

"SOULBURNER"

A screenplay by

Derek Mathias

FADE IN:

EXT. LITTLE BIGHORN VALLEY - DAY

SUPER: June 25, 1876

Several dozen prone soldiers in blue Union uniforms peer over the crest of a grassy hill.

MAJOR GENERAL CUSTER (37), blond hair, mustache and goatee, rides a white horse along the line behind the soldiers.

CUSTER

Troops! Lock and load like
Sergeant Tyson showed you.

Hundreds of mounted Sioux and Cheyenne warriors crest a distant hill. Their whoops and the thunder of galloping hoofbeats carry to the Union soldiers.

CUSTER

Hold your fire, men!

The soldiers aim down the sights of 21st century M16 assault rifles and two M240 machine guns.

The warriors close to within two hundred yards.

CUSTER

Fire!

Rifles and machine guns roar.

Under the hail of bullets, riders topple from their mounts. Horses scream and crash to the ground.

INT. THE MCBRIDE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: October 6, 1998

RAY MCBRIDE (37), old white phosphorus burn scars on his face, sits in a badly worn recliner, sullenly drunk and holding a beer can. He watches an old black-and-white TV.

Gangly YOUNG ALAN MCBRIDE (14) lies on the ratty carpet, drawing a picture of a darkly creepy, tentacled monster.

RAY

Why do you keep drawin' that crap, Alan? Don't you got homework to do?

YOUNG ALAN

Already done. It was easy.

RAY

Damn straight it was easy. You don't know what hard is. Watchin' hundreds of your buddies get blown up in a rocket attack, and then spendin' a year bein' tortured in an Iraqi prison with half your face melted off, now that's hard.

He crumples his empty beer can and tosses it at a full trash bin. The can rolls off and falls to the floor.

RAY

Hey, I thought I told you to take out the garbage.

YOUNG ALAN

Uh...I'll take it out first thing in the morning, Dad, I promise.

Ray clambers out of his chair and removes his belt. Alan cowers.

RAY

You need a lesson in responsibility, boy.

YOUNG DAN MCBRIDE (17), muscular and wearing dusty work clothes, trudges tiredly in from a hallway.

YOUNG DAN

It's not his fault, Dad. I told Alan I would take care of it when I got home from work.

RAY

Quit lyin' for your brother.

He turns back to Alan and prepares the belt.

Fear and anger vie in Dan's eyes. He balls his fists and advances on Ray. He speaks softly.

YOUNG DAN

No. Never again.

INT./EXT. BUS - NIGHT

SUPER: May 7, 2005

A BUS DRIVER and four passengers ride along an empty North Carolina forest road.

Passenger MYRA ALVAREZ (20), pretty college student, changes the cassette in her new 1990s-era Sony Walkman.

She hears a bang and the bus swerves. It slows to a halt.

BUS DRIVER

Looks like we got ourselves a flat, ladies and gentlemen. I gotta call it in. You might wanna get out and stretch your legs for a spell while we wait for the mechanic. Sorry for the inconvenience, folks....

Resigned groans. Myra remains seated as the others all file out. She listens to her music for a while. Then she too gets up and heads for the door.

As she steps off the bus, two long gray tentacles snake out of the darkness. They whip around her and yank her away before she can even scream.

EXT. PARTLY CLOUDY SKY OVER MIAMI - DAY

SUPER: September 27, 2005

AGENT BRAXON (25), calmly professional, athletic and stunningly beautiful wearing a gray leather-like catsuit, pops into existence. She plummets.

BRAXON

Add-Brain, status report!

A computer-generated voice speaks in her head.

ADD-BRAIN IMPLANT (V.O.)
 Insertion coordinates: west eighty
 point two five two, north twenty-
 five point eight one four.
 Altitude six thousand four hundred
 twenty-nine meters.

Braxon angles herself to aim for the ocean. It's too far.
 She scans below and spots a large swimming pool.

EXT. MIAMI POOL - DAY

A couple dozen people swim and sit by the pool.

MIKE (12) sits on the edge of the pool in his swim trunks.
 He spots Braxon falling from the sky.

Braxon shoots past the diving platform. She jackknifes to
 enter the pool feet-first with a surprisingly small splash.

She swims up and surfaces near Mike. He gawks at her,
 although nobody else has noticed her. She looks him over.

BRAAXON
 What is today's date?

MIKE
 Uh...it's September twenty-
 seventh.

BRAAXON
 And the year?

MIKE
 Y-Year? Two thousand and five.

BRAAXON
 Good. We were off by only nine
 days and one hundred and twenty-
 four surface kilometers, although
 we'll have to adjust better for
 elevation.

She effortlessly hoists herself out of the pool.

MIKE
 D-Did you just fall out of a plane
 or something?

BRAXON

Or something.

She walks away.

EXT. IRANIAN DESERT - NIGHT

SUPER: November 22, 2024

SERGEANT TYSON (27), muscular soldier in future desert fatigues, clutches a two-barreled M51 rifle/shotgun and hides behind a rock. He whispers loudly into an ear mic.

TYSON

Captain Torreón! This is Sergeant Tyson. Corporal Dancer's just x-ed it. Repeat, Corporal Dancer's just been x-ed. All Bravo Squad's dead but me, sir, and I got a bunch of rags closing in. Can you send in a Badboy Unit? Over.

He hears only static. Then a nearby explosion, gunfire, voices shouting in Persian.

Tyson activates his night vision face shield, revealing approaching enemy soldiers in glowing green.

He stands and opens fire with ripping bursts. Several enemy soldiers drop, others return fire.

A parachute flare ignites overhead, illuminating the area.

Enemy soldiers cry out in fear and turn to run. Tyson shouts triumphantly and continues picking off targets.

He hears a heavy crunch behind him. He turns and looks up in horror, as two long gray tentacles whip around him and yank him into the air.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSES - DAY

SUPER: June 8, 2006

Dilapidated warehouses line a dusty white dirt road.

Over the road a rusty sign reads "Property of Fort Ord, CA." Three paper targets hang from the bottom of the sign.

Pistol shots ring out. Bullet holes punch through the center of one target in a tight cluster.

DAN MCBRIDE (25), muscular with a crew cut and a confident swagger, observes his target from ten yards away.

His smaller, shaggy-haired brother, ALAN MCBRIDE (22), looks on with a dubious frown.

DAN

See? Just like that, Alan.

He takes a fresh magazine from a nearby shooting bench that displays several firearms, including a Vietnam-era M16. He demonstrates how to reload. He hands Alan the pistol.

ALAN

You sure it's wise to arm a spaz?

DAN

If we're gonna be partners, I need to know you can handle a gun.

ALAN

An E.M.T. is supposed to fix people, not put holes in them.

DAN

Gotta wear a lot of hats in this line of work, bro. You know how to make coffee, too, right?

ALAN

Can't I just be the medic? Or maybe do your taxes?

DAN

Medics gotta be able to defend themselves and I don't pay taxes.

He gives Alan a critical look.

DAN

Having second thoughts about coming to work with me?

ALAN

I hardly ever saw you when you were in the army, Dan. So whatever it takes, I'll do.

He slips off the safety and aims at the next target with his left thumb behind the slide. He squeezes the trigger.

The pistol bucks and the slide slams into his thumb. He yelps and grabs his hand. The pistol drops into the dirt.

DAN

Damn it, Alan!

Dan snatches up the pistol and inspects it for damage.

A cordless phone handset on the shooting bench rings.

Dan notices the blood welling from Alan's knuckle.

DAN

Alan! Are you okay?

ALAN

I've had worse.

DAN

I'm sorry, bro. I did that once too. You need to keep your thumb pointing forward like so....

He demonstrates the proper grip with the pistol.

ALAN

I'm good for now, thanks.

Dan is oblivious to the sarcasm. He answers the phone.

DAN

McBride Private Investigations,
Dan speaking.... Yessir, I worked with General Frost when I was with the Eighty-Second Airborne. Why do you...? Sure thing.

He hangs up.

DAN

We got a client! He's on his way.

They gather up the shooting equipment. Alan leads the way up the steps of the nearest warehouse.

A door sign reads "Daniel McBride: Private Investigator."

INT. DAN'S HOME OFFICE - DAY

Alan enters the converted warehouse. The high-ceilinged space contains a messy office, living room and kitchen.

Alan glances up, and just for an instant he sees...

...the DISPLACER, a short bus-sized Lovecraftian monster with scabby skin, two giant chicken legs, a huge stalked black eye, and two long gray tentacles below.

The Displacer vanishes. Alan back-pedals into Dan.

DAN

Alan, what the hell?

ALAN

Did you see that?!

DAN

See what?

ALAN

I thought I saw...something.

Dan frowns with concern.

DAN

Monsters again? I thought you got over that years ago.

ALAN

I did! Ever since Dad left.

DAN

Then what was it?

ALAN

Uh...nothing, I guess.

DAN

Go fix up your hand. Then help me clean this place up.

He slides his shooting gear under a ratty couch. He picks up an empty pizza box and a shirt from the coffee table.

On the table lie two books titled "Crazy Horse's Last Stand" and "The Robertson Presidency."

Alan goes to the kitchen and pulls out a paramedic's EMT kit. He competently washes and bandages his hand.

ALAN

How much time do we have?

DAN

None. Have you seen the second cordless phone handset anywhere?

Alan looks around at the sad garage sale furniture.

ALAN

Ever thought about getting a real office?

DAN

Then I'd have to pay rent. Frank lets me stay here for free for keeping an eye on the warehouses.

ALAN

I guess you get what you pay for.

A ring tone sounds. Dan pulls a 1990s-era cell phone from a pocket and glances at it.

DAN

It's Audrey. I don't have time for her shit right now.

ALAN

Talk to her. I can clean up this mess on my own.

DAN

Never marry a woman for her looks.

Alan hides trash bags behind the kitchen counter. Dan answers the phone.

DAN

What's up, Audrey?... No, I'm getting ready for a business meeting.... I know the check's late but I... Jesus, I'll get it in the mail as soon as I can. Let me speak to Tanya. I haven't spoken to her in... Oh come on...

He hangs up.

DAN

Bitch won't let me talk to my own daughter.

ALAN

Just send her the child support.

DAN

God damn it, you don't think I would if I had it?

A knock sounds. Dan heads for the door and opens it.

MAJOR GENERAL FROST (55), ramrod posture and iron-gray hair, stands outside. Beside him stands bland-faced MAJOR WEISS (35). Both wear US Army dress greens.

DAN

General Frost! What are you...?
Come in, sir!

They enter. Dan ushers them to mismatched seats in front of the desk before taking a seat behind his desk.

FROST

How have you been, sergeant?

DAN

Uh, ex-sergeant, sir. I didn't re-up last year.

FROST

That's actually why I've come to you for help.

DAN

Oh? I don't follow, sir.

FROST

I need someone I can trust who knows Fort Ord but who no longer works there.

DAN

You know I'm your man, sir.

Frost glances up at Alan. Dan follows his gaze.

DAN

Yeah...Alan, mind taking a walk?

ALAN

Huh? But I thought we were--

DAN

Take a walk.

With a wounded glance, Alan heads to the door. He picks up his EMT kit on the way.

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSES - DAY

A desert-camouflaged military Humvee sits outside.

Alan mutters to himself as he stomps down the steps and heads to the nearest office window.

ALAN

Partners, my ass....

He rummages through the EMT kit for a stethoscope. He presses the chestpiece to Dan's office window.

DAN (V.O.)

...really melt the lock?

FROST (V.O.)

It will. But we'll need it back. Drop it off with the cargo.

DAN (V.O.)

Can do. But...this is really a two-person job, sir. Could I--

FROST (V.O.)

Do you have someone you can trust?

DAN (V.O.)

Yes, sir, I do.

FROST (V.O.)

All right, then. But the less he knows, the better. Understood?

DAN (V.O.)

Plausible deniability. Yes, sir. I won't let you down.

INT. DAN'S HOME OFFICE - DAY

Alan enters as Frost and Weiss leave.

Dan fetches a beer from the kitchen.

ALAN

So...it's a two-person job and you can bring someone you trust.

DAN

How did you know that?

Alan lifts the stethoscope from his EMT kit.

ALAN

It's my job to figure things out. I'm a private investigator now, remember? You know, your partner? The guy who's supposed to be working with you, not sent to wait outside?

DAN

Yeah, I deserved that. I'm sorry, bro. The general and I used to work on a need-to-know basis and I automatically went into that mode.

ALAN

Okay. So...what job are we doing?

DAN

Not we. The job could be a little dangerous, Alan. I'm thinking of asking Frank to help me out.

He glances at Alan's bandaged hand.

ALAN

Oh come on, Dan, this is nothing.
I've been hurt a lot worse before.

DAN

I know....

He sips his beer as he thinks.

DAN

On second thought, the job mostly
involves just loading a truck.
So...maybe this would be a good
way to get your feet wet.

ALAN

A general can't order some of his
own soldiers to load a truck?

DAN

This job's gotta be off the books.

ALAN

So it's not exactly legal, is it?

DAN

It's important. And it pays
enough to clear most of my debts.

ALAN

You have debts?

DAN

A few.

ALAN

But...surely there's a more
responsible way to pay your bills.

Dan chokes on his beer.

DAN

You're one to talk, Alan!

ALAN

Huh?

DAN

It's because of you I'm in debt!

ALAN

What? You mean my college tuition? I thought the inheritance...

DAN

Yeah, well you thought wrong.

ALAN

You sent me your military pay, didn't you? I'll pay you back.

DAN

With what? Your unemployment checks?

ALAN

I'll find a real job. I can look for a local E.M.T. position--

DAN

And good luck with that. But for right now I got us a "real" job. I thought you were willing to do whatever it takes.

Alan sighs.

ALAN

You were always there when I needed you, Dan, so you know I'll always be there for you. I'm in.

DAN

Atta boy. C'mon, let's get you a haircut.

ALAN

Haircut?

INT. MILITARY PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Alan uses the rearview mirror to inspect his new military haircut. Dan drives. Both wear olive drab army fatigues. Dan wears staff sergeant rank, Alan second lieutenant rank.

Dan's name tag reads "Smith." Alan's reads "Wesson."

DAN

Can I have my mirror back?

Alan sits back. He pulls on a maroon beret.

ALAN

Isn't impersonating military personnel a felony?

DAN

No one's gonna ask. Just let me do the talking.

ALAN

But...

DAN

Frost will go to bat for us if anything goes wrong.

ALAN

You trust him?

DAN

I worked for him for two years. Yeah I trust him.

They drive past a sign that reads: "Welcome to Fort Ord, California -- Home of the 82nd Airborne Division."

EXT. BATTALION HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Nearly all the windows in the two-story building are dark. The grounds are empty and quiet.

The pickup truck pulls into a parking space near the front door of the building. Dan and Alan exit the truck.

Both wear gloves and carry disposable respirator masks. Alan holds a set of bolt cutters.

Dan produces a two-shot taser from a cargo pocket.

ALAN

You're trying to make me regret coming to work with you, right?

DAN

Cover up and stay behind me.

INT. BATTALION HEADQUARTERS FOYER - NIGHT

Hallways and offices lead off from the foyer. A large metal armory door dominates the room.

A CQ PRIVATE (18) sits at the front desk reading a magazine while a CQ SERGEANT (22) snoozes on a couch.

Dan and Alan enter, their faces concealed by the masks.

CQ PRIVATE

May I help--

Dan fires the taser at the two soldiers. They both stiffen and slide to the floor.

Dan uses duct tape to tie up the two soldiers and to cover their mouths and eyes. He drags them into a nearby office.

He and Alan remove their respirator masks.

ALAN

Dan, what have you done?

DAN

No names! They'll be fine.

He inspects the armory door's massive straight-bar padlock.

He takes an orange squeeze bulb from a pocket and twists a knob. He squeezes a drop of blue liquid onto the lock.

He steps back as smoke rises from the lock. The metal sizzles and bubbles and melts like wax. It drips onto the tile floor and burns a hole through that too.

ALAN

Whoa...Frost gave you that?

DAN

I said no names! But yeah, he said it's a military grade acid.

He squeezes another drop of blue liquid on an alarm bell near the ceiling. It melts the same way.

ALAN

I didn't know such stuff existed.

DAN

A motion sensor inside the armory will still set off an alarm at the M.P. station. We gotta work fast.

ALAN

What are we stealing?

DAN

We're not stealing anything.

Dan slides open the heavy metal door. He grabs the bolt cutters from Alan and heads into the...

ARMORY

Padlocked racks along the walls hold dozens of M16 rifles. Two M60 machine guns sit on their bipods.

Dan pops the chains with the bolt cutters.

ALAN

It sure looks like stealing to me.

DAN

Not if we're giving it all back.

ALAN

Huh?

DAN

Load those machine guns onto the truck. C'mon, move!

EXT. BATTALION HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Alan finishes wrestling the M60s onto the bed of the pickup as Dan heads down the steps with an armload of M16s.

INT. BATTALION HEADQUARTERS FOYER - NIGHT

Dan heads in for more weapons as Alan heads out with an armload of rifles. The telephone on the desk rings.

Dan answers the phone. He speaks with a bored drawl.

DAN

H.H.C., fourth of the three-two-five, Sergeant Wilson speaking, may I help you, sir?

As he listens, he gestures for Alan to keep moving.

DAN

Yeah, sorry sarge, but this new cherry I got on C.Q. bounced a basketball off the armory door and... Oh hell, sergeant, you don't gotta do that... Uh, okay.

He hangs up just as Alan returns from the truck.

DAN

Damn, that used to work. The M.P.s are on their way. Let's go!

EXT. BATTALION HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Dan pulls a tarp over the pile of weapons in the truck bed.

EXT./INT. MILITARY PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

The pickup pulls out of the parking space and drives off.

An M.P. Blazer drives past them in the opposite direction. It pulls into the space the brothers just vacated.

The pickup reaches the base exit and accelerates.

Dan checks the rearview mirror.

DAN

Damn it. Hang on.

Alan stares out the back as Dan accelerates. The Blazer's headlights swing in behind them. Colored lights flash.

Up ahead lies an intersection with a green light. A semi-trailer truck waits to the left of the intersection.

As they shoot through the intersection, Alan notices the TRUCK DRIVER is staring at the Blazer.

The semi lurches forward into the side of the Blazer. The Blazer tumbles into a substation transformer and explodes.

Alan and Dan stare through the rear window.

DAN

Jeezus....

ALAN

We have to stop!

DAN

Not with what we got in back.

ALAN

But--

DAN

Ain't happening, bro. The truck driver will call for help.

ALAN

He was looking right at the M.P.s.
How could he not have seen them?

LATER

The pickup parks next to a sedan in the otherwise empty back parking lot of a convenience store.

ALAN

What are we going to do, Dan?

Dan tiredly rubs his face. He hands Alan a cell phone.

DAN

I gotta finish the job. I'll call when I get to the drop site.

ALAN

Wait, shouldn't I go with you?

DAN

I want you in a safe place in case something else goes wrong.

ALAN

What more could go wrong?

DAN
Nothing. But...something doesn't
feel right.

ALAN
Robbing fort Ord wasn't right.

DAN
This ain't a robbery, Alan. It's
a demonstration to show the
Pentagon that the base has got
real security problems.

ALAN
Dan...why didn't you tell me?

DAN
I...I thought it would be a good
test for you. To see how you'd do
if you thought it was real.

ALAN
But that crash...

DAN
That wasn't supposed to happen.
Frost needs the weapons returned.
So please...get in the car.

Alan exits the truck. Dan drives off.

INT./EXT. SEDAN - NIGHT

Alan sits with the window open and a cell phone in his lap.
The phone rings and he answers on speakerphone.

ALAN
Dan?

DAN (V.O.)
No names, bro. I'm almost there.

Alan hears a door bang open. In the rearview mirror he
sees a CLERK exit the convenience store with bags of trash.

DAN (V.O.)
Big house. Everything's dark.
There's nobody here.

The Clerk throws the bags in a dumpster near Alan's car.

DAN (V.O.)
 Something's not right. I'll call
 you right back.

ALAN
 Dan?

He hears a faint hiss and slaps at something on his neck.
 He sees the Clerk nearby pocket something.

ALAN
 Can I help y...uh, ohh...

He sways dizzily and gasps for air.

The Clerk watches for a moment, then turns and walks away.

Alan digs two EpiPens from his EMT kit. He injects one
 into his thigh. He pockets the other one.

He breaks out in a sweat. His eyes close and he slumps.

EXT. MILITARY PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Alan awakens under a ratty tarp. He pulls it down and sees
 he's in the truck bed, traveling down a forested dirt road.

Lying on his left is the CLERK'S TWIN, wearing only
 underwear. On his right lies Dan. Both are unconscious.

ALAN
 Dan!

He shakes Dan's shoulder but gets no response.

The truck parks and the driver gets out. Alan pulls the
 tarp back into place and feigns unconsciousness.

EXT. FETCH SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

The Clerk pulls away the tarp. One by one he drags the
 Clerk's Twin, Alan and Dan off the pickup, then walks away.

Alan cautiously lifts his head. He lies on the shoulder of
 a dirt road 50' down from a two-story modern log cabin
 house built against a forested hill.

14 additional unconscious bodies--most in underwear or naked--lie in a haphazard line along the side of the road.

A light over the far end of the line reveals the naked, unconscious forms of GENERAL FROST'S TWIN, MAJOR WEISS'S TWIN and the TRUCK DRIVER'S TWIN.

Several trucks and cars line the road, including General Frost's Humvee. One truck has a backhoe loaded in back. A dozen civilians and soldiers work among the vehicles.

The Truck Driver and the Clerk help load ammunition crates and the weapons Dan and Alan stole onto a large truck.

Major Weiss descends the steps from the house. He approaches General Frost who stands 15' from Alan.

ALAN
(whispers)
What the hell...?

WEISS
We can't get close enough to spray it.

FROST
Then set a charge to destroy it after we're gone.

WEISS
And the originals?

FROST
Dispose of them. It's time to arm the militia.

Weiss nods to a CORPORAL, who carries an M16 and grenades on his equipment belt. The two officers then move off.

Alan watches as the Corporal takes an orange squeeze bulb from a bulging leathery bag on the seat of Frost's Humvee.

The Corporal walks to the far end of the bodies and sprays down General Frost's Twin's naked body with blue liquid.

Smoke rises from General Frost's Twin's skin. Then it sizzles. He squirms and thrashes without waking. His body melts away, leaving a dark, steaming hole in the ground.

The Corporal works his way down the line, repeating the grisly process with each body.

Alan stares in horror. He shakes Dan's shoulder.

ALAN

Dan, wake up!

Alan touches his thigh where he injected the EpiPen, and realization hits him. He pulls the second EpiPen from his pocket and injects it into Dan's thigh.

A truck rumbles to life. Alan glances around and sees most of the soldiers and civilians climbing into the vehicles. One by one they drive off down the road.

Alan lies still as SERGEANT SERRA approaches. Serra climbs into the pickup and starts the engine.

Alan gives Dan a desperate shake. No response.

Then he notices Dan is lying on the ratty tarp. He looks at the trailer hitch on the back of the pickup.

He loops an edge of the tarp with a hole in it over the trailer hitch. Then he rolls onto the tarp next to Dan.

Alan clings to the tarp and holds Dan around the neck as Serra drives off. The growling engine masks the sound of the dragging tarp.

The Corporal is too busy spraying bodies to notice, and Frost and Weiss intently study a map in the Humvee.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

The pickup drives down the uneven dirt road.

Alan struggles to keep himself and Dan from sliding off the tarp. He chokes on kicked-up dust.

Dan cries out and thrashes awake.

Alan loses his grip. Both brothers tumble off the tarp onto the road.

Dan lurches unsteadily to his feet, his eyes wild. He sees the pickup moving away and yells at it.

DAN
What the hell?!

ALAN
Shh! Quiet, Dan!

Dan's legs wobble and he collapses into the dirt.

Alan scrambles to him. Dan stares around without focus.

The pickup brakes. Sergeant Serra climbs out and switches on a flashlight. He walks over to the two brothers.

Alan looks around in desperation and spots a heavy stick nearby. He grabs it and struggles to his feet.

SERRA
You! How did you recover from--?

He draws a pistol from a holster at his hip.

Alan gives a wild swing with the stick and knocks the pistol from Serra's hand. He swings again, but Serra grabs the stick and yanks it away.

Alan stumbles backward. He trips and sprawls on his back. Serra bends over and grabs Alan's neck with both hands.

Dan slams into Serra's side and knocks him to the ground. He straddles Serra and punches him hard again and again.

DAN
Nobody hurts my brother! Never
again! Got that?

Serra's skin turns translucent gray and his face melts into a featureless smooth blob.

Dan stops pounding and stares at the sergeant.

The gray flesh slides off Serra's arm, revealing a scabby skeletal form with a clawed hand underneath.

The claw slashes at Dan as he scrambles away.

He and Alan stare in disbelief as the skeleton claws its way out of its own flesh and rips through its clothing.

The emaciated creature that emerges has scabby, plate-like skin layered like upside-down scale armor. It has no eyes or ears in its round head.

Segmented plates in the head slide open to reveal a gaping maw filled with shark-like teeth. Organs within squirm like worms in mucus.

The creature orients on Alan and emits a high-pitched squeal. Spider-like, it leaps at Alan, claws spread wide.

Dan snatches up Serra's pistol and fires again and again.

The scabby creature crashes to the ground. Keening, it thrashes violently for a moment, then falls still.

Dan and Alan stare in stunned silence.

ALAN

T-Tell me you see that too.

DAN

What the fuck is that?

The monster's shell-like skin cracks and separates. Liquefied flesh pours out over the ground. The skin melts like heated wax. Soon nothing is left but a brown puddle.

Unnoticed, the translucent gray flesh oozes away from the shredded fatigues like an amoeba with two human eyeballs.

It morphs into a duplicate of the stick Alan used.

DAN

Are we dead? Was that a demon?

ALAN

No. I...I think it's an alien.

DAN

An alien? That's insane!

ALAN

And a demon isn't?

DAN

Could an alien still live after the flesh slid off its bones?

ALAN
Uh...good point.

He looks at the ripped-up uniform. Dan checks the pistol.

ALAN
Where did its flesh go?

DAN
I'm out of bullets.

ALAN
The gray blobby stuff. It's gone.

DAN
I'll check the truck.

He hurries over to the pickup.

Alan looks warily around at the ground. He squats down to pick up the duplicate stick next to the shredded uniform.

He lifts with one hand...but the stick is heavier than before. He frowns and grasps it with both hands.

Vertigo blurs his vision. He blinks.

DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. ANCIENT ARMORY - NIGHT

Alan finds himself in a hazy, dreamlike world. He stands in a room with stone walls and no windows.

Torchlight glitters off ancient Greek armor hanging on the walls. A Spartan sword sits on a carved wood stand.

Sergeant Serra steps from behind a stone pillar. He wears only a red tunic and leather sandals.

ALAN
Is this...am I lucid dreaming?

SERRA
Something like that.

ALAN
Does that mean I can dream up a steak dinner?

He concentrates. A plate with a steak dinner and silverware appears in his hands. He grins with delight.

His expression turns wary and he puts down the plate.

ALAN

Where am I? Are you a demon or an alien?

SERRA

This is our universe, so you are the alien. Help me with my armor.

ALAN

I want to know what's going on.

SERRA

Help me put on my armor and I will answer all your questions.

Alan reluctantly nods. He lifts a skirted breastplate from the wall and fits it into place over Serra's torso.

ALAN

What's happening to me?

SERRA

I released a substance that penetrated your skin and formed a neurochemical bridge between our brains. It is how we read minds and control our frames.

ALAN

Frames?

SERRA

The non-sentient mounts we ride.

He gestures at a pair of vambraces on the wall. Alan fetches the armor and begins strapping it to Serra's arms.

ALAN

Non-sentient mounts? I don't follow.

SERRA

Then view my memory.

INT. OFFICE RESTROOM - SERRA'S POV - DAY - FLASHBACK

Serra, in fatigues, sees his own reflection in the mirror.

A skeleton-creature crouches nearby, claws splayed.

Serra looks down at the unconscious form of Major Weiss on the floor. A gray amoeba-creature adheres to Weiss's face.

The amoeba then oozes over to the skeleton and flows up its leg. It spreads out over the upside-down layered plates until it completely covers the skeleton with gray flesh.

The amoeba morphs to look just like Major Weiss.

The naked duplicate Weiss kneels and strips the uniform from the human Weiss.

BACK TO SCENE

Alan blinks and finds himself back in the stone room.

ALAN

It's a symbiotic relationship!

SERRA

We breed our frames to improve our mobility and to allow us to hear and speak. The greaves, please.

He gestures at a set of shin armor. Alan fetches the armor and fits it onto Serra's legs.

ALAN

Why do you want to look like us?

SERRA

So we can convince you to perform dangerous tasks on our behalf without putting ourselves at risk.

ALAN

Like steal guns from the military.

SERRA

Yes. And an anti-government militia will use the weapons to assault a military base for us.

ALAN

Why do you want to do that?

SERRA

So we can dig up a device that was stolen from us and hidden in a cave beneath the base. The helmet, please.

Alan picks up a bronze helm and fits it over Serra's head.

ALAN

What kind of device?

SERRA

Something to put an end to your species.

ALAN

Put an end to...why?

Serra gestures at a round shield. Alan reluctantly picks up the shield and fits it to Serra's arm.

SERRA

This universe belongs to us, not you. We existed here first.

ALAN

Haha...wait, you're serious?

SERRA

Your questions have given me the time needed to establish control over your autonomic functions.

He turns and lifts the sword from its rack.

SERRA

This is not mere dream imagery, but metaphor for the vulnerability of connected minds. You armored me and left yourself defenseless.

Alan stares in horror. He snatches up the small steak knife he'd conjured and brandishes it.

Serra laughs at the puny weapon. Sword and shield ready, he advances on his prey.

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE

Dan slides a fresh magazine into the pistol as he approaches Alan. He has a crowbar tucked into his belt.

DAN

Found some ammo and this crowbar.
Better than nothing.

He sees Alan squatting with both hands clasping the stick.

DAN

Bro?

Sweat trickles down the side of Alan's face. He trembles, the muscles clenching in his jaw.

DAN

Alan!

He grabs Alan and hauls him upright, breaking his contact with the stick. Alan awakens and stares wildly around.

DAN

You okay, Alan?

Alan looks at the amoeba, still disguised as the stick. He snatches the crowbar from Dan's belt and smashes it down on the amoeba with all his might again and again.

The amoeba stick twitches and flexes. It loses its form and turns translucent gray.

Alan keeps hitting until it dissolves into a clear liquid and soaks into the ground.

DAN

Holy shit! What was that?

ALAN

That was the creature's flesh! It got into my mind and spoke to me. They're looking for a device hidden under a military base--they plan to use it to kill us all!

DAN

This...can't be happening....

ALAN

It is happening, Dan! We have to go to the police.

DAN

The police? And tell them what?

ALAN

Tell them that shape-changing aliens are duplicating people and...and...

DAN

Exactly. Nobody's gonna believe this. We gotta stop 'em ourselves.

ALAN

How? What can we do?

DAN

One step at a time, bro. First...where the hell are we?

ALAN

Just down the road from a house where the aliens killed all the people they duplicated.

DAN

How many have they duplicated?

ALAN

Fifteen? And there's something in the house they're planning to destroy after they leave.

DAN

If it's important enough for them to destroy, then I want to find out what it is.

ALAN

Dan, they're heavily armed. Assault rifles. Grenades.

DAN

Then we don't get seen. Let's go.

INT./EXT. MILITARY PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Alan talks as Dan drives with the headlights off.

DAN

An EpiPen? Quick thinking, bro.

ALAN

Well, the symptoms resembled
anaphylactic shock, so...

Approaching headlight beams filter through the trees.

Dan turns off the road into the forest and cuts the engine.

He and Alan watch as the Humvee with General Frost, Major Weiss and the Corporal drives down the road.

Dan starts the engine and continues toward the safe house.

EXT. FETCH SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

Dan and Alan cautiously approach the dark house on foot.
Dan draws Serra's pistol and they quietly climb the steps.

Dan opens the front door and turns on Serra's flashlight.

INT. FETCH SAFE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dan and Alan enter a room with white dust sheets covering
the furniture. A stairway leads up to the second floor.

Both brothers grimace from the stench.

Dan's flashlight illuminates a table covered with stacked
green blocks. Wires lead to an LED timer, which counts
down with just over two minutes remaining.

DAN

Oh crap...that's C-four.

ALAN

Can you disarm it?

They hear the metallic cycling of a pistol action.

Dan raises the flashlight to reveal BRAXON'S CORPSE
standing in a hallway entrance.

The week-old corpse was once exotically beautiful. Now her rotting head lolls to the side, one eye milky, the other shot out. Dried blood cakes the side of her face.

She points a sleek, futuristic pistol between Alan's eyes.

A disembodied, distorted, synthetic voice fills the air:

ADD-BRAIN (V.O.)
Identify yourselves or be
terminated immmmmediately.

Dan and Alan stare in horror.

DAN
I...I...

ADD-BRAIN (V.O.)
Threat identificationnnnn...ERROR!
Ally identity accepted.

Braxon's Corpse lowers her gun.

ADD-BRAIN (V.O.)
Status rrrrrreport: H.R. Agent
Braxon expirrrred at twenty-one-o-
five hours, September first, two
thousannnd six. This add-brain
encyc implant has overrrrrided her
nanofiberrrrr bioaugment chassis.
Imperative mmmmessage to deliver
to H.R. Command. Deliver
mmmmmessage now?

Dan and Alan just gawk.

ADD-BRAIN (V.O.)
Deliver mmmmessage now?

DAN
Uh...y-yes?

ADD-BRAIN (V.O.)
Connnnfirmed.

A holographic map of California appears in the air.

The map zooms in on a fenced-in cluster of buildings atop a coastal cliff in the Fort Hunter Ligget area.

The image rotates and becomes transparent, revealing a large natural cavern under the buildings.

A narrow tunnel leads from the cave to under the ocean. It comes up between a cluster of three sharp rocks that project above the surface of the ocean.

An animated line draws a path from the rocks, through the tunnel and into the cave.

BRAXON (V.O.)

Captured fetch displacer. Safely hidden in cavern with undersea access. Enter osmotic door under displacer. Go to set destination and repair incursion.

Her voice turns sad.

BRAXON (V.O.)

Am dying. Fetch prisoner shot me through eye. Can't think clearly. Add-Brain also damaged and cannot initiate repairs. Hope someone--

The map winks out. Braxon's Corpse raises her pistol.

ADD-BRAIN (V.O.)

Identify yourselves or be terminated immmmmediately.

DAN

What?

ADD-BRAIN (V.O.)

Threat identificationnnnn...ERROR!
Ally identity accepted. Status
rrrrrreport: H.R. Agent Braxon
expired at twenty-one-o-five...

Dan glances at the timer. Ten seconds remain.

DAN

Ten seconds! Run!

He grabs Alan and hustles him out the door.

EXT. FETCH SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

Dan and Alan race down the steps and across the road.

The explosives detonate with a jarring roar.

Dan and Alan hit the ground. They look back at the destruction. Flames consume what's left of the house.

DAN

What the hell was that?!

ALAN

I don't know!

DAN

It was a zombie!

ALAN

No! An alien cyborg.

DAN

An alien cyborg zombie! My head's gonna explode....

Alan stares at the burning remains of the house.

ALAN

She was enemies with the other aliens--the "fetch," she called them. If only she could have helped us....

Dan takes a deep breath and gets himself together.

DAN

Actually, she did help us. That map she showed us is a military facility on Fort Hunter Liggett. I've been there once. It's a couple hours drive away.

ALAN

You're not suggesting we go after the displacer, are you?

DAN

You want aliens getting their claws on it? C'mon, let's go.

INT./EXT. PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Dan drives through a picturesque coastal town. Few lights glow and the streets are empty.

Well beyond the opposite end of the town, bright lights illuminate a building complex on a cliff.

Dan drives. He scans the businesses along the main street.

ALAN

What are you looking for?

DAN

Something every coastal town has.

His cell phone rings. He pulls it out and glances at it.

DAN

Audrey. Why the hell is she calling so late? You talk to her.

He tosses the phone to Alan, who answers on speakerphone.

ALAN

Hi, Audrey. It's Alan.

AUDREY (V.O.)

Alan? So my lazy ex now has you answering his phone?

ALAN

He's, uh, busy. Can I help you?

AUDREY (V.O.)

Tell him Tanya got food poisoning and to get his butt over to Community Hospital right now.

DAN

What?! Is she all right?

AUDREY (V.O.)

So you are there. She's asking for you, Dan, so get over here.

Dan's face twists with anguish.

DAN
I can't, Audrey. Not now.

AUDREY (V.O.)
You son-of-a-bitch! You always
want to talk to her when she's
fine, but when she really needs
you you're too busy? You asshole!

DAN
Audrey, I just...can't right now.

AUDREY (V.O.)
What could possibly be more
important than your daughter?

DAN
Tell her I love her. I'll see her
as soon as I can, I promise.

He reaches over and hangs up the phone. His eyes are wet.

ALAN
Dan...

DAN
Don't. We're here.

Dan pulls into an alley behind a store with a sign reading
"Dave's Dive Shop." He switches off the headlights.

He exits the vehicle and uses the crowbar to jimmy the lock
to the back door of the store. He disappears inside.

Alan fidgets as he keeps an eye on both ends of the alley.

Dan exits the store carrying a large nylon duffle and two
small air tanks. He dumps the gear into the truck bed.

He climbs in and drives back out to the main street.

ALAN
Two robberies in one night. I
hope this doesn't become a habit.

DAN
Don't hope too hard. We're not
done yet.

EXT. MARINA - NIGHT

Small boats bob along the two docks of the little marina.

Nobody's around. A chain link fence and a padlocked gate are the only security.

Dan pops the padlock with the crowbar. He and Alan grab their gear and head down a wood pier to the only motorboat.

They climb into the 12' fiberglass dinghy, and Alan stows their gear while Dan prepares the outboard motor.

As Dan tilts the outboard into the water, his right hand slips and drags across a sharp bolt. He hisses in pain.

DAN

Damn it!

ALAN

Let me take a look.

Blood wells from a gash along Dan's palm.

DAN

I'll be okay.

ALAN

Not yet you won't.

He pulls a small first aid kit from a cargo pocket.

ALAN

You're lucky I'm the medic.

Alan quickly cleans and dresses the wound. Then he holds up his own bandaged hand with a wan smile.

ALAN

Brothers in injury.

Dan inspects Alan's handiwork. He shakes his head and turns to continue working on the motor.

ALAN

What? I didn't do a good job?

DAN

You did a great job.

ALAN

Then...what's wrong?

DAN

Nothing. We need to get going.

ALAN

It's not nothing. Tell me.

DAN

It's just that you should've been a real doctor instead of a paramedic.

ALAN

Medical school is too expensive.

DAN

Too expensive? Then why the hell did you go to college at all? You wasted my money on an education you weren't even gonna finish!

He yanks on the starter cord and the motor roars to life.

Alan stares at Dan in surprise.

ALAN

It wasn't wasted, Dan. College made me a better E.M.T.

DAN

If that's all you were planning to be, you could have joined the army and become a medic for free! Now cast off the line.

Alan hurries to untie the mooring lines.

ALAN

I'm...sorry, Dan. I thought I was saving money.

DAN

Saving money wasn't the point! You were the smart one, the one who could really do something with your life. And I wanted to help make that happen.

ALAN

But--

DAN

You don't quit when you're only half done, Alan. And you don't throw away someone's generosity.

Alan casts off the last line. Dan maneuvers the motorboat along the sailboats toward open water.

ALAN

Dan, do you have any idea how expensive medical school is?

DAN

I'd have figured out something.

ALAN

I can still go some day.

DAN

Yeah, if we don't end up in jail.

ALAN

And if shape-shifting alien cyborg zombies don't destroy the Earth.

Dan manages a grim chuckle and shakes his head. He opens the throttle and heads into the open ocean.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

The motorboat roars through the swells.

The military base comes into view as the motorboat rounds a rocky point.

The installation sits atop a 30' cliff. A tall fence topped with razor wire surrounds the group of buildings. A road leads down to a cement pier that juts into the ocean.

Alan scans ahead from the bow. He points.

150' from the cliff and 300' from the pier, a cluster of three sharp rocks protrudes from the water.

As the motorboat approaches the rocks, Dan cuts the motor. Alan tosses the anchor overboard.

Flashes of light come from the base. Distant sounds of automatic gunfire and explosions carry across the water.

DAN

Shit, it's started. Quick, help me with the tanks.

Alan assists Dan, who fumbles one-handed to fit regulators to the two air tanks. They test the air flow.

They pull on the dive tanks, fit dive masks onto their faces, and strap flashlights to their wrists.

DAN

Now remember, keep breathing. Never hold your breath.

ALAN

I took the basic open water course, Dan. I know what to do.

Dan smiles. With one hand he awkwardly unbuckles the pistol belt and holds it out to Alan.

DAN

Here. I can't shoot worth shit with my left hand.

ALAN

And I can't shoot worth shit with either hand.

DAN

Just remember what I taught you and you'll do fine. Take it.

Alan sighs and takes the gun. He buckles it in place.

DAN

I feel safer already.

A bullet punches through Dan's mask. The crack of a distant rifle follows an instant later.

Alan automatically turns to look at the pier.

A MILITIAMAN stands on the dock. The muzzle of his M16 flashes as he fires several more shots toward the boat. More militiamen run down the pier.

Bullets whizz by and ricochet off the motor. Alan ducks down and looks at Dan.

Dan has slumped against the gunwale. Blood fills his mask and trickles from the hole in the lens.

ALAN

No! Dan, get down!

He rushes at Dan to grab him. The unbalanced boat tilts, and the brothers topple overboard with a heavy splash.

Alan surfaces and struggles to fit Dan's mouthpiece in place. Dan's head rolls limply. Blood sloshes from the hole in his cracked mask.

ALAN

Dan, we have to go under. Just keep breathing normally. Never hold your breath....

Bullets hit the water nearby.

Alan stuffs his own regulator into his mouth. He dumps air from their vests and they sink beneath the surface.

EXT. UNDERWATER - NIGHT

Alan shines the flashlight through murky green water. His breathing labors in his ears as he struggles to swim in his military fatigues with one arm around Dan's neck.

He swims between the three rocks and shines the flashlight into the darkness below. He pinches his nose and blows.

He dumps more air from his vest and descends.

INT. UNDERWATER TUNNEL - NIGHT

The rocks form into a tunnel that curves shoreward, becoming horizontal. Alan aims the flashlight ahead and pulls himself along the rocks, dragging Dan along with him.

He continues to follow the tunnel as it curves upward.

INT. CAVE

Alan bursts through the surface of a subterranean pool. He splashes his way to the shore, hauling Dan behind him.

He clambers out and rips off his and Dan's gear. He checks Dan's neck for a pulse and listens for breath.

ALAN
No, please, no....

He frantically administers CPR.

A dull rumble of an explosion shakes the cavern.

Alan grabs the flashlight and shines it upward. Small pieces of rock drop from the ceiling.

ALAN
Oh god, here they come.

He grabs Dan's shoulders and shakes him.

ALAN
Get up, Dan, or we'll die in here!

The flashlight reveals the bullet hole between Dan's unseeing dead eyes. Alan bursts into tears.

ALAN
Dan, please...you can't leave me
like this....

A gray tentacle enters the beam of the dropped flashlight. It slowly probes along the ground toward Dan.

Alan leaps to his feet. He snatches up the flashlight and shines it on the tentacle. He follows its length to...

The Displacer. Light reflects off the huge creature's scabby skin. It crouches under the low ceiling and stares back with its single huge eye.

Alan cries out and backpedals. He fumbles for the pistol, trips and falls into the pool. He thrashes, sputtering.

The tentacles pull back and the Displacer remains still.

Alan calms down. He cautiously clambers out of the pool.

ALAN

Y-You're the displacer? What kind
of a beast from hell...

Another explosion shakes the cavern.

ALAN

Agent Braxon said to "Enter
osmotic door under displacer."
What the hell is an osmotic door?

Another explosion. More rocks drop from the ceiling.

Anguished, Alan gently puts a hand on Dan's chest.

Then, holding his breath, he cautiously walks up between
the tentacles and ducks under the crouched Displacer.

Set into the smooth underside of the Displacer, toward the
back, is a manhole-sized circle of translucent gray.

Alan touches the circle and pushes. His hand slides
through it as if it were mucus. He recoils and the gray
material flows back into place, unbroken.

Another explosion shakes the cave. Alan takes a deep
breath and pushes his head through the osmotic door.

INT. DISPLACER

Alan shines the flashlight around.

The body cavity is half the volume of the Displacer, with a
flat floor and room enough for a man to stand. Pink,
fleshy material coats the walls and floor.

A second osmotic door is embedded into the back wall. From
the ceiling above it hang four transparent sacs. Three of
them each contain a human brain.

In one corner sits a basketball-sized SCOUT, with scabby
skin, a single large black eye, a wide slit for a mouth,
and two bird-like legs. It quietly watches Alan.

As Alan warily climbs up into the body cavity, the ceiling
glows with a dim red light. He turns off the flashlight.

ALAN

"Go to set destination and repair incursion." What set destination?

Another muffled explosion sounds through the walls, and the Displacer rocks slightly.

Alan loses his balance and places a hand against the wall. His gaze loses focus.

ALAN

Oh god...so hungry!

He breaks contact to clutch his stomach. He regains focus.

ALAN

Wait...that wasn't me.
You...you're starving!

He steels himself and presses both hands against the wall. Again his gaze loses focus.

INT. CAVE - DISPLACER'S POV

The Displacer's fisheye view reveals an infrared image of the far side of the cave.

A shaft of bright light pierces the darkness through a manhole-sized opening in the ceiling. Dirt streams down to a pile of rubble below the hole.

INT. DISPLACER

Alan's unfocused gaze stares in awe.

ALAN

I see what you see....

A deep, booming, echoing voice fills Alan's mind.

DISPLACER (V.O.)

Affirmative.

ALAN

Y-You can talk!

DISPLACER (V.O.)

Negative.

ALAN

Uh. What?

DISPLACER (V.O.)

Negative. I cannot talk.

ALAN

Umm...we're talking here.

DISPLACER (V.O.)

We communicate through a
neurochemical bridge formed
between our brains.

ALAN

Then you're a fetch?

DISPLACER (V.O.)

Negative. I am a displacer.

Alan concentrates as something catches his attention.

INT. CAVE

A rope drops from the hole. A STOCKY SERGEANT climbs down
the rope, followed by CAPTAIN SANTOS and LIEUTENANT GREEN.

Each soldier wears full battle gear and carries a slung
M16. The Sergeant also carries an M72 anti-tank weapon.

Santos walks along the pool toward the Displacer. He sees
Dan's body and the two sets of dive gear on the shore.

SANTOS

Someone is already here.

He looks up at the Displacer. He hurries toward it.

INTERCUT - DISPLACER/CAVE

ALAN

No! Get him away from us, beast!

The tentacles whip around Santos. They lift him up and
fling him away. He lands in the pool with a huge splash.

He thrashes violently in the water and emits an inhuman
keening sound.

His flesh turns a translucent gray and contracts against the skeleton. It splits apart and shrivels away.

Alan gives a grim smile of satisfaction.

ALAN

You're water soluble? No wonder
you didn't swim here.

Still clad in its uniform, the skeleton-creature scrambles out of the pool. It opens its maw and squeals.

Lieutenant Green opens his mouth and squeals back a reply.

The skeleton bounds over to him. Green lays a hand on the skeleton and it calms. It turns and scrambles up the rope.

Green faces the Displacer.

GREEN

Exit the displacer now and we will
allow you to leave unharmed.

Alan's distorted voice projects from the Displacer:

ALAN (V.O.)

I killed one of you alien bastards
already. Come anywhere near me
and I'll kill you too!

GREEN

My orders are clear: recover the
displacer if possible, destroy it
if not. Leave now if you wish to
live.

ALAN (V.O.)

You monsters murdered my brother.
I'm not giving you anything!

Green nods to the Stocky Sergeant. The sergeant steps forward and prepares the M72.

ALAN (V.O.)

You wouldn't....

GREEN

My orders are clear. Fire when
ready, sergeant.

The Sergeant cocks the anti-tank weapon and takes aim.

ALAN

Oh, crap....

His eyes widen with realization.

ALAN

Go to set destination. That's it!
Beast, go to set destination now!

The M72 fires as the Displacer vanishes into thin air.

INT. DISPLACER

Alan lies on his back looking up at the four sacs hanging from the ceiling. Only two sacs contain brains now.

He scrambles to his feet.

The Displacer's tentacles push huge clumps of prairie grass through the main osmotic door and into the second one. They withdraw and repeat the procedure again and again.

ALAN

So that's how you eat?
Wait...grass? In a cave?

He presses his hands against the body cavity wall.

EXT. GRASSY VALLEY - DISPLACER'S POV - DAY

The afternoon sun shines down on a broad, shallow valley filled with prairie grass.

MR. BECK, in a modern business suit with an M16 slung across his back and a revolver on his belt, rides a horse down a nearby hill. It trots toward the Displacer.

INT. DISPLACER

Alan's jaw drops.

ALAN

Teleportation? Oh my god, no
wonder the fetches want you back!

He frowns and glances at his watch.

ALAN

Wait...it's daylight? How far did you teleport us, beast?

DISPLACER (V.O.)

We are at the set destination.

ALAN

And where is that?

DISPLACER (V.O.)

Coordinates four six A one L ten--

ALAN

Never mind.

EXT. GRASSY VALLEY - DAY

Beck rides up to the Displacer and dismounts.

BECK

My name is Mister Beck. We'll wait until nightfall to transport your weapons shipment to Fort Lincoln, otherwise we risk the displacer being seen.

When there is no response he continues.

BECK

The troops have completed training with the first weapons shipment. With your shipment they'll be fully equipped for the event change.

He stands there, waiting.

INTERCUT - DISPLACER/GRASSY VALLEY

ALAN

What am I supposed to do, beast?

DISPLACER (V.O.)

I have no answer to that question.

BECK

Is something wrong?

The Displacer projects a distorted version of Alan's voice.

ALAN (V.O.)
Everything is fine, Mister Beck.
Where is Fort Lincoln?

Beck points back the way he came.

ALAN (V.O.)
What can you tell me about the
"event change"?

BECK
You don't know? Then who are...?

He turns and scrambles back onto his horse.

ALAN
Oh, crap. Get him, beast!

EXT. GRASSY VALLEY - DAY

Beck's horse wheels and bolts off.

The Displacer steps forward on its massive chicken legs.
It reaches out its tentacles, which narrow as they extend.

The tentacles whip around Beck and drag him from his mount.
They hold him in the air with his arms pinned to his sides.

Alan drops through the Displacer's osmotic door and wrings
the sleeve of his sopping fatigues. He draws his pistol
and approaches Beck.

Alan fails to notice as a gray pseudopod oozes out from
under Beck's shirt and over the grip of his revolver.

BECK
Who are you?

ALAN
I'll ask the questions. Tell me
about the "event change."

BECK
You can't stop it. We have enough
weapons and ammunition from the
first shipment to complete it.

ALAN

To complete what?

Beck's pseudopod draws his revolver and fires. The bullet grazes Alan's arm.

Alan cries out and fires six rounds wildly at Beck. Two rounds manage to hit Beck's torso.

Beck's face distorts as his skull collapses in his head. His body deforms as his skeleton rapidly dissolves.

His flesh pulls away as the liquefying skeleton pours onto the grass, along with most of his clothing and the guns.

INT. DISPLACER

Alan clammers back inside and touches the body cavity wall.

ALAN

Kill it, beast!

He breaks contact and rolls over to inspect his arm. Blood trickles from where Beck's bullet grazed him.

The Displacer's tentacles push up through the main osmotic door. The writhing amoeba hangs in its grip.

ALAN

What are you doing? Don't bring it in here!

The tentacles feed the amoeba into the second osmotic door.

A moment later, a gooey alien brain sloshes into one of the two empty sacs.

Alan turns away from the revolting sight. He looks at the pistol in his hand. His face twists with grief.

ALAN

Dan...I can't do this alone.

He curls up against the wall and shakes with silent tears.

DISPLACER (V.O.)

Who is Dan?

Alan notices his hand is in contact with the wall.

ALAN

M-My brother. The fetches killed him. He was all the family I had left. I don't know what to do....

He wipes away his tears and takes a deep breath.

ALAN

Beast, do you think Mister Beck's "event change" has anything to do with the incursion Braxon wants repaired?

DISPLACER (V.O.)

I have no answer to that question.

ALAN

Great. What do you know?

DISPLACER (V.O.)

Clarify. More specificity needed.

ALAN

Are you even intelligent? I mean, are you sentient, like a person?

DISPLACER (V.O.)

Negative.

ALAN

Great. So you're basically like a talking help file?

DISPLACER (V.O.)

Affirmative.

ALAN

Can you at least speak less mechanically? You sound like a computer with the volume turned up to eleven.

The Displacer's voice takes on a human-like modulation.

DISPLACER (V.O.)

Yes. Yeah. Sure. Uh-huh. I can identify and use speech patterns drawn from your mind if you wish.

ALAN

Good. Do that. And can you use a voice that's a bit less deafening?

The Displacer's voice switches to sound just like Dan.

DISPLACER (V.O.)

Sure, bro. Although technically I can't be deafening, since my speech goes directly to your mind, not through your auditory system.

ALAN

No! Don't use Dan's voice!

The voice changes to that of MYRA, a shy young woman with a soft southern accent.

MYRA (V.O.)

I'm sorry. Is this better, Alan?

ALAN

Much. Thank you. Now it looks like we need to go to Fort Lincoln, but you'll be seen if you walk around during daylight. If you can teleport, can you also turn invisible or something?

MYRA (V.O.)

Sorry, no I can't.

Alan's gaze drifts to the nearby Scout. He thinks, then cocks his head as realization dawns. He concentrates.

The Scout stands up on its bird-like legs.

SCOUT'S POV

The Scout observes Alan with the same fisheye lens distortion as the Displacer. Alan waves at the Scout.

EXT. GRASSY VALLEY - DAY

The Scout drops out from under the Displacer. It scurries off through the grass like a chicken toward Fort Lincoln.

The sun hangs lower in the sky.

INT. DISPLACER

Alan shakes his head in awe.

ALAN

How far can this scout critter go
and still stay in contact, beast?

MYRA (V.O.)

Ninety-seven thousand miles.

ALAN

Wow. Wait a sec...it's afternoon?
Are we in Australia?

MYRA (V.O.)

I have no answer to that question.

ALAN

You're about as helpful as most
help files, you know that?

MYRA (V.O.)

Thank you.

ALAN

That wasn't a...never mind.

EXT. HILL ABOVE FORT LINCOLN - DAY

The Scout crests the hill. It looks down on a group of low
wood buildings clustered near the shore of a broad river.

To one side lies an improvised shooting range near a row of
large canvas military tents.

Men in blue Union uniforms shoot M16s and M60s at a line of
paper targets. Faint popping sounds reach the Scout.

Sergeant Tyson, helmet removed and revealing a Mohawk
haircut, calls out instructions as he walks behind the
shooters in his desert fatigues.

MR. LAGOS and a HUSKY BUSINESSMAN in business suits watch.

The Scout turns and scurries back down the hill.

EXT. GRASSY VALLEY - DAY

The Scout trots past Alan on its way back to the Displacer.

Alan sits on the toppled trunk of a long-dead tree 90' from the Displacer. He wears only his boxer shorts.

The rest of his clothing hangs on the bare branches to dry in the late afternoon sun.

Alan draws his pistol and inspects it.

DAN (V.O.)

You don't quit when you're only
half done, Alan.

Alan loads the pistol exactly the way Dan showed him.

He properly aims at a distant rock and squeezes off a shot. He misses. He tries again and blasts a chunk off the rock.

DAN (V.O.)

You were the smart one, the one
who could really do something with
your life. And I wanted to help
make that happen.

Alan smiles sadly. He picks up Beck's M16 and inspects it.

EXT. HILL ABOVE FORT LINCOLN - NIGHT

The Displacer strides across the starlit prairie. It comes to a halt behind the grassy hill.

Alan drops out of the Displacer and climbs to the top of the hill. He carries Beck's M16.

Several campfires glow in the fort below.

EXT. FORT LINCOLN SHOOTING RANGE - NIGHT

Alan cautiously approaches the row of tents.

TYSON (O.S.)

Spank night for a walk, ain't it?

Alan jumps. Sergeant Tyson steps from a tent as he lights a cigar. His two-barreled M51 hangs down his back.

TYSON
From your milskins, I'm guessing
you're with the new shipment.

ALAN
Er...milskins?

TYSON
Military skins. Your uniform.

ALAN
Oh. Right. Yeah, I just arrived.

TYSON
Good, that'll finish squaring out
the rest of the troops.

He saunters over and extends a hand.

TYSON
My tag's sergeant Brad Tyson.
Welcome to Fort Lincoln.

He notices Alan's rank and smoothly switches to a salute.

TYSON
Oh, sir. Sorry.

Alan forces a smile and returns the salute.

ALAN
Lieutenant Wesson.

TYSON
They said you'd be staging from
two thousand six, but from your
milskins I'm guessing you stage
from way earlier. I'm from twenty
twenty-four myself.

Alan chuckles, then sees Tyson isn't joking.

ALAN
You don't mean the year twenty
twenty-four, do you?

TYSON
Ayfirm, I do. The Travelers saved
my ass from a flameout in Iran.

Alan stares, slack-jawed. Tyson grins.

TYSON
 This your first time trip?
 Flashbangs the brain, don't it?
 What year are you from?

ALAN
 I'm from...from two thousand six.
 This is really twenty twenty-four?

Tyson laughs.

TYSON
 Neg, sir. It's eighteen seventy-
 six. Didn't they tell ya?

Alan breathes out in amazement.

ALAN
 Eighteen seventy-six....

TYSON
 Ayfirm. The Travelers brought me
 here to quip up and train the
 Seventh Cav for the event change.

ALAN
 What event change?

TYSON
 You remember Custer's Last Stand?

ALAN
 You mean Crazy Horse's Last Stand.

Tyson frowns, then realization dawns and he grins.

TYSON
 That must be the tweaked timeline
 you remember! Means we succeeded.
 Or will succeed. Whatever.
 Custer x-ed it in the original
 timeline. We're using battletech
 from our century to make sure he
 powns the fight.

ALAN
 Why do that?

TYSON

The Travelers told me he'll have a genius kid who creates a civicorp that advances society by decades! Gotta tell ya, it's spank to be fighting a war that I know will do some good in the world.

ALAN

Oh, wow....

TYSON

Flashbangs the brain, eh? So let's go help make it happen, sir. I got horses and a wagon ready to hump your shipment into camp.

Alan thinks hurriedly.

ALAN

Ah, no, sergeant. General Frost needs to talk with you first.

TYSON

A general? I'm sure he'll want a milchat with Mister Lagos, not me.

ALAN

No, you're the perfect person to talk to. Let's go, sergeant.

TYSON

Ayfirm, sir.

Alan and Tyson walk toward the distant hill.

TYSON

Can't say I look forward to seeing the soulburner again. That thing stims the barfer.

ALAN

Soulburner?

TYSON

The displacer. It's what I call it on account that it needs to eat people. Creeps me out.

ALAN

People? I saw it eat grass.

TYSON

Ayfirm, it can gut down anything to live. But to make a jump, it's gotta eat a living person's brain.

ALAN

A live brain?

TYSON

Ayfirm. It uses it to make the complex calcs to teleport through time. Burns that brain right up, too. Stims the barfer, I tell ya.

Alan looks queasy. Then he notices Tyson looking him over.

ALAN

Is something wrong, sergeant?

TYSON

Uh, sorry, sir. It's just that...your milskins look kinda oldfash for two thousand six.

ALAN

It's what the Eighty-Second Airborne Division wears.

TYSON

Huh. I thought those olive drabs were decommished in the eighties. And since you're from the advance-tweaked timeline, I'd expect your milskins to be later tech, not earlier tech.

ALAN

Well, maybe there were more important changes to my timeline than military gear.

TYSON

Maybe. You guys got nanotech yet?

ALAN
What's that?

TYSON
You haven't even heard of it?

Alan shrugs.

TYSON
You got smart phones, right?

ALAN
I don't think so.

TYSON
Hmm. Your computers ain't still using C.R.T. monitors, are they?

ALAN
There's another kind?

Tyson gives a disturbed frown.

TYSON
None of this tracks right if society's sposed to plus tech by decades....

ALAN
Maybe the changes are social?

TYSON
Maybe. Ya got same-sex marriage yet?

ALAN
Uh, no. President Robertson stopped it.

TYSON
President who?

ALAN
Robertson. He got Congress to make gay marriage illegal.

TYSON
Illegal? This can't be happening!

ALAN

What's wrong?

TYSON

What's wrong? I've been happily married for five years! Now you're spilling that when I get home, me and Jamal won't be hitched no more? That ain't spank, man, that just ain't spank!

LAGOS (O.S.)

Sergeant Tyson!

Tyson and Alan turn. Mr. Lagos hurries to catch up.

TYSON

(softly, to Alan)

He heads up the Travelers.

LAGOS

Where are you going, sergeant?

TYSON

Gonna help the lieutenant here with the shipment.

LAGOS

So the displacer is here? Where is Mister Beck? He was supposed to meet you and report back to me.

ALAN

I've no idea. Nobody met us.

LAGOS

I see. That is...unfortunate.

He studies Alan.

LAGOS

I wasn't informed anyone new would arrive with the shipment.

ALAN

We ran into...complications. I should let General Frost explain.

LAGOS
General Frost is here?

ALAN
He is. Let me show you to him.

Alan continues walking. When Tyson and Lagos follow, he breathes a small sigh of relief.

EXT. HILL ABOVE FORT LINCOLN - NIGHT

Alan, Tyson and Lagos crest the hill. Alan drops back as the other two approach the Displacer.

Alan raises his M16 and fires a burst into Lagos's back.

Tyson turns and reflexively fires a burst from his M51. One bullet hits Alan in the side. He collapses.

Tyson stares down the sights as Alan struggles to breathe.

ALAN
D-Don't shoot! The Travelers...
aren't human! L-Look....

Tyson glances over and does a double-take. He sees Lagos' flesh oozing away from his melting skeleton.

ALAN
Th-They're not here to change
Earth's history for the better.
They're here to destroy us.

They watch as the amoeba morphs into a rock.

TYSON
This can't be happening....

ALAN
It is happening, s-sergeant. And
I need you to stop them. I can't
do it m-myself.

Tyson grimaces with revulsion.

ALAN
Tyson?

TYSON

I'm not giving up five years of marriage and my iWatch VR for no suxor shapeshifting monsters. What do ya need me to do, sir?

Only now does he notice the blood soaking Alan's side.

TYSON

Sir! You're perfed! Oh, smeg, I shot ya!

He kneels down and checks the wound.

ALAN

How bad is it?

TYSON

I seen worse shroompaths. But we don't got any real medtech here.

Distant shouts carry from Fort Lincoln.

TYSON

They heard the leadslinging.

ALAN

H-Help me into the displacer.

INT. DISPLACER

Tyson gently carries Alan through the osmotic door.

Gasping in pain, Alan places his hands on the inner wall.

ALAN

B-Beast, eat that amoeba-creature before it gets away.

The tentacles feed the amoeba through the second osmotic door. Its brain sloshes into the last remaining empty sac.

ALAN

Why didn't y-you tell me you can teleport through time!

MYRA (V.O.)

You didn't ask.

Tyson takes a packet from a pocket and sprinkles powder into Alan's wound. The bleeding quickly stops.

ALAN

Th-Thanks, Tyson.

TYSON

That'll weaksauce the pain, too.
But you need real medtech.
Or...maybe we can time trip back
and stop me from perfing you?

Alan stares in surprise as the implication settles in.

ALAN

Oh, wow, of course! But...I think
I have a better idea. Exactly
when did you arrive in this time?

TYSON

Two weeks ago. June eighth, right
at noon. Same exact spot where
they said you would arrive.

ALAN

That's perfect! I'll tell you the
plan in a sec. But first...

He puts both hands on the wall and concentrates.

MYRA (V.O.)

Destination accepted.

ALAN

Energize.

MYRA (V.O.)

What?

ALAN

I mean...go to set destination.

EXT. GRASSY VALLEY - DAY

The sun hangs directly over the grassy valley.

The Displacer abruptly appears. It turns and stalks over a nearby hill and out of view.

Tyson walks back over the hill, carrying Alan in his arms.

Tyson gently places Alan behind the dead tree trunk. He then crouches beside Alan and readies his M51.

ALAN

Are you sure you can hit them from this range?

TYSON

Does the Hoffstetter flamecheck?

ALAN

Uh...what?

TYSON

It means ayfirm.

ALAN

When this is all over, Tyson, you've got to tell me what things are like in your time.

TYSON

If this undoes what the fetches did, you'll have some spank changes even in your decade.

ALAN

The only spank change I'd want is for my brother to still be alive.

His eyes go wide with realization.

ALAN

Wait...if we can undo what the fetches did to Custer...then we can undo what they did to Dan!

TYSON

Makes sense to me. I'd be amped to help ya save your...

The Displacer suddenly appears in the same spot as before.

Alan and Tyson peek over the log.

Earlier Tyson drops out from under the Displacer with a crate in his arms. He looks around in awe.

One by one, four men in business suits drop from the Displacer: Mr. Beck, Mr. Lagos, the Husky Businessman and a BALD BUSINESSMAN. Each carries a crate.

They stack the crates nearby and return for more, unloading explosives, ammo boxes, M16s and M240 machine guns.

After the last trip, Bald Businessman returns to the Displacer. It abruptly vanishes.

The businessmen converse. One points toward Fort Lincoln.

ALAN

Whenever you're ready, Tyson.

Later Tyson rests his M51 on the tree and takes aim. He fires three short, ripping bursts.

All three businessmen jerk and collapse. Earlier Tyson dives behind the crates.

Later Tyson stands up and waves.

LATER TYSON

Yo, Tyson! It's me! I'm you!

Earlier Tyson stands and opens fire.

Bullets chew up the tree. Later Tyson grabs his side.

LATER TYSON

You motherfu--

He reflexively fires a grenade from his M51.

ALAN

No! You could kill yourse--

The grenade hits the crates. A massive explosion tears apart Earlier Tyson and the amoeba-creatures.

Alan stares in shock as Later Tyson suddenly transforms into a blown-up, rotting corpse.

SERIES OF SHOTS - TIME REVERSES AT HIGH SPEED

-- The exploding crates reassemble themselves.

- The Displacer walks backward into the valley and vanishes.
- Alan's M16 sucks bullets out of Mr. Lagos's back.
- Alan and Tyson meet by the tents near Fort Lincoln.
- The Displacer strides backward across the prairie.
- The Scout backs away from the hill over Fort Lincoln.
- The amoeba forms into Mr. Beck, and Alan's pistol sucks bullets out of him.
- Beck rides his horse backwards out of the valley.

INT. DISPLACER

Alan lies on his back looking up at the four sacs hanging from the ceiling. Only two sacs contain brains now.

He scrambles to his feet and looks himself over. His fatigues are soaking wet again.

He checks his arm and his stomach. No bullet wounds.

ALAN

Whoa...

The Displacer's tentacles enter through the osmotic door as it feeds itself clumps of prairie grass.

Alan presses his hands to the body cavity wall.

EXT. GRASSY VALLEY - DISPLACER'S POV - DAY

The afternoon sun shines down on a broad, shallow valley filled with prairie grass.

A two-week-old crater remains where the crates exploded.

INT. DISPLACER

Alan frowns in confusion.

ALAN

Beast...what happened?

MYRA (V.O.)

You created an unsustainable paradox. Time rewound back to the point where the paradox could resolve itself.

ALAN

Then where...when are we?

MYRA (V.O.)

Back when we first arrived in this valley.

ALAN

Tyson blew up the Travelers. He killed Mister Beck two weeks ago ...so Beck couldn't show up to meet us today...right?

MYRA (V.O.)

Sounds right to me.

ALAN

Then...we succeeded, didn't we? We undid the altered history and fixed the incursion!

His elated grin turns into an uncertain frown.

ALAN

Wait, if history was undone...why do I still remember what happened?

MYRA (V.O.)

A time traveler's mind apparently retains his original memories even if the timeline is changed.

ALAN

Oh. Why is that?

MYRA (V.O.)

I have no answer to that question.

ALAN

Great. At least I managed to fix Agent Braxon's incursion problem. What can you tell me about her?

MYRA (V.O.)

What do you mean?

ALAN

Like where did she come from? And why did she hide you in that cave?

MYRA (V.O.)

Displacer pilots usually delete my mission memories, but Agent Braxton did not. I can show you my memory of her, if you like.

ALAN

Oh yes! Please.

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

INT. WAREHOUSE - DISPLACER'S POV - DAY

The Displacer's fisheye lens reveals a large, dusty room with dirty windows in the peaked 30' ceiling.

Four M16-armed soldiers in fatigues stand about the room. MR. LEE, in a business suit, reads forms at a desk.

LIEUTENANT VAUGHN, wearing fatigues and a pistol at his side, enters and approaches Lee.

VAUGHN

The mission is verified. Now that we have the general, we can obtain additional weapons from Fort Ord.

LEE

Good. Has the general found--

Glass shatters as Agent Braxton leaps in through one of the ceiling windows.

As she drops through the air, she draws her futuristic pistol and fires four hissing rounds.

Brown guts explode out the backs of the M16-armed soldiers.

Braxton lands on her feet with catlike grace.

Vaughn draws his pistol, but Braxon fires before he takes aim. He crashes to the ground.

Both the amoebas and the skeletons of all five fetches quiver and melt as they die.

Braxon stares at the Displacer.

BRAXON

It's even uglier than I'd
imagined.

Mr. Lee reaches for Vaughn's pistol. Braxon raises her weapon and he pauses.

BRAXON

You're going to pilot the
displacer for me.

LEE

I will not.

Braxon strides over to him. She touches a small device of crystal and metal to the side of his face. It hums.

Lee stiffens and trembles. The flesh where the device touches him briefly warps and turns translucent gray.

BRAXON

That was set to ten percent.
Shall I increase it to twenty?

LEE

I will pilot the displacer.

BRAXON

That's what I said.

She grabs Lee and shoves him toward the Displacer.

LEE

You are not a human.

BRAXON

I'm an enhanced human.

LEE

Then you cannot be from this time
period. You are from the future.

BRAAXON

Smart fetch.

LEE

Why do you need the displacer? If you can travel through time--

BRAAXON

Our technology is still new, unreliable and limited to a one-way trip. That will now change.

INT. DISPLACER - SCOUT'S POV

Mr. Lee and Braxon enter through the osmotic door. Four sacs hanging from the ceiling contain human brains.

Braxon holds her crystal device against Lee's face. He presses his hands against the body cavity wall.

LEE

The destination is currently set to eighteen seventy-six.

BRAAXON

Why?

LEE

Only an overseer would know.

Braxon waves her hand. A hologram of a gray building in a sunbaked courtyard under a polluted sky appears in the air.

BRAAXON

Set the location to this image, October fifth, twenty forty-two.

LEE

I cannot. The displacer and I are from this time period. Nothing can displace into its own future.

Braxon's device hums. Lee trembles and his face distorts.

LEE

I speak the truth!

The humming stops and Lee recovers.

BRAXON

That means I am stranded in this time. How long can the displacer survive without food or water?

LEE

It can shut down all non-essential functions and survive for at least sixty-three of your years.

BRAXON

That long? Change of plan, then.

She waves her hand again. An image of the cave and its subterranean pool appears in the air.

BRAXON

Set the location to this image.
Use the current time.

Lee concentrates. He then nods at Braxon.

BRAXON

Send us to the set destination.

Brief blackness.

Braxon drags Lee to his feet and touches her device to Lee's face. Only three sacs now contain brains.

BRAXON

Set the destination back to where it was in eighteen seventy-six.

Lee concentrates.

LEE

It is done. Why are we here?

BRAXON

This cavern is currently under a military base, so you fetches can't simply dig down to it. And it's accessible only through a tunnel that's filled with sea water.

Lee flinches and Braxon gives him a cold smile.

BRAXON

A few decades from now, my younger self will be the first person to discover this cave. The displacer will be here waiting for me. We will reverse engineer it and use it to alter your history so that you never leave your planet.

LEE

Never. This is our universe.

BRAXON

If only you could learn to share.

LEE

Would you willingly share your body with a cancerous infection?

BRAXON

That's an overly dramatic metaphor, don't you think?

LEE

On the contrary. If we allowed you to live, you would eventually spread throughout the universe.

BRAXON

I still seek an overseer. If you can tell me where to find one, you don't have to go for a swim.

LEE

An overseer? I know where my overseer will soon be. I can send the displacer to that location.

BRAXON

I won't risk losing it. The displacer stays in this cave. We'll leave through the tunnel.

LEE

No! The hypertonic ocean water will desiccate my flesh!

Braxon pulls a large black plastic bag from a pocket.

BRAXON

You'd better hope this doesn't
leak.

END OF FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Alan blinks and regains focus.

ALAN

Wow, Braxon is amazing! And she's
so beautiful....

MYRA (V.O.)

You really think she's beautiful?

ALAN

Of course. I just wish she hadn't
died. She could really help...

He blinks with sudden realization.

ALAN

Braxon died in that house at
twenty-one-o-five hours on
September first, two thousand and
six...I know where and when she
died! If I can warn her before
she gets shot...

MYRA (V.O.)

I thought you wanted to save Dan.

ALAN

I do! But...I don't want what
happened to Tyson to happen to him
too. That incredible Agent Braxon
knows time travel better than we
do. If we save her first, surely
she can help us safely rescue Dan!
What do you think, beast?

MYRA (V.O.)

Stop callin' me that!

ALAN

Uh...what?

MYRA (V.O.)

Stop callin' me beast. Please.

Alan ponders for a moment.

ALAN

You're not just a help file, are you?

Myra sighs.

MYRA (V.O.)

No. My name is Myra Alvarez. I'm a twenty-year-old college student from Sanford, North Carolina.

ALAN

You...what?

MYRA (V.O.)

A year and a half ago, the fetches grabbed me off a bus. They fed me and four others to the displacer.

Alan looks up at the two brain-filled sacs.

MYRA (V.O.)

No, neither of them is me. I'm...somewhere inside the displacer's brain.

ALAN

Oh, wow. How did that happen?

MYRA (V.O.)

I don't rightly know. The fetches didn't do any teleportin' for over a year when my brain was the last one left. Somehow it must've gradually copied my mind into its own brain, because when the displacer teleported again and used up my brain...I just kept right on thinkin'.

ALAN

Wow. That's just...wow. Why didn't you tell me sooner, Myra?

Myra hesitates.

MYRA (V.O.)

I haven't talked with anyone for a long, long time, Alan. I was used to hidin' from the fetches. When you started talkin' to me like a person instead of a machine, I began rememberin' who I am...was. I started replyin' back to you.

Alan smiles.

ALAN

I'm glad you did. I needed someone to talk to. But why didn't you just teleport away from the fetches long ago?

MYRA (V.O.)

I can't. The displacer only takes orders through the neurochemical bridge, not from within itself. I can't control its actions at all.

ALAN

Oh. Well, what if I do this?

He concentrates.

MYRA (V.O.)

W-What did you just do?

ALAN

I ordered the displacer to take orders from you. Did it work?

The Displacer's tentacles push up through the osmotic door. They wave in the air as if doing a little dance.

MYRA (V.O.)

That's...all it took? Oh my god-- Alan, thank you, thank you!

The tentacles embrace Alan in a bear hug.

ALAN

Uh, you're welcome. Careful, you're stronger than you think!

The tentacles let go and slide back out.

MYRA (V.O.)

Sorry. You don't know what this means to me. I've been a prisoner in here for so long....

ALAN

Glad I could help. And there may be another way I can help you too.

MYRA (V.O.)

Oh? How?

ALAN

Maybe we could go back and stop the fetches before they took you. We'd need someone competent like Dan or Braxton to help, but...

MYRA (V.O.)

They would do that for me?

ALAN

Of course! We're going to save their lives...they'll owe us!

He shakes water from his dripping sleeve.

ALAN

But first I'd better clean up.

EXT. GRASSY VALLEY - DAY

Alan wears only boxer shorts. He lies on the dead tree trunk, his eyes closed as he soaks up the afternoon sun.

His clothes hang from the bare branches as they dry in the sun. The pistol belt also hangs from a branch.

The Displacer settles down next to Alan.

EXT. FETCH SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

The road is empty, the house dark and quiet.

The Displacer abruptly appears on the road. It turns and stalks off into the forest.

Alan walks out from the trees, his clothes now dry. He jogs up the steps up to the house and tries the front door. Locked. He heads around back.

He picks up a rock and heaves it through a window. He reaches through the hole and unlocks the window.

INT. FETCH SAFE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alan enters from a hallway and looks around at all the furniture covered with dust sheets.

The growl of a car engine reaches his ears. He ducks into a closet and leaves it open just a crack.

Braxon and Mr. Lee enter through the front door.

BRAXON

Take a seat. Tell me, why is your overseer coming here?

Lee removes a sheet from a couch and sits down.

LEE

This is one of our safe houses.

Alan watches Braxon's mesmerizing curves.

ALAN

(whispers)

Damn....

Braxon spins looks directly at the closet doors.

ALAN

Oh, crap.

Braxon leaps to the doors and yanks them open. She points the muzzle of her sleek weapon at Alan's terrified face.

BRAXON

Who are you and why are you here?

ALAN

I-I'm Alan Mc-McBride. I...I'm--

BRAXON

You're too scared to be a fetch.

ALAN

I...I'm here to save your life.

BRAXON

Good start. Explain.

ALAN

Uh, your prisoner's going to shoot you soon. You'll die at exactly twenty-one-o-five hours.

BRAXON

My prisoner kills me? Not likely.

ALAN

All I know is that he shoots you through the eye. You leave a message with your add-brain but the fetches get to it first.

BRAXON

My eye? That could do it. But how does my prisoner acquire a--

Alan sees Lee yank a machine pistol from under the couch.

ALAN

Watch out!

Lee fires on full automatic as he bolts for the stairs.

Braxon shields Alan with her body. Bullets bounce off her back and clatter to the floor. She barely flinches.

ALAN

Oh my god! He shot you!

BRAXON

I'm fine. You know the future but you're not a fetch and you're not from Historical Repair. Explain.

ALAN

Uh, he's getting aw--

BRAXON

I can still hear him. I'm more interested in your explanation.

ALAN

Oh. Okay...I found your message too, and I got to the displacer before the fetches did. I sent it to eighteen seventy-six and--

BRAXON

You sent it? You can access the fetch neurochemical interface?

ALAN

Uh, yeah. Can't you?

BRAXON

No. My enhancements. Continue.

ALAN

Well, I learned that the fetches were trying to destroy humanity by changing the future.

BRAXON

They can't defeat us militarily, so they alter our history so we destroy ourselves in the future.

ALAN

But how did they know that killing Custer would--

BRAXON

The observer effect. Humans disconnected from their normal place in the timeline retain their original memories. Disconnected fetches, however, can instead see the consequences that any changes to the timeline would generate. And all fetches are disconnected.

She pauses and cocks her head.

BRAXON

My prisoner's up to something. Follow me. Keep a safe distance.

She heads for the stairs. As her foot touches the first step, she hears a faint click and an electronic whine.

With inhuman speed and agility, she leaps backward, grabs Alan, and hauls him down behind the couch.

An explosive blast rips the stairs to splinters.

Braxon calmly stands and looks at the razed stairs.

BRAXON

Fetches live for complexity and manipulation. It figures he would bring me to a booby-trapped house.

ALAN

Y-Your enhancements are amazing!

BRAXON

You think so? In my original timeline, I had an even more capable fully robotic body.

ALAN

Really? What happened to it?

BRAXON

I was our first time travel test subject, so I was already disconnected from my proper place in the timeline when the Custer incursion impacted my time. I suddenly found myself wearing this obsolete cybernetic body. Nobody else noticed history change, but due to the observer effect, I retained my original memories.

ALAN

Well, at least you don't have to worry about that anymore. I fixed the Custer incursion for you.

BRAXON

No, you didn't.

ALAN

Uh...what?

Braxon scoops Alan up in her arms, leaps at a wall, kicks off, and lands on the second floor landing.

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Braxon sets Alan down. He wobbles on unsteady feet.

ALAN

Some warning would have been nice!

BRAXON

For you, perhaps.

ALAN

Wait, you said I didn't fix the Custer incursion, but I--

BRAXON

If you had succeeded, I would have my robot body back. The fetches must have had a plan B in place.

ALAN

I failed? Why didn't you just fix the incursion yourself?

Braxon heads down the hallway. Alan trails after her.

BRAXON

Unfortunately, our technology can't send us back that far. But a captured fetch in my time revealed there is an overseer in this time period. An overseer could reveal when the fetches first arrived on Earth. With both a displacer and an overseer--

ALAN

--you could stop the fetches back then and undo every change they've made to the timeline since!

Braxon gives him an approving smile.

BRAXON

Exactly. Unfortunately, I won't succeed. I'll be dead soon.

ALAN

What? But I just saved you from--

A trapdoor drops beneath Braxon's feet.

She thrusts her hands against the two walls of the hallway, catching herself from falling into a tray of blue acid.

Alan gawks as she calmly steps across to the opposite side.

BRAXON

Unfortunately, if your mind dies while you are disconnected from your proper place in the timeline, your death is permanent.

ALAN

But I stopped you from being shot!

BRAXON

Nevertheless, I will still drop dead, from no apparent cause, at the exact same moment I would have died if you hadn't interfered. Changing history can't undo that.

She heads toward two closed doorways along the right wall.

Alan cautiously steps around the edge of the trapdoor.

ALAN

So...I've accomplished nothing?

BRAXON

Not nothing, Mister McBride. You stopped the bullet from damaging my brain, so I won't be foolish enough to leave a message the fetches can find.

ALAN

So...the fetches won't know where you hid the displacer. They'll have no reason to hire Dan and me!

Braxon opens the first door, revealing a tasteful bedroom.

BRAXON

Correct. My younger self will discover the cave regardless. She'll find the displacer and figure out what to do with it.

A panel in the opposite wall of the bedroom pops open and four shotgun barrels fire simultaneously.

Braxon covers her eyes with her arm. Buckshot bounces off her, pattering everywhere.

ALAN

Braxon!

BRAXON

These deterrents aren't built for someone like me.

She walks down to the next door. She pauses and frowns.

BRAXON

Something's wrong. I've already decided not to record the message. That decision should have caused time to reverse by now. Since it hasn't, something will interfere.

She looks at Alan suspiciously.

BRAXON

Do you know something that might cause me to change my mind?

ALAN

Umm...no.

Braxon inspects the door. It's made of solid steel.

She lightly touches the metal. A spark of electricity zaps her fingertip.

ALAN

Wait...exactly when will your younger self find that cave?

BRAXON

August twenty-fourth, twenty thirty-five, shortly after noon. On a swim during my lunch hour.

ALAN

Oh, no. Braxon, the displacer was starving to death when I found it.

BRAXON

Starving? Are you certain?

ALAN

Yes. I don't think it would have lasted a few weeks, much less a few decades.

BRAXON

And I thought my prisoner couldn't successfully lie to me....

She grabs the handle, shrugging off the electricity that courses through her body. The door is locked.

BRAXON

Change of plan. Do you know of a place to hide the displacer where nobody will find it?

ALAN

Uh...my brother's warehouse office is big enough and secluded enough, but--

BRAXON

That will have to do.

She turns and heads back to the...

BEDROOM

Alan follows and cautiously looks in from the doorway.

ALAN

Wait, you want me to take care of the displacer?

Braxon scans the bedroom.

BRAXON

Memorize the following: Braxon one-four-three. It's a "virtual I.D.," something that will make sense to you in a few years.

ALAN

Braxon one-four-three.

BRAXON

Contact me at that I.D. on April twenty-first, twenty thirty-two, and explain everything to me. I'll take the displacer off your hands then. Is that clear?

She picks up a heavy dresser and shoves it through the wall separating this room from the next.

FAMILY ROOM

Braxon emerges through the hole in the wall. She scans the large room cluttered with sheet-covered furniture.

Alan climbs through behind her.

ALAN

That's twenty-six years from now!

BRAXON

Correct. Now I need you to teleport back to the moment just before you teleported here. You need to convince your earlier self not to interfere with my death.

ALAN

Huh? Why?

BRAXON

Because for this plan to work, everything must occur exactly as it did before you arrived here.

ALAN

But...my brother died, Braxon. I came here to ask you to help me undo his death.

BRAXON

The fate of our civilization depends on fixing the damage the fetches have caused. And that means getting the displacer to my time so we have an effective means of going back and undoing the damage.

She puts a hand on Alan's shoulder.

BRAXON

As you've made me aware, I've sacrificed my life in order to make that happen. I'm sorry, Mister McBride...Alan...but your sacrifice is your brother.

Behind her stands a sheeted lamp. Neither she nor Alan notice as a small area on the front of the sheet contorts.

ALAN

Please, there has to be some way--

Mr. Lee's machine pistol emerges from the contorting sheet.

Braxon abruptly turns and yanks the weapon away.

The white sheet loses its lamp-like form and flows away from the skeleton-creature beneath.

The skeleton lunges at Braxon with its clawed hands and tooth-filled maw.

Braxon dodges and fires her pistol into the skeleton's chest. Brown guts blast out its back.

The fetch drops to the floor and shudders violently.

BRAXON

Time travel is complex and dangerous, Mister McBride. You're not a chronologist and you're not a front-line fighter. Your mind is not even from the original timeline, so this isn't your fight. Don't make any further changes. None. Is that clear?

Alan is too choked up to speak. He nods.

BRAXON

Good. Now go convince yourself not to come here. Take good care of the displacer, Alan. I'll see you in twenty-six years.

EXT. GRASSY VALLEY - DAY

A two-week-old crater remains where the crates exploded and killed Sergeant Tyson and the alien businessmen.

Alan wears only boxer shorts. He lies on the dead tree trunk, his eyes closed as he soaks up the afternoon sun.

His clothes hang from the bare branches as they dry in the sun. The pistol belt also hangs from a branch.

The Displacer settles down next to Alan.

The later version of the Displacer abruptly appears nearby.

Alan cries out and snatches up the pistol.

Later Alan's voice projects from the Later Displacer.

LATER ALAN (V.O.)

Relax, Alan, it's me...your future you! I'm coming out, so don't shoot. You don't want to do what Tyson did to himself....

Later Alan, fully dressed, drops from the Later Displacer.

EARLIER ALAN

Oh, this is weird. You're really me?

LATER ALAN

I'm no fetch, if that's what you mean. I'm just here to tell you not to try to save Agent Braxon.

EARLIER ALAN

Why not?

LATER ALAN

I could explain...but there's not much point. If you decide to teleport the displacer to Dan's office instead, that should undo our interfering with Braxon.

EARLIER ALAN

But how will I know what you--

LATER ALAN

You'll know. We're disconnected from the timeline, remember? We'll keep our memories.

EARLIER ALAN

Oh. But...what'll happen to you?

LATER ALAN

I...suppose I'll just cease to exist as soon as you make your decision, since your visit to Braxon will never happen.

EARLIER ALAN

That's scary. But okay, I'll teleport the displacer to Dan's--

SERIES OF SHOTS - TIME REVERSES AT HIGH SPEED

- The second Displacer vanishes from the grassy valley.
- The skeleton-creature leaps backward into its white sheet disguise. Braxon hands it its machine pistol.
- Splinters form into a staircase. Braxon leaps away from Alan and places a foot on the first step.
- Bullets fly from Braxon's back into Mr. Lee's revolver as he leaps back to the couch.
- Glass shards leap back into a single pane in the back window, and Alan catches the rock.
- The Displacer backs out of the forest. It vanishes.
- Alan stands next to the Displacer in the grassy valley. He strips off his dry clothing.

BACK TO SCENE

Alan stands in his boxer shorts beside the dead tree and the Displacer. His wide eyes stare without focus.

ALAN

Whoa....

He grabs up his dry fatigues and pulls them on.

INT. DISPLACER

Alan climbs aboard and touches the wall.

ALAN
I couldn't save her.

MYRA (V.O.)
I know. Your future self told me.

ALAN
Oh? Oh, right--your memories
updated too.

MYRA (V.O.)
Braxon didn't die in her proper
place in time...but your brother
did. You could still save him.

Alan sighs.

ALAN
No. Braxon said not to change
anything. I'm supposed to just
keep the displacer safely hidden
in Dan's office...for the next
twenty-six years.

He concentrates for a moment.

MYRA (V.O.)
Destination accepted.

ALAN
Go to set destination.

INT. DAN'S HOME OFFICE - DAY

The Displacer abruptly appears next to Dan's desk.

INT. DISPLACER

Alan sits up. One brain remains. He touches the wall.

MYRA (V.O.)
You're really not going to try to
rescue Dan?

ALAN
Braxon said it's dangerous.

MYRA (V.O.)
Fixin' the Custer incursion was
dangerous, but you did just fine.

ALAN
Sergeant Tyson did that, not me.

MYRA (V.O.)
He just pulled the trigger. You
figured out what had to be done.
You managed to do what no one else
could. You even gave me my
freedom back!

Alan smiles wanly.

ALAN
That last part wasn't difficult.

MYRA (V.O.)
But it meant so much to me, Alan!
I'd given up hope, but you
returned it to me. I owe you
everythin'. As far as I'm
concerned, you're a hero.

ALAN
Th-Thank you for saying that.

MYRA (V.O.)
No, thank you, Alan.

One of the Displacer's tentacles caresses Alan's face. The
other slides up the inside of his leg.

ALAN
Whoa!

He jumps to his feet. The tentacles recoil as if stung.
They slither back out the osmotic door.

Alan touches the wall again.

MYRA (V.O.)
Oh god, Alan, I'm sorry! I didn't
mean to...oh, god!

ALAN

Uh, it's okay, Myra.

MYRA (V.O.)

No, it's not! I just...I just felt close to you, and for a second I forgot that I'm a monster. I'm so sorry, Alan....

ALAN

The displacer is a monster. You're not.

MYRA (V.O.)

I am the displacer. I'm hideous.

ALAN

What you look like doesn't matter.

MYRA (V.O.)

It does if it keeps me from bein' close to someone! I'd give anythin' to look as beautiful as that Agent Braxon. I'd rather die than live like this....

ALAN

Don't talk like that, Myra. I'd rather spend the next twenty-six years with you than with Braxon.

MYRA (V.O.)

You're lyin'.

ALAN

I'm not. She's...kind of scary.

Myra manages a wry laugh.

MYRA (V.O.)

And I'm not?

ALAN

The displacer is scary, not you. I honestly enjoy being around you, Myra. I feel comfortable with you.

Myra is quiet for a moment.

MYRA (V.O.)

I actually used to be pretty. At least that's what people told me. I'd show you an image of me...but it's been so long, I've forgotten what I looked like. I can't even recall the faces of my family....

ALAN

I wish I could give that back to you...but even if Braxton had found the overseer, undoing everything would kill you. You didn't die in your proper place in the timeline.

MYRA (V.O.)

Agent Braxton was lookin' for an overseer? Why?

ALAN

They're the only ones who know when the fetches first arrived. If she could have stopped them back then, it would have undone every change they've made since.

MYRA (V.O.)

Alan...General Frost is an overseer.

ALAN

What?

MYRA (V.O.)

That's what the other fetches called him when I first saw him.

ALAN

Oh wow. Myra, do you realize what this means?

A pistol shot sounds from outside the office.

ALAN

Is that...gunfire?

Another shot fires.

INT. DAN'S HOME OFFICE - DAY

The phone on Dan's desk rings. One cordless handset recharges in its base, the second slot is empty.

INTERCUT - DAN'S HOME OFFICE/DISPLACER

ALAN

I'd better answer that. Myra,
would you mind?

A tentacle grabs up the handset and passes it up through the osmotic door to Alan.

Alan answers and hears a conversation already in progress:

DAN (V.O.)

...Private Investigations, Dan
speaking.

WEISS (V.O.)

Hello. Are you the Dan McBride
who worked for General Frost?

DAN (V.O.)

Yessir, I worked with General
Frost when I was with the Eighty-
Second Airborne. Why do you--

WEISS (V.O.)

I may have a job for you. Could
we meet at your office in ten
minutes?

DAN (V.O.)

Sure thing.

They hang up. Alan stares at the phone in astonishment.

ALAN

Oh no.... Myra, I think I set the
displacer's destination to when I
last remember being here. This is
the day Dan showed me how to
shoot. He and I are outside right
now--they'll be here any minute!
Quick, set the destination to the
same moment we left the cave....

He drops the handset through the osmotic door and glances at the one remaining brain.

MYRA (V.O.)

Wait, Alan. You know who the overseer is now. You can finish what Agent Braxton started!

ALAN

No, I can't. It would kill you.

MYRA (V.O.)

My brain was kept alive in that brain bag for over a year before it was destroyed. If everythin' is undone, I'll get to live out that year in my human body.

ALAN

But you won't remember any of this. You're a copy of Myra's mind, so undoing everything will mean you'll never have been made! Worse, after living that year, you'll just suddenly drop dead!

MYRA (V.O.)

I know, Alan. But much as I wouldn't mind spendin' the next twenty-six years with you...I want to be human and see my family again, even if it's just for a year. You gave me back my freedom. This is how I want to use it. And you'll see Dan again!

ALAN

But...Myra, are you sure you--

MYRA (V.O.)

I am. Please, let me do this.

Alan puts his hands on the wall and concentrates.

The front door opens and shaggy-haired Earlier Alan walks in holding his freshly-injured hand. He looks up and...

ALAN

Go to set destination now!

The Displacer vanishes. Earlier Alan back-pedals into Dan.

DAN

Alan, what the hell?

ALAN

Did you see that?!

DAN

See what?

ALAN

I thought I saw...something.

INT./EXT. MILITARY PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT

Earlier Alan talks as Dan drives with the headlights off.

DAN

An EpiPen? Quick thinking, bro.

ALAN

Well, the symptoms resembled
anaphylactic shock, so...

Approaching headlight beams filter through the trees.

Dan turns off the road into the forest and cuts the engine.

He and Alan watch as the Humvee with General Frost, Major Weiss and the Corporal drives down the road.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

The Humvee continues down the road from the safe house.

As the Humvee rounds a corner, its headlights wash across the Displacer standing in the middle of the road.

The Humvee brakes. Frost, Weiss and the Corporal climb out and approach the Displacer.

The Corporal carries his M16 at the ready. Grenades hang from his equipment belt.

FROST

So our attempt to recover the
displacer will succeed. Good.
But why did you bring it here?

Alan creeps out from hiding in the forest behind the three
soldiers. He takes careful aim with his pistol.

He fires two rounds into the Corporal's back, then shoots
frost and Weiss as they turn around. All three drop.

The skeleton-creatures shudder in their death throes, and
the amoebas ooze away to form into rocks and branches.

Alan pulls the M16 and grenades away from the gooey mess.

He then hurries to the Humvee and returns with the two
leathery bags containing orange squeeze bulbs.

He dumps one bag into the other and hands the empty bag to
the displacer's tentacles.

ALAN

Put General Frost in here for now.
Feed the others to the displacer.

The tentacles scoop one of the amoeba rocks into the bag.
They knot the bag, then reach for the other two amoebas.

INT. DISPLACER

Alan enters as amoeba brains slosh into two empty sacs.

He sets his watch timer for fifteen minutes. He sits down
and presses his hands against the wall.

ALAN

Okay. In fifteen minutes we'll
jump back in time fifteen minutes
and meet ourselves right now.

MYRA (V.O.)

I wish Braxon could see this. I
bet her head would explode.

ALAN

Nah. Short circuit, maybe....

Myra laughs.

LATER

The watch timer counts down to zero and goes off with a BEEP, BEEP, BEEP.

Alan turns it off. He touches the wall and concentrates.

ALAN
Go to set destination.

EARLIER

The Displacer stands on the road, illuminated by the headlights of the Humvee. The leathery bag with Frost's amoeba squirming inside it sits in the road.

A second Displacer suddenly appears next to the first.

The two Alans drop out from under their Displacers. They walk up to one another.

EARLIER ALAN
Oh, wow. I'm not sure I'll ever
get used to this.

LATER ALAN
I was thinking the exact same
thing. Come on, we've got fifteen
minutes to get this done.

Earlier Alan kneels and unties the leathery bag.

Frost's amoeba pseudopod raises a derringer out of the bag.

BLAM! Earlier Alan topples over, clutching his side.

Later Alan grabs his own side. A large blood stain already soaks his fatigues. His face instantly turns pale.

EARLIER AND LATER ALAN
God damn it, not again!

EARLIER AND LATER MYRA
Alan!

The Earlier Displacer's tentacles yank away the derringer.

EARLIER ALAN

I-I'm okay. He sh-shot you too?

LATER ALAN

It's the s-same injury, just fifteen minutes older. Time didn't r-rewind. I...I think it's because I'm still alive....

EARLIER ALAN

Was that gun s-stored inside him?

EARLIER AND LATER MYRA

We gotta get y'all to a hospital!

LATER ALAN

N-No! We have to go through with this or it'll screw up everything.

EARLIER ALAN

He's r-right. Go ahead. Do it.

Later Alan reaches into the bag and touches the amoeba. Vertigo blurs his vision. He blinks.

DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. ANCIENT ARMORY - NIGHT

Alan finds himself in the same dreamlike room with ancient armor on the walls and a Spartan sword on a stand.

He concentrates. A pistol appears in his hand. He smiles and quickly tucks it into the back of his fatigue pants.

General Frost steps from behind a stone pillar. He wears only a red tunic and leather sandals.

FROST

You are Dan McBride's brother. I did not expect to see you again.

Alan feigns wide-eyed wonder.

ALAN

W-Where am I? Am I dreaming?

FROST

Yes. Help me with my armor.

ALAN

Huh? Why should I? You shot me!

He holds his bloody side and sways unsteadily.

FROST

You're badly injured. Armor me
and I will heal you.

ALAN

Y-You can do that? Okay....

With difficulty, he fetches the skirted breastplate from the wall. He fits it into place over Frost's torso.

FROST

How did you acquire the displacer?

He gestures at the vambraces. Alan fetches the armor and straps it to Frost's arms.

ALAN

I'll tell you...but first I'd like
proof that you r-really are from a
different planet.

FROST

You've seen our true appearance.

ALAN

Yes...but you could be demons.

Frost chuckles. He gestures at the greaves. Alan fetches the armor and fits it to Frost's legs.

FROST

Would experiencing a memory of my
home world convince you?

ALAN

Y-You can share memories?

FROST

We can.

ALAN

Could you sh-show me when your
species first arrived on Earth?

FLASHBACK SEQUENCE - FROST'S POV

INT. DROP SHIP

Hazy smoke fills the large, red-lit room with fleshy walls.
A huge rectangular osmotic door fills one wall.

The crouched Displacer fills half the room.

A dozen scouting units that look identical to the Scout sit
quietly to one side next to a pile of leathery bags.

Nearby sits a pile of jelly-like eggs the size of melons.

Frost stands with three other fetches, all in humanoid form
with featureless, translucent-gray flesh.

The room shudders and the scouting units come to life.
Each grabs up a bag and scurries out the osmotic door.

The four fetches each gently pick up two eggs and carry
them through the osmotic door.

EXT. SHORE OF LAKE CAYUGA - NIGHT

A secluded, grassy clearing surrounded by forest.

The fetches carefully pile the eggs off to one side.

The scouting units run all over the area, picking up twigs,
leaves and other samples to stuff into their bags.

Frost observes the DROP SHIP. It resembles a giant version
of the Displacer, only without legs or tentacles.

The Displacer emerges through the Drop Ship's huge osmotic
door and walks over to the water's edge.

The fetch PILOT drops out from underneath the Displacer and
walks back to the Drop Ship.

The fetches take the last of the eggs from the Drop Ship.

At some invisible signal, the scouting units all turn and drag their bags back to the Drop Ship.

END OF FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Alan blinks and finds himself back in the stone room.

ALAN

Wait...what happened n-next?

Frost gestures at the helm. Alan takes it from the wall and fits it over Frost's head.

FROST

The drop ship returned to the cloaked mother ship. Then we established our first outpost near the shore of Lake Cayuga.

ALAN

There's more than one outpost?

Frost gestures at the shield. Alan fetches the shield and fits it on Frost's arm.

FROST

We are masters of complexity because we are thorough. Now tell me how you acquired the displacer.

ALAN

No. But y-you don't actually plan to heal me either, do you?

FROST

No. I just needed to buy time to establish control over your autonomic functions.

Alan draws the pistol from the back of his pants and points it at Frost. Frost smiles.

FROST

Unless you can imagine every working component of that pistol, it is just a lump of metal.

Alan pulls the trigger. Nothing happens. Frost smiles.

FROST

We imagine primitive weapons and armor because they require little concentration. But my sword represents the very real control I have over your heart and lungs.

He turns and reaches for the sword...but it's gone.

ALAN

I learned something from how you fetches changed Custer's timeline.

Frost turns back to Alan with a puzzled glare.

ALAN

Always have a plan B.

Sword in hand, Earlier Alan steps up behind Frost. He thrusts the sword deep into Frost's unarmored back.

Frost drops to his knees. He topples face-forward.

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE

Later Alan blinks back to awareness. Earlier Alan kneels before him, his hands also on the amoeba.

The translucent gray amoeba dissolves into a clear liquid.

LATER ALAN

What happened to j-just pulling me out once I got Frost's memory?

EARLIER ALAN

I f-found myself as trapped as you. I conjured an M16, but when I saw your pistol didn't w-work, I stole his sword instead.... Will Frost's memory work?

LATER ALAN

I...I think s-so. I'd better use it now...while I still can.

He stands and sways. His face is ashen.

EARLIER ALAN

Y-You don't look so good.

Later Alan forces a smile through the pain.

LATER ALAN

In fifteen m-minutes you'll l-look
exactly this bad too.

Both Alans head to their displacers.

EXT. SHORE OF LAKE CAYUGA - NIGHT

The Displacer pops into existence on the grassy shore.

The Scout drops out of the Displacer. It holds the bag of acid squeeze bulbs in its mouth.

It drags the bag to the forest and hides in the brush.

The Displacer turns and stalks into the lake. It descends below the surface of the murky water.

The Drop Ship descends through the air. It corkscrews down slowly and gently touches down on the grassy shore.

A dozen scouting units exit the Drop Ship's osmotic door and run around collecting samples in their bags.

Four translucent-gray fetches carry out jelly-like eggs and stack them in a pile near the Drop Ship.

The Earlier Displacer emerges from the Drop Ship and walks to the water's edge. The Pilot returns to the Drop Ship.

The scouting units turn and drag their full bags to the Drop Ship.

The Scout grabs its bag of acid bulbs and follows them.

INT. DROP SHIP

The Scout enters. It drags its bag to where the other scouting units cluster together with their own bags.

EXT. SHORE OF LAKE CAYUGA - NIGHT

The Drop Ship lifts off of the ground. It accelerates rapidly as it corkscrews into the air.

INT. DROP SHIP

Everything in the room droops as the Drop Ship accelerates upward. The Pilot's flesh pools around its frame's feet.

EXT. SPACE

The Drop Ship rises above the atmosphere of the Earth.

Ahead floats the huge MOTHER SHIP, a cigar-shaped cylinder with scabby skin, rotating around its long axis.

The Drop Ship moves into synchronous orbit over a giant osmotic door in the side of the Mother Ship.

It slides through the door.

INT. DROP SHIP

The room shudders and the scouting units come to life. They haul their bags out the Drop Ship's osmotic door.

INT. DISPLACER

Alan, shirtless, sits with his bare back against the wall, his eyes closed with concentration.

A bloody makeshift bandage covers the wound in his side.

ALAN

Okay, S-Scout...it's time.

INT. MOTHER SHIP

Low gravity makes it easy for the Scout to drag its bag through the Drop Ship's osmotic door.

The cylindrical room is two hundred yards in diameter. The distant ends disappear in the hazy red atmosphere.

Random scaffolding like rigging on a long-sunken ship stretches throughout the interior, connecting the scabby, uneven flesh of the interior walls.

Gray fetches walk along the interior walls of the Mother Ship with a slow, bouncing gait in the low gravity. Some have humanoid frames but most resemble crustaceans.

Nearby stand three motionless displacers.

The Scout opens its bag and reaches among the orange squeeze bulbs. It pulls out one of the Corporal's hand grenades.

It uses its tongue and one foot to pull the pin free. The spoon flies off and goes spinning through the air.

The Scout drops the grenade back into the bag.

INT. DISPLACER

Alan's eyes remain closed in concentration.

ALAN
Go, Scout! Run!

INT. MOTHER SHIP

The Scout bounds away through the light gravity like a mutant kangaroo.

The grenade explodes, blasting up a cloud of blue liquid.

Fetches pause and turn to face the site of the explosion.

The blue liquid floats back down to the ground. It coats everything in an area the size of a large swimming pool.

The blue-coated area sizzles. Fetches hit by the spray fall to the floor, writhing and screeching.

The sizzling area becomes a boiling pool of smoke.

The whole area collapses and ejects into space, sucking the hazy red atmosphere out the gaping hole.

Fetches and scouting units lift from the floor. They flail helplessly as venting air sucks them through the opening.

The Scout loses its grip on the floor. It flies through the air and shoots through the hole.

EXT. SPACE

The Scout tumbles away from the Mother Ship.

The Mother Ship squirms in agony as it sprays its inner occupants into the void. Then it slowly rips apart.

Fetches and scouting units writhe in the airless cold. They gradually cease to struggle.

The Scout kicks feebly and then falls still.

INT. DISPLACER

The room sways as the Displacer heads for the shore.

MYRA (V.O.)

Headin' back to shore now. When we get there, I'll order the earlier version of the displacer to stay hidden in the lake.

Alan groans in pain as he struggles to breathe.

MYRA (V.O.)

Alan...I don't think you've got much time left.

ALAN

I don't need...a lot of time. Thank you for...for doing this.

MYRA (V.O.)

It's my pleasure. You made me feel like a person again, and that means everything to me. I'm just glad I was able to return the favor.

ALAN

I...I'm going to miss you, Myra.

MYRA (V.O.)

I'm gonna miss you too, Alan.

The tentacles enter the osmotic door and gently hug Alan. He hugs them back.

MYRA (V.O.)

We're almost there. Get ready.

Alan picks up the Corporal's M16 and pockets two grenades.

EXT. SHORE OF LAKE CAYUGA - NIGHT

Near the edge of the forest, the four fetches work to construct a leafy shelter over the pile of eggs.

The Earlier Displacer remains motionless by the water.

The Later Displacer walks out of the lake next to the Earlier Displacer. Water streams from its scabby carapace.

The fetches turn to face the Later Displacer.

The Later Displacer's tentacles slither through the osmotic door of the Earlier Displacer.

Alan drops out from under the Later Displacer. He lurches toward the four fetches, which close ranks before the eggs.

He raises the M16 and rakes automatic fire across the line of fetches. The four aliens collapse.

The skeleton-creatures writhe and melt as the amoeba-creatures pull away from their dying frames.

ALAN

This...this isn't your universe
anymore....

He takes out the two grenades and pulls their pins. He tosses one among the amoebas and one onto the eggs.

He turns and drops behind a nearby log.

The grenades detonate, blasting apart the amoebas and their eggs.

SERIES OF SHOTS - TIME REVERSES AT HIGH SPEED

-- The Later Displacer walks backward into the lake.

-- Earlier Alan pulls the sword from Frost's back.

-- A bullet exits Alan's side and enters Frost's derringer.

-- Bullets fly from the Corporal's back into Alan's pistol.

-- Earlier Alan stands in his underwear in the grassy valley as fully clothed Later Alan walks backward toward the Later Displacer.

- Captain Santos flies out of the cave pool and into the Displacer's tentacles.
- The bullet flies out of Dan's dive mask.
- Alan removes the bandage from Dan's cut hand.
- Alan swings the stick away from Serra's hand. The pistol flies into Serra's hand.
- A small dart flies from Alan's neck and into a small blowgun in the Clerk's mouth.
- Dan and Alan remove armloads of guns from the back of the pickup and hurry backward toward the armory.
- Shaggy-haired Alan listens at Dan's office window with his stethoscope.
- Alan grips his freshly-injured knuckle.

EXT. SHORE OF LAKE CAYUGA - NIGHT

The Earlier Displacer stands alone where the Pilot left it at the water's edge.

It watches the fetches and their eggs melt and dissolve.

It turns and walks into the lake.

EXT. UNUSED WAREHOUSES - DAY

Well-maintained warehouses line a red dirt road.

Over the road a sign reads "Property of Fort Bragg, NC."

Three paper targets hang from the bottom of the sign. One has a tight cluster of bullet holes through the bull's-eye.

Alan again has shaggy hair. Blood wells from his knuckle.

The cordless phone handset on the nearby shooting bench just sits there. It doesn't ring.

Alan staggers with sudden disorientation.

DAN

Alan! Are you okay?

Alan looks up at Dan. His disoriented gaze turns into a huge grin. He embraces his brother in a big hug.

ALAN

Dan!

DAN

Alan, what the hell? I got a gun here! You wanna get shot?

Alan pulls back but still grins like an idiot.

ALAN

No. I can say with absolute certainty that I never want to be shot ever again.

DAN

Again?

ALAN

Oh, Dan, you have no idea how glad I am to see you!

DAN

You're right, I don't. What's--

ALAN

Your phone isn't ringing! That's why time rewound to this moment-- the fetches don't exist anymore, so they can't call you! Everything they did is undone!

DAN

Did you get hit in the head as well as your knuckle?

ALAN

Dan, I have the most awesome story to tell you....

DAN

Is this your way of trying to get out of learning how to shoot?

ALAN

What? Hell no. Give me that....

He takes the pistol. With practiced smoothness, he checks the magazine and the chamber, slips off the safety, aims downrange, and empties the weapon at the second target.

The cluster of bullet holes isn't as tight as Dan's, but every round has hit the bull's-eye.

DAN

Damn! How did you go from Imperial Stormtrooper to Dirty Harry in just one minute?

ALAN

I learned a lot in that minute.

Dan's new 2006 cell phone rings. He answers.

DAN

Hello?... Oh hey, sweetheart, what's up?... Sure, I'll pick some up on the way home. Kiss Tanya for me, okay? Bye, hon.

He hangs up.

ALAN

Uh...was that Audrey?

DAN

Yeah. You're joining us for dinner tonight, right?

ALAN

You two are...together again?

DAN

Again? What are you talking about?

ALAN

Nothing. By the way, I wanted to say how much I appreciate all the work you did to put me through college, Dan. Thank you.

Dan blinks in surprise. He manages a smile.

DAN

Don't mention it.

ALAN

And I just want you to know that I became an E.M.T. to save money, but I plan to go to medical school as soon as we can afford it.

Dan's smile broadens. Then fades.

DAN

It ain't gonna be easy, bro. I got a few debts.

ALAN

I know. But I think I know where we can find something that'll help us make some money...if it's still alive.

DAN

If what's still alive?

Alan grins.

ALAN

Something that stims the barfer, but you get used to it.

INT. DAN'S HOME OFFICE - DAY

Alan and Dan enter carrying the shooting equipment. They come to a halt and stare in shock.

The Displacer stands in the middle of the room.

MYRA

Alan!

ALAN

M-Myra? You're...alive?

MYRA

I am! I just never dropped dead! Near as I can figure, the displacer didn't copy my mind into its brain, but transferred it instead. So even though my body died out of its proper place in time...my mind never died.

ALAN

Oh wow....

DAN

Alan, what the hell is that?!

ALAN

Oh, Dan meet Myra, Myra meet Dan.

MYRA

Hi Dan! So nice to meet you!

Alan's wide grin turns to a puzzled frown.

ALAN

Wait...Myra, we undid everything
the fetches did. So how can you
still be the displacer if it never
ate you?

MYRA

I'm not the displacer, silly!
Hold on....

Myra drops through the Displacer's osmotic door.

ALAN

Oh my god....

Myra grins at Alan.

MYRA

I went lookin' for the displacer
and found where it was hidin' in
Lake Cayuga...and I teleported it
here! I thought you might like to
meet me all human-like....

Alan and Myra run into each other's arms, as Dan stares in
bewilderment.

EXT. LITTLE BIGHORN VALLEY - DAY

SUPER: June 25, 1876

Whoops and war cries carry through the smoky air.

Dead and wounded soldiers in blue Union uniforms lie on the grassy hill. Those who are still able struggle to reload and fire their Springfield Trapdoor carbines.

General Custer kneels behind a dead white horse. He fires two single-action revolvers at a Sioux warrior riding by.

A bullet hits Custer right over his heart. The revolvers tumble from his grasp. A second bullet catches him in the left temple.

Custer slumps over the body of the horse.

INT. THE MCBRIDE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

SUPER: October 6, 1998

Ray McBride, in a business suit and with no scars on his face, sits in a comfortable recliner holding a beer can. He watches a brand new flat screen TV.

Young Alan McBride lies on the carpet, drawing a picture.

RAY

What are you drawing, Alan?

Alan holds up a picture of parachuting soldiers.

YOUNG ALAN

It's you and your company
attacking Iraq.

RAY

Not bad. Except we didn't jump
into Iraq. Our plane just landed
in Saudi Arabia. We didn't see
much combat, either--the tank guys
and Air Force got all the fun.
Don't you got homework to do?

YOUNG ALAN

Already done. It was easy.

RAY

Good. But you only got a B plus
in history last time, so after
dinner I want you to double-check
your work, okay?

He crumples his empty beer can and tosses it at a full trash bin. The can rolls off and falls to the floor.

RAY

Hey, I thought I told you to take out the garbage.

YOUNG ALAN

I'll take it out first thing in the morning, Dad, I promise.

Young Dan McBride in his dusty work clothes trudges tiredly in from a hallway.

YOUNG DAN

I'll take care of it.

RAY

Hey Dan. I'm sorry, but your brother needs a lesson in responsibility. Alan?

YOUNG ALAN

All right, all right....

With an overly dramatic sigh, he stands and tramps over to the trash bin.

INT./EXT. BUS - NIGHT

SUPER: May 7, 2005

A BUS DRIVER and four passengers ride along an empty North Carolina forest road.

Myra Alvarez switches to a different song on her brand new Apple iPod Mini.

She suddenly reels, disoriented, and looks around in surprise. She looks out the window with an awed smile.

MYRA

No flat tire...the fetches didn't stop the bus!

Her expression turns perplexed.

MYRA

Wait...how is it I remember being
the displacer?

A BUS PASSENGER overhears and leans toward her.

PASSENGER

Partied a little hard today, eh?

EXT. IRANIAN DESERT - NIGHT

SUPER: November 22, 2024

Sergeant Tyson clutches his M51 and hides behind a rock.

He hears a nearby explosion, gunfire, voices shouting in Persian.

He activates his night vision face shield, revealing approaching enemy soldiers in glowing green.

He stands and opens fire with ripping bursts. Several enemy soldiers drop, others return fire.

A parachute flare ignites overhead, illuminating the area.

Tyson staggers with sudden disorientation.

TYSON

I'm back...here?

Enemy soldiers spot Tyson under the flare. They shout and concentrate fire on him.

Tyson fires back, but a bullet punches through his face shield. He collapses.

EXT. CHRONOSTAT FACILITY COVE - DAY

SUPER: August 24, 2035

What was once the military base on the cliff overlooking the ocean is now a futuristic research facility.

Braxton wades nude into the ocean. She swims out near the cluster of three rocks projecting above the surface.

The dorsal fin of a great white shark passes before her.

Braxon smiles with delight, but the shark circles closer. She backs up to the three rocks, pushing the increasingly inquisitive shark away.

She takes a breath and dives down between rocks where the shark can't follow. She discovers the underwater tunnel.

Curious, she swims through the tunnel, showing no signs of needing to breathe. Her vision switches to gray thermal imaging in the darkness.

INT. CAVE

Braxon swims up to the surface of the subterranean pool.

OLDER ALAN (32) and OLDER MYRA (31) sit in lawn chairs beside the pool. A futuristic lamp glows between them.

OLDER MYRA

Hi Braxon!

OLDER ALAN

We brought a present for you!

He gestures toward the opposite side of the cavern.

Braxon turns and looks up. She gapes in shocked disbelief.

FADE OUT.