

THE LAMB

FADE IN:

COMPUTER MONITOR SCREEN

A futuristic monitor shows the Earth from space, with data scrolling down side of screen in alien language. Along top of screen is large title type in same alien writing.

Subtitle: EARTH - file open.

IMAGES flash onscreen, backwards in time from present (2021 AD): President Blackwell, Senator Alden, President Obama, Iraq, American economy collapsing, George W. Bush, Gordon Brown, Vladimir Putin, G8 Summit, Tony Blair, global warming, World Trade Center attack, Bill Clinton, Yeltsin, Reagan...

Accompanying the images is a swift alien text-scroll down the side of screen. English subtitles under images, but subtitles will speed up too fast to read; faster images as they recede into past: Tiananmen Square, space shuttle, Moon landing, Viet Nam, Beatles, Kennedy, Sinatra, Sputnik, Hiroshima, Hitler, Wright Brothers, Gandhi, Darwin, Lincoln, Beethoven, Spanish Inquisition, da Vinci...

Ultimately arrive at images of Jesus Christ, different paintings, sculptures, media. Subtitles flash JESUS CHRIST, JESUS OF NAZARETH, SON OF GOD, EMMANUEL, MADONNA AND CHILD, THE LAMB OF GOD, YESHUA, JESUS, JESUS, JESUS, JESUS...

EXT. OPEN ROAD - NIGHT

TEXT: In an alternate future...

Joshua Tree. Hard rain falling. A lone old trucker, MARLON, drives a semi-trailer through the storm, heading west to Los Angeles. Highway is pitch black, except for his headlights. He sees a man, JC, walking along the highway shoulder. Marlon pulls up and opens his passenger door.

MARLON

Need a ride, bud?

JC

A ride? No.

MARLON

You broke down? Need some gas? I got nothin' but gas--heh heh heh! If you're stuck down the road a-ways--

JC

I have no vehicle.

MARLON

No veh--?! Well, how'd you get out here, bud? You live 'round these parts--

JC

No.

MARLON

Look--where are my manners? I'm sittin' here talkin' while you get soaked to the soul. Step on up, bud. Hell and damnation out there tonight, eh?!

JC steps into cab. He is Caucasian, brown hair just past collar, thin beard, 30 years old. Marlon drives on, chatting.

MARLON (CONT'D)

I'll get you where y'goin'--can't in good conscience leave a body out in that. Here!

Marlon reaches back, hands JC a towel, who accepts it wordlessly. Marlon offers his hand.

MARLON (CONT'D)

Name's Marlon...

JC shakes Marlon's hand, doesn't offer his name. Marlon takes it as privacy rather than rudeness and talks on.

MARLON (CONT'D)

So...er, where are you headed, bud?

JC

Los Angeles--

MARLON

Los Angeles?! Well, that's where this here road goes and I'm followin' it--heh heh--straight on into the City of Angels. You wanna check out the Star Maps--

Offers JC coffee from thermos. JC accepts.

MARLON (CONT'D)

--here, wouldja like a hot one? What're you doin' in L.A.?

JC

Thank you. I am trying to fix things.

MARLON

You a mechanic? You don't mind me askin',
but how'd you get out here in the middle
of nowhere, bud?

JC

I... coalesced.

MARLON

Is that like one o' them water-power
cars? Hey, you're not one o' them culty
people flyin' around out here on a ranch,
are ya?

JC

(contemplative)

Culty?

MARLON

Ever heard o' them Integratron people?
They're out here in Joshua someplace
y'know - flyin' around and drinkin' pee
an' stuff! Takes all kinds. Agnostic
myself - don't believe everything you
hear and only half of what you see--heh
heh heh--help yourself to another hot
one! So what d'you do in L.A.? You're a
mechanic, you said?

JC

I'm a... in your language you would call
us The Caretakers.

MARLON

Oh, a foreigner! I'm from Arizona myself -
been on this run goin' on five years -
wife still won't leave me! Heh-heh-heh.
Caretaker? What d'you take care of?

JC gestures at the desert.

JC

This is all...It's a little hard to
explain, Marlon. This is... my sector...

MARLON

Your "sector"? Heh heh, you sure you're
not one o' them culties? How come you
talk like that? You from England?

JC bursts out in genuine laughter. Marlon laughs also.

JC

No. All your countries are my responsibility. I am here to fix things.

MARLON

You mean like boats and houses and such?

JC

(laughs again)

No, I need to deliver a message. Take action. Keep the sector safe...

MARLON

Well hey--in L.A. you can deliver your message real good! They got world-famous stages out there: Sunset Strip, The Forum, Dodger Stadium.

(beat)

We got a few miles, bud... What's uh...so what's the message?

JC

(matter-of-factly)

I come to bring peace.

MARLON

(oblivious to the portent)

Heh! We could all use that, bud...

TELEVISION BROADCAST

Scenes of ALAN T. BLACKWELL Presidential Inauguration: Crowd-lined streets cheering black limousine; Blackwell, white male, 56, exiting limo, waving; walking up Capitol stairs, surrounded by officials and Secret Service.

NEWSCASTER VO

...arriving from the White House, to Capitol Hill, for the Inauguration ceremony yesterday; what a moment for war hero, Alan T. Blackwell, sworn in for a second term as the 45th president of the United States...

TEXT SCROLL ACROSS BOTTOM OF SCREEN

"Democratic incumbent president, Alan T. Blackwell on Capitol Hill. President Blackwell was sworn in by Chief Justice Joseph Martin and continues duties of the Office of the Presidency on January 21, 2021." Scroll wraps and repeats.

EXT. OPEN ROAD - DAY

Marlon's rig pulls to a stop in Beaumont, 80 miles east of Los Angeles. Rain has stopped. JC exits truck.

MARLON

Sure you don't wanna go right on into L.A. with me? I know a great rib joint - and the waitresses--

Marlon gestures "big boobs" with his hands.

JC

(arches an eyebrow)
Tempting. But I'd like to get a feel for this sector first, Marlon.

MARLON

You take care, bud. Hey! I never did get your name.

JC

Cordero.

MARLON

Got a Christian name, bud?

Beat. JC gives wry smile, pronounces his name with the Spanish inflection: "Hay-soos."

JC

Jesus.

MARLON

(archly, smiling)
I'd a-never picked you for a Mexican, bud...

JC smiles, closes truck door and walks off.

TELEVISION BROADCAST

Blackwell shaking hands of crowd on way to podium. His wife and VP accompany him.

NEWSCASTER VO

...his First Lady, Janine, and Vice President Victoria Ross, whom many call Blackwell's right and his left hand, from the 2016 White House...

INT. USA TODAY NEWSPAPER OFFICES - SAME TIME

Los Angeles. Watching the Inauguration is editor DAVID ROWLEY, 58, feet up on desk.

Columnist MADISON (white blonde female, 26) sits across desk from him. Rowley looks at Madison, shakes his head resignedly and holds up a bumper sticker: "BLACKWELL: Four More War."

INT. SETI INSTITUTE - SAME TIME

San Francisco, California. Tech JODIE, (female, 33), watches Inauguration while on the phone to DYLAN, 31, her tech boyfriend at JPL, Pasadena, California.

JODIE

(refers to Blackwell)

I know you think the guy's a creep, Dylan, and he's never cared about the Search for E.T.'s, but at least he's keeping our budget afloat.

INT. JPL OFFICE - SAME TIME

DYLAN

It's weird, Jodie. The Eris Lander Mission; we've gone over budget - don't know where it keeps coming from! Not complaining - ELM's not gonna make it to the "tenth planet" on ion streams alone. Hey, your travel's all set, right?

JODIE

That'd be seven-thousand-and-forty.

DYLAN

What?

JODIE

Times you've asked me! I'll see you soon, baby! Wouldn't miss being a part of the Lander Mission for two worlds!

They laugh.

DYLAN

Been a long year shuttling up and down, up and down, San Fran and back every other weekend, hon!

JODIE

It'll be good to be there, Dylan.

DYLAN

Counting down the days 'til launch!

JODIE

I'll be there long before that--

DYLAN
I'm talking about my launch--

They laugh.

JODIE
Oh, you cosmic perve!--

INT. NAVARRO'S HOME - SAME TIME

ARMY PFC RAFAEL NAVARRO, Mexican male, 24, watches Inauguration with his kids, SERENA (age 3) on his lap and CARLOS (age 5) on the floor.

Navarro's wife, ABILENA, 23, comes into lounge room, looks at TV, turns to Navarro.

ABILENA (CONT'D)
(sadly)
No more, Raffy.

NAVARRO
(softly)
Querida, it's just another tour. It's so we won't have to fight them over here--

Abilena alternates between English and Spanish.

ABILENA
Is that what the lunatics tell you?! It's your fourth! You been stop-lossed again! This killer of children will keep killing like that Oil Idiot of Texas!--

NAVARRO
I have one more week, Lena! I can't do this now--

ABILENA (CONT'D)
You can't do this?! I can't do this! We're dying on our rent and he's giving 100 billion to Pakistan? And sending 20,000 more troops?! And what do I tell them, every time they ask?
(refers to the kids)
"Daddy will come home in a little while, babies" - I just say the words - it means nothing! You'll keep going back and back until you--
(her voice breaks)

CUT TO:

TELEVISION BROADCAST

Blackwell, right hand raised, repeats words of Chief Justice.

BLACKWELL (ON TV)

I, Alan Theodore Blackwell, do solemnly swear, that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. So help me God.

PULL BACK

We see TV is playing above the counter in a diner.

INT. DINER - DAY

Diner is populated by flannelette shirts, truckers, blue-collars.

JC walks in, looks around, sits at a counter-top stool. On the words, "So help me God," he glances at the TV screen, then looks for a menu.

A YOUNG WAITRESS saunters past JC, heels clacking. He looks at her retreating ass-cheeks, biting his lip. He is interrupted by MARCIE, the old waitress.

MARCIE

What can I getcha, hon?

JC

(points at menu)

Er... this Breakfast Special please.

Marcie walks off. TV highlights show Blackwell giving an address. A banner behind him: "AMERICAN PEACE, WORLD PEACE."

BLACKWELL (ON TV)

...We must rethink, revise, revitalize our economy, our faith, and our global initiatives so sovereign nations the world over realize our continued commitment to the challenges we face...

On a counter stool, to the right of JC, a redneck diner in baseball cap and flannel shirt, WADE, 30, whistles at TV in approval. Marcie lays out cutlery and water glass for JC, while maternally berating Wade.

MARCIE

Keep it down, Wade!

BLACKWELL (ON TV)

My fellow Americans, we must demonstrate to our friends and enemies alike that in these times of war, we will bring peace!

On TV, crowd cheers wildly. Wade cheers. JC looks to his left, where a quiet diner eats. JC speaks to the quiet diner, MARTY DUBROWSKI, white male, 49.

JC

The president of the planet is not keeping his promise.

DUBROWSKI

(sniggers, keeps eating)

Okay, Captain Kirk; president of the United States'll do. You know what they say: Four More War.

JC

We've been monitoring. He's not the best man for the job, but his title fools everyone into believing he is, including himself.

DUBROWSKI

No shit, Sherlock.

(points to far corner of diner)

Now wouldja philosophize over there, Ralph Waldo Emerson? I'm workin' on this plate of shit here--

MARCIE (O.C.)

(unfazed)

Shit good enough to eat, Paper Boy!

DUBROWSKI

Dearie, just because I write about aliens doesn't mean I eat alien food--

JC

His plan for peace is more war. Does no one in this sector see the contradiction?

Wade looks over at JC with a look of anger/disbelief, then turns back to his food. Blackwell continues unnoticed on TV.

DUBROWSKI

I guess you got a better plan--

JC
I come to bring peace.

DUBROWSKI
(points to same corner)
Yeah, well, you can start over there,
Mahatma.

JC
What's your name?

DUBROWSKI
What's my?-- Whadaya wanna know my name?--
Dubrowski. Marty Dubrowski, OK? Now go.

JC
You're a writer, Marty?

DUBROWSKI
(eating)
Yup.

JC
For a publication that many people read?

DUBROWSKI
(annoyed)
"Readership"? Who gives a shit?! Long as
the rent's paid...

JC
Publish my message of peace.

Dubrowski opens his jacket exhaustedly, shows a press badge.

DUBROWSKI
Look, Mac, I write for THE ENQUIRER.
I've heard every nutjob "message of
peace" there is. It ain't a story. A
story is that freak thunderstorm out in
the desert last night; a story is me
tyin' it to Blackwell's 2nd term--

JC
I can explain that disturbance--

DUBROWSKI
Not just a sociologist, ladies and
gentlemen - a meteorologist too! Lordy!
We Has Bin Saved! Look, you seem like a
half-decent tourist - what're you doin'
out here in podunk anyway?

JC
I'm here to fix things. In my sector.

DUBROWSKI
(dubious, while eating)
No shit? What's yer name?

JC
(Spanish pronunciation)
Cordero. "Hay-soos" Cordero.

DUBROWSKI
(says it aloud, then clicks)
"Hay-soo--"? "Jesus"? J.C.?! Come on! A long-haired granola-boy calling himself Jesus ain't a story either; Napoleons and Mansons and Jesuses crawl outta the sewer every day...

JC
(points to TV)
Marty, this sector's fate rests with this man's decisions. By continuing his wars on this world, he will inevitably move outwards to other sectors--

Wade can't help butting in now. He slaps JC on shoulder.

WADE
Hey, whoa there, pal! Whadaya talkin'? I'm not gonna sit here and listen to this terrorist shit--

JC is amused, unthreatened, and continues speaking to Dubrowski, ignoring Wade.

JC
"Terrorist"? A word with more weight than truth.

DUBROWSKI
Y'know, I am so sick of hearing that word - someone doesn't agree with you, they're a terrorist--

JC
(to Wade)
I come to bring peace. Isn't that what everyone wants? Your president says so.

WADE
 (making throaty Arab sounds)
 All I'm hearin' from you is terrorist
 achmed-ach shit!

DUBROWSKI
 (to Wade)
 Hey, Homeland Security, no one's talking
 Arab here. Pop a Xanax, wouldja--

WADE
 Hey! No one's talkin' to you, man!

DUBROWSKI
 Sure sounds like it, Dubya!--

MARCIE
 Siddown, Wade!

JC gives a small laugh at this exchange. Dubrowski gives a dismissive gesture, and keeps eating.

WADE
 Shut your face, Marcie! Ay-rab hippie
 comes into our American town... Probably
 not even American, are you, Ay-rab?!

JC
 (really amused now)
 No, I'm not American--

WADE
 Told you! I can smell the stinkin' oil
 comin' off your greasy hair.

Wade's observation is so obviously wrong, two diners, an OLD MAN and OLD WOMAN, exchange an incredulous look.

JC
 You believe this Blackwell brings peace?

WADE
 It's right there on his sign, dumbass!
 "American Peace - World Peace"!

JC
 So a banner of peace allows him to wage
 war with seven sovereign nations without
 being called a liar?

DUBROWSKI
 I've done a great exposé on it, Wade.
 Learn to read and I'll e-mail it to you.

Wade suddenly moves in on Dubrowski.

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

SENATOR VICTOR ALDEN, African-American male Republican, 55, his office filled with pics of him and George W. Bush, Mitt Romney, John McCain, etc. watches Blackwell's inauguration with aides BERG and ROYNHAM.

SENATOR ALDEN
Berg! Get me another one, wouldja!

Berg pours an indigestion drink, which Alden downs with a grimace.

BERG
Postpone lunch, Senator Alden?

Alden waves Berg away, looks to a picture on the wall - two smiling soldiers: YOUNG ALDEN with YOUNG BLACKWELL.

SENATOR ALDEN (CONT'D)
(reminiscing)
Bled with me in Kuwait in '91. I swore
I'd keep him on track - now look at him!

BERG
Well, no better track he could be on--

Alden glares at Berg, like he's said something inappropriate.

BERG (CONT'D)
(backpedaling)
I mean - he's president, sir.

SENATOR ALDEN
Forget it! Roynham, got that Peace Summit
itinerary?

EXT. ROOF OF SKYSCRAPER - DAY

Sniper JOSHUA WHITE, with a powerful rifle draws a bead on a jogger far below (iPod on his arm, earbuds in), pushing a jogging stroller with a canopy.

CLOSEUPS

White's eye at the scope; gun barrel; trigger finger.

Suddenly - White's cellphone rings. He answers it, his eyes never leaving the scope.

WHITE

White.

VOICE ON TELEPHONE

Office.

WHITE

Ten minutes.

White hangs up, pauses, squeezes the trigger. The silencer whiffs.

CLOSEUP

stroller; a bullethole appears in stroller canopy. Jogger continues, oblivious.

In swift movements, White disassembles rifle, packs it in a guitar case, takes elevator down to street, drives through town, parks in front of a skyscraper, exits car and walks into - the CIA BUILDING.

INT. CIA OFFICE CORRIDORS - MOMENTS LATER

We follow behind White as he walks with deliberate gait through CIA security clearances. White walks into an office, closes door behind him.

Sign on the door: United States Director of Central Intelligence.

INT. CIA DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

CIA DIRECTOR THORN sits behind large desk. (We don't reveal Thorn's name during this scene). He slides a large envelope on desk towards White.

CIA DIRECTOR THORN

Mr. White. Your next sanction.

INT. SOLLY'S ROOM - DAY

SOLLY works on his political website (think: MoveOn.org) while his friend, RIZZO, slumps on Solly's bed, reading a comic, eating chips from a pile on his chest. Solly has four other computer monitors playing four news channels. The Inauguration is on all of them in BG.

Solly types furiously as Blackwell speaks.

SOLLY

God! Damn! He's burying himself -
 "expanding domestic oil exploration."
 Flip-flop-fuck! Gettin' deeper in shit--

RIZZO

(lazily, eyes not leaving
 comic, eating chips)
 How can he be getting deeper in shit if
 he's just scored a second term, Solly?

SOLLY

Look, I'll handle the politics, Rizzo!
 That's what my website's for.

RIZZO

"SaberRattling.us"! The CNN of online
 political skullduggery.

SOLLY

"Skullduggery"? Dude, no one's used that
 word for like two centuries!--

PUSH IN

on one of Solly's monitors. We see Arab dignitaries at the
 symposium, flashes going off continually, Blackwell in photo
 ops, Senator Alden and other senators pressing flesh.

SUZE RANDALL NEWS ANCHOR

The heads of 20 Middle Eastern nations
 currently in conflict with the U.S. are
 wrapping their World Peace Summit tour in
 Los Angeles on January 22nd. This rare
 gathering of world power is being hosted
 at The Hotel Sofitel in Beverly Hills,
 California--

Another monitor of Solly's: News Commentary Show.

JOHN THURMOND COMMENTARY SHOW

...y'know, political scientists can
 speculate about the Democrats co-opting
 the Republicans' hawkish stance, but
 American foreign policy is about
 retaining absolute power and that, my
 friends, means absolute war.

INT. DINER - MOMENTS LATER

We return to scene with Wade smacking the face of Dubrowski.

WADE

I told you keep outta this, pussy!

Dubrowski rises in anger, is stopped by JC.

DUBROWSKI

Pussy?! You piece o' shit! My son died in Iran for slobs like you--

WADE

Then you should have more respeck for America, old man!

JC

Relax, Marty. He's not a threat.

DUBROWSKI

Damn right! He's gonna get pummelled--

As Dubrowski holds his face and moves forward, JC blocks him.

DUBROWSKI

Can win my own fights, Savior Boy!

MARCIE

Wade! Don't make me call the cops!

JC

Not in anger, Marty.

WADE

Won't need the cops, Marcie! Need a - doctor!--

Wade swipes at JC on the word "doctor," who deflects it with lightning speed. Dubrowski sees JC's combat expertise, flops into his seat amazed, still holding his face.

JC

(unfazed, to Wade)

You follow the example of your leader.

WADE

What's that supposed to mean?

JC

You speak peace and act war. I am here to bring peace.

WADE

(to room in general, mocking)

Y'hear that? "To bring peace"! Just like Alan Blackwell, only more Ay-rab!

The Old Man and Old Woman diners do a double-take and keep eating, as if watching an action movie.

WADE (CONT'D)

How you gonna do that with broken legs!--

On "legs," Wade swings at JC again. JC deflects Wade's attack, slamming Wade's head on the counter. Wade slumps to the floor. He rises holding his head, whining.

WADE (CONT'D)

Why don't you get outta this country?!

JC

Should anyone leave a country badly served by its leaders? The badly-served should make the leaders leave.

WADE

You some kinda radical communist?

Wade lunges at JC again. With an amused look, JC deflects all Wade's blows nonchalantly, while forcing him outside.

JC

You shouldn't bring your ignorance and insecurities into public, Wade - leave that to your military officers. Question is: Why aren't you "fighting them over there," Wade?

WADE

(chopping away, tiring)
Doin' my duty over here, Haji - keeping bastards like you off the streets.

JC

It's a free country, Wade. Free yourself.

JC makes a gesture and Wade flies backwards off the curb, falling to the street, beaten. Dubrowski and diners peer out diner windows at the scene. JC steps into the street, smiling, offering his hand.

JC (CONT'D)

Come on--

As JC steps off the curb, we see a semi-trailer bearing down on him and Wade. It won't stop in time.

CLOSEUP JC

closes his eyes, tilts his head back.

A blinding light and THUNDEROUS SOUND. When the light and sound fade, the semi-trailer and all other traffic heading in the same direction has stopped dead in the street. Not crashed, not in suspended animation - just stopped dead. No one harmed. Drivers exit their cars, bewildered.

Wade is wide-eyed, speechless. He takes JC's hand.

JC (CONT'D)
 (still smiling)
 Maybe you should be staying off the streets, Wade? Go home.

WADE
 (dazed)
 Yes.

JC turns to leave and feels a hand on his shoulder. It is Dubrowski.

DUBROWSKI
 Baby - now you're a story!

CUT TO BLACK.

ACT II

FADE IN:

CLOSEUP

ENQUIRER headline: "THE SECOND COMING. Jesus Is Back!"

INT. DUBROWSKI'S APARTMENT - NEXT DAY

JC reads the paper, sitting at Dubrowski's dining table, while Dubrowski sits on opposite side. JC wears jeans and a Judas Priest black t-shirt. Dubrowski looks ready for work - i.e. in a disheveled suit. Both eat from an open pizza box.

JC
 Marty! "Second Coming"? I've never been here before!

DUBROWSKI
 JC, no one's gonna buy that story of the first Jesus being a stand-in! Come on: your substitute?!

JC
 We sent him because I was bringing peace to another sector. And don't call me JC.

DUBROWSKI

Well, in this sector, that guy was the Real Deal--

JC

He didn't have the power to bring peace - just observe and educate.

DUBROWSKI

Tell that to King James and Jeffrey Hunter. Hey - why're you both called "Jesus" anyway? Your dad's omnipotent - he couldn't think up two names?

JC

Now hold on there, Marty! I told you: my progenitor is not that sloppy human creation you people call "god." We are galactic travelers--

DUBROWSKI

Blah blah. So what's with the names?

JC

You wanna get technical, his name wasn't Jesus either - it was Yeshua [Hebraic pronunciation]. We are the Caretakers.

DUBROWSKI

(tries out the headline)

"Second Coming of the Caretakers"? Did you guys create the Universe?

JC

Something this complex? Only beings who don't understand creation think everything needs a creator. No, but we keep it running smoothly. Those writers and translators had no idea--

DUBROWSKI

You don't hold much regard for that cornerstone of civilization, do ya?

JC

Look, your bible stories were plagiarized from hundreds of older sources, and they were written five, six centuries after Yeshua's time anyway. By extremist disciples. Every religion calls their book the cornerstone. Yours is different?

DUBROWSKI

We were right about Jesus being white!

JC

(laughs out loud)

Now that's a good one. Look, it's all just reciprocal altruism, common sense: "Do unto others," "Don't murder." Don't all species know these things without writing them down?

DUBROWSKI

Some people need that happy crappy right in front of their faces.

JC

But then there's the repressed sexuality, cold-blooded mass killings, incest, bigotry--

DUBROWSKI (CONT'D)

You realize we're gonna catch hell for this - no offense--

JC

(offhandedly, reading again)

There's no hell.

DUBROWSKI

--oh, er, for telling it like it is. Lay these ideas on people, you never know how they'll react: half believe, half don't, half go nuts, half kill the nuts, half get bad, half get worse; either way - chaos...

JC

I see you've been reading your bible. Great family entertainment.

DUBROWSKI

Well, at least with you being here, we've got "proof."

JC

That's what they said about Yeshua...

DUBROWSKI

But that's what creates doubt, right? Lack of proof.

JC

It's also the foundation for "faith" -
lack of proof. Still, when there's
incontrovertible proof, does everyone
accept it?...

DUBROWSKI

(finishes the thought)
Or try to destroy it?--

JC

Read your bible. Bring the kids.

INT. USA TODAY NEWSPAPER OFFICES - DAY

Rowley paces the office. Madison sits before his desk,
listening to him rant.

ROWLEY

All day. All night. Calls, non-stop
calls! Truckers, taxi drivers, even the
cops out in Beaumont -
(adopts goofy voice)
"It's a miracle! A miracle!" All our
affiliates are bombarded. A real-life,
broad-daylight, piss-your-pants, laws-of-
physics bender: all the traffic frozen
for ten minutes--

MADISON

An accident, David?

ROWLEY

No accident. Some guy stepped into the
street and - bam! - no power! Not only
that, no one was injured; no cars doing
those movie-flips off the back of other
cars - nothing!

MADISON

And?

ROWLEY

And this morning I see this!

Rowley throws ENQUIRER with "Second Coming" headline onto the
desk. Madison cranes to read paper.

MADISON

Boss, you're not gonna start following
leads from THE ENQUIRER?

ROWLEY

Madison, on a normal day, I wouldn't use it to wipe shit off my shoe - but when everyone's yelling "miracle" in Beaumont, and a headline screams SECOND COMING with the lead in Beaumont - I'm smelling something - and it ain't the shit on my shoe.

MADISON

You're not thinking what you've always told me not to be thinking...

ROWLEY

Even if this guy did it scientifically, something extraordinary got done. There's freakin' cellphone footage on YouTube already! All these witnesses can't be suffering a collective hallucination.

MADISON

(cheeky)

Well, y'know that's what atheists say about Christians, boss...

Rowley gives her a look.

MADISON

David, you're not gonna make me--

ROWLEY

(makes her jump)

Madison! I don't care if it is bogus: Christ on a nacho chip; Virgin Mary on a fucking pumpkin - if everyone's talking about it, it's News with a capital "get-your-ass-over-there!"

MADISON

Gone, boss!

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

In checkout line, Abilena, her 3-year-old in shopping cart, spots ENQUIRER, "Second Coming." She adds it to her cart.

INT. NAVARRO'S HOME - LATER

Abilena wordlessly shows ENQUIRER to Navarro.

NAVARRO

Baby, come on, you're shittin' me!

ABILENA

I prayed for a miracle, Raffy! Jesus heard my prayers--

Navarro throws the paper across room.

NAVARRO

The miracle is it's selling papers - to people like you!

INT. NAVARRO'S HOME - LATER

While Abilena is in kitchen, Navarro plays ball with Carlos. Ball rolls to where ENQUIRER has landed. Navarro retrieves ball, picks up ENQUIRER, looks around furtively, then reads.

CARLOS

Daddy - throw it! Throw it!...

INT. DUBROWSKI'S APARTMENT - DAY

JC sits at Dubrowski's desk, being shown the Internet.

JC

Ancient technology, but a large step in uniting people. I thank you for promulgating my message on these circuits.

DUBROWSKI

Don't know about "promulgate" - I'm just writin' it down. We're gonna look like lunatics at first but - heaven help us - I've been called worse.

JC

No heaven either.

Dubrowski does a double-take, then looks at his watch.

DUBROWSKI

Uh, of course - what was I thinking? Oh shit! I gotta get outta here. I got a meeting with the editors for a massive exposé on mah man, Mr. Cordero!

JC

And what about Mr. Cordero? I've been here one whole day, Marty; I should be delivering my message--

DUBROWSKI

Relax, JC - I got it all figured: first,
I lube 'em up, make our demands, and when
they're ready to drop trou, I take you in
and we fist 'em like cows giving birth!

JC

As long as we're reaching people.

DUBROWSKI

(twirling imaginary mustache)
We will, JC. We will. So: don't open the
door, don't pick up the phone, don't look
out the window, don't go Walking The
Earth like your pal from Nazareth--

JC

Lotta thou-shalt-nots; like a bible,
Marty. You Pharisee or just Roman?

DUBROWSKI

Yeah, go on, crucify me!
You're the one appears on my
planet with no money, no
place to stay, no job, no
clothes--

JC

This is my job--

DUBROWSKI

(saddened)
And you're lucky you fit my son's
wardrobe... y'welcome to his room...
shoulda been playin' baseball, stupid
kid. Ran off playin' soldier...

JC

I'm here to stop decisions made on
propaganda, Marty.

DUBROWSKI

(comes back to reality)
Anyway - Who woulda taken you in if you
didn't meet me?

JC

But I did meet you, Marty. Does that say
something about "destiny"?

DUBROWSKI

(a beat, considers)
No such thing, right?

JC

Beginning to see the light!

DUBROWSKI
Almost got me, JC!

JC
Go fist 'em - we've got to move on the message! If I can survive a supernova, I think I can live through one day in California.

DUBROWSKI
(as he is exiting)
Stay outta sight!

JC
(shouting after Dubrowski)
And stop calling me JC!

INT. DYLAN'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Jodie's bags are splayed around the living room. On the couch, she and Dylan snuggle, watching CARL SAGAN'S COSMOS on DVD. Excerpt from Episode 12: "Encyclopedia Galactica."

CARL SAGAN (ON DVD)
...Direct communication among billions of human beings is now made possible by computers and satellites - the potential for a global intelligence is slowly emerging, linking all the brains on earth into a planetary consciousness...

DYLAN
He knew back then - he could see it coming, like Toffler in FUTURE SHOCK.

JODIE
(acknowledges)
Mm!

DYLAN
(kisses her hair)
I'm glad you're here, Jodie. Missed you... Staying long?

JODIE
(smiles)
Is that a question or an order?

DYLAN
Y'know, I was looking at some bigger apartments in the area, or maybe--

JODIE

How come?

DYLAN

Well, you know... this long-distance thing is... whew!

JODIE

(playfully)

Dylan! Ohh, that's so sweet! But hon, you know I'm not the marrying type!--

DYLAN

Who said marriage? Chicks! Stampede to the nuptials!

Jodie laughs.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Just... you know... hang out for awhile.

JODIE

You mean move in?

Dylan looks at her, shrugs his shoulders.

JODIE (CONT'D)

Baby... I've just started on this new project up in San Francisco...

DYLAN

Doesn't have to be right now... We're pretty slammed with the Eris Mission anyway - but, you know, sometime...

Jodie touches his face.

JODIE

Thanks for understanding, Dylan!

DYLAN

What new project?

JODIE

If I told you... I'd have to fuck you.

DYLAN

Oh yeah? What if I made you tell me?

JODIE

Well then... I'd tell you... and then...

Jodie climbs over Dylan; he feels something in his back.

DYLAN

Ow, Jesus!

Dylan pulls out an ENQUIRER, amused. He leafs through it as Jodie kisses him.

DYLAN (CONT'D)

Still reading this shit?

JODIE

(while kissing)

Hey! That's SETI required technical material. That cover piece is funny...

While Jodie makes out with Dylan, we see CARL SAGAN on TV.

CARL SAGAN (ON DVD)

...There will be planets on which intelligent beings have not 10 (to the 11th) neurons each, as we do, but 10 (to the 20th) or 10 (to the 30th). I wonder... what they would know.

Dylan mockingly reads "Second Coming" article, as Jodie paws and kisses him.

DYLAN

"Jesus explained, 'The thunderclap you heard was billions of molecules moving faster than sound, being forced into a warp in the sixth dimension.'"

(snidely)

Shyeh, right! Sixth dimension!

JODIE

(mock outrage)

Heeey! What're you doing?!

DYLAN

(mock seriousness)

I'm reading here!

Jodie squeals and starts pulling Dylan's jeans off; he continues to read as if ignoring her.

DYLAN

"Maybe you've got to be a rocket scientist to understand it, but the end result speaks volumes: no one died. And if a message from on high was ever to be imparted by a messenger on the down low, what better way to illustrate it than by example.

(MORE)

DYLAN (CONT'D)

When asked what his message was, Jesus said, 'I come to bring' "--

(stops reading)

blah blah - yeah well, I am a rocket scientist and it still sounds bogus!

MEDIUM ON DYLAN

We see Dylan's upper body on the couch. Jodie moves up into frame, hair mussed, eyes glazed.

JODIE

(softly)

It's a miracle!

DYLAN

The miracle is it's selling papers - to people like you!

JODIE

(moves down out of frame)

Not that miracle!

We see sensual pleasure spread over Dylan's face as he tosses the paper aside.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Madison climbs stairs of Dubrowski's apartment building, griping on the phone to Rowley.

MADISON

(loudly whispering)

I can't believe you made me do this, David! If this guy is a savior, he's taking asceticism to a whole 'nother level! There's - oh my god! - there's a spider up in the corner!...

Madison arrives at Dubrowski's front door, knocks.

INT. DUBROWSKI'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

JC pokes his head out of shower when he hears knocking.

INT. STAIRWELL - SAME TIME

MADISON

If Quasimodo answers this door, I swear, David, I'm running... I'll take off the pumps... You owe me big time, David! What was I thinking--?

JC opens door, wearing jeans, his torso bare, hair wet and towel around his neck. Madison, whose eyes were on the spider above, looks down to JC and has a "choral moment," then wordlessly hangs up phone while Rowley is still talking.

MADISON

(blankly)

Oh, Jesus?!

JC

(big smile)

An exclamation or a greeting?

Madison, flustered, holds out her hand.

MADISON

Er, uh, maybe a little of--Madison Brandt. I... I'm a reporter from USA TODAY; I'd like to interview you regarding that uh, up in Beaumont--oh!

Madison flinches at the spider moving above her, and rushes in. JC takes her hand in greeting, as well as comfort.

JC

Sorry about the lodgings, Miss Brandt--

MADISON

You can call me Madison--

JC

Madison. But there was no--

MADISON

Uh, don't tell me: there was no room at the inn?

JC is caught off-guard momentarily before he gets the reference. They both giggle, talk over each other.

JC

Oh, er, yeah, and with the--I get it--

MADISON

Huh, I thought you'd like-- uh, see, 'cause you're Jesus and--

JC

Beautiful and smart. And unscrupulous.

MADISON

(flustered)

Oh - er... thank you, I think--What do you mean, Mr. Cordero?

JC

(indicates apartment)

All this - courtesy of a reporter, like you. And with human nature, there's less room on a front page than at the inn.

MADISON

Well, no honor among thieves, Mr. Cordero.

JC

Well, that's human nature too, Madison. And call me Jesus. Lucky for you, I'm no thief and it's not about honor; it's about getting my message to this world.

(indicates Internet)

Your leaders and peacemakers share equal time with fruitcakes and charlatans. Can I rise above this noise?

Madison is giving JC's bare, v-shaped torso the once-over, then twice-over (think: Hugh Jackman, WOLVERINE).

MADISON

Looks like you've done your homework on our culture, Mr.-- Jesus. So you'll know USA TODAY is a reputable publication with advertisers in the range of--

JC

We brought mass communication here once. It failed because it was too new. Now everything is old as soon as it's new.

MADISON

"We"?

JC

(beat)

Well, it's a long story...

Madison plops herself on the couch, turns on her dictaphone, lays it on coffee table, readies her notepad.

MADISON

I've got time.

JC
 (seriously)
 Well, let's see... In the beginning, God created the heaven and earth. And the earth was without form, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light...

Madison writes. JC speaks, looking at Madison slyly, waiting for her to get the gag. Madison stops, looks up. They laugh.

JC (CONT'D)
 No, it really is a long story. Would you like a little wine?

MADISON
 I wouldn't want to impose on Mr. Dubrowski's courtesy any more than I already have--

JC
 Hey, I'm his guest; you're my guest: just a little wine.

Madison looks at his chest again.

MADISON
 Uh, okay.

JC immediately adopts a crucified pose, arms out, and starts "whining" adenoidally.

JC
 Ohh, it's hot out here! Oww, these nails and stuff! Ohhh, I'll never get the blood out of this loincloth--

At first, Madison is shocked, then laughs despite herself at the sick joke. A barrier has come down between them. She throws a cushion at JC.

MADISON
 That's sick! Stop it!--

We cut while they're both laughing uproariously.

FLASHBACK:

TEXT: Kuwait. Gulf War. 1991.

INT. BARRACKS - DAY

Five soldiers, all mid-20s, roar with laughter and talk shit around makeshift card table: YOUNG ALDEN (nickname Vicky), YOUNG BLACKWELL (nickname Exorcist), CAPPY (captain), BARBRA (as in Streisand, Jewish guy), NORMAN (as in Bates). Young Alden pushes Young Blackwell goodnatureedly.

INT. KUWAITI CAFE - DAY

Young Blackwell hunches in seedy, dark cafe, talking furtively with ABD AL KARIM (pr. "Kareem"), 48yo.

YOUNG BLACKWELL
They've been delayed.

ABD AL KARIM
What? I promise the Iraqis today, Alan!

YOUNG BLACKWELL
So sue George Bush! Whadaya gonna do, Karim? I had ta kiss some hairy ass to score this sweet deal, not gonna let it-- Look, meet me tomorrow at--

ABD AL KARIM
(heated whispers)
There is no tomorrow! I have your money now, Alan! And you have no guns! I cannot keep money! They will search me!--

YOUNG BLACKWELL
Ah, take it easy, Creamy! We'll work it out. Look, give me the money now and--

ABD AL KARIM
Are you mad? You think because I am Muslim I am like bimbo blonde? You think--

Karim sees a TARIQ (Arab late 40s) entering cafe over Blackwell's shoulder; shields himself behind Blackwell.

YOUNG BLACKWELL
Wha--? Who's--?

ABD AL KARIM
(Swears in Arabic, then speaks English)
My fucking brother! Don't let him see me! He is civilian! Stupid won't help us! He'll report me!

Tariq spots Karim and Young Blackwell, moves toward them.

TARIQ
 (smiling)
 [Arabic, with English subtitles] Hey,
 goatface! What you doing here?

Karim rushes out in other direction.

YOUNG BLACKWELL
 Ay, what about my money?! Hey, asswipe!

Tariq reaches table, calling after Karim. His eyes meet Young Blackwell, who gives him arrogant stare. Tariq pauses, slightly shocked, regains composure and rushes after Karim.

YOUNG BLACKWELL (CONT'D)
 (under breath)
 Towelheads!

INT. DUBROWSKI'S APARTMENT - DAY

JC sits beside Madison on the couch. He has a Black Sabbath HEAVEN AND HELL t-shirt on. They've been talking awhile.

MADISON
 I feel like Lois Lane interviewing
 Superman - is all this true?

JC
 I never lie.

MADISON
 Heh, that's what Superman said. Are you,
 like... a super man?

JC
 You mean, faster than a speeding bullet?

Madison laughs, grabs his bicep.

MADISON
 Are you more powerful than a locomotive?

JC
 (flexes)
 Powerful enough to bring peace.

MADISON
 And your predecessor wasn't?

JC
 He didn't. It's amazing how many people
 still think he succeeded.

JC reaches for Madison's cleavage, picks out her tiny crucifix on a necklace.

JC (CONT'D)

Enough to start a religion, and flaunt as their supposedly "joyous" symbol the means by which he died.

MADISON

A gift from my mother... I never thought of it that way.

JC

No one does. The truth is too hard to face, so everyone sees it backwards: torture and death and failure become martyrdom and afterlife and success.

While he says this, JC turns the tiny crucified Jesus to face Madison's skin and gently places it back on her cleavage. She breathes heavily.

MADISON

How do you know so much about us?

JC

This is my sector. It's my job to know.

MADISON

You watch us?

JC

Closely.

MADISON

(touching his face)

Who are you?

JC

I am the Way, the Truth and the Life--

MADISON

(playfully slaps his chest)

Who is "this"? You say you're not human; that you imitate life-forms on the worlds you take care of, but... do you "feel" how humans feel?

JC

You mean: do I eat, do I sleep, do I... desire?

MADISON
 (beat, uncertain)
 Yes. Are you... like a normal man?

JC
 (enough talk - he moves in)
 I'm like - a super man...

INT. SOLLY'S ROOM - DAY

On one of Solly's TVs, a local news report:

REPORTER (O.C)
 "The blogosphere is on fire today with miraculous news from Beaumont, a small town in Southern California: an area near O'Leary's Diner, on 6th and Beaumont, came to a total standstill for ten minutes. No one was hurt, no property was damaged. Eyewitnesses say everything moving just - stopped. Many eyewitnesses attribute this 'miracle' to a man who saved another man's life..."

Visuals: traffic on the road near O'Leary's Diner, with diner exterior shots.

INT. DUBROWSKI'S APARTMENT - LATER

Afterglow. JC and Madison snuggle naked on the couch.

MADISON
 What was he like?

JC is deliberate, paced, thoughtful. Madison listens.

JC
 They called him the Lamb of God. Because lambs were used as sacrifices.

CUTAWAYS

Gruesome b/w flashback scenes of original Jesus in biblical times (played by same actor, for continuity) fighting ROMAN SOLDIERS in Garden of Gethsemane with his disciples.

CLOSEUP

sword pulled from its scabbard on hip of Roman soldier.

JC (CONT'D)
 He had his quiet believers.

CLOSEUP

swords unsheathed on hips of APOSTLES.

JC (CONT'D)
He was a quiet man.

PAN UP

robed body, to face of JESUS in biblical times; not the meek savior - instead, a hard warrior, staring down soldiers.

JC (CONT'D)
They also called him the Lamb because the legends say he went meekly to his death.

Jesus yells a charge; he and Apostles launch into battle.

JC (CONT'D)
The Romans prided themselves on taking no prisoners.

Sword battle, gory, gruesome, gutting.

MADISON
Why didn't he just leave his human body before they captured him?

JC
He was depleted. Takes a considerable amount of power to create and destroy matter. The dimensional warp causes thunderstorms across the globe. He had to live out his life - and death. Fighting to the end because, like all of us, he believed it's never too late to fix things.

The disciples lie dead; Jesus stands, bloody, panting, sword in hand, dead Romans around him. Remaining soldiers grab him and drag him screaming to the ground.

MADISON
Did he actually "take away the sins of the world"?

JC
Huh... "the sacrifice to atone for all mankind." But mankind fell deeper into depravity for what they did to him.

PULL BACK, TILTING

Silhouette of a naked, bleeding Jesus on a cross, convulsing in death-throes.

MADISON

Where is he now?

JC

Educating another world in the Kuiper Belt.

MADISON

There are worse ways to kill a man now.

JC

All in the name of peace. And it will get bloody all over again.

MADISON

But you said you didn't want to fight; that you'd show the way to salvation.

JC

Who else said that?

MADISON

...and they crucified him. What are you going to do?

JC

(eyes lowered, resolved)
Bring peace.

FLASHBACK

TEXT: Kuwait. 1991.

EXT. KUWAITI MARKETPLACE - DAY

Young Alden on patrol with Cappy, Barbra, Norman. They talk to a shopkeeper, while market crowd mills around them. Norman translates.

NORMAN

(to Young Alden)

Says some Iraqis come through once in awhile - haven't been around in days. This sector is just civilians - we'll never get any real info--

A bomb EXPLODES right under them. Young Alden is thrown to the ground. Beat, as dust clears, and NOISE SWELLS to SCREAMS. Near him, someone groans.

Young Alden looks around, dazed. Cappy's dead eyes stare; Barbra and Norman are dazed and rising. Near him, an unknown Kuwaiti groans. Young Alden crawls to him. It is Tariq.

YOUNG ALDEN
You okay, buddy? Oh shit...

Tariq speaks Arabic to him, urgently, grabbing at Young Alden. Tariq's side is bloodied, his leg mutilated.

YOUNG ALDEN (CONT'D)
Norman! Norman, gimme a hand!

Norman trudges over, flops down, near tears.

NORMAN
We gotta get back to base, Vicky! Cappy's dead!--

YOUNG ALDEN
Affirmative, man! Gimme a hand!

Young Alden is lifting Tariq.

NORMAN
What for?! Let's get the fuck outta--

YOUNG ALDEN
(firmly)
Help me! What's he saying?!

NORMAN
Dunno! Somethin' about his wife and kid - who cares? Let's go!

YOUNG ALDEN
We're taking him!

NORMAN
Fuck we are! He's a civilian! Let his own people--

YOUNG ALDEN
No shit, he's a civilian! Got nothing to do with this fucking war. We're taking him! Barbra - get Cappy!

INT. BARRACKS - DAY

MEDIC SEYMOUR tends to Tariq's wounds in an army cot. Young Alden sits nearby with Norman.

MEDIC SEYMOUR

He'll be okay - if you get him to a hospital soon. Can't say I agree with this, Vicky - our supplies are for our men! What's he keep saying?

NORMAN

Keeps thanking you - says his son is gonna be a doctor like you.

Tariq keeps talking, pulls out a crumpled letter, hands it to Medic Seymour, who hands it to Norman.

MEDIC SEYMOUR

Yeah well... thanks, I guess, buddy.
(to Norman)
What's that?

NORMAN

(looking over letter)
What're you giving it to me for? I can hardly speak it; can't make shit out of the writing...

YOUNG ALDEN

(commanding)
What's it say?

NORMAN

From his son... somethin' about 'The end is in sight at...' uhm, something school, something something - er, looks like he's gonna graduate, whatever, he's telling--

Young Blackwell walks into barracks, fully armed, in from patrol. All eyes turn to him. Tariq's eyes widen. He babbles to Young Blackwell, who simply stares with dead eyes back at Tariq. Tariq urgently babbles to others around him.

Young Alden sees there is something between Tariq and Young Blackwell; jogs Norman for info.

YOUNG ALDEN

What's he sayin'?

NORMAN

Oh shit!...

YOUNG ALDEN

What the fuck's he sayin'?!

Norman translates slowly, eyeing Blackwell warily.

NORMAN

He says... he saw Exorcist... selling weapons. He keeps sayin' "traitor"... erhm.. "judgment will come--"

While Tariq babbles and Norman translates, Young Blackwell strides across room and before anyone can react, FIRES point blank into Tariq's face, shattering it.

Young Alden and Norman dive on Young Blackwell. Medic Seymour is sprayed with blood, Young Blackwell is laughing, Young Alden on top of him.

YOUNG BLACKWELL

What's the deal, Alden? You a sandie-lover all of a sudden?

Young Alden punches Young Blackwell.

YOUNG ALDEN

He was an innocent civilian, you fuck!

YOUNG BLACKWELL

(suddenly serious)

Hey! No towelhead is innocent if they don't kill Haji alongside us!

YOUNG ALDEN

Being an insane motherfucker is one thing, Blackwell; being a fuckin' Judas whore--

YOUNG BLACKWELL

You believe this sandie?!

YOUNG ALDEN

We've been gathering shit for weeks; this just corroborates--

Blackwell giggles insanely.

YOUNG BLACKWELL

Hee hee hee hee! Whatcha gonna do, towel-lover? You want some o' the cash? I'll pay you to suck my dick!

YOUNG ALDEN

(spits on Blackwell)

You're lucky you're U.S. Army, you goddamn psycho! Military's gonna cover this up;

(MORE)

YOUNG ALDEN (CONT'D)
you'll get your honorable discharge,
you'll get your fuckin' medal - but
you'll never betray America again - I
swear it!--

YOUNG BLACKWELL
Get offa me, fag!

Norman stands over the two men. He realizes he still holds
Tariq's letter, now crumpled.

CLOSEUP

on letter, as Norman lets it fall to the ground. We see
Arabic writing on letter.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. USA TODAY NEWSPAPER OFFICES - AFTERNOON

CLOSEUP

on laptop screen. Rowley reads Madison's article on JC.
Madison enters room as he scans the lead.

ROWLEY
You got him! Tell me you got him?

MADISON
(glazed-eyed)
Oh, I got him all right.

ROWLEY
(scanning piece excitedly)
Is he legit? Oh god! Tell me he's legit!

MADISON
Oh, he's legit all right.

ROWLEY
What's he like? Big guy, strong?

MADISON
Oh, he's big all right.

ROWLEY
Charlton Heston or Morgan Freeman?

MADISON
He's like a young Brad Pitt.

ROWLEY

Brad--? So he's a bit of a fem then, eh?
Okay, fine. Fine. Mysterious and dark? Or
introspective and holier-than-thou?--

MADISON

He makes me laugh.

ROWLEY

He makes you--?
(beat, as he thinks the
unthinkable)
Jesus fucking Christ! Are you fucking
Jesus Christ?!

SOURCE MUSIC cuts in: "Sex Machine" by James Brown.

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Source Music continues as JC walks the streets in a flamboyant cowboy body-shirt, tassels on cuffs and breast pockets. He scrutinizes everything living, from trees, to birds, to little dogs barking at him. Not in "wonderment" - more like a boss on the factory floor.

VOICEOVER

Rowley and Madison continue talking over visuals of JC.

MADISON (O.C.)

David! That's private!

ROWLEY (O.C.)

Private? He's the lead in the largest-selling book in history! There's no one less private than this guy!--
(suddenly inquisitive)
Is he normal?

MADISON (O.C.)

Is he what--? Shit, David!

ROWLEY (O.C.)

Okay, okay! Is he the real McCoy?

MADISON (O.C.)

His story is fantastic, but it gels with everything you've got on him. If nothing else - his legend is wildfire on the web. Like you said, if it's news, print it.

ROWLEY (O.C.)

Put him up at the Marriott, wine and dine the kid; tweak a miracle outta him. Where is he now?

MADISON (O.C.)

I told him to have a look around, network his message--

INT. USA TODAY NEWSPAPER OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

ROWLEY

You told him what?

MADISON

Well, he's not our prisoner, David! We can't just lock him up and...

Rowley's eyes start bulging in anger. He splutters, unable to form words. Madison takes the hint.

MADISON (CONT'D)

Gone, boss!

EXT. CHURCH - AFTERNOON.

JC arrives outside CHRIST THE KING CHURCH on Rossmore, south of Melrose. On bulletin board: "Today's Sermon: The Lamb of God Who Taketh Away the Sins of the World." JC contemplates, then steps in.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

JC takes a seat in a middle pew. FATHER DOMINIC sermonizes from pulpit. A giant crucifix is suspended behind altar.

We see Navarro, Abilena and their two kids in a pew.

JC looks at wrist of woman next to him; a rubber bracelet: "What Would Jesus Do?" The woman smiles, amiably showing it. JC smiles and looks directly at her cleavage; she goes blank and pulls her hand back, perturbed.

FATHER DOMINIC

...In the New Testament, John calls Jesus the Lamb of God, the sacrifice for sin. Isaiah 53:10 foretold that when Christ appeared, we would "make his soul an offering for sin." Romans 8:3 outlines how Jesus is the perfect sacrifice.

JC sniggers, sighs under his breath.

JC

It's come to this... The dance begins...

Father Dominic ignores him. The Jesus bracelet woman inches away from JC.

FATHER DOMINIC

Sacrifice of lambs played an important role in our journey to spiritual freedom. In fact, in Exodus 12:11, the Angel of Death passed over those people "covered by the blood" - a beautiful picture of Christ's atoning work on the cross.

JC speaks out loud to Father Dominic.

JC

(evenly)

"Atoning work"?

Father Dominic ignores JC, plows on.

FATHER DOMINIC

Exodus 29:38 tells of the daily sacrifices of lambs in Jerusalem; to point people towards the perfect sacrifice of Christ on the cross. The death of one for the salvation of many. Jesus bore the brunt of our sin--

JC bursts out laughing, rising and addressing Father Dominic. People are shocked into silence.

JC

Come on! Do you really believe this "atoning work on the cross"?

(addresses crucifix)

Doing some great atoning there, Yeshua - hang tight!

CHURCHIE-8

Father Dominic! Kick this bum out!

FATHER DOMINIC

Young man! If there is something you'd like to talk about, please visit me after mass! This is inappropriate! Please sit--

JC steps into the nave and slowly makes his way to the middle of the altar while he speaks.

JC

These "teachings" are inappropriate! This talk about human sacrifice; you don't think it bleeds into your culture--

CHURCHIE-1

He's got a point...

JC

--infects your children? You seek a thousand reasons for violence, and never blame snuff stories from your own bible.

CHURCHIE-8

Siddown meathead!

JC

You've euphemized human sacrifice into lambs and love and afterlife - your children, led by your example, willingly join the military--

CHURCHIE-2

Kids are influenced by video games - that's a scientific fact!

JC

--and you willingly send them - as human sacrifices for the sins of their parents. Your bible is not a gateway to peace - it's the obstacle!

A beat, then the crowd burst out squabbling.

CROWD

This is the house of God! - Tight! - Siddown! - Let him talk! - Who are you, God? - What gives you the right to question the bible? - You a terrorist? -

CHURCHIE-1

He's right! Why should we talk about sacrifice all the time - isn't it time to enjoy our lives?

CHURCHIE-3

Jesus died for us - what's the matter with you?

CHURCHIE-4

He had to be sacrificed for our sin!

CHURCHIE-1

I'm sick of being a sinner who needs saving! Hell, I wasn't in the Garden of Eden - why am I stuck with original sin?

FATHER DOMINIC

Please, my children! We can discuss this rationally. I'm sure this gentleman has some valid arguments, but this is not--

JC now stands before the altar. He spreads his arms in a grand gesture. His one word booms louder than natural.

JC

Peace!

Crowd and Father Dominic fall silent. JC addresses a lady.

JC (CONT'D)

Is there peace in this world, miss?

CHURCHIE-4

Look, please, I don't want to play your little games, whoever you are--

JC

"Blessed are the meek--"

CHURCHIE-1

--"for they shall inherit the earth."

CHURCHIE-7

Matthew 5:5. Hey, who are you, man?! You got a blog?

Some of the crowd raise cellphones, recording the commotion.

FATHER DOMINIC

I think you've said enough! Respect this house of the Lord. Someone call 9-1-1!

JC

"Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth." It means: only in peace will you have an Earth to inherit. Turn away from these cults and imaginary--

FATHER DOMINIC

How dare you blaspheme our savior in this house of worship, sir!

JC
 (points to giant crucifix)
 You're worshipping him? He's a proxy! He didn't bring peace. He didn't end what you call sin. He didn't even die for you!

FATHER DOMINIC
 God damn you, sir! Do not presume to know Jesus! He's more amazing than you can imagine!

JC
 And you, priest! Presuming authority with those false robes! You preach fantasy and insanity!
 (to crowd)
 If there is to be peace in this sector, there must be logic, common sense, understanding! Or sacrifice...

In her pew, Abilena excitedly pulls Navarro's sleeve.

ABILENA
 (loudly whispering)
 It's him! It's him, Raffy!

NAVARRO
 Shh, baby! Not now!

ABILENA
 I tell you, it's him!

CARLOS
 Where's baby Jesus, mama?

Crowd shouting back and forth in anger and doubt. Father Dominic moves toward JC from pulpit.

FATHER DOMINIC
 Okay, that's enough! Let's get you out--

JC stands center-stage, before the altar. He raises his arms amongst the shouting.

JC
 Witness!... Your hypocrisy!

With a lightning move, JC turns and brings his forearm down on the marble altar, chopping it in half with a THUNDEROUS CRACK. The shockwave shudders the church and the giant crucifix sways and falls. The base hits the ground and it leans forward and falls toward JC and the smashed altar.

With one hand, JC effortlessly stops its fall, then flings it off him distractedly, onto shattered altar.

Everyone freezes. Silence in the REVERB of the decimation.

JC (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Why do you only listen to talk of peace
from those with the power to war?

FATHER DOMINIC
(fearful)
Who... are... you?

JC
I am the Caretaker of this sector. I come
to bring peace. But I am not the lamb. I
am the lion who sent him.

Abilena breaks the silence, jumping up and shouting.

ABILENA
It's him! It's Jesus Christ! He's come
back to save us!

Crowd suddenly erupts, everyone crushing around JC, trying to touch him, shouting requests.

CHURCHIE-1
I always knew it was you,
Jesus!

CHURCHIE-2
Jesus, please cure my son's
brain disease!

CHURCHIE-3
Please make me win the
lottery!

CHURCHIE-4
Make me lose weight, Jesus!

CHURCHIE-5
Make the Colts quarterback
come back after his injury!

CHURCHIE-6
Make gas prices go down!

JC
I come to bring peace! You must move
against the Death your leader brings.

Crowd shouting and mobbing JC, who exits as he speaks.

EXT. CHURCH - AFTERNOON.

JC at top of church steps. Crowd makes it impossible to move further. JC shouts above the din.

JC
Be at peace! I will explain all you need
to know. We protect Life in all sectors--

Crowd is too impatient for rationale. JC fields their directionless questions. Overlapping dialog.

CHURCHIE-1

Where do our souls go when we die?

JC

There are no souls.

CHURCHIE-3

Up to his planet, Dumb-ski!

CHURCHIE-4

No souls - whadaya mean?!

CHURCHIE-7 puts his arm around JC'S neck with no propriety, flashes cellphone in their faces.

CHURCHIE-7

Can I get a picture, Jesus? Thanks, man!

WOMEN with babies force them onto JC, other people weeping and touching his cowboy shirt. Cellphone cameras flash.

CHURCHIE-1

What do we do? Tell us!

CHURCHIE-8

Help us kill the Arabs!

JC

Your Internet makes direct communication among billions of humans possible - linking all the brains on earth into a planetary consciousness--

JC hands babies back, fends off arms clutching at him.

JC (CONT'D)

(answers CHURCHIE-8)

Kill for sustenance, kill for self-defense. Do not kill for greed, or for someone else's slogan--

CHURCHIE-5

What planet are you from?

JC

No planet - we reside in the interstices between dimensions--

CHURCHIE-5

Inter-wha--?

CHURCHIE-3

It's like the Internet - only in outer space-like.

JC

Your technology reaches into the cosmos,
yet your messages remain provincial. You
think you are alone in the wilderness,
but many others have heard your voice.

CHURCHIE-1

Can you, like, do an e-mail blast for us,
Jesus? Can you cure her son through the
internet?

JC

I am not here to cure you with medicines
you don't have. Or to make your team win.
Or give you money--

CHURCHIE-2

Won't cure my son? What good are you?!

JC

Life and death are part of the Universe.
The sick and weak must be allowed to die.

CHURCHIE-2

"Allowed" to die?! You're not Jesus!
Jesus was compassionate and kind and
cured the sick! Hope God strikes you
down, you impostor!--

JC rises to this challenge, arms out, calling to the sky.

JC

Then strike me down! Any god of any
religion - strike me down!

In the silence, nothing happens.

JC (CONT'D)

There is no "god"!

Silence. Someone laughs. Someone screams. A baby vomits.

JC (CONT'D)

But there is no absence of god! There is
just - The Universe. Among the canvas of
worlds, you are not pioneers, you are not
special; you are not "noble"; you exist
among countless others.

CHURCHIE-7

Oh yeah? If we're not special, then
why're you here?

CHURCHIE-1

Yeah, how come you're not on Venus or something?

CHURCHIE-3

Too hot, Dumb-ski!

JC

Life! You have Life! The Caretakers go where Life flourishes. But now Life is threatened through your destructiveness. I do not come to save you. I come to save Life in this sector.

CHURCHIE-6

What's he talking about?

CHURCHIE-3

You gonna ask for money now?

JC

No money. No killings. No persecution in anyone's name. No politics or duplicity. Life is the engine. No morals or love or religion.

JC is interrupted by SIRENS WAILING in the distance. Crowd goes wild, noisily crushing, making last requests.

CROWD

Jesus, my dog, my dog! - You got a website, dude? - Here's my number, Jesus! - When will the Pope die? - Is Ralph Nader gonna run for President again? -

ABILENA

(to Navarro)

Raffy, help him.

Navarro hands Carlos to his wife, who is already holding Serena, hands her car keys also.

CARLOS

Daddy, can I please have McDonald's now? Have we seen baby Jesus? Can I please?

NAVARRO

Here, Carlos - go with mama.

SERENA

McDonna! McDonna!

Abilena kisses Navarro tenderly.

ABILENA

We're gonna be okay. He's here!

CARLOS

Daddy, can I come with you? Please?!

NAVARRO

(to Carlos)

Daddy will come home in a little while, baby, okay? Mama will take you to McDonald's.

CARLOS

Yay! McDonald's! Okay daddy - bye!

As Abilena nudges down the steps with kids, Navarro pushes up through crowd to JC at top of steps. He takes JC's arm.

NAVARRO

Jesus, I'm Rafael.

JC

No requests?

NAVARRO

(indicating SIRENS)

If you are who you say you are, it can't hurt to give you a hand. You don't wanna meet these guys right now.

JC

I need to meet everyone I can, Rafael.

NAVARRO

Trust me, Jesus. Let me get you outta here. And you can do your thing when everything's calmed down, man!

JC

(archly)

You want me to put my faith in you without any proof?

Navarro does a double-take, unsure.

JC (CONT'D)

(smiling)

Your move, son.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Navarro shepherds JC back inside church, up the nave, as crowd pushes in on their heels.

INT. CHURCH RECTORY

Navarro pushes JC through rectory door, behind altar area, slams it shut with crowd obnoxiously BANGING on door.

Father Dominic rushes to kneel before JC in supplication, kissing JC's hand, while Navarro THUMPS through back rooms looking for an exit.

FATHER DOMINIC

Oh, Jesus! Jesus! Will you forgive me,
Lord? I am Dominic Rossi, your servant!
My faith was tested and I failed!

NAVARRO (O.C.)

(calls from back rooms)
Father Dom, where's the back door?

JC

Faith should be tested, never accepted
blindly. And you're not my servant,
Dominic. You serve an ideal that never
existed.

FATHER DOMINIC

I serve you, Lord!

JC

Get this straight and tell your people: I
am not your crucified savior resurrected;
the test to your faith is not believing
what you think I am - it is believing
what I am.

FATHER DOMINIC

But... but...

NAVARRO (O.C.)

Jesus! Come on! This way!

JC

Whatever will you do with all your
reverence now?...

Father Dominic hesitantly lets go of JC'S hand. He is still kneeling, silent, when JC rushes out with Navarro.

EXT. CHURCH - SAME TIME

A police cruiser pulls up, cops, MARTINEZ and GARDNER, exit vehicle. Gardner runs into church, while crowd mobs Martinez.

MARTINEZ

(talking in all directions)
 Okay, okay, who was just here? Look,
 lemme get a coupla - yes sir, what
 happened? No sir - Yes sir, I'm sure you
did see him. We are at his house--

Gardner calls from the top of the steps.

GARDNER

Sargent Martinez, you gotta see this!

INT. CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER.

Martinez and Gardner stare at shattered altar and crucifix.

MARTINEZ

Oh, for the love o' Christ!

INT. PUB - EVENING.

JC and Navarro sit at bar, drinking. JC is getting sloshed,
 Navarro is buying (JC has no money).

JC

I've monitored this stuff for eons, but
 never so... copiously. It does make a
 body feel... No wonder Madison...

NAVARRO

Y'know, Jesus, my wife, she believes all
 that miracle shi--all that stuff. She
 gets those e-mail spams: "Forward this to
 10 friends for a miracle." And she does!--

JC is eyeing a waitress.

JC

(boisterous, off-topic)
 She's got a body built for procreation,
 Rafael. Let us go forth and multiply.

NAVARRO

I just believe in taking care of my
 family, Jesus.

JC

Great, Rafael! Now why you telling me?!

NAVARRO

I want to help you bring peace. I wanna
 see my son grow up, play football; see my
 little Serena's grandchildren, y'know?

JC

So quit.

NAVARRO

Quit? What, the army? Nah, that's not what I mean--

JC

That is what you mean. You're just waiting for someone to convince you.

NAVARRO

For a savior, you sure don't know how things work around here. I been stop-
losses, man - direct order from the president; no judge in the land will--

JC

For a lifelong resident of this place, you sure didn't learn enough not to enlist in the first place.

NAVARRO

I'm fighting for my country.

JC

For your "country" - or to keep politicians in private jets; to arm them with political leverage; to elevate their power and blood money?--

NAVARRO

Okay, okay, I made a mistake, man! Caught up in every new slogan: WMD, oil, democracy, terrorism, selling weapons, torture, troop movements...

JC

You all fall for it, Rafael; you're so indoctrinated, now you feel naked without your gun.

NAVARRO

Got that right, Jesus! I can't even walk into McDonald's anymore; I don't feel my gun here, I feel less safe! That's fucked up, man!

JC

Comes a time when the most honorable thing to do - for peace, for yourself, for your sector - is to walk away.

NAVARRO

But I signed a contract! I go AWOL - it's jail, court-martial, dishonorable discharge. Can't do it, Jesus. Gotta think of my family.

JC

They're right about one thing, Rafael - peace is sacrifice. But you don't have to lose a limb for peace. You achieve peace by eradicating the warring elements.

JC continues drinking.

NAVARRO

But they got our balls--

JC

If the military exists, they'll use it. Take away their power. What if they called a draft and no one came?

JC downs drink, SLAMS down empty glass, shouts at BARTENDER.

JC (CONT'D)

Barkeep - more mead for me and my wardog friend here!

NAVARRO

(sighs)

Why can't you just make everyone live in peace? The Middle East and the Democrats and the Taliban and the oil guys?...

JC

(quaffing another drink)

Free will's a bitch, Raf!

Navarro's cellphone rings.

INT. DUBROWSKI'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Dubrowski enters. Calls to JC.

DUBROWSKI

Honey! I'm home!

Dubrowski throws his briefcase in its regular corner, drops his keys, goes to fridge, grabs a hotdog and bread slice, lifts a water bottle, eats, talking all the while.

DUBROWSKI (CONT'D)

I killed today! Those bastards didn't stand a chance! We're down for tomorrow! I got the contracts right here! How'd you go surfing the web, Dick Dale? We're gonna get some legs with bloggers - you have no idea how many people who can't write, write. Y'know, we should go shopping tomorrow, get you some man-clothes; maybe something a little flashy but not too flamboyant. Something that says 'I may look tacky but I'm ahead of the fashion curve'...

Dubrowski realizes apartment is silent. Stops chewing.

DUBROWSKI (CONT'D)

Hey, JC? Surfer dude? Jesus?

Dubrowski rushes through apartment. Empty. He sees wine bottle and glasses on coffee table, notices something near couch; picks up a woman's panties. Spit-takes the hotdog.

DUBROWSKI (CONT'D)

Oh, for the love o' Christ!

Dubrowski is startled by a KNOCK on the door.

INT. PUB - EVENING.

Senator Alden in a booth having a drink with Berg and Roynham.

SENATOR ALDEN

Well, that was a fuckin' waste of time!
"Peace Summit," my White Republican ass!

BERG

Meeting all those Middle East leaders can only bulk your resume for 2024.

SENATOR ALDEN

Sure, but Blackwell's pissed away America's foreign credibility; Turkmenistan's about to ally with Afghanistan--

They look up when they hear a loudmouth at the bar. We see JC, from Alden's P.O.V.

JC

Barkeep - more mead for me and my wardog friend here!

They turn back, uninvolved.

BERG
Another beer?

SENATOR ALDEN
All 'round.
(indicates indigestion drink)
And uh, Berg, another--

Berg slides out of the booth.

INT. DUBROWSKI'S APARTMENT - EVENING.

KNOCK on door. Dubrowski looks through peephole. It is Madison. He swings open door and holds up panties.

DUBROWSKI
I wouldn't be much of a reporter if I
couldn't guess these are yours.

Madison, flustered, grabs panties, shoves into purse.

MADISON
Uh, thanks, er - Mr. Dubrowski, er - Is
Jesus around?--

DUBROWSKI
You know my name, you know where I live,
you've drunk my wine, you've schtupped my
houseguest, and all I know about you is
your panty size.

MADISON
Uh, sorry, Mr. Dubrowski. Madison Brandt,
USA TODAY. I need to talk to--

Dubrowski grabs her hand in greeting, pulls her inside.

DUBROWSKI
Oh, a partner in crime, eh? Now it makes
sense. Come in! Come in!

MADISON
Is Jesus still--

DUBROWSKI
He's flown the coop.

MADISON
Mr. Dubrowski, do you know where we could-

DUBROWSKI

Miss Brandt, you of all people should appreciate how much I don't appreciate having my story pulled from under me.

MADISON

Mr. Dubrowski--

DUBROWSKI

"Marty."

MADISON

I'm truly sorry and embarrassed, Marty, but I think this guy's the real deal--

DUBROWSKI

He's real all right. The Earth might have moved for you today, Cutie, but the Earth stopped yesterday and these peepers were on scene.

MADISON

So do you know where he could have--

Dubrowski rounds on Madison sternly.

DUBROWSKI

Listen, Brandt! We're not moving forward until we get a few things straight. Now I'll bet a Pulitzer we're onto something bigger than Ben-Hur, so I'm willing to forgive you your ethical trespasses - so you owe me big. First - we share the byline--

MADISON

Marty, you know I've got to talk to my editor for--

Dubrowski's look says: Get It Done.

MADISON (CONT'D)

Uh...OK.

DUBROWSKI

And - I want half of everything: book rights, movie deals, Jumpin' Jesus pogo sticks - you name it.

MADISON

(sarcastically)

You want I should sign in blood or will a handjob do?

DUBROWSKI

Don't tempt me, Cutie - we could be onto the biggest thing since, well, Jesus Christ, and I'm covering all the angles now so we don't lose him to Rupert Murdoch. We'll sign the papers before any bloodletting or handjobs, trust me--

Madison's cellphone rings. She answers.

MADISON

(into phone)

Yes, David... uh-huh... Rossmore and Melrose...

(to Dubrowski)

A guy smashed a massive marble altar at Christ the King Church on Rossmore; said something about being "the lion who sent the lamb."

Dubrowski moves towards door, with Madison in tow.

DUBROWSKI

That your editor?

MADISON

Uh-huh.

DUBROWSKI

(motions to give him the phone)

Lemme...

INT. STAIRWELL - EVENING

As Dubrowski and Madison descend stairs hurriedly, Dubrowski is on phone to Rowley.

MADISON

David, Mr. Dubrowski would like--oh, OK.

(hands Dubrowski phone)

David Rowley.

DUBROWSKI

Mr. Rowley, Marty Dubrowski, Jesus's manager--

ROWLEY (O.C.)

Mr. Dubrowski, glad to speak with you. Erhm, I wonder if we could talk some kind of deal--

DUBROWSKI

We're quoting the same bible passage, Mr. Rowley.

ROWLEY (O.C.)

Look, I'm at this Peace Summit thing, so why don't you bring him in tomorrow morning; dying to see one of your boy's miracles.

DUBROWSKI

I'm sure we can squeeze one outta him... David.

ROWLEY (O.C.)

Let's give 'em hell, Marty!

DUBROWSKI

Let's give 'em heaven!

They both laugh mock-evilly, Madison looking on confused.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH RECTORY - NIGHT

KNOCKING on rectory door. Father Dominic opens it to Madison and Dubrowski.

DUBROWSKI

Hear your altar's been altered, Father.

Father Dominic tries to slam door shut, Madison stops him.

MADISON

Uh, sorry about my caveman colleague, Father. I'm Madison Brandt from USA TODAY and this is Martin Dubrowski from THE ENQUIRER. We're looking for Jesus.

FATHER DOMINIC

(trying to close door again)
He's not here. I've already spoken to the press and police and--

Dubrowski steps forward and forcefully holds door.

DUBROWSKI

The press? Shit! We gotta get to him before-- Father, yesterday I saw a miracle. And by tomorrow, we're hoping to ... "promulgate" his message to the world. We're on his side, Father.

MADISON
We're here to help.

Father Dominic looks past Madison and Dubrowski warily to check they are alone, then opens door and lets them enter.

INT. PUB - NIGHT

JC and Navarro. We pick up where we left off. Navarro answers his cell phone while JC gulps down drinks.

NAVARRO
Yeah... oh, Father Dominic!... Yeah, I had to get off the streets until the heat died down... we're at Molly Malone's on Fairfax.

INT. CHURCH RECTORY - SAME TIME

Father Dominic on phone. Madison and Dubrowski stand near.

FATHER DOMINIC
(to Madison)
Molly Malone's pub, Fairfax and 6th.

Madison motions she knows it.

FATHER DOMINIC (CONT'D)
(to Navarro)
OK, stay there... two friends of his - Miss Brandt and Mr. Dubrowski... Thank you, Rafael, God bless.

Dubrowski charges for the door, but Father Dominic stops him.

FATHER DOMINIC (CONT'D)
Wait, my son! Take my hand.

Dubrowski gives Madison a look, like Father Dominic's a kook. Madison elbows Dubrowski.

DUBROWSKI
Seeking primitive human comfort, Father?

FATHER DOMINIC
We join our hands in prayer, my son. Lord, you have delivered your son to thwart extremist fake religions. We pray--

Dubrowski pulls his hand free and makes for the door, followed by Madison.

DUBROWSKI

Whoa! Got the wrong pigeon, Father!

MADISON

Father, he's not the son of god and his point is that all religions are fake--

DUBROWSKI

Don't presume to know Jesus, Father! He's more amazing than you can imagine!

INT. PUB - NIGHT

JC drains a glass and slams it on counter.

JC

Let's get outta here!

NAVARRO

But Jesus, your friends are on their way--

JC

(slurred words)

Rafael! This is my sector - I wanna take a look around! Comin'?

JC stumbles towards exit. Navarro counts his money gingerly onto the counter, then runs after JC, who has bumped into Berg, making him spill three beers.

BERG

Asshole!

JC

(laughing, tries to hug Berg)
Jesus forgives you, my son!

BERG

Get offa me, fuckin' freak!

NAVARRO

He's drunk, sir! Sorry, it was an accident--

BERG

So who foots the bill, soldier?

Navarro sadly reaches for his wallet.

NAVARRO

Yeah, well, uhm...

BERG
And for the laundry!

JC
 Rafael, you've been generous tonight -
 (hiccup) - and you've used enough of your
 money for my sake.

BERG
 Look, I don't care who pays - you or you!

JC
 (flippantly)
 No, what I mean is: no one needs to pay!

Berg grabs laughing JC by lapels, slams him back up against the bartop.

BERG
 You asshole!--

Before Navarro can intervene, JC has twisted out of Berg's grasp, forced Berg onto a barstool facing the bar, twisting his arms behind him in a vice-hold.

The Bartender immediately brandishes a baseball bat.

BARTENDER
 Hey! No trouble, fucker!

JC
 No trouble, barkeep!
 (to Berg, near his ear)
 What we're gonna do is: you're gonna
 accept my apologies and--barkeep, three
 waters for my perpendicular friend here!--

BARTENDER
 Let 'im go, buddy! He's a senate suit!

BERG
 Water?! We're drinking--nnghn!

Berg's arm is twisted tighter to quiet him.

JC
 (to Bartender calmly)
 It'll be okay, barkeep - just get the
 waters!

Bartender, bat in one hand, cautiously lays out three pint glasses, fills them with water.

JC (CONT'D)
 (to Berg)
 What I said was: no one needs to pay...

BERG
 Okay, okay - no one pays! Cool!--gnngh!

From their table, Alden sees Berg is in a spot.

SENATOR ALDEN
 What's this? Shit! Roynham, get Lloyd!

Roynham flips out his cell and presses a number, puts it away. He looks to Alden, indecisive.

SENATOR ALDEN (CONT'D)
 (indicating Berg)
 Well... go get him!

Back at the bar, JC tilts his head back. There is a blinding light. The waters turn into beers.

JC slaps the arriving Roynham on the back, who flinches.

JC
 Make sure he gets 'em to the table this time, eh?

JC leaves with the surprised Navarro. Roynham, Berg and Bartender are agape. Bartender's bat slips out of his hand and CLOPS to the floor.

Berg immediately gulps down a beer to test its authenticity; slowly puts it down, looking after JC.

BERG
 I'll be damned!...

EXT. OUTSIDE PUB - NIGHT

JC is rolling drunk and walking loosely.

NAVARRO
 How did - how did you do that?

JC
 Molecular transposition. Let's go to a naked lady bar. I haven't had enough naked ladies today. Hey taxi!

Navarro dialing Father Dominic, phone to his ear.

NAVARRO

You mean you've already had naked ladies today?--oh, Father Dom! Yeah, it's Rafael. No, no, I was--anyway, we've left the pub... He wanted to go... how'm I gonna stop him?...

A taxi pulls up. JC gets in, directs TAXI DRIVER.

JC

Be off, swift chariot!

NAVARRO

(leans in taxi window)

Hang on, Jesus! Let's wait for your friends!

JC

Rafael - this little lamb can find his way home.

Navarro gets into taxi, which drives off.

NAVARRO

(into phone)

Father Dom - lemme call you back... They haven't got my number?... oh, crap!... I'll let you know.

TAXI DRIVER

Where to?

NAVARRO

(to JC)

You sure aren't like the guy in the bible.

JC

Even the guy in the bible is not like the guy in the bible.

(to Taxi Driver)

Once around the town, my good man, and then the nakedest lady bar you can drive through the wall of.

NAVARRO

(to Taxi Driver)

No, please.

(to JC)

Look, I'll take you back to my place and we can chill there 'til tomorrow--

SCREECHING TIRES on street behind cab. Two black cars swerve through traffic unnoticed, to catch up with cab.

TAXI DRIVER
Okay where, ladies?

JC
(to Taxi Driver)
What's your name, citizen of this sector?

TAXI DRIVER
It's on the license, bro! Look, I'll drop you guys at the Pink Rhino. Some high-class hos there--

JC
(reads license)
"Hay-soos"! Hey, that's my name too!

TAXI DRIVER
(bored)
I'd a-never picked you for a Mexican, gringo.

NAVARRO
Please, could you take us to Melrose and Western?

TAXI DRIVER
Quit screwin' 'round! Where you guys headed?

One of the black cars pulls up alongside Taxi Driver's window. AGENT LLOYD flashes a badge.

AGENT LLOYD
Pull over! Agent Lloyd, Secret Service!

TAXI DRIVER
(to Navarro and JC)
Wha--? Hey, who are you guys? What is this?

NAVARRO
Shit! Those suits really were government!
Don't sweat. Keep driving!
(to JC)
Keep down - maybe they'll leave us alone.

Instead, JC rolls down a window and leans out.

NAVARRO (CONT'D)
What are you doing?!

JC

Hey fellas! Ya lookin' fer me?!

AGENT LLOYD

We'd like a word with you! Pull over!

TAXI DRIVER

Hey man! I'm not getting paid for this James Bond shit! I'm stopping - those narcs are serious, bro!

NAVARRO

You stop and they'll beat you to a pulp in a back room, same as us!

(to JC, pulling on his shirt)

Jesus - stop, man!

TAXI DRIVER

You just told me to keep driving, asshole! Whassa matter with you guys?!

NAVARRO

(to Taxi Driver)

Not you! Just keep driving - they got no right, we didn't do nothin'! They attacked us!

EXT. PARKING LOT DONUT SHOP - NIGHT.

Martinez and Gardner sit parked, with lattes and paninis.

POLICE DISPATCH (ON RADIO)

Unit 56, respond Code 3; three vehicles driving erratically heading north on Fairfax, from Olympic Boulevard, suspected Code 37.

MARTINEZ

God dammit!

Martinez hurls his sandwich and drink out the window, SCREECHES out of parking lot, flips on SIREN.

EXT. DUBROWSKI'S CAR - NIGHT.

Dubrowski and Madison drive south on Fairfax, arrive at intersection of Fairfax and Beverly. As they wait at the light they see, heading north towards them, two police cars clearing traffic, followed by a taxicab and two secret service cars, followed by two more police cars.

EXT. POLICE CAR - SAME TIME

Gardner and Martinez in lead police cruiser. Gardner on radio to dispatch, as they zoom north across Fairfax/Beverly intersection.

GARDNER

Unit 56 here, Martinez and Gardner, we're Code 6, engaged in pursuit; escorting Secret Service, north on Fairfax, leading suspect vehicle, yellow cab; will maintain position--

MARTINEZ

(looking in his rearview)
Shit! We lost 'em!

Behind Martinez, the yellow cab turns west on Beverly. Martinez hooks a u-turn, tires SCREECHING.

GARDNER

(into radio)
Suspect vehicle has turned west on Beverly, repeat: west on Beverly!--

INT/EXT. DUBROWSKI'S CAR

Dubrowski and Madison see yellow cab turn west onto Beverly. JC is hanging out a window of the taxi, laughing.

MADISON

You waiting for a personal invite?

DUBROWSKI

That guy's gonna be the death of us!

Dubrowski turns right onto Beverly, across two lanes of traffic, eliciting wild HONKING, and follows JC's cab.

EXT. HOTEL SOFITEL - NIGHT

Marquee: "Hotel Sofitel Welcomes World Peace Summit 2021."

Summit has concluded. Streets around Sofitel are ABUZZ with afterparty: dignitaries, citizens, press, police and protesters. Traffic logjammed. Camera flashes everywhere.

Reporter LARRY BONNET is on the street live.

LARRY BONNET

Though Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq proffered olive branches to President Blackwell, his resolute refusal to reconcile or compromise came as no surprise to the other nations currently in conflict with the United States: Iran, Syria, Georgia and Uzbekistan.

Protester groups, with picket signs and banners, are cordoned off in sections next to each other: two pro-war groups, CHRISTIANS FOR DEMOCRACY, MUSLIMS FOR ENLIGHTENMENT; and one anti-war group: PEACE FIRST.

Reporter LISA BELLAMY is on the street live.

LISA BELLAMY

President Blackwell left the summit early, sending a clear message to the foreign dignitaries that the United States' position remains resolute on no timelines for withdrawal from their territories.

Christians For Democracy get vocal on camera:

CHRISTIANS FOR DEMOCRACY

Get these Ay-rabs outta the country! -
Blood For Oil! - These rich bastards are
causing our deficit! -

Larry Bonnet interviews Wade amongst the Christians For Democracy.

WADE

(indicating Muslims For
Enlightenment)

These people attacked us and we gotta win
the War on Terrorism!

LARRY BONNET REPORTER

But what constitutes a "win"?

WADE

When we wipe 'em out! Go back to Arab-Land! Why does our government fix their schools? Nuke 'em back to the Stone Age!

The Christians For Democracy take up the chant of "Nuke 'em!"

Lisa Bellamy interviews Muslims For Enlightenment.

LISA BELLAMY

These American Muslims believe that the Middle Eastern leaders negotiating peace with the United States should stay at war instead, to fulfill holy writ.

Muslims For Enlightenment picket signs: Jihad on America, No Oil For Blood, Bomb Blackwell. They chant:

MUSLIMS FOR ENLIGHTENMENT

10-12! 10-12! 10-12!

MUSLIM-1

You Americans should keep your infidel feet off our Holy Lands--

LISA BELLAMY REPORTER

Yes, but your feet are planted right here in America--

MUSLIM-1

Dude, I was born here!--

LISA BELLAMY REPORTER

So how can you demand Americans out--

MUSLIM-2 butts in.

MUSLIM-2

'Cause they're holy lands, woman! You should cover yourself for Mohammed!

LISA BELLAMY

What do you mean, '10-12'?

MUSLIM-2

You'll see! We'll make you forget 9-11!--

LISA BELLAMY REPORTER

You're announcing the date of your--?

MUSLIM-2

We told you last time too. Allah blinded you and gave us victory!

Muslims For Enlightenment start chanting: "Victory!"

Fighting breaks out between the Muslims and Christians.

Rowley is pressing flesh near lobby entrance. He looks up as SIRENS and SCREECHING TIRES approach.

JANCY DAVIS, reporter for Entertainment Tonight, on site.

JANCY DAVIS

Well, they're in agreement on something at least - Muslims call it enlightenment, Christians call it democracy; looks like the same thing President Blackwell's selling--

Jancy looks up as JC, police and SS arrive at Sofitel.

Taxicab SCREECHES to a stop at jammed crowds and traffic. JC exits cab, big smile. SS cars SCREECH to halt behind taxi, four SS AGENTS leaping out. Taxi Driver jumps from cab and onto ground, hands behind head.

TAXI DRIVER

I didn't do nothing, man! I swear!

SS Agents ignore Taxi Driver, shouting at JC, pulling badges.

AGENT LLOYD

You! Halt! We want a word with you!

JC walks giddily at Peace First crowd, arms out, big smile.

PEACENIK-1

Hey - it's that YouTube Jesus guy!

PEACENIK-2

Who's over there?

PEACENIK-3

He's come to save us!

Peace First overwhelms JC, trying to touch him, yelling for autographs, press photographers snapping pics. SS Agents scramble at JC and are swept aside.

SLOW MOTION

JC sees Joshua White exiting the Sofitel, unnoticed by all around him. Their eyes meet. Then White is lost in the crowd.

Dubrowski and Madison are trapped in their car, crowd pushing in on all sides. They can see JC being mobbed.

DUBROWSKI

Does this make Jesus bigger than the Beatles again?

Martinez and Gardner are last to arrive. They exit car, can only look on at JC being mobbed.

Suddenly - a BOMB EXPLODES.

From numerous angles, we see the whole bottom floor of the Hotel Sofitel blow up, taking with it everyone on the street and bringing the Hotel crashing down on itself.

FADE TO BLACK.

ACT III

AUDIO ON BLACK

Two voices on phone, Blackwell's and CIA Director Thorn.

BLACKWELL

We're scrambled. Go ahead, Thorn.

CIA DIRECTOR THORN

We don't know what happened, Mr. President.

BLACKWELL

Then find out, goddamit! Every Middle Eastern leader was at that summit, Thorn!

CIA DIRECTOR THORN

I know, sir. It detonated! It went down!

BLACKWELL

(beat)

So why aren't any of those towelheads dead?

FADE IN:

INT. DUBROWSKI'S APARTMENT - DAY

CLOSEUP

USA TODAY headline: "MIRACLE MAN: Can He Bring Peace?"

PULL BACK

Newspaper is draped over sleeping JC's face, on Dubrowski's couch.

Dubrowski, in dressing gown, on the phone to Rowley. He stands talking, while stirring a drink on the table.

TV AUDIO in BG, reports last night's events.

ROWLEY (O.C.)

(on phone)

Well, I wanted a miracle - and I got one!

DUBROWSKI
 Sure did, David! Hang on, our boy is
 risen! Rejoice!

JC splutters, throws paper off, opens a bloodshot eye.

DUBROWSKI (CONT'D)
 How the hell are ya?
 (to Rowley)
 Lemme call you back, David. Thanks for
 the front page!

Dubrowski hangs up. Jesus croaks an unintelligible greeting.

DUBROWSKI (CONT'D)
 Y'know, usually you'd be lucky to make
 Page Four, but after last night's stunt,
 Cutie stopped the presses for you. And
 how sweet it is with my co-writer byline.

JC
 What?

Dubrowski deliberately raises his voice, while JC moans.

DUBROWSKI
 Called a hangover, JC!

JC
 (holding his head)
 Oooowahhh!...

JC rises slowly, groaning. Holding his gut, he shuffles over to Dubrowski, looks at TV. Dubrowski hands JC the drink he is stirring.

DUBROWSKI
 Here. Drink. Old tribal recipe.

JC
 (peers into drink)
 Wha's this?

DUBROWSKI
 It'll either kill ya, or wake you up.

They watch the TV news reports. By the various network logos, we see the news is everywhere.

CUTAWAYS ON TV

cellphone and security camera footage; press camera footage of Sofitel explosion closeup; crowds caught in blast; press chopper footage of building collapsing.

SUZE RANDALL NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)

Disaster was averted last night in Beverly Hills at the Hotel Sofitel, site of the 2021 World Peace Summit, when an explosion obliterated the building at approximately nine p.m. and it was somehow reconstituted - well, "magically" - as you see in this footage.

CUTAWAYS ON TV

a blinding light obscures every single video at the same point - just as the Sofitel becomes flattened. Glitches in all the media, then Sofitel is restored when media comes back online. Traffic and crowds restored, no explosive or smoke debris.

INT. TELEVISION STORE - DAY

Multiple TV screens show this footage while scores of people watch, spellbound.

TELEVISION BROADCAST

Larry Bonnet reports from street in front of Sofitel.

LARRY BONNET REPORTER

--not even al Qaeda taking credit for the vicious attack - which might have taken the lives of numerous world leaders had the mystery miracle man not intervened. Investigations continue--

INT. SOLLY'S ROOM - DAY

SOLLY

(speaking on a v-log)
...turnin' up even more evidence, the kind the government doesn't want exposed. Citizens, the bomb was an American design - this wasn't the slapdash Improvised Explosive Device of--

RIZZO (O.C.)

"Slapdash?" Who says slapdash, dude?

SOLLY

Shutup, Riz!--of Taliban design, it was CIA design--

TELEVISION BROADCAST

JOHN THURMOND COMMENTARY SHOW (V.O.)
 ...Eyewitnesses attribute the miracle to
this man - whom it was reported
 "gestured" just before the shockwave of
 the explosion reached him--

JC on press camera footage, cellphones, etc.

INTERVIEWEE: PEACENIK-1 (ON TV)
 I saw him do it! He's not a normal man.
 He's like, a super man, man!

INT. WHITE MIDDLE CLASS FAMILY HOME - DAY

Around the breakfast table, a W.A.S.P. family watches TV.

INTERVIEWEE: ARAB DIGNITARY (ON TV)
 We are feeling gladdened, now that we
 know a powerful man like this might some
 day be running your country.

The parent W.A.S.P.s look at each other approvingly.

INT. BANK - DAY

Customers wait in line, watching multiple TVs.

EXT. HOTEL SOFITEL - NIGHT.

TELEVISION BROADCAST

from last night, after disaster. Camera is shaky as crowds
 run panicked, joyous, confused.

LISA BELLAMY REPORTER (ON TV)
 I'm here at the Hotel Sofitel in Beverly
 Hills and - I can't believe what I've
 just-- This building was just leveled by
 an explosion and - and I swear, Katie, I
 was in the explosion and the building is
 now... what just--?

Larry Bonnet on site, soon after Sofitel restoration, with
 street interviews from Muslims For Enlightenment and
 Christians For Democracy. The swearing is bleeped.

WADE (ON TV)
 F**cking terrorists, man! You f**ked up,
 f**kers! We got Jesus, man! He knows me!

MUSLIM-1

It is Mohammed come to save us from the infidels!--

CHRISTIAN FOR DEMOCRACY-2

He's a white man, Haji! Didn't you see! It's our god! And he's gonna f**k you!--

MUSLIM-2

If he's your god, why did he save our leaders? Mohammed has returned!--

Christians For Democracy and Muslims For Enlightenment start wrestling.

INT. PUB - DAY

TELEVISION BROADCAST

from last night, after Sofitel restoration.

INTERVIEWEE: DEMOCRATIC SENATOR (ON TV)

With such power, I'm hoping that young man will assess how he can benefit the Blackwell White House in our peaceful quest for global cooperation.

SUZE RANDALL NEWS ANCHOR (ON TV)

The blogosphere is burning with debate on whether this unknown man is, in fact, an incarnation of--

INT. DOCTOR'S WAITING ROOM - SAME TIME

Patients watch a TV showing an Interviewer outside a grocery store with a crowd of lower middle-class.

INTERVIEWER (O.C.) (ON TV)

Do you think he's Jesus?

Majority of crowd assents enthusiastically. BYSTANDER in BG holds up picture that looks exactly like JC.

BYSTANDER

It's Joseph Smith! He looks exactly like him - see?! The Angel Moroni said this would happen--

INT. DUBROWSKI'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

JC and Dubrowski watch TV.

SHARON TASHMAN NEWS ANCHOR
 --don't know what to make of the interior
 of the Sofitel lobby being reconstituted
 to resemble an adult "gentleman's club."

CUTAWAY ON TV

Sofitel lobby tricked out with stages, moving lights,
 stripper poles.

Dubrowski laughs crazily.

JC
 (half-smiling)
 What?

DUBROWSKI
 That was you!

JC
I did that?

DUBROWSKI
 Yes, you drunken cow!

JC
 What's that noise?

Dubrowski leads JC to a window.

P.O.V. WINDOW

Looking down to the street, we see a crowd making a commotion
 on the apartment front lawn, stretching down the street.

DUBROWSKI
 (shouts out window)
 "He's not the Messiah! He's a very
 naughty boy!"

Crowd cheers wildly.

JC
 How'd they find out where we are?

DUBROWSKI
 People find out.

JC
 What now?

DUBROWSKI

Well, I see CNN, NBC, ABC, a few locals,
national press over there, cops,
cultists, cuties, and even a beer
company. And being your personal manager--

Dubrowski "ahems" as JC looks at him quizzically.

DUBROWSKI (CONT'D)

--I'd say, "Let us go down from the
mountain and confound them."

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Agent Lloyd, with Alden, Berg and Roynham.

SENATOR ALDEN

Someone tell me what the fuck happened?
Agent Lloyd?

BERG

(to Agent Lloyd)

Where were you when he grabbed me?

AGENT LLOYD

Staking out the perimeter, as ordered--

SENATOR ALDEN

Screw your little dance of dipshit! Who
planted that bomb? Did he?

AGENT LLOYD

So he could dive into it?

SENATOR ALDEN

If he knew it wouldn't harm him... make
him look like a hero.

ROYNHAM

I don't know, Senator. He disappeared
shortly after - he wasn't looking for
fame or credit.

SENATOR ALDEN

(calming)

Well, with such power, he could've offed
me at any time, so he's not out to kill
me at least... so what is he up to?

No one answers.

SENATOR ALDEN
 (to Agent Lloyd)
 Keep an eye on him.

EXT. DUBROWSKI'S APARTMENT - DAY

JC exits Dubrowski's apartment building, with Dubrowski in tow. He is immediately swamped. Smiling and putting out his hands, letting people touch them.

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE

showing JC on covers of TIME, NEWSWEEK, U.S. NEWS, also international papers and websites: TA NEA (Greece), Tages-Anzeiger (Switzerland), EuropeanVoice.com, The New Vision (Uganda website), Al Jazeera website, Vatican website, Lidovky.cz (Czech)... Result: everyone knows JC.

MONTAGE intercut with following interviews.

INT. THE ZADRA TALK SHOW - DAY

ZADRA
 ...one of the biggest arguments against Jesus being not of this world was that he didn't bring any new technology to the table - no talk of fridges or cars--

INT. GOOD MORNING AUSTRALIA SHOW - DAY

JC answers the above question on the GOOD MORNING AUSTRALIA SHOW, host MATT HOWELL.

JC
 But he did bring technology - and it was completely misunderstood. Think about praying - how do you do it, Matt?

MATT HOWELL HOST
 Er, what's that got to do with technology?

JC
 Let me clarify: you're an adult human, surrounded by broadcast technology, and you send "mind signals" into space for the really important stuff?

Crowd laughs. In the wings, Dubrowski sniggers.

DUBROWSKI

That's my boy!

MATT HOWELL HOST

When you put it that way, it sounds kinda goofy--

JC

One of the many technologies he introduced was two-way radio. "Call on me and I will answer," meant "call on the radio!" Of course, leave behind something that complex and eventually someone's gonna destroy it for being "evil."

Crowd laughs.

INT. JAPANESE NEWS PROGRAM - DAY

JAPANESE NEWS ANCHOR

[Japanese, English subtitles]
His views are the epitome of Social Darwinism: Let robbers rob. Let killers kill - on the proviso they watch their own backs in a new, freer society that would allow vengeance with impunity.

EXT. ARMY YARD - DAY

ARMY PERSONNEL and vehicles fill BG, readying to depart, as Navarro calls JC on a public phone in the yard.

NAVARRO

Yeah...freaky night, man!... Hey Jesus, y'know, I appreciate everythin' you doin,' but y'understand?... Okay, gotta book. Hey, we'll have another beer soon! Yo, take it easy, "Hay-soos"...

INT. FRENCH TALK SHOW - NIGHT

Host CLAUDE speaks to JC. French, with English subtitles.

CLAUDE

You say "no souls" - but Jesus told us we would go on after our time on Earth.

JC

[fluent French, English subtitles]
When he said "We" would go on, he meant "we the Caretakers," not "you." Claude, your species suffers a bad case of anthropocentric narcissism.

INT. "FEMVIEW" BRITISH TALK SHOW - NIGHT

Four ladies interview JC in informal couch setting (think: THE VIEW). MOLLY the matriarch, PHOEBE the brain, JANA the activist, BRIANA the skin.

PHOEBE FEMVIEW
--then what's the purpose of living if we don't "go on."

JC
You "don't go on"? How about sex?

Crowd laughs. The hosts all talk at once.

MOLLY FEMVIEW
I dunno, Jesus - are you asking?

BRIANA FEMVIEW
Now you're talkin', Jesus!

JANA FEMVIEW
Men are such pigs!

PHOEBE FEMVIEW
No, go on. Go on--

JC
Why is sex regarded as "bad"? Called unsafe, dangerous; transmitting disease; you've been told to "protect" your kids from sex; there's statutory rape, pornography--

JANA FEMVIEW
I don't see where you're going with this.

JC
Sex itself is not the cause of disease - it's cellular dysfunction, viruses, immune system weakness. Sex is not "dangerous" - Sex transmits Life!

INT. MADISON'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Madison and JC in bed, watch FEMVIEW. JC grabs Madison.

JC
And it's fun too!

MADISON
I think that Jana bitch wants you.

INT. "FEMVIEW" BRITISH TALK SHOW - NIGHT

PHOEBE FEMVIEW
A very philosophical way of looking--

JANA FEMVIEW

You guys buying any of this, 'cause I'm not!

JC

It's not philosophy - it's purely physics. Your genes, pieces of you, do "go on" in your children.

INT. CONWAY SHOW - NIGHT

Talk Show Host CONWAY introduces JC.

CONWAY

You've seen his numerous TV appearances, he's in every magazine, from TIME to THE ENQUIRER; the web is burning down with his hits; matter of fact, he's in the news more than Miley Cyrus these days - but she's still 3 divorces and 2 drug-induced nervous breakdowns ahead of him--

Crowd laughs.

CONWAY (CONT'D)

He's not a spirit, or a god; his race gave us our Jesus of Nazareth...

Crowd cheers, APPLAUDS. Someone yells: "Jesus is god!"

CONWAY (CONT'D)

Yes, the Caretakers (some contention on 'god' there). Let's give him a big Earth welcome, ladies and gentlemen: Jesus!

JC enters to APPLAUSE and studio band playing "Jesus Is Just Alright With Me" (Doobie Brothers) and takes his guest seat.

CONWAY (CONT'D)

First time on the show, thanks for being here, Jesus!

JC

Thank you for having me, Conway.

CONWAY

Now I gotta ask you something... on behalf of the guys here and, I think, the studio audience as well, but would you... perform a miracle for us?

Crowd noise of approval.

JC
 (amused)
 A "miracle" implies I contravene the laws
 of physics - I don't...

INT. PAKISTANI TALK SHOW - DAY

LATE NIGHT WITH BEGUM NAWAZISH ALI. JC talks with host, ALI SALEEM, who is dressed in drag.

JC
 [fluent Pakistani, English subtitles]
 --We are no more magic than you are. Your
 GPS phones, digital scanners - they're
 not magic - but take them back 2000 years
 and suddenly - you're a god! Your own
 Arthur C. Clarke said, "Any sufficiently
 advanced technology is indistinguishable
 from magic."

ALI SALEEM
 You're not coming to "fight us over here"
 are you, Jesus, you handsome devil?

Ali Saleem finger-walks up the arm of JC's chair.

JC
 (smiles)
 What the USA needs to understand about
 fighting them "over there"--

ALI SALEEM
 (coy, finger-walking)
 So should I go over there, or do you want
 to come over here?

Crowd laugh, JC smiles, gets serious.

JC
 --is that the fight is with you wherever
 you want to hide and fight from; it
 affects you financially, psychologically,
 socially--

Ali Saleem's fingers have reached JC's shoulders, twirling a
 lock of his hair.

ALI SALEEM
 But Jesus, who does your hair?

Crowd laughs.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - SAME TIME

Blackwell watching BEGUM SHOW on laptop in bed. He picks up his phone. We don't see Thorn during this conversation, just hear his voice.

BLACKWELL

Luce, get the CIA Director for me,
wouldja please, honey?
(beat, he waits)

CIA DIRECTOR THORN (ON PHONE)

Thorn here, Mr. President.

BLACKWELL

This Jesus activist: what the hell is he
doing on overseas TV pissing on my
foreign policies?

CIA DIRECTOR THORN (ON PHONE)

He has no affiliation, sir, so we've got
no leverage. We're not even sure what his
nationality is right now.

BLACKWELL

Not even sure--? Well, get the INS on it,
Thorn! Is he a threat?

CIA DIRECTOR THORN (ON PHONE)

Harmless, as far as we know, Mr.
President. Had an altercation with
Senator Alden's aide a couple months
back, so we tried to pick him up - night
of the Sofitel incident. He's got a
growing contingent of - heh - "disciples"
- politically across the grid, from
Gandhi-types to Hitler-types; don't think
any of 'em actually agree on his
"message." No records, no priors, no
prints, no past.

BLACKWELL

(beat)
The Sofitel?

CIA DIRECTOR THORN

Nothing, sir. Clean.

BLACKWELL

(beat)
Let's talk to him...

INT. MADISON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JC and Madison in bed, curled into each other, talking, watching his public appearances on TV.

MADISON
I'd like you to stay...

JC
I know.

MADISON
Just putting it out there. I know this is your job, traveling around and--God! I feel like a pathetic housewife waiting for you to come back from a road trip...

JC
I may not be back for millennia.

MADISON
(sighs)
You told me it would end this way.

JC
Peace is sacrifice, Madison.

Her cellphone RINGS.

INT. MEGACHURCH - DAY

The BRINN MARION SHOW. Evangelist BRINN is exorcising a young lady. His hands roam freely over her breasts and body.

BRINN
(flamboyantly frenetic)
Oooh! Devil, you have tried to take this fair servant of the Lord with your evil cancer, but I tell you, Devil - Get out!
Get oooout!

The woman faints. Brinn closes his show.

BRINN (CONT'D)
We've had a mighty show tonight, ladies and gentlemen! Jesus himself visited and delivered his Message of Peace!

Crowd cheers wildly.

BRINN (CONT'D)
Jesus! Come on back out here!

Amidst cheering and CHOIR SINGING and BAND PLAYING, JC comes onstage from wings, smiling and waving.

BRINN (CONT'D)

Jesus, will you do us the honor of healing some of your flock? Drive that no-good devil out for once and for good.

JC

(smiling)

Hang on, Brinn! I appreciate you letting me broadcast my message - but it doesn't come with a sideshow. That's your department.

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Alden, Berg and Roynham watch the Brinn Marion Show.

BERG

Senator Alden, I don't believe he's in any kind of agreement with Brinn Marion.

SENATOR ALDEN

Doesn't matter, Berg! This farty preacher is Blackwell's spiritual advisor and he's on that show. Sends a message he's arcing to the New Left.

INT. PRODUCTION ROOM - SAME TIME

DIRECTOR of Brinn Marion Show sits before bank of monitors, speaking into his comm to PRODUCER.

DIRECTOR BRINN SHOW

Was this guy briefed? Should we cut to break? He's losin' him.

PRODUCER BRINN SHOW (ON COMM)

Are you kidding? Ratings are through the fucking roof! Doesn't matter what he says - they'll forget him tomorrow. We got Criss Angel!

INT. MEGACHURCH - DAY

JC

...At its most fundamental, Life is sex. But that information was distorted - unless you look at it and talk about it and do it the "proper" way, you're a pervert, a deviant.

(MORE)

JC (CONT'D)

But it's actually the other way around,
Brinn: the people suppressing themselves
and accusing others - they're the ones
perverting natural processes.

BRINN

(unsure)

What are you saying, Jesus?

JC

There is something 'right' in what you do
so 'wrongly,' Brinn.

Crowd "oooohs." Brinn doesn't know how to react. He fake-smiles.

BRINN

Why, Jesus, you sure do talk funny!--

We see the Director. In his comm, we hear the Producer.

PRODUCER BRINN SHOW (ON COMM)

This is fuckin' great!

INT. GERMAN TALK SHOW - DAY

JC interviewed by host REINHOLD in German, English subtitles.

JC

I am not "their" Muslim god, or the white
Christian god. I am not a god! I am a
Caretaker. When gods talk, peace is the
path to war.

REINHOLD

Yet they all want peace.

JC

They want domination. I come to bring
peace.

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

SENATOR ALDEN

Berg, ever wondered what would happen if
a normal human ran against a god-king?

BERG

Er, never happened in my lifetime--

SENATOR ALDEN

Of course not! There's never been a real
god-king - until now! We're facing this
dilemma! Roynham - stats?

ROYNHAM

Gallup shows his approval at 80% with the middle class, sir.

SENATOR ALDEN

(to Berg)

See what I mean?

BERG

But if he's successful at bringing peace - isn't that what we want, Senator?--

SENATOR ALDEN

Fuck his peace! Peace is power over commerce, not lack of war. When I run in four, we can't let this magician siphon off votes for some independent party of hippie culties. Find some dirt on him!

ROYNHAM

Sir, we've dug! No records, no priors - it's like he appeared outta nowhere.

SENATOR ALDEN

Look, you two: I've learned my lesson with Blackwell. I swore I'd never let him betray this country again. When he ran for president, we all believed it was the most honorable job a man could aspire to, so we buried his Kuwait covert ops - for "honor," for "country" - for shit! Now he's a bigger traitor to America and humanity than he ever was in '91. I failed him! I failed the country! You can't find dirt on Jesus - make some! I've sacrificed too much to let anyone take America off me again!

INT. MADISON'S BEDROOM - NIGHT.

We pick up where we left off - JC and Madison in bed. Madison's cellphone RINGS. She answers it warily.

VOICE ON PHONE:

Miss Madison Brandt.

MADISON

Who's calling?

VOICE ON PHONE

This is the Office of the President of the United States.

INT. JPL - DAY

Dylan and Jodie run checks on ELM. A few techs in BG.

DYLAN

Two more days to launch and these gimbals
are still giving us strange readings--
what the fuck is this?

CIA AGENTS, led by AGENT HARRIS, burst into room, accompanied
by armed soldiers.

AGENT HARRIS

(showing badge)

Mr. Dylan Walters? Agent Harris, CIA.
We're requisitioning the Eris Lander
Mission under orders of the president of
the United States.

DYLAN

The wha--? What the--?

Jodie is not surprised in the least. She moves forward.

JODIE

Dylan, it's OK. These men are on orders
directly from President Blackwell. We
still want you on the team--

DYLAN

Wha--? What are you talking about?!
Whadayou mean, "we"? What the hell is--?

AGENT HARRIS

Mr. Walters, my explanations are a
courtesy, not a requirement.

DYLAN

This is a civilian facility, you
bastards! What gives you the right to
militarize--?

JODIE

SETI found life, Dylan.

DYLAN

I'm happy for you - but what's that go to
do with anythi--?

JODIE

Hold on! Let me explain! I...

Dylan is confused over why Agent Harris is letting Jodie take the lead, looking back and forth between them.

DYLAN
Well... what?

JODIE
About a year ago, spectrographic analysis confirmed life on Eris--

DYLAN
What?! Jodie, you know what this means?--

JODIE
That's not all, Dylan.

Dylan is scientifically aroused and forgets momentarily he is being held.

DYLAN
I know! We have to start a regimen of radio signals and chemical analysis, right on the heels of the Lander--

JODIE
No, Dylan! That's not what I mean.

Dylan is brought back to reality.

JODIE (CONT'D)
About ten months ago, President Blackwell commissioned Warrior missiles added to the ELM--

DYLAN
Is that what this is about? Jodie - tell these dumb shits:
(to room in general)
A countdown isn't "3-2-1-blast off!" It's calculated from the launch window backwards, so time can be allocated for all the prep. We can't possibly retrofit the module with Warriors and still make the launch window in 48 hours--

JODIE
It's been done! At our underground desert facility. Fuel and payload accounted for; we just need to--

DYLAN
(trailing off)
Wha--? You told me Area 51 didn't exist.

AGENT HARRIS
It doesn't, Mr. Walters.

JODIE
--marry it to the existing chassis...

DYLAN
(dripping with sarcasm)
I thought you weren't the marrying type.

Jodie gives Dylan a spiteful look, yet a little regretful.

JODIE
I'm telling you this because we want you
onboard, Dylan!--

DYLAN
Waitaminute! "We." What's this "we"?

JODIE
I've been briefing Blackwell for the past
ten months--

DYLAN
You've briefed... How do you get to kiss
his ass? You're just a tech--

JODIE
After we verified my findings, the CIA
made me an offer...

DYLAN
You've been working with the CIA? I've
been visiting your shitty apartment and
you've got a fuckin' spy hideout
somewhere in the fuckin' clouds--?

JODIE
It's not like that, Dylan! The admin's
with us on this one: that's your budget
infusion that keeps on giving. Blackwell
has renamed the mission Operation
Agamemnon--

DYLAN
The Warrior class--oh god! They're
hydrogen fusion!

JODIE
Yes. Power of suns.

DYLAN
 (sarcastic)
 What's Blackwell going to do? Launch a
 pre-emptive strike against Eris?

Jodie looks at him. Dylan realizes his sarcasm is truth and
 springs into action.

INT. DAILY SHOW WITH JON STEWART

JON STEWART
 Y'know, some people say you might be...
 "going" to the White House... and I don't
 mean the Virtual Tourist Trip.

Crowd noise of approval.

JC
 (laughs)
 My work doesn't include political
 aspirations, Jon.

Crowd gives affectionate "boooooo!"

JON STEWART
 Unless this place is filled with
 Springsteen fans, I'd say you'd fare
 pretty well in an election.

Crowd cheers.

JON STEWART (CONT'D)
 So what's next for Mr. Cordero?

JC
 Your media is logjammed with my message
 of social harmony, Jon. Yet I must speak
 with one powerful man who seems oblivious
 to peace...

JON STEWART
 You mean...

JC
 I need to go to the White House after
 all.

JON STEWART
 Shouldn't you be saying "Take me to your
 leader" or something?

Crowd laughs. APPLAUSE. Jon Stewart makes the "Live Long and Prosper" hand sign, shakes JC's hand, as "Jesus Christ Superstar" song plays out to commercial break.

INT. JPL - DAY

Dylan suddenly starts typing furiously at a console, surprising everyone, even Jodie. Agent Harris looks at Jodie questioningly. She darts looks at the wall monitors.

JODIE

He's trying to initiate launch codes
outside the window--

(to CIA Agents)

--the Lander will miss Eris completely -
fly off into space. Hold him! Dylan!

CIA Agents wrestle Dylan away from console and hold him.

JODIE (CONT'D)

Dylan, don't! We've been authorized to
use military force--

DYLAN

(struggling)

Get offa me, you fuckin' pieces of-- No!
Gnnngh! No! You people are nuts! This
planet is not even hostile--

JODIE

We don't know that!

Dylan struggles against his holders.

DYLAN

You've known them for a year and now
you're gonna attack this benign
civilization because Blackwell can't get
enough war to satisfy his skunken
shithole here on Earth?

JODIE

It's about protecting the Earth, Dylan!
In not just about national security -
it's planetary security now! We're
fighting them over there so we won't have
to fight them over here! We want you--I
want you on the team--

DYLAN

(spits in her face)

Fuck you - you Judas whore!

CIA Agents drag Dylan out of the room.

INT. SOLLY'S ROOM - NIGHT.

RIZZO

(while munching chips)

Does he even want another website?

SOLLY

He'll love it! My website for him will be at the top of the search engines, man!

(reads from online text)

Look, he says: "There are enough resources today to feed, clothe and educate every single person in the world and to support a healthy space program - peacefully! It is the convoluted monetary programs created by the wealthy through greed that precludes this from happening."

RIZZO

Sounds like a small-gov-leftie or a rad.

SOLLY

Totally rad, Riz! Listen to this: "No money, no robbery; no countries, no wars; no religion, no evil."

(starts typing)

Everyone who hooks up with him isn't allowed to use money - and it's working! All these travel companies and hotels and cars - they're all donating their shit! It's unbelievable, man!

(finishes setup of website)

Done! Gonna be "Jesus Is Just Alright dot com." Launch!

CLOSEUP

Solly's finger. As he presses "Enter" -

TELEVISION BROADCAST

EXT. CAPE CANAVERAL LAUNCH PAD - DAY

On Russian TV, we see the Eris rocket being launched, while Russian anchor reports.

RUSSIAN NEWS ANCHOR (V.O.)
 [Russian, English subtitles]
 The Eris Lander Mission launched
 successfully from Cape Canaveral in the
 USA today. Sources claim President
 Blackwell has retrofitted the scientific
 mission with nuclear warheads--

TELEVISION BROADCAST

We see a computer simulation showing Eris orbit in relation
 to Earth; ELM flight-path, arriving and orbiting Eris.

JOHN THURMOND COMMENTARY SHOW (V.O.)
 Eris, the "tenth planet" - or dwarf
 planet orbiting in the Kuiper Belt. Three
 times farther than Pluto, the ELM will
 arrive there in just over 12 years. The
 burning question: why would the
 administration put nukes onboard this
 scientific mission?

WEB BROADCAST

Solly's v-log on SaberRattling.us:

SOLLY (ON WEB)
 --and we know the CIA retrofitted the ELM
 with Warrior missiles for a pre-emptive
 strike against a non-defined "threat."
 Your tax dollars at work, Citizens...

TELEVISION BROADCAST

INT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

JC meets Blackwell. Both sit in the presidential photo op
 chairs.

LARRY BONNET REPORTER (V.O.)
 Though Jesus holds no official titles,
 the president felt it was time to meet
 this powerful stranger whose
 revolutionary political views have taken
 hold on many fronts; who claims to be not
 of this Earth, yet wishes to - as he says
 - "bring peace to this sector."

JC
 ...Religion and politics should have
 separation - but why waste time
 separating what should be abolished in
 the first place?

Crowd walla uncomfortably.

JC (CONT'D)

People who need religion as a reason to be good, well - what kind of people are they?

BLACKWELL

You're going to use the 'Hitler was a Christian' argument, Jesus? That bad men can be of good faith?

JC

Your Hitler was neither christian nor atheist, Mr. Blackwell. But you need to see the opposite: that good men can be of no faith. You don't need religious superstition to be honorable, trustworthy, virtuous.

Crowd walla assent. Cameras flash constantly. Text scrawl misapprehends JC'S statements. E.g. "Jesus: Religion and politics should be separated"; "Jesus: Religious people are honorable. "

BLACKWELL

You're right, Jesus. But peace is a universal truth some people don't hear--

JC

Like the Peace you bring to the Middle East?

BLACKWELL

I believe it won't be long before--

JC

Belief is your obstacle, Mr. Blackwell, and religion is theirs. Keep planting your "infidel feet" on their "holy" ground, you'll never bring peace - because their beliefs are obstacles to reason as well. Isn't this reason enough to excise religion and politics from Life completely?

BLACKWELL

Mr. Cordero, the U.S. has the utmost respect for Middle Eastern beliefs--

JC

You respect their beliefs only until you want something they have.

BLACKWELL

They've welcomed us before and they will again--

JC

You speak of weapons sales, imports, trillions for oil pipelines - that's not "welcoming" - that's business, Mr. President.

BLACKWELL

So we sacrifice a little social harmony for economic growth--

JC

This idea you've cultivated of sacrifice - like it benefits you for its pain. For millennia, you've spoken of the sacrifice of lambs, saviors, virgins--

BLACKWELL

(fake smile for press, winks)

Our troops sacrifice every day. And I'm pretty sure they're all virgins, right, boys?

Crowd laughs. JC interrupts.

JC

To them, their sacrifice is just cause. To you, collateral damage.

Crowd boos. Blackwell now interrupts JC, quietly but forcefully.

BLACKWELL

Now hold on there, Jesus! Our troops should be honored, not defamed. My friend, the greatest sacrifice a man can make is to lay down his life for something he believes in.

Crowd roars approval.

JC

(ominously)

And thy will be done.

BLACKWELL

Why, thank you, Jesus. I like the sound of that.

(addresses press)

(MORE)

BLACKWELL (CONT'D)

Y'know, if this were a dictatorship, it'd be a heckuva lot easier - just so long as I'm the dictator.

Crowd laughs.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT.

Father Dominic's church is now a bustling headquarters for JC and his "disciples." Computer screens, cubicles, INTERNS rushing around. Father Dominic no longer wears the priest collar, supervising activities in the bullpen.

Dubrowski is cussing out JC in a private section of the bustling HQ. Madison sits quietly aside, while others work at cubicles.

DUBROWSKI

Have you gone nuts, JC? Talking about sacrificing troops! Book a room at Guantanamo right now!--What?!

A young INTERN-1 pokes his head into the private area.

INTERN-1

Uh - Malta is sending a delegation to meet Mr. Cordero next week.

DUBROWSKI

Thanks! Go!

MADISON

He's a celebrity, Marty. Celebs get that little extra leeway to make asses of themselves.

JC

(sarcastically)

Gee, thanks, Madison.

MADISON

And you're the most powerful being on Earth, lover, and they're scared shitless to interrupt...

DUBROWSKI

What are you gonna do if Blackwell keeps accumulating nukes and threatening to annihilate every Second Worlder for their stockpile?

All talk halts as INTERN-2, a curvy young redhead, enters with electronic notebook.

She presents it to JC, who signs it while looking her over. She exits, putting extra swing in her hips. JC stares; is slapped on the arm by Madison.

MADISON
Constantly!

JC
You complaining?

MADISON
I think you drooled on her notebook.

JC
Madison, all Life forms have a proclivity towards procreation - when we assume a Life form, we're constantly in that zone.

MADISON
You mean you're a walking sex machine?

SOURCE MUSIC starts: "Sex Machine" by James Brown. On the words "Get up! Get on up!" JC looks at Madison smugly, as if saying the words himself. Madison moves in on JC.

MADISON
Meow!

Madison and JC get physical, oblivious to onlookers. Dubrowski ahems sarcastically.

DUBROWSKI
Ahem! We all appreciate it when you two play patticake in public, but, uh, Blackwell, JC?

Madison moves away from JC.

JC
Blackwell's just a reflection of humanity, Marty. And humanity in current society is a paradox: you keep your sick and old and malformed living against the Life cycle, yet your healthiest, youngest and most virile, you send into wars to die or to kill others like them.

DUBROWSKI
You always make too much damn sense, JC.

MADISON
(motioning around them)
But hon, doesn't all this prove your message is working? In just three months!

DUBROWSKI

It looks pretty awesome, JC.

Intercom on desk BEEPS. RECEPTIONIST speaks.

RECEPTIONIST (ON INTERCOM)

Jesus, Pope Alfonse is on Line 3. Says he's expecting you at the Vatican tomorrow.

JC

Oh. Tell him I'll do a live feed.

(to Madison and Dubrowski)

It's an insular illusion. We haven't budged the men behind the mass destruction.

(introspective)

A decision has to be made...

Dubrowski gives Madison an alarmed look.

DUBROWSKI

Uh, whatever decision you're rolling around in that big brain of yours, JC, what about the rest of humanity - the innocents - who have nothing to do with the assholes in power?

JC

Is humanity truly innocent if they let these murderers live?

A pregnant pause. Dubrowski notices Father Dominic is standing in the doorway.

DUBROWSKI

Father Dominic?

Father Dominic enters, stands just inside doorway.

FATHER DOMINIC

Uh, just "Dominic," Marty. I'm not using the appellation any more - it's just...

(refers to JC)

...it lacks any meaning now... I just wanted to say that all my life I've been praying for salvation for Earth. Forgive me - forgive us all - for being so provincial, Jesus.

JC

(motions around him)

Thanks for the resources, Dominic.

FATHER DOMINIC

You asked me what I was going to do with all my reverence - this is the least I can do. But what about the innocents?

JC

The wardogs have become the representatives of your species; even at less than 1-percent of your planet, their actions have made Earth actively against Life.

FATHER DOMINIC

You can't mean that they speak for Earth? What about animals and plants? They're blessed with - uh, sorry, force of habit - they're Life forms too.

JC

The plants and animals are the working parts of the machine. This sector would run smoothly if they were the only parts. The artificial leaders - the coalition of ten major countries supporting Blackwell--

DUBROWSKI

Yeah, but they've been threatened with stopping their funding and imports--

JC

Gangsterism on a world scale! The terrorized have the option not to be, by not bowing to terrorist action.

MADISON

It's easier said than done, Jesus.

JC

But it must be done. "Life will find a way." The United Nations must find their way - to Life. They can stop Blackwell, yet they accede to his wars and embargoes - for politics, for money, for religion. And those secret world powers do nothing to help, only exacerbate: the Illuminati, the Templars, the Vatican's covert nihilists - these people don't just "represent" Death. They are Death. Now Blackwell spreads humanity's belligerence outwards from Earth with satellites and probes.

FATHER DOMINIC

Forgive me if I quote that obsolete book,
Jesus, but God told Lot he would spare
Sodom if he could find just ten good men.

JC

That percentage acceptable to you,
Dominic? Ten good men among billions?
Your same book - story of Yeshua: the
sacrifice of one to atone for the many.

DUBROWSKI

Let's dig in, JC: step up volunteers,
book more TV, radio--

JC

The message is delivered, Marty. The
decision rests with your leaders. Then I
act on their decision. I'm just a
bureaucrat; I see the ones and zeroes in
front of me. At this point in human
development, I look up "peacekeeper" and
I find soldiers and weaponry. Mother
Theresa or Mandela or even Jeanette
Rankin or John Lennon are never
"peacekeepers." The Earth "keeps peace"
at the point of a missile warhead. It's
like the Earth is asking to be sacrificed
for the good of the sector.

MADISON

(meekly)

Didn't you come to save life?

JC

Madison... again you confuse me with the
misrepresented savior in the bible myths.
We are not compassionate. We do not
forgive. Life everywhere is at stake, not
just Earth. When a sector is threatened--

Interrupted by Solly running in.

SOLLY

(breathless)

Jesus! A privilege and an honor, dude!

INT. OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

CLOSEUP

Blackwell, his face wracked in anguish.

He is on speakerphone to CIA Director Thorn.

BLACKWELL

I don't like this magician co-opting my message of peace!

Blackwell emits small sounds, as if in pain.

CIA DIRECTOR THORN (ON PHONE)

Are you okay, sir?

BLACKWELL

No! He's turning my own base against me. And Congress is listening. I lose their support, I lose the War For Global Peace.

Blackwell looks downwards, his eyes widen, his breathing quickens. He reaches for something we cannot see.

CIA DIRECTOR THORN (ON PHONE)

Our strategists believe his slipup of "laying down life for something" could mean a group suicide pact... Mr. President?

Blackwell emits an "aahowuh" sound. His breathing slows.

BLACKWELL

(slowly, meaningfully)
Ironic he talks about sacrifice so much, isn't it, Mr. Thorn?

REVERSE OTS BLACKWELL

We see VICTORIA ROSS, VP, kneeling under Blackwell's desk, her face in his lap.

CIA DIRECTOR THORN (ON PHONE)

(understands the directive)
A goddamn tragedy, Mr. President...

INT. NAVARRO'S HOME - NIGHT

Abilena opens a letter from the U.S. Government. She reads, goes weak in the knees and sits heavily on a coffee table.

CLOSEUP LETTER

on words "...for his brave sacrifice for our country..."

Son Carlos enters. He stands in the doorway, unsure.

CARLOS

Mama? When will daddy come home?

Abilena holds a tiny American flag, enclosed with the letter.

ABILENA

(her voice trails off)

Daddy will come home in a little while,
baby...

PUSH IN

on tiny flag.

EXT. DEEP SPACE

CLOSEUP

American flag insignia on fuselage of Eris Rocket, as it glides soundlessly through space.

PULL BACK

We see the Warrior missiles clearly marked and prominent.

INT. CIA DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - DAY.

We cut to this scene exactly where we left off in ACT I. CIA Director Thorn places an envelope before Joshua White. Now we discover the CIA Director is the Thorn whom Blackwell has been speaking to all along.

CIA DIRECTOR THORN

Mr. White. Your next sanction.

WHITE

Mr. Thorn.

White opens envelope. It is a dossier and picture of JC.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

We pick up scene after Solly's entrance.

JC

Are you sure about this, Solly?

SOLLY

(pulls out cellphone)

It's all right here, I can show you.

FATHER DOMINIC

You mean President Blackwell is going to nuclear strike this planet Eris for no reason?

DUBROWSKI

Oh, he thinks there's a reason - to protect the Earth.

MADISON

And that's where he is...

FATHER DOMINIC

Who?

Madison looks at a crucifix on the wall. Father Dominic follows her gaze, eyes widening in realization.

JC

Madison, get our people verifying Mr. Solomon's information now! Have it sent to your phone!

MADISON

Gone, boss!

Rizzo runs up, out of breath. Dubrowski stops him interrupting the scene, with an arm out.

RIZZO

(referring to Solly)
I'm with him, dude!

JC

Marty - where is Blackwell right now?

Dubrowski gets on a computer and tries to navigate.

DUBROWSKI

Uh, let's see...

Solly pushes him aside and types furiously. In three seconds he has an answer.

SOLLY

He's in D.C. Gonna be at a rally in Cape Canaveral over the next two days.

JC

Have you sent this info out?

SOLLY
 V-logged, YouTube'd, Flickr'ed,
 Twitter'ed, Facebook'd - you name it!

JC
 The last dance.

JC resolutely moves out with Dubrowski. Solly dolefully looks after them. JC stops, turns to Solly.

JC (CONT'D)
 Solly, you said you have something to show me?

Solly's face lights up as he falls in step.

SOLLY
 Can my friend, Rizzo, come too?

Rizzo makes a shushing motion at Solly, but follows them out after grabbing a packet of chips off a desk.

TELEVISION BROADCAST

NEWSCASTER V.O.
 Jesus and his disciples travel to the Democratic Convention at Cape Canaveral, where President Blackwell is rolling out his deep space plans tomorrow morning.

We see JC with hundreds of "disciples" boarding a private jet at Los Angeles Airport.

NEWSCASTER V.O. (CONT'D)
 Spokespersons for Jesus issued statements that the president is launching a pre-emptive nuclear attack on Eris. The White House denies these charges...

We see Cape Canaveral convention; senators speaking, Peace First picketing.

INT. JOSHUA WHITE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Watching the TV broadcast is CIA sniper, Joshua White. He continues cleaning his disassembled guns.

INT. SENATOR'S OFFICE - EVENING

Alden, messily eating dinner at his desk, is interrupted by Agent Lloyd.

AGENT LLOYD

Sir, President Blackwell has put out a sanction on Jesus Cordero.

ALDEN

(beat, then callously)

Well, for once, I'm on the same page with that prick.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Dubrowski sits talking with Madison.

DUBROWSKI

I asked him about NASA being a modern day Noah's Ark.

MADISON

You mean, build spaceships to transport people to habitable worlds?

DUBROWSKI

Uh-huh. He told me the technology exists - has for 50 years. He's right. We coulda had a base on Europa by now - but they only "allow" probes into deep space when a military agenda is behind the science.

MADISON

(contemplative)

Instead of sending Life from this world, we send Death... Where are we headed, Marty?

DUBROWSKI

Cape Canaveral, Cutie.

MADISON

You know what I mean.

DUBROWSKI

They told me my son's death was a sacrifice so others could live. Two thousand years we've been buying that "one for the many" malarkey - only now it makes sense--

MADISON

I love him, Marty.

DUBROWSKI

I know. Guess it wouldn't help if I told you he only looks human.

(MORE)

DUBROWSKI (CONT'D)

Guess it's true about what's "inside"
making the man - principles, power,
intelligence - easy to love.

Father Dominic, walking up the aisle, pokes into the conversation.

FATHER DOMINIC

The first Jesus would have been proud. If he-- well, if they feel that sort of thing-- Can he stop those nukes?

DUBROWSKI

I don't know, Dom. But I do know the first Jesus asked us to think globally and we killed him for it. This Jesus is asking us the same thing - but the tables are turned: if we don't relinquish our provincialism, he'll do the killing.

FATHER DOMINIC

My children... uh, my friends, whatever his decision, have faith he will make the right one.

Tears well in Madison's eyes.

DUBROWSKI

"Where are we headed"? We've immortalized the notion that a sacrifice will save us. We've never, ever considered that the sacrifice might be us!

Father Dominic joins hands with Madison and Dubrowski.

DUBROWSKI

Another prayer, Father?

FATHER DOMINIC

Just some primitive human comfort.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARK - NEXT DAY

DEMOCRATIC CONVENTION at Cape Canaveral, 2,000 in attendance, in a large open park surrounded by tall buildings.

Blackwell speaks onstage. CIA Director Thorn and VP Victoria Ross flank him. The crowd cheers after everything Blackwell says.

BLACKWELL

Security and spreading liberty have
always been the American way; defending
the homeland and exploring new horizons.

JC enters convention area with hundreds of disciples in his
wake. Crowd parts like the Red Sea to let him through.

BLACKWELL (CONT'D)

A new age dawned when John F. Kennedy
touched the stars. Heroes like Bill
Clinton kept America on the cutting edge
of space exploration.

Blackwell ignores JC's contingent as they approach the stage.
Madison, Dubrowski and Father Dominic flank JC.

BLACKWELL (CONT'D)

President Obama moved us out of the solar
System with his organized armada of
exploratory vehicles to Alpha Centauri...

Crowd noise gradually dies in expectancy by the time JC and
followers arrive at foot of stage.

Blackwell stops speaking, looks to CIA Director Thorn, who
nods at SS Agents to take action. No one moves.

BLACKWELL (CONT'D)

(smugly, playing to cameras)
How wonderful! Jesus the Wandering
Magician has decided to join us. To what
do we owe this pleasure?

JC speaks to Blackwell from the base of the stage.

JC

You have misused your power and
technology in the name of ignorance,
greed and the destruction of Life!

BLACKWELL

(impatient suddenly)
The "prophet of doom" act was old in the
'60s, Jesus! Let me escort you out!
Thorn! Thorn?...

Blackwell turns to CIA Director Thorn, sees he is immobile.

CIA DIRECTOR THORN

Mr. President. I... can't...
(to JC)
Damn you! What have you done? Release me!

COMPUTER SCREEN

Title above screen: "WebTV - Live Broadcast". Screen shows action at Canaveral convention. Text under the screen: "President Blackwell outlines Deep Space Eris Mission."

PULL BACK

INT. OFFICE SPACE WITH CUBICLES

Computer is being watched by person in cubicle.

PULL BACK

TVs in many cubicles, all showing this broadcast.

EXT. PARK - DAY CONT'D

Blackwell looks around, sees all his SS Agents are frozen.

BLACKWELL

What is the meaning of this, Jesus?

VP VICTORIA ROSS

Alan, I can't move!

BLACKWELL

Shut up, slut!

JC

Stop your destruction of Life.

BLACKWELL

I don't know what you're--

JC

After knowing who I am, after witnessing my power, you still face me like an idiot child? Conflict is your bread and corruption is your wine. You are Death.

Crowd goes wild with anger. JC raises his arm and slowly lowers it, the crowd noise disappearing, as if lowering a volume to silence. JC's disciples look on quietly. Solly pokes at a woman, frozen silent.

BLACKWELL

I'm trying to bring peace!

JC

This is not peace.

INT. POLICE STATION - SAME TIME

Police Martinez and Gardner watch these events on TV.

MARTINEZ

Whadaya know? That son of a bitch truly
was the son of a--

EXT. PARK - DAY

Blackwell rants around the stage to SS Agents, trying vainly
to extricate their guns from chest-holsters.

BLACKWELL

I'll show you peace, you shit! We
could've brought peace to Iraq in '91!;
blown away those towelheads! That
chickenshit Bush failed! Then his idiot
son failed! Even that black bastard was
too gutless to finish it!...

Ignoring Blackwell, JC somberly turns to Dubrowski; they take
each other's hands, then hug. This is a goodbye.

DUBROWSKI

Was a pleasure, JC.

JC

Don't call me JC.

INT. NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE - SAME TIME

Canaveral convention plays on all screens. Traders have
stopped commotion on the floor and watch in shock as
Blackwell loses his mind onscreen.

EXT. PARK - DAY

BLACKWELL

Diplomacy! Peace summits! Alternate
energy sources! We don't have the energy
to look for alternate energy--all those
dunies understand is oil and guns!

JC grabs Madison around waist, kisses her deeply.

JC

Won't be seeing you around.

MADISON

(tears in her eyes)
Always telling the truth.

JC
 There will be no pain... There will be
 ... peace.

Blackwell is ranting, slowly going insane; he's the only person who can move, yet still can't grasp any weapons. JC ascends the stage.

JC (CONT'D)
 So you chose a peace gathering - the Sofitel - to kill them all? Your own people, collateral damage.

Blackwell stops, shocked. He continues arrogantly.

BLACKWELL
 Fuck you! When I served, I was collateral damage. That's war, you idiot! Life, Death, Peace, Sacrifice!

Shock on faces of crowd. Thorn is ruby with rage at Blackwell's admissions. VP Ross weeps silently.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - SAME TIME

Giant screens broadcast the lurid events of Blackwell's disintegration.

EXT. PARK - DAY

BLACKWELL
 You think your devil's magic can stop me?! You think you can stop the march of peace?! Our missions are set in stone. I am forging the future! Nothing can stop the path to peace! Not even you, freak!

JC addresses crowd from stage. He doesn't need a mic.

JC
 You called my predecessor a lamb - and sacrificed him joyously for the greater good.

Blackwell attacks JC, but finds a "force shield" around JC. Blackwell drops to his knees, screaming in frustration, clawing at shield, looking like he's clawing air.

BLACKWELL
 (voice breaking)
 Help me! Someone kill this fucker! Die!!

MONTAGE

TV and computer screens around the world all show this scene. From India to Australia, across Europe, Asia and the Soviet Union...

JC

Will you be so joyous when your planet
has become the lamb to the slaughter?

EXT. VATICAN SQUARE - SAME TIME

POPE ALFONSE stands under a giant screen that broadcasts Canaveral events. Crowd panics, runs in all directions.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - SAME TIME

Panic in the streets while Canaveral broadcast continues.

EXT. PARK - DAY

JC looks solemnly at his hundreds of followers, silently awaiting his next move.

JC (CONT'D)

I came to fix things. But to save this
sector, to bring peace, there must be...
a sacrifice.

Blackwell screams, now insane, ripping his eyes out.

INT. USA TODAY NEWSPAPER OFFICES - SAME TIME

Rowley shouts orders into a phone. He looks at his TV, goes silent, mouth agape, dropping the phone.

EXT. PARK - SAME TIME

P.O.V. THROUGH GUNSIGHT

We see JC through red crosshairs as White draws a bead on him from a nearby building. JC scans the area, then looks directly at us - into the gunsight.

CLOSEUP

White's eye at the scope bulges in fear. He hesitates.

JC (CONT'D)

Rejoice! One is destroyed so a multitude
may live!

JC closes his eyes, tilts his head back.

CLOSEUPS

Dubrowski, eyes sad.

Madison, teary, looking longingly at JC.

Father Dominic, who starts to make the Sign of the Cross, thinks again and stops himself.

Blackwell, eyes bleeding in abject terror.

White's eye at gunsight; as he squeezes trigger, the rifle kicks, we hear a POWERFUL SHOT--

CUT TO:

EXT. DEEP SPACE

P.O.V. FROM SPACE

The Earth. One minute, Earth is there, the next, it has imploded to nothingness amidst blinding whiteness, leaving a background of stars.

CUT TO:

COMPUTER MONITOR SCREEN

Alien monitor from opening scene: showing an empty area of space, text scrolling down side of screen, then stopping.

Large alien type appears along top of screen.

Subtitle: EARTH - file closed.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEEP SPACE

Where the Earth was, we see a tiny wisp of a SPIRIT form. The Spirit starts streaking through space. We follow. Spirit slams into Eris Rocket and blows it up.

The massive hydrogen fusion nuclear explosion resembles a sun.

Spirit continues streaking forward through space.

P.O.V. IN FRONT OF SPIRIT

Spirit streaks through space. We track backwards through space, in front of the Spirit's path, faster than the Spirit, leaving the explosion in the distance until it looks like an overbright star in the night sky.

We slow down as a dark planet opens up in the foreground.

TEXT: Eris.

EXT. ERIS - NIGHT

Two ERISIANS come into view, standing in foreground looking up at the night sky, at the explosion that looks like a star. They communicate verbally, with English subtitles.

ERISIAN-1

Look, Acolyte! The prophecies are coming true! A star in the east.

ERISIAN-2

Praise be to god, Priest! On this night, a savior will be born!

EXT. ERIS PLAINS - NIGHT

PAN ACROSS

rocky, featureless land, to three ERISIANS trudging forward, focusing on the brightest point in the night sky, the nuclear explosion. Voiceover in Erisian, with English subtitles.

ERISIAN VOICEOVER

And wise beings from the east followed the strange new star in the night sky to the place of His birth...

COMPUTER MONITOR

shows Eris in space. Alien text scroll down side of screen, with large alien type along top of screen.

Subtitle: ERIS - file open.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END

THE LAMB

by Jon Dunmore / Damon Pipitone (C) 2008

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