

Version - Night 8 - SCV
June 12, 1997

FADE IN:

The screen comes into color on the letters HBO. The voice of Tom Martin is heard.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

Tonight, in an event the world has been awaiting, HBO is proud to present the President of the United States speaking from the Oval Office of the White House.

This broadcast is being translated simultaneously in every country of the world. Ladies and gentlemen. . .The President.

CUT TO:

INT: THE OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

President John Franklin Delano Hall, a tall, spare very well- preserved man (who looks to be about 55 years of age but might be ten years older) is sitting at his desk. He is well- featured, even handsome. Some might say he bears a slight resemblance to Sidney Poitier. Others would speak of Colin Powell. He certainly is black. He exudes a relaxed confidence. One trusts this man.

PRESIDENT HALL

Good evening, my friends, here and abroad. The time has come to speak to you about a matter of the gravest importance.

He shifts in his chair, lays down the sheaf of papers he has been holding, then leans toward the camera, giving the viewer the feeling he is experiencing an informal, private conversation with the President.

PRESIDENT HALL
(continuing)

Three years ago, I was elected to this office, in part, I believe, because of your faith in my promise that I would hide the facts neither from you, my fellow Americans, nor, to the best of my ability, from the citizens of other lands.

We would work to uncover the truth, no matter how unhappy these facts might prove to be.

But up until this moment, I have not been able to carry out my basic promise--the restoration of a free press in the United States.

I was convinced by my advisers--and they are good men and women--that censorship had to be maintained. It was felt that the revelations we had to offer were too depressing, even too catastrophic, to impart to you.

Nevertheless, I never stopped believing that we on earth are still capable of mighty actions provided you, the people, are not kept in ignorance of the truth.

That was the core of my belief. That remains the core of my belief. This hour before us now, therefore, becomes a time of reckoning.

Because of the universal news blackout, very few of you can be more than uneasily aware of all the staggering problems our country, and the world, is facing at this moment.

(more)

Yet, into that vacuum of ascertainable knowledge of our world situation a poisonous infection of rumors of an oncoming cataclysm have spread at so great a rate, that the average citizen of the world by now sees our reality as worse even than it is.

PRESIDENT HALL
(continuing)

That is why I can wait no longer; I must keep my promise.

Tonight, in a specially prepared documentary, you will be given your opportunity to face the facts, to look into the depths of the bleak situation that surrounds us.

When you have finished watching this documentary, I will speak to you again, and will offer a possible solution to some of these near-incommensurable problems.

So, be prepared to hear a series of unhappy, even shocking facts — which are, at least, not rumors —

CUT TO:

The documentary begins.

We see a title: THE STATE OF THE WORLD, JANUARY 20, 2027

Animation shot:

We see the sun slowly turning in a dark field of stars. Venus, Mars and the rest of the planets and moons, in turn, become visible. We have a view of the entire solar system.

The Earth, however, does not present its familiar blue marble coloring. Rather, it emits bilious greens and inflamed reds as if volcanic fires and poisonous clouds are erupting.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

Over the last two decades, extreme natural disasters, disruptions in society and plagues upon our health have caused world-wide unrest and massive disorder.

Restrictions in our access to information have, in consequence, ensued.

Now, however, we are able to present hitherto unreleased data.

(more)

and also be aware that we are, notwithstanding, not without some light at the very end of the tunnel.

Now, TOM MARTIN (cont'd; V.O.)
 in conjunction with the
 government's information
 services and the leaders of
 the world's scientific
 communities, HBO ~~now~~ presents
 a full report on the State of
 the World.

Animation shot: the turning globe

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)
 (continuing)
 At the conclusion of our
 telecast, President Hall, as
 he has announced, will resume
 his address from the Oval
 Office of the White House.
 Your host on this report is
 Tom Martin.

CUT TO:

INT. TV STUDIO - NIGHT

Tom Martin is sitting behind a desk. Dressed in an elegant three-piece suit, it seems too large--it no longer fits. He is not thin, but emaciated, indeed, more emaciated than any of the commentators we are accustomed to. Otherwise, he might remind us of Dan Rather.

TOM MARTIN
 Good evening. In the ten
 years following the turn of
 the century, in the period
 that is now known as The
 Golden Twilight, Americans
 were unaware that they were
 living in the last of what now
 seem to have been ~~the~~ carefree
 days.

A DOCUMENTARY montage of turn-of-the-twentieth century film clips illustrates the following commentary. We will alternate between DOCUMENTARY footage and STUDIO shots of Tom Martin.

DOCUMENTARY: Shots of clear streams, lush forests, white beaches, blue oceans. Abundant wildlife.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)
 By 2010, stringent ecological
 measures had returned the
 earth to a pristine beauty.
 (more)

TOM MARTIN (cont'd; V.O.)

In addition to this ecological reburgeoning, there were other advances.

In the first decade of the Twenty-First century, incidents of cancer, diabetes, and other previously incurable illnesses were ~~rare~~ *reduced*, and the single most grievous disease of the latter part of the twentieth century, AIDS, as well as other sexually transmitted diseases, had been *all but* completely eradicated.

The average life span had increased to eighty-nine years for men and ninety-five for women.

DOCUMENTARY: Shots of elderly people doing aerobics, and dancing.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

(continuing)

Researchers threw themselves into finding drugs that would insure a higher quality of life, such as a successful cure for arthritis and Alzheimers, and. . .

DOCUMENTARY: Shots of obese people weighing in at a weight- watchers meeting.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

(continuing)

. . .an inexpensive pill was developed called *LEAN* that would dissolve fat. Now people could eat as much of anything they wanted and still stay thin.

DOCUMENTARY: Shots of skinny people eating large plates full of french fries and hamburgers, milk shakes and banana splits.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

(continuing)

Moreover, the drugs to combat fat and sexually transmitted diseases were cheap and plentiful.

DOCUMENTARY: Mobile white vans with medical insignia are parked on the streets. The vans have windows, like ice cream trucks, from which white-coated medics dispense pills to the lines waiting in front of each window.

The feeling is almost like a happy street fair. The documentary camera zooms in on a young thin girl wearing a blue feather hat accompanied by a pimp at the window of the van. She hands the attendant a bill and receives a packet.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

(continuing)

Along with these cures for AIDS and STDs, and the eradication of fat through *LEAN*, came a rise in promiscuity unparalleled since the early nineteen-seventies.

DOCUMENTARY: clips of neon-lit night clubs, men and women dancing near-naked, naked women and men suspended from the ceiling in cages simulating sex.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

(continuing)

But as a philosopher once said, "You can't cheat life".

New viruses--more virulent, even, than AIDS--began to mutate and invade the auto-immune systems of the entire population of the world without regard to age, gender, race, or sexual preference.

DOCUMENTARY: Fashion shows with wan, super-thin models are watched by small audiences of equally thin women.

In a near-empty gym, a skeletal man tries to lift a *light* barbell.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

(continuing)

Too late, it was discovered that *LEAN* had a dangerous tendency, over a ten year period, to program the body to reject all fat in the human system, thereby altering the metabolism to such a degree that the condition was irreversible.

DOCUMENTARY: Shots of skeletal men and women sitting in hospital beds. Empty playgrounds and desolate city streets.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

(continuing)

Indeed, *LEAN* eventually metamorphosed the body's DNA, so offspring were also unable to maintain a proper level of body fat.

With such low levels of fat, many women ceased menstruation and the birth rate dropped at alarming rates.

Shots of hospital nurseries, with only one or two babies in rows of empty cribs.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

(continuing)

A sizeable number of men and women were suffering from malnutrition even though they were forced to eat more and more to survive.

DOCUMENTARY: Shots of thin people walking down city streets carrying bags of fatty food into which their hands keep dipping.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

(continuing)

Given the state of collective malnutrition, infectious diseases proliferated as did the use of antibiotics, which became progressively less effective.

In addition, the world cancer rate, once so close to eradication, rose ~~800 per cent~~ in the last ten years. Skin melanomas ~~have doubled~~ that rate of increase.

*an astonishing
800 per cent*

are even

DOCUMENTARY: People with hideous skin cancers; missing noses; prosthetic devices for ears and chins.

Shots of rabbits, blind, hop into each other. Blind cows bump into fences. People with dark glasses and canes tap down the street.

*In the young, the sunlight reached
into the night months.*

*Let's
dissect*

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

(continuing)

That is due to stop Since the Ozone layer of the atmosphere became dangerously thin, humans now risk cancer from sun exposure as well as cataracts and blindness if they venture out unprotected for extended periods. *Having become*

DOCUMENTARY: Shots of a plastic factory, several kinds of plastic commodities dropping down onto a conveyer belt.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

(continuing)

was Even though its link to cancer is now as suspect as ~~was~~ tobacco, in the nineteen-nineties, more than eighty-five percent of the materials used for clothing, construction, vehicles, ships, toys, and machinery are still made from plastic.

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO - NIGHT

TOM MARTIN

As if these health problems were not enough, the Herculean meteor storm of 2017 that crashed into Hawaii kicked off a chain reaction of earthquakes, volcanos and tidal waves, which resulted in a cumulative and calamitous loss of land mass and lives.

CUT TO:

DOCUMENTARY: Shots of volcanos, tidal waves, earthquakes, bridges falling, buildings collapsing.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

Large portions of California, Hawaii, and Central America were covered by water. In the aftermath, the earth's atmosphere was saturated with volcanic ash.

In the year, 2018, Virtually no sunlight reached earth for eight months.

DOCUMENTARY: Shots of a dark cityscape, cars with faint lights slowly making their way through what looks to be a dense fog. Fine ash covers the ground like snow.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)
(continuing)

Undersea earthquakes shifted the earth's crust, and submerged oil deposits were emptied into the Pacific Ocean.

Long dormant rogue microbes were also stirred up from the ocean floors, first infecting and then decimating the world's sealife.

DOCUMENTARY: Shots of oil-soaked birds and otters, tons of fish floating on oily water. Beaches that are black with oil.

A shot of a dirty ocean beach on the edge of a vast stretch of desert. We focus on a large sign posted near the water, its paint peeling as though it had been out in the elements for several years. DANGER! NO SWIMMING. NO BOATING. NO FISHING. ENTER OCEAN AT YOUR OWN RISK! SIGNED BY ORDER OF THE NEVADA SEACOAST AUTHORITY, JULY 8, 2018.

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO - NIGHT

TOM MARTIN
Cycles of growth and harvest were totally disrupted. They have not returned to normal.

Each year for the last ten years, every record of heat and cold in the world has been broken.

DOCUMENTARY: Shots of New York City, deserted, heat-softened streets. A homeless man falling to the pavement in heat stroke.

Shots of the same streets, paralyzed in a vast snow storm.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)
Last summer, in New York City, thousands died on July Fourth when the temperature rose to 125 degrees Fahrenheit.
(more)

TOM MARTIN (cont'd; V.O.)
 The coldest day of the year in
 the same city was 45 below
 zero Fahrenheit on February 15.

Comparable figures exist for
 every major city of the world.
 The data for drought. . .

DOCUMENTARY: Shots of an emaciated cow nosing barren
 ground. Skeletal children in Africa, flies buzzing
 around their lethargic faces.

Shot of an immense flood, bloated animal carcasses
 floating by.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)
 (continuing)
 . . .and floods broke all
 records.

DOCUMENTARY: Shot of driving rain and small houses being
 blown off their foundations. Boats wrecked on shore.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)
 (continuing)
 Hurricanes began to exhibit
 what meteorologists term
 "convoluted travel patterns",
 That is: hook turns.

On a weather map, a line draws the storm path of a hook
 turn, which then becomes a 360-degree return upon itself.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)
 (continuing)
 An example of this is
 Carthage, Florida. The town
 was obliterated last summer
 when Hurricane Veronica
 returned not twice but three
 times in 48 hours.

DOCUMENTARY: Shots of a town devastated by a hurricane.
 We see nothing but a water-soaked plain with the remains
 of a street passing through. One palm tree still
 stands, broken, its fronds missing.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)
 (continuing)
 Not a single survivor was left.

CUT TO:

Shot of huge forest fires. Dying beasts in an African
 veldt. Bare ground covered with blackened stumps in
 Brazil.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)
 Uncontrollable vast fires ran
 rampant. The once endless
 rainforests are now more than
 90% barren.

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO - NIGHT

TOM MARTIN
 To date, over 78% of all
 species of mammals and fish
 have ceased to exist. And the
 earth's population is one-
 third of what it was in the
 year 2000.

DOCUMENTARY: We see a radiation clock in Grand Central;
 on the Kremlin Gate in Red Square; at the entrance to
 Saint Paul's in London; on the Chicago Tribune Building
 in Chicago; the Colosseum in Rome; the Alhambra in
 Grenada, etc.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)
 Another dire consequence of
 these recurring massive
 earthquakes is that every
 country in the world has
 suffered one or more
 catastrophic breakdowns in
 their nuclear plants.

DOCUMENTARY: Shots of various nuclear reactors in half-
 shattered condition, smoke clouds foaming out of them.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)
 (continuing)
 The historic paradox is
 obvious to all. The world
 congratulated itself on
 avoiding a nuclear war, yet
 the result is as if we had all
 undergone just such a
 conflagration.

There is no place on the
 entire planet that has not
 been contaminated to some
 degree by radiation.

DOCUMENTARY: A South American native holds a giant
 tomato the size of a pumpkin. When he cuts it in half
 with his machete, an army of insects pours out.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)
(continuing)

This nuclear contamination,
combined with genetic
engineering of fruits and
vegetables, resulted in rogue
products unfit for human
consumption.

Shot of a banana which has grown four limbs and a
shapeless head from its banana body. Giant fruits and
vegetables, all misshapen or half consumed by smuts and
fungus.

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO - EVENING

TOM MARTIN

With the ability to clone
animals, first developed in
the late nineties, came a rush
to create perfect livestock
for production of meat, dairy
products and eggs.

DOCUMENTARY: Shots of identical cows being milked,
identical chickens laying egg after egg.

Shots of cows with deformed limbs or two heads, chickens
flopping on the ground with no feet. Pigs and lambs,
each suffering a strange deformity.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

But the unforeseen drawbacks
to cloning proved to outweigh
the benefits--Not to mention
the moral implications.

Shots of crowds brandishing placards reading "NO
CLONES!", "GOD, NOT MAN, MAKES MAN", "STOP PLAYING GOD",
etc.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

(continuing)
It was then discovered that
illegal human clone
experiments had taken place.
Given the public outrage, the
process was outlawed.

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO - NIGHT

TOM MARTIN

Where then are we? Some scientists have come to believe that we have reached the Tipping Point.

An individual, an organism, a society, can maintain a stable condition through increasing stress until the Tipping Point is reached.

Then the situation takes an abrupt turn. It flares up.

Most scientists now believe that the earth is now at its Tipping Point.

Insurance companies, as one concrete example, were wiped out by the increasing number of deaths and catastrophes.

Nearly all of them have ceased doing business. Dallas has been hit the hardest.

CUT TO:

DOCUMENTARY: Shots of the skyline of Dallas at evening. All the buildings are lit.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

In 1998, Dallas was the world capitol of insurance. Today. . .

Shot of the same skyline. The same kind of evening. All the lights are out.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

(continuing)

Dallas no longer exists as a viable economic entity.

DOCUMENTARY: Shots of horrific car crashes as Martin keeps speaking.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

(continuing)

(more)

TOM MARTIN (cont'd; V.O.)

Due to the depletion of the world's supply of global oil stocks due to contamination by nuclear spew, the number of cars able to operate in the world today is but a third the number in use fifteen years ago.

Yet the increase in car crashes is ten-fold.

The Tipping Point! Armed robbery is up 1500 per cent over the last fifteen years, ditto burglary.

DOCUMENTARY: Shots of prisons, barbed wire-enclosed camps where barracks- like structures line the paths.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

(continuing)

Such increases are also present in white-collar felonies.

Crime has become the single largest occupation on earth.

The construction of Prison camps and funeral parlors are at present the only growth industries in the world.

(we knew it)

DOCUMENTARY: A long shot of the White House, looking much the same as ~~it has for two hundred years~~, with one large change--it is under an enormous geodesic dome, like a wedding cake under a glass cover.

Inside the dome, the grass is green, and the gardens are lovely. Outside the dome, the earth, sky, and the city streets are gray, dark, and deserted.

At small entrances around the circumference, we see a few vehicles enter and exit. Sentry boxes are at the gates.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

(continuing)

A combination of crime and inhospitable climate created the necessity of cordoning off the center streets of Washington D.C., and enclosing our seat of government in climate-controlled domes.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

(continuing)

To the people of the world who may be watching now in simultaneous translation, I can promise you that your own parliaments and palaces and seats of government are similarly enclosed, protected, and sequestered from sight.

As Tom Martin speaks, we see shots of the Capitol building, the Chamber of Deputies in Paris, the British Parliament, the Reichstag, and the Kremlin.

All are under geodesic domes. All with printed legends underneath the pictures to identify them since their appearance is barely visible beneath the transparent domes.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

(continuing)

More mysterious, however, is the burning of churches.

Shots of burning churches of various denominations in different cities.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

(continuing)

Reminiscent of the arson attacks on black churches in the American South at the end of the Twentieth Century, the phenomenon has become prevalent again.

Now, however, the arsonists attack mosques and synagogues, churches black and white, religions of all denominations, even Buddhist temples.

An editorial in the Washington Post recently declared: "An unhappy suspicion exists that the attack is upon the Almighty Himself."

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO - NIGHT

TOM MARTIN

It will take a larger person than myself to sum up this most distressing of reports. I leave it to President Hall to address the issues that so directly concern us all.

Ladies and gentlemen of the world audience, I now return you to President John Franklin Delano Hall.

CUT TO:

INT: THE OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

We are again with the President. He is sitting in the same position, at his desk.

PRESIDENT HALL

Thank you, Tom. The presentation you have just seen has been an unsparing but most truthful look at our present reality.

We are at a point in history where we can no longer afford to delude ourselves. The horrors of the recent past have condemned our future.

When you elected me to this office, I promised to do my best to make this a better world, and I believed at the time that it would happen.

Working with the best minds of our time, I tried mightily to improve matters, only to encounter failure in every direction.

We have not been able to reverse, or even slow the course of what we have come to call Global Disease.

(more)

Not all of the rumors have been incorrect.

^{can}
PRESIDENT HALL (cont'd)

But if we ~~have~~ learned nothing
else in this disheartening
time, we ~~have~~, after centuries
of bloody war, come at last to
~~understand~~ that we have
managed to ~~so~~ pollute the
atmosphere, the seas, the
mountains, and the plains of
the earth that we ~~have~~
condemned ourselves to become
extinct.

from

ought,
recognizing

may be

to such a point

Humankind, if it remains on
earth, is doomed. At this
point in time, not one in five
hundred of the world's finest
scientists believes that there
can be more than twenty years
left to life on the planet.

least, at

Three-quarters of us will be
gone in five more years.

Yes, there is a
serious
foundation
even to
these rumors

It is further calculated that
of the fraction of men and
women then alive, another
three-quarters will fail to
survive the two following
years.

So, for the past several
years, our top scientists have
been engaged in a race with
time to find a cooperative
action that will save the
human race.

That is why I am speaking to
you tonight. Such an action
has become feasible.

The major nations have been
secretly developing a vast
inter-planetary project which
can now be presented openly.

It is a project so tremendous
in scope that you, the people
of this globe, must by means
of the voting process accept
or reject it.

PRESIDENT HALL

(continuing)

You will soon learn in detail what you are voting for or against. If you vote in the negative, you have my word that this project will not be activated.

That is because the next stage entails mortal sacrifice for the majority of us. I repeat: mortal sacrifice.

be This project which I now present to you is called "Legislation for a Fleet". It is a concept that will ~~be~~ not only explained in broad detail tonight, but will be debated internationally over the next three months.

At the end of that period, we will have a world-wide vote. On that date, the people of the world, will confirm our plan or deny it.

He pauses, as if to underline the importance of his last remark.

CUT TO:

Two monitors on the President's desk. On one of them we can see Hall's speech prompter unrolling line by line, but next to it, on another small monitor, we can see a bedroom, and it gives Hall an image of a woman sleeping. She is restless; feverish.

CUT TO:

President Hall.

PRESIDENT HALL

There is, however, a way to save a number of us provided we are ready for prodigious self-sacrifice and brave actions.

One piece of hitherto censored information that is positive, even optimistic, is that we have established a colony of one hundred men and women on Mars.

(more)

PRESIDENT HALL
(continuing)

They have not only been able to survive in a biosphere, but have thrived. Having learned a great deal from the mistakes of the relatively unsuccessful Arizona enterprise in the last century. . .

CUT TO:

EXT: ARIZONA DESERT - DAY

Shot of the American biosphere in Nevada.

CUT TO:

INT: THE OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

PRESIDENT HALL
. . .our men and women on Mars are doing well. We speak often. The news is inspirational.

Within a biosphere, life can exist on Mars. Water under the permafrost can be melted, and so hydrogen and oxygen are available.

Fuel is being manufactured with local Martian carbon and the processed hydrogen, and vehicles are already running on such fuel.

Cities are waiting to be built as soon as there is an influx of pioneers from Earth.

CUT TO:

INT: MISSION CONTROL - DAY

Shot of a vast computer room with thirty or forty technicians. It is a scene comparable to Mission Control in Houston on a shuttle take-off.

PRESIDENT HALL (V.O.)
In our Havens on earth, where knowledge can still advance, the logistics have been developed.

(more)

PRESIDENT HALL (cont'd; V.O.)
A feasible plan exists.

CUT TO:

INT: THE OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

PRESIDENT HALL

This plan, which has been given the name Legislation for a Fleet, calls for a number of us to take up life on the planet Mars.

We are speaking of a gigantic project. It will be equal to mobilizing for a mighty, all-consuming war.

If we vote in favor, we commit, every one of us, each citizen of each participating nation, to devote himself or herself to helping us build a fleet of rocket ships to send to Mars.

Each nation's economy will be given over to constructing and equipping these ships, selecting the pioneers, training them, and--this is the crux of the matter--showing the moral fortitude to bid them goodbye.

For not all of us can go. The majority must accept the fact that only a minority--the healthiest, most brilliant, and best trained males and females will be able to leave this planet.

Let me offer the logistics. The Legislation for a Fleet calls for the construction of ten thousand rocket ships.

Each one will be capable of carrying one hundred persons to Mars.

They will not be able to return.

(more)

PRESIDENT HALL (cont'd)

The space ships, themselves, must serve as habitats for these pioneers on Mars until the Martian cities of the future can be built and a new civilization can commence.

Ten thousand ships to carry a total of one million people. For one trip.

The work of outfitting this Fleet will take, we calculate, two years. Indeed, the project must be completed in two years.

To wait too long would be tantamount to populating the ships with human beings not well enough to meet the rigors of life on the red planet.

The magnitude of the sacrifice we are asking of all of you, therefore, cannot be ignored. Only one person in a thousand can hope to go.

The heartbreaking fact is this:

Which is equal to saying that in each American town with a population of ten thousand, ~~five good men~~ *women* and five good *men* ~~women~~ will make the trip.

Yet, for each person chosen, there will be another ten prepared for back-up should the first person turn ill, or the second, or the third.

And behind these ten will be another hundred directly involved in the development, training, morale, equipment and support of each voyager.

Participation in the Voyage of the Fleet will reach into all the corners of our country and rare will be the family who will not be contributing to this last chance for the race, our human race.

(more)

PRESIDENT HALL (cont'd)

We will, of course, ~~that~~ great
majority of us who remain
behind--and that includes
myself--make efforts to build
and equip a second major Fleet
in the months and years
following the departure of the
first Fleet.

But we cannot ~~guarantee~~
success in such a venture.

Second

*pretend that the chances for
will be as good.*

As President Hall pauses for a moment to sip a glass of
water, the woman who is visible to him on his monitor [^]
smiles suddenly and, ~~even as she is lying in bed,~~ bares
one breast. It is a remarkably beautiful breast.

The President quickly presses a button on the monitor,
which then goes blank. He tries to keep speaking
without losing a beat.

PRESIDENT HALL

(continuing)

Let the way be prepared, then,
for the vote. ✓ Let us remember
that some of the bravest and
noblest moments in the world's
history have come in times of
great turmoil and woe.

I would remind us of the noble
words of Winston Churchill as
he addressed the British
people so many years ago at
the lowest point of their
fortunes in World War II.

It was then that he said, "I
have nothing to offer you but
blood, sweat, toil, and tears."

I have less to offer. Yet I
have more. For you can vote
in favor of the greatest
sacrifice that humanity has
ever made.

If we are coming to the end of
history on earth, it is also
fair to recognize that we may
never have come so close, each
of us, to knowing our own soul
as in this period when most of
us will lose our earthly
existence.

(more)

PRESIDENT HALL
(continuing)

To commemorate this ~~sense of~~ *hour of decision,*
~~dedication,~~ we will offer you
the rarest of sights in these
grim years. We will televise
a fireworks display over the
city of Washington D.C.

It will be the first such
attraction in four years.
Given the roll call of our
dead, there has been little
desire for celebration.

But tonight, in anticipation
of this great and apocalyptic
election, we have put together
our resources. May this be
the mightiest fireworks
display in the memory of every
living human.

FADE OUT:

On President Hall.

FADE IN:

EXT: WASHINGTON D.C. - NIGHT

The sky of Washington is lit up more than any Fourth of
july in any American mega-city. Then, as the fireworks
fade, a short animated film (less than a minute) appears
on the TV screen showing spacemen entering a row of
rocket ships that extend as far as the eye can see.

At a signal, they take off all at once. The television
frame is lit with a second fireworks show, the blazing
exhaust of ten thousand rockets, but this is seen
merely as a light-dazzler of animation, more intense
even than the fireworks.

CUT TO:

INT: EMILY HALL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The woman is talking, through a monitor in her bedroom,
to President Hall. She is his wife, the First Lady. In
spite of her illness, one can see that she has been
extremely beautiful and vivacious.

CUT TO:

INT: THE OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

The President is responding to her through the monitor on his desk.

PRESIDENT HALL

What the hell did you think you were doing? My God, a bare breast! In the middle of my speech!

EMILY (ON MONITOR)

(Not without mockery)

~~Don't carry on like this!~~

You're in the Oval Office.

Someone will hear you.

Stop carrying on!

PRESIDENT HALL

The technicians are gone.

Despite himself, Hall begins to laugh.

PRESIDENT HALL

(continuing)

You're outrageous.

EMILY (ON MONITOR)

I thought you needed a diversion. You were starting to sound pompous. Just remember to tell yourself: John Franklin Delano President Hall is really very sexy.

PRESIDENT HALL

Sexy? Do I still remember?

EMILY (ON MONITOR)

Of course you do. The more my fever rises, the hornier I get. I remember.

PRESIDENT HALL

(Not wholly amused)

Emily, can you try to conceive of how much is at stake?

EMILY (ON MONITOR)

Go to hell. Just go to hell. Why do you expect me to care? I won't be going to Mars. I'm the one, in case you forget, who has to get ready to die.

PRESIDENT HALL

The doctors have not said anything of the sort.

EMILY (ON MONITOR)

Bugger them. You know it. I know it. The fever never goes down.

PRESIDENT HALL

I can't believe that. You are still so beautiful.

Emily takes three painkillers, washes them down with water.

EMILY (ON MONITOR)

Do you want the truth? My own death is more important to me than all the rest of it, all your damned Legislation for a Fleet.

PRESIDENT HALL

You don't believe everything you are saying.

EMILY (ON MONITOR)

You know I am going to die. And I think you are afraid of catching something.

Isn't that why you don't come near me any more? I haven't seen you in a week.

PRESIDENT HALL

It's been one emergency after another. I don't like to pop in for a minute then rush out. It just brings out the worst in you.

She re-arranges her nightgown, twisted in the covers. In the process, she uncovers her long, shapely legs.

EMILY (ON MONITOR)

John, tell the truth. Am I repulsive to you? ~~And~~ don't lie. *Don't dare to lie.*

PRESIDENT HALL

(without hesitating)

Not one minute in twenty-four hours can pass without me thinking of you. I love you, Emily.

Yes, EMILY (ON MONITOR)
 As much as you can love one
 woman. But not as much as you
 love ~~all of that damn~~ *all that damn* humanity,
humanity out there.

When you speak to a crowd,
 Jack, you get a look on your
 face that you never show to me
 when we make love.

PRESIDENT HALL
 Stop it, Emily. That's not
 fair.

EMILY (ON MONITOR)
 It is certainly true. What a
 look ~~you get~~ when they are all
 hanging on your every word!

She lies back on the pillow, her painkillers taking
 effect. She becomes dreamy, glassy-eyed.

EMILY (ON MONITOR)
 (continuing)
 I always thought we would be
 buried in the same place, side
 by side. But now, I will lie
 alone. And you and your
 beloved humanity will go to
 Mars.

PRESIDENT HALL
 I have said over and over that
 I will remain behind. Would
 you like me to vow, on my oath
 to you that I will never leave
 the earth?

EMILY (ON MONITOR)
 John, you will end up going.
 You're still healthy. I'm
 sure you'll find a young woman
 up on Mars who will give you
 the children I never could.
 Little Martians. Ugly little
 green Buggers.

The President is silent. Emily smiles. A sad smile.

EMILY (ON MONITOR)
 (continuing)
 Don't mind me, babe. Just the
 fever talking.

PRESIDENT HALL
I adore you. I'll come over
right now.

But his voice lacks impact.

EMILY (ON MONITOR)
Don't come over. It's too
long a walk from the Oval
Office all the way to your old
bedroom. Who knows? You
really might catch something.

She flips a switch. His monitor goes dead.

CUT TO:

INT: THE OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

Hall is motionless at his desk. Quietly, soundlessly,
he taps his fist on his desk, a picture of despair.

CUT TO:

INT: EMILY HALL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Emily turns on her bed. She is weeping softly.

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO - DAY

In the corner of the screen is the date MARCH 20, 2026.
Tom Martin is speaking.

TOM MARTIN
Since the President's now-
famous "kickoff" speech, the
debate has raged. The world
is in ferment.

What does the average American
think about the "Legislation
for a Fleet"? We take you now
to New York City and Lisa
Wilcox. Lisa?

CUT TO:

EXT: CITY STREET - DAY

A young, blonde, extremely thin woman reporter is doing
a "man in the street" segment.

LISA WILCOX

Thank you, Tom. I'm Lisa Wilcox, and with me here is Roland Fitzsimmons.

She holds a microphone to the mouth of a young man. He is barely out of his teens, and wears tight black clothing, circa 2027.

LISA WILCOX

(continuing)

How will you vote on the "Legislation for a Fleet"?

UNDERGROUND YOUTH

I'm voting "No", Man! I mean, why should I bust a nut to help send ~~some tight-ass~~ technocrats up to Mars?

all these

~~I mean,~~ for what? To reproduce themselves into another technocratic society that will just kill off another planet?

They got us into this mess!
Let them stick around and face it like the rest of us!

The reporter turns and stops a worn, middle-aged woman, thin, ill, weary, carrying a shopping bag of food. As she speaks, she automatically eats from the bag.

LISA WILCOX

And you, ma'am. How will you vote?

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

Well, I am in favor of it. Maybe we can get it right somewhere else.

It don't make much difference anyhow. Not to most of us. But I hope one of my children can go.

The woman hands Lisa a donut. Lisa automatically takes it and begins to eat it as she speaks.

LISA WILCOX

And there you have it--the two sides of the question. How will it be resolved? We will find out in a few weeks.

(more)

LISA WILCOX (cont'd)
Now back to you, Tom.

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO - DAY

TOM MARTIN

Thank you, Lisa. Tonight, the Vice President and Chief of Aerospace Research, Dr. Anderson Stevens, has agreed to answer our questions concerning how feasible it will be for human life to sustain itself on Mars.

Anderson Stevens is perhaps the hardest working man in the United States right now.

As well as stepping in to assume the Vice Presidency when President Hall's running mate Senator Alfred Guinn died three weeks before the election, Dr. Stevens has a reputation as the leading Astro-Physicist in the world.

The development of the concept of the Mars Mega-Migration has been his for the last decade, and in a few weeks he will know whether the work of his life will be confirmed or denied by the vote of the people of the world.

He will now join us from his office in the White House. Please come in, Dr. Stevens.

Anderson Stevens appears on Martin's monitor. They speak across a divided screen. About the same age as the President, Stevens is tall, he is impressive. He suggests a man of immense intelligence and knowledge. An air of secrets long held comes off him. He would be a worthy match for a Swiss banker.

TOM MARTIN

Dr. Stevens, since I know that your time is most limited, let me move immediately to the point.

TOM MARTIN

(continuing)

The question on everyone's mind is obvious. Can we really build a viable society on Mars?

Further along, as Stevens speaks, he will be often in V.O. while Virtual Reality animations of Martian vehicles and geodesic domes are shown, as well as other relevant material.

ANDERSON STEVENS

Tom, there is no question about this. As President Hall has informed us, not only has Commodore McNab established a successful pilot village of one hundred men and women on Mars. . .

We see an illustration of three geodesic domes connected by arched mud-brick tunnels. In the center dome is a space-ship standing on end.

ANDERSON STEVENS (V.O.)

. . .but our advance calculations have proved correct.

As we fully anticipated, water under the Martian permafrost can be melted by means of nuclear reactors, and electrolytic processes can then separate out hydrogen and oxygen.

Illustration of Martian vehicles rolling over the terrain.

ANDERSON STEVENS (V.O.)

(continuing)

Fuel for our Martian vehicles *is then*
~~can thus be~~ manufactured with local Martian carbon and the newly- separated hydrogen.

Camera back to Anderson Stevens.

ANDERSON STEVENS

Yes, our Martian vehicles are already up and running on methane, a wholly usable fuel.

TOM MARTIN

Yet in roughly three years the first cadres of what will very soon be a million people will be arriving on Mars. How can you cope with such an influx?

ten thousand
space ships
carrying ~~the~~

ANDERSON STEVENS

Until the domes are built, our pioneers will live in their space ships. The payloads in each space ship are relatively enormous.

these ten thousand
rations
carried up

Rations will be sufficient to feed each ship-group for the first three years after landing.

By that time, our agriculture should be flourishing.

We see a virtual reality animation of hundreds of such ships standing vertically on their base. They are connected to each other by arched mud-brick tunnels. As we look at the animation, geodesic domes of various diameters are raised to enclose them.

TOM MARTIN

What will you use for construction material?

ANDERSON STEVENS

First of all, good old Martian clay for bricks for small habitations.

For larger buildings, concrete and steel can be manufactured up there.

You see, Tom, iron ore is four times more prevalent on Mars than on earth, and all the elements for making steel are also present including Magnesium, Manganese, Zinc, and Copper.

We even have Molybdenum although in smaller amounts than on earth.

(more)

ANDERSON STEVENS (cont'd)

We'll have wood from trees grown in greenhouses under the domes, but most of our artifacts will, of course, be molded from plastic or from waste agricultural materials.

TOM MARTIN

What will the pioneers do for food once the transported stores of nutrition are consumed? will

Can you explain a little further what

ANDERSON STEVENS

Agriculture ~~is~~ progressing ~~already~~ under another set of geodesic domes. thousands of

(Already, our first hundred pioneers)

We have created an atmosphere of oxygen combined with carbon dioxide taken directly from the Martian atmosphere and from nitrogen extracted from soil nitrates.

Pertinent illustrations of crops, lush under geodesic domes, are shown.

ANDERSON STEVENS

(continuing)

Crops are already growing, and bountifully.

There is adequate sunlight, almost close to half as much as on earth, and that is sufficient for the photosynthesis of plants in great greenhouses. We have bees and other insects for pollination.

Moreover, we can multiply this rate of growth with use of ~~the~~ carbon dioxide, which is abundant on Mars. by the

~~ANDERSON STEVENS~~

(continuing)

We can grow every variety of plant, and we have reason to believe that fish will thrive in Martian waters.

TOM MARTIN

But meat. Will there be meat
for those who crave it?

ANDERSON STEVENS

No. We can, however, grow
greenhouse mushrooms to help
round out the protein in our
diet.

TOM MARTIN

No meat, however?

ANDERSON STEVENS

Alas, no meat.

(He chuckles.)

And I'm a meat-eater myself.
But we can't put cattle on the
space ships. Just frozen fish
eggs. Bring on the fish.

(He casts an eye at
his watch.)

TOM MARTIN

I see your time is up. It's
been fascinating to talk to
you, Dr. Stevens.

ANDERSON STEVENS

Likewise, Tom.

Stevens is getting up to leave, even as he fades out on
the screen.

TOM MARTIN

Now, to hear an opposite point
of view, we'll be listening to
the Reverend William
Abernathy, head of the
Charismatic Adventist Order of
Churches, who is very much
opposed to the Martian project
and will vote against it.

Reverend Abernathy, can you
hear me?

The reverend appears on screen. He is portly, jovial,
florid, and full of energy at this moment.

REV. ABERNATHY

Oh, I'm here. I'm here. I've
been waiting to get on, I can
promise you.

TOM MARTIN

Are you ready, sir, to shed light on this extraordinary proposal?

REV. ABERNATHY

It's no great mystery to me, Tom, or to the followers of Jesus Christ who have known for twenty years that we are now living in the last days-- we are in the midst of Armageddon.

The proposal to go to Mars is just one more manifestation of the work of the Anti-Christ. *He is the one* who is orchestrating the downfall of man.

TOM MARTIN

You don't see the colonization of Mars as our only hope of survival?

Abernathy leans into the camera, *much as though he were* ~~as if~~ speaking directly to ~~someone~~ *everyone* in the viewing audience.

REV. ABERNATHY

Our only hope of survival is to get right with our Lord Jesus Christ and go with Him to Heaven.

I have a message for President Hall and Dr. Stevens: Save your efforts. It is too late. Man is inherently wicked. He has taken a God-given Eden and transformed it into Hell on earth.

No matter where he goes, he will take destruction with him.

Instead of wasting our energies on a pipe dream to Mars, we should ~~be~~ concentrating on purifying our souls. ~~for~~ *is coming upon us.* the last big migration to eternity.

TOM MARTIN

Thank you, Dr. Abernathy. That's a point of view. Where will you be on election night?

REV. ABERNATHY

In my church, praying for the defeat of this terrible proposal, this abomination.

TOM MARTIN

To repeat, the election is in exactly one month, on April 20.

REV. ABERNATHY

April 20, 2027. The year of Armageddon.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT: TIMES SQUARE - NIGHT

Tom Martin and Lisa Wilcox are standing before a TV camera in the center of Times Square in New York. A crowd is roaming the street, in a party atmosphere. Streamers and confetti are flying through the air. The flashing billboard above the street says:

ALL CAPS { April 20, 2027. Legislation for a fleet to mars is approved.

ALL CAPS { U.S. Vote: 61% in favor, 35% no, 4% undecided

ALL CAPS { World majority: 55%, yes; 35%, no; 5%, undecided

ALL CAPS { The first ships of the fleet are scheduled to be ready in one year.

TOM MARTIN

The Legislation for a Fleet has been approved. It is incredible. It is done. We are going to transform the site of human operations to Mars.

LISA WILCOX

As you can see, there is a rare feeling of hope in the air. This crowd is rejoicing.

TOM MARTIN

Yes, Lisa, they certainly are. And if there is one person responsible for obtaining the result of this fateful election, it is President John Franklin Delano Hall.

(more)

TOM MARTIN (cont'd)

Like no president since,
perhaps, Franklin D.
Roosevelt, he has succeeded in
the true purpose of a
democracy. He has engaged the
imagination and secured the
trust of the whole world.

LISA WILCOX

Tonight, it certainly seems
that way.

CUT TO:

INT: THE OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

PRESIDENT HALL

My friends, dear citizens of
the six continents of the
world, it is now five months
since the Legislation for a
Fleet ~~has been passed~~, and I
can declare that in the face
of obstacles seen and
unforeseen, we have kept on
schedule. The Fleet is being
built.

*was passed
on April 20,*

An atmosphere of good will has
come over the earth. Never in
the memory of anyone living
have so many people cooperated
in such a spirit of mutual
concern for one another.

Half of us, half of all the
people in the world are by now
engaged either in the
construction of the Fleet, or
in the preparations that
surround such construction.

Let me here read to you the
remarks of Vice President
Anderson Stevens on these
matters.

He picks up a paper.

PRESIDENT HALL
(continuing)

He states: "This worldwide cooperation on the part of those who will be left behind has given the astronauts a profound sense of mission, and a humility equally profound.

They carry with honor the weight of your contribution as they prepare to build a new world."

He lays down the paper. Leans directly into the camera.

PRESIDENT HALL
(continuing)

I, as your President, can add that working for the success of the pioneers has given to all of us who will remain on earth an inner satisfaction ~~we~~ *most of us* have never felt before.

Can we term it the absence of guilt?

In these five months, we have entered so unprecedented an era of peace that the rate of crime in every major city of the world is now lower than at any time in the last one hundred years.

Humankind has arrived at a profound sense of purpose. I salute all of you throughout the world for your willing sense of sacrifice.

The lights fade on the President. We pull back to see the Secret Viewer watching the continuing action through his monitor.

We see the cameramen starting to dismantle the equipment. A director says, "Thank you, Mr. President, you can move now from your chair."

PRESIDENT HALL
It went well?

DIRECTOR

Splendid.

(Holds up a fist in
celebration)

You give strength to us all.

PRESIDENT HALL

(he permits himself
a wan smile.)

A doctor is no better than his
patient.

CUT TO:

INT: CORRIDOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

The camera follows President Hall down a hallway in the
White House. He enters a room where two advisors are
sitting.

INT: THE WHITE HOUSE - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

~~The small conference room with the two advisors.~~

The advisors do not rise to greet President Hall, nor do
they congratulate him on his speech. The pall that sits
upon them is as evident as if they have taken a noxious
gas.

PRESIDENT HALL

What's gone wrong?

One of the advisors looks away, then cannot reply.

PRESIDENT HALL

(continuing)

Where is Anderson Stevens?

ADVISER

He'll be here in a moment,
sir. A message just came in
from the colony. Dr. Stevens
is, at present, speaking to
Commodore McNab.

PRESIDENT HALL

I take it the Commodore has
everything under control on
Mars?

As he studies the two men, his unease increases, for
neither adviser can reply.

PRESIDENT HALL

(continuing)

Something is wrong.

ADVISER

Dr. Stevens will explain. He
wanted nothing to interfere
with your speech.

A door opens. Anderson Stevens enters.

PRESIDENT HALL

What does McNab have to offer?

ANDERSON STEVENS

You might as well speak to him.

Stevens touches a switch under a large monitor, and a
grainy black and white image appears. (no color TV yet
from Mars!)

ANDERSON STEVENS

(continuing)

Please bring back the
Commodore.

On this video tube, an attendant comes into view behind
a man in a wheelchair. McNab is a piteous sight.
Emaciated, huddled, he looks as if he is suffering from
a disease equal to leprosy. Indeed, the man is enclosed
in a transparent plastic bag with respirator. The
attendant, as well, is wearing a portable respirator.

PRESIDENT HALL

Dear God!

ANDERSON STEVENS

All this happened in the last
two weeks.

MCNAB

(Speaks with
difficulty)

Mr. President. . .

(Pause)

It's a devastator, this
disease.

PRESIDENT HALL

Has it affected your cadres?

MCNAB

Sick, sir. Every last one as
sick as I am. Even my
attendant here.

The attendant, indeed looks about as bad as McNab except
that he is standing.

MCNAB
 (continuing)
 More deadly than anything on
 earth. Much quicker. We're
 just about wiped out, sir.

PRESIDENT HALL
 And the animals? Has nothing
 thrived?

MCNAB
 Yes. The cockroaches.

He starts to laugh, but the sound turns into a cough.
 Anderson Stevens leans toward the President.

ANDERSON STEVENS
 (quietly)
 Mr. President, we have to
 speak in the safe room.

McNab stares at the camera, lost in vales of nausea.

PRESIDENT HALL
 Carry on, McNab. And may God
 bless you.

CUT TO:

INT: WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

The President and Anderson Stevens approach a door.
 Beside the door is a small box. The President inserts
 his finger into a slot in the box. An electronic voice
 answers.

ELECTRONIC VOICE
 President hall. Fingerprint
 confirmed.

Anderson Stevens does the same.

ELECTRONIC VOICE
 (continuing)
 Anderson Stevens. Fingerprint
 confirmed.

The door opens.

CUT TO:

INT: THE WHITE HOUSE - SAFE ROOM - NIGHT

The President and Anderson Stevens are alone in a large
 room, sitting inside a chamber made of plexiglas.

it It is eight feet high, eight feet wide, and twelve feet long, ~~and is~~ suspended by four cords from the ceiling, ~~and~~ rests a foot off the floor--a sound-proof box. It sways very slightly on its supports as they speak.

ANDERSON STEVENS

The plants are dying because there are no insects to pollinate them. The concrete structure itself is consuming the oxygen from the air.

PRESIDENT HALL

Mars is no longer habitable?

ANDERSON STEVENS

It's some new kind of virulent bacteria ~~infested with~~ radioactivity. Our latest probes find this bacteria travelling throughout the solar system.

We know already that Europa and Ganymede, off Jupiter, have been contaminated.

Jack, we can build a fleet here, but there will be no planet in the solar system worth landing on.

PRESIDENT HALL

How long have you withheld this from me?

ANDERSON STEVENS

For the last ten weeks. Let us say I have been keeping a tight grip on my fears. McNab thought he and his men could work their way through it, but he was wrong.

PRESIDENT HALL

Have you informed Mikhail Nikitavitch?

ANDERSON STEVENS

He was alerted two hours ago.

PRESIDENT HALL

I have to meet with him.

*the illness
when it first
hit*

ANDERSON STEVENS

He wants to meet with you.
But it can't be Washington or
Moscow. Paris, perhaps. He
suggests Paris.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE LUXEMBOURG GARDENS, PARIS - DAY

The Gardens are still recognizable, but the foliage,
such as it is, is sparse, wilted; gasping for breath.
The sky is dark gray.

President Hall and President Mikhail Nikitavitch Evganov
stroll by the pond. They are alone at the center of a
circle of men that moves with them.

The circle is made up of secret service agents, Russian
security forces, and French police, each about a yard
apart from the man on either side of him.

Evganov is short, stocky, still powerful in build. White
hair. Strong Russian accent in English.

EVGANOV

Remember these gardens that
first time we meet? You and
me--young diplomats then. *what was the year.*
Year 2004. Civilized period.
Essence of civilization.

(Angers
himself?)

PRESIDENT HALL

Old pal, do not look back on
the good old days. Just don't
look back.

They walk a few steps. They are relatively relaxed,
but the circle of security people moves with them, wary
beyond measure, searching every tree and every roof-top
on the city's horizon.

EVGANOV

I must ask. How is your wife?

PRESIDENT HALL

Not well. I was sorry to hear
about your wife.

EVGANOV

Hard. It was hard. And
yourself? Healthy?

PRESIDENT HALL

(Nods)

Still.

EVGANOV

I, likewise.

(Brusquely)

Can you trust Anderson Stevens?

PRESIDENT HALL

He is my oldest friend. We were roommates at Yale.

EVGANOV

He held bad news to himself.

Doesn't he know? We are strong enough to receive bad news. You and I did not get to where we are by cringing, by wringing hands.

PRESIDENT HALL

He thought he was doing the best thing.

EVGANOV

Yes. Everybody does best thing. And is always awful. So, Mr. American President, what do we do?

PRESIDENT HALL

Declare the bad news. We have no choice.

EVGANOV

Your people are not ready. My people, carbon copy. World's people? Carbon of carbon copy. You cannot raise hopes, then announce: Apology. Must declare disaster. P.S.--No hope.

He laughs as if he has just told a tremendously funny joke.

PRESIDENT HALL

Let's make an announcement. Together. Tonight. From here in Paris.

EVGANOV

I say wait. Give our scientists time. Maybe they find something. Bad news can always wait.

PRESIDENT HALL
(showing anger)
The leaders of the world
invariably decide that the
news is too unpleasant for the
people to hear.

We don't have the right to
raise false hopes. You
destroy human dignity by lying.

EVGANOV
(He, too, is angry
now.)
You know enough to know: You
don't tell people truth.
People would rather be told
they are healthy, than be
healthy. But with Americans,
count on it. You always find
hypocrisy.

PRESIDENT HALL
Nikita, I don't see myself as
a hypocrite.

EVGANOV
Do you tell people how there
are domes on earth for wealthy
people? Wealthy, idle people
who, these days, we do not
need at all.

Do your people know that some
of these wealthy individuals
will be Fleet passengers?
Undeserving passengers.

PRESIDENT HALL
You forget. There will be no
Fleet.

EVGANOV
(Strikes his forehead)
No Fleet! You see, I cannot
comprehend it. Shock is great.

They walk. Perhaps twenty seconds go by. The circle
moves with them.

EVGANOV
(continuing)
You must agree. Better to
invite leaders of all nations
to sustained conference.
Maybe we find some course.
(more)

EVGANOV (cont'd)

Otherwise, total civil disorder. I say: avoid civil disorder. That we can do for now.

PRESIDENT HALL

Without your agreement, I have no choice. So we start with the leaders. I can see it. What a mess that will be.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE REICHSTAG - DAY

Like the White House, the Reichstag is enclosed by a transparent geodesic dome. We see Anderson Stevens entering.

CUT TO:

INT: THE REICHSTAG - DAY

A large chamber in the Reichstag. A huge oval table. perhaps twenty men and women are gathered around it. They all wear earphones for simultaneous translation. As they speak, we hear French, German, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Swahili, Hindustani, Hebrew and Arabic being spoken.

The camera pans over the translators, each busily converting what is said into the home language for their separate leaders.

Some speak quickly, some haltingly, and their voices compose a more or less consecutive sound track which appears in English as subtitles.

The VARIOUS VOICES are foreign languages. SUBTITLES appear on the screen in translation.

VARIOUS VOICES

Hear, hear.

Two days already!

Nothing agreed.

President Hall, you are in the minority, and your Vice President, Anderson Stevens. . .

Why can we not hear Stevens again?

(more)

VARIOUS VOICES (cont)

~~CONFERENCE (cont'd)~~

He does not agree with you,
President hall.

PRESIDENT HALL
Nor is Mr. Stevens the
President of the United States.

VARIOUS VOICES
But what does Stevens say?

We want to hear from Stevens.

Yes.

PRESIDENT HALL
Vice President Anderson
Stevens is my ~~closest friend,~~
my most trusted adviser.

(Pause)

But I am here to represent the
needs of my people, not the
future of rocketry.

VARIOUS VOICES
You evade the issue.

Let Stevens speak.

In this hour, Stevens is the
voice.

Silence.

PRESIDENT HALL
Let Stevens speak. I will
reply.

ANDERSON STEVENS
I am opposed to informing the
people of the Martian impasse.
I say this in the face of my
old friend. We have an
honorable disagreement, but a
profound one.

If we ~~If we~~ tell the people what has
happened on Mars, I anticipate
a despair so great that it
will paralyze the efforts of
our best astrophysicists to
look for a new solution.

VARIOUS VOICES
What solution?

Show us a solution.

ANDERSON STEVENS

There is one possibility.
Transfer human life to a
planet circling some other
star than our sun, some
hospitable star in our galaxy.

VARIOUS VOICES

For shame, Stevens, for shame.

Desperation speaks.

No fuel or system of booster
propulsion can ~~do it~~ in less
than a century.

*make such a
trip*

Or do you suggest that we
approach the speed of light?

The more agitated they become, the calmer is Stevens.

ANDERSON STEVENS

Hear me out. We always knew
that Mars was, at best, a way-
station until the technology
could be developed to find a
planet with an atmosphere like
earth.

(pause)

We have found such a planet.

Now he has their attention.

ANDERSON STEVENS

(continuing)

There is a star we call 16
Cygni B, which has a planet in
orbit. A rocky planet like
Earth. And it has water.

ANDERSON STEVENS

(continuing)

We have also detected ozone,
whose presence is possible
only if the planet's
atmosphere is being
replenished by a multitude of
living, breathing creatures.

For a moment, they are quiet at the possibilities. Then
they break into loud argument again.

*The same room. The chairs are now turned toward a very
large television set. The lights have been dimmed.
Stevens' video is playing.*

VARIOUS VOICES

How do we ever get there?

Specificity, more specificity!

Let the man speak!

ANDERSON STEVENS

Gentlemen, we are close to offering hope. Give me three more months.

VARIOUS VOICES

(said almost in unison by different people)

A month.

Two months.

He has had long enough.

No, no, no

(pause)

We cannot enforce secrecy when we do not know the secrets we are protecting.

EVGANOV

(speaks for the first time)

Let Stevens explain what he has in mind.

ANDERSON STEVENS

It is premature.

EVGANOV

You entered this room forty-eight hours ago. With portfolio. Let us see what is in it.

ANDERSON STEVENS

A video.

EVGANOV

(claps his hands together)

Show it.

DISSOLVE TO:

The same room. The chairs are now turned toward a very large television set. The lights have been dimmed. Stevens' video is playing.

It is an animation, but silent. He speaks to explain it. Sometimes we hear him in V.O., sometimes we see him dimly at the side of the TV screen as it transmits the video.

ANDERSON STEVENS (V.O.)

We have kept this alternate plan under lock and key. No point in confusing the issue.

Our alternate plan, however, calls for the construction of a tunnel ten miles long at Olgemutsk in Siberia and another tunnel in the deserts of southern Utah near Canyon Fork.

The video offers shots of two large desert areas, one of tundra in Siberia, one of an expanse in Utah. Then the video shows Anderson Stevens standing before a globe five feet in diameter, an enormous globe.

He wheels it deftly to point to a place in Siberia, swings it around to show the area in Utah. At that point, the video shifts to an animation which shows an arc of the earth's surface, perhaps 40 or 50 miles long.

On it, in scale, we see a tunnel being bored. In ten seconds, it moves ten miles on the drawing. The line of the tunnel is pitched at a shallow angle.

ANDERSON STEVENS (V.O.)

(continuing)

The base of this tunnel, which is ten miles long, is at a depth of a vertical mile below the earth. The tunnel will be comparable in its action to the muzzle of a rifle.

Its innovation, gentlemen, is that the rocket will be fired through the tunnel, and attain an immense exit velocity.

(more)

ANDERSON STEVENS (cont'd; V.O.)

Calculated properly, taking advantage of the earth's rotation about its own axis and the greater speed of our rotation around the sun, it is estimated that the exit velocity, given our nuclear engines, will be sufficient to provide a trans-galactic passage vastly greater than any speed heretofore obtained.

We believe maximum speed can approach $3/5$ the speed of light.

Gasps of astonishment.

ANDERSON STEVENS (V.O.)

(continuing)

Yes. It will prove able to accomplish this despite the relatively large payload of a hundred men and women, start-up food, provisions and selected seeds to keep these hundred people alive for five years, time enough to complete such a trip.

As Stevens speaks, the animation shows us our own planet revolving around its own axis and about the sun. The rocket is being fired out, dramatically, if schematically, so that we see it elude the gravitational pull of the sun.

We hear a voice in the darkness speaking in Hebrew which is then translated in SUBTITLES into English:

VOICE (V.O. IN HEBREW)

But what name will you give to this Noah's Ark?

ANDERSON STEVENS (V.O.)

Noah's Ark Roman numeral one, if you please. We plan many of these ships.

At least a hundred, each equipped to reach 16 Cygni B, *going out by fives,*
~~each going out consecutively.~~
 at twenty-four hour intervals while we ~~must~~ wait for ~~the~~ *each*
 tunnel to cool.

VOICE (V.O. IN HEBREW)

But what will you use for a ship?

ANDERSON STEVENS (V.O.)

Some units of the Fleet,
already close to completion,
can be adapted quickly.

We will cover their ceramic
skin with new compounds able
to endure temperatures higher
by twenty times than any
insulation developed
heretofore.

There is a pause in the darkness. And some applause.
The lights come up. A voice speaks in Swahili. SUBTITLES.

VOICE (V.O. IN SWAHILI)

Will there be an African
representative, or merely an
Afro- American representative?

ANDERSON STEVENS

Both. To be certain. All
developed races and cultures
will be represented.

EVGANOV

Stevens! What are our chances
for success?

ANDERSON STEVENS

My colleagues put it at better
than 50 percent. I say it's
higher, 80 percent.

EVGANOV

And when is unveiling of new
plan for world populations?

ANDERSON STEVENS

Not for awhile. It is best to
act publicly as if we are
still going to Mars.

EVGANOV

Once upon a time, one million
human beings going to Mars.
Now, ~~people~~, forget it.

Just ten thousand lucky boys
and girls. They search for
hospitable planet near strange
star five years away.

(more)

we say
to people

EVGANOV (cont'd)

So, What will happen when you
announce new plan?

ANDERSON STEVENS

Some people are going to
appreciate the audacity of the
concept. Human beings will
actually be travelling to the
stars.

That is vastly more exciting
than a migration to Mars where
no one could go outdoors
without a support system.

The Planet circling 16 Cygni
B has an atmosphere
sufficiently close to our own
to enable life to continue as
we have known it. Fewer
people, yes. But more
possibilities.

VARIOUS VOICES

But so few people!

The Majority will still perish!

At this, he slams his hand down on the desk.

ANDERSON STEVENS

What are the options? We will
certainly all perish if
nothing is done! Give me the
opportunity!

For this he receives mingled applause and jeers.

VARIOUS VOICES

What does President Hall say?

This comes out in a variety of languages. The SUBTITLES
dance from the speed with which the questions are being
asked.

PRESIDENT HALL

I have profound misgivings.
I don't like a period of
silence.

ANDERSON STEVENS

Silence is essential. If the world knows that a tunnel is being built, they will want to know where.

There will be marches on the tunnel mouth. The pace of our work could be compromised.

Terminally compromised. I would go so far as to say that silence is essential to the success of this project. Give me three months.

EVGANOV

Let us decide on it.

The leaders and their advisers return to the long oval table. The poll starts.

We hear a voice.

CUT TO:

VOICE

Resolved: That three months of silence be observed concomitant with Project ARK I.

We see a counting machine on the conference table. The consensus is affirmative. Seventeen are in favor, three against. there is clapping around the table.

PRESIDENT HALL

Having been one of the three who was opposed, I now, with the deepest misgivings, move nonetheless to ask that the decision be made unanimous. We are in this together.

More cheers. They are not exactly whole-hearted, however.

CUT TO:

INT: THE WHITE HOUSE - PRESIDENT'S DEN - NIGHT

President Hall ~~who~~ is at his desk alone ~~in his den~~. He is dictating.

PRESIDENT HALL

Let this be a memo to myself. In three weeks, we will have the secret test. Twenty-one more nights await me.

PRESIDENT HALL
(continuing)

I cannot talk to anyone,
certainly not to my wife. I
cannot inflict my anxiety upon
her sufferings.

Nor can I speak to Stevens; he
would consider it harassment.
His plan will work or it will
not work, but nothing is
gained if I question him at
every step.

Let him succeed. Yet, how
can I trust our silence?
Trying to protect two great
secrets.

The impossibility of life on
Mars; the construction of the
giant tunnels. The leaks are
many. My credibility is
crumbling.

He looks over at a television set. The sound has been
off. He picks up the controller and we hear on the TV
set:

CUT TO:

INT: CHARISMATIC ADVENTIST CHURCH - NIGHT

The Rev. Abernathy is preaching from the pulpit of
Washington's largest fundamentalist church. Television
cameras are trained on him as he speaks.

REV. ABERNATHY
Followers of Jesus Christ, we
have known for twenty years
that we are now living in the
last days--we are, as I speak,
living in the midst of
Armageddon.

Things are coming quickly to
a head. An atmosphere of
evasion hangs over the White
House. There are rumors
everywhere.

I have heard it said that the
Mars fleet will never take
off. That it is a sham to
conceal the real work of the
forces of government.

REV. ABERNATHY

(continuing)

We have reason to believe that they are, at this moment, digging a vast underground city for the rich and privileged deep beneath the earth.

Down there, they will live free of radiation while the rest of us sicken and die.

Well, they can dig all the way to China, but it will do them no good. The reality is--There will be no survival for Mankind.

The Anti-Christ is just lulling man into thinking he can escape. And then he will make his move. He will destroy the world.

So I have suspicions. Grave suspicions. The Devil speaks with a beautiful tongue. So does President Hall. Can he be our Anti-Christ?

CUT TO:

INT: WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

President Hall turns off the video of Abernathy and goes back to dictating his memo to himself.

CUT TO:

INT: EMILY HALL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Watching Abernathy on her television, Emily Hall has gotten up from bed, put on a wrapper, and started off down the corridor to the President's den.

INT: CORRIDOR OF THE WHITE HOUSE - NIGHT

She walks slowly and with pain. At the end of the hall, perhaps a hundred foot promenade, she opens the door quietly to Hall's den and enters.

CUT TO:

INT: WHITE HOUSE - PRESIDENT'S DEN - NIGHT

She stands silently about ten feet behind Hall, who dictating again, is unaware of her presence.

PRESIDENT HALL
I feel prodigious anxiety
about the Mars disaster. I
may have made a profound error
in agreeing to conceal it.

Emily's voice surprises him. It has come out of her with all the timbre of an involuntary reaction.

EMILY
The rumors are true. They are
true, aren't they?

The President turns with a start.

PRESIDENT HALL
Emily!

Caught short, he tries to force the outcome.

PRESIDENT HALL
(continuing)
Should you be out of bed? Is
this wise for you to be out of
bed?

He gets up, goes toward her. She puts up her hands to resist his approach.

EMILY
Why did you keep this from me?

PRESIDENT HALL
You know the answer. The
essence of national security
is that you don't let your
wife know.

EMILY
(she sways) 
I don't exist for you anymore,
do I, Jack?

Her knees give way, and Hall lifts her easily and puts her in a chair. He arranges a throw over her legs.

EMILY
(continuing)
Tell me the truth. You owe me
that.

PRESIDENT HALL

The Mars colony has failed.
We are going ~~try to~~ get to a
planet in the stars. *to*

We will ~~try to~~ shoot a ship,
like a rifle shoots a bullet,
into the galaxy.

The desperation of the plan sinks into Emily's
consciousness.

EMILY

How many will go?

PRESIDENT HALL

I don't know. ~~Perhaps a~~
~~hundred thousand.~~ If we
succeed with the first bullet, *one hundred*
~~hundreds of~~ space ships will
follow, one by one. If we
succeed, ~~perhaps a hundred thousand~~
with the ability to self-replicate

He is clearly hanging on to his emotions.

EMILY

You must be suffering so.

She manages to get out of her chair. Standing, she puts
her arms around him. He holds her tightly for a moment,
then lifts her as easily as a child, and carries her
back to her room.

The camera follows the trip down the hall.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: EMILY HALL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She is in her bed. Hall sits beside her. She speaks
calmly.

EMILY

Darling, I've always known,
there's a part of you that's
not to be trusted. Something
diabolical in you.

PRESIDENT HALL

Isn't that true of everyone?

She tries to laugh, but it is obvious. She is in pain.

EMILY

I have to stop watching
Reverend Abernathy.
(more)

EMILY (cont'd)
Or I'll be the next to accuse
you of being the Anti-Christ!

~~EMILY~~
~~(continuing)~~

Oh, Jack, I don't blame you.
When I think of how you were
born on the same day that Jack
Kennedy was assassinated. And
your parents named you John
Franklin Delano Hall--how
could you help yourself? You
had to be President.

But you took me with you.
Just a pretty girl from the
neighborhood. I don't know if
I ever wanted to be where we
are now.

PRESIDENT HALL
I couldn't have done it
without you.

EMILY
And you believe that?

PRESIDENT HALL
I know it in my bones.

EMILY
Then remember this. WE took
a private vow at our wedding,
and it wasn't because we were
Mormons, but because we loved
the idea. Do you remember?

PRESIDENT HALL
I remember. ~~But tell me again.~~

EMILY
We took a vow to be married
not only in this life, but for
eternity.

PRESIDENT HALL
For eternity.

EMILY
I hope I can trust you not to
break that vow.

He looks stricken. She sees and is slightly ashamed of
her attitude. He is in his own kind of pain now.

*} Clean up to a
double-speak*

and be going to convert

Maybe you do.

She smiles up at him. A sweet smile full of irony and understanding.

EMILY

(continuing)

Jack, it doesn't matter if a handful of us get on a rocket ship and go somewhere else. The bad guys have won. The Earth is finished.

PRESIDENT HALL

Emily, for even a few men and women to survive. . . I know we could begin again, and this time do better.

EMILY

And you truly believe that? You believe that as well?

PRESIDENT HALL

I do.

EMILY

Then heaven help all of us.

PRESIDENT HALL

How can you say that?

EMILY

Certain questions answer themselves by being asked.

They look at each other. With a wan hand, she indicates that he should go.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT: THE UTAH DESERT - DAY

In their native costumes, the dignitaries of fifty countries sit in a small viewing stand. Stevens' two assistants are also installed on this viewing stand.

Anderson Stevens is being heard on the five video sets arrayed in front of the dignitaries. The video monitors show different scenes as Stevens speaks: THE CONTROL ROOM. . . . A VIEW DOWN THE TUNNEL. . . THE NOSE OF THE ROCKET ten miles away, one mile under the earth. . . THE MOUTH OF THE TUNNEL, 20 feet in diameter, which sits on a ramp-like projection, its bottom perhaps ten feet off the earth, its top thirty feet high.

ANDERSON STEVENS (V.O.)

If you look at the monitor that is now focussed on the nose of the rocket, you will perceive the space-ship vibrating. That is due to the extreme heat at the base of the tunnel.

Without the ceramic skin covering the rocket, every one of the astronauts who boarded the ship up here and were then lowered into the tunnel on a specially designed monorail track. . .

Animation demonstrates this on the dignitaries' monitors as he speaks.

ANDERSON STEVENS (V.O.)

(continuing)

. . . would have been incinerated down there. But now they are safely ensconced.

Anderson Stevens' video offers us a shot of the interior of the tunnel which looks much like Lincoln Tunnel or the Chunnel.

ANDERSON STEVENS (CONT'D v.o.)

This tunnel will be used ~~once a~~ *once a* ~~alternate~~ days for fifty firings of separate rockets. Coordinated with us with us will be the other fifty launch days at Olgemutsk.

One hundred ~~consecutive~~ *firings* days in all. This is scheduled to commence a month after the success of this test.

CUT TO:

EXT: UTAH DESERT - DAY

Shot of the take-off clock mounted on the near desert ground in front of the dignitaries. At the beginning this clock showed 30 minutes until takeoff. In the course of the orientation offered by Anderson Stevens, we see the clock winding down.

CUT TO:

INT: MISSION CONTROL - DAY

One minute to go. Dialogue from mission control:

VOICES

Fifty-eight seconds. . .Safety
harness fastened. . .Motors
armed . . .Fuel flowing. . .
Positive?

ANOTHER VOICE

Positive.

The clock winds down to ten seconds.

CUT TO:

EXT: UTAH DESERT - DAY

The ramp where the dignitaries are sitting, begins to tremble, then to shake. The monitors show the motors firing ten miles away at the other end of the tunnel.

CUT TO:

INT: MISSION CONTROL - DAY

VOICE

Takeoff!

As Anderson Stevens speaks, we see the anxious faces of the people manning their computers in Mission Control.

ANDERSON STEVENS (V.O.)

Satellite under way! Initial
speed five feet per second.
Satellite will surface in one
minute. At ever-accelerating
speed. It's coming! It's on
its way!

CUT TO:

EXT: UTAH DESERT - DAY

Shots of the dignitaries.

Shots of the desert earth rumbling. The ramp shakes. The dignitaries are all vibrating. On the monitor, their faces look distorted as if they were undergoing a test pilot's high Gs.

CUT TO:

EXT: UTAH DESERT - TUNNEL MOUTH - DAY

The ship bursts out of the earth, its ceramic skin glowing with the incandescence of a welding torch.

It traces a path of incredible velocity across the sky, moving so fast that it looks like a bolt of lightning. But in reverse. It leaps lividly from the earth into the sky.

And there, some miles up in the sky, the rocket ship glows and turns to ash. It decomposes. It all but disappears.

We see a powder of residue slowly settling, slowly falling through the sky.

CUT TO:

EXT: UTAH DESERT - DAY

We see the faces of the dignitaries who are sitting on the ramp. Some are weeping. Some look as pale as the ash of the incinerated ship. Anderson Stevens is sobbing with an extraordinary sound, as if he is racing to overtake his own grief.

President Hall puts his hands to his face.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: THE WHITE HOUSE - SOUTH LAWN - DAY

The President is talking to a bank of microphones.

PRESIDENT HALL

This is the most difficult matter I have ever had to present to the people of the world.

Now that I have told you why it will be impossible to send the fleet to Mars, or for that matter anywhere, I would ask us all to recognize that an even harder task approaches for all of us.

We will carry on, as long as we are able. Then, I would ask us all to prepare ourselves for the end. We must open our hearts.

(more)

PRESIDENT HALL (cont'd)

We must remember that each of us has a soul and that soul might give us a life beyond death.

For those who do not believe this, those for whom nothing else is left, the opportunity remains to die well. We can die in dignity and with grace.

We can die with the hope that the human spirit will, by one means or another, prove more miraculous and more mighty than any wonders man has extracted from matter.

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO - DAY

Shot of Tom Martin and Lisa Wilcox sitting at a table. Both commentators have extremely vivid makeup. What gives the game away is that their wrists, seen from the over-large cuffs of their shirts, are exceptionally pale. Ditto the exposed portions of their necks.

LISA WILCOX

I believe the President was hoping to offer the people of the world another great speech, but we may have had too many great speeches lately from him.

TOM MARTIN

In Berlin, Der Spiegel commented, "If all that is left to us is to ready our spirit, why, then, did the President deny us six useful months to meditate upon our end? And from France, the Premier offers his reaction:

CUT TO:

INT: OFFICE OF THE PREMIER OF FRANCE - DAY

The French premiere at a microphone. We have seen him before at the Reichstag, during the debate on what to do about the ten-mile tunnel. As he speaks in French, the following appears in SUBTITLES:

FRENCH PREMIER

Throughout the ages of
humankind, we have received
all the benefits of the stars.
They twinkle at us through a
dark sky. Now the President
of the United States is
offering to reverse the gift;
we will twinkle at the stars.

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO - DAY

TOM MARTIN

We asked the Reverend
Abernathy for his comment.

Reverend Abernathy is on a large monitor in the studio.

REV. ABERNATHY

(on monitor)

I disagree. I think the
President made his first and
only great speech today.

The answer is simple. Let us
die with dignity. Let us die
with devotion to the Lord.
Here is the answer. Be ready
to partake of the afterlife.
Be ready.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE WHITE HOUSE - EVENING

The White House is on one of the monitors of the Secret
Viewer. It is an airless evening under a leaden green
sky.

CUT TO:

INT: THE WHITE HOUSE - PRESIDENT'S DEN - NIGHT

The President's appearance has begun to alter. His hair
is much longer; his face is gaunt; his eyes are
feverish; his clothing is rumpled. If the actor's
features permit, we can suggest that his resemblance to
Abraham Lincoln is increasing. He is dictating another
memo to himself.

PRESIDENT HALL

My speech produced effects
opposite to all I hoped for.
(more)

PRESIDENT HALL (cont'd)

I can never remember an
atmosphere in these United
States so profound in its *disappointment*
its depression, its bitterness,
its madness.

Teachers now give their
lessons to classrooms that are
empty. People refuse to work.

The President flips on a monitor. We see a gang of 30
or 40 kids hurling stones at a building until all the
windows are broken.

PRESIDENT HALL (V.O.)

Even adults are throwing
stones. It as if they wish to
proclaim: "This is what our
city will look like when we
are gone."

The funeral processions make
up most of the traffic.

CUT TO:

EXT: WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

Traffic stalled while people march through the streets
in front of and behind the limousines.

PRESIDENT HALL (V.O.)

Impromptu carnivals have begun
on the roads to the cemeteries.

We see a Shot of just such a carnival. The dress of the
people is outlandish, reminiscent of medieval motley.

PRESIDENT HALL (V.O.)

(continuing)

Those world leaders who
counseled me to maintain the
silence surrounding our plans
are now the ones who condemn
my act.

CUT TO:

INT: EMILY HALL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Hall comes in, takes a seat beside the bed, lifts
Emily's hand, kisses it. She withdraws it gently.

EMILY

I'm sorry. My fingers hurt.

PRESIDENT HALL
It has gone to your hands?

EMILY
Everywhere. It has gone
everywhere.
(A silence)
I need a stronger painkiller.
You have never experienced
anything like this.

PRESIDENT HALL
If I could take your pain into
me, I would.

EMILY
Damn you, Jack. Just give me
the painkillers.

PRESIDENT HALL
I'll take care of it. But I
want you to take them in
moderation.

EMILY
Jack, understand this. I'm
going to die in a very short
time.

(She stifles the
impulse to weep)
So near.

PRESIDENT HALL
My God, do you know how I love
you? It can't be true.

EMILY
Something is going on in me,
Jack. Something different.

PRESIDENT HALL
Emily, I say you are not going
to die.

EMILY
When I am gone, tell yourself
this: If we had really loved
each other, we would have
passed away on the same night.

PRESIDENT HALL
Is that fair?

EMILY
Not for you. You have to be
loyal to the people.
(more)

EMILY (cont'd)

Your people out there. But I
~~am jealous of them.~~ I always
 wanted us to be buried in the
 same place, side by side. Now
 I will lie alone.

PRESIDENT HALL

I won't leave this earth.
 Never. I vow it. I will be
 buried beside you.

She is moved by this.

EMILY

Hold my hand. I don't care
 about the pain. It's death I
 want to talk about.

PRESIDENT HALL

Death.

EMILY

Have you ever asked yourself?
 What is eternity?

PRESIDENT HALL

I can't pretend to know. I
 suppose it is the largest
 aspect of God.

EMILY

What if God dies with us?
 What if this earth is all that
 there is of God?

PRESIDENT HALL

I don't want to think such a
 thought.

EMILY

Why don't you want to?

PRESIDENT HALL

I just don't.

EMILY

I know why. You are really
 saying that if it comes to it,
 you are ready to leave my
 grave here on earth and go
 away to some other place.

PRESIDENT HALL

Not so. *No one can leave
 the earth now.*

EMILY

Of course it's so. Your beloved people will draft you to go. And then you won't really be breaking your vow to me.

PRESIDENT HALL

If you only could trust me.
If only you weren't so bitter.

EMILY

Thank you, darling. Will you weep in public when I am gone? The people will cheer for you again. "Look, he weeps. He is just like us."

PRESIDENT HALL

You are cruel.

EMILY

Oh, Jack.

She is trying not to break down into tears.

EMILY

(continuing)

Jack, you had better go now. But just remember. I have always loved you. From the day I saw you. We did love each other, and somewhere across the Universe I will search for you and I will find you. We are married for eternity.

She reaches for her pain medicine. Takes several.

EMILY

(continuing)

I feel better. We'll talk tomorrow.

Gently, she blows a kiss at him. She lies back. She looks very tired. He withdraws from the room.

She falls back on the pillow. She is still, but her eyes look out, seeing another world.

CUT TO:

So you ~~say~~ think.
But Audenson
Stevens will
yet find
a way ~~and~~
~~then you~~

~~That way~~
You'll ~~have~~
have no choice.
So, you see

~~HALL~~
What makes
you ~~so sure~~
of that?

EMILY
Some things
I just know.
Audenson
Stevens
will ~~get~~
~~something~~
do it. I
know. And
then your

INT: THE WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Hall turns around in the corridor, goes back to her room.

CUT TO:

INT: EMILY HALL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Hall speaks as he enters.

PRESIDENT HALL

Emily? Are you all right?

Emily?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: PENNSYLVANIA AVE - DAY

The President is inside his bubble-top limousine traveling down Pennsylvania Avenue.

Through the car window we can see that the limousine is decked with black flags and moves slowly in a funeral cortege.

The President, dressed in black, looks out the window at people lining the streets. As he looks at them, his eyes well with tears.

One man, however, throws a rock at the limousine but it bounces off. The man is immediately seized by police.

We focus again on the President in his bubble-topped limousine. The glass has been scarred by the stone that was hurled and in the windshield the sun refracts in such a way that he sees the face of his wife.

PRESIDENT HALL

Emily!

CUT TO:

INT: THE OVAL OFFICE - DAY

The chief of the CIA is with President Hall.

CIA CHIEF

I apologize, sir, for intruding at this most unhappy hour, but it concerns the Russians. They ~~appear to be~~ *are* building a new tunnel at Olgemutsk.

PRESIDENT HALL

Are you sure that they are not
just removing installations
from the last project?

CIA CHIEF

No, sir. This is a new
tunnel. It is being driven
directly into the earth.
There's no consensus among our
analysts as to what the
Russians can possibly be up to.

CUT TO:

INT: THE OVAL OFFICE - DAY

The President alone at his telephone.

PRESIDENT HALL

(on the phone)

Mikhail, I have just learned
that you and I are not on the
same page.

EVGANOV (V.O.)

For you, I am ready to turn
each and every page.

CUT TO:

EXT: LONDON - DAY

Shot of Big Ben.

CUT TO:

INT: UNDERGROUND ROOM - DAY

Legend says: AMERICAN EMBASSY SAFE HOUSE THREE. LONDON.

Again we see the plexiglas chamber suspended one foot
from the ground. Evganov and President Hall are within
it.

EVGANOV

My nuclear people. Your
rocket people. They now cook
up barbaric scheme. Your
generals, my generals.
~~Naturally!~~ They are on inside
and you and me, outside.

PRESIDENT HALL

Are you ready to say what is
happening?

EVGANOV

They will take one space ship
from Martian Fleet. Just one.
Give it routine takeoff off
standard launch-pad. Yet plan
calls for this one space ship
to reach 16 Cygni B.

PRESIDENT HALL

How? We know that the tunnel
doesn't work.

EVGANOV

You are not listening. This
space ship does not depart
from tunnel. Like I say:
routine takeoff from earth.

PRESIDENT HALL

Then why build a new tunnel?

EVGANOV

Patience.

Evganov removes a small TV monitor from his attache
case. It is perhaps 3" by 2", but it is an aid to
enable the President to visualize what the Russian is
talking about.

Close up on the small screen of Evganov's monitor. It
shows a circle marked "sun" plus a circle marked
"planet" and an arrow indicating the space ship in orbit
around the planet. At a given moment, the animated
diagram shows the planet blowing up.

EVGANOV

(continuing)

As you see. At proper moment,
they explode this planet.
Immense wave of repercussion.
Like tidal wave.

Astronomical acceleration for
space ship ensues. But space
ship does not undergo super *have to*
heat of tunnel.

The arrow accelerates off into space.

PRESIDENT HALL

Which planet is to be
destroyed? Is it Mars?

EVGANOV

Mr. President. . .

The two men look at one another.

The Premier presses a button on the video. The circle that has been called "planet" lap-dissolves into a photograph of the earth taken from space.

PRESIDENT HALL

Of course. As of now, we certainly do not have the capacity to dig a tunnel on Mars.

EVGANOV

No.

PRESIDENT HALL

So this is the purpose of the new tunnel? The one that goes straight down into the earth?

EVGANOV

Yes. They load its base. . .
(Points to ground)
. . .with fissionable material. When space ship gets out far enough, such fissionable material will be detonated by radio wave sent by this ship.

PRESIDENT HALL

Are you saying that we can put our Fleet into use after all? That all the ships of the Fleet will take the trip?

EVGANOV

No. This detonation of earth will discharge radioactive material across one hundred million miles of heaven.

Only one alloy made from very rare mineral traces can protect space ship against vast new solar system fallout.

He reaches into his pocket and takes out a small shiny piece of metal.

EVGANOV

(continuing)

Vuranel. There exists enough vuranel to guarantee one complete shield for one ship. So, forget about one million men, women, and children.

(more)

EVGANOV (cont'd)
Project is now restricted to
one hundred people. Only one
hundred. They can take this
trip.

We save one remnant of
humanity, one hundred people,
no more.

PRESIDENT HALL
Who will go?

EVGANOV
Your people. And some of
mine. A chosen few. You and me.

PRESIDENT HALL
I won't go.

EVGANOV
You will. If you don't go, I
don't go.

PRESIDENT HALL
Do you expect me to agree to
blowing up our planet? In
order that a hundred people
have some small chance to
reach 16 Cygni B?

EVGANOV
Does it matter? Very soon, we
are all dead anyway.

PRESIDENT HALL
How do we know what we
destroy? You can't calculate
that! What if we kill the
spirit of something larger
than ourselves?

EVGANOV
(Taps him on the
shoulder)
Look, my friend, do you
believe God is found in some
weed or in some cockroach? I
don't.

God is found in you. He is
found in me. When all men and
women are gone, so is God gone.

PRESIDENT HALL
I don't know if I believe that.

EVGANOV

You wish to discuss moral merits? I don't. We live in crisis.

PRESIDENT HALL

How can you countenance any of this? You have betrayed me.

EVGANOV

Believe it, or do not believe it. But this tunnel in Siberia--was built without my knowledge. Without permission.

Yet some of my Russian intelligence, yes, still loyal to me. Finally, I know.

Your tunnel in Utah much closer to completion than our Russian work in Siberia.

So I offer one sad fact: you and me have lost political power. Technicians now have it.

If showdown comes tomorrow, they seize power. In Russia. In America. We must deal with them.

PRESIDENT HALL

I won't. I'm perfectly prepared to meet my end here.

EVGANOV

You deserve to be on space ship; I deserve my place. Is it not our duty to look for continuation of humankind? Do you give that up without consideration?

PRESIDENT HALL

I can never agree to a secret plan to blow up the Earth.

EVGANOV

(sighs)

What if all people are told?

PRESIDENT HALL

If the people said yes. .
Well, they won't

EVGANOV
If they did?

PRESIDENT HALL
They would never vote yes.

EVGANOV *never*
Then let us ~~another~~ world
election? You are not opposed?

PRESIDENT HALL
I don't know what I feel. But
I would be ready to propose
such a world-wide vote, yes.

EVGANOV
You will not be allowed to
propose it.

PRESIDENT HALL
Who would stop me?

EVGANOV
Your subordinates. They will
arrest you. Who do you think
conceived of blowing up our
earth? Who?

PRESIDENT HALL
Anderson Stevens?

EVGANOV
Entirely his conception.

President Hall picks up a phone in the plexiglas room.

PRESIDENT HALL
(On the phone)
Prepare for a television
address. I want to deliver it
tonight. On world circuit.

PRESS CHIEF
(visible on TV phone)
Sir, I have to be able to
announce the subject.

PRESIDENT HALL
What are you saying?

PRESS CHIEF
Sir, a network can no longer
be cleared. Not even for the
President. Unless we are
informed of the subject.

PRESIDENT HALL
(Controls his temper)
It will be a religious address.

PRESS CHIEF
(Long pause)
I hope, sir, that the networks
will give us the time.

PRESIDENT HALL
I'll wait to hear from you.
(He hangs up. Then,
to Evganov)
You are right. They will not
let me give the speech. Not
in America. I have to make it
here in London. Will you
stand beside me?

EVGANOV
No, my friend. They will put
you in jail for this speech.
You need me outside.

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO IN LONDON - DAY

PRESIDENT HALL
I repeat again that no power
other than the people of this
earth have the right to
approve or disapprove of such
an irrevocable act.

Since the technicians may not
respect your right to vote in
this matter, I recommend a
first precaution to protect
your rights.

Those people in the United
States who have means of
transportation to Canyon Fork
in Utah would do well to march
on the tunnel site. March on
it. Hold it!

EXT: AIRPORT
This is not rebellion. It is
your citizens' action as a
free militia following the
request of your Commander-in-
Chief, myself.

I hereby empower you to do so.
I plan to be there myself.
(more)

PRESIDENT HALL (cont'd)
I am flying back to Washington
and will continue on directly
to Canyon Fork.

CUT TO:

INT: AIR FORCE ONE - NIGHT

Interior of Air Force One. President Hall is studying a piece of paper closely. Now he hands it back to his press chief.

PRESIDENT HALL
The ratings cannot be this
low. Are they lying?

PRESS CHIEF
No, sir. As I foresaw, the
domestic networks and the
National Cable Syndicate
closed you down.

Only the International Network
gave clearance, and that only
in part.

PRESIDENT HALL
There were whole rejections?
by nation?

PRESS CHIEF
Forty percent, sir, of the
nations would not carry your
message.

PRESIDENT HALL
(Shrugs)
And Washington closed us down
altogether?
(Press chief nods.)

We see Washington D.C. through President Hall's point of view. The President looks out the window as the airplane is banking over the city.

CUT TO:

EXT: AIRPORT - NIGHT

Air Force One comes to a halt far out on the runway. Through the window we can see flight stairs being wheeled up to it.

As Hall descends the flight stairs, an army truck full of MPs drives up. They dismount, surround the President and lead him off.

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO - NIGHT

TOM MARTIN
(looks more haggard
than ever)
A bulletin from the White
House: President Hall, owing
to the stress of office, has
had a psychotic breakdown.

At present he is under
observation by psychiatrists
at an undisclosed hospital
location.

Vice President Anderson
Stevens is now installed as
Commander-in-Chief.

CUT TO:

INT: RED SQUARE - THE KREMLIN - NIGHT

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO - MOSCOW - NIGHT

A Russian TV studio. Evganov is speaking in Russian.
A translator gives a simultaneous rendition in English.
The voice should be thin and high-pitched, much in
contrast to Evganov's heavier tones.

EVGANOV (IN TRANSLATION)
Over the last ten days,
political tensions have become
acute in our sister republic,
the United States of America.

Russian people, Russian
friends, today, at my press
conference, I was asked, "Is
John Hall, the President of
the United States, sane?"

EVGANOV (IN TRANSLATION)
(continuing)
I give my answer now. I saw
the President of the United
States in London ten days ago.
(more)

EVGANOV (cont'd; IN TRANSLATION)
He was sane then.

He has always been the sanest
man I know. He has special
sanity of the kind found only
in men of remarkably fine
character.

Villainous technicians are
imprisoning him to obtain
their own ends.

So, trust your own hearts.
Let citizens everywhere look
for open investigation of
these charges against the
American President.

I say to my American cousins:
Let your President, John
Franklin Delano Hall, be shown
to you.

Demand that he have the
inalienable right to speak to
you.

CUT TO:

EXT: CITY STREET - DAY

An American newscast:

A montage of shots of demonstrations.

Close-ups of placards:

Free president hall!

No prisoners in the name of psychology

~~D~~ sucks

Don't blow up the earth.

CUT TO:

EXT: BETHESDA MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

Tom Martin stands in front of the medical center,
holding a mike, speaking into the street camera.

TOM MARTIN
We have learned that President
Hall is sequestered in
Bethesda Naval Hospital.

TOM MARTIN
 (continuing)
 Crowds are forming in the
 streets of Washington. A
 condition close to civil war
 may now exist in America.

MPs surround the entrance. They drive away the camera
 crew from Martin's show. Martin is jostled, but tries
 to maintain his dignity as a particularly large MP takes
 him by the arm and drags him away.

TOM MARTIN
 (continuing)
 It looks like that's all for
 now.

CUT TO:

INT: BETHESDA MEDICAL CENTER - DAY

A hospital room with barred windows. We see President
 Hall pacing back and forth between the window and the
 door. A key turns in the lock. An attendant ushers
 Anderson Stevens into the room.

ANDERSON STEVENS
 (To the attendant)
 It's all right. You can leave
 us alone.

PRESIDENT HALL
 (After the attendant
 exits)
 Iago, I see, maintains his
 interest in Othello.

ANDERSON STEVENS
 I do not think of myself as
 Iago. That will become
 apparent as we talk.

I am not without a higher
 purpose. You must never
 forget the tunnel built in
 Utah.

PRESIDENT HALL
 The one you told us would
 function properly?

ANDERSON STEVENS
 I didn't believe that for one
 moment. I knew in advance
 that the space ship would burn
 to a cinder.

PRESIDENT HALL

You knew? Then why did you
allow the test to go ahead?

ANDERSON STEVENS

Because I needed to determine
something even more important.

It was essential to find out
how deeply one can dig into
the earth before the heat
becomes too great to install
a nuclear bomb.

I learned that one can even
rig a nuclear device in the
bowels of the earth.

So the shot to which you refer
was, from my point of view,
a success.

He pauses at the expression on Hall's face.

ANDERSON STEVENS

(continuing)

A success. I learned that it
is possible to place a very
large fusion bomb deep enough
in the core of the earth to
blow our planet to smithereens.

PRESIDENT HALL

And your people call me mad.
The astronauts in that space
ship were your friends.

ANDERSON STEVENS

Yes. Many of them.

PRESIDENT HALL

Men and women you knew well.
You condemned them to die in
an experiment? One that you
knew to be hopeless?

ANDERSON STEVENS

I want you to recognize how
serious I am.

I want you to understand that
I will not hesitate to keep
you in captivity.

(more)

ANDERSON STEVENS
(continuing)
I can man the new ship myself.
I can be the one to give the
order to blow up the earth.

PRESIDENT HALL
Then why do you bother to
speak to me?

ANDERSON STEVENS
Because I want you to command
the ship.

PRESIDENT HALL
Yes, you are the one who is
mad.

ANDERSON STEVENS
Think of me as mad, but listen
to my logic. Madmen often
have the finest logic. I am
suffering from dreams,
terrible dreams.

I hear a voice say, "Blastoff",
and I push the button and the
earth explodes.

But then the blast becomes an
ear-piercing scream, and I see
millions of souls racing
through space after the ship.

I wake up in a sweat. These
dreams convince me that the
new undertaking is a violation
of every sacramental restraint
any of us have ever known.

I have come to believe that
the fate of the ship is going
to be affected by the emotions
of everyone alive at the
moment the earth blows up.
So, I confess it. I need you.

PRESIDENT HALL
Why?

ANDERSON STEVENS
Because I am a scientist. I
have no relation to the
people. You do.

PRESIDENT HALL
And this, you believe, will
make a difference?

Despite himself, Hall is listening.

ANDERSON STEVENS
If all life on earth ceases to
exist at the same moment,
then, yes, in the very instant
that the earth is obliterated,
the spirit of human life might
be capable of emitting a force
of liberation, or a force of
deterrence.

A good force could literally
spring us across the heavens.
A hostile force could destroy
the ship.

PRESIDENT HALL
No. You are saying that even
in your ice-dungeon of a
heart, there is terror. A
moral terror.

less force {

~~PRESIDENT HALL~~
(continuing)
You cannot bring yourself to
look down into the depths of
your act. So you wish me to
bear the eternal consequences
of this deed.

Anderson Stevens has been growing more and more
distraught. Now, he bows his head.

ANDERSON STEVENS
You are right. You are the
only man large enough to bear
the consequences.

PRESIDENT HALL
But I believe it is wrong.

ANDERSON STEVENS
I know it is right. I have
spent a thousand days and a
thousand nights living with
the terror that I might be
wrong. I still believe I am
right.
(more)

ANDERSON STEVENS

(continuing)

Something in me knows that one thing is true: we do not destroy the earth because we are unworthy of it, but because nature has been too cruel to us.

I tell you, we do not know. Man may have been mismated with the earth.

Perhaps we voyaged here millions of years ago and discovered that we were in the wrong place.

Some spirit imprisoned in each of my cells tells me that humankind, we men and women, are different from the earth. We are only visitors upon it.

So, we cannot suffer ourselves to sit here and be extinguished.

Not when the beauty that first gave speech to our tongues commands us to voyage out and find another world, a world where we may even live again.

PRESIDENT HALL

For that vision, you are ready to kill everyone on earth.

ANDERSON STEVENS

In fact, I must.

~~He bursts into tears, then walks about until he can control himself.~~

He turns back to Hall.

ANDERSON STEVENS

(continuing)

We need you to lead us on the trip. This will be the deepest ordeal we humans will ever face, but we can achieve greatness beyond measure if we survive. That is why I come to you.

PRESIDENT HALL

You cannot even trust yourself to lead this project. How, then, can I trust myself? How can I know if my motive is good or you have succeeded in tempting me?

ANDERSON STEVENS

No one can answer such a question.

PRESIDENT HALL

You have. Something in what you say appeals to me. But, again, I do not trust myself. Here, in Bethesda, for the first time in my life, I've had moments where I hate God. Therefore, I know this much:

Many out there will go to their deaths with a hatred too deep for expression.

They will wish with their last breath that they could find the power to destroy God. I, too, have evil dreams. I may be one of those men.

ANDERSON STEVENS

You have no choice. The mob on the streets outside here are trying at this moment to break into this hospital and liberate you.

Before I allow them to succeed, I will shoot you myself.

Stevens opens his jacket. Indeed, he is wearing a holster with a small automatic in it.

PRESIDENT HALL

Shoot! That would make it very easy for me.

ANDERSON STEVENS

No.

(The gun comes down)
My dreams tell me that we are doomed unless you command us.
(more)

ANDERSON STEVENS (cont'd)

In these years, our dreams
speak with more authority
than our own voice. So I will
let you speak to the people.

I will put my power behind
you. I have come to
understand. Let the people
vote.

PRESIDENT HALL

What if you lose such an
election? What if the people
say, "Let us stay here and die
together."

"Let us allow the earth to
mend itself without the sound
of human speech or the racket
of our motors and our
machines?"

Yes, what if they vote not to
destroy the earth?

At that moment, you would have
to betray me. I know it.

If you were able to incinerate
a hundred of your best
friends, how can there be
anyone you would not betray?

ANDERSON STEVENS

(Cries out)

Do you think I am not tortured
by the memory? *(He barges into tears.)*

PRESIDENT HALL

You are. But you are capable
also of suffering immense
torture in the name of your
idea.

Some night in some desert, a
space ship will go up into the
sky and twenty hours later,
all of us will be awakened by
the last explosion of them all.

INT: TV STUDIO - DAY PRESIDENT HALL

(continuing)

No, I will give you the choice: Shoot me, or wait for the people to free me. But, know this much: My first act will be to imprison you.

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO - DAY

ON MONITOR: A shot of the clock is included.

TOM MARTIN

President Hall still remains in Bethesda, but a most unprecedented rumor is circulating.

It has not yet been verified, but the word is that President Hall may soon be released.

The trek continues across Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah.

Americans are converging on the tunnel mouth by helicopter, small plane, automobile, by motorcycle, and on foot.

We see in digital display, a crowd of virtual people approaching the mouth of a virtual tunnel in the desert. Virtual MPs close the entrance, then give way, and allow the virtual people to enter.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

HBO apologizes for its inability to cover this extraordinary event by live camera, but all camera crews of all networks have been declared non-operative in that area, so the images we offer are VIRTUAL REALITY.

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO - DAY

TOM MARTIN

A news break is now coming in:
Acting Vice President Anderson
Stevens is being interviewed
on the steps of the White
House.

CUT TO:

EXT: WHITE HOUSE - DAY

Stevens on the White House steps.

LISA WILCOX

And how would you characterize
the mental condition of
President Hall?

ANDERSON STEVENS

I would say that he is sane.

LISA WILCOX

Would you qualify that in any
way?

ANDERSON STEVENS

I have had conversations with
the President. He is
completely sane.

LISA WILCOX

But that disagrees entirely
with what you said yesterday.

ANDERSON STEVENS

I was in error yesterday.
Totally in error.

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO - DAY

As Tom Martin searches the monitor before him, he cannot
contain himself. He smiles.

TOM MARTIN

A bulletin! After hours of
waiting, a bulletin!
President Hall has been
released.

(more)

INT: TV STUDIO - TOM MARTIN

(continuing)
He is leaving Bethesda
Hospital and is returning to
the White House.

CUT TO:

EXT: WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

Pennsylvania Avenue

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)
We are happy to present live
coverage of the President's
return.

In a shot reminiscent of O.J. on the thruway, we see
from the POV of a helicopter, the President in his
bubble-top limousine following squad cars in ranks of
three while twelve more squad cars in ranks of three
bring up the rear.

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO - DAY

TOM MARTIN
An extraordinary day. An
unbelievably happy occasion.
Look at the happiness on these
peoples' faces.

CUT TO:

EXT: WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

Pennsylvania Avenue. People, sick, wasted and infirm,
nevertheless make their way to their windows to watch as
the President's car passes.

From the street we look into the window of a parlor-
floor brownstone.

Four old men, limping, carry a woman up to a large
window. we can see that she is on a stretcher. She is
very old, extremely emaciated, but she blows kisses
through the window at people on the street.

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO - DAY

TOM MARTIN

President Hall will appear on world-wide television in one hour. We have heard this from an unimpeachable source, the President himself.

Martin flips on a tape recorder. We hear President Hall's voice.

PRESIDENT HALL (V.O.)

Tom, be a good fellow, spread the word. In one hour, I am going to give a world-wide talk.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

May I inquire as to the issue, sir?

PRESIDENT HALL (V.O.)

You know it. Do we destroy the earth to save a few men and women?

Exactly what I said in London, but this time everyone in the world will hear it. Another global election is necessary.

CUT TO:

INT: THE OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Again, the President is in the Oval Office. Two TV cameras are upon him.

PRESIDENT HALL

Like all of you, ~~there has been many a night when sleep was impossible.~~

→ The arguments for and against, *have* licked like flame upon my spirit.

Finally, I know how I will vote. I confess ~~to you~~ it was the words of a man now in prison, Anderson Stevens, ~~who~~ *that* convinced me.

(more)

PRESIDENT HALL
(continuing)

I have indeed come to believe that we humans must rise from the fiery grave of earth in order to achieve the great world we should have had here.

If these anointed one hundred men and women who take the trip can survive this last and most excruciating of all our trials, it is my belief that they will be enriched forever by the nobility, and courage of those left behind.

The sacrifice will be engraved on the memory of the astro-pioneers. All of you on earth will in one moment have become our ancestors.

In so doing, you will have offered us life. I tell you that if the people consider me worthy of such an honor, I will be the first to enter the ship. I will take upon myself this apocalyptic act.

I will press the button that will blow up the earth. The responsibility for this act is such that I cannot ask it of anyone else.

CUT TO:

EXT: CAPE CANAVERAL - NIGHT

A world-wide television newscast is being watched by the Secret Viewer. Tom Martin is talking from a stand near the space ship. He shivers in the floodlights. He is thinner than ever.

We see him smiling and waving to people, but he is offering commentary on what was shot earlier.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)

This filming which you are about to witness took place at 9:00 P.M., just twenty-two hours ago, last night at Cape Canaveral where I had the honor to be present as President Hall and the ninety-nine other pioneers boarded ARK II and took off for the newly named Planet Xanadu which circles in orbit around the twin star named 16 Cygni B, a celestial body comparable to our sun.

During this occasion, I was able to film the farewell conversation between President Hall and Russian President Mikhail Nikitavitch Evganov which I present to you now.

The film begins to roll:

Evganov and President Hall stand on the loading platform for ARK II. Behind them, we can see male and female pioneers boarding the space ship.

EVGANOV

(Shaking hands with President Hall)

Yes, poor Evganov! Now, whole world will know. Evganov is not well enough for this new game.

Inappropriate to have first funeral of new world one hundred million miles from here.

PRESIDENT HALL

Yes, ~~I know you are not well.~~
I wish it were not so. We are going miss you.

EVGANOV

Only fanatics should take long trips.

(embraces him)

Like yourself.

They smile. Each wipes one tear from the other's cheek. each does it with his thumb. Then Evganov walks away, and President Hall turns to face Martin.

TOM MARTIN

A few last questions, sir. -

~~PRESIDENT HALL~~

~~Please ask them.~~

TOM MARTIN

This departure is in advance of the public's knowledge of your departure. Can you give us the reason?

PRESIDENT HALL

Yes. This is why we have invited you to film the departure. I apologize for the secrecy involved.

But intelligence and security forces have received incontrovertible information that a public farewell could endanger the takeoff.

Indeed, at this very moment, impromptu guerrilla attacks are taking place around the periphery of the loaded tunnel entrances in Siberia and in Utah.

Given the strength of our security forces at each base and--I cannot emphasize this enough--the general acceptance of the project by the world's population, no guerrilla force will be able to reach the tunnel before zero hour tomorrow.

TOM MARTIN

Is it true that a kamikaze helicopter manned by former U.S. troops and armed with a torpedo was going to attempt to crash into ARK II before take-off?

ready

PRESIDENT HALL

Yes, but they were apprehended, ~~before takeoff~~. I repeat: These are the actions of a very small group.

(more)

PRESIDENT HALL (cont'd)

I can understand the intensity of their feelings, but their numbers are miniscule in relation to the general acceptance by the public of the necessity for this action.

TOM MARTIN

Speaking of the public, what is your reaction to the polls which show that those on earth who were most ill were most in support of the trip?

Focus group inquiries revealed that instant extinction was considered far superior to the agonizing process of wasting away.

Martin has a coughing fit.

PRESIDENT HALL

I, too, have seen those polls and I accept them. I would point out, however, that there was also a swing vote, a determining vote.

Many people voted for this quick and abrupt termination end in spite of their desire to live a little longer.

But they take pride in the thought that humankind refuses to give up. That we still seek to continue our existence.

TOM MARTIN

One last question, Mr. President. I see that Anderson Stevens' name is on the flight manifest.

PRESIDENT HALL

He will accompany us. Yes.

TOM MARTIN

In spite of all that has happened between you?

PRESIDENT HALL

Anderson Stevens has a knowledge of astrophysics that cannot be equalled by anyone living.

The chances for success on this trip will be measurably increased by his presence.

We are about to enter an unknown sphere of existence and the laws of the past, the ethics of the past, perhaps even the sacraments of the past, may now have to give way to a new understanding of human possibility.

I trust I have not erred in choosing Anderson Stevens to be part of the crew; I'm sure he hopes he did not err in releasing me from Bethesda Hospital to command this voyage.

In any event, I stand by my decision. All one hundred of us on ARK II will fail unless we reach at last to a higher spiritual plane of forgiveness.

And now, if you will excuse me, it is time to board our ARK.

He steps off the platform and through the entry hatch of the ship.

TOM MARTIN

(he cannot escape the curse of his profession. He is smarmy at last.)

We have been privileged to witness the farewell remarks of a great man.

CUT TO:

A long shot of Anderson Stevens following behind President Hall. Other pioneers, male and female, follow.

CUT TO:

EXT: CAPE CANAVERAL - NIGHT

The reviewing stand at Cape Canaveral, three miles away.

We see two dozen functionaries and notables and the ever-present TV crews. In the distance, on the launching pad, the rocket is ignited.

Again we see the light of the rocket blast before we hear it. Then, in the next fifteen seconds as the rocket is released and begins to lift, the shock of the blast travels over the intervening three miles at the same time as the sound of the motors travels over the three miles.

The reviewing stand shakes as the space ship begins very slowly to lift.

CUT TO:

EXT: LAUNCHING PAD - NIGHT

A much closer shot of the rocket, and the lift-off.

CUT TO:

INT: ROCKET SHIP - NIGHT

The control room of the space ship. ~~It is loaded with secret cameras. Perhaps a dozen small circles of light.~~

President Hall is staring at a color monitor. He sees the coast of Florida rapidly being left behind. The earth is visible by moonlight.

In each shot, the Earth is further away. A legend in the corner of the screen shows the elapsed time.

CUT TO:

TV STUDIO
INT: ROOM OF THE SECRET VIEWER - LATE AFTERNOON

Tom Martin
~~The Secret Viewer~~ is watching a newscast.

~~TV studio.~~

TOM MARTIN

ARK II, on schedule, has now been aloft for eighteen hours and is making a giant orbit around the earth.

TOM MARTIN

(continuing)

The zero hour, scheduled for
2100, Eastern Daylight Saving,
will be in another six hours.

We are with you constantly, of
course. And the President is
watching as we telecast. Here
he is.

CUT TO:

INT: ARK II CONTROL ROOM - SPACE

President Hall watches Martin on the monitor. He waves
a hand.

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO - DAY

TOM MARTIN

Unlike the busily-occupied
astronauts, all work has, of
course, ceased on Earth.

While many people are waiting
at home, others have collected
in public places.

We will give you coverage, as
we are able, from various
selected places.

As he speaks, we see some of the shots he is describing.
People are sprawled on the grass in Central Park. A
couple in the distance, fully clothed, are making love.

A girl runs by the camera. She is nude. She looks at
the TV camera, runs on, turns back, approaches the
camera and flaunts her full naked body. Then she bursts
into tears.

Solitary joggers go by. At the pony rides, a few
parents are buying tickets for their children. The
horses are very old. A little boy is stroking the mane
of one horse with great love.

CUT TO:

INT: A BAR - LATE AFTERNOON

It is filled with drinkers. A party is going on. *Pop*
Several are singing an old blues song, "I'll be glad
when you're dead, you rascal, you." They are laughing
and crying.

CUT TO:

INT: NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY - LATE AFTERNOON

The large reading room.

It is almost entirely empty. Two or three old scholars
sit by themselves at separate tables, books piled high
beside them. The large clock upon the wall reads 20:30.

One of the scholars looks around, then surreptitiously
tears a page from the book he is reading and slips it
into his pocket. He looks stricken when he realizes
that a TV camera is on him.

CUT TO:

EXT: STREET IN NEW YORK - EARLY EVENING

A man sitting on the curb takes his shoes off. He
wiggles his toes. Sticks a finger between his toes.
Then, becoming aware of the TV camera, he sticks the
same long middle finger toward the lens.

CUT TO:

EXT: A REST AREA ON A SUPER-HIGHWAY - EARLY EVENING

Cars have pulled off. People are listening to their
radios. one adolescent is looking at a portable
television. He sees himself, gives a grin, then a
grimace.

CUT TO:

INT: TV STUDIO - EVENING

TOM MARTIN

Now, we are starting to say
goodbye to our correspondents
in other parts of the world.
We regret that not all
stations are still functioning.

We will start with Spain.
Hello, Madrid.

VOICE (V.O.)

Adios, Senor Martin. Goodbye,
Tom.

TOM MARTIN

Unfortunately, there is no image coming to us from Madrid. Our audio is still intact, however.

Since time is now a factor, we will let you hear from several places as they come in.

All you stations connected to this telecast: Audio only, please.

We hear a cacophony of greetings and farewells in a dozen languages. "SAYONARA, "AUF WIEDERSEHEN," "AU REVOIR," "CIAO," "GOOD NIGHT, TOM," and voices from China, India, Argentina, etc.

TOM MARTIN

(continuing; The strain is beginning to show)

Our apologies for the non-functioning of our video components.

(Touches his earpiece)

We cut now to Lisa Wilcox at an impromptu carnival in Provincetown, Massachusetts, where they are celebrating the end of the world. Lisa? Are you there?

LISA WILCOX

Yes, I am, Tom, and as you might know, Provincetown is the place where the Pilgrims first landed in America before they went on to Plymouth.

So HBO thought it was fitting to show the conclusion here.

big A drag-queen, dressed in tall high-heels and blonde wig, comes up to Lisa and hands her a bottle of whisky. Lisa looks startled for a moment, then takes a swig.

CUT TO:

EXT: PROVINCETOWN STREET - EVENING

A chain of people in medieval motley. Clowns, gays, straights, lesbians, tourists, children, hang onto giant decorated floats as they parade down the narrow street.

As the camera draws closer, we see how ravaged and exhausted the people are.

All through the late afternoon and evening as the TV camera has shown people in the parks and streets and libraries, we have been given a view at last of how very ill are the people of earth who remain, but the epitome of this attempt to show gaiety in the midst of plague-ridden illness is most evident in this last frolic of the exhausted as they move down Commercial street in Provincetown.

A girl on a float takes a vial from her blouse, downs it, shrieks "poison," and falls over. A voice from the crowd: "party pooper!" Giggles. Wails.

Lisa Wilcox is in the middle of the revelry, holding the bottle of whisky. Her hair has come loose, and her shoes are off. She is drunk.

LISA WILCOX

Yeah, Tom, here we are, you old auntie! Why didn't you come with us?

What do you think you're doing in that TV studio? Are you giving an imitation of the last living cell in a dead body?

The crowd around her hoots with laughter.

LISA WILCOX

(continuing)

You know, Tom, while I have the chance, I just want to tell you that I have never liked you.

I should have gotten the anchor job instead of you, but you were such a kiss-up. . .

The broadcast is cut short.

TOM MARTIN

Sorry, ladies and gentlemen. Apparently, we have lost our Provincetown connection. Let's cut to Rev. Abernathy.

CUT TO:

INT: REV. DR. ABERNATHY'S CHURCH - NIGHT

The Reverend is conducting a last supper before a network camera. He stands at the altar, holding the communion cup. A long line of parishioners waits to receive their wafer and sip from the cup.

As each comes up, the Reverend puts a wafer on their tongues and offers them the cup.

REV. ABERNATHY

Eat, for this is My body.

Drink, for this is My Blood.

Jesus, we are coming to You.

God's people are coming Home.

We pull back to see the floor of the church. It is covered in prone bodies. As they walk away from the altar, the poison in the wine takes effect, and each parishioner falls.

They fall in slow motion, gracefully, gratefully. The Reverend's voice continues.

REV. ABERNATHY

(continuing)

". . .yea, though I walk
through the Valley of the
Shadow of Death, I will fear
no evil. . ."

CUT TO:

INT: ARK II - SPACE

President Hall at the ARK II TV monitor. He is looking at the last street carnival.

PRESIDENT HALL

People of the Earth. We are
one minute away from
farewell. I ask all of you
down there to pray for us.
Pray that our purpose is good,
not evil.

Pray that we are true, and not
false. Pray that we carry
life into a new place where we
will survive.

CLOSE-UP of President Hall. He is shaking as he looks at the monitor which shows the Earth. Hall now sees the face of his dead wife on the screen. For a brief moment. Then she is gone.

TOM MARTIN (V.O.)
 ARK II is passing through
 heavy belts of radiation. Let
 us hope we do not lose its
 signal.

CUT TO:

EXT: PROVINCETOWN STREET - EVENING

Yes, we are back to the carnival in Provincetown. The procession has stopped moving. Some of the participants are on their knees, some hands folded in prayer, some raised to the sky. A macho adolescent punches his bicep at the sky as if to say "fuck you."

Lisa Wilcox looks at the camera. She can't help herself. She is a newsperson.

LISA WILCOX
 Hi, Tom. Sorry. You know I
 didn't mean what I said. .
 .Love Ya. Goodbye.

TOM MARTIN
 Goodbye, Lisa. It's OK.
 Goodbye, dear President Hall.
 Goodbye, brave pioneers. Good
 fortune to you all. Can we
 have a last close-up of you,
 President Hall?

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP Of President Hall.

PRESIDENT HALL
 Forgive me. May I be an
 honest man and not a deluded
 servant of the Devil.

We hear the crowd in Provincetown doing a countdown.

CROWD
 Ten. . .Nine. . .Eight. .
 .Seven. . .Six. . .Five. .
 .Four.

PRESIDENT HALL
 Farewell. And may God Bless Us.

Tears streaming, his hand shaking, he grasps the red lever that will detonate the bomb.

CUT TO:

~~A shot from the newscast of ARK II. It looks like a silver minnow in a dark heaven. A legend reads: VIRTUAL REALITY.~~

~~As he pulls the lever that hears for over it, we hear Emily Hall.~~

~~We see Hall pull the lever. Then we hear~~

EMILY (V.O.)

You will end by destroying all of everything.

~~Then we hear~~ ~~his~~ ~~wife's~~ voice.

CUT TO:

~~INT. ARK II - NIGHT~~

~~INT. ARK II - NIGHT~~

President Hall looking at his monitor in the cabin on ARK II.

Half a million miles away, and then racing in on a zoom shot so that the planet appears to be just 50,000 miles away, we see the Earth explode and a vast flame leap out and engorge the moon, then go blazing toward the other planets.

Over President Hall's TV monitor comes an inexplicable and terrifying voice out of the earth itself.

A scream of many voices full of humankind's anguish, jubilation, desperation and ecstasy vaults out of the sound box even as the glowing red-hot earth begins to collapse in upon itself.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE

A last glimpse of the space ship, a silver minnow of light, streaming out into the oceans of mystery and the darkness beyond.

VIRTUAL REALITY: says the legend.

Very slow dissolve into

Divine reality

Credits roll as the ship grows faint and disappears. We are left with the heavens, dark and sparkling with stars.

The end.