

PLASTIC MAN

by

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FADE IN:

INT. CAGE

We are a lab mouse.

Our world is a cage; the laboratory beyond the wire mesh has the sprawling limitlessness of a universe with dark endless voids and immense technological instruments gleaming with celestial light.

We can hear a WOMAN'S VOICE though we can't understand what she is saying.

There are several other lab mice in our cage and as the voice gets closer there is sense of mounting apprehension.

We fight the other mice, pushing into the far corner.

Suddenly the world beyond the mesh is eclipsed by the WOMAN. If we were not a mouse, we might think she was beautiful.

She opens the cage and a panic erupts. There is nowhere to hide as her hand reaches in and TAKES HOLD of us.

The cage seems to fall away as she LIFTS us.

We can barely hear her voice over the blood pounding in our ears.

She TURNS us OVER and we see an enormous hypodermic needle that she uses to inject us with a sapphire-blue fluid.

We are then placed in a small air-tight tank. There is a small Plexiglas window and several tiny holes. After a moment we hear the HISS of VALVES OPENING.

A milky fluid suddenly floods the chamber and we begin to feel nauseous, our VISION BLURRING and DISTORTING.

As quickly as the fluid filled the tank it now drains.

The god-like hand again LIFTS us from the tank but something is wrong because --

We SLIP THROUGH her fingers.

The GROUND RUSHES UP at us but when we hit --

We BOUNCE. And BOUNCE.

FLIP FLOPPING, the bounces coming quicker and quicker,
LOWER and LOWER until we are RACING ACROSS the floor.
Free!

We see the woman in her white lab coat screaming at her
assistant as they try to corral us.

We DODGE, ZIPPING ACROSS the floor, looking for a way out
when we see, set in the tile floor, a drain.

The WORLD SWIRLS WITH us as we DASH TOWARDS it, the dark
holes widening as we DIVE at them, PLUNGING HEADLONG INTO
BLACKNESS --

TUMBLING DOWN the rabbit hole.

After a long silent moment, we hear a MAN SNEEZE.

INT. DIME STORE

The DARKNESS BECOMES a curtain that is yanked open as the
same MAN steps out talking to himself.

MAN

Hi, Susan... no. Hi, Susie...

We realize he has just stepped out of a photo booth.

We do not see his face, MOVING WITH him, staying waist
high as he waits for the photo strip.

MAN

Howdee, Susan... no... Hello there,
Doctor Bright. No no no. Hello,
Susan...

A smoldering octave lower.

MAN

Hello, Susan...

The green light flashes and the strip of black and white
pictures drops into the gate.

We DESCEND PAST each picture of the man's face, framed
tightly as if each was a panel in a comic book.

Each face seems like someone who has a secret or who is
trying to look very smart.

Except for the last one which looks like he was about to
sneeze.

The man grabs the strip.

EXT. SUSAN BRIGHT'S BROWNSTONE - MORNING

An upscale neighborhood: Brownstones and coffee houses.

Dr. Susan Bright (WOMAN) steps out of her door. She is the scientist that we saw in the OPENING SCENE.

She is in a hurry, juggling a briefcase, an armful of books, a cup of coffee and her keys as she heads for her car.

She is bent to the car door as we GLIDE UP BEHIND her.

MAN

Hello, Susan.

The voice hits her like the Hymlich maneuver.

SUSAN

Oh my God...

MAN

What god would that be?

She turns around and we see the man; Daniel "Eel" O'Brien. Black leather activist. We cannot tell if he is dangerous or just trying to look dangerous.

SUSAN

Daniel...

O'BRIEN (MAN)

What? No kiss? Not even for old times sake?

She forces a smile and gives him a hug.

His hand slips into her lab coat pocket and then away.

SUSAN

When did you...?

O'BRIEN

Been out for six months now.

SUSAN

Really? What have you been doing?

O'BRIEN

You know, this and that.

She smiles.

SUSAN

Still chasing litterbugs?

His grin has an edge to it.

O'BRIEN

Somebody has to.

SUSAN

Same old Daniel.

O'BRIEN

Oh no. Not by a long shot. I may look like the old Daniel O'Brien, but on the inside, nothing is the same.

SUSAN

Is that so?

O'BRIEN

Oh yeah. See, Susie, a man doesn't do the hard time and just pick up where he left off. Oh no. The big house does things to a man.

SUSAN

The big house?

O'BRIEN

The big house.

SUSAN

Jesus, Daniel. It wasn't Ryker's Island. It was work camp for white collar criminals.

O'BRIEN

A cage by any other name would still smell like sweaty ugly men.

Sounds like the same O'Brien to her.

O'BRIEN

You know, I've been following your work at Argon Labs.

Her smile disappears.

O'BRIEN

I've been thinking about you a lot all these years, locked up in my cell. I'd tear through every issue of the Midwest Science Journal looking for your latest findings, watching as you slowly worked your polymerization experiments up through single celled organisms to

that holiest of holies, the fruit fly. Exciting stuff. I got to tell you, it really kept me going.

SUSAN
I guess I should be flattered.

O'BRIEN
I remember you said, nanotechnology was going to change the world.

SUSAN
It already is.

O'BRIEN
I've read they're using it to repair cancer cells.

SUSAN
And for cleaning up oil spills.

O'BRIEN
Right. You predicted it.

He moves closer, eyes smoldering.

O'BRIEN
Do you ever wonder what happened to us, Susie?

SUSAN
It was a long time ago, Daniel. We were young, different people, heading in different directions. That's all.

She backs away.

O'BRIEN
Yeah.

SUSAN
Well, it was good to see you, Daniel, but I have to be going.

O'BRIEN
Sure. Can I ask you one more thing? You haven't published anything in a while. How come?

She shrugs, getting into her car.

SUSAN
Nothing really worthwhile.

O'BRIEN
That's what I thought.

She closes the door.

O'BRIEN

Be seeing you.

She watches him turn and walk away in the rearview mirror. She GUNS her car's ENGINE and the SOUND ROLLS INTO --

The ROAR of SMOKESTACKS, gaseous flames burning into boot-black clouds.

EXT. CALUMET CITY - DAY

An industrial wasteland; towering smokestacks and warehouses of corrugated steel, factories and chemical plants built around a small lake that shimmers with an oily iridescent sheen while its shores churn a frothy green bile.

One of the more distinct buildings in this skyline of black steel and blue-gas flame, is Argon Laboratories.

It is a heavily secured compound. There are two oblong buildings: one is the main lab building, the other is a chemical warehouse.

Where the two buildings are connected, a third structure rises on a steel framed skeleton like a water tower.

This is Argon Tower and at the top of the two story private manor, built beside a helicopter pad, is a twinkling glass conservatory.

INT. ARGON'S OFFICE

A pair of gleaming, red-patent leather stiletto-heeled SHOES CLICK delicately across the floor.

WOMAN

Icarus?

We FOLLOW the high heels THROUGH the office until we see the base of a statue and the name chiseled into stone; "Icarus Argon".

We RISE UP the nine-heads-high, heroically proportioned statue and see Icarus Argon as he once was; a single halogen high-lights the massive David-like physique.

She crosses the sprawl of the office and everywhere are mementos marking the milestones of Argon's life. His face beams on framed magazine covers; People's "Sexiest Man Alive," and Time's "Man of the Year". A 1989 Mr. Universe trophy is almost lost in the thicket of awards.

The Woman calls to the wheelchair-bound figure slouching

behind a black, obelisk-like desk.

WOMAN

Icarus, I thought I would find you here.

She is Mrs. Poppy Argon, a stunning woman of cosmetic perfection and a body that might have been surgically cut from a comic book.

She designs her own dresses made from Argon rubber or PVC, usually red to match her collection of high heeled shoes and boots.

POPPY (WOMAN)

You never came to bed.

He says nothing.

POPPY

Have you been here all night?

She moves around him and we get our first look at the new Icarus Argon.

POPPY

How are you feeling today?

He is an unwrapped mummy; brown flesh drapes over stringy cords of muscle like a wet paper bag. His eyes, hard white marbles lined with red cracks, coldly stare up at her.

ARGON (MAN)

I feel like I felt yesterday.

She feels his forehead.

ARGON

Like rotting meat.

POPPY

You're not rotting meat.

He lifts his arm.

ARGON

Oh no? Smell this.

POPPY

Icarus, please, if you want me to give you a bath just say so.

ARGON

No. I'm getting used to it.

She opens a manila folder, setting several sheets of paper

on a tray in front of him.

POPPY

Fine. Now I need your signature on this today.

He snatches the pen from her and begins signing everything she lays in front of him.

ARGON

What about Dr. Bright?

Poppy sighs.

POPPY

She's working as fast as she can, Icarus. It will be ready soon.

ARGON

It's ready now, I know it is.

POPPY

She says it's not.

ARGON

She's lying. She lost the first one on purpose.

POPPY

She did not. The mouse ran down the drain.

ARGON

She let it escape because she wants me to die.

POPPY

Don't be a child, Icarus. She is just another scientist and like all scientists, she doesn't care about anything outside the world of the laboratory.

She gathers her papers back into the folder.

POPPY

Right now she is still concerned about the unstable molecular waste generated by the first experiment. I am sure that when she solves that problem she will be ready for the second test.

She pats him on the head.

POPPY

Now you be a good boy today and take

your medicine and Poppy will make
you forget about everything tonight.

She blows him a kiss, wiggling her long red-nailed
fingers.

EXT. MAIN GATE

Susan Bright's car rolls up to the main gate. Inside her
car she is searching for her security card key.

The GUARD notices and steps out of the booth. She rolls
down the window.

GUARD
Something wrong, Dr. Bright?

SUSAN
I can't find my key card.

GUARD
Not a problem. Just let us know if
it's lost and we'll make you a new
one.

SUSAN
Thanks.

He returns to the booth and the gate arm waves up.

EXT. ADMIRAL HOTEL - DAY

A poorly painted sign in the window reads: "Transients
Welcome."

INT. ADMIRAL HOTEL

CLOSE ON Susan Bright's Argon ID, as an x-acto knife
carefully cuts out the photo.

O'Brien is hunched over, working diligently. The hotel
room behind him is the kind of place where "cheap" would
be the politically correct adjective.

There are piles of nondescript scientific journals and
reference texts everywhere. The walls around him are
covered with clipped articles and we repeatedly glimpse
the words nanotechnology, molecular engineering,
assemblers and replicators.

Using a colored marker he colors in one of the serious-
looking black and white photos from the strip.

There are only twelve colors in the set of markers so the
result looks somewhere between Warhol and Turner-vision.

He compares it to the color photo of Susan. Shrugs, good

enough.

INT. SUSAN BRIGHT'S LAB

Susan is not listening, her face as frozen as her picture, her mind somewhere else.

NEBBLEMAN

Without the nanobot it appears there will be no way to stabilize the waste entirely. Even at subzero temperatures it remains active.

DR. NIGEL NEBBLEMAN is Susan's assistant. More nebbish than man.

NEBBLEMAN

I wonder if there is a way we could catch that mouse. Susan? Susan, are you listening to me?

She blinks.

SUSAN

What? Oh, I'm sorry, Nigel. I was just thinking...

NEBBLEMAN

Aaabout...?

SUSAN

This morning. I saw someone I haven't seen in a long time.

NEBBLEMAN

A man?

SUSAN

Yeah. I knew him when I was still in school.

NEBBLEMAN

What did he want?

SUSAN

I'm not sure. That's the funny thing about him. He's the kind of guy that you never know what he wants or what he might do to get it.

EXT. STREET

O'Brien is moving against the general flow of traffic on a crowded street.

He notices a MAN in a business suit with a briefcase in one hand, a white Styrofoam cup of coffee in the other.

The Man, apparently in a hurry, slugs down the last of the coffee, crumbles the cup in his fist and without a second thought, tosses the cup into the hedge.

O'BRIEN

Hey!

The suit walks right past him, oblivious to O'Brien's outrage.

O'Brien looks back at the cup and then the Man. A single word hisses from his lips.

O'BRIEN

Litterbug.

He rushes to the hedge and seizes hold of the cup, then whirls back, chasing after the bug.

O'BRIEN

Hey! Hey, you! Hey, litterbug!
Mr. Litterbug!

He grabs the bug by the shoulder and spins him around.

O'BRIEN

Excuse me, but I believe you dropped
this.

The Litterbug, a very large litterbug, laughs.

LITTERBUG (MAN)

Yeah? So what?

O'BRIEN

So what? So what? For starters,
how about littering is a crime.

LITTERBUG

Haw-haw! Why don't you run off and
find a cop and I'll wait right here.

O'BRIEN

Why don't you just put this in your
pocket so when you see a garbage can
you can put it where it belongs.

LITTERBUG

Why don't you just shove it up your
ass! Haw-haw!

The Litterbug starts walking away, but O'Brien continues to dog him.

O'BRIEN

What is it with you litterbugs? Is

it a territorial thing, marking your turf with your garbage?

LITTERBUG

You better quit pushing me, pal.

O'BRIEN

I just want to know what goes on in the mind of a litterbug. What chemical is secreted by your smooth brain that tells you, 'It's okay, just chuck it'?

LITTERBUG

Look, asshole, I don't got time for this. If you got a problem, you better take care of it yourself.

O'BRIEN

Oh no, no, no. No can do. You enjoyed a tasty beverage and thus this receptacle becomes your responsibility and I don't care if it's a Styrofoam cup or the Exxon Valdez! You've got to learn to take responsibility!

LITTERBUG

What are you going to do? Make me throw it out?

O'BRIEN

I'll do whatever I have to do.

Fists clench as they eye one another up and down until the Litterbug laughs again.

LITTERBUG

Jee-sus! You're crazy as catshit! You win. Gimme the cup.

Smiling, O'Brien starts to give him the cup.

O'BRIEN

Believe me, later on you'll feel a lot better about this...

When suddenly the Litterbug seizes O'Brien's wrist, yanking him off balance as he pops him square in the nose.

A second blow to the gut doubles O'Brien over and a briefcase to the back of the head drops him to the sidewalk.

LITTERBUG

Later on you're going to feel a whole lot worse! Haw-haw.

He kicks him in the gut.

LITTERBUG

Next time mind your own business!

He walks away as O'Brien squeezes the styrofoam CUP, CRACKING it in his fist.

O'BRIEN

No good stinking litterbug...

INT. SUSAN BRIGHT'S LAB

Susan is still talking to Nebbleman.

SUSAN

Do you remember about five years ago, that uh... incident at Purnell Labs?

NEBBLEMAN

Oh yeah. They were working on molecular assemblers, too, weren't they?

SUSAN

They also tried using viral R.N.A. as the bonding element.

NEBBLEMAN

That's right. C.D.C. found out and closed them down...

Susan looks into the mouse cage as Nebbleman remembers the rest.

NEBBLEMAN

Yeah, somebody broke in and stole the samples, one of those animal rights groups, right? I remember now, they freed all the monkeys which caused that huge pileup on the Massachusetts Turnpike, right?

SUSAN

Yeah. But it wasn't a group. It was one man.

NEBBLEMAN

That's the guy?

She nods.

NEBBLEMAN

And you think he knows what we're doing here?

She nods again.

NEBBLEMAN

Oh.

EXT. MAIN GATE

A security card slides through the gate box.

The arm raises and Daniel O'Brien drives in, waving to the security man who absently waves back.

INT. SECURITY OFFICE

We GLIDE THROUGH the frosted glass and out THROUGH the inverted letters spelling, "SECURITY."

SIM

So you think this psycho-environmentalist character stole your security key to break into the lab?

The head of Argon Security sitting behind his enormous desk is D.T. SIM, a little guy with something to prove.

His silent partner is Doby, an enormous man with the face of a mastiff.

SUSAN

It might be paranoia, but I've never lost my keycard before.

SIM

'Paranoia is what separates the secured from the unsecured.'

He smiles, enjoying his own cleverness.

SIM

Just a little saying we've got in the security business, Dr. Bright. We get paid to be paranoid. We worry so you don't have to.

He lights a stogie.

SIM

A lot of people think security is just a job, but for me it's a way of life. It's a state of mind.

He blows a cloud of smoke into the air.

SIM

If this nutcase did take it and has

half a brain, he'd use it right away, before we could invalidate it.

SUSAN

Yes, that is what I was thinking.

SIM

In fact, would it be safe to say, based on your general knowledge of this character, that he is already in the building?

SUSAN

Yes, he might be.

INT. ARGON LAB - CLOSE ON COLORED ID

that O'Brien forged, clipped to the pocket of a lab coat.

We notice that he also inked in some dark glasses and a moustache.

Smiling, nodding, he moves through the busy corridors with a sense of inconspicuous conspicuousness.

Susan appears from around a corner, walking toward him as he turns away. Something about the tall moustached man catches her eye when --

NEBBLEMAN

Susan! Susan!

Nebbleman hurries to catch up.

NEBBLEMAN

What did security say?

SUSAN

They'll in validate the key. Probably nothing.

NEBBLEMAN

Well, you got another problem.

SUSAN

The replicators?

NEBBLEMAN

Worse. Mrs. Argon wants to talk to you. She's waiting in the lab.

SUSAN

This day just keeps going from bad to worse.

INT. SUSAN BRIGHT'S LAB

FROM INSIDE the mouse cage, we see Poppy looking DOWN AT us. Her perfect red lips slightly curling into a sneer.

POPPY

Vermin...

SUSAN (O.S.)

Can I help you, Mrs. Argon?

As Susan enters the lab, Nebbleman fades back and disappears.

POPPY

I spoke to Dr. Argon this morning and he remains frustrated over the loss of the original nanobot.

SUSAN

I am aware of Dr. Argon's frustrations.

POPPY

He believes that the second nanobot should be ready for testing by now.

Susan does not want to hear this now.

SUSAN

Dr. Argon is going to have to muster a little patience. I was rushed into testing the nanobot on that mouse and now we are dealing with a toxic waste that has the potential to make Three Mile Island look like spilled milk.

Susan stares daggers.

SUSAN

Under the circumstances, I can't fathom what makes Dr. Argon think we are ready for anything bigger. If C.N.N., or hell, if the E.P.A. knew what was in my basement --

POPPY

Is that a threat, Dr. Bright?

SUSAN

Look, as I have said and will continue to say, the instability of the assembler waste remains my priority --

POPPY

While you remain on the staff at Argon Laboratories, your priorities

will always be the same as Dr.
Argon's priorities. I imagine that
is a simple enough equation for a
bright girl like you to figure out.

Poppy smiles. Susan suppresses the urge to smash her head
with a microscope.

POPPY

If you don't have any questions,
I'll let you get back to doing your
job.

SUSAN

Just one question. Since Dr. Argon
no longer has feeling below his
waist, how is it that you're still
able to do your job?

Poppy glances up at the security camera in the far corner.

She leans close to Susan and whispers.

POPPY

I could have you fired right now.

SUSAN

You won't. That's why you're
whispering.

Poppy glares at her, then spins on her heels and leaves.

Still fuming, Susan turns to a special computerized,
vault-like machine which is the nanobot freon-containment
system.

At the top, there is a sealed plate that is connected to
an electron microscope.

She touches the plate, almost lovingly, letting her anger
drain away.

Nebbleman skulks back in.

NEBBLEMAN

He wants another test?

She says nothing.

NEBBLEMAN

I bet he hasn't read a single report
we've written on the waste problem.

SUSAN

I hope you're right. I'd feel a lot
worse if he had read them and just
didn't care.

NEBBLEMAN

What are you going to do?

SUSAN

What I've always done. As long as I'm the only one who can build the nanobot, I'm the only one who can say when it should be tested.

As they return to work, we RISE UP TO the unblinking eye of the security camera.

INT. SECURITY BOOTH

The security booth is Sim's world; he is intimate with every detail of each small framed monitor.

SIM

Hey, Dobe... Ever wonder if this is how God feels looking down on us?

Doby says nothing.

SIM

Yeah, me neither.

EXT. ARGON LABS - DAY

The sun, a brilliant ball of lemon yellow, slowly begins to curdle --

Transmogrifying into a full moon, pale and winter blue against a night sky.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

A dark room filled with barrels labeled, "EXPLOSIVE MATERIALS: CONTAINS TRINITROTOLUENE."

A barrel lid cracks open. Two eyes peek out.

O'Brien unfolds himself, awkwardly climbing out of the empty barrel.

INT. STAIRWELL

O'Brien slithers up the stairs, clinging to every shadow.

INT. HALL

Like a ghost, he glides down the dark empty halls, moving only when the surveillance cameras pan away.

INT. SUSAN BRIGHT'S LAB

The DOOR HICCUPS and O'Brien slips inside.

On hands and knees he crawls toward the center of the lab where the nanobot is stored.

Again we PEER OUT THROUGH the wire mesh of the mouse cage. O'Brien's head POPS UP IN FRONT of us.

O'BRIEN

Oh no, P.O.W.s.

He ducks down just as the camera sweeps overhead. He pops back up.

Opening the cage, he frees all of the little mice.

O'BRIEN

Never leave a man behind.

He grabs the last one, ducking under the arc of the camera.

INT. SECURITY BOOTH

There is a flash of white in the corner of Susan's lab.

SIM

Did you see that?

Doby nods.

SIM

Looked like a... mouse.

INT. SUSAN BRIGHT'S LAB

The cage is empty.

O'Brien finds the security panel of the nanobot containment system. He sprinkles graphite dust on the keypad.

When he blows on the dust, four numbers remain covered: 1-6-8-9. From his pocket he pulls out a folded paper.

It is filled with a list of all the numbers relevant to Susan's life such as birthdays, phone numbers and significant dates.

His thumb stops at "August 6th, 1991. Birth of Nanobot."

O'BRIEN

Never good at remembering numbers,
were you, Susie?

He types the date and the pressurized SEALS GASP. The plate rises, revealing a glass tube filled with a sapphire blue liquid.

O'BRIEN
That's your baby, ain't it?

He is about to touch it when the lab DOOR suddenly swings OPEN.

He ducks. Holding his breath, he waits. The room is silent.

Slowly, quietly, he peeks out. A flashlight blinks near him and he ducks back down.

He hears a WHISPER.

Panicking, he starts to creep toward the door when a beam of light suddenly pools around him.

SIM
Look what we caught here.

O'Brien can't see because of the light in his eyes.

SIM
One big muther of a mouse.

O'Brien bolts, running straight into Doby's chest.

A giant fist hammers down onto the top of his skull as his eyes roll up into his head.

FADE TO

BLACK.

FADE IN:

ON NIGHTMARE

trapped beneath searing laboratory overhead lights, Argon's hideous face HOVERS OVER us, a cracked lipless smile revealing ulcerous gums and stained teeth.

ARGON
I've been waiting for something like
this my whole life.

The voices warp through the watery space.

POPPY
Bad boy got caught with his hand in
the cookie jar.

The faces float over O'Brien like disembodied heads.

SIM
You should have stayed in jail, pal.

Argon grips O'Brien's head under the chin. Poised between his fingers is a gleaming stainless steel hypodermic needle.

ARGON

For every environmentalist, anti-industrialist, animal activist that has shoved their myopic, protectionist cause-of-the-month crap down my throat, I shove this down yours!

He sticks the needle into O'Brien's neck. O'Brien's eyes flutter, the voices and faces stretching away.

Argon's thumb depresses the plunger.

POPPY

You sure you know what you're doing, Icky?

INSIDE the hypo, blood blossoms all around us as the sapphire fluid containing the nanobot is injected into O'Brien.

We RUSH with blurred speed INTO his blood stream as we see the nanobot; a microbiotic machine that resembles a snowflake.

As it bounces from protein cell to cell, falling AWAY FROM us, it begins to blur as we hear what sounds like MUZAK.

The shapes FOCUS again as we realize that we are now LOOKING DOWN INTO the aisle of a grocery store.

The two parts of the nanobot become O'Brien and Susan joined together by the grocery cart they are pushing.

FLASHBACK - INT. GROCERY STORE

It is the 1970s. O'Brien is a granola hippie activist type, extra crunchy. Susan still loves Oreo cookies.

SUSAN

Nanotechnology is going to change the world, Danny. I'm telling you in ten maybe twenty years, life is going to be a totally new kind of experience.

O'Brien is not listening, repulsed by the stock lining the shelves.

SUSAN

And what I love about molecular science is the way it revolutionizes how we have to think. It unifies

the entire world on a single level.
Everything is completely connected.
Sometimes I can really feel it,
everything around us, just a small
part of a whole. It's really
wonderful.

O'BRIEN

Yeah, we'll see.

SUSAN

We'll see? What does that mean?

O'BRIEN

We'll see how wonderful it is after
you spend the next twenty years
making Agent Orange.

SUSAN

God, Daniel, I'm not going to make
Agent Orange.

O'BRIEN

You think the chemists that invented
Agent Orange twenty years ago were
in school saying, 'Boy, I really got
some good ideas for a highly toxic
incendiary defoliant.' You think
Oppenheimer was dreaming about
mushroom clouds before the war?

She tries to ignore him.

SUSAN

We've had this conversation already,
Daniel.

O'BRIEN

All I'm saying is that the companies
that have money for the kind of
research you're interested in, have
money because that's what they're
interested in! Money!

She stops the cart.

SUSAN

I'm sorry I brought the whole thing
up! If you're gonna flip your wig --

O'BRIEN

I can't help it, Suze. It's this
place. You know how I get in these
stores. They freak me out. All
these tiny boxes, little cans filled
with eight syllable God knows what.

He grabs a can of Spam.

O'BRIEN

Look at this. They've taken all the food out of food. When you start talking about the future, this is what I see. Huge vats of Spam. You are what you eat and they're turning us into Spam-people.

He shoves the can back into the shelf.

O'BRIEN

You think it's a coincidence that they have all these aisles lined up like this, like a little maze! We're all lab rats running through their maze, pulling lever A or lever B, each designed to create some kind of bio-chemical dependency. All the while they're everywhere, watching us, two-way mirrors, surveillance cameras, nodding to each other, making little notes.

SUSAN

You're insane.

O'BRIEN

Am I? Look! Right there! That's exactly what I am talking about.

A little BOY is trying to get a box of Trix cereal from a shelf that is too high.

O'BRIEN

Lever A...

He jumps several times, unable to grab the economy-sized box. O'Brien walks over to him.

SUSAN

Daniel! Don't -- Oh no.

The tips of the kid's fingers are slowly coaxing the box from the edge.

O'BRIEN

Let me help you, kid.

The Kid's face widens into a smile until O'Brien pushes the box back.

KID (BOY)

Hey!

O'BRIEN

You don't want this.

KID

Yeah, I do!

O'BRIEN

You have no idea what this is doing
to your body.

KID

I like Trix!

SUSAN

Daniel, give him the Trix.

O'BRIEN

Susan, this is the future of America
here.

KID

Trix are for kids!

O'Brien grabs a box of Shredded Wheat.

O'BRIEN

Here, kid, this is great stuff. Why
don't you give it a try?

KID

I want Trix! Mommy!

The Boy's wail swells unnaturally loud as we rise up,
DISTORTING, as it becomes --

The PRESSURIZING of the TEST TANK.

INT. TEST TANK

O'Brien jerks awake. He is inside a dark steel capsule.

There is a WET SUCKING NOISE as the hoses are opened and
the white assembler fluid begins pumping into the tank.

O'BRIEN

Mommy!

INT. LAB

Argon watches the gauges climbing on the tanks with a mad
gleam in his eye.

Poppy stares at the computer flickering through the model
simulation.

POPPY

Icky, this is so exciting.

Sim looks a bit nervous.

SIM

How long do you leave him in there?

ARGON

Until he's done.

He laughs until the tank shivers.

The whole unit is now sizzling hot. A coolant line bursts.

Each of them backs away as the tank vibrates under mounting pressure, like a water balloon that is ready to burst.

POPPY

... Icky?

The TANK EXPLODES, splitting open like a can of whipped cream.

We see the world THROUGH the eyes of O'Brien as he rises from the burbling marshmallow-amnion. Everything has a sense of UNNATURAL VISCOSITY as if reality had been remade with molasses.

The room CURVES and WARPS, our eyes like carnival mirrors. We see a DISTORTED ARGON staring at us in awe.

ARGON

My God... it works.

Now we see O'Brien.

He has been completely polymerized, his entire body shifting and flowing like a drunken wave machine.

The rubbery flesh of his face looks too heavy, hanging slack. His eyes bulge and loll as he tries to focus.

ARGON

Grab him! Hurry! Grab him!

Doby is the closest and he snatches O'Brien's arm. O'Brien reacts, yanking his arm which thins to a strand of spaghetti and whips free.

O'Brien stumbles backwards, quivering like a Jell-O Slinky until his bare foot, which seems more a puddle than a foot, lands on the main floor drain.

His leg slips immediately through the sieve as he slaps down to the floor, one leg sprawled out in front of him.

He blinks.

Then the rest of him falls through.

Sim grabs at the pile of clothes covering the drain but Daniel O'Brien is gone.

FROM BELOW the drain we LOOK UP at Argon and the others staring down.

SIM

That's impossible.

POPPY

It's a miracle.

ARGON

It's an organic-polymerization.

Behind them the tank core continues to melt down, gelatinous waste splattering the room.

POPPY

Icky! What's happening?

ARGON

Who cares! We've got to find him!
Hurry!

His chair heads for the door.

INT. STORM DRAIN

A six inch pipe opening GROANS with the sound of STRETCHING RUBBER.

Fingers suddenly reach out and grab the edge of the hole.

There are a series of CARTOON-LIKE SOUNDS as O'Brien pulls himself out, emerging from the opening like toothpaste.

After a struggle he pops free, snapping into normal human proportions.

Cradling his head, he stands up in the corrugated metal drain.

Unsure of what has happened or why he is naked, he stumbles out into the creek, his bare feet squishing into the muddy water.

EXT. ARGON LABS

The moon throbs overhead in a sky of dark crushed velvet.

Sim and Doby's flashlight beams dart and bounce as they sweep the compound.

They find the drain pipe and Sim throws his beam down it, careful not to get his shoes muddy.

SIM

Ah for the love of God, I ain't going in there.

He looks at Doby.

SIM

You check it out.

INT. ELEVATOR

Poppy and Argon ride up in the elevator that connects the main lab to Argon Tower.

ARGON

It works, Poppy. It works, it works!

POPPY

Now, Icky, I don't need you winding yourself up. I need you focused and in control.

ARGON

But, Poppy, you don't know what this means --

POPPY

You don't either. We won't know anything until we find that guy and find out if he's alive or what.

ARGON

Yes, that's true. We have to find him, run tests, determine if the polymerization is stable.

POPPY

In the meantime, we're going to need someone to deal with that mess in the lab. I don't think we should call Dr. Bright.

ARGON

Oh no. No. We'll get her assistant. What's-his-name? Nebbishman?

POPPY

Nebbleman.

INT. MAIN LAB

Nigel Nebbleman enters the building. He is wearing a

raincoat over his pajamas that are covered with small bunny rabbits.

Poppy is waiting for him.

POPPY

Dr. Nebbleman, thank God you're here!

In her high heels she is taller than him and when they embrace, his head lays against her ample bosom.

POPPY

I've been nearly hysterical with fright. Thank God you came. I feel so much better that you're here.

NEBBLEMAN

What happened?

Poppy leads him to the stairwell.

POPPY

As I told you on the phone, there's been an accident. A terrible accident.

INT. SUSAN BRIGHT'S LAB

We hear Nebbleman's voice crack with panic, as he rushes towards the double doors of the lab.

NEBBLEMAN (O.S.)

Oh my God. Oh my God. Oh my God.

The moment he bursts in and sees the ruptured test tank melting into the white mucous of the assembler waste --

He faints.

POPPY

Great.

INT. ARGON'S OFFICE

Nebbleman lifts his face from the paper bag he was breathing in. Panic is cracking his voice.

NEBBLEMAN

Okay. Alright. Okey-dokey. Now, we need the nanobot. The nanobot that initiated the reaction. Once we have that we can stabilize the meltdown. Simple really. No problem.

ARGON

The nanobot is gone.

Nebbleman's voice rises several octaves.

NEBBLEMAN

Gone? What do you mean gone? Gone where?

His knees buckle as Argon does not answer.

ARGON

Dr. Nebbleman, we are scientists, you and I and men of science are not concerned with emotions and opinions. We are concerned with facts.

Nebbleman is hyperventilating, like a mouse caught in a glue trap.

ARGON

The fact is, that the milk has been spilled and now we need you to tell us how to clean it up.

NEBBLEMAN

Cleaned up? It can't be cleaned up! Without the nanobot the waste can't be stabilized! That's what we've been trying to tell you! The only thing we can do is run! Run! Run!

Argon signals to Poppy. Poppy slaps Nebbleman. Nebbleman is quiet.

ARGON

Facts, Dr. Nebbleman. Facts. You've been using cryogenics to control the waste from the mouse experiment, haven't you?

NEBBLEMAN

Well, yes. The replicators are not as active at low temperatures.

ARGON

Then perhaps we can use liquid nitrogen to keep the meltdown under control.

NEBBLEMAN

That might work.

ARGON

Poppy, order the trucks from the Gary plant. And we're going to need a containment crew.

POPPY

A containment crew is going to attract a lot of attention.

ARGON

You're right. Place a call to our friends at the network and to Mr. Joplin at the E.P.A.

NEBBLEMAN

How did this happen? How did the nanobot activate the assembler fluid? If I'm going to help, I have to know what happened.

Argon studies Nebbleman for a moment.

ARGON

All right, Dr. Nebbleman. Come with me and I'll tell you everything.

Motoring his chair around, Argon leads Nigel to the conservatory.

The elevator slides open and Sim gets out leading a muddy Doby.

POPPY

Mr. Sim, did you find him?

Sim has O'Brien's wad of clothes tucked under his arm.

SIM

No, but if he's alive I think I know where he might go.

He holds up the key to O'Brien's hotel room; the plastic key chain stamped, "Admiral Hotel."

INT. ADMIRAL HOTEL - NIGHT

A muddy bare footprint, black grime against green shag.

We PULL BACK and see another, then another, the tracks leading toward the white light of the bathroom door.

We CLOSE IN ON the bilious white of the steam, the warble of O'Brien whimpering and shivering even in the scalding water.

He begins to sneeze and cough as if something were tickling the back of his throat. He snorts at it, inhaling through his nose, trying to suck it out.

Finally, he spits a clear silicon-like wad of phlegm that remains connected to his mouth by a long rubbery strand.

He spits at it, and it stretches until he flicks it off with his hand.

It hangs on the wall for a moment like a sticky rubber slug before being swept down the tub drain.

INT. SUSAN BRIGHT'S LAB

We RISE THROUGH the floor drain.

Wearing a special insulated contamination suit, Nebbleman is on hands and knees examining the lab floor.

He lifts a hand and we see an impression that gradually fades as if the ground were a sheet of foam.

He slaps it hard and the tile ripples like a waterbed.

NEBBLEMAN

Oh God, it's worse than I thought.

He runs for the door leaving a trail of footprints.

NEBBLEMAN

Get that crew in here. Now!

EXT. ARGON LAB - NIGHT

Outside the lab a flurry of activity erupts.

Thick hoses are attached to the belly of giant tanker trucks.

Brilliant portable klieg lights illuminate the grounds like a ball park.

Men in bulbous insulated space suits milk the tankers filling scuba-like canisters that are worn on their backs.

The bold letters on the back of the tanker read: "WARNING -- LIQUID NITROGEN."

Slowly we MOVE TOWARD the "O" in "NITROGEN." It OPENS in front of us like a yawning tunnel which we DESCEND INTO.

INT. ADMIRAL HOTEL ROOM - DAY

O'Brien is in a deep sleep, mouth wide open, his breathing rasped. Turning his face deeper into his pillow, he is suddenly unable to breathe.

He sucks for air with a strained gurgle. His eyes pop open, still suffocating and he bolts upright.

We see that his neck has been twisted around like a knotted sheet.

His head spins around and snaps back into place.

O'BRIEN

Mommy?

He is dizzy and confused. He rubs his head and neck, panic seeping into his expression as he begins to remember last night's events.

He looks down seeing the muddy footprints on the carpet.

O'Brien touches his neck where he was injected.

O'BRIEN

Uh oh.

Suddenly the door whaps open, Sim and Doby FILLING the FRAME.

SIM

Good morning, Mr. O'Brien!

Still in his underwear, O'Brien jumps from the bed.

O'BRIEN

You! I remember you!

SIM

I'm real touched. Now get your Sunday's on. We're going for a ride.

He throws O'Brien's pants at him.

O'BRIEN

What? I'm not going anywhere!

SIM

Oh yes you are!

O'BRIEN

I get it. You're the goon fetch boy. The zookeeper Argon calls in when one of his guinea pigs gets loose.

SIM

That's right.

Sim opens his coat showing O'Brien his firearm.

SIM

Only this ain't no tranquilizer gun. Now let's go!

O'BRIEN
Forget it, pissboy! You tell Argon
he can call my lawyer.

Sim reaches for his gun.

SIM
The hard way it is!

O'Brien heaves a Yellow Pages at Sim which sails past his
head. He leaps behind the coffee table.

Sim points the gun at O'Brien's head.

SIM
Not smart! You forgot I've got the
gun!

O'Brien, on his toes, keeps the table in between him and
Sim.

O'BRIEN
Then let's see you use it, bucko!
Dr. Argon's not going to take it
very well that you killed his
experiment.

Sim snorts.

SIM
Okay. Okay. Doby?

He waves Doby to the other side of the table. But before
they can grab him, O'Brien spins away from Sim and bolts
for the window.

He throws it open, yelling.

O'BRIEN
Help! Somebody help me!

Sim and Doby tackle him from behind.

SIM
I'll take care of this. Hold him.

Sim raises his gun high into the air --

SIM
Lights out.

And brings it down on O'Brien's head. It rebounds off of
O'Brien's skull which in turn rebounds off the floor.

O'BRIEN
Ow!

Sim raises it again.

SIM

I said -- Lights out!

And again smashes O'Brien in the head to no effect.

O'BRIEN

Ouchhh! Cut it out!

Sim looks at the gun then repeatedly brings a hail of blows onto O'Brien whose head bounces off the gun and floor like a dribbling basketball.

O'Brien grabs his head as Sim tires.

O'BRIEN

Jesus!

Panting, Sim holsters his gun.

SIM

Get his legs.

O'Brien lunges, grabbing the window sill as the two men each take a leg.

O'BRIEN

No!

They heave at his legs trying to wrench him from the sill. O'Brien's body raises off the floor.

Struggling and straining with all of his might, O'Brien looks up to secure his grip and his eyes go wide.

O'Brien's arms have begun to stretch. He looks back over his shoulder to see that his legs also have begun to stretch.

Sim and Doby seem to notice at the same time, that they have stretched O'Brien halfway to the door.

SIM

Holy shit!

The two men let go of O'Brien's legs and he is flung like a slingshot out of the room.

SIM

Holy shit!

He cartwheels in the space outside the window, splayed and flailing spastically.

The people, nine floors down, scream as O'Brien plummets toward them.

O'Brien's tearing eyes clamp shut in the face of onrushing pavement, a faint sound caught in his ear. An ascending twang, like a tightening guitar string.

Whump. O'Brien hits the ground, unsure if he's alive or dead.

A woman screams.

He rattles his head and opens his eyes. There is a woman in front of him, her face buried in her hands.

O'Brien tries to stand.

O'BRIEN

Oh God -- am I dead?

Hearing him, the woman peers out from shielding fingers. She looks up at his arm and screams again.

O'Brien is confused. Slowly he turns, following her gaze up, up, up. His arm stretches up to the ninth story window, like a safety line, his hand still gripping the sill. His face contorts in horror.

O'Brien screams, letting go.

Loopy wet spaghetti strands collect on the sidewalk in a pile as his arm falls. The crowd collectively inhales. The hand plops on the top of the pile like some strange garnish.

O'Brien whimpers.

A CAR SCREECHES to a stop and O'Brien jumps back at the sound. As he lands, his body jerking to the side, his arm suddenly begins reeling in like a fishing line.

The crowd's heads swivel back and forth watching the arm snap back to normal in a loud whip-crack.

O'BRIEN

Oh God.

He cradles the arm under the stare of the gaper's block. Chest heaving, he stumbles back two steps.

He shoots a look up at his apartment window. The shadows of Sim and Doby look down.

He bolts.

INT. ADMIRAL HOTEL ROOM

Sim and Doby watch open-mouthed as O'Brien disappears down the street.

SIM
This is going to take some
explaining.

Sim whips out his cellular phone and dials.

SIM
Mrs. Argon? It's Sim.

POPPY (V.O.)
Mr. Sim? Do you have him? He's
alive?

SIM
Oh yeah, he's alive. Technically.

POPPY (V.O.)
And you have him?

SIM
We lost him.

INT. ARGON'S OFFICE

Poppy sits atop the massive ebony slab of Argon's desk,
the phone pressed to her ear.

POPPY
Here, you tell him.

She smiles and hands the phone to Argon.

ARGON
Mr. Sim, you know I sooner kill the
messenger than listen to bad news.

INT. ADMIRAL HOTEL ROOM

Sim swallows hard.

SIM
Don't worry there, Dr. Argon. He
gave us the slip, in a manner of
speaking. But we're definitely
closing in on him.

Doby frowns.

ARGON (V.O.)
Mr. Sim, when you do locate him. Do
not scare him off again. Just watch
him. I think you can handle that.
Right, Mr. Sim?

SIM
You got it, Dr. Argon.

He hangs up.

SIM

Shit!

Sim slams his hands on the desk and looks down to find the pictures of Dr. Bright, a heart encircling it.

SIM

Hello?

EXT. ARGON LABS - DAY

We are LOOKING THROUGH the LENS of a local network news camera on location outside Argon Labs. The CAMERA RACK FOCUSES and PANS TO network reporter, SPENCER LAMM.

SPENCER

Tawney, I'm standing in front of the security station just outside of Argon Labs in Calumet City. Since seven o'clock this morning, when security guards barred the weekend staff here at Argon Labs, rumors have been circulating as to the nature of the accident that occurred here last night.

He looks over his shoulder as an unmarked tanker rolls past the security gate.

SPENCER

All we know for sure is that at 9:30 a.m., two sedans carrying the county sheriff and men who have been identified as high-ranking officials of the E.P.A. entered the Argon offices and have not come out.

INT. SUSAN BRIGHT'S BROWNSTONE

We PULL BACK REVEALING the reporter on television in the kitchen.

SPENCER (V.O.)

We expect a statement some time today, but until then we can only speculate that whatever did happen here, which has crews working around the clock, no one was prepared for. This has been Spencer Lamm live at Argon Labs.

Susan drops her coffee cup when she hears the name. She rushes to turn up the volume but the special report is over.

She is searching the other stations when someone POUNDS on her door.

THROUGH the peep-hole she sees O'Brien, his face WARPED by the WIDE-ANGLE LENS.

SUSAN

Oh shit...

With the chain still on, she opens the door.

O'BRIEN

Susie! You gotta help me!

SUSAN

Daniel, what are you doing here?

O'BRIEN

Please, Susan! I need help!
Something is wrong with me!

SUSAN

Sorry, Daniel, I'm a physicist, not
a psychiatrist.

O'BRIEN

No, something is really wrong...
look!

He stuffs his arms into the three-inch slot between the door and the jamb then squeezes his body and head through.

Susan steps back, her mouth falls open.

SUSAN

You... you...

She points at him then at the television.

O'BRIEN

They did it to me!

SUSAN

The nanobot.

As O'Brien spits the story out his gestures become more animated.

O'BRIEN

Last night, Argon's goons grabbed me, the big one hit me, probably did severe cranio-sacral damage and bam, I drop to the floor, and then Argon was there, and it became like a bad dream. Everyone was laughing as he stuck this big needle in my neck and

then I'm not sure what happened but
I came to in a metal tank and they
drowned me with white goo and I
thought I was dead, everything soft
and blurry and the next thing I know
I wake up back in my hotel and
Argon's goons bust in and we fight
and I fall out the window and again
I thought I was a goner, but I hit
the ground and I bounce and I look
up and my arm is really really long
and I know, I know I shouldn't have
been in your lab but Jesus Christ,
Susan, feel my skin, feel it! It
feels like plastic!

He reaches his arm across the room and she feels his hand.

SUSAN

... just like the mouse.

O'BRIEN

Mouse? What mouse?

SUSAN

My first organic-polymerization was
a lab mouse.

O'BRIEN

What happened to it?

SUSAN

I don't know.

He jerks his hand away.

O'BRIEN

You don't know?

SUSAN

It escaped from the lab before we
could finish the experiment.

O'BRIEN

But you've polymerized single-celled
bacteria and the fruit flies, I know
you have.

SUSAN

Yes.

O'BRIEN

Then you must have at some point
tried to reverse the procedure.

She nods but it is not the kind of nod he was hoping for.

O'BRIEN

Oh no, no, no! You've got to be able to fix me! Please, Susan, tell me you can make me normal again!

SUSAN

Once the subject was polymerized we were unable to reassemble the original organic structure.

His legs go wobbly.

O'BRIEN

Oh God, please! This can't be happening! I can't be plastic! A plastic man?!

SUSAN

Daniel!

O'BRIEN

I'm a plastic man! A plastic man!

She slaps him; his chin flaps back and forth before snapping into place.

SUSAN

We don't have time for hysterics.

O'BRIEN

We don't?

SUSAN

What has happened to you is nothing compared to what is going to happen to Calumet City if we don't hurry.

INT. KITCHEN

She hands him a glass of water and drops several pills into his open palm.

O'BRIEN

What are these?

SUSAN

Mostly caffeine diuretics. Help you go to the bathroom.

O'BRIEN

Why?

SUSAN

The nanobot is still inside you. It's programmed to exit through the urinary tract. We need it as soon as possible, so swallow those.

He stares at the gleaming plastic capsules.

O'BRIEN
Pills... you know how I feel about
pills.

SUSAN
If you don't want to do it this way,
I can remove it surgically.

He gobbles them down.

O'BRIEN
Why do we need it?

SUSAN
The nanobot is the only thing that
can stabilize the waste.

O'BRIEN
What waste?

INT. ARGON LABS - DAY

A BLAST of icy smoke COUGHS from the NOZZLE of a LIQUID
NITROGEN PACK.

Two men in their heavy insulated space suits work over the
broken chamber where O'Brien was polymerized dousing the
assembler waste with their liquid nitrogen hoses.

The lab has become a winter wonderland.

The lights have quit and the room is lit only by the green
and yellow fluoro-glow sticks worn on the helmets of the
workers.

The assembler waste, covered in frost, bubbles and churns
lava-like and the two men FIRE another burst of FROZEN
GAS.

FRANK TATER crosses to the door, his boots CRUNCHING ON
the ICY FLOOR.

INT. HALL

Dr. Nigel Nebbleman, also wearing an insulated suit, waits
for him.

NEBBLEMAN
Well, Frank?

Frank lifts his helmet.

FRANK
I've never seen anything like it.

We can't get a handle on it.

INT. BASEMENT LAB

It is in this poorly-lit basement that Dr. Bright does most of her work.

SUSAN

To put it simply, the nanobot inside you is a microscopic machine encoded with information like a strand of messenger R.N.A. that is programmed to synthesize your molecules with the polyisoprenes of the assembler fluid, rebuilding your entire organic system on a molecular level.

O'BRIEN

That was 'simple'?

She sighs.

SUSAN

The nanobot combined your molecules with the plastic molecules in the white assembler fluid, so that on a molecular level you now have more in common with a Good Year tire than a human being.

O'BRIEN

Got it.

SUSAN

The problem is the by-product created by the process.

O'BRIEN

The waste.

As they talk, we MOVE ALONG a stainless steel table where Susan is conducting a series of tests with the waste.

These tests reveal the stages of molecular deterioration caused by the waste.

SUSAN

Only part of the molecule from the assembler fluid bonds to your molecules. The part left over is a highly charged unstable molecule we call a replicator.

She puts on a pair of protective gloves and grabs one of the test cylinders.

SUSAN

The effect these replicators have on any matter, organic or inorganic, is similar to the molecular deterioration caused by nuclear radiation.

The PRESSURIZED SEAL SIGHS open and she pours the contents out.

SUSAN

I've been measuring the levels of deterioration. As with radiation, the more exposure, the more damage it does.

A white egg rolls into her gloved palm.

SUSAN

I dropped a single replicator in with this egg two days ago.

She hurls the egg at the ground and quite naturally at this point, it bounces back.

He catches it. It squishes between his fingers like a racquetball. He pulls at it. It stretches like Silly-Putty.

O'BRIEN

It's polymerized like me?

She takes the egg back.

SUSAN

The replicators start off like assemblers, but the replicators never stabilize.

O'BRIEN

What happens?

She opens another cylinder and pours it out. And oval-shaped wad of gray SLUDGE SPLATS onto the lid.

O'BRIEN

That was an egg?

SUSAN

Three days ago it was.

O'BRIEN

What do these replicators do to people?

SUSAN

With enough exposure, the same thing they do to everything else.

He swallows hard, watching the egg-wad cling like snot from the lid, as she reseals the cylinder.

EXT. MAIN GATE - DAY

Spencer Lamm is on the scene which continues to escalate.

SPENCER

Here in Calumet City, a bomb has just dropped. Through anonymous sources, we have learned that Argon Labs may have been the victim of an attack by a radical environmentalist group. No such group has yet to claim responsibility but we are expecting confirmation of these rumors at a press conference scheduled this afternoon.

INT. LAB

Susan puts the cylinder of slime back into a large freezer unit filled with similar cylinders.

O'BRIEN

So right now there's little replicators spreading throughout Argon's lab?

SUSAN

That's right.

O'BRIEN

Isn't it already too late then?

She shakes her head, opening a final cylinder.

SUSAN

There is a forty-eight hour period during which the waste can be stabilized.

The contents slide into her hand.

SUSAN

The nanobot will start a chain reaction and transform the replicators through a double hydrogen bond, creating an ionic solid instead of a polymer.

The egg seems fossilized, half way to becoming the wad of slime. She hands it to O'Brien. It is as fragile as a glass spider web.

O'BRIEN

Yet another miracle of modern science.

She ignores the sarcasm laced in that comment.

SUSAN
I think while we're waiting, we had better run some basic diagnostics on you.

O'BRIEN
You're the doctor.

EXT. SUSAN BRIGHT'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Across the street a dark Lincoln ominously glides to a stop.

INT. SIM'S LINCOLN

Sim settles back, watching the building for any sign of O'Brien.

SIM
Now we wait.

Both he and Doby are licking ice cream cones. For a moment it is the only sound in the car.

SIM
Darn good cone.

INT. BASEMENT

O'Brien is sitting on a table, his shirt off, while Susan listens to his lungs with a stethoscope.

SUSAN
Breathe deep.

The AIR RUSHES out.

SUSAN
Lungs sound fine. You didn't have any pre-existing physical conditions, did you? Allergies? Infections?

O'BRIEN
No, why?

She removes the stethoscope and grabs the light scope.

SUSAN
My theory is that during the polymerization the nanobot should correct any malformed or defective

molecules. Open.

His mouth stretches impossibly wide for an amazing view of the glands at the back of his throat.

Looks fine.

SUSAN

That theory is the reason Argon has been pushing me to test the second nanobot. He believes it's the only thing that will save him.

She picks up a hypodermic needle.

SUSAN

I'd like to run a few sample blood tests to get an idea of how stable your condition is.

O'Brien is beginning to bounce a bit, the caffeine pumping through his veins.

O'BRIEN

Okay. Sure. You're the doc.

Tearing open a needle package, she inserts it into the plastic hypo.

SUSAN

Hold still.

She fights to poke the needle through his resilient skin.

When the sliver of metal pops through, tiny Superball bubbles of blood bounce into the cartridge like ping-pong balls in a bingo machine.

SUSAN

Amazing.

She fills another cartridge when he begins to chatter, his rubbery teeth vibrating against each other.

SUSAN

Is something wrong?

O'BRIEN

No, no, I just feel wired!

His whole body begins to twitch and ripple.

SUSAN

It's probably the caffeine.

Suddenly he realizes he has to go to the bathroom.

O'BRIEN
Whoa! Whoa! I gotta go! Right
now!

She slips the needle out and he bolts off the table.

SUSAN
Wait!

She grabs a glass beaker as his hand shoots back and snags
it.

INT. BATHROOM

He bursts in, fumbles with the beaker and his zipper, then
lets it rip.

O'BRIEN
Ahhh...

His eyes close as we hear him filling the beaker. It is a
STRANGE SOUND; more like a solid than a liquid.

The sound bothers him and he looks down. What he sees
terrifies him.

INT. BASEMENT LAB

Susan is looking into a microscope at the blood samples
when he comes tearing down the stairs.

O'BRIEN
Susan!

SUSAN
What? What's wrong?

He throws the beaker onto the table as if it were
contagious.

O'BRIEN
Look at this!

SUSAN
What about it!

He sticks a stirring rod into it and pulls it out. The
contents are extremely viscous, like rubber cement. A
wispy strand dangles from the end of the stick.

O'BRIEN
Just look at it!

SUSAN
The polymerization probably
synthesized into a kind of methyl-
cyanoacrylate. So what's wrong?

He looks as if he is about to cry.

O'BRIEN

That's not biodegradable.

She can't stop herself from laughing.

O'BRIEN

Oh yeah, real funny. Yuk-yuk.
Let's laugh at everything a man
believes in.

SUSAN

I'm sorry, Daniel, but you have to
admit it's pretty ironic that you of
all people would be the first man
ever polymerized. It's got to mean
something.

O'BRIEN

Means? Oh no. We won't know what it
means until the end of the story and
maybe then it won't seem quite as
funny to you, Doctor Frankenstein!

The smile disappears.

SUSAN

What's that supposed to mean?

O'BRIEN

Just giving credit where credit is
due.

SUSAN

You have no one to blame but
yourself.

O'BRIEN

Blame the victim.

SUSAN

Victim my ass! You stole my
security key and used it to break
into my lab to do who knows what
kind of damage! Maybe this is the
end of the story and you finally got
what you deserved!

O'BRIEN

This is what I deserve for trying to
protect the world from a madman and
his mercenary physicists?

SUSAN

You're not protecting the world,

you're obstructing progress!

O'BRIEN

I don't consider uncontrollable
toxic waste progress!

SUSAN

And I'm sure you thought Columbus
was going to sail off the edge of
the world!

O'BRIEN

But lo and behold he found another
world that progress could
annihilate!

SUSAN

Come on, I don't see you living in a
cave!

O'BRIEN

And I don't see you sunbathing at
Chernobyl!

She stops first, smiling, caught by an odd sense of deja
vu. He smiles, feeling the same thing.

SUSAN

Just like old times.

O'BRIEN

Yeah. Old times.

There is an awkward silence.

O'BRIEN

I want you to know that I really
appreciate you helping me.

SUSAN

I'm glad you came to me for help.

They aren't sure what to do.

O'BRIEN

I feel very emotional right now. A
bit out of control.

SUSAN

Probably the caffeine.

O'BRIEN

Do you have something to bring me
down?

SUSAN

No problem.

INT. ARGON'S OFFICE

JOHN JOPLIN, high-ranking EPA official, listens as Dr. Nebbleman tries to explain what has happened.

Argon and Poppy are also in the office.

NEBBLEMAN

The nanobot is a molecular machine. It uses the assembler fluid to polymerize a whole system of carbon-based molecules as in, say, a human body.

His eyes shift nervously to Argon who nods encouragingly.

NEBBLEMAN

Once it's complete, the waste from the assembler fluid is left destabilized with groups of highly charged attractors capable of bonding to any carbon molecule exposed for a long enough period.

JOPLIN

Hold on, son. Are you saying that they can bond to people?

NEBBLEMAN

With enough exposure, it appears they can bond to anything.

JOPLIN

Well, what will they do to people?

Nebbleman glances nervously at Argon.

NEBBLEMAN

Well, at this time, I mean that is to say, it is difficult to project --

ARGON

Look, John, nobody wants to find out what happens. That's why you're here. We need your help on this one and that's why that suitcase is here.

Poppy opens it for him. The root of all evil. Stacks and stacks of it.

JOPLIN

Let me assure you, Dr. Argon, the E.P.A. is, as always, on your side.

INT. SUSAN'S LIVING ROOM

It is later.

O'Brien is stretched out on the sofa in a valium fugue; his long supple limbs conform to the curves of the cushions, dangling over all sides.

His head is on the floor, neck distending down from the arm rest.

Mid-snore, he wakes up, yawning.

From his upside down view, he sees the refrigerator.

O'BRIEN

... food.

INT. BASEMENT LAB

Susan is looking through a microscope trying to find the nanobot.

SUSAN

Come on, where are you?

INT. KITCHEN

O'Brien opens the fridge.

Rubber-necking, he looks inside while his body lies on the couch.

O'BRIEN

Hey, Susie! I'm hungry!

INT. BASEMENT LAB

She is still glued to the microscope.

SUSAN

Damn it!

She pounds her fist against the lab table.

O'BRIEN (O.S.)

Uh oh. I remember that temper.

SUSAN

Daniel, I didn't hear you come down...

She turns and finds his head almost floating, perched on his neck arching erectly up the stairs.

O'BRIEN

What's wrong?

SUSAN
The nanobot... it's not here...

O'BRIEN
It's still inside me?

She nods watching his head bobbing cobra-like around her.

SUSAN
You'll have to start drinking
fluids, lots of fluids.

She reaches out and touches his neck. He smiles.

SUSAN
How far can you stretch?

O'BRIEN
I don't know.

EXT. SUSAN'S BACKYARD - DAY

Standing in the square of rich green grass, O'Brien looks up.

He lifts his head and takes a deep breath, staring at his fingers spread against the blue expanse above him.

SUSAN
Go ahead. Reach as high as you can.

From ABOVE his hand, we see O'Brien nod nervously and begin to reach --

His face, Dr. Bright, the square lawn, the house, one by one seem to FALL AWAY --

Spreading out under the hand until the ground seems like the sky did moments ago.

INT. SIM'S LINCOLN

Sim and Doby lean into the front windshield of the black Lincoln, watching O'Brien's arm telescope into the sky.

SIM
That's why I love the security biz.
Just when you think you've seen
everything...

He whips out his cellular. Dials.

EXT. SUSAN'S BACKYARD

Dr. Bright stares, open-mouthed, at the arm-ribbon as it rises impossibly like a kite.

She turns and sees O'Brien's body thinning, almost spooling out like a ball of yarn until his pants fall down to his ankles.

He feels the draft and turns to see her looking at him.

O'BRIEN

Oops.

He grabs his pants as his arm returns with a RUSHING sound that ends with a loud rubbery CLAP.

O'BRIEN

I'll end up back in jail for indecent exposure.

Dr. Bright nods vaguely, already lost in thought.

O'BRIEN

What?

She reaches out and feels his hair.

INT. BASEMENT LAB

A scalpel saws through several strands of O'Brien's hair.

SUSAN

That should do it.

His hair is shorter and she drops the strands with the rest of it, into a Ziploc bag.

SUSAN

I'm going to go out for a while. I want to take the blood samples to a lab that has the equipment I need.

O'BRIEN

What did you want my hair for?

SUSAN

Something else I want to try.

She puts the Ziploc bag in her briefcase and gets the blood samples.

O'BRIEN

I could go with you.

SUSAN

I think it would be better for me to go alone. I'm sure Sim is looking for you. Just sit tight. I'll bring you back a pizza.

O'BRIEN

No cheese.

SUSAN

I was hoping you were over that.
Remember to keep drinking fluids.

INT. LIMO

Poppy, Argon and John Joplin are inside, as it pulls up outside Cook County courthouse.

POPPY

How do I look?

She is dressed in a two-piece PVC business suit; smart yet slutty. Argon smiles.

ARGON

Positively paradoxical.

INT. SUSAN'S LIVING ROOM

O'Brien is stretched out on the couch watching "The Itchy and Scratchy Show" on the television.

He is drinking a two liter bottle of Coke without stopping. His Adam's apple bobs like a cartoon as he swallows.

We can hear the COKE FIZZING in his distending stomach. It swells like a water balloon.

Finishing the bottle, he tosses it into a garbage bag filled with empties.

He lets out a super hero style belch then settles back, chuckling at the cartoon.

Itchy gets a frying pan to the face.

On the table, there is a vase filled with dried flowers. He empties it and with the vase walks over to the hall mirror.

Slowly he forces the vase over his head.

When he yanks it off, his head keeps the shape. He starts to laugh and his face pops back.

There is a series of GURGLING sounds from his STOMACH as he realizes he has to go.

He bolts for the bathroom, his hand whipping out for the beaker.

SAME - BIT LATER

He's finished and he sets the beaker back where it was.
He thinks and mumbles.

O'BRIEN

Technically, I don't even have to
'go' to the bathroom...

We MOVE CLOSER and CLOSER to the beaker, THROUGH the glass
INTO the golden fluid --

SHRINKING as we MOVE THROUGH the murk DOWN TO the
MOLECULAR LEVEL where we SQUEEZE BETWEEN chains of
elastomers --

And FIND the nanobot.

INT. COOK COUNTY COURTHOUSE

The press room is small, considering the sizable horde
that is packed wall to wall, shoulder to shoulder, to see
CEO Poppy Argon and the EPA deliver their statements.

The WHITE NOISE of press CHATTER reaches a fevered pitch
as the county sheriff leads Poppy Argon and several EPA
officials in.

John Joplin steps to the podium and the crowd noise dies.

He leans into the bouquet of microphones, opening his
statement.

JOPLIN

Good afternoon. The intent of...

A MAN shouts from the crowd.

MAN

Who are you?

JOPLIN

Oh. I'm John Joplin, special
investigator for the E.P.A. The
intent of this press conference is
twofold. Number one, to affirm that
there has been a slight chemical
spill at Argon Labs. Cleanup is
already under way.

FLASHBULBS BURST.

JOPLIN

And number two, that the E.P.A. in
conjunction with members of Illinois
County Sheriff Department and the
F.B.I. have concluded that the spill
was not accidental.

The press begins to titter and Joplin raises his voice.

JOPLIN

Last night, Argon Labs was the target of what can only be described as a terrorist act.

Another barrage of flashes.

JOPLIN

The single assailant sabotaged certain chemical storage units, creating the toxic spill.

MAN

Are there any suspects?

JOPLIN

The only thing I can say is that the perpetrator was photographed by Argon Security cameras. The rest of the details of the case, until a later time, will be kept in the highest confidentiality. Thank you.

The press erupts: "Who was it? Was it a group? Have you identified him?"

Joplin's eyebrows go up and he turns back to the podium.

JOPLIN

Oh, yeah. His name's Daniel O'Brien.

The entourage begins to file out under a barrage of questions. Spencer Lamm fights to get his crew in front of Poppy.

SPENCER

Mrs. Argon, do you have anything to say to this O'Brien character?

Poppy looks at the mic, several others surrounding it.

POPPY

All I can say is that when these radicals act outside the law, recklessly endangering the environment and human lives, it clearly demonstrates that they are the menace and we are the victims.

INT. SUSAN'S LIVING ROOM

The TELEVISION is ON, though "MUTED."

We hear O'BRIEN GRUNTING and the sound of sweaty RUBBER RUBBING AGAINST RUBBER.

The door opens and Susan enters, a pizza box in one hand, briefcase in the other.

SUSAN

Daniel?

As she enters, she notices something is different about the furniture. There is a second, flesh-colored love seat.

O'Brien's head suddenly pops up.

O'BRIEN

Surprise!

His head rises from the top of the back.

SUSAN

That's pretty good.

O'BRIEN

Getting used to it.

He starts to get up, becoming human, the round padded seat swelling into buttocks when he realizes he is naked.

O'BRIEN

Whoa!

He pops back to a chair.

SUSAN

Don't worry, I got just what you need.

A leg of the chair shoots out as he grabs his underwear from the pile of clothes.

Susan sets the pizza down and opens her briefcase.

SUSAN

I have a friend at a textile lab. She helped me.

The O'Brien chair pulls the underwear up over the front two legs, covering the cushion as he stands changing back to normal.

SUSAN

Ta-da!

She holds up a tiny red suit that looks big enough for a G.I. Joe doll.

O'BRIEN

What's that?

SUSAN

It's a crime fighting costume, what do you think? It's underwear, so if you lose your clothes you'll still be decent.

O'BRIEN

That's going to fit me?

SUSAN

Like a glove.

He pulls at it. It stretches easily.

O'BRIEN

You made this out of my hair?

SUSAN

Sort of. We used a process similar to the vulcanization of rubber and added bulk with a chain of chloroprene elastomers.

He shakes his head.

O'BRIEN

I bet you still kill at Scrabble.

She smiles.

SUSAN

Go on, try it on. Oh wait...

She reaches back into her bag.

SUSAN

There was some extra, so I made these.

In her palm are two little red boots.

O'BRIEN

Cute.

As he crosses to the bathroom we see the television is again updating the crisis at Argon Labs.

SUSAN

Did you go?

O'BRIEN

On the counter.

She grabs the sample, heading immediately for the

basement, when the television catches her eye.

INT. BATHROOM

O'Brien crams one foot in and then the other. The material stretches miraculously.

O'BRIEN
Groovy.

INT. SUSAN'S LIVING ROOM

O'Brien bounds out of the bathroom.

O'BRIEN
'In brightest day, nor darkest
night. No evil shall escape my
sight.'

Susan is silent in front of the TV, the sound now ON. She is still holding the beaker.

O'BRIEN
What is it?

He moves around her and sees his own face on the screen.

It is the black and white photo of him about to sneeze.

At the bottom of the screen is the title, "Voice of Dr. Warren Wertham."

DR. WERTHAM (V.O.)
... an extremely volatile individual
given to emotional outbursts.

O'BRIEN
Wertham? That's no good.

SUSAN
Who is he?

O'BRIEN
The head shrinker at the prison.

DR. WERTHAM (V.O.)
... paranoid delusions and prone to
hero fantasies all of which are
characteristic of a form of
infantile dementia.

O'BRIEN
Ha! What a crock. He couldn't be
more wrong, could he?

She says nothing.

O'BRIEN

I said, could he?

The sneeze picture shrinks to an insert over the anchor woman, Tawney Towers' shoulder.

TAWNEY (V.O.)

Once again, at this time, authorities continue their statewide manhunt for the man believed responsible for the situation developing at Argon Labs. As reports come in, News Center 5 will continue to update you.

Susan cuts it OFF.

SUSAN

Oh no. They're trying to blame you for the accident. That means they must not have been able to control the replicators.

O'BRIEN

I can't go back to jail. I gotta get out of here.

SUSAN

You're not going back to jail. All we need to do is find the nanobot. Once the meltdown is under control, then we deal with Argon --

Suddenly, the front door explodes open, the jamb easily splintering under Doby's girth.

Doby and Sim barrel in, pistols pointing.

SUSAN

What in the hell?

SIM

Pipe down, brain lady! And you...

The gun sweeps toward O'Brien.

SIM

I'd curb that monkey business, lessin' you want to find out if that rubber skin of yours is bulletproof. Now, keep your hands where I can see them.

He notices the urine sample.

SIM

What's that?

Susan doesn't miss a beat.

SUSAN

Lemonade. Do you want some?

She offers him the beaker. Sim considers it.

SIM

No thanks.

Back to business.

SIM

Put it down and let's go. Someone wants to talk to you.

He waves them out the front door as she sets the beaker on the counter.

EXT. SUSAN BRIGHT'S BROWNSTONE

The black LIMO FIRES UP as the foursome approach. Sim opens the back door for O'Brien and Dr. Bright.

SIM

Get in.

INT. LIMO

In the artificial coolness, Daniel O'Brien sits with Icarus Argon, across from Poppy, Susan, and Dr. Nebbleman. In the rear window we see Sim's Lincoln follow.

Poppy brandishes a chrome revolver from her handbag.

Argon smiles in the shady light, makeup covering the more abrasive features of his spotty skin.

ARGON

My apologies to you both for the rather rude invitation but I had to see you. And, Dr. Bright, your house isn't...

He motions to his blanket-draped legs.

ARGON

Wheelchair accessible.

SUSAN

Dr. Argon, I demand an explanation.

O'BRIEN

I can explain it. Attempted murder wasn't enough for him. He wants to add kidnapping to the charges.

ARGON

If you'd like, we can go straight to the authorities. I understand they are very interested in talking to you.

O'Brien's only response is to grind his teeth in silence.

ARGON

We haven't been properly introduced, Mr. O'Brien. I am Icarus Argon.

He offers his hand, taking O'Brien's.

He closes his eyes, beginning to caress O'Brien's hand between the withered brown flesh of his own.

ARGON

Do you know how I made my first fortune? Poly vinyl chloride. P.V.C. It was almost thirty years ago when I first held a credit card in my hands. There was something about the way it felt. I told myself, paper was doomed. This was the future...

He looks at O'Brien's hand, lets go.

ARGON

... plastic.

O'BRIEN

Wow, that is one moving story. Take it easy on my heart strings. Now I really feel guilty complaining about you shooting me up with your poison.

ARGON

Poison? I'm surprised at you. You lack vision, Mr. O'Brien.

O'BRIEN

You're lacking a few things too: ethics, morals, common decency and, oh yeah, deodorant.

Argon smiles. His coolness irritates O'Brien.

ARGON

Look at me, Mr. O'Brien. I once competed for Mr. Universe but now I am reduced to this, a withered shell. A prison of rot.

He leans into O'Brien.

ARGON

People ask me what I did to myself.
I answer, what didn't I do?! I
treat me body like I treat the rest
of the world, as a force to be
controlled. Most people believe
there is something sacred about the
human body, about nature. They are
the same fools who thought the
world was flat.

O'Brien smirks.

ARGON

The body is just another part of
nature and ever since we gave up
trees for central air, there has
been nothing sacred about nature.
Nature is the enemy, Mr. O'Brien,
and science is our greatest weapon
against her.

O'BRIEN

You egomaniacs make me laugh.
Nature's going to bury you like she
buries everyone else.

Argon laughs.

ARGON

Not anymore, Mr. O'Brien. The
nanobot has changed that.

SUSAN

If you think I would ever give you
the nanobot after this, you are
deluding yourself.

ARGON

You don't have to give it to us
because Dr. Nebbleman can just cut
it out of him.

O'BRIEN

Ha! Morons. It's not even in me
anymore.

Everyone reacts.

ARGON

What?

Before O'Brien can say anything else, Susan slaps her hand
over his mouth.

NEBBLEMAN

She could have given him something
to stimulate his kidneys.

ARGON

Dr. Nebbleman, take care of them.

Argon grabs the car phone while Nebbleman removes a loaded
syringe from a black case.

ARGON

Mr. Sim I want you to return to Dr.
Bright's. I believe she is hiding
something of ours there.

SUSAN

No.

We see the Lincoln turn off the highway.

SUSAN

Daniel, do something!

With eye blurring speed, O'Brien's arm rockets out as he
grabs for the needle. Nebbleman screams as O'Brien's hand
molds over his own.

Poppy wheels on O'Brien as Nebbleman falls, screaming,
wrestling against his own hand.

Before she can raise the gun, Dr. Bright lunges, grappling
for control.

The GUN FIRES wildly.

ARGON

No!

The BULLET RICOCHETS around the cabin before embedding in
the seat cushion in between Nebbleman's legs.

O'Brien pushes the hypo plunger down, squirting the
sedative in Nebbleman's face. Nebbleman screams.

SUSAN

Daniel, go! I'll be all right! Get
the nanobot!

He nods, yanking the door handles but they are locked.

He glances quickly around the limo, then dives at the rear
seat, body thinning, flattening into the crack where the
seat meets the back --

Leaving Poppy clinging to his empty clothes, as he
disappears from the cabin.

Nebbleman can hardly catch his breath.

NEBBLEMAN

Where did he go?

ARGON

The trunk.

As soon as the words pass Argon's reptilian lips, there is a CLICK and the TRUNK opens behind them.

ARGON

Ott, shake him!

EXT. LIMO

O'Brien stands and the limo begins to zig-zag hard on the open expressway.

Argon smiles through the small rear window as O'Brien tries to keep his balance.

O'BRIEN

Here goes nothing.

O'Brien throws an arm at a passing truck going in the opposite direction seizing hold of it --

Slinging himself like a rubber band --

Into the air, tucking his knees to his chest, bracing himself. He becomes --

A red comet, that crashes into an oncoming Cadillac caving in its hood and rebounding into the air soaring over a row of homes.

A rumbled heap, he lands heavily in a plot of backyard bushes.

O'BRIEN

Ow.

He stumbles to his feet, shaking away the cobwebs.

O'BRIEN

Damn.

His teeth grit. Muscles flex.

O'BRIEN'S POV

ROCKETS INTO the air --

SHOOTING STRAIGHT UP, RACING FORWARD BOUNDING OVER power lines and rooftops.

INT. LIMO

Order has been somewhat restored.

Poppy presses the barrel of her pistol into Dr. Bright's midsection.

Dr. Nebbleman is still red-faced from the physical exertion. His glasses begin to fog and he cleans them with his kerchief.

The PHONES RINGS.

NEBBLEMAN

Yes?

SIM (V.O.)

It's Sim. We're almost there.

NEBBLEMAN

Mr. Sim, watch out! O'Brien escaped and could be on his way!

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING BACKYARD

Two small children are playing in their sandbox.

Suddenly, a red foot stomps down between them, the thin leg stretching up into the sky. It rocks forward and pushes off and away.

The two kids stare at each other blankly.

EXT. SUSAN BRIGHT'S BROWNSTONE

Sim and Doby head for the front door, Sim still on his cellular phone.

SIM

You want to tell me what I'm looking for?

NEBBLEMAN

I've only been invited to her house once, but I know there is a basement lab that she uses for private research.

SIM (V.O.)

Okay.

SUSAN

You were never invited to my house.

NEBBLEMAN

You're looking for a urine sample.

SIM (V.O.)

Bingo.

EXT. SUSAN BRIGHT'S BROWNSTONE

Sim stares toward the basement, when out of the corner of his eye he notices --

NEBBLEMAN (V.O.)

The fluid should be murky yellow in color and extremely viscous.

The beaker of lemonade.

INT. CITY STREET

O'Brien grabs the top of a building and he vaults over as though hopping a fence.

INT. SUSAN BRIGHT'S BROWNSTONE

Sim inspects the beaker as if he might taste it. He takes a whiff.

SIM

Wait a minute. This ain't no lemonade.

INT. LIMO

Susan glares at Nebbleman.

SIM (V.O.)

What's it smell like?

NEBBLEMAN

Smell? Uh, something like methylcyanoacrylate.

SIM (V.O.)

Like Crazy Glue?

NEBBLEMAN

Yes. That's it. He's got it. Oh God, he's got it!

EXT. SUSAN BRIGHT'S BROWNSTONE

O'Brien watches from behind a light post as Sim and Doby cross from Susan's walk to the Lincoln.

He slinks down among the row of parked cars and edges out toward the street.

The black Lincoln starts TOWARD us getting bigger, FILLING OUR VISION, then PASSES OVER --

And we see O'Brien clinging to the chassis like a rubbery

Max Cady.

EXT. CALUMET CITY - DAY

The afternoon sun has started its descend over the industrial landscape. Tongues of exhaust flame lick up at the orange popsicle sky.

EXT. MAIN GATE

The black limousine eases through the gate against the swell of media.

The steel garage DOOR RATTLES down like a modern portcullis.

INT. ARGON LABS

The barrel-shaped limo driver helps Argon into his wheelchair.

POPPY

Gently, Ott. Gently.

ARGON

Dr. Nebbleman, I want to know the moment the nanobot arrives. The instant, understand?

NEBBLEMAN

Of course, sir.

SUSAN

Dr. Argon, I know you want to use the nanobot on yourself, but you mustn't. The situation is critical right now. The replicators are growing exponentially. If we wait much longer it will be too late. You have to use the nanobot to stop the meltdown.

ARGON

Dr. Bright, I don't have to do anything.

SUSAN

But in another twenty-four hours the core meltdown will be beyond the stabilization period. There will be no way to stop it.

ARGON

To be brutally honest with you, Susan, as long as the nanobot does to me what it did to that idiot O'Brien, I don't give a rat's ass

about what happens after that.

The sincerity of his smile unnerves her.

SUSAN

You can't mean that.

ARGON

Come with me, Susan. I want to show you something.

INT. ARGON'S OFFICE

The elevators open and Poppy, Argon and Susan get out.

ARGON

Something to drink, Dr. Bright?

SUSAN

No, thank you.

ARGON

You'll forgive me but all the excitement has left me extremely parched. Poppy?

Poppy gets him a Coca-Cola while Susan notices the statue of Argon.

ARGON

A monument to my past. I much prefer the future. Come.

INT. CONSERVATORY

The moist air envelops them as they enter.

ARGON

This is my garden. Few people have seen it because it means so much to me. I am hoping as a fellow scientist you can appreciate it.

It is a botanical nightmare. Huge sealed tanks feature bizarre plant-life bred and genetically engineered indiscriminately, like a blind man pairing a sock drawer.

Susan moves onto the yellow brick lane, a look of horror wrinkling her face.

ARGON

Gardener?

A man in a green jump suit looks up. This is the GARDENER. He is never without his red sprayer tank, slung over his shoulder and is always wearing an old snouted gas mask.

ARGON

Would you excuse us?

He disappears as the three start down the path.

ARGON

Every species, every organism is the only one of its kind, created through cross-breeding or chemical and radioactive mutation as well as genetic manipulation.

Inside atmospherically controlled tanks, life exists where it should not. Translucent palmy ferns bask beneath a deadly drizzle of acid rain. Crystalline cacti flourish around the soft glow of a radioactive isotope.

ARGON

I spend more time here than anywhere else, nurturing them, treating them, because they all require very special care.

He gazes into a sealed geranium at a single flower with petals the color of a dead fish. It is being fed drops of photophorescent paste from tubes that hang like IVs.

ARGON

Poppy calls them my children and I suppose that's how I feel. That I have given birth to all of them, and there is nothing as precious or as beautiful as one's own children.

Poppy smiles at him as they stop in front of a tank where seamonkey-like creatures titter and play inside their toxic solarium.

ARGON

We will always love most that which we create. Don't you agree, Susan?

SUSAN

Does that mean Oppenheimer loved the atomic bomb?

She can't believe that she just used an O'Brien line.

ARGON

More than he would ever admit. His child changed the world. What could make a parent more proud than that?

INT. ARGON LABS

The black Lincoln glides into the garage.

The door closes behind them and the car eases into the parking place, the cement block in front of the car reads: D.T. Sim; Chief of Security.

FROM UNDER the car we see the feet of Sim and Doby sweep by then disappear as the two men enter the lobby of Argon Tower.

O'Brien drops to the ground from the Lincoln's drive shaft letting out a string of whispered expletives.

INT. CONSERVATORY

Argon slurps from the Coca-Cola, watching Susan.

ARGON

I brought you up here, Dr. Bright, because I want you to understand that we are on the path. The only difference is that you are walking with your head down, afraid to look up, to see where the path is going.

SUSAN

I suppose you are going to tell me where it is going.

ARGON

I ask you what is the purpose of science? What is the point of all our relentless exploration, investigation and experimentation? It is to understand a single physical phenomenon, or to understand them all? To cure one disease, or to cure every disease? If science is simply a means, what then is the end?

His WHEELCHAIR CLICKS and HUMS toward her.

ARGON

Look up. Look above you, Susan, and tell me what you see.

She looks up through the glass roof of the conservatory at the soot-stained sky.

SUSAN

Pollution?

ARGON

Do you know what I see? I see man making his own clouds. I see man coloring his own sky, and like this garden it is a site that makes my

heart sing.

He licks his lips.

ARGON

This is our world, Susan, and once you realize that, you will understand that the only place our path can end is on the throne of heaven. Science is the quest for divine perfection.

SUSAN

How do you know we're not heading in the wrong direction?

ARGON

I look behind us, I look to the past, to a world steeped in rot and decay. I think of the Acropolis in another century reduced to little more than dust. I see the faces of Rushmore eventually losing all distinction, and then I look at this...

He cradles the plastic bottle of Coca-Cola.

ARGON

And I imagine it in a thousand years as perfectly shaped as the day it was made.

He smiles at her.

ARGON

I find that thought exceptionally reassuring.

Nebbleman burst through the glass doors.

NEBBLEMAN

They're here! They're here! We have the nanobot.

ARGON

Excellent. How long until the assembler tank is complete?

Nebbleman's glasses steam up from the humidity as he stumbles toward them.

NEBBLEMAN

Dr. Makeo is working on it now, sir. I estimate at least another six hours.

ARGON

In the meantime, why don't you find something useful for Dr. Bright to do.

SUSAN

I swear to you, Argon, if you don't stop the meltdown that nanobot will be the last one I ever build.

ARGON

Susan, I sense you are having difficulty understanding the situation you are presently in. I ask that you keep in mind that I am ready to reduce an entire city to gelatin to get what I want.

Susan notices the guards posted at the door.

ARGON

If I were you, I'd be careful about making promises that you will be unable to keep.

His smile is as subtle as a knife point.

INT. HALL GALLERY

O'Brien sneaks ever so silently, edging toward the door at the opposite end.

The walls are covered with an impressive collection by artists like Dali, Picasso and Bacon, picture-lit dramatically.

As he nears the end, he suddenly hears voices moving toward him. He jumps back, searching for a place to hide.

Two armed GUARDS enter.

GUARD #1

Who are we supposed to be looking for?

GUARD #2

Some guy in red underwear.

They do not notice the bizarre red portrait hanging on the wall.

GUARD #1

How are we supposed to know the color of his underwear?

INT. HALL

A guard is posted outside Susan's room.

INT. SUSAN'S ROOM

Scientific equipment is piled in a room that looks like a guest bedroom.

Awkwardly filling the center of the room is a long industrial freezer unit.

Nebbleman and Susan are alone.

NEBBLEMAN

These samples were taken from the surrounding area. All the pertinent information is on disk.

Nebbleman lifts the lid, cold air puffing out, spilling over the freezer's edge.

NEBBLEMAN

What we need to know is expansion rates, how soon the replicators will reach the edge of the compound.

Inside there are several normal-looking objects taken from the lab, including a metal stool, a microscope and several glass beakers.

She stares at him numbly.

SUSAN

I don't believe this is happening...

NEBBLEMAN

Susan, Dr. Argon is giving you an opportunity here.

SUSAN

Opportunity?

That snaps her up.

SUSAN

There's a guard outside my door! I'm a prisoner, Nigel! Do you understand that?

NEBBLEMAN

Dr. Argon would say we are all prisoners.

SUSAN

Argon is a lunatic! I can't believe I was stupid enough to believe I could control him. You heard what he said, Nigel. He doesn't care if

all of Calumet City is turned to
Jell-O. How can that not affect
you?

NEBBLEMAN

Because I am a new man, Susan. I am
a man of vision. Your problem,
Susan, is that you're always looking
down. If you'd just look up you'd
see the big picture and in the big
picture men of vision do not dwell
on what might be lost. They focus
on what can be gained.

SUSAN

Is that what Argon told you?

NEBBLEMAN

No! Well, not those exact words.

SUSAN

Nigel, can't you see he's using you?

NEBBLEMAN

Of course he is, but at least there
isn't a security guard outside my
door.

SUSAN

You're afraid of him.

NEBBLEMAN

Who isn't?

Her eyes narrow.

SUSAN

Daniel O'Brien.

INT. HALL

O'Brien tip-toes past an intersecting hall when he
hears --

SECURITY

Hey...

O'Brien freezes.

SECURITY

Hey, you!

The security man is a hundred feet away, but before he can
even get his gun out --

O'Brien's arm shoots down the hall, a huge hand
reaching --

Covering the security man's entire head before he is able to scream.

The hand is like a plastic bag over his head that he can't get free of until he finally blacks out.

O'Brien lays him down gently. His arm snaps back and he tip-toes away.

INT. SUSAN'S ROOM

Nebbleman smirks, cleaning his glasses.

NEBBLEMAN

I'm not interested in being a hero, Susan. I'm not interested in self-delusion and romantic sentiment.

He puts his glasses back on.

NEBBLEMAN

I'm a scientist. I have lived my whole life by the diagnostic application of fact and the fact is, Argon is going to get whatever he wants, so if I were you, I'd give it to him.

SUSAN

You mean the designs for the nanobot? You think after this I'm going to give them to him?

NEBBLEMAN

I think that either you're going to give them to him or he's going to make you give them to him.

SUSAN

Make me? How? You think he's going to torture me?

Nebbleman shrugs.

NEBBLEMAN

I would.

He smiles and that makes it worse.

SUSAN

Get out. Get out now before I hurt you.

Nebbleman stammers before scurrying for the door.

INT. HALL

O'Brien is searching different rooms, stuffing his head between door and jamb, calling, "Susan," in a hushed voice.

The elevator at the end of the hall opens and he hears the ELECTRIC WHINE of Argon's WHEELCHAIR together with the TAP of Poppy's STILETTO HEELS.

He presses himself flat against the nearest door.

POPPY

Do you think she will give us the designs?

ARGON

Eventually. These things are always a matter of leverage.

POPPY

And you think O'Brien is that leverage?

ARGON

That remains to be seen.

O'Brien peeks out and sees that they are heading straight at him.

POPPY

And you still believe he's going to come here?

ARGON

Based on what we know of him, that would seem inevitable.

POPPY

Do you think she loves him?

ARGON

She must feel something for him. After all, she and I did create him.

It seems they are about to see him but when they reach the double doors, O'Brien is gone.

She throws open the door and he follows her into --

INT. POPPY'S BEDROOM

Everything is red; PVC gleaming like patent leather.

POPPY

Do you think she loves him like I love you?

It is a woman's question and it annoys him.

ARGON

Poppy, are you in one of your moods again?

POPPY

No, Icky, this is real.

She closes the doors behind them.

POPPY

I've been thinking a lot since this all started. Thinking about us.

Uninterested in the direction of the conversation, Argon notices that there are two identical ottomans.

POPPY

You know how I feel about you. You know how much I need you. How much I trust you. I would do anything for you.

ARGON

Why are there two ottomans?

POPPY

Icarus, please! This is important!

She sees him staring at the ottoman and steps up onto it, heels gouging into the padding.

The OTTOMAN GURGLES.

POPPY

Look at me, Icarus! Look at my body. I've done everything, changed anything you asked me to. 'We will always love most that which we create.' Is that still true?

ARGON

Yes. Yes, of course it is.

POPPY

Then you still love me?

ARGON

Poppy, please, just tell me what you want.

She steps down and kneels close to the wheelchair.

POPPY

I want to know what will happen if the nanobot works on you become like

O'Brien, a plastic man. What will
happen to me?

He realizes what she is asking.

ARGON
You want to be polymerized?

Timidly, she looks up into his eyes.

POPPY
Plastic means forever, doesn't it?

His smile is like a razor-cut, lips slowly widening.

ARGON
That it does, my dear. That it
does.

She smiles until he pulls away and begins wheeling out.

POPPY
Icarus?

ARGON
I promise, my dear, I will give the
matter some consideration.

POPPY
Consideration?

ARGON
If you honestly trust me, then
you'll have to trust me.

He closes the door.

Angry, she turns away looking for something to hit. She
picks up a hairbrush instead and begins violently brushing
her hair in the vanity mirror.

Behind her, in the mirror, we see the ottoman scurry
mouse-like to the closest door.

INT. BATHROOM

O'Brien stands up in agony, holding his back where her
heels dug in.

A CLATTERING noise draws him to the door. He peeks out
just as she pulls down the zipper on her dress.

Shrugging out of the sleeves, she walks toward the
bathroom.

O'Brien searches the room; where the bedroom was red, the
bathroom is completely white.

There is nowhere to hide except --

The toilet. He climbs in as the door opens. She drops her dress and kicks off her shoes.

As she moves to the tub, O'Brien's hand reaches up and pulls the flush.

She hears the TOILET FLUSH, looks at it, wiggles the handle.

INT. SUSAN'S ROOM

Susan is moving around the room, thinking.

In her gloved hands is the glass beaker which she is wringing nervously, wadding, crinkling, and pulling at it so intensely it sounds like popping bubble wrap.

She looks at the windows and at the black steel bars outside.

We RISE ABOVE her, MOVING TOWARD the chandelier, TOWARD the single light bulb that is apparently burned out.

Until we can SEE INTO the grayish glass and FIND the tip of the fiber optic cable.

INT. SECURITY BOOTH - CLOSE ON MONITOR

as if looking through a window down into Susan's room.

SIM (O.S.)

Ubi... Ubiqu... Ubiqu...

WIDER ANGLE

Sim is reading from a dictionary.

SIM

Ubiquitous. Present, or seeming to be present, everywhere at the same time; omnipresent.

He looks up.

SIM

I like that.

INT. PIPES

O'Brien zips through the intersecting, elbowing maze of pipes.

INT. BATHROOM

Another toilet seat peeks open. The room is empty.
O'Brien climbs out.

He grabs a towel, drying himself as he quietly cracks open
the door.

When he sees Susan at the desk he can't believe his luck.

O'BRIEN

Susan!

She nearly jumps out of her skin.

SUSAN

Daniel!

They rush to each other's arms.

SUSAN

I don't believe it. You're here!
Oh thank God.

O'BRIEN

You didn't think I could just leave
you?

SUSAN

I didn't know what was going to
happen. I was just so worried
something was going to happen to
you.

O'BRIEN

What could happen? I'm the plastic
man, remember?

She remembers Argon.

SUSAN

Oh no! Argon! We have to stop him
before he uses the nanobot! We have
to get the nanobot!

O'BRIEN

Where is it?

SUSAN

Argon's private lab.

O'BRIEN

Let's go.

They start for the door when Susan whispers.

SUSAN

Wait. There's a guard.

O'Brien almost laughs.

O'BRIEN
He'll never know what hit him.

He grabs the handle and throws open the door.

Susan can't see what he sees, but she knows by his reaction, it's not good.

SIM
Savior-faire is everywhere.

O'Brien backs up into the room, pushed by a very large gun.

SIM
I am Mr. Ubiquitous, ain't I
O'Brien?

Doby enters behind Sim with several heavily-armed guards.

SIM
You know what ubiquitous means,
don't you? It means here we go
again.

Sim laughs very loudly as Argon wheels in, Poppy at his side.

ARGON
Welcome to my home, Mr. O'Brien. As
you can see we've been expecting
you.

Sim laughs again.

O'BRIEN
This is wonderfully accommodating of
you all. Now I won't have to come
looking for you.

SIM
You were looking for us?

O'BRIEN
Yeah, I have something I've been
meaning to give you.

SIM
Yeah, and what might that be?

O'BRIEN
An ass-beating. Would you like
yours first, Mr. Sim?

Sim cocks his gun and now O'Brien smiles.

SIM
Just try it! Come on! Do
something. Move. Anything.
Anything! Just twitch, blink, I
dare you! I double dare you!

O'Brien becomes completely rigid, frozen like a smiling
mannequin.

Sim doesn't know what to do. He looks around the room
when --

O'Brien's tongue lashes out like a frog's, and snatches
the gun.

SIM
That's disgusting.

O'Brien levels the gun at Argon and everyone reacts.

O'BRIEN
I should kill you right now for what
you did to me!

ARGON
Maybe you should, but you can't.

Susan screams as Doby grabs her and pins a gun to her
head.

SUSAN
Run, Daniel! Get out of here!

O'BRIEN
I'm not leaving without you, Susan!

ARGON
You don't have to leave, Mr.
O'Brien. We've prepared a wonderful
room for you. I think you'll find
it quite comfortable, so
comfortable, in fact, I doubt you'll
ever want to leave.

As he speaks they all pull out white oxygen masks.

ARGON
Gardener!

The Gardener appears, sprayer in hand and rushes straight
at O'Brien, aiming the nozzle into his face.

O'Brien tries to back away, to find air but the nozzle is
everywhere pumping a mist that envelops both of them.

Coughing, choking, unable to breathe, the gas begins to

take effect. O'Brien collapses, the gas-masked figure standing over the soft rubbery head.

SUSAN

Nooo!

Poppy and Argon exchange quiet smiles.

SUSAN

What are you going to do to him?

ARGON

Do? Well, I suppose that depends on you.

She knows what he wants and her head drops.

INT. CONSERVATORY

The Gardener adjusts several gas tank valves and we FOLLOW the feed lines UP TO the top where the humidifier blower breathes into the sealed cell.

The gasses drift down to the bottom where we see the supple red puddle of O'Brien.

Floating on the edge of consciousness, O'Brien lifts his head. Outside the curved Plexiglas he sees warped faces staring at him.

O'BRIEN

... Susa...

His eyes roll and his head pitches forward, slapping and flattening out against the plexi.

Dr. Bright touches the glass.

SUSAN

What did you use?

ARGON

A light mixture of oxygen, dioxide, and sodium pentothal. He'll sleep, that's all.

She takes a last look at him, then steadies herself as she turns to Argon.

SUSAN

I give you the design, you let us both go. That's the deal.

Argon nods.

INT. ARGON'S PRIVATE LAB

Makeo and Nebbleman watch as the new assembler tank finishes its test run.

The tank looks like a cross between a Giger Sarcophagi and a dry cleaning machine.

The motors and pumps suddenly stop as the lab grows quiet.

NEBBLEMAN

... it's ready.

INT. SUSAN'S ROOM

Susan is at the desk, her jaw set, her face blank, in a kind of analytical trance.

INT. SECURITY BOOTH

Sim and Doby are alone at the control center.

Sim is trying to concentrate on Susan with the same intensity that she is concentrating with.

He fails.

SIM

You know why I hate smart women?

Doby says nothing.

SIM

They're always thinking but you never know what they're thinking.

INT. SUSAN'S ROOM

Suddenly she walks to the far wall and turns out the light.

INT. SECURITY BOOTH

The monitor goes dark.

SIM

Why'd she do that?

INT. SUSAN'S ROOM

In the dark, she takes her chair and wedges it under the door handle. She puts on the protective gloves.

SUSAN

All right, Argon. You want a fight, you got one.

Then throws open the freezer unit.

INT. CONSERVATORY

In a drugged haze, O'Brien searches the edges of his prison.

His head and limbs move with a strange fluidity, rising and falling like the molten blebs of a lava lamp.

His fingers find the gas line opening in the blower.

Taking a deep breath, he sticks his arm into the tiny hole and pulls himself up inside.

We FOLLOW the coils of copper tubing DOWN INTO the different tanks of gas.

We hear the "TINK, TINK" as he pounds against the metal canisters.

Unable to hold his breath, he rises through the gas-feeds, back to the opening where he emerges like a giant red droplet of water --

Falling and splashing back into his cell.

INT. POPPY'S BEDROOM

Poppy is helping Argon undress.

ARGON

Can you feel it, Poppy? The presence of the moment? Can you feel the weight of its significance?

POPPY

Oh yes, Icky. I can feel it.

ARGON

This is what my entire life has been directed at, this moment, this threshold.

POPPY

Okay, arms up, lean forward.

He leans over her shoulder and she holds him up while she takes his pants off.

ARGON

I stand on the verge of man's greatest triumph over the forces of nature!

Pants down, she sets him back into the chair.

ARGON

Gently, gently. My metamorphosis
will be more than a simple
transformation.

She pulls his feet free of each pant leg.

ARGON
It will be an ascension.

POPPY
I'm so excited, Icarus.

She stands helping him with his robe.

POPPY
I was wondering if you'd finished
considering?

ARGON
Considering what?

POPPY
What I asked you earlier?

He realizes what she is talking about.

ARGON
Poppy, please --

POPPY
If you loved me like I loved you?

ARGON
Poppy, this is not the time!

There is a KNOCK on the door.

ARGON
Yes?

Dr. Makeo enters.

MAKEO
We are ready for you, sir.

INT. HALL

Sim, Doby and several security guards are outside Dr.
Bright's room.

SIM
Dr. Bright. This isn't doing anyone
any good.

He knocks, yelling at the door.

SIM

This ain't very cooperative
behavior! I'm going to tell Dr.
Argon that you ain't cooperating!

He shoves at the door but it doesn't budge.

SIM
Come on! We know you're in there!

No answer. He turns to Doby in disgust.

SIM
Break it down.

INT. SUSAN'S ROOM

We hear DOBY SLAM against the door, but it holds. Across
the dark room we see Susan standing at the window.

SUSAN
Come on, come on...

She is holding the glass beaker against the iron bars,
infecting them with the replicator fallout.

Body batters the door again.

She drops the beaker and grabs hold of the two bars. They
bend like thick rods of rubber.

SUSAN
Yes!

The next blow vibrates through the entire frame.

Ignoring it, she grabs hold of the stool that was also
taken from the lab.

Stretching out one of the legs, she ties it to one of the
non-polymerized bars.

The DOOR SPLINTERS at the hinge.

Hurrying, she squeezes herself and the stool out between
the rubber bars.

Standing on the ledge, she makes a crucial mistake: she
looks down.

The roof of the main laboratory is forty feet away.

EXT. MAIN GATE

Chatting with the other reporters, Spencer looks up and
sees Dr. Bright standing outside the window.

SPENCER

Holy shit! Jumper!

He grabs his cameraman.

SPENCER

Get this! Get this!

INT. SUSAN'S ROOM

The DOOR SHRIEKS, cracking open.

Out on the edge, Susan closes her eyes.

SUSAN

It'll work. It's got to. It's got to.

Holding tightly to one of the other legs of the stool, she takes a deep breathe and --

Steps off the ledge.

She falls, the stool stretching surreally, but it is not pliable enough to reach the roof below.

Halfway down it slows, about to bungee-bouce her back up.

Her body jerks as the leg wrenches from her grip --

Sending her cartwheeling into the open air.

She seems to hang for a moment, watching the stool shrinking back to the window.

She screams.

EXT. MAIN GATE

Every camera is locked on her.

EXT. ROOF

There is nothing between her and the roof except the force of gravity. It sucks her down.

Plummeting, helplessly hurtling, she screams again as --

She slams onto the roof, but instead of being splattered against it --

She bounces up.

The polymerized roof gives like a trampoline, tossing her lightly until she lays on her back, staring up at the window, adrenaline bubbling out of her in laughter and tears.

EXT. MAIN GATE

The cameraman looks at Spencer.

SPENCER

There's a logical explanation. Has
to be.

INT. SUSAN'S ROOM

Sim finds the stool still tied to the bars.

Outside he sees Susan climbing down through a roof access
door into the quarantined lab.

SIM

Oh shit. Where's Argon?

INT. ARGON'S PRIVATE LAB

Argon sits in his wheelchair, eyes blazing as Nebbleman
draws the nanobiotic fluid into a hypodermic needle.

NEBBLEMAN

Of course you understand, Dr. Argon,
that once the nanobot is inside of
you, there is no going back --

ARGON

Shut up and do it!

Nebbleman forces down a swallow, and sticks the needle
into his neck.

INT. MAIN LAB

Susan moves through the unreal reality of the polymerized
building.

Her feet sink with every step into the floor.

Door handles bend like kneaded dough.

The concrete formed steps in the stairwell pillow out
under her weight and she loses her balance --

Groping for the rail that also distends.

SUSAN

This is insane.

INT. ARGON'S PRIVATE LAB

Argon sheds his robe and, wearing black bikini briefs, he
starts to climb into the tank.

Makeo tries to help him.

ARGON

No! I'll do it myself!

His legs, withered and atrophied like sticks of beef jerky, drag behind him. With obvious effort, he pulls himself into the chamber.

Wheezing, he can only nod to Dr. Makeo, who closes and seals the chamber.

Dr. Makeo cranks the pressurized balloon valves, watching the gauges as the chemicals begin to flow from the mixing vats into the main chamber.

There is a MUFFLED SCREAM as the chamber begins to fill, KNOCKING and shaking slightly.

Several nervous glances are exchanged as the gauges begin to climb.

INT. CONSERVATORY - CLOSE ON RED TEETH

of a strange serrated shaft.

O'Brien has formed his arm into a massive tire jack which spans the walls of his transparent cage.

His other arm works the lever with slow determination, ratcheting up the shaft.

Outside the tank, the polyethylene window begins to bulge where his hand presses.

O'Brien glares beneath his heavy eyelids.

O'BRIEN

Come on, O'Brien --

INT. MAIN LAB

Susan sneaks out of the stairwell. Down the hall, she sees two members of the containment crew in their heavy protective suits. Each has a tank strapped to their back, and is hosing the entire hall with liquid nitrogen.

They do not notice her, as she heads the other way, trying not to let the floor squeak.

INT. CONSERVATORY

Above O'Brien, the HUMIDIFIER HISSES, sodium pentothal wafting down.

He grits his rubbery teeth and cranks the lever.

It CLICKS one more tooth.

The WALLS swell, warping, CREAKING as the lever arcs back.

O'BRIEN

Just one more...

Sweat pours down his face, but just as the TOOTH CLICKS, the arm shaft bends and --

O'Brien collapses into a watery pile.

INT. MAIN LAB

The TANK RUMBLES as Poppy chews at a perfect nail.

POPPY

I can't stand it! How much longer?

Nebbleman watches his timer for a moment, then counts it down.

NEBBLEMAN

Five, four, three, two -- Drain it!

Makeo throws open the drain valves as Nebbleman monitors his improved waste system.

NEBBLEMAN

It's working, it's working.

Makeo unscrews the tank locks and steps back.

STEAM WHEEZES from the opening as a strange figure emerges, covered in a Saran Wrap caul.

Hunched over, the figure coughs a gelatinous mass from its lungs as it tears itself free of the layer of polymerized sweat.

No longer a debilitated cripple, Argon rises to his feet as everyone sees the massive physique restored to all its former glory.

POPPY

Oh my God.

His arms reach out to the heavens as he lets loose the scream that has been trapped for so long inside.

EXT. MAIN GATE

The SCREAM sends a chill through the reporters.

INT. LAB HALL

SUSAN

Oh no.

The CREW members hear the SCREAM and stop working. One of them notices her.

CREW #1

Hey! Hold it! Stop!

They rush at her. Searching for any kind of weapon, Susan grabs a fire extinguisher from the wall.

Swinging it like a club, she lets the first one have it but --

It, too, has been polymerized and the red tank bounces off his skull.

SUSAN

Nuts.

CREW #2

Lady, you're in serious trouble!

He throws her back against the wall, which she springs off of, kicking him in the balls --

Finally finding something solid.

Screaming, he falls to his knees, his hose spewing liquid nitrogen.

The second man grabs her, causing her to drop the extinguisher into the puddle of foaming nitrogen.

They wrestle until she tears herself free, snatching hold of the extinguisher. She whips around --

Clubbing him again, but this time the frozen TANK EXPLODES over his head, frothing like a shattered beer bottle.

He falls to the soft mat-like floor.

INT. ARGON'S PRIVATE LAB

Sim and Doby emerge from the elevator and head for the lab.

He hears POPPY GIGGLING and Argon's new BOOMING VOICE.

ARGON (O.S.)

It's fantastic to be plastic!

Sim pushes into the lab and sees Argon, still wearing bikini briefs, bouncing Poppy into the air with his huge rubberized arms.

SIM

Holy...

Argon hears him.

ARGON

Exactly right, Mr. Sim. You have entered one of the holiest places on Earth.

He catches Poppy and she cuddles against his chest.

ARGON

This lab shall forever be consecrated ground and you, Mr. Sim, stand here a witness to man's ultimate triumph: the polymerization of human flesh!

Nebbleman is behind him, using a razor to cut his hair like Susan did to Daniel.

NEBBLEMAN

Sir, please try to hold still.

SIM

So, I guess it worked.

ARGON

'Worked'? 'Worked'?!

Argon laughs.

ARGON

A watch works, Mr. Sim. A bureaucrat works. What transpired here cannot be measured by the word 'work.'

His chest swells, as if he were posing down for Mr. Universe.

ARGON

What you see before you is the culmination of evolution. The realization of the one driving desire at the heart of all great human endeavors; the desire for immortality! The polymerization of human flesh is no mere molecular transmutation, no simple scientific procedure; it is nothing short of a miracle! A miracle that marks the ascension of man from the finite to the infinite! From the transient to the everlasting!

His perfect white teeth high-beam the room. Poppy stares,

adulation oozing from every pore.

POPPY

Oh, Icky...

Argon kisses her, hard.

SIM

Look, I don't mean to rain on everyone's ascension here, but we got a little problem.

ARGON

Speak.

SIM

Dr. Bright has escaped.

Argon breathes deep, controlling his temper.

ARGON

If you let her reach those reporters outside the main gate, Mr. Sim --

His hand whip-wraps around Sim's throat.

SIM

... gurk... understood.

INT. MAIN LAB

Wearing one of the protective suits, Susan pushes through part of a containment crew, heading for the elevator.

Most of the CREW is surrounding the CAPTAIN.

CREW #3

The whole west wing is gone, Captain.

CREW #4

It's in the phone lines --

CREW #5

It's spreading to the underground pipes --

CREW #6

We gotta get out of here!

The Captain notices Susan.

CAPTAIN

Hey! Where are you going?

Thinking fast, she points to her crotch as though needing to go to the bathroom. The Captain nods.

INT. CONSERVATORY

O'Brien is deflated, head cradled in an arm coil. His other arm is raised against the perspex wall.

He has turned his finger into a glass cutter, moving it around and around in a slow deliberate circle.

INT. POPPY'S BEDROOM

Argon stands before the mirror wearing a new black suit, like O'Brien's.

ARGON

Excellent work, Dr. Nebbleman. You have outdone yourself.

NEBBLEMAN

Thank you, sir.

Poppy steps behind him, running her hands over his body.

POPPY

Oh, Icky, you know what latex does to me...

Someone KNOCKS at the door.

ARGON

Enter.

Sim does.

SIM

Dr. Argon, everything's starting to come apart here. You hired me to take care of these matters of security and I am trying, but elements are making my job impossible.

ARGON

Have you found Dr. Bright?

SIM

No. The captain of the containment crew is closing down the main lab. He says the area has got to be evacuated.

NEBBLEMAN

He's probably right, sir, the building is probably going to collapse under its own weight.

SIM

And if we evacuate, what do you want to do with O'Brien?

ARGON

It'll be better for us if he simply disappears. The gardener will know what to do.

NEBBLEMAN

Wait, wait, can I at least have his body?

ARGON

Donated to science. Perfect.

INT. CONSERVATORY

The glass cutter tracing the circle has completely lost its shape; his FINGER SQUEAKING against the Plexiglas.

The Gardener leads Sim, Doby, and Nebbleman towards O'Brien's geranium.

SIM

Can I ask you something? Do you ever take that mask off?

The Gardener shakes his head.

SIM

Doesn't it get hot?

The Gardener nods.

At the end of the path, they reach O'Brien's tank. O'Brien sleepily lifts his head.

SIM

Sorry, pal. Check out time. Moral of story; next life, mind your own business.

The Gardener begins to shut off the valves. The gauges drop to zero as the gas OPENING at the top of the tank RASPS and goes SILENT.

Immediately, O'Brien knows that he is going to suffocate.

He screams and pounds on the Plexi.

They all watch as his soft rubbery fists mash uselessly against the walls of the tank.

SIM

Even a plastic man's gotta breathe, eh, Doc?

Nebbleman is too entranced to reply.

At the far end of the conservatory, the door swings open.

Sim glances over his shoulder and sees a member of the containment Crew striding toward them.

SIM

What are you doing here? You're supposed to be looking for the woman.

CREWMAN

We found her.

The voice is muffled by the headgear.

SIM

What? Did you say you found her?

Body catches the scent of something fishy. He turns to the Crew Member.

Behind Sim, O'Brien sucks at the thinning air, his punches growing weaker.

The Crew Member lunges at Sim but Doby is ready --

Seizing hold of the small body while tearing off the helmet, revealing Susan Bright.

NEBBLEMAN

Susan!

SIM

Wellie well, Dr. Bright. You're just in time.

O'Brien's eyes bulge when he sees her, but he knows it is too late. His hands press against the plexi, his eyes melt into silicon tears.

SUSAN

Nooo!

Like a wild animal she bites Doby, twisting free just long enough to jump at Sim and --

Snatch the gun from his belt.

Sim grabs her wrist and they fight for control until Susan manages to squeeze off a SINGLE SHOT --

That punches a hole in O'Brien's tank.

The hole is tiny, but it is all Plastic Man needs.

He dives at it, thinning to a pencil, driving himself through.

He emerges from the other side, like a genie freed from his lamp.

SIM

Uh-oh.

Afraid now, Sim twists Susan's arm behind her back and yanks the gun free.

Nebbleman cowers behind Doby.

The Gardener slips away, hurrying for his spray can.

O'Brien faces Sim, his eyes blazing with malice aforethought.

Sim hides behind Susan, holding the gun to her, barely able to see over her shoulder.

SIM

Here we go again, eh, O'Brien? I got the gun, I got the girl. All you got is some rubber underwear!

He laughs, feeling a little better.

O'Brien points a single finger that creeps slowly at Sim.

O'BRIEN

I've been thinking about you, Mr. Sim.

Sim watches it as the tip shapes into a fish hook.

O'BRIEN

All the different ways that I could kill you.

SIM

Oh yeah?

He aims the gun at O'Brien.

SIM

Maybe you're ready to find out if that hide of yours is bulletproof?

O'BRIEN

The question is, are you?

Sim thumbs back the hammer.

O'BRIEN

Because once you pull the trigger,

if that bullet doesn't kill me, we
both know, you're a dead man.

Sim's hand shakes.

SIM
I ain't afraid of no plastic man.

BOOM.

The bullet sinks into O'Brien's chest, pushing his flesh
back with a shrieking stretch, projecting it out behind
him impossibly, until --

The bullet stops.

O'Brien looks back at Sim whose eyes fill with fear.

Susan dives to the ground as the bullet comes rushing back
and --

With a resounding whip crack, hits Sim right in the chest.

Sim sinks to the ground, dead.

Doby howls and rushes O'Brien who turns his fists into
sledgehammers.

Nebbleman bolts but Susan snatches hold of him.

SUSAN
Do you know the best thing about
having you as an assistant, Nigel?

She wrings the lapel of his lab coat.

SUSAN
Was knowing that if you ever pissed
me off, I could always kick your
ass.

She winds up just as Nebbleman's eyes cross.

NEBBLEMAN
Ohhh...

He faints into a bruise colored bush. She shakes her
head.

O'Brien pounds the sound of chirping birds into Doby's
skull as Susan sees the Gardener rushing behind him.

SUSAN
Daniel!

But the spray can is already HISSING, pumping out deadly
clouds of red gas.

O'BRIEN

Not this time, pal!

O'Brien clasps his hands together and forms a giant bellows that sucks up all the gas.

O'BRIEN

Let's see how you like it.

He shoves the nozzle of the bellows into the filter of his gas mask and squeezes.

The dark glass eyes fill with smoke as the Gardener thrashes around trying to get the mask off.

He stumbles, flailing wildly and smashes into the seamonkey geranium.

The little creatures swarm all over him as he collapses to the ground.

O'Brien turns just as Susan rushes into his arms.

O'BRIEN

You saved my life.

SUSAN

Did you think I could just leave you...?

They hold each other tightly, feeling the volatile electrons charging the air, creating an intermolecular bond between them.

O'BRIEN

Susie... I...

SUSAN

You don't have to say anything, Daniel. I'm a scientist. I know what's happening. I recognize the classic symptoms. Dizziness, shortness of breath, sweating palms... I can feel my adrenals secreting, my parasympathetic nervous system quivering, the estradiol coursing through my entire body...

Her lips move closer to his.

SUSAN

And I know there's only one way to cure it...

She kisses him and almost melts the polymerized lips right

off his face.

The kiss is so intense, it shakes the entire building around them.

EXT. ARGON TOWER

The metal frame supporting the tower has finally been affected by the replicators.

Two of the legs squash out causing the other legs to bend.

INT. CONSERVATORY

They break the kiss, realizing that the building is actually shaking.

O'BRIEN

What in the...?

SUSAN

Oh shit, the meltdown. It's spread to the tower.

O'BRIEN

We've got to get the nanobot.

SUSAN

It's too late. Argon injected it.

O'BRIEN

You mean he's polymerized, like me?

She nods.

O'BRIEN

That means the nanobot is still inside him.

SUSAN

Yes.

O'BRIEN

What would happen if I threw him into the core?

SUSAN

The same thing I suppose.

That's all O'Brien needs to hear.

INT. POPPY'S BEDROOM

What is happening beneath the red rubber sheets of Poppy's bed is beyond anything ever pictured in the Kama Sutra.

Poppy screams as the earth moves again.

Argon sticks his head out.

ARGON

Did you feel that?

POPPY

Did I? I've been waiting for that
for years.

ARGON

Not that.

The building shivers and leans again.

ARGON

That. It's the fall-out. We have
to get out of here.

EXT. ARGON TOWER

The tower leans a few more degrees as outside the lab,
bedlam erupts.

The containment crew and security force scatter from the
building like rats pouring from a sinking ship.

EXT. MAIN GATE

Spencer grabs hold of the fence, watching the tower lean.

SPENCER

We gotta get in there!

He notices that the fence is warm.

SPENCER

Hey, what's up with the fence?

He pulls back and it stretches like gum.

INT. ARGON'S OFFICE

O'Brien and Susan are arguing in the office. The floor
weirdly tilts under them.

SUSAN

Daniel, just forget Argon. Let's
get out of here. We'll find another
way to stop the waste.

O'BRIEN

We don't have time to argue, Susan.

He's dragging her toward the door to the roof.

O'BRIEN

I'm going to set you down outside.
You have to get over to the
reporters outside the gate. We have
to warn people what's happening.

She doesn't like being dragged anywhere.

SUSAN
You're not going after Argon!

O'BRIEN
I have to!

SUSAN
Do the words 'hero fantasies' mean
anything to you? How about
'infantile dementia'?

That hurts.

O'BRIEN
Maybe you're right... but so what.
I'm going to beat the snot out of
him.

She is about to continue the fight when the elevator opens
and ends it.

Argon and Poppy get out.

ARGON
How apropos.

O'BRIEN
Ain't it.

The men begin circling each other.

ARGON
As you can see I am a new man, just
like you.

O'BRIEN
Oh no. You're not like me. In
fact, I'm betting you're the same
greedy, remorseless, egomaniacal bad
guy you always were.

O'Brien pumps up a huge fist. His forearm then goes slack
as he begins swinging the fist like a medieval morning
star.

ARGON
It remains to be seen who is the
good guy and who is the bad guy.
History is written by the victor.

O'BRIEN
The only history I'm gonna write is
your obituary!

He lunges, the fist arcing down as Argon awkwardly
counters --

The blow connects snapping Argon's head back.

POPPY
Icky!

SUSAN
Get him, Daniel! Knock his block
off!

Poppy hisses at Susan as the two women now edge toward one
another.

O'Brien presses his attack, battering and bludgeoning
Argon --

Every blow landing with a loud rubber smack that
reverberates through Argon's teeth.

Desperate, the villain flails back, long ropy limbs trying
to tie O'Brien up as --

His extending legs drive both men flying backwards --

Crashing through the enormous vista-windows.

SUSAN
Daniel!

EXT. MAIN GATE

The reporters are lifting the fence and scrambling inside.

Spencer hears the WINDOW EXPLODE and sees the black and
red intertwined bodies --

Still locked in combat, pummeling, kicking, biting --

Cometing straight to the earth.

Ka-boing.

The force of the fall blasts them apart each rebounding
into the air --

O'Brien flipping, righting himself as he lands on his
feet.

Argon quickly recovers.

Spencer does not.

SPENCER

That-that's not possible.

INT. ARGON'S OFFICE

The two women smell blood.

SUSAN

Okay, Barbie, let's get this over with.

POPPY

Don't worry, four eyes.

From her bag, Poppy whips out a razor knife.

POPPY

It's not going to take long.

EXT. GROUNDS

O'Brien and Argon have at one another again.

Spencer stands in the white wash of his cameraman's light.

SPENCER

We are just outside Argon Labs and I can, without fear of hyperbole, say that what is happening behind me is the most unbelievably fantastic thing the world has ever seen.

Argon is learning quickly, morphing his body the way O'Brien does.

SPENCER

Two men, if they are indeed really men, locked in mortal combat.

Pure Jack-the-King-Kirby pugilistics.

SPENCER

One of them apparently the dangerous radical environmentalist authorities have been searching for. The other appears to be Icarus Argon, or at least Icarus Argon fifteen years ago.

Fists flying, blasted bodies hurling through the air only to bounce right back.

SPENCER

There are times, singular fleeting moments when a man glimpses an event which he knows is going to change

the world. Although I do not fully understand what is happening here, I sense that this fight is somehow about the future of the planet.

Argon suddenly realizes that O'Brien is leading the battle closer and closer to the main lab.

ARGON

I know what you're doing.

O'BRIEN

You mean besides kicking your ass?!

ARGON

You think you can use me to stop the meltdown.

O'Brien's face reveals nothing.

ARGON

It's not going to happen.

His arms shoot up to the helicopter pad, but O'Brien snags hold of him.

O'BRIEN

Not so fast, Icky, I promised you an ass-beating and I'm just getting started.

Boom. Fist-imprinted in the middle of Argon's face.

INT. ARGON'S OFFICE

Poppy slashes viciously at Susan, driving her back into a corner where --

She ducks behind the statue of Icarus and shoves --

Tipping it over onto Poppy, who screams falling back as the statue smashes to the ground.

Susan grabs one of the broken arms and backhands Poppy before she gets to her feet.

Susan is about to finish her off when the building tilts again throwing her, crashing over the desk.

EXT. GROUNDS

The TOWER SQUEAKS again, legs bending, giving way, throwing the crowd into a panic.

If O'Brien even notices we can't tell. His attack is an unrelenting fury --

Fists like jackhammers --

Like wrecking balls and ballistic missiles.

Bomb after bomb rearranges Argon's face. His body growing soft and supple, his knees turning to syrup as --

O'Brien winds up the haymaker.

O'BRIEN

Well, Argon, according to you this makes me the good guy, don't it?

Ka-boom. Lights out.

Argon hits the ground with a wet smack.

INT. ARGON'S OFFICE

Poppy is up first, delivering a stiletto-heeled kick to Susan's face, knocking her out.

The building trembles again and Poppy forgets Susan and hurries to the roof door.

EXT. GROUNDS

The crowd has burst apart, running from the building, while O'Brien shoulders Argon and heads for the main lab floor.

INT. ROOF STAIRWELL

Poppy pushes outside to the roof. The helicopter has shifted toward the tilted edge.

She climbs into the pilot's seat.

INT. LAB STAIRWELL

O'Brien climbs the polymerized stairs in giant steps. He is heading for Susan's lab when --

Argon's eyes snap open.

INT. ARGON'S OFFICE

Susan wakes up as the BUILDING continues to GROAN.

She goes to the elevator but it no longer works. She then sees the open roof door.

INT. HALL

Argon attacks with snake-like speed, whip-wrapping both arms like twin boa constrictors around O'Brien's neck.

A small "gak" spits out as O'Brien feels his windpipe pinch.

EXT. ROOF

The helicopter BLADES begin to CHOP as Susan flings open the roof door.

INT. HALL

O'Brien throws himself backward against the wall, trying to smash Argon off him, but --

Everything is polymerized.

They bounce and roll into a smaller lab, Argon wrapped around O'Brien like a creeping-ivy vine.

O'Brien thrashes through the room, slamming into stainless steel scientific equipment --

Only to bounce off them like they were nerf toys.

Desperate, he hurls them both at a large window but --

The polymerized glass balloons out, both bodies visible inside the bulging bubble that --

Snaps back, slinging them across the lab and out into the hall.

EXT. ROOF

Susan tries to climb into the helicopter when the tower tilts more violently than ever.

The helicopter slides out hooking its landing gear on the guard rail, flipping up out of control, killing the engine.

Thrown free, Susan slides toward the same edge where the helicopter dangles precariously.

Below them is the roof of the main lab.

INT. MAIN LAB

O'Brien falls to his knees. He is ready to give up when he sees something.

His face as red as his suit, his breath a tiny rasp, he begins to crawl.

ARGON

Die! Die! Damn you! Why don't you
just die!

The world spins and goes spotty as he collapses.

ARGON

Yes!

But his hands keep going, cartoon fingers groping down the hall toward --

The tank of liquid nitrogen still laying near the broken fire extinguisher.

The hands take hold of it --

ARGON

No! Oh no!

And come rushing back like the cavalry.

Argon screams as the nitrogen sprays out, soaking his arms, freezing them solid.

A little frosted, O'Brien slips his head free while Argon tries to crack apart his arms.

He looks up and sees O'Brien aiming the nitrogen again.

ARGON

No. O'Brien! Don't! Please!

O'Brien lets him have it, full frosting blast.

He grabs hold of him and with two huge steps bursts into Susan's lab.

INT. SUSAN'S LAB

The room pulses with a seething sense of sickness as everything turns to gray slime like a rotting banana turning brown.

Fluorescent lights drip like stalactites from the drooping drop-ceiling.

Equipment hangs like swamp-moss, or sits in puddles like melting chocolate.

The center of the room is a crater, the floor sagging limply like a wet napkin.

At the bottom of the crater where the assembler tank used to be is a pond of pale glowing goo.

Argon cracks his jaw loose. They stand at the edge of the crater.

ARGON

Please, O'Brien, don't do this to

me! I'll give you anything you want!

O'BRIEN

Yeah, I'm going to finish what you started --

O'Brien sees the finger slither out like a black tentacle around his leg. O'Brien slips free and --

Hurls Argon out over the crater.

Argon screams as his finger reaches for the soft pipes above the drop-ceiling.

The finger finds a hold just before Argon hits the white pool. He bounces, dangling above it.

ARGON

You can't do this! You owe me, O'Brien. I made you plastic! I made you!

O'BRIEN

That's right. And making me was the biggest mistake you ever made!

O'Brien's hand sears at us shaping into a huge pair of scissors.

Argon screams as the scissors clip through the finger strand --

Dropping Argon into the pond of moon-milk.

Almost immediately there is an reaction.

The pool sizzles and begins to swell into a single volcanic bubble.

O'Brien whirls and runs.

EXT. ROOF

Susan carefully slides to the edge, reaching out to help Poppy.

SUSAN

Grab my hand!

INT. CONSERVATORY

The building is shaking as Nebbleman wakes up.

INT. LAB

The bubble continues to swell.

INT. HALL

O'Brien races through the rubbery hall.

EXT. ROOF

Poppy is struggling to get out of the safety harness when --

INT. MAIN LAB

The bubble bursts.

INT. HALL

The force of the blast launches O'Brien into the air and he recoils tucking himself into a ball --

Super-bouncing down the hall.

EXT. ROOF

The building shivers from the explosion and the helicopter pitches back.

Swinging out from Susan who loses her balance and slips.

INT. SUSAN'S LAB

The chain reaction spreads out from the crater as molecules shift, rebounding, changing into an ionic solid --

Like blown glass that is cooled too quickly --

Shivering with the sound of CRACKING ICE FLOES.

EXT. ROOF

The tower tips again, ready to fall at any moment.

Susan clings to the rail while inside the helicopter Poppy is no longer struggling.

She is staring up at the enormous full moon above her.

POPPY

Icky...?

EXT. MAIN LAB

O'Brien dives from the lab as part of it collapses with a shower of CRASHING GLASS.

EXT. ROOF

The rail gives out and the helicopter falls.

It seems for a moment to drift like a snowflake as Poppy reaches at the moon.

POPPY

Plastic means forever...

It hits the roof and shatters through it as though it were sheet candy.

Susan is thrown out over the edge dangling from the rail as --

The helicopter shatters through the building with an ear-bleeding CRASH before its metal carcass bursts into flames.

As Susan clings to the rail, she looks up and sees Nebbleman. He stares at her through his broken glasses.

NEBBLEMAN

This is all your fault, Susan...

He bends toward her clutching fingers.

EXT. GROUNDS

O'Brien is searching everywhere for Susan.

O'BRIEN

Susan! Susan!

EXT. ROOF

Nebbleman is peeling up her fingers, when --

The tower begins to fall.

With a final METAL SHRIEK the legs give out completely. Still holding on, Susan falls with the tower.

Nebbleman's eyes bulge as he is thrown over the rail and into the fiery abyss...

O'Brien looks up as the tower arcs down and sees Susan clinging, dangling, about to be buried beneath it.

O'BRIEN

Noooo!

A red rubber rocket sears across the night sky.

Susan's grip fails and she drops into --

O'Brien, who has flattened himself out like a giant luge chute.

She slides away as the tower collapses into the fiery oblivion, falling lightly into the soft waiting arms of...

SUSAN

My hero...

They kiss.

We RISE ABOVE them, REACHING UP FOR the moon in all its luminous glory, WATCHING as it morphs into a blazing sun.

We PAN DOWN TO a new day.

EXT. CITY STREET

O'Brien is carrying a brown bag filled with groceries. Susan is walking beside him.

She suddenly starts laughing.

SUSAN

God, when we were in that store all I could think about was that one time, when we were in school, and you attacked that little kid who wanted some cereal. Do you remember that?

O'BRIEN

I remember I was trying to help...

SUSAN

God, what a fight that was.

O'BRIEN

We were different people then.

SUSAN

Do you suppose that was our problem? We met before our time? I think that happens a lot. People, events, planets all just circling each other waiting for that moment when everything clicks into place.

O'Brien is no longer listening to her, staring at something like an attack dog.

SUSAN

That moment of synchronicity where everything seems to work out just the way it should.

Walking straight toward them is the Litterbug.

SUSAN

I suppose if there were a god, it

would be those moments that would
make me believe in her... or him.

Just like he did before, the Litterbug gulps from a
styrofoam cup.

SUSAN

Daniel, what is...

She sees what he is staring at just as the Litterbug
crumbles the cup and pitches it into the bushes.

SUSAN

Oh no.

The Litterbug continues toward them.

SUSAN

Daniel, please, don't, not today,
it's such a nice day...

She watches him bracing for the attack, jaw working,
hackles raising, fists clenching.

SUSAN

Aww shit.

The Litterbug reaches them, shoves his way past and
O'Brien --

Lets him go. He smiles.

O'BRIEN

You're right. It is a nice day.

He walks over and picks up the cup himself.

O'BRIEN

I can throw it out. No big deal.

She can't believe it. His arm shoots out and a moment
later whaps back; the cup is gone.

She smiles and he wraps his arm around her.

SUSAN

Things do change.

O'BRIEN

I guess they do.

They stroll on and we GLIDE BACK in the direction his arm
shot --

Where we see the Litterbug wedged head first into a wire
meshed trash can, kicking like an inverted cockroach, the
styrofoam cup stuffed in his mouth.

And we CLOSE ON the sign --

"Keep litter in its place."

FADE OUT.

THE END