PULSE

by

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A void. A vacuum. And a whisper of a voice...

VOICE
"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth..."

EXT. SPACE

The outer reaches of the universe. RADIO AND TV BROADCAST SIGNALS travelling out into the vastness of space.

BROADCAST SIGNALS
"...the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God."

Shadows appear, dark and murky. Slowly we become aware of a MUFFLED, PULSING sound; like a DISTANT, BOOMING HEARTBEAT.

And we're moving...

OUTSIDE OUR GALAXY

A small spiral amid innumerable galaxies.

BROADCAST SIGNALS
"And with each escalation, the world comes closer to the brink of cosmic disaster."

THE MILKY WAY

A small speck of light amid a vast field of 300 billion stars. Neptune, Uranus, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the moon...

BROADCAST SIGNALS
"That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

EARTH

A tiny ball in our solar system. As those voices grow louder and mumbled, a barrage of overlapping broadcasts...

BROADCAST SIGNALS
"E is equal to mc-squared."

BROADCAST SIGNALS
"Deutschland - Sieg Heil!"

THE STRATOSPHERE

Land and vast oceans, housing thousands of different species.

BROADCAST SIGNALS
"...three shots were fired at President Kennedy's motorcade in downtown Dallas."

BROADCAST SIGNALS
"Tear down this wall!"

FROM UP IN THE CLOUDS

In the east, a wash of predawn light hits the endless ocean green, South American jungle. Angling toward Puerto Rico...

BROADCAST SIGNALS
"At 8:50 p.m. a huge, flaming object, believed to be a meteorite, fell on a farm in the neighborhood of Grovers Mill, New Jersey."

And buried within, a series of plain grey structures - an instillation, all dominated by:

EXT. ARECIBO OBSERVATORY - MORNING

An enormous, 1000ft radio telescope, cradled in the natural bowl of the mountain valley sinkhole, dominating the 118 acres in the middle of nowhere mountainous jungle range.

SUPER: <u>ARECIBO, PUERTO RICO</u>

And the main structures that make up the AO:

Building 1&2: the tracking/receiving station and Telescope Control, and the main administration, scientific staff offices and cafeteria.

VSQ (Visiting Scientists Quarters): weathered living quarters of the primitive installation. Motel 6 meets log cabins.

BROADCAST SIGNALS
"Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

EXT. DISH - MORNING

The massive reflector dish, and sitting on the very edge:

SCOTT MESSENGER (30s), headphones on, listening.

There is an open, optimistic spirit in him. For too long, his Achilles Heel has been his willingness and desire to believe. This is a part of himself he's determined to change.

An ALARM BLARES. A beat, and Scott takes off toward the observatory, passing the VSQ...

INT. JIN'S CABIN - MORNING

Decorated with a child's artwork and family photos. The faucet drips, creating a metronomic drone.

JIN SAITO (40s) sits on the edge of her bed, staring off into space. She looks tired. A soccer mom with a high-end genius IQ. She holds a small, toy dinosaur.

The ALARM reaches her. She doesn't respond.

INT. DEV'S CABIN - MORNING

The cabin is spotless, not only in cleanliness, but in personal effects. Just like it's resident.

DEVESH SINGH (30s), clad in a suit, cleans his framed degrees on the wall. Expert in computational linguistics and applied mathematics. If ET phones home, he'll translate the call.

It's not that he's succeeded at everything he's ever tried. It's that he's succeeded effortlessly.

The alarm blares. One frame juts askew. He straightens it.

INT. ANGIE'S CABIN - MORNING

Decorated with cacti, posters of The Pixies, Harold and Maude, James Joyce, and recordings of Monks "Ohming".

ANGIE BOSH (20s) short hair, pierces visible and not, and several statement tattoos, is currently meditating, legs crossed, hands upturned on her knees. Speaks 15 languages.

The alarm breaks her peace. She stands, turns up the volume on the speaker, drowning out the alarm, and sits back down.

INT. BUILDING ONE, CONTROL ROOM - MORNING

Amid SETI posters ("Are we alone?") is a plaque:

"*A man's reach should exceed his grasp, or else what's Heaven for?*" -- Robert Browning

Wearing his favorite worn-in robe, WENDELL BARNES (late 30s) is set up before glowing banks of electronic equipment. Through the windows we see the mammoth radio telescope.

He's the best theoretical engineer there is, yet with limited personal skills and no filter. Also one of the all-time high Jeopardy winners.

He rolls his chair down the line of computer monitors, his altar. Indeed, this control room is his electronic chapel.

The crew comes in, one by one. Some excited, most not. Scott focused. Jin kills the alarm.

SCOTT
What do we got?

WENDELL
Twelve second pulse. Sixty decibel.

SCOTT
Class?

Wendell consults a spectroscope, switches magnification, where we see the baseline static of a distant star.

WENDELL
F-class star... recent variability. 14.6 light years away. 7.36.7 right ascension... 5.21 declination.

He swivels to a new monitor as a thin spectrum appears, integrates. Something juts from the baseline static. A spike.

SCOTT
Put it on speaker.

Wendell hits a button. An eerie, monotone HUM fills the room.

WENDELL
Exhibiting clear audible digital modulation. 1471.5 MHz.

Dev enters new coordinates, checks a new spectrum that integrates on the scope.

DEV
270 hertz bandwith. Doppler shift of negative 25 hertz per minute.

SCOTT
270? That can’t be right...

The 3-D waveform goes haywire from interference, then falls. The spectrometer flatlines. The speakers - only static hiss.

DEV
Marked as RFI from low earth orbit.

JIN
I got up for a LEO Satellite.

Everyone deflates a bit, used to bum signals.

WENDELL
3 minutes 18 seconds to false verification.

DEV
If this were a pulse signal, we'd have lost it by now.

SCOTT
We'll call it a readiness drill.

ANGIE
I thought that last drill was the last drill.

WENDELL
Why would you think that?

ANGIE
'cause you said it would be.

WENDELL
What? No, no, no - I distinctly remember forgetting that.

Everyone files out. And Wendell is left alone once again.

WENDELL
I thought we did pretty good.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Following a pool ball as it rolls down a track - falls and triggers a bicycle pump that fills a balloon - popping to release air that triggers dominos to fall, releasing a spring that swivels a tower of pencils, slowly turning until finally pressing - a single button.

A RUBE GOLDBERG DEVICE... all to turn the coffee maker on.

We get the sense that these guys have been for a while, isolated in the middle of nowhere, bored as all hell.

Jin watches it percolate. The steady drips creating a signal - PLOP-PLOP. PLOP-PLOP. And she stands there, staring.

Angie sits before the ancient TV, watching some Puerto Rican soap opera in poor reception. She adjusts the antenna.

ANGIE
We have the largest radio antenna in the world, but I still can't get a clear picture on this thing.

Dev sits at a table with his laptop open, the pulsing signal of typing. Then deleting. Typing. Deleting.

On the screen: "Of Time and Space - a dissertation by Devesh Singh, PhD." That's as far as he got. He changes the byline again: "D.H. Singh." Deletes it. "D. Havash Singh." Thinks on it. No. "Devesh H. Singh."

Wendell eats cereal, reading an ancient tabloid.

WENDELL
Cattle mutilations are up.

DEV
Don't.

WENDELL
The government's been suppressing it for years.

ANGIE
What would aliens want with cows?

WENDELL
Who knows? That's the whole point. It's like the pre-Copernicans who swore the sun revolved around the Earth, or that the Earth was flat, or the Victorians at the end of the last century who concluded that all major discoveries had now been made. I mean... try to imagine civilization a thousand years ahead of us -- then imagine trying to explain... I dunno, a microwave oven - to someone a hundred years ago. I mean the basic concepts didn't exist...

JIN
Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

A beat as everyone thinks on it. With nothing left to say, they all go back to what they were doing.

As a LOW RUMBLE grabs ears one by one, heads swivelling to the source of the noise. Realizing...

A mad dash as everyone scrambles to clean up, quickly hiding all paraphernalia, shoving dirty plates into closets.

EXT. ARECIBO OBSERVATORY - DAY

A black sedan negotiates the overgrown, dusty mountain road to the AO.

INT. SCOTT'S CABIN - DAY

A star map up on the wall. An old, lumpy cot and several monitors along the desk that connect to the control room.

Scott lies on the bed, recording himself into a digital recorder.

SCOTT
It's...

He checks his watch, but it has stopped.

SCOTT
It's late. Or early. On Monday. I think. Had another false signal. Pretty sure I'm never getting paid.

Just as he clicks off, Angie runs in.

ANGIE
Scott. They're here.

SCOTT
A week early?

Scott scrambles to clean himself up.

ANGIE
And there's something else... It's kind of pertinent--

SCOTT
Later, Angie. Wait... who's with them now?

INT. ADMIN OFFICES - DAY

A formidable group of COMMITTEE MEMBERS, men in suits. Two women. A second tier of more junior folks. Eight in all.

Led by RICHARD ATWATER (50s) Deputy Director of the National Science Advisory. Although short and balding, he is the most powerful man in the room.

And they're all staring blankly at Wendell.

ATWATER
I'm sorry, you saying the NSA caused Hurricane Katrina?

WENDELL
Well, I can't prove it, but that's the point. They don't want us to know the truth.

ATWATER
Who's "they?"

WENDELL
They? They's them! What's the matter with you?!

Just as Scott runs up, out of breath, shoving Wendell away. Putting on his best smile.

SCOTT
I apologize, he's medicated.

As Scott directs them into the conference room, saying--

SCOTT
Hi! Scott Messenger. Hello! Welcome! Hey... you!

--to each one that passes. Sighing in relief. And then Scott sees her - the last suit to go in:

ELIZA WITT. Thirties, attractive, intellectual. A moment of awkward recognition. Scott is totally caught off-guard.

SCOTT
Eliza... Hey.

ELIZA
Scott. It's good to see you. You look...

SCOTT
You, yeah, too...

ELIZA
Well.

A lot of history here. They smile nervously, sharing a look that's perhaps a bit too long.

Interrupted by TYLER BANGER. All of 22. A younger, upgraded model of Scott. Pretentious due to his drive to do something that will make him famous.

TYLER
Hello. Tyler Banger.

SCOTT
Banger? Seriously?

ELIZA
He's my assistant.

TYLER
I'm a doctoral candidate in physics at MIT and I'm doing research with Ms. Witt.

SCOTT
I bet you are.

Eliza shakes her head and walks inside the briefing room, followed by overeager Tyler. Angie passes on her way in.

ANGIE
I tried to tell you.

Scott hangs back a beat, thrown, gathering herself.

SCOTT (V.O.)
Geneticist J.B.S. Haldane once said, "The universe is not only stranger than we think, but stranger than we can think."

INT. ARECIBO, CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Like grandma's living room, mostly for show. A large table ringed by delegates. Our team looking their Sunday best. All eyes on Scott, center stage, remote in hand, controlling the projector that will play counterpoint to his words.

SCOTT
Ever since mankind first used intellect to distinguish itself from the rest of the animal world, a profound distinction became evident - we do not simply seek survival, we seek to understand. Who are we? Where did we come from? Are there others like us out there?

Scott triggers various IMAGES as he narrates: Sumerian art, Egyptian hieroglyphics, Mesopotamian carvings, Petroglyphs, Renaissance paintings and cave art...

SCOTT
What you're seeing are interpretations of ancient artwork throughout the world.

Each slide reveals stranger and stranger art - from odd-shaped creatures with large heads to ancient figures in space suits, Anunnaki deities in ancient Mesopotamian culture, hovering rockets and dish-shaped craft.

SCOTT
Art from every culture and part of the world, all depicting space vehicles, pictographs and megalithic monuments describing human interaction with entities. All cultures and religions asking the same questions.

Lights come back on. Scott's eyes go to Eliza, seated in the back corner, with Tyler beside her, taking copious notes.

SCOTT
Humans have a great curiosity, a need to know what's around the corner, over the next hill, above the clouds. It's our nature, when faced with a question, to search out the answer at any cost.

ATWATER
Your passion's noted, but it's the "at any cost" that concerns me. The people I represent are asking why we're still pouring money into this program with nothing coming back.

SCOTT
What if Columbus believed the world was flat? Or that Earth was the center of the universe? We're talking about highly intermittent radio emissions from nearby technological civilizations. It takes time to capture, but our microwave and computers are rapidly evolving. Within a few years, technological advances will allow radio telescopes to hear all the way to the edge of the Galaxy.

ATWATER
You want me to tell them a theory that aliens are gods? Or God's an alien? Is that what you're saying?

Scott, his theory on the spot, catches Eliza looking, shaking her 'no', don't go there.

SCOTT
No...

Eliza, relived, letting out the breath she was holding, when:

SCOTT
...I'm saying that there is no God.

EXT. BUILDING ONE - DAY

Jin and Angie watch the delegates board cars and drive off.

ANGIE
That went well, I think.

Jin gives her a look. Angie shrugs.

EXT. DISH - DAY

Eliza walks along the periphery of the vast concave dish where Scott keeps busy, working/repairing the reflector dish. He knows what's coming. They are silent for several moments, neither of them ready for small talk. Finally --

SCOTT
Low-noise preamp keeps shorting. Everything's always breaking down out here.

ELIZA
Don't you know how to take care of this place without me?

It's one of those jokes that hit so wrong; Scott's answer could take a day and a half.

SCOTT
Thought you would have left with the others.

ELIZA
I have some paperwork to do. We'll be out of your hair first thing in the morning.

"We?" Scott's eyes find Tyler, eavesdropping from a distance.

SCOTT
So what is he, twelve?

ELIZA
He's twenty two and he's a genius.

SCOTT
Is that what genius looks like these days?

ELIZA
His research into Buckyball theory has broken monumental ground and verifies a multi-dimensional universe, which should make you happy.

SCOTT
I'm so happy.

ELIZA
Look, I didn't want to come here any more than you wanted me to.

SCOTT
Then why did you? And if you say professional reasons, I'm going to break something.

She looks at him. She was going to say that. Scott walks the periphery of the dish, wiping grease off his hands with a rag. Eliza follows, finally gets to the point --

ELIZA
The price has gotten too high for them.

SCOTT
We're close, Eliza, I know it. They're out there. They could be talking to us. Right now. I just need more time.

ELIZA
There are over four hundred billion stars out there, and only two possibilities. One, there is intelligent life in the universe but they're so far away you'll never contact it in your lifetime.
(MORE)

ELIZA (CONT'D)
Two, there’s nothing out there but noble gasses and carbon compounds and you’re wasting your time.

SCOTT
If we don’t find any verifiable signals of extraterrestrial origin, that we are, indeed, alone in the universe... Isn’t that discovery also worth the price of admission?

ELIZA
Not for people like me. You can’t disprove the theory of God.

SCOTT
Why not? The power of science is uncertainty. Everything’s uncertain, but science can define that uncertainty. That’s why science makes progress and religion doesn’t.

ELIZA
We’re not designed at a level of theoretical physics. What matters to most people is what happens at the human scale, relationships to others, things we experience. Not alien life we’re never going to meet in our lifetime.

SCOTT
Is that why you walked out on it?

ELIZA
No, I walked out on you. There’s a difference.

As that truth settles in.

ELIZA
It’ll take a couple weeks for the paperwork to go through. You can stay until then. For what it’s worth, I really am sorry.

She starts her way down, joining Tyler. Off Scott, effected.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Wendell and Dev are at the boards, mid argument, a game of Risk before them.

DEV
Now what are you saying? The CIA killed JFK?

WENDELL
No. They shot him, but he's still alive.

DEV
I don't want to talk to you anymore.

Dev heads out. But Wendell chases after, still arguing, and we are left in the empty room.

WENDELL (O.S.)
Ok, fine. But they're the same people who framed Richard Nixon.

DEV (O.S.)
We're not talking.

And all we hear is the fuzzy sound of radio static.

And then, beneath the static - another sound... Barely audible but definitely there... something building up. Screens flicker slightly, then:

A MASS OF NUMBERS, LETTERS AND SYMBOLS FLASH ACROSS MONITORS.

AND A FAINT, IRREGULAR PULSE FADING IN AND OUT OF RECEPTION - LOOPING, ARCING TONES AND PITCHES. METALLIC AND UNNERVING.

Wendell comes inside, thinking he heard something... He looks at the monitors - now all showing baseline readings. And the soft, melodic hiss of static.

Whatever it was - it's gone now.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Eliza and Tyler are going over paperwork at the table when Scott enters, sits across from them. Staring. Uncomfortable.

SCOTT
I figured it out...

TYLER
Should I leave or something?

ELIZA
No.

SCOTT
Yes.

TYLER
I'll be in the cafe.

SCOTT
It's a cafeteria.

Tyler heads off, and Scott focus his attention on Eliza.

SCOTT
It all makes sense now. You're sleeping with him.

ELIZA
You're out of your mind if you think I'm discussing this with you.

SCOTT
Because it's true.

ELIZA
Tyler is different. He's a genius.

SCOTT
So we've established.

ELIZA
And he knows what he wants.

Eliza fixes her eyes on him. Then, gathering her work, walks out. Scott reels from that one and struggles not to show it.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

Eliza walks with purpose, Scott close on her heels.

ELIZA
You had your chance with me.

SCOTT
That's not how I remember it.

ELIZA
Memory's a tricky thing, isn't it?

SCOTT
I asked a yes or no question.

ELIZA
And I answered it.

SCOTT
By leaving. No note, no message. I deserved more than that.

ELIZA
What does it feel like to understand everything in the universe except mankind?

He stares at her, then turns and walks away. Eliza, instantly regretting her words.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - EVENING

Wendell dozes in his chair with his chin on his chest and his feet propped up on the console.

Beside him - the baseline screens. Then - a SPIKE. Growing and falling like a wave. And it continues to grow, a massive line of jagged mountain on the screen.

And the headphones on the controls - a faint PULSE emanating.

A moment, and Wendell's eyes open. Then he sees it. He scrambles to get the headphones on. His eyes grow bigger by the second.

INT. CAFETERIA - EVENING

Dinner amid the disenchanted group. Everyone in their own worlds. It's the kind of quiet that makes one introspective.

Scott glancing now and then at Eliza, careful not to let her see him doing so. When he focuses on his food, Eliza glances back at him, also not giving any ground.

Then -- the ALARM shrieks through the entire facility. Heads turn. Frustrated groans.

ANGIE
Not another drill...

DEV
We don't have a drill scheduled...

Scott stands and hits the intercom button.

SCOTT
(into intercom)
Wendell, what's with the alarm?

Static on the intercom. And then:

WHOOM-WHOOM...WHOOM-WHOOM...WHOOM-WHOOM...

Pulsing throughout the entire facility. No one moves.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Wendell sits in his chair. Behind, the entire team is gathered, slack-jawed. The OTHERWORLDLY METALLIC SOUND envelops them. Strange, abstract, but almost melodic.

WHOOM-WHOOM...WHOOM-WHOOM...WHOOM-WHOOM...

ON THE MONITORS: a 3-D waveform display - we see the signal rippling and pulsing demonically.

SCOTT
System checks.

They run their routine checks with practiced calm. Wendell monitors instrument readings, typing in coordinates.

WENDELL
Could be AWACS, verifying intensity.

JIN
Monochromatic, strong too.

Dev types rapidly on the keyboard, watching a monitor above: Star Field origin of signal.

DEV
Checking interferometric position.

Heads squeeze together to see the spectroscope. There's something spiking above the static. They switch to 3-D waveform display.

DEV
Check right ascension 18 hours, 34 minutes, declination plus 38 degrees, 41 minutes.

SCOTT
What's the frequency?

ELIZA
What's the frequency?

Scott looks at Eliza, seeing a glimpse of what she once had: passion. She sees him, and stands up straight, professional.

WENDELL
Trying to pinpoint signal noise... got it. 4458.8 Gigahertz.

Eliza and Scott look at each other significantly.

ELIZA
Probably nothing.

SCOTT
Display absolute intensity.

On an equalizer: a sound spike leaps with each pulse.

WHOOM-WHOOM! WHOOM-WHOOM! WHOOM-WHOOM!

DEV
Good solid spike...nice symmetry to the modulation.

JIN
Reading over a hundred janskys...

ELIZA
Has to be a glitch. Flight traffic noise, maybe. Military.

ANGIE
Air force isn't supposed to be on this frequency.

Another display shows satellites and major debris in orbit.

DEV
NORAD's not tracking any spacecraft in our vector.

WENDELL
Confirming sidereal motion; whatever it is, it's not us.

Excitement ripples through the room. All eyes on Scott. Beat.

SCOTT
Detection protocol. <u>Now</u>.

In fast sync: Dev dives back to the controls with Wendell. Angie slaps open the "Signal Detection Protocol" manual, finding the red pages - the Hot Sheets. Hands it to Scott.

SCOTT
Confirmation Phase One...

WENDELL
Swinging dish five degrees off-axis...

The signal drops in volume and intensity.

SCOTT
And the signal fades. Looking good.

WENDELL
Now swinging the dish back on target...

The undulating pulses grow LOUD.

SCOTT
And the signal returns.

DEV
Definitely sky-based.

WENDELL
Humming really loud now... two hundred twenty janskys...

TYLER
Jesus... Is this for real?

ELIZA
False positive. Has to be...

WHOOM-WHOOM!!! WHOOM-WHOOM!!! WHOOM-WHOOM!!!

SCOTT
Confirmation Phase Two.

DEV
Initiating software check...

SCOTT
Jumping ahead to Phase Three... second-source verification.

ANGIE
(snaps up red phone)
Who's online? Green Bank? Ohio State?

JIN
No, Mother Russia.

Angie scans the list of numbers on a post-it, dials.

SCOTT
Be there, just be there...

Jin leans closer to the screen and FRACTAL IMAGE of the pulse reading. ODD PATTERS BEGIN TO APPEAR WITHIN THE SIGNAL.

JIN
What is that...?

Wendell looks down at a glass of water - rippling. Overhead lights swing with each booming pulse --

<u>WHOOM-WHOOM!!! WHOOM-WHOOM!!! WHOOM-WHOOM!!!</u>

DEV
Software self-checks! Phase Two complete! Waiting on confirmation!

Eliza is now caught up in it all--

ELIZA
We need another ear on this thing!

ANGIE
I'm working on it!

WHOOM-WHOOM!!! WHOOM-WHOOM!!! WHOOM-WHOOM!!!

SCOTT
Come on, come on, come on. Pick up the phone and confirm...

Now all eyes are on Angie, phone to ear. Endless ringing and--

WHOOM-WHOOOOOOOOOOM!!!!!!!!!! WHOOM-WHOOOOOOOOOOM!!!!!!!!!!

A BLASTING PULSE ROCKS the entire station -- POWER CUTS OUT, phone dies, lights switching to dim emergency lighting.

WENDELL
Full drain!

DEV
Need to reset the breakers!

Wendell and Dev scramble beneath the control board, quickly removing a wall panel to expose the circuit board.

WENDELL
It's the red wire! Red!

DEV
I know!

Dev rewires the fuse, punches the lever back to the 'on' position and POWER PUMPS back on, but--

THE PULSE IS GONE...

On the spectroscope: the spike has sunk back into baseline static. The speakers quiet to a soft HISS.

As quickly as it appeared, the signal has vanished.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Eliza and Scott stand on opposite sides of the corridor.

ELIZA
42 seconds.

SCOTT
42 seconds of non-random, non-Earth-based signal. Explain that?

ELIZA
Space junk.

SCOTT
Space junk?

ELIZA
Radio bounce off space debris. Satellites. Military burst communication. There’s a million reasons to explain that signal, all of them terrestrial, human based.

SCOTT
No way. Not at 107 MegaHertz.

ELIZA
107? You deviated from the approved survey. What are you doing so far below microwave?

SCOTT
Screw the survey. The only way an extrasolar race is going to hear us is if they pick up our signal leakage - radio, TV, radar - all below microwave band. Doesn’t it make sense that we should be looking for them in the same way?

ELIZA
It’s 42 seconds. And it hasn’t repeated.

SCOTT
Why are you so eager to dismiss it?

ELIZA
Why are you so eager to believe?

SCOTT
When I was a boy, my dad used to tell me stories of Neil Armstrong, lunar modules, the Space Shuttle. No one cares. The Space Program, NASA. No one looks up at the heavens and asks “what if” anymore.

ELIZA
Probably because we have enough problems here on Earth. You know the rule. If you can't confirm it, it doesn't exist.

She turns and continues on, away from him.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone gathered, minus Tyler and Eliza. Folders, photos, strip-charts and digital recordings cover the table, along with a large star map. Readings all baseline and static.

SCOTT
Do we have a point of origin yet?

DEV
Impossible to say. Not local.

WENDELL
Outside of our solar system. It'll take a while to pinpoint, maybe never unless we get another hit.

Scott takes a seat. Praying for the signal to repeat. It's going to be a long night.

EXT. ARECIBO OBSERVATORY - MORNING

The sun rises, washing the jungle and observatory in light.

INT. REC ROOM - DAY

Wendell and Dev going at Ping Pong. The ball creates a signal pattern as it hits paddle and table. Plop-plop. Plop-plop.

Wendell hits it back to Dev, who stands frozen as the ball hits the floor and bounces away.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Dev walks past Jin and Angie at the boards, switching all the monitors to the original signal pulse recording. Wendell enters behind, joining a confused Jin and Angie, watching Dev, in his own world now, working the computer.

ANGIE
Uh... excuse us, Dev.

Wendell SHUSHES her and leans closer to see what Dev is typing.

WENDELL
You’re on to something, aren’t you?

DEV
The pulse...

JIN
What about it?

DEV
It’s not a pulse.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - LATER

Everyone is now present, watching Dev run the signal through filters. Eliza stands in the back, arms crossed, skeptical.

DEV
The fractal pattern signal we saw on the screen was not a glitch.
(beat)
It was a transmission... Code.

A GRAPHICAL REPRESENTATION forms on the screen:

2 3 5 7 11 13 17 19 23 29 31 37 41 43 47 53 59 61 67 71 73 79
83 89 97 101 103 107 109 113 127 131 137 139 149
151 157 163 167 173 179 181
191 193 197
199 211
216

SCOTT
Primes...

ELIZA
A fluke.

DEV
The universal sign of intelligence is the ability to produce a sequence of prime numbers. They’re too irregular to arise from any natural process and no mathematical equation is known that will produce them.

TYLER
Except 216 isn’t a prime.

SCOTT
Unless it’s not part of the message. Maybe it’s a way to decipher it. Our Rosetta Stone.

JIN
Plato believe in the cosmic importance of the number 216.

ANGIE
216 reduces to nine in numerology.

DEV
216 equals 6 cubed.

SCOTT
6 was part of the Sumerian segesimal mathematics.

ELIZA
A multiplier...

Eyes turn to Eliza, but she trails off in thought and sits down, a bit dazed by where her thought process has taken her. Scott sits across from her, holds her eyeline.

SCOTT
Go on.

ELIZA
It’s just a theory. A multiplier. One could plausibly write:
216=6x6x6. 666.
(beat)
A bible code.

Beat.

SCOTT
We need a bible.

The team rushes out, everyone searching frantically for a bible, as papers and other books are tossed every which way.

ANGIE
Got it!

She flips through as everyone crowds around.

SCOTT
Significant, don’t you think? An alien intelligence using the bible to communicate.

Dev selects the sequence of repeating primes, types a command on the computer using 216 as the decoder and hits ‘enter’.

DEV
Extrapolating every 216th word...

Everyone hovers over the monitor expectantly. The cursor blinks. And then...

Letters begin to type out by themselves:

HELLO. HOW ARE YOU? I AM FINE.
WHAT IS YOUR NAME? MY NAME IS JOSHUA.

Nobody...moves...an...inch.

Scott steps forward on numb legs and touches the screen reverentially.

SCOTT
Hello Joshua...

ELIZA
There’s no one in the bible named Joshua.

WENDELL
That we know of.

JIN
Ask him who he is.

Dev type the words, translated into numbers. Hits enter.

I AM

WENDELL
“I am?” Where’s the rest?

DEV
That’s it.

ELIZA
Tell him to give us proof. Prove that he’s alien intelligence.

Dev types: *Where are you from?* They wait. And... nothing.

ANGIE
He’s gone.

ELIZA
See? Someone playing a prank on us.

WENDELL
Uh, I don't think so...

They follow his eyes to the basketball in the corner...

ROLLING SLOWLY BY ITSELF to the center of the floor...

Then - the ball begins to lift up - LEVITATING in mid air...

Spinning on its axis, as other items LIFT UP around it, a ball of rubber bands, crumpled up paper, popcorn, quarters... The basketball COMBUSTS, set on fire...

As all others rotate around it. A huge planet, one with rotating rings of sunflower seeds. A star. A sun...

A GALAXY...

A MINIATURE MODEL SOLAR SYSTEM, and not our own.

SCOTT
We are definitely not alone.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The team is gathered, minus Wendell and Jin. Excitement and nerves have adrenalized the group.

TYLER
I'm trying to figure out a way to record what we just heard. I don't know... what do I say? I mean, it can hardly be explained by a disturbance in the magnetic field.

SCOTT
Say it was space junk.

He shares a look with Eliza.

ELIZA
Say whatever you like, but for now, not a single word of this leaves the AO.

DEV
We could be witness to the greatest moment in human history. Why in God's name would we keep it secret?

ELIZA
Throughout history, every time a technologically advanced culture has come into contact with a more primitive one, the primitive one has been wiped out or assimilated. The fact that the signal even made it to Earth suggests we're dealing with an intelligence hundreds, even thousands of years more advanced than us.

SCOTT
She's right.

Even Eliza is a bit stunned to hear him agree.

SCOTT
Until we know, we don't know. I want ears on this 24/7. When Joshua's ready to talk again, I want to be ready.

INT. ELIZA'S CABIN - DAY

Eliza unpacks in a cabin. Tyler is earphoned up, listening to the signal and making notes. He's obviously shaken.

A KNOCK at the door. Tyler stands and opens it. Speaks to someone outside, then turns back to Eliza.

TYLER
He won't say what he wants.

Eliza looks up at Scott in hovering in the doorway.

ELIZA
That's because he doesn't know.

EXT. ARECIBO, VSQ - MOMENTS LATER

Scott follows Eliza, headed back toward Building 1.

SCOTT
What's he still doing here? This isn't really what I had in mind when you said you were staying...

ELIZA
You need the documentation.

SCOTT
That's what you're here for.

ELIZA
I'm a cosmologist--

SCOTT
Religious cosmologist--

ELIZA
Not a stenographer. I am not going back into this alone. The problem was we were alone too much and in that isolated state we imagined signals that weren't there.

SCOTT
I didn't imagine anything.

ELIZA
You went public to the world about contact with alien life. Without verification. You broke every rule. You lost your job, your grant, your credibility--

SCOTT
It was a bilateral signal. Satellites don't move the same way as stars.

ELIZA
The point is, it wasn't real. None of it was.

SCOTT
You think I imagined how I felt about you?

ELIZA
Obviously, considering how fast it disappeared.

That one stings Scott.

SCOTT
And now you're a believer? Kind of a fair weather fan, huh?

She pulls out a hat from her bag, puts it on. It's a Chicago Cubs hat. And she continues on, Scott shaking his head.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Scott's huddled over a star map with Dev, Eliza and Jin.

DEV
I ran the test three times.

ELIZA
The machine's broken.

DEV
If it were broken, the signal should come up wildly different each time you do a separate test.

SCOTT
You're telling us the signal source originated 150 billion light years away? It's not possible. The Milky Way is only a hundred thousand light years in diameter. This isn't just outside our galaxy, it's outside of the known universe.

DEV
There's a theoretical wall of light at the edge of the universe - the blast wave from the Big Bang. It's constantly expanding, like a balloon, and all planets, stars, galaxies - they're all in this balloon, okay? Whatever the signal is, it came from the other side.

ELIZA
There isn't anything on the other side.

JIN
Apparently we were wrong.

A beat as they absorb this information. The intercom SQUAWKS.

WENDELL (ON INTERCOM)
Scott, you there?

SCOTT
(into intercom)
Yeah, Wendell. What is it?

WENDELL (ON INTERCOM)
He's back...

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Wendell and Angie are hunkered over the monitors when Scott enters with the rest of the team in tow.

ANGIE
We didn't know what to say, so...

SCOTT
(typing as he talks)
Hello, Joshua.

JOSHUA'S VOICE
Hello Scott.

Scott straightens at the sound of the VOICE: JOSHUA'S TEXT IS TRANSLATED INTO A MECHANICAL, DIGITIZED "HAL/STEPHAN HAWKING"-TYPE VOICE, "TALKING" THROUGH THE SPEAKERS.

WENDELL
I ran the text through a translator. Cool, right?

Scott takes a seat before the monitors, TYPING as he talks.

SCOTT
We have so many questions for you. Who are we? Why are we here? Where did we come from?

JOSHUA'S VOICE
I have your answers. But you must make a leap of faith.

SCOTT
What leap of faith? I don't understand.

JOSHUA'S VOICE
You will.

And the voice fades. Wendell checks the signal, shakes his head. Joshua's gone.

ANGIE
What does that mean, leap of faith?

Suddenly, lights fade out. Dim emergency lighting snaps on...

ELIZA
What's happening...?

WENDELL
Power spike. Not sure...

Data floods the workstation, obscured by static flashing across the screens too fast for comprehension...

NUMBERS, LETTERS AND SYMBOLS.

TYLER
What the hell is that?

WENDELL
About sixty million lines of code... I have no idea. I don't even know how to decipher this.

DEV
It's some form of a fractal pattern... fractional geometry that crops up in Chaos Theory. I can run it through a series of filters, try to clean it up.

Dev immediately sits at the console and gets to work.

JIN
Are we sure we even want to know? Some doors that are opened can't be closed.

SCOTT
Do you honestly think he would contact us if he were hostile? If their technology is far more advanced than anything we could comprehend, then they wouldn't ask for surrender. They would take this planet in half a second and we would never know.

DEV
Here we go...

The monitor begins to translate and display complex DRAWINGS.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

The entire team is crowded around the table in the situation room. Before them are SCHEMATICS FOR SOME TYPE OF OBJECT.

WENDELL
It's an ark.

TYLER
An ark? Like Noah?

WENDELL
If I'm reading this right, and that's a big if, it looks like instructions to build a complex, magnetically shielded box.

ELIZA
What does it do?

WENDELL
I mean, listen to this:
(reading)
Spatial displacement unit powered by two top-spin, dual positive micro singularities to produce a standard off-set Tipler sinusoid. Magnetic housing units, an electron injection manifold to alter mass and gravity, cooling and x-ray venting systems...

ANGIE
I speak fifteen languages and I have no idea what you just said.

Dev and Wendell share a look. Dev nods for Wendell to continue. He does, with trepidation.

WENDELL
An experimental gravity drive which generates an artificial black hole to use the immense gravitational power to bridge two points in spacetime, greatly reducing travel time over astronomical distances.

JIN
Interstellar flight?

SCOTT
Can we build it?

WENDELL
I'd have to take a look at all this carefully, but, if I had to make a guess... We could probably build it in a few days.

ELIZA
But. We are not going to.

All eyes on Eliza.

ELIZA
Just to make it clear, there is absolutely no way we are going to do that.

Eyes still on Eliza.

ELIZA
We have no idea what we are dealing with here. Pandora's box. Trojan Horse. Instructions on how to surrender our planet. End of story.

JIN
She's right.

ELIZA
Of course I'm right. Is anyone here seriously thinking otherwise?

She scans the faces before her. Clearly some of them are.

DEV
Can I play Devil's advocate to your Devil's advocate?

ELIZA
No.

SCOTT
Go ahead.

Eliza shakes her head at being undermined.

DEV
We are scientists. We explore every possible scenario. Every variable. So how do we test this? We don't, because we can't. No constants, no controls. Everything about this device is currently theoretical.

ELIZA
You're assuming this being, Joshua, whatever it is, is benign.

SCOTT
Yes.

ELIZA
And you're assuming the device is actually going to work and not kill the occupant.

SCOTT
Yes.

ELIZA
That’s a lot of assumptions.

SCOTT
Call it a leap of faith.

ELIZA
That’s a pretty big leap. Even for you.

SCOTT
Fine. Call it risk assessment. The question is, does the risk outweigh the reward?

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Everyone is present. No one talks. No one is looking at each other. Just staring blankly. We get a sense that this is like a married couple vying for friends after a messy divorce.

ELIZA
You all know my vote. Anyone else want to weigh in?

SCOTT
I’m a hell yes. I can’t believe we’re even voting on this.

TYLER
I’m with Eliza. No way.

SCOTT
You don’t get a vote, Banger.

ELIZA
He’s on my team, he gets a vote. Jin?

JIN
No. I don’t think so. No.

ANGIE
I’m a yes. Sorry.

ELIZA
Okay. Three no’s, two yes’s.

DEV
Three yes’s. I’m in.

SCOTT
So we’re tied.

All eyes turn to Wendell, agonized.

EXT. SCOTT'S CABIN - EVENING

Scott places a small saucer of water out on the stoop next to the door as Eliza approaches.

ELIZA
The cat ran away three years ago. Why are you putting out water?

SCOTT
In case she decides to come back.

A loaded response, not lost on Eliza.

ELIZA
That's a lot of faith for a non-believer.

SCOTT
Call it hope.

ELIZA
More like hope and a prayer.

Scott smiles, shakes his head.

ELIZA
Be honest. There's nowhere you'd rather be than sitting out at some remote corner of the world searching for the answers to the mysteries of the universe. And call me crazy, but I just can't compete with that...

SCOTT
I never asked you to.

ELIZA
Why do you want this so badly?

SCOTT
Part of what made the Apollo mission so awe inspiring was looking back at a unified, fragile planet, adrift in a cold and terrifying void. It made us reconsider who we were as a species, our place in the universe.
(MORE)

SCOTT (CONT'D)
The discovery of alien life - even if it amounts to nothing more than a string of protein or some nucleotides, would undoubtedly prompt that same kind of introspection about the role of life in the cosmos.

Jin walks up. They both look at her expectantly.

JIN
We've made a decision.
(to Scott)
I'm sorry.

The vote: no go. Eliza takes it as her cue to give him space.

SCOTT
What if you're wrong?

ELIZA
It's a chance I'm willing to take.

And she continues away. Further and further.

INT. ELIZA'S CABIN - NIGHT

Eliza sits on the bed, looking at the star map posters on the wall, reliving a past life. Tyler steps out from the bathroom, flossing methodically.

TYLER
And the ark? You're not the least bit curious?

ELIZA
I'm searching for other answers. That's the difference between us. I ask "how?" Scott asks "why?"

TYLER
So you're not still in love with him?

ELIZA
That was a long time ago. It's different now. I'm different.

Eliza lies down, away from Tyler, a long way from sleep.

INT. WENDELL'S CABIN - NIGHT

Wendell lies in his bunk, wide awake, agonized, staring at the ceiling where glow-in-the-dark star stickers are attached, forming various solar systems.

INT. CAFETERIA - MORNING

Scott enters, just as Eliza passes, storming off, followed by her pet Tyler. Scott turns to swing vote Wendell, sitting at a table, looking down at his clasped hands.

WENDELL
Don't make me regret this.

EXT. ARECIBO OBSERVATORY, VARIOUS - DAY

All around the facility, the crew is dismantling equipment, gathering parts, following detailed instructions.

SCOTT & DEV

Electrical conduits are ripped loose from the radio telescope, titanium metal sheets and magnetic shielding. A subpanel blows. They share a look, then get back to work.

WENDELL

Dismantling housing amps, crygenics, sub-reflectors - the guts of the tracking boards.

ANGIE

Dragging heavy oxygen tanks outside, lugging them along, cables draped over her shoulders.

JIN

Gathering DC power supply batteries from cars, the generator.

INT. ARK ROOM - DAY

What will become known as the Ark Room, is now merely a cluttered storage room with back up tower drives ringing the perimeter, running the control board. A bank of windows look into the control room next door, a door connecting them.

The junk is cleared and pushed to the sides of the room, replaced with various gear - mixers, converters, analyzers, antenna feeds, housing amps, O2 tanks, cables.

Wendell and Dev follow the BLUEPRINTS, tacked up on the wall, putting this complex device together. Angie sits in a chair, watching, bored. Scott oversees it all.

DEV
Radiation differentials are taking longer than expected, but we'll get there.

ANGIE
This ark, it's crazy. Interstellar travel, like the Tower of Babel.

SCOTT
You going biblical on me, Angie?

ANGIE
You know what happened to the Tower of Babel, don't you? It fell down.

Dev dispenses liquid helium, adding it to a cooling jacket around the low-noise amp. A "System Temperature" readout plummets: 60 degrees, 0, -90, -270, -390...

DEV
We're levelled off at negative 458. Absolute zero.

Out the window, Scott sees Eliza and Tyler packing up the car. He turns away, gets back to work, but Jin sees it.

EXT. ARECIBO OBSERVATORY - DAY

Jin joins Eliza at the car, rearranging luggage.

JIN
You didn't have an affair with Scott. I know you fell in love with him but I don't believe for a minute that you left because of the false signal. I think you left because you wanted him and then you got scared.

Eliza opens her mouth, then:

JIN
I'm not finished. And since then you've been having relationships with men who don't mean anything to you. Like Tyler. You're drawn to the unquantifiable.

ELIZA
I'm a religious cosmologist. My job deals with the unquantifiable.

JIN
You don't have to take you work home with you.

Jin walks back, her words settling on Eliza's shoulders.

INT. ARK ROOM - EVENING

Wendell fires up the power supplies. Lights begin cycling, computers begin glowing. Everyone stands back, all staring at the center of the room where it lies:

THE ARK.

A slate black box dominates the center of the adjoining room. It's roughly the size of a coffin, six feet long, two feet wide, two feet deep. Covered in intricate machinery, pneumatic tubbing, valves, pipes and scuba-like tanks.

Ice encrusts it, giving it the feeling of a living thing. An enigmatic monolith.

ANGIE
So how does it work, exactly?

DEV
We run the 216 code. It takes ten seconds to translate and initiate.

WENDELL
A countdown.

ANGIE
And then?

SCOTT
Liftoff.

JIN
I guess the next obvious question is - who's going?

WENDELL
I'd do it but I need to control the countdown, and, I don't want to.

JIN
I'm on medical.

ANGIE
Comms here.

SCOTT
I started this. It should be me.

WENDELL
We need you to supervise. So that leaves...

Dev sees all eyes on him.

DEV
Shit.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Through the ark room window: Ice sheaths the sides of the ark, vapor coming off in huge puffs. It seems alive, a waking dragon.

Wendell and Scott are at the control board, with Angie prepping the Ark. Jin attaches a heart monitor on Dev, along with electrodes to his temples.

WENDELL
Sixty seconds.

The reality of what they're about to do begins to sink in. We hear rapid heartbeats, getting quicker and quicker.

SCOTT
All right. Let's do this.

Dev puts on a helmet with a HELMET-CAM attached to the side and RADIO-MIC headset. He steps to the ark with trepidation.

WENDELL
Anyone else think it's strange that this thing looks like a coffin?

Dev, getting inside, stops, as all look at Wendell.

WENDELL
I'm sure it's perfectly safe.

Dev slides into the ark like a race car driver, cramped and claustrophobic. He's strapped in by Scott and Jin.

SCOTT
Safe travels.

The latch is closed, tightened, creating a vacuum seal.

INT. ARK

The dark, claustrophobic confines of the Ark. A sense of being buried alive, six feet under. A sensory deprivation chamber. All we hear is Dev breathing. In and out.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

Wendell is at the console, controlling operations. Jin sits to his left, monitoring Dev's vitals, while Angie oversees communications. Scott hovers behind, coordinating it all.

Then Eliza enters, tossing her bag to the side.

ELIZA
Where are we?

WENDELL
Green across the board. All systems are operational.

Scott shares a look with Eliza, smiles his thanks.

JIN
Thirty seconds.

SCOTT
Okay, people, "go/no go" status.

JIN
O2, go. CO2 venting active.

WENDELL
Shielding is a go.

SCOTT
Atmosphere repressurization valve?

JIN
Holding steady.

ANGIE
Radios online. Strong signal.

SCOTT
(into mic)
Dev, can you read us?

DEV (ON RADIO)
Loud and clear.

SCOTT
Alright. We're a go.

But Scott hovers above the console, apprehensive to initiate. Fighting his gut. Eyes turn to him, staring. He starts the sequence, flipping the switch.

SCOTT
Initiating 216 code. Translating.

The 216 code begins to translate...

WENDELL
The countdown has started.

COMPUTERIZED VOICE
10...

The ark begins to generate a STRANGE HARMONIC HUM. Complex, otherworldly and unnerving. Layered with overtones, like the thrum of angry bees.

JIN
Levels holding.

COMPUTERIZED VOICE
9...

Wind picks up. The lights flicker, the radio pulses.

ELIZA
What was that?

WENDELL
Minor power fluctuations... We're still in the green.

COMPUTERIZED VOICE
8...

The ark begins to VIBRATE and SHUTTER. Angie cues the mic.

ANGIE
Dev, how's it going in there?

INT. ARK

Something is happening inside the box. The air is shimmering, as if changing the atmosphere itself.

DEV
It's hard to explain. Some kind of shimmering effect. And a pressure in my ears. Like being underwater.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

Eliza writes on a piece of paper, shows it to Scott: "Hallucinating?"

SCOTT
How's the O2 levels?

JIN
Steady.

ELIZA
What about carbon dioxide venting?

JIN
It's all holding.

COMPUTERIZED VOICE
7...

BANG! A THUNDERCLAP rolls through the room.

EXT. ARECIBO OBSERVATORY - CONTINUOUS

We see clouds gather above the facility, an ominous microclimate forming, producing strange, violet-hued lights in the sky. An electrical storm sparking.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

The noise is gaining in volume and intensity. At the same time, they become aware of another noise --

ELIZA
You hear that?

The noise is pulsating in time with the intermittent images on the computer screens. As a fine tracery of spiderweb-like CRACKS slowly creep their way across the glass.

COMPUTERIZED VOICE
6...

THE ARK IS FLEXING, METAL BUCKLING AND GROANING.

We see Dev's heart rate on the monitors, zipping upward.

JIN
His heart rate is skyrocketing.

ANGIE
(into radio)
Dev, can you hear me? Devesh?

Nothing but static.

ANGIE
We've lost radios.

COMPUTERIZED VOICE
5...

Wendell's eyes go to the warning lights on the front panel. On the gauge, a needle swings rapidly into the red zone.

WENDELL
Hey - we've got a problem here!

Numbers swinging wildly on all gauges. Screens go haywire.

WENDELL
Showing a main bus B undervolt.

Scott's worried face is reflected on the screen as columns of numbers begin to rise.

COMPUTERIZED VOICE
4...

JIN
O2 tank number two not reading at all and number one dropping!

WENDELL
Fuel cells reading under. Voltage dropping fast!

ELIZA
Is this instrumentation failure or a real power loss?

Wendell, overwhelmed as his screen goes wild.

WENDELL
It's gotta be instrumentation. Showing complete failure.

ANGIE
Fuel cell 1 and 3 showing gray flags, nothing on the flows.

WENDELL
Main bus A down too now, to 25 and a half. Main bus B reading zero.

The 216 code rapidly translates... All look at the instruments - lights fluctuating wildly.

COMPUTERIZED VOICE
3...

On the wall - paint BUBBLES and ULCERATES from unseen force.

ELIZA
He's in trouble. Call it off.

WENDELL
There's no plug to pull! No off switch!

ELIZA
We built this with no failsafe?!

WENDELL
We followed the blueprints!

Suddenly, the entire facility SHUDDERS VIOLENTLY. All screens go dead at the same time.

SCOTT
We are no longer in control of the device.

COMPUTERIZED VOICE
2...

WHAM! AN ONSLAUGHT OF LIGHT AND NOISE ASSAULT THE CREW, THIS TIME HIGHER-PITCHED AND PULSING MORE RAPIDLY.

A millisecond of blinding flash illuminates the dark jungle - all but bleaching out the entire room --

And a SUCKING ROAR.

COMPUTERIZED VOICE
1...

A VORTEX FORMS IN THE CLOUDS - SOMETHING IS OPENING IN SPACE/TIME...

AN EAR-SPLITTING ROAD SHAKES THE GROUND. A BLINDING WHITE LIGHT HITS THE BOX AT THE SAME TIME THE LIGHTS FLARE.

INT. ARK

Dev seems to glow white-hot for an instant - then a burst of blinding white light --

A sense of ACCELERATION - MOVING FAST DOWN A DARK TUNNEL WITH A WHITE LIGHT AT THE END -- faster and faster - consumed by the light at the end of the tunnel and --

INT. CONTROL ROOM

A DEEP ROAR fills the room.

A WAVE surges out of the Ark - bending light like a ripple on a pond, pushing coolant and debris before it, blowing out lights, debris swirling in its wake...

the briefest suggestion of a SCREAMING FACE, obscured by STATIC and ROLL before the screen CUTS to static entirely.

The AO shudders violently. Consoles EXPLODE with sparks. An equipment rack IGNITES. Scott grabs an extinguisher, fights the blaze... Eliza and the others hold on for dear life.

Wendell's nose begins to bleed. He looks queasy, has to lean on the wall to steady himself. The others are feeling the effects as well - nose bleeds, dizziness.

Angie's doubled-over, dry-heaving. Scott blinks, disoriented, reacts to a sudden pain in his temple. A trickle of BLOOD runs from his nose.

Eliza brings a hand to her ear, which is bleeding.

ONE BY ONE, THEY VIOLENTLY REACT. They go into seizures, eyes rolling to white, dropping. Collapsing, writhing, terrified, covering ears. We can't hear their screams over the noise.

Survival instincts kick in and Scott slams the volume OFF.

Everyone covers their eyes for a moment... and then - all is calm. As they recover...

SCOTT
Is everyone alright?

Dazed nods all around.

TYLER
What the hell just happened?

A moment of stunned silence in the room, as all eyes turn to--

THE ARK - STILL THERE.

No one moves a muscle. The darkness of the Ark ripples...

Then -- BOOOM!

The ark's top BURSTS open and the rush of escaping atmosphere carries Dev's body from the darkness -- exploding out and sprawled across the floor as normal gravity exerts itself.

A beat until instinct kicks in, everyone rushing over to him, except Wendell who just stares in shock.

He's covered in sweat and a sheen of ice, eyes bloodshot, veins bulged out. Blood fountains from his noise and mouth, forming a red icicle over his face.

ELIZA
Oh God... Dev...

JIN
I've got a pulse. Heart rate's off the charts. Pressure's 90 over 50 and falling...

Blood bubbles from Dev's mouth and eyes. He GASPS, then SCREAMS, spraying blood from his mouth, shivering uncontrollably. Hyperventilating.

SCOTT
He's crashing!

JIN
We need oxygen!

Wendell kicks in, grabs the O2 tank, handing it to Jin who places the nozzle over Dev's mouth.

SCOTT
Dev, you're out. You're safe. Everything's fine. Just look at me.

And he does. His voice, barely a whisper.

DEV
We...were...wrong...

FADE TO:

INT. DEV'S CABIN - MORNING

Swaddled in bandages, Dev lies on the bunk, out cold. Jin sits beside the bed, holding Dev's hand. Scott enters.

SCOTT
How is he?

JIN
Unresponsive to stimuli, but stable. Severe shock. I had to intubate, pure oxygen feed to get the nitrogen out of his blood.

SCOTT
Nitrogen?

JIN
His peritoneum ruptured... But he's alive. He might wake up in fifteen minutes. He might not wake up at all. Whatever happened inside the ark, it scared the hell out of him.

Jin moves the hair off Dev's face, fixing it the way he likes. Scott watches.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Angie and Tyler sit around the room, both rattled.

TYLER
What happened? What did he mean, we were wrong? Wrong about what?

ANGIE
Nothing happened. He didn't go anywhere. It was a major screw up and we almost killed him.

WENDELL (O.S.)
Or maybe it worked...

They turn to Wendell, standing in the doorway.

INT. ELIZA'S CABIN - DAY

Eliza sits on the bed, looking at an old photo of the team, herself and Scott hand in hand. Younger, full of life and love. Better times. The TV is on a channel full of static.

The overhead lights FLICKERS... A KNOCK at the door.

ELIZA
It's open.

Nobody enters. Curious, she steps up and opens it to nothing.

ELIZA
Hello...?

Behind her - on TV: the image changes to REAL TIME FOOTAGE of the cabin, and Eliza at the door, her back to us. As a BLURRY FIGURE walks silently across the room, disappearing into the bathroom.

Yet the figure is only seen on the TV, not in the room. And Eliza never sees it, shutting the door and sits at the desk.

Then -- PLOP-PLOP-PLOP...

Coming from the bathroom... Eliza looks that way, and cautiously approaches.

She stops at the door for a beat, fear creeping up on her. She slowly pushes open the door and --

TYLER (O.S.)
Eliza.

Eliza jumps, turns to Tyler entering the cabin behind her.

TYLER
There's something you have to see.

Eliza follows Tyler out. As we stay on the bathroom door as it opens fully, revealing the tub - dripping water...

Turning darker, and RED...

INT. CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Wendell runs footage, crew gathered around, minus Jin and Dev. Over the speaker, the recorded audio file - STATIC and NOISE DRONES, unnerving.

WENDELL
That's playback of Dev's helmet cam. Nothing but static, right?

ELIZA
Right.

WENDELL
Wrong. It was hard to hear through all the background noise, but I was able to isolate it.

SCOTT
Isolate what?

WENDELL
Another layer. I'll just play it.

Wendell cues the playback.

WENDELL
It's... disturbing.

Static blares in a lower pitch. Everyone listening. Intent.

Then they hear it... something deep in the lower decibels, underneath it all, reverberating:

INHUMAN VOICES.

An unholy GARBLE rips through the room. A terrifying wail, a cry of despair. Raising hairs on their necks.

The recording ends abruptly, sound mercifully cutting off to STATIC. Wendell stops the tape. They sit there, stunned.

SCOTT
What the hell was that?

TYLER
Nothing human.

WENDELL
It gets worse.

Scott stares at him. Wendell plays the recording again. The HELLISH INCANTATION blares. Scott listens intently.

ELIZA
I'm not hearing anything.

SCOTT
It's hard to make out, but listen.

Scot rewinds. He plays the recording again. And this time, we HEAR A FAINT, unsettling VOICE COME THROUGH THE STATIC...

VOICE
...inflecto down...

ANGIE
"Inflecto down..."

SCOTT
Latin?

Angie types a series of commands into the console.

ANGIE
Trying to clean it up...

Presses 'play'. More STATIC. But this time, the voice is much more clear. This is what they hear:

VOICE
...bow down...

No one moves. A beat. Eliza shakes her head, won't accept it.

ELIZA
For all we know that could be Dev's voice. He didn't go anywhere. He was in there for three seconds.

SCOTT
Three seconds earth time. We've been under the assumption the ark was a ship of some kind. But what if it's not? What if it's a tear in the fabric of space/time?

ELIZA
A wormhole?

SCOTT
A doorway.

ANGIE
A doorway to where?

WENDELL
That’s the million dollar question.

ELIZA
What you’re saying isn’t possible.

SCOTT
Einstein theorized that wormholes would be the form of interstellar travel, not speed of light. So what if the ark is capable of opening or artificially creating a wormhole?

ELIZA
Theoretical being the key word here. I want to know why Dev almost died.

SCOTT
What do you want me to say?

ELIZA
You think this ark creates a gateway...

SCOTT
Yes.

ELIZA
To what? Where did we send Dev?

SCOTT
I don’t know.

ELIZA
Where did it go?

SCOTT
I don’t know.

ELIZA
What happened inside that ark?

SCOTT
I don't know!
(beat, calm again)
I don't know. There's a lot of things going on here that I don't understand. Truth takes time. Who knows what a race thousands of years ahead of us can do.

ANGIE
Or what they did to Dev...

INT. DEV'S CABIN - NIGHT

Jin sits alone with Dev behind her, sleeping. The lights FLICKER. Jin hears something RUSTLING behind her, turns...

JIN
Dev...?

Dev lies unmoving on the bed. Comatose. Jin hears the sound again, RUSTLING CLOTH. She moves past Dev...

AS HIS EYES SNAP OPEN--

...toward the second bed, and stares in shock.

THERE'S SOMETHING UNDERNEATH THE SHEET.

She slowly reaches out. Lifts the cover. A YOUNG BOY looks at her and GIGGLES.

Jin GASPS and backs away, hand covering her mouth in total terror and--

ANGIE (O.S.)
Jin?

She turns. Angie stands in the doorway. Jin turns back, but the boy is gone. Angie reads her expression.

ANGIE
What's wrong?

JIN
Nothing. It's nothing.

ANGIE
I'll take a shift. Get some rest.

JIN
Yeah... that's a good idea...

And Jin, dazed, heads out. Angie sits beside the bed. Looking back at Dev, eyes closed.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Eliza sits as Scott boots up the computer, types...

SCOTT
Joshua? Can you hear us?

JOSHUA'S VOICE
Yes, Scott.

SCOTT
I need to know what happened inside the ark.

JOSHUA'S VOICE
Use it and see for yourself.

ELIZA
What happened to Dev?

JOSHUA'S VOICE
He asked a question. Joshua made him a believer.
(beat)
Would you like to believe?

ELIZA
What question?

The curser blinks... and then, finally:

JOSHUA'S VOICE
Ask him.

Joshua fades out. On cue, Angie rushes in looking pale.

SCOTT
What is it?

ANGIE
Dev - he's not in his room.

SCOTT
Split up. Find him.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Wendell and Scott walks cautiously down the hall.

WENDELL
Let me get this straight. She's mad at you for cheating on her with your work, even though she's sleeping with her aid, which you're mad at her for, even though you're not interested in sleeping with her.

SCOTT
We're not having this conversation, Wendell.
(calls out)
Dev! Dev!

WENDELL
I may not be the best advisor when it comes to women--

SCOTT
You live with your mom.

WENDELL
I'm just saying, what are you after, the girl or the alien?

SCOTT
I don't know. Both.

WENDELL
Even if you can't have both?

SCOTT
If I let myself feel what I feel for Eliza... I'm letting go of rational thought, of science, forever.

WENDELL
Scott. Science let go of you after the false signal - which I totally don't blame you for. But this is your life. It's happening now. Live it.

Shoving his feelings down deep, Scott continues on, not ready to say more, and Wendell knows better than to push.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

Angie moves down the hall, flashlight in hand, looking into rooms as she goes.

LIGHTS FLICKER... Followed by an odd SQUEAKING NOISE from down the hall, like a rusty wheel from a shopping cart.

ANGIE
Hello?

The noise stops. Angie stays still, listening. Then - squeaking returns. She ventures further. The noise grows...

As she notices marks on the floor, crouching to see better. They form two long lines that trail off down the hall, made from dirty wheels.

On edge, Angie looks them over, following the markings until they abruptly end at the cafeteria doors.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - SAME

Jin monitors the cameras and INTERCOM, searching for Dev.

JIN
(on intercom)
Dev? If you can hear me, we're worried about you.

Static on the intercom. She switches camera feeds, watching the crew in various sections of the AO, searching for Dev.

The MONITORS FLICKER. The intercom crackles. A VOICE - underneath the static... A YOUNG BOY - GIGGLING...

Jin's breath catches in her throat. She hits the intercom.

JIN
Max...?

Jin frantically searches the security feeds - empty room and hallways... Then - movement on a screen: a small figure runs down the end of the hall and vanishes around a corner.

Jin switches feeds - searching - another hall, another glimpse of the small figure...

JIN
Max! Max!

Close on Jin, searching the feeds frantically. She can't find him on the cameras. Where did he go?

As a hand comes up behind her - rests on her shoulder and Jin JUMPS. Turning around to face: Eliza and Tyler.

ELIZA
It’s us. Did you see something?

JIN
I saw... I thought I saw...

TYLER
Saw what?

Jin bows her head. Eliza shares a look with Tyler, confused.

INT. CAFETERIA - SAME

Angie pushes open the doors and enters the darkened space. The noise has stopped. She tries the light switch, but nothing happens.

ANGIE
Hello...? Dev?

LIGHTS FLICKER - and an 8-foot tall FIGURE is seen behind Angie, facing the wall. She doesn’t see it.

About to exit when she hears something... MUMBLED WHISPERING.

She looks back. Shines her light that way - toward the whispers - and her face goes white.

ANGIE
Oh my god...

Angie takes a step forward, her flashlight illuminating:

Dev, standing on a chair - WRITING MASSIVE MATHEMATICAL EQUATIONS & THEOREMS on the wall in thick black marker. The rest of the room trails off into darkness.

ANGIE
Dev? Can you hear me? Are you okay?

He writes frantically, zoned out - something’s not right. Angie steps forward.

ANGIE
Dev, why don’t we get you to Jin,
have her check you out?

Something catches Angie’s eye - Dev’s REFLECTION in the glass of the vending machines.

DEV
Do you believe in God?

She steps forward, staring at the reflection...

DEV
If you knew for a scientific fact
that there is nothing after life...

Dev's features are distorted far beyond the what the curved glass could account for.

DEV
...that when you die, there is no
heaven, no hell, just darkness...

Eyes, nose, mouth - all misaligned like a Francis Bacon painting. But because of the murky light, we're not sure of what we're really seeing.

DEV
...would you still believe in God?

Angie stares, frozen in place.

ANGIE
Dev. You're scaring me.

Suddenly, Dev WHIRLS to ATTACK! He RUSHES at Angie, SLAMMING her against the wall with UNNATURAL STRENGTH, hands clawed around her throat, choking the life out of her.

Suddenly Scott and Wendell are there - pulling Dev off her.

WENDELL
Jesus Christ! Stop!

SCOTT
Dev! Let her go! Let her go!

And Dev seems to come back to reality, seeing what he's doing, and he stops, crawling away from them to the corner of the room, just as scared and confused as the others.

EXT. DEV'S CABIN - NIGHT

Jin, Scott, Eliza and Tyler stand outside the cabin.

JIN
He's in a delicate state. Probably
post-traumatic stress...

SCOTT
You don't know what he saw?

JIN
He wouldn't tell me.

ELIZA
What did he tell you?

JIN
That whatever he thought he saw wasn't an alien. It was something else.

Scott and Eliza trade looks, then Scott approaches the door.

INT. DEV'S CABIN - NIGHT

They enter, staring across the room at Dev, wrists bound by restraints to the chair he sits in. Scott pulls up a chair and sits across from him.

SCOTT
(carefully)
Hey, Dev. How do you feel?

Nothing. Dev looks haunted. He doesn't make eye-contact.

SCOTT
Can you tell us what happened? Why you attacked Angie?

DEV
People aren't themselves anymore... different...

Something about his tone sends a shiver down Eliza's spine. The others' too.

ELIZA
And what about you? Are you yourself?

Dev is beginning to drift a little... almost as if his personality were being supplanted by another...

DEV
How long was I gone?

Looks are shared. They speak to Dev with kid gloves on.

SCOTT
Dev, nothing happened. The ark, it didn't go anywhere. We lost radio contact for a few seconds.

DEV
Seconds...?

SCOTT
What happened? What did you see?

He doesn't answer, lost inside his head.

ELIZA
When you came out, you said we were wrong. Do you remember?

DEV
Yes, Eliza. I remember.

ELIZA
What were we wrong about?

Dev looks up, locking eyes with her for the first time. His personality is gone... something else has taken over.

DEV
Everything.

He LUNGES at her! Eliza jerks back, just barely out of his reach. Scott is on him in a second.

Dev thrashes violently against his restraints. Jin injects him with a hypodermic, sedating him. Dev drifts off to sleep. Everyone stares.

ELIZA
(pointed)
Was that post-traumatic stress?

OFF Scott, not sure what to make of it...

INT. ARK ROOM - NIGHT

The surrounding machinery moves in a slow giant's dance. A trick of the eye, or is the Ark staring back at them?

SCOTT
Until we know what's happening, I want this room sealed. The Ark is off limits. No one goes near this thing.

They file out, Scott locking the door behind. Through the door's window, the Ark hums. Its darkness fills the screen.

INT. ANGIE'S CABIN - NIGHT

Angie stands before the bathroom mirror, examining the bruises on her neck, still shaken by her encounter with Dev.

The LIGHTS FLICKER. Followed by that same SQUEAKING sound...

It's coming from inside the cabin. Behind her.

Angie's terrified eyes are huge, staring through the mirror at the room outside.

DARKNESS begins to seep out, and then something else--

ANGIE
Nononono...

A RAGGED SHOPPING CART rolls past the door, covered in plastic bags filled with God knows what. A bum's mobile home.

Angie spins and steps out of the bathroom into the main bedroom. She looks this way and that. The room is empty.

She slides down the wall, hugging her knees to her chest.

INT. CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Scott stands next to Wendell at the wall, staring up at Dev's writings.

SCOTT
What is all this?

WENDELL
Complex string and chaos theory. Ever hear of Einstein's Theory of Everything? I think Dev found it.

SCOTT
How could he know these things?

WENDELL
That's just it. This is way beyond anything we're even close to being able to understand. He couldn't.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Eliza and Tyler walk down the corridor. The sound of WATER - the drinking fountain runs. Eliza stops it.

ELIZA
I'm going to use the restroom.

Tyler waits outside as Eliza disappears within.

INT. RESTROOM

The sink DRIPS. She notices the floor is wet in splotches... BARE WET FOOTPRINTS... leading into a closed stall.

ELIZA
Hello...?

She steps over and pushes the stall door open. It's empty.

But the water in the toilet is bubbling up, as if someone were breathing beneath it... and it's building, GURGLING...

Eliza takes a step back as water bubbles fiercely, beginning to spill out onto the floor.

And then - A HAND REACHES OUT OF THE WATER IN THE TOILET.

Followed by another hand - a FIGURE PULLING THEMSELVES OUT OF THE IMPOSSIBLY SMALL SPACE.

A head, and entire body, spilling out onto the floor. Slowly rising...

A DROWNING MAN stands in the room, a human body wrinkled and swollen by water. Eyes like coals. As the Man moves, bones and rotting flesh poke through the skin.

He raises one hand to point at Eliza in accusation... His mouth opens to speak, but only WATER comes gushing out.

Eliza's BREATH stops in her throat. Her mouth works but nothing comes out. She BLINKS...

...and the VISION is gone. Eliza is alone, BREATHING hard. Everything is definitely not okay.

INT. CAFETERIA - NIGHT

The team is gathered, all shaken and sleep deprived.

SCOTT
What you're describing is not physically possible.

ELIZA
I'm telling you, I saw something.

SCOTT
An optical illusion. Stress, sleep deprivation, isolation - these all produce hallucinations, impaired judgement.

ELIZA
I know what I saw and it wasn't a hallucination! I saw a man. He was soaking wet. And then he vanished.

SCOTT
Maybe you saw one of us?

ELIZA
No. It was someone else.

SCOTT
Who?

ELIZA
(ignoring the question)
Tyler, you were right there. You must have heard something.

Tyler, leaning against the doorway:

TYLER
I didn't see anything and I don't have to see anything. This Ark is fucked.

SCOTT
Thank you for that scientific analysis, Banger.

TYLER
Hey! You don't need to be a scientist to figure it out. You break all the laws of physics, you think there won't be a price?

SCOTT
Anyone else seeing things? Wendell?

Wendell keeps his eyes down, not ready to answer. Then:

JIN
I did.
(beat)
About an hour ago. In the hallway. I saw my son. He was alive, and he looked happy...

Jin looks up, sees the eyes on her, judging.

JIN
I have three doctorates. I've been under stress and sleep deprivation before. This was different.

She falls silent, unwilling to say more.

ANGIE
Jin's right. It's like something reaching into your mind. Seeing your past, and making it real.

SCOTT
What did you see?

ANGIE
A homeless man.

SCOTT
In the AO? That could explain what you saw, Eliza. Someone got in--

ANGIE
I killed him.

That quiets the room.

ANGIE
I was in collage, walking back to my dorm from the library and this bum came at me out of nowhere, out of the dark. He tried to grab me, so I pushed back. He fell and hit his head. And last night I saw him.

TYLER
We built something outside of our comprehension. Against everything we know, we went straight to human trails on a totally unknown variant. Damn the consequences. This isn't science. I don't know what it is.

JIN
I pray everyday to see my son again. And now I do. Someone answered my prayers. It's a gift.

ANGIE
Or atonement...

SCOTT
Why don't you guys get some sleep? We can talk in the morning.

ELIZA
I don't need sleep. I need answers.

They file out, leaving Scott and:

WENDELL
I have a theory...

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Wendell hurries to keep pace with Scott, who doesn't slow.

WENDELL
It's the only conclusion the data supports.

SCOTT
I don't need to hear this right now.

WENDELL
Just listen. When we look at a star, we're not seeing the present, okay? We're witnessing light that's thousands, millions of years in the past, but just now reaching us.

He grabs Scott by the arm to stop him. Scott faces him.

SCOTT
What are you saying? Joshua's bringing our past back to haunt us? Do you know how crazy that sounds? It's impossible. We're hanging on by our fingernails here...

WENDELL
I know that. But you wanted an answer. And that's the only one I have.

SCOTT
Then find another.

And Scott is off.

EXT. ELIZA'S CABIN - MORNING

Scott knocks on Eliza's door. She doesn't answer.

SCOTT
Come on, Eliza. I know you're mad at me but I need to see the tapes of the signal. Can you or the Backstreet Boy get it over to me?
(MORE)

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Okay, I’m sorry, that was an unfair and completely outdated reference.

The door opens to Eliza.

ELIZA
What do you want?

SCOTT
The tapes--

ELIZA
No, Scott. What do you want? But you can’t answer that, can you, because you don’t know.

SCOTT
If this is real, we need to figure out how to make it stop.

ELIZA
What if I don’t want it to stop?

SCOTT
What do we really know about Joshua? What does he want? What are his goals? Don’t you see that as a problem?

ELIZA
Nothing I’ve seen would make me believe he was malicious.

SCOTT
There’s something going on in this facility that we don’t understand.

ELIZA
And maybe we never will. And maybe that’s okay.

Eliza steps back in, closing Scott out.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - MORNING

Wendell sits in front of the screens, pulling an all-nighter. Lights FLICKER...

He HEARS a faint WHIMPERING. It sounds like an animal, maybe a dog. He can’t find where it’s coming from. Listening, following the sound to a series of desks.

It’s coming from beneath them.

Wendell gets down on all fours, tilting his head to see under the desks, but is only greeted by darkness.

As the whimper turns deeper - into a GROWL...

There is something underneath the desks. A black shape, moving closer, Wendell's freezes as it crawls toward him and--

Tyler enters with the stack of tapes.

TYLER
What are you doing?

WENDELL
You hear that...?

TYLER
Hear what?

Wendell listens for another beat longer, the dark shape no longer there, then shakes it off.

WENDELL
Nothing.

TYLER
Eliza said Scott needs these tapes.

Wendell grabs the tapes and sits back at the controls.

TYLER
You got any coffee?

WENDELL
It's cold.

TYLER
I don't care.

Tyler pours a cup and steps to the windows looking into the ark room, staring at the box. Mesmerized.

Wendell loads a tape in the player. The footage from Dev's ark camera is still distorted. Frustrated, he types in a series of instructions. Hits 'Run', and skims the newspaper.

WENDELL
Record heat in Greenland.

TYLER
So?

WENDELL
So? What better way to terraform a planet than global warming? Raise the planet's temperature, make it a suitable environment for alien life. For colonization

TYLER
Weather has always been strange.

WENDELL
Separately, yes. Collectively, you begin to see patterns. Symptoms. And then... supernova.

TYLER
Kind of like Eliza and Scott.

WENDELL
Opposites don't always attract.

Behind them, the process refines, accelerates... pieces coming together like a jigsaw on the computer screen.

Tyler turns around. Sees the computer.

TYLER
Wendell... what is that?

Wendell sees the monitor.

WENDELL
Holy shit... find Angie. Now!

EXT. ARECIBO, VSQ - MORNING

Scott walks toward his cabin when he hears LAUGHTER.

INT. DEV'S CABIN - MORNING

Scott pushes in to find Dev still restrained to the chair, giggling to himself.

SCOTT
Something funny, Dev? Earth to Dev...

Dev mumbles to himself, having a private argument with someone inside his head. Scott turns to leave when:

DEV
It hides in plain sight, you know?

SCOTT
What hides in plain sight?

DEV
Sin. You think you're safe? You can't run from it. You can't hide. Shut it down. See what happens.

SCOTT
Okay, thanks, Dev. I feel much better now.

DEV
You should really go inside the ark. It changes... everything.

SCOTT
I like my world just fine.

DEV
Do you?

Dev looks toward the door.

DEV
He's coming.

Ominous. As the door opens behind them, Scott turning, relieved to see Wendell. He looks like he's seen a ghost.

WENDELL
Something's happening.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The atmosphere is subdued. No one is talking. A few moments of eye contact, but those too are short lived. It's a team divided, rattled, exhausted, scared.

WENDELL
I think I know why we've been seeing things. When Dev made the original translation of the signal, he made a mistake.

SCOTT
What mistake? What are you saying?

WENDELL
I'm saying that whoever we've been talking to, he's not an alien. And his name isn't Joshua.

SCOTT
Then what is it?

Wendell looks to Angie, who answers for him.

ANGIE
It’s four letters... Hebrew letters. Derived from a verb that means “to be”.

ELIZA
What letters exactly?

Angie writes the four Hebrew letters on the dry/erase board.

ANGIE
Yod, Hey, Vav and Hey.

ELIZA
Y-H-W-H. The Tetragrammaton...
(beat)
Most people pronounce it: Yahweh.

Eyes travel to Eliza, who has to sit down.

TYLER
Wait, what?

ELIZA
Old Testament. In Judaism, Yahweh is considered to be his proper name.

TYLER
Who’s proper name?

Beat.

SCOTT
...God.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Scott walks away, as Eliza comes out after him.

ELIZA
Where are you going?

SCOTT
To destroy the Ark.

ELIZA
You can't. This is contact. We found God. We found a way to communicate with God. We have the opportunity--

SCOTT
I don't care what it is.

ELIZA
How can you say that? Science is about finding universal truths. So why can't science find God?

SCOTT
Because the whole idea of God was dreamed up by Man when he discovered he was going to die.

ELIZA
You want to know what your problem is?

SCOTT
No. I want to remain in the dark.

ELIZA
You're scared because you've spent your whole life thinking nobody is looking over you, and suddenly our subconscious is an open book. We're experiencing changes in reality by a force not our own. It proves--

SCOTT
It proves nothing. Native Americans starve themselves to see visions. They're not God. They're hallucinations. Science.

ELIZA
I wasn't hallucinating. The things I've seen... I can't explain them.

SCOTT
Try. Tell what you saw.

She looks down, refusing to give a straight answer.

ELIZA
A gift, from God.

SCOTT
Whose God? Dev is Hindu. You're Christian. Wendell's Jewish. Jin's Buddhist. I'm an atheist. I don't even know what Angie is. Wicca?

ELIZA
So you're saying what?

SCOTT
I'm saying we need to bury this. Bury it where nobody can ever find it.

ELIZA
People need to know.

SCOTT
You want to go public? Do you know how crazy that sounds?

ELIZA
Why are you so eager to dismiss it?

SCOTT
Why are you so eager to believe?

ELIZA
You can't deny it. This is happening, Scott. Wake up.

SCOTT
Then why can't you tell me what you've seen?

She can't. Scott shakes his head, continuing to the Ark room.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Angie, Jin, Wendell and Tyler sit at a table. Still stunned by the experience.

ANGIE
I'm just saying, it isn't definitive. Doesn't mean he's <u>the</u> God.

TYLER
I don't believe in God. I'm a scientist.

JIN
So what's the voice on the tape?

TYLER
I don’t know. At least I don’t claim to.

WENDELL
But we know that he could be.

All eyes on Wendell.

WENDELL
We’ve established that the source signal is coming from outside the universe, outside the white wall. On the other side of the Big Bang. And 216. It’s a significant number in the Old Testament. Supposedly it is the true name of God. A name no human is ever supposed to hear.

ANGIE
But we did hear it. We translated the number. The countdown. The pulse...

WENDELL
Exactly.

JIN
We’re not supposed to know God’s true name, or even say it aloud. It’s not for human ears.

ANGIE
Maybe that’s why they bled when we translated the signal. We all heard it. We are all infected with it.

WENDELL
Not all of us... Dev. He was inside the ark. Shielded. Protected.

ANGIE
Then why does he have it worse than all of us?

WENDELL
Maybe he doesn’t. Maybe that’s just the way we’re seeing him.

As it soaks in...

INT. ARK ROOM - DAY

Scott kneels beside the Ark, ready to power it down.

ELIZA (O.S.)
I was ten when I found him.

Scott looks up, but doesn't turn to Eliza in the doorway.

ELIZA
My dad was in the bath with his wrists cut. I never told anyone about that until now. But Joshua knew. He knows our secrets. He knows our dreams. I can't let this go. If I have a chance to say I'm sorry, to say good-bye, then I'm going to take it.
(beat)
If you want to shut it down, I won't stop you. I just want you to know, that whenever you're ready let me in. I'm here. I've said my peace. The rest is on you.

Eliza walks out, leaving Scott. He looks at the power switch. And leaves it in the 'ON' position.

EXT. ARECIBO - EVENING

The suns sets over the dish. Lights flicker on throughout the facility as night descends. The SOUND of jungle - night insects buzzing and chirping.

EXT. ARECIBO, VSQ - NIGHT

Jin sits on the rusty swingset, holding the toy dinosaur. Her mind is elsewhere.

The past few days have taken their toll on her - both physically and mentally. It looks like she hasn't eaten or slept in a week. Dark circles beneath her eyes.

Then - ALL SOUNDS CEASES in the jungle. Replaced by a CHILD'S LAUGHTER...

Jin slowly looks up, listening, then spins around - just as the door to her cabin slams closed. And she's up and running toward it, leaving behind the toy dinosaur on the swing.

INT. JIN'S CABIN - SAME

The door opens and Jin steps inside. She stops, staring ahead at the bed...

A FIGURE sits atop the mattress, the sheet draped over, creating a large lump.

JIN
Max...

Soft giggles come from beneath the sheet. Jin steps forward, her entire body shaking with emotion. She takes the edge of the sheet in her hand, slowly pulling it off the figure...

Until her son Max comes into view. He raises his head, smiling, and puts his hands out toward his mom to be hugged.

Jin can't hold back the tears. She falls to her knees and takes her son into her arms, never letting go.

JIN
Mama's here, sweetheart. I'm never going to leave you again. Not ever.

As we move around Jin's teary face to her son, staring ahead, no emotion on his features at all.

He blinks once - AND HIS EYES TURN SOLID BLACK...

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Scott sits, staring at the computer screens. He slowly types:

SCOTT
Joshua?

JOSHUA
Yes, Scott.

SCOTT
Everyone has seen something. So why haven't I?

JOSHUA
You do not believe.

SCOTT
It's wrong. They think it's a gift. I don't share their views.

JOSHUA
Use the ark. Take me in.

SCOTT
I don’t believe you’re God.

JOSHUA’S VOICE
I am what I am.
(beat)
Are you afraid?

Scott doesn’t move.

JOSHUA’S VOICE
You should be.

And Joshua’s gone. Scott turns and sees Eliza enter. She sees the stricken look on his face.

ELIZA
Everything okay?

SCOTT
No.

INT. ARK ROOM - NIGHT

The Ark lies still, dark and cold. As a shadow of a figure stretches across it. There is someone inside the room...

EXT. ARECIBO - NIGHT

Scott and Eliza sit on top of a picnic bench, looking out at the dish. They sit not far apart and yet so aware of the chasm between them -- yearning to bridge the gap yet not knowing how.

SCOTT
You wanted an answer, there it is. I’ve seen nothing. I don’t know why, I just haven’t. Science says we have five senses we use to identify and observe the world around us. I’ve never seen God. Never heard Him, touched Him.
(beat)
My dad was a Christian Scientist. Didn’t believe in modern medicine. Instead, he prayed every night for God to heal him. He died six months later. But he didn’t have to.

ELIZA
You’re working on the premise of duality.
(MORE)

ELIZA (CONT'D)
Death can’t exist as a substantive thing. Death isn’t the opposite of life, just the absence of it.
(beat)
There’s heat and cold, right? But not exactly. You can have lots of heat, and we can hit 458 degrees below zero, which is no heat, but we can’t go any further after that. Same with darkness. In reality, darkness isn’t. If it were, you would be able to make darkness darker, wouldn’t you?

Scott takes it in.

SCOTT
I get what you’re saying. Cold is the absence of heat, and dark is the absence of light, in the same way that evil’s the absence of God. I get it, I do. I just... I can’t believe in it.

ELIZA
We need to find a way to coexist. It’s the only we we’re going to survive.

Then - the ENTIRE FACILITY ROCKS. Scott stands, looks up to the sky, then takes off running toward the facility. Eliza’s a step behind, now seeing what Scott saw:

A MICROCLIMATE forming up above in the sky.

...someone has activated the Ark.

INT. BUILDING 1, HALLWAY - NIGHT

The ALARM BLARES. Scott and Eliza run down the hall, meeting up with Angie and Wendell along the way.

ANGIE
(in a panic)
She wouldn’t listen to me. I tried to stop her.

They arrive at the door, locked from the inside. Through the door’s window, they see Jin at the controls.

WENDELL
She started the sequence...

On the screen, the 216 code deciphers: 9...8...7...

SCOTT
Jin! Open the door!

Jin doesn’t respond. She flicks the main bus button.

ANGIE
What is she doing?

The ark opens and Jin steps inside, then seals itself.

6...5...

ELIZA
Jin! Do not do this!

SCOTT
Break it down. Break down the door!

Scot grabs a fire extinguisher and starts ramming it at the door. Metal dents and clangs, but holds.

The countdown at: 4...3...

The electrical storm builds outside. The Ark vibrates violently.

ANGIE
Ohgodohgod...

Scott bangs at the door repeatedly, ignoring the pain, as the hinges begin to give way.

2...1...

Scott tosses the extinguisher away with a clang, and uses his hands to pry the door off its hinges, screaming with strain.

Launch...

INT. ARK ROOM - SAME

The door busts free and they rush in.

SCOTT
Abort the countdown!

ELIZA
It’s too late. She’s gone.

A beat as everyone stares at the Ark. And then -- nothing. IT DOESN’T OPEN. Seconds tick by.

And the Ark opens, releasing gas and steam, clearing and they look inside...

THE ARK IS EMPTY. JIN ISN'T INSIDE.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - SAME

Scott rushes up to the controls, the others following, numb.

SCOTT
Joshua! I know you can hear us! Where's Jin?

JOSHUA'S VOICE
She is with me now.

ANGIE
When is she coming home?

JOSHUA'S VOICE
She isn't.

SCOTT
Send her back now!

JOSHUA'S VOICE
You should not raise your voice, Scott.

SCOTT
I'll do whatever the hell I want. You're not God. God wouldn't do this.

JOSHUA'S VOICE
Would you like to see what happens when people question me?

SCOTT
(threatening)
Do your worst.

The cursor blinks. Then:

JOSHUA'S VOICE
Ok.

And Joshua is gone.

WENDELL
Are we sure we want to provoke him?

SCOTT
He took Jin.

TYLER
Technically, she went to him.

WENDELL
Look, I'm just saying... we have no idea what this thing is capable of.

Suddenly, a reverberating HUM hits them like a massive soundwave cranked up at top volume from a mile away.

Behind, a rack of monitors begin to display a strange wave of distortion — pixels create an intermittent fractal image.

ELIZA
I think we're about to find out...

EXT. ARECIBO - NIGHT

Throughout the entire facility, a low rumble is heard, barely on the threshold of sound.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

Glasses rattle, and then the monitors go off. Then the lights. All power dies.

TYLER
What just happened?

WENDELL
We lost all power. Major drain.

SCOTT
Can you fix it?

WENDELL
Sure. If I knew what the hell was causing it.

ELIZA
The circuit breaker. We can cycle it to get emergency lighting on.

WENDELL
It's in the cafeteria. I'm on it.

And Wendell is off. Something begins to VIBRATE nearby.

ANGIE
What is that? Do you heat that?

It’s picking up in volume.

ELIZA
Oh God...

They look at her, following her eyes to the monitors... THE 216 CODE TRANSLATES. THE COUNTDOWN HAS STARTED.

As they turn and look in unison toward the ark room through the windows...

AT THE ARK. It seems to breathe. Vibrating, building...

INT. DEV’S CABIN - SAME

Dev is alone, sitting in the center of the room, still shackled. Head bowed. Lights FLICKER, and he looks up.

DEV
He’s coming...

INT. CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Wendell rushes in, stumbling in the dark as he feels his way over to the circuit breaker on the wall. He pulls down the lever and dim EMERGENCY LIGHTING splashes on.

He heads back the way he came when something stops him.

His eyes travelling to Dev’s equations on the wall - seeing them in a new light, literally, as the emergency lighting illuminates previously unseen theorems.

WENDELL
You gotta be kidding me...

INT. ARK ROOM

Chaos as everyone scrambles, pulling plugs and flicking switches. Yet whatever they do, the ark continues to build.

TYLER
It’s not working!

SCOTT
We have to turn the ark off now!
There has to be a way!

ELIZA
Where the hell is Wendell?!

ANGIE
What's that noise...?

They all stop to listen. Faint POUNDING is heard. Not a heartbeat. Metal on metal.

SCOTT
He's here...

THERE IS SOMETHING INSIDE THE ARK... trying to get out.

SCOTT
Joshua's here.

BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!

Angie SCREAMS. The pounding grows louder. LOUDER. The Ark vibrates with each blow. Angie puts her hands over her ears.

ANGIE
Stop it! Stop it!

But the POUNDING intensifies, metal GROANING under incredible pressure.

ELIZA
We have to open it.

TYLER
The hell we do.

ELIZA
It's God. We need to open it.

Eliza takes a step toward the ark, but Wendell storms in, out of breath.

WENDELL
Don't open it! Do not open that ark!

A MUFFLED SCREAM rips through the ark. It begins as a human sound and ends as something else, a CRY of rage.

WENDELL
It's not real! We were wrong!

As quickly as it started, the POUNDING STOPS and the ARK POWERS DOWN TO SILENCE.

They remain frozen for a moment. Afraid to breathe.

SCOTT
Wendell, what the hell is going on?

WENDELL
Dev's theorems - we were wrong. They aren't Einstein's Theory of Everything.

ELIZA
Then what are they?

WENDELL
The theory of Nothing. Of absolute zero. Whoever's in the box, whoever we've been talking to...
(beat)
He's not God.

THEN - A COMPUTER SCREEN FLASHES ON in the control room.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The crew slowly enters and stares at the monitor, and the single blinking cursor on it... Words manifest:

YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE DONE THAT

Beat.

I WILL KILL YOU ALL

No one moves.

SCOTT
You have ten minutes to gather whatever you need. We're leaving.

CUT TO:

INT. ARECIBO, VARIOUS

CHAOS - the crew running around frantically. Gathering files, laptops, personal items, powering down equipment.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

Scott shuts down consoles one by one. Hangs back for a beat, looking at his life - powerless and dark.

DEV (O.S.)
You can't leave. He won't let you.

Scott spins around to Dev, halfway between light and shadow.

SCOTT
Dev... how'd you get out?

Dev's voice is a WHISPER as he backs into the shadows.

DEV
I've always been out, Scott.

SCOTT
We're leaving, Dev. Get to the jeep or you'll lose your ride home.

Dev is swallowed by the darkness.

DEV (O.S.)
I am home.

EXT. ARECIBO - NIGHT

Two jeeps idling. Wendell loads gear into them. Angie sits, frustrated. Sad.

ANGIE
If he's not God, what is he? How could he know so much about us? Or make our nightmares real?

WENDELL
I don't know. But I guess that's the point. I mean, we have God-like power relative to an insect, but that doesn't mean we can move mountains at will.

Scott and Eliza move up and load the last of their gear.

ANGIE
What about Dev?

SCOTT
He's staying.

WENDELL
We can't leave him.

SCOTT
We didn't. He left us a long time ago.

Angie and Eliza board up, noticing:

ELIZA
Wait, where's Tyler?

They look around.

SCOTT
(calls out)
Tyler?! Tyler?! Shit. I'll find him. Finish loading the trucks.

ELIZA
I'm coming with you.

SCOTT
Eliza--

But she's already headed for the facility. Scott follows.

INT. BUILDING 1

Flashlight in hand, Scott and Eliza enter the facility. Dim emergency lighting FLICKERS, casting ominous shadows.

SCOTT
Tyler?!

ELIZA
Tyler?!

Nothing. Moving on, when Eliza stops at the windows.

ELIZA
Scott...

Scott joins her, looking out the VSQ. Dark and deserted cabins, save one. Dev's cabin.

EXT. ARECIBO - NIGHT

Wendell and Angie wait nervously. Finally, Wendell gets up.

WENDELL
Screw this.

ANGIE
Where are you going? Scott said to wait here.

WENDELL
I'm getting Dev back.

And he's off toward the facility, leaving Angie all alone.

INT. DEV'S CABIN - NIGHT

Eliza and Scott enter and stop dead at what they see...

ELIZA
Jesus Christ...

Dev stands in the middle of the room. He has a gun pointed at Tyler's head.

DEV
I know why people pray now.

TYLER
God help me I don't want to die...

SCOTT
No one's going to die, right, Dev? Put the gun down and we can talk about this.

He grips the gun tighter, finger firmly around the trigger.

TYLER
Please! Please stop!

SCOTT
You have a choice, Dev. There's always a choice. Right now. You can chose to put the gun down. It's within your power--

DEV
My power?! If you could see the things I've seen, you wouldn't try to stop me. You'd help me.

SCOTT
Come on, Dev. You're scaring us.

DEV
Do you know the story of Abraham and Isaac? God told him to kill his own son - to prove his devotion.

ELIZA
But he didn't. Abraham didn't kill Isaac. God was just testing him.

DEV
Except it isn't... It isn't God.

CRACK!! A bullet tears through Tyler's chest and blood erupts - he collapses--

SCOTT
NO! DEV NO!

And then Dev turns the gun on his own head--

Blowing a hole into the right side of his face, projecting a spray of blood and bone as his body hits the ground.

Eliza's legs give out and she collapses as Scott rushes in...

INT. BUILDING 1 - NIGHT

Wendell moves through the facility, searching for Dev.

WENDELL
Dev?! You here?!

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Wendell entering, looking about. Spotting something outside the bay windows that look out onto the radio telescope.

A SILHOUETTE of the person, atop the dish.

Too hard to see who it is in the dark. And then the figure seems to sense Wendell's gaze, as it turns to face him.

WENDELL
Dev...?

GROWLING is heard behind him. He turns to face a GERMAN SHEPHERD. Tail between its legs, barring fangs--

INT. DEV'S CABIN - NIGHT

Eliza sits on the bed, facing away. Scott kneels beside the bodies, placing a sheet over them.

ELIZA
How could it be so cruel? How could it torture us like this?

Scott holds out his hand to her.

SCOTT
We have to go.

Eliza takes his hand and stands. Scott leads her out, as we stay on the covered bodies.

AS ONE BEGINS TO RISE...

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Eliza and Scott move down the corridor.

ELIZA
What does it want? Why is it doing this?

SCOTT
Absence. I think it finds people who have a darkness in them and exploits it. Killing the light, the good.

ELIZA
Until there's nothing left but darkness.

They come upon Wendell, sitting against the wall, clutching a bloody forearm wrapped in a shirt.

ELIZA
Wendell, what happened?

WENDELL
My dog attacked me.

SCOTT
What dog?

WENDELL
Her name was Sophie. She used to like going for rides in the car. One day, I was late for school, so I took my mom's car without permission, and when I was backing up, I ran over something... It took Sophie a half hour to finally die. I held her for I don't know how long. I told her I was sorry.

Wendell tears up. Scott crouches before him, puts a hand on his shoulder.

SCOTT
It wasn't your fault.

WENDELL
But it was my fault. That's why I'm seeing her again. I'm paying for it. We all are.

Wendell sucks it up, dries his eyes and allows Scott to help him up.

WENDELL
I saw Dev...

Scott and Eliza share a look.

SCOTT
Wendell... Dev’s dead. He died.

ELIZA
I’m so sorry.

WENDELL
No... that’s not possible. I just saw him.

SCOTT
Are you sure it was him?

WENDELL
Who else could it be?

ELIZA
Saw him where?

WENDELL
Outside. On the dish.

SCOTT
Show me.

ELIZA
Go. I’ll find Angie. And be careful.

Scott watches Eliza walk off, torn between protecting her and the others, then follows Wendell away.

EXT. ARECIBO - NIGHT

Angie fidgets as she waits, every night sound jarring her nerves more and more.

An artificial noise reaches her... SQUEAKING.

And she freezes... as the rusty shopping cart slowly rolls up beside her and stops.

EXT. ARECIBO, DISH - NIGHT

Scott and Wendell arrive at the lip of the massive dish.

SCOTT
I don’t see anyone.

WENDELL
He was here, I know it.

SCOTT
Where exactly?

Wendell trudges over to a support beam.

WENDELL
Here, I think.

Stopping, and Scott looks at a clip of wires connected to a small black box that trail out to the center of the dish’s primary reflector.

WENDELL
What is this...?

SCOTT
Oh Jesus...

WENDELL
What? What is it?

SCOTT
An ark. A giant ark.

WENDELL
We need to leave here, now.

SCOTT
We can’t. We have to stop it.

WENDELL
How exactly?

SCOTT
Blow it up.

WENDELL
I can do that.

And Wendell is off. Scott takes another look at the ark.

EXT. ARECIBO - NIGHT

Eliza arrives at the jeeps. She looks around.

ELIZA
Angie?

Angie isn't there.

EXT. ARECIBO - NIGHT

Angie runs toward the facility. She turns to look behind her, but no one is pursuing.

When a FIGURE rises up before her from the darkness, stopping her fast, sending her to the ground.

A HOMELESS MAN stands over her. Looking down at Angie with bloodshot eyes beneath tangled and matted hair.

Wild looking, frayed and covered in grime so deep it's impossible to tell his ethnicity. Dried blood turned black crusts his face in streaks.

ANGIE
I'm sorry... I didn't mean to hurt you. Please. I'm so sorry.

He GRUNTS, reaches down for her--

ANGIE
NO!

Angie climbs to her feet, gathers up her anger and strikes out, attacking him, fists swinging wildly --

The Homeless Man pushes her back. Angie's foot catches, she trips and --

THUNK! A sickly, hollow crack.

The Homeless man thumps past her, swallowed by darkness, and we are left looking at:

Angie, on the ground, head turned, eyes staring blankly. A beat, and the ground beneath her begins to fill with blood.

As Scott runs past, a mere ten feet away, never seeing her.

The intercom crackles to life.

ELIZA (ON INTERCOM)
Scott! Scott, come in!

Scott rushes to the intercom.

SCOTT
(into intercom)
Eliza, I got you. What is it?

INT. ARK ROOM - NIGHT

Eliza stares ahead, on the intercom, white as a sheet.

ELIZA
(into intercom)
It wasn't Dev. I know who Wendell saw.

A figure seems to coalesce from the shadows behind Eliza.

SCOTT (ON INTERCOM)
Eliza...can't hear...say again...

His voice is broken by static and interference.

ELIZA
(into intercom)
You have to get back here now! He's out there! If he finds you--

And now Scott's voice is barely audible, covered by static.

SCOTT (ON INTERCOM)
Who--?

But Scott is cut off.

ELIZA
(into intercom)
Scott! Damn it!

And we see what Eliza is looking at: THE ARK IS OPEN.

As a FIGURE steps up behind her into the light...

EXT. ARECIBO - NIGHT

Scott bangs the intercom.

SCOTT
(into intercom)
Eliza? Eliza?

And then - the PULSES return on the intercom, just like the first signal. Scott runs off toward the facility.

INT. EQUIPMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Wendell rummages through, throwing gear out of the way, coming up with jugs of chemicals, wires, pipes, a mock DETONATOR.

When he’s greeted by GROWLING. Inside the room with him.

INT. ARK ROOM - SAME

Eliza glances over her shoulder. Her jaw drops in surprise as she sees...

TYLER grinning at her...

Arcane runes etch his face; his eyes blaze with unholy zeal. He SMASHES the intercom with his fist, cutting off Wendell’s VOICE, and stands between Eliza and safety. Eliza backs away.

ELIZA
No... I saw you die. Who the are you?

TYLER
I think you know...

ELIZA
The Devil.

He smiles, AS WATER POURS OUT OF HIS BODY, TRANSFORMING HIM INTO THE DROWNING MAN.

DROWNING MAN
Do you remember me now?

ELIZA
Dad...

DROWNING MAN
You let me die.

ELIZA
That’s not true... I was ten years old.

DROWNING MAN
I begged you to save me, and you did nothing. You stood there and watched me bleed out...

The Drowning Man lifts his wrists, revealing suicidal slash marks, bleeding dark blood.

ELIZA
Shut up! SHUT UP!

Eliza crawls over a desk between her and the door out, tumbling over as the Drowning Man whirls around in pursuit--

Eliza gets up again and reaches the door, but it’s locked.

She fumbles with lock - behind her sounds of the desk screeching on the floor as it’s pushed out of the way.

Eliza gets the door open and launches herself out into --

INT. HALLWAY

Eliza runs. Dead ahead, the Control Room...

INT. CONTROL ROOM

Eliza slams inside, flinging herself against the door and holding it shut with her body--

The door shudders as the Drowning Man bashes against it, wood rattling in its frame with every strike--

Eliza reaches out, grabbing a chair, using it to wedge beneath the handle and barricade it.

She backs away from the door. It’s not going to hold. And just when it’s about to break --

The pounding suddenly stops from the other side. Then: a terrible, SCREECH. Bestial. Big.

Eliza waits, her breath shuddering.

And she JUMPS when the roof directly above her reverberates as if something heavy were crossing it at great speed.

The ceiling SHUDDERS as large dents crumple inward in a dotted line, marking the heavy footfall overhead as it tears across the room.

And all is jarringly quiet. Eliza stands there for a second more, then turns to the room, and stops.

A figure sits at the radio controls.

ELIZA
Scott.

The figure doesn’t move. Eliza slowly circles around the chair...

It’s Wendell. Bound with wire, covered in bite marks, and gagged, unconscious.

ELIZA
Hold on. I'll get you outta these.

Eliza kneels in front of him and begins to loosen the cords.

AS A POOL OF WATER SEEPS IN BENEATH THE DOOR CRACK...

Wendell BREATHES in ragged gasps, opens his eyes...

THE WATER IS BUILDING, RISING TO FORM A FIGURE...

He stares over Eliza's shoulder like a deer caught in the headlights. Eliza looks behind her...

The Drowning Man stands RIGHT BESIDE HER.

He SMASHES Eliza with a backhand that sends her flying. Wendell struggles to free himself, his screams muffled and useless beneath his gag.

As her vision clears, she sees the Drowning Man hovering over her.

ELIZA
What do you want with us?!

DROWNING MAN
Better if I just show you.

The Drowning Man stalks towards her, grabs her leg and drags her out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY

Scott races down the hall toward the control room at the end.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

He bursts in, immediately spotting Wendell. He ungags him, begins on his restraints--

SCOTT
Where is she?

Wendell's choked up.

SCOTT
Wendell. Where is Eliza?

WENDELL
She's gone...

Scott slowly rises and walks to the bank of windows looking into the ark room.

WENDELL
He took her. I couldn't do anything.

Scott is wracked with the pain of it all.

SUDDENLY THE COMPUTER SPEAKER CRACKLES TO LIFE -- A voice can be heard beneath the static.

ELIZA (ON RADIO)
Scott -- come in, Scott --

Her voice is thin whispered, far away. Scott takes the com.

SCOTT
(into radio)
Eliza--! I'm here. I'm here with you.

ELIZA (ON RADIO)
I'm sorry, baby -- shouldn't ever have left you --

Scott closes his eyes, this precious moment warring with desperation --

SCOTT
Listen -- listen to me --

Her signal fading by the second, as her voice grows more distant.

ELIZA (ON RADIO)
I'm sorry... so much time wasted...

SCOTT
(time slipping away)
We'll make it back there. You and I will see it together. I promise, just stay with me --

ELIZA (ON RADIO)
...so tired...

He keeps searching -- he knows he needs to give her more than that to keep her going -- but what?

SCOTT
I don't want to breathe another second -- if I can't remember what it feels like to be near you.

And he adds, for the first time in a long while --

SCOTT
I love you --

A pause -- did Eliza hear? Finally, faintly --

ELIZA (ON RADIO)
...oh god he's coming...

The radio CLICKS OFF --

SCOTT
Eliza? Eliza?!

Scott bangs on the radio, trying to will Eliza back to him. But it's pointless. She's gone.

WENDELL
Scott...

Scott steels himself -- he sees what to do, but he's overwhelmed by the gravity of the step he's about to take --

And his face transforms. Without a word, he powers up the 216 sequence. Computers come to life.

WENDELL
What are you doing?

The Ark hums, breathing...

WENDELL
Scott! What are you doing?!

SCOTT
I'm getting her back.

WENDELL
You can't. Scott, listen to me. If you go, you won't come back.

Wendell goes to stop him, but Scott pushes him off.

SCOTT
I'm not leaving her. I won't.

Wendell exhales. He gets it, and nods.

WENDELL
Alright. I'll do it.

SCOTT
Give me ten minutes. Make sure you're clear of the dish, then you finish the job. You blow the fucker up, and you don't look back.

Scott takes the detonator, climbs into the ark and lies down. Wendell works the controls.

WENDELL
We're a go. Ten minutes and counting.

Scott locks eyes on Wendell.

SCOTT
Thank you, Wendell. For everything.

And the ark seals over Scott.

INT. ARK

Scott lies still as the air around him begins to warp...

SCOTT
I'm coming, baby. Hold on.

Scott watches as wisps of light become visible in his peripherals. Building up, as if moving down a dark tunnel toward a light at the end of it...

And just as he reaches that light--

EXT. ARECIBO - NIGHT

Wendell runs toward the dish, arms full of completed explosives. He stumbles, drops a pile of them. Has to go back, gathers them up, runs on, checking his watch.

8 minutes, counting down....

INT. LIGHT

Scott finds himself standing in a SOLID SPACE MADE OF BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT in every direction he looks. He is outside the universe, the white wall of the Big Bang. There is nothing.

SCOTT
Eliza!

Then - a blurred figure can be made out - walking toward him.

It isn't Eliza...

Scott turns, revealing a FORMLESS, misshapen figure, STARING WITH EYES SEWN SHUT.

SCOTT
Joshua...

JOSHUA
Hello, Scott.

SCOTT
Where's Eliza?

JOSHUA
Does your mind truly fathom now what is beyond the universe?
(beat)
NOTHING. Absolute and eternal NOTHING. And if God is Everything, then I have seen the Devil. It's a liberating experience.

SCOTT
Who are you?!

Joshua's face ELONGATES, now resembling SCOTT'S FACE.

JOSHUA
You don't recognize yourself? My name is Scott Messenger and you killed me!

Joshua begins to laugh and Scott is stopped in his tracks.

JOSHUA
You killed me... do you want to see...?

Joshua reaches out and grabs Scott by the skull. Scott GASPS as a VISION FLASHES before his eyes. He can't fight it. He's drawn in.

FLASHBACK - SERIES OF SHOTS

Faster than the eye can see. More than mind can accept... VISIONS FROM HELL.

- Jin's bloody, grinning child, devouring his mother...

- Dev's dissected body. Dev looks up, and smiles...

Scott writhes in Joshua's grip. His hands flail out to the sides.

THE VISIONS CONTINUE:

- Eliza's father floating dead in a bathtub filled with blood, as the image warps and the figure in the tub is now Eliza, surrounded by thick black fluid...

- A sluggish, oily, black sea. Hundreds crucified, upside-down upon the Third Seal...

Scott's under the spell of this false memory. There's a sense that if he goes all the way into it, he could die. And he doesn't mind. And then:

ELIZA (V.O.)
Scott...Scott, don't listen...don't listen...

He hears Eliza's voice as if from the bottom of a well. And in the flashback he steps back and says:

SCOTT
No, this is a lie.

BACK TO SCENE

Scott wills himself back to the present. He looks at Eliza next to him, then at Joshua, his doppelganger.

SCOTT
NO!

His hand closes into a fist and he swings at his doppelganger's head.

Joshua reels back, stunned, and Scott gets to his feet.

SCOTT
You can't have her!

Scott hits the doppelganger again. HARD. Blood gushes from his skull, filling the runes on his face.

Joshua staggers. Scott attacks. Again and again and again...

This time the doppelganger is ready. He catches Scott's fist and SMASHES him to the floor with a single blow. Scott GROANS, gets to all fours, trying to get up.

SCOTT
You're not God.

JOSHUA
There is no God. There is only nothing. Only darkness...

Joshua slowly stalks towards him.

JOSHUA
...only me.

EXT. ARECIBO, DISH - NIGHT

Wind rushes past Wendell and funnels down the center of the dish. He kneels and plants the explosives.

The dish rocks wildly, knocking Wendell off his feet. He slides down to the edge - but catches hold of the lip.

Looking up at the explosives, unarmed, now out of reach.

WENDELL
Shitshitshit...

And he can't climb back up. 6 minutes and counting...

ANGIE (O.S.)
Wendell!

Wendell looks up to see Angie perched above him. Alive. Head badly bruised and bloody.

WENDELL
Angie...

ANGIE
Give me your hand!

Wendell reaches up, and Angie helps haul him to the beam.

INT. LIGHT

Scott attempts to rise, collapses back to the ground. Joshua kicks him savagely. Again and again.

JOSHUA
I watched the Beginning and I will see the End. I am the dark behind the stars. I am the dark inside you all.

ELIZA
He's lying. Scott, listen to me--

JOSHUA
I'm not asking you to believe me on faith. You'll see... I'll show you.

Scott stares dead-on into Joshua's hellish face. As he clears the surface, he holds something in his fist... and raises it in his hand.

HE'S HOLDING THE DETONATOR.

SCOTT
You can't have us.

JOSHUA
NOOO!

Joshua opens his mouth in anger. The movement to his jaw causes his skin to rupture and split, as his jaw unhinges impossibly wide.

His FACE STARTS TO ELONGATE, his entire form DISINTEGRATING.

Scott grabs Eliza's hand, then DEPRESSES THE DETONATOR.

EXT. ARECIBO - NIGHT

Wendell and Angie crawl up from the dish to and fall back, gasping for air when --

BOOOOOOM! The dish ignites in a series of explosions--

The whole dish sways. The pedestals begin collapsing, toppling, twisting down into the earth like a giant corkscrew.

The mammoth dish -- falling away into the sinkhole.

INT. LIGHT

Scott and Eliza are alone. Then Eliza embraces Scott with all the passion she has ever felt for him.

The two of them reconnect, all past quarrels forgotten -- nearly shaking with the depth of their need for each other --

Until the light completely envelopes them...

INT. ARK ROOM

Wendell and Angie run in, working the controls frantically.

The ark hisses open, releasing a jet of steam. It clears, and we see two figures laying side by side in the ark.

Scott and Eliza. Clutched together in a lover's embrace.

SCOTT
I choose you...

It’s what she’s been waiting to hear.

EXT. ARECIBO - DAWN

Scott steps up into the driver’s seat of the jeep, joining Eliza, starting the engine. Wendell and Angie sit in back.

They look at the observatory one last time. Then Scott hits the gas, driving them far away from here.

INT./EXT. ARECIBO, VARIOUS

Moving through the facility...

BROADCAST SIGNALS
“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth...”

The VSQ cabins...

BROADCAST SIGNALS
“...the rights of man come not from the generosity of the state, but from the hand of God.”

The cafeteria...

BROADCAST SIGNALS
“That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.”

The control room...

BROADCAST SIGNALS
“Free at last! Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!”

Finally ending on the PHOTO of the entire team. Happy, smiling. Full of life.

Shadows appear, dark and murky.

Slowly we become aware of a MUFFLED, PULSING sound; like a DISTANT, BOOMING HEARTBEAT...

FADE OUT.