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## **Mission Control**

**REVISIONS**

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FADE IN:

Space. The stars, the void, the infinite majesty. We follow the pointers of Ursa Major toward Polaris in the north, eternally fixed in the firmament, our celestial guide since the first man dared journey by night. But this night, the still, cold order of the heavens is marred by a streak of light, then another, as the Perseid meteor shower taunts the July darkness. As another luminous graffito ignites, it MORPHS into a projectile of another kind as a --

Dart --

Thok! Buries its point into a dartboard.

1 INT. MEXICAN BAR - NIGHT (N1)

1

Not a great shot -- confirmed by a GROAN off-screen, then a fearsome torrent --

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.C.)

Damn, damn, damn --

REVEAL the potty mouth belongs to JULIE TOWNE, 30's, a tightly wound spring, who curses her bad luck with a silent expletive under her breath.

AMBER

Tough luck, *vencida*.

AMBER, 20's, a skinny homegirl in a tank top that shows off her "Hecha en México" tattoo, snaps her fingers, impatient. Julie forks over the scrilla, then turns to RODRIGO, a brawny vato, Amber's boyfriend, and the opponent Julie just lost to.

JULIE

*No puedo creer que perdí otra vez --*

Half Mexican and fluent in Spanish, Julie might almost blend in, were it not for her business casual attire.

RODRIGO

*Créelo porque es la verdad.*

JULIE

*Sabes cuál es el problema...? I'm too tense.*

She shrugs her shoulders, rolls her head on her chest --

RODRIGO

I would be too after all the money you dropped.

JULIE

Nothing another shot of courage won't take care of....

(calls to the Waitress)

*Hola... Corazón. Otra mas?*

The Waitress signals she's on her way.

JULIE (CONT'D)

See, when I'm in the zone, my sweet spot, there is no stopping me. But getting there requires the perfect balance of booze and fine motor skill.

(to the waitress)

*Otra ronda para mis amigos - yo pago.*

(then to Rodrigo)

And my sweet spot is one tequila away.

The Waitress pulls a bottle of crappy well-tequila out of her leather bottle holster, pours shots all around. Julie pays. Then to Rodrigo --

JULIE (CONT'D)

So how 'bout you give me a chance to win my money back.

RODRIGO

How about you cut your losses. When you wake up in the morning flat broke you pretend it was all a bad dream.

JULIE

I don't dream when I sleep... Double or nothing?

Rodrigo just looks at this girl. Can she be serious? Then --

JULIE (CONT'D)

*Arriba, Abajo, Al centro, Pa' dentro.*

Julie tosses back the shot. Amber and Rodrigo follow suit.

JULIE (CONT'D)

What'd'ya say?

Rodrigo clocks her upscale wardrobe and her unsteady stance. This girl wants to lose more money? Why not?

RODRIGO

Double or nothing.

Julie gestures for him to go first. He tosses his darts. One, two, three... unremarkable numbers all.

Julie steps up. A stillness envelopes her. She closes her eyes for a moment, summoning all of her energy. Her eyes snap open. In them, we see a look of lasered focus, as if she has tuned out everything except her immediate objective. We will see this total focus again, her super power if you will. Julie throws. Three triple 20's.

JULIE

Guess I found my sweet spot...

2 EXT. MEXICAN BAR - ALLEY - NIGHT (N1)

2

Julie counts the stack of bills as she heads to her car. A hand catches her, spins her around.

AMBER

You grift all that tonight?

JULIE

Your man put his money down and got beat. That's why they call it gambling.

As Julie turns to go, Amber lunges at her. Amber is ready to throw down, but Rodrigo, who has arrived on scene, catches her from behind by the waistband of her jeans, yanks her backwards. Instead of grabbing Julie, Amber gives her a shove. Julie loses her footing, stumbles against the side of her car, which breaks her fall, catching the side mirror in her face on the way down. She shakes it off.

RODRIGO

If you were a dude, there'd be a boot across your throat and you wouldn't be getting up.

Julie jumps into the car, keys the ignition, and lays down rubber as her car screeches away.

CLOSE ON a HUMAN EYE --

Filling the entire frame, looking right at us, perhaps through us. Then REVEAL the area of skin underneath, above the cheek -- puffy and purpling. The CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal Julie, examining the damage in her compact mirror. She spackles on another layer of concealer, then steps out of the bathroom stall.

3 INT. BUILDING 30 - LADIES ROOM - DAY (D2) 3

She casts a final look at her reflection as she transits past the large mirror above the sinks, then exits into --

4 INT. BUILDING 30 - HALLWAY - DAY (D2) 4

STAY with her as she moves along the institutional-looking corridor, through a pair of double doors marked "Restricted Access," "Authorized Personnel Only," into --

5 INT. BUILDING 30 - MISSION CONTROL - DAY (D2) 5

DARKNESS

As our eyes adjust, we can make out rows of shadowy figures in front of glowing screens. As Julie transits past them, WIDEN to REVEAL the cavernous space of Mission Control. A phosphorescent glow emanates from several large screens at the front of the room.

6 INT. BUILDING 30 - MISSION CONTROL - DAY (D2) 6

Julie arrives at the center console. The placard reads: FLIGHT DIRECTOR. She picks up the headset, puts it on. Then, the barroom-hustler-back-alley brawler in a size two, announces in the confident tone of someone used to being in charge --

JULIE

All stations: This is Bullseye. I have the room.

Moments later.

Flight controllers at each of their stations go about their tasks with Julie at the helm.

JULIE (CONT'D)

All stations: the Russian Space Agency is on schedule for tomorrow's Soyuz launch. Are we ready to receive them? ETHOS?

RAJ SIVAPATHADUNDARAM, 30's, East Indian, at the ETHOS station --

RAJ

Internal pressure 21.5 kpa, temperature 24 degrees, gas levels good. We're go to share air with Soyuz.

JULIE  
Copy that. SPARTAN?

MIKE KOZZA, late 20's, buff Floridian bro, at SPARTAN station --

MIKE  
Power A and Power B both good.  
Batteries at full charge.

JULIE  
CRONUS?

DONALD MEEKER, 70, an Apollo-era throwback, like his vintage headset --

DONALD  
I've got static on the Ku and S bands.  
Not sure why. Maybe sunspot activity or  
Earthside weather.

JULIE  
Is it a problem?

DONALD  
Negative. It just pisses me off.

JULIE  
Keep an eye on it.

RAJ  
FLIGHT, on the to-do list, the gas  
analyzer needs recalibration, air  
density's too high for the temperature.  
Low priority.

JULIE  
Copy. PLUTO --

IZZY RYERSON, late 20's, an intense propeller head, is the PLUTO flight controller --

IZZY  
Onboard computers are ready to link up  
with Soyuz systems through the port's  
wired connection.

As Julie continues the status review with the flight controllers, the CAMERA FINDS RAYNA MACKLEN, late 30's, African-American stunner, the mission's public affairs officer (PAO), who sits with BOGDAN GOLOVKIN at a monitor with the NASA TV feed. The pair's colloquy serves as color commentary --

RAYNA

Visiting us from Moscow to cover tomorrow's docking of Soyuz for ITAR-TASS is Bogdan Golovkin. Welcome.

BOGDAN

Thank you, Rayna. It's a great pleasure to be here for the first ever docking of a Russian Soyuz capsule with Durga.

RAYNA

The three cosmonauts on board will assist in the continuing construction of the station, which when completed will be placed in orbit around the sun. The first phase of a manned expedition to Mars.

BOGDAN

But a journey of 140 million miles begins with one step. And this is an important one.

As their commentary continues, the CAMERA FINDS CHAZ TRAN, OPS, mid-20's. He announces --

CHAZ

FLIGHT, crew's running twenty minutes behind.

JULIE

CAPCOM -- What's the hold up?

MARIA "DEKE" SLAYTON, 30's, in a blue flight suit --

DEKE

Taking longer than expected to set up the JPL experiment. Recommend we skip pre-dock diag 5-E to catch up.

CHAZ

Recommend against. 5-E includes tertiary hatch pressure test.

DEKE

(off loop)

Tertiary. As in we already did two others that were fine.

CHAZ

(off loop, to Julie)

An astronaut wanting to skip a diag's like a six-year-old trying to bag on a dental appointment.

JULIE

(on loop)

We'll leave the schedule as is. But encourage them to pick up the pace.

DEKE

Copy, FLIGHT.

7 EXT. DURGA - DAY (D2)

7

Establishing. The Durga Space Station. A gangly, beautiful assemblage of gleaming white, silver, and gold, sprawled against the backdrop of Asia below, as it soars past in low earth orbit.

8 INT. DURGA - DAY (D2)

8

COMMANDER MALIK STEVENSON, 40's, African American, floats in zero-g, his feet wedged under a rail on the "floor." He screws the last bolt into the mounting plate of an equipment rack labeled "JPL VapEx." In the background, HOFF, 30's, female, petite, and GOLDMAN, 40, stocky, work on their tasks. Stevenson presses the power button on VapEx. The readout screen displays status bars indicating it is functional.

STEVENSON

Houston, VapEx is installed and online.

DEKE (O.S.)

Copy, Durga. We are receiving that data now.

STEVENSON

Moving to Node One to prep bunks for the Russians.

Stevenson pushes off the wall and floats into the connector.

DEKE (O.S.)

Commander, we have a high-priority data analysis that needs your attention.

STEVENSON

Houston, we're way behind schedule.

9 INT. BUILDING 30 - MISSION CONTROL / INT. DURGA - INTERCUT

9

DEKE

Understand, Commander. It's a matter of some urgency.



Registering low-grade annoyance, Stevenson returns to Central Node. He goes to a laptop mounted to the wall, next to which is taped a picture of Amelia, an eight-year-old African-American girl. He types a few keystrokes. As digital information loads onto the screen, a child's drawing emerges. A smile spreads across Stevenson's face. The drawing shows a rocketship with a stick figure at the controls labelled "Daddy," in laser combat with a UFO.

STEVENSON

Have received data. Priority status now understood.

DEKE

We thought it might brighten your day.

STEVENSON

Affirmative, Houston.

Then suddenly, the lights go out, plunging Durga into complete darkness. Only the light reflected off Earth through the cupola illuminates the interior.

Back at Mission Control, red lines of text appear on the main status screen at the front of the room.

MIKE

FLIGHT, SPARTAN. Power A and B just went down. It's a double failure.

IZZY

FLIGHT, PLUTO. All Durga's computers just went into reboot.

DEKE

Durga, do you read?

JULIE

Copy SPARTAN. Copy PLUTO. CAPCOM, do we have voice?

DEKE (CONT'D)

Checking, FLIGHT. Durga, do you read?

(silence)

Houston to Durga -- what is your status?

Still no response. A preternatural stillness descends. There's no room for anxiety, a useless extravagance as a single-minded, focused intensity takes over.

DEKE (CONT'D)

Durga, do you read...?

10 INT. DURGA - DAY (D2) 10

Commander Stevenson takes stock --

STEVENSON

Hoff? Goldman? You guys all right?

HOFF

Fine here.

GOLDMAN

I'm good. What happened?

11 INT. BUILDING 30 - MISSION CONTROL - INTERCUT 11

DEKE

(to Julie)

We've got voice.

(to Stevenson)

Do you read?

STEVENSON

We read you, Houston.

JULIE

CRONUS, how's telemetry?

DONALD

Good, FLIGHT. Great, actually. That reboot must have cleared a memory leak or something. Signal's better than before.

JULIE

ETHOS, life support status?

RAJ

Pumps, filters, and coolant flow are all offline. Estimate 70 minutes until CO2 buildup becomes a problem.

JULIE

SPARTAN, any idea on the cause?

MIKE

Not sure, FLIGHT. Right before the blackout, VapEx popped a breaker.

Several minutes later. Aboard Durga, floor panels that have been removed, float around the cabin. Stevenson looks into a cabinet with LED readouts.

STEVENSON

Houston, I'm going to connect Battery A to Power B to see if we can get online.

JULIE

(to Deke)

No... Tell him to stop.

DEKE

But if they get power back, the auto-diagnostics will --

JULIE

Just give the order, CAPCOM.

Stevenson pulls two cables out and is about to plug them into the opposite connectors.

DEKE (O.S.)

Durga, do not cross-connect power.

Stevenson pauses, then presses on anyway. He plugs the cables into the opposite connectors and throws a switch. The lights come back on and the hum of equipment resumes.

At Mission Control, Mike sees the results on his screen.

MIKE

FLIGHT, power is back online. Looks like Battery A is running Power B.

JULIE

Damn him...

A beat, as flight controllers react to the somewhat incongruous ad hominem curse. Then --

DEKE

What's the problem?

JULIE

We don't know what caused the short.

DEKE

Gotta be VapEx. What else could it be?

JULIE

We don't speculate on cause. We prove it.

DEKE

But they were already in --

JULIE

This isn't a democracy, Slayton. Next time, just relay the order when I give it.

DEKE

Copy.

A beat, then --

DONALD

This space stuff would be a lot easier without all the damn people.

JULIE

And we're only eleven minutes into the shift.

IZZY

Statistically speaking, that means we'll have another 42.6 incidents today.

JULIE

Case in point.

**MAIN TITLES**

ACT ONE

12 INT. BUILDING 30 - DIAZ'S OFFICE - DAY (D2)

12

FULGENCIO DIAZ, 50's, thoughtful with uber smarts, real world and academic, is the Director of the Johnson Space Center. Also present are Julie and Rayna.

JULIE

The Russians do understand a short circuit can also be the effect of a larger problem and not the cause? I mean, it's not like Russian electrons follow different rules.

DIAZ

I talked to my counterpart at Roscosmos. Unless we can be specific -- that his cosmonauts are in danger and here's why -- they're launching as scheduled.

JULIE

What is the harm in exercising a little caution?

DIAZ

The Russians look at risk as a challenge. Hardwired to their DNA.

JULIE

That makes no sense.

RAYNA

They're also very image conscious. Probably worried if they postpone, it will make them look hesitant, therefore weak.

JULIE

That really makes no sense.

RAYNA

Neither does their 65-year-old dictator bragging about his 16-year-old mistress. But it's the world we live in.

Rayna's cell buzzes. She looks down at her phone and the push notification she's just received, which screams: "Mars Needs Women!" As she scrolls down, her expression darkens. Diaz addresses Julie --

DIAZ

I'm not the one you need to convince.

RAYNA

Excuse me. I've got a situation.

She hurries out, Diaz calls after her --

DIAZ

Thanks, Rayna.

(then to Julie)

Look, if it was up to me --

JULIE

Will you talk to them again?

DIAZ

I can't promise they'll change their minds... Another sign of weakness.

JULIE

Good lord...

13 INT. BUILDING 30 - BREAK ROOM - DAY (D2)

13

A small kitchen with a refrigerator and vending machines. Raj chows down on a hot pocket, while feasting his eyes on his cellphone screen. Mike and Chaz lean in, equally incredulous. At the far end of the table, Donald sits by himself, powering down coffee while reading a newspaper.

On the cellphone REVEAL the headline seen previously, "Mars Needs Women!" and below, a provocative collection of nude photographs of CAPCOM, Deke Slayton, shedding her flight suit.

CHAZ

CAPCOM certainly lives up to the motto:  
"For the Benefit of All."

RAJ

(faux disgust)

What happens when you let a Kardashian in the Astronaut Corp.

CHAZ

Do I sense a lurking misogyny here?  
Dismissing the accomplishments of a  
Yale Phi Beta Kappa, Rhodes Scholar,  
because she happens to have --

MIKE

Fan-freakin-tastic tits... which are  
totally real by the way. And I'm never  
(MORE)

MIKE (CONT'D)

wrong.

(off their looks)

What? Just cuz I like banging dudes, I can't appreciate a great rack?

RAJ

But no way are those real... Those cans are totally store bought.

CHAZ

Negative, Raj. Our pillow biting brother is one hundred percent correct. Go look at the footage from her zero-g training and you'll see how those puppies behave once they've slipped the surly bonds of Earth... Poetry in motion.

Izzy arrives with Funyuns in hand. Re: the cell phone --

IZZY

Is that the *Aquaman* trailer? Spoiler alert. The fractal texturing and volumetric fog in the opening CGI sequence don't cut it in 4K --

When Raj holds up the phone, Izzy takes it, studies intently, then, handing it back --

IZZY (CONT'D)

The asymmetrical nevus above the left areola. Someone should tell her to get it looked at.

He heads off. Donald gives them a look, goes back to his paper. Raj takes it as an invitation.

RAJ

Can't leave Donald out of the reindeer games.

(hands him the cell)

You hail from the golden age of the Playboy centerfold.

CHAZ

Apollo dudes might've had the right stuff, but you can't beat the perks of the gender integrated workplace.

A quick glance, then Donald hands the phone back.

DONALD

I appreciate a well turned ankle as much as the next guy. But you're

(MORE)

DONALD (CONT'D)  
carrying on like cannibals who just  
heard fresh meat's in camp.

CHAZ  
We're just having a little fun. No  
disrespect.

DONALD  
Really?

Pointing to a couple of women at a table across the room --

DONALD (CONT'D)  
Maybe after studying the size of your  
hands and feet, they've reached the  
hilarious conclusion that you are a  
needle-dick-bug-banger. Or these nice  
gals --

He turns to a group of three women sitting at another table,  
calls --

DONALD (CONT'D)  
Jessica -- I just bet five bucks Raj  
here is a grower-not-a-shower. You in?

The women crack up. Raj takes his phone and scoots out of there,  
utterly mortified, as does Chaz. Mike just stands there a  
moment, as if not quite understanding their embarrassment. Then  
to Donald with a shrug --

MIKE  
First question I ask on a date.

He turns, goes, leaving Donald to resume reading the paper.

14 EXT. 32,000 FEET - DAY (D3)

14

Somewhere over East Texas. A Boeing 727-200 plummets past  
CAMERA in a steep dive, engines shrieking, a Zero-G logo on the  
fuselage.

15 INT. 727-200 - DAY (D3)

15

Deke floats in a zero-g environment aboard the Vomit Comet as  
part of her training. Her task is to insert blocks into  
appropriately shaped holes in a board mounted on the cabin wall.  
Effortless for her. Less so for the astronaut candidate  
hovering next to her, THAD, who is preoccupied with managing the  
nausea the training exercise is giving him.

DEKE  
So the parking attendant at my building  
asked me how much I got paid. Like a  
Slayton would show off the girls for  
(MORE)



DEKE (CONT'D)  
cash... I probably sound like an  
entitled brat even saying that but --

THAD  
If the Louboutin fits.

DEKE  
And I know how this is going to play  
out. Everyone's just been waiting for  
me to pull something like this.

The plane levels off, returning the pair to standard gravity.  
Thad's stomach settles.

THAD  
Coulda been worse.  
(off her look)  
The pics coulda been lame. At least he  
got your angles right.

DEKE  
So you looked at them, too?

THAD  
Not as stroke material or anything.

DEKE  
I'm gonna have to go to deep space to  
find anyone who hasn't seen my landing  
strip.

Then, as we begin to notice a crack or two in her bravado --

DEKE (CONT'D)  
So when you snuck a peek at these nude  
pictures of me -- to not get aroused --

THAD  
Maybe we can talk about it like... over  
dinner.

DEKE  
Like a date?

As the plane reaches its apogee --

THAD  
Nothing that serious. More like a hook  
up... as friends...

Deke can see plain as day where this is headed, calls him out.

DEKE  
With benefits.

THAD  
If you insist. I ain't mad.

Deke, totally annoyed, gives him a little utz, putting English on him that sets him spinning in zero-g, as the plane goes into a steep dive once again.

Deke floats over to resume her task, inserting blocks into corresponding holes as her cellphone rings. She fishes for her phone, answers, continuing her task. In b.g., Thad is curled into a weightless ball, trying to keep from blowing chunks.

DEKE

Slayton.

16 INT. BUILDING 30 - HALLWAY - DAY (D3)

16

As Rayna blasts out of an elevator.

RAYNA

We need to talk. Where are you right now?

17 EXT. ELLINGTON FIELD JOINT RESERVE BASE - DAY (D3)

17

Rayna holds out her cellphone for Deke's inspection: Exhibit A, as they cross the tarmac. In b.g., see the Vomit Comet. Thad, hunched over, steadies himself against the landing gear, yaks onto the runway.

RAYNA

So, you were dating the guy who took these?

DEKE

We're more like pals. But Antwan swears he doesn't know how those pics got out there.

RAYNA

And you believe him?

DEKE

I've known Twan since college. We were in Pierson together. That's my bro. Am I in trouble over this?

RAYNA

NASA is an American icon. Like Disney or Nabisco...

(re: her phone)

And this just looks... bad.

DEKE

Bad? I hit this gym five times a week, sometimes twice a day. Feel these abs.

We're not sure if she's just messing with Rayna, earnest sarcasm being an art form in the wheredyouprep realm.

RAYNA

Your abs aren't the issue --

DEKE

Am I pleased my ass is trending on Twitter? Hell no. But it's my ass. So I'm not understanding why your panties are in a bunch... I'm sorry, I don't mean to be going off on you.

RAYNA

It's OK. I'd be a basket case if this was my junk out there. But as an astronaut, you're a NASA ambassador --

DEKE

Rayna, I get it. What happens now?

RAYNA

I'll try to shut this down.

18 INT. OFFICE CUBICLE - INTERCUT

18

PAN ACROSS framed TMZ headlines adorning the walls to PETER HOLLOWAY, 40's, a bored look on his face as Rayna fulminates on the speakerphone.

RAYNA (O.S.)

I don't care how many solids you did for me on the Hill. If you don't pull those photos, we're going to --

PETER

Take us to court? For what?

19 INT. BUILDING 30 - HALLWAY - INTERCUT

19

Rayna powers back toward her office, blood up, continuing --

RAYNA

Appropriation of likeness, trademark infringement --

PETER

Like anyone's looking at the NASA logo --

RAYNA

Portrayal in a false light, invasion of solitude --

PETER

Rayna, do you know how many times a day I get threatened like this?

RAYNA

The difference being that I have access to an entire justice department that I am going to drop on your ass.

(a beat, softens)

Dammit, Peter. Couldn't you at least have given me a heads up?

PETER

The pictures aren't ours. We had nothing to do with them... On my mother's eyes.

RAYNA

Where did they come from?

PETER

Some black hat hacked an iCloud server and posted them this morning. We grabbed them to use as click bait.

RAYNA

You're all class, Pete.

PETER

I'm supposed to pass up a full spread belonging to a Slayton heiress, who also happens to be an astronaut? Twenty million uniques that bought us, baby.

RAYNA

I need a name.

PETER

I don't have one.

RAYNA

Or the missus finds out about the intern who's doing what wives don't have to.

PETER

Yet somehow that dereliction of duty is my fault.

RAYNA

A name.

PETER

I don't have a government name. All I got's TROLLDOG69, spelled correctly, two L's, D-O-G.

RAYNA

And he's a scholar.

PETER

(a beat)

How'd you know about the intern?

RAYNA

I didn't. I just know how you roll.

Rayna hangs up as Julie rounds a corner. Re: the look on her face --

JULIE

What's wrong?

RAYNA

Sure you want to know?

20 INT. DURGA - DAY (D2)

20

Later. Stevenson, floating on his side, screwdriver in hand, unbolts the panel housing the Power A and B systems. As each screw floats loose, Hoff plucks them out of the air.

STEVENSON

Jasmine, nope. Mulan, nada. Belle, forget it. I had no choice.

HOFF

So, you caved and got her the costume?

STEVENSON

Big green fists and everything. Most intimidating kindergartner on the block. Instead of trick-or-treat she just kept saying "Hulk smash."

(then)

Houston, we are proceeding with manual inspection of Power A and B.

21 INT. BUILDING 30 - MISSION CONTROL - INTERCUT

21

Deke at the CAPCOM station --

DEKE

Copy that.

She glances around the room with an out of character self-consciousness. Every look in her direction feels like silent judgement, fueling a building resentment in her.

Stevenson inspects the electrical circuits with a flashlight. Then, Hoff points --

HOFF

There...

REVEAL red and green wires fused together. A look of relief as he clicks his comm link --

STEVENSON

Houston, we've located the short.

DEKE

And it only took you three hours.

The remark lands with a thud, earning Deke looks from the other controllers. Stevenson and Hoff also exchange a look, then --

STEVENSON

Will begin repairs --

DEKE

Please elaborate on the nature of the short, Durga.

STEVENSON

(an edge in his tone)

We have two wires fused together in the Power A system.

DEKE

(pushes)

Need a bit more specificity, Commander. Think you can do that?

STEVENSON

It's the red one and the goddamn green one and if you're done pissing me off I'm going to fix it.

The room goes quiet. Julie glares at Deke, keys her mic --

JULIE

Commander this is FLIGHT. Proceed with repairs to Power System A.

STEVENSON

Copy, FLIGHT.

HOFF

Hulk smash.

Pulling off her headset, Deke approaches the Flight Director --

DEKE

You went around me.

JULIE

Yeah, I did. Because you lost control of the situation.

DEKE

Since when is requesting a damage assessment an invasion of privacy --

JULIE

(cuts her off)

You're supposed to understand their state of mind, not get 'em more riled up.

DEKE

He's the one who crossed the line.

JULIE

When an astronaut crosses the line, it's our job to move the line. Is that clear?

A beat. Deke nods, heads back to her station. PICK UP Rayna crossing to Izzy, who glances up at her. One-on-one interactions make him uncomfortable anyway, more so when it's an attractive woman.

RAYNA

Izzy, I need your help.

IZZY

Um... For what?

She hands him a piece of paper with TROLLDOG69 scribbled on it.

RAYNA

I need your computer kung-fu to find out who belongs to this username.

IZZY

(a beat, then)

I... uh... um... The employee handbook states that using NASA assets for a personal matter is a violation of agency policy. It's on page thirty-two in the code --

RAYNA

This is agency business. Mission critical. I need you to find the skid mark who posted those pictures of Deke.

(off his hesitation)

You have a six-C position risk designation which clears you to access privileged information.

(a searing look)

Unless there's been a change in your security status I'm not aware of.

IZZY

No... I... No... I was just following protocol. In an abundance of caution.

RAYNA

Get back to me ASAP.

Rayna sails off.

22 INT. BUILDING 9 - DURGA MOCK-UP - DAY (D2)

22

The CAMERA FLOATS down a connector into what appears to be the main node of Durga, FIND Julie in standard gravity, staring at a control panel, lost in thought. For a moment, it's not clear if we're watching a dream, or a fantasy of some kind. Until Diaz pops his head into her field of view through a nearby porthole, where the unforgiving vacuum of space would be. REVEAL: Julie is in a full-scale training mock-up of Durga.

DIAZ

Permission to come aboard?

JULIE

I'm not the skipper. Float wherever you like.

DIAZ

My dad always said: I wish all my problems had but one neck and my hands were around it... Sounds more profound in Spanish.

JULIE

It doesn't, actually.

(then)

I don't have an answer for what caused the blackout, if that's the question.

DIAZ

You shut down the VapEx experiment.



JULIE

Somebody from JPL called you to complain?

DIAZ

The director. Do you think "having my head on a pike" was a figure of speech?

JULIE

I'm trying to rule out variables. I didn't know what else to do.

DIAZ

He's a blow hard anyway.

JULIE

Who is probably right. JPL always is.

DIAZ

*Mija*, only the pope is infallible.

JULIE

(a rueful smile, then)

That experiment should not have caused that short. There's something I'm not seeing.

DIAZ

(after a beat)

Roscosmos launches their Soyuz tomorrow, as planned.

JULIE

You can't let them. Not until we know what happened up there --

DIAZ

But we do know. JPL finally has a tick in their loss column. It shouldn't have happened, but it did. The sooner you can wrap your head around that --

JULIE

It's not my head that's bothering me, it's my gut.

DIAZ

Maybe this "gut feeling" is about something else.

JULIE

Like what?

DIAZ

Like maybe you feel like something's wrong because you're not up there --

JULIE

(cuts him off)

You're not my shrink.

Diaz notes the defensiveness, heads off. Then turning back --

DIAZ

You would have been a great astronaut. But don't let that get in the way of doing the job down here.

23 INT. JULIE'S APARTMENT - DAY (D3)

23

Next morning. Julie digs through an assortment of tea, phone to her ear --

JULIE

NO. WAY.

MIKE (O.S.)

(on phone)

I have a different reaction when my tests come back negative.

JULIE

Run the diagnostic again. And again after that. If we keep getting clean results, I want you to devise a new diagnostic test. And run that five more times.

MIKE (O.S.)

(on phone)

Maybe you should just, you know...

Julie stares daggers at the box of chamomile tea in front of her with the big bold letters urging her to RELAX.

JULIE

Relax?

MIKE (O.S.)

(on phone)

I don't believe in miracles. But maybe just... stoop to victory here?

Julie transits her obsessively neat apartment to her dartboard.

JULIE

I don't want victory, Mike, I want it to fail again.

Julie launches a volley of darts, each fighting the others for space in an increasingly crowded bullseye --

JULIE (CONT'D)

Because unless someone can explain to me how we replicate the fault, we don't have a clue what went wrong up there. Which means we don't know what's going to happen next.

(then)

Copy?

MIKE (O.S.)

(on phone)

Copy, Bullseye. We will accept nothing less than total, unconditional, failure.

Off the tea kettle's SCREAM --

24 INT. BUILDING 30 - DIAZ'S OFFICE - DAY (D3)

24

Rayna pokes her head in. Diaz, on the phone, motions her in.

DIAZ

Nothing would make me happier than not having to get our lawyers involved.

Thanks, Paul.

(hangs up)

The curator just confirmed those were our moon rocks in the estate sale. The executors are deeply sorry for the confusion --

RAYNA

Under advice of counsel.

DIAZ

-- and are donating the astro-material back to NASA.

RAYNA

In loving memory of the klepto researcher who stole them in the first place.

DIAZ

On another matter --

RAYNA

I'm working a lead on the hack. But the pictures are out.

DIAZ

What pictures?

RAYNA

The nude photographs? Of Maria Slayton?

DIAZ

Do I want to hear this?

RAYNA

I thought that's why you wanted to see me.

He hands her a piece of paper. Rayna scans it, then --

RAYNA (CONT'D)

Where'd this come from?

DIAZ

I was going to ask you.

RAYNA

(reads)

"...repeated delays are evidence of..."

DIAZ

(from memory)

"...the continuing erosion of the American space program." It goes downhill from there. It's all over TASS and their affiliates.

RAYNA

You think this came from our friends at Roscosmos?

DIAZ

They can be difficult. But there's too much respect between our agencies --

Rayna blurts as a half formed idea takes hold --

RAYNA

Do we think the Russians are behind hacking these pics?

(off his skeptical look)

Bad press, now this? I gotta ask the question.

DIAZ

For sure they want to be perceived as the alpha dog in the Durga partnership. But they start making our space program look like an extra-terrestrial clown car, it raises questions about their own judgement for being in business with us.

(then, after a beat)

You worked in oppo research. Any way our adversaries on Capitol Hill are involved?

RAYNA

Congressman Burke? Not his stilo. He comes straight at you. This kinda thing's a little too tawdry.

DIAZ

Too tawdry? This is a U.S. Congressman we're talking about.

RAYNA

One of his young turks maybe? Trying to make his bones? In which case I will nail his slimeball ass, cause him to lose his nuts, money, and reputation, leaving him an empty shell of a man, who will rue the day he ever messed with NASA.

DIAZ

I worry for your soul.

RAYNA

Don't. It's packed away in bubble wrap in an attic somewhere for when I need it. Otherwise it would just get in the way.

DIAZ

I'm glad you're on our side.

RAYNA

I'll run this to ground, see what shakes loose.

25 INT. BUILDING 30 - MISSION CONTROL - DAY (D3)

25

The attention of each of the flight controllers is focused on one of the big screens at the front of the room, where the Soyuz is ready to launch. Bogdan, seated next to Rayna, watches intently --

RAYNA

5... 4... core stage ignition... 2...  
1...

(beat, then)

Liftoff...

(beat)

All boosters full function. Good  
burn... Soyuz has cleared the tower.

DONALD

Can we get the commie-nauts off our  
screen now?

Sucking up after the earlier dressing down Donald gave him --

RAJ

The red menace can take care of their  
own problems.

JULIE

Soon as they left the launch pad, they  
became our problem. ...Big picture,  
Raj.

RAJ

How come Donald can bag on the ruskies  
and I can't...?

JULIE

Because he's a crusty old Cold War  
relic beyond redemption --

DONALD

And proud of it.

JULIE

-- And because I say so.

RAJ

Copy, FLIGHT.

The nagging doubt she's been unable to shake tightens its grip,  
then --

JULIE

All stations... I need every one of the  
great big brains in this room focused  
on what caused that short. Hunches  
don't cut it. I want proof.

26 INT. BUILDING 30 - MISSION CONTROL - DAY (D3)

26

The screens at the front of the room show: the view of Soyuz  
from Durga, the view of Durga from Soyuz, Stevenson at the  
Canadarm controls, and the Soyuz crew from an onboard camera.  
Rayna, at her PAO station along with Bogdan, gives play by play.

RAYNA

We're just minutes away from the first Soyuz docking with Durga --

BOGDAN

With all the various delays in the Durga program, the cosmonauts have waited a long time for this moment.

Rayna gives him an appraising look.

DEKE

Docking is on schedule, Soyuz. Stand by.

27 INT. SOYUZ CAPSULE - INTERCUT

27

LEBEDEV, the skipper, is in the middle seat, with a cosmonaut on either side, packed into the cramped space like sardines.

DONALD

FLIGHT, we've got a lot of static on comms again.

JULIE

Worse than before?

DONALD

About the same.

Julie clicks her pen anxiously. Something just isn't right. She closes her eyes, focusing her energy and concentration. Then, after a beat, she looks up, a determined, single-mindedness in her gaze. Then --

JULIE

CAPCOM, tell them to stand down from docking.

Everyone in the room registers surprise. Then --

DEKE

Durga, halt docking procedure. Repeat: Halt docking procedure. Stand down.

BOGDAN

It appears as if we have encountered another delay.

RAYNA

Yes it does.

BOGDAN

The American flight controllers are taking great care to ensure the safety of our cosmonauts.

Off Rayna, searching Bogdan's expression for telltale satisfaction at this setback, or some clue to an agenda perhaps beyond simple reportage.

28 INT./EXT. SOYUZ CAPSULE - DAY (D3)

28

Commander Lebedev looks out a forward port. REVEAL Durga hanging in space ten meters ahead of the craft. Registering impatience --

COMMANDER LEBEDEV (RUSSIAN)

So, we wait...

COSMONAUT #1 (RUSSIAN)

Shall I run another check on the guidance system?

COMMANDER LEBEDEV (RUSSIAN)

We have more productive ways to pass the time.

Reaching into an overhead storage cabinet, he pulls out a squeeze bag of vodka. Big smiles from the other two Cosmonauts. Lebedev holds the container in front of him, squeezes out a blob of clear liquid, which forms into a perfect globe.

COMMANDER LEBEDEV (RUSSIAN) (CONT'D)

May we suffer as much sorrow as the drops of vodka we are about to leave behind.

Leaning forward, he sucks in the floating vodka. No drops are left behind. The two Cosmonauts offer a cheer. As the Commander squeezes out zero-g shots for his shipmates --

29 INT. BUILDING 30 - MISSION CONTROL - DAY (D3)

29

Julie tensely watches the video feed of Stevenson, et al., inspecting the docking port.

STEVENSON (O.S.)

Diagnostic complete. Zero deficiencies. Just like the other two times we ran it.

All eyes turn to Julie. Her gut screams that something's wrong, but she has nothing objective to base it on. She hangs there a beat, clicking her pen anxiously. Then, after an interminably long interval, she concedes, throwing in the towel in a tone bordering on disgust --

JULIE

We're go for docking.

DEKE

Durga, we are go for docking.



STEVENSON (O.S.)

About time.

Julie watches with trepidation. Rayna narrates --

RAYNA

The Flight Director has okayed the docking. Now, Commander Stevenson will grab the Soyuz with the Canadarm and pull it to docking port one.

30 INT. DURGA / EXT. DURGA - INTERCUT

30

The Canadarm is a multi-articulated device capable of physically grabbing incoming spacecraft, as well as providing a platform for spacewalking astronauts to work on any part of the station.

Stevenson at the controls of the Canadarm, using the video feed from its camera to guide him. It reaches out toward the Soyuz to grab it, but when it touches Soyuz, all hell breaks loose. Durga goes dark. All its computers reboot.

The Canadarm, usually a slow and graceful instrument, jerks spasmodically. Instead of gently gripping Soyuz's handle, it punches it, sending Soyuz slowly drifting away. Then the Canadarm clenches back toward Durga and impacts the side of Central Node. The hull cowling around docking port one is severely damaged by the blow.

31 INT. BUILDING 30 - MISSION CONTROL - DAY (D3)

31

Donald throws off his headset as a loud burst of static comes over the comm lines, followed by dead silence. Red lines of text show up on the status screens, indicating multiple system failures.

All the main screens turn black with "LOSS OF SIGNAL" across them. We also see the Soyuz lights flicker and spark. The Cosmonauts work rapidly to stabilize the situation, a cohesive and effective team.

DONALD

FLIGHT, CRONUS. Voice down, telemetry is spotty.

MIKE

We've got complete loss of power on all systems, FLIGHT.

IZZY

All computers are either offline or in reboot.

RAJ

FLIGHT, ETHOS. Life support is offline.

JULIE

One at a time. If we can't talk to Durga, talk to Soyuz.

DEKE

Soyuz, we've had a major failure aboard Durga. What is your status?

LEBEDEV (O.S.)

Durga's windows are dark. We have no control over Soyuz, but pressure is holding and life support is good. Concentrate on Durga.

32 INT. DURGA / INT. BUILDING 30 - MISSION CONTROL - INTERCUT 32

The astronauts pull flashlights from the wall and turn them on. To Hoff --

STEVENSON

Comms.

Hoff heads to the breaker box.

JULIE

OPS, procedure for power failure and loss of voice?

CHAZ

Procedure 22-alpha, FLIGHT.

RAJ

Fire! FLIGHT we have a fire! ...Central Node, cabinet six. Life support systems are on fire!...

STEVENSON

Houston? Do you read? We've had another blackout --

DEKE (O.S.)

Durga you have a fire in progress. Central Node cabinet six.

Stevenson points his flashlight. Smoke seeps through the seams of the bulkhead. Off his expression of alarm.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

33 INT. DURGA - DAY (D3) 33

Stevenson rips the wall mounted fire extinguisher out of its cradle, heads off.

STEVENSON

Fire suppressant in-hand. Will resolve.

34 INT. MISSION CONTROL - INTERCUT 34

Raj barks to Deke --

RAJ

No... Opening the cabinet will feed it O2.

DEKE

Negative, Commander. Do not open the cabinet. It'll just make the fire worse.

RAJ

FLIGHT, cabinet six's intermediate oxygen tank is at 120 degrees and it's only rated safe to 194.

JULIE

What happens at 194?

RAJ

It'll burst, dumping pure oxygen onto the fire --

CHAZ

FLIGHT, the procedure for a fire near an O2 tank is full abort.

JULIE

Get Goldman prepping the Node Two Orion and Hoff sealing off all hatches to the Central Node. We'll starve the fire.

Deke considers a moment, then --

DEKE

Hoff, get to the Node Two Orion and prep for emergency departure. Goldman, seal the hatches in Central Node. We're going to try and suffocate the fire.

HOFF  
Copy.

GOLDMAN  
Copy.

Izzy looks up, then to Chaz, off loop.

IZZY  
FLIGHT ordered Goldman to Orion and Hoff sealing Central Node. Deke got their orders backwards.

CHAZ  
Too late. They're already executing.

Hoff floats into the Orion and powers up the main systems. Goldman, with some effort, seals the hatch leading to Node One, then moves to the Node Two hatch, calls --

GOLDMAN  
Commander. Come on.

Back at the Canadarm Controls --

STEVENSON  
Houston, I'm going to work on this. The Russians are in a crippled spacecraft.

DEKE (O.S.)  
So are you, Commander. Get to Node Two immediately.

Stevenson reluctantly goes into Node Two with Goldman.

DEKE (CONT'D)  
Central Node sealed off. Crew is secured in Node Two.

RAJ  
O2 tank at 148 degrees.

Everyone watches Raj nervously.

RAJ (CONT'D)  
156 degrees... 162... 163...

A tense beat inside Durga --

RAJ (CONT'D)  
Still 163...

But then Raj continues grimly --

RAJ (CONT'D)  
164...

Another long beat that feels like an eternity. Then --

RAJ (CONT'D)

163...

Then thicker smoke billows out of the cabinet, evidence the fire is going out, there is a collective relief all around.

RAJ (CONT'D)

160 degrees... 158... O2 levels in Central Node are below 8 percent.

Stevenson immediately heads into Node Two, dons EVA suit.

STEVENSON

Request permission for rapid EVA to recover Soyuz.

JULIE

Tell him no.

DEKE

Negative on that EVA, Commander. We need to keep Central Node sealed.

Aboard Durga, Stevenson stops, as his crew looks to him for guidance. Then, as he resumes suiting up, they pitch in to assist.

STEVENSON

They're drifting away, Houston. I'm going after them.

Julie throws her pen down onto the desk in frustration.

Stevenson is now in his EVA suit. Goldman and Hoff join him in the Node Two connector. Goldman opens the hatch, shoves Stevenson through, starts to follow. Stevenson challenges his crewmate --

STEVENSON (CONT'D)

Where do you think you're going?

GOLDMAN

Half of Durga's offline. We can't trust the EVA umbilical on automatic. I have to man the controls from Central Node.

STEVENSON

The hell you do. The smoke could be toxic. Your ass stays here. That's an order.

Goldman and Hoff shove Stevenson through the hatch, then reseal it.

DEKE

Maybe this is one of those times we  
move the line?

Julie unplugs her headset, transits to the EVA flight controller station, plugs in --

JULIE

All stations: be advised, FLIGHT is  
manning EVA.

(to Deke)

Give me Stevenson.

DEKE

Commander Stevenson, EVA has you now on  
direct.

JULIE

Comm check.

STEVENSON

Julie?

JULIE

We didn't have an EVA controller on  
hand.

RAYNA

Commander Stevenson is preparing for a  
rapid EVA to recover the Soyuz, which  
is experiencing electrical problems of  
its own, after a heat imbalance aboard  
Durga --

Bogdan reacts to the brazenness of this understatement. Rayna meets his gaze. If his true intent is indeed adversarial, her look almost dares him to call her on her euphemistic characterization. Bogdan says nothing.

Stevenson's EVA helmet lights the smoky, dark, central node. He enters the airlock --

STEVENSON

Airlock cycled. Exiting station.

JULIE

Copy, you are go for EVA.

35 EXT. DURGA - DAY (D3) 35

Stevenson, tethered to Durga, uses the Manned Maneuvering Unit to thrust toward Soyuz.

36 INT. BUILDING 30 - MISSION CONTROL / EXT. DURGA - INTERCUT 36

On the main screens, we can see a staticky view from Stevenson's camera. We also see a clear view of Stevenson approaching from the Soyuz cameras. Another screen offers a clear view of Durga in which we can see the damaged cowling still attached to the spacecraft.

JULIE

CRONUS, why does Stevenson's video have static when Soyuz's is clear?

DONALD

Unsure, FLIGHT. And his seems to be getting worse.

Julie registers that lasered expression again. As if stepping out of time for the briefest moment. She closes her eyes, drawing in energy. Then her eyes snap open --

JULIE

Wave off! Don't touch Soyuz! Repeat: wave off.

STEVENSON (O.S.)

I'm almost there.

DEKE

Commander Stevenson, the order is wave off. Halt forward motion. Do not make physical contact with Soyuz under any circumstances.

A tense beat. Is Stevenson going to comply with the command this time?

STEVENSON

Copy.

A minor MMU thrust stops Stevenson just meters from the Soyuz.

In Mission Control, everyone watches Julie, wondering what the hell is going on with her. Then, almost to herself --

JULIE

It's been staring us in the face the whole time. ETHOS, is the air density level still elevated?

RAJ

Until the gas analyzer's recalibrated.  
Low priority as I indicated.

JULIE

CRONOS, the comm static yesterday, what  
time did it resolve?

DONALD

...17:43:17.

JULIE

SPARTAN, what time was the first power  
failure?

MIKE

17:43:17.

JULIE

Anyone know how many orbits Durga's  
made since 17:43:17?

IZZY

(doing it in his head)

Thirteen hundred, eighty-seven minutes  
have elapsed. Fifteen point four  
orbits.

DONALD

Static charge...

JULIE

Built up on the outer hull, more and  
more every orbit, until it arced inside  
to the ship's electrical system and  
fried the power cable.

RAJ

How's that possible? Static charge is  
neutralized with xenon gas release  
through the PCU's. Both of which are  
fully functional.

JULIE

You said the gas analyzer was mis-  
calibrated, reporting the air density  
too high. What if it's right?

RAJ

Then there's a heavier gas present...

JULIE

Like xenon? ...Request visual  
inspection.



DEKE

Hoff, we need eyes on PCU one and two.

JULIE

Fifteen point four times around this giant magnet we call home, the static electricity kept building.

DONALD

Like rubbing a balloon on a mohair sweater.

IZZY

Would explain why Soyuz lost power when the Canadarm touched it.

JULIE

And what would happen if Commander Stevenson had the misfortune of completing that circuit... with his body this time?

HOFF

PCU one is non-functioning. Appears to be a xenon leak. And PCU two... was never powered on.

JULIE

Commander, be advised of an extremely dangerous electrical charge discrepancy between Durga and Soyuz. Durga has no functional PCU. Repeat: extreme danger.

STEVENSON

Copy, Houston. Electrocution avoidance protocols being observed...  
(then, meaning it)  
Thank you...

Off Stevenson, shaken by the close call.

37 INT. DURGA - DAY (D3)

37

Aboard Durga, Hoff pulls the protective cap off the power button and turns PCU two on. It powers up and activates.

38 EXT. DURGA - DAY (D3)

38

Outside the station, near where Central Node connects to the main truss, we see a small, silver valve open. As the spacecraft moves from daylight into the approaching gloaming, a puff of escaping gas becomes visible. Rapidly expanding, the gas freezes

in the vacuum of space. The crystalline fog glistens in the golden sunlight of magic hour, then fades into nothingness, and along with it the build-up of static electricity.

39 INT. BUILDING 30 - MISSION CONTROL / EXT. DURGA - INTERCUT 39

HOFF (O.S.)  
PCU two active and functional.

Julie inspects her EVA station readouts, then --

JULIE  
Commander, the PCU issue has been resolved. Neutral charge. You are go for Soyuz recovery.

STEVENSON  
Copy.

Stevenson thrusts forward with his MMU, makes contact with the Soyuz, and attaches a tether to it.

STEVENSON (CONT'D)  
Tether attached. Reel us in.

RAYNA  
It won't be long now before the cosmonauts board Durga and get a look at their new digs.

40 INT. BUILDING 30 - HALLWAY - DAY (D3) 40

Izzy at the soda machine, pumps in quarters, which immediately come out the coin return. Rayna approaches, checking her text messages, crosses to him. Izzy retrieves the coins, feeds them in again. With the same result.

RAYNA  
Any luck?

IZZY  
The problem's with the six pin interface plug to accommodate a pulse bill validator but --

RAYNA  
With TROLLDOG69.

But Izzy just keeps putting the coins in and having them returned, oblivious to Rayna's impatience. Then, finally --

IZZY

I tracked the hacker down to an IRC, hosted on a server in New Mexico. I have the channel output piped to a grep on my Linux box at home. If he logs in, I'll know. But it's a waiting game.

Rayna, genuinely impressed --

RAYNA

You're amazing. So you must have deployed some dark web, black ops, Jason Bourne-level skill set to get all this.

As he speaks, Izzy pounds the machine --

IZZY

Not really. Any 3rd grade meathead with enough cortex to point and click could have done it.

He pounds the machine really hard, puts his coins in, then finally a soda can rolls down the chute.

IZZY (CONT'D)

Just had to science it out.

41 INT. BUILDING 30 - HALLWAY - DAY (D3)

41

Deke crosses from the ladies room, headed back to her station. Her cellphone rings. She looks down at it: Mom, on FaceTime. She hesitates a beat, but there's no dodging this bullet. Needing privacy, she heads through a door marked Historic Apollo Mission Control. She enters --

42 INT. BUILDING 30 - APOLLO MISSION CONTROL - DAY (D3)

42

The room is dark, except for a single overhead spotlight gunning down onto the sage-green Flight Director Console, arrayed with signs of life, circa 1969: coffee cup, ashtray, a cigarette lighter with the Apollo logo, and a pack of Marlboros. Deke holds more technology in her hand than was available to the entire space program of that era. She answers --

DEKE

Hi, Mom.

SHARON SLAYTON, late 60's, not entirely at ease with this app, judging from the way her image bounces around on Deke's screen.

SHARON

Hello, Dear...

DEKE

I was going to call you guys as soon as I got off work.

SHARON

You would've missed us. We're on our way to an event at the club. The company is hosting a golf tournament and your father has to make an appearance.

DEKE

So is there a good time to call back when we can talk?

SHARON

You don't have to, darling. I know how busy you are. I was just calling to make sure you're OK.

DEKE

I'm fine. But Mom --

SHARON

You were the talk of the clubhouse today, according to your father.

DEKE

Oh Jesus...

SHARON

Those pictures certainly don't leave a lot to the imagination.

DEKE

Those were never supposed to be made public. There was a computer hack --

SHARON

Then those were actual photographs of you? They weren't forged or doctored or whatever they do?

DEKE

No, but --

SHARON

Are you still an astronaut or are you doing pornography for a living now?

DEKE

Mother, will you please listen to me --

SHARON

Don't take that tone. Your father needs to know what to say in case one of the sports reporters asks, which I'm sure they will --

DEKE

(exasperated)

No, Mother. I am not doing pornography -- If you would just do me the courtesy of hearing me out, I can explain what happened --

SHARON

Your father's out in the driveway honking the horn. You know how impatient he gets.

DEKE

When is a good time to call? How about in the morning before Dad goes to work?

SHARON

I'm just so glad your brother's not alive. He'd be so disappointed. ...Gotta run. Love you.

Her mother's face vanishes from the screen, leaving her daughter with multiple stab wounds, all of them in the heart. Deke's tears come hard.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

43 INT. DURGA - DAY (D3)

43

BROADCAST FOOTAGE from Durga shows the NASA Astronauts welcoming the Cosmonauts aboard. If Stevenson is still rattled by his brush with near-death, he's not showing it. And for their part, the Cosmonauts seem to exhibit none of the after effects of the fifth of vodka they polished off to pass the time. An ability also hardwired to Russian DNA.

44 INT. BUILDING 30 - OBSERVATION BOOTH - INTERCUT

44

Diaz splits his focus between the footage from Durga being broadcast to the world, and business as usual down in the MCC. Julie, flush with the thrill she gets solving problems, joins Diaz, handing him a beer from a nearby mini-fridge --

JULIE

Your dad would be pleased.

(off his look)

We got our hands around that problem  
and strangled it to death.

DIAZ

I should've listened to your gut.

Julie raises her bottle in toast --

JULIE

To my gut. Long may it churn.

DIAZ

And to mine, and the bleeding ulcer I'm  
working on.

JULIE

You can't have victory without the  
specter of defeat nipping at your  
heels.

DIAZ

Victory... Our Russian friends would  
disagree with your assessment.

JULIE

Come on, we saved their guys.

DIAZ

From the danger we put them in. ...Not  
to mention the very expensive Soyuz  
capsule we totaled in the process.

(MORE)

DIAZ (CONT'D)

Which is going to cost the U.S. a boatload. Something the Right Honorable Congressman from Missouri won't let us forget anytime soon.

JULIE

How far over budget are we at this point?

DIAZ

Two billion-ish. Not counting today.

JULIE

If it helps, we can leave the damaged cowling as is.

DIAZ

Burke's got my stundeens in a vice any way you cut it. But it's better than nothing.

JULIE

(after a beat)

We almost lost the whole enchilada up there today.

DIAZ

(nods, then)

Even so, I can't help thinking that it's down here on terra firma that Durga is most vulnerable. All it takes is a sub-committee vote that doesn't go our way.

JULIE

Call me petty, but the most humiliating part of all of this... JPL was right. Again.

Diaz polishes off his beer, drops the bottle in the recycling bin, turns to Julie --

DIAZ

I meant it when I said you would have been great up there...

Looking down at the MCC below, then --

DIAZ (CONT'D)

But if you hadn't been down there running the show today... we'd be having a very different conversation right now.

He goes.

45 INT. DURGA - NIGHT (N3)

45

Stevenson floats in zero-g. A pensive look on his face, he gazes out the porthole at Earth. Holding onto a box, Soyuz Commander Lebedev pulls himself into the room and looks out at the view. In English --

COMMANDER LEBEDEV

Every time we come up here... so many more lights there are than the time before.

STEVENSON

Yeah... Will you look at China --

COMMANDER LEBEDEV

Then there's North Korea, where there's a permanent black out.

STEVENSON

(after a beat)

"Every point of a sphere is the center, or none is."

COMMANDER LEBEDEV

"An equal earth which all men occupy as equals." Sir Fred Hoyle, I believe?

STEVENSON

(a wry smile)

A guy who hopefully knew more about stellar nucleosynthesis than people.

COMMANDER LEBEDEV

(registering surprise)

Such cynical talk coming from an American. You sure you're not Russian?

STEVENSON

Do I look Russian?

Smiling, the cosmonaut opens the box, takes out a flight-safe container of high ruble vodka.

COMMANDER LEBEDEV

Moscow's finest.

(hands it to Stevenson)

A small gift for your hospitality and what you did for us today.



STEVENSON

You would have done the same.

COMMANDER LEBEDEV

So, you are an optimist.

STEVENSON

(re: vodka)

I'll keep it on hand for emergencies.

The Russian smiles --

COMMANDER LEBEDEV

An optimist who doesn't drink, you are definitely not Russian.

46 INT. BUILDING 30 - JULIE'S OFFICE - NIGHT (N3)

46

Julie reaches for her compact, touches up around her eye, then starts out, just as Deke charges in, clearly agitated --

DEKE

You wanted to see me?

JULIE

I'm busy. It can wait.

Her dismissive tone sets Deke off, who goes on the offensive --

DEKE

It's about those pictures isn't it? It was only a matter of time before you got around to ass-reaming me over this. So let's hear it. Let's hear how I embarrassed the organization. How I'm not fit to wear the meatball patch because my tits are all over the internet. Get it all out now. Because if you're going to use this to give me crap for the rest of my time here, you might as well just fire me.

JULIE

Is that what you want?

DEKE

Hell no. I love the job. I love the mission, the stress, everything about the place...

Julie takes another look at her eye as Deke yammers on --

DEKE (CONT'D)

Was it smart taking my clothes off in front of a camera? Apparently not. But I never intended it to be a public spectacle. I mean, there's a big difference between being an extrovert and an exhibitionist --

Julie cuts Deke off --

JULIE

Don't complain and don't explain. Both accomplish nothing. Besides annoying the hell out of me.

(then)

I could give a crap about your centerfold moment.

DEKE

Then what did you want to see me about?

JULIE

You changed my orders without permission during the fire.

DEKE

(at a loss)

See, I was, uh, what I did there was --

JULIE

You're a metallurgist...

DEKE

Yeah...

JULIE

So you anticipated that heat from the fire would have caused the metal on the node's seal valve to expand. Making it difficult to turn.

DEKE

I figured --

JULIE

Goldman's stronger and was better equipped to deal with it. Even though I'd assigned the task to Hoff.

DEKE

Just something that occurred to me in the moment.

JULIE

Good forward thinking. Your quick read of the situation saved lives.

Deke is stunned. She's no better at getting a compliment than taking criticism.

JULIE (CONT'D)

All I care about is how you act when you're at CAPCOM. That's all I will ever judge you on. Whatever you do outside my jurisdiction, is none of my business.

DEKE

That means a lot... You work twice as hard, they treat you like you're half as good --

JULIE

You're doing it again... In a world of men, whining just makes it worse... I have somewhere to be.

DEKE

Thanks...

But Julie is already gone.

47 INT. BUILDING 30 - HALLWAY - NIGHT (N3)

47

Leaving for the day, Rayna and Diaz walk down the hall.

RAYNA

Not the best day, not the worst.

DIAZ

Not by a long shot. Any progress on your hacker?

They arrive at the elevator. Diaz presses the button, doors open. They enter --

48 INT. BUILDING 30 - ELEVATOR - NIGHT (N3)

48

RAYNA

Got a solid lead.

DIAZ

Get with me in the morning and we'll turn it over to law enforcement.

RAYNA

I'd like to hold off a beat... if it's  
OK. Those pics are still out there.

DIAZ

How do you unring that bell?

RAYNA

Not sure I can. But I'd like to give  
myself the room to try.

49 INT. BUILDING 30 - LOBBY - NIGHT (N3)

49

They step out and transit toward the front doors.

DIAZ

And see if any of this traces back to  
our political opponents?

RAYNA

Or even our friends...

He follows her gaze across the lobby to Bogdan, who paces,  
speaking on his cellphone in Russian.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

50 INT. BUFFALO TAVERN - NIGHT (N3)

50

Urban cowboys and sawdust on the floor. In a SERIES of QUICK POPS over country MUSIC, we watch as Julie plays darts with a thick-necked Marine of the motard variety. She is kicking ass, each dart landing exactly where she wants it. Motard doesn't like it one bit. When Julie's last dart finds its mark, Motard hands over a wad of cash, spins, stalks off, pissed.

51 INT./EXT. JULIE'S CAR - NIGHT (N3)

51

Julie's car pulls into an empty parking lot. She turns off the engine, then takes the envelope out of the glove box, counts the money. A worried look suddenly flashes across her face. She counts again. She checks the glove box. Then she looks up, as another car pulls into the parking lot. It glides up next to hers. The window goes down to reveal the figure of a MAN cloaked in shadows. She puts her car window down, extends the envelope, hoping for the best. The man takes it. After a beat --

MAN

You're three hundred light.

JULIE

I thought it was all there... I must've miscounted.

MAN

A rocket scientist who can't count...

JULIE

I'm not a rocket scientist, actually... I'll have the three hundred for you with the next payment.

MAN

Whatever it is you do to pay the rent, you pretty good at it?

JULIE

Have to be. People's lives depend on it.

MAN

I am hired by the client to locate certain individuals, such as yourself. So for me to go back to the client and pretend I am unable to find that certain individual... To pretend that I am bad at my job... That my reputation

(MORE)

MAN (CONT'D)

isn't important... You're asking me to shoot myself in the foot. I need to be compensated for that self-inflicted wound. ...You got one-day grace on the three bills.

JULIE

Thank you.

MAN

You don't come through, you leave me no choice but to dime you to the client.

JULIE

You'll get your money.

Car windows slide up, the vehicles drive off in opposite directions.

52 INT. DURGA - STEVENSON'S QUARTERS - NIGHT (N3)

52

About the size of a small closet. Pictures of family and friends, including Amelia, decorate the tiny space. Mounted on the wall, velcroed to a small shelf, is a laptop. Stevenson positions himself in front of it and loops a bungee cord around his waist to keep himself in place. He slips on a headset, taps on the keyboard.

Hear a phone RING as the CAMERA PUSHES PAST HIM, THROUGH the port, out into the vacuum of space, gunning back at Durga with the Soyuz capsule docked to it. As the spacecraft orbits out of frame, the CAMERA HOLDS ON the continent of Europe far below. Then, like a location search on Google Earth, Europe and the Atlantic Ocean spin out of view as the CAMERA bores down on North America. Our POV dive bombs toward the American south, faster and faster, targeting Texas. Houston appears below. The ground comes up fast until finally we are --

53 INT. JULIE'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT (N3)

53

In sweatpants and a T-shirt with a graphic of a space shuttle bombing the cratered surface of the moon, Julie stands in front of the mirror taking off her makeup, giving us a good look at the shiner she's been keeping under wraps.

Her cellphone rings in the other room. She goes to answer it.

54 INT. JULIE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - INTERCUT

54

A functional space for the hard work of dreamless sleep. She snaps her cell from the nightstand. The caller ID reads, MALIK.

A hint of a smile appears as she answers. Stevenson's face pops up on her screen.

JULIE

Hi.

STEVENSON

Wasn't sure if you'd still be up.

JULIE

Since when have I ever gone to bed before two?

STEVENSON

True... How you holding up?

There's clearly a history here.

JULIE

Nearly lost a Soyuz capsule and almost blew up a hundred-billion-dollar space station today. I'm great.

STEVENSON

Jules...

JULIE

Not going to throw myself off a building, if that's what you're asking. Just pissed I didn't figure out the problem sooner.

STEVENSON

You can't put that on yourself.

JULIE

It's my job to be the smartest person in the room.

STEVENSON

Any excuse to beat yourself up.

A familiar topic, apparently.

JULIE

I have issues.

STEVENSON

You have a lifetime subscription.

She laughs. A comfortable silence, then --

JULIE

How are you doing?

He registers a somber look, then --

JULIE (CONT'D)

What?

STEVENSON

When I got the order to hunker down and hope the fire burned itself out... Only time in my life I was... afraid...

Julie is caught off guard by the admission. Then, after a beat, he completes the thought --

STEVENSON (CONT'D)

...of never seeing Amelia again.

His words strike a painful chord. She shoves it aside.

JULIE

By the grace of God, that didn't happen. And for what it's worth, I felt the same when you went on the EVA. You're so damn stubborn, I was afraid you --

STEVENSON

That didn't happen either... On account of you... Which is why you're in the big chair.

Julie nods, appreciating of the affirmation. Stevenson continues --

STEVENSON (CONT'D)

...And because of you, I am still walking, talking, living, and breathing. So if anybody wants my opinion, you are the smartest person in the room.

Which elicits a smile from her, then --

STEVENSON (CONT'D)

What's up with the shiner?

JULIE

You should see the other guy.

STEVENSON

Not funny. Are you OK?

She immediately closes up --

JULIE

I don't want to talk about it.

STEVENSON

Jules...



JULIE

I'm fine.

STEVENSON

Did someone hit you?

JULIE

It's none of your business.

Her words stop him cold. Julie immediately regrets them. We get the sense there was a time when everything about her was his business. After a beat --

JULIE (CONT'D)

Sorry... I'm just... I'm tired...

STEVENSON

It's been a long day for everyone...  
I'll let you get some rest.

JULIE

Yeah.

STEVENSON

Sleep well.

JULIE

You too.

Stevenson clicks off the call. His eyes drift over to a photo taped to the wall of eight smiling astronaut candidates in flight suits. He and Julie are in the group, standing next to each other. The CAMERA PUSHES IN on the pair, HOLDS a moment.

Frustrated with how the conversation ended, Julie just looks at her phone. Her finger hovers over the call back button. Then, she tosses it onto the nightstand instead, and gets under the covers. She lies there a long moment, eyes wide open. She reaches toward the nightstand, pulls something out of the drawer and slips it under the sheets. She turns off the light. After a beat, HEAR a gentle hum.

The CAMERA MOVES through the darkened bed chamber toward the window, then slowly PUSHES through the half-opened curtains, out into the muggy July night. The CAMERA CONTINUES its upward trajectory, shedding the light pollution radiating from Houston's urban sprawl.

We follow the pointers of Ursa Major toward Polaris, shimmering in the black void. And then, Perseid unleashes one, two, three shooting stars. The volley crosshatches the northern sky with streaks of fire that fade into nothingness, leaving the North Star a mute witness.

THE END