

V: THE NEXT CHAPTER

"Rebirth"

A Four-Hour Miniseries

Written by

J. Michael Straczynski

Newsgroups: rec.arts.sf.tv
From: dss2k@poe.acc.Virginia.EDU (David Strauss)
Subject: V: Rebirth - The Script!
Date: Wed, 25 May 1994 00:30:11 GMT

Well, after numerous requests, I decided to ask Joe Straczynski's permission to repost this here. It is the first three acts of the Miniseries he wrote to revive V. Warner Brothers passed on the series due to anticipated costs being too high, and now it will never be made. Eventually, JMS says, it will probably be novelized, but he doesn't know when.

For those who care, here's JMS' permission:

From: straczynski@genie.geis.com
Message-Id: <199405242245.AA0660733644@relay2.geis.com>
Date: Tue, 24 May 94 22:27:00 UTC
Subject: Question / Request
X-Genie-Id: 0236346
X-Genie-From: STRACZYNSKI
Status: RO

Sure, by all means, repost the segment. And thanks.

jms

And now, the first three acts of "Rebirth." (That's all Joe has released.)

V: THE NEXT CHAPTER
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A Four-Hour Miniseries
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FADE IN:

BLACK SCREEN

On which we HOLD for a moment, just black, and SUPER the word:

Prologue

and gradually a VOICE FADES IN:

ANNOUNCER (VO)
(hushed)
- continuing our coverage live from
the United Nations as the papers are
signed at last, signaling an end to
the Visitor occupation of Earth.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK SCENE (FROM FOOTAGE)

In which the head Visitor is signing a peace treaty at the United Nations. (NOTE: treat the video/footage so that it looks grainy, washed out, which increases as we ZOOM IN on the action.)

ANNOUNCER (cont'd)

Present: representatives from every nation, as the world breathes a sigh of relief. The war is over....

And on that FREEZE THE IMAGE. Then PUSH IN at high speed, the image BREAKING UP as we

CUT TO:

SCENES OF CARNAGE (STOCK/NEWS)

Which FILL THE SCREEN with horrific images: cities in ruins, communities devastated, cannon-fire from side-streets (taken from news footage of actual war-zones - Beirut, Ireland, elsewhere - and cities ravaged by natural disaster), INTERCUT with scenes of Visitor ships looming overhead or FIRING down at those below. (Stock.)

It should give the sense of a flurry of news reports, each overlapping the next, from a variety of reporters and nations, the words pouring out in a flurry of voices and accents.

This footage should also be grainy, rough, as though from an archive.

NEWS VOICES (vo)

(overlapping)

...sudden, unprovoked attacks, reports of heavy casualties in Los Angeles, Chicago, London...

(another)

...statement from the White House confirming the arrival of fifteen Visitor motherships now circling the Earth. News of the reinforcements...

(another, in French)

...every step being taken by the military to deal with the Visitor attack...

(another, English)

...Prime Minister denounced the surrender as a hoax designed to buy time for a major Visitor offensive...

(another)

...word of heavy fighting throughout the United States; all communication with the West Coast totally cut off..

(another)

...we've lost San Diego. Once again, San Diego has been destroyed. The entire city is reported vaporized. Civilians are urged to stay away...

(another, in Russian)

...heavy casualties in Minsk, one

Visitor ship destroyed...
(another)
...please stand by.

And on that, ABRUPTLY END MONTAGE and go to

BLACK SCREEN:

HOLDING a BEAT, then, in somber, stunned tones:

NEWS VOICES (vo)
(in German)
...Earth has surrendered...
(in French)
...Earth has surrendered...
(in Japanese)
...Earth has surrendered...
(American)
...Earth has surrendered. We repeat:
Earth has surrendered.

THEME MUSIC UP as against the blackness, we SEE something silver, metallic. A pillar, it seems. Then it turns, and we realize that we're looking at a single letter...

V

It's cast of hard steel, and as the light falls fully on it, fire-red letters appear beneath the V. Smoke and light pours through them, forming the words:

The Next Chapter

MAIN TITLES CONTINUE (TO BECOME STANDARD EPISODE OPENING)

As we SEE each of our main characters in photographs of themselves in happier times, which BURN AWAY, revealing footage of those characters now in the present, fighting, running, always in motion. The final photograph to burn away is DAMON MALLORY'S, frozen in time in an alley, glancing back over his shoulder as we

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. ALLEY - NIGHT

where Damon cuts down an alley, moving fast, eyes searching the shadows. He carries a duffel bag, his face covered by a few days growth of beard. He's been on the road a long time. He ducks into a doorway as suddenly LIGHT spears the night from somewhere overhead. He hugs the doorway as the light passes over the alley. We can't see what it is that's hovering overhead, but from the sound it's massive. Another moment, and then it's gone.

Damon moves on. Not running from pursuit, but wanting not to be noticed. He cuts into

A BREEZEWAY

between two buildings. He's about to step into the breezeway when a SECURITY 'BOT cruises past the opposite entrance to the

breezeway. Damon hugs the corner, not wanting to be spotted.

SECURITY 'BOT

(prerecorded voice)

Curfew is midnight. To ensure public safety, anyone found outside after midnight is subject to arrest.

Repeat: curfew is midnight....

Then it goes on its way. Damon lets out a slow breath, then crosses toward a doorway on the other side of the breezeway. He STOPS abruptly as he sees another MAN heading for the same door. He hugs the wall, waits. The man knocks, twice, then four times, quickly. The door opens and the MAN steps inside.

Damon approaches the door and does the same. Knocks. The door opens again, just a crack. Enough for a GUARD inside, someone we can't see, to peer out. The Guard looks around, checking the street, then nods, admitting the man. Damon then approaches the door and repeat the process, entering

INT. BAR

Few are drinking at the moment. Damon barely gets a step inside when the door slams shut behind him, and a SECOND MAN appears at his elbow.

2ND MAN

Let's see it.

Damon holds out a hand. The 2nd Man takes his hand, and pricks his finger. A thin stream of blood emerges. It drips into a small vial filled with chemicals. The man shakes it, and the vial's contents foam up. He nods.

2ND MAN

Good, old fashioned human blood.

(nodding to inside)

Broadcast starts in a few minutes.

Damon nods, and heads further inside. He goes to the bar, sits on one of the stools. Looks around. The place is darkened, the people paired off in groups of two or three, talking in hushed tones. The BARTENDER approaches Damon.

DAMON

Beer.

BARTENDER

Fresh out. Should be getting a shipment Tuesday. I got a brother works out in a Free Zone, sending it in.

DAMON

Whiskey?

BARTENDER

That I got.

The Bartender reaches to the racks of bottles behind him, pours out a drink. Puts it in front of Damon.

BARTENDER

Four.

Damon hands over a five-dollar bill. The Bartender picks it up, looks at it and smiles, almost wistfully.

BARTENDER

Haven't seen one of these in a while.
Y'know, if you trade these in, you
can get nearly double -

DAMON

I know. Call me sentimental.

The Bartender shrugs, rings up the transaction as an OLD MAN approaches the bar, and sits beside Damon. The Bartender brings back the change, puts a few coins down on the bar. Damon picks them up.

THE COINS

And in the light of the bar, we can SEE that these aren't any coins we've seen before. One square, one triangular, one oblong, each covered with alien script.

DAMON

turns them in his hand, then shakes his head. Puts them back on the bar.

DAMON

Keep the change.

And begins to sip at his drink. The Old Man beside him signals to the bartender.

OLD MAN

The usual.

As the drink comes, the old man glances at Damon.

OLD MAN

First time here?

DAMON

Just hit town.

OLD MAN

Thought so. Got a good memory for
faces. Good to have you with us.

At that moment someone steps up to the bar carrying a cloth-covered parcel. He unwraps it, revealing a short-wave radio. He plugs it in and futzes around, trying to find the correct frequency.

During this, Damon glances back at the rear door, where one more

LATECOMER is being checked. The pinprick test is administered, and the man enters. He makes straight for the bar, sitting down on the other side of Damon. He looks to no one, just goes and sits. The bartender approaches.

LATECOMER

Whiskey.

The Bartender slaps a glass on the bar, and leaves. The Latecomer takes a sip, then puts the glass down, though still holding onto it. At that moment, the broadcast begins:

VOICE OF RESISTANCE

(on radio)

— the Voice of the Resistance
returning to the air with word of new
attacks against Visitor strongholds
in Australia and West Germany. Our
thoughts go out to our brothers and
sisters in Europe in their battle
against the invaders.

There's cheering at the good news, though the latecomer seems a little less enthusiastic. Damon glances at the latecomer's hand, clasping the glass.

INSERT: NEWCOMER'S HAND

A thin trail of blood from the pricked finger slides freely down the side of the glass. It flows far more freely than it should from a small pinprick.

BACK TO SCENE

As the BROADCAST CONTINUES (text to come), Damon finishes his drink, leans toward the old man, gesturing to the newcomer.

DAMON

That man — you ever see him here
before?

OLD MAN

No.

DAMON

You ever know a hemophiliac who'd
agree to let his finger get stuck,
then forget all about it?

OLD MAN

No.

DAMON

Me either.

Damon puts down his glass, walks casually over to the latecomer.

DAMON

Excuse me —

Then as the latecomer turns, Damon slugs him. The latecomer tumbles backward, and a rush of others come in to separate the two, holding back Damon, not understanding what's going on.

OTHERS

What the hell – lay off – what're you trying to pull? –

DAMON

Let me go! I know what I'm doing!

OLD MAN

You heard him! Let him go!

The others hesitate, then agree. Apparently, the old man carries some weight with them. Damon shrugs free of their hands, goes to the latecomer, who is still being held. Damon grabs his hand and lifts it up for all to see. The trail of red still leaks from his pricked finger.

DAMON

It's red, all right. Maybe even looks a little like human blood. But you forgot something. Human blood clots. So what is it? Some kind of glove? Fill it up, put it on?

Abruptly, Damon grabs hold of the latecomer's neck, toward the back, coming up with a fold of skin. He YANKS forward, and the layer of synthetic flesh comes off with a tearing sound, REVEALING the scaled, green skin of a Visitor. The others REACT with varying degrees of shock and alarm. Surprisingly, and disturbingly, the Visitor smiles.

VISITOR

Did you think I was foolish enough to come alone?

With that, he gives out an ALIEN CRY that nearly pierces the ears, and then everything's SLOW, SLOW, SLOW AS:

FOUR MEN IN THE CORNER

rise from the table, draw Visitor weapons from beneath their jackets, and begin FIRING into the crowd. One of them has a com-link in his hand, and is YELLING into it in ALIEN language, as

THE BAR WINDOWS

explode inward with attacking Visitors and laser fire. Search lights glare in from outside, turning the bar a bone-bright white. The attack is on. INTERCUTTING WITH:

THE UNMASKED VISITOR

throwing off those holding him, diving for Damon. They struggle. Damon lays him out, though with difficulty.

ANGLE ON THE DOOR

as the place empties, people rushing out into the alleys, some being cut down by incoming FIRE. Others amid the crowd are able to fire back, buying precious seconds for some to get out.

DAMON

gets to his feet, panic all around him, grabs his duffel bag, pulls out the weapon inside, and makes a break for it.

INT. ALLEY

Panic: people and Visitors firing in all directions. Damon cuts through it, FIRING as he goes. He gets clear, heads down an alley, to a fence. Grabs the top, and is partly over when:

OLD MAN

Help!

Damon turns. The old man who assisted him in the bar runs from two Visitors. He's too slow and too old to climb the fence, they're going to capture him. Damon swings back over and drops down between them, FIRING as he goes. The Visitors RETURN FIRE, but there's little cover in the alley, and Damon takes them out quickly. Turns back to the Old Man.

DAMON

C'mon!

He helps the Old Man over the fence, then follows suit himself.

INT. ANOTHER ALLEY

where Damon and the Old Man get clear, breathing hard. Damon looks down one intersecting alley, then the other.

DAMON

Split up, try and throw 'em off.

OLD MAN

Will do. And thanks.

The Old Man flashes Damon a quick "V" for Victory before trotting off into the darkness. Damon watches him go, a smile on his face, then goes back to alert as LIGHTS flicker over the alley. The search is widening. He gets moving.

QUICK CUTS

as Damon runs through alleys, jumps over fences, fast and agile, until coming out into

EXT. REAR OF APARTMENT BUILDING

Damon comes up the fire escape, going in a second story window.

INT. APARTMENT/FLOPHOUSE

Not much to look at, even in the dark. Breathing hard, exhausted but exhilarated, he slumps onto the sofa. Give it a BEAT, then

A MATCH

flares in the darkness across from Damon. Someone is sitting in the chair on the other side of the room. Has been ever since Damon arrived. The voice has a distinctly Australian accent.

BURKE

That was right stupid, Major. You could've been killed or captured. Either way it's a bloody waste of materiel.

Startled, Damon flicks on a light, revealing BURKE, late thirties/early forties, his features gaunt, severe, his eyes hard and small behind wire-frame glasses. He's lighting a cigarette.

DAMON

I don't know what you're talking about, you've got the wrong guy.

Burke shakes his head, stands. Walks slowly toward him.

BURKE

Major Damon Mallory. Served during the Earth/Visitor War. Dishonorably discharged under the Lazarus program. Your mother's maiden name is Taylor, you've a mole on your left shoulder.

DAMON

Look, I don't know what this is about, but either you get out of here right now, or -

BURKE

(over him)
- and the password is: Millennium.

Which stops Damon dead in his tracks. He looks at Burke with new interest - and growing anger.

DAMON

Five years. Five years I've been undercover. What the hell took you so long?

BURKE

Got caught in traffic. What do you want, an apology? You were told you'd be reactivated when the Visitors forgot about you. It took a while, okay? So you wanna take a swing at me, or do you wanna go make bang-bang with the green scaly guys?

Damon hesitates, then grabs his coat and and heads for the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Burke leads Damon to a semi-trailer. Opens the rear doors.

BURKE

After you.

Damon steps into

INT. TRUCK

Dark. And suddenly a hell of a lot darker as the doors SLAM shut behind him. An instant later, the truck begins MOVING, driving through the darkened streets.

DAMON

Hey!

He goes to pound on the door when suddenly a LIGHT flares at the other end of the trailer. He squints against the light. All he can see is a silhouette of someone seated behind a desk.

BOARD MEMBER

Good evening, Major. We hope we haven't inconvenienced you.

DAMON

I was starting to think you guys had lost my file or something.

BOARD MEMBER

Just waiting for a task suited to your abilities.

DAMON

Yeah, well, next time don't be so fussy. It was getting pretty damn cold out there.

(beat)

So what've you got?

A manila folder slides the length of the table, ending just short of the end. Damon approaches it.

BOARD MEMBER

You've been designated Sector Chief for the local resistance group.

DAMON

What happened to the old chief?

BOARD MEMBER

You don't need to know that.

DAMON

Translation: he got himself killed.

BOARD MEMBER

The folder contains a list of agents we haven't called in from the cold

yet. Pick whichever ones you want.

Damon picks up the folder, leafs through it.

DAMON

Then what? Do I coordinate with the rest of the first group -?

BOARD MEMBER

I'm afraid that won't be possible.

Damon closes the folder, peers out at the silhouetted figure.

DAMON

(beat - it sinks in)

Are you trying to tell me they're all dead?

(no reply)

I get it. I don't need to know that, either. You guys are too much.

(beat, pacing)

So what's the mission? Or is that classified too?

BOARD MEMBER

You are to rendezvous with one of our people, who will give you your instructions. But you're not to take any further action without clearing it with us first.

DAMON

Why do I get the sense you don't know what the job is, either?

(no answer)

OKay, so who's my contact?

(no response)

Look, how do you expect me to find him if you won't tell me who it is?

BOARD MEMBER

He'll find you. When he does, you will notify us through Burke, the man who brought you here. We'll advise you from there.

DAMON

Great. And just for the record - who are you, anyway?

And gradually, the light begins to dim behind the figure.

BOARD MEMBER

A Member of the Board, Major. That's all you need to know. Good luck.

The light goes out, then a rustle of movement. Damon's alone.

DAMON

Hey! Hey, I'm not finished yet. I

got some things I want to ask -

The truck shudders to a stop. An instant later, the doors open behind him. Burke stands in the opening.

BURKE

Last stop. Everybody out.

With a final glance around the trailer, Damon steps out onto

EXT. STREET

the same spot where they'd picked him up. Damon jumps down from the trailer beside Burke.

BURKE

Welcome back to active duty, Major.
We'll be in touch.

With that, Burke goes to the front of the semi, climbs in, and the trailer rumbles off into the darkness. Damon watches it go, then glances at the folder in his hand. Shakes his head, and starts back toward his apartment. What he doesn't notice is:

ANGLE - DOORWAY

Where someone is watching Damon leave. At first, we SEE only his back. Then, as Damon heads away, the figure turns more fully into the light, and we see HAM TYLER. Only he looks different now: harder, his face scarred and haunted. He's been through hell. He shakes his head, then walks off into the darkness, as we

FADE TO BLACK

AND

FADE OUT:

End Act One

Act Two

FADE IN:

EXT. ELECTRONICS SHOP - ESTABLISHING - DAY

PANNING the neighborhood as a young black woman - LYNN CAYCE - steps into a shop marked CAYCE ELECTRONICS REPAIR.

INT. ELECTRONICS SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Where we FIND her husband JORDAN CAYCE working behind a television set that has seen better days. Black, middle-thirties, he's independent, tough-minded and he's been around. It's a small shop, a one-man operation: a clutter of tools and wires and spare parts for as far as the eye can see. He rewires a circuit, crosses them - and there's a SPARK from the wiring that zaps him.

JORDAN

Damn....

A thin line of smoke comes up from the back of the set. Jordan's pissed. Hits the counter. He's going to have to start over. As he starts to tear out the wiring, the

FRONT DOOR

closes, and Lynn crosses to him. She carries a paper sack, and brings it to the counter.

LYNN

Is that a circuit burning, or are you just glad to see me?

JORDAN

Damn it, Lynn, I -
(pulling back)
Wiring's brittle, keeps coming apart.
Can't get decent parts anymore,
manufacturer only handles Visitor
business, whole world's going to
hell...

LYNN

Well, as long as you're enjoying
yourself.
(puts down sack)
You forgot your lunch. Again.

BEHIND THEM

the door opens again, and Damon enters. He lingers in the background, looking at the used sets and other equipment for sale, waiting until she leaves. They notice him, but don't think much of it. She lowers her voice a little, continues.

LYNN

I was talking to Ruth this morning.
She says a shop just came up vacant
in the Neutral Zone. You could make
some contacts there, get better
supplies, maybe even get you back
into computers where you belong -

JORDAN

No.

LYNN

Would you just think about it?

JORDAN

Lynn, if you work in the Neutral
Zone, you work for the Visitors.
You're a collaborator. I can't do
that.

LYNN

But you -

He sets down the tools, straightens. He's not angry, but he's losing his patience.

JORDAN

Lynn - no. Please. We've had this discussion before. It was no then, and it's no now. All right?

She looks like she'd prefer to pursue it, but she stops. Drops it. For now, anyway. Nods, then gathers up her stuff.

LYNN

All right.

She starts toward the door. He glances up again.

JORDAN

Lynn?
(off her glance)
About the shop - I know you mean well. I just can't, that's all.

She nods, not truly agreeing or accepting, but willing, for now, to let it go. And heads out the door. A moment later, Damon makes his way to the counter.

JORDAN

What can I do for you, buddy?

DAMON

Are you Jordan Cayce?

JORDAN

Suppose I am. Who wants to know?

DAMON

The password - is phoenix.

Jordan starts, as though slapped. He hadn't expected this.

JORDAN

Yeah? Well, the answer - is no.

With that, he disappears into the back of the shop. From his expression, Damon clearly hadn't expected this reaction.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - DAY

Near some STORES in which we see a merging of human fashions with Visitor fashions, for those trying to keep a foot in both worlds. It's not much of a park, little more than a spare plot of grass, but it's green, and that's a start. A few people are camped out in sleeping bags and tents, castoffs. Jordan sits on a park bench, eating from a sack lunch, looking not terribly happy with the world at the moment. A BEAT, and then Damon comes up alongside the bench. Sits. Looks around.

DAMON

You want to talk about it?

JORDAN

No.

He takes another bite or two from the sandwich, finally puts it down. He doesn't want this, but sees no way out.

JORDAN

That woman in the store? That's my wife. We had it pretty good, before the war. I worked in computers. I was one of the best.

DAMON

I know, that's why I need you.

JORDAN

Look, I did my part, I fought in the damn war, and we got our butts kicked clear across the planet. We lost. And now look at me. Fixing TVs and toasters, Lynn working double shifts; it's not fair. I'm tired of getting shot at.

He goes back to his lunch. Damon lingers.

DAMON

Then why won't you work in the Neutral Zone?

(off Jordan's glance)

I couldn't help overhearing. She's right, you know. You could do real well for yourself -

JORDAN

I won't work for them. But I'm won't fight 'em anymore, either. You end up dead fast that way. Now if you don't mind, I'd like to get back to my life.

Jordan heads away, trashing the remains of lunch. Damon shakes his head, disappointed. A BEAT, and then he glances up. Frowns.

UPSHOT - PAST DAMON

And there we see the source of his discontent, looming high above the city: one of the Visitor motherships, hanging suspended in the afternoon sky, casting its mammoth shadow across the city.

CUT TO:

INT. NEUTRAL ZONE - ESTABLISHING

Just outside the perimeter. We SEE a number of uniformed Visitors and humans moving through the Zone, engaged in conversation. We LINGER for a moment on a sign nailed to the

wall of a building, right at the corner of the intersection.
Below the Visitors symbol we can read the warning:

NOW ENTERING
NEUTRAL ZONE
All Terran Vehicles
Subject to Search

EXT. AN ADJACENT STREET

Off the beaten track. A few storefronts, objects for sale in windows and doorways. Damon ENTERS the alley just as a Visitor is leaving. Damon waits until he's gone, then moves toward a VENDER in one of the doorways. He's Korean.

VENDER
Yes, sir, what can I do for you?

DAMON
I'm looking for Digger.

VENDER
(small laugh)
You and everybody else. Here, take a look at this -

DAMON
I was told I could contact Digger through you.

VENDER
Were you?
(holding up product)
How about this? Imported from China, or what's left of her -

Damon, running out of patience, grabs him by the shoulder.

DAMON
Look, damn it, this is important.

The Vender looks him over, sizing him up.

VENDER
Digger only works where there's a profit. No profit, no Digger.

Damon shakes his head in dismay, and finally releases the Vender.

DAMON
Just put the word out, all right?
Tell Digger I want a meeting. The name's Damon. I'll be around.

Damon heads away. As he does, the vendor nods to a street kid lurking in an alley - JACKO - who watches Damon intently. He emerges from the shadows, following Damon for a pace or two. Then, abruptly, he stops as though listening to something. Then:

JACKO

Hey!
(as Damon turns)
Digger says: what do you want?

DAMON
What...?

Damon kneels down, turns Jacko's head just slightly. We SEE that the kid's wearing a transceiver earplug.

DAMON
Transceiver?
(off Jacko's blank look)
Transmitter/receiver. Radio?
(kid nods)
We have to talk.

Jacko listens to something we can't hear, then glances up again.

JACKO
Digger says: business or pleasure?

DAMON
Not over an open channel. This has to be in person. It's important.

JACKO
(listening again)
Digger says: follow me.

The kid heads off. Damon follows him into

ADJACENT ALLEY

where Jacko picks up a manhole cover and steps back.

JACKO
You ever been DownUnder before?

DAMON
Not in these parts, no.

JACKO
Digger says: hold onto your socks.

Damon proceeds down the steps. Jacko waits above until he's down, then follows, replacing the manhole as he goes.

INT. TUNNELS

And where you'd expect to see no one else around, instead there are people passing through the underground maintenance tunnels in both directions. The walls are spray-painted with graffiti, much of it dedicated to anti-Visitor slogans. Jacko leads him past vendors working out of boxes and suitcases, exchanging Visitor money for Terran hard cash, selling radios and watches and travel passes. (Background dialogue to come.)

The folks in the DownUnder are a combination of rough-and-tumble types, punkers, and straights: we see a pair of nuns negotiating

with a vendor for a shortwave radio.

DAMON

Business is good.

JACKO

Visitors don't come down here. They try, sometimes, but without air support, they have to come down one at a time. They come down, they don't go back up again.

DAMON

So in the meantime, you're more trouble than you're worth.

JACKO

For now. They'll figure out how to pull it off someday.

DAMON

And then?

Jacko makes a slicing gesture across his throat, his meaning clear. He continues into

ADJACENT TUNNEL

Different from all the rest. This one is markedly empty. Jacko stops, turns, points down the tunnel.

JACKO

That way.

Damon hesitates only a moment before continuing into the otherwise deserted tunnel. He's barely inside when two large MEN come out of the shadows, one in front of him, one behind.

FIRST MAN

(re: the duffel)

Hand it over. Weapons search.

DAMON

Sorry. Private property.

FIRST MAN

In two seconds it'll be my property if you don't let me see it.

DAMON

And when I get it back it'll be light just a few of my valuables. Right?

FIRST MAN

(smiling)

Strictly business. You pay me a little now, or you pay me a lot later. Your choice.

Damon shrugs as though giving in. Removes his duffel, and SLAMS

the first man across the face with it. The second man comes at him, and Damon takes him out with a savate kick. Damon presses the advantage, dragging the first man back unsteadily on his feet. He cocks his fist back to deliver a haymaker when:

DIGGER

Cut it.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL Digger holding a Visitor laser. Her expression is strictly no-nonsense, her voice cool, but there's no doubt that she'd pull the trigger if given a moment's provocation. Damon looks like he's considering it for a moment, then finally releases the man. Digger lowers the weapon and nods toward the far end of the tunnel.

DIGGER

Go on.

With a final glance to his opponents, Damon heads away. Jacko follows. Digger lingers as the two men pick themselves up off the ground, then approaches the first man. We don't SEE it, the action taking place BELOW FRAME, but she grabs him in a very delicate part of his anatomy. His face shows the pain.

DIGGER

I track you going into business for yourself again, I'll cut 'em off and mail them to you in a box. Fourth class. You copy?

He nods. Quickly, and emphatically. Digger lets go and retraces her steps back to the room she emerged from.

INT. DIGGER'S QUARTERS

A clutter of boxes, merchandise, steam-pipes, old TVs, you name it, a black-marketeer's dream. There are also a number of kids from every ethnic group in the place, from 12 on up until the late teens. She holsters the weapon, looks to the kids.

DIGGER

Cypher mode, troops. Eyes and ears out, make sure no one bothers us.

The kids head out, disappearing down the access tunnels and air ducts. Jacko is one of the last to go, pausing just long enough to give Digger the transceiver in his ear. She smiles and hands him a chocolate bar. He's clearly her favorite.

DIGGER

Nice going.

He smiles, takes the chocolate, and heads out. She looks at the transceiver in her hand, holds it up for Damon to see.

DIGGER

Beautiful, isn't it? One of the last things to come out of Japan before the Hammer fell.

DAMON

The password is -

DIGGER

Phoenix. Yes, I know. I've been expecting you ever since they picked you up.

DAMON

How -

DIGGER

Nothing happens up top, or DownUnder, that I don't hear about.

DAMON

That's why I'm here. With your network of contacts in the black market, you'd be a big help to the Resistance. You interested?

She smiles grimly, walks away, then raises her right wrist so he can see the silver band that encircles it, much too tightly.

DIGGER

A gift from the Visitors. When they took over, they grabbed kids for slave labor to help clear rubble off the streets. I was sixteen when I got this.

DAMON

Paingivers. I've seen them before. Used at Visitor prison camps. You try to escape, they broadcast a signal -

DIGGER

- and it fries you. Major flatline. Took me a year, but I figured out how to disable it. Stuck my hand in a high-voltage fence. Figured I'd either short circuit it or die, either way was okay by me. It worked. Brains, not brawn.

She turns away from him. Rubbing the bracelet.

DIGGER

But I still can't get it off. Alien metal. Lasers, diamond drills, nothing works. It was made for a skinny 12 year old girl. Soon it'll be so tight it'll cut off the blood. Then they'll have to - to amputate.

She lets this sink in. Then turns toward a locked cabinet.

DIGGER

You want to know if I'm up to it?

She opens the cabinet, revealing a stunning assortment of weapons, Terran and Alien. Enough to outfit a small army.

DIGGER

Where and when?

Damon smiles. He's found the right person.

DAMON

Soon. Got one more to go. I'll be in touch.

With a casual salute, he exits. Digger watches him go, her hand unconsciously straying to the painkiller on her wrist.

CUT TO:

EXT. VISITOR MOTHERSHIP - DAY

Just enough to ESTABLISH UNDER:

FIRST VISITOR (vo)

The Counselor will leave within the hour.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTHERSHIP - CONTINUOUS

One of the control centers. Several uniformed VISITORS move through the scene in BG UNDER:

FIRST VISITOR

He requests an audience.

SECOND VISITOR

I'll inform his Excellency.

With a bow, the Second Visitor heads out of the room and into

INT. CORRIDORS

passing other Visitors at work. He heads down the corridor, past an intersection, and pauses in front of a reinforced door that reads ATMOSPHERE BATHS - NEGATIVE PRESSURE. He touches a hand to a handplate, and the door SIGHS open. He steps into

INT. AIRLOCK

And we HEAR the sound of air being pumped, exchanged. He waits. Finally, a red light above the door on the other side of the room goes from RED to GREEN, and he goes through into

INT. ATMOSPHERE BATHS

of which we can see precious little. Lots of steam, and smoke, and what might be pits of molten rock glowing through the mist. We can dimly SEE a number of robed shapes moving through the room, while others sit, almost as though in meditation. The

First Visitor looks around, then finally finds the one he's looking for. He stoops beside the figure. Whispers. After a moment, the figure opens one yellow, slitted eye. A BEAT, then it nods, and the First Visitor exits.

STAY WITH the figure as it rises, and moves out of the room into an ante-chamber, where a Visitor TECHNICIAN mans a control console. It steps up onto a raised platform, and a translucent glass tube descends over it. Once covered, it shucks the robe.

The tube makes viewing difficult, but we can SEE that this is a Visitor, and for the first time we can see, albeit only partly, the full reptilian form. It nods to the technician, who starts up the equipment. There's a POWER WHINE, and the tube GLOWS.

Then, layer by layer, we SEE the reptilian form covered by what might pass for human flesh. First just pinkness, then musculature, then more flesh, then a simple face, which grows in detail by the moment. Finally, the process finished, the tube retracts, and out steps the figure we saw earlier on the poster: the Leader. He is nude, though we only SEE his head and shoulders. As someone puts a ROBE around him, we

CUT TO:

INT. VISITOR CHAPEL - MOTHERSHIP

The Leader sits, waiting. Others also sit quietly in BG. The Visitor symbol is here, but different. Silver, the points on the end of each arm seen now as stars, and the whole design is integrated into a much larger canvas of Visitor symbols. There are various frescoes, detailing various stages in Visitor evolution, from crawling lizards to lizards standing upright, to starships and lightning bolts. In the center of it all is a symbol that looks like a sword against a starburst.

Into this, the Counselor comes. Bows, as the Leader stands.

COUNSELOR

Excellency.

They sit in one of the alcoves.

COUNSELOR

My ship departs for Homeworld within the hour. Counselor Henrod, my replacement, should arrive shortly. I've received some - troubling reports about him. His loyalty -

LEADER

- is a topic of some discussion, yes, I know.

COUNSELOR

And you agreed to his transfer here?

LEADER

You determine if a stone holds iron or gold by putting it in a crucible,

and heating it until it melts and shows its secrets. The Emperor feels this would make a fine crucible.

(beat)

Leave him to us, Counselor.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Just enough to ESTABLISH as we cut inside to

INT. BAR

Where we FIND Jordan at the bar, nursing a beer and looking not at all happy with life. There are a fair number of other people in the place, at tables and behind the bar. A jukebox plays an old blues song from the thirties, soft, and soulful. Jordan looks up at the Bartender.

JORDAN

Man's got a right to make a living, right? Puts in his time, fights for everybody else, he's got a right to say no, make a little time for himself, doesn't he?

(bartender nods)

Damn right. Once in a while, you got to do for yourself.

Give it a BEAT. Then suddenly the door OPENS, and in walk three Visitors, in full uniform. Instantly, the place falls dead. The only SOUND is the song, which continues unabated. The Visitors walk through the bar, checking out the clientele with suspicious glances. They stop at a table, look at the couple seated there.

VISITOR

Identity papers.

They begin digging out the papers. The Visitor waits impatiently, looks around, notes the jukebox.

VISITOR

What is that racket?

The other customers look around, but no one answers. The Visitor glances to one of his companions.

VISITOR

Turn it off.

The second Visitor goes to the jukebox and unplugs it. The soft, gentle voice and music falls silent. The room suddenly seems dead and depressed and empty. The Visitors finish checking the couple's ID, and then move on to the next table.

Just as they get there, however...the music starts again. They whirl around to see Jordan leaning up against the jukebox. He's just plugged it in again, and once more the sweet sounds of the song fill the bar.

JORDAN

You want to know what that is? That is Helen Morgan. Recorded October 16th, 1929 with the Leonard Joy Orchestra. "Why Was I Born?" from "Sweet Adeline."

The main Visitor nods to his companion, who starts back toward the jukebox, clearly expecting Jordan to step aside. Jordan doesn't, standing between the Visitor and the jukebox, which continues behind him.

JORDAN

I was sixteen when I played this song for the first time. It was the sweetest sound I'd ever heard. Made me think that maybe the human race isn't so bad after all, if we can produce something as pure, as -

VISITOR

Step aside.

JORDAN

When it's finished.

The Visitor draws his weapon. Jordan doesn't move. But then, one by one, every person in the bar stands, slowly, and starts to surround the three Visitors. Yeah, the Visitors have guns, but it's three of them against fifty others, some of whom have large, blunt instruments in hand.

The Visitors consider the odds...and with a look that says "We'll be back," they stalk out of the bar as, behind them, the song continues to its conclusion.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAR - ALLEY - NIGHT

Jordan steps out of the bar, still humming the tune to himself. Just then, he notices he's not alone. One of the Visitors we saw earlier steps into view at the other end of the alley. Waits. Then starts slowly toward Jordan. Jordan slows, looks around, starts to head back the way he came. But now a Visitor appears there as well.

VISITOR

That was a mistake.

With that, he SLUGS Jordan. Jordan hits the wall, rubs his mouth. It's bleeding. He shrugs.

JORDAN

Hey, it was my quarter.

With that, Jordan rushes one of them, but the Visitor is too strong, and too fast. The others start in on him when:

DAMON

Hey, you got him! Great. that's the

guy, all right. Stole my wallet.

VISITOR

We —

DAMON

No, that's okay. I'll take it from here. Let me get a human cop, and —

Damon approaches, surreptitiously getting something out of his back pocket. Just as they shove him away:

DAMON

MOVE!

He IGNITES what he's holding, a magnesium FLARE. The Visitors are blinded. Jordan breaks loose, and it's a free-for-all. The fight rages back and forth inside the alley, until one of the Visitors decides that this has gone far enough. He pulls out a Visitor weapon from his belt, FIRES. Jordan dives at Damon, saving him. They tuck and roll, and Damon comes up with a similar weapon, FIRING back. He takes out the first Visitor, then the second as he tries to escape.

That done, Jordan and Damon sit, exhausted, on the alley floor.

JORDAN

Thanks.

DAMON

Anytime.

JORDAN

(re: the weapon)

So where'd you get that thing?

DAMON

Old war souvenir. Surprised it still works.

JORDAN

Imports. Last forever.

(beat)

Stupid question. How long've you been following me?

DAMON

On and off, since we met. I thought maybe you might change your mind. Wanted to be there when it happened.

JORDAN

Who says I changed my mind?

DAMON

They weren't delivering a singing telegram. You must've done something to make 'em mad.

JORDAN

Yeah, I did. And tell you the truth,
I'm glad. I've been mad at these
creeps for a long time. And maybe
now it's time I did something about
it.

(beat)

I'm in.

He extends a hand. Damon takes it, shakes.

DAMON

Welcome to the front lines.

FADE TO BLACK

AND

FADE OUT:

End Act Two

Act Three

FADE IN:

EXT. DAMON'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Just enough to ESTABLISH as Damon walks into

INT. CORRIDOR FRONTING APARTMENT

He stops in front of the door. Something's wrong. His door is
slightly open. He looks around. Doesn't see anyone, but that
doesn't prove anything. He reaches into his bag, comes up with a
weapon. Has it at his side as he nudges open the door and enters

INT. DAMON'S APARTMENT

Nothing looks disturbed. Holding the weapon up and ready, Damon
moves slowly and cautiously through the living room, eyes
searching the shadows. He STARTS at a small noise from the
kitchen. He approaches. Takes a breath. Steps into

INT. KITCHEN

ready to fire if need be - and there is HAM TYLER, his face in
the refrigerator, a half-eaten sandwich in his hand. He barely
seems to notice the gun, or Damon.

HAM

You got any decent coffee around this
joint?

Damon lowers the gun a little.

DAMON

Ham? Ham Tyler? Is that you?

HAM

No, I'm the Easter Bunny, what do you think of my disguise?
(sniffs milk carton)
Whoof!
(pours it into sink)
I let myself in, hope you don't mind.

Damon relaxes slightly, puts the weapon away.

DAMON
Who, me? This place is getting like Grand Central Station.

HAM
I've seen Grand Central. It's cleaner.

Ham sits at the table, continues eating, seemingly very casual.

DAMON
I didn't know you were still alive.

HAM
Good.

DAMON
Last time I saw you was during the war. I still owe you for pulling my fat out of the fire in Mexico.

HAM
Glad you see it that way, Damon, because I'm about to collect.
(beat)
So, what'd they tell you about the mission?

DAMON
Just that you needed support for a mission.

HAM
But they didn't say what, right?
(off Damon's nod)
Which means they still don't know what the mission is. Good. And they want you to tell them what it's about. Right?
(no answer)
That's what I thought. Which is why we're playing this my way. I'll tell you what you need to know, when you need to know it. You got any ketchup around here?

Ham gets up, looks for it. Damon points to a cabinet.

DAMON
Third shelf. Why won't you tell me?

HAM

I can't tell you that.

DAMON

You can't tell me why you can't tell me?

HAM

That's right.

DAMON

You're asking a lot, Ham.

HAM

Hey, you were the one said you owed me big-time. Look, either you trust me, or you don't. What's it gonna be?

Damon thinks about it for a long moment. Finally nods.

DAMON

All right. I'll play along, but just for now. Anything else?

HAM

Two things: One: There's an old warehouse over on Lake, meet me there with your team tomorrow night at eight. I'll fill you in then. Two: go back and tell the Board I haven't shown up yet. We've had no contact.

DAMON

That's it?

HAM

For now.

With that, Ham heads back into

INT. LIVING ROOM

and makes for the door, Damon behind him.

DAMON

What next? Raise the dead?

HAM

That'll teach you to let somebody save your life. Next time let 'em kill you, it's less painful in the long run.

And just as Ham steps out through the door:

DAMON

By the way...you remember a spring day, about six years ago, you were pinned down by a Visitor convoy and

an F-1 fighter plane blew them away?
Saved your butt?

HAM
Yeah. Was that you?
(off Damon's nod)
Damn.

Looking vaguely annoyed, Ham exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. MOTHERSHIP - DAY

Just enough to ESTABLISH UNDER:

KYRAN (vo)
Welcome aboard, Counselor Henrod.

INT. MOTHERSHIP - CORRIDOR FRONTING DOCKING BAY

An airlock door dilates open, and COUNSELOR HENROD enters. He carries a heavy case, and is met by KYRAN. She bows, just slightly, at the meeting.

KYRAN
Security Chief Kyran, at your disposal. Your quarters are this way.

They start walking down the corridor. After a BEAT:

KYRAN
So how are things on Homeworld?

HENROD
The same. But that's to be expected.

KYRAN
The New Order requires discipline and consistency.

HENROD
So I'm told.

KYRAN
You don't agree?

HENROD
I didn't say that. I only meant that that's a very simple answer designed to eliminate an entire class of complex questions.

KYRAN
Great truths are always simple.

HENROD
Yes.

(beat)
So I'm told.

They stop in front of a recessed door. Kyran bows slightly.

KYRAN
Your quarters. When you're settled,
perhaps we can continue our
discussion. I'm sure I'd find it
quite - fascinating.

HENROD
I look forward to it. Now, when can
I see his Excellency? I was told -

KYRAN
He is indisposed for the moment. The
pressures of running an occupation
force of this size.

HENROD
But policies require -

KYRAN
You will be notified when he wishes
to see you. Good eating, Counselor.

On that, Kyran heads off. Henrod doesn't look happy. He's just had his loyalty quizzed, and been put off, within minutes of arriving. Not pleased, he opens the door to his quarters and steps inside, closing the door loudly behind him.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK - AFTERNOON

Damon walks casually across the park. He heads toward a park bench, where someone is seated, reading a newspaper. After Damon sits, give it a BEAT as the paper lowers to reveal Burke.

BURKE
You're late.

DAMON
I got tied up.

BURKE
What's your report?

DAMON
I've selected my team. They're good.
But I'll need hardware, a lot of it.
If we're going to fight these things
we'll need more than rough language.

BURKE
Done. What about your contact?

Damon looks around, hesitates just the barest second, then:

DAMON
Hasn't shown up yet.

BURKE
Why not?

DAMON
How should I know? I'm not his mother.
(beat, moving past it)
Look, what's the deal on this guy?
If the Board doesn't know what he's up to, why'd they bring me in out of the cold to help him?

BURKE
It wasn't unanimous. But he's big with some of the top guys on the Board. They think he's some kind of hero. I say he's a loose cannon. Everything he touches blows up. So if you do hear from him, chirp in. For your own sake.

With that, Burke walks away, not looking back.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNELS - NIGHT

Digger moves through the underground tunnels, thick with people sitting hunkered against the walls, sleeping on floors. As she moves forward, she's approached by the same MAN we saw earlier, guarding her quarters. Behind him, we SEE several others standing with a confused-looking WOMAN.

DIGGER
What's the problem?

MAN
(re: the woman)
She came in through B tunnel a few hours ago. Security found her wandering around after lights out. No name, no contacts, no ID. DownUnder Council just voted on whether or not she gets sanctuary.

DIGGER
And?

MAN
Negative. We're taking her topside now.

Digger moves forward, looking more closely at the woman, who doesn't meet her gaze. She's been through some rough times, to be sure. Her clothes are torn, she's dirty, her hair is ragged. She focuses at a nowhere point somewhere past Digger.

DIGGER
(to the woman)
What happened? Do you need help?

MAN
Won't do you any good. She's not talking. Hell, I don't know if she can talk.

DIGGER
She's in shock. We can't send her out like this. Why'd the Council vote to send her out?

MAN
Officially? No sponsor. We're short on everything. Food, supplies – without a sponsor –

DIGGER
What's the unofficial reason?

MAN
Five Visitors tried to follow her down the tunnel. None of them got very far, but they must've wanted her real bad.
(beat)
She's got their mark.

He pulls up her sleeve, revealing a holographic tattoo...a translucent projection of the Visitor symbol that rotates slowly above her skin, where a slender device has clearly been implanted in her arm. Digger examines the spot and the hologram with growing curiosity.

DIGGER
This is new. Never seen a tag like this before.
(to the woman)
What did they want with you, I wonder?
(to the man)
Tell the council she stays.

MAN
We can't. If the visitors come again –

DIGGER
Let 'em. We don't throw our own kind out like garbage.

MAN
She doesn't have a sponsor.

DIGGER
She does now.

With that, Digger takes the woman's arm and slowly begins leading

her down the hall. She pauses only long enough to call back:

DIGGER

By the way – any of you boy scouts
seen Jacko? I've been looking all
over the place for him.

MAN

Said he was going out, had something
to do. That's it.

Digger nods, and continues on her way.

CUT TO:

INT. LEADER'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

The Leader carefully assembles bits of enamel on a mural he's
making. It's a rendering of another world, with symbols covering
parts of the world. There's the sound of a CHIME behind him.

LEADER

Come.

The door opens, and Kyran enters. Without turning from his work:

LEADER

Yes?

KYRAN

Ship is secure. Transports locked
down for the night. Ground base
confirms all quiet.

LEADER

Very good, Kyran.
(as she starts away)
Nothing else to report?

KYRAN

What else would there be?

LEADER

I understand you've had an escape
from Biolab 7.
(off her glance)
I do hear things on my own.

KYRAN

A matter of no importance, Leader.
We're in the process of finding a
replacement subject even now.

LEADER

And the woman?

KYRAN

Knows nothing that can harm us. And
in her condition, without assistance,
I doubt she'll survive the night.

LEADER

Good. And our guest? Is he settled in?

KYRAN

Yes.
(noting the mural)
Homeworld.

LEADER

It relaxes me, reminds me why we're here. And what's at stake.
(beat)
Your appraisal of the Counselor?

KYRAN

Young, idealistic, keeps his own counsel...he could prove to be troublesome.

LEADER

You worry too much, Kyran. He's far from the Council, on a world filled with unknown dangers. If he should be in a difficult situation, there's always the chance that his shuttle might accidentally be put down in an area outside our control. He could be stranded for hours.

KYRAN

And would, of course, be killed almost immediately.

LEADER

A tragedy, to be sure. But then, I've always told the Homeworld council that we need more ships.
(beat)
Good night, Kyran.

KYRAN

Good night, Leader.

She backs out of the room, and he returns to his mural, smiling.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A young PREGNANT WOMAN steps out of her small apartment, locks the door, looks around nervously and then starts off across the street. There's no one else about. She pulls her coat closer about her as she turns a corner. Just then

A BLACK VAN

edges out of a side alley and begins pacing her.

INT. ALLEY

Jacko is going through a dumpster when he HEARS the sound of footsteps. He dives quick into the dumpster, hiding from sight.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The woman enters the alley, cutting across to save a few steps. She passes the dumpster and is halfway down the alley when

THE BLACK VAN appears at the end of the alley, blocking the exit.

THE WOMAN slows, stops. Waits. The van just sits there. She looks back the way she came. And another black van blocks the only other way out of the alley. She's startled by the SOUND of the first van's door sliding open and she CRIES OUT.

INT. DUMPSTER

Where Jacko huddles, listening to the SOUND of a struggle out in the alley, the woman CRYING for help. Her cries are suddenly muted, though. There's the sound of footsteps, and the BANG of the van door slamming shut.

INT. ALLEY

As the two vans drive off into the night, we go back to

THE DUMPSTER

Where Jacko trembles, frightened, very much alone in the dark.

FADE TO BLACK

AND

FADE OUT:

End Act Three

—

David Strauss / dss2k@virginia.edu (PsiCop P12+ & B5 Waiter, Fresh Air)
Administrator, New York Islanders Mailing List

"Mr. Potato Head! Mr. Potato Head! Back doors are NOT secrets!"

Originally sourced and posted by David Thiel @ www.geocities.com/Area51/Cavern/3227/v.htm email: d-thiel@uiuc.edu

Can also be found via FTP in ASCII format at:
sunsite.doc.ic.ac.uk/media/tv/collections/tardis/us/sci-fi/V

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