

RED PLANET BLUES

A *SPACE NOIR*

By

William Gunn

For Barbara...*Always and Forever!!!*

"On Mars, You Never Know Who You Can Trust."

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FADE IN:

PROLOGUE:

EXT. MARS - AERIAL SHOT - DAY - 2185

Two DUNE BUGGIES Race Across The Surface of The HELLAS BASIN, an Area of the RED PLANET the Size of the CARIBBEAN SEA. Both Dodge Rocks and Boulders that Litter The Bleak Landscape. ONE Buggy is Slightly Ahead of The Other. The Distant SUN Hangs Low in The Sky as Evening Approaches.

EXT. MARS - TRACKING SHOT

The Rear Buggy Closes in on its PREY. Each Vehicle Carries One MAN. The Driver of The First Buggy wears a DAYGLO YELLOW ENVIROSUIT with an Attached TRANSPARENT '*Fish-Bowl*' Style HELMET. A Meter-Long Radio ANTENNA Protrudes From The Back of His E-SUIT. He is DR. SAM GRANT - CHIEF-OF-STAFF for MARS GENERAL HOSPITAL - Early '40's.

The MAN in The Rear Buggy wears a Similar E-SUIT that's ELECTRIC BLUE in Color. He is ARLO TRASKE - THORIUM PROSPECTOR - Mid-50's. His '*Fish-Bowl*' Style HELMET is Tinted GOLD. He Holds a Long Object That Could Be a WEAPON. Possibly a RIFLE!

The Forward Buggy Makes a SHARP EVASIVE TURN To the Right, Enters a SMALL BOX CANYON and comes To a Stop. The Driver Dismounts His Vehicle. He trudges in the direction of The Other Buggy, Which Has Also Stopped. The Second Driver Gets Out of His Buggy. They Stand a Few Meters apart. Their Conversation Takes Place Via HELMET RADIO.

GRANT
Traske, is that you?

TRASKE
You might as well give up, Doc --
There's nowhere left to go. You're
screwed!

GRANT
Like Hell!

TRASKE
You think the Cavalry's comin' over
the hill?

Traske Slowly Shakes His Head.

TRASKE (cont'd)
'Cause they're not.

Traske Moves Closer. He's Definitely Carrying a RIFLE. His E-SUIT is Older than the Other Man's. It's Seen Better Days.

TRASKE (cont'd)
In fact nobody gives a damn.

GRANT
I don't believe you.

TRASKE
You're a fool. You've been one since you first got here.

GRANT
What are you saying? That I should have looked the other way. Been a Team Player?

TRASKE
Maybe, for starters.

GRANT
I don't put up with theft. Not from anybody.

Grant Looks around For a way out. There Isn't One.

Traske Points His RIFLE at Grant.

TRASKE
Big Friggin' Deal, Doc! Big Friggin' Deal!

GRANT
This nonsense has gone on long enough. Tell your boss it's too late to stop the truth -- It's gonna get out sooner or later.

TRASKE
That ain't my concern.

GRANT
If you're who I think you are, why are you doing this?

TRASKE
A man's gotta make a livin'. I gotta bunch o' mouths t' feed.

GRANT
 Whatever they're paying you I'll
 double it. I promise!

TRASKE
 (snorting over the
 Radio)
 That ain't worth two farts in a
 sandstorm.

GRANT
 What are you saying?

TRASKE
 I think you know.

GRANT
 You're insane! You really believe you
 can kill me and get away with it?

TRASKE
 Why not, I have before.

GRANT
 (sounding desperate)
 Now what?

TRASKE
 In five hours they're broadcastin'
 the heavyweight fight between
 Kowalski and Morgan from Singapore --

Traske Moves Closer. The RIFLE Still Pointed at Grant.

TRASKE (cont'd)
 -- I gotta thousand solars ridin' on
 Kowalski --

He Moves Even Closer Still. Less than Two Meters Away While
 Aiming For Grant's Midsection.

TRASKE (cont'd)
 -- I ain't missing it for nobody.

BANG!!

ROLL INTRO. CREDITS:**I.****EXT. MARS ORBITAL STATION - NIGHT - 2187**

MARS ORBITAL STATION is a TWO-HUNDRED METER Diameter ROTATING Wheel-like STRUCTURE Orbiting FIVE HUNDRED KILOMETERS Above the Surface of the RED PLANET. IT Looks Like a Ginormous Metallic TIRE with Four SPOKES Radiating Outward From a Slightly Smaller CENTRAL HUB. A Large SPACECRAFT 'FREEBIRD' Docks with the Station.

INT. MARS ORBITAL STATION - CONTINUOUS

TWO Dozen Arrivals Are Lined Up to Pass Through the CUSTOMS BOOTH. ONE of the Them is Called by the Next INSPECTOR - A Slender Young WOMAN - Early 20's - Who Wears a White Uniform with a Lot of POCKETS. A CUSTOMS BADGE is Pinned to Her Left Shoulder. She Uses a MEDSCANNER (Handheld Diagnostic Device) to Begin Her Preliminary Assessment. All the While She's Making Notations in an Electronic NOTEPAD.

INSPECTOR

You seem to be in perfect health.

The PASSENGER is JOHN WESLEY (JACK) GREYSON MD - NEUROSURGEON - 42 - TALL and Fairly Thin - SMART-ASS!!- He's Not As Clever As He Thinks He Is! - Slight Southern Accent - FROM The BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS of NORTH CAROLINA.

JACK

(grimacing)

Tell that to my aching head.

The Inspector Looks Very Cheerful. She Flashes a Lot of Pearly-White Teeth.

INSPECTOR

Just drink as much water as you can, being hydrated will help.

JACK

I'll do that.

INSPECTOR

That's what I'm here for.

JACK

That's it?

A Small light on her Medscanner Flashes YELLOW.

INSPECTOR

(with a frown)

According to this you've got a history of Total Virtual Reality abuse.

JACK

The operative word is 'History'. I kicked that back in Lunopolis.

INSPECTOR

I don't know. That might be a problem. We just can't let anyone in. You understand -- Don't you?

Jack Hands Her a Small BUSINESS CARD. It Looks Like a PRINTED CIRCUIT Board.

JACK

That's the contact info for my therapist, Doctor Julio Delgado. He can confirm my current mental health status.

She Stares at the Card For a Moment.

INSPECTOR

(with a slight smile)

I don't think that'll be necessary, Doctor Greyson.

JACK

You don't sound too certain about that.

INSPECTOR

Just remember, you'll have to register with the proper authorities once you're in MarsPort. It's the law.

JACK

(scowling)

You're joking, right?

INSPECTOR

Not at all. They have some pretty strict anti-Teever laws down there.

JACK

Why?

INSPECTOR

(whispering)

Because the Governor's son died of a TVR overdose two years ago -- That's why -- Good enough reason?

JACK

(frowning)

Yah. Can I go now?

INSPECTOR

(with a smile)

Of course, there's just one more thing... **'Abandon all hope, ye who enter here.'**

JACK

Huhhhhhnnnnnn?????

INSPECTOR

Sorry. That's something my Great-Grandpa used to say to all New-comers.

JACK

(with a snarl)

Whatever -- I think I'm gonna puke.

The Inspector Reaches Into one of Her Numerous Pockets. She Takes Out a Packet of Small Blue-Green CAPSULES.

INSPECTOR

Take a couple of these. They'll help -- I promise.

INT. MARS ORBITAL STATION - TAVERN - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Jack Greyson Takes an Elevator Down one of the SPOKES to the Wheel with a HALF-A-DOZEN or so of the Other Passengers. There HE Finds a TAVERN - **THE WET SPOT.**

The WET SPOT is a Smallish Place that Seats about Twenty PEOPLE. Most of Them are in Four-Person Booths. In Spite of the Crowd, It's Fairly Quiet. There's One BARTENDER Behind a Long Shiny Bar. The Rest of the Staff are FOUR-ARMED ROBOTS that Trundle About on Six Wheels.

Jack Notices SEAN CALLAHAN - Mid-40's - CO-OWNER and ENGINEER of SPACECRAFT 'FREEBIRD' - Tall and wiry - In a Dimly Lit Booth and Heads in His Direction. His WIFE - YOKO CALLAHAN - Late 30's - CO-OWNER and PILOT of 'FREEBIRD' - Short and curvy - Is With Him.

Callahan Half-Smiles as Jack Slides into the Booth.

SEAN

Now that you've made it, how're you feeling?

Jack Gets Settled. Then He Takes in a Deep Breath. His Color Is a Little Better. Jack No Longer Looks Like He's so Nauseous. Or Not as Much.

JACK

(with a heavy scowl)
Like a turd that's had the shize beaten out of it.

SEAN

Most likely from the Cold-Sleep.

JACK

(arching an eyebrow)
Oh really -- Y'think?

YOKO

That should wear off in an hour or so. It usually does.

JACK

God I hope so. Otherwise I want to crawl back inside that friggin' icebox for another three months.

SEAN

(half grinning)
Give it time. Cold-Sleep's a Bitch!

JACK

(frowning)
They should warn people.

YOKO

(with a grin)
They do. It's in all the travel brochures.

JACK
 (with a heavy scowl)
 I know. But I didn't know it'd be
 this bad.

Jack Waives Over a ROBOWAITER. He Orders a Shot of BOURBON.
 He Drinks It Down In One GULP. He Orders a Second...Then a
 Third.

JACK (cont'd)
 Any last-minute nuggets of advice?

SEAN
 (grinning)
 Don't Eat the Red Snow -- Don't Go
 Outside Without Your E-Suit -- And
 Stay the Hell Away From 'Free Mars'.

JACK
 I've heard about Free Mars,
 I thought it was an urban legend.

SEAN
 It's real enough. Trust me, Doc.

JACK
 You seem to know a lot about them.

YOKO
 (with a slight smile)
 You hear things. In our line of work
 it pays to keep your ears open and
 your mouth shut.

JACK
 How will I know who's a member or
 not?

YOKO
 You'll figure it out once you've been
 in MarsPort a while.

Sean Callahan Moves a Bit closer to Jack.

SEAN
 One more thing --

JACK
 -- What?

SEAN
 Don't get mad when they call you
 'Homer.'

JACK
 (arching an eyebrow)
 Homer???

SEAN
 It's what the locals call us folks
 born on Earth -- The Homeworld,
 y'know?

JACK
 Right.

YOKO
 (with a tear in her
 eye)
 Jack -- What you're doing -- Your
 search -- That's one of the Bravest
 Things I've ever heard in my life.

SEAN
 (with a slight grin)
 Or the Craziest -- If you ask me.

JACK
 (arching an eyebrow)
 Thanks you guys -- I think.

An ANNOUNCEMENT Comes Over the PA SYSTEM.

V.O.
**ATTENTION...ATTENTION PLEASE...THE
 NEXT SHUTTLE FOR MARSPOINT WILL BE
 DEPARTING IN FIFTEEN MINUTES...ALL
 PASSENGERS PLEASE REPORT TO THEIR
 ASSIGNED SEATS IMMEDIATELY...THANK
 YOU.**

INT. MARSPOINT BOUND SHUTTLE - FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER

Jack Greyson is Shown to His Seat by a FLIGHT ATTENDANT. He Notices There are Over a Dozen Other People Aboard. He Waves to Sean Callahan Who Waves Back. Yoko Callahan Gives Jack a '**THUMBS-UP**'.

Once Jack Is Securely Strapped In, He Reads the Following From a HOLOSCREEN Attached to the Back of the Seat in Front of Him.

MARSPORT is Located in Mare' Ionium on the Northwest Corner of the HELLAS BASIN.

MARSPORT is Recognized as a Sub-Section of the HELLAS BASIN REGION of the UNITED EARTH PROTECTORATE.

The HELLAS BASIN is Equal in Size to the Caribbean Sea.

The HELLAS BASIN Lies 33 Kilometers (20 miles) Lower than the Summit of OLYMPUS MONS, the Tallest Mountain in the Solar System

MARSPORT has a Population of 200,000 According to the Last Census.

MARSPORT Consists of Over Two Dozen Increasingly Larger Geodesic Domes.

They Range from Three Hundred Meters to Several Kilometers Across. The Largest is Seven Kilometers in Diameter.

All of the Domes are Covered by Ten Meters of Martian Soil for Radiation Protection.

Each Dome Has a Series of Interconnecting Airlocks.

MARS GENERAL HOSPITAL is Located Inside the Largest Dome.

THE ROCKET ENGINES Fire Shortly Thereafter. Jack passes out from the Acceleration and the BOURBON. Mainly from the BOURBON.

INT. MARS GENERAL - OPERATIONS MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Two MEN Sit in an OFFICE Across a LARGE DESK. They are Jack Greyson and an Older MAN - CARLOS CHIANG - OPERATIONS MANAGER for MARS GENERAL HOSPITAL - Mid 70's - Short and Paunchy. He has Mutton-chop Sideburns and Thinning Hair.

There isn't an Obvious COMPUTER WORK STATION on The Ornate Desk. There is a Large Holographic Communications Console, or HOLOCOM There However. It Makes an Annoying Humming NOISE the Whole Time Jack is There.

CHIANG

Welcome to Mars General. I'm glad you decided to take me up on my offer.

Chiang Fixes a DRINK for Jack.

JACK

Thanks, Mr. Chiang.

CHIANG

Please call me Carlos. Everybody does. We don't put up with that official crap like they do on Earth.

Jack Half-Smiles When He First Tastes The Drink. Then He PLACES The GLASS On The DESK.

JACK

Truth to tell I've never had much use for official crap myself.

CHIANG

Which is one of the main reasons I wanted you here --

Jack leans a little Forward.

JACK

-- Really?

CHIANG

And your impressive C.V. was a plus --

JACK

(grinning)

What can I say. Thanks?

CHIANG

(with a slight smile)

-- Of course the fact you were at the top of your class in Med School was a major factor in my decision as well.

JACK

Good to know. I'm curious, what happened to my predecessor?

CHIANG

It seemed he decided to take a Sunday drive -- He never came back.

JACK

(arching an eyebrow)

When was that?

CHIANG

About eighteen months ago. He rented a Dune-Buggy one weekend to do a bit of sight-seeing -- Nobody's seen nor heard from him since.

JACK

Any ideas?

CHIANG

Not a one. Security theorized he must have driven off a cliff. Something like that.

Jack Moves a little bit closer to Chiang's Desk.

JACK

But wouldn't there be any signs?

CHIANG

You'd like to think so. But Mars is a big planet. Its landmass is the same as Earth's.

JACK

I always forget that.

CHIANG

(half-smiling)

A lot of off-worlders do -- They tend to underestimate Mars.

JACK

I'll bet.

Jack Scratches His Nose.

JACK (cont'd)

Didn't you used to be the CFO of The Solar System Mining Corporation?

CHIANG

That was twenty years ago. I barely own any stock now.

Jack Looks around the Large Office For a Bit, then changes the Subject.

JACK

What was his name?

CHIANG

Sam Grant, why?

JACK

Just curious.

CHIANG

Tell me Jack, what do you think of our little town?

JACK

I'm impressed, so far.

CHIANG

It's no Lunopolis. But I'm sure you'll get used to the place very soon.

JACK

Speaking of Lunopolis. I wonder how long it'll be before I get used to the extra gravity?

CHIANG

Being from Luna I'd have thought the difference wouldn't have been that noticeable.

JACK

Most people make that mistake.

Jack STANDS Slowly...Then Sits Back DOWN...SLOWLY.

JACK (cont'd)

This gravity is over twice what I've been living in for the past seven years.

CHIANG

I'm sure you'll adjust soon enough.

JACK

I'll be spending a lot of my time in the gym to acclimate. That's for damn sure.

CHIANG

That'll help. As a matter of fact we have a first class facility here in MarsGen.

JACK

Terrific.

CHIANG

It's on the second floor in case you're wondering.

JACK
I'm sure I'll become a regular.

CHIANG
That's the spirit.

JACK
I wish somebody would go ahead and
invent Artificial Gravity. It'd be a
big help for everyone.

CHIANG
I wouldn't be a bit surprised if SSMC
was working on it.

JACK
They can't invent it fast enough far
as I'm concerned.

CHIANG
(with a thin smile)
Give them time.

JACK
What's all this crap I've heard about
Free Mars?

CHIANG
Don't pay any attention to the rumors
you may have heard.

Chiang Moves closer to Jack with an Open look on his Face.

CHIANG (cont'd)
They're just a few Malcontents.
Nothing to worry about.

JACK
(grinning)
That's about what I thought.

Jack stands Up Again. HE Changes the Subject...Again.

JACK (cont'd)
When do I get a look at my office,
meet the staff -- Get the lay of the
land?

CHIANG
You're eager, I like that. How does
9:00 tomorrow sound?

JACK

Let's make it 7:00. I'm an early riser.

CHIANG

That's fine. I'll see you at 7:00.

INT. MARS GENERAL - CONFERENCE ROOM - 7:13 AM

A HANDFUL of PEOPLE Stand Around the CONFERENCE ROOM. Most Look BORED. There Are ONE or TWO Who Appear to be Over the Age of FIFTY. THE OTHERS Look a Lot YOUNGER.

Chiang Hands Jack a Small ELECTRONIC NOTEPAD with the NAMES and HOLOGRAPHS of All of the ATTENDEES. Chiang Stands at the HEAD of the TABLE. He Waits Until Everyone in the Room Stops TALKING. He Begins to Speak.

CHIANG

Good morning everyone. This is Doctor John Wesley Greyson, our new Chief of Staff --

He Raises His VOICE. The CROWD Moves in a Little CLOSER, Though Not a Lot.

CHIANG (cont'd)

-- He last served as Chief Resident at Armstrong Memorial Hospital in Lunopolis. We're lucky to have him.

JACK

As Carlos said I served at Armstrong Memorial. I was there for seven years -- I prefer Jack.

ONE of the MEN Speaks up - HIROSHI TANAKA MD - CHIEF SURGEON - Mid-30's - Average height and weight - His Hair in the Style of a SAMURAI.

TANAKA

Why was I once again passed over for this position, Carlos?

CHIANG

As I've explained several times before, the Board and I don't think your quite suited for the job.

TANAKA

Bullshize!!

JACK
I'll need a strong Deputy Chief,
you're more than welcome to the job.

TANAKA
(really pissed)
Why don't you get on the next ship
to Lunopolis. You're not wanted here.

Jack stands Up Very Straight Facing Tanaka.

JACK
For one thing -- I didn't fly to Mars
in Cold-Sleep for three months to
turn tail and run --

Jack Looks Around the Room. Only a Few Make EYE-CONTACT.

JACK (cont'd)
-- And second -- Who would reimburse
the ten million solars it cost to
bring me out here?

SOMEONE Else Speaks - MARLENA ANTONOVA - CHIEF NURSE - Late
20's - Tall and skinny.

ANTONOVA
(with a friendly
smile)
I don't know about anyone else, but
I'm glad you're here.

JACK
Thanks.

ANTONOVA
Marlena.

JACK
Right.

ANTONOVA
I for one am glad we'll have some new
blood in charge --

SHE Stands a Bit Taller in Order to be BETTER Seen.

ANTONOVA (cont'd)
-- The last guy was so damned
undependable.

JACK
 (with a slight smile)
 I've been accused of many things over
 the years, that's isn't one of them.

Another MAN Chimes in - ALAIN' ROCHARD MD - NANOSURGEON -
 Mid-30's - Average Height and weight.

ROCHARD
 I'll be happy to have an extra pair
 of hands in the OR. It'll lighten the
 workload

JACK
 Hopefully.

ROCHARD
 I see you studied at Wake Forest. Did
 you pick up any new techniques in
 nanosurgery over the years?

JACK
 In fact one of the best in the field
 works at Armstrong Memorial --
 Barbara Kingsford. Do you know her?

ROCHARD
 I never had the pleasure. But I
 definitely know of her. She's done
 some amazing work over the years.

JACK
 She's developed a totally new series
 of treatments over the past five
 years.

Rochard stands a Little closer to Jack.

ROCHARD
 I'd love to hear more.

JACK
 Anything I've learned I'll happily
 share. That's what I'm here for.

ROCHARD
 Thanks.

JACK
 (with a smile)
 In fact, I plan to have an '**Open
 Door**' policy. If anyone ever needs my
 help -- Anytime.

CHIANG

Does anyone else have any more questions for Jack at this time?

SOMEONE Else Speaks Up - PEDRO MONTOYA MD - GENERAL SURGEON - Early 30's - Short and a Bit OVERWEIGHT.

He Holds Up his HAND.

MONTOYA

(laughing)

Yes, I have a question for Jack.

JACK

(with a grin)

Shoot!

MONTOYA

Isn't it true you're a Teever?

JACK

I was addicted to Total Virtual Reality -- I kicked it cold turkey three years ago back in Lunopolis.

MONTOYA

(with a sneer)

You know what they say -- Once a Teever, Always a Teever!

CHIANG

Exactly what kind of fool do you take me to be?

Chiang Looks Directly at Montoya.

CHIANG (cont'd)

Jack was vetted by the best Medical Placement Service on Earth.

JACK

It's alright. It's only natural for others to check out new people

CHIANG

It's still no excuse for him being a Horse's Arse!

ANTONOVA

(with a frown)

Why don't you Arseholes give Jack a chance. He just got here.

MONTOYA
(with a nasty grin)
Whasamatter 'Lena, you gotta
Schoolgirl Crush?

TANAKA
Yeah Marlana, do you?

MONTOYA
It'd explain a lot.

TANAKA
(with a twisted smile)
It sure would, Pedro -- She must be
Head-Over-Heels in Love with our new
Chief-of-Staff already.

MONTOYA
I've heard of Love-at-First Sight,
but this is ridiculous.

ANTONOVA
(with a snarl)
You can both kiss my Skinny Martian
Arse!

MONTOYA
Screw you, Marlana!

ANTONOVA
(with a WIDE grin)
You wouldn't like it -- I just lay
there.

JACK
(shaking his head)
This really wasn't what I was
expecting on my first day at the job.

CHIANG
(frowning)
I'm very sorry Jack. There's no
excuse! Both Hiroshi and Pedro will
be severely reprimanded.

JACK
(smiling)
No. In fact as my first official act
as Chief of Staff. Let's just drop
the whole thing -- It's not worth the
hassle.

CHIANG
Are you sure?

JACK
(nodding)
Absolutely!

FLASHBACK:

LUNOPOLIS - PHONE CONVERSATION - SIXTEEN WEEKS AGO

TWO PEOPLE, a MAN and a WOMAN Are Talking on a Voice-Only TELEPHONE.

MAN
I got the job -- I'm leaving in four weeks.

WOMAN
Good, maybe you can finally figure out what happened to him.

MAN
Maybe.

WOMAN
You don't sound too confident.

MAN
It's not that. I'm not gonna be able to go in there with guns ablazin', that's all.

WOMAN
What are you saying?

MAN
I'm really gonna have to be discrete. I can't tip my hand too early.

WOMAN
Oh my God!

MAN
I've got to build up a level of trust, otherwise I'll never get anywhere.

WOMAN
But you promised --

MAN

-- Yes I did -- And I'm gonna keep that promise, I swear -- But--

WOMAN

-- But?

MAN

It may take longer to get all the answers -- Assuming --

WOMAN

-- Assuming???

MAN

He wasn't involved -- Somehow.

WOMAN

Now you just wait one Damn minute, Ja --

MAN

I am, but neither of us have seen Sam in over five years -- Anything could have happened.

WOMAN

I know, but I also know he'd never do anything wrong. It's not in his nature.

MAN

True, but people change -- Unfortunately.

WOMAN

Not him! Just find out -- Please.

MAN

I will -- Whatever it takes.

END FLASHBACK:

INT. MARS GENERAL - CORRIDOR - DAY

Jack Runs Into Marlena Antonova. The Corridor is EMPTY Except for a Few MAINTENANCE ROBOTS. They Operate in NEAR-SILENCE. Except ONE. It Has a LOOSE BEARING that Causes it to Make a SLIGHT SQUEAK When It Moves in a FORWARD Direction. A RED LIGHT Flashes on TOP.

ANTONOVA
What're you up to?

JACK
(grinning)
Exploring.

ANTONOVA
Cool.

JACK
This place is bigger than I thought.

ANTONOVA
That it is.

JACK
By the way, I really appreciated your coming to my defense the other week. It meant more than you know.

ANTONOVA
(with a slight smile)
Anytime. Those Bastards were way out of line.

JACK
Yah, which reminds me. There's a get-together at Governor Malenkov's condo Friday night --

Jack steps a bit closer to Antonova.

JACK (cont'd)
-- It's a Plus-One event.

ANTONOVA
Are you asking me to be your Plus-One?

JACK
(with a slight grin)
That okay?

ANTONOVA
I'm flattered -- I really am --

Antonova Begins to Walk Away From Jack...Very Slowly. Then She Turns Around.

ANTONOVA (cont'd)
-- But I don't think my Wives would like that idea too much.

JACK

I'm sorry you won't be able to make it. I've heard his parties are supposed to be -- Very interesting.

ANTONOVA

Looks like you'll just have to find that out by yourself.

JACK

Looks like it.

ANTONOVA

I'm curious Jack. Won't that be too much stimulation for an --

JACK

-- Ex-Teever?

ANTONOVA

I really don't mean to pry, but from from what I've read isn't there an upper limit on stimulation for someone in your situation?

JACK

Yah.

ANTONOVA

What'll you do then?

JACK

(with a slight grin)

Be very damn careful.

MARSPORT - GOVERNOR MALENKOV'S CONDO - NIGHT

THERE Are Dozens of PEOPLE in the Large Place. A STRING QUARTET Plays MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY CLASSICAL MUSIC.

A MAN Walks Up to Jack - YURI MALENKOV - GOVERNOR OF THE HELLAS BASIN - Early 70's - Built Like a Pro Tennis Player.

He holds out his Right Hand in a Friendly Gesture.

MALENKOV

Doctor Greyson, I see you made it to my home. I'm glad you could spare the time.

JACK

Me too, Governor Malenkov. I understand your events are always a lot of fun.

MALENKOV

(with a broad smile)

Please, Call me Yuri.

JACK

Thanks --

MALENKOV

How do you like the music?

JACK

-- The Rolling Stones?

MALENKOV

(with a look of mock horror)

Philistine! The Beatles!!!

The TWO Men Walk Towards the BAR. The Crowd Parts for Their HOST.

MALENKOV (cont'd)

What can I get you to drink?

JACK

I'll have whatever you're drinking.

MALENKOV

Is a vodka martini alright?

JACK

Just make it a small one please --

Jack Looks at his Watch.

JACK (cont'd)

-- I've gotta get up awfully early in the morning.

Malenkov Stands Back to Take a Better Look at Jack.

MALENKOV

Why on Mars do you have to get up early on a Saturday morning?

JACK

I've got rounds in the ER, starting at 7:00 a.m.

MALENKOV
 (shaking his head)
 You can't assign someone else?

JACK
 'Fraid not.

MALENKOV
 That's a real pity.

JACK
 (nodding)
 Yah. Sure is.

A Slightly DRUNK Carlos Chiang Walks Up. He has a MARTINI in His Hand. He's With a Tall, Slender Youngish WOMAN Wearing a Very REVEALING DRESS. SHE Has a Look of TERMINAL BOREDOM on Her LOVELY Face.

She Remains SILENT During the Entire CONVERSATION.

CHIANG
 I see you've met our new Chief of Staff.

MALENKOV
 The Board made an excellent choice.

CHIANG
 Thanks, Governor.

MALENKOV
 (looking in another
 direction)
 Great. Whatever.

Chiang Wanders Off. He Walks Towards Another GROUP of PARTY-GOERS. His Silent Companion Follows Behind Him.

Jack Steps a Bit Closer to Malenkov.

JACK
 This is really good vodka. I'm usually not a fan.

MALENKOV
 It's made right here in MarsPort.

JACK
 Really?

MALENKOV

We limit imports from Earth as much as possible. It really helps our local economy.

JACK

Makes sense.

MALENKOV

I don't know if you're aware of it, but there are scores of private farms all over the rim of the Hellas Basin.

JACK

I've read about them. Besides supplying MarsPort and the other settlements. Don't they also supply food to the mining operations as well?

MALENKOV

(beginning to grin)

You've done your homework. I really admire that.

JACK

I like to know as much about where I'm going to be living.

MALENKOV

(smiling)

I can tell.

JACK

There are mining operations all over Hellas Basin aren't there?

MALENKOV

A hundred or more I'd estimate.

JACK

All automated, right?

MALENKOV

(with a slight smile)

For the most part, though human supervision is always needed. There's nothing like having boots on the ground.

JACK

What kinds of ore?

MALENKOV

You'd be surprised -- Nickel-Iron,
Titanium, Helium-3, Thorium -- Just
to name a few.

JACK

(arching an eyebrow)
Thorium?

MALENKOV

It's used in most Non-Fusion Reactors
all over the System.

JACK

I read that somewhere.

MALENKOV

We mine approximately seventy percent
of all the Thorium used in the Solar
System right here on Mars.

JACK

That's amazing. All by robots?

MALENKOV

No, we utilize Human Miners to dig
the ore. It's hard work, but it's
well paid. Machines are too slow and
cost too damned much.

JACK

Seems practical.

MALENKOV

(with a bigger smile)
I'm certain the Mining Companies
will be happy to know that you agree
with their Management Style.

JACK Takes Another Sip of His DRINK.

Just then A TALL Lovely WOMAN Approaches - MONIKA
BEITERHOFF - 31 - REPORTER - MARSPORT TRIBUNE - Athletic
build - Dark Red Hair - Blue-Green Eyes - Slight German
Accent.

MONIKA

Aren't you going to introduce me?

MALENKOV

Of course. Monika Beiterhoff, this is
Doctor Jack Greyson. He's the new
Chief of Staff at Mars General.

JACK
It's a pleasure.

MONIKA
(with a slight smile)
You too, Doctor Greyson.

MALENKOV
I'll leave you in Monika's capable
hands.

Malenkov Pats Jack on the Back. He Smiles as He Walks Away.

MALENKOV (cont'd)
She'll show you 'round to some of the
other guests.

Monika Reaches Out To Jack and Takes Hold of his Left Hand.

MONIKA
(with a sly smile)
Of course. Shall we, Jack?

They Move Toward the Larger, Noisier, More Crowded Section
of Malenkov's Condo.

Jack Hesitates For a Moment or Two.

JACK
I don't know. I've never been a
social butterfly.

MONIKA
It'll be fun. There are a lot of
people who'd like to meet the new
Chief of Staff of MarsGen.

JACK
I can't imagine why?

MONIKA
Think about it. There will come a day
when you might perform surgery on
them.

JACK
I know that's true. But their social
status won't matter when they're in
my O.R.

MONIKA

Don't be so naive'. Their social status makes a big difference when it comes to every aspect of their lives.

Jack Shakes his Head. Then He Staggers a Bit.

JACK

Back in Lunopolis when it came to medical care it was first-come-first-served. Social status didn't matter.

MONIKA

It's the same here on Mars -- Officially.

JACK

Now what in the Hell does that mean?

MONIKA

You'll find out in due time.

JACK

(arching an eyebrow)
God I hope so.

Monika Sees a MAN Approaching.

MONIKA

Speaking of important people. Here's one you should definitely avoid, whenever possible.

He is HAROLD BARRINGTON-SMYTHE IV - PRESIDENT of UNITED MARS WORKERS UNION - Also LEADER of OLYMPUS MONS CRIME SYNDICATE - 37 - Tall and lanky - Jet-Black Hair with a Matching Pencil-Thin Mustache - Bright Blue Eyes.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE

Who's your friend, Monika?

MONIKA

This is Jack Greyson, the new Chief of Staff at MarsGen.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE

The new sawbones, I'm Harold Barrington-Smythe. My friends call me Harry.

JACK

Nice to meet you, Harry.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE

You too, Jack. I hope Monika's not boring you too much.

JACK

(with a smile)

Not at all. What line of work are you in, if I may ask?

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE

You could say I'm an entrepreneur.

JACK

(somewhat puzzled)

That covers a lot of ground.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE

Very perceptive. Let's just say I have my fingers in a lot of pies here on Mars.

MONIKA

You may be interested to know, he's the richest man on Mars!

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE

Actually there's that fellow over in Clarkesville who's wealthier -- The former asteroid prospector.

MONIKA

Oh yes. I forgot about him. He is quite wealthy isn't he?

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE

He could buy and sell me. Three times over -- Easily.

JACK

I've heard of Clarkesville, but I can't recall where it is?

MONIKA

It's located on the opposite side of Mars near the entrance of Valles Marineris.

Barrington-Smythe Glances at His WATCH.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE

Well if you two will excuse me I must be going. Auf weidersehen, Maudi.

Jack Takes a sip of His DRINK.

JACK

Mausi??

MONIKA

(with a slight smile)

It means little mouse -- In German.

JACK

Interesting man, Mr. Barrington-Smythe.

MONIKA

He's also a very dangerous man.

He Looks Over His SHOULDER.

JACK

Him -- He looks harmless enough.

MONIKA

Looks can be deceiving.

She Looks Back Too.

MONIKA (cont'd)

In addition to being President of the largest union on Mars -- He's also a very powerful Crime-Lord.

Jack Greyson Looks Like He's Just Spotted a RATTLESNAKE.

JACK

What do you mean a Crime-Lord?

MONIKA

Have you ever heard of Olympus Mons?

JACK

The volcano?

MONIKA

No, the crime syndicate.

He's Sill SHAKEN...QUITE A BIT IN FACT.

JACK

A crime syndicate, here on Mars?

MONIKA

Yes Jack, here on Mars.

JACK

I really find that hard to believe.
Nothing like that exists in
Lunopolis.

MONIKA

I'm sure it exists there too, you
just never noticed it.

JACK

(shaking his head...
slowly)

But with the United Earth Security
Service how do they survive?

MONIKA

Do you honestly believe underpaid
bureaucrats are immune to bribes?

JACK

I guess I've been so involved in
medicine for so long I didn't notice
such things.

MONIKA

That's why I'm in Investigative
Journalism, to keep up with those
kind of activities.

A Look of Relief Comes Across Jack's Long FACE.

JACK

I'm glad somebody does.

MONIKA

Here's an example -- If MarsGen needs
a new piece of medical equipment or a
rare vaccine, Olympus Mons will find
a way to make sure it 'Falls off a
Cargo Pod'.

JACK

You seem to know a lot about a lot of
things. Did you know Sam Grant?

MONIKA

Just barely. He mainly kept to
himself, why?

JACK

Just wondering.

He Changes the Subject. Then He Looks at His Watch Again.

JACK (cont'd)
 Good grief. I didn't realize it was
 so late. I'm working this entire
 weekend. Are you free next Friday
 night?

Monika Takes out Her VISIPHONE. She Hums a Tune Under Her
 Breath While She Looks.

MONIKA
 Let me look. No. But I am Saturday.
 What did you have in mind?

JACK
 Dinner and a holovid. The latest
 STARQUEST Episode has finally been
 released.

MONIKA
 Took them long enough.

JACK
 Ain't that the damn truth!

MONIKA
 I'll see you Saturday night. Does
 8:30 work for you?

JACK
 (with a big smile)
 Absolutely.

INT. MARS GENERAL - CHIEF OF STAFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Jack Greyson is at His Desk as He Finishes up Some Paperwork
 When A Stranger Walks in - LIAM M'KEMBA - CHIEF OF SECURITY
 FOR MARSGEN - Early 60's - A Tall MAN of AFRICAN DESCENT
 Wearing a Dark Business Suit.

The Stranger Extends His Left Hand.

M'KEMBA
 I'm Liam M'Kemba, the Chief of
 Security for this asylum.

JACK
 Nice to finally meet you. I don't
 envy your job.

M'Kemba Takes a Seat in Front of Jack's Desk. He Adjusts his
 Jacket Once He Gets Settled.

M'KEMBA

(smiling)

Nor I yours. I'm sorry I haven't come by sooner. I had a major family crisis to deal with in Clarkesville. It couldn't be avoided.

JACK

I'm really sorry. Is everything alright now?

M'KEMBA

Yes, thanks for asking.

JACK

How can I help you out today?

M'KEMBA

I heard you attended one of Yuri Malenkov's famous parties last night. Did you meet anyone of interest?

Jack Leans forward in His Chair.

JACK

How'd you know that?

M'KEMBA

It's a small town. News travels fast.

JACK

I suppose it does, I just didn't think of it that way.

M'KEMBA

It's not Lunopolis.

JACK

That's for damn certain. Back home everybody minds their own business.

M'KEMBA

Lunopolis has over four times the population of MarsPort.

JACK

Speaking of my own business, why are you so curious about who I may have met at Yuri's party?

M'KEMBA

It only makes sense. It's part of my job to know if any of MarsGen's staff becomes...compromised.

JACK

Compromised? I met Malenkov, drank some lousy vodka, talked to a few people and left early.

M'KEMBA

Anyone I may know?

JACK

(with a slight frown)

How about Carlos Chiang? Do you know him?

M'KEMBA

Anyone else?

JACK

(with a slight grin)

I spoke with Monika Beiterhoff for a little while.

M'KEMBA

She's a strange one, isn't she?

JACK

(arching an eyebrow)

How so, I found her quite pleasant.

M'KEMBA

I've always noticed that she plays it close to the vest. I suppose it's because she's an Investigative Reporter.

JACK

I know that. She told me herself. In fact we're going out to dinner this coming weekend.

M'KEMBA

Why so long?

JACK

You may not have noticed but we're both very busy people. We had to coordinate our schedules.

M'KEMBA

I'd very much appreciate it if you'd
let me know how the date goes.

M'Kemba Moves a Little Closer to Jack.

M'KEMBA (cont'd)

Is that something you could do?

JACK

No.

M'KEMBA

Are you quite sure? It'd really help
me out.

JACK

(Pissed!)

Hell No!!

II.

INT. MARSPOORT - HOLOTHEATER - NIGHT

Jack Greyson and Monika Beiterhoff are Among Seventy or So
Couples in the Large Circular Showroom to Watch the Latest
STARQUEST Episode. Three Service ROBOTS are Roving To and
Fro taking Food and Drink orders. One Stops Directly Before
Monika and Jack.

MONIKA

What would you like, Jack?

JACK

Any old Bourbon'll do.

MONIKA

Sorry, all they have are non-
alcoholic beverages.

JACK

(scowling)

Dammit, you're kidding.

MONIKA

I'm afraid not, how about a
Droobleberry Slush?

JACK

(feigning a frown)

You really want to see me throw up?

MONIKA
 (with a slight grin)
 Of course not, Silly.

JACK
 A large cola then -- And popcorn.

MONIKA
 Sounds good.

She Presses a Couple of BUTTONS on the Robot and a Moment
 Later they Both Have a Drink and Popcorn. Jack Begins
 Wolfing His Down. Then He Begins Gulping His Soda.

Monika Watches Jack in Bemused Awe.

MONIKA (cont'd)
 Slow down Jack. Nobody's going to
 steal it -- I promise.

JACK
 I guess I was hungrier than I
 thought.

MONIKA
 Evidently.

THE HOUSE LIGHTS Go Down. The MUSICAL SCORE Begins. The
 AUDIENCE Gets Quiet.

SUDDENLY!!! There's a SERIES of BRIGHT FLASHING IMAGES
 Coming from ALL DIRECTIONS of the LARGE ROOM. A Few Moments
 into the PRESENTATION, Jack Greyson Begins SHAKING...A
 Little.

MONIKA (cont'd)
 Are you alright, Jack?

JACK
 Yah.

MONIKA
 Are you sure. You don't look so good.

JACK
 (trying to smile)
 I'm fine.

Jack Starts SHAKING a Bit More. It's Even MORE NOTICEABLE
 Than BEFORE. WITHIN Moments He's Nearly CONVULSING. Jack Has
 a BLANK LOOK on His Face. Before Monika Can React Jack
 Stands **STRAIGHT-UP OUT OF HIS SEAT!!!**

POPCORN Flies Out of JACK'S Bag Like so Much UNWANTED SNOW. THE LID of His DRINK Comes LOOSE Dousing Monika and A Few Other ATTENDEES With COLD, STICKY Fluid. A COUPLE of Them Shout CURSES. Then Jack Screams Like He's Been STRUCK by LIGHTNING.

JACK (cont'd)

AAAAAAAAAYYYYYYYYYEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!

Jack RUNS Full-Tilt Towards the EXIT. HE Knocks Over Several PATRONS as He Makes his GETAWAY. SOME of Them Try to Tackle Jack to the Floor Without SUCCESS. Jack BARREL-ASSES Out the Door Waving his ARMS. Monika STANDS There With a Look of WORRY and CONFUSION.

She follows Jack as Best as she can. Monika Keeps Him in Sight the Entire Time.

INT. MARSPORT - TREE COVERED PARK - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Monika Catches Up to Jack. He's on a BENCH with his HEAD Between his LEGS. HE Looks SICK...Very SICK.

MONIKA

What happened back there?

JACK

(looking embarrassed)

At the theater?

MONIKA

Yes Jack, at the theater.

JACK

When I sort of -- "Blanked-out"?

MONIKA

(concerned)

That's one way of putting it. You really scared me.

JACK

I'm really sorry about that. It's a side effect of TVR withdrawal caused by sensory overload -- It hasn't hit me this hard in nearly a year.

MONIKA

Mein Gott!

JACK
Fortunately it doesn't happen that often -- I'm usually better prepared.

MONIKA
How do you possibly prepare for that?

JACK
(trying to smile)
You may have noticed I drink a lot of Bourbon -- It takes the edge off.

MONIKA
(with a slight grin)
I'll have to remember that. The main thing is that you're feeling better now.

JACK
Yah -- Mostly -- Now that we're in a quiet place.

MONIKA
Shall we continue on to the restaurant then?

JACK
(still looking weak)
Can we put it off 'til Friday night -- Right now I just wanna go home, have a drink, take a stress-pill and go to bed.

MONIKA
Of course, I'll make sure you get home safely.

JACK
(trying to grin a bit more)
Thanks.

FADE IN:

INT. MARSPORT - DOME SEVEN - LEVEL 3 - DAY

JACK GREYSON stands under a Large HOLOGRAPHIC Display that reads HANK'S MOTORSPORTS. There are a few vehicles of varying sizes and different colors there on the lot. They range from One-Person DUNE-BUGGIES to Six-Person MULTI-DAY EXPLORER-VANS.

A Tall, Skinny MAN with Dark Brown Hair and a Matching Handlebar Mustache walks up to Jack. He has a 'Professionally' Friendly Smile on his face - HANK HOLLIDAY - DEALERSHIP OWNER - LATE 60's.

HOLLIDAY
Howdy stranger, what can I do you for?

JACK
Not much -- Just takin' a look.

HOLLIDAY
(with a slight frown)
Swell -- A *Homer* Lookie-loo.

JACK
I suppose...

HOLLIDAY
You don't wanna buy anything today?

JACK
No -- Unless --

HOLLIDAY
(with a hint of a smile)
-- Unless what?

JACK
You do rentals too?

HOLLIDAY
(with a Broad smile)
Friend, I got the best rental rates in all of MarsPort.

Jack takes a step back. A Slow Step.

JACK
You wouldn't try t' be jerking around a *Homer* -- Would you now?

HOLLIDAY
You wound me, Sir -- By the way whad'ya say your name is?

JACK
I didn't

HOLLIDAY
 (arching an eyebrow)
 Well??

JACK
 Jack.

HOLLIDAY
 Jack what?

JACK
 Jack -- Spratt.

Holliday holds out his Right Hand.

HOLLIDAY
 A pleasure -- Mr. Spratt.

JACK
 Yah -- You too --

Jack moves in a bit closer to take the other Man's Hand.

JACK (cont'd)
 -- What I'm really interested in is
 findin' out if an old friend of mine
 rented one of your Buggies a while
 back.

HOLLIDAY
 Why?

JACK
 (with a grin)
 'Cause he told me he got a helluva
 deal from one of you guys here on
 Level 3 -- I'd like the same deal if
 possible.

HOLLIDAY
 How long ago was he here?

JACK
 Oh, about a year-and-a-half ago.

HOLLIDAY
 (flabbergasted)
 A year-and-a-half ago -- Now just how
 in th'Hell am I supposed to recollect
 everyone I dealt with eighteen months
 ago?

JACK
Beats me -- Computer records maybe?

The Salesman Taps the Left Side of his Head.

HOLLIDAY
Son, this is the only computer I
trust.

Jack begins to walk away...Slowly.

JACK
Okay -- Okay -- If you don't remember
you don't remember -- Maybe I'll have
better luck with the Dutchman.

HOLLIDAY
That Horse-Thief -- He can't even
remember his own mother's birthday.

Jack turns back around to Holliday.

JACK
Well?

HOLLIDAY
Whad'ya say your friend's name was
again?

JACK
I didn't.

HOLLIDAY
Well???

JACK
Grant -- Sam Grant.

Holliday scratches his chin. Then he holds out his Left
Hand...Palm-up...With a BIG Smile.

HOLLIDAY
Come to think of it that name does
sound a bit familiar.

Jack reaches for his wallet. Then he pulls out a One-Hundred
Solar Bill.

JACK
I thought it might.

After three more similar monetary exchanges occur.

JACK (cont'd)

Well?

HOLLIDAY

(smiling)

I remember it like it was
yesterday -- It was a Sunday
afternoon -- I was getting ready
t'close up for th' day.

Jack Greyson nods. His patience is wearing thin.

JACK

Go on. Then what?

HOLLIDAY

Your Friend comes in here like th'
Devil Himself was on his heels -- He
was almost outta breath.

Jack moves even closer to Holliday. They are less than half
a meter apart.

JACK

Did he say anything that you recall?

HOLLIDAY

Just that he wanted t'rent m'best
Buggy -- Cost didn't matter -- He'd
also need an E-Suit -- He was in one
helluva hurry -- I didn't even have
time t' haggle with him --

The Salesman Stretches his Back in order to become more
comfortable.

HOLLIDAY (cont'd)

-- That in itself made me a bit
suspicious -- It set off a few alarm
bells in my head.

JACK

Really, why?

HOLLIDAY

(with a sideways grin)

Mister -- You really are a *Homer* --
Nobody does any tradin' down here
without takin' th' time t' haggle for
at least a good hour -- It's just not
done.

JACK
 (with an arched
 eyebrow)
 Well, imagine me not knowing that.

HOLLIDAY
 Yeah, whatever -- Whad'ya say your
 name was -- You look a little
 familiar t'me -- Aren't you that new
 Doc at MarsGen?

Jack turns away from Holliday.

JACK
 Not me. You must be confusing me with
 somebody else.

HOLLIDAY
 I dunno -- I'm pretty good when it
 comes t' faces.

Jack Greyson begins to make a Hasty Retreat.

JACK
 Well, I suppose there's a first time
 for everything.

The Salesman looks at the Cash in his Hand and Smiles.

HOLLIDAY
 I suppose so.

INT. MARSPOORT - CAFE - NIGHT

As Jack Greyson and Monika Beiterhoff Finish their MEAL a
 Strolling MARIACHI BAND Plays a Soft and Lovely TUNE. Jack
 Lights Monika's CIGARETTE. She SMILES. They Both Look HAPPY
 and SATISFIED. Jack is GRINNING.

A WAITER Brings Another Bottle of WINE to their TABLE. HE
 Hands the BILL to Jack, Who Makes a TERRIBLE FACE. Monika
 LAUGHS Out LOUD. TEARS Begin to Roll Down her Beautiful
 CHEEKBONES.

JACK
 (beginning to laugh)
 Good God. Why didn't you let me know
 how expensive this place is?

MONIKA
 What's wrong, Jack?

JACK

Oh nothing. How do you feel about washing dishes?

MONIKA

It can't be that bad.

JACK

(with a twisted grin)

I don't know. I may have to promise free brain surgery to the owner and her whole family as well.

MONIKA

The food was good.

JACK

Yah -- But I wouldn't have had that third glass of wine if I'd known it was imported from Earth.

She tries to distract Jack.

MONIKA

How was your steak?

JACK

(with a half-smile
and a half-grimace)

Terrific, I couldn't even tell it'd started out in a hydroponics tank.

MONIKA

(with a sudden
shudder)

Oh God Jack. Remember reading how people used to kill animals for food?

JACK

They didn't know any better -- In fact back home in th' Blue Ridge Mountains there're farmers who still keep chickens -- Some 'em are my kinfolk.

MONIKA

For the eggs -- Right?

JACK

(with a wink)

Mostly.

Jack changes the Subject.

JACK (cont'd)

I was wondering -- Since you know so much about what goes on in Marsport -- What do you know about Free Mars?

MONIKA

Not much. Just a few rumors. That's all.

JACK

What kind of rumors?

MONIKA

Silly stuff really -- Rumors about Independence from Earth.

JACK

(arching an eyebrow)

Really?

MONIKA

Yes. Really --

Monika Takes a Sip of Wine.

MONIKA (cont'd)

-- From what I've heard they feel that Earth's treating them like third-class citizens on their own planet for decades. How they're angry and ready for change -- Self-Rule!

Jack Lights a CIGARETTE. He INHALES Three Deep PUFFS.

JACK

If that's so I can't say that I blame them. I've always sympathized with the Little Guy.

MONIKA

That's a good way to live.

JACK

Thanks. But I'd like to know more.

MONIKA

Why?

JACK

Maybe I can help in my own way. Do something, even if it's not much.

MONIKA

Alright, take the cost of medical care here on Mars. As I pointed out at Yuri's party it's a rigged system.

JACK

For the upper class, right?.

She Takes a Bite of Her SALAD.

MONIKA

Precisely.

JACK

That Sucks! I intend to make a lot of changes in the way that's handled. Major changes.

MONIKA

That won't win you many popularity contests.

JACK

Like I give a damn --

Jack Takes Another SIP of Wine. Then He Lights Another Cigarette.

JACK (cont'd)

-- It's never been my style anyway?

MONIKA

(with a subtle wink)

Give the man a prize.

She Hesitates a Moment. Then She Charges Ahead.

MONIKA (cont'd)

There's something else, though.

JACK

What?

MONIKA

There's the Missing Thorium Situation.

JACK

(looking puzzled)

What Missing Thorium Situation?

MONIKA

According to the bookkeepers there should be quite a bit more of the stuff mined every quarter.

JACK

What bookkeepers?

MONIKA

The one's who work for all the major mining operations.

JACK

Okay. How much is missing?

MONIKA

Millions of solars worth. Tens of millions over the past four years.

JACK

How many companies are we talking about?

MONIKA

All of them.

JACK

How many Thorium Mining Companies are there.

MONIKA

There are nine operating Thorium Mining outfits within twenty clicks of MarsPort. Including the Independents.

JACK

Any suspects?

MONIKA

The United Earth Security Service isn't saying. Sometimes I think they're in on it.

JACK

(arching an eyebrow)

You never know.

MONIKA

Yes. And there's been an increase in accidents among the Thorium miners.

JACK
Really? How much?

MONIKA
Thirteen percent in the past four
years.

JACK
What sort of accidents?

MONIKA
(looking grim)
Explosives misfiring -- Laser Drills
burning through E-Suits -- Pressure
Seals failing -- Things like that.

JACK
(frowning)
And when these accidents occur, what
happens then?

MONIKA
The site is shut down at least
seventy-two hours for inspection.

JACK
(with a faraway look)
That's what I thought.

MONIKA
Do you think somebody's arranging
these accidents?

JACK
(nodding slowly)
Yah.

MONIKA
That would give someone ample time to
confiscate as much ore as they'd
like.

JACK
It's how I'd do it if I was in
charge. Pretty slick -- Nobody'd be
the wiser.

MONIKA
Except for the occasional dead miner.

JACK
(with a heavy frown)
Yah -- There is that isn't there.

MONIKA
And if that isn't enough.

Jack Snaps to Attention.

JACK
(arching an eyebrow)
What else is there?

MONIKA
There's the Drug Trafficking too.

JACK
Drug Trafficking -- What Drug
Trafficking?

MONIKA
Two types really, Jack -- The first
is for Pain Meds for the Injured
Miners -- The second is for
Stimulants to make them work longer
hours to make up for lost time.

JACK
So they get screwed from both
directions.

MONIKA
Indeed they are!

Jack Greyson Begins to Pound on the TABLE.

JACK
That really Sucks Out-Loud!

MONIKA
I totally agree.

JACK
Any idea who's behind all of this?

MONIKA
I've been working this story for over
a year and not getting anywhere.

Monika Takes a SIP of Wine. Then ANOTHER.

MONIKA (cont'd)
It's so frustrating.

JACK
I can imagine -- Do you think Free
Mars may be connected somehow?.

MONIKA

I did, until I met some people who claim to be members.

JACK

Could they have lied to you?

MONIKA

No. All of them are beyond reproach.

JACK

I'd really like to meet some of them, just to talk.

Monika Hesitates for a Full Two Minutes. All the While Jack Sits There as He finishes his WINE.

MONIKA

That's a lot easier said than done. Though one of them was at Yuri's party.

JACK

Let me guess, Harry, right?

MONIKA

(with a thin smile)

I really can't say.

JACK

What about Barrington-Smythe? From what you've told me this sort of hijacking would be right up his alley.

MONIKA

It's not Harry. I know.

JACK

Oh really, how?

MONIKA

(smiling)

I asked.

INT. MARSPOORT - JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jack and Monika are Woken up by the Holocom that Sits next to his Bed. He Looks at His Watch and Sees that It's 1:30AM.

When He Answers the Device, a THREE-DIMENSION 1/10 Scale Image of a Woman Appears In the HOLOFIELD - DOCTOR KATHERINE (KATE) O'MALLEY MD - FREE CLINIC OPERATOR - Late 50's - SHE'S Short and Wiry with a FIERY PERSONALITY.

KATE
Is this Doctor Greyson?

JACK
(still half asleep)
Yah -- Whooziss?

MONIKA
Who's calling, Jack?

JACK
Beats me, Darlin' -- Now if you can tell me why the name of Hell you're calling at this ungodly hour I'd appreciate it.

KATE
I'm Doctor Kate O'Malley -- I run what passes for a free clinic here in MarsPort.

JACK
This couldn't wait 'til the morning -- During regular office hours?

KATE
I'm afraid not. We've got an emergency. I need a neurosurgeon. Stat!

Jack Sits Up. He's Fully Awake NOW!

JACK
I suppose I can be there in an hour.

KATE
(irritated)
The sooner you can get here the better.

JACK
How will I find your clinic?

KATE
(with a slight grin)
Just follow your nose to the smelliest part of Dome One.

The Call Disconnects. Jack Turns to Monika.

JACK
I've gotta go out for a while.

She's Still Not Fully AWAKE.

MONIKA
Why?

JACK
Medical emergency.

MONIKA
When will you be back?

Jack Kisses Her on The Forehead.

JACK
I wish I knew. Go back to sleep

Monika pulls the Blanket over Her Head.

MONIKA
You don't have to worry about that.

INT. MARSPOORT - O'MALLEY'S CLINIC - FORTY MINUTES LATER

THE CLINIC is Clean But VERY Disorganized. A Few MEDTECS (Medical Technicians) Are Wandering Around GOING From PATIENT to PATIENT. Every STAFF MEMBER Looks Tired. A FRAZZLED Kate O'Malley Walks Towards Jack. She Holds Out Her Right Hand and SMILES.

KATE
Welcome to my humble place of
business, Doctor.

Jack takes her Hand.

JACK
(grinning)
I'm glad I could make it.

KATE
(with a thin smile)
Not half as glad as me.

JACK
Why aren't these people at MarsGen?

KATE
 (sounding very tired)
 The poor bastards can't afford it.
 Good medical care here in Marsport is
 for the lucky few. The ones with
 money and power.

Jack takes Another Slow Look All Around The Place.

JACK
 That's not right. Aren't there any
 other Doctors on staff?

KATE
 (frowning)
 No, just me and the few Medtecs you
 see. And it's worse in most of the
 other clinics in MarsPort -- A lot
 worse.

JACK
 That's incredible. How do you manage?

Kate Quickly CROSSES Herself.

KATE
 Hand to mouth usually. And with a few
 donations -- And lots of prayer.

JACK
 Where's my patient?

KATE
 A bit over four hundred kilometers
 from here.

JACK
 You're joking?

With A Pat on His Back.

KATE
 You wish.

EXT. AIRSHIP BARSOOM - NIGHT

THE BARSOOM Is IMPRESSIVE. She's Cylindrical in Shape and
 Nearly as LONG as a FOOTBALL FIELD. She's Painted DAYGLO
 GREEN. The GONDOLA Hangs Underneath the Main Body like an
 AFTERTHOUGHT.

STANDING Outside the BARSOOM is The OWNER/OPERATOR - VIJAY RAMESH - Mid-30's - Tall and Rangy - HE'S Originally From REYKJAVIK, ICELAND - HE Has a WEST TEXAS DRAWL.

VIJAY
(smiling)
Welcome aboard. This ol' Gal is m'
pride 'n joy!

JACK
I can tell --

Jack Cranes His Neck to Take in The View.

JACK (cont'd)
-- Kate O'Malley told me my patient
is four hundred kilometers away.

VIJAY
Right.

Jack Follows RAMESH Through a Man-Sized HATCH That's
ADJACENT to The GONDOLA.

INT. AIRSHIP BARSOOM - CONTINUOUS

FROM The MAIN HATCH, Jack Climbs into The PASSENGER CABIN.
There HE BUCKLES Up into the Traditional SHOTGUN Seat. It's
Really CRAMPED Considering Jack's Lanky Build. Jack Notices
MOST of the Lighting in the CABIN Comes from the INSTRUMENTS
on the CONTROL PANEL.

Jack Takes a Look at His Watch. It's 2:27AM

JACK
How long will it take to get there?

VIJAY
A tad over four-and-a-half hours --
assumin' --

JACK
-- Assuming what?

VIJAY
No Sandstorms.

JACK
I was under the impression that the
Metsats keeps a close eye on those.

VIJAY

Oh they do. But sometimes th' damn things whip up with little or no warnin' at all.

JACK

Why do I find no comfort with that knowledge?

VIJAY

Don't get yer panties in a wad -- We'll make it there an' back without any SNAFUS.

Jack Looks Around The Interior of The GONDOLA. He'S Shaking His Head...SLOWLY.

JACK

I was under the impression it took two people to fly one of these birds. A Pilot and an Engineer?

VIJAY

(with a grin)

Aboard my ship I'm both. It's a real money saver.

JACK

(looking a bit concerned)

Is that safe?

VIJAY

(with a BIGGER Grin)

Now don't blow a gasket in yer E-Suit -- This ol' Lady's got th' best Autopilot on Mars.

Ramesh Changes the Subject.

VIJAY (cont'd)

I'll bet she didn't tell you I'm part of her underground?

JACK

Underground?

VIJAY

It's nothin' sinister -- We're just some average people who donate our time an' services t' Kate's clinic --

The PILOT Takes a Reading From One of the INSTRUMENTS. Then He Turns Toward Jack.

VIJAY (cont'd)
-- We make sure those who need medical care get it.

JACK
Sounds like a worthwhile cause.

VIJAY
We like t' think so.

JACK
Do you know the Muldoons?

VIJAY
Just barely.

JACK
Why didn't they just bring the boy to MarsGen?

VIJAY
'Cause it woulda taken 'em at least fifteen hours by tractor.

JACK
Do they trust you?

Vijay Looks Out the Forward VIEWSCREEN. The MARTIAN LANDSCAPE is CHANGELESS. All he Sees are Rust-Colored DESERT and LOW SAND DUNES in the DISTANCE. He has a Beatific SMILE on His LONG FACE.

VIJAY
No -- But they trust Kate.

JACK
She seems very trustworthy.

VIJAY
She's prob'ly th' most trustworthy person on this whole God-fersaken planet!

JACK
I can believe that.

VIJAY
Wouldya b'leive me if I told ya that she came out here over twenty years ago?

JACK
Sure, why?

VIJAY
T' run Mars General.

JACK
Why isn't she working there now?

VIJAY
She couldn't take all th' bullshize.

JACK
(nodding)
I can understand that.

Jack Yawns. TWICE.

VIJAY
We gotta ways to go yet. Why don't ya
sack out a while?

JACK
(rubbing his eyes)
Sound's like a good idea.

HE Hunkers DEEPER into His SEAT and Closes His EYES.

JACK (cont'd)
Wake me when we get there.

VIJAY
(grinning)
Well -- Duh!

BEGIN MARS SURFACE MONTAGE:

-- BARSOOM Flies Perpendicular in a Northeasterly Direction
across the Rim of the HELLAS BASIN.

-- She Flies at an Average Altitude of One Thousand METERS
above the SURFACE.

-- THROUGH the Forward VIEWPORT the Morning SUN can be Seen
RISING in The EAST Bringing a New DAY.

-- BELOW BARSOOM the Colors of the Features of MARS Begin to
CHANGE Once SUNLIGHT Begins to Strike THEM. The TOPS of the
Countless DUNES Catch the FIRST LIGHT.

-- BARSOOM Flies Over Half-a-Dozen MINING OPERATIONS. A Few MEN Can be Seen on the GROUND as they Begin their SHIFTS. They Look Like So Many ANTS.

-- BARSOOM also Flies Over Two Other FARMS on HER Way to the MULDOON FARM. There's Little Activity Going On at Either PLACE.

END MARS SURFACE MONTAGE:

INT. AIRSHIP - BARSOOM - DAY

A FAIRLY Loud BELL Begins to RING. Ramesh Shuts It OFF Almost IMMEDIATELY. Then He turns to Jack. He SHAKES Him a Little Bit. Jack Rubs His Eyes as He Tries to Become Fully AWAKE.

VIJAY

Y' better wake up. We'll be landin' soon.

JACK

How long?

Ramesh Checks the CHRONOMETER. He NODS to himself. He Makes a Few NOTES in His LOGBOOK.

VIJAY

Twenty minutes, give or take.

JACK

Cool. What can you tell me about the farm?

VIJAY

It's one of the oldest on th' Hellas Basin. In fact it's fifth generation, I think.

JACK

(amazed)

Fifth generation. You mean they've been out here nearly a hundred and twenty years?

VIJAY

Sounds 'bout right. Most of th' ones on this side of th' Basin are only third and fourth gen -- On th' other side they're mostly second and third.

Jack Looks Out a VIEWPORT. The LANDSCAPE is UNFAMILIAR to Him. All He Sees is UNENDING DESOLATION.

JACK

They've been out here since MarsPort was first settled back in 2071?

VIJAY

Yeah. They were members o' th' Pan-European Pioneer Corps.

JACK

No wonder they don't like outsiders.

VIJAY

Not that. They just like their own kind. Typical farmers.

JACK

(with a slight smile)

I know the type. My sister's married to one.

VIJAY

(smiling too)

So's mine.

INT. MARS - MULDOON FARM - DAY

The MULDOON FARM Consists of HALF-A-DOZEN Transparent DOMES Nestled Up TIGHTLY Against the RIM-WALL of the HELLAS BASIN. The BARSOOM Sits DOWN on a Paved LANDING PAD.

ONCE Through the AIRLOCK Jack and Vijay are met by a Couple of LOCALS - JED MULDOON - FARMER - Mid-40's - Dark Blond Hair and Blue Eyes - Tall and Lanky.

MULDOON

Welcome Vijay, where's Kate?

VIJAY

She thought it would be better if an expert came instead.

JACK

I'm Jack Greyson -- Kate told me you have a medical emergency.

MULDOON

You're the new Doctor from Earth?

JACK

Yah. But I've been working for the past seven years in Lunopolis.

MULDOON

Aye, but to us simple farm-folk you're still a Double-Damned Homer!

A WOMAN Stands NEXT To MULDOON. She has a SCOWL on Her LONG FACE - SAMAYA MULDOON - Late 30's - FARMER - Also Tall and Lanky - of MIDDLE-EASTERN DESCENT.

SAMAYA

Why didn't Kate come herself?

JACK

I'm a neurosurgeon. She's not.

VIJAY

Hey guys, if Kate says Jack is okay you can bet th' farm on that.

MULDOON

(with a slight scowl)

I guess you'll do, Doctor.

JACK

(frowning)

Thanks. May I see my patient now?

SAMAYA Starts to Walk Away From the AIRLOCK. SHE Heads Towards a Well-Lit CORRIDOR. QUITE a Few of the Other KIDS Try to TAG ALONG But Samaya Shoos Them Away. NOT SO GENTLY IN A FEW CASES.

SAMAYA

Of course, Doctor. Come with me.

INT. MULDOON FARM - MEDBAY - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Jack Sees a BOY Lying on a White Sheet on a Low-Slung BED. There are a Few Wires and Tubes Attached to HIM. He's Unconscious. His Breathing is SHALLOW.

JACK

What happened?

SAMAYA

Hiram here was attending his chores two days ago when he fell off a ladder. He hasn't stirred since.

JACK
How tall a ladder?

MULDOON
Five meters.

Jack Uses a PENLIGHT to Look into the Boy's EYES. HE Nods His Head a Few Times.

JACK
And how old is Hiram?

MULDOON
Eleven his next birthday.

Jack Checks the Boy's PULSE. HE Makes a Few ENTRIES in His NOTEPAD. Then He Rubs His Chin.

JACK
Was he being supervised?

MULDOON
No. Of course not.

JACK
Then please tell me, what in the Hell was an eleven year old child doing climbing a five-meter tall ladder?

MULDOON
Like Samaya said, his chores.

Jack Looks Totally AMAZED!

JACK
At eleven?

MULDOON
Doctor Greyson -- Don't judge us by your Homer standards. We're a working farm. We have kids as young as three doing chores.

JACK
(with a frown)
That's awful. It violates all sorts of Child Labor Laws.

JED MULDOON'S Patience Is Wearing THIN.

MULDOON

In a farm like ours it's all-hands-on-deck all the time -- Or we all starve together.

SAMAYA

That's very true, Doctor --

SAMAYA (cont'd)

(nodding)

-- In a good year we have enough produce to sell to MarsPort and the other cities. In a bad year it can be pretty rough.

Jack Scratches His HEAD. He Looks Off into the DISTANCE. He HUMS a Quiet Tune Under His BREATH.

JACK

As a matter of fact I've gotta few relatives who're farmers. Sometimes it's a struggle for them too.

MULDOON

Here on Mars?

JACK

Back on Earth.

MULDOON

(with a slight smile)

Maybe you're not such a bad fellow, after all -- For a Homer.

JACK

(grinning)

I hope not, now let me take a closer look.

Jack Takes Out a Medscanner From a JUMPSUIT Pocket.

MULDOON

What the devil is that thing?

JACK

It's a Medscanner. It'll help me figure out what's wrong with Hiram.

SAMAYA

I've heard of such devices. I never thought I'd actually see one.

JACK

You must be the Household Medtec.
Tell you what. When I've finished,
it's yours.

SAMAYA

I really shouldn't.

JACK

I insist. I've got plenty to spare
back at MarsGen.

SAMAYA

Thank you.

MULDOON

Any word on Hiram yet?

HE LOOKS at the DEVICE. It BEEPS Somewhat LOUDER than
Before.

JACK

(with a frown)

Any moment now -- Yah. As I suspected
he has a Subdural Hematoma -- A bad
one.

MULDOON

Can you fix it here?

JACK

Afraid not. He needs surgery at
MarsGen -- ASAP!

SAMAYA

How soon?

Jack TRIES To SOUND As CALM As POSSIBLE IN ORDER To Reassure
The MULDOONS.

JACK

Eight-ten hours max. I can give him
something that'll help him sleep 'til
we get there.

SAMAYA

What?

JACK

Narcosamine. Twenty cc's.

MULDOON

Is that safe, Samaya?

Samaya Holds Up Her LEFT HAND In An Unfamiliar GESTURE.

SAMAYA
 (frowning)
 As safe as any drug,
 I suppose.

MULDOON
 Doctor Greyson. If you're taking
 Hiram to MarsPort, I want Samaya to
 go with him.

JACK
 Of course.

MULDOON
 Samaya --

SAMAYA
 -- I've already packed my bags.

INT. MARS GENERAL - OPERATIONS MANAGERS OFFICE - DAY

Jack WALKS Into Chiang's OFFICE. M'Kemba Is There As Well.

Both MEN Seem AGITATED. Chiang is FUTZING With a CIGAR. The
 SOUND SYSTEM is Playing LOUDLY. Chiang Turns DOWN The VOLUME
 Once The DOOR to His OFFICE is FULLY CLOSED.

JACK
 (with a slight smile)
 What's up?

CHIANG
 (looking very stern)
 It's come to my attention that you
 recently performed surgery on a boy.
 A boy from one of the farms.

JACK
 As a matter of fact several members
 of the staff assisted me --
 Voluntarily --

HE STANDS a Bit STRAIGHTER. Jack Clears His THROAT.

JACK (cont'd)
 -- If the boy didn't have the surgery
 he'd have died.

M'KEMBA
 Was this surgery authorized?

JACK
 Authorized by who? Being Chief of
 Staff I assumed it was my call.

M'KEMBA
 You assumed wrong.

CHIANG
 You may not realize it but Mars
 General has a chain of command --

M'KEMBA
 -- A chain of command you didn't
 follow.

CHIANG
 What you did was totally
 irresponsible --

M'KEMBA
 -- We don't engage in socialized
 medicine here at Mars General.

JACK
 May I remind you both, every citizen
 of the United Earth Protectorate has
 the right to free healthcare.

CHIANG
 (with amused disdain)
 And may I remind you, we're not on
 Earth, are we?

M'KEMBA
 I'm afraid I'll have to file an
 official report with the U.E.P.
 Security Service.

JACK
 (very angry)
 File and be damned. I don't give a
 Rat's Arse!!

M'KEMBA
 (very solemn)
 You really should, Jack.

CHIANG
 (smarmy)
 That's a big mistake. You'll regret
 it -- I promise.

JACK
(pissed)
Is that a threat?

Chiang Lights His CIGAR. HE Blows SMOKE in Jack's Direction.
Then He TAKES Another PUFF.

CHIANG
Of course not. Just a bit of friendly
advice.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jack Paces the FLOOR while Monika WATCHES. She's CONCERNED
And It SHOWS. Monika Has A DRINK In HER LEFT HAND That
Hasn't BEEN TOUCHED, The ICE Is PARTIALLY MELTED.

MONIKA
It's only a week.

JACK
I know. But it still pisses me off.

MONIKA
What did you expect?

JACK
I don't know, a handshake maybe.
Something dammit!

MONIKA
Things work differently on Mars.

JACK
I'm beginning to understand that. I
wonder how much Kate could pay me to
come aboard?

MONIKA
Don't be silly. The Board won't let
Chiang fire you.

JACK
I hope you're right. But if they do I
was thinking about something that
could tide me over.

MONIKA
Such as?

JACK
I could make housecalls.

MONIKA
(with a strange look)
What's a housecall?

JACK
Back in the nineteenth and early
twentieth centuries doctors would go
to patient's homes instead of the
patient coming to the doctor.

MONIKA
(arching an eyebrow)
Wasn't that terribly inefficient?

JACK
It was ridiculously inefficient. It
would probably be twenty times harder
on Mars -- At least.

MONIKA
(nodding)
At least.

JACK
If I could persuade Kate she might go
for it, though.

MONIKA
(arching HER eyebrow)
Let me see if I understand this. You
and Ramesh would fly his airship from
farm to farm dispensing medical
treatment?

JACK
(with a thin smile)
It does sound a bit quixotic -- When
you put it that way.

MONIKA
Just a bit.

JACK
I've got to do something.

MONIKA
I know. But have you really thought
this through?

JACK
How I'd get my supplies for example?

MONIKA

Right.

JACK

Maybe through Barrington-Smythe.

MONIKA

(with a slight frown)

You can't be serious. Like I told you he's dangerous.

JACK

No doubt. But I'll bet he knows where to obtain anything we'd need to be successful.

MONIKA

But at a very steep price.

JACK

You're right -- I know.

MONIKA

Of course I am.

JACK

I believe I'll go visit Kate tomorrow and see if she'll have me.

MONIKA

I'm sure she'll appreciate anything you can offer.

JACK

I hope so -- I just don't want it to be a waste of time.

INT. O'MALLEY'S CLINIC - DAY

The OLDER DOCTOR is Alone When Jack Greyson Enters Her CLINIC. There Are a Few PATIENTS in COLD-SLEEP PODS.

Kate's Drinking From a Large COFFEE MUG When Jack First Arrives.

KATE

Jack, what in the Bloody Hell are you doing here this early?

JACK
You've probably heard by now that I
got in trouble for operating on the
Muldoon boy?

KATE
(nodding slowly)
News travels fast in this damned
beehive.

JACK
I've come to ask a favor.

KATE
(with a cautious grin)
Ask away.

JACK
If I get fired I'd like to come to
work for you --

Jack Moves CLOSER.

JACK (cont'd)
-- In fact I'd like to start making
housecalls starting with all of the
Hellas Basin Farms.

Kate O'Malley Takes A STEP Back Away From Jack.

KATE
I see.

JACK
What do you think?

SHE Rubs Her CHIN Then REPLIES.

KATE
It's a noble idea. But I couldn't pay
you one-tenth of what you're making
at MarsGen.

JACK
I didn't go into medicine for the
money.

KATE
That's why I like you so much, Jack.
You're an idealist.

JACK
(with a slight grin)
I suppose I am, after all.

Kate Yawns A WIDE YAWN.

KATE
And a Drunk too. I can smell the
booze from here.

JACK
(with a BAD Irish
accent)
Gee thanks, Katie-Darlin' -- You
really do care.

KATE
(with a slight frown)
How's that been workin' out for you,
Jack?

JACK
What?

KATE
The Smart-Arse Routine.

JACK
(with a BIG smile)
Pretty well, so far.

KATE
God, I really hope so.

JACK
Why?

KATE
I know some Important People who'd
like to meet you.

JACK
Who?

KATE
(with a sly smile)
Just some folks with Free Mars!

JACK
When?

KATE
As soon as possible. You might want
to sober up first.

JACK
Right. You don't know this. But I
tend to act stupid when I'm
nervous --

Jack STANDS a Bit CLOSER to Kate.

JACK (cont'd)
-- Bourbon helps.

KATE
Stupid, how?

JACK
I start making jokes -- Everything is
hilarious -- In spite of the
circumstances.

KATE
(looking sad)
That must be a real pain in the ass.

JACK
(scowling)
You have no idea -- The worse off
things get, the funnier I become --
I'm the Life-of-the-Friggin'-Party!

INT. MARSPORT - LOCATION UNKNOWN - TIME UNKNOWN

SOMEONE Removes the BLINDFOLD That Covers Jack's EYES. The
Light is VERY BRIGHT at First. He Sits in a Hard CHAIR that
Faces a Long TABLE. Three PEOPLE Face Jack. Two MEN and One
WOMAN. They All Appear to Be LATE MIDDLE-AGED.

FREE MARS 1
I understand you've been wanting to
meet us.

JACK
Yah!

FREE MARS 3
You know we wouldn't be holding this
meeting if Kate O'Malley hadn't
recommended it --

FREE MARS 2

-- We think very highly of her opinions --

FREE MARS 1

-- Indeed.

JACK

Is she a member of Free Mars?

FREE MARS 3

No, more's the pity -- We've been trying to recruit her for years --

FREE MARS 2

-- And her answer is always the same, 'As the Great Groucho Marx said, **"I refuse to join any club that would have me as a member".**'

JACK

Yah. That sounds like her.

FREE MARS 1

She's the "Real Deal".

JACK

(with a smile)

Yah, she sure is! Now what?

FREE MARS 2

In a perfect world, you'd join our cause.

JACK

I appreciate the offer -- I really do. But I think I'm gonna take the same stand as Kate.

FREE MARS 3

Are you quite sure, Doctor Greyson?

JACK

Yah. And it's not that I disagree with your ideals. It's the Revolutionary overtones that bother me.

FREE MARS 1

That's a real pity.

FREE MARS 2
You recently performed surgery on
that child from the Muldoon Farm.

JACK
Yah.

FREE MARS 1
And you were chastised by your
Superiors.

JACK
(grinning)
Chastised Hell! I had my Arse handed
to me.

FREE MARS 2
Would you do it again?

JACK
Hell Yeah. I'm not gonna let anyone
go without medical care. Not on my
watch.

FREE MARS 1
Even though you may lose your
position?

JACK
(with a twisted grin)
I could care less.

FREE MARS 2
That's what caught our attention,
Doctor Greyson.

JACK
Oh?

FREE MARS 1
Yes. That's why we contacted Kate. We
wanted to meet you.

FREE MARS 2
We thought you might be a good
candidate for recruitment.

JACK
(grinning)
What can I say. I'm a sucker for lost
causes.

FREE MARS 2

Tell me Doctor, are you aware how the Government functions here on Mars?

JACK

I know what I've read. There are Twelve Regions across the planet. Each with it's own Governor.

FREE MARS 3

Precisely. We have Yuri Malenkov here in the Hellas Basin. He's been in office the past four years.

JACK

I know. I've met him. He seems harmless enough -- For a Bureaucrat.

FREE MARS 2

Yes we know. There's one each for all the regions, Mariner Valley, Olympus Mons, Syrtis Major, Arcadia just to name a few.

JACK

Okay.

FREE MARS 2

Do you know how they're selected?

JACK

I haven't a clue. Elections?

FREE MARS 1

No. Each Governor is appointed by one of the Major Corporations that funded the Permanent Settlement of Mars over a Century ago.

JACK

(arching an eyebrow)

I didn't know that. That's very interesting. I thought the United Earth Protectorate was in charge.

FREE MARS 3

Most people are under that impression, but as long as the right people on Earth receives their share of the profits that will always be the case.

JACK

The right people being the
Stockholders. Of course.

FREE MARS 2

And certain high ranking United Earth
Protectorate Board Members as well.

JACK

So, between the Corporations and the
Bureaucrats on Earth getting the
Lion's Share, Mars is left with the
Crumbs.

FREE MARS 1

Very dry crumbs, Doctor.

JACK

No wonder Medical care isn't free
here on Mars.

FREE MARS 3

Exactly -- It's also why the Farmers
are so poorly paid for their labor.

FREE MARS 2

Some of those unfortunate folks come
close to starvation every year.

JACK

That really Sucks -- Out Loud! Nobody
should have to live that.

FREE MARS 1

You're absolutely right, Doctor.

JACK

At least when it comes to the cost of
Medical care I'm planning on making
some drastic changes.

FREE MARS 1

We know. But will that be enough to
make a difference that'll change
things?

JACK

Hey, it's a step in the right
direction. It's why I went to the
Muldoon's Farm.

FREE MARS 2

That was admirable. But as you said it's most likely going to cost you your job.

JACK

Sometimes you gotta choose what's right -- In spite of the consequences.

THE Other MAN Stands and WALKS Closer to Jack.

FREE MARS 3

And there's the plight of the Thorium Miners. They're caught up in this Cycle of Greed as well.

JACK

I've heard a little about that.

FREE MARS 3

From Ms. Beiterhoff, correct?

JACK

Yah. According to what Monika told me something rotten is going on with all that.

FREE MARS 1

To put it mildly. Evidently there's been an increase in Industrial Accidents. People are dying!

FREE MARS 3

Yes -- There have been a lot more unexplained explosions over the past few years.

FREE MARS 2

Entire shipments of Thorium are going missing, more and more often. It's as if they're just vanishing into thin air.

FREE MARS 1

The Miners are losing valuable work time.

FREE MARS 3

Not to mention their share of the profits -- Millions of solars.

JACK

She told me about that too. What else can you tell me?

FREE MARS 2

Someone high up in one of the Mining Companies is behind the entire operation.

JACK

Which one?

FREE MARS 1

The Solar System Mining Corporation.

JACK

(looking puzzled)

But why?

FREE MARS 3

To make more profits -- Possibly as individuals for illegal purposes.

JACK

You're saying they're Greedy Bastards?

FREE MARS 1

Exactly.

JACK

What kind of proof do you have. Extraordinary claims like this requires extraordinary proof --

RUBBING His EYES.

JACK (cont'd)

-- Especially when you're implicating someone in something involving deaths?

FREE MARS 3

Oh, we have proof. Or we did.

JACK

Whaddya mean "You did?"

FREE MARS 2

We had an inside man. An informant who had overwhelming evidence.

FREE MARS 1

We were planning to go public. Hold a Press Conference.

FREE MARS 3

He called to let us know where to meet him to receive the information. We waited three hours at the rendezvous point -- He never showed up.

FREE MARS 2

We finally received a message. He said he had been exposed and was being followed.

FREE MARS 3

He told us to meet him at a secondary rendezvous point -- One that we believed was totally secure.

FREE MARS 1

That was the last we ever heard from him. He was a good man. He was killed before he could get the information to us.

JACK

Who was he?

FREE MARS 1

Doctor Sam Grant.

JUST Then a Wall EXPLODES.

BOOM!!!

A Dozen SECURITY TROOPS Storm Through the RAGGED HOLE. They're LED by Liam M'Kemba.

To Jack, His EYES are filled with sheer HATE and BETRAYAL!

FREE MARS 1 (cont'd)

You Homer Bastard!

III.

INT. MARS GENERAL - CHIEF OF SECURITY'S OFFICE - DAY

Two MEN are in the OFFICE. They Are Liam M'Kemba and Jack Greyson.

Jack is STRAPPED into What Appears to Be a DENTAL CHAIR. M'KEMBA Stands Next to HIM. The LIGHTING is Very BRIGHT. There is a Small Metal TABLE Next to the CHAIR. It's COVERED With Shiny Metallic Medical Instruments and One SYRINGE.

M'KEMBA

I imagine you're wondering why you're here?

JACK

I have no idea.

M'KEMBA

You were meeting with some people you shouldn't have.

JACK

Really?

M'KEMBA

Really.

JACK

How so?

M'KEMBA

They're dangerous.

JACK

Them -- They seemed harmless enough.

M'KEMBA

You know who they are?

JACK

Yah. Just some old friends.

M'KEMBA

What were you doing?

JACK

(with a BIG smile)

Playing Canasta. You ever play? It's lotsa fun and a great stress reliever -- You should try it sometime.

M'KEMBA

(with a thin smile)

There's that damned humor again. Not everything's a joke.

JACK
Except you. Why am I here, really?

M'KEMBA
(ignoring the
question)
Did you know I'm a doctor?

JACK
Hippocrates must be rollin' over in
his grave.

M'KEMBA
No. I'm a psychologist, not an MD.

JACK
Then Freud and Jung must be rollin'
over in theirs.

M'KEMBA
Anything else to say, Jack?

JACK
(with a BIG grin)
Yah -- Your Mother was a Whore and
your Father had the Clap.

M'KEMBA
Do you know what my previous position
was?

JACK
Professional Arse-Kisser?

M'KEMBA
(proudly)
I was a Brigadier with the United
Earth Protectorate Security
Service -- I headed up the Enhanced
Interrogation Division.

JACK
Why am I not surprised. When we first
met I thought you reminded me of
somebody -- Somebody famous in fact.

M'KEMBA
Who?

JACK
Hitler.

M'KEMBA

How droll.

JACK

I gotta million of 'em.

M'KEMBA

I'm sure you do. But I'm only interested in one subject.

JACK

Lemme guess. Your weight and your IQ?

M'KEMBA

No -- Free Mars!

JACK

What about Free Mars?

M'KEMBA

How long have you been a member?

JACK

You're crazy, I'm not a member.

M'KEMBA

Then why were you meeting with the leadership earlier today

JACK

(frowning)

Like I said, we were playing cards.

M'Kemba REACHES for the SYRINGE. HE BARES Jack's Right ARM.

M'KEMBA

I really didn't want to do this.

JACK

(frowning)

All right! All right! If you must know I was asking them if they knew anything about my predecessor -- Happy?

M'KEMBA

Doctor Grant?

JACK

Yah.

M'KEMBA

Why?

JACK

He was my Best Friend. I promised his Mom I'd find out what happened to him.

M'KEMBA

How noble of you Jack. Of course I don't believe you.

JACK

Whaaaa????

M'KEMBA

Don't act so surprised, I haven't really trusted you from the get-go.

JACK

(with a grin)

Not that I give a wet fart, but why?

M'KEMBA

There was just something about you. A gut feeling I guess you could call it.

JACK

Okay --

M'KEMBA

(shaking his head)

That damn smugness. What finally convinced me was when you performed that unauthorized surgery on that Farm Boy.

JACK

Never mind he'd have died without it?

M'KEMBA

(shrugging)

So what. He's just another useless mouth to feed. A waste of space.

JACK

You Son-of-a-Bitch!

M'KEMBA

(sneering)

That's just great, Jack! You are a Man of the People after all.

JACK
 (wild-eyed)
 If I get outta this chair, I'll show
 you.

M'KEMBA
 (almost looking sad,
 almost)
 You leave me no choice.

JACK
 There are always choices.

M'KEMBA
 That'll be up to Carlos to decide.

M'Kemba Places the HYPO on Jack's Right ARM and PRESSES the TRIGGER. There is a Slight Huffing NOISE. A Few MOMENTS Later Jack Greyson is OBLIVIOUS to HIS SURROUNDINGS.

INT. MARSPOORT - BARRINGTON-SMYTHE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

EVEN Though it's Late, Harry Barrington-Smythe is Hard at Work. HE Sits at His DESK Dictating into a HOLOCOM. HE Has a VISITOR at the Entrance of the Large ROOM - Monika Beiterhoff - She's Been CRYING.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
 This is an unexpected yet pleasant
 surprise. Why are you here at such an
 ungodly hour?

MONIKA
 They've got Jack.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
 (with a curious smile)
 Who's "they"?

MONIKA
 Chiang and M'Kemba.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
 Yeah. So?

MONIKA
 They're going to hurt him -- Maybe
 worse.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
 (scowling)
 It's no skin off my arse.

Monika Wipes Away the TEARS.

MONIKA
Please!!!

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
Why's he so important?

MONIKA
I love him.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
The truth comes out.

MONIKA
Yes damn you. Happy now?

Harry Writes SOMETHING Down in His NOTEBOOK.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
More than you could ever know --

He Looks into Her EYES.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE (cont'd)
-- Exactly what do you think I can
do?

MONIKA
Pull some strings. Use some of that
influence you're always bragging
about -- Something -- Anything!

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
Why are those Bastards holding him?

MONIKA
They're saying he's a traitor, and a
member of Free Mars.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
Is he?

MONIKA
You know he's not.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
Yes.

Monika Begins to CRY AGAIN.

MONIKA
Please Harry!!

Harry Lights a CIGAR. Then He Inhales SLOWLY.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
 If it weren't for the fact my folks
 took you in as an orphan after your
 parent's death --

MONIKA
 (still weeping)
 -- I -- I Remember --

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
 (with a quick burst
 of anger)
 -- Do you Really -- Really???

Harry Takes a DEEP Breath.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE (cont'd)
 To me it seems you only get in touch
 when you need something that I can
 provide -- Or am I mistaken?

MONIKA
 (in a very quiet
 voice)
 No, and I'm really sorry for that.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
 You're sorry -- I'm sorry --
 Everybody's sorry -- But nothing ever
 change -- Does it?

Monika Holds His HAND. Very TIGHT.

MONIKA
 No, but it will -- I promise.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
 I hope so for both our sake,
 otherwise --

MONIKA
 (unsure)
 -- Otherwise?? --

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
 (he shakes his head)
 -- We wouldn't even be having this
 conversation -- But because it's
 you -- Mausi --

Harry Hands Her a Silk HANDKERCHIEF.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE (cont'd)
 -- I may have some interesting
 information -- Information that
 Carlos Chiang wouldn't want exposed
 to public scrutiny -- Maybe.

MONIKA
 (she begins to
 smile...almost)
 Really?

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
 I said maybe, don't get your hopes
 up -- Yet.

MONIKA
 I'm sure whatever information you
 have will be useful.

Harry Looks Into Monika's Eyes Even CLOSER.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
 Possibly. You haven't even asked
 about the family -- I'm hurt.

MONIKA
 (quietly)
 How's the family?

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
 (smiling broadly)
 We're all doing great -- Alex and I
 are happier than ever -- Joanna wants
 her own Airship for her next birthday
 and Harry the Fifth is growing like a
 weed.

MONIKA
 (with a hint of a
 smile)
 That sounds very nice.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
 It is -- You and Jack should try it.

MONIKA
 (wistfully)
 Maybe -- Someday.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
 I hope so -- Now if you'll give me an
 hour or two I'll see what I can dig
 up.

MONIKA

Thanks so much -- I'll owe you big-time.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE

(with a half-smile)

Indeed you will -- Maudi.

INT. MARS GENERAL - OPERATIONS MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

THERE are Three MEN in The ROOM - Carlos Chiang, Liam M'Kemba and Jack Greyson. Chiang Sits at His DESK With a CIGAR in His MOUTH. M'Kemba Paces the FLOOR. Jack is UNCONSCIOUS. He's Propped UP in a High-Back CHAIR. There's a Pair of HANDCUFFS on His WRISTS.

CHIANG

Wake him up.

M'Kemba Gives Jack a SHOT of SOMETHING in His Right ARM.

M'KEMBA

This'll take a minute or two.

CHIANG

Whatever, just do it.

M'KEMBA

Who pissed in your cornflakes?? --

Jack Begins to WAKE. HIS Eyes FLUTTER a Couple of Times.

M'KEMBA (cont'd)

-- See, he's awake.

CHIANG

About damned time.

Chiang WALKS Over to the CHAIR where Jack Sits. His CIGAR Has GONE OUT.

CHIANG (cont'd)

You really screwed up royally.

M'KEMBA

And we had such high hopes.

CHIANG

We sure did. We thought we had a winner this time, but you're another loser -- Just like Grant.

JACK
 Sorry to disappoint you, Carlos--But
 as they say you can't win 'em all.

CHIANG
 Always the Smart-Ass.

M'KEMBA
 God, how I hate such impertinence.
 Why did you ever consider this fool?

CHIANG
 He had a very impressive Curriculum
 Vitae -- The glowing recommendations
 from Doctor Floyd at Armstrong
 Memorial.

Chiang Takes a SIP of SOMETHING. Then ANOTHER.

CHIANG (cont'd)
 He was also at the top of his class
 at Wake Forest Medical.

JACK
 -- You forgot about my tremendous
 singing voice -- And my twelve-
 inch --

-- SLAP! --

JACK (cont'd)
 Ow. That hurt dammit!!!

M'KEMBA
 (very stern)
 Continue being a boor and I'll treat
 you as such, behave and I won't.

CHIANG
 Will you behave?

JACK
 What choice do I have?

CHIANG
 Let's make Jack more comfortable,
 shall we?

M'KEMBA
 Of course, where are my manners?

M'Kemba Removes the HANDCUFFS From Jack's Wrists.

CHIANG

What would you prefer, Jack -- Scotch
or Bourbon? --

Chiang Takes a BOTTLE DOWN From a SHELF Behind His DESK with
an Extra FLOURISH.

CHIANG (cont'd)

-- The Scotch is a Single-malt from
the Highlands of Scotland -- I
recommend it.

JACK

Then I'll have Bourbon.

M'KEMBA

You've presented us with a unique
situation. You've found out the
truth.

CHIANG

What my colleague said is correct.

JACK

As if I really give a Rat's Arse.
What truth, Carlos?

CHIANG

You have an opportunity that most men
rarely see in their entire lifetimes.

JACK

Cool -- What?

M'KEMBA

As you probably have figured out
already, there's a lot more to
MarsPort than meets the eye.

CHIANG

Indeed, quite a bit more in fact.

He SIPS His SCOTCH.

CHIANG (cont'd)

And the right men in key positions
can make a great deal of money, if
they're smart.

M'KEMBA

Are you smart, Jack?

CHIANG
Yes, are you?

JACK
I'd like to think I am.

M'KEMBA
You need to be. It took a lot of
planning to get us where we are
today.

CHIANG
(looking sad)
Before all the previous nonsense, our
plans were working so well.

JACK
(nodding very slowly)
Then here comes Grant,
screwing up everything.

CHIANG
(with a smile)
No. Initially we thought he wanted to
join us.

JACK
You're joking.

CHIANG
Not at all. He came to us one day
when we were having lunch --

M'KEMBA
-- On a Tuesday.

CHIANG
It was a Wednesday.

M'KEMBA
Does it really matter?

CHIANG
No, of course not --- Anyway, he came
to us telling us he'd been
investigating the missing Thorium and
had arrived at a certain conclusion.

JACK
What conclusion?

CHIANG

That the two of us were behind the entire operation. He wanted in.

M'KEMBA

As a full partner, otherwise he'd take his evidence to the United Earth Security Service.

CHIANG

At first we denied any knowledge of what he was talking about.

JACK

I'll bet.

CHIANG

But after we looked over his 'so-called' evidence we decided it would be best to bring him into the fold.

JACK

(looking puzzled)

Just like that. No strings attached?

M'KEMBA

Of course not! We're businessmen, not thugs.

CHIANG

We can be reasonable, Jack. You must understand that.

JACK

Yah. I suppose.

M'KEMBA

Still I had a feeling about Doctor Grant.

JACK

What kind of feeling?

M'KEMBA

That his motives weren't what he said they were.

JACK

How so?

M'KEMBA

(sneering)

That he was playing us for a couple of fools.

CHIANG

More's the pity -- It was his down-falling.

JACK

How so?

M'KEMBA

I became to believe the evidence was too good to be true -- That it had been fabricated.

CHIANG

It turned out he was a member of Free Mars.

M'KEMBA

And he was gathering information for them -- He was a Spy!

JACK

(lying)

I find all this hard to believe.

CHIANG

That's a shame -- It's still true whether you accept it or not.

M'KEMBA

I had one of my agents follow him. A Prospector named Arlo Traske.

CHIANG

Traske caught him red-handed making a call to his Free Mars friends.

M'KEMBA

He overheard the Doctor making plans to meet his associates.

CHIANG

Before Traske could stop him he escaped via Dune-Buggy into the Hellas Basin Outback.

M'KEMBA

Naturally we had Traske follow him.

CHIANG

His orders were to bring Doctor Grant back to us for questioning.

M'KEMBA

But that fool Traske had other ideas. He killed the Good Doctor, instead.

CHIANG

Needless to say we were quite upset with that information.

JACK

I'm sure you were.

M'KEMBA

No, we really were. We didn't want any harm to come to Doctor Grant.

CHIANG

We just wanted to keep him '*quiet*' for a while -- Nothing underhanded.

M'KEMBA

We were going to place him into Cold-Sleep then ship him off to Titan Base.

CHIANG

That way he'd be out of our hair for at least thirteen months.

JACK

Thirteen months?

CHIANG

That's how long it takes to go from Mars to Titan Base -- Even with Fusion Drive.

M'KEMBA

(with a thin smile)

There's a fortune to be made, Jack. It's amazing how much we've made so far.

JACK

On Thorium?

CHIANG

It powers most of the non-Fusion reactors throughout the entire Solar System.

M'KEMBA

(grinning)

We found a way to siphon off several million solars worth every year -- Without being caught.

JACK

By arranging the occasional accident in one of the mines so it's closed down for a safety inspection --

Jack Slowly Takes Another SIP of BOURBON.

JACK (cont'd)

-- Giving your crew time to go in and walk off with as much Thorium as they can carry, right -- Never mind the miners who get killed.

CHIANG

Who's to say, Jack. How do you know how many workers should be dying every year in those mines?

M'KEMBA

It's very hard work. Even though the mines are pressurized. Sometimes there are accidents.

Carlos Chiang TRIES To LOOK LIKE HE Actually CARES.

CHIANG

Pressure seals fail. Explosives are mishandled.

JACK

You really don't give a Damn, do you?

He REVEALS His TRUE FEELINGS.

CHIANG

Not particularly. Nobody forces those men and women into those mines at gunpoint. It's their choice.

M'KEMBA

They know the risks.

CHIANG

(nodding)

They really do.

JACK

And you being the former CFO of the Solar System Mining Corporation has put you in a position to take advantage of all of the chaos when such accidents cause --

Jack Looks at Both MEN Very CAREFULLY.

JACK (cont'd)

-- You can make whole shipments disappear -- Right, Carlos?

CHIANG

Damn! You are as bright as as I thought. The 'Smart-Alec' act is just a diversion.

Jack Takes In A DEEP Breath.

JACK

So -- Let's see if I've got this right -- You're offering me a chance to join you two in an illegal operation that's been ripping-off millions of solars worth of Thorium for several years -- Maybe even arranging the occasional 'Accident' -
-

Jack Stands to STRETCH. His BACK Makes a Loud **POP!**

JACK (cont'd)

-- In spite of the fact that this operation is at least indirectly responsible for the death of my friend -- Right?

CHIANG

That sums it up very well.

Jack Greyson Looks like a MAN Who's RUN Out of OPTIONS.

JACK

(with a thin smile)
Sure -- Why the Hell not?

CHIANG

See, M'Kemba -- I told you he'd join us.

M'KEMBA
I suppose. I thought he was your Best
Friend.

His Mood Seems As If It's TOTALLY CHANGED.

JACK
(frowning)
He was back at Wake Forest -- Truth
to tell the Son-of-a-Bitch still owes
me money -- Fifty solars!

M'KEMBA
What about your promise to his
Mother?

JACK
Yah. There is that -- Isn't there?

M'KEMBA
Yes.

Jack Makes a SUDDEN MOVE. He Attempts to KICK the LEGS out
from Under M'Kemba. While He does that, Chiang Removes a
Small PISTOL from his Desk.

He POINTS It at Jack Greyson.

CHIANG
So you are a fool after all --

He STANDS Closer to Jack.

CHIANG (cont'd)
-- I believe Hiroshi's going to be
Chief of Staff -- Just like he
wanted.

JACK
Be sure to tell him the job's a real
pain in the ass.

Chiang Holds the REVOLVER with a Tighter GRIP.

CHIANG
My God Man, do you ever quit?

JACK
Hell no!!!

M'Kemba Comes Up Slowly Behind Jack and GRABS Him. He holds
HIM Very TIGHTLY.

M'KEMBA

Be sure to tell the Supreme Council
back at U.E.P. Headquarters when you
and your Free Mars co-conspirators
are on trial.

JACK

On trial -- For what?

CHIANG

(very smug)

Treason, Of Course.

M'Kemba Looks Like He's REPORTING a HIGH SCHOOL Sporting
EVENT. VERY Dispassionately.

M'KEMBA

They used to hang traitors. I wonder
if they still do?

JACK

Okay, okay, this Horseshit has gone
on long enough. You can't keep me
quiet forever -- The truth will get
out.

Carlos Chiang Looks Very SELF-ASSURED.

CHIANG

It hasn't yet, do you think you're
the man who can do it?

M'KEMBA

(sneering)

Anyway, no Sane Person would believe
such allegations -- Especially from a
Teever!

CHIANG

And even if you had proof it could
easily disappear. Along with
yourself.

Chiang Stands a Bit Closer to Jack.

CHIANG (cont'd)

(with a crooked smile)

I hear Titan's quite lovely this time
of year.

M'Kemba Pulls ANOTHER SYRINGE from his POCKET. HE Has a VERY
STRANGE Look on His Face as He GETS Within ONE METER Of Jack
Greyson.

M'KEMBA

(smiling)

You'll go to sleep here and the next thing you know you'll be at Titan Base.

CHIANG

Goodnight -- Jack. Or should I say Goodbye --

JACK

You Bastards! Somebody will find out.

CHIANG

(beginning to laugh)

Face it, even if they did. No one will believe your fabrications.

JUST Then the Door SLIDES OPEN. Monika Beiterhoff WALKS in.

MONIKA

I would, and so would my friends at the U.E.P. Security Service.

CHIANG

(SHOUTING)

This is a private meeting, Ms. Beiterhoff. Get out!!!

M'KEMBA

Shall I escort you out?

Her Eyes are Like LASER BEAMS!

MONIKA

Try it -- Just see what happens -- Old Man!! --

Monika Briefly Turns to Jack.

MONIKA (cont'd)

-- Liebchen, are you alright?

JACK

Better now.

MONIKA

Okay, the game is up.

M'KEMBA

And what game would that be?

CHIANG
Yes, what game indeed?

MONIKA
The one where Jack and I get the Hell
out of here -- And you two --

CHIANG
-- We two do what -- Precisely?

MONIKA
Surrender.

M'KEMBA
My God, you're as foolish as he is.
Astounding!

Chiang Is SHAKING His Head In AMUSEMENT.

CHIANG
She is. isn't she?

M'KEMBA
(nodding)
She's bluffing you know. She doesn't
know a thing.

CHIANG
When you're right -- You're right --

Chiang Moves toward Monika.

CHIANG (cont'd)
-- Admit it -- You have an empty
hand. You have absolutely no evidence
of any wrongdoing on either of our
parts.

MONIKA
(smiling)
Okay. You're right. I don't have any
evidence -- But I believe I know
someone who does --

Monika Takes Her Visiphone Out of Her Pocket. She Dials a
String of NUMBERS. Then She SPEAKS to SOMEONE Not PRESENT.

MONIKA (cont'd)
-- You can come in now.

Once Again the Door SLIDES OPEN. In Walks a Familiar Man.
Harry Barrington-Smythe.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
Hi everybody. It's good to see you.

CHIANG
What are you doing here?

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
Checking on a friend. You okay?

JACK
Better and better, you?

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
(grinning)
My Lumbago is acting up. But aside
from that I'm fine.

M'KEMBA
You're nothing but a criminal.

Harry Takes a DEEP Theatrical BOW.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
(with a twinkle in
his eye)
Takes one to know one.

Jack Applauds. He's SMILING the Whole Time. Monika STANDS
Next to Jack. VERY CLOSELY.

Monika Looks at Harry with PRIDE and Sincere ADMIRATION.
LIKE Only a SISTER Can Give To Her BROTHER.

MONIKA
(with a Broad smile)
You tell them, Harry!

CHIANG
This doesn't concern you. You have no
business interfering in our affairs.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
I beg to differ. In fact, I believe I
have some rather interesting
information. Information that neither
of you would like to be made public.

CHIANG
(concerned)
What could someone like you possibly
know about our business?

Harry LOOKS at Chiang and M'Kemba. He has a BIG SMILE on his Face.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
You'd be surprised, Carlos.

CHIANG
I don't believe you.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
You really should --

He WINKS at Jack.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE (cont'd)
-- You see -- I've had both of your offices wired for sight and sound since last Founder's Day.

M'KEMBA
(incredulous)
That's impossible -- I have both inspected twice daily for any electronic listening devices.

Harry Looks at M'Kemba With a MIXTURE of Both DISTRUST and DISGUST. He SHAKES his Head as he Walks Towards the Men.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
You should have been paying your staff higher wages -- It's amazing how little it takes to sway the loyalties of key people --

He MOVES Closer to Chiang. Harry SLAPS Him, SNATCHES the REVOLVER Out of His HAND. Then He PLACES It in a JACKET POCKET. ALL WITHIN A FEW MOMENTS!

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE (cont'd)
-- A few hundred solars in a man's pocket every month really makes a difference.

M'KEMBA
(angry)
What man?

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
Like I'd ever tell you --

He Moves CLOSER to Jack.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE (cont'd)
 (with a BIG smile)
 -- By the way -- I've always
 considered myself a sophisticate --
 I've never been in the position to
 judge another man's -- Sexual
 Proclivities --

Harry takes a BREATH. He Still Looks at M'Kemba.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE (cont'd)
 (with a slight
 shudder)
 -- But even I find some of your
 preferences somewhat -- Shall we say
 Rather -- Unusual.

CHIANG
 (surly)
 You're bluffing. I know your type.
 You couldn't tell the truth if you're
 life depended on it.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
 Are you really willing to take that
 chance?

M'KEMBA
 I guarantee he's lying -- There's no
 way anyone on my staff would betray
 me.

CHIANG
 (very smug)
 I know.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
 It's really funny that you both are
 thinking this way -- I thought you
 might --

Harry Looks at His Watch.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE (cont'd)
 -- So I made a few hundred copies of
 the evidence. Then I had it all
 converted into transmissible format.
 If I don't make a certain phone call
 in --

He Takes Out His Visiphone.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE (cont'd)
 -- The next thirteen minutes, every
 bit of it will be broadcast to every
 reliable news agency in the entire
 Solar System -- From Lunopolis to
 Titan Base.

CHIANG
 I still think you're lying. A clown
 like you couldn't arrange all of
 that.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
 (grinning ear to ear)
 How much are you willing to bet? --

Harry Glances at His WATCH One More Time.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE (cont'd)
 -- Tick -- Tick -- Tick.

Carlos Chiang Sounds Much OLDER than His ACTUAL YEARS. He
 has a Look of Complete and Utter FAILURE on his Face.

CHIANG
 What do you want?

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE
 (with a BROAD grin)
 As for me -- A handful of those Cuban
 cigars would be nice --

Harry Walks Towards the ORNATE DESK.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE (cont'd)
 -- I understand they're hand-rolled
 on the inner thigh of a robot in
 Newark, New Jersey -- As for him --

He Nods Towards Jack Greyson.

BARRINGTON-SMYTHE (cont'd)
 -- Jack?

JACK
 (with a HUGE smile)
 I've got a few suggestions.

EPILOGUE:

INT: MARS GENERAL - OPERATIONS MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Jack Greyson and Kate O'Malley Both Stand in the Large OFFICE of the OPERATIONS MANAGER of MARS GENERAL HOSPITAL.

JACK
How do you like your new office?

KATE
(smiling)
Oh my God, it's amazing!

JACK
I thought you'd like it -- It suits you.

KATE
(frowning)
I tell you one thing -- As soon as possible I'm getting rid of this ugly damned desk.

JACK
(with a slight grin)
I don't blame you.

KATE
You'll also be happy to know effective immediately there'll no longer be any cost for treatment at Mars General.

JACK
That's terrific. I wanted to do the same thing.

Kate Looks Out a WINDOW.

KATE
I know. We'll also begin those Housecalls like you wanted.

JACK
To the Farms around Hellas Basin?

KATE
Yep, Vijay is already on board. He's ready and willing. 'Barsoom' is standing by.

JACK
Fantastic. I'll be sure to sign up when he's recruiting volunteers.

KATE
That's funny, he thought you would.

JACK
(with a slight frown)
I'm curious Kate, won't the
Bureaucrats here on Mars and back on
Earth possibly object.

KATE
(with a nasty grin)
Possibly -- But as far as I'm
concerned they can take their
objections and blow 'em out their
collective Arse!

Jack Changes the Subject.

JACK
Are your friends from Free Mars
alright?

KATE
They're all safe and sound. After we
talked a while they realized you
didn't screw 'em over.

JACK
That's good. You can tell them they
can rely on me from now on.

KATE
I know they'll be happy to hear that.

JACK
I just hope they know they can trust
me from now on.

KATE
Trust's a hard thing to build. It's
not something that happens overnight.

JACK
I know. Hopefully they'll come around
soon enough.

KATE
The only thing that'll convince them
are actions not words, Jack --

Kate Changes the Subject.

KATE (cont'd)

-- I don't know what you had on Chiang. But it sure worked!

JACK

By now he and M'Kemba are well on their way to Earth. Where I'm certain they'll enjoy their early retirement.

KATE

In the Maximum Security Prison on Luna, I hope!

JACK

No doubt. Hopefully they'll get five hundred years each.

KATE

If there's any justice.

JACK

What about the other Board Members?

KATE

Time will tell. But I trust Lorelei Gomez-Wu, the Treasurer.

JACK

Really, why?

KATE

(smiling)

We've been lovers off and on for nearly twenty years.

JACK

I really hope you're right.

KATE

How are you holding up, Jack?

Jack Stands to Leave. Then He Hesitates.

JACK

I'm getting there. I still can't believe how everything happened so damned fast -- I thought I was a goner for sure.

KATE

That was all Monika's doing --
You're one lucky son-of-a bitch that
she had the cojones to ask
Barrington-Smythe for help --
Otherwise you'd be in really deep
shize.

JACK

(frowning)

I know, but I don't have to like it.

KATE

Grow up! The two of you will be
running Marsport within ten years if
you play your cards right -- And you
don't wuss out.

JACK

How should I handle it?

KATE

Grow a pair -- Jesus!!

Kate CROSSES Herself.

KATE (cont'd)

Mother of Mercy! -- Give me strength!

JACK

When did life become so --
Complicated?

KATE

(with a frown)

When the Good Lord decided to put Men
in the World.

Jack Walks Towards the Door with a Stupid GRIN on his LONG
Face.

INT. MARSPOrt - MONIKA BEITERHOFF'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Monika Beiterhoff Sits on Her Sofa. It's Covered with STACKS
of PAPERWORK. She Tries to Focus on the Mess. Her Eyes are
RED. Her Tears Stopped Moments Before

Her Doorbell CHIMES. It's Jack Greyson On The HOLO-IMAGER.

JACK

Hi there. Can I come in?

MONIKA
Suit yourself.

THE DOOR SLIDES Open. Jack Moves Towards Monika...SLOWLY.

JACK
How are you?

MONIKA
Fine.

JACK
You sure?

She Looks at the Paperwork. Monika Tries Hard Not to Look At Jack.

MONIKA
Yes.

JACK
Good, I just wanted to check --

Jack Moves a Bit Closer. He Hesitates Though.

JACK (cont'd)
-- I really wanted to thank you again
for all you did to save me -- I
really mean it -- I just wish you had
taken a different route -- That's
all.

MONIKA
No problem.

JACK
And I'm really sorry how I reacted
when I found out that you went to
Barrington-Smythe for help. I was way
outta line.

MONIKA
You think?

JACK
I was caught off-guard.

MONIKA
Oh, really!

JACK
I can only apologize so many times.

Her Eyes ABLAZE!

MONIKA

Then apologize some more. You really hurt me -- Damn you, Jack --

She Shakes Her Head. She Almost Starts To Cry Again. She Takes In Three Deep Breaths With Her Eyes Closed Tight. She Regains Her Composure. Then She Begins to Smile...A LITTLE.

MONIKA (cont'd)

-- I've known Harry for years. We're just friends.

JACK

I still don't trust him -- You told me yourself he's no good.

MONIKA

He's always been up-front with me. And there's more -- Much more.

JACK

What?

Monika looks very Sad.

MONIKA

You wouldn't understand, Jack. You couldn't.

She Stands Up. She's now next to Jack.

MONIKA (cont'd)

We practically grew up together. He was like an Older Brother to me.

JACK

(with a cautious frown)

That may be, Monika. But there's one thing I do understand. He wants something -- Regardless of the past.

MONIKA

What?

JACK

You -- He's in love with you! It's obvious!

MONIKA

That's crazy. He can't be, Jack.

JACK
Oh really. He's a man, isn't he?

MONIKA
Mien Gott! Can't you tell. He's
married -- He and his Husband have
been together over ten years.

JACK
Oh??? --

MONIKA
-- Yes!

The Two Stand Very Quiet. Then They Share a Passionate Kiss.

A Minute or Two Goes By. In Order to Catch Their Breath They
Move Apart a Bit. Then They Kiss Again...FOR SEVERAL
MINUTES!!!

JACK
You won't believe what Kate told me
earlier.

MONIKA
What?

JACK
That the two of us are gonna be
running this whole place some day.

MONIKA
She's right.

JACK
How do you know?

MONIKA
(with a slight smile)
I've seen the future.

JACK
I believe you.

MONIKA
Free Mars?

JACK
(with a WIDE grin)
Free Mars!

FADE OUT: