

"ANTITRUST"

Screenplay by

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SHOOTING DRAFT

2001

ON A BLACK SCREEN

it says: "The coolest thing?"

VOICE

Wow. That's hard. I'd have to say
it's the day we launched Outpost
'98.

We hear a (famous) Seattle alternative band.

EXT. OUTPOST CAMPUS - DAY (BEGIN MAIN TITLES)

Quick cuts, seductive angles: 70 hot-air balloons rise over a vast, green corporate campus. Their mylar skins are imprinted with Outpost '98 logos; their gondolas are dressed in Outpost-colored bunting.

18,000 Outpost employees cheer. They're spread out over rolling lawns, amid Arabian tents and costumed Acrobats. Over the balloon-dotted sky, the graphic re-appears: "The coolest thing?"

DIFFERENT VOICE (DARYL)

It's the beverages.

INT. OUTPOST OFFICE - DAY (CONTINUE TITLES & MUSIC)

A Programmer sits in his handsome office, forested landscape out the window. The screen says: DARYL, M.I.T. '95

DARYL

Gary always makes sure we've got the
coolest stuff to drink.

JUMP CUTS of tall refrigerators: Snapples, Cokes, Fruitopias, Zaps, Jolts, Barques & Sprites are lined-up behind glass doors. "The coolest thing?"

DIFFERENT VOICE (DIANA)

Knowing your work means something.

INT. OUTPOST CAMPUS - DAY (CONTINUE TITLES & MUSIC)

A 24-year-old Korean-American Girl sits at the edge of a

plashing, post-modern fountain. DIANA, STANFORD '97

DIANA (V.O.)

Knowing everywhere in the world,
this is the software people use.

MONTAGE of world capitals & remote places: Stockbrokers & Farmers, News Anchors & Students, CEO's & Eskimos boot-up Outpost '98, or log-on with Outpost Internet Traveler.

DIANA (V.O.)

20 years ago, Gary had an idea, that's all he had. And now the company's bigger than IBM.

Over the last shot (a Ghetto Kid uses Outpost Word in the library): "The coolest thing?"

VOICE (V.O.)

It's the people. Which is weird.

EXT. COFFEE HOUSE/TERRACE - DAY (CONTINUE TITLES & MUSIC)

A Programmer sits with two colleagues, drinking lattés at the edge of Lake Washington. MITCH, BERKELEY, '98

MITCH

Big companies are s'posed to be impersonal.

MONTAGE: Programmers play competitive games at an Outpost picnic; Toddlers play on computers in an Outpost Day Care Center; Geeks confer at a diagram-covered whiteboard; Employees listen/dance to the Seattle band we've been hearing, on-stage, at the Outpost '98 launch.

MITCH (V.O.)

There's this myth that doing a start-up is cooler. But there's no community with a start-up. No permanence.

BACK TO SCENE: COFFEE HOUSE/TERRACE (CONTINUE TITLES)

One of Mitch's colleagues is nodding. DONNY, HARVARD, '97

DONNY

It bums me out when the media say we're cultish, or whatever. Why? 'Cause we care about each other?

Donny didn't mean to sound so mushy. Nobody knows where to look for a second.

MITCH

'Love you too, bro.

As they laugh: "The coolest thing?"

VOICE (TERRY)

I'll tell you what's not cool.

TERRY

How Gary gets this superbad rap.

MONTAGE of magazine covers (Newsweek, Vanity Fair, WIRED) featuring Gary Boyd. They say, eg: "Who Owns Cyberspace?" On a Time cover, he's composited by the Capitol Dome: "ROBBER BARON OR VISIONARY? Outpost's Antitrust Woes"

TERRY (V.O.)

There's this prejudice against super-smart people. People like Gary.

GARY (early 40's) reads a statement before a Congressional Sub-Committee. His voice is pleasant but firm:

GARY

A kid working in his garage can create the next Outpost, the new IBM. All it takes is a great idea.

A bloated Senator looks hostile.

GARY

That's why nobody can have a monopoly in a business built on ideas.

As we watch, CAMERA pulls back from the screen on which the movie is being projected. REVERSE INTO:

INT. COLLEGE AUDITORIUM - EVENING (END MAIN TITLES)

Over an audience of 40 or so computer students we read:

STANFORD UNIVERSITY

We pick out MILO CONNOR, watching keenly. He's 21: clear-eyed, alive, innocent. He sits with his best friend, TEDDY CHIN, third-generation Chinese-American.

DIFFERENT VOICE (V.O.)

The coolest? Gary. He's like you or me. If we happened t'be insanely rich.

Some appreciative laughter in the auditorium. But behind Milo, LARRY LINDHOLM squirms in his seat. He whispers:

LARRY

Can we go?

VOICE (FROM THE FILM)

For me? It's Seattle!

LARRY

'Starting to get nauseated.

BRIAN BISSEL, in front of Milo, twists in his seat:

BRIAN

Do you mind?

Larry gets up.

Two Outpost Recruiters, REDMOND PRICE, 31 (gray suit) and DANNY BAYLOR, 29 (Outpost '98 golf shirt) note the walkout. Danny scans headshots in a Stanford Yearbook. (On-screen behind them we see Seattle: night streets wet-down & shimmering; Young People entering a club; Young People climbing Mt. Shasta.) Finding Larry's picture, Danny points out the name to Redmond, who shrugs: unconcerned.

VOICE FROM THE MOVIE

Did anybody mention the beverages?

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

The double-doors swing open (over them, a plate reads: THE HEWLITT-PACKARD AUDITORIUM) and Larry comes out.

UP THE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

ALICE POULSON, a very pretty girl of 21 (more hiply dressed than the geeks) searches the hall, reading the names over the doors (NEC Communications Classroom, Toshiba Computer Lab, Mitsubishi Classroom). She spots Larry.

ALICE

Is it over?

LARRY

They still have to give 'em refreshments laced with mind-altering drugs.

ALICE

You are a fanatic.

LARRY

'Gonna wait outside.

EXT. STANFORD COMPUTER SCIENCE BLDG. - A MOMENT LATER

Tilting down the neo-classical edifice, we read the name etched over the entrance: WILLIAM GATES COMPUTER SCIENCE BUILDING. We find Larry and Alice sitting on the steps.

LARRY (AT FIRST O.S.)

Alice? You gotta make him do the start-up with Teddy and me.

ALICE

"Make" him?

LARRY

(thoughtfully)

You know what I mean.

As we hear Larry speak, we cut back into:

THE AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

The lights are on. Milo & Teddy stand by a table dressed in Outpost bunting, laden with refreshments & giveaways: mousepads, T-shirts, caps & books with the Outpost logo on them (a simple contour drawing of a frontier outpost). While most Students chat earnestly with Recruiters, Milo & Teddy load their plates with pizza and tortilla chips.

LARRY (V.O.)

I'm not exactly worldly, but I'm the Secretary of State next to him.

Milo puts some brownies on his plate.

LARRY (V.O.)

And they're all throwing this -- stuff at him. Stock options. Pay packages.

Spotting a book on the table, Milo picks it up.

EXT. GATES BLDG. - CONTINUOUS

LARRY

I'm just screwed.

ALICE

(that's not true)

You know what he's like. He just wants to work on stuff that's cool.

LARRY

You don't wanna move, do you?

ALICE

I can paint anywhere.

Larry looks at her: you didn't answer my question.

ALICE

I'd like to stay here, yeah. And I kind of think he should be with Teddy.

THE AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Milo and Teddy discuss the book almost joyfully. (We see a page of code: utterly indecipherable.)

ALICE (V.O.)

I mean, nobody else can follow what they're talking about half the time.

MILO/TEDDY

(under Alice)

'Could be a condition-variable in the locking code -- If it didn't seg fault, first!

EXT. GATES BLDG. - CONTINUOUS

ALICE

Maybe you shouldn't push it so hard. About Outpost. No offense, you sound insane.

LARRY

I can't help it. I feel like they'd do anything to keep their --

ALICE

Anything? That's not even credible. If he wants to go up there? To check it out? I think you should encourage him.

(seeing Larry's incredulity)

It's his life. But everybody's treating him like this -- valuable object. You're hurting your own case.

INT. AUDITORIUM - CONTINUOUS

Brian, already wearing one of the Outpost caps, effuses to Redmond.

BRIAN

He's my god. I hear he actually calls recruits sometimes. Or is that an Urban Legend?

REDMOND

Gary's running the biggest software company in the world, Brian. He's being harassed by the Justice Department, and he's got a new baby.

Across the room, Milo (eating chips, perusing code) reaches for a napkin but unwittingly grabs some bunting. It unravels in a long TP-like streamer -- just as Danny approaches, peering at Milo's ID tag.

DANNY

Milo? I'm Danny.

MILO

Oh hi.

He tries to sluff the paper off his hand; Danny holds out a cell phone.

DANNY

Gary would like to speak to you?

Milo and Teddy look at each other: right. But Danny looks like he means it. Milo's grin fades. He takes the phone.

MILO

...Hello?

GARY (ON THE PHONE)

Milo? Gary Boyd. I'm hoping you and your friend can come up here. We've made some amazing strides in digital convergence. I'd love to show them to you.

MILO

You would? Wow. When would we come?

(he waits; he looks
up)

'Think he hung up.

Danny holds out two plane tickets, in 1st class folders.

INT. UNIVERSITY AVENUE DINER (PALO ALTO) - NIGHT

Alice examines one of the tickets almost suspiciously.

ALICE

But how does he know that's what you guys're working on?

Larry, Teddy & Brian are at the table with Alice & Milo. It's a student hang-out, with loud music.

MILO

All the companies know. The faculties tell 'em. At the target schools.

LARRY

In exchange for endowments. They should just drop the pretense and name the schools after 'em.

BRIAN

(to Teddy)

I can't believe you refused a ticket!

TEDDY

My parents're already freaked-out
I'm staying here. 50 miles from

Chinatown.

BRIAN

Well maybe if you told 'em how much
money you'd be making --
(to Milo)
You're going up there. Right?

LARRY

I think you should go.

MILO

(amazed)
You do?

LARRY

I mean, it's your life.

As Alice predicted, Milo is pleased by Larry's remark.
"Empowered." Larry smiles conspiratorially at Alice.

INT. MILO & ALICE'S APARTMENT - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

In a tidy, playfully decorated room, Alice stirs in bed,
sees the space next to her is vacant.

TINY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Milo sits at a desk, thinking, agitated, in the dim light of
a PC. He looks up, sees Alice in the doorway.

MILO

I think I kind of lost it. I was
just so thrilled to be talking to
the richest, most powerful... 'Didn't
know I even cared about that stuff.'

ALICE

C'mon, how often do you talk to
somebody who's been on the cover of
Time. Three of four times.

She picks her way through geek clutter (motherboards, code
manuals, Coke cans) sits next to him.

MILO

A lot of what Larry says is true.
They just clone stuff, or reverse
engineer it, and everybody gets stuck
with their inferior version cause
they --

ALICE

Then you've gotta ask him about that.

He looks at her: you've gotta be kidding.

ALICE

It's important.

MILO

If he's really a bully, he won't cop to it, anyway.

ALICE

Bully? Are we talking about Gary Boyd? Or your dad.

He doesn't deny it: she sees right through him.

MILO

When I was a kid? And he was moving us all over the place? I spent all my time writing stuff on Outpost 1.0. I thought Gary Boyd was the greatest.

ALICE

But he's not quite the same guy anymore. Don't get your hopes too high?

INT. 737 - FIRST CLASS CABIN - DAY

In the cabin, everybody types on a notebook but Milo. He looks out the window expectantly: at the Seattle skyline.

INT. SEA-TAC AIRPORT - GATE 13 - DAY

Milo comes off the plane. Danny and Redmond greet him.

INT/EXT. HIGHWAY/CAR - DAY

Redmond drives his black Lexus 85 m.p.h. Danny leans forward from the backseat.

DANNY

'Couldn't convince Teddy to come?

MILO

He's pretty tight with his family.

DANNY

We could move 'em up here.

MILO

He just likes to write code. He's bummed there's so much secrecy and competition, everybody trying to own everything.

REDMOND

Who do you mean by "everybody."

Milo almost blushes. He makes an awkward segue.

MILO

So -- how far are we from the campus?

REDMOND

Oh we're not going to the campus.

EXT. GARY BOYD'S COMPOUND - LAKE WASHINGTON - DAY

Beyond a rocky beach, buildings are cunningly carved into a wooded hillside. Glass walls are framed in rich wood. The main house is 28,000 sq. ft. Then there's the guest house, pool building, reception hall, library...

EXT. GATEHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Redmond pulls up. A discreet Guard in a Mr. Rogers cardigan recognizes him. The gates swing open.

EXT. BOYD HOUSE - DAY

They pull up by a Lexus SUV with a baby seat. Another Man in a cardigan stands in the open front door.

MILO

Who's that?

DANNY

I think they call him the "Houseman."
'Cause "guard" sounds too weird.

Milo just sits there, eyeing the monumental residence.

DANNY

Don't be nervous. The house is the
weirdest thing about him.

REDMOND

It's like he knows everybody expects
him to be this worldly, colorful
zillionaire. But he's just a guy who
likes software.

INT. BOYD MANSION - DEN-LIKE ROOM - DAY

Milo and the Houseman cross a long room with a lake view. We hear music by Satie. The Craftsman furniture and lamps are custom-made. A Cezanne hangs on the wall.

ANOTHER DEN-LIKE ROOM WITH A VIEW

There's a Craftsman crib here, stuffed animals, another Cezanne. Even the toys seem arranged. They enter an

ANTEROOM/CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

HOUSEMAN

Have a seat. He won't be long.

Milo sits on a bench. He tries not to look, but his childhood hero is partly visible through a glass panel in the door: Gary (in a suit and tie) has an open American face. But something goes on behind his pleasant features and self-possessed mien: his desire (or need) to solve the problem at hand is so intense it makes him appear vexed -- even vulnerable.

CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As Gary concentrates, two Outpost Senior Managers speak: PHIL TATE, 40 (bald); and RANDY GRIMES, 36, (gray eyes).

PHIL

We tried the big vaporware number,
Gary, it's no-sale.

RANDY

Can we buy into their IPO? Or is
that a Justice Dept. problem?

PHIL

There is no public offering. The guy
who wrote it joined some freakazoid
cult in San Luis Obispo. 'Wrote this
just to run their web site.

ANTEROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gary speaks with precise hand gestures: settling the matter. Phil and Randy gather their papers, and stand. They exit, nodding at Milo as they pass. Then Gary comes out.

GARY

Milo? Excuse the tie. I was on TV.

Milo is a little dazzled as they shake hands: such a familiar face, such a big figure in his young life.

MILO

...That's okay.

INT. DEN-LIKE ROOM - MOVING

Now New Age music plays. They move back through the same room, but the Cezanne has been replaced by a Hieronymus Bosch (bodies roiling in Hell). Milo is -- puzzled.

GARY

The house knows the paintings I like,
it knows my favorite music. Same for
anybody else who's in the system.

NEXT ROOM - STILL MOVING

As they walk, Milo watches a Cezanne "original" digitally re-configure to a Bosch, brushstrokes and all.

MILO

Cool!

GARY

Would you like a Coke or something?

MILO

(too shy, too nervous)

Oh. No thanks.

He opens a glass-doored refrigerator, scans a shelf with rows of Snapples -- in alphabetical order.

GARY

When we started, I just hired my smart friends. That was great. We got a little bigger, I had to hire smart strangers. Much harder.

He selects a Kiwi-Raspberry, they walk on.

GARY

Now I don't get to hire anybody. But I know you're the guy to write Skywire.

INT. GARY'S WORKROOM (LAKE VIEW) - MOMENTS LATER

They enter. An entire wall is taken-up by a Bosch triptych. As Gary crosses to the other side of the room, Milo stands by a table covered in art books -- hundreds of them (Soutine, Chinoiserie, Roy Lichtenstein...)

MILO

You know a lot about art, I guess.

GARY

There's a rumor going around, maybe you've heard it.

Gary heads back, carrying something spherical.

GARY

There's more to life than computers?
I'm looking into it.

Glancing down at the daunting display of books, Gary looks vaguely afflicted. He mutters:

GARY

'Once I start looking into something.

Looking up now (and much more at ease) he holds up a shiny,

detailed metal object: model satellite.

GARY

I've only shown this to three other people. I bought 200, we've launched 12 so far. I keep the coordinates in this room.

(as Milo takes it,
carefully)

It's left over from SDI. Reagan's Star Wars technology? They orbit 426 miles up.

MILO

Low enough to relay internet traffic.

GARY

(he smiles: exactly)

Among other things... We know convergence is the real super-highway: all the PC's, TV's, phones, etc. linked together. Why cram it into a cable if you can use the whole sky?

MILO

(turning the sleek object)

Skywire.

INT. GARY'S WORKROOM - LATER

Milo and Gary peer at a monitor, side-by-side. Milo sips his own Snapple now. Gary speaks his language.

GARY

The content filer has t'be written into the media files so bits coming off the satellite can be read by multiplatforms. Really, omniplatforms. Including whatever new hardware emerges.

MILO

It needs a more object-oriented language. This doesn't scale, does it?

GARY

You'd have to start practically from scratch. But this is all you'd be working on. No marketing meetings, no product seminars. We can't waste the time. Half the Valley's working on convergence. So're media conglomerates, cable companies, phone companies. 'Can't finish second, Milo. There is no second... Now what

would you like to ask me?

Milo has a deer-in-the-headlights look.

MILO

...Ask you?

INT. GARY'S HOUSE - ANOTHER ROOM - DUSK

As they walk, Milo chides himself for his reticence. Gary seems to read his mind.

GARY

I know what people say, and not just the Justice Department. We clone ideas, inflict our second-rate versions on the world, we haven't done anything original since 1.0.

Milo's amazed by Gary's acuity. And his candor.

GARY

Do I think that's fair? No. I'd put some of our apps up against anybody's. But is there some truth to it?

They have come to a stop in a windowed entryway. Milo watches Gary keenly. Gary nods. He knits his brow.

GARY

When you get to a certain age, you start wondering. About your legacy. I doubt you even remember Outpost
1.0 --

MILO

I do!

GARY

(pleased)

Yeah? I wanna feel like I did when I wrote that. But I'm 42, that's 100 in cyber-years. I look at you and see the things that got me here.

(the furrows deepen)

But somehow got away.

EXT. CUPERTINO HILLS (SILICON VALLEY) - NIGHT

A block of floodlit "tract mansions," Taco Bell palaces of the Valley's newly rich. Milo & Alice cross a vacant lot to where the lights twinkle below. Their '89 Honda Civic is parked nearby. Milo is excited.

MILO

If my dad'd leveled with me like that even once... The weird thing

is, my fantasy he could somehow be like the old Gary? It's his fantasy, too.

ALICE

I think that's great, Milo. I do.

MILO

...But?

ALICE

Didn't you visit the campus?

MILO

I forgot. That's why you have to help me decide.

ALICE

No way. You have this -- destiny.

MILO

C'mon, I wouldn't have a destiny without you. My destiny would be dying at 20. From eating --

ALICE

Don't bring that up. Like a different girlfriend would've let you die?

MILO

(shrugs)

You saved my life in a lot of ways.

He's sweet. She kisses him. He holds onto her.

ALICE

It's not just Gary that makes you wanna go there? 'Cause it's a big place. You might not even see him again.

He'd hate to think that's true. But he manages a smile.

MILO

I know.

EXT. MILO & ALICE'S APARTMENT - DAY

The Honda is loaded with luggage and boxes, some of which are tied to the roof. Milo & Alice stow a final piece.

MILO

When's Brian coming for the TV?

ALICE

Prob'ly waiting by the phone for Outpost to call. We'll leave it for

him?

As they head back in, they see a Toyota park at the curb.

ALICE

'Give you guys some time alone.

She continues inside. He waits, watches Teddy cross the sidewalk to join him.

MILO

...You got my E-mail?

TEDDY

And your phone messages. You wanna do what you do, it's not a crime.

MILO

Is that how Larry feels?

TEDDY

Uh. Not exactly.

A brown Buick parks behind Teddy's car. As they speak, a rumpled, 50ish MAN in an off-the-rack suit gets out.

MILO

Wanted to say goodbye to him...

TEDDY

Hey, we got seed money for the startup! A million-five!

Milo grins, he high-fives Teddy.

TEDDY

We rented a loft in Sunnyvale.

(he gives Milo the number)

You know what's the bad part? We can't talk about work anymore. We're competitors! The venture capitalists made us sign like 100 confidentiality forms.

MILO

Outpost made me sign 1,000. 'Guess we'll find out what else we have to talk about. Life stuff.

They embrace. It's awkward, but it's heartfelt.

INT. MILO & ALICE'S APARTMENT - A MOMENT LATER

Milo enters, reading Teddy's phone number.

MILO

Guess what? They got their --

The rumpled Man sits on a radiator, watching CNN on a TV, the last remaining piece of furniture. Alice enters, holding a jam jar filled water, hands Milo a business card.

ALICE

Milo, this is Mr. Barton from the Justice Department.

(gives Barton the water)

Sorry about the glass.

Milo reads the card: Lyle Barton, Asst. Prosecutor, DOJ, Seattle Branch Office. Milo's a little spooked.

BARTON

Don't worry, Milo. I'm here as a friend. Or maybe a supplicant.

MILO

Right... What's that mean again?

BARTON

Beggar. We're at a disadvantage with Outpost. Our experts aren't as smart as theirs. Sometimes we can't tell which technologies pose the threat of a monopoly. We need a really smart guy to help us pick our fights. I'm taking a shot in the dark, here. I can offer you 32,000 a year, a Buick. I'm hoping you've got a feeling it's the right thing to do.

MILO

(fiddling with the card)

It's just -- I kind of feel the need to do something with my ability. Create something...

BARTON

Like I said: shot in the dark.

Milo tries to give back the card.

BARTON

If you see something there that rubs you the wrong way? Do the right thing.

And he goes.

MILO

That took some fun out of --

ALICE

We're not gonna let it.

She kisses him. They head out. We linger. On TV a graphic says: SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA: MASS SUICIDE - LIVE. Emergency Medical Personnel roll gurneys with bodies out of a new Mediterranean mansion. Footage shows bodies (including a few children) on bunkbeds, uniformly shod in black Nikes.

CNN VOICE

-- ingested the fatal mixture of sedatives crushed in apple sauce. According to the cult's eerily professional website, it was "time to move on..."

EXT. OUTPOST CORPORATE CAMPUS - DAY

Crane past identical, low, steel & glass buildings, amid the vast lawns & fir trees... Past a building under construction... To find Redmond's Lexus, cruising.

INT./EXT. REDMOND'S CAR/CAMPUS - CONTINUOUS

Milo looks out the window, Redmond gives the tour:

REDMOND

There're 20 buildings, I mean not counting the Gyms, the Day Care, etc.

The Day Care is a Michael Graves-looking building with a big cartoon-dog sculpture on its roof, ears cocked to the sky. A Teacher leads her little charges inside.

REDMOND

Gary's put millions in there. And the people with kids? They're not hotshot geeks, they're just payroll clerks or whatever.

Two Men in suits, with briefcases, (conspicuous amid the Geeks in jeans and T-shirts) enter Building #19.

REDMOND

You'll see a lot of that: Department of Justice goons snooping around.

The car pulls into a lot full of Miatas, BMW's, Boxters.

CLOSE ON - THE OUTPOST LOGO

THEN TILT UP TO SHOW:

EXT. BUILDING 20 QUAD - DAY

The logo is of inlaid stone. Redmond & Milo walk over it. Milo carries a box with some personal effects, including a

small painting. Redmond wears a photo I.D. tag.

REDMOND

So how'd you like the house?

MILO

His Snapples were in alphabetical order.

REDMOND

(he laughs)

Well, he micro-managed the company till it got too big...

(he opens the door)

'Guess he needs to micro-manage something.

INT. BLDG. 20 LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

At the desk, a RECEPTIONIST looks up, stands to hang a temporary ID pass around Milo's neck.

RECEPTIONIST

Milo, I'm Judith. Welcome!

Milo smiles. Redmond uses his magnetic swipe card on an inner door (a security cam is at every door); he holds the door open for Milo.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

They walk up a long carpeted hallway, past open offices where Geeks (mostly males under 30) sit at workstations.

REDMOND

Everybody has the same office, there's no dumbass corporate hierarchy.

They pass a room in which Geeks play video games. Just outside it, a chubby programmer, DESI, sips a Diet Coke.

DESI

Get out while you can, dude!

REDMOND

Desi, Milo.

DESI

The guy who was at Gary's house?

He bows deep, with mock-obedience. Milo blushes, Redmond laughs, he snags Milo's elbow. They walk again, passing a service hall with a Civil Defense sign.

REDMOND

Best bomb shelters in America, accessible from every building. You

gotta figure we're a major target,
right?

ANOTHER HALLWAY - A MOMENT LATER

Up the hall, a young woman (LISA) is about to go into her office. She pauses half a second, looks at Milo, goes in. She's beautiful.

REDMOND

Whoa. Lisa actually looked at you.

As they pass her office, they look in: she's already at her workstation, studiously avoiding their gaze.

REDMOND

Every geek here's got a thing for Lisa. But that's about the biggest reaction she's had to anybody.

MILO

(shy, changing the
emphasis)

She's a programmer?

REDMOND

Heavy graphical background, doing
design-interface for Skywire apps.

(he all but winks)
You'll be working with her.

MILO

I've got a girlfriend, remember?

REDMOND

Right. That's rare around here. You
know how nuns' re-married to Jesus?
'Posties are married to Outpost.

INT. MILO'S OFFICE - MOMENT LATER

A handsome, modest office like all the others: workstation, whiteboard, window. They enter.

REDMOND

Here's your world.

(pointing at the desk)

Copy of Gary's book, also the audio
version, narrated by Gary.

Milo puts down his box, picks up the book: The Next Highway (Gary by a highway on its cover). As we look at it:

VOICE (SHROT)

The card's encoded. Tells us who
came through the door and when.

INT. OFFICE OF PHYSICAL SECURITY - LATER

In an office with a bank of monitors that play feeds from security cameras, BOB SHROT, 40, Head of Physical Security, issues Milo his swipe card. Redmond watches.

SHROT

Unauthorized entries sound like this.

He drags the card through a sample slot, producing an unbelievably loud, piercing EEEEEEEE. He shouts over it:

SHROT

If you see a tailgater, report him.

MILO

Tailgater?

SHROT

(kills the alarm)

Somebody coming in on your swipe.

(gives Milo a photo

ID)

You see somebody wandering around without ID, it's your duty to challenge him. I don't give a shit if you're a stock-option billionaire. If you don't challenge, I'll have your butt.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

MILO

He seems a little -- tense.

REDMOND

Geeks pull his chain cause he's non-tech. Ex-cop or something. They moon cameras, or use ATM's as swipe cards. The cameras're our real security so he's a little demoralized.

EXT. BUILDING 20/PARKING LOT - DAY

As they walk, Milo watches two Hardhats roll a spool of fiber-optic cable into the building under construction.

MILO

What're they building?

REDMOND

#21. Way behind schedule. It's top-secret, but everybody knows it's a digital broadcast space. They see the dishes on top, the fiber optics going in.

MILO

Gary's not into fiber optics. He's betting everything on the satellites.

REDMOND

You wanna survive in the software business, you cover your bets... I gotta say, this is the weirdest car anybody ever requested.

They approach a 1990 Deux Chevaux, cheap but charming.

REDMOND

Oh, right. Your girlfriend's an artist.

INT. BLDG. 20 CAFETERIA - DAY

Blond wood, smoked glass -- a room as sleek as the Geeks who lunch here are nerdy. Milo and Redmond push trays.

REDMOND

I phoned her at your hotel, told her about our corporate housing options. She sounds neat.

Lisa's at a table, looking at Milo. When their eyes meet, she busies herself, placing the plates back on her tray.

MILO

...She is.
(turning away from
Lisa)
She is!

Lisa passes behind them, smiles fleetingly at Milo. At a table, Randy and Phil note the "interaction." Meantime:

REDMOND

'Might be some friction on the domestic front. You're expected you to put in ridiculous hours. People've accused us of breaking up relationships to get their undivided attention.

He laughs.

INT. BLDG. 20 HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Lisa moves swiftly up the hall. She looks up it and down it (making sure no one's looking) before ducking into

MILO'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

She goes to the box on Milo's desk (his personal effects) -- starts rooting through it.

INT. CAFETERIA - LATER

Redmond and Milo have eaten; Redmond stacks their plates.

REDMOND

Your counselor'll fill you in on everything else. That's who you'll be working with almost daily.

INT. MILO'S OFFICE - LATER

Milo has fed the old Skywire disks into his machine. He reads a complicated screen.

VOICE

Busy?

Milo looks up. It's Gary. Milo is thrilled.

MILO

No! Just waiting for my counselor to come by and introduce himself.

GARY

Okay. I'm Gary.

Milo's smile deepens. Gary notices the small painting (by Alice) hanging on the wall. He stares at it.

GARY

'Think I should buy some originals?

MILO

...Do I?

GARY

Somebody said I'm just another Philistine. With reproductions.

MILO

That's insane. You're ahead of your time.

GARY

That's what I told her. My wife.

Milo colors as Gary drags a second chair in front of the screen; didn't realize he was contradicting Mrs. Boyd.

GARY

'Thinks I'll be less of a control freak if I have a hobby. 'Just gives me something else to obsess about...

Milo smiles as Gary sits down, studies the screen.

GARY

Anything we can salvage from the old code before you start fresh?

Milo can't quite get over: Gary's his counselor.

MILO

Uh, might be one or two things.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. QUAD - OUTSIDE MILO'S OFFICE - LATER

Two awe-struck Geeks see Gary through the window.

GEEK 1

He's been in there like an hour.

GEEK 2

Shit.

INT. MILO'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

MILO SCROLLS THE SCREEN:

MILO

Could work with a new switch. There may be a few more things hidden.

GARY

Don't spend too much time searching. You ever vetted somebody's old code before?

(when Milo shakes his head)

It's a different skill. Stay close to the surface. The best-hidden secrets are in plain sight. You know the best place to hide a leaf, right?

(when Milo shakes his head)

In a tree.

INT. EMPTY HOUSE - EVENING

We're in an old (empty) Craftsman house. Through a front window, we see Alice lead Milo up a path. As they enter:

ALICE

...The corporate condos were as romantic as they sound.

Milo's grinning as he takes in the house.

THE BEDROOM - MOMENT LATER

Windows give onto a garden with a small studio. Milo's still

beaming, Alice is pleased. Till he says:

MILO

You know he's never been anybody's
counselor before?

ALICE

Milo! What about --?

She gestures at what she hopes will be their home.

MILO

Oh, It's great. It's great!
(they start to kiss,
but:)
'Think I should tell him I learned
everything using 1.0? Maybe I could
show him one of my early programs.

She pulls him back into the kiss.

MONTAGE W/ MUSIC

- 1.) MILO types intently in his office.
- 2.) GARY sits with MILO at his desk, discussing code. Pan to the window; we see a different pair of awed Geeks.
- 3.) Milo & Alice read in bed. He's reading Gary's book.
- 4.) MILO shows GARY one of his early programs, written on 1.0.: it's simple-looking, with some childish writing scrawled on it. Gary seems touched.

INT. OUTPOST CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Two DOJ AGENTS depose Gary. (A video-cam records his answers.) Two Outpost LAWYERS sit next to him. One of the Agents is reading from a document:

DOJ AGENT

"Infotek's urgent need to license
Outpost Office is such that we can
use it as a tool in the current
negotiation."
(looks up)
When you wrote the word "tool," what'd
you mean by it?

Gary studies his copy of the E-mail. He looks vexed.

GARY

I don't remember.

DOJ AGENT

What d'you think you meant by it?

GARY

I'm confused. Am I supposed to speculate under oath?

The Agent shifts in his seat. We get an idea of Gary's negotiating skill (making the other party look unreasonable, while offering nothing).

OTHER AGENT

Since you didn't have an answer to that question, Mr. Boyd --

GARY

("confused" again)
Didn't I? Have an answer? "I don't remember."

The Agents confer. Gary sees Phil, looming outside the open door. One of the Agents sees him, too. He doesn't try to hide his annoyance:

DOJ AGENT

Did you wanna take a break, Mr. Boyd?

INT. AN OFFICE - A MOMENT LATER

Gary takes a manila envelope from Phil, opens it.

PHIL

Your protege's moving so fast we can barely keep up with him.

Gary reads the page from the envelope: computer code.

GARY

This is good. Who did it?

PHIL

'Start-up not 50 miles from here.
Kid's on Prozac.

GARY

Maybe we should all get on it.

INT. MILO'S OFFICE - DAY

Milo stares at his screen, frustrated. Gary enters.

GARY

How's it going?

MILO

Maybe I'm going too fast.

GARY

(sharply; incredulous)
Too fast? At least four companies're

on the verge of workable convergence systems, Milo, they --

Catching himself, Gary trails off. He sits down, exhales.

GARY

Even when I had a hand in every aspect of the company I knew the one thing you can never control is somebody's creative process.

Gary seems sincerely contrite. (He needn't be: Milo just wants to please him. Besides: Milo sees he'd like to stop obsessing about convergence, to be a "worldly zillionaire," engrossed in his hobbies; but, after all, what could be more engrossing than Skywire?)

MILO

It's okay. Really.

GARY

(reaching into his pocket)

Take a look at this. Slightly different approach.

Reading the page Gary got from Phil, Milo knits his brow.

MILO

You did this -- overnight?

GARY

You're making me young again.

INT. LISA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

PAN OFF a TV, where local news footage shows a mangled, smoking BMW, post-wreck, on a lonely nocturnal highway.

NEWS VOICE

...A graduate of MIT, he was on the antidepressant Prozac, and had been warned not to drink and drive. (Etc.)

Lisa watches the news report, knowingly.

INT. BUILDING 20 HALLWAY - DAY

Lisa heads up the hall, carrying a CD-ROM.

INT. MILO'S OFFICE - DAY

Milo's typing.

LISA

Milo?

He looks. He stands.

MILO

Lisa.

LISA

You know my name.

MILO

You know mine.

LISA

You're famous around here.

MILO

(winces)

I'm getting a teacher's pet rep.

LISA

I wouldn't worry about it. You've gotta figure most people around here were their teachers' pets.

MILO

...Were you?

LISA

We moved around so much I barely knew my teachers.

MILO

Me too! Were you an Army brat or something?

LISA

...Something like that. Yeah.

MILO

Didn't mean to pry. I just have this theory. Some of us who got to good at this? We were -- escaping something.

This seems to jolt her. She pales a little. What a mysterious girl. But this only adds to her allure.

MILO

Did I say something?

LISA

No, I know what you mean. I used to spend my life wishing people could be like computers. Least they make sense. Sometimes you think they've betrayed you. Like a person would. But then you see, no, you just missed a step. You can go back and make it

all work.

This strikes a deep chord with Milo, all of it.

MILO

I used to wish that. All the time.

They're looking at each other: he gets self-conscious.

MILO

(re: the CD-ROM)

What've you got there?

LISA

Graphical interfaces. For Skywire?

I'm s'posed to coordinate with you.

MILO

Show me.

They sit. As she inserts the disk, he finds himself looking at her. On the screen, the frontier outpost we know as the logo appears. It's struck by a bolt from the sky. The outpost comes alive with light, music, movie-images through its windows, a ringing phone. Finally, the word SKYWIRE burns into it. It's neat, she's really good.

MILO

Cool!

LISA

Yeah? I ran it for lots of platforms, ranging from the narrowest bandwidth to --

Simultaneously, they reach for the mouse. Their hands touch. They look at each other. Something happened.

MILO

...Sh-Show me the next one.

She nods, manipulates the mouse. He stares at the screen strenuously, fighting the impulse to stare at Lisa.

INT. ANTEROOM - GARY'S OFFICE

Gary's SECRETARY types as Milo enters. She smiles at him.

SECRETARY

Have a seat. He's with someone, but I know he wants to see you.

INT. GARY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Gary's face is red. The two Lawyers who sat in on his deposition are with him again.

LAWYER

Because we bundled it, the judge is threatening to enjoin the whole --

GARY

I'm confused, Ted.

Gary has used the phrase before, but the pretense of ingenuousness is gone; it's witheringly condescending.

GARY

Didn't you tell me they'd be Chapter 12 by the time they could hope to enjoin? I'm very confused, because you said they'd be ready to settle.

ANTEROOM - CONTINUOUS

Milo hears Gary yelling behind the closed door. It's indecipherable, but we discern an enraged "bullshit!" Milo flips through a copy of Wired, trying to ignore it. The Lawyers come out, passing swiftly, rather grimly.

SECRETARY

Go on in.

(when Milo looks dubious)

He's always happy to see you.

INT. GARY'S OFFICE - A MOMENT LATER

Agitated, Gary rather compulsively lines-up the papers, pens, etc. on his desk; he barely hears the knock at the open doorframe.

GARY

Milo. What's up?

MILO

Well -- you sent for me.

GARY

Right... Right.

Still distracted, he finds a page of code on his desk, gives it to Milo. Once again, Milo marvels.

MILO

You really wrote this just today?

GARY

(dark, unsmiling)
What're you implying.

MILO

(taken aback)
Nothing!

Their eyes are locked. Gary blinks, sags into his chair.

GARY

Everything I do is under scrutiny.
The questions they ask, trying to
make anything strategic look sordid.
(knits his brow)
I'm confused. Doesn't everybody in
business try to get ahead?

MILO

(uncomfortable)
I'm sure.

GARY

The purpose of this company isn't to
destroy our competitors any more
than the purpose of living is to
breath. But the software business is
binary: you're a zero or a one. Being
obsessive isn't a crime. It's a
character trait.

Milo just wants to get out. He studies the code to hide his
discomfort. Gary watches him.

GARY

It scales, don't you think?

MILO

Definitely.

He smiles. For the first time it looks forced.

INT. SEATTLE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A youthfully upscale place, a converted red-brick warehouse.
Alice looks great. The Waiter pours wine.

ALICE

This feels fairly grown up, I'd say.

Milo smiles (again it looks forced) raises his glass.

MILO

To our new life.
(she's looking at him)
...What's wrong?

ALICE

That's what I need to ask you.
(when he says nothing)
You know you can't keep anything
from me.

MILO

He gave me some new code-fixes this morning. I said, "Did you really do this just today?" Cause I was impressed. He said "What're you implying?"

She just looks at him. He grows a little defensive:

MILO

It's the way he said it. Just the way my dad did, when he was caught in a lie. That's how you knew you were onto something ugly.

ALICE

(just confused)
What would it mean, anyway? If he didn't write it?

MILO

That's what I'm asking myself. Does he have some genius stowed away? Why not let him write Skywire.

(upset)
'Not saying it makes sense.'

A Busboy leaves a basket of rolls. Glum, preoccupied, Milo takes one without looking, brings it to his lips --

ALICE

Milo!

He looks at Alice, looks at the roll, blanches.

MILO

I'm so stupid.

He throws the roll back into the basket.

ALICE

He's your boss. He's not your --

MILO

(he's nodding)
I know, I know.

ALICE

If you can't deal with him on that basis, you better get a new counselor.

MILO

(the very idea hurts)
Isn't that -- extreme?

ALICE

What's extreme is what that ER doctor said when he pumped your stomach.

Eat another sesame seed and that's it.

We see the rolls: covered in seeds.

ALICE

I mean, if one little comment from Gary is gonna upset you this much --

MILO

You're right. It's -- a working relationship. Don't know what I was expecting.

He smiles. But his heart's not in it. She hates to see him suffer. She picks up her glass.

ALICE

C'mon. Let's do the toast?

EXT. TERRACE OUTSIDE CAFETERIA - DAY

Milo sits alone, marking up pages of code as he eats. He doesn't notice Lisa, standing with her tray.

LISA

Did you wanna be alone?

MILO

No. Please.

He indicates she should sit.

LISA

They just pushed up the schedule on Skywire apps. How fast are you going?

MILO

"There is no second place." Plus every time I get jammed-up, Gary has an inspiration.

(looks at her, curious)

Is it like that with your counselor?

LISA

Mine's not the CEO. He barely remembers to take a shower.

MILO

Right, right. But does he ever just, like, hand you code?

LISA

Maybe once. I re-wrote it, anyway.

MILO

(he smiles)

You're compulsive.

LISA

Mmm-more like -- I have a little trouble. Trusting people.

MILO

Why's that?

LISA

Long story. Not that interesting.

She smiles charmingly to cover whatever she's feeling. The more enigmatic she is, the more intrigued he is.

EXT. BLDG. 20 QUAD - DAY

Milo and Lisa walk, eat ice cream out of paper cups with Outpost logos. They laugh. We go nearer.

MILO

So, when you were talking about wishing people were more like computers. Was that then? Or now?

LISA

Then and now.
(when he looks at her)
But not right now.

She maintains eye contact. Her meaning is clear.

VOICE

Milo!

Milo turns, sees Brian (Stanford classmate, Outpost zealot) give an envelope to a Guard at the door of #20; he trots over to Milo, who is as flustered as another guy might be having been found in bed with a girl.

BRIAN

Just dropped off a resume. Almost got in the front door.

He looks at Lisa, back to Milo, wondering why he isn't being introduced.

MILO

You're living here?

BRIAN

'Thought if I relocated it could help my case. I'm writing programs for the local public access station. Where any whack-job with 100 bucks gets his own show? God, does it suck.
(gives him a business

card)
Can you help me?

MILO
Sure, I'll see what I can do.

Seeing how flushed Milo is, Brian thinks he must have blundered in on something. He starts to back away.

BRIAN
Well I parked illegally. See y'later?

MILO
(watching Brian go)
'Forgot to introduce you.
(a beat)
I have a girlfriend.

LISA
That's great. I -- didn't know.

MILO
She saved my life.

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

The station is closed. Milo's car is parked, empty.

MILO (O.S.)
How's it going down there?

We find him, in an illuminated phone booth.

TEDDY (ON THE PHONE)
I've been hacking for five night's straight, I'm really making headway.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. TEDDY'S LOFT (SUNNYVALE) - CONTINUOUS

A funky space, posters on the wall, a red Stanford pennant, rubber trees at either end of his desk.

TEDDY
But these, like, White Supremacists trashed my office, last week.

MILO
What?!

On the wall beyond Teddy the word GOOK (in blood red) has been covered over with paint but still bleeds through.

TEDDY
They're in the neighborhood. They usually hassle Vietnamese grocers.

MILO
Jesus, Teddy.

TEDDY
I'm cool. They didn't touch the machine. Or my disks. Probably didn't know what they were. So, you a Moonie yet?
(he waits)
Milo?

MILO
I met this girl.

TEDDY
What? Come on. Is it serious?

MILO
I don't know.

TEDDY
Did you tell Alice?

MILO
No! I keep thinking it'll go away. But there's this -- connection. She's been hacking since she was little, she had to move around a lot. Plus I see her every day, we're working on the same program. She's -- beautiful.

TEDDY
A beautiful geek? I don't wanna sound paranoid, or like a pig, but what're the chances?

MILO
What d'you mean?

TEDDY
I dunno. I guess Larry's got me totally suspicious of that place.

MILO
What does that mean?

TEDDY
Milo, geeks don't have two girlfriends. Most don't have one.

MILO
I didn't plan this.

EXT. BUILDING #20 QUAD - DAY

Through a window, we watch Milo traverse the quad.

GARY (O.S.)
What'd the girl say?

PHIL
There may be a little less trust
after your outburst.

We are

INT. GARY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Gary turns back inside, where Phil reads Milo's new code.

PHIL
Hasn't affected his work, though.

GARY
Nothing does. Still. I want him to
like me.

Phil is confused by Gary's sincerity; so is Gary.

EXT. BUILDING #20 PARKING LOT - EVENING

Desi and another Geek watch in astonishment: Gary walks Milo to his car, his arm circled over Milo's shoulder. He seems to be -- apologizing.

EXT./INT. MILO & ALICE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Milo comes eagerly up the path: can't wait to tell Alice what just happened. He enters -- pulls up short. Alice is waiting for him. She's white.

MILO
...What's wrong?

She doesn't know how to say it.

MILO
What!

ALICE
Teddy was killed last night.

MILO
What're you -- what?

ALICE
It was a hate crime.

Milo is staggered. She moves to him...

ALICE
I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

He hangs onto her, for support.

EXT. SUNNYVALE LOFT BLDG. (SILICON VALLEY) - DAY

Establish the funky building, vestiges of police tape on the door, a limo and many cars parked out front.

INT. LOFT - MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

A mixture of Teddy's relatives and Computer Friends have gathered. In the BG, Teddy's Dad weeps volubly.

INT. TEDDY'S WORKSPACE - CONTINUOUS

Teddy's brother, NELSON, shows Milo the workspace: red Stanford pennant, rubber trees on the desk. Milo, in a suit, peers at the painted-over epithet on the wall.

NELSON

They trashed his hard disk, all his back-ups. Nothing's left.

MILO

They caught the guys?

Nelson shows Milo a San Jose Mercury: mugshots of two skin-headed Aryan Nations Members in their 20's.

NELSON

It's an airtight case. They found the weapon with Teddy's blood on it and their fingerprints. They'd been arrested twice for beating-up Asians. How come they weren't in jail?

Milo unpins a picture of himself & Teddy from a board.

MILO

He told me about the break-in. He didn't seem to take it that seriously.

NELSON

You guys don't take anything seriously do you? That's not on a hard drive?

Milo is stung by this. Alice appears in the doorway.

ALICE

Nelson? Your mom wants you. It's time to go to scatter the ashes.

Milo is pinning the picture back up. The pushpin falls to the floor, he kneels to retrieve it. On the floorboards, he sees a thin, shiny plastic filament. He picks it up.

MILO

I didn't know he was working with

fiber optics.

But when he looks up, Nelson's gone.

ALICE

We gotta go too, honey.

As he heads out with Alice, he unthinkingly stuffs the filament in his suit pocket.

EXT. BLUFF OVER THE PACIFIC - DAY

A raw beautiful bluff. The sea stretches to infinity behind a smaller group of Mourners. A LAY MINISTER intones the Lord's Prayer.

EXT. BLUFF - LATER

Milo approaches Larry with trepidation. Larry nods, it's okay. They hug each other. They walk slowly back toward the cars.

MILO

I know you lost all his work. Maybe I could come down here and --

LARRY

You are naive. Look at your employment contract: you can't work anywhere else in this field for at least few years.

(he smiles sadly)

Not that I don't miss you.

MILO

Just thought his work should go on.

LARRY

He was on the verge of something, too. He was gonna show us the next day. He said "The answer's not in the box, it's in the band." Know what it means?

MILO

It's only meaningful when you've got 40,000 lines of code to back it up.

LARRY

Man, could he write code. Totally elegant. He had his own style.

MILO

Those really weird, short lines.

They smile. For a moment, they've brought Teddy back to life. Alice comes up from behind, to fetch Milo.

LARRY

Take good care of this guy.

EXT. BLDG. 20 - DAY

Arriving for work, Milo sees Outpost flags at half mast.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

As Milo comes up the hall, Lisa is standing there. We get the feeling she's been waiting for him.

LISA

You okay?

He looks at her, perhaps hearing Teddy's words ("what're the chances?"). He nods, moves on. She watches him head up the hall.

INT. MILO'S OFFICE - DAY

Milo types. There is a rapping on the doorframe. Gary.

GARY

I heard what happened.

MILO

Were the flags for Teddy?

Gary nods. Spontaneously Milo stands, hugs Gary.

GARY

Had you talked to him much lately?

MILO

Just once. 'Guess I was worried we didn't have anything to talk about, since work was off-limits. Non-disclosure.

GARY

Did you?

MILO

Talk about work? Never!

GARY

I meant did you find other stuff to --

MILO

Oh. Yeah.

GARY

You've been coming in early.

MILO

It helps. Alice said it would help.
To focus on something.
(a little guilty)
'Don't know what I'd do without her.

INT. MILO & ALICE'S HOUSE - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Milo sits on the couch, in dim light. Alice comes in.

ALICE

You okay?
(sits by him, holds
him)
I miss him, too.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DINING ROOM TERRACE - DAY

Milo eats alone. Through the window, he sees Lisa inside. She's eating alone, too. Gary comes trotting up.

GARY

Milo?

He is unclasping a manila envelope; he takes pages out.

MILO

Wow. You must have 20,000 lines of
code there...

GARY

34,000. But they're real short lines.
'Just came out that way.

Seeing Gary's code, Milo knits his brow: it must be sort of like -- Teddy's.

GARY

Been thinking about the push mechanism
in the handler. And it came over me:
it's in the wrong place.

MILO

(an uncertain smile)
The wrong place?

GARY

The answer's not in the box. It's in
the band.

Milo's smile freezes. As he stares at Gary, we zoom with a reverse dolly so that the background retreats queasily but Gary remains dominant in frame. For Milo, it feels like the very ground is going out from under him.

Gary continues to explain, pointing at lines of code. And

Milo pretends to listen. But he can't even make out the words Gary speaks -- he hears only a jumble of echoes.

Milo nods mechanically; he wants to scream. Or run. He perceives, amid the echoes, that Gary is standing, smiling, saying "See you later." And he's gone.

Milo touches the pages, like some talisman of Teddy.

LISA (O.S.)

Milo? You okay?

It strikes him she always shows up at these moments. He gathers his wits before looking up.

MILO

Gotta go home. 'Think I ate something.

INT./EXT. MILO'S CAR/OUTPOST PARKING LOT - DAY

Pulling out of the lot, Milo seizes the car phone. He hits HOME on the speed-dial. Gets a busy signal. Rings off. He's about to press re-dial when he sees the Outpost logo branded on the receiver.

He throws it down like it's contaminated.

EXT. MILO & ALICE'S HOUSE - DAY

Middle-of-the-day sounds: chirping birds, school children. Milo pulls to the curb at a bad angle.

EXT. INT./FRONT DOOR/FOYER - DAY

He fumbles with his keys. When he gets inside:

MILO

Alice? Alice!

He moves into the bedroom. He sees her through the window, painting in the studio.

EXT./INT. BACK GARDEN/STUDIO - MOMENT LATER

He stands outside the studio. Waits for her to look up. She does. She smiles. Then she sees something's wrong. He waits for her to come out here, where it's safe to speak.

EXT. BACK GARDEN - LATER

He paces, agitated. She watches him. She's skeptical, but doesn't want to appear unsympathetic.

ALICE

Are you saying you think they had something to do with his death? Nelson said it was an airtight case.

MILO

I don't know what I'm saying. Maybe --
maybe they hired those guys.

ALICE

I can't see Outpost putting its
reputation in the hands of people
like that.

MILO

I don't know! I just know it was
Teddy's code. All these ideas flying
in from everywhere. You know how he
says "Any kid working in his garage
can put us out of business?" It's
like they know what every kid's doing.

ALICE

They hack into people's programs?

MILO

Nobody does work like this on-line.
It's in your PC, or in a mainframe.
Self-contained. They'd have to be,
like, watching people. Physically.
(he freezes)

Oh Jesus.

INT. BEDROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Milo's at the closet, rummaging among the clothes hanging
there. Alice comes up behind him. He finds his suit jacket.
He digs in one pocket, then another. He finds the fiber optic
strand (from Teddy's floor). Shows it to her.

MILO

(almost silently)
It's a camera.

EXT. BACK GARDEN - AGAIN

They've trooped back outside. She's worried she's indulging
his paranoia.

MILO

It isn't a broadcast studio. It's --
a surveillance post or something.
That's why they have the dishes on
top.

ALICE

You're scaring me. I think we should
just go.

MILO

Go where? You can't get away from

people like this.

ALICE

"Like this?" It's Gary you're talking about.

MILO

(it really hurts)

You think I don't know that?

ALICE

Milo. Why would he --

MILO

How should I know? "Solving a problem," I guess. Or needing to control everything. I don't know.

(can't think about it)

I've gotta get in there.

ALICE

Even if all this were true. There're 20 other buildings. All of them filled with computers and --

MILO

It's the only one with dishes on the roof. The studio's a front. That's why they keep postponing its opening.

(muttered, obsessive)

...gotta get in there.

ALICE

Milo, you told me those DOJ Agents are all over the place. How could they hope to hide a surveillance post?

(as he mulls this)

And how can you get in there, anyway?
With the cameras and the swipe cards --

MILO

I can't just walk away!

ALICE

You can't just walk in, either.

MILO

They stop the construction work at six or seven. The parking lot's mostly clear by two or three in the morning. Even the early Geeks don't get there before five.

ALICE

Is it two? Or is it three? Have you ever really noticed?

He knows what she's saying: he's unqualified for this, a space-cadet. She tries to hold him. But he wriggles away.

MILO

No! I can't just keep my head in the sand. That's how I got into this mess.

He paces, he thinks. She watches him, worried.

MILO

I know how to get in there. But you've gotta help me.

ALICE

(scared, reluctant)
...Whaddo I do?

MILO

So you believe me?

She can't lie. She shakes her head.

ALICE

Just tell me what to do.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

INT. MILO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Standing at his window, Milo can see #21. Workers in Hardhats come out of it, carrying lunchboxes. Milo holds a small writing pad. He notes the time.

EXT. SUBURBAN MAIN STREET - DAY (CONTINUE MONTAGE)

Alice parks in front of a drugstore. As she gets out of the car, she looks around uneasily.

INT. DRUGSTORE - (CONTINUE MONTAGE)

Alice is at the counter, buying a wind-up alarm clock.

INT. MILO'S OFFICE - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT (CONT. MONTAGE)

Milo watches a car pull out of the parking lot, leaving only one or two others. He writes down the time.

INT. TOystore - (CONTINUE MONTAGE)

Alice is at the counter, among children and mothers, purchasing a chemistry set.

INT. MILO'S OFFICE - NIGHT (CONTINUE MONTAGE)

He watches a SECURITY GUARD (DELBERT) go into #21 on his

rounds, notes the time: 3:45 AM.

INT. MILO & ALICE'S - STUDIO - NIGHT (CONTINUE MONTAGE)

Alice, wearing dishwashing gloves, ties the alarm clock to a small Tupperware container with copper wire.

Milo (wearing latex gloves) is at the sink, mixing chemicals from the toy chemistry set. Alice approaches with the container affixed to the clock. As she holds it out Milo pours the mixture into it.

SHORT FADE:

OVER BLACK we hear ticking. The screen lightens to show:

INT. SUPPLY CLOSET (BUILDING 20)

Milo's alarm clock is set for 11:00. It sits amid mops and cleaning products.

INT. BLDG. 20 HALLWAY - DAY

Milo stands in the open door of a refrigerator, as if searching for a soda. He's looking up the hall, waiting for someone. He consults his watch. 10:53.

MILO

Come on.

Here comes a GUARD; he nods to Milo as he passes. The Guard opens a door with his card. Milo rushes through the door on the Guard's swipe -- "tailgating."

GUARD

Sir, you gotta use your own --
(noticing)
Where's your ID?

Milo cops an attitude. He's not completely convincing.

MILO

Do you know who I am?

GUARD

It's my job, I gotta --

MILO

(he's getting better)
The kind of stock options I'm sitting on?

INT. PHYSICAL SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

Bob Shrot, the ex-cop in charge of physical security, looks up as the Guard escorts Milo into the room.

INT. SUPPLY CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

The bomb explodes. The blast is tiny but loud (glass cleaning bottles ring; plastic bottles moan).

INT. SECURITY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Milo sits, watches Shrot encode a new card for him, finding his info on a terminal. On a monitor behind Shrot, Milo sees Programmers being ushered out of the building.

SHROT

Every geek has to try this once to
show me how smart he is --

ANOTHER GUARD rushes in.

ANOTHER GUARD

There was an explosion in a Y-sector
closet, we're evacuating the whole
sector.

Shrot comes to his feet, grabs a holster (with gun) off a shelf. Milo, looking flummoxed, stands.

SHROT

Un-nh, can't wander around without
ID now. Just park your ass in that
chair.

Milo sits. Shrot goes out with the Guard.

GUARD (O.S.)

Whole place reeks of fuckin' ammonia.

Milo moves quickly to the wall, reads a chart with the Guards' Schedule, runs his finger down it til he finds the name of the Guard on the 3 AM shift: DELBERT, KEN.

INT. HALLWAYS - A FEW QUICK CUTS - CONTINUOUS

Guards open closet doors, shine their flashlights.

INT. PHYSICAL SECURITY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Milo has moved to Shrot's seat. He's encoding a fresh card with Ken Delbert's information.

INT. SERVICE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Panning off the civil defense sign we find Shrot standing at a closet, examining a piece of the alarm clock.

INT. PHYSICAL SECURITY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Milo is at work, bringing up schematic screens, diagnosing the system with his unique concentration.

Panning to the window, we see the evacuated Programmers enjoying themselves on the lawn. It's a rare, exciting event: they jump around, miming explosions.

INT. SERVICE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Shrot and the Guard collect pieces of the bomb out of the debris, puts them in a tray.

INT. PHYSICAL SECURITY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Milo brings up the screen that controls the #21 cameras. On the monitors, he sees nothing very interesting: a hallway, a room under construction...

He pulls down a menu. RECORDING is highlighted. He clicks PLAYBACK. The image hardly changes, but a Guard wanders through. He types, the tape rewinds (the Guard moves backwards). He finds a neutral spot (showing an empty hallway), stops the tape.

INT. SERVICE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Gary, Randy & Phil approach Shrot; Gary stares at him.

RANDY

What is it?

SHROT

Not much. Glorified cherry bomb.
Right by the civil defense sign?
Some geek's idea of irony. I been
saying we need a camera in this hall.

RANDY

There's nothing in this hall.
Someone's pulling your chain, as
usual.

SHROT

(thinking aloud)
Unless it's a diversion. Milo's in
my office. He was tailgating, so I --

Gary explodes, with incredulity.

GARY

Milo? Try to have a clue. Try to
think.

Gary strides off. Shrot feels unfairly maligned.

RANDY

That kid's the great white hope.

SHROT

I could get it out of him.

RANDY

You're not listening.

Randy and Phil head up the hall. Shrot watches them. Even if his "intellectual superiors" are convinced of Milo's innocence, he isn't.

He walks swiftly back toward his office. Then he runs.

INT. PHYSICAL SECURITY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Milo reads a warning message. DOWNLOADING PLAYBACK STREAM TO **RECORD CYCLE WILL CAUSE BIT OVERLOAD. DO YOU WISH TO PROCEED?** Y/N. He types Y.

The glitch freezes the tape (we see it lock into place): it shows the empty hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

They've let the Programmers back in. They head up the hall as Shrot heads down it. He pushes past them gruffly.

He knows he's enhancing his Neanderthal image (they make cracks) but he's more interested in obeying his instinct.

INT. PHYSICAL SECURITY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Milo immobilizes another camera in #21... and another.

INT. HALLWAY CONTINUOUS

Shrot rounds the corner. His office is in view, now.

INT. PHYSICAL SECURITY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Milo, at the keyboard, closes up windows, one by one.

INT. SECURITY OUTER OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Shrot is back, he has only to round the corner to see Milo. We assume his POV as he does so:

Milo sits in the chair where Shrot left him.

MILO

Everything okay?

INT. MILO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Pan off the clock (3:20 AM) to find Milo at his desk, looking at the clock with a certain dread. It's time.

EXT. BLDG. 20 QUAD - NIGHT

Milo walks the path between the two buildings, fiddling nervously with the dummied swipe card.

Hearing footfalls behind him, he whirls: it's a Geek loping to his car. He smiles. Milo smiles: waits, walks on.

Nearing #21, Milo looks around, making sure no one else is around. His POV (panning): A Programmer works late, visible through a lighted window in #20... The dog sculpture with cocked ears sits atop the Day Care, its quizzical expression seeming to wonder what Milo is up to... The Geek he just saw racing by on foot now pulls out of the parking lot in his James Bond BMW...

Milo arrives at the entrance. Heart pounding, he brings the card to the slot. Will he trigger that awful alarm?

He slides the card, the door clicks.

INT. BLDG. 21 - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

He enters: concrete floor, unpainted walls, construction lights. At the inner door he looks up at the camera.

CUT TO:

A MONITOR

that shows us where Milo stands, minus Milo. Widen:

INT. SECURITY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A GUARD packs up his stuff, getting ready to go home. The new guard, KEN DELBERT enters.

DELBERT

How's it goin'?

GUARD

(shaking out his cup)
Big night. Switched from tea to coffee. Brought new meaning to my work.

DELBERT

Yeah? Maybe I'll start my rounds with #21 tonight.

GUARD

You are a wild man.

INT. BLDG. 21 - INNER HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Milo moves up a hall with unpainted walls, bare floors, unconnected wires. The only illumination is from construction lights on the concrete floor. Opening doors, he sees:

Bare rooms. Wall plates ready to receive electrical equipment, bundles of wire hanging out. In other words: the building is as advertised, so far.

EXT. BUILDING 20 - NIGHT

Delbert comes out with his flashlight, heads across the clean-swept path that leads to #21.

INT. BLDG. 21 - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Milo nears a set of double-doors at the end of the hall. He hears a low ominous hum from within. Convinced he's found something, he quickens his pace. He's about to swipe his card when a beam of light bounces along the wall.

He presses himself into an alcove. Through a chink in the unfinished wall he sees:

Delbert come in the front door. His rounds consist of shining his torch up at the cameras, making sure the red lights are on.

He walks right past Milo (who doesn't breath).

Delbert swipes open the double doors, leans in: the humming gets louder.

ON MILO: pressing himself into the alcove.

Delbert turns around, heads back down the hall... exits the building.

Milo waits a beat before heading to the end of the hall. Using the card, he enters

A BIG SPACE

A studio-to-be, architectural touches like soffits framed in but not plaster-boarded. The portentous hum comes from around a corner. He approaches, convinced the answer lies here. Clearing the wall he sees:

A squat emergency generator sitting on the floor, powering construction lights. Something you'd buy at Sears.

EXT. #21 ENTRANCE/A MOMENT LATER - (BINOCULAR SHOT)

Through infra-red binoculars we see Milo come out, looking left and right, to make sure he hasn't been observed.

VOICE (RANDY)

Well. Now he knows: nothin' in there.

We are

INT. PHIL'S OFFICE - BLDG. 20 - CONTINUOUS

Randy turns back into the room, where Phil is sifting through papers spread over a coffee table.

RANDY

Maybe he'll get back to work.

PHIL

Speaking of which...

RANDY

Yeah, yeah.

Randy pulls the blinds shut, joins Phil.

EXT. QUAD - CRANE SHOT CONTINUOUS

From a high angle, we track Milo, as he walks along the path to a bench. The camera passes briefly behind a dark object in the foreground (dog sculpture) as we track him.

QUAD - TIGHTER - CONTINUOUS

Milo sags onto the bench. He stares out, perplexed, suffering. Then he knits his brow. He seems to be studying -- the ground.

Or rather the shadow stretched out in front of him: the looming silhouette of the dog atop the Day Care.

He stands up, turns around. REVERSE ON:

The whimsical canine. Push toward it's ears cocked to the sky... Then toward a single ear, framed by fur-brown concrete, but with a smooth, concave inner surface of enamelled metal: satellite dish.

MILO

(muttering)

...in a tree...

EXT. DAY CARE CENTER - A MOMENT LATER

At the entrance, Milo applies the swipe-card.

INT. DAY CARE CENTER - CONTINUOUS

He steps in on colorful carpeting, amid balls & tricycles. Kid's artwork hangs on the wall. He moves through this room, into the

COMPUTER ROOM

20 screens glow. They hang suspended over a wide, ringed table, a chair at each keyboard. Indeed, Gary has spared no expense for the toddlers: they're flat, sleek, digital screens. At the moment, they show colorful, childish contour drawings that say WHERE I WANNA WORK (e.g.: a spaceship).

There are a dozen more screens on tables at the perimeter of the room showing screensavers (eg: angelfish swimming).

Milo moves slowly around the table, studying the screens. Not surprisingly, most of the WHERE I WANNA WORK drawings are of desks or tables with computers.

Tracking just ahead of Milo, we get to a screen that shows a workstation with a red pennant on the wall, a rubber plant at each end of a desk. Even in contour form it's -- familiar. Milo passes it. And comes back to it.

Staring at it, he sits. He begins typing. [The drawing still occupies the screen, but in a window he's brought up at the bottom, there is dense, DOS-looking code.] He types furiously

--

numbers, symbols, backslashes. Whatever he's trying to do is a challenge even to him. He deletes lines, begins anew, his frustration evident.

As he works through the layers of code, the pixels on the screen start to fill in. The contour lines slowly dissolve into a live broadcast image of Teddy's workstation in Sunnyvale (eerily empty, now).

When all the pixels have fallen into place, Milo hears CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK CLICK from every direction, as all the screens in the room fill in with live broadcast images. All of them show variations on a theme:

A workstation seen by a camera over-the-shoulder of a programmer (if he were present). The stations are of various shapes and sizes, but in each case we have an unobstructed view of screen & keyboard. At this hour, few programmers are present. One guy has fallen asleep, his head on a desk. A Japanese Geek is hard at work: it's day there.

INT. PHIL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Phil and Randy work at the coffee table.

PHIL

Did you download Corey? In San Jose?

RANDY

Damn. 'Have to go back over there.
(he stands, stretches)
Be so much easier if we could walk
in the front door.

PHIL

You don't look anything like a three-year-old.

INT. DAY CARE - COMPUTER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Milo works the keyboard. Again, the code gets dense and

obscure as he goes deeper. He succeeds in calling-up a graphical interface. Among the menus he can choose from are: **TARGET SCHOOLS, PD UPLOADS, RX UPLOADS.**

He clicks Target Schools, a menu shoots down (Berkeley, Cal Tech, etc.). He clicks Stanford, then Chin, Teddy. Two windows open. In one, there is a video stream of Teddy winning an award in the Gate's Bldg. In the other, uploaded police video stenciled SUNNYVALE PD) of the White Supremacists whose mug-shots we saw in the San Jose Mercury; they're being interrogated.

In the first window, Teddy's image dissolves into a handheld crime-scene video (marked SV-PD) of a ransacked grocery store. "DIE GOOK!" is painted on a wall. Milo looks confused: some "narrative" is unfolding, but it remains obscure without audio.

He types some more.

In the bottom window, he brings up convoluted text regarding the audio. About the only phrases we can understand are: "Audio Block ON" and "Hardware Requirement: Magnetic Filter Type PBX-R17."

His eyes cast about the room for some suitable hardware substitute. He digs in his shirt pocket. He takes out his swipe card, studies it. He casts about some more, till he sees some kids' safety scissors in a jar.

INT. BUILDING 20 - SERVICE HALL - CONTINUOUS

Randy whistles as he heads up the hall. Arriving at the door with the Civil Defense sticker, he swipes his card.

INT. DAY CARE COMPUTER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

On-screen, long-lens footage shows a low building; the Aryan Nations suspects come out of it. A still photo appears in the 2nd window: a steel hasp.

Milo's eyes are narrowed: what am I seeing? Meantime, he is reaching under the table where he has removed a plate from the mainframe terminal, exposing hardware within.

He has trimmed the swipe card to size and is wedging its magnetic strip into a metal slot. He wiggles the card. We hear an eerie fibrillation, which flattens into the voice of a serene, eminently sane female:

MULTIMEDIA NARRATOR

-- run this methamphetamine lab known to Federal Authorities, per ND 47, from which we removed the implement, fingerprints intact.

Crime-scene video streams in now stenciled FBI by the

time/date). A handheld camera pans a blood-spattered wall then shows a mutilated Asian murder victim. (All of this footage is made even eerier by the jerky glitches always present in streaming video, and its sinister graininess.)

MULTIMEDIA NARRATOR

FBI footage, procured by ND 47, shows the aftermath of an Aryan Nations' killing in Denver. Note the evidence of torture, which is typical.

Milo pales as he realizes he is watching a primer on how racial killings are done.

He hears a creaking noise behind him, and whirls.

It's the classroom hamster, on his wheel.

INT. STAIRWELL/BOMB SHELTER - CONTINUOUS

Still whistling, Randy descends some metal stairs, enters a vast bomb shelter (canned foods, etc.)

INT. DAY CARE - COMPUTER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Milo has tapped into his own file: footage of him lecturing at Stanford (as an RA), pointing to a whiteboard.

MULTIMEDIA NARRATOR

-- complete immersion in code-writing renders him both unobservant and suggestible [click]. On two occasions he went truant from classes to attend Comix Conventions.

The audio crackles and drops out again. Milo's eyes narrow: he sees video of Alice, sitting on a folding chair, speaking to someone. She has a harder look, pulls on a Marlboro.

What's he seeing? He wiggles the jerry-rigged hardware almost urgently, till the narration crackles back on:

MULTIMEDIA NARRATOR

-- Rebecca P, a Connecticut art student facing Federal drug charges, whose records were supplied to us by
N.D. 47.

He hears her voice under the Narration, answering an unseen Interrogator (sounds like Phil). It's a job interview. Milo subtly, unconsciously shakes his head, as if to deny what his eyes see. The narration begins to fibrillate, again:

MULTIMEDIA NARRATOR (O.S.)

Armed with his personal files, she was easily able to ingratiate herself with the socially maladroit Milo --

The audio drops out as Milo sees uploaded medical files and ER photos of himself marked STANFORD MEDICAL CENTER: he's waxen, bloated, gasping for breath. With a certain dread, Milo jams the card in deeper:

MULTIMEDIA NARRATOR

...she planted the sesame seed both to test the extent of his proclivity and to provide a bonding experience, since she would quote "save his life."

Milo is devastated, disbelieving. Now he sees real-time ER footage: an Allergy Victim, bloated, twitching, gasping, dying...

MULTIMEDIA NARRATOR

-- should it be needed Milo's allergy is the ideal --

The audio crackles out. But Milo doesn't have the heart to bring it back: he can fill in the rest.

INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Randy traverses a well-lit tunnel. Still whistling.

INT. COMPUTER ROOM - DAY CARE CENTER - NIGHT

Numb now, Milo clicks randomly: crime footage, personal records, animations -- it all flies by with Chuck Worman-like speed.

MULTIMEDIA NARRATOR

Note that the cult members are found reclining after swallowing the [click] Syringe marks best hidden at base of scrotum [click] mimics high blood alcohol [click] indistinguishable from kidney failure.

Milo closes his eyes, leans back: overwhelmed. Suddenly he sits forward, whispers almost fervently as he types:

MILO

Please don't be one of them.

INT. DAY-CARE - UNDERGROUND ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Camera moves slowly through stacks of pre-school supplies, toward a windowed door at the back of the room.

RANDY appears in the window, lit ominously from below. He applies his swipe card.

INT. COMPUTER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Milo watches footage of Lisa taken by surveillance cam- eras: she is outside #21, trying to peek in the door.

MULTIMEDIA NARRATOR

...needs to be watched, due to her heightened level of suspicion --

In one window, footage of Lisa casing the hallway before going into Milo's office; in another, footage of her eating lunch with Milo.

MULTIMEDIA NARRATOR

-- and to her possible contagion of key employees.

Milo clicks. A MAN's pair of mug shots appear. In the other window, a grade-school yearbook photo of Lisa.

MULTIMEDIA NARRATOR

In August '86 Lisa informed her mother of the sexual molestation by her stepfather, and of his threat to kill her should she tell anyone.

Milo watches streaming local news footage of a man being taken from a courtroom in shackles (jerky, grainy). He's lost the audio, but doesn't need it, anymore.

INT. DAY-CARE STAIRWELL

Randy climbs up to the main floor... whistling.

INT. COMPUTER ROOM - DAY CARE - CONTINUOUS

Milo watches eerie crime-scene footage: a Girl with her throat slashed.

But then, hearing nearly-distant whistling, he clicks on windows furiously: closing them.

INT. DAY CARE BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Randy rounds a corner. He enters the

COMPUTER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The screens show the children's contour images, again. Where's Milo?

Randy takes a seat at the same console Milo was at, and begins to type. Camera booms slowly down beneath table-level to find:

MILLO hanging onto the underside of the table, knuckles white, as he clings to metal table braces. The toes of his sneakers are jammed into the space between a black plastic data tower and the table bottom.

Randy shifts in his seat, his knee rising toward Milo's back. Milo arches it, avoids a knee by mere millimeters.

RANDY: brings up a shot of a Programmer at work, zooms in on his screen to begin collecting his code.

MILO: begins to lose his grip as sweat forms on his brow and, worse, on his hands. They're giving way.

RANDY: clicks. A printer across the room starts making a hard-copy of the purloined code.

MILO: stares in horror as the data tower his toes are jammed on top of starts to shift -- threatening to disengage from its ports. He tries to lift it back up with heels of his shoes.

RANDY: knits his brow as his screen flickers. He keeps typing, but starts to lower his head: he's going to look under the table.

MILO: winces as he presses the tower upward with his heels, while trying to maintain his balance...

RANDY: lowering his head, keeps his eyes on the screen, hits keys. Just as he is about to clear the level of the table -- the screen re-illuminates. He comes back up.

MILO: having extended his legs to support the tower, feels his hands slipping...

RANDY: closes up the window...

MILO: flops to the carpet(!) just as --

RANDY pushes away from the table... From the floor

MILO watches him walk over to the printer, collect his hardcopy, and disappear from view.

Milo listens: the door clicks shut, the whistling recedes.

BACK ROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Milo traces Randy's steps. He sees the door with the Civil Defense sticker, intuits how Randy got here, i.e., how one moves, unobserved, between the Day Care and #20.

He sags against the wall. Wondering what to do, now.

EXT./INT. MILO'S CAR/STREET - DAWN

Milo sits in his idling car, staring at his own house, up the street. How can he go in there?

He puts the car in gear, does a U-Turn.

EXT. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE - SEATTLE - EARLY MORNING

The Deux Chevaux is parked on the street outside a government building. Not many people are around, yet. A Janitor hoses down the sidewalk.

INT. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE - RECEPTION AREA MORNING

Milo slides a business card across a reception desk. It's the one the rumpled Prosecutor, Lyle Barton, gave him that day in Palo Alto.

MILO (O.S.)

He gave me this. 'Said I should come see him if --

DOJ RECEPTIONIST

He's not in yet.

MILO

Can I wait in his office?

DOJ RECEPTIONIST

It's locked, dear.

He looks over his shoulder, then back again, frightened.

MILO

Please.

DOJ RECEPTIONIST

Wait in his outer office.

INT. BARTON'S OUTER OFFICE - MORNING

Milo sits on a wooden bench, foot tapping. Hearing Barton's voice, he comes to his feet. Barton enters with a Co-Worker, holding a container of coffee, discussing the particulars of a case.

CO-WORKER

Do I make the call, or do you?

Milo is relieved the second he sees Barton's kindly face.

MILO

Mr. Barton, do you remember me?

BARTON

...It's -- Milo, isn't it?

MILO

Yes sir. I need to talk to you.

BARTON

Give me two seconds with Lacy here?

(unlocks his door)
Go on in, I won't be a moment.

Milo enters as Barton finishes up with his colleague.

BARTON (O.S.)
I'll make the call, but I think you
need to send a Fax first (etc.).

INT. BARTON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Milo paces. He surveys framed diplomas, commendations and photos on the wall. He takes comfort in their solidity: pictures of Barton's teenage Kids, Barton and Wife at the Grand Canyon. There's a college football photo, a young Barton with his team. Milo studies it, smiles. Move in on the photo, till we see the number on Barton's Notre Dame football jersey:
ND 47.

Milo's smile fades. It takes a moment before he even hears Barton behind him.

BARTON
Milo?

MILO
Yeah. Hi. Thank you for seeing me.

BARTON
Have a seat.

As Milo takes the seat in front of the desk (mind spinning) Barton moves to his own chair.

BARTON
What seems to be the problem? You
look a little upset.

MILO
I am. I am, sir.

What's he gonna say?

BARTON
Milo?

MILO
My friend, my best friend, Teddy,
was killed in Silicon Valley.

BARTON
My goodness.

MILO
It was racially motivated. He's
Chinese. He was. And... I know
sometimes the FBI gets involved with

that. Don't they?

BARTON

If there's a Civil Rights violation.
But generally we let the local police
and DA do their work first.

MILO

I -- just wanna help bring these
guys to justice. They're neo-Nazis.

BARTON

Let me look into it, see what's being
done. Frankly, it's not my area.

MILO

(he gets up)
'Just didn't know who else to talk
to.

BARTON

(circles an arm over
Milo)
And Outpost? You're happy there?

MILO

Yes sir.

INT. MILO & ALICE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Alice is on the phone in the front room. Agitated, she puffs
on a pencil (surrogate cigarette). We hear Phil through the
receiver:

PHIL (ON THE PHONE)

'Didn't mention he was going to the
Justice Department?

ALICE

No.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. PHIL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

PHIL

Not like him, is it? To do a thing
like that without telling you. You're
not losing your hold on him, are
you?

ALICE

He'll tell me when he gets home.

PHIL

That'll be a test, won't it?

ALICE

Instead of busting my chops you should do something about that girl. Fire her. Or something.

PHIL

Lisa's an extremely valuable member of the Skywire team. We've got our eyes on her. You keep yours on Milo.

ALICE

(as she hangs up)
Prick.

EXT. MILO & ALICE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Milo comes up the path. He pauses as he nears the door: he's not sure he can pull this off.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As Milo enters, Alice rushes to meet him.

ALICE

It's almost nine, I've been so worried!
(she takes his hands)
What did you see in there?

MILO

Nothing.

ALICE

Nothing?

She watches him as he collapses onto the couch.

MILO

It's what they said it is. An unfinished broadcast studio. You were right... I just drove to Seattle and back.

ALICE

...Why?

MILO

Remember Lyle Barton?

She shakes her head.

MILO

The Justice Department guy who came to the apartment when --

ALICE

I remember.

MILO

After I broke into 21 -- which was insane, thank God they didn't catch me! -- I just drove around. Trying to figure out what possessed me. You know what? I've been putting my own guilt on Gary.

ALICE

Guilt?

MILO

(quietly)

If I'd stayed down there, maybe this wouldn't've happened.

ALICE

Poor baby. You know that's not true.

She sits by him, touches her hand to his face tenderly. He closes his eyes for a moment, steals himself to her touch. Then he forces himself to cup his hand over hers.

But he can't stand it. He gets up, looks out the window.

MILO

I thought, instead of indulging all these paranoid delusions, risking my job, alienating Gary, scaring you, I should do something useful with my grief. Help them find Teddy's killers.

He doesn't see her smile: is that all. Assuming an appropriately concerned expression, she moves toward him:

ALICE

I was so worried about you.

She turns him around, kisses him. Her eyes are closed. His remain open. He's looking at her. Trying to comprehend the treachery.

She touches him, breathes heavily. She wants more than kisses: to prove to herself how wrong Phil was, her professional pride insulted. Or perhaps it's more personal than that, especially with Lisa as a potential rival.

MILO

(through their kisses)

...been such a long night.

But she doesn't stop. She moans as she presses herself to him: wants proof of his devotion.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

He's on top of her in the moment just after. Her eyes are closed. He stares at her -- glares at her -- with what we recognize as spent anger.

ALICE

That was -- different.

MILO

...Different?

Shit. She knows.

ALICE

You didn't feel it? So intense.

What's clear is, she liked it. A clap of thunder takes us to:

EXT. PIZZA PARLOR - NIGHT

It's pouring. Milo stands outside, wearing a slicker, looking in the window at someone.

INT. PIZZA PLACE - MOMENT LATER

Lisa reads a paperback at a table, a slice of pizza on her plate, an umbrella hooked to her chair. Sensing someone standing over her, she looks up. She smiles.

LISA

So you're not avoiding me.

Milo sits across from her. He doesn't know where to start.

LISA

What's wrong?

He looks around, wants to make sure no one's listening. He speaks very quietly.

MILO

I snuck into #21.

LISA

Why would you do a thing like --

MILO

You thought about it too. You've been suspicious for a while. But it's not happening in there. It's happening in the Day Care.

LISA

The Day Care?

Two Men with even features enter the restaurant. One has a laptop case slung over his shoulder.

MILO

Can we go someplace else?

EXT. CITY PARK - NIGHT

They're in a bandshell. The rain falls heavily, drips off the eaves. She holds the filament from Teddy's workspace.

MILO

It's easy to know who the smart geeks are, the schools tell 'em. They upload medical files, school records, pharmacy files. They'd be happy just to steal code forever. But when a program gets close to fruition. Like Teddy. He was almost there.

LISA

But why would they --?

MILO

You know. There is no second place. And what's the risk? The killings're undetectable, they're hand-tailored, they make "sense." I mean, they're in the information business. They have scenarios for all of us, too. In case we find out too much.

She's peering at him. He reads her mind.

MILO

I'm not one of them. Not trying to "suss you out."

She wants to believe him.

MILO

They killed my best friend! I'm living with somebody they pay to go to bed with me. Can't you trust somebody just once? I don't wanna be alone here.

His plea is so ardent, his humanity so transparent. But she can't quite do it.

LISA

I'm sorry, Milo... I'm sorry.

She smiles sadly as she backs away.

MILO

(forcefully)

I know why you're so secretive. Why you won't let anybody near you.

(quieter)
I know what he did to you.

LISA
Oh yeah?

She tries to sound tough; there are tears in her eyes.

LISA
So that's in my -- file?

He wants to comfort her. He takes a step toward her. She shakes her head: no.

LISA
Is that my -- scenario?
(when he hesitates)
Tell me.

MILO
They'd frame him.

LISA
(horrified)
He's out of prison?

MILO
(he nods)
They're already watching you. If they had to, they'd give him this drug that mimics an alcoholic blackout. He'd wake up not even remembering his "act of revenge."

She draws her hands to her face as the facade cracks. She weeps silently. He moves to her, carefully, slowly, seeing her fear, her trauma. He touches her shoulders. She tenses, tries to back away.

LISA
No.

But he holds on.

MILO
Nobody's gonna hurt you.

Slowly, he wraps his arms around her.

She remains tense for a moment, then yields, pressing her face into his shoulder. The rain drums on the bandshell. After a moment:

LISA
...Milo?

MILO

Hmm?

LISA

I always felt if a -- boy I liked ever found out -- he'd run. He'd think I was unclean.

MILO

No, no. Never.

She clings to him tightly, now, the wall of her mistrust breached after all the years of pain, secrecy, shame.

A wide shot: they hold each other, alone in the storm.

VOICE (PHIL)

All his suspicions were allayed?

INT. LIBRARY-LIKE OFFICE - DAY

Alice nods. She sits in front of leather-bound books.

VOICE

You're sure.

She's at Gary's house. On the hot seat. Phil and Randy watch her. Gary does, too, but deep in shadow, behind a desk, at a remove. Rain falls heavily on the Lake.

ALICE

He said it made sense that Gary's code was like Teddy's, that that cliché about great minds was true. Said it was all about his own guilt. (she shrugs) Plus, he has a tendency to get Gary mixed-up with his dad once in a while. It always passes.

PHIL

He wasn't acting?

ALICE

I don't think he knows how.

Phil looks convinced. Gary doesn't.

EXT. HIGHWAY/GAS STATION - MORNING

From across the highway (cars with morning commuters whiz by) we see Milo pumping gas at a self-serve; Lisa fills-up in the next lane. Ostensibly, they have run into each other on the way to work. They are smiling, casual.

Only when we cut close do we see that their expressions bear no connection to their words.

LISA

What about the FBI?

MILO

They've got this guy in the DOJ,
maybe others. We tell the wrong
person, it's over.

LISA

Who can we trust?

MILO

There's always a logical answer --
you just have to define the question.

She defines it:

LISA

How do you let go of a secret without
telling the wrong person.

She pretends to need help lifting her car hood: "a helpless
female." He comes over to help her.

MILO

We don't tell anybody.
(she's puzzled)

We tell everybody. At once. So there's
no secret left to protect. When
everybody knows, they don't dare
touch us.

INT. PHYSICAL SECURITY OFFICE - MORNING

Bob Shrot is on the phone. Behind him, a nerdy security
programmer, LEN DIETZ, is at the console that controls the
security cameras (the ones Milo futzed with).

SHROT

(into the phone)
No, Tony can't fill in for you, he's
not at your authorization level.

Scrolling, Len knits his brow: he's found something odd.

LEN

Bob? You better look at this.

EXT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Milo checks Lisa's oil for her.

MILO

Do we post it on the Net?

LISA

There're so many disinformation sites

about Gary already. Where he has devil's horns or they crop him in with Saddam Hussein.

INT. PHYSICAL SECURITY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Shrot stands over Len's shoulder.

SHROT

Could it be a glitch? Something the construction workers caused?

LEN

Unlikely. All 14 cameras are frozen. Do we call Randy and Phil? Tell 'em there may have been a break-in?

SHROT

Not yet. 'Love to bust my ass cause I'm not in frigging Mensa.
(walks to the window)
I swear to God, it's that kid Milo,
I told 'em so in the first place,
but they didn't even wanna hear about it.

(turns to Len)
Let's run a printout on card entries.

EXT. GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

Milo shows Lisa the oil stick. She nods.

LISA

The mainstream media. TV, or a newsmagazine.

MILO

Right. But Gary's tied-in to a lot of media conglomerates. Have to be careful who we pick.

LISA

We could cross-reference a data base on media ownership. But not on our own computers. Not even at home.

MILO

Certainly not at my happy home.

He slams the hood.

INT. PHYSICAL SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

Shrot and Len watch a laser printer, as it spits out line after line after line of swipe card entries...

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

A LASER PRINTER spits out code. We are:

INT. MILO'S OFFICE - DAY

Milo watches new Skywire code emerge from his printer.

Gary is in the doorway behind him: watching Milo, scrutinizing him. Sensing someone, Milo turns and looks.

MILO

Gary, hi.

GARY

You look a little tired.

MILO

I'm okay. It's going well!

GARY

'Have a look?

MILO

Sure.

Gary takes the page. As he reads it over:

GARY

Why did you move around so much?
When you were a kid.

MILO

...My dad was a compulsive gambler.
Only he didn't think he was. That
applied to guys who didn't have a
"system." "Losers," who played games
of chance. He could "read" people,
so chance had nothing to do with it.
No matter how deep a hole he dug
himself, he'd give you the whole
speech. And you'd better not point
out the obvious.

(he shrugs)

His creditors would catch up to him.
Loan sharks or whatever. He'd wake
us in the middle of the night. Off
we'd go, again.

GARY

What would you tell the kids? At
your new school? You had to come up
with a good story, right?

Milo thinks: he's testing me.

MILO

No. I just went deeper into the

machine. Preferred being the geek to having to explain. Lying would've been worse.

GARY

...Worse?

MILO

Cause he was a liar. And I hated him.

(mimicking a voice)

"Get your head out of that machine, wise up to the real world." The more he mocked me the deeper I went. Cause if being savvy meant being like him -- (he shrugs)

Guess that's why I'm kind of clueless, even now. Didn't cultivate my conniving side. 'Not sure I even have one.

GARY

Don't be so hard on yourself. With a brain like yours, you could connive with the best of 'em I bet.

Gary smiles. There's no way to read it.

EXT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - NIGHT

Establish the humble building, in a Park.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Lisa and Milo sit together in front of a monitor. A Kid does his homework on a computer at the next table. Milo shakes his head, as he scrolls.

MILO

He's buying up pretty much everything: cable companies, baby bells, picture libraries, museum rights, film archives... Getting ready for Skywire.

LISA

(she's thinking)

What about "60 Minutes."

MILO

Yeah, they dig stuff like this.

(he types, then reads)

"CBS News has partnered with Outpost Information Systems in a cable news network due to launch Fall of 2001."

LISA

But still, you can't say CBS wouldn't

love to break something like --

MILO

(he's shaking his
head)

Say there's just one "mole" working
there, like Barton at the DOJ. How
do we know he's not the guy we've
contacted? Or she? Or the guy she
works for?

At the next table, she notices a Lady reading Time.

LISA

Time?

MILO

(types, reads)

Time-Warner has a 40 per cent stake
in Gary's set-top device. That also
takes out CNN.

(scrolling & scrolling)
"GE joins Outpost in new venture,"
which means NBC is out. "Disney joins
Outpost," ABC is out. "Outpost and
NewsCorp in new deal," Fox is out.
Any of these places could have a
mole. Or all of 'em.

(still scrolling)
It's like a a continuous loop. We
can go to some alternative press
place that 1,000 people read, get
them and us killed. But anything big
enough for this is a parent of or a
subsidiary to something Gary's got a
finger in!

HOMEWORK KID

Shhh.

MILO

Sorry.

LISA

Milo?

She's thought of something. He's watching the nerdy Kid,
smiling sadly, perhaps identifying with him.

LISA

How close are you?

MILO

What?

LISA

He's got 12 satellites up. He's got

dishes on top of 21. He's building
this --
(gestures at the screen)
mega-network for Skywire. Let's use
it.

Move in on Milo as he thinks it over with a mixture of
excitement and skepticism.

EXT. LIBRARY/PARK - NIGHT

Milo and Lisa walk in the park outside the library, thinking
it through.

MILO

We can't just assume they're standing
by to receive Skywire 12 months from
launch. I'd have to write in an aglet.

LISA

A what?

MILO

It's how on-line services push logos
they wanna sell you. You don't ask
for 'em, they just appear. 'Have to
work on it somewhere besides my office
or my house. And then the quality of
the broadcast wouldn't exactly be
digital, that's 12 months away.

LISA

But they'd still get the idea, right?

MILO

You'd have to design a graphic
interface to make the data pop. Maybe
some audio, too. To tie it all in to
Gary. How long would that take you?

LISA

It's a standard GUI. Once I've got a
concept, it's maybe three day's work.

MILO

Gary knows I'm close on Skywire. We
have to do this fast.

LISA

Before they kill somebody else, too.

MILO

(a new wrinkle)
Oh, man. I'd have to get into Gary's
house. To get the satellite positions.

LISA

You mean -- break in?

MILO

I don't know --

LISA

And what if the broadcast dishes on top of 21 aren't hot yet? You said the place isn't finished.

The complications pile up. They walk. They think.

LISA

I'll go look.

(when he looks dubious)

They'll just have a few more pictures of me snooping around.

They come to a fountain and balustrade at the edge of the park, stop walking.

MILO

(looks at her)

Why were you so careless?

LISA

I thought the worst they would do is fire me. Who knew they took termination so literally?

Gallows humor. What a game girl. He's nuts about her.

MILO

Why were you snooping in my office?

LISA

Oh.

(she gets bashful)

I liked you. I was checking you out.

He kisses her. There are no constraints now, there's no "adulterous" guilt: they kiss with a passion deferred.

INT. MILO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Slow push-in on the phone on Milo's desk: it's ringing.

INT. ALICE'S STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Alice is calling him. Her face hardens, she hangs up.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER

As we pan the Best Western decor (in semi-darkness):

MILO (O.S.)

'Think everybody in this place is

here the same reason we are?

LISA (O.S.)

'Cause their apartments might be bugged?

Milo grins. He & Lisa lie in bed.

MILO

I told Teddy about you.

LISA

What'd he say?

MILO

"A beautiful geek? What're the chances?"

She smiles, rather bashfully.

MILO

I felt guilty. 'Cause I "owed so much" to Alice. But even then I was starting to wonder. Is it so great to be so consumed by this one thing that you let another person do your thinking for you? If you have a lucrative skill, it's all anybody wants from you. You grow older but you don't grow up. You turn into -- into --

LISA

Gary.

It's painful for him: losing a second father.

MILO

Larry used to say how the guys who wrote the first cool operating systems, like the UNIX guys at Berkeley? They just gave it away. They figured it was human knowledge, it belonged to the world, like Shakespeare or aspirin. 'Know what I'm gonna do after we broadcast the incriminating stuff? Air the Skywire code. Then nobody can have a monopoly.

INT. ALICE & MILO'S HOUSE - LATER

Alice is in bed. In the darkness, Milo comes in as quietly as possible. But she switches on the bedside lamp.

ALICE

Where were you?
(holding his gaze)

You know you can't keep anything
from me.

MILO

Okay, yeah. I did something naughty...
There's this amazing Comix store in
Seattle.

(is she buying it?)
To tell you the truth, I did it once
or twice at Stanford. 'Guess I can't
keep anything from you...

Of course she buys it: it's in the file.

ALICE

(she smiles)
I won't turn you in.

INT. PHYSICAL SECURITY OFFICE - MORNING

Shrot and Len go over the print-out of the card entries.

LEN

Every entry was authorized.

SHROT

Keep looking.

LEN

What're we looking for?

SHROT

Any irregularity in the pattern.

INT. MILO & ALICE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Morning TV is on in the kitchen. A Seattle station airs a puff piece about a party at Gary's house: people in formal clothes (including Gary & his Wife) hold drinks and eat canapés on the terrace over Lake Washington. (Gary's haircut is different: it's file footage.)

TV VOICE

Last years' party-goers pledged over
\$2 million to the Museum; this year's
event promises to raise even more.
Lured in part by the chance to see
the stunning Boyd house...

Alice, grinding coffee, isn't paying attention. Milo is.

MILO

Look at this.

ALICE

What?

MILO

Why doesn't he ask us to his party.
He's never even met you.

ALICE

He has thousands of employees, Milo --

MILO

It's for the Museum. He knows you're
a painter. If anybody should be
invited --

ALICE

Milo --

MILO

I know you think I'm too attached to
him, but still. I am close to Gary.
And you're the most meaningful person
in my life.

(he gets up)

I'm going back to the Comix place,
why should I be killing myself.

ALICE

Milo, you --

But he's out the door. She's not entirely displeased by such
a dramatic demonstration of his loyalty to her.

EXT. BUILDING 21 - DAY

Close on a satellite dish. We pan from the base of the dish
to the wiring: a cable is fused to a component box.

Lisa is on the scaffolding, having climbed it brazenly, in
broad daylight. She holds a small metal box with a meter and
two clamps. She applies the clamps to the base of the cable.
The needle on the meter dances.

GUARD

Hey! Get down here!

She was expecting to be busted. Still, she's scared.

EXT. SAINT CATHERINE'S DAY SCHOOL - DAY

A Catholic school on a wooded lane. Schoolgirls in uniform
play on the swings and hopscotch courts.

INT. LIBRARY - SAINT CATHERINE'S

Milo types madly on a four-year-old PC. It takes him a moment
to notice SISTER BEATRICE.

MILO

This is a lifesaver. My PC crashed

just before finals.

SISTER BEATRICE

None of us knows how to use it. I'm thinking of taking a course.

(she wants to look)

May I?

MILO

Sure.

With her, we see the complex lines of code.

SISTER BEATRICE

Forget it.

INT. PHYSICAL SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

Lisa sits with Bob Shrot. She's unfolding a page of sketch paper.

LISA

I needed t'see it up close for a graphic. The outpost with a dish on top? I climbed up there to get it right.

She hands him an unfinished rendering of the dish. He looks at her, at the drawing, at her again. She's scared, but tries to hide it.

SHROT

(hands back the drawing)

Next time you ask.

Relieved, she gets up. The meter tumbles to the floor, thud. She goes white. But when she looks up, she sees

Shrot didn't see it: Len is standing in the inner door, waving a printout.

LEN

'Might of found something.

Lisa grabs up the meter as Shrot joins Len. As she goes out, she hears:

LEN

Delbert seems to enter #21 twice. Without leaving the first time.

SHROT

Let's get him in here.

INT. SEATTLE MONORAIL CAR - NIGHT

Milo looks up as his train comes into a station. Lisa enters

the car, carrying a stack of comix. He stands, they kiss, he takes the comix.

MILO

Great. I knocked off the aglet, as soon as I get a passable version of Skywire we're there.

LISA

The dishes are juiced up, too.

MILO

Thank God.

LISA

Milo? Shrot suspects somebody broke into #21. I was in his office when he was reviewing the card readouts.

MILO

(confused)

They know I broke in. Alice helped me.

(figuring it out)

Shrot's not one of them. He's blundering into this on his own.

LISA

He doesn't know about the Day Care.

MILO

Hardly anybody does, that's the beauty part. No cameras, the DOJ doesn't bother with it, it's accessed by a tunnel they boast about. You know the best place to hide a leaf?

LISA

Yeah, that's old, in a tree.

MILO

Oh.

LISA

Milo? What if Shrot notices somebody entered the Day Care at four A.M.? And tells them about it?

They look at each other: the consequences of this discovery would be deadly.

INT. BUILDING 20 CAFETERIA - DAY

A busy lunch hour. Milo is eating with some other Programmers, including Desi. There's a stir of excitement in the room.

Gary comes straight to Milo's table; all conversation

instantly drops out.

GARY

Milo?

Milo stands. Gary hands him a heavy vellum invitation.

GARY

I'm giving a benefit for the art
museum Thursday night. Thought you'd
like to bring Alice.

Everybody at the table is listening.

MILO

That's great! Thanks.

GARY

(as he goes)
'Sorry about the late notice...

Milo sits down. Everybody's looking at him.

DESI

"Sorry about the late notice?"

INT. PHYSICAL SECURITY OFFICE - DAY

Delbert is seated across from Shrot and Len. Shrot holds the printout.

SHROT

Why did you enter #21 twice?

DELBERT

Huh?

Shrot hands Delbert the printout. Delbert looks at it: dense with coded entries. He stares at it.

DELBERT

This thing's screwed-up. Look here.
(shows it to them)
'Shows me going into the Day Care
that night. I never been in the Day
Care.

Shrot narrows his eyes...

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Milo sits with Lisa as she brings up the graphic interface she's designed for the Skywire broadcast. It's an Outpost desktop, with recognizable logos, fonts, etc.

LISA

One window'll be obits I downloaded,

based on the scenarios you described.
The other windows'll accommodate the
surveillance stuff you told me about.
The idea is, this works with anything,
since we can't edit.

He nods. [It's not necessary for us to understand what she's saying, just so Milo does.] She holds up an audio copy of Gary's book, *The Next Highway*.

LISA

Same with the excerpts I'm choosing:
they'll play against any of the images
you described.

MILO

Perfect.

(something preys on
his mind)

How am I gonna get away from the
party long enough to --

LISA

You could always say you have to go
the bathroom.

MILO

That's lame, isn't it?

LISA

You'll come up with something.

He already looks nervous. We begin to hear live music.

EXT. GARY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The music echoes from inside. Push past a line of cars and limousines in the lit-up drive, Milo's car at the head of it.

Milo and Alice get out. As they go inside, she pulls a tag from the sleeve of his just-bought dinner jacket.

INT. GARY'S HOUSE - ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS

As Milo and Alice enter, he sees a Balthus painting re-digitize to a Mondrian.

ALICE

They called the house to ask who's
your favorite painter.

Alice smiles, Milo forces a smile: it'll be even harder to sneak away, now.

They pass a doorway where a Houseman stands, to keep guests from entering residential rooms (the ones Milo must pass

through to get to Gary's workroom). A Guy in a pretentiously hip tux tries to peek in.

HOUSEMAN

Sorry, Sir, this part of the residence is restricted.

Milo looks a little more tense...

PARTY ROOM - A MOMENT LATER

The room is full of people. A long windowed wall has been opened onto a lakeside terrace, where more Guests drink and chat, and an orchestra plays.

A giant Mondrian digitizes on the wall: the world's largest ID card. Milo sinks a little more.

Across the room, Gary, his Wife (a blandly pretty blond) and two Men are grouped around a Monet set on an antique easel (thus clearly the real thing; Mrs. Boyd has prevailed.) Gary notices the giant digital Mondrian.

MILO takes two flutes of champagnes off a tray. He hands one to Alice as Gary et. al. approach.

GARY

Alice, I'm Gary. This is my wife,

Clarissa.

(handshakes, etc.)

Milo, this is Barry Linder, who's visiting from Hollywood.

LINDER is a short, tan man of 50.

LINDER

I hate being the Hollywood guy. It's so limiting. Meet my friend, Ricky.

RICKY is 25-years-old; he looks like a Polo model.

RICKY

Hi, guys.

GARY

Barry's studio's gonna help fill the Skywire pipeline, thought you guys should meet.

MILO

(his mind elsewhere)

Cool.

ANGLE: the orchestra, playing.

ANGLE: a group of SOCIETY TYPES chatting.

SOCIETY WOMAN

He's a sweetheart. He gave 10,000
PC's to the Library Association.

SOCIETY MAN

All 10,000 of which will be signed
onto his browser, no doubt.

SOCIETY WOMAN

And so what?!

ANOTHER MAN

Wait'll all the books are on-line.

SOCIETY WOMAN

And so what?

ANGLE: Milo, Alice, Gary, Barry Linder, Clarissa, Ricky.
Milo looks utterly preoccupied...

LINDER

The merchandising implications are
epic. A kid's watching the movie, he
points and clicks at the laser blaster --
before the reel's even over he's
ordered the toy.

ALICE

But, I mean -- Devil's Advocate --
won't that influence the content?
Won't the artists complain? The
directors or writers or whoever?

LINDER

Artists? Darling, the only art left
in America is business. You're in
Picasso's house!

Gary smiles as everyone toasts him, except Milo; he hasn't
heard any of it.

MILO

Where's the bathroom?

LINDER

The irreverence!

Laughter.

TRACK MILO as he wends his way through laughing, chatting
Guests, dread and determination on his face. He moves away
from us, enters the

ENTRANCE HALL

speaks to the Houseman who guards the residential rooms.

HOUSEMAN

You'll have to use one over there.

He indicates an area on Milo's side of the door.

MILO

There's like eight women waiting in line. They take forever.

(winces: painful bladder)

Please?

HOUSEMAN

Right here.

He points to a door immediately behind him. As the Houseman watches, Milo goes into the

BATHROOM

He stands there a moment, breathes deeply. He cracks open the door. The Houseman is turning away another Guest; Milo makes his move.

DEN-LIKE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Looking over his shoulder, Milo hurries to a door at the far end of the room, silently cursing the Mondrian that inevitably appears.

The Houseman looks over his shoulder, sees the closed bathroom door, assumes Milo's still inside.

INT. PARTY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gary chats with his guests. Alice looks up at the digital art, now a Bosch again.

INT. GARY'S HOUSE - VARIOUS ROOMS - CONTINUOUS

Milo walks fast. As he passes from one room to next, he sees a Mondrian: he's been in this room. All the austere, tastefully decorated rooms are blending together.

He stands in the center of the room making quarter turns. Through each of four (open) doorways he sees a perfectly-appointed "den," the ultimate expression of bland, rich, professionally-decorated taste.

He's lost.

He starts into one room -- backs up -- goes into another.

INT. ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS

The Houseman looks over his shoulder again. He sees the Mondrian and, in the room beyond that, another Mondrian.

He moves to the bathroom door, knocks on it. Opens it. He pulls a sleek walkie-talkie from his jacket.

INT. ANOTHER DEN - CONTINUOUS

Milo, still lost, is getting frantic. He doubles back, cuts toward another wing of the house. Through an open doorway he sees:

A young, chillingly calm NANNY, watching him. The Baby fusses in her arms. Milo smiles, keeps moving.

INT. GARY'S HOUSE - A DEN - CONTINUOUS

A Second Houseman follows the trail of Mondrians. He sees Mondrians in two different directions. He hesitates, picks a direction, keeps moving.

INT. PARTY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The first Houseman moves through the Guests, toward Gary.

INT. GARY'S WORKROOM - CONTINUOUS

Milo has finally made it. Sitting at Gary's work station, he slips a CD-ROM into the PC. It floods with text. The music echoes from far off. The entire wall behind him is filled with a Mondrian.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

As Linder chats, the first Houseman sidles up to Gary, whispers in his ear. We see Gary smile, excuse himself. He and Alice share a look as he moves off.

We go with Gary. His smile fades instantly. He pushes through Guests, who thank him for hosting such a brilliant "do;" he hardly hears them.

INT. GARY'S WORKROOM - NIGHT

Milo writes frantically on his tiny pad, copying from the PC screen:

LONGITUDE - 77 Degrees 03 Minutes 58 Seconds East

LATITUDE - 38 Degrees 55 Minutes 14 Seconds South

ALTITUDE - 426 MILES

He flips the page, begins entering the fixes for the next satellite. Thinking he's heard something, he looks up.

Nobody's there.

INT. ANOTHER DEN - CONTINUOUS

The Second Houseman turns in several directions, confused by the trail of Mondrians. Passing into the next room, he runs into a Third Houseman, also confused. Each follows a different Mondrian, in a different room.

INT. GARY'S HOUSE - A DEN - CONTINUOUS

Unlike the Housemen, Gary doesn't follow the paintings. He moves swiftly, seems to know where Milo is.

GARY'S WORKROOM - CONTINUOUS

Milo still working...

PARTY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alice looks up at the digital painting: still a Bosch. Her face sets grimly.

INT. GARY'S WORKROOM - CONTINUOUS

Milo clicks, closing the window. Concentrating, he doesn't see what we see on the wall behind him: the Mondrian drains away... And the wall fills up with the hellish Bosch triptych.

After a moment, Milo senses something.

Gary stands in the doorway. Watching him. Milo doesn't breathe. Gary crosses the room, eyes locked with Milo's.

Gary comes behind Milo. He reads the screen. It's filled with text, whatever Milo loaded in when he sat down.

GARY

(reading the screen)

"Dear Lisa. I've enjoyed working with you. I'd be lying if I didn't say I find you attractive. But in my heart I know that Alice..."

(he looks up)

You left my party to send E-mail?

MILO

I couldn't do it at work cause of security or at home for -- obvious reasons.

Gary stares at Milo. He looks skeptical. The party music floats in from afar as the moment stretches.

GARY

You could've handwritten it.

MILO

I'm not much good at handwriting. Or parties.

GARY

Oh, that's right. You're "clueless."

This hangs there.

MILO

Gary, I'm sorry if I was rude --

The Second Houseman sticks his head in.

HOUSEMAN

Everything OK, Mr. Boyd?

GARY

No problem.

(when he's gone)

Is there?

MILO

Gary, I --

GARY

You see what's hanging on the wall?

He looks over. Milo looks over. Among the framed commendations, awards, degrees we see Milo's childhood program, written on Outpost 1.0. Gary has had it framed.

Milo absorbs it. Even now, he feels something for Gary.

GARY

I hope you know what you mean to me.
Not just because of what you're doing.
Because of who you are.

MILO

I do know, Gary. I feel the same way. I thought I was coming here for a job. But it's meant a lot more.

Milo smiles almost tenderly. He doesn't know if Gary buys it. Perhaps if he could see Gary's eyes. But they're obscured by Bosch's writhing bodies, reflected on his eyeglasses.

Gary moves away from Milo, he stands over the table with the art books, vaguely looks through one.

GARY

When will you have a Beta version?

Milo wonders: does he know? He picks his words carefully.

MILO

I'm pretty close. But when I wrote the last contact switches, it wiped out a piece of the content filer.

You know what it's like, writing software.

GARY

I do know. You focus on the big problem. But somewhere down the chain, something breaks down. Something gets destroyed. At first it's upsetting. You feel you've lost control.

Gary puts down the book. Something in his tone draws Milo.

GARY

So you have to remind yourself: it's just the process. Something's always lost along the way to anything worthwhile. Some little bug, some glitch. 'Can't get bogged down in that, you're doing something other people could never do. They lack the imagination, the brain, the nerve. Let them fret about every unforeseen consequence. You have to solve the problem. That's who you are.

Is this a confession? A plea for understanding? Or just a pep-talk to keep Milo focused on Skywire?

EXT./INT DRIVEWAY/MILO'S CAR - LATER

In the car, Milo and Alice pull away from the lights and limos in icy silence. Several beats.

ALICE

Are you gonna tell me where you went?

MILO

I went to see the Skywire model in Gary's office. You know. Just to hold it again.

He looks at her. She stares ahead, out the windshield.

ALICE

Are you having an affair, Milo?

He'd better have his story straight with Gary and Alice.

MILO

No. No. I sent an E-mail to somebody, just now. To tell her how I feel about you.

(looks at her)

You know I'm clueless, without you.
You know I --

ALICE
(fighting tears)
Just shut up?

Or is she faking it? Has he lost the trust of all of them?
He's afraid, now.

EXT. INT. DAY CARE - DAY

Move in on the building, past Kids playing in the yard.

INT. DAY CARE - COMPUTER ROOM - DAY

We hear the children's shouts OS. Short, with a fingerprint kit, is dusting the keyboards. Len stands over him.

LEN
Get the backslash, the colon, keys
kids don't use but geeks do.
(looking around,
perplexed)
What would Milo want in here, anyway?

SHROT
They know. 'Just they don't trust me
with it. So we'll get the evidence,
first, ask questions later.

EXT. LIBRARY PARK - EVENING

By the balustrade, in the dimness, Milo stands with Lisa.

LISA
Does he know you know?

MILO
He suspects I know something. I think
he was sort of -- explaining himself
to me, in case I do.
(he breathes)
We have to go in tonight. I'm two
hours from a Beta version.
(knows she won't like
it)
But I've gotta go home for an hour.

LISA
Why?!

MILO
She called to apologize. I said I
was pulling an all-nighter. She said
then come home just to say Hi. Which
I always do when we fight, it's
suspicious if I don't.

LISA

Please don't go.

MILO

At this point the worst thing I could do is anything out of the ordinary.

She looks at him, worried, then takes a disk out of her backpack.

LISA

Here's the interface.

He takes it. They kiss. She watches him go, worried.

EXT./INT. MILO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As Milo comes up the path, he sees Alice in the kitchen.

He opens the front door, steps in. She comes from the kitchen in an apron, wiping her hands. The apron is spattered, her hair is askew.

ALICE

I'm a mess! I got this Hunan cookbook, since we're always afraid for you to eat in Chinese restaurants. I've been mincing things into teeny-tiny pieces all afternoon.

He smiles to hide his terror. Is she killing him now? Or just testing his reaction? Or is it a sincere overture?

MILO

Great!

ALICE

Look at me! I'm gonna change.

When she turns away, we see the fear on his face.

INT. THE BEDROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Alice pulls into a dress.

IN THE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Milo, at the stove, sniffs at the food that simmers in a wok. He grabs a spoon, examines it; but it's minced too fine to discern one ingredient from another.

BEDROOM

Alice pulls her hair back with a ribbon...

KITCHEN

Milo churns the garbage in the wastebasket, reads the label

on a jar, the label on a can...

BEDROOM

Alice applies blush-on.

KITCHEN

Milo goes through the spice cabinet...

LIVING ROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Milo paces. He stops when she comes from the bedroom.

MILO

(he smiles)

You look beautiful.

ALICE

Yeah? Give me a goodbye kiss.

MILO

...What?

ALICE

I know you. You're gonna run back to work right after dinner. I want my kiss now.

Either she's the most cold-blooded woman in the world, or...

He takes her in his arms, kisses her long and hard -- as if his life depended on it. When he releases her, she pretends to swoon. She backs toward the kitchen.

ALICE

Be right back.

KITCHEN - A MOMENT LATER

Camera is positioned on the counter, just behind the big bowl as Alice spoons the food into it... She sprinkles on some final ingredient, also minced.

DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Milo's fingers drum the table top...

KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Alice picks up the dish. We don't see her face.

ON THE DISH - MOVING - CONTINUOUS (ALICE'S POV)

We hold the dish out in front of us. The food shines in the light, a poisonous yellow gleam. We move from kitchen to dining room, slowly, deliberately...

Milo comes into view beyond the dish, wearing a forced smile. We come all the way to the table with the dish, where Alice sets it down.

She sits. Milo, still vamping, pours wine. He picks up his fork. Stares at it.

ALICE

Milo?

His mind churns furiously.

ALICE

Milo?

MILO

Don't we have any chopsticks?

ALICE

Oh, right. Hold on.

When she's gone, he flips his left arm over and drags the tines of his fork against it, making score-marks, like those used by allergists to test for sensitivity.

He dabs the sauce onto the tracks, wipes it clean. He stares at it.

INT. KITCHEN DRAWER - CONTINUOUS

Alice roots through ladles, bottle openers, cheese graters, spatulas. At the bottom of the drawer, she finds two pairs of take-out chopsticks, wrapped in white paper.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Milo looks from his watch to his arm -- no reaction yet.

MILO

(under his breath)

One more minute...

But here's Alice. She slips into her seat.

ALICE

Here we go.

MILO

Great.

He unwraps the chopsticks rather slowly.

MILO

...wanna savor this.

ALICE

It's gonna get cold.

MILO

Right. Wait. A toast.

ALICE

You're just afraid to eat it.

She smiles, picks up her glass.

MILO

To the artist.

They toast. She sips her wine. He sips his. He wants desperately to glance at his inner arm once more. But she's watching him, waiting for him to eat.

He picks up the chopsticks, gathers up a tiny bite. She watches keenly. He brings the food to his mouth, passes it between his lips, swallows.

He closes his eyes, ostensibly to savor the food, in fact bracing for a paroxysm.

She watches him expectantly -- either for his verdict on the food, or for the first fatal spasm.

MILO

(his voice cracks)

It's great. It's great.

She grins. She takes a bite. The moment she looks away, he turns over his arm to get a look, face full of fear.

The tracks are still flat, there's no redness. He shovels a large bite into his mouth, ecstatic to be alive. Then another bite, greedy with life.

INT. COMPUTER SECURITY OFFICE - NIGHT

Shrot and Len are in a high-tech office. On a monitor, we see a blown-up image of a fingerprint taken from Milo's keyboard; Milo's name is printed under it.

In a second window, other fingerprints flash by: thousands of prints lifted off keyboards in the Day Care.

Shrot waits for a match to click in.

INT. MILO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Milo scrolls his Skywire code, concentrating intensely. Till he feels some stickiness on his thumb and forefinger. He rubs them together, peers at his keys.

Dolly-zoom in on a trace of fingerprint powder.

Fear seizes Milo. He ejects his the Skywire CD -- it is a bright silver color, with a Skywire logo on it -- slips it in an equally distinct silver (CD) jewel-case.

INT. BLDG. 20 HALLWAY - MOMENT LATER

Milo smiles at Desi as he moves up the hall. He almost bumps into Gary's Secretary.

SECRETARY

Milo, hi! How was the party?

MILO

Great! Great! Thanks for asking!

He continues up the hall. He ducks into the service hall.

INT. COMPUTER SECURITY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Shrot watches as

The computer produces an alarm-like buzzing. The second window locks onto the matching print. The prints flash in unison, garishly confirming the match.

INT. TUNNEL/STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Milo races along the tunnel that leads from #20 to the Day Care...

INT. COMPUTER SECURITY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Shrot punches a number on the phone.

LEN

You calling Phil and Randy?

SHROT

I'm calling Gary.

INT. STAIRWELL/DAY CARE BACKROOM - CONTINUOUS

Milo climbs the stairs, fumbles with the swipecard, enters the Day Care.

INT. COMPUTER SECURITY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Len is at the console. On a security monitor, he has called-up video from a moment ago: Milo hurrying up the hall, almost running into Gary's Secretary.

Shrot has an eye on the video as he speaks on the phone.

SHROT

He's left his office, we think he's gone back to the Day Care for some reason. Can you tell me why, Gary?

(he listens)
Whatever you say.
(hangs up angrily)
Wants to consult with Phil. Was it
Phil's idea to run the fingerprints?

Shrot straps on his service revolver as he heads out.

SHROT
Come with me.

LEN
(trying to catch up)
Where we going?

INT. DAY CARE - COMPUTER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Milo is under the table, detaching one of the black plastic data towers that contain the "primers," stored surveillance material, etc.

INT. PHIL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Phil hangs up the phone. He turns to Randy, who is with the two men: the blond GUNTHER, the pale-eyed RIMAN.

PHIL
He's in the Day Care.

INT. DAY CARE - CONTINUOUS

Milo carefully detaches a second data tower.

EXT. BLDG. 20 - CONTINUOUS

Shrot and Len hurry out of the building, toward the Day Care across the quad. Len is ill-at-ease:

LEN
Bob, I'm a programmer, not a cop.

In his haste, Shrot doesn't even hear him.

INT. BUILDING 20 HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Gunther, Riman & Randy head down the service hallway, en route to the bomb shelter stairs.

INT. DAY CARE - CONTINUOUS

Milo, lugging one bulky black data tower under each arm (wondering if he should just ditch one) gets as far as the main, colorfully-carpeted room --

Shrot is there, gun drawn. Len stands just behind.

SHROT

What are you doing?

MILO

You're better off not knowing.

Shrot thinks he's being mocked, as usual.

SHROT

What're you doing?!

Milo sets down one of the towers.

MILO

They're surveilling programmers from in here. They steal their code. Sometimes -- I know this sounds insane -- sometimes they kill one.

Shrot looks skeptical.

MILO

They let me break into 21. 'Cause there's nothing in there. You know they've been keeping things from you. 'Getting in the way when you try t'do your job. That's why you never told 'em your suspicions about me. Right?

Shrot doesn't deny it.

MILO

If you had I'd be dead now.

Milo's sincerity is striking. Shrot cogitates.

MILO

You've been following your gut all along. Please don't stop now?

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Gunther, Riman and Randy climb the metal stairs, turn at a landing, climb some more.

When they get to the next landing, Riman opens the door. They enter

THE DAY CARE - BACK ROOM

Hearing voices inside, Gunther draws a gun; they move forward stealthfully. They enter the

COMPUTER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

RANDY

What's going on here?

Randy sees: Shrot and Len.

SHROT

Who're these guys?

RANDY

Where is he?

SHROT

We're too late. Take a look.

He shines his light under the table, where the towers have been detached.

SHROT

What's in here worth taking, anyway?

EXT. QUAD - CONTINUOUS

Milo hurries away from the Day Care. He has just one data tower, now, so he can move faster.

INT. DAY CARE COMPUTER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Randy starts to push past Shrot --

RANDY

He must be out there still --

He gets to the front room, where the jettisoned data tower still sits (but he doesn't see it).

SHROT

(calling after)

Forget about it. His car's not in the lot, he's gone!

Shrot watches anxiously to see if he's stopped Randy.

EXT. OUTPOST - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Milo moves low among the high-priced cars, lugging the tower. He gets to his Deux Chevaux, opens the trunk --

VOICE

Hey!

Milo turns. It's Desi, again.

DESI

Wanna get a cheeseburger or something?

MILO

Maybe another time.

As calmly as possible, he stows the tower, slams the trunk,

gets in the car.

INT. DAY CARE - COMPUTER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Randy hangs up the phone.

RANDY

(to Shrot & Len)

Fellas, I'm gonna have to ask you to leave here now.

SHROT

Wait a second. I'm the one who found out he was mucking around in here in the first place.

RANDY

We're all grateful for that. Really. Go out the way you came in?

Reluctantly, Shrot & Len head out toward the front room.

INT./EXT MILO'S CAR/HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Milo is on the phone, he drives as fast as one can in his car.

MILO

Meet me at the other location.

LISA (V.O.)

Tell me you're not calling on your car phone?!

INT. DAY CARE - COMPUTER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Randy, Riman & Gunther have turned the Day Care into a surveillance post. They hear Milo & Lisa's conversation on speakers.

MILO (V.O.)

They know, I had no choice. Get out of the house now! Do you have a laptop?

INT. LISA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

LISA (ON THE PHONE)

It's three years old, it --

INT. MILO'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

MILO (ON THE PHONE)

Bring it to the other location.

LISA

But you said the other --

He rings off. He reads something off a business card.

INT. LISA'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Scrambling, Lisa grabs her old laptop, finds her keys.

INT. GARY'S HOUSE - GARY'S WORKROOM - CONTINUOUS

Phil's on the phone.

PHIL

Yeah, alright.
(hangs up, briefs
Gary)
He's off campus, he's taken some
surveillance data with him.

Gary's eyes narrow.

PHIL

She's bringing her laptop, it's wired.
Second she boots up, we're on 'em.

EXT./INT. BUILDING/MILO'S CAR - RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

Milo reads the address off the business card, which has a satellite dish as its logo. (He holds it in front of him.)

When he brings down the card, it reveals a real-life satellite dish through the windshield.

As the car pulls up by a low cinderblock building, we read a sign that says KNQR - PUBLIC ACCESS.

INT. KNQR - RECEPTION AREA - CONTINUOUS

Milo rushes in, lugging the tower. There's a linoleum floor, framed one-sheets for tacky public access shows (Yoga, blow-dried Evangelist, Nude Talk Show). Behind the reception desk sits a beefy RENT-A-GUARD with an earring.

RENT-A-GUARD

Help you?

MILO

Brian here? Brian Bissel?

RENT-A-GUARD

(picks up the phone)
Who wants to see him?

INT./EXT. LISA'S CAR/HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Lisa drives fast, checking her rear-view-mirror to make sure she's not being followed. Pan to the seat next to her: her laptop lies on the passenger seat.

INT. DAY CARE COMPUTER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A monitor shows a green interface with yellow coordinates (like an air traffic controllers' screen). Randy sits at the keyboard in front of it, phone cradled on shoulder.

RANDY

(into the phone)

Nothing. They haven't booted-up yet.

INT. KNQR - CONTINUOUS

Milo speaks to Brian.

MILO

This is the biggest Beta demo in like the history of software. You'd be my partner.

BRIAN

You can't pre-empt Yoga, that's our biggest show.

MILO

Brian! You wanna be a big deal, don't you? That's your dream in life.

Brian is examining the data tower. He touches the Outpost logo branded into it, rather reverently.

Lisa comes in, laptop slung over her arm.

BRIAN

Will I get to work for Outpost?

MILO

No. But you can write your own ticket in the Valley after this. We're gonna bring down Outpost.

BRIAN

What?

MILO

What'd they ever do for you?

Brian's thinking it over. He shrugs.

BRIAN

Okay.

MILO

Great. Great! We need to drag a lot of heavy stuff in front of the door --

BRIAN

What?!

MILO

(to the Rent-a-Guard)

Wanna be a part of history?

RENT-A-GUARD

Not really.

MILO

(digging in his pocket)

Well -- would you like to pick up an extra -- 232 dollars?

INT. GARY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Gary is pacing...

PHIL

(on the phone)

Nothing yet, Gary...

INT. KNQR - RECEPTION AREA - CONTINUOUS

The Rent-a-Guard drags a file cabinet in front of the door, where he has already dragged the couch, some chairs, a garbage can, two lamps...

INT. SATELLITE ROOM (UPSTAIRS) - KNQR - CONTINUOUS

Three TV's of various sizes and wood veneers are turned on: one to NBC ("ER") one to CBS ("48 Hours") one to ABC (toothpaste commercial). On an in-house monitor a leathery Woman in a leotard does yoga.

Lisa is cabling her laptop into the station's computer. Brian boots it up: it runs the satellite. Milo cables the data tower into the laptop.

Cables go in every which direction: the whole set-up has a distinctly gerry-rigged look.

Go tight on the laptop power switch. Lisa toggles it on.

INT. DAY CARE COMPUTE ROOM - NIGHT

The yellow coordinates start blinking on. Randy sits at a console.

RANDY

(into the phone)

We've got a fix on 'em.

(typing)

218 North Jericho Road.

Gunther and Riman grab holstered guns, race out. Randy types some more, speaks into the phone:

RANDY

Public access TV station. KNQR.

INT. GARY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Phil hangs up, blows a sigh of relief.

PHIL

He's taken it to the public access station.

Phil sags gratefully into a chair... only to see Gary plow past him. At his workstation Gary types, mutters:

GARY

That's what he was doing in here.

The Bosch wall screen fills up with a dark blue background, longitude and latitude lines...

PHIL

Gary?

Gary throws a printed spiral notebook at him.

GARY

Help me change the Skywire settings.
Add five degrees to each satellite coordinate.

PHIL

Gary, don't worry, we --

GARY

Just do what I'm asking!

Gary hits a switch. A wood panel slides into the wall, revealing a bank of four TV's.

INT. CAR/HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Gunther and Riman speed toward the station.

INT. SATELLITE ROOM - WNQR - CONTINUOUS

Milo slips his disk in the laptop. Lisa cables the video tower to the laptop.

BRIAN

You're interfaced with our dish.

MILO

(to Lisa)
Gimme the coordinates?

Lisa reads from Milo's little pad.

LISA

Longitude 77 degrees, 03 minutes, 58 seconds East.

Milo types on the laptop.

LISA

Latitude 38 degrees, 55 minutes, 14 seconds South.

INT. GARY'S WORKROOM - CONTINUOUS

Phil reads to Gary as he types.

PHIL

19 seconds South. Altitude 431 Miles.

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

We see the Earth far below. The Skywire Satellite orbits majestically into frame, shifts five degrees to the left.

INT. SATELLITE ROOM - KNQR - CONTINUOUS

Milo hits enter. Milo, Lisa, Brian, shift their collective gaze to the three funky TV sets.

"ER" plays, uninterrupted, Dan Rather, Diane Sawyer on ABC, the Yoga lady, the audio of all four blending in a chaotic low melange that adds to the tension (particularly the frantic medical emergency on "ER").

BRIAN

Is it your software?

MILO

Is it your dish?

LISA

Maybe it's the satellite.

MILO

(he thinks)

Let's try #2.

INT. GARY'S WORKROOM - CONTINUOUS

GARY

Okay, #2.

PHIL

Longitude 48 degrees 06 minutes --

EXT. KNQR - CONTINUOUS

Gunther and Riman squeal into the station parking lot.

INT. SATELLITE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lisa looks out the window to the parking lot, below. Milo is typing in coordinates.

LISA

They're already here. My laptop must be wired!

BRIAN

(anxiously)

Milo?

MILO

(typing)

We're there.

Milo hits enter.

INT. GARY'S WORKROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gary hits enter.

EXT. SPACE CONTINUOUS

A second Skywire satellite shifts regally away from the Earth, as if shunning the signal.

INT. SATELLITE ROOM KNQR - CONTINUOUS

Milo, Lisa, Brian watch the TV's. "ER" et al.

MILO

Damn!

EXT./INT. KNQR - ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Gunther and Riman tear through the barricade the Rent-A-Cop has erected with ruthless precision.

INT. SATELLITE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Milo cogitates while Lisa reviews the satellite coordinates --

LISA

(to Brian)

You checked your connections?

BRIAN

(to Milo)

Yes! Should you reboot?

Milo is scrolling the software, trying to figure out which of a 1,000 possible glitches is getting in the way.

MILO

...He knows.

LISA

What?

MILO

He's been altering the coordinates
since we logged on. He's a step ahead.
Let's jump to #12.

INT. GARY'S WORKROOM - CONTINUOUS

PHIL

Ready for number three?

GARY

Let's go.

PHIL

Longitude 109 --

GARY

Wait... He knows.

PHIL

What?

GARY

'Knows I'm altering the coordinates.
Let's jump to #12.

PHIL

Gary?

GARY

Just do it.

INT. KNQR - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Rent-A-Guard drags furniture, props, lights, in front of
the entrance to the satellite room.

INT. ENTRANCE - KNQR - CONTINUOUS

Gunther and Riman have created an opening in the barricade.
They step through it. They hear the racket the Rent-a-Guard
is making upstairs. They head that way.

INT. STAIRWAY/UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Rent-A-Guard is holding a lightstand as they ascend,
guns drawn.

GUNTHER

Step aside. We won't hurt you.

Riman takes the lightstand from him. The Rent-a-Guard puts

his hands up, sidles across the hallway as they tear into the barricade.

INT. SATELLITE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lisa reads to Milo.

LISA

Latitude 47 degrees.

MILO

Wait a second. He knows I know.

BRIAN

What?!

MILO

He's working backwards, too.

(to Lisa)

Let's do number five?

LISA

Longitude 66.

Milo types.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Gunther and Riman rip down the barricade, reach the door. They whip it open, guns drawn. They see:

An empty supply room. [The barricade was a decoy.]

INT. SATELLITE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Rent-A-Guard has joined Milo et al in here. He tries to slide a heavy shelf in front of the door, but it's not yet in place. Lisa has dialed 911. She's scared.

LISA

Come now. They've got guns!

OS, we can hear Gunther and Riman pounding at the door.

GUNTHER (O.S.)

Open the door, Milo!

BRIAN

(to Milo)

You there yet?

MILO

(typing)

One more second.

He hits enter. The door is kicked open. Gunther & Riman enter, Gunther with a gun, Riman still carrying the light stand.

He immediately bashes the KNQR computer with it. Lisa looks devastated.

BRIAN

Hey, hey, relax, relax!

He holds up the computer cable, to show Riman it was never plugged in, anyway.

LISA

Oh my God.

BRIAN

(to Gunther)

Should I call Phil? Or do you?

Gunther knits his brow. He notices Milo: still staring at the TV screens.

BRIAN

Milo? Wake up. Our regular programming will not be preempted tonight.

Milo's gaze stays fixed to the screens. Riman grabs him by the shirt. But Gunther's concerned by Milo's behavior:

GUNTHER

(staring at Milo)

Wait.

As Milo watches the screens, a pixilated, ghostly image begins to appear on all of them: the animated Skywire logo (lightning strike, etc.).

Brian lurches across to the laptop, ejects the CD-ROM. It's beige-colored, says Outpost Word.

BRIAN

...When did you know?

MILO

(still watching the screens)

You should've called a few times to bug me about your job prospects.

LISA

Milo? Who's got Skywire?

INT. GARY'S WORKROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gary and Phil watch as the Skywire logo gets steadily stronger on Gary's TV's. Phil is confounded:

PHIL

If Milo didn't launch Skywire, who

did?

We hear a low steady hum.

CUT TO:

A CABLE plugged into a dusty wall-port that doesn't even have a plate on it. Panning along the cable, we widen to show:

INT. UNFINISHED STUDIO (#21) - CONTINUOUS

In dim construction light, not far from the Sears generator, Len sits on the concrete floor. The second data tower is patched into a laptop. The distinct silver jewelcase lies by the CD-rom drive. Shrot paces:

SHROT

Now what are we doing? I don't get any of this shit!

LEN

I launched Skywire. Just pray the last set of coordinates Milo sent me connected us to Gary's satellite.

CUT TO:

FOUR TV SETS

Each shows the standard Outpost desktop: Outpost logo, fonts, colors. [This is the all-purpose interface Lisa created for to Milo.] A window at the top shows a succession of Obituaries with photos Lisa has downloaded from newspapers: "Programmer Dies in Highway Crash;" "Programmer Among Cult Suicides;" "Programmer Victim of Racial Killing," etc.) The obituaries -- eight of them -- fade up and down in a continuous cycle. Meantime:

Lower on the screen, the material from the day-care data tower appears, following the same succession we saw when Milo brought up Teddy's data, i.e., footage of a young Programmer at college, surveillance footage of him typing away (from behind), medical records that describe his vulnerability or a crime primer that describes his scenario. Between the obits and the primers, cause and effect is (eventually) established.

The crowning note is the audio, Gary in VOICE OVER, gleaned (by Lisa) from the audio version of his own book:

GARY'S VOICE OVER

Most of us who write software achieve our greatest work before age 30. As I grow older I know how important it is to access fertile young minds!

REVERSE ON

Gary watching.

INT. KNQR - SATELLITE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

We hear sirens grow near. Gunther watches the broadcast, still gripping his gun.

RIMAN

(to Gunther)

You know the scenario for this.

This sounds ominous. Lisa wonders what it means. Milo wonders what it means. He swallows hard.

MILO

'Last thing you wanna do is hurt us now.

(not at all sure)

Right?

GUNTHER

(to Brian)

Who's seeing this?

BRIAN

(with dread)

Who isn't?

CUT TO:

A MONTAGE

1. MOVE PAST ROWS & ROWS OF PC's playing surveillance footage, a crash-scene upload, and an obituary, in a college computer lab. Students watch, agog.

GARY'S VOICE OVER

We work hard to stay ahead because we know any kid working in his garage can put us out of business.

2. TIMES SQUARE - Pedestrians and motorists (with craned necks) watch the Jumbo-Tron, now the world's biggest desktop. In one window, college video of a promising Programmer, in the other, footage of a cult suicide. (Sometimes the Programmer in question is simultaneous with his obit, sometimes not, but the connection by now becomes clear).

GARY'S VOICE OVER

The first rule of the software business is: those who don't innovate are doomed to die.

3. The cuts accelerate. In a NETWORK CONTROL ROOM, Technicians flip switches, trying to bring back scheduled programming.

At the NIKKEI, the Brokers are transfixed by what comes over the Big Board. In a VEGAS CASINO Gamblers sip their drinks as they watch it on closed-circuit horserace monitors. On a STREET CORNER, a Crack Dealer watches on his beeper. At a STADIUM, the Stones play but (tilting up) the Diamond Vision behind them plays Milo's broadcast. In an ELECTRONICS STORE, a wall of TV's -- 200 of them -- plays grisly primer footage for Shoppers. A guy takes a shiny wrapped copy of Outpost '98 from his basket, returns it to the shelf... In the Day Care Computer Room, it plays on all the monitors as Randy moves through the room with a big buzzing electro-magnetic hoop, which he runs over each tower, wiping out data.

Through all the cuts, we hear Gary's narration:

GARY'S VOICE OVER

That's why we work so hard to invent or acquire great new applications. Consumers don't care where new ideas come from, just so long as they're offered at competitive prices. Isn't that what the free market's about? Sure, we like being #1, but it's pressure, too. This business is binary: you're a zero or a one.

INT. JUSTICE DEPT. - WASHINGTON D.C. - CONTINUOUS

A group of Government Lawyers, working late (Chinese takeout, loosened ties) watch with a dawning sense of unbelievable good luck.

JUSTICE DEPT. LAWYER

'Guess we should wake the Attorney General.

TIGHT ON: A PC SCREEN - Teddy Chin's recruitment file is in one window, the hate crime footage is in another.

GARY'S VOICE OVER

I've been called "aggressive" but to me, that's really a compliment.

REVERSE: SUNNYVALE LOFT - CONTINUOUS

Larry watches with his start-up partners. His eyes close: it hurts to see Teddy, again.

GARY'S VOICE OVER

Look at all the jobs and technologies my "aggression" has created.

INT. LYLE BARTON'S HOUSE - FRONT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

OPEN on a framed photo of Barton, his Wife and Kids. The broadcast plays, OS.

BARTON'S WIFE (O.S.)

Lyle? Phone for you.

She comes in. No Barton. The front door is wide open, the TV is still on.

GARY'S VOICE OVER

We really are a family here at Outpost.

INT. MILO & LISA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Paintings are gone from the wall, clothes flung around. Move in on a note pinned to the pillow, as the TV plays.

GARY'S VOICE OVER

I think that's why outsiders sometimes sees us as "cultish" or "secretive."

Milo, It wasn't so bad, really.

XX "Alice"

EXT. OUTPOST CAMPUS - NIGHT

High wide shot: sirens scream as unmarked sedans and squadcars squeal into the sanctified parking lot.

GARY'S VOICE OVER

Is loyalty and group spirit somehow "sinister" nowadays?

INT. GARY'S WORKROOM - CONTINUOUS

Open on Gary's TV monitors, then pan into the room. Phil has departed; the Outpost Lawyers have taken his place.

LAWYER

The "murder" stuff is all innuendo: bad PR, legally null. 'Could probably be spun as Urban Legend. There is a case for corporate espionage, but if you cop a plea, you'll get a slap --

GARY

Cop a plea? I'm confused, Ted. You think I knew about this?

The Lawyers suppress their opinion.

GARY

I'm running the company, fighting the DOJ, raising a family. Randy and Phil obviously overreacted. To this endless, antitrust witchhunt.

LAWYER

(get real)
The government's gonna offer 'em a
helluva deal to tie you into this.
Whether you knew about it or not.

LAWYER 2
Randy, Phil and whoever else knew
about it.

GARY
That won't be a problem.

INT./EXT. CAR/RURAL ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Gunther & Riman turn off a rural road...

GARY (O.S.)
As for PR, Skywire'll take care of
all that.

...onto a tarmac. A private jet sits lit up, waiting.

INT. GARY'S WORKROOM - CONTINUOUS

GARY
The world's seen it now. They know
it's gonna dominate the convergence
market even beyond how Outpost '98
dominates the desktop.

INT. PRIVATE JET - 35,000 FT. - CONTINUOUS

Continuous dolly past: Gunther, as he takes a Chivas from
the Stewardess; Lyle Barton who slips on his headset; Alice,
sorting through video cassettes; Randy & Phil, playing gin
rummy; Brian, eating a hamburger. Meantime:

GARY (O.S.)
Go after us, you give foreign
competitors a shot at the platform
that'll hold sway for 30 years: you
threaten not just our chip and PC
partners like when you came after
the browser.

INT. GARY'S WORKROOM - CONTINUOUS

GARY
You threaten TV networks, phone
companies, catalog outlets, publishing
houses, movie studios, travel agents,
airlines, stock brokerages -- you
sabotage the whole economy. Talk
about undermining innovation!

LAWYER 2
(he's writing on a

legal pad)
Easy to spin, old as the hills: What's good for Outpost is good for America.

He hands the pad to Gary.

INT. KNQR - SATELLITE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Milo watches the screens, anxiously.

MILO

Come on, Bob. Load in the other disk.

INT. GARY'S WORKROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gary is reading from the Lawyer's pad.

GARY

"I had no knowledge of these activities, but I have to ask myself if the competitive environment I encouraged in some small way contributed --"

LAWYER

Gary?

Gary looks up. The Lawyer nods soberly at the TV's.

In one window, the Skywire code scrolls slowly past. In the other, it says: "Here's the code for the operating system that made this broadcast possible. Take it. Use it. Make the new convergence technologies as free as the Web."

Under the windows, these words scroll continuously: **HUMAN KNOWLEDGE BELONGS TO THE WORLD.**

Watching, Gary knits his brow: he looks wounded.

INT. COLLEGE COMPUTER LAB - CONTINUOUS

In the lab that began the montage, move past rows of Students scribbling madly as the code unfolds, or saving it to their hard drives.

Off-screen, a Student says, "Well, the genie's out of that bottle."

SHORT FADE:

CYBER PUNDIT (OVER BLACK)

The Board ousted Gary Boyd as Chairman, they're assisting the DOJ in the breakup of Outpost into divisions.

FADE IN ON:

TV - PLAYING LARRY KING LIVE

The CYBER PUNDIT chats with LARRY KING.

LARRY KING (ON TV)

That's gotta kill him, right?

CYBER PUNDIT (ON TV)

Outpost was his baby, sure. On the other hand, we just learned Gary Boyd owns the Skywire satellites. Personally.

LARRY KING (ON TV)

Outpost doesn't own em.

We are:

INT. SUNNYVALE LOFT - DAY

Larry Lindholm sits on a couch watching TV. MOVERS are carrying out computer equipment all around him. He tries to ignore them.

CYBER PUNDIT (ON TV)

Conglomerates're lined up to finance the launch of the remaining satellites. They'll pay him a huge premium to get on-line.

LARRY KING

That'd change with a criminal indictment.

CYBER PUNDIT

There's no hard evidence he knew about this. Anybody who could implicate him seems to've vanished.

LARRY KING (ON TV)

Isn't there a stigma? Bankrolling this guy?

CYBER PUNDIT (ON TV)

Stigma? Larry! 60 billion buys you some slack in this world.

LARRY KING (ON TV)

And the kid who wrote Skywire -- then gave it away? They're calling him the digital Robin Hood.

CYBER PUNDIT (ON TV)

Milo. Surprised he's not your guest.

LARRY KING (ON TV)

We tried!

CYBER PUNDIT (ON TV)

You better believe everybody's trying
to sign him up.

As Larry (King) chuckles, Larry (Lindholm) looks up.

Milo and Lisa wear backpacks. As Milo sluffs his off:

MILO

Larry, Lisa.

Larry switches off the TV as he comes to his feet. A Mover passes by, hauling out a monitor. Larry explains:

LARRY

Your app kind of blew mine out of
the water.

MILO

(he shrugs)

We'll come up with the next big thing.

LARRY

...You wanna work -- here?

MILO

Got out of my other commitment.

Larry hugs Milo. Turns to Lisa:

LARRY

May I?

He hugs Lisa, too. A Mover grabs Milo's backpack from the floor.

MILO

Hey, wait!

(when the Mover looks)

Not giving everything away.

The Mover sets it down, moves on.

LARRY

C'mon. Bring your stuff.

Milo grabs up his pack, the three of them head away from camera.

LARRY

You guys'll be using Teddy's old
space, is that okay?

MILO

Cool.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END