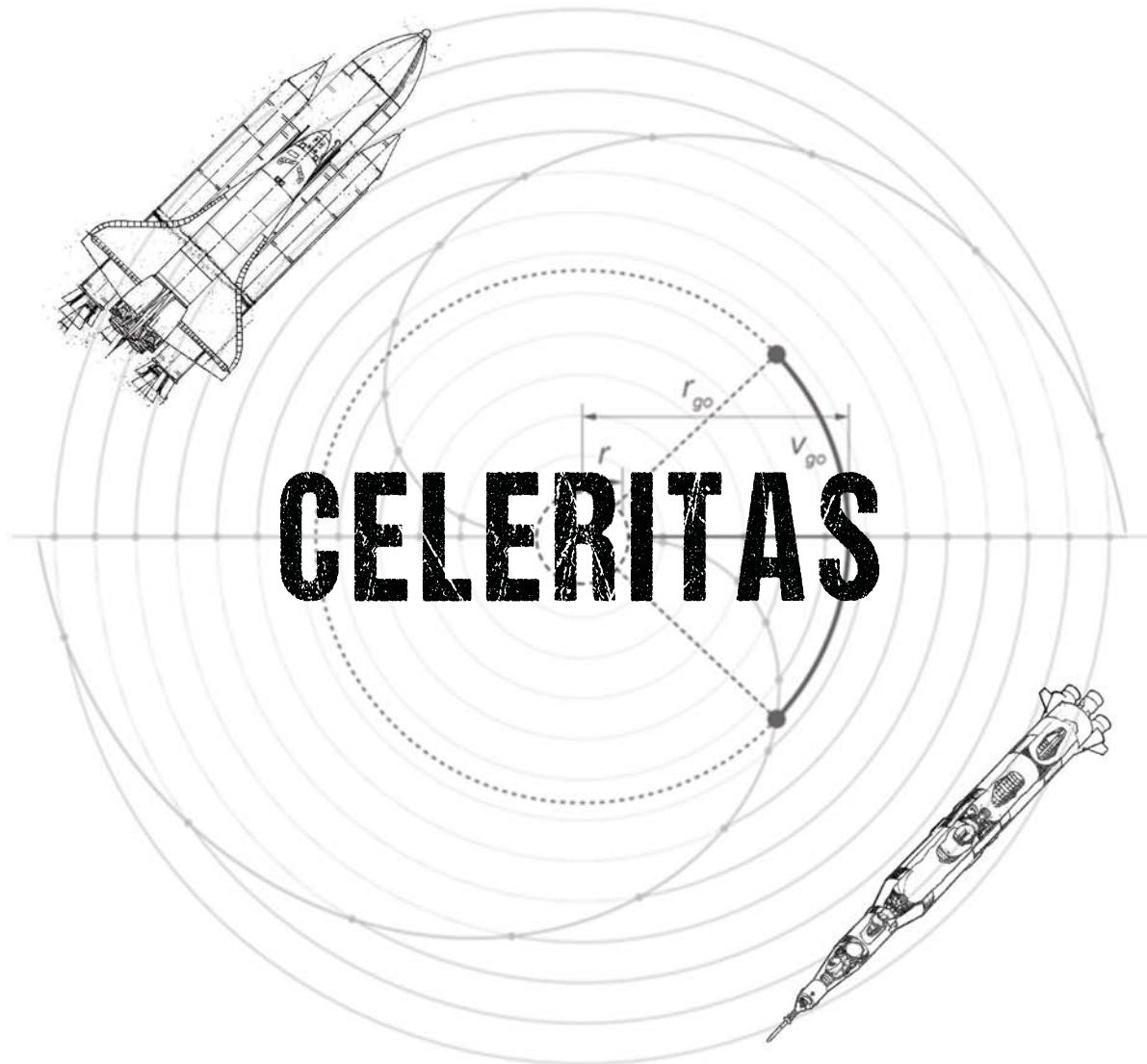


VERVE



BY
KIMBERLY BARRANTE

Madhouse Entertainment
310-587-2200

Verve
310-558-2424

Celeritas (n), from the Latin, meaning "swiftness" or "speed," is the origin for the symbol c , the universal notation for the speed of light in a vacuum, as seen in Albert Einstein's famous equation $E = mc^2$. The speed of light in a vacuum is defined as 299,792,458 meters per second.

*When you sit on a hot cinder, a second seems like an hour.
When you are courting a nice girl, an hour seems like a second.
That's Relativity.*

- *Albert Einstein*

FADE IN:

An ANALOGUE CHRONOMETER: its hours, minutes, seconds, even milliseconds, are all FROZEN IN TIME as we float backwards.

The millisecond dial begins to move. CLICK. The tiny movement of the gear echoes in slow motion. 21 becomes 22. CLICK. 23. CLICK. 24. CLICK, CLICK, CLICK... The dial speeds up. Seconds gather on the dial nearby.

Our vision shakes as we pull farther back, revealing...

INT. JANUS 2 COCKPIT

The chronometer continues to flip on the dash of a one-man SHUTTLE. The other dials spin wildly. Alarms blink and beep.

Through the cockpit window, we can see EARTH: a small blue orb floating in the vast black of space.

EXT. SPACE - CONTINUOUS

Earth's curving atmosphere glows. We see what appears to be a COMET zooming past the LUNAR SURFACE towards Earth.

We follow its descent into the atmosphere. The "comet" is revealed to be a SHUTTLE of mid-20th century design. On the side of the shuttle is written: JANUS 2.

INT. JANUS 2 COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Strapped to the pilot's chair is PAUL HAWKINS (27), a handsome "All American" boy, outfitted in an Apollo-style spacesuit and helmet; he clutches the armrests for dear life.

Paul forces his eyes open: the control panel shakes beyond comprehension. He struggles against the inertia to extend his finger towards a large, blinking BUTTON. He PRESSES it.

EXT. EARTH'S UPPER ATMOSPHERE - CONTINUOUS

JANUS 2 stops accelerating; its tail of light disappears. And yet, the shuttle shoots through the atmosphere at high speed.

INTERCUT: INT/EXT. COCKPIT/ATMOSPHERE

Paul takes hold of the center JOYSTICK and pulls back. The shuttle enters the Earth's lower atmosphere, nose tilted up;

its heat-shielded belly BURNS RED HOT. Paul speaks into his helmet microphone.

PAUL
Houston, this is Janus 2. Do you read?

Clouds whiz past as Janus 2 continues its rapid decent.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Houston, this is Commander Hawkins.
Do you copy?

From the cockpit window, the GULF OF MEXICO grows larger.

On the DASHBOARD: a 1960's POLAROID PHOTOGRAPH is wedged between the dials. MAGGIE (25), a beautiful red-headed girl, smiles up at us, frozen in time.

Paul gazes at the Polaroid longingly. In his vision, PARTICLES OF LIGHT dance around her face. Paul TAKES THE PHOTO, bringing it up to his helmet. Suddenly, he jolts.

A PARACHUTE ejects from the shuttle. Its sheet catches the wind and TEARS, useless. The craft continues to plummet.

Paul hits another BUTTON on the console. A pair of SECONDARY CHUTES are ejected; they hold. The clouds clear; blue ocean fills his view. Paul shuts his eyes and braces.

JANUS 2 CRASHES into the waves with an explosive spray.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY (1969)

POP! A CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE is uncorked; bubbles overflow.

LANCASTER, CALIFORNIA 1969. The living room of a stylish ranch home. WALTER CRONKITE'S VOICE mixes with upbeat MUSIC.

Paul, hair slicked back and shirt tucked, shakes CHAMPAGNE SUDS from his hand. He pours the Champagne into FLUTES.

PAUL
Come on, we're gonna miss it!
Bruce, take the needle off that
thing, will ya?

BRUCE (28), a burly airman, complete with crew cut and bomber jacket, lifts the needle off the turntable. The guests crowd around a BLACK-AND-WHITE TELEVISION. SHIRLEY (24), a big-haired, tipsy brunette, takes her seat.

SHIRLEY

Come on, Paul! You gotta set the mood!

PAUL

It's space, Shirley, not American Bandstand. Gather round! Get your champagne ready!

NORMAN HAWKINS (27), Paul's **IDENTICAL TWIN BROTHER**, enters. Norman's appearance is noticeably more scruffy than Paul's, with his chin-length shaggy hair and five o'clock shadow.

Norman takes a sip of his beer as he hangs towards the back. BILLY (25), skinny and freckle-faced, bumps into him.

BILLY

Oh, hey, Norm! Few years, we'll be watchin' yer brother up there, huh?

Norman smiles halfheartedly. Billy squeezes to the front. Everyone looks towards the screen.

Just then, Norman sees the red-haired MAGGIE (25) across the room. He recognizes her from somewhere. Maggie catches Norman staring; he quickly turns back to the broadcast.

WALTER CRONKITE (ON TV)

So there's a foot on the moon,
stepping down on the moon.

PAUL

Shh! Shh! It's starting!

In the frame of the small set, we watch the CBS coverage of the LUNAR LANDING. One can make out the outline of the lunar module followed by a fuzzy NEIL ARMSTRONG descending.

NEIL ARMSTRONG (ON TV)

I'm at the foot of the ladder. The L.M. foot beds are only depressed in the surface about 1 or 2 inches.

Norman grows more and more captivated by the broadcast.

NEIL ARMSTRONG (CONT'D)

Although the surface appears to be very, very fine-grained as you get close to it, it's almost like a powder down there.

WALTER CRONKITE

Well, look at those pictures.

NEIL ARMSTRONG
I'm going to step off the L.M. now.

PAUL
Son-of-a-bitch...

NEIL ARMSTRONG
That's one small step for man...
One giant leap for mankind.

The crowd CHEERS and applauds over Cronkite's commentary.

WALTER CRONKITE
Armstrong is on the moon - Neil Armstrong, 38-year-old American, standing on the surface of the moon, on this July 20th, 19 hundred and 69.

INT. PAUL'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The celebration continues. Norman wanders the living room. He's stopped by Bruce's clap on the shoulder.

BRUCE
Don't see you round the base anymore, Norm. Figured you'd gone up north, turned hippie.

NORMAN
(passing him)
It's tempting.

Maggie wanders the perimeter of the dance floor, sipping a COCKTAIL. Norman slips by her, accidentally bumping her arm. Maggie drops her glass; it SHATTERS.

MAGGIE
Oh!

NORMAN
Shit! Sorry-

MAGGIE
It's okay.

NORMAN
No, it's my fault.

Norman avoids eye contact as he pats his shirt dry. Maggie sees Norman clearly for the first time.

MAGGIE

Norman?

NORMAN

Yeah?

MAGGIE

It's Maggie.

NORMAN

Maggie. Wow, you... you grew up.

MAGGIE

(chuckling)

Yeah, I did.

Beat. Norman starts to reach down.

NORMAN

Uh, here, let me get-

MAGGIE

Oh, I can do that-

NORMAN

It's fine. Lemme just-

Norman's RIGHT PALM is sliced by a glass shard.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Ah!

MAGGIE

Oh my God, you're bleeding!

NORMAN

It's nothing.

MAGGIE

Here, let me see.

Maggie and Norman step off to the side, into...

THE KITCHENETTE

Maggie wets a NAPKIN at the sink and begins to clean the cut.

NORMAN

Never thought I'd see you back in
Lancaster.

MAGGIE

Makes two of us. Still, it feels like home. Thought you'd be long gone by now.

NORMAN

"You can take the boy out of the farm..."

MAGGIE

You're no farm boy.

NORMAN

It's home. Anyway, it's where I'm needed.

MAGGIE

Paul told me about your Dad. I'm sorry.

NORMAN

(beat)

So what are you doing back?

MAGGIE

I'm studying to be an architect.

NORMAN

Really!

MAGGIE

Down in Palmdale.

(beat)

Go ahead, say it.

NORMAN

What?

MAGGIE

You were going to say "Women can't build houses."

NORMAN

Wouldn't say that. My mother built our farm from the ground up. Course the barn sorta leans to the left-

Maggie presses down on the wound.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Ouch!

MAGGIE

Sorry.

Maggie wraps the napkin tightly around Norman's hand.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
All done.

NORMAN
Thanks.

MAGGIE
What about you?

NORMAN
Hm? Oh, I, uh, specialize in
aerial pesticide application.
(beat)
Basically crop dusting.
(beat)
I like being outdoors.

Maggie nods with polite interest. The FAST SONG ENDS and a SLOW SONG begins. Both stand in silence.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
So... Would you... Do you want to-

A drunk Paul enters with TWO BEERS; He hands one to Norman.

PAUL
You were looking a little dry over
here, Norm.
(sees his hand)
What happened?

MAGGIE
I threw a bottle at him.

Paul cozies up to Maggie. Norman tries not to notice.

PAUL
Some things never change. You
know, Norman was a test pilot too,
back in the day.

MAGGIE
Really?

PAUL
Mm! Pretty cocky one too.

NORMAN
You weren't so humble yourself.

PAUL
Did flyboy here tell you about the
time he almost broke Mach 7?

Maggie gives Norman a chiding look.

MAGGIE
He didn't.

NORMAN
Almost. Key word.

PAUL
First off, Norman worships Robert
White. Day White broke Mach 6,
Norman decides he wants to enlist.

NORMAN
Woulda been drafted anyway.

PAUL
After our second tour, we get
transferred to Edwards. 'Year in,
Norm gets behind an X-15-2-

NORMAN
(correcting)
A2-

PAUL
Makes it to Mach 5 and starts
barrel rolling! Drops 100,000 feet!
Shoulda blacked out in seconds, but
this son-of-a-bitch pulls out of
it, not a scratch on 'im!

NORMAN
I got lucky.

PAUL
Bullshit. You had talent.

NORMAN
So did Mike Adams.

PAUL
(suddenly somber)
Yeah, well... Mike didn't have the
bird you did.

NORMAN
Right.

Norman takes a sip of beer. Awkward silence.

MAGGIE
I'm going to get another drink.

PAUL
I got it-

MAGGIE
No, I'll get it.

Maggie crosses to where the punch bowl is set up. The eyes of the two brothers follow her. Paul snaps out of it.

PAUL
So. How's Mom?

NORMAN
Same. She's lonely.

PAUL
She's got you.
(beat)
You know if you need anything-

NORMAN
We're okay. Thanks. Any word from NASA?

PAUL
Checkin' the mailbox every day.
They woulda' snatched you up in a heartbeat, you'd uh stuck around.

NORMAN
'Think I'll stick to dustin' crops.

PAUL
Right! Dad's ol' Tiger Moth. That clunker still flying straight?

NORMAN
It's flying...

Norman exits. Paul ogles Maggie across the room. He takes a generous sip of his beer and joins her.

INT. 1957 CHEVY PICKUP - LATER

Norman drives home from the party, the countryside of Southern California silhouetted in the light of a full moon.

EXT. HAWKIN'S FARM - YARD - LATER

The door of his rusted Chevy creeks as it's slammed shut. Norman walks across the dirt yard, towards a large BARN, long since worn by time and termites. He tugs at the doors.

INT. BARN - CONTINUOUS

Norman turns on a hanging bulb, revealing...

A rusted 1940s TIGER MOTH BI-PLANE; its yellow wings and dented propellers peek out from underneath a canvas tarp. Norman smiles at the plane like an old friend. He adjusts the TARP to cover the wingspan before shutting the light.

INT. FARMHOUSE - ENTRYWAY

Norman enters the Victorian farmhouse, careful not to make a sound. He walks past an archway, gazing into...

THE FRONT PARLOR

He sees his mother, EVELYN HAWKINS (55), asleep in her apron on the settee; her straw-grey hair is twisted in a bun.

Norman notes the LEATHER PHOTO ALBUM opened across her chest, as if she fell asleep looking through it. He tiptoes to her, carefully sliding the album from her hands. He re-opens it.

INSERT: SEPIA PHOTOS from the 1930s, all are of a young, smiling couple: EVELYN (20s) and her husband MITCH (30s).

Norman closes the album and rests it on the side table. He then takes off his JACKET and lays it on his mother's shoulders. She stirs, but doesn't wake.

INT. PAUL'S CONVERTIBLE - SAME TIME

Paul drives through mid-century suburbia, Maggie beside him.

PAUL

50 miles up is the cut off. You break 50, you get your astronaut's wings. View's not bad either.

MAGGIE

Must make you feel so thin up there. I like feeling the earth under my feet.

PAUL

It's different when you're in a cockpit. You're in control. It's like... You know when you're falling in a dream, but you know you're dreaming so you're not scared? That's a bird for me. It's knowing you have wings.

MAGGIE

So you never get scared?

PAUL

Every time. Part of the thrill.

Maggie chuckles, shaking her head.

EXT. MAGGIE'S PARENT'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Paul parks in front of a dark ranch home.

MAGGIE

Thanks for the ride home.

PAUL

No problem.

MAGGIE

We should land on the moon more often. 'Makes a great party.

Paul gazes at Maggie's lips. He leans in to kiss her. Maggie does the same. Paul pushes forward...

BREEEEEEEER! Paul removes his weight from the steering wheel; the car HORN stops beeping. Maggie laughs. Paul covers his face, embarrassed.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

If my mother wasn't up before...

PAUL

Sorry.

MAGGIE

It's alright. Well... G'night.

PAUL

G'night.

Maggie exits the car; she saunters down the path, slightly tipsy. Paul sits in his car, hypnotized.

PAUL (CONT'D)
When can I see you again?

Maggie swings around; she makes a phone with her fingers.

MAGGIE
Call me when we get to Mars!

Paul gives her a thumbs up. Maggie enters her house.

INT. JANUS 2 COCKPIT - DAY (PRESENT)

PAUL'S POV:

Flashes of light and muddled sound. We hear a man's HEAVY BREATHING along with SEAGULLS and OCEAN WAVES...

DAYLIGHT leaks in from the cockpit window, fading in and out as the waves wash over the glass. The COCKPIT HATCH is forced open, letting in the surf. A MEXICAN FISHERMAN peers into the hatchway.

FISHERMAN
Es un hombre. Yo pienso que es
Americano.

Paul's vision BLURS TO BLACK.

EXT. GULF OF MEXICO - DAY (PRESENT)

PAUL'S POV: Unseen hands drag Paul back, lifting him out of the shuttle.

From the deck of a FISHING BOAT, we see JANUS 2 in the distance being tossed up and down in the current. It's kept afloat by inflatable buoys encircling the craft.

His vision BLURS TO BLACK.

INT. A BRIGHT ROOM (PRESENT)

Darkness. BREATHING reverberates into an oxygen mask.

PAUL'S POV: His vision is fuzzy, blinded by the fluorescent lights. As the room comes into focus, we see we are in a BODY-SIZED INCUBATOR.

Shadows orbit the outside of the glass. One shadow, MARCUS, leans closer; its voice is distant.

MARCUS
Commander Hawkins?

Paul's vision begins to fade...

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Commander-

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - DAY (PRESENT)

A HEART MONITOR BEEPS. Paul's eyes flicker open.

Paul's skin is pale; there are blisters on his face. He is lying in a hospital bed, dressed in a johnny. He has a nasal cannula and an I.V.; electrodes are taped to his chest.

The room is windowless. Though he's surrounded by medical equipment, it resembles a cell more than a hospital.

AGENT MARCUS (40s) of Homeland Security sits beside the bed. He wears a dark suit and a smirk that only top security clearance supplies.

MARCUS
Good morning.

Paul stares at Marcus, expressionless and very weak.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
You've come a long way.

PAUL
Where am I?

MARCUS
NASA Headquarters.

PAUL
Kennedy?

MARCUS
Houston.

Paul tries to lift his body. He can't.

PAUL
I can't move.

MARCUS
You had the Bends. We put you in a recompression chamber. You should regain feeling in your limbs soon.
(MORE)

MARCUS (CONT'D)

(beat)

Do you know your name?

PAUL

Hawkins.

MARCUS

Know your first name, Hawkins?

Paul hesitates. Finally...

PAUL

Paul.

MARCUS

Good. Who's the president of the United States, Paul?

PAUL

Donald Duck.

MARCUS

(chuckles)

That's funny. You're funny, Paul. Specially for a "spaceman."

PAUL

And your English is pretty good for a Russian.

MARCUS

I'm not Russian.

PAUL

Sure as hell not NASA.

MARCUS

You're right. I'm not.

Paul's head pounds. He struggles to keep his eyes open. Finally, Marcus pats the mattress beside him.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Get some rest, Paul.

As we follow Marcus out, we notice the TWO-WAY MIRROR on the opposite wall. The door shuts; we hear the LOCK TURN. Paul stares at the ceiling, weak and disoriented.

INT. HAWKIN'S FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY (1969)

Morning sunlight shimmers through the lace curtains. Evelyn Hawkins washes dishes at the sink, her back to the stairwell.

Norman descends and enters, hung-over, his RIGHT HAND still bandaged. He attempts to smooth the wrinkles out of his SHIRT. Evelyn scrubs the same dish over and over.

NORMAN

Ma?

EVELYN

(not looking up)

Mm?

NORMAN

Headin' up to the hardware store.

Evelyn snaps out of her daze; she turns to him.

EVELYN

Norman! You're up early. Sit down;
I'll make you some toast.

NORMAN

It's alright. I'm not hungry.

Evelyn notices her son's WRINKLED SHIRT. It saddens her.

EVELYN

Is that your father's?

NORMAN

I didn't have a clean shirt. Sorry,
I shouldn't of-

EVELYN

No! You look smart.

Evelyn tugs at the shirt. Norman lifts his arms, obediently.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

I wish you'd let me iron it.

NORMAN

'Gonna get wrinkled soon enough.

EVELYN

Your father was the same. How he
ever got through basic without
pressin' his shirts is beyond me.

Norman chuckles. Evelyn looks up at her son's face. She reaches out, tenderly holding his cheek.

EVELYN (CONT'D)

Oh, Norman. My handsome boy... Wish you'd let me take some sheers to that mop of yours.

NORMAN

Yer worse than my Drill Sergeant.

EVELYN

I should hope so. He only had to teach you to stand up straight; I'm the one that raised ya.

NORMAN

I'm not in the air force anymore.

EVELYN

But it's still in you. You can walk around in your wrinkled shirts, trying to look ordinary. You're still a hero.

Norman cracks a smile; deep down, he doesn't believe her.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

Paul looks improved: the blisters on his face have healed. However, the electrodes on his chest and the beeping heart monitor reminds us of his condition.

Marcus stares at Paul with a smile, waiting for an answer.

MARCUS

Commander Hawkins.

PAUL

Mm?

MARCUS

We were discussing your ship. Can you describe it to me?

PAUL

Want me to paint you a picture?

MARCUS

If you think it'll help.

PAUL

Lockheed U-2 "Dragon Lady." Single engine, leather interior... Or maybe I crashed in a flying saucer.

Marcus' patience is running thin. Still he smiles. He rises, fishing into his jacket pocket.

MARCUS

*There's something you might want.
It was on you when they fished you
out.*

Marcus drops MAGGIE'S POLAROID PICTURE on Paul's lap.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Look familiar?

She does, though Paul tries to hide it.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

*Keep it. Call it a sign of good
faith. Maybe it'll jog your
memory.*

Marcus exits, locking the door. Only then does Paul reach out to Maggie's photo; he smiles sadly.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - AFTERNOON (1969)

The California countryside. A gold autumn sun flashes between the bare trees lining a dirt road.

Maggie sits on the handlebars of PAUL'S BIKE as it races forward. She shrieks with fear and excitement.

MAGGIE

(smiling)

Paul! Slow down!

PAUL

*Can't! We need to increase speed!
Reach escape velocity!*

MAGGIE

You're gonna crash!

PAUL

Trust me!

MAGGIE

Ahhh!

PAUL

Wooohoo!

EXT. HILLSIDE - LATER

The dry grass of hillside glows gold in the sun. Paul's bike leans against a nearby tree. Maggie sits on a blanket as Paul looks through the viewfinder of a 1960s POLAROID CAMERA.

MAGGIE

The sun's in my eyes.

PAUL

Just one more second. Smile!

Maggie resists at first; finally she smiles. Paul presses the shutter. The camera buzzes as the POLAROID FILM prints. He drops down by Maggie; she cozies up to him. Paul holds up the Polaroid: its still gray.

PAUL (CONT'D)

And now we wait.

Both lie on the grass, gazing up the blue sky. They see the ghostly face of a DAYLIGHT MOON.

MAGGIE

I've always loved how you can see
the moon during the day... Do you
think we'll ever live there?

PAUL

Sure! See that dark spot.

MAGGIE

Where?

PAUL

The little one right there, 'looks
like an eye patch. I got a time
share in that exact crater.

MAGGIE

(hits him)

Oh hush.

PAUL

How 'bout it though? You could
design the house.

MAGGIE

Maybe the moon's my only option.
No firm wants to hire a woman, not
on this planet anyway.

PAUL

You know, if you married a millionaire, you could start your own firm.

MAGGIE

Guess that rules you out then.

PAUL

I'm serious! I hear astronauts make a pretty penny.

MAGGIE

Don't make promises you can't keep.

Paul looks at Maggie, building up his courage.

PAUL

I love you.

Maggie turns to Paul: it's the first time he's said it.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I know we've only been goin' steady a month now, but, if there's anyone I'd buy the moon for, it'd be you.

MAGGIE

I love you too.

Paul pulls Maggie close. They KISS. Maggie glances down at the POLAROID PICTURE.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Paul, look!

Slowly, Maggie's features develop on the film; we see the Polaroid from the Janus 2 dashboard taking shape.

PAUL

See what a little light can do.

INT. SIDE ROOM - JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - (PRESENT)

The room is dark, save the light coming from Paul's cell, which we can see through a mirrored glass window.

Marcus peruses the contents of an AGED MANILA FOLDER, labeled "JANUS PROJECT: CLASSIFIED." He is joined by EDISON (30s), an anxious "lab rat" with wire-rimmed spectacles.

EDISON

*If the second kidney fails, he
won't last without dialysis. It's
the Arrhythmia that worries me.
Fluid in the lungs, third degree
burns. If I didn't know better, I'd
say he'd been struck by lightning.*

MARCUS

This all we got on Janus?

EDISON

*All we could dig up. Project's been
cold a while now.*

Marcus flips through another FOLDER, labeled "C.C. PAUL HAWKINS" and stamped "K.I.A." Inside, at the top, is clipped a PHOTOGRAPH OF PAUL in his Air Force uniform.

Meanwhile, Edison stares at Paul in awe.

EDISON (CONT'D)

*He's not possible. He should be
flat as a pancake!*

MARCUS

What about his shuttle?

EDISON

*Whatever's left of it's still
floating in the Gulf. The
fishermen were reluctant to talk
about it.*

MARCUS

*Which means it's scrap or for sale
on the internet. Message Archives
for the blueprints.*

EDISON

*What about him? We gonna wait
until he finds the Statue of
Liberty buried on a beach?*

MARCUS

This is strictly "need to know."

EDISON

Meaning?

MARCUS

*Meaning If we need something, we'll
tell him.*

INT. BARN - DAY (1969)

Norman tinkers under the hood of the TIGER MOTH. We hear a RACHET CRANKING an unseen nut. Norman rises, wiping his brow. He wipes the grease from his hands with a rag.

Evelyn enters.

EVELYN
Find the problem?

NORMAN
Cam shaft was off. You know if Dad kept any spares?

EVELYN
There's a shoe box full of junk in the cellar, 'you wanna go digging.

NORMAN
I'd rather grind one from scratch.

EVELYN
You'd be lucky to find anything down there. Mind you, I tried sorting through it. Just got to be too much. Mitch never threw anything away; always afraid he might need it down the road.

NORMAN
I could throw it out if you want?

EVELYN
You think that's what I want you doin' with your time: rummaging through someone else's trash? I'll get to it. And if I don't... Well, then you can toss it all. 'Least I won't be around to mind.

NORMAN
Don't talk like that.

EVELYN
I'll talk how I want. Don't patronize me.

NORMAN
Sorry.

Norman turns his attention to the engine. He pulls on the rusted cam shaft, trying to wrench it from its casing.

EVELYN

What are you doin', Norman?

NORMAN

Told you: cam shaft's jammed.

EVELYN

You know, I thought coming home was the best for you. You were so lost after your father died.

NORMAN

Dad would have wanted me here.

EVELYN

Don't get me wrong, Norman: he lived for you boys. But it don't mean he didn't live for himself. The farm was his dream, but you're not gonna keep his memory alive by tendin' to it. You keep it by livin'. Your brother knows that. Bout the only thing sets you apart.

NORMAN

Not the only thing.

INT. X-15 COCKPIT - DAY (1969)

Paul sits in the cockpit of an X-15 as it flies through the air. His oxygen mask can't hide his beaming smile.

PAUL

Wooooooooohoo!

EXT. SKY OVER DESERT - CONTINUOUS

The X-15 zooms past: it's a slick, bullet shaped craft with short wings, like a dart.

PAUL (V.O.)

Mach 5 point 3. 47 miles and climbing.

GROUND CONTROL (ON RADIO)

Looking good from here, Hawkins, over. 52, do you have a visual?

INT. B-52 COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Bruce, the pilot of the NB-52, a bomber-like aircraft, looks out his cockpit window at the X-15.

BRUCE

Roger, Control, I have visual.
Paul, your ascent's looking a
little steep.

INTERCUT: INT. X-15 COCKPIT / B-52 COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Paul grips the wheel, pulling up. He ignores Bruce.

PAUL

Mach 5 point 5. 48 Miles.

BRUCE

Paul, don't you get cocky, tryin'
to earn them wings.

PAUL

50 miles, Bruce. She can do it.

BRUCE

'Ain't the one I'm worried about.

The X-15 begins to shake. Paul holds fast to the wheel.

PAUL

Mach 5 point 6. 5 point 7. 5 point-

The X-15 jerks violently.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Son-of-a-bitch!

The X-15 begins to spiral, plummeting towards the desert.
Bruce strains to see Paul's plane from his cockpit.

BRUCE

Hawkins! Paul, do you read!

Paul does somersaults.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Control, he's spinning out!

Paul pulls on the wheel. The X-15 pulls up and levels out.
He leans back, breathing heavily into his mask.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Paul! Paul, do you copy!

PAUL

I'm good. Altitude leveling off at 40 miles. Starting descent.

GROUND CONTROL (ON RADIO)

Roger that, X-15.

Both planes head back to back.

BRUCE

Jesus, Hawkins! You scared the shit out of me!

PAUL

I guess heaven can wait.

BRUCE

You wanna get to heaven, do it on your own time, stop risking a perfectly good bird!

PAUL

Who says you gotta die to get to heaven?

The X-15 cuts through the clouds, followed by the B-52. We see the CALIFORNIA DESERT, like a sea of sand below them.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

Paul sits up in bed. He stares at the singed, crumpled POLAROID OF MAGGIE. Paul's hands begin to shake. The Polaroid slips from his grasp. He stares at his trembling hands: something feels different. They begin to GLOW. Particles of light orbit his hands. He wiggles his fingers; the particles spark. It captivates and terrifies him.

The DOOR UNLOCKS; Paul is startled. Marcus enters; he's holding a FOLDER and some MAGAZINES underarm.

Paul glances back at his hands; everything is BACK TO NORMAL.

MARCUS

Look at you. You'll be running the Marathon in no time.

Paul stares at Marcus coldly.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

I brought you some reading material.

Marcus casually tosses the MAGAZINES on Norman's lap, including a 1967 "Sports Illustrated" Swimsuit Edition and a December 1966 POST with the glaring headline "Are Flying Saucers Real?" Paul flips through them.

PAUL
You should renew your subscriptions.

MARCUS
Why do you say that?

PAUL
(holds up the magazine)
This Swimsuit Edition's from 1967.

Paul throws the magazines aside.

MARCUS
If you want something else-

PAUL
I wanna speak to Gene Krantz.

Marcus thinks about his answer carefully.

MARCUS
Director Krantz is not available at this time.

PAUL
Fine, get Dick Nixon on the phone.

MARCUS
You really think I can do that?

PAUL
You put a man on the moon. Can't make a simple phone call?

MARCUS
Let me explain something, Commander-

PAUL
Start with why I'm a prisoner.

MARCUS
You're under quarantine. For your own protection-

PAUL
Bullshit... Who are you? Really.

Marcus considers this.

MARCUS
You're dead.

Paul turns pale: he could actually believe it.

MARCUS (CONT'D)
Officially. Your family, everyone
you knew: they think you blew up.
But we know better, don't we.
(beat)

I'm not asking for much, Paul.
Just answers. Only one other man
made the trip you did, and he
didn't make it past atmo. So my
question is, how did you?

PAUL
I want to see my family.

MARCUS
That's not a good idea.

PAUL
You got two options: either I walk
out that door or my family walks
in. Till then, all you get is my
name, rank, and serial number.
That answer your question?

INT. LECTURE HALL - DAY - (1969)

Maggie sits at a desk taking notes, surrounded by fellow Palmdale University architecture STUDENTS. At the head of the class, a drowsy PROFESSOR (50s) writes on the board.

PROFESSOR
Fallingwater was designed by Frank
Lloyd Wright in 1935, just
southeast of Pittsburgh.

Norman peaks in the WINDOW of the classroom door, searching for Maggie. Spotting her, he waves.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
It was commissioned by Edgar
Kaufmann Senior, prompted by his
son Edgar Junior, Wright's protege.

Maggie spots Norman in the doorway, along with most of her class. She glares at him: "What are you doing here!"

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
 You'll notice, on first glance,
 that the plot size is doubled by
 the use of cantilevers...

Norman smiles, then he gets an idea. He mimes for her to
 "Hold on." He disappears from view.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
 C.A.N.T.I.L.E.V.E.R.S.

Norman reappears in the window. He knocks on the glass.
 This time, the whole class turns; the Professor is oblivious.

PROFESSOR (O.C.) (CONT'D)
 This allowed the expansion of the
 structure, not possible with the
 use of traditional foundations.

Maggie glares at him: "What!" Norman presses a piece of
 SCRAP PAPER up against the glass, undoubtedly stollen from a
 nearby bulletin board. It reads: "I MADE YOU A HOUSE."

The rest of the class turns to Maggie, who tries to make
 herself as small as possible. Norman then puts up another
 PAPER, on which: a crude, child-like DRAWING OF A HOUSE.
 Maggie stifles a laugh.

PROFESSOR (CONT'D)
 Note the T-shaped beams which have
 been integrated into the concrete.

FEMALE STUDENT
 (whispering)
 Who is that guy?

MAGGIE
 (smiling)
 I have no idea.

EXT. PALMDALE UNIVERSITY - CAMPUS QUAD - DAY (1969)

Maggie walks with Norman, books in her arms.

MAGGIE
 Does Paul know you're here?

NORMAN
 We're not attached at the hip, you
 know. I mean, we were, but they
 did this surgery-

MAGGIE
I'm serious.

NORMAN
I was in the area. Thought I'd swing by, walk you home... For old times sake.

MAGGIE
Thought you were done trying to protect me.

NORMAN
Not yet.

EXT. EDWARD'S AIR FORCE BASE - TARMAC - DAY (1969)

Paul, still in his flight suit, walks across the runway, helmet in hand. Bruce, also in his suit, walks beside him. In the distance, we can see planes towed into a hangars.

PAUL
I tell ya: 'I ever get behind the wheel of Apollo, I'm takin' that thing straight to Mars. Forget the Lunar pit-stop.

As Bruce chuckles, a ROOKIE PILOT (20s) runs to meet them.

ROOKIE PILOT
Hawkins! General wants to see you in his office!

Paul's face lights up. He gives Bruce a smile: "This is it!"

INT. EDWARD'S AIR FORCE BASE - GENERAL'S OFFICE - LATER

Paul, still in his flight suit, stands at attention in front of a desk. His expression is empty as his heart sinks.

The GENERAL (60s), a grey haired veteran with grizzled features, sits behind the desk.

GENERAL
I wanted to break the news to you personally. I know how much this meant to you.

PAUL
(eyes forward)
Thank you, Sir.

GENERAL

Ten years ago, having steel balls was enough. Now you need a doctorate to go with them. Still, you're young. Not like the universe is going anywhere.

Paul is silent.

EXT. MAGGIE'S PARENT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sunset: the street lamps begin to light as the world is washed in deep blue.

Maggie is silhouetted in the warm light of the doorway. She turns to look back at Norman, standing by the gate. She waves before entering the house. Norman waves back. He then slips his hands into his pockets and walks home.

As he does, he passes an ABANDONED HOME with a lawn gone to seed. On the fence surrounding it, a rusted "BEWARE OF DOG" SIGN dangles from a nail. Norman lazily HITS IT: the sign swings, CREAKING. He continues walking, past a JUNKYARD.

INT. BAR - SAME TIME

Paul sits alone at the counter, gripping a ROCKS GLASS. He takes a shot of his whiskey, sucking the dry taste off his tongue. He ignores the drunken laughter of the patrons.

INT. HAWKIN'S FARM - BARN - LATER THAT NIGHT

Norman puts a TARP over the TIGER MOTH. Suddenly, there's a CLANKING NOISE from outside, followed by muffled CURSING. Norman grabs a CROW BAR leaning against the wall. He pushes the barn door open and looks out.

Paul drunkenly stumbles around the yard, holding a half-empty BOTTLE OF WHISKEY. He angrily kicks a tin can across the dirt. Norman sighs and tosses the crow bar aside.

EXT. HAWKIN'S FARM - YARD - CONTINUOUS

Paul notes Norman walking towards him. He spreads his arms wide, welcoming the ridicule.

PAUL

The prodigal twin returns!

NORMAN

What are you doing here?

PAUL

Man can't visit his brother?

NORMAN

It's three in the morning.

PAUL

Have a drink with me.

NORMAN

Looks like you've had enough for
both of us.

PAUL

That's funny! You're funny, Norm.

NORMAN

Just keep it down; you'll wake mom.

Paul looks towards the farm house.

PAUL

Used to think Dad gave us a gift,
givin' us wings. All he did was
spoil being on the ground-

NORMAN

What are you talking about?

We see the discovery on Norman's face.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

You heard from NASA, didn't you?

Paul doesn't answer; he takes a swig from his bottle.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

PAUL

No you're not.

NORMAN

'Scuse me?

PAUL

You know, when we went into the
service, I used to think I was
following you. Like that 2 minute
head-start you had at birth just
stuck-

NORMAN
Will you shut up-

PAUL
Funny thing is, you left! For once
we had different lives! Now I'm
right back where I started: Green
frickin Acres!

NORMAN
And that's my fault?

PAUL
Just once, Norman, just one
Goddamned day, I'd like to feel I
ain't beholdin' to you.

NORMAN
I didn't quit for your ego! I quit
because Mom needed me!

PAUL
You quit 'cause you're a coward.

Norman PUNCHES Paul across the face. Paul retaliates by
tackling him to the ground. They scuffle in the dirt.

PAUL (CONT'D)
G'off!

NORMAN
Make me.

PAUL
I'll kick your ass!

NORMAN
You're out of practice.

PAUL
So's your right hook!

NORMAN
I was holdin' back!

PAUL
Bullshit!

Paul drunkenly tries to punch Norman, but Norman gets the
upper hand. He pins him to the dirt.

NORMAN
You gonna say "uncle?"

PAUL
Screw you!

NORMAN
(pressing down)
What's that?

PAUL
Gah! Dammit! Uncle! Hippie Son-of-a-bitch...

Norman releases his brother. Paul sits up, massaging his jaw. He reaches for the spilt bottle of whiskey.

PAUL (CONT'D)
'Waste of good bourbon.

He tosses the empty bottle aside.

NORMAN
What were you gonna do: drink yourself into space?

PAUL
Better than being earthbound and sober.

NORMAN
Can't argue with that.

Norman smiles at his brother. Soon they're laughing together. Norman rises, extending a hand to his brother.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Come on. Beer's on me.

Norman lifts Paul to his feet. They head to the house.

PAUL
You really clocked me good.

NORMAN
Well, you're an idiot.

PAUL
'Least I remember how to shave.

EXT. HAWKIN'S FARM - FIELD - LATER

Paul and Norman sit on the hood of the rusted CHEVY PICKUP, drinking BEER and watching the SUNRISE.

PAUL

Remember those Western Double Features? We used to buy one ticket and sneak the other in.

NORMAN

Yeah. Till you messed it up.

PAUL

Dad was already on to us.

NORMAN

There was Mom thinkin' we just liked wearing matching outfits.

PAUL

Old man knew better.

(beat)

I miss him.

NORMAN

Yeah. Me too.

PAUL

Sometimes I see his face in other people. Just strangers walkin by. I look again and it's just some old man who looks like him. I don't know why, but, it always gets my hopes up.

Paul gazes at the MOON as it fades into the dawn.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I always imagined that's what the moon looked like: the desert in a black and white Western. Grey sands. Maybe a tumbleweed. Sometimes I wish I could just take a bird up there and see it with my own eyes, you know? Stead of looking out through a fish bowl, breathin' from a dryer hose.

NORMAN

You could always smoke the shit they're peddlin' behind the grocer.

PAUL

Hippie.

NORMAN

Square.

They each take a swig. Paul's tongue loosens.

PAUL
I'm gonna ask Maggie to marry me.

Norman shoots a look at Paul.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I know you think I'm taking it too fast, but, seeing as I won't be "boldly going where no man's gone before" . . . I just don't see the point of waiting. I love her.

(looks to Norman)
Be my best man? Make sure I don't do anything stupid?

NORMAN
'Full time job.

PAUL
(chuckles)
Yeah, it is. It would mean a lot.

NORMAN
'Course.

Paul smiles at his brother, lifting his beer bottle up. Norman takes the cue and CLINKS his bottle against Paul's.

A golden sunrise floods the field.

PAUL
Tell you what, though... you don't get this view from space.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

Paul stares into the keyhole of his "cell" door. He wields a MAKE-SHIFT LOCK PICK made out of a mattress spring.

Paul hears voices from the room next door; He quickly gets back into bed. Marcus enters, PAUL HAWKIN'S FILE in his hand. He leaves the door open behind him.

PAUL
More magazines, Comrade?

MARCUS
(beat)
There's someone here to see you.

A RED-HAIRED WOMAN (60s) with a familiar face enters; Paul freezes. Though her grey roots betray her age, her hair is dyed ginger. She smiles with tearful eyes.

WOMAN
Hello, Paul.

Paul's breathing quickens: he knows her voice.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Do you know who I am?

PAUL
Should I?

The woman looks to Marcus. He nods. She approaches the bed.

WOMAN
I wanted to be the one to tell you.
You've been gone a very long time-

PAUL
Who are you?

WOMAN
Don't you recognize me?

PAUL
(lying)
No.

MAGGIE
I'm Maggie. I'm your Maggie.

PAUL
You're lying.

MARCUS (O.C.)
It's a new century, Commander.
You've been gone almost 50 years.

Paul's eyes remain fixed on the red-haired woman.

PAUL
(under his breath)
No.

MARCUS
Paul-

PAUL
NO!

Paul launches himself from the bed. He shoves Marcus down before ripping the I.V. from his arm. Paul takes one last look at the red-haired woman, before running out of his cell.

Marcus watches from the floor. He makes no move to stop him. Instead, he calmly presses a PANIC BUTTON on the wall.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Paul runs down a sterile, brightly lit hall. He makes for a set of double doors at the end.

INT. LAB - CONTINUOUS

Paul bursts in to a hangar-sized LAB with various sorts of aeronautic equipment. The startled TECHNICIANS, all in white full-body suits. Paul exits back through the doors.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Paul turns down another hall. A group of MEN in suits and lab coats spot him and begin pursuit. Paul backtracks.

He turns the corner, spotting a door to the STAIRWELL with a SIGN labeling the current floor as "B5," a basement level.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Paul runs up the stairs. His body can't handle the climb. He begins to feel faint, taking a moment to catch his breath. Finally, he pushes through a door labeled "GROUND LEVEL."

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Paul runs into the lobby. He freezes in the SEA OF PEOPLE:

All are wearing 21ST CENTURY clothing. A WOMAN (30s) walks by talking on her cellphone. A MAN (40s) passes with a computer underarm. To Paul, it looks like a futuristic spaceport.

The MEN pursuing Paul burst into the lobby.

Paul spots the main entrance on the other side of the security turnstiles. He makes a break for it. As he does, a pudgy SECURITY GUARD (50s) blocks him.

Paul is trapped and growing weaker. He begins to stagger.

The lobby SPINS around him. The same LIGHTS Paul saw around his finger tips seem to be popping in his peripheral. He strains to focus on the people surrounding him.

As Paul's vision begins to blur, we can make out Marcus emerging from his pursuers.

MARCUS
Easy, Hawkins...

Paul collapses to his knees. Through the haze, he sees a YOUNG RED-HAIRED WOMAN running towards him. It's Maggie, as she was in 1969. She crouches beside him; her voice echoes.

MAGGIE
Paul?

PAUL
(barely audible)
Maggie.

Paul passes out.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. DINER - DAY (1969)

Windswept soil hangs in the air of this desert dive, kicked up by lazy ceiling fans. A seasoned WAITRESS (50s), puffs on the cigarette, as she polishes a glass behind the bar.

Paul sits at the counter in his flight jacket, a cup of coffee in front of him. He turns a small JEWELRY BOX in his hands. Finally, he opens it: a DIAMOND RING shines inside.

Paul pockets the box. He takes one last sip of his coffee, tossing a dollar bill on the counter. He's about to turn when TWO MEN IN TRENCH COATS flank him.

MAN
Captain Hawkins?

Paul looks up.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Paul is shown in to the room by an aid, who closes the door behind him. He stands awkwardly by the door.

MEN seated at the table turn to look at Paul: RAMIREZ (29) a stocky Latino man, and GARNER (29), Black-Irish and stone-faced. Both are in Air Force Uniforms.

However, Paul's eyes are drawn to the man closest to him: WEST (31), short and cocky, sporting a weathered flight jacket. He chews a toothpick between his teeth.

At the head of the table, standing in front of an empty blackboard, is GENE KRANZ (36), broad shouldered with a crew-cut. He wears a vest over a shirt and tie.

Next to him stands CHARLES "CHUCK" ROSEN (32), a baby-faced engineer with curly-hair and thick rimmed glasses.

KRANTZ
(smiling)
Take a seat, Captain.

Paul does so, warily. West winks at him, still chewing on his toothpick. Krantz puts his hands in his pockets.

KRANTZ (CONT'D)
Well, now that we're all present and accounted for, let's begin. My name is Gene Krantz. I'm Director of Operations at NASA. This is Chuck Rosen, he's an engineer in our aeronautics lab.

Chuck nods, shyly.

KRANTZ (CONT'D)
As you may have heard, we have a reputation for shooting men into space. You each come from different backgrounds, but you all have one thing in common... wings. You're pilots. More than that: you're test pilots. You boys shot through the sound barrier like it was tissue paper. Now we're aiming to break a few more laws of nature. And to do that, we need you.

(beat)
I'm only gonna say this once... this is a top secret operation with a time factor. You want answers, you say yes. You sign an official secrets act, pack a toothbrush, and come back with a set of astronaut's wings. You want out? There's the door.

Paul looks around. No one stirs. West grins.

WEST
So, what laws are we talkin' here?

Krantz shoots West a look before stepping aside.

KRANTZ

Chuck?

Chuck steps forward. He clears his throat nervously.

CHUCK

186,000 miles.

RAMIREZ

Per hour?

CHUCK

Per second.

PAUL

The speed of light.

The other pilots eye at Paul. Chuck nods and proceeds to write "**E = mc²**" on the blackboard; he circles the "C".

CHUCK

Celeritas. The "C" in Einstein's Relativity Equation. If the universe had a speed limit, that would be it.

GARNER

We're going to break Light-Speed?

CHUCK

You can't break it. That's impossible. But you can come close.

RAMIREZ

This is a joke, right? We can't even break Mach 7, now you wanna break Light-Speed?

PAUL

They do it all the time on Star Trek?

West chuckles; he's the only one. Chuck ignores them and takes out a set of drawings, laying them on the table.

CHUCK

We've received word the Soviets are working on a ship that can travel at point 6 C. That's a little over half the Speed of Light.

(MORE)

CHUCK (CONT'D)

Our plan is to launch a prototype
from orbit within the year.

GARNER

Sorry, Sir, did you say from orbit?

CHUCK

The technology only works in a
vacuum. Air-resistance isn't a
factor in space.

WEST

This "tin can" you want us to
fly... What's it run on?

CHUCK

Sorry?

WEST

I mean, at that speed, anything we
got in our tank's gonna boil, along
with the blood in our veins. How do
you plan on fueling this thing?

KRANTZ

Well, with the hot air you're
packing, West, I figure that'll at
least get us to Neptune.

Chuck draws a crude ROCKET on the blackboard behind him.

CHUCK

Traditional propulsion relies on
hydrogen and oxygen: positive mass
creating positive momentum. The
fuel burns, propelling the ship
forward.

Chuck draws an arrow going out from the nose of the ship.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

What we've developed uses negative
mass. The drive displaces matter
around the ship like a ballast.

Chuck draws a series of arrows radiating out from the back
and the front of the craft.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

You only need a rocket to break
orbit. Once in space, the ship
polarizes: positive mass at the
front, negative mass at the back.

(MORE)

CHUCK (CONT'D)
With gravity at the wheel, one
could accelerate indefinitely.
Theoretically.

GARNER
Theoretically?

CHUCK
(meekly)
Well, we haven't tested it.

RAMIREZ
So it's some kind of "space slide?"

KRANTZ
It's a Diametric Drive. And it's
something the Russians don't have.
(beat)
Who wants to take her for a spin?

Paul raises his hand.

KRANTZ (CONT'D)
Captain Hawkins?

PAUL
You said this thing could fly
forever. Where are we flying to?

EXT. SPACE

DARKNESS -- pops of LIGHT explode as they zoom past us -- PLANETS grow larger before swerving to avoid us -- the very GASSES and PARTICLES of space whizzing by, like a cosmic blizzard -- our vision blinded by LIGHT and ELECTRICITY.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

Paul wakes in his hospital bed. He's heavily sedated.

The red-headed woman sits by his bedside. Paul stares at her. Though the years have worn her, he recognizes her.

PAUL
(groggily)
Hi.

OLD MAGGIE smiles with relief.

OLD MAGGIE
Hi.

PAUL
So it is you.

OLD MAGGIE
You haven't changed.

PAUL
Neither have you.

MAGGIE
Don't start.

PAUL
It's true: you're still a red head.

Maggie chokes back tears.

MAGGIE
*We thought you were dead. When I
 got the call, I didn't believe-*

*Paul reaches out, taking Maggie's left hand. Then he notices
 the WEDDING BANG on her finger; he stares at it, heartbroken.*

PAUL
Where's my brother?

INT. SIDE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

*OLD NORMAN (70s) stands in a dark room. His face is wrinkled
 and his hair white. He looks through the mirrored glass at
 Paul; it's like staring at a reflection of his younger self.*

Marcus steps up beside him.

MARCUS
Norman Hawkins?

Old Norman doesn't respond at first.

OLD NORMAN
Mm? Yes?

MARCUS
(extending a hand)
*Agent Marcus. We spoke on the
 phone.*

OLD NORMAN
Oh. Right.

*Old Norman shakes his hand warily. Marcus turns his
 attention to the Recovery Room behind the glass.*

MARCUS

Strange, isn't it? Like looking back in time. I understand it's difficult seeing your brother after all these years, and in this... "condition."

OLD NORMAN

So what happens now?

MARCUS

That's up to him. Paul's been reluctant to talk to us.

OLD NORMAN

Guess you'll have to postpone the press conference.

MARCUS

Mr. Hawkins, this can never get out to the press.

OLD NORMAN

My brother's a hero. He broke light-speed-

MARCUS

-Using top secret technology from a project that has been collecting dust for decades. A project with an equally mysterious Soviet counterpart. We need to know what we're dealing with.

OLD NORMAN

You can't keep him here forever. People are going to notice.

MARCUS

Mr. Hawkins... your brother was declared dead 50 years ago. Who's going to notice?

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

The door opens; Paul and Old Maggie look up.

Old Norman lingers by the door. He carries a LEATHER ALBUM under his arm and a flat VELVET BOX.

Paul stares at him, as if he himself has seen a ghost. Old Maggie looks back and forth between them.

OLD MAGGIE
I'll leave you two.

She shoots Paul a reassuring gaze before exiting.

Silence. Neither speaks. Neither can find the words. Old Norman clears his throat nervously.

OLD NORMAN
You look good.

PAUL
You too.

OLD NORMAN
I got old.

PAUL
That was the plan.
 (beat)
You had me declared dead?

OLD NORMAN
It was out of our hands. They lost contact after you broke orbit.
Still, it was for the best.

PAUL
 (snickers)
For you?

OLD NORMAN
 (beat)
For Mom.

Paul looks ashamed.

PAUL
What did you tell her?

OLD NORMAN
The truth. What she could understand anyway. Mom was fading even before you left.

PAUL
 (tearing up)
How long after did she...?

OLD NORMAN
2 years. She was stubborn till the end; 'still believed you might come back. Guess she was right.

Beat. Old Norman starts to fumble in his pockets.

OLD NORMAN (CONT'D)
I brought you something.

He takes out the VELVET BOX and hands it to Paul. He opens it: inside is a set of SILVER ASTRONAUT WINGS.

OLD NORMAN (CONT'D)
They're yours.

PAUL
Thank you.

OLD NORMAN
You earned 'em.

Old Norman remembers he's holding the ALBUM.

OLD NORMAN (CONT'D)
I, uh, brought this too. Thought you might want to catch up.

Paul takes it: it's the same ALBUM his mother cherished.

OLD NORMAN (CONT'D)
Well then.
(he extends his hand)
Welcome home.

Paul takes his brothers hand, gripping it tight. Suddenly, Old Norman pulls him in close. They EMBRACE tightly.

INT. SIDE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Old Maggie watches from behind the mirror. She looks down at the wedding band on her finger, paired with a DIAMOND RING.

INT. DINER - DAY (1969)

MUSIC plays on a nearby Jukebox. Maggie sits across from Paul in a booth. Paul stares vacantly into his coke.

MAGGIE
Hey. Earth to Hawkins?

PAUL
Hm?

MAGGIE
Lost you for a sec there.

PAUL
Sorry... Busy day.

MAGGIE
Want me to get behind the bar so
you can spill all your secrets?

Paul laughs. Under the table: he turns the RING BOX in his hands. Paul thinks hard for a moment, taking deep breaths.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Paul, what's wrong?

Paul looks into Maggie's eyes: it's not fair for her. He shoves the box deep into his pocket.

PAUL
NASA accepted my application.

MAGGIE
Oh my God. Paul! That's amazing!
When do you start?

PAUL
I report to training next week.

MAGGIE
Next week? But that means... are
you leaving for Houston?

Paul stares into his coke. Maggie has her answer.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
I see. Well... Congratulations.

PAUL
Thanks.

Silence.

MAGGIE
Your mother will be so proud.

Maggie hides her pain with a smile; it breaks Paul's heart.

PAUL
I thought you could come with me.

MAGGIE
To Houston?

PAUL
Well, I'd take you to Mars, but I
think they'd object.

MAGGIE

I can't move to Texas. I've got
classes in the fall.

PAUL

So drop out.

MAGGIE

You want me to give up. Now.

PAUL

I'm not asking you to give up,
just... put it on hold for a
little. Just until I come back.

MAGGIE

(laughs)

"Come back?" Jesus, Paul, you're
acting like they're gonna send you
up in the next shuttle-

(Off Paul's look)

They're not sending you up in the
next shuttle... Are they? Paul?

PAUL

Maggie, this program... it's my
dream. But it won't wait for me. I
don't want to do this without you-

MAGGIE

What are you asking me?

PAUL

Do you love me?

MAGGIE

Yes.

PAUL

Then come with me.

Paul reaches back into his pocket. He pulls out the box,
revealing the DIAMOND RING inside. Maggie is shocked.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Marry me, Maggie.

Maggie stares at the ring, excitement mingling with doubt.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

*A gaudy Houston motel room. Old Maggie and Old Norman sit in
silence on a flowery bedspread, a gap between them.*

OLD MAGGIE
They're bluffing.

OLD NORMAN
I don't think they are.

OLD MAGGIE
He's your brother. You owe him
everything-

OLD NORMAN
What would you have me do! Dig a
tunnel to his cell, break him out!

Old Maggie rises in a huff; she paces as she thinks.

OLD MAGGIE
What did they say? What exactly
did they say?

OLD NORMAN
They said, "he's sick, he needs
care"-

OLD MAGGIE
Then why isn't he in a hospital?
What are they planning to do, cart
him off to- to... Area 51? What?

OLD NORMAN
You're overreacting.

OLD MAGGIE
I don't trust them. He didn't,
and neither should you.

Old Maggie leans on the DESK behind her; trying to calm
herself. Old Norman plays the reunion back in his mind.

OLD NORMAN
He looked different. His face... I
looked at him and, at first, it was
as if no time had passed. But when
I looked in his eyes... It's like
his soul aged 50 years without him.

OLD MAGGIE
We've all grown old. Some of us do
a better job hiding it.

OLD NORMAN
I don't want to hide anymore. I
don't want to lie.

OLD MAGGIE
It's too late for that.

Old Maggie goes into the BATHROOM. We hear her SLAM the door as we remain on Old Norman, contemplating her words.

INT. HAWKIN'S FARMHOUSE - ENTRYWAY - DAY (1969)

Norman enters, sweaty and exhausted. He hears his mother talking excitedly in the parlor.

EVELYN (O.C.)
 You'll be sure to write. And
 reverse the charges when you call.

PAUL (O.C.)
 Ma, I can pay for long distance...

FRONT PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

Norman turns the corner. He sees Paul, looking oddly chipper, sitting beside his mother.

EVELYN
 (happily)
 Norman!

Though confused, he welcomes his mother's embrace.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
 Paul just came to tell us the news!

Norman eyes his brother suspiciously.

NORMAN
 Which part?

EVELYN
 Your brother's going to be an
 astronaut! Oh goodness, did I
 spoil it? He said he told you.

Norman shoots Paul a look. Paul glares back: "Play along."

NORMAN
 Yeah. Yeah, he did.

EVELYN
 (to Paul)
 If only your father could have held
 on just a few more years.

Evelyn holds Paul's face in her hands, beaming ear-to-ear.

EVELYN (CONT'D)
I am so proud of you.

Paul embraces his mother, but throws an apprehensive glance in Norman's directing. Norman stares back coldly.

INT. BARN - MOMENTS LATER

Paul walks into the barn. He frowns at his father's old Tiger Moth: it's more pathetic than he remembers.

Norman SLAMS the door of the Barn and corners Paul.

NORMAN
What did you do?

PAUL
Now just, hold on a second-

NORMAN
You told me you didn't get into the
Space Program.

PAUL
I didn't.

NORMAN
Then what?

PAUL
(hesitates)
I can't talk about.

NORMAN
You "can't talk about it?"

Paul stands firm.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
So you're involved in some "secret
project," is that it?

PAUL
I'm not saying anything.

NORMAN
Well, you better start saying
something-

PAUL

Look, what do you want from me!
Jesus, Norman, you're acting like
some shit-for-brains-civilian! You
know what we do! We couldn't tell
Dad you broke Mach 6 for months in
case the Ruskies tapped the phones!

NORMAN

So you're a spy now! What!?

Paul remains silent. Norman is exasperated.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Does Maggie know?

PAUL

She's knows I'm going to Houston.

NORMAN

And you're gonna, what? Just leave
her? After all that poetry you
spouted about love-

PAUL

She's coming with me. We're
engaged.

The dagger already sinking into Norman's gut is twisted.

NORMAN

Engaged. Wow. Congrats.

PAUL

Thanks... Don't say anything to Ma.
We wanted to tell her together.

NORMAN

Course. So when do you, you know...

PAUL

Launch?

NORMAN

Get married.

PAUL

We haven't set a date. Not like
they don't got churches in Texas.

NORMAN

You're sure you know what you're
doing?

PAUL

Do we ever? Either of us? We've been leaping without a net since we were kids. I'm not gonna stop now.

NORMAN

'Cept now you have Maggie to think of.

PAUL

I am thinking of her. I'm thinking about you too. I know why you quit the airforce, Norman, and it wasn't cowardice. You've flown to hell and back, seen things I can't even imagine. Thing is, you keep seein' them. Every time you get in that cockpit. No matter what's on the horizon, that burning jungle pops right back in. But we've seen beauty too! Now I have a chance to see the universe! To remember that beauty for the rest of my life. Isn't that worth dying for?

Silence. Norman's expression has softened.

NORMAN

Just promise me one thing. Promise me you'll live to remember it.

PAUL

I promise.

Norman takes in the image of his brother, looking more a man than his own reflection ever gave him credit for.

NORMAN

Well then. "One small step for man..."

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Paul lays in bed, flipping through the yellowed pages of the FAMILY ALBUM. At first, he recognizes them...

INSERT:

1. *Their father, MITCH (30s) in WWII Airforce attire, smiling in the cockpit of a fighter, 1944.*
2. *Two twins, perfect Paul and shaggy-haired Norman, playing with a Lionel Train wrapped around a Christmas tree, 1947.*

3. MITCH (40s) washing his brand new Chevy Pickup, the twin boys covered in mud from the hose.

4. Brash Paul and shy Norman, both looking clean-cut in their AIR FORCE UNIFORMS, posing in front of the field, 1963.

Paul TURNS THE PAGES. The pages shift to COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS as the years roll on, past his memory...

INSERT:

5. Norman and Maggie on their wedding day, 1971.

6. Maggie in a hospital gown holds a newborn bundled in a white blanket; Norman holds his child's tiny hand, 1973.

7. Maggie, in a skirt-suit and a hard hat, standing in front of the frame of a house, blue prints in hand, 1975.

8. A summer picnic: Norman, with sideburns and a beer gut, and Maggie with feathered long hair and bell-bottoms. They pose arms wrapped around each other, 1977.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Old Norman sits at the desk, the lamp light shadowing every wrinkle. In the background, we see the sleeping Old Maggie.

On the desk is a discarded WALLET SIZED PHOTO of Old Maggie and Old Norman. A square has been cut out around his face; the RAZOR BLADE responsible rests beside it.

Old Norman's BIFOCALS slip down his nose as he carefully glues his CUT-OUT HEAD onto a NASA ID BADGE.

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - LOBBY - DAY (PRESENT)

Old Norman enters the lobby with a TOUR GROUP carrying a DUFFLE BAG. The duffle goes through the X-Ray scanner without a hitch. Old Norman thanks the guard as he takes it.

Old Norman wanders around the lobby, trying his best to look casual. Soon, he sneaks away down a hallway. We see a sign for the RESTROOM with an arrow pointing down the hall.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Old Norman is now dressed in a LAB COAT. He has traded the duffle for a CLIPBOARD as he walks around the Lower Level. He turns his face from TWO TECHNICIANS as they pass him.

Old Norman turns the corner. He approaches Paul's room, which has a GUARD (30s). He smiles and flashes his FAKE ID.

OLD NORMAN
Checking his vitals.

The guard nods. He unlocks the door with a set of keys on a chain. Old Norman nods "thanks" and enters. The guard closes the door and LOCKS IT.

INT. RECOVERY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul sits up in his bed, flipping through MAGAZINES. He hears the handle being jiggled. He grabs a nearby BEDPAN.

Old Norman enters, quickly shutting the door behind him. Paul brandishes his bedpan like a weapon. Old Norman turns and is startled; he throws his hands up in surrender.

OLD NORMAN
Whoa whoa! It's me!

PAUL
Sorry. Still getting used to, you know... the wrinkles.

OLD NORMAN
Yeah. Me too.

Paul throws the bedpan aside. Old Norman reaches under his shirt and pulls out SPARE CLOTHING he stuffed there.

OLD NORMAN (CONT'D)
We don't have much time.

PAUL
What are you doing?

OLD NORMAN
Jailbreak. What does it look like?
Put these on.

Paul catches the T-SHIRT and JEANS tossed to him. He unfolds the T-shirt: it's got "NASA" slapped across the front.

OLD NORMAN (CONT'D)
(off Paul's look)
I had to improvise.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The guard continues to stand beside the door. KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK. The guard unlocks the door. Old Norman peeks out.

OLD NORMAN

Oh good, you're still here! Uh... he seems to have collapsed onto the floor. Blood sugar thing. Can you help me get him back into bed?

The guard nods. Old Norman holds the door for him.

OLD NORMAN (CONT'D)

Thanks you so much. Just there...

As the guard enters, Old Norman raises the BEDPAN high. CLANG! THUD. He knocks the guard unconscious.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Both brothers exit the Recovery Room: Old Norman, in his lab coat, followed by Paul, dressed in the T-shirt and jeans. Paul checks behind him to see they aren't being followed.

PAUL

So what's the plan now?

OLD NORMAN

Walk out the front door.

PAUL

How are we supposed to get past security?

OLD NORMAN

It's NASA, not the Death Star!

Old Norman keeps walking. Paul is even more confused.

PAUL

The what!?

INT. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER - LOBBY

Old Norman and Paul enter the lobby. Old Norman takes off his lab coat and throws it in a waste bin. He notes the cameras that surround the lobby. He takes out 2 BASEBALL CAPS from his back pockets.

OLD NORMAN

Cover your face.

Both put on the hats, also courtesy of the NASA Gift Shop. For a moment, we catch a glimpse of the black and white SECURITY FOOTAGE: their faces are obscured by the caps.

The two brothers blend in with the crowd. Paul glances behind him. His eyes widen.

PAUL

Shit.

He taps his brother on the shoulder: Old Norman turns: Shit!

Behind them is Marcus and THREE AGENTS, scanning the crowd. Old Norman looks towards the door. GUARDS stand at the entrance: all talking on radios, scanning the crowd.

Old Norman sees their salvation on the wall.

OLD NORMAN

Remember how I got us out of
detention?

PAUL

Which time?

OLD NORMAN

Just plug your ears.

Old Norman goes to a FIRE ALARM. He looks harmlessly around the lobby as his hand finds the lever; he pulls down...

REEEE! REEEE! REEEE!

The FIRE ALARM SOUNDS. Clueless tourists and school children are herded towards the exits. Among them, Old Norman and Paul. They are joined by workers from the building.

Marcus tries to search over the heads of the mob, but it's useless. We see him shout curses from a distance.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Old Norman and Paul hurry across the lot, away from the crowds. They look back: no one's chasing them... yet.

Suddenly, a SEDAN cuts them off. Old Maggie rolls down the driver-side window sporting a smug smile.

OLD MAGGIE

Need a lift?

Paul glares at his brother.

PAUL

You got Maggie involved?

OLD NORMAN

It's her car.

PAUL

She could go to prison!

OLD MAGGIE

Come on, flyboys! I'm not getting any younger!

Old Norman gives Paul a shrug. Paul gives in, climbing into the backseat; Old Norman takes shotgun. Old Maggie FLOORS IT.

INT. SEDAN - LATER THAT DAY

We are on INTERSTATE 10, moving west through Texas. Old Maggie drives the first leg. Paul looks out the window of the backseat, gazing at the "alien world" around him...

Dealerships packed with "futuristic" looking cars-- Giant Shopping Centers lit like the Vegas Strip -- Gas Stations with "\$4 a Gallon" posted on their marque.

INT. SEDAN - LATER THAT NIGHT

Old Norman drives. Paul stares out the front-passenger window. He then glances at the REARVIEW MIRROR. Old Maggie is sleeping serenely in the backseat. She is beautiful.

Old Norman notices Paul staring at his wife in the mirror. He decides not to say anything, but innocently CLEARS HIS THROAT. Paul quickly turns his gaze to the road.

PAUL

So where are we headed?

OLD NORMAN

*Somewhere safe. My daughter has a cottage on Manchester Beach.
'Should be empty this time of year.*

PAUL

You have a daughter?

OLD NORMAN

Yeah.

Silence. Old Norman continues to glance over.

OLD NORMAN (CONT'D)
How long was it for you?

PAUL
I don't know how long they kept me-

OLD NORMAN
I meant the flight. How long?

Paul hesitates. Then, as matter-of-factly as possible...

PAUL
3 hours-

OLD NORMAN
3 hours!

Paul glares at his brother: it's a sore subject.

OLD NORMAN (CONT'D)
Jesus... So what now?

PAUL
I thought you had a plan.

OLD NORMAN
*Yeah, but after that. You got the
 rest of your life ahead of ya.*

PAUL
*Don't know. I mean, do you even
need pilots anymore, or do robots
 do everything for you.*

OLD NORMAN
*World hasn't changed as much as you
 think.*

PAUL
Speak for yourself.
(beat)
Thanks. For busting me out.

OLD NORMAN
Still not even, though, are we.

Silence. After a moment, Paul starts to laugh.

OLD NORMAN (CONT'D)
What? What is it?

PAUL
*The first time I saw you: I thought
 you were Dad's ghost.*

Old Norman joins Paul in laughter.

PAUL (CONT'D)
'Figured I'd finally cracked. I never realized how much we looked like him until now. 'Guess I have that to look forward to.

OLD NORMAN
That and high blood pressure.

PAUL
You really did get old, didn't you?

Old Norman shrugs: "Whatcha gonna do?"

PAUL (CONT'D)
Guess they can tell us apart now.

OLD NORMAN
That's an understatement.

PAUL
(beat)
Can I ask you question?

OLD NORMAN
Shoot.

PAUL
Are The Beatles still together?

INT. G-FORCE SIMULATOR - DAY (1969)

MONTAGE:

1. RAMIREZ screams, eyes shut tight, as he's whipped around the centrifuge in a small pod. 10-Gs press against him.
2. The simulator shakes violently as GARNER turns green.
3. WEST's turn; his cheeks jiggle back. He howls excitedly.
4. PAUL's skull feels cemented against the headrest. He grits his teeth against the pressure.

END OF MONTAGE.

INT. OUTSIDE JANUS SIMULATOR - DAY (1969)

NASA MANNED SPACECRAFT CENTER in Houston, Texas. A hanger-like room inside the main complex. In the center of the room is a metal cylinder: the JANUS SIMULATOR.

INT. JANUS SIMULATOR - CONTINUOUS

Paul, in a flight suit and helmet, sits in a fake JANUS COCKPIT. He casually flips three switches at eye level.

PAUL
(into headset)
Houston, this is Janus 2.
Preparing for separation.

INT. CONTROL BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Chuck sits at a console, wearing a headset. Gene Krantz looks over his shoulder, holding half-a-headset to his ear. They are joined by two plain-clothes TECHNICIANS (30s), each controlling the simulation on their computers.

CHUCK
(into microphone)
Roger, Janus 2. You are a go.

INTERCUT: INT. JANUS SIMULATOR / CONTROL BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Paul dresses a button on the dash. An INDICATOR LIGHT flashes and turns off.

PAUL
Boosters offline and ejected.
Prepping the Diametric Drive.

Gene gives Chuck a significant glance. Chuck nods; he points to one of the technicians who types into his computer.

CHUCK
Uh... Roger that, Janus. Be sure
to check your course heading before
initiating. Over?

PAUL
Roger that.
(mumbling)
'Ain't my first rodeo.

Paul presses a BUTTON marked with a PLUS SIGN.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Positive Field generating.

A LIGHT above the negative button BEEPS and FLASHES RED.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I've got a warning light on the
Negative Drive.

CHUCK
Roger, Janus 1. Check your AFD,
for me, will you?

Paul scowls: "What the hell?"

PAUL
You wanna elaborate on that?

CHUCK
Your Asymmetric Field. Can you
give me a differential?

Paul searches the panel.

PAUL
(mumbling)
Dummy-dashboard doesn't make a lick
of sense...

He finds a DIAL labeled AFD. He squints to read it.

PAUL (CONT'D)
'K, I got "point 4" and holding.

CHUCK
You need a factor of 1 before
punching it. Recommend abort,
Janus. Over?

Suddenly, the warning light on the Negative Drive SHORTS OUT.

PAUL
Hold it, Houston, I got an all
clear on the drive. I'm gonna
attempt to compensate.

CHUCK
Uh, negative, Janus. Suggest
initiating re-entry sequence.

Paul flips the NEGATIVE DRIVE switch.

PAUL
Negative Drive up and running.

Chuck rubs his temple: this isn't a good start.

PAUL (CONT'D)
AFD now up to point 7... point
8... Approaching full Factor 1.

CHUCK
Janus, you are not clear, repeat
not clear for D-Drive! Over?

Chuck looks up at Gene: "Seriously?" The Flight Director just shrugs. Paul looks at the AFD DIAL. It passes FACTOR 1.

PAUL
Factor 1 point 1. 1 point 2.
Punching it.

Paul pushes the IGNITION BUTTON on the console. ALARMS sound around him; the cockpit FLASHES RED. The simulation is over. We hear the controls powering down. Paul leans back.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Shit.

INT. CONTROL BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck removes his headset. He glares at Gene.

CHUCK
Well, you wanted test pilots.

GENE
He's just getting a feel for her.

CHUCK
They teach them to follow orders at Edwards?

GENE
You're asking them to shoot into space with nothing but your bullshit and their balls to back 'em. You don't need "yes men," Chuck. You need heroes.

Gene exits; Chuck looks out towards the simulator and Paul.

INT. OUTSIDE JANUS SIMULATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Paul exits the simulator, carrying his helmet. He passes Garner on the way for his session.

GARNER

Smooth steerin', Hawkins. 'Dented
her straight out of the lot.

PAUL

Hilarious, Garner.

EXT. HAWKIN'S FARM - DAY (1969)

Norman flies the TIGER MOTH over a field, DUSTING CROPS, but he seems distracted from his task.

Norman grips the steering and PUSHES DOWN. The plane goes into a dive. The pitch of the engine gets higher and higher. He PULLS UP: The plane swoops up easily.

He isn't content. He climbs higher and higher, glancing at the field below. He DIVES AGAIN, this time it's sharper. The engine whines on the descent -- faster and faster --

REEEUUUUUUUUR! The plane PULLS UP once more, this time with more difficulty. Norman smiles: It's just like old times.

Norman DIVES a third time. The sight of the ground zooming closer and closer seems to hypnotize Norman. Suddenly, he realizes he's gone too far. He wrenches the steering back.

The plane PULLS UP, just in time, but not without straining the engine. It begins to SPUTTER.

Norman quickly brings her down. It's a rough landing, the vibrations rattling every bolt of the rusted craft.

Norman breathes heavily, the adrenaline still pumping through his veins. He looks to heaven: "What am I doing?"

EXT. GAS STATION - INTERSTATE 10 - DAY (PRESENT)

We hear a car door SLAM. Paul, asleep in the back seat of the sedan, his forehead against the window, wakes with a start. He looks up. Old Norman's looking down from outside.

OLD NORMAN

Pit stop.

INT. GAS STATION MINI MART - DAY

The bell above the door CHIMES as Paul enters. He looks around at the shelves of junk food and magazines. He picks up the cover of a modern SPORTS ILLUSTRATED. The bathing beauty on the cover stares lustfully back.

Old Maggie peeks around the aisle. Paul catches her looking and quickly puts the magazine back on the rack.

OLD MAGGIE
You'll be glad to know women
haven't changed in 50 years.

She continues on; Paul looks back at the magazine.

PAUL
(mumbles)
Not sure about that.

Meanwhile, Old Norman heads towards the back. He peruses the Snack Food and selects a few BAGS OF CHIPS.

Old Norman turns to look at the FRIDGE. He pulls out a liter of COLA. He's about to shut the door when he spots something better. He trades the soda for a SIX-PACK OF BEER.

EXT. GAS STATION - LATER

Paul walks across the pavement, looking up at the clouds. He shuts his eyes, relishes the sunshine and wind on his face. He sways, and his eyes shoot open: he's dizzy.

Paul's vision doubles as he staggers towards the car. LIGHTS floats around him, bouncing off each surface only to collect on others. The particles GLOW. There's a BLINDING FLASH-

EXT. GAS STATION - (PRESENT)

Old Maggie exits the store with a PLASTIC BAG of supplies. She fishes for her keys in her purse. She looks up.

OLD MAGGIE
Oh my God...

Old Maggie starts running. We see her bend down before a collapsed Paul. Old Norman exits the Mini Mart, carrying a BAG. He runs over; Old Maggie cradles Paul's head.

OLD MAGGIE (CONT'D)
He's not breathing!

Old Norman kneels; he checks Paul's pulse.

OLD NORMAN
Lay him flat... Now, Maggie!

Old Maggie lays Paul's head gently on the pavement. Old Norman performs CPR on his brother.

OLD NORMAN (CONT'D)
Don't do this. Not again. Wake
up... Wake up!

INT. FARMHOUSE - NORMAN'S BEDROOM - DAY (1969)

Norman's eyes open. He's in the same TWIN BED he slept in growing up, bundled under the same spaceman comforter. Norman turns to his brother's twin bed: vacant, its comforter perfectly tucked in. It hasn't been slept-in in years.

INT. FARMHOUSE - BATHROOM - LATER

Norman brushes his teeth. He then runs the water, splashing it on his face. Norman looks in the MIRROR: his hair has grown more unruly. His stubble is now a beard.

INT. FARMHOUSE - ENTRYWAY - LATER

Norman lazily walks down the stairs. He freezes when he hears the sound of WOMEN LAUGHING. He continues into...

THE KITCHEN

Maggie and Evelyn are seated at kitchen table sharing a POT OF COFFEE. TWO PLATES filled with crumbs are all that's left of their slices of pie. Maggie sees Norman and smiles.

MAGGIE
 Mornin, Ace.

EVELYN
 If it is still mornin. This boy
 could sleep till sundown. There's
 still coffee if you're interested.
 Maggie made the pot herself.

NORMAN
 (suddenly)
 I thought you were in Houston.

MAGGIE
 (self-conscious)
 Not yet. Still a few things left
 to settle.

EVELYN
 Not to mention a wedding to plan.
 Have you and Paul set a date?

MAGGIE

Uh, no. No, we haven't.

EVELYN

I always liked the spring: warms
the heart after a long winter.

MAGGIE

I'm sure that'd be lovely, but Paul
hasn't mentioned the wedding.

Beat.

NORMAN

I'm sure he's just busy.

MAGGIE

Right.

EVELYN

Paul always was absent minded.
Head in the clouds, even as a boy.
Norman was the sharp one, and the
most romantic.

NORMAN

Ma...

EVELYN

Course knownin' him now, you
wouldn't believe it. Who was that
girl you were sweet on, back in
grammar school?

NORMAN

I don't remember-

EVELYN

The one with the pigtails, used to
live by the scrap yard. See, there
was this noisy ole bulldog chained
up by the fence. Poor child was so
afraid of that mut, she'd walk the
long way round just to avoid him.
That is till Norman started walkin'
with her.

NORMAN

It wasn't that out of the way.

EVELYN

Made you late for supper more 'n
once. Still, he walked her home
everyday. My little gentleman.

Norman glances at Maggie, obviously embarrassed. Maggie has a knowing smile on her face.

INT. HAWKIN'S FARM - BARN - LATER THAT DAY

Norman opens the barn door, the dust lifting into the newfound sunlight. Maggie waves it away as she enters.

MAGGIE

Well you were right about one thing: it does lean a little.

NORMAN

'Waiting for it to come crashing down. Posts must be rotten.

MAGGIE

They look solid enough. It's the foundation. It's slipping out from under the sills. You should brace the frame; buy it some time.

NORMAN

You talk like it's living?

MAGGIE

Buildings aren't just piles of wood. They breathe. Barns like this have memories. When they are loved, they stand. When they're neglected, they die. Till all that's left is the bones.

Maggie takes in the barn, imagining it's lonely skeleton. Her sadness touches Norman.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

So, don't give up on her yet.

NORMAN

I won't.

Maggie and Norman gaze at each other. Maggie lifts the tarp covering the TIGER MOTH BI-PLANE.

MAGGIE

She's beautiful.

NORMAN

It's a Tiger Moth. My Dad bought it after the war. He taught me how to fly in this plane; Paul too.

MAGGIE
I'm surprised Paul didn't strap a
rocket to it's hull.

NORMAN
Trust me, he tried.

MAGGIE
Did you always want to fly planes?

NORMAN
Geese actually. Canadian Geese.
Had a saddle all picked out-

MAGGIE
You know what I mean.

NORMAN
Guess it's in our blood.

MAGGIE
(beat)
So.

NORMAN
So?

MAGGIE
You still got it?

EXT. HAWKIN'S FARM - LATER THAT DAY

Maggie sits in the FRONT SEAT of Norman's TIGER MOTH BI-PLANE as Norman flies. Her red hair whips furiously behind her.

The PLANE swoops low, over WHEAT FIELDS and ORANGE GROVES and DESERTS. Maggie closes her eyes, letting the wind whip through her hair, her cheeks feeling the warmth of the sun

Norman watches Maggie from the cockpit behind her. She's beaming. For a moment, they share the same freedom.

MAGGIE (V.O.)
(to Norman)
Paul told me about Vietnam.

EXT. HAWKIN'S FARM - YARD - LATER THAT DAY

Parked in front of the barn, both Maggie and Norman sit on the tail-end of the plane.

MAGGIE

He said they split you up.

NORMAN

Didn't want the bad eggs in one basket.

MAGGIE

Paul admires you. He says you were a great pilot. Better than him.

NORMAN

Wasn't setting the bar very high.

MAGGIE

(laughing)

I'll tell him you said that!

NORMAN

Be my guest.

MAGGIE

So why did you quit?

NORMAN

(beat)

Remember Mike Adams?

MAGGIE

Your pilot friend?

NORMAN

'67: Adams was tryin' to break sub-orbit, get his astronaut wings. Son-of-a-bitch made it too. Thing is, he lost control on re-entry. Started spinning... They found his wreck in the Mojave.

MAGGIE

I'm sorry.

NORMAN

Back in Vietnam, I saw men tailspin into the jungle. Saw them liberated after months in bamboo cages. But it was our duty to keep flying. To protect the troops on the ground. But when we lost Adams, when I saw his wife and kids at the funeral- What did he die for? I couldn't understand it. In war, we knew what we were fighting for. But out in the desert...

(MORE)

NORMAN (CONT'D)

What's the point of flying into the sun if you're gonna come crashing down?

MAGGIE

Because someday we won't fall.
Someday we'll reach it. Look at all that you've done, that Paul will do! We don't all have wings of wax.

Norman turns. His eyes search her face for judgment; there is none. He leans in. At first Maggie, doesn't pull back. Their lips are almost touching when Maggie recoils.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Don't.

Norman pulls back quickly.

NORMAN

I'm sorry, I shouldn't have-

MAGGIE

It's alright.

Norman retreats towards the barn.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Norman, wait!

He turns.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

It's not that I don't care. I'm getting married.

NORMAN

I truly hope so.

MAGGIE

What do you mean?

NORMAN

Look, I love my brother. I do. But he has one passion. One thing that matters most, and it's up there. Think you can compete with that?

MAGGIE

You think I can't? Paul: he has dreams. They might not mean anything to you, but they mean everything to him.

(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
And I love him for that, not in
spite of it. Maybe that's what you
can't understand.

Maggie starts to walk away.

NORMAN
(calling after)
I'm trying to protect you.

MAGGIE
I'm not that little girl anymore,
Norman. I don't need you to walk
me home.

Maggie exits into the farmhouse. Norman remains.

INT. BAR - NIGHT (1969)

Paul and West sit at the counter, nursing beers. They are surrounded by PATRONS in cowboy hats. COUNTRY MUSIC plays on the jukebox. Paul's mood hasn't improved.

WEST
Ever been to Bien Hao?

PAUL
I was stationed further south. My
brother flew reconnaissance there.

WEST
Brass had me flying Douglas A-1s.
Two weeks in: got shredded by anti-aircraft. Bastards put at least a dozen holes in my hull. One musta clipped the fuel line, cause I was raining gasoline all over Vietnam. Thought for sure I was gonna have to ditch 'fore I reached base. Said my prayers and everything. Turns out I had enough.

(cheers his beer and sips)
What about you? You ever thought
you weren't gonna make it?

PAUL
When I was 8 I had this pain in my gut. Turns out my appendix was ready to pop. Just before they rolled me into surgery, I told my brother he could have my comic books. I figured, "What the hell. Might as well be put to good use."

WEST

You mean to say 2 tours and 5 years
at Edwards and you never thought
you were a goner?

PAUL

Guess I got it out of my system.
Something in me told me I'd come
back. Maybe not in one piece.

WEST

Yeah, well: something goes screwy
at light speed, 'won't be much left
to bury, never mind walk away with.

PAUL

Thought's crossed my mind.

WEST

I guess danger's relative.

This stirs something in Paul's memory.

PAUL

What did you say?

WEST

Danger. It's relative. Why,
what'd you think I said?

Paul's eyes widen in realization.

EXT. NASA PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Chuck walks to his car, fishing the keys out of his briefcase. He looks up and sees Paul, leaning on his convertible, hands in his pockets. He's been waiting.

PAUL

Einstein's Theory of Relativity.

Chuck stands his ground as Paul walks over.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Read it back when I was fixin' to
be a Spaceman. Surprised it didn't
occur to me before. There was this
thing called "Time Dilation." A
man travels at the speed of light.
Time stops. But not on Earth. On
earth, the clock's still ticking.
Sound about right?

CHUCK

That's the theory.

PAUL

And just exactly how long will
Janus' maiden voyage be? Earth
Standard Time.

CHUCK

If Einstein's correct: 4 years.

PAUL

4 years.

Chuck nods. Paul controls his anger with a smirk.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Were you planning on telling us
this little fact?

CHUCK

The particular risks would have
been explained eventually.

PAUL

Eventually!

CHUCK

Come on, Hawkins. You've given
your whole life to your country.
You're saying 4 years isn't worth
seeing the universe?

PAUL

I'm saying it would have been nice
to read the fine print, 'stead of
selling my soul to some four-eyed
pencil-pusher! What exactly is
your endgame? You wanna be able to
launch nukes at light speed? What?

CHUCK

How long do you think it takes to
get to Jupiter's moons?

PAUL

Never really thought about it.

CHUCK

6 years, as Apollo flies. Janus? 6
hours at a fraction of the power.

PAUL

So that's what this is about:
colonization?

CHUCK

Why else would Neil Armstrong bring
a flag to the moon? Space is the
new frontier, Commander. You
really want to sit this one out?

Chuck exits.

INT. NASA LOCKER ROOMS - NIGHT

A solitary bulb illuminates the locker room after-hours.
West sits silently on the bench, wringing his hands, his head
bowed in thought. It's the most serious we've ever seen him.

Paul stands over him, leaning against the lockers.

WEST

4 years?

Paul nods.

WEST (CONT'D)

Jesus...

(chuckles)

Here I was thinking it'd be a milk
run. Guess I'm more like my old
man than I thought.

PAUL

It won't feel the same, for you.

WEST

That's what I'm afraid of.

PAUL

I'm sorry, West.

WEST

(shrugs)

Don't got any family. Not livin'
anyway. Someone's gonna be "Lost
in Space," might as well be me.
Maybe I'll meet a nice Martian
girl, settle down.

Paul chuckles.

WEST (CONT'D)

What about you? You staying?

PAUL
(beat)
I don't know.

WEST
Guess we don't have much of a
choice anyway.

PAUL
There's always a choice.

INT. CAR - NIGHT (PRESENT)

The orange glow of highway lamps travel in lines over Paul's face. He awakens in the backseat of Old Maggie's Sedan.

Old Maggie rides shotgun as Old Norman drives.

OLD MAGGIE
(hushed)
He's worse! He needs a hospital!

OLD NORMAN
We can't take him to the E.R.!
They'll find him in two seconds.

OLD MAGGIE
Then where are we going?

OLD NORMAN
(beat)
To an old friend.

EXT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - FRONT STOOP - DAY (PRESENT DAY)

Old Chuck (70s) opens his front door. He peers through his signature thick-framed glasses at Old Norman.

OLD NORMAN
Chuck Rosen?

OLD CHUCK
(sighs)
Look, I'm Jewish and diabetic. Take
your Jesus and your Thin Mints next
door.

Old Chuck starts to close the door; Old Norman stops him.

OLD NORMAN
Why did Armstrong bring a flag to
the moon?

OLD CHUCK

What did you say?

OLD NORMAN

*50 years ago, you invented a ship,
one that could break light speed.*

OLD CHUCK

How did you know that?

Old Maggie approaches, supporting a half-conscious Paul. Old Chuck stares at him; his eyes widen with recognition.

OLD CHUCK (CONT'D)

Son-of-a-bitch...

INT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Paul rests on the couch as Old Maggie keeps vigil beside him. We hear Old Norman and Old Chuck talking in...

THE KITCHEN

They stand opposite each other, speaking in whispers.

OLD CHUCK

*I don't understand what you want
from me!*

OLD NORMAN

*It's your machine; you understand
what happened more than anybody.*

OLD CHUCK

*I'm an engineer. I'm not a doctor.
You expect me to patch him up with
duct tape?*

OLD NORMAN

*You invented time travel.
Improvise.*

INT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Old Chuck enters from the kitchen, followed by Old Norman. Old Maggie moves aside as the engineer leans over Paul. First he takes his pulse. Then he puts his ear to his chest.

OLD CHUCK

*Heartbeats irregular. I can hear
wheezing: might be pneumonia,
pulmonary edema, I can't tell...*

OLD MAGGIE

Can you help him?

OLD CHUCK

*I told you. I'm not a doctor.
Best bet is to take him to the E.R.*

OLD NORMAN

*We can't. The Feds can't know where
he is. You said the Drive minimized
G-Forces on the body-*

OLD CHUCK

*There's more than just G-Forces up
there! Accelerate too fast or too
close to the sun- he's lucky he
didn't vaporize.*

OLD MAGGIE

So what do we do?

OLD CHUCK

*I know you think you did the right
thing: breaking him out. But I'll
be honest... he doesn't look good.*

*Old Norman looks at Old Maggie: how her eyes are fixed only
on Paul. He turns to Old Chuck, eyes pleading.*

OLD NORMAN

Please. He's my brother.

OLD CHUCK

(sighs)

*I'll get a compress, see if we
can't get his fever down. You can
stay here as long as you need.*

*Old Norman nods "thanks." Chuck exits. Old Maggie sees a
PAPER sticking out of Paul's pocket. She takes it out to
discover her salvaged POLAROID PICTURE. Old Norman sees
Maggie heartbroken by the photo; overwhelmed, he exits.*

INT. VAN - DAY (1969)

Paul gazes down at MAGGIE'S POLAROID as the van cuts across
the NEVADA DESERT. West, Garner, and Ramirez sit beside him,
looking out over the desert.

The van slows as it approaches a long chain-link fence. Paul pockets Maggie's photo and looks at the gate.

A GUARD emerges from his booth, his hand on his sidearm. He motions for them to stop. We see a rusted sign on the fence: "NELLIS BOMBING AND GUNNERY RANGE, RESTRICTED AREA, NO TRESPASSING BEYOND THIS POINT."

EXT. AREA 51 - CONTINUOUS

The afternoon sun bounces off the desert like a mirror.

Paul, West, Ramirez, and Garner are joined by Krantz and Chuck. Lieutenant CECILIA CAPELLO (30s), a beautiful, stone-faced brunette in military dress, emerges from a HANGAR.

CAPELLO

Gentlemen! Welcome to Area 51. I'm Lieutenant Capello; I'll be your military liaison during the launch.

West grins behind his aviator sunglasses.

WEST

You got any UFO's in that hanger?

CAPELLO

If by that you mean stealth aircraft that can fly Mach 6, drop a bomb on Moscow, then take your mother to dinner all while invisible to RADAR...

(smiles)

I'm afraid I'm not at liberty to comment.

West nearly swallows his toothpick.

CAPELLO (CONT'D)

This way to the Janus facilities.

Capello leads them into the hanger. West leans towards Paul.

WEST

I think I'm in love.

INT. AREA 51 - JANUS HANGAR - CONTINUOUS

Capello leads the JANUS TEAM through a large airplane hanger which is empty save for...

THREE JANUS SPACE CRAFT, shiny and fresh off the assembly line, are revealed. They are miniature compared to other shuttles. The JANUS INSIGNIA is on the side: the god himself, his two heads looking to the past and the future.

Chuck steps forward.

CHUCK
Janus 1, 2 and 3... 4 will be ready
for launch next month.

Chuck points under the hull to a series of clamps.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
The craft will break Atmo using
conventional rockets, secured here.
After the boosters are jettisoned,
the Diametric Drive will take you
the rest of the way. Janus 1 is
scheduled to launch in 48 hours.

GARNER
'Pulled the short straw on that
one, West.

WEST
Don't worry. I'll send you a
postcard from Jupiter.

KRANTZ
Try to get some sleep. We'll be
monitoring the launch from Houston.

Krantz claps West on the shoulder.

KRANTZ (CONT'D)
See you in a few years, Commander.

West SALUTES him. Krantz returns it. He exits.

Paul walks over to Janus 1. It's the most beautiful bird he's ever seen. West stands next to him.

WEST
Whatdya think, Mister Spock?

PAUL
I think she's beautiful.

WEST
Eh, woulda' looked better in red.
Hey, you think they got aliens
stowed in a freezer somewhere?

INT. AREA 51 - JANUS HANGAR - DAY (PRESENT)

44 years later, Marcus and Edison stand in the SAME HANGAR. Over the years, it's become cluttered with scrap metal.

In the sea of junk and failed prototypes sits a small craft covered by a dusty tarp. Edison removes it, revealing a rusted JANUS 3, the insignia on the side all but faded.

EDISON

This is the third of the series. The first disintegrated on an emergency re-entry. One casualty. There was supposed to be a fourth shuttle but they scrapped it after Hawkins went missing. Spoke with the guy who does the inventory: he said didn't even know it was here.

MARCUS

You're telling me the United States government had time-travel in an Area 51 bunker... and forgot?

EDISON

(nervously)

Well, it... didn't work. I mean, we know it works now, but before...

MARCUS

Send it to the lab. And find me someone who actually knows what it does.

EDISON

Yes, sir.

Marcus walks away, taking out his cell phone.

MARCUS

(on phone)

Cynthia? I need a list of everyone on NASA's payroll: 1965 to 1975.

Edison replaces the tarp on the craft.

INT. FARMHOUSE - CELLAR - DAY (1969)

Norman turns on a hanging bulb, revealing a DIRT CELLAR lined with dusty mason jars, cardboard boxes, and forgotten tools.

Norman wipes the dust off a large CARDBOARD BOX and opens it. We first see a MODEL AIRPLANE made from a kit. Norman lifts it gingerly and smiles. He places it to the side.

Norman reaches deep into the box, throwing unwanted articles aside. Finally, he pulls up his father's faded WORLD WAR II UNIFORM. He touches the TARNISHED WINGS on the jacket's breast pocket. They offer little comfort. What now?

EXT. AREA 51 - LAUNCH PAD - DAY (1969)

We see a launch pad similar to the one at Cape Canaveral. JANUS 1 has been strapped to two booster rockets.

INT. AREA 51 - LAB - SAME TIME

West is helped by a male TECHNICIAN (50s) to secure the latches of pressurized suit. Paul and Capello stands by.

WEST

Suit's cutting off my circulation.
4 years in this, you can forget
children.

CAPELLO

Try redirecting your blood flow
elsewhere... like your head.

WEST

(coyly)

What about the heart?

CAPELLO

Ask me again in 4 years.

WEST

Yer lookin a little down in the
mouth there, Paulie.

PAUL

Just jealous you get to go first.

WEST

You know, when I got back from
Vietnam, nothing was where I left
it. My family. My girl. Everyone
had moved on. Time waits for no
man... Do me a favor, Lieutenant?
If the world changes while I'm
gone, will you leave something for
me. Just something to tell me what
I missed. Think you can do that?

CAPELLO
Of course, Commander.

WEST
Thanks.

A technician approaches, holding up West's helmet.

TECHNICIAN
It's time.

West takes his helmet and rises.

WEST
Back in a sec!

West winks at Capello and exits.

EXT. AREA 51 - LAUNCH PAD - LATER

We see steam accumulating in the bowels the launchpad.

GROUND CONTROL (O.S.)
(over radio)
Launch in T minus 7 minutes.

INT. JANUS 1 COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

A Technician tightens the straps across West's chest, securing him in the cockpit.

EXT. NEVADA DESERT - CONTINUOUS

Paul exits his convertible, having driven up a hill. He watches the launchpad from a distance.

INT. MISSION CONTROL (HOUSTON) - CONTINUOUS

Gene Krantz, sporting a brand new vest, sits at his post as NASA engineers monitor the launch progress.

GROUND CONTROL (O.S.)
(over radio)
4 minutes and counting. We have a go for ignition.

INT. JANUS 1 COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

The technician gives West the thumbs up. West returns it.

EXT. NEVADA DESERT - CONTINUOUS

Paul sees smoke billowing from the launch pad.

GROUND CONTROL (O.S.)
(over radio)
13, 12, 11, 10, 9... We have
Ignition Sequence start.

EXT. AREA 51 - LAUNCH PAD - CONTINUOUS

Flames and smoke engulf the launch pad.

GROUND CONTROL (O.S.)
(over radio)
5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0-

JANUS 1 starts rising.

GROUND CONTROL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Lift off. We have lift off, Janus
1 has cleared the tower.

EXT. NEVADA DESERT - MOMENTS LATER

Paul shields his eyes from the sun, watching JANUS 1's path into the clouds.

INT. JANUS 1 COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

The cockpit shakes violently. West tries to focus on the control panel. 7 million pounds of thrust press on the craft.

GROUND CONTROL (O.S.)
Janus 1, prepare for booster separation.

The blue sky turns dark. After a moment, he can see the pinpricks of stars. West smiles at the sight.

WEST
"Well, will you look at that picture."

BEEP! BEEP! BEEP! We hear a warning alarm. West's smile fades. He turns to a flashing orange light on his console.

WEST (CONT'D)
Houston, I got an Alarm.

GROUND CONTROL (O.S.)
Copy, Janus 1.

The shuttle starts to shake more violently.

GROUND CONTROL (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Booster Separation seems to be
disabled. Initiate override.

Two more WARNING LIGHTS BLINK on the console.

WEST
Hey, something's wrong here.
Houston, are you reading-

BANG!

EXT. NEVADA DESERT - CONTINUOUS

An EXPLOSION in mid-air; the sound fills the desert like THUNDER. Flaming debris falls to the ground.

INT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY (PRESENT)

Paul wanders the living room. He's halfway through scanning the titles on Chuck's bookshelf when he spots an IPOD DOCK on a middle shelf. He cocks his head: What the hell is that?

Paul peers closer at the IPOD sticking out of the top. The CENTER BUTTON looks friendly; he PRESSES IT. The screen comes alive, along with the speaker. MUSIC suddenly fills the room. Paul presses the PAUSE button.

Old Maggie steps in from the other room. She watches as Paul plays with the IPOD'S FORWARD and BACKWARD ARROWS. The songs switch from bad to worse. He presses OFF.

OLD MAGGIE
How are you feeling?

PAUL
Better. Thanks.

Paul motions to the IPOD.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Somebody shrunk his turntable.

OLD MAGGIE
It's an iPod. Here.

Old Maggie takes it. She clicks through the songs.

PAUL

You figure something so simple as a record player would be the same.

OLD MAGGIE

People still own records. They just don't play them.

Finally, she selects the perfect one. She replaces the iPod: LEAVIN' ON A JET PLANE sung by the Mamas and the Papas plays.

OLD MAGGIE (CONT'D)

There.

Old Maggie sways with the music, leading Paul away from the shelves. She takes his hands and Paul begins to dance.

OLD MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Remember how to dance?

PAUL

Not sure I knew to begin with.

OLD MAGGIE

Never too late to learn.

They DANCE. The music begins to ECHO in Paul's head. FLASH. Paul is disoriented. FLASH. He breaks away from Maggie.

MAGGIE

What is it?

STARS rush across Paul's vision; it's as if he's in the cockpit once more, accelerating at light-speed. He falls to his knees. Old Maggie shuts off the music and rushes to him.

OLD MAGGIE

Hey! You with me?

Paul steadies himself; the fit has passed.

PAUL

It's coming back. Not all at once, just bits and pieces. Everything felt wrong, even my own heartbeat. The faster I went the slower the world moved. I can't explain-

OLD MAGGIE

You don't have to.

PAUL

I could see the universe, Mags. Every particle in every second.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

I flew with them. Then I came crashing down. Thing is: it didn't feel like crashing. At first it felt like waking. That moment when you wake up from a dream and you can still remember it. Now I see things when I'm awake. Things I'm not supposed to.

OLD MAGGIE

It'll be okay. You'll forget.

PAUL

Strange thing is: I don't want to. The things I saw, all the light and darkness... it was beautiful.

By the door, just around the corner, Old Norman stands out of sight. He's heard everything.

INT. MAGGIE'S PARENT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY (1969)

Maggie, already in her coat, rushes to pack the last few items. MAGGIE'S MOTHER calls from the other room.

MAGGIE'S MOTHER (O.S.)

Do you need your parka?

MAGGIE

(calling off)

It's Texas, mother, not the Arctic!

The DOORBELL RINGS, making her even more frazzled.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

The taxi's here!

Maggie goes over to the door, she opens it wide. Paul stands on the stoop, dressed in a BLACK SUIT. He looks like he drove all night to get there. Maggie smiles.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Paul! I thought you were in Nevada-... Paul, what's wrong?

INT. MAGGIE'S PARENT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Maggie sits on the couch; Paul sits in front of her. She refuses to look at him.

MAGGIE

You asked me to marry you.

PAUL

I know.

MAGGIE

How could you? Did you think you could trick me into waiting-

PAUL

I wouldn't do that. You know I wouldn't.

MAGGIE

(beat)

I was prepared. I knew the risks of being an astronaut's wife and I was ready, because it was part of you. But keeping me in the dark, proposing when you knew, you knew you were leaving-

PAUL

I couldn't lose you!

MAGGIE

So you lied to me?

PAUL

I made a promise. 4 years and we can start over, start a family!

MAGGIE

How will I know you're coming back? Will I even know I'm a widow?

PAUL

I'm sorry.

MAGGIE

Then don't go. Please. Stay.

PAUL

Janus 2 launches in a week.

MAGGIE

Then let it launch without you.

PAUL

If I do that, I'll regret it for the rest of my life.

MAGGIE

So you would risk everything?

PAUL
I'm sorry.

Maggie storms off, slamming her BEDROOM DOOR behind her. Paul buries his face in his hands.

EXT. HAWKIN'S FAMILY FARM - YARD - DAY (1969)

Sunset. Norman polishes the TIGER MOTH as a car drives into the yard. It parks and Maggie emerges; she's been weeping.

INT. BARN - NIGHT

Maggie and Norman sit in silence. Norman is just only beginning to grapple with the news himself.

MAGGIE
Did you know?

NORMAN
No.

Silence.

MAGGIE
The strange thing is... I would wait a lifetime for him. It still doesn't change what he did. He chose to leave. You were right. Only one thing matters to him. Why is Earth not enough? Why were we not enough?

NORMAN
He'll come back, Maggie.

MAGGIE
Would you? If it meant waking up every day knowing what you gave up. You already gave up and you hate yourself!

NORMAN
I didn't have what he has.

MAGGIE
A chance to escape-

NORMAN

You. If there is one thing that could erase all regret, it's knowing that every wrong turn, every tailspin, has lead to you. I could never regret that path, no matter what I'd sacrificed. Paul will come back, not because he chose Earth, because there is nothing more beautiful than what you are! You're wings, Maggie.

Maggie gazes at Norman. She takes his head in her hand and KISSES HIM. It's both pain and bliss for Norman. Norman pulls away, out of breath, still holding her cheek.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

I'm not Paul.

MAGGIE

I know.

Maggie KISSES HIM AGAIN. This time, Norman pulls her in. The kiss builds in passion. Maggie lies back, pulling Norman down. He moves on top of her and THEY BEGIN TO MAKE LOVE.

INT. BARN - THE NEXT MORNING

Morning light leaks in through the barn's slats. Maggie sleeps soundly beside Norman. He watches her sleep, stroking her hair. He KISSES HER FOREHEAD before rising from the hay.

INT. FARMHOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY (1969)

We hear porcelain CLINKING and the sound of Evelyn HUMMING "AS TIME GOES" BY from Casablanca. Norman enters quietly, watching from the door. His mother stands at the sink.

EVELYN

Da dee da da dum... a kiss is
just a kiss... a smile is just a
smile... la de deda dada da dum...
as time goes by...

NORMAN

Ma?

EVELYN

(turns)

Paul?

NORMAN

It's Norman.

EVELYN

What are you doing here? I thought
you were shipping out.

NORMAN

Mom, are you okay?

EVELYN

I'm so glad you come home one last
time. It will do your father good.

NORMAN

Dad's dead, Ma. Last winter.

She doesn't hear him. He goes to him, fixing his shirt.

EVELYN

It's killing him, you know. Don't
get me wrong, he's proud of you,
but, seeing you goin' off to war...
makes him think he should have
fought harder in the last one. As
if he could keep it from you.

NORMAN

Ma, please don't-

EVELYN

Oh, I know. I shouldn't have
mentioned it. He wouldn't want me
to. I just can't bear to see
another one of my boy's broken...
not after what happened to Norman.
They took his spirit.

Norman fights back tears.

NORMAN

Norm's okay. Honest.

EVELYN

You look after your brother, Paul.
He's your blood, more n' anybody on
this earth. You are one soul.

NORMAN

I will, Mamma.

She pats Norman lovingly on the cheek; she frowns.

EVELYN

Oh, Paul. My brave, Paul... You
need a shave.

Norman smiles at his mother; he nods.

THE CELLAR

Norman turns on the hanging bulb. He then re-opens his father's dusty CARDBOARD BOX. Norman puts his father's WWII uniform aside and digs deep, recovering a LONG WOODEN BOX. He opens it. Inside is an antique SHAVING KIT with a STRAIGHT RAZOR: his fathers. He shuts the box.

EXT. NEVADA DESERT - ESTABLISHING (1969)

Creedence Clearwater's "BAD MOON RISING" plays inside a beat up WINNEBAGO nestled beneath a rare crop of trees.

INT. PAUL'S WINNEBAGO - NEVADA DESERT - NIGHT

Paul WASHES HIS DISHES, listening to the radio propped by the sink. There's a KNOCK at the door. Paul shuts off the music. ANOTHER KNOCK. Paul's heart skips; he runs to the door.

EXT. PAUL'S WINNEBAGO - CONTINUOUS

Paul opens the RV door.

PAUL

Maggie-

Norman stands there instead, holding a SIX-PACK OF BEER.

NORMAN

The prodigal twin returns.

PAUL

How'd you find me?

NORMAN

Heard a rumor 'bout a crazy man
campin in the hills.

PAUL

They told you at the barracks.

NORMAN

Never said where I heard it... You
got a bottle opener?

EXT. PAUL'S WINNEBAGO - LATER

Norman and Paul sit drinking BEER on Paul's convertible.

NORMAN
When do you leave?

PAUL
Tomorrow.

NORMAN
You left without saying goodbye.

PAUL
I thought if I told you, you'd...

NORMAN
Kill you?

PAUL
Try to stop me, but that'd do it.

NORMAN
You're lucky I'm a pacifist now.

PAUL
(chuckles)
Hippie.

NORMAN
Square.

They each take a sip.

PAUL
Kinda wish I did let you talk me
out of it.

NORMAN
Having second thoughts?

PAUL
Doesn't matter. Maggie won't take
me back. Even if she did, and I
walk away, they'll never give me
another chance.

(beat)
You understand why I have to do
this. I have a duty. To the
program, to West. If Janus fails,
then his death means nothing!
Someone has to try-

NORMAN
I understand.

PAUL
Good. Least somebody does.
(beat)
I'm the best pilot they got, Norm.
Wish to God I wasn't. It's our job:
to beat the odds. What kind of
pilot would I be if I bailed out?
What kind of man?

NORMAN
(beat)
Paul, I'm gonna ask you a question,
and I want you to be honest.

PAUL
(chuckles)
That why you brought the beer?
Trying to liquor me up?

NORMAN
Do you love Maggie?

Paul glares at Norman.

PAUL
You know I do.

NORMAN
Wanna grow old with her?

PAUL
Yes.

NORMAN
Would you do anything for her?

PAUL
Yes.

Norman looks into his beer bottle, nodding.

NORMAN
Okay, then.

Norman takes his BEER BOTTLE and HITS PAUL HARD ON THE HEAD.
CRASH -- THUD -- Paul falls to the dirt.

INT. POLICE STATION - HALLWAY (PRESENT)

Marcus paces, a cellphone grafted to his ear.

MARCUS

(on phone)

*Yes, sir... Yes, I understand...
We've contacted the daughter but...
Some story about her father going
AWOL, "off his pills," that sort of
thing... Yes sir.*

We see Edison down the hall, running to him. He goes to speak; Marcus lifts a finger.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

*I'll let you know as soon as she
does... Yes... G'night, sir.*

(he hangs up)
Dick... What is it?

EDISON

*Paul Hawkins got his Appendix out
in 1950.*

MARCUS

So?

EDISON

*I looked over the ultrasound when
they brought him in: Two busted
kidneys and one healthy appendix.*

MARCUS

*So either he grew one in space, or
our pilot's not Paul Hawkins.*

Edison nods, relishing in Marcus' discovery.

INT. PAUL'S WINNEBAGO - NIGHT (1969)

MONTAGE:

1. Norman lays Paul gently on the bed in the back of the RV.
2. Norman looks into a small mirror hung over the kitchen sink and splashes water on his face. He then lathers his chin and SHAVES HIS BEARD using his FATHER'S SHAVING KIT.
3. Norman runs his mop-head under the tap. He cuts his long hair with SCISSORS. The long strands fall into the basin.
4. Norman combs his wet hair back and parts it neatly to the side; more and more, he's beginning to resemble Paul.
5. Norman puts on Paul's uniform buttoning the tan-colored shirt all the way up.

He puts on the suit jacket and pins Paul's officer credentials and aviator's wings to his lapel. It doesn't feel like a disguise: it feels like removing one.

6. Now fully transformed into Paul, Norman takes up a folder stamped JANUS PROJECT. He goes to check on his brother, still unconscious in his bed. He's about to exit the trailer when he spots MAGGIE'S POLAROID taped to the RV dash.

END MONTAGE

INT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Paul sleeps on the couch; Old Maggie lays a cold compress on his brow. She glances down at Paul's RIGHT HAND. Old Maggie gingerly turns his hand over.

Across his right palm is a SLENDER SCAR. She looks up at the man she gave it to: NORMAN, lying on the couch. He wakes.

OLD MAGGIE

'Mornin, Ace... Here, drink this.

Old Maggie holds a CUP OF WATER to Norman's lips; he drinks.

OLD MAGGIE (CONT'D)

How do you feel?

NORMAN

Like I got hit by a planet.

OLD MAGGIE

To be fair, you hit it first.

Old Maggie caresses Norman's scar.

OLD MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Thought it would have faded by now.

NORMAN

Guess you made an impression.

INT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY (PRESENT)

OLD PAUL (formerly Old Norman) stares out the kitchen window. He watches sunlight dancing off the spray of a backyard sprinkler. Old Chuck approaches.

OLD CHUCK

Do you know why I chose "Janus?"

(beat)

(MORE)

OLD CHUCK (CONT'D)

*The Romans called him the god of
beginnings. One face looking to the
past, the other looking forward.*

OLD PAUL

Sounds two-faced.

OLD CHUCK

*I suppose it is. Oddly fitting.
(beat)
I attended your funeral.*

Old Paul cringes: he knows.

OLD CHUCK (CONT'D)

Why did you do it? Bury yourself.

OLD PAUL

He took my place. So I took his.

OLD CHUCK

It's desertion-

OLD PAUL

*Why do you think I stayed quiet!?
God, you don't think I wanted to
lie every day: to my friends? To my
daughter?*

(beat)

*I thought when he came back,
everything would go back to normal.
But he didn't. We failed him.*

OLD CHUCK

*Your brother saved your life.
Perhaps failure is relative.*

OLD MAGGIE (O.C.)

(from the living room)

Paul!

Old Chuck and Old Paul race into...

THE LIVING ROOM

*Norman is nowhere to be seen. Old Maggie is at the window;
Old Paul and Old Chuck join her.*

OLD MAGGIE

*Someone just pulled into the
driveway.*

A BLACK SUV pulls into the driveway. Agent Marcus gets out.

OLD PAUL
It's the Feds.

Before Old Chuck can get a word in, Old Paul grabs him by the shirt collar, pressing him against the wall.

OLD MAGGIE
Paul-

OLD PAUL
What did you do!?

OLD CHUCK
Are you insane!

OLD PAUL
You hid us only so you could turn us in, is that it?

OLD CHUCK
I didn't call the Feds!

OLD PAUL
Then how did they find us?

OLD CHUCK
Janus was my project. They're here for answers, same as you.

OLD PAUL
Then they'll be disappointed.

OLD MAGGIE
Paul, let him go. Now!

old Paul finally releases Old Chuck.

OLD MAGGIE (CONT'D)
We have to get Norman out of here.

OLD PAUL
The suits blocked our exit. We have to hide.

OLD CHUCK
And when they find Norman in the broom closet, what then?

NORMAN (O.C.)
Then I go with them.

Everyone turns to Norman, standing weakly behind them.

OLD MAGGIE

No.

NORMAN

You've done all you can for me.

OLD MAGGIE

We can still run. Paul, tell him-

NORMAN

I'm dying, Maggie. I've been dying since I got back. Let me go.

The DOORBELL RINGS. Norman glares at Old Paul. For a moment, we think Old Paul's convinced, until he turns to Old Chuck.

OLD PAUL

Where's your car?

INT. PAUL'S WINNEBAGO - DAY (1969)

Paul wakes disoriented. He massages the back of his head as he sits up and looks around. Feeling something strange on his scalp, he looks at his fingers: there's blood from last night. It begins to come back to him.

PAUL

Norman?

No answer. Paul teeters as he rises from the bed. Soon the trailer, and his situation, comes into focus.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Norman!?

EXT. PAUL'S WINNEBAGO - CONTINUOUS

Paul rushes outside. The desert sun is blinding; Paul shields his eyes searches the lot. His CONVERTIBLE is gone.

Paul gets into Norman's beat-up CHEVY; the keys are still in the ignition. Paul tries to start it.

PAUL

Come on... come on...

The engine turns over again and again. It won't start. Paul hits the wheel angrily. He glances something in the passenger seat: NORMAN'S WALLET. Paul opens it, revealing Norman's DRIVER'S LICENSE. He stares at his brother's face. And then he understands.

EXT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - FRONT STOOP - MOMENTS LATER

Chuck peeks out the door; he makes his voice sound frail.

OLD CHUCK
Can I help you?

Marcus stands at the bottom of the stoop. Two more AGENTS stand by a BLACK SUV is parked behind MAGGIE'S CAR.

MARCUS
Charles Rosen?

OLD CHUCK
Yes?

Marcus flashes his HOMELAND SECURITY BADGE.

MARCUS
Agent Marcus. Homeland Security.
Mind if we come in?

OLD CHUCK
I guess. Oh, just watch where you
step coming up the path. Dang
septic tank's been actin' up.

Chuck goes inside. Marcus plugs his nose and follows. The two AGENTS exchange a look before tip-toeing across the yard.

EXT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Old Maggie and Old Paul support Norman between them as they descend the back porch.

OLD PAUL
You got 'im?

MAGGIE
Yes.

OLD PAUL
Are you sure, cause I'm getting all
the weight over here-

OLD MAGGIE
I'm fine, Paul, don't patronize me!

NORMAN
You guys lasted fifty years-

OLD MAGGIE
Shut up, Norman!

OLD PAUL
Shut up, Norman!

They hobble towards CHUCK'S OLDSMOBILE parked by the shed.

INT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Old Chuck and Marcus sit across from each other.

OLD CHUCK

*Can I interest you in a caramel,
Agent Marcus?*

MARCUS

Uh, no, thank you.

CHUCK

They's sugar free.

MARCUS

*If we could just get to the matter
at hand, Mr. Rosen-*

CHUCK

Doctor.

MARCUS

Sorry?

CHUCK

*It's Doctor Rosen; Professor too.
You should add that to my file!*

EXT. BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

*Old Maggie and Old Paul help Norman into the passenger seat
of Chuck's car. Norman grips his gut in pain.*

OLD PAUL

*Drive straight to Victoria's house.
Don't stop for anything.*

OLD MAGGIE

Where are you going?

Old Paul doesn't answer.

NORMAN

*Paul, whatever you're thinking,
don't.*

OLD PAUL

*I'll take our car, lead 'im in the
opposite direction. It'll buy you
enough time to get to the coast.*

NORMAN
No.

OLD PAUL
You made your choice, Norm, now
this one's mine.

OLD MAGGIE
What if they catch you?

OLD PAUL
Then they'll have their man. I'm
Paul Hawkins, aren't I?

Beat. Old Maggie KISSES Old Paul. She hands over her keys.

OLD MAGGIE
Not a scratch.

OLD PAUL
Yes, ma'am.

Old Paul goes to Norman; they embrace tightly.

NORMAN
This is the stupidest thing you've
ever done.

OLD PAUL
You should talk.
(beat)
Take care of, Maggie.

Norman nods. Old Paul looks one last time at his wife before heading towards the front yard.

INT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Chuck sucks loudly on a caramel candy.

MARCUS
So you see, now that NASA's
switching gears, we're doing a
little inventory, so to speak.
Nothing you need to be concerned
about. However, we would like to
go over your work on the Janus
Project... for posterity's sake.

CHUCK
Oh, well, that's certainly
thoughtful of you.

Silence. Chuck just smiles.

MARCUS
So did you have anything to add...?

CHUCK
Sorry, what was the question?

MARCUS
Let me put it another way: is the aircraft you developed in any way a threat to national security, past, present, or future.

CHUCK
Agent Marcus... when I was your age, we were strapping 400 thousand gallons of liquid hydrogen onto the backs of Americans and lighting a match, just to walk on the moon. If you think a man like that is a threat, you're missing the point.

A CAR ENGINE is heard in the front driveway. One of the AGENTS peeks through the blinds.

AGENT
Sir, someone's in the car outside.

EXT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Old Paul is driving Old Maggie's car. He looks in his REARVIEW MIRROR: The BLACK SUV is blocking his way.

OLD PAUL
Here goes nothin.

Old Paul puts the car in REVERSE and RAMS into the SUV, pushing it back a few feet.

OLD PAUL (CONT'D)
Sorry, Maggie.

Old Paul drives forward, reverses, and RAMS it again.

INT. CHUCK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Agents at the window take out their HANDGUNS and head outside. Marcus goes with them.

OLD CHUCK
Find what you were lookin' for?

Marcus glares at Old Chuck before exiting out to...

EXT. DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Old Paul backs into the SUV one more time, pushing it off to the side enough to clear a path for him. The Agents and Marcus emerge SHOOTING at his car. BULLETS pelt the windshield. Old Paul DUCKS.

OLD PAUL
Son-of-a-bitch!

Old Paul SLAMS ON THE GAS, backing into the road. He SPEEDS OFF. The Agents scamper to their beat-up SUV, Marcus barking orders. They screech out of the driveway in pursuit.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - CONTINUOUS

Old Maggie and Norman watch as Old Paul drives past, followed by the SUV. When the sirens fade, Old Maggie drives out from their hiding spot, turning in the opposite direction.

INT. AREA 51 - HALLWAY - DAY (1969)

Norman wanders the hall in Paul's uniform, trying to find where to report. Lieutenant Capello sees him wandering.

CAPELLO
Commander!

NORMAN
(turns)
Yes?

CAPELLO
Shouldn't you be at the lab by now?

NORMAN
I was just stretching my legs.

Capello doubts that; still, she turns to leave him.

NORMAN (CONT'D)
Don't suppose you could point me in
the right direction.

CAPELLO
Down that hall, to the left.

NORMAN
 Right! I mean, left. Of course.
 Thank you.

Norman starts off; Capello watches him suspiciously.

CAPELLO
 Hawkins.

Norman turns: shit.

NORMAN
 Yeah?

CAPELLO
 I'm sorry about West. He was a
 brave man.

Norman nods; Capello SALUTES him and continues down the hall.

INT. OLDSMOBILE - DAY (PRESENT)

Old Maggie drives Chuck's Oldsmobile down a deserted country road, nervously checking the rearview for the black van. Norman's in a cold sweat; she notices him falling forward.

OLD MAGGIE
 Norman? Can you hear me? Norman!

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

SCREECH! Old Maggie breaks quickly in the middle of the road. She opens the door to the passenger side and climbs inside.

OLD MAGGIE
 Norman! Norman, wake up!

Norman's eyes open slightly.

NORMAN
 Home.

OLD MAGGIE
 We're almost there.

NORMAN
 (shaking his head)
Home.

Then Old Maggie understands.

OLD MAGGIE

The farm isn't there anymore. Paul had to sell it when your mother passed. Do you understand?

NORMAN

(fading)

Please.

Old Maggie looks back down the road: she feels helpless.

OLD MAGGIE

Okay... Okay... Hold on.

She gets back in the car and does a fast U-Turn.

INT. AREA 51 - LAB (1969)

Norman is zipped into his FLIGHT SUIT. Unfamiliar faces of the Janus Project clap him on the shoulder and wish him well.

INT. AREA 51 - HALLWAY - LATER

Norman, in his flight suit, is paraded down the hall by technicians. Lieutenant Capello watches from the sidelines.

INT. AREA 51 - LAUNCH PAD - LATER

Steam rises around Norman as he walks the GANGPLANK.

GROUND CONTROL (O.S.)

(over radio)

Launch in 5 minutes.

INT. POLICE STATION - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY (PRESENT)

Old Paul sits in a cement brick room at a metal table, his hands HANDCUFFED in front of him.

Marcus enters. He sits himself across from Old Paul and slaps TWO MANILA FOLDERS on the table. He leans back with a smug smile. He then lifts his shirt, revealing his RIGHT ABDOMEN.

MARCUS

I'll show you mine if you show me yours...

Marcus who waits patiently. Finally, Old Paul lifts his shirt: an APPENDECTOMY SCAR stretches across his abdomen.

*Marcus opens the folder, stamped: CAPTAIN NORMAN HAWKINS:
HONORABLY DISCHARGED.*

MARCUS (CONT'D)

*Now, Norman Hawkins still has his
appendix. Then again, you're not
Norman Hawkins, are you?*

Old Paul remains silent.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

*Let's try this again.
(motions to himself)
Agent Daniel Marcus...*

He motions to Old Paul.

OLD PAUL

*Commander Paul Hawkins, United
States Airforce.*

MARCUS

*Seems you've come back from the
dead twice this week, Commander.*

OLD PAUL

*You wanted Paul Hawkins, you got
him. Ask me your questions.*

MARCUS

Let's start with where's Norman?

OLD PAUL

Why? So you can lock him up?

MARCUS

He impersonated an officer.

OLD PAUL

*My brother taught me everything I
know. You ask me: I've been
impersonating him my whole life.
(beat)*

*Now you can charge me with
desertion. Lock me up. Hell, you
can slap a rocket to my ass and
make me finish what I started. But
I'm askin' you... let my brother
die in peace.*

*Marcus stares back at Paul, touched. He glances down at
NORMAN'S FILE PHOTO in front of him, conflicted.*

EXT. HAWKIN'S FARM - YARD - DAY (PRESENT)

A "WILL BUILD TO SUIT TENANT" sign stands in front of dried up field of weeds and dust. The FARMHOUSE itself has been demolished. The OLD BARN is a lean-to of rotted wood, beside it: a rusted PLANE PROPELLER.

Old Maggie parks the Oldsmobile up to where the driveway once was. She helps Norman out of the car; he looks around.

MAGGIE

I told you. It's gone.

NORMAN

Still holds memories.

Norman gets out of the car. Old Maggie watches him wander the yard from the drivers seat before finally joining him. She follows Norman as he wanders the yard.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

The house was there. My Dad bought it with his G.I. Loan... That pine over there: it was a sapling I brought home from school. Paul's didn't make it through the winter... Dad used to wash his car there, where the ground slopes down. Seems steeper than I-

Norman stumbles. Old Maggie rushes to him, guiding his fall. Norman's head rests on Old Maggie's lap.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

I'm alright... I'm alright...

OLD MAGGIE

We have to get you to a hospital.

NORMAN

No. I'm where I want to be.

(gazing up)

Moon's out already. You know from here, it really is... beautiful.

INT. JANUS 2 COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

A TECHNICIAN tightens the straps across Norman's chest. As they do, Norman looks out the cockpit window. He sees a DAYLIGHT MOON in the late afternoon sky. The technician taps Norman on the shoulder, startling him. He gives Norman a thumbs up. Norman returns it.

The Technician closes the hatch behind him. Norman wedges MAGGIE'S POLAROID next to a large GREEN BUTTON.

GROUND CONTROL (O.S.)
(over radio)
T minus 11, 10, 9... We have
Ignition Sequence. 7, 6...

EXT. NAVADA DESERT - CONTINUOUS

Paul parks Norman's Chevy on the same hill where he watched West. This time, he's frantic as he exits the car, shielding his eyes from the sunrise, desperate to make out the shuttle. In the distance, smoke billows around the launch pad.

INT. MISSION CONTROL (HOUSTON)- CONTINUOUS

Gene Krantz, in a NEW VEST, stands behind rows of NASA technicians. A nervous Chuck Rosen sits at his station.

CHUCK
Come on, Hawkins.

GROUND CONTROL (O.S.)
(over radio)
5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0... Lift off.

INTERCUT: INT. MISSION CONTROL/ JANUS 2 COCKPIT

BOOM! The cockpit shakes; Norman is pressed into his seat.

Gene Krantz and Chuck watch their monitors nervously.

GROUND CONTROL (V.O.)
We have lift off. Janus 2 has
cleared the tower.

The FLAMES outside the cockpit window extinguish revealing: DARKNESS. Black nothing dotted with millions upon millions of stars.

Norman takes a moment to gaze at the EARTH below him, glowing blue in a sea of black. Finally he presses a BUTTON; the BOOSTERS DETACH and FLOAT AWAY.

CHUCK
Janus 2. Do you copy?

NORMAN
I'm here.

CHUCK
Everything looks good from here.

NORMAN
Makes two of us.

CHUCK
(smiles)
No regrets then?

Norman thinks; he smiles.

NORMAN
No regrets.

CHUCK
Can you confirm Positive Field
generation?

Norman scans the dashboard, not sure what he's looking for.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
Paul, do you read? What's your
differential?

Norman finds a dial labeled DIFFERENTIAL.

NORMAN
Differential's Point 9. Over.

Chuck turns to Krantz. Krantz nods.

CHUCK
Janus 2... Your call, Hawkins.

Norman takes one last look at Maggie's picture.

EXT. HAWKIN'S FARM - YARD (PRESENT)

Old Maggie cradles Norman. In his vision, the setting sunlight glows behind her. He DIES smiling up at her.

INT. JANUS 2 COCKPIT (1969)

Beside the cockpit Polaroid is a large GREEN BUTTON.
Norman's GLOVED HAND reaches out. HE PRESSES IT.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END