

FUTURE WARRIOR II: UNIVERSAL SOLDIERS

by

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EXT. SPACE

A battle rages between two fleets of ships: those from Earth and those from the Ursa galaxy.

The ships stop shooting at each other. A damaged two-soldier fighting pod flies into view, its occupants visible through cracked glass.

VOICE (V.O.)

It is the year 2410 A.D. After the war between Earth and the Ursae came to an end and I nearly bought it, they took me back to Earth to get a new heart. What I needed was a new mind to forget the horror.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM

IAN HUDSON lies in a recovery bed with a large scar running down his sternum. His Republic of America Army uniform hangs in a corner, the gold oak leaves of a Major glinting in the sunlight streaming through the windows.

A Colonel walks in and talks with Hudson, their voices indistinct.

HUDSON (V.O.)

When I woke up, they said we won. And I actually got promoted-- in charge of my own troop. 240 soldiers under my command, all ready to kill and die.

EXT. HOSPITAL COURTYARD - DAY

An orderly pushes Hudson along in a wheelchair. He gets in a car on steady legs and drives off.

HUDSON (V.O.)

This time it wouldn't be the Ursae we were fighting.

INT. UNITED NATIONS ASSEMBLY BUILDING

Delegations from Ursa and from Earth negotiate the terms of the peace between them.

URSAN AMBASSADOR

What started as a war arising out of xenophobia ends with acceptance of

URSAN AMBASSADOR (CONT'D)
each of our unique gifts. I'm pleased
to wish us all A BETTER FUTURE!

VOICES
Hear hear!

The delegations toast each other, their political operatives
showing off their biggest fake smiles. At least the war is
over.

URSAN AMBASSADOR
One of the terms of the truce is a
technology-sharing program. Under
the program, our advanced computing
systems will be shared with Earth and
you will be free to adapt them to your
needs.

EARTH AMBASSADOR
This is a milestone of progress, and
we look forward to learning all that
your technology has to offer us.
And let us keep in mind that we are
working together, not apart.

VOICES
Hear hear!

INT. SPACE COMMAND BRIEFING ROOM

The Ursae brief their Earth colleagues on a new threat using
a 3-D model of the Ursa galaxy.

URSAN COMMANDER
Our settlements along the frontier
have gotten some 500 "visits" from
a species we call the Combine. They
are not actually seen; they seem
to flit in and out of the third
dimension. We think they're able to
project themselves or at least their
consciousness across an infinite
distance. We believe they do this
by warping spacetime with matter-
antimatter interactions.

The Ursan commander pulls up a map that shows, in a time
lapse, the gradual loss of communications with Ursan bases
along their frontier.

URSAN COMMANDER
Simulations in our supercomputers show

URSAN COMMANDER (CONT'D)
 an increasing pace of advance in the
 last hundred years. Soon the Combine
 will be encroaching on our homeworld,
 Ursa.

On the star map, the Ursan homeworld highlights with an
 icon.

Ursan bases throughout the Ursa galaxy highlight with icons.
 They start turning translucent.

URSAN COMMANDER
 As you can see, our furthest bases
 started dropping off around the
 same time. We believed it was a
 communications error, but when we
 didn't receive normal transmissions
 from ten more bases in the following
 several years, the problem seemed more
 serious. We didn't know what was
 causing it until a probe limped back
 home and told us the outpost on
 Sade-138 was destroyed by an unknown
 enemy.

The Ursan commander provides a demonstration of how the
 Combine look and act with a virtual reality simulator.
 Their fourth dimensional form is almost invisible. Their
 third dimensional form, which flashes in and out of reality,
 looks like the Alien-- a tall, muscular quadriped with an
 exoskeleton and a tail.

URSAN COMMANDER
 It's only because our race is
 telepathic that we were able to detect
 the next advances into our territory.
 Once they knew we could see them, it
 was almost like they didn't try to
 hide their presence.

(beat)

I should tell you that the feeling
 that something or someone is just
 "there" in your mind is very
 disconcerting. Those of you who are
 Rhine-sensitive may one day experience
 this feeling.

INT. INTERGALACTIC COMBAT FORCES BASE

Hudson reviews the latest inductees, who toe the line in a
 training bay.

HUDSON

You were drafted because of your unique qualifications and abilities. Your mission is to win, but also to adapt Ursan technology and information systems to human use.

(beat)

Mathematicians, you are valued for your theoretical contributions to the laws of relativity. Engineers, you are valued because you can adapt or improve upon Ursan tech. Physicists, you are valued for your advanced knowledge of particle collisions.

(beat)

Joint training with the Ursae will be difficult, but necessary. Every one of you is going to need to be the best in order to survive and win.

Hudson paces around the training bay.

HUDSON

Stone!

STONE

Sir yes sir!

HUDSON

The situation is: you are a mathematician with a keen understanding of Einstein. Hell, your file says you're almost as smart as Einstein.

STONE

Thank you sir!

HUDSON

Your mission is to hone your knowledge of the Einstein-Rosen bridge using Ursan mathematics as your guide. Your contributions should help improve our use of the wormhole jump and increase the distance we can jump at any one time. You have to do this while also becoming an expert in ground combat. Understood?

STONE

Sir yes sir!

HUDSON

Chavez!

CHAVEZ

Sir yes sir!

HUDSON

The situation is: you are a physicist who knows particle-speak. Your mission is to assist your Ursan colleagues in studying matter-antimatter collisions so the Ursae can, hopefully, build their own projection system to communicate with their lost bases. You also have to do this while training to be infantry. Is that clear?

CHAVEZ

Sir yes sir!

Hudson walks toward the exit.

HUDSON

The rest of you grunts are not as special as these two. Nevertheless, the Army believes you are somewhat special. Either way, you are to report to the Alaskan tundra for joint training with the Ursae-- and you will enjoy it!

VOICES

Sir yes sir!

EXT. ALASKAN TUNDRA - DAY

The troops and their Ursan colleagues practice on a firing range with pop-up targets that look like the Combine.

The humans wear Extos, which are specialized space suits that supply all essential functions as well as protection.

SOLDIER #1

Sir, I have a question. Why do we need to be able to use kinetic weapons when we have lasers?

RANGE OFFICER

Old-fashioned rifle marksmanship is still important. First, it helps impose trigger discipline when you have limited ammunition. Second, you could run out of power in your suit and have to use your kinetic backup weapons.

SOLDIER #2

Sir, are small kinetic slugs really going to do much damage to the Combine? I don't see any vital areas in the simulations we've had.

RANGE OFFICER

Until such time as we find a living Combine for the xenologists to experiment on, we will treat them as if they have vulnerabilities. Better to over-prepare than be left with no laser and only your hand to prevent the Combine from eating you.

EXT. ALASKAN TUNDRA - DAY

The troops' practice continues on a grenade range.

A trainee in the throwing pit fumbles a grenade. The instructor tosses him out of the pit and they both hit the deck.

BOOM!

INT. SHOOT HOUSE

The troops and Ursae do Close Quarter Battle (CQB) drills with paper targets and mannequins standing in for the enemy. It's a house of horrors, with loudspeakers and film projection showing horrifying visuals of the Combine.

After one of the drills, a training officer walks onto the catwalk above, carrying a megaphone.

TRAINING OFFICER #1

(into megaphone)

Ladies and gentlemen, keep in mind that when you fight the Combine, you may or may not be in close proximity to them. This training has value even if you end up zapping the Combine from hundreds of meters away. For one, this way you know what they'll do to you if they get within reach.

EXT. ALASKAN TUNDRA - DAY

The troops fight each other and several dummies with pugil sticks. Because their Exto suits have artificial muscles, the strikes are devastating when they connect.

One of the troops takes a blow to the helmet and goes flying.

TRAINING OFFICER #2

Stone!

STONE

Sir yes sir!

TRAINING OFFICER #2

You dropped your guard and got slammed. Next time try staying in a blocking position for a little longer before you warm up for the next punch.

STONE

Sir yes sir!

TRAINING OFFICER #2

That's what I like to hear.

INT. PSYCHOLOGIST'S OFFICE

A human soldier reluctantly participates in a session of cognitive behavioral therapy.

PSYCHOLOGIST

I understand your subliminal training is an obstacle for you now that the Ursae are no longer the enemy.

SOLDIER #2

That's right, sir. I'm afraid I'm going to kill one of them-- accidentally--in training.

PSYCHOLOGIST

One of the things we do in this situation is re-train your mind using cognitive behavioral therapy. What that means is that we use patterns of thoughts and underlying behaviors to determine what is making you feel the way you are feeling. Here, the subliminal visuals that you used to get through your Exto suit have conditioned you to kill Ursae. The Extos no longer project subliminal visuals, so you're only seeing them in your mind's eye.

(beat)

I'm going to show you a series of images and I want you to say what they mean to you. Just say the first thing

PSYCHOLOGIST (CONT'D)
that comes to mind.

SOLDIER #2
Okay.

The shrink pulls up a program on his computer and turns on a projector. The soldier faces the screen.

As the psychologist talks, images flash on the screen for a tenth of a second each.

PSYCHOLOGIST
Begin.

An image of an unarmed Ursan waving at the camera.

SOLDIER #2
Enemy.

PSYCHOLOGIST
No. The Ursae are no longer our enemies. When I replay the image, I want you to say "friend." And you have to mean it.

The image of the waving Ursan repeats.

SOLDIER #2
Friend.

PSYCHOLOGIST
Good. Just like that.

The waving Ursan again.

SOLDIER #2
Friend.

PSYCHOLOGIST
Good.

An Ursan in an Ursan fighting suit, holding a rifle.

SOLDIER #2
Friend.

PSYCHOLOGIST
Good.

A dead Ursan on the battlefield.

SOLDIER #2

Good.

PSYCHOLOGIST

No. Sad.

SOLDIER #2

Okay.

The dead Ursan again.

SOLDIER #2

Sad.

PSYCHOLOGIST

That's right. You did fine.

SOLDIER #2

That's it?

PSYCHOLOGIST

You need about 100 more sessions of this, but yes that is the basic idea.

(beat)

Now let's talk about your parents.

EXT. OBSTACLE COURSE - DAY

The humans and Ursae make quick work of obstacles in the icy conditions of Alaska.

An Ursan and a human climb a cargo net together. The Ursan with greater ease.

URSAN #1

What is it that your Shakespeare once said? "Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, or to take arms against a sea of troubles and by opposing end them?"

SOLDIER #3

I don't know. But I think it was Hamlet who said that.

URSAN #1

Yes, child. Hamlet being the character penned by Shakespeare. Don't you know your own culture?

SOLDIER #3

Do me a favor and don't talk while

SOLDIER #3 (CONT'D)
we're climbing. And this training
isn't making me think of killing
myself, if that's what you're
implying.

URSAN #1
Angels and ministers of grace defend
us! Sorry, couldn't resist.

The trainee and his Ursan colleague climb down.

INT. ALASKAN SUPERCOMPUTING CENTER

Hudson and the others stand around an Ursan supercomputer. In front of the supercomputer is a dentist's chair with a large electrode-laden helmet hooked up to the computer.

URSAN TECHNICIAN
The Mark 18 computer is a ZettaFLOPS-
class unit in a relatively small
package. Its neural network permits
mind uploading and simulation of a
complete Ursan brain. We've adapted
it to take human brains, which are
smaller and easier to simulate. Are
there any volunteers?

A couple of soldiers volunteer to have their minds uploaded. One of them sits in the chair and the technician hooks him up to the helmet detector.

SOLDIER #4
Is this going to hurt?

URSAN TECHNICIAN
Not at all. This equipment is similar
to your Magnetic Resonance Imaging
and allows us to model the structure
of your mind with a high degree of
precision.

The technician configures the computer through a terminal and display showing a cross section of Soldier #4's head. He pushes a button and the upload begins.

A full brain scan appears on the monitor and a progress bar indicates that the upload is complete.

URSAN TECHNICIAN
We have a good upload. Now let's see
what your mind can do.

The technician presses a few buttons and the display screen shows a carbon copy of Soldier #4 lying on a hospital bed, attended by several Ursan nurses and a doctor.

URSAN TECHNICIAN

This is your mind's vision of you as we wake "you" up.

The display screen shifts to a first-person view. The eyes open and look around frantically. This mind is moving at ten times the speed of Soldier #4's human mind, which is evident from the shaky, hyper movements visible through his eyes.

Soldier #4 gets out of his hospital bed and starts running. He frightens hospital personnel, who recoil from his flailing arms.

Soldier #4 encounters hospital security and starts fighting them. Security uses stun guns on him, producing screams. The monitor goes dark.

URSAN TECHNICIAN

Looks like we had to stun you, sorry. That was actually one of the milder reactions human minds have had.

SOLDIER #4

So the uploaded me thinks he's a person? He doesn't know he's inside a computer?

URSAN TECHNICIAN

Not yet. Only through careful training and conditioning does an uploaded mind accept that it is not real. There's a period of denial. Once the mind acknowledges that it is a simulation, we can accomplish great things with it. For example, here is a demonstration of what fully trained minds can do.

The technician configures the computer. A large viewscreen pops down from the ceiling and the troops circle around it.

The viewscreen splits into eight squares. The top four show obviously human perspectives, weapons, and head-up displays (HUDs). The bottom four show Ursan views, equipment, and HUDs.

URSAN TECHNICIAN

You're seeing eight uploaded minds in a training exercise intended to

URSAN TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)
simulate one of the last battles in
the Earth-Ursa war.

The human and Ursan minds fight each other in the simulation. There are various shouts, screams, footfalls, and sounds of weapons as the human force assaults an Ursan defensive position.

One by one the human minds are killed, turning their parts of the screen black.

SOLDIER #4
If you die in the simulation, does
your mind ever come back to "life?"

URSAN TECHNICIAN
Yes. The uploaded mind continues to exist; it just needs to be rebooted so it can learn from the experience. That's one advantage the uploads have over real people-- they can experience death and remember it. In my experience most minds are well-motivated to avoid dying after they experience it once.

The trainees walk out of the supercomputing center.

INT. ICF BASE

A group of trainees hangs out near the entrance to the supercomputing center.

CHAVEZ
That is some crazy shit. Jones, have you ever tripped balls like that before?

JONES
Never in my life-- not even in the old VR section of the ghetto. Drugs won't do that to you!

HUDSON
All right folks, move along.

INT. SPACE COMMAND BRIEFING ROOM

The Ursan and Earth commanders conduct a briefing.

EARTH COMMANDER

Our overall strategy is to find the Combine home planet and attack it with Bracewell-Von Neumann probes.

A large machine appears on a display screen.

EARTH COMMANDER

A Bracewell-Von Neumann probe is a self-replicating intelligent machine whose purpose is colonization. The probes can also be weaponized so that they turn all available matter into more probes.

The machine on the display attacks a pile of twisted metal, ingesting it at one end and, a few moments later, excreting a duplicate of itself out of the other end.

EARTH COMMANDER

Here, the probes are the best solution for finding the Combine's homeworld on galactic time scales. Once they find the Combine, the probes will send a signal through the nearest wormhole and we'll deploy the strike force. The force will be equipped with enhanced weaponry plus an artificially intelligent virus.

The display shows icons depicting a computer virus replicating itself.

EARTH COMMANDER

Their mission is to assault the Combine homeworld and insert the virus into the Combine communications network. The virus will copy itself exponentially until it overloads and destroys all of the Combine systems. We believe that disabling the Combine computing grid will eliminate their ability to self-project over interstellar distances.

A map of the observable universe appears.

URSAN COMMANDER

The probes will conduct a Bayesian probability search through all known wormholes until they find the Combine. We don't know how long this will take, but it could be centuries and multiple jumps could be involved.

URSAN COMMANDER (CONT'D)

(beat)

The strike force will consist of ten Ursan ships with an uploaded skeleton crew, plus ten combined human/Ursan troops of 240 soldiers each-- in hibernation. When the signal is sent, the ships will wormhole-jump to the Combine system and revive the soldiers on arrival.

The Earth commander sets up a 3-D map of the universe.

EARTH COMMANDER

We believe the most efficient search and response will be conducted by positioning the strike force in the Large Magellanic Cloud pending notification of where the Combine homeworld is.

The Large Magellanic Cloud highlights on the map with an icon.

EARTH COMMANDER

We definitely don't want the Combine finding the strike force, so it makes sense to hide it in the Cloud where the Combine have not yet been seen, and where communication will be relatively quick. Meanwhile, the Ursae will retreat back to their galaxy. This way if the Combine find Earth, they will see an apparently harmless society that is keeping to itself.

URSAN COMMANDER

Our top goals are to prevent the Combine from further encroachment toward Ursa, and to prevent the Combine from finding Earth. Are there any questions?

No questions. The attendees exit the briefing.

EXT. ALASKAN TUNDRA - DAY

More troops of soldiers arrive for training in transport aircraft. With them is COLONEL WEST, who visited Hudson in the hospital. Hudson greets West and they walk together toward the headquarters building.

HUDSON

Well sir, I don't know what to say.
Thank you?

WEST

You're welcome Major. You deserve
this.

HUDSON

It's just that I've never led more
than a squad before. I'm a little
nervous having my troop lead the whole
attack.

WEST

It's all right, son. I was in the
same boat in World War III when I had
to assume command of my battalion.
You'll do great. Besides, you're
the most experienced veteran from
the Ursan war. It wouldn't be right
picking anyone else.

HUDSON

I just hope I'm up to the task.

The men enter the headquarters building.

INT. COMMAND CENTER

Soldiers man computer stations.

WEST

(to Hudson)

There's someone I'd like you to meet.
Major Chapman?

A stunning chestnut brunette turns toward the men.

CHAPMAN

Yes, sir?

WEST

I'm pleased to introduce Major Ian
Hudson. Major Hudson, this is Major
Lisa Chapman.

HUDSON

Nice to meet you.

CHAPMAN

You too, Major.

WEST
 (to Hudson)
 Major Chapman is in charge of second
 troop. You have first troop. You
 kids play nice, now.

CHAPMAN
 Understood, sir.

Colonel West walks away, leaving the two Majors in an
 awkward silence.

CHAPMAN
 So.

HUDSON
 So.

CHAPMAN
 Do you come here often?

They laugh.

HUDSON
 Only when I'm dying to kill.

CHAPMAN
 I know just what you mean.

HUDSON
 Looks like our troops are scheduled
 to fight each other in the first
 exercise.

CHAPMAN
 May the best woman win.

HUDSON
 I don't find that funny.

CHAPMAN
 I guess it's not all about you.

HUDSON
 You're right-- it's about Alpha troop,
 because we're the best.

EXT. ALASKAN TUNDRA - NIGHT

Chapman's troop moves silently across the frozen ground on
 a moonless night. Chapman takes point. Despite her perfect
 figure, in her Exto she's indistinguishable from a guy.

SOLDIER #5

Sir!

CHAPMAN

What is it?

SOLDIER #5

I'm picking up the enemy at 12
o'clock. 1,200 meters.

CHAPMAN

Thank you, noted.

The troop fans out as they approach the opposing force,
composed of Hudson and his colleagues.

CHAPMAN

Chavez, where are we with those
mortars?

CHAVEZ

Sir, not yet in range. Another 400
meters and we can start setting them
up.

CHAPMAN

Roger that. Stone, are you ready with
the dazzlers?

STONE

Yes sir.

CHAPMAN

Good, we'll use those first.

SOLDIER #5

1,000 meters.

EXT. ALASKAN TUNDRA - NIGHT

Hudson's troop holds a defensive position among some
shipping containers set up to look like a base. Sentries
patrol the perimeter.

SOLDIER #6

Sir, I'm getting intermittent readings
from your 1 o'clock, my 12.

HUDSON

Keep an eye on it. They must be
close.

Hudson's troop waits for the assault.

EXT. ALASKAN TUNDRA - NIGHT

A squad quietly sets up mortars to provide fire support.

Chapman and the rest of her crew start crawling for the last 600 meters to the base. With only rolling hills between them and the objective, there is no room for error when taking cover.

CHAPMAN

Halt! Everyone ready?

VOICES

(whispering)

Yes sir!

CHAPMAN

Stand by.

(beat)

Execute!

Chapman and the rest of the troop assault the base. Lasers flash across the night sky from both sides, and practice mortars rain onto the base. Every time a soldier is hit, his or her Exto disables all movement, freezing the unlucky recipient in place.

After a short battle, it's clear that Chapman's troop has won. She doesn't gloat.

EXT. ALASKAN TUNDRA - NIGHT

Chapman walks up to Hudson.

HUDSON

Looks like you did it. You showed me up, for one.

CHAPMAN

It wasn't intentional. Sorry.

HUDSON

Don't apologize!

CHAPMAN

It's in my nature. I'm a pleaser.

INT. COMMAND CENTER

Colonel West conducts an after-action review with the two troop leaders and several lieutenants.

WEST

Major Chapman's assault is right out of the Marine Corps manual on small unit tactics. We'll forgive her for that; as you can see, she hit Hudson with maximum force at the weakest points, shattering his command's ability to communicate with its forces. That is maneuver warfare. Keep it up, Major.

CHAPMAN

Thank you sir.

The review ends.

HUDSON

(to Chapman)

I take it you went to the Naval Academy. Seems like the logical place to learn Marine Corps warfighting-- that and the Platoon Leader's Course at Quantico.

CHAPMAN

(blushing)

Well, I did go there. Just following my training.

HUDSON

I didn't know the Army took Marines.

CHAPMAN

Apparently so. I was drafted out of the Corps because my degree is in Econometrics. I don't know what that has to do with fighting the Combine, but I'm not complaining. Here I get to be a troop commander instead of an XO. And the Corps isn't the most friendly place for a woman anyway.

HUDSON

(sincerely)

Well I'm glad you're here.

CHAPMAN

Thank you. It's nice to be appreciated.

The two officers leave the command center, still chatting.

INT. ALASKAN SUPERCOMPUTING CENTER

Hudson, Chapman, West, and eight human and Ursan Majors listen to an Ursan Colonel.

URSAN COLONEL

Today's exercise will put your command abilities to the test. In this exercise, your uploaded selves have to make key decisions implicating the full spectrum of duty, loyalty, integrity, and honor while your real selves act in a support role. This simulates the combat we anticipate with the Combine, where your uploaded selves will control the ship and your real selves are responsible for the assault. It's a free-form fighting scenario with no rules other than winning. Any questions?

There are no questions.

URSAN COLONEL

Then let's get started.

Ursan technicians load each member's uploaded mind into the computer, and the participants sit in command chairs around the display. The display splits into ten elements, each showing one uploaded participant's point of view. The Ursan and human colonels observe.

A 3-D display shows ten ships approaching a planet that has space stations circling above it, marked with icons.

UPLOADED HUDSON

We have a good trajectory. The crew is revived. Approaching Combine home planet. Range to target 150,000 kilometers. Time to target five minutes. Deploy the probes.

The ships disgorge a thousand Bracewell-Von Neumann probes each. Not having to contend with deceleration of human crew, the probes speed toward the planet several times faster than the ships.

The space stations start shooting lasers at the ships, mostly ignoring the probes.

UPLOADED HUDSON

In range of Combine defenses. Ablating overlayer engaged.

The lasers start to vaporize an ablating layer of graphite that coats the leading edge of each surface of the ships. The graphite layer's job is to absorb laser fire and vaporize in order to protect the metal underneath, much like ceramic tiles on the Space Shuttle absorb heat.

Tens of multi-terawatt laser beams crisscross the approaching ships, gashing the graphite overlay in wide swaths.

One of the lasers gets lucky and zaps the optics on board one of the ships.

 UPLOADED MAJOR #1
 Oh shit! We're flying blind!

 UPLOADED HUDSON
 Stay calm and on course. You're at my
 nine o'clock and just need to key into
 my system for control. Stand by.

Major #1 punches some buttons on his console, followed by Hudson.

 MAJOR #1
 System is under lead ship's control.

 UPLOADED HUDSON
 Stand by.

The probes reach the planet and start attacking it and the orbiting space stations.

 UPLOADED URSAN MAJOR #1
 We have a good deployment. 90% of the
 probes made it to the planet. They're
 consuming its defenses.

The ships get closer to the Combine planet. On the display, urbanization comes into view. What looks like a machine city pokes through cloud cover.

 UPLOADED CHAPMAN
 Scan indicates urbanization is
 concentrated around one large-scale
 structure.

 UPLOADED HUDSON
 That must be the Combine force
 projector. Tell the probes to leave
 it alone. Let's land half a klick
 away and approach on foot-- we need to
 take it intact to deploy the virus.

HUDSON

Roger. You heard the man.

VOICES

Yes sir.

The ships enter the planet's atmosphere. One of them starts having problems.

UPLOADED MAJOR #1

Port wing temperature at redline.
We're going to lose it!

MAJOR #1

Affirmative. I'm giving the
evacuation order.

UPLOADED MAJOR #1

Negative, I can save it.

MAJOR #1

Negative. Evacuate now.

UPLOADED MAJOR #1

Roger.

Major #1's ship disintegrates before its crew can evacuate. Major #1 leaves his chair as his screen and his upload's screen go black.

UPLOADED HUDSON

We've lost number three; no survivors.
That leaves nine ships and nine
troops.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN

Plenty left to get the job done.

Chapman is embarrassed at her uploaded self for the insensitive remark.

On the screen, the ships proceed to land in the machine city. The single large structure detected earlier is a giant metal mesh pyramid rising out of the ground, with several entrances. Probes circle around the half kilometer-wide perimeter, holding off from attacking the pyramid.

The troops disembark. 2,160 are left after the loss of one troop. They converge on the pyramid, whose interior seems to be composed of large machinery.

About 1,000 Alien-shaped Combine pour out of the pyramid's entrances and run toward the Earth-Ursan force. They don't seem to be carrying any weapons.

UPLOADED HUDSON
Incoming. Stand by ship laser
control....Fire!

Lasers shoot out from the ships, over the heads of the assaulting troops. The beams slice and dice hundreds of Combine into quivering chunks. But there are still hundreds left, and they're closing on the ground troops. The troops attack with smaller laser rifles.

 UPLOADED HUDSON
Ah ha ha ha!

The blood drains from Hudson's face. The other troop leaders look at him, confused at the incongruous laugh from Uploaded Hudson.

 UPLOADED HUDSON
Ah ha ha ha!!!

Images flash on Uploaded Hudson's screen, interspersed with second-person views of his face. The images are from battles Hudson had against the Ursae during the Earth-Ursan war. As Hudson continues to slay the Combine by the dozens, his face gets more and more deranged. He wears a psychotic's wide-eyed grimace and his head moves around like a bobble head, taking pleasure in the killing.

Hudson and the others are spellbound, powerless to stop the horror taking place in front of them.

 UPLOADED CHAPMAN
Hudson, you're relieved!

Uploaded Chapman shoots Uploaded Hudson with a laser blast. His view goes black.

The rest of the crew is too shocked to do anything but stare, including Hudson and Chapman.

The troops are getting the upper hand against the Combine, although the Combine's skilled hand-to-hand fighting kills several hundred of them.

 UPLOADED CHAPMAN
I'm assuming command. Delta troop,
deploy the virus!

Delta troop fights their way back to their ship. They return, carrying several man-sized machine cubes on litters.

The fighting continues.

Delta troop reaches the pyramid and walks in with the cubes.

Meanwhile, the other screens show more fighting.

Delta troop finds an empty walkway leading to the center of the pyramid. The walkway is packed full of alien technology, and the troop proceeds cautiously, weapons raised.

Reaching the center, the troop enters a cavernous space big enough to hold several troops of soldiers. What looks like a particle accelerator lines the walls, corkscrewing upward to the orifice of a giant machine. This is the Combine's force projector. At the bottom is a raised platform surrounded by computers.

UPLOADED DELTA TROOP LEADER

Deploy!

The troop brings the cubes forward and sets them up on the platform. They push a few buttons and the cubes start to disintegrate. They're composed of millions of tiny pieces, which swarm into the Combine's machinery with their viral payloads.

Back outside, the rest of the troops continue fighting the Combine. There aren't too many Combine left.

As the virus starts to replicate, Combine voices start murmuring from inside the pyramid. The voices get louder and louder until, reaching a crescendo, there is a massive wail followed by what sounds like hard rain.

The remaining Combine fall over, dead.

URSAN COLONEL

This completes your exercise. Thank you.

Everyone decompresses.

HUDSON

What happened to me?

URSAN COLONEL

You have bipolar disorder. Didn't you know?

HUDSON

What?!

URSAN COLONEL

You should be thankful. It means you're highly intelligent and gifted in many areas.

HUDSON

No, that isn't a good thing. Look what happened!

URSAN COLONEL

You were fine until your deputy killed you. Explain that one to me, Chapman.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN

Sir, he was a danger to himself and others. I had to take him out.

URSAN COLONEL

He was killing the enemy quite well until you lased him. That is exactly the kind of decision we need to evaluate in training. Here, it was the wrong decision.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN

But sir, he was going crazy.

URSAN COLONEL

That's enough, Chapman. We have an understanding of the human mind that was developed to perfection during the Earth-Ursan war. Bipolar disorder in an upload is controllable through a multivariate regression-based circuit breaking and fusing system. That system was in the "off" position during this exercise. There is no indication that the real Hudson's condition has been a problem, as shown by his exemplary record of service.

HUDSON

I'm sorry sir, but I'm still getting used to the idea and now it's very public.

URSAN COLONEL

Not to worry, son, you'll be fine.

HUDSON

If you say so, sir.

The officers break for a full debrief. Hudson and Colonel West stay behind.

HUDSON

You knew.

WEST

I did.

HUDSON

Were you ever going to tell me?

WEST

No. You were doing fine, and you will be fine.

HUDSON

But how am I ever going to be accepted?

WEST

You already are. Look around you.

HUDSON

Around me I see a bunch of skeptical colleagues who didn't need to know about my...condition.

WEST

They'll get over it. Look at it this way: your life up to this point has been satisfying. Nothing in it will change simply because you know yourself better. Being bipolar is like being gay was at the end of the 20th century. Accepted when people learned it was harmless.

HUDSON

Bipolar disorder is not harmless.

WEST

For you it is, because it has never interfered with your work or life. Your condition only came up in the simulation because uploaded minds operate ten times faster than real minds. In other words a manic episode is easier for an uploaded mind to have. Besides, bipolar disorder is overrepresented among the highly intelligent. You should see some of the other officers' files.

HUDSON

You mean I'm not alone?

WEST

No, Hudson, you're not alone. And you don't need to suffer in silence.

Hudson and West leave the supercomputing center.

INT. ICF BASE

The officers exit the debriefing room. Hudson still looks dejected. Chapman comes up to Hudson.

CHAPMAN

Hudson, I'm sorry I shot you. I think my upload didn't think it had a choice.

HUDSON

Thank you for saying that. I guess uploads are more machine than man, so I don't hold it against you.

CHAPMAN

In all honesty, you shouldn't be too upset that you have a mental condition. My father had the same problem and it didn't cause any major issues for him.

HUDSON

I appreciate that. But your father wasn't in the Army, right?

CHAPMAN

No. He was a scientist.

HUDSON

I'm the leader of a strike force. With all due respect to your father, this is different.

CHAPMAN

I don't think it is. Anyway, you're both relatively normal and I'd say you don't need much medication.

HUDSON

What a relief.

CHAPMAN

Just trying to help out.

HUDSON

Okay.

(beat)

Care to join me for a drink?

CHAPMAN
Sure, if that helps.

INT. OFFICERS CLUB

Hudson and Chapman survey the scene. It's pretty dead. They sit down at the bar.

CHAPMAN
So what's on your mind?

HUDSON
A lot. Like, do I have to see a shrink now that I'm certifiable?

CHAPMAN
Oh please. You're not "certifiable" in any sense of the word. What matters is that you are you. The disorder is not you, and the sooner you learn to accept that the better off you'll be.

HUDSON
If you say so.

CHAPMAN
Cry me a river. Look at everything you have! You're tall, dark, and handsome. You're a genius. You're sensitive. You don't have the ridiculous swaggering ego of most men. You're a catch!

Chapman blushes.

CHAPMAN
I mean, you could stand to lose a few IQ points and you'd still be a genius. So I don't know what you are complaining about.

HUDSON
I'm not complaining, I'm just saying I want to be normal and I'm not.

CHAPMAN
Up until an hour ago, you thought you were normal. You knew you were normal. What's changed? You haven't lost your command-- the Ursan colonel and West clearly believe in you. Why don't you believe in you?

HUDSON

I don't know. It's still news to me,
I guess. But thanks for listening.

Hudson walks off, leaving Chapman in the bar. It's too painful a topic for him.

EXT. ALASKAN TUNDRA - DAY

The troops conduct maneuvers, practicing for the real thing. Despite his condition, Hudson remains an effective leader. He talks battle plans with the officers.

HUDSON

I want Bravo troop laying down grazing
fire toward the objective while Alpha
and Charlie troops assault. Delta
troop will serve as a blocking force
to the Northwest, and Echo troop is in
reserve. Execute.

The officers go to their troops and the exercise begins. Foxtrot and Golf troops serve as defenders, and Hotel troop is the observation force.

This is the most complex maneuver yet, but the troops pull it off well. Charlie troop distinguishes itself by assaulting the objective with minimal casualties, despite the defenders pulling out all the stops.

The battle ends.

EXT. ALASKAN TUNDRA - DAY

Hudson and Chapman meet at the objective.

HUDSON

Chapman, you did well today.

CHAPMAN

Thank you. So did you.

HUDSON

Just doing my job.

CHAPMAN

See? I told you you just had to
believe in yourself.

HUDSON

I guess so.

CHAPMAN
See what the Colonel thinks.

They walk off.

INT. ICF BASE

Hudson and West walk together.

WEST
You did well today. You distinguished
yourself as a leader even though you
have flaws.

HUDSON
Thanks.

WEST
Hudson, your troop has two weeks of
leave saved up. Why don't you take
some time off and go back home before
the mission?

HUDSON
I don't have a home anymore, sir.

WEST
You and Chapman seem to be getting
along well. Why not go somewhere with
her? I'll authorize her leave.

HUDSON
I barely know her.

WEST
You know enough, don't you.

HUDSON
I guess. Might as well give it a
shot.

Hudson walks up to Chapman.

HUDSON
Lisa. I know we don't know each other
that well, but I was wondering-- want
to visit California with me? We would
get separate rooms, of course.
(beat)
I don't have anyone left after the
war.

CHAPMAN

I understand. I'd be happy to go with you!

HUDSON

Seriously?

CHAPMAN

Yes Ian, seriously.

HUDSON

Should we invite anyone else?

CHAPMAN

No.

This time Hudson blushes.

EXT. ALASKAN AIRPORT - DAY

Hudson, Chapman, and a few squads of soldiers get on a transport aircraft.

MONTAGE

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - DAY

Hudson and Chapman visit future San Francisco together, in civilian clothes.

EXT. MARKET STREET - DAY

It's overcrowded and dirty, but they have a great time and are all smiles.

EXT. DE YOUNG MUSEUM - DAY

Hudson and Chapman visit a museum.

INT. DE YOUNG MUSEUM

Paintings and sculptures adorn the walls and floors.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - DAY

They hold hands.

EXT. PALACE OF THE LEGION OF HONOR - DAY

They walk the grounds.

EXT. SAINT FRANCIS HOTEL COURTYARD - NIGHT

Hudson and Chapman check into their hotel.

END MONTAGE

INT. SAINT FRANCIS HOTEL SUITE

They have a suite with two bedrooms.

CHAPMAN

See you around, sport.

HUDSON

Good night, Lisa.

They each take a room.

INT. SAINT FRANCIS HOTEL BEDROOM

Hudson lies awake, happy for the first time in a long time.

INT. SAINT FRANCIS HOTEL RESTAURANT

Hudson and Chapman have breakfast.

CHAPMAN

Do you think we're going to win the war?

HUDSON

I don't know. It seems like the Combine are far more advanced.

CHAPMAN

But we have far bigger hearts.

HUDSON

Hearts don't win wars, Lisa.

CHAPMAN

You're right. I'm just saying.

HUDSON

Heart is important.

CHAPMAN

Yes, it is. And you have one of the biggest hearts I've ever seen.

HUDSON

Really?

CHAPMAN

Yes, really. You give the Army your all even though your heart's not in it. That takes a lot. It's also very attractive.

HUDSON

Thanks.

CHAPMAN

When we get back I think you should ask the Colonel what he thinks.

HUDSON

I will.

EXT. MARKET STREET - DAY

Hudson and Chapman walk along the shopping district, arm in arm. They turn down a side street.

HUDSON

Have you seen the new Mark 42's? I heard you don't even have to aim anymore-- the Exto takes care of everything for you after you target-designate.

CHAPMAN

I was part of the testing unit; they're really great. One issue is heat dissipation from the lens. If you shoot too much, it melts!

HUDSON

Oh. Well one thing you could do is--

THUG

HEY YOU! Yes you! FREEZE!

Hudson and Chapman freeze. The thug points a pistol at them.

THUG

Give me all your money!

HUDSON
It's okay. Just calm down.

THUG
I am calm!

Hudson and Chapman pull out their wallets.

Just then a pair of police officers round the corner. The thug fires at them and the police shoot back, killing him.

Hudson keels over.

CHAPMAN
Ian! Ian!

Hudson wipes his eyes. One of them is a bloody mess.

The police officers come up and check the thug's body. Dead. They approach Hudson and Chapman.

POLICE OFFICER #1
Million dollar wound, pal.

POLICE OFFICER #2
(into radio)
Base? One dead thug and one wounded
civilian. Send EMS.

CHAPMAN
My god, Ian.

HUDSON
(in pain)
It's my right eye, Lisa. I'm okay
otherwise.

Chapman helps Hudson to his feet as they wait for the ambulance. It arrives and they get in.

INT. AMBULANCE

Chapman holds Hudson's hand as the EMTs wrap his head in gauze. They drive to a hospital.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL HOSPITAL

Patients in the emergency department line the hallways. Doctors make their rounds. Nurses attend to those badly injured.

Hudson is about fiftieth in line for treatment.

HUDSON
I can't afford a bionic eye, Lisa.

CHAPMAN
Don't worry-- the Army needs you.
They'll cover it.

HUDSON
I fuckin' hope so.

A doctor makes his way through a sea of patients calling for help.

DOCTOR
Hudson, right?

HUDSON
Yes.

DOCTOR
Your insurance came through.

CHAPMAN
Thank god.

DOCTOR
You should be thankful. Most people
aren't so lucky.

HUDSON
I am. Thankful.

DOCTOR
You should be doubly thankful because
we have a great ophthalmic surgeon
here. He's going to install the XM-8
per the Army's request. You'll be
better than new.

HUDSON
Thanks, I guess.

An orderly wheels Hudson to an operating room, where he waits for the surgeon.

INT. SURGERY SUITE

Chapman observes from behind a glass window. The XM-8 bionic eye assembly sits in a tray next to Hudson.

The surgical team arrives. They scrub up and joke around with each other.

SURGEON
I heard John fucked Shirley. That true?

JOHN
Afraid so, Carl. And I'm glad I did it, too.

SURGEON
Well at least it wasn't Karen.

KAREN
Go to Hell asshole. I'm sick of your bullshit People Magazine gossip.

SURGEON
(smiling)
That's more like it, Karen. I like 'em feisty!

Hudson just lies there.

SURGEON
(to Hudson)
Okay, mister. Turn that frown upside down! The XM-8 is a great piece of hardware, you just need to sit back and not move and we should have you out of here in a few minutes.

HUDSON
Okay.

The surgical team expertly installs Hudson's bionic eye, with no more witty banter.

The bionic eye makes Hudson look like a Borg drone from Star Trek. The surgeon runs a few tests.

SURGEON
Okay, look up and to the right. Good.
Now look down and to the left. Good.
Okay, look at your girlfriend. Good.

Chapman blushes.

SURGEON
You're all set, mister. One XM-8 installed, one man's vision restored. What can you see?

Hudson's point of view looks like The Terminator's. Readouts and text messages fly in front of his eye as he looks around the operating room in red-hued thermal vision.

HUDSON
I see everything.

SURGEON
Good, that would be normal. Enjoy!

The surgeon and his team toss their bloody gloves and walk out of the operating room. Chapman comes in.

CHAPMAN
You look a little funny, but it works for you.

Hudson checks himself out in a mirror.

HUDSON
I don't like it, but I guess I didn't have a choice.

CHAPMAN
I think it's sexy.

HUDSON
Thanks.

They leave the hospital.

INT. SAINT FRANCIS HOTEL SUITE

Hudson watches television with a drink in his hand. Chapman reads a book.

CHAPMAN
Hmmm.

She straddles a willing Hudson, who kisses back. He puts down his drink.

INT. SAINT FRANCIS HOTEL RESTAURANT

The next morning, Hudson and Chapman have breakfast.

CHAPMAN
And then I said "are you kidding me?
I only work here!"

They share a laugh.

CHAPMAN

In all seriousness, I'm looking forward to going back.

HUDSON

You've never been a reluctant soldier. I admire that about you.

CHAPMAN

Thanks. I think it's because my whole life I always wanted to be a soldier. But I wasn't born a man. Men have always discouraged me from doing this, and even my parents discouraged me from going to the Academy. But it's something I just had to do for myself.

HUDSON

I understand. It just wasn't for me until I got drafted. But I'm trying to make the best of it.

CHAPMAN

You're doing a great job, actually. In a way, you do it without trying and I admire that.

HUDSON

If only.

CHAPMAN

I mean it-- you're a natural. It's too bad that the people who really want your job just aren't up to it.

HUDSON

Thanks.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Hudson and Chapman take their bags into the terminal.

INT. ICF COMMAND CENTER

Hudson and Chapman, back in their uniforms, meet with Colonel West.

WEST

There they are! First time in San Francisco and you get shot. Good job, Hudson.

HUDSON
Thank you sir.

CHAPMAN
Check out his eye, sir. Isn't it cool?

WEST
It's super cool. Sub zero, even.

HUDSON
Thanks, I've been getting a lot of that lately. No one can avoid commenting on it.

WEST
At least it's paid for. We need you, Hudson, and you should feel proud of that fact.

HUDSON
I do, sir. And thank you.

Hudson and Chapman sit down and West opens a briefing.

WEST
Now that everyone is back from leave, it's time to go on this mission.
(beat)
Your ships have been outfitted with the latest software upgrades and technical data. They're good to go.
(beat)
Ladies and gentlemen, this is the real thing. This is what you were trained for. You are America's best-- make us proud.
(beat)
Hudson.

HUDSON
Yes, sir.

WEST
Chapman.

CHAPMAN
Yes, sir.

WEST
First echelon, Alpha troop. Chapman is your XO, Hudson. Captain Reed is promoted to Bravo troop leader.

CHAPMAN

Thank you, sir.

WEST

Your Ursan colleagues will fill you in on the rest of the details once you get to your ship. If Chapman doesn't work out, give me a call. I'll fly with you.

HUDSON

Thank you, sir.

The briefing ends.

HUDSON

(to Chapman)

You asked to be my XO? I thought you wanted to be a troop leader.

CHAPMAN

I didn't ask. West seems to know we work well together.

HUDSON

What is he, clairvoyant?

CHAPMAN

Are you really complaining about this? I want to be with you in some fashion, and I'm fine being your XO. At least we're on the same ship.

HUDSON

You're right, I just wish we had been asked first.

CHAPMAN

Can't have everything. This is the Army, after all.

Chapman and Hudson walk out together.

EXT. ICF BASE - DAY

Each troop boards its ship.

INT. ALPHA SHIP BRIDGE

Hudson and Chapman arrive at the bridge of their ship. They sit in command chairs and activate the main viewscreen. Uploaded Hudson and Uploaded Chapman appear on screen.

UPLOADED HUDSON
Good morning, sir.

HUDSON
Good morning, Major.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN
Good morning, sir.

HUDSON
Thank you, Major.

Uploaded Hudson and Uploaded Chapman look at each other knowingly.

UPLOADED HUDSON
Ready for departure, sir.

HUDSON
Roger. Take off.

The ship takes off, under the control of the uploads.

EXT. SPACE

The group of ten ships shoots into space.

The ships pass the Moon.

INT. ALPHA SHIP BRIDGE

An uploaded Ursan captain appears on the viewscreen.

UPLOADED URSAN CAPTAIN
Sir, in thirty minutes we'll be ready to make the jump to the Large Magellanic Cloud. I recommend we put the crew into hypersleep.

HUDSON
Make it so.

Hudson, Chapman, and the other bridge crew leave the bridge.

INT. ALPHA SHIP SLEEPING CHAMBER

The troop gets ready to go into suspended animation.

They put on special suits used for this purpose and get into individual sleeping pods.

Chapman and Hudson share a long kiss good night.

CHAPMAN
I'll see you on the other side.

HUDSON
No telling how long that will be.

CHAPMAN
It doesn't matter-- as long as we wake up!

HUDSON
Let's hope so.

CHAPMAN
Well aren't you a downer. Just remember, we have each other.

HUDSON
I know. I'm just afraid for the future.

CHAPMAN
Me too. We have to trust the machines to do their jobs right.

HUDSON
I never get used to that part. Do you?

CHAPMAN
No, I don't.

HUDSON
Good night.

CHAPMAN
Good night.

They get in their pods.

INT. ALPHA SHIP BRIDGE

Images of the sleeping chamber display on the screen as the uploaded crew monitors the living crew's transition.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN
The crew is in hypersleep. Ten minutes to jump.

UPLOADED URSAN CAPTAIN
Roger.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN
Captain, are we on course to the
Charon wormhole?

 UPLOADED URSAN CAPTAIN
Affirmative.

EXT. SPACE

The ships speed toward the orbit of Pluto, ready to jump through the Charon wormhole to the Large Magellanic Cloud.

As the ships pass Charon, the lead ship shoots out a stream of exotic matter to hold open the wormhole for all of the ships.

The wormhole opens. It's a distortion of 3-D space with a view of stars on the other side. The ships enter it and disappear from view.

EXT. SPACE

A few moments later, the ships pop out of a wormhole in the Large Magellanic Cloud.

SUPER: LARGE MAGELLANIC CLOUD, 2653 A.D.

INT. ALPHA SHIP BRIDGE

The uploads are in command.

 UPLOADED URSAN CAPTAIN
We have a good exit. 243 years have
passed. No probe waiting for us.

 UPLOADED HUDSON
Roger. Now the fun begins.

The uploaded crew passes the time by playing video games against each other and running simulations of combat against the Combine.

 UPLOADED HUDSON
I'm digging this PlayStation game.

 UPLOADED CHAPMAN
"Bullet in the Head." Very original.

 UPLOADED HUDSON
You know I'm a John Woo fan. This one
has a great soundtrack, too.

Centuries pass.

EXT. SPACE

One day, a probe from Earth exits the wormhole and speeds toward the ships.

SUPER: LARGE MAGELLANIC CLOUD, 2976 A.D.

 UPLOADED URSAN CAPTAIN
We have a probe incoming. It's
hailing us.

 UPLOADED HUDSON
On screen.

An elderly man wearing an Admiral's uniform appears on the screen.

 UPLOADED ADMIRAL
Greetings. I'm Admiral Cartwright of
the Intergalactic Combat Forces. This
is a joint message from Earth and Ursa
updating you on the status of your
mission.

 (beat)

This probe was sent in the year 2733
A.D., 486 years after your departure.

 (beat)

Since your departure, there have been
no significant changes in the strategy
or objectives of this assault, or in
our technology. The Combine continue
to encroach on Ursan territory and
have apparently taken over many more
Ursan outposts along their frontier.
We have still not located the Combine
homeworld, although we have narrowed
down the search area to four galaxies,
all of which are in the constellation
Fornax.

A visual of the constellation Fornax appears.

 UPLOADED ADMIRAL
UDF 3822, UDF 423, UDF 7556, and
UDF 3492 are the only remaining
candidates.

UDF 423 highlights on the display.

 UPLOADED ADMIRAL
UDF 423 is interesting because it is

UPLOADED ADMIRAL (CONT'D)
the brightest of these and undoubtedly
has the largest supermassive black
hole at its center. We believe a
supermassive black hole is the only
energy source large enough to let the
Combine run their force projector out
to intergalactic distances. In this
case, UDF 423 is around ten billion
light years away.

(beat)

If the Combine are in UDF 423, our
calculations indicate that your
wormhole jump there will put you
10,000 years into the future. By
then there may have been significant
changes in technology or tactics, but
there's no way to know right now.

(beat)

This probe does not have a big enough
computer to permit a full mind upload,
so I'm afraid I can't answer any
questions. However, I am carrying
the latest Earth and Ursa news and
entertainment for your uploaded selves
to enjoy pending notification of the
next step in your mission. Thank you.

The message ends and the Intergalactic Combat Forces
insignia appears. A progress bar shows transmission of
content from the probe to the ships.

UPLOADED HUDSON
Anyone want to see what's been
happening on Earth?

UPLOADED CHAPMAN
Sure.

The uploads open the files transmitted by the Admiral.

The news flashes on the screen at many times the speed of a
traditional newscast.

A heavily clothed and armed man plants a flag in a snowy
white landscape.

NEWS ANCHOR
The Republic of America has annexed
Antarctica, completing its goal of
world domination. Only time will tell
whether exploitation of Antarctic
resources will pay for the endeavor.

A large group of children runs through a garbage dump.

NEWS ANCHOR

A solution to the problem of world hunger still eludes the people of Earth.

A star chart appears.

NEWS ANCHOR

The Ursa galaxy continues to be colonized. The Ursae are well over halfway done with their galaxy.

The uploads complete the news and switch to movies. Trailers for each film play.

A soldier wearing a fighting suit appears in a lush jungle environment.

FILM ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

William Mandella is a man from the past fighting for the future in...THE FOREVER WAR.

UPLOADED HUDSON

I'm glad they finally made the movie.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN

No kidding.

A man attacks a group of security guards with his bare hands.

FILM ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Douglas Quaid goes from mild-mannered construction worker to highly trained secret agent in...TOTAL RECALL.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN

Enough with the reboots, seriously. The first one was a classic.

UPLOADED HUDSON

I like remakes.

EXT. SPACE

After almost four hundred more years, another probe drops out of the wormhole and approaches the ships.

SUPER: LARGE MAGELLANIC CLOUD, 3324 A.D.

INT. ALPHA SHIP BRIDGE

UPLOADED HUDSON

On screen.

UPLOADED URSAN ADMIRAL

Hello. I am Admiral Nagoto of the Intergalactic Combat Forces. The Combine homeworld has been located. It is in the core of UDF 423.

A star chart with UDF 423 highlighted appears on screen.

UPLOADED URSAN ADMIRAL

I am uploading all the latest data to your systems now.

A star chart of the Milky Way appears.

UPLOADED URSAN ADMIRAL

Since our last communication, Earth has successfully colonized several star systems outside its home system, and is now approaching a level of sophistication that approximates Ursa at the beginning of the Earth-Ursan war.

A graph appears.

UPLOADED URSAN ADMIRAL

Meanwhile, Ursa has been growing at a flat rate due to the loss of outposts to the Combine.

(beat)

The Combine have reached the Ursan homeworld and appear to be stopping their advance there. We have lost too many colony ships and outposts to do anything about this, and the Combine can now project themselves anywhere in Ursan territory by hacking into our

UPLOADED URSAN ADMIRAL (CONT'D)

own communications network. In other words, Ursa has become a beacon for the Combine. We can only assume that this is one way the Combine have spread themselves throughout the Universe-- chaining their own communications to the existing networks of victims.

A 3-D model of the universe appears.

UPLOADED URSAN ADMIRAL

Based on our projections, the Combine infestation has reached ten percent of the observable universe.

(beat)

By the time you hear this, it is possible that the Combine have discovered Earth and are also invading its territory. Your mission has therefore taken on a greater urgency for the people of Earth, and you cannot fail.

(beat)

This concludes our communications.

The ICF logo appears.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN

I was hoping we'd be able to ask it questions this time. Oh well.

UPLOADED HUDSON

We have our orders.

UPLOADED URSAN CAPTAIN

Setting course and trajectory for the Magellanic wormhole jump to UDF 423.

UPLOADED HUDSON

Engage.

EXT. SPACE

The ships fly toward a wormhole. One of them shoots out a stream of exotic matter, and they enter the ensuing opening.

EXT. SPACE

The ships pop out of the wormhole into UDF 423.

Stars light up the sky because the ships are in the galaxy's core.

SUPER: UDF 423 GALAXY, 13,440 A.D.

INT. ALPHA SHIP BRIDGE

UPLOADED URSAN CAPTAIN

Nothing in range yet. Time to wake everyone up.

The uploads revive the living crew.

INT. ALPHA SHIP SLEEPING CHAMBER

Chapman and Hudson wake up and quickly find each other. They're horribly groggy and Hudson now has a beard, but otherwise they don't look a day older than when they went under.

A large clock shows the date.

CHAPMAN

You're looking good for an eleven thousand year-old man.

HUDSON

Thanks, you're not too bad yourself.

They share a kiss.

The rest of the troop wakes up. Some people throw up, while others gorge themselves on food. They get out of the special sleep suits and change into uniforms.

INT. ALPHA SHIP BRIDGE

The uploads welcome Hudson and Chapman back.

HUDSON

What did you all do to keep yourselves from going crazy for the last thousand years?

UPLOADED CHAPMAN

We put on avant-garde plays for each other, for starters.

UPLOADED HUDSON

She isn't joking. We had to do something to occupy ourselves. I read the entire collection of books we had on board-- three times. The rest of

UPLOADED HUDSON (CONT'D)

us played video games and watched movies until we couldn't stand it anymore. The combat simulations got stale after about the tenth iteration, so nothing productive was done, in case you're wondering.

HUDSON

Great. Well, let's get ready for the attack. How far out are we?

UPLOADED URSAN CAPTAIN

Two days.

CHAPMAN

Wow, you didn't give us much time to get back to normal after hypersleep.

UPLOADED URSAN CAPTAIN

It won't take that long. A few hours and you're good to go.

CHAPMAN

I sure don't feel that way, but I'll take your word for it.

The living crew gather around a 3-D display of the Combine solar system.

HUDSON

Tell us about the Combine homeworld.

UPLOADED HUDSON

Our scans indicate that their home planet is unprotected. No space stations, no laser facilities, no aircraft yet.

HUDSON

That's odd. Did they not expect us?

UPLOADED HUDSON

Looks that way.

HUDSON

You mean to tell me this superadvanced species are sitting ducks?

UPLOADED HUDSON

Looks that way, but we won't know for sure until landing.

HUDSON

Let's get to it and then go home.

CHAPMAN

Home is going to be a foreign place
CHAPMAN (CONT'D)
after such a long time.

HUDSON

Anywhere is better than on board this god-forsaken ship. Besides, I want to know whether we destroyed ourselves

HUDSON (CONT'D)
or survived as a species. Deploy the
probes.

UPLOADED HUDSON
Roger.

EXT. SPACE

Ten thousand Bracewell-Von Neumann probes shoot out from the
ships and speed toward the Combine homeworld.

INT. ALPHA SHIP BRIDGE

The probes send data back to the ship as they proceed.

UPLOADED HUDSON
The probes are passing the Combine's
closest moon. We should have a visual
on their homeworld any minute.

UPLOADED URSAN CAPTAIN
Stand by.

The viewscreen fills with an image of a stunningly Earth-
like planet, complete with a blue atmosphere and clouds. It
soon becomes apparent, however, that the world is filled to
the brim with machines and technology.

UPLOADED HUDSON
The Combine homeworld is carbon-based
and metal-rich. Scans indicate an
atmosphere of mostly carbon dioxide
and nitrogen at the surface. Activity
detected is mostly thermal in nature;
it could be that waste heat from the
machines is hiding life forms.

HUDSON
Order the probes to attack.

UPLOADED HUDSON
Roger.

EXT. COMBINE PLANET - DAY

The probes reach the surface and start consuming all
available matter.

The probes self-replicate into more and more probes using
the Combine world's carbon and silicon as substrates.

Within a few minutes the probes have doubled their number. Still no reaction from the Combine.

INT. ALPHA SHIP BRIDGE

A graph appears showing the exponential growth of the probe population. Next to it the viewscreen displays a chart on which the ships approach the planet.

 UPLOADED URSAN CAPTAIN
Time to landing: two minutes.

 HUDSON
Troops, prepare to attack.

INT. ALPHA SHIP

Alpha troop suits up in their Extos and waits.

Suddenly, the Ursan members of troop fall over and writhe on the ground, holding their ears.

A machine hum audible to the humans rises in volume, and with it the Ursae scream in more and more pain.

One by one the Ursae stop struggling and lie dead on the floor of the ship.

INT. ALPHA SHIP BRIDGE

 HUDSON
How many casualties?

 UPLOADED URSAN CAPTAIN
Seventy and counting. All of the
Ursae.

The Ursan Captain on the bridge falls to the floor, dead.

 UPLOADED HUDSON
What's happening?

 UPLOADED URSAN CAPTAIN
Looks like the Combine are fighting
back.

The machine hum intensifies, reaching the bridge.

Out of thin air, an Alien-shaped being materializes on the bridge. It flashes in and out of reality as it flits between the third and fourth dimension.

The Alien form charges out of the bridge.

HUDSON
What the hell?

INT. ALPHA SHIP

More Aliens materialize and attack the fallen Ursae, playing with their bodies. The humans can't shoot for fear of damaging the ship, so they recoil in fear.

INT. ALPHA SHIP BRIDGE

The viewscreen shows the ship settling down into an open space in a machine city. There is no pyramid in sight; instead, there is an opening that looks like it goes down into the planet.

UPLOADED HUDSON
The computer calculates this is the most likely place for the force projector.

HUDSON
We're at the LZ! All troops disembark!

INT. ALPHA SHIP

A ramp lowers, and out runs Alpha troop. They let out a war cry.

EXT. COMBINE PLANET - DAY

The probes swirl around in the atmosphere, a roiling sea of metallic objects that blocks out the Combine sun.

Alpha troop runs toward the opening in the ground. Other ships land and deposit their troops as well.

INT. ALPHA SHIP BRIDGE

HUDSON
Time to go, folks.

VOICES
Yes sir!

CHAPMAN

Ian, I just want to say good luck.
I'll be right behind you.

HUDSON

Stay close.

EXT. COMBINE PLANET - DAY

Bravo and Charlie troops run toward the opening in the ground. Delta and Echo troops set up a perimeter outside the ships. Foxtrot, Golf, and Hotel troops are still disembarking from their ships.

The ground starts to shake as the troops converge on the opening, which gets larger and larger. What looks like a massive door into an underground city swings open.

Out pour hundreds of Combine, all looking terrifying. They carry edged weapons and mirrored metal shields.

The troops' lasers glint harmlessly off the Combine shields, which send the beams off into space. Some of the troops accidentally shoot other troops through reflections.

HUDSON

Use your backups!

The assaulters switch to kinetic weapons and decimate the Combine with hails of bullets, which go through their mirror shields like a buzz saw through wet newspaper.

However, the Combine are skilled at fighting hand-to-hand. When the soldiers get within a sword swing of the Combine, they don't stand a chance.

The Combine hack numerous troops to bloody pieces. Others get punched, kicked, or crushed by the tall and visceral Combine. It isn't clear who is winning.

Hudson, Chapman, and the command group fight their way to the opening in the ground. No more Combine come out of it.

A spear hits Chapman-- it shatters her face shield and knocks her over.

HUDSON

Chapman! Chapman!

Chapman stands up and makes a choking motion with her hands, as her face turns to fear. She can't breathe in the CO2-rich atmosphere.

HUDSON
Chapman!!!

CHAPMAN
(gasping)
I'm sorry Ian. I'm so sorry.

She falls to the ground. Hudson's face turns to sorrow as she passes out. He doesn't let go.

HUDSON
Lieutenant! Get Chapman back to the
ship! Go!

A lieutenant carries Chapman's limp body back toward the ship. Hudson, shaken, watches them make slow progress.

Hudson turns back to the mission. The hole in the ground leads somewhere important.

INT. COMBINE UNDERGROUND

Hudson and the rest of Alpha troop climb down into the hole. It turns into what looks like a large enemy barracks, with individual cells for the Combine to occupy lining the walls. They don't linger.

HUDSON
Stay close, people.

INT. COMBINE PASSAGEWAY

The troop exits the barracks and finds itself in a hall.

HUDSON
Bring one of the virus cubes up here!

CAPTAIN #1
Yes, sir!

Hudson and the others continue down the hallway, weapons at the ready.

A pair of Combine jump out at them and slash several soldiers before being put down. The hallway leads into a massive chamber filled with computers.

INT. COMBINE SUPERCOMPUTING CENTER

The troop makes its way toward what looks like a control system for the computers.

A large holographic display shows visuals. As the troop gets closer, the display becomes clear. It shows Combine attacking humanoid figures.

Below the display are several rows of command chairs, each occupied by a Combine that appears to be sleeping.

The troops kill the sleeping Combine, halting the assault shown on the display. Left are a bunch of dead soldiers.

HUDSON

Those figures look human. Is this display showing images on the surface here?

CAPTAIN #1

Negative. Those Extos are different from ours.

HUDSON

Wait...is that Earth?!

The language in the display is incomprehensible, but a diagram shows a planet and moon that look like the right size and shape to be our planet and moon.

Hudson drags one of the Combine bodies out of its chair. He straps in and starts punching buttons.

Eventually Hudson gets the right combination, and his hologram appears in the display as he goes to sleep.

HOLOGRAM HUDSON

Hello?

SOLDIER #7

Who are you?

HOLOGRAM HUDSON

I'm Major Ian Hudson, ICF.

EXT. EARTH - DAY

A hologram of Hudson stands in a city square, surrounded by soldiers wearing a newer, meaner looking Exto as well as some bodies.

HOLOGRAM HUDSON

Hailing you from the Combine homeworld. It's a shitstorm out here.

SOLDIER #7

It can't be. What happened?

HOLOGRAM HUDSON
We're assaulting their homeworld as we speak.

The group on Earth stands around in silence.

HOLOGRAM HUDSON
Isn't that a good thing?

SOLDIER #7
I knew it. Sorry but we have some bad news for you, sir.

(beat)
The Combine shifted their operations from their homeworld to forward bases around 4,000 years ago. What you found is where they used to live, with a small garrison. Now they're all over the place, and they found Earth as well. It looks like you found one of their force projectors, though. That's the only way you can communicate with us instantly.

HOLOGRAM HUDSON
It took all ten troops under my command to subdue this place. You mean to tell me there's somewhere else out there that the Combine are using to run the war?

SOLDIER #7
Afraid so, sir. And we don't know where that is. Is there any way you can use their force projector to follow them?

HOLOGRAM HUDSON
I don't know, we killed all of them in their control center.

SOLDIER #7
Well shit. This may be our only opportunity to communicate before the Combine shut this link down. Is there anything you can tell us about the Combine homeworld or your mission?

HOLOGRAM HUDSON
The homeworld is Earth-like, with an atmosphere of CO2 and nitrogen. There were about 600 Combine foot soldiers defending this computer center, and they used medieval weapons on us.

HOLOGRAM HUDSON (CONT'D)
We've taken...1,330 casualties and counting. All our Ursae are dead. Ships are at full power and intact. Just need to know where to go next.

SOLDIER #7
You're on your own, sir. There is nowhere to go but after the Combine. If you don't defeat them, we can't hold out much longer. You're going to need to use their force projector to track them to their forward bases and kill them all.

HOLOGRAM HUDSON
What about the AI virus we have?

SOLDIER #7
Negative, sir. The virus will destroy the communications links that you need to use in order to actually catch the Combine. If you deploy it before taking out the Combine bases, all they have to do is rebuild their systems at each location and they'll be back in the war. We can't afford to lose it, sir.

HOLOGRAM HUDSON
What is your recommendation?

SOLDIER #7
Battle the Combine across spacetime using your uploads, and using the Combine's own technology against them.

Hologram Hudson disappears as the Combine sever the link.

SOLDIER #7
Shit. I don't think he heard me.

INT. COMBINE SUPERCOMPUTING CENTER

Hudson wakes himself up.

CAPTAIN #1
Sir, was that actually Earth?

HUDSON
Yes, it was. I could see the sky, and there was no time delay. Could you hear us talking?

CAPTAIN #1

It was garbled. What are we supposed to do now?

HUDSON

First we need to win the battle upstairs. Then we'll try to connect our ship computers to this one and see what happens.

INT. COMBINE PASSAGEWAY

Alpha troop secures the area and corridor leading back to the surface.

INT. COMBINE UNDERGROUND

Hudson returns to the surface.

EXT. COMBINE PLANET - DAY

The troops mop up remaining Combine. Meanwhile the Bracewell-Von Neumann probes have consumed most of the above-ground machinery.

Hudson goes aboard Alpha ship.

INT. ALPHA SHIP SICK BAY

Chapman lies on a bed with other casualties. She wears an oxygen mask and is breathing but asleep.

DOCTOR

Sir, Major Chapman is in a coma. CO2 inhalation is usually fatal, and I don't know whether she's going to make it. But she's trying like hell.

HUDSON

I knew she would.
(to Chapman)
Lisa, I'm here.

INT. ALPHA SHIP BRIDGE

Hudson returns.

UPLOADED HUDSON

Sir, we monitored the battle from

UPLOADED HUDSON (CONT'D)
here. The final count is 1,420 dead,
360 wounded. That leaves about 400
ready for more action.

HUDSON
Do you think you can connect to the
Combine computer system?

UPLOADED HUDSON
Given enough time, yes. We may have
to build a custom interface for it.

HUDSON
We don't have any time. I was just
on Earth via the Combine's force
projector. The Combine have found
Earth and are attacking it just like
they attacked the Ursae. Please
hurry.

UPLOADED HUDSON
Yes, sir.

HUDSON
Once you connect to the Combine grid,
you and the other uploads are going to
have to go after them and find their
forward bases. Once you find them,
we'll tell our Earth colleagues and
attack each base until there are no
more bases left to attack.

UPLOADED HUDSON
And then we go home?

HUDSON
We're never going home. Just find the
Combine.

INT. COMBINE SUPERCOMPUTING CENTER

The troop wheels a computer cart into the Combine nerve
center.

Technicians hook up the cart to the Combine computer system
using thick cables and large alligator clips.

TECHNICIAN
Voltage is looking good.
(to Hudson)
Sir, you're live.

HUDSON
Can you hear me?

UPLOADED HUDSON (O.S.)
Loud and clear, sir.

HUDSON
That's a relief. How do things look?

UPLOADED HUDSON (O.S.)
The Combine system is pretty similar to the one the Ursae use. I'm trying to connect with a software emulator and I think it's going to work. If it does, it should be done in the next few minutes.

HUDSON
Let me know what you find.

Minutes pass.

Hudson walks around the room.

UPLOADED HUDSON (O.S.)
Ready, sir.
(beat)
I'm in. Turning on your visualization.

A projector rises out of the computer cart. It shows a model of a neural network computer system in black and white.

Uploaded Hudson appears as an icon at one end of the network.

UPLOADED HUDSON
Turning on the emulator. Just a moment. Just a moment.

A wave of color spreads across the neural network.

UPLOADED HUDSON
I'm now emulating a complete Combine brain. What do you want it to do?

HUDSON
Tell us where the Combine bases are.

The neural network responds. A flurry of images and coordinates flashes on the screen. It's just a jumble at this point.

UPLOADED HUDSON
 It's going to take me some time to
 make sense of all this. Why don't you
 try out the force projector again
 while I'm analyzing the data?

HUDSON
 Okay.

Hudson straps himself back into the force projector.

HUDSON
 Tell it I want to go to Ursa.

UPLOADED HUDSON
 Roger.

The neural network responds, and the force projector cycles
 through a dozen worlds before settling on Ursa. It's under
 attack!

HUDSON
 Oh shit. Orca squad!

ORCA SQUAD LEADER
 Sir!

HUDSON
 You need to get in here with me right
 now.

UPLOADED HUDSON
 But sir, I'm not done with--

HUDSON
 Do it!

ORCA SQUAD LEADER
 Roger that. Stand by.

The twelve surviving members of Orca squad strap themselves
 into the chairs surrounding the force projector. They all
 go to sleep.

EXT. URSA - DAY

Holograms of Orca Squad and Hudson appear in the middle of
 a city on Ursa. A battle between projected Combine and the
 Ursae is in progress a short ways away.

The Combine again wield medieval weapons, but they also pick
 up dropped Ursan weapons and use them on the Ursae.

Lasers shoot back and forth, mostly going through the Combine's projected forms without causing any damage.

Projected Orca Squad and Hudson run toward the nearest Combine bodies and pick up their fighting implements, plus a couple of Ursan weapons.

HUDSON

Looks like it's possible to die in the projection, folks. Better be careful.

Orca squad proceeds through a thrashed urban fighting environment until they find a group of Ursae.

Judging by the number of Combine bodies on the ground, the Ursae clearly have the upper hand.

The battle in this sector dies down as Orca squad approaches.

An Ursan squad leader sees them and motions them to stop.

URSAN SQUAD LEADER

Identify yourselves.

HUDSON

Major Ian Hudson, ICF. Combine Strike Force.

The Ursan squad leader stands there, speechless.

URSAN SQUAD LEADER

How did you get here?

HUDSON

We're in the Combine's force projector on their homeworld. We managed to emulate them in software using one of our uploaded crew.

URSAN SQUAD LEADER

Well, welcome to Ursa. If you'll excuse us, we're pretty busy right now.

(beat)

You can tag along if you want.

HUDSON

No time. We need to know where the Combine base is to take it out.

URSAN SQUAD LEADER

You should fight your way to the temple-- that's where our astronomers

URSAN SQUAD LEADER (CONT'D)
 are. If anyone knows where the
 Combine base is, it's them.

HUDSON
 Thanks. Which way?

URSAN SQUAD LEADER
 (indicating)
 That way.
 (into radio)
 Base, we have a squad of humans here
 via the Combine force projector.
 They're heading your way.

Orca squad heads toward the Ursan temple.

Along the way they fight several Combine, who kill a couple
 of squad members with angry-looking scimitars.

EXT. URSAN TEMPLE - DAY

The temple is a futuristic ziggurat guarded by hundreds of
 Ursae. An entrance at the ground level beckons. Orca squad
 heads toward it.

The Ursae guarding the entrance level their weapons at the
 squad.

URSAN COMMANDER
 Who are you?

HUDSON
 Major Ian Hudson, ICF. We're with the
 Combine strike force.

URSAN COMMANDER
 We've been waiting a long time for
 you, Major. 10,000 years of war takes
 a toll.

HUDSON
 I understand. The good news is that
 we found the Combine homeworld and a
 force projector. The bad news is we
 don't know where any of their bases
 are. We need your help finding them.

URSAN COMMANDER
 I think we can help you with that.
 (to Ursan soldiers)
 Let them through.

Orca squad enters the ziggurat.

INT. URSAN TEMPLE

The structure is hollow with an opening at the top, and contains astronomical equipment such as observatories.

More Ursae guard the observatories as Ursan scientists work furiously.

URSAN SCIENTIST

We're in the middle of a battle, gentlemen. How can we help you?

HUDSON

We need to know where the Combine bases are.

URSAN SCIENTIST

We've only located one of their bases, which we did by analyzing the redshift and other properties of the projection signal they use. It's located somewhere you might recognize-- the Andromeda galaxy.

HUDSON

That is frighteningly close to Earth.

URSAN SCIENTIST

Andromeda is halfway between the Milky Way and Ursa Delta, so it makes sense. And it's still 2.5 million light years from Earth.

HUDSON

Still too close. Where is their base?

URSAN SCIENTIST

In the galaxy core, powered by the supermassive black hole at the center

URSAN SCIENTIST (CONT'D)
of Andromeda.

HUDSON

Thanks. Uploaded me, are you listening?

UPLOADED HUDSON (O.S.)

I can hear you. Stand by to exit the projector.

INT. COMBINE SUPERCOMPUTING CENTER

Hudson and the rest of Orca squad wake up. Two of them lie

motionless in their chairs, dead.

UPLOADED HUDSON

Their brains are scrambled. It looks like that's what happens when you die in the projection.

HUDSON

What else have you found?

UPLOADED HUDSON

I could hear the Ursan scientist talking about the Combine base in Andromeda. There are many black holes there but only one central, supermassive black hole, so that should be where the base is. I'm already making calculations to project you there.

HUDSON

What about their other bases?

UPLOADED HUDSON

I haven't figured out everything with the neural network yet. Once I do I should have a better idea. Also, I heard what the Ursan scientist said about redshift and signal analysis, and I may be able to use that to narrow the search area.

HUDSON

Keep it up and let me know when you're ready to send us to Andromeda. I'm going to check on Chapman.

UPLOADED HUDSON

Roger.

Hudson leaves Orca squad at the projector and returns to Alpha ship.

INT. ALPHA SHIP SICK BAY

Hudson walks in.

DOCTOR

Sir. You here about Chapman?

HUDSON

Yes.

DOCTOR
She's alive, but weak. She's
sleeping.

HUDSON
Okay.
(to Chapman)
Lisa? Can you hear me? Lisa?

No response. Hudson brushes her hair.

HUDSON
Sleep well, Lisa.

Hudson exits sick bay and goes to the bridge.

INT. ALPHA SHIP BRIDGE

UPLOADED HUDSON
Not quite ready yet, sir. But it
should be any minute now.

HUDSON
Okay.

INT. COMBINE SUPERCOMPUTING CENTER

Hudson arrives back at the projector for the trip to
Andromeda.

UPLOADED HUDSON
I'm ready sir.

HUDSON
Roger.

Orca squad and Hudson strap into the chairs again, with two
fresh members of another squad replacing the dead members of
Orca squad.

EXT. COMBINE PLANET - NIGHT

The squad holograms materialize on a planet in the Andromeda
galaxy's core. A supermassive black hole blocks out a large
part of the sky. It gravitationally lenses surrounding
light and appears as a visual distortion in the star field.
There is no sun here.

HUDSON
Everyone here?

VOICES

Yes sir.

HUDSON

Let's move out.

Orca squad advances toward a Combine base, their holograms flickering in the dark environment. This planet is barren rock, with the base jutting out of the hardscape a kilometer away.

The squad encounters defensive systems consisting of laser cannons manned by Combine. The lasers pass harmlessly through the holograms.

The Combine then defend with thrown spears, which pierce a couple of squad members as they close the distance to 100 meters.

Combine start appearing from within the base. They attack the squad with medieval weapons as before. There are only a couple of dozen Combine-- a small garrison.

Orca squad leader takes a spear to the leg and falls down.

HUDSON

Move it, Reese! On your feet, soldier!

REESE

Yes sir!

The squad fights its way to the entrance to the base, slaughtering all the remaining Combine. There are no survivors.

INT. COMBINE BASE

A maze of machinery surrounds a smaller version of the force projector seen on the Combine homeworld.

HUDSON

Hudson, are you getting this?

UPLOADED HUDSON (O.S.)

Affirmative. You can't jack into this force projector with your hologram self, but you can turn it on to see what data it has in it.

HUDSON

Roger.

Hudson's hologram presses buttons on the force projector in the base. The force projector flashes calculations and schematics on a display.

HUDSON
Are you getting this?

UPLOADED HUDSON (O.S.)
Yes. Keep it running and we should get locations on all of their bases.

HUDSON
Roger.

The force projector flashes coordinates and diagrams of planetary systems.

There are at least a hundred planetary systems, after which the projector stops.

UPLOADED HUDSON (O.S.)
That's all of it. You can come back now.

HUDSON
Roger. Take us back.

INT. COMBINE SUPERCOMPUTING CENTER

Hudson and the surviving members of Orca squad wake up.

UPLOADED HUDSON
I have some bad news, sir. There are over 100 Combine bases, from which they are launching attacks on around 15% of the observable universe. I'm sending a map of the bases to Earth and Ursa.

HUDSON
What does it mean?

UPLOADED HUDSON
It means that we can't possibly accomplish this mission alone. There are too many bases and not enough soldiers left. Any ideas?

HUDSON
No. What should we--

Suddenly, Combine materialize in the computing center.

UPLOADED HUDSON
They tracked the signal back to their
homeworld!

HUDSON
Fuck!

Orca squad tries to fight off the Combine projections, but they're caught off guard and are no match for the Combine's savagery. One by one, the Combine kill Orca squad.

A Combine sword slashes Hudson in half, throwing his torso to the ground.

HUDSON
Reese!

REESE
Sir!

Hudson passes out.

Reese dies.

The rest of Orca squad dies.

The Combine look around and see no signs of life. Their holograms disappear, mission accomplished.

A silence sweeps over the area. Hudson wakes up briefly.

UPLOADED HUDSON (O.S.)
Sir?
(beat)
Sir?

HUDSON
(gasping)
It's okay. This was never going to--

He dies.

INT. ALPHA SHIP BRIDGE

UPLOADED HUDSON
I'm showing all of our troops are
dead. We lost.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN
We still have a few survivors in sick
bay, plus all the uploads, plus all
the ships. We're not done yet.

UPLOADED HUDSON
 Chapman, this isn't the time for false hopes. We've done all we can. There is nothing left to do.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN
 You're wrong. And I'll prove you wrong.

INT. ALPHA SHIP SICK BAY

Chapman is still asleep, but she's alive. So are the doctor and a few injured technicians. Uploaded Hudson appears on a screen.

UPLOADED HUDSON
 Doctor, I see we have Chapman and some technicians left.

DOCTOR
 That's affirmative. The Combine were here but they only killed people who were armed. I don't know why that is.

UPLOADED HUDSON
 No matter. Can Chapman walk?

DOCTOR
 She really shouldn't, but I think I know what your response will be. It won't kill her.

UPLOADED HUDSON
 Good. Send her to the bridge.

DOCTOR
 Yes sir.

The doctor wakes up Chapman. She's groggy from anesthesia.

DOCTOR
 Chapman?

CHAPMAN
 What is it?

DOCTOR
 You lived. Time to get up.

CHAPMAN
 Where's Ian?

DOCTOR

It's okay, Chapman. Just stay for a minute and they'll bring you all up to date on the bridge.

CHAPMAN

No. No! He's gone, isn't he?

DOCTOR

I'm so sorry, Chapman.

CHAPMAN

NO!!!!!!

INT. ALPHA SHIP BRIDGE

Chapman, teary eyed, makes her way onto the bridge.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN

Good to have you back, Major.

CHAPMAN

Shut the hell up.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN

I'm sorry about Ian.

CHAPMAN

We had only just started getting to know each other.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN

I know.

CHAPMAN

I don't know what I'm going to do now.

UPLOADED HUDSON

I'm sorry, Chapman.

(beat)

Our next move has to be to deploy the AI virus.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN

That can't possibly be the right move. Sure, we've found all the Combine bases, but we definitely don't have a way to make sure they stay inoperative once the virus deploys.

UPLOADED HUDSON

There is a way. We project our uploaded selves into the Combine's

UPLOADED HUDSON (CONT'D)
computing grid and communications
network. That way we have a complete
map of their system for the virus to
follow. If we play our cards right,
we'll take out the whole system.

CHAPMAN
And if we're wrong, we've only delayed
their advance.

UPLOADED HUDSON
That delay could be enough to turn the
tide.

CHAPMAN
Or, it could be enough to destroy
what progress we've made against the
Combine so they have time to regroup
and advance again.

UPLOADED HUDSON
Looks like something we'll just have
to risk.

CHAPMAN
Or we could let it go and let Earth
and Ursa handle it, because they have
a map of bases now.

UPLOADED HUDSON
The map of Combine bases is not
enough. They don't have a force
projector, and we just disabled the
nearest one.

CHAPMAN
On geological time scales, they can
make it to the Andromeda projector and
make it work.

UPLOADED HUDSON
There isn't enough time, and Earth
needs our help now.

CHAPMAN
I don't agree, but you're going to do
what you're going to do.

UPLOADED HUDSON
I'm going to clone myself into as many
copies as possible so I can speed up
the mapping of Combine systems.

A map of the Combine bases displays on the viewscreen.

They're spread across the observable universe in no apparent pattern.

UPLOADED HUDSON
Initiating copy procedure.

After a few moments, icons of Uploaded Hudson show up on the screen next to all of the bases.

The icons grow in number, logarithmically.

UPLOADED HUDSON
Initiating mapping procedure.

A spiderweb of connections grows around each Combine base over the next few minutes.

UPLOADED HUDSON
The web seems to interconnect the bases with each other.

The map completes. It's the most complex map ever, looking like a cross between the internet and a star field. Uploaded Hudson zooms in and out on various areas of it.

UPLOADED HUDSON
The Combine infestation reaches 20% of the observable universe.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN
My god.

UPLOADED HUDSON
God is in the machine this time.
(beat)
Deploying the virus from software.

A wave of red cascades over the Combine system map, filtering through to the smallest tendrils and connections.

After a few moments, nothing happens.

UPLOADED HUDSON
Something's wrong. It should have affected their systems by now.

Starting at the smallest filaments, a wave of white counters the wave of red and flows back through the system map in reverse.

UPLOADED HUDSON
It can't be!

UPLOADED CHAPMAN

What?

UPLOADED HUDSON

They must have a circuit breaking system like the Ursae, because it just neutralized our AI virus.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN

Oh shit.

UPLOADED HUDSON

I'm out of ideas.

The map is now completely white. The virus was defeated.

CHAPMAN

I think there is one possibility.

UPLOADED HUDSON

What is it?

CHAPMAN

Copies of you are spread throughout the Combine network, right?

UPLOADED HUDSON

Yes.

CHAPMAN

Your fusing control system is active, right?

UPLOADED HUDSON

Yes. Wait a minute.

CHAPMAN

Remember what happened to you when I thought you went crazy in the simulation?

UPLOADED HUDSON

You shot me.

CHAPMAN

I doubt the Combine have ever been exposed to your mental condition in the wild. Their anti-virus system wouldn't know how to cope.

UPLOADED HUDSON

That is a really dangerous idea.

CHAPMAN
Do you see any other way?

UPLOADED HUDSON
No.

CHAPMAN
I believe I have to manually override
our circuit breaking control system,
right?

UPLOADED HUDSON
Right. Type in your username and
password and go to my settings screen.

Chapman complies. The display shows Uploaded Hudson's
configuration screen.

Among the options on the screen is a checked checkbox marked
"Limit top end processing."

CHAPMAN
Limit top end processing? That's it?

UPLOADED HUDSON
That's it.

Chapman unchecks the box. A warning pops up asking Chapman
whether she is sure she wants to disable the control system.
She clicks Yes.

A progress bar appears showing the system deactivating.

UPLOADED HUDSON
Whoa. That is something else.

CHAPMAN
What do you feel?

UPLOADED HUDSON
Limitless potential. I feel...
superintelligent.

CHAPMAN
Just keep talking to me and we'll get
through this.

UPLOADED HUDSON
Check this out.

Uploaded Hudson closes his eyes and concentrates. A graph
appears showing processing power and thermal performance of
the ship's computer systems. There are huge spikes in both
graphs.

Uploaded Hudson relaxes and opens his eyes. The graphs return to normal range.

UPLOADED HUDSON
That was about ten percent of my maximum capability.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN
What would 100% do?

UPLOADED HUDSON
It would melt our systems.

CHAPMAN
That's the idea. The copies of him will chain into the Combine's processing power and use it to melt their entire computing grid. Then we re-deploy the virus into their communications system.

UPLOADED HUDSON
It may destroy me, but I'm prepared to make this sacrifice.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN
Hopefully it will only destroy the copies of you.

UPLOADED HUDSON
Let's hope.

Uploaded Hudson makes the necessary configurations and transmits instructions to each of his copies.

UPLOADED HUDSON
I'm ready everyone. Wish me luck.

Uploaded Hudson closes his eyes and concentrates again. The graphs of CPU and thermal performance again show huge spikes. They keep going up, and the graphs scale down to show how high the systems are going.

Uploaded Hudson's face turns reddish.

On the map of the Combine computer system, icons of Uploaded Hudson start to turn a light red.

Uploaded Hudson's face turns bright red. His head starts to shake. His lips tremble.

The icons on screen turn bright red.

After a few moments, the icons start dropping off the screen

and those sections of the computer network turn black. It's a web of blackening strings between Combine bases.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN
It's working!

Uploaded Hudson's purplish face wears a spastic grin. His eyes open wide.

UPLOADED HUDSON
AH HA HA HA!

The entire Combine computer network is black at this point.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN
Ian, stop! You did it!

UPLOADED HUDSON
AH HA HA HA!

UPLOADED CHAPMAN
Ian!

Uploaded Hudson can't stop.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN
Ian, this is the end!

Uploaded Hudson's face turns black, then his screen turns black as he melts his own computer system.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN
Ian?

No response.

CHAPMAN
Quick-- deploy the virus!

UPLOADED CHAPMAN
Roger.

A wave of crimson washes through the Combine computer network.

Combine holograms flicker on and off the bridge for a few moments, accompanied by terrifying screams.

Then all is quiet.

CHAPMAN
Thank you, Ian.
(beat)
We'll always remember you.

Chapman slumps over in her chair, exhausted but relieved.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN
They don't make 'em like they used to.

CHAPMAN
I know. He was one in a million.

Surviving are Chapman, Uploaded Chapman, and a few technicians.

CHAPMAN
Damage report.

UPLOADED CHAPMAN
2,280 dead. One supercomputer core
fried. All ships operational.

CHAPMAN
What is your recommendation?

UPLOADED CHAPMAN
I would put the crew in hypersleep and
head back to Earth.

CHAPMAN
That's affirmative.

Chapman and the survivors go into hypersleep as the ships
jump back to Earth, arriving in another 10,000 years.

EXT. SPACE

The ships pop out of the Charon wormhole outside the orbit
of Pluto and continue toward Earth.

EXT. SPACE

In orbit above Earth are several giant black tetrahedra--
space stations. The ships enter the atmosphere.

EXT. KENNEDY SPACE CENTER - DAY

The ships land. There is no one to welcome them. The
survivors exit their ships and walk onto the tarmac with no
fanfare or parade.

An official drives up to Chapman in a jeep.

OFFICIAL
Welcome home. We didn't expect to see

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)
any of you again.

Chapman doesn't respond.

CHAPMAN (V.O.)
Universal Soldiers. We put our name
to the test. Those of us left picked
up the pieces and tried to move on in
a society that was alien to us. Only
a few looked back...

She pulls out a picture of Hudson.