

FROM THE EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS OF  
*GREY'S ANATOMY*  
AND  
*DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES*



# DEFYING GRAVITY

THE FARTHER THEY GET FROM EARTH,  
THE CLOSER THEY GET TO EACH OTHER.



DEFYING GRAVITY

BY

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**DEFYING GRAVITY**

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

**EXT. SPACE**

A spectacular view of the heavens....

DONNER (V.O.)

There's a reporter I know who calls  
space travel a fool's game.

SLOWLY PAN to reveal MARS - the red planet up close and personal. And orbiting Mars, A SPACECRAFT from this century. This is ZEUS - nothing too fancy - a deluxe version of our present space station, seventy meters long, with a large, plate shaped space shield at one end.

PUSH SLOWLY toward the planet.... past the ship, as...

DONNER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He says that human beings are sixty  
percent water. They eat, sleep,  
defecate, can't follow directions,  
and explode like pinatas when exposed  
to the vacuum of space.

(beat)

Lately I've been wondering if the  
bastard's right.

A HUGE DUST STORM is visible on the surface planet.... evil  
looking even from this distance. SUPER:

**DONNER - 2044, MARS**

THEN SLAM TO:

**EXT. GUSEV CRATER / MARS -- DAY**

A HOWLING, SHRIEKING RED DUST STORM that, in a thicker  
atmosphere, would blow buildings down.

FIND TWO SHAPES moving slowly, agonizingly through it.  
Astronauts in thick space suits, GREG WALKER, 37, and KAREN  
LEWIS, 29. Visibly wet and exhausted, through their dust  
caked helmets...

WALKER

They're launching, Karen! We gotta  
move!

She nods... clearly struggling...

WALKER (CONT'D)

Gusev base... Gusev base...

**EXT. GUSEV BASE -- DAY**

The storm buffeting a rover and quonset-like structure next to a fifteen foot high Mars Landing craft, Calliope.

**INT. CALLIOPE MARS LANDER -- DAY**

Two men, a sweating and strained MADDUX DONNER, 26, and TED CHO, 30, are doing everything they can to monitor Walker and Lewis -- but the signal is distorted. Filled with static.

WALKER (RADIO)

Donner.... read...?

DONNER

Barely read you, Walk. You guys need to push it! We gotta get out!

And things are not going well here, at all. The craft creaks and groans from the wind. An alarm beeps a warning, as Ted Cho runs through a launch sequence.

TED

...Coordinates are NOUN 22, 061, 2 niner... HA and HP are NA... We are at t-minus one minute to launch...

DONNER

They can't make that, Ted. There's no way...

TED

We're gonna hold at one.

**INT. ZEUS / FLIGHT DECK - IN MARS ORBIT**

The planet in view from the cockpit, where the Mission Commander, MIKE GOSS, 43, sits. He is cool to the point of freezing.

INTERCUT THE ELEMENTS

MIKE GOSS

Calliope, this is Zeus. We're showing that the dust is breaching your thruster controls...

TED

Yeah, we got an alarm here.

DONNER

Zeus, they're a hundred meters out.

MIKE GOSS

This storm's on the rise. You need to get off the planet.

DONNER

A *football field*, Mike. I can go out...

MIKE GOSS

You will not leave the lander! Now continue the damned sequence.

TED

(hesitates, then...)  
Pitch is zero, niner, niner. Hydrogen and LOX are go...

DONNER

We can't leave 'em, Ted... we can't..  
(into radio)  
Karen! Greg! Push!

**EXT. IN THE STORM**

Walker puts his faceplate directly in front of Lewis'. Lewis is gasping... exhausted, out of it.

WALKER

Look at me, Karen! Look at me! Double time! We gotta *move*!

Lewis nods... then they start to leap and run in the 1/3 gravity. It's an herculean effort... but they're making headway.

INTERCUTTING

**INT. CALLIOPE MARS LANDER**

A COMPUTERIZED FEMALE VOICE sounds a new alarm.

FEMALE VOICE

Warning. Launch weather parameters are at minimum. Warning. Launch parameters are at minimum.

TED

Thirty seconds...

DONNER

They're seventy meters out. We can *hold*... Ted?

TED

Zeus, we're holding at twenty-five.

He stops the launch clock. A beat... then the clock resumes on its own.

MIKE GOSS  
I'm overriding your launch control,  
Calliope. T-minus twenty seconds  
and counting...

Donner and Ted trade a look - Goss is a prick - then Donner reaches to his side of the control panel and hits a switch. A NEW ALARM beeps as...

FEMALE VOICE  
Warning. Liquid hydrogen valve has  
been manually closed. Launch  
parameters are at minimum. Warning.

MIKE GOSS  
Did you close that valve, Donner?

DONNER  
Give them a *couple of minutes*.

MIKE GOSS  
You don't have two minutes!

DONNER  
We'll take our chances...

MIKE GOSS  
*Not on my watch. You will die. The  
mission will fail. I need that lander  
off the planet now.*

The alarms... the female voice... all closing in on Donner and Ted.

MIKE GOSS (CONT'D)  
Open the damned valve!

Finally, off a silent, burdened look... both knowing that this is a defining, awful moment in their lives...

DONNER  
Karen... forgive me....

Then Donner reaches up and pushes the switch to open the valve.

### **THE LANDER**

Blasts off the planet Mars with a horrible, percussive roar...

THEN TO BLACK

### **HOLD IN BLACK**

Then SUPER:

**CHLOE - 2050, HOUSTON**

HEAR

MIKE GOSS (PRE-LAP)  
 Welcome to Houston and the Agency's  
 training facility. I'm Flight  
 Director, Mike Goss.

**INT. TRAINING CENTER / CENTRIFUGE STAGING AREA -- DAY**

ON CHLOE BARNES, 27 and attractive in a simple, no make-up way. She stands with twenty other astronaut candidates, a mix of men and women about her age, all wearing orange jump suits. They stand on an observation platform in loose formation... opposite Goss and the instructors. One of them is

MADDUX DONNER, now 32, standing next to TED CHO. He makes eye contact with Chloe - there is clearly something between them - Chloe breaking the look as...

NADIA  
 That's Cho and Donner. They were  
 the two on the Mars lander.

That from NADIA GHUKOV, a drop dead gorgeous Russian with the steely eyes of a pilot. She stands on one side of Chloe, the other side covered by JEN TAYLOR, an African/Canadian earth mother.

JEN  
 They just did what they were told to  
 do.

MIKE GOSS  
 (continuing)  
 The flight of Cygnus will be the  
 most ambitious in history - seven  
 planets and over six years in space -  
 we aren't going to go easy on you.

MOVE DOWN the line of candidates, passing people we'll come to know, hate, and love: AJAY SHARMA, EVRAM MINTZ, CLAIRE DOUCETTE, STEVE WASSENFELDER - an oddly out of place, pimply 22 year old with a weight problem...as

MIKE GOSS (CONT'D)  
 And you'll be competing not only  
 with yourselves, but with many of  
 your instructors. I don't think  
 there's anyone in the program who  
 doesn't want to be on this crew.

Finally land back on CHLOE and JEN. Jen noticing that Donner's eyes are on her friend.

JEN  
 You know him?

CHLOE  
(covering)  
Who?

JEN  
Donner. He sure looks like he knows  
you.

And Chloe's clearly uncomfortable about it.

CHLOE  
He doesn't.

JEN  
He's smiling at you. Smile back.

CHLOE  
Jen...

JEN  
Don't be such a tight ass.

CHLOE  
No.

Which is heard by all. Goss stops talking. A silent moment - all eyes on Chloe and her profound embarrassment. Then

MIKE GOSS  
Excellent. Candidate Barnes has  
just volunteered to be in the first  
centrifuge group. Anyone else?

Now Donner is grinning at her. Off Chloe's embarrassment to

**INT. CENTRIFUGE CAPSULE / TRAINING CENTER -- DAY**

Chloe in *agony*, straining against the G's, as the centrifuge whips her around and around. The pressure and speed building relentlessly, mercilessly, until...

**INT. TRAINING CENTER / LOCKER ROOM -- DAY**

WHAM! Chloe bursts through the door of this co-ed locker room with separate lavatories. Pushes past Donner and some of the other astronauts, into

**THE LADIES ROOM**

where she bangs into one of the stalls and pukes. Just a huge heave. Hangs there, over the toilet, collecting herself.

**RESUME THE LOCKER ROOM -- TIME CUT**

As Chloe comes sneaking back out of the ladies room... finding herself face to face with a *gathering* of applauding astronauts.

Among them: Ted Cho, Jen, Nadia, Ajay, and, front and center, a grinning DONNER.

CHLOE

Crap.

Then, to make it all a little worse, Donner crosses with A CHARM ON A NECK CHAIN.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Oh no. What's this?

DONNER

An award. First one in your class to heave.

And now Chloe sees that the charm is A SMALL BRASS BUCKET. He gives her a sexy smile, then drapes it around her neck, Chloe resisting their chemistry... but clearly drawn to him.

DONNER (CONT'D)

Everybody'll get one or two. Earn five buckets, you wash out.

(then, more privately)

I think I'm the only guy to make it through without one. You want some tips I could buy you a drink at Dukes.

Chloe looks at him...

CHLOE

You can't be serious.

Then brushes past.

DONNER

I'm being nice. Serious and nice.

(she keeps going)

Is there something wrong with serious and nice?

But Chloe will have none of it and continues to

HER LOCKER. Tosses the necklace inside it. Jen crosses, as Chloe starts to undress.

JEN

Lighten up, girl.

CHLOE

So light, I'm floating.

JEN

He was making a pass at you.

CHLOE

Not my type.

JEN  
The smart, good looking, American  
hero type.

CHLOE  
He left two people on Mars.

JEN  
Then *tragic* American hero - even  
better.

Jen studies Chloe...

JEN (CONT'D)  
You're not gay, are you?

CHLOE  
(beat, looks at her)  
I'm a geologist who wants to travel  
to another planet without unnecessary  
complications.

JEN  
A space nun.

CHLOE  
A *what*?

ACROSS THE ROOM - AT THE MEN'S LOCKERS

Ted, and Donner having their own discussion, joined by ROLLIE  
CRANE, 40, awkwardly endearing, as they check out the women.

TED  
A space nun. Either that, or she's  
gay.

DONNER  
She's not gay.

ROLLIE  
You have first hand knowledge?

DONNER  
Call it an educated guess.

NADIA saunters past him wearing a towel.

DONNER (CONT'D)  
But, clearly gents, it's time to  
move on.

Donner follows.... passing

WASSENFELDER AND AJAY SHARMA - Ajay eyeing Chloe...

WASSENFELDER

Dude... you don't stand a chance.

But Ajay crosses to Chloe anyway, watching awkwardly as she finishes dressing.

AJAY SHARMA

Chloe Barnes. I am Ajay Sharma. We met on the Cape.

CHLOE

Yeah... hi, Ajay.

AJAY SHARMA

I just wanted to say that it is a good thing that you won the bucket.

CHLOE

I'm not so sure about that.

AJAY

Oh no... it is an obstacle that we all must face eventually. You were fortunate enough to face it first.

And now Chloe's eyes move over Ajay's shoulder.... to

DONNER flirting with Nadia at the door to the ladies room.

ON CHLOE - jealous. And feeling that Ajay's words apply directly to Donner.

TO BLACK

**HOLD IN BLACK**

Then super:

**CAPE CANAVERAL - 2055**

HEAR AN ORCHESTRAL NETWORK THEME - ANNOUNCING:

**A VIDEO GRAPHIC - OF CYGNUS**

ANNOUNCER'S VOICE

The Flight of Cygnus....

The graphic goes IN MOTION - Cygnus flying a path through the solar system, as WE HEAR THE FOLLOWING in a variety of languages on NEWSCASTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD:

NEWSCASTERS

Five nations, seis anos, sete planetas, und acht Astronauten... un grand tour du systeme solaire... a grand tour of the solar system.

(MORE)

NEWSCASTERS (CONT'D)  
The most ambitious exploration in  
the history of mankind.

**INT. MISSION CONTROL / CONFERENCE ROOM -- MORNING**

ON MIKE GOSS, the Mars Mission Commander, now 54, standing  
at a lectern...

MIKE GOSS  
I'm Flight Director Mike Goss. I'm  
gonna introduce the crew, as if you  
don't know them already... then open  
the floor to questions.

This is the FINAL PRESS CONFERENCE on launch day.

INTERCUT HIS INTRODUCTIONS - not with the astronauts as they  
enter - rather, with the astronauts as they spent their last  
free moments on earth:

**INT. AN APARTMENT BEDROOM -- VERY EARLY MORNING**

On a sexy, sweaty, post-coital couple in bed : DONNER, now  
36, and NADIA GHUKOV at 33.

MIKE GOSS  
Mission Pilot, Nadia Ghukov...

NADIA  
Time for one more.

DONNER  
Swear to God - it feels like it's  
gonna fall off...

NADIA  
No pain - no gain. And beside, it's  
going to have six years to heal.

DONNER  
Only if I wait for you.

Nadia playfully locks onto Donner's neck with her mouth and  
mounts him. He winces...

MIKE GOSS  
Originally from St. Petersburg, she'll  
pilot Cygnus and the Mars lander.

DONNER  
Awww c'mon, Nads. Nadia?

**EXT. BEACH - DAWN**

DR. EVRAM MINTZ, 35, sits on the beach gazing out at the sea  
with the eyes of a man who has lived much longer.

He's a lean Israeli/American with a dim view of humanity, having seen just too many people die in war.

MIKE GOSS

Dr. Evram Mintz, our Medical Specialist... a war tested surgeon, he also has a degree in psychiatry.

Mintz raises an almost finished pint of vodka, and drains it.

**EXT. JOGGING PATH - DAWN**

JEN CRANE, now 34, as she jogs with ROLLIE CRANE, 45, her husband of two years. He's the kind of guy who's everybody's big brother. A lanky, modern Jim Lovell/Tom Hanks who's desperately in love with his wife.

MIKE GOSS

Mission Commander, Rollie Crane... and Jen Crane, our Mission Biologist. They got married in training - Jen calls this their honeymoon.

They both pull up to watch the sun rise. A moving moment for both of them, as they take each other's hand.

**INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH -- DAWN**

PAULA OCHOA, 31, and from a poor family in Brownsville, Texas, takes communion from a woman priest. She's a very carefully put together woman. Religious, optimistic, industrious. Hates slackers.

MIKE GOSS

Paula Ochoa, our Payload Specialist and teacher. She'll also pilot the Venus lander.

**INT. A DORM ROOM MESSY APARTMENT -- DAWN**

The sun's rising but STEVE WASSENFELDER, 27, could give a damn. Still pudgy and pimply, he sits in front of a gaming console playing HALO 23 - something he's been doing all night.

MIKE GOSS

Theoretical Physicist, Steve Wassenfelder.

Shoves a handful of Cap'n Crunch into his mouth.

MIKE GOSS (CONT'D)

I think he's sponsored by Xbox.

The reporters chuckle.

**INT. A BEDROOM -- DAWN**

Where AJAY SHARMA, 35, and painfully, endearingly sincere, prays in front of a small shrine to a Hindu God, Lord Ganesha.

MIKE GOSS

From Mumbai, Flight Engineer Ajay Sharma. He says he's Hindu, but I swear he worships the spacecraft.

The centerpiece of the shrine is a porcelain figurine of Ganesha, four armed and with the head of an elephant.

MIKE GOSS (CONT'D)

And still on her way in is our geologist, Chloe Barnes.

**INT. AT A BATHROOM MIRROR -- DAY**

CHLOE'S at her mirror putting on make-up like it's a foreign substance. All thumbs and rushing. The time and date are projected at the bottom of the mirror ; 7:15 A.M., 10/03/55.

BEV BARNES

...beware of new endeavors, Cancer.  
With Mercury in retrograde and Saturn  
in your seventh house...

That from a woman projected in the upper left of the mirror. A vid call.

CHLOE

I don't have time for this mother!

MIKE GOSS

Chloe'll be the first human to set foot on Venus, if she makes it here in time for the launch.

Chloe drops her eye shadow brush.

CHLOE

Crap crap crap!

BEV BARNES

Language, Chloe...

**INT. INTERNATIONAL SPACE AGENCY / MISSION CONTROL-- DAY**

CHLOE is escorted quickly through the busy control room by DONNER. She's awkward, flustered, late. He's covered his hickey with a band aid and is walking.... painfully. He works a baseball in one of his hands - an on the job quirk. It'll make sense later.

CHLOE  
Had a little trouble getting out the door...

DONNER  
On launch day?

CHLOE  
Technical difficulties.

DONNER  
I can see. Nice make-up.

CHLOE  
Nice hickey.

DONNER  
You're jumping to conclusions.

CHLOE  
You're walking with a limp.

DONNER  
A *giant* leap.

CHLOE  
Jen saw you leaving Nadia's when she went out for her morning run.

DONNER  
Jen should keep those things to herself.

CHLOE  
And you should keep it in your pants. It's launch day.

DONNER  
Was I supposed to wear eye shadow?

CHLOE  
It's for my *mother*. Jerk....

Clearly, these two have heat. They head up AN OPEN FLIGHT OF METAL STAIRS to

#### **AN UPPER CATWALK**

That overlooks the Control Room floor. Off the catwalk is a huge, glass walled

#### **CONFERENCE ROOM**

This is where the PRESS CONFERENCE is being held. The astronauts are sitting at a dais with MIKE GOSS, who turns to Chloe as she enters, introducing..

MIKE GOSS

Chloe Barnes...

CHLOE

Forgot we were leaving today...

Which brings a few chuckles, as she takes her seat. Behind the dais is a vid panel with a live shot of Cygnus orbiting Earth.

Opposite the astronauts, are about twenty reporters - one of whom was in mid-question....

REPORTER

I was asking about sex in space.

Nadia winks at Donner - who has taken a place beside TED CHO and others in the support staff near the door.

MINTZ

We men have all been given reversible vasectomies. And all of us will be wearing kermits...

Mintz holds up a card with small green dots on it.

MINTZ (CONT'D)

...libido inhibitors behind our ears.

CHLOE

Our hands will be on the mission and off each other.

That gets a laugh. Oddly (or maybe not so) Chloe's eyes dart to Donner.

ANOTHER REPORTER

And what will you miss the most?

JEN

Sunrises, sunsets...

WASSENFELDER

My HALO buddies, and in space... there is no pizza.

That get a laugh....

AJAY SHARMA

And no chicken vindaloo, which I will miss greatly. Also I will miss my good friend and mentor, Maddux Donner. He will be with me in mind and spirit.

Donner nods to Ajay, clearly they have a connection.

WILLIAMS

But why are any of you going at all?

TREVOR WILLIAMS - the Anderson Cooper of the BBC presses a question from the front row.

WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Why send hungry, emotional pinatas when probes and rovers can do the job?

From Donner's suddenly set jaw, we understand that this is the reporter he was talking about earlier.

MIKE GOSS

This is a six year mission to seven planets - it's far too complex.

WILLIAMS

And manned flights are sixty percent more successful - I've read the hype. Would you call the last manned mission to Mars a success?

MIKE GOSS

Three of us in this room were there... we'd all say yes.

His eyes go to

DONNER and TED CHO - NEAR THE DOOR - Next to Ted is his wife, EVE WELLER-CHO, 38. She gives Ted's hand a squeeze - and a look that says this has been his cross to bear.

WILLIAMS

Despite deserting two astronauts on the planet's surface.

Donner tenses...

MIKE GOSS

(bristles)

We knew the risks twelve years ago and these people know the risks now.

WILLIAMS

Do they? It seems to me that, aside from your Mission Commander, this is a very green crew.

DONNER

(sotto to Ted)

Know where this is going...

TED

Let him handle it, Donner.

MIKE GOSS

This crew was picked for its skills  
and compatibility.

WILLIAMS

But clearly not its experience.

MIKE GOSS

You're fishing, Trevor...

WILLIAMS

Then I'll be more specific. I think  
we in the press were all surprised  
when Donner and Cho weren't selected.

All eyes now on Donner and Ted... Donner biting his tongue.

MIKE GOSS

They're alternates.

WILLIAMS

But why? Does it have something to  
do with what happened on Mars?

And Donner just can't help himself.

DONNER

The man just said it didn't.

WILLIAMS

That's not what I heard.

DONNER

You only hear what you want to hear.

TED

Donner...

WILLIAMS

The truth would be nice, for once.  
I still don't think we have a straight  
answer. Why haven't the cockpit  
transcripts been released? I think  
we'd all like to know what happened.

DONNER

There was a storm. We had to  
launch...

WILLIAMS

Did you? Or did you and Cho panic  
and blow out of there to save your  
own skin?

DONNER

You little....

And Donner makes a dive for him. Tackles him to the floor.

TED

Donner!

WASSENFELDER

Whoa... *Rumble!*

The astronauts... and the world... looking on in horror.

**INT. A SMALL SIDE ROOM -- TIME CUT**

Goss in Donner's face. They are alone.

MIKE GOSS

What kind of a cowboy asshole are you? You jump the BBC on launch day? At the *press conference*?

DONNER

He's been asking for it since...

MIKE GOSS

He's a noisy motherfucker who sticks his nose where it doesn't belong. But you know what? Handling him is *not your job*. And it's *not your job* to talk about Mars, and it's *not your job* to question my judgment. Your job is to back up Ajay and make sure that ship's running properly. Only, that's not going to be your job much longer... because, as soon as I can get someone else up to speed, I'm getting you discharged from the program.

Donner is stunned.

MIKE GOSS (CONT'D)

Now get out there and say goodbye to the crew.

**INT. MISSION CONTROL - CATWALK / CONTROL ROOM -- DAY**

Donner emerges from the room, numb. Looks down at the astronauts on the control room floor as they hug goodbye to their friends, lovers, and colleagues.

DONNER (V.O.)

I've always been one of those people who believes that you create your own destiny....

Donner finds CHLOE looking up at him. There's regret in both their eyes... and a strange feeling that they're not done with each other yet.

DONNER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 ... And, through a few bad decisions,  
 I've certainly made mine.

Donner shrugs to her - so he's a fuck up. Chloe smiles and shakes her head - yes he is. Then she turns away and Donner heads down to the floor. But not before...

Each of them looks back to the other. Missing each other's look by a heartbeat. Chloe passes:

**ARNEL POE AND WASSENFELDER - ON THE FLOOR**

as they say their goodbyes. ARNEL, 25, Mission Programmer and a fellow geek, shares a secret with his astronaut buddy.

ARNEL POE  
 ...Your collection's in the vid bank.  
 All 369 hours of it.

WASSENFELDER  
 Dude...

They bump fists.

ARNEL POE  
 But you gotta crack the code, first.

WASSENFELDER  
 Asshole.

Next to them are

**EVRAM MINTZ AND CLAIRE DOUCETTE**

CLAIRE, 37, and the attractive French Flight Surgeon, gives Mintz a kiss, reacting to the alcohol on his breath.

CLAIRE  
 You're at least a point two. I could  
 ground you right now.

MINTZ  
 But you won't, because you love me...  
 and there's no vodka in space.

Then NADIA passes and we follow her to

**DONNER**

as he arrives on the floor. She leans in and whispers...

NADIA  
 I like fighters. Ladies room in  
 five minutes.

And she moves on... quickly replaced by

AJAY

Wassenfelder and I thought you rocked.

DONNER

Unfortunately Goss didn't. I guess it's a pretty good example of why I'm not on this mission.

AJAY

But he knows that there is no way that I can do this without you. You and me and that ship are a three - way, Donner.

DONNER

(smiles)

A team maybe... a trio...

AJAY

Yes. We are each essential. And you cannot blame yourself for not being chosen for the crew. This is the way it was meant to be.

DONNER

You think so, Aj?

AJAY

I am positive. We all have our individual paths, Maddux. Our challenges and problems to work out. Clearly, your path is here on earth.

Ajay gives him a long, emotional hug...

AJAY (CONT'D)

We are brothers. I will be with you helping always, in spirit.

And Ajay breaks the hug and heads off.

DONNER (V.O.)

And then there are those who feel that it's all mapped out for us by someone or something else. That we really don't have any control at all.

Donner's eyes find

**MIKE GOSS AND ROLLIE CRANE**

Shaking hands... something dark in both of their eyes. Goss sees the guilt in Rollie's.

MIKE GOSS

They'll know soon enough, Rollie.  
Your job is to keep them from asking  
questions.

Rollie nods and moves on. We hang on Goss as he looks over  
to Eve Weller-Cho. Whatever it is, she knows it, too.

RESUME DONNER - who has been watching (but not hearing) this  
exchange.

DONNER (V.O.)

It's that kind of thinking that makes  
me nervous. Because being a human  
in space is all *about* control.

**INT. UNITY TWO SHUTTLE CRAFT -- DAY**

The crew in full pressure suits and helmets, lying on their  
backs ready for launch. All feeling the importance of the  
moment. And the fear.

TED CHO'S VOICE (RADIO)

...Eight.. Seven... six...

CHLOE

Is anyone aware that Mercury's in  
retrograde?

DONNER (V.O.)

There is simply no room for error in  
space.

TED CHO'S VOICE

...And we have ignition....

HEAR A GIANT ROAR... the craft vibrating.....

TED CHO'S VOICE (Radio)

And lift off...

**INT. MISSION CONTROL - CONTROL ROOM -- DAY**

The image of a huge rocket lifting off the pad on the vid  
screen - it's sound throbbing from the speakers.

DONNER AND TED CHO watch from their stations - Donner aching  
to be onboard, Ted, the voice of Mission Control.

TED

The first step on the voyage to the  
planets.

Then find

**EVE CHO AND MIKE GOSS**

as she approaches Goss' Flight Director station. They watch the rising rocket for a moment, then

EVE

How many do you think would've gone,  
if we'd told them?

MIKE GOSS

That's a weak minded question, Eve.

He looks at her with ice cold eyes. This is a Goss we haven't seen.

MIKE GOSS (CONT'D)

But the answer is all of them. Every  
single one.

EVE

Thank you. I'll be able to sleep  
tonight.

And, as they turn back to the rising spacecraft HEAR

TED

Godspeed, Unity Two... Godspeed...

TO BLACK

END OF ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

FADE IN:

**INT. CYGNUS - AIRLOCK BAY - DEEP SPACE**

On a fuzzy, flesh colored image... that slowly comes into focus:

A WOMAN FLOATING, weightless, nude, and *nine months pregnant*. It's CHLOE - 37, now. Floating eerily, serenely, in a deep blue light... stars visible behind her through the long, thick vista panes. Floating past the wall-racked space suits and EVA packs that she certainly should be wearing. Something is very wrong.

HEAR RADIO CHATTER - stress in the pilot, TED CHO'S, voice.

TED (RADIO)

... T-minus one twenty to burn... HA and HP are NA. Pitch zero, niner, niner.... Donner, where are you on the thrusters?

**EXT. CYGNUS - SECONDARY TRUSS - DEEP SPACE**

MADDUX DONNER, at this point in time 41 years old, floats in a full EVA suit, sweating, exhausted, working with a fierce intensity on a thruster.

DONNER

I'll be done in time for the burn.  
If you have to, leave me behind.

He looks past the truss to

THE PLANET they're orbiting. Cold, dark... but SOMETHING VERY BRIGHT emerging from behind it.... like the sun emerging in an eclipse. Donner is clearly frightened.

DONNER (CONT'D)

It's coming, Ted. You copy that?  
It's coming. *Continue the sequence.*

TED (RADIO)

(hesitates, then...)  
...Stabilizers at one-four-zero...  
thrusters - seven-niner-seven...  
shield generators are engaged...

DONNER

Oh my God... she's out.

Donner reacting as he sees:

CHLOE, pregnant and naked, floating into an airlock.

DONNER (CONT'D)

Chloe's out. Do you copy? She's entering the aft port airlock. How the hell'd she get out?

**CHLOE - IN THE CYGNUS AIRLOCK**

She serenely punches a button that seals the airlock doors behind her.... then turns to the keypad that will open the iris leaves of the gate into space.

There's something madonna-like about her. Something beatific. Graceful. She looks up through the airlock's window... and makes eye contact with

**DONNER - OUTSIDE ON THE TRUSS**

It is an electric, intimate moment as their eyes meet. Something that jolts Donner to his core.

DONNER

Chloe... please don't...

As if in answer, a reassuring smile dawns on her face... then she turns her attention back to the keypad.

DONNER (CONT'D)

No... Chloe! Somebody get down here and stop her! Ted?

But no one can hear him - RADIO STATIC filling his helmet as

THE LIGHT SOURCE - emerges. Brilliant. Blinding.

ITS RAYS lighting up the ship. Moving across toward

CHLOE - IN THE LOCK as she carefully keys in the code...

And then DONNER'S HANDS find what's been jamming the thruster nozzle. Something curious. A golf ball sized, porcelain FIGURINE HEAD OF AN ELEPHANT, worn and broken off at the neck. Donner seems to recognize it. The elephant head beginning to glow as

THE LIGHT hits it and Chloe's airlock. The iris leaves start to open - to expose her to the vacuum of space. To the searing heat of the light.

DONNER (CONT'D)

*Chloe!*

Then he, too, is hit by the light. Donner looks to the orb and its blinding brilliance, then his face suddenly changes. Something revelatory in his expression. In what he's seeing. Then there's

A STUNNING BRILLIANT FLASH

**INT. MISSION CONTROL - CONTROL ROOM -- NIGHT**

DONNER awakens with a small jolt. Breathless. Sweating. *THIS HAS BEEN HIS DREAM.* And, from the way he sighs, he's had it before. Takes a long moment to compose himself.

He's on a couch in the corner of the room, having been relieved by another shift. Stands groggily, picks up his baseball, and crosses to TED, who's also been relieved, but is hanging on the perimeter.

DONNER

Status?

TED

Off watch crew's in quarters. Rollie's on a walk-through with Solomon. EECOM's working on a small vent leak. No biggy. We should go home - get some rest.

Donner nods... then looks at the live shot of Cygnus orbiting. Remembering his dream. Trying to make sense of it.

DONNER

You're a Buddhist, right?

TED

Raised as one.

DONNER

Where do you come down on fate?

TED

Fate?

DONNER

Predestination. Feeling that the future is somehow out of your control.

TED

Don't believe it. Neither did Buddha.

DONNER

It's bullshit, right?

TED

Bullshit.

DONNER

Right.

Then he manages a thin, disappointed smile and, with one last look to the image of Cygnus, heads off. Hold on Ted... then to

**INT. CHLOE'S BAY -- NIGHT**

This is her private quarters. Not huge - but ample. A bed, a desk, some shelves.

CHLOE looks into LENS - speaking into a hidden wall camera at her desk.

CHLOE

So this is night one of day one and we're still in near earth orbit. They want us to talk about anything - about how we feel.

**INT. AJAY'S BAY -- NIGHT**

AJAY

I am so... proud to be the engineer on this ship. She is my responsibility. My destiny. This voyage with her is my karma. I am in awe and filled with an indescribable joy.

**INT. WASSENFELDER'S BAY -- NIGHT**

WASSENFELDER

I know you guys are monitoring this. I mean, you tell us it's private, but seriously? So I'm gonna pull down my pants and show you crack....

**INT. JEN CRANE'S BAY -- NIGHT**

JEN

...feels strange not to be sleeping with Rollie. But it's better for crew morale. And we were celibate for three months last year during the ship orientation -- so we're cool with it. I guess....

**INT. CHLOE'S BAY -- NIGHT**

CHLOE

Mom, if I ever let you see this, it was a perfect launch, a flawless docking, and the ship's in incredible shape. So much for your horoscope...

And then Chloe reacts to AN ODD, HUMAN SOUND echoing from somewhere deep in the ship. It's chilling. Chloe TURNS OFF THE CAMERA.

And we GO WIDE, as she stands and crosses to her door. Opens it and steps into

**THE DORM CORRIDOR**

Lit in a deep blue light, it's long and very narrow. Chloe listens... nothing but the whoosh of air in pipes and the deep rumble of the ship. And then, just as she's about to turn away...

THE SOUND AGAIN. A baby crying? Maybe. As Chloe heads down the tunnel... her chest tightening, HEAR

BEV BARNES (PRE-LAP)

... Why you would ever want to do a job that makes you vomit.

FLASHBACK TO

**INT. CHLOE'S BATHROOM -- NIGHT**

Chloe brushing her teeth, still looking a little green. The time/date function on the mirror tells us it's 08:46 PM on 09/12/50. BEV BARNES is again in the vid call window, looking seven years younger than the last time we saw her.

CHLOE

I'm a geologist, Mom.

BEV BARNES

And we don't have plenty of rocks on this planet?

CHLOE

I want Venus rocks. Mars rocks.

BEV BARNES

Let the robots do it. Look at you astronaut girls - short hair, no make-up, you all look like men.

Chloe fluffs her short hair in the mirror, appraisingly. It is kinda boyish.

BEV BARNES (CONT'D)

And what *about* sex?

Chloe suddenly feels an unpleasant urge. Disappears from the mirror.

BEV BARNES (CONT'D)

Do they have sex in space? For crissakes, these are your best years...

THE SOUND OF CHLOE SPEWING off camera.

BEV BARNES (CONT'D)

Did you just vomit?

**INT. TRAINING CENTER / LOCKER ROOM -- DAY**

Jen and Chloe at their lockers.

JEN

Pregnant?

CHLOE

I'm puking in the morning, I'm puking at night. You're the biologist, tell me.

Chloe produces a lunch bag from her locker and shoves it into Jen's hands. Off Jen's look...

CHLOE (CONT'D)

A urine sample. I dribbled a little - sorry.

JEN

You're serious.

(she is)

Yknow, they used to sell tests in drugstores.

CHLOE

I'm not looking for a history lesson. And if I go to my gyno, they'll know.

JEN

So you're not a space nun.

CHLOE

I am now.

JEN

Who's the father?

CHLOE

Don't ask - won't tell.

JEN

And you did it without protection?

CHLOE

We were drunk and he swore he'd had a vasectomy.

(off her look)

Please, don't make me feel any more stupid.

JEN

So, if you're pregnant - what the hell you gonna do?

Chloe's face tell us she doesn't have a clue.

**INT. CYGNUS / TRUSS CORRIDOR-- NIGHT - RESUMING PRESENT**

Dark and very long - this is the main corridor of the ship. It's on energy conserve mode, now and very creepy.

ON CHLOE moving slowly down it. Listening as she passes bulkhead doors on either side labeled: SECTOR 1 and SECTOR 2. Then the SOUND AGAIN -- ambiguous but strangely human ... and clearly up ahead. Chloe presses on....

So quiet now. Just the hum of the ship. Chloe's breathing shallow and fast... as she approaches the bulkheads to Sectors 3 and 4....

A LOUD METALLIC SWOOSH shatters the silence.

CHLOE jumps out of her skin... then turns to see

ROLLIE and the prep crew commander, SOLOMON emerge from the open SECTOR 4 DOOR. Something furtive between them. Both very surprised to see Chloe.

ROLLIE

Chloe... aren't you off watch?

CHLOE

I'm sorry. I just... heard something down here.

SOLOMON

Heard something?

CHLOE

Yeah... um...

SOLOMON

From your bay?

CHLOE

I know it's weird, but...

ROLLIE

What did it sound like?

CHLOE

(beat)

I don't know. High pitched?

(beat)

Probably just the ship, right? Not used to the sounds.

There's an awkward pause.

SOLOMON

Yeah, probably the truss creaking.

CHLOE  
The truss creaking.

SOLOMON  
It contracts and expands in the shade  
and sun.

CHLOE  
Right. I'm sure that's what it was.  
The truss...  
(beat)  
Anyway...

ROLLIE  
You should go back to your bay, Chloe.  
Get some rest for tomorrow.

CHLOE  
My thoughts, exactly. 'Night guys.

She turns, and heads back up the corridor, clearly disturbed.

HOLD ON ROLLIE AND SOLOMON - something dark and unspoken -  
then to

**INT. CYGNUS / FLIGHT DECK-- DAY**

Paula Ochoa looks into camera with a big smile, Nadia and  
Rollie programming the ship's controls in the b.g.

PAULA  
Hola, estudiantas! Bienvenidos a  
Cygnus! Live from the flight deck of  
Cygnus, this is our first broadcast  
from space!

Yes... a bilingual broadcast from space. Actually trilingual.  
Paula is also signing for the deaf. It is both incredibly  
good willed... and obnoxious.

INTERCUT WITH

**INT. MISSION CONTROL - CONTROL ROOM -- DAY**

Paula's is the largest of the many images - most of Cygnus'  
interior - displayed on the room's huge vid screen.

PAULA  
The astronauts who prepared Cygnus  
are on their way home, so we finally  
have the ship to ourselves. I'm  
going to give you a little tour.

DONNER AND TED CHO watch from their stations, as Paula repeats  
the above in Spanish.

DONNER

Will somebody please change the channel?

This gets some laughter and some hisses.

PAULA

At the moment. We're on the Flight Deck, which is where we control the ship. Mission Commander Rollie Crane and Pilot Nadia Ghukov are programming the rocket burn that will send us on our way to Venus.

As she continues in Spanish, find...

CLAIRE DOUCETTE - the Flight Surgeon at her station, monitoring a screen split into eight sections, each section monitoring the vitals of one astronaut. She reacts as something puzzling appears in two of the panels. Keys her mic.

CLAIRE

Flight, this is Surgeon.

ACROSS THE ROOM - MIKE GOSS

Responds from his station.

MIKE GOSS

This is Flight.

CLAIRE

I've got a couple of weird EKGs from Rollie and Ajay. They're similar - so it's probably a glitch. I'm going to have Evram adjust the contact points on their med bands - just advising.

MIKE GOSS

Keep me posted.

Then he turns to

EVE WELLER-CHO - who has been monitoring from her post behind him. Crosses.

EVE

Could be a transmission problem.

MIKE GOSS

Could be.

(into mic)

FIDO, what's the max time we have left in orbit?

FIDO (Flight Dynamics Officer)  
 We need the Venus burn in thirty  
 hours and sixteen minutes. It's a  
 pretty hard window.

Off their dark concern...

**INT. CYGNUS / BIO-LAB -- DAY**

A bay filled with isolation tanks, incubators, and scientific  
 equipment. Also a large hydroponic tank with many, many  
 small plants growing out of it.

Chloe and Jen tend small tomato plants as...

JEN  
 My Rollie *strange*?

CHLOE  
 Strange last night. He and Solomon  
 acted as if I'd caught them doing  
 something.

JEN  
 Doing something.

CHLOE  
 You know what I mean. Doing something  
 professionally sneaky.

JEN  
 Sneaky?

CHLOE  
 Skulky.

JEN  
 Honey, you are digging yourself into  
 a very deep hole.

CHLOE  
 I'm just asking you if you've noticed  
 anything...

JEN  
 No! And what were you doing down  
 there anyway? We were supposed to  
 be in quarters.

CHLOE  
 I... thought I heard something.

JEN  
 You heard something in your bay that  
 was coming from the other side of  
 the ship? What? Was it like an  
 explosion? A siren?

CHLOE

You didn't hear anything strange  
last night?

JEN

No.

A beat, then Chloe sighs...

CHLOE

It was probably just the truss  
expanding. I dunno. I haven't been  
sleeping much....

PAULA enters with AJAY, still doing her show. We notice  
that they direct their remarks to cameras mounted on the  
walls of the ship. Big Brother. Paula signs as Ajay  
enthusiastically explains that...

AJAY

... Our grav suits contain nano fibers  
that are pulled toward the deck  
electromagnetically. But anything  
without the fibers, like Jen's  
tomatoes, will float.

Jen accommodates him by pulling a small, green tomato off  
one plant and sending it floating across the room.

EVRAM MINTZ sticks his head in.

MINTZ

Sorry to interrupt. I need to check  
Ajay's med band.

AJAY

Is there a problem, Evram?

MINTZ

We think it's just an adjustment.

A beat. Then...

AJAY

I'm sorry, Paula.

PAULA

It's okay Ajay. Gracias por su ayuda.

Ajay heads out as Paula resumes her show...

PAULA (CONT'D)

Y este es nuestro Bio-Lab.

**INT. MISSION CONTROL - CONTROL ROOM -- DAY**

Mike Goss, and Eve Weller-Cho, are standing behind Claire Doucette at her station - all eyes on Claire's screen. This is the POV of

DONNER, who leans over to TED CHO -

DONNER  
What's up with that?

TED  
Glitch in Rollie's and Ajay's med bands. They're trying to get a clean read.

AT CLAIRE'S STATION - Claire's in communication with Mintz.

CLAIRE  
That's not clearing up anything, Ev.

**INT. CYGNUS / MED-BAY -- DAY**

Mintz has both Rollie and Ajay stripped to the waist - adjusting a thin blue band around their torsos.

MINTZ  
Now?

CLAIRE  
Negative.

ROLLIE  
Would you please relay that this is a complete waste of time? I have work to do.

**RESUMING CLAIRE'S STATION**

EVE  
Why don't they try a couple of new bands?

CLAIRE  
Ev... try fitting them with new bands.

Eve glances nervously over to Ted and tries to smile. Goss lets his eyes drift up to

THE VID SCREEN - where Paula has moved on to

**THE OBSERVATION DECK**

PAULA  
...our favorite place, the Observation Deck, where we look at our amazing  
(MORE)

PAULA (CONT'D)  
 universe, and also watch movies and  
 YouTube from our data bank.

The view out the large vista pane is stunning. Paula hits a switch and the vista pane instantly clouds over, becoming a vid screen. She moves over to

WASSENFELDER, who is busy typing into a projected keyboard, the screen in front of him a mass of code and numerical strings.

PAULA (CONT'D)  
 This is our physicist, Steven  
 Wassenfelder. Looks like he's doing  
 something very complicated. Can you  
 tell us what you're doing, Steven?

WASSENFELDER  
 You probably don't want to know.

PAULA  
 No. We would very much like to know.  
 (into camera)  
 Probably calculating a trajectory.  
 Muy difficil!

WASSENFELDER  
 Really, I don't think...

PAULA  
 Don't be so condescending. Diganos.  
 Tell us.

WASSENFELDER  
 Well actually I'm trying to crack a  
 512 bit encryption code....

Paula smiles into camera, impressed, signing furiously.

PAULA  
 A hah!

WASSENFELDER  
 ... To get to the porn my friend  
 loaded into the bank.

Paula's hands stop.

**INT. MISSION CONTROL - CONTROL ROOM**

GOSS sighs as the room reacts around him.

MIKE GOSS  
 What's the delay to air?

SOMEONE IN BACK

Thirty seconds.

MIKE GOSS

Then you've got twenty to put a lid on it. And Ted?

TED

Sir?

MIKE GOSS

Give our boy genius a spanking.

The lightness in the room dissipates quickly as Goss turns his attention back to

CLAIRE'S SCREEN - which has two EKGs running across it. Claire freezes the screen and points out...

CLAIRE

See that blip there? Between the S1 wave and the S2? It's a mid-systolic ejection murmur.

EVE

And both of them have it? That's impossible.

And yet there's something in her look to Goss that says it's not impossible at all. That she and he know the cause. He's not giving up yet.

MIKE GOSS

These are the old med-bands - let's see what the new ones say.

CLAIRE

These are the new ones.

(beat)

We're going to have to do a heart scan before I can clear either one of them for flight.

Off Goss and Eve...

TO BLACK

END OF ACT TWO

## ACT THREE

FADE IN:

**INT. CYGNUS / MEDICAL BAY -- DAY**

Rollie is lying down, under a thin bridge that is the scanner. Mintz types in the settings on a projected keyboard, as Ajay awaits his turn.

ROLLIE

This is insanity. We both had flight physicals three days ago. The scans were perfect.

MINTZ

Rollie, I'm just as mystified as you are, believe me.

AJAY

And believe me. Every person on this flight has been chosen to be here. To be tested. There are obstacles that each of us, individually and collectively, must overcome in order to begin anew. Ganesha does this for us. This is a challenge that we will overcome. I belong here. Rollie belongs here. This will work out.

Mintz and Rollie look at each other, nonplussed. Then...

MINTZ

Deep breath, Rollie....

A BEAM OF LIGHT scans down his torso.

**INT. CYGNUS / OBSERVATION DECK -- DAY**

Chloe, Jen, Paula, Nadia and Wassenfelder are gathered - Chloe and Paula comforting a freaked out Jen. Wassenfelder sits in his corner working on cracking the porno code.

PAULA

It's just not possible for both of them to come down with heart murmurs. Not a chance.

CHLOE

Has to be equipment error.

JEN

It has to be. I mean, right? You said Mercury's in retrograde. Maybe this is a Mercury in retrograde thing.

NADIA

I'll notify Mission Control.

CHLOE

A suggestion already made by my mother. She can't understand how the Agency, which is ostensibly in the planet and star business, can ignore astrology when planning missions.

WASSENFELDER

She has a point.

NADIA

Don't be insulting. You're a physicist.

PAULA

He watches porno.

WASSENFELDER

A *theoretical* physicist. I welcome variables of all kinds.

He waggles his tongue at Paula, then continues to work on the code.

PAULA

You disgust me.

NADIA

And we should be concerned with alignment of the planets?

WASSENFELDER

In one context, we already are. We have only twenty-eight hours to leave Earth orbit or we miss Venus.

NADIA

We can hit Venus if we leave in a week.

WASSENFELDER

Sure - with a max burn that will consume 10,000 pounds of liquid hydrogen.... and we'd be late enough that, if we actually want to *land* on Venus, we'd have to miss Mercury at her apogee. Which doesn't sound too important, until you realize that we need *that* to alter our trajectory around the Sun, so we can slingshot and hit Mars - I won't even get into the *outer planets*.

(MORE)

WASSENFELDER (CONT'D)

(beat)

So you see? We're hopelessly dependent on planet alignment. As believed the ancients who came up with astrology. Who's to say that it's not all connected?

CHLOE

You will never be introduced to my mother.

JEN

But what you're saying is that we have to use Rollie and Ajay, or we scrub the mission.

WASSENFELDER

Unfortunately, I'm not.  
(slams his keyboard)  
Damn... Thought I had it.

PAULA

It's a 512 bit encryption code. You won't break it in a hundred years.

WASSENFELDER

Wrong. I did get it.

He hits a key and the vista pane clouds over and becomes a giant vid screen.

A WOMAN IN LINGERIE appears on screen doing a slow strip tease.

CHLOE

Do you *mind*?

Wassenfelder turns it off with a confused sigh.

WASSENFELDER

Wasn't interested in it anyway.  
Must be the kermit.

CHLOE

Why are you not saying that we have to use Rollie and Ajay or scrub the mission?

Nadia answers for him.

NADIA

Because he knows there's a service pod leaving for the space station tomorrow morning. The alternates could be on it.

She smiles at Chloe and Jen.

NADIA (CONT'D)

(to Jen)

Hello, Ted.

(Chloe)

Hello, Donner.

Said in a way that clearly suggests that they've had prior relationships with these men.

CHLOE

Don't you dare go there...

NADIA

Nothing like old boyfriends to make a trip interesting.

Which holds a double meaning for Chloe. Is her dream for real?

**INT. MISSION CONTROL - CONTROL ROOM -- DAY -- PRESENT**

WITH MIKE GOSS, EVE CHO, and the FIDO as they climb the steps toward the conference room.

FIDO

We'll need to sterilize the service pod, do flight physicals, upload their profiles to the ship...

MIKE GOSS

I'm not making a decision until we hear from Claire.

FIDO

We can't push the Venus burn...

MIKE GOSS

I *get it*. We have 27 hours to leave earth orbit or wait six years for the next window.

They head into the conference room -- Eve glancing down at her husband on the floor. Clearly upset.

**ON TED CHO AND DONNER**

Very on edge. Donner really working the baseball in his hands, as he looks up at the conference room.

DONNER

If there's something wrong with Ajay and Rollie...

TED

Don't even think it.

But, of course, that's all he's thinking.

DONNER

When I asked you about fate last night...

TED

I don't believe in fate - I'm a Buddhist.

DONNER

I didn't tell you something.

TED

What?

DONNER

I've been having a dream about this mission.

TED

And...?

DONNER

You and I are both on it.

Hold on their look... then to

**INT. MISSION CONTROL / CONFERENCE ROOM -- DAY**

Claire facing an imposing group of Mike Goss, Eve Cho, the FIDO... and several very high ranking officials. She uses a laser pointer to highlight areas of the men's scans being shown on the vid screen.

CLAIRE

This is calcified plaque... here... here... and here. It's on their aortic valves which is causing the stenosis. I don't know how it got there, or why it wasn't there 3 days ago, but I've checked the results five times and it's real.

MIKE GOSS

Can Mintz remove it?

CLAIRE

He has the equipment and skills - but the men would need time to recover and might never recover fully.

AN AGENCY MAN

Isn't this similar to what eliminated the first mission commander?

CLAIRE

That was arterial blockage - but his plaque appeared suddenly, just like this.

AN AGENCY MAN

And the odds for three occurrences...

CLAIRE

Off the chart.

A chill runs through the room.

MIKE GOSS

Put a med team on it, Claire. Check for everything - diet, environment, viruses, run the genomes of the men -- hell, run the entire crew. We have to know what's causing this.

CLAIRE

I can't clear these men for space travel.

MIKE GOSS

I think we got that. You're excused.

Goss turns to the FIDO.

FIDO

I'll have Launch get the pod ready.

MIKE GOSS

I want a few more minutes.

The FIDO nods and heads out behind Claire. Nothing more is said until the door is closed behind them. Then the mood is instantly contentious.

EVE

You don't need more time, Mike. We know damned well what's causing this, and they're *going*.

MIKE GOSS

This is *our* mission. I'm not gonna let that... *thing* - dictate our crew. Wassenfelder's bad enough...

EVE

We don't have a *choice*. You think for a moment that I want to send my husband?

MIKE GOSS

That makes two of us.

(MORE)

MIKE GOSS (CONT'D)

And Donner for a hundred reasons.  
Who's to say it won't give *them* heart  
murmurs?

EVE

There are no guarantees, Mike. None.  
We're in uncharted territory here.  
But this seems to be what it wants.  
And whether you want to face it or  
not, it has more say in this mission  
than we do.

And Goss doesn't like that at all.

**INT. MISSION CONTROL - CONTROL ROOM**

All eyes on the conference room, as Eve Cho emerges. Crosses  
down the stairway to her husband and Donner.

EVE

You're both going to need immediate  
physicals. You'll have tonight to  
get your personal things in order,  
then launch in the service pod  
tomorrow morning.

Said like a prison sentence. Donner unable to hide his  
excitement.

DONNER

Report to Medical now?

EVE

Yes, Donner, leave us.

He heads off... leaving Ted and Eve alone. This is a  
difficult moment for both of them.

TED

This wasn't supposed to happen.

EVE

Oh, Ted... you don't know the half  
of it.

(beat, her eyes  
hardening)

We need to see the new Mission  
Commander upstairs.

Said in a way that chills, Ted. He looks up to see Goss and  
several of the higher ups looking down at him from the  
catwalk. Whatever this is... it isn't good.

MUSIC UP as our characters get the word....

**INT. CYGNUS / TRUSS CORRIDOR-- DAY**

Mintz and Rollie move solemnly down it, into

**THE OBSERVATION DECK**

where the crew has been waiting.

ON JEN... as she makes eye contact with her husband... and AJAY as his eyes meet Mintz's. Both get the same crushing answer. Both utterly devastated. Ajay slowly shaking his head in utter disbelief.

**INT. SPACE AGENCY MEDICAL FACILITY**

Donner under a more deluxe version of the scanning device used on Cygnus for Rollie. The BEAM OF LIGHT traces across his naked body...

**INT. MISSION CONTROL / CONFERENCE ROOM**

Ted is seated across from everyone except his wife. Eve sits at his side... as Mike Goss gives Ted some incredible news. We can't hear what Goss is saying -- but Ted is clearly floored. Incredulous. He looks to his wife for confirmation.

She nods and takes his hand.

**THE OBSERVATION DECK - RESUMING**

As Jen stands numbly and crosses into her husband's arms.

Ajay stands... Chloe and Wassenfelder try to comfort him... but he's not hearing anyone or anything. Moves slowly - like a dead man walking - out of the room.

**THE MEDICAL FACILITY - RESUMING**

As Donner pulls on his pants. CLAIRE enters...

CLAIRE  
Clean bill of health, but the pants  
stay off.

DONNER  
Excuse me?

CLAIRE  
You need your vasectomy, Donner.

DONNER  
I don't understand.

CLAIRE  
Your sterilization. It's painless.

DONNER

I know. I had it done when I got  
back from Mars.

Claire rechecks the image on her vid pad.

CLAIRE

Not according to your scan.

Off Donner - blown away by this revelation, to:

**THE CONFERENCE ROOM**

And the even more blown away Ted Cho. He just sits there in  
silence... then

TED

When are you planning to tell the  
crew?

MIKE GOSS

In forty-one days. When you get to  
Venus.

And off Ted's look to Eve...

TO BLACK

END OF ACT THREE

## ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

**EXT. EARTH ORBIT / CYGNUS**

The ship floating over her home planet, moving from daylight into night.

**INT. AJAY'S BAY -- NIGHT**

Ajay talking into camera; his personal log. He is numb with pain. And, as he speaks, *applies paint to his face*. A long red line from his brow to the beginning of his nose....

AJAY

I have always believed that this was my mission. My ship. That I was traveling on the path that Ganesha wanted for me. That this... that out here... were where my challenges and obstacles would be. I feel so.... lost, now.

He now paints the end of his nose white... and white from the corners of his eyes out.

AJAY (CONT'D)

I cannot understand this - I cannot. Who needs this path more than I?

Ajay lets the question hang.

**EXT. DONNER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT**

A modern block of base apartments. Simple, clean design. The street empty and dead quiet at this time of night.

Find a lone man heading up the walk -- a brief/bag slung over his shoulder - a baseball in his hand. Donner. He pauses for a moment to look up at

THE NIGHT SKY. Tantalizingly close. And disturbing. HEAR

DONNER (PRE-LAP)

Give them a *couple of minutes*.

MIKE GOSS (PRE-LAP)

You don't have two minutes!

**INT. DONNER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT**

Donner slumped on a couch watching A VID SCREEN - playing a recording from:

**INT. MARS LANDER -- DAY**

Time readouts and other technical data stream in the corner of the screen -- but this is clearly a cockpit camera view of Donner's moment of reckoning.

Watching the final moment of the video:

DONNER

We'll take our chances...

MIKE GOSS (RADIO)

*Not on my watch. You will die. The mission will fail. I need that lander off the planet now. Open the damned valve!*

The alarms... the female voice... all closing in on Donner and Ted. Finally, off a silent, burdened look... both knowing that this is a defining, awful moment in their lives...

DONNER

Karen... forgive me....

Then Donner reaches up and pushes the switch to open the valve. AND THE CRAFT BUFFETS from the launch.

HOLD ON DONNER as he sits watching from his couch. Numb with pain and self-doubt. Then he stands, and looks at the room around him. Bachelor astronaut shit. His life.

And bile rises in his throat. Deep seated frustration and anger. Then he suddenly starts pulling things off the wall shelves, throwing them into a pile on the floor.

**INT. TED AND EVE CHO'S KITCHEN -- NIGHT**

Ted and Eve at the table, looking emotionally worn.

EVE

It's strictly *need to know*, Ted.  
You can understand that, can't you?

TED

I'm your *husband*. I trained the people on that mission. I'm having a hard time, okay?

(beat)

How long has Rollie known?

EVE

A couple of months. He had to be briefed on procedure. You'll get yours via private uplink as you fly.

A THREE YEAR OLD BOY enters, looking sleepy... clearly their son. Ted swallows his emotion... smiling at the boy.

TED

Hey, nunchuck. Why don't you come and help Daddy pack, then I'll put you to bed.

Ted and Eve trade a look. Their child barely bridging the chasm of betrayal.

**INT. CYGNUS / FLIGHT DECK -- NIGHT**

Quiet. Solemn. Rollie sits in his commander's seat, Jen in his lap. Something very tender about this as they look out at the stars.

JEN

Maybe I could request a replacement. Come back on the pod.

ROLLIE

There's no time for that. And six years... it's really not that much. I'll be CAPCOM - we'll talk every day.

A pause... something weighing on Rollie.

ROLLIE (CONT'D)

Jen... forgive me.  
(off her look)  
I want you to know that I was going to be there with you.

JEN

Be there with me?

ROLLIE

Yeah.

JEN

For what?

ROLLIE

(beat, covering)  
For... everything. Just remember that. And remember how much I love you.

It's a tender.. but oddly cryptic moment. Jen reaches up behind his ear and pulls Rollie's kermit off. Then pulls hers off, as well, sticking them on the console.

JEN

Show me.

She flips off the switch to the cabin lights... then they kiss tenderly, deeply.

**INT. MISSION CONTROL - CONTROL ROOM -- NIGHT**

Mike Goss and the rest of the control room can see this on one of the panes on the vid screen. They're moved.

MIKE GOSS

Let's kill the flight deck cameras  
and give the Mission Commander some  
privacy with his wife.

A sentiment shared by all. The screen goes dark.

**INT. AJAY'S BAY -- NIGHT**

The painted Ajay moves to the shrine he's built for Ganesha. Says a silent prayer, then removes the porcelain effigy of the God.

He looks at it for a long moment... his face etched in failure and resignation. Then he takes a deep breath of resolve. Tucks Ganesha into his grav suit and leaves the bay.

**EXT. DONNER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT**

Donner is a man possessed as he hauls photos, clothes, books, and space memorabilia... his life.... out onto the lawn. A large pile gathering.

**INT. TED CHO'S SON'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT**

His son has a wall shelf loaded with toys. Many of them space oriented. Ted has pulled his son up onto his hip, and they're carefully considering each toy.

TED

Now there's not much room in my  
sleeping bay, so maybe it should be  
something small.

The boy considers... then picks out a small, compact lander model. Ted looks at the model with a pain that he can't hide.

TED (CONT'D)

This is the lander Daddy piloted on  
the Mars mission.

BOY

I know.

TED

(a pause, then)  
Good choice.

Eve watches from the doorway. Feeling oddly apart. Responsible. And now, she finally releases... Allowing the tears to flow.

**INT. CYGNUS / FLIGHT DECK -- NIGHT**

Rollie and Jen remove the last of their grav suits... and begin to float weightless in their embrace. They float in effortless beauty, silhouetted against the stars outside.

**INT. CYGNUS / TRUSS CORRIDOR-- NIGHT**

Ajay moving down it... stopping in front of a metal scissor door. Opens it to reveal a complex control panel and a vid screen. Ajay starts entering instructions.

**INT. DONNER'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT**

Donner clears out a dresser... dumping two drawers into one, the easier to carry. Then opens the bedside table drawer and pauses.

THE DRAWER is stuffed with mementos of the Mars mission. Posed photos of the astronauts: Goss, Cho, Walker, Lewis and Donner. A sleeve patch. A pair of Florida Marlins tickets. And a young couple, obviously in love, posing in the stands with a caught game ball. Donner and Karen Lewis.

Hang on Donner....

**INT. FLIGHT DECK**

Rollie and Jen naked now. Just shadows. Making weightless, balletic love. And, finally, back to

**EXT. DONNER'S APARTMENT**

As WHOOSH - Donner lights his life on fire. Bitterly watches it go up in flames... looking at

THE BASEBALL in his hand. Contemplating throwing it in. Then deciding he can't. Pockets it and turns his back on the fire... heading toward his car.

**INT. CYGNUS / OBSERVATION DECK -- NIGHT**

A casual gathering. Everyone but Jen, Rollie and Ajay. Some eat their protein bar dinner.

NADIA

The way I see, they're lucky. You can't call an ambulance on the surface of Mars.

WASSENFELDER

You realize that this points to a common cause. I mean, there's no way that it occurred randomly. It could be viral, environmental, maybe something they were eating... we were eating.

He contemplates his protein bar, disappointed.

MINTZ

They're looking into everything.  
Claire's going to be monitoring all  
of us closely.

Chloe reacts to the SOUND FROM THE NIGHT BEFORE - only this time it chills her even more. Clearly the sound of A BABY CRYING. Chloe looks to the others.

CHLOE

You guys hear that?

PAULA

What?

THE CRYING AGAIN... very clear to Chloe. Freaking her. But she can see no one else is hearing it. Chloe stands... makes an excuse.

CHLOE

Y'know... I'm gonna check on Ajay.

WASSENFELDER

Tell him I got the porno up and  
running. He can pull off his kermit  
and enjoy.

As she exits,

FLASHBACK TO

**INT. DUKES -- NIGHT**

This is a cowboy dive with oldies on the playlist and astronauts at the bar. Chloe sits on a barstool sipping water nervously as AJAY approaches.

AJAY

Chloe...

CHLOE

Hey, Ajay.

AJAY

I see you're drinking water, but, if  
you would like something stronger, I  
would like to buy it for you... even  
though I don't drink.

CHLOE

That's sweet, Ajay... but I'm meeting  
someone... Jen...

Who is quickly moving in...

JEN  
Scram, Ajay. Girl talk.

AJAY  
Oh... certainly. Maybe next time.

And he moves off as Jen slides onto the stool next to Chloe.

JEN  
Somebody's got a boyfriend. If that's  
vodka, drink up.

Chloe is instantly relieved by the implied message.

CHLOE  
Thank, God... I'm not pregnant?

Jen hands her a PINK LITMUS STICK. The end is blue.

JEN  
No, you're pregnant. You're just  
not going to have the baby.

Chloe deflates.

CHLOE  
Last time I looked, it was the law.

JEN  
Chloe. Look at me. There are ways  
to take care of the problem.

CHLOE  
(a pause)  
I don't know...

JEN  
There were at least a thousand  
qualified applicants for your slot.  
Getting into this program was winning  
the lottery.

CHLOE  
I know... I just...

JEN  
You can't give it up for a lust screw.  
You can't.

Chloe looks to her for a long moment.

JEN (CONT'D)  
I know of a guy.

CHLOE  
Let me process here a little...

JEN

I know a guy. When you're ready,  
say the word.

Another moment, then...

CHLOE

I need some air...

She stands and heads out.... passing

DONNER - AT THE DOOR

DONNER

Hey, Chloe.... look...

CHLOE

Not now.

And she's out the door. HOLD on Donner, then from his side..

AJAY

Dude... you don't stand a chance.

**INT. CYGNUS / TRUSS CORRIDOR -- NIGHT**

Chloe moving slowly down it. Freaked out. Hearing A BABY CRY again. Is she crazy? And, once again, the sound leads her to the bulkhead to SECTOR 4. The crying coming from behind the door.

There's a security palm print pad next to the door. Chloe presses her hand to it -- but the door does nothing. A puzzling moment... then

A PERSON - a shadow - far down the corridor - maybe a hundred meters away - catches Chloe's eye. It could only be...

CHLOE

Ajay?

But he doesn't answer. Just disappears through an airlock door, that seals with a metallic swoosh.

Off Chloe to

**INT. FLIGHT DECK -- NIGHT**

Still dark... but Jen and Rollie have finished and are cuddled in his command chair in their grav suits.

JEN

You think we were the first?

ROLLIE

Not even close. But it is a very elite club.

JEN

You think anyone was watching?

She looks to the cabin's camera, Rollie realizing...

ROLLIE

Damn.

MIKE GOSS (radio)

Cygnus.. This is Control.

Rollie flips on the cabin lights, thinking the worst.

ROLLIE

Go ahead, Control.

MIKE GOSS

Do I have permission to turn on the Flight Deck cameras?

ROLLIE

(relieved smile to Jen)

You do, sir... and thank you for your discretion.

INTERCUTTING

**INT. MISSION CONTROL - CONTROL ROOM -- NIGHT**

Goss is at his station, looking up at the vid screen. The flight deck camera comes back up... but there are a couple of other blank screens.

MIKE GOSS

We didn't want it to wind up in Wassenfelder's vid bank.

(beat)

Listen, we just had the cameras and the operation control for the airlock corridor go offline. Can't seem to get them back up.

Rollie checks his console.

ROLLIE

Yeah, that's what I'm seeing here. I'll get Ajay down there to take a look.

CHLOE (O.S.)

Actually, I think he's down there already.

Jen and Rollie turn to CHLOE, who stands by the entrance to the flight deck.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I just saw Ajay entering the airlock corridor. I tried to follow, but I couldn't open the door.

**INT. AIRLOCK CORRIDOR -- NIGHT**

Ajay floats, weightless, in the deep blue light... chanting the Gavatri Mantra. His painted face, calm with a detached resolution, is deeply disturbing.

Lowers the helmet of the large EVA suit he's wearing over his head. Clearly preparing to leave the ship.

TO BLACK

END OF ACT FOUR

## ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

**INT. CYGNUS / AIRLOCK CORRIDOR -- NIGHT**

Ajay, still chanting, and now fully dressed in his EVA gear, punches in a code at the airlock we saw Chloe exiting at the opening of the show.

The inner leaves open.... and he floats inside the lock - only one gate between him and the void of space.

**INT. MISSION CONTROL - CONTROL ROOM -- NIGHT**

The activity upped considerably from the last time we saw it. Some very tense faces. Among them

The EECOM and GNC systems engineers, both working feverishly.

EECOM

Flight, I'm showing an EVA pack up and running.

MIKE GOSS is pacing at his station...

MIKE GOSS

*Dammit*, he's going for a walk. How soon until you can override his instructions?

EECOM

Working on it. Give us five minutes.

MIKE GOSS

If he's in the suit, we don't *have* five minutes.

(beat)

Where the hell is Donner?

FIDO

On his way in.

MIKE GOSS

And the time to Venus burn?

FIDO

Six hours, nine minutes...

CLAIRE DOUCETTE - at her station.

CLAIRE

Ajay's heart rate and BP are spiking.

MIKE GOSS

(keys a switch)

Cygnus, have you made contact?

INTERCUTTING

**INT. CYGNUS / FLIGHT DECK -- NIGHT**

Nadia is now in her seat, working with Rollie...

NADIA

Negative, Control. Rollie's running through the channels. It look like his COM's off.

MIKE GOSS

Does anyone know if Hindus commit suicide?

DONNER (O.S.)

They don't.

Goss turns as DONNER arrives - hurriedly, deeply concerned.

DONNER (CONT'D)

At least, I don't think they do. Where is he? Let me talk to him.

MIKE GOSS

He's got his COM turned off.

DONNER

Then that's not good...

CAPCOM interrupts with an advisory...

CAPCOM (RADIO)

Cygnus, be advised that you're coming up on daylight in ten, nine, eight....

**INT. THE AIRLOCK -- NIGHT**

Ajay punches in the open code, with his thick, gloved hands.

CAPCOM (RADIO)

...seven...six....five...

THE GATE LEAVES slowly iris open...

CAPCOM (CONT'D)

...four...three...

**EXT. CYGNUS / EARTH ORBIT -- NIGHT/DAY**

Ajay floats outside... and is hit by the FIRST RAYS OF DAY. His face paint eerie, in context. The only emotion that we can read is.... one of breathless rapture. Tears coming to his eyes. Hold for a long moment, then

DONNER (V.O.)

Space travel is a fool's game.

INTERCUT WITH

**INT. MISSION CONTROL - CONTROL ROOM**

Ajay's small figure now visible outside the ship on the giant vid-screen. Eve Cho joining Donner at Goss' side.

EVE

He's moving away from the ship.

DONNER

Ajay... please don't...

DONNER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Human beings are sixty percent water.

**INT. CYGNUS / OBSERVATION DECK -- DAY**

Wassenfelder, Chloe, Paula, and Jen watching through the vista pane, as Ajay floats away.

DONNER (V.O.)

They sleep, eat, defecate, can't follow directions, and explode like pinatas when exposed to the vacuum of space.

CHLOE

What's he doing?

PAULA

Putting himself in orbit.

Chloe can barely breathe.

CHLOE

Oh, Ajay....

WASSENFELDER

Wherever he's going, I hope he makes it.

Paula, standing beside him, actually puts her hand on his shoulder, sharing the sentiment.

**INT. MISSION CONTROL - CONTROL ROOM -- NIGHT**

The entire room looking at the wide shot of Cygnus over earth. You can just make out the astronaut - a small gleaming dot drifting up. Drifting away.

EECOM

Flight - We've just been able to override his programming. We have control of the airlocks.

MIKE GOSS  
Did you copy that Cygnus?

**INT. CYGNUS / FLIGHT DECK -- DAY**

ROLLIE  
We see that here, too.

NADIA  
I go out. I go out and get him.

ROLLIE  
We want to go out and get him. Do you copy?

Goss is silent... thinking....

DONNER  
Let her go, Mike....

NADIA  
I can get him!

DONNER  
Let her go.

Then...

MIKE GOSS  
*Negative.* I'll eat the loss of an EVA suit - I can't afford to lose another crew member.

The entire room deflates. Donner is numb... Goss turning to him.

MIKE GOSS (CONT'D)  
You and Cho lift off in two hours - get your ass in gear.

But this is a different Donner. This is a Donner who has burned his past. His jaw slowly stiffens. His eyes hardening with resolve.

DONNER (V.O.)  
That reporter's right about every single item... except the initial premise.

DONNER (CONT'D)  
That's it?

MIKE GOSS  
That's what?

DONNER  
You're just going to let him die?

MIKE GOSS

I have six hours to get a fifty billion dollar mission on its way to Venus. I don't have time to screw around with Ajay, Donner. Don't piss me off.

All eyes on them. The room quiet. Then Donner just hauls off and *decks him* with a wicked punch.

DONNER

When I get back, I quit.

Donner turns to the EECOM.

DONNER (CONT'D)

Harry, what's he got left in that suit? Eight hours?

EECOM

Give or take.

Then Donner heads out, leaving a smiling room behind.

DONNER (V.O.)

Man belongs in space because of exactly what he brings into the void.

#### **AJAY - IN SPACE**

Floating high above Cygnus with an incredible view of Earth. Emotional. Living his dream.

Ajay reaches down and pulls up something tethered to his suit. The figurine of Ganesha. Showing it the view.

#### **EXT. CAPE CANAVERAL -- DAY**

A booster rocket lifts off, a brilliant torch aimed at the sky.

#### **INT. SERVICE POD CAPSULE - LIFTOFF**

Donner and Ted pulling G's.

DONNER (V.O.)

We carry the baggage of our past... our fears, our superstitions and our failings.

#### **INT. CYGNUS / OBSERVATION DECK**

CHLOE

Mercury went direct two hours ago.

PAULA

Too late for Ajay.

WASSENFELDER

No, it's not...

DONNER (V.O.)

But we also carry our hopes and our dreams. The hard lessons learned from our lives...

And he nods out to

**THE SERVICE POD - THEIR POV**

moving along the length of Cygnus... toward the distant glowing dot that is Ajay... riding on top of the ship's giant shield.

CHLOE

Donner....

**INT. MISSION CONTROL - CONTROL ROOM -- MORNING**

The Vid screen showing Donner and Ted's pod clearly moving toward the wrong end of the ship. Goss, Eve Cho, and the entire room watching.... Goss nursing a sore jaw.

MIKE GOSS

Donner, Cho... you will dock your craft to Cygnus now.

INTERCUT THE ELEMENTS as

**INT./EXT. SERVICE POD**

DONNER

Unless you can override these controls, Mike - I think we're making a little detour.

ON CHLOE - hearing that...

EVE CHO can't hide the pride she feels...

DONNER AND TED trade a smile.... then look out to

**AJAY - SITTING ATOP THE SHIELD**

not more than twenty feet from them. Making eye contact.

Donner signals 41 with his fingers. Ajay reaches down to his suits control panel and turns his COM.

EECOM

They're on 41.

Mission Control, CHLOE and our astronauts on Cygnus listen in as...

Ted pulls the small craft to within a few feet of Ajay --  
Donner and he almost eye to eye as...

DONNER

It's an amazing view, isn't it?

AJAY

Ganesha and I have been enjoying it  
very much.

He reveals the murti of Ganesha. Donner, of course,  
recognizes it from his dream.

DONNER

Ganesha...

AJAY

He is the Lord of Obstacles... but  
also of New Beginnings.

DONNER

Then maybe you guys would like to  
hitch a ride back in. Start something  
new.

AJAY

This is my path, Donner. Right here.  
All the way to Venus.

DONNER

Correct me if I'm wrong, but, if you  
stay out here, don't you have to  
start all over in the next life?

Ajay doesn't respond.

DONNER (CONT'D)

You're always saying we each have  
our lessons to learn -- our obstacles  
to overcome. Maybe this is your big  
one, Ajay. Maybe you overcome this  
and you take a big giant step toward  
nirvana.

Ajay's eyes meet Donner's, welling with emotion...

AJAY

You don't understand...

DONNER

I think I do. My path is here now.  
With these people, on this ship.  
Your path is now on Earth.

(beat)

But we can't do it alone, Ajay. You,  
me, the ship.... we're a three-way.  
We need each other.

A long pause....

DONNER (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 For all our faults, whether we guide  
 our own destiny or are guided by it,  
 we are resilient. We can adapt.

AJAY  
 There is something I must do first.

It is huge moment of relief...

IN MISSION CONTROL - a soft cheer tempered by Goss' cool.

ON THE CYGNUS FLIGHT DECK - High fives and, between Rollie  
 and Jen, an emotional hug.

ON THE OBSERVATION DECK - Wassenfelder and Paula in a once  
 in a lifetime embrace....

CHLOE looking out the vista pane at Donner's pod. Deeply  
 moved by what he's just done.

DONNER (V.O.)  
 We can find redemption in simple  
 acts of humanity.

**INT. DONNER'S BAY -- NIGHT**

Donner looking into the lens. Finishing his personal journal;  
 this is what we've been hearing.

DONNER (V.O.)  
 I've never heard of a robot or a  
 probe capable of doing that.  
 (beat)  
 So, if space travel's a fool's game,  
 then I guess that's what I am. But  
 I've never felt more alive, or more  
 human.

A pause, then he pulls something up into frame. HIS BASEBALL.  
 Gives it a slow twist and pulls his hand away.... the ball  
 rotating slowly as it floats.

MATCH CUT TO:

**EXT. THE EARTH IN SPACE -- DAY**

The same size as the baseball. CYGNUS enters frame, still  
 in orbit. The service pod is gone.

MISSION CONTROL  
 Cygnus, you are go for a Venus burn  
 in five... four.. three... two

**INT. FLIGHT DECK**

The crew in pressure suits and helmets, strapped into their seats... feeling the big push as

NADIA hits the burn button on the console.... and the ship heads off into space.

Visit each of their faces...

TED - burdened with his knowledge. His responsibility.

JEN - tears welling in her eyes.

PAULA - saying a silent prayer.

WASSENFELDER - enjoying the ride.

MINTZ - wishing he had a drink.

CHLOE - thinking about that baby cry... stealing a glance over to

DONNER - The father who hasn't a clue. And then Chloe smiles... somehow comforted that he's here.

Then to

**EXT. EARTH ORBIT**

The home planet... as AJAY'S FIGURINE OF GANESHA comes into view in the foreground... moves past, THE CAMERA PANNING WITH IT to reveal that the figurine has been attached to the very top of Cygnus' shield.

Riding the front of the ship like a hood ornament. The Lord of Obstacles and New Beginnings, leading them all toward Venus.

TO BLACK

END OF SHOW