GANNON

Screenplay

Written by
James H. Tate

EXT. SUNSET BLVD - MORNING - CRUISING IN THE VANTEX

GANNON, late 30s, effortlessly confident, cruises down Sunset in his Vantex -- a sleek, silver, two-seater convertible built for a world about ten years ahead of this one. ROXIE, his lunch date, sits beside him. Opening credits flash across different angles of Gannon, Roxie, and the car.

ROXIE
(leaning in, playful)
So. You're really the World Marshal?

GANNON
Card-carrying. Badge and everything.

ROXIE
That's a lot of responsibility for one man with this good a jawline.

Gannon's watch chirps. He glances at it, then at Roxie.

GANNON
Duty calls. Hold that thought, Roxie.

He answers. A frantic, garbled voice comes through -- MARV, Gannon's old college buddy, permanently at war with his own computer.

GANNON (CONT'D)
Hey Marv... okay... Marv, breathe... no, don't click that... Marv, hit Ctrl-Alt-Delete. Now reboot. You'll be fine.

Gannon hangs up, shaking his head, and winks at Roxie.

GANNON (CONT'D)
That man is a menace to technology. Press the blue one, would you?

The dash lights up with color-coded buttons. Roxie presses blue. Ambient lighting shifts, music kicks in low.

ROXIE
Ooh. Fancy.

GANNON
Now the gold one.

A compartment slides open, champagne on ice. Roxie whoops, pours two glasses.

GANNON (V.O.)
Why can't I just find one nice woman who isn't currently on somebody's payroll to distract me? You'd think the World Marshal would rate better.

Beautiful strangers turn heads as the Vantex glides past.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Too much demand, not nearly enough supply. It's a tough life, saving the world and staying single.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - AFTERNOON - VANTEX CHASE

A black armored SUV screeches around the corner -- VIKTOR DRACE at the wheel, fender panels sliding open to reveal mounted weapons. Gannon clocks him in the mirror.

GANNON
Hold onto something, Roxie. Time to see what she's got.

Gannon floors it. A wild chase tears through the streets -- Drace's SUV bearing down, weapons blazing. Gannon punches a button; the Vantex's top seals into a bulletproof shell. Bullets spark off metal, shatter storefront glass, miss every single pedestrian by inches in the specific way only movie bullets manage.

DRACE
(over a loudspeaker)
I will end you, Gannon! Today's the day!

GANNON
You say that every week, Viktor. Try Tuesdays, they're slower for me.

The two vehicles trade paint down a full city block. Gannon swerves hard, narrowly missing a woman crossing with groceries -- their eyes meet for one lingering half-second before he's gone.

GANNON (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Story of my life. Always the wrong moment.

Drace pulls alongside, murderous.

DRACE
You think you're clever, Gannon. Let's see how clever.

GANNON
Clever's my whole brand, Viktor. Roxie -- the copper one.

Roxie hits it. A slick of oil sprays from the Vantex's rear. Drace's SUV fishtails wildly and slams into a light pole, erupting in a fireball.

GANNON (CONT'D)
Should've upgraded your tires, champ.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Gannon is a man you do not want to cross. Also a man you should probably not get in a car with, statistically speaking.

Roxie stares at him, hair wrecked, adrenaline written all over her face.

GANNON (CONT'D)
Let me explain. It all started a long time ago.

EXT. ESTABLISHING - PARENTS' HOME - LOS ANGELES - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A YOUNG GANNON, maybe ten, fires an old pistol at bottles lined along a fence -- his late father's, the one thing left behind. MOTHER calls from the house.

MOTHER
Gannon! Lunch!

Young Gannon fires one last shot, dead center, and jogs inside.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK, LATER)

A TEENAGE GANNON sits across from Mother at the breakfast table.

MOTHER
Looking forward to your first day of college?

GANNON

Not really. Heard the place is full of theater majors and guys who think patchouli's a personality.

MOTHER
Gannon. It's not kind to judge people's paths.

GANNON
Figuratively speaking. I just think I'm built for something bigger.

MOTHER
Have you considered the military?

GANNON
Or something with more gadgets. Less marching.

MOTHER
(wistful)
When you run for president someday, I'm managing the campaign. That's non-negotiable.

GANNON
Mom. One thing at a time.

MOTHER
I just miss your father. Ever since he passed, it's felt like the house got quieter than it should be.

GANNON
I know, Mom. I'm going to make it count. Somebody's got to save this planet from its own idiocy.

MOTHER
I believe you, sweetheart. Just remember -- brains first, everything else second.

INT. GANNON'S APARTMENT - CENTURY CITY - MORNING

Gannon, mid-push-up routine, phone on speaker beside him. Mother's voice comes through.

MOTHER
(over phone)
Did you eat breakfast? I worry when you skip breakfast.

GANNON
(between push-ups)
Protein shake counts, Mom.

MOTHER
It does not count. Your father always said a real breakfast keeps a man sharp.

GANNON
Dad also thought a bowl of chili counted as a vegetable, so.

MOTHER
He was a complicated man. How's the World Marshal business? Anyone try to kill you this week?

GANNON
Only the usual amount.

MOTHER
That's my boy. Call your mother more.

Gannon hangs up, smiling despite himself, and heads for the shower.

EXT. GETTY MUSEUM - PARKING LOT - DAY

Gannon meets ROXIE again, unexpectedly, both of them there for entirely unrelated reasons.

ROXIE
You didn't call.

GANNON
In my defense, someone tried to kill me approximately four minutes after you got out of the car.

ROXIE
That's a genuinely good excuse. Rare, for you, I'm guessing.

GANNON
You'd be surprised how often it actually applies.

ROXIE
Buy me a coffee and we'll call it even.

GANNON
Deal.

They walk off together, easy, no hard feelings -- the specific breezy resilience of two people who both know this isn't going anywhere serious and are perfectly fine with that.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - LOBBY - DAY

DELIA, sharp, watchful, considerably smarter than Marsh gives her credit for, intercepts Gannon on his way out.

DELIA
He's not going to listen to you, you know.

GANNON
I'm aware. Had to try anyway.

DELIA
For what it's worth, I think you're right about the aliens. I've seen the briefings he doesn't bother reading.

GANNON
You could leave, Delia. Find work somewhere that doesn't require lighting a man's cigars.

DELIA
Someone's got to keep an eye on him. Better me than nobody.

GANNON
Fair enough. Watch yourself.

DELIA
Always do.

A beat of real mutual respect passes between them before Gannon heads out.

INT. VOXCORP HEADQUARTERS - HALLWAY - MORNING

Before reaching Voss's office, Gannon passes a wall of framed magazine covers -- Voss's face beaming from a dozen of them, "Visionary," "Genius," "Man of the Year."

Gannon pauses at one, shakes his head, and keeps walking -- a small, quiet beat establishing how thoroughly Voss has built his own myth before we ever see the man crumble in front of Gannon minutes later.

EXT. 405 FREEWAY - BACK IN THE VANTEX WITH ROXIE

GANNON
And after years of training, I was appointed World Marshal by the W.G.A.

ROXIE
The writers' union?

GANNON
No. Not those guys. The Western Galactic Alliance.

INT. RITZ CARLTON - WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Gannon, younger, sharper suit, stands at a podium before a room of press and politicians.

GANNON
I accept this position with the full weight of what it means for our global community. Maintaining peace with our galactic neighbors will require every one of us to rise to the occasion.

The crowd murmurs, half-terrified, half-thrilled.

GANNON (CONT'D)
I've spent the last several years building a direct channel to the Alliance leadership. If we manage this correctly, Earth joins the wider galactic community. If we manage it poorly -- I'd rather not finish that sentence.

JOURNALIST 1
Who's going to stop groups like the Nightshade Syndicate from using this new contact to their advantage?

GANNON
That would be me. Next question.

EXT. 405 FREEWAY - BACK IN THE VANTEX (CONTINUOUS)

Gannon's watch beeps. JOHANNA's face appears in the small display -- sharp, quick, entirely unbothered by whatever chaos Gannon's currently narrating.

JOHANNA
It's me. You ready?

GANNON
Well, I, uh--

JOHANNA
You forgot.

Roxie, sensing she's been demoted to background noise, climbs out at the next light and slams the door. Gannon winces.

JOHANNA (CONT'D)
Focus, Gannon. I've got you booked solid today. Did you look at the notes on the new gravity-drive tech?

GANNON
I did, and I think I already know who's behind it.

JOHANNA
Slow down, Sherlock. This is only getting started. You've got somewhere to be -- the President's expecting you within the hour.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

The Vantex pulls up. A SECRET SERVICE AGENT checks a clipboard and waves Gannon toward VIP parking.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY

Gannon enters, ready to deliver a warning nobody in this room particularly wants to hear. PRESIDENT HOLLAND MARSH, silver-haired, permanently pleased with himself, greets him from behind the Resolute desk.

PRESIDENT MARSH
Thank you for coming, Gannon.

GANNON
Wish it were under better circumstances, sir.

PRESIDENT MARSH

You wouldn't happen to know anything about a government Humvee that exploded on Hollywood Boulevard this morning?

GANNON
No idea, sir. Probably freelancers.

PRESIDENT MARSH
Mm. Speaking of which -- I'm told you've been in contact with the Alliance's leadership.

Marsh gestures to DELIA, his assistant, who brings over a cigar box.

PRESIDENT MARSH (CONT'D)
Delia, light me up, would you?

Delia obliges. Marsh puffs, considering his next words carefully.

PRESIDENT MARSH (CONT'D)
Here's my situation, Gannon. I've got some very persuasive people in my ear who'd like to see us take a harder line with the Alliance. Cigar?

GANNON
I'll pass, sir. With respect -- a war with the Alliance is not a fight this planet wins.

PRESIDENT MARSH
NATO tells me you're the only man alive who can actually reach their leadership. That makes you valuable, Gannon. Valuable men get taken care of.

GANNON
I don't want to be taken care of, sir. I want you to stand down.

PRESIDENT MARSH
What I want, Gannon, is a planet with fewer strings attached to it. Let the people at the top get comfortable before the lights go out for everybody else. That's just good governance.

GANNON
(standing, done)
With respect, sir, that's the worst governance I've ever heard out loud. You have no idea what their firepower actually looks like. I've seen it. You do not want them provoked.

Gannon exits, disgusted. Delia closes the door behind him.

PRESIDENT MARSH
Delia. Get me the Director on the line.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

Marsh on the phone.

PRESIDENT MARSH
George. We've got a Gannon problem.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
You didn't really think the United States government could intimidate Gannon, did you?

INT. VOXCORP HEADQUARTERS - SEATTLE - MORNING

A gleaming tower, VOXCORP in massive backlit letters. Gannon enters a corner office belonging to MARCUS VOSS, founder, billionaire, permanently unbothered by anything short of a market crash. A sleek device sits on a shelf behind the desk -- unmistakably a weapon dressed up as a gadget.

VOSS
Gannon. Been a while. How's the dog?

GANNON
Fine. Marcus, I need five minutes.

VOSS
(checking his watch)
It's six a.m. This better be worth the five minutes.

GANNON
The President's out of control. He knows about my contact with the Alliance. He thinks you're involved.

VOSS
I'm always involved. It's mostly what I do.

GANNON
He's talking about starting a war, Marcus. If that happens, you're the first name on their list.

VOSS
Relax, Gannon. A man worth what I'm worth doesn't scare easy.

Gannon's eyes land on the device again -- a small plaque underneath reads PD-4001.

GANNON
That decelerator on your shelf. The Nightshade Syndicate wants it. If Marsh finds out you've had prototype tech capable of neutralizing Alliance weapons, you become collateral damage in somebody else's war.

VOSS
You worry too much. This little guy's harmless. Comes bundled with three apps and a two-year warranty.

GANNON
Marcus. Keep it locked up. Don't sell it, don't demo it, don't so much as mention it exists. I mean it.

VOSS
Noted, noted. Now if you'll excuse me, I've got a nine o'clock and a standing massage appointment I will not be rescheduling for anyone, up to and including aliens.

Gannon leaves, frustrated. Voss stretches, satisfied with his own existence, and turns to admire the view.

VOSS (CONT'D)
Ah. Great to be rich.

A helicopter drops into frame outside the window. A SNIPER, braced in the open door, takes aim and fires. Voss staggers, shatters through the glass, and falls. The chopper's crew rappels down, grabs the PD-4001 off the shelf, and vanishes back into the sky.

INT. SALOON - SEATTLE - AFTERNOON

Gannon sits at the bar, orders two drinks he has no intention of finishing calmly. A TV above the bar cuts to breaking news.

TV ANCHOR
We're getting reports that tech mogul Marcus Voss has been shot and killed at VoxCorp's Seattle headquarters.

Gannon's eyes lock onto the screen.

TV REPORTER
(live, on scene)
Sources say the last visitor to Voss's office fled the building in a silver sports coupe following a heated exchange.

TV ANCHOR
Police have identified a person of interest -- a man going by the name Gannon, reportedly holding the title of World Marshal.

The bar goes quiet. Every head slowly turns toward Gannon.

GANNON
(to himself)
Oh, that's just wonderful.

A woman nearby recoils.

BAR PATRON
Get away from me.

GANNON
I didn't do this. I'm the World Marshal.

BAR PATRON
Sure you are.

She walks out. Gannon sits alone under the weight of every stranger's stare, appetite for his own drinks completely gone.

EXT. DOWNTOWN SEATTLE - AFTERNOON

Gannon drives with a baseball cap pulled low, dialing Johanna.

JOHANNA
(answering, mid-chess-move)
This is Johanna.

GANNON
Johanna, it's Gannon. Voss is dead. I think Marsh had him killed, and now I'm the fall guy.

JOHANNA
Huh. I was just starting to like the guy.

GANNON
They're going to come for me next.

JOHANNA
Lay low. Rent a movie. I hear the new Fabulous Five sequel's actually decent.

GANNON
Johanna, this is serious. Drace is out of the picture, so who's actually behind this?

A beep sounds on her end.

JOHANNA
Gotta run, that's my hair appointment. Lay low, I mean it.

She hangs up before he can get another word in.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Getting framed for a murder you didn't commit is, generally speaking, a bad Tuesday.

INT. SEATTLE CITY JAIL - NIGHT

Gannon, arrested within the hour, sits on a payphone with his attorney while a large, patient BIKER waits his turn behind him.

GANNON
I don't care what it takes. Get me out.

ATTORNEY
(over phone, distracted)
It's the Fourth of July, Gannon. My kids come first.

GANNON
You're fired.

He hangs up, drops his head into his hands. The phone rings again. He picks it up, wary.

JOHANNA
(over phone)
About time. Did you think I'd rather talk to your biker friend?

GANNON
Johanna, how did you even find me?

JOHANNA
I'm always tracking you, Gannon, it's the whole job. Listen -- the Nightshade Syndicate has the PD-4001, and I'm tracking the signal right now. Looks like it's headed east. New York, probably.

GANNON
With Drace gone, they've got a clean run at the whole operation.

JOHANNA
The agency knows you're clean. You'll be out before you get comfortable in there. Get to New York and get that device back before they figure out what it actually does.

EXT. GANNON CRUISING IN THE VANTEX - 35,000 FT, MACH 1.2

The Vantex banks through the clouds, wing extensions deployed, wheels folded up. Gannon's asleep at the wheel. The autopilot chimes.

AUTOPILOT (V.O.)
New York City. Thirty minutes.

Gannon stirs, doesn't wake. His watch beeps. Johanna's face appears, and she pauses, catching him mid-snore, deciding not to wake him just yet.

GANNON
(rousing)
Oh. It's you.

JOHANNA
You humans need an absurd amount of sleep. Back home we run four to seven hours out of a forty-two hour cycle.

GANNON
Random question. Are you -- involved with anyone? Where you're from?

JOHANNA
Don't think it'd work out between us, babe.

GANNON
This whole dating thing is exhausting, Johanna. Purely from a biological standpoint -- why not us?

JOHANNA
For starters, I'm about sixty percent gelatinous under this projection. Focus, Gannon. Bigger fish.

GANNON
Fine. Where's the decelerator headed?

JOHANNA
Still in the city, still moving. I've got a lock.

EXT. BROADWAY & 54TH - DAY

The Vantex touches down smoothly in the middle of traffic, because of course it does. Gannon checks in with Johanna.

GANNON

I'm on the ground. You still got the chip?

JOHANNA
Yeah, and watch your back, I think they're tracking your car--

GANNON
Call you back.

Gannon spots a yellow cab in his mirror, packed with Nightshade operatives. He guns it into Central Park. The cab follows, weaving around a horse-drawn carriage, closing fast. An operative leans out the window with the PD-4001 aimed dead at him.

Gannon pops a smokescreen, cuts out of the park onto Fifth, vanishes into a sea of identical yellow cabs. His phone rings. He hesitates, answers anyway.

MARV
(over phone)
My computer's doing the thing again. The spinning wheel thing.

GANNON
Marv, genuinely not a great time.

He scans the mirrors -- clear. Cuts toward Riverside. A crowd of pedestrians forces a hard stop.

GANNON (CONT'D)
Did you reboot?

MARV
(over phone)
It's frozen. This has been nothing but problems since you set it up.

The cab reappears in his mirror. The operative takes aim again.

GANNON
Marv, something's come up. Call you back.

He floors it toward the Lincoln Tunnel, cab in hot pursuit. A beam fires from the PD-4001, clips a delivery truck instead of the Vantex -- the truck lurches into slow motion, bizarre and glitchy. The cab clips it, spins out, recovers.

Gannon, seeing an opening, slows deliberately, letting the cab close the gap -- then arms the self-destruct and ejects. The seat rockets him skyward on a parachute rig as, below, the Vantex and the pursuing cab both go up in a single fireball.

Gannon drifts down to the wreckage, finds the scorched PD-4001 in the rubble, and stamps out the last of the flames with something close to grief for the car.

EXT. LONELY AVENUE - NIGHT (MONTAGE)

Melancholy jazz. Gannon walks the city alone, cap low -- kicking a can, buying a hot dog, finding a quarter on the sidewalk, nearly walking into a stranger who doesn't even glance at him. He flags down a cab.

INT. CAB - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

DEX, the driver, mid-40s, sharp and unbothered, studies Gannon in the rearview.

DEX
Where to?

GANNON
Nearest Vantex dealership, if such a thing exists in this city.

DEX
Doesn't. Airport, then?

GANNON
Airport works.

DEX
You look like you had one hell of a day.

GANNON
You have no idea. The same three disasters keep finding new ways to happen to me.

DEX
Story of every fare I get after midnight. Mind if I put music on?

GANNON
Please.

Dex cues something warm and unexpected -- old soul. Gannon's shoulders finally drop half an inch.

GANNON (CONT'D)
Good choice.

DEX
I've got taste. Rare quality in this business.

They ride in comfortable, easy quiet for a stretch, two strangers letting a bad night soften around the edges.

GANNON
You always this calm with strangers who look like they've been shot at recently?

DEX
(glancing in mirror, amused)
Man, I've had worse in this cab than "looks like he's been shot at." You're a slow Tuesday by comparison.

Gannon's watch beeps. Johanna's face appears.

GANNON
(to Dex)
Excuse me one second.

JOHANNA
Lost the signal on the car. Fell asleep, honestly. Long shift.

GANNON
Car's gone anyway. Self-destructed with the decelerator still in the rubble.

JOHANNA
Good riddance to both. Don't lose the plot here, though -- you've still got a planet to save from itself.

GANNON
Yeah, yeah. Marsh is going to wreck things for a lot of people before this is over.

JOHANNA
Uncle Rekk wants his head in a display case, for what it's worth.

GANNON
When do you actually get here? And when do I meet this uncle?

JOHANNA
Couple weeks for me. Rekk runs late on principle -- call it a month.

GANNON
I'll get Professor Wexlow on the new car. Try to keep the apocalypse on hold till then.

JOHANNA
No promises. Goodnight, Gannon.

Watch closes. Dex glances back, grinning.

DEX
She sounds like a whole situation.

GANNON
You have no idea.

The cab pulls up to a mini-mart. Behind them, unnoticed, a battered pink Hummer rounds the corner -- Viktor Drace at the wheel, bandaged, singed, furious, front fenders sliding open.

EXT. MINI-MART - NIGHT - GANNON HOMEWARD BOUND

The cab pulls out. Drace's Hummer falls in behind, closing fast. Gannon spots him, calm as anything, and fires one clean shot out the window -- blows Drace's front right tire.

DEX
(startled)
What in the hell was that? Wasn't that guy on the news? Thought he was locked up.

GANNON
Wrong guy got arrested. Happens more than you'd think.

DEX
So why's he after you?

GANNON
Probably the several vehicles of his I've personally destroyed.

DEX

Why'd you just take the tire? You had a clear shot.

GANNON
Trust me. I've hit my quota for property damage today.

EXT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - NIGHT

The cab pulls up. Dex turns around, all business.

DEX
Forty-seven, even.

GANNON
You got a card? Might need a ride again sometime, given my luck.

DEX
Always. Call anytime.

Gannon hands him a hundred, waves off the change, and heads inside. Dex pulls away, calling back through the window.

DEX (CONT'D)
Try to stay out of the news, man!

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Gannon, asleep in coach. VERONICA, sharp, funny, drops into the seat beside him.

VERONICA
Sorry -- finally found my row.

GANNON
(half-asleep, charming anyway)
Take a load off.

She settles in, grabs a blanket, drifts off within minutes. TIME CUTS forward in small jumps -- the armrest divider quietly raised, the two of them gradually, unconsciously drifting closer under the blanket, until the cabin lights dim fully and the frame holds on nothing but two people finally, peacefully asleep.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (V.O.)
We'll be arriving in Los Angeles in approximately fifty-five minutes.

They wake up nose to nose, startled, and Veronica laughs it off, settling back against him instead of pulling away.

VERONICA
So when do I get mine, Mr. Marshal?

GANNON
Depends how patient you're feeling.

They kiss. CUT TO black for exactly as long as good taste requires.

EXT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

Gannon and Veronica exit together, considerably more disheveled than when they boarded.

GANNON
That was an unexpectedly excellent flight.

VERONICA
Don't wait too long to call.

She heads for her own car. Gannon flags a cab, grinning to himself the whole ride.

INT. JOHANNA'S SPACECRAFT - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Johanna watches Gannon's whole arrival on a monitor -- Veronica, the goodbye, all of it. Her jaw sets. Something crosses her face that looks a great deal like jealousy before she catches herself and pushes the thought away, adjusting course with more force than the maneuver strictly requires.

INT. REKK'S MOTHERSHIP - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

REKK, imposing, permanently unimpressed, smacks ZIB upside the head.

REKK
No, you absolute waste of a uniform, that way. Has the floating gun reached Earth's atmosphere yet?

ZIB
Yes, your eminence.

REKK
And you didn't think to mention that?

KORR
We were just about to--

REKK

Never mind. Take him out.

KORR
Yes, your highness.

REKK
Today, ideally.

ZIB
Yes, your greatness.

EXT. EARTH ATMOSPHERE - THE FLOATING GUN

A sleek, silent, three-foot hovering drone -- bristling with weapons, self-destruct armed -- streaks toward the White House, blasts through a window, and glides inside.

INT. WHITE HOUSE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Two SECRET SERVICE AGENTS round the corner, weapons raised.

AGENT 1
What is that thing?

AGENT 2
Doesn't matter. Fire!

Bullets spark harmlessly off the drone's hull. Two quick beams fire back -- both agents drop instantly, no blood, no drama, gone like a light switch. The drone, slightly scorched now, smokes faintly as it drifts on down the hall.

INT. REKK'S MOTHERSHIP - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Zib and Korr wrestle over the drone's joystick controller like kids fighting over a video game.

ZIB
My turn.

KORR
My turn.

Rekk stalks over, freezes the drone mid-hover with one button, smacks them both, and takes the controller himself.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The drone drifts up to Delia's desk, fires a warning shot into the wall beside her. She bolts. It glides to the main doors, blasts the lock, and pushes through into the Oval Office, where President Marsh is mid-call, oblivious.

PRESIDENT MARSH
(on phone)
I don't care what it costs, get me those upgraded weapons by Tuesday or there will be consequences you have not yet imagined.

He hangs up hard, still hasn't noticed the drone hovering three feet behind him.

PRESIDENT MARSH (CONT'D)
Delia! Get in here, I need --

He turns. Sees it. The drone detonates, taking out half the west wing in a single, enormous fireball.

INT. REKK'S MOTHERSHIP - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Zib and Korr stare at the feed, slack-jawed. Rekk sets the controller down, satisfied, and smacks Zib once more for good measure.

REKK
That's how you get things done around here.

INT. JOHANNA'S SPACECRAFT - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

An alert flashes. Johanna zooms her satellite feed in on the burning White House, horrified.

JOHANNA
Oh, he did not just do that. Uncle Rekk's completely lost it this time.

She throws her craft to maximum speed, course locked toward the mothership.

INT. REKK'S MOTHERSHIP - BRIDGE - DAY

Rekk reviews reports with Zib and Korr, considerably more mundane a scene than the chaos suggests -- running an empire is mostly paperwork, apparently.

REKK
Quarterly resource extraction numbers. Go.

ZIB
Sector 14 is up six percent. Sector 22 is down, but that's mostly Korr's fault.

KORR
It is not my fault the harvesters broke.

ZIB
You drove one into a moon.

KORR
The moon moved.

REKK
(rubbing his temples)
The moon did not move, Korr. Moons don't move. That's the whole point of a moon.

Splith wanders through, sniffing at Rekk's boots. Rekk absently scratches the droid's head, softer than his usual bluster.

REKK (CONT'D)
Where's my niece been all week?

ZIB
Down on the middle planet still, sir.

REKK
Figures. Get me the Earth surveillance feed. I want to see what's got her so distracted this time.

INT. GANNON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gannon and Johanna, mid-movie-night, Johanna baffled by the concept of a remote control.

JOHANNA
Why does it need forty buttons? What does the yellow one even do?

GANNON
Honestly, no idea. I think it came with the cable box.

JOHANNA
Your species builds things you don't even understand yourselves. That tracks, actually.

GANNON
We're a work in progress.

She settles against him, watching the screen without really watching it.

JOHANNA
Can I ask you something?

GANNON
Always.

JOHANNA
Are you scared? Of any of this? The Marshal thing, the aliens, all of it?

GANNON
(honest, for once, no performance in it)
Every single day. I just don't have the luxury of showing it, most of the time.

JOHANNA
You can show it to me.

Something in Gannon's careful composure softens.

GANNON
I'm terrified, actually. I have no idea what I'm doing half the time. I just keep doing it anyway.

JOHANNA
That's the only kind of brave that actually counts, where I'm from.

EXT. VOXCORP HEADQUARTERS - LOBBY - DAY (FLASHBACK, EARLIER IN THE WEE

A brief flashback -- Gannon's first attempt to warn Voss, weeks before the assassination, waved off just as easily.

VOSS
Gannon, you worry more than my board of directors, and that's genuinely saying something.

GANNON
I worry because you're a target, Marcus. That's not paranoia, that's math.

VOSS
Everyone's a target when they're worth what I'm worth. I sleep fine.

GANNON
I hope you keep sleeping fine.

Voss laughs it off, entirely unbothered, and Gannon leaves already knowing, on some level, exactly how this ends.

INT. SANTA MONICA AIRPORT HANGAR - AFTERNOON

Gannon, dropped off by a hired car, finds PROFESSOR WEXLOW waiting beside a sheet-covered shape -- the new Vantex, presumably. Wexlow is brilliant, twitchy, disappears behind a side door mid-conversation more than once for reasons Gannon has learned not to ask about.

PROFESSOR WEXLOW
Gannon! Good to see you. How's the dog?

GANNON
Neighbor's got him. He's fine.

WEXLOW
Excellent, excellent. One moment.

Wexlow ducks behind the door. A beat. He returns, considerably more energetic than he left.

WEXLOW (CONT'D)
Right! Let's talk upgrades.

GANNON
What's she got that the last one didn't?

WEXLOW
Retractable side blades in the mirror housings, silent deployment, handles most checkpoint security without ever needing to stop. Crude, but it works.

GANNON
I like it already.

WEXLOW
New autopilot, upgraded nav, satellite radio you'll actually get signal on this time.

GANNON
Professor, you're a genius and I mean that completely.

WEXLOW
Get some rest. I hear you've got company arriving soon.

GANNON
Word travels.

WEXLOW
Gravity drives, self-designing computers, alien weapons tech -- a man in my position has to stay ahead of the curve. Excuse me one moment.

He ducks behind the door again. Gannon shakes his head, smiling, and climbs into the new Vantex.

GANNON
(calling back)
Get some sleep, Professor! Genuinely!

Gannon pulls out onto Ocean Park. His phone rings. Marv, obviously.

MARV
(over phone)
Dude. System's completely fried again.

GANNON
Marv, have you considered a hobby that doesn't involve a keyboard?

MARV
(over phone)
Nah, kidding, it's actually running great. Just wanted to say thanks.

GANNON
Glad to hear it. Remember Professor Lumpman from school?

MARV
(over phone)
We froze his whole system right before the midterm. Best week of my academic career.

GANNON
Anyway, got another call coming in. Talk soon.

MARV
(over phone)
Later.

EXT. BEVERLY BOULEVARD - AFTERNOON

Marv parks his car, locking a steering-wheel club into place, when a MUGGER steps up with a gun.

MUGGER
Out of the car.

MARV
You're serious right now?

MUGGER
Out. Now.

The mugger yanks the door open, hauls Marv out at gunpoint, and freezes -- staring at the steering wheel club still very much locked in place.

MUGGER (CONT'D)
Are you -- is that thing locked?

MARV
(still terrified, oddly proud)
Yeah. I'm very consistent about it.

The mugger, defeated by basic automotive security, curses under his breath and jogs off empty-handed. Marv stands there a long moment, hands still raised, processing what just happened.

INT. JOHANNA'S SPACECRAFT - COCKPIT - CONTINUOUS

Johanna pilots with sharp focus, hailing the mothership.

JOHANNA
Uncle Rekk, come in. This is Johanna requesting dock.

REKK
(over comm)
Hold on a minute.

A long pause. Johanna whistles to herself, waiting.

REKK (CONT'D)
What is it, kid?

JOHANNA

Ready to board.

REKK
Thought you were heading to the middle planet first.

JOHANNA
Gravity readings are off down there. Figured your storeroom's got a spare shield generator.

REKK
I can read your generator from here, kid. It's fine.

JOHANNA
Just being careful. Don't want to get stranded.

REKK
Fenn's probably got a spare in storage somewhere. Dock through bay thirty-seven. You bring me anything?

JOHANNA
You're still my favorite uncle, you know that?

REKK
Get in here when you're ready, goofball.

INT. REKK'S MOTHERSHIP - BRIDGE - LATER

Johanna and Rekk talk over the situation on Earth. Her robotic pet, a small hovering droid named SPLITH, sniffs around the console.

REKK
So what am I supposed to do about this World Marshal.

JOHANNA
What do you mean? He's fine.

REKK
He's W.G.A. approved, right? Remind me why I approved him again.

JOHANNA
You don't remember? He's harmless, Uncle. Genuinely.

REKK
Don't tell me you're mixing business with -- you know what.

JOHANNA
Please. You think I want to be stuck down there forever?

REKK
You've been listening to nothing but Earth music for forty Earth years. Your whole wardrobe's Earth now. If I find out you've gone soft on this, I am firing up the old expeller. I picked the wrong decade to quit smoking.

JOHANNA
He's the Marshal because we say he is. That's the whole of it.

Rekk laughs, genuinely fond of his niece, distracted enough by Splith's antics that he doesn't notice Johanna quietly pocketing the Mothership Operations Manual off a nearby shelf.

REKK
He's got more nerve than anyone else down there. Probably our best shot at a mediator.

JOHANNA
I think he's just lucky. We'll see.

INT. SPACECRAFT DOCKING STATION - CONTINUOUS

FENN jogs up as Johanna heads back to her ship.

FENN
Johanna -- you'll need this.

JOHANNA
The shield generator? I probably won't need it.

FENN
Our gravity charts are out of date for that sector. Take it. How long since you've seen a doctor?

JOHANNA
Twenty-three years, give or take.

FENN
You'll probably be fine. Just avoid the tap water. And American beer. Functionally the same substance.

Johanna climbs in, flies for Earth.

INT. GANNON'S APARTMENT - CENTURY CITY - NIGHT

Gannon, dead asleep, is jolted awake by his phone. Wexlow.

WEXLOW
(over phone)
It's me. Lots has happened. The president's dead, we're being invaded, a new president's being sworn in shortly, and your girlfriend lands in about thirty minutes. Otherwise, pretty normal day. You?

GANNON
On my way. And she's not my girlfriend, you old pervert.

WEXLOW
Sure, sure. See you soon.

INT. WEXLOW'S PRIVATE HANGAR - DAY

Gannon pulls in as Wexlow monitors a blip on a radar screen.

WEXLOW
Just in time. There's her signal.

GANNON
Where?

WEXLOW
Oh -- that was fast.

JOHANNA steps out of her landed craft -- striking, impossibly tall, thin in a way that reads as otherworldly rather than human. Gannon's jaw drops.

JOHANNA
What a dump. You got anything to drink?

GANNON
You're -- you're so tall.

JOHANNA

Thirsty, mostly.

WEXLOW
I've got water, lemonade, something stronger if you want it.

JOHANNA
Lemonade. Lots of ice.

She sways, suddenly pale.

JOHANNA (CONT'D)
Actually -- I think I need to sit down.

Her whole frame seems to lose solidity for a moment, and she collapses into Gannon's arms.

INT. WEXLOW'S HANGAR - LOFT - LATER

Johanna's out cold on a cot. Gannon paces, genuinely worried. Wexlow checks a monitor.

WEXLOW
Vitals are stabilizing. Her physiology's shifting -- gravity adjustment, best I can tell. Never seen it up close before.

GANNON
Will she be okay?

WEXLOW
Hard to say. Worst case, we fly her back out of atmosphere. Your doctor's not going to be much help here.

Wexlow flicks on the news.

TV ANCHOR

We're now getting reports that the Nightshade Syndicate has claimed responsibility for the death of tech mogul Marcus Voss, and that the group made off with experimental weapons tech in the same attack. In other news, thousands of unidentified objects of varying size are approaching Earth from multiple vectors. And in Washington, Vice President Krantz will be sworn in tomorrow at one o'clock in front of the Capitol.

INT. REKK'S MOTHERSHIP - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

REKK
Why don't we just kill him already. Where's the sport in dragging it out. Fine. One o'clock it is.

ZIB
Should I send another floating gun, your worthlessness?

REKK
Yes. Load the decelerator on this one. If it weren't for my niece down there, I'd just expel the whole planet's core and be done with it. Get me a pill. Any word from her?

KORR
No, your lowness.

REKK
Keep trying.

INT. WEXLOW'S HANGAR - LOFT - LATER

Johanna stirs, murmuring.

JOHANNA
(barely audible)
Gannon.

GANNON
I'm here. What do you need?

JOHANNA
Water.

Gannon fetches it fast. She drinks in total relief.

JOHANNA (CONT'D)
I have a gelatinous intraskeleton. It's -- a whole thing.

GANNON
A gel-what-now?

WEXLOW
(entering)
Gelatinous intraskeleton. Certain species use it to adapt to shifting gravitational conditions. Her whole physical structure's recalibrating. Lower center of gravity, different musculature.

JOHANNA
I need another day, I think.

GANNON
Take whatever time you need. I'm just glad you're talking.

JOHANNA
(quiet)
Your life isn't fully your own right now, Gannon. This world's fate is--

She drifts off again mid-sentence.

WEXLOW
Come on. Let me show you the car while she rests.

INT. WEXLOW'S HANGAR - MAIN FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Wexlow pulls the cover off the Vantex. Nothing looks different.

GANNON
Looks the same to me, Doc.

WEXLOW
Trust me. This one went from airplane to spacecraft.

He pops the hood, revealing a compact, humming generator array.

WEXLOW (CONT'D)

Gravity-shield generator, antenna retrofit. Climb to fifty thousand feet on turbines, kick in the generator, ride turbine power to the edge of atmosphere. From there you calibrate the antenna to any coordinates on the galactic map -- say, Jupiter -- and the planet's own gravity does the heavy lifting. Slingshot around a few bodies, pick up serious velocity, and the auto-recalculator handles the deceleration.

GANNON
You're telling me I could drive this thing on the Moon.

WEXLOW
Forty minutes, tops. Adjustable suspension, full off-road capability. You'll be fine on almost any terrain.

GANNON
Doc, I genuinely don't know how to thank you.

WEXLOW
All in a day's work. Excuse me one moment.

He ducks out. Gannon, unable to resist, hops in and takes off before Wexlow's even back in frame.

WEXLOW (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Call me before re-entry!

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING LAWN - DAY - VP KRANTZ'S INAUGURATION

A massive crowd. VICE PRESIDENT KRANTZ, built like a linebacker, works the podium with the subtlety of a monster truck rally.

KRANTZ
This country was built on strength! On never bending to weakness, foreign or domestic! We will crush our competition, we will crush the aliens, and our victory will be total!

The crowd roars. Two hundred feet above, unnoticed, the floating gun arrives and locks the decelerator onto the crowd. A pulse of light ripples outward -- every single person freezes mid-motion, time itself stuttering to a crawl.

KRANTZ (CONT'D)
(voice dragging, slowing)
And the traitors will be -- persecuted --

The gun fires a precise shot. Krantz's raised fist disintegrates cleanly at the wrist, weightless as smoke.

KRANTZ (CONT'D)
(very slow)
...ow.

A second shot, and Krantz himself dissolves entirely into drifting light, gone before the sound of it even finishes echoing -- fast, clean, more magic trick than massacre. The crowd remains frozen, unaware anything happened at all.

The gun powers down the decelerator and withdraws. Time resumes. The crowd blinks, confused, nobody quite able to explain the sudden absence at the podium.

INT. REKK'S MOTHERSHIP - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Zib and Korr high-five. Splith barks.

EXT. MOON SURFACE - DAY

Gannon tears across the lunar surface in the Vantex, suspension raised, music cranked, pulling off gravity-defying jumps that would be impossible anywhere else.

GANNON
Woo-hoo!

His phone rings. Wexlow.

WEXLOW
(over phone)
Having fun?

GANNON
Doc, this is unbelievable.

WEXLOW
Knew you'd love it. Also -- your girlfriend's awake. Asking for you.

GANNON
Not my girlfriend. She's approximately eight feet of alien with incredible eyes and I have no idea what to call whatever this is.

WEXLOW
Sure. Triple power on the shield generator for re-entry, don't forget.

GANNON
Copy that. On my way.

INT. WEXLOW'S HANGAR - LOFT - LATER

Johanna sits up, wrapped in one of Wexlow's lab coats, working through a bowl of soup with real enthusiasm.

JOHANNA
This is genuinely the best thing I've eaten in decades. What is it?

WEXLOW
Chicken noodle. You've been out two days, that'll do it.

JOHANNA
Guessing you've never watched a Xexon recalibrate for new gravity before.

WEXLOW
Fascinating, honestly. You've barely lost any mass, but your proportions have shifted considerably.

Johanna looks down at herself -- entirely reshaped now, closer to human scale, curves where there weren't any before.

JOHANNA
Huh. That's new.

Gannon bursts in.

GANNON
That was fast -- come meet the new Johanna.

He races up the stairs. Johanna stands, and Gannon simply stops in the doorway, staring.

JOHANNA
What. Is it my hair?

GANNON
(flustered)
You're -- I mean -- we should get you some actual clothes. Can't have you running the fate of the planet in a borrowed lab coat.

JOHANNA
Shopping?

GANNON
Shopping.

EXT. RODEO DRIVE - DAY (SHOPPING MONTAGE)

Gannon and Johanna move store to store, easy and laughing, clearly enjoying each other more with every stop. She tries on outfit after outfit. They end up hand in hand outside a bar Gannon frequents, THE YELLOW GATOR, before pausing at a storefront TV.

TV ANCHOR
The nation continues to mourn two extraordinary losses this week. Meanwhile, our lead story -- the globe now appears entirely surrounded by unidentified craft of every size. Whether these vessels are connected to the recent "floating gun" attacks remains unconfirmed, though this reporter has her suspicions. In the wake of yesterday's tragedy, evacuations continue in major cities worldwide. Our new president, Secretary Aldous Finch, will be sworn in at an undisclosed location, time to be announced.

The picture glitches. Rekk's face fills the screen, broadcast hijacked.

REKK
(on every screen, everywhere)

Don't touch that dial, Earthlings. I've got the vertical, the horizontal, and frankly better production values than whatever you were just watching. You've had a good run down there, but it's getting crowded, and you want to expand into space. That's my territory. Nothing goes up here without my say-so. Get used to my face. You work for me now. And any further attempts to install a new president will end exactly like the last one. This has been the Supreme Rekk. Out.

The screen cuts to static. Gannon turns to Johanna, cold suspicion in his eyes.

GANNON
Look me in the eye and tell me you had nothing to do with this.

JOHANNA
I swear, Gannon, I had no idea he'd actually start killing people. He's my favorite uncle. He's lied to me before -- never like this.

GANNON
Give me one reason to believe you.

JOHANNA
I was unconscious for two days. What reason would I have had?

A beat. Gannon's suspicion softens, just slightly.

JOHANNA (CONT'D)
I have something that can help. The mothership's operations manual. It's in my ship. Most of the systems run on the same tech Voss was working with -- if anyone can find a weakness in it, it's you and the Professor.

GANNON
Take me to it. Now.

They move fast, all business now, the easy warmth of the shopping trip replaced by real urgency.

INT. GANNON'S APARTMENT - CENTURY CITY - NIGHT

Gannon and Johanna, relaxed for a rare quiet moment, the mothership manual open on the bed between them.

JOHANNA
So. You've got family? Besides your mom?

GANNON
Mom's in Minnesota. Dad's -- gone. Long time now.

JOHANNA
You don't have to tell me if you're not ready.

GANNON
Give me a minute, love. I haven't figured out how to say it out loud yet.

A comfortable silence. She doesn't push. The TV flickers on its own -- Rekk's broadcast still running.

WGA TV ANNOUNCER
And with the all-new BrainSync system, everyone enjoys guaranteed happiness, forever. Visit a sync center near you.

Gannon kills the power.

GANNON
Guess we've got work to do.

They're up and moving in the same instant.

INT. GANNON'S VANTEX - NIGHT

Gannon speeds toward the hangar, dialing Marv one-handed.

MARV
(over phone)
Ow -- hello?

GANNON
You okay?

MARV
My phone's doing something weird. Call the landline?

A burst of static, the call drops.

GANNON
Rekk's jamming everything. Johanna, the shielded chip.

Johanna slots a small chip into her phone. Gannon dials the landline instead.

MARV
(over phone, frantic)
Dude, the sky is actually falling, and my phone just started smoking.

GANNON
Marv, is your computer up? We're all in serious danger. I need the old college folder -- the one we built as a joke.

MARV
(over phone)
The virus? You want to buy it?

GANNON
We need it to save the planet, actually.

MARV
(over phone)
Copy that. Sending it to a disc. Where do I bring it?

Gannon rattles off the hangar address, hands white-knuckled on the wheel, Johanna quietly steadying him with a hand over his.

INT. WEXLOW'S HANGAR - NIGHT

Gannon, Johanna, and Wexlow work furiously -- the manual, a laptop, a whiteboard covered in scrawled diagrams.

WEXLOW
Perimeter security's straightforward enough. We could short the outer dock door.

GANNON
Just blast it.

WEXLOW

Sensors are too deep in the housing. And reaching his bridge from the dock is its own nightmare.

GANNON
(tense)
Where is Marv?

WEXLOW
You think this old virus of yours actually helps?

GANNON
Most of his newer systems run on VoxCorp architecture. If it ever worked on anything, it works on this.

Wexlow studies a signal readout, going pale.

WEXLOW (CONT'D)
Gannon. I'm reading a laser signal locked directly onto the planet's core. Multiple resonant frequencies.

GANNON
That's not good.

JOHANNA
He wouldn't actually do that with me still down here. Would he?

EXT. MARINA DEL REY - NIGHT

Marv, backpack slung over one shoulder, tries and fails to flag a cab. His phone shocks him again. He hurls it at a passing taxi in frustration. Misses. It shatters on the pavement. He stares at the wreckage, defeated.

INT. WEXLOW'S HANGAR - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

GANNON
This manual only gets us so far. How much time do we actually have?

WEXLOW
Impossible to say. He's dialed the core in. Maybe he's waiting on her.

JOHANNA
Great. So he beams me up first, then does it anyway.

GANNON
Not happening. We need to stay focused.

Marv bursts in, breathless, disc in hand.

MARV
Sorry -- had to grab a cab. My car got jacked earlier tonight.

GANNON
You should've called. I'm sorry, man.

Wexlow feeds the disc into his terminal, studying the code with genuine delight.

WEXLOW
This is beautifully ugly. You two built this in college?

GANNON AND MARV
(simultaneously)
Mostly him.

WEXLOW
Give me a few minutes to compile executables, mod the phone weapon, and back everything up properly.

GANNON
Can you push it wireless?

WEXLOW
Of course. Coordinates for the mothership are already preset on the Vantex. Excuse me one moment.

He steps away to a side room. A beat later, a heavy thud sounds from behind the door.

JOHANNA
(alarmed)
Professor?

No answer. She and Marv rush in to find Wexlow collapsed, clutching his chest.

MARV
(dropping to his knees)
Hey -- hey, stay with me, come on!

Marv works frantically, Johanna beside him, both of them fighting for a man neither can save. After a long, terrible moment, they stop. The room goes quiet.

JOHANNA
(quiet, devastated)
He's gone. His heart just -- it was too much, all at once.

A beat of real grief before the urgency of the moment forces its way back in. Gannon's phone rings. Johanna answers, shaken.

JOHANNA (CONT'D)
Gannon. The Professor's dead. His heart gave out.

GANNON
(over phone, voice cracking, then steadying)
Not now. God -- not now. Johanna, I need those uploads. Can you finish it?

JOHANNA
I don't know computers, Gannon. I know gadgets, not code.

GANNON
Put Marv on.

Johanna hands the phone over, shaking.

MARV
(over phone)
He just kept going, man. I couldn't save him.

GANNON
I know. I know, Marv. But I need you to finish what he started. Send the modded files to my phone. It's all in the folder marked GWM.

MARV
(over phone)
I don't know if I'm good enough for this.

GANNON

You built the core of it in college. You're exactly good enough. Go.

INT. GANNON'S VANTEX - COCKPIT - NIGHT

Gannon streaks toward orbit, tense, watching a progress bar crawl forward on his dash.

MARV
(over phone)
This thing's a mess in here. Okay -- found the folder. GWM. Gannon World Marshal, cute.

GANNON
Don't let it distract you.

MARV
(over phone)
Installing now... five percent... thirteen... nineteen...

GANNON
Keep it coming, Marv. Good vibes only.

EXT. REKK'S MOTHERSHIP - SPACE - NIGHT

The Vantex approaches in stealth mode, the last of the upload arriving just as Gannon reaches the hull.

AUTOPILOT (V.O.)
Updates complete. Cell phone weapon ready.

GANNON
Thank you.

AUTOPILOT (V.O.)
Relax, Gannon.

He taps his phone against a control panel by the docking door. It slides open. He parks, unbothered, on the loading dock like he owns the place.

INT. MOTHERSHIP - DOCKING STATION - CONTINUOUS

A few alien dockworkers barely glance up. FENN, mid-task, notices him.

FENN
We've got a visitor. You lost?

GANNON
A bit. My friend's uncle works around here somewhere.

FENN
Which friend?

GANNON
Johanna. Xexon 5.

FENN
Lovely girl. Rekk's down that hall, past the security door. You're not the friend from Orgzan she keeps mentioning, are you?

GANNON
Just doing some quick research. Bio-interface spectrum modulator, that kind of thing.

Gannon raises his phone and fires -- a clean, silent pulse. Fenn drops, stunned, not hurt. Gannon moves fast down the row, dropping two more guards the same way, then reaches a terminal, taps his phone to it. The lights flicker once and steady.

INT. REKK'S MOTHERSHIP - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

ZIB
What was that?

REKK
System readings?

KORR
Brief undervolt, ninety percent of systems. Back to normal now.

REKK
Weapons?

ZIB
Functioning. All wings checked in. Nothing from engineering.

REKK
Put a full alert out for this Gannon character. Seal every perimeter.

INT. MOTHERSHIP - DOCKING STATION - CONTINUOUS

Gannon taps his phone one more time.

GANNON
Voice control.

AUTOPILOT (V.O.)
Activated.

GANNON
You really do get around.

AUTOPILOT (V.O.)
Never far from you, sugar. Your phone's been linked to the Vantex mainframe this whole time.

GANNON
Reroute their security to preset A. Find their attack wings and shut them down -- quietly. Make it look like everything's still responding normally.

AUTOPILOT (V.O.)
Stealth approach. Processing.

GANNON
Get me to that bridge.

INT. REKK'S MOTHERSHIP - BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Rekk hovers over the console, hand on a massive activation switch -- the core expeller, primed and ready.

REKK
Supreme is the one who gives, and the one who takes away. One button, and we forget Earth ever existed.

Gannon storms in, phone raised.

GANNON
Not so fast.

REKK
How did you get in here? Seize him!

Gannon drops Zib and Korr with two quick, clean shots before either can move, then levels the phone at Rekk. Splith bounces excitedly around Gannon's ankles.

GANNON

I've got your entire network locked to my voice command, Rekk. Test the weapons if you don't believe me. Try hitting something that isn't breathing for once.

REKK
(hitting buttons, nothing responding)
That's impossible. I just installed the latest security package.

GANNON
And I appreciate that, genuinely. Now power down the expeller.

REKK
You think this ends your way? I still have attack wings.

He hits more buttons. Nothing responds. TORQUE's voice crackles weakly through a dying intercom link.

TORQUE (V.O.)
She's frozen solid down here, sir, I can't --

Gannon cuts the feed with a tap of his phone, weapon never wavering.

GANNON
I've assumed control. Now listen, because I don't bluff. Push that button and I end you before you ever see the results. Every person on that planet -- every single one -- matters to me. All of it. I can't imagine a universe without it.

Something shifts in Rekk's face, genuinely moved despite himself.

GANNON (CONT'D)
Turn it off, Rekk. These people are counting on me. I'm the World Marshal -- you approved that yourself. This planet's plenty stupid, I'll grant you that. But two wrongs, Rekk. Come on.

A long pause.

REKK
I do like your style, Mr. Gannon. One condition, before I power this down.

GANNON
Name it.

REKK
Your planet is a mess. No real leadership, no vision, nobody down there with the nerve to actually hold it together -- present company excluded. With expansion coming, I can't have that kind of chaos on my books. Accept the presidency. I'll back the campaign quietly. Just tell me where my niece is, and we'll call it settled.

GANNON
I'm not sure she wants to leave, Rekk.

REKK
(reaching for the button again)
You two? Oh, to hell with this--

GANNON
I will melt your head before your hand finishes moving. I'm not kidding.

Rekk freezes, then leans back, chastened.

GANNON (CONT'D)
Hang on. Autopilot, get Johanna on the line.

AUTOPILOT (V.O.)
Dialing.

Beeps. Johanna's voice comes through, giddy.

JOHANNA
(over phone)
Baby, it's you -- you have to see this view. It's incredible up here.

GANNON
I love you. Where are you?

JOHANNA
(over phone)
The Moon. Earth looks unbelievable from here.

GANNON
Your uncle's got a question for you.

Gannon holds the phone toward Rekk.

REKK
(awkward)
Sweetheart. Aren't you about ready to come home? We've, ah, reached a settlement.

JOHANNA
(over phone)
Actually, I think I'd like to stay a while longer. Haven't even played golf here yet.

REKK
You genuinely like it down there?

JOHANNA
(over phone)
I love it, Uncle. Billions of them, and every single one's completely different.

Rekk sighs, and powers down the expeller.

REKK
Gannon. You two have plans? Marriage, that sort of thing?

GANNON
(a beat, then certain)
If she'll have me. Yes.

REKK
Smooth. All right. Talk to her later, both of you. Pumpkin -- stay away from the tap water.

He cuts the call, then straightens, businesslike again.

GANNON
Restore Earth's communications. All of it.

REKK
Fine, fine.

He taps at his console. Gannon lowers his weapon, finally, and dials his mother.

MOTHER
(over phone)
Hello?

GANNON
It's me. You okay?

MOTHER
(over phone)
Fine, dear. Lights just came back on. Oh, and look, my show's back on too.

GANNON
Love you, Mom. Talk soon.

He closes the call, exhausted, and looks at Rekk one more time.

GANNON (CONT'D)
Two sectors. Seventeen and ninety-one. Nothing more, ever.

REKK
(reluctant nod)
Deal. And my systems? With Voss gone, who keeps my tech running?

GANNON
I've got a remote lock on everything you own, Rekk. Don't test it. Stay in your lane, and I'll keep the lights on for you when you need it.

REKK
You've got real nerve for an Earth-squat. Go on. I've got some explaining to do to my crew.

EXT. MOON SURFACE - NIGHT

Johanna and Marv sit together in her ship, taking in the view, the fear of the last few hours finally starting to drain out of both of them.

JOHANNA

Sometimes the best thing you can do is just breathe for a minute. It's all going to work out.

MARV
I hope so. He's the best friend I've got. Up there all alone.

JOHANNA
He's not alone. And he knows exactly what you did for him tonight. We all do.

Her phone rings. She answers, hopeful.

JOHANNA (CONT'D)
Did you get him?

GANNON
(over phone)
Got who?

JOHANNA
Splith! Is he okay?

GANNON
(over phone, laughing despite everything)
He's fine. Bouncing around my cockpit like nothing happened.

JOHANNA
Stay right there. I want to see that view one more time before we head back.

EXT. OUTER SPACE, NEAR THE MOON - NIGHT

The Vantex and Johanna's craft fly side by side back toward Earth, unhurried, two small lights against the dark.

EXT. MARV'S PLACE - NIGHT

They drop Marv off. He waves them goodbye, exhausted, relieved, considerably more of a hero than he'll ever fully get credit for.

MARV
Call me when the planet's not ending, yeah?

GANNON
You have my word.

INT. VANTEX COCKPIT - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Splith curls up happily in Johanna's lap.

JOHANNA
I'm so glad you're okay.

GANNON
He was ready to get out of there. Your uncle really doesn't understand basic comms protocol.

JOHANNA
I mean thank you. For everything.

GANNON
We did it together. All of us.

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING LAWN - DAY (GANNON'S INAUGURATION)

Weeks later. A massive crowd, considerably calmer than the last inauguration. Gannon stands at the podium in a sharp suit. Johanna watches from just offstage, radiant.

GANNON
With the new terms secured by our negotiating team, the Alliance has pulled back entirely. We've been granted safe, guaranteed expansion into two sectors of local space -- no more, no less, and no further threat to this planet or its people.

The crowd erupts. Tickertape falls. Overhead, several friendly UFOs perform a slow, celebratory flyby.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
And that, give or take an exploded car, a dead billionaire, several assassinated politicians, one heartbroken hacker, and a genuinely excellent professor gone too soon, is how Gannon became the first World Marshal to also become President -- which is either the best or worst idea anyone in this story ever had. History, as usual, will decide.

Gannon steps down from the podium into Johanna's arms, the crowd still roaring behind them, Splith bouncing circles around their feet.

JOHANNA
So. Mr. President.

GANNON
Don't get used to the title. I'm delegating almost immediately.

JOHANNA
Good. I hear the new guy's got a honeymoon to plan.

They kiss as the crowd cheers, confetti still falling, the whole ludicrous, improbable story finally, properly landing somewhere that feels, against every reasonable expectation, like a genuine happy ending.

FADE OUT.

END OF SCREENPLAY