EDGEWAYS

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FADE IN:

EXT. HOSPITAL LANDING PAD - NIGHT

Atop one of a thousand dizzying high-rises, Emergency
Management Technicians from Easy City's High Altitude Rescue
Team rush ADRIAN RHODES (late 20s) from a rescue vehicle.

His knee is bent the wrong way, he's covered in blood.

A glimpse of a face both youthful and weathered - wild,
shapeless hair, calculating eyes drawn in pain.

SUPER: "EASY CITY, CHINA. 2152."

INT. OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT

RHEE JIANJUN (Late 30s, Bond-ish) and FU RENSHU (50s, spooky)
watch the doctors.

                    FU RENSHU
          Only enough to save his life.

One of the Doctors, LIQIN (late 20s), looks shocked.

                    LIQIN
          I can't do that, director Fu, the
          Hippocratic--

                    FU RENSHU
          I'm from the Information, Education
          and Defense agency, my dear.

Liqin swallows.

                    LIQIN
          What's that supposed to mean?

                    FU RENSHU
          It means the only reason you've
          ever heard of Hippocrates is
          because I allowed it. So if you
          want anyone to hear of you ever
          again, you'll do as I say.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Adrian wakes to find Deputy Director Fu Renshu by his
bedside.

He groans.

                    ADRIAN
          Am I dead?

                    FU RENSHU
          Interesting you should ask. Your
          GSTF file says you are.

                    ADRIAN
          Right, but... ow.

                    FU RENSHU
          I know you weren't part of a proper
          ONE-sanctioned unit. You want to
          tell me about that?

Adrian looks at his injuries.

                    ADRIAN
          I'm not one to make big speeches,
          so let's just say that's not going
          to happen.

                    FU RENSHU
          No one's questioning your loyalty,
          or your resolve. I'm trying to help
          you. They're thankful now; they let
          us take you to the hospital.
                    (MORE)

                    FU RENSHU (CONT'D)
          Nevertheless, you're a security
          risk. Do you think a rogue
          operation'll be willing to bear
          that risk indefinitely? I can offer
          you protection.

Adrian stares him down.

                    FU RENSHU (CONT'D)
          It comes to this. We can regenerate
          the knee, but your injuries are
          severe. The longer we wait, the
          less perfect the operation. Think
          about that.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Liqin - the surgeon who saved Adrian - KNOCKS on the
doorframe and enters. His eyes drift and lock on her.

She holds a spider plant.

                    LIQIN
          I brought you something.

                    ADRIAN
               (disoriented)
          What?

                    LIQIN
          It's a spider plant. There're
          really easy to care for--

                    ADRIAN
          Is this some kind of code? A test?

                    LIQIN
          No, it's just a plant. This is what
          people do - to express concern,
          and... to say I'm so sorry, Mister
          Kuelling.

                    ADRIAN
          Excuse me?

She double-checks his chart.

                    LIQIN
          Mykal Keulling. You know your name,
          right?

                    ADRIAN
          Right. I meant, what are you sorry
          for?

                    LIQIN
          Your knee. There was a man from
          CIEDA here. He wouldn't let me...
          he made me stop before I'd
          regenerated it completely.

                    ADRIAN
          Oh, that. Don't sweat it. I know
          he's a hard case.

                    LIQIN
          Are you in much pain?

                    ADRIAN
          Yes, but you know what would help?

He gives her a weak smile. She laughs, nervous.

                    ADRIAN (CONT'D)
          When I get out of here, I know a
          place that administers a great
          caffeine drip.

                    LIQIN
          Is that your way of asking me out
          for coffee?

                    ADRIAN
          It is.

                    LIQIN
          Then I'd better write a
          prescription.

She enters her Link number on a data pad and gives it to him.

                    ADRIAN
          See?

Adrian moves his knee experimentally.

                    ADRIAN (CONT'D)
          Getting better already, miss...?

Liqin smiles.

                    LIQIN
          The plant does mean one other
          thing.

                    ADRIAN
          What?

She looks at him, all trace of humor gone.

                    LIQIN
          Don't get caught.

                                        CUT TO:

EXT. H.A.R.T DISPATCH CENTER - DAY

A URV - a high tech, versatile flying vehicle for High
Altitude Urban Rescue - is docked on the side of the
building. We HEAR the VOICE of a DISPATCHER, OVER.

                    DISPATCHER (V.O.)
               (filtered)
          H.A.R.T., Emergency... yes... yes,
          we'll send a team over right away.

SUPER: "SIX MONTHS LATER"

INT. URV COCKPIT

TARAFANE "TZ" ZAMZINGER (attractive female, mid-20s) and JOEL
FERED (late 20s, slightly pudgy) - two Emergency Management
Technicians, enter the cockpit already strapped into their
acceleration couches. They LOCK into place.

Fered faces forward, the driver. TZ faces rearward, where she
can manipulate the controls for the medical gurney mounted
aft.

                    TZ
          So, what have we got?

                    FERED
          Guy fell down a lift shaft at
          crossstreet plaza. Probably dead.
          Bystanders linked us.

EXT. STREET

The URV detaches, configures for flight and SCREAMS off,
passing cars left and right as it weaves through the flying
traffic of the vertical city.

INT. URV COCKPIT

TZ looks over her shoulder.

                    TZ
          Not to be macabre, but what's the
          rush? You know riding backwards
          makes me nauseated.

                    FERED
          Ah, there's this ambulance chaser -
          this black market medevac's been
          beating me to my jobs recently. I
          think he's hacked my dispatch
          encryption.

                    TZ
          But if the victim's dead, it has to
          be us.

                    FERED
          I just really don't want him to get
          there ahead of me.

                    TZ
          And I really don't want to boot in
          the gurney.

She looks out the window, trying to calm her stomach -
notices something outside.

                    TZ (CONT'D)
          Does he drive a kind of beat up
          orange China car?

EXT. STREET

TZ looks out the window at Adrian Rhodes in a old model
decommissioned taxi. He waves.

INT. URV COCKPIT

Fered glares at him.

                    FERED
          Aw, not again! Hold onto something!

FREEZE FRAME

SUPERIMPOSE: "PROFESIONAL DRIVER, CLOSED COURSE."

BACK TO SCENE

He jams the accelerator forward.

                    TZ
              (sick)
          Oh god.

EXT. STREET

Both vehicles accelerate. Adrian cuts in front of a
Transatmospheric freighter, which swerves in front of Fered
to avoid a collision.

INT. URV COCKPIT

Fered throws his hands up, as though to brace himself against
a person who has stumbled into his path. We see the wireless
control devices hooked around his thumbs.

                    FERED
          Whoa!

EXT. STREET

The URV extends its flaps and angles its aerofoils against
the impeding freighter in a motion just like Fered's.

Adrian BLAZES around a corner, ducks between a building and a
scanning tower. Fered, on a wider parabola, skims the top of
the tower, clips its antenna.

INT. URV COCKPIT

Fered steers, hyper focusing.

>   FERED
>   He's faster than I am, but I can go
>   places he can't. Just give me a
>   chance...

>   TZ
>   I'm going to give you carrots and
>   peas if this keeps up...

EXT. STREET

Fered gains on Adrian, going above the traffic while Adrian
has to dodge though it.

INT. URV COCKPIT

TZ scans (with her eyes) through a holograph that hovers in
the air in front of her.

INSERT: A schematic of a building with a point indicated two
thirds of the way up.

BACK TO SCENE

>   TZ
>   Here's a break. The lift is stopped
>   between levels. Fastest way will be
>   to go to the roof, coordinate with
>   the lift operator and go down the
>   shaft on our drop lines.

EXT. CROSS STREET PLAZA

The vehicles race up to the building, neck and neck. Adrian
slows, thwarted by the massive breezeway that blocks his
access to the side of the building.

INT. URV COCKPIT

TZ jerks a finger directionally.

                    TZ
          Turn in there!

                    FERED
          Stellar.

He jerks the controls.

EXT. CROSS STREET PLAZA

Fered ducks the URV into an alley, re-configures the ship to
fit narrowly between the neighboring buildings, and rockets
upward.

INT. URV COCKPIT

They relax.

                    FERED
          Let's see your crappy hover bug do
          that!

                    TZ
          Not bad, professional driver closed
          course.

                    FERED
              (defers to her)
          Professional navigator.

                    TZ
          I'll prep the medbay.

INT. LIFT SHAFT - DAY

Fered and TZ descend into frame, along with the gurney. They
arrive on the roof of the stopped elevator, where the VICTIM
lies broken, still gasping for breath.

                    VICTIM
               (groans)

                    TZ
          Holy crap, this guy's still alive!

                    FERED
               (kneels down)
          Sir, I need you to hold still.
          We're going to...
               (surprised noise)

The lift shudders and descends out of sight, leaves them
suspended by their drop lines. It stops far below, where
Adrian stands silhouetted in an open door.

                    ADRIAN
               (smirks)
          Need a lift?

TZ and Fered gawk at him helplessly.

                    FERED
               (deflated)
          He's good. Unethical and mercenary,
          but he is good. You think he bribed
          the lift operator?

                    TZ
          I dunno, but I'm glad we're not
          paid by the job. You wanna stop for
          a drink?

                    FERED
          Might as well. Unless someone gets
          hurt while he's taking that one to
          the medcenter. Then it's no
          contest.

INT. DARK CRAWLWAY - NIGHT

Grunts and mutterings.

A flashlight comes on.

Adrian works his way down the tight shaft. He's dressed as a
mechanic: jumpsuit, coil of rope, tool belt and diagnostic
equipment.

The VOICES of NIA and Adrian talk OVER.

                    ADRIAN'S VOICE
               (filtered, over Link)
          Hey, Nia? It's Mykal.

                    NIA'S VOICE
               (filtered, over Link)
          Hey Mykal.

                    ADRIAN'S VOICE
               (filtered, over Link)
          Hey, yeah, I'm running short of
          ideas for the 'Hushed Voices'
          correspondent blog this week. Is
          there, like, a theme for the feed I
          can tie into?

He finds an access panel, removes it, and pulls a sleek, full-
face helmet from his knapsack.

                    NIA'S VOICE
               (filtered, over Link)
          Sure, you want to do something on
          corporate malfeasance?

                    ADRIAN'S VOICE
                 (filtered, over Link)
            That's rich, for a media
            conglomerate.

                    NIA'S VOICE
                 (filtered, over Link)
            I know, right? Hypocrisy is policy.

He plugs a cord from his helmet to the node inside the access
panel.

Illumination from its small screen casts an eerie light on
his face.

Numbers roll across the screen until they arrive at the
correct password.

He's in.

                    NIA'S VOICE (CONT'D)
                 (continued, over Link)
            Whatever. I don't make this crap
            up, Dern does. I'm only the editor.

                    ADRIAN'S VOICE
                 (filtered, over Link)
            Who are you guys looking at?

                    NIA'S VOICE
                 (filtered, over Link)
            Oh, the usual. Fosset. HRZA. An
            equity group called Julu
            Transnational.

                    ADRIAN'S VOICE
                 (filtered, over Link)
            Yeah, Julu. They're a Cypro-corp
            front, I can tell you.

Adrian calls up a schematic of the building he's in.

                    NIA'S VOICE
              (filtered, over Link)
          You don't say.

                    ADRIAN'S VOICE
              (filtered, over Link)
          I could probably break into Julu
          Transnational. I know a guy who's
          good with access codes--

                    NIA'S VOICE
              (filtered, over Link)
          Don't tell me that, Mykal, I don't
          want to know that.

He studies the map, enters a few keystrokes, and a countdown
TICKS away on the screen.

15:00.

14:59.

Adrian marks the time on his watch and continues down the
crawlway, leaves the cable from his helmet plugged into the
network junction.

                    ADRIAN'S VOICE
              (filtered, over Link)
          I could pose as a lift operator.
          They're real secretive, like.
          Everyone knows not to mess with
          their stuff.

                    NIA'S VOICE
              (filtered, over Link)
          Mykal, are you listening? I don't
          want to know. Are you insane? Why
          do you have to do crap like that?

INT. LIFT SHAFT - NIGHT

Michael arrives at a cavernous shaft.

He takes the rope from over his shoulder and ties it off,
runs the free end through the carabiners on his repair
harness.

He suffers a small, private bout of vertigo, works himself up
to go over the edge.

                    ADRIAN'S VOICE
                 (filtered, over Link)
              'Course anybody could hack this
              stuff. Things a trans-national
              corporation really doesn't want you
              to know, they keep isolated on
              local nodes. Best thing to do is go
              in there and probe it out of them.

He rappels forty feet down to level 263, clamps his rope off
near a panel next to the elevator door.

                    NIA'S VOICE
                 (filtered, over Link)
              Whatever. I don't care where you
              pick up the juicy tidbits. Just
              make sure to have your stuff in by
              Tuesday. They're starting to be
              stricter about that sort of thing.

                    ADRIAN'S VOICE
                 (filtered, over Link)
              Will do. Thanks, Nia.

                    NIA'S VOICE
                 (filtered, over Link)
              You bet.

An ELEVATOR COMES UP THE SHAFT.

Adrian looks down, sees...

HIS POV

An elevator, impossibly far below him, coming up at great
speed.

BACK TO SCENE

He pries the panel loose, lets it drop down the shaft.

It HITS the elevator coming up.

Adrian plugs a remote device into the network box, makes a
connection.

He logs on and enters the command to open the door.

The elevator door GROANS and yawns open as Adrian swings.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Adrian makes a swashbuckler landing.

CIEDA agents LIWEI, TENGFEI and RONG react in surprise,
forearm-mounted railstorms trained on the open door.

Adrian's eyes go wide.

As the agents hesitate, Adrian swings on his rope back out
into the elevator shaft.

The CIEDA agents FIRE.

The plasma charges burn holes in his outfit and knock the
wind out of him, but don't penetrate his black undergarment.

He releases the clamp on his rope and drops. He lands hard on
the elevator traveling up the shaft.

INT. ELEVATOR – NIGHT

Two more CIEDA agents, HUIZHONG and LAO react to the SOUND
and look nervously at the ceiling. They respond to
technopathic links.

>   HUIZHONG
>   What?
>   (beat)
>   A Raider? Shit!

INT. LIFT SHAFT – NIGHT

The slack end of Adrian's rope coils beside him as the
elevator approaches at the door he just aborted.

He thinks fast, steps into an alcove in the shaft.

INT. JULU, HALLWAY – NIGHT

Liwei, Tengfei and Rong rush to the gaping elevator door.

THEIR POV

They see nothing but the roof of the elevator traveling
upward.

BACK TO SCENE

The elevator arrives at the open door, and the CIEDA agents
all speak at once.

>   LIWEI
>   Push the button!

>   HUIZHONG
>   What's going on?

                    TENGFEI
          Go up!

                    LAO
          What waiter?

                    RONG
          He's getting away!

Huizhong hits the button and the elevator continues up.
Tengfei, Liwei and Rong look down the shaft.

THEIR POV

They see nothing.

BACK TO SCENE

Suddenly realizing, they look up just in time to see Adrian
clinging to the bottom of the elevator.

They aim and FIRE.

Adrian jumps amid a SHOWER of plasma charges and barely
catches hold of the rope which dangles from the crawlspace
where he entered the shaft.

He scrambles up, his canvas tennis shoes SQUEAK on the
condensation.

INT. CRAWLWAY - NIGHT

Adrian crawls fast as he can down the access tunnel, collects
his utility helmet, but leaves the cable plugged into the
junction.

He glances at his watch.

12:59.

12.58.

He shuffles into the unexplored bowels of the building.

He puts a hand down on empty air, falls down a connecting shaft, acquires several choice bruises.

He scoots through several more twists and turns before arriving at a grate.

Hurriedly, he kicks it out and leaps from the crawlspace.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

He drops from the shaft and SPLASHES foot-first into a toilet.

He pitches over, scrapes the side of the stall, twists his ankle, and HITS the floor hard.

He watches weakly as his helmet rolls from the crawlspace, bounces off the toilet, hits him square in the face.

It rolls off under the other stall.

He lies there dazed, clutches his nose.

INT. JULU, HALLWAY - NIGHT

Adrian pokes his head out of the Ladies' bathroom door and scans the hall.

He enters the hallway and limps down it.

His soaking wet tennis shoes SQUISH.

He looks back and sees he's left a set of wet footprints.

He SQUISHES on.

As he crosses a corridor, he sees all five CIEDA agents there waiting for him, guns trained.

There's no point in running.

                    ADRIAN
               (sighs)
          Damn it.

INT. JULU, COMPUTER MAINFRAME ROOM – NIGHT

Huizhong and Liwei stand across a table from Adrian who is
handcuffed to a chair.

They've set up a temporary camp in the computer mainframe
room.

Rong dives methodically at a monitor built into the far wall.

Tengfei looks over Rong's shoulder.

Adrian's wet shoes lie in a corner.

                    RONG
          A High Altitude Rescue Team has
          been dispatched, responding to
          reports of shots fired. They'll be
          here in a few minutes.

                    HUIZHONG
          I told you not to just shoot at
          stuff.

                    LIWEI
          All right, Tengfei, go down to the
          garage and stall them. Let me know
          when they arrive.

                    HUIZHONG
               (to Liwei)
          What should we tell them?

                    LIWEI
          Tell them we chased this guy in
          here to apprehend him.

Adrian glances at his watch.

02:15.

                    HUIZHONG
          Somewhere you have to be?

                    ADRIAN
          Actually, I had theatre tickets--

                    HUIZHONG
          This isn't enough drama for you?

                    ADRIAN
          You guys aren't supposed to be
          here, are you?

                    LIWEI
          Okay, let's go over this again. You
          say you're a lift operator, and
          your name is Smith.

                    ADRIAN
          Schmidt.

                    LIWEI
          Schmidt.

                    ADRIAN
          You can say that again.

He turns a small monitor around to face Adrian with Schmidt's
file called up.

The picture shows a German man in his mid sixties with a
moustache.

                    HUIZHONG
          This is you?

                    ADRIAN
          It's an old picture.

                    HUIZHONG
          Uh-huh.

                    LIWEI
              (Inspects Adrian's helmet)
          What's this thing for, scuba
          diving?

                    ADRIAN
          Actually, it gets great radio
          reception.
              (They look at him blankly)
          You know, for when I'm working.

                    LIWEI
          Okay.

Adrian looks at his watch again.

It reads 01:05.

                    LIWEI (CONT'D)
              (pulls Huizhong aside)
          Well, what do you think?

                    HUIZHONG
              (with contempt)
          He's a Raider. What else would he
          be doing here?

                    LIWEI
          Then he might be here for the same
          reason we are, following the
          Chang'e money, looking for a story
          to sell.

They look over at Adrian, who cranes his neck, tries to see
what they're saying.

Adrian smiles.

                    HUIZHONG
          We should hold him for questioning.
          He may know something.

                    ADRIAN
               (to Liwei)
          Are you going to play the bad cop
          now?
               (indicating Huizhong)
          He's not very good at it.

                    LIWEI
          Agreed.

Tengfei comes into the room.

Huizhong and Liwei turn to face him.

Rong stays fixed to his terminal.

                    TENGFEI
          The HART team is here. I can't
          stall them anymore. What should I
          tell them?

                    LIWEI
          Stay here.

Liwei and Huizhong exit to meet the HART team.

The moments tick by as Adrian and Tengfei stare each other
down.

INSERT

The Countdown on Adrian's watch reaches 00:01

then 00:00

BACK TO SCENE

KLAXONS ring through the room.

Tengfei assumes a blank stare as he LINKS his superiors.

> TENGFEI
> There's an alarm going off, you
> hear that? What should I do?
> (listens)
> Well, where's the Fire Alarm
> Control Panel?
> (listens)
> Okay.

Tengfei leaves the room, only Rong remains at the console.

He pulls the wet sock off his right foot with his left.

He pulls his knapsack under the table, catches the zipper
pull between his toes and opens the bag.

He fishes around in it.

He fumbles uselessly in it for several agonizing seconds
before finally extracting an EM field disrupter by its open
casing.

He almost has it to his imprisoned hands when he loses his
grip, and the field disrupter CLATTERS to the floor.

Rong turns and looks sharply at Adrian, who STRAINS against
his handcuffs trying to recreate the sound.

Rong turns back to his work without noticing the field
disrupter on the floor.

Adrian resumes his efforts.

The fall has closed the shield, and Adrian wastes more time
trying to pick up the field disrupter with his foot as it
spins and slides unhelpfully from his grip.

Adrian props the field disrupter against his other foot, gets
it on its end, and shoves it between uncooperative toes.

He lifts it painfully to his hand, COUGHS as he hits the button.

He applies the ultrasonic device to his handcuffs, and it promptly GLITCHES and shuts off.

                    ADRIAN
                (sotto)
            Come on!

He CLICKS again.

The handcuffs begin to get hot, sear his wrists.

Adrian grits his teeth, keeps the field disrupter in place.

The ALARM goes quiet at almost exactly the time the handcuffs relax enough for Adrian to squeeze painfully out of them.

He tries to catch them, but his numb fingers fumble and they CLATTER to the floor.

Rong turns in shock just as Adrian jumps from his chair.

He SMACKS Rong's head against the computer console.

Rong falls from his chair, dazed.

Adrian puts on his shoes. He knows he should run, but he's in the computer interface room and this is his last chance at getting inside today.

He can't resist trying to finish the job.

He hops on the interface, but enters a few commands.

ON SCREEN: "DATA MINER UPLOADED> WORKING..."

Adrian waits, looks over his shoulder, shifts his weight.

Huizhong, Liwei, and Tengfei return.

                         HUIZHONG
                    (sees the situation)
              What da...?

He whips up his arm-mounted railstorm and OPENS FIRE.

The node interface EXPLODES in a shower of debris as the
plasma charges CHEW it up.

Adrian dives for the other doorway and rolls out.

The agents run to check on Rong.

Adrian circles around behind them to the first doorway, darts
back in the room, grabs his knapsack and helmet from the
floor.

Huizhong spins, FIRES.

Adrian ducks out amid a RAIN of charred shrapnel.

                         LIWEI
              Would you stop shooting?!
                    (into link)
              HART team, this is agent Liwei.
              Seal the building! We have an
              escaped prisoner, and I don't want
              him getting out!

INT. JULU, HALLWAY - LATER

Huizhong and Tengfei search, guns ready.

INT. JULU, LOBBY - NIGHT

HART technicians Joel Fered and his partner TZ evacuate Rong
on a stretcher.

                         RONG
              I'm fine, I'm fine.

                    FERED
          You're not. Besides, your boss says
          we take you in for a look either
          way, so just relax.

INT. JULU GARAGE LEVEL - NIGHT

Liwei stalks the darkened garage alone, when suddenly...

Headlights come on!

A hover-car FLIES right at him!

He dives out of the way as it SCREAMS past.

It CRASHES into one of the large nanoplas observation
windows.

The car's a totaled accordion, but the window's unharmed.

Liwei runs to check the car, but there's no one inside.

                    LIWEI
              (realizes the game)
          You might as well come out. You're
          not getting out that way.

From the shadows, Adrian silently curses.

                    LIWEI (CONT'D)
          You're not getting this story, not
          tonight. But give us what you have -
          tell us what led you to Julu, who's
          using them to fund Chinese
          companies, we'll take it from
          there.

A spidery CRACK runs up from the car's point of impact.

Then another.

They spread, the windows STRAIN against their frames.

Liwei sees what's about to happen.

                    LIWEI (CONT'D)
          Schmidt.

He takes cover as the window explodes outwards, and things
begin to get sucked out.

Adrian runs, favoring his sprained ankle, with the flow of
air to the window and stops himself by the frame.

Cautiously, he steps out.

EXT. JULU BUILDING – NIGHT

Adrian, still carrying his helmet, stops just outside the
window, teeters on the short ledge, wonders where to go.

There's a cavernous drop before him, skyscrapers all around.

The FLOW of oxygen from the window keeps the frostbitten high-
altitude air breathable.

Past Adrian's ledge, a landing pad juts out from the
building.

Its stairwells lead down to the breezeways between buildings.

Between Adrian and the landing pad, along the ledge, five
more observation windows strain under the outward AIRFLOW.

Adrian sprints towards the landing pad.

The windows EXPLODE outward immediately after his passing.

Adrian mutters to himself as he limps along the ledge, tries
to keep his eyes forward and not dwell on the abysmal drop.

Adrian reaches the end of the ledge, clings to the side of
the building, and swings his body around a corner, his feet
on less than an inch of support.

EXT. LANDING PAD - NIGHT

Adrian reaches the pad, GASPS stabbing ragged breaths in the thin atmosphere.

TZ and other members of the High Altitude Rescue Team cut off the stairwell to the breezeways.

Adrian turns to run the other way towards the edge of the landing pad, and BOUNCES painfully off Fered and falls down.

Fered's metal jump gear RINGS with the impact.

Adrian scrambles up, ready to fight.

                    FERED
          Please don't do this.

His helmet rolls away towards the precipice.

Adrian feints to the right, then dives after his helmet, catches the chin strap just before it rolls over the edge.

As Fered approaches from behind, Adrian winds up and swings his helmet around as hard as he can.

The BLOW throws Adrian off-balance, knocks Fered off his feet.

Adrian regains his footing, sees more CIEDA and HART officers rush him.

                    TZ
          Stop!

Adrian turns to run, but he's trapped on the ledge!

He looks back at his pursuers, then over the drop-off, and groans.

Rivers of personal vehicles pour through the spaces between the buildings.

The HART URV RISES from below the ledge, looms over him, catches him in its searchlight.

Adrian SUCKS IN as much oxygen as he can, pulls on his helmet, and leaps over the edge.

EXT. EASY CITY - CONTINUOUS

He falls face first and flailing into the jagged abyss.

His helmet's re-breathers STRAIN to keep up with his ragged gasps as the dizzy confusion of a bottomless Easy City canyon RUSHES up to meet him.

                                        CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

GAO RU (40s), a water broker with a briefcase and a leather face frozen in a perpetual smile emerges from an arriving train.

He traverses the steps to an observation platform, admires the high-altitude view.

                    GAO RU
                (gapes in awe)
            Wow.

His smile disappears as first Adrian, then the HART technicians fall past the window.

                                        CUT TO:

EXT. EASY CITY - CONTINUOUS

Adrian wrests a grappling hook and line from his bag.

He loops it through a buckle on his wrist and throws it out into the air ahead of him.

The hook CATCHES.

With a bounce, Adrian pendulums into the middle of traffic.

Cars WHIZ by all around him.

One barely misses him, ZIPS by beneath him at the apex of his swing.

As he swings back the other way, Adrian sees a giant trans-atmospheric freighter BARREL towards him.

It's a about the length of a 20-story building and wide enough to monopolize six lanes of traffic.

Its forward landing lights blind him.

A graphic plastered to its side reads, "PHALLIC EXTENSION."

The driver BLARES his HORN, it's right on top of him.

Adrian tugs hard on the line supporting him.

He just misses the freighter at the opposite apex of his swing, and lands with a hard THUD atop it.

INT. PHALLIC EXTENSION – NIGHT

VICTOR FLYNN (Late 40s), the pilot, reacts to the THUD on his cabin roof.

He's an angry Buddha, dirty, jowly, with a physique gained by years behind the wheel of a freighter.

EXT. PHALLIC EXTENSION - TRAVELLING

Adrian's line goes taut as it reaches its extremity and DRAGS him across the top of the freighter, past the circular dorsal-mounted fusion generator and onto an exhaust vent grate.

His helmet CRACKS as it bounces along its surface, HISSES AIR.

Adrian tries to extricate the line from its buckle, but there's no slack.

He strains to reach the boot knife strapped to his ankle, his wet hi-tops are blocks of ice.

Adrian retrieves the knife, CUTS the line.

He rolls to stop scant feet from the back edge of the freighter as it bobs and weaves through traffic, flashes past latticework intersections, on-ramps and bypasses built brazenly through buildings.

Just as Adrian recovers from this, Fered, TZ and another HART technician land on the freighter's roof with a JOLT.

Their URV's winch system trails lines that belay their jump suits as it paces the heavy freighter.

INT. PHALLIC EXTENSION - NIGHT

Victor turns his security cameras on the roof just in time to see...

INSERT

On the screen, the HART technicians chase Adrian towards the edge of the freighter.

BACK TO SCENE

                    VICTOR
          This isn't a taxi service, boys.

He twists the freighter's hand-grip controls.

EXT. PHALLIC EXTENSION - TRAVELLING

Victor steers the ponderous metal whale for a low underpass.

Adrian, facing forward, sees it coming and dives for cover.

The underpass SCRAPES the three HART technicians neatly off
the roof.

They dangle, dazed, on the lines beneath their URV.

Adrian types on his wrist keypad, his helmet links to the
node of the Phallic Extension.

INT. PHALLIC EXTENSION - NIGHT

A text message appears on Victor's screen.

INSERT

The screen reads: "SRRY ABOUT DENT - WILL BUY YOU A DRINK
SMTIME. RGRDS, GUY ON ROOF."

BACK TO SCENE

Victor looks in his rear-view.

INSERT

CIEDA cars chase them, SIRENS BLARING.

BACK TO SCENE

                    VICTOR
          Shit!

Victor opens up the throttle.

EXT. PHALLIC EXTENSION - TRAVELLING

Adrian fights for balance as Victor follows a hover-car
towards a carwash - - a circular tunnel with three laser-
scouring arrays.

EXT. CAR WASH - NIGHT

The hover-car goes through a tunnel, lasers SCOUR the dirt
and corrosion from its hull.

It doesn't look healthy for a living person outside the
vehicle.

EXT. PHALLIC EXTENSION - TRAVELLING

The Phallic Extension turns sharply towards the carwash.
Adrian slides on his back, goes over the edge of the
starboard side head first.

He kicks his heels over, flips to fall feet first down the
curve of the hull.

He lands on the starboard walkway with a stab in his ankle.

Off balance and about to pitch over backwards, he grabs a
handgrip beside the starboard cargo door.

The handgrip releases a tension wire tie-down with a metallic
WHIP-PING.

Extra crates topple off, and Adrian falls with them.

The crates HIT the cars in pursuit, BREAK OPEN and spill a liquid over them, the tunnel, and Adrian.

When the CIEDA cars - covered in accelerant - hit the scouring laser, the entire tunnel IGNITES.

The resultant fireball SCORCHES the cars.

The crate debris - still attached by the tension wire to which Adrian reflexively clings - catches on the outside of the tunnel and swings him out of the way or the BLAST.

The CIEDA Nomads CRASH to the tunnel floor and GRIND to a halt.

EXT. EASY CITY - NIGHT

The Phallic Extension ROCKETS out the other end of the car wash and away.

EXT. CAR WASH - NIGHT

Adrian dangles by the wire at the tunnel's mouth, SLAPS at the fire on his canvas hi-tops.

INT. CIEDA CAR - NIGHT

Rong, Tengfei Huizhong and Liwei sit dazed but unharmed, trapped in their disabled car at the bottom of the blackened car wash.

                    LIWEI
          Holy Schmidt.

                                        DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ADRIAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A door opens into the shabby darkness of a tiny apartment in a low-income housing project.

The warren of corridors outside is crabbed and charmless.

Adrian sighs as he limps into the room, turns the light on, triggers an exodus of cockroaches.

He stashes his sweat-soaked gear in the ventilation shaft above his closet.

He checks his video messages in the central alcove.

The first is ADRIAN'S MOM (late 50s.)

                    MOM
               (filtered, over Link)
          Hi Adrian, it's Mom. It's the Moon
          Festival this weekend, you know. I
          thought we'd go to the park in your
          building and have a picnic. So I'll
          see you tomorrow morning unless
          something changes. Link me.

                    ADRIAN
               (groans)
          Never should've told you I wasn't
          dead.

The next message plays. It's DU TIAN (30s).

                    DU TIAN
               (filtered, over Link)
          This is Du Tian of the State
          Administration of Taxation, calling
          for Mr. Mykal Keulling to inform
          you we will be conducting an
          investigation into your financial
          history...

                    ADRIAN
              (moans)
          Never should've told you I <u>was</u>.

The next message plays, a FEMALE SPOKESPERSON.

                    FEMALE SPOKESPERSON
              (filtered, over Link)
          Hi Mr. Keulling, this is Lanying
          Jehng from Jade Holidays, calling
          to inform you you've won two
          tickets to a weekend cruise to New
          Mauritius. At any point in time
          around 200 of our tickets go
          unsold, so we like to give them to
          prospective customers like you.
          When you're ready for adventure,
          use this promotional code to board
          one of our fantastic cruise ships
          departing daily from Wan Chai
          District, pier 5! Congratulations,
          we know you'll enjoy your cruise.

                    ADRIAN
          That's random.

Adrian sniffs, and opens his mail slot.

It pipes directly to his central alcove from a dispatcher in
his building.

There's also a message bio-chip in the mail slot.

                    ADRIAN (CONT'D)
          Not sure I wanna see what's on you.

He stuffs the bio-chip in his jacket pocket.

In the efficiency kitchen, Adrian opens the refrigerator and
peers in.

A lone pot pie stares back at him from the shelf.

He POPS it in the electron exciter, eats it before it's cooled, burns his tongue.

He takes off his clothes and goes to bed in his bunk alcove.

He turns the light out, lays in the dark.

> ADRIAN (CONT'D)
> (remembers)
> Liqin!

He turns the light back on in a hurry.

He rushes around his room, pulls out a wrinkled shirt, sniffs it.

He discards it, sniffs another, pulls it on.

He brushes his teeth with a pair of socks draped over his shoulder, they fall in the sink.

He tries to pull his pants on and run for the door at the same time.

Unsuccessfully.

INT. ADRIAN'S APARTMENT, GARAGE – NIGHT

He runs downstairs to his hack, gets in and starts to pull out.

He stops.

He runs back and puts a traffic cone in his parking place.

He jumps back in the hack and SPEEDS off.

He TEARS into the street as traffic swerves to avoid him.

EXT. HOSPITAL DROP-OFF - NIGHT

Adrian pulls up to the curb.

LIQIN waits impatiently outside the hospital, wearing scrubs.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK - NIGHT

Adrian does a last-minute hair check in the mirror, but sobers when he sees Liqin's expression.

EXT. HOSPITAL DROP-OFF - NIGHT

She comes over to the hack, hesitates, but gets in.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK - NIGHT

She doesn't say anything.

He doesn't move.

                    LIQIN
          Could you just go?

                    ADRIAN
          Hi, Liqin. Sorry I'm late.

                    LIQIN
          I've been waiting out here for an
          hour and a half!

                    ADRIAN
          Sorry, it's been kind of a rough
          day.

                    LIQIN
          How hard can it be to remember
          something like picking up your
          girlfriend?

                    ADRIAN
          I was--

                    LIQIN
          Besides, I thought today was your
          day off.

                    ADRIAN
          Listen, I won some tickets for a
          cruise to New Mauritius. I don't
          know if it'll be any good, or
          anything, but I thought maybe we
          could go--

                    LIQIN
          This isn't a good time Mykal.

                    ADRIAN
          Relax on a beach--

                    LIQIN
          You're obviously busy.

                    ADRIAN
          Maybe talk this stuff out--

                    LIQIN
          I'm not sure I want to be with you
          for that long right now.
               (glares out the window)
          Look, Mykal, I love you, but I just
          don't know if our relationship is
          going anywhere. You never have
          time, or you forget--

                    ADRIAN
          I'm trying to make time. Right now
          I'm making--

                    LIQIN
          You show no initiative towards
          wanting to change your life--

                    ADRIAN
What, I want to go on a cruise,
how's that?

                    LIQIN
And if you hadn't won it, what
would we be doing? I was there when
they brought you to the hospital,
remember? I know Mykal Kuelling's
not your real name. I know you used
to do something dangerous,
something important. I know you
miss it, and I don't begrudge you
that. I just think maybe we need to
take some time away from each other
to see how we feel.
     (looks tenderly at him)
If our feelings are still there--

The back door opens, an irritable-looking EXECUTIVE (50s)
gets in the hack.

                  BUSINESSMAN
Take me to Gothic Towers, upper
Acclivity, section 9.

                    ADRIAN
The sign says 'off duty,' pal!
Can't you read?

                    LIQIN
That's it! I'm so tired of this.
I'm sick to death of your flaky non-
careers and your stupid black
market hack. We're done, Mykal!

EXT. CURBSIDE - NIGHT

Liqin jumps out, SLAMS the door, and runs from the hack.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK – NIGHT

He watches her go with a fatigued expression.

The executive leans up to the rear seat partition.

                    EXECUTIVE
          Now can you take me to Gothic
          Towers? Upper Acclivity? Section--

                    ADRIAN
          Section 9, yeah, I got it.

He hits a button.

INSERT

The hack sign goes from 'Off-Duty' to 'Hired.'

BACK TO SCENE

Adrian drives.

                                   DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET – NIGHT

The hack weaves through a sea of traffic.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK – NIGHT

Adrian looks out the window, watching the city at night.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK – VARIOUS

Adrian aimlessly studies the parade of faces that pass
through his back seat: desperate, lonely, agitated in perfect
urban silence, just like him.

                                                    SMASH TO:

EXT. STREET – NIGHT

A long, black Cypro-corp model Edonikos cuts off a
lightweight Katy – runs it out of its proscribed lane and
into the pedestrian overpass right in front of Adrian.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK – CONTINUOUS

He snaps to alertness, watches in horror as car and causeway
BURST into flames.

EXT. STREET – NIGHT

The Edonikos drives away without stopping.

EXT. STREET – NIGHT

Adrian pulls his hack over beside the smoldering breezeway
and gets out onto the curb.

A crowd gathers, unsure what to do about the trapped driver.

SCREAMS come from inside the breezeway.

The crowd AD LIBS various responses, "It sounds like a girl,"
"Somebody do something!"

                         ADRIAN
               Where's HART?

                         BYSTANDER
            I linked, they're on their way.

Adrian goes to the trunk, gets out his helmet.

EXT. BREEZEWAY ROOF - NIGHT

Adrian ventures precariously out onto the BURNING structure,
looking for a way in.

He tries to ignore the overwhelming sense of vertigo he gets
when he glimpses the cavernous drop below.

The wind shears BUFFET him.

INT. BREEZEWAY - NIGHT

JIAYING (20s, Pregnant) is injured and trapped in her car by
jagged debris.

She cowers, listing to the supports GROAN as they weaken.

Out of the flames, climbing over rickety, smoldering girders,
comes Adrian.

                         ADRIAN
                    (Almost looses his
                     balance)
                Jeez-oh-man!

The young woman shivers and flinches at the CRUNCH of
breaking nanoplas, clearly going into shock.

                         ADRIAN (CONT'D)
                    (regains composure)
                Hi, ma'am. What's your name?

                         JIAYING
                J-Jiaying.

                    ADRIAN
          Well, Jiaying, I want you to know
          the ambulance is on it's way. but I
          can get you a better deal, like.

                    JIAYING
          What?

                    ADRIAN
          I'm a freelance ambulance driver.
          The real ambulance is expensive,
          and if you're uninsured, it can
          break you. Plus, you know, it might
          be too late. I can get you to the
          hospital fast and cheap. If I don't
          beat them by thirty percent, it's
          free.

                    JIAYING
          I think...

                    ADRIAN
          What?

                    JIAYING
          I think I'm going into labor!

                    ADRIAN
          Oh god, this is not happening.

                    JIAYING
          It's happening.

                    ADRIAN
          Jesus, lady, neither one of us has
          a lot of time, here. Do you want a
          good deal or not?

INT. HOSPITAL DROP-OFF - NIGHT

Liqin's on duty when Adrian arrives.

A meaningful look passes between them as Adrian transfers the patient.

Liqin and the orderlies take Jiaying into maternity and leave Adrian standing in the hallway.

                                        DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ADRIAN'S APARTMENT – MORNING

In the morning Adrian comes home and finds his house thoroughly tossed.

His books are pulled from the shelves; his comfy chair has been shredded.

The ventilation grate's pulled free, his raider gear strewn about the room.

He takes his jacket off, crosses the room to upright a spider plant.

                    ADRIAN
          Why'd you even give me this plant,
          Liqin? Some kind of test? You want
          to see how I handle responsibility?
               (looks around room)
          Like this is how.

He throws the jacket onto his kicked-over coffee table.

The reader in the table top ACTIVATES the bio-chip in his pocket.

A HOLOGRAPH of RHEE JIANJUN's face leaps from its surface, his head tipped sideways partially intersecting the floor.

                    RHEE JIANJUN'S HOLOGRAPH
          I hope you're enjoying your new
          apartment, and the fact Fu Renshu
          doesn't know where it is.

He looks off-screen.

                    RHEE JIANJUN'S HOLOGRAPH (CONT'D)
          There's a package, registered to
          Gutterman Smith at the Post office.
          Take it to the TAF Little Wing and
          give it to the pilot, Coughlin.
          He's at the Skytown Spaceport, pier
          96. Sorry to involve you in this,
          but for old time's sake - I hope
          you can make it.

Adrian looks guiltily at his watch.

                    ADRIAN
          Guess I should've watched you
          earlier.

He throws his jacket back on and rushes for the door, but
before he can reach it, the DOORBELL RINGS.

Adrian stops in his tracks.

Cautiously, he switches on the one-way viewer.

His face falls as he recognizes Du Tian of the State
Administration of Taxation.

                    ADRIAN (CONT'D)
          Damn it!

He slinks back in his living room to hide.

INT. ADRIAN'S APARTMENT - LATER

Adrian straightens his apartment, but the job is too massive.

He sits on the floor, in a corner.

He gets up, cautiously switches on the viewer, sees nothing.

Adrian opens the door, runs into his mother just coming down
the corridor.

                    ADRIAN
              (sotto)
         Oh, great.

                    MOM
              (hugs him)
         Adrian!

                    ADRIAN
              (stammers)
         M-mom!

She strides into his apartment, glimpses its condition.

                    MOM
         Oh my goodness, Adrian, what
         happened?

                    ADRIAN
         Uh, sorry, ma, I... had a party
         last night, and it got a little out
         of hand. Haven't had time to clean
         up yet.

                    MOM
         Well, Adrian, I know a young man
         likes to be a little wild but my
         goodness. But this could get
         expensive.

                    ADRIAN
         I don't normally, ma, I just--

                    MOM
         And what friends of yours would--

                    ADRIAN
         Yeah, speaking of which, I have to--

                    MOM
          I brought you some groceries, and I
          baked fresh moon cakes.

She wafts them before his nose

Adrian's sense of duty and empty stomach fight a silent war.

He uprights the kitchen table.

INT. ADRIAN'S APARTMENT - LATER

Adrian stands from the table where his mom sits, the remains
of Dim Sum still on it.

                    ADRIAN
          I'm really, really sorry, mom, but
          they called me in to work today,
          and I have to go, like now.

                    MOM
          Oh? Are you working somewhere
          specific now?

                    ADRIAN
          It's a long story, but it kinda has
          to do with why I'm back in Easy
          City.

                    MOM
          But - it's the moon festival this
          weekend; it's supposed to be a time
          for family.

                    ADRIAN
          The Journalism and Medical
          Transport industries wait for no
          man, I'm afraid.

                    MOM
          Well, I took off the whole weekend
          so I'll be here when you get back.
          Maybe we can go out tomorrow.

                    ADRIAN
          Okay ma, I promise you we'll do
          that.

Adrian runs out the door.

EXT. EASY CITY, POST OFFICE - DAY

Adrian's hack pulls into the Post Office parking garage.

INT. EASY CITY, POST OFFICE - DAY

Adrian flirts with the girl working there.

He signs for a package.

EXT. EASY CITY, POST OFFICE - DAY

Adrian strides back out to his hack with the package under
one arm, WHISTLES off-key.

He notices a black Edonikos parked nearby.

Adrian's almost to his car when Gao Ru - the water broker
from the train station - flashes Adrian a hand sign which
means "I need a lift."

Adrian hesitates, torn between duty and fare money.

He opens the back hatch, and Gao Ru gets in.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK - DAY

Adrian settles back in his seat.

                ADRIAN
        Where to, chief?

                GAO RU
        The Chamber of Commerce.

Adrian pulls the hack into traffic.

INT. EDONIKOS - DAY

The occupants, LISTIS and SKYLOS, look at Adrian's hack with
the car's surveillance equipment, see an altered-wavelength
view of the package on Adrian's seat.

                LISTIS
        Diabasma paketo?

                SKYLOS
        Eftase metafero.

EXT. EASY CITY STREET - DAY

Adrian leans back, eyes Ru.

                ADRIAN
        You look like a tourist, but you've
        been to Easy City before, yeah?

                GAO RU
        I'm in town on business.

                ADRIAN
        Sure, but you know the hack sign.

Adrian repeats the hand signal.

>   GAO RU
>   I don't know, I'm from Sichuan
>   Province.

>   ADRIAN
>   Whatever. Welcome to E.S.C.

They ride in silence for a beat.

Adrian looks at the rearview display.

HIS POV

A black Edonikos hover-sedan follows them.

There's damage to the Edonikos's left front fender.

This is same car that deliberately wrecked the Katy right in front of him last night.

BACK TO SCENE

>   ADRIAN (CONT'D)
>   Same car caused a wreck in front of
>   me last night. Just before my place
>   was tossed...

Confused, Adrian looks around him.

His gaze falls on the package he's just retrieved.

>   ADRIAN (CONT'D)
>   What have you got me into, Agent
>   Rhee?

Adrian looks at himself in the rearview display, takes a deep breath.

                     ADRIAN (CONT'D)
               (to Gao Ru)
          Just thought I'd warn you, we've
          got a problem. It's okay, I can
          handle it.

                     GAO RU
          Is it something with the car?

                     ADRIAN
          No the car's fine. Just hang in
          there.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUING

Adrian blows through an intersection and merged with the
right hand lane.

The black Edonikos sticks close.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK - DAY

Adrian looks in the rear view display.

HIS POV

The black Edonikos cuts across three lanes of traffic,
accelerates and moves in.

BACK TO SCENE

Adrian pops a trim lever and hammers on the throttle.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The plasma engines SCREAM, the hack leaps forward and up into
a new layer of traffic.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK - DAY

Gao Ru, horrified, sinks into his seat, his face distorted by speed.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The hack blazes along the left hand lane, close to the oncoming traffic, the black Edonikos right behind them.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK - DAY

Gao Ru shouts over the high-pitched WHINE of the engines.

                    GAO RU
          What are you doing?!

                    ADRIAN
          Just gonna teach this tailgater a
          lesson.

Adrian slams the throttle back.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The hack pitches wildly forward, its engine SPUTTERS.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK - DAY

Gao Ru SLAMS against the dividing nanoplas.

INT. EDONIKOS - DAY

Listis and Skylos react in shock as Adrian stops dead in front of them.

The driver, Listis, turns hard.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The Edonikos veers into oncoming traffic to avoid a collision.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK - DAY

Adrian looks behind him, laughs, then faces back to the road.

He's headed right at a lane divider!

                    ADRIAN
          Jeez-oh-man!

He turns the hack, hard.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Adrian's hack swerves into the path of oncoming traffic, right behind the Edonikos.

Cars BUZZ by in the other direction as the black Edonikos swings to the far left of the street, dives below a hack stop.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK - DAY

As the car ahead dives, Adrian sees he's headed directly for the platform.

He pulls up frantically.

                    ADRIAN
          Hang on!

EXT. STREET – DAY

Adrian's hack SCRAPES the edge and ROCKETS through the stop the wrong way in a shower of sparks.

The executive from the previous night sits at the stop as though he's been waiting for some time.

He lifts a finger expectantly as the hack SHOOTS by, then drops it in frustration.

He looks at his watch and sighs.

Adrian steers back into the correct lane of traffic.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK – DAY

Adrian looks past his left shoulder.

He's side by side with the black Edonikos, which tries to force him off the road to the right.

He sees the Listis's face through the window.

Adrian yanks the wheel left.

EXT. STREET – DAY

The hack careens into a side alley. Adrian REVS the fusion drive.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK – DAY

Adrian FIRES UP the hack's repulsorlifts.

                    ADRIAN
          I really shouldn't do this. It's
          dangerous, but I tried to ditch
          them politely. You saw it, right? I
          tried.

He pulls back the controls, points the hack's nose in the
air.

The hack SCREAMS upward. The package from Adrian's footwell
lands on the nanoplas divider.

Gao Ru slides off the back seat, LANDS HARD on the hack's
rear window.

It's all that separates him from the abysmal drop.

                    GAO RU
          Oh, god!

EXT. STREET - DAY

Layers of traffic whip by.

Up, past the tallest buildings the hack leaps from the
skyline and hangs poised against the sky.

It peaks and plunges backward.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK - DAY

Gao Ru - and every object in the back seat - falls forward
again and HITS the nanoplas divider.

His briefcase SMASHES open, showers the cabin with debris.

Some of the smaller items SPILL through the divider hole,
land around the package in the footwell.

EXT. STREET - DAY

They fall, fall, fall and dive-bomb back into traffic several
blocks away.

Adrian blends into the traffic, safe in a wholly different
part of town.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK - DAY

Gao Ru pounds on the nanoplas.

                  GAO RU
          Stop! Stop! Let me out of here,
          right this instant!

EXT. STREET - DAY

The hack pulls to the side of the road.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK - DAY

Adrian pulls the hack to the side of the road.

                  ADRIAN
          I don't know if you want to go
          walking in this neighborhood...

But Gao Ru isn't listening.

He SLAMS the back hatch, opens the front, and collects the
spilled contents of his briefcase.

In his distraction, he picks up the package and stuffs it in
as well.

                  GAO RU
          I've got your license. I'm gonna
          make sure ECTA shuts you down.

EXT. STREET – DAY

Gao Ru SLAMS the passenger door and stalks off.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK – DAY

Adrian drives away, emotionally drained.

>   ADRIAN
>   (sotto)
>   You're welcome for what they didn't
>   do to you because they didn't catch
>   me.

Absentmindedly, he looks over at the offending package only
to realize with a shock that it's gone!

>   ADRIAN (CONT'D)
>   Jesus!

He whips the hack around.

EXT. STREET – DAY

Adrian gets out and searches the crowded plaza, but there's
no sign of Gao Ru.

Adrian stares into the mass of humanity in despair.

INT. ADRIAN'S APARTMENT – NIGHT

His mom meets his at the door.

>   MOM
>   Hi Adrian. I made dinner.

He comes in wearily to find she's cleaned the place.

                         MOM (CONT'D)
          Any word on your schedule this
          weekend?

                         ADRIAN
          Mmm.

                         MOM
          What's bothering you, honey?

                         ADRIAN
          Nothing, just a rough day.

He sinks onto the couch, every joint cracks.

                         MOM
          Well, you have some messages. I'll
          play them for you.

                         ADRIAN
          No thanks, Mom, I can--

She links to the info station in the central alcove.

We see DANE (late 40s, slovenly.)

                         DANE
             (filtered)
          Hi, it's Dane, from the Hack
          Hookup. I'm really sorry Mykal, but
          you know you can't jostle the
          customers. This isn't the first
          complaint. You're a good worker,
          and I hate to loose you, but I
          can't have you taking fares
          anymore. It's not worth the risk.
          Police are gonna be looking for
          your hack, I'd get rid of it if I
          were--

Adrian jumps up, avoids her look and skips to the next
message.

It's DU TIAN.

                    DU TIAN
                 (filtered)
          This is Du Tian calling to inform
          you I have found serious financial
          discrepancies and I'm going to
          seize your assets if you can't
          offer me an explanation for these--

Adrian stops the machine and considers his options.

                    MOM
          I always said you have to get
          around to that accounting.

His mother wipes the counter top.

                    MOM (CONT'D)
          You should really see about getting
          a new Link, too. Waiting for your
          messages is positively medieval.

                    ADRIAN
          Thanks mom, that's very helpful.
          Sure would hate to miss the latest
          tripe on the Chang'e feed.

INT. ADRIAN'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - DAY

He shuts the door, sits on his bed, and puts on his helmet
and tries to link Rhee Jianjun at CIEDA.

                    ADRIAN
          Come on, Agent Rhee. Tell me what
          the hell's going on.

HIS POV

He hears a CHIME, looks at a roughly-rendered desk with a
pleasant looking VIRTUAL RECEPTIONIST behind it.

                    RECEPTIONIST
          I'm sorry, the Link you're
          attempting to reach is offline.
          Thank you for using Chang'e
          Community Immersion. Please Link
          again later.

BACK TO SCENE

He tears the helmet off, throws it in a corner.

EXT. ADRIAN'S APARTMENT, BALCONY - DAY

He goes out onto his tiny balcony and looks up, past the tiny
bit of park space several stories below, crammed between his
housing project and the nanoplas wall.

A tiny bit of sky peeks through the top of the infinite
canyon.

A gigantic floating billboard wanders lazily past, obscures
his bit of sky.

An Ad for Chang'e flashes across its face:

"CHANG'E (TM). EVERYTHING YOU LOVE IN ONE PLACE. RIGHT HERE,
RIGHT NOW."

Adrian looks back at the helmet.

He's got an idea.

INT. BUG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Amid a claustrophobic amalgam of thick wires, hoses and
monitors, PRODIGY (late 30s, computer hacker) calls up a
schematic of the orbital billboard on his interface.

Adrian looks over his shoulder.

                    PRODIGY
This is it, my friend. The easiest,
least conspicuous way to break into
the Chang'e network, if you can get
up there.

                    ADRIAN
Oh yeah?

                    PRODIGY
Sub-orbital billboard;
communications relay doubles as the
biggest eyesore this side of
Shanghai. I hear they got a five
star restaurant up there, too, the
Eclipse or something like that.

                    ADRIAN
I thought you said this was
inconspicuous. What about the
restaurant? Many people there?

                    PRODIGY
Nah, man. Mid-Autumn Festival.
It'll be closed.

                    ADRIAN
Oh, yeah.

                    PRODIGY
What's this for again?

                    ADRIAN
Never mind.

                    PRODIGY
        (sarcastically)
Okay, I'm cool. I'll give you a
virus that can crack its security,
circumvent its firewalls and gain
unrestricted access to the private
flow of Chang'e data.
                    (MORE)

                    PRODIGY (CONT'D)
          I don't have to know what it's for.
          Heck, you could probably hack into
          CIEDA with this thing.

                    ADRIAN
          It's nothing like that. Corporate
          malfeasance, illegal international
          funding of Chinese trans-nats.
          Suffice to say a story like this'll
          put moon cakes on the table for...
          well, long enough to ensure my
          continued patronage of your wares.

                    PRODIGY
          How are you gonna get up there?
          Your hack barely makes it to the
          stop and rob.

                    ADRIAN
          I know a guy with a Trans-
          Atmospheric Freighter.

                    PRODIGY
          Really? Sweet.

                    ADRIAN
          I owe him a drink, though.

INT. SPACEPORT CASINO - NIGHT

The room explodes in white as Victor Flynn lands a punch
squarely on Adrian's jaw.

Adrian falls back onto a craps table, dazed.

He touches a couple fingers to his nose and sees blood.

He nods appreciably at Victor.

Victor picks him up by his shirt, slams him against the
nanoplas observation window.

                    VICTOR
          Give me one good reason I shouldn't
          reach down your throat and tie your
          pancreas in a knot?

                    ADRIAN
          I need a favor.

                    VICTOR
          A favor? You must be suicidal.

Two heavily-muscled security guards arrive beside Victor, but
make no move to stop him.

                    ADRIAN
          Just hear me out. You don't have to
          say yes.

                    VICTOR
          Oh, I don't?

Victor cocks his fist again.

                    ADRIAN
          I can pay you back for the damage,
          plus extra... if you help me on a
          job.
               (Victor says nothing)
          I've got a scam that can make us
          both plenty of money. All you have
          to do is get me there.

                    VICTOR
               (grudgingly interested)
          How much?

                    ADRIAN
          More than a jump across the usual
          ponds.

Adrian smiles a bloody-toothed smile.

>   VICTOR
>   Why don't you buy me that drink and
>   we'll talk.

He puts an arm around Adrian and leads him to the bar.

>   VICTOR (CONT'D)
>   Call it a measure of good faith.

The security guards go back to watching the tables.

INT. SPACEPORT CASINO - LATER

Two rounds of empty EfferVess flasks are on the bar. Victor
downs the last of the heavy gas beverage and slams the empty
flask among the others.

>   VICTOR
>   (loose)
>   You still buying?

>   ADRIAN
>   You have to drink money to make
>   money, or something like that.

>   VICTOR
>   You're a philosopher.

>   ADRIAN
>   I try to stay positive.

>   VICTOR
>   I find it difficult, as a person
>   like myself, to be positive in
>   today's world.

Victor fixes up a vaporizer full of kief.

>   VICTOR (CONT'D)
>   We did so much better as hunter-
>   gatherers.
>   (MORE)

                    VICTOR (CONT'D)
          Our propensity to hoard and the fat
          our bodies store would have seen us
          through scarcity--

                    ADRIAN
          Our tendency to be easily
          distracted would have helped us
          look out for predators, and prey.

                    VICTOR
          Our restlessness would have helped
          us discover new sources of food. It
          must have been prosaic. The whole
          invention of agriculture really
          screwed things up for guys like us.

Adrian swirls the gas in his flask.

                    ADRIAN
          So what's your point?

                    VICTOR
          Well, what really galls me is that
          there are some assholes who can
          afford the gene-gineering to
          sidestep all those problems. I
          figure I lost a whole trip's worth
          of profit on those crates you blew.
          I'm falling seriously behind, here.

                    ADRIAN
          C'mon, man.

Adrian claps him on the back.

                    ADRIAN (CONT'D)
          That is all about to change. I'm
          your new good luck charm. Without
          me how would you have gotten away
          from the cops?

                    VICTOR
          They wouldn't have chased me if you
          hadn't hitched a ride.

                    ADRIAN
          You wouldn't have run if you
          weren't carrying something illegal.

Victor blinks, unable to argue with this logic.

                    VICTOR
          Are you kidding? They were driving
          Zenith Mark 3's. I could outrun one
          of those with one engine cold.

Adrian gives him a doubtful look, which Victor ignores.

                    VICTOR (CONT'D)
          One thing about this scam bothers
          me. What if you can't find a buyer?
          Or what if there's no connection at
          all?

                    ADRIAN
          That's two things, but it's Cypro-
          corp. Who wouldn't pay to see them
          taken down a peg? I know they're
          using that Julu Transnational to
          illegally fund someone, I just have
          to find out who and prove it.
          C'mon... we've already had our
          share of bad luck. What else could
          possibly go wrong?

While Victor thinks it over, the door to the casino BURSTS
OPEN, and a police raiding squad pours into the room!

Everyone else in the place scatters, convinced they're the
raid's intended target.

Victor Flynn pulls Adrian into one of the roulette tables
that collapses into the wall.

INT. SPACEPORT MAINTENANCE AREA - DUSK

Victor and Adrian worm their way through the 'workers only'
section of the spaceport, down sweaty hallways full of dirty
equipment and spare parts.

INT. SPACEPORT HANGAR DECK - DUSK

The two run out out of the automated cargo transfer area, and
onto the massive windy hangar deck.

Hover-tugs tow dozens of other trans-atmospheric freighters
to and from the tiers of berths stair-stepped upwards in a
vehicle-sized amphitheater from the central landing area.

There are dozens of configurations, most decorated with nose
art.

The police are not far behind.

                    VICTOR
          Good luck charm, my saggy ass.

They run towards CHEN, a bemused maintenance man.

                    VICTOR (CONT'D)
          Chen, my rig ready?

                    CHEN
          Locked down, loaded, ready to go!

                    VICTOR
          Well, unlock it, we're going!

Victor flips him a black market casino chip as they blow by.

Chen releases the magnetic docking coupler.

He looks after them for a moment, almost plowed by the group
of pursuing Police.

Victor and Adrian POUND up the deck plates into the rear
cargo hold of the Phallic Extension.

INT. PHALLIC EXTENSION -DUSK

Adrian and Victor run through the hold, shut the payload bay
doors, and climb the ladder to the cockpit.

Victor wedges himself in the pilot's seat.

                    VICTOR
          Strap up.

INT. SPACEPORT HANGAR DECK - DUSK

The police run up to Chen.

                    POLICEMAN
          Re-lock the docking couplers!

Chen complies, but it's too late.

The Phallic Extension BLASTS off, swings around.

It BUZZES the cops, and ROCKETS out of the hanger.

INT. PHALLIC EXTENSION - DUSK

Adrian laughs hysterically, but Victor stares straight ahead
with fierce concentration.

                    VICTOR
          You wouldn't think it was so funny
          if you knew what I'll have to bribe
          the flight controllers. As far as
          they or the cops are concerned,
          you're driving.

                    ADRIAN
          Oh.

EXT. STREET - DUSK

Two patrol cars - stationed outside to catch any stragglers -
swing around the building in pursuit, their digital sirens
SQUAWK.

Victor avoids them deftly with a quick turn around the
massive network of pipes and support structures that join the
spaceport tower to the rest of Easy City's high altitude
mass.

The police cruisers lose significant ground as they FIRE
BRAKING ROCKETS to avoid a collision.

Despite its bulk, the Phallic Extension maneuvers at whiplash
speed.

Its intake skirt barely clears the top of the nearest tower.

Victor FIRES its massive plasma engines, and it ROCKETS away.

INT. PHALLIC EXTENSION COCKPIT - DUSK

Adrian nods to Victor, impressed.

EXT. EASY CITY - DUSK

The Phallic Extension BLASTS into orbit, the giant billboard
in its sights.

EXT. ORBITAL BILLBOARD - SUNSET

The sun's last rays illuminate the steam and condensation on
the billboard.

Adrian creeps along its surface, tries to avoid the more
obvious security cameras, as well as the vertigo he feels at
the sight of the dizzying drop.

His helmet's damaged re-breather strains at the thin air.

Frost gathers on his thermal suit.

Adrian loops his climbing rope around a thermal vent, and
climbs down to the underside of the billboard.

He arrives at a loading dock.

His helmet node cracks the combination and keys in.

INT. BILLBOARD RESTAURAUNT - NIGHT

Adrian slinks through the empty and darkened ultraluxe
restaurant.

He reads the sign.

                    ADRIAN
          Moonset Restaurant. Home of the
          lunar dessert.

Adrian shakes his head.

The bay windows allow a spectacular view of the city.

He sits on the plush carpet and stares down at the city.

He watches a shuttle launch.

INT. BILLBOARD CRAWLSPACE - NIGHT

Adrian climbs into the guts of the billboard - a
claustrophobic amalgam of thick wires, hoses and monitors,
and finds a place to jack his helmet in.

He watches the stream of data flow before his eyes.

The virus dives into Julu's records, looking for large outflows of cash.

He's got all the time in the world, everything he needs.

A loud, MECHANICAL GRIND and CLUNK breaks his reverie.

He checks the security monitors.

INSERT

He sees the shuttle docking at the port.

BACK TO SCENE

Adrian fumes.

                    ADRIAN
          Damn it!

In a panic he shoves his equipment into his bag, opens the hatch and rams face first into two SECURITY GUARDS.

They have their plasmafoils drawn.

Adrian rushes GUARD ONE, dropping him with a swift kick to the gut, rolls and retrieves the plasmafoil.

On instinct, he almost shoots GUARD TWO.

At the last moment he reconsiders, changes his aim, and SHOOTS a pipe near where guard two is standing.

It SPEWS STEAM into the tight quarters, burns GUARD TWO.

Guard Two throws his hand over his face, SCREAMS in pain.

Guard two FIRES BLIND after Adrian, BLASTS several other pipes and circuit bundles as Adrian darts through the steam.

EXT. BILLBOARD - NIGHT

A shadow flits across the illuminated advertisement as Adrian traverses the structure.

EXT. BILBOARD ROOF - NIGHT

Adrian climbs out of a hatch on the roof of the billboard, looks to the empty sky for a speedy pickup, but no luck.

Guard Two pokes his head from another hatch father down the billboard's surface.

Raw steam burns glisten on his face as he takes aim and FIRES at Adrian.

Adrian dives out of the way, crouches behind one of the large nanofilament cables which tethers the billboard to its satellite buoys.

He glances up at it.

It's barely thicker than his waist, provides slim refuge from the plasma bullets guard one FIRES.

They CHEW head-sized holes into the cable.

                    ADRIAN
          Damn it, are you crazy? You'll
          bring the whole place down!

Adrian breaks cover, throws himself on his stomach across the roof and drops headfirst back down the hatch.

INT. BILLBOARD - NIGHT

He runs down the hall, around the corner, and out onto the loading dock where the shuttle's parked.

EXT. BILLBOARD, SHUTTLE DOCK - NIGHT

Adrian waits in the shadows near the shuttle.

It's in the clear.

INSERT

The Damaged cable SPARKS.

The heat generators OVERLOAD.

Flames BURST OUT all over the billboard.

BACK TO SCENE

Adrian makes a break for the shuttle, but Guard One is
waiting out of sight, under the wing by the cockpit door.

He COLD-COCKS Adrian with the butt of his plasmafoil.

Adrian goes down and slides towards the edge of the dock as
the billboard shudders and quakes.

Adrian catches hold of the edge of the dock.

His feet dangle over the void.

Guard Two approaches, his burned face twisted in fury.

He looks down, raises his foot, and grinds Adrian's fingers
with his heel.

                    GUARD ONE
               What're you doing?

                    GUARD TWO
               What he gets, putting us in danger,
               wrecking the billboard, burning my
               face.

                         GUARD ONE
            This isn't us – we don't throw
            people off.

                         GUARD TWO
            No one's gonna know, and you're not
            going to tell them. No paperwork, I
            just want it over.

Adrian and Guard One look at each other, Guard One doesn't
move.

Adrian's fingers slip, he's about to let go and fall...

INSERT

With a shower of sparks, the damaged tether cable SNAPS
LOOSE.

BACK TO SCENE

The billboard pitches violently and drops.

Adrian holds tight as the world turns upside down, but Guard
Two tumbles off into the abyss.

Guard one clings to the shuttle. He and Adrian lock eyes as
the shuttle BREAKS LOOSE of its mooring, SCRAPES across the
dock and over the edge.

It barely misses Adrian's head as it tumbles end over end on
the long dive back to earth.

Adrian closes his eyes, but hears the LONG SCREAM.

Adrian rights himself, but the billboard is on its side.

He climbs to relative safety, looks up at the foundering
cable.

INT. BILLBOARD, CONDUIT - NIGHT

Adrian climbs through the twisted maze of broken nanoplas and
flaming debris.

INT. BILLBOARD, RESTAURAUNT - NIGHT

Adrian climbs past the fine wooden tables piled like broken
matchsticks in the corner of the upended room.

EXT. BILLBARD ROOF - NIGHT

Adrian climbs through the hatch and sees that the cable has
indeed snapped.

The billboard hangs by its one remaining tether, losing
altitude.

Pipes full of combustible gasses BREAK LOOSE, flames tongue
its surface.

Adrian HEARS the SCREAM of a PLASMA ENGINE and turns to see
the Phallic Extension approach.

A ladder trails behind it - directly over him.

In a desperate move, Adrian leaps and catches hold of the
ladder.

EXT. PHALLIC EXTENSION - NIGHT

As he climbs to safety, Adrian watches the billboard drop
from under him.

HIS POV

The screen flashes a final message:

"NEED HELP? WE HAVE A H.A.R.T.! LINK I <3 EC."

BACK TO SCENE

The Billboard goes up in flames, falls into the East China
Sea and EXPLODES.

The Phallic Extension CRUISES away.

EXT. PHALLIC EXTENSION - NIGHT

The freighter ROCKETS through the night.

INT. PHALLIC EXTENSION, COCKPIT - NIGHT

Adrian flops into his seat, out of breath.

                    ADRIAN
          Shén me niao? Where were you?

                    VICTOR
          You're asking me? You just crashed
          an orbital billboard!

                    ADRIAN
          You weren't the one stuck on that
          thing!

                    VICTOR
          What about that shuttle? Were there
          any witnesses?

                    ADRIAN
          Not unless assholes can fly under
          their own power.

                    VICTOR
          That's cold.

                    ADRIAN
          It's not my fault, they shouldn't
          have shot at me.
                    (MORE)

                    ADRIAN (CONT'D)
          You're bound to be on somebody's
          camera, though - they can't track
          your transponder or something?

                    VICTOR
          Nah, I'm rigged to go signals dark
          whenever I need to. It's a generic
          model transport; I can broadcast a
          false registry. Hell, even my nose
          art can display an interference
          pattern, I can fly whatever colors
          I want. Don't test me, kid, I do
          this for a living.

                    ADRIAN
          Well so do I... just not much of
          one. Still didn't get what I was
          looking for.

                    VICTOR
               (disgusted)
          You're telling me after all that,
          you came away with nothing useful?

                    ADRIAN
          Like you said, I came away alive.
          And just barely, that's the point I
          want to make.

                    VICTOR
          In other words, this trip isn't
          worth the fuel I spent to get up
          here.

                    ADRIAN
          Just relax, I'll think of
          something.

Adrian hunkers down in his seat, sets his helmet in his lap,
checks his messages.

                    DU TIAN'S VOICE
          This is Du Tian with the State
          Administration of Taxation. I have
          a warrant for your arrest...

Adrian quickly deletes that one.

Victor looks at him sideways.

                    ADRIAN
             (chuckles nervously)

                    VICTOR
             (taps his head)
          No Link, huh?

                    ADRIAN
          Can't afford it, more ways than
          one.

He goes to the next message.

We hear the VOICE of FU RENSHU.

                    FU RENSHU
          This is Deputy Director Fu Renshu
          of CIEDA. We have reason to believe
          this 'Gutterman Smith' account
          belongs to the Raider we caught on
          Friday in the Julu Transnational
          building. We also believe you were
          there in connection with a case
          we're working on.

                    ADRIAN
          Holy crap, how'd they find my
          Gutterman account?

Victor stares at Adrian.

                         FU RENSHU
                    (beat)
               We're willing to offer you a pardon
               in exchange for any information you
               have regarding the source of Julu
               Transnational's funds. I'm linking
               from my personal account. Please
               respond to this message
               immediately.

                         ADRIAN
                    (to Victor)
               You know who that was?

                         VICTOR
               It's the spooks!

                         ADRIAN
               Yeah. Apparently they're working on
               the same case I am, and they need
               to know where Julu Transnational's
               getting their money! That means I
               have one piece of the puzzle, they
               have the other, and they're willing
               to do a trade! See?

                         VICTOR
               Go ahead. My rig's shielded, they
               can't trace us.

     Adrian puts on his helmet and links to reply.

     Fu Renshu answers.

                         FU RENSHU
                    (filtered, over Link)
               This is Fu Renshu.

                         ADRIAN
                    (voice scrambled)
               This is Gutterman.
                         (MORE)

                    ADRIAN (CONT'D)
          I have Julu Transnational's
          backers, and I'm willing to trade,
          but I need more than just a pardon.

                    FU RENSHU
               (filtered, over Link)
          Adrian?

                    VICTOR
               (hisses)
          I thought your name was Mykal.

Adrian shushes him.

                    ADRIAN
               (voice scrambled)
          I've got a cash flow problem.

                    FU RENSHU
               (filtered, over Link)
          Really.

                    ADRIAN
               (voice scrambled)
          Yeah, and I've been having trouble
          with a Du Tian from the State
          Administration of Taxation, so I
          need him off my back.

                    FU RENSHU
               (filtered, over Link)
          How much are we talking about?

                    ADRIAN
               (voice scrambled)
          Enough to cover the loss of a
          shipment of unmentionables, plus
          interest.

Adrian winks at Victor.

                    ADRIAN (CONT'D)
Call it a finder's fee. And I want
exclusive coverage of the Julu
Transnational story when it breaks.

                    FU RENSHU
               (filtered, over Link)
Anything else?

                    ADRIAN
               (voice disguised by
                helmet)
That's the deal.

                    FU RENSHU
               (filtered, over Link)
How about I arrest you, and take
what I need?

                    ADRIAN
               (voice scrambled)
No, uh, that doesn't work for me.

                    FU RENSHU
               (filtered, over Link)
No?

                    ADRIAN
               (voice scrambled)
I know you guys; quit trying to
ratchet me into a better deal. You
need what I have, and I told you
what I want in exchange.

                    FU RENSHU
               (filtered, over Link)
That could be difficult.

                    ADRIAN
               (voice scrambled)
You want difficult?
                    (MORE)

                    ADRIAN (CONT'D)
          I've been dragged, chased, shot at,
          soaked, wrecked, set on fire and
          nearly knocked senseless, not to
          mention exploded, and hurled to my
          death because of you people, so if
          you think I've got a lot to loose
          here, you're wrong.
               (beat)
          I'm not greedy, but I'm going to
          hang up unless you can offer me
          some inkling of compensation. How
          bad do you want it?

Fu Renshu glares at him.

                    FU RENSHU
               (filtered, over Link)
          I'll see what I can do about the
          tax agent.

                                        DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. EASY CITY HOVERPAD - NIGHT

Adrian, wearing his raider helmet, walks alone onto an empty
hoverpad.

CIEDA agents appear from the shadows, railstorms trained.

                    FU RENSHU
          Thought it was you. Rhee Jianjun
          shouldn't have brought you into it.
          He should've come to us. We could
          have helped.

                    ADRIAN
          Maybe he didn't want the kind of
          help you gave him after Xinjiang.
          I'm surprised you couldn't find
          this information out for yourself.
          A decent neurohacker could--

               FU RENSHU
Yeah. Our budget for that sort of
thing is...
     (glares at Rong)
Not as large as you might imagine.

               ADRIAN
The file's uploaded to the node you
gave me, and you didn't get it from
me. It's encrypted. You compliance
with my terms gets you the
password. It's twenty-one
characters. You could probably
crack it eventually, but it'll cost
you time you don't have.

               FU RENSHU
The credits're in your account. You
won't be hearing from Du Tian
again.

Adrian confirms this on his helmet.

               ADRIAN
The password's 'Fu Renshu is a
liar.'

Fu Renshu looks at Rong who consults his link, nods.

               FU RENSHU
Sorry to do this, but you might
have expected. You'll have to come
with us.

Adrian flashes a knowing smile behind his mirrored helmet.
His image wavers and becomes infused with interference.

               ADRIAN
What makes you think I'm even here?

His hologram disappears.

A long beat, on Fu Renshu and his men, before their images
waver and becomes infused with interference, too.

> FU RENSHU
> (almost bored)
> Yeah, well... neither are we. Just
> keeping up appearances.

Another beat, the hoverpad stands empty.

INT. ADRIAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Adrian wakes up and meanders into the kitchen, groggy.

He's slept in his clothes.

His mom bakes moon cakes and watches the Moon Festival
charity telethon on her Link.

Adrian sits at the kitchen table and broods.

> ADRIAN
> Hey mom. Sorry about this weekend.
> It's kind of a bust, I know.

> MOM
> It's okay, honey, I know you're
> busy. It's not like it was a
> special holiday devoted to family
> or anything.

> ADRIAN
> (ouch)
> Well, I'll make it up to you. I've
> got a couple of cruise tickets and
> I'd like you to have them.

> MOM
> Oh, Adrian, I couldn't!

                    ADRIAN
          No really, ma, it'd mean a lot to
          me if you took them.

EXT. DOCKS - DAY

The hack parks on the crowded pier. Adrian sees his mom and
her FRIEND into the line.

They drop off their luggage, link embarkation forms to board
the cruise.

Two black Azimuth Nomad hover cars pull onto the crowded ship
docks and the CIEDA agents jump out.

                    LIWEI
          There's no way we can cover this
          area with so few people.

They fan out onto the long dock lined with passenger ships.

                    FU RENSHU
          Split up. Liwei, Huizhong, take
          embarkation. Lau, Tengfei, customs.
          Rong, you're with me.
               (holds up his holo badge)
          CIEDA agents, coming through!

Adrian sees Liwei and Tengfei waving their guns and holding
their badge holographs high as they wade through the massive
tangle of people.

                    ADRIAN
               (sotto)
          It really is a small town.
               (to his parents)
          Mom... gotta go. Have a great time.

He leaves them bewildered, runs off through the crowd.

                          ADRIAN (CONT'D)
                      (over his shoulder)
                    Have a great time!

He gets in the hack.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK - DAY

He's about to take off, when he sees...

HIS POV

Gao Ru runs desperately through the crowd towards his hack.

BACK TO SCENE

Gao Ru jumps into the back seat, flustered.

His hair is mussed, his suit torn, his nose bloody.

                          GAO RU
                    Get me outta here!!

Adrian slowly turned around, a knowing smile on his face.

                          ADRIAN
                    First time in Easy...
                        (recognizes Gao Ru and the
                         Cypriots)

                      ADRIAN AND GAO RU
                    You?!?

Gao Ru covers his face.

                          GAO RU
                      (sotto)
                    Oh no...

His pursuers, the Cypriots, batter the hack, try to get in.

The commotion draws Rong and Fu Renshu's attention, they spot Skylos and Listis.

                    FU RENSHU
          You there, Stop! Everyone, get away
          from him!

People run in every direction.

Listis runs, but Skylos freezes, puts his hands in the air.

Adrian faces straight ahead, slouches lower in his seat.

                    ADRIAN
          Hoo boy.

He lets out the throttle.

                    RONG
          On the ground, now!

Skylos lies face down. Huizhong puts his knee on Skylos's back, slaps on the liquid-metal cuffs.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Adrian forces the hack into the flow of traffic and TEARS away.

                                        DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AIRPORT DEPARTURE TERMINAL - DAY

Adrian drops Gao Ru off at the curb.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK – DAY

                GAO RU
        Sorry I yelled at you before. Guess
        I didn't appreciate what you were
        trying to save me from.

                ADRIAN
        It can happen to anyone.

                GAO RU
        Yeah, thank you. I'll think twice
        before I come back to this town.

                ADRIAN
        Probably just as well.

Adrian's on his way out of the Airport complex when he
remembers...

              ADRIAN (CONT'D)
        The package!

EXT. AIRPORT DEPARTURE TERMINAL – DAY

Adrian drives the hack around the freeway ramp and back to
the terminal.

He parks illegally.

INT. AIRPORT DEPARTURE TERMINAL – DAY

Adrian searches the building, but Gao Ru is gone.

Adrian wavers between finding the package, and fear his hack
will be towed.

INT. ADRIAN'S HACK – LATER

Adrian steers his hack for home.

He's exhausted.

His comm. Unit BEEPS and we see Dane on the screen.

                    DANE
          Hi Mykal.

                    ADRIAN
          Hey Dane. Change of heart?

                    DANE
          Actually, yeah. I just got a link
          from... the guy you pissed off. He
          dropped the complaint, says you set
          it right.

                    ADRIAN
          Yeah, I was expecting that. So
          we're cool?

                    DANE
          Yeah we're cool. I cancelled the
          A.P.B. On your hack.

                    ADRIAN
          Alright. Business as usual.

Dane grunts and signs off.

Adrian smiles at himself.

                                        DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ADRIAN'S APARTMENT – NIGHT

Adrian enters.

His house has been ransacked again.

He sees Liqin in the middle of the tiny, wrecked living room, watering his spider plant.

Adrian hesitates a moment, tries to process the scene.

> LIQIN
> Hello, Mykal. Door was unlocked –
> your house is a mess.
> (off his look)
> Mykal?

> ADRIAN
> (surveys house)
> I don't believe it. Twice in one
> weekend!

> LIQIN
> Your spider plant needed water.

> ADRIAN
> Who did this? Who's doing this?
> CIEDA? Cypro-corp? Who?

Adrian paces the room, turns on Liqin.

> ADRIAN (CONT'D)
> I mean, um... why did you even give
> me that spider plant? You know I'll
> just forget to water it.

Liquin shrugs.

> LIQIN
> You were in the hospital, it's what
> people do. Mykal, what's going on?
> You look terrible. What do you--?

> ADRIAN
> (realizes)
> The bio-chip!

He races to the vent where he'd stashed it with his gear.

The gear is there, the bio-chip is gone.

                    ADRIAN (CONT'D)
          It's been a long weekend.

Adrian replaces the vent.

                    LIQIN
          I've been worried about you.

She sits on the shredded couch, motions him over.

Adrian sits down beside her.

                    ADRIAN
          I forgot to ask, the pregnant girl
          that came in Friday night, Jiaying –
          how'd she make out?

                    LIQIN
          Fine. Apart from being rescued from
          a burning breezeway, it was a
          completely normal delivery. New
          life...
               (shakes her head)
          ...never ceases to amaze. You were
          right on time.

                    ADRIAN
          Yeah. Sorry I was late before,
          though.

                    LIQIN
          It's okay, baby.

She hugs him, runs a hand through his hair.

                    LIQIN (CONT'D)
          Sorry I got mad. It was stupid.

                    ADRIAN
          So you don't hate my hack?

                    LIQIN
          Oh I hate the hack, but I think
          it's kinda sexy to have a boyfriend
          whose house gets broken into by
          international spies...

Her face softens.

                    LIQIN (CONT'D)
          My mystery man.

                    ADRIAN
          Really?
               (beat)
          You're weird, Liqin.

                    LIQIN
          I know. I can't help it. And on
          reflection, I don't mind putting
          off responsibility for a little
          adventure now and then.

                    MYAKL
          Liqin, I--

                    LIQIN
          Let me finish. I want to help if I
          can. All I'm saying is, one
          adventure at a time - so I can keep
          up, okay?

She kisses him.

                    ADRIAN
               (muffled)
          This is too good to be true.

                    LIQIN
               (tenderly breaks the kiss)
          Tell me about it. Speaking of
          which, what's this you were telling
          me about a cruise to New Mauritius?

Adrian smacks his forehead.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END