

THE RIG

by

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WGA registered

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FADE IN:

INT. VAST OCEAN - DAY

Water stretches to the horizon, laps against the camera.

Below the waterline, SUPER the poem:

"IN CHAMBERS DEEP,

WHERE WATERS SLEEP,

WHAT UNKNOWN TREASURES PAVE THE FLOOR?"

--Edward Young, 'Ocean'

INT. GLOBAL ENERGY COALITION (GEC) BOARD ROOM - DAY

A sleek, modern-looking conference room. Twelve high-powered executives of different nationalities sit around a jet-black table. The arrangement of the water glasses, coffees, and notebook computers suggest that they've been at it a while. On one wall are miniature flags of at least fifty different countries, all orbiting the GEC - Global Energy Coalition - logo.

The far wall is taken up by a large view screen. On screen is DR. JACOB WREXHAM, late forties, handsome, commanding - everything we expect a self-made billionaire entrepreneur and philanthropist to be. But he has a look on his face like he just swallowed a sea urchin.

There is an uncomfortable silence. Everyone looks defeated.

At the end of the table is a sallow-faced German man with greying temples - RUDIGER KLEIN. A nameplate in front of him says "Executive Director". He breaks the silence.

RUDIGER KLEIN

Doctor...Jacob. The GEC  
appreciates everything you have  
done for this endeavor. Without  
your sizable financial assistance  
and--

WREXHAM (VIDSCREEN)

(at his wits' end...this  
isn't normal)

Don't patronize me, Rudy. I built  
the goddamn Rig!

RUDIGER KLEIN

Yes, Doctor, you built it, but you do not own it. This council simply cannot condone cutting back on petroleum production. It is folly...the results will be economically horrific.

(beat)

It is time for you to step back from operational involvement. I wish it had not come to this, but this council is in unanimous agreement...

He surveys the room. The other execs nod weakly, clearly uncomfortable.

RUDIGER KLEIN (CONT'D)

...that we can no longer allow you to be involved in proceedings.

WREXHAM (VIDSCREEN)

You are gambling with the world, Rudy! If we don't reduce production now, there will be grave consequences for millions...billions. Not today, but tomorrow, and you know it.

RUDIGER KLEIN

I am sorry, Jacob, I truly am. But the GEC must put the needs of the constituent nations first.

(beat)

You are, of course, welcome to remain in your quarters...

Onscreen, Wrexham's eyes narrow coldly.

WREXHAM

You are making a mistake. You will regret this.

The monitor goes blank.

EXT. VAST OCEAN/UNDERWATER - DAY

Blue, blue as far as the eye can see.

The sun's rays play through the water.

Schools of brightly-colored fish scatter on a whim. Larger fish meander, a bit more confident. A cagey-eyed shark lazily swims by, totally dominant.

We descend like a submarine. The water becomes darker.

FLASH

A piece of a news report fills the screen. A REPORTER talks while she gestures at a gas pump behind her with cars waiting in an endless line.

REPORTER

...oil levels at their lowest, and crude pricing at its highest. The President has acknowledged that he has given authorization to tap the Strategic Oil Supply. The only question is, how long can it last?

FLASH

Another report. Diplomats speak in the U.N.

REPORTER

...defuse tensions between China and Japan. Canadian oil sands have averted catastrophe, but virtually all think-tanks are in agreement that an alternative energy source is perhaps our last hope to prevent radical change. And advances must come soon.

BACK TO SCENE:

We are going deep, the water changing to darker and darker blue.

It's getting harder to see the sea life.

FLASH

A reporter narrates while footage shows a "news style" map with a large red circle off the West coast of Japan.

REPORTER

Breaking news this evening. Massive oil reserves have been identified off of the coast of Japan, apparently buried in the sea floor.

(MORE)

REPORTER (cont'd)

To quote the President's Chief Energy Advisor, "this could be the Mother Lode." Preliminary indications are that over 150 Billion barrels of...

FLASH

The report now shows the typical military footage like airplanes taking off from carriers and soldiers putting on their gear.

REPORTER

...three carrier groups en route. China is readying an amphibious assault fleet. Tensions are reaching a peak, and conflict seems inevitable. But despite international pressure that is bordering on hostility, Japan's Premier refuses to budge from his position, claiming that the continental shelf is connected to his country and therefore property of it. United Nations negotiations continue but grim estimates...

FLASH

Politicians sign a treaty document, and then exchange firm handshakes.

REPORTER

An unexpected light at the darkest hour? The Big Five--China, Russia, Japan, the EU, and the United States--have reached preliminary terms for sharing the oil in the MotherLode.

A large GEC Logo appears on screen.

REPORTER

Coordination will be the responsibility of the newly-formed Global Energy Coalition, or "gee eee cee" for short. Now thoughts turn to devising a plan for actually harvesting the petroleum...

FLASH

A slightly younger and considerably more optimistic Jake Wrexham is all smiles as he greets the dignitaries of the GEC. Next to him is a table with a cloth draped over something.

REPORTER

...the GEC received help private industry. Billionaire entrepreneur Doctor Jacob Wrexham has proposed a revolutionary idea and he's backing it with his own billions.

Wrexham pulls the cloth off to reveal a scale model of a massive undersea oil station. Camera flashes erupt from the cadre of reporters.

REPORTER

It is being dubbed "Jake's Atlantis", and is quite literally a giant underwater station where oil drillers and pumpers will...

FLASH

BACK TO SCENE:

We're moving along the sea floor now. The only way we can tell is by the eerie glow of fluorescent plants and fish that pass by underneath.

A pinpoint glow in the distance starts low, then grows. Before long, the aura stretches across the entire view and the ocean floor is much easier to see.

The lights are from something man-made. Something huge, like approaching a city at night. It sheds light on the ocean floor.

The lights are getting BRIGHTER...

FLASH

The reporter at her news desk.

REPORTER

Four years and one-hundred-ninety-billion dollars later, the Rig is open and the first barrel of oil is flowing.

The screen behind her comes to life and starts showing short clips from the inside of the Rig itself.

REPORTER

You might think the Rig is a  
spartan work station.

Jake Wrexham appears onscreen, being interviewed. It's  
definitely a happier time for him.

WREXHAM

From the beginning, I planned this  
to be a true home for the workers.  
Restaurants, bars, a hospital, a  
cinema--we even built an indoor  
soccer field. Thousands of people  
will be stationed here, and they  
need to be comfortable...

FLASH

EXT. THE RIG

We crest a shelf and an undersea valley is revealed. Filling  
the valley is the source of the huge glow -- THE RIG.

It's thoroughly impressive: bulky, metal sections are joined  
together by spacey-looking, translucent walled tunnels.  
Massive support pylons plunge into the sea floor.  
Floodlights beam off of every surface, creating an eerie blue  
glow.

It's utilitarian, but with an obvious aesthetic. The design  
is a statement as much as being functional.

Spidery networks of passages pop out of junctions and twist  
around to enter other ones. People are walking through some  
of the transparent hallway tubes.

Lights of moving vehicles are scattered all around the  
structures.

It's breathtaking.

Approaching the Rig, we move by one corner which is dominated  
by a Hershey's Kiss-looking structure. It's the Umbilical  
tank.

The Reporter's voice carries on, but from now on we don't cut  
away to news footage.

REPORTER (V.O.)

The link in the chain is the series  
of tubes called the "Umbilical".

(MORE)

REPORTER (V.O.) (cont'd)  
Oil is pumped up through them to  
the Surface Control Platform, where  
waiting tankers collect the  
precious cargo.

Near one of the support legs, there's a machine walking around. It looks like something out of Robotech--humanoid in shape, but with an actual human in the cockpit. It's called a "SOLO", a single pilot undersea work vehicle, and it's welding something into place.

Nearby, a ten-wheeled juggernaut oil tank--a "Crawler"--rumbles off in search of oil to capture and pump.

REPORTER  
And all would be impossible without  
the SOLOs. They look like robots,  
but trained pilots are inside,  
directing every movement, and  
making good money. As for the  
actual oil pumping, that's a job  
for the lumbering Crawlers...

The voice fades out.

We veer off away from the Rig and head into darkness. After a few moments, a clustered group of lights appears, growing larger by the second.

It's two SOLOs, doing some drilling on a seabed rock cluster. Their shoulder work-lights bathe the area in brilliance.

One of the SOLOs jets up over the rock outcropping and drifts down to the other side. The SOLO moves like a cross between a mini-sub and a man on a jetpack. It is powered by an array of gas thrusters that give it instant, precise control and maneuverability.

INT. SOLO 346 COCKPIT

SOLO DRIVER 346 manipulates the controls.

There's a vidscreen right in the center of his control panel. On that screen is the face of the other SOLO pilot.

SOLO DRIVER 488 (VIDSCREEN)  
Finding anything?

SOLO DRIVER 346  
Heck, it's all rock to me, bro.  
They tell me they want core  
samples, I get core samples.

The SOLO brings a drilling bit to bear on the rocks in front of it. The bit WHIRRS as it engages.

SOLO 346 (CONT'D)  
A hundred bones says I strike  
before you. Besides...

As he's boring into the rock, there's a SPARK and then rock shards erupt and pepper the vehicle like a mini meteor storm.

A trio of red ALARM lights flash on the control panel.

SOLO 346  
Jesus!

SOLO 488 (VIDSCREEN)  
What's up?

SOLO 346  
Rocks! Must've hit a gas bubble.  
(to himself)  
Oxy breach, shit!

His hands flit around the control panel, flipping switches.

Now a klaxon sounds, and there is HISSING air.

SOLO 346  
Puncture! I've got a breach...I'm  
losing O2! Mother of God...

He flips a switch and the other pilot is wiped off the vidscreen.

SOLO 346 (CONT'D)  
Ops, SOLO three-four-six. I have  
an emergency!

EXT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM - DUSK

Topside now, at the ocean's surface.

A huge surface platform glints in the fading light. It looks like a large conventional oil platform.

Grouped around it are ten or 12 oil tankers, clustered like piglets on their mother's teats, beacon lights flashing red and green.

On one of the exterior balconies, a woman stands in a yoga pose.

She's SERA FOX, early thirties, wearing a simple black suit and making it look good. She's more than a pretty face, though -- there's an obvious intelligence in her eyes.

Sera comes down out of the pose and gazes at the sunset.

SERA FOX  
Never get tired of those.

A sharp BEEP sounds from one of her pockets. She fishes out a vidphone and looks at the screen.

SERA  
Those, on the other hand, I can do  
without.

She SIGHS, turns, and enters the door behind her.

INT. SURFACE PLATFORM/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sera strides down the busy hallway, rolling her neck to stretch it out. People swerve out of her way without her having to even make eye contact.

A large room is at the end of the hall. Sign above the doorway says "SOLO/CRAWLER OPERATIONS".

The door automatically slides open and she enters.

INT. SURFACE PLATFORM/OPERATIONS ROOM - NIGHT

It looks like Mission Control from the Apollo Program, or ATC for O'hare and JFK combined. At least twenty people sit behind flatscreen monitors, observing and communicating with undersea work crews.

Sera heads up a short stairway onto a catwalk. There's a "bridge" room hanging in the center.

INT. SURFACE PLATFORM/OPS ROOM BRIDGE - NIGHT

She walks in and takes the empty center seat just as the DEPUTY CONTROLLER falls over himself to get out of it.

DEPUTY CONTROLLER  
SOLO three-four-six is reporting a  
breach.

Sera nods, then punches a blinking red light on the console. SOLO 346 shows up on the screen.

SERA

This is Ops. Go ahead.

SOLO 346 (VIDSCREEN)

Ops, I have O2 venting. A breach.  
Shit!

SERA

Stay calm. What kind of breach?  
Can you confirm windscreen breach?

SOLO 346 (VIDSCREEN)

Negative.  
(panting)  
Hull breach.

SERA

Hull breach sensor is illuminated?

SOLO 346 (VIDSCREEN)

Uhhh...no. No, but I have a  
breach!

SERA

SOLO, you need to remain calm or I  
can't help you. What warning  
lights do you have?

SOLO 346 (VIDSCREEN)

O2 Tank 2. Air pressure. Gas  
Contain.

SERA

Give me Tank 1 fill.

SOLO 346 (VIDSCREEN)

Tank 1 is...10 percent. I've been  
on Tank 1 all shift! Tank 2 is  
dropping fast...20 percent, 15  
percent. Goddamnit! Mayday, I'm  
recalling!

EXT. OCEAN FLOOR

SOLO 346 starts jetting off. Gas is venting from an exterior  
tank that has a neat hole in it.

SERA (O.S.)

You will do no such thing. SOLO  
three-four-six, cease thrusters  
now.

SOLO 346 (O.S.)  
 Ops, I'm losing O2! I don't wanna  
 dry-fish! I'm making a run!

SERA (O.S.)  
 SOLO, cease thrusting now or you  
 don't have a chance. You are  
 thirty-five clicks out and have  
 fifteen clicks of O2. Cease  
 thrusting NOW!

That gets to him. He stops.

INT. SURFACE PLATFORM/OPS ROOM BRIDGE - NIGHT

SERA  
 Ok, listen up. Did you fill for a  
 cutting torch?

SOLO 346 (VIDSCREEN)  
 (beat)  
 Yeah. I think so.

SERA  
 (rattling it off)  
 Seal off Tanks 1 and 2. Patch ECS  
 override to Torch Auxiliary Tank.  
 Shut down lighting, loco, and aux  
 power. Got it?

INT. SOLO 346 COCKPIT

SOLO 346  
 (a ray of hope, flips  
 switches)  
 Uhh. Done. Done. Done.

SERA (VIDSCREEN)  
 Good. You are now running Climate  
 Control on your torch tank. You  
 have two hours of air if you sit  
 still and stop panicking. I'm  
 sending a Crawler to pick you up,  
 and he'll be there in forty  
 minutes.

INT. SURFACE PLATFORM/OPS ROOM BRIDGE - NIGHT

SERA  
 Now's a good time to think about  
 why you love being a SOLO.  
 (MORE)

SERA (cont'd)  
Handing you over to Dispatch Three  
now. Ops out.

Sera makes eye-contact with a controller in the room, and gestures at him with a circling of her hand. He nods, and starts calling a Crawler for dispatch.

SERA  
(to herself)  
Just another day in the oil  
business.

She punches up another face on the screen.

SERA  
Jimmy, who's on call for SOLO  
backup? Don't tell me it's...

JIMMY THE CONTROLLER (VIDSCREEN)  
Yep. Mason.

SERA  
(groans)

Just then a statuesque man walks into the bridge, beaming a big smile. SAMSON MFUZU is the type of guy you like before he's even said a word. Samson is Night Operations Controller - Sera's second in command.

SAMSON  
Good morning and hello, Ops.

Sera smiles at him.

SERA  
Good night and goodbye, Ops. Was  
hoping you'd be here soon.

SAMSON  
How are our little ants doing?  
What news does the new moon bring?

SERA  
Don't let them hear you call them  
'ants'. It'll be like herding  
cats.

SAMSON  
Already it is, is it not?

SERA  
(laughing)  
Yeah, I guess so.  
(beat)  
(MORE)

SERA (cont'd)

We've had a little drama. SOLO three-four-six is freeze-framed on O2 reserve. Was out core-sampling and a rock spray caused tank breach. Dispatch three is arranging a Crawler for recovery.

SAMSON

It appears that I missed the excitement.

SERA

Not quite. SOLO backup still needs paged and deployed. I'm going to leave that to you.

Sera stands and cedes Samson the chair. Samson sits and takes scope of the monitors while Sera gathers her things.

SAMSON

Hmmm. SOLO three-eight-three is allocated as backup. Three-eight-three sounds familiar, does it not?

SERA FOX

Not to me.

She exits in an obvious hurry.

SAMSON

It is Mason, is it not...

She's already gone.

INT. THE RIG/NEPTUNE'S PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

It's an undersea bar, just like topside.

Decorations are a weird amalgamation of different cultures-- American, Indian, Chinese, Japanese. The clientele fits, but they mix as one. They're mostly SOLO and Crawler pilots, giving off the typical pilot bravado.

RNN - the Rig News Network - is on the TV.

A lone drinker has claimed a table for himself. He's MASON FOX, mid-thirties, handsome and fit but sporting a few days of stubble and messy hair. Clearly the beer he's working on isn't his first...or second.

A brawny and DRUNKEN off-duty RP (Rig Policeman) named BILLY slips down at the table and leers at Mason.

RP BILLY  
Mason Fox.

Mason ignores him.

RP BILLY  
I'm talking to you, Fox.

MASON  
Leave me alone.

RP BILLY  
So you and Ops, eh? That true?

MASON  
Not anymore.

RP BILLY  
You were married.

MASON  
Nope. Never married.

RP BILLY  
She's got your name.

MASON  
(sighs)  
I've got her name.

DRUNKEN RP  
Wha...?

MASON  
But we never tied the knot. Now you  
got your "fact" straight. Put it  
in a box somewhere and keep it  
safe...never know when you might  
get another one.

Drunken Billy leers closer, spittle flying.

RP BILLY  
So that's why you always got all  
the golden jobs. Prospecting,  
claim finding. Leaving the crap  
for the rest. You were married to  
the boss.

The man pushes Mason from across the table. Mason's beer  
sloshes a little on to his hand. He shakes the liquid off.

MASON

I said we weren't married. And she wasn't the boss then.

(takes a drink)

I get the good jobs because I'm good. Now go away.

RP BILLY

Ops.

(spits on the table)

I hear she was a club-foot on the SOLO, and that's why she got a bubble up topside. Get her out of the way and keep the rest of us safe. She thinks she's so smart, ordering people around all the time. She's as dumb as she is bitchy. Nice ass though, so I can see what you liked. But why would she waste her time with--

Mason backhands him solidly across the jaw. Billy pitches off the chair, and collapses onto the floor. A few nearby patrons chuckle.

Mason shakes the rest of the beer off his hand.

MASON

(disgusted)

Feds.

Mason's vidphone is sitting on the bar. It LIGHTS and CHIRPS. He answers, carefully choosing the AUDIO button instead of VIDEO.

MASON

Mason Fox.

(beat)

Yeah.

(beat)

Be there in five. Just got out of the, uh, shower.

He drains his glass and then gets up and heads for the door. He exits the bar to...

INT. THE RIG/"DOWNTOWN" - CONTINUOUS

Downtown is the central area of the Rig, home to all the restaurants, bars, shops. It feels like a cramped Asian street market, except more gleaming metal, fluorescent lights...and no chickens running around.

Mason threads his way between the surprising number of people, passing storefronts and making a series of turns. It's a lively area and highlights the Rig's diversity - it seems as though every nation is represented.

Mason heads for an exit tunnel that is marked "TO LAUNCH BAYS".

EXT. THE RIG

A few SOLOs are hard at work doing welding repairs on a support leg.

A Crawler rumbles by them on its way to the Umbilical deposit station. It passes beneath a large, circular viewing window.

The window looks in on a swanky, well-furnished suite that's appointed in a minimalist but stylish modern industrial decor.

All of the lights inside are off, but there's a luminous glow coming off of a large computer screen. A man sits in front of it.

INT. THE RIG/WREXHAM'S DEN - CONTINUOUS

The man looks as though he came from a black tie event, and he wears the duds well. It's Jake Wrexham.

On the computer screen is an encrypted login for a Swiss Bank:

"CONFIRM TRANSFER?

\$750,000,000

YES/NO"

For several moments, Wrexham sits motionless and silent, staring at the screen.

He punches a key and the screen changes.

INITIATING TRANSFER. ENTER SECURE PASSKEY 1.

He taps on the keyboard.

INITIATING TRANSFER. ENTER SECURE PASSKEY 2.

More taps.

INITIATING TRANSFER. ENTER SECURE PASSKEY 3.

Again.

INITIATING TRANSFER. CONFIRM BIO PASSKEY.

He places his thumb on a fingerprint reader.

TRANSFER CONFIRMED.

Wrexham flips off the screen, leans back, SIGHS, and then picks up a glass of red wine from the desktop. He stands and gazes out of the viewing porthole.

Despite his nice attire he looks tired and his hair is mussed.

Wrexham CLINKS the wineglass against the porthole, toasting himself.

WREXHAM

A revolution for under one billion.  
A bargain at twice the price.

He CHUCKLES wearily before draining the glass.

After a pause, he turns and walks out of the den and out into a dark adjoining room.

INT. THE RIG/WREXHAM'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

WREXHAM

Easy lights.

The room is bathed in a warm glow.

The walls are lined with beautifully framed pieces, all spot-lit like the finest galleries. They aren't art, though - they are magazine covers and newspaper pages. They all feature Wrexham.

Wrexham strolls along the walls, his empty wine glass in tow. He seems to take in each cover in turn.

The covers show humble beginnings that lead to monumental achievements.

FAST COMPANY: "DR. JACOB WREXHAM'S E-BLIP: WHY YOU SHOULD FOLLOW"

WALL STREET JOURNAL: E-BLIP IPO SOARS

FORBES: WREXHAM'S METEORIC RISE

MEN'S HEALTH: JAKE WREXHAM ON LIFE AND LOVING IT

NEWSWEEK: JAKE WREXHAM'S \$1 BILLION GIFT

WIRED: WREXHAM FUNDS H-PRIZE

Wrexham crosses the room to the other wall, where the collection continues...with Rig stuff.

POPULAR SCIENCE: WREXHAM'S ATLANTIS: MYTH OR REALITY?

SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN: JACOB WREXHAM'S RIG--WHY THE GEC IS LISTENING

NY TIMES: THE RIG STARTS PUMPING

TIME: MAN OF THE YEAR - DR. JACOB WREXHAM

As he approaches the end of the wall, there is some open space. He dawdles there for a moment, peering at the blank wall, wondering at the covers that may be yet to come.

WREXHAM

Phone Harken.

A LCD display on the wall springs to life. It is white for a moment, but then a face appears.

Onscreen is JAX HARKEN, Captain of the Rig Police SOLO unit. He's a thuggish-looking man, muscular, cold.

JAX (VIDSCREEN)

(nods)

Doc.

WREXHAM

Tonight.

JAX (VIDSCREEN)

The green?

WREXHAM

The transfer is confirmed. Check and see.

JAX (VIDSCREEN)

I will.

(beat)

And the other half?

WREXHAM

After lockdown, as we've agreed. Just do it fast and don't be sloppy. I want violence kept to a minimum.

JAX (VIDSCREEN)  
It ain't gonna be squeaky clean,  
Doc.

WREXHAM  
I'm paying you a lot of money so  
this isn't a bloody circus. I want  
it done professionally.

Jax raises an eyebrow.

JAX (VIDSCREEN)  
No guarantees.

WREXHAM  
These people are not the problem,  
Captain. It's the GEC I want  
squeezed!

JAX (VIDSCREEN)  
It's your revolution, Doc. I just  
want to make sure my retirement is  
funded. My resume's gonna have a  
black spot after this.

WREXHAM  
I don't think you'll need to attend  
any more interviews. You'll be a  
rich boy. Now go get it done. End  
call.

The monitor shuts off.

Wrexham's eyes drift back to the blank wall space.

INT. THE RIG/SOLO LAUNCH BAY

It's a massive hangar with a large circular pool of water in the center. This is where SOLOs come and go. Looks kinda like the Death Star hangar in STAR WARS or an aircraft carrier hangar deck: SOLOs, crew, pilots, supply containers, rubber hoses, and the like. Right now it's only filled to half-capacity, though. Lots of SOLOs are obviously still out on day-shift.

One SOLO is captured by a crane, being lowered towards the water. The cockpit is open and Mason Fox is strapping in.

INT. MASON'S COCKPIT

Mason preflights his ship. He has a picture of Sera Fox--taped next to the vidscreen.

She's lounging in bed in a simple tank-top, smiling and holding up her hand as though to fend off the camera.

MASON

SOLO three-eight-three com check.  
Check.

Mason yanks the picture down and tosses it aside with a grimace.

LAUNCH CONTROLLER (RADIO)

Read you loud and clear SOLO three-eight-three. Status?

MASON

O2 check. Nitro check. Pressure check. Bats...bats are nominal. Barely. Didn't you guys charge this thing?

LAUNCH CONTROLLER (RADIO)

Number one standby went down with a bum torch. Had to quick charge number two, sorry. You should have enough for the short shift.

MASON

Roger. Is this how you guys are going to keep me from earning double-time?

LAUNCH CONTROLLER (RADIO)

You know the regs, SOLO. Backup shifts are limited to five hours max. Don't go freelancing.

Mason punches a key and his cockpit clamps into place.

MASON

Roger. Then what am I wasting my time here for? SOLO three-eight-three ready to deploy.

LAUNCH CONTROLLER (RADIO)

Initiating insertion. Good flying.

As the crane lowers him, Mason reaches down, picks up Sera's picture, and smooths it back into place on the dash.

INT. THE RIG/RP HQ READY ROOM

It's a large locker room.

Several dozen RPs are donning full riot gear and checking weapons. They're hardy looking hombres.

Jax, also in riot gear, is in the center.

JAX

In position by 1845. Go-light is at 1900. I want this done fast, and I want it done right. I'll handle SOLO and CRAWLER recall. Any questions?

The RPs mumble agreement.

JAX

Good. Remember, boys. In another few hours, you'll be rich men. I don't want any cold feet now.

(beat)

SOLOS.

He gestures at a handful of men off to the side. Instead of Riot Gear, they're dressed in SOLO flightsuits.

JAX

We've got to get all SOLOs in the henhouse. If any stragglers give you problems, you are authorized to use force.

The men nod.

JAX

Make us rich. Hoo-ah.

RPS

(as one)

HOO-AH!

INT. THE RIG/SOLO LAUNCH CONTROL ROOM

The LAUNCH CONTROLLER is seated behind a monitor in a small room overlooking the SOLO hangar.

Jax pops up on his screen.

JAX (VIDSCREEN)

SOLO Launch?

LAUNCH CONTROLLER

Captain Harken, how can I, uh, help?

JAX (VIDSCREEN)  
 We've had a safety breach. We need  
 to do a briefing to the pilots.  
 1900 hours.

LAUNCH CONTROLLER  
 Tonight?

JAX (VIDSCREEN)  
 Yes, tonight. You have a problem  
 with that?

LAUNCH CONTROLLER  
 (stammering)  
 No Captain. Tonight will work  
 fine. Crawler Bay was just  
 reporting some problems...

JAX (VIDSCREEN)  
 I know, just spoke with them. Have  
 your pilots assembled for 1900  
 hours. ALL your pilots.

LAUNCH CONTROLLER  
 Yes Captain.

He exhales slowly.

INT. SURFACE PLATFORM/OPS ROOM BRIDGE - NIGHT

Samson reclines in the chair.

The Launch Controller pops on the vidscreen.

LAUNCH CONTROLLER (VIDSCREEN)  
 Ops?

SAMSON  
 Ops. Go ahead.

LAUNCH CONTROLLER (VIDSCREEN)  
 Shift change. Permission to  
 proceed?

SAMSON  
 Permission granted. I'll be here  
 if you need anything.

LAUNCH CONTROLLER (VIDSCREEN)  
 Roger. Bringin' 'em in and sendin'  
 em out. Oh--one request.

SAMSON

Yes.

LAUNCH CONTROLLER (VIDSCREEN)

We've a crane down, so we'd like to ingress Day before deploying Night, if you will. Crawler Bay's offered to synchronize with us. Should only lose 10 minutes. We can double-time it to station and make it up that way.

SAMSON

Permission for line change granted. Keep me informed of difficulties.

LAUNCH CONTROLLER (VIDSCREEN)

Will do, sir.

(beat)

One more thing. Got a call from Jax Harken. RPs want to give a safety briefing while we have both crews on hand. Says they need to roll out a new procedure ASAP.

SAMSON

Sounds like an excellent use of the down time. Proceed with shift coordination and safety briefing. Keep me updated.

LAUNCH CONTROLLER (VIDSCREEN)

Will do, Ops. Launch Out.

Samson looks up at the illuminated shift board that takes up an entire wall of the bridge. Names are listed in two groups: DAY, NIGHT.

He punches a key and the NIGHT crew block moves up, displacing the DAY crew to the bottom.

INT. THE RIG/SOLO LAUNCH CONTROL ROOM

The Launch Controller looks about furtively. Then closes his eyes in realization.

LAUNCH CONTROLLER

The backup!

INT. MASON'S COCKPIT

Mason pilots his SOLO through the water. The Rig fades into the distance.

A few other SOLOs pass Mason, but they're heading in the opposite direction. Coming back from shift.

The Launch Controller pops up on Mason's screen.

LAUNCH CONTROLLER (VIDSCREEN)  
SOLO three-eight-three?

MASON  
Hear ya Launch.

LAUNCH CONTROLLER (VIDSCREEN)  
Uh, sorry about this, but  
we're...uh...RPs want to do a  
safety briefing in thirty minutes.  
We need you to come back in. They  
said they need everybody there.

MASON  
What?

LAUNCH CONTROLLER  
There was a problem with Crawler  
Bay, and we're delaying shift  
change to synch with them. RPs  
want to talk to us while we're  
down. Something urgent.

MASON  
I just got wet, Launch. I'm not  
coming back in for the RPs.

LAUNCH CONTROLLER  
Look, Captain Harken was pretty  
firm. We really don't need him and  
his goons harassing us. So if you  
could just come back in...

MASON  
Hey, you guys paged me, remember?  
Now that I'm stuck in, I'm gonna  
hit some rock. I'm not Captain  
Harken's errand boy. Somebody's  
got to keep this Rig pumping oil.  
Don't worry, though. Tell him I'll  
be SAFE.

Mason punches the screen off, and then taps the BLOCK  
INCOMING button on his HUD.

INT. THE RIG/SOLO LAUNCH CONTROL ROOM

LAUNCH CONTROLLER  
Damnit.

He picks up his vidphone and calls Jax.

JAX (ON VIDPHONE)  
Jax.

LAUNCH CONTROLLER  
Everything is good.  
(beat)  
Just have one orphan.

JAX (ON VIDPHONE)  
Who?

LAUNCH CONTROLLER  
SOLO three-eight-three. Mason Fox.

JAX (ON VIDPHONE)  
Fox? Ace, right?

LAUNCH CONTROLLER  
Yeah, he's good. But he won't come in.

JAX (ON VIDPHONE)  
Figures.  
(beat)  
Just him?

LAUNCH CONTROLLER  
Yes sir. All other SOLOs are accounted for, and will be in by 1900.

JAX (ON VIDPHONE)  
Make it so. I'll take care of Fox.

INT. THE RIG/SOLO LAUNCH BAY

All four launch cranes are actively working, plucking SOLOs out of the waterlock pools and then depositing them on hardstands where the pilots can disembark and the maintenance crews can get at the vehicles.

The pilots begin gathering at one end of the room, around some supply crates. There's a lot of muttering.

Pilots HARDY, CHIU, and DAVIDS are milling about together. DAVIDS dwarfs the other two, but they are all fit and a little fearless--they could be fighter pilots up in the topworld.

HARDY  
Some sort of safety briefing?

DAVIDS  
Joy.

CHIU  
Feel free to use my razor after I  
slit my wrists...

Suddenly, one of the side doors BURSTS open and out files two dozen Rig Police, fully armed in riot gear! They're led by Jax Harken.

JAX  
Get down on the floor!

The pilots are fully confused as the RPs surround them all menacingly.

DAVIDS  
What the hell?

Jax clubs the big guy down brutally. Davids falls and shakes it off. Fingers his bloody lip.

JAX  
I said, get down on the floor now!  
Face down!

A few more pilots get clubbed down, too, and then the rest realize that the RPs mean business. They comply and lay down.

JAX  
Keep your mouths shut! Play real  
nice and maybe nobody gets killed!

A couple of the pilots exchange glances.

HARDY  
(mouthing quietly)  
Killed? What is going on?

Chiu just shrugs.

JAX  
The Rig is under new management,  
gentlemen.

INT. THE RIG/NEPTUNE'S PLAYGROUND

With the pilots all at the briefing, the crowd in the bar is a bit smaller than usual. The TV has the usual RNN feed.

REPORTER (TV)

...and make sure to tune at 9:00 for the RigBall drawing. You could earn a 2-week bubble to the resort of your choice and 10 thousand dollars to make that vacation sparkle. Onto--hey! What the hell is going on?

On the TV stage, RPs appear, escort the reporter off, and then the feed goes blank.

DRUNKARD

(pointing at the TV; he's ignored)

Get a load of that?

The door bursts open and RPs crash the place.

RP SERGEANT

There's been an emergency. You must all return to your quarters and stay there. If any of you are SOLO or Crawler mechanics, please allow us to escort you to the Launch Bay. Your services are needed.

A few are indeed mechanics and happily comply, thinking they're doing a good thing.

The rest of the bar's patrons file out agreeably and head for home.

INT. THE RIG/DOWNTOWN

Small groups of RPs hurry down each street.

Throngs of people head for the tunnels that are marked "TO RESIDENCES".

INT. THE RIG/SOCCER FIELD

RPs crash the soccer game.

INT. THE RIG/SOLO LAUNCH CONTROL ROOM

All the pilots are being herded into a corner. The RPs have them at gunpoint. One pilot breaks from the group and turns to run.

Jax whips his gun up and fires a quick burst into the pilot's back. He drops immediately. Jax strides over to him, where he's groaning on the floor.

JAX

You're lucky I'm using riot bullets. Just some broken ribs to think about. Next time, I'm using this.

He whips out a wicked knife and bends down to hold it up against the squirming pilot's neck.

JAX

(to everyone)

This is no joke! Do not move, do not talk!

Jax is actually enjoying himself.

INT. MASON'S COCKPIT

Mason is working away busily taking core samples, his drill arm WHIRRING away at a rock shelf.

The "Incoming Transmission" light blinks on his HUD. He notices it but ignores it.

His personal vidphone CHIRPS.

MASON

Hmmm.

He flips it open. Screen says "SERA FOX". Flips it closed and sets it on the dash.

It's silent for a few moments, and he eyes it nervously.

It CHIRPS again.

Mason resists for a beat but then gives in.

MASON

This should be about as much fun as a decomp.

He flips open the phone and answers it.

SERA (ON VIDPHONE)  
Jesus Christ Mason!

MASON  
Sorry, Mason's not here right now.

INTERCUT with Sera on her phone in SOLO OPS room (Surface Control Platform). Samson is beside her.

SERA  
Are you ok?

MASON  
Eh?

SERA  
Where are you?

MASON  
Why aren't you calling on the com?  
This is my personal line.

SERA  
I tried. You're blocking it.

MASON  
I am?

SERA  
Don't be cute.  
(beat)  
Are you ok? Where are you?

MASON  
Drillin' rock out at 350 November  
Bravo, where do you think?

SERA  
Do you actually not know what's  
going on?  
(to Samson)  
Typical Mason. In his own world.

MASON  
I'll make up the Safety Briefing,  
Ops. No need to send Deep Rescue.  
(beat)  
I thought you forgot my personal  
number?

SERA  
I thought I did, too.  
(beat)  
Seriously, have you not heard?

MASON  
(stops drilling)  
What?

SERA  
Mason, there is something major going on down there. Some sort of a terrorist action. People are fighting. Maybe dying. Shit, I don't know what the hell is going on actually.

MASON  
What?

SERA  
Some sort of a takeover, Mason. Jesus!

SAMSON  
(leaning over her shoulder)  
Mason, you should report back to Launch Bay. These men appear very serious. They know you are out on station. We've been ordered to recall you.

MASON  
What do you mean a "takeover"?

SERA  
I don't know. We're getting reports of...we're getting a lot of reports. I think the Rig Police are in on it.

MASON  
The feds?

SERA  
I think. I--

SAMSON  
Sera. Transmission is incoming. I'm putting it up now.

SERA  
Hold on, Mason.

INT. SURFACE PLATFORM/OPS ROOM BRIDGE - NIGHT

Sera puts down the phone, and Samson punches the transmission onto the giant video screen wall. All of the CONTROLLERS go silent and watch.

Dr. Jacob Wrexham appears. Behind him is his wall of magazine covers.

WREXHAM (VIDSCREEN)

Good evening. As many of you know, I am Jacob Wrexham. This message is for the Global Energy Coalition, and for all those who care about the future of our planet.

(beat)

My forces are in control of the Rig. Rest assured that casualties have been carefully avoided, and there is no need for bloodshed.

SERA

Jake Wrexham?

WREXHAM (VIDSCREEN)

This facility was built to supply oil to a world in desperate need of it. And in this respect, our modern Atlantis has performed admirably, as I believe the supply record can attest.

Wrexham pauses a moment.

WREXHAM (VIDSCREEN, CONT'D)

Too admirably, in fact. The Rig was meant to produce enough petroleum to bridge the energy gap and allow us to break free from our dependence on fossil fuels. It was methadone for our heroin addiction. But now we are still as addicted as ever!

(his face reddens)

Will someone please explain to me why global spending on alternative fuel development went DOWN last year?

He takes a sip of water.

WREXHAM (VIDSCREEN)

I can explain. Simply put, the GEC has allowed too much oil to be produced. This has alleviated pressure to reform, and has allowed the richest nations to conveniently forget the crisis.

(beat)

The GEC holds the power to change this path. By regulating oil production, it can force alternative fuel development. We must begin to tighten the oil flow!

SERA

Drop production? Is he kidding?

SAMSON

(nodding)

Strangely, I do not think so.

WREXHAM (VIDSCREEN)

The GEC does not agree with my plan to restrict output. And now I am banned from proceedings.

(beat)

It was my strategic leadership that built this station, and if the GEC will not assume strategic leadership of this planet, than I will.

He steadies himself.

WREXHAM (VIDSCREEN)

The GEC must cede control of the Rig. The Rig will become its own sovereign nation. I will act as de-facto President until such time as an appropriate governing body may be set up.

(beat)

The Rig - not the GEC - will own and control petroleum distribution from these fields.

SERA

Fu--

Samson quickly places a hand over Sera's mouth.

WREXHAM (VIDSCREEN)

The Rig's independence must be granted within the next 24 hours.

INT. GEC BOARD ROOM - NIGHT

GASPS and GUFFAWS erupt in the room. Rudiger Klein is apoplectic, tugging hurriedly to loosen his collar.

On screen, Wrexham continues.

WREXHAM (VIDSCREEN, CONT'D)

I understand that this is inconvenient, but let me assure you that it is not a request. It is a demand.

(beat)

If the GEC misses this deadline, then I will detonate explosive charges that will sever the Umbilical.

On screen, Wrexham dramatically tips over his water glass and lets the water run out.

WREXHAM (VIDSCREEN, CONT'D)

The oil flow will cease. You fear reduced production, do you? Production will drop to zero.

More GASPS throughout the room.

WREXHAM (VIDSCREEN, CONT'D)

If you attempt military action at any time, I will sever the Umbilical immediately.

(beat)

Your only option is to accept this New World, and this New Rig. Rest assured that you will get enough oil. But gone will be the days of carefree consumption. The Rig will bridge our energy gap...with proper usage. We will control this crisis, and not be controlled by it.

INT. SURFACE PLATFORM/OPS ROOM BRIDGE - NIGHT

Sera and Samson can only shake their heads.

WREXHAM (VIDSCREEN, CONT'D)

One last thing. Should you...doubt...the sincerity of my demands, I must offer up one...ugly but necessary measure.

(MORE)

WREXHAM (VIDSCREEN, CONT'D) (cont'd)

In establishing control of this New Rig, I have temporarily gathered all SOLO and Crawler pilots in one location. Should you attempt a military action, not only will I sever the Umbilical, but I will also ensure that the only...available...SOLO and Crawler pilots are ones that are dedicated wholly to my cause.

INT. THE RIG/SOLO LAUNCH BAY

The RPs and hostage pilots are shifting uncomfortably, watching Wrexham on the screen.

WREXHAM (ONSCREEN)

You may eventually repair the Umbilical, but how will you run the Rig without pilots?

HARDY

Did he just say what I think he just said?

CHIU

I really hope not.

Two of the nearby RPs, BARON and SAWA exchange glances--they can sense the tension in the hostages.

RP BARON

Mebbe we shouldn't let these guys watch this.

RP Sawa nods.

INT. SURFACE PLATFORM/OPS ROOM BRIDGE - NIGHT

WREXHAM (ONSCREEN)

Surely you will do the calculations for yourself, but my own studies predict that even in the best conditions, it will you take three years to recover to 100 percent productivity. Is that how you wish to spend the next three years? In global chaos with no petroleum?

(beat)

You have 24 hours. Viva la Nouveau Rig.

The transmission ends.

For a moment, Sera, Samson, and the rest of the controllers are silent.

Then CHAOS erupts.

INT. GEC BOARD ROOM - NIGHT

More disorder.

EXEC #1

He can't...

EXEC #2

24 hours? It's impossible...

RUDIGER KLEIN

Madness!

INT. THE RIG/WREXHAM'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Wrexham has just finished his speech. His face is a combination of relief and resolve.

Jax rings on the vidphone. He's dressed in riot gear.

JAX

Piece of cake, Doc. Easier than I thought.

WREXHAM

Anything I should know about?

JAX

Nope.

(beat)

Well, just one thing. A lone SOLO is still out. Not answering on the com. I'll take care of him.

WREXHAM

Remember, no violence Captain. If we resort to violence, then they will be forced to intervene militarily. That is not what I want, it is not what they want, and it is not what you want. So keep a leash on your dogs, and on yourself.

(beat)

Work it through Operations.

(MORE)

WREXHAM (cont'd)  
 Tell them to bring in their lone  
 wolf. If they refuse...

JAX  
 ...then I'll deal with him my way.

EXT. THE RIG

Several RP SOLOs patrol the outside. They look like the  
 working SOLOs except that instead of drills and torches,  
 they're armed - their right arms are cannons.

Abruptly, two of these RP SOLOs break off and start heading  
 away from the Rig in formation.

INT. MASON'S COCKPIT

Mason's on his personal vidphone.

MASON  
 Sera, you still there?

There's a pause before she answers.

SERA (VIDPHONE)  
 Yeah Mason.

MASON  
 What the hell is going on? You  
 guys see this coming?

SERA (VIDPHONE)  
 We don't know anything more than  
 you, hon...uh, Jesus... Mason.

MASON  
 Well I tell you what -- I'm gonna  
 bubble. I don't need a part of  
 whatever gong show is happening  
 back there.

He starts punching some controls and angling his SOLO upward.

SERA (VIDPHONE)  
 Mason, we can't have you do that.

MASON  
 What?

SERA (VIDPHONE)  
 Just got a call from Captain Jax  
 Harken.

MASON  
The RP tightass?

SERA (VIDPHONE)  
Yeah. Guess he's in on the whole thing. He says you are to report to Launch Bay immediately or they're going to...  
(beat)  
He's going to execute a couple of pilots.

MASON  
What?

SERA (VIDPHONE)  
Mason, we need you to go to Launch.  
(conflicted)  
Look, I don't like this any better than you. But we need to let the GEC handle this. It's between them and Wrexham. We don't want to escalate things. It's crazy enough already.

MASON  
I ain't flying back just to get in line to be whacked.

SERA (VIDPHONE)  
Mase, Wrexham is just posturing.

MASON  
Oh really? Then should be no problem if I bubble. It's my ass. Maybe you're just hoping to get me to the front of the line...

SERA (VIDPHONE)  
Stop being hardheaded!

SAMSON (O.S.)  
Two incoming SOLOs. Broadcasting RP codes!

EXT. OCEAN FLOOR

Two RP solos, fully armed, jet towards Mason's craft.

INT. MASON'S COCKPIT

Mason wheels his SOLO around to face the incoming RPs, while sidestepping towards a rock formation to his right.

His COM light blinks at him. He punches a button, and one of the RPs breaks in on the screen.

RP SOLO LIEUTENANT (VIDSCREEN)  
Mason Fox, we are to escort you  
back to the Rig.

MASON  
What? I'm just out drilling rock,  
guys.

RP SOLO LIEUTENANT (VIDSCREEN)  
Captain Harken's orders.  
(beat)  
We are authorized to use deadly  
force.

MASON  
Deadly force? Geez guys, what the  
heck has come over you? I'm just  
doing my job out here keepin' the  
Rig in oil--

One of the RPs cannon pods erupts in muzzle flashes, and then a large rock near Mason's solo EXPLODES into a million tiny fragments.

Mason's SOLO shudders under the shockwave.

RP SOLO LIEUTENANT (VIDSCREEN)  
Which way will you have it?

Mason throws his hands up from the controls.

MASON  
Whoa, there. Your show.

Mason glances down at his personal vidphone - Sera's still on it.

MASON  
(whispering; to Sera)  
You catching this?

SERA (VIDPHONE)  
Jesus yes. Mase...go with them.  
We'll figure something out.

Mason SIGHS, ends the call.

MASON  
 (to RPs)  
 Ok, gentlemen. Vectoring to Launch  
 Bay.

He jets towards the RP SOLOs, who maneuver around to his sides, and keep their cannons trained on him.

The three SOLOs head for the Rig in the distance.

INT. GEC BOARD ROOM - NIGHT

Things have calmed down a little. Klein is trying to bring some order.

RUDIGER KLEIN  
 Security. Get me Rig Police  
 Captain Harken. What is the status  
 of his men?

The SECURITY DIRECTOR appears far too corporate for his area of expertise.

SECURITY DIRECTOR  
 It seems...

RUDIGER KLEIN  
 Out with it man!

SECURITY DIRECTOR  
 Captain Harken is...he is involved.  
 The RPs are involved. The fox is  
 guarding the henhouse, as it were.

RUDIGER KLEIN  
 Where are your goddman screening  
 procedures, Mr. Van Buren! Mother  
 of god.  
 (beat)  
 Military, I want options.

A hard-looking uniformed man steps forward. He's GENERAL WILLIAM BROOKING, highest ranking commander of the GEC joint forces.

GENERAL BROOKING  
 Mr. Director, we have planned for  
 similar situations. Within 12  
 hours, I can have an assault force  
 ready to deploy. Even assuming all  
 ninety-seven RP personnel have  
 defected, success is virtually  
 guaranteed.

RUDIGER KLEIN  
Casualties?

GENERAL BROOKING  
Unavoidable.

RUDIGER KLEIN  
I want a number, sir!

GENERAL BROOKING  
(cold)  
I cannot give an accurate estimate  
at this time.

Klein removes his glasses and rubs his nose and eyes.

RUDIGER KLEIN  
The Umbilical?

GENERAL BROOKING  
Assuming the threat of explosives  
is truthful, we have no options at  
this time for mitigating a  
detonation event. Our tech  
specialists are researching whether  
jamming is possible. If we could  
get visual confirmation of the  
charges, that would help.

RUDIGER KLEIN  
Production? How vulnerable is the  
Umbilical?

The PRODUCTION DIRECTOR looks quite disheveled and a bit pale  
at the mention of military intervention.

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR  
You mean can it stand a blast?  
Jesus, Rudy, I don't know for sure.  
The Umbilical is designed as a  
redundant system - one central tube  
and six satellite tubes. It would  
take one hell of a bomb to cut  
through all of them. You'd have to  
place charges on all the lines if  
you really wanted to cut the whole  
thing.  
(beat)  
Jake Wrexham...

RUDIGER KLEIN  
...designed this system. If anyone  
would know how to cripple it, he  
would.

PRODUCTION DIRECTOR

Yes sir.

RUDIGER KLEIN

Get me Vehicle Operations.

INT. SURFACE PLATFORM/OPS ROOM BRIDGE - NIGHT

The place is remarkably silent. With no SOLOs or Crawlers in the field, all the controllers are trying to find something to do to keep themselves busy.

Sera is sitting quietly, thinking. Samson is fiddling with the computer.

The viewscreen comes alive. It's Rudiger Klein.

RUDIGER KLEIN

Ms. Fox.

Sera bolts upright.

SERA

Executive Director.

RUDIGER KLEIN

Do you have any contact with your pilots?

SERA

No, sir. Rig Ops is not responding, and there are no pilots in the field. There was a safety briefing and--

RUDIGER KLEIN

How many assets do you have on the Surface Platform?

SERA

Not many, Sir. Just a couple of ferry vehicles...three or four SOLOs, two personnel transports. A few trainee pilots.

RUDIGER KLEIN

Ms. Fox, I must be blunt. If Dr. Wrexham carries through on his threat, I need to know how long it will take to retrain enough pilots to restore production.

SERA

You mean if he *kills* my pilots!

RUDIGER KLEIN

This is difficult for us all, Ms. Fox, but I need to know how quickly we can restore production levels. How many months?

SERA

Rudy, don't ask this of me.

(beat)

We need to negotiate for their release, sir. You can't ask me to plan for them getting killed.

RUDIGER KLEIN

Ms. Fox, I need an answer. Within the hour.

The call ends.

Sera turns to Samson.

SERA

They're going to friggin' invade.

SAMSON

What?

SERA

It's the only option they have.

SAMSON

Sera, you are being hasty...

SERA

No, Samson, I'm right. Think about it from the GEC's perspective. They will never cede control. Ever. That leaves two options: negotiation or military intervention. Negotiation's out...you think Jacob Wrexham is going to change his mind?

SAMSON

I'm sure Doctor Wrexham does not wish for people to be killed...

SERA

I don't think he does, either. But he's thinking big picture, here. He thinks the world's at stake.

(MORE)

SERA (cont'd)  
 He's come this far already. He's  
 not going to change his mind.

SAMSON  
 You cannot know that, Sera.

SERA  
 (working it through;  
 ignoring him)  
 This isn't a money grab. Which  
 means he can't be bribed. Which  
 means he isn't bluffing. The GEC  
 has to use force...

SAMSON  
 Sera, I think you...

SERA  
 ...and if they use force, then it  
 puts Wrexham to the test. If he's  
 twitchy, say good bye to the  
 Umbilical. And to my pilots...

She gets up suddenly and darts from the room.

SAMSON  
 Sera, wait!

He follows her out the door.

INT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sera runs through a series of interior hallways. She arrives  
 at a bulkhead door with a security keypad.

She punches in a code and puts her hand on the fingerprint  
 reader. The pad BEEPS, the door CLUNKS, and she pushes it  
 open.

INT. WEAPONS LOCKER - CONTINUOUS

It's a small but tidy room, filled with pistols, submachine  
 guns, body armor, and ammo.

Sera grabs a pistol and holster from the wall, slings it over  
 her shoulder. She reconsiders, and then takes a second  
 pistol, too.

She reaches for ammo, pausing at the stacks labelled  
 "CONVENTIONAL BULLETS - DECOMPRESSION HAZARD - NOT FOR  
 STATION USE". She instead grabs a handful of clips in the  
 container labelled "NON-LETHAL".

SAMSON  
(in the doorway)  
Sera, what in the world are you  
doing?

SERA  
(putting her kit together)  
He'll kill the pilots, Samson. I  
don't know about Wrexham, but Jax  
Harken will. I've never liked him.  
He gets off on power. This could  
go really bad.  
(trying to steel herself)  
The GEC is going to assault the  
Rig, and the pilots are going to  
get caught in the middle.

SAMSON  
What can you possibly expect to do  
about it?

She finishes grabbing supplies and heads out of the room,  
Samson still in tow.

INT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Sera winds her way through more passageways. She passes  
through a door that lets out into the open.

EXT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM - NIGHT

Sera makes her way across a catwalk, down some stairs, and  
through a door marked "LAUNCH".

INT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM/LAUNCH BAY - NIGHT

It's like a miniature version of the launch bay on the Rig,  
with a central pool of water. There are three or four SOLOs  
floating in the pool, docked to a hub. A few more are  
arranged on the hard floor around the bay in various states  
of disassembly - clearly undergoing maintenance.

Sera enter with Samson on her heels.

She heads over to a set of open face lockers with flight  
suits in them. One of the lockers has a label with her name  
on it.

She starts changing from her civies into the 2-piece flight  
suit. She has an athletic build...her desk job hasn't  
softened her yet.

SAMSON

Sera! This is madness!

SERA

(dressing)

Go check the manifest. Tell me which SOLO is fully charged and has the least squawks.

SAMSON

You could get killed, Sera!  
 (beat; changing tactics)  
 Perhaps the Doctor Wrexham is right. Perhaps his plan will be good for the Earth. It is doubtful that this will ever result in bloodshed if his intent is positive...

SERA

Samson. Either help me or get out of the goddman way.  
 (apologetic)  
 I won't roll dice with my pilots. If the GEC won't work for their release, I will.

Sera's finished dressing. She buckles the gun belt on, and then takes the second pistol and stuffs it in her waistband in the small of her back. Her flight jacket drapes to cover it up.

Samson's quiet for a moment, biting his lip. Then he heads over to the launch terminal, presses a few buttons.

SAMSON

(reluctantly)

Take S-Four-Two. Full batteries, only squawk is a nav light. Preparing it now.

SERA

(heartfelt)

Thanks, Ops.

She walks over to one of the SOLOs, pitches her gear in, and then climbs into the cockpit.

SAMSON

Be very careful, Ops.

INT. THE RIG/SOLO LAUNCH BAY

The launch crane is just finishing setting Mason's SOLO down onto the launch bay floor.

It's immediately mobbed by several RPs who train their guns on the cockpit. Jax Harken is leading.

In the far corner, the mass of hostage pilots are watching with interest. They seem to be grouped a little more orderly - whispering amongst each other.

DAVIDS

(surveying the RPs)

Look, there's more of us than them.  
I ain't gonna be no sheep to the  
slaughter.

HARDY

Hear that.

CHIU

They don't even have real guns.  
It's all riot control gear.  
Plastic bullets.

They share some knowing looks with other nearby pilots.

Back at Mason's SOLO, the cockpit rotates open.

MASON

Easy there, Triggers. I promise I  
won't leap out and eat ya all.

JAX

Fox, right?

MASON

(climbing out)

Sure thing.

JAX

(menacing)

No lone wolves around here.

(gestures)

Find your friends and sit down and  
shut up. If you don't, I'm either  
gonna spark ya, shoot ya, or knife  
ya. Maybe all three. Got it?

MASON

Sure buddy. I don't give a gallon  
about your revolution. I just work  
here.

The RPs start escorting Mason over to the other pilots. Jax turns and heads the other direction.

RP BILLY  
Hey Mason!

Mason turns just in time to see a FIST. He gets sucker-punched and laid out flat.

RP BILLY is the same guy who Mason punched out in the bar earlier.

RP BILLY  
(leering over his prey)  
Now we're even, you driller trash.

Mason, on his butt, puts his fingers to his lip. They come away with blood.

His silence speaks louder than any words. He glares the RP down.

RP BILLY  
If your house-bitch could see you now.

MASON  
(getting up slowly)  
Aww, you just had to go and do something really stupid.

Lightning quick, Mason charges into the guy, lifting him up on his shoulder. He runs a few steps and then tosses Billy into the launch pool. SPLASH!

The nearest RP moves in on Mason with his shock rod. Neatly, Mason dodges, it, steps in, and then throws a punishing fist to the gut. He's a brawler, all right. The RP doubles over.

Mason wrests the shock rod out of his hands, turns it around, and then shocks him. The RP collapses, convulsing.

The whole thing has happened in a flash.

JAX  
Get a leash on that guy!

A half dozen RPs converge on Mason, guns trained. There's no chance.

Mason drops the shock rod.

Jax calmly walks over, picks it up. Holds it up to Mason, who eyes it nervously.

JAX  
What did I tell you, puppy?

SHOCKS him. Mason crumples.

JAX  
Bad dog.  
(to the RPs)  
Take this trash over to the rest.

A couple RPs drag Mason to the rest of the pilots.

RP Billy climbs out of the water sheepishly.

EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

Sera's SOLO descends rapidly in the dark water, flood beams leading her way.

INT. SERA'S SOLO

Sera watches her depth gauge.

SERA  
Ops, you there?

Samson appears on the vidscreen.

SAMSON (VIDSCREEN)  
Go ahead, Sera.

SERA  
I'm going to call ahead in sec.  
Can't have them thinking I'm the  
military.

SAMSON (VIDSCREEN)  
Yes.

SERA  
On the way down, I'm going to take  
a pass by the Umbilical. See if I  
can verify the charges. Maybe  
Wrexham's bluffing, I don't know.  
I doubt it.

SAMSON (VIDSCREEN)  
Don't do anything...what does Mason  
say... "cowboy"?

SERA  
 (unconvincingly bitter)  
 I don't care what Mason says.

She punches a few buttons.

SERA  
 Rig Control, this is Solo S-Four-  
 Two.

There's a short delay, but then an RP appears on screen.

RP CONTROLLER (VIDSCREEN)  
 Identify yourself immediately.

SERA  
 I'm Sera Fox, SOLO Crawler  
 Operations. Look, I'm alone. I'm  
 coming down to talk with Dr.  
 Wrexham. I'm not representing the  
 GEC.

RP CONTROLLER (VIDSCREEN)  
 Advise you reverse direction or  
 face interception.

SERA  
 Then intercept me! Look...I'm  
 alone. I just want to speak with  
 the Doc, and then you can put me  
 wherever you want.

RP CONTROLLER (VIDSCREEN)  
 Standby.

The screen goes blank.

SERA  
 (to herself)  
 What are you doing...

INT. THE RIG/SOLO LAUNCH CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

The RP Controller waves Jax Harken over.

RP CONTROLLER  
 It's Sera Fox.

JAX  
 You're kidding me...

RP CONTROLLER  
She's alone. Wants to talk to the  
Doctor.

Jax squints, thinking. It looks hard.

A smile breaks out.

JAX  
This could be useful... Give her  
clearance, but I want her docking  
at Transport Pool Bravo, not here.

INT. SERA'S SOLO

The screen comes back to life.

RP CONTROLLER (VIDSCREEN)  
Descent authorized. Dock at T-  
Bravo.

SERA  
Roger. ETA seven minutes.

RP CONTROLLER (VIDSCREEN)  
You are alone?

SERA  
Yes.

RP CONTROLLER  
If you deviate from your path or if  
we pick up another contact, Captain  
Harken has authorized the use of  
deadly force.

SERA  
(reassuring)  
I'm alone, and I'm coming straight  
down the Umbilical. Don't worry.  
(clicks off the COM)  
I'll do the worrying.

INT. THE RIG/SOLO LAUNCH BAY - NIGHT

Mason is stirring. He's woozy and grumpy.

MASON  
It's always the tequila that does  
it. Whiskey and I'm fine. Tequila  
and this happens.

DAVIDS

Mase, what the hell you doin' out there?

HARDY

You gonna get yerself knifed, man. Captain Harken has flipped his chicken. He just wants an excuse.

MASON

(sitting up)

Aww, he's a big teddy bear.

The pilots laugh, glad to see he's ok.

MASON

What's the score?

CHIU

You know about Wrexham?

MASON

Yeah.

HARDY

You know what happens if the GEC tries to crash this party?

CHIU

We're the leverage.

MASON

Great. I never been a hostage before.

HARDY

(whispering)

We're thinkin' of trying somethin'.

Mason cocks an eyebrow, interested.

DAVIDS

We outnumber 'em, and I don't see kindly to sittin' here waitin' to see whether the Feds decide to throw our skins away.

HARDY

The only people they're threatening are us pilots. All we gotta do is get to the escape pods and bubble. Let the Feds and these kooks sort out their differences however they want.

CHIU

You in?

Mason fingers his cut lip.

MASON

What do you think?

INT. SERA'S SOLO

Through the cockpit glass, the occasional fish or bubble shows that she's descending.

At first tiny and dull, there's a string of lights stretching vertically. As the SOLO approaches, the lights get stronger. It's the Umbilical.

The Umbilical is a series of winding cables, running from the Rig to the Surface Control Platform above. It's the oilflow connection between the two.

SERA

Hey Mother, good to see you.

Sera adjusts the controls, angles the SOLO down more, and starts following the Umbilical.

The lights of the Rig start to appear, stretching across the sea-floor like a city seen from a jetliner.

SERA

Nothing yet...but...

(beat)

Damn.

She stops her descent.

SERA

I was really hoping he was a bluffer.

The SOLO's lights show some things attached to the Umbilical. They look like manmade barnacles, electronic parasites that obviously don't belong.

The explosives.

Each charge has a steady green light and a single flashing red light. They have small, conical antennas.

SERA

Ops, you there? Charges confirmed.

She punches a button.

SERA  
Sending you video now.

She orbits the Umbilical. There are almost a dozen charges in all, with at least one on each Umbilical strand.

Her CALL light flashes. She taps it.

The RP Controller pops on screen.

RP CONTROLLER (VIDSCREEN)  
Have you stopped? Sending escorts now. Proceed to docking T-Bravo IMMEDIATELY.

SERA  
Roger, was just adjusting my...tank flow.

EXT. OCEAN/UMBILICAL - NIGHT

Sera breaks away from the Umbilical and starts jetting towards the Rig. A couple of RP SOLOs thrust up to join her.

INT. THE RIG/TRANSPORT BAY BRAVO - NIGHT

It's one of the three transport bays on the rig. Sera is mooring her SOLO at one end. A pair of empty personnel transports (subs that hold about two dozen people) float nearby.

Jax and another RP are waiting for her.

Sera gets out of her vehicle.

SERA  
(an ever so slight nod)  
Captain Harken.

Jax nods, holding his gun with barrel pointed to the ceiling. He knows enough of Sera Fox to show her a little respect.

The other RP moves forward, takes the pistol out of Sera's holster. She doesn't resist.

JAX  
Why'd you bring the piece?

SERA

Not sure, things just seem like they're getting crazy. Look, can you hurry up and take me to the Doctor before the GEC does something stupid? I'm just here for my pilots.

They start walking. Sera clandestinely adjusts her flight jacket to make sure her remaining gun (tucked into her waistband in back) is covered.

INT. THE RIG/WREXHAM'S QUARTERS - NIGHT

Wrexham is sitting in a modern-looking chair, a snifter of cognac in his hand.

The door opens and Jax escorts Sera in at gunpoint.

Wrexham stands and walks to meet her. He waves for the RPs to lower the guns.

WREXHAM

(extending a hand)  
Sera Fox?

SERA

(polite)  
Yes. Hello Doctor.

WREXHAM

Jacob Wrexham. Please, have a seat and a drink.

Another snifter is waiting for her. Sera obeys, noticing all the magazine covers as she walks by.

Wrexham savors a sip.

WREXHAM

You are not here on behalf of the GEC.

SERA

No sir.

WREXHAM

How did you get down?

SERA

I took a SOLO.

JAX

She used to be one of these coal-miners, Doc. She was so bad at it they promoted her topside just to get rid of her.

Sera glares at him.

WREXHAM

Captain Harken...please. Go ensure your jackals are under control.

Jax's eyes narrow, but he turns to leave. The other RP remains.

WREXHAM

(turns back to Sera)

Sera Fox. Daytime Operations of the SCP. USC business educated. Went on to drive SOLOs instead--for the thrill, I guess--but then her smarts got the better of her anyway and she ended up in management.

(beat)

You're here for the pilots.

SERA

Doctor, I understand what you're trying to do--

WREXHAM

Of course you do, you're an intelligent woman!

He reaches down to tap a few controls on his chair. The wall viewscreen comes to life.

He cycles through a series of graphs.

The FIRST is a graph of oil barrel output from the Rig per month. The value steadily climbs upward.

WREXHAM

This, shows how successful we've been down here. I'm sure you take pride in doing your part.

SERA

Production has risen by 18% since I took over, sir, and fatals have dropped 44%.

WREXHAM

Impressive.

He BEEPS the slide to advance. The SECOND is a graph of global alternative fuel usage. The values climb, plateau, and then drop.

WREXHAM

And here is the cost of our success. That drop in alternative fuel use is just last year.

BEEP.

The THIRD is a graph of global R&D dollars spent in the development of alternative fuels. The shape is the same as the other graph, but the drop off is more spectacular.

WREXHAM

What story do these tell you, Ms. Fox?

SERA

The Rig is a success, Doctor.

WREXHAM

(laughs)

Very nice of you to say, Ms. Fox. A year ago, I agreed with you. But now this platform...this noble and expensive mind you...

He seems to drift for just a moment, then comes back.

WREXHAM (CONTINUING)

The Rig is acting as a set of blinders, and the GEC is the horse that simply plods on, uncaring of whatever chasms may be approaching.

(beat)

How long will these oil fields last?

SERA

They're vast, sir. A long time.

WREXHAM

Maybe. Maybe. Would you bet on it?

SERA

Sure.

WREXHAM

Would you bet world war on it?  
Would you bet your life on it?

Sera is silent.

WREXHAM

Progress is charted by hard choices, Ms. Fox. Whether you're talking poker, business, politics, or battle, it's the difficult choices that enable you to have a chance at victory. The end cannot always be seen when you are en route.

Sera notices a small picture on the endtable next to Wrexham. It's a beautiful woman, but her hair and dress seem a bit...dated.

Wrexham notices her looking at it.

WREXHAM

(calmer)  
Julie.

SERA

I forgot that you were married.

WREXHAM

She died 8 years, 2 months, and 12 days ago. At 3:59 pm in the afternoon.

Sera doesn't know what to say. They sit in silence for a moment. He sips his drink.

WREXHAM (CONTINUING)

When I funded the groundbreaking of this facility, I thought that I was doing the world a service that she would have been proud. But I didn't know the real service wouldn't come until now.

SERA

Doctor, I'm not trying to tell you you're wrong about all this. I'm just here for my pilots. Don't make them pawns in this. They're just doing their job.

Wrexham takes a long pull on his cognac. He's listening, thinking.

INT. THE RIG/SOLO LAUNCH BAY - NIGHT

The pilots are still huddled, conspiratorially.

With Jax gone, the RPs don't look quite as alert. They're sharing soldier's jokes with each other.

Mason and the pilots near him exchange nods. It's time.

The tension is palpable...

HARDY

Go! Go!

Almost as one, the pilots leap to their feet and charge the guards. A battle ensues, and it's a fierce one.

The pilots have nothing but their bare hands. The RPs have rubber bullets and shock rods, and they use them both to great effect.

The launch bay is like a writhing mass of bodies. The short BURSTS of gunfire and ZAPS from the shock rods ring above the grunts and yells of both sides. Rubber bullets ricochet off of supply crates, SOLOs, walls...and take down quite a few pilots and even other RPs.

Here and there, pilots are able to get hold of some of the RPs' weapons, and for a space, it looks like they might gain the upper hand against their captors.

For his part, Mason overpowers an RP and takes his submachine gun.

MASON

Get to the pods!

Mason, Davids, Hardy, and a few other pilots near him fight their way to a nearby exit. Chiu gets caught up in a fracas and gets separated.

Davids handily dispatches the two RPs that stand in their way, and then Mason's group gets to the doorway.

Mason turns to see how the rest of the battle is going, but the nearby pilots grab him and pull him out with them.

INT. THE RIG/PASSAGEWAYS - CONTINUOUS

HARDY  
Nearest pod is...  
(looks up at signage in  
the corridor)  
Hospital!

They rush through a series of corridors, and wind their way to the...

INT. THE RIG/HOSPITAL FOYER

There are a few RPs there, locking down the hospital.

They're taken by surprise by Mason and the pilots (who are now armed), and quickly overpowered.

Hardy gets shocked in the melee, and another pilot takes some rubber bullets to the ribs and face.

MASON  
Here!

The pilot pulls a large red handle that opens a small airlock to an escape pod. The pod itself looks like a small circular room or perhaps one of the whitewater ride carriages from an amusement park. It has seats for about a dozen people.

MASON  
Get in!

They spot Hardy, who's still laid out cold.

Mason and Davids dart back out, grab Hardy, and drag him into the pod.

INT. ESCAPE POD

MASON  
Bubble-time. Wish I'd done it when  
I was still in my SOLO.

He pulls the lever.

A series of NOISES and a camera shake announce the separation of the escape pod from the Rig.

Some venting bubbles are seen through the portholes, and then the pod starts to rise rapidly.

EXT. THE RIG

The escape pod detaches from the Rig and begins to rise.

INT. ESCAPE POD

DAVIDS

Hope Chiu and the other boys got  
out.

MASON

(matter of fact)  
Yeah. Luck to 'em.

INT. THE RIG/SOLO LAUNCH BAY

The fight is still raging, hard to tell who's winning.

Some other pilots have escaped, but a lot are still wrapped  
up with the RPs.

INT. THE RIG/DOWNTOWN

A few pilots run between shops and taverns. They see some  
RPs down the way and decide to duck into Neptune's  
Playground.

INT. THE RIG/PASSAGEWAY

Jax Harken sees a few pilots escaping down an adjacent  
corridor.

JAX

(on his COM unit)  
This is Captain Harken! I need all  
available personnel to SOLO Launch.  
On the double!

He runs to the Launch Bay entry.

INT. THE RIG/SOLO LAUNCH BAY - CONTINUOUS

Jax walks in on the chaos. A pilot tries to run by him -- he  
lays the woman out with a backhand.

After a moment's pause to survey the melee, Jax swings up his  
submachine gun, pops the clip out, puts a different clip in,  
and then brings the gun up to his shoulder. He calmly takes  
aim.

BRRAP BRRAP and two pilots drop. One of them is CHIU.

This time, though, they're bleeding. Jax is firing REAL BULLETS.

This gets noticed by nearby RPs and pilots alike. Both sides are surprised.

JAX  
Stop! I'll shoot every last  
goddamn one of you if I have to!

The blood is pooling around the two dead pilots.

The remaining pilots lose some heart. It allows the RPs to regain control and round them up.

JAX  
Now we do it my way.

INT. THE RIG/WREXHAM'S QUARTERS

Wrexham and Sera are still talking.

WREXHAM  
It's a matter of principle, Ms.  
Fox. Not emotion. It's business  
that we're--

A CHIRP sounds.

WREXHAM  
Phone.

The viewscreen comes to life again. It's Jax in the SOLO Bay.

JAX (VIDSCREEN)  
Doctor. We've had a...we've had a  
situation.

WREXHAM  
What...

JAX (VIDSCREEN)  
The pilots tried to make a break.  
I've restored control.

WREXHAM  
This isn't supposed to be a clown  
show, man! The GEC--

JAX (VIDSCREEN)  
There have been some casualties,  
sir.

WREXHAM  
How many?

JAX (VIDSCREEN)  
A few.

Behind Jax, some RPs are moving one of the pilot's bodies.  
The blood smear can't be missed.

SERA  
Oh my god. Oh my god! You let  
that monster...  
(whispering)  
Mason.

It's the first time we've seen her truly scared.

JAX (VIDSCREEN)  
They must have been organized, Doc.  
Were I you, I'd ask your new friend  
about it.

WREXHAM  
No more of this craziness! I want  
order, Captain Harken. We must  
have order!

Jax is clearly irritated. Gives a curt nod, and the call  
ends.

Wrexham gathers himself and then faces Sera.

WREXHAM  
Clever.

SERA  
Huh?

WREXHAM  
It's good to know I'm convincing.

SERA  
I don't--

WREXHAM  
They send you in here, pilots stage  
a break. Then all you have to  
worry about is where my big red  
button is. And will I use it.

SERA

I didn't have anything to do with that... I came here to prevent something like that!

WREXHAM

So the pilots came to the idea on their own? I know they adore you. Don't you think I research my business ventures first?

SERA

(laughing in disbelief)

What? I'm not going to tell them to fight back against a trigger-happy thug and some fanatical billionaire who's lost his mind...

(she's said too

much...tries to recover)

What do you expect, sir? Every time they get wet they know they're putting their lives on the line. You threatened them. It got their backs up. Jesus. Now you have your ape in there filling people full of holes.

WREXHAM

Captain Harken, in spite of his greed, is doing the world a service at this moment. I don't very much care for him, but I do need him.

(standing; nods to the RP guard)

Ms. Fox, a noble purpose on your part, but I'm afraid you now have a part to play in this.

Sera dives out of the way just before the RP grabs her.

She rolls between the chairs and then springs to her feet with an athlete's grace. She reaches behind her back and whips out the pistol

WREXHAM

My god, where did you--

Sera fires three or four quick rounds into the guard, who clutches his ribs in pain and drops to the floor.

She trains the gun on Wrexham.

SERA

You are getting people killed. I know what you're trying to do, but don't do it this way. Please.

Wrexham, for once, is silent.

SERA (CONT'D)

Call this whole thing off. Tell me where the detonators are.

She glances to make sure the guard is still out.

SERA (CONT'D)

Or...Jesus...just let the pilots go. Blow the Umbilical, whatever. Just don't make them part of it.

WREXHAM

(resolute)

We are all part of it.

He stares down the barrel.

WREXHAM (CONT'D)

Are you going to shoot me with plastic bullets, Ms. Fox?

SERA

(bluffing)

Enough in the face will still do the job.

Wrexham turns nonchalantly to face out the large porthole that graces one of his walls.

WREXHAM

Except that killing me doesn't stop it. Except that the charges are on a timer that can't be stopped if something happens to me.

(faces her again)

Except that you aren't a killer, are you?

Her bluff's been called. She's out of ideas.

WREXHAM

But your life has value to me too, my dear.

(to his viewscreen)

Call Jax Harken.

SERA

Damn you.

She turns and bolts from Wrexham's apartment.

Jax appears onscreen.

WREXHAM

It seems that Ms. Fox has escaped.  
I want her captured. Quickly.  
Alive.

JAX

(grinning wolfishly)  
I'll try, doc. About the last  
part, I mean.

The screen goes dark again.

Wrexham's eyes fall on the picture of his wife.

INT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM/OPERATIONS ROOM - DAY

With Sera gone, Samson is running the show. He looks a little frazzled. A nearby OPERATOR calls out to him.

OPERATOR

Ops - we have an escape pod  
bubbling. Pod Charlie  
Foxtrot...that's a Hospital pod, I  
think.

SAMSON

(surprised)  
ETA?

OPERATOR

6 minutes.

SAMSON

Scramble recovery.

INT. ESCAPE POD - NIGHT

The pilots are groaning and collecting themselves.

HARDY

That was some crazy shit.

The water outside the windows gets lighter and lighter.

MASON

Surface time. This is the first  
time I've been glad to go topside  
in...ever.

DAVIDS

That's truth.

EXT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM - DAWN

The escape pod BREECHES the surface and floats on the shallow waves.

The Surface Control Platform looms nearby, sparkling in the light.

A recovery ship is bee-lining it over.

INT. THE RIG/RESIDENCE CORRIDOR - DAY

Sera pads down the hallway, nervously looking around for RPs.

A door cracks open and a RANDOM GUY sticks his head out.  
Sees Sera with a gun, and then closes it quickly.

SERA

Pilots made a run for it...where  
would they be...

(beat)

Neptune!

She turns down a corridor with new purpose--and gets CRACKED  
in the face by an RP. Totally blindsided, she falls in a  
heap, the pistol scattering forward on the ground.

Jax is there with a squad.

He just laughs.

INT. GEC BOARD ROOM - DAY

All the execs are talking, when a PAGE interrupts them.

PAGE

Mr. Director, a call from the Rig.

The room hushes.

RUDIGER KLEIN

Patch it through.

The viewscreen comes to life. It's Jacob Wrexham, looking very taxed and a bit unstable.

WREXHAM (VIDSCREEN)  
 Forgive the lack of pleasantries,  
 Rudy, and I'll forgive you for  
 sending Ms. Fox down here to start  
 a coup.

RUDIGER KLEIN  
 I don't--

WREXHAM (VIDSCREEN)  
 (overriding)  
 Save it. Your attempts have forced  
 my hand, I'm afraid. I'm moving  
 the time table up. You now have  
 six hours to grant the Rig's  
 sovereignty. Don't wait for the  
 last minute, Rudy. I don't know if  
 our clocks are synchronized.

Screen goes blank.

Klein looks very haggard.

EXT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM/DOCKS - DAY

The rescue ship is docked. The pilots are being helped onboard the massive platform. Medical personnel are waiting with blankets and supplies.

Mason darts through their lines.

MEDIC  
 Wait, you're hurt!

MASON  
 Must have me confused with someone  
 else.

He runs off.

INT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM/OPERATIONS ROOM - DAY

Mason bursts in, sweaty and ragged.

MASON  
 Hey miss know-it-all, just wanted  
 to--

Samson is speechless.

MASON  
Where is she?

SAMSON  
Sera?

MASON  
Who d'ya think?  
(beat)  
She off doing stretches? Picked a  
hell of a time to grab a coffee.

He turns to go.

SAMSON  
Mason, she--

MASON  
Hurry with it.

SAMSON  
She's bottom-side.

MASON  
(stunned)  
Come again?

SAMSON  
She's on the Rig. Mr.--Doctor--  
Wrexham is holding her.

MASON  
Oh no.

SAMSON  
She went down to try to convince  
him--

MASON  
(laughing grimly)  
No, no, no.

SAMSON  
I told her it was foolishness.

MASON  
She is so goddamn driven.

SAMSON  
Mason, there's something else you  
should know.

He looks back at Samson. There's nervousness in his eyes.

SAMSON (CONT'D)

Wrexham is threatening to kill her.  
He thinks she had something to do  
with the escape attempt.

MASON

Attempt, nothin', my friend. At  
least one pod of us god out.

(beat)

Doctor Crazy thinks she was behind  
it? You mean she was already down  
there when we bubbled...

SAMSON

I--I'm sorry. I look at Sera as  
family. I told her not to go.

Mason's not fully listening now. The wheels are turning.

MASON

Where's the weapons locker?

SAMSON

This is not--

MASON

Give me the code. I know you have  
some hardware up here. Pirates and  
all that.

SAMSON

No. I cannot.

MASON

I thought you "look at her as  
family."

SAMSON

I cannot.

MASON

I'm not asking.

There's a dangerous gleam in his eyes.

SAMSON

(walking to the door)

You two are much the same, have I  
told you?

MASON

That's why we didn't get along.

INT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM/WEAPONS LOCKER

Mason stocks up on weapons. He grabs a pistol and submachine gun. When he reaches for ammo, he does the reverse of Sera-- pauses over the plastic bullets and then grabs the full-metal jackets instead.

SAMSON  
You must not...

Mason ignores him. He's about to leave when he notices a case on the floor. Grenades.

Mason pops it open and grabs a few, throws them in a pouch.

INT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM/LAUNCH BAY - DAY

It's the same room Sera grabbed her SOLO from earlier.

Mason looks at the computer manifest, picks out a SOLO. He heads over to it.

MASON  
I hope this rag has enough bats to  
get me where I'm goin'.

He gets in and starts pre-flighting.

Samson is still in tow.

SAMSON  
Mason, wait.

Mason hardly looks up.

SAMSON (CONT'D)  
They will know you are coming.  
They will pick you up on scanners,  
and when they find out it is you  
again, they will kill you. The RP  
SOLOS are armed.

Mason tries to ignore him, but it's hard.

MASON  
I know. Already been shot at by  
one.

SAMSON  
You will be vented before you  
arrive.

MASON

Maybe. She went down for us pilots. I can't let her take the fall alone.

SAMSON

You will be killed. That helps nothing, and least of all her.

Mason stops. Samson's right.

SAMSON

(relieved)

This is not something you can do by yourself, going down half-cocked in a SOLO. Let the GEC handle the negotiation. It is not for us to--

Mason's eyes widen.

MASON

You're right! Using a SOLO is not a good idea.

He hops out, grabs his gear, and sprints from the bay.

SAMSON

Wait!

EXT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM/CATWALK - DAY

Mason emerges from one door, walks across a catwalk, and through another. The door has a placard: "UMBILICAL CONTROL".

INT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM/UMBILICAL CONTROL - DAY

It's a round room that looks a bit like the SOLO/CRAWLER OPS room - lots of monitors and some techs watching them.

The center of the room is dominated by a big platform with horizontal opening that's covered by an iris-lens.

The techs look up to see Mason, armed and looking a bit rough.

TECH MARTY

We're under attack!

MASON

You're not under attack, boys. Chill out.

They all start scrambling.

Mason fires a BURST into the ceiling. That does the trick-- they all stop.

MASON

You're not under attack, I said!  
I'm one of the good guys!  
(takes a breath)  
Look, I need help. Who's small-  
freight?

Beat.

The freight operator--TEDDY--raises his hand. Balding and jovial, he looks like he came from the tough streets a while back. He's also the only tech in the room not frightened by Mason's gunplay.

TEDDY

Yeah, who cares?

MASON

Get a BB out.

TEDDY

Nothin's sendin' until this nutso  
storm's over. Already got a  
backlog, buddy.

He gestures to a neatly ordered rack of boxes, letters, and the like.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

You gotta letter to send? Gun or  
no, get in line.

MASON

Will I fit?

TEDDY

Huh?

MASON

Will I fit?

TEDDY

In the BB? They're for packages,  
jimbo.

MASON

I know. I get Amazon orders all  
the time. I'm a big reader, you  
wouldn't know it.

(MORE)

MASON (cont'd)

(beat)  
Will I fit?

TEDDY

(chuckling)  
Yer off.

MASON

You know what's happening right now? Well, I just came from down there, and I gotta go back.

TEDDY

What?

MASON (CONT'D)

The pilots are on the chopping block. A few of us didn't like it, so we left. Problem is...you know Sera Fox?

TEDDY

Solo Ops, yeah? I know her. Nice cans. Steady hand. She's top stuff in the Ops room, word is.

MASON

Well she went down on her own to try to get the pilots out. Now the goons have her, saying she's first to go if things go south. So I'm asking you, will I fit?

TEDDY

Wait. You're not "Mason Fox", are you?

Mason grins.

TEDDY

I heard about you and her. Got a divorce, right?

MASON

We never got married. Long story.

Teddy shrugs his shoulders. Now he's on board with the plan. Thinks for a sec.

TEDDY (CONT'D)

Sure you'll fit. Just scrunch up tight.

(turns to another tech)  
Roll one out, Asuna-san.

Tech ASUNA-SAN nods, grinning, and then she punches some controls.

An overhead crane lurches to life, WHINING. From the hook is dangling a spherical ball, about five feet in diameter. It's a "BB". The crane neatly deposits the ball on top of the iris door.

Teddy walks over and pulls a handle that is recessed in the ball. A rectangular hatch opens.

TEDDY

We used to call this an "E" ticket ride, my friend.

Mason runs his hand down the BB's metal surface, having second thoughts.

MASON

This thing gonna kill me?

TEDDY

Nah. Might put your nose on the bottoms of your feet, though.

MASON

Great.

TEDDY

We "g" metered 'em once. Got tired of breakin' Christmas presents for you boys. 7 gees. If you can fly a fighter plane, you should be able to survive this. That's the theory anyway.

MASON

Fighters? Sheesh. I drive SOLOs, man.

He steps in, confidently. Lays down and braces himself.

TEDDY

Don't know what your plan is, my friend, but good luck. Hope you get your girl. She runs a tight ship up here. Maybe try to save the Rig, too, yeah? I got some friends down there.

MASON

Don't hold your breath.

Teddy starts to shut the hatch.

MASON

Wait!

TEDDY

What?

MASON

I got enough air?

TEDDY

Sure, just don't breathe.

(laughs)

You'll be there before you know it.

I'll make sure somebody's waitin'.

The hatch SLAMS shut.

Teddy turns to Asuna-san and waggles his finger in a circle. She presses some keys.

The iris door in the floor opens and the BB DROPS with a SHUDDERING FOOM!

The techs all shake their heads in amazement.

At the top of the stairs, Samson Mfuzu stands silently, watching.

INT. GEC BOARD ROOM - DAY

A thin, conservatively dressed psychologist, DR. PETERS, is just finishing up his report.

DR. PETERS

...this panel's opinion that Doctor Wrexham is most likely not simply posturing. His increasingly unstable patterns of behavior over the past several months are consistent with his unilateral approach to these demands. Furthermore, his idealism--

RUDIGER KLEIN

Get to the point, sir. Layman's terms.

DR. PETERS

Bluntly, Mr. Director? He has nothing to lose and he thinks he is pursuing a valiant cause.

RUDIGER KLEIN

What about his morality, Doctor?  
No one believes Jacob Wrexham wants  
blood on his hands.

DR. PETERS

Agreed, sir. But in this case his  
sense of purpose acts to strengthen  
his resolve.

RUDIGER KLEIN

So he is not backing down, and he  
is not bluffing.

PSYCHOLOGIST

Yes.

RUDIGER KLEIN

And there's no time to maneuver or  
talk him down.

(dismisses him; sighing)

Thank you, Doctor.

Dr. Peters nods, gathers his papers, and leaves.

Klein address the room.

RUDIGER KLEIN (CONT'D)

This unfortunate report leaves us  
few options.

(beat)

A hard time has come upon us. As a  
matter of procedure, we must put  
this resolution to a vote. There  
can be no abstaining. All those in  
favor of military intervention?

Ten of the twelve board members raise their hands...several  
reluctantly.

RUDIGER KLEIN (CONT'D)

(unsurprised)

Mr. Secretary, please record the  
result. Ten to two.

(turns)

General, how soon can you begin?

GENERAL BROOKING

Within two hours.

RUDIGER KLEIN

Complete your preparations and  
advise when you are ready.

(MORE)

RUDIGER KLEIN (cont'd)  
 And General--please remember the  
 Rig is inhabited by civilians, not  
 terrorists.

GENERAL BROOKING  
 Our plan is designed to minimize  
 collateral damage, sir.

RUDIGER KLEIN  
 Is that all you can offer?

GENERAL BROOKING  
 That is as good as it gets, Mr.  
 Director.

Klein nods. The General turns to go.

RUDIGER KLEIN  
 News of this decision may not leave  
 this room, or it will endanger the  
 benefit of surprise. May God have  
 mercy on us.

INT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM/STORAGE ROOM - DAY

The door cracks open, and Samson Mfuzu furtively slips in.  
 He closes the door behind him softly.

Samson pulls out his personal vidphone and punches in some  
 numbers.

INT. THE RIG/WREXHAM'S QUARTERS - DAY

Wrexham answers a call on his screen.

It's SAMSON! Wrexham is unsurprised--they know each other!

WREXHAM  
 Samson.  
 (angry)  
 Damn it man, how did you let Ms.  
 Fox get down here?

SAMSON (VIDSCREEN)  
 (respectful)  
 She...could not be stopped, Doctor.  
 I did not anticipate that she would  
 cause any harm.

WREXHAM

Well she got your pilots all stirred up and they nearly wrecked everything! Captain Harken is turning into a butcher just to keep order.

SAMSON (VIDSCREEN)

That is unfortunate, Doctor. Some of the escaped pilots have just arrived at Surface. That is why--

WREXHAM

I need you to keep peace up there, Samson. If things get out of control, the board is going to reflexively do exactly what I don't want them to do.

INT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM/STORAGE ROOM - DAY

SAMSON

Yes, I fear that also. There is something else you should know.

Samson pauses for a sec, clearly anguished with the decision to speak further.

SAMSON (CONT'D)

Mason Fox--one of the pilots--is on his way back down to the Rig.

WREXHAM (VIDPHONE)

Back DOWN?

SAMSON

He was one of the pilots who escaped. Yes, he is going back.

WREXHAM (VIDPHONE)

Why is he coming back down? Wait...did you say "Fox"? Don't tell me...

SAMSON

He and Sera Fox were once engaged, yes.

WREXHAM

You mean married?

SAMSON

No...it is a lengthy story.

(beat)

He has weapons with him. He is...reckless.

WREXHAM

Thank you, Samson. You've done the right thing. We can't allow the violence to escalate. I'll alert Captain Harken to look for incoming SOLOs.

SAMSON

He is not in a SOLO, Doctor. He is-

-

WREXHAM

We'll watch for a transport, then. Do you have the transponder code? Are there others with him?

SAMSON

That is not it, either.

(beat)

Do you know of the Umbilical Small Freight chute?

INT. BB

Inside the BB, a fluorescent domelight provides some weak illumination.

Mason is being hurled about violently as the BB rattles down the Umbilical tube.

MASON

(grunting)

Seven...gees...my...asssss!

EXT. OCEAN/UMBILICAL

Tracking shot to indicate the BB's travel down the Umbilical.

INT. THE RIG/ANOTHER PASSAGEWAY

Jax and some RPs are trotting down the hall. Jax is talking into his communicator.

JAX

Gotcha Doc. We'll be there to  
greet him...

INT. THE RIG/SMALL FREIGHT RECEPTION ROOM

It's the counterpart to the Umbilical Control Room up top. A large metal tube dominates the room. It has an access hatch and a conveyer belt on which the BBs are obviously rolled out.

The room is empty except for two FREIGHT TECHs. It's one of the few places the RPs haven't locked down...or maybe they got pulled away when the pilots tried to make a break.

FREIGHT TECH #1

If this is one of Teddy's little jokes...like the time he sent the skunk...how does a guy get ahold of a SKUNK in the middle of the ocean?

FREIGHT TECH #2

Even Teddy wouldn't do something with all this going on...

Some yellow klaxons light up and start BEEPING. A steady RUMBLING starts, grows louder, and then a long pneumatic HISS signals the arrival of the BB inside the tube.

Tech #2 manipulates some controls. The access hatch in the tube opens, and the BB is retrieved out onto the conveyer belt.

Tech #1 walks over and pulls the BB access lever, opening the door.

His jaw drops in surprise.

Mason steps out of the BB, unsteady.

The techs look at him and his guns and are momentarily speechless.

MASON

(rubbing his neck)

Thanks, fellas. Owe ya one. Teddy said you'd come through.

TECH #2

(dumbstruck; beat)

If Teddy's with you, we're with you.

Mason heads for the exit, then turns back to them. Cracks a wozy smile.

MASON  
Small Freight...when it absolutely  
has to be there on time.

TECH #1  
You're damn right!

INT. THE RIG/PASSAGEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mason emerges from the freight room, adjusts his weaponry and starts sneaking off to the left.

From the other direction, we hear some TALKING and noises of people approaching. Mason quickly runs to the nearest corner and flattens himself behind the wall.

He peeks.

A squad of RPs led by Jax Harken shows up and crashes into the Freight Room.

MASON  
How did they...

Just as he pulls his head back, the last RP PATROLLER spots him.

RP PATROLLER  
There he is!

MASON  
Nuts.

Mason takes off running.

RP PATROLLER  
(into radio)  
Target is in Umbilical Quadrant,  
heading down Market Access Tunnel  
November. Constrict!

INT. THE RIG/ADJOINING CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Mason is huffing it for all he's worth down a long corridor. He turns around and sees the RPs giving chase. When he turns his head back...

...four more RPs are in front of him, weapons raised. Mason screeches to a halt, puts his hands up.

Jax and the other RPs catch up.

MASON

We have to stop meeting like this.

JAX

I'm getting tired of dealing with you.

MASON

I'm getting tired of being dealt with. Don't you guys have more important things to do, like say...beating up on unarmed pilots?

JAX

Sure.  
(raises gun)  
You'll do.

Mason takes two steps to the side, putting himself right by the plexi-corridor wall.

MASON

Uh uh...heard you're firing full-metal jackets these days. Go right through me and the glass.

JAX

(grins)  
Don't worry, I won't miss.

He's seriously considering firing.

MASON

Bummer.  
(beat)  
In that case...

He grabs one of the grenades from his vest and PULLS THE PIN. Holds up the grenade (still clenched).

RP PATROLLER

Jesus!

Both RP groups shift uneasily, looking at the corridor and assessing their chances of running for the nearest safety bulkhead.

JAX

What the hell are you doing?

Mason takes a step towards Jax.

JAX  
 Stop! I'll shoot you right there  
 Fox! I'll do it!

MASON  
 Then we all die. No way you make  
 that airlock in time.  
 (nods to the transparent  
 wall)  
 These things aren't designed for  
 bullets and grenades. Remember a  
 year ago when that O2 supply bottle  
 blew in Residence Corridor 32?  
 Nasty business.

He takes another step. Jax and the RPs back up a step.

MASON  
 Take me to Sera.

JAX  
 Who?

MASON  
 You don't lie well, fuzz. You're  
 too serious.  
 (beat)  
 Take me to Sera NOW! Just you.  
 Leave your piglets here.

Mason takes another step, holding the grenade up. Gestures  
 with his other hand for Jax to lead the way.

JAX  
 Crazy bastard.  
 (to the RPs)  
 Wait here.

MASON  
 Throw your radios over.

After a nod from Jax, the RPs comply, tossing their earpieces  
 over into a pile. Mason stomps on them happily.

MASON  
 Ok, I feel better. Let's go.

He and Jax head off down the corridor.

INT. THE RIG/WREXHAM'S QUARTERS

Wrexham has his glasses on and is typing away on his  
 computer.

Nearby, Sera is hog-tied to a chair and gagged. An RP keeps a watchful eye on her.

She glares daggers at both of the men. The RP is noticeably uncomfortable; Wrexham ignores her.

The door slides open and in comes Jax and the RPs.

Wrexham rips off his glasses.

WREXHAM  
(harshly)  
Where is Fox?

Jax sticks his thumb out, pointing behind him.

Mason walks in, still holding his grenade.

SERA  
(eyes wide)  
MMMMPH! HRRRMPH!

The RP tenses, trying to decide whether to jump Mason. A head shake from Jax calms him down.

WREXHAM  
(disbelieving)  
You again?

MASON  
Believe me, I'm as tired of you  
seeing me as you are.

SERA  
MMMMRARURMMMPHSHHH!

MASON  
(to Sera)  
Hey...was hopin' to find you here,  
honey.

SERA  
(angrily)  
HNNNY?

MASON  
You okay?

She shrugs.

MASON  
Fuzz, drop your weapons.  
(beat)  
And get her out of that chair.

They comply. When Sera's hands are free, she rips out the gag.

SERA

Mason, Jesus! How did you...what are you...

Sera picks up Jax's pistol.

MASON

Careful. He's not firing rubber.

She pops out the clip and takes it. Then drops the gun and exchanges it for the other RP's gun.

SERA

Yeah. He shot a couple of the crew...I think it was Phillips and Chiu.

WREXHAM

I really don't know what you hope to accomplish, here.

MASON

Fer starters, stopping you from--

WREXHAM

(overriding)

From what? Look, I've been over this ground with Ms. Fox, so get an update from her. The charges are on a timer. Killing me won't stop that. And Captain Harken is on a timer, too...

Jax cocks his head.

WREXHAM (CONT'D)

His men have orders to perform the...order to eliminate the pilots unless we order them not to, which I certainly will not do under gunpoint.

(beat)

So if you really want to do something helpful, I suggest you run off and find a safe place to call the GEC and get them to support the only peaceful resolution to this matter. Either way, I am through wasting effort with you two when there are global issues at stake.

(MORE)

WREXHAM (CONT'D)

As long as you stay away from the pilots, I will leave you to your own devices. When this gets resolved, you will come to understand...even support...the hard decisions I have made. Now please.

(he waves them off)

You have my word that I will leave you alone. And Captain Harken's as well, yes?

He glares at Jax.

JAX

(like pulling teeth)

Ok.

Mason and Sera exchange glances. They're not quite sure what to do.

Mason replaces the pin in his grenade.

WREXHAM

Are you going to leave or not?

The Foxes, confused, back out of the room into the...

INT. THE RIG/PASSAGEWAY - CONTINUOUS

The door to Wrexham's Quarters slides shut in front of them.

Sera whips up the pistol and pumps two rounds into the lock keypad control. It FIZZLES and SPARKS.

SERA

I don't trust them. One of those two is a terrible liar.

INT. THE RIG/WREXHAM'S QUARTERS

JAX

You really going to let those two go?

WREXHAM

I am, you're not. Lying is not your strong suit, Captain.

Jax breaks a smile.

WREXHAM (CONT'D)

We are too close to let these two ruin everything. Isolate them and do what needs done. Just those two.

Jax turns to go...and BUMPS into the door when it doesn't open.

JAX

FOXES!!

INT. THE RIG/RESIDENCE CORRIDOR

Mason and Sera are jogging through one of the residence blocks. They are approaching a four-way intersection.

SERA

Mase...Wrexham said you were one of the pilots that escaped.

MASON

I was.

SERA

Why did you come back down here?

MASON

Why do you think?

SERA

Oh Mase--

MASON

Yeah. Yeah.

INT. THE RIG/RESIDENCE INTERSECTION

As they creep into the intersection...a GUN is suddenly against Mason's head. Two RPs on each side have been waiting in ambush.

RP PATROLLER

Don't even twitch, buddy.

Sera tenses, but thinks better of brining her gun up.

Behind Mason and Sera, Jax and another RP are charging down the hallway in pursuit.

JAX  
(shouting)  
Hold them!

He catches up, out of breath.

JAX  
(wickedly)  
You're out of places to run.

Mason brings up his grenade again. Looks over at Sera.  
PULLS THE PIN AGAIN.

JAX (CONT'D)  
(gestures to Mason's  
grenade)  
Put the pin back in that thing,  
hoss. You're not gonna use it  
anyway. Can't fool me twice.

Mason brings up the grenade and...opens his fingers, letting  
it ROLL OUT AND CLUNK TO THE FLOOR.

For a long moment, all eyes watch it roll.

SLOW MOTION:

Everyone sprints for cover.

Mason grabs Sera and yanks her directly forward down one  
branch of the intersection.

Jax dives directly back.

The other RPs bolt in other directions, a few of them running  
into each other and falling down in the intersection.

The grenade EXPLODES with smoke and a flash. The frame  
SHUDDERS.

Water starts SPRAYING in through wall punctures.

On all four adjoining passageways, the escapees pull the  
airlock handles. Bulkheads SLAM down into place.

Two RPs are left trapped in the center. They start SCREAMING  
as the glass spiderwebs into more and more cracks.

EXT. OCEAN - LOOKING IN ON INTERSECTION

The intersection decompresses...a reverse explosion.

The passageway vanishes under the release of all of the air bubbles.

INT. THE RIG/SERA AND MASON'S PASSAGEWAY

Mason and Sera find themselves alone with one of the RPs. All of them struggle to their feet slowly.

Mason shakes his head and waggles his finger at the RP.

The RP is outnumbered and intimidated by the two of them. He drops his gun and puts his hands up.

TRAPPED RP

I was just following orders!

They eye him up and down. He suddenly seems pretty harmless.

TRAPPED RP (CONT'D)

I had no choice!

SERA

Well here's a new order. Go to your quarters and wait for this to blow over. Any time you think of coming back out, remember that I could've shot you and he could've broken your bones.

The RP nods.

MASON

Or I could have shot you and she could've broken your bones.

SERA

And when it does blow over, we'll speak up for you and say that you *\*were\** just following orders. That you weren't one of the RPs set to get a pay off. That you're one of the few honest ones. Tell any of your buddies the same thing. They're to drop their arms and recuse themselves to quarters.

Mason rips the RP's radio out and pushes him away. The man runs off, terrified.

Momentarily safe, Mason and Sera hug. It's heartfelt, genuine.

There's a pause while their faces are close...will they kiss?

The moment passes, and they don't. They awkwardly break, and then they slide down on opposite walls of the tunnel, exhausted.

MASON  
So, wanna grab coffee sometime?

SERA  
Now what?

MASON  
(sighing)  
Always business with you.

SERA  
That's not fair.

MASON  
Isn't that why it didn't work?

Surprisingly, Sera says nothing for a beat. Avoids his eyes.

SERA  
A grenade, Mason?

MASON  
Didn't have many other cards to play.

SERA  
You could've killed...should've killed us.

MASON  
You'd rather I let them take us?

SERA (CONT'D)  
It's just this craziness -- is not what we need down here. You shouldn't have come back down here.

MASON  
Down here? What do you know about 'down here'?

SERA  
Oh don't start that. I did my time on the Rig.

MASON  
Yeah, your time. Like a prison for you. Got out as fast as your bubble could carry you.

(beat)  
(MORE)

MASON (cont'd)

Sorry you couldn't rescue yourself, Sera, but five minutes ago you were the Doc's housemaid and you could show a little gratitude.

SERA

I was getting through to him. He doesn't want violence.

MASON

You were gagged and hog-tied! Why didn't I ever try that?

SERA

(glares him down)

You always wanted a dumb girl. No wonder I disappointed you.

(beat)

I'm just saying that by coming down here with guns-a-blazin', you're escalating a situation that's already on knife's edge.

MASON

Are you for real? I didn't start this. You tell me to fly my SOLO home, I fly my SOLO home. Then I get beat on, thrown into a corner, and put in line to become an EX-SOLO driver.

SERA

If you hadn't egged the pilots on to fight, I might've gotten Wrexham to--

MASON

Why do you assume it was me that egged them on?

SERA

It's just...so Mason.

MASON

Not good enough, huh?

SERA

It's just not...smart...

MASON

(biting)

I've heard this before. Save it.

SERA  
(wounded)  
Mase, that's not what I...it's not  
that simple.

MASON  
Yeah, it is. You're not happy down  
here, fine. Enjoy topside enough  
for the both of us.

Sera doesn't say anything. Instead, she gets up and starts walking.

Mason considers for a sec, then follows.

They walk in silence, each trying not to be the first to speak. Finally Sera gives in.

SERA  
(tight-lipped)  
So now what, gunslinger?

MASON  
Now we find a pod and bubble.

SERA  
Bubble? No way. We have to find a  
way to help.

MASON  
(saracastic)  
How about organizing the pilots and  
leading an escape?

SERA  
Cute. But I don't mean the pilots.  
I mean, yeah the pilots, but I'm  
talking about the whole situation.

MASON  
Not our problem. Is the GEC gonna  
let you wrap a red bow around the  
Rig and give it to the good Doctor?

Surprisingly, she doesn't answer immediately.

SERA  
(stops)  
Mason, I've been thinking of  
something.

MASON  
Oh no.

SERA

I saw the charges. There's...I don't know, eight or ten. They're heat-bonded to the Umbilical. We can't mess with the charges themselves...we'd probably set them off. Unless you got your Demo Cert and didn't tell me?

(beat)

Didn't think so. In any case they'd signal a code and Wrexham would probably detonate them remotely. But we can cut them off.

MASON

Cut them off?

SERA

With SOLO torches. We can excise the charges individually. I've seen the Umbilical specs before-- the tubes aren't that thick, and the alloy isn't work-hardened. Compared to deeprock, it'll be like cutting butter.

MASON

You want to prevent the umbilical tubes from being destroyed by cutting them up yourself?

SERA

Just cut out the charges is all. With a few good hands at the controls, SOLOs can patch the tubes back up in a few days. We'll lose oil for half a week, not half a year.

MASON

I still say bubble.

She turns on him.

SERA

Put other people first for once in your life!

MASON

The Queen of Ambition is giving me a lecture on selflessness?

Sera loses it. She grabs Mason by the collar and puts her face inches from his.

Despite her rage, when their faces get close each of them involuntarily softens a bit.

Sexual tension again.

SERA

If I have to cut the charges off all by myself, I will. I used to drive SOLOs, remember? Bubble if you want.

(unconvincingly)

I don't care what you do.

She storms off and turns a corner.

We stay with Mason, who is a bit dumbfounded, not sure if he is angry, sad, or both.

Suddenly, GUNFIRE erupts down from the direction Sera left. A moment later, Sera herself comes running back around the corner. Rubber bullets RICOCHET off of the wall behind her.

SERA

Mase!

She flattens against the near wall, pulls out her gun.

MASON

How many?

SERA

Two, I think.

Mason slings up his submachine gun, considers for a moment, and then drops it and runs straight towards the intersection.

SERA

What are you--

MASON

Something Mason!

He times it perfectly. Just as the RPs come around the corner, Mason hits them at a full clip. He LEVELS one of them with a shoulder charge, knocking the RP out cold.

The other RP swings his gun around towards Mason and--gets POPPED by a barrage of rubber bullets from Sera's pistol. The man groans and falls.

Mason crawls over and handcuffs the RP with zipties from the officer's own belt. Sera does the same to the knocked out cop.

SERA

Let's get out of here!

They run off.

INT. THE RIG/WREXHAM'S QUARTERS

Wrexham is typing on his terminal when Jax comes in through the busted door.

Jax is cut and bleeding from the grenade blast. His eyes glare murder.

WREXHAM

You blew it? Can you do nothing I ask? I paid you over half a billion dollars, and you can't do one simple thing!

Jax doesn't say a word. Just takes a few menacing steps towards Wrexham.

WREXHAM

This is chaos! You let this happen!

JAX

Me?

WREXHAM

You and your bloodthirsty ways! This was supposed to be civilized and quick, not a...damn circus!

JAX

You don't have the stones to do the hard stuff, Doc. If you had let me kill a few pilots up front to set an example--

WREXHAM

More killing? There's already been enough, Captain. If they think things are out of control down here, god knows what they'll...

JAX

Like what?

WREXHAM

(dream is fading)  
They'll never give me control of the Rig.

JAX  
Us control, you mean.

WREXHAM  
(surprised)  
Us? You got your money already.

JAX  
Yep, half of it.

WREXHAM  
Well you're not getting the other  
half unless we finish this  
properly.

It was the wrong thing to say.

Jax DECKS him. Wrexham is floored, his face bloodied.

Jax jumps on him, roughs him up a bit more, and then reaches into Wrexham's jacket pocket and pulls out...THE DETONATOR.

JAX  
I'll be gettin' my other half all  
right. And the Rig. But it's time  
for the brave to step up. I'll  
handle it from here. Just stay out  
of the way.

He stands up and admires the detonator with way too much  
glee.

INT. THE RIG/WORK SECTOR PASSAGEWAYS

RPs patrol the halls, here and there ordering Rig civilians  
to get back to their residences.

As a squad of RPs passes, Mason and Sera pop out of a  
storeroom.

MASON  
(whispering)  
Follow me.

SERA  
I'm not going to a pod.

MASON  
I'm not taking us to a pod. I'm  
taking us to an EVA.

Sera looks at him quizzically.

MASON (CONT'D)

The SOLO hangar's where most of the RPs are, so we can't just bust straight in. But I'll bet the RPs don't know jack about the EVA pool. So we grab EVAs and come back in the SOLO EVA pool. Then all we gotta do is sneak into some SOLOs before they realize we're there.

SERA

You want to use a SOLO to bubble instead of pod?

MASON

Not bubbling, Sera. I can't let you go out there alone.

SERA

Mase...thank you. It's the right thing to do, I know it is.

Mason's a bit uncomfortable under her praise.

MASON

Yeah. Me too.

They sneak down the hall and slip through a door titled "CENTRAL EVA / SMALL MAINTENANCE".

There are four tubes against the far wall. Each is an entry into an EVA - a one-person MINI-SUB with a small mechanical arm that can do little maintenance jobs that don't take a full SOLO.

Mason and Sera each lay down into one.

INT. MASON'S EVA

He's powering it up.

MASON

Hope you remember how to drive.  
This'll be a warm up for the SOLO.

INT. SERA'S EVA

SERA

Drive, nothing. I can fly.

Mason LAUGHS over the comm.

MASON (O.S)  
Good to have ya back in the saddle,  
Ops. Follow me out.

EXT. THE RIG/EVA LAUNCH

The two mini-sub launch like torpedoes out of the sockets.

After getting their bearings, Mason and Sera fall into single file and begin jetting forward. They hug the superstructure of the Rig.

EXT. THE RIG

Mason and Sera fly their EVAs towards the Rig's SOLO launch quadrant.

INT. RP SOLO COCKPIT

An RP SOLO pilot is patrolling. In the background, Mason and Sera's EVAs are passing along the Rig hull. A BEEP sounds from the pilot's dashboard.

RP PILOT  
Wha...holy...contact!

He swings the SOLO around and starts targeting the EVAs.

INT. MASON'S EVA

MASON  
He sees us. Follow me!

EXT. THE RIG/SEAFLOOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Mason ducks down and hugs the seafloor. The EVAs just barely fit under the Rig's infrastructure.

In the distance, the RP SOLO's cannon lights up. Sediment kicks up in a trail...the bullets just barely miss Sera and Mason's vehicles as they tuck away out of reach.

The RP SOLO pursues, but can't fit in between some of the structural beams.

INT. SERA'S EVA

SERA

He's gonna send friends around the side, Mason.

MASON (O.S.)

And they'll be late. We're there already, babe. Uhh, Sera.

She laughs.

EXT. THE RIG/UNDERSIDE

We're looking up at the underside of the main SOLO Launch Pool entrance.

Mason and Sera avoid that big one and instead b-line to a smaller launch pool entrance off to the side.

INT. THE RIG/EVA BAY

Unlike the main launch bay, this room is empty of RPs. On the far wall, a large plexi opening looks out into the main SOLO launch bay. The gaggle of pilots are still herded into a corner, guarded over by a host of RPs.

The two little EVAs breach the pool and dock. Mason and Sera open the cockpits and crawl out.

Silently, they slide over to the viewing window and peek into the launch bay.

SERA

I'll get over to the launch control crane. You get to a SOLO. You're the better hand.

MASON

No way. We both need to get out there. With all the RPs flyin' around, somebody's going to need to keep them off your back while you cut off the charges.

SERA

But somebody has to run the crane. How will we launch?

Mason takes another peek.

MASON

See those two SOLOs...they're close enough to the pool edge. All we gotta do is fire the thrusters and tip ourselves into the water.

SERA

This sounds too Mason.

MASON

Got a better idea, Ops?

She doesn't.

SERA

Ok, but it's not going to be pretty. We'll be lucky if they run afterwards.

(peeking in again)

Wait--only one has a cutting torch!

MASON

You take it. I'll take the drill rig. I'm gonna have other things to worry about then cutting the charges.

SERA

A drill's no match for a cannon, Mase.

MASON

Yeah, not thrilled about it either.

They sneak over to the door.

INT. THE RIG/SOLO LAUNCH BAY

Looking over the launch bay room from the captured pilots' perspective.

Against the far wall, the EVA bay door opens, and Mason and Sera slip out. The RPs don't catch it.

CAPTIVE PILOT

(nudges his friend;  
whispering)

Hey...look!

The pilots watch Mason and Sera each making their way to SOLOs on either side of the pool.

At one point, the nearby RPs turn to survey the room. It looks like one of them is going to spot Mason, who's right in the middle of crawling up into the SOLO cockpit.

CAPTIVE PILOT

Hey, I could use a beer over here!

The nearby RPs turn to face them...the distraction works.

RP SERGEANT

No talking!

Mason slips up into the SOLO. Sera gets to hers a moment later.

The WHIRRING of the SOLO cockpit motors echoes loudly throughout the room. The windshields rotate down and LOCK into place.

The RPs turn in surprise. They aren't quite sure what to do.

The SOLOs' TURBINES kick to life, causing a tremendous JETSCREAM in the enclosed space.

Sera's SOLO straightens erratically, the thrusters fire, and the SOLO dances sideways in herky-jerky fashion...then topples into the pool, SCRAPING along the lip the whole way.

The pilots start CHEERING.

RP SERGEANT

Fire!

The RPs pepper the SOLOs. But unlike Jax, they're still firing rubber and the shots are harmless.

INT. MASON'S SOLO

The rubber bullets bounce off of Mason's reinforced windshield.

MASON

She thinks I'm the wild one?

INT. THE RIG/SOLO LAUNCH BAY

Mason's SOLO follows SERAs, and not any more gracefully. The SOLO wobbles NOISILY, metal SCRAPING metal, and then tips into the water with a SPLASH.

EXT. THE RIG/SOLO LAUNCH BAY

Establishing shot.

The two SOLOs drop into the water from the launch bay and reorient themselves.

They are banged up a little, but still functional.

INT. MASON'S SOLO

MASON

Whooooeei! Never done that launch before!

(beat)

My systems are nominal...no real damage? You?

INT. SERA'S SOLO

She's manipulating controls, a little slowly.

SERA

I've been talking people through things for so long, I forgot what it feels like to be at the controls. Oxy...hydro...all looks good. Torch fuel is three-quarters. Should be enough if I'm not too slow.

EXT. THE RIG

MASON

It's like ridin' a bike, you'll be fine.

(beat)

Look, I'm gonna go be a distraction. Just get those charges off no matter what you hear, okay babe--uh, okay?

Sera either doesn't notice the "babe" or doesn't mind.

SERA

Okay. God I hope I have a steady hand today.

Mason turns and takes off in a different direction from Sera.

INT. MASON'S SOLO

Punches a control on his comm so he's broadcasting on the wide frequency.

MASON  
Good day, RP toadies. Can Jax Harken come out and play?

RP DISPATCH (O.S.)  
Identify yourself.

MASON  
That would be no fun.

RP DISPATCH (O.S.)  
Return to bay immediately. We have authorization to use deadly force.

MASON  
Wow, really?

RP DISPATCH (O.S.)  
This is not a joke! Comply or--

MASON  
Yeah, I know. You'll have to catch me first, though. Tell your captain I'm out in the schoolyard if he wants to bully me.

Mason cuts the comm and throttles up full.

MASON  
This might not be the smartest thing I've ever done.

INT. THE RIG/RP LAUNCH BAY

A smaller version of the main SOLO bay. All these SOLOs are armed, though, and marked with GEC insignia.

Jax and some goons are climbing into cockpits. If steam could actually come out of ears, he's be producing it.

JAX  
Launch, get me in the water right the hell now.

EXT. THE RIG

Mason's SOLO thrusts off at full speed.

Two RP SOLOS on patrol spot him and give chase.

INT. SERA'S SOLO

MASON (O.S.)  
Okay, they noticed me. Get onto  
that cable and start cutting!

SERA  
Almost there.  
(beat)  
Mason, they're armed...remember?

MASON (O.S.)  
Yeah, but they're slow and cross-  
eyed. And I'm not...remember?

Sera's SOLO is hugging the Rig superstructure.

The Main Pumping Station comes into view--it's where CRAWLERS  
come and deposit their petroleum loads and the juice gets  
sucked up into the Umbilical.

From there, she jets up and follows the Umbilical upward.  
It's not very long before she reaches the spot where the  
explosive charges are planted.

SERA  
(to herself)  
Volunteer bomb squad, reporting to  
duty.

EXT. THE UMBILICAL

The cutting torch sparks to life on the end of Sera's SOLO's  
right arm.

CLOSE ON the first explosive charge as she starts cutting  
around it with the laser-like bead. Her line isn't straight,  
but it's doing the job.

SERA  
I haven't even been drinking.

INT. SERA'S SOLO

She's almost done with cutting out the first charge. There's  
already a bead of sweat forming on her brow.

Her arm slips a bit and the torch beam comes perilously close  
to touching the charge itself.

SERA  
 (steadyng herself)  
 Breathe. Follow the form. Relax.

She resumes cutting and connects the circle. The explosive charge comes off of the Umbilical, still attached to the piece of tubing that it is bonded to. It falls down towards the Rig below.

A few spurts of oil escape out of the open Umbilical cable, but most of the pipe is empty since things are shut down.

SERA  
 Rinse and repeat.

She moves to the next charge.

EXT. OCEAN FLOOR ROCK FORMATIONS

Mason is fleeing at a full clip while RP SOLOs--three now, give chase. Intercut cockpit shots as necessary to show reactions.

The RPs open up with their cannons repeatedly, but Mason deftly maneuvers in and out of the rock formations like he's stunt flying through a canyon.

Cannon rounds EXPLODE on either side of him and his SOLO shudders under the impact of stray rock fragments.

MASON  
 Don't you guys get eye exams before  
 you get into flight school?

One of the RPs thrusts forward, trying to close with Mason. Just as he's about to get a point-blank shot, Mason does a nifty roll-over and slips right between two rocks.

The RP isn't in the right position for the slot and pancakes into the rocky face. EXPLOSION.

INT. MASON'S SOLO

MASON  
 I guess not.  
 (calls up Sera)  
 How you doin' up there, Ops?

SERA (VIDSCREEN)  
 Making progress. Keep them busy.

MASON  
I'll try. Could ya hurry up a lil'  
bit though...babe?

SERA  
Working on it, BABE.

EXT. THE RIG/RP LAUNCH BAY

A series of about 10 more RP SOLOs splash down into the water. It's Jax and his group.

They fall into formation and zip off.

INT. JAX'S SOLO

JAX  
This is Captain Harken. I want  
Mason Fox dead. An extra million  
to the shooter!

Some cheers echo on the comm.

JAX (CONT'D)  
And who's guarding the charges?

RP LIEUTENANT (RADIO)  
No one, sir. We're all engaging  
Fox.

JAX  
Scanner says someone's up there...  
(dawns on him)  
It's her!  
(to himself)  
Now we can settle up once and for  
good.

He changes his broadcasting frequency.

JAX (CONT'D)  
Foxes. This is Jax Harken.

INT. SERA'S SOLO

She's concentrating hard on cutting one of the last charges, and hardly spares the vidscreen (with Jax on it) a glance.

INT. MASON'S SOLO

He's still flying, trying to shake the pursuing RPs.

JAX (VIDSCREEN)  
 Just wanted ya both to know that  
 your stunts are over. You shoulda  
 quit while you were behind. Hey  
 Mason...this one's for you...

On the vidscreen, Jax holds up a small device--it's the  
 DETONATOR!

MASON  
 Huh?

Jax smiles and then...presses the button.

BEEP.

EXT. THE UMBILICAL/SERA'S SOLO

One second, Sera's SOLO is cutting away at one of the last  
 remaining charges.

The next, she is engulfed in an EXPLOSION as the charges go  
 off.

The charred, inactive SOLO falls in several pieces towards  
 the sea floor. It's a bubbling, smoking ruin.

Hard to say whether the cockpit is in one piece or not.

More explosions flash from down below...

EXT. THE RIG/UMBILICAL PUMPING STATION

Where the seafloor meets the Umbilical, explosions are going  
 off like popcorn. It's where all the charges Sera cut off  
 had sunk down.

The scattered charges are damaging the pumping station and  
 nearby corridors, but they aren't leveling it.

INT. MASON'S SOLO

MASON  
 (frantic)  
 Sera? Sera!

JAX (VIDSCREEN)  
Shouldn't have screwed with me,  
Fox.

MASON  
SERA!

EXT. OCEAN ROCK FORMATIONS

Mason's SOLO makes an abrupt loop and turns head-on towards the pursuing RPs. They're taken by surprise.

One of the pursuing RPs sees Mason charging straight at him. The RP squeezes off a couple shots, but misses in haste.

Mason's SOLO flies by so close you could spit on it.

While zipping by, Mason lashes out with one SOLO arm, landing a punch right on the RP's windshield.

INT. RP SOLO 1 COCKPIT

The RP Pilot SCREAMS as the cockpit CRACKS and then COLLAPSES under the pressure. Scratch one.

EXT. OCEAN ROCK FORMATIONS

Without missing a beat, Mason maneuvers in close with the other RP SOLO, grappling as though they were two wrestlers.

Mason pins the RP's cannon arm. A few shots FIRE off harmlessly to the side.

Mason brings his left SOLO arm up and RIPS off some pneumatic lines on the RP SOLO. It FIZZLES and BUBBLES.

INT. RP SOLO 2 COCKPIT

RP SOLO #2  
Dammit! Lost hydraulics!

Scratch two.

INT. MASON'S SOLO

Mason decouples from the disabled RP SOLO. It starts falling towards the sea floor, immobile.

MASON  
You fed bastard!

He's seeing only red.

EXT. OCEAN NEAR JAX

The formation of RPs are flying towards Mason. Jax is in the center.

JAX (O.S.)  
We've got you outnumbered ten-to-one, idiot.

No response.

EXT. WIDE OCEAN SHOT

Jax and the RPs are at the left of the screen moving towards Mason's lone SOLO on the other side. It looks pretty hopeless.

THEN, in the foreground, a dozen MIL SOLOS fly into view! They are painted bright red with squadron insignia.

INT. MIL COMMANDER'S SOLO

MIL COMMANDER SHIELDS  
This is Commander Shields. Break radio silence. You have permission to engage.

INT. JAX'S SOLO

JAX  
The Mils! Dammit! Fight them off or nobody gets paid!

Mason appears on his screen.

MASON (VIDSCREEN)  
Odds just got even, asshole.

EXT. OCEAN

It's a massive air battle...just underwater.

The RP squadron peels off and they engage the incoming Mil SOLOS, cannons firing.

The vehicles leave contrails behind them...the streams interweave and make patterns. Little pockmark EXPLOSIONS appear as they trade fire.

Two lone streams don't break or curve, instead heading straight for each other.

It's Mason and Jax.

INT. MASON'S COCKPIT

Jax's SOLO is coming straight towards Mason...they could be jousting.

Muzzle flash on Jax's cannon arm. Mason lays on the controls, taking evasive action.

Despite his quick moves, the shot lands a glancing blow somewhere...Mason's craft SHUDDERS and he's thrown momentarily out of control, spinning.

EXT. MASON'S SOLO

Mason's SOLO spins in the water and CRASHES into a nearby rock formation. Sparks fly.

Jax's SOLO WOOSHES by, and then banks around to take another firing pass.

INT. JAX'S SOLO

JAX

This might not take as long as I thought.

INT. MASON'S COCKPIT

Mason steadies his craft. It's damaged, but still functioning.

MASON

Ain't gonna be no fish in a barrel.

EXT. MASON'S SOLO

Mason brings up his drill arm and it WHINES to life...then he PLUNGES it into the sea floor.

A HUGE CLOUD OF DUST gets kicked up and quickly envelops him.

INT. JAX'S SOLO

Jax is trying to get a firing solution on Mason, but the dust obscures his targeting. He fires off a few rounds dead-stick, but can't tell if they hit anything.

JAX  
You sneaky...

He edges a bit closer, firing here and there.

JAX  
(on the com)  
Come out, come out, wherever you  
are...

MASON (VIDSCREEN)  
Obliged.

Mason's SOLO comes ROCKETING out of the dustcloud, heading straight for Jax.

JAX  
Gaaaa!

Jax squeezes off a quick shot, but it's not locked on. It catches Mason another glancing blow...this time on the legs.

EXT. MASON AND JAX'S SOLOS

The two SOLOS COLLIDE and lock into a fighting embrace. They wrestle for their lives, metal prying against metal.

In the background, the RP SOLOS are battling the MIL SOLOS like something out of Thunderball.

Mason and Jax's SOLOS tumble to the sea floor, kicking and punching. Jax doesn't dare fire his cannon arm at such close proximity.

After a struggle, Jax gains the upper hand...rolling over on top of Mason's sparking, malfunctioning SOLO.

Jax pins him and his left arm comes free to strike a series of deadly BLOWS on Mason's cockpit.

INT. MASON'S SOLO

Jax's arm HAMMERS on the glass. It CRACKS.

JAX (VIDSCREEN)  
Say goodnight, Fox!

Mason's right arm comes free and the drill-bit SPINS to life.

MASON  
Goodnight.

The drill THRUSTS forward right into Jax's cockpit, WORRYING away at it...

INT. JAX'S SOLO

...Jax has a look of horror...

JAX  
You can't...

...beat...

The drill punches through and Jax's windshield EXPLODES!

He has no time to scream.

EXT. OCEAN FLOOR

Medium shot of Mason drilling the hell out of Jax. Sparks fly and then there's a BLAST. Jax's O2 tanks have caught.

Mason's SOLO is hurled off a dozen meters. It tumbles down to the floor, sediment kicked up everywhere.

INT. MASON'S SOLO

His SOLO is lying on its side. The lights are dim, and various alarms are flashing on his control board.

Mason GROANS.

The crack in his cockpit spreads a little.

A thin voice comes over the com.

SERA (VIDSCREEN)  
(weak)  
Mase...are you there?

She flickers on to the vidscreen!

MASON  
Sera?!

SERA (VIDSCREEN)  
Yeah.

MASON

I thought you got caught...that  
he...

SERA (VIDSCREEN)

I did, a little. I'm a little  
banged up. Leg's twisted. My  
SOLO's in three pieces. Thankfully  
I'm one of them. As soon as the  
Mils finish mopping up they can  
recover us.

The cracks spread more.

MASON

(gushing with relief)

You did the right thing. I woulda  
just got the heck outta there. You  
had the guts and the goal, girl.

SERA (VIDSCREEN)

You did get out of there...then you  
came back, remember?

MASON

Wasn't any noble thing. I just  
came back for you.

SERA (VIDSCREEN)

That's noble enough for me.

(beat)

Mase? Why did you keep my name?

MASON

I'm a little stubborn you know. A  
guy's got to have a little hope.

SERA

You are stubborn.

(she can sense that  
something's up...he's  
being too open)

Why are you telling me this?

Mason doesn't answer.

INT. SERA'S SOLO

SERA

(authoritative)

SOLO, I want a status report.

Mason chuckles.

MASON (VIDSCREEN)  
 (almost out of air)  
 Transparency breach imminent, Ops.  
 Oxy levels critical. Systems  
 failing across the board.

SERA  
 No. No goddamnit!  
 (presses a button to  
 broadcast wide)  
 Attention GEC SOLOs, this is  
 Operations. I need a gooper on the  
 double!

There's a brief pause.

MIL SOLO OPERATOR (RADIO)  
 SOLO Ops, Lieutenant Goren here.  
 I'm gel-equipped.

SERA  
 Thank God. Home in on transponder  
 Three-Six...uhhh Eight. Double  
 fast! Goop his cockpit.

LT. GOREN (RADIO)  
 His what?

SERA  
 His cockpit, I said. Hurry  
 soldier!

LT. GOREN (RADIO)  
 Sir?

COMMANDER SHIELDS (RADIO)  
 Do it, son.

LT. GOREN (RADIO)  
 Homing now!

EXT. OCEAN FLOOR

Mason's SOLO is lying there, disabled. LT. Goren's Mil SOLO  
 vectors in at high speed, lights beaming.

INT. MASON'S COCKPIT

Mason has almost passed out from lack of O2. His half-closed  
 eyes are watching the cracks grow with a sense of detachment.

He's fading.

BLINDING LIGHT from the incoming Mil SOLO's floodlights.

GREEN GOO BLOBS appear on the windshield

Blackness...

INT. THE RIG/DOWNTOWN

GEC Military Operatives storm the Rig's DOWNTOWN. The scattered RPs give up.

INT. THE RIG/SOLO LAUNCH BAY

In the SOLO LAUNCH BAY, the last remaining RPs run away and the hostage pilots stand and CHEER!

EXT. THE RIG/WREXHAM'S QUARTERS

Same angle as earlier--we're looking in through a large porthole at Wrexham on his computer.

A squad of military operatives storm in through his door. They handcuff him.

He doesn't resist.

INT. GEC BOARD ROOM

Rudiger Klein mops his head with his handkerchief and straightens his glasses as cheers erupt all round the room.

EXT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM/BOAT ACCESS RAMP - DAY

Samson unlashes a small Zodiac boat. He looks haggard. Climbs in, starts it up, PUTTERS away.

INT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM/INFIRMARY - DAY

Mason is waking in a hospital bed. Sera's at his side, in a wheelchair. RNN (Rig News Network) is showing on the tele.

He blinks and looks at the IVs and such plugged into him. Then he notices Sera. Her face is bruised and her leg is in a cast, but she is actually dressed in one of her work suits.

They smile at each other.

MASON

(weak)

You should see the other guy.

SERA

Welcome back. We're Surface.

MASON

(groans)

Just when things couldn't get any worse.

SERA

(kindly)

Get a new tune, grumpy. Crawlers recovered us and we got sent up. Rig hospital's full.

They both watch the monitor for a few seconds.

MASON

Things must be a madhouse up here.

SERA

You have no idea.

(beat)

Samson was involved.

MASON

Jesus.

(beat)

Explains why I got jumped the second I came out of the BB.

SERA

They caught him on a skiff 50 clicks out, making a run for it.

MASON

Why him?

SERA

(hurt by Mfuzu's betrayal)

Why any of this? Why did a do-gooder billionaire decide it was time to shake things up? I dunno, maybe his ideas are right.

MASON

I can think of better things to do with all that money.

Sera laughs.

SERA

You wouldn't change a thing. Like you'd go topside all the sudden.

MASON (CONT'D)

Yer right.

(beat)

With Samson gone and you here, who the hell is running Operations?

SERA

Me, who'd you think?

She points to her bandaged leg and her wheelchair.

SERA (CONT'D)

You don't think this is enough to stop me from working, do you?

MASON

I don't think anything can stop you, girl.

SERA

You're damn right. But keep calling me 'girl' and there will be bloodshed. I can get out of this chair if I need to...

Their attention drifts back to the monitor and the RNN story. It shows footage of Crawlers and SOLOs working on repairs.

RNN REPORTER (VIDSCREEN)

...damage was stabilized rapidly. Umbilical Control believes pumping output will be back to full capacity within a month. Altogether an amazing end to a crisis that threatened the very world...

Sera runs her hand gently along Mason's bruised cheek and jaw.

SERA

I suppose you're chomping at the bit to get back down there.

MASON

It's where I belong. I'm good at what I do.

They're both afraid to commit to change.

Sera pulls herself up, kisses him on the head gently, and then drops back into her wheelchair and wheels out.

A Medic drops in to check on Mason. It's the same guy who tried to stop Mason when he surfaced in the escape pod earlier in the story.

MEDIC  
(friendly)  
I knew you were hurt!

MASON  
Guess you were right.

INT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM/OPERATIONS ROOM - NIGHT

Sera's back in her Operations chair. She's giving orders, but biting her lip, holding back tears and trying to keep some composure.

SERA  
Roger. Yes, return to normal core scouting. Business as usual. By the time the U is patched up, I want a full fleet of crawlers on the take.

Occasionally she looks out the window at the dark sea, illuminated here and there by Umbilical beacons or docked tankers.

The vidphone rings and Sera punches it up on screen. It's Mason, still in the hospital bed.

MASON (VIDSCREEN)  
I was thinking.

SERA  
(composing herself)  
Miracles happen.

MASON (VIDSCREEN)  
Funny. Look, once the black stuff is flowing full and the Rig gets patched all up, I was thinking I might request a Bubble.

Sera tries to appear indifferent.

SERA  
A Bubble?

MASON (VIDSCREEN)  
A surface transfer.

SERA  
I know what the hell a Bubble is,  
Mason. I'm just wondering what a  
Bubble and you have to do with each  
other.

MASON (VIDSCREEN)  
I have some unfinished business up  
here topside.

SERA  
(beat)  
Yeah?

MASON (VIDSCREEN)  
Yeah. There's a girl up here I've  
got the hots for.

Sera can't hold it in any longer. A huge smile takes hold  
and she leaps out of her chair...and promptly falls in a heap  
when her wounded leg buckles.

INT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM/INFIRMARY - SIMULTANEOUS

MASON  
Sera!

Mason lurches for the vidscreen as he watches Sera drop from  
view. He unbalances in the doing and falls out of HIS bed,  
BANGING his head on the way down.

His CURSING is lost in the CLATTER.

INT. SURFACE CONTROL PLATFORM/OPERATIONS ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

Sera climbs back up to her seat; the screen shows Mason  
scramble back up to his bed, knocking over the food stand in  
the process.

The Ops crew outside on the bridge are laughing, trying hard  
to avoid looking right at Sera.

SERA  
(red-faced)  
I'll talk to you later, Mason Fox.  
I have work to do.

MASON (VIDSCREEN)  
I'll talk to you later, Sera Fox.  
Maybe on your next break?

He puts emphasis on the last bit, hoping it won't land in her lap like a rabid badger.

SERA  
A guy's got to have a little hope.

She punches the call off. Smiles.

FADE TO BLACK.