

CRIMES OF THE FUTURE  
an original screenplay  
by  
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FADE IN:

1 EXT. SEEDY MOTEL - DAY 1

A seedy motel at the edge of a small bay.

A boy, BRECKEN, an ordinary-looking eight-year-old, sits in the shallow water which comes within yards of the motel. He's DIGGING around in the pebbly bay bottom with a soup spoon, looking for crayfish, leeches, anything interesting.

His mother, DJUNA DOTRICE, sits on a tattered lawn chair in front of their motel room, WATCHING her son with exaggerated intensity, nervously fingering an old cell phone. She is in her early thirties, attractive but strained, tense, exhausted. \*

DJUNA  
(calling out)  
Brecken, I don't want you eating  
anything you find in there, you  
understand me? I don't care what it  
is.

Brecken hears her, but he doesn't answer, he just keeps digging.

2 INT. SEEDY MOTEL ROOM. BEDROOM - NIGHT 2

Djuna sits on one of two beds, DISTRACTEDLY watching the cigarette-scarred TV. Her cell phone is on the bed beside her.

3 INT. SEEDY MOTEL ROOM. BATHROOM - NIGHT 3

In the tacky bathroom, Brecken is brushing his teeth, looking at himself in the mirror. He is thin, malnourished, pallid, looks sad in his T-shirt and gray-white underpants.

Brecken SURREPTITIOUSLY glances over his shoulder towards the bathroom door, which is open. He hears the droning TV set. Leaving the water running at a slow trickle, he puts down his toothbrush and SITS on the cold bathroom floor, under the sink.

With one eye on the open door, Brecken drags the small pink PLASTIC WASTEPAPER BASKET towards him and pulls it into his lap.

(CONTINUED)

We can see now that the rim of the basket has been torn away in bite-sized scallops, almost as though it has been CHEWED. And in fact it has been, because as we watch, the boy begins to GNAW HUNGRILY at the rim of the basket, pulling away small chunks of it, drooling a strange, thick WHITE SALIVA over it as he eats and chews and hungrily wolfs the tough plastic down.

Brecken's eyes glaze over with pleasure as he eats, as he enters a kind of primordial RAPTURE. He is no longer worrying about the open door of the bathroom.

But perhaps he should worry, because at the door, watching him with fascination and a kind of melancholy disgust, is his MOTHER, Djuna, cell phone in hand.

Djuna stares with scary intensity at her son for a few moments, as though trying to truly perceive what it is he is doing, then quietly withdraws from the doorway. \*

4 INT. SEEDY MOTEL ROOM. BEDROOM - LATER 4

Brecken is sound asleep on the twin bed closest to the bathroom. Djuna sits watching him on the other bed. There is an angry vacantness in her look, a quiet DERANGEMENT. She toys absently with the cell phone which lies beside her, then slowly, stealthily, pulls back the bedspread of her bed, revealing the PILLOW. She takes the pillow in her hands and slips to her knees between the beds.

Djuna SLIDES closer to the sleeping Brecken on her knees, places the pillow gently over the boy's face. The boy stirs, his air flow interrupted.

Djuna rolls onto the bed and lies on top of Brecken, pressing the pillow down over his face with her forearms, LOCKING her fingers and hands together over the pillow. She barely notices the desperate STRUGGLE that begins to stir beneath her.

5 INT. SEEDY MOTEL ROOM. BATHROOM - LATER 5

Djuna sits on the toilet with the lid down, absent-mindedly nudging the wastepaper basket across the floor with one foot. A full two inches of plastic have been gnawed away around the basket's rim since we last saw it.

The cell phone in her hand is RINGING, but for the moment she doesn't seem to notice.

(CONTINUED)

Through the doorway she can see the LIFELESS form of Brecken lying on its bed, the pillow still over his face.

Djuna answers the phone.

DJUNA  
(into phone)  
Yes. It's still Djuna. Now you've confirmed the phone number. Yes. I want you to tell Lang that if he's interested in picking up the corpse of that creature he calls his son - yes, yes I mean the Brecken thing - then you tell him to come to the address I gave you. It'll be here, and I won't be.

Djuna presses END, and then she presses POWER, so that she can't be called back again.

She sits with the phone dangling in her hand for a beat, then suddenly she begins to SOB, deeply, horribly; she is racked by her sobbing, and doubles over on the toilet seat, clutching her knees and rocking in pain.

The cell phone CLATTERS to the floor.

6 INT. TENSER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

6

We are in a strange, dark space. Cave-like, with splinters of light. There is something hanging in the middle of this space, something bulky and irritated, like a bear in a hammock.

We hear the small, insect-like sounds of tiny motors making adjustments of some kind. A subdued MOAN of pain.

A light swells up. The place is a cave, but an aggressively hypoallergenic stainless-steel and gray-porcelain cave. A slim, attractive, efficiently-dressed woman in her early thirties - CAPRICE - fusses her way towards the thing hanging in the centre of the room.

The thing is a not a bear but a bear-like man, SAUL TENSER.

And he is hanging, not from a hammock, but from a series of SLINGS ON PULLEYS which extend from the very high ceiling. As Tenser flinches or twitches in the slings, the slings raise, lower and rotate his body, forcing it into some obscure but precise geometry.

(CONTINUED)

Tenser MOANS in his sleep, unaware of the light and of Caprice. He wears bizarre pyjamas which have a tight, machiney, woven pattern like carbon fibre and are shaped like a random group of sacks.

CAPRICE  
(gently)  
Saul. Saul, darling, can you wake up?

A pause, then a moan, a sigh. We can't really see Tenser's face.

TENSER  
Who's here?

CAPRICE  
(calming)  
It's just me, it's Caprice.  
(pause)  
Did you sleep?

TENSER  
(not quite conscious)  
I think my bed needs new software.  
It's not anticipating my pain any more. It's not turning me properly.

CAPRICE  
Yes, I heard you over the intercom.  
A sleepless night. I'll call LifeFormWare right away. They're usually very responsive.

\*

TENSER  
(sensing something)  
What else?

CAPRICE  
The tests cooked all night and were ready this morning. There's a new hormone in your bloodstream.

TENSER  
(groggy but brightening)  
Ah, great. It's about time. I thought I was all tapped out, dried up. Finished.

CAPRICE  
You always think that, and you're always wrong.

(CONTINUED)

TENSER

One day, I'll be right.

CAPRICE

Not today.

TENSER

Not today.

Tenser's hand, clad with a fingerless synthetic glove, appears from amid the slings and reaches for a control module which dangles from a cord.

He manipulates the module, operating the motors and slings which rotate him, lower him, and unfold him so that he can finally sit with his feet on the floor and his back curved in an odd position but still supported by the slings. Caprice holds herself back from helping him—a long-established ritual.

Tenser sits still, staring, breathing heavily. Now that we can see him clearly, he seems to be in his early forties, and he is still living in the residue of his troubled night.

Suddenly, a rumbling and shaking from Tenser which might be a coughing fit but turns out to be a heavy, coarse, smoky laugh.

TENSER (CONT'D)

(a heavy laugh)

Let's do it before breakfast.

CAPRICE

You're sure? You don't want to wait till...?

TENSER

Caprice, I'm sure. Before breakfast.

Tenser is lying on a small, orthopaedically-shaped OPERATING TABLE—it's really more like a cutting-edge dentist's chair—set in the middle of a small, efficient private operating theatre within Tenser's apartment.

Hovering over him is Caprice, who is manipulating THREE TUBES which pierce Tenser's abdomen just below his rib cage. She is peering down one of the tubes, as through a microscope, and manipulating rods through the other two tubes, rods which operate some kind of instruments deep within Tenser's body.

(CONTINUED)

All the rules that we know about O.R. procedure seem to be broken here, with neither pain suppression nor the need for a sterile environment seeming to have any priority.

Tenser is not only conscious, he's fully awake and conversational. The two are alone in the room, and Caprice is maskless and wearing the street clothes we saw her in earlier.

Tenser himself is still wearing his odd pyjamas, the top open and spread wide to surrender only the necessary square footage of skin for Caprice's rods.

TENSER

What do you see? I can feel you pulling things around in there.

CAPRICE

(into eyepiece)

It seems to be some small sort of endocrine gland, about the size of an adrenal gland.

TENSER

Small. That's disappointing. Not very dramatic.

CAPRICE

(encouraging)

It's a brand new organ, never before seen. And it's functioning. Can you feel it? That new hormone?

TENSER

(cryptically)

LifeFormWare.

\*

CAPRICE

LifeFormWare?

\*

TENSER

The pain is different. That's probably why my bed's computer is having trouble. This new organ is shifting my pain centres.

CAPRICE

For better or worse?

TENSER

So far, just different. How's the artwork coming?

(CONTINUED)

CAPRICE

It's a slippery surface. Hard to be precise with the ink.

TENSER

Why not do something that really looks like a tattoo? A heart, a knife, "Mother"?

CAPRICE

I was just thinking that, although I was tending towards a variation on traditional Samoan.

TENSER

(nods)

You can't miss with Samoan.

8 INT. TENSER'S KITCHEN - MORNING 8

Caprice eats breakfast—bacon and eggs—in Tenser's kitchen. She sits at a tile and stainless-steel counter, reading a newspaper whose odd, stiff pages have been laminated in plastic.

9 INT. TENSER'S BREAKFAST ROOM - MORNING 9

Tenser eats breakfast alone in his bizarre breakfast room, which is ceramic and porcelain from floor to ceiling, small, claustrophobic, mechanical, like a stainless-steel Japanese robo-toilet.

He eats unrecognizable food from a ceramic tray attached to a MECHANO-CHAIR which is like a huge all-metal infant seat. The chair itself is electronic and gear-driven, and it constantly fidgets and adjusts as Tenser himself fidgets and adjusts.

He eats with difficulty, as if the process of eating itself were hugely uncomfortable for him, picking, probing, examining each morsel with a SET OF UTENSILS that look more like surgical instruments than eating tools.

As he struggles to swallow, tears well up in his eyes and roll down his cheeks, but this seems to be more a physiological reaction than one involving pain or emotion.



9A	EXT. TENSER'S APARTMENT - DAY	9A	*
	Tenser and Caprice leave the apartment which seems to be in a large concrete decrepit structure.		*
	They walk towards us down a rocky dirt path.		*
	It is summer, but Tenser is dressed for late autumn, if not winter: heavy full-length black cloth coat, carbon-fiber gloves, scarf, hat, big insulated boots. He seems very uncomfortable in his body.		*
	Caprice, on the other hand, is at ease in her jeans and a T-shirt, sneakers, beret.		*

10 EXT. VICTORIAN BANK - DAY

10 \*

Tenser and Caprice walk along a busy downtown city street, heading towards a shabby Victorian-style bank building.

At a distance there is no indication that the bank is not still functioning as a bank, but when we get close and up the rather grand set of front steps, we see a cardboard sign in black marker taped to the inside of the front door glass that reads: VICTORIAN BANK PERFORMING SPACE.

\*

CAPRICE  
How're you doing?

TENSER  
OK.

Tenser pulls out a modern, synthetic pocket watch, checks a timer, puts it away.

TENSER (CONT'D)  
I've got the requisite two hours  
before I have to scurry back to my  
burrow.

CAPRICE  
You're sure you want to go with a  
live audience this time. You had a  
bad reaction to somebody last time.

TENSER  
We made it part of the show and it  
worked. Besides, I need live for  
validation. It's too easy to cheat  
when it's only media, and everybody  
knows it.

CAPRICE  
(laughs)  
We could generate the audience in.  
We wouldn't be the first.

(CONTINUED)

10

TENSER

I've already got the recluse  
tremors bad, Caprice. Don't take my  
last humans away from me.

11

INT. VICTORIAN BANK. BACKSTAGE - DAY

11

Backstage at the Victorian Bank is not really backstage: this area is a warren of small, barren rooms which retain only bits and pieces of their original ceiling moldings and woodwork. There is rubble everywhere, as though the place has been abandoned in mid-demolition.

The room they're in is hot and dusty, but Tenser hasn't removed any of his street gear. He and Caprice stand amid a group of about ten people, some standing, some sitting, all listening attentively. They have the feel of theatrical technicians, backstage workers.

TENSER

I seem to have produced a new  
marvel, so we can incorporate it  
into our next show.

(murmurs of excitement)

Not worth getting too excited about  
though. It's pretty small and  
boring and we'll have to use macro-  
screens to show the audience what  
we're doing. I'd hoped for  
something more spectacular, but I'm  
at the mercy.

A short, thin woman speaks up—ISBISTER, the stage manager,  
who is sitting on a chunk of Ionic pedestal.

\*

ISBISTER

Do you have a sell-by date on this  
new organ? I remember the problem  
with the last one.

CAPRICE

This one seems fairly benign.  
Unless it decides to manifest ugly,  
we should have two months before  
its growth impedes.

TENSER

(competitive)

Is the troupe heavily booked,  
Isbister? Is there a line-up, is  
that the problem?

(CONTINUED)

ISBISTER

We would un-book for a Saul Tenser performance. You know that. But I'd like time to do it right. The heavy media presence you want is always complex.

TENSER

Let's do it right, then. Let's...

Tenser's THROAT has seized. He can't swallow, he can't speak. Caprice steps right up to him and jabs a large NEEDLE into his throat.

The Victorian Bank troupe stirs, anxious, but they are not panicked. They've seen this before.

12 INT. TENSER'S BEDROOM - DAY 12

Tenser is in his slings. Caprice leans in amongst the cables. His bed has him stretched out, back arched, head down. He is gasping for air. Caprice is operating a THROAT DEVICE which is clamped around his windpipe.

CAPRICE

(soothing, singing)

We can use this, Saul. We can use this in the show. We'll use this, we'll use this till it's all used up.

13 EXT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING - NIGHT 13

Caprice and Tenser are on the street again, Tenser's dress the same, Caprice now adding a windbreaker to her wardrobe. Tenser seems fully, even nonchalantly recovered from his allergy trauma. \*

As they approach a massive government building whose style is vaguely fascistic, they pass by a COUPLE in an alley. Both the young man and the older woman seem to have KNIVES in their hands, seem to be CUTTING each other, but we're not sure. Caprice and Tenser notice them but seem unconcerned, walk steadily by.

Once they reach the building, Caprice and Tenser walk right past the grand entrance and instead slip down a set of UNOBTRUSIVE STEPS which lead to the underground floors.

14 EXT. ACROSS STREET - NIGHT 14

Across the street in the shadows, a tall, handsome man, LANG DOTRICE, early forties, watches the pair. \*

He nervously peels the wrapper off what seems to be a PURPLISH CANDY BAR, and begins to bite pieces from the bar, more in agitation than in hunger. The wrapper is metallic in texture and bears no markings or advertising of any kind.

Once the pair across the street disappear down the steps into the depths of the government building, Dotrice begins to distractedly pace back and forth. \*

15 INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING. HALLWAY - NIGHT 15

Tenser and Caprice walk down a dark hallway and stop at a door marked N.O.REGISTRY.

Tenser tries the door, but it's locked. He knocks. After a beat, the door is opened and a short, bespectacled man wearing a name-tag that labels him DON WIPPET peers out.

WIPPET

Wippet.

TENSER

It's Saul Tenser.

WIPPET

(sudden big smile)

Omigod. So it is.

16 INT. NATIONAL ORGAN REGISTRY OFFICE - NIGHT 16

Wippet fusses the pair into a dreary basement office which he shares with only one other person, a pale, ascetic, scholarly young woman name-tagged TIMLIN. She watches them shyly from her work-loaded desk as Wippet tries to get them settled.

Wippet locks the door with slightly too much drama.

WIPPET

Wow, this is a treat and a privilege for us, isn't it, Timlin? That's Timlin over there.

(Timlin waves shyly)

Can I take your coat?

(CONTINUED)

TENSER

I'll keep it, thanks.

WIPPET

Fine, fine.

(gestures around the  
office)

Well, this isn't very grand, is it?  
But it is the National Organ  
Registry nonetheless, and we are  
fully equipped, aren't we, Timlin?

Timlin nods shyly.

WIPPET (CONT'D)

It's all secret stuff now because  
we're part of the NVU of Justice,  
but we'll be ready to break out and  
go public when the time inevitably  
comes. We're ready for prime time,  
aren't we, Timlin?

A faint smile from Timlin that suggests that they're not.

TENSER

NVU?

WIPPET

New Vice Unit.

(can barely suppress a  
chuckle)

There's no crime like the present.

CAPRICE

We're a little confused about  
procedure. This is our first time.

Timlin now speaks up, but speaks would not be the right word.  
She whispers.

TIMLIN

But you understand the necessity of  
organ registration from a security  
standpoint?

TENSER

I understand that... human bodies  
are changing.

(hoarse, sardonic laugh)

I know this quite well. And this  
apparently is of some concern to  
the governments of the world.

(CONTINUED)

WIPPET

Human bodies, yes. "Human" is the operative word. Human evolution is the concern. That it's going wrong. That it's uncontrolled, insurrectional. That it could lead to a bad place. Look what's happened to pain thresholds. The world is a much more dangerous place now that p- p- pain has all but disappeared. What good is it that only a lucky handful of us experience pain in our sleep? Pain has a function. It's a warning system that we don't have anymore. Why has this happened to us? What does this mean? And what about infections? Whatever happened to them? Nobody washes their hands anymore. And what about that new fad, what do they call it? Desktop surgery? In public! It's repulsive.

For some reason, Wippet stutters on the word "pain". Timlin matter-of-factly interrupts Wippet, as though she's used to his rants, hardly notices them any more.

TIMLIN

(to Tenser)

Our records indicate that you have been producing random and novel bodily organs for some years, but that you have consistently had them removed.

TENSER

Who wouldn't?

WIPPET

You'd be surprised.

CAPRICE

We would be surprised. They're basically tumours, aren't they? Who would want to keep them? They could kill you.

TENSER

Or at the very least, make you gain weight.

(CONTINUED)

TIMLIN

(flat)

What is the relationship between  
you two?

A glance, a hesitation between Caprice and Tenser.

CAPRICE

I remove these tumours as part of  
our performance. We are performance  
artists. We perform together.

TIMLIN

And you are qualified to perform  
surgery?

TENSER

As Mr. Wippet was saying, everybody  
seems to be qualified to perform  
surgery these days.

CAPRICE

If consent is legally given,  
there's really no issue there.

TIMLIN

I'm speaking of your professional  
relationship. You wouldn't want to  
kill your performance partner,  
would you?

TENSER

(teasing)

You never know. There's a lot of  
improvisation in our shows.

CAPRICE

(not playful)

Stop it.

(to Timlin)

We met when Saul was cut up on the  
streets while he was on duty. I was  
a trauma surgeon at First General.  
We... unleashed things in each  
other. We both changed, left our  
professions. And now we are what we  
are.

WIPPET

You're stars, that's what you are.  
Gosh, everybody you meet wants to  
be in performance art these days.  
It's the hottest thing. But not  
everybody can do it.

(CONTINUED)



An awkward moment of silence.

TIMLIN  
Well, then. Registration?

17 INT. NATIONAL ORGAN REGISTRY O.R. - NIGHT 17

A long room like a 50s barbershop - four chairs, no waiting. Just as drab and dreary as the office. The chairs are like the operating table in Tenser's apartment, only shabbier, more institutional.

One wall of the room is lined with glass-faced metal medical cabinets and drawers filled with instruments, jars, plastic containers.

Timlin and Wippet are on either side of the semi-reclined Tenser, each one peering through a VIEWING ROD inserted deep into the Tenser abdomen. Tenser has his eyes closed, possibly dozing. He still wears his coat, hat, gloves, scarf. Just enough chest has been exposed to allow the insertion of the viewing rods into what seem to be permanent channel inserts in his body.

Caprice sits sideways on the adjacent chair, adjusting a TINY CAMERA which she wears on her index finger like a ring. Satisfied, she slips off her chair and begins to record.

WIPPET  
(into eyepiece)  
Oh, my. It is so beautiful!

TIMLIN  
I can't quite see the tattoo from my angle. Can you pick it up from where you are?

WIPPET  
Oh, yes. It's very clear. Gosh! A gorgeous, I might even say sensual example of the registration tatooist's art.

CAPRICE  
(recording)  
Why don't you tell us what a registration tattoo is?

Wippet is suddenly aware of the camera. He immediately stiffens, performs for the camera.

(CONTINUED)

WIPPET

(for the camera)

Well, we here at the National Organ Registry have just instituted a policy of tattooing novel organs, idiopathic organs, that is, new organs whose function is unknown, so that they can be registered and kept track of. Our fear is that some of these neo-organs will establish themselves genetically, and will be passed down from parents to children, who would then no longer be, strictly speaking, human. At least, not in the classical sense.

(stiff smile)

Our concept of the registration tattoo has largely been inspired by the performance art of Saul Tenser.

Timlin picks up on Wippet's "on camera" tone. She looks up from her viewing rod and finds Caprice as she moves around the room, looking for the best shooting angle.

TIMLIN

(to Caprice)

I'm sorry. It's forbidden to record in here.

CAPRICE

I was thinking we could use it for our performance. We record the most intimate things.

Timlin holds out her hand for the camera.

TIMLIN

I'm sorry, but it's illegal. This department does not yet exist.

WIPPET

(forced joviality)

If it doesn't exist, I guess it's impossible to record.

CAPRICE

Too bad.

Caprice removes her RING-CAM and drops it into Timlin's hand. Timlin drops it into a pocket and goes back to the eyepiece of her viewing rod.

(CONTINUED)

TIMLIN

(into eyepiece)

Did you do this, Caprice? This is  
your work?

CAPRICE

The tattooing, you mean? Yes. It's  
been part of our act for years.  
Decorating and celebrating the  
inner body and so on. From a  
practical point of view, it makes  
it easier to identify the new organ  
under the pressure of the  
performance context. And the  
audience loves it.

WIPPET

(manipulating his rod)

I can see why. God, the delicacy!  
The subtlety! The nuancing!

(looks up)

We're pretty pragmatic and down to  
earth at the Registry, as you can  
imagine.

(eye back to rod)

But looking at what you've done  
here—this is not just pragmatic  
and down to earth. This is Art.  
With a capital A.

Wippet lets go of his viewing rod and begins to pace  
excitedly back and forth. The loose rod bobs around in  
Tenser's abdomen like a bullfighter's banderilla.

WIPPET (CONT'D)

(claps his hands)

Listen, what do you think of this:  
organ-registration tattooing as a  
latent 21st Century art form?

Tenser, his eyes still closed and his voice drowsy, begins to  
speak.

TENSER

Latent art is very good, very good.  
Secret laws for secret crimes, and  
now, secret art. You could  
establish the Saul Tenser  
Collection, a display of my neo-  
organs tattooed by Caprice. Think  
the Registry would go for it?

(CONTINUED)

Tenser dozily snags the bobbing viewing rod with his hand and twists the flexible eyepiece around so that he can look into his own abdomen.

TENSER (CONT'D)  
(into eyepiece)  
Of course, it would all be very underground. Private viewing by mandarins only.

WIPPET  
You're playing with me now, Mr. Tenser. And frankly, I'm flattered. But if you think "future art"... doesn't that resonate? The National Organ Registry won't be underground forever. We shall emerge and we shall be the future.

18 INT. TENSER'S OPERATING ROOM - NIGHT 18

Alone in his operating room, Tenser is fiddling with a large SARCOPHAGUS-LIKE DEVICE, its top lid like a huge insect's carapace resting against the wall. The human-shaped capsule is hinged open—a high-tech iron maiden.

From every interior surface, NASTY-LOOKING IMPLEMENTS pop in and out as Tenser plays with the thing's controls—needle-like periscopes, razor-sharp cookie-cutter wheels, surgical scissors, auto-scalpels. You wouldn't want to fall asleep in this machine.

An embossed logo—SARK—adorns every prominent surface of the thing.

Caprice enters, hot.

CAPRICE  
I don't think you should have invited those two creeps from the Registry to our show.

TENSER  
Why not? Why not get 'em on our side?

CAPRICE  
I don't trust them. The woman, Timlin, she's especially creepy.

(CONTINUED)

TENSER

I thought she was rather  
attractive. In a bureaucratic way.

CAPRICE

(ignoring him)

The LifeFormWare technicians are  
here. They need to see you in your  
bed.

\*

TENSER

I'm a little upset about the  
tattoo.

CAPRICE

(defensive)

Oh?

TENSER

Rambunctious. That's what I'd call  
it.

CAPRICE

That's a technical term?

TENSER

It really takes over the form, the  
shape of the organ itself. It  
really, in a sense, dominates it,  
reshapes it. It's not just  
parasitic, although I suppose, in a  
sense, it is that too. But it seems  
to take meaning away from the  
organ. Takes the process of meaning  
for itself, as it were.

CAPRICE

(won't get into it)

You'd really better get into bed.

Tenser is in his bizarre sling and cable bed. The two  
LifeFormWare technicians, ROUTER and BERST, are busily  
working around him. They are both stocky women in their  
thirties, and they wear no-nonsense heavy-duty overalls.

\*

Router is gently adjusting Tenser's position while Berst is  
working quietly in the background, handheld software analyser  
plugged into the wall, DIGITAL NOTEPAD humming, taking  
readings.

(CONTINUED)

ROUTER

There, there. You'll be comfortable again soon. The OrchidBed is our top of the line bed. Once we've corrected the misalignment created by your hormonal imbalance, you'll be floating. It won't be long, will it, Berst?

\*

BERST

Naw. These things are basically bulletproof. This bed loves your body, Mr. Tenser. It is so flexible, so attuned to every shift of your pain centres, it's a beautiful thing to behold.

Berst pauses to check a page on her digital notepad.

BERST (CONT'D)

I see you've actually got several of our units here, don't you? The OrchidBed bed, our BreakFaster Chair - that'll probably need some adjustment as well. We can download your OrchidBed co-ordinates into the BreakFaster, tweak the EatWare parameters, and we'll be very close. And... omigod.

\*

\*

ROUTER

What is it?

BERST

Router, Mr. Tenser has a Sark unit here.

Router drops what she is doing and takes a look at Berst's notepad, leaving Tenser dangling awkwardly.

ROUTER

(awestruck)

Yes. He really does. A Sark unit.

Tenser, Caprice, Router and Berst are gathered around the Sark unit, whose lid has now been swung closed so that it looks like a high-tech, carbon-fibre coffin with a lot of unspeakable mechanical and electronic features.

(CONTINUED)

The technicians stare at the thing with intense lust and longing, like Volkswagen mechanics in the presence of a vintage Ferrari.

BERST

The Sark autopsy module was one of the best units we ever made. It's gorgeous.

ROUTER

They're legendary.

BERST

So complex.

ROUTER

So subtle.

TENSER

Have you ever worked on one of these?

BERST

They stopped making them before our time. I've never seen one in the flesh before.

ROUTER

They're legendary.

BERST

What do you use it for? You're not in the autopsy business, are you?

CAPRICE

It's my paint brush.

Tenser, wearing his accustomed wintery clothes, is in the spotlight in the PERFORMANCE ARENA of the Victorian Bank.

Massive SCREENS everywhere showing him from different angles. Rubble architecture. Huge rooms with high ceilings, all very open to each other. A forest of pseudo-Greek columns and architectural flourishes. No seats. Crowds swarming and schooling like fish. Heavy music.

Pulsing intermittently on the screens is the title of this particular performance: BODY IS REALITY.

(CONTINUED)

There are tons of cameras in evidence. In fact, almost every member of the audience has one, from ring-cams like Caprice's to old-fashioned film-news Auricons, sixties-style Eclairs, hand-cranked pre-war Bell and Howells, Beaulieu Super-8s, wind-up Bolexs. RETRO-COVERAGE. You can't really tell the official media from the amateurs. Everybody's either transmitting or receiving - their eyes and ears are not enough.

Here and there we find mixing carts with monitors, guys with headphones of all kinds, it's hot, it's the centre of something. But still with a seedy tone, an underground feel.

As we swirl with the crowd, we find some familiar faces: Wippet and Timlin from the Organ Registry; Router and Berst from LifeFormWare. They are recording and swooning, so excited to be there and to be in the KNOW: those are their clients up there, THEIRS. \*

And there is someone else there - Dotrice, who is nervously gnawing once again on a strange PURPLE CANDY BAR like the one we saw outside the Organ Registry Building. \*

There is a general awe of sound when Caprice appears from nowhere, from smoke, sitting on the Sark unit which looks especially deadly in this dramatic lighting, pulled along its skids by two women in vaguely S&M gear.

Caprice JUMPS off the Sark and begins to play with controls embedded in a CARBON-FIBRE BODICE strapped to her chest. Screws and knurled knobs along the side of the Sark rotate and spin, unlocking the Sark's lid, which then swings open with an ominous yawn like a beckoning tomb.

As if responding directly to the buttons on Caprice's bodice plate, Tenser strips down to absolutely nothing, meticulously hanging and folding each item of his clothing on a special rack wheeled out for them.

Tenser SLIDES himself into the Sark, head on a pillow clamp. Caprice plays with more buttons on her breast plate and the cover COMES DOWN OVER TENSER, encasing him in its shell like a beetle, clamped tight at the neck, only the head revealed, sealed into this bizarre suit of armour like Joan of Arc.

The crowd shuffles closer, drawn towards the capsule as if magnetized. The screens show various tight images of the details of the procedure, the Sark's locks and knobs spinning shut, the lid clamping around Tenser's neck, the panel in the lid sliding open on ball bearings to reveal Tenser's naked chest and abdomen, TENSER'S FACE seen from directly above him, the controlled, frenzied ecstasy.

(CONTINUED)



Now Caprice steps forward and seizes the surgery capsule's controls, begins to shift them like a locomotive engineer STIRRING his machine into life.

From a bewildering variety of crevices, trap doors, sliding panels and irisng channels a bevy of needle-scopes, insertion-scan devices, flesh cutters, saw-toothed probes, vise-like retractors and vibrating scalpels emerge. Ultrasonic spray nozzles to spritz clarifying fluids, suction nozzles to vacuum them back up.

As the crowd watches raptly, the surgical devices CONVERGE on Tenser's chest and abdomen, SLIT open his body in four different places, PLUNGE into the wounds, RUMMAGE around in his abdominal cavity, SEVER his neo-organ, HAUL it out into the light of day—complete with tattoo.

Then they CAUTERIZE and STAPLE and SEW and GLUE everything back together again.

All of this is visible in exquisite close-ups on the squad of screens, including those recorded by tiny surgical cameras which are the first devices to SUBMERGE into Tenser's body, and it's all accompanied by a pounding, hypnotic sound track.

22 INT. VICTORIAN BANK - LATER 22

A BIG PARTY is in full swing in the many interlaced rooms of the Victorian Bank.

Huge photos of the removed and tattooed neo-organ are already on display everywhere, as is the ORGAN itself, in a JAR above the bar, with magnifiers in place on all sides and, of course, cameras. The preservative fluid it's in ripples with the base waves of the music that shudders everything in the building.

Wippet and Timlin are getting very drunk, hanging out with the performance crew and spewing food and drink with every fit of laughing.

Caprice and Tenser lounge on a chaise longue near the bar, receiving the many who gather to pay court, who sit on chairs and cushions surrounding them, standing and leaning against the fluted pillars.

Caprice occasionally touches TENSER'S WOUNDS to check their healing, wounds which are on full display even though Tenser now once again wears his hat, coat, scarf, gloves, boots.

(CONTINUED)

And at the other end of the bar is Dotrice, sullen, drink in front of him but not drinking, eating another PURPLE CANDY BAR instead. And WATCHING Caprice and Tenser very, very carefully. \*

Standing next to Dotrice is a very drunk HEAVY MAN, who is scoffing up every canapé and beer nut within range. He is definitely eyeing Dotrice's intriguing purple candy bar as he laughs raucously and talks to Router and Berst, who are still in overalls, but now designer overalls. \*

BERST  
(to Heavy Man)  
Yeah, really. I'm a LifeFormWare technician. Saul Tenser is one of our favourite customers. The work we do for him is technically so challenging, fascinating. His body needs are subtle and they are constantly shifting. We feel, Danni Router and I do, that the Tenser account will force our entire organization into new, exhilarating territory. \*

Timlin comes over to Tenser's group, subtly works her way through the hangers-on in her low-key aggressive style. When she gets to Tenser, she kneels down behind him and whispers in his ear.

TIMLIN  
(to Tenser)  
Do you mind if I tell you something intimate?

TENSER  
What? Oh, you. No, no. Go ahead.

TIMLIN  
Surgery is sex, isn't it?

TENSER  
Is it?

TIMLIN  
You know it is. Surgery is the new sex.

TENSER  
Does there have to be new sex?

(CONTINUED)

TIMLIN

Oh yes. It's time. When I was  
watching Caprice cut into you, I  
knew what I was seeing. I wanted...

TENSER

Yes?

TIMLIN

I wanted you to be cutting into me.  
That's when I knew.

Timlin nuzzles Tenser behind the ear, bites his earlobe, then  
staggers to her feet and sways her way back to Wippet and the  
performance crew.

Caprice has, of course, missed nothing.

CAPRICE

What was that all about?

TENSER

Just another epiphany. Art triumphs  
once again.

ANGLE ON

The Heavy Man, who notices that Dotrice, in order to wipe his \*  
mouth with a napkin, has put his half-eaten candy down on the  
bar.

He is listening to Router, who is now doing her own \*  
LifeFormWare monologue while desperately hanging on to the  
bar for support.

ROUTER

Saul Tenser is an artist of the  
inner landscape. The creation of  
art is often associated with pain,  
and pain, as we know, is always  
associated with sleep.

With a MISCHIEVOUS WINK at Router and Berst, the Heavy Man  
picks up the candy bar, grabs a quick, HUGE BITE, peels back  
the wrapper a bit to disguise his theft, then replaces it on  
the bar. Happily chewing now, he pats his own sweaty brow  
with a napkin and gives the women another wink.

(CONTINUED)

22

ROUTER (CONT'D)

We at LifeFormWare specialize in  
manipulating and modulating the  
pain of artists, and for us, Saul  
Tenser is the greatest challenge,  
so intimate and involving is his  
art—and the nature of his pain. A  
good night's sleep is a hard thing  
to define when you are an artist  
and you seek pain.

\*

As Router talks on, the Heavy Man suddenly begins to CHOKe,  
to gag, to vomit down his shirt. He collapses, quivering,  
twitching, now almost taking on the PURPLE HUE of Dotrice's  
bar. People rush to his side, pull his slimy shirt open,  
pound on his chest.

\*

Dotrice, who is just finishing off his candy bar, crumples up  
the wrapper, puts it in his pocket, and moves away from the  
stricken Heavy Man as unobtrusively as he can.

\*

Router and Berst, hammered though they are, are right in  
there with the other aid-givers, ready to operate on the spot  
with swizzle sticks if they have to.

But in the overall hubbub, this little drama is LOST.

23

INT. NATIONAL ORGAN REGISTRY OFFICE - MORNING

23

Another in the series of drab, hidden NOR offices.

There are three unoccupied chairs in the room, but Wippet and  
Timlin are standing side by side with their hands behind  
their backs and their heads, hang-over-wracked, hanging low.  
Their Boss, BRENT BOSS, paces back and forth in front of them  
like a drill sergeant. He is big and nasty and he is not in a  
good mood.

BOSS

Starstruck puppies. Not dignified.  
Not savoury. Not up to Registry  
standards. And not low-profile  
enough. This office is invisible.  
And its inhabitants, its denizens,  
its citizens, you, are also  
invisible. And if you are not, you  
are disappeared.

Boss pauses to allow reaction. There is only embarrassed  
silence.

BOSS (CONT'D)

(CONTINUED)

Not going to ask me how I know you went to the Tenser performance? How I know you got falling-down blotto at the post-performance party? I'll tell you. You were seen. It's that simple. The Registry exists under New Vice legislation to help contain and shape human evolution. It is top secret. It's not a branch of showbiz, like practically everything else these days. If you expose yourselves and the Registry, not just to public ridicule, but merely to public view, you endanger not only your jobs. You get my meaning?

Wippet and Timlin nod glumly.

BOSS (CONT'D)  
All right. Somebody wants to talk to you. Don't move.

Boss leaves the room. They don't move.

WIPPET  
That's unfair.

TIMLIN  
We're on dangerous ground.

WIPPET  
(defiant)  
We're not just functionaries. We are passionate about our work.

TIMLIN  
I love this job. I don't want to lose it.

The door opens and into the room walks a man we have not seen: COPE. Tall, red-head, freckles, youthful old face. Definitely been a cop for a long time. He sits in Boss's chair and consults a FOLDER that has been left there.

\*

COPE  
Sit down.

\*

They sit.

COPE (CONT'D)  
I'm Detective COPE. I'm with New Vice. And you are?

\*

\*

(CONTINUED)

WIPPET

Wippet.

TIMLIN

Timlin.

COPE

Yes, good. You have had recent dealings with the performance artist Saul Tenser?

\*

WIPPET

Yes.

COPE

And you have a portfolio of all the neo-organs which he has developed and removed?

\*

TIMLIN

(relaxing a bit)

He donated it to us. He was the first to undertake the logging, the archiving, of his inner creations. We call it the Tenser Organography. For him it was an art thing, an artist wanting an systematized record of his art...

\*

WIPPET

But for us, it triggered an awareness of the flow, the significance of these spontaneous growths which many people were experiencing in secret. So now we've begun actually requiring the legal registering of these growths...

TIMLIN

The registering of a genuine, new Saul Tenser internal organ...

WIPPET

It's like discovering a new species of animal...

TIMLIN

Well, really more like discovering a new Picasso...

(CONTINUED)

23

The pair have now run out of gas. COPE looks at them quizzically.

\*

COPE

\*

How can a tumorous growth be considered art? Where is the emotional shaping, the philosophical understanding, that is basic to all art? Look, I have a lump on my abdomen—you see it?

\*

Cope pulls up his t-shirt to expose a lump on his abdomen.

\*

COPE (CONT'D)

\*

Picasso? Duchamp? Francis Bacon, perhaps? Am I an artist?

\*

\*

TIMLIN

(nervous but not backing down)

He takes the rebellion of his own body and seizes control of it. Shapes it, tattoos it, displays it, creates theatre out of it. It has meaning, very potent meaning, and many, many people respond to it.

COPE

\*

Tattoos it?

24

INT. NATIONAL ORGAN REGISTRY OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

24

Cope is leafing through a PORTFOLIO OF PHOTOS of the many tattooed organs that have been removed from Saul Tenser's body—the Tenser Organography. Wippet and Timlin look on with pride and anxiety.

\*

Each photo has appended next to it a detailed reproduction of the TATTOO which adorns it.

WIPPET

You see, right from the very beginning, after he met Caprice, all his neo-organs were tattooed while they were still in his body.

COPE

\*

Caprice is his lover?

TIMLIN

(insistent)

Caprice is his performance partner.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TIMLIN (CONT'D)

She does the tattoos. And the  
surgery.

(CONTINUED)



24

Cope flips the plastic-covered pages of the portfolio. The tattoos are predominantly abstract, and in a bizarre way, brilliant.

\*

COPE

\*

Looks to me as though Caprice is the artist. Tenser is just a glorified organ donor.

WIPPET

Well, there are the performances. And then, there is the question of will.

COPE

\*

Will?

WIPPET

Yes. We believe that on a certain level, perhaps a subconscious one, Saul Tenser wills these new organs to grow.

(pause)

You really ought to get that lump on your abdomen looked at.

\*

25

EXT. SEEDY MOTEL - NIGHT

25

LANG DOTRICE, who we've met before, and TARR, younger, slight and bearded, walk up to Djuna's door. Dotrice turns the knob. The door is unlocked.

\*

\*

\*

26

INT. SEEDY MOTEL - NIGHT

26

The pair enter the room. The boy's body lies on the bed, just as we last saw it. Dotrice sits on the bed beside it. He takes a deep, shaky breath, then gently removes the pillow from the boy's face. Brecken is beautiful in death—he could be asleep. Dotrice begins to tremble.

\*

\*

Tarr comes out of the bathroom with Djuna's cell phone in one hand and the waste basket in the other.

TARR

Should we hunt the bitch down? We don't want the cops to get her. She'll talk.

Dotrice can barely speak.

\*

(CONTINUED)

26

DOTRICE

(hoarse whisper)

No. Fuck her. She doesn't know  
enough to hurt us. Never was  
interested, was she? What's that?

TARR

Brecken.

Tarr hands the basket to Dotrice, who runs his finger along  
the chewed rim. Dotrice begins to sob hopelessly, petting the  
boy's corpse like a dog. Tarr looks away.

TARR (CONT'D)

Yeah, we'd better take everything  
with us. Everything.

27

INT. TENSER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

27

Tenser sleeps in his OrchidBed bed, but it is a restless  
sleep, and the servo-motors are having a hard time keeping up  
with him, hunting and adjusting the slings, straps, cables.

The lights swell up and Caprice comes in. She moves close to  
Tenser, speaks softly to him.

CAPRICE

(gently)

Saul. Saul, darling. Can you wake  
up?

A sigh, a moan. Tenser turns, suspended, opens an eye.

CAPRICE (CONT'D)

Saul, your bed says that you're  
working on something new. Can that  
be right? So soon?

TENSER

The bed is never wrong. Just ask  
our friends from LifeFormWare.

CAPRICE

Is this something we should worry  
about? The interval between growths  
seems to be closing up.

TENSER

I'm feeling very creative. I guess.  
We'll just have to start cutting  
faster.

(CONTINUED)

Caprice is not convinced. She's worried.

28 INT. ANCIENT AQUEDUCT - NIGHT 28 \*

We are watching another body-art performance. KLINEK, a wiry Czech in his 40s. \*

A young woman surgeon is just finishing SEWING HIS LIPS AND EYES SHUT with coarse black thread. \*

Klinek's head is shaven in order to accentuate the strangeness of SEVERAL ADDITIONAL EARS attached to his head and face. They are pretty good replica ears, still reddish at the attachment points, lacking only real ear holes. When we pull back to see his entire body, we see that it is covered in ears. He is wearing a bikini brief. \*

On stage, Klinek begins to move his flexible body in a Tai Chi-like dance. He hums as he breathes, in rhythm with the booming speakers over which his RECORDED VOICE recites a manifesto. \*

KLINEK (O.S.)

It is time to stop seeing. It is  
time to stop speaking. It is time  
to listen. \*

The performance takes place in an ancient stone Roman aqueduct whose water has been drained. The audience is standing around on the lower level with Klinek and on the upper walkways surrounding the basin. \*

Scattered here and there in the audience are couples engaged in what Wippet called DESKTOP SURGERY: they are cutting and probing each other in INTIMATE places with highly ORNATE surgical instruments. As usual, pain and disinfection don't seem to be issues.

At the edge of the rapt crowd stands Tenser, wearing his usual outfit, still overdressed, the air temperature is moderate and the spectators are dressed accordingly. \*

(CONTINUED)

A slim, intense middle-aged woman—ADRIENNE BERCEAU—steps next to Tenser. She watches him watching for a moment or two, then speaks quietly to him.

BERCEAU  
I don't like the ears.

TENSER  
What?

BERCEAU  
The ears. They're cute, they're striking, but what do they have to do with the obsolescence of the body? A thousand ears is not good design. Surround sound? The extra ears don't even work. They're just for show.

\*

TENSER  
How do you know?

BERCEAU  
I'm Adrienne Berceau. I'm Klinek's Biomorphology Coordinator. Don't tell him I said this, but he's better with the dancing than he is with the conceptual art. Are you working on anything new, Mr. Tenser?

\*

\*

\*

TENSER  
I never really know when I'm working on something new. It doesn't seem to be my decision.

BERCEAU  
What if it is?

TENSER  
If it is?

BERCEAU  
The creation of inner beauty cannot be an accident. Forgive me for quoting you and your show. Have you heard of Dr. Nasatir?

TENSER  
No.

(CONTINUED)

BERCEAU

You should pay him a visit. Inner  
beauty is his specialty, as it is  
yours.

(CONTINUED)

28

Berceau slips Tenser a BUSINESS CARD as the Klinek show storms on. She points to a date and an address written on the back of the card.

BERCEAU (CONT'D)  
I've booked you an appointment. Go  
to the address written here.

TENSER  
A consultation about a medical  
problem?

BERCEAU  
A consultation about a political  
problem.

29

EXT. ANCIENT AQUEDUCT. STREETS - NIGHT

29 \*

Tenser leaves the Klinek performance before it is over. He crosses the street, begins to walk home. He soon finds himself walking with somebody, a man, Dotrice, who has materialised out of the shadows. \*

Tenser is alert but just keeps walking with Dotrice, who mainly looks down at the ground, nodding to himself, working himself up to speaking. Finally. \*

DOTRICE  
I've got a concept for you. \*

TENSER  
Yeah?

DOTRICE  
Yeah. It came to me when I noticed  
you use a Sark unit in your show.  
The Sark was originally an autopsy  
module. Did you know that? \*

TENSER  
I knew that.

DOTRICE  
Have you ever thought of using it  
for a real autopsy? As part of your  
show? \*

TENSER  
Perform an autopsy on a corpse?

(CONTINUED)

29

DOTRICE

I've got a corpse for you. A  
special corpse.

\*

Tenser risks a sidelong glance at DOTRICE. The man is CRYING  
quietly, sniffs back tears.

\*

DOTRICE (CONT'D)

Yeah. You could do a live autopsy  
on a dead body. There would be  
surprises. I can guarantee a few  
surprises.

\*

TENSER

What corpse are you talking about?

DOTRICE

My son. Eight years old.

\*

TENSER

Why is he a corpse?

DOTRICE

His mother murdered him. Wouldn't  
that be good raw material for a  
performance?

\*

TENSER

You have the body of your son?

DOTRICE

I have it. He's my son.

\*

TENSER

Wow.

DOTRICE

Yeah. I know. How radical are you?  
You afraid of a little emotion?

\*

TENSER

I'm afraid of everything.

30

INT. TENSER'S BREAKFAST ROOM - MORNING

30

Tenser is in his LifeFormWare BreakFaster chair, trying to  
eat.

\*

Caprice knocks at the door. Tenser gives up his attempts at  
eating. He massages his throat.

(CONTINUED)

TENSER

Come in.

(CONTINUED)



Caprice comes in, closes the door, paces. She looks at his ceramic tray, still full of his odd but vaguely recognizable food.

CAPRICE  
You're not eating.

TENSER  
The throat thing is very severe  
today. It won't open.

CAPRICE  
What's going on?

TENSER  
I'm not sure.

CAPRICE  
You were out for a very long time  
yesterday.

TENSER  
It's not my allergies. In fact,  
they haven't been bothering me.  
It's strange.

CAPRICE  
Are you in discomfort?

TENSER  
It's a compelling fullness. Not a  
completely bad feeling. At least,  
not uninteresting.  
(pause)  
I went to see the Klinek.

CAPRICE  
How was it?

TENSER  
The usual. It was packed.

CAPRICE  
Jealous?

TENSER  
Of course. But that's not it. I met  
a guy. On the street. He had an  
idea for a show.

31 INT. TENSER'S OPERATING THEATRE - MORNING

31

Caprice is in the Sark unit, naked. The lid is open. Tenser is playing with the controls. SHARP PROBES and CUTTING WHEELS are hovering over her body.

CAPRICE

So, I'm the boy's corpse. We'd have to modify the Sark. Convert it back into an autopsy module.

TENSER

I don't know where the law is on "acts degrading to human remains". We'd have to be outrageous to make it worthwhile. We'd have to go deep.

CAPRICE

The bust can be part of the show. We can share a cell.

TENSER

I'm not sure how we'd play the inner beauty angle. This guy, Dotrice, he said there'd be surprises when we opened the kid up. He wouldn't tell me what he meant.

\*

Tenser is starting to CUT her.

TENSER (CONT'D)

Oops. Sorry. That was the machinery talking.

CAPRICE

That was you talking. Keep going.

TENSER

Really?

CAPRICE

So far so good.

He cuts her more, very sexually.

TENSER

You could be on the inside for the next show.

(CONTINUED)

CAPRICE

Maybe. But maybe this is just for  
us.

Tenser programs the controls, lets go of them. They operate  
without him. He CLIMBS on top of her in the Sark. The cutters  
cut them both as he kisses her.

32 EXT. SHIP GRAVEYARD - NIGHT 32 \*

In the shadow of several dilapidated beached ships, Tenser  
paces back and forth, waits for somebody. It's deserted and  
quiet. \*

A man EMERGES from the shadows and approaches Tenser, and we  
soon see that it's COPE. \*

COPE \*

How're you feeling?

TENSER

What do you mean?

Cope nudges Tenser's abdomen. \*

COPE \*

Got anything cooking in there?

TENSER

Your imagination's working  
overtime.

COPE \*

I just got to see your portfolio.  
You're very prolific. I had no  
idea. It must be exhausting.

TENSER

I could live without it.

COPE \*

Listen, illuminate me. Why is Saul  
Tenser doing undercover? I mean,  
you seem pretty deep into that body-  
art stuff.

TENSER

What I'm saying with that body-art  
stuff is that I don't like what's  
happening with the body.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TENSER (CONT'D)

In particular, I don't like what's  
happening with my body, which is  
why I keep cutting it up.

(CONTINUED)

COPE \*  
Huh. Your partner, Caprice. She's  
in the dark about this? The under  
the covers?

TENSER  
Yeah.

COPE \*  
Totally?

TENSER  
Yeah.

COPE \*  
She can't read your insides? There  
aren't any traces there that say  
"undercover stoolie"?

TENSER  
You really are imaginative.

COPE \*  
I told you. What have you got for  
me?

Tenser hands COPE the business card he got from Berceau. COPE \*  
looks at it.

COPE (CONT'D) \*  
(reading card)  
Dr. Nasatir. Cosmetic surgery.  
(to Tenser)  
So?

TENSER  
Someone contacted me at the Klinek  
show.

COPE \*  
I heard it was a good show. Very  
disturbing. Multiple ears. Wow. Got  
to be good. \*

TENSER  
It was OK if you like escapist  
propaganda.  
(pause)  
This someone talked to me about my  
take on inner beauty. Said I should  
really consult with a doctor. Dr.  
Nasatir.

(CONTINUED)

32

COPE

Inner beauty, huh? That's right up  
your alley.

\*

TENSER

I guess that's why she was talking  
to me.

COPE

OK, good. Follow it up. Find out  
what it means. What else?

\*

TENSER

Why is your body-crime unit called  
New Vice? I don't get the vice  
part.

COPE

Somebody in the Bureau thought it  
was sexier than Evolutionary  
Derangement. Sexier means easier  
funding. Anything else?

\*

TENSER

Yeah.

(pause)

You have a woman named Djuna  
Dotrice in the Metro Pen.

\*

COPE

We have? New Vice has her?

\*

TENSER

Probably just Old Homicide. She's  
in for murder, murdered her own  
kid.

COPE

Yeah, well?

\*

TENSER

I need to talk to her.

33

INT. NATIONAL ORGAN REGISTRY OFFICE - DAY

33

Another drab NOR office—or have we been in this one before?  
Hard to tell. Cope and Boss sit across a desk from each  
other.

\*

BOSS

Your assessment?

(CONTINUED)

33

COPE

He's very volatile, very unstable.  
He's more them than he is us.

\*

BOSS

That can be good.

COPE

It's the old story. The perfect  
undercover agent fuses with his  
cover and forgets he's an agent.  
Perfection but useless. It could  
happen with Tenser.

\*

BOSS

We can pull him.

COPE

Not yet. He's still functioning as  
an agent.

\*

BOSS

His body? What do you think?

COPE

His body is his seal of  
authenticity. As long as he keeps  
cutting himself up and pulling  
those things out, who's gonna blow  
the whistle on him?

\*

BOSS

I mean, if his body changes his  
mind...

Cope makes a hammer-coming-down-on-a-firing-pin gesture with  
his thumb and index finger.

\*

COPE

Then we change our minds.

\*

34

EXT. ROUTER AND BERST'S SHOP - DAY

34

A concrete-block former gas station now bears a sign reading  
"ROUTER AND BERST - AUTHORIZED LIFEFORMWARE REPAIRS". The  
intersection of two desolate suburban streets.

\*

35 INT. ROUTER AND BERST'S SHOP - DAY

35

In the middle of their Spartan but very clean and orderly work space, Router and Berst have bolted Tenser's Sark unit onto an immense STEEL ROTATING WORKSTAND. They have the machine partially dismantled, and its complex insides are strewn over a variety of metal-topped tables and tool cabinets.

Along the walls of the shop stand several LifeFormWare products, mostly chairs—we've seen one of them, the BreakFaster—that have come in for repairs. Caprice wanders amongst these sculpturally provocative machines while Router and Berst chatter on as they work. They're wearing their working overalls and boots, but not much else.

\*

\*

ROUTER

The Sark was originally a coroners' autopsy sarcophagus. When they went out of style in the medical profession, they took on a new life as artists' supplies.

BERST

I've heard that some Sarks that were modified for performance surgery have been really brutally hacked around, but this one was converted by someone with a very delicate touch. It's in beautiful shape.

ROUTER

Where's your partner?

CAPRICE

Saul likes me do the techno dog work.

(picks up something sharp)

Keeps me in touch with my roots.

Caprice is paying no attention to the working duo. Router nudges Berst, lays down her tools, and begins to SLIP OFF her overalls. Berst suppresses a laugh and begins to do the same.

ROUTER

What happened to him?

CAPRICE

The body-growth thing.

(CONTINUED)



BERST

Is there a name for it?

CAPRICE

Accelerated Evolution Syndrome.  
Your body gets very inventive and  
throws a lot of new stuff at you. I  
guess it wants to see what sticks  
for the next generation. There  
seems to be a lot of it around.

ROUTER

But Tenser isn't letting anything  
stick, is he? I mean, not if he  
gets rid of it all - the new,  
improved body parts?

CAPRICE

It's pathological. It's not  
healthy. It's a breakdown of the  
system. An organism needs  
organisation. Otherwise, it's just  
designer cancer.

BERST

Hey, Caprice. Check us out!

Caprice, cruising the LifeFormWare repair items, hasn't been  
looking at the Sark mechanics for the last minute or two—and  
neither have we. She turns in their direction now and bursts  
out laughing.

\*

The two women have shed their overalls and have somehow  
INSTALLED themselves stark naked in the partially dismantled  
chassis of the Sark. Their chunky bodies are intertwined and  
adorned with electrical wires and machine pieces and their  
arms are outstretched in a theatrical TADDA! posture.

BERST (CONT'D)

Whaddya think? Do we gotta future  
in performance here?

Tenser makes his way down a street to Dr. Nasatir's address  
and finds himself looking up at a modern high-rise that is  
already showing signs of decay.

37 INT. HALLWAY. DOCTOR NASATIR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

37

Tenser walks down the hallway, finally finds Dr. Nasatir's door, knocks. A man with rolled-up sleeves opens the door. He is Eastern, but not quite Asian—Turkish, perhaps—and he is letting someone else out, a very young man, maybe eighteen. The young man flashes a knowing look at Tenser.

YOUNG MAN

Thank you, Doctor.

(laughs)

I feel so much more open.

As the young man walks away down the hall, DR. NASATIR turns to Tenser.

NASATIR

Saul Tenser. Come on in.

38 INT. DOCTOR NASATIR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

38

Tenser enters Nasatir's apartment. A quick look around suggests that this is indeed the Doctor's apartment, and not a doctor's office in the normal sense. A 60s abortionist-style setup.

NASATIR

This is very exciting.

TENSER

Is it?

NASATIR

Seeing you here—it's like a lightning bolt from the blue. It strikes you very hard and very convincingly. Let me take your coat.

Tenser hesitates.

TENSER

I'd prefer to keep it on, if you don't mind. I get cold.

NASATIR

(shrugs)

If you don't mind staining.

(gestures)

Please.

39

INT. DOCTOR NASATIR'S APARTMENT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

39

Nasatir leads Tenser into his kitchen. He gestures towards the KITCHEN TABLE.

NASATIR

Please. Just hop up on there and expose your abdomen.

Tenser finds a plastic step-stool at the foot of the table. He steps on it and sits, starts opening his coat, his vest, his shirt.

TENSER

Tell me about the lightning bolt.

NASATIR

Saul Tenser and the Inner Beauties.  
It's a marriage made in heaven.

Nasatir now starts to PROBE Tenser's very scarred abdomen.

NASATIR (CONT'D)

Perhaps you'd better lie down.

TENSER

(lying down)

The Inner Beauties.

Nasatir draws a LINE across Tenser's abdomen with his very long, elegant index finger.

NASATIR

I propose to install the rip-lock here. It will give you maximum access.

TENSER

Access to what?

Nasatir laughs, then turns to his kitchen counter top where he finds a sewing kit box. He opens it and removes a device that looks like a PORTABLE HEM-STITCHER, only nasty. He turns back to Tenser and begins to apply the device to the proposed cut line on Tenser's abdomen. BLOOD flows.

NASATIR

For a man of your experience, this will be nothing.

And in truth it does seem to be nothing to Tenser. He barely seems to notice the surgery he's undergoing.

(CONTINUED)

TENSER

I believe I'm here to discuss my  
political problem.

NASATIR

I wasn't aware you had one.

TENSER

I wasn't either, but Adrienne  
Berceau seems to think I do.

NASATIR

Ah, Adrienne. She's so dramatic.  
Listen. Me, I'm just a mechanic, an  
installer of doors and windows into  
the future. The politics will come  
soon, when you are registered.

TENSER

Registered for what?

NASATIR

(a kindly, bemused smile)  
He doesn't even know.  
(pause)  
For the Inner Beauty Pageant. I'm  
sure you'll be a contender.

Another kitchen. Caprice finishes a fairly conventional meal  
while Tenser watches, prods his new RIP-LOCK, which is  
basically a plastic zipper built into his flesh.

TENSER

How's the Sark coming along?

CAPRICE

Our LifeFormWare friends are  
very... how can I put it? Very  
playful.

\*

TENSER

Is that a good thing?

CAPRICE

They love it to death, that piece  
of machinery. They literally  
salivate on it. They won't hurt it.  
(indicates rip-lock)  
What's this? Cut yourself shaving?

(CONTINUED)

TENSER

I seem to be a contestant in the  
Inner Beauty Pageant. It's very  
hush-hush. Might not be quite  
legal.

CAPRICE

(touching it)

The things you drag home.

TENSER

I'm going to enter in the category  
of Best Original Organ Based On No  
Known Function.

(indicates rip-lock)

This is like a raincoat for  
internal organ flashers.

Tenser arches back over the edge of the table and RIPS open  
his rip-lock. Sure enough, we see internal organs pulsating  
and quivering and juicing. Caprice is excited. She delicately  
touches.

CAPRICE

(excited)

Wow. A whole new world opens up.

(depressed)

Wait a minute. Have we just been  
made obsolete?

Tenser zips back up and sits up.

TENSER

No, of course not. This is just a  
functional thing. It's a zippered  
fly or a velcro flap. It's not art.  
It's not sensual. Remember what our  
Registry friend said: sex is  
surgery. A zipper can't replace our  
Sark.

CAPRICE

I think she said, "Surgery is the  
new sex." Besides, velcro has its  
own sex appeal.

Caprice sidles over to Tenser and we hear the sound of a rip-  
lock being UNRIPPED.

TENSER

Careful. Don't spill.

She goes down on his access flap, out of frame. Tenser's head  
rolls back and he moans in ecstasy.

41 EXT. METROPOLITAN PENITENTIARY - DAY

41

Tenser stands outside what seems to be just another bland, low-rent high-rise.

After a beat, he enters the building, and we read a small, embossed metal plaque that reads: METROPOLITAN PENITENTIARY, and below that a plastic sign that reads: PLEASE PREPARE IDENTIFICATION.

42 INT. METROPOLITAN PENITENTIARY. INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

42

Tenser sits across a lunch table from a woman we have seen before—DJUNA DOTRICE. She looks even more tired and frazzled \* than before, but still has the same CRAZED intensity in her eyes and body posture.

The prison interview room is low-ceilinged and depressing in its total lack of drama or danger. It looks like an office lunchroom. There are two other interviews going on in the room, family affairs, both very subdued.

DJUNA

He ate a plastic wastepaper basket.  
What would you do?

TENSER

I wouldn't kill him. A little kid.  
My own son.

DJUNA

(contemptuous)

But he wouldn't be your own son. He  
wouldn't even be a little kid.

TENSER

What would he be?

DJUNA

A creature. A thing. A thing my  
husband invented to torment me.

TENSER

A thing that can eat a plastic  
wastepaper basket.

DJUNA

Eat it and enjoy it and eat nothing  
but plastic and weird synthetic  
stuff.

(maniacal laugh)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DJUNA (CONT'D)

He would take that watch that  
you're wearing and he'd have it for  
lunch.

TENSER

He could digest plastic?

DJUNA

He had this weird, thick white  
drool that he'd slurp over  
everything. It was like acid. It'd  
dissolve any kind of plasticky  
stuff. It would sting if you got it  
on your skin. Didn't bother him,  
though. That lizard.

TENSER

Your husband is Lang Dotrice.

\*

DJUNA

Was. Was my husband. I've disowned  
him. Fuck him.

TENSER

He invented your son?

DJUNA

Yeah. That's how I think of it. And  
here's another thing I think of.  
The thought of that slimy worm  
growing in me still makes me sick.  
I'm glad I didn't know it at the  
time. I would have gone crazy.

TENSER

The police tell me they haven't  
found the body of your son Brecken.  
I get the feeling they don't think  
you really killed him.

DJUNA

I confess and they don't believe  
me.

(laughs)

The perfect crime.

TENSER

You confessed.

DJUNA

Yeah.

TENSER

Why?

(CONTINUED)

The slightest hitch in her voice. The slightest TRACE of regret. But only slight. Tenser thinks that she's the non-human.

DJUNA  
I'm guilty.

TENSER  
Where's the body?

DJUNA  
Lang has it. Unless he's thrown it away.

TENSER  
How did he get it?

DJUNA  
I left it for him. My little divorce present.

TENSER  
What is Lang going to do with the body?

DJUNA  
Maybe him and his cannibal friends are going to eat it. Who the fuck knows? Who the fuck cares?

TENSER  
His friends are cannibals?

DJUNA  
(laughs)  
If you're a Barbie Doll, then they're cannibals.

TENSER  
If the police found Brecken's body and did an autopsy, what do you think they'd find inside it?

DJUNA  
(laughs)  
Outer space.



43 INT. SPA BEAUTY SPA - DAY

43

In the vast, marble-tiled space of the Spa Beauty Spa, amid the deep hair-washing sinks and the leather pump-action swivel chairs, the performance artist ODILE lies draped on a classic chaise-longue with her FACE OPENED UP by a plastic surgeon.

IMPLANTS in her forehead, her cheeks, her chin; collagen in her lips, her brows.

On small screens mounted everywhere we see the various SURGERIES that preceded this one, and the models of CLASSICAL feminine beauty upon which her performances are based.

We see the chin of Botticelli's Venus, the forehead of the Mona Lisa, the eyes of Gérôme's Psyche, the lips of Moreau's Europa: all images isolated by computer and mapped over images of her own face to indicate her surgical destination.

Other screens and speakers pump out challenges to notions of female beauty, human aesthetics, sexuality.

The crowd is relatively small, maybe thirty-five people, not kids, educated, well-dressed. There are many cameras in evidence, but few retro-cams, mostly ring-cams, earring-cams. A SERIOUS group, not there just for fun.

And they are thinking hard as Odile and her crew quietly DELUGE them with images, concepts and blood, and among those thinking hard are Caprice and, somewhere at the edges, Wippet. No Timlin, no Tenser.

44 INT. SPA BEAUTY SPA - LATER

44

A low-key but intense post-performance party is in progress, with a very small group in attendance. One couple is engaged in some PLAYFUL desktop surgery involving FEET, but for the rest, it's drinking and conversation.

Wippet has corralled Caprice, but she's really got her eye on Odile, who is surrounded by her crew and a few hangers-on.

\*

WIPPET

Where's Mr. Tenser?

CAPRICE

(distracted)

He's doing some research. Where's your friend Timlin?

(CONTINUED)

WIPPET

She was intimidated.

CAPRICE

By whom?

WIPPET

We've been forbidden to mingle.  
It's now become part of the job  
description. I'm risking my career  
just being here, but I can't stay  
away.

(mischievous smile)

I've got the fever.

Caprice can see that Odile is about to make an exit.

CAPRICE

Forgive me. I've got to talk to her  
before she goes.

Wippet smiles and takes another drink from the washstand  
which is being used as an impromptu bar. He's nervous and  
he's looking for REGISTRY SPIES, but he's not going to leave.

INT. SPA BEAUTY SPA - MOMENTS LATER

Caprice talks to Odile, who smiles, touches her arm, responds  
to her with great warmth. Odile has a heavy French accent  
and, at the moment, a very BRUISED and STITCHED-TOGETHER  
face.

ODILE

You have no idea how hard it's been  
for me to find plastic surgeons who  
understand that I do not wish to be  
made more beautiful.

CAPRICE

Surgeons tend to be very focussed  
and unimaginative. It's considered  
a strength.

(pause)

I was a surgeon myself. Not  
cosmetic surgery. Trauma.

ODILE

(enjoying the word)

Trauma. But that's very  
provocative. I enjoy trauma. What I  
do to myself is very traumatic.

(CONTINUED)

45

CAPRICE

Is it? You seem so peaceful, so  
beatific while your surgery is  
going on. Watching you suddenly  
filled me with the desire to cut my  
face open.

(coy sip of her drink)

It was a feeling that shocked me.

ODILE

(flirtatious)

A desire to be open is often the  
beginning of something new and  
exciting. Perhaps you would like to  
join me and the troupe at the hotel  
later this evening?

46

INT. TENSER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

46

Caprice has come back from her Odile evening with a slightly  
MODIFIED FOREHEAD.

She sports A TINY EMBEDDED CORONA in her brow, just below her  
hairline, like antler buds on a young deer. Tenser examines  
her stitches, presses around the corona. (NOTE: The stitches  
and redness will disappear in a few scenes, but the corona  
remain until the end.)

\*  
\*  
\*

TENSER

(examining her face)

A desire to be open?

CAPRICE

Metaphorically. Emotionally.  
Artistically.

TENSER

You want to take over the Brecken  
show.

CAPRICE

I want to perform the autopsy. I  
want to perform.

TENSER

Well, this is new.

CAPRICE

Yes, it is.

TENSER

You were too shy before.

(CONTINUED)

CAPRICE

I'm not too shy now. I think. Will you have something new for the show? We could definitely work in a Tenser extraction. Double Autopsy.

TENSER

I do have something cooking. Maybe a few things. But I'm happy to let them stay inside for now.

CAPRICE

That might not be healthy.

TENSER

We could extract privately if it's a problem. Doesn't have to be a performance.

CAPRICE

Don't let it go too long.

TENSER

How was Odile's show?

CAPRICE

It was brilliant. She's exhilarating.

(pause)

She says hello.

TENSER

Hello.

CAPRICE

I want to do more than perform. I want to construct. I want to construct the Brecken show.

TENSER

It already has an innate structure. A murdered boy. A very strange boy. A public autopsy. Some surprises.

CAPRICE

I want to work with it. It's juicy with meaning.

TENSER

You'll have to meet Dotrice, the boy's father. You'll have to convince him.

\*

(CONTINUED)

CAPRICE  
I'll convince him.

47 INT. GOVERNMENT BUILDING. HALLWAY - DAY 47

Tenser stands outside the door labelled N.O.REGISTRY. The door opens and Wippet is there. Wippet smiles a huge, NERVOUS smile.

WIPPET  
Saul Tenser. Come on in.

48 INT. NATIONAL ORGAN REGISTRY OFFICE - DAY 48

TENSER  
What's up?

WIPPET  
I want your advice as a neo-organ generator. I want to show you our safe room.

49 INT. NATIONAL ORGAN REGISTRY OFFICE. SAFE ROOM - DAY 49

Another room that looks like all the others - and yet, there is something about it.

WIPPET  
This is where we archive our more provocative material.

TENSER  
I thought it was all provocative.

Wippet turns to face Tenser. He is GIDDY and childlike and excited, flushed.

WIPPET  
You, you provoke us. You provoke me.  
(giddy)  
I'm so glad you're with us. It makes such emotional sense.

TENSER  
Who's us?

(CONTINUED)

WIPPET  
(giddy laugh)  
I'm the one. I'm the Registrar for  
the Inner Beauty Pageant. Shhh.  
Don't tell.

TENSER  
Registration seems to be your  
strong suit.

WIPPET  
I think you've got a good chance to  
win your category. If I were you,  
I'd even go for Best In Show.

TENSER  
I'm not sure I'll have anything to  
show. I might have to fake it.

Wippet's face clouds over. There is suddenly an element of  
DANGER there, something we haven't seen before.

WIPPET  
(a sea change)  
Speaking of faking it. I said it  
makes emotional sense for you to be  
with the Inner Beauties, and it  
does. But you know, it doesn't make  
logical sense.

TENSER  
No?

WIPPET  
No. The Inner Beauty Pageant is all  
about acceptance. Acknowledgement.  
Aesthetic empowerment. You, Saul  
Tenser, you're all about anger,  
rebellion, rejection by scalpel.

Tenser pauses, turns as if to leave, hand on the door handle.

TENSER  
This has been a mistake, hasn't it?  
You're right. I'd be a fish out of  
water at your little secret event.

Wippet lunges towards Tenser MELODRAMATICALLY, almost grabs  
his hand, doesn't, begins to sob, hands to face.

WIPPET  
(sobbing)  
Don't go! We need you! We want you!  
It'll fall apart without you!

(CONTINUED)

Tenser is taken aback. He has to work hard to keep from LAUGHING.

TENSER

What if I win for best original organ and then I rip it out in public at my next show? Wouldn't that humiliate your group?

Wippet regains his composure with surprising swiftness, only a few stray snuffles.

WIPPET

(regaining composure)

It's star power. We'll settle. Whatever you want. And maybe, yes, maybe, you'll begin to see it our way.

Tenser lets go of the door handle.

TENSER

So, OK, we rewind. I'm here to register for the Inner Beauty Pageant.

WIPPET

Yes, exactly. Well, I'm the one who's going to certify your rip-lock. Dr. Nasatir is lovely, isn't he? A very refined and elegant man. And once we've done that, we decide what category you'll compete in, and how you'd like to present yourself. Can we burrow through those layers of clothing, please? I'm so excited!

Tenser walks down the dismal hallway towards the light, the front doors. Halfway down it he is INTERCEPTED by a sprightly Timlin, loping like a gazelle.

TIMLIN

Mr. Tenser? Saul?

TENSER

Yes? Oh, it's you.

TIMLIN

Could you come into my office?

51 INT. NATIONAL ORGAN REGISTRY. TIMLIN'S OFFICE - DAY 51

Timlin's office is just a variation on the government theme. There are three chairs in her office, but they don't sit. They pace, they dance a slow PAS DE DEUX.

TIMLIN  
You were just with Mr. Wippet.

TENSER  
I was.

TIMLIN  
I'm very worried about him.

TENSER  
He seemed to be in fine form.

TIMLIN  
It's a very dangerous form that he's in.

TENSER  
I don't understand.

TIMLIN  
In our line of work it's very easy to be dazzled by the glamour of the performance world, the charismatic people we meet, like, well, like you.

TENSER  
I see.

TIMLIN  
Do you?

TENSER  
Maybe not. Tell me.

TIMLIN  
This is our world. This office, this building. From the centre of it, deep within it, a beautiful white light emanates outwards. That light is you, what you create, and those like you.

Timlin gets physically closer to Tenser as she speaks. He slips subtly away, but she subtly pursues, as though drawn by his GRAVITATIONAL PULL.

(CONTINUED)



TIMLIN (CONT'D)

It is hard for us, drab little  
bureaucratic insects that we are,  
not to be drawn into your powerful  
gravitational field. Hurtling  
towards you, plunging into your  
black hole that pulls all light  
into it. We want to follow that  
light, fuse with that light.

TENSER

Has Wippet done some fusing, do you  
think?

TIMLIN

He is drawn to inner beauty.

TENSER

Is he playing games with subversive  
groups? Is that what you mean?

Timlin begins to cry, collapses on Tenser's chest, hugs him,  
nuzzles him.

TIMLIN

I'm so fond of him, but I think I  
might have to turn him in.

Tenser kisses her temple in a soothing, brotherly way.

TENSER

(kisses her)

Don't do that.

(pause)

How safe is this room?

TIMLIN

Totally. You can be open with me.

TENSER

Yeah. Open. Have you ever run  
across a neo-organ, or rather, a  
system of neo-organs, that had a  
digestive function? A system that  
could digest synthetics, plastics,  
that sort of thing?

TIMLIN

No. That sounds interesting,  
though. We've only seen single  
organ growths here, like yours. Of  
course, nobody knows what would  
happen if those growths were  
allowed to accumulate.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

51

TIMLIN (CONT'D)

Do you think they actually could  
eve... oops, I almost said evolve,  
but I didn't... develop into an  
actual organ system, like the  
nervous system, the circulatory  
system, the lymphatic...?

They have become TANGLED UP in an awkward, half-embrace.

TENSER

You're very good with human  
physiology.

TIMLIN

Do you think you'd ever let me be  
part of your show? I'd love to be  
in that Sark module with you at the  
controls.

TENSER

That would definitely fall into the  
category of New Vice.

TIMLIN

That's where I live.

Timlin grabs Tenser and sticks her tongue down his throat.  
For a moment, some SERIOUS KISSING ensues, but Tenser finally  
pulls away.

TENSER

I'm sorry, I'm just not very good  
at the old sex.

52

INT. DOCTOR NASATIR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

52

Doctor Nasatir is in his apartment eating dinner. He is in a  
LIFEFORMWARE BREAKFASTER CHAIR. It fidgets and adjusts as he  
struggles to eat with the by-now-familiar odd eating  
implements. \*

There is a KNOCK at the door. Annoyed, Nasatir levers himself  
out of his chair and goes to the door, opens it.

It's Router and Berst, TOOLBOXES in hand, ready for work.

ROUTER

Doctor Nasatir?

NASATIR

(wary)

Yes?

(CONTINUED)

BERST  
Router and Berst of LifeFormWare. \*  
Authorized technicians.

ROUTER  
You called us, we're here.

NASATIR  
(confused)  
Did I call you?

BERST  
A paradigm shift in your  
BreakFaster chair.

NASATIR  
Yes, that's true. But I'm just  
eating now.

Router and Berst smile and nod at each other.

ROUTER  
Perfect timing.

52A EXT. DOCTOR NASATIR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 52A \*  
Router and Berst exit the apartment still smiling. \*

52B INT. DOCTOR NASATIR' APARTMENT - NIGHT 52B \*  
Dr. Nasatir lies slumped in his BreakFaster Chair bleeding \*  
profusely from several head wounds. \*

53 EXT. RURAL TRAILERS AND ACCESSORIES - NIGHT 53  
Somewhere in an industrial wasteland set down in the middle  
of the countryside, we look at a nondescript INDUSTRIAL  
PLAZA.  
We follow Dotrice as he walks towards it, eating a purple \*  
candy bar. He comes to a slab-steel door marked: RURAL  
TRAILERS AND ACCESSORIES. He knocks on the door. It is opened  
by a slight, bearded man - TARR. They shake hands warmly.  
DOTRICE \*  
Tarr.

(CONTINUED)

53

TARR  
Lang. Everybody's here.

54

INT. RURAL TRAILERS AND ACCESSORIES - NIGHT

54

A group of about FORTY PEOPLE are sitting around at a series of steel workshop tables. They are all quietly eating MEALS on paper plates. The meals, prepared by two solemn men and one woman, are basically chopped-up purple bars and some other strange, SHINY SYNTHETIC MUSH. There is a RITUAL feeling to this eating without any obvious trappings of ritual.

(CONTINUED)

Humming along around them is a grungy, man-powered ASSEMBLY LINE which is producing these meals and MANY VARIETIES OF PURPLE BAR - some are bread-loaf sized - along with vats grinding up the basic ingredients, spouts pouring the stuff into moulds, fixers which dry the resulting bars, and a hand-operated vacuum-wrapper which sucks the metallic plastic wrappers around the bars and seals them.

TARR

Why don't you take a load off?  
Toss that mini-bar and have some  
mush. It's a new brew. Got some  
fabulous polyethylenes. You won't  
believe the snap in your throat.

DOTRICE

Tarr, if we have to move the  
commune, I mean, the whole  
operation, the assembly line,  
everything - how quick can it be?

\*

TARR

You're expecting problems?

DOTRICE

I'm going ahead with the Brecken  
autopsy. I'm going to seal it  
tonight with Saul Tenser and his  
people. Finally, what we're doing  
is going to be very public, and  
it's going to resonate.

\*

TARR

You sure this is the best way?  
Putting your son's murder at the  
centre of it makes it very  
personal, Lang. Wouldn't it be  
better for you to get some distance  
on it?

DOTRICE

(a wry laugh)

I keep my son's body in my freezer.  
That's a distance of about five  
inches. And that's as far away as  
it's ever going to get.

\*

We are looking at Dotrice's FREEZER, a large floor unit.  
Dotrice is standing beside it, looking out the window at the  
street.

\*

\*

56 EXT. DOTRICE'S PLACE - NIGHT 56 \*

Tenser and Caprice are standing on the sidewalk looking up at Dotrice. \*

57 INT. DOTRICE'S PLACE - NIGHT 57 \*

Dotrice raises his hand in acknowledgement, then lowers his blinds. He sits on his bed and waits. The room is small, dominated by the freezer. A cheap furnished room in a cheap hotel. \*

The knock at the door. Dotrice gets up and lets Tenser and Caprice in. Dotrice gestures with a laugh. \*

DOTRICE \*

(laughs)

Sit anywhere you like.

They sit, Caprice on the bed, Tenser on a metal folding chair. Dotrice leans against the freezer. \*

TENSER

This is Caprice. She's my partner.

DOTRICE \*

Hi. Yeah. I've seen your work.  
Beautiful.

CAPRICE

(instant glow)

Thank you.

TENSER

(pause)

I talked to your wife.

DOTRICE \*

(tense)

Did you? Why did you do that?

TENSER

I wanted to know what we were getting into.

DOTRICE \*

Do you know now?

TENSER

Not exactly.

(CONTINUED)

DOTRICE

Maybe we should start with this.

Dotrice steps back from the freezer, UNLATCHES the lid and swings it wide open. The inside cold seems to breathe into the room. Tenser and Caprice exchange nervous glances. Dotrice catches it.

DOTRICE (CONT'D)

Don't you want to take a look at your raw material?

Tenser and Caprice stand up and drift over to the freezer. Inside, curled up in the fetal position, is the BODY OF BRECKEN, beautiful, blonde, icy blue.

Tears spring into Caprice's eyes. She turns away, sits back down on the bed. Tenser looks down at the frozen corpse, drilling into it with his eyes. Dotrice gives him a few more seconds, then gently CLOSES the freezer lid.

CAPRICE

(to Tenser)

I don't think we should do this.

DOTRICE

Maybe you shouldn't.

TENSER

But it's obvious that you really want us to. Why do you?

DOTRICE

I need to make a statement. A very public statement.

TENSER

Wouldn't a formal police autopsy make that statement?

DOTRICE

(laughs)

It would be covered up. You'd never hear a thing.

CAPRICE

(shaky)

Performance art is all consensual. This would be different. This would be... different.

DOTRICE

You'll have my consent. Brecken isn't talking.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DOTRICE (CONT'D)

(to Tenser)

I'm sure you realize that Djuna  
doesn't care what happens to her  
son's body.

TENSER

I got the feeling she was obsessed  
with his body. Especially his  
digestive system.

DOTRICE

Ah, well.

Dotrice pulls out a purple candy bar. The wrapper has been  
opened and folded back over the half that's left. Dotrice  
opens the shiny wrapper to expose the purple bar itself.

DOTRICE (CONT'D)

(to Tenser)

Ever eaten one of these?

TENSER

Never seen one of those before.

DOTRICE

Go ahead. I think it'll be a  
revelation.

TENSER

I'm very fussy about my food.

DOTRICE

So was Brecken.

(takes a bite)

So am I.

(chews)

Does the EatWare application work  
for you? I looked at those  
BreakFaster chairs from  
LifeFormWare in a showroom window  
once. The way they adjust every  
little part of your body to make  
chewing, swallowing and digesting  
easy. At one point in my life I  
thought they might be the answer.

TENSER

To what question?

DOTRICE

The eating problem that I have,  
that Brecken had... and that you  
have.

(CONTINUED)



TENSER

You think they're related?

DOTRICE

You're a man who's fighting what he really is. You should let your body lead you to where it wants to go, instead of hacking it to pieces and displaying it in a hidden museum like the bones of an extinct animal.

CAPRICE

Saul would be dead now if he listened to that advice. His body wants to kill him. What we're doing is, we're making art out of anarchy. We're creating meaning out of emptiness.

DOTRICE

Are you? Has it ever occurred to you that you might simply be interfering in a fantastic natural process that you should surrender to?

TENSER

It never has.

DOTRICE

Will you do the Brecken show?

58 EXT. SHIP GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

58 \*

Under the shadows of the beached abandoned ships, Tenser meets COPE.

TENSER

Should I do the Brecken show? What does New Vice want to get out of this?

COPE

You have a new best friend.

TENSER

Who would that be?

(CONTINUED)

COPE

Lang Dotrice. We want him. But we  
don't want just him. We want his  
group of freaks. All of them.

\*  
\*

(CONTINUED)

TENSER

I don't know anything about a group.

COPE

You'll find out about the group. He likes you. He trusts you.

TENSER

He trusts me to cut up his dead son in public. What'll that get us?

COPE

It could get you to the next stage, which is infiltration. We want to know everything there is to know about Dotrice and his plastic-eating comrades.

TENSER

Plastic-eating?

COPE

You don't get it yet?

TENSER

You talking about those purple candy bars?

COPE

Ever try eating one of those? One of our agents did. He's as dead as Brecken now.

TENSER

Poisoned him?

COPE

They're synth bars. Synthetic, man-made stuff. Toxic. Deadly. A normal human can't eat that stuff. But those people, they just munch away, no problem. They're evolving away from the human path, Saul. It can't be allowed to continue.

TENSER

We do the show and what? You raid the show, grab Dotrice?

COPE

No. You do the show. Dotrice loves you. He clasps you to his bosom.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

58

COPE (CONT'D)

You go with him as his follower.  
You live with his commune. And  
then, when we tell you to, you let  
us in.

TENSER

Dotrice thinks the publicity from  
the show will blow the lid off  
something. Thinks it'll be the  
beginning of the evolution  
revolution.

\*

COPE

There will be no media outlet at  
that show that New Vice won't  
control. It won't go anywhere.

\*

TENSER

(shrugs)

OK.

COPE

OK. So.

(nasty)

The show must go on. Speaking of  
shows, where are we with the Inner  
Beauty Pageant?

\*

TENSER

That show's not going on. It's been  
cancelled. Apparently a crucial  
Doctor Nasatir has disappeared. The  
organizers are having trouble  
finding a replacement. They're  
quite despondent.

COPE

That's a good sign. We've got 'em  
spooked. At least something's  
working. Too bad, though, in a way.  
(coat-opening gesture)  
I was looking forward to seeing you  
do your inner striptease.

\*

59

INT. ROUTER AND BERST'S SHOP - NIGHT

59

Router, Berst, Caprice and Dotrice are standing in a line,  
awkward, LOOKING at something with degrees of awe, sadness,  
wistfulness.

\*

(CONTINUED)

They are looking at BRECKEN, who lies locked into the Sark module, his beautiful blonde head still translucent and cold blue in death, his slight abdomen exposed.

ROUTER

He looks like a little ice doll.

BERST

He looks like he was never alive.

CAPRICE

(to DOTRICE)

I'll need to know what to expect.

\*

DOTRICE

You don't like surprises?

\*

CAPRICE

There will always be surprises. But I need to be able to shape the performance. It needs to have a dramatic shape. Otherwise, it'll just be the surgery channel, and it won't have any impact. We're going to create music, and visual material on a series of screens, possibly spoken and acted pieces, all with meaning, with suggestion, with mystery and ambiguity, and with provocation.

DOTRICE

All of those things.

\*

CAPRICE

And more. Because the audience will provide surprises. The audience is not passive. The audience is interactive. And feeling that and responding to it is where the spontaneity comes in.

Dotrice APPROACHES the Sark, circles it.

\*

DOTRICE

(shrugs)

Then why don't you just cut him up now? This machine, it looks like it could put him back together again, no problem. Invisible mending, they used to call it. Dress rehearsal, with all the trimmings, no holding back.

\*

(CONTINUED)

Dotrice starts to play with some controls. Random tools begin to STIR alarmingly. Caprice takes his hands off the controls. \*

CAPRICE  
Don't do that. You won't like what happens. You have to know what you're doing.

Tenser is there, having slid in like a ghost.

TENSER  
I think that goes for all of us.

They look up at Tenser.

TENSER (CONT'D)  
I think we have to do our autopsy show now, private elite audience. Let Dotrice do it. You guide him, Caprice. \*

CAPRICE  
Are you serious?

TENSER  
We can call the show Second Autopsy. I see it all now. It could be great.

CAPRICE  
What's going on?

TENSER  
What about it, Dotrice? Or is there some reason you don't want us to look inside the box in private? \*

CAPRICE  
That's very cruel, Saul.

DOTRICE  
No, no. I get it. It's all right. You've been doing your research, and you're mistrustful now. \*

TENSER  
There are a few things you haven't been telling us.

DOTRICE  
A few things. Does it matter? Nothing that'd hurt you. Nothing that'd spoil your performance. \*

(CONTINUED)

TENSER

What about one of those candy bars  
you offered me? Would one of those  
spoil my performance?

Dotrice can't help but laugh.

\*

60 INT. RURAL TRAILERS AND ACCESSORIES - NIGHT 60

We've been here before, only now it's empty except for Tarr,  
Caprice, Dotrice, Tenser and the purple-bar-making machinery.

\*

DOTRICE

We're moving everything out. Mr.  
Tarr here's taking care of it. I  
figure the Brecken show will make  
us too hot. But this is how we feed  
ourselves. It's poison to anyone  
else.

\*

TENSER

Yeah, nice.

DOTRICE

I was just playing. Seeing if you  
knew anything. Besides, it was  
natural for me to offer a bite.  
This is what all of us eat. You  
feel familiar to me. I wouldn't  
have let you have any.

\*

TENSER

All of us is how many?

DOTRICE

Our own little cell, 60, 70 souls.  
But around the world, our network  
is vast. Really, the number's  
unknowable.

\*

TENSER

And everybody's had the same  
elaborate surgery?

Dotrice lifts his shirt and shows his scars. So does Tarr.  
The same strange PATTERNS of microsurgical holes and  
subsurface tunnelings.

\*

(CONTINUED)

DOTRICE

\*

Everybody, around the world. The procedures were developed over years of collaboration. There are variations, of course. Culturally unique versions.

TENSER

And you did it because?

DOTRICE

\*

Because our bodies were telling us it was time to change. Time for human evolution to sync up with human technology. We've got to start feeding on our own industrial waste. It's our destiny.

TENSER

The end result is that you can't eat food.

DOTRICE

\*

We eat modern food. We eat plastic. That's what we like to call it.

TENSER

If you found yourself in the open countryside, what would you eat?

DOTRICE

\*

(laughs)

Each other. No, we couldn't even do that. Not pure enough plastic.

(pause)

Somebody has to lead the way to the future. And it's us.

TENSER

And Brecken?

DOTRICE

\*

Brecken was the first-born.

TENSER

The first to be born with a plastic-processing digestive system. The first to be naturally unnatural.

DOTRICE

\*

She hated us. Djuna. She stole Brecken away from us. She didn't really know what a gem her kid was. She couldn't handle it.

(CONTINUED)



TENSER

He really must have been a gem.  
Because what you're saying sounds  
insane to me.

DOTRICE

Why? What?

\*

TENSER

Are you saying that your surgery,  
the surgery that made you a plastic-  
eater, was somehow replicated  
genetically in your son? That  
surgically-acquired characteristics  
became inheritable? You cut off  
your little finger and your kids  
are born without little fingers?  
That's not desirable and not  
possible.

DOTRICE

Brecken was our miracle child. He  
was everything we all wanted to be.  
That's all I can say. I can't say I  
understand the process.

\*

TENSER

And our Brecken show?

DOTRICE

I wanted to someday present my son  
to the world, to show the world  
that the future of humanity existed  
and was good. Was at peace and  
harmony with the techno world that  
we've created. Now, all I can do is  
present the reality of his dead  
little body as a promise of the  
future. And I need you to do that.

\*

TENSER

They'll try to discredit you.  
They'll say that it's a hoax, an  
alien autopsy. They do fear you and  
want to destroy you. You must be  
aware of that.

DOTRICE

The people who need to believe,  
will believe.

\*

TENSER

It is an intimate thing, what we  
do.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

60

TENSER (CONT'D)

And it will feel like a violation  
for it to be done in public.

DOTRICE

I know. But it has to be done.

\*  
\*

TENSER

You're saying that when we open  
Brecken up, we'll see a perfect,  
natural child who was born with  
what amounts to a completely  
deviant digestive system. He'll  
have... three stomachs like a goat.  
It'll be obvious that he's  
different.

DOTRICE

I don't know what we'll see. But I  
know he'll be beautiful. Sweet and  
real and beautiful.

\*

61

INT. VICTORIAN BANK - NIGHT

61

The setup for the Brecken show is basically as it was for  
Tenser's own performance.

Massive screens everywhere, all at the moment bearing the  
words FIRST AUTOPSY. Rubble architecture. Huge rooms with  
high ceilings all very open to each other. A forest of pseudo-  
Greek columns and architectural flourishes. No seats. Crowds  
swarming and schooling like fish.

And as before, there are tons of CAMERAS in evidence, from  
ring-cams to pro-studio to retro-coverage.

Amid the crowd we find Router and Berst, and Dotrice, and  
Wippet and Timlin. Timlin has a SURREPTITIOUS look about her.  
She is studiously avoiding eye contact with Wippet.

\*

WIPPET

(to Timlin)

Surprised to see you here. Couldn't  
stay away?

TIMLIN

(evasive)

Guess not. Special event. Worth the  
risk.

(CONTINUED)

And tons of audio coverage as well, because the retro-cameras don't record their own sound, so there are amateur boom-men and headphone-wearing Nagra/shotgun-mike carriers. Hot and sweaty and churning.

But there is a big difference here, and that difference is CAPRICE: it's her show, not Tenser's, and the lighting is cool and melancholy and simple, and so is the music and the imagery on the screens.

The SARK rolls out from behind a wall, but this time there are no S/M overtones, no straps and buckles. And Caprice appears, dressed very SIMPLY, no control-panel breast plate, no techno-frivolity.

Brecken's body is already LOCKED into the Sark, and so his reveal to the audience is over the screens surrounding the playing area.

The crowd goes quiet and still when they see the subject of First Autopsy: Brecken does look like a BEAUTIFUL ICE DOLL, and the Sark, lit starkly, its outlandish details standing out in high relief, does look like an eerie alien sarcophagus.

And finally we find TENSER, behind the wall, working with Isbister at the lighting, sound and effects boards, working the sliders subtly, sensitively, FOCUSED on Caprice and in tune with what she says and does.

CAPRICE

We've all wanted to see an autopsy,  
haven't we? We've all felt that the  
body was empty, empty of meaning  
and we've wanted to confirm that,  
so that we could fill it with  
meaning. Autopsia means a seeing  
for oneself. Why First Autopsy?  
Because we know there'll have to be  
a Second Autopsy.

Now Tenser comes out from behind the wall and takes his place at the Sark's controls, delicately STIRRING the machine to life.

And as before, from a bewildering variety of crevices, trap doors, sliding panels and iris-ing channels, a bevy of needle-scopes, insertion-scan devices, flesh cutters, saw-toothed probes, vise-like retractors and vibrating scalpels EMERGE. Ultrasonic spray nozzles to spritz clarifying solutions, suction nozzles to vacuum up fluids that would obscure vision.

(CONTINUED)

CAPRICE (CONT'D)

If you want to do an autopsy, you need a corpse. Corporeal, incorporate, corpulent. Body words. Fleshy words. Brecken is our corpse. Brecken was a young boy who was murdered by his mother because of what was hidden in his body. Because of the meaning that was there. For her, the body was not empty of meaning. And now let us dive deep into the body of Brecken and, like professors of literature, search for the meaning that lies locked in the poem that was Brecken.

Dotrice paces around the edges of the crowd, anxious, emotional, VOLATILE, reacting to Caprice's words, the light, the music, the images on the screens. \*

As the crowd watches raptly, the surgical devices CONVERGE on Brecken's chest and abdomen, SLIT open his body in four different places, PLUNGE into the wounds, RUMMAGE around in his abdominal cavity.

As the tiny cameras SUBMERGE and Brecken's inner landscape is exposed, we see on the screens that his organs are a FRANKENSTEIN CRAZY-QUILT of crudely stitched-together parts, all garishly tattooed in the broadest possible Hong Kong harbour-sailor-style complete with HEART, KNIFE, and "MOTHER".

And the organs are not organs we've ever seen diagrams of before, they're not organized in any recognizable pattern. There are solid MEATY things where the lungs should be, and SPIRALLING entrail-like tubes twisting around everywhere in the chest cavity like monstrous PARASITES.

Even to a novice in anatomy, the jumble inside Brecken is aggressive, ludicrous, MALIGNANT butchery. There is a sense of purpose evident, but the purpose is to mock and horrify.

Wippet is horrified, and he recoils, turns to Timlin for support. But once again Timlin turns away, evasive, something odd going on. She won't meet his eyes, and she won't look at the screens.

Now the look on Dotrice's face, his body language: he is shocked, SHATTERED. He staggers away from the playing area, almost knocking Timlin over as he lurches past her so that Wippet has to catch her. \*

(CONTINUED)

Dotrice finds a wall niche at the far end of the performing arena, installs himself in it, turns his back on his son, puts his hands over his face in ANGUISH. \*

Router and Berst have been TRACKING Dotrice, experiencing the show through him, and now his distress is their distress. \*  
They want to get close to him and comfort him, but they don't dare.

Caprice is momentarily stunned into silence, but the CROWD IS GOING WILD: they love it. Their APPLAUSE and shouts give her a few seconds to recover, and she begins to pick up the pieces.

CAPRICE (CONT'D)  
(faltering)  
So we see that the crudeness and  
the desperation and the ugliness of  
the world has seeped inside even  
our youngest and most beautiful.  
(recovering)  
And we see that the world is  
killing our children from the  
inside out. Here we have the  
anatomy of today's pathology. And  
we know now why we'll have a Second  
Autopsy, and a Third. We know that  
we'll keep diving back deep inside,  
hoping to find a different answer.  
But for tonight, let us not be  
afraid to map the chaos inside. Let  
us create a map that will guide us  
into the heart of darkness.

Dotrice still stands with his back turned to Caprice, listens to a few more of the words, then flees, almost bent double with the HORROR. Router and Berst exchange a glance, watch him go, then FOLLOW him. \*

Tenser sees Dotrice leave. He has the impulse to go after him, but he keeps working the controls, frantically ADJUSTING the autopsy module so that it can deal with a very non-standard anatomy. \*

The CLAWS and PINCERS now begin to remove Brecken's organs several at a time and place them neatly in COMPARTMENTS that extend on STALKS to receive them - part of the Sark's retrofitting by Router and Berst.

62

EXT. VICTORIAN BANK - NIGHT

62

Router and Berst TUMBLE out of the columned doorway of the Victorian Bank into the street, looking for Dotrice. He's there, HUNCHED OVER, sobbing on the grand granite steps.

\*

They sit beside him, wanting to hold him but seemingly too timid to do it.

ROUTER  
(gently)  
That was hideous.

BERST  
I feel so awful.

DOTRICE  
(sobbing)  
That's not what he was inside.  
That's not what he was. She did it.  
She let them cut my boy to pieces.

\*

BERST  
She?

DOTRICE  
Djuna. The ex-wife. The mother of  
the cadaver.

\*

ROUTER  
Djuna? No, she didn't. She had  
nothing to do with it.

DOTRICE  
Yes, yes. What you saw in there,  
that was her message to me.

\*

BERST  
No, it wasn't. But I have a feeling  
she'd approve of this.

Out of their overalls, Router and Berst each pull a small CHROME-PLATED DRILL with a long, narrow drill bit. Smoothly, without hesitation, they switch on the drills and force the bits DEEP into the back of Dotrice's head. The high-speed drills whine and JUDDER as they bite through bone, catch in Dotrice's hair, but they don't jam, they don't stop.

\*

\*

Dotrice PITCHES forward down the steps, blood spurting from the tiny holes. He lies sprawled there, twitching and jerking, then is still.

\*

(CONTINUED)

Router and Berst touch him with the steel-capped toes of their boots, then turn and scamper playfully back inside without a further word.

63 INT. TENSER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 63

In Tenser's bedroom, both Tenser and Caprice are feeling PAIN in their sleep, moaning, gasping, calling out.

Caprice sleeps in a niche carved into one side of the room which we might have noticed before. Her bed is like a Japanese SLEEP CAPSULE, a duvet-lined womb complete with built-in lights and computer screens.

Tenser is no longer sleeping in his OrchidBed, but is CURLED UP in a sleeping bag underneath it, as though he were afraid to get too far away from it. \*

Now they both cry out, almost simultaneously, and the cries wake Caprice.

She gets out of her bed and pads over to Tenser, falls to her knees under the OrchidBed, shakes him gently. Tenser responds almost instantly, as though he were just waiting for a reason to wake up and leave the pain behind. \*

CAPRICE  
You were in pain.

TENSER  
Was I?

CAPRICE  
What's it like?

TENSER  
Physical pain?

CAPRICE  
Yes.

TENSER  
It's hard to be clear about it. It becomes part of the dreaming. And it mixes with the emotional pain of the dreaming, so it's confused.

CAPRICE  
I almost thought... I almost thought I was feeling...  
(pause)  
Did you dream about Dotrice? \*

(CONTINUED)

63

TENSER  
Dotrice, and Djuna, and Brecken.  
They were all in the Sark together.  
A family autopsy.

\*

CAPRICE  
Who was at the controls?

TENSER  
You and I. We both were.

They EMBRACE on the floor, on the sleeping bag.

64

EXT. SHIP GRAVEYARD - NIGHT

64

Cope meets Tenser. Cope is SMILING ear to ear.

\*

\*

TENSER  
You're smiling like the Cheshire  
cat.

COPE  
I hear you had a great show. Great.

\*

TENSER  
Yeah. And I hear it went out  
worldwide. All media firing on all  
cylinders. What happened to your  
blackout?

COPE  
Somebody musta screwed up. Happens  
in these big departments.

\*

TENSER  
New Vice is getting pretty big, is  
it?

COPE  
It is now. Lotta people running  
scared. So many plastic-eaters  
running around with scalpels. Makes  
people insecure.

\*

TENSER  
They're pretty good with the  
scalpels, those plastic-eaters.  
Better than whoever did that hack  
job on Brecken's insides.

(CONTINUED)



COPE

\*

(big smile)

Yeah, so, OK. We've got a man  
inside. We got there first. Kid  
was pretty weird inside anyway, you  
wouldn't have recognized a thing,  
but the hell of it was, it was all  
natural. He was born that way.

TENSER

You wouldn't want everybody to know  
about that.

COPE

\*

Couldn't let that out. Once that  
got out of the box, we'd never get  
it back in.

(pause)

Your friend at the Registry did the  
work. "Inspired by Caprice." We  
wanted to make sure that it looked  
like an authentic Saul Tenser  
construction. Well, maybe a touch  
more flamboyant.

TENSER

My friend? You mean, Wippet?

COPE

\*

No, that strange little woman,  
what's her name? Timlin.

TENSER

I wondered why she was at the show.  
I guess she couldn't resist  
checking out her work.

COPE

\*

(knowing leer)

She really wants to be Caprice for  
you, if you know what I mean. And I  
know that you do.

TENSER

If you wanted an authentic Saul  
Tenser, why didn't you involve Saul  
Tenser?

COPE

\*

What ever happened to spontaneity  
and surprise? Your art can't  
encompass that?

(CONTINUED)

TENSER

Dotrice's assassination was a surprise to me.

\*

COPE

Assassination? Fancy word for murder.

\*

TENSER

He was a leader. He had a cause.

COPE

Well, whatever it was, it was a surprise to me too.

\*

TENSER

You've got a bad habit of not telling me things. Makes it difficult to function.

COPE

I'm telling you, we didn't know about it. Maybe his crazy wife got to him somehow. Dunno.

\*

TENSER

Who is your man inside?

Cope pauses while he weighs the pros and cons of giving ultra-privileged information to Tenser. He knows it's a TEST of trust. Finally.

\*

COPE

(pause)

It's a guy named Tarr. He was close to Dotrice. But he didn't pull the trigger. I can vouch for that.

\*

\*

TENSER

Well, it doesn't matter who killed him. It's going to make a martyr of him.

(pause)

Just what the cause needs.

COPE

(disturbed)

The cause? Sounds like you're becoming a believer.

\*

(CONTINUED)

64

TENSER  
(wry smile)  
If you're going to be good at  
living undercover, a part of you  
has to believe.

65

INT. TENSER'S BREAKFAST ROOM - NIGHT

65

Tenser sits in his Breakfast chair. He is trying to eat but it's NOT WORKING. The chair is fidgeting like a crazed thing, trying to make the eating process happen. Tenser puts down his utensils, sits there.

The chair keeps working FEVERISHLY.

The door opens and Caprice comes in.

CAPRICE  
Well, Saul, what do you think?

TENSER  
I think yes. I think it's time to  
try it.

Caprice pulls a PURPLE CANDY BAR out of her pocket and hands it to Tenser. She sits opposite him, takes out a ring-cam and slips it on, activates it. She smiles nervously.

CAPRICE  
(nervous smile)  
We're rolling.

Tenser PEELS back the wrapper, takes a bite, BEGINS TO EAT.

The Breakfast chair suddenly STOPS its fussing.

It gets very quiet except for a contented, rippling HUM which sounds something like a large cat PURRING.