

ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK

by

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Based on a screenplay  
by John Carpenter and Nick Castle

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## ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK

FADE IN:

EXT. MANHATTAN - NIGHT

The city comes out of the gloom, appearing in all its splendor like a wondrous beast rising from the depths of hell; its many skyscrapers writhing tentacles, its illuminated windows millions of leering eyes, appraising us, considering us.

The beast nearly defies the most elaborate imagination -- its hide is filled with countless souls that trample along its armored back, labyrinthine streets that crisscross its skin like an intricate tattoo. This living place pulsates with the vitality of a newly-made star, forged out of the hammers of gods, never to be again; unable to be equaled.

OVER CREDITS -- a VOICE comes to us, computerized, impassive:

VOICE

In 2022, a three-hundred foot retaining wall is constructed around lower Manhattan to fight rising sea levels.

We SEE a series of AP/UPI PHOTOS showing the construction work. The wall dwarfs men and machinery, its looming facade stretching off to the vanishing point. The voice continues:

VOICE

The project goes from East 42nd street, around South Street Seaport and lower Manhattan, continuing along the West side highway up to 42nd street. Citizens aptly name it "The Wall." Cost: \$414 billion dollars.

EXT. MANHATTAN AND SURROUNDING AREAS - DAY

PHOTOS - show the seas RISING, engulfing Jersey City, Atlantic City, the Hamptons, Fire Island.

VOICE

Global climate changes affect the entire Eastern Seaboard. Vast swaths of land are submerged. Whole communities vanish.

Parts of Boston disappear under the rising waves. Cities up and down the east coast are inundated with the new tides.

Much of Miami and other urban areas in southern Florida are now waterlogged.

VARIOUS NEWS PHOTOS show images of millions of homeless refugees, their homes gone, their lives permanently altered. A slide show at HYPERSPEED inundates us with images of the horror -- too much for the brain to comprehend.

EXT. VARIOUS PARTS OF MANHATTAN - DAY

Back in Manhattan -- a busy street: pedestrians shouldering past one another, cabs honking at a blocked intersection. Life in motion becomes a series of STILL SHOTS. The shots show THREE GARBAGE TRUCKS, all in three different parts of the city.

THE TRUCKS -- are driven by wild-eyed, nervous drivers, young men in their late twenties. We get snapshots of their faces, as if seeing surveillance photos. One photo finally --

-- COMES TO LIFE. The DRIVER is muttering something to himself as he closes his eyes, double parking in front of the New York Stock Exchange.

EXT. NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE - DAY

The young Driver doesn't hear the beat traffic COP halfheartedly pulling out the ticket book and shouting something at him, because the young driver is raising something in his hand -- a remote detonator.

Still whispering a prayer to himself, his eyes turning heavenward, the Driver's thumb DEPRESSES the button.

THE GARBAGE TRUCK IS OBLITERATED, the young Driver and the traffic cop VAPORIZED in 1/1000 of a second. The blast radius jettisons cars, cement, glass, and body parts down several different streets.

VOICE

On March 21, 2024, terrorists detonate three highly advanced radiological disbursement devices, or "dirty bombs." The first is triggered at 10:16 AM.

We see a PHOTO of a massive blast wave coming RIGHT AT THE CAMERA, the voice saying:

VOICE

The next two are detonated within three minutes and twenty-one seconds.

WE SEE THE OTHER TRUCKS - detonating, the second in Times Square, the third in front of the Metropolitan Museum of

Modern Art on the upper East Side. The destruction is horrifying to behold:

VOICE

The three bombs were highly advanced nuclear "suitcase bombs" formerly the property of the Soviet Union, bought on the black market. The bombs disbursed the payload of material in the garbage trucks: a lethal load of plutonium-239 and radium 226. Thousands of deaths are realized in an instant, and many more occur when the fallout begins taking its toll...

AP/UPI PHOTOS: of black clouds over three points in Manhattan.

EXT. HIGH OVER MANHATTAN - DAY

The explosive cloud from one of the dirty bombs begins to fade, the winds taking whirlwinds of dust, torn bits of clothing, shredded magazine pages, smoke and particulate matter all over greater Manhattan.

VOICE

One teaspoon of either element is enough to kill thousands. The terrorists' combined yield of nuclear material on March 21, 2024 was one metric ton.

A SERIES OF PHOTOS -

-- show us the AFTERMATH -- FEMA helping the sick and wounded; an armada of personnel in radiation suits transporting the tens of thousands of dead onto flatbed trucks; A FIRE PIT on Ward's Island, where the bodies by the thousands are cremated, the radiation too severe to allow the corpses to be handled by coroners or funeral workers; dead bodies line the streets of Manhattan...

The Photos turn into real life again as dark objects begin to FALL FROM THE SKIES. Whump! Thump! -- they land on the empty streets with wet slaps, some bursting on impact. We realize what they are at last -- BIRDS. Falling from the heavens in the hundreds, their wings no longer able to keep them aloft as radiation finishes them.

TREES - in Central Park begin to lose all their leaves, foliage falling off in great clumps. The grass dies in great swaths, everything becoming brown and rotten, lifeless...

PHOTOS: show Scientists in full biohazard suits taking water

and soil samples from places around the city.

EXT. MANHATTAN NEIGHBORHOODS - DAY

AN ENORMOUS CLEANUP CAMPAIGN - attempts to wash away the remnants of the radioactive material. No use. The fallout has spread too far, too fast. Geiger counter needles are going off the charts.

VOICE

In August of 2024, the Presidential Task Force on Manhattan declares the city uninhabitable. The half-life of radium-226 is one-thousand, six hundred and two years.

We see PHOTOS of an abandoned Manhattan, now a ghost town, the streets which once teemed with life now vacant, empty.

THE VOICE

The half-life of the other element in the terrorists' bomb, plutonium-239, a material found in every nuclear reactor on earth, is 24,110 years...

As CREDITS roll, we SEE photos of the National Guard flying in helicopters overhead, loudspeakers blaring to the deserted streets below:

NATIONAL GUARD LOUDSPEAKER

Evacuate now. You must evacuate the city now. If you are still in the city, you will die. Evacuate now. Evacuate...

AS THE CHOPPERS fade away over the cityscape, we see --

EXT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

-- the figure of a A LONE OLD WOMAN in her apartment, staring at the receding choppers through a slit in the curtains. Our only glimpse is of a horribly misshapen face, disfigured by the effects of radiation...

EXT. VARIOUS CITIES - DAY

A BARRAGE OF IMAGES -- of terrorists striking in different cities around the world, their prowess growing.

MORE IMAGES - show Los Angeles besieged by mobs demanding clean drinking water. Looters become the law.

A BLURRY PHOTO SHOWS - a looter being SHOT in the street by a shop owner, the image is transferred to the cover of TIME

MAGAZINE, a headline shouting: "ANARCHY NOW?" Below that, a sub-header: "Effects of The Recession: Crime Rate at Epic Proportions."

AP/UPI PHOTOS - of The Wall being extended around Manhattan. A FRONT PAGE STORY from the Washington Post reads: "President Considers Proposal from Senator: Manhattan to be Supermax Prison."

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO - DAY

A TELEVISION DISCUSSION IN PROGRESS -- one of those loud political debate shows, a FOX NEWS label in red across the top corner of the screen. An older man in a bow tie is shouting at the other panelists:

OLDER FOX DEBATE SHOW PANELIST

They've got regular food drops, they've got anti-radiation tablets, access to uncontaminated water. We will save billions of dollars annually by shutting down all the supermax prisons in the country. This is win-win!

YOUNGER FOX DEBATE SHOW PANELIST

The entire project is cruel and unusual. It's barbaric punishment!

OLDER FOX DEBATE SHOW PANELIST

What's more cruel: executing the very worst of the worst, or giving them a fighting chance in a place no one wants to live?

ANOTHER PHOTO - shows the completion of the wall, the work finished by construction crews clad in heavy-duty radiation suits. Automated drones complete the assembly of prefabricated sections of the three-hundred foot high wall.

THE WALL - is now not just a device to hold the waters back. It circles THE ENTIRE ISLAND OF MANHATTAN. An awesome feat of construction, a devastating sight to behold... A CNN WEBPAGE READS -- "MANHATTAN SUPERMAX -- OPEN FOR BUSINESS."

The accompanying photo shows a remote-piloted barge heading through a "draw-wall," a section of the barricade that can retract, the water in the massive corridor drained out, like a section of the Panama Canal. As the barge makes landfall, three-thousand prisoners are seen warily treading down the barge's loading ramp, hands clutching all the possessions they have in the world -- a small survival kit.

EXT. MANHATTAN SUPERMAX BARGE - DAY

The image now COMES TO LIFE -- the men move off the barge in real time, our view showing us, up close and personal, the apprehensive look on the faces of America's worst offenders as their boots touch the irradiated soil of Manhattan.

We find one PRISONER among the three thousand -- we'll know him later as THE DUKE, a hulking giant, head shaved, tattooed arms bulging, and a gaze thousands of yards distant -- a gaze that takes in the wonder of what lies ahead of him, of the opportunity all around him in this abandoned wasteland...

His eyes snap back to the present, and he SHIVS the smallest prisoner he can find in front of him. The prisoner drops, blood spouting from several holes in his back. The Duke takes the man's survival kit, his eyes challenging anyone who dares to make an issue of the first murder on the streets of New York since the dirty bombs were detonated.

-- CREDIT SEQUENCE ends... The screen goes black. One ominous word comes onscreen:

**NOW.**

EXT. 30,000 FEET OVER THE ATLANTIC - NIGHT

AIR FORCE ONE - bellows through the night sky at 640 miles per hour, the aircraft approaching the Newfoundland Coastline, the night-black Atlantic ocean 36,000 feet below.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE, CARGO HOLD - NIGHT

In the belly of the aircraft, a SECRET SERVICE AGENT makes a routine check of the large stainless-steel food containers. Sees something curious -- an open container, empty save for coffee-grounds spilling everywhere.

He looks over to see several other containers in the same state. His eyes widen as he realizes the grounds are used to throw off the scent of the sniffer dogs. About to speak into the communication device in his lapel, he feels a six-inch knife plunge into his neck. His eyeballs bulge as he sees the glare of his killer staring right back at him --

-- it's a PRESIDENTIAL STEWARD, a man who must have been vetted thousands of times for this job, now showing his true colors -- a traitorous blood red. The Steward lets the dead Secret Service Agent drop.

The Steward ushers SEVEN ARMED HIJACKERS out from the shadows. He and his comrades begin the takeover...

EXT. SURFACE OF THE ATLANTIC OCEAN - NIGHT

As we slowly push over the tops of the ocean swells, something odd catches our eye: seven enormous SPIKES rising from the waters. And something else:

A GARGANTUAN METAL HAND, cast in olive drab, holds aloft something strangely familiar to us -- a giant metal TORCH.

And then we understand: it's the STATUE OF LIBERTY, nearly fully submerged by rising sea levels, only her crown and the torch visible above the brackish surface. The symbol of freedom and liberty is now nearly lost beneath the unforgiving seas.

We move UNDERWATER, momentarily splashing into the cold, dark harbor, the faint tendrils of light playing upon the seemingly disapproving frown on the face of Lady Liberty. As we move directly toward her eye, our world turns black.

EXT. ABOVE THE CROWN OF THE STATUE OF LIBERTY - NIGHT

AS WE PASS THE CROWN, we leave her behind, to see --

-- A WALLED IN ELLIS ISLAND, looming ahead.

EXT. ELLIS ISLAND SUPERMAX HQ - NIGHT

A secure prisoner processing bus heads over a recently-constructed causeway that leads from Newark to Ellis Island.

Ellis Island has been completely walled in, the rising waters from global warming held at bay. The bridge ends in a dizzying loop down toward what was once sea level, now a fortress, the operational headquarters of Manhattan Supermax.

INT. PRISONER TRANSPORT BUS - NIGHT

The bus is filled with prisoners, resigned gazes on their faces, their eyes searching for a view out slit windows in the bus.

THE VIEW - shows a main entrance gate, a sign overhead which reads: "MANHATTAN SUPERMAX PROCESSING CENTER."

ON THE BUS - we see glimpses, just bits and pieces, of ONE PARTICULAR PRISONER:

Black motorcycle boots with heavy buckles and snaps; combat pants; a tattoo on a sleeveless shoulder, the word PEACE spelled out, letters comprised of little MACHINE GUNS. A BLUE EYE stares out the window at the depressing gray scenery.

Finally, we see a BLACK EYE PATCH, covering the left eye.

This is SNAKE PLISSKEN, obviously a threat to society, one of the worst of the worst, now about to be put somewhere to keep the rest of civilized society safe. Snake stares out the window at the prison sign, and it seems only he among his compatriots notices the faded sign below the new one: "Ellis Island. Welcome to America."

He turns away from the sign as the bus with bars on the slit windows makes a final turn to a grim-looking cement and steel processing center...

A GUARD saunters back toward Snake, eyes curious.

GUARD

They were right, you are him.

(stares at Snake for a  
moment)

So, what'd you do with all that money?

Snake considers the Guard for the briefest of seconds, as if examining a not too particularly interesting insect.

SNAKE

Why should I tell you?

The Guard takes a look over his shoulder to make sure his superior officer isn't looking, then pulls out a small flask. Shakes it, tantalizing.

Snake considers the flask. Reaches out for it. Chugs the entire contents in one go. Smacks his lips in approval and nods at the Guard, giving him back the now bone dry vessel. The Guard stares at him, waiting for the answer. Snake forgot there was a question.

GUARD

The money? What'd you do with it?

Snake nods, oh yeah, that question.

SNAKE

Invested it.

INT. SUPERMAX PROCESSING CENTER - DAY

SNAKE is processed through the initial system, a long walk down a series of corridors, a COMPUTER VOICE telling him what to do and where to go.

## COMPUTER VOICE

Follow the yellow line on the floor.  
Walk in a calm, controlled manner. No  
sudden movements. No talking. Follow  
all instructions. The walls around you  
are able to deliver a pulse of nine-  
hundred volts. Keep walking.

A half dozen GUARDS watch Snake from behind plexiglas safety viewing ports. One smiles and shouts to be heard through the barrier:

## PROCESSING GUARD

Hey Plissken! What'd you do with all  
that money?

Snake ignores them, following instructions from the speakers overhead:

## COMPUTERIZED VOICE

Please move to the red room on your  
left and stand on the designated  
outlines. Do not move until told.

IN THE RED ROOM - Snake looks down to see red footprint outlines. He matches up his boots onto them, looks up to see a nasty looking HELMET hanging from retractable arms near the ceiling. The helmet comes swooping down and pressurizes to the size of his skull. Snake can't move.

## PROCESSING CENTER COMPUTERIZED VOICE

Please open your mouth. Failure to do  
so will result in dental damage and  
possible tooth loss.

Snake opens up. The helmet grips him in place and a long CLAW comes out and sticks into his mouth -- molds are taken of his teeth, X-Rays hum, his dental records now on file.

## INT. A BLUE ROOM - NIGHT

Bzzzzzp! Snake grimaces as a barcode tattoo is etched onto the back of his neck in under three seconds. Blood droplets pool around the fresh ink, nearly obscuring the eleven digit number under the barcode. He is told:

## COMPUTER VOICE

You may now leave the blue processing  
room. Please follow the yellow line to  
the next room.

IN ANOTHER ROOM - A tracking device is INJECTED into his forearm. Snake mutters:

SNAKE

Ouch.

COMPUTERIZED VOICE

Please move on to the next area...

Rubbing his arm as he goes to the next zone in the labyrinthine processing corridor, he passes a sign that reads: "LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT AREA." This room is a psychologically pleasing lime green.

COMPUTERIZED VOICE

After the tone, you will have exactly thirty seconds to list your items to be bequeathed, or to record messages to be heard by family members only.

He isn't give much time to consider his final wishes as the tone sounds.

COMPUTERIZED VOICE

Please record your last will and testament now.

SNAKE

Hi, it's Snake, I'll be out of the office for a few weeks. Please leave a message after the beep.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - NIGHT

A massive firefight is taking place between SECRET SERVICE AGENTS and hijackers in the long hallway on Air Force One.

The hijackers have already taken the cabin, the pilots dumped unceremoniously outside the cockpit doors. Secret service agents fire their light automatic weapons down the long fuselage corridor.

A half-dozen errant bullets finally CRACK through a window, the hull of the aircraft breached.

The world turns inside out as the turncoat-Steward is lifted bodily and SUCKED OUT into the midnight air, his cry of surprise and terror fading over the roar of the night air at 38,000 feet.

The other hijacker clutches a seat in desperation as everything is BLASTED out the small opening as --

-- A SECRET SERVICE AGENT slides inexorably toward the opening, unable to stop himself from being pulled on the carpet.

He is finally lifted skyward and JETTISONED out the hole, screaming the entire way. He's gone in an instant.

INT. COCKPIT OF AIR FORCE ONE - NIGHT

The plane goes into a severe dive, the two hijacker-pilots wrestle with controls, the plane barely functional as cabin pressure drops. Both pilots don heavy oxygen masks as -- ANOTHER HIJACKER behind them shouts a rehearsed treatise into a satellite cell phone, his voice broadcast over various news outlets, shouting over the din of aircraft warning chimes and sirens.

INT. SECURE WAR ROOM, AIR FORCE ONE - CONT.

A reedy, hollow-cheeked man in his late fifties stoically listens to the gunfire outside his door as he tries not to be knocked off his feet, the plane listing and JOLTING every moment. This is the PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

THE PRESIDENT

Can you lift the cockpit door off at the hinges?

SECRET SERVICE AGENT

No, Mr. President; safety hinges.

THE PRESIDENT

Can you blow off the lock?

SECRET SERVICE AGENT

A grenade might punch a hole in the fuselage, sir, bring the entire plane down.

Another SECRET SERVICE AGENT rushes in, secure satellite phone in hand.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #2

We have notification from Washington -- the hijackers are on CNN right now. They say they're going to crash the plane.

The President handcuffs a brushed-steel briefcase to his left hand.

THE PRESIDENT

Get me to the pod.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE ESCAPE MODULE ROOM - NIGHT

THE PRESIDENT climbs into a confining escape pod. He is

buckled in with crash webbing. As the door to the pod is ready to close, the President glances sadly at the men whose lives will be sacrificed protecting him.

THE PRESIDENT

May God keep and watch over you all.

The President flicks a button, the pod door whispers closed in an instant.

INT. THE MANHATTAN SUPERMAX CONTROL CENTER - NIGHT

Police Commissioner ROBERT HAUKE, a hatchet-faced man who still looks lethal despite his years, is embroiled in a second-by second tracking of the downing of Air Force One.

On a VIDEO PHONE with the White House situation room and the Pentagon, Hauk quickly discusses options should the terrorists be successful in crashing the plane into the city.

HAUK

We can have a team on Manhattan soil within nine minutes.

(looking over data on his computer screen)

What's the design of the President's escape pod? Can anyone open it from the outside?

One of the people on the other video conference is Secretary of State REBECCA CLARKE. Clarke leans into the video phone, her face stone serious, calm and capable as she says:

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE

It was designed so rescuers could save the President should he be knocked unconscious or otherwise incapacitated. There are no locks on the pod.

Behind Hauk, an AIRSPACE CONTROL OFFICER shouts:

AIRSPACE CONTROL OFFICER

It's coming on radar now, sir! Heading right for lower Manhattan on an altitude of three thousand feet and descending rapidly.

Rebecca Clarke can hear the development. She looks into the secure video phone at Hauk and says:

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE

Bring him back alive, Mr. Hauk.

Hauk orders the choppers spun up, slamming an open palm down

on an ALL ALERT button.

EXT. ATOP SEVERAL MANHATTAN BUILDINGS - NIGHT

In the prison, we see four TRACKING RADAR DISHES on four different buildings swivel slowly around and around when -- THEY STOP, locking onto an incoming target.

EXT. MANHATTAN ARMORY BUILDING - NIGHT

ATOP THE MASSIVE ARMORY BUILDING in lower Manhattan, a large RECEIVING DISH sits like an open flower, receiving information.

INT. MANHATTAN ARMORY - CONT.

A series of COMPUTER screens displays the information from the radar dishes. A BLIP on the screen moves toward an overhead map of Manhattan -- it's Air Force One.

A HAND -- picks up a Motorola UHF two-way radio. The radio is held up toward the mouth of a man we will know as BRAIN, his voice reedy as he says:

BRAIN

Come in, come in. It's Brain, here.  
Come in.

After a moment, a familiar voice comes over the airwaves:

ROMERO

Yeah, Brain, whattya want?

BRAIN

Somethin' comin' in low and fast, just crossing over the wall now. Better tell the Duke.

ROMERO

Helicopters?

BRAIN

Too big for helicopters. This is somethin' else.

EXT. MANHATTAN SUPERMAX CONTROL CENTER TARMAC - NIGHT

DOZENS OF PARAMILITARY soldiers head for RAPTOR ATTACK HELICOPTERS, sleek black troop choppers with twin jet engines, the body of the reinforced craft bristling with weapons, infra-red and night vision equipment.

EXT. OVER MANHATTAN - NIGHT

The listing Air Force One roars over darkened skyscrapers, startled PRISONERS glancing up from the streets below as the 833,000 pound aircraft THUNDERS above, one wing skipping off a building top, sending the airplane tilting sideways, toward certain annihilation, but --

THE RED ESCAPE POD is ejected, an attached silver tri-parachute whispering open in the night. The pod begins making its pendulous descent to the city below.

INT. SUPERMAX PRISONER PROCESSING CENTER - CONT.

Snake Plissken stands in a yellow room as a screen before his eyes lights up, listing his crimes before his face.

COMPUTERIZED VOICE

S.D. Plissken, you have been sentenced to sixteen consecutive ninety-nine year terms for the following crimes: murder, grand larceny, treason, grand theft auto, interstate trafficking, concealed weapons, kidnapping. Specifically the theft of six-point-one billion dollars from three Federal Reserve Banks...

SNAKE

Four Federal Reserve Banks. Never caught me for that last one.

COMPUTERIZED VOICE

...endangering lives of city and federal officials...

The voice drones on, and as Snake realizes he's going to be here for a while, he sighs and leans back against the wall and closes his one good eye...

FLASH TO:

EXT. A HIGH DESERT COUNTRY - DAY

Afghanistan, perhaps. Or the deserts of Mongolia. Morocco? We're not sure, but the war here, wherever here is, seems to have been raging for some time as we see --

-- A quad-propellor C-130 landing on a rocky airstrip. The massive plane kicks up whirlwinds of dust as it passes row after endless row of military barracks. Soldiers march in formation in the distance. Firing ranges to the southeast. Thousands upon thousands of coalition forces, prepared for a war of attrition.

EXT. MILITARY LANDING STRIP - DAY

ENORMOUS SECURE KEVLAR-SIDED PALLETS are offloaded onto flatbed trucks. A Lieutenant, his back to us, oversees the procedure. He turns, and we see his uniform name: S. PLISSKEN.

SNAKE

They're all here.

Plissken has no eye patch yet, and we notice for the first time how startling his blue-eyed gaze is.

A COLONEL nods and says:

COLONEL

Let's open em up, Lieutenant.

ON THE FIVE PALLETS - they are triple locked. Plissken and the Colonel unlock them, several dozen soldiers looking on. The pallets are filled with -- MONEY; American cash, lots of it. Hundreds of Benjamin Franklin eyes stare up at Snake.

COLONEL

Two hundred fifty million in each pallet.

SNAKE

One billion per month.

Snake reaches up for the lid of the pallet as he grumbles,

SNAKE

All to fund a puppet government that no one has the first idea who's in charge of.

Snake slams the lids closed, one after the other, and locks them tight.

EXT. TRUCK CONVOY - DAY

A convoy of desert tan army trucks heads off down a winding mountain road, five deuce and a halves kicking up clouds of dust as they disappear over the horizon...

BACK TO:

INT. TOP FLOOR OF THE CHYSLER BUILDING - NIGHT

The massive man we saw earlier, THE DUKE, watches Air Force one spiraling past, engines howling in protest, The Duke tracking it with his bulky binoculars. His second in command, ROMERO, whines in his distinctive nasal voice:

ROMERO  
What is it, Duke?

THE DUKE  
Somethin' juicy.

The Duke's gaze shifts to the silver parachutes that appear in the night, a small red pod underneath them.

THE DUKE  
Somethin' really juicy.

He lowers the binoculars, grumbling to the thirty heavily armed MEN standing in the large room behind him:

THE DUKE  
We move.

INT. THE PROCESSING CENTER - NIGHT

Snake is starting to doze off, standing up, as the voice drones on:

COMPTUER VOICE  
...Crimes against humanity;  
international piracy; theft and abuse  
of US Government property including but  
not limited to the following items...

Snake's head bobs up and down. He emits a snort as he wakes up, his one good eye taking in his surroundings. With an angry grunt he remembers where he is. He closes his good eye again. And waits.

FLASH TO:

EXT. HIGH DESERT COUNTRY VILLAGE - DAY

IN THE PAST - Snake and his squad of five trucks and fifty men are delivering the money pallets to a group of heavily armed LOCAL MILITIAMEN.

Snake makes the uneasy handoff of the cash, looking into the eyes of the hardened warriors, sizing them up. There's no love lost here. Snake doesn't bother to shake hands as he tells his soldiers to mount up, turn the trucks around.

Before Snake can get into his lead truck, he sees --

EXT. HIGH IN THE SURROUNDING MOUNTAINS - CONT.

-- a glint of something, a tiny pinprick of light, flashing for an instant. Something that any normal person would dismiss immediately. But not Snake. His antennae is twitching.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HIGH MOUNTAIN VILLAGE - LATER

As the final Army truck begins rolling away down the dirt road, Snake hops on the side, his eyes locking onto the MILITIA LEADER, Snake's gaze searching for malice or duplicity. The Militia Leader just stares back, his hard gaze never wavering, as Snake climbs into the cab of the truck, gone from the man's life.

EXT. MANHATTAN, THE PRESENT - NIGHT

Air Force One finally CLIPS a skyscraper, half a wing shearing off. The massive fuselage turns upside down, engines roaring in a futile symphony as the aircraft comes right at us -- we get a brief glimpse of the wide-eyed resignation of the suicide hijackers through a cracked cockpit window as --

IMPACT -- the plane CARTWHEELS along The Avenue of the Americas, a fireball erupting down the boulevard, jet fuel spraying Times Square, the tidal wave of orange death eliminating anything in its path, old neon signs and massive billboards now OBLITERATED in the conflagration.

EXT. THE PRESIDENTIAL POD - CONT.

The pod is still airborne, a quarter mile behind the conflagration when -- the parachutes get caught up in a gargoyle on the side of a twenty-five story building, one chute shredding to pieces. The pod begins a rapid fall, the two chutes now tangled with one another.

INT. THE POD - CONT.

The President grunts as SEVEN AIRBAGS inflate, surrounding his body, preparing for the moment of impact.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREETS - NIGHT

The pod hits, HARD, and bounces down the asphalt block like a massive red rubber ball. The three-thousand-pound pod SMASHES into a plywood-covered storefront window, splintering cheap pine before it finally --

-- comes to rest.

INT. LEAD RAPTOR HELICOPTER - NIGHT

Hauk watches the POD TRACKING INDICATOR as the blip comes to a stop. The chopper pilot sends the helicopter into a quick descent, weaving in and out of the black buildings that rest like sombre, forgotten giants.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREETS - NIGHT

The raptor helicopters roar along the moonlit streets, shadowy forms of PRISONERS darting back into the darkness.

ON THE STREETS - the machines of war land in formation on the wide street. Soldiers clad in combat/radioactive protection suits immediately leap from cargo bay doors and take up defensive positions around the choppers, weapons at their shoulders, night-vision goggles taking in everything around them.

EXT. LEAD RAPTOR HELICOPTER - NIGHT

Hauk exits the chopper. Takes a quick assessment of the damage. Spots --

-- the red escape pod. Sitting in a storefront window.

Hauk rushes over, taking cover as he moves, his men flanking him, guns trained in a 360-degree field of fire.

AT THE POD - the hatch is open, the pod EMPTY. Hauk leans in, traces his index finger over spattered liquid on the right armrest in the pod. Holds his finger up to the light: the liquid is blood red.

EXT. STREETCORNER - NIGHT

A MACK TRUCK CAB wheels around the corner, engine grumbling, high beams blinding Hauk and the soldiers wearing night vision.

Hauk's men ready their weapons to fire but -- THE TRUCK STOPS. Sits there for a moment, engine idling like some hellish beast.

Then, the hauntingly distinctive whispery/nasal VOICE of the Duke's second in command, Romero, comes out over a loudspeaker rigged up to the top of the vehicle:

ROMERO (ON LOUDSPEAKER)  
We're sending over a message. Hold  
your fire.

A FIGURE STEPS out of the truck. Hauk signals for his men not to shoot. The figure aims a CROSSBOW heavenward. Fires a bolt.

IT LANDS AT HAUK'S FEET. Hauk picks up the bolt. Something attached to it. Hauk scowls as he sees what's tied onto the arrow: a MAN'S FINGER. Worse, the finger has a ring on it with a familiar insignia: THE PRESIDENTIAL SEAL.

Hauk and Rheme stare at the finger, then both men look up at the truck.

RHEME

Jesus...

A note wrapped around the finger reads: "DEMANDS: CENTRAL PARK. 8AM TOMORROW."

ROMERO (ON LOUDSPEAKER)

You shoot at us, he dies. Send in  
choppers to rescue him, he dies. If  
you're not in the air in thirty  
seconds, he dies.

Hauk's own second in command, RHEME, a square-jawed soldier who never seems to blink, says:

RHEME

Let's take them. They probably have  
him in the truck right now.

HAUK

And if they don't? If they kill him?

Rheme doesn't reply. They stare at the Mack truck.

HAUK

I can't chance it.  
(shouts)  
We're ready to negotiate!

ON THE TRUCK - with the windshield blacked out, the headlights gleaming, the silver grille polished and shining in the night, the vehicle seems to be its own beast, a life force to be reckoned with. The voice comes out over the loudspeaker again:

ROMERO (OVER LOUDSPEAKER)

Twenty seconds... Nineteen...  
Eighteen...

HAUK

We'll give you anything you want!

ROMERO  
Sixteen... Fifteen...

Hauk spins his index finger at the chopper pilots. The soldiers MOVE, running to the Raptors. They pile in.

THE HELICOPTERS -- take to the air, the night filling with the deadly black aircraft. The choppers finally turn and rotor into the distance.

ON THE GROUND - the Mack truck engine rumbles. We finally see the driver: it's the Duke. He puts his beloved truck into gear and takes the 7.5 ton beast rumbling away down a deserted street.

INT. SUPERMAX PROCESSING CENTER - NIGHT

Snake now stands in a blue secure chamber, a sign on the wall reading -- "SELF-IMMOLATION CHAMBER."

The computerized voice comes through a speakers:

COMPUTERIZED VOICE  
This will be your last chance to self-terminate. The Self Immolation Chamber has been designed for a minimum of pain. The eighteen jets will cremate an average sized man in under two and a half seconds, at a controlled temperature burst of one-thousand, six-hundred and sixty degrees centigrade. Your ashes will be placed in a lead-lined urn with an attractive dove-gray finish. If you wish to implement the self-termination option, please press the three touch-screen buttons before you in sequence: green, yellow, red.

Snake stands in the center of the immolation chamber and stares back at the buttons. He finally shrugs. Why not? His hand reaches out and presses the first button. It illuminates GREEN.

INT. SUPERMAX CONTROL CENTER - CONT.

Hauk is on his secure video phone with Secretary of State Clarke, relaying the situation to her.

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE  
Can't you send in an attack squad?

RHEME

They have some kind of tracking system in place in the city. Every time we make a supply delivery, they know our exact location.

HAUK

If we fly in there, they'll know. And they'll kill him.

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE

Then what do you propose, Mr. Hauk?

HAUK

They've set a meeting for tomorrow morning. Let's see what their demands are and negotiate for the President's release.

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE

You obviously haven't looked over the file we sent you.

Rheme hands Hauk a handheld tablet computer, about the size and thickness of a piece of a legal pad. Hauk glances at the document on the screen, words like "EYES ONLY," and "TOP SECRET" visible under a Presidential Seal. Hauk tosses the tablet computer aside.

HAUK

I've been a little busy, what does it say?

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE

The Vancouver Summit is in twenty-four hours. If the President isn't there with the evidence that Iran and Syria have enriched nuclear weapons ICBM capabilities, The President will be compelled by world leaders to call off the coming invasion. NATO will demand the withdrawal of all our buildup of troops on the borders and in the Persian Gulf. We don't have any more friends supporting this conflict, Hauk.

HAUK

Sounds like you're in a bit of a jam. What do you want me to do?

CLARKE

I'm on my way to you now. You have a plan in place within 46 minutes or you'll be out of a job.

Clarke switches off.

HAUK

(mutters)

Yes, ma'am.

INT. THE PROCESSING CENTER - CONT.

Snake reaches out and touches the next button, which lights up yellow. He stands there, considering the final red button.

FLASH TO:

EXT. HIGH DESERT COUNTRY VILLAGE - NIGHT

Twilight has overtaken the mountain ranges of the high desert country. SERGEANT OSBORNE crawls up next to Snake, who is on his belly on a ridgeline, using his rifle's night scope to stare down at the town where they delivered the money.

SERGEANT OSBORNE

Sir? What are we still doing here?

Snake stares through his scope, now swinging along the mountain ranges that ring the town for miles.

SNAKE

The town's wrong, Osborne.

SERGEANT OSBORNE

Wrong how? Like no running water and no McDonald's wrong?

Snake whispers as his rifle scope stops at a point on the far mountain range:

SNAKE

Someone's out there....

SERGEANT OSBORNE

I don't see anything --

But he follows Snake's gaze with his own rifle scope to see --

POV - THROUGH SCOPE -

A COLUMN OF MEN making their way down the mountainside.

SNAKE'S VIEW - swings back to the town, the pallets of American currency being moved into a "secure" building in the center of town -- really just a mud and stone structure with steel doors. Snake's scope veers back to --

THE MOUNTAINS - where hundreds of heavily armed INSURGENTS are now making their way down the mountainside, single file, nearly invisible, toward the town, its inhabitants utterly clueless of what's coming their way....

INT. SUPERMAX CONTROL CENTER, THE PRESENT - NIGHT

Hauk's eyes have moved to the twenty-some monitors showing the prisoner processing. His eyes lock onto one particular prisoner, standing in the self-immolation chamber. Hauk mutters to himself:

HAUK

Plissken...

INT. IMMOLATION CHAMBER - CONT.

As Snake's hand reaches out to the last button on the wall, he mutters:

SNAKE

Fuck it.

Before HIS FINGERS REACH THE BUTTON, Hauk's voice comes over the loudspeakers:

HAUK

Hold it, Plissken.

FLASH TO:

EXT. HIGH DESERT COUNTRY VILLAGE - NIGHT

The skies in the village are alive with flashes of lightning, illuminating the surrounding mountains. The staccato CRACK of thunder is ear piercing. Except it's not thunder. It's a FIREFIGHT, and SNAKE is right in the middle of it.

ON SNAKE - he is defending the town from the insurgent force, dressed in black, their men obviously well-armed and trained. The insurgents are mowing down civilians and local forces in the town.

Mortar rounds EXPLODE all around Snake and his men, who have fanned out behind the perimeter of the secure structure, defending the money.

The battle is quick and violent, punctuated by spattering

blood, black in the night, the grunt of soldiers hit by bullets and shrapnel, the high keening shriek of the residents in the town as their homes are BLASTED into oblivion.

ON SNAKE - the hordes of enemies just keep coming. He sights three dark figures in the night and fires, POP, POP, POP, the three figures go down, Snake's shots accurate and deadly, no movement wasted. Then snake does something that would seem to defy our common sense -- he moves TOWARD the insurgents, killing as he goes.

Black-clad figures rise behind low walls to fire at Snake and his men. The firefight is a confusing, a three-hundred and sixty degree field of battle.

SNAKE'S MEN - move with him, defending his flank, firing as they go, taking cover behind rocks as they swiftly move.

THE INSURGENTS - seem to be firing more intently now, dust and rock KICKING UP around Snake and his men, bullets CRACKING and ZINGING through the air. A soldier next to Snake wails in pain, and is silent, unmoving.

Snake drags the soldier's body to the side of an enclosure, dirt kicked up in great heaps as Snake is tracked by the belching insurgents' machine guns. Snake is finally behind cover; looks down to see how badly the soldier is hit.

Snake sees that it's OSBORNE, his Sergeant, shot in the throat. Osborne's confused eyes stare back up at Snake as he tries to speak. Blood gurgles out of the Sergeant's mouth, his eyes widening before he finally --

-- Dies. Osborne stares into oblivion, Snake looking down at him. Snake realizes the man has died in his arms. He lets Osborne's corpse go. Rises to one knee.

Now Snake's blue eyes take on a new level of cold hatred as he reloads his weapon, pulls the pins on two grenades and RUSHES THE ENEMY, hurling the grenades over the series of low walls.

The explosions light up the night sky, Snake silhouetted in the melee, his outline a black figure in the night, his gun belching fire, sweeping the insurgent line, meting out punishment with every click of the firing pin....

FLASH TO:

INT. HAUK'S OFFICE, SUPERMAX PRISON CONTROL CENTER - NIGHT

A manacled Snake Plissken stares back at Hawk, legs cuffed to a secure metal chair, hands mobile but cuffed. Snake rears his head back and LAUGHS, long and hard.

SNAKE

You want me to go in and save him?

HAUK

That's the deal.

SNAKE

I don't give a fuck about your President. He can rot in there.

SNAKE reaches out with manacled hands, Hawk quick to grab a firearm in his desk drawer. Snake grins at Hawk and merely opens the cigar humidor on Hawk's desk, helps himself. Hawk relaxes his grip on the weapon as Snake bites off the end of the cigar.

HAUK

Save the President, and you walk away a free man. Think about it.

SNAKE inhales the scent of the cigar, running it under his nose. Ruminates for a moment before saying:

SNAKE

Got a light?

Hawk scoffs, then tosses a cigar lighter across the desk.

SNAKE

Wanna know what I think?

HAUK

What?

SNAKE

I think your plan sucks.

SNAKE lights the cigar. Hawk scans a file on the desk in front of him.

HAUK

You spent eleven years in places like Afghanistan, Chechnya, Libya, Iraq, Syria, Iran; running black-ops. Doing the dirty work no one else was qualified to do.

(scans down the page)

(MORE)

HAUK (CONT'D)

Broke out of Leavenworth, twice, ripped  
off three Federal Reserve Banks --

SNAKE

Four.

HAUK

I think you could successfully carry  
out this mission.

Snake inhales the Cohiba, sits back and exhales.

SNAKE

I'm thinking about it.

HAUK

Think fast. The Vancouver Summit  
happens in twenty-four hours. After  
that, he'll be better off staying in  
that prison than ever showing his face  
again.

SNAKE

Yeah? Why's that?

Hauk glances up at the wall clock. Tick, tick.

HAUK

A titanium micro disc in the  
President's briefcase. On the disc is  
the sole copy of evidence that will  
justify the invasion of Iran and Syria.

SNAKE

And get him reelected, no doubt.

HAUK

The President was flying back from the  
Middle East with the disc when the  
plane was hijacked.

(looks at the clock)

You got five seconds to give me your  
answer, Plissken.

Snake stares with his one good eye, the corners of his mouth  
turning up in a what resembles a grin. He hisses:

SNAKE

Do me a favor?

HAUK

What's that?

SNAKE

Call me Snake.

Hauk stands up and hits an intercom:

HAUK

Get this piece of shit out of my office.

Guards come in and move to grab Snake, who holds up a placating hand and says:

SNAKE

Full pardon?

HAUK

For all crimes committed in the US and abroad.

SNAKE

What about in international waters?

HAUK

I've got a document here countersigned by the attorney general. Now what's it gonna be?

SNAKE

I guess I'm going in one way or another. Where do I sign?

Hauk pushes a tablet-screen computer across the desk. An official form on the screen outlines the deal. Snake picks up the computer stylus with his cuffed hands and signs on the tablet screen. His signature goes into the Internet forever. The deal is on.

INT. A TACTICAL ROOM - NIGHT

Rheme, Hauk's second in command, is leading a crash-course briefing in the island-prison:

RHEME

We make two drops a month of food, water and anti-radiation pills. Different factions hoard them and use them as currency and power. The races have divided up the island -- blacks and Latinos taking certain areas, white supremacists sticking together in others, Asian Tongs taking over most of Chinatown.

Rheme uses a computer presentation to show Snake the different sections of the island.

RHEME

But it's Clarence D. Dukemajian who really controls most of the island -- all of midtown and more. Calls himself "The Duke." Went from bank robbery to mass murder back in 2018. As soon as we dumped him in Manhattan, he started organizing and recruiting. We estimate he has nearly sixty-thousand prisoners following his every order, and he constantly negotiates deals with other gangs. And we know his crew recovered most of the weapons left behind in various gun shops, police stations and private collections after the island was abandoned. They're heavily armed.

Plissken stares at a mug-shot of The Duke. The bear-headed man stares back at him, eyes coal black.

RHEME

The ones you really have to worry about are the "Crazies." A mixture of the mutated, sick and diseased, they don't even make an attempt to get to the food drops or anti-RAD pills. They're cannibals. Crazies control the underground, nobody knows how many are down there. Rumor has it they have a subway car they've gotten operational again to move from the sixty third street station down to the Freedom Towers. So they can move, and they're dangerous because you cannot bargain with them.

Snake's eyebrows go up as he cheerfully chimes:

SNAKE

The city that eats you alive!  
(finishes his cigar)  
What a wonderful experiment your island prison has turned out to be.

INT. WEAPONS READY ROOM - NIGHT

A veritable arsenal is laid out before Snake. He handles all the weapons in a methodical, professional manner, checking actions, looking through scopes, testing the night vision viewfinder on a high-tech HELMET. Puts in an earpiece.

RHEME

The earpiece also works as a thermal indicator for up to thirty yards. Anything with body heat over 40 kilograms coming at you and that earpiece will start to ping.

Snake shoves it in his ear and tests it. PING!PING!PING!

SNAKE

How do you make it stop?

RHEME

Use this.

Rheme hands him a wrist-readout monitor.

HAUK

Press the sides.

(Snake does)

Also tells you how much time you have left.

The wrist indicator reads: 23:02.

SNAKE

The deal was 24 hours.

HAUK

Vancouver Summit, Plissken. Can't be helped.

RHEME

Most importantly, you'll be able to triangulate on the President's personal microchip, embedded in his thigh. Radius of two miles.

SNAKE

That's it? Why not more?

HAUK

For obvious security reasons, Plissken. Secret Service needs to know his exact whereabouts at all times but they don't want the whole world to know the President's location if a foreign group were able to hack into his signal.

Snake nods, tests it out. The screen is blank, a small group of lines radiating outward, looking for signals in the immediate two mile area.

RHEME

We'll inject a microphone into your larynx so we can hear you. When you have the President and the disc, you call for an exfiltration.

SNAKE

I don't like needles.

A skinny DOCTOR brings over a wicked looking set of injector guns.

SNAKE

You said microphone. Why two needles?

HAUK

One for the larynx microphone, the other to protect you from the radiation for up to 24 hours. After that your body starts absorbing RADS at a brisk pace.

Snake eyeballs the young, nervous-looking doctor. Then he nods. The Doctor puts the needles on either side of Snake's neck and PHWOOT! -- injects him.

CUT TO:

SNAKE'S GOOD EYE - the young Doctor puts a contact lens over Snake's cornea. We hear Hauk's voice explaining:

HAUK (O.S.)

If you can't contact us, there's a four seat retractable-wing RAMjet glider on the top of the Time Warner East tower. It's there in case any of our men get caught in the city and need to make a quick exfiltration. The hanger opens on retina scan only.

ON SNAKE - blinking back the discomfort of the lens.

SNAKE

What about ammo? All these weapons are empty.

HAUK

Uh-uh. Not gonna let you blast my brains against these walls and make an escape, Plissken.

SNAKE

Call me Snake.

Rheme hefts a heavy case.

RHEME

It's on an altimeter lock. The case opens only after you've ascended over ten-thousand feet and then descended again to sea level. Inside are knives, assorted tools, grenade activation keys, and ammo.

SNAKE

What kind?

HAUK

Nitro-crosstops, explosive slugs, designed to blast through flesh and inflict maximum damage.

SNAKE

Maximum damage. Lovely.

HAUK

Let's get something straight, Plissken -  
- every guy beyond those walls is a convicted rapist, murderer, cop killer, or worse. They're inside for life, many of them spared the needle by being shoved beyond the walls of that prison. The point is to use any and all force necessary to find the President -- all the lives in there are expendable.

SNAKE

Like mine?

(glances up)

How am I getting in?

Rheme goes to a display on a monitor, showing the plan of entry:

RHEME

Thirteen-thousand foot drop on an expandible chameleon-coat hardwing, right over the southern tip of the island. The hardwing should be invisible to their radar if you come in low enough.

HAUK

You flew one over Afghanistan, it should come back to you. Get as close to the President's signal as you can before you land.

SNAKE

Hauk, what happens if he's dead?

Hauk stops, his two eyes boring into Plissken's good one.

HAUK

The President and the disc, or no deal,  
Plissken.

EXT. SUPERMAX CONTROL CENTER TARMAC - NIGHT

SNAKE and Hauk, flanked by six heavily armed GUARDS, are WALKING towards the chopper pads and landing strip.

SNAKE is geared up in a camouflage/radiation protection suit. He has strapped all the weapons onto various parts of his body. Empty knife sheathes on his thighs, empty guns around the hips, flash bang and frag grenades (awaiting activation -- arming keys are also in the altimeter-lock-controlled ammo case) attached to a bandolier, a light machine gun strapped around his chest, and a bulky "hardwing" backpack on his back, so big it sticks up past his head. His helmet has an array of functions. SNAKE straps the heavy ammo case around his belly. The man is nearly lost amongst the equipment.

HAUK

Tell me one thing before you go,  
Plissken. What the hell did you do  
with all that money?

SNAKE

(grumbles)  
Invested it.

The sun is a crimson disk on the horizon, partially hidden by rolling thunderheads. As he walks, SNAKE's eyes travel to the view of a darkened, walled MANHATTAN ISLAND. Lightning flashes out over the abandoned buildings, illuminating the dark facades. The city is ominous, seemingly staring back at him as he moves toward it. SNAKE looks down at his wrist gauge -- 22:51.

EXT. AT A LIGHT AIRCRAFT - NIGHT

Hauk and Rheme escort SNAKE to the plane, turbines already spinning. SNAKE shouts over the sounds of the aircraft engines:

SNAKE

Gonna wish me luck?

Hauk and Rheme watch SNAKE slide the aircraft door shut.

HAUK  
 (to himself)  
 Good luck, Plissken.

EXT. IN THE SKY - NIGHT

The aircraft takes off with a nearly inaudible drone of sound-baffled quad propellers.

INT. BELLY OF THE PLANE - NIGHT

Snake is alone in the belly/jump area of the plane. He inspects the triple locking mechanism that keeps him from busting into the cockpit and wresting control from the pilot. He smirks as he takes his seat again, talks to himself:

SNAKE  
 Thought of everything.

INT. THE COCKPIT - NIGHT

The Pilot mutters into his headset -

PILOT  
 MMSP-three-niner rising to twelve-thousand feet.

SUPERMAX FLIGHT CONTROL (V.O.)  
 Manhattan Supermax reading you, three-niner. You are cleared.

The pilot flicks a switch on the panel.

PILOT  
 Going visual camouflage now.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE PLANE - NIGHT

The belly of the plane alters before our eyes - turning from cloud white to night-sky black as we watch. The color changes with a small electrical pulse in the six-millimeter thick color-altering coating, what they call a "chameleon-coat."

INT. THE BELLY OF THE PLANE - NIGHT

SNAKE - hears Hawk's voice in his ears:

HAUK (V.O.)  
 Snake, you know that little idea you had about taking the hardwing over the walls and landing in Brooklyn? Well, you can forget about it.

Snake pauses for a moment, then his hand goes up to the two dots on his neck: the injections.

SNAKE

What did you do to me, asshole?

HAUK (V.O.)

A small particle lodged into your carotid artery. An explosive charge that dissolves over a period of twenty-three hours. That deadline for the President? It's your deadline, too, Plissken.

Snake scowls into his reflection in the window of the hold of the plane. Stares at his neck, sees the small red pinpricks there. One of them a symbol of the end of his life.

SNAKE

Tell me how to diffuse it or the deal's off.

HAUK (V.O.)

The only thing that will neutralize the charge is a concentrated blast of gamma rays. You get back here in time, with the President and that disc, and we'll stop the charge. And you'll get your pardon and your life back. Whatever screwed up life it was.

The Pilot's VOICE comes out over the speakers in the belly of the aircraft:

PILOT (ON SPEAKERS)

Twenty seconds, I repeat --

SNAKE - sees the red PREPARE TO JUMP light illuminating.

PILOT

-- repeat, twenty seconds until jump.

SNAKE

(mutters)

When I get back, Hawk, I'm gonna kill you.

HAUK (V.O.)

As long as you bring back the President and the disc, Plissken.

THE READY LIGHT - goes to YELLOW. The JUMP DOOR opens automatically. Snake is blasted with cold air.

He makes a final check of his equipment. Ready. The jump light turns to GREEN. A computerized voice in a speaker says:

COMPUTERIZED VOICE

Jump. Jump. Jump.

Snake takes a step toward the cargo hold and LAUNCHES HIMSELF HEADFIRST INTO THE NIGHT AIR.

EXT. SKIES OVER MANHATTAN - NIGHT

FALLING --

Snake puts out his arms and legs to slow his descent as he FREE FALLS toward the dark city below, rooftops of buildings like ten thousand black eyes staring up at him.

FLASH BACK:

EXT. HIGH DESERT COUNTRY - NIGHT

The entire town is decimated, fires raging, mud and brick structures blasted apart. Civilian and soldier's bodies are strewn around in blood-soaked clumps.

SNAKE -- is alive, moving slowly through the aftermath, his uniform spattered with blood and soot. The soldiers in his unit are all dead, Snake walking between the bodies, checking for pulses. None of them made it. Snake hears the far off cry and gurgle of wounded residents. The sound of gunfire has mercifully ended.

ON SNAKE - he moves through the enemy insurgent's line. Dead bodies everywhere. His eyes take in the carnage.

He finally turns over the body of an insurgent, pulling off the black face covering to reveal -- an AMERICAN. Decidedly an American soldier, the hair buzz-cut short, face pale and freckled. Snake pulls off another face cover to see MORE AMERICAN soldiers.

Snake hears a GROAN. Moves swiftly to find --

-- a DYING SOLDIER. Lifts the man's face up to his own, the soldier's eyes blinking rapidly, death approaching like a cold hand reaching out to embrace him. Snake stares down at the soldier and says:

SNAKE

Who are you?

The soldier stares up at him, his eyes finally focusing. He whispers:

SOLDIER

You were supposed to be gone.

Snake pulls the man closer, his grip tight on the man's insurgent disguise.

SNAKE

Why were you trying to kill these people?

SOLDIER

(whispers out the words:)

The m-money.... S'posed to take it back, make it look like insurgents killed everyone... Don't know -- don't know why. J-just follow orders...

The man's eyes grow distant, as if only he can hear the whisper of a mechanical drone, somewhere overhead. He whispers:

SOLDIER

The airstrike...

Snake's eyes narrow:

SNAKE

What airstrike?

(He shakes the man, hard)

What airstrike?

But the soldier is dead.

Snake hears something, far above the crackling of the flames - the whisper of a JET AIRCRAFT, moving in the atmosphere. Snake's eyes look up at --

-- the pinprick stars in the night sky, and among them -- a glimmer of silver, so high above. Beneath the moving glimmer, there is the small dot of something released from its belly, falling now...

MATCH CUT -

-- to the black night sky.

EXT. SKIES OVER MANHATTAN - NIGHT

IN THE PRESENT, SNAKE IS FALLING - as if from the stars above.

Snake releasing something from the big pack on his back -- a flexible HARDWING UNFURLS, titanium struts supporting

composite material to create an immense WING.

Like an immense Cretaceous-period bird, Snake is now in a controlled flight toward the city. Unable to gain altitude but able to steer, Snake takes a tight turn to the left, missing the top of a downtown skyscraper just in time. The "chameleon coat" on the underside of the hardwings matches the look of the night sky above Snake exactly, making Snake invisible to those on the ground.

Flying without a sound, he checks his wrist-gauge -- no sign of the President's tracking implant.

SNAKE LOOKS UP -- sees the wall of a building coming up on him quick -- he TURNS AGAIN - whooosh! just missing being splattered into the building like a bee into a windshield.

He HEARS Hawk's voice in his ears:

HAUK (V.O.)  
Any signal, Plissken?

SNAKE  
Negative. I'm heading North. See if I  
can find an updraft between these  
towers.

Snake flies through a corridor of fifty story buildings, finally getting some warm air to send him UPWARD. He just bought himself more flying time.

AS HE FLIES - Snake looks below. He can see the rusting hulks of what must have been cars on the ragged streets below. Human figures dart into view, and just as quickly disappear.

"BLIP! BLIP!" Snake checks the wrist gauge. A red dot appears on the far edge of the screen.

SNAKE  
Got something. The signal, two miles  
northwest. Looks like the East  
Village.

Plissken aims the hardwing where he wants to fly. It responds.

SNAKE  
Losing altitude. Gonna fall short.

SNAKE - is getting lower and lower as he flies. The street is rushing up toward him. He checks his wrist gauge. BLIP! BLIP! He still has a strong signal. The ground is RUSHING UP. He's going too fast, he'll be dead on impact, the city

flashing past in a blur, and then --

-- SNAKE PULLS BACK on the two guidewires at his waist. The hardwing rears up, catching the air, slowing his descent instantly. Like a bird coming in for a landing, Snake's boots hit pavement. He runs a few steps as momentum keeps him going, and then he stops, his boots firmly planted on the streets of --

-- MANHATTAN.

He speaks to his implanted throat-microphone as his eyes sweep the vicinity.

SNAKE

I'm in.

SNAKE - takes off the hardwing, looking up as he does so, realizing he's landed in the looming facade of an enormous brick church, a massive sign reading "PEACE TO THE WORLD."

SNAKE ditches the hardwing in a pile of rubble. Kneels down before the ammo case, waiting for the altimeter lock to activate. Glances around, vulnerable out here in the open, empty streets -- fully armed but without the bullets to make him lethal. His precious ammo languishes in the heavy black case. Snake stares at the red light on the altimeter lock.

SNAKE

I'm at sea level. Open, goddamn it.

SNAKE stops, sensing something in the darkness. "PING!PING!PING!" His ear sensor sounds, the noise jolting in the stillness. Someone or something is within his thirty yard radius.

FIGURES - in the darkness, begin to move.

FOUR PRISONERS materialize from a nearby building, approaching the stranger who seemed to materialize in the middle of the street. The first prisoner calls out:

PRISONER #1

Hey, man! Where'd you come from?

SNAKE's eyes take in the man in a half-second assessment: the prisoner has a section of pipe in his hands. ANOTHER has a baseball bat with metal spikes sticking out of the ends. The two OTHERS are armed with a chain and a machete. One of them calls out:

PRISONER #2

What's in the box, man?

Snake eyes each man as they approach him from four different angles, his feet near the weapons case.

PRISONER #3

Give us the box, and we won't hurt you.

SNAKE

(smiles at this)

Do you promise?

The silence of the night is abruptly broken as A MACHETE whistles through the air at Snake's head. He ducks the blow, grabbing the man's arm, pivoting around him and twisting the until bone SNAPS. The machete CLANKS to the ground. Snake FLIPS the man over, hurling his body into the next attacker. The two men go down with a combined grunt as --

-- the third and fourth attackers converge on Snake, section of metal pipe swinging down toward him as --

-- the dropped machete is now in Snake's hand, Snake swinging it to meet the other attacker's arm, SEVERING it neatly above the elbow.

THE LIMB - flies through the night air, the metal pipe clattering to the cement as --

-- SNAKE WHIRLS and buries the machete into the other man's head, just about to nail Snake with the baseball bat. The prisoner's eyes open in shock as he stares into the gates of oblivion, now opening for him. The third man is on his feet, charging Snake, who --

-- drops to one knee, letting the man charge BELLY FIRST INTO THE MACHETE. The tearing flesh sounds like a pinata ripping open, the metal buried to the hilt in the man's midsection, his eyes wide in horror as he realizes this is his last moment on earth.

It's startling how fast Snake killed the three men. How economical and brutal the violence was. The entire conflict took six and a half seconds.

The last man, the one with the broken arm -- has sprung to his feet and LEAPS onto Snake's back -- his good arm clinched tight around Snake's neck. Snake reaches up, grabs the man's head and FLIPS the man over his shoulder, twisting as he goes, the man's neck SNAPPING in midair as --

-- Snake drives the man's head right into the WEAPON'S CASE. The man's skull BOUNCES off the case with a wet, crunching -- THWOCK!

Beep! -- a cheerful tone goes off, the green light on the case illuminates, the lock CLUNKING open as the man's dead body rolls away.

SNAKE

About goddamned time.

Snake wrenches up the lid like a starving man hoping to find choice cuts of meat within. He can't resist a smile as he starts loading all his weapons. The amount of ammo is staggering, the magazines and clips clicking home with reassuring metal comfort, knives sliding into sheathes with a satisfied sigh.

Snake finally holds up a grenade key. Inserts it into one of the grenades on his bandolier. A small light on the weapon "snicks!" from red to green. He does the same with the other eleven explosive devices.

SNAKE STANDS - much more comfortable now. He's armed to the teeth, and can take anything that comes at him. Snake takes the empty ammo case and ditches it in the alley next to the hardwing.

He takes his first long look at the ruined corpse of what was once the most vibrant, alive city in the world. The city that never sleeps is now forever slumbering, the darkened skyscrapers like grave markers in the night. Snake's good eye takes the entire panorama -- the ruined restaurants; the shattered glass front under the telltale green Starbucks sign; the trees withered from radiation lining the block; a hollowed-out frame of a four story walk-up, the bones of the building intact, a cornerstone reading: "EST. 1922."

Snake runs his hands over the cornerstone, his fingers touching the etched date in granite. He takes the entire scene in as he realizes he's now a part of this sad reflection of what was. He mutters under his breath:

SNAKE

...Fucking shame.

-- before he finally starts to move.

EXT. MANHATTAN STREETS - NIGHT

SNAKE IS JOGGING down the middle of the block -- following the tracking blip on his wrist gauge, his boots echoing off pavement in the dark night. He runs through a New York that few have seen -- a place completely devoid of human activity.

Where there once were streets teeming with foot and street traffic, cab horns honking, the unending hum of the city moaning like a calving animal -- now there is only dead

silence. Snake tracks the blip, running past a group of carcasses of what can only be human bodies, swarming with RATS. Big ones. The rats are cleaning the last of the meat down to the bone.

HUMAN EYES - watch him from surrounding buildings, furtive glances stolen from behind curtains and crumbled walls. Who is this lone man with an eye patch running down the middle of the block, armed with handguns, an automatic assault rifle and much more? And how, the watchful eyes seem to inquire, can I get what he has and take it for myself?

Snake moves toward a ten story office building looming before him.

THE WRIST GAUGE - is blipping like crazy, the signal very close now.

INT. THE BUILDING - NIGHT

The atrium is abandoned, shattered splinters of glass and debris crunching under Snake's boots.

THE TRACKING SIGNAL -- leads up the wide marble staircase. Snake lets the muzzle of his automatic rifle lead the way as he flicks on his combat helmet infra-red.

INFRA-RED POV - Snake moves up the staircase, the infra-red seeing nothing. But -- PING!PING!PING! -- the heat sensor in his ear starts sounding.

Snake whips around just in time to duck -- A LEAD PIPE - whizzing past his head. Snake strikes with the butt of his assault rifle, bone crunching, blood spraying the sheetrock behind the intruder.

FIVE OTHER ATTACKERS come at Snake, armed with fire axes, pieces of wood, sections of sharpened metal. Snake opens up with the silenced machine gun -- "PHWWUUUUTT!" The three men drop in their tracks, nitro-crostop bullets exploding through flesh, doing the maximum amount of damage, as promised. Blood and gristle spray against the walls as the attackers drop one by one.

INT. BUILDING, UPSTAIRS - CONT.

On the fifth floor, Snake moves through a candlelit hallway. The blip on his wristgauge is now a steady glow -- the President is close by.

Snake sees a group of what look like GUARDS standing watch over a man, face obscured, head slumped forward, his wrist handcuffed to a radiator, sitting on a rat-chewed sofa pillow on the floor.

Snake pulls off a grenade from his bandolier. Pulls the pin and TOSSES it down the hallway. Snake ducks behind a wall. Two seconds later there is a BANG! and a blinding flash of light as the flash bang grenade explodes.

Snake rushes the hallway, the Guards howling in pain, rubbing their blind eyes as Snake dispatches them, one by one, two bullets in the center mass and one in the head. The Guards fall. Snake approaches the President, lifting his head up to check the damage.

SNAKE

Mr. President?

The MAN is obviously NOT the president, his eyes wild, his teeth like a screwed-up picket fence painted nicotine-brown.

DERELICT PRISONER

Yessir, all I had to do was swallow a magic pill and I'm the President! That's what they told me. Swallow and presto! Now I'm the President!  
(looks Snake up and down)  
You must be my secretary of defense.

SNAKE

(turns, disgusted)  
Hauk, are you reading this?

HAUK (V.O.)

Yeah, Plissken.

SNAKE

They obviously cut the tracking implant out of the President's thigh and gave it to this asshole to swallow.

INTERCUT --

-- with Hauk in the control center. He speaks into his headset microphone:

HAUK

Better start looking for The President somewhere else, Plissken.

SNAKE

This island is thirteen miles long, Hauk. How am I supposed to find him without the tracking device?

HAUK

Gossip spreads fast in a prison.  
Interrogate some of the locals. You  
got twenty-one hours, Plissken. Hauk  
out.

Snake sits heavily in a chair facing a window that shows a panoramic view of New York. The dark buildings rise skyward like gravestones. Snake shakes his head as he mutters:

SNAKE

I am completely fucked.

DERELICT PRISONER

And I'm the President!

CUT TO:

SNAKE'S PAST -

EXT. HIGH DESERT COUNTRY - NIGHT

Snake is RUNNING, trying to get away from the town when --

-- the first 5,000 pound bomb whistles down out of the night sky and OBLITERATES the center of the village. Snake is HURLED off his feet, the blast radius sending him end over end, his body smashed into a rocky field.

The heat of the blast is so close that his uniform smolders. Rubble and rock RAIN out of the sky all around his crumpled body.

He tries to blink away blood and debris, realizing the side of his face is burned, his left orbital bone destroyed, the lid seared shut, the eye forever useless. His right eye takes in the sight of --

A SECOND BOMB EXPLODING, wiping out any last remnants of bodies, structures, and vehicles. But Snake can't hear the second blast, his body picked up and hurled again, tossed like a rag doll in a child's tantrum. He lands in an unconscious heap, earth and rock again raining from the sky, as if from clouds made of stone....

BACK TO:

INT. BUILDING, UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

Snake stares out at the darkened New York skyline as he hears a CLANK!CLANK!CLANK! from outside. Snake leans forward. Sees a ragged looking man, hands and face disfigured like a leper, banging a pipe on manhole covers.

THE MANHOLE COVER -- opens, and dozens of dark figures stream out like cockroaches.

SNAKE -- stands up and uses his helmet telescopic eyesight. It ZOOMS in on the figures below, and WE SEE how truly awful these people look. These are people who have not taken or were kept from taking their anti-radiation pills. The hoards of those slowly dying. Outcasts.

Snake sees the dozens multiply, as FIFTY MORE start appearing from subway exits, making it to street level, manhole covers opening up and down the block like disturbing jack in the boxes come to life. Snake hears the drunk behind him shout:

DERELICT PRISONER

Crazies are comin'! Crazies are comin' out!

SNAKE

(hisses:)

Shut up.

Snake hears a SCREAM as a healthy prisoner RUNS in the center of the street below, chased by the shuffling, ragtag group of Crazies behind him. The healthy prisoner runs right into a wall of Crazies, hundreds now, who engulf the man, his screams turning high-pitched, awful to hear, like a cat caught in a garbage disposal.

Snake watches as the mob ushers the man below ground, to do what with him Snake can only guess at, and that guess would probably involve some kind of barbecue.

SNAKE

Jesus.

One of the Crazies, as if he could possibly hear Snake's whisper, LOOKS UP, making EYE CONTACT with Snake.

THE CRAZIES' FACE - is horribly misshapen, a few teeth left in the twisted oval of a mouth. The Crazy POINTS with one crooked hand, the dark hole of a mouth bellowing a rallying cry to his denizens.

Snake steps back into the shadows. Too late.

EXT. ON THE BUILDING - NIGHT

The Crazies have vectored in on another meal, this one with an eye patch over one eye. They begin SWARMING through the front doors of Snake's building.

INT. THE BUILDING - NIGHT

Snake SHOTS the handcuff off the drunk's wrist.

SNAKE

Better run, Mr. President.

Snake charges upstairs.

DERELICT PRISONER

I'm the President! I don't have to  
run, I got people to do that for me.

Snake sees the hordes already appearing at the fifth floor.  
They SWARM the drunk, the man still shouting:

DERELICT PRISONER

Lemme go! Lemme go, I'm the President!

He is ushered off by twenty Crazies, taking him to be the  
guest of honor at a banquet where the main course is himself.

SNAKE CHARGES upstairs, the stairway behind him filled with  
the wild-eyed hoard, all hungering for soon to be charbroiled  
flesh. Snake turns and unleashes a spurt from his rifle -- a  
wall of Crazies fall backward, taking others with them down  
the staircase. It buys Snake a few precious seconds.

EXT. THE ROOF - NIGHT

Snake leaps from the top of the roof down onto the building's  
exterior fire escape. Starts heading down, the rusted metal  
barely holding him, the rickety staircase desperately in need  
of re-anchoring to the bricks. The whole thing groans and  
protests as his boots move down the steps, the entire rig  
threatening to come away from the wall of the building.

HAUK (V.O.)

What's going on, Plissken?

Snake charges down the fire escape as Crazies start leaping  
onto it from ABOVE, ragged feet taking them down toward him.  
Snake looks --

-- DOWN, only to see more Crazies on the street climbing UP  
the ladder and onto the fire escape from below. Nowhere for  
Snake to go.

SNAKE

Can't talk right now, Hawk. I'm busy  
trying not to become dinner.

SNAKE WEDGES a grenade into a gap in the fire escape

anchoring, shoving the grenade tight into the space between metal and brick.

THE ENTIRE FIRE ESCAPE -- is SHAKING with the weight of the dozens of Crazies coming from above and below.

Snake pulls the pin. Dives through --

-- A WINDOW, and lands in a roll in a halo of glass.

The Crazies reach the window as Snake turns to see -- BA-WHOOM! The grenade EXPLODES, sending body parts and metal flying, ripping the anchoring away from the building.

THE FIRE ESCAPE -- starts to come away, anchors RIPPING away from concrete, the weight of human cargo tearing away rebar anchors in the cement and brick.

Crazies scream in horror as the entire ten stories' worth of metal groans in midair, tilting away from the building, seemingly balancing for one brief instant until --

INT. IN THE BUILDING - NIGHT

SNAKE REACHES THROUGH THE BROKEN WINDOW and KICKS the fire escape. It doesn't take much to send it toppling away.

Snake sees the wide-eyed terror of the mutant Crazies as the teeming, shrieking mass of metal and writhing flesh goes tilting sideways, taking a ten story ride to the pavement below, all of them hollering and wailing as they HIT THE STREET. The mess is awful to behold, bodies splattering apart, metal ripping into lethal, jagged pieces, stabbing through flesh and crushing bone.

EXT. BACK OF THE BUILDING - NIGHT

SNAKE - is heading down a back exit stairwell, not out of the woods yet. Crazies appear from above, chasing him down the staircase.

EXT. AN ALLEY - NIGHT

The exit door bursts open, Snake charging down the darkened, refuse-strewn corridor between buildings. PING!PING!PING! Snake's heat sensor goes off, and he comes sliding to a stop to see --

A WALL OF EYES - staring back at him. Red eyes. Hundreds of them. Maybe a thousand. All hissing and moving and writhing, Snake realizes he's seeing a black mountain of RATS. Mutated, enormous, some as big as house cats, the animals' teeth are yellow razors, catching the moonlight as they see the delicious meal standing only twenty feet away.

The rats seem to shriek in unison as --

SNAKE

(mutters)

Oh, shit.

-- the rats CHARGE.

Snake turns to run the way he came, coming to a sliding stop as he sees --

MORE THAN FIFTY Crazies filling the alleyway. Mutant shrieks of hunger and bloodlust ring out in the night as the Crazies RUN toward Snake.

Snake looks above him, sees a broken drainpipe. Leaps up and grabs on, swinging his legs above him and climbing up as --

BELOW - the wall of Crazies and the wall of rats MEET.

Snake can't figure out which is which as the entire warring mass of limbs, claws and fangs tangle in the darkness, screams of pain and terror both homo-sapiens and rodentia echo upward.

The Crazies try to swat the rats off as the mutated beasts regroup and attack en masse, one Crazy being bitten in the back of the neck, the side of his face, rats hanging from the flesh on his arms and body, dangling on him like grotesque ornaments to the man's garish Christmas Tree. The Crazy does an anguished dance that would make a Russian wedding guest envious, before finally falling to the ground, the rats engulfing him.

EXT. BUILDING LEDGE - NIGHT

Snake climbs along a ledge toward the end of the alley, not wanting to look back at the obscene view of the melee. He is finally able to drop over a fence, back onto the street.

FROM OVERHEAD - Snake is running, boots pounding blacktop as hundreds upon hundreds of mutated Crazies pour up from the manholes, from the subways; an unending tide of human detritus bent on the goal of satiating their hunger with meat -- any meat.

A BRINK'S ARMORED TRUCK - turns the corner from behind the crowd of Crazies, headlights illuminating their ragged bodies.

SNAKE -- looks over his shoulder as he runs, sees the Armored Car mowing down Crazies by the dozen, bones crunching under tires, heads slamming off the reinforced metal grille. Crazies leap onto the hood, slamming their hands against

bullet-resistant glass -- no use. The driver shrugs them off, pulling the wheel left and right, left again, bodies hurled to the pavement, scattering like tumbleweeds. Blood sprays black in the night.

THE BRINK'S TRUCK - comes up alongside Snake, the goateed DRIVER checking out this eye-patch wearing, heavily-armed guy running in the middle of the street. The Driver leans over and unlatches the passenger door, kicks it open.

DRIVER OF BRINK'S VAN

Get in!

Snake looks over his shoulder, seeing the hundreds of Crazies still after him. He doesn't hesitate to jump up into the safety of the truck, slamming the door behind him.

INT. THE BRINK'S TRUCK - NIGHT

The Driver is a ferret-faced man in his late twenties, eyes constantly darting around.

DRIVER OF BRINK'S VAN

One of my favorite pastimes, running over these bastards. I do it every Friday night. Name's Enrique; everyone calls me Squirrel. You're him, ain't you? Snake Plissken?

(Snake doesn't answer)

You're him, man! I can't believe it! Wait till I tell Brain.

(slaps the wheel, smiling)

Hey, you got any X, Snake? Man, I miss X.

SNAKE

Where do you get gas for this truck?

SQUIRREL

Brain, where d'you think? Puts me on drug patrol, you know. He makes the gas, I give him drugs. But people left a lot of shit here when they abandoned the city, you just gotta know the right places to look. And have the balls to look there. Big crystal meth fiend, Brain. Says it keeps his brain moving at "Mach 5." Always planning a way outta this place.

SNAKE

Who is Brain?

Squirrel takes a left on Houston.

SQUIRREL

He's the only man with the juice. The gas. The Duke's the muscle, Brain's the brain. Knows everything.

SNAKE

Everything, huh? How about where the President is?

SQUIRREL

Shit, everyone knows the Duke's got em.

SNAKE

And where can I find the Duke?

SQUIRREL

Find him? You don't find him, man. He finds you just so he can kill you.

SNAKE

Then let's start at the beginning, Squirrel. Take me to Brain.

Squirrel realizes there is the muzzle of a gun pressed against his cheek. He focuses in on the black barrel, then at the man with the eye patch who holds the weapon.

EXT. THE LOWER MANHATTAN ARMORY - NIGHT

A massive stone building taking up half a city block now dwarfs Snake and Squirrel. Squirrel pushes the call button, stares up at a video camera above the massive entryway arch.

A FLOODLIGHT shines down on the duo and A VOICE comes out over the intercom:

BRAIN (V.O.)

Who's that with you?

SQUIRREL

A celebrity, man.

There is a long pause. Then the floodlight goes out. The video camera light winks off. Finally, a series of locks start KA-CHUNKing open. The massive front doors of the armory recede into the walls. A whippet-thin man with hair dyed platinum blond stands in the doorway, wearing a lab coat, a Black Flag button on the lapel. This is BRAIN. He takes one look at the man standing before him, armed to the teeth.

BRAIN

Jesus Christ. It's Snake Plissken,  
right at my front door.

INT. BRAIN'S LAIR - NIGHT

Machines thump and slurp away in the background, this cavernous place turned into a fuel factory. As our eye takes in the vast machines doing their endless fuel processing, we hear Brain's voice echo off the enormous armory walls:

BRAIN

SNAKE Plissken, international pirate,  
freedom fighter, rebel, traitor, right  
here in New York. What did you do with  
all that money, anyway?

SNAKE

Invested it.

As Snake takes in Brain's lair, Brain trots ahead to lead Snake through the gasworks, a proud father of the machinery:

BRAIN

All these cars and trucks and  
motorcycles -- the people just  
abandoned them when they left the city,  
I mean -- some of the owners were  
probably dead anyway, right Snake? So  
we got these vehicles, and the gas left  
at the abandoned gas stations. Didn't  
last forever. That's where I came in.  
You can change the engines to run on  
cooking oil or leftover grease if you  
know what you're doing. And other  
things, too.

SNAKE nods as he passes a video wall, a recording eye staring back at him. Snake's eye takes in a bunch of titanium memory discs (about the size of a half-dollar) lying around on Brain's long work table. His hand goes over them, rifling through the piles. Brain doesn't see Snake pocket one of the discs.

SNAKE

What's all this?

BRAIN

I'm recording instructions on how I  
make the gas, just in case I disappear  
sometime, which I hope I do. Then  
someone else can do these shitty jobs  
for the Duke.

(MORE)

BRAIN (CONT'D)

We got environmentally sound engines,  
isn't that funny, Snake? Right here in  
the most radioactive place on Earth.

Snake sees a heap of what looks like RODENT BONES in a  
plastic container in the far corner of the cavernous hall.

SNAKE

Environmentally sound, huh? What do  
the rats have to say about it?

BRAIN

You can also run cars on animal fat  
mixed with vegetable oil.

SQUIRREL

Guess who gets to collect the dead rats  
that we trap? It's disgusting.

Snake sees a map on the wall with a PATH drawn on an overlay.

SNAKE

And this?

BRAIN

(smiles, proud)  
Path through the Forbidden Zone near  
the Freedom Towers. I'm just finishing  
it up for the Duke.

SNAKE

They'll burn you off that wall.

BRAIN

I'm still working on that.

SNAKE SEES - a PHOTO of a six year old gap-toothed BOY,  
smiling back at the camera.

Brain gives Squirrel his share of jerry cans of fuel.  
Squirrel hands over a bag of crystal meth. Snake snatches  
the meth away.

BRAIN

Hey!

Snake leans in, his good eye boring into the twitchy but  
intelligent eyes of the smaller man before him. Snake does  
something we haven't seen. He smiles as he says:

SNAKE

I wanna meet the Duke.

EXT. BRAIN'S LAIR - MOMENTS LATER

Snake stands in front of Brain's wall map of Manhattan, all divided and highlighted into sections, neighborhoods run by particular crews and gangs. Brain points at the map.

BRAIN

He's up in Harlem, making a trade with the 122nd Street Crew. He's got the President in his secure mobile trailer. But there's no way to get to him, Snake.

SNAKE

What's wrong with the armored car?

SQUIRREL

To get there you gotta go through the Tongs, the Nazi Skinheads, the Black Panthers. We got a pass through some of the others because of the Duke's arrangement, but you'd get stopped at 106th street entrance. They might let me and Brain in, but not you.

SNAKE

You get me there, I'll handle the rest.

BRAIN

You'll get us out if we help?

SNAKE

You'll get out and get a full pardon. Right Hauk?

In Snake's ear, he hears Hauk's voice reluctantly grumble:

HAUK (V.O.)

You're handing out pardons like they're Halloween candy, Plissken.

SNAKE

Deal or not?

HAUK (V.O.)

Okay, okay. Just get it done.

BRAIN

(peers at Snake)

How are we getting out?

SNAKE

Uh uh. Not until you show me the President.

BRAIN

Tell me how we get out, or no President.

SNAKE

(finally says:)

We got a glider on the West Tower of the Time Warner buildings. Good enough?

Brain nods, then glances back at the wallet-sized photo of his kid on the wall.

BRAIN

My boy is ten, now. Been eight years since I seen him. I'm missing his entire life.

Brain stares at the photo, then looks up at Snake.

BRAIN

If the Duke finds out I'm helping you, I'm a dead man. But I'd risk everything to spend one more day with my boy.

(points a finger at Snake)

I'm gambling on you, Plissken.

INT. THE ARMORED BRINK'S TRUCK - NIGHT

The truck is moving, Snake and Brain inside, Squirrel driving, the truck rumbling quickly through the warren of rubble and filth-strewn streets, old burnt-out car hulks blocking their path in places, Squirrel plowing through with the heavy truck.

Brain and Squirrel are arguing about the best way to get uptown, the various roadblocks and gangs that stand between them and their chance to get out of this prison.

SQUIRREL

Broadway is out of the question, Brain! You nuts?

BRAIN

It's the most direct.

Snake can HEAR Hawk's voice in his ear:

HAUK (V.O.)  
Take the fastest route, Plissken.  
We'll support you from the air. Radar  
won't pick us up and no one will be the  
wiser.

SNAKE  
(to Squirrel)  
We have backup, let's do a straight  
shot up Broadway.

BRAIN  
See? We got the man behind us.

Squirrel puts the truck in gear and gets moving. Snake,  
sitting in the back compartment, his good eye peering out the  
small bullet-resistant square of glass, grumbles:

SNAKE  
What's wrong with Broadway, anyway?

EXT. ON BROADWAY - NIGHT

The entire street is blocked off, yellow cab hulks piled high  
in a makeshift barricade.

SQUIRREL  
This is Skinhead territory. They got a  
ton of recovered guns and ammo. Stuff  
people left behind...

Squirrel's eyes peer out at the buildings on the left and  
right. He is very twitchy behind the wheel.

INT. SURROUNDING DARKENED BUILDINGS - NIGHT

Dark windows fill with shadows of MEN, staring at the Brink's  
Truck that rumbles up the long boulevard.

WEAPONS - appear in the darkened windows. Some are actual  
rifles, many are makeshift -- compound bows with homemade  
explosives attached to arrow heads.

ONE SKINHEAD - nocks and arrow into the groove, a PIPE BOMB  
FUSE lit on the shaft. The skinhead aims AND FIRES.

ON THE BRINK'S TRUCK -

All is quiet until -- THE PIPE BOMB EXPLODES into the side of  
the Truck, ROCKING the heavy truck to one side.

INT. THE TRUCK - NIGHT

SQUIRREL

Jesus!

-- THE NIGHT ERUPTS WITH GUNFIRE. Every window firing down at the truck, bullets sparking off metal, ricochets slamming into pavement and brick. MORE HOMEMADE PIPE BOMB ARROWS - streak down at the Truck, explosions ROCKING the truck from side to side, the armored metal scorched black.

SNAKE -- sees thickly muscled, bald white men, covered in tattoos, charging out of the darkness, HURLING Molotov cocktails. The first bottle EXPLODES on the windshield. Squirrel yelps in surprise as flames spread across his field of vision.

SNAKE - shoves the barrel of his gun through one of the gun ports in the armored car. Opens up with a blast -- bullets RIPPING across the chests and heads of a group of Skinheads. One man drops his bottle; it shatters and EXPLODES, the flames ENGULFING HIM. The man does a spastic dance of billowing flame as he runs off into the night.

EXT. ON THE ROAD AHEAD - NIGHT

The Skinheads have pulled out a makeshift SPIKE STRIP across the road: barbed wire with knots of twisted metal and star-shaped shards of steel.

INT. BRINK'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Squirrel yanks the wheel sideways, the heavy truck jumping the curb. He mows down several skinheads as he avoids the spike strip entirely. Yanks the wheel and gets back on the pavement.

BRAIN - sees something up ahead that makes him say:

BRAIN

Uh, Snake?

Snake looks over to stare out the windshield.

HUNDREDS OF SKINHEADS are taking up positions at the massive barrier, one hundred yards ahead.

SQUIRREL

What do I do?

SNAKE

Don't slow down!

(mutters:)

Hauk? Let's see what you got.

The voice in his ear says:

HAUK (V.O.)

Roger that, Plissken. Sit tight.

EXT. TWO THOUSAND METERS OVERHEAD - NIGHT

A propeller driven AC-2000 PHANTOM GUNSHIP groans across the night sky, making a steady, wide circle at 300 mph. The plane is high enough to avoid any makeshift radar that might be available in the city below. We HEAR Hauk talking to the pilot over the scene:

HAUK (V.O.)

Phantom Six, this is Manhattan One.  
You are go for support, use all means  
necessary.

PHANTOM SIX PILOT (V.O.)

Phantom Six, a roger on your command  
Manhattan One.

INT. THE AC-2000 PHANTOM - NIGHT

A group of three WEAPONS OPERATORS stare down at their incredibly clear readouts of the street scene far below, special zoom cameras showing everything. The men see the roadblock far ahead of the Brink's Truck, and the hundreds of skinheads who stand ready to defend it. One of the Weapons Operators locks onto the target and mutters into his wraparound headset:

WEAPONS OPERATOR

Target locked. Hellfire one, firing.

He clicks the red button on the joystick in his control panel. Clicks it again as he says:

WEAPONS OPERATOR

Hellfire two, firing.

EXT. AC-2000 PHANTOM - NIGHT

HELLFIRE MISSILES STREAK from the belly of the craft.

EXT. THE BARRICADE ON BROADWAY - NIGHT

Four point six seconds later, the first hellfire missile SLAMS into its target -- OBLITERATING an enormous section of the barricade, dozens of skinheads evaporating with the first concussive wave of the blast, several dozen more HURLED END OVER END, landing twenty yards away, debris and metal raining down on them.

The second hellfire SHRIEKS into the rising column of flame, scattering barricade metal skyward, flinging into oblivion those unfortunate enough to be too close to the blast.

INT. THE BRINK'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Snake sees the heavy layer of smoke covering the point of impact slowly dissipating to reveal -- A HOLE IN THE BARRIER. Big enough to drive through, metal and steel bent and blackened with the violence of the rockets. Just as he sits back in satisfaction, saying --

SNAKE

That'll do, Hawk.

-- a charred and SEVERED LEG thumps! onto the windshield.

SQUIRREL

Yeech!

Squirrel hits the windshield wipers, sending the leg skittering away. The view reveals:

A WALL OF FLAME blocking the hole in the barrier. He eases off the gas pedal. Snake comes forward, assesses the situation in a half second, says:

SNAKE

Punch it.

SQUIRREL

You crazy?

Snake SLAMS his foot over Squirrel's, FLOORING THE GAS.

SQUIRREL

Hey!

Squirrel turns away, can't look as the truck goes barreling toward the curtain of flaming death.

EXT. THE BRINK'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Careens through the hole in the barrier, speeding right through the flames and scattered debris and blasting through the other side.

INT. SUPERMAX CONTROL CENTER - NIGHT

Secretary of State Clarke has arrived, her face grim as she hears the situation from Hawk:

HAUK

He's heading uptown now, Madam Secretary, using intel from the local prison population. He's got a good idea of where the President is. We're helping along the way as he goes.

Clarke watches the progress of the Brinks truck from the infra-green tracking cameras on the AC-2000 Phantom. The truck weaves its way through different obstacles, making its way past 70th street.

CLARKE

You sent one man, and a well-known criminal and Army deserter at that, a guy who's been a thorn in our side for years, to save the most powerful man in the world? How am I supposed to sell that one to my people?

HAUK

You can go in with full force, Madam Secretary, if your desired outcome is a dead President.

Hawk and Clarke stare at one another for a moment before --

CLARKE

General, so glad you could make it.

Hawk turns to see --

JOINT CHIEFS FOUR STAR GENERAL WILKINS, striding through the door, uniform chest a smattering of decorations. The stout man with a volcanic-rock face steps forward and nods to the Secretary of State.

GENERAL WILKINS

Ma'am, got here as fast as I could. Everything is in place. The team is arriving as we speak.

HAUK

Team? What team?

EXT. ON THE LANDING STRIP - NIGHT

A LUCIFER TROOP CHOPPER whirs down for a landing out of the drizzling night-sky clouds.

A SIX-PERSON NAVY SEAL TEAM disembarks from the cargo hold, pairs of black boots hitting the tarmac.

The Seal Team makes their way across the tarmac, Prison Guards watching in awe as the cream of America's military crop head toward a sign that reads: CONTROL ROOM.

All six men are ready to go, wearing night-black, faces covered in greasepaint, night-vision goggles around their necks, machine guns gripped in capable hands.

INT. SUPERMAX CONTROL ROOM -

Hauk stares at the Seal Team, then casts a withering look at Rebecca Clarke.

HAUK

These guys get caught inside, we won't be able to do a thing, you realize that Madam Secretary?

The lead SEAL TEAM MEMBER, a coolly efficient soldier named BAYLOCK, steps forward and says:

BAYLOCK

That won't be an issue.

INT. THE BRINK'S TRUCK - night

There are MORE BARRICADES ahead, with more prisoners armed with makeshift weapons and bombs, waiting for their prey to come through.

INT. AC-2000 PHANTOM - NIGHT

In the skies high above, the TECHNICIANS lock onto various human targets in the path of the truck, far below. The GUN TECHNICIAN mutters:

PHANTOM GUN TECH

Targets locked. Commencing sweep with M6-1 Vulcan. Firing.

He pushes a red button marked TRIGGER on the control panel.

INT. THE BELLY OF THE AC-2000 PHANTOM - NIGHT

The hydraulically driven, six-barreled, rotary action and air

cooled Vulcan gatling gun belches hot death down at the targets below.

INT. THROUGH THE BRINK'S TRUCK WINDSHIELD - NIGHT

Snake watches as human targets ahead SIMPLY VANISH, as huge slugs from above serpentine across cement, spraying up pink mist and big chunks of asphalt.

The electronic locking systems of the Phantom are all too capable at outsmarting running human targets. Dozens of men are obliterated as the Vulcan cannon's slugs wipe them off the face of the earth.

EXT. ALONG THE PRISON WALLS - NIGHT

A zodiac patrol boat cuts through the water, twin diesel engines belching smoke as the SIX MAN NAVY SEAL TEAM makes it to the wall, rising high above their heads.

Baylock nods to two of his men, who aim Copperhead rappelling cannons toward the lip of the wall a hundred feet above and FIRE.

THE CANNONS - belch diamond-tipped SPIKES, which KA-THUNK! into the retaining wall, trailing three hundred feet of rope behind them.

THE SEAL TEAM - use ascending harnesses and clip onto the ropes, ZIPPING up the line, motors WHIRRING on their harnesses as they go skittering up the walls like black insects.

AT THE TOP -- the team is here, Baylock coming last. The team leader stares at the view on the other side of the wall, at the INCREDIBLE EXPANSE of Manhattan Supermax, darkened buildings stretching off into the vanishing point.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT

Snake looks out the windshield to see a once lush and tree-filled park now a pale corpse of its former self. Trees are nothing more than withered, blackened husks, most disintegrating, the irradiated wood long since dead.

Grass is nonexistent. The water is polluted. No ducks on the ponds. Not a leaf in sight. It's a moonscape.

EXT. ABOVE CENTRAL PARK NORTH - NIGHT

At the well-guarded 122ND CREW CHECKPOINT - Squirrel and Brain submit to a check of the inside of the truck, the 122nd Crew members looking in the back of the armored car -- empty.

One Guard peers under the bottom of the truck. Nothing there.

BRAIN

Duke wants to see us right away. You guys hold us up, there could be trouble.

The Guard sneers at Brain, but the threat is real enough for him to wave the truck through. Squirrel gets behind the wheel again, Brain in the passenger seat.

THE GUARDS - move the "front gate" of the barricade -- a PRISON TRANSPORT BUS, letters reading: NEW YORK STATE CORRECTIONS. The Guard revs the engine and drives the bus forward far enough for the Brink's Truck to make it through.

IN THE BRINKS TRUCK - NIGHT

Squirrel and Brain roll through the checkpoint as --

-- ON THE ROOF - unseen by the Guards, Snake is spread-eagled on his belly. The Truck rolls into the perimeter.

EXT. ON THE RETAINING WALL - NIGHT

Baylock's Seal Team has set up a ZIP WIRE CANNON on the side of the wall, aiming it at a burned out FIFTEEN-STORY BUILDING, four blocks away. BOOM! The zip cannon fires, a six foot SPIKE hurtling through the night air, trailing a one-inch thick metal wire --

THE SPIKE EXPLODES through a window on the twelfth floor and SLAMS into the far wall, anchoring the zip wire.

BAYLOCK - slaps the first man on the back, who attaches his flying fox wheel to his waist harness. The Navy Seal says nothing before STEPPING OUT OVER THE VOID. The other team members watch as the Seal Team Member HURTLES along the metal wire, heading over the gun emplacements of the deadly NEUTRAL ZONE below.

INT. THE APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The Seal Team Member uses his hand brake to come to a controlled stop, flying through the broken window. He lands, his gun out and sweeping the room before he's even detached himself from the cable. He speaks into a throat microphone:

SEAL TEAM MEMBER

I'm in. We're clear here.

EXT. ON THE WALL - NIGHT

BAYLOCK

(into his throat mic:)

We're on our way.

He taps the next man on the back, who takes off over the void and toward the dark high-rise in the distance. Baylock checks a TRACKING DEVICE - showing a blue DOT two miles away. It's SNAKE'S TRACKING IMPLANT. Baylock looks up, scanning the horizon, as if he can see where his target is, even now.

EXT. WITHIN THE PERIMETER OF THE 122ND STREET CREW - NIGHT

Brain and Snake are on foot, using rusted car hulks as cover. Brain spots what he's looking for. Points:

BRAIN

There it is.

Snake sees a secure mobile TRAILER, three blocks away. He uses his HELMET BINOCULAR VIEW, an eyepiece that whines down from his high-tech helmet and clicks into place in front of his good eye.

BINOCULAR POV - it's a POLICE TRAILER, painted emblem on the side reading: NY CITY POLICE MOBILE HQ. Snake sighs.

SNAKE

Reinforced steel and locks, no doubt.

BRAIN

It's got a weakness, Snake: the belly.

Snake nods, good. They hear a loud CHEERING from the West. Snake lowers the helmet binocular-eyepiece to zoom in on: A GROUP OF TWO HUNDRED OF DUKE'S PERSONAL GUARDS, all cheering at something. Many are armed with guns, many more with sections of pipe, baseball bats, clubs.

BRAIN

They're negotiating over there.  
Probably having a little fun, too.

SNAKE

Distract the Guards at the trailer. If  
they give you any shit, use this.

Snake hands Brain a nine-millimeter handgun. Brain holds the gun in his hand awkwardly, his eyes finding Snake as his voice goes up an octave:

BRAIN

Me?

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT

Baylock and his Seal team move nearly invisibly in the night, heading toward 122nd street. Baylock is guided by the BLUE beacon on his readout, Snake's blue dot flashing more rapidly the closer they get.

EXT. NEAR THE FORBIDDEN ZONE - NIGHT

THE DUKE - is sitting in a folding chair, another man in a chair next to him -- the BOSS of the 122nd Street Crew.

They are at the edge of the FORBIDDEN ZONE, signs all around warning of death if the line to the zone is crossed. The two powerful leaders, veritable kings in this island prison, are now relishing in their post-deal euphoria.

IN THE ZONE - SEVERAL DEAD BODIES are lying in the dirt within the zone, fresh blood pooled around the ruined flesh.

THE DUKE shouts to his Guards:

DUKE

Bring out two more.

TWO TERRIFIED prisoners are brought out from the back of a police paddy wagon, their arms and legs chained. A half dozen more prisoners are cowering in the paddy wagon, awaiting their fate as the doors close again.

As the two prisoners are brought forward, the crowd of spectators CHEER, and a furious round of betting begins.

PRISON SPECTATOR

Fifteen smokes the one on the left sets  
a new record!

ANOTHER PRISONER

I'll take that action!

The betting continues, the prisoners listening to their fates being wagered upon.

THE PRISONERS - are forced to stand before the Duke. The Duke rises to his full height, dwarfing the two men.

THE DUKE

You know who I am. And you know why  
you're here. Nobody, nobody -- fucks  
with the Duke.

(MORE)

THE DUKE (CONT'D)

(grins)

But I'm gonna give you one chance to  
make things right.

The Duke points past the forbidden zone to THE WALL, looming  
in the background, stretching as far as the eye can see.

THE DUKE

You make it to the wall and back, and  
you can go free.

One of the men begins to shake, he knows it's suicide to even  
try. The Duke hangs two TRACKING DEVICES around the  
prisoner's necks, little instruments on a shoestring loop.

THE DUKE

Prison rumor has it that a convict  
named Louie Borquinn made it all the  
way to the wall, through the Forbidden  
Zone. There are blind spots in the  
perimeter defense, you just have to  
find them. These little devices Brain  
came up with will record your path, and  
if you make it, allow all of us to  
follow you to the wall. So you see?  
Your death will not be in vain.

The Duke holds up a receiving instrument that shows two red  
blips, representing the tracking devices.

THE DUKE

Make it there, and be a hero, if you  
can.

The Duke chuckles to himself, and his guards remove the  
prisoners from their shackles. The CROWD ROARS AS --

THE TWO PRISONERS - walk slowly to the edge of the Forbidden  
Zone. They can see the dead bodies in the expanse beyond.  
Behind them, the Duke points his rifle at the men and says:

THE DUKE

Do it now, or we will shoot you where  
you stand.

The Prisoners turn back toward the Forbidden Zone before the  
first man starts to RUN. The second man is close behind,  
taking a different route. The CROWD CHEERS, the Duke and the  
122nd Street Crew BOSS leaning forward in their chairs,  
smiling, waiting to see who makes it the farthest.

EXT. AT THE MOBILE POLICE TRAILER - NIGHT

Brain saunters up to the secure trailer, the Duke's GUARDS

staring back at him.

BRAIN  
Hey guys! Nice night, huh?

Brain notices three DUCATI MOTORCYCLES parked in a row. He whistles through his teeth.

BRAIN  
Nice bikes. Where'd you guys get these?

DUKE'S GUARD  
Traded with the Tongs for 'em.

DUKE'S LEAD GUARD  
What do you want, Brain?

BRAIN  
(leans in; quietly:)  
It's not that the Duke don't trust you, but he told me to check in, see how our guest is doing.

LEAD GUARD  
Duke didn't say anything to me.

BRAIN  
Well, what did he say to you, exactly?

LEAD GUARD  
He told me not to let anyone inside. That's it.

BRAIN  
Well, that's not what he told me. So we have what the Greeks called a conundrum here. You know what that word means, right?

The Guards watch the interaction with Brain, not noticing -- SNAKE, crawling UNDER the trailer.

EXT. NEAR THE FORBIDDEN ZONE - NIGHT

As the Prisoners RUN into the Forbidden Zone, a computerized voice ECHOES over the landscape:

COMPUTER VOICE  
YOU HAVE ENTERED THE FORBIDDEN ZONE.  
TURN BACK OR DEADLY FORCE WILL BE USED.  
THIS IS YOUR ONLY WARNING.

As the men continue to run, the ground ahead of them abruptly

OPENS in different places.

Automated gun emplacements RISE UP, servos whining as the weapons lock onto their targets.

THE TWO MEN RUN - the night quiet, only the sounds of Duke's men cheering them on from far behind when --

A half dozen FIFTY CALIBER MACHINE-GUN EMPLACEMENTS OPEN FIRE. The sound is deafening in the still night.

THE BULLETS -- seem to track the first man as he runs. The prisoner jukes the first cannon, actually making it a little further, past the dead bodies before HE IS CUT DOWN, the upper half his body simply EXPLODING.

Far behind, the Duke's crowd ROARS in approval.

EXT. UNDERNEATH THE TRAILER - NIGHT

SNAKE - uses the mace-sized can of LIQUID NITROGEN that is housed in the butt of his combat knife. Sprays the contents onto the escape hatch locking mechanism. The metal surrounding the bulky lock turns white as the metal reaches absolute zero.

Snake uses the butt of his combat knife and SMACKS the frozen metal. The entire locking mechanism FALLS to the ground in pieces.

Snake JAMES the knife blade into the escape hatch seam and YANKS. The hatch swings down on its hinges. Snake steals one last glance at the Guard's legs, sees Brain is still talking to them. No one has heard a thing with the commotion of the "games" taking place with Duke's men. Snake climbs up and --

INT. THE TRAILER - CONT.

-- INSIDE. Snake's head peeks up from the escape hatch. He's in the BATHROOM. He pulls his legs in, his movements silent.

SNAKE - peeks around the doorway. Sees two of Duke's GUARDS standing near -- THE PRESIDENT. The most powerful man in the world is tied to a plush chair in the center of the mobile trailer, briefcase still handcuffed to his wrist. A GUARD is trying to pick the thumbprint ID lock, with little luck.

EXT. THE FORBIDDEN ZONE - NIGHT

The second prisoner has somehow made it past the last dead body, running his heart out, dodging left and right as more cannons come up out of the ground to fire at him. Tracer

bullets light up the night sky as the crossfire finally FINDS THE PRISONER, his legs cut out beneath him, his torso twisting, arms pinwheeling for balance, the upper half of his body still trying to run. Finally, his torso THWOMPS! to the earth.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK NORTH - NIGHT

BAYLOCK'S SEAL TEAM - has set up a series of HEAD-HIGH TRIP WIRES, tied between the desiccated hulks of what used to be oak and maple trees.

INT. THE SECURE TRAILER - NIGHT

Snake is quick and merciless, driving his K-Bar blade directly into the first Guard's medulla oblongata. The Guard falls like an unstrung marionette.

The President's eyes widen as he sees a man wearing an eye patch walk out of the shadows. The other Guard sees the look, turns, sawed off shotgun coming up as --

-- SNAKE FIRES his silenced rifle, a single shot to the Guard's forehead. The Guard's finger depresses the trigger on the shotgun -- BOOM! Snake moved just in time -- avoiding most of the pellets, the blast nailing his RIGHT THIGH.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE TRAILER - NIGHT

The other Guards that Brain is talking to hear the blast.

GUARD

What the hell was that?

The Guards charge over to the trailer.

INT. THE TRAILER - NIGHT

Snake grimaces in pain, limping over to the President.

SNAKE

Can you move?

THE PRESIDENT

Who are you?

SNAKE

(yanking him to his feet)

Can you move?!

THE PRESIDENT

Hell yes, I can move.

SNAKE

Then stay behind me. And stay close.

The President grabs the silver briefcase on the floor and takes it with him.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE TRAILER - NIGHT

Snake KICKS OPEN THE TRAILER DOOR - sees one Guard with his hand on the handle of the door. PWHOOOT! Snake rakes the first two Guards with a silenced, controlled burst from the assault rifle. The Guards go down in a spray of blood, as --

BRAIN FIRES -- the nine millimeter in his hands kicking as he wastes the last Guard. Snake reloads on the run as he and the President move to Brain.

SNAKE

Hauk, come in. Come in, Hauk.

BRAIN

Shit! The whole fucking place heard us, Snake!

Snake grimaces, realizing they may not make it to the Brink's truck. Snake is eying the three motorcycles parked next to the trailer as he hears Hauk's voice in his ear:

HAUK (V.O.)

Here, Plissken.

SNAKE

Hauk, I found --

Snake is cut off as Brain shouts:

BRAIN

Behind you, Snake!

A bloodstained GUARD, still alive, grabs Snake in a chokehold. The man is cutting off Snake's oxygen supply, Snake's one blue eye starting to bulge. He can't get free.

Brain tries to get a clear shot, his hand quivering as he aims the gun, the barrel moving dangerously from the Guard's head to Snake's.

Snake can't tell what's more lethal: the chokehold, or Brain's quivering aim. He mutters:

SNAKE

Don't -- shoot --

-- as he struggles to get free.

EXT. NEAR THE FORBIDDEN ZONE - CONT.

The Duke has heard the gunfire. Uses his binoculars to see trouble, way back at the trailer. He snaps his fingers at a dozen Guards:

THE DUKE  
Go check it out.

TWELVE GUARDS start charging for the tactical trailer.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE TRAILER - CONT.

Snake feels the air leaving his lungs, his face beet red, the life being choked out of him, Hawk's voice in his ear saying:

HAUK  
Plissken? Plissken? Come in.

The President can do nothing but stand and watch, helpless. The Guard is a bear of a man, holding Snake with thickly-muscled arms. Snake manages to pull his three-inch holdout knife from his boot and PLUNGE IT into the Guard's groin.

The Guard doubles over, howling in pain. Snake pulls the knife out with a wet "SCHWOCK!" and quickly drives the knife under the man's sternum, right into the aorta, unleashing a splash of blood. The Guard finally goes down for good.

Snake feels his neck. Something's not right.

SNAKE  
Hawk? Hawk, come in.  
(nothing)  
Hawk?

INT. THE TACTICAL ROOM - CONT.

Plissken's feed from the throat microphone is nothing but a high-pitched SQUEAL.

HAUK  
Shit. His communications are out.

Secretary of State Clarke is making phone calls to various inner-cabinet dignitaries, apprising them of the situation. She holds a hand over the phone --

CLARKE  
Is he dead?

Hauk stares at the big map of the island prison as he lets out a deep exhale.

HAUK

Unknown.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE TRAILER - CONT.

Snake HEARS someone shout:

DUKE'S GUARD

Hey! He's got him!

Snake sees GUARDS running toward him, a hundred yards away. Snake turns. Brain is gone.

THE PRESIDENT

He ran away.

The GUARDS are getting closer, one man shouting:

DUKE'S GUARD

Stop him!

He checks a dead Guard's pockets. Nothing. Checks another. Yanks out a set of KEYS. Snake grabs the President.

SNAKE

Come on!

Snake tries the keys in the first Ducati. No go. The second: they fit. He hops on and starts it up, revving the engine.

SNAKE

Get on, sir.

His "sir" is ironic and biting. The President stares back, dubious, but sees the horde of Guards approaching fast. He hops on the back.

SNAKE

Better hold on.

The world's most powerful man puts his arms around Snake's waist.

THE PRESIDENT

I hope you know what you're doing.

Snake guns it, the President hanging on for dear life.

INT. THE BRINK'S TRUCK - NIGHT

Brain jumps in, Squirrel behind the wheel.

SQUIRREL

Where's Snake? And where's the President?

BRAIN

Duke catches me helping him and I'm dead!

Then Brain sees through the windshield, far off -- A MOTORCYCLE ZIPPING toward the barricade.

BRAIN

Smart mother fucker. Hit it!

Squirrel revs the engine and takes off after the motorcycle.

EXT. AT THE TRAILER - CONT.

THE DUKE is apoplectic with rage at the news of the President's liberation by an eye-patch wearing intruder.

His men pile into various kitted-out cars. Four Guards get on motorcycles. The Duke gets into his Mack Truck cab and hits the gas. Everyone is after that lone headlight in the distance, the whine of the 2000 cc engine receding toward 106th street.

EXT. NEAR THE BARRICADE - NIGHT

SNAKE SEES THE BARRICADE AHEAD -- the makeshift wall keeping them in, no way to get over it, until --

-- SNAKE SEES a tangled junkheap of rusted cars in a pile, and in the junkheap --

THE BACK END OF A FLATBED TOW TRUCK, rusted and discarded, the metal lying off kilter on the end of an old Buick. Snake REVS the throttle, the President's eyes widening as he realizes what Snake has in mind.

THE DUKE'S GUARDS - watch in awe as a motorcycle FLIES OVER THEIR HEADS, the wheels grazing the top of the POLICE BUS BARRICADE.

EXT. THE BARRICADE - NIGHT

THE MOTORCYCLE - lands HARD on the pavement on the other side of the barricade, the President GRUNTING with the bone-crunching impact. Snake holds on to the controlled rear-

wheel slide, the Ducati threatening to wipe out. He finally rights the motorcycle and speeds away.

INT. BRINK'S TRUCK - CONT.

Brain opens the door and shouts at the Guards at the front gate:

BRAIN

Open up! He's got the President!

The Guards move the front gate, the Brink's Truck peeling out after Snake's motorcycle tail light, just entering the north end of Central Park.

EXT. NEAR THE BARRICADE - NIGHT

THE DUKE'S MEN - ROAR past the open gate, dozens on motorcycles and in SUVs and yellow cabs, all chasing after the Ducati, far ahead.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT

THE DUKE'S ARMADA - is closing in, motorcycles leading the way, Duke's customized Mack Truck close behind, the big engine belching smoke into the sky.

The first motorcycle comes along Snake and the President. Snake raises his automatic rifle and BLASTS the rider off, the man's Suzuki flipping end over end.

Snake takes a hard RIGHT TURN, heading off into the maze of the park, avoiding dying tree-trunks that stick up skyward like grotesque gravestones.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - CONT.

Snake goes off-roading through irradiated dirt, tires spraying mud as The Duke's men chase close behind, the Duke's Mack Truck growling, felling desiccated tree trunks as it barrels along. The President looks around in wide-eyed terror when --

-- One of Duke's guards GUNS his motorcycle, getting ahead of Snake and the President.

ON THE BACK OF THE MOTORCYCLE - is a TAIL GUNNER, turned the other direction, driver and gunner back to back. The Tail Gunner aims his wicked rifle at Snake when --

-- SNAKE FIRES, hitting the tail gunner, blood arcing skyward. The bullet goes through the gunner and driver, sending the motorcycle cartwheeling end over end.

SNAKE - is riding through the park, past those burning trash barrels again. He looks back, sees dozens of headlights after him -- turns around just in time to see --

-- ONE OF THE TRIP WIRES, HEAD HIGH - strung between two dead tree trunks. Snake sees the glimmer of the wire just in time and SETS THE BIKE down, avoiding being decapitated.

THE PRESIDENT - and Snake SLIDE at thirty miles per hour on the irradiated earth, not a blade of grass in sight, the motorcycle doing a spastic dance as it cartwheels off into the night, engine whining.

The President's briefcase handle is RIPPED from the handcuff; the case skittering off into a set of bushes. The President, still alive and banged up, grits his teeth, trying to keep back the pain. Looks down at his forearm. Broken, the ends of the bone like crude knuckles in his forearm.

Snake is instantly up as --

-- ONE OF THE DUKE'S MEN doesn't see the other trip wire -- ZING! His head is neatly taken from his body, the motorcycle driving itself for a few seconds, the rider like the headless horseman, until the bike finally topples and crashes against a tree trunk.

THE PRESIDENT - realizes the briefcase is gone. Looks around frantically as Snake protects the President with his body, roughly pushing the man behind him.

SNAKE

Stay down!

ONE OF THE DUKE'S MEN -- FIRES from a motorcycle --

SNAKE IS HIT - the impact of the bullet sends Snake flying off his feet, his body SMACKING INTO A TREE HUSK, combat helmet CLANGING off the thick trunk.

EXT. THE PARK - NIGHT

SNAKE - is face down in the earth, his good eye losing focus as he slips toward unconsciousness. His eye widens slightly at what will be his final view before passing out --

-- A BLADE OF GRASS, poking out of the irradiated earth. Impossibly pushing upward, toward the sunlight soon to come, toward the healing sky. Snake finally passes out.

EXT. NEARBY - NIGHT

SQUIRREL AND BRAIN - pull up a discrete distance away in the Brink's truck. Squirrel shakes his head.

SQUIRREL  
There goes our chance.

Brain stares at the Duke's men, circling the fallen Snake.

BRAIN  
(mutters)  
Maybe...

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE PARK - NIGHT

BAYLOCK watches through his night scope, his team flanked around him, weapons trained on Duke's men, who are completely unaware of their presence. Baylock gives the hand signal to stand down. Speaks into his throat microphone:

BAYLOCK  
(whispers:)  
Plissken is down. Target is alive, but  
in enemy hands.

INT. SUPERMAX CONTROL ROOM - CONT.

Hauk swears under his breath as Baylock's voice continues over the speakers:

BAYLOCK (V.O.)  
Too many bogies to make an attempt  
here. Going into surveillance mode.

Clarke yells over at Joint Chiefs General Wilkins:

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE  
Tell them to attack now. We may not  
get a better chance.

WILKINS  
If they say there are overwhelming  
enemy odds, then we wait.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - NIGHT

THE DUKE stands over Snake's unconscious body. His men are circled around the Duke, watching.

THE DUKE  
This man had balls. He had the balls  
to come right in and try to take my man  
right under our noses. And he almost  
did. This is a man I coulda used.

He delivers a swift KICK to Snake's ribs with one steel-toed boot shank. Snake groans but doesn't come to. The Duke

marvels:

THE DUKE

Still alive.

The Duke leans down and RIPS OPEN Snake's radioactive uniform to reveal -- some kind of glittering metal-composite shirt, one tenth of an inch thick. The Duke finds a RUINED BULLET, holds it up to the moonlight, then looks back down at Snake.

THE DUKE

Kevlar cloak. Expensive.

DUKE'S GUARD

Look at the tag, Duke.

PROPERTY OF MANHATTAN MAX SEC PRSN is labeled on the inside of the thin kevlar covering.

THE DUKE

They sent him in.

(to the President:)

This guy a friend of yours?

THE PRESIDENT

Please, my arm. It's broken.

THE DUKE

(nods to one of his men)

Get the doc to take a look at him.

Don't want "The President" in pain for his big TV appearance tomorrow.

The Duke uses his fingers to put quote marks in the air around the title: The President. His men nod and usher the President off.

EXT. NEARBY - NIGHT

NO ONE SEES - Brain, pulling the forgotten Presidential briefcase from the bushes. Brain runs off, back to the safety of the Brink's Truck.

EXT. THE PARK - NIGHT

SNAKE'S BODY - is dragged through the dirt by his boots. WE FOCUS - on the blade of grass, still proudly arching up toward the sky until --

-- AN ERRANT FOOTSTEP of one of Duke's men brings a boot CRUSHING down on it.

FLASH TO:

## INT. MILITARY COURTROOM - DAY

Snake is standing behind the defense table at a military tribunal. His left eye is covered by an eyepatch, the scars on his face healing, the ones on his soul still fresh. A military JUDGE is speaking:

## MILITARY JUDGE

The preponderance of evidence is clear and acute: that Lieutenant Plissken decided to call in an airstrike on the village after firing on and killing United States soldiers, and putting his own platoon in harm's way, with tragic consequences. Tragic not only for US and coalition soldiers, but also for civilians. And your motive for this, the most base and venal of all -- greed. You knew there was money in the village, and you wanted it. Frankly, my stomach turns at the sight of you.

(to Snake:)

You have not only disgraced the uniform, you are a liability to the peaceable world at large. Unfortunately, I am compelled by legal protocol to let you make a final statement before sentence is handed down, otherwise I would just shove you in a very dark hole forever and forget all about you. Do you have anything to say, Lieutenant Plissken?

Snake stares back with his one good eye, his face a mask of cold betrayal.

## SNAKE

Yeah, I do...

The courtroom is quiet as all present are expecting an explanation, a remorseful speech from the condemned. Instead, the man in uniform with the name S.D. PLISSKEN on his chest lets the corners of his mouth turn up in the slightest of ironic grins as he says:

## SNAKE

...Call me Snake.

CLOSING IN - on Snake's good eye, the world loses all perspective, everything becoming the cold blue of his iris, the world darkening as we reach his pupil, finally going --

BLACK...

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAWN

Fire. The world is ablaze as we PULL BACK, realizing we are back in the Supermax.

A violent red DAWN rises over the irradiated Manhattan skyline. The long-dormant skyscrapers reflect blood red sunlight.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SUPERMAX - DAWN

Along a retaining wall that keeps the rising waters back even here, General Wilkins is on a secure satellite phone, finishing a conversation:

GENERAL WILKINS

No sir, that won't be a problem. I understand. Rest assured, sir.

He hangs up. Hears a voice behind him say:

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE

Who was that? The Vice President?

GENERAL WILKINS

(turns to see her)

Out to take in the lovely Manhattan skyline, Madam Secretary?

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE

What's the status of the Seal Team?

GENERAL WILKINS

They're in a holding position.

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE

A holding position? General, my bullshit detector is very good, and I'm getting a strong whiff right now.

GENERAL WILKINS

Madam Secretary, we have the best men on this. Now please just stay out of my way and let me do my job.

She stops him. Her deep brown eyes look into his.

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE  
Let's speak, General, off the record.  
And let's say, off the record, of  
course -- that I knew a little more  
than you thought a pissant woman  
Secretary of State could possibly know.

GENERAL WILKINS  
Time's wasting, madam.

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE  
We're both part of the same school of  
thought, General, the same political  
principals: we want to protect the  
office of the President of the United  
States.

GENERAL WILKINS  
Go on.

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE  
Protecting that office requires, from  
time to time in history, certain  
sacrifices. Would you agree?

GENERAL WILKINS  
It does.

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE  
When this is over, let's make sure  
we're not one of those sacrifices.

GENERAL WILKINS  
Are you really prepared to go as far as  
you have to with this?

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE  
I am.

GENERAL WILKINS  
Because there are forces at work who  
have made a decision.

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE  
I understand.

GENERAL WILKINS  
A decision that we have stumbled upon  
an opportunity. One that will allow a  
fractured country to rally behind a  
cause. Everyone loves a good cause,  
now don't they?

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE

They do. You have my support, General.

Wilkins can't help but let a smile creep up into the corner of his mouth.

GENERAL WILKINS

I underestimated you. My apologies.

Wilkins moves around her and heads back inside, shouldering the Secretary of State's ASSISTANT out of the way as he goes.

The Assistant, a young man with a finely tailored suit, straightens an out of place hair as he hands a phone to his boss, whispering:

ASSISTANT TO SEC. OF STATE CLARKE

The First Lady for you.

(motions over his  
shoulder)

He sure is cranky.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - MORNING

The belly of an attack helicopter comes down toward us, eclipsing the rising sun, bathing us in darkness.

Hauk and his men land at the appointed meeting time of 8:00 AM, the Duke's signal fires directing to a specific area. Hauk's men pile out of the choppers. They see --

-- nobody. No one is there to meet them. There's just a big flag sticking out from a picnic table.

Hauk's soldiers cover every angle of attack, Raptor choppers waiting on the dirt, rotors still turning, awaiting a quick getaway from the LZ.

Hauk and Rheme run up to see -- THE FLAG is not a flag at all. It's a protective radiation suit and a kevlar shirt, tied to the end of a pole.

RHEME

Plissken's!

Hauk nods, grim. Then sees A PIECE OF PAPER under a rock, a list of demands written on them. Hauk glances at the demands for five seconds, absorbing them, one lip curling up in disgust. Then he makes a spinning motion to the soldiers. Move out.

INT. THE PRESS BOX - DAY

Brain is talking with the Duke.

BRAIN

Everything's set up, Duke. I got a satellite feed that'll patch us right in to CNN, Fox, ABC, you name it. All they have to do is receive the feed and give it air time.

The Duke nods as he takes a handful of radiation pills.

THE DUKE

Oh, they'll air it. Live and in high-definition. Know why? America loves a good reality program. And I got the best one they'll ever see.

The Duke grimaces, his hand going up to his mouth. He plays with a back molar. Finally YANKS. The bloody tooth comes out in his hand. The Duke holds it up to the light, as if examining a fascinating butterfly.

THE DUKE

Look at that. Coming right out now. Sometimes my guts hurt, too. Despite the damn pills they give us, none of us are very long for this place, are we?

BRAIN

No, Duke. We're not.

THE DUKE

A couple of my guys said you were with him. Plissken, I mean.

Brain stays silent. The Duke stands, coming forward, Brain willing himself not to take a fearful step back.

THE DUKE

You do my heavy thinking for me, Brain. How was Plissken gonna get the President out?

BRAIN

I don't know, Duke.

THE DUKE

Take a guess.

BRAIN

He'd have to get him over the wall. Can't go through the Forbidden Zone.

THE DUKE

But you know how to beat the zone,  
Brain, don't you?

BRAIN

I can just about beat it, Duke. But  
Plissken would never make it.

THE DUKE

Unless he had your help.  
(puts a hand on Brain's  
shoulder, squeezes)  
Don't cross me, Brain. Ever.

Brain stares up at the big man, who's lower lip is bloody  
from the pulled tooth. He tries to keep his voice from  
trembling as he says:

BRAIN

I won't, Duke.

INT. UNKNOWN - DAY

SNAKE'S EYE OPENS - to see a GIANT OF A MAN, at least seven  
feet tall and over three hundred pounds, much of it muscle,  
standing over him.

Snake tries to get his bearings, stares at the immense  
crossed arms of the Giant, sees his own WRIST GAUGE on the  
Giant's wrist. Snake can make out the time remaining -- only  
02:59 left!

Snake sits upright in a flash -- realizes he's cuffed to the  
metal bed frame. His thigh, injured in the shotgun blast, is  
still oozing blood. They've done nothing medically to help  
him. All his equipment and weapons are gone. The earpiece  
is gone from his ear. The Giant puts a massive hand on  
Snake's chest and SHOVES him back.

THE GIANT

I'll be seeing you. Real soon.

The Giant laughs as he walks past --

-- The Duke, standing in the doorway. The Giant is still  
laughing as he calls out:

THE GIANT

Real soon!

Snake glances around, realizes he's got an amazing view in  
this cavernous office suite. He must be in one of the top  
floors of the Chrysler Building. Duke's lair.

THE DUKE

Nice, huh? I like it. It's comfortable for me. I got running water, generator for electricity. I like the view, too.

(smiles)

I still can't get over this. They sent Snake Plissken in to get the President. That's something. I've been a great admirer of yours for a long time, Snake. The man who took down three Federal Reserve Banks.

SNAKE

(mutters:)

Four.

THE DUKE

Hat's off, really, man.

The Duke, chummy, pulls up a chair, sidles up next to Snake.

THE DUKE

Of course I know who you are but, do you know who I am?

Snake stares up at the big man.

SNAKE

Queen Elizabeth II?

THE DUKE

No more jokes in about a half hour, Snake. Unless...

(shakes his head)

No. What am I thinking? No one's ever fought their way out. I'm sure you won't either.

Snake leans as far up as he can, inches away, hissing:

SNAKE

Your plan for using the President to get out of here won't mean shit in about two hours, "Duke." He'll be worthless.

The Duke looks at Snake, then leans back and laughs long and hard, truly relishing the moment.

THE DUKE

You think I want to use the President to get out of here?

(MORE)

## THE DUKE (CONT'D)

Why the hell would I want to get out of here? This is New York, baby. I got all I need. In here, I got more power than I could ever dream of, power I could never have on the outside. Now why in the hell would I give that up?

Snake works out the details in his head in about two seconds.

## SNAKE

Jesus. You're not gonna use the President as a bargaining chip. You're gonna kill him.

The Duke stares back, his smile fading. His non answer is an answer in itself. Snake shakes his head.

## SNAKE

Then -- just what the fuck do you want?

## THE DUKE

I want the world to see you die, Snake Plissken. But that's just a warm up. After that comes the main event: the most powerful man on Earth fighting for his life, right there on national television. Hell, worldwide TV.

(shouts)

Live from New York!

(leans forward, whispers:)

Can you see it, Snake? The President fighting for his life, begging for his life, and dying, in here. Inside this radioactive hell they walled us up in.

The Duke rises to his feet, chest expanding as he raises his massive arms to the skies.

## THE DUKE

I want the world to see that we cannot be discarded. They know my name within these walls. After today, the entire world will know my name. And the world will witness the true meaning of power as the President's death is beamed right into every living room in America, and beyond. Imagine the repercussions, Snake. The fucking world turning on its goddamn axis, the President of the United States killed in the world's worst prison! Imagine the ripples, the anarchy that will occur.

(MORE)

THE DUKE (CONT'D)

And then, and then just maybe the whole planet will become like this, like this hell that I find myself king of.

(softly:)

That, my friend, is true power.

SNAKE

What are you waiting for? Let's get this over with now.

The Duke motions out the window, as if it's self evident.

THE DUKE

Prime Time baby. Can't go on TV until it's Prime Time.

Snake takes a few breaths, then says:

SNAKE

They'll destroy you after that, you realize that? They'll level this place.

THE DUKE

Brain reckons we have enough food, pills and weapons stockpiled to fight for two years. Two years! Imagine it. A two year guerilla war on my home turf, as they try to get the big bad man who killed the President. I love the idea. I relish the thought.

Snake can do nothing but stare in wonder at this man, this mirror reflection of himself, albeit fractured and darker in ways that even Snake can't dream of.

One of the Duke's men brings in a plate of food -- MRE's from the supply drops. Slaps it in front of Snake.

THE DUKE

Better eat up. Gonna need strength if you wanna put up a good fight.

(laughs)

Then again, you can skip the meal if you wanna die quick and painless.

The Duke laughs again as he leaves the room, his voice echoing off the hallways outside as he says:

THE DUKE

Painless... Ha!...

His cold, ironic laugh echoes as the big man walks down the long hallway, leaving Snake sitting there, the prepackaged meal before him. After a long moment, Snake sighs, opens the food package, and begins to eat...

INT. PADDY WAGON - EVENING

SNAKE and The President are being transported in the back of the paddy wagon to Madison Square Garden. Snake works to bind the shotgun wound in his thigh. The President gingerly holds his broken left arm, now in a makeshift splint. Snake finishes wrapping his still-bloody thigh wound.

SNAKE

Where's the briefcase?

THE PRESIDENT

Gone. I don't know where.

SNAKE

Shit. What's so important about that disc, anyway?

The President stares back at Snake, as if wondering how he's ended up in this predicament, talking seriously to a guy with an eyepatch who was #1 on the FBI's Most Wanted List.

THE PRESIDENT

It's everything I've worked for, fought for.

SNAKE

Fought for? When did you ever have to fight for anything?

THE PRESIDENT

We're not so different. We have the same problem, you and me.

(Snake scoffs)

The problem of being misunderstood. The problem of having the entire world rooting for your failure. And if they only knew -- you just want to make the world a safer place. A better place.

The President ruminates on his own words, staring into the metal hull of the paddy wagon as the engine rumbles beneath them, taking them to an unknown destination.

SNAKE

A better place. On your terms?

The President glances over at this battered man in the paddy wagon with him. He stiffens slightly.

THE PRESIDENT

My terms may not agree with everyone,  
but they are democratic and just, and I  
will stand behind them.

Snake leans forward, his voice dropping in volume:

SNAKE

I've been on the front lines of your  
wars to make this world "a better  
place." Look around you, Mr.  
President. Does this look like a  
better place to you?

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - EVENING

The seats are filled with over TWENTY THOUSAND screaming, rabid prisoners. They are watching FOUR MEN FIGHT within the perimeter of the ice hockey boards, the ice long since gone. The men are armed with knives, shields and swords, weapons pillaged from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, sharpened to perfection for this particular pastime.

The makeshift GLADIATORS are hacking away at one another, much to the delight of the crowd. One man goes down in a spray of blood, his right arm crushed by a prisoner wielding a medieval mace.

The felled prisoner tries to protect himself, raising a useless arm to ward off the next blow -- the mace swings down and THWOCKS! into the prisoner's skull. Blood sprays on the plexiglas hockey boards. The crowd roars.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - EVENING

Baylocks' six man SEAL TEAM has made it to the outside of Madison Square Garden. Baylock checks his TRACKING DEVICE, sees the blue dot radiating outward from within the structure. He speaks into his throat microphone:

BAYLOCK

We've acquired the Target. Inside  
Madison Square Garden.

INT. SUPERMAX CONTROL CENTER - EVENING

General Wilkins sees Snake's kevlar shirt on the table, Hawk standing over it, grim.

HAUK  
Then Plissken is still alive.

GENERAL WILKINS  
Someone could simply have his tracking device. I think it's high time we go ahead with Plan B.

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE  
Good. It's about time. Do it.

HAUK  
What? What are you going to do?

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE  
What does it look like, Hawk? Your plan failed. Now we're going in with everything we've got.

EXT. LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, VIRGINIA - EVENING

F-16S and assault choppers are scrambled, the twin engines of the jets blazing white hot as the aircraft hurtle toward the setting sun.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - EVENING

SNAKE AND THE PRESIDENT - are prodded through the tunnels that superstars like Mark Messier and Patrick Ewing used to walk down. They can HEAR the echo of the crowd, building in intensity.

Snake can only guess where he's headed, and it doesn't sound good. The President shuffles along, shoved forward by the dozen guards behind them, all armed with rifles. Snake, limping on his injured leg, turns and helps the President. Whispers to him:

SNAKE  
You're still my ticket out of here.  
You stay alive.

The President glances at him, fear in his eyes. Nods.

INT. SUPERMAX CONTROL CENTER - EVENING

Hauk, Wilkins and Rheme watch the bank of monitors as the news feeds start coming in over the channels.

CNN NEWSCASTER (ONSCREEN)  
Again, these are unprecedented live images from inside Manhattan's Maximum Security Men's Prison.  
(MORE)

CNN NEWSCASTER (ONSCREEN) (CONT'D)

Sights no one has seen before. In a unique bargain with the prisoners, we are picking up a live video feed from Madison Square Garden, where there seems to be some kind of sporting contest going on. We have no control over these ground-breaking images, but if the camera would only zoom in, we could --

The Newscaster stops as he sees the bloody spectacle on the screen: one of the prisoners hacking off a limb of his opponent with a machete.

CNN NEWSCASTER

Oh, my God.

The screen goes black, the words: "TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES" flashing for a moment before a Pepsi commercial is rushed onto the screen.

Rheme switches channels. Finds the feed again, this time on BBC World, the NEWSCASTER saying,

BBC NEWSCASTER

If you have young children watching, please turn the television set off. We are not going to cut the feed on these one-of-a-kind images.

Wilkins pours himself a cup of coffee, sees Hauk pacing:

GENERAL WILKINS

Stop worrying, Mr. Hauk. We've got things in good hands.

HAUK

I'm still counting on Plissken.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Snake limps through a barbed-wire tunnel that leads into the bloodstained arena. The President is held back, awaiting his turn in the gladiator arena.

ON SNAKE -- he turns to see the President, wide-eyed with terror, watching as --

-- THE TUNNEL is closed behind Snake. He looks around the massive arena, the crowd chanting:

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN CROWD

Monster! Monster! Monster!

Snake checks out the top of the hockey boards: covered in razor wire, barbed wire, shards of glass glued to the tops, jagged metal facing inward. THE DUKE'S VOICE comes out over the P.A. system:

THE DUKE  
Gentlemen and Gentlemen, you know me,  
you know who I am! The man who  
provides you with food, liquor, and  
anti-radiation pills! And the man who  
provides you with enter-fucking-  
tainment!

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN CROWD  
(chants:)  
Duke! Duke! Duke!

INT. IN A PRESS BOX -

The Duke holds a PA microphone in one massive hand, sunglasses on his face, Snake's combat helmet on his head, Snake's silenced machine gun and grenade bandolier strapped around his broad chest.

THE DUKE  
I am the motherfuckin' Duuuuke!

The crowd ROARS.

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN CROWD  
DUKE!DUKE!DUKE!

THE DUKE  
And right now, right here, I give you  
the penultimate match of the night!  
(silence from the crowd)  
That means next to last!

The CROWD ROARS.

THE DUKE  
After the blood is spilled, I will give  
you the PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES!

The crowd is apoplectic.

THE DUKE  
But let's not get ahead of ourselves!  
We got some great entertainment to  
start.

He points one accusing finger down at the small form of Snake Plissken, way down on the floor below.

THE DUKE

They sent their best man in to try to  
get the President out!

The crowd boos at Snake, standing there all alone in the  
center of the hockey rink.

THE DUKE

Their best man failed. And now, he has  
to face the one, the only, the  
undefeated -- MONSTER!

The crowd cannot be silenced as --

INT. THE GLADIATOR ARENA - CONT.

THE GIANT MAN who was wearing Snake's wrist gauge comes  
walking through the opposing tunnel, ducking beneath the  
razor wire, then standing to his full seven feet. He is  
wearing FULL BODY ARMOR, specially tailored to his immense  
breadth and girth. "Monster" raises his arms to the crowd,  
who cheers:

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN CROWD

MONSTER! MONSTER! MONSTER!

INT. IN THE PRESS BOX - CONT.

The Duke's personal DJ spins a remix of Metallica's "Some  
Kind of Monster," music blaring from the Garden sound system.

INT. GLADIATOR ARENA - CONT.

Monster smiles, basking in the adulation, as he affixes his  
homemade gladiator helmet, fashioned from car metal and  
chrome, a big DODGE RAM TRUCK logo covering the nose.

The news cameras ZOOM in on this massive beast of a man as --

WEAPONS - are dropped into the arena from a platform on the  
scoreboard above. A handheld MACE and a shield fashioned  
from a car door. Snake picks up the shield, sees the logo on  
the inside of the metal reading "PRIUS -- PASSENGER SIDE  
DOOR."

Monster smiles through his metal mask and slowly begins  
moving toward Snake. The crowd goes insane with anticipation  
as MONSTER TAKES THE FIRST SWING.

Whoosh! Snake ducks the mace, missing his head by inches.  
Snake hobbles away, dancing on his good leg like a boxer.  
Monster swings again -- Snake raises the shield and BOOM!  
The mace nearly knocks the shield from Snake's grasp.

As Snake goes down, he gets a brief glimpse of the wrist gauge. It reads: 01:20.

EXT. OVER THE PENNSYLVANIA COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Heavy SAMPSON TROOP CHOPPERS thunder across the black landscape, bellies laden with full platoons of soldiers, on a bearing toward New York.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN/IN THE TUNNELS - NIGHT

Brain and Squirrel walk toward the MEN guarding the President, craning their necks to see the action in the arena. Brain casually speaks to the LEAD GUARD:

BRAIN

Hiya. Duke sent me to check the President's clothes for cyanide capsules. They put them in shirt buttons. The Duke don't want a dead President on TV. At least not yet.

The Guard is dubious, his eyes taking in the nervous Squirrel.

THE GUARD

I never heard anything about that. I dunno about this, Brain.  
(nods to a cohort)  
Go check with the Duke.

BRAIN

You won't need to check.

THE GUARD

Why not?

BRAIN

Because of the bullet.

THE GUARD

What bullet?

BOOM! Brain blasts the man's guts against the wall as he FIRES a .45 from the hip.

BRAIN

That bullet.

Squirrel raises a shotgun and SHOOTs, decimating TWO GUARDS with one shot. Brain raises his dual gleaming .45s and WASTES the last two guards, sending blood spattering on the corridor walls. The horrified President stares at the two men, wondering if he's next..

BRAIN

Come with us, Mr. President. I know how to get us off this island.

The President hustles along beside them, in shock at the violence that just occurred.

THE PRESIDENT

Thank you. Thank you. Your support will not be forgotten.

BRAIN

My support? You think you're in some goddamn campaign? I didn't vote for you, I don't like you, and I'm not doing this for you. I'm doing this for my kid.

He yanks the President down the corridor, the group breaking into a run, Squirrel adding:

SQUIRREL

I didn't vote at all.

EXT. SKIES OVER MANHATTAN - NIGHT

Twelve Samson choppers BELLOW over the retaining wall at the southern tip of Manhattan. Target -- Madison Square Garden. Pilot chatter can be heard as the choppers move:

SAMPSON PILOT (O.C.)

Arming hellfire and tow missiles.

ANOTHER SAMPSON PILOT

Target viable in seven minutes.

SAMPSON PILOT

Roger that.

INT. SUPERMAX CONTROL CENTER - NIGHT

Hauk and Rheme watch the news coverage, see the giant of a man fighting a guy with an eye patch.

HAUK

I knew it.

RHEME

It's Plissken! Son of a bitch is still alive!

HAUK  
 (nods, mutters:)  
 For how long?

INT. GLADIATOR ARENA - NIGHT

Snake has lost his shield, taking two hands to BASH his mace into Monster's shield. Monster, slightly winded from chasing Snake around, easily deflects the blow.

Monster immediately swings back, PUNCHING Snake with his big shield, sending Snake cartwheeling against the boards. Snake has a second to regain his breath before -- THE MACE slams down, right where his head was a moment before, CRACKING the plexiglas.

INT. IN THE PRESS BOX - NIGHT

The Duke, thoroughly enjoying himself, hits a buzzer, sounding a KLAXON.

INT. THE ARENA - NIGHT

Monster stops swinging the mace. Tosses it aside, as well as his shield.

FROM ABOVE - new weapons are lowered to the two gladiators in the arena.

MONSTER'S HAND - reaches up and YANKS down a RAZOR-SAW, a wicked, lightweight, double-bladed type of chain saw with two jagged sets of teeth that cut in opposite directions.

SNAKE - pulls his from the rope and immediately cranks his up with one pull. BZZZZZPPP! The crowd goes nuts.

MONSTER - starts his saw, the blades shrieking as he swings it around and around over his head, doing a grotesque dance, a ballet honoring the massacre that is to come.

The crowd is silent with anticipation as the two men face one another at opposite ends of the arena. And then --

Monster RUSHES Snake, remarkably fast for such a big man laden down with armor.

SNAKE DODGES the first deadly ROAR of the sweeping arc of the razor saw.

SNAKE SAWS into the armor on Monster's chest. Sparks fly. No damage is done to the massive man. He just smiles beneath his helmet and SWINGS AGAIN.

SNAKE DIVES - and rolls, the saw glancing off a shoulder. Snake's blood sprays. The crowd CHEERS.

INT. TIME WARNER EAST TOWER - NIGHT

BRAIN AND SQUIRREL - lead the President up the staircase of the East Tower.

BRAIN

(gasping for breath)

Come on! We get to the roof and we get out of this goddamn place. Come on!

The President huffs his way up another flight of stairs.

SQUIRREL

Slow down! We're not all amped up on crystal meth like some people!

EXT. SKIES OVER MANHATTAN - NIGHT

The armada of choppers sweeps over building tops.

SAMPSON PILOT

Sixty seconds out. Going hot.

ANOTHER SAMPSON PILOT

Armed and ready.

SAMPSON PILOT

On my mark, gentlemen.

The choppers head toward the squat, square profile of Madison Square Garden.

INT. THE SUPERMAX CONTROL CENTER - NIGHT

Hauk turns to Clarke, hearing the chatter of the attack copters.

HAUK

You're gonna end up killing everyone, including the President.

CLARKE

We're out of options, Hauk.

(motions to the clock)

We either get the President out now, or politically he's as good as dead.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Baylock and his Seal Team are covering the main exit.

BAYLOCK

Ready to fire up the barbecue. We'll  
make sure meat stays on the grill.

The Seal Team aims their weapons at the main entrance: an array of crew-serviced machine guns, rocket launchers, and automatic rifles. Muzzles of various yawning diameters are trained on the exit to the stadium, waiting...

INT. THE ARENA - NIGHT

Snake tries to repel another BLOW by the giant of a man.

Monster KNOCKS the razor saw out of Snake's grasp. It goes skittering along the arena floor and --

-- OUT OF REACH. Snake LEAPS out of the way of Monster's killer blow. Sees --

-- THE MACE on the ground, discarded. Lifts it up and SWINGS, BASHING Monster in the head, knocking his metal helmet clean off. The crowd gasps.

Monster, momentarily staggering, bleeding from the nose, is really pissed now. He starts sawing at the air, closing in on Snake in a berzerker rage, roaring as he comes in for the kill, the razor saw roaring and snapping.

Snake holds up the mace to defend himself. The saw BLASTS through the mace, Snake holding both useless pieces in his hands. Monster KICKS Snake, sending him falling backward, landing --

-- HARD AGAINST THE BOARDS, Snake falling to the ground, right next to --

-- HIS DISCARDED RAZOR SAW, still turning, engine still belching smoke.

SNAKE'S POV - Monster's legs coming at him.

He takes the saw by the handle and SHOVES IT SKITTERING ALONG THE GROUND. The blade BITES into Monster's shin, tearing into flesh and bone.

Monster HOWLS IN AGONY, going down on one knee. Snake is up in an instant. He BASHES monster in the head with the Mace. Stunned, Monster falls even further, the blades of the razor saw turning in his hands. Snake leaps on the giant's back and SHOVES the back of Monster's head with both hands, sending his neck right onto Monster's own RAZOR SAW --

-- BZZZZZRRRTTPPP! Deadly blades facing upright, Monster's

saw, still gripped in his hand, CHEWS through the giant's own thick neck in half a second, going through gristle and spine, Snake pushing down as the blood FOUNTAINS SKYWARD.

-- Plop! Monster's head, released from the confines of his body, now rolls away on the arena floor, eyes still wide in shocked disbelief.

FROM HIGH ABOVE - Snake backs away from the headless Monster, the razor saw in the giant's dead hands still buzzing away. The crowd is stunned silent. Then, the first voice comes chanting:

CROWD MEMBER

Snake.

Others join in:

CROWD MEMBERS

Snake! Snake!

Soon the entire Garden is shouting in one voice --

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN CROWD

SNAKE! SNAKE! SNAKE! SNAKE!

INT. THE PRESS BOX - CONT.

A minion runs up and whispers something in Duke's ear.

THE DUKE

What? MotherFUCKER!

He stands and shouts into the microphone:

THE DUKE

Hear me, my battalion of justice! Hear me! The President has been taken! BRAIN TOOK HIM!

The crowd roars its disapproval.

INT. THE GLADIATOR ARENA - CONT.

Snake, breathing heavily from the battle, looks at the hallway leading into the rink. Sees the President's dead guards, their bodies strewn in pools of blood.

INT. THE PRESS BOX - CONT.

The Duke hears something strange over the din of the crowd -- HELICOPTERS, a lot of them, the echoes of their rotors now dying as there is another sound -- ROCKETS.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

The first Samson chopper FIRES a fusillade of rockets, EXPLODING into the side of the Garden. Glass and concrete SHOWER onto the surrounding streets.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - CONT.

The Duke shouts over the P.A. system:

THE DUKE  
It's time to meet the enemy! It's our  
time of DESTINY! Let's show them how  
New York can KICK ASS!

The crowd rushes for the exits, parts of the ceiling starting to cave in as more ROCKETS EXPLODE into Madison Square Garden. The entire structure is swaying with the violence of the hellfire missiles.

EXT. OVER THE SKIES OF NEW YORK - NIGHT

Two F-16s that were in a holding pattern now descend like hungry eagles, wings swept back in attack position.

EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE, MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

The doors burst open, prisoners starting to rush out as --

BAYLOCK'S MEN - open up with their machine guns, raking the first wave of hundreds, killing men by the bushel, bodies stacking up in the exit, creating a bloody barricade of flesh.

INT. SUPERMAX CONTROL CENTER - NIGHT

There is one news station still broadcasting a view of the gladiator arena. Hauk leans forward, staring at the screen.

HAUK  
(whispers)  
Plissken...

He watches in awe on screen as the man he sent in is left alone, still alive, still deadly.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

As the building shudders, debris raining down from the ceiling with each blast, Snake has been forgotten.

He YANKS the wrist gauge off Monster's dead body. Looks at the remaining time: it changes before his eyes from 01:00.00

to 00:59.59, ticking down: 00:59.58, 00:59.57... He swears under his breath as he grabs the razor saw and CUTS HIS way through the plexiglas.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

The first missiles from the F-16s come STREAKING into the side of Madison Square Garden.

A MASSIVE FIREBALL DETONATES inside and outside the Garden, glass and steel showering the street, the blast wave hurtling prisoners hundreds of feet in the air, bodies flying like dolls hurled during a giant baby's tantrum. The entire side of the edifice starts to crumble as --

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

Snake struggles to keep his footing, enormous chunks of concrete and metal raining down, tons of debris falling from the skies, pulverizing those unlucky enough not to have made it to an exit.

Snake falls out of the arena and joins the crowd of thousands heading for the exits. Huge chunks of cement RAIN DOWN from the ceiling, prisoners screaming in horror as the debris maims and kills.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

BAYLOCK'S MEN pull back to the perimeter set up by the landing Sampson choppers.

The Army FIRES indiscriminately, wasting prisoners by the hundreds. The Garden is burning, anything left alive in there will soon be as good as dead.

BAYLOCK - looks down on his homing beacon readout -- sees the blue dot beginning to MOVE.

BAYLOCK

(to his men)

Target is out of pocket and on the move. Let's go, go, go!

The Seal Team follows Baylock as they hustle to a waiting Sampson Chopper. The Team piles in, Baylock giving an order to the pilot, the chopper taking wing into the night sky.

INT. SUPERMAX CONTROL CENTER - NIGHT

Hauk whirls on General Wilkins.

HAUK

You goddamn plan is going to kill everyone in that building.

GENERAL WILKINS

That's a distinct possibility.

HAUK

Including the President!

Wilkins doesn't answer, just sips his coffee. Hauk realizes the truth in an instant.

HAUK

You're going to let him die, aren't you? You're going to make a hero out of this guy.

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE

A martyr.

Hauk looks from Clarke to Wilkins, who holds out a placating palm.

GENERAL WILKINS

I just follow orders.

EXT. THE STREETS OUTSIDE MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

It's a war zone on Seventh Avenue.

The Army vs. Duke's heavily armed and loyal followers.

THE DUKE -- leads his men into battle, thousands of his loyalists diving behind the wreckage of cars, firing back at the soldiers with whatever weapon they have -- rifles, handguns, crossbows, even thrown rocks.

THE SOLDIERS -- cut through scores of prisoners, but the flood of them is too much to stop.

FROM FAR OVERHEAD - every convict group in the city, friendly to the Duke or not, is now descending on the firefight to get some action. The hordes of disparate prison gangs now have a common enemy to destroy.

EXT. ON SNAKE - NIGHT

Snake dodges his way through the conflagration, the streets around him alive with gunfire, helicopters still making strafing runs, rockets EXPLODING into the sidewalk just behind him, body parts flying heavenward.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

The outnumbered Soldiers are pulling back to their troop helicopters even as --

EXT. SKIES OVER MANHATTAN - NIGHT

-- THE F-16s COME SHRIEKING OVER AGAIN - Vulcan cannons spraying 7.62mm shells, human beings exploding as the twin cannons leave carnage-strewn track marks down Seventh Avenue.

EXT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

The Duke's men have taken to their vehicles, trucks and cars ROARING PAST the Army gun emplacements, prisoners firing weapons as they barrel past the soldiers on the ground.

AN ARMY HELICOPTER -- vectors in on an old Mustang and unleashes with a minigun -- sixty five rounds of depleted uranium slugs per second completely obliterating the Mustang in one burst.

THE DUKE -- throws one of Snake's grenades -- BAWHOOM! Two soldiers are lost in a corona of fire and shrapnel, blood spattering against the windscreen of the Samson chopper. The pilot wastes no time, taking the chopper skyward again, retreating. The Duke smiles before he glances over to see --

SNAKE -- far in the distance, his form limping away, blurred through the heat waves of rising flames.

EXT. DOWN THE BLOCK - NIGHT

SNAKE -- blood dripping from his leg and shoulder, YANKS one of Duke's men from a vehicle. Lays a precise blow to the man's jaw, sending him sprawling backward to land in a tangle of limbs. The man's shotgun skitters to the ground.

Snake grabs the weapon, yanking a bandolier of shells from the man's unconscious form. Snake gets in the car. Floors the gas, the two gleaming towers of Time Warner Center on the horizon.

EXT. TIME WARNER TOWERS - NIGHT

Snake makes it to the towers. He doesn't bother to park the car, he just EXPLODES through the wide atrium plate glass window, the car HURTLING over marble floors, slick with glass and debris.

INT. THE CAR - CONT.

Snake eyeballs the wide main lobby staircase. He decides not to walk.

He GUNS the engine, taking the car up a forty-five degree angle, rubber desperately trying to grip the marble staircase, the rear-wheel drive shimmying back and forth before finally nosing its way violently forward.

INT. TIME WARNER TOWER - NIGHT

Snake wrenches the steering wheel at the top of the stairs, the car fishtailing, the heavy back end exploding through piles of desks and boxes, long since abandoned. Snake floors the gas, heading up the second flight of steps.

THE STAIRS - abruptly get narrower, the atrium staircase ending. Snake WEDGES the car right against the sides of the wall, the car struggling upward a few yards like a trapped salmon, desperate to make its spawning grounds. Finally, the engine dies.

SNAKE - realizes he can't get out of the car. He plants a boot on the windshield and KICKS out the glass. He clambers out and starts --

-- LIMPING up the rest of the stairs. Many, many flights lay ahead of him.

EXT. TIME WARNER TOWER EAST ROOF - NIGHT

Brain is trying to blow-torch his way through the lock of the RAMJET HANGAR, and having little luck.

SQUIRREL

Goddamn thing is indestructible!

BRAIN

No it isn't. We'll get through.

Brain looks away from the glare of the blow torch as he cuts into the metal around the lock. Before he can get any further, he hears a VOICE --

VOICE

Hold it, Brain.

Brain whips around to see SNAKE, hobbling up onto the roof, shotgun barrels trained on Brain. Brain drops the blow torch. Snake stumbles over to Brain.

SNAKE

Asshole.

Snake knocks Brain aside with one angry swipe. Leans into the lock and puts his eye up to THE RETINA SCANNER.

KA-CHUNK! The locks click open. The big hangar doors rattle upward on backup generator power. The President looks into the hangar and sees what the rest of them see -- A RAMJET GLIDER, a sleek, white aircraft, wings folded upward, cockpit an ample size.

BRAIN

Good. Seats four.

Brain rubs his hands together in anticipation.

SNAKE

You're not going anywhere, Brain. You left me in there to die. Now I'll do the same for you.

BRAIN

You might need this, Snake.

Brain puts one hand in the air, one in his pocket. Pulls out the gleaming titanium disc, holds them up to the moonlight.

THE PRESIDENT

Give that to me.

BRAIN

Ah, ah. Easy does it. I encrypted it. If I don't get out, you'll never be able to read it.

Brain pulls out a portable computer, no smaller than the Blackberry of the 2000s. A small slot in the side for micro discs.

SNAKE

(aims his gun at Brain)  
Decode it. Now.

BRAIN

When we're in the air.

Snake stares at Brain, then says:

SNAKE

Help me prep the glider.

## EXT. BAYLOCK'S HELICOPTER - NIGHT

The helicopter is vectoring in to the tower, Baylock using the signal from Snake's tracking implant to guide the pilot.

BAYLOCK

Target is on the roof of the East Tower.

## EXT. ROOF OF THE EAST TOWER - NIGHT

The four men have rolled the light glider into position, the nose facing down the short runway on the roof, really just a ramp that leads to the edge. Snake and Brain unfold the wings.

## INT. THE RAMJET - NIGHT

Snake preps the aircraft with an expertise that comes only from flying the glider countless times: he flicks on buttons that illuminate -- DIFFUSERS ON; SCRAMJETS ACTIVATED.

SQUIRREL

Come on, Snake, come on.

SNAKE

Shut up, the thing can't just start. You gotta preflight or the only place we'll go is right into the pavement.

Snake enters a series of commands into the touch screen on the ceiling: OXYGEN INTAKE READY, a loud WHOOSH fills the air from outside. He finally hits: THRUSTERS ON, and DYNAMIC PRESSURE ON.

AIRPLANE COMPUTER VOICE

Kilopascal pressure is good.

Snake hits the flashing red ENGINES READY lights.

AIRPLANE COMPUTER VOICE

Engines activated.

Engine one ROARS to life. More switches are thrown. Engine two bellows awake.

SNAKE

We're in business.

Snake eyeballs the end of the runway.

SNAKE

Disc, Brain.

Snake's hand goes into the backseat. Brain hands over the President's titanium micro disc.

SNAKE  
Decode it first.

BRAIN  
Oh, that was just bullshit to get me a seat on the plane, Snake. I didn't have time to encrypt it.

Snake shakes his head, pockets the disc. Hits another set of buttons before gripping the yoke.

SNAKE  
Here we go.

He hits a FLASHING RED BUTTON - "RAMJET ACTIVATE - TAKEOFF." The air is rammed into the engines, THRUSTING THE CRAFT into instant speed. Zero to eighty in two seconds. The thing hurtles down the runway but --

EXT. TIME WARNER TOWER - NIGHT

-- BAYLOCK'S SAMPSON CHOPPER - rises up from the lip of the roof, rotors thundering, Baylock and his men in the cargo hold, weapons trained on the streaking plane.

INT. RAMJET - NIGHT

SNAKE - makes eye contact with Baylock before --

INT. SAMPSON HELICOPTER - NIGHT

THE SEAL TEAM - opens up, firing at the aircraft, bullets slamming into the hull of the craft.

INT. RAMJET - NIGHT

The engines are HIT, oil and fluid SPRAYING.

THE PRESIDENT  
(to the SEAL team)  
We're on your side, goddammit!

A bullet hits the cockpit, glass splintering, Squirrel shouting --

SQUIRREL  
Jesus Christ!

Snake feels the jet LURCH before --

-- IT CLEARS THE RUNWAY -- off into clear sky, wings taking flight.

WARNING LIGHTS and sirens are flashing and howling, their glow reflecting off Snake's scowling face.

COMPUTERIZED VOICE

Engine one, malfunction.

Snake tries to give the craft more thrust, but it lists to one side. The voice speaks again, as calmly as if describing the local weather:

COMPUTERIZED VOICE

Engine two, malfunction.

THE PRESIDENT

How many engines do we have?

SNAKE

Two.

Snake, trying to keep them aloft. It's no use, the engines are ON FIRE, flames glowing red in the cockpit.

SNAKE

We're going down.

SQUIRREL

Shit! Shit, shit! This was my chance!  
I could already taste that X!

SNAKE

Shut up.

BRAIN

Set it down on Broadway, Snake.

Snake nods, trying to muscle the struggling craft, turning toward the grid of the streets, far below. He sees one wide boulevard -- his landing strip, if he can make it.

INT. SAMPSON HELICOPTER - NIGHT

Baylock and his men watch the ramjet glider spiral down in a slow trail of flame and smoke.

INT. TIME WARNER BUILDING - NIGHT

The DUKE and his men are at Snake's abandoned car, wedged between the hallways, the night sky visible through the enormous atrium windows that stretch up from the lobby, stories below.

The Duke turns to see an amazing sight through the windows: a flaming jet glider spiraling down toward Central Park.

The Duke allows himself the smallest expression of satisfaction as he watches the glider go down. He whispers to the dwindling form of the glider:

THE DUKE

No one gets away from The Duke. No one...

EXT. BROADWAY AND 68TH - NIGHT

THE JET GLIDER -- comes hurtling onto Broadway, flame and sparks showering skyward in a massive rooster tail, reflecting off building fronts like a roman candle. The plane goes into a wicked spin, Snake and his passengers hanging on in this insane amusement park ride before the aircraft finally comes to rest. Flames lick away outside the cockpit, growing in intensity as the plane --

-- FINALLY STOPS.

ON THE COCKPIT - Snake kicks his way out, pulling the President with him, Brain and Squirrel following.

SNAKE - looks around him -- how the fuck is he going to get out now? Snake turns to Brain:

SNAKE

That map in your lab, the one in your lab showing the path through the Forbidden Zone, is it accurate?

BRAIN

That's miles away, Snake.

SNAKE

What if I could get you there? Could you get us through the Zone?

BRAIN

Duke had a guy run all the way to the wall and back and survive. There are blind spots. Gun emplacements can't cover everything, it's too much space.

SNAKE

Ever try it yourself?

BRAIN

Getting to the wall without a plan to get over the wall isn't much of an escape plan. But the map is legit, believe me. It works.

SNAKE

They told me there's a working subway car at 63rd Street that heads all the way downtown.

BRAIN

Shit, everyone knows that, Snake. But you can't use it.

SNAKE

Why not?

SQUIRREL

Man, it's suicide to go underground!

INT. SUBWAY SYSTEM - NIGHT

Snake leads the three men over the turnstyles. It's dark in here, illuminated only by Snake's makeshift torch, a stick with ragged clothes on the end, ghostly shadows cast on the walls.

BRAIN

(whispers)

They might still be asleep. They usually come out after midnight.

They make it to the empty platform. No subway car.

SQUIRREL

Shit.

SNAKE

There.

Snake points down the subway tunnel. The group sees the dark back end of the subway cars. Many dark forms are asleep around it.

INT. THE SUBWAY TUNNEL - DAY

The group steps CAREFULLY through the mass of Crazies, all resting in their ragged clothes, misshapen faces hidden by darkness.

Snake leads the group quietly to the head of FOUR SUBWAY CARS. The Crazies are still unaware of their presence, dozens of them sleeping in the darkness.

EXT. ON THE STREETS ABOVE - NIGHT

Duke and his men have made it to the wreckage. Duke uses Snake's helmet heat sensing eyepiece to find --

-- SNAKE'S BLOOD DROPS on the blacktop, the heat still coming off the crimson splatters, leading down into -- THE SUBWAY STATION.

INT. THE SUBWAY - CONT.

Snake climbs in the subway car, helps the President up. Brain moves to the engineer's compartment and scans the controls, trying to make sense of them.

BRAIN

Here goes.

He turns a key in the large instrument panel and switches on a series of buttons. The subway cars HUM TO LIFE.

BRAIN

Power is on.

The Subway car lights flicker to life and the power comes on with what seems like an ear shattering WHINE.

INT. IN THE SUBWAY TUNNEL - CONT.

THE CRAZIES - seem to abruptly EXPLODE WITH LIFE. They rush the car, the doors still open.

INT. THE SUBWAY CAR - CONT.

Snake BLASTS the first four with the shotgun.

SQUIRREL

Close the goddamn doors!

Squirrel is beating back hordes of Crazies with a length of pipe.

IN THE ENGINEER'S COMPARTMENT - BRAIN is looking madly for the right controls. Hears Snake shouting:

SNAKE

Get these doors closed or we're all gonna be someone's midnight snack!

The President, standing next to Brain, finds the door controls and SLAMS his hand on the button.

Snake FIRES AGAIN, blasting two Crazies backward against the tunnel wall. The doors begin to hiss closed, but --

-- THE CRAZIES GRAB Squirrel, who shrieks in horror. Snake grabs Squirrel's other arm, playing a deadly game of tug of war. It's no use, there are HUNDREDS of Crazies now, swarming around the subway cars, their subway cars.

Snake loses the game, Squirrel pulled into the crowd of malformed, starving subhumans, his screams muffled and lost in the hurricane of Crazies.

Crazies are on the roof, on the doors, struggling to pry them open even as Snake hollers --

SNAKE

Get us the hell outta here, Brain!

INT. ANOTHER PART OF THE SUBWAY TUNNEL - CONT.

DUKE - and his men have come to the firefight late. The big man sees Snake defending the engineer's subway car.

The Duke CHARGES toward the melee, heading for the last subway car on the tracks. Crazies turn to see Duke and his men coming at them. They ROAR with hatred at the invaders and ATTACK as --

-- THE CARS START TO MOVE - heading away from the platform.

EXT. ON THE SUBWAY CARS BEHIND - CONT.

Duke and his men have made it to the back, blasting their way through Crazies. Duke and his men pry open the back doors and head into the safety of the final subway car, even as the entire subway picks up speed.

INT. THE SUBWAY CAR - CONT.

BRAIN - opens up the throttle, taking the cars faster. A subway station flashes by outside the windows -- 52nd Street. Brain can make out HUNDREDS OF CRAZIES in the headlights on the tracks ahead.

BRAIN

Oh, shit.

The President pushes the throttle forward:

THE PRESIDENT

Don't slow down!

EXT. IN THE AIR ABOVE MANHATTAN - NIGHT

Baylock watches the little blue dot on his readout wink out as the interference of the underground blocks the signal.

BAYLOCK

Lost the signal. They're underground,  
moving south at last reading.

INT. SUPERMAX CONTROL CENTER - CONT.

General Wilkins swears under his breath, replies to Baylock:

GENERAL WILKINS

Roger that.

Hauk and Rheme have distanced away and are now studying a large electronic display table, showing every square inch of Manhattan, the city grid movable with the touch of a finger.

HAUK

That subway car could end up at six  
possible stops.

(motions to them)

The problem is knowing which one.

RHEME

What's he planning to do when he gets  
out of the subway?

Hauk touches the screen, the map of Manhattan moving to another grid, showing: THE FORBIDDEN ZONE.

HAUK

He's going for the zone. He must have  
someone with him who knows the way  
through. Knows the blind spots. If he  
gets into the zone, we can't help him.  
But if he gets through...

RHEME

How the hell does he expect to get over  
the wall?

HAUK

He doesn't. He'll be expecting us to  
get him over. And that's just what  
we'll do.

INT. THE SUBWAY CARS - CONT.

Headlights illuminate the startled eyes of the tunnel  
dwelling Crazies before -- THEY ARE MOWED DOWN by the cars,

blood SPATTERING the view before Brain and The President.

The subway nearly DERAILS, the entire forty tons worth of metal LEANING TO ONE SIDE, sparks spraying along subway walls, bodies of Crazies SMASHING like ripe pumpkins as the cars demolish the human wraiths before --

-- THE CARS SLAM back down on the tracks with a massive CRUNCH of metal. They are on the rails again.

EXT. ON THE SUBWAY CARS - CONT.

Some doors have pried open, Crazies wriggling into subway cars like rats. Duke and his men battle them in the last car as more Crazies turn and rush the other way, toward the lead car, and Snake.

INT. LEAD SUBWAY CAR - CONT.

SNAKE sees DOZENS OF CRAZIES in the car, RUSHING TOWARD HIM.

SNAKE  
Brain! FULL POWER!

INT. THE ENGINEER'S COMPARTMENT - CONT.

Brain pulls back on the throttle, HARD. The subway suddenly JOLTS with the loss of speed, sending everyone FLYING FORWARD.

THE PRESIDENT  
(hanging on for dear life)  
Wrong way!

ON SNAKE - he hangs on to the overhead bar, the Crazies tumbling toward him as --

-- BRAIN REVS UP THE THROTTLE AGAIN, sending the now off-balance Crazies TUMBLING BACKWARD, flying into one another, smashing into metal, arms crashing through subway windows.

INT. REAR SUBWAY CAR - CONT.

The Duke's men are suddenly face to face with a hoard of Crazies, the change of speed sending them pinwheeling for balance toward the rear of the car.

Duke's men fall one by one, leaving only the big man to fight the Crazies. The Duke eyes the fifteen Crazies before him, all the grotesque faces and mouths staring back at him, hungering for his flesh and blood. The Duke, reloading his weapon, smiles as he locks and loads. He whispers:

THE DUKE

Come get some.

THE CRAZIES RUSH HIM -- Duke's gun FIRING again and again.

INT. LEAD SUBWAY CAR - CONT.

Snake sees subway platforms rush past the car windows in a blur: 33rd Street, 24th Street... Snake checks the wrist gauge: 00:21:01. Urges the subway to go faster.

SNAKE

Come on, come on.

INT. REAR SUBWAY CAR - CONT.

The Duke TOSSES ONE OF SNAKE'S GRENADES into the pile of writhing Crazies. A muffled blast sends blood and body parts flying, the Duke hitting the deck.

EXT. SUBWAY TUNNELS - CONT.

The subway is absolutely flat out ROARING down the tunnel, way past regulation speed. The headlights are wobbling as the cars come RIPPING around a corner, illuminating --

-- a WALL of surprised Craizes, who look up in horror, wide eyes taking in the multi-ton metal beast bearing down on them. No time to run --

INT. ENGINEERING COMPARTMENT - CONT.

Brain sees crazies looming in the windshield for a brief second before they SPLAT! and CRUNCH! under the wheels of the hurtling cars.

INT. REAR SUBWAY CAR - CONT.

THE DUKE, alone now, all the Crazies dead in piles around his feet, rushes forward, no one left between him and Snake but a mess of blood and bodies.

INT. LEAD SUBWAY CAR - CONT.

Snake can see The Duke through the rattling subway cars, Duke throwing open the door to the car before -- BOOM! Snake fires the shotgun, the Duke ducking just in time, shotgun blasting the metal above Duke's head.

Duke OPENS FIRE, bullets raking the subway car, Snake diving out of the way, rolling to one side, shotgun coming up to fire and -- CLICK! He's out of shells.

SNAKE

Oh, shit.

The Duke smiles, raising the assault rifle as --

-- A CRAZY, still alive, shrieks and LEAPS on Duke's back, bashing a BRICK into Duke's head, clanking off Snake's combat helmet. Snake sees his chance, RUSHES Duke. Kicks him square in the chest, sending him sprawling backward.

The Duke and the Crazy land in a heap as --

-- Snake feels the subway car come to a GRINDING HALT, metal grating against metal, sparks flying outside the subway windows like Roman candles.

BRAIN

We're here! Let's go, Snake!

The doors SLURP open, blood of felled Crazies splattering out onto the platform.

SNAKE steals a glance backward --

-- sees the Duke still fighting with the Crazy. Snake tosses the President out of the car and onto the platform. Motions for Brain. Brain jumps off as --

-- the Duke WASTES the Crazy, stands up to see SNAKE, still here.

INT. ENGINEERING COMPARTMENT - CONT.

SNAKE throws the car into REVERSE.

Runs out of the compartment and LEAPS between the closing doors and --

-- ONTO THE PLATFORM, just in time. The subway car disappears down the tunnel, backward, the Duke still inside, his form dwindling in the distance.

INT. SAMPSON HELICOPTER - NIGHT

Baylock sees Snake's tracking dot come online again, moving slowly toward the retaining wall.

BAYLOCK

(into throat mic)

General, we've got a signal again.  
Moving toward the Forbidden Zone on  
Albany Street.

INT. SUPERMAX CONTROL CENTER - CONT.

Hauk puts a hand on Rheme's shoulder.

HAUK

Get a team on the wall! Move!

Rheme runs off, shouting orders into his walkie talkie.

GENERAL WILKINS

My team will intercept him. You'll never get him in time.

EXT. THE FORBIDDEN ZONE - NIGHT

Snake, The President and Brain are staring beyond the edge of the five hundred yard Zone: a desolate field of debris -- a forboding wasteland.

SNAKE

Lead the way, Brain.

Brain closes his eyes, whispering to himself, as if trying to paint a three dimensional image of the map in his head. Snake prods him again.

SNAKE

We don't have much time, here, Brain!

BRAIN

Okay, okay!

Brain takes the first step into the zone.

EXT. THE FORBIDDEN ZONE - NIGHT

BRAIN gets fifty yards in, walking gingerly every step of the way.

Snake and the President watch his careful path through the desolate Zone. Brain goes twenty paces to the left, then fifteen paces toward the wall. Five paces carefully to the right, then twenty more toward the wall. The machine gun emplacements are still dormant, Brain finding his way through the blind spots. Brain turns around and beckons:

BRAIN

Come on! What are you waiting for?

INT. SUPERMAX CONTROL CENTER - CONT.

A surveillance technician shouts to Hauk:

## SURVEILLANCE TECHNICIAN

Got em, sir!

Hauk, Clarke and Wilkins turn to see the surveillance cameras showing angles of the southern Forbidden Zone. They see three figures walking through the wide expanse.

HAUK

Zoom in!

The Technician does. The little figures become clearer.

HAUK

It's Plissken.

Hauk leans forward, trying to make sense of the blurred, darkened images:

HAUK

He's got the President with him.

General Wilkins can only stare at the monitor.

EXT. FORBIDDEN ZONE - NIGHT

SNAKE - slowly follows Brain's serpentine path. His thigh wound still oozes blood onto the dirt and grass. Snake winces with each step. The President is right behind him.

ON BRAIN - he steps carefully to his left when --

A GUN EMPLACEMENT WHINES TO LIFE - the computerized voice calling out over the landscape:

COMPUTER VOICE

WARNING, WARNING, YOU HAVE ENTERED THE  
FORBIDDEN ZONE.

Brain steps quickly back to where he started. The gun emplacement whines once, wicked cannons spinning, then recedes into the ground, unable to find the target.

Brain releases the air from his lungs in an enormous sigh of relief.

SNAKE AND THE PRESIDENT - follow in Brain's footsteps, getting through the first part of the Forbidden Zone.

ON BRAIN - he is within sight of the wall, looming over him. So close, just a hundred more yards to the final step to possible freedom.

BRAIN - gets a little too excited at the prospect. Takes a

few steps too fast. GUN EMPLACEMENTS WHINE TO LIFE -- bullets rake the ground around him.

Brain closes his eyes, terrified. A bullet EXPLODES into his foot. Brain HOWLS IN AGONY, his foot now a mere stump. Brain teeters to one side, way out of his intended path.

SNAKE -- watches as --

THE GUNS CUT BRAIN DOWN. Brain falls to the dirt in a bloody heap, holding his ruined belly. With his dying breath, he whispers:

BRAIN

Snake...

-- and POINTS in the right direction. Brain falls forward, dead, his outstretched index finger still pointing a path toward the wall.

EXT. OVER THE FORBIDDEN ZONE - NIGHT

Baylock's HELICOPTER comes out of the gloom, rotors thundering.

EXT. FORBIDDEN ZONE - NIGHT

The President looks up, waves both arms at the helicopter.

THE PRESIDENT

Here! Down here!

Snake is holding his rifle aloft, too, waving the chopper to rescue them. But he sees --

-- BAYLOCK, in the cargo hold, with a sniper scope trained on THE PRESIDENT.

INT. SAMPSON HELICOPTER - NIGHT

Baylock speaks into his headset to the Pilot:

BAYLOCK

Get me closer.

THE PILOT

(shouts into his headset)

Any closer and we become a target.

BAYLOCK

Then just hold the damn thing steady.

He gets a bead on the President, muttering:

BAYLOCK

Sorry, sir.

-- but BAYLOCK'S HEAD EXPLODES, a bullet ripping the top of his skull off, blood spattering the ceiling of the chopper. A soldier in the cargo hold shouts:

SOLDIER

Jesus Christ!

EXT. FORBIDDEN ZONE - NIGHT

Snake takes aim again, this time at the helicopter cockpit. HE FIRES, full auto.

INT. SAMPSON HELICOPTER - NIGHT

The cockpit windscreen is CRACKED open with the force of the bullets, the pilot taking a round in the leg. He screams in agony, pulling hard on the collective, his foot leaving the pedals.

THE CHOPPER goes into a crazy spin, heading too low, one of the soldiers in back shouting:

SOLDIER #2

Don't get in range! Stay outta range!  
STAY OUT OF RANGE!

The chopper starts to creep CLOSER TO --

EXT. FORBIDDEN ZONE - NIGHT

-- THE DEFENSE EMPLACEMENTS.

Almost EVERY gun emplacement whirs to life with this metal monstrosity coming into range, the huge helicopter a sitting duck in the skies.

Fifty-caliber guns whir to life, computerized sight systems LOCKING ONTO the airborne intruder and FIRING. The chopper is sprayed with gunfire from six directions at once, engine smoking, men inside trying to take cover, big slugs bouncing off metal and striking flesh and bone. Rockets SLAM into the chopper from artillery emplacements.

INT. SAMPSON HELICOPTER - NIGHT

THE PILOT'S FINGER spastically YANKS on the rocket trigger, firing powerful TOW missiles directly into the retaining wall  
-- WHOOSH! BA-WHOOM! BA-WHOOM!

EXT. THE RETAINING WALL - NIGHT

Missile after missile is fired, hitting the wall with incredible force, chunks of cement and steel rebar exploding outward like a volcanic vent spraying magma and molten stone skyward.

A DOZEN MISSILES ARE LAUNCHED, the impact thundering over the Forbidden Zone, the impact amazing to behold.

EXT. FORBIDDEN ZONE - NIGHT

THROUGH IT ALL - the President and Snake take cover, Snake protecting the President with his body, the skies above them on fire.

THE CHOPPER GOES HURLING TOWARD THE GROUND - heading RIGHT OVER Snake's prone body, directly at the wall --

-- the chopper HITS the earth, landing struts catching the ground, the entire craft cartwheeling, gun emplacements still firing on the blazing hulk of metal, now rolling toward the wall...

Finally, the violence is over... The Forbidden Zone is quiet.

ON THE PRESIDENT - his face falls with the realization.

THE PRESIDENT

They weren't trying to rescue us. They wanted to kill me.

Both men stare at the wreckage of the chopper.

SNAKE

(with bitter irony:)

How's it feel to be a liability?

INT. SUPERMAX CONTROL CENTER - CONT.

Clarke turns to Wilkins, who doesn't make eye contact. She spits out the words:

CLARKE

If he gets out of there alive, we are both done.

Wilkins stares at the monitors, stunned, seeing the flaming wreckage of the helicopter, and his hopes, burning away.

EXT. FORBIDDEN ZONE - NIGHT

The SILENCE IS BROKEN - a sound coming over the strangely peaceful landscape. ccccccRAACCCK! Snake looks up to see:

SNAKE

Oh, shit...

The retaining wall -- IS CRACKING.

EXT. THE RETAINING WALL - NIGHT

A seam of ruined concrete, right in the middle of the wall where the missiles hit, is now giving way. Fissures begin to spiderweb away from the divot created by the missiles. The CRACKING NOISE GROWS.

EXT. FORBIDDEN ZONE - NIGHT

Snake gets up and pulls the President forward, following in Brain's footsteps again.

SNAKE

We gotta move.

The stunned President is staring up at the now SHUDDERING retaining wall.

EXT. ON TOP OF THE RETAINING WALL - NIGHT

Rheme's GUARDS have arrived on top of the high wall, five men preparing a winch system with three-hundred feet of rope. The men can HEAR the cracking of the wall, fifty yards to their left.

EXT. SUPERMAX TARMAC - NIGHT

Hauk hustles the young Doctor on board a Raptor helicopter, the Doctor bringing the gamma neutralizers with him.

EXT. FORBIDDEN ZONE - NIGHT

The Duke has come on the scene, his eyes taking in the flaming wreckage, the cracking retaining wall.

The sound of the CRACKING WALL is BOOMING across the forbidden zone, each shudder of the cement monolith shaking the very earth under foot.

The Duke can see TWO FIGURES, very far off in the distance, stepping carefully through the zone, just out of shooting range. Still wearing Snake's helmet, the Duke lowers the heat sensor eyepiece and sees --

HEAT SENSOR POV - Snake's blood drops, still giving off warmth. The Duke follows the path, keeping low; a stalking predator zeroing in on the kill.

EXT. THE RETAINING WALL - NIGHT

Rheme and his men send a RESCUE HARNESS down a long winch. The harness slowly makes its way down the three hundred foot-high wall.

EXT. FORBIDDEN ZONE - NIGHT

SNAKE AND THE PRESIDENT - follow Brain's path. They pass his corpse, one finger outstretched. A blood spattered PHOTO of Brain's SON lies on the ground next to him. Snake reaches down and retrieves the photo, pockets it.

EXT. BASE OF THE RETAINING WALL - NIGHT

They have finally made it to the massive wall. The rescue harness has just arrived from high above.

Snake puts the president in the rescue harness. The most powerful man in the world is winched skyward as --

THE RETAINING WALL ABOVE THEM MOANS -- the first sign of moisture starting to soak through the cracks. This is not a good prospect.

Snake checks his wrist gauge: three minutes left. He urges the harness to hurry.

SNAKE

Come on, come on!

*BbbbrraaPPP!*

Snake ducks gunfire, cement from the wall above his head splintering.

It's THE DUKE. He's made it through the Zone.

EXT. ON TOP OF THE RETAINING WALL - CONT.

GUARDS ON THE WALL FIRE down at the Duke.

EXT. FORBIDDEN ZONE - CONT.

Duke takes one knee and uses the scope to return fire. Nails the guards, killing them one by one.

ON TOP OF THE WALL --

Rheme ducks the gunfire, shouting into his communicator:

RHEME

Hauk, we need backup at wall section  
26, now.

INT. RAPTOR HELICOPTER - NIGHT

HAUK is in the chopper, heading across the dark water.

HAUK

There in twenty seconds.

In the cargo hold behind him -- the young Doctor holds on for dear life as the chopper races across the dark water, toward the massive, looming wall.

EXT. ON TOP OF THE RETAINING WALL - NIGHT

THE PRESIDENT gets up and onto the retaining wall, his feet landing on the sixteen foot metal catwalk, Rheme helping him over. On the other side of the wall is the black water of the Hudson, starting to bubble and roil where the wall is splitting, the water molecules by the billions shouldering each other out of the way to get through that growing split, forcing it to weaken, forcing it to open up and let the Hudson in.

EXT. THE FORBIDDEN ZONE - NIGHT

THE DUKE -- turns to find Snake, only to see -- SNAKE'S BOOT -  
- smashing into the Duke's skull.

SNAKE

That's my fucking HELMET!

Snake's helmet flies off the Duke's head. Snake is on him in an instant, fist smashing into the Duke's face, again and again. The Duke grunts in pain as --

-- FROM HIGH ABOVE - the President sends the rescue harness down. Calls down:

THE PRESIDENT

Plissken!

Snake is about to deliver a killing blow to the Duke's throat when he turns and RUNS for the harness. Leaps up and grabs on. The Duke is left in a writhing mass on the ground.

EXT. ON TOP OF THE RETAINING WALL - NIGHT

The President and Rheme winch Snake upward. Snake is lifted along the wall, but --

EXT. THE FORBIDDEN ZONE - NIGHT

THE DUKE gets his bearings, finds the gun still at his side. Stands and raises it, Snake in easy range, a helpless target in the harness.

EXT. ON SNAKE - NIGHT

SNAKE LOOKS OVER HIS SHOULDER TO SEE -- the Duke, about to pull the trigger but --

-- THE WALL IN FRONT OF THE DUKE FINALLY GIVES WAY --

EXT. BASE OF THE RETAINING WALL - CONT.

-- sixty thousand metric tons of water mixed with shattered concrete EXPLODES DOWN TOWARD HIM. The Duke only has time to say --

THE DUKE

They ain't gonna forget me! No one forgets THE DUKE!

He raises his arms in triumph before he is ENGULFED, gone in an instant. The wall of water SLAMS down on his body with the crushing force of mother nature at her most vengeful, The Duke erased from existence.

EXT. ALONG THE RETAINING WALL - NIGHT

Snake sees the wall CRUMBLING toward him, water GEYSERING down into the prison, more concrete splitting off and crumbling to the earth below.

BELOW HIM - the gun emplacements fire wildly, too many targets to hit, before they too are lost in the first tidal wave of death.

SNAKE - is close to being swallowed up by the maelstrom, his boots climbing the wall faster than the harness can take him. He gets out of the deadly clutches of the spraying water with no time to spare, reaching the top of the wall as --

EXT. ON TOP OF THE RETAINING WALL - NIGHT

-- The President and Rheme helps him over the edge, The President's hand extended, pulling Snake to safety. They yank him up and over the top.

Snake looks behind him, sees the hole in the wall growing. The entire section of the wall threatens to come down.

SNAKE  
 (an understatement)  
 We need to run.

THE WALL BENEATH HIS FEET - starts to crack and crumble, the SOUND of the wall dying a deafening ROAR.

THE PRESIDENT RUNS - the wall behind them CRUMBLING, an enormous V-shaped split in the retaining wall allowing millions of tons of water per second into the prison.

EXT. RAPTOR HELICOPTER - NIGHT

Hauk's chopper appears along the wall, the struts coming down, close enough for Rheme to climb onboard and extend his arm down to The President. Snake helps the President up inside as --

-- the fissure in the wall HURTLES toward Snake. Almost there --

-- THE WALL BENEATH SNAKE SHUDDERS.

Snake JUMPS, landing on the helicopter struts just as --

EXT. THE RETAINING WALL - NIGHT

THE ENTIRE WALL BENEATH him implodes, the engorged Hudson CASCADING into the prison.

EXT. RAPTOR HELICOPTER - NIGHT

Snake's boots are just above the roiling madness as Snake wrestles his way into the chopper.

His face is grim as he realizes he's safe -- for the moment, his eyes taking in the end of the world sight below him.

SNAKE'S POV - tons of reinforced concrete is toppling inward in a mad rush. Blocks and blocks of lower Manhattan are ENGULFED by a tidal wave, water EXPLODING down tight streets - the wall of water thirty feet high, obliterating anything in its path.

INT. RAPTOR HELICOPTER - NIGHT

The young Doctor extends the handheld gamma guns toward Snake's neck, but --

-- Hauk shoves the Doctor aside.

HAUK  
 Titanium micro disc, Plissken.

Snake stares at Hawk, his gaze unflinching. Snake reaches into his breast pocket and pulls out the quarter-sized disc and hands it over. Hawk nods to the Doctor. The Doctor brings up the gamma guns and ACTIVATES THEM. The guns hum at Snake's neck for two seconds. The Doctor stops.

THE DOCTOR

That's it.

Snake looks at his wrist gauge, the seconds counting down: 00:00:02, 00:00:01, 00:00:00. Snake waits to see if the Doctor really deactivated the nitro capsule. Nothing happens.

Snake exhales, slowly. It's over...

EXT. SUPERMAX TARMAC - NIGHT

LATER - the Prison is in emergency mode, FEMA crews landing on the tarmac. An enormous prisoner rescue operation is underway.

HAUK -- walks through it all, through the FEMA workers and the Prison officials and the Red Cross choppers making rescues, bringing back the wounded and dying prisoners.

Hawk, exhausted and harried, doesn't know what the future of this prison experiment will bring.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE SUPERMAX TARMAC - NIGHT

THE PRESIDENT -- is in makeup, his personal camera crew ready to go, lights flicking onto the makeshift lectern which will be broadcast to the Vancouver Summit.

NEWS DIRECTOR

We're live in four minutes, Mr. President.

The President nods. General Wilkins and Secretary of State Clarke walk up to the President's chair.

GENERAL WILKINS

It's good to see you safe and sound, sir.

THE PRESIDENT

Thank you, General. Thank you for all your help.

He glances at Secretary of State Clarke.

THE PRESIDENT  
I'd like to speak to both of you in detail later about the rescue operation you mounted.

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE  
Our hands were tied sir, by the officials here at the prison.

THE PRESIDENT  
Yes. I see. I'd be very interested to get details of this story while it's still fresh in your mind.

FOUR SECRET SERVICE MEN - are standing behind Clarke and Wilkins. Rough hands are placed on them as they are ushered away for questioning.

SECRETARY OF STATE CLARKE  
You're making a mistake, Mr. President!

GENERAL WILKINS  
(as he's taken away)  
Shut up.

The President's eyes flick over to the rest of his Secret Service detail, who are stopping a man with an eye patch.

THE PRESIDENT  
It's okay. This man I can trust.

Snake is allowed to pass.

THE PRESIDENT  
Mr. Plissken, I owe you a debt of gratitude. This entire country owes you. How can the debt be repaid?

SNAKE  
By assuring me I have a full pardon.

The President glances at Clarke and General Wilkins.

THE PRESIDENT  
Give this man whatever he wants.

SNAKE  
And, by assuring me that you'll end hostilities that could lead to another war.

THE PRESIDENT

Mr. Plissken, we have made such strides, to pull out of the conflict now would not only be foolish, it would defile the memories of the brave men and women who have sacrificed so much to get us to this place.

SNAKE

Then answer one question, and I'm out of your life forever.

THE PRESIDENT

I've only got a few minutes, Mr. Plissken.

SNAKE

A lot of people have died for your policies, but tonight a lot of people died trying to get you out of that prison. Up close and personal, and not on some statistical casualty sheet. Lives were lost, other lives forever altered.

Snake places the photo of Brain's child on the table before the President. The President glances at it as Snake says:

SNAKE

I'm just wondering how you felt about that.

The President takes a tone of gravity:

THE PRESIDENT

It is one of the things I will have to live with, sir. It is a sacrifice that I will always --

AIDE

(interrupting)

Sixty seconds, Mr. President.

The President turns back to Snake, his train of thought gone.

THE PRESIDENT

I will always have to deal with it...  
Is -- uh, is there anything else?

Snake stares back at the President before scowling and walking away.

EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE SUPERMAX TARMAC - NIGHT

Snake is walking across the tarmac when a voice comes out of the darkness:

HAUK  
You gonna kill me now, Snake?

Snake glances over at the man, leaning against the wall.

SNAKE  
After a snack and a nap, maybe.

HAUK  
Be straight with me, Snake...what the hell did you do with all that money?

SNAKE  
(grumbles)  
Told you, I invested it. In real estate. Bought up a bunch of city blocks.

HAUK  
Oh, yeah? Where?

SNAKE  
(motions)  
Manhattan. Midtown. Two weeks before the entire place became uninhabitable.

HAUK  
(snickers at this, then:)  
I got an offer for you. How about a job working with me? We're gonna need a lot of good men in the coming weeks, trying to rebuild this place. Come on, we'd make one hell of a team, Snake.

Snake glances over, lip curled in disgust at the sight of the man. Grumbles:

SNAKE  
The name's Plissken.

Snake walks away, leaving Hawk to blend back in with the shadows.

EXT. SUPERMAX TARMAC - NIGHT

THE PRESIDENT - is given the cue: live and on-camera. He reads from the Teleprompter:

## THE PRESIDENT

I am sorry I can't be at the Vancouver Summit in person. But I have something that I want to present to the world tonight. Evidence of what I always knew, evidence of the betrayal of all freedom-loving nations by a few rogue countries; betrayal on the world's stage by enemies who mean us harm. Evidence that will show the world that the only option to this problem is to disarm and disband our enemies, and bring the wrongdoers to justice.

(holds up the disc)

The evidence I present tonight will allow us to continue the quest for democracy and freedom worldwide.

The President puts the gleaming disc into the player. A HOLOGRAM FLICKS to life before the camera, but oddly it's BRAIN, recorded in his lab at some point in the past. Brain, clearly speedy on crystal meth, says,

## BRAIN (ON MONITOR)

Okay, next lesson for the syllabus! How to make fuel for a modified engine out of a mixture of vegetable oil and rat fat. You'll need a lot of rats for this. And a lot of rat fat...

## EXT. ANOTHER PART OF THE SUPERMAX TARMAC - NIGHT

A LONE FIGURE - walks away from the news cameras and the lights, limping off toward the open prison gates, leaving everything behind.

SNAKE - reaches up to his eyepatch and pulls it away to reveal: THE TITANIUM MICRO DISC, sitting there in the hollow socket where his eye should be. Snake takes out the disc, considering it with his good eye for a moment. Snake rears back and HURLS IT over the fence and into the black waters beyond.

ON THE WATER - there is a flash of silver as it lands in the wide expanse of black water, far below the elevated tarmac.

ON SNAKE - he watches the ripples ebb and fade from the water, then turns and moves off into the night, his form soon lost in the all-embracing darkness.

FADE OUT.