MARS ATTACKS

THIRD DRAFT

by Alex Cox

May 1st 1989
THE AGE OF THE DINOSAURS  EXTERIOR  DUSK

The late Cretaceous Period.  The sun has set.  
The western sky glows.  Pteranodons drift in the air.  

A herd of fearsomely-horned PENTACERATOPS grazes 
beside a lake.  Several TYRANNOSAURS stalk the 
outskirts of the herd.  A brightly feathered pair 
of ARCHAEOPTERIX prepare their nest.  

STARS appear in the sky.  One of them moves at 
random from the rest.  A brightly coloured disc 
of light, growing larger...  

One of the TYRANNOSAURS charges the herd, impaling 
itself on the horns of a PENTACERATOPS.  
The pierced dinosaur screams.  

The FLYING SAUCER hovers motionless above.  

The other TYRANNOSAURS fling themselves on the 
PENTACERATOPS' flanks.  The horned reptile shakes 
its head, trying to free the dying dinosaur hooked 
to its carapace.  

The rest of the HERBIVORES back up, abandoning 
their doomed partner, closing ranks around their 
horned offspring.  

Pteranodons circle excitedly, making hungry hissing 
sounds.  The TYRANNOSAURS are feeding now. 
Almost too dark to see --  

ZAP!  ZAP!  ZAP!  

Brilliant heat rays leap forth from the SAUCER, 
searing the dinosaurs into skeletons and dust...  

The death beams incinerate the species that have 
dominated earth for eighty million years.  
The AGE OF THE DINOSAURS is ending fast.  

A glowing POD drifts down from the SAUCER, 
reaches the scorched earth and splits open, 
releasing SEVERAL MOUSELIKE MARSUPIALS.  

The SAUCER races off, zapping the landscape.  
The MARSUPIALS scatter in all directions.
The **AGE OF MAMMALS** has begun.

**DISOLVE TO:**

**CHICAGO EXTERIOR DAY**

The same landscape. The same lake.

A gleaming downtown city surrounded by endless suburbs, smoking factories and arterial beltways.

**WACKER DRIVE EXTERIOR DAY**

A low-rent PET SHOP with a prominent display of MOUSELIKE MARSUPIALS. We pull back from the signs that advertise the captive animals to reveal the window of a TV and appliance store next door. TWO WINOS watch the array of TVs within.

Conflicting broadcast voices drift out through the door. Suddenly the voices fade and all the TV SCREENS flicker and blank out.

On all the screens a BLONDE NEWSREADER appears. Her speech is out of synch. Her face looks like it's made of PLASTIC.

**NEWSREADER**

(on TV)

Bellow earthlings. Good news here.
No longer we need live in fear.
Further details after these

**IMPORTANT WORDS --**

The WATCHING WINOS stare impassively. **ON SCREEN,** two bulbous, huge-brained heads appear. They babble in an alien tongue. Excitedly spooning glowing goop from a brightly coloured package --

The WINOS lick their lips --

The picture crackles and breaks up. **PULL FOCUS TO --**

**SKIP and ROY** marching past, smiling.

**SKIP and ROY** are blond and square-jawed, clad in blue business suits. They walk in step and always smile.
Without looking, they step out into the street.
Cars swerve and collide, trying to avoid them.

JOHN HANCOCK TOWER         EXTERIOR         DAY

SKIP and ROY stride blithely through four lanes of traffic, heading for the TOWER. More crashing sounds.

YOUNG & KACHACHURIAN ASSOCIATES        INTERIOR         DAY

The bauhaus offices of Chicago's premier P.R. HOUSE. Pictures of former presidents Carter and Reagan, Donald Trump and Jim Wright on the walls.

SKIP and ROY emerge from the elevator and approach the stunning RECEPTIONIST. She is on the phone. SKIP and ROY wait and smile and watch the wall-inset TV.

TV VOICE
Another hoax interruption of scheduled broadcasting throughout the Midwest brings to mind a fabled radio show --

RECEPTIONIST
(hanging up the phone)
May I help you?

SKIP
We're here to see Mr Young.

RECEPTIONIST
Your names?

ROY
Skip and Roy.

RECEPTIONIST
Skip and Roy...

She studies her desktop COMPUTER. Already she has them pegged as loonies. Their names are NOT on the screen.
RECEPTIONIST
I'm sorry, Skip and Roy, but
you don't seem to have an ap --

Her screen chatters softly. SKIP and ROY's names
appear on it. Bemused, she picks up the phone.

JOHN YOUNG'S OFFICE    INTERIOR    DAY

JOHN YOUNG, mid-forties, tanned, handsome, no sense
of humour, sits behind his antique desk. He talks
to his secretary JANICE via an unseen speaker phone.
Vast plateglass vista of Chicago skyline behind him.
Print of Breughel's Triumph Of Death on the wall.

YOUNG
Never heard of 'em.
Who are they with?

JANICE'S VOICE
They don't, ah, want to say, Mr Young.
You must have green lighted them,
though. They're in the system.

YOUNG
Okay. I'll give them 3½.

YOUNG opens his top desk drawer. His gold and black
Cartier .38 PISTOL sits discreetly out of an
intruder's sightline.

JANICE ushers SKIP and ROY in.

JANICE
Would you like something?
Diet Pepsi? Perrier? Mr Pibb?

ROY
Yes please.

JANICE
Uh, well, what?

SKIP
The same for me!

Confused, JANICE retires. SKIP sits down opposite
JOHN YOUNG, beaming. ROY pulls out an electric BUG
DETECTOR and proceeds to scan the room.
YOUNG
That really isn't necessary.
This whole floor is secure.
Likewise the floors above it
and below.

ROY beams and sits down next to SKIP. SKIP takes
out a CASSETTE RECORDER lays it on YOUNG's desk.

The CASSETTE RECORDER sprouts four metal legs and
sits up, angling its condenser mike towards YOUNG.

YOUNG frowns, unimpressed.

ROY
Our sources tell us you are
the best R.P.MAN in the world.

YOUNG
R.P.? You mean P.R.
Public Relations.

SKIP
Yes, that too. We represent
a THIRD PARTY, unpresent at
this time.

YOUNG
UNpresent. Hmm. A FOREIGN party?

ROY
Foreign? In a sense, yes. And --

YOUNG
I'm sorry but I can't help you.
Representing foreign parties entails
registration with the State Department
as an agent of a foreign power.
Here at Young and Kachachurian we --

Unseen behind him, GLOWING FLYING SAUCERS gather in
the sky. SKIP and ROY observe the SAUCERS passively.

YOUNG
-- try to keep our business basically
domestic. How large a market are we
talking here? Perhaps I can refer
you to a smaller
company.
JANICE re-enters with a tray of waters. She sees the FLYING SAUCERS, DROPS THE TRAY AND SCREAMS.

YOUNG looks around and sees the SAUCERS too. He turns back to SKIP and ROY. His mouth moves but no words emerge. SKIP and ROY keep smiling.

N.O.R.A.D. INTERIOR DAY

Panic stations. GLOWING DOTS all over the BIG BOARD. More DOTS taking up positions above the major military and population centres of the Northern Hemisphere.

MILITARY VOICES

The BIG BOARD flickers and goes out. RESERVE POWER kicks in. Instead of the huge WORLD MAP, we see a COMMERCIAL for MARTIAN BEER.

FOUR STAR GENERAL
(staring at the ad
for FROTHY SUDS)
Sure am thirsty. I --

JOHN HANCOCK TOWER LOBBY INTERIOR DAY

SECURITY GUARDS stare open mouthed at the MARTIAN COMMERCIALS pouring from their surveillance monitors.

PEOPLE rush out of the elevators, try to make it out into the street. The AUTOMATIC DOORS are closed.

YOUNG'S OFFICE INTERIOR DAY

JANICE is on her knees amid the spilled Perrier, saying the rosary. SKIP and ROY sit smiling past YOUNG at the hovering SAUCERS. YOUNG loosens his tie. He eyes the .38 REVOLVER in his drawer.

YOUNG
What do you want from me?
ROY
Mr Young, this lovely planet is in grave danger. Even now an armed INVASION FORCE is on its way here from the PLEIDES.

YOUNG
The whuh -- ?

SKIP
The PLEIDES. A stellar system dominated by an EVIL EMPIRE not unlike the dreaded FOUNDING FATHERS here on Earth.

YOUNG
The Founding Fathers? But --

ROY
He means the NAZIS.

SKIP
Yes. The dreaded Nazis. Slip of the tongue.

Oh.

ROY
Luckily our MARTIAN FRIENDS will not sit back and let this takeover occur. At great cost to themselves, they are determined to defend Earth and preserve its precious freedoms.

SKIP
To do this, they must naturally COOPERATE with Earth media. Hence here you come, in.

YOUNG
You want me... to do P.R.... for Martians.

ROY
To represent them as our trusted ALLIES. And to find markets for their goods. Our Martian friends desire to put the planet's television on your hands.
YOUNG
The PLANET's television?

SKIP
Our Earth has many televisions, this I know. Many religions, likewise many governments and languages. Very confusing. Henceforth there will just be one.

ROY
Exacto! Henceforth everyone will speak the lovely language that we speak. Urr...

SKIP
English.

ROY
Yes, English. Our motherstongue.

YOUNG looks out the window at the GLOWING SAUCERS, stringing HOLOGRAPHIC ADS across the city sky.

YOUNG
One language. That makes sense.
One TV network. I don't know.
What about RATINGS?

OUTER SPACE

A CHINESE SPY SATELLITE completes its orbit.

• A MOTHBALED SOVIET SPACE STATION drifts past, shadowing it.

A U.S. STAR-WARS PARTICLE BEAM BLASTER follows the Russian ship's ellipse.

A FLYING SAUCER appears and ZAPS the space hardware.

SOVIET S.A.C. INTERIOR NIGHT

Similar to U.S. N.O.R.A.D., except that the T.V.'s are black and white. One by one, the SATELLITE INPUTS flicker out, replaced by MARTIAN ADVERTISING.
The SOVIET GENERALS and SCIENTISTS stare transfixed at the ADS for MARTIAN LIQUOR in tall frosty bottles and for spring-powered BOUNCING CARS.

CHICAGO STREET EXTERIOR DAY

Gridlocked. Cop cars stuck fast with sirens howling. LONG LINES form outside a church. Most people simply stand and stare at the SAUCERS and the glowing AIRBORNE ADVERTIZING. Somewhere WINDOWS BREAK.

YOUNG'S OFFICE INTERIOR DAY

YOUNG and his LAWYER sit with SKIP and ROY. The MARTIAN ADS and SAUCERS hang behind them in the sky.

LAWYER
In the event of either party's failure to observe the contract between my client and the Martian Round Table, either party may elect to terminate said contract within 30 days...

The BLONDE NEWSREADER intones from YOUNG'S ADVENT TV.

NEWSREADER
(on TV)
-- SAUCER fired on by rogue vessels of the U.S. Sixth Fleet. Earth's rulers are advised not to repeat this PROVOCATION --

. .

YOUNG
This woman has to go. Too plastic. (into intercom) Janice. Get me Yolanda. (to SKIP and ROY) You'll like this girl. She's my executive assistant. I've been grooming her for Channel Twelve --

MIDWEST AIRSPACE DAY

U.S. F1-11 FIGHTERS hurtle towards CHICAGO. Skyscrapers and glowing UFO's at 12 o'clock.
YOUNG'S OFFICE   INTERIOR   DAY

SKIP and ROY shake hands with YOLANDA MACKENZIE - early twenties, black and gorgeous. YOLANDA, trying to keep her mind on business, keeps glancing at the SAUCERS outside.

YOUNG
It's a tremendous opportunity.
We'll broadcast PLANETWIDE.
You'll be the P.M. ANCHORWOMAN,
six and nine Eastern Standard Time...

A MISSILE STRIKES A SKYSCRAPER OUTSIDE.

DOWNTOWN CHICAGO   EXTERIOR   DAY

With SONIC BOOMS the U.S.A.F. JETS arrive, loosing off rockets, missiles, cannon fire. They overshoot their targets.

Some spectators cheer. Others groan.
AIRBURSTING BOMBS ENVELOP THE SAUCERS IN FLAME.

The smoke rises. Missile debris falls into the streets.

THE FLYING SAUCERS ARE UNSCATCHED.

The JETS return for a second pass. The SAUCERS return fire. JET FIGHTERS explode among the skyscrapers. Burning chunks of titanium and blazing hydrozene fuel rain down on the watching crowds...

YOUNG'S OFFICE   INTERIOR   DAY

YOLANDA drags YOUNG out from behind his desk, summons the Executive Elevator.

YOLANDA
Snap out of it, Johnny! 'Sgo!

YOUNG
(mesmerised)
Go? Where?
YOLANDA
The EXECUTIVE SHELTER! It's thirteen storeys deeper than the public one.
(with a glance at SKIP & ROY)
You want to invite THEM too?

ROY
But there is no need. It is as you said. This building is SECURE.

YOUNG
I didn't mean --

YOLANDA
Too late.

A BURNING Fl-11, out of control and breaking up, is spiralling straight for them. YOUNG stares. YOLANDA covers her eyes.

JOHN HANCOCK TOWER    EXTERIOR    DAY

The BURNING JET collides with an invisible FORCE FIELD and explodes. The air surrounding the SKYSCRAPER remains tranquil and still.

YOUNG'S OFFICE    INTERIOR    DUSK

YOUNG blinks. A thousand fires burn below. The ADVERTISING NET glows brighter as the daylight fades.

LAWYER
Ahem. All disputes, lawsuits and arbitrations shall take place in the State of Illinois --

SKIP
According to the Civil Code of Mars.

LAWYER
(making corrections)
Do we have a copy?

YOLANDA crosses to YOUNG, still staring out the window.
YOLANDA
(whispering)
Johnny, this is bad business. These dudes are not good clients for the Agency. Tell 'em you're going to the bathroom. I'll meet you on the stairs --

YOUNG shakes his head.

He opens his lower desk drawer and extracts a bottle of Wild Turkey, pours vintage bourbon into his "I ♥ ADVERTISING" coffee mug.

WASHINGTON D.C. EXTERIOR NIGHT

The White House. All the lights on. National Guardsmen piling sandbags up.

OVAl OFFICE INTERIOR NIGHT

The PRESIDENT and the VICE PRESIDENT and the JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF. All keep glancing nervously out of the windows.

GENERAL HACKETT speaks for the JOINT CHIEFS.

GENERAL HACKETT
Mr President, we have no choice. Regretfully, we must deploy the NUCLEAR OPTION.

PRESIDENT
Go nuclear? Oh dear. Is it that serious?

GENERAL HACKETT
It's way past serious, sir. We have to demonstrate resolve. If we delay another minute it may be too late.

PRESIDENT
Well, I guess it'll be all right. Where are we going to drop 'em? Moscow?
ADIMIRAL
Sir, we're not at war with Russia at this time.

HACKETT
I've spoken to my opposite number in the Kremlin, sir, and we've reached a provisional agreement, subject to your approval of course: The Soviets will NUKE the aliens over Leningrad --

PRESIDENTIAL AIDE
That's one of their own cities, sir!

PRESIDENT
I know that.

HACKETT
-- while we show our determination with a similar surgical strike over Chicago.

PRESIDENT
Meaning?

HACKETT
We hit the bastards over Chicago.

The PRESIDENT whistles, sits back in his chair.

In a corner of the room, a GLOWING OVAL SHAPE APPEARS. Smaller and brighter than a FOOTBALL. It hovers near the ceiling.

OUTER SPACE
In low earth orbit, the glimmering MARTIAN COMMAND SHIP bides its time. Receiving information via hundreds of lights that come and go across its DARK CIGAR SHAPE. Attended by a SCORE or so of brilliant FLYING SAUCERS.

MARTIAN MISSION COMMAND SHIP INTERIOR

Huge-brained MARTIANS in a gothic/mandarin interior.

The MARTIANS are divided into GENERALS and BUSINESSMEN. The GENERALS wear Ruritanian military uniforms dripping with medals and gold braid. The BUSNINESSMEN wear charcoal grey suits.
The GENERALS smoke stubby cigars. The BUSINESSMEN drink highballs.

They watch and comment on a bank of TV SCREENS. The TV's are OVOID and have low quality RED IMAGES.

The MARTIANS are transfixed by the IMAGE beamed to them from their MOLE in the WHITE HOUSE --

-- it is of the PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES standing beside a set of GOLF CLUBS.

OVAL OFFICE INTERIOR NIGHT

The PRESIDENT takes out his DRIVING IRON, fingers it.

The GENERALS wait impatiently.

The TRANSMISSION MOLE hovers unseen above.

PRESIDENT
Gentlemen, before I came to this high office, as you know, I was a professional golfer. I was a professional golfer twenty seven years. I golfed against the greats. Frazetta. Palmer. One time, this is before some of you were even born --

The MARINE GENERAL unholsters his .45 and shoots the PRESIDENT in the head.

All the GENERALS turn to face the V.P.

GENERAL HACKETT
Mr President?

V.P.
Sure! Sure! Whatever you say!

MARTIAN COMMAND SHIP INTERIOR

The MARTIAN BUSINESSMEN and GENERALS follow a simultaneous translation of the scene in MARTIAN SUBTITLES.
One of the MARTIAN GENERALS jumps up, clapping his hands and shouting. The OTHER GENERALS look at him and make the Martian Disapproval Gesture.

M.X. MISSILE SILO       EXTERIOR       NIGHT

The silo doors swing open.

Three MX MISSILES, with TEN WARHEADS APiece, roar forth, leaving pretty pink con-trails on the night sky.

CHICAGO SKYLINE       EXTERIOR       NIGHT

The dogfight is over. The saucers are still there. Most of the city centre is ablaze.

ALIEN ADVERTISING SHAPES form an aurora borealis across the low-lying clouds.

CHICAGO STREET       EXTERIOR       NIGHT

People stand still, ignoring the fires and burning cars, transfixed by the ALIEN INFORMATION.

YOUNG'S OFFICE       INTERIOR       NIGHT

YOUNG quaffs Wild Turkey by the cupful. SKIP and ROY sit bolt upright, beaming. YOLANDA looks out at the wreckage and the light.

LAWYER
In return for his services, my client will receive the sum of twelve point seven million dollars per annum, or the equivalent in Martian Credits, with an inflation adjustment of --

YOLANDA
You can't do it. It's worse than the Exxon oil spill. It's worse than Union Carbide. It's like SOUTH AFRICA!
The OFFICE BOY enters, bearing bags of nachos, baco bits, potato chips and cheeze wizz on a SILVER TRAY.

OFFICE BOY
This is the best I could do, Mr Young. The restaurants are all closed and they won't let us leave the building.

ROY
A necessary precaution.

YOLANDA
Why? Why is it necessary? Why won't you let anybody out?

YOUNG studies his contract, offers a dorito to SKIP.

SKIP
No, thank you! Yum!

JACK
It says here you reserve the right to Teletransfer me or my image. What does that --

YOLANDA
What's that funny noise?

YOUNG pricks up his ears. There is a WHISTLING SOUND.

WHITE HOUSE LAWN EXTERIOR NIGHT

The GENERALS and the BRAND NEW PRESIDENT run across the lawn. Their HELICOPTER waits, rotors spinning. The GENERALS pile aboard. They help the NEW PRESIDENT up after them.

The CHOPPER rises.

A FLYING SAUCER appears. ZAP.

The PRESIDENTIAL HELICOPTER explodes.

CHICAGO SKYLINE NIGHT

Three pink con trails dip towards the burning city. Each of the trails umbrellas out into TEN TINY JETS.
The SAUCERS hover, still pouring out ADVERTISING. The MISSILES make a lonely whistling sound.

WHITE OUT.

BLOSSOMING MUSHROOM CLOUD.

YOUNG'S OFFICE        INTERIOR        NIGHT

Only the tinted plateglass walls have saved YOUNG and the OTHERS from FIRST DEGREE BURNS.

One side of everybody's face has turned bright red -- except for SKIP and ROY, who are unchanged, lit by the GLOWING FIRESTORM OUTSIDE.

The SURROUNDING BUILDINGS are gone, vaporised.

A FLYING SAUCER drifts past, UNHARMED.

        ROY
Sign here, pleased.

ROY pushes the contract across the table. SKIP offers YOUNG a pen. Totally stunned, YOUNG takes it.

        YOLANDA
Johnny, no!

YOUNG starts to sign.

YOLANDA reaches into his desk drawer, where his Cartier .38 REVOLVER sits --

        YOUNG
It isn't loaded.

YOLANDA withdraws her hand. SKIP looks at her, smiling.

        ROY
And here. And here. And here...

YOUNG AND KACHACHURIAN ASSOCIATES        INTERIOR        NIGHT

JOHN YOUNG walks through the open-plan office. His red-eyed, shellshocked employees cluster around their COMPUTERS' TV SCREENS.
YOLANDA and SKIP watch him from the doorway of his outer office. YOLANDA is furious, her eyes tearful. SKIP grins like a loon.

SKIP
A fine man. And a friend. My BROTHER! Where is he going?

YOLANDA
To eat shit and die.

TV VOICE
Occupants of the John Hancock Tower, have not fear. Thanks to the sensible collaboration of your beloved employer, John Young, you have all been spared. PEACE WITH HONOR is upon us now. Youpie! Youpie! FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY DO NOT LEAVE THE BUILDING FOR AT LEAST TWO YEARS.

The WORKERS stare at YOUNG with hatred, horror, disbelief. Zombielike, YOUNG enters the bathroom.

OFF SCREEN RETCHING SOUND.

CHICAGO EXTERIOR NIGHT

Ash covers the lake. The downtown area is all gone. A lone building stands untouched by the conflagration - the JOHN HANCOCK TOWER. Nothing else remains.

SLOWLY the SAUCERS DESCEND.

DISSOLVE TO:

CHICAGO EXTERIOR DAY

THE SAME WASTELAND SEVERAL YEARS LATER.

THE TOWER is still the only building of any size.

SEVERAL SAUCERS hover beside a large TRANSPARENT DOME.
TRIPEDAL WALKING MACHINES, seven or eight storeys high, wander around the outskirts of a squalid SHANTY TOWN which services the TOWER.

SHANTY TOWN  EXTERIOR  DAY

PEOPLE IN RAGS wait in long dishevelled lines for vaguely luminescent YELLOW SOUP. The lines shuffle slowly forward. All eyes are fixed on the ubiquitous TELEVISIONS positioned in windows and on tripods in the street.

TV VOICES
- feel great all the time!
  Have another ANODYNE!

- further increases in the basic Voluntary Pay Deduction -

- did not foresee a combat role for Martian military advisers -

- Cute'n'unpredictable
  Furry'n'collectible
  Unbreakable disposable
  SHAAAPE SHIFTRRRRRRS!!

PLOP! A MARTIAN SHAPE SHIFTER falls from the canvas awning of a shack and lands on a MAN in a line.

The MAN freaks out, starts smashing at the RAINBOW-COLOURED MARTIAN THING and screaming.

The SHAPE SHIFTER screams, too. A high-pitched howl which bleeds into the WAIL OF SIRENS.

TWO ARMORED VEHICLES arrive. They bear the Royal Coat of Arms of the MARTIAN FRIENDSHIP POLICE.

Pastel-uniformed POLICEMEN with shields and FLAME GUNS pile out and grab the screaming MAN.

As they rush him into the back of a VAN, we recognise him as JOHN YOUNG'S FORMER OFFICE BOY.
OFFICE BOY
BASTARDS GEEK SONS OF BITCHES
LONG LIVE THE F.E.P.A.!!!

The ARMORED DOOR slams shut.

The HEAD COP looks around for other troublemakers. No one looks at him. No one speaks.

His eyes rest on a sorry shack from which the MARTIAN SOUP is being dispensed. Spray-painted on a wall are the initials "F.E.P.A."

HEAD COP
Burn it down.

The crowd of food seekers disperses fast.

The COPS train their flame guns on the hut. Through the rising flames we see the gleaming spindle of the JOHN YOUNG TOWER.

YOUNG & KACHACHURIAN ASSOCIATES INTERIOR DAY

The old open-plan office has become a TELEVISION STUDIO, filled with the latest Japanese TV technology and bulkier, cruder MARTIAN TV GEAR.

YOUNG has a camp bed in the corner, surrounded by empty whiskey bottles and discarded Martian packaging. Above it hangs the original Triumph of Death, looted from the Prado. He also has a couple of Goyas and the original Guernica. He is OLDER and GREYER.

YOUNG is arguing with a TV COMMERCIAL FAMILY beneath the lights of a TV KITCHEN SET. All stare at cans of BRIGHTLY COLOURED GOOP. The cans are labelled in Martian and in English, SYNTHO-DREK.

The TV CREW hang around listlessly, some of them smoking MARTIAN PIPES. Young is hornswoggled and very MAD.

YOUNG
I don't see any problem here. You have your props, you have your actors, lights, camera, action, shoot!
DIRECTOR
(holding up a dripping can)
THIS is the problem, Mr Young.
This SYNTHO-DREK.

YOUNG
What kind of problem is that?
It looks great. Mega-photogenic.
Action! Camera!

TV MOTHER
Mr Young, we don't know what we're supposed to DO with it. Are we meant to EAT it, WASH with it, or use to to SCOUR THE SINK?

TV GRANPA
I'm not eating that shit.

TV KID
Poo.

YOUNG
Pathetic! What do you think — they'd ask you take SYNTHO-DREK if it was dangerous? Christ, they have W.F.D.A. labs analyzing this stuff twenty seven hours a day, just so you SLUGS can drink it and NOT DIE!

TV FATHER
(caving in)
I'll take a little taste...

TV KID
(to YOUNG)
YOU taste it.

Everyone looks at YOUNG.

YOUNG
Bring in another kid.

DIRECTOR
Another kid. He wants another kid.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Replace the kid.
The TV KID is whisked off and another TV KID brought onto the set. The second kid is BLACK.

YOUNG
NOW! You put the cans here on the kitchen table. Moms and Pops and the old bastard and junior all gather round and stare in admiration at the CANS. All say in unison, "MM MM MM! NEW MARTIAN SYNTHO-DREK!"
Junior reaches for can. Freeze frame. Super Logo. Got it? There we are.

The ACTORS and DIRECTOR nod dumbly. Something in one of YOUNG's pockets makes a BUZZING SOUND. He roots hastily in his rumpled coat. The BUZZING becomes oppressively loud. Finally he finds the source --

-- his MARTIAN WATCH with its broken plastic strap.

The WATCH has many buttons and a tiny red-tinted TV SCREEN. YOUNG pushes a code and the SCREECHING stops. SKIP's beaming face appears.

SKIP
Good morning, Friend John Young!

YOUNG
Skip. What do you want.

SKIP
Your prompt attendance on Departure Level Four, if you don't mind.

YOUNG
(wearily)
Me, mind? Oh, you know me, Skip.
Not at all.

YOUNG turns and almost collides with a STAGE LIGHT.

He trudges, tripping over wires, past the EXECUTIVE ELEVATORS - long since defunct and blocked by dying Martian Cactus - past the ARMED GUARDS holding back the homeless and the curious --

YOUNG
Assholes. Out of my way.
Class A Person coming through.
Behind his back, the WHOLE CREW flips him off, in unison.

**EMERGENCY STAIRS** **INTERIOR** **DAY**

In the absence of elevators, the stairs are the main artery of the building. As a result they are always swollen with PEOPLE – struggling up and down or eating from smoking stands or trading old-Earth watches and appliances on the black market.

Everyone wears rags or the bright plastic uniforms of the FRIENDSHIP POLICE, stationed at every doorway.

A rope dumbwaiter carries office and factory items up and down.

Many people recognise YOUNG. They give him as wide a berth as they can, as he plows slowly upwards, intoning his litany.

**YOUNG**

Class A Person. Stand aside.
Clear a path. Thank you.

**JOHN YOUNG TOWER** **EXTERIOR** **DAY**

A SAUCER hangs in the air beside DEPARTURE LEVEL FOUR, a murky transparent bulb which appears to be growing on the side of the skyscraper.

Liquid and steam exhaust pour from an outlet port beneath the saucer, blackening the building's sides.

**DEPARTURE LEVEL FOUR** **INTERIOR** **DAY**

YOUNG arrives, exhausted, in what looks like an exclusive AIRPORT DEPARTURE LOUNGE. Martian SAUCER LOGOS deck the walls, as do big glossy photos of the domed cities and red sands of Mars. COPS, FLIGHT CREWS and a couple of MOSLEM DIPLOMATS in transit.

SKIP, who has not aged at all, extends a hand. YOUNG is red-faced and exhausted.
John, my friend. It is how fine to see you. And looking so well.

(panting)
I am NOT...
Where are we GOING?

Friendship Center One.

D.C.? Why?

A DOOR OPENS, iris-like, in the wall. FRIENDSHIP COPS enter via the connection tube, followed by TWO SPINDLY FIGURES IN SPACE SUITS. Through the glass of their HUGE HELMETS we can see HUGE EXPOSED BRAINS.

The MARTIANS and their GUARD OF HONOR bustle into the building. SKIP leads YOUNG after the departing DIPLOMATS into the --

PLASTIC TUNNEL EXTERIOR DAY

-- which connects the tower to the hovering SAUCER. The earthmen hurry through the semi-organic tunnel. Their feet sink into the floor.

FLYING SAUCER INTERIOR DAY

YOUNG, SKIP and the DIPLOMATS enter via the tube. They are greeted by a beaming blonde FLIGHT ATTENDANT. She takes their boarding cards, directs them to the TRADER SECTION. The DIPLOMATS take their seats in RELIGIO/MILITARY.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Drinking or non-drinking?

YOUNG
Drinking please.

SKIP has a window seat. His "window" is a video monitor. SKIP drops a COIN into the monitor and selects a view of Night Sky With Clouds.
The plastic tube detaches from the SAUCER and retracts into the TOWER. The SAUCER glows more brightly, starts to rise. Suddenly its speed and direction, hisses horizontally away --

SAUCER  INTERIOR  DAY

YOUNG and SKIP watch in-flight video. YOUNG has selected a repeat of The Honeymooners. MARTIAN NEIGHBORS have been chroma-keyed into the show. SKIP watches a documentary about ANTS.

RECORDED VOICE
-- in the event of a loss of cabin pressure in the Saucer, there is a slight risk human passengers may explode. At the first sign of swelling, push your Call Button --

YOUNG
I hate flying Trader. It's degrading's what it is. On the way back I shall expect an upgrade. What's this all about?

SKIP
I was not told. To bring you straight to Friendship Center One is all I know. (watching the ANTS)

HA!  HA!  I love these old amusing shows. You were quite right, John. Many TV channels are much better than just one.

The ROBO-STEW arrives, a self-propelled cart with an array of unfamiliar LIQUORS and a TRAY of PILLS.

ROBO VOICE
Care for a complimentary cocktail, sir?  An Alco-Jolt?  An Anodyne?

YOUNG
Gimme a VAT o'GIN. (the MACHINE buzzes)
Only kidding.
ROBO VOICE
Pan-Mar PROUDLY serves only
MARTIAN products on all fl --

YOUNG
Gimme an Anodyne.

WASHINGTON, D.C. EXTERIOR DAY

The SAUCER zips across the azure/yellow sky.

Below it is the dome of the EARTH/MARS FRIENDSHIP CENTER - formally the U.S. Capitol Building - one side of it stained yellow by the nearby MARTIAN SMELTING PLANT. Tripedal WALKING MACHINES service the PLANT.

FRIENDSHIP CENTER INTERIOR DAY

Space-suited MARTIANS and their HUMAN counterparts watch a wall-mounted VIDEO reply.

YOUNG and SKIP enter and take seats at the conference table. ROY is already there. YOUNG eyes the replay.

ON SCREEN, a Martian WALKING MACHINE struts through a street of impoverished wood-frame houses. It grabs a running HUMAN in its tentacles, pops him in its collecting cage.

Suddenly a bright beam of light emerges from one of the houses. It hits the WALKING MACHINE amidships. Slowly the WALKER - tentacles thrashing wildly - topples out of frame.

The scene repeats. Everyone looks at YOUNG.

YOUNG
Excuse me, ah, what show is this?
I'm not familiar --

ROY
This is not a show, Young John.
This is Reality.
FRIENDSHIP COP
They've got ahold of Martian
weapons. It's a technological
bleed-thru.

YOUNG
Yes, but humans aren't allowed
to possess Martian weapons --

A spacesuited MARTIAN GENERAL interrupts.
Gesticulating angrily, he emits a flurry of
unintelligible gibberish. ROY translates.

ROY
Field Marshall Quaaarggg says these
are not humans. These are TERRORISTS.

A MARTIAN BUSINESSMAN speaks up, more calmly,
more gibberish. SKIP translates.

SKIP
Trader Faargahaar says this is not
an isolated incident. Acts of
aggression using Martian weapons
have been occurring for some time.
This one was different.
It was TELEVISED.

Consternation. Everyone looks at YOUNG.

YOUNG
Well that can't be. This kind of
footage contravenes the Fairness
Code. It shows our Martian allies
in an, ah, negative light.

The MARTIAN GENERAL interrupts again.

ROY
Westcoast programming was jammed
last night. The clip you have
just seen was shown repeatedly
IN PRIME TIME.

ALL
Outrageous! Unforgivable!
What are you going to do about
this, John?
YOUNG
I'm not going to do anything about it. I'm responsible for licensed broadcasting. This broadcast obviously wasn't licensed.

FIELD MARSHALL QUAAARGGG jabbers again, rapping the table with his power-assisted metal-encased hand.

ROY
Field Marshall Quaaarggg observes that if there's NOTHING you can do about it, there's certainly SOMETHING he can do about it. Favours destruction of SAN FARCISCO - where outrage took place.

YOUNG
You mean San FRANCisco.
And it's not a good idea.

Another MARTIAN interrupts the ranting FIELD MARSHALL. This MARTIAN wears a charcoal business suit and a red sash. SKIP translates.

SKIP
Ambassador Xaxolottyl suggests you GO to San Farcisco, John. Appear on television. Advise earth people this is wrong. Ask them to tell us who this did.

YOUNG
I'm not going to San Francisco if you're going to blow it up.
Anyway, they wouldn't tell us.

A MARTIAN translates this to AMBASSADOR XAXOLOTTYL. SKIP translates the AMBASSADOR's reply.

SKIP
Why not? Do they not know that we are here to save them from the PLEIDEAN MENACE?
YOUNG
(addressing the MARTIAN)
Yes, they do, sir. At least, that's what we've told them.
The problem is that not all earth people believe what we tell them.

ROY
(translating)
Why not?

YOUNG
Well, that's hard to say.
Some people think - it's only a small minority - they don't believe that there ARE any Pleideans.
They think that's something you guys just... made up...

The MARTIANS whisper among themselves.
The EARTHLINGS glare at YOUNG.
YOUNG ruffles through his papers.

YOUNG
The GOOD NEWS is that according to the very latest POLLS most earthlings are now NEUTRAL to the Martians. Which is a big improvement on this time two years ago when they were SIXTY PER CENT NEGATIVE --

ANOTHER GENERAL speaks up. ROY translates.

ROY
General Xabaartlarrl instructs you to proceed to San Francisco, John. There to personally find this REBEL BROADCAST CENTER and to close it down.

YOUNG
That's not my --

ROY
You have 24 hours.

GENERAL XABAARTLARRL intones again.
All the MARTIANS bow their heads.
SKIP
General Xabaartlarrl recommends a forty minute silence for our fallen comrades. Starting NOW.

EARTHLINGS bow their heads likewise.

OAKLAND EXTERIOR DAY

The ruins of the felled Walking Machine.
FRIENDSHIP COPS are covering it with tarps.
A RAGGED CROWD looks on enthusiastically.

A SAUCER passes overhead. We PAN with it to the SAN FRANCISCO SKYLINE.

LIMOUSINE INTERIOR DAY

NO DRIVER. Alone again, YOUNG sits in back.
From the bar he takes a labelled vial of MARTIAN SOMETHING, breaks the seal and sniffs. The colours around him intensify and he STARTS HALLUCINATING.

RADIO VOICES (in his head)
John Young's Gonna Die!
Electric Chair! He's Gonna Fry!

FREEWAY EXTERIOR DAY

The LIMO speeds off, dodging between rusty abandoned cars. A huge billboard advertises, RAMBO CONQUERS THE PLEIDES. A sign reads, DOWNTOWN/NEW PHOBOS.

RADIO VOICES
Stick Your Finger In His Eye!
Nobody Likes Him! Crucify!

YOUNG ASSOCIATES EXTERIOR DAY

The LIMO deposits YOUNG outside a glass-walled SKYSCRAPER downtown. The street is full of garbage, rusting, burned-out cars. Birds nest in the street lamps.

FRIENDSHIP COPS rush to open the doors for YOUNG.
YOUNG ASSOCIATES
INTERIOR
DAY

YOUNG stumbles through the office, still shitfaced on the Martian Inhalant. He is followed by trembling shabby Minions, although because this is Frisco their rags are in much better shape than in Chi-town.

MINION 1
But Mr Young. 24 hours? We've never done anything like this before --

YOUNG
And a good thing too! In this business we thrive on challenges. You have an open line to the FRIENDSHIP POLICE, top level access to the files of the FRIENDSHIP DEATH AND TORTURE SQUADS, a staff of skilled DATA ANALYSTS and a roof that's covered in electric ariels and prongs. Get busy!
(grabs the MINION's arm)
That's a nice suit, by the way.

MINION 1
Why, thank you sir. It's made of ALL-MARTIAN MATERIALS.

YOUNG
HOW SPLENDID! Be a shame to trade it in for PROLETARIAN RAGS, wouldn't it?

The MINION scurries away. A SECOND MINION approaches him. YOUNG is floating several inches off the ground.

MINION 2
Mr Young, if we're really trying to find this transmitter, don't you think it might be better to look... underground?

YOUNG
Explain.

MINION 2
(eyeing her colleague's SUIT)
I'm sure you know there's a BLACK MARKET, sir. It's an anti-social

(CONT.)
MINION 2
(CONT.)
institution, trading in old earth
products and forbidden stuff.
If you're looking for the rebels,
that would be the place to start...

YOUNG
Hmm. That's risky. But it's a
good call... How would one..?

MINION 2
Make contact? I dare say I could...
SCOUT AROUND... find somebody to
talk to...

YOUNG drifts back to the floor. He rubs his temples
and shakes out the Alien Inhalant Bottle. It is EMPTY.

YOUNG
(to MINION 1)
You! Get me some more of this!

MINION 2 rolls up a swivel chair for YOUNG.
She offers him a strangely-shaped MARTIAN PIPE.

MINION 2
Actually, sir, I have a friend...
who KNOWS the principal black
marketeer of the Bay Area...

She lights YOUNG'S PIPE and then her own.

YOUNG
Really? What's his name?

MINION 2
It's a she, sir.
YOLANDA McKENZIE.

YOUNG jumps up, dropping his PIPE.

MINION 2
I can put a call in, if you --

YOUNG
Don't bother.
GUERRERO STREET       EXTERIOR       DAY

Dereliction. Garbage and abandoned cars. Soup kitchens. On every corner is a bright and cheery MARSOTHEQUE, dispensing Martian products to long lines of sorry BUMS.

YOUNG'S LIMO pulls up outside an unusually well-kept Victorian house. Three BLACK TOUGHS wait outside.

TOUGH 1
Keep movin' bunky.

YOUNG
I'm here to see Yolanda.

TOUGH 2
No you ain't.

YOUNG
Just tell her BIG JOHN's here.

The TOUGHS exchange a glance.
One of them flips down a pencil mike from his MOTORCYCLE HELMET --

TOUGH 2
Yo. We got a scrawny little white dude out here calls hisself "Big John".
(he listens)
She said to go on up.

The TOUGHS part for him. YOUNG struts up the steps.

YOLANDA'S PAD       INTERIOR       DAY

YOLANDA loads a .38 REVOLVER. She is older, perhaps more beautiful, and very hard. Her hair is cut really short.

Her pad is packed with stuff -- cans of motor oil, wrist watches, auto parts, Italian suits, maple syrup. CONTRABAND.

Someone knocks at her REINFORCED METAL DOOR.
She pushes buttons. JOHN YOUNG enters.

YOLANDA hides the gun beside her back.
YOLANDA
What are you doing here?

YOUNG
You look great, Yolanda.
You look just the same.

YOLANDA
You look TERRIBLE.
You're older, and your face
is full of broken veins.

YOUNG
It's the Teletransfer.
I hate it, but it's in my contract.
Your nose is the first to go --

YOLANDA produces her GUN and aims it at him.

YOLANDA
This time it's LOADED, Johnny.

YOUNG
You still mad at me? I can't
believe it. Ten years is a long
time to hold a grudge, Yolanda.

YOLANDA
Vile traitor. Enemy of the entire
species. Collaborating pig.

YOUNG
Yolanda, kill me or listen to me.
The Martians are really pissed.
They're threatening to take out
the whole Bay Area. TOMORROW.

YOLANDA
Why?

YOUNG
Some rebel group blew up a Walker.
It got shown on PRIME TIME TV.

YOLANDA shakes her head. She lowers her gun.
YOUNG buzzes through his WATCH OPTIONS, finds the TIME.

YOUNG
We got about eighteen hours.
YOLANDA
Eighteen hours to do what?
Is this true or just some really
perverse plan to try and get us
back together? You bastard.

YOUNG
Still as insecure as ever, eh
Yolanda? It breaks my heart to
see you sunk to this
degeneracy...

YOLANDA
Yeah, and how does it feel to
be the MOST HATED MAN in the
ENTIRE WORLD?

YOUNG
Smitty's more hated than me.

YOLANDA
He is not! I ought to put you
out of your pathetic misery --

YOUNG
Shut up and pull the trigger.
I'll see you in Hell! You and
Frisco! 18 hours from now!

They stare at each other. Both sit down.

YOLANDA
What are we going to do?

YOUNG
Make contact with the rebels
out in Oakland. Tell 'em what's
gonna go down. Hopefully they'll
understand and give us a patsy.

YOLANDA
A what?

YOUNG
A patsy. Someone we can sacrifice.
If not we'll just pull someone out
of prison, blame it on a cop maybe.
A rogue cop with access to the
Arsenal. I like that --
YOLANDA
You're a disgusting person.

YOUNG
Don't you want to use the phone?

YOLANDA gets up and pulls on a FLAK JACKET and a CRASH HELMET. Finishes mug of coffee. Grabs keys.

YOLANDA
You don't call the rebels on the videophone, Johnny. I'll be back in two hours --

GUERRERO STREET   EXTERIOR   DAY

YOLANDA emerges. TWO of her MEN follow her down the steps and across the street to the MARTIAN STREETCAR. -- a long sagging plastic tube which crisscrosses the city.

A dark shape, the car itself, arrives at their stop. YOLANDA and the HEAVIES climb into the tube.

YOLANDA'S PAD   INTERIOR   DAY

JOHN YOUNG wears one of the Italian suits. He sits in YOLANDA's kitchen, smoking an old-fashioned cigarette and playing the Moonlight Sonata on her Baby Grand.

ON TV in the foreground - without sound, unseen by YOUNG - a hand-held shot of a FRIENDSHIP POLICE SUBSTATION appears. It holds steady for a moment. Then the POLICE STATION EXPLODES.

WAREHOUSE AREA   EXTERIOR   DAY

Dunes of DUST from a MARTIAN EXCAVATION PLANT have covered much of the old waterfront.

YOLANDA and COMPANY scour the sand away from the boarded-up entrance to an old BART SUBWAY STOP --
BART  INTERIOR  DAY

Light shafts in as YOLANDA and the HEAVIES enter. Darkness as they shut the door.

Their NIGHT VISION VIDEO HELMETS cast a greenish blue glow on the stairs.

SUBWAY TRACKS   INTERIOR

The THREE walk down the tracks towards a distant source of light. They pass a stalled TRAIN.

SUBWAY INTERSECTION   INTERIOR

They arrive at the REBEL CAMP.

A junction underground where four tunnels merge. Lit by hanging bulbs and the light of TELEVISION SCREENS.

The REBELS are all WATCHING TELEVISION.

Their tasks of cooking, cleaning weapons etc. forgotten as they stare at the PIRATE TV IMAGES OF TWO MARTIAN WALKING MACHINES EXPLODING...

YOLANDA and her GUYS thread through the transfixed REBELS, towards a HAMMOCK where rebel leader "WHITEY" ALVARADO and his intimates gaze at a TINY TV. At the last minute --

REBEL
Psst. Whitey. It's your girlfriend.

WHITEY grabs a copy of The Rights of Man by T. Paine.

WHITEY
(reading)
"He that would make even his own liberty secure must guard even his enemy from oppression!"

YOLANDA gives WHITEY a peck on the cheek.
YOLANDA'S MEN
All right, Whitey.
Right on, bro.

WHITEY
You dudes here to volunteer?

YOLANDA'S MEN
To watch TV?
Sure Whitey.

WHITEY jumps up from the hammock, ready for a fight.

WHITEY
Got a PROBLEM?! SPIT IT OUT!

YOLANDA
What are you all watching, Whitey?
(tosses him a frozen
Canadian Shrimp Dinner)
Have some Canadian Shrimp.

YOLANDA'S PAD  INTERIOR  DUSK

YOUNG dozes on YOLANDA's bed.

The TV plays the image of EXPLODING WALKERS.

An EERIE LIGHT brightens the room.

With an EARDRUM BURSTING CRASH!!! one half of a
McDonalds Arch appears in the middle of the room.

SKIP stands beaming within the ARCH.
He steps out and pulls JOHN YOUNG out of bed.

YOUNG
AAAAAAA!!! NO!! PLEASE!!
You can't Teletransfer me without
a warning! I'm not ready - Skip --

SKIP pulls YOUNG with him under the ARCH.
YOUNG grabs a tie. SKIP pushes buttons --

SKIP
You're wanted --
BZZZAAAP! SKIP and YOUNG and the ARCH flash like a nuclear blast in reverse and DISAPPEAR.

WASHINGTON D.C. EXTERIOR NIGHT

The THREE OF THEM appear with a THUNDERCRASH on a patch of mineral waste.

The CAPITOL, a.k.a. FRIENDSHIP CENTER ONE, rises above the dust and waste about a mile away, lit by the lights of the GIANT SMELTER.

SKIP
-- in D.C.
(he looks around)
Hmm. Missed our coordinates.

SKIP picks YOUNG up, checks for a heartbeat, starts walking him towards the CAPITOL BUILDING.

The ARCH disappears.

SUBWAY INTERSECTION, S.F. INTERIOR

YOLANDA sits with WHITEY on the hammock, eating MICROWAVE SHRIMP and drinking Ralphs whiskey ('12 Years Old') from prized 7-11 BEAKERS.

They stare at the DESTRUCTION on TV.

WHITEY
We're turning corners every day. And GETTING IT ON TV!

YOLANDA
I thought we weren't supposed to trust TV, Whitey.

WHITEY
This is different. This is OUR TV. (egging the TV on) Yeah! Go for it!

ON TV ANOTHER FRIENDSHIP SUBSTATION GOES UP IN FLAMES.

YOLANDA
Who's doing this, Whitey?
WHITEY
The F.E.P.A., Oakland Chapter.
Although that looks like L.A.
And that, that, shit that looks
like PARIS, FRANCE --

YOLANDA
Listen, Whitey. I have it on good
authority that the Geeks are mad
as hell. They're threatening
to torch the whole Bay Area.

WHITEY
Propaganda. Shit, that REALLY
IS Paris. Let's see that again --

YOLANDA
Whitey. What if they mean it.

WHITEY
And if they do? So what.
Better to die as free people
than live as slaves.
(to his SUPPORTERS)
Right?

BETSY, his trusted lieutenant, a stern, fair-haired
girl whose family were obviously *#@@X&@'d by MARTIANS,
begins a chant --

BETSY
Long live the E.P. and the F.E.P.A.!!
Long live the E.P. and the F.E.P.A.!!

WHITEY'S LIEUTENANTS stare at them.
YOLANDA and CO. wisely take up the chant.

On TV, more MARTIAN THINGS explode.

FRIENDSHIP CENTER, D.C. INTERIOR NIGHT

A large lecture theater/briefing room full of
worried EARTHLINGS and MARTIANS in space suits.

The MARTIAN BUSINESSMEN and MILITARY jabber
back and forth. YOUNG, SKIP and ROY stand
at the foot of the lecture podium, arguing
beside a replay of the PIRATE TV ATTACKS.
ROY, like SKIP, is un-aged.
ROY
The Generals are furious.
Insist upon reprisals.
Favoring destruction of the
Eastern Seaboard.

YOUNG
Don't tell this to me.
Tell it to Smitty.
He's the President.

ROY
Smitty is hosting another
GAME SHOW. Your idea.

SKIP
EarthPrez Smitty will be here
tomorrow for the Celebration of
the Martian Half-Year Holiday
and ROYAL BIRTHDAY.
That is too late for the
Generals, who want ACTION NOW.

YOUNG
I'm doing my best.
I still have 13 hours --

(CONTINUED)
SIMULTANEOUS CHANTING from the serried ranks of MARTIANS. BUSINESSMEN and GENERALS sway in unison.

SKIP
They are deadlocked.
Want to hear from you.
(he pushes YOUNG onto the podium. A BRILLIANT SPOTLIGHT hits him. The MARTIANS shut up)
Speak now.

ROY
And make it GOOD!

YOUNG squints into the brilliant light.
Scores of glowing bloodshot ALIEN EYES stare back at him.

YOUNG
Ah... mm... well... I only just, ah, saw the tape, uh, and I haven't fully...
(straightens the SILK TIE he stole from YOLANDA)
Gentlemen. I mean, my Martian Friends. What we have seen today is a great outrage. My sympathies and those of all Good Earthlings go out to you at this sad hour. Although we cannot share your sorrow, being inferior, yet we are sorry too. In our own way. Today. I know your martial Martian instincts are to seek revenge. But Martian sirs, as a Great Man once said, "Revenge Is Sweet When Honored By Its Absence!" Um. I come to you this evening with a FIVE POINT PLAN to win the hearts and minds of Earthlings everywhere and ensure eternal peace, stability, and markets for your surplus goods.
(he pauses, thinking fast)
My points are these:
ONE: More creative TV spots.
TWO: Brighter street lights.
THREE: Strategic hamlets. That's a good one, never fails.
FOUR: Stronger drugs.
FIVE: A chicken in every pot!
There IS an alternative. Just say YES. Ich bin ein Martian.
Thank you very much!
THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE from the enthralled BUSINESSMEN. Grudging clapping from the GENERALS. Spotlight out.

YOLANDA'S PAD    INTERIOR    NIGHT

SKIP and YOUNG rematerialize in SAN FRANCISCO with a THUNDERCLAP. YOUNG falls to his knees, holding his bleeding nose.

SKIP
That was a lovely speech you gave, friend John. Especially I loved the reference to chickens. Very original. Reminding me of happy days of childhood.

YOUNG
(holding his nose)
Get me a paper napkin - towel --

SKIP goes to the kitchen.
YOUNG grovels on the floor.

The door opens and YOLANDA enters.

YOLANDA
Hi, Johnny. What are you doing on the floor?

YOUNG
(wiped out)
I... they... I was TELETRANSFERRED. Had to make a speech... D.C....

YOLANDA eyes YOUNG with obvious disbelief.

YOLANDA
You oughta lay off that Martian hooch, Johnny. It's starting to --

SKIP appears from the kitchen with a handful of TOWELS for YOUNG's bleeding nose. YOLANDA screams.

YOLANDA
What's THAT doing here?
YOUNG
Yolanda, this is Skip. A friend --

YOLANDA
It isn't a friend! It's a GEEK ROBOT! Get it out of here!

YOLANDA'S PAD EXTERIOR NIGHT

SKIP stands under a streetlight, beaming, next to YOUNG'S LIMO. MARTIAN ADS glow in the sky.

YOLANDA'S GUARDS watch him darkly.

A KID rides by on a bicycle and shoots him. The BULLET bounces off his chest and ricochets away.

YOLANDA'S PAD INTERIOR NIGHT

YOLANDA and YOUNG sit in far corners of the room.

YOLANDA
I met with someone who's into the Ejercito Popular. They're jacked up by the videos. But they're not making them.

JACK
You sure?

YOLANDA
Jack these are small time operators. They might hit a Friendship Station once in a while, but... nah. Not them. They don't have the muscle.

SKIP
What about the broadcast center?

YOLANDA
Maybe they got one. Even that I kinda doubt. They're fantasists.

YOUNG stares at TV, breaking up with interference. The static breaks and a DIGITAL CLOCK appears.
YOUNG
Nine hours...

He rises. From his pocket he produces the
MARTIAN FLYING SAUCER TICKETS. Offers one to
YOLANDA.

YOUNG
This is a ticket for the Martian
Hop tomorrow at noon.

YOLANDA
Save it for your "friend".

YOUNG
This is MY ticket.

YOLANDA
Sticking around for the fireworks?

YOUNG
Why not? I missed 'em last time.

YOLANDA
You sure did.
(she waves the ticket away)
Keep your ticket, Johnny.
You might change your mind.

LIMO INTERIOR NIGHT

SKIP and YOUNG ride back through the dark streets.
YOUNG is wiped out and preoccupied. SKIP listens
to the radio.

TALK SHOW VOICE
(from radio)
We must never forget we mammals are
only here because of a Martian
experiment. We owe them a TREMENDOUS
debt of gratitude. Frankly I'm
sick and tired of --

SKIP
Worried, Friend John? Why don't
we pull up at a MARSOTHEQUE for
a Lift-Upp or Qnattlarrgg Soda?
YOUNG
No, I'm okay. I'm... shit!
Why am I the one that has to
deal with this. You think
they're bluffing?

SKIP
The GENERALS? No. They are
in state of ANXIOUS NERVOUSNESS
due to impending Half-Year
Holiday.

YOUNG
What's the big deal about
a holiday? I've seen 'em come
and go. Christmas. Thanksgiving.
President's Day. King Day.

SKIP
King Day? Aha. No doubt alike.
Impending Annual Half-Year Holiday
celebrates PRINCE ROYBLOTTO DAY!

YOUNG groans. SKIP warms to his subject.

SKIP
Prince Royblotto is a Great Martian.
Regal, intelligent, winner of the
Martian Prize for Peace. He stands
two hands taller than the average
Martian and has a Bigger Brain!

YOUNG
(sees a MARSOTHEQUE ahead)
Stop there.

SKIP
And Friend John this year the GOOD
PRINCE honors us all with a ROYAL
VISIT. Hence is all the spit
and polish in the air --

The LIMO STOPS. JACK jumps out --

MARSOTHEQUE EXTERIOR NIGHT

-- followed by SKIP.

He pushes past the line of waiting PEONS.
YOUNG
Sounds great, Skip.
Excuse me. Class A Person.
Stand aside.

MARSOTHEQUE    INTERIOR    NIGHT
Bright and cheerful, full of MARTIAN JUNK.

YOUNG pushes to the counter, waving his CLASS A PASS.
The COUNTER BOY sips a flourescent MARTIAN SODA
which has started to turn his face the same color
as his favorite DRINK.

YOUNG
Two bottles of Lift-Upp, please.

BETSY brushes past him, leaving the store.
She carries a bulky ragged backpack.

The FRIENDSHIP COP eyes her butt as she leaves.

SKIP
You know... is strange. I am
attached to Central Automatic
Nervous System, as you know.
Mostly flows smoothly. But
sometimes... I get crossed signals.
Circuits are confused.

YOUNG
What do you mean?

The COUNTER BOY gives them their drinks.

YOUNG
(slapping Martian Credits
on the counter)
Keep the change.

SKIP
Well... Sometimes... I think
the name of PRINCE ROYBLOTTO
and I am AFRAID.

YOUNG guides them to a table. He pops the top of
his Lift-Upp. A SERVO-STRAW emerges from the foam.
SHAPE SHIFTERS creep up the walls, across the table.
YOUNG stares at SKIP. SKIP IS CRYING. SKIP continues to beam.

YOUNG
(patting his shoulder)
So you're afraid of the King.
That's natural. Makes sense --

SKIP
No. It does not. Prince
Royblotto is loved by all --

YOUNG
Bubba, you're talking to an old pro here. A seasoned campaigner.

SKIP
But he IS. Royblotto is the first good Prince the Dynasty has had in 15,000 years. The Traders love him and he has the Military jumping YOUPIE! Without Royblotto, Earth would have an atmosphere of SULFUR DIOXIDE by now...

YOUNG
(drinking his Lift-Upp)
Mmm. You really think this Blobbo is a good dude, huh?

SKIP
Yes, John. I do. And I'm af --

KA-BOOM! THE MARSOTHEQUE EXPLODES.

The blast blows SKIP apart. Bits of wire and plastic and metal fly everywhere. The roof falls in.

MARSOTHEQUE EXTERIOR NIGHT

PEOPLE stagger out of the smoke and flames. BETSY videos the burning building.

BETSY
Get out of here! Get going!
YOUNG appears, charred and confused. He still holds SKIP's hand. Wires and plastic filaments trail from it. YOUNG'S LIMO BURNS.

YOUNG sees a human body move beneath the rubble. He drops SKIP's hand and starts to clear away the wreckage. SIRENS are heard.

BETSZY
(packing away her camera)
You! Are you MAD? Get out of here!

YOUNG stares at her, uncomprehending.

Around the corner comes a huge WALKING MACHINE, topped by FLASHING RED & BLUE POLICE LIGHTS, wailing sirens. DEATH RAYS flicker up and down the street.

BETSZY grabs YOUNG's arm and drags him out of the path of the RAYS.

BETSZY
Don't you know better than to HELP PEOPLE?

She starts to RUN. YOUNG stares at the APPROACHING MACHINE.

BETSZY
Shit!

She runs back, grabs him, pulls him down the street. Around the corner BETSZY grabs a MAN HOLE COVER, lifts it, hustles YOUNG inside --

BART INTERIOR NIGHT

TWO OTHER REBELS help BETSZY down the metal stairs. YOUNG follows. Still in a daze --

YOUNG
Where are we?

BETSZY
BART. Stands for Belowground Army Refuge Tunnel. Carry this.

She thrusts a heavy old wooden TRIPOD at him.

The THREE REBELS run off down the tracks, chasing their flashlight beams. YOUNG follows.
TUNNELS        INTERIOR        NIGHT

Three flashlights dance through track intersections, across ancient platforms, past stalled trains.

The SOUND OF WAVES.

OLD PRESIDIO AREA        EXTERIOR        NIGHT

Covered with yellow and white ash from the MINE.

The stumps of the blasted GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE protrude from the black sludge of the Bay.

BETSZY, YOUNG and the REBELS struggle up an ash dune...

ASH DUNE        EXTERIOR        NIGHT

Behind the crest of the dune are a couple of swept-away PORTACABINS. REBELS in shadow standing guard.

BETSZY approaches the cabins.

Through the windows of one, YOUNG sees a SATELLITE DISH, pointed at the sky.

He looks up at the sky himself and says a little PRAYER OF THANKS. He sees a SHOOTING STAR.

BETSZY hands TWO TAPES to a REBEL in the cabin doorway and comes RUNNING BACK --

  BETSZY
  What's your name?

  YOUNG
  John... Davison.

  BETSZY
  What line of work you in?

  YOUNG
  I, ah, don't have a job.
BETZSY
You do now.
(punching his shoulder)
Ready to give your life to save your fellow Earthmen?

YOUNG
Oh, sure...

BETZSY
Swear to abstain from Martian Imports and from Martian Drugs?

YOUNG
Yeah, why not? I been meaning to.

BETZSY
You're in. Let's go.

They run off over the DUNE.

SUBWAY INTERSECTION    INTERIOR    NIGHT

WHITEY ALVARADO'S CAMP.

YOUNG sits with a RAGGED BUNCH OF CITIZENS who are new converts to the E.P./F.E.P.A.

BETZSY looks on approvingly as WHITEY strums a guitar and sings.

WHITEY
(singing)
The old planet won't look the same
Till the Martians are down the drain
Until they're beaten, crushed and defeated.
Till the roads are full of cars again
I won't rest till they're
Back on Mars again
They just ain't worth
The Green, Green Fields of Earth.

The song continues. The REBELS hum along.
YOUNG edges over to BETZSY.

BETZSY
Isn't he brilliant? Whitey's the best SubLeader we've had since Sister Frances.
YOUNG
Sister Frances? You mean that nun who fell out of a window?

BETSY
Nuns don't fall out of windows. She was murdered by the Martians. Where do you get your information, Davison?

YOUNG
Oh, TV I guess.

BETSY
From now on, you don't trust TV. Unless its our TV. And don't go SAVING PEOPLE, either.

YOUNG
I thought I swore to save my Fellow Earthmen.

BETSY
Not if they shop at Marsotheques.

She gives him a funny look. YOUNG salutes her. She punches his shoulder.

BETSY
Get some sleep.

STREET   EXTERIOR   DAWN

A MANHOLE COVER rises, jams against the oil pan of a rusting car.

JOHN YOUNG pushes at the MANHOLE COVER. The COVER breaks the oil pan, which dumps ANCIENT SLUDGY OIL on him.

He climbs out of the tunnel, scrabbles up from underneath the car.

He pats his pockets for his WALKIE-TALKIE watch. It's smashed. Its screen is blank.

He looks around for a --
PAY PHONE  EXTERIOR  MORNING

A SMALL CAMP of PEOPLE around the phone. They rouse themselves as YOUNG appears.

PHONE SITTERS
Change for the phone, sir? Want a card number? How about a shoeshine? Need a Martian PET?

YOUNG
Aside, aside please. Class A Person.

Reluctantly, they step aside.

An OLD LADY is talking on the PHONE. YOUNG pushes her away.

He stares at the video monitor, which is smashed, throwing back several CRACKED REFLECTIONS.

YOUNG pushes buttons.

OPERATOR VOICE 1
Thank you for using Mars/Bell VisiFone. All our lines are temporarily busy. If you wish to jump the queue, dial your CLASS A CARD NUMBER now.

YOUNG does so. The PHONE SITTERS gather round.

OPERATOR VOICE 2
Hi. You've reached the Mars/Bell Patriotic Snitch Hotline. All our lines are temporarily busy. If you wish to hold, please insert 50 MARTIAN CREDITS now.

YOUNG looks for MONEY. He has none.

PHONE SITTER
Out of money! AND he's phoning the COPS!

The SITTERS close in on him. ONE waves a SNAPPING MARTIAN PET in his face --
PHONE VOICE 3
(cutting in suddenly)
Hello?

YOUNG
I want to report a REBEL CELL.

All the PHONE SITTERS immediately back off.
The RED LIGHT of a VIDEO CAMERA blinks on behind
a black screen above YOUNG's face.

PHONE VOICE 4
Where is it, sir?

YOUNG
In the old Subway. What do they
call it? Bart. It's near a
street called... Poke.
Or something. Also - this is
very important - there's an
ILLEGAL SATELLITE TRANSMITTER
out where --

PHONE VOICE 5
Satellite transmitter, did you say?

YOUNG
Yes! It's in the ash dune where
the approach road to the Golden
Gate Bridge used to be.
It's very important that you...
that you DEAL WITH IT IMMEDIATELY.

All the PHONE SITTERS are on the move now,
packing up their stuff and marching hurriedly away.

VIDEO MONTAGE

-- the broken-up image of YOUNG --
-- video map fixing his COORDINATES --
-- video map of the PRESIDIO AREA --
-- flourescent red antlike figures and machines
closing in on the TWO AREAS --
-- lone red dot homing in on YOUNG --
-- MARTIAN WRITING streams across the screen,
in two adjoining SPIRALS --
PAY PHONE  EXTERIOR  DAY

YOUNG hears the throb of helicopters. He is alone.

    YOUNG
    (into phone)
    Not at all. My pleasure.
    Long live the Bond of Friendship
    between Earth and Mars!

Distant EXPLOSIONS. YOUNG hangs up, dials again.

    PHONE VOICE
    Please deposit seventy Martian
    Credits or Five Thousand Dollars
    after the tone --

A beat-up CAR arrives. A RATTY MAN with a face
dyed purple by Martian Sodas, at the wheel.

    RATTY MAN
    Mr Young?

    YOUNG
    Yes --

The TRUNK files open. METALLIC TENTACLES whip out
and encircle YOUNG. They drag him into the TRUNK.
It shuts. The beat-up BLACK CAR speeds away.

ASH DUNE  EXTERIOR  DAY

The feet of a WALKING MACHINE straddle one of
the CABINS. The other cabin is ABLAZE.

FRIENDSHIP POLICE herd CAPTURED REBELS.
aboard the walking machine's COLLECTOR.

WALKING MACHINE CAB  INTERIOR  DAY

The MARTIAN CREWMEN in the cowl-like CAB wear
olive drab fatigues and baseball caps. They CONVERSE.

    SUBTITLE
    A shame, this senseless violence.
    I shall not sleep tonight.
The GUNNER sees a PRISONER cut and run below.
He ZAPS the running PRISONER with a DEATH RAY.
Turns to his CAPTAIN, speaks --

SUBTITLE
Me either.

DOWNTOWN EXTERIOR DAY

The BLACK CAR hurtles through the streets, ignoring stop signs, crashing over POTHOLES.

It disappears through the gates of the old ARMORY, now labelled in bright colors, EARTH/MARS FRIENDSHIP CENTER. The appointments board outside says, TORTURERS REQUIRED. A long line of people waits to be interviewed.

BART INTERIOR DAY

 MARTIAN METAL SPIDERS twenty feet across chase the REBELS down the subway tracks.

The METAL SPIDERS spray HEAT RAYS and GRAB WOUNDED PEOPLE in their tentacles, PULLING THEM APART.

VERY REALISTIC AND HORRIFIC.

BETSY and WHITEY are holed up in a narrow alcove off the main tunnel.

BETSY blasts the MARTIAN MACHINES with her AK-47. WHITEY jams against the wall behind her. He is WOUNDED.

BETSY
(in shock)
They just keep COMING ON!!!
(screaming)
Shoot me! Shoot me before they get here!!!

WHITEY puts his GUN against the back of her head. He can't bring himself to do it.

WHITEY
I can't --
METAL TENTACLES WHIP AROUND THE CORNER
AND GRAB BETSY AND WHITEY, DRAGGING
THEM INTO THE BOWELS OF THE MACHINE --

Their SCREAMS are drowned out as the SPIDER'S
POD BAY DOORS slam closed --

INTERVIEW ROOM    INTERIOR    DAY

YOUNG sits dishevelled in a chair.

He is interrogated by a black android, KEN.

A MARTIAN GENERAL in a spacesuit and TWO
FRIENDSHIP COPS eye him grimly.

KEN
Tell me again your name.

YOUNG
My name is John Young.

KEN
Where's your ID?

YOUNG
I lost it in the fire.
I mean the bomb.

KEN
Why did you call the Friendship
Snitch Hotline?

YOUNG
To report a rebel cell and the
Transmitter. What time is it?

The MARTIAN GENERAL explodes.
He shouts at KEN, gesticulating at YOUNG.

KEN
General Acularattlaar says you
are playing games with us.
(to the COPS)
He is Naughty, no?

COPS
Naughty.
YOUNG
You assholes.
(to the GENERAL)
I am not Naughty. You Naughty!
You don't know what your own
guys are doing, do you? They
haven't told you! That makes
sense! Well listen up, Bunky,
if it wasn't for ME today would
be the LAST day of the REST
of YOUR LIFE!!

GENERAL ACALRATLLAAR speaks two words to KEN.

KEN
Take him to Room 202.

The FRIENDSHIP COPS turn pale.
They grab YOUNG and drag him out the door.

CORRIDOR INTERIOR DAY

YOUNG is dragged unprotesting down the hall.

He sees SKIP coming the other way.

YOUNG
Skip! You're alive!
Help me! HELP MEEEE!!

SKIP strides blankly on. He ignores them.
YOUNG Looks back and sees the HOLLOW in the
back of SKIP'S HEAD. SKIP'S BRAIN TAPES have
not yet been implanted.

SKIP opens a door and enters.
The door to ROOM 202 is up ahead.

YOUNG stiffens, grabbing his arm.

YOUNG
My arm - I - I - I'm having one
of my ATTACKS -- my PILLS --

He stiffens further, tripping, grabbing his side.
The GUARDS let go of him.
YOUNG jumps up and runs back down the corridor. His GUARDS bump heads.

YOUNG jams through the door where SKIP went.

ANDROID HOLDING BAY INTERIOR DAY

YOUNG bolts the metal door behind him, looks around.

He is surrounded by a mess of ANDROIDS, ANDROID PARTS and dusty piles of BRAIN AND PERSONALITY TAPES.

The NEW SKIP android sits motionless beside the motionless android of a BEAUTIFUL GIRL.

Outside, the GUARDS are hammering on the door.

    YOUNG
    Hup... Hup... Hup...
    SKIP: SKIPPY, BOY!
    (no reply)
    Shit...

YOUNG starts to rifle through the HUGE PILE of TAPES. They all have names and ages --

    -- KEN AGE 28 --
    -- DOLORES AGE 40 --
    -- RON AGE 17 --
    -- ERIC AGE 35 --
    -- SKIP...

Exalting, YOUNG grabs the tape marked "SKIP" and marches over to the ROBOT MAINFRAME.

The hammering on the door is louder. The door rattles.

YOUNG slips the tape into the back of SKIP's head.

    SKIP
    Goo goo... bll...gghghh...

    YOUNG
    Skip..?

SKIP falls off his stool and starts to crawl around on all fours, drooling.
Too late, YOUNG reads the full INFO on the back of the ROBOT MAINFRAME --

-- SKIP  AGE 6 MONTHS --

YOUNG
They're the BABY TAPES!!

He jumps back to rummage in the PILE --

CORRIDOR  INTERIOR  DAY

The FRIENDSHIP POLICE run down the corridor carrying a POWERFUL ELECTROMAGNET.

Bruised and confused but alive, WHITEY and BETSY are marched by SEVERAL GUARDS the other way.

ANDROID HOLDING BAY  INTERIOR  DAY

YOUNG has found a later-model TAPE.
He tries to wrestle the BABY TAPE out of SKIP's head. But "BABY" SKIP will not oblige.

SKIP
No! Bad da-da. Grrrr.

He punches YOUNG in the head. YOUNG falls down.

The UPPER DOOR BOLT draws back, under the powerful force of the ELECTROMAGNET.

Holding his jaw, YOUNG jumps up, approaches the BEAUTIFUL FEMALE ROBOT.

Her head has no brain tape.
He holds SKIP's brain tape in his hand.

YOUNG
This is weird...

He pops SKIP'S TAPE into the FEMALE ROBOT'S HEAD.
Her eyes focus on YOUNG.

Her gorgeous pouting lips part.

SKIP'S VOICE EMERGES.

    SKIP 2
    Hello Mr Young.

The DOOR flies open and the COPS burst in, levelling their guns at YOUNG.

The female SKIP - SKIP 2 - steps quickly in front of YOUNG, raising their guns --

    SKIP 2
    Hold your fire! This man is a Class A Person and a Friend of Mars!

CORRIDOR INTERIOR DAY

YOUNG and SKIP 2 stride back along the corridor, followed by two COPS.

    YOUNG
    Thanks, Skip. I don't know what's going on, man, uh, ma'am, but you sure saved my bacon.

    SKIP 2
    (hoarse male whisper)
    Fraid not, Friend John. Something is very wrong here. Excuse me a minute --

She bends as if to tie her shoe - she has no shoelaces - straightens up fast and KICKBOXES the COPS into unconsciousness. Grabs YOUNG's arm --

    YOUNG
    Where to?

    SKIP 2
    Teletransfer.

    YOUNG
    Isn't there another op --
PLASTIC TUBE    INTERIOR    DAY

Adjoining two redbrick buildings.  SIRENS aft.

YOUNG and SKIP hurry through it,
SKIP sniffing the air --

  SKIP 2
  Through here and to the left,
  the greatest concentration of
  energy.  Must be the TRANSFER
  SECTION --

NEXT BUILDING    INTERIOR    DAY

They exit the swaying tube, push through a
set of double doors into the TELETRANSFER SECTION.

TELETRANSFER ROOM    INTERIOR    DAY

A BLACK SPACE within which are four consoles and
TWO ARCHES.  The ARCHES glow dully.

SKIP pushes buttons on a console and an ARCH
begins to brighten up.

YOUNG is attracted to a bank of TV SCREENS.

The TVS SHOW A SERIES OF WALKER EXPLOSIONS
AND SABOTAGE AT MARTIAN PLANTS.

It is new footage and YOUNG watches with interest.

  SUDDENLY, on TV, a BIG HAND enters the frame.
  It picks up a FALLEN WALKER, repositions it.

For a couple of seconds, the edges of the
MINIATURE SET are seen.  Then the SCENE begins
again.

  YOUNG
  Skip.

On the TV below, he sees BETSY and WHITEY on
interrogation stools, under bright lights, surrounded by MARTIANS.
YOUNG

SKIP!

SKIP 2
We're ready, Mr Young.

YOUNG
No, Skip. This is... wait a minute...

SKIP 2
We have leave NOW.

YOUNG follows SKIP towards the ARCH.
They take up their positions under it.

YOUNG
Where are we going?

SKIP 2
To the only person who can help us.
PRINCE ROYBLOTTO.

YOUNG
Prince Blobbo? But isn't he on --

WHAP! Their atoms fracture into white light.

ROYAL PALACE, AXIKYLIAK, MARS INTERIOR NIGHT

KE-RUNK!

Only to re-form beneath the glimmering arch in one of the ROYAL PALACE'S GARDEN DOMES.

A transparent geodesic structure filled with exotic plants, many of them imported from EARTH.

Outside the red desert and the eternal night sky.

YOUNG is on his knees, his head ringing.

SKIP looks around.

SKIP
We are in luck. This is one of Axikyliak's Gardens. Some of these plants are from Earth. Such PROUDNESS!
A MARTIAN GARDENER and TWO GUARDS come running up. On Mars, the MARTIANS are much taller, released from the crushing gravity of EARTH.

YOUNG
Skip, what if we'd -- rematerialized off target -- like, OUTSIDE?

SKIP 2
I would be fine. You would be dead, of course.

SKIP makes MARTIAN SIGNS to the GUARDS, who lower their yeoman-of-the-guard PIKES. He makes the MARTIAN GESTURE of SERVILITY, followed by YOUPIE. The GUARDS and GARDENER reply.

SKIP 2
We are in luck. Royblotto is even now reclining in his OBSERVATORY.

SKIP 2 beckons to YOUNG.

Though she has SKIP'S MIND & VOICE, her body language is different and she does not usually PHYSICALLY MANHANDLE YOUNG.

YOUNG follows, rubbing his temples, staring at the ARIZONA CACTUS and the MARTIAN PLANTS.

OBSERVATORY APPROACH TUBE INTERIOR NIGHT

CACTUS here too, growing through the soft organic floor and the curved TUBE walls.

Ahead of them, the DOME of the PALACIO.

ROYAL PALACE EXTERIOR NIGHT

Magnificent ageing crystalline domes on a plateau in the red desert. Docked SAUCERS and tributary tubes. Garages full of BOUNCING CARS.

The domes and the immediate vicinity are covered in SAGUARO, CARDON, ORGAN PIPE and other giant earth CACTI.
ROYAL PALACE   INTERIOR   NIGHT

YOUNG gets all antsy as the GREAT ORGANIC DOORS start to breathe open, revealing the opulent alien OBSERVATORY/BOUDOIR within.

YOUNG
You haven't told me what to do.  
Do I bow?  What do I call him?  
Shall I be standing up or kneeling?  
Can I sit down?

SKIP 2
Just BE YOURSELF.  Don't fuck up.

PRINCE ROYBLOTTO cranes down in the ELEVATOR CHAIR of his POWERFUL TELESCOPE.

He immediately starts tucking into a large banquet table laden with Martian junk food like Lift-upp and Syntho-Drek.

SKIP 2
Prince Royblotto, I am Skip, your humble servant android number 56702.

YOUNG
And I am John Young.

ROYBLOTTO
I have heard of you.

The PRINCE speaks through a STEREO VOICEBOX prominently labeled SONY/IKKTNFLARR.  
He has an automatic woman's voice.

YOUNG
You have?

ROYBLOTTO
Oh yes.  You are so famous here you even have a Martian name.  
How does it translate, Skip?

SKIP 2
"Earth Dog Who Drinks Too Much  
And Serves Us."

YOUNG
Oh Martian Great One, I come here on behalf of San FARNcisco --
ROYBLOTTO
You come here on your own behalf. Continue.

YOUNG
Well, uh...

SKIP 2
O Mighty Prince, Earth Dog was yesterday sent on assignment by the Earth/Mars Friendship Council. His mission --

YOUNG
-- which I chose to accept under EXTREME DURESS. Like, clear BLACKMAIL --

SKIP 2
-- was to infiltrate a Cell of Earth Rebels broadcasting SEDITIOUS PROPAGANDA --

Two automated SUIT RACKS roll up, jockeying for ROYBLOTTO's approval. One holds pinstriped morning suits, the other admiral's outfits.

YOUNG
-- and snitch on them so they could be BLASTED WITH DEATH RAYS and destroyed. Which I did. Then...

YOUNG dries up. ROYBLOTTO and SKIP 2 stare at him. YOUNG is silent, thinking, blinking.

YOUNG
I'm sorry, I need a minute to sit down.

He does so, on the floor. Starts rocking back and forth, holding his head, breathing audibly.

SKIP 2
John! Royblotto is waiting!

ROYBLOTTO
That's all right, Skipper. He's realising what he did.

The PRINCE snaps two fingers in front of YOUNG's face. YOUNG looks up. He's crying.
ROYBLOTTO
You're forgetting that you had no choice. That by doing what you did, you saved the lives of maybe millions, Mr Young...

SKIP
And preserved our business interests when they were under threat from the REBELLION.

YOUNG
There IS no Rebellion. It's all phoney. Manufactured for the TV cameras. To convince us that there IS a valid Rebel movement when I'm sorry to say there's not.

ROYBLOTTO
MANUFACTURED, you say?
As in FAKE? But why?

YOUNG
Don't ask me. It's you that's doing it. Your guys.

ROYBLOTTO freezes suddenly, a wafer of Yum-Ickk still between his teeth. He stares into space.

YOUNG
What's happened to him?

SKIP 2
He's just thinking.

YOUNG
Oh.
(staring at the PRINCE)
He's got a cactus stickin in him. Think he'll grant us POLITICAL ASYLUM?

ROYBLOTTO lurches back to life, starts eating again.

ROYBLOTTO
Very interesting. You are dismissed.

SKIP 2 and YOUNG exchange a glance.
YOUNG
Sir, if --

SKIP 2
Thank you Noble Princeling for the
Honour of Your Time. Youpie! Youpie!

SKIP backs towards the doors, bowing.

YOUNG
Forgive me, boss, but if we go
back to Earth right now our
ass is grass --

ROYBLOTTO
When you return to Earth you will
be met by Ambassador Xaxolottyl.
He will escort you to a place of
safety. Soon you will enjoy a BEER.

YOUNG
An EARTH beer? Thank you very much.

He starts to back away like SKIP.
Cannot help commenting on all the CACTUS.

YOUNG
I guess you really dig CACTUS, huh?

ROYBLOTTO
We hate them. They are like a plague.
They grow to ten or twenty times
the size they do on Earth.

YOUNG
Really? Why not, you know --?
(makes throat-slit ting gesture)

ROYBLOTTO
Everything that grows on Mars is LIFE.
All LIFE is SACRED. Don't you
have rules like that on Earth?

YOUNG
I don't think so.

ROYBLOTTO
Very sensible!
(he cranes up, still eating)
See you tomorrow. Let's have lunch.
OUTSIDE THE PALACE DOOR      INTERIOR      NIGHT

YOUNG stares at the doors.

Other MARTIANS step past, with CACTUS sticking to their heads.

    YOUNG
    What did he say?

    SKIP 2
    He's coming to Earth tomorrow.
    It's his birthday.

    YOUNG
    Oh. We better bake a cake.

GARDEN DOME      INTERIOR      NIGHT

YOUNG and SKIP 2 push through the ORCHIDS to the TELETRANSFER ARCH.

AN OCOTILLO CACTUS has already started winding around it. SKIP 2 pushes its buttons.

    YOUNG
    Listen, Skip. Maybe we shouldn't go back. Don't you think we can hide out here? I've never been to Mars. I'd kinda like to take a Barge on the Canals --

    SKIP 2
    There are no canals.
    Step under the arch please.

    YOUNG
    Skip, I'm serious. We don't know what's gonna happen to us if we go back. What if --

SKIP 2 pushes another button.

The ARCH repositions itself over YOUNG's head.

WHAP! They're gone.
TELETRANSFER ROOM, S.F. INTERIOR DAY

SKIP 2 and YOUNG rematerialize with a FLASH and a CRASH. YOUNG vibrates, groaning weakly.

HIS POV

TWENTY FRIENDSHIP COPS levelling their guns and flames throwers at him and SKIP 2.

YOUNG
- it's a trap?

HWWHAP!! ANOTHER ARCH APPEARS.

AMBASSADOR XAXOLOTTYL stands beneath it, with an old MARTIAN GENERAL, PTTUXNER. XAXOLOTTYL wears a white linen suit and a red sash. PTTUXNER sports a scarlet cape.

XAXOLOTTYL
Hold your fire! I am Ambassador Xaxolottyl and these MEN are under my protection.

Confusion from the COPS, especially since SKIP 2 is a woman.

PIER 41 EXTERIOR LATE AFTERNOON

A STRETCH LIMO pulls up outside the old earth landmark. The DINER is the last vestige of the human waterfront, which now serves as a MARTIAN MINERAL REFINERY and SLUDGE OUTLET.

YOUNG, SKIP 2, AMBASSADOR XAXOLOTTYL and GENERAL PTTUXNER climb out and head up the steps to the diner. YOUNG carries a BIRTHDAY CAKE.

PTTUXNER seems pretty senile and leans on a cane.

INTERROGATION ROOM INTERIOR

SPEAKERS play dozens of different COMMERCIAL JINGLES and LOUD SPEECHES at WHITEY, BETSY and other exhausted REBELS in a white flourescent room.
The REBELS are in a bad way, sweating and holding their heads. They keep up a feeble chant.

REBELS
Long live the E.P. and the F.E.P.A.!

TRACK THROUGH THE WALL

to reveal Martians and Earth SCIENTISTS clustered around a WESTINGHOUSE/CHERNOBYL RADIATION GUN, aimed through the wall at the REBELS.

The SCIENTISTS all wear goggles and LEAD COATS.

PIER 41 INTERIOR LATE AFTERNOON

YOUNG and SKIP 2 and the MARTIANS sit at the bar drinking Anchor Steam. The customers and bartenders are MARTIAN. The busboys are from EARTH.

SKIP 2
(Translating for GENERAL PTTUXNER)
So then the Field Marshal... this is the funny part... he called on his radio... no, he means he WAS called... this is the funny part...

Drunk as a skunk, GENERAL PTTUXNER crashes head first on the table. He starts to snore.

AMBASSADOR XAXOLOTTYL starts whispering urgently in SKIP 2's ear. YOUNG, pretty drunk, finishes his beer and beckons to the MARTIAN BARMAN.

YOUNG
You fellers ready for another one?
Lemme geddem. Hic. Isn't every day a feller gets to save Frisco AND get to go to Mars and meet Prince Boppolopolis AND drink good EARTH BEER --

SKIP 2 shakes his/her head. He/she cannot believe what the AMBASSADOR is telling him.

YOUNG
Cheers!
Ambassador Xaxolotty says that Prince Royblotto is in grave danger. Says there is a plot to MURDER him tomorrow when he journeys here from Mars.

YOUNG
On his birthday? No. Guess he won't need his cake. Too bad.

The plan is too bad for him but worse for you and other Earth things. Prince Royblotto is the only reason Earth has not been strip-mined to the core. He is sentimental. Environmentalist.

YOUNG stares out at the defiled bay, the HUGE RUSTY MACHINES rising from fields of silt.

YOUNG
I see.

Crown Prince Argonpolon is not so far-sighted. He will undoubtedly side with HARD-LINERS IN MILITARY. Siphon off Earth's atmosphere. Turn planet inside out. Same as we did with Venus.

YOUNG hoists his bottle of beer.

YOUNG
Here's TO Venus! The evening star! May we all SHINE as brightly! Long live Venus! Death to the Pleides!

(suddenly depressed)
Who's killin' old Roy, anyway?

Hard-liners in the Military.

YOUNG nods. Finishes his beer. Calls for another.
YOUNG
That makes sense.

AMBASSADOR XAXOLOTTYL speaks again. SKIP translates.

SKIP 2
However, there may be a way --

YOUNG
Oh, really? How convenient. And how surprising. Doesn't involve me, does it, by any chance?

SKIP 2
Tomorrow Prince Royblotto is scheduled to address Earth's Leaders at the Martian Friendship Building in New York. We have arranged for you to be the KEYNOTE SPEAKER.

YOUNG
No thanks.

SKIP 2
We have top flight intelligence that EARTH TERRORISTS working for the MARTIAN MILITARY will infiltrate the building and --

YOUNG
Blow me away instead? No thanks. That means no thanks.

SKIP 2
Friend John, you MUST HELP US. If the plot against Royblotto succeeds, it will mean more than the end of EARTH. It will mean the end of BUSINESS AS WE KNOW IT,

YOUNG
You're exaggerating. It can't be that bad. Three more beers!

AMBASSADOR XAXOLOTTYL pleads with YOUNG in his alien tongue. The OLD MARTIAN beats his breast. SKIP 2 translates.
SKIP 2 (translating)
I will reveal to you a SECRET, John. There are only 5,611 MARTIANS. We reproduce once every eight hundred years. With the best will in two worlds, there is no way we can consume the PRODUCTS OF OUR BOOM ECONOMY.

YOUNG
Is that why Prince Royblotto -- ?

SKIP 2
EATS so much? Exactly. Not because he is hungry, but because he MUST. As an EXAMPLE.

YOUNG
And Earth --

SKIP 2
We need you, John. Far more than you need us. Without Earth, Mars will perish, buried beneath the WEIGHT of its UNSOLD CONSUMER GOODS.

YOUNG nods, understanding for the first time the SOCIO/ECONOMIC BASIS of the INVASION FROM MARS.

SKIP 2
This is why we killed the DINOSAURS, John. This is the reason for the EARTH PROJECT. So an intelligent race of mammals would evolve which would eventually appreciate the finer things we have to offer.

They all stare at the TV, playing ads for ANODYNE and SYNOTHDREK. YOUNG eats a piece of CAKE.

SKIP 2
You have to help us, John.

YOUNG
I have to take a leak.
PIER 41 EXTERIOR DUSK

YOUNG pisses off the end of the peer.

He sits down, opens a beer and has another PIECE OF CAKE.

Watches the SYNTHO-DREK BLIMP drift by.

SKIP walks up, looking ravishing in his/her form-fitting dress, backlit by the brilliant ether sky.

SKIP 2
Have you decided?

YOUNG

Nope.

He throws the CAKE into the Bay.
The ACID SLUDGE sets it alight.

SKIP 2
If you stick with the program,
John, they'll give you anything.
You could be President of Earth.

YOUNG
Thanks a million. I think at one time, huh, you know? I think I thought the job might actually be worth something. Be worth having. Look good on my curriculum vitae. Or something. Now I don't know. I might just go SWIMMING in the bay.

SKIP takes a step towards him. YOUNG rises, hovers at the pier's edge above the BUBBLING ACID SLIME.

YOUNG
Stay away from me.

SKIP 2
John, please --

YOUNG
"Earth Dog Who Drinks Too Much and Serves the Martians."
That about sums it up.
He hiccups, sways. Stares at SKIP 2, radiant against the green ball of the setting sun.

YOUNG
You look great, Skip. Real pretty.

SKIP 2
Thank you, John. You're not so bad yourself.

YOUNG
I used to love this woman, Skip. You met her. She worked for me at my office in Chicago.

SKIP 2
Yolanda.

YOUNG
Yeah.

SKIP 2
She's very beautiful.

YOUNG
Thank you.

SKIP 2
John. I know how you're feeling. I know how hard this is for you. John, if there's anything that I can do for you... To make it easier.

SKIP extends a lithe hand. YOUNG looks at SKIP. He takes it.

Together they start walking back towards the city.

YOUNG
I have a room at the Holiday Inn.

SKIP 2
I know. I booked it.

YOUNG slips his arm around SKIP's waist.

YOUNG
Just don't talk. Okay?
INTERROGATION ROOM  INTERIOR  NIGHT

The REBELS are passive, zombie-like.

The room is full of EARTH TECHNICIANS, administering injections, supervising rapid sleep-training, posing BETSY against the background of a F.E.F.A. flag, holding a MARTIAN RAY GUN and a poster.

Other REBELS are being given bundles of posters - all of which proclaim, "HAPPY DEATHDAY, PRINCE ROYBLOTTO."

MARTIAN GENERALS and grimly smiling ANDROIDS supervise.

WHITEY ALVARADO sits strapped to a chair, his head in a high-powered VIDEO HELMET.

WHITEY
Hate Royblotto --
Death to Royblotto --
Royblotto did it to my MOM!!

HOLIDAY INN  INTERIOR  JUST BEFORE DAWN

YOUNG wakes up next to SKIP.

SKIP is looking at him.

SKIP 2
I didn't sleep all night.
I was watching you.

HOLIDAY INN  BALCONY  EXTERIOR  DAWN

YOUNG sits on his balcony, drinking his coffee, alone.

A brightly-coloured little BIRD lands on the balcony rail. It perches for a couple of seconds, looks at YOUNG, and flies away.
FLYING SAUCER    INTERIOR    DAY

YOUNG and SKIP sit in separate seats in the RELIGIO/MILITARY SECTION. SKIP wears a conservative business suit and skirt.

The FLIGHT ATTENDANT shows the LAST PASSENGER to her seat. It is YOLANDA. Carrying a bottle-clinking canvas bag.

YOUNG
Well hello.

YOLANDA looks at him in surprise, shock, horror and relief. The FLIGHT ATTENDANT indicates her bag.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Would you like me to take that?

YOLANDA
No thank you.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Care for an ANODYNE?

She shakes her head.

YOUNG
Going to New York?

YOLANDA
(indicates her bag)
I'm taking this to Smitty.
(to FLIGHT ATTENDANT)
Is it too late for me to change s --

The FLIGHT ATTENDANTS are already belted in.

The SAUCER starts to vibrate. The WALLS GLOW.

YELLOWSTONE AREA    EXTERIOR    DAY

The FLYING SAUCER whisks across the sky.

Seconds later, another SAUCER follows it.
FLYING SAUCER INTERIOR DAY

YOLANDA pulls a bottle of WILD TURKEY from her bag. She takes a shot out of her polystyrene cup. JACK stares at her. She offers him the BOTTLE.

YOLANDA
So. Is Frisco gonna fry?

YOUNG
Not today.

YOLANDA
(sighing)
Mission accomplished, eh?
Congratulations.

JOHN YOUNG takes a shot, too.
YOLANDA hides the bottle as the ROBO-STEW slides by pushing MARTIAN PILLS.

YOUNG
Young lady, you're gonna get into some serious trouble with that stuff. Only Martians are allowed to possess refined earth spirits, and only then for SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES.

YOLANDA hands him her poly cup.

YOUNG
What if if fell into the wrong hands?

YOLANDA
It's falling into the wrong hands.
It's for Smitty.

YOUNG
PRESIDENT Smitty?

YOLANDA
The very same. His handlers are trying to get him off the MARTIAN SUBSTANCES before he croaks. They're trying to get him hooked on nicotine or alcohol - something less harmful.

YOUNG savours his second shot.
NEW MEXICO   EXTERIOR   DAY

The SAUCER flashes over a huge THERMAL ENERGY PROJECT which has created VOLCANOES all across the north-east mesas of the STATE.

The MILITARY SAUCER follows, a few seconds behind.

MILITARY SAUCER   INTERIOR   DAY

WHITEY, BETSY and THREE OTHER REBELS crouch in the hold of the machine, surrounded by crates of MARTIAN RATIONS and HIGH TECHNOLOGY.

They are all pale and sick, sweating heavily, clutching MARTIAN GUNS.

REBEL 1
Royblotto's gonna get his! He's been the focus of my entire hatred all my life!

REBEL 2
That VIVISECTING BASTARD! This is for all those poor children - and JONESY!

REBEL 3
Yeah, JONESY!

BETSY
Are you okay, Whitey?

WHITEY
Yeah, I was just... thinking.

BETSY
What about?

WHITEY
(rubbing his head)
Smashing the ALIENS in their SPAWNING GROUNDS - GRINDING THEM - DESTROYING EVERYTHING - JONESY - (his head clears for a second) Who the heck is JONESY?

BETSY stares at him, as if he's gone mad. A REBEL calls to her. She crosses to the porthole, holding her side as if in pain --
BETSY
Shape up, Whitey.
Here it comes.

HER POV

Through the Porthole, the abandoned runways of Newark Airport, Manhattan Island up ahead.

Above the island, an ELECTRICAL STORM --

MARTIAN FRIENDSHIP BUILDING, N.Y. EXTERIOR DUSK

Formerly the TRUMP TOWER. SAUCERS hang from several CONNECTING TUBES. The ATLANTIC OCEAN has risen thrity feet and drowned the streets.

THUNDER. LIGHTNING. WIND. RAIN.

The MILITARY SAUCER arrives.

EXECUTIVE BANQUET LEVEL INTERIOR DUSK

YOUNG, SKIP and AMBASSADOR XAXOLOTTYL hover conspiratorially in a corner of the large room, listening to a briefing from ROY.

The place is crowded with EARTH BIGWIGS and MEMBERS of the Martian Dynasty. ANDROIDS and FRIENDSHIP COPS circulate, providing security and canapes.

No sign of PRINCE ROYBLOTTO.

ROY
Our sources tell us that there are at least a dozen TERRORISTS. They've been subjected to genetic bombardment and given FALSE MEMORY IMPLANTS. They want one thing in two worlds and that is to KILL PRINCE ROYBLOTTO.

YOUNG
Where are they now?
SKIP 2
(translating for the AMBASSADOR)
We don't know. They left Oakland earlier this morning on a Military Hop. They could be anywhere. They could be in the BUILDING.

YOUNG
Great.

He beckons SKIP aside. They converse in whispers.

YOUNG
Is Roy cool? Can we trust him or is he in with the Generals?

SKIP 2
Roy is with us. We DROIDS are mostly loyal to the ROYAL FAMILY.

He/she gives YOUNG's hand a squeeze.

YOUNG
Okay. Here's my plan. What we do is, we PRE-EMPT the Generals. Find us a couple of low-level OFFICERS and some loyal RENTACOPS. As soon as possible the COPS kill the SOLDIERS, We claim it's a PALACE COUP, AVERTED. Throw suspicion on the GENERALS, cancel the gig and ship Prince Blobbo back to Mars. Where is he now?

SKIP 2
In make-up.

ROY has been translating YOUNG's plan. The AMBASSADOR replies.

ROY
The Ambassador won't go for it. Says it's impossible to deviate from schedule. Royblotto is due to be assassinated at 6.05.

YOUNG
But we're trying to make it NOT HAPPEN, remember?
ROY
Yes. But happen or not happen, it must be done on time.

SKIP 2
(agreeing)
The Martians are very punctual. It's a cultural thing.

EXECUTIVE ELEVATOR INTERIOR NIGHT

WHITEY, BETSY and the REBELS ride the plush elevator up. It does not stop until it reaches the floor below EXECUTIVE BANQUET LEVEL.

The doors open. They get out, warily.

LOWER LEVEL INTERIOR NIGHT

This level of the building is empty, filled with dust and cobwebs and abandoned carpenter's tools.

THREE POLICE UNIFORMS and TWO WAITERS' OUTFITS hang on a rack, awaiting them.

The REBELS don the clothes.

They fit them perfectly.

From above, the sound of MUSIC AND APPLAUSE.

EXECUTIVE BANQUET LEVEL INTERIOR NIGHT

YOUNG shakes hands with EARTHPREZ SMITTY on the podium.

SMITTY is bloated and bloodshot, with tubes running from his nose. He wears a checkered yellow suit. YOLANDA and TWO KIDS sit beside him.

SMITTY and YOUNG exhchange a TV-celeb HUG.

FLASHBULBS POP.

SMITTY's twin brother SNUFFY stumbles on stage, making like Rocky.
SMITTY
Johnnie y'old bastard. Hear yer introducing me and this Martian King Feller. Make me look good! AHAHAHAHAHA!

ROY and AMBASSADOR XAXOLOTTYL bow low before SMITTY. They take their seats behind him in the REVIEWING STAND.

SKIP and the FRIENDSHIP POLICE mingle with the applauding crowd.

YOUNG
What time is it?

YOLANDA
Five forty five!

FANFARE. DIMMING OF LIGHTS.

PRINCE ROYBLOTTO glides out onto the stage in an ANTI-GRAVITY CHAISE LONGUE. His head is encased in a glass bubble. He still has a CACTUS sticking in his head. He waves to the applauding crowd.

ANGLE ON THE REBELS

Entering the auditorium. They see PRINCE ROYBLOTTO. Then the lights fade on him and rise on JOHN and SMITTY.

REBEL 1
I could get 'em from here --

BETSY
We must FOLLOW THE PLAN.

The three COP REBELS go one way. BETSY and WHITEY, dressed in the waiters' uniforms, slip down the aisle between the tables.

ON STAGE

YOUNG looks from PRINCE ROYBLOTTO to SMITTY and his CLAN, which for the occasion consists of YOLANDA, SMITTY'S TWIN BROTHER SNUFFY and TWO CHILD ACTORS. All the EARTHLINGS BOW, except for YOUNG. YOUNG stares at the KID playing SMITTY's son.
YOUNG
Don't I know you?

KID
Yeah. You're the jerk who
fired me off a Syntho-Drek
Commercial.

YOUNG
Oh yeah... Listen. I got
another gig for you.
And your sister, too. Hi kid.

KID
What's in it for us?

YOUNG
Your own TV show with a sweetheart
deal and merchandising. A career
in politics. All the power that
you could rationally wish for.
Maybe more.

SISTER
We'll have to speak with our LAWYER.

A chorus of PSSTS. Everyone stares at YOUNG,
waiting for him to begin the show.
AMBASSADOR XOXOLOTTYL urges him to get on with it,
The MARTIAN GENERALS frown.

YOUNG walks towards the microphone. Pretends to
trip en route, arrives at MIKE limping.

YOUNG
Ladies mmm and gentlemen. Martians.
(adjusts height of
MIKE STAND)
Mr Ambassador. Your Princeling.
Honored President of Earth --

ANGLE ON SKIP

Looking for REBELLIOUS SIGNS.

He/she and BETSZY pass without RECOGNITION.
BETSZY is placing anti-Royblotto handbills on tables,
WHITEY carries a heavy MARTIAN GUN under a coat.
ANGLE ON YOUNG

Clearing his throat. The DIGNITARIES await impatiently YOUNG'S "KEYNOTE" ADDRESS.

The BIG CLOCK on the wall says, 1750.

YOUNG
I don't know much about history. Don't know much biology. Don't know much about science or the humanities. Can't remember the Martian Lessons that I took back in the years following the GREAT MISUNDERSTANDING --

ANGLE ON YOLANDA, SMITTY AND COMPANY. The fake SISTER is talking on her portable phone.

YOUNG
But I do know that I love you, PRINCE ROYBLOTTO, kindest and gentlest and if I may say the MOST ZEN OF MARTIANS, and I know that if you loved me too, and I am not addressing you here, Oh Great One, but rather my FELLOW EARTHLINGS --

ANGLE ON THE REBELS

Creeping along one wall. TWO OF THEM are pretty sick and struggling to carry their MARTIAN WEAPONS.

ANGLE ON YOUNG

Looking at the BIG CLOCK. It is 1755. YOUNG looses his tie.

YOUNG
So before you accuse, criticise and abuse, walk a mile in my difficult footwear. They asked me how I knew our Martian friends were true? I of course replied that feelings deep inside CANNOT BE DENIED. Oh no --
ANGLE ON SMITTY

Still waiting to be introduced. He looks at his watch. It is 6:02. He shows YOLANDA.

YOLANDA smiles.

YOUNG
Did any of you ever see that great old movie COLORS? What a great show that was. And the SERIES, with that great great Martian actor, QUINTAAK NAKKLPRAAAR. Who else was in it? Warren Oates, I think. And Lee Marvin --

ANGLE ON THE MARTIAN GENERALS

Looking uncomfortable. FIELD MARSHALL QUAAARRRGGG drums his servo-assisted fingers on his chair, drilling holes in the arm.

YOUNG
The old bull and the young bull are standing on the hill. Well, the old bull is standing there and the young bull comes up to him. And the young bull says --

ANGLE ON PRINCE ROYBLOTTO

Waiting in the wings, in darkness, surrounded by GUARDS.

PRINCE ROYBLOTTO smiles.

ANGLE ON YOUNG

Sleeves rolled up, drinking WATER from the glass jug, tears rolling down his cheeks, mopping his brow.

YOUNG
It makes no difference
Where I turn
I can't get over you
And the flames still burn.

He turns to look at YOLANDA.
YOUNG
Well I love you so much
That it's all I can do
Just to keep myself from
Telling you that I never
Felt so ALONE before

YOLANDA looks into YOUNG's eyes and her heart breaks. She rises, forgetting all else --

YOLANDA
Oh Johnny --

CRASH! One of the REBELS falls over a table.
The OTHER "COP" REBELS GO FOR THEIR MARTIAN GUNS --

-- WHICH MISFIRE, blasting the ceiling --

REBELS 2 & 3
SHIT!

The REBELS are JUMPED BY FRIENDSHIP COPS.

PRINCE ROYBLOTTO'S HONOR GUARD rush forward,
jumping off the stage to help them --

YOUNG realises what he's tried to avoid is happening and YOLANDA grabs him in her arms --

YOLANDA
Johnny, ten years ago, there were times - when all the lights were out and it was just you and me, breathing, your hands scooping me up like rain and all the tears were gone and I felt like I'd known you for A HUNDRED YEARS.

ANGLE ON

BETSZY and WHITEY dropping their papers,
running for the PODIUM --

ANGLE ON SKIP

Running after them, too late --
ANGLE ON YOUNG

holding onto YOLANDA with one hand and dragging
the KIDS from their chairs with the other --

Standing directly in front of PRINCE ROYBLOTTO --

YOUNG
Act like you're trying to GET AWAY!

YOLANDA
I AM trying to get away --
Johnny this isn't DIGNIFIED.

WHITEY draws down on PRINCE ROYBLOTTO with his
MARTIAN GUN. He sees YOLANDA.

BETSY aims as well! Her aim is blocked by
the STRUGGLING KIDS.

KIDS
Let us go! Let us go!

YOUNG
LOUDER!

BETSY
Let the kids GO!

YOUNG
No way. Want to kill him,
got to kill THEM too.

WHITEY
This isn't fair!

BETSY
YOU'll die too!

YOUNG
Make my day.

BETSY sits down on a chair, sweating and shivering,
able to support her weight. The fight goes out
of WHITEY for a moment, too, though he still holds
his GUN.

YOUNG lets go of their hands, Everyone gasps.
YOUNG
My friends --

ALIEN VOICE
NO - MORE - SPEECHES!!

ANGLE ON FIELD MARSHALL QUAAARRGGG, unable to contain his ANGER, rising and pulling a DEATH RAY GENERATOR from his SABER BELT.

KKRRRKK! ZAP!!!

The PINK BEAM heats ROYBLOTTO'S HELMET till it bubbles and EXPLODES. ROYBLOTTO'S HEAD does likewise.

The CACTUS still attached to part of ROYBLOTTO'S BRAIN flies across the room and sticks in WHITEY's ARM.

WHITEY screams. Raises his MARTIAN GUN -- -- YOUNG ducks. YOLANDA and the KIDS cut and run -- WHITEY shoots FIELD MARSHALL QUAAARRGGG.

The OTHER GENERALS scatter.

Deathly silence. WHITEY stands in a daze.

YOUNG grabs the MICROPHONE and hurries down into the auditorium --

YOUNG
(into microphone)
ROYBLOTTO wounded, maybe dead! But HIS ASSASSIN lies dead also late this afternoon, killed by a genuine HOMEGROWN EARTH HERO and a LOYAL FRIEND OF MARS! A moment of TRAGEDY. A moment of UNITY and GROWTH as well. It's at moments like this that we TURN TO ANODYNE --

ANGLE on the AUDIENCE, reaching for their MARTIAN POPPERS and PILLS.

YOUNG throws and arm round WHITEY, leads him away from the COPS, up onto the stage.
YOUNG
-- and why not a slim FIVE-PACK
of LIFT-UPP? Doesn't that
sound good? What's your name,
son?

WHITEY
Whitey Alvarado. My full name
is Enrique Antonio Alvarado Montiel.
They call me Whitey on account of
my HAIR.

YOUNG
Whitey! I like that! Well step
up here and TAKE A BOW --

He leads WHITEY past the STEAMING WRECKAGE of PRINCE
ROYBLOTTO and into the SPOTLIGHT. FIRE EXTINGUISHERS.

YOUNG
Somebody's gotta say it.
Why shouldn't it be ME?
I give you WHITEY ALVARADO --
the next President of EARTH!!

SMITTY
(jumping up)
Wait --

SMITTY's mike is cut off.
ROY approaches YOUNG.

ROY
Thank you, Friend John.
We'll take it from here.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS play on the PRINCE'S REMAINS.
Several MARTIAN GENERALS are UNDER ARREST.

AMBASSADOR XAXOLOTTYL has the microphone and
is making an IMPASSIONED SPEECH in Martian,
holding WHITEY's hand. MUSIC BEGINS AGAIN.

YOUNG
Too bad about Royblotto.

ROY
That wasn't Royblotto, Prince
Royblotto never leaves the Palace.
YOUNG stops and stares at a CLEANING CREW dragging away PIECES OF ROYBLOTTO and his CHAISE.

They are MASSES of WIRES and LEVERS and ELECTRONIC CIRCUITS.

FANFARE.

Behind them, on the stage, a SECOND ROYBLOTTO appears, waving, to TUMULTUOUS CHEERING.

YOUNG
And that? THOSE?

ROY
Two of ROYBLOTTO'S DROIDS. There are twenty-eight of them. Twenty-seven now.

YOUNG
Jesus H. Christ. What's going to happen to 'em?

YOUNG and ROY walk down a staircase at the back of the stage.

ROY
Happen to who? YOU?

YOUNG
No, the conspirators. The GENERALS.

They enter the --

GREEN ROOM INTERIOR NIGHT

Backstage. Very confused and frightened DIGNITARIES abound. YOLANDA is pouring SMITTY scotch. The KIDS run around playing exploding robot heads.

YOLANDA looks up at YOUNG and smiles.

ROY
In Mars there is a special punishment for traitors and assassins. It calls, IX-TYP-KGH-AT-AT-URG. It means --
YOUNG
(heading for YOLANDA)
Oh, you don't have to tell me now.

SKIP 2 puts a hand on YOUNG's arm.

SKIP 2
Friend John. There is one more thing you have to do.

YOUNG
Can't it wait?

SKIP 2
It only takes a second.

YOUNG
Yolanda, I'll be right back. Will you - ?

YOLANDA
I'll be right here, BIG JOHN.

YOUNG's chest swells with pride.

The DIGNITARIES part for him as he follows SKIP into the --

LOWER LEVEL INTERIOR NIGHT

Dusty and deserted. The lights of NEW YORK glitter outside, below. PANFARES can still be heard above.

A TELETRANSFER ARCH waits for YOUNG, softly glowing.

YOUNG
I don't understand.

SKIP 2 grips his arm. It is a GRIP OF IRON.

SKIP 2
I'm sorry, Friend John. If there was any other way --

YOUNG
Where are we going?

SKIP 2
YOU are going far away.
YOUNG

(struggling)
NO! There's this GIRL!
I can't leave right now!
I did my JOB!

SKIP 2
You did, indeed. Too well.
Now you know all about us --
our strengths - our weaknesses -
our inner secrets --

YOUNG
No! That's where you're wrong!
I don't! I'm not OBSERVANT!

SKIP 2
Stop lying. You have made windows
into Martian Souls. For all our
sakes and for the sake of all our
MUTUAL FRIENDS, we can no longer
COEXIST in the same SPACE/TIME
CONTINUUM...

SKIP 2 pushes buttons in the ARCH.
The ARCH glows more brightly.
She holds YOUNG firmly beneath it.

YOUNG
Skip, you don't understand!
I have this chance to start again
- it's really important -
Prince Royblotto won't like
this, Skip --

SKIP
Yes he will. See you again, maybe.

SKIP pushes the final button and steps back --

YOUNG
SKIP! It's NOT SUPPOSED TO
END THIS WAY --

THWAP! With a burst of WHITE LIGHT, YOUNG and
the ARCH are whisked away --

IDYLLIC BEACH EXTERIOR DAY
TROPICAL PARADISE. White sand and thick
jungle that runs down to the water.
A TINY FIGURE walks beside the surf.

YOUNG V/O
- and of course it didn't.

ANGLE ON JOHN YOUNG

Dressed in animal skins, bearded and tanned, checking his reed LOBSTER POTS. All are FULL of FRESH RED LOBSTERS.

YOUNG V/O
I guess somebody had a soft spot for me, sorta. Guess I shouldn't blame them, though I do. This is just what you get for being GOOD.

YOUNG
(to his LOBSTERS)
Right, fellers?

The LOBSTERS click their claws.

JUNGLE EXTERIOR NIGHT

YOUNG sits in a hammock in his TREE HOUSE, built high in the V of two palm trees, thirty feet above the ground.

A BIG MOON in the sky.

YOUNG V/O
There's plenty of food, and NO pollution. MOST of the animals are friendly...

He stares at a TINY, MOUSELIKE MARSUPIAL sitting on a branch, looking at him.

YOUNG V/O
... just gotta watch out for the BIG ONES, though.

A RUMBLE in the JUNGLE.

A TREE CRASHES DOWN. ANOTHER.

GIANT FOOTSTEPS.
Through the JUNGLE stalks a GIANT TYRANNOSAURUS.

CRABLIKE TICKS the size of footballs run up and down its scaly neck.

The TYRANNOSAURUS pauses, hissing, below YOUNG's tree house. It sniffs, scratches its ear, and goes on about its way.

The CRASHING FOOTSTEPS fade.

YOUNG V/O
Sure helps to stay alert and not MISS ANYTHING. Who knows? You might be in on history in the making. And maybe Skip was right and we WILL meet again, somewhere. Sometime. Maybe I'll see YOLANDA again, too. Oh yeah. The way I figure it,

KEEP WATCHING THE SKIES.

YOUNG sips from a fermenting coconut and stares into the NIGHT SKY.

HE SEES A SHOOTING STAR.

END
**Theme:** A disorderly but dedicated group of rebels defies the Martian invaders who have colonized Earth, turning the planet into a dumping ground for surplus Martian consumer products.

**Synopsis:** In the late Cretaceous Period when gigantic dinosaurs roamed the land, Martians in flying saucers arrived, incinerating the reptiles into dust. Zap! In a blink of an eye, a proud species which had dominated the Earth for over eighty million years is reduced to ashes. And now, in their stead, the Martians release glowing pods from which emerge mouselike marsupials. The Age of Mammals has begun...

Roughly one hundred million years later in Chicago, blonde, square-jawed SKIP and ROY, nerdy to the max, arrive unannounced at a Public Relations firm where they want the company's friendly, intense President JOHN YOUNG, 45, to represent all publicity and advertising for a mysterious foreign power. That power is not of this Earth, however, and the first clue is when Roy produces a tiny microcassette recorder which sprouts legs and ambles towards Young. Outside Martian saucers gather like flies. They've arrived. The Martian invasion is accompanied by a telecommunications blackout as American and Soviet military monitors transmit commercials for Martian beer. Roy and Skip reveal they're the representatives of the Martians, and they claim that Earth is in grave danger—not from the Martian invasion but from the imminent attack by invaders from the Pleides. Roy and Skip insist that the Martians want to help Earth resist the invaders, but to do so they need Young—a brilliant media mind—to support the Martian

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**Recommendation**  
**Budget**

1  HIGH  MEDIUM  LOW
cause by serving as their appointed representative in the media. The Martians also need markets for their surplus goods which run the gamut from useless beverages to a variety of services. Young's black, gorgeous assistant and companion YOLANDA MACKENZIE, 23, opposes Young representing the Martian cause, fearing the publicity campaign would end up as awful as the firm's campaign for South Africa's image. Outside the building, American military jets attack the Martians, but an invisible force field protects Young's building from damage...

Meanwhile, at the Oval Office, military GENERAL HACKETT advises the PRESIDENT to join forces with Russia to nuke the Martians off the planet. Gigantically-brained Martian GENERALS and BUSINESSMEN in a gothic command ship high over Earth eavesdrop on the Oval Office via a football-sized hovering monitor. When the President falters in his resolve to nuke the Martians, a MARINE GENERAL shoots and kills the President, leaving the military free to pursue its destructive path. Chicago's crowds are transfixed as commercials for Martian products materialize in the sky. Boom! U.S. military forces nuke Chicago in a display of force to the Martian invaders. The Martians, however, protect Young from the blossoming mushroom cloud. As Young is about to sign the contract with the Martian representatives Skip and Roy, Yolanda pulls a gun on him, convinced that by siding with the Martians Young will betray the human race. As Yolanda fails to get off a shot, Young signs the document, then vomits as the saucers descend in droves...

Several years pass. The Martians, now in total control of Earth, use tripod walking machines and the Friendship Police to maintain order. Chicago, now a burnt-out shell full of homeless people in rags, gives its populace a steady diet of Martian commercial advertising for such useless products as Anodyne. These goods are purchased as Martian stores known as Marso-theques. Young's former OFFICE BOY, now in rags, screams when a Martian SHAPESHIFTER lands on him. Young, older and greyer, supervises a Martian commercial for a new product called Syntho-Drek. The ACTORS, afraid to sample the new stuff, refuse to recite their lines. Young is summoned to Friendship Center One(formerly Washington, D.C.) by Martian leaders, including Field Marshall QUAAARGGGG, who reveals a contingent of REBELS fighting the Martian presence have stolen Martian weapons, accessing Martian television to broadcast the event. Young, held responsible for this breach of security, is dispatched to San Francisco to ferret out the rebel camp and the satellite dish. The Martians will destroy Frisco if Young fails...

Young, arriving in San Francisco, gets shitfaced on a Martian hallucinogenic cocktail, enlisting a group of his MINIONS to help him uncover the rebel camp. There is a heavy black market trade in real Earth goods in Frisco, and imagine Young's surprise when he discovers that his former love and assistant Yolanda is head of black market operations. Yolanda's still royally pissed at Young betraying the human race by collaborating with the Martians. Yolanda claims that Young is the most hated man in the world. After a series of investigations, Young dis-
covers the hideout of rebel leader WHITEY ALVARADO and his sidekick BETSY. Whitey spouts patriotic passages from Tom Paine, but what disturbs Young most is that Whitey and Yolanda may be romantically involved. Young's plan is to infiltrate the rebels under the assumed name of DAVIDSON, but before he can do so he is teleported back to Washington where the Martians listen to Young's appeal that they retract their decision to level San Francisco. As an alternative, Young persuasively offers a program which will enable the Martians to more effectively dump their surplus products on Earth. After Young's impassioned speech in which he promises "a chicken in every pot," the Martian Generals and Businessmen give Young a standing ovation...

Young and Skip are teletransported back to San Francisco to complete their task of infiltrating the rebel stronghold. Of late, Young has suffered nosebleeds from too many teleportations. Skip reminds Young that the Generals are concerned about the imminent visit of Prince ROYBLOTTO, a great Martian leader who is at odds with the Martian Generals. Royblotto, an ardent environmentalist, is a good dude who wants what's best for Earth. Young, having successfully infiltrated the rebels as Davison, is hustled down a manhole by Betsy when a Martian walking machine nearly zaps them dead. Underneath the city, Young stumbles on the rebel's satellite dish located near an ash dune. Betsy forces Young to repeat the rebel oath of allegiance in which he pledges to abstain from all Martian imports and drugs. Young listens to Whitey's moving rendition of a protest song attacking the Martians...

Now Young, having successfully infiltrated the rebel stronghold, calls the Mars Snitch Hotline and spills the beans to Martian operators, revealing not only the location of the rebel hideout but the existence of the satellite dish. Young's location is immediately registered, and it isn't long before a Martian car with metallic tentacles scoops him up and takes him away for interrogation. Shortly thereafter, Friendship Police capture a group of rebels, and Whitey and Betsy find themselves cornered by Martian metallic spiders. Betsy, convinced she's a goner, begs Whitey to shoot her, but before he can do so, both Betsy and Whitey are grabbed by tentacles and thrown into the bowels of a spidery tank...

In the presence of a Martian General and Friendship police, black android KEN interrogates Young about the rebels. They don't buy that Young is who he says he is—a "class A" person. The only help for Young is through Skip, but his programmed android tapes have been removed. In an android holding bay, Young recovers Skip's tapes, slipping them into a sexy, beautiful woman android. Skip's voice emerges from the sexy android, and SKIP 2 aids Young to escape the custody of the cops. In a flash Skip 2 and Young are teletransported to Mars where they discover Prince Royblotto gorging himself on Martian junk food. Young appeals to Royblotto to save San Francisco as an automated suittrack provides the Prince with a fashionable pinstripe. Royblotto puts Young's mind at ease, insisting that Young has done a fine job of safeguarding Martian business interests during the rebellion. Young insists the re-
bellion was a phony story manufactured by the Martian Generals. There was never any threat from the Pleides. Young, fearful of his life once the Generals get their hands on him, is offered aid by Royblotto, who promises to protect Young when he returns to Earth...

Skip 2 and Young, teletransferred back to Frisco, are met by a contingent of Friendship COPS determined to take them both back into custody. Royblotto, true to his word, sends wacky Ambassador XAXOLOTTYL to Earth by teletransferring him via a McDonald's Hamburger arch. In a flash Xacolottyl whisks Young and Skip 2 to safety. Shortly thereafter, Young learns of an assassination plot to murder Royblotto when he arrives on Earth for a visit. In truth, it's really the Martian military Generals who plan to waste Royblotto and blame his death on the rebels...

Skip 2 hatches a plan through which Royblotto can be saved—Young will be the keynote speaker at New York's Martian Friendship Center where Royblotto is due to make his appearance. Young, of course, will put his life in jeopardy by doing so, since word has it that terrorists working for the Martian military will infiltrate the building. If the plot of the military comes off, it will mean the end of business for the Martians. Why? Young learns that there are in existence only 5,611 Martians. That means it would be impossible for the Martians to consume all of the surplus products generated by their boom economy. Thus the Martians need a dumping ground for their useless consumer trash. The dinosaurs were wiped out by the Martians to make way for an intelligent race which would appreciate the finer things a consumer culture could offer...

Young, hopelessly drawn to Skip 2, makes passionate love to her at the Holiday Inn. On the saucer express to New York, Young is reunited with Yolanda, who congratulates him on his success at saving Frisco. Yolanda's carrying a bottle of booze in the hopes that she can wean U.S. President SMITTY off Martian substances, all addictive. Whitey and Betsy, who have escaped custody by the cops, trail Young in another saucer, having been programmed by the military to kill Royblotto...

Young suggests that they save Royblotto's life by masterminding a coup d'etat and blaming the takeover on the Generals. At New York's Friendship Center, Young welcomes President Smitty and his eccentric twin SNUFFY. Prince Royblotto glides out with the aid of an anti-gravity chaise—a cactus atop his head. Whitey and Betsy, both armed, wait for their chance to kill Royblotto. Young stalls for time, making speeches and singing a love song to Yolanda. As Whitey and Betsy take aim at Royblotto, their aim is blocked by a bunch of KIDS, and the shots go haywire, missing their mark completely. Field Marshall Quaaarrrgg, enraged, takes it upon himself to kill Royblotto by splattering Royblotto's brains across the room. Whitey, coming to his senses, shoots and kills Quaaarrrgg. Now Young takes to the mike and congratulates the rebels as being the true heroes on Earth. Whitey becomes U.S. President as the Martian Generals are arrested and hauled away. There's still
an incredible surprise in store when it's revealed that instead
of killing the real Royblotto, Quaaarrgg shot his android
double. Everyone's amazed when a second Royblotto android--
actually one of many in existence--appears and waves to the crowd.
But what of Young's fate? Skip 2 insists that Young knows too
much about the Martian soul, and that his presence on Earth
would pose a danger. Zap! Young's teletransferred to an isolated
tropical paradise teeming with lobsters and, you guessed it,
marsupial mice. And guess what? The tropical island is in-
habited by gigantic dinosaurs...how's that for deja vu...

Although Young lives an isolated life on the island, he hopes
that one day he will be reunited with Skip 2 and Yolanda. Young
keeps watching the skies for a sign...

And then he sees a shooting star...
MARS ATTACKS
Alex Cox

COMMENT:

This draft (dated May 1, 1989) is a joy and a pleasure to read, a fine blueprint upon which to base a film which is satirical, action-oriented, fun, and, most importantly, carries a strong and viable social message about the effects and origins of consumer culture. In many ways, MARS ATTACKS can be read as a metaphor for American consumerism and imperialistic exploitation in the service of extending capitalism. The fact that this message is hidden in a comic-book, Fifties-style science fiction form makes it all the more compelling and interesting. The screenplay reads like one of those old comic books about alien invasions, but what makes it contemporary is the story's veiled social and political criticism of American values. The draft, however, still suffers from a host of problematic issues which, nevertheless, can be easily resolved in revisions. What's important is that the basic concept of the piece remains a timely and viable one, and in the right directorial hands I suspect audiences would line up for this one.

This new draft has come a long way towards being clearer, less cluttered, and stronger in terms of its characters. There are some major changes from the 2nd draft (please see attached coverage dated 5/6/86). Missing from this draft are the characters of black marketeers POODLES and DIRK, whose roles seem to have been assumed by Young's assistant YOLANDA. Rebel Leader PACO O'BRIEN has become WHITEY--also king of the rebel force. In the earlier draft, Paco put greater pressure on Yolanda to join the rebel cause, a point which is still obscure in the new draft. What, exactly, is Yolanda's role here? Although allied with the black market, her connection to and relationship with Whitey and the rebels deserves additional clarification. In the last draft, BETSY was a suburban teen raised in a conservative household who swears allegiance to the rebels. She, in this new version, has become BETSY, an older, more street-wise type whose allegiance to Whitey is more clearly etched out. In some ways I like the earlier scenario--it makes a comment and satiric response to Sixties middle class kids who joined protest movements. One aspect of this script is its potential richness to evoke and comment upon various aspects of American cultural history: Whitey, Betsy and the rebels should be more clearly etched out as Sixties "radical types" attacking consumer culture.

This new draft jettisons the various scenes involving gigantic insects. For example, the gigantic fly no longer attacks Betsy's pop. President SMITTY and others are no longer victims of the Martian shriveling ray, and the Martians no longer use huge bees as weapons against the rebels. In this new version, the conflict between the Martian and the rebels is more direct with a cleaner throughline for the plot. There are still, however, problems in sorting out the storyline of this new version. The rebels Whitey and Betsy are apparently brainwashed to assassinate ROYBLOTTO, but the reasoning for this is obscure. We've lost the entire section in which Yolanda uses a vat of molasses to distract the insects. Also gone is a following scene in which
Paco and Betsy lure a miniature saucer onto some electrical cables. Betsy, hit by a Martian ray, wakes up to discover she's a muscle-bound hulk with a neck like a bull. Her weapons have also melted into her flesh--she's half human, half-machine. Gone is Betsy's attempt to rescue the DOG, and her rescue of Paco and Yolanda from the spider. I might mention that while this newer draft attempts to forge a cleaner throughline, it sacrifices some of the funny and richly visual material of the earlier version. Another case in point in the subsequent scene in which Young and Smitty (shrunken) are strapped to chairs with Young's funny line about Smitty's days "as a bon vivant being numbered."

Royblotto has assumed corporeal form in this new version instead of the Martians bringing his brain in inside a belljar, although in the earlier version Royblotto was telepathic. In this later draft, I think things are improved by having Royblotto emerge as a character with a social conscience who is directly opposed to the agenda of the military. Royblotto has become a conservationist--much more of a sympathetic and vulnerable figure. Royblotto's transformation also enables Young to fight for something positive. It gives him an agenda, although my sense is that Young joins the rebel cause too late. Martian trader FAMRAQAHAAR has also receded into the background as a character. Young's role here--in the newer version--is less one of a mediator. Also, Royblotto's encased grey matter gets blasted by the Rebels while in the newer version he survives.

The newer version has Royblotto clones appearing at a New York function attended by the military, who have clearly become the heavies in the piece instead of the rebel force. The ending, by the way, is completely changed. Instead of Young escaping with the rebels across an arid landscape, Betsy dying alone, and Yolanda becoming President of the U.S., Young joins forces with the rebels against the military. However, Young is dispatched to an isolated existence on a deserted island where he awaits Yolanda and Skip's return. Skip has been fleshed-out as a very funny character indeed, assuming the form of a woman with a man's voice and giving Young a bit of romance. I might add that the romantic entanglements in this new draft seem muddled and confused. At one point, Young is allied with Yolanda--at another with Skip II. The ending, which I find unsatisfying (since I don't get it that Young is sent away because he "knows" the truth about the Martians) might be bolstered if either Yolanda or Skip 2 accompanied Young to the island. Young would be on a desert retreat with a gorgeous woman--in the case of Skip 2 a gorgeous woman with a male voice.

I suggest we consider the following points for revision:

1) Yolanda's allegiance needs to be clarified, not only vis-a-vis the rebels but towards Young himself. She is still, in my mind, a murky character without motivational anchoring. Their love affair should perhaps be picked up at the end. Another vague point is Yolanda's relationship to Whitey--are they lovers and if so where does this lead? What's the relationship of the black market to the rebel movement? Are they separate movements?
2) Young's motivation and allegiance with the rebels should be more clearly articulated earlier on in the draft. Ditto Yolanda. As a general note, while the first and last acts of the draft are clearly etched out, something strange happens in the middle sections of the script. One loses the thread of the story entirely as Cox attempts to balance too many characters and situations. The overall impression is of a messy middle section—the characters and throughline get unravelled and confusing. More should be made of Young's experiences in Frisco and his decision to join forces with the rebels earlier on. The brainwashing of the rebels (presumably by the military) is confusing and isn't developed out enough. In short, too much happens in the middle with the end result that we lose sight of what these characters are doing. One suggestion would be to tease out and develop Young's visit with Royblotto on Mars—suppose we got a good and deep insight into Martian culture and the idea of consumerism. This might go far in streamlining the second act and creating a bit more clarity. In addition, devoting a bit more space and energy to Royblotto would make him a far more sympathetic character. Ditto for the way in which we set up the rebels Whitey and Betsy. Make Young the consummate yuppie achiever and flesh-out his materialism.

3) This script is funny, but it's not yet funny enough. Cox needs to go a long way still to tease out the satirical potential of this material. More, much more, needs to be done with the Martian consumer products and their influence on the people of Earth. What about credit card culture? Why has Mars developed a boom economy? A closer link needs to be drawn between using contemporary American consumerism in a satirical way with Martian culture so the audience gets it. SMITTY, hooked on Martian stuff, could be dispatched to Betty Ford Martian-style (or his wife). Royblotto should be more Dixie Lee Rayish—more identifiable as a wacky "save the bay/whales figure" Yolanda should be more radically like Angela Davis—spouting Panther slogans. Ditto for Whitey as a rebel—let's make him Abbie Hoffman. The idea is that all of these characters need funnier and closer analogues to American culture. The Martians, too, should ape consumer culture. This is what makes this script funny, offbeat, and eccentric, and we should exploit these aspects for all they are worth.

4) It doesn't work very well to have Young snitch on the rebels because we're never sure—at most points in this draft—where he stands. The result is that he becomes unsympathetic and unlikable.

5) Ending is a letdown unless it's funny (see above reference) and it would be better perhaps not to ship Young away unless we can treat it comically à la Crusoe. (And having Skip 2 join him).