

COLLECTIONS

Written by

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INT. CELL BLOCK - STATEVILLE PRISON - NIGHT

Open on a block of dark prison cells as a GUARD walks the line. His flashlight intermittently illuminates each cell he passes, keeping a headcount.

The SOUNDS OF THE SLEEPING OCCUPANTS competes with RUMBLES OF THUNDER - A GROWING STORM OUTSIDE.

MOVE CLOSER ON ONE CELL as the guard passes, his flashlight illuminates a SLEEPING MAN. Satisfied, he moves on.

WE MOVE INTO -

INT. PRISON CELL - CONTINUOUS

Move closer on the Sleeping Man... he's not breathing.

CLOSER to reveal he's a DETAILED PAPIER-MACHE DUMMY...

As the Guard's footsteps fade, we move past the dummy to -

A WALL CALENDAR. October, 1940. Decorated with a caricatured Grim Reaper holding a scythe.

Every day is crossed out, except for the 31st - Halloween.

WE MOVE DOWN -

BESIDE THE TOILET, a pile of mortar dust on the floor at the base of the wall -

Beside a FEW LOOSE BRICKS, recently moved out of place.

We move through a gap between the loose bricks, into the -

INT. WALL CAVITY - CONTINUOUS

A vastly long and narrow space lined with pipes and wiring.

We follow one pipe (a short section is missing, spewing a torrent of water) past A LENGTH OF ROPE hanging from the darkness above us...

... then TWO MORE ROPES in succession. We follow the third and final rope UP TO -

A STRUCTURAL BEAM. We move along the top of the dustcaked steel and catch up to a PAIR OF BOOTS which belong to -

A MAN IN PRISON BLUES, stealthily crawling forward.

This is ADDISON PORTER (30s, Rugged, devil-may-care).

Except for the impatient scowl, he looks just like the papier-mache dummy currently occupying his bed.

REVEAL - he's stuck behind TWO OTHER, SLOWLY CRAWLING PRISONERS. LES is in the lead, followed by JOEY. (Both 40s, much less rugged & devil-may-care).

THUNDER CLAPS - paralyzing them with fear as LIGHTNING reveals a glass-panelled ceiling over their heads being lashed by rain...

... Oh, AND that they're aslo shimmying across A NARROW STEEL BEAM HANGING 100 FEET OVER THE INTERIOR OF...

INT. ROUNDHOUSE CELL BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

A massive, circular cell block covered by a high roof and ringed by multiple tiers of prison cells. An INTERIOR GUARD TOWER keeps watch in the center of it all.

BACK ON THE BEAM -

Porter looks down - watches as the first Guard finish his rounds and approach the tower.

ON THE GUARD TOWER -

A OLD RADIO INSIDE PLAYS LOW - broadcasting an OVER-EXCITED CORRESPONDENT. The sounds of wailing sirens, explosions in the background of the news report.

CORRESPONDENT (VIA RADIO)
(filtered)
... German air raids continue over
London...

ANOTHER GUARD steps out, offers the first Guard a smoke.

ON THE BEAM -

Porter impatiently raises his head to look beyond Les & Joey to the goal - A HATCH LEADING OUTSIDE.

PORTER
(whisper)
Can we speed it up?

Les & Joey eye RAINWATER dripping onto the beam ahead. Making the surface slick, TURNING THE CAKED DUST TO MUD.

Les fearfully inches forward... A CRASH OF THUNDER rattles him. He SLIPS, regains his balance - but KNOCKS A CLUMP OF THE FRESH DUST-MUD OFF THE BEAM.

Porter holds his breath as he watches it fall.

ON THE GUARD TOWER -

The Guards smoke outside the door as the MUD CLUMP smacks to the concrete floor between them.

They look at the mud... then at each other... THEN UP.

ON THE BEAM -

Porter sees it all.

PORTER (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Move.

Les hugs the beam. Completely paralyzed.

PORTER (CONT'D)
Joey. Move him or we're dead.

Joey gets the message.

JOEY
(whispers, gently)
Snap out of it, Les.

Joey nudges him. Les shakes his head. Petrified.

Joey nudges him HARDER... AS MORE THUNDER CLAPS.

Les YELPS as he SLIPS, barely hanging on - KNOCKING MORE CAKED DIRT FROM THE BEAM.

TWO FLASHLIGHT BEAMS suddenly play across the roof supports.

Porter anxiously reacts.

ON THE GUARD TOWER -

Both Guards search the ceiling above them... A THIRD GUARD emerges with another FLASHLIGHT.

ON THE BEAM -

Porter's face falls as a beautiful plan begins to unravel... and A FOURTH GUARD joins the growing group below.

Porter looks back to Joey struggling to maintain his balance, desperately trying to pull Les back up onto the beam -

Then to the EXIT HATCH just beyond his escape partners.

CLOSE ON PORTER'S FACE as he briefly does the mental math. Frustration turns to resignation as he reaches forward -

Porter grabs Joey's leg... AND SHOVES HIM OFF THE BEAM.

As Joey begins to fall, Joey reflexively grabs Les - taking him along for the ride as -

THEY BOTH PLUMMET FIVE STORIES, SCREAMING THE WHOLE WAY DOWN.

ON THE GUARD TOWER -

Les and Joey fall through the roof, obliterating it with a SICKENING, BOOMING CRUNCH.

ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE: CATCALLS and SHOUTS from AWAKENING PRISONERS... WAILING ALARMS... MORE NIGHTSHIFT GUARDS rushing in from all directions. CHAOS.

BACK ON THE BEAM -

Porter's vanished in the distraction, the EXIT HATCH swings in the wind... MORE THUNDER ROLLS with the WAILING ALARMS.

EXT. ROUNDHOUSE ROOFTOP - STATEVILLE PRISON - MOMENTS LATER

RAIN FALLS IN SHEETS as Porter runs to PHONE CABLES at the edge of the cell block roof.

BEHIND HIM - Chaos continues to erupt as the CELL BLOCK LIGHTS POWER ON BELOW HIM.

Porter pulls up a pantleg, REVEALING A PIECE OF THAT BROKEN WATER PIPE TIED TO HIS LOWER LEG.

He places the pipe over the cables... AND LEAPS - IMPROVISING A ZIP LINE -

ON PORTER as he comes in for a landing on the -

EXT. GATE HOUSE ROOF - STATEVILLE PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Porter gathers himself while WATCHING A GROUP OF GUARDS RUN BACK TOWARDS THE ROUNDHOUSE and the WAILING ALARMS.

He enters the building through the ROOF DOOR.

WE SLOWLY PULL BACK AND DOWN, tracking Porter's obscured progress from the outside.

WE HEAR THE SOUNDS OF A STRUGGLE... A FEW PUNCHES LANDING...
BROKEN GLASS... SMASHED FURNITURE...

As we settle on the street level -

GUARD (O.S)

NO, NO -

A COUPLE OF GUNSHOTS silence the man's pleas just before -

EXT. FRONT DOOR - GATE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The ARMORED FRONT DOOR swings open with a MECHANICAL BUZZ.

REVEALING PORTER - now dressed in an ILL-FITTING PRISON
GUARD'S UNIFORM. He straightens his new hat, checks a blood
spot on his sleeve before -

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

He steps onto the street.

Pulls CAR KEYS fromn a pocket, inspects them before moving
towards a CAR PARKED ACROSS THE STREET.

He playfully tosses the keys in the air. As he catches them,
he glances back to the parked car... his brow furrows,
confused.

REVEAL - Across the road, a LARGE MAN in a black suit and
fedora stands still beside the car. Face hidden in shadow.

Porter watches him for a moment. The Man seems to stare back -

And then abruptly starts across the road. Striding with
purpose, straight towards Porter through the rain -

Porter cocks his head quizzically. Puts a hand on his
HOLSTERED PISTOL.

Porter's distracted as he HEARS THE LOW, RUMBLING approach of
a LARGE SEMI TRUCK. Its HEADLIGHTS shining brighter and
brighter through the rain as it moves closer -

The MAN IN BLACK, continues to stride towards Porter - on a
collision path with the speeding truck -

The truck closes rapidly... barely fifty feet from the Man
moving slowly across the middle of the road.

Porter's frozen in place as The TRUCK BLARES ITS HORN -

In an instant, the Man pulls two .45's from his long coat and fires rapidly, precisely into the massive truck's front tires - BLOWING THEM OUT.

Porter stares in rigid, wide-eyed shock -

With only feet to spare, the monstrous truck suddenly veers violently away from the gunman -

AND TO THE LEFT - STRAIGHT AT PORTER - WHO HAS NOWHERE TO GO.

Porter's eyes widen with incomprehension - and then...

PORTER'S POV, as the surreal gunman is eclipsed by the truck.

The screen is filled by the truck's massive grill.

PORTER
Sweet Jesus.

SMASH TO BLACK:

BRIGHT BLUE SKY

We hold for a beat.

Our view rotates, we stare down on the scene - FIFTY FEET UP.

Porter's piece of pipe lays bent and twisted next to the truck - half burrowed in the massive, dented gates.

Porter's hat tumbles by.

WE PLUNGE with a roar, impossibly fast.

Straight through the truck, into the earth. Layers of dark soil and then glowing orange magma sail by...

EXT. HONG KONG - HARBOR - DAY

CHINESE JUNKS coat the water. Buildings crowd the hillsides.

A stream of silvery, translucent souls burst from the water, between passing ships. The FISHERMEN take no notice.

EXT. EARTH ORBIT

A steady stream of spirits flows from every direction.

Porter's spirit flies into view - screaming in terror.

EXT. DEEP SPACE

Millions of spirits flow into a BLACK HOLE.

PORTER'S POV. Down we go, swirling intense light.

EXT. UNDERWORLD ORBIT

Ink-black space - far below is a cloud-covered planet. Spirits stream towards antennae, towering above an enormous concrete building.

INT. SPIRIT PROCESSING CENTER - DAY

A cavernous room gridded with thousands of cubicles. Each with a man-sized, opaque glass vat and a console of gauges.

The technology is purely mechanical - cogs and wheels. Steam driven and industrial. Jules Verne would love it.

Pneumatic tubes criss-cross the ceiling - filled with multicolored objects moving at high speed.

A PA system echoes AIRPORT-STYLE RECORDINGS as GUIDES with tourist-flags herd groups of shell-shocked NEW ARRIVALS.

ON A BANK OF THREE CUBICLES

Behind frosted glass, robotic appendages work within human-shaped mesh. A hose pumps a FLESH-TONED LIQUID into the vat. In unison, an electric pulse of blue -

DING! The MACHINE TO THE LEFT emits a WARNING BUZZ. Inside the vat - a loud, wet explosion. The interior oozes red...

Porter steps from the CENTER MACHINE - naked and disoriented. A WOMAN speaks over the scene, like a 40's educational film.

PRE-RECORDED VOICE (O.S.)

(scratchy recording)

Welcome to the Post-Earth Weigh-Station, maintained by Inferis Corporation. Please retrieve your clothing and orientation materials.

THOOMP. A tube deposits a copy of Porter's prison guard clothes and shoes on a tray... as well as an ID CARD and ENVELOPE.

Reveal hundreds more cubicles, people in stages of arrival.

INT. CORRIDORS/SPIRIT PROCESSING CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Porter walks from his cubicle fully dressed. Men in biohazard suits rush around him, into the 'red-ooze cubicle'.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM/SPIRIT PROCESSING CENTER - LATER

From across the tracks, Porter waits with a somber group of people. An El train roars into the station.

Graffiti mars the door: a red 'x' through Inferis.

PRE-RECORDED VOICE

Since assuming operations millennia ago, the Inferis Afterlife Weigh Stations have been processing over ten billion souls per day.

EXT. UNDERWORLD - LATER

THE TRAIN rumbles onto a bridge over a dark river. A sign at the bridge entrance: RIVER STYX.

Docked across the river, an ancient, flat-bottomed ferry. A loud sign reads: RIDE THE LEGENDARY FERRY.

Rain falls on a twisted landscape of ancient buildings. Crumbling, decaying and crammed along dark, narrow streets, the city is an enormous ghetto -

But is about to expand: Construction cranes and steel skeletons of buildings in progress dot the skyline.

This is the Underworld we've all heard about... hit head on by the early industrial 20th century.

ON THE STREETS - PEDESTRIANS in various periods of dress (everything pre-1940) mingle with HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGES and CARS of the era. VENDORS line the sidewalks. An overcrowded, cultural melting pot.

Interspersed in the crowd are black clad, GESTAPO-LIKE POLICE OFFICERS on foot patrol.

A huge spike of lightning STROBES the scene -

INT. TRAIN - SAME

Porter's face is pressed to the window, his brow furrowed.

PORTER

This is wrong.

He pulls his face away, stares at a pull down, movie screen at the front of the car - on it, a TACITURN SPOKESWOMAN.

SPOKESWOMAN (V.O.)

Though the weighing process is a stage in one's life often fraught with confusion and uncertainty, we at Inferis have gone to great lengths to make it as pleasant as possible. To clarify any information, please see your orientation packet.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM/INFERIS SQUARE - LATER

Dazed, Porter moves down the platform stairs towards...

SPOKESMODEL (V.O.)

We are now arriving at the Registration Center. Here you will register yourself as a Spirit in Transit, and a citizen of the Underworld. Enjoy your stay and remember: Inferis is here to serve.

THE REGISTRATION CENTER - a magnificent, soot-blackened stone edifice resembling Grand Central Station.

Lines of people snake for a mile from the entrance. Porter reluctantly joins the closest line.

Unbeknownst to him, a few spots ahead... Les & Joey - still wearing their prison stripes.

EXT. REGISTRATION CENTER - HOURS LATER

Porter emerges to the sound and fury of the City. ACROSS THE STREET, ANGRY PROTESTERS held back by blockades and POLICE.

He holds a SMALL RED SLIP in his hand - examines it.

Then tears the slip in half. Dumps the shreds and his orientation packet in a nearby trash can.

PROTESTERS
 (various)
 Down with Inferis!

TOURGUIDES loiter around the steps, a few guide HAPLESS NEW ARRIVALS to carriages and cars on the street.

PORTER
 (sotto)
 What kind of hellhole...

VOICE O.S.
 Don't worry, friend. Hell's a long ways away.

Porter turns to find a tightly wound GUIDE in a cheap suit.

PORTER
 I find that hard to believe.

GUIDE
 You get the red ticket to the great down under?

Porter doesn't answer.

GUIDE (CONT'D)
 Welcome to the club, pal. Me too. Actually, pretty much all of us. Thankfully, we do a little work for the Corporation, we get a reprieve.

PORTER
 (indicates the protesters)
 What about them?

GUIDE
 They're lookin' a gifthorse in the mouth. They don't want to work.

PORTER
 Makes sense, you work your whole life. Why do it when you're dead?

GUIDE
 One hundred percent agree, but who are we to change the rules? Right?

PORTER
 And once it's worked off?

GUIDE
 Reincarnation. A second chance.

Porter eyes a separate, much smaller group of new arrivals being herded away under tight security.

PORTER

And them?

GUIDE

Straight to heaven.

(offers his hand)

The name's Julian and I'd like to offer you my services. Show you around the City.

(an aside)

I also happen to run one of the best employment agencies in town -

ACROSS THE STREET - a THUGGISH, ONE-EYED COP spots Porter. Nods to a few other COPS.

BACK ON PORTER - he walks, Julian follows.

JULIAN

It's all about Credits, my friend. Every hour worked is an hour off your sentence. And another credit on your card.

(indicates Porter's ID)

This is your ID and Credit Card. You pay for goods and services with it. Like this tour - it'll cost you ten credits.

(another aside)

And when I get you a job, I shave a little off each hour you work -

Porter gives him a look.

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Standard fee.

Porter eyes the plastic card. So much for eternal rest.

PORTER

You think you could point me to the River, Julian?

JULIAN

Sure thing, pal. There's the new attractions... the River Pier complex, the River Styx Ferry...

BEHIND THEM - the One-Eyed Thug shoves through the crowd accompanied by the THREE BRUISERS, loosely tailing Porter.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
So. What'd you do back on earth?

PORTER
Little of this, little of that.

JULIAN
I'm askin' in terms of jobs. What
kind of sentence they give you?

Porter hands his papers to Julian.

Julian whistles low. Looks at Porter in a new light.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
Good thing the judge never knew the
half of it, huh?

EXT. STYX PIER - LATER

The clash of Atlantic City and ancient Greek legend -

Perhaps creepy and foreboding long ago - the restaurants and
shops newly built along the pier have 'Disney-fied' it.

At the end of the pier floats the aged RIVER FERRY.

By the Ferry, a small 'GIFT HUT' and a life-sized statue of
the FERRYMAN. NEW ARRIVALS take pictures with the statue.

Porter watches a train rumble across the bridge overhead -
the same line he came in on.

ACROSS THE RIVER - a steady stream of souls flows in.

An eerie mist wafts over the dark water. Strange birds and
insects periodically appear.

JULIAN
(dramatically)
This is THE Ferry. Famous for -

PORTER
You ever do any fishing, Julian?

Strange bubbles and shapes move beneath the murky water...

JULIAN
Uh, no.
(dramatically... again)
This is THE Ferry. Famous for
taking the dead across the River
Styx for millenia.
(MORE)

JULIAN (CONT'D)

(beat)

They retired it when Inferis built
the rail system you see today.

A SLEEPY CLERK sits behind the counter of the Gift Hut.

Displayed next to the Ferry, an ORNATE, STEEL OAR. A paddle
on one end, RAZOR SHARP SPEAR on the other. Porter grabs it.

Julian nervously glances at the Clerk and moves to take the
spear from Porter. Wants to avoid a scene...

JULIAN (CONT'D)

Buddy, you can't take that.

Porter keeps the oar. Hops aboard the Ferry, moves to untie
the ropes.

The clerk suddenly wakes up - turns to Julian.

CLERK

Hey! He can't do that -

Julian grabs the oar before Porter can put it in the water.

JULIAN

Where do you think you're goin'?

Porter climbs from the Ferry, yanks the oar back, looks to
the opposite bank while he continues to untie the lines.

PORTER

What's it look like? I'm leaving.

Julian grabs the lines.

JULIAN

You don't want to do this. Soon as
you're half way across, you'll wish
you'd listened to me -

VOICE O.S.

(sing-song) Por-ter!

Porter's eyes narrow with recognition.

He turns to find the One Eyed Cop and the other Officers.

ONE EYED COP

Out of the Ferry, chiseler.

Julian backs away.

JULIAN

Best of luck pal, you can pay me
later.

Porter, steps from the ferry, but hangs onto the oar.

The Cop smiles wide. Too wide: a long, open cut runs from the
left corner of his mouth to his left ear - exposing rotted
teeth and gums... ending in the empty left eye socket.

A leather thread crudely stitches his cheek.

PORTER

Who would've thought. Mr. Jim
Walker, an officer of the law.

Jim stares in silent rage.

PORTER (CONT'D)

It's been a while.

COP/JIM WALKER

Fifteen years.

His tongue lolls from his cheek - he puts it back.

PORTER

That long, huh?

JIM WALKER

We ain't in Hell yet, but close
enough.

Porter grips the oar as the three other Officers flank him.

PORTER

Wow. Chet?... Hollis, Dutch -
How've you been?

They stare back with pure hatred.

PORTER (CONT'D)

Don't tell me you boys've been
waitin' for me all this time?

ALL FOUR PULL VARIOUS WEAPONS from pockets, holsters.

JIM WALKER

You left us for dead.

PORTER

Boys, I don't want any trouble.

JIM WALKER

We're only the welcoming committee.
Angleton and the rest are waitin'
at a bar around the corner.

PORTER

(beat, thinks)
.... Angleton? Oof.

JIM WALKER

A gut wound's hard to cure.

PORTER

(sincere)
Listen fellas... It was the heat of
the moment. I had a chance to save
my hide and I took it -

WALKER

Always looking out for yourself,
aren't you Porter?

PORTER

You would've done the same -

Walker slugs him. Porter crumples - dropping the oar.

JIM WALKER

That's just a taste, jellybean.

Hollis kicks him in the gut.

JIM WALKER (CONT'D)

All you had to do was pull the car
around, we would've made it fine.
(beat)

You owe us, Porter. Time to pay up -

Porter gets to his feet, eyes flash with anger. He picks up
the oar, hefts its weight - looks to the spear-point handle.

PORTER

Funny. Your smile sure says
'payment in full' to me.

Walker's brow knits like chain-link. With a mighty roar, he
charges like a bull.

Porter flips the oar - exposing the 'spear-point' and lowers
it... Walker runs himself through. The point juts his back...

Walker grabs the shaft and slowly removes it, covered in his
gore: a red, liquid rubber. **The wound closes before our eyes.**

Walker hands it back to Porter, whose face says it all -
'Time to cut bait.'

The men close in - Porter steps back. He glances at the bridge's iron trellis. He plants the sharp end of the spear into the pier, uses the pole to vault him onto the trellis.

WALKER

Where you runnin' to this time?!

He and the Officers clamber onto the trellis as well.

EXT. RAIL BRIDGE/TRESTLE - CONTINUOUS

A train rolls in through a heavy fog... as Porter climbs onto the trestle. He's forced to dive between two sets of tracks.

ACROSS THE BRIDGE - the SPIRIT PROCESSING CENTER is lit by a stream of souls.

Porter runs towards it between the tracks. Trains roar by on either side - incoming new arrivals. Outgoing are empty...

He glances over his shoulder... Walker and his men stop and watch from a hundred yards back - smiling knowingly... until the fog thickens, erasing their end of the bridge from view.

Porter slows to a backwards jog, catching his breath.

He sees a thin metal PROTECTIVE MESH covers both sides of the bridge. Then an IRON ARCH looming over the tracks a few feet ahead. A BRIGHT RED & YELLOW LINE painted below.

A tiny bulb throws weak, flickering light over a GRIME COVERED PLAQUE affixed to its side of the arch. He's drawn to the one visible word: 'WARNING'... He walks closer, rubs the dirt away...

INSERT PLAQUE: 'WARNING! Unauthorized personnel prohibited. Any persons found beyond line of demarcation will immediately forfeit rights & privileges as granted by Inferis Corp.'

He pauses a moment... shrugs. Hops over the painted line.

NO FLASHING LIGHTS. NO SIRENS. NOTHING BUT SILENCE.

A moment passes... Then a slight RUMBLE shakes the bridge. But not a train to be seen through the fog... As he continues to jog forward.

CLOSE ON IRON ARCH as the bridge trembles again. A chunk of rust flakes loose above the plaque... revealing...

Unseen by Porter, ancient graffiti carved into the metal:
'BEWARE THE HOUND'.

EXT. RAIL BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Porter jogs, unaware. The bridge trembles again - accompanied by another LOW RUMBLE. He stops - looks down the track but the fog has thickened.

He puts an ear to the rail - trying to feel for a train's vibration as he faces back towards the city.

Dead quiet... AND THEN A MASSIVE BARITONE SHRIEK.

The bridge shakes with a violent roar... and doesn't stop.

Porter stays put, wide-eyed -

BEHIND HIM - (from the Processing Center) the fog shifts, briefly revealing... THREE MASSIVE, RABID, CANINE HEADS, RUMBLING TOWARDS HIM. They're quickly obscured again by the fog.

He senses something... slowly turns around as -

THE FOG SHIFTS AGAIN, REVEALING THE DOGS HEADS speeding towards him - TAKING UP THE ENTIRE WIDTH OF THE BRIDGE.

Porter jumps to his feet, runs back from where he came.

Behind him, the 'beasts' emerge: Three steel tractor scoops formed into THREE GIANT, DOGS' HEADS - their 'teeth' razor sharp - designed to crush victims. It's CERBERUS, the Hound.

They're the front of a double-wide steam locomotive riding both lengths of track. It's sole purpose to trap escapees.

ON TOP - a SMALL UNIFORMED MAN sits in a CAGED PILOT HOUSE - grinning from the thrill of the chase - he pulls a long chain-

Releasing another SHRIEK FROM A ROW OF FOG HORNS.

PORTER sprints as fast as he can, back under the 'warning arch' as Cerberus rapidly closes in, chugging fast.

Porter makes a leap over the side, trying for the water below - but the wire mesh traps him. He tries to climb - can't get a foothold.

He falls back to the trestle, onto his back. He looks up into the faces of the dogs now upon him - WITH A FINAL THUNDEROUS HORN BLAST -

SMASH TO BLACK:

EXT. UNDERWORLD JAIL - LATER

Rain falls on a gas-lit street. 30's era patrol cars parked in front of a small, soot blackened building.

INT. CELL BLOCK - SAME

A dim, windowless jail filled with small iron cages. A TONE DEAF DRUNK sings and cries from somewhere in the darkness.

WE MOVE BETWEEN CELLS, past the FREAKISH PRISONERS... a few NATIVE AMERICAN WARRIORS recline on cots; a MAFIA THUG cleans his nails - he's missing his eyelids and nose, etc.

INT. PORTER'S CELL - SAME

He lays on his cot, groans in pain as his body repairs under his torn clothing. Skin and bone meld before our eyes.

FEMALE VOICE O.S.
Hurts, doesn't it?

The voice is rich, sultry... seductive.

Porter glances into the darkness outside his cell as an ATTRACTIVE WOMAN moves into the dim light.

Coal dark eyes framed by raven black hair. She wears a skirt suit, black and neatly pressed. This is HALIDAY (30s).

She places herself on a tiny wooden stool, crosses her legs - sets a small black briefcase on the floor.

Porter stares, forgetting his pain... momentarily speechless.

PORTER
Funny. Doesn't hurt as much now.

Haliday smirks, lights a cigarette.

HALIDAY
I'm here to lend a hand.

Porter eyes her appreciatively.

PORTER
Oh, yeah... ?

HALIDAY
My name is Haliday. I'm an
executive employed by Inferis
Corporation -

Porter flashes his most seductive smile.

PORTER
Is that Miss or Mrs... Haliday?

HALIDAY
We have a vacant position in a
small, but powerful department. I
believe you could fit the bill.

PORTER
I'm dead. I don't need a job.

HALIDAY
Mr. Porter, when you're sentenced
to Hell, you have two options. You
pay the Devil or you pay The
Corporation.

PORTER
I've paid my debt.

HALIDAY
Had you actually fulfilled your
sentence at Stateville, it still
wouldn't have been nearly enough
for a clean slate down here.

Porter angrily rolls away from Haliday, faces the wall.

PORTER
According to who? Huh? What gives
some company the right to decide if
I burn in hell? For chrissakes -
only one's got the right to judge
me is God -

HALIDAY
(condescending)
Mr. Porter. Those days are long
gone. The world has grown so many
times over since the beginning that
no one single entity could ever
hope to keep track of it all.
That's why the Corporation is here.

(MORE)

HALIDAY (CONT'D)

Whether you like it or not, we are in charge of your fate.

PORTER

Good for you. I'm not interested.

HALIDAY

Regardless, you are going to be in the Underworld for a long while. You're welcome to get a job cleaning toilets for a few credits an hour. You'll only be here for a thousand years or so, but it's honest work.

(beat)

Or. You can work for us in a much more respected capacity.

(beat)

I guarantee you'll be out much sooner... And you'd get to visit earth on a regular basis.

Porter rolls over, reassesses Haliday.

PORTER

What's this job?

HALIDAY

The Corporation is actually a partnership between two departments. My department takes care of the paperwork... while the other side is responsible for collecting unpaid debts from the earthbound.

(beat)

You would be doing the 'Collections' work.

Porter narrows his eyes.

PORTER

I'm not following.

HALIDAY

Ever heard of the Grim Reaper?

It takes a moment for it to register.

PORTER

No shit.

(skeptically)

'Collections'?

HALIDAY
A Corporate marketing decision.

Porter stares for a long beat.

 PORTER
 (incredulous)
Did Walker send you in here?

Haliday smiles patiently.

 HALIDAY
No, Mr. Porter.

 PORTER
Ok. Ok. I'll go with it.

 HALIDAY
Do you remember your death?

Porter's demeanor shifts.

 HALIDAY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
You recall someone waiting for you
across the street from the prison?

Porter's sobered, watches her intently.

 PORTER
A Grim Reaper... killed me?

 HALIDAY
'Collected' you, Mr. Porter.

He grabs the bars, intense and in Haliday's face.

 PORTER
Then you know who killed me.

Haliday chuckles, shakes his head at Porter's naivete.

 PORTER (CONT'D)
Did you do it? A man's at least got
a right to know who killed him.

Haliday laughs even louder.

 HALIDAY
Sorry. No, I didn't. I work
strictly on the admin side.

 PORTER
Then who?

HALIDAY

I can't tell you. It goes against
our principles -

Porter clutches the bars angrily.

PORTER

You help kill people for a living,
the hell you mean principles?!

HALIDAY

It causes too many problems. Even
if you knew, you'd be separated.
You wouldn't believe how vengeance
could muck up a productive workday.

PORTER

I can only imagine.

Porter's already shaking his head in the negative.

PORTER (CONT'D)

No way I'm getting involved with
that. I don't kill people.

Haliday reaches into her briefcase, pulls a sheet of paper.

HALIDAY

I could swear my research was
correct... Addison Porter...
(reads to himself)
Bootlegging, murder, hijacking,
murder, kidnapping, armed
robbery... murder -

PORTER

Self-defense. Besides, I've changed
my ways -

HALIDAY

I find that highly unlikely. I'd
say you're the type of resourceful
man with extraordinary survival
instincts. You look out for
yourself, I respect that.

PORTER

I'm no trigger man.

HALIDAY

People die. It's part of the
natural order and your job would be
to protect that.

(beat)

(MORE)

HALIDAY (CONT'D)

The most dangerous situation is when a person fails to arrive as scheduled. This could potentially cause irreparable harm.

PORTER

And that's where 'Collections' comes in.

HALIDAY

Very good.

PORTER

How did I not die when I was supposed to?

HALIDAY

As perfect as the system is... there are glitches. You were meant to die that day with Walker and the others. It was an anomaly.

PORTER

Wait. Wouldn't you have seen my 'glitch' before it happened?

HALIDAY

We're not perfect. We make mistakes, but try to correct them.

Haliday points to a jagged scar on Porter's neck.

HALIDAY (CONT'D)

Woodworking shop, correct?

Porter reacts.

HALIDAY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Just an over-excitabile inmate with a jigsaw... or something else?

PORTER

Sonofabitch. And the other times?

HALIDAY

Unfortunately, you were adept at getting out of those situations.

(beat)

Which is another reason for my interest in your talents.

Haliday snaps her case open, reaches in - retrieves a THICK CONTRACT and PEN.

HALIDAY (CONT'D)
So. What do you think?

He pulls it and the pen through the bars... leafs through it.

PORTER
(reads, mutters)
Fifty years or four thousand and
thirty-seven 'collections'...

HALIDAY
Think of it as fifty years to
freedom. You fulfill your end of
the bargain, and you are retired.

PORTER
And after that?

HALIDAY
Reincarnation. A second chance to
live your life.

This grabs his attention. He thinks for a beat.

Haliday takes the opportunity to recross her legs, smooths
her skirt. She takes a long drag off her cigarette...

Once again, Porter can't help but stare.

PORTER
How can I refuse?

EXT. COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT - DAY

A monolithic building set next to the Registration Center.
Haliday glides up the hill of steps, Porter trudges behind in
his torn clothing - eyes the PROTESTING CROWDS and the
MULTITUDE OF CONSTRUCTION CRANES dotting the skyline.

HALIDAY
Impressive isn't it? Thanks to
Hitler, we're expanding
exponentially. We estimate close to
fifty million additional arrivals
in the next few years.

INT. COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT - RECEPTION - MOMENTS LATER

HARDENED RECEPTIONISTS sit at a long desk. AN OFFICIAL
REAPER'S SEAL COVERS A LARGE IRON DOOR behind them.

With a hiss, the door rolls open. Haliday leads the way into -

INT. HALLWAY/MUSEUM - CONTINUOUS

White, linoleum floors, DISPLAY CASES line either side. Filled with plaques and awards, surrounded by ancient weapons and armor - from swords to pistols - military uniforms, etc.

Prominently featured , THE DARK ROBE AND SCYTHE OF LEGEND beside a portrait of the traditional Grim Reaper. Despite its impressive contents, the display looks like a cheap junior high effort.

Porter pauses to ogle it as Haliday keeps walking.

PORTER

(sotto)

You've got to be kidding me.

HALIDAY

The Collections Agents have a strange affection for their past.

He passes photos of alumni: Wyatt Earp, Jesse James, etc.

PORTER

You'd think they'd put this stuff in a museum.

HALIDAY

Not in the budget, Mr. Porter.

Haliday opens a door, Porter follows her onto -

INT. THE PIT - CATWALK

They stand forty feet above a massive warehouse floor. Black iron girders crisscross the ceiling. Large, hanging lights cut through a smoky haze to illuminate an open bullpen.

BELOW - THOUSANDS OF WOODEN DESKS cover the floor, divided into sections of varying size.

Large MAPS and CHALK TRACKING BOARDS dominate the opposite wall, giving the feel of a war-room. Though half the desks are empty and covered by dusty sheets, the din is tremendous.

Porter gapes in wonder.

HALIDAY (O.S.)

This is The Pit. The hub of operations for the Earth.

PORTER

The Earth... ?

HALIDAY

This isn't the only Underworld. We service three hundred and six other civilizations.

(beat)

Not here, of course.

PORTER

Of course...

QUICK SHOTS of VARIOUS NATIONAL FLAGS hanging over sections.

HALIDAY

(proud)

Every country, territory, town and outpost is covered from this room. This is my department.

Porter skeptically eyes the desk-workers.

A MAN IN A DARK SUIT on the phone at a desk, taking notes.

HALIDAY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Section Managers coordinate with the Records Clerks. They red-flag situations, put Agents on the job.

The Man hangs up his phone, hands his note to the TRACKING BOARDS, where a CLERK on a tall, rolling ladder reads it. Takes a long chalk-tipped stick, adds the name to a grid

HALIDAY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

When it is found to be a legitimate problem, we monitor the situation.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF NAMES on this grid... with FIFTY OR SO CLERKS rolling back and forth across its face, adding and erasing names.

HALIDAY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

That board keeps track of the agents. Their locations, progress.

Despite their well-oiled rhythm, it's apparent that these people are overworked and tired.

PORTER

These poor saps watch over it all?

HALIDAY

Yes, very inefficient. At least until the computers are in place.

PORTER
What's a computer?

HALIDAY
(proudly)
Automation. It's the future.

Porter's attention is drawn to LOUD CHEERING AND LAUGHTER at the back of the room.

A larger GROUP OF MEN are crowded into a corner, throwing whistles and catcalls at a LARGE MAN STANDING ON A DESK.

PORTER
What's with the party?

HALIDAY
(peeved)
Mr. Grissom just finished his contract today.

PORTER
Last kill, huh? Hoo-ray for him.

Haliday shoots Porter a knowing, half-amused glance.

HALIDAY
Indeed.

ON THE PARTY - GRISSOM climbs down from the desk, hands out ODD SLICES OF CAKE AND GLASSES OF PUNCH to his fellow AGENTS.

GRISSOM
Eat, drink and be merry.

Some AGENTS suddenly stop talking, nudge the LOUDER MEN.

They stare up at PORTER and HALIDAY, the latter scowling.

Grissom catches sight of Porter. Raises a glass as a toast... gives him a respectful nod.

Porter gives an awkward nod in return. Does he know this guy?

Haliday loudly clears her throat, continues to scowl upon the party, which immediately breaks up.

The Agents quietly trudge back to their desks, cake in hand - party's over... they COLLECTIVELY GRUMBLE UNDER THEIR BREATH.

AGENTS (VARIOUS)
Corporate pricks. Bitch.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A couple hundred men shower, shave and change.

Many halt their conversations at the sight of Haliday. She's completely comfortable in this environment. The men seem used to the intrusion, eye them suspiciously.

HALIDAY

There is one last matter to take care of before you are situated.

(beat)

Your trial run.

PORTER

You never said anything -

Haliday calmly raises a hand to quiet him.

HALIDAY

The Corporation does not believe in training. One cannot truly train to do this job - the situation changes every time. Instead, we emphasize instincts. Thus, we need to gauge your abilities.

(she motions to lockers)

You'll find a change of clothing in sixty-five. Meet me in the hall.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Porter steps out of the locker room, now dressed in a bathrobe and shower shoes. The door slams shut behind him.

No sign of Haliday, but to his left and right, two other intersecting halls. He wanders to the left...

Finds himself at another intersection. This place is a maze.

He wanders down yet another hallway... HEARS A DISTANT NOISE. He cocks his head -

Incrementally louder - more distinct. A rapid metallic pounding... CLINK, CLANK, CLINK, CLANK.

Warily, he looks each way - tries to gauge its direction. The sound is now LOUDER - much closer. TERRIFYINGLY LOUD -

BEHIND HIM, we get a brief glimpse of what 'IT' is... rounding the corner behind him with a surge of speed -

CLOSE ON PORTER, as he slowly turns, eyes widening as...

A 7 FOOT, IRON-CLAD AUTOMATON stomps towards him like an enormous wind-up toy: Steel cogs, and wheels whir under a protective cage. It's legs propel it forward - attached to wheels similar to a locomotive.

PLUMES OF STEAM erupt from BROKEN HOSES around its head.

It slows as it closes on him. Two glass lenses focus on him as he backs away - the Robot pursues, matches his steps.

It raises its arms - REVEALING RAZOR SHARP CLAWS FOR FINGERS.

The hissing steam suddenly loses pressure... water spurts from the hoses... THE ROBOT LURCHES TOWARDS HIM...

Only to FALL FACE FIRST with a resounding BOOM. Just missing Porter, showering him with a cloud of metal shards and oil.

A TEAM OF HARRIED TECHNICIANS rounds the corner.

TECHIE #1
Sorry 'bout that.

They heave the robot onto a GURNEY, sweep up debris.

HALIDAY (O.S.)
Marvelous, isn't it?

Porter spins to face Haliday - who is beaming with pride.

PORTER
What the hell is it?

HALIDAY
The future of the Reapers.

PORTER
Or the future of paper weights.

HALIDAY
(sighs)
Well, still in the experimental stage, as you can see.

She lovingly pats the machine's head... a SMALL BELL SUDDENLY SOUNDS, like an old alarm clock.

The Technicians freeze, go into panic mode...

HALIDAY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
By the time these are ready for deployment you'll have moved on to a new life.

Haliday calmly grabs a bundle of wires near its 'neck'.

HALIDAY (CONT'D)
 Its best feature: just in case
 someone actually was able to
 incapacitate it - a self-destruct
 mechanism.

The ringing gives way to a HIGH-PITCHED WHISTLE - the
 Technicians sweat profusely.

HALIDAY (CONT'D)
 Wouldn't want this work of genius
 to get into the wrong hands.

She calmly yanks a blue wire free - the whistle slowly dies.
 The Technicians breathe a sigh of relief.

INT. HALLWAYS - MOMENTS LATER

Haliday power walks, Porter tries to keep up.

PORTER
 Why am I wearing a robe?

Haliday ignores him, hands him a folder.

HALIDAY
 Every time you go out, you'll get
 one of these. Your mission dossier.

Haliday narrates while Porter flips through the file.

HALIDAY (CONT'D)
 (quick and efficient)
 Ranulph McGitty. Eighty-seven years
 old. Retired Marine colonel. Should
 have expired in the First World
 War. Mustard gas at the Marne,
 March of 1918. The McGitty family
 owned a chain of department stores.
 Upon his return from the Western
 Front, he spent every red cent
 searching for ways to defeat death.
 It is safe to say that he has so
 far succeeded.

They walk until the hall dead-ends at a catwalk, overlooking -

INT. TRANSPORT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

One section holds hundreds of glass vats like those from Porter's arrival. The other section, furnace-like cylinders.

In the center of the room, TECHNICIANS mind a console.

QUICK SHOTS as VARIOUS AGENTS (men and women) move into the furnace cylinders... many emerge from the glass vats.

Porter and Haliday descend the stairs from the catwalk. The Agents and Techs tense as they notice Haliday...

She leads Porter to FLOYD (40s) a tall, thin Tech in mechanic's overalls. The left half of his skull is cut away - exposing its innards. A glass dome keeps it all together.

Haliday steps up behind Floyd, taps him on the shoulder. The tall man registers a slow, belabored surprise...

HALIDAY

This is Floyd. He'll tell you
everything you need to know.
Happy returns, Mr. Porter.

Haliday exits. Everyone relaxes, resumes their business.

TWO AGENTS pass by.

AGENT #1

She's got you on a trial run, huh?

Porter warily nods.

AGENT #2

Who'd they assign you to?

PORTER

Some guy named McGitty.

They look at each other, sadly shake their heads.

AGENT #1

Lady Luck screwed ya, pal.

They walk towards off, still shaking their heads.

PORTER

What the hell was that about?

Floyd's oblivious, motions for Porter to follow him.

Porter follows, but watches the TWO AGENTS talk to a GROUP OF AGENTS - they point towards him. He can't hear what they're saying, but they all stare. ONE GUY gives him the thumbs up.

Floyd stops in front of a SEPARATION CHAMBER. His speech is a slow and deep baritone.

FLOYD

This is a Separation Chamber. It will destroy your physical body, freeing your ethereal presence, which will be sent to a station on earth.

Porter nods blankly - not really listening. He shrugs off the odd looks from the Agents and turns back to Floyd.

PORTER

(low, intense)

Floyd. You wouldn't happen to know if one of these jokers collected me-

FLOYD

Nope.

Floyd flips a series of switches... the machine POWERS UP. A hatch opens and he motions Porter in. Porter complies.

PORTER

I bet you get that question a lot.

FLOYD

Yup. On earth, your spirit will be placed within a temporary body that is identical to your own. You'll get your clothing and weaponry on site. We'll send the location and time-limit via teletype.

PORTER

Time limit?

FLOYD

The body you get on earth has a shelf-life that we dial in.

Porter raises an eyebrow as the Machine rumbles to life.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

Do your job and leave on time.

PORTER

And what happens if I don't?

FLOYD
Your body disintegrates.

PORTER
So?

FLOYD
And your soul is lost. A ghost, to
wander the earth for eternity.
(beat)
Robe please.

Porter hesitates.

PORTER
What's with the nudity?

FLOYD
The machine is an incinerator.
Department's on a tight budget:
that body is cheap, clothing isn't.

Porter reluctantly hands the robe to Floyd.

FLOYD (CONT'D)
Want some advice?

Porter nods. Floyd leans in.

FLOYD (CONT'D)
Listen to the Spirits. Don't talk
to anyone else... especially the
Angels and Demons.

Porter tilts his head, tries to decipher this new info.

PORTER
Uh -

FLOYD
Happy hunting.

The hatch slams shut. Porter braces himself as a LOUD
MECHANICAL WHINE fills the compartment. An INSTANT WALL OF
WHITE FLAME shoots through the chamber.

Porter is incinerated mid-scream... his spirit flows into a
filter in the ceiling...

INT. TRANSPORT ROOM - EARTH - CONTINUOUS

Much smaller than HQ - but purely automated. MACHINERY powers
up. A dusty, glass VAT FILLS WITH A HUMAN FORM.

With a DING, the door opens to reveal Porter - his body identical to his underworld body.

A mechanical clacking sound. A TELETYPE MACHINE rattles off a message. Porter moves to it, reads the printout.

INT. SUPPLY ROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Porter enters the room, impressed.

Filled with RACKS OF CLOTHING. On another wall, EVERY TYPE OF WEAPON IMAGINABLE. Boxes of ammunition fill shelves.

INT. TRANSPORT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Porter's dressed as a Cop. He holsters two .45's. Studies a CITY MAP plastered to the wall while he fastens a WRISTWATCH.

Across the room, a WATER-TIGHT DOOR, an IRON KEY on a hook and a large lever mounted in the floor. Beside the key, INSTRUCTIONS in red: 1) Pull handle. 2) Take key.

He pulls the handle... we hear a rush of water on the other side of the door. Porter grabs the key as the water subsides.

INT. WELL - EVENING

Pitch black pierced by light as the door opens with a hiss. Dripping water and MUTED STREET NOISE from somewhere above.

He slowly steps into the narrow, muddy shaft, feels along the stone-wall for a ladder, his hand comes away coated in slime.

PORTER

What the -

He tries to climb the stone wall - slides back to the mud floor with a wet splat.

Light glints off metal on the opposite wall, he runs his hand over it, finds a KEY HOLE - inserts the key and turns...

SOUNDS OF GRINDING GEARS as individual stones extend from the walls, becoming a spiral staircase to the top of the well.

He cautiously tests the first step, then the next - CHECKS HIS WATCH: COUNTING DOWN FROM TWO HOURS.

EXT. WELL - FACTORY COURTYARD - EVENING

A yard behind a derelict factory.

A pile of leaves shifts as Porter pushes the well cover open from below. As he begins to climb out...

CLOSE ON Porter's foot as it comes off the final step - and releases a SWITCH embedded in the stone.

INT. WELL - CONTINUOUS

The door slams shut. Water fills the well. The steps retract.

EXT. WELL - FACTORY COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

Porter hops to solid ground as the last step disappears...

And then he panics. How the hell is he getting back down? He searches for a switch or lever in the well-stones. Zilch.

He backs away, calming himself. He'll have to cross this bridge later. He smiles as he breathes in the sweet, sweet air - gets on his hands and knees and kisses the ground.

EXT. CHICAGO LAKE-FRONT - LATE EVENING

Empty and desolate. Fog blankets the area - a FOGHORN BLASTS OVER THE AMBIENT SOUNDS of the lake-front.

Porter emerges from a crack in the factory wall.

ACROSS THE STREET, a NEON SIGN - the entrance to a FISHING PIER. Under the sign, a shuttered BAIT SHOP.

Porter pauses breathlessly - eyes the pier and shop longingly. Considers them for a beat, checks his watch - reluctantly keeps walking.

A SHORT COP emerges from the shadows under the pier entrance, twirling his billy club. He watches Porter.

HOOKER (O.S.)
Where you goin' to, handsome?

Porter sees a HOOKER, leaning seductively against a lamp.

Porter ignores her, keeps walking. She sidles up next to him - a redhead, way past her prime... a strange hump on her back.

PORTER
Buzz off, lady.

HOOKER
No need to be rude, Reaper.

Porter abruptly stops.

PORTER
Who the hell are you?

HOOKER
You must be new, kid. No one gave
you any training?

COCKNEY VOICE (O.S.)
What's the problem here?

REVERSE to the Cop (50s, scrawny, steely & intensely ugly). A
mangled face - thousands of street-fights worth of scars.

Porter steps back, instinctively defensive.

PORTER
Officer -

HOOKER
A new Reaper, a real greenhorn.

The Cop sizes him up.

COP
That so? Well you stay away from my
flock, we'll get along just fine.

The Hooker rolls her eyes.

HOOKER
He doesn't know what you're talking
about, Nigel. No one's told him.

COP/NIGEL
Bullshit. They must be slippin'
down there, eh Reaper?

PORTER
Yeah, sure. Why don't you move
along now and let me do my job.

Porter walks - Nigel blocks his way with his nightstick.

NIGEL
Not just yet.

Porter tenses.

PORTER

You're gonna be ticklin' your
tongsels with that thing, tiny.

Nigel removes his cap... revealing two stubby horns.

NIGEL

Wanna try your luck, boy?

Porter gapes.

HOOKER

Now, now... let's calm down.

The Hooker separates them. Her hump moves... a few errant feathers emerge, which she tucks away.

Porter steps back from both of them.

PORTER

Ahhh... I was warned about you.

HOOKER

Nigel and I work for competing
teams. So to speak.

Nigel stares daggers at Porter, itching for some violence.

HOOKER (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

We influence some people, give them
a push in one direction or the
other. Also give 'em a little
protection, from the likes of you.

(beat)

My team's a little more on the up
and up.

NIGEL

That's a bit subjective.

HOOKER

But, we've got an understanding.
Plenty of souls to go around.

NIGEL

However, you Reaper prick, if
you're here to go after any of my
recruits... you're gonna have to go
through me first. Get it?

He points his night-stick menacingly - Porter pulls a pistol.

PORTER
Why don't you spell it out, tiny.

The Hooker pushes Nigel back, sighs in frustration.

HOOKER
Why don't you just tell us who
you're here to kill, then we could
all be on our way?

Porter hesitates. Until the Hooker pulls her own pistol.
Porter gauges the odds -

PORTER
Some guy named McGitty.

The Hooker laughs, holsters the pistol.

NIGEL
Well, why didn't ya say so...

Nigel snorts derisively, steps aside with a flourish.

Porter doesn't know how to react, hesitantly walks past.

PORTER
See you around, tiny.

NIGEL
Oh, I doubt that.

Off Porter's reaction.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Porter walks down a run-down, old-money avenue. Rotting
Victorian homes line either side, all abandoned but one.

EXT. MCGITTY MANSION

Set back from the street, surrounded by a wrought-iron fence.
He pushes the gate open, WINCES as the hinges SQUEAL.

EXT. MCGITTY'S PORCH - A MOMENT LATER

Porter mounts the rickety steps, avoids some missing boards.
He rings the doorbell.

A BRASS PERISCOPE hangs high up under one of the eaves. It
comes to life, turns and focuses on him.

An ANCIENT INTERCOM BUZZES with a DEEP, RASPY VOICE...

MCGITTY (O.S.)

Yes?

Porter pushes the intercom button.

PORTER

Good evening, sir. I'm Sergeant...
Smith with the police department.
Got a call about a disturbance.

MCGITTY (O.S.)

Really.

PORTER

Doin' the rounds, house to house,
making sure everything's... A-Ok.

MCGITTY (O.S.)

Uh-huh.

(beat)

Thank you for the visit Sergeant. I
haven't seen anything, but I'll
make sure to lock-up. Good night.

PORTER

I'd really like to come in. Make
sure everything's up to snuff.

Silence.

Porter shifts uncomfortably.

MCGITTY (O.S.)

If you insist.

A LONG BUZZ, the door clicks open. Porter steps into -

INT. FOYER - MCGITTY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Dim lights illuminate bullet-pocked walls and floors, slashed
paintings. A winding staircase dominates the foyer.

A periscope extends from the ceiling, focuses on Porter.

The door slams shut. He goes to grab the knob but is stopped
by an IRON SLAB dropping from above, blocking the door.

He draws both pistols. CACKLES ECHO from speakers.

MCGITTY (O.S.)
 How about a song? Back in France,
 we had plenty. Let's see...

He puts a hand on the banister. BEHIND HIM, a silvery SPIRIT floats from the floor: a priest, face peppered with holes.

Porter spins. His eyes widen at the sight of the spirit.

PRIEST
 Careful of the banisters.

Porter cocks his head... a pneumatic hiss fills the room. BARBED NAILS ERUPT UP FROM THE BANISTER. PINNING HIS HAND.

He drops his guns and yelps. Puts his free hand on the railing, another hiss and the entire rail porcupines with nails - trapping his other hand.

PORTER
 (anguished pain)
 What the hell?!

He frantically kicks at the wood as music blares from the speakers - pops and scratches from an old record...

MCGITTY (O.S.)
 (singing along)
 It's a long way to Tipperary! It's
 a long way, to gooooo!

Porter looks at the stairs, thousands of tiny holes in the wood. He yanks his feet from the steps as a sea of barbed nails shoot through the holes. He balances on his toes.

MCGITTY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 It's a long way to Tipperary! To
 the sweet-est girl I knooooowww -

IN THE FOYER, another spirit, a PLUMBER, floats by a CHANDELIER... which is slowly descending.

PRIEST
 Keep moving.

The Chandelier rotates, a vintage WWI HEAVY MACHINE GUN nestled within the cobwebbed, crystal tassels.

The Plumber disappears into the ceiling.

Porter fights panic - pulls both feet onto the rail. He uses his feet for leverage and RIIIIIIIPS HIS HANDS FREE.

He stands on the banister, fighting for balance.

The Priest nods in approval.

MCGITTY (O.S.)
Good-bye Picadilly!

The gun completes its rotation - and opens fire.

Porter leaps at the chandelier - snags a loose loop of chain. He swings in agony as DOZENS OF SPIRITS emerge from the walls and fly past, watching the action.

The chandelier spastically spins, trying to shake him loose while bullets continue to fly - the barrel turns orange hot.

MCGITTY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Good-bye Leicester Square!

Porter pulls himself up onto the gun, rides the gun like a bronco. His pants smolder on the superheated barrel -

A long cord leads to the trigger from the ceiling. Porter rips the cord from the gun - it falls silent.

MCGITTY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Awww... Christ on a stick.

Porter's now level with the second floor. Times a jump, but the Priest moves in front of him - tries to wave him off.

PRIEST
Wrong way -

But it's too late. He jumps for the second floor landing...

And misses. He goes down hard, hits the ground face first.

MCGITTY (O.S.)
Oh boy!

Porter stands shakily, cradles his broken nose...

Porter stumbles to the wall as the Priest appears.

PRIEST
Keep moving, keep moving.

The floor drops away. Porter grabs at the wall - finds purchase on the wallpaper, tears it into a long strip as he goes down, into -

INT. BASEMENT/MINIATURE BATTLEFIELD

A grotto the size of a football field... McGitty has re-created a miniature WWI battlefield: trenches, barbed wire...

The wallpaper rips free, dropping him forty feet to the dirt. Scores of Spirits spill in from all directions as -

SPEAKERS BLARE BATTLEFIELD NOISE - SCREAMS, GUNFIRE, ETC.

REAL EXPLOSIONS send showers of dirt over Porter - he dives into a trench as TRACER-FIRE WHIZZES inches over his head.

The Priest and Plumber float above the fray.

PORTER peaks over a dirt berm as a couple of uniformed mannequins on tracks turn his way. They sport ridiculous smiles... AND OPEN UP WITH REAL TOMMYGUNS.

He ducks - drags himself further down the trench.

MCGITTY (V.O.)
Achtung! Achtung! Kommen Sie hier
Baron Von Richtofen!

AT THE CEILING - A SMALL DOOR OPENS, revealing a RED BARON BI-PLANE MODEL on a track. Its motor powers up with a BUZZZ -

CLOSE ON THE PLANE - ITS DANGLING GRENADES OF DOOM. At the controls, a tiny BARON VON RICHTOFEN, grinning into the wind.

BACK TO PORTER - He gets to his feet - makes a mad dash... as it buzzes him - DROPPING GRENADES BEHIND HIM.

An errant grenade bounces past him - hits another GUN TOTING MANNEQUIN, blowing it apart. Porter's showered with debris.

The plane buzzes off, going for another lap.

Porter grabs the fallen mannequin's GUN. Looks to the bi-plane, coming back for its next pass -

Random explosions erupt to either side - pinning him in place... his face sets in determination. Time for a stand.

He steadies, takes careful aim... and fires.

He misses the plane, but hits its GUIDE-WIRE, sending it off track, straight at a MANNEQUIN with a FLAMETHROWER.

The plane hits the Thrower's fuel tank - it explodes! Rocketing the over-sized doll through a wall, revealing...

An ancient, WINE CELLAR - still attached to the house above.

PORTER leaps onto the field, weaves through explosions to -

INT. WINE CELLAR

His sees a DUMBWAITER - barely big enough to squeeze into.

EXT. BASEMENT/BATTLEFIELD - CONTINUOUS

MCGITTY'S P.O.V - his periscope pans wildly, searching...

MCGITTY (O.S.)
(sing-song)
Marco? Marco?! Dammit!

INT. DUMBWAITER - CONTINUOUS

Porter's bent into the small space. He strains, pulling on the rope - moving upward.

The Priest pops his head in - in Porter's face. Porter's surprised, nearly lets go of the rope.

PORTER
Where is he?

The Priest looks up.

PRIEST
The study. Two floors up.

As the Priest moves out of the way - allowing Porter to see out from the tiny, porthole window... to a MECHANICAL CHAIR, attached to a rail on a circular staircase.

INT. MCGITTY'S STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

A BANK OF PERISCOPES, each labelled for an area of the house. They extend over an ELABORATE CONTROL BOARD FILLED WITH BUTTONS AND SWITCHES, manned by a WIRY OCTOGENARIAN with his back to us - MCGITTY.

He moves from periscope to periscope, frantically searching... as HE HEARS A MECHANICAL WHINE O.S.

The old man cocks his head, he moves to a periscope marked KITCHEN STAIRS. He chuckles, low and dangerous.

MCGITTY
Sly one, aren't we...

INT. PRIVATE STAIRCASE - SAME

The CHAIR moves up the stairs, past dusty PORTRAITS.

INT. MCGITTY'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS

McGitty stares into the monocle... A variety of ropes dangle nearby. He grabs one - yanks on it.

WE HEAR A THUNDEROUS SUCCESSION OF BOOMS from O.S.

MCGITTY

Polo.

He joyously spins in his chair with a smile of victory.

INT. PRIVATE STAIRS - SAME

WE MOVE UP past a row of large, smoking holes in the wall - bits of plaster float like confetti. In each hole - a mounted, smoking shotgun.

The auto-chair SPARKS and SMOKES, badly damaged.

INT. MCGITTY'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS

He pulls his frail frame from the chair, grabs a CANVAS BODY BAG and a SHOTGUN from a nearby table...

He releases THE LOCKS ON THE DOOR, opens it and steps out. Hums a happy ditty while shuffling out. He slams the door -

REVEALING A DUMBWAITER DOOR AND WINDOW SET INTO THE WALL. Porter's face rises into the window.

The door bursts open and Porter tumbles to the floor. His attention is immediately drawn to-

THE WALLS - where the old man's STUFFED AND MOUNTED THE HEADS OF DOZENS OF FORMER REAPERS. ALL IN ARRESTED DECOMPOSITION. Some are familiar, like the PRIEST and PLUMBER.

REVERSE TO PORTER, staring wide-eyed at the display. Behind him, the PRIEST and the PLUMBER float into the room, followed by their ghostly entourage... more familiar faces.

PORTER

... Reapers. All of you?

The group nods, stares in admiration.

INT. THIRD FLOOR LANDING - CONTINUOUS

McGitty watches the chair reach the top of the stairs. Empty.

MCGITTY
REAPER!!

INT. MCGITTY'S STUDY - SAME

PRIEST
Lock the door.

Porter's still transfixed by the mounted heads.

PORTER
... good idea...

A SPIRIT sticks his head through the door, into the hall outside. His head pops back in -

SPIRIT
Now.

Porter lunges/locks it as the knob turns from the other side.

He leans against the door a beat - listens for movement.

A BLAST carves a jagged hole above the knob, splintering the heavy oak and most of Porter's right hand.

Porter stares at his hand: everything gone but the thumb.

MCGITTY (O.S.)
That must've hurt.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

McGitty loads another shell with shaking hands.

MCGITTY
Open the door you BASTARD!

INT. MCGITTY'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Porter scans the room. No place to hide, no weapons in sight. McGitty's surveillance set-up takes up most of the space.

BOOM! Another hole in the door - cracking the top dead-bolt. Porter ducks, crawls away from the door, as -

BOOM! The second dead-bolt goes in a shower of sparks. Only the locked knob remains.

Porter notices the Priest motioning to the control board.

Porter crawls into the seat. Hundreds of buttons, each cryptically labeled - it's wired to the entire house.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

McGitty's hands shake with rage and Parkinsons. He struggles to load the shells that'll blow that door open.

MCGITTY
(rambling)
Sonofadonkeyswhore...

He drops his shells to the floor.

MCGITTY (CONT'D)
Dammit.

He sloooowly bends for the shells.

INT. MCGITTY'S STUDY - SAME

PORTER
Here goes.

He hits every button systematically...

VARIOUS SHOTS OF THE HOUSE:

- The main staircase flattens into a ramp.
- Doors swing open, revealing artillery pieces.
- A ceiling pops open, dropping mounted circular saw blades.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

McGitty is on his knees, loads both barrels - freezes at the cacophony of boobytraps. We detect a small twinge of fear.

MCGITTY
Huh.

INT. MCGITTY'S STUDY - SAME

Porter has sprung every trap... well, almost...

His hand hovers over six untouched buttons: the third floor.

Porter looks to the Priest, who shrugs. He reaches for the first button -

BOOM! The door flies open. McGitty shuffles into the room.

MCGITTY

That was just one barrel, Reaper -

Porter slams his fist onto the remaining buttons.

All at once, the room comes alive:

- A cage falls over Porter and the board.

- A slab of iron slides over the door... locking McGitty in.

- The floorboards part and slide beneath the walls...

REVEALING A SEA OF RAZOR SHARP MOWER BLADES.

McGitty is thrown on his ass by the moving floor.

MCGITTY (CONT'D)

Oh no.

With a PITCHED WHINE, HUNDREDS OF BLADES BEGIN TO SPIN. As McGitty's pulled into the blades, he looks to Porter -

MCGITTY (CONT'D)

SON OF A -

His body's turned to mulch before Porter and the Spirits. They drink it in - it's been a long time coming.

The last of McGitty's body disappears into the blades, trading places with his spirit, floating over the din.

He stares in horror at Porter and the spirits he can now suddenly see congregated.

The Priest and Plumber wave at him with sly smiles.

The old man stares in shock at his own ethereal body. He SCREAMS as he shoots up and away.

EXT. MCGITTY'S HOUSE - SAME

His screams continue as he soars through the roof and into the sky, joining a flow of spirits towards the Afterlife.

INT. MCGITTY'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Porter catches sight of himself in a MIRROR... he looks like the walking dead. Literally.

Porter looks at his hands - they're rotting before his eyes.

PORTER
What time is it?

He checks his watch... not much time left.

EXT. MCGITTY'S HOUSE/STREET - EVENING

Porter limps down the driveway. He looks like a cadaver.

EXT. FACTORY - MOMENTS LATER

Porter lopes like a hunchback. No hair. Flesh peeling from his face. Hands and arms are turning to bone and gristle.

EXT. THE WELL - MOMENTS LATER

He feebly digs through the leaves around the well... searching for a switch. He falls back in exhaustion.

... and then there it is - a keyhole, glinting in the stone.

He musters some strength, inserts the key, turns. Drags himself to the rim as the water rapidly recedes -

He throws himself in.

INT. TRANSPORT ROOM - UNDERWORLD - MOMENTS LATER

Porter emerges from the GLASS VAT. Still out of breath.

REVERSE TO Floyd smiling... around him a phalanx of Reapers and Technicians - including Agents 1&2. They burst into APPLAUSE AND CHEERS: Porter's conquered the beast.

Porter stands before them buck naked.

PORTER
(sotto)
Roll out the band, why don't ya.

The crowd parts, revealing Haliday. She surveys the room, a restrained smile on her face.

Porter hastily cups his bits and pieces, shoots her a smile.

HALIDAY

Mr. Porter, fantastic work. You've got a promising future with us -

AN ANGRY VOICE INTERRUPTS.

VOICE O.S.

Haliday!

All assembled turn to the catwalk above and behind Porter.

VOICE O.S. (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

I want a fucking explanation.

Porter finally turns and stifles his reaction.

REVERSE TO MOT, THE GRIM REAPER SKELETON PICTURED IN THE EXHIBIT.

His joints are held together by hinges, servos and wires, all powered by a battery where his heart would be.

He bounds down the stairs, chock full of angry energy. His voice booms from a voice box in his throat.

MOT

You stepped over the line this time, you pencil pushing bitch.

Haliday maintains her serene smile.

HALIDAY

Mr. Mot -

Mot looks to Porter... who tries to look anywhere but at him.

HALIDAY (CONT'D)

I hope you don't mind, but I took it upon myself to sign Mr. Porter. He's a diamond in the rough -

Mot puts a bony finger in Haliday's face.

MOT

Bullshit. I've read his file. He's definitely your type of guy... but he is not Reaper material -

HALIDAY

I would have to disagree. He just accomplished something that scores of your men have failed to. Poor Mr. McGitty is proof of that.

Mot reacts.

HALIDAY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

I would even venture to say that Mr. Porter could have a future as an executive -

MOT

You do not have the authority to recruit without my input. And you don't have the authority to dictate future plans. Things have run just fine for a long time and I'd prefer they stayed the same.

(beat)

This is a partnership between our departments, not your goddamned kingdom.

HALIDAY

Whatever you say, Mr. Mot.

Haliday gestures to the crowd.

HALIDAY (CONT'D)

Even your men seem to agree that he's conducted himself rather well. Wouldn't you say he at least deserves a chance after such a spectacular showing... ?

Mot glares at his AGENTS. Some look away uncomfortably.

He stands for a moment, simmering. Stares daggers at Haliday.

MOT

Porter. Change and meet me outside. We'll get to know each other.

(beat)

We'll continue this later, Haliday.

HALIDAY

(enigmatic smile)

I'm sure we will.

EXT. STREET - UNDERWORLD - EVENING

Rain comes down in sheets as MOT and Porter weave through PROTESTERS. MOT wears a coat and hat - walks with an umbrella, whacking each person who steps in his way.

MOT

Make a lane, dammit.

Mot leads Porter through a warren of narrow lanes.

MOT (CONT'D)

Let's get this straight... you heard what I said to the lovely Miss Haliday? I meant it all. A man with your record is undesirable.

Porter looks away, irked.

MOT (CONT'D)

So you know, I'll be your section chief... you'll be reporting to me for the next fifty odd years, so lets try to get along.

PORTER

What about Haliday -

MOT

She's the administrative side - I, on the other hand, do the real work. Good enough for you?

PORTER

Sure, fine.

MOT

I won't deny it, you did great work with McGitty. We were after that prick for years. But if it weren't for that geriatric bastard, you would be out on your ass. Got it?

He stops walking for a moment. Stares at Porter, who forces himself look Mot in the 'eye'.

PORTER

I never did anything worse than what you boys are doin' -

MOT

What we do is for the good of everyone, Porter. That's the difference.

PORTER

I'm sick of this judgemental crap.
 Maybe I'm not the same man I was.
 But, I never really got a chance to
 prove that, now did I?

MOT

So... you broke out of prison to
 prove you're a changed man?

Porter bites his tongue.

MOT (CONT'D)

We've got a decent apartment for
 you on the other side of town. I
 figured we'd take a short detour on
 the way... hope you don't mind.

EXT. RED LIGHT DISTRICT - MOMENTS LATER

Stuffed to the gills with DRUNKEN MEN AND WOMEN - MANY
 FREAKISHLY MAIMED, soaking their sorrows.

Neon lights and signs adorn a variety of bars and cafes
 BLARING ALL TYPES OF MUSIC.

Women of the night ply their wares behind red-lit glass. It's
 like Bourbon Street, re-imagined by Tim Burton.

MOT

Beats Stateville, don't it?

Porter stares in awe.

PORTER

I had no idea...

MOT

That you could have this much fun
 when you're dead?

He points to a couple of WOMEN on the curb.

MOT (CONT'D)

They look dead to you?

They smile and giggle at him.

PORTER

Not at all.

Mot leaves Porter to stare longingly. It's been a while.

Mot waits in front of a shop, its sign: 'Communicate With the Living, Any Seance Worldwide'.

Behind them, the door opens, an CRYING WOMAN exits, comforted by A FRIEND. Deeper in the room we glimpse kiosks of Ham Radio equipment, like an antique internet cafe. PATRONS sit hunched over the equipment.

MOT

It's only another level of existence. Also a physical world.

PORTER

I see what you mean.

MOT

How about a drink?

EXT. THREE SISTERS BAR - RED LIGHT DISTRICT - MOMENTS LATER

A SMALL JAZZ COMBO BELTS OUT SOME TUNES from a corner riser.

A packed room - mostly SERVICEMEN OF ALL NATIONALITIES. Early casualties of the war. Many maimed.

Elsewhere, MANGLED WAITERS serve cocktails.

Mot and Porter sit at a corner booth with beers.

PORTER

Can I ask you something?

MOT

Shoot.

PORTER

Who killed me?

MOT

Wouldn't you like to know.

PORTER

Yeah. I would.

MOT

You know what, pal. Some poor sap was just doin' his job - the same job you're now doin', I may add.

PORTER

I had plans. For a fucking life -

MOT

We all did. Grow up and stop taking it personally.

Porter leans back, glowers. Mot tries to smooth it over.

MOT (CONT'D)

So. You run into anyone interesting up there?

Porter takes a slow sip of his beer.

PORTER

Yeah, this cop and this whore... a real freak show -

MOT

Cute redhead and a big dumb palooka?

PORTER

Yeah...

MOT

She's an Angel. I used to know her. Back when I did the wet-work like you young kids.

PORTER

The old whore was an Angel...?

MOT

Yep, wings and all.

(beat)

I hate that other guy. A Demon and a smug motherfucker on top of it -

A waiter passes... he's missing his lower jaw.

MOT (CONT'D)

Buddy, could we get some cashews when you got a chance?

He ambles off. Porter can't help but stare.

MOT (CONT'D)

They usually don't affect us. They love playin' their games with each other. Whisperin' in people's ears, manipulating free will -

PORTER

Come on. You're saying they had a hand in my free will?

(MORE)

PORTER (CONT'D)

I don't remember one of those crazies whisperin' in my ear, tellin' me to knock over banks -

MOT

Mo Parsons. Sat next to you in seventh grade social studies.

Porter's jaw drops.

MOT (CONT'D)

Oh yeah. I know all about you.

(beat)

Kid always seemed to have a hat on, didn't he? Loved playin' hookie -

PORTER

Said he was sensitive to the sun...

MOT

They love to start on 'em young.

Porter stares off into space - remembering.

MOT (CONT'D)

Anyway. Make sure you watch yourself with their kind - stay alert. They're one reason we have 'glitches'. They'll do anything to keep you from their golden geese.

PORTER

Golden geese?

Mot looks to the Nazis at the bar.

MOT

Yeah. Take Herr Fuhrer. You think there's no Demons at work over there in the Fatherland? You think Goebbels doesn't have a pointy set of horns under that wig? Doing his bit to influence an entire nation?

PORTER

Give me a break...

MOT

The problem is when these sonsofbitches start interfering with the natural order. They start helping these people live a little longer. They try to keep us at bay, protect their investments.

A WOMAN suddenly screams from O.S. They look over.

AT THE BAR - the GERMAN AND BRITISH SOLDIERS are at each other's throats. Throwing insults and punches.

A stool is thrown - and the bar erupts in chaos.

MOT (CONT'D)

I do hate these freaking wahoos.
Let's get outta here.

EXT. RED LIGHT DISTRICT - LATER

Haliday and Porter walk from the bar. Behind them, a window shatters - a COUPLE FIGHTING SOLDIERS tumble to the sidewalk.

PADDY WAGONS arrive, sirens wailing. POLICE run to the bar.

MOT

You shoulda seen me. Stalking
through those medieval villages.
(beat, sigh)
Christ, I miss it. We kept
everything running like clockwork.

PORTER

According to Haliday, everything
seems to be running fine -

MOT

Bullshit. Haliday and her people
stopped processing the souls
correctly. They started using
arrivals as slave labor. For
Christ's sake - this place is
supposed to be a shanty town, not a
metropolis. Temporary shacks and
tents turned into shopping plazas
and apartment blocks.

(beat)

I mean we used to have a training
program, for the love of god. She
ditched that too.

They've reached a small, decrepit TENEMENT off an alleyway.
Mot opens the door for Porter.

PORTER

To be honest, I just want to do my
bit and get the hell out. Whatever's
going on is none of my business -

MOT

Wrong, Porter. It is your business. This place is about the big picture. We're here to do one job and that's maintain order.

PORTER

Maybe back in the day, Mot. But, honestly, you ever think you've been here a little too long? Maybe you should be doin' your bit to get out on good behavior too -

Mot puts a up boney hand - shutting Porter up.

MOT

What I'm trying to say is don't listen to Haliday. No matter what she promises you. She and the Corporation stand for nothing but evil. She and her people may put on a show of working with us, but they've got plans to screw the human race.

Porter sighs, bored.

MOT (CONT'D)

Yeah, big yawn you idiot. Soon we're going to do something about her and the Corporation. When that happens, even a man like you is gonna to have to choose a side.

Mot flips Porter the keys - hitting him in the chest.

MOT (CONT'D)

Apartment 201. See you tomorrow.

And then he's gone - footsteps echo in the alley.

EXT. COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT - MORNING

There's a new sense of chaos and urgency as Police disperse the protesters... something's happened. Porter moves to a barricade, flashes his ID to an OFFICER.

INT. COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT - RECEPTION - MOMENTS LATER

A group of police loiter, a PLAINCLOTHES interviews the receptionists.

INT. CATWALK/THE PIT

On the floor, Agents stand in line to be fingerprinted.
Porter turns away as Mot runs past and down the stairs.

PORTER
What happened?

Mot barely acknowledges him. Porter follows.

INT. PIT FLOOR - SAME

Haliday supervises as POLICE detain MORGAN, a tall, sandy haired agent. A few Agents crowd around.

Mot storms onto the scene. His Reapers surround him as they face off against Haliday and her SECURITY MEN. It's tense.

MOT
What are you doing?

HALIDAY
Mr. Morgan assisted the escapee.

Mot briefly locks eyes with Morgan, Haliday notices.

MOT
Bullshit. Why the hell would he do that? Beside's the only one who knows London, I need him to hunt down the escapee -

HALIDAY
I'm not stupid, Mot. A Reaper escaped last night, I doubt that he accessed those machines without being noticed. I'm sure another Reaper helped him.

She eyes the Reapers behind him.

HALIDAY (CONT'D)
Maybe more than one Reaper.

A tense beat as Haliday and Mot stare at one another.

MOT
(chuckles)
Hypothetically... what if we all did turn a blind eye?

Haliday tenses.

HALIDAY

That would be serious, Mr. Mot.

MOT

But not quite as bad as using your position for your own gain. Right?

For once, Haliday loses her cool.

HALIDAY

I have no idea what you're talking about.

(beat, flustered)

Regardless, we still have an escapee on the loose. Even you'd agree that he needs to be captured before he causes even greater harm -

MOT

Sorry, Haliday, but Morgan's the only Agent for London. None of these men signed on for London and I won't make them go.

Haliday takes note of Porter coming down the stairs.

HALIDAY

We'll have to get a volunteer then.

MOT

Sure.

(turns to his men)

Anyone want to volunteer?

The Reapers stare silently, defiantly.

MOT (CONT'D)

Sorry, Haliday. Doesn't look like you have any takers -

HALIDAY

How about you, Mr. Porter?

The crowd parts to reveal Porter, surprised - standing at the rear of the group. Everyone looks to him.

PORTER

Excuse me?

HALIDAY

Would you like to volunteer for London, Mr. Porter?

Mot glares at Porter. Haliday flashes a dazzling smile...

PORTER
 Sorry, I'm lost... who's in London?

HALIDAY
 The escapee is a former Reaper. Mr. Grissom. For some reason, he decided to go to Earth rather than be reincarnated.

Porter looks at her quizzically.

PORTER
 ... the guy who just retired?

HALIDAY
 You remember. Excellent.

Porter takes in the hostile glares of the Reapers surrounding him... this may not be the best moment to work with Haliday.

PORTER
 I don't know about this -

HALIDAY
 You may be interested to know that Grissom's final collection was you.

PORTER
 What did you just say?

Mot and the Reapers turn to Haliday in shock.

MOT
 You smarmy fuck.

The skeleton moves to strangle her. Security Men move to defend Haliday as his Reapers pull him back. She's loving it.

HALIDAY
 Fancy a jaunt in London?

PORTER
 Sign me up.

Mot turns to Porter, shakes his head an emphatic 'No'.

MOT
 He's too green to go after Grissom.

HALIDAY
 Which is precisely why he is right for the task. His recent arrival puts him beyond suspicion... unlike you and your men.

MOT

Porter, don't do it. What did I
tell you last night?

Haliday leads Morgan and the Security away. Turns to Porter.

HALIDAY

Mr. Floyd will bring you up to
speed and supply you with all the
necessary equipment.

Mot helplessly stares at Porter, before he storms back up the
stairs. The remaining Reapers continue to stare.

PORTER

What the fuck are you looking at?

INT. TRANSPORT ROOM - LATER

Floyd powers up a machine as Porter rapidly strips.

PORTER

(mumbles angrily)
Motherfucker. Toasting me on his
way out... sonofagoddambitch--

Porter steps into the machine. Moves to shut the door -

Floyd stops him... puts up a finger, 'just a moment'.

PORTER (CONT'D)

Come on -

Floyd heaves an ancient lock-box into view, wrenches it open:
Nestled inside is a STRANGE HIGH-TECH, YET ANTIQUE GUN. A
cross between a musket and a flamethrower.

PORTER (CONT'D)

What's this piece of shit?

FLOYD

Portable incinerator.

Porter smiles like a little kid as Floyd pulls it out.

PORTER

No shit? Go Buck Rogers, go...

FLOYD

For escapees only. The last resort.

PORTER

Tell me why you even bother with
pistols and knives. Why not do 'em
all with this?

FLOYD

Because everyone in the underworld
would look like Mot.

Porter reacts. Floyd nods, puts the gun back in the box.

PORTER

Don't I need that?

FLOYD

This one's for the museum. You get
yours in London.

Floyd slams the door shut.

FLOYD (CONT'D)

Happy hunting.

Porter winces as the machine powers up...

CUT TO:

A BLOOD RED MOON -

The DRONE OF ENGINES GROWING CLOSER... the moon is suddenly
eclipsed by a twin-engine HEINKEL, A GERMAN BOMBER.

It's joined by a swarm of bombers - attended to by smaller,
Messerschmitt fighters, zipping in and out of the formation.

PAN DOWN TO -

EXT. LONDON - EVENING

Covered by clouds and smoke. Through a break we see raging
fires. Thousands of BARRAGE BALLOONS pepper the skyline.

SUPER: LONDON, ENGLAND

The bombers pass as bomb-bay doors open: FREEING THOUSANDS OF
SCREAMING MISSILES on the city below.

WE MOVE DOWN AT AN ANGLE TO THE CITY. Passing through the
bombs... moving around Barrage Balloons.

Towards streets lit by flame and flash - Hell on Earth.

EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Ash flakes fall like fresh snow.

IN THE CHURCHYARD - A wooden cover falls from an old well...

Porter emerges, dressed in a British military uniform.

EXT. LONDON - STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Porter ambles along a narrow street, struggling to illuminate a map with his flashlight.

CLOSE ON a small slip of paper in his hand: Grissom.
Trafalgar Square. Nelson's Column - 11:15.

Porter checks his watch, counting down from three hours.

He glances in confusion from the map to bombed out street corners. It's impossible to navigate with half the city gone.

He slips the address in his sock... as he spies a mound of rubble with a wheel sticking out. Clears some bricks away, exposing one word - 'Harley'.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

With a RUMBLE, Porter and his bike slowly bump and weave through cratered streets and piles of bricks.

He passes a partially collapsed house, exposed upper floors.

ON THE SECOND FLOOR -

A MATCH FLARES in the darkness - half illuminating a man's mangled face. He lights a cigarette... watching.

Porter glimpses someone ducking into shadows. He checks the 'Incinerator Gun', strapped to his chest.

BEHIND HIM - Three figures cross the street.

A ROCK smacks him in the back of the head. He slams on the brakes. A SNICKERING LAUGH comes from the darkness...

He's hit by a LARGER ROCK, from the opposite direction...

PORTER
For the love of God.

A few deeper, more sinister guffaws. A FAMILIAR, RASPY
COCKNEY VOICE CALLS OUT - their Leader.

LEADER (O.S.)
Is the Reaper lost?

Porter freezes as he sees a silhouetted man in a knit cap smoking a cigarette on a rickety balcony.

OTHER VOICES (O.S.)
(sing song)
A little lamb, lost in the woods.

Porter grasps a pistol in his waistband.

LEADER
Would you please shut up.
(beat)
Where you headed to, Reaper? You
lookin' for your friend?

PORTER
My friend?

A chorus of cackles and catcalls. Porter feels very exposed.

LEADER
You're a Yank.

PORTER
You're sharp.

More LAUGHTER. More shadows close in.

LEADER (O.S.)
My, my. This ain't just any Yank,
he's the one I told you about.
(to Porter)
Heard about McGitty, that poor sod.

Porter reacts - tries to figure out who this is.

LEADER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
A long way from Chicago, ain't ya?

The voice suddenly sounds familiar to Porter.

PORTER
Do I know you?

More sinister laughter.

LEADER (O.S.)
I'm offended. Americans and their
manners.
(to Porter)
You really don't remember, eh?

Nearby EXPLOSIONS STROBE THE SCENE. Porter spots dozens of shapes moving through the rubble. They're flanking him.

PORTER

Maybe just tell me where I can find
my friend, and I'll be gone.

A few chuckles from the darkness.

LEADER (O.S.)

He got away.

The fire brightens, flames illuminating the Leader's mangled face - IT'S NIGEL, THE DEMON FROM CHICAGO.

Porter reacts. Nigel and his Demons laugh maniacally.

LEADER/NIGEL

Looks like you're gettin' yer
memory back, eh?

Nigel removes his cap... revealing his stubby set of horns.

Porter's face falls. He guns the engine, hopping over debris, through a rain of bricks thrown from every direction.

Dozens of dark shapes chasing him are illuminated by firelight: battle-scarred demons. ANOTHER GROUP melts from the shadows ahead.

Porter turns the bike. Now speeding into -

EXT. NARROW ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Between two teetering tenements. The side-car sparks off trash-bins. He skids into a dead end.

Demons toss everything down on him from the rooftops... pots, pans, dishes. More round the corner at the entrance, boxing him in.

He reaches down, unhooks the side-car. Spins in circles, trying to make a hard target.

ON THE ROOFTOP - A GIANT DEMON tosses an IRON BATHTUB.

It grazes his head... PUNCHES A HOLE IN THE OPPOSITE WALL. The wall shudders... A GROAN as it slowly collapses outward.

Porter twists the throttle, launches himself through the gaping hole before the wall can collapse on him...

INT. TENEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Porter negotiates a rickety apartment hallway - the bathtub's caused a domino effect, destabilizing an already unstable building that's accordioneing on his heels...

... he launches through a window straight ahead.

EXT. ANOTHER NARROW ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Porter flies across the alley, gets a glimpse of the pursuing mob before landing through a hole in the building next door -

INT. HOSPITAL - OPERATING THEATER - CONTINUOUS

He lands hard on the shredded parquet with a LOUD CRACK.

Porter barely has time to register where he is, before the abused flooring gives way...and then a loooooong drop.

INT. HOSPITAL - MORGUE - CONTINUOUS

Porter bellyflops hard on a steel table. The bike clatters nearby, engine still running.

He rolls over.

To his left - BLUE EYES stare back. Porter rolls off the table. The eyes belong to a naked, obese man. Dead and rotting. A SAW PROTRUDES FROM HIS CHEST, SCALPELS NEARBY - the man was mid-autopsy when the place was abandoned.

OTHER BODIES lay rotting on exam tables around the room.

VOICES ABOVE. He looks to a pair of doors. He checks for his pistol... missing. The I-Gun is safe, strapped to his chest.

HEAVY BOOTS now echo in the hall -

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Some Demons move down the hall - spiked bats and pistols in hand. They come to a door marked 'Morgue' - kick it open.

INT. HOSPITAL - MORGUE - CONTINUOUS

They look around the room - the bike on its side, still running. The Fat Man... the SAW AND SCALPELS NOW MISSING. They spread out, checking bodies, refrigerated drawers.

NIGEL (O.S.)
Check every floor.

ANOTHER DEMON shines a light on the Fat Man, moves away... he hears a SMALL GROAN.

He whips the light back. Suddenly grunts painfully -

REVEAL - a handful of scalpels pincushion his groin.

Porter's eyes flash under the Fat Man's arm-pit. His arm whips out, embeds the HAND SAW in the Demon's throat.

They struggle for the Demon's gun. The Demon wins, starts emptying it into the Fat Man. BOOM - BOOM - BOOM.

Porter rolls the obese corpse onto the Demon, crushing him. THE OTHER DEMONS OPEN FIRE. Rounds puncturing other corpses.

Porter scrambles under the tables to his bike. Flips it over, jumps on - hits the gas, slams through the double doors.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Porter brakes. Demons have set up a roadblock at the other end. Loud footsteps behind him.

He REVS THE ENGINE. Rockets towards the mob, who've turned nervous... Until, PUTT, PUTT, PING. The bike loses power. With a final SPUTTER, dies. Porter taps the gas gauge.

The bike coasts to a stop as more come up behind him.

NOTHING LEFT TO DO BUT GRIN.

INT. HOSPITAL - MORGUE - MOMENTS LATER

The double doors fly open. The Demons drag Porter into the room, throw him onto a table and hold him down.

Nigel saunters in.

PORTER
Told you that I'd be seein' ya -

NIGEL
You remember me now, huh?

PORTER
Sure I do, tiny -

Nigel punches him. Porter's coat falls open, revealing the I-Gun. Nigel rips it off his chest, throws it aside.

NIGEL
Why're you in London, Reaper?

PORTER
Thought I'd see the sights. You
know, Big Ben, London Bridge -

Nigel shakes his head, punches him again.

Nigel turns, methodically picks surgical tools.

PORTER (CONT'D)
I thought your beat was Chicago -

NIGEL
It's all about numbers, boy. We
don't have enough to be everywhere -
we go where the action is. And a
war-torn city is a gold mine for
recruits, you know.

A dumb oaf, BRUCE, picks the I-Gun from the floor. Handles it like a souvenir... Porter looks at it longingly.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
Where's Morgan, the regular man?

PORTER
Vacation.

NIGEL
Strange to send a new man up to the
middle of a war-zone... not to
mention a Yank who doesn't even
know the city.
(beat)
Don't ya think, Harry?

HARRY, a short, pudgy Demon nods.

NIGEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
What's goin' on in HQ, Reaper?

PORTER
Nothin' much, pretty slow actually -

NIGEL
Sounds like lies. Don't it Harry?

Harry nods. Porter stays silent.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
 You know, back in the old days,
 we'd trap one of you buggers easy.
 That wasn't the hard part.

Nigel grabs a blood-crusted bone-saw and scalpel.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
 The nasty bit was keepin' you
 trapped. We'd get bored, let you
 escape. Track you down for kicks.

Moves to Porter.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
 Threw one bastard into the Thames,
 ball on each ankle. Chained his
 wrists. Back in... fifteen-hundred
 and sixty-three I think -

Harry pipes in.

HARRY
 Sixty-one.

NIGEL
 Shut up, Harry. Sixty-three.
 (beat)
 Wouldn't you know, that Reaper
 gnawed through 'is own ankles like
 a wild animal. Come up on the
 docks, draggin' himself across the
 cobbles on his elbows. Scared the
 poor ladies out of their silks.

Nigel plays with the saw.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
 He made it back to 'is well - but
 couldn't open the door to that
 incinerator machine on account he
 had no hands. What was 'is name?

They all think on it. After a beat...

HARRY
 Mr. Stumpy.

The group laughs.

NIGEL
 Yeah, I guess it don't matter
 really. His spirit's probly still
 floatin' around 'ere somewhere.

He positions the saw at Porter's shoulder.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
So, your friend.

PORTER
Uh, yeah -

NIGEL
Morgan's got a pleasant way about him. Englishmen are polite. But you Americans... pigs in a perfumery.

He shakes his head in resignation

NIGEL (CONT'D)
Big bloke comes through here an hour before you. Another American. We try to stop him for a friendly chat. He was in a hurry though, not very cordial if you get my meaning. He nearly tears poor Bruce's arm off. Show 'im Bruce.

Bruce steps forward, snuffles as he exposes his forearm: a nasty cut exposing bone. A few Demons pat him on the back.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
(low, threatening)
Also gave me this-

He points to his freshly busted nose.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
He was quick for a fat man. What we want is a lil' revenge, mate. Tell us where we can find 'im.

Porter looks away.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
Bruce needs a little present. Here me boy, make the first slice.

He hands the saw to the sniffing beast.

PORTER
A retired Reaper.

Nigel blinks, as do the rest.

NIGEL
A retired Reaper...

PORTER

The fat one. A retired Reaper. He hijacked the equipment.

Nigel and his men trade quizzical looks.

NIGEL

Why would a retired Reaper do that?

PORTER

I don't know.

Nigel nods to Bruce, who makes to saw...

PORTER (CONT'D)

I don't know. Honest!

NIGEL

Where is he now?

The floor creaks as the Demons move closer, murder in their eyes. Porter pauses a beat, gets angry.

PORTER

You come with me, you can do what you want with the fat one. As long as you kill him, I'm happy -

NIGEL

Where you gettin' him? When?

PORTER

Westminster. Eleven-fifteen.

Nigel grabs the saw, jams it under Porter's jaw.

NIGEL

Where in Westminster?

PORTER

(choking)
Get me there first.

Nigel saws into his neck. Porter gasps in pain.

PORTER (CONT'D)

(barely intelligible)
You help me, I help you. Win-win.

NIGEL

Come on Reaper. Where?

Porter's gasping in pain.

PORTER
 (even less intelligible)
 Fuck - you -

Nigel pushes in, sawing into Porter's throat. He gets a murderous look in his eye...

NIGEL
 (gritted teeth)
 Maybe we don't need to find him.
 You'll do just fine...

The Demons look at one another uncertainly, then at Harry.

Porter closes his eyes, waiting for the final cut...

Harry clears his throat. Nigel ignores him.

HARRY
 Sir.

NIGEL
 What?!

Harry demures.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
 Out with it.

HARRY
 Shouldn't we put it to a vote?

Porter opens his eyes a crack - hopeful. Nigel sighs with exasperation... he looks to his Demons.

NIGEL
 A vote.

They all shift uncomfortably, nod in silent agreement.

Nigel shakes his head in frustration.

EXT. THAMES RIVER - LATER

Warehouses burn and crumble dock-side. A few flaming barges and ships drift in the tide. A small, flat barge glides under the shadow of LONDON BRIDGE.

INT. BARGE - CONTINUOUS

Porter is bound with rope, sitting uncomfortably close to Bruce. Porter focuses on the I-Gun, sitting in the oaf's lap.

They sit amidst a group of armed Demons glaring at him.

Nigel stands on the prow: a demonic George Washington smiling at the chaos. Loving it.

Porter longingly stares at the passing river, turns to Harry -

PORTER
You ever fish around here?

Harry looks at him strangely.

EXT. WESTMINSTER - STREET - LATER

All looks quiet - until a DEMON SCOUT melts from the shadows. He looks up the street to a large park. Inside the park is -

EXT. ABANDONED CARNIVAL - CONTINUOUS

Untouched by bombs. Wind moans eerily through the darkened rides, whipping tattered banners and tent-flaps. A ghost carnival - long abandoned since the bombing began.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

A hundred feet behind the Scout, dozens more DEMONS melt from the shadows, quickly and silently following his lead.

Bruce is at the rear, pulls a tightly bound Porter by a rope.

EXT. CARNIVAL - CONTINUOUS

Nigel signals to the scout to climb the FERRIS WHEEL... then pulls Harry, Bruce and Porter into a tent.

INT. CARNIVAL TENT - MOMENTS LATER

A small tent, filled with jars of stale candy.

PORTER
How far to Westminster?

NIGEL
This is it. What's the address?

PORTER
Someplace on Charing Cross Road.

NIGEL

That's a long road. How about a
cross street -

PORTER

Memory's a little fuzzy right now -

Nigel nods to Bruce, he slugs Porter across the jaw.

Porter goes down, gets yanked back up and slugged again.

Bruce lets him drop through the back of the tent.

EXT. CARNIVAL TENT - CONTINUOUS

Porter lands hard, his face inches from a LARGE GENERATOR.

'Danger - High Voltage' is painted next to a LARGE SWITCH.
There's a sudden spark in his eyes, the gears are turnin'.

He's abruptly dragged back through the 'wall' -

INT. CARNIVAL TENT - CONTINUOUS

Porter's yanked to his feet in front of Nigel.

NIGEL

Address.

PORTER

I think I'm brain damaged.

Bruce looks to Nigel, who shakes his head.

NIGEL

Keep an eye on him.

Nigel leaves the tent...

EXT. FERRIS WHEEL - SAME

THE SCOUT watches with a spyglass from the top-most carriage.

SPYGLASS POV - TWENTY HEAVILY ARMED MEN IN BRITISH UNIFORM.

He frantically signals to everyone below. Recognizes them,
not as British soldiers, but...

EXT. CARNIVAL TENT - CONTINUOUS

Nigel sees the signal.

NIGEL
Fucking Fairies.

He quietly issues commands to his Demons as he strides towards the Ferris Wheel -

The Demons silently hide anywhere possible among the rides.

EXT. FERRIS WHEEL - CONTINUOUS

The Scout hides himself in the nearest carriage.

INT. CARNIVAL TENT - CONTINUOUS

Harry watches through the tent flap as the Demons scramble.

HARRY
(resigned)
Fuckin' Angels.

PORTER
I thought you all got along...

HARRY
Not when we're competin' for the
same souls.

Porter looks to Bruce... standing a few feet away, struggling with the lid on an enormous jar of gumballs.

Harry continues to watch through the tent-flap.

EXT. CARNIVAL - CONTINUOUS

Silent and seemingly empty.

ON THE FERRIS WHEEL - Nigel peaks over the top of a carriage.

REVEAL - a group of ANGELS move into the carnival. ARMED, BATTLE-HARDENED MEN AND WOMEN, a fascist force of God LED BY NONE OTHER THAN THE ANGEL/HOOKER FROM MCGITTY'S.

We see wing protrusions on their backs, under their coats...

INT. CARNIVAL TENT - CONTINUOUS

Harry slowly closes the tent flap, holds his breath.

Porter quietly grabs the I-Gun strap between his teeth, taking the gun with him as he -

FALLS BACKWARDS, through the thin tent wall, into...

EXT. CARNIVAL TENT - CONTINUOUS

Porter falls onto the GENERATOR LEVER - pulling it down. The GENERATOR SPARKS, SPUTTERS AND CHUGS.

EXT. CARNIVAL - CONTINUOUS

The Angels jump at the noise.

ON THE FERRIS WHEEL - Nigel is startled as well.

INT. CARNIVAL TENT - CONTINUOUS

Harry and Bruce run to the generator noise at the back of the tent. They stare helplessly at Porter's receding back as he runs into the adjacent park.

EXT. PARK - CONTINUOUS

He runs through the grass, screaming through gritted teeth - the heavy gun swinging wildly.

EXT. CARNIVAL - CONTINUOUS

The carnival lights up in all its glory.

RUST AND GRIME FLAKE FROM RIDES SPINNING AND TWIRLING FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MONTHS, ORGAN MUSIC BLARES FROM EVERY SPEAKER.

It's suddenly May Day in the middle of the Blitzkrieg!

The Angels are even more shocked at the appearance of the Demons, screaming in fear, some spinning on the faster rides.

ON THE FERRIS WHEEL - Nigel rises higher, spots Porter. He leaps down, hopping from carriage to carriage in pursuit.

EXT. ROOFTOP - SAME

A BRITISH MILITARY SPOTTER lowers his binoculars. He's joined by OTHER SOLDIERS. They gape at the spectacle.

EXT. STREET - SAME

Up and down the street, black out curtains part - faces appear from shelters, all staring at the lights.

IN ONE WINDOW, a couple small children clap with glee.

EXT. CARNIVAL - SAME

The Demons that aren't stuck on rides come out of the woodwork, attacking the Angels with anything at hand.

A DEMON and ANGEL are locked in hand to hand combat.

ANOTHER DEMON slashes the Angel in the back, tearing the coat and allowing a billowing, feathery wing to erupt from the hole. It flaps wildly as the Angel tries to take to the air.

EXT. CARNIVAL - FERRIS WHEEL - SAME

The Scout rises in his carriage, above the din of the fight.

He hears an ENGINE DRONE as he rises to the top of the wheel. He glimpses a fresh wave of German bombers between clouds.

DEMON SCOUT

Shit.

INT. GERMAN BOMBER - SAME

Five thousand feet above the debacle below... a BOMBARDIER sits hunched over a viewfinder.

BOMBARDIER'S P.O.V.: Nothing but darkness. And then, CLOUDS PART TO REVEAL the full blown carnival.

He happily hums the tune of 'It's a Long Way to Tipperary' as he PUSHES A RED BUTTON.

EXT. PARK - SAME

Porter runs awkwardly, his arms still bound to his sides. Behind him, Nigel is gaining.

REVEAL a street sign reading CHARING CROSS ROAD

EXT. CARNIVAL - SAME

DEMON SCOUT
Incoming!!

A chorus of high-pitched screams pierces the night.

The combatants stop abruptly, look to the sky... and scatter.

AND THEN THE BOMBS IMPACT.

AT THE FERRIS WHEEL

The Scout leaps to safety - but not fast enough.

An explosion dislodges the Ferris Wheel from its moorings, sending it rolling over him and a few others...

EXT. PARK - CONTINUOUS

Bombs obliterate the carnival behind Porter and Nigel.

Porter looks over his shoulder... eyes widen in terror. He gets a sudden boost of adrenaline.

Nigel turns towards the growing rumble behind him.

The Ferris Wheel rolls into the park - right on their heels.

Porter pulls his arms from the ropes as he runs through a stand of giant oaks and onto the street beyond...

But Nigel is farther behind. Almost reaches the trees, as the wheel rolls over him...and groans to a stop. The dense trees have stopped the giant wheel. The oaks creak from the weight.

A familiar voice fades over the scene. Aged but defiant:

WINSTON CHURCHILL (V.O.)
(filtererd)
...therefore we must regard the
next week or so as a very important
period in our history.

EXT. ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL - CONTINUOUS

The famous image of the stately dome rising over a sea of smoke and fire, yet seemingly untouched by the destruction.

WE DESCEND TO -

EXT. LONDON NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

FIREFIGHTERS struggle to extinguish a mountain of flames.

An imposing figure in a dark coat and hat walks toward us unconcerned... somewhat mechanically.

WINSTON CHURCHILL

(filtered)

It ranks with the days when the Spanish Armada was approaching the Channel,

The flames illuminate his metallic, mannequin's face.

WINSTON CHURCHILL (V.O.)

(filtered)

...and Drake was finishing his game of bowls. Or when Nelson stood between us and Napoleon's Grand Army at Boulogne.

INT. CABINET WAR ROOMS - WHITEHALL - CONTINUOUS

A warren of bunkers built deep underground to house Churchill and his advisors during the German Blitz.

A large map covers a far wall, showing Nazi dominated Europe.

WINSTON CHURCHILL (V.O.)

(filtered)

We have read all about this in the history books. But what is happening now is on a far greater scale -

A wall clock reads 11:10...

We move past military clerks manning the offices. Find a -

EXT. SMALL RADIO STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

A small ON-AIR sign is red-lit over the door.

Through dim light and clouds of cigar smoke - a squat elderly man sits in shadow at a desk, cigar in hand. He speaks animatedly into a microphone. This is WINSTON CHURCHILL.

WINSTON CHURCHILL (O.S.)
 (filtered)
 - and of far more consequence to
 the life and future of the world
 and its civilisation than those
 brave old days.

His speech finishes, the on-air sign goes dark.

AN UPBEAT BBC ANNOUNCER takes over as CHURCHILL'S SECRETARY
 (a small, priggish man) respectfully waits outside the studio
 with the Prime Minister's coat and hat.

Churchill gets to his feet with the aid of a cane.

BBC ANNOUNCER O.S. (FILTERED)
 Ladies and gentlemen, the Honorable
 Prime Minister, Sir Winston
 Churchill.

EXT. TRAFALGAR SQUARE - MOMENTS LATER

On one side of the square, war's wraith: flattened buildings,
 a GIANT MOBILE CRANE WITH WRECKING BALL sits amidst the
 destruction. The crane arm sways above the traffic...

On the other side of the square: Londoners staying true to
 the wartime phrase, 'business as usual'. Cars pack the
 streets, citizens and soldiers crowd the bars, clubs and
 cafes. The lights are low but London nightlife is booming.

WE FIND PORTER entering the square, exhausted and confused by
 the dichotomy. He checks his watch - one hour left.

He drags himself towards the center, Nelson's Column.

INT. CHURCHILL'S CAR - SAME

Churchill rides in the back, face covered in shadow. His
 Secretary up front with the DRIVER.

SECRETARY
 Sir, we'll be attending Scrabble
 night at Lady Astor's -

CHURCHILL
 No. I won't.

SECRETARY
 Sir -

CHURCHILL
I'll visit the men. I won't play
Scrabble while there's a fight on.

SECRETARY
Sir -

CHURCHILL
(to the driver)
We'll go to Tower Hill, the anti-
aircraft battery.

EXT. STREET/TRAFALGAR SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Churchill's car moves into the square. Stops behind traffic.

AIR RAID SIRENS WAIL - drivers become desperate. SHRILL HONKS
erupt from all directions, others leave their cars running.

Churchill's car is dead in the water.

EXT. NELSON'S COLUMN - TRAFALGAR SQUARE - SAME

The crowd goes into panic mode.

Porter momentarily ignores the chaos, reaches into his coat,
cautiously puts his hand on the I-Gun.

PORTER
Where are you, you fuck?

EXPLOSIONS illuminate something that grabs his attention.

A TALL MAN IN BLACK. Mechanically striding against the tide
of running people... something familiar about this guy -

Porter stops his hand-wringing for a moment as the Man
passes, his shadowed face is momentarily illuminated -

IN SLOW MOTION - light glints off of the METALLIC FACE. ITS
OPAQUE EYES MECHANICALLY FOCUS, just like Haliday's robot.

Porter stares as the mechanical Man passes within inches.

BACK TO REAL TIME as it moves towards Churchill's car.

INT. CHURCHILL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Churchill impatiently chews his cigar, watches FLEEING
PEDESTRIANS while his driver tries to get out of the jam.

CHURCHILL
Shall we walk instead?

EXT. TRAFALGAR SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

ANGLE ON THE CRANE - the arm suddenly swings in the direction of Churchill's car, the wrecking ball dangles heavily...

BEFORE THE FOUR TON BALL IS RELEASED WITH AN OMINOUS WHOOSH.

EXT. TRAFALGAR SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

THE MECHANICAL MAN steps towards the rear of Churchill's car - only feet away. The wrecking ball swings past him, inches wide of the mark.

INT. CHURCHILL'S CAR - SAME

The Driver catches sight of the wrecking ball WHOOSHING by in the rearview.

The Driver pauses a moment, mouth agape.

CHURCHILL
(impatient)
What is it?

EXT. TRAFALGAR SQUARE - SAME

Porter watches as the wrecking ball continues on its trajectory - STRAIGHT AT HIM.

He drops to the ground as it swings up and away... He spins to watch its immediate return, gathering destructive speed as it rockets back towards the Mechanical Man.

INT. CHURCHILL'S CAR - SAME

The Driver grinds the gears, desperate to get out of there.

He looks in the rearview: sees the Man approaching the rear window... The wrecking ball flashes back into frame.

This time slamming into the Man and lifting him from the street in one bone crunching swoop.

The Driver turns to stare, can't believe what he just saw. Churchill looks as well, sees nothing at all.

CHURCHILL

What is the bloody matter with you?

The Driver slams it into gear, peels rubber, jumps the curb.

CHURCHILL (CONT'D)

Much better! Excellent driving!

The car speeds down the sidewalk.

EXT. TRAFALGAR SQUARE - SAME

The Man swings on the wrecking ball...

...into a huge, bone jarring BOOOOOOM as the ball slams into a STALLED DOUBLE DECKER BUS - ripping a massive hole in its side and tipping it over.

When the ball swings free, the Man is no longer attached.

Porter cautiously approaches the wrecked bus -

Around him, the Square has quickly emptied, leaving an eerie scene - empty cars, blowing trash and WAILING SIRENS.

AT THE BUS - Porter peers into the windshield...

PORTER

That sonofabitch -

GRISSOM (O.S.)

That seemed too easy.

Porter spins, face-to-face with GRISSOM, peering through the windshield as well.

Porter momentarily forgets what he just saw. Pulls the I-Gun. Grissom is confused, yet calm - he eyes the gun warily.

GRISSOM (CONT'D)

You.

Porter raises the gun menacingly -

PORTER

You.

GRISSOM

Where's Morgan?

PORTER

Arrested.

Grissom reacts - 'oh shit'.

PORTER (CONT'D)
You recognize me, Grissom?

GRISSOM
(cautious)
Sure. You're the new guy.

PORTER
Right, the new guy. Thanks to some fine work you did at Stateville.

GRISSOM
I was just doin' my job, kid. You can't take it personally -

Something heavy shifts inside the bus.

Porter puts his ear to the windshield. His eyes go wide.

GRISSOM (CONT'D)
No way he's waking up from that -

PORTER
I don't think you know what you're dealing with.

Grissom backs away, unsure.

Porter suddenly remembers why he's here, readies the gun - puts Grissom between him and the bus.

PORTER (CONT'D)
Don't move.

VOICE (O.S.)
Oy, mate.

Porter turns and GETS A LEAD PIPE TO THE FACE. He's laid out.

Nigel stands over him, diminutive but vicious. He's bloodied and mangled. A lead pipe in one hand, a nasty cleaver in the other - and a bloodthirsty grin on his face.

He catches sight of Grissom. Smiles even wider.

NIGEL
My lucky night.

The sound of violently wrenching metal erupts from the bus.

Grissom backs further away, drawing Nigel closer to the bus. Nigel stops at the windshield, cocks his head -

BOOM! THE FRONT OF THE BUS EXPLODES AS THE ROBOT BLASTS FREE. Nigel's lost in a shower of shrapnel as he's steam-rolled.

Grissom is knocked on his ass -

The Machine is a chugging juggernaut. LOUD METALLIC, CLANKING footsteps echo with each stride as it speeds away.

Porter struggles to his knees - shakes out the cobwebs.

A BEAT as he and Grissom stare in amazement at the departing figure. Nigel MOANS - a motionless, mangled heap.

GRISSOM

God. Damn.

PORTER

I told you.

Grissom staggers to his feet... sees a MILITARY TRUCK, a tarp covers bulky objects in the flatbed.

He moves to the truck - KEYS dangle from the ignition.

PORTER (CONT'D)

Wait a second, motherfucker.

Grissom hops in, cranks the starter...

PORTER (CONT'D)

We've got something to settle -

Porter runs to the front of the truck. He raises the gun, fires as Grissom hits the gas -

Porter's forced onto the hood as an enormous sheet of white flame erupts from the muzzle... it goes high and wide.

Grissom accelerates, Porter is forced to let go of the gun, IT SLIDES AWAY FROM HIM, DISAPPEARING INTO THE TRUCK'S CAB as he desperately grasps the pane of the folded-down windshield.

ON NIGEL, as the truck kicks dust over his mangled form.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The Machine quickly accelerates to an inhuman speed...

Though its hat stays firmly in place, Its clothing is shredded, giving glimpses of metal beneath the fabric.

INT. CHURCHILL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The Driver glances in the rearview, sees the Machine running some distance behind... and gaining. Concerned, he speeds up.

EXT. STREET - SAME

The Machine is bumped from behind, staggers, loses speed.

REVERSE TO THE truck, Grissom behind the wheel. He strains to see over Porter, still spread-eagle over the hood.

INT. TRUCK - SAME

Grissom checks the speedometer: pushing 70mph.

The Machine keeps running just ahead, but its head rotates to face its attackers. It opens its mouth, revealing A GUN.

Porter gets an inkling as to what's about to happen.

PORTER

Brakes.

Grissom accelerates.

PORTER (CONT'D)

HIT THE FUCKING BRAKES.

The Machine FIRES a mini version of Porter's. A stream of flame misses Grissom and Porter by inches... as the truck clips the Machine again - it wobbles, keeps going.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The Machine, truck and Churchill's car race by, moving into a narrow gorge of damaged buildings.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

GRISSOM

This isn't working -

He eases up on the gas, giving the Machine some room...

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

ON PORTER - every bump threatens to buck him off and under the front tires.

Grissom's hand grasps his wrist, yanks him over the hood.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Porter falls into the passenger side headfirst.

 GRISSOM
 Grab the wheel -

Grissom lets go of the wheel, crawls out onto the hood.

 PORTER
 Are you crazy?

Porter grabs the wheel - moves into the driver's seat.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

A WINCH AND SPOOL OF STEEL CABLE IS BOLTED TO THE BUMPER.

Grissom appears over the grill, grabs the hook-end of the spooled cable.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Grissom falls back between the seats - holding the length of cable. He stomps on Porter's foot, already on the gas.

The truck accelerates -

EXT. STREET/CHURCHILL'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The Machine is feet from the rear window, its mouth opens...

A loop of cable flies into frame, lassos its neck!

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

REVERSE TO GRISSOM, he stomps on the brakes himself -

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The tires SCREEEECH and smoke as the winch's steel cable rapidly unspools -

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The cable goes taut, yanking the Machine backwards, slamming it into the pavement with a CRUNCH. It GRINDS AND SPARKS as its weight and speed maintain momentum.

EXT. TRUCK

The truck grinds to a dead halt.

A hundred feet away - the Machine lays motionless.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Down the street, Churchill's car pulls away, turns a corner.

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Sudden silence as the truck stalls.

Grissom and Porter are fixated on the fallen Machine - its clothing shredded... exposing a steel, piston-like 'leg'.

GRISSOM

What is it?

PORTER

A robot.

GRISSOM

What?!

PORTER

Haliday's pride and joy.

GRISSOM

How the hell do you know?

PORTER

Haliday showed me.

GRISSOM

She did, huh?

Grissom angrily grabs him by the lapels.

Air raid sirens interrupt the conversation. Grissom looks up as search lights illuminate the clouds. Engines drone above.

Porter takes the opportunity to search for his gun - he drops to the floorboards...

Grissom coughs, Porter looks to up see him holding the gun.

GRISSOM (CONT'D)
It'd really burn you to get killed
by me twice, wouldn't it?

Porter lunges for the gun. Grissom nails him in the face with the stock. Porter falls back, clutching his nose.

GRISSOM (CONT'D)
You're new, so I don't think you
knew what you were getting into.

ON THE STREET - Unseen by them, the Machine slowly stirs - like Frankenstein on the slab.

PORTER
Why don't you put the gun down, try
to hit me again -

GRISSOM
Don't know if Haliday told you
this, but she sent that thing to
assassinate someone very important.

The Machine's head swivels around, notes the truck and the cable leading from the winch to its neck. It slowly stands.

GRISSOM (CONT'D)
And I can't leave til it's stopped.

PORTER
Ok. How about I clue you in. Wanna
know what Haliday told me? That's
the future of the Reapers.

Grissom is horrified.

GRISSOM
And you knew about this?

PORTER
Told me it was years off.
(beat)
But who knows - this could be its
trial run. The beginning of the end
of the Reapers, Grissom.

The Machine tugs on the cable, trying to release itself.

Grissom yanks Porter from the driver's seat, frantically turns the starter. Stomps the gas. The Machine continues pulling the stalled truck, rolling it closer.

PORTER (CONT'D)
Hit the brakes.

GRISSOM
I am.

They're separated by less than a hundred feet...

A loud whistling gradually permeates the scene... They look to the sky with dread.

ANGLE ON THE SKY - searchlights slash the clouds, illuminating a single, glinting SILVERY BOMB gracefully cutting the air overhead as it tumbles beautifully.

And then it impacts - neatly slicing through the street between the truck and the Machine.

ANGLE FROM ABOVE - a single, neat hole in the pavement.

The hole suddenly explodes. A house-sized chasm is blown in the street. A wave of debris and dust obscures our view.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

WE FLOAT THROUGH A THICK CLOUD OF DUST...

The two men sit on the edge of the blast crater, shell-shocked. Porter coughs weakly.

No sign of the Machine. The only reminder is the CABLE, loosely extended from the winch, disappearing into the hole.

A SILHOUETTE briefly appears through the swirling dust - only to disappear again... then the dust parts - feet from the truck, revealing NIGEL pedalling a bent bicycle.

He steers with the LEAD PIPE between his teeth, like a psychotic pirate.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Nigel coasts to the truck, jumps off unseen by Porter and Grissom. Stealthily moves to the cargo hold tailgate -

The truck suddenly lurches forward, away from him - stops.

INT. TRUCK - SAME

The cable goes taut, drags the truck forward. Grissom and Porter stare wide-eyed at the chasm.

It teeters on the hole. They frantically search for a handhold to brace themselves for their impending fall...

PORTER
No fucking way.

EXT. CARGO BED - TRUCK - SAME

Nigel finally grabs the tailgate... just as -

INT./EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The truck does an abrupt, full force lurch over the hole. Porter and Grissom scream as the truck pitches into the hole. The truck passes, Nigel hangs out of the tailgate - bug-eyed.

INT. CRATER - CONTINUOUS

The truck plummets. A coaster ride as they bounce and ricochet off the jagged debris - they desperately hang on.

Then abruptly slam home, coming to rest in -

INT. SEWER - CONTINUOUS

A tunnel barely large enough for the truck. Clogged with mud and debris - flowing with fetid waste. The cable stretching into the darkness...

GRISSOM
That wasn't so bad -

The truck jumps forward again - rapidly picks up speed... pulling them into the pitch darkness.

A BRIGHT RED FLARE suddenly lights the dark space -

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

REVEAL Porter is holding a road flare out his window. A ransacked toolbox lies next to him.

They wince at the smell.

PORTER
We're in a goddammed sewer. Where is this thing taking us?

Porter raises the flare higher as -

A HUGE BRICK PILLAR flies into view, directly in their path.

PORTER (CONT'D)

Ahhhhhh!

Grissom turns just in time, sends them into a fishtail.

INT. CARGO BED - TRUCK - SAME

Under the tarp, Nigel tries to crawl to the front. He's whipped around like a ragdoll.

EXT./INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The truck ricochets off the brickwork. Obstacles come fast as Grissom tries to navigate.

PORTER

...it must've found another way.

GRISSOM

What?

PORTER

(a revelation)

It's a Reaper. It misses one ambush, it goes to the next...

Grissom nods wryly... of course.

GRISSOM

Haliday sure did good work, didn't she, Porter?

PORTER

Why would Haliday need to assassinate anyone? Her job is to protect the natural order and crap -

GRISSOM

She doesn't want to protect it. She wants to manipulate it.

The truck squeezes between two pillars, smashing one.

PORTER

Whoah! Watch the walls.

BEHIND PORTER - In the cargo bed, the tarp rises - revealing NIGEL, poised to strike with his iron pipe.

GRISSOM

Good idea.

Grissom wrenches the wheel to the left.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Throwing them into a 100mph sideways skid. The front and back ends touch wall -

They pulverize a series of smaller pillars causing the tunnel to collapse in their wake, filling it with rubble.

Two enormous concrete pillars fly out of the darkness - headed for the passenger side... Porter's side.

PORTER

AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

The truck slams into the pillars with an earthshaking crunch.

INT./EXT. CARGO BED - TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Nigel is launched from behind Porter, dragging the tarp with him as he slams into the pillar with a thud.

INT. TUNNEL - SAME

The 2.5 ton truck is t-boned on the pillars, and wedged between the walls - it's not going anywhere.

The tunnel behind them is choked with debris...

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Porter peels his fingers from the dash.

PORTER

You psychotic sonofabitch.

EXT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Grissom is covered by the tarp. He yanks it off - scrambles onto the hood, takes a look at -

The winch - The cable still taut. Straining, but holding.

GRISSOM

Now we hunt it down -

Porter gets out of the truck.

PORTER
There's no 'we'. I'm leaving.

GRISSOM
Without me? I'm sure Haliday's
gonna love that.

Porter aims the I-Gun at Grissom. Reaches into the fetid water with his other hand, grabs a crusty jug.

PORTER
I'm sure I'll be able to fit most
of you in here.

... UNSEEN BY THEM - Nigel feebly crawls towards Porter.

GRISSOM
As it stands, fifty million people
are going to die in this war.
Haliday wants to quadruple that.

PORTER
Not my problem.

GRISSOM
That thing is on its way to kill
someone who's going to help end
this war -

PORTER
Not my problem, fat man.

GRISSOM
If that person dies, this war will
go on forever. Billions on this
planet will die and not one of
those souls will ever leave the
Underworld. No Heaven, no Hell.
Nothing but work for eternity.

ON NIGEL - as he reacts to that. He takes a look at the cable, still groaning and straining as the machine tries to move forward, somewhere far down the tunnel.

PORTER
You're not making any sense.

The cable suddenly goes slack... as does Nigel's face.

BACK ON GRISSOM -

GRISSOM

You think I came out here on a whim? After all those years on the clock, I was chomping at the bit to visit London? During the blitz?!

Porter shrugs.

GRISSOM (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

I was retired. I could've walked away and been golden. But I didn't.

PORTER

Because you're an idiot.

GRISSOM

Because this is bigger than me. This affects the rest of the human race. For eternity.

Porter looks away.

GRISSOM (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

You may not care about humanity, but I know you care about yourself.

(beat)

If we're replaced by these machines, you've got no future either, Porter.

Porter's deep in thought. His beginning to shift as he considers the implications -

But from down the tunnel... clank, clank, clank.

NIGEL

Oy.

Porter and Grissom turn, surprised at Nigel's presence.

CLANK, CLANK, CLANK - loud, echoing... very close.

NIGEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

It's coming back.

PORTER

Christ...

Grissom checks his surroundings - sees the discarded tarp.

He looks to the cargo bed... his eyes light up.

INT. TUNNEL - A MOMENT LATER

From the darkness... the Machine's footsteps approach. Its face pierces the inky darkness an inch in front of us - illuminated by the flare.

The cable hangs from its neck, knotted from the chase.

It stares intently at PORTER AND NIGEL, caught with nowhere to hide. They freeze, block our view of the truck...

GRISSOM (O.S.)

MOVE.

Porter and Nigel dive to the brown water - REVEALING AN ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN MOUNTED ON THE TRUCK BED.

BETWEEN THE PILLARS, Grissom sits at the controls. He's rotated its FOUR 50 CALIBER GUNS towards the Machine.

He pulls the trigger. RA-TATATATATATATATATATA. A storm of ammo is unleashed as all four muzzles flash and roar.

The Machine stands there, no time to react. Bullets shred its remaining clothing - ricochet off its metal hide. It tries to maneuver, but it can't escape.

ON GRISSOM - RA-TATATA....CLICKCLICKCLICKCLICK.

The guns go silent... PORTER AND NIGEL peek up from the water - the Machine is battered, but still standing.

GRISSOM pulls the trigger once more - CLICK.

GRISSOM (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

RUN.

THE MACHINE closes on the truck - opens its mouth.

Grissom dives from truck as it's enveloped in flame.

Porter finds his flare - Grissom and Nigel follow him deeper into the tunnel.

The Machine turns to the truck, tries to tear the cable free.

INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

The ceiling is dropping lower - almost touching their heads.

Porter and Nigel stumble through the water by the light of the flare. Grissom brings up the rear -

GRISSOM

Keep runnin', it's coming...

They reach a dead-end... but there's an iron grate overhead.

INT. DUNGEON - CONTINUOUS

A darkened room. A sewer grate is pushed from the floor with an echoing clatter.

Porter emerges, followed by Grissom and Nigel - who digs in a pocket, comes up with a zippo and lights it.

Porter flinches as the faint light reveals MEN IN VARIOUS STATES OF TORTURE.

Nigel lights a torch on the wall... the men are wax dummies in a museum reproduction of a medieval dungeon.

PORTER

Where are we?

HIGH ON THE WALL - a tiny, barred window flashes - faint explosions can be heard from outside...

Nigel's in deep thought...

SMASH TO:

BOOM-BOOM-BOOM-BOOM. Bursts of orange flame and smoke.

EXT. TOWER HILL - ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTERY - SAME

WE PULL BACK from the business end of an anti-aircraft gun, surrounded by a ring of sandbags.

A crowd of civilians and members of the Home Guard turn to watch Churchill's sedan skid to a stop behind the battery.

The Driver moves to open the door for Churchill, who's already out and moving.

A CHEER goes up from the onlookers, soldiers snap smart salutes - Churchill waves his hat in gratitude.

REVEAL that we're on a small hill overlooking the Thames. Searchlights, AA flak and burning buildings light up the sky.

In the foreground is the TOWER OF LONDON.

INT. DUNGEON - SAME

NIGEL
We can stop it here.

PORTER
What do you care?

NIGEL
Seems I've got as much to lose from
this as you two.

They snap-to as a heavy, metal groan comes from the tunnel...

INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

The Machine has torn the winch from the bumper. It clatters to the ground, echoing down the tunnel. It's free.

INT. GREAT HALL - CONTINUOUS

Exterior searchlights shine into the dark room through narrow, barred windows near the high ceiling. Illuminating thick stone walls, paintings, shining metal, etc.

Nigel bounds up the staircase and into the room, followed by Porter and Grissom.

He moves towards a recessed -

GATE PASSAGE - A small stone passageway separating the Great Hall from massive oak front doors.

ONE IRON PORTCULLIS hangs above the entrance to the room. ANOTHER IRON PORTCULLIS is on the opposite side of the passage, set against the doors themselves.

They're both held in place by massive chains that run through ancient gears in the walls... controlled by TWO ANCIENT, LARGE IRON LEVERS.

In the old days, this Gate Passage was the last defense against invaders - trapping them in this small room should they get past the oak doors. Now, this passge may save them.

NIGEL (CONT'D)
This is a fortress. If it's good
enough to keep the hordes out, it's
good enough to keep the beast in.

Nigel pulls on one of the levers with both hands - nothing. He wraps his arms around it - still nada.

NIGEL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Help me with this.

Grissom grabs the lever while Nigel lights a torch, goes in search of... something.

GRISSOM
(re: the lever)
What are we doing?

NIGEL (O.S.)
Blocking the exit.

Porter reacts - keeps his gun pointed at Grissom, unsure of what to do...

PORTER
You're both nuts -

GRISSOM
Make up your mind. Are you going to shoot me, or you going to help?

CLANK, CLANK, CLANK - the Machine's steps ECHO IN THE HALL.

Porter looks to the DUNGEON STAIRCASE BEHIND THEM as -

The Machine tops the last steps. Scans the room, moves towards them and the doors to the outside.

Porter's torn as THE MACHINE APPROACHES...

A BEAT and then -

PORTER
(sotto)
Goddammit.

He drops the I-Gun, jumps in to help Grissom pull the lever to close the passage as -

The Machine stomps past them, heading for the oak doors.

NIGEL (O.S.)
Ahhhhhhhh!

Nigel flies into frame wielding a MASSIVE WARHAMMER.

Grissom leaps out of the way. Porter dives aside, tumbles into the -

INT. GATE PASSAGE - CONTINUOUS

Porter's now inside the Gate Passage. Behind the Machine as it storms toward the doors. Less than twenty feet to freedom -

INT. GREAT HALL - CONTINUOUS

Nigel's hammer comes crashing down on the first rusted lever.

INT. GATE MECHANISM - CONTINUOUS

Ancient gears churn within the walls. Rusty chains break free-

INT. GATE PASSAGE - SAME

The first iron portcullis falls from the ceiling between the machine and the oak doors... The Machine slams full force into the lowered portcullis.

The impact is massive, sending a shower of ancient mortar and plaster onto Porter's head as he shields himself.

INT. GREAT HALL - SAME

Nigel stands over the second lever, straining to pull the hammer over his head...

Nigel lets the hammer drop... O.S. gears churn once more.

INT. GATE PASSAGE - SAME

Porter spins around at the sound of the second set of gears. Frantically crawls towards Grissom and Nigel - trying to escape the Gate Passage before he's trapped with the Machine.

The Machine turns as well...

WITH PORTER as he dives under the FALLING PORTCULLIS, but -

BEHIND HIM - the portcullis suddenly stops its descent. REVEAL that it's jammed ON THE MACHINE'S SHOULDERS. Trapping it in a crouched position - for the moment.

INT. GREAT HALL - CONTINUOUS

Inches behind Porter, the Machine struggles to raise the portcullis. Cogs and gears grind, steam vents.

Porter's scoots backwards... Nigel drops his hammer as he and Grissom sidle backwards.

The Machine is slowly gaining leverage...

Porter finds his gun - laying below the levers. He dives for it, aims at the struggling Machine and pulls the trigger.

White hot flame streams from the muzzle, igniting the portcullis and the Machine like a flare.

All three shield their eyes from the blinding light.

EXT. TOWER HILL - SAME

Churchill stands with a HOME GUARDSMAN explaining the operation of the Anti-Aircraft gun. Their backs to the Tower.

Behind them, the Tower's windows flash with bright light.

But in the midst of the Blitz no one seems to notice....

INT. GREAT HALL - CONTINUOUS

The Machine momentarily pauses, stands stock still. Burning remnants of its clothing drop to the floor...

Then the flames go out. All three look like they're about to throw up.

Porter aims the Gun again, pulls the trigger. Bathes the Machine in more flame. Doesn't even scorch it.

THE MACHINE'S FACE maintains a pleasant expression, but its a walking steam engine - pistons and piping sheathed in armor.

It gives a mighty heave, lifting the three-ton portcullis.

PORTER

Should've known that was coming.

Grissom, Nigel and Porter backpedal into the MUSEUM DISPLAYS. Porter slips behind a display case beside a -

SPIRAL STAIRCASE -

PORTER (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

What now?!

ACROSS THE ROOM - Grissom and Nigel hide as well as -

The Machine slowly moves back into the Great Hall. Grissom peeks around his pillar, observing the Machine.

NIGEL

What do ya mean? We trapped it.

The Machine turns, strides towards Porter's spiral staircase.

GRISSOM

Where's it going?

Nigel tentatively peaks around his pillar as the Machine begins to climb up the spiral stairs.

Nigel's confusion is slowly replaced by dawning realization.

NIGEL

(sotto)

The roof.

GRISSOM

What?

NIGEL

It's going for the bloody roof.

Nigel grabs a torch, sprints for the opposite corner of the room - a second spiral staircase. Grissom follows.

NIGEL (CONT'D)

Get to the roof door before it can.

Porter looks at his gun, now useless. He tosses it aside... catches a glimpse of his hand - IT'S BEGINNING TO ROT.

He curses under his breath, as he checks his watch: less than an hour left before he's done for.

He grabs a torch, follows Nigel and Grissom.

INT. SOUTH STAIRS - SAME

The Machine makes its way upstairs - its progress slightly slowed as its massive shoulders spark on the narrow walls.

INT. NORTH STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Behind Grissom and Nigel, Porter dashes up the stairs past -

INT. ARMOR ROOM - SECOND FLOOR GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

Porter stumbles into the room behind Grissom and Nigel. It's filled with ANCIENT SUITS OF ARMOR, SWORDS, OTHER WEAPONRY.

The room is divided by a heavy stone wall and thick oak door.

Through the open doorway, they watch the Machine top the steps - the end of the line for that stairway.

It moves across the room towards them... to the only remaining stairway - RIGHT BEHIND THEM.

Nigel slams the door shut, pulls down the THICK WOODEN BAR.

BOOM! The Machine rams the door from the other side. The room quakes - the door doesn't look like it'll hold for long.

PORTER
Fantastic plan, tiny.

Grissom helps Nigel slide a display in front of the door.

The Machine batters the door again - it SPLINTERS. The impact knocks the display onto Nigel. Grissom strains to lift it...

Nigel struggles to crawl away as - BOOM! The door splinters some more. The Machine will be through at any moment...

GRISSOM
(to Porter)
Lock the roof door. We'll try to slow it down.

Porter hesitates - the door is bashed and splintered again...

GRISSOM (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Go!

Porter runs to the stairs - heads to the third floor.

INT. ARTILLERY ROOM - THIRD FLOOR GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

Porter flies into a large, open space. Bright flashes of AA fire pulse through narrow windows lining the walls...

Briefly illuminating rows of CANNON, PYRAMIDS OF CANNONBALLS arranged around them. Uniformed dummies stand watch.

At the opposite end of the room - the DOOR TO THE ROOF.

He sprints to the roof door... but his face falls.

REVEAL - THE DOOR is nothing but a thin plank of wood, creaking in the breeze.

Horrified, he reaches out, pulls it shut - nothing but a tiny hook and latch to keep it closed.

He turns to the room, desperately looks to the cannon and cannonballs surrounding him... A FRESH WAVE OF EXPLOSIONS SOUNDS FROM OUTSIDE.

He slowly grins... A plan forming.

INT. ARMOR ROOM - SECOND FLOOR GALLERY - SAME

The door is matchwood - the only thing keeping the Machine at bay is Grissom and Nigel's pile of displays.

GRISSOM

Porter?!

INT. ARTILLERY ROOM - THIRD FLOOR GALLERY - SAME

Porter contemplates an illustrated diorama: a MINIATURE CANNON, A LARGE WOODEN RAMMER and a GLASS JAR OF GUNPOWDER.

He's beginning to look worse - steadily decomposing.

PORTER

Working on it!

INT. SECOND FLOOR GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

NIGEL

What the fuck does that mean?

The Machine finishes the door -

GRISSOM

Hurry it up!

The Machine finally crunches through the piled barricade.

Nigel desperately throws ancient bits of chain-mail, daggers, etc., from the ruined displays - anything to slow it.

A metal boot hits the Machine in the head, it seems to notice Grissom and Nigel for the first time - opens its mouth, poised to strike.

Grissom grabs Nigel, yanks him behind the only standing display case, FULL OF SUITS OF ARMOR. They close their eyes -

They dive to either side of the door as the Machine tops the last of the steps... it pauses, considers the fresh obstacle.

Porter touches his torch to the cannon's fuse. Smiles wide -

BOOM!!!!!! The muzzle erupts. Porter's thrown backwards as the room explodes with rock, shrapnel and black smoke.

The stairwell is obscured in the explosion - lost in a rolling tide of dust that rapidly fills our vision, until -

BLACK

INT. THIRD FLOOR GALLERY - MOMENTS LATER

CLOSE ON PORTER'S FACE. Blood leaks from his ears as he slowly sits up. He shakes out the cobwebs... along with tufts of hair. He's not looking so good.

The RINGING IN HIS EARS becomes the familiar tone of a RINGING ALARM BELL... like a small clock...

Porter's suddenly alert - rapidly crawls to the stairway.

He comes upon a pile of rubble - frantically clears the debris as Grissom and Nigel groggily appear over his shoulder-

NIGEL

The flippin' heck is that?

PORTER

Something Haliday showed me.

Porter finally reaches the Machine, pauses.

Despite the situation, all three stare in wonder at its remains: its head cleanly severed.

Both Grissom and Nigel are awed.

GRISSOM

Good job, kid.

The ringing bell has now become the WAILING, TEA KETTLE WHISTLE... detonation only seconds away -

Porter snaps out of it, spots the infamous clump of wires spilling from its open neck. He finds a shard of broken rock... carefully grabs the blue wire...

And cuts it. Silence.

All three seem to collapse into themselves. The day is saved.

NIGEL
 (shellshocked)
 It's over?

Grissom takes a closer look at Porter's decomposing form.

GRISSOM
 We may have enough time to get you
 back...

STEPS ARE HEARD from the stairs in front of them.

All three stand frozen... too tired at this point to care
 about who or what is coming.

Out of the shadows... a figure appears, a FEMALE OFFICER. She
 carries a torch, stepping through the rubble on the stairs.

She tops the steps, raises her head - IT'S HALIDAY, wielding
 her own INCINERATOR GUN.

All three look up in shock. Haliday notes Nigel.

GRISSOM (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 Haliday...

HALIDAY
 Well done, Mr. Grissom. I'll tell
 Mr. Mot of your success.

Without further ado, she fires a long burst from her I-Gun.

Grissom is INCINERATED MID-SCREAM - his spirit, still
 sporting a confused expression, replaces his crumbling body.

His spirit looks helplessly at Porter and Nigel... then
 abruptly falls through the floor with an ethereal scream.

Porter and Nigel are frozen, shocked at the suddenness of
 Grissom's 'death'.

NIGEL
 (sotto)
 This is Haliday?

PORTER
 (sotto)
 Yep.

NIGEL
 (sotto)
 She's a bitch.

Haliday steps further into the room, looks over the body of her fallen Machine. She pauses, shakes her head sadly.

Haliday points the I-Gun at them, coralling them against the fallen machine. She regards Nigel with undisguised distaste.

HALIDAY

Strange for a Demon to be in league with Reapers, don't you agree?

NIGEL

I'd say this is a special case.

HALIDAY

Right. But look where it got you.

Nigel grimaces.

HALIDAY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Which brings me to you, Mr. Porter. I'm upset.

PORTER

I'm sorry.

HALIDAY

If you would've just done as you were told, I wouldn't have had to come up here. I hate coming up here. However, I couldn't help but notice that Mr. Grissom and Mr. Churchill were still alive.

(beat)

You've betrayed my trust.

PORTER

I'd say the same for you.

Haliday shakes her head. She seems genuinely hurt.

HALIDAY

I like you, Porter. You're not like the rest of these idiots. You would've had another job waiting for you because you understand what counts: the bottom line.

Porter looks away uncomfortably.

HALIDAY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Let's be honest. I know I'm better with numbers. Someone has to do the thinking for the rest of the rabble...

Haliday moves to a narrow window, her face illuminated by the AA Gun - she glances towards Churchill's spot on the hill...

HALIDAY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 ... and I doubt I would ever have any chance of reaching Mr. Churchill and escaping intact. But you have a talent for succeeding where others have failed, Mr. Porter.

PORTER
 Gee. Thanks.

Porter smiles.

HALIDAY
 If you finish the job... I will commute your sentence, Mr. Porter.

She pauses to let it sink in. Porter is genuinely surprised.

He seems to contemplate it... as he glances to a window - his eyes are drawn to -

OUTSIDE - A FIRE RAGING NEARBY - he watches a FIRE CREW rescuing BLOODIED, SCREAMING CHILDREN from an upper floor of a bombed out building... the horrors of war.

Nigel watches him closely -

HALIDAY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 That's right. A chance for a new life. If you wish, you will be reincarnated tomorrow.
 (beat)
 If you do this for me today.

Haliday reaches into her coat with her free hand - withdraws a pistol, holds it out to Porter.

She smiles seductively.

HALIDAY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
 And, perhaps afterwards... a celebration. Together.

Porter raises an eyebrow... then stares at the pistol -

Nigel looks between Haliday and Porter, breathless. The room is silent, save for the rhythmic booming from outside.

NIGEL
 Don't do it, lad.

Porter seems to finally make up his mind. Nods to himself before slowly reaching out to take the pistol. We glimpse his rotting arms - Nigel shakes his head sadly.

GRISSOM (O.S.)
Don't do it.

Porter freezes - a look of wonderment on his face.

NIGEL
The fat man is back...

Haliday spins around, aims at... nothing.

GRISSOM
Over here, asshole.

We find Grissom's ethereal head and shoulders. He appears embedded in the floor - heaves himself up through the timbers, as if he were climbing from a pool.

With Haliday's back turned, Porter puts his back to the door, closer to the fallen Machine. Nigel warily follows his lead.

GRISSOM (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
You never seen a ghost before?

Haliday smirks, of course she has. She turns back to Porter, cocks her head confused -

REVERSE TO PORTER - now hunched over the Machine's neck.

GRISSOM (O.S.) (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
Cuz it looks like you're about to become one.

Porter looks up at Haliday, smiles crookedly.

PORTER
Thanks for the offer lady, but no.

CLOSE ON the infamous wire in Porter's hand - he reattaches the shredded ends...

THE HIGH-PITCHED WHISTLE SUDDENLY RESUMES

It registers for Haliday, she loses her cool -

HALIDAY
NOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!

Porter yanks Nigel out the door as Haliday fires. They duck the flame from her gun, take a dive down the rubble strewn stairs... as -

EXT. TOWER HILL - ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTERY - SAME

KAAAA-BOOOOOOM!!! The side of the tower erupts in an enormous explosion - the orange mushroom cloud lighting the sky.

Churchill and the others are thrown off their feet.

They watch as half of the building collapses. The explosion sheering off an entire wing.

EXT. TOWER COMPOUND - MOMENTS LATER

The half-ruined Tower smolders in the background. SOLDIERS and EMERGENCY WORKERS swarm the rubble.

CLOSE ON A MOUND OF RUBBLE, stones slowly shift... a hand shoots up through the debris - pushing stones away.

EMERGENCY WORKER

(sotto)

Bloody hell.

He moves to the hand, clears away more rubble - we catch sight of Porter's face - battered and dazed.

EMERGENCY WORKER (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

We got one!

EMERGENCY WORKERS descend, frantically clear the rubble.

Porter's battered and rotting face is revealed -

CLOSE ON NIGEL - as another group of EMERGENCY WORKERS clear the rubble - his mangled face surfaces...

The worker winces at his ugliness...

EMERGENCY WORKER#2

Not looking so good, mate.

The worker moves him, causing his hat to slip off - partially revealing his horns.

The worker stares, dumbfounded.

NIGEL

Fuck off.

Nigel shoves him away, pulls his hat back on.

EXT. TOWER COMPOUND - MOMENTS LATER

WORKERS help Porter and Nigel down from the rubble -

A throng of soldiers and spectators converge upon them -

WORKERS

Step back, please. Give them air -

The group parts, revealing none other than WINSTON CHURCHILL - his doting secretary by his side.

Porter and Nigel look to one another uncomfortably...

Hushed silence as Churchill turns to his secretary.

CHURCHILL

Is this them?

His secretary nods. Churchill smiles broadly - stuffs his cigar in his mouth as he leans in to shake their hands.

CHURCHILL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

You two are very brave men. It's a miracle you both survived - and intact at that.

He looks closely at the both of them.

CHURCHILL (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Mostly at least.

(beat)

Never even saw the Jerry bomb that did it. Direct hit, too I'd guess. We're indebted to spotters such as yourselves. You've done a great service against evil tonight.

Nigel coughs uncomfortably.

PORTER

Uh... no problem, sir.

CHURCHILL

A Yank, eh?

PORTER

Yessir.

CHURCHILL

I commend your volunteerism. I wish more of your countrymen would see it your way... This is an epic struggle. Much more grave than I think anyone would dare imagine.

Porter slowly nods - 'you have no idea'.

Churchill hands him a cigar.

CHURCHILL (CONT'D)

Make sure and tell Roosevelt that God is on our side.

Porter smiles awkwardly.

PORTER

Sure thing.

CHURCHILL

Thank you. And get some medical attention. It's a wonder you're even standing.

With a wink and a salute, Churchill walks off - leading his entourage on an inspection of the wreckage.

Porter stares at the cigar a moment, spots something more interesting in the distance. Porter checks his watch, tosses the cigar to Nigel.

WITH PORTER as he walks towards us - followed by Nigel. He fights through the crowd to get to -

A MILITARY AMBULANCE - he rifles through a MEDIC'S PACK, comes up with a LONG LENGTH OF STRING and a STITCHING NEEDLE.

Nigel looks at him quizzically.

PORTER

For fifteen... miserable years there was one thing I thought about every damn day...

Porter continues to walk - Nigel follows. Porter intently threads the needle as he reaches -

A SMALL RUSTED GATE -

He pushes it open, passes a fallen tree - leans down, comes up with a BROKEN BRANCH -

A small, serene smile slowly forms as Porter finally pauses and ties the other end of the string to the branch.

PULL BACK TO FURTHER TO REVEAL that Porter stands at -

EXT. RIVER THAMES - DOCK

Behind him, flames leap into the sky from the burning city - silhouetting the Tower... AA flak bursts in the sky above... Bombers drone overhead, still dropping their bombs...

But all the noise fades, leaving only the sounds of the river tide, gently lapping at the dock.

Porter sets his makeshift fishing rod aside - calmly pulls his boots off and takes a seat at the edge of the river. He revels in the feeling of the water on his bare, rotting feet. He looks like he should be pushing up daisies...

Nigel sits beside him - pulls his zippo, lights the cigar. Stoically watches Porter's right ear detach.

NIGEL

Shouldn't you be gettin' back?

Porter hefts his rod, sloowwwly dips the lure in the water...

PORTER

(sighs)

I've got twenty minutes.

As if on cue, a few hundred dead fish bubble to the surface.

Porter looks at them blankly. Nigel gives him a sympathetic clap on the shoulder.

SMASH TO BLACK

THE END