

ALL YOU NEED IS KILL

screenplay by
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based on the novel "All You Need is Kill"
by Hiroshi Sakurazaka

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INT. UNITED DEFENSE FORCES DROPSHIP - IN FLIGHT - STORM

SOUND: Someone breathing, GASPING for breath they're so afraid. And the HIGH-PITCHED WHINE of RAMJETS laboring against heavy side-winds as we struggle to focus on -

- OPEN OCEAN. CHURNING, whipping past at a couple hundred miles an hour, 800 feet below a SOLDIER'S DANGLING BOOTS.

CAGE (V.O.)

What am I doing here?

PVT. BILLY CAGE is maybe 20. Too young for this. COLD SWEAT trickles into his eyes. When he tries to wipe it away, his ARMORED FINGERS CLACK against clear ACRYLIC. His FACEPLATE.

Cage is wearing an EXOJACKET: powered, tight-fitting body armor, bristling with weaponry. TWO DOZEN OTHER young, terrified SOLDIERS hang with him, also jacketed, dangling over the OPEN BAY DOORS, over OCEAN.

Cage taps a button. His faceplate opens, NOISE floods in at a DEAFENING ROAR. He rubs his eyes -

YONABURU

Don't poke yer eye out, bud.

PVT. YONABURU, a hard-ass fuckup with Asian features but a Southern drawl - Cage's battle-buddy - smiles.

SGT. FARELL

GET YOUR PLATE SHUT, PRIVATE!

FROM UP FRONT, BATTLE-SCARRED SGT. FARELL shoots them a look.

ACROSS from Cage, GRIFF, 25, a burly-looking bad-ass, keeps making an about-to-vomit face, barely fighting back the urge.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)

PRIVATE GRIFF! Don't PUKE.

GRIFF

Yes sir!

Griff's face twitches again. A female soldier, NANCE, grins.

NANCE

You spit up in yer jacket, you're in for a world a' shit.

FORD, a jarhead dickweed proper, LAUGHS, missing a few teeth.

Now OIL from Cage's jacketed fingers streaks his face. The faceplate sucks shut. FLOATING HEADS-UP READOUTS flicker up -

YONABURU
You OK there, buddy?

CAGE
(trembling)
Yeah.

YONABURU
We're gonna be fine. I got us life insurance. Mrs. Smith.

Yonaburu taps "MRS. SMITH", an antiquated SMITH & WESSON .357, against his faceplate and slips it in his exojacket's utility belt. Cage doesn't look too reassured.

SGT. FARELL
...READY FOR DROP... HOLDING...

BENEATH THEIR FEET

DOZENS OF OTHER FB90 DROPSHIPS streak by; squarish, clumsy-looking, like flying bricks, which is what everyone calls them. ARTILLERY FIRE STRAFES back and forth as -

A DROPSHIP takes a HIT and is gone. FAR BELOW, a BEACH comes into view, a red SQUARE superimposed on the HEADS-UP -

THE DROP POINT. Cage shuts his eyes.

CAGE
Oh God oh God oh God -

SGT. FARELL
GO! GO! GO!

The first SOLDIER hits a release and FALLS, tumbling. Then ANOTHER. Then ANOTHER. YONABURU gives Cage the thumbs up and -

YONABURU
WOOHOOOO!

Yonaburu hits his RELEASE and -

FROM BENEATH THE DROPSHIP

- SOLDIERS LITTER OUT, tumbling like living ordinance. You'd think parachutes might open... but they don't.

BACK IN THE DROP SHIP

SGT. FARELL
DROP! DROP, YOU BABIES!

CAGE CAN'T DO IT. SEVERAL OTHERS can't, either. ONE SOLDIER DANGLES by a jacketed hand like a kitten going to the vet. Sgt. Farell KICKS the hand free and JUMPS himself -

RADIO
(screeching)
...TAKING FIRE UP HERE, WE GOTTA...

KERWHAM! The dropship is STRUCK - TWICE. One of the hanging soldiers is TORN IN HALF, the pieces flying. FLAME belches through the DROPBAY and the ship LURCHES -

Cage SCREAMS, HITS his release and -

TUMBLES OUT OF THE DROPSHIP

The dropship ABOVE, in FLAMES, BURNING SOLDIERS falling, OTHERS clinging on as it SPINS OUT OF CONTROL. CAGE FALLS, SCREAMING, his HEADS-UP flashing red, the ground RUSHING UP -

EXT. BEACHHEAD - BATTLE OF RUBY TUESDAY

- WHUMP! THUMP! FHUMP! SOLDIERS hit the beach, hard enough to leave CRATERS in the WET SAND.

AND HERE COMES CAGE, SCREAMING, FLAILING, KICKING - at the last second his jacket goes into AUTOLAND; tiny JETS cushion the fall just enough to not break any bones and... WHAM!

Two seconds of ear-ringing silence. A GASP as Cage's lungs refill, he staggers up, WET SAND falling from his faceplate, his HEADS-UP highlighting TERRAIN and FRIENDLIES -

THREE OTHER SOLDIERS stagger up out of their own craters.

HAPPY SOLDIER
WE MADE IT!

THE HAPPY SOLDIER smiles at Cage, and -

12 TONS OF FLAMING DROPSHIP LAND ON THE HAPPY SOLDIER. Cage is THROWN BACK from the impact, landing in two feet of surf. Struggling back up, he sees -

THE BROKEN DROPSHIP SPEWING FLAME, ANOTHER SOLDIER stuck half-under the ship, FLAILING as he dies. Cage stares in shock.

YONABURU
CAGE! YOU IN ONE PIECE?

CAGE
I, uh, yeah - the ship, the ship...

YONABURU

COME ON!

Cage turns, seeing YONABURU with a FLOATING BLUE HEADS-UP FLAG superimposed above him. Cage blindly runs after him as -

UP THE BEACH

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF OTHER JACKETED INFANTRY stream to their meetpoints, thick as ants, ARTILLERY STRAFING PAST THEM as -

IN THE SKY

MORE DROPSHIPS THAN WE CAN COUNT and fast-moving STRIKEJETS beyond them STREAK in loose formations into the horizon and -

OUT TO SEA

MASSIVE CARRIERS lob HEAVY ORDINANCE into the already blasted coastline, pieces of SEA-CLIFF exploding. HALF A MILLION SOLDIERS are landing today in what can only be -

HUMANITY'S LAST, BEST STAND... RUBY TUESDAY.

It looks like D-Day meets Armageddon.

SGT. FARELL (ON RADIO)
ASSEMBLE AT THE TRENCH!

CAGE AND YONABURU CLUMSILY RUN

to join their company. It's hard to even walk in an exojacket if you're not practiced in it, and they aren't.

ON THEIR HEADS-UPS: Their TWO BLUE DOTS get closer to the cluster of OTHER BLUE DOTS as the first ENEMY FIRE starts streaking in, TEARING UP THE BEACH. THAP! THAP!

CAGE JUMPS, YONABURU TOO -

- BOTH land badly, SCRAMBLE UP, catching a first GLIMPSE of THOUSANDS OF ENEMY INFANTRY streaming down the cliffs but -

CAGE AND YONABURU TUMBLE INTO THE TRENCH

Falling in with the other terrified SOLDIERS, SGT. FARELL screaming to TAC-COM about where's his fucking air support. Cage has two seconds to get his bearings before -

ON CAGE'S HEADS-UP

A RED DOT approaching the BLUE DOTS of his company. Then a few more RED DOTS...

CAGE

This isn't how it's supposed to be.
This isn't... First Division was
supposed to clean this up -

SGT. FARELL

LOCK AND LOAD!

Cage watches in mounting horror as the heads-up shows FOUR MORE PAIR. And then 20. And then... a WALL OF RED.

CAGE

We're all gonna die.

YONABURU

Shut the fuck up!

SGT. FARELL

HOLD... HOLDING...

Even the Sergeant can't hide his fear.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)

LIGHT 'EM UP!

As the FIRST SOLDIER out of the trench jumps up, a PROJECTILE hits him, knocking him at CAGE'S FEET -

The PROJECTILE in the soldier's chest isn't of human origin. It's streaked with silver, biomechanical, WRIGGLING. A MIMIC "JAVELIN". And from where the thing flew -

THE ON-RUSHING MIMIC HORDE.

At first, you could mistake them for human infantry, but they're not. They are ALIEN KILLING MACHINES.

They're ARMORED, SHARP, and BRISTLING with unidentifiable weaponry that seems to grow out of their bodies, like a nightmare version of the jacketed soldiers they're evolved to kill. Parts are METAL, parts GLISTENING BIOMASS.

MIMICS have no individuality, no emotion, purpose or existence other than the vicious removal of human life.

SOLDIER

INCOMING!

THE SOLDIERS FIRE into the RACING MASS. They might as well be firing BB-GUNS at an oncoming BUFFALO STAMPEDE.

ANOTHER soldier, down the line, takes TWO JAVELIN HITS. His jacket starts SHAKING, JITTERBUGGING off his brainstem's death-throes, his autocannon FIRING wildly -

MIMIC JAVELINS sweep the trench where Cage and Yonaburu try to aim - THUP THUP THUP!

SGT. FARELL (RADIO)
CHECKPOINT TWO! MOVE MOVE MOVE!

Soldiers start RUNNING. But Cage is FROZEN TO THE SPOT, trembling, unable to MOVE. Yonaburu SLIDES DOWN BESIDE HIM -

YONABURU
COME ON, CAGE! WE GOTTA -

- BLAM! A SECTION OF TRENCH COLLAPSES.

The hail of sand and smoke clears just in time to see the rest of 3rd Platoon HAULING ASS UP THE BEACH. ON CAGE'S HEADS-UP, the LITTLE BLUE DOTS of their team head OFFSCREEN.

CAGE AND YONABURU ARE TOTALLY CUT OFF.

YONABURU (CONT'D)
SHIT! SHIT!

Yonaburu slides into firing position - target numbering systems on OVERLOAD -

YONABURU (CONT'D)
Jesus, here it comes.

Cage lifts his weapon, shaking, trying to pick a target. It's useless. In two seconds, they're gonna be DEAD MEAT.

CAGE
Oh god oh god oh god -

A squelchy RADIO SCREECH -

CHIEF BREEDER (RADIO)
...VALKYRIE ONE, this is CHIEF BREEDER. STRIKEJETS GOT A LOCK...

YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE (RADIO)
THEN LAY 'EM DOWN, C.B.

CHIEF BREEDER
YES, MA'AM!

SLEEK U.D.F. STRIKEJETS, FOUR OF THEM, streak in low. MIMICS volley JAVELIN as the sleek aircraft swing in for bombing -

ONE STRIKEJET takes a hit and tumbles, FLAMING, the PILOT SCREAMING as he spins, PLOWING INTO the MIMIC FRONT LINE...

... but then the OTHER STRIKEJETS deliver their payloads.

KATHOOM! A WALL OF FLAME goes up, the ground SHAKING from the impact. SMOKING, TWITCHING FRAGMENTS of MIMIC RAIN DOWN -

YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE (RADIO)
CLEAR FOR CLOSE ENGAGEMENT.

WHAM! WHAM! WHAM! THREE BIG, JACKETED SOLDIERS land, SMOOTHLY ROLLING into 3-point fighting position. This is DOG COMPANY.

DOG COMPANY SOLDIERS are different. Their exojackets are blackened, dented, tricked out with graffiti, decals from the countries they've fought in. Their grim faces are scarred. Not a one of them stands under 6'4".

YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE (RADIO) (CONT'D)
Eat 'em up, boys.

The Dogs' MASSIVE SHOULDER ROCKETS OPEN FIRE, 20mm, 50mm cannons nailing MIMICS right and left -

YONABURU
Holy shit!

CAGE'S EYES GO WIDE and the WORLD GOES SLOW as -

SERGEANT-MAJOR RITA VRATASKI

AKA "VALKYRIE ONE", AKA "THE FULL METAL BITCH", LEAPS, flying RIGHT OVER CAGE AND YONABURU'S HEADS -

Her sleek exojacket is painted BLOOD RED. It's bare of weaponry except for - her TUNGSTEN CARBIDE BATTLE AXE. Almost comically HUGE, nearly as big and certainly as heavy as she is. Good for one thing: BISECTING MIMICS.

The axe SWINGS and four MIMICS are converted to eight TWITCHING HEAPS. She rolls into a PERFECT BATTLE STANCE.

Her face; beautiful, battle-ready, and deadly calm -

RITA
Take me to your leader.

- and with a collective YELL, the rest of DOG COMPANY follow her STRAIGHT INTO THE MIMIC FRONT LINE. Yonaburu JUMPS UP -

YONABURU
It's RITA! THE FULL METAL BITCH!
Come on, man, we gotta -

But Cage is running across the sand. DESERTING.

YONABURU (CONT'D)
CAGE!

Worse yet, TWO MIMIC RUNNERS have detached and GIVE CHASE. YONABURU FIRES, taking one down, but the other is closing in -

He looks back, to where RITA and the DOGS mercilessly engage the mimic in a ballet of precision fighting. He'd join, but -

YONABURU (CONT'D)

Fuck.

Yonaburu takes off after Cage as -

- Cage BLINDLY HAULS ASS for the SEA CLIFFS, scrambling up a rocky bluff. Yonaburu catches up -

YONABURU (CONT'D)

We have to get back to the unit!

- and GRABS Cage's leg. Cage KICKS, FLAILING -

CAGE

We won't make it! They're all DEAD!

YONABURU

They shoot deserters!

CAGE

I don't care! LET ME GO!

Cage CRAWLS, DRAGGING YONABURU to the CREST OF THE CLIFF.

YONABURU

CAGE, I'M NOT LETTING YOU -

Yonaburu stands, HEAVING BACK on CAGE'S LEG, and -

SHUP! HALF OF YONABURU'S head disappears in a shattering of red, the broken shell of his faceplate smoking.

CAGE

YONABURU!

Yonaburu's jacket twitches, shudders, goes limp - and falls.

CAGE (CONT'D)

NO!

Cage tries to stand, but Yonaburu's hand is still gripping his ankle. He twists, scrambling up -

CAGE SEES WHAT SHOT YONABURU.

The cliff's crest is a NEST OF MIMIC SCOUTS. SEVEN of them. Only a little less surprised than Cage.

Before he knows what he's doing, he's got TARGET-LOCK. Cage FIRES BLINDLY, the shock of his forearm cannon SPINNING him around in an arc -

TAKTAKTAKTAKTAK! SEVERAL MIMICS GO DOWN, Cage FALLS on his ASS, just missing the swings of BLADED MIMIC ARMS -

- and he's STILL FIRING, into MIMIC LEGS, WHIPPING them down to the ground. No one has ever fought worse - or been as lucky - as Cage at this moment. In 2.3 seconds, SIX DEAD MIMIC lie twitching around him. Cage SCOOTs back, seeing -

- THE LAST MIMIC on the rise, getting ready to FIRE.

He SHOOTS it. But with a CHITTERING, BUZZING NOISE, a FRESHLY BIRTHED JAVELIN erupts from its dying body like a 400 mph tumor and HITS Cage's side. CAGE FIRES AGAIN, just as -

- a SECOND javelin hits his FACEPLATE, it SHATTERS, the WORLD SPINS, ARCS and Cage goes down, BLACKING OUT -

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - HOURS LATER

The LATE-AFTERNOON SUN streaks through TORN CLOUDS. SMOKE rises from the SCORCHED EARTH and BODIES of men, aliens, and machines litter the terrain for miles. A landscape of hell.

Cage COUGHS, OPENS HIS EYES.

He's lying on his back, RAIN drizzling on his unprotected face, his BLOOD mixing in the puddles beside him. YONABURU'S BODY and the DEAD MIMIC SCOUTS are scattered around.

A LIVING MIMIC is nearby, scavenging through the dead, eating bits of other fallen mimic. It hasn't noticed Cage, until -

CLICKING and WHIRRING, YONABURU'S EXOJACKET goes into power-down, releasing him like an insect's carapace. His dead, naked-except-for-underwear BODY slops into the mud and blood.

The eater of the dead LOOKS UP. Interested. ANOTHER MIMIC stands behind it. Oh fuck. Here they come.

CAGE STRUGGLES to lift his 20mm, CLICK. CLICK. Nothing. The MIMICS RUN THIS WAY. CLICK. CLICK. Cage SCREAMS -

- SHUP! The mimic's body is TORN IN HALF - A FLASH of RED EXOJACKET as THE SECOND IS CUT DOWN. We barely see it happen. Just pieces of mimic falling, and in two seconds it's over.

Cage blinks up at... RITA VRATASKI.

Her crimson exojacket shines in the afternoon sun. Her gore-spattered faceplate hovers over Cage, then RETRACTS as she grabs a canteen from her utility belt.

Rita may be the greatest warrior on the planet, but she can't be more than 23 years old. And she's beautiful.

Storm clouds part, BLUE SKY beyond, but rain still drizzles.

She drinks, looking up at the sky.

RITA

When I grew up in Pennsylvania,
they had a name for this.

CAGE

For... what?

RITA

For when it's raining, but the sun
is shining.

Rita lifts Cage's head, giving him some water.

RITA (CONT'D)

They said it was because the devil
was beating his wife.

(beat)

Who comes up with this crap?

Cage trembles, COUGHS, blood sputters out.

CAGE

Am I... gonna make it?

RITA

No. I don't think so. But I'll stay
with you until you die.

CAGE

You don't have to... thank you, I -

RITA

I need your battery. It's fresh.
Looks like you hardly used it.

This sinks in.

CAGE

(bitterly)
Take it.

RITA

You sure about that?

CAGE
I don't deserve it.

Rita gently pushes Cage over, unhooking something on his back. Cage grimaces in pain. He shivers, bloody, crying.

CAGE (CONT'D)
I... I don't want to die.

Rita looks at him, a trace of painful softness in her face.

RITA
Dying's not that bad, once you get used to it.

Distant EXPLOSIONS, moving closer. Rita grabs her axe, her jacket whining up to full power, her radio CRACKLES to life.

RITA (CONT'D)
I have to go. Good luck, soldier.

CAGE
Fuck... off...

Rita smiles, then heads off to the CLIFF'S EDGE, surveying the Armageddon in progress far below.

Cage's jacket goes into power-down, unhooking from his body. With the last of his strength, he CRAWLS to Yonaburu's side.

CAGE (CONT'D)
(delirious)
Yonaburu... I'm sorry... I...

Yonaburu's one intact eye stares at him, blind and dead.

SPLISH. SPLASH. Cage FREEZES.

A MIMIC FOOT quietly steps into the mud by Cage's head. It's standing right over him. This one is ODD, its armor plates and vesicles diffracting light in a OILY RAINBOW OF COLOR.

It LEANS IN CLOSE, SCANNING HIM. Cage TREMBLES, helpless.

The thing's face is a HORRIBLE MAW - up close, it's no more a functional face than a black widow spider's hourglass is a functional timepiece. A decorative WARNING to human prey.

Detecting no threat from Cage, the mimic shifts focus to -

- RITA'S BACK. She's 20 yards away, too distracted by the battle to notice, as -

The mimic begins to VIBRATE, TINY BLACK TENDRILS exude from every crevice of its armor, waving in the breeze. A FRESH JAVELIN forming in the center of its body, WHIRRING...

And that's when Cage sees MRS. SMITH, Yonaburu's antique SMITH & WESSON, GLINTING IN THE MUD -

Cage GRABS the pistol, aims right up into the belly of the mimic, SHUTS his eyes and SQUEEZES THE TRIGGER - BLAM!

Now a mimic could usually take a .357 slug and shrug it off, but Cage got it RIGHT BETWEEN THE PLATES. With a hellish SQUEAL, the mimic STAGGERS, the developing JAVELIN MISFIRES, TEARING a hunk of the mimic's body with it -

- Cage fires AGAIN. And AGAIN. INNARDS SPILL -

SILVER-BLACK TENDRILS like melted plastic, CRACKLING with electrical charge, DRIZZLE ONTO CAGE'S BODY, at 600 degrees. CAGE SCREAMS as it BURNS INTO HIM. There are probably worse deaths, but this one ranks way up there. It's HORRIBLE -

- Cage's DEATH-SCREAM scales register, the sound going flat and weird, squelching out like a bad RADIO SIGNAL as -

- the IMAGE SHUDDERS, FALLING APART, winking out like an old tube TV, a high pitched WHINE, a BUZZ and -

INT. C-COMPANY BARRACKS - MONDAY MORNING

- CAGE SITS UP, SCREAMING, slapping at his chest like he's trying to put out a fire.

CAGE

AIGH! HELP! GET IT OFF ME!

He ROLLS off his bunk, FALLING to the floor, TEARING at his undershirt, revealing - HIS SKIN, perfectly intact, beneath.

YONABURU

What the fuck is wrong with you?

YONABURU sits in his undershirt, cleaning MRS. SMITH, staring at Cage like he's crazy.

CAGE

I was... it was... you were...

Cage stares around like a trapped animal.

SOLDIERS, the men and women we saw on the dropship, scattered around the barracks in various states of undress, stare back.

CAGE (CONT'D)
I, uh, I must have, uh... fallen
asleep. Had a nightmare.

GUY CAT-CALL
Didja piss yerself?

GIRL CAT-CALL
Check his diaper!

There's a RECRUITMENT POSTER on Cage's wall: RITA VRATASKI, her crimson exojacket shining against blue sky, hair flying, a stern look on her face: "I WANT YOU! JOIN THE CLEANUP!"

But someone - Cage, in fact - has defaced the poster to read "JOIN THE FUCK-UP, SUCKERS!" Little skulls around her feet.

NANCE, a tough-looking GIRL SOLDIER, burly as hell, leers in.

NANCE
Maybe it was a wet dream. Maybe he
was dreamin' about Rita.

CAGE
Shut up, Nance.

She blows him a kiss. Cage rubs his head, in mild shock.

CAGE (CONT'D)
Ow... GOD my head is killing me. I
cannot drink like that anymore.

YONABURU
Like what?

CAGE
Like last night.

YONABURU
We were here last night, dumbass.
Liquor raid's tonight. Battle's
tomorrow.

Cage blinks, confused.

CAGE
Oh. I... Right. I gotta, I think I
gotta go puke.

INT. LATRINES - DAY

Cage washes his face, taking two aspirin, hands shaking. He looks in the mirror, trying to get a grip on himself -

CAGE
It was just a dream.

INT. C-COMPANY BARRACKS - DAY

Cage walks back to his bunk in a daze, staring at the faces of the SOLDIERS he just watched get killed; some playing video games, some looking at porn, some working out, some asleep, half-dangling out of Mylar hammocks.

- there's DAVIS, who didn't make it out of the DROPSHIP -

- there's ROKER, who took a JAVELIN in the chest -

- and YONABURU, hunkering over a map that looks like football strategy. PALKA, a short Norwegian, tosses him WIRE CLIPPERS.

YONABURU
Mission accomplished?

PALKA
We have our exfiltration point.

Palka circles a spot on the map.

YONABURU
Excellent. We'll strike at 2200.
Griff, you're gonna be the decoy -

GRIFF
You think they got tequila?

YONABURU
'Course they do. They're officers.
They got everything.

PALKA
Going to get DRUUNK...

Yonaburu rolls up the map, hiding it. Cage frowns, worried.

CAGE
Man, you ever feel like you're
remembering something while it's
happening, like it's already -
(distracted)
Hey, Ford! Can you not do that?

SEVERAL SOLDIERS are GAMBLING between the bunks, heaps of goodies behind the WINNER, the LOSER throwing down his cards.

The dealer, FORD, scoops chips, smiling. He was missing teeth in the dropship... now he's not.

FORD

Do what?

CAGE

Sarge busted our asses ALL DAY yesterday in PT! You wanna put everyone through that again?

FORD

What're you talking about? Sarge's out all week gettin' his arm sewed back on! Besides, we got a lookout -

- indicating a FAT SOLDIER, KIMMEL, up near the door, whose attention is evenly divided between a HANDHELD VIDEO GAME and HIS NOSE, which he is picking mightily.

CAGE

Dude, he came RIGHT through that door, and -

SLAP! SOMEONE SLAPS KIMMEL on the back of his head, sending his game skittering across the floor. Cage's eyes go WIDE.

YONABURU

Oh. Fuck.

SGT. FARELL

Now just what in the got-damned fucking shit do we have here?

SGT. FARELL is a living piece of leather; badly scarred, mean as piss. Everyone is terrified of him, even his superiors.

Soldiers SCRAMBLE to attention, but it's FAR TOO LATE -

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)

I'm gone for SIX WHOLE DAYS and my platoon, the platoon with MY good name on it, has TRANSMOGRIFIED into a veritable SHITSTORM of SHENANIGAN and INIQUITY! I. AM. APPALLED!

Farell punctuates everything he says with VIOLENCE; a well-aimed KICK, a SLAP, a tipped-over FOOTLOCKER, as the soldiers FALL OVER EACH OTHER to come to ATTENTION -

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)

You are ALL. IN. DEEPEST. SHIT. FIG. SHIT. YOU. MOTHERLESS. BABIES!

SLAP! KICK! No one escapes his reach.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)
 And you will NOT. GET. OUT of this pigshit until you have EACH. AND. EVERY. ONE learned the life-giving power of FEAR and DISCIPLINE, the NECESSITY of ORDER and ETHIC if I have to personally KILL every SINGLE ONE of you embarrassing sacks of human waste and drag your DEAD and LIFELESS BODIES by the SHORTEST, CURLIEST HAIRS and throw you to the MIMIC HESSIANS!

Two SOLDIERS exchange a look... did he just say "Hessians"?

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)
 DID you not think I would return?
 DID you not imagine that I would be wholly prepared to CASTRATE and MASTECTOMIZE each and every -

Sgt. Farell stops short, seeing the GAMBLERS, who stand at attention... but their cards, chips are scattered everywhere.

His face curls into a whole new level of acid rage.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)
 (quietly)
 Oh. I see I've interrupted a game.

A few GAMBLERS close their eyes, ready for certain death.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)
 Tell me, Private Ford. Why do I hate gambling so much?

FORD
 (trembling as he recites)
 Sir, because it's a game of chance, sir... because it entertains the notion that our... fate is in hands... other than our own... sir.

SGT. FARELL
 And what do I think about chance?

FORD
 (reciting)
 "There is no chance. There is only choice. And choice is character. And character is fate."

SGT. FARELL
 That's RIGHT!

He SLAPS Ford anyway, for good measure. Silence. Farell scans the terrified soldiers in hateful wonder.

His voice drops to an almost tender register, as if he pities these poor pukes for the choices they have made this morning.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)

Now I know that none of you exactly CHOSE to be here. I know that all the young ladies and gentlemen FIT for the International Marine Forces have long since been decimated by the MIMIC DISEASE, and that no sooner have you conscripts completed the most RUDIMENTARY training than you are to be thrown into what is GUARANTEED to be the Mother of all Battles: RUBY TUESDAY.

(softly)

We lost North America. We lost the Pacific. We lose this, we won't get to fight another. I would imagine the pressure... must be enormous.

He scans their faces.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)

Ask me if I care. ASK ME IF I CARE, SOLDIER!

SOLDIER

Sir, do you -

SGT. FARELL

NO I DO NOT CARE. PT NOW NOW NOW!

The soldiers HUSTLE OUT. Cage stares, STUNNED, as we CUT TO:

EXT. UNITED DEFENSE FORCES BASE - DAY

A GLASSY TOWER looms above a SPRAWLING MILITARY BASE on a BAY. The base is the size of a city, but it's only part of what will be the largest military operation in human history.

YONABURU (O.S.)

It's called 'deja vu', man, which is French for been there, done that. Happens to everyone.

FAR BELOW, the soldiers of C-Company run in loose formation.

EXT. PHYSICAL TRAINING FIELD - OBSTACLE COURSE - DAY

FOREIGN BATTALIONS arrive, train -

CHINESE REGIMENTS MARCH.

RUSSIAN SOLDIERS BARK ORDERS.

JAPANESE COMMANDOS SPAR IN EXOJACKETS.

Cage looks around the field, sweating, dazed.

CAGE

Dude, I knew everything he was gonna say. Every word.

YONABURU

EVERYONE knew what Sarge was gonna say! He always says that shit.

C-COMPANY soldiers RUN, past JEERING COMPANIES of better behaved soldiers who aren't getting PT'ed to death.

CAGE

I swear... this is different. It's like... I'm remembering things that haven't even happened yet.

YONABURU

Fine. You had a dream, we were in battle, and everyone died. Only the Valkyrie saved you - and then you died.

CAGE

Yeah.

YONABURU

And the Sarge busting our asses out here, that was in your dream, too.

CAGE

Yeah... I think it was.

YONABURU

OK then, Mr. Wizard. Tell me what happens next.

Cage looks around the field, straining to remember.

CAGE

Uhh... Kimmel's gonna pass out.

The fat Private STRUGGLES over an easy OBSTACLE, FARELL SCREAMING at him until... Kimmel FAINTS. MEDICS rush over.

YONABURU

Well I coulda' seen that coming.

CAGE

Yeah? Well, now... Nance and Ford over there, they're about to get in this big-ass fight...

NANCE and FORD power over a wall, Nance taking the opportunity to GRAB Ford's ass. He KICKS her, they FALL IN THE MUD. It's ON.

SGT. FARELL starts yelling, SOLDIERS start running over, egging them on -

CAGE (CONT'D)

...and then Roker over there makes a perfect shot...

ROKER hits three BULLS-EYES, HOOTS. Yonaburu frowns, spooked.

CAGE (CONT'D)

...and then Davis gets his leg stuck in the ropes...

DAVIS swings over a rope obstacle, slips and ends up swinging upside down, his leg tangled.

CAGE (CONT'D)

...and then Ford has to go to the infirmary after Nance busts his -

YONABURU

(scared)

Shut UP, man, yer freakin' me out!

CAGE

That's what I'm saying! Ford gets his teeth knocked out and then...

Cage trails off, seeing that RITA has walked onto the field, trailed by her Dogs.

CAGE (CONT'D)

What the hell?

YONABURU

Holy fuck. It's Valkyrie One!

Out of her jacket, Rita looks nothing like the amazon warrior you might expect. She's small. Delicate-looking.

Out of their jackets, the DOGS are, if anything, more menacing than on the field; muscled, tatted, scarred. They swagger in loose formation around Rita, true to their name.

GRIFF

(walking up)

Damn. Looks like someone let the Full Metal Bitch outta her tower.

Cage stares, bewildered. Soldiers gathered around the fight COME TO ATTENTION as RITA steps through -

- and INTO THE FIGHT, where FORD swings at NANCE, missing, leaving himself wide open. Nance SWINGS, her FIST coming in SLOW MOTION, Ford's eyes WIDE, his nose: DOOMED -

- but RITA INTERCEPTS THE SHOT, catching Nance's fist with an audible SMACK. Ford staggers back. Everything STOPS.

RITA

How about you two save this for the battle?

FORD muddily salutes. So does NANCE. So does SGT. FARELL.

RITA (CONT'D)

Why are these soldiers in PT the day before battle, Sergeant?

SGT. FARELL

3rd Platoon has a discipline problem, ma'am. I felt that a little physical exertion might help them grasp this important military concept.

RITA

I see.

With a nod from Rita, one of the Dogs HITS THE DIRT, assuming a board-like position: the ISO-PUSHUP.

RITA (CONT'D)

Lt. Shep is demonstrating the iso-pushup. In Dog Company, we use it to practice discipline. The iso-pushup is the best training outside of a jacket you will get.

NOW

The whole PLATOON is in a PERFECT LINE, in a position that could pass for torture; the ISO-PUSHUP. Not going up, not going down - just holding position.

RITA (CONT'D)

To control your exojackets you must control your body. To control your body, you must control your mind.

SWEAT drips from soldiers' noses. It's hardest for the biggest ones. Yonaburu TREMBLES - and COLLAPSES.

SGT. FARELL

GET BACK INTO POSITION, PRIVATE!

Yonaburu struggles to get back up. Cage can't take his eyes off Rita. Rita suddenly LOOKS THIS WAY. Shit. Here she comes.

RITA

This man's had enough.

SGT. FARELL

Yes, ma'am.

Yonaburu gets up. The lolling DOG SOLDIERS smirk. Rita DROPS, assuming Yonaburu's place, next to Cage. Cage tries to keep his eyes on the ground, but finally, he looks -

Sergeant-Major Rita Vrataski is looking Cage dead in the eye.

RITA

(quietly)

Do I have something on my face, Private?

CAGE

Uh... No, ma'am.

RITA

Then I suggest you keep your eyes on the ground.

Cage looks down, sweat dripping. OTHER SOLDIERS DROP, one by one. Rita holds the position effortlessly. Cage is shaking. He finally DROPS.

OVER BY THE WATER COOLERS

Cage GUZZLES, watching Rita, now the only one doing an iso-pushup, her DOGS cheering her on.

Yonaburu SLAPS Cage on the back -

YONABURU

Damn. What'd she SAY to you, man?

CAGE

Nothing, I -

YONABURU

You really had me going there for a minute. I mean, you didn't dream about any of that, Rita comin' over and her talkin' to you 'n stuff... did you?

CAGE

No. That wasn't... that's not what happened at all.

YONABURU

Good. I was starting to think you were crazy.

CAGE

(troubled)
Yeah. Me too.

INT. BATTLE READINESS DEBRIEFING THEATER - DARKNESS

UP FRONT, nervous-looking EXECUTIVE OFFICERS, pencil-pushers, point to vidscreens, where MIMICS and BATTLE PLANS hover -

FLAGS showing armies of EVERY NATIONALITY cruise in towards the YUCATAN PENINSULA, while the island of CUBA - all of the Caribbean, in fact - is SWARMED with GLOWING RED LINES that extend halfway around the globe; MIMIC FORCES.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

The mimic are amassing on the island of Cuba, preparing for an all-out strike on the continent. When they reach a critical mass, they *will* attack.

ON THE VIDSCREENS, whole CONTINENTS have been wiped clean of human influence; NORTH AMERICA is gone, ANTARCTICA is gone. Areas of CANADA appear to be DISEASED...

EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CONT'D)

That's why we're striking them first. If we wait, we could lose South America. So this is what you'd call a, uh, critical juncture.

IN BACK, soldiers from Cage's platoon pay limited attention. They're working on their own plans: tonight's liquor raid.

YONABURU

You're still coming with us, right?

CAGE

I don't know, maybe -

YONABURU

Come on, man, it's ritual. C-
Company ALWAYS gets drunk before
they go into battle!

CAGE

We've never been in a battle.

YONABURU

But that's how rituals get STARTED,
wuss. We're in on the GROUND FLOOR.

Cage can't exactly argue with this logic. As the meeting adjourns, Farell WAYLAYS them all at the door.

SGT. FARELL

3rd Platoon, HOLD!

Farell gives them all the bad-eye.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)

Now, Command doesn't let me ride
your sorry asses past 1900 hours.
But if any of you maggots have the
spine and mettle to meet me in the
sparring bay, I can offer in-jacket
training.

The soldiers guiltily file past. Not one takes him up on it.

EXT. LIQUOR RAID - BEHIND THE OFFICER'S CLUB - NIGHT

ONE SOLDIER hands bottles of LIQUOR under the edge of the Mylar tenting while OTHERS keep a lookout. A CURIOUS MP shines his flashlight on the fence -

YONABURU

(hissing)

GO! GO!

But when the curious MP gets there he sees -

NOTHING BUT EMPTY GRASS behind the club. We pan ALONG the fence, to where the last of the soldiers slip through the HOLE that Palka made this morning -

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

DRUNK SOLDIERS run around in the breakers, hooting and laughing, total grab-ass. SEARCHLIGHTS span the beach nearby.

ROKER

No, no no no no man, LOOK. I totally watched the whole thing - it's gonna be a cakewalk.

SOLDIERS gather around, soaking wet and getting wasted. ROKER, with drunken authority, DRAWS A MAP THE SAND -

ROKER (CONT'D)

This is first division. This is 2nd, 84th - all the fuck of 'em. They're all over. WE...
(drawing)
...are gonna be right down here.
Bringin' up the rear.

Maybe he uses a broken seashell to demark a spot, or a beer bottle. One of the soldiers is totally naked, no explanation.

DAVIS

Bringin' up the rear. That's funny.

ROKER

It's a fuckin' CAKEWALK, man. We drew the lucky straw!

DAVIS

It's cos they know how bad we suck.

ROKER

Same difference.

Two soldiers try some version of a high-five, and FALL on their asses. SURF washes in, destroying the battlefield.

CAGE sits off by himself, staring out at the breakers. Yonaburu staggers over, sits.

YONABURU

You're not still thinking about all that deja-bullshit are you?

CAGE

Nah. Not really.

YONABURU

Good.

Yonaburu offers cage a BOTTLE. Cage hesitates, DRINKS.

IN THE DISTANCE, we see the RED FLASHES of artillery. Low THUMPS echo across the water. BOMBING raids on the island.

INT. GLOOMY BARRACKS - NIGHT

The soldiers of 3rd Platoon creep back into their barracks. O.S. The sound of someone PUKING. Yonaburu is clutching a worn photo, too drunk to walk. Cage helps him to his bunk.

YONABURU

...when this battle's over, I'm gonna get my gold star and we're gonna have like fifteen fuckin' kids and live off of the Breedin' Credits...

Yonaburu collapses into bed, dropping the picture. Cage picks it up. A sorta-pretty girl. "I love you, Danny-boy".

YONABURU (CONT'D)

Ain't she pretty?

CAGE

Yeah, man, now get some sleep.

Cage crawls up onto his rack. Lays there, staring at the poster of Rita in the gloom.

YONABURU (O.S.)

Hey, Cage?

CAGE

Yeah?

YONABURU

In that dream you had, about the battle... you uh, never said exactly what happened to me.

BEAT.

CAGE

I... uh, think you got away.

YONABURU

Really?

CAGE

Uh... Yeah.

YONABURU

Cool. Well I won't let the mimics get you this time, man. I swear.

Cage stares into the darkness, worried, and we CUT TO:

EXT. UNITED DEFENCE FORCES BASE - 5 AM - RUBY TUESDAY

ALARMS BLEAT, RADIOS ECHO across the base, and everywhere, STREAMS of SOLDIERS, millions of them, run to their deployments like ants.

DROPSHIPS lift off in formation, HOVERCRAFT and MEGACARRIERS steam out of the bay, WAVES of STRIKEJETS BOOM THROUGH THE SOUND BARRIER, whisking off, faster than can be followed.

INT. ARMORY - RUBY TUESDAY

ROWS of EXOJACKETS line the walls as SOLDIERS pound in. Every exojacket is custom fit, a soldier's name emblazoned on each.

SOME SOLDIERS look really excited to get in their jackets, SOME look at theirs like they're iron maidens. Soldiers STRIP to their underwear; exojackets need full body contact.

GRIFF even strips off his underwear, OTHER SOLDIERS wince.

NANCE

Aw Griff no one wants to see that!

GRIFF

I gotta feel free, man!

Yonaburu's jacket CLICKS into place around his body, sealing his arm down to his fingertips. Exojackets are stronger than steel, and microjointed for maximum mobility.

YONABURU

Wooh, LORDY! Welcome to the
Plastic Fantastic Death Machine!

He KNOCKS his polycarbonate arm, THUK-THUK, for good measure.

KIMMEL struggles to wedge into his jacket, having managed to gain another 13 pounds since his fitting.

KIMMEL

Can someone, uh...

YONABURU

Suck in.

Yonaburu and ANOTHER SOLDIER push... With a GROAN, Kimmel fairly POPS into his suit as it POWERS UP, encasing him.

GRIFF
 (looking up)
 OH FUUCK.

CAGE steps around the corner. His jacket FESTOONED with extra AMMO, GRENADES, and so many GUNS that he can barely walk.

Soldiers LAUGH as we PUSH IN on Cage's ANXIOUS FACE.

CUT TO:

INT. UNITED DEFENSE FORCES DROPSHIP - IN FLIGHT

CAGE looking, if anything, more terrified than before, DOWN BETWEEN HIS FEET as the BAY DOORS RETRACT, revealing -

- CHOPPY SEAWATER flying by below. Cage SWALLOWS HARD. ACROSS FROM CAGE, Griff is twitching, trying not to barf -

 SGT. FARELL
 GRIFF, DON'T PUKE!

 GRIFF
 SIR yes SIR!

 NANCE
 You spit up your jacket, yer in for
 a world a' shit.

 FORD
 You shit in your jacket, yer in for
 a world a' pain.

Ford GRINS. This time, he's still got all his teeth.

 YONABURU
 Yo buddy, check it out. We got
 nothin' to worry about. I brought
 us life insurance. Mrs. Smith.

Yonaburu taps MRS. SMITH against his faceplate. Cage's lip begins to twitch. He squeezes his eyes shut.

 SGT. FARELL
 ...READY FOR DROP... HOLDING, AND -

CAGE DOESN'T WAIT. He hits his RELEASE, and DROPS.

EXT. AIR - 9.8 METERS PER SECOND SQUARED

CAGE'S HYPERVENTILATING GASPS. YONABURU tumbles after -

YONABURU
WHOO-HOO! DAMN, BUD, WAIT UP!

Cage LOOKS UP in time to see the dropship TAKE TWO HITS, FLAMING SOLDIERS falling as the ship begins its death-spiral.

EXT. BEACHHEAD - BATTLEFIELD - FOGGY DAY

- WHAM! BEAT. A GASP as Cage's lungs refill, he staggers up, wobbly, WET SAND falling from his face-plate -

HAPPY SOLDIER
WE MADE IT!

THREE OTHER soldiers stagger up out of their own craters -

CAGE
HEY! LOOK OUT! LOOK OUT!

Cage WAVES HIS ARMS frantically, which gives the doomed soldiers exactly enough time to LOOK UP before -

- 20 TONS OF FLAMING DROPSHIP CRASH DOWN on them. Cage is THROWN BACK from the impact, landing in two feet of surf.

YONABURU
CAGE! YOU IN ONE PIECE?

Cage nods, dazed. They RUN.

EVERYTHING is exactly like it was before, with one major difference: instead of drizzling rain, there's a THICK FOG.

CAGE AND YONABURU MAKE IT TO THE TRENCH, falling in with other terrified soldiers, FARELL screaming to TAC-COM -

SGT. FARELL (ON RADIO)
I NEED SOME GODDAMN AIR SUPPORT!

GRIFF trembles, gripping his autocannon -

GRIFF
This isn't... It's like they fuckin' knew, man... it's like they KNEW!

ON CAGE'S HEADS-UP, a RED DOT approaches the BLUE DOTS of his company. Then MORE RED DOTS. EVEN MORE THAN LAST TIME.

SGT. FARELL (ON RADIO)
LOCK AND LOAD!

CAGE
We have to get out of here!

SGT. FARELL
LIGHT 'EM UP!

ROKER jumps up, ready to FIRE, when a MIMIC JAVELIN hits him square in the chest, knocking him back -

YONABURU stares down at the dead man, in shock, and sees -
- CAGE, ALREADY RUNNING AWAY.

YONABURU
SHIT!

Sgt. Farell SNARLS, lowers his 30mm cannon at Cage's BACK.

YONABURU (CONT'D)
WAIT! I'll get him back, sir!

BLAM! A BLAST of FLAME and SAND as a mimic JAVELIN lands in the TRENCH. Maybe Farell is dead, but there's no time to look back. YONABURU RUNS AFTER CAGE -

CAGE RUNS BLINDLY -

- YONABURU TACKLES HIM and they GO DOWN, ROLLING. Cage WRIGGLES FREE, crawls away.

YONABURU GRABS his ankle, MIMIC JAVELIN streaking past -

CAGE
LET ME GO!

YONABURU
I'M NOT LETTING YOU GO!

Yonaburu HEAVES CAGE BACK by the ankle - JUST LIKE BEFORE.

CAGE SEES

TWO MIMIC JAVELIN streaking in -

CAGE
YONABURU!

- Cage TWISTS, KICKING YONABURU and KNOCKING him out of the LINE of FIRE -

- a javelin NEATLY MISSING Yonaburu's head.

YONABURU
Why the FUCK'D YOU DO THAT?

Cage stares in wonder - SMILES.

CAGE
I DID IT! I SAVED YOU!

LAUGHING, like he broke a CURSE. But then Cage COUGHS.
Something DARK spatters the inside of his faceplate.

Yonaburu's expression turns to one of horror.

YONABURU
Oh buddy. Oh man.

Yonaburu stares at Cage's chest. Cage looks down -

THERE'S A 90MM HOLE CLEAN THROUGH HIS CHESTPLATE. Took out
enough spine that he didn't feel anything.

YONABURU (CONT'D)
Oh god, I'm sorry, man, I'm really -

Cage looks BACK AT THE TRENCHES where the rest of the platoon
are getting HAMBURGERED in the FOG -

- and the distant flash of RED where RITA and the DOGS fight
a SEA OF MIMIC TWO-LEGGERS. Cage's jacket starts to TWIST and
shake, it's gonna JITTERBUG -

And then YONABURU'S whole head DISAPPEARS IN A PUFF OF RED -

The image SWIMS, the sound FUTZING like a lost HAM RADIO
TRANSMISSION as Cage BLEEDS OUT, DYING -

- the weird static rising to a BUZZY ROAR until we CUT TO:

INT. BARRACKS - MONDAY MORNING

CAGE WAKES UP ON his BUNK, COUGHING AND HACKING AND GASPING,
falling out of bed with a YELL. Everyone STARES.

Yonaburu scowls up from cleaning Mrs. Smith.

YONABURU
What the fuck is wrong with you?

SOLDIER
Didja piss yerself?

Cage stares around the barracks like a trapped animal.

CAGE
Yonaburu. You, uh, gotta help me
man, you gotta -
(MORE)

CAGE (CONT'D)
 (beat)
 Come with me. Now.

INT. LATRINES - MORNING

Cage explains, crying. Yonaburu frowns, listening.

CAGE
 ...and then, then I ran, I couldn't
 help it. I just had to, there
 wasn't... You don't know what it's
 like. There's gonna be thousands, I
 mean, hundreds of thousands of 'em.
 (wiping his nose)
 And anyway, I did save you, for
 like a second. For just a second.
 MAN, my fuckin' head hurts.

Cage messily shakes out some aspirin, chewing several.

CAGE (CONT'D)
 I know it sounds crazy, but you
 gotta believe me. We have to get
 out of here or it's...

Yonaburu looks at Cage with a mixture of pity and disgust.
 His friend has totally cracked.

CAGE (CONT'D)
 You do believe me, don't you?

YONABURU
 Um, of course I do, man.
 (carefully)
 Let's, uh, get back in there, OK?
 And pretend like everything's all
 right. We, uh, really need to think
 this through, come up with a plan.

CAGE
 Thanks, buddy. You're the best.

INT. BARRACKS - MORNING

SGT. FARELL is forcing to Ford to recite -

FORD
 ...THERE IS ONLY CHOICE. CHOICE IS
 CHARACTER. AND CHARACTER IS FATE.

SGT. FARELL
 That's RIGHT!

Sgt. Farell SLAPS Ford, for good measure, and sees -

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)
Now what the shit do we have here?

YONABURU
PRIVATE YONABURU and PRIVATE CAGE,
SIR. WE WERE IN THE LATRINES.

SGT. FARELL
You needin' COMPANIONSHIP? The
pornvids ain't ENOUGH for you?

YONABURU
NO SIR, PRIVATE CAGE is SICK, GONE
SECTION EIGHT, SIR!

Cage stares at Yonaburu, BETRAYED.

SGT. FARELL
We're ALL Section Eight here,
Private! Case of the WILLIES ain't
enough to -

YONABURU
HE'S CRAZY AS A SHITHOUSE RAT, SIR,
PRIVATE CAGE SAYS HE -

CAGE
You said you'd help me!

Cage TACKLES Yonaburu. SOLDIERS HOOT, they love a good fight -

SGT. FARELL
GOD DAMN IT, GET 'EM OFFA HIM!

But not before Yonaburu, way the hell bigger than Cage, lands
a real proper PUNCH. Cage hits the floor, face first -

Bleeding, disoriented, Cage is HAULED UP -

INT. SICK BAY - DAY

- and onto a GURNEY. His hands are ZIP-TIED. A NURSE dresses
his split eyebrow. A MEDIC shines a light in Cage's eyes.

MEDIC
And you say you're from the...
future? But only... thirty-six hours?

CAGE
Yeah, I think, I mean, no. It's not
like that.

(MORE)

CAGE (CONT'D)
 It's just that I can SEE it.
 Everything that's gonna happen. But
 like I dreamed it. Before.

MEDIC
 Ah. I see.

CAGE
 (trembling)
 We're all gonna die tomorrow.

MEDIC
 Mmm-hmm. Well, you're gonna be
 right here on base, safe 'n sound,
 Private. We'll see to that. Nurse?

The nurse hefts a sizeable HYPO-GUN to Cage's head.

MEDIC (CONT'D)
 Now you may feel a little pressure -

CAGE
 Wait... NO!

Cage FREAKS, KNOCKING the hypo away from his head, the nurse
 FIRES anyway and the needle PLANTS itself in -

- the MEDIC'S ARM. The Medic's eyes glaze over like he's been
 given an instant lobotomy. Cage twists, grabbing a BONE SAW -

CAGE (CONT'D)
 Now listen, don't... uh, don't screa -

The nurse SCREAMS at the top of her lungs. Cage saws the zip-
 tie off his hands and backs out the door -

AND INTO THE HALL

RUNNING, ass hanging out of the medical gown. More SCREAMS -

AND TO THE KITCHEN

- where FAT COOKS make all manner of shitty food, and among
 the STEAM and cookpots CAGE is hunkering, hiding, running -

TO A DOOR MARKED "KITCHEN LOCKERS" -

EXT. BUSY BASE - DAY

- CAGE RUNS out the back, dressed in someone else's clothes,
 the base busy with TRUCKS and PEOPLE, he keeps his head low -

- PAST the TRAINING fields where his PLATOON is in PT -

- and OFF HIS SHOULDER, MPs are running out of the door, with the NURSE pointing, but Cage is already -

SLIPPING BEHIND THE OFFICERS' CLUB, distant ALARMS GOING OFF as he finds the PIECE OF FENCE that PALKA cut for the liquor raid. He SLIPS THROUGH, putting it back as best he can and -

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Cage HITS the beach at a LOPE, staying close to the cliffs so the guard towers can't see him, running until the base, the BAY FULL OF SHIPS, disappear behind him, and -

- BEAUTIFUL WHITE SANDS extend in front. Blue skies above. He throws off his hat. Cage is free. AWOL, but free.

EXT. BEACH - AFTERNOON

SEABIRDS CAW. A BEAUTIFUL LITTLE GIRL is playing in the surf. A SHADOW FALLS OVER HER. She looks up, scared -

But it's Cage, smiling down at her, out of breath, sunburned.

CAGE

Hi there, little girl!

LITTLE GIRL

GRANDPA!

An OLD MAN in a STRAW HAT is fishing in the surf, wearing high boots. He waves, reeling line, coming this way.

OLD MAN

Ain't hardly any more fish these days, but I want her to know how to do it. For when they come back.

(eyeing Cage's bandage)

You from the base?

CAGE

Yeah. I mean, no. I was. I'm out.

OLD MAN

(a funny look)

Well it's a damn fine day to be out.

The old man's fishing line WHIRRS, the pole YANKS. He starts reeling in line. A postcard-perfect scene...

LITTLE GIRL

Pretty!

The little girl POINTS. Cage FROWNS.

The water at the girl's feet is covered in an iridescent, sickly SHEEN. A DEAD fish rolls in the oily surf. Cage instinctively picks her up, taking her to dry sand as -

THE OLD MAN wades into the oily water, reeling in line to whatever it's snagged on. Something dark, moving, BIG...

...A MIMIC AQUA-SCOUT RAISES ITSELF OUT OF THE WATER.

The thing is segmented, 9' tall, too many eyes, water pouring off of it. ANOTHER MIMIC rises BEHIND IT, EAGERLY INTERESTED -

LITTLE GIRL (CONT'D)
GRANDPA!

Cage looks back just in time to see the old man WHACKING at the MIMIC with his fishing pole before he's CUT TO SHREDS. Cage COVERS the little girl's eyes and RUNS.

CAGE
HELP! HELP!

But no one's around. The SPUT! SPUT! of mimic JAVELINS and -

THUK! The world GOES RED, at a BAD ANGLE. Cage is on the sand, looking up, grasping for the little girl -

CAGE (CONT'D)
R-run...

He can't crawl to her because his LOWER HALF is six feet behind him. The MIMIC SCOUT advances, javelins BLOOMING across its body like flowers -

CAGE (CONT'D)
...I'm sorry...

The last thing Cage sees is her shoe in the sand. The girl's SCREAM warbles, detuning into a weird DISTORTED HUM as the image ARTIFACTS, FALLING APART, BUZZING and we CUT TO:

INT. BARRACKS - MONDAY MORNING

Cage opens his eyes. Tears on his face.

INT. LATRINES - MORNING

Cage washes his hands, looking awful. The water whisks down the drain in the sink.

INT. BARRACKS - MORNING

Yonaburu is carefully cleaning Mrs. Smith when Cage walks up, eyes rimmed red, a faraway look on his face.

YONABURU
You OK, buddy?

CAGE
Yeah. Can I see that for a minute?

YONABURU
No one touches Mrs. Smith but me.
(smiling)
Aw, man, I'm just pullin' yer leg.

Yonaburu hands the pistol over, butt first.

Cage takes the gun, chambering one of the bullets that Yonaburu has taken out and placed on a crate.

YONABURU (CONT'D)
Hey, what are you -

CAGE
I'm really sorry, buddy.

He puts the gun to his temple.

We don't see it happen. We see the faces of EVERYONE IN THE BARRACKS yelling NO and a terrible, distant THUMP and then -
- the YELLS detune, the image SHUDDERS APART and we CUT TO:

INT. BARRACKS - MORNING

Cage opens his eyes. He doesn't move for a long time, just listens to the sound of the barracks.

INT. LATRINES - DAY

The water pours down the drain-hole in the sink. Cage stares at it. He cracks open a bottle of aspirin. Takes two.

INT. BARRACKS - DAY

YONABURU hunkers over the map of the liquor raid, marking locations with a sharpie.

Cage stares at the poster of Rita. JOIN THE FUCKUP, SUCKERS.

CAGE
 (frowning)
 Yonaburu, I got a question.

YONABURU
 Shoot.

CAGE
 If today was your last day on
 Earth, what would you do?

YONABURU
 I'd probably get good and drunk.
 Which, as it turns out, I was
 already planning on doing.

Cage nods distantly.

CAGE
 You wanna get some breakfast?

YONABURU
 No, I don't wanna "get some
 breakfast". I got strategic plans
 to make.

Cage walks through the barracks, lost in thought, looking at everyone who will be gone tomorrow: soldiers gambling, soldiers sleeping... KIMMEL, intent on his game.

Cage exits just as SGT. FARELL ENTERS.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Cage walks down the hall, a semi-blissful look on his face, Farell's YELLS echoing through.

SGT. FARELL (O.S.)
*Now just what in the got-damned
 fucking shit do we have here?*

INT. MESS HALL - DAY

Cage puts his cup at a machine emblazoned "METACOFFEE: BETTER EVEN THAN THE REAL THING!" The dank liquid sputters in.

Cage eats alone, wincing over the bitter drink.

RITA and her DOGS enter, Rita getting food, finding a place to sit. She walks in perfect slow motion, gliding through the world like nothing can touch her, her face expressionless.

One of the DOGS looks this way, giving Cage a deadly look.
Cage looks away. Finishing, he dumps his tray.

KITCHEN GIRL
Having a good day?

CAGE
I've had worse. Mind if I borrow
your pen?

Cage writes "5" on the back of his hand.

KITCHEN GIRL
What's that for?

CAGE
I, uh, keep dying, and then waking
up again. Figured I better start
keeping track, you know?

The girl smiles politely, afraid of this crazy person.

CAGE (CONT'D)
Would you happen to know where the
holovid library is?

CUT TO:

EXT. EMPTY SPACE/INT. HOLOBAY

STARS, one billion of them, serenely float in the firmament
of space, until -

A SILVER, BULLET-LOOKING THING WHISKS PAST, at near light-
speed. Only it's not a bullet. It's... a MIMIC SEEDER.

CAGE (V.O.)
*I was only three years old when the
mimic first got here.*

CAGE stands in the dark HOLOBAY, the seeder STREAKS past him.

CAGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*They'd probably started heading
this way a thousand years before I
was even born.*

EIGHT MORE MIMIC SEEDERS follow suit, smoothly fanning out
into geostationary orbits above... the EARTH, at Cage's FEET.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY PARK - NIGHT

A LITTLE BOY and his FATHER stand on a dark hill, the lights of a CITY far below, the father pointing up.

CAGE (V.O.)
*My dad used to take me up on a hill
 and show me their satellites. I
 thought they were pretty.*

TINY SILVER SPECKS shine low in the sky. The boy stares.

INT. UNITED NATIONS/EXT. SPACE - HOLOVID FOOTAGE

AT THE UNITED NATIONS, POLITICIANS ARGUE under IMAGES of the strange spheroids. MILITARY OFFICIALS scowl suspiciously.

CAGE (V.O.)
*We tried everything we could to
 communicate with them.*

IN LOW-EARTH ORBIT, A SPACE STATION revolves near a SEEDER...

...the station SHOOTS a LASER at the seeder. After a beat, it EXPLODES. MILITARY OFFICIALS watching monitors CLAP...

...BUT THEN, in a slow-motion ballet, each of the remaining SPHEROIDS evenly FRAGMENTS into smaller pieces...

CAGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Then one day, they just dropped.

...and all the pieces DROP. The GENERALS' HAPPY FACES fill with dread, watching international reports stream in.

ONE OF THEM lands on a CITY, OBLITERATING SEVERAL BUILDINGS and landing DEEP IN THE EARTH -

The images RACE FORWARD, Cage FAST-FORWARDING TO:

EXT. AMAZON RAINFOREST - DAY - HOLOVID

- A DAVID ATTENBOROUGH-TYPE pushes through RAINFOREST, led by LOINCLOTHED TRIBESMEN.

CAGE (V.O.)
*They'd gotten down deep, and were
 showing up all over the place.*

They come to a HUGE EMPTY SPOT in the forest, the denuded Earth covered in an OIL-SLICK-LOOKING GOO, where THOUSANDS of PILLBUG-LIKE HALF-SPHERES work their way out in a circle.

CAGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Everything they touched, died.

A TRIBESMAN kicks one over. Hundreds of LEGS wave in the air, until he STABS it with a SPEAR, and we

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - A SINKHOLE

TEEMING with the SILVER, BUG-LIKE THINGS. FAMILIES watch as a CLEANUP CREW comes in and starts EXTERMINATING the plague.

CAGE
Then they started mutating.

An EARLY VERSION of a MIMIC raises itself out of the hole, WALKING UPRIGHT - ROUGHLY HUMANOID.

It SPRAYS the CLEANUP CREW with some kind of ACID. MAYHEM ensues, people SCREAMING, running every which way.

EXT. ANTARCTIC ISLAND - DAY

PLUMES of brownish SMOKE rise above ARCTIC ISLANDS, a U.D.F. BOMBING RAID in process. The ground ERUPTS with MIMIC.

CAGE (V.O.)
They always seemed to know where we would attack next, and the more we attacked them, the better they got.

NEW KINDS of MIMIC INFANTRY pour out of holes in the earth, like rudimentary versions of the human weaponry they are modeled on. Some SHOOT, some FLY. Some are FAST, some BIG.

CAGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
They fought like us. After a while, they even looked like us. Kind of.

We see a SOLDIER cornered with a MIMIC, it GRABS the soldier. The soldier SCREAMS -

- the mimic makes a SCREAMING SOUND back, the shifting PLATES on its horrible face MIMIC the soldier's EXPRESSION -

Then the face COMES APART, turning to WHIRRING BLADES: SPLAT!

INT. AUTOPSY FOOTAGE - HOLOVID

DOCTORS in a lab DISSECT a MIMIC TWO-LEGGER -

CAGE (V.O.)
Mimic had no brain, no signs of self-awareness or fear. Scientists claimed they were more like robots than living things. But they didn't look like robots and they didn't act like robots.

- part of the mimic ANIMATES and with only a HALF of a body KILLS the doctors, SMASHING the lab -

CAGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
They acted more like zombie space killers from hell.

The HALF-MIMIC closes in on the camera. It's made of LAYERS, like one of those Russian dolls with other dolls inside - BLACK and SILVER OOZING out around its one good EYE -

It SMASHES the camera.

EXT. DISEASED EARTH - DAY

SWATHS of OCEAN have turned a weird, opalescent GREEN. WHOLE CONTINENTS are turning a DEADLY GRAY...

ORANGE CLOUDS PART, and far below, the JAGGED remains of the FLORIDA PENINSULA jut into the rising ocean.

CAGE (V.O.)
It wasn't until the Battle of Florida that things turned around.

A MILLION-SOLDIER INTERNATIONAL FORCE fights the MIMIC HORDE on the CHARRED remains of DISNEYLAND, as -

RITA VRATASKI, wearing an early STANDARD-ISSUE EXOJACKET, LEADS the HUMAN FORCES TO VICTORY, DECIMATING MIMIC.

CAGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
She was only 19 years old. It was her first battle.

She kills the LAST, her faceplate OFF, hair slick with sweat, LIFTED on the ARMS of her COMRADES -

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE

CAMERAS FLASHING, Rita looking lost and alone.

CAGE (V.O.)

No one knew how she did it. When the press asked her how a nineteen-year-old girl who had never been in battle was suddenly able to kill four thousand mimic and turn the tide of the war, she simply said:

RITA

(nervously leaning to mic)
I, uh... play a lot of video games.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME/HOLOVID

CAGE, a be-zitted, lazy-looking TEEN on his stepfather's couch, powers down CHEETOS, watching the holovid of Rita.

CAGE (V.O.)

When I was nineteen, I was still living on my stepfather's couch, staying up all night watching holovids and praying my service card would never come.

Cage's STEPFATHER brings him a SHINY BLUE CARD. Cage stares at his card, Cheeto dust on mouth, in shock -

CAGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But of course my card came. They always do.

- while ON-SCREEN, Rita bows her head, receiving a MEDAL; the ORDER OF THE VALKYRIE, the only one of its kind. She looks out at the stadium, camera flashes flicking like stars.

But she doesn't look very happy. Rita looks out at the STADIUM-SIZE CROWD, indifferent, as -

- a single TEAR ROLLS DOWN HER CHEEK.

EXT. UDF COLLECTION TRANSPORT - DAY

Rita's TEAR is COMMEMORATED IN RECRUITMENT POSTERS that decorate the CRUMBLING WALLS of the BURNED-OUT SUBURB.

"JOIN THE CLEANUP!"

CAGE (V.O.)

They were still calling it the cleanup, which was stupid because everyone knew it was all-out war.
(MORE)

CAGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*The Earth was dying, the weather
 was getting totally screwed up. It
 was them or us.*

CAGE is loaded onto a transport, with other young MEN and WOMEN who look just as shit-scared as he does.

EXT. UDF DEFENSE FORCES BASE - YUCATAN PENINSULA - DAY

An INCOMPREHENSIBLY LARGE MILITARY BASE covering the Yucatan Peninsula. ARMED FORCES from all over the planet ARRIVING -

- and the SILVERY MIMIC HORDE covering the distant ISLAND, enough to be visible from SPACE -

CAGE (V.O.)
*The Battle of Ruby Tuesday was
 going to be the big one. It was a
 gamble. Humanity was going all in.
 If we lost this one, there wouldn't
 be anyone left to fight another.*

ON THE BASE

Cage gets off the truck, looking particularly out of place, the same look on his face as we

CUT TO:

INT. BATTLE READINESS DEBRIEFING THEATER - DARKNESS

CAGE, sitting among a thousand SOLDIERS.

CAGE (V.O.)
*A lot of people were scared. But
 me, I'd actually been there. I knew
 exactly how it was going to go.*

STRATEGIC MAPS of tomorrow's battle hover in the darkness. EXECUTIVE OFFICERS (XO's) point, highlighting the animated BATTALIONS that will be landing tomorrow.

CAGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I knew we were gonna lose.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
 ...the main points of attack will
 be two miles north of this canyon
 here, where we expect the mimic to
 stage their front line. 1st Corp.
 will be taking most of the heat.
 (MORE)

EXECUTIVE OFFICER (CONT'D)
 Your job will be to scoop up
 fleeing mimic infantry, prevent a
 breach here... or here. We'll be
 giving it all we've got, so -

CAGE
 I have a question, sir.

The XOs SQUINT, interrupted. Their eyes adjust...

CAGE is the only soldier among a thousand who is standing.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER
 Yes, Private?

Cage coughs nervously.

CAGE
 Um... what if the mimic already
 know what we're planning? Wouldn't
 the breach point be more heavily
 defended than any other area?

SENIOR XO
 Son, mimic don't work that way.

GRIFF
 (whispered)
 - dude, sit the fuck down -

CAGE
 Uh, yeah, but if they did, C-
 Company'd get stuck between the
 cliffs and the canyon. And from
 that elevation, they'd, um,
 probably be able to make mincemeat
 of the advance dropship deployment
 before we even touch down.

SGT. FARELL takes an interest.

NERVOUS XO
 Our intel says the mimic are
 massing north of the drop point.

CAGE
 What if the intel is wrong?

The XOs look even more nervous. And irritated.

SENIOR XO
 Son, we can't plan for every
 eventuality.
 (MORE)

SENIOR XO (CONT'D)

C-Company and all the 81st will be one of the luckier divisions; it's a backup position. Now unless we have any other wild theories to entertain, this debriefing is ended. Good luck tomorrow, soldiers.

FORD

- teacher's fuckin' pet -

The soldiers stand to file out, giving Cage not-cool looks. SGT. FARELL begins his spiel about in-jacket training.

YONABURU

Dude, what the fuck was that?

CAGE

I just thought someone should say something.

YONABURU

Yeah, something totally insane. You still doing the liquor raid with us tonight or what?

CAGE

Maybe next time.

YONABURU

Next time? Battle's tomorrow, dumbass.

CAGE

I'm sure it'll be fun without me.

YONABURU

Man, what's wrong with you? You've been acting like a dick all DAY.

GRIFF

Told you he'd puss out.

INT. LOCKER ROOM/ARMORY - NIGHT

Cage wanders the gloomy, empty locker room.

At his locker, he stares in at his empty exojacket, "CAGE" emblazoned on front, like a coffin with his own name on it.

SGT. FARELL appears.

SGT. FARELL
You asked some pretty good
questions today, Private. Made the
pencil pushers think. That took
guts. Sign of a good soldier.

CAGE
I'm not really a good soldier, sir.

Farell sits, eyeing Cage in a new light.

SGT. FARELL
You're really worried about
tomorrow, ain't you?

CAGE
Sarge, what if you were going into
battle and you knew you were going to
die? What if you were, like, certain
with one hundred percent certainty?

Farell thinks on this, taking the question seriously.

SGT. FARELL
Then I wouldn't be afraid.
(beat)
That's what it takes to be a great
soldier. Realize your doom and get
on with it. Inflict the greatest
damage you can on your enemy. And
die a hero.

Farell rubs his jaw, looking up at Cage's exojacket.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)
Come to think of it, Private, that
is the perfect condition in which
to enter any battlefield situation.

Cage stares at his empty jacket, thinking.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)
You meet me in the sparring bay if
you want a little practice with
that thing.

Farell exits. Cage looks at the "5" written on his hand.

CAGE PUTS ON HIS JACKET. The LEGS bind, the ARMS seal, the
CHEST closes, every slick moving polycarbonate plate whirring
into place, as SYSTEM CHECKS fill the faceplate.

Cage picks up his AUTOCANNON and we CUT TO:

INT. SPARRING BAY - NIGHT

Cage steps in, looking around. The bay is a vast, echoing space the size of an airplane hangar.

CAGE

Sarge?

Farell strikes without warning. WHAM! Cage goes down in a tumble, Farell knocking him sprawling.

SGT. FARELL

Forget about the jacket.

WHAM. Cage struggles to stand. He's really bad at this.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)

Forget about me.

At every turn, Farell is delivering blows to poor Cage, his jacket STRAINS, firing "STREAKERS": AUGMENTED-REALITY - MUNITIONS that can only be seen from inside the faceplate.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)

Use your instincts and the jacket will help you. Don't think about it too much. Don't fight the jacket.

EVERYWHERE that Cage fires is milliseconds too late. And the Sergeant isn't even firing back. He's playing with him, his moves Aikido-like, always using a foe against himself.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)

When you forget that you're wearing the jacket is when the soldier and the jacket are one. When the soldier and the jacket are one, the mimic cannot defeat you.

Cage gives it all he's got, FINALLY landing a blow - WHACK!

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)

Good.

And then Farell HAMMERS CAGE, KNOCKING HIM CLEAN OFF HIS FEET, jumping, landing on him, pinning his arms back and putting the barrel of his 50mm in Cage's face.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)

You're green, but you've got more mettle than you think you do.

Farell rolls off of him, smiling.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)
Now. You wanna try that again?

CAGE
Yes, sir.

WHAM!

INT. DROPSHIP - DAY

The dropship bay doors OPEN, the OCEAN far below. Cage's jacketed hand is shaking. GRIFF making about-to-puke-face.

SGT. FARELL
GRIFF! DON'T PUKE!

GRIFF
YES SIR!

UP FRONT, Farell gives them all a grim look. When his eyes meet Cage, he gives him the tiniest nod of reassurance.

BENEATH, the BEACH comes into view... and the DROP POINT.

SGT. FARELL
...READY FOR DROP... HOLDING...
HOLDING... GO!

Soldiers DROP. YONABURU. NANCE. FORD. GRIFF. CAGE turns to a TERRIFIED SOLDIER - maybe KIMMEL - who clings for his life -

CAGE
LET GO!

He shakes his head. Cage SHOVES him, forcing him out, the guy drops, SCREAMING. Cage THROWS ANOTHER, GRABS a THIRD just as -

THE DROPSHIP TAKES THE HIT, AND THEY'RE OUT, TUMBLING and -

EXT. BEACHHEAD - DAY

CAGE LANDS on the beach, WHAM! Several other soldiers stagger up out of their craters. A happy soldier waves -

HAPPY SOLDIER
WE MADE IT!

Cage TACKLES the SOLDIER, barely knocking him out of harm's way as the DROPSHIP SMASHES DOWN - at least he saved one.

YONABURU
SHIT, CAGE - YOU OK?

The STUNNED SOLDIER stares back at the ship, in shock -

HAPPY SOLDIER
The ship... the ship...

CAGE
COME ON!

They HAUL ASS across the beach. This time, it's POURING RAIN.

THEY ROLL INTO THE TRENCH

Yonaburu's heads-up is RED with mimic -

YONABURU
Holy fucking fuck.

Cage moves past his terrified comrades to SGT. FARELL, who uselessly SCREAMS ORDERS to his RADIO -

SGT. FARELL
WELL, TAC-COM GOT IT FUCKIN' WRONG!
We need some GODDAMN AIR SUPPORT!

CAGE
MIMIC ARE GONNA OVERRUN THIS TRENCH
IN TEN SECONDS! WE HAVE TO MOVE, SIR!

SGT. FARELL
JUST WHERE THE HELL DO YOU SUGGEST -

CAGE
THERE'S A CANYON, ONE CLICK WEST!

A split-second BEAT. Sgt. Farell believes him.

SGT. FARELL
Right! MOVE! MOVE!

THE SOLDIERS MAKE IT OUT just as the trench is REDUCED TO RUIIN by JAVELIN FIRE -

CAGE
(to Yonaburu)
STAY WITH ME!

The soldiers RUN for the CANYON as -

SEVERAL MIMIC RUNNERS detach and GIVE CHASE. Cage TURNS, LEVELS his 20mm, BLAM! A MIMIC GOES DOWN! FOLLOWING HIS LEAD -

- TWO OTHER SOLDIERS turn to FIRE on the MIMIC but are OVERTAKEN. Hand to hand, the MIMIC are unstoppable, the TWO SOLDIERS are CUT DOWN as -

WHAM! A MIMIC RUNS RIGHT INTO CAGE, KNOCKING HIM SIDEWAYS, JAVELIN BLOOMING ACROSS ITS BODY, ARMS SHARP AS RAZORS. CAGE ROLLS, TWISTS and as it LEAPS -

He RAMS his PILEDRIVER in the mimic's CRAW - KERWHAM! The mimic DIES, javelin fizzling like dud fireworks.

SGT. FARELL (ON RADIO)
GOOD WORK, PRIVATE!

YONABURU
YEAH!

Yonaburu FIRES his 50mm, KICKING back like a 10 year old firing his first shotgun: BLAM! BLAM! Not too accurate, but MIGHTY EFFECTIVE -

CAGE
C'MON, MAN!

CAGE grabs YONABURU's shoulder and they run until -

- STRIKEJETS ROAR in, laying down a WALL OF FLAME, close enough that CAGE AND YONABURU are KNOCKED FLAT, DIRT in the SKY, MIMIC PIECES FALLING, it's hard to tell up from down -

CAGE staggers up, but YONABURU TOOK A PIECE OF SHRAPNEL.

CAGE (CONT'D)
HOLD ON!

Cage GRABS Yonaburu's FOOT, DRAGGING HIM as FRESH MIMIC clear the OILY SMOKE, Cage FIRING with his one FREE ARM -

YONABURU
I'm bleedin' out, man... Let me go.

CAGE
NO!

YONABURU
I... I'm sorry I called you a dick.
(fading)
You're my best... friend...

Distracted, Cage doesn't see the MIMIC BARRELING at him -

CAGE
Just hold on, man, I can get you -

- a sickening CRUNCH and we

CUT TO:

INT. BARRACKS - MORNING

Cage wakes up on his bunk. Yonaburu is cleaning Mrs. Smith. Cage's bare feet hit the concrete floor.

He stands there, smiling at Yonaburu.

YONABURU

(frowning)

What the fuck is wrong with you?

CAGE

Nothing, man.

Still smiling, Cage writes a "6" on his hand with a sharpie.

CAGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The Sarge was right. If there wasn't any way out of this, maybe I could at least go down fighting. So what if there were a million of them and only one of me. Maybe I had a million tries.

KIMMEL'S FACE, intent on his video game. Two blocky, old-skool STREET FIGHTERS square off. One EATS the other's LIVER.

CAGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Maybe I could win this thing after all.

GAME OVER. RESTART. Cage peers down at the game -

CAGE (CONT'D)

You're getting pretty good at that, Kimmel. How many times would you say you've played that game?

KIMMEL

I dunno. Couple thousand? I been able to beat it for a while - I'm just trying to top my own score.

CAGE

Heads up, buddy, Sarge is coming.

KIMMEL

Huh?

Cage steps up on his footlocker, addressing the room.

CAGE

Hey everyone, I just thought you should all know that Sgt.

(MORE)

CAGE (CONT'D)

Farell got out of rehab early. He's on his way. He'll be here in one minute.

FORD

Bullshit.

KIMMEL spies the Sarge, COMING DOWN THE HALL -

KIMMEL

Guys! Guys! The Sarge is coming!

SOLDIERS respond like a bomb went off, flying into action, hiding laundry, flipping gambling paraphernalia into lockers -

INT. HALLWAY - BARRACKS

SGT. FARELL MARCHES DOWN THE HALL as if he knows in his heart what he will find there. CAGE WAYLAYS HIM.

CAGE

SGT. FARELL, SIR!

SGT. FARELL

Private.

CAGE

SOME OF THE MEN WERE HOPING TO THROW YOU A PARTY, SIR, AND THEY WERE WONDERING IF YOU WERE -

SGT. FARELL

(scowling)

Let me pass, private.

Cage tries to waylay him again, Farell PUSHES past him and opens the door on -

INT. BARRACKS - MORNING

- A SHOCKINGLY CLEAN quarters. SOLDIERS stand at attention.

SGT. FARELL

Now just what in the got-damned -

The Sergeant is totally brought up short. Cage steps in behind him and... begins to SING.

CAGE (SINGING)

Fooooor he's a jolly good fellow,
for he's a jolly good fellow, for
he's a jolly good fee-ee-loooo-

(MORE)

CAGE (SINGING) (CONT'D)
 (wait for it)
 Who came back with both his arms.

A weak improvised cheer goes up. Farell frowns.

SGT. FARELL
 Well. I'll be damned. I'd heard a rumor this platoon'd fallen to the forces of Chaos.
 (beat)
 I don't usually take such pleasure in being wrong.

He scans the place, inspecting, still suspicious.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)
 Right. We'll be reviewing Mimic Killzone Tactics on the field at 0900. Get yer breakfast. You, HOLD.

Indicating Cage. Soldiers bustle out. Farell GLARES at Cage, noticing that Cage has a "6" written on the back of his hand.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)
 I don't know what game you're playing, Private... "Cage". But if you fuck with me, I will kill you.

CAGE
 Sir, yes sir.

INT. MESS HALL - MORNING

CRAPPY BREAKFAST FOOD hits metal trays. METACOFFEE splutters out of a machine. Yonaburu tastes some, scowling.

YONABURU
 What-all do they put in this shit?

GRIFF
 Everything an exploding body needs.

FORD
 (to Cage)
 Dude, you TOTALLY saved our ASSES back there. Sarge woulda killed us!

They SIT, eyeing -

RITA, at a corner table, flanked by her DOGS, who sit around, not eating, looking bored.

YONABURU

I don't get it. She can eat whatever she wants but she comes in here, like she's gonna eat with us, and then she just eats by herself and doesn't even let anyone look at her. Not even her Dogs.

GRIFF

That's why they call her the Full Metal Bitch, man. She's mean.

One of Dog Company notices them looking, gives their table the bad-eye while cleaning his fingernails with a dagger.

FORD

(whispering)

I heard she screws 'em. ALL.

GRIFF

Naw, man, they're all homos. So she won't screw 'em.

CAGE

You guys ever give it a rest?

DAVIS

She thinks she's better than us.

CAGE

She is better than us.

YONABURU

I thought you hated her! You're always talking about how much you hate all her hero bullshit. "Join the fuck-up, suckers".

CAGE

She's still the best.

Cage eats, thinking.

CAGE (CONT'D)

You think one person could change a whole battle?

YONABURU

I dunno, man. Maybe if that person were Rita.

CAGE

What about me?

YONABURU

Dude, you couldn't hit a barn if we dropped it on you.

CAGE

Yeah, but - what if I got a million tries? Like on Kimmel's video game?

YONABURU

Mmmaaybe. Could you also, like, shoot laser beams out of your eyes or teleport or something?

CAGE

I'm being serious.

YONABURU

I know you're being serious. That's what's so frickin' funny.

Rita stands, eyes ahead, and exits, the Dogs trailing.

CAGE

How long do you think it would take me to get as good as her?

YONABURU

(laughing)

I dunno, three, four lifetimes?

Cage smiles and we CUT TO:

INT. SPARRING BAY - NIGHT

Cage ROLLS, EVADING TRACER FIRE, taking HITS. Tracers aren't real, but when they hit, exojackets give a SHOCK - OW!

SGT. FARELL

What are you afraid of? A little sting? That ain't nothing!

WHAM! WHAM! Cage is fast, but Farell is faster and FEARLESS - LEAPING off walls, FLIPPING, SHOOTING, raining HELL on Cage.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)

You think the mimic's afraid of death? I seen a mimic eat its own battle-buddy. I've seen a mimic throw itself into a dropship ramjet just to bring the thing down. It did not hesitate. There was no decision, only action.

Cage SWINGS his PILEDRIVER and we slip in TIME to -

EXT. BEACHHEAD - RUBY TUESDAY - LATE MORNING

- Cage's PILEDRIVER OBLITERATES A MIMIC as he PUSHES the PLATOON farther up the canyon, SOLDIERS SCREAMING while he fires SEEKER SHELLS, targeting nine MIMICS at once -

- NINE MIMICS DIE, B-B-B-B-B-B-B-B-B-BLAM!

YONABURU
DAMN, SON, THAT'S SOME SHOOTIN'!

CAGE
MOVE OUT!

Cage FIRES, turning, seeing MORE MIMIC LEAP off the CANYON RIM, one LANDING ON YONABURU and TEARING HIM TO SHREDS -

YONABURU
GET IT OFF ME! AIGHH!

With a SCREAM, Cage LEAPS, FIRING DOWN BETWEEN HIS FEET -

INT. SPARRING BAY - NIGHT

- ALMOST LANDING ON FARELL, but Farell ROLLS, FIRES BACK, but Cage is BETTER NOW - HACKING DOWN with his 20mm, his TRACER ROUNDS HAMMERING FARELL'S ARMOR -

SGT. FARELL
You gotta fight with more than pea-shooters if you wanna WIN -

- Farell THROWS his repeater cannon aside and LEAPS, engaging Cage HAND TO HAND, TOO CLOSE for any of his weapons to work.

They're PUNCHING, KICKING, Cage taking the worst of it, dizzy, STAGGERING back like a boxer up against the ropes.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)
WHY ARE YOU HERE, PRIVATE?

CAGE
BECAUSE I WANT TO BE THE BEST, SIR!

SGT. FARELL
Then FIGHT, DAMN YOU!

Farell is RELENTLESS, BEATING THE HELL OUT OF CAGE -

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)
 Recognize your weakness and DO
 SOMETHING ABOUT IT!

- until Cage YELLS, FIGHTING BACK, RAINING BLOWS ON -

EXT. RUBY TUESDAY - ROCKY SEA CLIFFS

- the THICK HIDE OF A MIMIC, its sharp limbs moving FAST AS BUZZ SAWS as it LEAPS on him again, Cage BARELY deflecting, then HITTING BACK, landing BLOW AFTER BLOW and -

KICKING the MIMIC into a TWITCHING HEAP. Cage gets up, SWEATING, a little BLOOD inside his faceplate, BARELY ABLE to STAND after his first real hand to hand with a mimic.

Soldiers CHEER.

ROKER (ON RADIO)
 WOO-HOO! That's some FIGHTIN'!

YONABURU
 Where'd you learn that shit?

Cage crouches, looks up at the SUN, high in the sky.

CAGE
 What time you got?

YONABURU
 11:45. Why you keep asking me what fuckin' time it is?

CAGE
 Just wanna see how far I can get.

Yonaburu FROWNS, is going to ask more... but here come MORE MIMICS, DRIVEN by RITA.

Cage WATCHES HER FIGHT.

It's as if Rita can't kill mimics fast enough. While her AXE is cutting one in half, she's twisting another mimic around, forcing it to FIRE into one of its MATES -

Cage FOLLOWS, watching. But then RITA notices his follow.

RITA (ON RADIO)
 You ought to keep your distance,
 private. You might get hurt.

She CROUCHES, LEAPS off, moving faster than Cage can possibly follow. The DOGS go after her. A STRIKEJET SORTIE coming in -

YONABURU
We gotta get out of here, man.
Sarge wants us to -

CAGE
Yeah, just a - YONABURU! LOOK OUT!

- a STRIKEJET SPINS OUT OF CONTROL, GRAPPLED with a MIMIC,
and CRASH-LANDS ON YONABURU with an EXPLOSION and we CUT TO:

EXT. RUBY TUESDAY - LAGOON BATTLE

Soldiers cross a SWAMPY AREA between CRAGGY CLIFFS. Cage
WADES after RITA, watching her FIGHT -

GRIFF (RADIO)
SECTOR FOUR IS CLEAR.

CAGE
What time we got?

YONABURU
12:45. Man, why the hell do you
keep asking me what - AIGH!

An AQUATIC MIMIC comes OUT OF THE WATER, this one with JAWS
in its TORSO. It BITES Yonaburu in HALF -

CAGE
YONABURU!

Cage FIRES and we CUT TO:

EXT. RUBY TUESDAY - MOUNTAIN BATTLE

On STEEP MOUNTAIN FACE, where CAGE can see RITA, BELOW,
dispatching MIMIC by the dozen.

CAGE
Man how does she MOVE like that?

YONABURU
SHHHH.

Yonaburu POINTS. ABOVE THEM, SEVERAL MIMIC watch the battle.
Yonaburu carefully takes a GRENADE, pulls the PIN, THROWS it.

They HUG to the cliff face, CROUCHING...

...but the grenade ROLLS BACK DOWN, coming to rest right
under YONABURU'S ASS. He doesn't see it.

CAGE
YOBO! LOOK OU -

INT. MESS HALL - MONDAY MORNING

SPLUT! Some NASTY-looking stew hits a cafeteria tray.

Cage is in line with everyone else. Unlike everyone else, he's piling food of every imaginable variety on his plate. Adding salt, sugar, spices. Anything to break the monotony.

YONABURU
Goddamn, man. That's disgusting.

CAGE
Well, Yobo, you gotta keep life interesting.

YONABURU
Yobo? What's that?

CAGE
Just a name I've got going for you.

YONABURU
Dude don't call me that. It's weird.

CAGE
I'm gonna call you that.
(to the kitchen girl)
Mind if I borrow your pen?

KITCHEN GIRL
Sure.

Cage writes "93 - KIA 2:32" on his hand. Yonaburu frowns.

YONABURU
Man, you're acting really weird today.

CAGE
You don't know the half of it.

Rita walks by, head down, in perfect slow-motion.

YONABURU
I don't get it. She can eat whatever she wants but she comes in here, like she's gonna -

Watching her, distracted, Cage COLLIDES with one of the DOGS.

HEELER

Private, you don't even LOOK at
Sergeant-Major Vrataski.

Yonaburu's eyes go wide. Heeler PUSHES Cage.

Cage PUSHES back. The mess hall goes still.

CAGE

Right.

Cage SWINGS his tray. He's pretty fast. Maybe if he were in an exojacket he might stand a chance against these guys, but he weighs half as much as any one of them.

THEY'RE ALL OVER HIM, Cage gets in one last good punch and then Heeler swings, the fist CONNECTS and we CUT TO:

INT. HOLOVID BAY - NIGHT

A SLOW-MOTION EXPLOSION. RITA steps through the smoke, looking insanely awesome, in an EARLIER EDITION of her crimson exojacket. The image FAST-FORWARDS...

CAGE stands in the holobay, intently studying Rita's moves. He switches out holodisks and -

ANOTHER IMAGE of Rita at the end of a battle, exhausted.

A CAMERAMAN pushes a camera in her face as she's drinking, she HURLS the bottle at the CAMERA, the image WINKING OUT. Cage shuttles back, to the frame before she hurls the bottle -

Cage freezes that frame.

Rita is beautiful. And in that one frame, she looks like the loneliest person in the whole world.

Cage walks around the LIFESIZE HOLOGRAM, looking at her closely. He studies her melancholy face. She's frozen, standing in front of him like a translucent ghost...

Their faces almost touching.

But she's just a holovid image.

Cage gestures, the image moves out of STILL, into MOTION -

- Rita's holovid bottle FLIES at Cage's face and we

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. SPARRING BAY - NIGHT

FARELL LANDS a punch, Cage barely feels it, twisting and fending Farell off with one hand. Farell finally KICKS him, sending him flying. Cage lies on his back, frowning.

SGT. FARELL
You... had enough?

CAGE
How do you think she got so good?

Farell stands over Cage, bent over, out of breath.

SGT. FARELL
Who?

CAGE
Valkyrie One. The Full Metal... Rita.

Farell sits on a bench, easing off his faceplate. He pulls two apples out of his jacket. Hands Cage one, eats.

SGT. FARELL
You've seen her fight?

CAGE
Yeah, I, uh... watch old warvids.
(beat)
No one can move as fast as her. I don't know how she does it.

Farell eats his apple, thinking.

SGT. FARELL
Prob'ly turns off her autobalancer.

CAGE
What's that?

SGT. FARELL
Have you signed your infirmary release? Organ donation forms? Next of kin notices?

CAGE
Uh... yeah.

NOW Farell tweaks with the back of Cage's jacket. READOUTS on the faceplate FLICKER as Farell hacks into the system -

SGT. FARELL

On the island of Okinawa, when the farmers were under the tyranny of the Samurai, they founded Karate on one simple principal: that the force of a blow was not in the muscle behind it but in the mind that could... let go of the body.

(beat)

Every muscle in the human body has a kind of control on it - something that tells it not to push too far, too fast. Keeps your body from tearing itself apart.

(beat)

When the Okinawans learned to let go of this control, they found that a human fist could puncture Samurai armor. And not suffer a scratch.

He pulls out a chip, shuts a port. The suit momentarily WILTS. Then powers back up.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)

Jackets have the same kind of control on 'em. Without it, if you're not careful, you could tear yourself to shreds just by tryin' to run too fast.

The faceplate readout flashes WARNING: AUTOBALANCER DISABLED.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)

Take a step. Easy. Easy.

Cage STEPS, BOUNCING, clumsy. Spring-loaded.

CAGE

This is pretty cool.

SGT. FARELL

Now take a swing at that target, but I want you to -

WHAM! Cage STRIKES the METAL, PYLON-SHAPED TARGET -

- and sends himself FLYING across the room in the process, landing in a HEAP. OW. Farell grins.

SGT. FARELL (CONT'D)

I didn't turn off the pain feedback. Just to keep things fair.

When Cage gets up, he looks, the target is GONE -

- because it's CRUMPLED AROUND HIS FIST. A twisted fragment falls to the floor.

CAGE

Wow.

SGT. FARELL

You wouldn't want to use this on the field of battle. It's against regulation. Someone could get hurt.

Farell WINKS and we CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN - RUBY TUESDAY

CAGE is DECIMATING MIMICS, twice as fast and twice as strong as he was before. He fights so fast and hard that it's a spectacle; soldiers WATCH, stunned.

CAGE

ALL CLEAR! MOVE OUT!

YONABURU

DAMN, where'd you learn to do that?

CAGE

I've been doing a lot of reading. What time you got?

YONABURU

(frowning)

3:15.

Cage DISPATCHES a straggler MIMIC. Leading the men up, out of the CANYON. As they near the crest of the hill -

- it's started SNOWING.

CAGE

For instance, did you know that the weather is totally unpredictable? They say a butterfly flapping its wings in Australia can make enough of a difference that, on the other side of the world a month later, there might be a hurricane, all because of whether or not that butterfly was having a bad day.

YONABURU

What does that have to do with anything?

Cage looks up at the sky, watching flakes of snow fall.

CAGE

I don't know. The weather's always different.

YONABURU

Of course it's always different. That's, like, the whole idea of weather.

They get to a CLIFF. Visibility is low.

Cage motions to several GROUPS of soldiers, who all creep into position. He's organizing an AMBUSH.

Cage SCANS the field below, his heads-up BINOCULAR-STYLE -

CAGE

Now the mimic will be gathering right...

Cage FROWNS. The vale below them is EMPTY.

CAGE (CONT'D)

That's weird.

SOLDIER (ON RADIO)

WE GOT... WE GOT A PROBLEM BACK HERE -

A soldier comes BARRELING through the SNOW, HYSTERICAL.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

It's... IT'S A TRAP! They knew we'd be here! They were waiting for us!

The soldier EXPLODES, a JAVELIN in his back.

CAGE

That's impossible, it's -

- MIMIC close in from behind. YONABURU TAKES A HIT and FALLS off the CLIFF FACE -

YONABURU

Caaaaaaage!
(thump)

CAGE

Dammit.

CAGE FIGHTS BACK WITH ALL HE'S GOT, a one-man army, pushing the mimic ambush back down the hill, but -

TAK TAK SPT SPT SPT -

His AUTOCANNON runs out of AMMO. So does his REPEATER RIFLE -
- a FRESH SWARM OF MIMICS head this way, and -

Cage JUMPS onto the turret of a HALF-EXPLODED TANK, KICKING mimic away, TEARING off the main cannon and using it as a BLUDGEON, WHANG! WHANG! WHANG!

He CLEANS UP on the six MIMICS, the last one running in a circle like a dying cockroach. He hits it again. It's DEAD.

Cage looks at the twisted piece of metal in his hand.

An IDEA.

The smoke and blowing snow clears, and a GIGANTIC MIMIC stomps into view, towering least 30 FEET TALL.

CAGE (CONT'D)

What the -

It SWINGS a huge arm DOWN, all goes BLACK and we

CUT TO:

INT. DISPENSARY - DAY

The dispensary is a mess; a tiny, poorly lit window on a vast world of cluttered shelves. A gaunt, prematurely balding DISPENSARY CAPTAIN watches a pornvid until -

CAGE

I need an B93 external memory unit for a Beyer-Michelson exojacket.

DISPENSARY CAPTAIN

I don't think we have -

CAGE

Back there, on the fifth shelf, up top. There's some that aren't in your system -

Frowning, the guy goes and looks. Sure enough -

DISPENSARY CAPTAIN

Yeah, but these aren't for -

CAGE

I have the requisition orders here.

Cage slides papers across like he's done this 20 times, smiling evenly at the Captain. The guy scans, frowning.

DISPENSARY CAPTAIN
You're a Chief Engineer?

CAGE
Yep.

DISPENSARY CAPTAIN
What are you going to use it for?

CAGE
That's classified.

Cage SIGNS. The Captain notices the number "187" written on the back of Cage's hand, frowns. Cage takes the Mylar baggie.

CAGE (CONT'D)
Thanks, Roy.

EXT. UDF FORCES BASE - DRIZZLING RAIN - VARIOUS

Cage walks, keeping his head down in the light drizzle. RITA'S GLASS TOWER looms over the base like a shining needle. What happens next is a SYMPHONY OF MOVEMENT AND SYNCHRONY.

CAGE (V.O.)
Sarge always said there was no such thing as chance, as luck. I still didn't believe him. Lots of things didn't seem to follow any pattern. The weather, for instance. But other things - it was weird just how predictable some things could be.

Cage walks across the base like the proverbial Rabbi walking between the raindrops. He knows EVERY MOVEMENT of each person on this base swarming with busy people rushing to and fro.

We flip in and out of SLOW MOTION as -

- a GUARD turns and looks at a piece of paper blowing across the road -

- CAGE STEPS IN FRONT OF HIM, just out of line of vision, neatly CROSSING THROUGH A CHECKPOINT and -

- STEPPING ONTO THE BACK OF A MOVING TRUCK like you'd catch a carousel horse. It cruises, slows, the driver SHOUTING at SOMEONE for just long enough for Cage to STEP OFF the truck -

- and right behind a GUARD, who he shadows, RIGHT behind him, and then splits off, down an alley -

- past a GUY and GIRL soldier illegally NECKING -

- and now skirting the base of Rita's TOWER, where several of DOG COMPANY hang out at the base, telling jokes -

CAGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I'd tried to get through them twenty times before I realized I didn't have to get through them at all.

FLASHBACK CUT:

To CAGE, fighting the DOGS single-handedly, DYING in horrible ways - STABBED, BEATEN, STOMPED, THROWN and DRAGGED and we -

CUT BACK TO:

Cage watches from an EAVE as two of the DOGS start fighting, wrestling, ANOTHER shouts for the others to come, LAUGHING -

Cage uses the distraction to SLIP PAST and into -

INT. ENGINEERS BAY - DAY

RITA's CRIMSON EXOJACKET stands in the middle of a large WORKROOM, looking mighty, except for the LEG, which is OPEN, pieces strewn out on the floor.

SHASTA RILEY, Rita's pigtailed, overalled, Coke-bottle-glasses-wearing CHIEF ENGINEER, pores over the machinery.

Shasta is so frustrated over whatever she's looking at that she doesn't realize Cage is STANDING RIGHT OVER HER.

Cage winces, this part is always hard to get right -

CAGE
 Uh... hi there -

Shasta STARTLES, jerking up so fast that her glasses fall off her face. Cage catches them before they hit the floor.

CAGE (CONT'D)
 Whups - there you go.

He hands them back. Shasta looks at him, eyes big as saucers.

SHASTA
 How'd you get in here? This is...
 This is a classified area...
 (MORE)

SHASTA (CONT'D)
only people with appropriate
security clearance are allowed in -

CAGE
I know. I just wanted a chance to
meet the real Shasta Riley. Chief
Engineer for Valkyrie One.

Shasta does another double-take. She smooths out a pigtail -

SHASTA
(blushing)
Oh. I'm actually, uh, really behind
today, I uh -

Cage peers in at the exposed machinery -

CAGE
Hm. Looks like the external memory
unit's been damaged on that thing -

SHASTA
Yeah, I'm trying to - how'd you
know that?

CAGE
Just guessing. You know... that is
so weird, because I just happen to
have one on me.

Cage produces the plastic Mylar baggie. Shasta stares.

CAGE (CONT'D)
Yep. That guy at the armory? The
weird bald one who is always
hitting on you and makes you fill
out extra paperwork every time you
go over there so he can spend more
time totally creepin' you out?
(beat)
I got it off of him.

SHASTA
Oh. Wow.

She looks at the dead unit she's been trying to fix -

CAGE
If you keep trying to repair that
thing it's gonna take you all
afternoon. A real pain in the butt.
This could sure save you a lot of
time - and a visit to El Creepo.

Cage smiles, holding the bag. Shasta eyes it, desperate.

SHASTA

What do you want for it?

Cage points to the wall, where three DENTED BATTLE AXES hang. Shasta searches the wall, Cage couldn't possibly mean -

CAGE

I want an axe. You've got extra.

SHASTA

Oh... no. You can't. I mean, that's pure tungsten carbide monomer. It's over two hundred seventy kilos. Jackets aren't made to carry a weapon that heavy, you'd overload the autobalancer -

CAGE

I fight with mine off.

Shasta eyes Cage up and down.

SHASTA

Oh.

(beat)

You're very unusual.

CAGE

I'll take that as a compliment.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - RUBY TUESDAY - MORNING

EVERYONE is suiting up, KIMMEL getting wedged into his jacket, SOLDIERS PACKING on ordinance. But Cage is REMOVING weapon after weapon, dropping them to the floor.

The number 203 is written on Cage's hand.

YONABURU

What the hell are you doing?

Cage slips on his exojacket, looking at his bare, jacketed arm, flexing, admiring it.

CAGE

Lightening up. Gettin' sleek.

YONABURU

What are you s'posed to fight with?

A DELIVERYMAN appears with a HANDTRUCK and a BATTLE AXE -

CAGE

This.

Cage leans over, picks up the battle axe and we CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN - RUBY TUESDAY - AFTERNOON

Using the HUGE BATTLE AXE, CAGE FIGHTS LIKE A BERSERKER, making short work of the mimic at hand and -

- LEADING the platoon to the crest of a hill, HUNDREDS of MIMIC below. And there's SOMETHING ELSE with them -

GRIFF

Gawd-DAMN what the hell is THAT?

The mimic horde parts, clearing the way for SOMETHING SO BIG that it takes a minute to stand upright, unfolding itself.

CAGE

(eyes narrowing)

That's a Megareaver. They bring 'em out sometimes. They're big, but they're slow.

The MEGAREAVER stands over 30' tall, and looks like a cross between a MIMIC and a WALKING WARSHIP, GLINTING in the rain.

FORD

Crikey.

LOFTING THE AXE, Cage SCREAMS, running STRAIGHT FOR IT -

- the MEGAREAVER ERUPTING with javelin fire even while it's raising its BLUDGEONING ARM... which SWINGS DOWN -

CRASH! Cage DIVING out of its way, evading javelins, LEAPING onto the Megareaver's leg, CLAMBERING UP -

UNTIL HE'S ON THE THING'S BACK. It REACHES for him -

CAGE CLEFTS AN ARM OFF... the stump SPRAYING the horrible blood everywhere, the blood KILLING the MIMICS it touches. Then, with some persistence, Cage HACKS OFF THE HEAD.

With a GURGLING ROAR, the thing COLLAPSES, disgorging what look like UNDEVELOPED MIMICS all over the battleground.

CAGE wipes his faceplate, his armor STEAMING with the things' oily black blood. He LIFTS his axe, RALLYING the soldiers.

CAGE

MOVE OUT!

A THOUSAND SOLDIERS CHEER. From the HEADS-UP view it's obvious that THEY'VE WON THIS STAGE OF THE BATTLE.

They push ONWARD, shooting stragglers -

SGT. FARELL (RADIO)
We got unconfirmed reports that
Sector Six is clear?

CAGE
Yes sir, it is, sir. Give us
everything you got for Sector Seven.

SGT. FARELL
I'll be got-damned, son, who the
hell taught you how to fight like
that?

CAGE
(smiling)
I know this mean old motherfucker.
Showed me a few tricks.

EXT. RUBY TUESDAY - PLATEAU, SECTOR 7

The soldiers reach a HIGH PLATEAU, OTHER PLATOONS, whole COMPANIES lining the ridge, while in front of them -

- THOUSANDS of MIMIC ASSEMBLE. A FINAL SHOWDOWN?

YONABURU
What're you grinnin' about?

CAGE
I never made it this far before.
I'm startin' to think we might just
win this thing.
(to radio)
READY TO ENGAGE!

SGT. FARELL (ON RADIO)
On your signal.

CAGE
Go.

Cage RUNS, LEADING THE MEN straight at the MIMIC HORDE. YONABURU by his side, Cage FIGHTS, deflecting shots aimed at Yonaburu.

ACROSS the PLATEAU, the SUN starts streaking through the clouds, even though it's STILL RAINING -

Cage dispatches mimics, the whole area around them clearing.

CAGE (CONT'D)
What time you got?

YONABURU
4:19? Damn. Would ya look at that.

BRIGHT sunlight all around them, but THICK RAINDROPS falling.

CAGE
Yeah. Pretty cool, huh? They say
that means that the devil is...
(wincing)
Ow!

Cage blinks. He TWITCHES. Something's WRONG.

The world BLINKS OUT and BACK like a transmission getting SEVERED. Cage CRINGES - STAGGERS.

CAGE (CONT'D)
It's... OW, FUCK!

Cage's head. It HURTS. It's killing him.

YONABURU
You OK, buddy?

CAGE
Something is... ARGH!

Cage falls to his knees, his BATTLE-AXE clanging to the ground. He TEARS off his faceplate, holding his head.

CAGE (CONT'D)
Oh no.

The IMAGE SHUDDERS, the SOUND WARBLING -

- and for a MILLISECOND Cage is -

BACK ON HIS BUNK IN THE BARRACKS, THRASHING -

YONABURU
(in the barracks)
What the fuck is wrong with -

Cage SPASMS again and -

IS BACK ON THE BATTLEFIELD - on his KNEES.

YONABURU (CONT'D)
- fuck is wrong with you?

Cage's face is WRENCHED in pain, he's helpless as more MIMIC come streaming in, taking out SOLDIERS.

CAGE
I'm sorry buddy, I - ARGH!

Cage COLLAPSES, SPASMING, and everything goes TUNNEL-VISION STYLE, BUZZING, WARBLING -

- WHAM! A MIMIC tackles Yonaburu, PULLING limbs off like you'd pull the legs off a fly -

- CAGE lies on his back, helpless, dying, as the world BUZZES, SHUDDERS... and WINKS OUT.

INT. BARRACKS - DAY

Cage wakes up on his bunk, holding his head. He YELLS, ENRAGED, KICKING THE WALL.

CAGE
NO! NO NO NO!

Yonaburu scowls up.

YONABURU
What the fuck is wrong with you?

Cage looks around the barracks, his lip twitching. A trickle of BLOOD coming out of his nose. He wipes it away.

CAGE
I die at 4:19. No matter what. 4:19 is when I died the first time.

A horrible, sad realization coming over him.

CAGE (CONT'D)
It's just a loop. It doesn't matter what I do.

YONABURU
What are you talking about?

CAGE
How could I have been so stupid? I really thought I could win.

YONABURU
Are you OK, man?

Cage walks through the barracks, steps up on a footlocker.

CAGE

Hey! Everybody listen up!

NO REACTION. Cage GRABS Kimmel's video game and SMASHES it on the floor. Everyone stares. Cage clears his throat.

CAGE (CONT'D)

Uh, good morning. I wanted to let you know that we're all going to die tomorrow. Or at least, most of us will. I definitely will.

(beat)

So you should think, like really think about how you're going to spend this day. The more you prepare yourself, the harder you try to be the best soldier you can ever be, the better you're going to do tomorrow, and for that matter, the better you're probably gonna feel about whatever happens.

Yonaburu covers his eyes, painfully embarrassed.

CAGE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry to bum everyone out, but you gotta trust me on this one. This is probably your last chance to get it right.

EVERYONE stares at Cage like he's crazy.

CAGE (CONT'D)

Oh, and Sergeant Farell got out of rehab early. He's coming down the hall right now.

EVERYONE flies into action.

INT. MESS HALL - DAY

Cage is eating by himself. The rest of the platoon sits at another table, talking, glancing this way, clearly talking about him.

KIMMEL steps up, looking nervous.

KIMMEL

Hey. I, uh... What you said back there meant a whole lot, man.

The guy who can never fit into his suit is staring at Cage with a mixture of awe and adoration.

CAGE

Ah... I was really just saying all that. Probably drank too much metacoffee.

Cage sips, scowling at the taste.

Kimmel sits, watching Cage pile all manner of spicy sauce, salt, syrup and whatever on the grossest pile of mixed-up foods you've ever seen. It's disgusting.

CAGE (CONT'D)

Gotta keep it interesting, right?

Cage eats. "214" is written on the back of his hand.

KIMMEL

What's... that for?

CAGE

It's the number of times I've seen you die.

(wiping his mouth)

It's OK, we all do. But you usually don't even make it through the drop. The main problem is that you're too fat. They shouldn't have let you in here. But they're out of fit soldiers.

Kimmel wants to get up, but it's too late -

CAGE (CONT'D)

Don't feel bad about it. That guy Davis over there? He won't ever make it out of the drop ship. And Roker? He ends up on fire, cooked in his own jacket. How fucked up is that? And Ford, he always manages to lose one of his arms. Sometimes the left, sometimes the right. It's the weirdest thing.

(beat)

Nance, on the other hand, she just totally freaks around the second hour of battle. Starts killing everyone around her until we have to take her down.

KIMMEL

Uh... I should probably go.

Cage shakes his head, smiling, drinking more metacoffee.

CAGE

You, you usually just drown, after you run away.

(chewing)

I don't think drowning's all that bad, really.

Kimmel looks like he's gonna be sick..

KIMMEL

Uh... Why are you telling me this?

CAGE

Because it's the one way I've figured to keep you from fighting tomorrow after that speech I gave. You're gonna get so freaked out that you're gonna take a Section Eight. The guys from the infirmary are coming in just now. You should get to know them.

And in walk the INFIRMARY GUYS. Kimmel looks.

CUT TO:

EXT. RUBY TUESDAY - VARIOUS

IN THE DROPSHIP

Cage rides, as in the opening, but his face is grim. He OPENS his faceplate, pulling out a flask of WHISKEY, DRINKING in the HOWLING WIND while FARELL SCREAMS at him.

He offers it to the rest of the PLATOON, they shake their heads, exchanging looks, and CAGE JUMPS, whiskey FLYING -

IN BATTLE

CAGE wanders the battlefield, surrounded by the dead and dying. His RADIO is going wild. He tunes it down, until all is silence, replaced with sweeping, sad music - maybe a string quartet version of Metallica's "NOTHING ELSE MATTERS".

AT A RAVINE

Cage is filling a gulley full of mimics, wounding them just enough so they can't climb out. He's clearly DRUNK.

BARRELS of fuel oil dump into the ravine. The mimics are screeching to get out.

He lights a match to the bottle of whiskey and THROWS it, face LIT UP with the HELLISH GLOW.

He looks TOTALLY INSANE.

AT A DROPSHIP LANDING SORTIE

Cage JUMPS from dropship to dropship, like Super Mario, climbing into the sky, way out over the ocean. At the highest one, he SWAN DIVES -

- DOWN, DOWN INTO THE WATER. SPLASH! He turns, drifting down, looking up at the dead and dying, the WAR MACHINES and MIMICS and MEN hitting the water and floating down -

Cage's PRESSURE METER going up and up until -

ON A SHARP PEAK

Cage RUNS at high speed, hauling a MIMIC up a hill, LEAPING -

- grabbing a STRIKEJET, HAULING the mimic bodily along, forcing the jet into a NEEDLE SHOT: straight up, ABOVE THE CLOUDS AND STORM -

- AND ABOVE THE ATMOSPHERE, where he can see the BLACK EDGE OF SPACE and the setting sun.

The mimic ICES OVER and finally EXPLODES. Cage lets go of the rocket, floating in low-earth orbit. IT'S BEAUTIFUL.

His faceplate ices over, ALARMS going off. Cage opens his faceplate, THE VOID RUSHES IN, AND WE

CUT TO:

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - RUBY TUESDAY

BLAM! A little VIDEO-GAME FIGHTER EXPLODES in a comically violent way. GAME OVER. YOUR SCORE IS 943,943,925. RESTART -

Cage wanders the field of battle, playing KIMMEL'S HAND-HELD VIDEO GAME, paying little attention to the battle at hand.

Whenever a mimic comes near, Cage DISPATCHES it without even looking up from the game.

FINALLY one manages to make him drop the game, Cage gets ANGRY. He throws himself into a HORDE of mimics.

CAGE is a DEATH DEALER, killing without purpose, rhyme or reason, standing on a GROWING PILE of dead mimic, but MORE and MORE COME, he'll be buried soon, when -

WHAM, a HUGE-ASS mimic slides into several pieces as -
 - RITA leaps into the fray, fighting alongside Cage.

Cage matches her moves, swing for swing. Cage has never fought this close to her before.

RITA lands, striking a pose. Her radio CRACKLES -

RITA

So. It's Cage, huh? Your jacket says you're a Private. You sure don't fight like a Private.

CAGE

I play a lot of video games.

RITA

You're pretty good.

CAGE

"Pretty good"?

Cage FLIES into action, killing SIX MIMIC with one complex and insane ballet-like stroke, showing off for RITA.

RITA

Your one weakness is that you fight like nothing matters. Something always matters.

She demonstrates. It's like her focus is always on what's next, like she doesn't really hate the mimic one way or another - there is a beauty, efficiency in it.

Cage hammers a few mimics back. Clumsy by comparison.

CAGE

I've tried to fight like you. I can't.

RITA

Try. Don't think about what's next. Forget about what just happened.

She swings, effortlessly dispatching more.

RITA (CONT'D)

You fight with your eyes. You've got to fight with your heart.

Cage tries. The improvement is immediate. Mimic go flying as they fight together. They are a perfect team.

Soon, Mimic litter the field. Smoke clears. Rita smiles.

RITA (CONT'D)
Not too bad at all, private.

CAGE
Well, thanks for the lesson. But I
gotta go die now.

Cage turns to leave. TWO MORE MIMIC head his way -

RITA
Private Cage, I've got a question.

- SLASH! SLASH! Cage FLIPS, dispatching two at once.

RITA (CONT'D)
How many loops is this for you?

Cage TURNS, STUNNED. His axe falls, clattering to the ground.

CAGE
What did you just say?

He stares at her, in total shock. Rita smiles.

RITA
I said how many - HEADS UP!

A MEGAREAVER CHARGES, SWINGING its CUTTING ARM and -

- the world BUZZES, falling apart, the IMAGE of Rita killing
the Megareaver SHATTERING INTO FRAGMENTS as we -

CUT TO:

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA FARMLAND - MORNING

A picturesque FARMHOUSE on a hill. Waves of GRAIN shush in
the morning breeze. Two HORSES nicker and prance by a barn,
and above, the sky is BRIGHT BLUE, hardly a cloud.

RITA VRATASKI is lying on her bed, watching the sky, the
horses. Rita's bed is in the middle of this wheat field.

She sits up, rubbing the sleep out of her eyes. Looks like
she didn't sleep too well.

With some regret, Rita taps a button and the horses FREEZE,
the grain STOPS WAVING. The HOLOVID IMAGE fades, revealing -

INT. RITA'S TOWER - MONDAY MORNING

- the UDF MILITARY BASE, the OCEAN, and operations going on below and out into the distance.

NOW Rita BREWS COFFEE, carefully pouring steaming water over fresh grounds, yawning, in her pyjamas.

The coffee brewed, she holds her cup like it's precious, looking out at the base... until a grating BUZZER goes off.

LT. HOLSTROM (INTERCOM)

Knock knock.

LT. HOLSTROM, AKA CHIEF BREEDER, enters, clipboard in hand.

LT. HOLSTROM (CONT'D)

Good morning, Valkyrie One.

RITA

Hey CB. What've you got for me?

Holstrom produces a HOLODISK. The room darkens, and now -

STRATEGIC MAPS of the ISLAND, the BATTLE hover around them, the ocean and the base still dimly visible through the glass.

Holstrom debriefs Rita. HILLS and TERRAIN and MIMIC CONCENTRATIONS spin and move. She takes it all in, drinking.

RITA (CONT'D)

Let me see the Sector Three ridge display again.

CRAGGY PEAKS come into view, dotted with MILITARY SYMBOLS. Holstrom watches Rita's face closely as she thinks.

She focuses, mind going somewhere else.

RITA (CONT'D)

They're probably going to hit the rear divisions. Here... and here...

LT. HOLSTROM

TAC-COM ran the simulations and see a low probability of a rear attack -

RITA

Then tell them their simulations are wrong.

(focusing)

They'll be in the mountains. Along this plateau. A lot of them... By late afternoon, they...

She trails off, frowning.

RITA (CONT'D)
After that, I'm not... getting
anything else.

Now Holstrom frowns, worried.

HOLSTROM
Nothing? What does that mean?

RITA
I don't know. It's probably
nothing.

HOLSTROM
What should I tell command?

BEAT.

RITA
Tell them I'm taking a walk.

HOLSTROM
TAC-COM prefers it if you don't
leave the tower the day before
battle, ma'am.

RITA
I don't care what TAC-COM thinks.

INT. ENGINEERING BAY/ARMORY - DAY

RITA'S CRIMSON EXOJACKET hangs, battered but battle-ready,
except for the leg, which is MESSILY OPEN -

SHASTA RILEY hunkers over the leg, removing the external
memory unit, all pigtails, overalls, Coke-bottle glasses -

RITA
Morning, Shasta. How's it going?

Shasta startles, dropping her glasses.

SHASTA
OH! Hi! I, uh, we're having some
trouble with the anterior memory
unit on V9, but I'm sure I'll have
it fixed by this afternoon, if you -

RITA
I just came to see if you wanted to
get some breakfast.

Shasta smiles, always rabbit-nervous, bites her lip.

SHASTA

I'd, uh, really love to, but I... I have to get this unit fixed before tomorrow. I knew I should have just ordered a fresh one.

Rita wanders, looking at Shasta's messy table, finding a cheap plastic figurine of... HERSELF. RITA, VALKYRIE ONE.

RITA

What's this?

SHASTA

(embarrassed)

Just something I got off base. I, uh, think it's from New Taiwan.

Rita picks up the figurine. There's a whole playset: AXE, JACKET, WEAPONRY...

RITA

God. The boobs are terrible! How would I ever fit in a jacket?

SHASTA

I know. It's kinda weird. I shouldn't have bought it.

RITA

No. It's cool. It's funny.

Rita puts the figurine back on the shelf.

She stares up at her empty exojacket, thinking.

RITA (CONT'D)

I... wanted to say, that, if anything happens tomorrow, that you've been a great engineer. I couldn't do what I do without you.

SHASTA

Is everything OK?

RITA

I'm just feel a little weird today. That's all.

Worried, Shasta watches her go.

EXT. TRAINING FIELD - DAY

Rita walks, watching PLATOONS OF INFANTRY train. Her DOGS in loose formation around her. An army photographer catches up, festooned with cameras, snapping pictures -

PHOTOGRAPHER

Give us a smile, Major. Come on.
Big battle tomorrow, huh? How many
mimics you think you're gonna kill?

But Rita's focus is elsewhere. She notices CAGE'S PLATOON fucking up an obstacle course in every conceivable way.

RITA

What are they doing?

HOLSTROM

That's 3rd Platoon, 301st division.
Conscripts. Never finished basic.
They're the worst, ma'am.

RITA

Everyone gotta start somewhere.

AT THE OBSTACLE COURSE

NANCE and FORD power over a wall, Nance taking the opportunity to GRAB his ass. They FALL in the mud, kicking.

FORD

HEY!

NANCE AND FORD SQUARE OFF, a throng forming -

SGT. FARELL

BACK! OFF! NOW!

NANCE

I think I'm gonna kill you, Fordy.
Right now. Front'a everyone.

They start SWINGING, just as -

- RITA pushes through the HOOTING THRONG. NANCE lands a PERFECT PUNCH on FORD. He staggers, twists, and SWINGS BACK -

Rita goes to catch his fist, but in a microsecond, notices -

- CAGE standing in the throng, watching HER instead of the fight. Rita hesitates... and still catches Ford's fist -

- but the force of his blow THROWS them both around, his fist grazing her cheek just as she sends him SPRAWLING -

The Dogs step forward to intervene -

RITA
Hold it, Shep.

Rita wipes blood off her lip. Offers her hand to Ford.

RITA (CONT'D)
You got a good right hook, soldier.

NOW

The soldiers hold their ISO-PUSHUPS in a perfect line.

Rita walks the line of soldiers, the PHOTOGRAPHER snapping pictures from a safe distance. A few of the Dogs hunker over the straining soldiers, GRINNING EVILLY at their torture.

RITA (CONT'D)
A jacket can't protect you from a
mimic. Only your mind can. The mind
is the greatest weapon you have. In
the end, it is your only weapon.

One of the soldiers, CAGE, keeps staring at her. His expression very serious, almost angry.

Beside Cage, Yonaburu COLLAPSES, struggling to get back up.

SGT. FARELL
GET BACK UP, PRIVATE!

RITA
This man's had enough.

SGT. FARELL
Yes, ma'am.

Yonaburu gets up, arms trembling. DOG SOLDIERS smirk. Rita notices Cage staring up at her again.

She drops into a perfect iso-pushup, right next to Cage. When she looks over, Cage is looking her dead in the eye.

RITA
Is there something on my face,
soldier?

CAGE
(quietly)
You're a very difficult person to
get to. It took me sixteen tries
before I remembered how to do this
one.

RITA
Do I know you?

CAGE
You don't recognize me?

RITA
I've never seen you before in my
life, soldier.

Cage frowns. He didn't expect that.

CAGE
I need to talk to you. In private.

Rita frowns, noticing that "329" is written on Cage's hand.

RITA
I'll make you a deal. If you can
hold the position longer than me,
you can say whatever you want.

CAGE
Fine.

THE SUN BEATS DOWN. One by one, soldiers drop, until only
Cage and Rita are left.

Two DOG soldiers keep time, shaking their heads. They've
never seen Rita, or anyone else, hold an iso-pushup this
long. A CROWD of SOLDIERS gather, gawking.

Cage and Rita STRAIN to hold the position, sweat dripping.

RITA
You... had enough...?

CAGE
I don't... think so...

But Cage can't take it anymore. With a YELL, he drops. Rita's
Dogs WHOOP -

SHEP
CALAMITY DAWG WINS! OOH RAH!

Rita gets up, dusts her hands off. Looks down at Cage -

RITA
It's too bad. Now I wanna know what
it was you had to say. But a deal's
a deal.

Rita turns to walk away, surrounded by her celebrating men. Yonaburu comes over, helping Cage up.

YONABURU

Damn, that was some crazy shit,
man, I never -

Cage PUSHES into the throng, after Rita.

CAGE

HEY! RITA! WAIT!

In a millisecond, CAGE is on the dirt, two of the DOGS on top of him, his wrists behind him. Cage spits dirt.

CAGE (CONT'D)

I got an answer to your question.
Three hundred twenty-nine.

Rita turns, frowning.

RITA

Three hundred twenty-nine what?

CAGE

Days since we met. Times I've died.
Times I've woken up again.

Rita's eyes go WIDE.

RITA

What did you just say, private?

CAGE

You said it was... You called it
"the loop".

Rita STARES, dumbstruck.

RITA

Let him go.

EVERYONE stares. Even the Dogs look perplexed.

Cage gets up, dusting himself off, giving one of the DOGS a violent look.

CAGE

Now you mind telling me just what
the hell is going on?

EXT. TRAINING FIELD - BY THE WATER COOLERS - DAY

Yonaburu DRINKS, staring across the field, to where Cage and Rita WALK, trailed at a distance by the DOGS.

GRIFF

Dude. What do you think they're talkin' about?

YONABURU

No freakin' idea.

EXT. BASE - AT THE FENCE - DAY

Rita walks in silence, face hard as stone, until they're well away from the onlookers.

RITA

I guess you have a lot of questions.

She looks at Cage's hand again. The numbers on it. Tears begin rolling down her face.

CAGE

Are you, uh... OK?

RITA

Yeah. I just thought I was the only one it had ever happened to.

CAGE

Are you... in the loop with me?

RITA

No. I got out.

CAGE

There's a way out?

Rita looks out through the fence at the ocean.

RITA

It was in the Battle of Florida. I'd lied about my age when I joined up. I didn't know the first thing about being a soldier.

CUT TO:

EXT. RITA'S MEMORY - VARIOUS

IN THE BATTLE OF FLORIDA, JACKETED INFANTRY FIGHT MIMIC BY THE THOUSAND. We fly over the battle, finding -

- RITA'S PLATOON. She's clearly way too young to be here, keeping close to her Captain, LT. ARTHUR HENDRICKS, a good-looking, fatherly man in his late 30s -

RITA (V.O.)
*We didn't have a chance in hell,
 but I was lucky, my Lieutenant was
 looking out for me. He kept me
 alive while everyone else in my
 platoon got shredded.*

They FIGHT side by side -

- but then LT. HENDRICKS goes DOWN, KILLED by a mimic with an ODD, RAINBOW-LIKE SHEEN -

RITA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*He died, trying to save me.
 I lost my head and went after the
 mimic that killed him.*

The YOUNG RITA HUNTS DOWN the MIMIC, enabled by REVENGE and FURY alone. Her EXOJACKET is TORN HALF AWAY when she finally KILLS the thing, using her PILEDRIVER -

RITA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I killed it. And then I died.

- SHE DIES, in the QUICKSILVER BLOOD of the ANTENNA MIMIC. We see the image fall apart, then RITA WAKES UP -

IN HER BARRACKS, screaming, in her hammock. People STARE.

RITA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*I woke up the day before the battle
 had even started. I thought I'd
 gone crazy.*

RITA wanders the barracks like a ghost -

RITA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*I must have died twenty times
 before I pulled myself together and
 decided to stand and fight.*

ON THE BATTLEFIELD, RITA HAMMERS mimics with a REPEATER RIFLE, SNARLING as she is CUT DOWN in a SPRAY OF RED -

RITA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
After a while, I got better.

We see LT. HENDRICKS die a VARIETY of DEATHS, RITA WEEPING over some of them, FIGHTING through the rest.

RITA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I was in four hundred eleven battles before I figured out how to break out of the loop.

ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE, Rita now fights with a BATTLEAXE -
 - when she sees a RAINBOW MIMIC, the first one she killed, just like the one Cage killed, streaking across the field -
 Her eyes NARROW, she RUNS AFTER IT and we

CUT TO:

EXT. BASE - BY THE FENCE

CAGE'S FACE, desperate to know -

CAGE
 How?

RITA
 The first time you died. Tell me exactly what happened.

CAGE
 I'd been hit. You were there. You took my battery. This... big mimic came up. Kinda... rainbow colored. It was going to shoot you in back. I killed it. It bled on me. I died.
 (beat)
 It was, uh, pretty awful.

RITA
 Do you remember what it was doing, when it... when you died?

CAGE
 (frowning)
 Yeah. This... stuff was coming of it, like little wires. I've never seen one of them do that.

RITA
 You killed an Antenna. While it was broadcasting.
 (MORE)

RITA (CONT'D)
 When you killed that mimic, you got tangled up in the signal. Became a receiver. Just like I did.

CAGE
 I... what?

Rita smiles.

RITA
 It's probably easier if I show you.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLOBAY - BATTLEVIDS

A SINGLE JACKETED HUMAN fights a MIMIC, we pull BACK, to a -
 SPY-SAT AERIAL VIEW of a BATTLE in PROGRESS. THOUSANDS of MIMIC flood across a field, engaging with THOUSANDS OF HUMANS, but we pull FARTHER BACK -

RITA
 You ever wonder why the mimic almost always know where we're going to strike next?

- until all that we can see are hundreds of thousands of BLUE and RED DOTS converging, dissolving, repeating, almost like a mathematical equation, on abstracted, 3-D terrain.

Rita's face is dimly illuminated in the holobay.

RITA (CONT'D)
 Look.

BLUE DOTS head to a position... But RED DOTS get there first.

RITA (CONT'D)
 Do you see the pattern?

CAGE
 No.

RITA
 Let me speed it up.

NOW the battle scuds by at high speed, the mimics POUR onto the human defense forces, like SAND settling, shifting -

RITA (CONT'D)
 Watch the movements.

And a pattern emerges: ONE SMALL CHANGE, then... EVERYTHING flows in a new direction. Pulsing from RANDOM ACTION... to FOCUSED ORDER.

RITA (CONT'D)
Now. Slow it down on that point.

She scuds back and forth across a SHIFT, ZOOMING in...

RITA (CONT'D)
The shift happens... each time an Antenna gets killed.

...we zoom in to see a single MIMIC, getting killed by a single SOLDIER. But at that moment, the whole mimic strategy - like grains of sand at the wider zoom - abruptly SHIFTS.

RITA (CONT'D)
When an Antenna dies, it sends out a message. To the receivers.

One RED DOT winks out. But the BLUE dot finds itself surrounded... TRAPPED.

RITA (CONT'D)
But the message travels backwards. Into the past.

Nine red dots CONVERGE. The blue dot is EXTINGUISHED.

The action REWINDS... the BLUE DOT moving back from the RED DOT, until earlier, several RED DOTS move from their cohort -

- ALREADY HEADING FOR THE PLACE WHERE THE ANTENNA WILL DIE.

RITA (CONT'D)
It's a perfect strategy when you think about it. You don't have to outsmart an enemy if you always know what they're going to do next.

Nine red dots CONVERGE. Again, the blue dot is EXTINGUISHED.

CAGE
So... when I killed the Antenna and it bled on me... I became a receiver? And now I'm picking up messages from...

RITA
...yourself, thirty-six hours from now. Like memories, but of the future. Every possible future will play out, until you break the loop.

CAGE

How?

RITA

We have to find the Antenna you killed. The one that bled on you. Before you killed it. Before it sent the broadcast.

CAGE

And kill it?

RITA

We have to get the receivers too, or it won't work at all. But yeah. That's the idea.

Cage nods, his head swimming.

CAGE

That's it? That sounds almost easy.

RITA

It's not. They'll know we're coming. They'll do whatever they need to kill you every time.

(beat)

They know how important you are.

Cage frowns.

CAGE

What do you mean?

RITA

If you break the loop, the mimic won't be able to tell what happens next.

(beat)

You'll be able to win the battle.

Cage's eyes go wide. Rita smiles.

On the holovid, STREAMS and EDDIES of MIMIC overpower human forces, over and over, in a constant loop...

EXT. BASE - NIGHT

The STARS are bright above, as Cage and Rita walk across the base. The DOGS trail behind them, keeping their distance.

CAGE
I can't believe I'm really going to
be free tomorrow.

RITA
(smiling)
You'll still be in the UDF.

ACROSS THE ROAD, OFFICERS enjoy final drinks at the PX. Cage
can see the tail end of his PLATOON, sneaking around back...

CAGE
Yeah, but no more headaches, no
more loop. I'll get my life back.

Rita's expression goes distant.

RITA
Yeah. But I should warn you. I
think being in the loop... did
something to me. Sometimes I still
pick up... fragments. Feelings,
little things, the day before a
battle. Like I can pretty much tell
if someone's going to die.
(beat)
It's why I don't really talk to
anyone the day before battle.

They come to a crossroad; Rita's tower is one way, C-Company
barracks, the other.

RITA (CONT'D)
You should get your sleep. It's
going to be a pretty big day.

CAGE
I was wondering - your lieutenant,
the one who helped you. Were you
ever able to save him?

A terrible sadness crosses Rita's face.

RITA
No.
(beat)
I think there are some people you
can't save, no matter what.

Rita turns and walks away.

From the shadows, a couple Dogs give Private Cage the last of
their suspicious looks and fall in line behind her.

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

Yonaburu is slumped on the floor, drunk. Cage stares at Yonaburu, thinking about what Rita said.

YONABURU

Well, here he is Mr. Bigshot talking to the Valkyrie all day. She tell you how we're gonna win this thing?

CAGE

Yeah. I think she did.

YONABURU

Good. Semper Fi, motherfuckers.

Cage helps him up, Yonaburu mumbling, clutching his girlfriend's picture. It falls to the floor.

Cage picks it up, looks at it. Thinking. Knowing he'll be free tomorrow. Knowing Yonaburu never will.

INT./EXT. DROPSHIP - RUBY TUESDAY

The dropship ROARS, STRAINING against the headwinds. DOG SOLDIERS & C-COMPANY stare at each other, while OUTSIDE -

RITA AND CAGE CLING TO THE HULL. Rita pointing to the CLIFFS teeming with MIMIC INFANTRY -

RITA (RADIO)

There. Do you see 'em? The receivers, they're always a few rows back. You can tell by the movements.

NINE RED DOTS on Cage's heads-up converge and divide.

CAGE (RADIO)

I see 'em.

RITA

Let's go.

They JUMP. The DOGS follow.

EXT. RUBY TUESDAY - VARIOUS

MIMICS swarm the field, coming by LAND, SEA and AIR.

We slip between EXTREME CLOSE-UPS OF ACTION, of Cage and Rita's faces, to WIDE STRATEGIC VIEWS of battle, RED and BLUE flags dancing and spinning in the heads-ups.

RITA
There's a receiver. Flag it.

CAGE
Got it.

FIGHTING SOLDIERS STARE as Cage and Rita fight together, mobilizing the troops, JUMPING past ranks.

Even Rita's DOGS can't keep up with them.

RITA
And another. You see it?

CAGE
Yeah.

As a team, they are UNSTOPPABLE. They complement each other like perfect halves of a single fighting machine.

RITA
You're pretty good.

CAGE
You keep saying that.

Their eyes meet. Smiling. They DIVE in, Cage showing off for Rita. They're DRIVING the mimic back, performing moves we've never seen before. It's BEAUTIFUL, watching them fight.

CAGE (CONT'D)
There's two more.

Cage and Rita fight like two people in love. The CLOUDS are starting to break, the SUN moving at high speed through the sky as the BATTLE PROGRESSES, CANYONS clear, MOUNTAINS clear -

- we find Cage and Rita again, at the forefront of SQUADS of victorious SOLDIERS engaging the MIMIC in groups -

CAGE (CONT'D)
I think I see the Antenna. There.
Three left, protecting something -

A LARGE, SHINY MIMIC breaks cover, STREAKING through the RAIN, to the CLIFF where Cage died the first time.

RITA
We're almost out of time.

CAGE
We'll move fast.

The last three RECEIVERS converge to protect the ANTENNA.

CAGE (CONT'D)
I've got these. Go for the lead.

CAGE begins fighting the last RECEIVERS as -

Rita LANDS in front of the ANTENNA MIMIC, its iridescent, rainbow-slick armor glistening in the AFTERNOON SUN.

It pauses... and then RUNS. Rita CHASES, the thing deflecting blows right and left. It's DAMN GOOD. FASTER than the rest.

Every time Rita lets up, TINY BLACK TENDRILS exude from the mimic's armor. It's trying to BROADCAST -

Cage HAMMERS the last receivers, dodging and weaving, hacking down ONE, then ANOTHER, while RITA and the ANTENNA FIGHT -

- it suddenly PUNCHES back, sending RITA FLYING, then JUMPS, landing right over her.

RITA
CAGE!

CAGE
ONE MORE -

Cage SPINS IN AIR, twisting down as the final RECEIVER fires multiple javelins, everything goes SLOW as his body moves in just the right configuration to evade every one -

- then he BRINGS his axe down. The last receiver is DEAD.

CAGE (CONT'D)
All clear.

He sees the ANTENNA standing over RITA, tendrils waving -

- and with a BATTLE CRY, Cage HURLS himself at the thing, and in a blur of ARMOR, AXE and MIMIC -

Cage stands in low battle stance.

The ANTENNA MIMIC slides into six pieces. The pieces fizzle, crackling. Cage steps away from the boiling blood.

It's over. Rita gets up.

CAGE (CONT'D)
I'm free. I'm really free.

RITA

We still have to go win this thing.

Cage opens his faceplate, Rita opens hers, feeling the rain.

Cage suddenly KISSES Rita. And then... she kisses him back, harder. BLUE SKY opens behind them, like her famous poster.

RITA (CONT'D)

You know what they used to call this? When it's raining and the sun is shining?

CAGE

Yeah. You once told me. You said it's because the devil was beating his... OW.

The weird BUZZ, the image SHUDDERS.

Cage BLINKS, staggers, a SHARP PAIN in his skull.

RITA

Are you OK?

CAGE

I, uh... there's something -

BEHIND RITA, along the ridge, MIMIC LAUNCHERS begin to line the cliffs. Thousands of them. Behind Cage, too.

RADIO

...GOT MASSIVE BUILDUP HERE...
NEVER SEEN THIS BEFORE... TRAP...

Cage turns. MIMIC are surrounding them, more arriving every second. Rita's face falls.

CAGE

Something's wrong, I... AIGH!

A terrible PAIN stabs through Cage's head. He twitches, stumbles. He looks at Rita, horrified.

RITA

Cage?

CAGE

I'm still in the loop.

Cage SCREAMS IN PAIN as the IMAGE SHIFTS, FUTZES to -

CAGE IS BACK ON HIS BUNK

- having a SEIZURE, people STARING, blurry, WINKING OUT and -

CAGE IS BACK ON THE BATTLEFIELD -

Rita's face buzzing back into view, only now she's CRYING, cradling Cage's twitching body as he dies -

RITA
Cage! CAGE!

CAGE
I... I don't think it worked.

Cage's nose is bleeding.

RITA
I know. I'll stay with you.

ALARMS are going off in her jacket, MORE and MORE MIMIC are surrounding the spot, by land and by air.

CAGE
You have to... get out of here...

Rita shakes her head. Their eyes meet. She's crying.

CAGE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, Rita, I -

But it's lost in a hail of MIMIC JAVELINS.

INT. BARRACKS - MONDAY MORNING

Cage opens his eyes.

Yonaburu cleans Mrs. Smith. Making sure to get every chamber, really into it, proud of his work, until he notices -

Cage, staring at the poster of RITA, tears on his face.

YONABURU
What the hell is wrong with you?

CAGE
It didn't work. We did everything right, but it didn't work.

YONABURU
What are you talking about?

Cage picks up a sharpie and writes 393 on his hand.

CAGE

Yobo, I got a question. If you had to spend the rest of your life living the same day over and over again, forever, what would you do?

YONABURU

That's a weird fucking question, man. I dunno. Probably see my girl. Live happily ever after 'n stuff.

CAGE

That's a pretty damn good idea.

YONABURU

(frowning)

Did you just call me "Yobo"?

Cage smiles, and we CUT TO:

EXT. BASE - RITA'S TOWER - MORNING

Rita's glass tower glints in the morning light.

The DOGS are assembled around the base of Rita's tower, having just finished breakfast. TWO of them are SCUFFLING, for fun, while the others egg them on.

One of them - picking his teeth with a bowie knife - looks up, noticing -

- CAGE, walking this way. HIGH-NOON STYLE.

HEELER

You ain't got the clearance to be in here, kid.

CAGE

I need to see Sergeant-Major Vrataski, now, and you need to get out of my way.

The scufflers get up, eyeing Cage.

HEELER

This a joke? 'Cos you 'bout to be in a world a' -

Cage moves. WHAM! HEELER goes DOWN -

SHEP

What the -

Cage TEARS into the Dogs like a MAN POSSESSED, fighting them ALL AT ONCE, eyes steady on the door to Rita's tower.

The Dogs have been in battle 20, 30 times. Cage, almost 400. Even without his jacket, Cage is pretty much unstoppable.

IN SECONDS, all the Dogs are on the ground.

INT. BASE OF RITA'S TOWER - MORNING

Cage walks in, dusty, wiping blood off his lip, looking around. An EXECUTIVE OFFICER frowns up at him, and -

- Rita comes out of nowhere, SWINGING.

CAGE

RITA! WAIT!

But Rita ATTACKS, hyperfast. Cage can barely deflect her blows. She sends him CRASHING down, Cage spins, fights back -

- but he's no match for her. In seconds, she's on top of him, hand on windpipe, fist cocked and ready to kill -

RITA

Who the hell are you?

The DOGS rush in, ready for bear -

CAGE

(gagging, bleeding)

Don't. I'm... in the loop. I killed an Antenna. I'm like you. Rita...

RITA

What did you say?

CAGE

My name's Billy Cage. I... I'm in the loop. You're... helping me.

Rita sees... that 393 is written on Cage's hand.

Rita's EYES GO WIDE -

She lets go, jumping back like she touched a live wire. Cage starts COUGHING. The DOGS stare, totally confused.

HOLSTROM walks in, cocking his gun, leveled at Cage.

LT. HOLSTROM

Anyone wanna tell me just what the hell is going on here?

Cage slowly salutes, at attention.

CAGE

Private... William Cage requests permission to speak with Sergeant-Major Vrataski. In private.

Rita nods. Holstrom hesitates. Stands down.

EXT. BASE - DAY

They walk, Rita's mind racing, and tears on her face. The highly confused Dogs trailing well behind.

RITA

(wiping her eyes)

Sorry. I'm just... used to being alone.

CAGE

I know.

RITA

How'd you... figure it out?

CAGE

I didn't. You told me. Last time. Before I died.

Rita nods, wiping her nose.

RITA

We have to find the Antenna you killed. And the receivers. I can show you how.

CAGE

You already did.

She stops, looking him in the eye, suspicious.

RITA

Then why are you... here?

Cage hesitates. He can't tell her the truth.

CAGE

Because, uh... at the last minute, I didn't kill the Antenna. We... wanted to come back. Spend the day together, just one more time.

RITA

Oh. I see.

Rita eyes Cage, wondering just what she and this Private have been doing, in his past, in her future.

CAGE

You, uh, wanna get some breakfast?

INT. MESS HALL - DAY

3rd PLATOON is in the Cafeteria, grimacing over the chow.

YONABURU

I don't know! He was crying, then he just jumped up and took off like a bat outta hell. And whatever he said to the Sarge musta -

(seeing)

Sweet Jesus on a mountain.

Cage and Rita enter the mess hall together, followed by the Dogs, who look just as confused as everyone else.

CAGE AND RITA STAND IN LINE

The SERVERS try not to stare at them, lumping chow.

CAGE

I'm sure not gonna miss the food.

Rita doesn't know what to say. She looks nervous, like she's on her first date.

CAGE (CONT'D)

Table in the corner. Just like always.

They sit.

RITA

This is weird. I feel like you must know everything about me.

CAGE

Not really. I mostly know how to kill mimics. I'm pretty good at that. You said so yourself.

Rita smiles uncomfortably. They eat.

CAGE (CONT'D)

One thing I could never figure was - why do you come eat with us? No one in their right mind would eat this crap if they didn't have to.

RITA

I have to do something that makes me feel like myself. I kinda got used to it.

Cage pours chocolate sauce over a pile of pickled eggs.

CAGE

This is my favorite lately.
"Pickled egg chocolate surprise".

Cage digs in. Rita tries some. She smiles. Not bad.

RITA

Loop food. Brings back memories.
What about...

Rita piles hot sauce on top of her oatmeal, adding what looks like canned sardines. Cage winces. She offers. He tries it.

CAGE

Not bad. Kinda... Smoky.

Everyone is staring at them. Cage takes another bite, washes it down with a big swig of metacoffee. Rita winces.

RITA

How do you drink that stuff?

CAGE

Hasn't killed me yet.

Their eyes meet. Rita suddenly starts laughing. Cage too. All the anxious worry coming off of them. Now everyone is REALLY staring. Cage leans in -

CAGE (CONT'D)

You wanna get out of here?

EXT. BASE - DAY

RUMORS visibly SPREAD around base, SOLDIERS going out of their way to stare at the pair as they walk, the DOGS behind.

CAGE

(under his breath)
Follow me.

Cage takes Rita's hand PULLS her around a corner, RUNNING -

EXT. BASE - BY THE FENCE

- down an alley, losing the Dogs, finding... THE HOLE IN THE FENCE, right where Palka always makes it.

CAGE

Come on!

EXT. BEACH - DAY

GULLS CAW, waves CRASH on the shore. Rita and Cage walk, stealing glances at each other. A sweet tension between them.

RITA

So when we, uh, decided to not kill the Antenna, and come back, were we, like...

CAGE

We, uh, just kissed. It all happened pretty fast.

Rita pushes her hair back. No one's around.

RITA

I want to know what it was like.

CAGE

Uh, OK.

They kiss. Nervous and tender. It's possible that Rita's never kissed anyone before in her adult life.

RITA

That was... nice.

CAGE

Yeah.

RITA

It was weird, too.

CAGE

Yeah. I guess it must be.

Rita looks out at the ocean, feeling complicated.

RITA

Why'd you join up?

CAGE

I got drafted. I tried everything I could to get out of it. And now... here I am.

(beat)

The last time... you told me you lied about your age to get in. Why?

RITA

I was sixteen. A farm girl. The town I grew up in, mimic scouts came up river, some hunters found them. They burned my town. I lost everything - my dad, my mom. My horse.

(beat)

I guess I joined the marines because I didn't want to live anymore. I figured if I could kill just one mimic, that would be enough and then I could die. I don't know what I was thinking. But I was lucky. There was this man. Lieutenant Arthur Hendricks. He found me. Showed me how to use my jacket.

CAGE

Were you... in love with him?

A painful look crosses her face.

CAGE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, you just seem... really sad about it.

RITA

It's OK. Yeah. I'm pretty sure I was in love with him.

CUT TO FLASHBACK:

Rita trains with ARTHUR HENDRICKS. He's handsome, late-30s, a warmth in him, not undone by the years of battle.

Then he's showing her pictures of his WIFE and CHILD. She looks at him like a girl in love.

RITA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I think he loved me too. But he had a family, so it was different... we never even talked about it. And besides, there was a war on.

WE SEE HER WINNING THE FINAL BATTLE, soldiers CHEERING in the smoke while she WEEPS over the body of ARTHUR HENDRICKS -

RITA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
No matter how I played it, I could never save him. He was the real hero of that battle. He died, and I got a medal. No one ever knew.

- and then, ON A STAGE, getting the Valkyrie Medal of Honor draped around her neck. It means nothing to her.

WE CUT BACK TO:

Rita, sitting in the sand, the same expression on her face. She wipes away a tear.

RITA (CONT'D)
 When I finally got out of the loop, all I wanted was to get back in. To have one more chance to save him.
 (beat)
 I'd have traded the whole battle for it.

Cage looks at her, not sure what to say.

CAGE
 I'm... really sorry. I think maybe some people are just fated.

RITA
 Yeah. Maybe so.

She looks at Cage.

RITA (CONT'D)
 Would you kiss me again?

CAGE
 Yeah.

They lie back. On the distant shore, the low THUMP and GLOW of ARTILLERY hammering the far-off island, and we CUT TO:

INT. RITA'S BUNK - DAWN - RUBY TUESDAY

Cage opens his eyes. The morning sky is bright blue overhead. He's in Rita's bed. And her bed -

- appears to be in a WHEAT FIELD. Cage sits up, disoriented.

CAGE
Where are we?

RITA
Pennsylvania. The farm where I grew
up. We had the bluest skies you've
ever seen.
(beat)
It's just an old holoivid. But I
wanted you to see it.

CAGE
It's really beautiful.

Rita smiles, a little sadly, and gets up, in her pyjamas.

The holoivid FREEZES, distorts and fades, replaced by -
- the thick polycarbonate glass of Rita's tower.

Cage stares out at the island, the distant shelling,
preparations for today's battle in progress, far below.

A grinder WHIRS, water BOILS, GROUNDS go into a brewing pot.

CAGE (CONT'D)
What's that?

RITA
It's coffee. Real coffee. Some of
the last in the world.

She adds water, the dark brew drizzles into the pot.

CAGE
I thought that stuff was extinct.

RITA
Almost. There's an island off the
coast of Africa - one of the last
places it'll grow. I fought there
once and they still have it flown
in for me. It doesn't seem right
that I should have it all to
myself.

She pours some into his cup. Cage drinks. His eyes go wide.

CAGE
That's uh... nothing like the stuff
they have in the mess hall.

RITA

It's probably the best cup of coffee you can get in the whole world. I mean, since no one gets to make coffee anymore. You have to do it just right or it's no good.

CAGE

You'll have to show me how sometime.

RITA

(sadly)
I'd like that.

Rita looks down at her coffee.

RITA (CONT'D)

I was wondering. The last time we... were in the loop. You said we decided not to kill the Antenna?

CAGE

Uh, no. But don't worry. We'll get out this time.

She searches his face. She knows he's lying.

RITA

Well. I'm glad we decided to come back.

CAGE

Me too.

They kiss, holding each other. Cage looks out at the beautiful vista, smiling... but something is flying this -

WHAM! A MIMIC JAVELIN HITS THE TOWER.

ANOTHER VOLLEY STREAKS IN - WHAM! WHAM! Cage and Rita are THROWN to the floor, her tower SHUDDERING with the impact.

The polycarbonate fractures, spider-thin cracks working their way across the room - but it HOLDS.

Cage picks himself off the floor, stunned.

ALARMS start going off. BELOW THEM, the BASE is getting HAMMERED by MIMIC JAVELINS -

- SOLDIERS run like ants on an upended mound as MIMIC ERUPT beneath them, the beaches DARK with MIMIC crawling from the SEA - CARRIERS and DROPSHIPS engulfed in flame -

CAGE (CONT'D)
 What the hell?

RITA
 The mimic are attacking early. They
 know we're together.
 (beat)
 We have to get out of here.

Another JAVELIN hits the tower, pieces SHATTERING IN. Rita GRABS Cage and they PILE into the elevator, the tower SHUDDERING with multiple impacts.

EXT. TOWER BASE - RUBY TUESDAY

They make it out, and to the ENGINEERING BAY. SHASTA is already there, with Rita's crimson exojacket ready -

RITA
 (to Cage)
 We have to find the Antenna. We're
 not gonna get another chance. Can
 you make it to the armory?

CAGE
 I think so.

Their eyes meet. Shasta notices the LOOK, and Cage TAKES OFF.

INT. ARMORY - RUBY TUESDAY

TOTAL MAYHEM. SGT. FARELL SCREAMS at 3rd Platoon as JAVELINS TEAR HOLES in the roof of the locker room.

SOME SOLDIERS make it to their jackets in time. SOME DON'T.

YONABURU finds his jacket, but - WHAM! An EXPLOSION sends him flying. He picks himself up, arm bleeding profusely -

- his exojacket is WASTED. Fuck.

ELSEWHERE, CAGE

Runs through the disintegrating locker room, DIVING, JUMPING through the carnage. He gets to his locker - it's DESTROYED -

HIS FACE: All is lost.

CAGE
 NO!

YONABURU

CAGE!

Yonaburu, spattered in blood and dust, holds Cage's jacket -

YONABURU (CONT'D)

They got mine. But I saved yours.

CAGE

Thanks, buddy. You're the best.

YONABURU

Go get 'em.

EXT. BASE - RUBY TUESDAY

Cage RUNS across the base, his heads-up a USELESS MESS of blue and red, the base in CHAOS -

CAGE

RITA! WHERE ARE YOU!?

RITA (RADIO)

Right here.

THOOM! Rita lands, the DOGS with her. HUNDREDS OF MIMIC CONVERGING on this ONE SPOT. But Rita fights with TWO AXES - cutting a SWATH -

- and then THROWS an AXE to CAGE, he catches it just in time, SWINGING just as the MIMIC reach him. SHUCK! The mimics FALL -

AND THE BATTLE IS ON

HOLSTROM calls in STRIKEJETS. Rita SEIZES EXECUTIVE COMMAND, organizing the remaining HUMAN FORCES. Cage LEADS PLATOONS.

Cornered, against impossible odds, EVERYONE fights at their best - better than their best.

- FORD saves NANCE'S ASS, the two TEAMING UP -

- the DOGS lay WASTE to everything in their path. SHEP is crushed. HEELER is blown in half. INU throws himself on an exploding MIMIC to save FOX. DANE ignites an AMMO DUMP, killing a hundred MIMIC at once -

- SGT. FARELL finds himself fighting one-on-one. Just how he likes it, WHANGING mimic with a twisted piece of metal.

SGT. FARELL

LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'VE GOT!

- KIMMEL even commandeers a DROPSHIP, FLYING it into the MESS HALL, DIVING and ROLLING FREE and watching the explosion.

FROM ABOVE

STRIKEJETS hail holy hell on the ADVANCING MIMIC FORCES, but the BASE is half-destroyed. It's not looking good.

CAGE AND RITA

fight their way onto a HEAP of smoking metal, getting a VIEW of the war-torn base.

RITA

There. And there. Do you see them?

NINE RED DOTS are flagged WHITE.

CAGE

Nine of 'em, check.

RITA

We don't have much time.

Cage kills a RECEIVER - WHAM. RITA kills ANOTHER - WHAM. Their moves in perfect mirror images of each other.

ONE, TWO, THREE mimic receivers go down. Everyone goes down a different way. Each one is harder to kill than the last.

The ANTENNA always WATCHING, RETREATING, HIDING -

The last two receivers TAKE FLIGHT, Cage and Rita HUNT them down, merciless and unstoppable, finding themselves in -

THE SMOLDERING CRATER OF THE MESS HALL

The RAINBOW-COLORED ANTENNA MIMIC SCUTTling into the WRECKAGE. Rita HEAVES back a hunk of smoking DROPSHIP -

- the ANTENNA MIMIC LEAPS, knocking her back, and is ON CAGE in a FLASH. CAGE FIGHTS BACK, but this mimic knows his every move. A SCREECHING BLUR of LIMBS and JAVELINS firing.

Cage is KNOCKED BACK, WHAM! WHAM! BLOOD hits the inside of his PLATE as he GOES DOWN -

As the blood beads and trickles off, Cage looks up at the spinning BARREL of the mimic's JAVELIN ARM.

It's going to kill him now.

WHACK! Rita hits it from the side. The ANTENNA flies through the air in SLOW MOTION, tendrils FLARING -

- AS ACROSS THE BASE

THOUSANDS OF MIMIC STOP ATTACKING. SOLDIERS are left scratching their heads as mimic DETACH, racing across the base to ONE POINT: to the MESS HALL CRATER -

BACK WITH CAGE AND RITA

- where the Antenna LANDS and LAUNCHES ITSELF at RITA, their BLOWS KEEPING THEM BOTH AIRBORNE until -

It KICKS RITA'S FACEPLATE, SHATTERING IT. She SCREAMS, losing grip on her axe -

RITA FALLS TO THE GROUND. The AXE falling nearby. JAVELINS pepper the area until a HUNK OF DROPSHIP FALLS ACROSS HER LEG, PINNING HER TO THE GROUND -

The MIMIC LANDS, standing over her, VIBRATING with POWER -

- its JAVELIN ARM leveled at Rita's unprotected face.

She glares up at it, gritting her teeth.

RITA (CONT'D)
DO IT, YOU BASTARD.

An ELECTRICAL ARC ZAPS between the mimic and Rita, then the Antenna mimic... CHITTERS, the WHIRRING stops.

Then it BACKS AWAY, looking for Cage -

RITA (CONT'D)
NO!

- the MIMIC whirls, too late. WHAM! Cage's AXE swings, CUTS into the mimic, BLACK BLOOD FLYING, but it's not DEEP ENOUGH.

The MIMIC SCREECHES, fighting back in a BLUR, but Cage BLOCKS its every strike. With no other option, the mimic starts to SHUDDER, a tachyon charge building -

- Cage SWINGS and the MIMIC falls, CRACKLING, SHORTING OUT -
DEAD.

Cage is on his knees, exhausted. ALARMS going off in Cage's heads-up. THOUSANDS of mimic will be here any second.

He goes to RITA, opening his faceplate.

CAGE
Are you OK?

RITA

Yeah. Get this thing off of me.

Cage STRAINS, lifting the fallen piece of dropship and freeing her, helping her up.

RITA (CONT'D)

Thanks.

They KISS, urgently. The SUN is streaking down, RAIN, too.

CAGE

We don't have much time. You have to get out of here. Killing the Antenna... it doesn't work. We already tried it. I don't know why, but they're still coming. I don't think there's any way out for me.

MIMIC have begun to line the rim of the crater. MORE arriving every second.

CAGE (CONT'D)

I... I'm sorry I lied. I just wanted to be with you. It was the only way I knew how.

(beat)

I love you, Rita.

Rita picks up her axe.

RITA

I love you, too.

Rita SWINGS, hitting Cage with the flat of the axe - KNOCKING CAGE BACK 20 YARDS. He sits up, holding his jaw.

CAGE

What the hell was that for?

RITA

I figured it out this morning.

She walks towards Cage. He scrambles back.

She looks up at the crater rim, her heads-up thick with on-rushing mimic coming from every angle.

RITA (CONT'D)

It's me. They're using me.

CAGE

What?

RITA
 Whatever the loop did to me, it
 turned me into a receiver.

She SWINGS her axe, Cage ROLLS -

RITA (CONT'D)
 As long as I'm alive, your loop
 won't end.

Cage GRABS his AXE, DEFLECTING HER BLOW, backing away.

RITA (CONT'D)
 You have to kill me. Or you'll
 never be free.

CAGE
 Are you out of your mind?

RITA
 I'm the last receiver.

Rita HAMMERS Cage. Cage PARRIES, backing away.

CAGE
 I can't... I'm not gonna fight you.

RITA
 Then you'll have to loop again
 until you get it through your thick
 skull. It's you they're after. You
 win the battle. Not me.

CAGE
 NO!

RITA
 I've watched you fight. I've seen
 what you can do.

Cage KICKS her away. The edge of the crater is lined with
 MIMIC - but they don't attack - they wait.

CAGE
 I'm not gonna kill - AIGH!

Cage staggers. His head. The image SHIFTS, BUZZING, like he's
 going to LOOP again. He YELLS, the world comes BACK -

RITA
 It's the only way out.

CAGE
 No, I won't -

RITA
You have to.

But Rita gives him everything she's got. She's SWINGING at him, FORCING him to protect himself. Cage DEFLECTS blows as best he can, BACKING, ROLLING AWAY. But Rita LEAPS -

- and with a YELL, Cage RAISES HIS AXE, WARDING HER OFF, she MISSES A PARRY AND -

- Cage's axe slices into Rita. She FALLS. Badly injured.

CAGE
RITA! NO!

He throws his axe down. Runs to her. She pushes herself up, over on her back. Blood gushing out of a gash in her side.

Cage cradles her.

RITA
You'll be... free now.

CAGE
I can get you help. We can get out of this together -

Rita shakes her head, coughs, smiling.

RITA
Dying's not that bad, once you get used to it.

CAGE
Rita!

The image DISTORTS, SPUTTERS one last time - and is NORMAL. The rain is coming down. The sun is shining.

Cage stands, picking up Rita's axe, wiping his face. He looks at the MIMIC HORDE. He raises the axe and RUNS into the horde with a BATTLE CRY.

CAGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Rita was right. About everything.

We see Cage's HEADS-UP, blinking RED, but as he fights we see the onrushing FRONTS of mimic FRACTURE, EDDY as -

ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE

SOLDIERS UNDER ATTACK watch as SOME MIMIC start running in the wrong direction, OTHERS even start attacking each other.

CAGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*At first a few stopped working
 right. But pretty soon, they just
 fell apart.*

Farell watches as everywhere the mimic fall into CHAOS. Some still attack, but the synchronous VOLLEYS, the ORDERED FRONT LINES are gone...

From ordered WAVES, to SWARMS, to NOISE...

The SKY is a HELLISH RED as CAGE CLEANS UP. The look in his eyes - insane with grief, exhaustion. He doesn't stop.

CAGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*I kept fighting long after the
 battle was over.*

EXT. BASE - WEDNESDAY MORNING

In the EARLY MORNING LIGHT, the BASE is smoking, ruined. CAGE staggers through the wreckage. YONABURU and SEVERAL OFFICERS trail Cage at a distance, afraid to come close.

Cage's exojacket is blackened, dented. Cage finally drops his axe, with a CLANG, and FALLS to his knees.

CAGE (V.O.)
*I don't even remember when they
 found me.*

PRELAP: TAPS begins to play.

EXT. MILITARY FUNERAL - ISLAND - DAY

A FUNERAL PROCESSION stretches out across the base. A MILLION SOLDIERS watch, and PEOPLE across the WORLD watch as RITA'S FUNERAL BIER is marched across the ISLAND.

ON A VAST STAGE, surrounded by COLONELS and MAJORS of every stripe, Cage is awarded the Valkyrie Medal of Honor. The second person in history to receive this privilege.

CAGE (V.O.)
*We'd won the battle of Ruby
 Tuesday. I was a hero.*

Cage looks like the saddest person in the whole world.

CAGE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*But it didn't matter. Nothing did.
 Rita was gone.*

EXT. BASE - ANOTHER DAY

The BASE is still ruined, but full of living HUMANS digging out, making repairs. BANDAGED SOLDIERS watch NEWSCASTS about the BATTLE OF RUBY TUESDAY.

INT. ENGINEERING BAY - DAY

Cage's EXOJACKET stands in the center of a workshop. YONABURU, his ARM IN A SLING, is painting Cage's jacket BRIGHT BLUE, like you'd detail a car.

He stands back, admiring his work. Cage steps in.

CAGE

I like it.

YONABURU

I don't know, man. You're gonna make a pretty easy target. I was thinking we could put some flames on there -

CAGE

No. I like the blue.

(beat)

I brought you something.

Cage tosses Yonaburu his new medal. Yonaburu frowns.

CAGE (CONT'D)

(smiling)

There's your gold star. Keep it.

INT. RITA'S TOWER - DAY

Cage rides the elevator up into Rita's broken tower. He has to step past warning tape to get to her room.

The spilled coffee. The bed just how they left it.

He stands there, looking out at the clear blue sky.

There's a knock. It's Shasta Riley. She salutes. Cage nods.

SHASTA

Uh... hi there. They said you were up here again.

CAGE

Hi Shasta.

SHASTA

The morning of the battle, when
Rita got her jacket, she, uh,
wanted me to... to give you this.
In case anything happened.

She hands him an envelope. Cage frowns.

CAGE

Thanks.

SHASTA

I miss her so much.

CAGE

I do too.

She nods and exits. Cage opens the envelope.

LETTER (V.O.)

*How to make the best cup of coffee
in the world:*

Handwritten instructions. At the bottom of the instructions -

LETTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*I love you. Always fight with your
heart.*

NOW

Cage is pouring the boiling water over the grounds, following
the instructions.

Cage drinks the coffee, staring out at the base.

Distant ALARMS start going off. Cage frowns. Yonaburu comes
in, out of breath, he RAN here -

YONABURU

Cage. I thought I'd find you here.
Alaska's under attack. We gotta
move out.

Cage nods, puts the coffee down. He smiles.

CAGE

Right. Let's go win this thing.

THE END.