

Nanobots

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. SUBURBAN VIRGINIA-- MORNING

The hamlet wakes. On this idyllic morn, two elderly joggers trot by, but we HEAR the soundtrack to a war. HEAVY BREATHING. SOMEONE BARKS OUT...

VOICE

Move out! On the double! We got company!

Sounds of HEAVY ARTILLERY fill the air. Then, over the horizon...

A PAPERBOY ON HIS BIKE

GUNFIRE sounds as he heaves the morning edition into the air. It cartwheels in a graceful, WHISTLING arc and lands on the front porch of the...

EXT. FULLER HOUSEHOLD--ESTABLISHING

KABOOM!

INT. DAN FULLER'S BEDROOM

DAN FULLER, 14, is in the thick of digital battle on his PlayStation 2. Beside him on the floor is the latest, already well-worn issue of...

E-GAMER MAGAZINE

its cover reads PIXELFEST: TAKE NO PRISONERS.

DR. MICHAEL FULLER, late 50's, stands unnoticed in the doorway. He is a two-time Nobel prize winner for his work in nanotechnology. However, his work as Dan's father leaves a lot to be desired. He's brilliant, but a workaholic. And, right now, he's an impatient parent. He flips off the surge protector and Dan's screen eclipses.

DAN

Hey!!

FULLER

For the third time, *breakfast*.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN -- MOMENTS LATER

Fuller scoops scrambled eggs onto a plate. Dan, scowling, stalks to the pantry and grabs a box of cereal...

FULLER

I made...

...and defiantly crams a handful of artificially sweetened nuggets into his mouth.

FULLER (CONT'D)

...breakfast.

Dan slumps into a chair at the breakfast counter. Determined, Fuller sets the eggs in front of his son.

DAN

Mmmmm...smells like guilt.

FULLER

All right, maybe that was a little heavy-handed, but I am your father and when I say stop goofing around...

DAN

(indignant)

"Goofing around?" Is Shaq goofing around when he shoots free throws? Is Lance Armstrong goofing around when he pedals through the Himalayas?

FULLER

The Tour de France doesn't go through Nepal.

DAN

Whatever. My point is, I'm training, the clock is ticking.

FULLER

Training?

DAN

As I see it, school isn't going anywhere and PixelFest, well, I'd look pretty lame as a 35 year-old gamer.

FULLER

(exasperated)

Not again. Playing video games is not a career. Where could video games possibly take you?

(beat)

Here, I got you something.

ANGLE ON: a package in red paper. A DVD? A video game? Or maybe...

DAN

(dry)

A College Entrance Exam Prep Book. Dad, I don't think you grasp the concept of buying my affections.

FULLER

I'm not buying your affections.
I'm...helping you train. For
something important. Now the practice
exams are this Saturday and I've
already registered you.

DAN

This Saturday? Dad, Pixelfest is
this weekend.

FULLER

I don't have time for this.

DAN

(sarcasm)
There's a shock.

FULLER

Meaning?

DAN

You only have time for something if
it involves an electron microscope.

FULLER

(stung)
Dan, you're going to take the practice
exam.
(beat)
Hey, how about we catch a movie
tonight, huh?

DAN

Whatever.

FULLER

Son, be reasonable. Where do you
think playing video games all day
could possibly lead?

CUT TO:

EXT. SOMEWHERE IN THE SOUTHWEST -- DAY

CREDITS roll as the CAMERA glides over the desert.

A HUMVEE

Tops a rise trailing dust. It passes a dilapidated SIGN
reading: AREA 51 RESTRICTED ACCESS. The humvee passes a
deserted compound of military hangars and heads into the
desert. It rolls to a stop beside a GRAFITTI-SCRAWLED
BOULDER. The passenger door opens.

ANGLE ON: A BOOT

crunches onto the dirt. GENERAL THOMAS DIXON, mid-60's, surveys the barren landscape. He's standard military issue, not quite ready to fade away.

The humvee circles the boulder and heads back the way it came. Dixon watches it for several moments, then speaks to the rock.

DIXON
(clears his throat)
The truth is out there.

Suddenly, the boulder rolls aside revealing a large tunnel.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51

Several meters below the surface, the military's most well-known top-secret facility is a city unto itself. Dixon makes his way past an array of people in various colored jumpsuits, labcoats and assorted uniforms, all of whom no longer exist to the outside world.

INT. TRANSPORT MEZZANINE

The mezzanine looks like the embarkation point for a Disneyland ride. Personnel come and go in futuristic golf-carts. Dixon walks to a woman dressed like a flight attendant at a console.

ATTENDANT
Welcome to 51, General. Your
destination's already programmed.

She hands him a small key.

DIXON
Thank you. I'll return it full.

She smiles politely as Dixon steps into the vehicle, inserts the key. In moments, he's speeding deeper into the heart of Area 51.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 BIO-RESEARCH LAB

PROFESSOR JANICE FORD, mid-30's, meets the General.

DIXON
Professor.

FORD
General. Thank you for coming on
such short notice.

DIXON

It was the least I could do for the head of the Bio-Research division. Besides, I was due for a good case of heat rash. So what's so important that you wouldn't even trust even our most secure lines of communication?

FORD

The fate of all mankind.

CUT TO:

INT. PROFESSOR FORD'S OFFICE

Ford points a remote control at the wallscreen and a Lovecraftian image appears--a green geodesic dome atop a gnarled, black coil that terminates in tentacle-like projections.

FORD

We've run test after test, and nothing we do has any effect whatsoever. In all my experience, I've never seen anything like this.

DIXON

Really?

FORD

It makes Ebola look like acne.

DIXON

Recommendations?

FORD

Put it on the next shuttle and drop it into the sun.

DIXON

Doctor, be practical.

FORD

I am. If Virus 1139 gets into the environment, we lose our spot at the top of the food chain.

DIXON

There must be some means of inoculation.

FORD

This is the ultimate biological weapon. It'll destroy any living thing it's used against...and any living thing that uses it.

DIXON

Then giving it a bad sunburn isn't good enough. We need other options.

FORD

There aren't any. You can never use this thing.

DIXON

Of course not. But what if whoever created it decides to? Now, if there's one place on earth where people can think outside the box, it's here.

Ford faces the giant image.

FORD

We've tried organic, chemical even radiological approaches, nothing. We're not even sure how it does what it does.

DIXON

And what would you need in order to find that out?

CAMERA pushes in on her expression as we...

CUT TO:

EXT. NANOSCAPE

A vehicle resembling a futuristic tank speeds across the rugged terrain. Ahead a chasm appears.

INT. DARPA LAB

ANGLE ON: A BLACK LATEX GLOVE

It cranks an invisible throttle.

EXT. NANOSCAPE

The vehicle accelerates toward the chasm until it is airborne. The craft lands on the other side. It's rough, but it's a landing.

INT. DARPA LAB

BUD

Yee-haah!

Dr. Fuller bursts into the lab.

FULLER

What? What was that?!? What's wrong?

BUD JENKINS, 19, is Doctor Fuller's intern. In sandals and a Hawaiian shirt under his labcoat, Bud seems suited more for the beach than the lab, except for the virtual control gloves and visor he wears. He reclines in a seat mounted on a platform in what looks like Darth Vader's media room. Next to the chair is a small, apparently empty, pedestal.

BUD

Wicked air.

At a nearby monitor, PROFESSOR SMITH BALLARD, late 50's, his life devoid of any extraneous activities like laughing or smiling, chafes at Bud's attitude.

BALLARD

(to Fuller)

Remind me why he's on the project?

BUD

(singing *and playing*
air guitar)

Take me on your mighty wings....!

FULLER

He's free. Besides, I think we can indulge a little enthusiasm.

Fuller grabs a hi-tech gadget that looks like a thermos with legs and jumps onto the platform. He places the gadget on the pedestal and begins making adjustments.

FULLER'S P.O.V.: a fuzzy image sharpens and reveals the vehicle Bud was piloting moments ago.

FULLER (*CONT'D*)

We have just perfected the world's first multi-function, multi-terrain nanobot. Do you know what this means?

BALLARD

Your *third* Nobel prize?

FULLER

The possibilities--the medical innovations alone are staggering! Scalpels will be obsolete, the most delicate operations will be painless outpatient procedures--better yet, patients might one day just operate on themselves.

BALLARD

Soldiers could receive instant medical attention without putting additional personnel in theater.

BUD

Dude, I could be mackin' on some hottie, and cleaning my ears at the same time and she'd never know!

BALLARD

I'll be sure to mention that in our next DARPA grant application.

BUD

Dr. F, this calls for a celebration. Brews on me.

FULLER

I appreciate that, Bud. But I'm going home.

BUD

(laughs)
Good one, Dr. F.

FULLER

I'm not joking. I'm going home now.

BALLARD

(stunned)
You're going home?

FULLER

I think I should make one father/son night before Dan starts drawing social security.

Fuller exits.

Bud puts an arm around Ballard.

BUD

Looks like it's just B and B out on the town.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY

Fuller hands his badge to the surprised security attendant.

ATTENDANT

Something wrong, Dr. Fuller?

FULLER

Nope. Just heading home for the night.

(off her look)

It's not like I never go home early.

(beat)

Well, tonight I am.

Fuller walks outside; takes a look around.

FULLER (CONT'D)
 (to himself)
 Hmm. So this is what it all looks
 like in the light.

His cell phone rings.

FULLER (CONT'D)
 Hello? This is Dr. Fuller.
 (eyes go wide)
 Yessir, General...Yessir...Actually,
 I was planning...I understand...Of
 course...
 (face falls)
 No sir, nothing I can't cancel.

A small contingent of special agents arrives.

FULLER (CONT'D)
 Yessir. I see them. See you shortly.

Fuller takes one last look at the outdoors then boards the
 black SUV.

CUT TO:

INT. FULLER RESIDENCE

Dan sprawls on the couch, wearing a headset and working a sleek black game controller. On the widescreen TV in front of him, digital mayhem. Dan controls a giant mech emptying both barrels of some mean-looking hardware at his attackers. At his back, a similar mech also gives as good as it gets.

A female face appears in a pop-up window in the corner of the TV screen. MIMI CARSON, 14, Dan's friend and wingman.

MIMI
 This is your exit strategy?

DAN
 Don't worry, as long as the ammo
 holds.

On cue, the barrels stop spinning.

MIMI
 You were saying?

Dan launches two thermite grenades.

DAN
 Make for the boulder!

The two giant battle robots race across the canyon floor with surprising speed. Just behind him, enemy fire tears up the landscape. Mimi reaches the boulder, it's...

MIMI

A dead end?!? Your answer to the frying pan is the fire?

DAN

Trust me.

MIMI

Do you know something I don't?

DAN

Only lots of things.

The two robots stand shoulder to shoulder, braced for a valiant final stand. The enemy forces gather.

DAN (*CONT'D*)

Now, Mo.
(beat)
Mo?

Suddenly, a molten barrage erupts from overhead.

A second pop-up window appears in the opposite corner with MOHAMMED "MO" KHAN, 14, the third musketeer.

MO

Say hello to my little friends.

Strafing fire decimates the attacking robots. One after another, they collapse in a shower of sparks and smoke. The few remaining retreat.

MO (*CONT'D*)

Sector secured.

MIMI

(to Dan)

You know, one of these days, you're going to screw the pooch. And I'm going to be there to see it.

DAN

Not likely.

MO

Next stop, gamma quadrant.

DAN

Can't, Dad's gonna be home soon.

MO
Ha, sounded like you said your dad
was coming home.

DAN
He is.

MO
But the sun's still out.

MIMI
Mo.

DAN
I know, I know, but he called.
They've finished the project ahead
of schedule.

MO
What is it, anyway?

DAN
Don't know, don't care.

MIMI
I don't see how you can not care.
Your dad runs a top secret research
lab. That's a lot cooler than saying
your dad sells insurance.

DAN
Your dad home before you go to bed?

MIMI
Yeah.

DAN
And on the weekends?

MIMI
Yeah.

DAN
It's a lot cooler to say that.

MIMI
So what are you guys doing tonight?

DAN
We'll attempt the standard father-
son bonding. He'll talk about
something I don't care about, then
I'll talk about something he doesn't
understand, so he'll just nod.

The phone rings.

DAN (CONT'D)
Gotta go. Talk to you guys later.

Dan turns off the game and answers the phone. After a moment, his face falls.

CUT TO:

INT. ATOMIC BURGER RESTAURANT--LATER

DAN
Well, at least I didn't have to hear the college spiel again.

MO
Maybe he's dealing with feelings of insecurity over having to assume a more maternal role in addition to being the family provider.

Mimi and Dan stare at him.

MO (CONT'D)
Oprah says it happens with single fathers all the time.

DAN
Actually, it's a lot like Christmas every day. I get up, there's signs someone's been in the house and sometimes there's a gift. This week it was a college entrance exam workbook.

MO
Eesh.

MIMI
At least he tried.

DAN
Whatever. Thing is, this time I actually kinda did wanna talk to him about my future.

He pulls out the copy of *E-Gamer*.

MO
Dude, you're going for it?

Mimi opens the mag.

MIMI

(reading)

"PixelFest. The most intense competition known to man. Top gamers from the world over clash head-to-head and thumb-to-thumb in all-out game-ageddon for cash and glory."

(beat)

Your future?

Dan smiles and takes the copy back.

MIMI (CONT'D)

You think your dad'll really see a three day gaming binge as an investment in your future?

DAN

No, but it doesn't really matter.

MO

How's that?

DAN

I was thinking...

MIMI

Bad plan. Always stick to your strengths.

DAN

(sarcastic)

If only that charm could be bottled. Then at least I could stick a cork in it.

(beat)

Anyway, as I was saying, I realized that Dad isn't really the key to me going to Pixelfest.

MO

Then what is?

DAN

My alibis.

MIMI

(realizing)

Oh no.

DAN

(Pleading)

Come on. It's only Friday through Sunday. He'll never know. It's a perfect plan.

MIMI

Dan, this is sprained even for you.
Do you have any idea what our parents
will do to us when--and I repeat:
when--they find out about this?

DAN

It's foolproof.

MIMI

Just because a fool thought of it
doesn't make it foolproof.

DAN

Mo?

MO

Man, I don't know. How're you even
gonna get there?

Dan holds up an airline ticket.

DAN

Round-trip to Phoenix, thanks to
last year's overbooked vacation
flight.

MO

You know I support you. You know I
bow to your game superiority. But
dude, I'll be grounded until I can
vote.

DAN

Come on, guys, I'd do it for you.
Our parents are always talking about
our futures and how it's important
to make the right choices. Well, I
have thought about it. I've trained.
I know this is my future.

(beat)

Search your feelings. You know it
to be true. It is my destiny.

MIMI

Well, you're not really good at
anything else.

Mo nods.

MIMI (CONT'D)

You're gonna owe us ginormous for
this.

CUT TO:

INT. DAN'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

Dan's alarm goes off. He gets out of bed already dressed.

INT. HALLWAY

Dan creeps past his father's bedroom. The door is open, and the room is empty.

DAN

This'll be easier than I thought.

Dan reaches the front door and pulls out his cell phone to conference in his confederates.

DAN (CONT'D)

Mo? Mimi? Hey, it's me. No, he's
already gone. Probably never even
came home. I'm telling you man,
it's gonna work.

A taxi pulls up. Dan throws his backpack in and follows after.

CUT TO:

INT. MIMI'S ROOM

She's still in bed.

MIMI

(sighs)

MO (O.S.)

What's wrong?

MIMI

Remember the last time he said "It's
gonna work."

CUT TO:

INT. MO'S ROOM

Mo munches thoughtfully on a Pop Tart.

MO

Yeah, there're still places I can't grow hair.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 CONFERENCE ROOM

Dr. Fuller sits alone in the cavernous room studying his high-security clearance badge. The doors open and General Dixon enters with Professor Ford.

DIXON

Dr. Fuller. General Tom Dixon.

FULLER

Of course, General, how are you?

DIXON

This is Professor Janice Ford.

Handshakes.

FORD

It's my pleasure, Dr. Fuller. Your innovations in nanotechnology are very impressive.

FULLER

Thanks. I'm...sure whatever you do is quite good, too.

DIXON

Sorry for the secrecy, Doctor, but it was necessary until you had the appropriate security clearance. The President is the only other civilian who wears that badge here at 51.

FULLER

51? As in...?
(pointing to ceiling)

DIXON

Yes, *that* 51.

FORD

Doctor, you were summoned here at my request. Your research might just might provide solutions to certain...

The virus appears up on the screen.

FULLER

Problems?

FORD

Challenges.

FULLER

(re: the screen)

What is that?

DIXON

That's on a need to know basis. For now you can call it "Big Evil".

FORD

We're conducting some experiments on the Vi...er...Big Evil but have run into some...equipment limitations. Specifically, we need to penetrate the nucleus without damaging the cell.

FULLER

And you want to know if I have a way to do that?

DIXON

Actually, Doctor, we know you do. What we really want to know is will you help us.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 LAB

A shaft of light illuminates a giant plexiglass column. Inside the column, a stainless steel canister stamped with various numbers and codes. Among them, the unmistakable biohazard logo.

Monitors around the room glow in soothing blue and green hues. In front of one monitor, a lab tech sits with one eye on the screen and the other on a weekly tabloid with a headline reading, "Batboy Missing! Feared Kidnapped!".

TECH

(chuckling to himself)

If they only knew.

As he flips the page, the door behind him slides noiselessly back. A man in a labcoat, ELLISON, enters pushing a cart with a clipboard. He peers at the tabloid.

ELLISON

I hear Bigfoot did it.

TECH

(Startled)

Doc! Didn't hear you come in.

ELLISON
How's our baby?

TECH
Snug as a bug.

ELLISON
No spikes, no anomalies?

TECH
It's about as active as Roswell on a
Tuesday night.

The professor flips a few switches. With a hiss, the protective cylinder sinks into the floor.

TECH (*CONT'D*)
W...w...waitaminnit. What are you
doing, Doc?

ELLISON
We're running some tests with the
boys from Darpa and need a sample.
Mind giving me a hand?

TECH
(Gulps)

ELLISON
It's perfectly safe.

Gingerly, the tech joins Ellison by the canister.

ELLISON (*CONT'D*)
The containment field keeps it in
complete stasis. That's a good thing.

TECH
So what exactly is this thing?

ELLISON
(conspiratorily)
Well, I'm not supposed to say, but,
in it's active state, it's a very
powerful biological weapon. Upsy
daisy.

They lift the canister onto the cart; the tech's almost in tears.

ANGLE ON: THE CANISTER

An automatic system lowers and seals the canister inside the cart.

ELLISON (*CONT'D*)
There, that wasn't so bad, he?

The tech manages a pained grin.

Ellison pushes the cart toward the door. He swipes his badge, but nothing happens. Again. Nothing.

ELLISON (*CONT'D*)

There seems to be a problem with the door.

TECH

That's because it's coded to the manifest.

He holds up a small PDA.

TECH (*CONT'D*)

Without a signature, the doors can't open.

ELLISON

Of course.

Ellison hastily scribbles on the PDA and hands it back. The door goes green and he disappears into the hallway. As the doors shut back, the tech, relieved, returns to the tabloid.

Moments later, the doors open again. This time, Drs. Ford and Fuller enter pushing a cart.

TECH

Doctor.

(re: Fuller)

I'm sorry, I'll need to see...

Fuller holds up his ID badge.

FORD

This is Doctor Michael Fuller. He's working with me on the sample.

TECH

Busy night.

FORD

What do you mean?

TECH

The other scientist already took a sample.

FORD

(instantly grave)

What other scientist?

TECH

In the hallway. Didn't you see him? Just now.

FORD
That's not even close to funny.

TECH
No, no....no...I'm serious.

He shows Ford the PDA.

TECH (CONT'D)
(reading)
Doctor...Ellison

FULLER
(re: her expression)
Who's that?

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 CONFERENCE ROOM

Ford briefs the General.

DIXON
You're sure it was Ellison?

FORD
Sensor logs confirm it. And a hard target search of 51 hasn't found him.

DIXON
I can't believe that.

FULLER
Who is he?

DIXON
He was my second-in-command. One of the brightest cadets ever produced by our nation's military academies.

FULLER
Then why didn't he even bother to cover his tracks?

DIXON
He didn't need to.

FULLER
Excuse me?

DIXON
The DNA of every person at 51 is on file. Should it become necessary, that sample can be used to track them with pinpoint accuracy.

(MORE)

DIXON (*CONT'D*)

But the question is not how do we find Ellison. It's what do we do then?

FULLER

What's that mean?

DIXON

It means a hypothetical doomsday scenario just became a reality.

FULLER

Now do I need to know?

DIXON

Unfortunately.

The lights shut off and Big Evil appears larger than life on the wallscreen.

FORD

Big Evil, otherwise known as Virus 1193, is structurally identical to other viruses. But it is the most aggressive strain we've ever encountered. It enters its host through the nasal membranes.

Onscreen: a rat in a lab. A small robotic arm opens a biohazard canister.

FORD (*CONT'D*)

Within moments, the virus replicates more than a thousandfold.

The rat runs on a wheel.

FULLER

I don't see anything.

FORD

Maybe not yet, but genetically speaking, that organism stopped being a rat about 10 seconds ago.

Suddenly, the camera zooms in. The rat twitches. It's about to sneeze...

ANGLE ON: FULLER'S WIDE EYES

SFX: A DULL, WET "POP"

FULLER

Eyewwwwwww.

DIXON

You should see the elephant footage.

FORD

Virus 1139 is virtually invulnerable.

FULLER

What are your plans for containment?

(off Dixon's look)

That look means either really bad news or the dog ate your homework.

DIXON

I don't have a dog.

FORD

There are no containment plans. Here we can create a static environment. Out there, there's no way. The virus can feed off too many organisms.

DIXON

Ellison has no idea what he's taken. Probably figures it's Sarin or Anthrax, something sexy.

FULLER

Sexy?!?

DIXON

Something that'll play on the news. Makes blackmail all the easier. But he has no idea what this is. If he were to release that sample into the environment, we're looking at an extinction level event within a month.

Onscreen: A infection simulation starts. Rapidly a purple blob spreads across the silhouette of North America...and beyond.

FULLER

(realizing)

My child's out there.

DIXON

A lot of people's children are out there.

FORD

That's why we brought you here, doctor. You have something just small enough to handle a problem this big. We'll provide you with everything you need. And if the lab doesn't have it, we'll get it.

FULLER
I'll need my team.

DIXON
Done.

FULLER
And I want my son brought here.

DIXON
Agents are on their way to pick him
up now.

CUT TO:

A MONTAGE

1. Scientists and engineers outfit a lab.
2. A technician welds a sheet of plexiglass into place.

DIXON (CONT'D)
Your team will have state-of-the-art
materials and full access to 51's
resources.

3. Technicians test computer systems.
4. A plexiglass cylinder lowers from the ceiling over a
biohazard canister.

MATCH CUT TO:

ANGLE ON: THE CANISTER

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL Fuller, Ballard and Bud looking
at the canister from the safe side of the glass.

BALLARD
But if the military can't kill it,
why do they think we can?

Fuller holds up the nanobot's virtual control unit.

BALLARD (CONT'D)
But it's only a prototype.

FULLER
It's been promoted.

BUD
But the nanobot has no offensive
capability whatsoever.

FULLER
That's where the military comes in.

Fuller pulls a slide from his labcoat and places it under a microscope. Bud starts to take a look, but Ballard edges him out.

Insert: Three tapered tubes resting side by side.

BALLARD

Missiles?

FULLER

It's what the military does best. Each contains a compound that will mutate the genetic code and render the virus inert. Theoretically. The catch is, it must be delivered directly into the nucleus, for it to work at all. The nanobot is the delivery vehicle.

Bud looks into the microscope.

BUD

Dude, pimp my ride!

TIME DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE LAB

Ballard and Fuller watch an overhead monitor intently.

Onscreen: The biohazard canister. Bud, wearing the remote control gear, sits at a console like he's playing a videogame.

BUD

(tune: Surfin' Safari)

Let's go hunting now, everybody's freakin' out, come on a safari with me...

Ballard's not amused.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CANISTER

At this scale, it looks like an empty cavern. A SMASH ZOOM takes us to a single dust mote. Another SMASH ZOOM takes us to its surface.

CUT TO:

EXT. NANOSCAPE

The nanobot accelerates across the landscape.

FULLER

Any signs of the virus?

BUD

Not yet. Waitaminnit, I think we have something. Three o'clock.

The nanobot careens to intercept.

FULLER

Negative. It's just a dust formation.

TIME DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LAB

CAMERA PANS over scavenged Chinese take-out containers, empty chip bags, etc. Ballard now wears the remote control gear.

BALLARD

I've got nothing.

FULLER

How could a space so small be so empty?

Then, at another monitor...

BUD

Wait...wait. Yes! We have a winner!

BALLARD

What? What do you have?

BUD

The Chewbacca Cookie Tin. Thank you, eBay!

Bud meets with scornful looks.

BUD (CONT'D)

(Defensive) It's a limited edition.

BALLARD

So are you.

FULLER

(Yawning) I need coffee. Anybody?

BALLARD

I'll join you. Here...

He hands Bud the remote helmet.

BALLARD (CONT'D)

Put your opposable thumbs to use.

After Ballard leaves, Bud flicks his thumb off his teeth in derision.

CUT TO:

EXT. NANOSCAPE

The nanobot does donuts on the surface. Tires screeching, it peels out and heads for a dust mogul, popping a side wheelie.

BUD
Yeeeeooooowww!

Suddenly, the ground beneath it gives way. The nanobot tumbles into darkness.

BUD (CONT'D)
I can't see a thing.

ANGLE ON: THE NANOBOT

Two armlike projections reach from either side and bathe the cavern in light.

BUD (CONT'D)
Wait till they get a load of this.

Suddenly, the camera angle tilts wildly. Bud struggles for a visual. Then he gets one.

BUD (CONT'D)
Oh. My. God.

A seething mud-green mass pours through the canyon beneath him, scarring a path as it goes. Bud zooms the camera in. It's a virus stampede. Big Evil.

BUD (CONT'D)
All right. It's on.

The nanobot engages the virus but is quickly engulfed and launched high into the air. The landing is rough--when the nanobot finally comes to a stop, it's almost totally destroyed.

BUD (CONT'D)
(Stunned)
Uh-huh.

CUT TO:

INT. LOUNGE

Bud backs through the lounge door and bumps into Ballard who scalds himself with his own coffee.

FULLER

What is it, Bud? You find it?

Bud nods slowly.

FULLER (CONT'D)

Well?

BUD

You're gonna need a bigger 'bot.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 CONFERENCE ROOM -- LATER

FULLER

The sheer impact of the landing damaged it beyond repair.

DIXON

So nanobots are no longer an option.

BALLARD

Not at all, sir. Given their size we can rebuild and redesign them very quickly. We'll go back to the drawing board and make the necessary improvements.

DIXON

Then don't waste any more time talking to me.

As the meeting breaks up, Dixon pulls Fuller aside.

FULLER

What do you mean you can't find him?

DIXON

The principal said Dan was out sick but there was no one at your home. My agents are checking the local malls, restaurants and parks.

FULLER

No, he wouldn't be there.

DIXON

Is there anywhere else he would be?

FULLER

(guiltily)

I don't know...He doesn't really go anywhere, that I know of.

DIXON

You don't know?

FULLER

No. If he wasn't at school he'd be
in his room playing videogame...
waitaminnit
(checks his watch and
sighs)
I think I know where he is.

CUT TO:

EXT. PHOENIX CONVENTION CENTER--ESTABLISHING

ANGLE: "PIXELFEST--GET YOUR GAME ON" IN STROBING L.E.D.

Sensory overload pushes the limits of human endurance. Dan's starstruck by the latest in hardware, software and even wetware--that is, the greatest gamers on the circuit, flanked by their agents, groupies, attorneys and sponsors.

ANGLE ON: PIXELFEST REGISTRATION KIOSK

As Dan approaches, a holographic projection appears.

REGGIE STRATION
Welcome to Pixelfest I'm Reggie
Stration. How may I help you?

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 LAB

Dr. Fuller frowns as a redesigned nanobot prototype falls
prey to the virus.

CUT TO:

INT. PIXELFEST

Dan wins his first competition.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51

Yet another nanobot is put to the test. It's no good.

CUT TO:

INT. PIXELFEST

Dan wins again and a crowd gathers.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 LAB

Fuller shakes his head. The nanobots are just no match for
the virus. Ballard and Bud walk away from the monitors in
frustration.

CUT TO:

INT. PIXELFEST

Dan emerges victorious yet again and the crowd cheers. A
suit in sunglasses emerges from the throng and pushes towards
him.

AGENT

Dan Fuller. I'd like to have a word
with you.

CUT TO:

INT. CONVENTION CENTER FOOD COURT

Dan scarfs a fully loaded hotdog as the agent talks.

AGENT

Just think about it.

DAN

Can you put me on a cereal box?

The agent smiles and hands Dan his card.

AGENT

My clients all have endorsement deals.
As a matter of fact, I'm supposed to
meet one now. And you've got more
winning to do. But call me next week.

Dan watches him leave then turns his attention back to the
business card. Lost in thought, Dan doesn't notice another
suit walk up.

SPECIAL OPS

Dan Fuller?

DAN

Sweet. I smell bidding war.

SPECIAL OPS

I need you to come with me.

DAN

I gotta tell ya, if you wanna sign
me, you're going to have to step up
to the plate.

SPECIAL OPS

I don't think you understand.

He grabs Dan's Arm.

SPECIAL OPS (CONT'D)

You're coming with me.

Panicked, Dan kicks Special Ops between the legs. He doubles
over and Dan disappears back into Pixelfest.

CUT TO:

INT. CONVENTION CENTER

Special Ops, moving slowly, turns a corner and finds...nothing
but a giant demon's head: a display for the latest version
of Hellbeast II.

INT. DEMON MASK

Behind the mask, Dan steels his nerve to make a break for it
when a security guard passes into view--he talks to the Suit.
Just then, Dan's cell phone goes off.

DAN

Not now!

The screen reads, Alarm: Next Competition.

His cover blown, Dan races from behind the mask and into the crowd, with the suit and the guard close behind.

Dan bolts through the door and back into the food court towards the elevators. He ducks into an elevator and the doors shut just ahead of his pursuers.

Dan's about to breathe a sigh of relief when the doors reopen to reveal Special Ops and the security guard.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 LAB

Onscreen: the nanobot and Big Evil are the quintessential David and Goliath--and David's having a real bad day.

FULLER

I don't understand. Based on all our calculations, this should be working.

BUD

What if we outfit the bot with A.I.

BALLARD

Maybe ten years from now.

BUD

Maybe they've got some alien technology around here we could use. You know, that's how we got the stealth.

BALLARD

Well, at least we're getting faster at rebuilding them.

FULLER

Yeah, we're failing twice as fast as before. Come on, think, what are we missing?

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 COMMAND CENTER

Dixon meets with Dr. Ford.

DIXON

Please tell me someone has good news.

The phone rings.

A lieutenant hands Dixon the phone.

DIXON (CONT'D)
(annoyed)
Only if it's the president.

LIEUTENANT
You'll want to take this, sir.

DIXON
Dixon.

He puts the call on speaker.

ELLISON
Since you're taking my call, General,
I'll assume you've put two and two
together. So I won't waste your time
or, more importantly, mine.

DIXON
What do you want?

ELLISON
What any good capitalist wants. And
lots of it.

DIXON
You're tossing away an exemplary
military career for money?

ELLISON
When you put it that way you make it
sound so superficial. I have
principles, beliefs. I believe in
market forces--black market. And I
have to tell you, there's quite a
demand for biological weapons. But,
I wanted to give you a chance to
best the current bid of \$300 million.
After all we've been through and all
I've learned from you.

DIXON
You learned nothing from me. Who's
the high bidder?

ELLISON
Now General, that would be unethical.
Besides, it's a paltry \$300 million.
The pentagon spends more than that
on two hammers and toilet.

DIXON
You're insane.

ELLISON
Not very diplomatic, General.
(MORE)

ELLISON (CONT'D)

Or prudent, now that I'm the world's second superpower. Just be thankful I'm not a fanatic with apocalyptic delusions. But, I see my time is up. We'll speak again.

A dial tone.

LIEUTENANT

Sorry sir. He bounced the signal all over the world. We didn't have time for a trace.

DIXON

Analyze what you have. In the meantime, bring me Ellison's file.

FORD

What are you thinking?

DIXON

The one advantage to having an enemy so intimately familiar with us, is that we're intimately familiar with him.

FORD

His DNA.

DIXON

We're sending in the bugs.

CUT TO:

EXT: THE SKIES SOMEWHERE OVER NEW MEXICO

A helicopter emerges from the clouds. A small appendage extends from its belly to release...mosquitoes.

FORD (V.O.)

Once programmed with Ellison's DNA signature, the mosquito-bots will search out a match. Once they have it, they'll tag him with a radiofluorescent marker.

CAMERA ZOOMS in on one of the insects, revealing a serial number on its belly. It lands on an unsuspecting person and inserts its proboscis. CAMERA ZOOMS in to show tiny circuitry scanning the blood.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMAND CENTER

Overhead, a large map appears, tracking each mosquito.

DIXON

Theft was approximately two hours ago, giving us a search radius of roughly 160 miles.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE:

1. A young couple in the park. A mosquito lands on the woman's neck and takes a sample. No match. She slaps the man.

2. A little league game. A base runner watches his base coach for signals. Another mosquito lands. The coach swats at it and the runner goes. The pitcher, surprised, lobs the ball to second for the easy out. Game over. Again, the indicator is red.

3. A back porch. A couch potato swills a beer. He belches and notices a mosquito on his arm. He raises a meaty paw and...splat.

Simultaneously, a monitor in the command center goes to snow.

LIEUTENANT

But what if he hopped a plane.

DIXON

That'd be too easy to trace. No, we'll find him in this area.

FORD

And then what?

DIXON

Pray we catch a break.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51

Reverse Angle: Two officers walk down the long hallway towards Fuller's lab. They reach the door and swipe a security badge. The doors hiss open.

INT. AREA 51 LAB

Fuller and the other scientists don't notice their arrival.

LIEUTENANT

Dr. Fuller. You have a visitor.

Dan Fuller stands in front of the two officers. He's awestruck by the surroundings.

DAN
Whoa! Make it so, Number One!

FULLER
Dan!

DAN
Dad!

Relieved and overjoyed, Fuller rushes to Dan and hugs him. The embrace lasts several moments.

FULLER
Son! I'm so glad you're safe.

DAN
You're not mad?

FULLER
I didn't say that.

DAN
Okay, but just lemme explain. You're not gonna believe it. I was winning...and this agent showed up and...

BALLARD
I hate to spoil the homecoming, but we're ready for the next trial.

FULLER
Son, now's not a real good time.

DAN
(dejected)
It's never a good time.

FULLER
(guiltily)
I promise, we'll talk later, son. For now, just stay here. I'll be back.

Fuller exits. Abandoned again, Dan's interest turns to the lab--it is Area 51, after all. He notices an active monitor and the remote control helmet and gloves.

Fuller ducks his head in quickly.

FULLER (CONT'D)
And Dan...

DAN
Yeah, dad?

FULLER
Don't touch anything.

ANGLE ON: THE HELMET

Hi-Tech. Expensive. Ah, what could it hurt? Dan slips it on.

DAN
Whoaaaa!

INSERT: NANOSCAPE

It's unlike any videogame Dan's ever seen!

RESTORE TO:

INT. AREA 51 LAB

Dan slips on the gloves and tests the controls.

DAN
Wicked!

The nanobot under Dan's control navigates the terrain like an Aborigine on a walkabout.

DAN (CONT'D)
Now you're playing with power.
(beat)
Hmmm. What's this do?

He presses a button on the virtual display and a missile screams over the horizon.

DAN (CONT'D)
Awesome!

Then it comes. Over the horizon, like a swarm. Big Evil.

DAN (CONT'D)
Hello, what's this? Looks like a bug problem.

Dan cracks his knuckles.

DAN (CONT'D)
No problem.

Dan engages the virus and more than holds his own. His skills are more than a match for the virus. Missiles fly, wreaking carnage. Suddenly, the helmet flies off his head.

FULLER
What are you doing?!? What did I tell you?!?
(MORE)

FULLER (CONT'D)

This is very delicate equipment.
Now I want you to go to commissary
and wait for me.

Now the monitor catches Bud's attention.

BUD

Uh, Doc.

FULLER

In a minute, Bud.
(to Dan)
Son, this isn't some videogame for
you to...

BALLARD

Mike.

Ballard points Fuller to the screen. His eyes go wide.

FULLER

Run a diagnostic.

BUD

Systems are bangin' on all cylinders.

BALLARD

He's right, Mike. Quadrant 3 is clear.

FULLER

Wha? How? (To Dan, incredulous)
Son, did you do this!?

DAN

Ok, before I answer that, is that a
good thing or a bad thing?

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 COMMAND CENTER

Fuller and the other scientists burst through the door.

FULLER

General! We've got it!

DIXON

What, exactly, is it?

FULLER

A delivery vehicle for the anti-virus.
Our limitation wasn't in the design,
but the maneuverability.

ANGLE ON: THE HELMET

BALLARD

To quote the bard, "What a piece of work is man, so infinite..."

ANGLE ON: THE REMOTE CONTROL GLOVES

DIXON

I'm a little rusty on my Shakespeare, professor, just give me the Cliff's Notes version.

BALLARD

The best match for an organism, is another organism.

Dan steps through the door wearing the helmet and gloves.

ANGLE ON: Dan's mouth, chewing gum.

DIXON

Your plan to save the world is a kid? Doctor, I think you may need to ventilate your lab.

FULLER

Where else would you find this level of hand-eye coordination?

BUD

And with all due respect sir, he's got mad skills.

DIXON

Show me.

TIME DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AREA 51 COMMAND CENTER

An overhead monitor carries a direct feed from Dan's nanobot.

FULLER

(into the mic)
Ready son?

DAN (O.S.)

Lock and load.

CUT TO:

EXT. NANOSCAPE

The nanobot moves deftly, fires lasers and missiles at the virus. Everyone in the command center, including General Dixon are amazed.

BALLARD

By our calculations, three such devices could engage and neutralize the virus.

DIXON

Can he handle three machines at once?

FULLER

No sir, we'll need additional pilots. But don't worry, they're already en route.

Dixon's brow furrows.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SKIES OVER THE NEW MEXICO

A Blackhawk helicopter streaks toward Area 51.

PILOT

Blackbird to base. ETA four minutes.

CUT TO:

INT. BLACKHAWK

CAMERA PANS to Mo and Mimi--strapped in, wearing helmets two sizes too big. Mo buries his face in a barf bag.

PILOT

You two all right back there?

Mimi smiles in abject fear and Mo gives a weak thumbs up before filling a barf bag.

TIME DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AREA 51

Dixon, Dan and a contingent of soldiers greet Mimi and the pilot.

MIMI

(ad lib) Hey Dan! What is all this? What's going on?

DAN

This is off the hook. I'll fill you in in a sec. Where's Mo?

Mo, still green, brings up the rear, escorted by the pilot, swabbing his jumpsuit.

DIXON
 (scowling)
 Why don't you two go find a change
 of clothes?

PILOT
 Yessir.

The pilot and Mo exit.

DIXON
 (to Fuller) I hope you're right about
 this.

FULLER
 Me too.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 CONFERENCE ROOM

Dixon debriefs the scientists, Dan, Mo and Mimi.

DIXON
 The subject is a former Area 51
 operative, Lieutenant James Ellison.
 Now he's threatening to sell a
 biological substance to the highest
 bidder.

BALLARD
 You can't just meet his demands.

DAN
 Duh.

FULLER
 Dan.

DIXON
 Kid's right. And we're not gonna
 meet his demands. About half and
 hour ago, we located Ellison and we
 don't expect him to move for roughly
 two hours.

FULLER
 Why's that?

DIXON
 Because he gave us that long to trump
 his highest bidder.

BUD
 General, your honor, sir, with all
 due respect, if you know where he's
 (MORE)

BUD (CONT'D)

at, why don't you send in the Rangers or Green Berets, or Delta Force or something?

DIXON

The situation is too unstable. One stray bullet hits this canister-- instant apocalypse. So we're inserting the team to neutralize the virus first.

DAN

Dude, that's us.

DIXON

Dan, Mimi and Mohammed will be stationed in the lab, each in command of a nanobot via virtual controls.

DAN

It'll be just like Maximum Carnage 2.0.

MIMI

Except there are no cheats and you're playing for the fate of the world.

Mimi raises her hand.

DIXON

Yes?

MIMI

So how do we get the nanobots to the virus?

A gangly sort, like Bill Nye's cousin, steps to the front.

DIXON

To answer that question, let me introduce Professor Elmer Sklew, the head of our Special Laboratory for Environmental Reconnaissance, Penetration, Etc.

ELMER

We call it SLERPE.

DIXON

He's one of the best in the field.

An enlarged picture of the mosquito-bot from earlier appears on the wallscreen. It rotates slightly to reveal "Property of SLERPE" stenciled on its metallic underbelly.

DAN

Kewl.

ELMER

Once we located the target, he was tagged him with a radiofluorescent dye so he'd be easy to find. Now we send out this mosquito-bot with very special cargo--the nanobots.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AREA 51 LAB

Dan approaches his father.

DAN

Dad? Can I talk to you for a second?

FULLER

Sure, son. What is it?

DAN

Well, I'm not sure how to say it, really.

FULLER

I understand.

DAN

(unsure)
You do?

FULLER

It's okay to be nervous. This mission is a lot of responsibility. But you'll be controlling the nanobots here in the safety of Area 51.

DAN

Oh, yeah, well. That's not really what I wanted to talk to you about.

FULLER

Oh?

Dan hands his father a piece of paper.

FULLER (CONT'D)

What's this?

DAN

We thought the nanobots could use a few modifications.

FULLER

Dan, I really don't think--

Bud walks by and sees the paper.

BUD
Dude! Righteous upgrades.

He shows it to Ballard.

BALLARD
Crude, but there is definitely some
merit here. Nice work.

Fuller reluctantly reconsiders the sheet. Game, set and
match to his son and his friends.

FULLER
Ok, but no air foil.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE:

1. A schematic of the nanobot.

DAN (V.O.)
We should have an extra grappling
hook.

2. A grappling hook appears on the schematic.

MO (V.O.)
And more missiles.

3. The nanobot goes from four wheels down to three.

4. Bud and Dan high-five.

FULLER
I think we're almost there.

CAMERA PANS over their faces one by one: Fuller is intrigued,
Mo and Mimi smile, Bud nods and Ballard looks skeptical.

MO
Cool. But can we add more missiles?

TIME DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AREA 51 LAB

Dixon enters.

DIXON
Fuller, we're down to the final hour.
Is your team ready?

FULLER
Yes, sir. Dixon, may I present the
Megamicrothunderbot Mark VI.

A picture of the newest version of the nanobot appears on
the overhead screen.

DIXON
The what?

FULLER
The kids named it.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 COMMAND CENTER

A siren sounds.

DIXON
Showtime.

DAN
Cool.

CUT TO:

The newly redesigned MMTBs Mark IV, ready for battle.

INT. AREA 51 LAB

Dan, Mimi and Mo are stationed at their own monitors. Each
wearing the remote control gear.

DAN
Lock and load.

MO
Yeah!

MIMI
What does that mean, anyway?

DAN
I dunno.

MO
Me neither. But it sounds cool.

DAN
Yeah.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 COMMAND CENTER

Dixon concludes final preparations.

DIXON

Status.

LIEUTENANT

All systems are 5x5, sir.

A small red light appears on the monitor.

DIXON

Bingo.

LIEUTENANT

Signal confirmed. We have contact with the bogey.

DIXON

Send them in.

CUT TO:

Mosquito P.O.V.: A dizzying flight through the city, over cars, around people, etc. The signal leads it to a high-rise apartment building.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELLISON'S APARTMENT

The mosquito-bot lands on the window. In moments, it's inside.

INT. ELLISON'S APARTMENT

Ellison checks his watch.

ELLISON

(to himself)

No bids, General? Didn't really expect so.

He dials his cell phone.

ELLISON (*CONT'D*)

(glancing at his watch) Yes. Everything's set. Party's on, BYOB just as we agreed. Oh believe me, this little cocktail of mine will be worth every penny.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 COMMAND CENTER

Dixon watches the feed from the mosquito-bot.

DIXON

Can we pick up what he's saying?

LIEUTENANT

Unfortunately he's on a scrambled
satphone. But he's definitely
confirming the transfer, sir.

A whispered argument from another bank of monitors distracts
Dixon. He walks over.

FEMALE LIEUTENANT

I'm telling you, that's it.

MALE LIEUTENANT

Fine. You wanna tell the General, go
ahead.

DIXON

You've found something, Lieutenant?

The male lieutenant rolls his eyes.

FEMALE LIEUTENANT

Uh, yes, sir. There, sir.

Onscreen: A giftwrapped box.

FEMALE LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

Seems if you were about to make a
multi-million dollar arms deal, you'd
be too busy to attend a birthday
party.

Dixon takes a closer look.

DIXON

Well, happy birthday to me.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT

As Ellison clips his cell phone shut, the mosquito-bot
penetrates the gift.

Mosquito-bot P.O.V.: Inside, a silver canister with a familiar
bio-hazard logo. A tiny drill attaches to the canister
inside.

CUT TO:

EXT. NANOSCAPE

Deposited by the drill, the Megamicrothunderbot makes its
way toward the virus. CAMERA PULLS BACK to REVEAL the two
other MMTBs following in formation.

Close On: Dan Fuller.

DAN

Estimated time to Big Evil about one minute. Please return your trays and seatbacks to their upright and locked position.

MIMI

(rolling her eyes) Geez.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 COMMAND CENTER

Fuller monitors their progress.

FULLER

Dan, we're picking up blips on the radar. You should have visual now.

DAN

Mimi, can you see it?

MIMI

No. Mo?

MO

Zilch. Scope's as flat as a 14-year old girl.

MIMI

Hey!

MO

Waitaminnit. Oh yeah, I'm getting something...

DAN

What?

MO

Disgusted.

Onscreen: a virus stampede pours over the horizon.

MO (CONT'D)

Uh, D, just how much of this stuff was there?

DAN

Half the sample.

MIMI

The big half.

DAN

Well it's about to be zero. Can I get a boo-yah?

MO & MIMI

Boo-Yah.

DAN

I can't hear you.

MO & MIMI

Boo-Yah!

DAN

All right! I'm going in.

CUT TO:

Dan throttles his nanobot ahead.

MIMI

So much for ladies first.

DAN

Targeting. Missiles armed...and...fire
one!A missile screams toward the virus and scores a hit. Almost
instantly, the target area calcifies.

DAN (CONT'D)

That's what I call Dano-technology.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMAND CENTER

Cheers erupt.

LIEUTENANT

Hit confirmed, sir.

INT. AREA 51 LAB

Mo prepares for his turn.

MO

Okay, okay, not bad. But let me
show you how it's done.

He grimaces as he lines up the crosshairs...

MO (CONT'D)

Come to papa, baby, come to papa.

...And fires. Again a target area is rendered inert.

MO (CONT'D)

Oh you like that? You want some more?

INT. AREA 51 COMMAND CENTER

LIEUTENANT
They're getting closer.

DIXON
Congratulations, Doctor. It looks
like this plan might just...

Fuller's not there. He's huddled over a monitor with Dr.
Ford.

DIXON (CONT'D)
Doctor...?

FULLER
General, we've got a problem. The
virus...it's multiplying.

DIXON
That's impossible, those containment
canisters were designed to be zero-
host environments.

FORD
They are. Nonetheless, the virus'
volume has increased 15%.

DIXON
But that would mean....

FULLER
It's found another host.

BALLARD
But what?

FORD
(realizing)
The only thing available. Virus
1139 is using itself as a host.

BUD
You mean it's like a cannibal virus
now? Eyeew.

FULLER
I don't understand. How could
anything on Earth could adapt so
fast.
(to Dixon)
How'd you create it?

BUD
Why'd you create it?

FORD
 (to Dixon)
 Tell him.

FULLER
 Tell me what?

DIXON
 (Relenting)
 Big Evil isn't one of ours.

BALLARD
 You mean some other country has this
 kind of technology?

DIXON
 Not exactly. Some other planet.

FULLER
 (nervous laughter)
 You're saying this virus was created
 by little green men?

DIXON
 Actually, doctor, we don't know what
 color they really are.

ANGLE ON: THE VIRUS

Viral cells attack each other and burst with new viruses.

FORD
 At this current growth rate the virus
 will literally bust out of the
 canister in about an hour.

DIXON
 Ellison's sitting on the most
 dangerous ticking bomb in history
 and doesn't even know it.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELLISON'S APARTMENT BUILDING

Ellison pulls out of a parking structure in a nondescript
 SUV.

RESTORE TO:

INT. AREA 51 COMMAND CENTER

Dan's voice calls on the intercom.

DAN (O.S.)
 Dad? Dad are you there?

FULLER
I read you, Son. Listen, there's
been a development. You're gonna
have to work faster.

DAN (V.O.)
Uh, that's gonna be a problem.

FULLER
What is it, son?

DAN
All three nanobots just went dead.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 LAB

Chaos. Fuller, Ballard and Bud burst into the lab.

FULLER
What happened?!?

DAN
I didn't touch anything.

MIMI
Yeah, everything was working great
then: nothing.

MO
Maybe we unplugged something.

DAN
Everything's wireless. There's
nothing to unplug.

Ballard and Bud take up positions at the monitors.

BALLARD
How about now?

DAN
Still nothing.

BUD
How about this?

MIMI
Come on, come on!

Onscreen: Nothing but snow.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 COMMAND CENTER

The mood is grave.

DIXON

Someone wanna tell me what in blazes just happened?

LIEUTENANT

The target went mobile, heading east shortly before the bots went dead.

DIXON

And we have to assume the virus is, too. Go to Defcon 4. Get me the President. And alert the CDC.

Fuller calls from the lab.

FULLER (O.S.)

General, we should have the problem corrected momentarily.

DIXON

Doctor, I need to know that these machines will be back online.

FULLER

They will, General. You have my word.

DIXON

When?

Ballard looks at Fuller, shrugs his shoulders.

FULLER

Uh, I don't have an exact time.

DIXON

Then get back to work.

The scientists exit.

LIEUTENANT

General, if they can't get those units working in time...

DIXON

I understand. That's why we're going to exercise other options.

LIEUTENANT

Sir?

CUT TO:

A SLO-MO, BRUCKHEIMER-ESQUE MONTAGE:

1. Black boots
2. Black gloves
3. Berets
4. Glimmering belt buckles

Wide Shot: A team of special ops agents.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 LAB

Ballard and Bud enter.

BALLARD

We've been all over the schematics.

BUD

Did everything but an anal probe.
(Off Ballard's withering look)
But, everything checks out.

MIMI

What's going on, Dr. Fuller?

INT. AREA 51 WAR ROOM

Dixon stands in front of a picture of Ellison. Team members nod.

FULLER (V.O.)

I'm not sure, Mimi. But I suspect
the General is prepping some sort of
mission to recapture the virus in
case we can't repair the nanobots.

Ford stands next to Dixon with a larger version of the canister.

FORD

And once you have the canister inside,
you'll have roughly an hour to get
the virus back here to 51. Don't
take that long.

MIMI (V.O.)

Do you think that'll work?

One of the team members glances up at the countdown behind Ford: 50 minutes and counting.

INT. AREA 51 LAB

Fuller's expression is grave.

Dixon's voice comes over the intercom.

DIXON (O.S.)
Dr. Fuller?

FULLER
Sorry, General.

DIXON
Well, we're not warming up the fat lady just yet. But we are locking down 51 as a precaution. If worse comes to...well, we'll be safe in here.

DAN
So what do we do now?

FULLER
We've done all we can.

A long moment, then...

MO
In that case, I'm getting something to eat.

Mimi slaps him in the head.

MIMI
How can you think of food at a time like this?
(beat)
Huh, I didn't think people actually ever said that.

MO
What else is there to do?

FULLER
He's right. There's nothing more you kids can do right now.

Mo gives Mimi a "See?" look. The two of them exit.

FULLER (CONT'D)
Dan, why don't you join them?

DAN
 No thanks. I don't have much of an
 appetite. It's the second chance of
 a lifetime blown today.

Dan hesitates, then heads for the corridor.

FULLER
 Hey Dan...

He turns.

FULLER (*CONT'D*)
 Tell me about Pixelfest.

On one level, it's little consolation with the world still
 being about to end and all. But on another, it means the
 world itself.

TIME DISSOLVE TO:

INT. AREA 51 CAFETERIA

Mo brings out a sandwich Dagwood Bumstead would be jealous
 of.

MIMI
 (staring)
 What? Were they out of kitchen sink?

MO
 All this masterpiece needs is some
 ketchup.

Dan enters.

MO (*CONT'D*)
 Hey, Dan, just in time. Hand me the
 ketchup will ya?

Dan takes a seat next to Mimi.

MIMI
 You okay?

DAN
 (shrugs)
 I was just talking with my dad.

MIMI
 And?

DAN
 That's it. Just talking with him.
 It was cool. And all it took was the
 end of the world.

She smiles.

DAN (CONT'D)

Something's still bothering me,
though.

MIMI

You mean aside from the killer virus
and being sealed underground for the
rest of our lives?

DAN

Those bots should still be working.
This should all be over by now.

MO

Dude, let it go. They've sent in
special forces. They'll take care
of this.

DAN

Dad said Ellison was moving right
before we lost the bots. Maybe when
he moved he knocked something loose.

MIMI

That wouldn't make any sense. The
bots are way too small to be affected
by something like that. It's the
same reason why we can't tell we're
on a spinning planet hurtling through
space.

MO

Ketchup me, will ya?

DAN

There's gotta be something. Stuff
just doesn't quit for no reason.

MO

Uh, little help?

Dan distractedly reaches for the ketchup bottle on the table
behind him.

MIMI

Okay, so you think we're likely to
figure out what it is when your dad
and the other scientists can't?

MO

A little help here!

Aggravated, Dan grabs the ketchup bottle. He's about to hand
it to Mo. Then hesitates. He pulls the bottle back.

MO (CONT'D)

Very funny, 'tard.

Dan stares at the squeeze bottle. Realization breaks.

DAN

They won't find a problem with the bots.

MIMI

Oh and how many Nobel prizes do you have?

DAN

(moving the ketchup
back and forth)

Don't you see? There isn't a problem. Ellison was *moving*. The bots are just out of range.

MO

You think it's that simple?

MIMI

The law of parsimony.

MO

What does marriage have to with this?

MIMI

Would it hurt you to watch the Discovery Channel sometime? The law of parsimony: a problem's simplest answer is probably the correct one.

MO

(grabbing the ketchup)

Okay. Say that's all it is. What can we do about it?

DAN

Nothing. From here.

MIMI

What are you suggesting?

DAN

If you can't bring the virus to Mohammed...

MO

Hold on. Go out there? With the virus? Forget that.

DAN

I can't just sit here.

MO

Dan, the military's handling it now.
As far as we're concerned, it's game
over.

DAN

(grinning)

No, it's not. It's overtime.

Dan heads for the corridor.

Mimi stands up.

MIMI

Dan, wait! You can't go out there
by yourself.

MO

Right.

MIMI

I'm with you.

Mo nearly chokes on his sandwich.

MO

You, too? Waitaminnit, are you
forgetting we're in lockdown? There's
no way out.

DAN

I've got a plan.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 LAB

Dr. Fuller, Ballard and Bud are engrossed with the nanobot
problem. They don't notice Dan enter.

ANGLE ON: DOCTOR FULLER'S LABCOAT

Dan grabs the security badge. Mimi grabs the remote control
units. Mo stands guard.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 CORRIDOR-- LATER

The trio head down the corridor.

MO

Tell me again why we can't just tell
your dad?

DAN

I'm going to tell him. But one thing I've learned is that talking to parents requires timing.

They stand before a giant door.

MIMI

Meaning you tell him once it's too late for him to stop us.

DAN

He won't let me stay up for Leno, you think he's gonna let me go out there, totally unprotected with a world-killing virus? Besides, it's easier to ask forgiveness than permission.

Dan pulls out his dad's ID badge.

MO

That's your plan!?! Just walk up to a door that can withstand a nuclear blast and say...

Dan swipes the badge. The door opens.

DAN

"Open sesame?" Let's go.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 CORRIDOR

The trio heads up an ascending hallway.

MIMI

How'd you know that would work?

DAN

I didn't for sure. But I figured, what's the point of locking us in? After all, who's stupid enough to want to go outside anyway?

MO

My thought exactly.

MIMI

So the lockdown is just a lock-out, not a lock-in.

MO

Okay, pretty clever. But the bots are still at least thirty miles away and we're in the middle of the desert.

DAN

We don't have to find them, just get close enough to re-establish contact.

MO

Oh, so you planning to jog through the desert?

DAN

Not exactly.

Dan walks up and swipes the card on a door marked TRANSIT BAY 2. The doors slide back to reveal the transport units from earlier.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT

The giant boulder entrance rolls away and three transport units leap from an underground opening.

DAN

We should be back in range in a few minutes.

MIMI

And if you're wrong?

DAN

Well, we'll probably never be grounded ever again.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET

Ellison's SUV winds through downtown streets. A few car lengths behind, the anti-terror force follows.

The SUV pulls into the parking garage of a large office building.

INT. SPECIAL OPS SUV

SPECIAL OPS

Target's entered the Global Life building.

SPECIAL OPS FEMALE
You don't think that's his target...?

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 COMMAND CENTER

DIXON
No, he's just meeting his buyer.
Get me a directory of the Global
Life Building.

SPECIAL OPS (O.S.)
We're going in.

CUT TO:

INT. THE DESERT

DAN
Anything?

MIMI
Nothing. But we've gotta be getting
close.

MO
If we don't turn around, we're not
going to have time to get back.

Then...

DAN
Wait, I've got something. Now I think
it's time to tell dad.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 LAB

Fuller and Ballard watch the monitor expectantly. Underneath,
Bud works under a tangle of wires.

BUD
How about now?

FULLER
Nothing.

BUD
I'm sorry, Doc. I gotta take a break.
I can't feel my legs anymore.

FULLER
(to Ballard)
Looks like it's your turn.

Bud slides out from under the console. Suddenly, the monitors go from snow to a familiar landscape.

FULLER (CONT'D)
Way to go, Bud! We're back online.

BUD
(confused)
Sure, thanks. But...uh...I didn't do it.

The scientists turn to see Bud standing behind them.

FULLER
What?!? Nevermind. Get the kids, quick.

Ballard exits to the other room.

Over the speaker...

DAN (V.O.)
This is Rogue Leader, we're back on the air.

BUD
That was fast.

Ballard re-enters.

BALLARD
They're not here.

FULLER
What?

BALLARD
And the equipment's gone.

DAN
There was nothing wrong with the bots, Dad. They were just out of range.

FULLER
(realizing)
Dan, where are you?

DAN (O.S.)
In range.

EXT. THE DESERT

The transport units are parked now. In their cockpits, Dan, Mo and Mimi prepare to rejoin the battle.

DAN
Connection is re-established.

MO
Never send a man to do a boy's job.

MIMI
Ahem.

MO
Sorry.

INT. AREA 51 LAB

FULLER
Dan, get back here, now! All of you.

DAN (O.S.)
Sorry, Dad. There's no other way.

FULLER
Dan!

BALLARD
Mike. He's right.

FULLER
No, he's not.
(into mic)
Dan, you've got to get back here.
You don't have enough anti-viral
toxin.

EXT. DESERT

MO
Told you we needed more missiles.

FULLER (O.S.)
The virus is feeding on itself and
multiplying. When the nanobots went
down, the virus grew larger than we
could anticipate. It's too big now.
You need to get back here on the
double.

Silence.

INT. AREA 51 LAB

FULLER
Dan? Did you hear me son?

DAN (O.S.)
There isn't time to make it back is
there.

FULLER
 (Growing frantic)
 Yes, yes there is. But you have to
 hurry.

Ballard and Bud lower their heads.

FULLER (CONT'D)
 Dan!
 (beat)
 I love you, son.

EXT. DESERT

DAN
 I love you too, Dad.

Mo whimpers.

MO
 (re: Mimi's look, he
 wipes his eyes)
 Darn dust.

MIMI
 So what do we do?

DAN
 Send in the fat lady.

MIMI
 That's it? You're giving up?

DAN
 What else can we do? Unless you
 know a way to grow missiles as fast
 as the virus is copying itself.

MIMI
 (realization)
 I do.

MO
 Ex-squeeze me?

MIMI
 At least, I think I do.

DAN
 (dry)
 Oh, and how many Nobel prizes do you
 have?

MIMI
 Whatever. Just how good a shot are
 you?

Off Dan's offended look we...

CUT TO:

EXT. NANOSCAPE--MOMENTS LATER

From a promontory, the MMTB's scout the virus "herd".

MO

Man, there're a lot of them.

MIMI

Ready for Operation: Silver Bullet?

DAN

Let's do it.

The MMTB's move down toward the viruses.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE GLOBAL LIFE BUILDING

The special ops vehicle pulls to a stop.

DIXON (O.S.)

Commander, Flu Shot is a go. I repeat
Flu Shot is go. It is Mission
Priority One that the canister be
retrieved intact. If it sustains so
much as a crack, game over.

Elsewhere in the building, Ellison disembarks his elevator
and heads for the restroom.

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

God speed.

SPECIAL OPS

Okay, people, we are go. Break out
the urban camo.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE:

1. Dress shoes being tied.
2. Suspenders being snapped.
3. Lipstick being applied

4. A clip-on tie being attached.

CUT TO:

INT. GLOBAL LIFE LOBBY

Among the suits moving in and out of the building, several men and women enter with one commonality: government-issue sunglasses. They step into an elevator, surrounding a mousy, balding guy.

CUT TO:

EXT. NANOSCAPE

Dan fires a missile, but misses its target.

DAN

Man, these things learn fast.

He fires another. The missile malfunctions, cartwheeling harmlessly into the air. The viruses have turned their attention to Dan's nanobot and converge.

DAN (CONT'D)

Awww!

MIMI

Come on, it only takes one.

MO

Yeah, it's all you dog. It ain't nothin' but a thing. You own this here, you own...

Mimi smacks him again.

MIMI

Let 'im do it already.

DAN

(deep breath)
One left.

MIMI

Here they come!

Dan's eyes narrow. His hands tense. And then...nothing.

MIMI (CONT'D)

Dan!

The viruses swarm Dan's nanobot. In seconds, it's buried under the mass.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT

Mimi and Mo, resigned, walk over to Dan sitting still in his transport.

MIMI
Dan, I'm sorry...

DAN
Shh...

MIMI
But I want you to know...

DAN
Will you shut up? Geez?

MIMI
Ga-aw, what's with you?

DAN
(annoyed)
Nothing much, just saving the world.

CUT TO:

EXT. NANOSCAPE

A virus grips Dan's nanobot. It moves in closer...closer.

DAN
If you can't bring Mohammed to the virus...

At point blank range, Dan fires his last missile. It's a direct hit.

DAN (CONT'D)
Gotcha.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 LAB

The scientists, joined by Dr. Ford, watch the video feed.

FORD
A direct hit.

FULLER
Nice shot, son.

The scientists are moved by Dan's spirit.

FULLER (CONT'D)
 (into the mic)
 Kids, I want you all to know how
 very proud I am of you.

DAN (O.S.)
 Dad, could you take another reading
 of the virus?

Fuller looks at Ballard.

BALLARD
 I don't see the point...
 (beat)
 ...Wait a minute. This can't be
 right.

Bud runs to a monitor.

BUD
 Confirming...
 (beat)
 Dr. F?

FULLER & FORD
 Yes?

BUD
 You'll wanna see this.

CUT TO:

INT. GLOBAL LIFE BUILDING

Ellison enters the office of FAROUK AND MASHNI GLOBAL IMPORTS.
 Several paces behind, a special ops female signals the rest
 of the team.

The agents open their briefcases to reveal:

TRANQUILIZER GUNS

CUT TO:

INT. FAROUK AND MASHNI IMPORTS LOBBY

The sharply dressed special ops female woman enters. The
 receptionist barely gets a word out before she is dropped
 with a dart.

FEMALE SPECIAL OPS
 Reception secured.

The agent takes the vacant seat behind the reception desk
 and studies a bank of small video monitors as other agents

enter. One carries a canister similar to the viral canister, but larger.

SPECIAL OPS

What're we looking at?

FEMALE SPECIAL OPS

Our target and what looks like the board of directors of Terrorism, Inc. in conference room 3.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM 3

Ellison sits down at one end of a large conference table. At the other end, several middle-eastern businessmen. As each takes their place, we hear the agent describe each in voiceover.

FEMALE SPECIAL OPS

Moving clockwise, we have Ibrahim Al-Yemeni. Wanted in connection with three embassy bombings in Europe. Seated next to him, Mohammed Al-Rashid Al Qaddi. Known arms broker to Al-Qaida, Abu Nidal and at least half a dozen other organizations around the world. And rounding out the trio is Ahmed Hassan Al-Sheikh.

SPECIAL OPS

That's a third of the most wanted list.

FEMALE SPECIAL OPS

But our biggest concern are the walls. They're glass.

SPECIAL OPS

So much for a sneak attack.

He looks at his watch. The timer is at 1 minute and counting.

CUT TO:

INT. F & M GLOBAL IMPORTS

The agents move quickly and stealthily down the corridors. Around the corner at the far end of the corridor is the glass-walled Conference Room 3.

From his vantage point, Special Ops can see the gift-wrapped package in the middle of the table. It's now or never.

He holds up three fingers...then two...a deep breath and...the agents storm the corridor. They're halfway down the corridor when one of the bodyguards sees them.

Guns are drawn, shots are fired. The businessmen, far less composed now, dive for cover.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMAND CENTER

DIXON
Alpha Team Report!

CUT TO:

INT. F & M IMPORTS

Ellison and Special Ops both dive for the canister. From the scrum, the canister tumbles loose, rolls across the floor.

Injuries are taken on both sides. Glass shatters. Bullets perforate the entire conference room. An agent and a terrorist exchange gunfire.

EXTREME CLOSE UP: The terrorist's gun. Through a puff of white smoke, a bullet emerges.

BULLET POV: IT RICOCHETS OFF THE AGENT'S KEVLAR HEADING STRAIGHT FOR...

There isn't time to react. The bullet perforates the canister. Agents and terrorists freeze mid-battle.

CUT TO:

EXT. CANISTER

At Nanoscopic level, the virus horde is released into the environment. They scatter and head for any living thing they can find. Everyone in the room freezes.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 COMMAND CENTER

Over the speakers, the noise of the gunbattle has become eerily silent.

DIXON
What's going on? Report Alpha Team.
What's your situation?

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: An agent's face. It begins to twitch and his eyes start to water. The others watch in rapt horror as the agent throws his head back and...

SPECIAL OPS
Ahhhh-choooooooo!!!

After a few more moments, they realize that's all that's going to happen. Fortunately, the agents recover their senses first and get the drop on the terrorists.

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 COMMAND CENTER

Over the loud speaker...

SPECIAL OPS FEMALE
Alpha team reporting in. Uh,
situation normal.

DIXON
Say again?

SPECIAL OPS FEMALE
I don't know how, but situation is
normal. We're fine.

He looks down at Ellison, immobile on the floor.

SPECIAL OPS FEMALE (CONT'D)
But you on the other hand....

CUT TO:

INT. AREA 51 COMMAND CENTER

Cheers erupt.

DIXON
What just happened?

As if on cue, Fuller, Ford and the other scientists enter the command center.

FORD
The anti-viral worked.

BUD
Now that's what I call a corporate
takeover.

Dixon walks over to Fuller.

DIXON
But how?!?

FULLER
Dan shot the toxin directly into one
of the viral nuclei.
(MORE)

FULLER (CONT'D)
 Instead of calcifying the cell, it
 reprogrammed the DNA.

FORD
 Essentially giving the virus a virus.

DIXON
 So as it fed on itself...

FORD
 It created more and more inert cells.

Dixon takes a minute to digest this.

DIXON
 That's a real impressive boy you got
 there.

FULLER
 I know.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FULLER HOUSE--ONE WEEK LATER

Things are right with the world again, even if the world is
 oblivious. Dan's in a video chatroom with Mo and Mimi.

MO
 How's that for lame? We go to Area
 51, use state-of-the-art technology
 to save the planet and nobody knows.

MIMI
 But we know.

MO
 Big deal. How about letting Oprah
 know or Howard Stern.

Onscreen: another screen name, PREZONE, appears in the
 chatroom.

MO (CONT'D)
 Oh, no way.

CUT TO:

INT: THE OVAL OFFICE

From an over-shoulder-view, we see the President in front of
 a webcam.

PREZONE

Sorry we couldn't make this a more public affair, gentlemen and lady, but it's too high a security risk. But I wanted to take this opportunity to extend the sincerest gratitude of the American people-even if they don't know.

DAN

Thank you, sir.

MIMI

Absolutely.

MO

Man, that's dope.

PREZONE

And before I sign off, I wanted to let you know that this little chat session isn't the only token of gratitude you'll be receiving.

MIMI

Really? What else is there?

PREZONE

I think I'll let those speak for themselves.

Instantly, a chime goes off on Dan's computer--an email with attachments.

PREZONE (CONT'D)

And remember, this is just between us, right?

The President signs off.

ONSCREEN: Dan downloads the attachment. His eyes grow wide as he reads.

CUT TO:

INT. MIMI'S ROOM

Her eyes are wide, too.

MIMI

Did you guys get what I got?

CUT TO:

INT. MO'S ROOM

His eyes are wide, too.

MO

You mean the "free ride" to any college we want? Boo-yah!

MIMI

All this time studying, wasted.

MO

Dan, did you get one, too?

DAN

Yeah...uh...yeah, I did. I think I should show my dad. I'm going go now, guys.

CUT TO:

INT. FULLER HOUSE

Dan comes downstairs, stunned.

DAN

Dad, could I talk to you for a second?

FULLER

Sure, son. What's on your mind?

Dan shows his father the printout.

FULLER (CONT'D)

A full ride?

DAN

Anywhere I want to go.

FULLER

(floored) I hope you thanked him.

Dan nods.

FULLER (CONT'D)

So, any ideas?

DAN

I was thinking USC.

FULLER

Really?

DAN

They have this new program in video game design. I figure from there, I was thinking maybe working at 51 or consulting for a game company.

FULLER

(Beat)

Dan, I'm glad you're thinking seriously about your future, but I think you're selling yourself short.

DAN

But I *am* thinking about my future. College and a career. I thought you'd be happy...

FULLER

But what about the PixelFest title?

DAN

Dad, I...what did you say?!?

FULLER

As I see it, school isn't going anywhere and PixelFest, well...you'd look pretty lame as a 35 year-old gamer.

DAN

You mean it?!?

FULLER

Knock 'em dead, Son.

Dan can hardly contain his excitement. And for the second time in as many days, he and his dad embrace.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE

Over The Shoulder View: The President speaks with General Dixon via videophone.

PRESIDENT

Are you sure this defense works?

DIXON

Yes. Now that we have a viable defense, we can destroy the rest of the sample.

PRESIDENT

Let's not act in haste, General.

DIXON

Mr. President?

PRESIDENT

If you're sure there's no risk now, I would prefer we continue study of

(MORE)

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
the virus. To learn more about those
who created it.

Dixon is silent.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)
Is there a problem, General?

DIXON
No, Sir.

CUT TO:

INT. GENERAL DIXON'S OFFICE, AREA 51

On the computer monitor is a map of the solar system. CAMERA
ZOOMS IN then..

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. THE SOLAR SYSTEM

And the camera keeps going and going until we...

Fade Out.