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WRITTEN BY M. LATHROM

GASP

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FADE IN:

NEWS REPORT

HEIDI HARPER, an anime computer generated news anchor in a smooth blue business skirt stands in empty blue space on the left of the screen.

A green gas materializes to her right.

HEIDI

It's the new street drug that's wrecking havoc throughout the colonies.

The word "SUBLIME" flies out from behind the gas. The word turns red. Cartoonish red drips fall from it.

HEIDI

Sublime. The gaseous by-product of illegally modified teleportation devices. Medical experts say the effects range from a profound feeling of nostalgia, to a psychoactive time travel.

The gas and word evaporate. A diagram of a person's head appears. The brain area fills with gas, then light up.

HEIDI

While claims of meddling in the past have generally been regarded as the nonsensical delusions of drug addicts, researchers at the Center for Spacetime Sciences say there may be some validity to their claims.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - DAY

Steel walls with a big window just above a ten-foot wide control panel. A scientist in a white lab coat mans the controls in the background.

Outside the window is a large chamber. A green electrical arc sparks between two large metal arms extending from the floor and ceiling.

DOCTOR RAY DOLAN (48), an overweight bald man with armless contains excitement as he stands with a hologram of Heidi projected from a disk device on the wall.

She addresses the camera.

HEIDI

I'm here with Doctor Ray Dolan at--

DOCTOR DOLAN

Hey. Great to meet you, really.

HEIDI

Yes. I'm here at C.S.S. Doctor Dolan, can you tell us a little bit more about Sublime.

DOCTOR DOLAN

Yes, uh well, we here refer to it by the technical term sublimation. When you go through a telepod, the molecules that make up your body never move. Your body is disintegrated, and then you're reassembled on the other side using new matter. You follow? The disintegrated body forms an electrically charged gas. All telepods are built with a recycler that neutralizes this gas. But users have found a way to illegally disable this neutralizer. They collect the gas and inhale it to experience the psychoactive effects.

HEIDI

What kind of effects.

DOCTOR DOLAN

Well, I've never tried it myself. But I know of an individual who became his grandfather and attempted to strangle his grandmother in an attempt to test the grandfather paradox.

HEIDI

Of course, these are just delusions.

DOCTOR DOLAN

Not exactly.

Doctor Dolan leads Heidi to the control panel. He shoves the other scientist out of the way. He makes some gestures on the touch pad.

A holographic diagram pops up. The green spark machine in the chamber outside the window revs up.

A fury of green sparks light up the center forming a green glowing ball of light.

The holographic diagram outlines the green ball over the window.

DOCTOR DOLAN

This machine measures the amount of disturbance to the fabric of spacetime. Think of that green ball as a scale model of our universe. Green is good. Green is go.

He swipes across the touchpad. The green ball spins. On the other side, red splotches like sunspots.

DOCTOR DOLAN

Red is bad.

HEIDI

So what does this mean to our viewers at home?

DOCTOR DOLAN

Well I don't know. But there's a correlation between the spike in sublime usage and the irregularities in the spacetime continuum.

HEIDI

This is all very technical, Doctor. What's going to happen if this continues?

DOCTOR DOLAN

Well, I can only assume that if the universe gets too sick, it's going to start fighting the infection.

INT. CHAMBER - SAME TIME

CLOSE ON the green light ball. A microscopic red splotch appears on it.

Move in closer to the splotch until it red consumes everything.

INT. LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

The redness grows smaller until it's a circle. Further out, and it's the pupil of an eye. Red, surrounded by red veins.

The eye belongs to MENK (32), a scrawny guy with platinum white hair. He wears a white tank-top and black capris jeans.

He sits in a gray fabric chair in a run-down apartment. Dirty, except for the shiny teleportation machine in the corner.

Beside him, a spiky haired guy, DOX (30), and a bald girl, CLEE (29).

Dox waves a hand in front of Menk's face. Nothing. He's head is back in the chair, his eyes rolled back.

Dox shrugs.

Clee snaps in his ear. Nothing.

CLEE

I'm next. I get freshies this time.

DOX

Negative. My telepod, my turn.

CLEE

In that case, my body, my Sublime.

DOX

What?

CLEE

If you ever want another whiff, you'll quit pulling the "my telepod" shit.

DOX

Whatev--

Menk gasps, his eyes straighten, the redness fades from his pupils.

Dox and Clee scoot in close.

CLEE

Shit cakes, man?

MENK

Wh--what? Who'd I'd take?

DOX

You had some of yourself.

CLEE

What happened?

Menk leans forward, pushes past Dox and Clee.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Menk plops down on a mattress on the floor. He lingers there for a moment, lost in thought. He grabs a mug from the ground. Sniffs it. Takes a swig.

He grabs a pounds the wall behind him with his fist. An electronic disk projects a holographic computer interface in front of him.

MENK

Show me Jordan Beeter video.

The cheery female voice sounds.

COMPUTER

Jordan Beeter has been deceased since March thirty-first, twenty sixty-seven.

MENK

Yeah, no shit. Show me last video of Jordan Beeter. Show me telepod one.

COMPUTER

Playing telepod one from March thirty-first, twenty--

MENK

Just play it!

On the hologram, video plays of a man on stage in a large amphitheater. He steps into a telepod, a metal half-cylinder.

Lower thirds on the video scroll text: "Jordan Beeter. World's first teleportation."

VIDEO SCREEN

Close up of JORDAN BEETER (40). He's handsome, salt and pepper man with in a trim suit. He nods to the audience.

Wide shot of the massive audience.

Jordan steps into the machine.

Above the stage, video of another pod outside at the top of the steps of the Capitol Building in Washington D.C. A large crowd around the Capitol watches.

Jordan faces the audience. Waves from inside the pod. A flash of light and he's vanished. A green mist lingers where he was.

Close up of the screen of the Capitol. The pod remains empty.

Close up of the audience in the theatre. Shocked faces. Worried mutters.

Lower thirds scroll text: "Jordan Beeters vanishes. Where did Jordan Beeters go?"

BACK TO SCENE

CLOSE ON Menk. His face troubled. He leans back in bed. Puts his hands on his head.

FLASH TO:

INT. LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

Menk in the seat with Dox and Clee beside him. He pops a vial of green gas, puts it to his mouth, inhales.

His head flies back. His eyes go red.

FLASH TO:

INT. AMPHITHEATER - DAY

POV the telepod Jordan Beeters got into.

The screen of the Capitol building above.

We walk into the pod. Turn around. Look out to the audience. Nod to the audience.

A flash of green light.

FLASH TO:

Green light coagulates into gaseous nebulae.

POV of arms and legs dangling in front of us. Wearing the suit Jordan was wearing

The gas bursts open revealing a grassy plain.

POV. Arms and legs dangle as we drop into:

EXT. GRASSY PLAINS - DAY

POV looks at hands. Still wearing the suit. The view looks around the field.

A group of 5 primitive humans, three women, two men, stand before us. They lower their heads. Get on the ground submissively. Lower their spears.

A red flash:

FLASH TO:

INT. LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

A gasp.

POV of Dox on the left, Clee on the right.

CLEE
Shit cakes, man?

FLASH TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Menk lies on the bed, glassy eyed with an expression of utter shock.

In the background, a news caster from the video speaks.

NEWS CASTER
Where is Jordan Beeters?

A strange smile appears on Menk's face.

SMASH TO BLACK.

THE END