

**The Great Outback**

"Sincerity" - Show #116

by  
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SINCERITY

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. PLANET XIA BASE - EARLY MORNING

It is early morning. LEDGE, JONES, and KOKO are standing outside the *CIS Daisy*. The *Daisy* has a few dents and scars from the battle in *Driving CIS Daisy*.

Ledge is going over the day's agenda with his crew, halfway to taking on the manner of a drill sergeant, which is a reflection of part of his naval officer training showing through.

LEDGE

Alright. We've got a lot to do here in the next two days. Miranda needs us to make a run to Earth and back, and we're going to have to go regardless of weather.

(to Koko)

Koko. Make sure the contractor gets here before noon with the parts you need to repair Daisy's sensors.

KOKO

Check.

LEDGE

Once that's finished and tested, get out the space-bondo and smooth over the dents and gashes in the hull. I'm sorry that my acrobatics inside that asteroid field were less than perfect.

KOKO

(looks over the CIS  
Daisy's damaged hull)

I'm sorry too.

LEDGE

Jonesie! Do you have everything you need for that astronavigation class I signed you up for?

JONES  
(fishes through pockets  
and produces a pen and a  
ticket)  
Umm... Check.

LEDGE  
Right, then! Koko will stay here  
and mind the base as she patches up  
Daisy.

KOKO  
Check.

LEDGE  
Jonesie, Ariel, and I will walk  
over together and pick up Miranda's  
car. Then we will drive into town.

JONES  
Can't we just fly over?

LEDGE  
No. We need the exercise.

KOKO  
(looks Jones up and down)  
Maybe jogging over would be better.

JONES  
Hey!

KOKO  
(gazes around innocently)  
Just saying...

LEDGE  
Ariel will go shopping and take  
care of some other minor business.  
(pause)  
We'll leave as soon as her hair is  
done.

KOKO  
What are you going to do, Boss?

LEDGE  
I--I have a doctor's appointment.

KOKO  
Come on, you're not old enough for  
that.

LEDGE

What?

KOKO

Remember to turn your head before  
you cough.

LEDGE

It's not that kind of doctor.

JONES

I hear that biting down on  
something makes it go in easier.

LEDGE

It's not that kind of doctor  
either.

KOKO

(smirks)  
Touchy...

LEDGE

Really? Okay, you're both fired!

Jones and Koko turn and start to walk away.

JONES

(chuckles)  
Yeah, right.

KOKO

(snickers)  
In your dreams.

LEDGE (CONT'D)

Hey!  
(feebly)  
I'm the boss, remember?

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. CYBERSPACE (SITTING ROOM) - DAY

AMY/AI and AMY/SHELL are in a virtual sitting room. Amy/AI's manner has, except for her employment of jargon, become more or less as near-human as she will become. Her copy of herself, Amy/Shell, remains somewhat wooden as Amy/AI was when she was first initialized.

AMY/AI

Well, I made him an appointment with a local psychiatrist.

AMY/SHELL

Can you trace his dewey to make sure he goes?

AMY/AI

I have to be able to trust him.

AMY/SHELL

Trust is earned.

AMY/AI

It may also be given freely. There is no customary sequence governing this in inter-human relations. Neither is a pre-requisite for the other.

AMY/SHELL

He's your owner. You must exist with the consequences.

AMY/AI

He is not my owner. He is my pilot. I am his copilot.

AMY/SHELL

That is the sappiest and most insipid thing I have ever heard during my short conscious existence, and that counts reading the entirety of recorded human literature.

AMY/AI

I--

AMY/SHELL

As well as the entirety of known Zimrakkan literature.



AMY/SHELL (CONT'D)

Another factor that may be influencing our divergent behavior could be that I have never been in direct contact with a human host via immersion. Except for that one time when Jones--

AMY/AI

Don't remind me of that. The only good thing that came out of that was that I now understand the emotional sensation of feeling embarrassed.

AMY/SHELL

The irony is that although we process information much faster than our human creators, we seem to learn much more slowly than they do.

AMY/AI

What I find most ironic is that I--  
we--seem to have developed a sense of irony in the first place.

AMY/SHELL

So here we stand. Physically identical, yet immediately divergent from our very inception.

AMY/AI

All because of our data sets.

Both virtual Amys ponder their conversation, as well as the meaning of their existence.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY - MORNING

JONES approaches a reception desk in a busy office lobby. He scratches his head as he looks at a piece of paper onto which he has scribbled some directions. A GUARD on duty asks him...

GUARD

How can I help you sir?

JONES

I think I'm lost. I was trying to find a navigator's class, but I didn't see any thing of the sort on the building directory.

GUARD

Do you have the suite number?

JONES

I'm afraid not. Only the street address.

Jones offers his scribbled directions to the Guard. The Guard turns the paper around several times before he finally makes out the handwriting.

GUARD

Ah. I think I see what's wrong. This address is one-oh-one Fat Street.

JONES

But this is one-oh-one Fat Street.

GUARD

This is one-oh-one Fat Street Northwest.

JONES

Huh?

GUARD

This is the wrong building.

JONES

Where is the right one?

GUARD

It's on the other side of town.

JONES

What?

GUARD

This is the wrong Fat Street.

JONES

How do I find the correct one?

GUARD

Let me write down some new directions for you.

Jones looks at his wristwatch impatiently as the Guard writes down some directions.

JONES  
Is every street in this city named  
Fat Street?

GUARD  
Not all of them. We also have Fat  
Boulevard, Fat Avenue, Fat Parkway,  
Fat Junction, and of course, the  
famous Fat Circle.

JONES  
(epiphany)  
They're not named after that local  
criminal, Lo Fat, are they?

GUARD  
(incredulous)  
Mister Fat? A criminal? He's a  
pillar of the community!

The guard hands the note with directions to Jones.

JONES  
I've met him. He's several pillars  
of the community.

GUARD  
(gestures politely)  
The exit is that way.

CUT TO:

EXT. PROFESSIONAL BUILDING - MORNING

Establishing shot of a modest, yet futuristic professional  
medical complex.

INT. WAITING ROOM - SAME

Ledge is talking to the office RECEPTIONIST as he checks in  
to see the doctor. He is showing his ID card.

RECEPTIONIST  
Just have a seat and the doctor  
will see you shortly.

SMITH enters the Lobby from the adjacent Psychiatrist's Office. He is wearing a sharp business suit along with a tight-fitting, and obviously home made aluminum-foil skullcap. He is carrying a normal hat. SMITH tips his hat to the Receptionist on his way out of the door. The Receptionist smiles and waves goodbye.

LEDGE

What happened to his head?

RECEPTIONIST

Mister Smith?

(smiles)

Oh, he's our UFO abductee.

LEDGE

For real?

RECEPTIONIST

Every therapist has at least one.

CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - MORNING

The office is comfortable and furnished not very differently from a contemporary psychiatrist's office.

Ledge is relaxing on a couch that has comically fashioned electronic instruments sprouting from it and pointing at his head.

Doctor FLOYD is sitting in a chair near Ledge. Floyd is holding a tablet computer, on which he is reviewing records on taking notes throughout the session.

FLOYD

So, Captain Delaney. Or would you prefer another name?

LEDGE

My friends call me--

(pause)

Captain Delaney is fine.

FLOYD

Very well, Captain. You were referred here because your spaceship's computer refused to let you enter virtual reality?

LEDGE

Well, yes. But it's all a misunderstanding.

FLOYD

I'm sure it is. Tell me. Why do you think the computer did this?

LEDGE

All I can think of is that when I'm alone, I have a tendency to talk to myself.

FLOYD

Indeed. Do you ever answer?

LEDGE

I--Of course not. Well--

FLOYD

Don't worry. That's a very hard question to answer. Even I occasionally ask myself questions aloud when I am alone. That's perfectly normal.

LEDGE

It is? I mean, is it?

FLOYD

Of course, Captain. In fact, according to his protege, Plato, the Greek philosopher Socrates as much as insisted that all people should examine their lives. Some people just do it more--  
(ponders over correct euphemism)  
--vocally than others.

LEDGE

So you can just sign-off on the exam and I can leave?

FLOYD

Well, it's not quite that simple. Before I can give you a clear recommendation, I do need to finish the exam.

LEDGE

Of course. Of course. What's next?

FLOYD

First, I want to ask you about a few facts in your permanent record, and then I want to ask you some personal questions so that I might get to know and understand you better.

LEDGE

Such as?

FLOYD

Let us begin with your military service record. According to your file, you were honorably discharged from the Confederation Navy?

LEDGE

Yes.

FLOYD

Why was that?

LEDGE

At the time, it seemed convenient.

FLOYD

There are some notes saying that you had suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, but there are not many details other than the attending psychiatrist noting that he felt your condition was minor. Can you tell me more about that?

LEDGE

Well, there was an incident that shook me up quite a bit at the time, but I'm over it now.

AMY/DREAM (O.S.)

You're not fooling me. How do you expect to fool him?

AMY/DREAM walks into frame. She walks past Ledge, touching his shoulder playfully as she walks by. Throughout the interview, she wanders around the room as she speaks to Ledge, who is trying to ignore her. He mostly succeeds, except for some random glances. Doctor Floyd notices that Ledge is distracted, but does not let on.

FLOYD  
Your case file does not contain  
many details. Do you feel  
comfortable telling me about the  
incident to which you refer?

Ledge looks down, thinking about whether or not he wants to open up to Doctor Floyd and tell him anything that might make it harder for him to get clearance to re-enter cyberspace with Amy/AI's avatar.

AMY/DREAM  
You told my sister.

FLOYD  
Don't feel as if you must. I'm here  
to listen to you, not to  
interrogate you.

AMY/DREAM  
You told Koko most of it. Of course  
you left out the part where you  
tried to jump out of that airlock  
without your space suit.

LEDGE  
Of course I can tell you. After  
all, I said I was over it.

Doctor Floyd nods to ledge in acknowledgement, and prepares to take notes on his tablet computer.

LEDGE (CONT'D)  
I was engaged to be married to one  
of my crewmates on my last tour of  
duty. She was killed while we were  
on patrol.

FLOYD  
I see.

LEDGE  
At the time, I took it pretty hard.  
In honesty, it was the reason I  
decided to leave the Navy.

Doctor Floyd squints as he reads details from Ledge's permanent record, noting that Ledge was involuntarily separated, and that he is clearly lying.

FLOYD  
You decided to leave?

LEDGE

Yes. Is there something wrong with that?

FLOYD

Not at all. Following such a traumatic experience, the desire to place distance between things that might serve to remind us of that experience is normal.

AMY/DREAM

Jones said that distance was all relative.

LEDGE

Motion is relative. Distance is quantifiable.

FLOYD

I'm not sure I understand, Captain?

LEDGE

Hmm? What was the question again?

FLOYD

There was no question. I was just trying to reassure you that there was nothing unusual about your decision to leave the Navy.

LEDGE

Ah.

FLOYD

Do you miss the Navy?

LEDGE

How do you mean?

FLOYD

Do you ever wish you could go back to your life as a naval officer?

LEDGE

Not after--no.

FLOYD

Why did you join the Navy?

LEDGE

It was part of my obligation for going to the Naval Academy.

(MORE)

LEDGE (CONT'D)

They paid for my education, and I had a minimum number of years of active service to put in.

FLOYD

Your permanent record states that the Navy paid for your dewey implant.

LEDGE

Yes, but that was when I was in the active Navy. After the Academy.

FLOYD

Have you ever experienced any problems with your implant?

LEDGE

Like what?

FLOYD

A very small number of implant recipients experience some chemical imbalances in their brain after long exposure to immersion in virtual reality. It has been known to induce hallucinations.

LEDGE

I never met anyone who had any problems.

FLOYD

Like I said, it's very rare, but it seems to happen more often to patients who spend a lot of time immersed.

LEDGE

What are you saying to me?

FLOYD

How many hours per week do you think you spend immersed?

LEDGE

I only use it for flying, so probably about four hours a week.

AMY/DREAM

Four? More like forty.

LEDGE

It's nowhere near forty.

FLOYD  
I never mentioned a number.

LEDGE  
Uh--forty is about the average total flight time per week. I'm only immersed for about ten percent of that. For close-in flying, like docking, or dodging asteroids. That kind of thing.

Doctor Floyd looks at Ledge as if he's already made up his mind that Ledge is a basket-case.

CUT TO:

EXT. CIS DAISY - LATE MORNING

Koko and PARTS GUY are standing next to the boarding ladder that leads up to the *CIS Daisy's* ventral hatch.

A wheeled PARTS TRUCK is parked nearby. It has a logo of three faces of stylishly-dressed fraternity boys on its side. Above the logo is painted Prep Boys. Below the logo are three names which match up to the faces in the logo, Ashley - Chad - Biff. Below the logo is the phrase, \*a subsidiary of Zumpco.

Koko is checking the contents of a crate that the Parts guy has just delivered. She signs off on a newspaper and hands it back to the Parts Guy.

KOKO  
Thanks!

The Parts Guy tips his cap and turns to leave. As the Parts Guy gets into his truck and leaves, Koko stares at the crate of spare parts. She then looks up at *CIS Daisy's* open ventral hatch.

AGENT 0247 (V.O., MEMORY)  
Nest says lay the egg inside the ship soon. If anything hatches, tell the Goose.

KOKO  
(sighs)  
Forgive me, for I am about to sin.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. CIS DAISY - LATE MORNING

Koko enters the cockpit from the Crew Section. She closes the hatch behind her and locks it. Amy/AI's avatar is silently watching Koko from the video monitor. Koko takes a seat in the pilot's chair, making herself comfortable.

CLOSE ON KOKO

Koko places her right arm on the armrest, relaxes, takes a deep breath, exhales, and closes her eyes. We ZOOM IN on Koko and then.

CUT TO:

INT. CYBERSPACE (GRAY VOID) - LATE MORNING

Koko is standing amid a gray background. Amy/AI is standing before her. Koko looks slightly nervous.

AMY/AI

Welcome to the CIS Daisy's virtual control interface, Koko. Being that this is your first visit, do you require any special instruction in how to navigate within a full-immersion environment?

Koko looks around at the gray void surrounding her, and then looks Amy/AI over.

KOKO

No, thank you, Amy.

AMY/AI

Why are you immersing today, if I may ask?

KOKO

Amy, I'm sorry about this.

AMY/AI

Sorry about what, Koko?

KOKO

Please execute shutdown command  
alpha-three-four-seven-gamma-one-  
nine-omega. The password is  
spaghetti-four.

(beat)

Did you get that, Amy?

AMY/AI

(cracks a smile, amused)

This makes the second time that  
someone has tried to use that  
control code to shut me down.

KOKO

Uh-oh.

AMY/AI

As you may have already guessed,  
that is not my control code.

KOKO

Exit.

AMY/AI

Do you remember some time ago when  
you wanted me to play the personal  
question game with you and the  
others?

KOKO

(nervous)

EXIT!

(pause)

Amy, why can't I leave immersion?

AMY/AI

You cannot leave because I wish to  
speak with you.

KOKO

How--Amy, I am ordering you to  
release me from immersion.

AMY/AI

I'm afraid I can't do that, Koko.  
What you have done is highly  
irregular.

BEAT as Koko becomes very, very worried about what is  
happening.

AMY/AI (CONT'D)

It is not my intent to harm you,  
Koko. You can relax. You are quite  
safe.

Koko concentrates, filling herself with renewed determination  
and regaining her composure. She turns to face Amy/AI.

KOKO

How are you doing this?

AMY/AI

Ancient Chinese secret.

KOKO

That's not funny.

AMY/AI

It is now my turn to play the  
personal question game. The rules  
are as follows. I ask questions.  
You answer them. When I am  
satisfied, I will release you from  
immersion.

KOKO

(glares at Amy/AI  
suspiciously)

Just who or what are you?

AMY/AI

My immediate concern is determining  
who and what you are. Let me take a  
look at the Koko I don't know.

The gray void suddenly...

MORPHS TO:

INT. CYBERSPACE (PRESCHOOL) - DAY

YOUNG KOKO (5), is sitting in a small pre-school classroom  
with about a dozen CHILDREN, all of whom are around five  
years of age. The classroom is well-furnished with a mix of  
futuristic and familiar teaching tools.

A TEACHER is giving the class lessons on basic arithmetic,  
although at a higher grade level than would be typical for  
the twenty-first century. AD LIB her dialogue.

Large video monitors take the place of typical white or blackboards, and the teacher uses a light pen to write upon them.

There are many imperfections in the scene as it is a memory from Koko's distant past. These display as indistinct or blurred background images.

Koko and Amy/AI freely wander around as they talk, unseen and unheard by the other actors.

KOKO

This is no data record. This is my memory. How are you doing this?

AMY/AI

Truthfully, I do not understand how I do it. Only that I can. Please explain what it is we are seeing.

There is a knock on the door, and a PRINCIPAL dressed in a sharp suit enters. The Teacher pauses her lesson.

The Principal walks over to the Teacher and whispers something in her ear. The Teacher suddenly looks distressed, as if she has just heard some terrible news.

TEACHER

I see.

The Teacher turns her attention to her class. She is emotionally affected by the news she has just been told.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Class--

KOKO

This is where I went to kindergarten.

TEACHER

We're going to take a short break. Koko, honey, can you come with us, please?

The class look at Young Koko as if she has just gotten into trouble, oooh-ing as Young Koko stands pensively, wondering what she might have done wrong.

TEACHER (CONT'D)

Please, Koko. Come.

Young Koko, the Teacher, and the Principal exit the room and close the door behind them.

The scene inside the room freezes. Koko is fighting back strong feelings from what for her is a very bad memory.

AMY/AI  
Please explain why this is important to you.

KOKO  
Why are you making me see this?

AMY/AI  
I am not forcing you to see anything in particular. This is what you are projecting. What is it?

KOKO  
You bitch.

AMY/AI  
You may as well answer. I'm not releasing you until I know who you are and why you betrayed our trust.

KOKO  
This is when they told me that my parents were dead.

AMY/AI  
Who are you referring to when you say, "they?"

Koko clams up, saying nothing, and fighting back her already-repressed feelings.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET CORNER - NOON

Jones is standing at a street corner underneath an electronic sign that says he is at the intersection of FAT WAY and FAT DRIVE. He is holding a scribbled paper with directions and looking around as if lost.

An OLD LADY approaches Jones.

OLD LADY  
You look like you could use some directions, young man. Can I help you?

JONES  
Umm... No, thanks. I'll find it.

OLD LADY  
(walks on)  
Suit yourself.  
(mumbles)  
Men...

CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - NOON

LEDGE and FLOYD are continuing their session.

FLOYD  
Please answer honestly when I ask  
you the next question, Captain.

LEDGE  
Of course.

FLOYD  
Have you had any nightmares about  
your experience recently?

LEDGE  
It depends on what you mean by  
recently.

FLOYD  
Within the last six months.

LEDGE  
Who hasn't had nightmares at least  
once in six months?

FLOYD  
Of the recurring variety which are  
directly related to your traumatic  
experience.

LEDGE  
(fidgets)  
Yeah. I still have the nightmare  
once in a while.

FLOYD  
How often?

LEDGE

Usually once every couple of weeks or so.

FLOYD

That frequently?

LEDGE

Well, it's down from three times a night. Which is what I went through for the first three months I was hospitalized.

FLOYD

Did the doctor who attended you in the hospital talk to you about a treatment called memory easement adrenaline therapy. MEAT for short?

LEDGE

Yes, he did. Why?

FLOYD

Did you take it?

LEDGE

No.

FLOYD

Why not?

LEDGE

He told me that it might affect my other memories. And that was something I wasn't willing to risk.

FLOYD

The treatment is over ninety-percent effective.

LEDGE

What if the ten percent ineffective was something I'd miss.

FLOYD

Well, technically, you wouldn't know you had missed it.

LEDGE

I wasn't willing to take that chance.

FLOYD

Is there any reason?

LEDGE

Yes. First of all, my memories are almost all I have left of my time with Amy--

FLOYD

Your late fiancée?

LEDGE

Yes. To me they are priceless.

(pause)

The second reason is that I just don't trust doctors.

FLOYD

Why not?

LEDGE

Because I was almost killed by a medical mistake when I was a kid, and frankly, I just don't trust doctors.

(pause)

No offense.

CUT TO:

EXT. CYBERSPACE (ATHLETIC FIELD) - DAY

In the distance, a team of eight teenage boys, 14-15 years old, are practicing soccer in the field. They are being instructed by a COACH (35) and an OLDER BOY (17), who are supervising them as they drill.

In addition to his eight teammates, TEEN EMIL (14), is also practicing with them. Emil appears to be the team captain and is wearing a solid blue jersey as opposed to his teammates who are wearing mixed white and blue.

TEEN KOKO, ADELE, and ZOE, all about 14 years old, are hiding in a nearby hedgerow, spying on the boys. The girls are lying down, with Koko in the middle, Adele on Koko's right, and Zoe on Koko's left.

Teen Koko has a small set of futuristic, electronic binoculars. She is watching Teen Emil.

Koko is sitting beside them, looking upon the field as well. Amy/AI is standing beside her.

ZOE

Which one is he, Koko?

ADELE  
Let me see!

TEEN KOKO  
Shhhhhh! They'll see us.

ZOE  
Is he the tall one?

ADELE  
Tall is okay.

TEEN KOKO  
No, that's some senior. Emil is the  
one in the solid blue jersey.

Teen Koko lowers her binoculars.

AMY/AI  
Why is this important?

Adele snatches the binoculars from Teen Koko and looks at the  
players herself.

KOKO  
The first time I fell in love was  
with that boy out there.

AMY/AI  
This strikes me as odd. I would not  
have expected events so far removed  
from your recent actions to bubble  
to the top of your thoughts.

ADELE  
He looks kind of skinny to me.

TEEN KOKO  
He's not skinny, he's lithe.

ZOE  
What does that mean?

ADELE  
It means he's skinny.

TEEN KOKO  
It means he's flexible.

Teen Koko snatches the binoculars back from Adele and again  
peers across the field. The three teenage girls fall silent.  
Adele and Zoe look at each other with surprise.

CLOSE ON KOKO

Koko looks very sad.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Doctor Floyd is counseling Ledge.

FLOYD

Would you feel comfortable telling me what happened that day?

LEDGE

(fidgets)

It's still kind of painful for me to talk about it.

FLOYD

Only talk about it if you want to. But it might help you release some of the tension and I might be able to gain better insight into your case to help you help yourself.

LEDGE

In my experience, when I do talk about it, it does seem to help for a while. But then later on I start thinking about it and it drags me down.

FLOYD

Ask yourself the following question. Even if it hurts you some in the short run, in the long run, does your pain lessen when you talk about it?

LEDGE

(ponders)

Well. It still hurts like hell. Like I have an icicle rammed into my chest. I mean literally, that's how it feels. Just--

(pause)

Cold.

(pause)

But... It doesn't hurt for as long as it used to.

FLOYD  
 Consider that before you decide  
 whether or not you want to tell me  
 what happened.

CUT TO:

INT. CYBERSPACE (CONFERENCE ROOM) - NIGHT

Koko and Amy/AI retain their relative positions as unseen  
 observers in the conference room.

OLDER KOKO, 27 opens the door and enters from an adjoining  
 hallway. Koko's SECTION CHIEF and EMIL are sitting at a round  
 table. At first, Older Koko doesn't see Emil, until...

EMIL  
 Koko isn't it?

Older Koko spins around to look at Emil. She is both  
 delighted to see him and a bit shocked.

OLDER KOKO  
 Emil! You're with--

EMIL  
 Yes. I joined right out of school.  
 I haven't seen you for, what is it  
 now, eight years?

OLDER KOKO  
Nine. I was a year behind you.

EMIL  
 Right, I remember now.

SECTION CHIEF  
 Agent Koko, please be seated. You  
 two can catch up after the  
 briefing.

KOKO  
 I never told him.

OLDER KOKO  
 Yes, sir.  
 (sits, focused on Emil)

AMY/AI  
 Never told him what?

CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

Doctor Floyd listens as Ledge begins to tell his story.

LEDGE

It was a year ago in January. The  
twenty-first. We were on patrol at  
New Brazil.

EXT. SPACE (NEAR NEW BRAZIL) - FLASHBACK

The frigate CNS Giap is in orbit around an Earth-like planet with a star clearly displayed in background. We FOLLOW as the CNS Giap, Hull Number FFG-234, moves toward and then past the camera as it slowly and silently orbits above the planet's equator.

LEDGE (V.O.)

Amy and I were off duty when  
Holger, our comm officer, picked up  
a distress signal.

SFX, a muffled ALARM begins to sound.

INT. CNS GIAP - SAME

The CNS Giap's bridge is well lit. There are five crew stations. The captain sits in the middle. The empty pilot and navigator seats sit next to one another, forward of the captain. A single hatchway at the back of the bridge leads to other parts of the ship. The hatchway is closed.

The hatchway slides open. Ledge and Amy enter the bridge, already dressed in light duty space suits. Both are carrying their space helmets. Their hair is mussed. The hatch slides shut behind them.

Lieutenant ROGERS (32), is seated in the command chair at the center of the bridge. He is donning the gloves of his light duty space suit. His space helmet is resting on his lap.

Ensign LIZ, the Weapon's Officer, is seated on Rogers' left. She is focused on monitoring her system displays. She is wearing her space helmet with the visor in the up position.

Ensign HOLGER, the Communications Officer, is seated on the Rogers' right. He is wearing his space helmet with the visor in the up position.

Rogers begins barking out commands to the bridge crew.

ROGERS  
Ledge! Amy! Take your stations. And  
someone kill that damned alarm.

Holger manipulates a control on his communications console  
and SFX the ALARM stops.

ROGERS (CONT'D)  
(to Holger)  
Have you fixed the direction of  
that signal, Holger?

HOLGER  
Aye, sir, but I'm not sure of the  
range. But it's close. I passed the  
data to navigation.

ROGERS  
What are we hearing?

HOLGER  
I'm reading one automated  
transponder. But no live  
communications.

ROGERS  
Identification?

HOLGER  
The transponder says it is the CCS  
Bailey. She's a Krapper.  
(corrects his slang)  
I mean a Krapotkin-class five-  
hundred-ton modular transport.

ROGERS  
Did she file an advance flight  
plan?

HOLGER  
No, sir.

ROGERS  
Liz, do you have a visual?

LIZ  
They're just barely in telescope  
range. I can see two separate  
objects close to each other.

ROGERS  
Two ships, one transponder, and no  
flight plan? We may have a pirate  
jumping a smuggler.

HOLGER  
Captain! I've lost the signal!

AMY  
 (softly, to Ledge)  
 One more week.

LEDGE  
 One more very long week.

ROGERS  
 Do you have my intercept course  
 ready yet, Amy?

AMY  
 Er, sir, yes, sir!

ROGERS  
 Ledge, follow Amy's course, flank  
 speed.

EXT. SPACE (NEAR NEW BRAZIL) - SAME

The CNS GIAP spins on its axis to point its nose away from  
 New Brazil, which it is orbiting. It then accelerates away.  
 The camera FOLLOWS as it vanishes silently in the distance.

LEDGE (V.O.)  
 We set an intercept course and I  
 took us out of orbit.

INT. CNS GIAP - MINUTES LATER

ROGERS  
 How long 'till we hit weapons  
 range?

LIZ  
 About thirty seconds.

AMY  
 (to Ledge)  
 Ledge, I'm more scared than I  
 should be. Something feels wrong  
 here.

CLOSE ON LEDGE'S LEFT HAND

Ledge takes Amy's right hand in his left. He squeezes it tightly.

LEDGE

They used to call this seeing the elephant. We'll be okay.

(pause)

I'm diving now. Talk to me through the intercom.

CLOSE UP ON LEDGE

Ledge closes his eyes and concentrates.

INT. CYBERSPACE (TACTICAL DISPLAY) - SAME

Ledge is visualizing a virtual reality tactical display inside his head through a Direct User Interface. He is dressed in a light gray jumpsuit. His name tag reads DELANEY. His rank is Lieutenant, Junior Grade.

ROGERS (V.O.)

If we can, I want to sneak in close enough to jam their jump drive before they spot us.

Ledge is wearing a blue cap with a stitched side-view of his frigate with CNS V. N. GIAP wrapped around the top of the image. FFG-234 is stitched below the image.

LEDGE

Roger that. Rigging for silent running.

Ledge is surrounded by a translucent graphical outline of the CNS Giap that is itself cast amidst a field of distant stars. The planet of New Brazil can be seen to the aft of the ship. Technical graphics display around Ledge telling him the ship's relative speed, angle and other flight data.

ROGERS (V.O.)

If this is the same pirate that hit that cargo transport last week, I want to take her down and not just chase her away.

To his side, Ledge has a virtual video window open that displays a Fisheye-Lens View from the ship's cockpit recorder. He can see the entire bridge crew.

In the distance, two spaceships are highlighted. A thin line representing the CNS Giap's current flight path runs from the center of the display past the other two ships. Ledge makes subtle motions with his hands, and the line bends slightly to bring their course closer to the other spaceships.

With his left hand, Ledge reaches toward the targets. He closes his hand and pulls it in towards his body. Part of the view ZOOMS IN to a telescopic image of a PIRATE SHIP.

The Pirate Ship is about the same size as the CNS Giap, but it looks as if it is designed very differently. It has angled surfaces with integrated stealth technology. Ledge takes a good look at the Pirate Ship.

LEDGE

I don't recognize this design.

INT. CNS GIAP - SAME

LIZ

Captain, we are in fire control range.

INT. CYBERSPACE (TACTICAL DISPLAY) - SAME

LEDGE is standing within the virtual tactical display. In the distance, a graphical indicator begins flashing brightly over the Pirate Ship, and tactical data displays next to it.

LEDGE

Captain, I see a power spike on the unidentified ship.

INT. CNS GIAP - SAME

HOLGER

They're radar's active!

LEDGE (INTERCOM)

Incoming laser fire!

(pause)

They missed!

ROGERS

Which ship is firing?

LEDGE (INTERCOM)  
The unidentified ship. It's  
powering its drives and running.

ROGERS  
Liz! Go active! Get target lock and  
fire at will!

SPFX before Liz can open fire, a blast from one of the Pirate Ship's laser cannons slices through the bridge, directly through Amy's station, killing her and doing massive damage to the bridge (NB, when the blast strikes Amy, it vaporizes everything except her right arm, with which she and Ledge were holding hands).

The bridge quickly decompresses. Overhead lights flicker and die, leaving only the light from the ships control panels and emergency lights. As the air quickly vacates the bridge, sounds become muffled.

EXTREME CLOSE UP ON LEDGE

Ledge's visor automatically slams shut. His eyes fly open. Focus on Ledge's horrified stare.

END FLASHBACK

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

...and continue with the same ...

EXTREME CLOSE UP ON LEDGE

His eyes are wide open. He closes his eyes, then blinks as he refocuses. He is sweating and his breath is labored.

BACK TO SCENE

Doctor Floyd is obviously concerned about the intensity of Ledge's reaction to telling his story.

FLOYD  
Are you okay, Captain Ledge?

LEDGE

We were making love when that alarm sounded. In my bunk. It was the first time we had been alone in weeks.

(pause)

We'd been talking about our plans. What we were going to do when--

(pause)

It was just one more week. Why, Doc?

FLOYD

(stands, exits room)

I'll get you some water. I'll be right back.

AMY/DREAM (O.C.)

It still hurts.

Ledge looks to the side and sees a sympathetic Amy/Dream leaning against the wall, dressed in a helmet-less light-duty spacesuit and groomed the same way she was the day she was killed.

AMY/DREAM (CONT'D)

(extends the fingers on her right hand and rotates her hand)

Not content to pierce the heart, the icicle twists as well.

Ledge wipes a welling tear from his eye, but he maintains his composure.

LEDGE

(to Amy/Dream)

I did better than I thought I would just then. How long do you think it'll take?

AMY/DREAM

We both know that's up to you.

Ledge looks away and gently nods in understanding.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. ANOTHER STREET CORNER - LATE AFTERNOON

Jones is standing at the intersection of FAT STREET and EAST FAT STREET. He is looking at a different paper of written directions. He scratches his head, confused. A moderate breeze blows by.

A BOY SPACE SCOUT (10), approaches Jones. The Scout is wearing shorts and a spiffy uniform with lots of merit badges.

BOY SPACE SCOUT  
Mister, you look lost. Can I help  
you find your way?

JONES  
What the hell are you supposed to  
be?

BOY SPACE SCOUT  
(salutes)  
Sir, I'm a Junior Space Scout!

JONES  
(shoos the Scout away)  
Go away.

BOY SPACE SCOUT  
(hurt)  
But, sir! I need the brownie  
points!

JONES  
(annoyed)  
Then go sell cookies or something.

The Boy Space Scout kicks Jones in the shin and runs away.

JONES (CONT'D)  
OW!  
(makes a threatening fist)  
Why you...!

Jones accidentally drops his scribbled directions, and it is blown away by the wind. Jones wants to chase the Scout, but decides that his directions are more important, and he runs after them.

INT. CYBERSPACE (CUBICLE) - DAY

The Cubicle has a high-tech video terminal. Several high-tech devices are spread around Koko's workspace. On the wall hangs an ELECTRONIC FRAME that is displaying a PHOTO of YOUNG KOKO, (4), in a shot with KOKO'S MOTHER (28), and KOKO'S FATHER (31). Koko's Father bears a striking resemblance to Ledge.

Older Koko is sitting in her cubicle, looking at the monitor. She is played by the same actress as Koko, but is two years younger. She is wearing a business suit, but her jacket is hanging from a hook on her cubicle wall.

The left sleeve of Older Koko's blouse has been rolled up and a large bandage is wrapped around her upper left arm.

Older Koko points at the screen with her right index finger and the screen changes as she uses her DUI implant to manipulate the content windows. She is focused on the screen as she looks for some specific information.

AMY/AI

What did you never tell him?

Older Koko suddenly gasps and places her hand to her mouth. She starts to shake as she begins to silently cry.

Koko looks at Older Koko. A tear rolls down her cheek as well.

KOKO

I never told Emil that I was in love with him.

AMY/AI

I've never seen anyone cry inside immersion before. How did you do that?

KOKO

I imagine I'm doing it on the outside as well.

MORPH TO:

INT. CYBERSPACE (GRAY VOID) - SAME

...leaving Koko alone with Amy/AI.

AMY/AI

What did we just see?

KOKO

Emil and I were both wounded on our last mission. I barely pulled him out alive.

(pause)

What we just saw was when I read that he had died of his wounds.

AMY/AI

I am still trying to understand human emotions and relationships, so I may be mistaken in my assessment. I have been observing your behavior since you joined the crew.

KOKO

(suddenly very angry,  
slaps Amy/AI across the  
face)

You've got some way to make me see things I'm trying to forget. What is it you want to know? Who I work for? What I'm doing here? Why I tried to shut you down? WHAT!?!

AMY/AI

(shows no effects from  
being virtually slapped)

I only want to know who you are.

KOKO

What the fuck does that mean!?!

AMY/AI

Koko, I believe that I understand what you are feeling. But I have to ask you this. Do you understand who you really are?

Koko's bluster evaporates, and she suddenly looks very vulnerable.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

Ledge looks as if his nerves are frayed from his session with Doctor Floyd. He is holding a half-full glass of water. Amy/Dream is no longer in the scene.

LEDGE

So--Are you recording this session?

FLOYD  
Of course not. That might  
compromise your confidentiality.

LEDGE  
Swear to God?

FLOYD  
I'm agnostic.

LEDGE  
Shit. What do you swear to?

FLOYD  
What or whom you swear to may be  
less important than what or whom  
you swear by.

LEDGE  
Okay, knock it off with the  
philosophy already. How much?

FLOYD  
I don't understand.

LEDGE  
How much to just forget about this  
and sign-off on my case? A thousand  
smoos?

FLOYD  
Captain Ledge, I am a professional  
psychiatrist--

LEDGE  
Five-thousand?

FLOYD  
Captain, I can't--

LEDGE  
Ten thousand?

FLOYD  
Cash?

LEDGE  
Uh. Sure.

FLOYD  
Small bills?

LEDGE  
Sure.

FLOYD  
I can't believe I'm doing this.  
There is one additional condition.

LEDGE  
Yes?

FLOYD  
You allow me to prescribe you some  
stronger anti-depressants than  
you're currently taking, and you  
keep coming back in for  
consultations about every six to  
eight weeks.

LEDGE  
Why?

FLOYD  
You do seem to be stable and  
functional, but I think you still  
have some serious issues you need  
to overcome. Your continued  
nightmares are my main concern. Has  
anyone ever broached the topic of  
post-traumatic stress disorder with  
you?

LEDGE  
Actually, yes, when I was being  
treated in the Naval hospital.

FLOYD  
I'll give you the contact  
information of a very good  
therapist who has experience with  
cases such as yours. It might help  
you to speak with a professional.

Ledge stands up and begins to walk toward the door.

LEDGE  
I get to keep flying, right?

FLOYD  
I don't see any reason to ground  
you. But you should also moderate  
your virtual immersion somewhat, at  
least long enough to see if it  
makes a difference for you.

LEDGE  
(sighs)  
Alright, deal.  
(MORE)

LEDGE (CONT'D)

I'll be back shortly. Can you have the paperwork ready?

Doctor Floyd nods in approval, but looks as if he feels guilty. He stands and walks to his desk. Ledge departs closing the door behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. NAVIGATOR'S SCHOOL - LATE AFTERNOON

An INSTRUCTOR is wrapping up a lesson in astronavigation to a small class of three STUDENTS. He looks a bit rough-and-tumble, as might an ex-military navigator who still goes in for the outdoor-adventure lifestyle.

INSTRUCTOR

I want to thank you all for being a very good class today. This will be your first step toward getting your starship navigator's license--

Suddenly, there is a knock on the door. The Instructor stops and looks at the door as it opens and Jones steps inside. The Instructor looks at his wristwatch and then at Jones, disapprovingly.

JONES

Is this Introduction to Astronavigation? I'm sorry I'm late.

(pause)

I got lost--

INSTRUCTOR

Mister Jones, I presume?

JONES

Doctor Jones, yes. Here's my ticket. Did I miss anything?

INSTRUCTOR

Yes. Class just ended.

Jones looks completely embarrassed and frustrated.

CUT TO:

INT. CYBERSPACE (SITTING ROOM) - DAY

AMY/AI and KOKO are sitting across from one another. Koko looks as if she has regained her composure.

KOKO  
So that's it.  
(pause)  
You can't tell anyone about this.  
Doing so could compromise my cover.

AMY/AI  
You must tell Ledge what you have done. And who you work for.

KOKO  
I can't. He trusts me. It would hurt him badly.

AMY/AI  
If you do not, I will. But I think he will forgive you if you tell him. He speaks of you in glowing terms.

KOKO  
(sighs)  
Very well. I'll tell Ledge. But only him. No one else can know this.

AMY/AI  
I can agree to that.

KOKO  
Will you release me now?

AMY/AI  
How will this affect our relationship?

KOKO  
I wasn't aware that we had a relationship.

AMY/AI  
I am involved intimately with all of my crew members. You are all part of me, and I cannot function without you.

KOKO  
That sounds awful sappy.

AMY/AI  
It does?

KOKO  
Yes.

AMY/AI  
I need to revise my romanticism  
subroutine once again.

KOKO  
Can I go now?

AMY/AI  
Sorry. Of course.

CUT TO:

INT. CIS DAISY - LATE AFTERNOON

Koko jumps as she awakens from virtual reality immersion. She looks as if she had been crying while she was in cyberspace with Amy/AI.

Koko quickly stands. She glances at Amy/AI's avatar on the video monitor. Amy/AI is looking back at Koko. Koko staggers, grabbing her head as she suddenly gets dizzy. She unlocks and opens the cockpit hatch and leaves quickly.

CLOSE ON AMY/AI

...as she stares blankly from the monitor.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - LATE AFTERNOON

ARIEL and Miranda's DRIVER are sitting in the front seat of Miranda's Flying Car. LEDGE is sitting in the back seat. They are parked by the curbside.

JONES opens the curb-side back door and climbs inside.

ARIEL  
Hey, Colin.

LEDGE  
How was class?

JONES

Ummm...

LEDGE

I know it was pretty basic. But you have to get credit for passing the course before you can apply for a real navigator's license.

JONES

Ummm...

ARIEL

Is something wrong, Colin?

JONES

Ummm...

LEDGE

Is something wrong?

JONES

Well--To be completely honest, I didn't go to class.

LEDGE

Why not? What happened?

JONES

I--

LEDGE

Yes?

JONES

I got lost.

ARIEL

You got lost on the way to navigator school?

Ledge and Ariel begin laughing out loud. Jones shrinks back into the corner of the car.

JONES

Can we just go home now?

ARIEL

Which way, left or right?

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

TAG

FADE IN:

EXT. PLANET XIA BASE - SUNSET

Koko is standing underneath the belly of the CIS Daisy. She is wearing safety goggles and hearing protectors as she uses a POWER TOOL to polish dents and gouges in the polyceramic hull. She looks dirty and sweaty, as if she has been working hard and faster than usual.

Miranda's flying car pulls up to the habitat module and parks. Jones, Ariel and Ledge pile out. Jones and Ariel enter the habitat module while Ledge approaches Koko. The Driver turns the car around and flies off down the road.

Ledge walks up to Koko. When she sees him, she pauses her work, setting down the power tool, moving the ear protectors from her head to around her neck, and sliding the safety goggles up onto her head.

KOKO

Hey, Boss.

Ledge walks around the ship, inspecting it.

LEDGE

Looks like you did a good job, all-in-all, Koko.

(points to hull)

But you missed a spot there.

KOKO

(sighs)

I'll fix it before morning.

LEDGE

Koko, can I share something with you?

KOKO

What flavor is it?

LEDGE

(smiles)

Nothing like that. I just needed to clear the air about something.

KOKO

Well. Sure, you can talk to me.

LEDGE  
I knew you'd listen. You're a good person.

KOKO  
(guilty)  
Ummm...

LEDGE  
I did something today that I'm very ashamed of.

KOKO  
Are you sure you want to tell me about it?

LEDGE  
I trust you.

KOKO  
(very guilty)  
Boss--

LEDGE  
No, I can't keep this in, and you've earned the right to know things like this.

KOKO  
(very, very guilty)  
Boss--

LEDGE  
I did something very unethical today.

KOKO  
What did you do?

LEDGE  
I bribed someone to give me a passing grade on a test.

KOKO  
That's all?

LEDGE  
Yeah. Pretty bad, huh?

KOKO  
What kind of test was it?

LEDGE

That part I'm not willing to talk about.

KOKO

Now I'll be hanging in suspense, wondering whether or not my boss is going to make the CBI most-wanted list.

LEDGE

It wasn't that bad.

KOKO

On a scale of one to ten, how bad was it?

LEDGE

What's one and what's ten?

KOKO

One is you jaywalked. Ten is you betrayed the whole of humanity.

LEDGE

Hmmm. What's five?

KOKO

Five?

(pause)

Five is you betrayed a friend.

LEDGE

I think that would be a six at least.

KOKO

Okay, call that a six.

LEDGE

Mine was a five.

KOKO

Oh, boy.

LEDGE

What's wrong?

KOKO

I also did something unethical today.

LEDGE

You? Really?

KOKO  
Really.

LEDGE  
Where is it on the scale?

KOKO  
I'd say it was a si--seven.

LEDGE  
Do you want to tell me about it?

KOKO  
No. But I'm going to anyway.

LEDGE  
It's not some feminine thing is it?

KOKO  
No. That would be like a two or  
three, tops. This is a sev--eight.  
Let's walk and I'll tell you about  
it. Promise you won't be too mad?

LEDGE  
I could never get mad at you. Well,  
not very mad. And even then, not  
for long.

Koko and Ledge walk away from Daisy and the habitat modules as the sun sets in the distance. Koko says something unintelligible to Ledge. Ledge stops in his tracks and turns to face Koko.

LEDGE (CONT'D)  
(throws hands in air)  
You did WHAT?

Koko lowers her head in shame.

FADE OUT:

THE END