

FADE IN:

I/E. A SPACE CAPSULE

Reclined in a seat, A MOTIONLESS ASTRONAUT. Outside the open hatchway, a blazing white super-nova.

The original RECORDING of the conversation between mission control and the astronauts of Gemini VI cuts through the silence.

RECORDED VOICE TWO
...holding steady...

RECORDED VOICE ONE
...one mile at twenty-seven
degrees...

RECORDED VOICE TWO
...roger...

A PAIR OF HUGE EYES stares in through the hatchway.

RECORDED VOICE ONE
...twenty-seven-twenty is
Charlie...

A GIANT PAINT BRUSH pokes in through the hatchway and, with Byzantine precision, applies paint to the astronaut's helmet.

Suddenly, one of the voices spasms.

RECORDED VOICE TWO
...that's affirm...that's affirm..

The giant eyes slowly look to the side.

RECORDED VOICE TWO
...that's affirm..

The giant eyes disappear, accompanied by FOOTSTEPS.

ROBERT TOBACCUS

walks to an old reel-to-reel tape player and switches it off. He is 55, dressed in frumpy brown shoes, baggy slacks, and a plaid shirt beneath a thread-bare cardigan.

THE ONE ROOM APARTMENT

in which he stands is a veritable shrine to historical and speculative spaceflight: posters and models abound. Science and modeling books are double-stacked on shelves, lining the walls.

He sits back at table, adjusts work light, and looks through the desk mounted magnifying glass. HIS EYES, once again, grow giant.

ROBERT' S POV

of a scale model of the Mercury space capsule. The detail, the paint, the construction have been impeccably executed.

BACK TO ROBERT

smiling to himself proudly at a job well-done. He glances up at the UFO clock on wall, and sees that it's time for work. He walks into kitchen area, grabs a broom, and exits through door into

ADJOINING HOBBY SHOP

With the flip of a light switch, a series of overhead fluorescent lights sputter on.

Hundreds of modeling and rocket kits fill the two aisles and surrounding walls. From the ceiling hangs a plethora of wonderfully constructed model rockets and spacecraft suspended by invisible thread.

Robert puts "OPEN" sign in window, exits outside onto

EXT. CITY SIDEWALK

and begins sweeping. Above him, on the roof's coping, sets a large sign which whimsically reads "SPACE AVAILABLE", decorated with painted planets and Flash Gordon-like spacecraft.

Robert sweeps the cigarette butts and discarded candy wrappers into a pile, unaware that he is being watched by

ZAL KINSKY

seated in an old, beat-up sports car, parked down the block. Zal is 42, wiry, and craggy-faced. One of his hands, marred with jailhouse tattoos, rests atop the steering wheel, a cigarette dangling between his fingers. He watches Robert disappear back into

INT. HOBBY SHOP

Robert begins his daily chore of re-stocking shelves.

AN HOUR LATER

Robert stands behind counter, plopping miniature jars of model paint into a wall rack.

A bell JINGLES, the front door opens, and A YOUNG BOY, 9, quickly disappears down aisle. Outside window, the boy's MOTHER waits, tending a baby stroller.

Seconds later, the boy reappears from aisle and eagerly lays a model on counter in front of Robert.

ROBERT

(impressed)

Hmm . .

YOUNG BOY

It is a good one?

ROBERT

Not just good. A landmark.

(waxing dramatic)

In 1947, on a fall morning, forty three thousand feet above the California desert, the X-1 rocket reached the speed of seven hundred miles per hour, breaking the sound barrier, thus beginning what is known as . . . the space age.

Robert rings up the sale. The cash register reads \$13.00. The young boy reaches into his pocket and lays a ten dollar bill on counter.

YOUNG BOY

Do I got enough?

Robert looks down at money, then at the boy's worn clothes and eager face.

ROBERT
(picking up money)
Just enough.

Robert puts model in a bag, and, as an afterthought, drops in a free tube of glue, a few jars of paint, and a brush. He hands bag to boy, then leans over to him, as if divulging a secret.

ROBERT
Take your time with it, yes?

The boy nods in agreement.

ROBERT
Remember... a finished model isn't just painted pieces of plastic glued together. It is a reflection of the builder.

The boy smiles and rushes out store, clutching his treasure.

The doorbell JINGLES and two teens, JOEY and GUY, enter.

JOEY
Hey, Mister Tobaccus.

ROBERT
Hello, Joey.

Guy, a newcomer to the shop, looks up in awe at the models hanging from the ceiling.

GUY
These are great.

JOEY
Didn't I tell ya?

Robert smiles to himself at their enthusiasm.

GUY
Look at that one!

Robert looks to where Guy is pointing. On shelf, behind counter, sits a three-foot-tall, beautifully constructed model rocket and launchpad.

Joey, a frequent visitor to the shop, speaks to Guy with the confidence of a tour guide.

JOEY

That is the Saturn Five. When the real one lifted off, the blast was so powerful that if you were standing within a hundred yards, it would shatter every bone in your body. Isn't that right, Mister Tobaccus?

ROBERT

Correct. And who is your friend?

JOEY

This is Guy. He just moved in.

Guy looks at a futuristic model spaceship on shelf.

GUY

What's this one?

ROBERT

It's something I designed myself. I call it "The Exodus." A ship to transport people to another planet when the earth is destroyed.

Robert lifts the top off model. Inside, numerous seated figurines.

GUY

Destroyed? How?

ROBERT

A virus, a war, a geographical catastrophe.

GUY

How many people will the ship carry?

ROBERT

I'm not sure yet. It's not finished.

GUY

(pointing at figurines)
Who are they?

ROBERT

(smiling)
They're the lucky ones.

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