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# Arena

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A R E N A

by

Catlan McClelland

A thesis screenplay presented to the

Faculty of the Department of  
Feature Film Screenwriting  
Loyola Marymount University

In partial fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Fine Arts

May 8, 2014

### APPROVAL TO ADVANCE TO CANDIDACY

The following student has met all the criteria to advance to candidacy  
for an M.F.A. in Fine Arts with an emphasis in Screenwriting

Student: Catlan McClelland Date: 12/9/13

Committee Co Chair (690): [Signature] Date: 12/9/2013

Committee Co Chair (691): [Signature] Date: 5/8/14

Advanced Screenplay Project Title:

Arena

Criteria for advancement to candidacy:

Student has demonstrated sufficient ability and knowledge to complete the thesis project.

Approved to Candidacy

Not Approved to Candidacy

Comments:

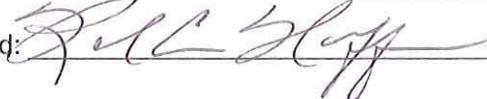
## ADVANCED SCREENPLAY PROJECT APPROVAL

The Advanced Screenplay Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting submitted by the candidate fulfils the requirements and standards set forth in the University Bulletin by the Division.

Screenplay Title: Arena

Student: Catlan McClelland Date: 12-09-13

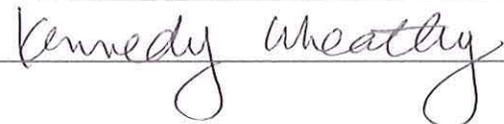
Committee Co Chair: SCWR 690 Karol Hoeffner

Signed:  Date: 12/09/2013

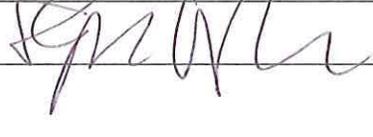
Committee Co Chair: SCWR 691 Beth Serlin

Signed:  Date: 5/8/14

Graduate Director: Kennedy Wheatley

Signed:  Date: 5/8/14

Dean: Stephen G. Ujlaki

Signed:  Date: 5/8/14

This feature length screenplay written by  
Caflan McClelland

---

under the guidance of a faculty committee  
from the School of Film & Television at  
Loyola Marymount University, and approved  
by the members of the committee, has been  
presented to and accepted by the Graduate  
School in partial fulfillment of the thesis  
requirements for the degree of Master of  
Fine Arts in Screenwriting.

Advanced Screenplay Project Committee:

  
Committee Chair: SCWR 690

  
Committee Member: SCWR 691

  
Graduate Director

  
Dean, School of Film & Television

  
Date

Arena

---

A Screenplay

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Film & Television,  
Loyola Marymount University of Los Angeles, California

---

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Fine Arts

---

By

Catlan McClelland

---

A R E N A

A SciFi-Gladiator Bloodbath

by

Catlan McClelland

EXT. SPACE

The lawless abyss.

POLICE SIRENS howl, lonely and distant.

Words punch through the black:

*THE GALAXY HANGS ON THE BRINK OF CHAOS.*

*Crime is rampant. Life is cheap and brutal.  
Only the brave officers of the Galactic Police  
Force stand against ruthless super-criminals.*

*The Law's most feared weapon is the prison  
planet ARENA, where felons are Judged under hot  
lights and cameras. Where bloodthirsty viewers  
watch convicts pay the ultimate penalty:*

DEATH BY COMBAT.

The view DROPS beneath storm clouds. The polluted glow of a--

EXT. FUTURISTIC CITYSCAPE - NIGHT

Neon skyscrapers groan towards the heavens.

Lights FLASH in heavy rain. Red. Blue. A POLICE CONVOY  
streaks over an elevated speedway.

EXT. APARTMENT TOWER - NIGHT

Cop wagons marked "G.P.F." join those already arrived. Tough  
troopers pour out. They duck behind cars, dodging LASER FIRE  
from the tower.

A LIEUTENANT winces at each shot.

LIEUTENANT  
Jones and Bingo?

ROOKIE  
Still breathing. Scanners put them  
on the sixteenth floor -- there.

The Lieutenant peeks out but a BLAST grazes his helmet.

LIEUTENANT  
Mother Justice! They shouldn't  
have gone after the Razor alone.

ROOKIE  
Who knows what he's doing to them.

LIEUTENANT  
I know.

Over his fearful face, a burst of PSYCHOTIC LAUGHTER--

INT. HIDEOUT - APARTMENT TOWER - CONTINUOUS

Two bound and gagged COPS: Officers JONES (female) and BINGO. Bruises. Caked blood. Eyes of terror.

RAZOR (O.S.)  
The last cop I killed, she begged  
for her life.

REVEAL their captor, RAZOR (40s). A beyond-crazy crimelord with knife-sharp CLAWS and a boundless appetite for chaos.

RAZOR  
*"P-p-please, Razor, I've got a fuh-  
fuh-family."* But I'm a decent guy--

He spreads his nails on Bingo's cheek.

RAZOR  
So I mailed them her fingers, then  
her arms, then her--  
(to goons)  
Would you keep it down?

Razor's ten goons -- a banged-up robot with an EYEPATCH, a TENTACLED alien and others -- fire BLASTERS out the windows. An orgy of destruction.

TENTACLES  
Yo boss! They're comin' in!

Razor glides over, sees the cops forming up like blue ants.

RAZOR  
(delighted)  
Mmmm, it's gonna get ugly...

EXT. APARTMENT TOWER - MOMENTS LATER

A phalanx of police marches towards the door while two armored patrol cars edge up to the building, then start climbing the tower like beetles.

As the cars roll over windows, Razor's goons fix DEVICES to the undercarriages. SHOUTS from cops in the cars--

EXPLOSIONS. Flaming wreckage plummets to the street.

More laz-shots stripe pavement. Struck cops fall. Others break rank and scramble for cover.

LIEUTENANT  
Everybody back. Back!

ROOKIE  
We've got to get in there!

LIEUTENANT  
Can't risk it.

Just then, the unmistakable WHINE of THRUSTERS.

Police look up as a flying PATROL CAR comes in for a landing. They shield eyes. Thruster-fire scorches the street.

The door hisses open. A BOOT plants itself in the road.

ROOKIE  
It's him.

OFFICER JOSEPH CAGE, in full combat gear. Early 40s, with a scar for each planet in the galaxy.

Cage strides over, badge GLEAMING. His face: weathered stone.

LIEUTENANT  
It's no use, Officer Cage. We can't get inside.

He keeps walking.

LIEUTENANT  
Sir! They'll blast you to cinders!

ROOKIE  
Wow.

CAGE plows toward the entrance past burning cars -- a blaster shot kills a hydrant beside him. He doesn't flinch as STEAM shoots sky-high. Another miss cuts a streetlight loose.

Cage is a juggernaut.

INT. LOBBY - APARTMENT TOWER - CONTINUOUS

EYEPATCH waits in ambush near the front door. He chances a look -- but where's that cop?

An EXPLOSION OF GLASS as Cage cannonballs through the window behind him. Eyepatch takes aim but Cage chops the gun aside.

CAGE

You have the Right to be Punished.

He swings his ROD (a blaster/baton) like a sledgehammer, caves in the bot's circuit-filled skull.

CAGE

Everything you have said and done  
will be used to determine the  
severity of your Sentence.

More of Razor's goons rush out, YELLING and FIRING.

CAGE

By resisting arrest you have  
forfeited your Right to a Trial.

Always advancing, Cage blasts them apart.

The lobby is filled with smoking bodies.

CAGE

Do you understand these Rights as I  
have explained them?

INT. HIDEOUT - CONTINUOUS

Cage kicks the door in. Jones has a bag over her head.

RAZOR

Can't a guy have a little fun?

CAGE

Come quiet or come dead.

Razor shoulders Bingo like he was feather-light, runs out a rear door laughing. Cage rips open the bag -- Jones GASPS.

JONES

...Go! Go!

EXT. ROOFTOP - MOMENTS LATER

Heavy rain comes down like judgment. SPOTLIGHTS from NEWS COPTERS splash the roof with white.

Cage spots Razor at the edge, dangling Bingo over

A twelve-lane rocketway hundreds of feet down. Hovcars and airbikes race by at blinding speeds.

RAZOR  
(re: copters)  
Look ma, I'm on TV.

CAGE  
Wrong, freak--

Cage pops open the AUTO-CUFFS.

CAGE  
--You're under arrest.

RAZOR  
How does your little book say to handle this?

CAGE  
(advancing)  
Release the hostage.

RAZOR  
--Appeal to the hostage-taker's compassion? His humanity?

CAGE  
What humanity.

RAZOR  
Exactly!

Cage closes in. Just a few more steps...

CAGE  
Final warning. Let him go.

A terrible smile spreads across Razor's face.

CAGE  
No.  
(rushes forward)  
No!

Razor SHOVES Bingo off the roof. The dark swallows him.

Cage ROARS, sticks his gun in Razor's cheek. He wants to ice this mother so bad.

RAZOR  
You won't kill me because you're weak. You play by the rules.

Cage shakes with fury.

RAZOR  
Do it, you slave. Break your precious Law, just this once.

Their eyes lock. Cage's finger SQUEEZES the trigger--  
--But stops. With a great effort, Cage holsters it.

CAGE  
No. The Law is the Law.

He slaps the cuffs on Razor. Cinches them TIGHT as

A squad of cops dashes onto the rain-drenched rooftop. The squad PARTS to reveal an eight-foot-tall CYBORG in a colossal cloak with a gavel-head CANE: this is the G.P.F.'s chief of day-to-day operations, GRAND CONSTABLE DAYWATCH (40s).

Half his face is a METAL MASK with one cold, electronic eye. His voice is absolute THUNDER.

CONSTABLE  
Excellent work, Joseph.

CAGE  
Constable.

CONSTABLE  
You have done it again: apprehended one of the gravest threats to Law and Order on the hundred planets.

Cage chucks Razor to the other Officers.

CAGE  
Process this felon before I do.

CONSTABLE  
Razor! We hereby sentence you to the battle-pits of Arena.

RAZOR  
I'll live like a king on Arena.  
I'll be the best the show's had.  
(MORE)

RAZOR (CONT'D)  
 (to Cage)  
 You'll be seeing me real soon!

CAGE  
 Wrong again, convict.

Rain cascades from Cage's brow, in profile.

CAGE  
 I don't watch television.

Cage strides past all.

The awestruck Lieutenant watches him go.

LIEUTENANT  
 I wouldn't want to be a criminal.

CONSTABLE  
 Not in this galaxy.

CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES. Heavy drumbeats of WAR MUSIC. As they roll--

EXT. PATROL CAR - CITYSCAPE - NIGHT

Cage pilots his craft over the grim city.

In streets below, a teeming mass of disorder. Criminals and victims scurry in the shadow of tall buildings wrapped in mesmerizing, fifty-story BILLBOARDS.

Huge ads for the ARENA show -- monstrous, wild-eyed CONVICTS locked in frenzied COMBAT. By Subscription Only. Call Now for Carnage. A PHONE NUMBER flashes in smog.

MAIN TITLES END

as Cage's car flies past a tower that dwarfs the rest, capped with a sky-piercing ANTENNA.

The view passes inside to--

INT. ARENA ENTERTAINMENT - CONTINUOUS

A symphony of RINGING phones.

An adorable girl, JUJU (8), wanders among hundreds of cubicles around a phone bank. SCREENS roll the Arena show.

Juju spots something SHINY on the floor and picks it up, then trots into a cubicle where--

AMARA  
(exasperated)  
Please hold. Please hold.

AMARA FREBON (30s) wears a headset, juggling lines. She's fierce, exotic and clearly too smart for this gig.

She hits a button, reads from a script:

AMARA  
...Okay ma'am. With the Arena Deluxe Subscription you'll get thirty fights per week of the most bone-crushing, adrenaline-spiking gladiator action to be seen anywh--  
(listens)  
Thirty's not enough?

Juju tugs at her sleeve. Amara covers the headset.

AMARA  
We're leaving soon.

JUJU  
I got you a present mommy.

She shows the prize: a lighter.

AMARA  
Honey, that's Mister Kinnimin's. Remember what daddy told us? We never steal, baby. Not ever.

JUJU  
But I didn't--

AMARA  
We're taking this right back to apologize.

Juju gives a "do we have to" look.

INT. KINNIMIN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Smoke-filled. The obscenely fat boss KINNIMIN (50s) ashes a cigarette, sucks at his oxygen hose as he watches a screen. SOUNDS of sword-clangs. Lasers. Death howls.

THE HOST (V.O.)  
...Ohhhh! That's got to hurt!

AMARA  
 (enters with Juju)  
 Mister Kinnimin? My daughter wants  
 to say something.  
 (to Juju)  
 Tell him.

KINNIMIN  
 That my laz-light?

With meaty fingers Kinnimin grabs it out of the girl's hand.  
 He turns back to the TV and sucks his hose.

KINNIMIN  
 Clean out your cube.

AMARA  
 What?

KINNIMIN  
 You heard me. You're gone.

AMARA  
 She's only a girl.

KINNIMIN  
 A thief like her belongs on Arena.  
 I'm letting you both off easy.

RAGE burns in Amara's TWO-COLORED EYES.

AMARA  
 Let me hear you threaten my  
 daughter again.

KINNIMIN  
 That's it, I'm calling the cops.

Amara gets the phone first, RIPS it out of the desk.

AMARA  
 Could be hard to get through.

She drops the phone and it SHATTERS. She leaves. The  
 sputtering Kinnimin tries to climb out of his chair. Can't.

INT. THE SANCTUM - NIGHT

A vaulted dome. Silent. Religious. A single FLAME burns.

BEEPS of a keypad. The door slides open to reveal CAGE by  
 firelight.

Carved into the stone floor:

*The Light Of Justice Must Not Perish.*

Finger-by-finger, Cage pulls off his heavy glove.

He sticks his bare palm over the open Flame. Skin blackens. Flesh CRACKLES.

CAGE

I lost one of ours today... Judge  
me...

Sweat pours down his face but he holds his hand steady. Behind him, a luminous FIGURE.

JUSTICE

My Officers have need of their  
hands.

CAGE

Mother Justice, Maker of Laws.

Cage KNEELS before this ethereal vision. She is a dazzling HOLO-PROJECTION in her 20s, pale, tall -- innocence itself. The timeless Protector of the Flame.

CAGE

I failed.

JUSTICE

You met chaos, and chaos did its  
work.

CAGE

You must pronounce judgment.

JUSTICE

My child I fear for you, so great  
is your conviction. You say you  
will defeat Crime--

CAGE

(looks up, eyes burning)  
If it takes until the stars go dark.

JUSTICE

Then rise, Officer, and hear me now.

He stands. Her brow furrows.

JUSTICE

As the centuries pass, my spirit  
grows heavy with doubt.

CAGE

Mother?

She turns, spreads her slim hands. The walls become SCREENS:  
SURVEILLANCE VIDEO of robberies, street warfare, muggings --  
POLICE busting down doors, cracking skulls -- FELONS marched  
past IRON BARS -- endless rows of PRISON CELLS.

JUSTICE

Our Officers have killed and bled  
for the Law, yet our galaxy stands  
further from Order than ever. Our  
prisons are filled past capacity.  
We compel convicts to execute one  
another in merciless combat... for  
the amusement of paying subscribers.

CAGE

I call that Deterrence.

JUSTICE

You were ever the optimist.

CAGE

I know what works.

The videos FLICKER OFF...

Mother Justice wears a wan smile -- She holds a BOX.

JUSTICE

Go on. It's for you.

Cage lowers his eyes.

JUSTICE

Even crusaders have birthdays.

She opens the gift: A rusted pair of old-fashioned, iron  
HANDCUFFS. Try as he might to hide it... Cage is touched.

He reaches out, takes the cuffs. Clicks them onto his belt.

JUSTICE (O.S.)

From another time. When the Law  
was a simple matter.

CAGE

Still is.

JUSTICE

(caresses his face)

Then go now and deliver it, Officer  
Cage, my bravest and most true. I  
will keep the Light for you.

The Flame FLICKERS as Cage strides out--

EXT. TRAM STOP - SLUMS - DAY

But the dashing young man in uniform who steps into the noisy  
dirty street isn't Cage. The nametag says Cadet GREG WILSON.  
20s. Eyes that not only look, but explore.

As he walks, Wilson watches a butcher lug an alien carcass --  
Some crazies shoot dice -- A hooker turns, shows a black eye.

He hears a COUGH and looks down at a BOY in a trashbag tunic.  
The kid shakes a cup.

WILSON

Where are your parents?

Wilson pulls some cash-dollars from his wallet, gives. The  
kid hugs him.

WILSON

Okay, okay.

Wilson pries him loose, moves down the street.

Then he pats his pockets.

WILSON

What the!?

INT. ALLEYWAY - SLUMS - MOMENTS LATER

The boy slips around a corner, counting the money in Wilson's  
wallet.

WILSON waits at the other end. Ready to nab him.

But the boy is met by a GANG of little kids. He distributes  
the cash. Wilson turns, goes.

EXT. SMOG-CHOKED SLUMS - DAY

FIGURES in shadow watch the clean blue uniform approach.  
A hidden MUGGER unsheathes a DAGGER and follows Wilson --  
another joins in the silent pursuit. Another.

But when they see Wilson's destination, they scatter. Wilson glances around. He's alone.

He looks up at a rickety stack of bricks.

INT. HOVEL - SLUMS - DAY

Dressed always for battle, Cage sits cross-legged on the hard floor. The thick Book of Laws open before him. A puddle of wax -- all that remains of last night's candle.

Wilson stands in the doorway.

WILSON

This place is a crime scene, sir.  
They should wrap it in tape.

Cage closes the book. His giant hand rests on the cover.

WILSON

Let's see... Victim lived alone.  
Was found dead, emaciated from  
excessive study of laws he knew  
backwards and forwards. Might not  
have died alone had he even glanced  
at a member of the female species.

Cage rises, checks his belt. Takes his helmet from a peg.

WILSON

Chose to live in the worst sector  
of the worst planet, and to force  
his best cadet to take a terrifying  
trip on public transportation to  
pick him up for patrol. The cadet  
in question almost got mugged four  
times and did once. That's today.

CAGE

Constable wants us.

Cage hulks out the door. Wilson looks at the bare walls.

WILSON

I think I'm going to buy you a TV.

EXT. HALLS OF JUSTICE - DAY

Columns. Big. Flags WAVE.

WILSON (V.O.)  
I know that Razor is as good as  
dead on Arena, Sir--

INT. ATRIUM - HALLS OF JUSTICE - DAY

Cage and Wilson pass under a magnificent STATUE of Mother Justice. She bears her tablets of Laws.

WILSON  
--but his organization's still out  
there. We should be working to  
dismantle what's left.

CAGE  
Razor is done, kid. Problem solved.

Two OFFICERS cross in the opposite direction--

OFFICER  
Tough about your partner, Jones.  
Bingo was a solid cop.

JONES looks at CAGE with hatred.

JONES  
Somebody's gonna pay.

CAGE  
You and Bingo should never have  
gone after Razor alone.

JONES  
You couldn't save him, Cage. The  
guilt is on your shoulders--

Cage and Wilson continue on.

JONES  
And the guilty will be judged.

INT. LECTURE HALL - ACADEMY - DAY

The CONSTABLE addresses a packed auditorium of CADETS:  
humanoid, alien, bot. He wears full dress blues and leans on  
his cane. Cage and Wilson enter at the back.

CONSTABLE  
Try to imagine a time before Law.  
Look back: the hundred worlds were  
cloaked in darkness. Savagery.  
Chaos! But then a light arose.  
(MORE)

CONSTABLE (CONT'D)

With the activation of Mother Justice, the first breath of Order was felt in this galaxy.

Cage spots one Cadet secretly watching ARENA on his comm.

CONSTABLE

This cosmic wind traveled to each planet, binding the worlds into a perfect union. But how long could this last? Let us be honest. Men are evil. Evil feeds on Disorder.

Cage is moving down an aisle towards the Cadet -- heads turn.

CONSTABLE

And so the G.P.F. remains forever locked in struggle with all-devouring Crime. We are concerned not with rehabilitation, but with annihilation.

Cadets edge away from Cage's unsuspecting target.

CONSTABLE

Thus, Arena.

Cage SMACKS the kid's cap off, grabs the comm.

FIRST CADET

(whispers)

Rawlings, what the hell are you--

He sees the mountain that is Cage. Snaps the comm in half.

FIRST CADET

Oh, sh--

CONSTABLE

Our intrepid Officer Cage. Cadets!

All Cadets STAND.

SECOND CADET

Sir! We've watched all your vids.

THIRD CADET

Your assault on Razor? Incredible.

FOURTH CADET

How do you walk into a storm of laz-fire like that?

CAGE  
Don't get hit.

Everyone but Cage LAUGHS, good-naturedly. Cage silences Wilson with a look.

The Constable BANGS his cane.

CONSTABLE  
Class adjourned.

INT. CONSTABLE'S OFFICE - HALLS OF JUSTICE - DAY

VID-SCREENS on every surface. Fifty different news feeds, talk shows, ARENA, etc.

CONSTABLE (O.S.)  
...Everyone thinks it's a simple thing, running a galaxy.

Cage and Wilson stand at attention before the Constable, seated in his throne. He pours himself another drink.

CONSTABLE  
My Planetary Deputies are all fools--

CAGE  
You wanted to see us?

CONSTABLE  
Joseph, you've locked up more high-value perps than anyone on the Force.

He points his cane at a wall of nightmarish VIDEO MUGSHOTS. Criminal psychos sneer and grimace.

CONSTABLE  
Salamander, assassin Haz Peshawa, and now the Razor. For these we are grateful. But I must urge you to take no further action against Razor's infrastructure.

WILSON  
--Sir?

CONSTABLE  
This comes directly from the old witch herself. I understand Mother is examining links between Razor's syndicate and various interests on Indigo and other planets.  
(MORE)

CONSTABLE (CONT'D)  
They must be left intact until she  
can complete her investigation.

WILSON  
But Constable, now's our chance to--

CONSTABLE  
--Are we high definition?

Wilson looks over at Cage.

INT. ROOFTOP HANGAR - HALLS OF JUSTICE - DAY

Cage strides to his PATROL CAR. Wilson hurries after.

WILSON  
We should be on Indigo right now,  
making sure Razor's goons aren't  
robbing, raping and killing any more  
innocent people.

The driver's door hisses open and Cage gets in, FIRES it up --  
exhaust jets go red-hot.

WILSON  
This is our chance to take his  
whole game apart. Hey, wait!

Wilson jumps in right as Cage rockets off the rooftop.

EXT. CITYSCAPE - DAY

The car weaves between buildings. Sky-bridges. Dark sprawl.

The murmur of RADIO CHATTER from Dispatch.

EXT. PORTAL ON-RAMP - CONTINUOUS

They fly into the ass-end of a TRAFFIC JAM, leading to an  
enormous black PORTAL. Cargo ships, Tugs in total gridlock.

WILSON (V.O.)  
Great. We'll be here for hours.

INT. PATROL CAR - CONTINUOUS

DISPATCH (V.O.)  
--All units vicinity of Planet  
Indigo. Criminal activity spike.  
Repeat, all units...

Cage looks at Wilson.

Wilson looks back.

Cage uncoils the squawk box.

CAGE  
(into radio)  
On it.

Wilson grins. Cage hits the console. Sirens WAIL.

EXT. PORTAL ON-RAMP - CONTINUOUS

Cage's car rises, zooms over the crowded on-ramp, lights flashing. It disappears into the VOID--

EXT. SPACE

A blink of light across the darkness.

EXT. SLUMS - PLANET INDIGO - NIGHT

The patrol car flies out of a portal and PURRS through the deserted sector. Derelicts. Slums. Sat-dishes.

The car rolls past a garish billboard for the ARENA show. One convict opens up the other's guts. Lurid neon FLASHES:

*JUSTICE... THE HARD WAY!!!*

AMARA (V.O.)  
It isn't fair.

INT. POLICE SUBSTATION - NIGHT

Amara holds Juju's hand. They're at the head of a line of dirty PETITIONERS on one side of laser-proof glass -- on the other, a tired SERGEANT shuffles papers.

AMARA  
Barely three days late on rent.  
Your officers evict us.

SERGEANT  
So you admit your mistake.

Someone in line WHISTLES. Creepy MEN, creepier ALIENS are looking Amara up and down.

AMARA  
We're out on the streets. How am I  
supposed to feed my girl?

SERGEANT  
Clean toilets. Hook. Next!

AMARA  
(bangs glass)  
You're supposed to protect us.

Amara wipes away a sudden tear. Angry at herself. She leads Juju out past CATCALLS.

SERGEANT  
Someone will look into it. In the  
order the petition was received.

EXT. SHIPPING DEPOT - NIGHT

A TRIANGLE insignia over the door. Cage's car rolls up.

WILSON (V.O.)  
It's Razor's alright.

INT. SHIPPING DEPOT - NIGHT

A refrigerated warehouse. Robot CRANE OPERATORS lift a cargo container on a tether, but swing too far and it falls, BANG! Packages spew out. The suspenders-wearing owner PONZI rushes over, breath steaming.

PONZI  
WHAT you are doing!

He sees Cage and Wilson standing over the fallen crates.

PONZI (CONT'D)  
Ah, Officers. A good day it is  
being tonight, yes?

Cage sticks his Rod into the cartons, rips open boxes marked FROZEN FISH and... fish fall out.

PONZI (CONT'D)  
So you see. Only the fish here.

Cage glances up into the container. In b.g., warehouse workers RUN.

PONZI (CONT'D)  
Wait wait wait.

Cage steps inside, pushes aside more boxes to find a COMPARTMENT and:

FORTY or FIFTY young GIRLS, some alien. All of them dolled up like whores. They cower when light hits them.

Cage's jaw quivers in anger.

CAGE  
Where are you shipping them,  
trafficker?

PONZI  
I am only middle-person. Have the  
mercy--

Cage BACKHANDS him.

CAGE  
For possession and smuggling of  
girl slaves...

PONZI  
--It is Razor! Wants girls fresh  
when he get out! He threatens my  
family! I have no choice!

CAGE  
There is always a choice, felon.  
Good luck on Arena.

Wilson takes hold of the wild-eyed Ponzi but

PONZI  
No! No!

Ponzi slips away towards a freezer pit, HURLS himself over the side and vanishes with a SCREAM.

Wilson grabs the railing, looks into the vat.

WILSON  
He begged you.

CAGE  
(wipes gloves clean)  
You want to save everyone in the  
galaxy. But you can't.

He turns. A SLAVE GIRL is looking up at him with gratitude.

CAGE  
Beat it.

INT. DINER - DAWN

Cage lurches into the sleepy cafe, Wilson behind. They sit at the counter, under a SCREEN playing Arena on low volume.

ON THE TV, convict-gadiator RAZOR swings a bloody cleaver, bearing down hard on his opponent.

THE HOST (V.O.)  
*I've never seen anything like it!*

WILSON  
Look -- he's on.

Razor holds up a dripping HEAD, punts it away.

The ALIEN WAITRESS blocks the view of the set, wipes the counter with a rag. She HONKS at Cage and Wilson.

WILSON  
No appetite thanks.

CAGE  
(holds up fingers)  
Two specials.

INT. HOVCAR - OUTSIDE DINER - CONTINUOUS

Amara rummages in a compartment. Juju picks at an empty food wrapper. The car they've been sleeping in.

JUJU  
Mommy?  
(swallows)  
I'm hungry.

AMARA  
I know sweetie.

She tosses what looks like a MASK onto the dashboard. Then an old-model BLASTER-PISTOL. She looks out the window, sees--

A CONVENIENCE STORE. An ELECTRONICS STORE. Then, the DINER.

What she doesn't see is the PATROL CAR...

AMARA  
Mommy will be right back.

JUJU  
Where are you going?

AMARA  
To get you some food.

INT. COUNTER - DINER - CONTINUOUS

The waitress plops down plates: donuts and something like coffee. Cage's comm RINGS.

<< INCOMING CALL >>

A video feed. The familiar DOMED ROOM.

CAGE  
Mother, come in.

The solitary Flame.

CAGE  
Come in.

The image blanks out. Cage frowns. Wilson's about to chow down but Cage stands up.

CAGE  
(drops bills on counter)  
Something isn't right.

OVER THEIR SHOULDERS

Amara can be seen getting out of the car, MASK over her face. She crosses the street. The BLASTER bulges in her pocket.

CAGE (O.S.)  
We must go to her.

AMARA pushes the door in, heads for the register.

AMARA  
(to waitress)  
This is a robbery! Empty it!

The frightened waitress goes honk-HONK.

AMARA  
Please.

CAGE (O.S.)  
Drop your weapon.

CAGE, ten paces away. Rod leveled. AMARA faces forward.

CAGE  
You picked the wrong planet, woman.

WILSON  
Sir, don't shoot. We can talk her  
down.

CAGE  
We're past talking.

AMARA  
That voice--

Everyone in the diner frozen. Silent.

Amara turns her head.

Her two-colored EYES as she SEES him.

AMARA  
Joe?

She pivots too fast and Wilson goes for Cage's weapon.

WILSON  
Don't!

Wilson pushes Cage's gun away as it spits fire -- the shot  
sails high--

Amara falls backwards and her blaster DISCHARGES, burns a  
fiery hole through her jacket -- the alien WAITRESS' head  
SPLITS IN TWO like a grapefruit -- the TV is RIPPED apart --  
an EXPLOSION of sparks -- Amara stares at the gushing mess  
that was the waitress.

AMARA  
No -- no --!

Amara is out the door. Cage ROARS. He shoves Wilson aside  
and runs straight to the end of the diner and leaps over an  
occupied table and SMASHES RIGHT THROUGH THE GLASS into the--

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Pounding the pavement after her.

Amara covers the thirty yards to her hovcar and Juju is  
shouting. Amara can't get the door open. Cage SLAMS her  
against the car. He rips off her MASK and finally SEES HER.

AMARA  
I didn't mean to hurt her. It's  
me, Joe.

He can't believe who he's looking at.

AMARA

Amara.

Wilson runs up. Cage stares at Amara, on the brink of a terrible decision. He unhooks his auto-cuffs.

CAGE

(to Wilson)

Read this killer her Rights.

AMARA

You can't say my name?

CAGE

You crossed the line. Now you are unknown to me.

WILSON

Who is she, sir?

Cage pushes the CUFFS into Wilson's hand. Wilson eyes Juju.

CAGE

Do it.

AMARA

Joe! Wait! My girl!

CAGE

I said NOW!

Wilson reluctantly pops the cuffs on Amara's wrists. He leads her to the patrol car -- they SPEAK OVER each other:

AMARA

(to Juju)

Aunt Finna will take care of you...

WILSON

...You have the Right to be Punished...

AMARA

...Back as soon as I can...

WILSON

...Forfeited your Right to a Trial...

Cage GRABS Amara, hurls her into the back of the car.

WILSON

Sir. Don't do this.

Cage climbs in.

CAGE  
For that stunt back there -- better  
find another way back to Draco.

WILSON  
The shot was an accident. We  
backed her into it! You're making  
a mistake!

CAGE  
I don't make mistakes.

The car BLASTS the ground with hot exhaust, zips away.

WIPE TO:

INT. PATROL CAR - NIGHT

Beep beep. THE CONSTABLE dials into Cage's dashboard comm.

CONSTABLE  
I see you two made a visit to  
Indigo... Where's the Cadet?

Cage rubs his jaw.

CAGE  
There is someone I must see.

CONSTABLE  
She's not going anywhere, is she?

Cage kills the comm.

EXT. SANCTUM - PLANET DRACO - NIGHT

Cage climbs the steep, narrow path to Mother's temple. Alien  
birds fly overhead, SHRIEKING in the purple night.

Cage watches them, unnerved.

A CLICK. Cage sees a shadowy FIGURE with his exact build  
emerge from the Sanctum, shut the door behind. Cage DRAWS.

CAGE  
Halt!

The Figure freezes -- then runs and LEAPS over the parapet.

Cage rushes to the edge. Can't get a shot. The Figure disappears into a SEWER OUTFLOW far, far below.

INT. SANCTUM - NIGHT

Dark. Cage runs in, weapon in hand. He taps his comm.

CAGE  
Dispatch. Possible Code 457.

He fires a flashlight, sweeps the beam over the room.

He sees the holder of the dead Flame: a tiny stone EFFIGY of Mother Justice.

DISPATCH (V.O.)  
--Units are already en route to  
your position.

Cage moves into the next chamber.

DISPATCH (V.O.)  
Remain where you are. Confirm.

CAGE (O.S.)  
(anguish)  
NO!

INT. INNERMOST SANCTUM - CONTINUOUS

Iridescent memory blocks are scattered on the floor like playthings. Wires ripped out. Circuits smashed. Chaos.

Cage cradles the dying Mother Justice.

Her FACE has a saintly glow -- a stream of LIQUID STATIC trickles from her lips. Somewhere, cop SIRENS lament.

CAGE  
Who did this? Who!

JUSTICE  
What have you done to me?

CAGE  
It was one of those monsters! Tell  
me his name!

JUSTICE  
I gave you my trust, Joseph... and  
you killed me.

CAGE  
No. I would never hurt you.

JUSTICE  
You have k-killed... killed m-me...

Her image FLICKERS, her voice FALTERS.

CAGE  
Hang on. Don't leave me alone.

Her neck goes limp like a dying swan.

A HISS OF STATIC and she DISINTEGRATES in his hands.

Cage's shock. The Sanctum RUMBLES.

OFFICER (V.O.)  
Officer Cage. Come out with your  
hands up.

EXT. SANCTUM - CONTINUOUS

Patrol cars hover. Twenty cops, locked and loaded, bound up  
the stairs. Officer JONES waves them on.

JONES  
Go, go!

IN THE SANCTUM

BOOM! Officers burst inside, but stop short when they see--  
CAGE standing there, a grieving god. His GUN in his hand.

JONES  
Officer Joseph Cage, you are under  
arrest for the murder and  
deactivation of Mother Justice.

CAGE  
I demand to see the Constable.

JONES  
You kill Bingo, now you kill the  
Mother. You're going down.

The cops circle Cage but keep their distance.

CAGE  
Somebody set me up.

Cage throws his Rod aside -- it CLATTERS across the floor.  
He turns to one of the cops.

CAGE  
Callahan, who taught you how to  
speed-load?  
(to another)  
Reynolds, who carried you out when  
you took one in the leg?

REYNOLDS  
Sorry Cage.

CAGE  
Who loved Mother more than I?

JONES  
(smiles)  
Resist arrest, make this hard.

CAGE  
I saw him! The one who killed her!

Cage BRISTLES as the cops step closer. The air is electric.

JONES  
Take him.

CAGE  
(roars)  
--This is all WRONG!

The cops swarm Cage. He SHOUTS and throws PUNCHES -- jaws  
crack, cops fall.

More cops rush Cage with ELECTRO-BATONS, ZAP him -- one  
should be plenty but they've got four and he's not bending.  
EVEN MORE COPS pile on batons. Cage BELLOWS, falls. CLACK!  
RACHET! They cuff his arms and legs.

Jones turns Cage's BADGE counter-clockwise, unlocking it.  
He fights to keep eyes open.

CAGE  
I am innocent.

JONES  
No one is innocent.

She rips off his badge.

INT. ATRIUM - HALLS OF JUSTICE - DAY

Mother's STATUE. Six cops march a manacled Cage under her gaze. Cage raises his head -- lip split, one eye black -- and looks at her one last time.

INT. LINEUP - DAY

CAGE is hurled in with a bunch of shackled PRISONERS: mean-looking humans, aliens, bots. Heavily armed cops at both ends. On the wall, huge NUMBERS.

TWO-HEADER

Hey look who it is.

REPTILIAN

The copsssss!

CYBORG

Policeman wanna dance?

COP

Knock it off, the boss is coming.

The door opens. Other prisoners crane to look, but Cage is in his own world of hurt.

A slim ANDROID in a bizarre suit and flawless skin strolls in. The HOST of the show:

GLIMMER

I've seen worse. I've seen better.

He is GLIMMER, permanently 30. Cobra eyes, the radiant blush of a sex addict and the best hair in the galaxy. His voice is filtered but rich, MUSICAL.

He walks the line, shopping. A CLERK jots down his picks. Wall-numbers LIGHT UP as

GLIMMER

I'll take numbers One, mmm, and Three -- great muscle tone.

CLERK

Excellent choice, Host, but what about Fifteen--

GLIMMER

Number Seven, I remember your spaceliner hijacking. That could have gone better.

(to Clerk)

(MORE)

GLIMMER (CONT'D)

Give me the killers Nine and Ten,  
as well.

(to Ten)

I hear you do wonderful things with  
an auto-hammer.

But Number Ten, a seemingly tough human, is pissing himself.

NUMBER TEN

Please. Anything but Arena.

GLIMMER

(to Clerk)

Load them up. Dispose of the rest.

NUMBER TEN

I'll work the asteroid mines. I'll  
scrub reactors. Anything.

The guy grabs for Glimmer's jacket.

NUMBER TEN

I don't want to die!

Glimmer takes hold of the man's throat and collapses it  
between impossibly strong fingers.

GLIMMER

Don't touch the suit.

He drops the guy -- dead.

GLIMMER

So I'll be needing one more. Now I  
remember we were getting quite a  
special shipment.

Glimmer walks up the line.

GLIMMER

Something Arena's never had before.  
Something almost exactly like--

He sees CAGE. Glimmer's eyes literally LIGHT UP.

GLIMMER

A cop.

WIPE TO:

EXT. PRISONER TRANSPORT - WARP TUNNEL

Hurtling through the star-streaked tube of a Planet-2-Planet.

INT. PRISONER TRANSPORT - CONTINUOUS

CAGE, beyond miserable, locked in his seat. Other cons stare. Glimmer leafs through an animated tittie mag.

PILOT (V.O.)  
Dropping out of portal, Host.

GLIMMER  
Finally. Who's got five minutes to spend in the car?

White light dims as the Transport falls out of warp. Through a porthole, Cage sees--

EXT. PLANET ARENA

A cloud-wrapped planetoid in a slow dance with a dim red star.

SUPER:

Prison Planet ARENA-1, population:	100	Contestants
	50	Guards
	1	Host

Fifty-mile-high ANTENNAE pierce the storm clouds. Arcs of ELECTRICITY jump between the poles -- a deadly web.

PILOT (V.O.)  
Enjoy the show.

The CLUNK of a latch: the Transport drops the convict pod. It plunges down, attracting fingertips of lightning.

Gone.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ACADEMY - PLANET DRACO - DAY

Draco's two suns set. HUNDREDS of Cops and Instructors assembled before a podium.

THE CONSTABLE wears his magnificent cloak and gavel. A row of Cadets. Among them, WILSON.

CONSTABLE

We are gathered here so that a new generation may pledge to Shield and Protect our troubled galaxy. We need good cops now more than ever.

He opens a metal case: a line of pristine BADGES.

CONSTABLE

These Cadets have demonstrated their abilities in the field, and will honor us with their continued commitment to the G.P.F. It is my privilege to award this great gift, this grave responsibility.

APPLAUSE as the Constable pins the Badges on the Cadets, turning them clockwise to lock in place. He ends on WILSON.

The Constable pulls Wilson into a handshake, posing for some cop PHOTOGRAPHERS. The human half of his face smiles.

LATER

Wilson walks with the Constable. New grads celebrate in b.g.

CONSTABLE

I regret your evaluating officer was unable to be here with us.

(turn)

Something troubles our young policeman.

Wilson looks up at the Constable, intense.

WILSON

Cage couldn't have done something like this. I can feel it.

(pats heart)

Here.

CONSTABLE

As the highest-ranked duty Officer and her personal attendant, only Cage held the codes to the Sanctum. Not even I am permitted within.

WILSON

He worshipped her. Literally.

CONSTABLE

I want you to think back, very carefully -- what did Cage say during your patrol? Anything about any of his fellow officers?

WILSON

Nothing.

CONSTABLE

I see.

WILSON

Constable, if we don't do something now, if we don't try to prove him innocent, Cage will die. Everyone in that prison's got beef with him.

CONSTABLE

Good luck on your first patrol, son. Keep your wits about you.

The Constable moves off to tend to the other graduates, leaving Wilson to his thoughts.

The sound of DRAGGING CHAINS--

INT. CORRIDOR - PRISON - PLANET ARENA - [PERMANENT NIGHT]

A pair of SHACKLED BOOTS as they march -- march -- march.

Casting long shadows, CAGE and other new arrivals are led down a dreary corridor lined with cells. Weird SHOUTS. Alien YAMMERING.

HANDS and TENTACLES grab at Cage through the bars.

ALIEN

...Finally in Hell NOW, Cage...

CYBORG

...Been waiting for you, handsome -- You on the WRONG side of the walls...

HUMAN

...Gonna finish what we started...

Cage's eyes.

GLIMMER (V.O.)

Behold.

INT. RECEIVING - PRISON - NIGHT

Steam HISSES from leaky pipes in a cold, gloomy holding tank. Twenty steel ROBOT GUARDS stand at synchronized attention: humorless machines in immaculate uniforms, oil-black boots.

GLIMMER  
--Your new masters.

Water drips onto the convicts, opposite. CAGE dead center.

Glimmer signals the Guards. They grab the convicts and proceed to cut their clothes off.

GLIMMER  
You are no longer Convicts, my despicable bunch of felons. You are now Contestants. Whatever your crime, Arena is the perfect courtroom, where every trial is combat, every sentence death.

The Contestants stand bare in the chill.

GLIMMER  
But if you manage to win TEN battles? You will be granted a full Pardon, endorsed by the Grand Constable himself.

Glimmer faces Cage.

GLIMMER  
Some of you think you don't belong here. Some of you will howl your innocence up to the stars. But when you step under the heat of the lights and the cameras, and death is all around you, only one thing matters. Victory.

Guards distribute JUMPSUITS to Contestants. A glowing "0" on each chest.

GLIMMER  
You are in my world now. Every other Contestant wants you dead.  
(to Cage)  
And some even more than others.

He claps his hands.

GLIMMER  
Let's have a show!

INT. COMMON AREA - PRISON - NIGHT

Now wearing the jumpsuits, the new Contestants pass under wall-mounted CAMERAS and emerge into a big hall that BOOMS like a gymnasium.

Cage steps out last, sees the dark dungeon. Criss-crossing walkways, crawling with Contestants -- a variety of NUMBERS on their suits. Fierce convicts prowl and slink around like jungle predators.

A FOUR-ARMED alien bumps into a burly CYBORG and a scuffle breaks out. Other Contestants crowd around, but Cage watches from a distance.

A twitchy little man taps Cage's elbow, talks rapid-fire.

KUCKOO

Hey, isn't you that big policeman?  
You killed that justice lady bad.

Cage scowls, his eyes on the fight. Four-arms has Cyborg by the throat and pummels the guy's torso with his two free hands.

KUCKOO

They call me Kuckoo, the who to  
know the whats to know. Once and  
future pickpocket, but I also do a  
little freelance larceny--

Guards rush in to stop the tussle.

GUARD #1

(filtered)

Save it for the arena, dirtbags!

--but they're too late because the Cyborg breaks the hold, grabs one arm and SPLITS OPEN the alien's shoulder to the ribs -- Four-arms WAILS -- The other Contestants go nuts and congratulate the Cyborg.

GUARD #1

Can medical patch him?

GUARD #2

No. Too far gone.

GUARD #1

Feed him to the Furnace.

They drag the writhing creature past Kuckoo and Cage.

KUCKOO  
Nobody comes back from the Furnace.

CAGE  
My cell. Where.

KUCKOO  
Oh it's up -- up the way a ways.

Kuckoo points through a mass of inmates to a STAIRCASE.

KUCKOO  
You're new so I'd wait for the  
guards to escort me. But you've  
seen the show before, right?  
(no response)  
Right?

Cage starts walking the LONG WALK towards the stairs.

One-by-one, Contestants take notice and go quiet. All stop  
what they're doing and eye-fuck Cage. A deadly silence --  
each footfall RINGS through the hall.

Cage keeps moving towards a knot of Contestants.

Several little ones surround a BIG HUMAN, massaging him like  
he's a boxer in the ring. The man shrugs them off and steps  
into Cage's path -- a beaming, hideous face.

RAZOR  
And it isn't even my birthday.

Cage glares.

RAZOR  
Didn't I say you'd see me soon?

CAGE  
Right where you belong.

RAZOR  
(to all)  
Cons? I'd like to introduce an old  
friend of mine...

Cage pushes his way past.

RAZOR  
The great Joseph Cage. Many of you  
know his work: he put you here.  
Let's give our newest inmate a  
hand, everybody.

A round of nasty APPLAUSE grows and grows, with WHOOPS and HOLLERS thrown in. All eyes on Cage as he climbs the stairs.

Mounted cameras rotate after him.

GUARD (V.O.)

All Contestants -- to your cells --  
all Contestants to cells...

INT. CAGE'S CELL - CELLBLOCKS - MOMENTS LATER

Cage walks the hall. Cons stare at him from their cells.

He keeps moving until one of his boots BEEPS. The heavy, barred door of his own dark cell slides open, CREAKING in its track. He pauses at this final threshold.

The open cube gapes at him.

A flat metal bed. Toilet. Pile of scraps. Trash from the previous occupant.

His own tiny HELL. Cage starts inside but--

BOSS GUARD

(deep)

Ask permission to enter.

Cage looks at him, then moves towards the cell anyway. The BOSS GUARD cracks him in the sternum.

BOSS GUARD

Ask permission to enter.

CAGE

I'm an Officer of the Law.

He's answered with a baton to the jaw.

BOSS GUARD

Said ask.

CAGE

(furious)

Permission -- to enter.

If robots could smile.

BOSS GUARD

Granted.

Finally Cage steps inside. The Boss Guard SLAMS the door behind him and clomps off.

Cage stares at the blank wall.

He curls his fingers. A fist.

He drives the fist into the wall. Cracks run. BLOOD flows.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Hey, I'm trying to sleep.

Cage steps back, looks around. Then he looks UP through the barred ceiling. And in the cell above:

AMARA peers over the edge of her bed, a "1" on her chest and a red smear on her forehead.

For a moment she looks confused to see him, too -- then she gives in to breathless LAUGHTER.

AMARA

Let me guess: jaywalking.

No response.

AMARA

--Hopped a turnstile. Littering?

No response.

AMARA

I got it: ripped a mother from her child. Shattered a family.

Amara stops laughing, comes close to the floor.

AMARA

I'm going to see my daughter again.  
I'm getting out. Just wait 'til  
they put you and me in the arena.  
I'll kill you as quick as I did  
that -- that other one.

Cage points at his face.

CAGE

You got some...

AMARA

Another day or two here, this blood  
will be yours.

She curls out of view. Something SLITHERS around Cage's feet. Lights flicker. The crunchy sound of FEEDBACK.

GLIMMER (V.O.)  
 (public address)  
 ...Lights out, Contestants, lights  
 out...

Cage watches a TENTACLE rise from the floor.

GLIMMER (V.O.)  
 I would say sleep well, but all the  
 nightmares live down here now.

The tentacle tip unfolds: a horrible, staring EYE.

GLIMMER (V.O.)  
 Tomorrow's a big day.

The KA-CHUNK of a switch. The prison plunged into darkness.

A lone CRY in the black.

Cage is a statue.

INT. TOMB OF HEROES - DAY

Sunshine. Trees. A vast monument to fallen Officers.

Wilson moves along walls of smooth marble crypts. Faces of  
 dead cops stare back at him. A slot marked "WILSON".

A smiling portrait of a man and woman in uniform. Wilson  
 spruces up the flowers. The CRACK of gunfire--

Wilson looks up and across the tombs -- laserblasts rise into  
 the sky. A COP FUNERAL is disbanding at

ANOTHER CRYPT

Where Officer JONES watches Wilson move against the tide of  
 cops. Menacing.

She turns and vanishes.

WILSON stands before the freshly-sealed slot. WORKERS fasten  
 a picture of the late BINGO in place.

CARETAKER  
 ...Easiest job I done.

A man in an old, dirty cop uniform with a broom sweeps dead  
 flowers away from the graves.

WILSON  
 What's that?

CARETAKER

Empty casket, light as a innocent  
heart. Want to pay respects, best  
pay them someplace else.

The Caretaker shuffles off, HUMMING the Arena theme song.

WILSON

No body, no death...

On the face of Bingo, a slight smile.

Almost a challenge.

WILSON

You're alive.

INT. TRAINING ROOM - ACADEMY - DAY

Wilson watches a new class of Cadets run drills on the  
training floor below. The Constable approaches, cheery.

CONSTABLE

How's the beat, Officer?

WILSON

Another class so soon.

CONSTABLE

Increased Arena revenue has allowed  
us to scale up recruitment. Each  
new boot on the ground is a step  
towards absolute Order...

WILSON

I've been thinking about Cage--

CONSTABLE

Yes, he who was once our brightest  
light has become our darkest shame.

WILSON

I'd like permission--

The Constable calls down to some Cadets.

CONSTABLE

Watch your corners!

CADET

Sir, yes sir!

WILSON

--I'd like permission to start an internal investigation. Officer Jones was angry, she had motive to--

The Constable stops.

CONSTABLE

When have we ever re-opened a case?

WILSON

Never.

CONSTABLE

Because we are never wrong. Jones is one of my most trusted.

WILSON

It doesn't add up, that Cage would gut Mother's systems--

CONSTABLE

The case remains closed.

(touches Wilson's arm)

You're an Officer now, Wilson. You have taken the oath to give your all and everything for the G.P.F. Promise me you won't pursue this matter further. Son?

Wilson salutes, starts off.

WILSON

Yes sir.

CONSTABLE

With Mother gone, so must the Law live on in our officers.

Wilson picks up his pace, goes. Below, a Cadet STUMBLES.

CONSTABLE

No no, that's how you get your point man killed.

INT. DINING ROOM - ALIEN HOUSE - NIGHT

An ALIEN FAMILY slurps dinner. The KIDS fiddle around with their comms. They speak an alien language, SUBTITLED:

DAD

Turn on Arena, hon.

MOM  
Not while we're eating.

The Dad twirls noodles.

DAD  
They got a new Contestant. A  
former cop.

The Mom raises whatever approximates eyebrows.

INT. CORRIDOR - PRISON - NIGHT

Cage opens his eyes -- a light shines on his face. Then dims. Shines again. Dims again. Cage looks down at his chest, where the "0" is slowly pulsating -- he is pushed forward on a hov-cart, in six-point restraints.

GLIMMER (O.S.)  
Contestant.

Cage turns his eyes -- Glimmer's face beside his.

GLIMMER  
Ready?

Cage stares ahead.

JONES (V.O.)  
Turn it on.

INT. ACADEMY BAR - CONTINUOUS

Officer JONES flags the bartender.

JONES  
Somebody I want to see die.

The guy shrugs, flicks on the big WALL-SCREEN:

And this is it.

A FIELD OF STARS. Intense, upbeat MUSIC like a futuristic *American Idol*. Synth guitars WAIL as a fiery comet erupts from the void. Music BUILDS. The comet flies at the screen and morphs into the sparkling face of--

GLIMMER (V.O.)  
 Get rrrready for the most bone-  
 crushing, gut-splattering,  
 adrenaline-spiking televid in the  
 galaxy, where convicted criminals  
battle to the death -- LIVE!

The logo SWEEPS into view: two manacled hands, one human, one alien. Both hold jagged implements of death.

GLIMMER (V.O.)  
 This. Is. ARENA!

INT. TAXI - IN TRAFFIC - CONTINUOUS

WILSON bangs on the divider glass.

WILSON  
 Can you hurry it up.

But the driver is chatting away in an alien tongue, taking his sweet time. Wilson looks over to watch the Arena intro on the backseat VIEW-SET that takes over the screen--

--Where a huge, ferocious HUMAN appears. A bull's neck and a bad attitude. His stats scroll.

A throaty ANNOUNCER (not Glimmer) intros the fighters:

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
 ...Meet notorious child killer  
Gorgola. Born in the gutters of  
 Planet Merton and raised by a gang  
 of murderous thieves, Gorgola  
 developed a taste for sadism early.

STILL IMAGES of his many young victims.

Heartbroken parents. Crime scenes.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
 Now in a death match with disgraced  
 G.P.F. Officer Joseph Cage, the  
same cop who busted him last month.

CAGE appears under studio lights.

On a screen beside him, footage of Cage shooting, busting perps, reading Rights. STATS roll.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
He was the toughest cop in the  
galaxy, until he threw it all  
away...

IMAGES of the Sanctum. Mother Justice. A state funeral.

STILLS of Cage cuffed, booked, jailed.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Cage deactivated Mother Justice,  
the high priestess of the Galactic  
Police Force. Jealous rage from a  
spurned admirer, or a calculated  
power grab? We may never know.

GLIMMER  
And here he is -- the cop-turned-  
killer, himself!  
(sticks mic in Cage's face)  
Anything to say in your own  
defense?

Cage stares ahead. Impassive.

Glimmer whips around to CAMERA.

GLIMMER  
Who will win: the vicious Gorgola  
or ex-cop Joseph Cage? Find out  
next, only on ArrrrrrrENA!

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
...Yours by subscription only...

A phone number FLASHES.

INT. STUDIO - PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Glimmer gets the all-clear from TECHNICIANS. He looks at  
Cage, whose eyes are closed.

GLIMMER  
It's time, Officer. Prepare  
yourself.

CAGE  
I don't belong with these  
criminals. I won't fight.

GLIMMER  
Then you will die.

Cage scowls. Glimmer comes in close.

GLIMMER

It doesn't matter to me if you are guilty or innocent. I don't care if you were called names at school, I don't care for extenuating circumstances, I don't care if you think the System failed you. If you don't fight, you can't win. If you don't fight, you won't survive long enough to prove your story. But what if you do fight?

The Guards take hold of Cage, pull him towards the door.

GLIMMER

And what if you win?

INT. DEPLOY TUBE - PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Cage is shoved into a slim elevator. Guards slam the door behind and there is a loud GRIND of machinery.

High above, a hatch at the top of the shaft pops open.

Cage's voice ECHOES in the narrow metal tube.

CAGE

Mother Justice...

The floor rises -- Cage is lifted towards a CIRCLE OF LIGHT.

CAGE

Give me strength.

As Cage ascends, the walls of the tube SLIDE OPEN with a HISS to reveal:

WEAPONS. Bladed and grisly. An unbelievable array of laser-swords, rifles, spiked balls, hydra-heads, skullcracks, etc.

Cage GRUNTS.

But before he can make his choice, the walls snap shut

And Cage, unarmed, is driven upwards into--

EXT. THE ARENA - CONTINUOUS

A nightmare.

Cage's head rises through the hole. The rest of him.

He sees the battlefield with incredible CLARITY:

Sun-hot STADIUM LIGHTS.

A PYRAMID of scrap metal.

To one side, an ominous GATE.

CAMERA CREWS flit overhead on hov-platforms. Their engines HUMMMM beneath a floating, multi-screen SCOREBOARD with max-def mugshots of--

*Ex-Cop JOSEPH CAGE*

*Child Murderer GORGOLA*

Cage isn't happy.

*Whooooshh...!* INCOMING!

His training kicks in and he dodges -- a huge TRIDENT buries its barbs beside him -- POUNDING steps -- Cage spins to avoid the swing of a massive AXE wielded by the hideous GORGOLA.

GORGOLA

We meet again, Cop!

Cage dives for the trident, pulls, rips the weapon free just in time to block the next axe-blow, CLANG! Knocked to one knee. Gorgola swings again, CLEAVES the earth. Cage rolls.

He looks to the peak of the metal mountain. In a halo of light: a BLASTER RIFLE.

This he must have.

GORGOLA

Gorgola has been waiting for this.

CAGE

You monster. Had to keep their little shoes, didn't you?

GORGOLA

Yesss.

Gorgola SWINGS but Cage dodges -- He scrambles up the hill towards the rifle.

GORGOLA

Where you going, boyfriend?

From the BLACK GATE, a blood-chilling ROAR.

Cage and Gorgola freeze. Turn. The gate SNAPS open and a dozen EYES light up the blackness.

A huge MONSTER comes SCREAMING out of the hole. THE XENO: a hairy tornado of tentacles and claws.

Cage and Gorgola curse, then run uphill. The beast lunges. Gorgola slams it with his axe -- it SHRIEKS and changes direction. Cage climbs towards the blaster -- The monster tears at Cage and Cage gets low, BURIES the trident in the thing's side as the creature GASHES Cage with a claw but overshoots -- it GROWLS as it digs in, spins around and comes back for more. It goes for Gorgola -- Cage gets closer to the top -- The rifle almost within reach but the scrap metal shifts and Cage stumbles--

The monster swings a huge tentacle and SWATS Gorgola aside -- it turns on Cage and races up the hill at him and it's coming like death -- Cage reaches for the gun -- the Xeno ROARS and opens many jaws and

Cage GRABS THE BLASTER RIFLE and spin-cocks it and with a YELL Cage UNLOADS THE MAGAZINE into the monster's throat -- flesh RENDS and DISINTEGRATES, bones SHATTER -- the creature emits a DEAFENING HOWL as eternity claims it...

The Xeno collapses with a WHIMPER and a geyser of blue blood and Cage stares at it but the battle isn't over because

He turns to see GORGOLA--

GORGOLA

Ha hah!

--who SLICES Cage's rifle in two. He gloats over Cage.

GORGOLA

Now it is the cop who is busted!

CAGE

Should never have arrested you.  
I should have killed you.

GORGOLA

Ahh, but then Gorgola wouldn't get to have his way with you.

(shows rotten teeth)

And on TV!

He lifts his axe for the deathblow--

GORGOLA

Gorgola!!!

--but suddenly stops. The not-quite-dead Xeno has a TENTACLE around Gorgola's leg. Gorgola kicks it away but Cage swings his broken gun up into Gorgola's chin, POW!!! Lays him flat.

GORGOLA

Gorgola?

Cage SLAMS the jagged barrel deep into the criminal's heart and Gorgola GASPS, eyes full of hatred. MUSIC.

Gorgola grabs Cage's throat, squeezes.

GORGOLA

(spitting blood)

Gorgola... will say hello... to  
Mother Justice for you!

His eyes go cloudy.

INT. ACADEMY BAR - CONTINUOUS

Cadets SHOUT and CLAP. Jones bangs down her glass.

JONES

Lucky shot...

*BWWWAANNGGG!* a KLAXON blares.

INT. THE ARENA - CONTINUOUS

Cage rubs his throat, looks up at a RED FLASHING LIGHT: "Gorgola" is wiped from the standings, while "Cage" edges onto the bottom of the board.

GLIMMER (V.O.)

You win, Contestant. Return to  
your cell.

Camera Crews hover over Cage -- The glowing "0" on his jumpsuit BLINKS, BLINKS again -- Changes to a "1".

INT. CONTROL BOX - PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Bustling technicians, dozens of monitors, and GLIMMER.

He watches the victorious Cage stagger towards an open gate. Glimmer shows a bit of a smile:

He has a fighter.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SANCTUM - DAY

Wilson at the top of the steps. Tall WRECKER machines perched on either side.

WILSON

No.

The Sanctum lies in RUINS.

A section topples, spewing dust. The scope of the destruction registers on Wilson's face.

He ducks under the << DO NOT PASS >> beams, careful not to disturb crumbling piles of slag. Something in the debris catches his eye. He pushes bricks aside to find--

The small EFFIGY of Mother. Once the holder of the FLAME.

Wilson slips the icon into his pocket. He moves to the edge and looks down:

Low-slung buildings. An open bazaar. The big round SEWER outflows, pumping fluid.

JONES (O.S.)

Not so close to the edge.

Wilson jumps back.

JONES

Some get close, they fall.

WILSON

Like Bingo did.

Jones looks over the ruins.

JONES

You best go home, boy. Let the real cops work.

Wilson watches her go. He shivers.

INSTRUCTOR TOMAS (V.O.)

I can't help you.

INT. CLASSROOM - ACADEMY - DAY

Cadets exit past a formidable police INSTRUCTOR. He swipes a hand, erasing the notes of his last class from the vid-board.

WILSON

The video's above my clearance.

INSTRUCTOR TOMAS

So the rook comes to me.

WILSON

One of our own officers set up Cage.

Tomas looks around. Motions Wilson close. Into his ear:

INSTRUCTOR TOMAS

You always were a pain.

INT. TOMAS' OFFICE - ACADEMY - DAY

Tomas and Wilson huddle around a small screen.

INSTRUCTOR TOMAS

There's Cage, climbing the steps.

WILSON

Why does he draw his weapon, there?

INSTRUCTOR TOMAS

So he can blast apart Mother Justice's mainframe and erase the central Code of Laws.

WILSON

What can't we see from this angle?

INSTRUCTOR TOMAS

Face it -- Nobody on the Force liked Cage...

WILSON

This is high up, we should be able to see the sewer outflows, below. But where are they?

INSTRUCTOR TOMAS

He thought he was above us all...

WILSON

Compare with the previous day.

Wilson taps the screen.

Tomas rubs his chin.

INSTRUCTOR TOMAS  
Sewers don't vanish overnight.

WILSON  
No, they don't.

INT. MEDBAY - PRISON - NIGHT

Cage, stripped to the waist, is held down by a ceiling-mounted ROBOT SURGEON with eight arms.

CAGE  
Not injured.

The Surgeon is directed by a doctor in a surgical mask -- A doctor with two-colored eyes. AMARA.

CAGE  
Back to playing doctor.

AMARA  
(to Surgeon, points)  
There and there. Cauterize.

The Surgeon hones in on Cage's shoulder wound. CAUTERIZES with a laser. He grits his teeth.

AMARA  
It was a long time ago.

CAGE  
Aeons.

AMARA  
You skipped out.

CAGE  
You blame me.

AMARA  
Not for leaving. For being gone  
before you left.

She moves to a wounded, three-armed Contestant on a nearby bed. Orderlies move about carrying supplies, etc.

AMARA (CONT'D)  
(to Surgeon)  
Amputate. Here.

THREE-ARMS

Take another arm I'm dead--

AMARA

My job is to keep you breathing 'til  
the next battle.

The SURGEON's spin-saw GRINDS. Amara raises her voice.

AMARA

There's a pool. Ten-to-one you  
don't make it to the third fight.

Cage frowns. She starts out.

CAGE

Amara.

She stops but doesn't look at him.

AMARA

Want to live? Grow eyes on the  
back of your head.

She exits, leaving Cage to the Surgeon and the Orderlies.

Cage watches her go, pulls his jumpsuit on.

One of the Orderlies passes Cage's bed. The guy drops some  
supplies...

ORDERLY

Pardon--

Cage notices the convict JUMPSUIT underneath the man's coat.  
His eyes narrow. The man POPS UP holding a metal SHIV.

ORDERLY / ASSASSIN

This is for the innocent!

He STABS! But Cage is too fast -- he grabs the knife-arm and  
pulls the guy over the medbed. They CRASH into the next bed,  
the Surgeon waving his many limbs in quiet panic.

THREE MORE ORDERLIES come out of nowhere and lunge at Cage.  
It's FOUR-on-ONE.

Cage cold-cocks the first guy and slugs the second one in the  
sternum -- that one flies into the third, and Cage sweeps out  
the knees of the fourth.

The first Assassin knocks a table onto Cage and runs -- Cage  
tackles him.

INT. COMMON AREA - PRISON

Other Contestants catch sight of the struggle through the Medbay window, gather round. KUCKOO waves Amara back over.

KUCKOO

Hey what what, watch the Copman.

IN THE MEDBAY

Cage grabs one of the Surgeon's ARMS. He points at the Assassin's face and FIRES... a jet of water.

Cage takes another arm and lights up the LAZ-SAW. A SCREAM.

The Assassin drops to the floor, his whole head cauterized.

The three other killers back away.

Run for it.

Cage looks up -- sees DOZENS of Contestants at the glass.

CAGE

Move along, convicts. Nothing to see here.

They disperse. Amara and Kuckoo remain.

CAGE

(to Amara)  
Growing some eyes.

INT. COMMON AREA - PRISON - LATER

Glimmer paces before the assembled prisoners. The three would-be ASSASSINS stand before the others, hands bound.

GLIMMER

Combat. It stays in the arena.  
(re: Assassins)  
Pick one. Kill him.

The Boss Guard takes hold of one, forces the man to his knees. Squeeze the man's temples.

GLIMMER

No no, the Furnace. Less mess.

Cage steps forward.

BOSS GUARD

Back in place, maggot. I said--

CAGE  
Galactic Code 541, Section 29: it  
is not within a warden's authority  
to execute convicts without express  
G.P.F. approval.

GLIMMER  
You ask mercy for a man who would  
murder you?

CAGE  
Not mercy. The Law.

BOSS GUARD  
Our Host will not be instructed in  
Law by a criminal.

CAGE  
Then he will be wrong.

The Contestants look between Cage and Glimmer.

Glimmer suddenly SMILES.

GLIMMER  
Wonderful! A true lawman.

He turns to the Boss Guard.

GLIMMER  
You heard him! Release this fool.  
(growls at cons)  
Back to your cells!

The Boss Guard GLARES at Cage, reluctantly drops his victim.

The guy looks up at Cage, shaken. His face MORPHS, cycling  
through different features -- a shifter.

He holds out a translucent hand.

PERCIVAL  
My name is Percival.

CAGE  
I don't care.

Cage stalks off.

EXT. SEWER OUTFLOW - DAY

A vast, circular tunnel.

Wilson steels himself and steps inside. He tries to keep to the edge, above water, but his boots stick in the muck.

WILSON  
Euyyyeuch.

He moves deeper into the--

INT. SEWER CONDUIT - CONTINUOUS

Wilson trips, drops his flashlight in the sludge.

WILSON  
Perfect.

He listens. The sound of the flowing sewage. But something else, too.

Improbably, the muffled sound of TV STATIC.

Wilson follows the hiss to an indentation in the pipe wall. He pries opens a panel to reveal a ROOM. Wilson steps inside and sees--

INT. HIDDEN ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A COP sits in a chair, in front of a screen showing SNOW.

WILSON  
Officer Bingo? It's me, Wilson--

Wilson turns Bingo around but

His GOUGED-OUT EYES stare at nothing.

Wilson recoils from the dead man, backing into the viewscreen, which falls and SHATTERS. The room goes black and Wilson fumbles towards the sewer, RETCHING.

INT. MESS HALL - PRISON - NIGHT

Contestants carry trays in a line. From a slit in the wall, an ARM ladles slop into bowls. PLOP.

Behind Cage, a reptilian convict.

SALAMANDER  
Like I've... been saying. The  
cops, they only bust non-humans.

CAGE  
Case Number 251979. Planet  
Malagua. Thirty counts Skyjacking.  
Four hundred sixty counts Murder.

SALAMANDER  
Good... guess.

CAGE  
Doesn't matter if you're red, blue,  
you got skin or scales. Do the  
crime, do the time.

AMARA  
(behind Cage)  
And some even do the time without  
the crime.

Right as Cage is about to get his food, Amara jumps him in  
line. The ladle serves Amara.

CAGE  
Get back. The rules are all we  
have left.

AMARA  
Had a long shift.

CAGE  
Back in your place.

AMARA  
You gonna make me, Joe?

Razor CLAPS.

RAZOR  
Ooo-wee this shit is better than  
television.

He sidles up next to Amara.

RAZOR (CONT'D)  
This man bothering you, miss? If  
you'd care to dine in my private  
quarters...

AMARA  
One creep for another? No thanks.

He takes her tray, UPENDS it -- the food goes all over her.  
Razor wipes some off and sucks his fingers.

RAZOR  
I get so clumsy.

Amara fumes. KUCKOO holds her back.

KUCKOO  
Think of your girl.

RAZOR  
Mmm, I'll be thinking of her too.  
Then the both of you together...

He saunters off. Amara takes Cage's tray, storms past to--

THE MESS TABLES

Loaded with Contestants. Self-segregated groups of aliens, humans, cyborgs. Amara sits with Kuckoo, the one-handed OLD MAN NEWTON (wrapped in a bubble of sadness) and a few others.

CAGE  
That's my plate.

AMARA  
Get your own.

Cage YANKS the tray away--

AMARA  
Hey!

--and moves to another table in the middle and sits down with his meal. All but one of the aliens leave.

Cage lifts the tiny fork with massive fingers. He tries to eat the stew but it slips through.

SALAMANDER  
My friend I'm... upset with you.

CAGE  
Take a number. Let me eat.

SALAMANDER  
You... shouldn't have killed my brother.

CAGE  
Shouldn't have drawn on an Officer.

SALAMANDER  
Soon you die. I win the Pardon, I go free. The galaxy is waiting.

CAGE

You will be put down like the rest.

Salamander slithers away. Amara looks over, arms crossed.

AMARA

You got a lot of experience with that. Like with Mother Justice.

Cage stands up. Amara too. Cage steps forward, but--

AMARA

Where's your gun, cop? Your badge? In here you can't call for backup.

CAGE

Never have.

KUCKOO

Uh that's great guys. But where's everybody else all of a sudden?

Kuckoo indicates the otherwise empty mess hall. Curious.

The numbers on their suits PULSATE. A CLINKING sound.

All eyes fall on a FORK as it vibrates.

OLD MAN NEWTON

Oh no.

The fork rattles across the tabletop towards the edge, falls.

*PING!*

The floor SPLITS OPEN.

The crack WIDENS. Cage and others jump back. Their mess table tilts, DROPS through. There's nowhere to go and the hole gets BIGGER. Trays and utensils tumble into the gap.

The sound of grinding metal is matched by the sudden PEAL of Arena's THEME MUSIC. Seven Contestants -- Old Man Newton, Amara, Kuckoo, Cage and four others -- DROP into the chasm.

INT. THE BOWL - ARENA - CONTINUOUS

They're surrounded by thick SMOKE in some huge pit.

A mechanical GROAN. All look up as the mess hall rises out of sight.

AMARA  
Who are we fighting?

INT. VARIOUS VIEWER LOCATIONS - CONTINUOUS

People on sofas, benches, barstools, ready for carnage. THEY at least were expecting this battle...

Amara coils for combat.

INT. AUNT FINNA'S - CONTINUOUS

Amara's daughter JUJU, glued to a screen. Her Aunt Finna carries her out.

FINNA  
Don't watch, sweetie. Don't watch.

INT. THE BOWL - CONTINUOUS

Amara goes right for Cage! A flurry of KICKS.

He holds up fists to block. Amara lands a brutal punch but Cage grabs her arm, locks it. He stares into the smoke.

KUCKOO  
What is it, cop?

CAGE  
There.

Nothing but gray.

AMARA  
I don't see anything.

OLD MAN NEWTON  
He's right. Look...

An ominous RED GLOW, getting brighter.

CAGE  
Get down.

KUCKOO  
Huh?

AMARA  
Down!

They dive for cover behind concrete boulders as three enormous LAZ BEAMS slam into the ground -- WHAM WHAM WHAM! like an EARTHQUAKE, showering them with dirt.

Smoke CLEARS to reveal

A deep BOWL, pocked with fiery craters and dozens of luminous yellow MINES poking out like cabbages. And worse:

A fast-moving, six-legged TANK with a short barrel.

CAGE

Laz-cannon.

GLIMMER (V.O.)

One team finds itself exposed on open terrain against skyjacker SALAMANDER and his crew! Doesn't look good for Amara and friends in today's SURPRISE BATTLE!

AMARA

Friends, huh.

ONE CONTESTANT is paralyzed in the open.

CONTESTANT

We're dead! Look at us. Ohh...

CAGE

Take cover now!

The cannon ROTATES towards the guy.

INT. ACADEMY BAR - CONTINUOUS

Police CADETS watch. They bang their mugs on the bar.

CADETS

Waste him. Waste him. Waste him.

IN THE ARENA

The dazed Contestant doesn't move. Cage scowls.

Cage gets up, dashes towards him but--

More FLASHES of burning red and

WHAM! -- the man is SCORCHED TO A SKELETON before Cage's eyes. Cage DODGES another beam -- he falls into a ditch but stops himself before hitting a glowing MINE.

GLIMMER (V.O.)  
It isn't right and it certainly  
isn't fair -- But it's fun.

CAGE's singed suit throws wisps of smoke. He looks at the other convicts.

This is the team he has to work with.

CAGE  
We'll take the tank. Old police  
riot control model.

KUCKOO  
Not to be a downer but they got a  
big laser gun in a mobile metal  
box. We got no cover, no chance.

Cage lifts the mess table, kicks off the LEGS.

KUCKOO  
Um.

The tank turns towards the group. The cannon FIRES,  
relentless. At the helm:

SALAMANDER  
Come out... come out!

CAGE  
We'll play it like a police raid.  
Amara, Kooky and you -- flank left.

KUCKOO  
Kuckoo.

CAGE  
They've only got one cannon. Split  
the fire and punish them.

Suddenly two flying GUN-PODS disengage from the tank --  
faster than airbikes. They HUM and WHIZ over the field.

OLD MAN NEWTON  
Oh dear me.

IN ONE POD'S COCKPIT

The pilot sneers, squeezes the trigger.

THE TWO PODS

scream in FAST, spraying blaster fire. No way to get cover.  
They fly by, barely missing each other.

FROM ABOVE

The two gun-pods make a big arc around Cage and Amara's team. The tank moves up the middle.

CAGE

Is somehow calm. Kuckoo looks at him like he's crazy.

AMARA  
(to Cage)  
Wait for the next pass.

THE PODS loop back around. Closer...

AMARA  
Now.

Cage hurls a FOOD TRAY like a DISCUS -- it smashes the first pod's glass cockpit. Cage's team DUCKS as the pod SWERVES left and plows through its twin.

One pod EXPLODES and the other flips end-over-end.

It SLAMS into the ground and rolls, coming to rest only inches from a yellow mine. The PILOT looks at it, relieved. The mine turns red.

PILOT  
(covers face)  
Auggghh!

BEHIND CAGE

KABOOM. A fireball.

CAGE  
Amara -- go. The rest of you  
convicts, stay on me.

AMARA'S GROUP - SPRINTING

then waiting for the cannon to fire -- BOOM BOOM! -- and moving for cover as it reloads.

CAGE'S GROUP - RUNNING

toward the tank through acrid smoke. They dodge blasterfire from the tank roof gunner.

AMARA'S GROUP - RUNNING

One guy trips and a beam ROARS past, but Kuckoo drags him on.

Closer to the tank now -- Amara pulls ahead.

KUCKOO

Amara!?

AMARA and another Contestant duck fire, running right under the legs of the tank. They track with it. Careful...

One of the legs FLATTENS her teammate.

GLIMMER (V.O.)

Ohhhhhhh!

Amara takes a moment to give a fuck-you salute to Cage. She reaches out and JAMS the TABLE LEG into the cannon's mouth.

Cage steps out, waves his arms.

OLD MAN NEWTON

It's about to fire!

GLIMMER (V.O.)

Cage is really asking for it--

The CANNON pivots. A point of RED LIGHT grows in the throat of the barrel -- Amara dives and

BOOM! A DEVASTATING EXPLOSION carves a gaping, molten HOLE in the tank. A CAMERA PLATFORM swings over the destruction--

CAMERAMAN

What a shot!

Three ARMORED FIGHTERS emerge from the hole, SALAMANDER at the head of the pack. He charges with his squad -- they hurl HOMING javelins that correct their flight paths. Cage, Amara and others sidestep the first volley but one of their teammates is struck and he topples into a pit and DETONATES another mine. BANG! Plume of smoke.

FIRST FIGHTER

Murder them!

Cage swings a tray across the first Fighter's cheek, CLANG! His team swarms the Fighter, PUMMELING him. The second Fighter swings his glowing LIGHTWHIP and it wraps around Cage's arm, starts to HISS and BURN.

Cage yanks the man forward and gets the whip around the guy's own neck. Cage pulls all the way through.

INT. DINING ROOM - ALIEN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The Alien Mom and Dad cover their eyes.

MOM AND DAD

Ohhhh...

KID

Awesome!

IN THE ARENA

Amara sees SALAMANDER sneaking up behind Cage.

She could. She could let him die. He creeps closer...

AMARA

Behind you!

Salamander hisses and SLASHES Amara across the side. She staggers back.

Cage, Salamander GRAPPLE -- Salamander tears the whip from Cage's grasp! -- a Camera platform above -- Salamander CRACKS his whip.

Cage and team close in.

But Salamander whips the platform's landing ski -- He pulls the tether -- The platform tilts with a REV of its thrusters--

PLATFORM PILOT

What the!?

--and Salamander LEAPS ABOARD. He tosses the stunned Pilot out of his seat, takes the controls.

The Cameraman keeps filming.

One of Salamander's teammates tries to climb on too. He kicks the guy's face -- falls -- an aborted YELP.

SALAMANDER

Two is company.

Salamander sneers at his enemies below.

SALAMANDER

We'll finish this... later!

He opens up the throttle, rockets the platform towards the jumbo SCOREBOARD -- could he get out?

CAGE ties the other end of the lightwhip to the dead tank.

CAGE  
There is no escape.

The platform plummets. Explodes.

"Salamander" is WIPED OFF the board.

A blood-spattered CAGE looks around at the survivors -- They look at him -- Behind them, the tank and platform BURN -- Ash falls like snow. It's over.

INT. VARIOUS VIEWER LOCATIONS - CONTINUOUS

as VIEWERS around the galaxy erupt in CHEERS and APPLAUSE.

INT. AUNT FINNA'S - CONTINUOUS

Finna and Juju jump in celebration. Hug each other.

GLIMMER (V.O.)  
Salamander gets puh-puh-PUNISHED as Joseph Cage pulls together a ragtag team of convicts and makes magic happen...

IN THE ARENA

Kuckoo takes Cage's hand, raises it into the air. Survivors raise fists -- Newton his stump. Cage sees the GASH in Amara's side, the spreading blood. Kuckoo steadies her.

Their suit numbers all increase by **ONE**.

A "3" on Cage's chest. CAMERAS crowd around. He faces one.

CAGE  
In the name of Mother Justice I will win ten battles and the Pardon. I will clear my name.

INT. VARIOUS VIEWER LOCATIONS - CONTINUOUS

Cage stares out from screens.

CAGE (V.O.)  
And then I will come for you. In whatever corner of the galaxy you hide -- I'll find you. And you will know justice.

VIEWERS hold their voting remotes.

CAGE (V.O.)

Watch me.

One swings a dial to the right. On the Scoreboard, "Cage" climbs the rankings, jumps a dozen names.

Cage heads off of the field. Others straggle behind.

The image BLANKS OUT

Replaced by the buzzing STANDBY SCREEN. The Arena LOGO (two manacled hands, bloody scimitar in each) rotates like a GLOBE.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

...Stay tuned for your chance to WIN! That's right. Ten LUCKY subscribers will receive ringside seats to Arena's gore-drenched kill-pits, where--

BURST OF STATIC--

The channel FLIPS to

A COZY ROOM. Fireplace. Easy-listening MUSIC.

Adorable kittens on a bed play with balls of yarn.

DEEP SMOOTH VOICE (V.O.)

Hey, it's a tough galaxy. Why not relax with your good fr--

BURST OF STATIC--

ADVERTISEMENT -- a masked BURGLAR creeps up to a parked car.

AD ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

--willing to do what it takes to keep your property safe?

He jimmyes the lock, looks up at the MACHINEGUN on the car's roof. It FILLS the guy with holes.

AD ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Trust the Auto-Protector. Available in chrome and--

BURST OF STATIC--

LIVE NEWS VIDEO

An APARTMENT TOWER under red skies. Occupants hurl furniture to streets far below. Smoke billows.

NEWSWOMAN (V.O.)  
 Rioting continued into its fourth  
 hour today as residents of Aerial  
 Block Five defied Galactic Police  
 and refused to surrender--

LOUD STATIC as--

INT. ROOM - AERIAL BLOCK FIVE - DAY

The TV ITSELF is ripped from the wall by burly hands.  
 The RIOTER chucks the set out the window with a SHOUT.

EXT. ACROSS FROM AERIAL BLOCK FIVE - PLANET MERTON - DAY

The TV falls a hundred stories.

An ARMY of cops perched on nearby rooftops, overseen by a  
 scowling CONSTABLE.

Cops stare up at the massive Aerial.

RIOTER  
 (from window above)  
 Go home, pigs!

LIEUTENANT  
 Tac teams waiting for your go,  
 Constable.

Groups of RESIDENTS stumble out onto a sky-bridge, hands up.

LIEUTENANT  
 Some rioters are coming quietly.

CONSTABLE  
 Arrest them.

Troopers push the stunned people into wagons.

RIOTER  
 This is our tower!

The guy unzips, pisses over the side. Other rioters CHEER.

CONSTABLE  
 (into comm)  
 Bring up the Punishers.

LIEUTENANT  
 Sir? There are families in there.

CONSTABLE  
Guilty by association.

On high treads, heavy ARTILLERY cannons rumble into position.  
The gunners nod to the Constable.

LIEUTENANT  
Mother Justice would never have  
allowed it.

CONSTABLE  
Now there is nothing to hold us  
back. Now criminals will feel the  
sting of an unrestrained lash.  
(into comm)  
Pacify.

The guns heat up.

RIOTER (O.S.)  
You think you can intimid--

POW POW! The artillery lets loose BEAMS of blinding white  
light -- the tower's support struts VAPORIZE.

The huge structure heaves, COLLAPSES on itself like a fiery  
sinkhole. Concrete and steel turn to smoke as it implodes.

CONSTABLE  
Hear that sound, Lieutenant?

DEATH HOWLS of thousands.

CONSTABLE  
Order.

INT. CONSTABLE'S OFFICE - HALLS OF JUSTICE - NIGHT

The Constable looks out over his city -- Glimmer's face fills  
a wallscreen behind him.

GLIMMER (V.O.)  
Cage is crushing the competition --  
Subscriptions are up thirty percent.

CONSTABLE  
Buys a lot of patrol cars.

GLIMMER (V.O.)  
He's the best thing that's ever  
happened to Arena. Viewers like to  
watch the cop kill the bad guys.

The Constable turns to Glimmer.

CONSTABLE  
You admire him.

GLIMMER (V.O.)  
I respect his performance.

CONSTABLE  
Be that as it may, Cage cannot be  
permitted to win the Pardon.

GLIMMER (V.O.)  
Every Contestant deserves a shot at  
freedom.

CONSTABLE  
No, not this one. I'm afraid  
that...

EXT. ACADEMY - CONTINUOUS

An agitated WILSON passes a billboard: A comic book image of  
a shirtless, battle-scarred Cage as he blasts apart the XENO.

CONSTABLE (V.O.)  
--This one must die.

Wilson continues on.

INT. TOMAS' OFFICE - ACADEMY - NIGHT

WILSON  
Tomas, you won't believe this--

A SUBSTITUTE instructor is cleaning out the desk.

SUBSTITUTE  
Classes are over for the day.

WILSON  
Where's Tomas?

SUBSTITUTE  
Only another three years to pension  
but I guess he took quarter rate.  
Seemed pretty anxious to get gone.

Wilson moves towards the boxes. Rips into them.

SUBSTITUTE  
You can't do that.

Wilson throws open one drawer after another. Nothing. Something.

Wilson picks up a small shaving RAZORBLADE. He turns it over in his hand, pockets it.

The Substitute touches his arm. Whispers.

SUBSTITUTE  
What do you think you're doing,  
kid? Half the galaxy can smell the  
stink you're raising.

Wilson frowns, turns away.

INT. GATE - PRISON - NIGHT

Wreathed in smoke. It OPENS.

Amara, Cage, Old Man Newton and Kuckoo trudge in from the battlefield -- but for Amara, each step is agony.

KUCKOO  
(to Cage)  
We got to get her to the Surgeon  
and fast.

INT. MEDBAY - PRISON - MOMENTS LATER

Cage and Kuckoo with Amara -- her arms over their shoulders.

Dangling his leg off a medbed:

RAZOR. He plays with one of the Surgeon's detached arms.

RAZOR  
Looking for something?

Cage looks up where the robot once hung: severed wires.

Kuckoo steps forward, a mouse against a lion.

KUCKOO  
Want to hurt my friends, you got to  
go through me.

Razor chuckles.

RAZOR  
I'm coming for you, Cage. But I  
want you wondering when.

INT. CAGE'S CELL - MOMENTS LATER

Cage sets Amara down on the metal bed.

Kuckoo paces, manic.

KUCKOO  
She's all busted up! Who's gonna  
doctor the doctor?

CAGE  
Go.

KUCKOO  
Well a thief's real good with his  
hands, so maybe but maybe I could--

CAGE  
I'll take it from here.

KUCKOO  
Okay but be careful with her, okay?  
(off Cage's glare)  
Okay.

Kuckoo withdraws. Amara cracks her eyes at Cage.

AMARA  
(faint)  
Lot of trouble to take for a  
convict.

Cage peels back Amara's blood-crusted jumpsuit to reveal a  
gaping WOUND below her ribs.

Cage tears off his sleeve, rolls it. He holds the cloth to  
her lips.

CAGE  
Bite.

She doesn't.

Cage tosses the sleeve aside, starts to stitch her with wire.  
She keeps her two-colored eyes locked on him as he works.  
Her accusing look demands an answer.

CAGE  
I left to protect the galaxy.

AMARA  
It was us that needed protecting.

CAGE  
Justice called. I answered.

AMARA  
See what you got for your trouble.  
She winces at a stitch, chokes down the pain.

AMARA  
Did she love you as much as I did?

CAGE  
She loved too much, Good and Bad  
alike. That was Mother's crime, and  
she paid.

He ties off the last stitch.

AMARA  
I raised Juju like you would have  
wanted. But when I told you she  
wasn't yours--

Amara reaches out a hand, takes his arm. Cage realizes.

CAGE  
You lied.

AMARA  
I wanted it to be true. Then you  
being gone... wouldn't hurt so  
much.

He pulls away, mad.

AMARA  
Joe.

CAGE  
Save it, convict.

Amara's mismatched EYES as  
Cage CLANGS the door behind him.

INT. SHOWERS/LAUNDRY - PRISON - NIGHT

Steam. Tiles. A line of rusty showerheads.

Fifteen Contestants or so, nude -- a lesson in galactic  
anatomy. They scrub blood from jumpsuits in a long TROUGH.

LONGSPINE  
You'd think they could afford a  
washbot...

MARAUDER  
Hey I saw how Razor won last round.

LONGSPINE  
Yeah?

MARAUDER  
Simple. He always does this one  
move. After he parries, he--

Cage steps inside, still fuming. Everyone tenses.  
Cage peels off his gore-smearred jumpsuit, dips in trough.

PERCIVAL  
Hey cop.

Cage scrubs the suit.

PERCIVAL  
Remember me, cop?

Other Contestants look over: is some shit going down?

CAGE  
(growls)  
Murdered your wife and both her  
lovers. A real party.

PERCIVAL  
I wanted those bastards dead, but I  
didn't kill them.

CAGE  
First time I've heard that.

PERCIVAL  
You scoured the scene, cop, found  
nothing. Later the murder weapon  
appears. Ever think your friends  
might have planted it?

CAGE  
The evidence was clear.

PERCIVAL  
Like it was for you.

Cage pulls the dripping suit out.

PERCIVAL

It was two cops. Bingo. And the other one...

Percival's face MORPHS to look exactly like JONES.

Cage WRINGS the jumpsuit hard.

PERCIVAL

You think you're the only innocent one on Arena, cop. But you aren't. I wasn't a killer, either--

Percival limps off into the steam.

PERCIVAL (O.S.)

Not 'til I got here.

INT. VIDBOOTH - DAY

Wilson squeezes into the booth in front of a thickset cyborg WOMAN. She taps glass. Wilson DIALS, holds up a finger: "one second."

Ringing. The cyborg woman taps the glass.

WILSON

(to the woman)

Razor hired Bingo to kill Mother Justice and set up Cage. Whoever's working with him on the outside had Bingo killed to cover their tracks.

The woman looks at him funny. She taps the glass.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

--Thank you for calling the Galactic Police Force. Would you like to: ONE subscribe to Arena, TWO renew a subscription to Arena, or THREE report a Crime?

WILSON

I need to talk to a prisoner.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Which planet.

WILSON

Arena.

The woman taps the glass.

OPERATOR (V.O.)  
 No visitations are being accepted  
 at this time. Would you like to  
 renew a subscription to Arena?

Wilson hangs up.

INT. CONSTABLE'S OFFICE - HALLS OF JUSTICE - DAY

The smug face of JONES. Long hair. Full combat patrol gear.

JONES  
 He tried to reach Cage directly.  
 He's not going to walk away.

She lays a PHOTO on the Constable's desk. WILSON.

CONSTABLE  
 Wilson I'm disappointed in you.  
 (to Jones)  
 Tie up the other loose ends, then  
 we'll discuss the rookie.

JONES  
 Let me cancel the kid.

CONSTABLE  
 My dear pet. I will tell you when  
 to jump, when to sit, when to bite.

Jones runs her hand through her hair.

CONSTABLE  
 I know how you like to bite.

INT. STREET - HALLS OF JUSTICE - DAY

Dressed as a biker -- helmet, pads and all -- WILSON sits on  
 a juiced-up airbike.

Through his visor he watches Officer JONES emerge from the  
 planetary headquarters.

Jones climbs into her patrol car, flies off.

Wilson revs the 'bike. The sound of SINGING--

INT. OUTSIDE AMARA'S CELL - PRISON - NIGHT

Cage moves down the corridor but stops when he hears the  
 SINGING. Kuckoo finishes the lullaby.

AMARA (O.S.)  
That was beautiful.

KUCKOO (O.S.)  
My father taught me.

AMARA (O.S.)  
Ever think on what you've done?

KUCKOO (O.S.)  
Today? Well I had breakfast,  
killed a guy twice my size...

AMARA (O.S.)  
Serious.

IN THE CELL

Amara sits up in bed. Kuckoo on the floor.

KUCKOO  
I try to tell myself there's no way  
I could've known. That the boy was  
behind the counter.  
(looks at her)  
But I would give anything to take  
that night back.

AMARA  
Even your life?

CAGE

Listens, square-jawed.

KUCKOO  
That's why we're here.

INT. TOUGH STREET - NIGHT

Jones pushes against a current of grimy pedestrians.

On foot, helmet on, WILSON follows at a safe distance.

Under a red light, Jones slides cash-dollars into the hand of  
a two-headed BOUNCER -- He opens his other hand and she pays  
that one too. He waves Jones through a slim DOOR with a  
TRIANGLE insignia.

Wilson approaches the Bouncer.

LEFT HEAD  
I don't like your pretty face.

RIGHT HEAD

Me neither.

WILSON

I have a package... for Jones.

The Bouncer's heads look at each other.

INT. BATTLE PIT - RAZOR'S VILLA - DAY

A walled, dirt ring with a harsh lamp overhead. Wilson approaches the edge, packed in tight with GAMBLERS waving cash-dollars at each other, SHOUTING odds.

Two savage ALIEN TIGERS circle with guttural GROWLS.

Wilson keeps moving, DEEPER into the villa. The sounds of the tigers ripping each other to pieces. Gamblers shout, cheer, groan.

Before Wilson:

A door.

KINNIMIN (O.S.)

I told you not to come here.

JONES (O.S.)

Don't always get what we want.

INT. BACK ROOM - RAZOR'S VILLA - DAY

The fat KINNIMIN, Amara's former boss. He sits in a hov-cart, sucking on his airhose, counting stacks of money.

KINNIMIN

Sometimes we do.

JONES

The Constable doesn't negotiate.

KINNIMIN

Hmmph. I bet our viewers would be quite interested in what I've got to show them.

JONES

Your terms are insane.

KINNIMIN

Being subscription manager has its perks, like how I found your bracket of all of Razor's fights, down to his final victory in the tenth round.

(holds out cigarette)  
Smoke?

OUTSIDE THE DOOR

Wilson stands listening. On a nearby wallscreen, ARENA. A quiet moment between fights -- CAGE paces in his cell.

KINNIMIN (O.S.)

The file is dated from before Razor's arrest. Pow! That torpedoes your whole game pretty good. I don't think two million's an unreasonable amount considering how much you have to l--

There is a sound of a scuffle.

KINNIMIN (O.S.)

Give me back my hose. Can't breathe--

A meaty THUD. A groaning GASP. Wilson draws his blaster.

KINNIMIN (O.S.)

My hose...!

Wilson grabs the handle, tries to force the door.

WILSON

Open up! Police!

Wilson can't get it open.

He SLAMS his shoulder against the door and he falls into

THE BACK ROOM

Jones has the fat man's hose around his neck. Kinnimin's eyes and tongue are popped from his head.

Very dead.

Wilson AIMS.

WILSON

Freeze!

Jones shakes her hair out. Some Gamblers and Goons peek inside the broken door.

JONES  
Haven't you had enough, kid?

WILSON  
On the ground, murderer.

JONES  
You won't shoot.

She starts past him. She's almost out the door.

Wilson FIRES! The blast hits the door jamb beside Jones' head and she STOPS. Gamblers and Goons duck.

JONES  
You won't shoot a cop.

WILSON  
Find out.

Wilson pops open the auto-cuffs.

INT. CORRIDOR - RAZOR'S VILLA - DAY

Wilson holds his gun to Jones' neck, marching her out step-by-step past Goons poised to strike.

WILSON  
This woman is my prisoner. I am authorized to use deadly force against anyone who interferes with her arrest and booking.

Everyone waits for a false move.

Wilson edges her forward, SWEATING it.

JONES  
He can't take all of you.

WILSON  
(to all)  
I said stay where you are.

GOON  
Doesn't look like the deadly force type...

WILSON  
Try me, assholes!

The Goons and Gamblers step aside. Wilson pushes Jones through, brandishing the gun.

GOON  
Hey man, whatever you say...

Wilson GLARES back at them.

WILSON  
March.

He shoves Jones out into the alley.

INT. CAGE'S CELL - PRISON - NIGHT

CAGE. One sleeve of his jumpsuit missing.

He hears the muted sounds of COMBAT in an arena above. Glimmer's voice RUMBLES. Quiet explosions.

Amara stands in the doorway.

CAGE  
Come to lay another stone on my heart?

Amara steps inside.

AMARA  
I'm getting off this planet. I need your help.

CAGE  
Win the Pardon.

She sits beside him, KISSES him. He's caught off guard.

AMARA  
Escape.

He edges away.

CAGE  
You only need me to get us past the G.P.F. patrols.

AMARA  
Joe. Come home.

CAGE  
Accept your punishment.

AMARA  
I'd never have been in that diner  
if your cops hadn't evicted us.

CAGE  
So you aren't guilty.

AMARA  
You forgot what it's like to care  
for another life.

Cage looks away -- into a cell across the hall:

OLD MAN NEWTON tries in vain to use his stump-arm to eat slop  
from a bowl.

AMARA  
Some things are more important than  
following the rules.

Amara leans in and kisses him.

He lets her. It's powerful and they're hungry for it. They  
start to peel the jumpsuits.

Newton drops his bowl with a CLATTER.

Cage pushes Amara off, stands.

CAGE  
No. I'll fight my way out. You  
can do the same.

AMARA  
Haven't you wondered why no one  
leaves Arena? Survive ten fights,  
get the Pardon--

Cage faces the wall.

AMARA  
But no one does.

CAGE  
I'll beat the game.

AMARA  
Will you.

INT. PATROL CAR - NIGHT

Jones grins behind the barred partition.

JONES  
You'll never make it stick.

WILSON  
Who was working with you on the  
outside?

JONES  
You take me in, everybody's gonna  
laugh at you.

WILSON  
You killed Bingo to cover their  
tracks. Who?

JONES  
All you got is me icing the fat  
man, a felon by the way. One call  
to the Constable and I'll be out of  
here before sunrise.

Wilson stares at her.

WILSON  
Think I'm going to walk into  
Central and book you proper? No.  
Special treatment for a special  
kind of criminal.

For the first time, Jones looks afraid.

INT. STUDIO - PRISON - NIGHT

Glimmer stands with CAGE, who wears a "5".

GLIMMER (V.O.)  
And heeeeere we go!

He spins a holographic wheel of the various battlefields:

The DROWNING POOL  
The THORN FOREST  
The ORB  
...and more, all deadly. The pointer lands on--

<< The CLOCKTOWER >>

Glimmer and some nearby Guards clap, like *Wheel of Fortune*.  
Cage steps through the GATE and a BATTLE MONTAGE BEGINS--

CAGE (V.O.)  
(echoes)  
I'll fight my way out...

INT. CLOCKTOWER - ARENA - MONTAGE

Cage swings two swords. He's like a machine -- he slashes through three enemies. The final robot divides in two -- Cage keeps his eyes on the BOARD as he spins, cuts down both.

INT. THORN FOREST - ARENA - MONTAGE

A nasty human rushes Razor. He sidesteps, swings his CLEAVER as the guy passes. Razor holds up the twitching face -- Razor's suit goes from "6" to "7".

He checks the scoreboard: "CAGE" right under "RAZOR".

INT. DROWNING POOL - ARENA - MONTAGE

Cage UNDERWATER -- he and an enemy STAB with lances, firing SPEARGUNS. The fight is murky, liquid, savage, in FLUX--

CAGE (V.O.)  
(echoes)  
I'll fight my way out...!

LOOKING DOWN AT THE POOL

Dark blood blooms with a bubbly GASP. Someone kicks their way to the surface--

--CAGE pulls himself out, breathing hard. A flashing "8" on his chest. CAMERAMEN crowd in for closeups.

INT. THE FALLS - ARENA - MONTAGE

Razor versus the much larger TITAN OMEGA, who swings his massive gauntlets at Razor -- the creature has Razor on the back foot.

Omega CHARGES but Razor calmly reaches behind a boulder -- a BEAM-SWORD is thrust into a smiling Razor's hand...

INT. THE PORTALS - ARENA - END MONTAGE

Cage faces a dark, shifting figure. THE BLACK MIRROR.

Both wield short swords on slippery boulders connected by a network of TELEPORTALS. Water cascades through the gates -- up down left right -- to show their many directions.

Crazy.

THE BLACK MIRROR  
Now, cop. Watch yourself die.

He MORPHS into a mirror-image of CAGE, jumpsuit and all.

The Mirror-Cage comes in fast and swings, *CLANG!* Cage parries. Cage slides BACKWARDS and vanishes through a portal *BWOOoo!* -- and is spit UPWARDS from another -- *bwaaAPP!*

INT. ALIEN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The Alien Family transfixed.

ON THE TV

The Mirror-Cage attacks--

MIRROR-CAGE  
Arena feeds on innocent blood.

CAGE  
Guilty.

MIRROR-CAGE  
And we are the butchers.

Cage knocks him back -- they roll--

Cage FALLS through another portal, scrambles over a rock, spins to meet the Mirror-Cage -- anticipating he will follow.

But the enemy slips out of A DIFFERENT portal--

MOM  
(subtitled)  
He's right behind you!

The Mirror-Cage swings but Cage hears him, SPINS -- the blade only nicks Cage's jumpsuit.

MOM (CONT'D)  
Phew!

INT. THE PORTALS - CONTINUOUS

Suddenly Cage is looking at a jumpsuited WILSON.

WILSON  
Face it Cage. You were bad police.

Wilson comes in swinging. *CLANG CLANG!* Cage holds ground.

WILSON  
 You sent thousands to their deaths.  
 Were you right every time?

Cage jabs but Wilson's too fast. Cage can't get a lock--  
 Wilson transforms into MOTHER JUSTICE.

CAGE  
 Mother?

JUSTICE  
 Yes, my child...

Cage is dazed. He reaches out a hand to her.

JUSTICE  
 You failed. A disgrace to the  
 Force.

Justice LUNGES with a spiteful STAB but Cage reacts in time.  
 He tumbles backwards.

JUSTICE  
 I trusted you -- but you let the  
 Flame go dark.

Justice spins, turning into--

AMARA  
 You abandoned your family...

A FLASH of light as AMARA swings her sword.

AMARA  
 Where is your heart?

Cage weathers the attack but

He's weakening.

AMARA  
 The guiltiest man in the galaxy.  
 Confess.

CAGE  
 No!

AMARA  
 Confess!

A desperate Cage YELLS and HURLS his sword through a portal  
 on his left -- the BLADE emerges from a second portal behind  
 Amara and THUD!

Buries itself in her back.

Amara falls.

Cage rushes up, kneels, turns her over.

Amara's face SHIFTS to the fighter's true form: PERCIVAL.  
He spits blood.

PERCIVAL  
Prison is good for the good, but  
bad for the wicked.

Cage tries to pull the sword out. Can't.

PERCIVAL  
The good are free of mind, but the  
bad are chained to their burden.

Cage shakes him.

CAGE  
Don't die.

PERCIVAL  
You will live, to right the wrongs.  
And when you have done so--

His eyes ooze red.

PERCIVAL  
Then I will forgive you.

He falls back, dead.

The KLAXON blares, *BWANGGGG...*

Cage looks at the blood that soaks his hands.

The pounding steps of MARCHING BOOTS--

INT. COMMON AREA - PRISON - NIGHT

Guards lead in a new batch of prisoners. They wear Arena  
JUMPSUITS and form three lines of ten.

BOSS GUARD  
Say it.

CAGE stares. Dead inside.

The Boss Guard CRACKS his baton over Cage's back.

BOSS GUARD

Say it.

As the Boss Guard LAUGHS a mechanical laugh, Cage looks at the prisoners's feet.

CAGE

You are no longer Convicts. You are now Contestants. Win ten battles and receive a full Pardon, endorsed by the Grand Constable. Some of you think you don't belong here. But when you step under the heat of the lights. And the cameras. And death is all around you, only one thing matters.

Cage notices a woman among the cons, her head shaved--

JONES.

CAGE

Victory.

Jones meets Cage's eyes.

BOSS GUARD (O.S.)

Alright. Move it along!

Cage looks over at RAZOR who has also taken notice of Jones. Razor cocks his head.

BOSS GUARD

Let's go, let's go.

The new Contestants are led off. Cage starts after her but the Boss Guard lays a baton across his chest.

BOSS GUARD

No, you and I need to talk first.

Cage watches Razor follow Jones off.

INT. SHOWERS - PRISON - NIGHT

A wall of steam.

A black-eyed Cage staggers in -- he has been badly beaten.

He finds Jones on the tiles, a CHAIN around her neck.

He stands over her corpse.

Cage notices a faint GLOW over the collar of her jumpsuit. He looks around. He turns her over and unzips the suit, revealing three tattooed WORDS in radioactive BLUE:

FIGHTS RIGGED

RUN

Sound of FOOTSTEPS on the tile.

CAGE

Rigged...

AMARA sees the tattoo.

AMARA

A message.

CAGE

Wilson.

AMARA

How does escape sound now?

Cage looks up at her.

INT. HOVEL - SLUMS - NIGHT

The Constable, escorted by three COPS, stands over Wilson in what was once Cage's tiny room. Wilson pores over the Book of Laws by the light of a large candle.

CONSTABLE

Where is she.

WILSON

Not just jail. The fast track to Arena.

CONSTABLE

What?

WILSON

Turned herself in, I guess. Guilty conscience must have caught up with her.

The Constable smiles, inscrutable.

CONSTABLE

Let's make a deal. You forget all this nonsense about Cage, Bingo, Jones. Come be my personal attache.

WILSON

No.

CONSTABLE

Then I'm sure you would shine as a Planetary Deputy.

WILSON

I know how high this goes, Constable. And I've finally got the proof.

CONSTABLE

(scowls)

Just like your fool parents. Too good for your own good.

(to Officers)

Kill him.

The cops DRAW but Wilson hurls hot candlewax across their eyes. They fall back. Wilson ELBOWS the window and it shatters -- he squeezes through the hole.

CONSTABLE

After him!

INT. CORRIDOR - PRISON - NIGHT

Contestants' fingers, wrapped around bars.

They curse at patrolling Guards who CRACK them with batons.

GUARD

You like my face, dirtbag?

INT. CAGE'S CELL - NIGHT

When the Guards move past, Cage looks up at Amara in her cell above. He nods once. She slips out of view.

Cage slips the assassin's SHIV from beneath his bed. He leans over as another Guard passes. Cage COUGHS. The Guard looks suspicious, but moves on. Cage CUTS his boot loose.

BOSS GUARD (V.O.)

No, it's off.

INT. GUARDSTATION - CONTINUOUS

BOSS GUARD

Recount.

The other Guard makes the robot equivalent of a GRUMBLE, doubles back.

INT. CORRIDOR - PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Amara and Cage moving fast, steady. Each with one bare foot.

AMARA

Glimmer's personal escape pod.  
Other side of the Furnace. Top of  
the main antenna.

They pass KUCKOO in his cell. He looks out, puppy-dog eyes.

MOMENTS LATER - TRACKING WITH

Amara and Cage and KUCKOO.

CAGE

The Furnace will torch us.

KUCKOO

The Furnace!?

AMARA

There's a pattern. Long, long,  
short, long--

Amara starts around a corner.

KUCKOO

Where are you going?

CAGE

This is the way.

KUCKOO

Sure, straight into a bunch of  
cameras. Talk about some amateur  
criminals.

Kuckoo pries open a vent, holds it for them like a butler.

INT. THE ORB - ARENA - CONTINUOUS

A rolling battlefield -- blade-studded walls are divided into horizontal strips which ROTATE in opposite directions.

Two bloodied CONTESTANTS go at it. A flamethrower against a

CHAINSAW

Raaaaah!

Cage, Kuckoo and Amara slip out of a gap between the sections -- they skirt the edge of the arena, hewing close to the rotating wall. They jump and duck the blades that come rushing at them along the border.

The guy with the flamer spots the escapees.

FLAMETHROWER

Look!

His opponent wastes no time in CHAINSAWING him open, but he sweeps his flamer over the other guy as he dies -- SCREAMS as FLESH SPLITS and CHARS -- Cameramen fixate on the fiery gore as Amara leads Cage and Kuckoo through another slit.

INT. CAGE'S CELL - PRISON - CONTINUOUS

The Guard looks inside. Only the single BOOT.

INT. DOOR - THE FURNACE - CONTINUOUS

Cage, Amara and Kuckoo stare into the open maw of a long tube that vents to a purple, stormy sky.

The air within the tube HUMS and the prison's powerful INCINERATOR fires -- BLINDING LIGHT, a ROAR of sun-hot fire.

CAGE

How far to the edge.

AMARA

Ten seconds?

They hear FOOTFALLS -- they duck out of sight as four Guards carry in the recent victims of the Arena.

GUARD #1

You still have to pay up. The bet was only that he would kill Kango--

GUARD #2

--Peshawa died too. Doesn't count.

GUARD #3

Roast them.

The Guards heave the bodies into the Furnace, step back.  
HUM, BLAST, LIGHT.

And the chamber is empty.

An earsplitting WHINE -- ESCAPE ALARM. LIGHTS FLASH, SPIN.

The Guards race off. Amara poised to cross the Furnace.

CAGE  
Long long short.

The scalding BLAST.

GUARD  
Halt!

Amara and Kuckoo dash in. The Guard GRABS Cage -- Cage  
throws him off and follows into the tunnel -- Six seconds...

INT. THE FURNACE - CONTINUOUS

Amara and Kuckoo book it. Right on their heels: Cage. And  
right behind him: the Guard.

The escapees are nearly there -- the Guard a half-step behind  
Cage -- the growing HUMMMMMmm of the Furnace.

EXT. VENT - SURFACE - PLANET ARENA - CONTINUOUS

Amara and Kuckoo hurl themselves out of the vent and Cage is  
right behind them and the Furnace BELCHES its ANGRY FLAME --  
Cage tumbles on top of Amara into acid rain and howling wind.

An arm clutches at Cage's suit: all that remains of the  
Guard. Kuckoo pries metal fingers loose, flings it away.

KUCKOO  
Ugh!

AMARA  
More will be coming.

Her face lashed by the rain, Amara stares up at one of the  
planet's towering ANTENNAE.

INT. CONTROL BOX - CONTINUOUS

Beneath SPINNING yellow lights, a Guard. Glimmer rotates in  
his swivel-seat.

GUARD  
Three convicts missing, sir.

GLIMMER  
You don't say!

He jams his finger on a monitor where--

EXT. SERVICE LADDER - ANTENNA - CONTINUOUS

Cage, Kuckoo and Amara ascend through punishing RAIN. The sky CRACKLES. Angry blue lightning leaps from antenna to antenna.

Amara shouts over the storm.

AMARA  
A hundred meters to the pod.

Kuckoo looks down.

KUCKOO  
Bad news bad news!

BELOW: Fifteen GUARDS coming up the antenna like spiders.

CAGE  
Climb.

Amara and Kuckoo scramble upwards.

Cage takes hold of a crossbeam -- rivets POP -- Cage strains, rips it loose and sends it plummeting at the Guards -- CLANG! It knocks FIVE into a deadly free-fall.

Cage goes hand-over-hand but

His ascent is arrested. A GRIP on his bare ankle.

BOSS GUARD  
Only the guilty run.

Cage kicks at the Boss, loses his grip -- he falls but grabs a girder, level with Boss Guard.

The cold-faced robot swings towards him but

KUCKOO  
Yahhhhh!

Kuckoo DROPS onto the Boss Guard and claws at him and they slide down the rain-slick antenna -- BANG as they hit a catwalk.

Cage looks up -- Amara's almost at the top.

The ESCAPE POD gleams in lightning.

CAGE

Amara!

AMARA

Joe! Let's go!

CAGE

I can save him.

AMARA

We have to go now!

Cage looks down at Kuckoo, grappling with the powerful Boss.

AMARA

It's our one chance!

The Boss Guard slugs Kuckoo in the guts, doubles him over. And seems to be really enjoying it.

AMARA

Our last chance.

Cage dangles. Looks up. Looks down. Rain pours across his face. His grip LOOSENS.

He follows the raindrops.

He slides down with a ROAR and a brutal KICK -- the robotic face of the Boss Guard almost surprised as he FLIES into open air, grabbing at nothing.

Cage holds out his giant hand to Kuckoo.

CAGE

Time to go, convict.

Kuckoo grins, takes it. Cage pulls him his feet.

But TEN MORE GUARDS leap onto the catwalk and Cage drops into fighting stance -- the Guards attack -- Cage puts fists to steel jaws -- two more Guards flip over the railing. The others take hold of him, force him to the cold wet metal.

Amara is shackled to GLIMMER's hov-platform. He steps out onto the catwalk. Cameramen roll.

GLIMMER

I know of one law that can't be broken.

He takes Kuckoo's ear. Kuckoo closes his eyes, HUMS.

Glimmer hurls him into the storm.

CAGE

No!

Glimmer grabs Cage's jaw, holds it shut.

GLIMMER

(to Cage)

In a galaxy gripped by chaos, Arena is our one great hope. Two men battle. One prevails. A promise that justice will be done -- A sacred coin toss. You're a sword swing from victory and you want to throw it all away?

CAGE

(gritted teeth)

Your coin's got two heads.

GLIMMER

(to Guards)

Take him to the box.

And watching this--

EXT. ELECTRONICS STORE - BUSY STREETS - NIGHT

WILSON in a hooded rainslicker, pressed up against the glass. Cheap view-screens FOR SALE, all showing the live Arena feed: Cage and Amara in chains. A news ticker--

*...Arena Escape Attempt FAILS...*

Wilson moves off into the night, past a WANTED Poster--

WILSON'S OWN FACE.

INT. CONSTABLE'S OFFICE - DAY

The Constable, nude -- his body half-machine. A team of deaf-blind ATTENDANTS oils and polishes his metal components.

He pushes a button.

CONSTABLE

Give me the secure line.

The vid-feeds BLANK OUT and the face of RAZOR fills the wall.

RAZOR (V.O.)  
 What's the holdup? Baby wants to  
 play.

CONSTABLE  
 Patience, old friend. When Cage is  
 dead you will be free.

RAZOR (V.O.)  
 And you give me Indigo.

CONSTABLE  
 You'll be Planetary Deputy. You  
 write the laws. But first--

RAZOR (V.O.)  
 Cage's skull. A cup. To drink his  
 blood!

CONSTABLE  
 That's entertainment.

A KNOCK. The Constable kills the line -- the screens  
 replaced by the usual channels.

CONSTABLE  
 Tell me you've located our rogue  
 Officer.

The LIEUTENANT, eyes down.

LIEUTENANT  
 Wilson's a ghost, sir.

CONSTABLE  
 Find him or find yourself on Arena.

INT. THE CONSTABLE'S CRUISER - WARP TUNNEL

Luxurious. The Constable plays flight attendant, welcoming  
 the rich SPECTATORS: a robot BUSINESSMAN, a suave ALIEN, a  
 jewel-studded DIVA, a few CRIMELORDS with their GOONS.

The Constable taps his cane. An ATTENDANT hurries past an  
 alcove -- tucked above racks of supplies, a pair of eyes.

WILSON.

He turns his head to look out a porthole as--

EXT. CRUISER - SPACE

Like a long, sleek falcon, the CRUISER punches out of a Portal into the cold heat of a pale red star.

DISSOLVE TO:

GLIMMER (V.O.)

*Next up!!!*

INT. ENORMOUS FACTORY - DUSK

Idle machines. Empty workbenches.

GLIMMER (V.O.)

Justice, arena-style. The manic-titanic BRAWL the whole galaxy is hungry for.

A half-eaten donut.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DUSK

Last Judgment-empty. A bag tumbles.

GLIMMER (V.O.)

With nine wins apiece, ex-cop Joseph Cage and the deadly Razor will engage in a Trial by Combat.

A parking meter flags -- "EXPIRED".

INT. ACADEMY CLASSROOM - DUSK

Podium. Vacant desks.

GLIMMER (V.O.)

Will Cage's grim determination be any match for Razor's brutality--?

EXT. BUTCHER'S - STRIP MALL - DUSK

An "OPEN" sign in a carcass-filled window. A bloody hand flips it "CLOSED".

GLIMMER (V.O.)

--Or will Razor crush the cop's chance at the Pardon in this colossal Tenth Battle?

Neon shop signs go dark. Dark. Dark.

EXT. HUGE APARTMENT TOWER - DUSK

Hundreds of windows, the glow of screens flickering in sync: everybody's tuned in.

GLIMMER (V.O.)  
Find out NEXT! Only on! *ArrrrrENA!*

INT. ISOLATION - PRISON - NIGHT

Cage's dark brow. A closet cell. Wallpapered with spikes.

In the hall outside, someone whistles the Arena THEME SONG. Footsteps STOP.

A panel slides open: Glimmer's ROBOTIC EYES.

CAGE  
Let me out of this casket.

GLIMMER  
It's for your own protection.

CAGE  
Used that line myself.

Glimmer clacks his tongue.

GLIMMER  
There is a nine on your chest.  
What comes next?

CAGE  
A fight you won't let me win.

GLIMMER  
I don't make the rules.

CAGE  
Who does?

Glimmer stares. The panel snaps SHUT.

INT. RECEIVING - PRISON - NIGHT

The Constable strides forward with his cadre of SPECTATORS. Guards stand at attention.

CONSTABLE  
Excellent.

Down the line: GLIMMER. He bows.

INT. CONTROL BOX - PRISON - NIGHT

Glimmer fiddles with a gun-shaped INJECTOR: a full vial of purple LIQUID.

CONSTABLE  
When have I not chosen the victors?

GLIMMER  
So much for may the best man win.

CONSTABLE  
(scoffs)  
You propose a fair fight.

GLIMMER  
Our viewers place a confidence in us. It's for the good of the show.

CONSTABLE  
There is far more at stake here than some android's romanticized sense of justice.  
(takes the injector, inspects it)  
Let me hear you say it: Razor wins.

GLIMMER  
(re: vial)  
A full dose will slow Cage's reaction time and disorient him. Ten minutes to near-total paralysis.

CONSTABLE  
And then?

GLIMMER  
Razor wins.

The wind HOWLS over--

EXT. CRUISER - PRISON - NIGHT

The Constable's sleek SHIP, perched atop the prison citadel. Rain streaks over its curves. A small panel flips open and

WILSON pokes his head out, looks down at the long fall.

EXT. CITADEL - PRISON - NIGHT

Jets of FURNACE FIRE spew into dark. Wilson a silhouette.

INT. AIRDUCT - PRISON - NIGHT

Drenched, Wilson wriggles up the narrow shaft.

Through a vent he spots CAGE led by Guards.

He keeps crawling.

INT. RECEIVING - PRISON - NIGHT

A BUNDLE under the Constable's arm. Cage led in.

CONSTABLE

My dear Joseph. You were judged to  
the satisfaction of the Code.

Cage stares straight ahead.

CONSTABLE

But after this battle you will be  
free -- one way or another. In any  
case, we need our policeman looking  
his best.

The Constable unfolds a GALACTIC POLICE FORCE UNIFORM,  
complete with helmet, boots, Rod, CUFFS. Holds it for Cage.

CONSTABLE

Bring back memories?

Cage looks at the gray-blue UNIFORM--

CUT TO:

INT. DARK ROOM - PRISON - NIGHT

--And he's wearing it. A single bare bulb overhead, Cage's  
eyes in shadow.

He pulls on his gloves, FLEXES the leather.

INT. RAZOR'S PREP - CONTINUOUS

Razor's HELPERS strip his jumpsuit to the waist and he  
flexes, revealing the scope of his savage power.

INT. ALIEN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Alien family members hurry to the couch, carrying food-trays.

INT. DARK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cage clasps the cross-belt. Tests the balance of a new ROD.

INT. RAZOR'S PREP - CONTINUOUS

Razor's underlings massage his muscles with oil. They pour water down his throat -- he spits it out in a SPRAY.

INT. VENTILATION - CONTINUOUS

Wilson pushes through a tube.

INT. DARK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cage's takes his belt, holsters the Rod, SNAPS latch.

INT. RAZOR'S PREP - CONTINUOUS

Razor in fighting stance -- he fires combos at a sandbag, one-two-three. He's so consumed by it he pounds one of his helpers too. Misted with BLOOD.

INT. ACADEMY BAR - CONTINUOUS

Standing room only. CADETS and COPS shove closer to the jumbo wall-screen.

INT. CONTROL BOX - PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Wilson DROPS out of a vent, directly into Arena's command center. TECHNICIANS and GUARDS stare at him.

INT. DARK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cage lowers the riot helmet onto his head, flips the visor down. Pinlights frame his face within.

GUARD (O.S.)  
Let's go, convict.

Cage's fingers brush the off-color patch over his heart -- where the Badge should be.

But something is in the front pocket. Cage pulls it out: The EFFIGY of Mother Justice. Where did that come from?

GUARD  
They're waiting.

INT. CORRIDOR - PRISON - TRACKING WITH CAGE

His hands and feet shackled. Ten Guards march him past cells, past VOICES:

CREEP  
...Dead man walking...

MONSTER  
...Bad knowing you...

OLD MAN NEWTON  
...Hey, so long, son...

Newton reaches his stump through the bars.

OLD MAN NEWTON (CONT'D)  
Awww, hell! You can take him.  
You're Joseph Cage, the cop!

Cage SHRUGS OFF the Guards' grip, strides over to a cell where AMARA sits in a corner, her hands gripping her knees.

CAGE  
Amara. Look at me.

AMARA  
We'll die here. Face it. You  
can't win.

The Guards move toward Cage, pull out their WHIPS.

CAGE  
There was a woman, eyes two  
colors...

CRACK! CRACK! The Guards LAY INTO his back.

CAGE  
...She was at the wrong place at  
the wrong time, and a policeman  
made a mistake.

Amara rises. The Guards keep whipping.

CAGE  
He told himself she was a criminal.  
That was the only way he could live  
with himself, for what he had done.  
But he was wrong.

GUARD  
Save it, convict!

CAGE  
And he is -- He is...

Amara wraps her fingers around Cage's glove.

AMARA  
Good luck, Joe.

The Guards pull them apart.

INT. CORRIDOR - PRISON - CONTINUOUS

WILSON struggles against the powerful grip of Guards.

WILSON  
That's my arm you're breaking, you  
hunk of junk!

They pull him into--

INT. MEDBAY - PRISON - NIGHT

Where Cage is strapped to a medbed. The Constable stands over him. Glimmer holds the INJECTOR.

GUARD  
We found the interloper.

WILSON  
Tell him what's in there. Tell him  
it's poison! Tell him what you did  
to Mother Justice!

Cage looks at the Constable.

CAGE  
You.

CONSTABLE

It was nothing personal, Joseph.  
Well, I suppose it was: you and  
that old witch were always so  
appallingly serious.

CAGE

You killed her.

CONSTABLE

Technically, Bingo did the killing.

Cage PUSHES against his restraints -- a lock POPS and he gets  
a hand loose. He grabs at the Constable, who steps aside.

CONSTABLE

Our mutual friend Razor and I go  
way, way back. You see -- he  
commits the crimes, the galaxy  
needs police. The galaxy needs  
police, it needs me to control  
them. You think the Law is what's  
written on stone tablets. But the  
Law is what I say it is.

CAGE

Your Law is a bottomless pit.

CONSTABLE

(to Glimmer)

Do him.

Glimmer hesitates.

CONSTABLE

Now.

An unhappy Glimmer puts the needle against Cage's arm. HISS.

Cage is instantly BATHED IN SWEAT. His veins BULGE, back  
ARCHES. Glimmer hands the Injector to the Constable, who  
casually pockets it.

CONSTABLE

Now everyone will watch Razor cut  
this Mother-lover to pieces.

GLIMMER

(touches ear)

We're on in five.

INT. JURY BOX - OVER THE ARENA - NIGHT

The Constable ushers the Spectators to their ringside seats, smiling and glad-handing.

INT. CELL - PRISON - NIGHT

Wilson, hands on bars. A squad of Guards passes, Glimmer at the tail. He smiles in at Wilson.

GLIMMER

We'll get you your own jumpsuit soon. Medium or Small?

WILSON

No one remembers, no one cares to look that far back. But I dug up the files on him.

GLIMMER

Mmm?

WILSON

The only con who ever beat Arena.

Glimmer's face.

WILSON

He believed in a fair fight. No matter what it cost.

INT. BENCH BOX - OVER THE ARENA - NIGHT

The Constable steps up to his private box. He removes his cloak, gives it a confident fold. He lays his gavel-head cane across the bench, sits.

INT. GREEN ROOM - PRISON - NIGHT

Makeup only halfway done, Glimmer sits before his vanity.

One drawer open.

TECHNICIAN (O.S.)

We're ready for you, Host.

Glimmer reaches inside. He carefully lifts out a frayed, faded JUMPSUIT with a number:

"10".

His EYES.

TECHNICIAN

Sir?

INT. BENCH / JURY BOX - OVER THE ARENA - CONTINUOUS

The Constable holds court with his Spectators.

CONSTABLE

...Which is why real women prefer  
cyborgs...

CHUCKLES from the group as the field lights go down.

Pump-you-up THEME MUSIC RISES.

DIVA SPECTATOR

Oh wow it's starting!

INT. CORRIDOR - PRISON - ALL A BLUR

HEAVY BREATHING. Moving forward. Shapes of GUARDS in front. Each step hazy. Lights fade in, out. Sound smothered. An underwater feel. One GUARD is shouting but his words are incoherent. He points a metal finger: forward!

Forward into

INT. THE ARENA - CONTINUOUS

A blackout. Through his poison-induced fog, Cage hears a thunderous voice, but MUTED. Can barely make out the words. Music GRINDS.

GLIMMER (V.O.)

(distorted)

...Get rrrready for Con. Fron.  
Tationnnn.....

LASER LIGHTS weave a crazy web overhead. Cage watches as GLIMMER zooms onto the arena on a hov-platform--

GLIMMER (V.O.)

(distorted)

--in Arena's TENTH BATTLE!

Cage hears the hum of Glimmer's VOICE as if locked in a cell someplace far away.

GLIMMER  
 ...to the death... *LIVE...!*

Nothing makes sense. Glimmer points to the Bench.

GLIMMER  
 ...Constable himself...

A spotlight shines on

THE CONSTABLE who stands and waves, to Spectator APPLAUSE.

GLIMMER  
 ...bestow the coveted Pardon ...  
 and here we have...  
 we have...

And full sound RETURNS

With teeth-grinding POWER--

GLIMMER (O.S.)  
 The fearless. The unforgiving.  
 Officer JOSEPPPPH CAAAAAAGE!

CAGE

stands in a tight ring of light.

GLIMMER (O.S.)  
 And behind door number two...

A second spotlight sweeps over the jury box to--

GLIMMER (O.S.)  
 Mass murderer and criminal  
 psychopath galore, the Master of  
 Mayhem himself -- RAAZORRRRR!

--Carrying his long-handled CLEAVER. Razor raises the blade  
 to Spectators, Constable. He sneers.

RAZOR  
 We who are about to kill, salute  
 you!

Lights RISE to reveal the true battleground--

INT. "THE COURTROOM" - CONTINUOUS

Colossal, wood-panelled, fateful. Enormous FLAGS bearing  
 G.P.F. insignia. Studio lights glare over the Constable,  
 seated at the JUDGE'S BENCH. Spectators fill the JURY BOX.

There is a metal pole in the middle of the courtroom.

GUARDS step forward.

They fix a MANACLE around Cage's right wrist.

Others do the same for Razor.

Guards run a simple, forty-foot chain through a loop on the mounted pole. They connect the chain to the two manacles.

Cage and Razor. Locked together.

The pulsing sound of HEARTBEATS.

RAZOR  
Chained to a dead man. Perfect.

GLIMMER  
Let the execution commence.  
In FIVE...

INT. VARIOUS VIEWER LOCATIONS - CONTINUOUS

The clock FLASHES like a seizure.

GLIMMER (V.O.)  
--Four--

Razor crooks the cleaver under his arm, spits into his hands and rubs them together.

GLIMMER (V.O.)  
--Three  
Two--

Razor winks at Cage.

INT. THE COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

GLIMMER (V.O.)  
ONE!

The battle-start KLAXON is heard, distorted, distant...

WITH CAGE AS

He blinks through sweat. Looks at his holster. Sees an OUT-OF-FOCUS man circling him. Maybe these things are related.

Cage flicks the clasp loose on the Rod. He wraps his fingers around the handle. The trigger.

The bad man is coming closer.

Cage draws the weapon and raises it to aim at this grinning psychopath coming at him like a nightmare and Cage PULLS THE TRIGGER but nothing comes out and

BANG!!! Razor CRASHES into Cage, raises his cleaver.

RAZOR  
Now the cop dies!

This was the jolt Cage needed.

Cage shakes it off, YANKS the chain -- Razor is THROWN off his feet and slides backwards.

Cage taps the Rod twice and CLACK! a long SWORDBLADE extends underneath the barrel.

RAZOR  
Mmm, pretty!

They circle.

The long chain SCRAAAAAPES on the wooden floor.

Each sizes up his enemy.

RAZOR  
It has all come to this, cop.

They move closer--

Cage SWINGS. CLANG! Razor parries and

FIRES a salvo of STABS at Cage, who spins away--

RAZOR  
Any last words?

Cage jabs but hits air.

Razor SLASHES open Cage's bicep--

INT. ALIEN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The family winces.

INT. CELLBLOCKS - PRISON - CONTINUOUS

Contestants rattle the bars of their cells.

CONTESTANTS  
Razor! Razor! Razor!

IN AMARA'S CELL

She listens.

RAZOR (V.O.)  
Raaaaah---!

INT. THE COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Razor SWEEPS the chain at Cage but

He vaults it, gets in back of Razor -- Cage grabs the chain and CHOKES him. Razor GASPS FOR AIR and

ELBOWS Cage -- he REELS.

RAZOR  
I said what do you have to say for  
yourself? Simpleton!

Razor stands behind the pole. He starts pulling the chain towards him, SNICKERING like a lunatic.

Cage digs his boots in, pulls the opposite direction -- GROANS with the exertion -- The purple poison GLOWS in the veins of his neck -- He's on the verge of fainting.

RAZOR  
A trillion eyeballs, watching you  
die!

Razor LETS GO and Cage tumbles back. Razor LEAPS at him and brings down the cleaver.

Cage ROLLS to avoid it -- the cleaver SPLINTERS the floor -- Cage SLICES the back of Razor's leg. Razor HOWLS.

He bares his teeth at Cage.

RAZOR  
Very bad!!! Very bad boy!

Cage jumps to his feet but loses his balance, almost tips over. The room SPINS.

Razor whips the chain at Cage's head -- Cage catches it, YANKS on the chain and pulls Razor to him, CLOTHESLINING him. Razor goes down.

IN THE ACADEMY BAR

Cops raise fists.

COP  
Boom! Like that.

IN THE BENCH

The Constable claps politely.

ON THE COURTROOM FLOOR

Cage CUTS hard at Razor's chest. Razor gags in surprise. Cage continues the attack--

Only to be gut-slammed with a thunderbolt KICK from Razor.

Cage goes flying fast and

CRACK! A sickening SNAP as he BANGS into the pole and his weapon clatters across the courtroom floor.

RAZOR  
This is what your life has come to.  
Your final judgment.

BONE sticks out of Cage's thigh. He struggles to stand.

Razor's image doubles

Triples

As Cage's mind tries to hold reality together...

RAZOR  
That looks painful. But still not  
a peep from our cop!

IN AMARA'S CELL

Her face: feeling the hurt.

IN THE COURTROOM

Razor approaches Cage, furios.

RAZOR  
Why won't you talk!

Cage's eyes drift over to his SWORD.

RAZOR  
Don't you know we're on tee veeee!

Cage makes a stumbling run and DIVES for the weapon. His fingers get around the grip--

RAZOR  
Not today.

Razor chops off Cage's sword hand.

INT. ACADEMY BAR - CONTINUOUS

Cops look on in horror.

Blood SPURTS from Cage's arm.

INT. JUDGE'S BENCH - CONTINUOUS

The Constable smiles.

INT. ALIEN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

On the screen, Cage's mouth open, in a silent yell.

Cage drops to his knees, the MANACLE slides off--

INT. THE COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cage is in another universe of suffering.

Razor towers over him, grinning like a madman.

RAZOR  
So sad...

AT THE BENCH

His eyes on the action, the Constable feels his pocket. He fishes out the liquid INJECTOR and sees

It's more than HALF FULL.

He stands.

CONSTABLE  
No.

RAZOR

grabs Cage by his uniform, yanks him up.

RAZOR

Rumor is you were born in a jail,  
to some slut convict. Humble  
beginnings for the great Cage.

Razor shows his hand. The nails EXTEND.

His knife-sharp claws GLEAM.

RAZOR

But such a fitting place to die.

Razor BURIES the blades in Cage's gut.

Cage's eyes BURN with pain.

They close.

Razor raises a bloody fist and ROARS in victory.

CONSTABLE

Razor, he's not...

RAZOR

Look out, galaxy! I'm back! I'm--

But Razor suddenly CHOKES when

Cage finds one last shred of strength and SQUEEZES HIM BY THE  
THROAT.

Cage raises what's left of his other arm and

POUNDS IT into Razor's face.

Again. Again. AGAIN. Flesh sags off bone like a juicy  
hamhock. Cage punches.

Punches.

PUNCHES.

Razor DROPS and Cage keeps pounding him.

THE SPECTATORS

are spattered with blood.

RAZOR

Moans.

RAZOR  
P-p-please...

Cage keeps slamming the bone into his face. Again.  
And again.

AND AGAIN!

Razor's face is demolished. He BURBLES blood.

RAZOR  
Mercy...

CAGE  
For you--

Cage puts his black boot on Razor's face.

CAGE  
This is mercy.

A hideous CRUNCH as Cage COLLAPSES HIS SKULL.

The "9" on Cage's jumpsuit blinks, blinks--

Changes to a "10".

A charged silence.

The Constable blinks at the dead Razor. At Cage. His mind working.

CONSTABLE  
Joseph Cage. Is Victorious!

He steps down from the Bench, holds up a paper.

CONSTABLE  
The Pardon is yours.

Cage turns to him. Growls.

THE SCOREBOARD BEHIND HIM

flickers, goes to STATIC. Piercing FEEDBACK, then

A VIDEO RECORDING of the Medbay: the Constable and Cage.

CAGE (V.O.)  
 (on recording)  
 You killed her.

CONSTABLE (V.O.)  
 (on recording)  
 Technically, Bingo did the killing.

IN THE COURTROOM

The Constable turns to see GLIMMER -- his eyes LIT UP as he beams his memory on the screen. Wilson and Amara flank him.

GLIMMER  
 Careful what you say in front of a robot.

CONSTABLE  
 Traitor!

CONSTABLE (V.O.)  
 (on recording)  
 ...Our mutual friend Razor and I go way, way back. You see, he commits the crimes, the galaxy needs police...

VARIOUS VIEWER LOCATIONS

as they react to the confession.

CONSTABLE (V.O.)  
 (on recording)  
 ...The Law is what I SAY it is...

THE CONSTABLE

SWINGS his cane, fells Glimmer. The recording CUTS OUT.

CONSTABLE  
 (to Cage)  
 Do you know how many subscribers Arena has? Who do you think pays for the Force, Joseph? Every Car, Rod, Badge, uniform. Every pair of cuffs, every bar of every prison on every planet. Arena oils the machine.

CAGE  
 Grand Constable Daywatch, you're under arrest.

Cage puts one foot in front of the other. Every inch hell.

CAGE  
You have the Right to be Punished.  
Everything you have said and done  
will be used to determine the  
severity of your sentence...

CONSTABLE  
(to Guards)  
Arrest these fools.

But a wave from Glimmer and the Guards take hold of the  
Constable instead. His shocked face.

CAGE  
By resisting arrest you have  
forfeited your Right to a Trial...

Cage coughs blood.

Wilson holds him up.

WILSON  
--Do you understand these Rights as  
we have explained them?

Wilson produces the old-fashioned HANDCUFFS, the gift from  
Mother Justice. Guards thrust the Constable's hands out.

Cage SNAPS the cuffs on -- CINCHES them tight.

He places his hand on the Constable's Badge.

Turns it counterclockwise.

CAGE  
Guilty.

Cage pulls the Badge off.

Cage drops.

Wilson lowers him onto his back. CAMERAMEN crowd around.

Cage looks up at him.

CAGE  
Officer Wilson.

WILSON  
You're fine. Stay with me.

CAGE  
Mother... would be proud of you.

Cage's eyes close.

He goes still.

ON THE BOARD

"Cage" fades from the standings.

VARIOUS VIEWER LOCATIONS

as the galaxy looks on the fallen cop.

IN THE COURTROOM

Amara bows her head.

Wilson does the same.

Cameramen move in. But Glimmer waves them off.

GLIMMER

No. Get back from him.

(to Technicians)

Shut down the cameras. Shut down  
the antennae. The show is over.

They lower their cameras.

GLIMMER

End transmission.

EXT. ANTENNA - CONTINUOUS

The tall ansible tower, THRUMMING with the signal's POWER.

It's red light flashing, flashing -- then DARK. The stars  
glitter.

And space is quiet.

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A blank TV set. A man reaches out, taps the side. Nothing.

INT. ALIEN HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The alien family looks at a dark screen.

INT. ACADEMY BAR - CONTINUOUS

Another empty screen. Somber SILENCE.

Then a small VOICE.

YOUNG CADET

Cage...

He bangs his fist, starting a CHANT.

YOUNG CADET

Cage... Cage... Cage...

Another cop joins in.

Another. The whole bar THUNDERS...

ALL COPS

Cage! -- Cage! -- Cage! -- Cage!

MUSIC builds as their VOICES ECHO over--

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CRUISER - PLANET ARENA - SPACE

The ex-Constable's ship rises from the darkened planetoid.

On Arena's surface, four powerful TUG-SHIPS fire their thrusters, sending the spiny orb towards its parent star.

INT. VIEWPORT - CRUISER - SPACE

Wilson, Amara, Glimmer and Old Man Newton watch the bier -- the Planet Arena itself -- as it is driven into the devouring sun. It glows orange as the crust turns molten.

INT. ARENA - CONTINUOUS

Aflame. Melting in heat. In the middle of the battlefield:

Cage's body on a slab like a knight of old. The robot GUARDS stand at attention, servants to the end.

Cage's face peaceful as FLAMES consume him.

EXT. CRUISER - SPACE

Far below, Arena is lost in the sun's immortal fire.

SLOW DISSOLVE

TO:

New THEME MUSIC plays...

INT. AUNT FINNA'S - DAY

As Juju watches TV: a fabulously coiffed GLIMMER hams it up for camera. Behind him, THE CONSTABLE is booted out of a patrol car into a crime-ridden SLUM -- weird CREATURES lurk in shadow.

GLIMMER (V.O.)

Ex-Constable Daywatch will have to survive by his wits alone in this gang-dominated slum. No backup for this disgraced lawman, on the next "CONS ON THE RUN"!

Bloodthirsty GANG MEMBERS surround the Constable. His face is pure panic. The image suddenly WINKS OUT.

AMARA (O.S.)

No TV after bedtime, kiddo.

Juju sees her mother holding the remote.

JUJU

Mommy!

She jumps up and they embrace. Aunt Finna looks on, warm.

JUJU

They didn't get you.

AMARA

They didn't get me.

Her tears run.

EXT. SANCTUM - PLANET DRACO - DAY

Tall cranes erect a new, larger DOME in a halo of sunshine. Policemen pitch in on the construction, carrying bricks and beams. And as brilliant as the SUNS above--

INT. SANCTUM - DAY

MOTHER JUSTICE, reactivated, stands intense and luminous over an assembly of cops. They APPLAUD.

Mother Justice extends a pale arm from her iridescent gown, beckons one Officer forward. Cops make way as WILSON passes between them.

He kneels at her feet.

A gleam of light as she pins the Constable's BADGE onto his uniform.

He looks up at her. She grants him a smile. A HUSH falls over the cops.

And all turn to see an ember, glowing brighter.

The Flame.

Reborn.

FADE OUT.

THE END