

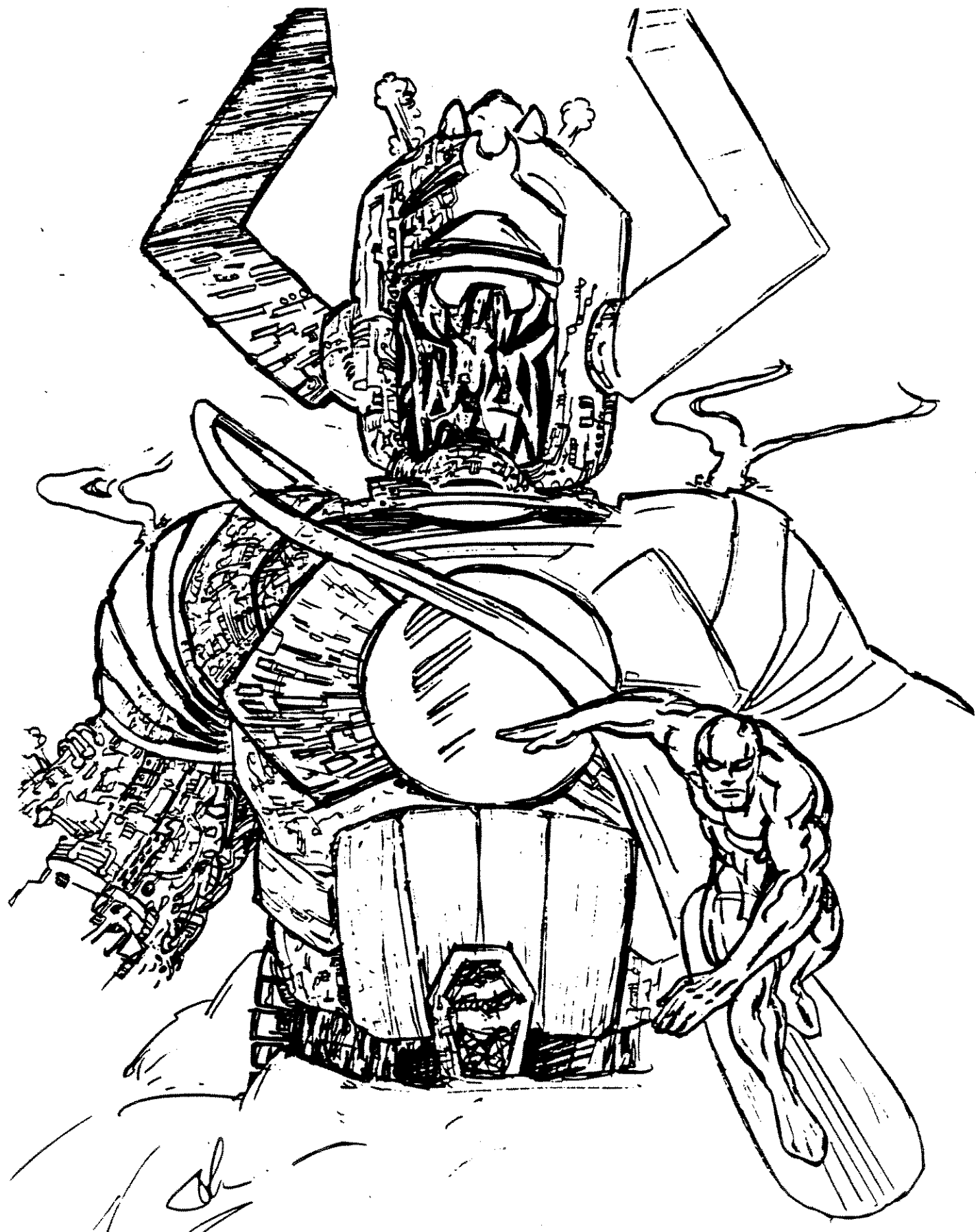
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THE
SILVER
SURFER

screenplay by John Turman

based on the Marvel Comics character
created by Lee & Kirby

//August 24, 1995



ALIENS DON'T SURF.

FADE IN:

THE WORLD - FROM SPACE

Orbiting lazily. CAMERA MOVES IN. Green-blue. Full of life. Swirling weather patterns. But the land masses are unfamiliar. It's not our world. Thank God.

ANGLE - PLANET

An odd disturbance on the planet's surface. A pin point of darkness. Weather swirls and shifts around it. The spot grows like a cancer. The verdant planet's surface blackens. The more it covers, the faster it grows. An exponential expansion. It races over the curve of the horizon: Consuming a planet! Whatever it is, it leaves no trace of life energy behind. Just a dead, desiccated world. But not ours. Not yet.

CAMERA MOVES past the dead planet into space: To the magnificent binary star supporting this solar system.

THE STAR FLICKERS

Like a lightbulb sucking a weak current. Something is mysteriously draining the massive fusion reactions. The star dies.

A silvery shadow flashes PAST CAMERA. Heading out to empty space. In the fading light it looks like: A human silhouette on a long flat board. Surfing?!? Can't get a good look. Too small. Too fast. A sweeping cut-back and whatever it is, it's gone in a flash. Flying through space at an impossible speed --

Then: An immense silhouette ominously obscures our view.
MUSIC CUE: GALACTUS' THEME.

FADE TO BLACK.

CAMERA RUSHES THROUGH SPACE (MUSIC UP)

Past nebulae, stars, planets, the diverse universe. Past an earth-built satellite heading in the other direction. The Pioneer spacecraft. Familiar planets --

CAMERA loops around Jupiter at breakneck speed. Ricochets off the rings of Saturn. We know where we are. Ahead, our new destination: Earth.

CUT.

A VAST ALIEN LANDSCAPE

A textured furrowed surface. Pink, white. The feeling that it's strangely alive. A gleaming silver blade fills the screen and cleaves the landscape. It's a fingernail being clipped --

INT. OFFICE - DAY

RAY RAMSEY is the man clipping it. He's bored. Behind a desk, his cluttered office in chaos. Mismatched file cabinets, dog-eared reference books. The frosted glass reads backwards: S.E.T.I. Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence. Research Division. United States Department of Defense.

RAY

What makes you think these were aliens?

Ray looks at the wall clock. The second hand sweeps toward three-thirty in slow-motion. MR. and MRS. QUINCY sit across from him.

MRS. QUINCY

They examined us.

Ray stands up and walks around his desk as he continues to talk --

RAY

Well, Mrs. Quincy, when we examined you, we found no physical evidence of any kind.

Ray adjusts a telescope pointed out the window --

MR. QUINCY

They knew you would. That's why they didn't leave a trace. Their science is much more advanced.

(whispers)

They don't want us to know...

Ray squints through the telescope.

RAY'S POV - THROUGH THE TELESCOPE

A building a block away. An art school. Ray pans past students in a life drawing studio class until he gets to - the model. A beautiful woman her back to CAMERA, partially hidden by a support column, her face obscured by a tangle of hair. She brushes her hair. She's beautiful. Totally unself-conscious --

ON RAY

Breathless. He steps away, a bit startled.

MRS. QUINCY

It was awful.

MR. QUINCY

They examined us, sampled our
bodily fluids...

Ray turns back to the Quincys. Pauses a moment as if
remembering why they're in his office.

RAY

Who did?

MR. QUINCY

The aliens.

It should be clear by now: Mr. and Mrs. Quincy are nuts.
And Ray has heard it all before.

MRS. QUINCY

Do you want to hear about the
examination?

Ray takes another look through the telescope, then sighs
and turns back to the Quincys --

RAY

Did you get a description?

MRS. QUINCY

We were totally nude...

RAY

Of them.

MR. QUINCY

(rehearsed)

They were unlike anything our human
eyes had ever beheld. Completely
alien in appearance yet somehow
strangely... beautiful.

Ray smacks the telescope in frustration. He reaches into
an overstuffed drawer and takes out a dog-eared stack of
photos. He shows the first. Mrs. Quincy's face lights
with recognition --

RAY

Something like this?

MRS. QUINCY

Yes. Not as vicious.

THE DRAWING - it's the creature from the movie "Alien".

RAY

A nice alien? Like this?

The next picture is E.T. --

MR. QUINCY

Yeah. That's it. There were a bunch of them. I'll never forget it as long as I live. These are secret government photos, aren't they?

Ray puts the pictures down and nods seriously.

RAY

No. They're Hollywood movie photos. You apparently saw an "E.T.", from the 1982 Steven Spielberg film. Good flick.

MRS. QUINCY

(off-balance)

These were, uh... green.

RAY

We get a lot of those. About three feet tall?

MR. QUINCY

You think we're making this up.

RAY

Mr. Quincy, it doesn't matter what I think. I've taken thousands of these reports of UFOs and extra-terrestrial encounters. But I've yet to find a single piece of hard evidence: a photograph in focus, a chemical compound not found on earth. But it never happens. Do you know why? Because they aren't real. We'd like them to be but they're not. We're all alone. There's no such thing as aliens.

Ray takes the report to the overstuffed file cabinet and tosses it in without looking. It will never be seen again.

RAY

But I have your report. You've done your civic duty. Have a nice day.

Ray shows them to the door.

MR. QUINCY

You don't have any faith.

RAY

Faith is nice. I need proof.
Photos. An anti-gravity device
would be swell. Maybe the
disintegrating ray from that
Daffy Duck cartoon.

Ray waves bye-bye as he stands in the middle of the
reception area, surrounded by more crackpots with more
stories.

RAY

Dottie, how much longer until
my government pension?

DOTTIE speaks without removing the cigarette, typing the
whole time.

DOTTIE

Nineteen years, five months,
six days...

(checks the clock)

And two hours.

The sound of the fax machine gets Ray's attention. There's
a linguini of paper lying on the floor and more printing.

RAY

I thought we were going to
change that number.

DOTTIE

We did.

RAY

He got the new one? Already?

Ray fumbles with the huge pile of paper, tears it from the
machine.

RAY

Who is this guy?

ON THE FAXES

Comparative astronomical star charts. 3-D technical
representations. Very impressive. Except for the last
bold-font page: BEWARE THE COSMIC RAYS!! THE END IS
COMING. EARTH IS DOMED!

RAY

I assume he means "doomed".

tosses the pile of fax paper in the trash. He looks up at the 'now serving' display --

RAY
Number 31. Next...

elderly man wearing a homemade aluminum-foil helmet nods.

RAY
They're beaming those signals into your brain again, aren't they Mr. O'Connell?

O'Connell nods, happy to be understood. Ray sighs and turns toward his office.

CUT.

NEW MEXICO DESERT - DAY

Outing across the Socorro desert like mushrooms, hundreds of telescope dishes pointed heavenward. NASA's ("Very Large Array") radio telescope.

CONTROL ROOM - SAME

Rows of hi-tech consoles. Monitors display star maps. Sharp post-graduate TECHNICIANS take readings, bored, passing a nerf football across the room to each other.

BELLS suddenly SOUND on the farthest monitoring console. One, in sequence, down the line. The effect is of something moving extremely fast through the room. The technicians turn and stare.

TECH 1
What was that..?

The room is silent again. The technician checks the equipment.

TECH 2
A glitch? Or a signal of some kind...?

TECH 1
Over 23 degrees of sky? Extensive activity at the upper spectrum, gamma and cosmic rays. Must be some kind of natural source...

TECH 2
Black hole or a pulsar, maybe?

TECH 1
 Look at this blue-shift. It's
 a moving point of origin...
 heading towards earth.

They exchange looks, realizing the significance --

CUT.

TIGHT ON RAY

A contrast to earlier: Very serious, very sincere.

RAY
 I believe you.

He's facing TRACEE, a daft, cultish chick.

TRACEE
 You do?

RAY
 Absolutely. I think you had
 what we in the industry call,
 "a close encounter of the
third kind."

She smiles. He touches her hand reassuringly.

RAY
 But you're not alone.

TRACEE
 Have you ever..?

RAY
 Yes. But it's classified. I'm
 not allowed to... It would
 blow your mind, Tracee.
 (then:)
 Look, I need to investigate
 your case further. What's your
 schedule like?

She smiles like a favored student.

CUT.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

TRACEE
 So I was just standing here, I like
 to come up here to think, look out
 on the city, realize that all those
 lights, they're people. So I look
 up and I see this round shape...
 with lights all around it.

Ray looks out across the city, sees the airport nearby, a couple of planes in final approach --

RAY

Hmmn.

TRACEE

I saw something, didn't I? I knew it. Billy thinks I'm crazy. He's my boyfriend.

RAY

He's not very supportive, is he? You've been touched by something special, Tracee.

Ray puts his hands on her shoulders.

TRACEE

It's kind of scary.

RAY

The idea that we're not alone... scares some people Tracee. Admitting the unknown represents a loss of control. But that doesn't scare you...

She puts her hand on his. He's in --

CUT.

EXT. SPACE - A SPACE STATION ORBITING EARTH

Soviet and U.S. crafts docked in a joint venture.

Three bulky space-suited ASTRONAUTS attached by lifelines, unfold a radar antennae array in the SLOW MOTION of zero gravity. A reflection in the antennae shows a distorted silver shape zipping past in the B.G.

One of the astronauts turned as fast as his suit allows but there's nothing there.

ASTRONAUT (V.O./RADIO)

(in Russian)

What the heck..?

Suddenly, a shadow drifts slowly over the astronaut's head. The dark bottom of a... silver surfboard. He looks up slowly, sees his own reflection in the bottom and then --

It's gone. A flash of silver - heading toward earth. Reflected in the astronaut's helmet glass. The astronaut inside watching, open-mouthed and wide-eyed.

CUT.

INT. NORAD DEFENSE - NIGHT

In a hollowed-out mountain in Utah. A military command complex.

RADAR OFFICER
We've got a bogey. A small
unidentified... crossing 23,000.

MILITARY TECH
Satellite flame-out?

RADAR OFFICER
Negative. Too fast for sub-orbital
decay. Definitely moving under its
own power.

The Military tech swivels a chair in the direction of the radar bay --

MILITARY TECH
How fast?

The Radar Officer squints disbelievingly --

RADAR OFFICER
one eight six zero zero
Mach 22.5.

MILITARY TECH
Come again.

RADAR OFFICER
That's eighteen thousand miles
an hour. Speed decreasing.

Stunned, the Radar Officer points to his console.

MILITARY TECH
Impossible.

All personnel crowd to watch the console.

CUT.

MOVING P.O.V. - EARTH - CLOSING AT MACH 22.5

MILITARY TECH (V.O.)
Whatever it is - at that angle
and speed - it's going to fry
when it hits the atmosphere...
now.

INTERCUT - MOVING P.O.V. - SAME VIEW

Surrounded by an inferno of atmospheric combustion.

BACK TO COMMAND ROOM

The techs stare. The blip on the screen remains. The technician fumbles for the phone --

MILITARY TECH

What is this thing? Plot a trajectory...

(into phone)

Maj. Powell, please. Western SAC with a code four... Wake him! We're picking up an unusual upper atmosphere bogey... You tell me.

RADAR MAN

Speed slowing. And it's changing direction. Someone's driving that thing.

CUT.

EXT. AIRPLANE (ESTABLISHING) - NIGHT

747. American Airlines red-eye.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT (SAME)

Pillows and blankets out. People sleeping. A man sleeps, head turned away from his wife. Their hyper-active son, CALVIN bounces up and down, his stuffed tiger on the seat beside him.

WIFE

Calvin, go to sleep, please.

She lowers her sleep mask. Calvin sighs, opens his window shade and stares out. He pages through a Fantastic Four comic book. Suddenly, his face is lit by a white reflective glow --

Calvin stares out the window, eyes big as saucers. He tugs at his mother while he stares --

CALVIN

Mommy... Mommy... Mom...

She wakes, annoyed.

MOTHER

What is it now?

CALVIN

There's a shiny man outside...

MOTHER'S POV. Nothing. Night sky. Calvin searches.

CALVIN

He flew away...

MOTHER

That's enough of this.

Mother collects his jumble of comic books and tucks them into her carry-on bag. She lowers her eyeshade. Calvin doesn't care: he's looking out the window.

He climbs down off his seat and squeezes carefully past this mother. Calvin walks down the aisle toward the cockpit. He stops a STEWARDESS.

CALVIN

I have to speak to the pilot.
It's urgent.

STEWARDESS

Why don't you tell me and I'll
tell him, okay?

Calvin says very seriously --

CALVIN

Okay, tell him to please be
careful driving so he doesn't
hit the silver man.

She gives an indulging lipstick smile --

STEWARDESS

What silver man?

CALVIN

Outside.

STEWARDESS

A flying silver man?

CALVIN

(shakes his head)
No. He's surfing.

She laughs.

STEWARDESS

You go on back to your seat.
I'll tell him for you.

IN THE COCKPIT

Bored routine of the flight. The Stewardess enters --

STEWARDESS

Ted, Jerry. You guys need
anything?

PILOT (TED)

We're fine.

STEWARDESS

Oh, a little boy wants you to be careful not to hit the silver man flying... surfing, beside the plane.

The pilot reaches into a plastic bag and hands the Stew a pilot wings pin --

PILOT (TED)

Tell him I'll keep an eye out. Make him a special co-pilot.

The pilot smiles. She exits.

CO-PILOT (JERRY)

She looks great.

PILOT (TED)

She's been doing that new kick-boxing workout.

The pilot flicks a few controls. Then he glances out his side window and sees --

A flat silver projectile suddenly racing up alongside the plan and slowing down until it becomes distinguishable --

A METALLIC MAN, SMOOTH OF FEATURE, ON A FLYING SILVER BOARD
- THE SILVER SURFER!

The pilot wildly jerks the plane out of auto-pilot --

The silver streak banks like a streak of lightning away from the plane --

CO-PILOT (JERRY)

Ted, what's wrong?!

The pilot straightens out the plane --

PILOT (TED)

Did you see that? It looked like...

(to himself)

It's ridiculous. I'm not going to jeopardize my pension...

(into mike)

One-seven-nine to tower, final approach for landing.

EXT. AIRPORT CONTROL TOWER - NIGHT

The buzz of overlapping controller talk. A radar man checks the radar --

CONTROLLER

You are not clear, one seven niner. Repeat, not clear. Unidentified object in your area. Do you have a visual?

PILOT (V.O.)

Uh... that's a negative...

Then: Out the big bay window of the control tower, a flash of silver whooshes past. The big window explodes in a hail of glass. Controllers dive for cover --

CONTROLLER

Jesus...

CUT.

INT. HALLWAY - NORAD DEFENSE

MAJ. OLIVER POWELL strides down the hallway, trailing support staff. He burst through the double doors into --

THE CONTROL ROOM

MAJ. POWELL

More space junk? What is it this time? Chinese? Soviet?

MILITARY TECH

It came through re-entry unchanged.

SCIENTIST

At a speed that should have vaporized it.

RADAR OFFICER

Seems to be operating under its own power...

MAJ. POWELL

What are we saying?

Powell looks at the men. They're all waiting on him.

MAJ. POWELL

A possible ETI? Alien technology?!

A dead pause --

SCIENTIST
It's one possibility.

MAJ. POWELL
Give me the others.

Another pause. Shrugs. Powell squints at this.

MAJ. POWELL
Can we get radio contact? Does
it answer hailing frequencies?

COMM OFFICER
We've tried, sir. No response.

Powell gives quiet orders --

MAJ. POWELL
Well, I don't care what it is, I
don't want it dying of loneliness
up there, gentlemen. Let's roll
out the welcome wagons.

Powell's words are others' deeds.

CUT.

EXT. AIR FORCE BASE (ESTABLISHING) - NIGHT

An air wing attack squadron scrambles. Taxis to take-off.

CUT.

EXT. HILLSIDE NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Three punk kids in a station wagon. TATTOO, the spiritual leader. RED, who looks like a psychotic Opie. TINY, who isn't, drives. Beer cans rattle. Grunge rock blaring. Burning off steroids.

Tattoo leans out the passenger side and swings a baseball bat. Takes out a mailbox.

RED
Dude, watch the car. My mom'll
kill us...

TATTOO
Oh, I'm afraid of your mom.

TINY
That's what she said.

RED
Shut up, Tiny.

In the rear-view mirror: A silver-white light --

TINY

Uh oh. Cops...

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - SAME

Tiny slows. A silver blur whizzes over their heads --

The Surfer whizzes over their heads, about twenty feet above the road.

RED

That's no cop.

TATTOO

Duh...

TINY

I think it was one of those UFOs...

RED

You believe in UFOs?

TINY

I never really thought about it. I guess not.

RED

If it is, I bet we could make a lot of money selling pictures of it to TV.

They consider this. Like what else are they doing tonight?

TATTOO

Follow it. Go, go, go...

Red rummages in his bag for his video camera as Tiny guns the engine --

RED

A UFO's better than a police beating any day...

THEIR P.O.V. - AHEAD

Up the hill, the flying Silver object skirts the tree line and suddenly disappears over the highest point.

TINY

Wow... it must've landed.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - SAME

The punks pull off the road.

TATTOO

It went down over there.

They get out of the car. Tattoo digs in his jacket and brings out a gun. The others stop, concerned.

RED

Hey! Where'd you get that?

TATTOO

It's my dad's. I take it all the time, he doesn't even know it's missing.

TINY

What's it for?

TATTOO

Protection.

Not the time to argue. Tiny grabs the baseball bat. The three of them head through the brush --

EXT. CLEARING - SAME

Quiet. There are still deer in the mountains here. One nibbles grass in the moonlight.

In absolute silence, a silver board drifts slowly into frame. Atop it is --

THE SILVER SURFER. Magical. Alien. Glorious. Smooth. perfectly reflective silver skin.

The deer looks up for a moment, then continues chewing.

SURFER'S P.O.V. - THE DEER (SURFER'S VISION)

A bizarre, alien view of our world. All sources and frequencies of energy visible at once. Like a finely developed Kirilian photograph. Moving and alive.

At the edge of this POV, like an overlay, alien symbols provide a readout. An instant energy composition analysis, passive and potential, sub-atomic. Reducing the life-form to positive and negative values. We are looking at the energy fingerprint of the deer. More than an X-ray, a Cosmic ray picture of the biologic engine that converts organic matter to energy. Organs and active muscles visible by their heat signature. The mouth, chewing. The heart beating like a trip-hammer. The deer registers a positive value, the trees less and the rocks in the B.G. nearly inert.

BAC TO SCENE - THE SURFER

He steps off the board and crouches to the ground. He holds a hand out, palm down. Like some alien zen meditation. The hand glows white-violet and a column of light stabs down into the cool grass --

THE EDGE OF THE CLEARING

The three punks burst step from the woods and stop cold --

THE SURFER turns, cocks his head curiously at the three life-forms. The deer skitters off into the brush.

Despite themselves, the punks whisper --

TINY

Look at that.

Red tries to raise his video camera but he's too nervous --

RED

What is it?

Tattoo's gun at his side, too startled to react.

TATTOO

It's a goddamn alien is what it is.

THE SURFER does not seem wary, threatened, frightened or frightening.

TATTOO raises the gun slowly, closes one eye --

RED

Wha... what are you gonna do?

TATTOO

I'm going to save the earth.
We let one in and next thing
you know, they'll take over.

Tattoo's finger curls around the trigger --

SURFER'S P.O.V. - (SURFER'S VISION)

Three figures. Energy levels high. The brain and central nervous system dancing with the synaptic firing of an (alleged) higher life form. Ebbs and flows like a plasma. One silhouette pointing an inert object RIGHT AT CAMERA --

THROUGH THE VIDEO CAMERA - ON TATTOO

Lining up his perfect shot. The Surfer doesn't move.

RED (O.S.)

Don't do it.

TATTOO

Why? There ain't no law
against killing an alien.

BACK TO SCENE

Tattoo squints. No nerves, no remorse, no doubt: It's an alien. Not human. He squeezes the trigger. POW!

THE SURFER steps back a half-step with the impact. His shiny silver skin ripples like a shimmering liquid pond.

Tattoo sees this and steps forward, firing rapidly. Eyes closed. POW. POW. POW. POW. POW. Empties the gun.

INSERT - DETAIL - TATTOO'S HAND FIRING

Each motion.

THE SURFER. Driven back. Ripples with each impact. The Surfer reacts but still stands.

TINY

Hey, it's still alive. Maybe
you missed.

Red backs up, holding the camera --

TATTOO

(nervous)
Hell I did.

THE SURFER steps forward. Deceptively fast. His movements are pure. He grabs the gun from Tattoo's hand before he can react.

TATTOO

Hey!

The Surfer looks at the gun. Inspects it. Learning. He points the gun at Tattoo and pulls the trigger the same way. Six times. Empty: CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK. CLICK.

TINY

I'll get the moon man.

Tiny runs across the clearing toward the Surfer, swinging the bat. SCREAMING.

He catches the Surfer on the shoulder with the first blow. Surprises and staggers him. The second finds a silver chin and sends him reeling --

TATTOO

Get him, Tiny!

The Surfer is on the ground. Looks up in confusion. Tiny connects again. Right in the face.

Swings again. The Surfer stops the bat with one hand. The huge Tiny cannot budge it. The Surfer stands and takes the bat away with one hand.

Tiny steps back and pulls out a big knife --

TINY

Alright, Darth Invader...

Tiny thrusts and feints with the knife --

The Surfer just cocks his head at the odd movements. Tiny steps in and cuts. He's good. In one fluid motion, he delivers five lethal cuts (forearm, armpit, jugular, carotid, gut thrust) --

The sound of metal on metal with each slice and --

The Surfer is unharmed. Tiny steps back, surprised --

TINY

Hey, I got you...

Like a thought, the Surfer takes the knife and slices back in an amazingly swift movement: Mirror-image mimicry of Tiny's exact moves --

Tiny staggers back, startled, grabbing futilely to stanch his pouring wounds.

THE SURFER cocks his head, watching curiously --

P.O.V. - SURFER'S VISION - TINY

Life fading. Colors and energy dissipating from the body through the wounds. Energy levels plummet as life seeps from the punk. Then: The readings lock up and fade, dying out --

RED trips, drops his camera, then turns and runs away --

The Surfer looks down at the knife in his hand. Drops it.

TATTOO reloads the gun with bullets from his pocket --

TATTOO
You're gonna pay you stupid
space monkey!

But just then the Surfer's expression goes blank. His eyes flare violet with cosmic energy. He looks up at the infinity of stars. Raises his arms in supplication and like a dynamo powering up, starts to glow with unearthly cosmic light --

EXT. HILLTOP (CLEARING) - NIGHT

A searing beam of pure energy lances into the sky. White-violet light. An inferno of cosmic power stabbing away from earth into space --

At the center of the cosmic beacon, in the clearing, is the Surfer. Beside him are Tiny and Tattoo. All detail is washed out as he glows white-hot with the tremendous expenditure of energy --

TINY AND TATTOO are mere silhouettes, bathed in this energy and then the silhouettes whither and crumble --

THE CITY - SAME

The beam dominates the landscape, arcing away from earth --

THE EARTH - SAME

The beam is still visible, emanating from a pinprick on the planet --

THE BEACON

Stabs out into the distant reaches of space.

CUT.

INT. NORAD COMMAND ROOM - SAME

A technician turns to Maj. Powell --

TECHNICIAN
Sir, we're picking up a
tremendous hot-spot in the
target zone! Radiation across
the spectrum!

MAJ. POWELL
Relay those co-ordinates to the
the intercept team.

TECHNICIAN
 (just as suddenly)
 It's gone, sir. It stopped. Like
 someone turned a switch off.

MAJ. POWELL
 Did we get a location?!

CUT.

EXT. SKY - JETS (ATTACK SQUADRON) - SAME

A sharp turn through the night sky.

CUT.

EXT. CLEARING - SAME

The Surfer's body smolders. Incredibly weak, drained from his effort, he tries to stand. Surrounding him is a circular patch of seared, black earth --

With a gesture, he calls his board to him. He falters as he steps on, stumbling, unable to find his balance --

He collapses, holds tight to the board as it rises skyward.

Over a perfect circle scorched into the grass clearing. Two charred human-shaped lumps within the circle. A video camera just outside the circle.

THE SURFER rises higher, above the trees --

As the army jets scream onto the scene.

SQUADRON LEADER (V.O.)
 We have a visual on the
 bogey...

INTERCUT - SAC HQ (MAJ. POWELL)

MAJ. POWELL (RADIO / O.S.)
 What is it?

The squadron radios through increasingly heavy static --

SQUADRON LEADER (V.O.)
 It seems to be metallic, silver
 in color...

MAJ. POWELL (RADIO / O.S.)
 What type of plane..?

SQUADRON LEADER (V.O.)
 Uh... that's a negatory. It's
 not a plane.

A ROAR OF JETS

The city twinkles below. A small silver point of light
 flies PAST CAMERA. Then the squadron of jets ROAR BY --

MAJ. POWERS (RADIO / O.S.)
 What the hell is it then, Captain?

SQUADRON LEADER (V.O.)
 (after a beat)
 Unknown object maintaining
 radio silence. Course
 unchanged. Three minutes ETA
 populated city center.

MAJ. POWELL sweats the command decision --

SQUADRON LEADER (V.O.)
 Awaiting orders, sir.

MAJ. POWELL (RADIO / O.S.)
 Get close enough to confirm a
 visual. But if it won't follow your
 lead and won't respond... shoot the
 damn thing down.

THE SQUADRON wings over into attack mode --

SQUADRON LEADER (V.O.)
 Gentlemen, let's get ready to
 rumble.

INSIDE THE PLANE, the squadron leader flips his tracking
 computer into place and sights the silver speck against a
 readout grid --

EXT. ANGLE - DEAD SKY

A WHOOSH and a streak of silver. The bogey passes CAMERA.

An instant later: Slower, louder and bigger, the planes
 roar past in attack formation. CAMERA CLOSE. Like
 watching from the pits at the Indy 500.

MAJ. POWELL (RADIO / O.S.)
 Can you confirm visual on the
 target? Repeat. Can you I.D.?

ANOTHER ANGLE - THE SURFER

RIGHT AT CAMERA. Hell, if it doesn't look like a silver man on a surfboard doing Mach 3 without breathing hard --

PLANES right on his tail.

ANGLE - FIGHTER PLANE

A young PILOT alongside the Surfer --

PILOT (V.O.)

(radio crackle)

Sir... it looks like an alien... on a surfboard, Sir.

MAJ. POWELL (V.O.)

What?!

The pilot just blinks and stares through his oxygen mask.

PILOT (V.O.)

Repeat...

INTERCUT - THE BASE - POWELL

Maj. Powell listens rigidly --

MAJ. POWELL

I heard you, Captain. Now you listen to me.

(beat, at a loss)

Aliens don't surf!

The other soldiers in the room react to this last comment.

MAJ. POWELL

If it won't answer, shoot it down.

(then, quietly to an aide)

Call Washington, tell them to send us a specialist.

AIDE

A specialist in what, sir?

MAJ. POWELL

I don't know. Whatever that thing is... Aliens... aliens that surf!

CUT.

BACK TO SCENE - THE SURFER FLYING ALONGSIDE A JET

THE SURFER turns. Makes eye contact with the youthful pilot alongside him.

SQUADRON LEADER (V.O.)
 We've got orders, gentleman.
 Lock on and fire on my command.

PILOT (V.O.)
 But, sir, it's... a man...

SQUADRON LEADER (V.O.)
 Fire when able...

The Squadron Leader FIRES --

THE SURFER plays with the missile. Allowing it to follow.
 Slowing so it can keep up. Seeing what it can do.

The Surfer banks and the missile follows. He U-turns and
 the missile manages to stay with him, heading back towards
 the vehicle that launched it --

THE COMMAND JET - SAME

The squadron leader looks through his sights and sees the
 Surfer heading straight for him, peeling past the cockpit
 at the last instant.

SQUADRON LEADER
 Crap.

The missile follows. Straight for the tube that launched
 it --

A SPECTACULAR EXPLOSION

BACK AT THE BASE - MAJ. POWELL

Explosions and static on the radio.

MAJ. POWELL
 Captain! Captain!

RADIO MAN
 We've lost radio contact, sir.
 He's down.

The wreckage of the jet tumbles out of the sky into the
 bay. A parachute billows, dangling the squadron leader.

ANGLE - SQUADRON LEADER

Hanging from the canopy. The Surfer investigates. His
 board drifts leisurely, almost motionless in the air as he
 inspects the drifting military man.

POV - SURFER'S VISION

The drifting man is a silhouette of multi-colored energy
 levels.

BACK TO SCENE

The squadron leader stares wide-eyed, clutching his chute lines. He fumbles in his flight suit and comes out with a hand gun.

SQUADRON LEADER

Alright, whatever you are...

In angry panic, he empties his gun at the Surfer --

The Surfer holds an outstretched hand. The nine bullets rest in a silvery palm. He makes a fist and it glows hot and violet with the Surfer's cosmic power. When he opens his hand, they are gone.

SQUADRON LEADER

Oh boy, we're in trouble...

The Surfer banks up and backward in an inverted loop, never losing contact with his board.

THE REMAINING JETS converge as the Surfer comes out of his loop. They FIRE.

THE MISSILES cut a path through the sky toward the Surfer.

THE SURFER. A pair of missiles hard on his tail. He pivots on his board and faces back at the missiles. He raises his arms and a pale violet light plays from his hands, probing the missile casings, exploring --

Without warning, the missiles explode. BOOM. BOOM. The blasts startle the Surfer, throw him off-balance. He scrambles to regain his footing on the board as it hurtles along at Mach 2.

A VIDEO DISPLAY - TARGETING COMPUTER

Locks on to the wobbling bogey.

PILOT (V.O.)

Locked and firing.

Twin rockets snake whistle toward the Surfer as he climbs back on his board --

PILOT (V.O.)

Going to manual detonation.

P.O.V. - FROM INSIDE THE COCKPIT

THE PILOT manually detonates the rocket. Within spitting distance of the tiny silver object. The double EXPLOSION is a good one. The Surfer is rocked.

ANGLE - THE SURFER'S HAND

Loses contact with the board --

PILOT (V.O.)

Bingo.

INSIDE THE EXPLOSIVE CLOUD

The Surfer's smooth skin ripples with waves of distortion.
The Surfer and his board are parted --

From the explosive cloud, a silver figure tumbles --

His board spirals unsteadily down after him, chasing the
falling figure --

Down --

THE SURFER reaches for his board and the board
sympathetically tries to flutter toward him --

But he's too weakened. He grasps futilely --

ANOTHER ANGLE - THE SURFER AND HIS BOARD

Fall through empty sky --

Dancing like a couple of feathers --

The city sprawls below --

CUT.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

A large art studio loft. Sculptures everywhere. In the
long shadows of moonlight, the forms and the textures of
the works are striking. Almost otherworldly in their
intensity.

ABOVE, the skylight shatters and the Surfer lands violently
in the middle of the studio --

Tables are rocked. A sculpted bust (briefly seen, it's Ben
Grimm) falls and shatters. The Surfer's unconscious body
lies still amid broken glass and wood.

A dog startles awake from its bed and leaps up barking.
WATCHER wears a seeing-eye harness.

ALICIA (O.S.)

What is it?

ALICIA MASTERS turns from where she works on a sculpture. Her unseeing eyes stare into the darkness as she listens. It's the woman we saw modelling at the art school. She's beautiful and blind.

She moves forward, glass crunches --

ALICIA
 Watcher, what happened?

Watcher whimpers, noses around the motionless body of the Surfer --

Alicia stumbles over a displaced piece of furniture. Her hand catches on a piece of broken glass and she cuts herself --

ALICIA
 Oh...

As she steadies herself to stand up, her other hand brushes something --

THE SURFER. Lying inches from her --

Alicia recoils when her fingers brush his body.

ALICIA
 Who is that? Who's there?

No answer. Slowly, her fingers return to the body. Playing over him, efficiently and gently like a piano virtuoso, exploring, taking inventory - "Seeing".

An oddly sensual moment as Alicia "looks around". Her hands move to his face, the smooth features.

The Surfer responds to her touch, a faint buzz of cosmic energy dances between them and --

THE SURFER's eyes open.

P.O.V. - SURFER'S VISION

Alicia's face bending down to his. But not just the wild colors and wavelengths. Something's changed. With the Surfer's massive expenditure of energy, Alicia's features are visible in the spectrum light we're familiar with. Light and dark and fleshtones. Overlaid with the energy traces and corresponding colors. The image is humanized.

ALICIA
 Are you alive..?

The Surfer turns to the dog: Watcher panting away in fuschia and chartreuse. A visible mist billowing from his mouth.

BACK TO SCENE

The Surfer doesn't answer, doesn't move. But he watches this strange new creature minister to him --

She stands, goes to the sink, fills a basin and brings a washcloth --

Alicia puts the washcloth on the Surfer's forehead. He sits up with a start. Alicia jumps back.

The Surfer relaxes, takes the washcloth. Looks at it. Smells it. Let's Alicia return it to his forehead --

ALICIA

What happened? Are you alright? Here... can you...

Alicia helps the Surfer to the couch. He's heavy but weakly helps her --

ALICIA

I'm sorry...

Alicia turns on the lights.

ALICIA

Since I don't need them, I forget. Better?

Alicia waits for an answer. There is none.

ALICIA

Like I said, I'm blind. So you're going to have to do more than nod or shake your head, okay?

No response.

ALICIA

What if you're deaf? Then we're in real trouble...

She touches his forehead and there is a faint glow of cosmic energy at her touch.

ALICIA

You're hurt aren't you... no, weak...

She stops, as if listening. An answer --

ALICIA

Oh. Hungry.

The Surfer nods imperceptibly. grabs her hand. Sees the blood from where she cut herself.

The Surfer touches the cut, watches her wince with pain.

ALICIA

Ow. Must've cut myself...

His expression is curious. Then: A glow of cosmic power and the wound heals.

ALICIA

What..?

Alicia feels her skin where the cut was. It's healed. Alicia steps back, confused --

ALICIA

I'll... get you some food.

TIMECUT.

INT. STUDIO - SAME

Alicia sets down a tray, a sandwich, juice.

ALICIA

Here you go...

The Surfer raises his hand over the food. The air shimmers, a cosmic glow and --

The food dissolves. The molecules convert into pure energy that flows back into the Surfer. (Just like the core sample he took at in the clearing.)

The process gives off heat. Alicia shields herself. Watcher barks.

ALICIA

What did you just do?

The Surfer turns and looks at her. She feels for the tray of food. It's gone --

ALICIA (CONT'D)

What happened to the food, the tray. Who... what are you?

In front of the Surfer, on a table, is a bowl of fruit. The Surfer raises his hands to it and converts it to energy too.

Watcher stands close by, BARKING. The Surfer reaches a hand out toward the dog. In position to convert him to energy?

Alicia pulls the dog away --

ALICIA

No, Watcher. Be nice.

She hugs and pets the dog. The Surfer watches. She reaches out, takes the Surfer's hand and places it on the dog --

ALICIA

Friend.

The Surfer follows Alicia's movement. Gets nothing from the experience emotionally but understands. Watcher pants happily --

ALICIA

His name's Watcher. He looks out for me. What's your name...?

A KNOCK O.S. and an insistent doorbell. Alicia looks up --
THE DOOR. More KNOCKS.

ALICIA

Who is it?

Before she can get there, the door explodes off its hinges. SOLDIERS double-time inside. Some in radiation suits, others conventional, armed.

Like storm-troopers, they fan out around Alicia, knocking her over, not realizing she's blind --

SOLDIER

Fan out!

Watcher runs out, barking furiously. A soldier reacts by leveling a gun at the dog --

MAJ. POWELL

Whoa, son, just a dog.

Maj. Powell helps Alicia off the ground.

MAJ. POWELL

I'm sorry, Ma'am, but we have a situation here...

Powell looks up, notices the broken glass and damage --

MAJ. POWELL

What caused that?! Where is it..?

But the Surfer is gone. TECHS takes readings with radiation monitors, homing in on the table where the food was.

TECH

We've got a hot spot, sir.
We're within safe levels but
we're picking up residual.

Powell turns back to Alicia as SOLDIERS loudly turn the place upside down --

MAJ. POWELL

Where is it?

ALICIA

Hey! What are you doing?!
Stop it! You can't do this!

MAJ. POWELL

It was here, wasn't it?
(then:)
Why would you try to hide it?

Alicia feels the decorations on Powell's uniform.

ALICIA

Look, Sargeant...

MAJ. POWELL

Major Powell,

Alicia smiles. She knew that. Powell turns to his men --

ALICIA

I'm not hiding anything. I
don't know anything. But this
person, whatever he is, was
hurt. You seem to want to hurt
him some more.

MAJ. POWELL

We're concerned for public
safety.

ALICIA

He seemed harmless, confused.

MAJ. POWELL

We have what's left of two
bodies on a ridge outside of
town who don't think he's that
harmless.

As Alicia digests this. Maj. Powell turns to his men.

SOLDIER
No trace of him.

MAJ. POWELL
We've got an alien on a
surfboard loose in this city
with enough firepower to down
three of our jets. That is
totally and completely
unacceptable!

SOLDIER
(unsure of proper response)
Sir...

ANGLE - THE SURFER

Outside. Tight to the side of the building, hovering
weakly on his board. Just out of view of the window
through which we can see Maj. Powell and the men --

MAJ. POWELL
Dammit! Aliens don't surf!
Not on my watch. Call
Washington again, where's that
"expert"?!

CUT.

EXT. THE CITY (ESTABLISHING) - NIGHT

Lights twinkling. The everyday routine of existence about
to be shaken.

INT. RAY'S APT. - SAME

Ray carries a pair of filled martini glasses through a 50's
decorated bachelor pad. Esquivel plays "Surfboard" from
the stereo --

Ray delivers a drink to Tracee on the couch. Toasts.

RAY
To intelligent life on other
planets.

Clink. Before they can drink a HARD KNOCK on the door.

RAY
Hey...

Impatient KNOCKS. Ray opens the door. Two men in dark
suits and sunglasses.

SUIT
Dr. Raynold Ramsey?

RAY

What is this, super hip pizza
delivery? Who are you guys?
What's with the sunglasses?
It's night.

One of the suits flashes a security shield --

SUIT 2

Lt. Sheckley, NSA. Would you
come with us, please?

RAY

What for?

SUIT

Your country needs you.

Ray steps out, pulls the door close behind him and speaks
confidentially --

RAY

Look, guys, this isn't the best
time. I've got company. Can you
come by the office tomorrow?

CUT.

EXT./INT. HELICOPTER (MOVING) - DAWN

Sunrise over the desert. The chopper follows the empty
highway toward the Air Force base ahead.

Inside, between the two suits, Ray sulks. Dressed hastily
and inappropriately casual.

CUT.

EXT. AIR FORCE BASE (ESTABLISHING) - DAWN

Equipment and troops are active. A sense of urgency.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Ray sits alone in an antiseptic conference room nursing a
free coffee --

Through frosted glass, Ray can see a group of military men.
One detaches and enters the room: Maj. Powell.

MAJ. POWELL

Good morning, Colonel.

RAY

I'm retired, Major.

MAJ. POWELL
Your file lists you last at a
level 5 security clearance.

Powell tosses Ray a new badge.

MAJ. POWELL
You're now a level 7.

RAY
Hey, that's two higher.

MAJ. POWELL
For reasons that will become
obvious, this discussion is
classified. You're the ranking
intelligence officer for SETI
division. Search For Extra-
Terrestrial Intelligence?

Ray smiles, answers guardedly --

RAY
Yeah, technically. But that's
just a fancy title for
"listens to nutcases all day
long". It's basically a
public relations position...

MAJ. POWELL
We had an incident last night.
A 'contact'.

Ray looks supremely skeptical --

RAY
With what?

Powell takes a breath and turns around --

MAJ. POWELL
Our air defense system tracked
a foreign object entering
earth's atmosphere over North
America at an extremely high
rate of speed.

RAY
An asteroid...

MAJ. POWELL
The object was observed making
several abrupt shifts in direction.

RAY

Possibly a satellite in orbital decay...

MAJ. POWELL

When the object failed to respond to hailing frequencies, five of our most sophisticated jets were engaged. They were easily out-maneuvered, three were downed by this... object.

Ray leans forward with interest --

MAJ. POWELL

Our radars detected sub-orbital speeds in excess of mach 20.

The ramifications hit Ray.

RAY

What kind of object?

MAJ. POWELL

We think it was an alien...

RAY

What did the craft look like?

Powell sets his jaw. He can't believe these words are coming out of his mouth --

MAJ. POWELL

There was no craft. It looked to my men like a silver man, standing on a flying surfboard.

Powell watches Ray carefully for a reaction. Ray lets out an uncontrolled laugh --

MAJ. POWELL

We don't think it's funny.

RAY

Come on. That's crazy. An alien on a surfboard. That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard. Everyone knows aliens don't surf.

MAJ. POWELL

I agree. But there it is.

RAY

A silver... surfer?

MAJ. POWELL
 Whatever it is, it's out there.
 And it's extremely dangerous.

On Ray's reaction --

CUT.

TWO BLACKENED CORPSES

INT. AFB MORGUE - SAME

The charred remnants of the two skinheads are laid out on slabs. Ray, Powell, a couple of SCIENTISTS and the army CORONER wear isolation suits and talk via radio mikes:

CORONER
 The suits are a precaution.
 There's no residual radio-
 activity. In fact, there's no
 organic material of any kind
 remaining. Fascinating.
 Apparently they've been reduced
 to some sort of petrified ash.
 It's a chemical compound I've
 never seen. As if all energy,
 all life, down to the molecular
 level, was simply sucked out.

RAY
 Who were they?

MAJ. POWELL
 No idea. We registered a
 discharge of intense energy
 from the spot where the bodies
 were found.

Powell picks up the bagged video camera --

MAJ. POWELL
 We found this. The tape was
 blank. Nothing but static.

SCIENTIST
 Like an electromagnetic pulse
 wiped it clean.

Ray in way over his head. He has no idea what to do.

RAY
 So what are you going to do?
 Where do you start?

MAJ. POWELL
 That's my question.

RAY
(sheepishly)
Right. Any witnesses...

CUT.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM

Powell leads Ray in. Alicia sits at the table.

MAJ. POWELL
Alicia, this is Dr. Ray Ramsey.

She turns to the voice. Ray stares, pole-axed. The same girl he sees through his telescope --

RAY
You.

ALICIA
Do I know you?

RAY
No. I... I've seen you. I work in the Federal building, across the street from the Art Academy where you model...

Ray can't take his eyes off her. She's blind, why should he?

ALICIA
I'm a teacher there. Sometimes I model for the life drawing classes.

RAY
You don't mind them looking at you?

ALICIA
Did it bother you? If you haven't noticed, I'm blind. The idea of people seeing things doesn't offend me.

RAY
Supposedly you had contact with what everyone around here seems to think is an alien.

ALIEN
You don't believe them.

RAY
I believe you. Why don't you tell me about it.

ALICIA
You don't believe me. You want
to get down my pants.

Ray is caught off-guard --

RAY
What..?

Alicia stands and reaches out to touch Ray. He falls
silent, lets her. Brief intimacy as she feels his face to
locate the top of his head --

ALICIA
Hm. He was handsome... like
you. But a little taller.

Ray is flattered.

RAY
You sure about that? I hear a lot
of "three feet tall and green".

ALICIA
No. He was smooth, warm, like
liquid metal.

RAY
So, a space suit of some kind?

ALICIA
No...

RAY
But definitely from another
planet?

ALICIA
How do I know. He's not from
around here. I thought you
were the expert.

RAY
I thought I was too. There's just
not much proof.

ALICIA
Did they show you the bodies?

RAY
Yes. But they don't even
really look like bodies.

ALICIA
So maybe it's just a hoax.

RAY
That's what I'm thinking.

ALICIA
What do you think Maj. Powers
is really up to?

Ray picks up her sarcasm.

RAY
Okay, fine, I'll play along.
Can you tell me anything else?
Did it try to communicate?

ALICIA
Yes. It was strange. Like
hearing him inside my head.
Like I could sense how he felt.

Ray rolls his eyes, sighs --

RAY
You're a psychic, then?

ALICIA
Boy, everything's a big joke to
you, isn't it?

RAY
No.

ALICIA
I'd never felt such loneliness.
I was sad for him.

RAY
Me too. He'll probably never
find the right surfboard wax he
needs to get home. Sorry...

ALICIA
Wow, you're afraid, aren't you?

RAY
I'm not afraid. He's the one
who's afraid.

ALICIA
No, he's just alone. It's okay
to be afraid.

She looks transcendent in her compassion. Ray's in love,
just doesn't know it yet.

RAY
I know. It's just that I'm not.

CUT.

INT. POWELL'S OFFICE

Ray paces before Maj. Powell, making a pitch.

RAY
Let me keep an eye on her.

MAJ. POWELL
Why?

Ray thinks. He's winging it --

RAY
I think she knows more than she
let's on.

MAJ. POWELL
We need to catch and contain
this thing, Ramsey.

RAY
I know. Look, it doesn't match any
of the profiles we've generated.
I've heard of little green men,
bug-eyed monsters. But a "Silver
Surfer"?! Come on. The girl had
contact with it. She's the only
lead we've got. Maybe there's some
kind of relationship. Let me
explore it.

Powell considers his few options --

MAJ. POWELL
Alright. But you call in as
soon as you come up with
something useful.

RAY
Absolutely.

Ray heads to the door. Powell stops him with --

MAJ. POWELL
She's pretty...

Ray stops at the door --

MAJ. POWELL
 I've read your file, Colonel.
 I know you don't give a rat's
 ass about any of this. But
 just remember that the
 government signs your checks.

Powell is no idiot. Ray's problem is that he thinks he's
 smarter than everyone else.

MAJ. POWELL
 The public counts on people
 like us. To protect them.
 Let's not let them down. This
 thing's a menace.

EXT. AIR FORCE BASE - DAWN

The base is buzzing with activity. A government sedan
 exits.

EXT./INT. CAR - SAME

Ray drives Alicia.

ALICIA
 I wonder why he's here?

CUT.

EXT. MOUNTAIN PEAK - DAY

Very high. Very remote. Swirling snow and inclement
 weather. And sitting on top, approximating Rodin's famous
 sculpture is --

THE SILVER SURFER

The whipping snow a natural camouflage against his
 reflecting skin --

A sound. CHK. CHK. Glacier cleats, an ice axe --

The top of a man's head comes into view. Swathed in
 fleece, gore-tex. A mountain CLIMBER, dead tired, ice
 frosting his beard. He assists a woman and another man to
 the summit --

CLIMBER 1
 Finally. We did it...

FEMALE CLIMBER
 Unbelievable...

The first climber and the woman kiss. Handshakes all around as they huddle together against the elements. One of the men takes a tiny bottle of champagne out of his pack and pops the top and passes it around --

The little bottle is passed to a shiny silver hand. All three climbers stare, dumb-struck --

The Surfer takes the bottle and does what he saw them do. Swigs. He hands it back. The Climber takes the bottle, still staring --

As the Surfer mounts his board and flies off.

CUT.

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - DAY

The gentrified neighborhood is deserted. Government troops maintain a cordon.

Ray's car pulls up. Ray flashes his badge to the military guards.

INT. ALICIA'S LOFT - SAME

Ray and Alicia enter. Ray looks at Alicia's sculptures.

RAY

Wow. They trashed the place.
You can't stay here. Why don't
you pack some clothes.

Ray goes to help her --

ALICIA

Thanks. I can handle it.

Ray backs off. He picks up a fallen sculpture, returns it to a table. He runs his hand over it. Then closes his eyes, feeling the form and texture --

ALICIA

Ready.

Snaps Ray out of it with a start. Alicia, bag in hand.

RAY

Your work is pretty intense.

ALICIA

Thanks. It's meant to be
touched not just seen.

Ray knows. He says nothing.

ALICIA
Where are we going?

RAY
My place. I'm supposed to keep
an eye on you.

ALICIA
For my protection, I suppose?

RAY
This whole thing's classified.
You're classified. He's
classified too... but he
doesn't know it yet.

CUT.

EXT. TROPICAL ISLAND PARADISE - DAY

Ants crawl all over their small sand hill and over a shiny
silver hand that lifts them up for inspection --

The Surfer sits on an empty beach --

Suddenly a beautiful 15 year old native girl burst from the
foliage and races to the water's edge --

She's followed by a native boy who catches up with her and
tackles her in the surf --

They roll around, laughing and then kiss.

ON THE SURFER, watching. Reminding him of something.

The young lovers see him and stop. Their gaze rises into
the air. They look at each other in wonderment for a beat,
then continue kissing.

CUT.

INT. RAY'S APT - DAY

Ray lets Alicia in. Watcher sniffs around. Alicia
familiarizes herself with the layout while Ray tries the
answering machine --

TRACEE (V.O.)
Ray, it's Tracee. You told me
to call if I saw anything.
Well, I saw it again...

BEEP. Ray clicks it off. Heads into the kitchen.

Ray puts down a bowl of pizza slices. Watcher goes at it
happily.

Ray walks Alicia into the bedroom --

RAY
This is the bedroom. It's
yours. I'll be on the couch.

Alicia seems mildly impressed.

ALICIA
No gallant offers to protect me
in the sack?

RAY
Boy, you can see right through
me, can't you?

ALICIA
But I'm blind, I'd probably
need a commitment, right?

RAY
Is being blind like a free pass to
be a bitch? This alien's the
perfect type for you, isn't he?
As long as he's not planning to
stick around too long.

Ray exits to the couch. Leaves Alicia thinking.

CUT.

EXT. BASEBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

A game in progress. The play-by-play drones V.O.,
announcing --

THE PITCHER unleashes a forkball --

The batter nails it. Home run. The ball flies --

THE BIG SCOREBOARD does an electric version of fireworks --

THE FANS cheers turn to gasps and cries of "look!".
People point, not to the field but above it --

THE SURFER sits on his board in the sky, watching the game.

FAT FAN (OVERLAPPING)
Hey, it's a bird!

FEMALE FAN (OVERLAPPING)
Is that a real guy?

DRUNK FAN (OVERLAPPING)
What's he hanging from? Is
there a blimp or is it a plane?

9 YEAR OLD FAN
It's a silver guy on a
surfboard!

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
That's a helluva promotion. I
wonder what they're selling?

A player looks up, crosses himself.

PLAYER
Madre de dios!

The Surfer has been spotted. He cuts and banks low, sweeping low over the first base line, causing the well-known FIRST BASEMAN to hit the dirt in a face-first slide, then looking up wide-eyed --

CUT.

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Alicia on the balcony, working a roll of aluminum foil into a sculpture. A bust of you know who. Ray watches a moment before --

RAY
Couldn't sleep, huh?

ALICIA
Sorry about earlier. You're right. I'm not giving you much credit, am I?

RAY
That's alright. What's that?

ALICIA
From what I can remember, him. It must be scary to suddenly find yourself in a completely new world. How alien everything must seem to him. We can't even imagine.

RAY
When did you lose your sight?

ALICIA
I was seven years old. I had a terrible fever. Someone just turned off the light one day and they never came back on.

RAY
Scary. Your parents?

ALICIA

They started fighting around that time. My father couldn't handle the arbitrariness of it, started looking for reasons. My mother finally threw him out. She took care of me until I had to take care of her.

RAY

Now you take care of yourself.

ALICIA

What I miss most are the stars. You can never touch them, seeing is all you get. I remember they were beautiful.

Ray stares at Alicia in the sunset --

RAY

They still are.

P.O.V. - HIGH ABOVE THE BALCONY - RAY AND ALICIA

A silver foot hanging five. Watching.

CUT.

INT. RAY'S APT. - LATER

Ray on the couch, scans the late-night news broadcasts. The SOUND is down low.

ON TV (VIDEO)

A crude drawing of a demon on a flying board with flames coming from his fingers. A group of Latinos being interviewed --

RAY

(calling to the bedroom)
They're getting sightings of your silver pal all over the world.

CHANGE. On another channel, the famous first baseman declines comment --

RAY

It's like everybody's seen this guy except me...

Ray tosses the channel changer and gets up, stretching --

RAY

Hey, are you hungry?

Ray heads toward the balcony --

EXT. BALCONY - SAME

Alicia stands outside, staring out as if trying to "see".

ALICIA

(softly)

You're here, aren't you?

Ray starts to answer and then realizes - she's not talking to him. He looks around --

THE SURFER rises into view beyond the balcony. Twenty stories over nothing. Like an elevator going up: First the bald head, then the smooth muscular shoulders, sleek body and the rest --

Not a sound but Alicia seems to know where he is. She turns toward the Surfer --

ANGLE - RAY

Amazed: A real-live alien! He stumbles back into the shadows and watches --

RAY

(under his breath)

Oh my God... Oh my God...

It's real...

ALICIA AND THE SURFER

ALICIA

You knew how to find me.

The Surfer nods. He steps off the board onto the balcony and approaches Alicia --

Ray races inside to the phone and dials.

RAY

(whispering)

This is Ramsey, get me Maj. Powell. It's urgent...

EXT. BALCONY - SAME

The Surfer reaches out a hand toward her --

Alicia extends her hand toward his, as if she can sense him there --

Just before the touch, Ray races between them, brandishing a baseball bat --

RAY

Back off, Buck Rogers! Get away from her! Alicia, get back..

ALICIA

Ray, no. He's trying to understand...

Ray's still in his stance --

RAY

He better understand this.

The Surfer points to the bat and understands. The Surfer closes his hand and it glows with cosmic power --

The Surfer raises his hand. A threatening gesture? No. It's a pitch --

A ball of energy about the size of a baseball moves slowly through the air toward Ray --

Ray is terrified --

RAY

Oh crap...

He closes his eyes and swings at the threat for all he's worth --

He connects. The cosmic baseball comes off the bat with home run written all over it --

The Surfer and Ray watch it fly up, over the city and explode like cosmic fireworks, a shower of twinkling sparks quickly fading as they fall to earth --

Ray lowers his bat in amazement --

The Surfer nods, raises an eyebrow: He understands.

RAY

...a forkball... that was a damn forkball... wasn't it?

Ray lowers the bat and approaches --

RAY

Can... you... understand... me?

Ray talks slowly, with hand gestures, like an American tourist in a foreign country --

The Surfer nods slowly and slowly manages to form words --

SURFER

Understand... you..

Sounding alien but recognizable --

RAY

Oh wow... You can, can't you?

(to Alicia)

He understands!

Ray is lost in the excitement of the moment. (This is where we forget he's already called the army.) Ray turns to the Surfer --

RAY

Okay. Let's see: Why... are... you... here? Are you lost?

Like ET? The Surfer shakes his head "no" and Alicia speaks at the same time --

ALICIA

No.

RAY

Then what?

THE SURFER struggles with these words --

SURFER

G-at-ACtsss...

They are loud, a harsh, booming screech. He adjusts his modulation. Softer, more pleasant now --

SURFER

G-at-acTsss...

Alicia's eyes go wide. Her mouth flies open, twisting in a scream --

The Surfer touches Alicia before Ray can move. He passes a hand over her face and a faint glow warms her features, relaxing them, softening them --

RAY

What happened? What did he just do?

ALICIA

He gave me... a dream. Amazing. I was in the woods, back when I was a child. Ray, it was real. I could see the stars. So peaceful...

She reaches out and touches the Surfer.

ALICIA
Why are you...?

The Surfer repeats more clearly, an explanation --

SURFER
Gal-ak-Tzzz...

RAY
(repeating)
Gal... ac... tus..

ALICIA
What is Galactus?

The Surfer's gestures in a purely alien way. Trying to explain the unexplainable.

SURFER
Gal-ACTsss... Sz.

RAY
Maybe it's the only word he knows.

The Surfer's expression is blank. He looks down.

SURFER
...No... ChoiCe...

More words. He's learning.

ALICIA
What? You have no choice or Galactus has no choice?

RAY
Or we have no choice.

The Surfer nods --

RAY
Galactus... bad?

The Surfer does not react to the word. Ray raises two hands and offers --

RAY
Good. Bad. Galactus is..?

SURFER
Iz.

ALICIA
 Good and bad don't mean
 anything to him.

RAY
 Oh, nice. He has the power to
 shoot f-16s out of the sky but
 can't tell the difference
 between good and bad.

ALICIA
 No, the words. The concept...

The Surfer watches Ray and Alicia talk: He's studying
 them. Suddenly: The WHP-WHP-WHP of helicopter blades beat
 the air overhead --

Three attack HELICOPTERS close in on the building --

RAY
 Uh oh.

Alicia turns to Ray but before she can say anything --

Ray's apartment door flies open --

The place is suddenly overrun with MILITARY COMMANDOS.
 More rappel down the side of the building. All are heavily
 armed. The focus of their attention is the Surfer --

ALICIA
 No!

The Surfer turns and watches as all the firepower draws
 down on the three of them, concentrated on the Surfer.
 Maj. Powell enters, cigar in mouth.

MAJ. POWELL
 Nice work, Ramsey.
 (turns to the Surfer)
 Now, we can do this the easy
 way or my way...
 (then:)
 Does this 'thing' understand
 English?

ALICIA
 He's not a thing...

Alicia turns to Ray, anger flashing --

ALICIA
 You called them... didn't you?

Ray starts to speak but has nothing to say. Powell signals
 and four soldiers in radiation gear approach and
 threateningly flank the Surfer.

RAY

I was afraid... for you...

ALICIA

No. For yourself...

Two soldiers grab the Surfer and one of them tries to put him in a pair of specialized high-tech handcuffs.

THE SURFER's expression registers surprise and then anger. His eyes flare with cosmic fire --

RADIATION OFCR.

We're get ultra-high frequency spiking. Gamma rays and shorter...

The Surfer throws the two of the soldiers across the room and the now-extremely crowded apartment --

They land with a crash. More of them jump the Surfer from behind --

The Surfer's eyes flare and --

The men holding him from behind break contact, holding their seared, burning flesh and YELPING in pain --

The situation escalates. The other soldiers raise their guns. The helicopters hover above --

ANGLE - THE SURFER

The spark in the Surfer's eyes flares to a flame as he braces for conflict. His board hovers in the air beside him. He's ready to mount it --

A very tense moment.

Alicia breaks it --

ALICIA

No... stop!

She races between the Surfer and the army --

MAJ. POWELL

Are you out of your mind, girl?!

RAY

Alicia, stay out of this...

ALICIA

I'm already in it. So are you!

RAY

Alicia...

SURFER
(repeating Ray)

Alic'ia...

She turns to the Surfer and in the middle of all this, there is a moment between them. The Surfer turns to her. Protectively.

Alicia looks around. Sees the scared faces of a lot of heavily armed young men. She makes a hard choice.

ALICIA
(finally:)
It's okay. Go with them.
They're here to help you.

But Alicia is hesitant, emotional --

SURFER
HelP...

ALICIA
Yes... help.
(sotto to Powell)
Aren't you?

The Surfer looks around. Powell takes the cue --

MAJ. POWELL
That's right. We're here to help.

Surfer looks back to Alicia --

ALICIA
Go with them. Please.

Alicia's eyes well up. A tear rolls down her cheek --

The Surfer notices this. He touches it, inspects it. He seems puzzled. He touches his own face and finds nothing.

ALICIA
Go with them.

SURFER
With them...

The Surfer shoulders his board and steps forward. The soldiers ready the shackles --

The Surfer approaches Powell. Powell grips his gun tightly.

The Surfer looks at the gun. He's seen guns before.

ALICIA

Put the gun away. He knows what it is. It's threatening.

(then:)

Do you want him to come with you or not?

Powell relents. The Surfer submits to the restraints.

ALICIA

You better not hurt him, you bastards.

CUT.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - SAME

Radiation-suited technicians escort the Surfer to a waiting heavily-armored vehicle --

MAJ. POWELL

I'm impressed, Colonel.

RAY

(deflated)

I'm retired, remember?

MAJ. POWELL

I'm still recommending you for a commendation.

Who cares? Ray is glances back at Alicia whose eyes seem to be following the Surfer, though that's impossible.

The armored vehicle rides into the cargo hold of a transport helicopter ---

THE HELICOPTER LIFTS OFF --

The ground forces caravan hits the road as neighbors watch curiously.

ANGLE - RAY AND ALICIA

Ray goes to her.

RAY

Are you alright?

Alicia reaches out, touches him gently to fix the distance. Then slugs him hard. Ray falls.

ALICIA

You're a jerk! Why did you call them? He just wants to understand...

RAY

I didn't know. I called before we talked to him.

ALICIA

Exactly.

RAY

But you told him to go along...

ALICIA

Because if I didn't, those soldiers would have been hurt. Or worse. They're just kids doing a job. I did it to save them.

RAY

You did the right thing. This is serious stuff, Alicia. The government should handle it.

ALICIA

And what about this Galactus?

RAY

What about it? We don't even know what it is.

ALICIA

Don't you think we should find out?

RAY

I'm sure they'll...

ALICIA

They'll what? Sit down and talk to him? Try to understand him?

CUT.

TIGHT ON THE SURFER

As TECHNICIANS and SCIENTISTS use heavily-reinforced cables to strap him into a high-tech examining table. He submits.

INT. LABORATORY

Armed SOLDIERS stand by as the room is cleared. It's an insulated and armored radiation chamber.

The Surfer is alone, surrounded by ominous-looking high-tech equipment.

THE OBSERVATION ROOM

Scientists and Technicians join support personnel and Maj. Powell, who chews on an unlit stogie.

Equipment HUMS and WHIRRS and a nuclear-powered laser drops into place, facing the Surfer.

THE SURFER looks on curiously.

THE LASER powers up and a crimson beam makes contact with the Surfer's arm. He looks down curiously but without reaction.

ANOTHER LAB ROOM

The Surfer's board rests on a table as a team of SCIENTISTS and ENGINEERS attempt an analysis --

ENGINEERS (VARIOUS)

I've never seen anything like this before... What kind of substance is it..?

They try to cut it, mark it, crack it. Nothing.

CUT.

EXT. FEDERAL BUILDING - NIGHT

A single office lit.

INT. RAY'S OFFICE - SETI RESEARCH DIVISION - NIGHT

Ray and Alicia the only ones there. Ray is in front of the computer on the phone, sipping coffee.

RAY

Yes, Ray Ramsey, SETI research. I'm calling to check on the alien...

(beat)

What do you mean that's classified? I'm a level 7 something... Well, how do I find a secure line? Hello?

Ray hangs up, turns to Alicia --

RAY

They've locked down security. Look, the Surfer will be okay. He's a revolutionary discovery. They'll probably trot him out at a press conference... he'll be on Nightline.

ALICIA

Really?

Ray turns on a small TV and scans the channels. Nothing.
No news.

RAY

They'll take care of him. They
have to.

Alicia throws her coffee mug across the room. It breaks.

RAY

Well, you've had enough coffee.

ALICIA

Damn it, Ray! This is all
wrong! He was trying to tell
us something.

RAY

Look, this has been emotional
for all of us. Yes, we
encountered an actual alien
being for God's sake. But it's
not like it's the end of the
world...

ALICIA

You're sure about that? What
if it is, Ray? Would we even
know it?

RAY

It's one alien... he's rides a
surfboard, for crying out loud.

ALICIA

What if it's a sign? Or a test?
We have no idea! I've got a bad
feeling about this Galactus.

RAY

What is that, women's intuition?

ALICIA

It's human intuition. Get some.

RAY

You know, I deal with people
like you every day. People
come into this office, "I saw
a UFO. They abducted me."
You're sounding like this one
guy, this loony tune who's been
faxing in 'end of the world'
messages.

This gets Alicia's attention --

ALICIA
What kind of messages?

Ray digs in the trash can and comes up with the latest pile of doomsday faxes.

RAY
Star charts, technical graphs... then this stuff:
"The world is domed." We think he means doomed. "Beware the cosmic rays..."

ALICIA
Cosmic rays?

RAY
Yeah, ultra-high frequency wavelengths above gamma rays...

Ray realizes the implications of what he's said.

CUT.

ON THE SURFER

Reacting in pain --

SCIENTIST (V.O.)
We're getting somewhere...

INT. LABORATORY

The Surfer still heavily strapped to the examining table. The laser is cranked up and smoking, working down his chest. SCIENTISTS and DOCTORS look on from the observation room.

ANOTHER LAB ROOM

A group of soldiers wrestle with the silver board. The board seems to be struggling to fly --

SOLDIERS
Give us a hand here! This thing's bucking like a bronc.

More soldiers pile on. They get the board secured.

INTERCUT - LABORATORY

Maj. Powell watches intently, chewing a stogie.

SCIENTIST
His skin is indestructible. Our
strongest lasers have no effect.

SCIENTIST 2
Somehow he seems to absorb the
energy.

MAJ. POWELL
He's been "absorbing energy"
for two hours. What makes this
thing tick? Is it a robot?

SCIENTIST
Let's try a gamma-ray
saturation.

The scientists all lower goggles to their eyes.

ON THE SURFER

A white flash of gamma-rays. The Surfer's mouth wide in a
soundless scream. INSIDE: It looks like the blackness of
the universe.

CUT.

EXT. SPACE

The swirling, endless cosmos. The milky way galaxy front
and center. MUSIC UP: GALACTUS' THEME --

A DARK SHADOW blots out the stars. Grows smaller as it
recedes toward the Milky Way. Our Milky Way.

DISSOLVE.

A FIELD OF STARS. CAMERA TILTS DOWN TO --

EXT. WHIPPLE OBSERVATORY (ESTABLISHING) - NIGHT

Nothing around for miles. Ray and Alicia drive a rental
car up the hill toward a seemingly abandoned, run-down
observatory.

RAY
It's an old observatory.
Nothing else around for miles.

RAY AND ALICIA knock on the front door.

RAY
It looks abandoned. Well, we know there's a phone line from the fax trace.

Ray steps back, kicks into a row of converted garbage cans. (Home-made, high-energy Dobsonian, Cherenkov radiation detectors.) He yells out --

RAY
Hey! Anybody home?

A scraggly-haired head pops out of an upper window --

VOICE (O.S.)
You're lost. Place has been closed for years. Go home.

RAY
We want to ask you a few questions...

VOICE (O.S.)
Trespassers will be ignored.

Alicia yells loudly --

ALICIA
Tell us about the end of the world!

RAY
We're with SETI research...

The window slams. A long string of footsteps. The front door opens. A disheveled man in a hole-filled black T-shirt sporting the Milky Way with an arrow and the legend: "You are here." This is MILO FORBISHER.

MILO
Geez. Don't you guys ever answer your faxes?

INT. OBSERVATORY - CONTINUOUS

Milo leads them through the cluttered interior, up the circular stairs. Books and papers on every step. The place is a mess. Milo's a real pack rat.

MILO
Name's Milo Forbisher.

They shake. Ray guides Alicia past the debris --

RAY

Ray. This is Alicia. Wait,
your name's familiar...

MILO

I used to publish in the
journals. So did you, Dr.
Ramsey. Boring, conventional,
catalog-related topics but
usually well-reasoned. I guess
we both moved on to bigger and
better things.

(then:)

I take care of this place since
lack of funding shut it down. No
one bothers me way out here. I'm
free to explore...

INT. MILO'S ROOM - SAME

A cyber-cocoon. Computers, books, electronics. Every nerd
amenity. No reason to ever leave and Milo hasn't in years.
Alicia and Ray on a beat-up couch, stacks of books as arm-
rests.

MILO

Jolt cola?

Milo opens a fridge. Ray and Alicia decline. Milo pops
one. He's nervous, keeps sneaking glances at Alicia but
never for too long.

MILO

Good stuff. You know a great
idea? Double jolt cola. Like
double espresso. Twice the
sugar and twice the caffeine.

RAY

Why not just drink two?

MILO

Urination is a problem. I'm
thinking about modifying one of
those fisherman's pals. They
hold about a pint but if I
could attach...

RAY

(interrupting)

Got it.

Milo winks at Ray like they understand each other.

ALICIA

We wanted to ask about those
faxes you sent.

MILO
I would've preferred you E-
mailed me. I don't do face 2
face anymore.

RAY
Well, we're here.

Milo ponders this, sneaks a side-long glance at Alicia,
leans in toward Ray.

MILO
She's very pretty...

As if figuring Ray's interest --

ALICIA
She's blind, not deaf.

Milo laughs nervously.

MILO
I'm sorry. See, I'm really no
good around people. So you
read my reports?

RAY
Pretend I didn't.

MILO
Okay. I'll cut through the
cybercrud and keep it simple.

Milo rummages, pulls out charts. He's passionate about
this stuff and more than a little manic --

MILO
Visual aids...

Milo holds up a 'before' and 'after' star chart. Before:
A red marker circles a point of light. After: A red
marker circles the same place but it's dark.

MILO
You see this? Tau Ceti in the
Magellan cluster. One day it's
there, the next, gone. I
noticed this eighteen months
ago. That got me started...

Milo holds up another --

MILO
This is, or was, M31, an entire
solar system revolving around a
binary star. All trace of it
gone in twenty four hours.

MILO

(continuing)

Here's a list of stars and celestial objects that have been "lost" in the last year alone. Completely vanished from the night sky. Now when I say the last year, these distant planets and stars could have been destroyed a hundred years ago but if the light from the phenomenon hasn't reached us yet, we have no way to see it. Follow me?

RAY

Then it could be hundreds of years before this would ever have anything to do with earth.

MILO

Ha! You'd think that, wouldn't you? I did too at first. But that's wrong.

Milo spins to his computer and his hands dance over the keyboard. Despite his appearance, he's quite graceful in his element --

MILO

I grepped the data for a pattern...

Milo swivels the computer screen to face CAMERA and Ray --

ON THE COMPUTER

Destroyed stars and planets graphically "imploded" in sequence, leaving a distinctive icon in their place. The remaining background stars are erased as the entire model is three-dimensionally rotated into an "overhead" view --

In the corner of the screen is the milky way --

MILO

We're here.

Next, a dotted line traces the path of destruction in our general direction --

MILO

The distance between these two former stars is a couple of light years. But the time I observed between their extinctions was less than a month. Impossible, right?

RAY

It would have to be able to move faster than the speed of light.

Milo's up to evangelist fervor --

MILO

Yes!! Whatever we're talking about here, let's call it...

ALICIA

(interrupting)

Galactus.

MILO

Um, okay. Sure. Why not? This "Galactus" is able to navigate through space, and time, at speeds greater than the speed of light.

RAY

But that's impossible.

Milo stares in awe at his computer model --

MILO

Sure. Every scientist on earth knows it is.

(taps the computer screen)

But apparently He doesn't.

Maybe He bends time, makes use of black holes or wormholes. I don't know how but He does it.

Milo pauses to let that sink in, then continues --

MILO

So even though the light from the systems that have been destroyed might not reach us for years, this Galactus - as you call it - could reach us a lot sooner. Because He is heading this way...

RAY

You say "he"?

MILO

He, she, whatever. I don't think God's gender is really an issue.

RAY

God?

MILO

Well, A god. Maybe not the God,
or your god. I'm not a religious
man, maybe you are. But what else
do you call something with this
kind of power? Mankind always
assumes just and benevolent Gods.
Well, what if one day He shows up
and he's neither? What if he
just doesn't give a shit?!

Ray stands.

RAY

This is absurd.
(sotto to Alicia)
He's nuts.

MILO

Of course it's absurd! You're
being forced to confront the
arbitrariness of human existence,
how can it not be?

RAY

We're talking about one little
alien visitor.

MILO

What alien?

Milo looks back and forth between Ray and Alicia.

RAY

It's classified...

ALICIA

(interrupting)
Two days ago, the Army had a
run-in with what a visitor...

Milo is wide-eyed. Ray looks irritated. Alicia doesn't
care.

MILO

Jiminy Crickets! The timing
works. What did it look like?

RAY

(under his breath)
A Silver Surfer. A guy on a
surfboard. Little taller than
me. Good-looking...

MILO

Wow. It's never what you expect, is it?
 (putting it together)
 And you think these two, obviously intelligent, extraterrestrial phenomenon, are somehow related?!

Ray doesn't.

MILO

I would love to see this Silver Surfer.

ALICIA

Ray can arrange it. Let's go.

RAY

What?..

Milo gets suddenly reserved --

MILO

Thanks, no. I can't.

ALICIA

Why, what's wrong?

MILO

I don't get out much. I'm not a people person. You go.

RAY

Agoraphobic.

MILO

So? I bet you've got issues.

RAY

Come on Alicia.

ALICIA

We need him, Ray. He can explain this thing. We have to find the Maj. Powell and try to talk to the Surfer. If we can understand him, maybe we can figure this out... stop whatever it is before it's too late.

RAY

And save the world.

Alicia shrugs.

ALICIA
Why not? Someone's got to.

Ray smacks his forehead.

MILO
Feeling kind of small and
insignificant, huh Ray?

ALICIA
Something's going on, Ray.
We're in the middle of it.
Destiny picked us. Get your
coat, Milo.

Milo edges closer to his computer --

MILO
I really can't.

ALICIA
You want to meet the alien.

MILO
Of course, but... People and
places make me nervous.

ALICIA
The end of the world makes me
nervous. Milo, we need you.

Ray shakes his head disbelievingly. Alicia takes Milo by
the shoulders --

ALICIA
The personal and psychological
problems of three little people
don't amount to a hill of beans
in this crazy world. He needs
us. The world needs us.

Milo takes a deep breath.

MILO
I'll get my coat.

CUT.

TIGHT ON THE SURFER

Writhing in agony. He SCREAMS --

ANOTHER LAB

The silver board breaks free of the cables restraining it.
Scattering soldiers and scientists like ten-pins.

The board hovers mid-air in the lab. Awed scientists scramble --

The board bucks and careens around the enclosed space like a caged animal. Equipment shatters.

A trigger-happy soldier opens fire with a machine-gun. The bullets ricochet off the board and around the room. People dive for cover.

The board leaps skyward, slices through ceiling of the lab to freedom --

INT. MAIN LAB BUILDING - THE SURFER

In the observation room, ALARMS sound. The phone BUZZES. Maj. Powers answers it as --

THE SURFER'S BOARD tears through the wall just above Maj. Powell's head. He dives out of the way as --

The board shatters the reinforced observation glass, tearing metal, as it returns to its master --

THE SURFER appears stronger as the board gets closer. He tears free of his restraints. His face is a mask of hurt and betrayal. He gestures. The board returns to him --

When they are reunited, there is a flash, a cosmic pulse. The Surfer gestures and the equipment melts, the laser, the Gamma-Ray generator, the instruments of torture --

THE SURFER MOUNTS HIS BOARD and is renewed. His hands gesture before him, generating a shock wave of cosmic energy. The lab wall explodes out --

EXT. AIR FORCE BASE - SAME

The lab wall blows into the street. Soldiers scatter. SIRENS SOUND.

Armored vehicles mobilize. Jeeps with mounted artillery skid across the asphalt, guns tilt skyward --

The Surfer easily evades their fire --

THE LANDING STRIP

Pilots race to aircraft. Before they can get there --

THE SURFER gestures and cuts a mind-blowing, cosmic-powered swath through the waiting helicopters and jets. His power is awesome.

Pilots are blown across the tarmac with the shock-wave --

INT. MORGUE - SAME

The wall glows and dissolves as the Surfer enters. The Coroner and staff scatter.

The Surfer lands between the slabs displaying the lifeless husks of the two punks from the mountain top. He cocks his head, examining them, then raises his hands. His palms being to glow and cosmic energy is returned to the bodies in the same way it was drained from them.

TATTOO and TINY lie naked on the slabs. Their eyes flutter.

The effort leaves the Surfer weak. Energy plumes curl off his body and he stumbles to one knee. Shaky, he gestures for his board as --

SOLDIERS appear at the deconstructed wall of the building. They level their weapons and fire as --

THE SURFER soars right at them. Banking hard, straight up and away into the sky.

MAJ. POWELL and his soldiers watch him go.

TATTOO

Hey, dude, where am I?

All eyes turn to Tattoo and Tiny. Right as rain in the decimated lab.

MAJ. POWELL

Who are you? Where did you come from?

TINY

We don't know nothing about trying to kill no UFO.

TATTOO

Shut up, Tiny. And we'll never do it again.

CUT.

EXT./INT. CAR (DRIVING)

Heading down a desert highway toward the air force base. Ray, Alicia, and Milo. Milo leans between the seats, wearing an orange backpack --

RAY

I don't even know if they'll let us onto the base.

MILO

That doesn't look like it will
be a problem.

A plume of smoke drifts heavenward in the distance. Alicia
smells the burning --

ALICIA

We're too late, aren't we?

As they get closer, the damage to the base becomes visible.
A swath of destruction through the place.

Ray parks outside torn and twisted cyclone fencing. He
helps Alicia from the car --

RAY

Maybe you should stay here.

ALICIA

No.

The trio pass overturned tanks. Buildings that look like
they've been blown apart by an atomic bomb blast.

EXT./INT. MAIN LAB - SAME

The above slug refers to the fact that half the building is
rubble. Maj. Powell inventories the damage with a crew of
men --

Rubble. Concrete melted into glistening slag. Medical
personnel assisting shell-shocked scientists. Holes
blasted through five foot thick containment walls --

MAJ. POWELL

Damn alien went berserk. We can't
contain that thing. It's too
powerful. We've got to destroy it.

SCIENTIST

But how?

SCIENTIST 2

It absorbs energy, the higher
the wavelength, x-rays, gamma
rays...

MILO

Cosmic rays...

SCIENTIST

Probably.

MAJ. POWERS

(gestures to include the base)
We're lucky no one was killed.

ALICIA

It wasn't luck. It was his decision.

SCIENTIST

No, in fact, we gained two people.

In the B.G., Tattoo and Tiny are escorted by MPs.

ALICIA

We don't need to destroy him, we need to understand him.

Powell glares at her --

MAJ. POWELL

Look at this base, missy! We understand him just fine. He picked the wrong planet this time for his little surfing safari.

Milo laughs. Maj. Powell sees nothing funny.

MAJ. POWELL

Who is this man?

MILO

Milo Forbisher, CalTech, physics chair.

(then, sotto to Ray:)

I was.

Ray gives Milo a look.

RAY

He's... consulting.

MAJ. POWELL

Then make yourself useful.

The military scientists huddle. Ray, Alicia and Milo head back to the car --

ALICIA

We've got to find him. Before they do.

RAY

He found you last time.

ALICIA

I don't think he trusts us
anymore.

MILO

I have an idea.

CUT.

EXT. BUSINESS DISTRICT (HIGH ANGLE) - DAY

Morning rush hour. Men and women in suits move freely.

INT. HABERDASHERY - DAY

Fine men's clothing. A pair of Japanese businessmen in Italian suits exit with bags. The shop is empty of customers. A finely-groomed salesman straightens an already straight tie on a mannequin. The BELL above the door chimes and the salesman looks up. He's facing the Surfer, board in hand --

SALESMAN

Holee...

SURFER

I wish ... some clothing...

Though his language is simple, his voice is gentle,
dignified --

SALESMAN

Of course. Wh-what did you
have in mind...sir..?

The Surfer points to a mannequin in an overcoat and snap-brim hat --

TIME CUT.

THE SURFER - LATER

Looking smart and not obviously alien in his new ensemble. The salesman hesitantly adds the hat carefully to the Surfer's head then backs up to the register and fiddles nervously with a gold ring --

SALESMAN

That'll do it for today, sir?

The Surfer nods gently.

SALESMAN

If you don't want to pay for the merchandise, I understand, I'll take it out of my salary...

The Surfer watches the man, trying to learn --

SURFER'S P.O.V. - THE SALESMAN'S HAND

Turning the gold ring over and over --

SURFER'S VISION - THE RING

In colors and wavelengths, the auric composition is broken down into its atomic components --

The Surfer places his hand on a stone ashtray. A dancing tickle of cosmic energy and the ashtray is transmuted into SOLID GOLD.

The Surfer exits --

The salesman races, wide-eyed, to the ashtray --

SALESMAN

This is solid gold... Wait.
How'd you do that, hey!
(back to the ashtray)
Solid gold!

The man laughs like a lottery winner.

CUT.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

The Surfer walks among men and women, businessmen and workers. His skin's still silver under the hat but with the coat and his hands pushed into the pockets, he passes. Almost. A few people stare and laugh --

KID

What's with the surfboard, dude?

The Surfer stops, sees the smirking faces and looks at his board.

EXT. ALLEY - SAME

The Surfer steps into the shadows and opens his hands. The board rises into the air.

HIGH ANGLE - SURFBOARD

Drifting lazily, moving, keeping pace with the Surfer on the ground below. It stops outside --

EXT./INT. TENEMENT - SAME

MARCUS. an eight year old boy looks out his window and sees the silver board hovering there. Six stories up.

BOY

Wow...

CAMERA PANS DOWN TO --

EXT./INT. RESTAURANT - SAME

The Surfer takes a seat at the counter. A WAITRESS walks up.

WAITRESS

What'll it be?

The GUY beside him orders --

GUY

The number five, no onions.
Chocolate shake and fries,
extra crispy.

The Waitress turns to the Surfer --

SURFER

The number five, no onions. Chocolate shake and
fries, extra crispy.

The waitress turns away but the Surfer stops her --

SURFER

Wait. Please, I would like to try the onions.

WAITRESS

You got it, sugar.

CUT.

EXT. RAY'S OFFICE - DAY

Milo stands back and admires his handiwork. A smaller version of the trash cans we saw outside his observatory. Looks pretty amateurish.

MILO

Voila.

RAY

What is it?

MILO

A portable Cherenkov detector.
(explaining)

Cosmic rays don't usually make it through the atmosphere to earth. If this Surfer is generating any, this should pick them up.

RAY

He could be anywhere.

Milo takes headphones from his orange backpack and plugs them in, puts them on. He turns the machine on and it starts to PULSE like a Geiger counter.

MILO

(smiles)

But he's not. He's in the city. Downtown.

CUT.

INT. RESTAURANT - SAME

Two number five's side-by-side. The Surfer holds his hands over the food but then watches as the guy beside him loads on the catsup and eats --

The guy notices the Surfer staring at him and returns it --

The Surfer points to the catsup and the man obliges --

The Surfer eats a big sloppy hamburger. And enjoys it.

TIME CUT.

SAME

The guy digs into his pocket and puts a ten on the counter and winks at the waitress --

GUY

Keep the change, darling...

The Surfer digs in his pocket and comes up with nothing. He turns around and scans the restaurant --

VARIOUS SHOTS - PEOPLE TAKING OUT MONEY, PAYING

The Surfer notices an expensively-dressed woman wearing a big diamond she's showing to another two women across the booth --

SURFER'S VISION

Zeroing in on the diamond. A carbon analysis --

BACK TO SCENE

The waitress snaps him back to reality --

WAITRESS

Will that be all? You can pay
me or the cashier.

The Surfer focuses on the pencil in her hand. He reaches
across and takes it.

Before the Waitress can say anything, he crushes the pencil
in one fist, which glows for an instant. When he opens his
hand, there is a pure diamond resting in his palm --

He offers it to the waitress --

SURFER

Keep the change... darling...

He exits. The non-plussed waitress turns to a co-worker --

WAITRESS

Hey, Darla, is this what it
looks like..?

EXT. RESTAURANT (HIGH ANGLE) - SAME

The Surfer exits and walks down the street. From on high,
his board appears, drifting after him. The problem is that
Marcus is riding on top, clinging for dear life.

MARCUS

Uh oh...

The Surfer doesn't notice.

CUT.

EXT./INT. CAR (DRIVING) - SAME

Milo slowly rotates his machine, headphones on, trying to
maximize the PULSING.

MILO

Make a left.

CUT.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

A poverty-ridden part of town. Modest homes fortified against their circumstances with iron bars and graffiti. Minority faces stare out from porches and stoops --

As a stranger in an overcoat and hat walks by. Nobody told him you don't do that in this neighborhood.

A couple of gang toughs stare at the Surfer as he passes but don't do anything more --

ABOVE - MARCUS ON THE BOARD

Holding tight. Looking down on his neighborhood.

EXT. LOW-RENT APARTMENT COMPLEX - SAME

A couple of kids play out front with rusted toys that should have been long-discarded --

Behind them on a stairwell, a couple of young men close a drug transaction. A third sprays writing on a wall in a color new to the wall --

The Surfer walks --

DRUG DEALER

What are you staring at?!

The tone is unmistakable and unfriendly. The Surfer continues walking --

DRUG DEALER

You're damn right, nothing...

As he counts his money --

A CAR leisurely cruises down the block --

As it gets in front of the apartment complex, a gun barrel is thrust out the window --

TAGGER

Oh shit!

He starts running down the street. So does the dealer. The buyer scrambles back into the complex --

The Surfer turns at the sound of fear in the voices --

The gun opens fire, spraying bullets down the street after the fleeing gang-bangers --

Kicking up dirt, chipping stucco --

Missing the gang-bangers --

But not the kids playing. A small black child is knocked off his big wheel by a bullet --

Another bullet hits the Surfer in the leg where he stands, up the street, but it's only an annoyance --

Tires SQUEAL and the car guns it out of there --

One of the other kids picks himself up off the sidewalk, examining a scrape on his arm. Another kid, a girl, stands there holding her doll and CRYING loudly --

The kid who was shot just lies there in a small puddle of red grass --

The scraped kid notices and starts yelling --

SCRAPED KID

Mama! Mamma!

A pretty but tired-looking woman races from her first floor, street-level apartment to her fallen child --

AS THE SURFER WATCHES IT ALL --

The woman cradles her baby in hands and yells hysterically to the kid with the scrape --

MOM

Call 911..! Brian, call 911!!
(to her injured child)

Noo!! My baby!! Why?! Why?!

The Surfer watches the scene --

The woman is in a state of shock. Another woman from the apartment joins her on the street --

As the woman holds her dying child and wails, the stranger in the overcoat is suddenly standing beside her --

She looks up, her eyes pleading --

MOM

They shot my baby! Why'd they
shoot my baby?!

She responds to the Surfer as if he's a figure of authority, a cop, a doctor. Ignoring the silver, alien face. She's desperate --

MOM

Save him... save my baby...

But she knows it's hopeless. She holds the child tightly to her chest, trying to protect him from a world that's already taken him --

MOM
 (quietly)
 Please...

The Surfer bends down and gently unwraps the woman's protective grasp --

He inspects the fatal wound --

And lays his hand over it --

The soft glow of the Surfer's power cosmic bathes the child and the skin around the wound knits and heals to his touch.

The mother watches in silence, afraid to interrupt the moment --

The Surfer stands up as the child weakly opens his eyes and sees his mother --

CHILD
 Mama, what happened?

With every passing second, the child gains strength. It's almost too much for the poor woman. Tears stream down her face as she hugs her child --

MOM
 A miracle, sweetie, just a miracle...

She looks up at the Surfer but says nothing --

THE SURFER reaches down and touches the tears on her face.

The Surfer rounds a corner as . The neighborhood gathers around the mother and her child.

The Surfer gestures --

ABOVE - THE BOARD

Suddenly arcs and dives. Marcus holds on and wails.

THE SURFER. As the board arrives at his feet. Little Marcus clinging tight. He looks up at the Surfer. The Surfer looks down curiously at this complication. As SIRENS grow louder.

DOWN THE BLOCK.

Ray, Alicia and Milo drive up.

MILO
 Stop.

He swings the machine 360 degrees as Ray watches the religious-tinged scene across the street.

Milo slowly tilts the machine skyward and finally picks up a weak PULSE. And growing weaker. He slides the headphones off and looks at Ray and Alicia.

ALICIA

No one said it was going to be easy.

CUT.

EXT. CITY - DAY

Raining. The board glides over the city with the Surfer standing on the front, coat flapping in the wind. Marcus at his feet, pointing, trying to find his way home.

CUT.

INT. TENEMENT - DAY

Marcus walks up the stairs. A couple of lounging TOUGH KIDS block the stairwell with a leg.

TOUGH

Toll road.

The Surfer follows behind Marcus.

SURFER

Is there a problem?

TOUGH

Look, G, it's the Tin man. No problem. If you want too use the stairs, you got to pay the fare.

They think this is hilarious.

MARCUS

It's not true.

(to the Surfer)

And I don't have any money.

The Surfer turns to the toughs.

SURFER

It is not true.

One tough opens his coat to flash a gun. The Surfer reaches out, touches it. The gun dissolves into pure energy and is gone.

TOUGH

Hey.

The other tough gets in the Surfer's face. The Surfer takes the cellular phone from his hand and evaporates it. Then the Rolex and the pinkie ring.

TOUGH

What the..?

Marcus smiles, glances down at the two tough guys hundred dollar sneakers. The Surfer sees the glance and dissolves them last.

TOUGH

Aw, not my grips, man. What's wrong with you? You down with O.P.P?

SURFER

No. I am not down with O.P.P.

The Surfer pushes them to the side and escorts Marcus upstairs.

OUTSIDE MARCUS' APARTMENT

MARCUS

Uh, you can't come in. You'll scare my mom.

Marcus takes the Surfer to a grimy mirror.

MARCUS

See?

The Surfer looks at the two of them. The difference. He touches Marcus' skin and the Surfer's skin morphs from silver to a deep chocolate brown. He's a dead ringer for Denzel or MJ --

SURFER

Is that better?

MARCUS

Cool.

INT. APARTMENT - SAME

Marcus' MOM opens the door.

MOM

Oh, Marcus, where've you been. I was worried sick about you.

MARCUS

I'm okay, momma.

MOM
Thank you, mister.

SURFER
You're welcome.

MOM
Won't you come in. I
apologize, the place is a mess.

SURFER
It is very nice.

It is. Homey and simple. Lots of love here. The Surfer
looks around.

CUT.

EXT. STREET - SAME

Ray skids to a stop. Milo leads the way as the three of
them burst out in the middle of the run-down neighborhood,
drawing stares.

Milo leads the way inside the tenement.

INT. APARTMENT - SAME

Ray KNOCKS. Marcus answers the door. There's the Surfer
(black-skinned) on the couch sipping coffee with Marcus'
mom. H looks up, surprised.

MOM
Are these your friends?

The Surfer says nothing, just stands up.

MOM
Mr. Alicia was just telling me
how he likes to travel.

RAY
Mr. Alicia?

MILO
(sotto to Alicia)
The alien's a black guy?

RAY
Thank God we found you. Look,
Surfer...

The Surfer stands, morphs back to silver. Marcus' mom
nearly faints. Milo is awed.

MOM
Oh my.

MILO

Double that.

SURFER

Surfer?

RAY

That's what we call you. The Silver Surfer. Listen, I'm sorry about before. Turning you over to those people. It was wrong. I didn't understand.

SURFER

I know. There's a lot I do not understand.

RAY

Damn, Three days and he speaks the language better than I do.

SURFER

But it is I who am sorry.

ALICIA

Why? What do you mean?

The Surfer looks out the window. The sky looks threatening. His board lowers into view.

SURFER

It is too late. I must go.

The Surfer sheds his coat and steps toward the fire escape.

ALICIA

No. Wait.

SURFER

I have no choice. He is coming.

RAY

Galactus.

The Surfer nods.

ALICIA

Please, tell us what's going on. Explain to us.

SURFER

Then come.

The Surfer touches Alicia's forehead and climbs onto his board. He's gone. Milo watches him soar over the city.

RAY
Great. Now what?

ALICIA
Follow me.

RAY
What?

Alicia exits with a purpose. As if she can see.

EXT. TENEMENT - SAME

Ray and Milo follow Alicia to the car.

ALICIA
I better drive.

Milo and Ray exchange a wild look.

MILO
Give it a try.

Ray tosses the keys and --

Alicia catches them. She gets in. Starts up the car. And they head off through traffic.

ACROSS THE STREET

An unmarked sedan the two suits who picked up Ray in the first place. One talks into a radio.

SUIT
Subjects are on the move.

VOICE (V.O.)
Anything unusual to report?

SUIT
The blind woman is driving.

VOICE (V.O.)
Maintain surveillance.

CUT.

EXT./INT. ARMY HELICOPTER - SAME

In the air. Maj. Powers on the radio --

MAJ. POWERS
Let's give them some time.
Maybe they'll get clear of the
city. The alien's gone native.
He's sweet on the blind girl.

EXT. STREET - SAME

Alicia navigates through traffic.

RAY

How are you doing this?

ALICIA

In my head, I can "see" where I'm going. He gave me a map.

CUT.

EXT. HILLTOP ROAD - DAY

Ray drives, Alicia and Milo beside him. Up the mountain road where the punks confronted the Surfer.

FURTHER BACK - THE SAME ROAD

A convoy of government 4-wheel drives follow. MAJ. POWELL's helicopter following.

MAJ. POWELL

Stay well back... Air support on stand-by. Monitor our position, maintain twenty-mile no-fly. Wait for my command.

CUT.

EXT. SKY ABOVE THE DESERT (ESTABLISHING) - SAME

Under a grey sky, HARRIER JETS in a holding pattern --

JET FIGHTERS cruising in formation --

In the lead, at the base of the foothills --

ATTACK HELICOPTERS lag well behind ground troops: TROOP CARRIERS, TANKS, HUMVEES.

It'd be over-kill for anything else.

CUT.

EXT. HILLTOP ROAD - SAME

Ray pulls off the road and stops at the edge of the brush. Alicia's the first one out of the car. Milo's in rotten physical shape and trails as they head through the brush --

EXT. CLEARING - SAME

The trio crosses the seared circle of ground where --

THE SURFER waits for them. Sitting on his board like Buddha, hovering six feet above the ground --

Milo pulls an asthma inhaler from his pocket and takes a long draw --

MILO
Unbelievable...

The Surfer turns to them. His face is expressionless, unreadable --

He looks harder, more alien, in communion with the approaching Galactus --

Alicia walks across the clearing with the confidence of a sighted person, bee-lining right for the Surfer --

RAY
Alicia! Wait...

A FALLEN TREE. Alicia adjusts her step as if she saw it.

THE SURFER AND ALICIA

As she gets closer, the Surfer's board lowers to the ground.

SURFER
I have been trying to understand your world...
(then:)
There is much I do not.

His voice is lyrical, musical almost, every word chosen carefully like a poem --

Milo takes out a microcassette recorder out of his bag and keys it, holding it out to capture the words --

The Surfer is now articulate, dignified.

ALICIA
We are sorry for the men who attacked you.

SURFER
You did not want them harmed. I understand. I did not hurt them. I will not hurt anymore...

RAY

Well they want to hurt you.

SURFER

It will not matter.

(lowers his head)

I am sorry for what I have caused.

For what he will cause. The Surfer lowers his head. He's struggling with something new: Emotion.

RAY

Which is what? What have you caused?

SURFER

I have traveled far and seen many things. Worlds without number... but I have never seen one such as your earth. This planet could be a paradise...

The Surfer pauses, searching for the right words --

SURFER

But there is so much suffering, hatred, cruelty, selfishness...

The Surfer seems pained by his own words. He does not share our semiotic remove: Words as symbols divorced from action. For him, words are real, they are feelings and actions --

ALICIA

Not everyone is like that. There is also good in the world. Trust, compassion, generosity, love...

The Surfer turns away, he can not meet her gaze --

SURFER

Yes. I have seen that too... But if it is within your power to choose, why do so many choose... wrong?

ALICIA

I... can't answer that.

SURFER

Nor can I.

MILO

I can. People are jerks.

RAY

Now is not the time, Milo.

SURFER

It no longer matters.

RAY

Why? Why doesn't it matter?

The Surfer turns to Ray's voice --

MILO

Galactus...

SURFER

(with proper accent)

Gal'act'us...

RAY

What is it? What is Galactus?

The Surfer opens his mouth to speak, then stops. Alicia understands --

ALICIA

Explain the color blue to me, Ray. Describe a sunset to someone who can't see.

RAY

Can it be stopped?

SURFER

Galactus cannot be stopped. He must... feed.

MILO

Feed? So, we're going to be the blue plate special at some cosmic luncheonette?

Ray turns to the Surfer, pleading --

SURFER

Not you. Your world.

RAY

But we'll die too.

SURFER

Yes. He has been called. That was my function as his herald. To find suitable worlds. Though, after what I have seen here, I cannot do so anymore. This will be my last.

RAY

How about the last one was the last?

SURFER

It is done. There is no hope.

ALICIA

No, we're still alive. There's hope.

RAY

This always hope. My season Clippers ticket are proof of that...

SURFER

You humans may soon destroy your world by your own hand anyway...

RAY

May. That's the operative word here. But anyway, that's our choice! It's our planet. Not yours...

SURFER

I make no choice in this matter.

Ray points up --

RAY

Not his!

SURFER

The matter is decided. I am sorry.

RAY

Sorry?! You invited him! You're not sorry. You probably get a commission on the deal or something.

The Surfer sets his jaw against the truth. He says nothing.

RAY

Look, I've spent my life searching for extraterrestrial life. I admit I never believed in it but here you are. And now you tell us we're going to be destroyed? Now. We're on a cusp, here. The edge of something great. What about trading technology? Advancing our race..? Isn't there some federation of planets we can appeal to and stop this?

SURFER

Do not look for meaning where there is none.

Ray existentially angry. The Surfer turns to Alicia and extends his hand --

SURFER

The good things you speak of about your world, they are in you. Compassion. Generous. Trust. Love.

(then:)

Come with me... I have the power to save you, Alicia, to take you with me...

A moment. Tempting. He's offering more than the world: The inverse. Alicia considers the possibilities --

SURFER

You will see things no one has seen...

ALICIA

No.

SURFER

This world will soon be over, Alicia...

ALICIA

I can't. This is my home...

ON SURFER --

Struggling to understand --

SURFER

Home. I had...

A SINGLE, LIQUID METAL TEAR ROLLS DOWN THE SURFER'S CHEEK --

The surfer touches it and turns to Alicia --

SURFER

What does it mean?

A tough question. She touches the tear, holds the silver droplet on her finger and struggles for an answer --

ALICIA

It's an emotion. Happiness, sadness, loss, memory. It's very human...

THE SURFER

Wavers. As if some brainwashed sense of duty were breaking down. There is a deep and real pain here --

The Surfer struggles with it and finally meets Alicia's gaze --

SURFER

I was once... the same.

RAY

Human?

The Surfer turns to Ray --

SURFER

Not human... Zennia'an.

ALICIA

What happened?

A pause as the Surfer remembers his unspoken tragedy --

SURFER

Gal'act'ss...

BOOM! AN EXPLOSION ROCKS THE SURFER WHERE HE STANDS --

Then another. And another. BOOM. BOOM. BOOM. The accumulative affect keeping the Surfer off-balance. Preventing him from recovering --

Ray, Alicia and Milo are thrown to the ground --

They shield themselves from the heat and concussion and look up. But it's not Galactus --

It's the army. These first explosions are mortar shells.

ALICIA

What?! No..!

Before she can move, a trio of soldiers grab her under battlefield conditions and carry her off --

Ray and Milo too --

MILO

Hey!

Alicia, Ray and Milo are hustled to a safe distance and the attack escalates --

ANGLE - MAJ. POWELL

In command, leading the assault.

MAJ. POWELL

We're ready for this alien freak this time.

ALICIA

No.

RAY

You don't understand...

On Powell's command, rocket launchers drown them out. Phosphor trails converge from a semi-circular perimeter, whistling in --

THE SURFER struggles to his feet. Gestures to his board --

THE BOARD, like a living thing, moves toward him --

zz-BOOM! zz-BOOM! zz-BOOM! The Surfer is staggered again. Driven back. Separated from his board --

A trio of HELICOPTERS whip low across the tree line. When they hit the clearing, they begin firing rockets --

At the Surfer's board --

Chip-shotting it across the landscape --

THE SURFER grasps for his board as it's blasted farther and farther away from him --

MAJ. POWELL

Keep him away from that board!

That's the plan --

Ground troops march from the brush from all directions, converging on the Surfer --

They open fire with automatic rifles, all the while advancing, driving him back away from his board --

While another division secures the board --

The air is smoky with discharge --

The Surfer is hit with hundreds upon hundreds of rounds. An impossible number of shells. Like a pincushion, each round makes a silvery impact and a spreading ripple --

The ripples overlap in visual echoes across his body and the cumulative effect becomes too much for his energy-absorbing abilities to assimilate --

P.O.V. - SURFER'S VISION

The assembled military through his eyes. Through the painful loss of energy, the scene becomes increasingly familiar to us. The colors of the Surfer's energy-sensing perception dim and his cosmic power fades with the onslaught --

BACK TO SCENE

While the Surfer is distracted, the army throws an Adamantium mesh net over the downed board. Chains are wrapped over this and winches pull the assemblage tight. Soldiers anchor the chains to anything handy; jeeps, tanks, trees --

ON ALICIA, RAY AND MILO

They can't believe their senses. Alicia holds her ears against the din and screams soundlessly --

ALICIA
(inaudible)
NOOOO....

Ray's mouth moves without words, shouting at the soldiers nearby, but no one can hear --

A break in the fire. A relative silence --

RAY
(to Alicia)
He's not fighting back!

ALICIA
He won't anymore...

THE SURFER

He rises barely. So weak. So fragile --

A final barrage hits him. His silver skin is no longer so shiny. There is a dull, ashen, lifeless cast to it now and he falls.

THE SURFER'S BODY

He lies in the grass, smoking tendrils curling up into the sky --

THE SOLDIERS

Disbelieving, they break out into applause --

POWELL allows himself a satisfied smile --

Ray turns to Powell and through clenched teeth --

RAY
Excuse me, Sgt. Bilko, but instead of trying to kill everything that moves, why don't you try listening for a change!

Powell's head whips around viciously to ream Ray for pissing on his moment of glory but before a word can be spoken --

THE MOTHER OF ALL INTERRUPTIONS: A shadow blots out the SUN --

What happens next is mind-boggling --

It's like something between a spaceship and a living planet. The size of a small city. And it's sinking out of the now-darkened sky like an angry eclipse --

GALACTUS' "SHIP"

The complexity of design suggests something much larger than its considerable size. It is planet-shaped. But a planet as computer architecture. Specifically designed and detailed down to the atomic level. This detail appears visible one moment and is gone the next. We cannot appreciate this object in its entirety, even when it fills the screen. [See the work of Moebius and Geoff Darrow for a jumping-off point in design.]

Let's say it now: congratulations to our special effects crew.

THE SCENE IS IN A PURGATORY-LIKE TWILIGHT

A panic races through the ranks of the soldiers.

MAJ. POWELL

What in heaven's name is that?

MILO

(proudly knowing an answer)
Galactus.

Ray holds Alicia --

RAY

The Surfer's down.

Alicia knows it. Tears stream down her face.

GALACTUS' SHIP

Hovers there. Then: A thread-thin light of pitch-darkness stabs down from the underbelly of the mammoth craft --

Vaguely violet in aspect, the dark side of the Surfer's power cosmic --

The fine beam impacts with the top of the highest peak. There is no immediate effect. The radiant beam just shines a point of darkness like Satan's flashlight. The point of impact is some distance away --

BACK TO SCENE

Ray turns to Maj. Powell --

RAY

The Surfer was our only hope
against it!

MAJ. POWELL

What is that?

RAY

If this is a good news-bad news
joke, that's the bad news.

ALICIA

We didn't even try to
understand...

MAJ. POWELL

We'll take of it the same way!

RAY

The sucker bet of a lifetime
and I can't reach my bookie.

Powell turns to his troops --

MAJ. POWELL

I want that thing brought down
now!

Even at face value it looks like a ridiculous attempt. But
just watch --

AN ALL-OUT ASSAULT --

ROCKET LAUNCHERS are wheeled around and elevated. They
fire --

THE MISSILES disappear into the spreading greyness: It is
spreading. That needle of blackness is now about 50 feet
across. Wait for the explosions. They don't come. The
missiles don't detonate. Nothing returns from the stygian
blackness. No light. Nothing. It is all-consuming.

MAJ. POWELL radios in air support --

HELICOPTERS and faster HARRIER JETS let loose with rockets
But it's like throwing rocks into the Grand Canyon to fill
it up --

THE ROCKETS vanish into the conical violet-black
circumference --

A HELICOPTER buzzes too close to the dark light. The
expanding cone clips a corner of the chopper --

The helicopter's path suddenly changes as it wobbles like a wounded bird and plummets out of the sky and crashes into the clearing --

THE HELICOPTER

Where the beam bisected it, in a circular pattern, it has been totally eaten away. A withered, empty husk. Reduced to a fraction of its mass. All energy consumed from it. It is now pure waste: Degraded to the dead, carbon building blocks of matter --

The circle cuts across the cockpit. The PILOT leaps from the craft, SCREAMING with a pain never known before on this earth --

His entire right side has been sucked dry of life-matter, diminished to elemental carbon. He dies horribly before the eyes of everyone there. His desiccated arm and leg crumbles with each movement. His insides spill out through the emptiness in his side. Enough of this, he falls.

Milo buries his face in his hands --

RAY

Ugh.

Powell is slack-jawed --

MAJ. POWELL

What is it..?

MILO

Proof that Einstein knew his stuff.

THE CIRCLE OF DARK LIGHT continues to widen, consuming more and more on the ground beneath it --

And now out of the forest and trees race animals in a blind panic. More than you would have thought still lived in the hills around the city: Birds, rodents, raccoons, deer, a mountain lion. Some have dark wounds from contact with the energy-conversion. SHRIEKING AND SCREAMING, they race across the clearing past the dumbstruck humans --

Though still far away, the soldiers back away from the hill in terror --

A young soldier turns to Powell looking for answers, for reassurance, the fear cracking his voice --

SOLDIER

What do we do, sir?!

Powell has no answer for the youth. The kid backs up from the advancing curtain of darkness.

MAJ. POWELL
Hold your ground!

The conviction is gone from his voice.

ALICIA, RAY AND MILO watch --

THE CIRCLE OF ENERGY-CONVERTING DARKNESS encircles the entire mountain top now and the edge of it creeps down the hillside toward the clearing --

It's moving faster now, a geometric expansion --

The shriveled, post-conversion, dead matter is visible at the edges of the darkness: The remains of trees, rocks, birds, squirrels, shrunken and lifeless --

RAY AND ALICIA hold their ground as the darkness advances towards them. Milo backs up slowly.

ANGLE - ALICIA

She tears herself from Ray and runs. Ray follows.

RAY
Alicia...

ALICIA
He needs help.

Toward the Surfer. Somehow, she dodges soldiers and equipment, steps over roots, as if she can see where she's going --

THE SURFER lays there unmoving --

RAY
What can we...?

Alicia reaches down to touch the Surfer's face --

ANGLE - THE TOUCH

Contact. Her hand on the Surfer. A spark of light in that touch. Somehow, that human contact heals, the same way it happened when they first met. It should remind us of the child whose life the Surfer.

The Surfer's hand rises to take hers --

Ray watches as --

The Surfer opens his eyes and gets to his feet --

SURFER
There is... hope.

THE SURFER gestures --

His board, shackled and bound, surges free, slices through the Adamantium netting like butter, tipping the tanks and jeeps that anchor the chains --

The board arcs through the air toward him --

THE SURFER seems rejuvenated when he holds it. He rises over the field, the frightened soldiers, toward the wall of darkness advancing down the mountain. His board lowers him to the ground at the edge of the energy conversion field.

He stands, facing the purple-black curtain. Raises his hand, palm open and plunges it into the energy field.

ON THE SURFER

As he grimaces in soul-destroying pain. We've never seen him like this. He's a being of pure, cosmic energy and this field consumes energy. The field engulfs his hand and arm and... stops.

The field retreats back, just beyond his fingertips. The Surfer stands in agony, swirls of crimson-black smoke evaporating lazily from where his arm had been immersed in the field.

The mammoth impenetrable wall of darkness distends, bulging outwards in an area that dwarfs the scene of onlooking humans. The distending outline reaches up the sphere a quarter mile high as it takes on a vaguely human form.

A HUGE FIGURE steps from the darkness like a splitting amoebae. Human in shape, God-like in proportion. A silhouette whose detail is incomprehensible directly, visible only in bas-relief contrast with the surroundings. Like a faint star we must look away to see. A 3-D hologram you need to stare at until your brain stops trying to understand it and only then can you see it. The shimmering complexity of detail within is infinite and immense. This is GALACTUS!

Within the silhouette, chaos theory reigns. The complexity of detail constructed like a pattern of Mandelbrot fractals, infinitely repeated and regressed mathematical variations. It is disturbing to observe, impossible to comprehend. Imagine a living black hole in human form.

Galactus steps away from the penumbra of blackness.

Though seemingly composed of a complexity like billions of organic circuit boards, there is a face to Galactus. He turns toward the Surfer.

The Surfer rides his board high in the air to face his master. Like a fly to a man, the immensities of scale of are amazing.

MILO

This is big.

Maj. Powell sends his man at the giant form. Bullets, mortars, missiles, vanish like pebbles in the ocean. Galactus just ignores them.

RAY

(to Maj. Powell)

Try talking trash about his mother.

Maj. Powell glares at Ray --

MAJ. POWELL

You think this is funny?

RAY

Am I laughing?! You're sending your men to be killed, Major. It doesn't even know we're here.

MAJ. POWELL

(desperate)

What do you suggest?

No answer.

The Surfer faces Galactus. From Galactus comes a booming pattern of sharp sounds, CLICKS, SNAPS, CRACKS and TICKS. There's a mathematical urgency to them, like an irregular metronome.

MILO

I think it's... it's speaking.

RAY

Anybody here speak giant purple alien?

No. But Milo listens intently.

MILO

Of course...

RAY

You're kidding?

Milo races for the army communications truck. Ray runs after him.

RAY

What? You understand this?

Milo talks as he moves, fast.

MILO

Not a click. But I've got a hunch.

Maj. Powell defers, snaps orders to his communications officers.

MAJ. POWELL

Give him what he needs.

INT. MOBILE COMMUNICATIONS CENTER -

Milo flips open up his laptop computer, works the keyboard. Ray rubs Milo's shoulders --

MILO

It makes perfect sense.

RAY

You can do it. You're the man. Who's the man? You're the man.

Milo smiles. He is the man.

MILO

It's math. He's talking in math. It'd have to be the universal language.

RAY

Come again.

MILO

One plus one equals two everywhere. On earth... out there. The physical universe operates by pure mathematics. This Galactus communicates through mathematical-based language. I can figure this out.

Milo pulls a Walkman out of his backpack and starts connecting wires.

MILO

I just need to record the signal...

Milo's plugged the Walkman into the army's bank of equipment and --

ANGLE - THE MASSIVE MILITARY SPEAKER ARRAY

INT. MOBILE COMMAND POST - COMMUNICATIONS BAY

The clicks and sounds come loud and clear through the command post's monitor speakers --

MILO

I'm just flipping the system so I can use the speakers outside as microphones to pick up the sounds and run them back through a standard decryption algorithm...

Connected. Milo punches some keys. The encryption program comes up and starts running the sounds through a series of procedures --

MILO

Let's see... If this thing's as universal as he thinks he is.. his language should be self-referential... could we be lucky enough that it contains its own primer... This might take a whi...

The computer settles on a protocol. Milo's almost disappointed --

MILO

Oh wow. Complexity ultimately equals simplicity. Look at that. It's just a basic binary code. Any twelve year old hacker could have decoded this.

Milo and Ray read aloud from THE COMPUTER SCREEN:

A series of mathematical formulas scroll across the screen.

RAY

That's a translation?

MILO

Forget the grammar. We're dealing with concepts.

RAY

I get the picture.

MILO

(unhappily)
It's pretty clear. He's about to consume our planet. Like the others. By converting it to pure energy...

ALICIA

The Surfer is trying to talk to him...

MILO

It looks that way.

The clicks and sounds get harsher, angrier.

ON SCREEN: Must feed. Energy.

Galactus turns away, back to his conversion field.

The Surfer glows brightly, a bolt of energy lances out, strikes Galactus in the back of the head. Like a gnat.

Galactus does not turn even around. He raises his hands and the conversion field resumes its advance.

Galactus walks toward the energy field. Though he towers over the landscape like a Montana sunset, the ground does not shake when he walks. He is energy as much as he is mass. The trees look like tall grass beside his leg.

RAY

Soup's on, huh?

MILO

Apparently.

RAY

Can you get this thing to translate the other way?

MILO

What?

RAY

So we can talk to him?

A novel idea --

MILO

Maybe.

RAY

Do it.

Ray grabs the microphone. Milo frantically re-programs, punches buttons --

RAY

(into the microphone)

Wait! Listen!

Ray's voice booms across the countryside. If Galactus has any awareness of their tiny efforts, he gives no sign of it. The Surfer glances their way though.

IN THE COMMAND POST, Milo continues to work furiously --

MAJ. POWELL

Hurry...

MILO

I'm trying.

Ray's voice suddenly switches over to binary clicks and POPS, still echoing over the landscape.

RAY

Listen! Don't. Please. We're not food. We're people. You can't eat us.

MILO

Tell him why, Ray.

At a sudden loss, Ray turns from the microphone to the people around him --

RAY

Wait? Why? Why can't he?

They're all dumbfounded too. Except for Alicia --

ALICIA

Because... because we're alive... we think, we feel...

RAY

I don't think he gives a...

ANGLE - MILO'S WALKMAN

Milo's hand brushes against the play button --

And Ethel Merman suddenly, unexpectedly, starts belting out "Everything's Coming Up Roses" from "Gypsy" --

EXT. MOUNTAIN CLEARING

U.S. Army troops and equipment listen to the incongruous --

ETHEL MERMAN

I had a dream... a dream about you, baby... it's gonna come true, baby... they think that we're through...

INSIDE THE MOBILE COMMAND POST

Milo scrambles to figure out what he did wrong --

MILO

Oops...

RAY

Is that Ethel Merman..?

MILO

In Gypsy. She was great...

(embarrassed)

I like show tunes...

ON THE SURFER AND GALACTUS

Ethel Merman still singing. Galactus still walking toward the energy field. Suddenly slows mid-step. --

ETHEL MERMAN

But baby, you'll be swell...
you'll be great... gonna have
the whole world on a plate...
starting here, starting now...

The Surfer looks down at the army command post --

Ray races to the door, watches --

Galactus stops. And turns. Slowly. To the source of the sound. Seems to cock slightly. Is he listening?

The energy field stops expanding.

ETHEL MERMAN

Honey, everything's coming up
roses...

Milo figures out the problem and presses the stop button on the Walkman.

Ray has noticed the effect on Galactus when the MUSIC STOPS.

RAY

Milo, wait!

MILO

What?

RAY

He likes Merman.

MILO

He likes it?!

Alicia goes to Ray --

ALICIA
It's music.

RAY
It's not mathematical.

MILO
Of course. It defies order.
It's illogical.

(beat)
So what do we do? Start
singing?

Ray rushes to Milo's set-up, digs through his back-pack --

RAY
No. What else you got?

A soldier can't help offering --

SOLDIER
I've got some Snoop...

RAY
No, I think it's got to be
music.

The soldier is offended but everyone defers to the trio.
Ray digs through Milo's bag, pulls out a tape --

RAY
Gershwin!

He pops it into the Walkman. The magical strains of
"Rhapsody in Blue" fills the clearing.

Slowly, monumentally, Galactus turns full around to face
the music --

RAY
Surfer!

The Surfer descends to Alicia and Ray race --

SURFER
He's... Confused... The music...

RAY
Can you help us get this
mountain swinging? Use that
cosmic power of yours to juice
up this set-up?

SURFER
Juice?

RAY
Power. Energy.

The Surfer understands. He raises his hands and pure cosmic power leaps toward the army generators, sparking and surging through them. The communications equipment steps up and we get full use out of the THX.

The soldiers watch the eerie tableau. The Comm Officer hands a field phone to Maj. Powell --

SOLDIER
The President's on the line.
He wants an update.

Maj. Powell takes the field phone.

MAJ. POWELL
It's music, sir. Gershwin.
(beat)
I don't know...
(beat)
I like it too...
(unsure)
It seems to be working...

Powell stares with the rest of us --

GALACTUS stands motionless. Really listening. The energy field remains unchanging.

The Surfer gestures to his board. Mounts and flies toward the unmoving giant. Up to his shoulder, like Jiminy Cricket.

MILO
We can't hear what they're
saying unless I switch...

RAY
No, don't touch it.

They all just watch. An eerie tableau. The MUSIC playing. The soldiers waiting in futile readiness. The alien giant and his tiny herald. Waiting.

The music ends.

Galactus seems to sigh, draws himself up. He turns toward the Surfer, offering finally to pay attention to him.

The unintelligible binary mathematical dialogue resumes between them, filtering faintly back across the hillside to Ray, Alicia and Milo --

With startling suddenness, Galactus waves his hand --

AND THEN SUDDENLY:

SURPRISINGLY --

THE ENERGY FIELD DISSOLVES --

The blackness lifts. Just evaporates.

ON OUR HEROES

Wanting to breathe a sigh of relief but waiting --

Galactus walks gently back up the hill toward his ships.

UP IN THE SKY the Surfer cuts and banks gracefully away,
over the blackened landscape --

And settles down in front of Alicia and Ray. On blackened,
dead-ground while they are on the green, still-growing
grass. Maj. Powers and his men keep their distance.

Alicia breaks the silence --

ALICIA

What's happening?

SURFER

He does not understand... music. In all the
universe, he has not experienced it. It is unique. It
is yours. I asked how he could destroy something he
did not understand. He could not. So he goes.

ALICIA

Why did you help us?

SURFER

I could not let harm come to this planet.

ALICIA

Why?

SURFER

Because we are... friends.

THE SURFER SMILES. The expression looks good on his face.

RAY

Excuse me, this Galactus thing,
he's going? That's it? Will
he come back?

SURFER

Maybe. Some day. There is a great deal of...
energy in this world. He knows that.

RAY

So, basically, we're safe.

No one says anything. The Surfer shrugs.

RAY

I mean it could be millions of
years before... couldn't it?

SURFER

As safe as you were before.

Ray breaks out in a huge grin, slaps the Surfer on the back
without thinking about it.

RAY

Why didn't you say so? God
damn. I mean, heck. We did
it! We saved the earth. The
whole thing. Wow! I'm going
to Disneyland. I'm going to do
Nike commercials... Talk
shows...

Alicia turns to Ray and puts a hand to his mouth.

RAY

I'll handle it. I'll stay
humble. Ray Ramsey, the man
who saved the world.

THEN: A SHADOW LIFTS

GALACTUS' SHIP withdraws into the skies --

Normal cloud patterns reassert themselves --

POWELL AND THE SOLDIERS

Return cautiously. With salvation from larger problems,
attention is re-directed. The Surfer is again the object
of scrutiny.

THE SURFER turns to Alicia and Ray --

SURFER

I cannot stay...

MILO

But you saved us. Them too.
They'll leave you alone now,
they have to...

SURFER

I am his herald... I must find new worlds for him.. .

ALICIA

(to Ray)
He doesn't belong here.

SURFER

The universe is boundless. My place is there, riding
among the stars. There are new worlds for me to
discover...

Alicia reaches for the Surfer and kisses him.

SURFER

I had been ... curious about that. I will miss you,
Alicia.

The Surfer steps away --

SURFER

I will remember my friends.

In the B.G., an army transport HELICOPTER bearing the
Presidential seal lands in the clearing. Maj. Powell runs
to it to meet the PRESIDENT and his staff. They stride
authoritatively across the field toward the Surfer, Alicia,
Ray and Milo - TOWARD CAMERA AS --

SURFER

(gestures)
To me, my board...

The Surfer gestures and his board returns to him with a
theatrical flourish. He mounts.

IN THE B.G.: Maj. Powell nervously quickens his pace,
ushering the President along --

THE SURFER SOARS --

MAJ. POWELL

Hey, wait a minute there...

MUSIC UP. The Surfer revels in his freedom, takes one lap around the clearing above everyone --

MAJ. POWELL

You! Surfer! Come back here!

Maj. Powell is impotent and furious. The President watches in wonder.

The Surfer arcs skyward towards the stars --

And is gone.

Alicia takes Ray's hand.

Maj. Powell catches up to them.

MAJ. POWELL

Whoa, whoa. The President's here.

RAY

We've had a big day, Major. Maybe another time.

MAJ. POWELL

What? You can't just...

Ray gives him a look. It's just not that important at the moment.

RAY

Are we in trouble for saving the world?

Maj. Powell bites his lip. Looks back at the President who nods. Powell turns around and walks back to the clearing.

RAY

So, what kind of food do you like?

Milo catches up --

MILO

Where are we going?

RAY

We?

Then Ray looks at Alicia and softens, puts an arm around Milo's shoulder.

RAY

We're going to get some dinner
and figure out the best way to
sell this story to TV.

Alicia gives Ray a stern look. He's chastened.

RAY

I'm kidding.

On the three of them walking into the sunset.

FADE.

THE SILVER SURFER - IN SPACE

Soaring free on cosmic winds. The earth curves below. He
allows himself -- a smile.

INSERT - GALACTUS

Seeing all. Knowing all (almost). His energy flares with
anger. From his 'eyes' twin violet beams of light lance
out --

EXT. SPACE - EARTH

From the receding silhouette of Galactus' ship, the two
crimson-purple beams race through space toward their mark --

THE SURFER is cut down in mid-flight as the cosmic rays,
like twin daggers, slice into him --

Blinding, intense pain doubles him over, throws him
effortlessly from his board. The impact glows with
Galactus' signature cosmic energy --

THE SURFER plummets lifeless, earthward.

The life-filled planet rises up fast --

CUT.

EXT. CORN FIELD - SOMEWHERE IN AMERICA - DAY

A little boy races through the stalks. It's CALVIN, the
boy we saw on the airplane on p. 10.

VOICE (O.S.)

You can't hide, you! I'll find
you!

Calvin runs, frightened by something. His arms pump furiously --

Suddenly he stops short. His jaw drops. His eyes wide. He stares in wonder --

Lying at the bottom of a shallow crater, the unmoving form of the Silver Surfer.

Looking back over his shoulder for an instant, Calvin scrambles down the crater for a closer look.

VOICE (O.S.)

Where are you?!

Calvin is in awe, inches from the Surfer's motionless body. Curiously, tentatively, gently, his small hand reaches --

And touches the Surfer. At the touch, there is a small glow of cosmic energy and --

THE SURFER OPENS HIS EYES.

FADE OUT.

THE END...