

ARMITAGE: DUMB BLOND

Episode 4

Dave Stone

[NOTE: This appears at the start of every script, just as a kind of failsafe. The entire story hinges on the spelling-convention for a certain word - that is, a man is referred to as a BLOND and a woman is a BLONDE. Especial care should be taken that the correct spelling is used appropriately at all stages.]

PAGE ONE

1.

IT'S NIGHT OUTSIDE, THOUGH LIGHTENING TOWARDS DAWN.

OPEN IN THE BIG WAREHOUSE-SPACE THAT SERVES TREASURE'S WIFE, TERRY, AS A WORKSHOP FOR HER VOCATION AS AN INSTALLATION ARTIST.

WOOD- AND STONE - AND METAL-WORKING TOOLS, PAINT AND CANVAS, HALF-COMPLETED SCULPTURES, SPOTLIGHTS, CYBER-MANIPULATORS, ETC, ETC, ARRANGED IN THE SLOPPY, ARTY MANNER OF, WELL, AN ARTIST AS OPPOSED TO SOMEONE SIMPLY MANUFACTURING THINGS BY WAY OF LIGHT ENGINEERING.

(JUST AS A CHARACTER/COLOUR NOTE: IN THE SAME WAY THAT I IMAGINE BRIT-CIT CLUBS AS MORE LIKE THE ONES YOU GET IN OLD BLACK-AND-WHITE MUSICAL COMEDIES RATHER THAN ANYTHING CONTEMPORARY, I IMAGINE TERRY AS 'RENAISSANCE WOMAN OF THE FUTURE' - THINK THE FUTURISTIC DREDD-WORLD EQUIVALENT OF LEONARDO DA VINCI'S WORKSHOP, ON A LARGER SCALE AND WITH A SOMEWHAT LESSER PREPONDERANCE OF PROTOTYPICAL HELICOPTERS.)

PROMINENT AND FOREGROUNDED, WE SEE A HALF-COMPLETED ARMATURE FOR A BIG SCULPTURE IN SCAVENGED WOOD AND RUSTY STEEL - A WOMAN CRUCIFIED ON ONE OF THOSE CROSSES LIKE AN 'X', THE PROPER NAME FOR WHICH I'VE JUST BLANKED ON. WELDING TOOLS AND CLAMPS, SPOTLIGHTS, BLUEPRINT NOTES, ETC, MAKE IT CLEAR THAT IT'S A WORK IN PROGRESS. (AND, YES, CHILDREN AND SPORTS FANS, CAN WE ALL SAY THE WORD 'META'?)

OUR MAIN ATTENTION AND FOCUS, THOUGH, IS ON THE PORTACABIN AFFAIR, LARGE ENOUGH TO HOUSE AN APARTMENT, WHICH IS THE

ACTUAL HOME OF TREASURE, TERRY AND THEIR SON CALLUM. THE HOMEY LIGHT OF OCCUPATION SPILLS FROM THE WINDOWS.

BOX: Brit-Cit. Sector Three. Studio/apartment of noted installation artist, Theresa Steel.

TREASURE: (from cabin) So, yeah, wonderful. I come home from a drokking pig of a day - if pigs still existed, which they don't - and find you with the drokking child minder!

TREASURE: (from cabin, link) What the drokk did you expect me to do?

TERRY: (from cabin, obviously, you know, a different voice) Oh, you did exactly what I should have expected ...

TITLE: SECOND-HAND INFORMATION

2.

WE'RE IN THE LIVING ROOM OF TREASURE AND TERRY'S APARTMENT. PRETTY MUCH NONDESCRIPT, SOFA AND CHAIRS AND STUFF. INDICATIONS OF THE TOYS AND PARAPHERNALIA OF HAVING A THREE-YEAR-OLD CHILD AROUND.

IMPORTANTLY: INDICATIONS OF A MULTI-SCREEN ENTERTAINMENT UNIT, WHICH WE'LL FOCUS ON A BIT LATER, AND A COFFEE TABLE OF SOME SORT WITH MAGAZINES ETC ON IT.

(I'LL DETAIL BASIC THE SET-UP FOR THIS SEQUENCE HERE, AT A BIT OF LENGTH, AND JUST CALL IT BACK FOR SUBSEQUENT PANEL DESCRIPTIONS. PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SIZE AND FRAME THINGS AND INCLUDE SUCH ELEMENTS AS YOU SEE FIT.)

ARMITAGE IS ON THE COUCH IN HIS SHIRTSLEEVES AND WAISTCOAT, GENERALLY TAKING CARE OF LITTLE CALLUM.

CALLUM IS A BRIGHT, INQUISITIVE AND AFFECTIONATE CHILD, PRONE TO GOING THROUGH PEOPLE'S POCKETS AND GIVING THEM SUDDEN HUGS. (COME TO THINK OF IT, I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER REALLY DESCRIBED CALLUM PHYSICALLY: AS THE NATURAL CHILD OF BOTH TREASURE AND TERRY, HE'S A COMBINATION OF BOTH, WHICH PROBABLY TRANSLATES, IN COMICS LAND, INTO A DARK SKINNED MIXED-RACE CHILD WITH BLOND HAIR.)

ARMITAGE IS ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO GETS ON WITH KIDS BY THE SIMPLE EXPEDIENT OF BEING TOTALLY INDIFFERENT TO THEM. HE'S SEEN BETTER WHEN CALLUM PROUDLY SHOWS HIM A TOY TRUCK, FIRMLY TAKES CALLUM'S HAND AWAY FROM TRYING TO PULL HIS WARRANT CARD OUT OF HIS POCKET, SCOWLS WITH IRRITATION WHEN CALLUM TRIES TO GIVE HIM A HUG AND A KISS, ETC, AND

WE'LL SEE INDICATIONS OF STUFF LIKE THAT IN THE FOLLOWING, WHERE OUR FOCUS TRULY LIES ...

TREASURE AND TERRY ARE ON THEIR FEET AND HAVING AN ARGUMENT. THEY'RE BOTH ANGRY, BUT NOT QUITE AT THE POINT OF SCREAMING IN EACH OTHER'S FACES. IT'S THE SORT OF ARGUMENT, IN SHORT, THAT BOTH PEOPLE THINK MORE OF AS A DISCUSSION FOR THE OTHER PERSON'S OWN GOOD.

TERRY: You left and shut me off like I never existed. That's what you do. That's all you do!

TREASURE: What, like I should have knifed you or something, and buried you under that three ton of raw clay you've got out there?

TERRY: Interesting to see where your mind automatically goes.

TERRY: (link) No. That would have taken at least some sense of human contact.

3.

TERRY AND TREASURE ARGUING. TERRY'S MORE FORCEFULLY ANGRY, TREASURE'S MORE SULLEN.

TERRY: I just don't know why I put up with it for so long! Everybody says I've been a saint!

TREASURE: Well a martyr, certainly.

TERRY: What?

TERRY: (link) What the hell is that supposed to mean?

4.

TERRY'S NOW INDIGNANT. TREASURE'S COLDLY ANGRY, LAYING OUT SOME GRIEVANCES.

TREASURE: You knew what I was when you met me. You knew who I was when you married me.

TREASURE: (link) You knew I believed in something bigger than myself - in my duty as a Judge - and you knew that sometimes other things had to take a back seat ...

5.

FOREGROUNDED ELEMENTS OF THE ARMITAGE-LOOKING-AFTER CALLUM BUSINESSES I MENTIONED.

WE'RE LOOKING PAST THIS TO FULL-FIGURES OF TREASURE AND TERRY IN FULL-ON ARGUING IN EACH OTHER'S FACES MODE.

(THE STYLE'S REALISTIC, BUT I IMAGINE THAT THE POSTURES ARE LIKE A CARTOON ARGUMENT: TERRY WAVING HER ARMS AND SHOUTING IN EXASPERATION, TREASURE DOING THAT HUNCHED-OVER, HEAD-UP SNARLING THING WITH TWO STRAIGHT-ARMED FISTS AIMED AT THE FLOOR. ALL IT NEEDS IS JAGGED LINES RADIATING OFF THEIR HEADS, BUT WHICH WE DON'T OF COURSE ACTUALLY SEE.)

TERRY: Drokk your drokking duty! You just want it both ways! As you want it, when you want it!

TREASURE: Oh yeah! Like you're the drokking expert on wanting it!

TERRY: You just don't get it, do you?

6.

CLOSE ON TERRY, COLDLY LAYING IT OUT LIKE IT IS, IN THE MANNER OF ONE WHO KNOWS PRECISELY WHAT HER PLACE IS, HERE, AND THAT PLACE IS IN THE RIGHT.

TERRY: You use me and our son - our drokking son - as accessories.

TERRY: (link) 'This is my family, this is my wife, this is my son' ... you use us like trophies. Things you can point to and show that despite everything you really are some kind of normal and functioning human being!

TERRY: Lina was a mistake, sure, and I fell for her line - but at least I could believe for a while that she respected me as someone real.

PAGE TWO

1.
IN THE FOREGROUND, TERRY ANGRILY LECTURES A SULLEN AND DEFENSIVE, INCREASINGLY DEFEATED LOOKING TREASURE. TO THE EXTENT THAT ARGUMENTS LIKE THIS CAN ACTUALLY BE WON, SHE'S WON IT.

IN THE BACKGROUND, THE SOFA, ON WHICH ARMITAGE IS LOOKING AFTER CALLUM.

TERRY: But - and this is the big but - one thing I didn't do was go out and hook up with the first slitch who didn't look at me like she was scraping me off the sole of my shoe!

TREASURE: Look, it wasn't like ...

TERRY: It was just spite. Nothing more or less. You just wanted to spread the shit around!

2.
THE SAME SHOT. TERRY STANDS GLARING AT A SULLEN AND DEFENSIVE TREASURE, HAVING WON.

IN THE BACKGROUND, ARMITAGE AND CALLUM. CALLUM IS LOOKING AT HIS TWO MOTHERS WITH INTEREST.

TERRY: You know that's how it was.

3.
THE SAME SHOT. TERRY AND TREASURE ARE JUST ON THAT POINT OF REACTING, IN THE WAY THAT ONE DOES WHEN A KID COMES OUT AND SAYS SOMETHING UNEXPECTED. TERRY'S EYES A WIDENING A LITTLE. TREASURE'S CLOSING HERS IN A KIND OF 'OH GOD' WAY.

IN THE BACKGROUND, ON THE SOFA, CALLUM IS SAYING SOMETHING. HE'S NOT SHOUTING OR SCREAMING OR ANYTHING, BUT THERE'S THE DISTINCT IMPRESSION OF HIM MAKING A LOUD AND GLEEFUL ANNOUNCEMENT IN THE WAY THAT KIDS DO. BESIDE HIM, ARMITAGE SITS, LOOKING UP AND OFF IN A 'WHAT AM I DOING HERE' SORT OF WAY.

(I'VE SPENT A LOT OF WORDS, HERE, DETAILING WHAT IS IN THE END THE LEAD AND PUNCH LINE TO A VERY, VERY SMALL JOKE - BUT FOR IT TO WORK, SUCH AS IT IS, THOSE DETAILS HAVE TO BE PITCHED WITH JUST THE RIGHT DEGREE OF UNDERSTATEMENT.)

CALLUM: Mama Terry said butt!

CALLUM: (link) She said big butt!

4.

CUT TO LATER, STILL IN THE LIVING ROOM. TERRY AND CALLUM HAVE GONE, PRESUMABLY TO THEIR RESPECTIVE BEDS.

TREASURE IS IN THE PROCESS OF SPREADING OUT A COLLECTION OF DOCUMENTS, CASE NOTES AND DATA PADS ON THE COFFEE TABLE BEFORE THE ENTERTAINMENT UNIT.

ARMITAGE IS ON THE SOFA, HAS PICKED UP A DATA PAD AND IS PERUSING THE SCREEN IN A SUITABLY INVESTIGATORY MANNER.

BOX: Later.

TREASURE: They're down for the night, what's left of it.

TREASURE: (link) So ... you think we have some hope in hell of sorting this all out?

ARMITAGE: Probably not the domestics.

ARMITAGE: (link) You're no use to me with this whole Tamara DeFane thing hanging over you, though.

5.

CLOSE ON ARMITAGE, STILL INVOLVED IN READING AS HE SPEAKS.

ARMITAGE: Sort that out and we can concentrate on our real job of those suspiciously good-looking victims, which we have by no means forgotten about.

ARMITAGE: You know, just for the sake of any Special Branch nano-bugs who might be listening in.

6.

TWO-SHOT OF ARMITAGE AND STEEL CONFERRING. TREASURE SEEMS NOT EXACTLY FRIGHTENED BUT A LITTLE WORRIED. ARMITAGE IS COMPLETELY UNCONCERNED.

TREASURE: You think Special Branch would do that? Keep tabs on us like that?

ARMITAGE: It's the sort of thing they like to do.

ARMITAGE: (link) Lucky for us, our lives are an entirely open book.

7.

CLOSE ON ARMITAGE, FROM TREASURE'S POV, SPEAKING TO US DIRECT.

ARMITAGE: Besides, my only connection with young Callum might have been in supplying the motile component - but I like him. He's one of the tolerable ones.

ARMITAGE: (link) I'm not going to see one of his mothers dragged through the dirt if I can help it.

PAGE THREE

THIS IS ANOTHER PAGE IN A DIFFERENT STYLE FROM THE MORE NATURALISTIC TONE OF ELSEWHERE, AND I'LL ATTEMPT TO DESCRIBE THAT HERE, JUST ON THE OFF-CHANCE THAT SOMEONE DOESN'T GET WHAT I MEAN LIKE A SHOT:

IN OLD COPIES OF THINGS LIKE PENTHOUSE AND THE LIKE, THEY HAD COMICS PAGES, OF A KIND, DETAILING THE 'SEXY MISADVENTURES' OF SOME GIRL WITH A NAME LIKE 'CARRIE'. CARRIE LOOKED LIKE A SOFT-PORN MODEL, LOVINGLY DETAILED, AND SHE KEPT GETTING INTO STICKY SITUATIONS WHERE ALL HER CLOTHES FELL OFF AND ENDED UP, LIKE AS NOT, GETTING GANG-BANGED.

(EXAMPLE: CARRIE DECORATES THE TREE FOR THE OFFICE PARTY, FALLS OFF THE LADDER LOSING ALL HER CLOTHES IN THE PROCESS AND BREAKS THE FAIRY. SO THOSE FUN-LOVING GUYS IN THE OFFICE STICK HER UP ON THE TREE WITH TINSEL TIED TO HER TITS. MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR READERS. THE END.) THIS PAGE IS LIKE ONE OF THOSE.

ONE OF THE DISTINCTIVE POINTS OF THE STYLE WAS THAT THERE WERE NO PANEL FRAMES, THE DISCRETE IMAGES PUT TOGETHER IN A MONTAGE - BUT FOR THE SAKE OF CLARITY, I'LL NUMBER THE IMAGES AS IF THEY WERE PANELS ...

1.
THE TITLE:

Tamara DeFane ...

DUMB BLONDE

In

“WHAT ABOUT THE WORKERS???”

(PLOT POINT REMINDER: THE WORD MUST BE BLONDE HERE, SINCE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT TAMARA THE WOMAN.)

2.
CLOSE ON THE DUMB BLONDE, WITH FIFTIES-LOOKING LIPSTICK AND CURLS, TALKING INTO AN OLD-STYLE TELEPHONE RECEIVER.

A THOUGHT-BUBBLE COMING FROM HER SHOWS A CARTOON GRAPHIC OF A LEAKING FRONT-LOAD WASHING MACHINE WITH A CROSS THROUGH IT.

3.

THE DUMB BLONDE IS AT THE FRONT DOOR OF AN IDYLIC FIFTIES-STYLE ROSE-COVERED COTTAGE, DRESSED UP LIKE A FIFTIES HOUSEWIFE WITH A SHORT SKIRT, HIGH HEELS AND A PERT LITTLE APRON - SHE LOOKS LIKE A STRIPPER IN A COSTUME, BASICALLY.

SHE'S ANSWERING THE DOOR TO A HUNKY HANDYMAN IN DENIM OVERALLS AND A CAP AND WITH A TOOLBOX.

4.

HUNKY HANDYMAN IS ON HIS HANDS AND KNEES, WITH HIS TOOLS OUT, AND IS FIXING THE BROKEN WASHING MACHINE.

IN THE BACKGROUND, SEXY HOUSEWIFE DUMB BLONDE STANDS, LOOKING DOWN AT - WE THINK - THE HANDYMAN WITH INTEREST. HEARTS ARE BURSTING FROM THE THINK-BUBBLE COMING FROM HER.

5.

CLOSE ON HANDYMAN, STANDING AND LOOKING AT THE CASH HE'S HOLDING WITH PUZZLEMENT. A QUESTION-MARK THOUGHT BUBBLE COMES FROM HIM.

BEYOND HIM, INDICATIONS OF THE DUMB BLONDE, IN THE WINDOW OF THE ROSE-COVERED FIFTIES COTTAGE, WAVING HIM GOODBYE.

6.

BIG IMAGE. THE - AHM - MONEY SHOT. AND LET ME SAY, I HAVE NO IDEA HOW MUCH CAN BE GOT AWAY WITH, SO I'LL JUST PUT DOWN THE BASICS AND LET OTHERS TONE IT DOWN OR AMP IT UP AS THEY SEE FIT.

THE WASHING MACHINE IS NOW QUITE DEFINITELY WORKING AND ON A SPIN-CYCLE. THE DUMB BLONDE SITS ON IT. THINGS ARE DEFINITELY JIGGLING. SHE'S OBVIOUSLY HAVING A FINE OLD TIME.

7.

A LITTLE END-GRAPHIC: 'The End' WRITTEN OVER A VALENTINE-HEART.

PAGE FOUR

1.
WE'RE BACK IN TREASURE'S LIVING ROOM. ARMITAGE AND STEEL ON THE SOFA, GENERALLY GOING THROUGH THE CASE NOTES ETC.

ON THE ENTERTAINMENT UNIT SCREEN IS THE 'THE END' HEART FROM LAST PAGE.

ARMITAGE: You know, I don't think I've ever even seen one of those Dumb Blonde things before. Didn't know how fortunate I was.

ARMITAGE: (link) When did your taste in women drop so dramatically?

TREASURE: Don't you start.

TREASURE: (link) It was just a one-night-stand thing. Like Terry said, I was just looking to spread the shit around.

2.
CLOSE ON TREASURE, EXPLAINING HERSELF DEFENSIVELY - BUT THERE'S A TOUCH OF THE 'CAN'T BELIEVE I DID THAT'S' IF YOU GET ME.

TREASURE: It all seems a bit unreal, somehow, like I wasn't quite in my right mind. Even when we were ... together, I didn't connect with her as an actual person ...

TREASURE: God forgive me, but I'm having trouble thinking of her death as any real loss - you know, apart from landing me in the crap.

3.
TWO-SHOT OF ARMITAGE AND STEEL ON THE COUCH. ARMITAGE IS READING A SHEAF OF PAPERS, TREASURE IS PICKING UP A DATA WAFER (THE SOLID-STATE FUTURE EQUIVALENT OF A DVD) FROM THE COFFEE TABLE.

ARMITAGE: Human life has worth, Steel. Any life. Look at the alternatives if it wasn't.

TREASURE: Some more than others, though, it seems.

4.
CLOSE ON TREASURE AS SHE SLOTS THE DATA WAFER INTO THE HOME ENTERTAINMENT UNIT.

TREASURE: I mean, look at this.

TREASURE: (link) Look at the media-frenzy that's accreted.

5.

THE IMAGE ON THE SCREEN: A TYPOGRAPHIC SAYING 'DUMB BLOND MURDER-WATCH'.

(AND AGAIN WITH THE REMINDER, TO MYSELF AS MUCH AS ANYBODY ELSE. IT'S BLOND, THIS TIME, THAT BEING A CLUE.)

RADIO VOICE: (from screen) A goddess, cut down in the prime of her life ...

6.

THE IMAGE ON THE SCREEN: CLOSEUP ON THE BLACK AND WHITE, SMILING FACE OF A DEAR LITTLE GIRL WITH BLONDE RINGLETS. TAMARA AS A CHILD.

RADIO VOICE: A darling child ... born of a single mother, her father beaten to death by Judges ... who by sheer courage and pluck fought her way up from the squalor of the Sector 13 ghettos ...

7.

LARGISH PANEL CONTAINING AN IMAGE ON THE SCREEN: A PUBLICITY-STILL OF TAMARA DeFANE THE DUMB BLONDE. POSSIBLY A REPRISE OF THAT SOFT-PORN STYLE OF PREVIOUS.

A CHEESECAKE-SHOT OF HER DRESSED UP LIKE A FARMER, WITH A STRAW HAT, CUT-OFF OVERALLS AND A PITCHFORK, MIMING SEXY SURPRISE AT BEING STARTLED BY A BEE.

RADIO VOICE: ... and became the stuff of dreams, the queen or our hearts ...

PAGE FIVE

1.

AN IMAGE ON THE SCREEN: A REPRISE OF THE NEWS-PHOTO WE SAW BRIEFLY BACK IN PART 2. A DRUNKEN TAMARA IS IN A CLUB AND CAUSING A SCENE, GOING VICIOUSLY FOR A PAPAZZO.

(INDICATIONS OF HER ENTOURAGE, AND IN PARTICULAR OF HER BIG BALD MINDER, GOREN, TRYING AND FAILING SO STOP HER.)

RADIO VOICE: In later years, the price of fame began to take it's toll. She succumbed to the pressures and temptations of notoriety ...

2.

AN IMAGE ON THE SCREEN: A ... SOMEWHAT SHAMBOLIC TAMARA IS ON A STAGE, SCOWLING VICIOUSLY AND MAKING A CRUDE GESTURE.

IF WE WERE SEEING THIS AND DIDN'T KNOW, WE'D THINK IT WAS JUST MORE PICTORIAL EVIDENCE OF A STAR IN DECLINE. AS IT IS, WE SEE THAT IT'S ACTUALLY DANIEL, THE TRIBUTE ACT. HE/SHE'S WEARING THE SAME OUTFIT AS WHEN WE SAW HIM/HER.

RADIO VOICE: ... but through it all, she was always ready to perform, with a generosity that put younger stars to ...

VOICE OFF: (treasure) Oh for drokk's sake!

3.

WE'RE BACK IN THE LIVING ROOM. ARMITAGE LISTENS AS TREASURE TALKS ANIMATEDLY, HAVING MADE A CONNECTION.

TREASURE: Who the drokk is putting this stuff out to DataDay?

ARMITAGE: The standard puff-piece guys are obviously having a field day. What's your point?

TREASURE: That last thing wasn't even her. That was ...

4.

CLOSE ON TREASURE. THAT SORT OF DELAYED-DROP EXPRESSION WHERE YOU REALISE YOU'RE SAYING SOMETHING INEXPRESSIBLY DUMB.

TREASURE: Oh drokk me.

TREASURE: Is it really all that simple?

5.

TWO SHOT OF ARMITAGE AND TREASURE, TALKING TOGETHER IN A GENERALLY CASE-CRACKY WAY. (THE FUN OF PEOPLE DOING NOTHING OTHER THAN TALK JUST NEVER ENDS, DOES IT?)

TREASURE: Listen ... I told you about Daniel, and how he thought that people were after him.

TREASURE: (link) Maybe they actually existed, saw me leaving the club with Tamara and they just got sort of confused ...

ARMITAGE: Yeah, but they'd have to be stupid to the point of idiocy and ... what am I saying? People are idiots.

ARMITAGE: (link, this balloon breaking into the next frame) Let's check it out.

6.

CUT TO A SNAPSHOT-SCENE OF THE RECEPTION AREA OF A BRANCH OF THE 'BODYSTORE'. ADVERTISING TAGLINE ON PROMOTIONAL POSTERS SHOWING BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE: 'IT'S A WHOLE NEW YOU'.

INDICATIONS OF SEVERAL NERVOUS, DEJECTED AND PIG-UGLY BRIT-CIT CITIZENS WAITING FOR THEIR APPOINTMENTS.

ARMITAGE AND STEEL ARE AT THE DESK, BEHIND WHICH IS A BEAUTIFUL (OF COURSE) RECEPTIONIST IN A NURSE-LIKE OUTFIT. ARMITAGE IS SHOWING HER HIS WARRANT CARD.

BOX: 'Daniel had been worried about the credit he owed to the BodyStore franchise ...'

BOX: 'He had worried about what means and methods they might use to get it back.'

PAGE SIX

1.
SNAPSHOT SCENE OF THE BODYSTORE'S PROCEDURE-ROOM. PROMINENT AND FOREGROUNDED, SOME FRIGHTENED LOOKING GUY IS IN AMONGST A HUGELY COMPLICATED TANGLE OF SLICY ROBO-SURGERY UNITS, FLUID-INJECTORS, IMPLANT-FORCE-GRAFTERS, ETC, ETC, ETC. ALL VERY BODY-HORROR CYBERPUNK.

BEYOND THIS, ARMITAGE AND STEEL ARE QUESTIONING A SOMEWHAT MAD-SCIENTIST-LOOKING BODYSTORE SURGEON, WHO IS CONSULTING HIS RECORDS ON A HANDHELD DATA PAD.

BOX: 'It didn't work like that.'

BOX: 'The entire BodyStore operation was based on the idea of giving people whole new lives, and owning a piece of them for every second of those lives.'

BOX: 'Ending those lives prematurely, for no return, was simply not a cost-effective option.'

2.
SNAPSHOT SCENE OF THE BODYSTORE 'DEPARTURES LOUNGE'. ARMITAGE AND STEEL ARE JUST GENERALLY CONVERSING AND HEADING OUT.

INCIDENTAL DETAILS OF BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE ADMIRING THEMSELVES IN LITTLE MIRRORS AND THE LIKE AND HAVING A PREEN.

(POSSIBLY, IF IT DOESN'T COME OFF AS SIMPLY STUPID, THERE'S A COMPLAINTS DEPARTMENT DESK, AT WHICH WE SEE A MAN WITH NO NOSE. HE'S CARRYING A LITTLE BOX.)

BOX: 'And, plus, they had certain ... personal effects on file, should it ever come to a matter of leverage.'

3,
CUT TO AN ESTABLISHING SHOT INSIDE THE 'BLACK LIGHT' NIGHTCLUB. IT'S DURING THE DAYLIGHT DOWNTIME AND THE CLEANERS ARE IN. GENERAL INDICATIONS OF THEM CLEANING UP.

(JUST TO BE CLEAR, AGAIN: THE BLACK LIGHT IS NOT A SEX CLUB OR ANYTHING, SO THE CLEANERS ARE ATTACKING NOTHING MORE DUBIOUS THAN THE DETRITUS YOU'D FIND IN ANY BUSY CLUB AFTER CLOSING TIME - WHICH IS GODAWFUL ENOUGH IN ITSELF, I SUPPOSE.)

ARMITAGE AND STEEL ARE QUESTIONING THE SHARP-SUITED MANAGER. POSSIBLY THE COMPARE WE SAW BACK IN PART 2, OUT OF COSTUME.

THE GUY'S NOT EXACTLY HOSTILE, BUT UNCOMMUNICATIVE.

BOX: 'Next stop, Daniel's place of quasi-work.'

BOX: 'The Black Light club.'

MAGAGER: As I told you, Detective, we turned all security CCHV footage over to the Judges. We have a cordial relationship with the New Old Bailey ...

ARMITAGE: Yeah, and I know what that relationship means.

4.

MOVE IN ON ARMITAGE AND STEEL QUESTIONING THE UNCOMMUNICATIVE MANAGER.

ARMITAGE: You get to keep stuff, which you can sell to ... other clients for a profit.

ARMITAGE: Things are changing in the New Old Bailey, what with the Star Chamber being gone. We're starting to do things a whole lot more like in the Mega-Cities.

5.

CLOSE ON ARMITAGE SPEAKING COLDLY. THE MANAGER'S ON THE POINT OF CAVING IN.

ARMITAGE: Ever hear of a crime blitz?

ARMITAGE: (link) Feel like getting bumped up on the list?

6.

CUT TO THE SECURITY OFFICE OF THE BLACK LIGHT CLUB. THE FUTURE BRIT-CIT VERSION OF WHAT YOU'D FIND IN A SECURITY OFFICE OF TODAY, BASICALLY, WITH MULTI-SCREEN CONSOLES AND THE LIKE.

POSSIBLE INDICATIONS THAT THE SCREENS SHOW VARIOUS ANGLES IN THE CLUB INTERIOR TO FIX IT. MAYBE INCIDENTAL DETAILS PREVIOUS SEC-STAFF OCCUPATION LIKE HALF-DRUNK CUPS OF COFFEE, HALF-EATEN PIZZA, HALF-CONSUMED PACKS OF THC-INHALERS ETC.

ARMITAGE AND STEEL ARE IN THE PROCESS OF SITTING DOWN AND WORKING AT THE CONSOLES, WITH ARMITAGE TAKING HIS COAT OFF.

TREASURE: What was that about a crime blitz?

TREASURE: (link) I mean, we might be bastards, but we're not complete and utter bastards, are we?

ARMITAGE: Got us in to the good stuff, didn't it?

PAGE SEVEN

1.

IMAGE ON A CONSOLE SCREEN: A GENERAL SHOT OF THE BLACK LIGHT CLUB ON THE NIGHT IN QUESTION.

TAMARA DeFAMATION/DANIEL ON THE STAGE AND DOING HIS/HER ACT, VARIOUS SEXY CLUB-GOERS, THE SMALL FIGURE OF TREASURE AT THE BAR.

TARGETING GRAPHICS AND LITTLE ID TAGS ARE OVERLAID ON TREASURE AND DANIEL, CONVEYING THAT THIS IS SECURICAM OUTPUT.

VOICE OFF: (Armitage) So, there's this Daniel. I can see how people might get confused.

VOICE OFF: (Armitage, link) And there's you, shrinking violet that you are ...

2.

WE'RE ON ARMITAGE AND STEEL AS THEY WORK AT THE CONSOLE AND CONFER.

ARMITAGE: Not exactly your best side, Steel, I have to say.

TREASURE: Drokk you so very much.

TREASURE: (link) I think we need to blip forward a bit before things get interesting ...

3.

THE IMAGE ON THE SCREEN: ANOTHER SHOT OF CROWDED CLUB INTERIOR. AN APPROPRIATELY TAG-TARGETED AND TAGGED TREASURE IS IN THE BOOTH, HAVING A DRINK AND GETTING ON WITH A TAG-TARGETED REAL TAMARA. (POSSIBLY SOME MINOR DIFFERENCE IN TAGS TO ENFORCE THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN DANIEL AND TAMARA.)

SMALL INDICATIONS OF A PAIR OF SOMEWHAT THUGGISH LOOKING GUYS IN THE CROWD, WITH THE SAME POSTURE AND EXPRESSIONS AS WE'LL SEE IN THE NEXT FRAME BUT ONE.

VOICE OFF: (Armitage) Here we go.

VOICE OFF: (Armitage, link) All very cosy. Did you even think to watch your back, Steel?

4.

BACK ON ARMITAGE AND STEEL, CONFERRING.

TREASURE: Well, yeah, you know, at the time I was sort of more interested in the things happening to my front ...

ARMITAGE: Hang on.

ARMITAGE: (link) I think I saw something.

5.

IMAGE ON THE SCREEN: WE'VE ZOOMED IN AND TAG-TARGETED THE TWO THUGGISH GUYS, IN CONFERENCE. ONE OF THEM IS SURREPTITIOUSLY GESTURING TOWARDS SOMETHING OR SOMEONE OUT OF SHOT.

VOICE OFF: (Armitage) Those two there.

VOICE OFF: (Armitage, link) Those two taking an interest in you. I know who they are.

6.

CLOSE ON THE FACE OF ARMITAGE, SCOWLING GRIMLY.

ARMITAGE: And I know who they worked for.

7.

CUT TO THE SHABBY OFFICES OF 'ACME REPOSSESSION AND SECURITY SERVICES'. TAG LINE, ON THE SIGNAGE, ETC, 'JOB DONE. CHEAP.'

ARMITAGE HAS THE THUGGISH OWNER OF THE CONCERN - NOT ONE OF THE TWO THUGS WE SAW - BY THE SCRUFF OF THE NECK AND IS GROWLING IN HIS FACE. TREASURE STANDS OFF TO ONE SIDE, COMPLETELY UNCONCERNED.

BOX: 'I'd have to check my notes for the actual names of the guys.'

BOX: 'No great loss, on account that they'd been nothing more than foot-soldiers, back in the day. Dirty work for the Overlords, on a level so low that it barely left a blip on even their sonar.'

BOX: 'Of course, with the collapse of the Star Chamber, they now had to find work even lower on the ladder.'

THUG BOSS GUY: I'm telling you! I don't know where they are!

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1.
CLOSE ON THE THUG BOSS GUY, GRIPPED BY ARMITAGE'S HAND AND SPEAKING FEARFULLY.

THUG BOSS GUY: Last I saw of them was when they quit. And then it's like they just dropped off the face of the earth.

THUG BOSS GUY: Something about this new outfit, operating out of Sector Two. ZipCo Holdings ...

2.
WE'RE ON ARMITAGE AS HE TURNS TO LOOK AT TREASURE. A MUTUAL LOOK OF SURPRISE AND THE BEGINNINGS OF WORRY.

THUG BOSS GUY: (off) They said the Big Guy was back - and how it would be just like old times.

3.
CHANGE OF SCENE. CUT TO AN ANGLED ESTABLISHING SHOT ON A BRIT-CIT STREET, OUTSIDE A BUILDING THAT LOOKS A BIT LIKE A BANK. STEPS LEADING UP TO IS AND COLUMNS AND STUFF.

PARKED OUTSIDE IS WHAT IS, BASICALLY, THE FUTURE BRIT-CIT VERSION OF AN UNMARKED TRANSIT VAN.

BOX: Brit-Cit. Sector Two. ZipCo Holding Company, Central Offices.

VOICE: (Treasure, from van) He's back? Drokking again? I thought the drokker was gone for good.

4.
CUT TO INSIDE THE BACK OF THE VAN. THERE ARE MAYBE FOUR ARMED JUDGES SITTING THERE IN RIOT GEAR, ON SEATING RUNNING DOWN BOTH SIDES TOOLED UP WITH BODY ARMOUR AND STUFF FOR AN OP.

ARMITAGE AND STEEL, ON SEATS FACING EACH OTHER BY THE BACK DOORS OF THE VAN, ARE CONFERRING.

ARMITAGE: Yeah, well - by his lights, he's probably back for better.

ARMITAGE: ZipCo was one of the operations he thought I didn't know about, back in the day. This is where he'll be.

5.

CUT TO INSIDE THE BUILDING, THE BIG LOBBY AREA OF SOME GENERIC BUT HIGH-CLASS BUSINESS CONCERN. ROSE-MARBLE INTERIOR COLUMNS AND RECEPTION DESK, LEASED FOLIAGE, WELL-APPOINTED SEATING AND WHATNOT.

VARIOUS BUSINESS-TYPES ARE LOOKING AROUND IN SURPRISE AND ALARM AS ARMITAGE, STEEL AND THEIR SQUAD OF ARMED JUDGES COME THROUGH THE BIG DOUBLE DOORS LIKE IT'S A RAID.

(POSSIBLE INDICATIONS, JUST TO SET ITS PRESENCE UP, OF THE DEPARTMENT-ISSUE PORTABLE BATTERING RAM WHICH ONE OF THE JUDGES IS TOTING.)

FX: - Clunch! - - Skraash! -

ARMITAGE: Stay where you are! Official Justice Department business!

6.

CLOSE ON ARMITAGE STEEL, CONFERRING IN A KINDA DYNAMIC WE'RE-ON-A-RAID WAY.

TREASURE: So, then, boss - up or down?

ARMITAGE: Guy always liked bolt-holes.

ARMITAGE: (link) We go down.

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1.
WE'RE LOOKING UP A MAINTENANCE-STAIRWELL AS ARMITAGE,
STEEL AND THEIR SQUAD OF ARMED JUDGES COME DOWN IT
HEADING FOR THE BASEMENT.

FOREGROUND OF A COUPLE OF RATHER THUGGISH-LOOKING
SECURITY GUARD TYPES - NOT THE COUPLE OF THUGS WE SAW
EARLIER ON THE CCTV FOOTAGE - TURN AND REACT WITH ALARM.

A GUARD: What the -

2.
DYNAMICALLY VIOLENT SHOT OF ARMITAGE AND STEEL TAKING THE
SECURITY GUARDS DOWN. ARMITAGE, OF COURSE, SMACKS PEOPLE
WITH SHEER BRUTE FORCE. TREASURE'S STYLE IS MORE FLUID,
WITH KUNG-FU KICKS AND STUFF.

FX: - Swak! - - Flunch! -

A GUARD: Hgnn!

3.
ARMITAGE, STEEL AND THEIR SQUAD OF JUDGES ARE AT A STOUT
SECURITY DOOR. SIGNAGE ON IT SAYS: 'PRIVATE', AND, 'ENTER AT
THE RISK OF SLITHERING AND SCREAMING DEATH', AND, 'THIS
MEANS YOU'.

ARMITAGE IS ADDRESSING THE JUDGE-GUY WITH THE BATTERING
RAM AND JERKING HIS THUMB AT THE DOOR.

ARMITAGE: Looks interesting ...

ARMITAGE: You there, lose the door. You're good at stuff like that, by all
accounts.

4.
CLOSE ON THE JUDGE-GUY SMACKING THE DOOR, WHERE THE
SECURITY LOCK IS, WITH THE RAM AND KNOCKING IT OPEN.

FX: - Swunch! -

5.

WE'RE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE DOOR AS ARMITAGE AND STEEL BURST THROUGH IT TO CONFRONT US.

BEHIND AND TO THE SIDES OF THEM THE ARMED JUDGES ARE DEPLOYING AND TRACKING TO TAKE DOWN ANY POTENTIAL PROBLEMS. (AND YES, YES, WE'RE ALL AWARE THE PRIMARY WOULD NEVER GO THROUGH A DOOR FIRST LIKE THIS IN ANY REAL LIFE. IT MIGHT COME AS A BIT OF A SHOCK, YOU KNOW, BUT THIS IS A COMIC AS OPPOSED TO ANY REAL LIFE.)

TREASURE STILL LOOKS HARD AND DETERMINED. ARMITAGE'S EXPRESSION IS JUST AT THIS POINT FROM TURNING FROM HARD DETERMINATION TO SURPRISE AT FINDING SOMETHING OTHER THAN HE EXPECTS ...

ARMITAGE: Don't move! Keep your hands where I can ...

ARMITAGE: (link) ... um.

6.

BIG FRAME. WE'RE SEEING WHAT OUR HEROES SEE ...

IT'S A SPACIOUS AND TASTEFULLY LUXURIOUS BUSINESS OFFICE. BEING UNDERGROUND, THERE ARE NO WINDOWS, BUT THIS IS COUNTERED BY LIGHTING PANELS AND ILLUMINATED PAINTINGS, SOME LANDSCAPES, SOME PORTRAITS. ONE OF THOSE PORTRAITS MIGHT BE OF AN UNCHARACTERISTICALLY NOBLE-LOOKING EFIL DRAGO SAN - ARMITAGE'S INTERMINABLE BETE NOIR - IF THAT DOESN'T COME ACROSS AS TOO ON THE NOSE.

WE'RE LOOKING AT - INSTEAD OF THE DRAGO SAN WE'RE EXPECTING - AN ELEGANT AND BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IN HER LATE THIRTIES.

SHE'S DRESSED IN A SOMEWHAT SEVERE BLACK PINSTRIPE TWINSET, WITH SHIRT AND TIE AND STOCKINGS AND HEELS - OBVIOUSLY NOT THE DIFFERENTLY SEVERE SORT OF OUTFIT WE SAW THE SPECIAL BRANCH INVESTIGATOR IN EARLIER. THIS WOMAN LOOKS MORE LIKE THE SEXY CEO OF A LAWYER-PARTNERSHIP IN SOME AMERICAN TV SHOW. THE PRIM AND TOUGH AND TOTAL BALLBUSTER OF A CHARACTER, YOU KNOW, WHO NONE THE LESS BLEEDS A SENSE OF DOMINANT AND BARELY-RESTRAINED SEX.

SHE'S LEANING AGAINST THE OFFICE DESK TO TOTAL UNDERSTATED WOW EFFECT, LOOKING AT US FROM THE PAPERS THAT SHE'S HOLDING AND REGARDING US WITH TOTALLY COMPOSED AND CLINICAL INTEREST, LIKE WE'RE SOME INTERESTING NEW KIND OF INSECT THAT'S FLOWN IN.

IN KEEPING WITH THE GENERALLY RECURRING MOTIF OF THIS WHOLE THING, HER HAIR (IN A BUN) IS BLONDE.

LAWYER WOMAN: Good morning. Detective Judge Armitage, isn't it?

LAWYER WOMAN: (link) You can call me Ms Frobisher.

LAWYER WOMAN: You were expecting someone else?

NEXT:Someone Else

Dave Stone

<http://www.pseudopod.empty-spaces.net>

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Armitage created by Dave Stone, David Bishop and Sean Phillips