

FACE MAN
Screenplay by Howard Wen
Story by Jason Wen

1) EXT. CITY/TOWER BUILDING - AFTERNOON

The look of this gigantic, multi-level city brings to mind the gaudy style of New Orleans architecture. With rusted railings, the buildings are taller than they are wide. Most of them have been physically constructed around trees which look like monstrous redwoods.

The natural ground level is unseen - a misty, swampy haze obscures the city's lower reaches. The sky is hinted at through the leaves and branches of the trees, but the orange of an afternoon sun manages to break through.

Life abounds in the city. Human forms move along wide platforms and walkways which connect between buildings. Dirigibles and aircraft that look like 19th Century notions of futuristic submarines hover throughout the city.

Colors of the buildings resemble rusted copper, gold and silver but accented with bright neons of mostly blue and green with some oranges and yellows. A good example of this is a clock tower seen prominently against the backdrop. Its clock face is a glowing, animated pie chart - apparently, it tells time by forming into a circle. The dirigibles and floating aircraft come in a greater rainbow of fluorescent colors - they look like exotic tropical fish.

We close in a tall Tower Building, that sweeps up into the skies, and onto its big, closed entrance doors. Metal and rusted looking, they look very secure.

2) INT. GRAND HALL

We see two, then at least a dozen lifeless human bodies scattered throughout this grand, majestic place. These dead ROYAL GUARDS are dressed in suits and helmets which completely cover their bodies. We see the heads of their bodies but are never directly shown the front of their helmets.

At the end of the hall, a man stands in front of a big, closed door - which looks like the kind of heavy, metal doors used in submarines.

This man, FACE MAN, wears a full-body outfit with helmet that's similar to the Royal Guards': a cross between a sleeker version of a deep sea diving outfit and a suit of knight's armor. His helmet totally obscures his face. As Face Man's breathes, his exhaling emanates into the cold air through twitching "gills" along the sides of his helmet.

We see him press an exposed index finger against what is apparently a touchpad by the door. Then we see that the finger is in fact not his – it's a severed finger he holds in his hand.

The locks to the heavy door release with a thunderous SNAP, and the door opens, swinging out.

3) INT. CORRIDOR

He enters this long corridor and approaches another door at the other end.

4) INT. FACE CHAMBER

He enters this enormous room. It looks somewhat like a planetarium theater except, instead of stars, there are human faces on the curved walls.

All of these faces are male – and perhaps every possible physical look and ethnicity is present. Eyes closed, they have expressions of peaceful slumber and look eerily lifelike.

Face Man unlocks the latches securing his helmet to the rest of his suit. From behind him, we see him taking off his helmet.

5) INT. GRAND HALL

The front doors open in and the orangy light of the afternoon cuts in harshly. We see the silhouette of what looks like a hovering, rounded creature with a long, skinny tail. It makes a sound that sounds either like a BUZZING or FLAPPING, or maybe BOTH, as it enters.

Once it's revealed in the light, we see that the REMOTE PROBE isn't a living creature at all. It looks like a combination of a robot version of a guppy, a blowfish and a hummingbird – it hovers in the air by rapidly flapping mechanical wings. Its tail is, in fact, a tethered cable. It has one bulging "eye" – a camera lens.

Still, even though it's clearly mechanical – a machine, the Remote Probe moves like a living thing as it floats through the Grand Hall. It drags its tether as if it's an endless tail. It even looks like it's breathing.

Intermittently through its POV (when appropriate), we see its camera focusing on the bodies of the Royal Guards. We hear SHUTTER-CLICKS when it examines them and focuses on specific details: most notably, the severed index finger of one of the Royal Guards and a fragment of what looked like a sea mine.

6) FLASHBACK

Through a series of jarring shots accompanied by the Remote's SHUTTER-CLICK, we see and hear the chaos which probably happened earlier in the Grand Hall:

A bomb, which looks like a sea mine, thrown in – the Royal Guards scrambling for cover but unable to escape from the devastation of the lethal device going off.

7) INT. GRAND HALL

The Probe hovers to the door leading to the corridor. It examines the finger touchpad. Then, at the end of what looks like an antenna dangling over its "eye," a flame fires up. The Probe applies this welding arm to one side of the closed door, searing through its lock.

8) INT. CORRIDOR

The door to the Grand Hall opens out. The Probe hovers in, whipping in its "tail." It quickly approaches the door at the other end and studies it briefly.

9) INT. FACE CHAMBER

With his helmet completely off, Face Man is massaging his face. Breathing steadily – cold mist flowing from his nostrils and mouth, he expresses extreme relief.

He hears the sound of a welding torch firing up. Turning around, he sees flames cutting in from one side of the door leading to the Corridor.

10) INT. CORRIDOR

The Probe finishes cutting through the lock of the second door. It bumps against the door, swinging it open.

11) INT. FACE CHAMBER

The Probe enters. It scans around the place, making more SHUTTER-CLICK noises. It sweeps its eye over the various faces. It passes by, then quickly returns to, a blank spot on one of the walls.

From its POV, we see this empty spot.

The Probe reacts curiously. You can easily imagine it asking itself, "Why is there an empty spot here?"

The Probe looks down when it hears the door CREAK. The heavy door slams shut.

From its POV, we see the Probe's transmission breaking up.

It descends toward the closed door and tries to open it by jerking its tether. A hand grabs its tether and yanks the Probe, spinning it around.

From the Probe's POV, we see the walls of the Face Chamber whirl by. The transmission of its camera is weakening even more.

The Probe straightens itself out, refocusing its camera.

From its POV, we catch a quick glimpse of a metal spear shooting right into the Probe's eye, followed by the sound of an EXPLOSION, and a complete breakup of the image transmission into snow.

12) INT. POLICE TRANSPORT

We see a CLOSE-UP of a monitor displaying a snowy, blank transmission. The screen is in the shape of a raised dome – like a "fish-eye" window of an underwater vessel.

Looking at the monitor are a team of POLICE COMMANDOS and a POLICE LEADER. With helmets completely covering their heads and faces, the Commandos and their Leader wear gear similar to Face Man's outfit, only theirs are bulkier. The main color scheme of their uniforms are dark blue and black – like SWAT uniforms.

The Commandos hold large guns which resemble chain guns. Instead of bullets, their weapons fire metal mini-spears.

13) EXT. POLICE TRANSPORT/TOWER BUILDING – AFTERNOON

The Police Transport is an elongated aircraft, parked on the landing platform in front of the Tower Building. Its chassis looks like a cross between that of a small passenger jet and a wheeled troop transport with a hint of the shape of a shark's body. Its primary colors are deep blue and black with rust.

A dozen Commandos jump out of the Transport and storm into the Tower Building.

14) INT. GRAND HALL/CORRIDOR

They hurry through the Grand Hall and file down the corridor in two lines.

The two Commandos at the front of the team kick in the door to the Face Chamber, its lock already cut open by the Probe. Just as these two are about to step into the Face Chamber, they're pierced through the chest with spears. They fall back, dead – their bodies at the feet of their fellow Commandos. The door is slammed shut from within the Face Chamber.

The next two Commandos at the front of the team look to one another. You can imagine both of them saying, "YOU go next."

15) INT. FACE CHAMBER

Face Man dashes across the length of the Face Chamber to another door directly opposite of the first one he went through.

The Police Commandos open the first door again – this time by throwing the body of one of their killed colleagues through it. They scramble in and run towards Face Man.

We see that, with the first door open again, the Remote Probe's cable is now freed.

16) INT. POLICE TRANSPORT

The Police Leader looks at the Probe's monitor when its transmission clears up.

The Probe quickly plays back a series of still images it took. Each is shown with the sound of a SHUTTER-CLICK:

1. Various, quick shots of the dead Royal Guards.
2. A CLOSE-UP of the Royal Guard's right hand with the index finger cut off.
3. More various, quick group shots of the faces in the Face Chamber.
4. A metal spear just as it's about to pierce into the Remote Probe's camera eye.

The playback stops on the image above. Along the right side of it, the Leader sees a person aiming his spear gun at the Probe – his face is blurry because the Probe's eye was focused on the incoming spear.

The monitor automatically zooms in on the perpetrator's face and digitally enhances it. The Leader and a Commando by him looking into the monitor recoil with shock when they see Face Man's face.

17) INT. FACE CHAMBER

We see a CLOSE-UP of the destroyed Probe's eye. Weak bolts and sparks of electricity shoot out.

The Commandos close in on Face Man, firing their chain gun-like weapons at him. The mini-spears from their guns miss their target as Face Man opens the second door with the severed finger, escapes through it, and shuts it behind him.

18) EXT. DIRIGIBLE PLATFORM – AFTERNOON

Face Man runs down the length of this platform. It's a docking area for dirigibles carrying freight. We see these aircraft in closer, better detail as Face Man runs by them.

19) INT. FACE CHAMBER

The Police Commandos wait anxiously as one of them goes through a key ring of severed index fingers to find the one that opens the door. The second finger he tries opens it.

20) EXT. DIRIGIBLE PLATFORM – AFTERNOON

The Commandos exit the Face Chamber, go after Face Man.

As he runs down the length of the platform, Face Man takes notice of the clock tower looming in the city's backdrop. He looks at the watch he wears. Its face resembles a smaller-scale version of the clock tower's – a pie chart in glowing neon. His watch runs in sync with the clock tower.

With the Commandos behind him, trying to catch up, Face Man approaches a dirigible – but it's moving away from its dock.

When he reaches the dock area, the dirigible has completely departed. However, Face Man doesn't hesitate – he keeps moving.

21) EXT. CITY – AFTERNOON

Face Man leaps off the dock's edge, flips forward through the air and, falling a little, grabs onto a pole.

His arms and legs wrapped around the pole, he looks down. The pole's length is indeterminable. It runs way down into the hazy lower depths of the city – and, though he doesn't look up, the pole's length doesn't seem to stop anywhere near above him either.

Face Man takes out what looks like a clamping device. He's about to lock it around the pole when small spears whiz by. One of them stabs the clamping device, destroying it, while another cuts across Face Man's upper arm, injuring him.

Losing his hands' grip, Face Man falls back but keeps his legs wrapped around the pole. Then, legs still around the pole, he slides down it.

The Commandos, now at the dock's edge, fire their weapons at him as he slides down. But, again, their guns' mini-spears miss him.

Face Man's descent down the pole increases, as he speeds by multiple levels of the city. He takes another look at his watch - its animated, pie-chart face is about to turn into a full circle.

22) EXT. ELEVATOR WALKWAY - AFTERNOON

We see a CLOSE-UP of a clock over an archway. The clock's animated face forms into a circle and blinks brightly.

Just as an elevator carriage zips up from below, riding along the pole, and stops at the archway, Face Man slows his slide by squeezing his legs against the pole. He comes to a stop above the elevator carriage's top. The elevator doors open.

In one swift move, and without using his hands, Face Man stands himself rightside-up by back-flipping off the pole and onto the elevator's top.

Then he does another back-flip off the elevator and onto the Elevator Walkway itself. He lands in a crouching position in the midst of a CROWD.

Every person in this crowd is dressed similarly to Face Man. They're of varying shapes and sizes: big, small, skinny, fat, etc.. All of them are wearing helmets that cover their faces.

Seeing Face Man without his helmet - and, especially, seeing his face, they back away from him with fear. Parents pull their children closer to them. One person yanks his pet - which looks like a smaller version of the Remote Probe - back on its leash and holds it close to his chest.

As Face Man stands, the Police Transport rises up behind him beyond the edge of the walkway. A SHARPSHOOTER hanging out from inside the Transport aims a rifle-like gun at him.

Once the crowd disperses far enough away from Face Man, the Sharpshooter opens fire. Face Man runs for the railing furthest away from the Transport.

Seeing the tops of two passing dirigibles - going in opposite directions, he climbs over the railing and leaps onto the first dirigible.

23) EXT./INT. POLICE TRANSPORT - AFTERNOON

The Police Leader signals the Sharpshooter to cease firing.

24) EXT. DIRIGIBLES - AFTERNOON

Face Man runs across the top of the first dirigible and jumps onto the top of the second one that's passing alongside the first.

He runs across the top of the second one, then jumps and grabs onto the railing of another walkway which runs parallel to the Elevator Walkway.

25) EXT. 2ND WALKWAY - AFTERNOON

Face Man climbs over the railing and onto the walkway. He runs across the width of the walkway to the railing at the opposite side. The Police Transport is hovering towards him.

26) EXT. POLICE TRANSPORT - AFTERNOON

A SPEAR GUNNER operates a spear gun mounted on the top of the Transport. He's targeting the large weapon on Face Man by looking through a periscope-like viewfinder.

27) EXT. 2ND WALKWAY - AFTERNOON

Face Man looks over the railing - at an Escape Ship ascending towards him.

28) EXT. ESCAPE SHIP - AFTERNOON

The top of this aircraft has a small, glass-domed window. We see a woman, FACE WOMAN, looking up at Face Man through it. She is the only other person we've seen thus far without a helmet.

29) EXT. 2ND WALKWAY - AFTERNOON

Face Man looks back over his shoulder at the approaching Police Transport.

30) EXT. POLICE TRANSPORT - AFTERNOON

The Spear Gunner steadies his aim on Face Man through his periscope.

31) EXT. 2ND WALKWAY - AFTERNOON

Face Man climbs over the railing, dives off into the open sky.

32) EXT. POLICE TRANSPORT - AFTERNOON

The Spear Gunner locks onto him, fires the spear.

33) EXT. CITY - AFTERNOON

Face Man descends toward the Escape Ship in a freefall. He's about to land on top of the aircraft...

But the spear from the Police Transport pierces him from behind, through the heart. He stops falling when the spear's cable pulls taut and dangles him over the Escape Ship.

34) EXT. ESCAPE SHIP - AFTERNOON

Face Woman reacts in horror when a splatter of Face Man's blood smacks against the dome window - additional drips streaming in a sweeping motion across the glass.

35) EXT. 2ND WALKWAY - AFTERNOON

Face Man's body sways side-to-side as it's automatically reeled in by the Police Transport. The Transport also comes to a landing on the walkway. The Commandos, their Leader deboard and run to the railing.

The Commandos haul Face Man's body over the railing. We see a CLOSE-UP of his lifeless face.

The Leader grabs one edge of Face Man's face - and literally rips it off. It sounds more like Velcro being separated, not entirely like flesh tearing, when it's removed.

We see a CLOSE-UP of Face Man's actual head: It's like a three-dimensional silhouette. Black. And faceless.

36) FLASHBACK

Quickly, we're shown a series of still images - some familiar, others we haven't seen before - that are accompanied by the Probe's SHUTTER-CLICK:

1. Various group shots of the faces we saw in the FACE CHAMBER until we're shown...

2. A CLOSE-UP of Face Man's face on the wall of the FACE CHAMBER...

3. The CLOSE-UP of the empty space on the wall that the Probe found where a face once was...

4. The CLOSE-UP of Face-Man just after he was killed...

5) And the CLOSE-UP of Face-Man's black, faceless head after his face has been ripped off.

The final SHUTTER-CLICK CUTS everything TO BLACK.

THE END