

# PROMETHEUS UNWOUND

MATT FORBECK

*This story was written several months before the events of September 11, 2001. Rather than delete or modify it, and allow terrorism to dictate our actions even in this relatively inconsequential manner, we present it as written in its entirety. The author, editor, and publishers would like to take a moment to recognize the true heroes of the day, the fine people who risked—and, in far too many cases, lost—their own lives to save those of people they never knew. May we all be so brave.*

## TOP SECRET: EYES ONLY

NOTE: This script has been submitted for approval by the director of the NSA. It was written by our agent—codename: Spud—who was on the scene of the recent disaster in New York City. Raw footage of many of the incidents depicted has been recovered from Spud's hidden camera. The stock footage referenced in the script has been secured by our field agents. Reenactment footage can be created as necessary.

The director is debating whether or not to have this film made. Would this help allay the panic in the streets, or would it amplify it? Time is of the essence. Have your response on the director's desk first thing tomorrow morning. If it's positive, we can be in production overnight.

## SCENE ONE

New York City. Dusk falls over the skyscrapers, which cast long shadows into Brooklyn and beyond, almost as if reaching toward the encroaching darkness rolling in from the east. The golden rays from the west cast everything into sharp, noirish contrast. The hues of the dying light bring a sepia-toned nostalgia to the place, but we know that it's only a matter of time before the light fades and night swallows the land. The strangest thing—something that any native New Yorker would recognize at once—is the lack of lights in the cityscape. Something is clearly rotten in the Big Apple.

SPUD [VOICE-OVER]

Death falls upon New York City.

The camera sails in closer, as if a cape was carrying it in for us.

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SPUD [VOICE-OVER]

And when I say "Death," I don't mean the Grim Reaper.

Flash to a picture of that serial killer, the GRIM REAPER, who ran around LA a few years back, right up until the FBI nailed him. He's there in his full skull-mask, reaching out with that bony finger of death he had.

He appears out of the darkness, as if reaching for the audience. Then he's gone.

SPUD [VOICE-OVER]

I mean DEATH. The real damn thing.

We swing in closer. Past the twin towers of the World Trade Center. We're heading uptown.

SPUD [VOICE-OVER]

New York City. The Big Apple. The City that Never Sleeps.

The camera finally spots its destination: the Empire State Building. The golden rays of the sunset are fading now.

SPUD [VOICE-OVER]

Well, you can be sure that no one around here is sleeping now.

Zoom in closer, to the top of the building. We can see that someone is strapped to the base of the antenna atop the skyscraper, spread-eagled like some modern-day Christ on an X-shaped cross of steel girders.

SPUD [VOICE-OVER]

Not even the dead.

The camera swings in hard toward the figure on the tower. We recognize the man there now, PROMETHEUS, by the remnants of his trademarked blazing-white-and-yellow costume. It's in shreds, as is most of his body. We can see that his belly has been opened up, and his guts and organs are hanging loosely out of his chest. We can almost see the front of his spine.

A group of zombies crowd around Prometheus. There are all sorts of dead people, of all races, genders, and physical types. The dead are feeding on him.

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The most amazing part of the scene is Prometheus. He heals faster than most people can breathe. And he's healing now. You can actually see the intestines growing back, the liver filling out the places that have been chewed off. This is one man who's going to be a long time dying.

PROMETHEUS

[Screams]

Zoom in tight on Prometheus' mouth. It's opened wide enough to swallow someone's head, and we can see where his cheeks have been shredded and are healing again. The genesis of a regenerating eyeball swims dangerously in a lidless socket in his head, and we can see clawlike, dead fingers scrabbling at his skull, trying to get at his brains.

Fade to black. Roll opening credits. End with the following:

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;  
To forgive wrongs darker than Death or Night;  
To defy Power which seems Omnipotent;  
To love, and bear; to hope, till Hope creates  
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates. . . .

—Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*

**SCENE TWO**

Fade back up. Intersplice footage of the battle between the FBI's capes and the criminal known as PANDORA with the interview SPUD did with Prometheus. Start with a shot of a plane flying into JFK.

SUBTITLE

Three days ago.

SPUD [VOICE-OVER]

I flew in from LA to do a documentary about the men and women of the FBI's special forces unit: the Commission. Call them capes, powers, goons, dupes—whatever you like. These men and women are the real power behind the throne these days. All I can say is I'm glad they're on our side.

It's a sunny day. Spud gets off the plane, and two FBI agents are there to greet him. They reek "Fed": dark glasses, earpieces, well-concealed shoulder holsters, and all that. They hustle Spud into a

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limo, where Prometheus awaits. He's in a black suit and a blacker mood. With a brusque motion from Prometheus, the limo takes off for the city.

SPUD

Mr. Stein. I'm pleased to—

PROMETHEUS

Drop the formalities. Call me "Vic."

SPUD

Vic, then. I'm surprised to—

PROMETHEUS

See me out of my costume? That get-up is for photo-ops, or when I'm on the job.

Cut: Prometheus in full costume, arrayed along with the rest of the Commission. Cut back.

SPUD

Aren't you afraid that your—

PROMETHEUS

Enemies will find me? Hardly. I was unmasked on national television back in 1996. Since then, I've lived with it.

Cut: An unmasked Prometheus as he strides out of P.S. 33, dragging an unconscious RUMPELSTILTSKIN behind him. His costume is ripped and torn, but his body is already healed. A blinding number of flashbulbs go off. Prometheus seems unaware of, or unconcerned by the cameras. Cut back.

SPUD

The fame. Has it been difficult adjusting to it?

PROMETHEUS

A bit. I'm an officer of the law, not a politician.

Cut: Prometheus in full costume again, this time with his mask pulled back. The PRESIDENT is pinning a medal on his chest in a White House ceremony. Cut back.

SPUD

Not yet, at least.

PROMETHEUS

Not ever.

*Prometheus Unwound*

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SPUD

What can you tell me about what happened with Pandora?

Cut: Series of shots from a TV news helicopter. Prometheus and Pandora—who is fully aflame here—battle it out atop the Empire State Building. DEMOGORGON, a monstrous demon, takes on the rest of the Commission in the background. Demogorgon is winning. Cut back.

PROMETHEUS

Not much more than what's already been in the news. Before the incident last week, Ms. Esperanza—a.k.a. Pandora—had been at the top of our Most Wanted list for over three years.

Cut: Interior of a school gymnasium. The skins of children flap from the basketball hoops, their corpses arranged in a bloody circle around a pentagram drawn into the court's center jump circle. Cut back.

PROMETHEUS

We were informed by sources that Pandora had concocted a grand plan to open a gate to Hell in the heart of New York City.

SPUD

Seriously? Hell?

Cut: A quick montage of pictures of demons and devils in art and architecture throughout history. Finish with a close-up of Pandora grinning out at the viewer. Cut back.

PROMETHEUS

Affirmative. Her plan apparently called for the gathering of a large number of corpses to be used in a blood sacrifice to a demon named Demogorgon. After she brought the demon into our world, it would be under her control, and she could then unleash mayhem upon the world.

SPUD

And that's exactly what she did.

PROMETHEUS

Until we stopped her, yes.

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Cut: Another shot of the scene above the Empire State Building during the battle with Pandora. Prometheus—large sections of his skin burned black by Pandora’s hellish magic—stands over the dead, extinguished Pandora, who is covered with blood. In the background, Demogorgon disappears into a rift in the sky. Cut back.

SPUD

But your victory had its price, didn’t it?

PROMETHEUS

Agent Asia, she . . .

Cut: Still above the Empire State Building. AMERICAN EAGLE soars down from the heavens, holding AGENT ASIA in his arms. Her neck is twisted at an unnatural angle. Cut back.

SPUD

I’m sorry. It was an inappropriate question coming so soon after . . . If you’d rather not—

PROMETHEUS

I’d rather honor my wife by talking about her, not remaining silent.

Cut: Agent Asia’s funeral at St. Patrick’s Cathedral. The crowd is a virtual who’s who of capes and other prominent members in both local and national law enforcement. Both the President and the ATTORNEY GENERAL are in the front rows. Prometheus kneels in the very front, his hands covering his tear-stained face. Cut back.

PROMETHEUS

Agent Asia sacrificed herself to save both the lives of her fellow agents and the life of every resident of New York City.

SPUD

Very true. But I understand there has been some tension between you and the other members of the Commission since then. Word is that you blame them—especially American Eagle—for not protecting her as they should have.

Cut: Outside St. Patrick’s, Prometheus tears into American Eagle. Madness gleams in his eyes. The fight rages on for a full minute before the other members of the Commission separate the two. Cut back.

*Prometheus Unwound*

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PROMETHEUS

After my wife's death, I was understandably distraught. It's only been two days, so I'm still coming to terms with it.

SPUD

I want to thank you again for agreeing to talk with me on camera, despite your obvious grief.

Prometheus waves off Spud's concern coldly, barely concealing a wave of disgust.

PROMETHEUS

My superiors didn't offer me a choice. Besides, that's not an issue.

SPUD

Then what is? How about your relationship with your team members? How are you ever going to patch things up with them now? I understand death threats were made.

PROMETHEUS

The situation has been blown out of proportion by the media. I didn't mean—

Prometheus' mobile phone rings. He fishes it out of the breast pocket of his suit coat.

PROMETHEUS

Excuse me. What? Repeat that. You're certain? Damn. Driver!

The limo screeches to a halt.

PROMETHEUS

The World Trade Center. Now!

The limo pulls a quick U-turn in heavy traffic, throwing Spud against a door. Prometheus remains perfectly in place. Horns blare as the car squeals away. The DRIVER runs all sorts of lights to get to his destination at top speed. As the limousine nears the World Trade Center, the driver slows to a halt.

PROMETHEUS

Driver! What's going on?

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DRIVER

There's a disturbance in the street, sir.

Prometheus motions for Spud to move aside so he can peer past the driver and into the street. A large number of ragged, battered-looking people are storming the entrance of the building. Guards are shooting at them. Bullets pummel into the people, but they keep coming on. Only those shot through the head actually fall to the ground and stop moving. They're zombies.

A number of zombies suddenly notice the limo and charge toward it.

PROMETHEUS

Run them down.

DRIVER

But, sir!

PROMETHEUS

Do it! Head straight for the underground parking ramp. Now!

The limo leaps to life, burning rubber. It runs down the creatures in the way. A FEMALE ZOMBIE is plastered across the windshield, which has cracked at the impact of her head, spiderwebbing beneath her. We can see that the flesh has been torn away from her skull, leaving only patches of hair on the scalp. The female zombie's teeth are exposed in a skeletal grin.

PROMETHEUS

Out of the way!

Prometheus shoves Spud aside roughly. He draws his gun and fires one round right past the driver and into the female zombie's head. A huge hole appears in the windshield, right in the center of that spiderweb break. The female zombie falls backward and spins off the limo as it careens toward the parking structure. She leaves three fingers clinging to the near edge of the hood.

The limo races around the side of the building, mowing down more zombies. The gate to the parking ramp is closed, but the driver rams it.

### SCENE THREE

The observation deck of South Tower of the World Trade Center. Looking out past the North Tower, we can see the Empire State Building in the distance. The entire rest of the Commission is here,

*Prometheus Unwound*

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waiting for Prometheus. As Prometheus and Spud exit the elevator, they are met by American Eagle, still sporting a shiner from his fight with Prometheus. The two do not shake hands. Most of the people on the deck—many of who have served with Prometheus for years—refuse to meet his steely stare.

AMERICAN EAGLE

[points at Spud]

What's he doing here?

Prometheus gives American Eagle a savage grin, happy to be the bearer of bad news to a man he clearly still has issues with. These two have been at each other for years, but it's obviously gotten worse in the past couple days.

PROMETHEUS

He has friends in high places. I confirmed with the head office on the way up. We're stuck with him for the whole ride.

American Eagle stares at Spud for a moment, unbelieving, then turns and walks away, shaking his head. At the window, he stops and beckons Prometheus over, offering him a pair of high-powered binoculars.

AMERICAN EAGLE

It's Pandora.

Prometheus barely restrains himself from sneering at the man as he refuses the binoculars. He knows that American Eagle doesn't need them, and he's not willing to admit inferiority to him in any way. The tension is thicker than the East River.

PROMETHEUS

Brilliant detective work.

Cut: A telephoto lens shows the top of the Empire State Building in sharp focus. The observation deck is swarming with zombies. Among them, we can see Pandora guiding things. She looks like the living dead as well.

PROMETHEUS

Air strike?

AMERICAN EAGLE

There's a concern about collateral damage. There are thousands of people in there.

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PROMETHEUS

Alive or dead?

AMERICAN EAGLE

Mostly alive. We've confirmed at least several hundred. Pandora's zombies seem to be holding them as hostages. They're not directly attacking the people in the building, but they won't let them leave.

PROMETHEUS

Options?

AMERICAN EAGLE

We've been asked to take out Pandora in a surgical strike. It's hoped that this would somehow damage the zombies.

PROMETHEUS

You've been watching too many movies.

AMERICAN EAGLE

The one thing we can't figure out is how this happened.

Prometheus snatches the binoculars from American Eagle. He stares out at the Empire State Building for a moment, then returns the binoculars. He's even more disgusted than before.

PROMETHEUS

Look at the people closest to Pandora.

AMERICAN EAGLE

People? You mean the zombies?

PROMETHEUS

I said look at them.

American Eagle peers intently at the Empire State, then gasps.

AMERICAN EAGLE

They're . . . the same people Pandora sacrificed to Demogorgon. . . . Dear God.

PROMETHEUS

God had nothing to do with it.

**SCENE FOUR**

*Prometheus Unwound*

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A shot of the New York City skyline. The shadows are getting longer, darker. Smoke and screams trail up from the street. Spud, Prometheus, and other members of the Commission sit in a military helicopter as it sails above the rooftops. The members of the Commission who can fly trail along outside. From the grid of buildings we focus on one rooftop where a lone WOMAN has been cornered by a crowd of zombies. She jumps, but American Eagle peels off from the formation and saves her.

PILOT

We're almost in position.

Prometheus sidles up to the helicopter's open hatch and spits into the wind. He wears double holsters for twin automatic pistols, one of which he currently has in his hands, ready to deal death to the undead. Dozens of extra clips of ammo swing from the holsters' harness. Most of the Commission lines up behind him. They each regard him nervously, almost shamefully. The flyers sail along outside, waiting for the signal. The chopper swings down over the observation deck of the Empire State Building.

PROMETHEUS

Let's do it!

Prometheus goes face-first out of the chopper on a rappelling line, catching himself scant inches from the observation deck. The others follow hot on his heels. He hits the ground firing with one hand while he releases his rappelling line with the other. He draws his other gun and continues firing without missing a beat. Each and every shot hits its target in the head.

The next few moments are filled with gunfire and zombie brains being splattered everywhere. Some Commission agents can fire plasma blasts from their eyes and hands, and they are having a field day with the zombies. Still, the zombies' numbers seem endless, and Pandora is nowhere to be seen. A rookie Commission agent, DARK JUSTICE, goes down, the zombies clawing open his skull before he hits the ground.

Prometheus works his way through the chaos, toward the doors into the building proper. As he does, American Eagle swoops in, firing away with his assault rifle at the zombies and then forcing his way into the building. Before he can follow, Prometheus is pushed back by a new wave of zombies.

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After another few moments of desperate fighting, it's looking bad for the Commission. The tide of undead seems unending. Suddenly, a voice rings out over the crowd. Everyone freezes, including the zombies.

AMERICAN EAGLE

Hold it!

American Eagle backs up out of the building's entry, and the zombies part before him as if he's a leper. He looks shaken to his core. Grinning madly, Pandora comes immediately behind him. She has Agent Asia in a chokehold in front of her, a gun to Asia's head. American Eagle stands between Prometheus and Pandora, keeping Prometheus from making a clean shot.

PANDORA

Welcome to my parlor.

AMERICAN EAGLE

Wh-What do you want?

PANDORA

Nothing much, love. Just a place for me and my pets to call our own. Of course, my needs aren't exactly simple. A sophisticated woman like myself could hardly make do with something even as small as a city block. No, I think I need something more expansive, a place to hold all my pets. All I want is NEW YORK CITY!

AMERICAN EAGLE

You're out of your mind.

PANDORA

Am I? Already my pretties have taken over most of midtown. It's only a matter of time before I have the rest of Manhattan, maybe even by the end of the night. After all, everyone we kill joins our ranks.

AMERICAN EAGLE

There's no way we can just hand over New York.

Pandora pouts beautifully and removes her gun from Asia's temple and points it at American Eagle. Asia doesn't seem to notice anything going on around her.

*Prometheus Unwound*

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PANDORA

Really? Well, I suppose I'll just have to settle for killing you all.

Prometheus steps around from behind American Eagle and plants a bullet squarely into Agent Asia's skull. Her brains splatter all over Pandora and even American Eagle.

AMERICAN EAGLE

Dear God!

American Eagle staggers back, clearly in shock at what just happened. He turns to Prometheus, horrified.

AMERICAN EAGLE

Are you crazy? You just shot your wife!

Prometheus pistol whips American Eagle, who drops to the ground. Prometheus sneers down at his former friend.

PROMETHEUS

You moron. My wife is dead.

Prometheus turns to Pandora.

PROMETHEUS

Give me one good reason why I shouldn't do the same to you.

Still holding Asia's brainless corpse as a shield, Pandora throws back her head and laughs down the barrel of Prometheus' gun. Then she turns slyly serious.

PANDORA

Why, my dear Prometheus. You're welcome to try. Of course, if you do that, all of New York is doomed.

American Eagle staggers to his feet.

AMERICAN EAGLE

What are you talking about?

Pandora sweeps the barrel of her gun, indicating the scene spread out before them all.

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PANDORA

I'm the only one who has any kind of control over my pets here. Without me around to focus them, just what do you think would happen?

Prometheus shoulders past American Eagle and points his pistol right at Pandora's head.

PROMETHEUS

I say we find out.

AMERICAN EAGLE

Prometheus, put down that gun! Agent, that is a direct order!

PROMETHEUS

You lost your authority over me two days ago, George.

American Eagle steps back and raises his assault rifle to Prometheus' head.

AMERICAN EAGLE

Put down that gun, or so help me . . .

PROMETHEUS

You don't have the guts.

American Eagle cracks Prometheus on the back of the head with the rifle's butt. Prometheus falls to his knees, dropping his own gun. American Eagle kicks it away. He then grabs Prometheus by the arm and hauls him to his feet.

AMERICAN EAGLE

Get yourself together, agent. We're leaving.

American Eagle signals to the chopper. The PILOT dives down from the safe vantage point at which he had the helicopter hovering. The flyers start ferrying the others back into the chopper. American Eagle grabs Prometheus beneath the arms and begins to rise into the air.

AMERICAN EAGLE

You won't get away with this, Pandora.

PANDORA

Why, love, it seems to me I already have.

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As American Eagle hauls Prometheus into the air, Prometheus pulls his second pistol from his shoulder holster and points it up at American Eagle.

PROMETHEUS

Put me down, you bastard!

AMERICAN EAGLE

Have you lost your mind?

Prometheus fires off a shot that zings past American Eagle's shoulder.

PROMETHEUS

I said, PUT ME DOWN, TRAITOR!

American Eagle looks down at Prometheus for a long moment. Then he lets go. Prometheus plummets directly into the waiting arms of dozens of hungry zombies.

AMERICAN EAGLE

[Shakes his head]

Whatever you say, Vic.

American Eagle flies back up to the chopper and gives the retreat signal. The flyers and the chopper spin around and head back toward the World Trade Center, leaving Prometheus to his fate. No one goes back to rescue him. No one even looks back.

AMERICAN EAGLE

Let's get out of here.

**SCENE FIVE**

Back at the World Trade Center observation deck. American Eagle is staring out toward the Empire State Building as Spud approaches him. Night has fallen over the city.

SPUD

So, just how bad is it?

AMERICAN EAGLE

Hm? Oh.

For a moment, American Eagle seems ready to lash out at Spud. Then he seems to realize the pointlessness of it, and his face softens.

AMERICAN EAGLE

It's about as bad as it gets.

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SPUD

Come on. It's not hopeless, is it? I mean, you guys have faced down worse than this before and lived to tell the tale.

At that moment, the power goes out. Suddenly, the only nearby light comes from FIREFLY, a member of the Commission who is standing off to one side of the observation deck.

A non-costumed Commission SUPPORT AGENT steps out onto the observation deck from near the elevators. He moves directly to American Eagle to report.

SUPPORT AGENT

Not to worry, sir. We have all floors above the 60th secured, and we have five choppers on the roof.

AMERICAN EAGLE

Backup generators?

SUPPORT AGENT

Should be on line soon, sir.

American Eagle turns away, dismissing the support agent without a word, like some kind of king. He resumes looking out the window to the north. He seems transfixed by something in the distance, but Spud can't figure out what. One of the Commission, a young woman by the name of PHASE, is looking through a set of binoculars in the darker side of the north wall. Suddenly she steps away and screams.

PHASE

OH MY GOD!

Spud dashes over to where Phase is standing. Her fellows in the Commission have rallied around her. Firefly holds her closely, comforting her. She is quaking like southern California on a bad day.

SPUD

What? What is it?

Phase points to the pay binoculars and stutters out her answer between sobs.

PHASE

It's him! It's Prometheus!

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SPUD

What? You can see him through that thing? He's still alive?

PHASE

Yes, he's still alive. But they're eating him! They're eating him ALIVE!

FIREFLY

But with his healing powers . . .

SPUD

He's regenerating as soon as they tear the flesh from him.

Cut: Through a telephoto lens, we see the details of the gruesome scene atop the Empire State Building. It is just as Phase has described it, just as this script describes back in Scene One. Only now we also can see that Pandora has cracked open Prometheus' skull and is using her fingers to feast on his brain. Cut back.

PHASE

We have to save him! What can we do?

American Eagle, still staring out the window in the direction of the Empire State Building, just as he's been doing all along, finally speaks up. The room falls deathly silent as all eyes turn to him. The thick glass windows and the lack of air conditioning, thanks to the power failure, make the place as quiet as a tomb.

AMERICAN EAGLE

Nothing. There's nothing we can do.

**SCENE SIX**

Liberty Island. Spud and all the surviving members of the Commission stand on the shore of the island, looking out at the darkened skyline of Manhattan to the north and east. The power is still working on Liberty Island, so behind them the floodlights pick the Statue of Liberty out of the night. Distant gunfire, the wail of sirens, and the occasional explosion punctuate the unnatural stillness of the night.

American Eagle is talking with the same non-costumed support agent that reported in to him on the observation deck of the World Trade Center in Scene Five.

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AMERICAN EAGLE

They've cordoned off the entire island?

SUPPORT AGENT

Yes, sir. Every bridge and every tunnel has been closed off to all traffic. Manhattan has been secured.

AMERICAN EAGLE

That's what you said about the World Trade Center.

SUPPORT AGENT

Sir—

AMERICAN EAGLE

Never mind.

American Eagle turns his back on the support agent, who scurries away. Spud approaches. American Eagle returns to staring off at the island.

SPUD

Excuse me?

American Eagle, clearly quite tired and distracted, turns back to face Spud.

AMERICAN EAGLE

Hm? Yes?

SPUD

So, um, what's the plan?

AMERICAN EAGLE

We strike at dawn.

SPUD

And by "we," you mean. . . ?

AMERICAN EAGLE

The Commission and the Marines.

SPUD

And me?

AMERICAN EAGLE

My orders are to bring you along. Vic was right. You have highly placed friends.

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SPUD

At this point, I don't know if I'd call them friends. What are you going to do? I mean, how do you fight against an enemy like this? You can't just nuke it.

American Eagle raises an eyebrow, though it's unclear if he is amused or considering the comment as a serious suggestion.

SPUD

Right?

AMERICAN EAGLE

No. No, we can't nuke it. There's too much to lose there. And there could still be hundreds of thousands of people alive.

American Eagle turns back to peer into the darkened city once again.

AMERICAN EAGLE

There is no easy solution . . . but that doesn't mean we're dead yet.

**SCENE SEVEN**

Liberty Island. Dawn breaks over Manhattan, and even from this distant vantage you can smell the dead. It takes a lot to mask a stench like that. Spud spots American Eagle and goes over to get an update from him. Before Spud can speak, American Eagle spins to talk to him.

AMERICAN EAGLE

Do you hear that?

SPUD

[Cocks his head]

Actually, no. I don't hear much of anything.

AMERICAN EAGLE

Exactly. The fighting has stopped.

SPUD

Is that something good or something bad?

American Eagle glances at a handheld computer, upon which he has been receiving and reviewing classified updates.

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AMERICAN EAGLE

Apparently it's something very good. From what anyone can tell, the zombies have all turned to corpses. They're just lying there.

SPUD

Maybe Pandora's mojo ran out?

AMERICAN EAGLE

Or maybe it's a trap.

SPUD

So how can you tell? I mean, you can't just go over there and ask the zombies whether they're alive or not, right? Right?

Close up on American Eagle. He looks at Spud as serious as death.

AMERICAN EAGLE

That's exactly what we're going to do.

#### SCENE EIGHT

The sky over Manhattan again. American Eagle is leading a group of flyers on a reconnaissance mission into the heart of the city. The Empire State Building looms large in the distance as the helicopter carrying Spud and a few other members of the Commission gets closer to the place where this all began.

As the chopper moves in toward the Empire State Building, we can see that Prometheus is still strapped to the base of the antenna. His clothes are in shreds, but he's actually looking much better than the last time we saw him. He may be covered with blood, but at least his skull is intact.

American Eagle lands right next to Prometheus. The rest of the flyers alight on the observation deck and begin inspecting the thick layers of corpses spread about the place.

AMERICAN EAGLE

Prometheus? Are you okay?

Prometheus looks up at American Eagle. For a moment, there is no recognition in his eyes. Then a wry smile cracks his face.

PROMETHEUS

Better'n ever, George.

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American Eagle sets about cutting Prometheus down. As he does, Prometheus collapses into his arms.

AMERICAN EAGLE

What in God's name happened here?

Prometheus shakes off American Eagle's helping hand, insisting on standing on his own two feet.

PROMETHEUS

I keep telling you, God had nothing to do with this.

Prometheus, still unsteady on his feet, looks down from his high vantage to the observation deck. He scans the casualties until he finds his wife's truly dead corpse. We zoom in close on what remains of her face, as if it is looking back at him.

PROMETHEUS

Get me down there.

American Eagle picks Prometheus up under his arms. The two sail smoothly down to the observation deck. American Eagle sets Prometheus down next to Asia's corpse.

Prometheus kneels and takes his wife's lifeless body in his arms. He bends his head and slowly begins to weep in silent rage. When he speaks, it's in a voice hoarse and thick.

AMERICAN EAGLE

What happened to the zombies? Where's Pandora?

PROMETHEUS

Do you know that these "pets" of hers like to eat brains?

Prometheus looks up at American Eagle. His tears have cut tracks through the caked blood on his face. A dark need for vengeance dances in his eyes. American Eagle steps back.

AMERICAN EAGLE

Yes.

PROMETHEUS

Did you know they ate parts of my brain?

AMERICAN EAGLE

Yes.

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MATT FORBECK

PROMETHEUS

You can see damned near everything with those eyes of yours.

Prometheus sets Agent Asia down gingerly, then stands to glare directly into American Eagle's eyes.

PROMETHEUS

Here's the funny part. See if you can follow this, George. Those zombies are used to eating the flesh of people they've just killed. They tore at me like starving wolves. But this body of mine is stubborn as Hell. It wouldn't give up the ghost. Finally they went for the brains anyhow. Pandora cracked open my skull herself. Then she scooped out my gray matter and tossed the bits to the zombies like some kind of doggy treats.

AMERICAN EAGLE

I know.

PROMETHEUS

I may be able to heal any wound, but that doesn't mean it doesn't hurt. If you prick me, I still bleed.

AMERICAN EAGLE

I know.

PROMETHEUS

I screamed so loud I ripped my vocal cords apart. But they healed right back up, so I got to scream again and again and again.

AMERICAN EAGLE

I KNOW, VIC! God damn it, I saw the whole damn thing.

American Eagle turns away. Prometheus stares at his back silently for a moment before continuing. As Prometheus begins to speak again, he uses one hand to roughly force American Eagle to face him.

PROMETHEUS

I haven't gotten to the good part yet. It turns out that brains like mine don't really die, not when they're in a zombie's stomach anyhow. It has

*Prometheus Unwound*

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something to do with why the ghouls want brains in the first place. Their bodies use the gray matter—the myelin, maybe—to keep their own nerves in shape so they can keep moving, no matter how badly the rest of them may rot.

AMERICAN EAGLE

What are you saying?

PROMETHEUS

I'm saying that the zombies that ate my brain were . . . infected by the stuff. Can't think of another word for it. After a few minutes, I realized I could actually control them just by thinking about it. That's why they're all lying down now.

A look of sheer awe falls over American Eagle's face. The rest of the Commission members in the place have been collecting around the two, listening to their conversation. The duo is given a respectful distance, but every ear in the house is listening to what they have to say.

AMERICAN EAGLE

Do you mean to tell me that you fed your brains to every zombie in Manhattan?

PROMETHEUS

Hardly. But Pandora did feast on my head herself. She can control the undead on the island. And now I can control her.

Wide grins of relief break out on the faces of American Eagle and the rest of the Commission. American Eagle reaches out and grabs Prometheus in a bear hug.

AMERICAN EAGLE

That's amazing, buddy! Christ, you did it! You saved us all!

It takes a moment, but eventually American Eagle realizes that Prometheus isn't responding. American Eagle releases his embrace, and Prometheus pushes him away. As this happens, the zombies suddenly spring to their feet and start grabbing the members of the Commission. The air is filled with surprised screams.

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MATT FORBECK

PROMETHEUS

No, "buddy," I saved myself. As for you, you  
traitor—well, you're dead meat.

The zombies grab American Eagle, three of them holding fast on every limb, others tearing off his wings. As he struggles, Pandora steps forth from the roiling crowd and grabs American Eagle's head. He screams as she cracks open his skull and begins gorging herself on the soft stuff inside.

Spud, still safe up in the hovering helicopter, watches in horror for a moment before it becomes clear that few if any of the Commission agents are going to be leaving alive. And he doesn't want to face them dead. Spud dashes forward and screams at the pilot.

SPUD

Get us the Hell out of here!

The helicopter zooms away at top speed, heading for the Hudson River and safety to the west. Two wounded flyers who managed to escape zip past the chopper, torn and bleeding. We focus on them, showing that at least some hope remains. But as the camera pans back to the New York City skyline, the now-mad cackling of Prometheus rings out like a tolling bell.

**FADE TO BLACK**

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