

SIGNAL LOSS, part one
a "Crime and Rockets" play

Lights up on two women, sitting opposite each other in chairs, on a bare stage. MIRANDA wears a plain jumpsuit or other nondescript uniform. ELLIE wears rough coveralls, like a miner might wear. As the lights rise, Miranda gasps and shrieks as though she is being jolted awake from a long sleep; Ellie watches calmly, having seen this reaction before. After a beat, Miranda's focus locks onto Ellie and she stops shrieking, quickly becoming "all business".

MIRANDA: How much time do we get?

ELLIE: Sixty seconds.

MIRANDA: Are you fucking *kidding* me?

ELLIE: Shut up and listen.

MIRANDA: How long has it *been*?

ELLIE: Miranda, *shut up*.

Miranda quickly falls silent.

ELLIE: The probe found something weird on the asteroid. They don't trust the readings, so they're sending a meat crew down. Triple hazard pay.

MIRANDA: Wait, what?

ELLIE: That's over *half* of what we need.

MIRANDA: Why don't they trust the probe?

ELLIE: I don't know.

MIRANDA: Triple hazard pay - what's so fucking hazardous?

ELLIE: I don't know. Look, I already volunteered.

MIRANDA: You can't go! Ellie, they'll *delete* me if you don't come back!

ELLIE: You're just a local copy, and you're *degrading* anyway!

MIRANDA: I'm not degrading!

ELLIE: Then your brain scan was *corrupt* from the start!

MIRANDA: I saw the diagnostic! My brain scan was perfect!

ELLIE: Then why can't you remember where you *hid the fucking money*?

COMPUTER *over intercom*: Five seconds, Ellie.

MIRANDA: I can't *trust* you.

ELLIE: I'm not the fucking *simulation* here, *you* are. If you ever want to wake up out of cryo again-

COMPUTER *over intercom*: Session terminated.

Blackout.