

# **INCURSION**

By David Deighton

EXT. OFFICE CAR PARK - DAY

A white single-storey building glistens in the California sunshine. It is set in the middle of its own landscaped compound surrounded by parking areas amid landscaped grounds with trees and grass. The loudest sound is the twittering of birds.

A dark blue convertible is waved through the gate by a uniformed security guard. It pulls-in to a parking space near the main doors of the building. The car park is mostly empty, it is Saturday.

ERICH ROTH gets out of the car and walks the fifty feet to the smoked glass doors of the main entrance. He is in his mid-twenties, of medium height, slim-lanky, even, with unkempt sandy-colored hair and green eyes. He wears his usual uniform of blue jeans and a white T-shirt under a dark blue blazer with shiny brass buttons.

INT. OFFICE RECEPTION - DAY

Erich comes through the door and waves his badge at VERA, a middle-aged black lady in a security guard's uniform, behind the reception desk.

ERICH  
Morning Vera.

VERA  
Ain't you got nothing better to do?

ERICH  
How else can I get to see you on  
Saturday?

She shrugs, raising her eyes to the ceiling.

VERA  
I just made coffee.

He walks along the corridor to the office kitchen and emerges carrying a donut and a plastic cup.

INT. MAIN OFFICE - DAY

Erich sits at his desk in his glass-sided cubicle office off the main office, where half a dozen people work at their desks. One side of Erich's room gives on to a technical area containing racks of servers and assorted electronic equipment. Two technicians are working at one of the racks; one of them waves to Erich.

The phone rings and Erich picks it up.

ERICH

Hello.

He listens for a moment.

ERICH

Sure, I'll come right through.

INT. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Erich enters the office of his boss LEMAN SCHULZ. Leman, a florid man in a business suit is talking on the phone and waves him to a seat. Erich continues sipping his coffee while Leman finished his phone call.

LEMAN

Erich, thanks for coming in on a Saturday. Something's come-up.

ERICH

No problem, I was going to be here anyway. The guys are working on the new release.

LEMAN

Yes, you're late aren't you? Got some bad apples in your team.

ERICH

What we've got is weak management that won't stand up for us. I had to ramp up the effort for a while, but we're back on track now.

Leman holds up his hands as if to ward off an attack.

LEMAN

Okay, okay. That wasn't what I wanted to talk to you about anyway.

(beat)

There's, ah, been a complaint from one of your staff.

Leman smiles, he's enjoying this.

ERICH

Oh. Who? What kind of complaint?

LEMAN

Sexual harassment.

ERICH

What! That's not possible. Who was it?

LEMAN

Linda Robins. She claims you  
blackmailed her into having sex with  
you. In the office.

Erich closes his eyes for a moment, reopens them, and laughs  
softly, realizing he should have seen this coming.

ERICH

Would it do any good to deny it?

LEMAN

It's your right of course. But if  
you want to avoid...

ERICH

You devious bastard!

LEMAN

I think I can persuade her to drop the  
accusation if you're not around any  
more.

ERICH

I'll bet. What did you promise her?  
My job? I have to hand it to you,  
Leman.

LEMAN

(smirks)

Of course it's your decision. I  
should warn you that we have, er,  
video evidence.

He slides a piece of paper across the desk toward Erich.

LEMAN

Sign this.

Erich picks up the paper. It is a resignation letter dated  
today, ready for his signature.

ERICH

I'll think about it.

LEMAN

Sign it or I'll fire you immediately  
and call the cops. Either way you're  
finished here.

Erich picks up a pen, signs and leaves without another word.  
Leman leans back in his chair, smiling.

INT. MAIN OFFICE - DAY

It is a typical modern layout, managers' offices and meeting  
rooms on three sides, and the middle area filled with

shoulder-high workers' cubicles. Today is Saturday and the office is almost deserted, except for some activity in one of the meeting rooms. Erich is with three programmers in their early twenties, all wearing jeans and T-shirts. They are ROB, MIKE, and STEVE.

ERICH

There's nothing I can do, he's got me cold. I'm out and that's it.

Rob is a wiry Australian with a surfers tan and sun-bleached fair hair tied back in a pony tail.

ROB

That's too bad mate, the project was just getting back on track.

MIKE

Hey man, it's going to be bad around here with you gone. Who's going to filter out all the brown sticky stuff.

ERICH

Linda. I think.

They grin at each other.

ROB

Maybe it won't be sooo bad then.

ERICH

Look guys, give her a break. I blame Leman, not her. She's a pretty good project manager.

MIKE

(smirks)

Sure thing boss.

STEVE

Let us know where you end-up. I'll come work for you again any time.

ROB

Yeah, ditto.

Erich takes the project mascot, a plastic alien, out of his cardboard box and puts it on the table. A graphical version of it can be seen cavorting on a computer screen in a corner of the room.

ERICH

Look after Drago someone.

There's a catch in his voice. He picks up the box, stands and heads for the door. At the door he half-turns back toward them.

ERICH  
Drinks in Ted's bar sometime next  
week.

Without waiting for a response, he walks out into the main office where a uniformed security guard is waiting to escort him out of the building.

After Erich leaves the three programmers look at each other in dismay. Steve sums it up for all of them.

STEVE  
Bummer!

INT. ERICH'S APARTMENT - DAY

Erich is trying to explain to his girlfriend JENNIFER why he has lost his job. They are sitting side-by-side on the sofa in the living room, half-turned toward each other, close but not touching.

JENNIFER  
You bastard Erich. You promised.

ERICH  
Honey, it didn't mean anything.

He tries to take her hand but she shrugs him off.

JENNIFER  
In the office for chrissake. How could you do this to me?

ERICH  
Sorry sweetheart.

He bows his head.

JENNIFER  
Don't you sweetheart me. I've had enough.

ERICH  
Look, I made a mistake. I'm sorry.

JENNIFER  
Who are you Erich?

ERICH  
What?

JENNIFER  
Who are you? I don't know you anymore.

ERICH  
Of course I...

JENNIFER

I think you have to spend some time.  
Find out who you really are, or decide  
who you want to be. Whatever.

ERICH

Wait. Maybe if we take some time...

JENNIFER

(crying)  
Go. Just go.

He opens his mouth to speak, but can't think of anything to say and shuts it again. He goes into the bedroom and throws some of his clothes into a bag. As he emerges into the living area, she is staring out the window, her back to him.

ERICH

I'll pick up the rest next week.

She doesn't reply, so he walks to the front door and leaves quietly.

INT. TED'S BAR - NIGHT

Erich is with about 30 people, most in their early twenties and casually dressed. The party is in full swing and he is buying another round of drinks at the bar. Steve and Mike are helping him ferry the full glasses over to the others.

ERICH

Is that everybody? I'm surprised so many came.

STEVE

Yep, I think that's it. Why can't they have more waitresses?

He carries away the last load, with some difficulty, just as LINDA ROBINS comes in from the street. She is neat and businesslike with close-cropped blonde hair in a dark business suit with a knee-length skirt. She moves with catlike sensuality, arching her back and swaying her hips.

ERICH

Hey. Linda. Glad you could make it.

LINDA

I just got your message. Erich, I'm so sorry. I had no idea...

Erich holds up his hand, stopping her in mid-flow.

ERICH

Look, it doesn't matter either way now does it? I should've known

better anyway. Let's just have a drink.

They order drinks and chat inconsequentially for a while then she looks pointedly at her watch.

LINDA

Oops, gotta go. Bye. Good luck.

He tries to kiss her goodbye but she turns her head so that it lands on her cheek.

ERICH

Yeah, you too sweetheart. All the best. They're a good team, they'll see you through if you treat them right.

She puts her half-empty glass on the bar and turns to leave. On her way to the door, she stops and looks back at him over her shoulder.

LINDA

You know, you surprised me Erich. I thought I knew you, but now I'm not so sure.

She leaves, and he mounts a barstool next to JACK SOMERVILLE, his best friend and a newspaper reporter. Jack is a tad taller and heavier than Erich, with floppy, blue-black hair that tends to fall over his right eye. BARRY is behind the bar. In his mid-twenties, blonde crew-cut and a spectacularly muscular physique.

BARRY

It doesn't so bad to me. Just a job, you lose one you go get another. What's the big deal? Life's too short.

JACK

Office affairs are dynamite, you never know when they are going to blow-up right in your face.

ERICH

Yeah, yeah. I should've known better. I know.

He stares into the bottom of his glass for a long moment.

JACK

I saw Linda was here, she didn't stay long though.

ERICH

Jen's thrown me out.

JACK

What did you expect? You can crash  
chez moi until you get back on your  
feet.

ERICH

Thanks, I appreciate it.

They are interrupted by a burst of laughter from a table near  
the back of the room. Most of Erich's guests have gone by now,  
leaving behind a hard core of dedicated drinkers. Rob is trying  
to out-do Steve as they work their way along rows of glasses  
lined-up on the table. He succeeds.

STEVE

Hey, that's not fair!

ROB

Such is life mate, a real bitch.  
Your round I believe.

They all laugh, the good humour is back. Erich nods toward the  
other end of the bar where two girls sit.

ERICH

See what I see?

JACK

You just can't leave it alone can you?

ERICH

You only live twice. Which one do  
you want?

JACK

(laughs)  
Well, the bartender's not bad.

BARRY

(winks)  
There's no accounting for taste.

JACK

I think my friend here wants to offer  
a drink to those two over there.

Barry walks over to the two women. They exchange a few words  
with him then nod and smile in Erich's direction. Erich gets  
down off his bar stool and saunters over.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Jack has a two bedroom apartment on the 9th floor of a block  
overlooking the ocean, although Jack's view is mostly over the  
city. It is a typical bachelor nest with standard furniture,  
a poster of George Michael and a print of the Hollywood Bowl  
on the walls.

Jack is getting ready for work, he is a reporter for the city's biggest newspaper. Erich slops around in a bath robe. They are having coffee.

JACK  
You look like shit.

ERICH  
(winces)  
Not so loud, please.

JACK  
Even Linda put in an appearance. I was impressed.

He pours them both more coffee.

ERICH  
Why not? I never had any illusions about her.  
(beat)  
And she never pretended to be anything she wasn't.

JACK  
You're taking it all pretty calmly.

ERICH  
It's all just a game really. Isn't it.

JACK  
A game?

ERICH  
But I miscalculated with Leman, let myself be taken in. Forgot he would need a scapegoat.

JACK  
I hate office politics.

They drink their coffee in silence as Erich scans the newspaper.

ERICH  
I'd better start looking for a job. Maybe get on the web later.

JACK  
That's the way. Get right back in saddle. You could call Jen too.

ERICH  
Yeah, as long as Leman hasn't black-listed me.

JACK  
I doubt that -- too scared of a

lawsuit.

ERICH

Probably not, but I won't take just anything. It has to be a step-up.

JACK

Maybe you should just take what you can get and then work your way into the job you really want.

ERICH

Sure.

JACK

Well that was the tip of the day from uncle Jack's employment service.

ERICH

(smiles)

Don't you have a job to go to?

JACK

Okay, I can take a hint.

He downs the rest of his coffee and leaves for work.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Jack comes in the door, he is greeted by Erich who is drunk, slumped on the sofa. He walks over to the bar and pours himself a bourbon. The bottle is nearly empty, he frowns.

JACK

How did it go today?

ERICH

Seems the market ain't so good right now.

JACK

No shit? You'll find something. You just have to keep plugging away at it.

Erich raises his glass.

ERICH

(sarcastic)

Here's to the merits of sheer, freakin hairy-assed, dogged persistence.

Jack takes a sip from his glass and walks over to the kitchen area. He opens the refrigerator door, then the freezer.

JACK

Hungry? I can offer you frozen  
pizza, or  
    (sorting through the  
    freezer contents)  
frozen pizza.

ERICH

Well, it's a tough call, but I think  
I'm going to go for the frozen pizza.  
Pepperoni if you have it.

JACK

It'll have to be quattro fromaggi.  
Anything on TV?

They settle down to an evening in front of the box.

INT. HIVE, TUNNEL

The creature that was SETH crouches in a side-tunnel, waiting.  
Waiting for prey, for meat. The stone ax in its claws held  
raised, ready to attack.

It is vaguely man-shaped with a hard shell, an exoskeleton  
complete with visible articulated joints. The head is an  
almost featureless ovoid with two unblinking, round, black eyes  
above a jutting beak.

There is no sound in the caves and tunnels of the Hive lit by  
a dim bluish light that appears to emanate from the rock walls.

Then there is a clumping sound, a vibration in the rock, getting  
louder. Another is approaching, suddenly it rounds the corner  
and enters the tunnel. One of its own kind, almost identical,  
but that doesn't matter. Meat is meat.

The creature springs, pinning its prey to the ground. It raises  
the ax for the killing blow but then there's a voice in its head.  
A familiar voice saying things it does not want to understand.

IONE (V.O.)

Dad. It's me, Ione. Your daughter.  
I've been looking for you.

SETH (V.O.)

What? For me?

IONE (V.O.)

Come-on. It's all right now, I'll  
take care of you.

SETH (V.O.)

I don't...

He frees her and she gets to her feet. He covers his face if  
trying to hide.

IONE (V.O.)

Manu too. Come with me. Manu is waiting for you. There are more new arrivals from Earth.

SETH (V.O.)

No. Just want to forget. Why can't you all just leave me alone?

But he allows her to take his ax and lead him back through the tunnels, head bowed.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Erich is listlessly walking the streets. He buys a newspaper and heads for Starbucks. On the way he stops by a ragged figure sitting among the ruins of a cardboard box just inside an alley. It is an old man with dirty white hair known as the COLONEL. Erich stuffs a bill into his outstretched hand.

ERICH

Hi Colonel. Nice day.

COLONEL

Thanks boy. Watch out for skirmishers. Testing our vigilance. Before the main attack.

The Colonel's mind had stayed behind in some forgotten war zone.

ERICH

Sure, I'll be careful. Want some coffee?

Without waiting for an answer he continues along the street and goes through the door of the coffee shop. As he comes out again holding two large cappuccinos he is accosted by WILSON, an immaculately groomed young man with a big beaming smile.

WILSON

Excuse me sir. May I ask you if you are interested in bettering yourself?

ERICH

What?

WILSON

Hello, my name is Wilson. I am looking for people who are open to new ideas and opportunities. May I ask if you have ever thought you could really change things?

ERICH

I'm not interested in politics.

Erich walks around him and heads back toward the Colonel with Wilson following in his wake.

WILSON

No no, not politics. We help you take charge of your life, realize your full potential. Can you spare me a couple of minutes to explain?

ERICH

How much does it cost?

WILSON

Absolutely nothing. The program is entirely funded by the federal government and private donors. We even pay you, a little.

ERICH

Sounds too good to be true. How much?

WILSON

I know it's unbelievable, isn't it. Actually it's even better than that. You get fifty dollars attendance money per meeting.

Erich arrives at the Colonel's alleyway and hands him one of the cups and a handful of sugar sticks. Wilson grasps Erich's arm, but he wriggles free.

ERICH

Look, what is this all about exactly?

WILSON

It's a new training program aimed at people like you.

ERICH

What do you mean by people like me?

Erich sips his coffee and winks at the Colonel who is noisily slurping his.

WILSON

Young, open-minded individuals who want to get their lives into the fast lane. Recognize yourself?

ERICH

Well...

WILSON

Come along to one of our meetings. There's one tonight. We give you fifty dollars just for showing-up, no obligations. Promise me you'll

come?

ERICH

Maybe.

WILSON

No, you have to make a commitment.  
That's all part of the approach.  
Making commitments and keeping them.

ERICH

Sure, I'll come if I can make it.

WILSON

Okay, that's good enough. Now, I  
need your name and a contact phone  
number.

ERICH

Why? Do you want my social security  
number as well?

WILSON

Thank you, that won't be necessary  
sir. My colleagues will check you in  
at the door.

ERICH

Alright, alright. The name's Roth,  
Erich Roth. Don't remember the  
phone number.

Wilson writes it down in his little book and hands Erich a card.

WILSON

Take this. Directions on the back.  
Present the card at the door. Seven  
o'clock. There's free cocktails and  
buffet. Casual dress, come as you  
are.

Erich glances at the card and puts it into his hip pocket as  
Wilson takes his leave.

COLONEL

Look just like civilians, don't they?  
But don't be fooled, underneath  
they're different.

Erich drinks his coffee and watches as Wilson approaches another  
prospect.

ERICH

That's just what I was thinking.

EXT. CENTER - EVENING

Erich arrives on foot at the address indicated on the card. It is a modern office building, fifteen stories of gleaming steel and glass. He hesitates a moment, double-checking the address, before entering.

INT. CENTER RECEPTION - EVENING

He goes through the automatic revolving doors into the foyer. It is impressive, white marble and glass, two storeys high. He shows his card to a uniformed security guard just inside the door. The guard directs him to an area at the back where Wilson and MANU, a statuesque African American in her mid-twenties, are assembling a motley group of young people.

WILSON

Ah, Erich. Glad you came. Please line up over there. We'll take you through when everyone is here.

None of the others seem to be inclined to casual conversation, so he takes his place in the line. About ten minutes later, they are marched through a set of double doors and along a corridor to door marked "Meeting Room".

INT. CENTER, MEETING ROOM - EVENING

Erich is in a meeting room together with about fifty others, most under thirty and dressed in jeans and T-shirts. They sit in rows facing SETH BODACH, an impressive figure in his fifties, with a deep California tan and a mane of white hair. He is delivering a well-worn welcome speech, standing at the front of the room, facing a blank white screen.

SETH

Thanks for coming, everyone, and congratulations. You have already taken the first step toward a new you and a successful new life.

Erich's new bosom pal Wilson stands with his back to the wall at the side of the room. He makes little gestures of encouragement every time Erich glances his way.

SETH

I am really excited about this program and I'm sure you will be too when you see what we are offering.

He looks around the room and, for a moment, his gaze crosses Erich's. There's a hint of something cold behind the eyes.

SETH

Now we are going to show you a short film then ask you to join us next door for cocktails.

He signals to someone at the back of the room and leaves via a side door. The lights dim and a video projector embedded in the ceiling projects an image on the white screen.

They sit and watch a fifteen-minute commercial extolling the virtues and ground-breaking technology of the Center for Human Development. The narrator is a B-list actor in his fifties.

Erich leans toward his neighbor, a pretty brunette.

ERICH  
(whispers)  
Kindda like high school. Huh?

She smiles politely but her eyes never leave the screen.

When the lights come back Wilson and two of his colleagues begin to pass round questionnaires.

WILSON  
Fill out these forms please. Won't take a minute. Need any help, Erich?

ERICH  
No, thanks. It's very detailed isn't it?

WILSON  
Government bureaucracy. Don't forget they are paying for some of this.

Erich sets to and fills out the form then hands it to Wilson.

ERICH  
When do we get paid?

WILSON  
In just a minute. Hey you've left some gaps here. Don't worry, I'll help you.

It is clear that Erich will not be allowed to leave until all the questions are answered. He replies to Wilson's verbal prompts and Wilson writes on the form. When they are finished Wilson hands him the attendance money and ushers him into the next room.

INT. CENTER, AUDITORIUM - EVENING

The room is huge, like a theater. At one end is a raised platform or stage. The plush red velvet chairs have been stacked around the edge of the auditorium leaving a clear central area. There are several hundred people present, most of them wearing smart business suits.

Erich and his scruffy colleagues stand out against the others

in the room. Wilson and friends chaperone the new recruits, making sure they get their share of food and drink and introducing them to senior members of the Center.

Everyone is friendly, even eager to listen to the newcomers. But Erich is ill at ease, something feels wrong.

His gaze is attracted to IONE, a blonde girl in a black dress, at the far end of the room, with Dugald. They are not talking but scanning the room as if looking for someone.

ERICH

Wilson, who's that?

WILSON

Ah that's the founder's daughter Ione. She is one of the most senior members of the Center.

ERICH

Hmm. Nice.

WILSON

(laughs)

Out of our league I'm afraid.

Erich tries to maneuver closer to Ione, but Wilson leads him away in another direction. After two hours, the crowd starts to thin out, and Wilson ushers him toward the door. He looks around for Ione but she is nowhere to be seen.

ERICH

It seems to be over then.

WILSON

That's it for tonight. Your induction starts tomorrow morning at nine.

ERICH

What's the rush?

WILSON

Why wait? We like to strike while the iron's hot.

ERICH

I'm not sure I can make it.

WILSON

You have to make the commitment. That's our way.

ERICH

Okay, okay. I'll be here.

They shake hands, and Erich steps out into the street; the door closes behind him.

ERICH  
(softly)  
Worse than timeshare.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Erich is telling Jack about the Center over a late-night drink. He shows him the brochure.

JACK  
It's a sect. You realize that don't you?

ERICH  
So what. You should have seen her Jack. Freakin gorgeous.

Erich is a little drunk, he doesn't really want to listen.

JACK  
Be very, very careful with these people. There are rumors.

ERICH  
Rumors?

JACK  
Disappearances, brainwashing...

ERICH  
Alien abductions.

Jack grabs Erich's arms and tries to turn him so that he is looking into his face.

JACK  
No really. We're investigating them at the paper.

ERICH  
You're starting to sound like my mother. If I had a mother, that is.

JACK  
I'm serious Erich. These people are dangerous.

ERICH  
Breathing is dangerous. Gimme a break.

INT. CENTER, CLASSROOM - MORNING

Erich sits at a desk typing into a laptop computer. Like the other twenty-four members of the class, all new recruits on their first day. Manu stands in front of the class. She is

beautiful but cold and formal.

MANU

Today will be devoted to completing the psychometric and other tests. Then tomorrow you will begin your individual programs. We break for lunch at twelve-thirty.

She scans the room.

MANU

Any questions? No? Then I will leave you to it.

After a look around the room, she makes for the door and leaves. They exchange glances but no one speaks.

INT. CENTER, CLASSROOM - LATER

Erich and his fellow recruits work silently at their laptops until Manu returns around mid-day.

MANU

Stop now everyone. We'll go for lunch and return here at one-thirty.

She walks over to Erich's desk.

MANU

Erich Roth, you are to report to room 305 at eighteen-hundred today.

ERICH

Oh. What's that for?

MANU

Your evaluation interview, by a senior member of the Center. It is very important. You must go.

ERICH

Okay, I'll be there.

He raises his eyes to the ceiling as she walks to the door and they all file out after her.

INT. CENTER, ROOM 305 - EVENING

Erich knocks and enters the small spartan office. He is surprised to see Ione seated behind the desk.

IONE

Erich. Thanks for coming. Sit please.

ERICH  
Pleased to meet you.

IONE  
Your test results are surprising.  
It seems you have a very high psychic  
potential.

ERICH  
Oh. Is that good?

He tries to make eye contact but she ignores his efforts.

IONE  
We want to put you through a special  
accelerated program, starting  
immediately.

ERICH  
You mean tomorrow?

IONE  
No tonight. Why delay? Is that a  
problem?

ERICH  
No, no, that's fine.

IONE  
Okay, let's go now.  
(stands)  
Follow me.

She rises and walks around the desk to the door, opens it and  
steps out into the corridor.

INT. CENTER CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Erich follows Ione to the elevators, trying not to ogle. He  
attempts to engage her in conversation.

ERICH  
Where are we going?

IONE  
(curtly)  
To the lab on the 15th floor.

INT. CENTER, LABORATORY - EVENING

They enter a brightly-lit room full of electronic equipment.  
Manu is waiting for them wearing a white lab coat.

MANU  
Hello Erich. This is the hot seat.