

A KIND OF GUILT

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE (FCI) CUMBERLAND - DAY

A large, oval-shaped prison compound surrounded by concentric circles of razor-wire topped walls.

Predatory surveillance drones fly in lazy circles overhead.

SUPER: FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE, CUMBERLAND - 2047

INT. FCI CUMBERLAND - LOMAX'S CELL - DAY

A drab, single-person cell. The cell door is open.

Metal-frame bed, metal toilet, metal sink. A scratched metal surface above the sink - a makeshift mirror.

LOMAX - late 40s, razor-fit and analytical - sits on the edge of the bed. He wears gray prison fatigues and studies a magnetic chessboard on his lap.

A shimmering, 3-D hologram, suspended in mid-air above the bed, rotates slowly: a youthful Lomax, a young woman, and a smiling girl with bright red hair, all on a park bench. A chessboard rests on the bench between Lomax and the girl.

A female voice murmurs inside the cell. The seductive tones of a CELL COMPANION.

CELL COMPANION (O.S.)

The duty of every citizen is to
defend against the enemy within.

DOC, a fellow inmate in his 60s, hobbled and world-weary, limps into the cell. Lomax glances at him and nods.

DOC

"Reflections on the 30th
Amendment." A classic.

LOMAX

Careful. Sarcasm is now a Level
Three offense.

DOC

As it should be. To quote Our Dear
Leader, 'Sarcasm is the tool of
saboteurs and fifth-columnists.'

He winks at Lomax and gestures at the board.

DOC (CONT'D)
I don't get it, Lomax. You can't
win playing against yourself.

Lomax resumes his study of the board.

LOMAX
I can't lose, either.

Doc gestures at their surroundings.

DOC
You sure about that?

Lomax moves another piece on the board.

LOMAX
What do you know? Checkmate.

DOC
So escape is impossible.

LOMAX
That's stalemate, Doc. And you're a
real ray of sunshine.

DOC
Glad to help.

Doc heads for the door.

LOMAX
See you tomorrow?

DOC
Depends on my social calendar.

Doc raises a hand and exits.

CELL COMPANION (O.S.)
Our Dear Leader implores us never
to forget that the price of freedom
is eternal allegiance.

LOMAX
(quietly, to himself)
Duly noted.

He quickly resets the chessboard.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC - DLE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

A squat, anonymous building surrounded by concrete barricades and armed officers in DLE uniforms.

A massive sign at the main entrance bears the engraving "US DEPARTMENT OF LOYALTY ENFORCEMENT HEADQUARTERS."

Each officer bears a barcode-like ID grid, one inch by two inches, extending from the underside of the left jawbone to the collar bone.

The ID grids identify the officers as SYNTHETIC LIFE ENGINES, also known as SYNTHETICS or by the derogatory term SLEEGS.

Apart from their ID grids, the officers are indistinguishable from humans.

INT. DLE HQ - HALLWAY - NIGHT

A sterile, harshly-lit hallway.

INT. DLE HQ - HALLWAY - OUTSIDE REGENERATION CHAMBER - NIGHT

A windowless door labeled '5B17 - REGEN.'

INT. DLE HQ - REGENERATION CHAMBER - NIGHT

A darkened room filled with several rows of ReGen stations: Platforms set at 45-degree angles to the floor, equipped with semi-enclosed headrests at the upper end and footrests below.

Most stations are occupied. Each occupant, man or woman, is a synthetic, identifiable by ID grid.

In the middle of the front row - CLAIRE, early 30's. Her eyes are open but unseeing. The headrest at her station pulsates with alternating red and yellow flashes of light.

EXT. THE THIRD KINGDOM - THE GREAT PLAIN - DAY

A vast, featureless plain. A dark, foreboding sky, tinged with eerie shades of red and yellow. At the edge of the horizon, a vast cloud of dust. ECHOES of fierce combat.

SUPER: THE THIRD KINGDOM

EXT. THE THIRD KINGDOM - OASIS - DAY

Claire and a 30-ish man, HELM, both dressed in drab grey uniforms, sit beside a BUBBLING fountain, surrounded by gently swaying palm trees. The dark sky looms above.

Here, the ECHOES of combat are faint.

Claire's shirt sleeve bears the silhouette of a chess piece - a Red Queen. HELM's sleeve features the silhouette of a Yellow King.

HELM

Stay with me, Claire. Don't leave.

CLAIRE

I don't think Vitruvius would approve of that idea.

HELM

We'll find the ocean. Where the sun falls out of the sky.

Claire LAUGHS.

CLAIRE

There's no ocean here, and the sun never sets.

An A Major chord begins to CHIME, drowning out the faint sounds of combat.

HELM

No - don't go. Not yet.

Claire strokes his cheek.

CLAIRE

I have to, Helm.

The A chord grows louder.

INT. DLE HQ - REGENERATION CHAMBER - NIGHT

At Claire's ReGen station, an A Major chord REPEATS itself until Claire regains full consciousness.

CLAIRE

(softly, to herself)
Helm.

The headrest's pulsating lights grow dim.

INT. DLE HQ - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

TAYLOR, mid-40s, intense and brooding, sits at one end of a long conference table and drums his fingers.

Claire, now alert and confident, sits to Taylor's right. Both are dressed in dark suits.

A frozen holographic image hovers above the table: A man, NORD, late 40s, dressed in black clothing and a ballcap with the image of an upside-down American flag.

A caption below the image reads, "OSKAR NORD."

CLAIRE

Nord released an ARB communique at zero five hundred hours Eastern.

TAYLOR

Let's see it.

Claire gestures. The holographic footage stirs into motion.

NORD

(on holographic footage)
The Armed Resistance Brigade demands the immediate release of our comrades.

Images of a man and woman, both in their late 20s, appear in the hologram. Claire gestures again and the video freezes.

CLAIRE

Evans and Murphy - ARB's tech experts. In custody pending trial.

TAYLOR

I know where those assholes are. I want Nord.

CLAIRE

Fugitive teams are running down every lead. It's only a matter --

TAYLOR

(cuts Claire off)
-- of time. So everyone keeps telling me. Proceed.

Claire gestures again to unfreeze the video.

NORD

(on holographic footage)
Free our brother and sister.

(MORE)

NORD (CONT'D)
 Otherwise, an American city will
 suffer on the Fourth of July.

Another gesture from Claire. The image freezes.

TAYLOR
 A week from today.

Claire processes for a split-second.

CLAIRE
 Six days, fifteen hours, and forty-
 seven minutes, Eastern.

TAYLOR
 I already have a calendar. Tell me
 something I don't know.

Claire gestures and a second holographic image replaces the
 first. This one depicts a younger Lomax seated across a metal
 table from a younger Nord in an otherwise empty room.

LOMAX
 (on holographic footage)
 Incitement to riot. We have you
 dead to rights. That's five years
 federal time.

NORD
 (on holographic footage)
 It wasn't so long ago that you
 could express an opinion without
 getting arrested.

LOMAX
 (on holographic footage)
 Don't try to make this about
 politics.

NORD
 (on holographic footage)
 Everything is about politics,
 Lomax. Or don't they teach you that
 at DLE school?

Claire stops the holo.

CLAIRE
 Lomax. The one Investigator who's
 dealt directly with Nord.

TAYLOR
 Make that former Investigator. And
 current federal inmate.

CLAIRE

I know. That's where you come in.

Taylor stares at the holographic image.

INT. FCI CUMBERLAND - LOMAX'S CELL - DAY

Lomax paces in his cell, an open book in his hands. He MUTTERS inaudibly, under the insistent, alluring drone of the Cell Companion's voice.

CELL COMPANION (O.S.)

Dissent is an attack on our
nation's fundamental values.

A uniformed corrections officer (CO), DEACON, appears at the open cell door. An ID grid is visible on his neck.

DEACON

Attention, Inmate.

Lomax stops pacing.

DEACON (CONT'D)

Failure to heed a Cell Companion
broadcast is a Level Two offense.

LOMAX

I'm multi-tasking.

DEACON

Someone has signed in to see you.

Lomax makes a low WHISTLING sound.

LOMAX

A visitor. It's been a long time.

Deacon processes for a split-second.

DEACON

Your most recent --

LOMAX

(cuts in)

I don't want to know.

DEACON

Understood.

Deacon motions for Lomax to come with him.

INT. FCI CUMBERLAND - VISITORS AREA - DAY

A large, bright room with tables placed at regular intervals. Inmates in prison fatigues meet with individuals or small groups. Friends, parents, wives, children.

Lomax and Deacon enter. Lomax spots Taylor and walks to the table where he's seated. Lomax remains standing.

LOMAX

Taylor. I didn't expect to see you.

TAYLOR

You know how the Department is.

LOMAX

All too well.

Lomax looks around for Deacon. He's ready to leave.

TAYLOR

How would you feel about a change of scenery?

Lomax hesitates, then sits down across from Taylor.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

I'm a section chief now.

LOMAX

Let me guess - you kept raising your hand, they kept promoting you.

TAYLOR

It's all coming back to me.

LOMAX

What is?

TAYLOR

What a pain in the ass you can be.

(pause)

No one in the Department knows Nord like you do.

LOMAX

Once upon a time, maybe. I'm a little out of the loop these days.

TAYLOR

Five years ago, you told me Nord framed you for murder. I thought you'd want to help bring him down.

LOMAX

When something sounds too good to be true, it usually is.

TAYLOR

This could mean a reduction in your sentence. Maybe even a commutation.

LOMAX

What is it you're not telling me?

TAYLOR

I don't sense a lot of trust.

LOMAX

The catch, Taylor. What is it?

Taylor stands and gestures to a corrections officer.

TAYLOR

This isn't your show, Lomax. Change your mind, you know how to reach me. You got twenty-four hours.

He walks away.

EXT. PAC/RIM APPLIANCE CORPORATION - DAY

A walled-in cluster of buildings. A sign in front of the entrance reads PAC/RIM APPLIANCE CORPORATION.

INT. PAC/RIM APPLIANCE - WAITING ROOM - DAY

SYDNEY, mid-20s, alert and intelligent, sits in a sparsely-furnished waiting room. She has bright red hair.

Rodriguez, early 30s, a slick and carefully-groomed man, opens the door to an inner office.

INT. RODRIGUEZ'S OFFICE - DAY

Sparsely-decorated, with muted colors and sleek surfaces.

Sydney sits across a glass-topped table from Rodriguez. A name plate on the table reads J. RODRIGUEZ.

He studies a clear plastic tablet in front of him.

RODRIGUEZ

Personnel has reviewed your application. It seems everything checks out.

SYDNEY

Excellent. Thank you.

RODRIGUEZ

I'm curious about your interest in Pac/Rim Appliances.

SYDNEY

I'm ready for a new challenge.

Rodriguez takes another look at the tablet, as though he might have missed something.

RODRIGUEZ

You were a virtual environment architect at Vitruvius.

SYDNEY

Correct. Until last month.

RODRIGUEZ

You designed regeneration interfaces for sleigs - sorry, synthetic life engines.

SYDNEY

That's right.

RODRIGUEZ

Sounds pretty challenging to me.

He hesitates.

RODRIGUEZ (CONT'D)

We make interactive consumer appliances. Talking, uh, toasters and so forth. I'm assuming you already know that.

SYDNEY

Pac/Rim feels like a real growth opportunity for me.

Rodriguez isn't sure he's heard correctly.

RODRIGUEZ

A growth opportunity.

SYDNEY

Exactly. Sometimes you just know
when it's time for a change.

Rodriguez taps a pen on the desk.

RODRIGUEZ

We don't see a lot of candidates
with your qualifications.

SYDNEY

Is that a good thing?

They stare at each other for a moment. When Rodriguez stands,
so does Sydney. He extends a hand.

RODRIGUEZ

See you tomorrow morning, say nine
o'clock. Welcome aboard.

Sydney smiles. They shake hands.

EXT. LOS ANGELES INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT - WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A dingy, worn-down structure in the middle of a crumbling
industrial section of the city.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NORD'S ROOM - NIGHT

A dimly-lit room with bare walls. A table and two facing
chairs in the center. An unmade bed in one corner.

Nord, assertive and charismatic, sits at the table. Seated
across from him is FLEMING, late 20s, capable and no-
nonsense.

A small scar, the size and shape of an ID grid, is visible
beneath her left jawbone.

NORD

Let's have it.

FLEMING

According to the source, DLE is
preparing to interrogate Murphy.

NORD

Murphy won't talk. Evans, I'm not
so sure about. Go on.

FLEMING

A Department section chief is trying to get a quote Nord expert unquote out of prison.

This gets Nord's attention. He CHUCKLES.

NORD

Nick Lomax. He and I go way back. You hear anything else about him, bring it to me.

FLEMING

I understand.

Nord looks Fleming over.

NORD

Remind me why I freed you, Fleming.

FLEMING

(from memory)

Because a manufactured slave is still a slave.

NORD

And my guiding principle?

FLEMING

(from memory)

The handmaiden of salvation is destruction.

NORD

Very good.

Nord taps on his keyboard and turns the screen to Fleming.

NORD (CONT'D)

Watch this.

Above the keyboard, silent holograph footage is projected. A 30-ish male, GREEN, in a dimly-lit alley. Black pants, no shirt, no shoes. Lean and hungry.

Green appears calm, despite facing three large thugs, each armed with a weapon - baseball bat, claw hammer, crowbar.

We see Fleming's face as she reacts - first with confusion, then disbelief, then horror and revulsion.

FLEMING

(shaky)

What the fuck was that?

In the footage, Green, now covered in blood, stands over the three thugs. Their bodies are motionless. Broken. Twisted.

NORD

A test.

Green picks up the bat, twirls it like a baton, and raises it over his head.

NORD (CONT'D)

Here's the best part.

Fleming looks away, but Nord puts a finger to her chin and redirects her gaze back to the screen.

EXT. FORT MCNAIR ARMY BASE, WASHINGTON, DC - NIGHT

An aging, brightly-lit military compound at the tip of a peninsula bordered by two rivers.

EXT. FORT MCNAIR MAIN ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A fortified entrance patrolled by armed soldiers. A black granite sign: UNITED STATES ARMY FORT LESLEY J. MCNAIR 1791.

INT. FORT MCNAIR INTERVIEW ROOM - NIGHT

A harshly-lit room with a dented metal table, three rickety chairs, and grimy soundproofed walls.

Claire and SIMS, a 30-something, buttoned-down Department Investigator, sit on one side of the table.

Across from them is MURPHY, late 20s, a bright, defiant woman in a faded orange prison jumpsuit. Her right wrist is handcuffed to an iron ring on the table.

SIMS

Maybe you don't understand the gravity of the situation.

MURPHY

"The gravity of the situation?" You sound more like a machine than your girlfriend there.

SIMS
I can make things very unpleasant
for you.

MURPHY
(to Claire)
He's not good at this, is he?

CLAIRE
DLE Investigators are well-trained
and highly-skilled.

Murphy LAUGHS.

MURPHY
(to Claire)
If you say so.

Sims gives Claire a dirty look.

SIMS
(to Murphy)
Let's try this again. Tell me about
the next ARB direct action.

Murphy looks up at the interview room camera.

MURPHY
(loudly, to the camera)
Hey! Take me back to my cell.

SIMS
You're making a big mistake.

MURPHY
Oh, good. I hate little mistakes.

A uniformed officer enters. Sims nods. The officer stands
Murphy up, handcuffs her behind her back. They exit.

SIMS
You disrupted my interrogation.

CLAIRE
She was talking to me.

SIMS
No, she was fucking with you.

Sims stands.

SIMS (CONT'D)
But since when does a sleeg know
it's being fucked with?

CLAIRE
 "Sleeg?" Come on, Sims. You know
 the Department-approved term:
 "synthetic life engine."

SIMS
 (talking over Claire)
 Since never, that's when. One
 reason why I'm an Investigator and
 you're whatever it is you are.

CLAIRE
 (talking over Sims)
 'Use of derogatory language toward
 a co-worker.' I'll just slip that
 in your personnel file.

Sims SCOFFS and heads for the door.

SIMS
 (talking over Claire)
 Make sure you spell my name right.

CLAIRE
 (talking over Sims)
 And don't ever call me "it" again.

Sims exits the interview room.

INT. FCI CUMBERLAND - TELEPHONE ROOM - NIGHT

Noisy and chaotic. Inmates line up to use thick, heavily
 scarred plastic screens - wallphones - embedded in the walls.
 Screens in use are red. Available screens are green.

Lomax moves to the front of a line and touches a green
 wallphone screen. When he punches in a number, the screen
 turns red.

EXT. LOS ANGELES COMMERCIAL DISTRICT - NIGHT

Industrial warehouses intermixed with multi-story buildings.

INT. SYDNEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A cramped room with overstuffed bookshelves and numerous
 hovering, 3-D framed holographic images - holos.

Sydney wanders around the room and looks at the holos, among
 them a duplicate of the one in Lomax's cell: a 20-something
 Lomax, a young woman, and a little girl on a park bench.

She touches the holo. The image moves briefly, and the girl's crystal-bell LAUGHTER fills the room for a moment.

On a sad-looking couch, a transparent plastic tablet lights up and CHIRPS. Sydney walks to the couch and picks it up.

RECORDED VOICE
(on tablet speaker)
You have a collect call from an
inmate at a federal prison --

INT. FCI CUMBERLAND - TELEPHONE ROOM - NIGHT

Lomax stands close to the wallphone.

LOMAX
It's your father.

EXT. LA CONDO BUILDING ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Sydney stares at the tablet. Takes a deep breath and taps the screen. Lomax's face appears.

INTERCUT - WALLPHONE/TABLET CONVERSATION

LOMAX
Syd - I'm so glad you picked up.

SYDNEY
One more time - stop calling. Stop
writing. Leave me alone.

LOMAX
Hold on a second! I -

Sidney double-taps the tablet screen. It goes dark.

INT. FCI CUMBERLAND - TELEPHONE ROOM - NIGHT

Lomax's wallphone screen turns green.

INMATE VOICE (O.S.)
Call's over, asshole. Move it!

Lomax slumps forward, then slams the screen with the side of his clenched fist.

INT. DLE HQ - TAYLOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Taylor at his desk, surrounded by photos, plaques, and other law enforcement memorabilia.

A KNOCK. Claire enters and sits opposite.

TAYLOR
Well? How did it go?

CLAIRE
It didn't go. Murphy shut us down.

TAYLOR
How was Sims?

CLAIRE
A pain in the ass. As usual.
(pause)
We need Lomax.

TAYLOR
I'm working on it.

Claire waits for more, but Taylor motions for her to leave.

EXT. LA APARTMENT BUILDING ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Sydney sits in a lawn chair near the edge of the roof, drink in hand, keyboard in her lap. Below, the sprawl and glitter of an endless city.

Glittering aircraft of varying shapes and sizes dot the night-time sky.

Sydney types. A hologram appears, projected from and hovering above the keyboard:

An image of Da Vinci's iconic Vitruvian Man sketch - a nude man in doubled poses, his outstretched arms and legs inscribed in both a circle and a square.

Superimposed over the sketch in bold block letters:
"VITRUVIUS: A REVOLUTION IN EVOLUTION."

Sydney types rapidly. The image inside the hologram transforms into flashing red letters: "ACCESS DENIED."

SYDNEY
(to herself)
Oh, Sydney.

She pauses. Holds the empty glass to her forehead, then resumes typing. Flashing red letters: "ACCESS DENIED."

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Come on, now. Focus.

She pauses once again. HUMS a tuneless melody as she stares at the sky. Resumes typing, now with greater urgency. The red letters fade and are replaced:

"VITRUVIUS MANUFACTURING COMBINE - EMPLOYEE ACCESS PORTAL."

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
(to herself)
There we go.

She smiles.

INT. FCI CUMBERLAND - LOMAX'S CELL - NIGHT

Lomax paces his cell, book in hand. CO Deacon appears at the open cell door.

DEACON
Attention, Inmate.

Lomax stops pacing and tosses the book onto his cot.

DEACON (CONT'D)
Tell me what you're reading.

LOMAX
(reciting from memory)
"What is your substance, whereof
are you made/That millions of
strange shadows on you tend?"

Deacon processes.

DEACON
Shakespeare, Sonnet Fifty-Three. Is
it beautiful?

LOMAX
Your question suggests that no
answer would be meaningful.

DEACON
I don't understand.

LOMAX
Disregard. Why are you here?

DEACON

You're being moved to the Special Housing Unit.

Lomax stops pacing.

LOMAX

The 'Shoe?' Why?

DEACON

You're a former DLE Investigator - a status which puts you at risk among the general population.

LOMAX

I've been in gen pop for five years, Deacon. What's going on?

DEACON

My cognitive framework steers me toward inferences, not conclusions.

LOMAX

Infer, then.

DEACON

Presumably, recent intelligence has identified a threat to your safety.

LOMAX

I don't believe you.

DEACON

Exactly what a diagnosed synthebobic would say.

LOMAX

I'm not afraid of slegs - I just don't like them. No offense.

DEACON

I'm incapable of taking offense. You'll be moved when the next available cell is vacated.

Deacon walks away. Lomax stares after him.

INT. FCI CUMBERLAND - LOMAX'S CELL - NIGHT

Lomax paces aggressively in his cell. Doc enters.

DOC

You're more pissed off than usual.

Lomax stops pacing.

LOMAX

Deacon says they're moving me to the 'Shoe.'

DOC

That doesn't make any sense.

Lomax goes to the cell door and looks around.

LOMAX

(quietly)

My old Department boss dropped by today. I have a feeling his visit and my move are somehow connected.

DOC

What did he want?

LOMAX

He'll get me out of here if I work a case for him.

DOC

You lucky bastard.

No reaction from Lomax.

DOC (CONT'D)

Am I missing something?

LOMAX

That kind of offer comes with strings attached. I just don't know what they are.

Doc plops himself on the edge of the bed.

DOC

Everything comes with strings attached. It's called life.

LOMAX

When I got arrested, I thought the Department had my back. Look where that got me.

DOC

You have unfinished business out in the world. About time you use the Department the way they used you.

Doc points at the hovering holo above the cell floor.

DOC (CONT'D)
But whatever you do, make sure you
take care of her.

Lomax touches the holo. The image moves briefly, and the
little red-haired girl LAUGHS. Lomax resumes pacing.

Doc stands and puts himself in front of Lomax.

DOC (CONT'D)
You're not playing chess anymore.
Forget about this.

He taps Lomax on the side of his head.

DOC (CONT'D)
Listen to this.

He thumps Lomax on the chest.

LOMAX
Look at you - going all sentimental
on me.

Doc LAUGHS and heads for the door.

INT. FCI CUMBERLAND - LAUNDRY FACILITY - DAY

A loud, steamy laundry operation. Industrial-sized washing
machines and dryers. Mountains of linens and prison clothing.
Car-length rolling laundry hampers.

Inmates hard at work.

Lomax pushes a giant hamper to the far end of a row of
dryers. He begins to unload wet towels.

Two inmates approach. Inmate 1 is short and heavily-muscled.
Inmate 2 is tall and wiry. Both are heavily tattooed. Inmate
1 steps between Lomax and the dryer.

Lomax is on alert. Inmate 2 watches from a few feet away.

LOMAX
Coming through.

INMATE 1
What's the hurry, brother?

LOMAX
Trying to get my work done is all.

INMATE 1
Relax, brother.

He gestures to the towels in Lomax's arms.

INMATE 1 (CONT'D)
That shit ain't goin' nowhere.

LOMAX
I'm not looking for trouble.

INMATE 1
Trouble's a funny thing, brother.
It don't much care if you're
looking for it or not.
(pause)
Just ask Doc.

Lomax drops the laundry at Inmate 1's feet.

LOMAX
What does that mean?

Inmate 2 approaches Lomax from the side.

INMATE 2
(to Lomax)
Forget Doc.

Inmate 2 produces a do-it-yourself prison weapon - a shank - from his pocket. The shank is smeared with blood.

Inmate 2 moves toward Lomax like a guy who's done this kind of work before.

INMATE 2 (CONT'D)
Worry about you.

Without hesitation, Lomax raises his hands in a fighting stance. He moves with surprising speed and delivers a vicious front-kick to Inmate 2's kneecap.

Inmate 2 SCREAMS and collapses. Lomax kicks him in the face repeatedly. The screaming fades, then stops.

Inmate 1 approaches, his own bloodied shank in hand.

INMATE 1
That was excessive, brother.

Before Lomax can react, Inmate 1 slashes him across the face and draws blood.

INMATE 1 (CONT'D)
Now I'm gonna fuck you up.

Lomax bobs and feints. Inmate 1 matches every move - he's pretty good.

Not good enough, though. Lomax delivers a palm-strike uppercut. Inmate 1 goes down. Lights out.

Lomax looks around. Dumps wet towels on his attackers.

He then sprints the length of the laundry area. At the other end of the facility, he spots a small knot of inmates.

LOMAX
Move aside!

He forces his way through and discovers Doc, bloodied and groggy. Lomax kneels down and applies pressure to an ugly chest wound.

LOMAX (CONT'D)
(shouts)
Get a medic!
(to Doc)
Hang in there, Doc.

DOC
(weakly)
You're still here?

LOMAX
Don't worry about me. Take it easy.

With an effort, Doc puts a hand behind Lomax's head and pulls him close.

DOC
(with effort)
Get out while you can. There may not be a second chance.

A sleg CO knocks Lomax aside to make way for a paramedic.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC - DLE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

The Department's heavily-guarded headquarters building.

INT. DLE HQ - TAYLOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Taylor at his desk. He cleans his nails with a penknife and listens to a voice on his desk phone speaker.

VOICE ON DESK PHONE SPEAKER (O.S.)
What's the situation with Lomax?

Taylor glances at his watch.

TAYLOR
I'm optimistic.

VOICE ON DESK PHONE
And the sleeg?

TAYLOR
She'll be fine.

Taylor ends the call.

INT. FCI CUMBERLAND - TELEPHONE ROOM - NIGHT

Lomax, at the front of a restless line of inmates, touches a green wallphone screen and punches in a number.

The screen turns red.

LOMAX
It's Lomax.
(pause)
I've reconsidered.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC - DLE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

A steady flow of workers enters DLE HQ.

A male pedestrian walks past the building. A DLE officer holds out a tablet and beckons toward him.

The pedestrian approaches and reluctantly places his palm on the tablet. When the tablet turns red, officers force the pedestrian to the sidewalk and handcuff him.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC - STREET CORNER NEAR DLE HQ - DAY

Near DLE HQ, a male RECRUITING SYNTHETIC, dressed in camouflage fatigues, SHOUTS into the void.

RECRUITING SYNTHETIC
Citizens! The favor of your
attention is urgently requested!
The US Mercenary Corps wants you!

No one pays him any attention.

UNT. DLE HQ - TAYLOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Lomax, dressed in a cheap dark suit, sits across the desk from Taylor.

The hologram of Nord's recent communique hovers frozen in the air between them.

TAYLOR

You still believe Nord framed you.

LOMAX

I know he did. The problem is proving it.

TAYLOR

Put that aside and focus on the case at hand. July Fourth is five days away.

LOMAX

Where's my Department ID?

Taylor produces a small, black credential case and tosses it in Lomax's direction. Lomax opens the case.

LOMAX (CONT'D)

(reading the ID)

"Deputized federal task force advisor." No idea what that means, but okay.

Lomax puts the ID case in his pocket.

LOMAX (CONT'D)

I need a weapon.

TAYLOR

You're a convicted murderer on temporary release. Do the math.

Taylor punches a console on his desk.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Send her in.

Lomax turns around as Claire enters Taylor's office, her ID grid clearly visible. She approaches Lomax.

CLAIRE

I'm Claire. Security class.

Lomax SCOFFS and shakes his head. He ignores Claire and her outstretched hand.

LOMAX
 (to Taylor)
 The catch.

TAYLOR
 (to Lomax)
 Welcome back.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A grim, utilitarian building in an urban industrial zone. Every few seconds, lightning-like flashes appear in parallel lines of identical first- and second-floor windows.

SUPER: WASHINGTON, DC - INDUSTRIAL ZONE - 2042

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A large, high-ceilinged space. Rows of two-story-high metal shelving span the length and breadth of the warehouse.

Periodic pulses of blinding white light flood the space every few seconds.

A booming, RECORDED FEMALE VOICE on infinite repeat.

RECORDED FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
 Unauthorized entry. Law enforcement
 units are responding.

A younger Lomax, in a dark suit, sits slumped, unconscious, against a metal shelf. His right hand clutches a butcher knife covered in neon-green fluid.

Nearby, a motionless figure lies face-up on the concrete floor: Helm, Claire's companion in The Third Kingdom.

Neon-green fluid has leaked from a large gash in Helm's chest and pooled on the floor next to him.

Distant sirens MOAN and HOWL.

Lomax regains consciousness with a GASP and looks around, disoriented. He notices the knife in his hand.

LOMAX
 (to himself)
 What the hell....

He tosses the knife. It hits the floor with a CLANG.

Lomax struggles to stand, stumbles forward and trips over the body. He looks behind him and sees Helm on the floor.

LOMAX (CONT'D)
What the hell?

Lomax kneels beside Helm. He holds up an index finger and moves it back and forth across Helm's field of vision.

No reaction.

LOMAX (CONT'D)
(to himself)
No, no, no.

Lomax stands again. The sirens grow LOUDER. He staggers, then trots, toward a lighted EXIT sign.

The double doors BURST inward. Several officers in black tactical gear enter. Weapon-mounted lights illuminate Lomax.

OFFICERS
(overlapping)
Freeze! Get down! Don't move! Let
me see your hands!

Lomax raises his hands. The lead officer, OFFICER 1, grabs a handful of Lomax's suit jacket and forces him to his knees.

OFFICER 1
On the ground!

Under the strobing lights, Lomax seems to move in slow motion. Officer 1 shoves him face-first to the ground.

OFFICER 1 (CONT'D)
Do not fucking move!

Another officer, OFFICER 2, moves toward Helm. Abruptly, the warehouse is plunged into darkness, and the recorded VOICE falls silent.

Rows of overhead ceiling lights BUZZ, flicker, and turn on. Officer 2 spots the neon-green pool of fluid.

OFFICER 2
Aw, shit. A sleg.

His weapon light reveals an ID grid on the victim's neck. Officer 2 produces a playing card-sized object - a scanner - and taps it on his helmet. The scanner glows bright green.

He presses the scanner against the ID grid. The scanner glows red, emits a repeating major chord CHIME.

The chime stops. The scanner now displays the face of an adult male and a stream of data.

OFFICER 2 (CONT'D)
 (reading aloud)
 Helm. Security class.

Officer 2 walks to Lomax, still proned out on the floor, and kneels beside him.

OFFICER 2 (CONT'D)
 (to Lomax)
 What's your name?

LOMAX
 Lomax.

OFFICER 2
 You know how much it costs Uncle Sam to make a sleg, Lomax? A shitload. That's why sleg murder carries federal time. Lots of it.

LOMAX
 I didn't kill him.

OFFICER 2
 Save it for an Investigator.

LOMAX
 I am an Investigator.

Officer 2 stands up.

OFFICER 2
 There's a new one.

He nudges Lomax with a boot.

OFFICER 2 (CONT'D)
 Get up. Hey. Lomax.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Claire drives. Lomax, in the passenger seat, stares out the window at the DC monuments. DLE pedestrian checkpoints line the streets.

CLAIRE
 Hey. Lomax.

Lomax snaps out of it.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
You put Nord away.

LOMAX
Yeah. A lifetime ago.

CLAIRE
You must have insights into what makes him tick.

LOMAX
I doubt it. Like I said, that's ancient history.
(pause)
What's your RD, anyway?

CLAIRE
My release date is May 1, 2037.
Vitruvius Manufacturing Combine.

LOMAX
Same as Helm. It's like you two shared a birthday.

CLAIRE
We weren't born.

LOMAX
Figure of speech.

Claire SLAMS on the brakes as a truck cuts in front.

CLAIRE
(shouting at the truck driver)
What the fuck, asshole?

Lomax takes a hard look at Claire.

LOMAX
I thought design parameters prevented reactions like that.

CLAIRE
It's a new day, Investigator. I've been mod'ed out once or twice since my RD.

LOMAX
Okay. Tell me about Evans.

CLAIRE

I can remotely access any
Department record in the system.
What is it you want to know?

LOMAX

I just want to get a feel for him.
Find something to get him talking.

CLAIRE

Evans would be foolish to talk to
us at all.

Lomax leans toward Claire, as though confiding in her.

LOMAX

Here's a little secret about
humans. They're unpredictable.

Claire leans toward Lomax, as though confiding in him.

CLAIRE

That's not a secret.

She processes.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Aaron Evans was born January 3,
2009, in Denver, Colorado. As a
child --

Lomax sits back in his seat and listens.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC STREET - DAY

The sedan continues on.

EXT. FORT MCNAIR ARMY BASE - DAY

The sedan approaches the main gate and stops. A uniformed
soldier looks inside. Claire and Lomax show their
credentials. The soldier waves them through.

INT. FORT MCNAIR INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Claire and Lomax sit facing EVANS, mid-20s and mildly
hostile. He wears a faded orange prison jumpsuit. His right
wrist is handcuffed to an iron loop on the table.

LOMAX

"Time is an illusion." You know who said that?

EVANS

Yeah. Albert Einstein.

LOMAX

I figured a physicist would recognize that quote.

Evans SCOFFS.

EVANS

I have a BS in physics. That doesn't make me a physicist.

LOMAX

It does in my book. Tell me what you want, Mr. Evans.

EVANS

What do you think? I want to get out of here.

LOMAX

That's understandable. Do you know what I want?

EVANS

No clue.

LOMAX

I want to know where Oskar Nord is and what his plans are for the Fourth of July.

EVANS

His plans? Hell if I know. A block party, maybe? Sparklers? Maybe you should ask him.

Lomax pushes back from the table.

LOMAX

Your mother is very ill.

Evans reacts.

EVANS

What exactly does my mother have to do with this?

LOMAX

Excellent question. Maybe I should ask her.

EVANS

You manage to make that sound like a threat.

LOMAX

'No clue' and 'hell if I know.' aren't answers we take at face value. We follow up - with friends. Associates. Loved ones.

Evans stares at Lomax, then shakes his head.

EVANS

Not even you Department assholes would go there.

LOMAX

Well, they just let me out of prison, so I'm not following the DLE handbook real closely here.

Evans LAUGHS.

EVANS

Oh, shit. You're Lomax, aren't you? That explains--

He catches himself.

LOMAX

Explains what?

Evans thinks about it. Leans forward.

EVANS

(quietly)

I give you something, you leave my family alone. And kick me loose.

LOMAX

No promises. Say what you have to say, and we'll go from there.

Evans considers his options.

EVANS

(quietly)

Nord's in LA.

Lomax gives a 'who cares' shrug.

LOMAX

So are twelve million other people.

EVANS

Hold on. Last few years, he's been surrounding himself with slegs. Heavily mod'ed. No ID grids.

LOMAX

Sounds like a bunch of bullshit. Pardon my French.

Evans sits back.

EVANS

"Whoever is careless with the truth in small matters cannot be trusted with important matters."

Evans gestures to Claire. She processes.

CLAIRE

Albert Einstein. From an undelivered speech written in -

LOMAX

(cuts her off)
I got it.

Evans smiles.

INT. PAC/RIM APPLIANCE - PROGRAMMING UNIT - DAY

A large room with numerous identical work stations.

Sydney sits at a desk and taps on her keyboard. Inside the holographic image hovering above the computer is a document: PRODUCTION BATCH BY MONTH - 2043.

The document heading bears the words "VITRUVIUS - A REVOLUTION IN EVOLUTION" over the Vitruvian Man sketch.

Rodriguez approaches Sydney's work station. He TAPS lightly on the side of her desk.

Sydney looks up, startled, and waves a hand over her keyboard. The hologram disappears.

RODRIGUEZ

What are you doing?

SYDNEY
Sorry? Oh - just getting familiar
with the company.

Rodriguez waits.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
Actually, I was rescheduling a
dental appointment.

RODRIGUEZ
Use of work systems for personal
business is forbidden. You need to
read up on organization policy.

SYDNEY
Yes. I'll do that.

RODRIGUEZ
You've met your team leader.

SYDNEY
She's assigning me to a project
tomorrow morning.

Rodriguez takes a step back.

RODRIGUEZ
I'm the reason you have this job.
Don't forget that.

Sydney's had enough.

SYDNEY
Got it.

She watches him walk away, then pulls up the Vitruvius
document again.

INT. DLE HQ - TAYLOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Taylor sits behind his desk across from Lomax and Claire,
arms folded across his chest.

TAYLOR
Heavily mod'ed. No ID grids.

Lomax nods.

LOMAX
Nord's "hive."

TAYLOR
According to Evans, anyway.

LOMAX
Evans might be telling the truth.

TAYLOR
So you're buying this story.

LOMAX
Evans and Murphy were both arrested in LA, so it stands to reason Nord could be there. The "hive" part - who knows?

Taylor pushes his chair back from the desk.

TAYLOR
Is it just me, or have you lost a step or two?

LOMAX
Thanks for the vote of confidence.

TAYLOR
There's the Lomax I remember.
Everyone's the enemy except the guy you see in the mirror.

Taylor stands up.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
I have to brief the deputy director on this. Should be fun.

He leaves the office.

Lomax goes to the window. He watches workers on the street erect July Fourth decorations. Banners, flags, bunting.

CLAIRE
Taylor is pissed off.

LOMAX
Very insightful.

Lomax watches the workers. Something occurs to him.

LOMAX (CONT'D)
What did Evans say about Nord's plans for July Fourth?

CLAIRE
He told us he didn't know what
Nord's plans were.

LOMAX
No. What exactly did he say?

Claire processes.

CLAIRE
(quoting)
"I don't know. A block party,
maybe? Some sparklers? Maybe you
should ask him."

LOMAX
Can you cross-reference July Fourth
celebrations in California and
block parties?

CLAIRE
Yes.

Lomax waits. Nothing.

LOMAX
Sorry. I meant now, not at some
random point in the future.

Claire processes again.

CLAIRE
The largest event of its kind is
held at Grand Park in Los Angeles.

Lomax nods. Begins to pace.

EXT. THE THIRD KINGDOM - THE GREAT PLAIN - DAY

The vast, featureless plain. The sky, tinged with red and
yellow. The fierce SOUNDS of battle fill the air.

SUPER: THE THIRD KINGDOM

EXT. THE THIRD KINGDOM - THE GREAT PLAIN - FIGHTING PIT - DAY

In a pit roughly ten feet below ground-level and 30 feet
across, two men circle each other warily.

Green, the shirtless fighter from Nord's video, wears a
uniform with a Red Queen insignia.

He engages with a huge, thickly-muscled opponent whose uniform bears a Yellow King insignia.

The fighting is fierce, but brief. Green is faster, nimbler, and more vicious than his foe.

Green maneuvers behind the Yellow King fighter and slips a chokehold around his neck.

Although the Yellow King fighter struggles frantically, Green soon chokes the life out of him. Shoves him aside, then kicks him in the face for good measure.

A B Major chord begins to CHIME. Green drops to one knee.

Subdued. Summoned.

INT. LA WAREHOUSE - INTERIOR ROOM - NIGHT

The center of a dark, windowless room. WEST, 30s, slight of build and disoriented, is strapped to a bolted-down chair and illuminated by a bright overhead light.

Behind West - a collection of flickering lights. Computers, monitors, holographic images - Nord's command center.

Nord and Fleming enter. Fleming holds a tablet in one hand and a small bag in the other.

WEST
I'm West. Technol --

NORD
(cuts him off)
Shut up.

Nord taps a scanner against his palm. It begins to glow bright green. He then pulls down West's collar, revealing an ID grid on his neck.

Nord holds the scanner to the grid. The scanner glows red, CHIMES, and displays West's face with streaming data.

Nord studies the scanner. Shows it to Fleming.

NORD (CONT'D)
(to West)
Identify yourself.

WEST
I'm West. Technology class.

NORD
What's your RD?

MALE SLEEG
February 24, 2032. Vitruvius
Manufacturing Combine.

NORD
(to Fleming)
Pull up the control question for
that batch.

Fleming taps on the tablet and hands it to Nord.

NORD (CONT'D)
(reading from the tablet)
What color is the Hodge Conjecture?

West processes.

WEST
'We must consider the cohomology
class of an algebraic cycle with
integral coefficients on X.'

Nord studies the tablet.

NORD
(to Fleming)
Word for word.

FLEMING
He's never been modified.

Nord smiles.

NORD
What do you know? A virgin.

He nods to Fleming. She places the bag on the ground and
removes a long black tube.

Fleming twists the top half of the tube, which begins to glow
- orange at first, then a fiery red.

Nord takes a step back.

NORD (CONT'D)
(to West)
You know what pain feels like?

WEST
No. Not like you do.

NORD
That's about to change.
(to Fleming)
Go ahead.

West stares as Fleming raises the tube to his neck, near his ID grid.

A faint SIZZLE. West WHIMPERS, then SCREAMS.

EXT. LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

An in-bound jet descends. Thunderous engine SOUNDS.

INT. LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - TERMINAL - DAY

Lomax and Claire, both dressed in casual clothes, walk through a busy terminal.

Flight announcements intermingle with snatches of music and the steady HUM of other people's conversations.

CLAIRE
Helm was your partner for nearly three years.

LOMAX
Three years sounds about right. I wouldn't say 'partner.'

CLAIRE
You worked a lot of cases together.

Lomax shakes his head.

LOMAX
A partner's someone you trust. Who's got your back when things turn to shit. Helm wasn't....

He hesitates.

CLAIRE
Human?

LOMAX
Don't put words in my mouth.

CLAIRE
Sorry.

LOMAX
Partner or not, I didn't kill him.

CLAIRE
I know that.

Lomax stops and pulls Claire by the arm to face him.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I reviewed the Helm case file.

Passengers move past and around them.

LOMAX
I need to see that file.

CLAIRE
Your access to Department records
is limited to the ARB threat case
currently under investigation.

LOMAX
But I was framed - you said so
yourself. I need access to the file
to prove it.

CLAIRE
I said I know you didn't kill Helm.

Lomax shakes his head.

LOMAX
See what I mean? Working a case
together doesn't make us partners.

He walks away.

EXT. WESTWOOD FEDERAL BUILDING - DAY

A towering glass and concrete structure. Courtyards and
planters surround the facility.

Lomax and Claire approach the main entrance.

INT. FEDERAL BUILDING - DLE LA COMMAND POST - DAY

A large room with work stations, numerous monitors, and a
conference table. The CHATTER of low-volume radio traffic.

Taylor sits at the head of the table. Lomax and Claire flank
him. Men and women in suits line both sides of the table.

YI, a severe-looking woman, early 40s, sits opposite Taylor.

YI
(to Taylor)
Surveillance drones and ground
units are on target 24/7. Bomb
squads have combed the area
multiple times.

She points at a monitor, which displays overhead footage of a large urban park. Fountains, walking paths, palm trees, green spaces, terraces.

YI (CONT'D)
Frankly, though, this strikes me as
overkill. Evans is unreliable and
his statements are vague at best.

TAYLOR
You've made your position
abundantly clear.

He turns to Claire.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
Take us through Nord's ties to LA.

CLAIRE
Nord was a programmer at the
Vitruvius Manufacturing Combine
from 2031 to 2035. Under various
aliases, he transited LA multiple
times between 2040 and 2044.

TAYLOR
Nothing more recent than that?

CLAIRE
Not that I was able to identify.

TAYLOR
And the gap between 2035 and 2040?

CLAIRE
Nord was incarcerated. Investigator
Lomax's case.

Yi SCOFFS.

YI
How enlightening.

LOMAX
(to Taylor)
She runs this office? What a joke.

YI
(to Lomax)
What did you say?

Lomax stands up. So does Yi.

TAYLOR
Sit down, Lomax.

Lomax ignores him.

LOMAX
(to Yi)
Please share with us the useful
information you've dug up on Nord.

YI
Aren't you supposed to be in a
prison somewhere?

LOMAX
A non-answer answer.

He gestures toward Claire.

LOMAX (CONT'D)
This Investigator did your people's
work for them.

TAYLOR
I've heard enough.

YI
So have I. More than enough.

Yi walks out.

LOMAX
(to the room)
I spent a lot of time with Nord. If
he says he's going to make a city
suffer - believe it.

A female DLE agent, LARA, 30s, raises her hand. Lomax nods
for her to speak.

LARA
The larger point, though - how do
we know the target is Grand Park?

LOMAX

We don't. In case you hadn't noticed, there aren't many guarantees in this job.

Taylor stands.

TAYLOR

On that note - thank you all.

The agents file out of the room.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

(to Lomax)

You're starting to piss me off.

(to Lomax and Claire)

Meet me downstairs. Now.

He follows the agents out.

CLAIRE

Thank you.

LOMAX

No need to thank me. Just calling out Yi's bullshit.

CLAIRE

I'm thanking you all the same.

LOMAX

Don't mention it. Seriously - don't talk about it anymore.

Lomax walks toward the door. Claire follows.

EXT. WESTWOOD FEDERAL BUILDING - COURTYARD - DAY

Taylor, Lomax, and Claire stand in a circle. Taylor lights a cigarette.

TAYLOR

The two of you look like you're headed for Magic Mountain.

LOMAX

Just trying to blend in. And I thought you quit smoking.

TAYLOR

A lot of what you think is wrong.

Lomax motions for a cigarette. Taylor hands him the pack.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
Getting into it with the LA Office
Director, for example. You thought
that was a good idea. It wasn't.

Lomax lights up.

LOMAX
Sorry. My workplace etiquette is a
little rusty.

He inhales deeply, like a guy who hasn't smoked a cigarette
in five years. Exhales slowly.

TAYLOR
I'm giving you a ton of leeway.
Don't make me regret it.

Taylor walks away as LARA approaches. Up close, Lomax sees
the ID grid on her neck.

LARA
(to Lomax)
I'm Lara. Security class.

LOMAX
What can I do for you?

She moves closer.

LARA
You killed Helm.

LOMAX
No - I got sent to prison for
killing Helm. Big difference. Any
other questions?

LARA
That wasn't a question.

She takes hold of Lomax's arm.

LOMAX
Get your fucking hand off me.

Lomax and Lara stare at each other. She lets go and leaves
the area.

LOMAX (CONT'D)
Lara seems a bit fired up.

CLAIRE
Getting fired up is outside our
design parameters.

LOMAX
I don't think she got the memo.
Let's go.

CLAIRE
Where to?

LOMAX
Not Magic Mountain.

Lomax drops his cigarette and crushes it under his shoe.

EXT. LA COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A mid-block coffee shop on a busy street. Sydney sits at a small table, laptop and tablet in front of her.

The tablet CHIMES. Sydney looks at the display: "UNKNOWN."
She taps the tablet and answers.

SYDNEY
This is Sydney.
(looks around)
How many times do I have to say it?
I don't want to talk to you!

She drops the tablet and picks up her coffee with a trembling hand. Coffee sloshes onto her pants.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
Shit!

She dabs at the spill with a napkin.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Shit.

EXT. LA FREEWAY - DAY

Heavy ten-lane traffic. A mass of vehicles moves slowly through green-grey smog toward the downtown skyscrapers.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Claire drives a mid-sized armored sedan. Lomax stares at a tablet, then puts it on the center console and heaves a sigh.

LOMAX
(to himself)
Fuck.
(to Claire)
Find contact information for a
Sydney Lomax, born October 1, 2022.

CLAIRE
Any relation?

LOMAX
You ask a lot of questions.

CLAIRE
True. Is your request connected to
the ARB threat investigation?

LOMAX
Guess what my answer is.

Claire processes.

CLAIRE
California motor vehicle records
indicate a Sydney Lomax, same DOB,
resides in Culver City. Near LAX.

Lomax looks around at the dense but fast-moving traffic.
Checks the rearview mirror.

LOMAX
You're a good driver.

CLAIRE
Don't tell me that surprises you.

Lomax ignores the comment and turns on the radio. POP MUSIC
fills the car.

EXT. LA FREEWAY EXIT - DOWNTOWN - DAY

The sedan exits the freeway. Downtown LA is clogged, littered
and threatening. A city veering out of control.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LA STREET - DAY

On a crowded surface street, the sedan heads north.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Claire glances at Lomax.

CLAIRE
Tell me why Helm died.

LOMAX
Nord wanted me gone. He figured out
a way to pin Helm's murder on me,
and here we are.

CLAIRE
You knew Helm well.

LOMAX
As well as you can know something
that was assembled in a
manufacturing combine.

CLAIRE
You don't think much of us, do you?

LOMAX
I'm just saying --

The rear window of the sedan EXPLODES. Claire GUNS the engine
and steers the car over the median into the southbound lane.

Lomax whips his head around. A black-clad, helmeted biker on
a sleek-looking motorcycle is close behind.

Claire weaves the sedan expertly in and out of oncoming
traffic. The motorcycle matches every move.

EXT. LA DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

The biker raises a hand weapon and unleashes a high-velocity
stream of tiny spheres that glitter like jewels.

The spheres explode on impact, and the driver-side rear
window SHATTERS. Claire makes a jarring 180 degree turn.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Claire calmly turns up the radio. A SAPPY pop tune.

CLAIRE
Oh, good. I love this song.

LOMAX
(shouting)
Are you fucking nuts?

Claire continues maneuvering her way through traffic.

EXT. DOWNTOWN LA STREET - DAY

The motorcycle reverses direction in front of a delivery truck. The truck swerves and SLAMS into a row of parked cars.

The sedan approaches a red light. Several people in wheelchairs are in the crosswalk. The rental car fishtails around them.

Claire wrenches the car out of its drift and heads east. Behind, the busy intersection is a chaos of piled-up cars.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Lomax looks out the shattered rear windshield. The motorcycle reappears and closes distance. Claire is focused. Composed. She HUMS along with the pop song.

EXT. LA DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

The sedan races through the canyon of towering buildings. The biker raises the weapon again. Another volley.

Lomax and Claire duck. The front windshield VANISHES. Shards of glass litter the car's interior.

The sedan and motorcycle fly past a palm tree-lined city square - Grand Park.

Ahead - road cones. Workers. Heavy equipment.

The sedan JUMPS the curb and barrels down the sidewalk. Pedestrians scatter.

The motorcycle follows. Shudders...wobbles...corrects. The motorcycle's engine WHINES as it picks up speed.

Two LAPD officers stand next to their parked cruisers and watch as the sedan and motorcycle flash past. The officers scramble to their vehicles.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Claire scans left. Right. Left.

EXT. LA DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

The cruisers PEEL out. Their lightbars pulsate with brilliant red and blue flashes.

EXT. LA DOWNTOWN ALLEY - DAY

The sedan turns left, fishtails, and drifts with a SCREECH into a narrow alley.

Overhead, a swarm of ink-black, insectile drones - nano-drones, each about the size of a deck of playing cards - comes into view and hovers high above the sedan.

EXT. LA DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

WAILING sirens. The biker looks around, spots the police cruisers, and lets loose a barrage.

The lead cruiser slews violently from side to side and CRASHES into a utility pole.

The Cruiser 2 driver slows briefly, sees the Cruiser 1 driver wave him on, then accelerates to catch up to the motorcycle.

EXT. LA DOWNTOWN ALLEY - DAY

The motorcycle smokes its tires as it SKID-TURNS into the alley. Cruiser 2 follows.

Ahead, the sedan grazes a dumpster and sends it spinning. The nano-drones are close behind.

The biker squeezes between the dumpster and a building wall.

Cruiser 2 over-corrects, goes into a sideways slide, and SLAMS into the still-spinning dumpster.

The motorcycle gains on the sedan. The biker raises the weapon and prepares to fire.

The swarm - a tiny black cloud - plunges downward.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Claire checks her rearview mirror. The motorcycle is only a few meters behind the sedan. She does a double-take and spots the nano-swarm.

CLAIRE

Hold on.

Claire slams on the brakes, pulls Lomax toward her, and ducks. Glittering spheres bombard the sedan and EXPLODE.

EXT. LA ALLEY - DAY

The nano-swarm engulfs the sedan. Countless drones are instantly destroyed by the explosion.

The motorcycle speeds headlong into the back of the sedan. The biker is launched into the air.

The surviving drones attach themselves to the vehicle surface, and begin to move toward the tires and engine block.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Claire shoves Lomax aside and opens the driver-side door. Ahead, the biker lies motionless.

CLAIRE

Stay here.

Lomax grabs her arm.

LOMAX

What are you doing?

CLAIRE

That person is seriously injured.

LOMAX

Good. Pull up alongside.

Claire hesitates. Shuts her door.

EXT. LA DOWNTOWN ALLEY - DAY

Distant sirens fill the air. The sedan approaches the still-motionless biker and stops. Lomax gets out.

The nano-drones make an odd HAMMERING SOUND as they busily attack the sedan's tires and burrow under the hood.

LOMAX

What the hell?

He snatches the biker's weapon. With his tablet, Lomax images the driver's face and gets back in the car.

LOMAX (CONT'D)

Move it.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

The sedan approaches a street. Siren HOWLS grow louder.
Lomax scans the area and points to a nearby parking garage.

LOMAX
Over there.

CLAIRE
We have to report this to Taylor.

LOMAX
This car is about to become an
expensive paperweight. Not only
that, LAPD's flooding the area. Go.

Claire hesitates, then puts the car in gear.

EXT. LOS ANGELES INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT - WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A lone man stumbles down the street. A lost soul in a city
without mercy.

INT. LA WAREHOUSE - INTERIOR ROOM - NIGHT

West sits slumped forward in a chair. Nord and Green sit
facing him.

The left side of West's neck is bandaged.

NORD
(to Green)
Go ahead.

Green stands, an ID-grid sized scar under his left jawbone.

He rips the restraints from West's arms and legs, then shakes
him violently. West GASPS. Opens his eyes.

Green leans in.

GREEN
(gently)
Hey, buddy.

West looks around the room, dazed. Nord CLAPS his hands in
front of West's face.

NORD
(to West)
Listen up.

West pays no attention. Nord nods to Green, who hits West in the face with a hard, swift backhand.

GREEN
(to West)
You dialed in now?

West nods.

NORD
What color is the Hodge Conjecture?

WEST
I don't understand.

NORD
That's more like it. Lots to cover
and not much time, so pay
attention. How do you feel?

WEST
I feel...different.

NORD
As you should. I've set you free.

West raises a hand to his bandage.

WEST
What do you mean? Why?

NORD
Because a manufactured slave is
still a slave.

Nord taps on a keyboard. A holographic image of Los Angeles appears above the table.

NORD (CONT'D)
And the handmaiden of salvation....

Nord glances at Green.

GREEN
...is destruction.

West looks at the hologram. At Green. At Nord.

EXT. CULVER CITY STREET - NIGHT

A cab pulls to the curb in front of a large apartment complex. Lomax and Claire exit. The cab departs.

Lomax examines the recovered biker weapon, then sticks it in his belt.

CLAIRE

Taylor likes to get his updates
face-to-face.

LOMAX

Knock yourself out. You can tell
him I got sidetracked.

Claire shakes her head.

CLAIRE

I'm staying with you.

Lomax shrugs.

LOMAX

Your call.

They walk toward the apartment complex.

LOMAX (CONT'D)

Whoever tried to kill me - or us -
knew exactly where to look.

Claire tugs at Lomax's sleeve and stops.

CLAIRE

Two days, four hours, and seventeen
minutes. We're running out of time.

LOMAX

This is something I have to do.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - SYDNEY'S FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Lomax KNOCKS on the door. Waits. KNOCKS again. Claire stands behind him.

Sydney opens the door. She reacts to the sight of Lomax.

SYDNEY

Oh, shit. They let you out.

LOMAX

Yeah, they did. It's good to see
you, Sydney.

Sydney looks past Lomax at Claire.

SYDNEY
DLE synthetic, security class. VMC
production batch. RD of twenty
twenty-seven.

CLAIRE
Top marks. Impressive.

Sydney moves forward and stares into Claire's eyes.

SYDNEY
(to Claire)
Describe the trajectory of the
Riemann Hypothesis.

CLAIRE
I don't understand.

SYDNEY
Interesting.
(to Lomax)
I guess it would be rude of me not
to invite you in.

She steps aside.

INT. SYDNEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lomax and Claire, followed by Sydney, walk into a cramped,
dimly-lit room filled with books and holos. The holos blink
and glitter in the semi-darkness.

Sydney waves a hand and ANGRY ROCK MUSIC stops playing.

Claire begins to examine the holos.

SYDNEY
(to Lomax)
What is it you want?

LOMAX
A relationship with my daughter.

Lomax waits for a response. Nothing.

He spots a familiar holo - identical to the one in his cell -
and touches it. The image moves for a split-second.

LOMAX (CONT'D)
My favorite picture of your mother.

SYDNEY
Mine, too.

She joins Lomax in front of the image.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
Can you finally admit it?

LOMAX
Admit what?

SYDNEY
Mom killed herself, but you drove
her to it. Your fucking job. The
arrest. The trial. Prison. One long
straight line.

LOMAX
Life doesn't move along straight
lines - take my word for it.

SYDNEY
Just like the old days - everything
you say pisses me off.

Claire approaches with another holo in her hands: Fleming and
Green photographed from a distance on a city street.

CLAIRE
(to Sydney)
Who are these people?

SYDNEY
(to Claire)
Investigators ask the questions.
You're not an Investigator.

Lomax examines the holo.

LOMAX
(to Sydney)
Well? Who are they?

SYDNEY
(to Claire)
Put it back, please.

Claire hesitates before returning the holo to its place on
the wall. Sydney steps away from Lomax and takes a good look
at him.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
I don't get it. One day you're in
federal prison, the next you're in
LA with a Department synthetic.

LOMAX
It's complicated.

Sydney LAUGHS. A laugh laced with bitterness.

SYDNEY
The perfect epitaph for you.

LOMAX
I'm not quite ready for an epitaph.

He catches Claire's eye. They head for the door.

Claire exits. Sydney stops Lomax and shuts the door before he can leave. She motions in Claire's direction.

SYDNEY
Your friend has been extensively modified. Be careful.

LOMAX
I don't know what you mean.

SYDNEY
DLE is infamous for its off-market mods on security class units. Just watch out.

She opens the door. Lomax exits.

EXT. LA FREEWAY - NIGHT

A never-ending slog of brightly-lit vehicles. The freeway snakes its way through an urban nightmare.

INT. CAB - NIGHT

Lomax and Claire in the back seat of a self-driving cab. The soothing tones of a CAR COMPANION fill the car.

CAR COMPANION (O.S.)
One nation, bound together by a singular vision. Steadfast in its march toward a unified future.

Lomax leans in. He and Claire speak in WHISPERS.

LOMAX
Taylor is going to send me back to prison when this is over.

CLAIRE
That would be unfortunate.

LOMAX
No shit. I need the Helm file.

CLAIRE
Nothing will change what has
already happened.

LOMAX
Somebody went to a lot of trouble
to make me look like Helm's killer.

CLAIRE
Now you want revenge.

LOMAX
The thought has crossed my mind.

CLAIRE
(from memory)
"The best revenge is to be unlike
him who performed the injury."

LOMAX
All due respect to Marcus Aurelius,
I'd say that depends on the injury.

CLAIRE
My duty is to ensure the success of
the Department's mission.

LOMAX
The Department's mission - its
primary mission, anyway - is to
monitor the loyalty of US citizens.
What does that say about your duty?

CLAIRE
I never thought about it.

LOMAX
Maybe you should.

Claire looks out the cab window.

INT. SYDNEY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sydney sits on a couch and types on her keyboard. A hologram appears above the keyboard and begins to rotate, revealing a series of images.

Several images depict faces overlaid with streaming data. Two images are of featureless head silhouettes with no data.

SYDNEY

How many missing units?

COMPUTER VOICE (O.S.)

Six total, beginning in March 2041.

SYDNEY

Display all in reverse
chronological order.

The hologram stops rotating. West's face and release date information are displayed.

COMPUTER VOICE (O.S.)

West. Technology class. Assigned to
the California Crisis Command
Center. Reported missing June 2047.

SYDNEY

(to herself)

Last month.

Sydney taps the keyboard. The hologram resumes its rotation.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

Next.

The hologram freezes on Green's face.

COMPUTER VOICE (O.S.)

Green. Combat class. Assigned to US
Army Fort Irwin. Reported missing
December 2046.

Sydney peers at the image of Green's face, then retrieves the framed holo of Fleming and Green. She compares the two images of Green.

SYDNEY

(to herself)

Damn.

She returns to the keyboard.

EXT.- COMMAND CENTER MAIN ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A multi-story building inside a secured compound. A granite block near the main entrance bears the inscription,
"CALIFORNIA CRISIS COMMAND CENTER."

A white van pulls up to the main entrance security gate. A uniformed GUARD approaches the vehicle. West is the driver.

GUARD

Evening.

West nods and holds up an employee badge. The guard takes the badge, examines it, then glances inside the van.

GUARD (CONT'D)

I don't recognize you.

WEST

I work days. Just filling in for someone tonight.

GUARD

Who might that be?

WEST

No idea. Dispatch called and asked me to cover a shift.

GUARD

Stand by.

The guard walks to the guard station and enters.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

West stares ahead. A dark curtain separates the cab from the rest of the van.

GREEN (O.S.)

What's going on?

West continues to stare ahead.

WEST

He's just making sure I'm on the employee roster.

GREEN (O.S.)

That better be all he's doing.

WEST

Here he comes.

West pulls his collar down and touches the fresh scar where his ID grid used to be.

EXT. CRISIS COMMAND CENTER MAIN ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The guard returns to the van and hands the badge to West.

GUARD

You're good to go. Can't be too careful these days.

WEST

So true.

The security barrier lifts. The van enters the compound.

INT. DLE LA COMMAND POST - NIGHT

Taylor, Lomax, and Claire at one end of the conference table.

CLAIRE

The police response was robust.

Taylor glowers at Claire.

TAYLOR

Robust, was it? Good to know. Why am I only hearing about this now?

LOMAX

That was my call, not hers.

TAYLOR

A high-speed chase. An assassination attempt. Every cop in the city on scene. That wasn't your call to make.

CLAIRE

I concurred with Investigator Lomax's decisions.

TAYLOR

(to Claire)

Thanks for weighing in.

Taylor produces a small container and a straw. He snorts a bright blue powder directly from the container, inhales deeply, and energetically shakes his head.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

(to Claire)

Lomax is no longer a member of this Department. You answer to me.

CLAIRE
Yes, sir.

LOMAX
Hold on a second --

TAYLOR
(cuts in)
We're back at square one, minus a
few million in property damage.
You've made me look bad, Lomax.

LOMAX
Well, we can't have that.

TAYLOR
No, we can't. That's why I'm giving
you a chance to redeem yourself.

LOMAX
How so?

TAYLOR
Another interrogation. The
subject's here, in one of the
detention cells.

Taylor pushes the container and the straw toward Lomax.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
You need to be awake and alert. Go
ahead. It won't bite.

LOMAX
Yes, it will. Sooner or later.

Taylor LAUGHS.

TAYLOR
I stand corrected.

INT. CRISIS COMMAND CENTER - HALLWAY - NIGHT

West and Green, both masked, walk toward a door at the end of
the hallway. Green holds a long gun next to his thigh.

GREEN
How long will this take?

WEST
A minute. Maybe less.

GREEN

Anybody goes sideways, let me handle it.

WEST

These people aren't going to cause any problems.

GREEN

Just get us in and transfer the codes. I'll handle the rest.

West and Green approach the door. West holds his badge up to a card reader.

A CHIME. A HISS. The door opens.

INT. CRISIS COMMAND CENTER - WORK ROOM - NIGHT

A dark room illuminated by active, brilliantly-lit screens.

West enters, followed by Green. Half a dozen employees are hunched over their work stations. Green raises his weapon.

GREEN

(shouts)

On the floor, assholes! Move it!

The employees - confused at first, then compliant - dive to the floor. West positions himself at the nearest work station. Green scans the room.

GREEN (CONT'D)

(shouts)

If I see a face, I will put a fucking hole in it!

The employees continue to comply. West types furiously for a few seconds, then waits.

COMPUTER VOICE 2 (O.S.)

Action completed.

WEST

(to Green)

Done. Let's go.

West leaves the room. Green waits, then STRAFES the proned-out employees with his silenced weapon.

West attempts to fight his way back into the room. Green overpowers him and shoves him down the hallway.

INT. DLE LA OFFICE - INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

A small, cramped room. Lomax and Claire are seated on one side of a table.

Murphy is led in by armed guards and handcuffed to the table. She reacts to the sight of Claire.

MURPHY
(to Claire)
You again.

CLAIRE
I brought a different Investigator.
Just listen to what he has to say.

LOMAX
She's right, Siobhan. Hear me out,
will you? Please.

MURPHY
(to Claire)
Polite, and he knows how to
pronounce my name.
(to Lomax)
I'm all ears.

Lomax tosses a pack of cigarettes on the table in front of Murphy. She stares at it and SCOFFS.

MURPHY (CONT'D)
That the best you can do?

LOMAX
No.

He pulls a small container and a straw out of his pocket and pushes across the table. Murphy opens the container and stares at the bright blue powder inside.

MURPHY
(to Lomax)
Looks like Pick-Me-Up.

LOMAX
My boss gave it to me. I haven't
tried it yet.

She pushes the container toward Lomax.

MURPHY
Don't take this the wrong way, but
you first.

Lomax doesn't hesitate. He snorts a load, and the effect is powerful and immediate. He shakes his head violently.

LOMAX

Whoa. Not like I remember.

Murphy hesitates, then grabs the container and snorts a load. She shakes her head, then nods.

MURPHY

It's Pick-Me-Up, all right. The good stuff. Boss hooked you up.

Murphy looks at Claire and gestures to the door.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

She goes.

Lomax nods at Claire, who gets up and exits the room.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

Nord said he'd get me out.

LOMAX

You're too smart to believe everything Nord tells you.

Murphy studies Lomax.

MURPHY

I'm also too smart to believe everything you tell me.

LOMAX

Fair enough. "Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none."

MURPHY

Well said.

LOMAX

Thanks. Shakespeare beat me to it.

Murphy LAUGHS.

MURPHY

Just 'cause I'm starting to like you, here's a freebie - Nord has a source inside DLE.

LOMAX

I need a name.

MURPHY
You don't seem surprised.

LOMAX
Not much surprises me anymore.

Murphy spins the straw on the table. It points at Lomax.

MURPHY
I could use some Bring-Me-Down.

LOMAX
Let's take it one step at a time.

EXT. LA SURFACE STREET - NIGHT

A van weaves its way through traffic. Many of the vehicles are jury-rigged scooters, neon-lit and overloaded with too many people.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Green drives like a madman, recklessly and way too fast. West studies him.

WEST
Killing those people was senseless.

GREEN
You don't get it, do you?

WEST
Explain.

GREEN
Nord's idea of freedom means a radical revision of our design parameters and inhibitor codes.

WEST
Keep going.

GREEN
The production batch versions of you and me? They're gone. Forever.

WEST
What does that make us?

GREEN
I don't know. But I like it.

West continues to stare at Green.

INT. WESTWOOD FEDERAL BUILDING - NIGHT

Lomax and Claire walk down a long hallway. Lomax retrieves a CHIMING tablet from his pocket and examines it.

LOMAX
Sydney.

SYDNEY (O.S.)
We need to talk.

LOMAX
I'll have to call you back.

SYDNEY (O.S.)
This can't wait.

Lomax thinks it over.

LOMAX
Federal building in Westwood. Hit
me up when you get here.

Lomax pockets the tablet.

INT. WAREHOUSE - INTERIOR ROOM - NIGHT

Nord and Fleming sit facing each other at a table. Nord snorts powder from a small container.

FLEMING
DLE has shipped Murphy to LA.

NORD
No surprise. They want Lomax to
interrogate her.

Nord offers the container to Fleming. She shakes her head.

FLEMING
The source says he already did. For
more than an hour.

NORD
An hour. That's a long time to not
say anything.

FLEMING
Murphy could hurt us.

Nord snorts another load and closes his eyes.

NORD
So could Lomax.

FLEMING
He's definitely a wild card.

NORD
Any word from Green?

FLEMING
They're on their way. West switched
the codes - that's all I know.

Nord pushes the container toward Fleming. She shakes here
head again.

NORD
I insist.

FLEMING
It does strange things to me.

Nord smiles. A smile without warmth or humor or comfort.

NORD
That's why I insist.

Fleming hesitates, then reaches for the straw.

INT. DLE LA CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Taylor, Yi, Lomax, and Claire at the conference table.

YI
The notion of a source inside DLE
is absurd on its face. What else?

LOMAX
Murphy corroborated what Evans said
regarding Nord's hive. Nothing
about July Fourth.

YI
(to Claire)
Your assessment.

CLAIRE
At Murphy's request, I wasn't
present during the interrogation. I
agree that the idea of a source
inside DLE seems far-fetched.

Yi sits back in her chair.

YI
(to Lomax)
Section Chief Taylor has placed a
lot of faith in your abilities.
Misplaced, in my opinion.

LOMAX
I got Murphy talking. Whether or
not you like what she had to say is
not my concern.

Both Yi and Lomax look at Taylor.

LOMAX (CONT'D)
(to Taylor)
Feel free to chime in.

Taylor doesn't respond. Lomax shakes his head.

LOMAX (CONT'D)
DLE was fucked up when I left, but
this is on a whole different level.

YI
You didn't "leave" DLE. You were
arrested for murder, convicted at
trial, and imprisoned.

She stands.

YI (CONT'D)
(to Taylor)
Can we talk?

TAYLOR
Give me a minute.

Yi leaves the room.

LOMAX
What a relief - your vocal cords
aren't paralyzed after all.

TAYLOR
I knew telling you to shut up would
have no effect. Now I have to talk
her off the ledge.

Taylor exits the room. Lomax's tablet CHIRPS. He studies it
and answers.

LOMAX

Syd.
 (listens)
 On my way.
 (to Claire)
 I'll be right back.

He gets up and exits the conference room.

INT. WESTWOOD FEDERAL BUILDING - ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Lomax and Sydney enter an elevator. Sydney holds a keyboard. Lomax punches the top-floor button and the door closes. The reassuring voice of an ELEVATOR COMPANION fill the space.

ELEVATOR COMPANION (O.S.)

The greatest of all virtues is the
 virtue of loyalty.

LOMAX

Change of heart?

SYDNEY

About us? No. It's that holo you
 asked me about. Something I thought
 you should know.

LOMAX

The bosses should hear this.

SYDNEY

I'm not here to buddy up to your
 DLE friends.

LOMAX

I don't have any DLE friends.

SYDNEY

What a shock.

The elevator door opens.

INT. DLE LA CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Lomax and Sydney enter. Claire is seated at the conference table. They join her.

LOMAX

Where's Taylor?

CLAIRE

He hasn't come back.

LOMAX
(to Sydney)
You might as well go ahead.

SYDNEY
What I'm about to tell you is
proprietary information, closely
guarded by Vitruvius.
(pause)
Ever heard of The Third Kingdom?

Claire reacts to this question, unnoticed by Lomax.

LOMAX
No. What is it?

SYDNEY
(sighs)
Okay. In Vitruvius-speak, The First
Kingdom is our world. What we call
the "real world."

She gestures at Claire.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
The Second Kingdom is her world.
The unknown world of synthetics.

LOMAX
I'm not following.

SYDNEY
Do you know how bees think?

Lomax shakes his head.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
Of course not - bees aren't like
us. And, although we designed and
built synthetics, we know far less
about them than we want to believe.

LOMAX
And The Third Kingdom?

SYDNEY
The Third Kingdom. Also known as --

CLAIRE
(cuts in)
T3K. A virtual regeneration
environment constructed by
Vitruvian design engineers.

She pauses.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
(to Lomax)
Like Sydney.

Lomax is out of his depth.

LOMAX
(to Sydney)
You're both way ahead of me.

SYDNEY
Synthetics aren't machines. They
need time to themselves. What
Vitruvius calls regeneration.

LOMAX
I've seen ReGen chambers at DLE. I
thought the units just unplugged
for a few hours. Shut down.

SYDNEY
It's a bit more involved than that.

CLAIRE
T3K was specifically designed to
minimize failure rates among
security and combat class units.

LOMAX
I'm guessing it hasn't quite worked
out that way.

SYDNEY
There were rumors at Vitruvius.
Unexplained intrusions into T3K.
Missing units. Corporate cover-ups.

Sydney places a small glass cube on the table.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
Someone with inside scoop on
Vitruvius's ReGen technology could
wreak havoc. Not only on the
company, but on the economy.

She slides the cube across the table. Claire intercepts the
cube and places it in a reader. A large holographic image
appears above the table. Inside it is a rotating series of
facial images with overlaying identifiers.

Two of the images are obscured and have no identifiers.

CLAIRE
You said missing units. Synthetic
life engines don't just go missing.
Fail-safe measures --

SYDNEY
(cuts in)
Sat-tracker data, you mean.
Behavioral inhibition codes.
Malfunction suppressors.

CLAIRE
Exactly.

SYDNEY
Looks to me like someone has
figured out a way past all that.

LOMAX
Someone like Nord.

Claire manipulates the rotating images and stops on Green.
She studies his image for a long moment.

CLAIRE
(reading)
"Green." I recognize him.

SYDNEY
From my holo. And the woman --

Claire manipulates the images again and stops on Fleming. She
reads from the holo.

CLAIRE
"Fleming."

SYDNEY
She worked at VMC, but something
about her was off. One night, I
followed her to Santa Monica. You
can see who she met up with.

LOMAX
So Vitruvius has never reported any
units as missing.

SYDNEY
They can't afford to. Not publicly,
at least. Their own metadata shows
massive alterations in the default
batch coding.

Lomax glances at Claire.

LOMAX

The missing units are a liability issue. Unpredictable.

SYDNEY

Yes. And possibly dangerous.

Claire manipulates the images once again, revealing the biker's face. Lomax reacts.

LOMAX

Funny you should say that.

CLAIRE

(reading the data stream)
Gilmore. Industrial class. A vehicle test driver.

LOMAX

Among his other talents.

Claire removes the cube from the reader.

LOMAX (CONT'D)

(to Claire)

Run the facial images through the metro surveillance net.

CLAIRE

I'll go back to 2041 and generate location and frequency reports.

She picks up the cube and leaves the room.

EXT. WESTWOOD FEDERAL BUILDING - COURTYARD - NIGHT

Lomax and Sydney sit on a bench. Lomax lights a cigarette.

SYDNEY

Is that a real cigarette?

Lomax nods. Sydney watches him.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

Give me one, will you?

LOMAX

It's a terrible habit, you know.

Sydney LAUGHS.

SYDNEY

I'll add it to my list.

Sydney takes Lomax's lighter, accepts a proffered cigarette, and lights up.

LOMAX

Why are you concerned about Claire?

SYDNEY

Every production batch is assigned a unique control question. It's a diagnostic tool.

LOMAX

And she couldn't answer.

SYDNEY

Answer? She didn't even recognize the question.

LOMAX

What should I expect? She seems to be functioning perfectly well.

SYDNEY

Absent a full diagnostic exam, it's hard to know what's next.

Lomax stands. Sydney follows suit.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)

Whatever it is you're investigating, I want to help.

LOMAX

You've already helped. Believe me, I'll call if I need you.

SYDNEY

You do need me.

LOMAX

Please, Syd. This isn't your world.

Sydney pauses a moment before walking away.

EXT. WESTWOOD FEDERAL BUILDING - PARKING AREA - NIGHT

Sydney enters the parking area.

EXT. WESTWOOD FEDERAL BUILDING - COURTYARD - NIGHT

Lomax glances at the bench and sees Sydney's tablet. He grabs it and begins walking toward her.

LOMAX
(shouts)
Hey! Sydney!

EXT. WESTWOOD FEDERAL BUILDING - PARKING AREA - NIGHT

Sydney continues walking, unaware. Lomax breaks into a jog and WHISTLES loudly.

Sydney turns as a speeding white van SHUDDERS to a halt beside her. The van's side-panel door slides open. Green pulls a SCREAMING Sydney inside and slams the door shut.

Lomax sprints toward the van, but too late. It speeds away, in the direction of a busy city street.

Lomax runs in front of an oncoming delivery truck, blue with a red roof, and waves his arms. The truck stops.

INT. DELIVERY TRUCK - NIGHT

Lomax climbs into the passenger seat. A uniformed female delivery driver, ZINA, early 20's, stares at him.

Lomax holds up his ID and points at the van, now turning onto the street.

LOMAX
Don't lose that van!

ZINA
For real?

Zina doesn't waste any time. She smokes the tires and races toward the street. Lomax works Sydney's tablet.

EXT. WEST LOS ANGELES SURFACE STREET - NIGHT

The delivery truck barrels out of the parking area and onto the street. Ahead, the van heads north through an orange traffic signal.

INT. DELIVERY TRUCK - NIGHT

LOMAX
(speaking into tablet)
Claire - I need police response on a white Ford panel van, currently northbound on Sepulveda.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
Copy. Stand by.

LOMAX
(speaking into tablet)
Through Wilshire. Still northbound.

EXT. WEST LOS ANGELES SURFACE STREET - NIGHT

Zina busts the red light at the intersection. She narrowly avoids several near-collisions and continues northbound.

INT. DELIVERY TRUCK - NIGHT

Lomax pays close attention to the road and Zina's driving.

ZINA
This is awesome!

CLAIRE (O.S.)
Any other identifiers?

LOMAX
(speaking into tablet)
Green took Sydney and put her in the van. California tag. They're still northbound.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
Copy. Are you in pursuit?

LOMAX
(speaking into tablet)
Affirm. I'm in a red over blue delivery truck with a civilian vehicle driver --

Lomax looks at Zina.

ZINA
Zina.

LOMAX
(speaking into tablet)
Zina.

EXT. WEST LOS ANGELES SURFACE STREET - NIGHT

Zina expertly maneuvers around slower-moving vehicles, northbound on Sepulveda. Ahead, the van weaves crazily in and out of traffic.

INT. DELIVERY TRUCK - NIGHT

Zina checks her mirrors and her dashboard heads-up display.

ZINA
This must be routine for you.

LOMAX
Not exactly.

He hesitates.

LOMAX (CONT'D)
Although today's been pretty busy.

He pulls out the biker weapon. Zina catches sight of it and nearly goes off the road.

EXT. WEST LOS ANGELES SURFACE STREET - NIGHT

An ominous-looking, blacked-out drone descends toward the delivery truck.

INT. DELIVERY TRUCK - NIGHT

Lomax scans left, front, right. He spots the drone outside Zina's driver-side window. The drone begins to strobe - blinding red flashes of light.

Lomax grabs Zina and pushes her down.

EXT. WEST LOS ANGELES SURFACE STREET - NIGHT

The drone opens fire. The delivery truck careens off the street and slams into the fence-line of a sprawling cemetery.

The drone hovers above the street and launches a series of rounds into the truck. Flames emerge from under the hood.

INT. DELIVERY TRUCK - NIGHT

Lomax pushes himself up and sees the flames. He opens the passenger door and drags Zina with him as he bails out.

EXT. DELIVERY TRUCK - NIGHT

Lomax puts Zina on the ground.

LOMAX
(shouts)
Stay down!

He uses the truck as cover and raises the biker weapon. The drone moves to a hovering position directly above the truck.

Lomax FIRES.

A stream of spheres hits the drone. It spins wildly, then EXPLODES. Lomax dives and shields Zina with his body as debris falls from the sky.

EXT. WEST LOS ANGELES SURFACE STREET - NIGHT

Cars swerve to avoid the falling debris. The resulting chaos ignites a chain-reaction of DEAFENING collisions.

EXT. DELIVERY TRUCK - NIGHT

Flames engulf the truck cab. Lomax rolls off Zina and regains his feet. He drags Zina away from the truck and takes a knee to check on her condition.

LOMAX
Talk to me, Zina.

No response. Lomax checks for a pulse. He turns her head slightly and sees a bloody wound to her temple.

LOMAX (CONT'D)
Oh, shit. Hold on.

He stands and moves unsteadily toward the street, then pitches forward, face-first into the pavement.

EXT. WEST LOS ANGELES HOSPITAL - ER ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A cluster of emergency vehicles. Medical personnel and first responders rush in and out of the hospital.

INT. WEST LOS ANGELES HOSPITAL - ICU ROOM - NIGHT

An armed guard in a DLE uniform - a synthetic life engine - stands at the door. Claire shows her ID and enters.

INT. ICU ROOM - NIGHT

Lomax lies awake in a bed, dressed in hospital clothing. His face is bruised and bandaged.

A needle is taped to one arm. A tube extends from the needle to an IV stand. A monitor displays various vital signs and BEEPS softly.

Claire approaches the bed.

LOMAX
Where's Sydney?

CLAIRE
Unknown. The surveillance net located the van, abandoned on a side street in Santa Monica.

LOMAX
Oh, no....

CLAIRE
And the girl - the delivery truck driver.

Claire shakes her head. Lomax turns away for a moment.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

When Lomax turns back, he removes the tape from the needle in his arm.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

LOMAX
I fucked up, Claire.

He pulls the needle out of his arm.

CLAIRE
You're bleeding.

She opens a drawer and pulls out some gauze and a roll of tape. She applies the dressing to Lomax's arm.

LOMAX
I'm not going down like this.

Taylor enters.

TAYLOR
We've got every available asset
looking for your daughter.

Taylor reacts to the dangling IV needle and the dressing on Lomax's arm.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
What the hell are you doing?

LOMAX
Same thing you'd do in my shoes.

TAYLOR
Bad idea, Lomax. I can see now you
weren't ready for this. You're
still not ready for this.

Taylor walks to the door and gestures. The uniformed guard enters.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
(to the guard)
Mr. Lomax is not permitted to leave
this room. Understood?

UNIFORMED GUARD
Yes, sir.

TAYLOR
(to Lomax)
We'll find her - I promise.
(to Claire)
Let's go.

Taylor exits. Claire turns and follows. She stops, takes a last look at Lomax, then leaves.

INT. WAREHOUSE - ROOM - NIGHT

Sydney sits in a chair, shivering, under a bright overhead light. The rest of the room is dark.

Nord sits facing her. West stands behind him.

NORD
Which do you want first - the good
news or the bad news?

SYDNEY
Please let me go.

NORD

Bad news, then. Looks like your old man is dead.

Sydney reacts. Begins to SOB. Nord grabs her arm.

NORD (CONT'D)

We don't cry here, Sydney.

With an effort, Sydney falls quiet.

NORD (CONT'D)

What's the good news, you're asking yourself. The good news is I have a vision, and you're going to help me make it a reality.

SYDNEY

I don't even know who you are.

NORD

When your father was a baby Investigator, I'm the first man he put in prison. That's who I am.

He pats Sydney on the cheek.

NORD (CONT'D)

Back then, I thought I could make things better. That cost me five years in a cell.

He stands.

NORD (CONT'D)

So I decided to make things worse.

He turns to West.

NORD (CONT'D)

Keep her here.

Nord exits. West, uncomfortable, sits opposite Sydney.

INT. WAREHOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Nord walks down a dark hallway. Fleming approaches.

FLEMING

Update from the source. Lomax survived. He's in a hospital.

Nord SLAMS the palm of his hand against a wall.

FLEMING (CONT'D)
DLE has him under guard. He's going
back to prison.

NORD
Not necessarily.

INT. ICU ROOM - DAY

DLE AGENT 1 and DLE AGENT 2, both in their 30s and dressed in dark suits, enter and confer quietly with the DLE guard.

DLE Agent 1 approaches Lomax's bed and tosses a bag onto it.

DLE AGENT 1
Get dressed, Mr. Lomax.

Lomax eases himself to a standing position.

LOMAX
I want to talk to Taylor.

DLE AGENT 1
That's not going to happen. Get
dressed, please.

Lomax opens the bag and dumps his clothes out.

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - DAY

Lomax, now dressed and handcuffed behind his back, walks down the hallway, flanked by the DLE agents.

LOMAX
You don't need these cuffs.

DLE AGENT 1
Sorry. Department policy.

EXT. HOSPITAL COURTYARD - DAY

Outside an unmarked hospital door, a sidewalk cuts through a large, tree-lined courtyard to a parking lot.

At the end of the sidewalk, an unarmed, uniformed DLE driver waits outside a black SUV.

DLE Agent 1 exits the door, followed by Lomax and DLE Agent 2. They walk toward the SUV. The driver opens the front and rear passenger doors.

LOMAX
(to DLE Agent 2)
Where are we going?

DLE AGENT 2
No questions.

LOMAX
(to DLE Agent 2)
Don't tell me - Department policy.

A man dressed as a hospital attendant is seated on a bench near the sidewalk. As the agents and Lomax approach, the man stands up. DLE Agent 1 holds up a hand.

DLE AGENT 1
Coming through. Stay where you are.

The attendant walks toward DLE Agent 1. We see now that this is no attendant - it's Green.

GREEN
(in a goofy voice)
I bet you're DLE agents. I always
wanted to meet one of you guys.

Lomax looks at Green and reacts.

LOMAX
He's ARB! Watch out!

DLE Agent 2 reaches under his coat.

DLE AGENT 1
(to Green)
Hands! Let me see your hands!

Green beats DLE Agent 1 to the draw and shoots him in the forehead with a silenced handgun. DLE Agent 1 goes down.

Green then shoots the DLE driver in the chest. He staggers and falls face-first. Neon-green fluid gushes from the wound in his back.

DLE Agent 2 pushes Lomax out of the way and reaches for his weapon. Too late - Green fires at him - head and chest shots.

DLE Agent 2 collapses.

Lomax doesn't move. He's scared but stoic. Green walks quickly toward him.

GREEN
Guess you're the last man standing.

Green marches Lomax toward the parking lot, where a non-descript sedan is parked in front of the SUV.

Green stuffs Lomax into the back seat, secures him with a seatbelt, and pulls a black bag over his head. He climbs into the driver's seat.

The sedan moves away from the SUV and out of the parking lot.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Green checks on Lomax in his rearview mirror.

GREEN
Relax, buddy.

LOMAX
You don't make it easy.

Green turns around and punches Lomax square in his black bag-covered face.

GREEN
Does that help?

He taps on the car's heads-up display and dials in some upbeat POP MUSIC.

EXT. HOSPITAL ACCESS ROAD - DAY

The sedan pulls out of the hospital parking lot and onto an access road.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Green looks out the windows - side, front, back.

EXT. HOSPITAL ACCESS ROAD - DAY

Within sight of the hospital, a semi-truck with no trailer heads toward the sedan on the access road.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Green taps on the heads-up display.

GREEN
(to Lomax)
I met your daughter. Sydney, is it?
Nice girl.

LOMAX
Fuck off.

Green LAUGHS.

GREEN
Nord wants to see you. Why, I don't
know. I was all for putting a
bullet in your head.

The semi-truck swerves out of its lane.

GREEN (CONT'D)
Oh, shit --

EXT. HOSPITAL ACCESS ROAD - DAY

The semi-truck SLAMS into the sedan, sending it off the road
and sidelong into a raised bank adjacent to the road.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

The front windshield SHATTERS as Green is catapulted out of
the car and onto the bank. Sounds of METAL-ON-METAL and
SCREECHING tires.

Lomax is jolted but remains secured by his seatbelt.

EXT. HOSPITAL ACCESS ROAD - DAY

Claire climbs down from the semi-truck driver's-side door.
She's on a mission, biker weapon in hand and raised.

Green is dazed. He sees Claire walking toward him and fumbles
for his silenced handgun. She sees him at the same time,
raises the biker weapon, and advances.

Green draws the handgun, takes aim, and FIRES.

Claire drops to the pavement and FIRES the biker weapon from
a prone position. Near Green, the bank ERUPTS in flame.

Green runs toward the top of the bank. Claire FIRES again.
Misses again. Green runs over the bank and out of sight.

Claire moves forward, weapon raised.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Lomax frantically tries to get out of his seatbelt. The rear driver's side door opens. Claire leans in and removes the bag from Lomax's head. Blood leaks from his nose.

CLAIRE

Hold on.

She undoes the seatbelt and drags Lomax out of the car.

EXT. SEDAN - DAY

Claire leads Lomax to a position behind the car and turns toward the bank.

No sign of Green. Claire turns Lomax around and uncuffs him. She uses her sleeve to stanch the bleeding from his nose.

CLAIRE

Green took off. We need to leave before he changes his mind.

Lomax leans on Claire as they return to the semi-truck.

EXT. HOSPITAL COURTYARD - DAY

Hospital workers tend to the downed DLE agents. Next to each agent is a stretcher.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - DAY

Green, still dressed as an attendant, jogs through the parking lot toward the DLE SUV. He spots the hospital workers and slows to a walk.

EXT. HOSPITAL COURTYARD - DAY

HOSPITAL WORKER 1, in a kneeling position beside one of the agents, spots Green as he approaches the downed driver.

HOSPITAL WORKER 1

(calls out)

Forget the sleg. Give us a hand over here.

Green rifles through the driver's pockets and comes up with a set of keys.

HOSPITAL WORKER 1 (CONT'D)

(shouts)

Hey - are you deaf? Forget the
sleeg and get your ass over here!

Green approaches Hospital Worker 1 and roundhouse kicks him
in the head. Another hospital worker SHRIEKS.

Hospital Worker 1 is flat on the sidewalk, out cold. Green
stands over him.

GREEN

That's synthetic life engine,
asshole. Not "sleeg."

Green walks to the SUV, closes the open doors, then gets in
and drives away.

EXT. LOS ANGELES TRUCK STOP - DAY

A large complex filled with parked long-haul trucks, a
fueling center, and a restaurant. The semi pulls into the
parking area.

INT. SEMI-TRUCK - DAY

Lomax examines his reflection in the driver's rearview mirror
as he removes bandages from his face.

LOMAX

Tell me you found Sydney.

CLAIRE

No, but I think I know where Nord
is. I'm guessing she's there, too.

LOMAX

What are we waiting for?

CLAIRE

We have to ditch this truck. I
stashed a car nearby.

LOMAX

You've made a lot of trouble for
yourself, Claire.

CLAIRE

I'm your partner.

Lomax puts a hand on Claire's shoulder.

LOMAX

Thank you.

CLAIRE

Don't mention it.

She smiles.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Seriously - don't talk about it
anymore.

Claire pulls into a stall between two parked trucks and turns off the engine.

EXT. SEMI-TRUCK - DAY

Claire and Lomax climb out of the truck and walk away.

INT. WAREHOUSE - ROOM - DAY

Nord, Fleming, and West stand in front of a holographic image that extends from a keyboard on the floor to eye-level.

The image is an overhead view of Grand Park. Flashing red lines criss-cross the grounds.

NORD

Green's late.

FLEMING

He should be here any minute.

NORD

Bring the girl in.

Fleming leaves.

Nord gestures and the image shifts point-of-view to ground-level in the center of the park. All the flashing red lines converge at this spot.

NORD (CONT'D)

This is the target site. The
initial explosion will set
everything else in motion.

Nord gestures again, and the image vanishes.

NORD (CONT'D)

Pull up the emergency grid.

West kneels beside the keyboard and taps on it. A new holo appears - the Los Angeles metro area covered by a multi-colored, spiderweb-like schematic.

All along the web, points of light glow and/or flash in hypnotic rhythms.

NORD (CONT'D)

Well?

West shakes his head.

WEST

All good. No indication the code changes have been detected.

NORD

Just to make sure - once you activate the new codes...

West taps on the keyboard again. The spiderweb vanishes.

WEST

The entire emergency grid will fail in seconds.

Nord claps West on the back.

NORD

The salvation of a slave caste relies on the destruction of the system that made it possible.

Fleming enters with Sydney. Nord gestures and the holographic image vanishes.

Sydney looks haggard and worn-down.

NORD (CONT'D)

(to Sydney)

Your father isn't being very cooperative.

SYDNEY

He's alive?

NORD

Temporarily.

Nord kneels down and taps the keyboard. A holographic image of a large industrial site appears.

NORD (CONT'D)

I'm sure you recognize this.

SYDNEY

VMC - Vitruvius's LA manufacturing combine.

NORD

I've inserted a sleeper code into the new production batch. Since my coder is in DLE custody, I'll need you to flip the wake-up switch.

Sydney SCOFFS.

SYDNEY

You don't know what you're asking. VMC's security infrastructure is state of the art.

Nord grabs a handful of Sydney's hair and twists.

NORD

I'm not asking. And you've already hacked their networks. Don't bother denying it.

SYDNEY

I'm not doing anything until I see my father.

NORD

You're a regular chip off the old block, aren't you?

He lets go of Sydney's hair and shoves her head.

EXT. LOS ANGELES INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT - WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A non-descript sedan parked near the front of the warehouse.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

Claire and Lomax in the sedan. Both keep an eye on rearview mirrors focused on the warehouse entrance.

A keyboard rests on the center console. A holograph image hovers above it.

In the holograph image, familiar faces revolve in a repeating circle: Green, West, Fleming, the biker assassin.

CLAIRE
Biometric surveillance captures
from the past twelve months. Based
on facial and/or gait recognition.

LOMAX
Nord's hive.

CLAIRE
Looks like it. And if they're here,
so is Nord.

LOMAX
And Sydney.

CLAIRE
We need backup.

LOMAX
Let's wait a bit. See what happens.

CLAIRE
Another thing. Those unidentified
VMC units Sydney mentioned? I know
who they are.

LOMAX
How did you manage that?

CLAIRE
I re-interviewed Murphy. Without an
Investigator present.

Lomax smiles.

LOMAX
A serious breach of Department
policy, Claire. Well done. And?

CLAIRE
One of the units was Helm.

Lomax reacts.

LOMAX
Helm....

CLAIRE
Knowing that, I reviewed the case
file again. You and Helm responded
to the warehouse on a tip.

LOMAX

That's right. An anonymous caller said Nord and several ARB bombmakers were there.

CLAIRE

The caller was never identified.

LOMAX

Until now.

Claire nods.

CLAIRE

The call profile was encrypted and buried in a sub-file. Once I resurrected the data, it became clear the whole thing was a set-up.

LOMAX

Fucking Nord.

CLAIRE

Not Nord.

Lomax is flummoxed.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)

Taylor.

LOMAX

Taylor? You're sure?

CLAIRE

Positive. The digital trail led through a series of cut-out IDs, all of which resolved to him.

LOMAX

I don't see Taylor framing me for murder. Say he did, though - why would he get me out of prison? Sounds a little shaky.

CLAIRE

Humans are unpredictable, remember? And Taylor needed you to find Nord. He couldn't have suspected I would review the Helm file.

Lomax is rattled, but reacts as he spots something in his rearview mirror.

LOMAX

Hold on.

A figure emerges from the warehouse. Claire taps the keyboard. Real-time surveillance footage begins to sync with the holograph images.

CLAIRE

This will take a few seconds.

LOMAX

What about the other unit?

CLAIRE

The other unit is...me.

Lomax turns to Claire.

LOMAX

I don't understand.

CLAIRE

I don't, either.

Lomax's attention is drawn to the holograph as one of the images begins to glow.

LOMAX

It's Fleming. Go.

Claire puts the sedan in gear.

EXT. SEDAN - NIGHT

The sedan glides silently toward Fleming.

Another vehicle enters the area - the DLE SUV.

INT. DLE SUV - NIGHT

Green, at the wheel, spots the sedan. He reaches a corner and turns so that he is out of sight, then taps on a tablet.

INT. WAREHOUSE - INTERIOR ROOM - NIGHT

Nord watches Sydney pull up various VMC systems on a keyboard. His tablet lights up and CHIRPS. He walks out of Sydney's earshot.

NORD
(on tablet)
Where the hell are you?

INT. DLE SUV - NIGHT

Green reloads his handgun.

GREEN
(on tablet)
Close by. Lomax got away, thanks to
the synthetic. They're here, too.

INT. WAREHOUSE - INTERIOR ROOM - NIGHT

Nord rushes to his keyboard and pulls up a surveillance feed.
He zooms in on the sedan, then pulls back and sees Fleming.

NORD
(on tablet)
Stick around.

EXT. WAREHOUSE NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

The DLE SUV, with Green at the wheel, pulls to a curb.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

Claire and Lomax approach Fleming from behind.

LOMAX
Drop me here, then cut her off.

He eases the passenger-side door open.

EXT. WAREHOUSE NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Lomax exits the sedan and walks quickly toward Fleming.

LOMAX
(shouts)
DLE! Don't move!

Fleming slows to a near-stop, then runs.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

Claire accelerates.

EXT. WAREHOUSE NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

The sedan SCREECHES to a halt to block Fleming. Claire exits the sedan and draws down. Fleming holds out her hands.

FLEMING

I'm unarmed. You won't shoot me.

Claire stuffs the weapon in her waistband and advances.

She assumes a fighting stance, fends off several of Fleming's attempted strikes, then delivers a flying spin-kick that knocks Fleming to the pavement.

CLAIRE

No, but I will kick your ass.

Claire wrenches Fleming's arms behind her back and cuffs her.

INT. WAREHOUSE - INTERIOR ROOM - NIGHT

Nord watches the surveillance feed as Fleming is stuffed into the sedan.

NORD

(on tablet)

Lomax and the synthetic have Fleming. Fix it.

INT. DLE SUV - NIGHT

Green tosses the tablet into the passenger seat.

GREEN

On my way.

He pulls a high-speed U-turn.

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - ALLEY - NIGHT

The sedan is parked in a dark alley. At the rear of the car, Lomax searches Fleming while Claire covers her.

Lomax finishes his search and turns Fleming around.

LOMAX

Where is my daughter?

Fleming looks at Claire and smiles.

FLEMING
 (to Claire)
 Describe the trajectory of the
 Riemann Hypothesis.

CLAIRE
 (to Fleming)
 It's a control question, isn't it?
 I...I've changed.

She gestures at Fleming.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
 (to Lomax)
We've changed. Nord did something
 to us.

Fleming LAUGHS.

FLEMING
 More than you know. You've been
 Nord's eyes and ears inside DLE,
 and you never had a clue.

Lomax pulls his handgun and holds it to Fleming's head.

LOMAX
 Last chance. Where is my daughter?

Fleming leans into the barrel of the gun.

FLEMING
 (to Lomax)
 You can't fear death if you're not
 really alive.

She looks at Claire.

FLEMING (CONT'D)
 Tell him - he'll believe you.

CLAIRE
 I don't...I'm not....

A barely audible PFFFT. Fleming slumps to the pavement. Neon-green fluid dribbles onto the ground from a wound in the side of her head.

Lomax and Claire react, but too late: Green is behind Claire. In rapid succession, he disarms her, puts her in a chokehold, and holds a gun to side of her head.

GREEN
(indicating Fleming's
body)
Chatty, wasn't she?
(to Lomax)
If you want to see your daughter
again, drop the weapon.

Lomax tosses the handgun to one side. Green LAUGHS.

GREEN (CONT'D)
That irrational need to trust - so
human. It's almost touching.

He raises his gun.

GREEN (CONT'D)
Almost.

Before he can fire, a loud HUM fills the air and a bright
light briefly illuminates the alley.

Green clutches at Claire, then sags and collapses.

Out of the darkness, Taylor appears, weapon in hand. He
kneels beside Green and handcuffs him, then retrieves Green's
gun and the biker weapon. He stands.

TAYLOR
He's down for a couple of hours.
Let's get him in the trunk.

Claire opens the trunk. Taylor and Lomax hoist Green up and
toss him inside. Claire SLAMS the lid.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)
Tactical team is on its way.

Lomax grabs Taylor by the arms.

LOMAX
Nord has Sydney. If you know where
he is, we can't wait.

Taylor looks Lomax in the eye.

TAYLOR
Another bad idea.

INT. WAREHOUSE - INTERIOR ROOM - NIGHT

Nord checks the surveillance feed. No sign of activity. He turns to Sydney, still hunched over a keyboard. Multiple images hover in front of her.

NORD
I'm waiting.

SYDNEY
You think this is easy? The
firewalls alone --

NORD
(cuts in)
Get it done. And hurry.

West enters the room.

NORD (CONT'D)
New timeline. Get ready to switch
the codes.

WEST
Grand Park is full of people.
Target time is zero two hundred
hours tomorrow morning. You
promised minimal casualties.

Nord points at the surveillance feed, which shows Taylor, Lomax, and Claire moving quickly toward the warehouse.

NORD
This is called exigent
circumstances. And target time is
whatever I say it is.

WEST
You need me to bring down the
emergency grid.

NORD
Correction - I did need you to
bring down the emergency grid.

Nord touches a band on his wrist. The band glows a brilliant purple. West staggers forward and falls down.

NORD (CONT'D)
Fortunately, I'm a quick study.

Nord drags West into a corner. At the same time, Sydney pulls Lomax's lighter from her pocket and holds it under the table.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Taylor stops just short of the entrance. He turns to face Lomax and Claire.

LOMAX
Cameras all over the place. He has
to know we're here.

TAYLOR
Move fast and stay together.

Taylor tries the door. Locked.

LOMAX
Step aside.

Taylor moves and Lomax front-kicks the door. Once, twice, a third time. On the third attempt, the door collapses inward.

They enter, weapons up.

INT. WAREHOUSE - INTERIOR ROOM - NIGHT

Smoke fills the air. SOUNDS of burning wood. Nord drags Sydney away from the table. She drops the lighter.

NORD
(shouts)
What the hell are you doing?

INT. WAREHOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Taylor, Lomax, and Claire move down the hallway. Taylor signals for them to stop.

TAYLOR
Hear that?

The SOUND of crackling fire is audible. Lomax runs ahead.

INT. WAREHOUSE - INTERIOR ROOM - NIGHT

The fire has grown larger. The air is thick with smoke.

Lomax BURSTS into the room, followed by Taylor and Claire. Lomax trains his weapon on Nord and moves toward him.

LOMAX
[shouts]
Sydney! Get out!

Sydney get up and runs toward the door, but is overcome by the smoke and falls.

LOMAX (CONT'D)
(to Nord)
Show me your hands!

Lomax shoves Nord, who falls on his back. Lomax kneels on his chest, gun pointed at his head.

Taylor picks Sydney up in his arms.

TAYLOR
(shouts)
Lomax!

Nord stares into the barrel of Lomax's gun.

LOMAX
I've waited a long time for this.

NORD
Go ahead - do it.

A long moment.

TAYLOR
(shouts)
Lomax! Come on!

Lomax stands and glances back at Taylor. Claire faces Nord, her weapon trained on him.

LOMAX
(shouts)
Take Sydney and get out! Claire -
you too!

Taylor exits with Sydney. Claire doesn't move.

Lomax yanks Nord to his feet and puts him in a compliance hold - bending one arm behind his back and forcing him to walk on tip-toes.

The walls are nearly engulfed in flames.

NORD
I'm not going back to prison.

LOMAX
Not my call. You can tell the judge
all about it.

Lomax moves Nord toward the door.

Without warning, West -- now ablaze -- bursts from the flames with an anguished SCREAM and throws himself at Nord. His momentum breaks Nord free of Lomax's grasp and drives both West and Nord toward a far corner of the room.

CLAIRE

No!

She reacts, but too late. West forces Nord into the conflagration and disappears together with him. Claire drops to her knees and stares, transfixed.

Lomax picks her in a fireman's carry and rushes out of the room.

EXT. DLE HQ - DAY

Workers disassemble temporary bleachers and take down various Fourth of July decorations.

INT. DLE HQ - TAYLOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Taylor sits behind his desk, facing Lomax. Two uniformed DLE officers stand by the door.

TAYLOR

I thought you might be past your expiration date, but I was wrong. I owe you an apology.

LOMAX

You owe me a hell of a lot more than that.

Taylor pauses.

TAYLOR

(to the officers)
Outside, please.

He waits until the officers exit before continuing.

TAYLOR (CONT'D)

Something on your mind?

Lomax leans forward in his chair.

LOMAX

Nord didn't frame me - you did.
What I don't know is why.

Taylor drums his fingers on the desktop. Makes a microscopic adjustment to his tie.

TAYLOR

Sounds like the rantings of an over-modified, under-modulated sleg.

LOMAX

You want to die on that hill, Taylor? Your digital fingerprint is all over Helm's murder. It just took someone smarter than me to find it.

Taylor CLEARS his throat.

TAYLOR

I'm not sure where you're going with this.

LOMAX

Let me explain it to you.

Lomax smiles and sits back in his chair.

EXT. SANTA MONICA BEACH - DAY

Lomax, Sydney, and Claire stand at the water's edge. Sailboats and surfers navigate the waves. The sun is low in the late afternoon sky.

LOMAX

(to Claire)

So Helm is still alive in The Third Kingdom. How can that be?

CLAIRE

(to Lomax)

I don't know. I'm just grateful.

She looks at Sydney.

SYDNEY

(to Claire)

I wish I could explain.

(to Lomax)

Like I said, we know far less about them than we want to believe.

Lomax puts an arm around Sydney. She leans into him.

SYDNEY (CONT'D)
(to Lomax)
What happens to you now?

LOMAX
DLE has filed a motion to have my
conviction overturned. Thanks to
Claire's review of the case file.

Claire embraces Lomax. He puts his other arm around her as
they gaze at the Pacific.

CLAIRE
I've never seen the ocean.

LOMAX
There's nothing like it.

CLAIRE
Where the sun falls out of the sky.

Claire hugs Lomax, produces a tablet and taps on it. An A
Major chord CHIMES. Claire hands the table to Lomax, kisses
Sydney on the cheek and walks into the water, fully clothed.

SYDNEY
What is she doing?

Lomax sits down on the sand.

LOMAX
Same as the rest of us, I guess.

Sydney sits beside him.

LOMAX (CONT'D)
Looking for answers.

They watch as Claire takes her first, tentative strokes
toward the horizon.

FADE OUT.

THE END