

THE AUDIT

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FADE IN:

EXT. - ABANDONED PRISON COURTYARD - DAWN

A one legged pigeon rummages through rubble searching for something to eat. Thick branches of a nearby tree sway from side to side, and a single berry drops to the ground.

The pigeon hops towards the berry and ravages - another falls to take its place.

Amongst the branches, a feral cat, knocking down berry after berry. Stealthily stalking its prey, then... POUNCES. Dropping down on the unsuspecting bird. Digging its claws and long teeth deep into the pigeon's neck.

The cat drags the lifeless pigeon across the overgrown courtyard and past a MAN slouched forward on a battered fabric sofa. The cat brushes past his right leg. A rope is tied around his ankle and the leg of the sofa.

FOOTSTEPS APPROACH from out of sight.

Looking on, the cat watches as a sleek, metal case is placed on the floor. A WOMAN props the semi-conscious man up and sits down beside him. Both faces obscured from view.

CUT TO WHITE.

INT. FILTERED SOUL COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

From behind, a man looks up at a large menu. Every inch is filled with an excessive number of coffee names.

BARISTA (O.S.)
Blue Heaven's Java Delight.

The man turns, revealing himself to be DOUG CLAYTON (male, late 30s, heavy set, disheveled, unshaven, and worn).

DOUG
What?

BARISTA
It's our coffee of the month. Or, if you're not feeling that, we've got over thirty different flavors to choose from.

DOUG
Just give me a --

Doug scans through the overwhelming number of choices.

DOUG (CONT'D)
-- a number five.

BARISTA
Grab a seat and I'll have someone
bring it right over.

Doug picks up a heavy looking metal case and walks toward the front of the café. He sits and studies the room.

Another waiter, JOEY (male, late 20s) appears, carrying a rack of clean cups and joins the Barista at the counter. The Barista whispers to him, hands him a coffee and nods in Doug's direction.

Smiling, Joey approaches Doug and sets the coffee down.

JOEY
One Jamaican Blue Mountain. Enjoy
your --

Joey notices the case by Doug's feet. His smile fades.

DOUG
Relax, Joey. Is there a back room
to this place?

JOEY
Yeah, it's, um... in the back.

DOUG
OK. For now, ignore I'm here. When
my colleague arrives, we'll head
there together. Got it?
(Joey nods)
Just act normal... and bring me
some sugar.

Joey returns to the counter. The spring in his step sprung.

NEWS READER (V.O.)
And now, with more details on the
tragic death of Senator Philip
Morris, Mary-Beth is live at the
scene of the crash. Mary-Beth what
more can you tell us?

Doug turns his attention to the TV hanging in the corner of the room. On the screen, shots of twisted metal and debris show the horrific aftermath of a motorway accident between a car and a truck.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

Investigators now believe it was a malfunction with the senator's autonomous vehicle which caused his car to swerve into oncoming traffic.

Doug grabs his coffee and takes a sip. Disgusted, he spits it back out and pushes the cup away.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

The death of Senator Morris comes only weeks after the tragic loss of...

Doug looks back at the TV, but his view is now blocked by a smiling and energetic KIA ELLIS (25), Native American with a slight frame and surprisingly personable... for an auditor.

KIA

Doug Clayton? I'm Kia Ellis.

She sits across from Doug - who stands up.

DOUG

You're late.

Kia quickly stands back up.

KIA

Yeah, sorry --

Doug grabs his case, and walks towards Joey, with Kia quick-stepping after him. Doug catches Joey's eye, who greets them at the counter. He smiles nervously at Kia.

INT. FILTERED SOUL COFFEE SHOP - STOREROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The room is dark and claustrophobic, filled with coffee supplies and cardboard boxes, stacked on the shelves and the floor. A single bulb hanging low in the middle of the room giving the only light.

From the boxes, Doug creates a makeshift table and two chairs and sits opposite a nervous Joey. Between them is the case which Doug is in the process of opening. Kia looks around for somewhere to sit.

Doug places his hand flat on the case as an in-built scanner scans his palm print.

A BEEP and a GREEN LIGHT flashes from the case.

DOUG
(clear diction)
Douglas. Clayton.

JOEY
This is my first audit.

Kia drags a crate over to sit on.

KIA
Mine too.

Another BEEP, another green light. Doug taps in a code on the case's keypad. A final BEEP and green light. The case opens.

Doug gives Kia a questionable look as she sits.

DOUG
You're here to train, right? So,
let's get this show on the road.

Kia stands back up and removes a larger than expected metallic helmet from the case. Attached to the helmet are half a dozen cables.

KIA
This equipment is a little
different than what I trained with
in class...

DOUG
I'll let you know if you make any
mistakes.

Kia turns back to Joey and does her best to give him a reassuring smile.

JOEY
I'm not sure what to expect. I
just know I shouldn't ask too
many questions.

Kia places the helmet carefully over Joey's head - dropping the visor down once the helmet is secure.

KIA
How's that feel?

JOEY
Surprisingly light.

Kia connects the cables to the case, but fits her first one to the wrong port. Doug arrogantly snaps his fingers and points to the correct connection.

JOEY (CONT'D)

I don't even know what I've done.
I know it must have been
something bad but... It's just
weird knowing that this time last
year I had a whole other life and
I can't remember one thing about
it. I mean, you guys know more
about me than I do.

Kia lightly squeezes his shoulder.

KIA

Just relax, Joey. Breathe deeply.

Kia looks up at Doug as she fits the second connection to the case.

JOEY

Is it going to hurt?

DOUG

A little.

KIA

You ever play VR games?

JOEY

Yeah. With my girlfriend's kids.
Can't get enough of them.

KIA

It's a lot like that. You'll be
fine. Take a deep breath.

Joey breathes deeply as Kia inserts two cables up his nostrils.

DOUG

We're gonna run you through five
simulations, as real to you as
this is now. Each one will lead
to a variation of the crime for
which you were convicted. Avoid
making the same mistake that
finds us here today and you move
onto the next one. Pass all five
and we go on our way.

JOEY
(nasally)
And if I fail?

DOUG
That chip in your head, the one that makes Joey, Joey, will trigger receptors in your brain causing you to fall into a deep sleep. You'll be taken back to our labs where your chip will be removed and replaced. This life and all your memories will be wiped clean and you'll be assigned a new one. Ready?

KIA
Just relax.
(turning to Doug)
No one ever fails, right?

Doug leans forward and lifts a glass panel to reveal a green button. He presses it.

Joey begins micro-convulsing in his chair. Kia backs off, a little surprised.

KIA (CONT'D)
Is that normal?

DOUG
For someone who is literally having his mind fucked with, yes. It's very normal.

Doug stands and walks over to the storage boxes. Joey's left arm flops down by his side spasmodically hits the side of his chair. Kia gently takes his hand in hers.

KIA
So what did he do?

DOUG
Strangled his girlfriend.

Kia drops Joey's hand into his lap. Doug smiles and turns to the storage boxes and begins reading their labels.

DOUG (CONT'D)
How old are you?
(off Kia's surprised look)
It's not a trick question.

KIA
Just a personal one.

DOUG
It's also in your file so why
don't we just cut out the
middleman?

KIA
I'm twenty two.

DOUG
Word of advice, if you wanna keep
looking as young as you do, those
thoughts you just had, learn to
leave someplace else. By the time
we clock out tonight, you're
gonna have shook hands with two
more murderers, a rapist, an
arsonist and a veterinarian.

KIA
I've met veterinarians before.

DOUG
(opening a box)
But not ones that were fucking
their patients.

Kia is not impressed. Doug pulls out a chocolate bar.

A green light lights up on the case.

Doug throws the bar at Kia. She instinctively catches it.

DOUG (CONT'D)
Pretend like you're a doctor,
he's your patient and evil is a
disease you can cure with a chip.

KIA
(looking at Joey)
I know. Learning about this in a
classroom was just... easier than
being so close to someone...
(beat)
...that ill.

A second light turns green.

KIA (CONT'D)
We're lucky I guess. To live in a
country where someone like Joey
can get the help he needs.
(MORE)

KIA (CONT'D)

I spent a few years traveling and some countries I visited still considered prison "a thing."

DOUG

You rich?

KIA

Excuse me?

DOUG

To spend a few years traveling.

KIA

This isn't my first job. I worked hard to be able to do that.

Doug takes a bite from the chocolate bar.

DOUG

Relax, I wasn't trying to offend.

A third green light lights up.

DOUG (CONT'D)

So what makes you want to be an auditor now?

KIA

I don't. Just doing it to get some money together, pay the rent, feed the dog, figure out what it is I want to do with the rest of my life. How long have you been doing it?

DOUG

Eighteen years, give or take.

KIA

Wow! That's almost as long as I've been... You must really enjoy it.

A blue light lights up on the case. Joey freezes in his chair. Doug doesn't pay either any attention as he stares at Kia.

KIA (CONT'D)

(thinking and tapping her forehead)

Blue light... blue light means...

Doug walks over to the case.

DOUG

The simulations are created by
unlocking and manipulating
existing memories. Sometimes...

KIA

...Sometimes it runs itself into a
narrative brick wall, one it can't
get through or around and needs to
be reset.

Doug presses down on the blue light much harder than he needs
to. The blue light turns off. Joey returns to his
convulsions.

DOUG

I've got a wife and kid to
support. I've got a mortgage and
two large dogs to feed. It may
not be a career you would choose
to do...

A fourth green light lights up.

DOUG (CONT'D)

But it's one that my dependents
are grateful every day that I do.

Doug sits back down and folds his arms.

KIA

I'm sorry I didn't mean to --

DOUG

You didn't.

Kia sits down uncomfortably next to Doug.

A fifth green light lights up. All five green lights begin
to blink in unison.

DOUG (CONT'D)

We're done.

KIA

That's it?

DOUG

You can take the helmet off.

With the cables disconnected, Kia raises his visor. Joey
looks disorientated.

JOEY
How'd I do?

DOUG
Congratulations.

Joey smiles at Kia. Kia struggles to smile back, avoiding eye contact. Without warning, an eruption of vomit explodes from Joey, finding its mark on Kia's foot.

DOUG (CONT'D)
You passed.

EXT. CITY STREET - MID MORNING

Doug walks off down the busy street with Kia carrying the case, one step behind.

Through the crowds, they head towards a bus stop. In the distance a shuttle bus approaches, elevated by thirty foot high stilts on wheels. When it arrives, small lifts adjacent to each stilt descend to the ground.

Passengers exit from one side whilst others scramble in from the other. Doug and Kia make their way into a lift. Once loaded, the lift raises into the body of the shuttle and the bus glides down the street, high above the traffic.

INT. BUS - MOMENTS LATER (MOVING)

Doug grabs the only spare seat leaving Kia standing, squashed in amongst the city's commuters.

Doug begins to doze off, lulled by the rocking train. The lights begin to flicker. The bus begins to slow. Doug snaps back awake. The bus picks up speed again.

INT. FOOD TOWER - LATER

A giant industrial complex. Thousands of rows of horizontal and vertical racks, each under artificial green light for vegetation. Automated machines monitor the produce.

Doug and Kia approach a WOMAN in white overalls attending to a watering machine.

DOUG
We're looking for Owen Crowe?

WOMAN

Level two. Blue zone. Straight ahead. About half a mile.

Doug points at a storage rack for Segways. One remains.

DOUG

Mind if I borrow that?

WOMAN

No.

(turns to Kia)

But we only have the one.

DOUG

She's a fit, young, girl.
Travelled the world.

Doug removes the remaining Segway from its rack and gets on. With a smug look on his face, Doug zooms off, calling back over his shoulder as he goes.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Another half mile won't kill her.

With a polite smile, Kia grabs the case and follows Doug.

CUT TO:

INT. ART STUDIO - DAY

Five robotic arms paint on a giant canvas. Artist SI-LOU (20s), young and innovative, enters with two paint buckets and drops them near the canvas. A robot arm goes to dunk its brush in one. Beat. It decides on another colour.

Doug and Kia walk in. Si-Lou looks up.

CUT TO:

INT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Large 3-D printers produce components for a building. Even larger machines connect them together. The CONSTRUCTION FOREMAN turns towards Doug and Kia as they approach.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

The mundanity of the day's audit becomes apparent as the same duties are repeated and cut between each new audit.

QUICK CUTS:

...Helmet is removed. Cables detached. A man throws up...

...Si-Lou sits convulsing. Lights flash green. Helmet removed. Cables detached...

...Doug sits comfortably on the bus. Kia still stands...

...Construction foreman convulses. Light flashes blue. Kia resets the machine. Helmet removed. Cables detached...

...Passenger sitting next to Doug offers Kia his seat. As soon as she sits, Doug stands to get off...

...Light flashes green. Helmet removed. Placed in case. Case closed...

...Doug gets up without telling Kia. Kia looks frustrated...

...Helmet removed. Placed in case. Case closed...

...Helmet removed. Placed in case. Case closed...

END MONTAGE

EXT. SPORTS AUDITORIUM - LATE AFTERNOON

...a MALE FIGHTER is SLAMMED to the mat HARD.

Doug and Kia make their way through the stands towards the centre of the outdoor auditorium. As a variety of combat activities take place all around.

TWO MALE and TWO FEMALE ATHLETES stand in the middle of a circular combat zone. Down their backs and following their spines are small holes with metallic rims; they assist each other fitting exoskeletons to their bodies, connecting via the holes along their backs.

Doug waves towards GALE MARTIN (50s), who's busy picking up dirty gym gear off the floor and placing them into the back of a small driverless cart.

GALE MARTIN
Just finishing up. Five minutes?

The pair pass a punching bag. Doug gives it a small punch and bobs his head. Kia ignores him and continues walking towards the four athletes who are engaged in a mixed-martial arts contest.

The female athletes easily going head to head with their male counterparts.

A BUZZER RINGS and the round ends. High fives are shared. Doug walks past Kia, mumbling:

DOUG
Fucking scabs.

Kia freezes at his comment.

INT. BUS - LATE AFTERNOON

The bus pulls into a station. For once Kia has a seat. Her and Doug sit side by side.

KIA
I didn't like what you said back there.

DOUG
You're gonna need to narrow that down for me.

KIA
Scab. You called them scabs.

DOUG
Didn't know their names.

KIA
(incredulously)
Are you serious?

DOUG
Christ, lighten up. Is this what you're gonna be like for the next four weeks?

KIA
Treating people with respect?
Yes, it is. Is this what you're going to be like?

DOUG
Ain't no other side to me, kiddo.

KIA
Kia. My name is Kia.

Kia turns away from Doug. A tear rolls down her cheek which she quickly brushes aside.

DOUG

Okay, Kia. It's only day one but it's clear we're not gonna get along so here's what I'll do. When we get back to the office I'll request you be placed with another supervisor. We've got plenty of family friendly ones you can tag along with. And if you're worried about how it's gonna look, don't. It's not the first time it's happened. How's that sound?

Commotion down the far end of the bus grabs both Doug and Kia's attention.

A GANG looking like they have just stepped out of "The Warriors" have boarded the bus. The LEADER, a slender and sallow looking man, slaps the head of a man sitting down. Another passenger tries to get away but is pushed to the glass floor. The Leader picks the man up and throws him several meters into the air.

KIA

Should we do something?

DOUG

Yeah, get off at the next stop, unless you want to stick around and treat them with some respect.

(interrupting Kia before she can respond)

This case contains the records of hundreds of rehabs. Their new identities, where they live, and where they work. There are a lot of grieving people out there who would pay a lot of money for that information.

KIA

(looking beyond Doug)
You talk too much.

The Leader crouches down in front of Doug and positions his face directly in front of him. Eye contact unavoidable.

LEADER

(smiling)
Hi there.

The Leader places his hand on the case.

LEADER (CONT'D)

This yours?

DOUG

Yeah.

LEADER

Let's try that again. Is. This.
Your. Case?

DOUG

No.

The Leader grabs Doug's face and kisses his forehead. He then ruffles his hair as he stands up. The Leader looks at Kia, who is unafraid to look him in the eye.

LEADER

That yours too?

DOUG

There's nothing in there that's
gonna be of any use to you.

LEADER

A case this heavy? If you're right
the only thing I'll steal is a kiss
from your bitch. But if you're
wrong, well, we're gonna have to
book ourselves a room. Open it.

Doug goes to place his hand on the palm reader but hastily makes his move, attempting to ram the case into the Leader's midsection. The effort is pathetic.

The Leader rips the case back from Doug and hands it to Kia.

LEADER (CONT'D)

Hold this for me sweetie while I
have a word with your boyfriend.

The Leader takes off his long coat to reveal two things: one he is wearing a vest. Two - both his arms have been replaced by mechanical ones.

At the shoulder, where metal meets flesh, it's clear where the term scab may have come from: his skin festering with scabs, fresh surgical incisions closed by thick wire stitches, through which yellow puss seeps out.

He lifts Doug effortlessly from his seat and stands him up.

LEADER (CONT'D)

Taking them out for a test drive.
What do you think? Would you
still fuck me?

DOUG

Not even if you bought me dinner.

The Leader laughs.

Doug is thrown with ease to the ground. His shirt ripped, revealing his belly and some of his sagging chest. The gang laugh.

GANG MEMBER #1

Look at his titties.

Doug, embarrassed, tries to pull across his shirt. The Leader removes his gloves, revealing mechanical hands.

LEADER

Now, you gonna open the case or
am I gonna have to open up your
fat belly?

WHACK. Kia smashes the case across the Leader's face, hard.

A gang member throws a punch, but Kia brushes it to one side with the case and knocks him down.

The Leader throws a punch but his fist smashes into the case that Kia uses as a shield. The punch leaves a perfect imprint of his fist in the case. Kia stumbles back, dropping the case. She hits back with a punch of her own. His nose caves in, drenching the scene in blood.

Another gang member grabs her from behind in a bear hug.

LEADER (CONT'D)

Hold that fucking bitch still!

But Kia refuses to stop moving. This is a brawl and she is a brawler. Constantly moving. Swinging. Pounding.

The battle rages on. The carriage destroyed. Kia's top is torn - revealing that her right arm is also mechanical. The only part of her arm covered in skin is her a hand: a synthetic glove made to look like flesh.

Finally, Kia subdues the gang. The Leader, face bloodied and broken, is beaten.

Kia stands. The Leader pathetically grabs at her ankle. Kia kicks his hand to one side.

Doug looks on in shock. That's all he has been good for.

Kia picks up a broken pole from the carriage and impales it into the Leader's shoulder, severing the connection between his arm and his nervous system. He lets out an almighty yell.

Kia leans on the pole, tired.

LEADER (CONT'D)

My arm!

KIA

Shut up.

(turning to Doug)

If you wanna request a transfer then do it. But it comes from you. Not me. I don't quit.

Kia pushes away from the pole to stand herself up. The Leader lets out one final SCREAM.

INT. AUDIT HQ - GLASS LIFT - NIGHT

A battered and bruised Doug and Kia stand in awkward silence. The ELEVATOR CHIMES its arrival on the 20th floor. The doors open and they step out into...

INT. AUDIT HQ - 20TH FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The silence in the lift is broken by the hustle and bustle of a hectic office. On either side of the lift doors, they are greeted by two very large and very serious, out of place security guards.

Doug and Kia make their way through the vast, clinically-finished, open plan office layout.

Doug, now carrying the case, continues to notice more security around the office, with no attempt being made to be discreet. A couple of guards notice the odd-looking pair.

They approach a mirrored door. Doug sees his reflection and his belly through his torn shirt. He moves his arm up to hide it. Kia tries her best to hide her arm.

Doug scans his hand print. The panel authorizes him and the solid pressurised doors slide open, revealing a darkened room.

DOUG

Wait for me in here.

Kia steps in and lights flood the area to reveal a large office occupied only by a large processing terminal in the center and one chair.

DOUG (CONT'D)

What size are you?
(before Kia can reply)
Trust me.

INT. AUDIT HQ - INVENTORY ROOM - NIGHT

Doug slips on a new shirt. A 3-D PRINTER SHOOTs back and forth, producing a second shirt. A work COLLEAGUE (30s) enters from behind.

COLLEAGUE

Jesus. What happened to you?

Doug waves it off.

DOUG

What's with all the security?

COLLEAGUE

Alex fucking Marchand is here. Haven't seen him myself but his apes have been dragging their knuckles around the office all afternoon.

DOUG

Did Cooper know they were coming?

COLLEAGUE

Unannounced inspection. Man I would have loved to've seen his face when Marchand walked into his office.

DOUG

Do we know why he's here?

COLLEAGUE

My guess it's to do with those rehabs turning up dead.

DOUG

What's that got to do with us?
That happened up in D.C.

COLLEAGUE

Selling out rehabs happens everywhere. D.C. made the news because they got caught doing it.

DOUG

They been to the processing room yet?

The printer's display flashes 90% complete. Impatiently, Doug snatches it from the case. A red error warning appears.

COLLEAGUE

Fuck knows. Been hiding out since they got here.

DOUG

You scared of monkeys?

COLLEAGUE

Scared of having my mind fucked with.

Doug gives him a confused look. Colleague leans in closer.

COLLEAGUE (CONT'D)

Word is the new chip they're trial-ing can read your mind. Take my advice. If you run into Marchand, don't stand too close. Especially if you have any secrets you don't want getting out.

INT. AUDIT HQ - PROCESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Doug with his new shirt and a renewed sense of confidence, struts back into the room. Kia, sitting at the terminal, reacts fast as Doug throws the new shirt at her.

DOUG

Put this on.

KIA

What? *Here?*

Doug walks passed Kia and towards the terminal where he takes a seat. Doug, now with a sense of urgency, talks faster than usual.

DOUG

This is the processing room,
which you won't have access to
until you've passed your four
weeks of training.

Doug begins to open the case.

Kia removes her torn shirt, revealing her entire right arm
from the shoulder to be mechanical. Her shoulder where metal
meets flesh, covered in heavy scarring, scars on top of
scars.

Kia puts her new shirt on but is little confused why one
sleeve is slightly shorter than the other.

DOUG (O.S.) (CONT'D)

This is the processor which you
also won't have access to until
you pass your training.

Doug takes a cable from the case.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Now watch closely.

(holds up the cable)

This cable -- goes into this
connection.

The terminal has only one connection. He rolls over in his
chair to a display panel on the processor.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Place your thumb here. Wait.

A CHIME comes from the UNIT. Doug stands and turns to Kia.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Data's uploaded. Unplug cable.
Place cable back in case. Close
case. Leave case in lock-up. Go
home.

KIA

That's it?

DOUG

That's it. We'll go over this
again and again for the next four
weeks until I sign you off.
Welcome to your new life at
NuLife.

KIA
(rolls her eyes)
This is going to be a long four
weeks isn't it?

Doug makes his way to the mirrored doors. On the other side,
is their boss, HARVEY COOPER (late 50s).

Harvey stands with his back to the room as he addresses the
CEO, ALEX MARCHAND (late 30s), a man with a face that looks
as though it was designed and approved by his parents
months prior to him being conceived.

HARVEY
And in here --

He turns, surprised to see Doug on the other side.

HARVEY (CONT'D)
...Is -- is one of our senior
auditors, Doug Clayton.

MARCHAND
Finally we've found someone who
works here. I was beginning to
think there was a national
holiday I wasn't aware of.

HARVEY
Doug is one of our longest
serving auditors. Been here
almost from the beginning.

MARCHAND
Maybe you should be the one giving
me the tour.

Harvey laughs nervously. Kia looks over at Doug who doesn't
answer but just stares at Marchand. An awkward silence
fills the room as Doug, almost frozen, blocks the entrance.

MARCHAND (CONT'D)
Mind if I come in?

DOUG
It's your building.

Marchand steps in. His golden age movie star presence fills
the room. Behind him, his LAWYER and entourage follow.

HARVEY
As I was saying, all completed
audits are uploaded in here.

LAWYER

And access to this room is
restricted too?

HARVEY

Strictly audit level or above.

Marchand superficially inspects all the hardware in the
room then turns his attention back to Doug.

MARCHAND

You enjoy your job, Doug?

DOUG

I enjoy having a job.

MARCHAND

But no sense of fulfillment?

DOUG

Not in my contract.

MARCHAND

Twenty years is a long time to be
doing something you don't enjoy.

DOUG

It pays the bills.

LAWYER

All of them?

DOUG

Wanna go through my bank records?
I can show you the car I don't
have, the apartment I can barely
afford and the shit I had for
lunch.

MARCHAND

(looking into space)
Instant noodles, potato chips and
a soda. You really should
consider adding some fermented
foods to your diet.

DOUG

The noodles were out of date.
(to the Lawyer)
Am I under investigation?

LAWYER

Until we can reassure D.C. that selling out rehabs is a cancer isolated to just a few cells, everyone is under investigation.

MARCHAND

Do you still box?

DOUG

Excuse me?

MARCHAND

(again, staring into the distance)

All those blows to your head. You really should consider having your brain scanned. I'm sure our medical covers it.

The entourage nod in confirmation.

Marchand steps towards Doug, who steps back. Marchand laughs.

MARCHAND (CONT'D)

Despite what you may have heard, our chips are some ways away from being able to read minds. Perhaps in a year or two. For now, being able to stream online is the extent to which we've been allowed to take it.

KIA

Is that legal?

MARCHAND

What's illegal about accessing public records? Kia.

(beat)

Fascinating. You have Navajo ancestry.

KIA

I hope you're accessing public records right now.

MARCHAND

(smiles)

Genealogy records.

(beat)

Do you speak it?

KIA

No.

The room remains silent as Marchand remains in his own little world.

MARCHAND

Shame. It's such a beautiful language.

KIA

(in perfect french)
So is French.

MARCHAND

(smiles)
I apologize if this seems like an interrogation. We have some exciting projects on the horizon and I wouldn't want anything to derail them. But please, you were on your way out. It's been nice to meet you both. Kia. Doug.

Kia and Doug turn to leave.

MARCHAND (CONT'D)

You've joined at an exciting time.
(also in perfect French)
We're going to be changing the world.

Kia and Doug exit the room. Marchand smiles.

MARCHAND (CONT'D)

(in perfect Navajo)
Goodbye my friends.

FOX (PRE-LAP)

Alex Marchand is a liar...

INT. HOTEL RECEPTION - NIGHT

Although Doug is dressed in a tux, he still manages to look scruffy. He makes his way through the hotel reception, walking through full body security barriers.

On large, flat screens throughout the reception, images of SENATOR FOX (late 30s) appear. Charismatic and debonair.

FOX

...and it pains me to say that --

Doug is stopped from entering the hall by security. He looks for his invitation. Finds only one half of it.

FOX (O.S) (CONT'D)
...because politics was not
something I entered into so that I
could hurl mud from a platform we
have all worked so hard to build.

Doug finds the other half and joins the two pieces at the tear down the middle. The guard gives it a once over before allowing Doug through into the hall.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The hall is full. Dinner tables smartly laid out and all guests transfixed upon Fox who stands up on a podium at the front of the room.

FOX
But when Alex Marchand sits in
front of Congress and asserts that
what he wants is to change the
world for the better, he is lying.

The guard stops Doug from moving towards his table as the speech continues. Frustrated, Doug tries to get the attention of someone seated at his table by waving his hand.

TRISTAN CLAYTON (female, late 30s) double takes when she sees Doug at the door.

FOX (CONT'D)
He argues that Nova's new chip,
which has the ability to increase
cognitive performance by ten,
thirty, forty fold, would bring
about a cognitive emancipation,
where all, regardless of the
quality of their genes or the
meritoriousness of the
environment into which they were
born, would live in a world
surrounded only by their peers.

Tristan does her best to be as least disruptive as possible as she slinks her way towards Doug.

As she does, she bumps into a GAUNT WAITER (30s). Tristan holds her hands up apologetically but she fails to register with him at all. His focus firmly on Fox.

FOX (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Sounds great doesn't it? So let
me ask, who in this room has the
million dollars it would cost for
the upgrade?

Tristan reaches Doug and the guard. She smiles at the guard
and confirms he Doug is with her. As the Guard backs off,
Doug gives him an arrogant smile. Tristan's smile fades as
she turns back to Doug.

TRISTAN
What the fuck are you doing here?

DOUG
Keeping a promise.

TRISTAN
(exasperated)
And this had to be the one you
decided to keep?

DOUG
Give me a break.

TRISTAN
How many do I have to give you
before you give me one?

DOUG
You asked me to come.

TRISTAN
Before I caught you cheating on
me.

FOX
Automation has already stolen the
jobs from one generation for whom
academia was not an option, and now
these chips... These chips will
steal what jobs are left from those
too poor to buy their own future.

DOUG
You caught me fucking a VR
program. How is that the same as
cheating?

FOX
Support Bill 52. Let us force a
brake on human trials and give
the decision makers a moment to
pause, and reflect.

TRISTAN

(spiteful)

Not when you can't tell the difference between a program and reality it's not.

FOX

Before Alex Marchand forces us all onto a train heading towards an unknown destination, at a speed too fast to jump off, on a track yet to be finished.

DOUG

Can we get into this another time?

TRISTAN

These are my work colleagues. Thank you. Please... don't be yourself.

FOX

The room erupts into applause. Tristan and Doug break from their standoff to applaud too. Doug overdoing it.

DOUG

Woo. Great speech.

CUT TO:

Doug and Tristan sit side by side at their table along with eight other COUPLES. Waiters begin serving dinner while Fox, effortlessly holds court at the table.

FOX

Alex Marchand is the key. If we go after Nova we'll be in danger of running into opposition from people who, rightly or wrongly, believe that what they've given society is far more than what they've taken. Their NuLife program being an example.

MAN

But NuLife was the brainchild of his father, not Alex.

FOX

Yes. And that's precisely why we need to target Alex and not Nova. His father was a man of great integrity and founded Nova with the goal of ridding society from the neurological disorders plaguing it.

(MORE)

FOX (CONT'D)

NuLife was a serendipitous consequence of that research and what Alex is trying to do is wrap up the promise of these new chips with that same bow.

LADY

I still struggle with NuLife. The idea that someone could be given a second chance at life after destroying someone else's.

FOX

It is difficult and I can completely sympathise with both sides but --

DOUG

People need to move on and find something else to moan about.

LADY

You think my opposition to NuLife amounts to moaning?

Tristan leans into Doug's ear, forcing a smile.

TRISTAN

Doug, please. Just eat your food.

DOUG

I didn't say "you" specifically, but feel free to prove me wrong.

Her HUSBAND squeezes her hand and whispers gently.

HUSBAND

Honey, you don't have to...

LADY

(eyes fixed on Doug)

Sure I'll give it a shot. I don't believe anyone who rapes a five-year-old boy, before slitting his throat and then feeding his body to a pack of dogs, deserves a new life. Discuss.

DOUG

I would have said the same thing once, but that's not the world we live in anymore. You're asking for someone to be held accountable for their actions --

LADY

And when did that become such a crazy idea?

DOUG

The moment we had computers that could predict our thoughts... and the idea that someone should be punished for acting on those thoughts disappeared the moment we had technology that could suppress them. What he did, he did, however hard it is to accept, because he had no choice.

LADY

He had a choice.

DOUG

The decisions we make, the impulses we act on are all formed in a part of the brain over which we have no control. If you were him, with all his genes and memories, if your brain mirrored his in every way and you were standing right where he was, at that exact same time you would have done the exact same thing.

LADY

I would not have murdered my own son.

DOUG

And neither would he if he were you. Look, in thirty years of NuLife there hasn't been one incident of a rehab committing even the smallest of crimes let alone the crime for which they were originally convicted of. And the cost of the program, per head, is a fraction of what it would have cost to incarcerate them. Denying someone the opportunity to NuLife would be like denying someone with a brain tumor the operation to have it removed. Anyone disagree?

FOX

No. Not with your argument. Just the level of insensitivity with which you put it across.

Behind them, a GLASS SHATTERS. Fox turns to see the Gaunt Waiter pointing a gun at him. The room falls silent. The waiter, more scared than Fox, struggles to pull the trigger.

FOX (CONT'D)
(standing)
It's okay. It's okay.

Security begin to make their way slowly towards the table.

FOX (CONT'D)
Look at me. No one is going to hurt
you. You have my word.

The waiter begins to sweat. His grip on the trigger tightens.

FOX (CONT'D)
Whatever it is, we can figure it
out. Okay?

Fox begins to reach out his hand. The waiter begins to loosen his grip. Fox's hand is inches away from the gun.

BANG. Fox is sprayed with blood. The waiter drops dead to the ground. A bullet hole right through his head. Security charges forward and looms over the body.

FOX (CONT'D)
(furious)
You didn't have to do that.

INT. HOTEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Doug sits with Tristan in one of the hotel's conference rooms, being questioned. Tristan rubs her thumb over a spec of blood on her shirt.

Only the back of the DETECTIVE interviewing them is seen.

DETECTIVE
Did you notice anything unusual
about him? Anything strange that
you may not have thought seemed out
of place at the time but now,
looking back, do?

Doug looks down at Tristan and notices her rubbing the spot.

DETECTIVE #1
...I need you to focus...

DETECTIVE #2 (O.S.)

Doug. Doug.

DETECTIVE #1

Yeah.

DETECTIVE #2 (O.S.)

We need you over here a sec.

Doug stops Tristan from rubbing the spot.

DETECTIVE #1

Be right there.

CUT TO:

INT. DOUG'S HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - A LITTLE LATER

The room is sparingly decorated and a claustrophobic mess. Clothes litter the floor.

Doug sits a zombie like Tristan in front of a desk in the corner of the room. A machine formed of two cylindrical devices holds Tristan's arms.

TRISTAN

(drowsy)

Not tonight please.

DOUG

It'll make you feel better.

TRISTAN

I don't want to feel better.

Doug detaches a visor from the machine as light enters the room through the door which slowly opens. ELLIE (7), stands on the threshold.

ELLIE

Dad?

Doug stops what he's doing but doesn't turn around.

DOUG

Go back to your room, Ellie.

Ellie turns away, closing the door behind her. Doug places the visor onto Tristan and presses another button. The visor glows green and Doug leaves her be.

CUT TO:

INT. ST. BERNADETTE'S SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - MORNING

Doug and Ellie sit in a full auditorium staring ahead. Ellie looks up at Doug, who ignores her. A large banner sits high above the stage reading, "ST. BERNADETTE'S SCHOLARSHIP EXAMINATIONS."

HOST (O.S)
Ellie Clayton.

Ellie passes her coat to Doug. A round of applause fills the auditorium, but not from Doug.

Ellie steps onto a box and behind a lectern on the podium. In front of her, a team of three PROFESSORS and the HOST.

HOST (CONT'D)
Okay Ellie, you will be asked fifty questions. To proceed to the next round, you must answer every question correctly. Are you ready to begin?

Ellie gives a confident nod. Doug looks on, giving nothing away. The rapid fire of questions begins.

PROFESSOR #1
At the end of a banquet, ten people shake hands with each other. How many handshakes will there be in total?

ELLIE
Forty five.

PROFESSOR #1
Correct.

PROFESSOR #2
Which number should come next in the series? 25, 24, 22, 19, 15...

ELLIE
Ten.

PROFESSOR #2
Correct.

TIME JUMP. Ellie thinks.

ELLIE
Anaxagoras.

PROFESSOR #3

Correct.

TIME JUMP. Ellie hesitates.

ELLIE

A. G. G. L. U. T. I. N. A. T. I. V.
E.

Doug looks on with no emotion.

PROFESSOR #1

Correct.

PROFESSOR #3

A rifle is fired horizontally from a height of one point five metres above ground level. Assume the air resistance experienced by the bullets is negligible. When rifle A is fired, the bullet has a horizontal velocity of 430 m s^{-1} as it leaves the rifle. Assume the ground is level. Calculate the time that the bullet is in the air before it hits the ground.

ELLIE

0.65 seconds.

PROFESSOR #3

Incorrect. 0.55 Seconds.

Doug looks away for the first time.

INT. ST. BERNADETTE'S SCHOOL - HALLWAY - LATER

Doug and Ellie stand in the hallway leaning up against the wall. The Host walks by.

HOST

Ellie, you did very well today.
(turning to Doug)
You both should be very proud.

DOUG

How do we reapply?

HOST

I'm sorry, Doug, you can only apply once.

(MORE)

HOST (CONT'D)

We have to give as many children
as we can an opportunity.

DOUG

I understand. But she just got
one wrong. There must be some
sort of concession you can offer?

HOST

I'm afraid not. Our rules are
very clear. And final.

DOUG

No shit.

The Host smiles at Ellie and begins walking off. Doug and
Ellie stand alone in the hall.

ELLIE

Can we go get some ice cream now?

DOUG

You really think you deserve it?

Ellie shrugs her shoulders.

INT. ICE CREAM PARLOUR - DAY

Doug and Ellie sit in a booth. Huge ice creams in front of
them. Ellie shoves a huge spoonful into her mouth and
scrunches her face as the cold hits her. Doug doesn't
notice or care.

ELLIE

It's okay. I could go to St.
Sebastian's. Like all my other
friends.

DOUG

No offense, but your friends are
stupid. You have a gift. But
you've only got five, maybe ten
years tops to make the most of it
before parents with enough money
are buying their kids off the
shelf what you were born with.
And when that happens you can
kiss your dreams of being an
engineer goodbye.

ELLIE

I don't want to be an engineer
anymore.

DOUG
When did this happen?

ELLIE
Dad, I'm seven years old. It's a bit early for me to decide on a career path.

DOUG
Well whatever you want to do, you're not going to be able to do it if you don't get a move on now. Things were hard enough back when we just had robots and scabs taking our jobs.

ELLIE
There will still be things I'll be able to do.

DOUG
Trust me, there ain't nothing you could ever do that a robot couldn't do for free. You've been born into a world where people are worth less than any other time in history.

Ellie focuses on her ice cream. Doug leans.

DOUG (CONT'D)
If you want something you're gonna have to fight harder than everyone else to get it.

ELLIE
Maybe I could become an auditor.

DOUG
(leans back)
Eat your ice cream.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - MORNING

Kia and Doug sit in silence as a rehab sits opposite, convulsing. Light on the case flashes blue. Kia turns to Doug, who's staring blankly ahead. Kia resets the case. The convulsions start again.

CUT TO:

INT. FACTORY - MIDDAY

Kia and Doug carry out an audit. Same positions. The lights on the case flash green.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK ROOM - AFTERNOON

Kia and Doug carry out another audit. Kia turns to Doug, about to say something to break the silence. The lights flash green. Doug gets up.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

Kia and Doug stand waiting for a break in the traffic before crossing the road. A MESSAGE CHIMES on his wrist watch. Doug reads the message and turns to Kia.

DOUG

You can knock off early.

KIA

Everything okay? You haven't been your usual disagreeable self today.

Doug turns away and walks in the opposite direction.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY ZOO - EARLY EVENING

Doug strolls past the quiet and empty looking enclosures. Silence broken every now and again by the NOCTURNAL CALLS coming from deep inside the zoo.

INT. ZOO - RESTAURANT - MINUTES LATER

Doug stands amid the restaurant. Floor to ceiling glass windows enclose it. On the other side lies a prehistoric jungle scene - resurrected creatures from ages ago.

MOWSA (O.S.)

There are more sabertooth tigers in this zoo than there are tigers in the wild in the whole world combined.

Doug turns to see the outline of a small woman hidden in the dark. She steps into the light so Doug can see her more clearly. This is, MOWSA (70).

Her nose sparkles in the light. Her normal human nose, has been replaced with one made of metal. Her cheeks are also embedded with a jade-like metal to match.

MOWSA (CONT'D)

And their survival now depends entirely on whether or not we can find a way to monetize their existence.

She takes a seat at a table, gesturing for Doug to join her.

MOWSA (CONT'D)

Never has fashion been more consequential. Tea?

Off Doug's nod, Mowisa pours water into a cup.

Doug notices Mowisa's security team lurking in the shadows, keeping their distance but on high alert. Like Mowisa, they also have had their fair share of body enhancements. The rest of the restaurant is empty.

DOUG

Can you even breathe through that?

MOWSA

Well enough to smell your cheap cologne from across the foyer.

DOUG

I'm not wearing any.

MOWSA

My point exactly.

Doug smiles.

MOWSA (CONT'D)

I'll be honest, I didn't think I'd see you again. Our last meeting ended on such a sour note.

DOUG

Well, things change. You still in the market for rehab records?

Mowisa stirs her tea.

DOUG (CONT'D)
What's the going rate for three?

MOWSA
More than enough to get Ellie
into a good school.

DOUG
You keeping tabs on me?

MOWSA
I keep tabs on all my employees.

DOUG
I don't work for you.

A wry smile crosses her face.

MOWSA
When can you deliver?

A mammoth makes it's way through the trees, closely followed
by its calf.

DOUG
A few weeks. They're looking into
leaks right now, but that'll quiet
down. When it does, I'll be in
touch.

MOWSA
(sipping her tea)
Everyone deserves a chance at life,
a good life, not just one that gets
them from one day to the next until
there are no more left to count
down. You're giving Ellie a
valuable head start.

Doug stands up, ready to leave.

MOWSA (CONT'D)
These people with their new
lives... They've been given
something they don't deserve. You
shouldn't feel guilty.

DOUG
I don't.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Doug gets on the empty bus. Tired, he slumps into a seat. Looking up he sees a digital noticeboard which displays the date MARCH 2. He closes his eyes.

TIME CUT: Doug wakes. It is now daytime. The crowded bus begins to slow as it pulls to a stop. Doug stands and exits, passing the digital noticeboard which now reads SEPTEMBER 8.

INT. AUDIT HQ - PROCESSING ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Doug disconnects his case from the processor and shuts it. The indent from the gang member's fist still prominent.

Doug walks to the doors as they slide open. Kia is on the other side.

KIA

Doug. I didn't realize there was anyone in here.

DOUG

There isn't. Place is all yours.

Kia walks past with her own case. Doug turns back around.

DOUG (CONT'D)

It's Kia, right?

KIA

Yeah, that's right.

Doug steps out of her way and allows an annoyed Kia to pass.

KIA (CONT'D)

(under her breath)

Prick.

Doug smiles to himself and then walks out.

EXT. SAINT BERNADETTE'S HIGH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Parents mingle together just outside the school's gate, waiting for their kids to come out. Across the road, Doug stands alone.

The school BELL RINGS loudly. The front doors burst open as hundreds of children noisily spill outside.

Doug waits patiently for Ellie to emerge. He fails to notice the men in dark suits approach and surround him. One of these MEN, wearing sunglasses, stands next to Doug.

Doug turns to face him and now notices the rest of the men. He knows why they are here.

MAN IN SUNGLASSES

You've been a naughty boy, Doug.

DOUG

Not here. Not in front of my daughter.

MAN IN SUNGLASSES

You think the rehabs you sold out were given a choice of how and where they were murdered?

Doug is turned around by one of the men and pressed up against the car. As his hands are cuffed, Doug sees Ellie standing across the road watching on. Their eyes meet.

MAN IN SUNGLASSES (CONT'D)

Let's hope whoever ends up being your auditor doesn't sell your sorry ass out too.

CUT TO:

INT. NULIFE REHABILITATION CENTRE - MORNING

Doug sits, wearing a hospital gown, in a clinical but peaceful room, filled with greenery. The door opens and in walks a bubbly, smiling DOCTOR (50s).

DOCTOR

How you feeling this morning Doug?

DOUG

You tell me. You've had me monitored to every device under the sun for a month.

DOCTOR

You assaulted one of our guards last night.

DOUG

He was a big boy. He could take it. You not worried I'm gonna take a swing at you too?

DOCTOR

No. Not now that you've got it out of your system. And once we've installed your NuLife you won't be able to throw as much as a harsh word.

DOUG

You're gonna turn me into a pussy?

DOCTOR

We're going to turn you into a socially responsible person. Give you a chance to make a contribution to society. But before we proceed I'll need you to sign these consent forms and this one to confirm you've been explained the procedure.

DOUG

I know how it works.

DOCTOR

But for legal reasons, humour me.

The Doctor slides three digital consent forms over as a holographic image of Doug's brain appears from a projector inside the table. Doug lazily flicks through the forms.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Your NuLife will be implanted into your corpus callosum which as you know serves as the gateway for signals moving from one side of the brain to the other.

The chip is shown resting in the brain, dozens of connections sprout out from it and merge with tissue.

Doug holds up one of the consent forms.

DOUG

Here?

DOCTOR

(nods)

Once imbedded the chip will act as a gatekeeper. Every thought, every memory, every feeling you'll ever have will be filtered through it before being forwarded onto the rest of you to process.

DOUG

Here?

Doug places the consent forms hard on top of one another and slides them all back.

DOUG (CONT'D)

Sounds great. Can't wait to be trapped inside my own head.

DOCTOR

You'll still be you, just a better version of you. You'll wake each and every morning with a purpose, a drive to be the best you can be. You'll be given new employment and maybe, if you're lucky, the opportunity to start a new family.

DOUG

And just like that you're going to make me forget about my old one. Forget my daughter.

DOCTOR

You'll remember the feeling of having a daughter, but the details, like names, faces, birth dates will all be inaccessible... It's not as bad as it sounds. Whenever you think of her, you'll be overwhelmed with an absolute certainty that wherever she is, she's happier than she's ever been. I imagine that's not something you've probably ever been able to say.

DOUG

'Fuck you' is something I've always been able to say.

DOCTOR

(smiles)

Not for much longer... She's here now. Would you like to see her?

INT. NULIFE REHABILITATION CENTRE - VISITING ROOM - LATER

Doug remains seated looking at his hands. Ellie is close to tears.

ELLIE
You won't remember me, will you?
(beat)
What if I come find you?

DOUG
Then you'll be arrested and have
every memory of me erased.

ELLIE
This is all my fault.

DOUG
Don't say that because it's not.

ELLIE
It is. I did it on purpose.

Doug looks up and sees Tristan standing outside the room
looking on. Unwilling to come in.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
I didn't want to go to St.
Bernadette's, so I answered the
question in the test wrong. If I
hadn't, you wouldn't be here now.

Tears begin to roll down her cheeks.

DOUG
Listen to me. Don't you ever
blame yourself for what I've
done. I would have ended up here
eventually.

ELLIE
Why?

DOUG
Because if there's one thing you
can always count on me to do, is
that I'll always do the wrong
thing.

A consultant comes in and escorts Ellie out of the room.
Doug remains alone.

FADE TO WHITE.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

A large, clean, open plan apartment. Views across the city can be seen through the large glass wall. A large bed dominates the room.

Satin white sheets cover a couple as they lie asleep. The male figure wakes quietly and walks naked to the bathroom. We get a glimpse of his muscular, athletic body.

INT. APARTMENT - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

A tap runs. The man's hands collect water and splashes it in his face. We see his reflection in the mirror, its Doug. He has lost weight. His hair is groomed and his body chiseled. He looks healthier and if possible, he even looks younger.

LYRA (O.S.)

Tyler?

TYLER, who's reflection still belongs to Doug, takes a towel and walks back out.

LYRA (female, 30s) lies in bed looking over at the man she's only ever known as Tyler.

TYLER

What you doing up?

LYRA

Looking at you. You okay?

TYLER

Yeah. Just couldn't sleep.

LYRA

Why not?

TYLER

Just feel like there's things I need to be getting on with.

LYRA

Like what?

Tyler turns to some pieces of wood lying on the floor in the corner of the room.

TYLER

Finish that for starters.

LYRA

Not at five in the morning you're not. Why don't you just print one out like a normal person?

TYLER

It's not the same as building one.

LYRA

No. But it is a lot quieter.

TYLER

Maybe I'll go for a run.

Lyra reaches up and kisses Tyler on the lips.

LYRA

Make me some pancakes when you get back?

TYLER

Why don't you just print some out?

LYRA

They never taste the same.

Tyler smiles and throws the sheets over a laughing Lyra.

EXT. APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Tyler runs out of the entrance, leaving behind him the enormous skyscraper he has just run down.

He picks up speed as he approaches a park until he has nothing else in his tank. Out of breath, Tyler takes a moment.

EXT. PARK - OUTDOOR GYM - CONTINUOUS

A man and a woman with mechanical legs kick-box.

Tyler performs pull-ups on a bar. Next to him, a man wearing an exoskeleton suit goes one further by doing muscle-ups. Tyler can do no more and drops down. The other man continues.

Beat. The man drops down and removes his exoskeleton suit. Shattered, he leans over, taking a breath. Tyler pats him on the back. The man acknowledges him. Smiles. Tyler jogs off.

INT. SUPERMARKET - LATER

Tyler walks down an expansive aisle followed closely by an automated trolley. He places eggs into the basket and continues walking.

All at once, loud CRASHING and BANGING is heard coming from the front of the store. Tyler, followed by his trolley, makes his way to the front of the store.

A group of a dozen individuals, their faces hidden by masks, are trashing the store with baseball bats. Supermarket drones, which are also flying around the store, are being hit out of the air.

One of the RIOTERS approaches Tyler.

RIOTER #1
Friend or foe?

TYLER
What?

RIOTER #1
(points his bat at him)
Friend...
(then points his bat at
Tyler's trolley)
...Or foe?

TYLER
Friend?

RIOTER #1
Then shit man, why you looking so
worried?

The raiders turn to the shelves. Rioter #1 takes a bag and begins filling it up.

RIOTER #1 (CONT'D)
You making a cake?

TYLER
Pancakes.

RIOTER #1
Nice. Thick or flat?

TYLER
Thick.

RIOTER #1
 Can never eat those. Find 'em too
 heavy.

Rioter #1 hands Tyler his bag, then motions him to step to one side. Tyler looks at his trolley. The trolley makes a BEEPING SOUND. Rioter #1 pulls back on his bat.

TYLER
 Can I ask you why you're doing
 this?

Rioter #1 stops mid swing.

RIOTER #1
 You got a job?

TYLER
 I restore old movies.

RIOTER #1
 I'm twenty five years old and I
 ain't ever had a job. No one
 ain't ever asked me to do
 anything other than to shut my
 mouth and stay invisible because
 of zombies like these that do
 what you say...
 (takes a swing at the
 trolley)
 Never takes a break, never goes to
 sleep, never takes a holiday or
 phones in sick and always,
 always...
 (takes another swing)
 ...Says thank you no matter how
 much abuse you give it.

The trolley is in pieces and makes one last BEEP almost as if it were saying thank you. One last swing finishes it off.

RIOTER #1 (CONT'D)
 (out of breath)
 And now they got people running
 around with computers in their
 heads. How am I meant to compete
 with that?

Another rioter stands at the entrance. POLICE SIRENS can be heard in the distance. Everyone scrambles.

RIOTER #1 (CONT'D)
 You voting?

TYLER

Voting?

RIOTER #1

(beginning to back away)
 Senator Fox, man. Ain't ever
 thought a politician would have
 given a damn about someone like
 me but that sonovabitch, he's got
 me believing.

(quoting)

"If a life is worth living then
 it needs to be given a chance to
 live." Fuck robots. Fuck Nova.
 Fuck Alex Marchand. That last
 part was mine. Do your part,
 pancake man...

Rioter #1 runs off with the rest of the crew, turning
 around just before exiting.

RIOTER #1 (CONT'D)

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD.

Tyler kneels down and looks at the broken trolley.

CUT TO:

INT. CINEMA - DAY

A female TEACHER and two dozen mostly bored SCHOOL CHILDREN
 look ahead.

TYLER (O.S.)

So why do we preserve movies?

Tyler stands at the head of the theatre trying his best to
 engage the students. Behind him, a frozen title page of The
 Cabinet of Dr. Caligari.

TYLER (CONT'D)

John Steinbeck once wrote, "How can
 we live without our lives, how we
 will know it's us without our
 past?"

STUDENT

Sorry. Who?

TYLER

John Steinbeck. He was a...

The Student momentarily freezes as he accesses information using his NuBrain chip.

STUDENT

Got it. Got it. Sorry about that.

TYLER

And films are just that, a record of our past, our history, our culture, and of our stories. If we allow even one to be lost we'll be losing something of ourselves. Let's take the movie we're about to watch...

STUDENT

...But they're not lost. I could download this movie right now using my NuBrain.

STUDENT #2

Not everyone has one, Jake.

TYLER

And the experience of streaming a movie in your head compared to watching that same movie in an unfamiliar room, full of friends and strangers alike is --

Jake freezes in his chair. His eyes fixed, unblinking staring straight ahead.

TEACHER

Jake? Jake!

JAKE

Well that was lame.

TEACHER

What have I told you about using your NuBrain during school hours?

TYLER

Maybe the reason you think it's lame is because you didn't fully understand it. Maybe when you watch it with the rest of us, you'll see it in a different light.

CUT TO:

The film has finished. Credits are rolling. The students make their way out up the stairs.

JAKE

That was still lame.

They pass a smartly dressed female figure walking down the stairs.

Doug is at the front of the cinema packing away his notes. He looks up and sees the lady approaching him. Her features obscured by the projector light coming from the projector room above.

TYLER

Hello?

No answer as the figure continues walking down the steps.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Can I help you?

The first thing he makes out is the silver case she's carrying with her mechanical hand. Then her face. It's Kia.

KIA

Hello, Tyler.

TYLER

It's been seven months since my last audit. I thought it was only meant to be one a year.

KIA

We reserve the right to audit ad hoc. My name is Kia. I'll be taking over from Frederica.

TYLER

She okay?

KIA

Perfectly. Promotion.

(taking in the theatre)

This is great. I never knew cinemas still existed.

TYLER

They still don't. It's more of a museum now. If you give me a moment I'll turn this off and we can get started?

INT. CINEMA - PROJECTIONIST ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kia places her case on the table as Tyler packs away the film reel. Tyler turns the projector off. The room darkens.

KIA
Kia. Ellis.

A light on the case flashes green.

Kia enters her code. A third light flashes green. The case opens. Kia removes a lightweight, wireless visor from within as Tyler sits down in the chair opposite.

TYLER
Never seen one like this before.

KIA
New, slicker design. Easier to carry around.

Without warning, a CRASH is heard from the stairs.

TYLER
What was that?

FOOTSTEPS make their way up fast. Kia leans forward with the visor.

KIA
What was what?

TYLER POV

Kia looks to the side as behind her, the door is kicked open and two henchmen dressed in long, tan suede coats burst in.

BACK TO SCENE

Kia quickly places the visor onto Tyler before he can react.

INT. VIRTUAL REALITY WORLD - PROJECTIONIST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Kia sits back down opposite Tyler. The men have vanished. Tyler is not wearing the visor.

TYLER
(panicked)
What's going on? This isn't an audit.

(MORE)

TYLER (CONT'D)

I shouldn't know I'm experiencing one. You're not an auditor.

KIA

Tyler, I need you to calm down.

TYLER

Let me out.

KIA

I will. But first I need you to listen to me.

TYLER

Why?

KIA

Because I need your help.

TYLER

And you do this by lying to me? Please let me out.

KIA

I just thought it would be easier.

TYLER

Well you were wrong.

Tyler tries to stand.

TYLER (CONT'D)

Why can't I move? What do you want from me?

KIA

I need Doug.

TYLER

Who's Doug?

KIA

The person you were before you became Tyler. I'm in way over my head and he's the only person who can help me.

TYLER

With what?

From out of nowhere, Tyler is hurled halfway across the room.

INT. CINEMA - PROJECTIONIST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tyler is knocked off his chair. The visor lands next to him. He looks around, the room destroyed. One henchman is knocked out, literally upside down in the corner. Kia disables the second one, slamming his face into a table.

KIA
How far did I get?

Tyler throws up. Kia runs over and picks up the visor.

KIA (CONT'D)
Tyler, there will be others. What do you know?

He doesn't answer. Kia hurriedly packs the visor back into its case. With her back turned, Tyler makes a run for it.

KIA (CONT'D)
Shit!

INT. CINEMA - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Tyler bursts into the narrow stairwell and bumps into another suede coat wearing henchman who pushes Tyler hard against the wall. Kia intervenes, barging into him with her metallic shoulder, connecting with his fragile jaw.

Free, Tyler begins crawling up the stairs.

Kia throws a punch at another henchmen, but he moves. Her fist punches a hole in the wall, bursting a water main. Water floods into the stairwell.

Momentarily distracted by the gushing water, Kia is lifted up by another henchman and pushed back against the wall. Another one shoves past and grabs Tyler's foot. Tyler struggles but does not put up a fight.

TYLER
Get off me!

Kia rams the head of the henchmen into the wall. His body goes limp as he is left hanging from his head.

The henchman tries to deliver a hammer blow to Tyler but Kia knocks him out with a blow using the case.

KIA
Come on.

In panic mode, Tyler accidentally kicks the case out of Kia's hand and down the stairs.

KIA (CONT'D)

Oh for fu...

Tyler gets to his feet and runs up the stairs whilst Kia is forced to run back down after her case.

At the top of the stairs, Tyler bursts through the door.

EXT. CINEMA - ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Out of breath, Tyler looks around for options. He runs to the edge and looks over. A long fall greets him.

BANG! BANG! GUNSHOTS ring out from the stairwell. Tyler hides behind an air conditioning chiller. He peers back as the door slams open. A henchman appears holding a gun.

Bloodied and beaten he scans the roof. He taps his temple and his eyes change color. First blue. Tap. Then green. Tap. Then red. He looks around and stops at the chiller Tyler is hiding behind.

He walks towards the unit, pointing his gun.

The door swings open again. The man spins around and FIRES but stops when he realizes that he is shooting at one of his colleagues.

The body slumps to the floor, revealing Kia using the body as a shield. She sprints at the man as he reloads.

Tyler stands and makes a run for it. Kia knocks into the henchman who in turn knocks into Tyler. All three fall over the edge of the building.

EXT. CINEMA - SIDE OF ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Kia hangs onto the side of the building. Tyler reaches out to Kia. Kia to Tyler.

The henchman falls but even with death fast approaching he remains focused on his mission. He FIRES his GUN.

Kia's about to grab Tyler when he's shot. Tyler's arm recoils back and away.

Spiraling in mid air, Tyler turns to face the rapidly approaching ground. Ahead of him the henchman's BODY EXPLODES into a vapor of crimson red as it hits the ground.

Tyler braces himself for impact. He hits the ground hard.

Dazed. Bruised. But unbelievably alive. He tries to stand but his body refuses to respond. Falling in and out of consciousness, Tyler lies back down and looks at the blue sky above.

FADE TO BLUE.

KIA (O.S.)
(whispers)
Doug, wake up.

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Doug lies in a bed with a visor on and cables inserted into his nostrils. He tries to move but quickly realizes that his right wrist and ankle are chained to the bed. Angrily he yanks at the handcuffs.

KIA (O.S.)
Don't move.

DOUG
Get me the fuck out of here.

Kia approaches Doug and lifts his visor. Doug struggles as his eyes adjust to the light.

DOUG (CONT'D)
What the hell are you doing to me?

KIA
Tell me your name.

DOUG
You know my name.

KIA
I need to hear you say it.

DOUG
Doug. My name is Doug.

Doug begins to fall back into unconsciousness.

TYLER
Tyler. My name is Tyler.

KIA
Shit. What's the last thing you
remember?

TYLER
Falling.

Kia holds a digital panel, types away.

KIA
Try again.

FADE TO WHITE.

EXT. CINEMA - ROOF - DAY

Back on the rooftop. The henchman makes his way towards Tyler
hiding behind the chiller, FIRING his GUN.

Tyler makes a run for it as a bullet grazes his arm, knocking
him to the ground.

Out of bullets, the henchman approaches, reloading.

Tyler, helpless, waits for the inevitable.

The henchman points his gun at Tyler when suddenly Kia flies
into the henchman, drop kicking him off the building. Tyler
blacks out.

INT. ABANDONED APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tyler moans awake, groggy and disoriented.

TYLER
What are you doing to me?

KIA
(continuing to type)
I need something only Doug can
give me.

TYLER
But I'm not Doug, I'm Tyler.

KIA
When they implant the NuLife they
don't wipe away your memories.
Doug's just locked up in his room.
(MORE)

KIA (CONT'D)

I need to let him back into the rest of the house, just long enough for him to help me and then I promise, I'll put you back the way you are.

TYLER

I thought you were an auditor, not a neurosurgeon?

KIA

I'm not but I was given step by step instructions by one.

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

KIA

Doug?

DOUG

Fuck you.

KIA

Doug listen to me...

DOUG

Fuck, I can still feel him rattling around inside my brain like a coin in a jar...

KIA

I can help you see Ellie again.

She now has Doug's attention.

INT. ABANDONED APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Doug wearily follows Kia into the living room - surprised to see a man chained to a chair at the back of the room.

DOUG

Is there a room in this apartment you don't have a man chained up?

Kia walks over to the man and crouches by his side, placing her hand on his knee. We see that both his arms have been enhanced mechanically; his shoulders covered in scarring.

KIA
Unlike you, he asked me to do it.
Claude?

CLAUDE (50s), thin with even thinner hair, stirs awake.

CLAUDE
Did you find him?

Kia nods her head towards Doug.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)
Doug? Long time no see.

DOUG
I remember you. I audited you.

CLAUDE
I remember you too. You called me
a scab.

KIA
Sounds about right.

DOUG
You gonna tell me what all this
is about?

Kia looks down and Doug follows her gaze. Next to Claude's feet, two metal cases. One with a dent in the side.

DOUG (CONT'D)
That's my case.

Kia slides the case over to Doug's feet.

KIA
You share your handprint and vocal
signature with Tyler, but...

DOUG
Only I know the code to the case.

Kia begins to open her own case by placing her palm on the reader. A green light lights up.

KIA
Kia. Ellis.

A second green light lights up.

DOUG
Is that it? You just need me to
open my case?

Finishing to type in her code.

KIA
That's it.

Kia opens her case. Doug looks down at his.

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Kia holds Doug's helmet, ready to place it onto Claude.

KIA
You ready?

Claude smiles. Kia lowers the helmet and starts the simulations. Both Doug and Kia's cases are connected to the helmet and to each other. They both sit down, side by side.

KIA (CONT'D)
After you were arrested I was assigned all your cases including Claude's.

DOUG
Claude St. Pierre. He was a... bomb disposal expert right?

KIA
(nodding)
Before an explosion took both his arms and left him with just his temper...

DOUG
...Killed three guys in a bar fight.

KIA
Right. I audited him three times and not once did he give me any reason for concern. But when it came to his fourth, he was a changed man. Paranoid. Frightened.

DOUG
Of what?

KIA

Himself. Told me he'd been having the same recurring dream, of breaking into an apartment and murdering a couple. So I audit him...

DOUG

...And he fails?

KIA

No. He passes. So I pack up and hand in my report. A month later I'm called into the office and told Claude's missing. Failed to turn up for work and his girlfriend hadn't seen him for at least a week. He'd just fallen off the grid.

DOUG

That's not possible. We can track every rehab using their chip.

Kia points to a device wrapped around Doug's bicep. A light blue light display shows that it is working.

KIA

He scrambles it.

The first light flashes green on both cases.

KIA (CONT'D)

Word starts going around that he must have died in a fire or a drowning, some kind of accident which could have destroyed the chip. The department liked the sound of it. Case closed.

The second light flashes green on both cases.

KIA (CONT'D)

Then a few weeks later I come home and there he is sitting in my apartment. Says that people were out to kill him and the dream was getting worse. As if it were becoming less a dream and more a memory. Begs me to audit him again, and again and again until he fails. So I put him under and as soon as I do I call the department. Tell them to send a unit to collect him ASAP.

The third light flashes green on both cases.

KIA (CONT'D)

But from the moment they arrived they made it clear that they weren't there to take him in but to take him out. To take us both out.

DOUG

You sure you're not being a little paranoid yourself?

The fourth light flashes green on both cases.

KIA

One of them pressed a gun to my head and said it was a shame to spoil such a pretty face but orders were orders. Claude saved my life that night. He helped me escape and convinced me that to solve whatever was going on, your case was a piece of the puzzle that we needed. So we broke into storage, stole it and tracked you down. And here we are.

Doug begins laughing hysterically.

DOUG

You expect me to believe that?

KIA

No. But it's the truth.

DOUG

You're crazy. You both are. You know that, right? The system is...

The fifth light flashes green on Kia's case but red on Doug's. Doug stares at it, shocked.

DOUG (CONT'D)

That isn't possible.

Kia walks over to Claude.

KIA

He was right.

DOUG

What the fuck is going on?

Kia crouches down next to Claude.

KIA
I... I don't know.

All of a sudden, Claude SCREAMS. He rips the chains binding him to the chair like they were made of paper and yanks the cables from his nose. Collapsing to the floor, he begins to smash his head into the ground. Splitting his helmet open.

Claude then begins smashing his skull into the floor. Kia jumps forward to stop him.

KIA (CONT'D)
Help me hold him down.

Doug goes to help but is swiped away effortlessly by Claude, sending him into a wall. Kia tries to subdue him with her arm but she's flung across the room.

Claude turns his hands to his skull and digs in. He winces from pain, then determination as he digs deeper until he finally rips out his chip. He falls to the floor, dead. His brain partially exposed.

Kia and Doug look on in stunned silence.

DOUG
We need to get out of here.

Doug crouches down next to Kia.

DOUG (CONT'D)
Kia -- look at me.

KIA
We need to do something. We need to tell someone.

DOUG
I've done my part. Now do yours.
Put me back the way I was.

KIA
I can't.

DOUG
What?!

KIA
But I know someone who can. He can bring Tyler back.

DOUG
Fuck Tyler. I want to be Doug.
Only Doug.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Roads are full to the brim with cars but traffic is non-existent as the driverless vehicles work in unison.

INT. DRIVERLESS CAR - NIGHT (MOVING)

Doug and Kia sit in the back.

DOUG
I'm sorry about your friend but I
can't help you.

KIA
If there's even a hint that NuLife
chips don't work, then the world
needs to know. This is everyone's
fight.

DOUG
Kia, I'm going home. I'm gonna get
my daughter. And this world you're
trying to save. It can go to hell.

Kia turns away to look out of her window.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL PLANT - LATER

The car comes to a stop outside a huge industrial plant.

INT. INDUSTRIAL PLANT - MOMENTS LATER

Doug and Kia walk through the complex. All around, an
assembly line of machines making machines. DRONES FLY and
automated DEVICES ZOOM around.

As they walk, a supervisor notices them but says nothing.

They reach the other side of the plant where they stand in
front of a glass door. The glass turns green, displaying
their reflections. Two skeletal figures, Kia's right arm
displayed in blue.

A BUZZER SOUNDS. The green glass takes a snapshot, then turns opaque. The glass door slides open and Doug and Kia are greeted by an armed guard. Kia and Doug are escorted down a hallway, eventually coming to a balcony that opens up to...

INT. MAKESHIFT HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS

The pair look over at a large atrium lined with dozens of temporary hospital beds, each filled with patients who have had, or are in the process of having their body parts replaced with mechanically enhanced ones.

Nurses wander between the beds, checking in on patients as they go. One patient screams in pain as he struggles to take to his new arm. He smashes a monitor next to him. Doctors and nurses run to his side and inject a sedative into his neck.

DOUG

This is the world you want to save?

They make their way through the numerous beds and machinery. They come to a glass enclosed operating room. Inside, a surgeon is inserting a chip into a woman's brain.

The surgeon is MORGAN BISHOP (mid 50s). He looks up and sees Kia. A smile appears behind his mask. He indicates to his team to finish up as he heads towards the exit.

INT. MAKESHIFT HOSPITAL - DOCTOR'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The room is cluttered and unorganized filled with computer terminals and odd bits of tech equipment.

MORGAN

(pointing to Doug)

Is this Claude?

KIA

No, this is.

Kia holds out Claude's chip.

MORGAN

Jesus, Kia.

KIA

It's not what -- Can you run a diagnostic on it? Tell me if anything is wrong with it?

MORGAN

I don't know, I'd --

DOUG

Hold on a sec, doc. Your little apprentice here has gone and fucked up my head. So no one...

Doug flicks Kia's hand so that the chip flies into the air. Doug catches it.

DOUG (CONT'D)

...Is doing anything until I've been put right. Got it?

Kia grabs Doug with her mechanical arm, hoists him up into the air and slams him violently against the wall.

KIA

Give. Me. The chip.

Doug tries to resist but knows there's no way he can fight back. He drops the chip into her hand. His body goes limp. His face softens and begins to look scared.

TYLER

Please don't hurt me.

KIA

(beat, realizing)
Tyler?

Kia lets go of Tyler.

KIA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Your other half was being an asshole. You okay?

TYLER

I just want to go home. I need to get back to my family.

KIA

So do I.
(beat)
But if you go back, you'll be putting them in as much danger as you are now.

TYLER

I don't understand why this is happening.

KIA

I don't either. But that's what I'm trying to find out.

CUT TO:

Morgan inserts the chip into one of his many drives and clicks away on his keyboard. A detailed schematic of the chip's diagnostics flashes up on one of his screens. Behind him, Tyler and Kia sit on stools patiently looking on.

KIA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about back there.

TYLER

It's okay I don't have any pride you can hurt. Neck yes. But pride, no.

MORGAN

You said Claude was suffering from nightmares right?

(off Kia's nod)

My expertise is in installations not diagnostics, but here...

Morgan pulls up a diagnostic screen onto a larger screen that floats in front of them. A red and blue line graph fills the screen.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

This is a report of his sleeping patterns. Blue means normal, healthy sleep. Now see that red spike? That means broken sleep, elevated stress levels...

KIA

Nightmares.

MORGAN

Right, but that shouldn't be possible. The chips are designed to regulate melatonin levels to maintain healthy, regular sleep cycles, but that's not happening. And look here...

Another screen pops up showing more line graphs.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Something happened right about here that shot his heart rate, blood pressure, adrenaline -- all through the roof.

KIA

Claude was right, his chip wasn't working. But why would one case pick up the fault and not the other?

MORGAN

I can't help with that but maybe, I know someone who can point you in a direction.

INT. MAKESHIFT HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Morgan, Kia and Doug walk down the corridor, wards on either side.

MORGAN

Most people come because they can't afford to go anywhere else, others because they can't afford not to. We deal mainly with neurological disorders. Granted our chips aren't as advanced as what Nova offers but for what most people need they'll do the job. They rarely fail.

TYLER

How can a place like this exist and no one even know?

MORGAN

Because not everyone who comes here is a sweet old lady battling Alzheimer's or a kid looking to replace a leg lost in a motorcycle accident.

Down a hallway are four henchmen. All have been mechanically enhanced to the nth degree.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

It's a trade I'm willing to accept. Our benefactor keeps the place open, ensures the right people look the wrong way. In exchange we provide the occasional... upgrade.

KIA
What version are they on?

MORGAN
The latest.

Morgan nods at the guard, who steps aside, and places his thumb print to a panel on the door. The door slides open.

INT. MAKESHIFT HOSPITAL - PRIVATE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Morgan, Kia and Tyler stand in the room as the door behind them slides closed. The room is dark. The only light comes from monitors in the far corner, where a patient lies. Only the smallest details of the patient are visible.

The three approach the bed. A small figure lying in the bed sports appendages that are no longer human, but mechanical. Only the torso appears to be organic.

Drawing closer, we see that this half machine, half woman is, Mowsa. Her taste for enhancements has clearly increased.

MOWSA
Come to show off your creation?

MORGAN
Come to ask a favour?

MOWSA
Who am I to say no to my creator?

Her eyes widen. No longer organic, they appear more like marbles. They change colour from green to purple and although the room is dark she focuses in on Tyler and begins to laugh.

MOWSA (CONT'D)
The years have been kind to you,
Doug.

TYLER
(confused)
I'm sorry. Do we know each other?

KIA
This is Tyler. Doug's better
half... so to speak.

MOWSA
And this is mine.

Mowsa stands from the bed. Her legs have been replaced with black titanium. She gingerly walks over to Tyler and places her hands, also made from the same material, on his cheeks. She looks into his eyes as hers change to green.

MOWSA (CONT'D)

Tell me Tyler what do you think you would see if you saw the world through my eyes?

Tyler tries to turn away but Mowsa forces him back. Her eyes turning to red.

MOWSA (CONT'D)

Look at me. What do you think you would see?

TYLER

I -- I --

Kia places her hand on Mowsa's.

KIA

We were told you could help.

Mowsa turns to look at Kia and smiles.

MOWSA

My dear girl what else would I be here to do?

Her eyes turn blue as she turns to stare right at Tyler.

MOWSA (CONT'D)

Now let me tell you a story.

The blue light fills the darkened room.

FADE TO BLUE.

EXT. ABANDONED FAIRGROUND - MORNING

Tyler looks up at a blue sky. Kia stands next to him in the deserted car lot. Each with their own case by their side.

In the distance, a miniature steam train on wheels makes its way towards them.

The train pulls up. A large Guard known as APE (for good reason), climbs out from one of the carriages and signals to Tyler to put his arms up.

TYLER

We've already been patted down.

Ape just smiles and continues with the frisk.

APE

Not by me.

He turns to Kia, signaling for her to do the same.

APE (CONT'D)

Sorry we don't have a lady around
to do this for you.

KIA

You'll do.

Slightly annoyed, Ape roughs up his frisk and then feels her enhanced arm. He rolls up her sleeve.

APE

You try anything and I will
personally rip that off and beat
him to death with it.

Ape motions them onto the train. He sits right behind them.

The train takes off, traveling through the abandoned fairground, an amalgamation of traditional and futurist rides. An enormous rollercoaster looms on the horizon. Known as G-FORCE, it hosts a one thousand foot vertical drop.

The ride dominates the complex. Doug takes in the large ride, its twisting tracks and the section that runs above the large pristine blue lake that lies next to the fairground.

The train comes to a stop outside the arcade.

INT. ABANDONED FAIRGROUND - ARCADE - MOMENTS LATER

Kia, Tyler and Ape pass by the vast mausoleum of arcade machines. Hundreds of machines line the aisles. All are off apart from one. In the far distance, JAVA (20s) sits on a stool bashing away on its controls.

APE

You have guests.

JAVA

Be a dear and grab 'em a couple
of stools for me.

Ape smiles through gritted teeth. Kia and Tyler watch as Java remains focused on the game, bashing away at buttons.

Ape returns with a couple of stools, nonchalantly bicep curling before presenting them to the pair. He then leaves.

JAVA (CONT'D)

Son of a bitch.

(turns)

Token?

TYLER

No thanks.

Kia holds out the NuLife chip.

KIA

We were told you can you tell us what's wrong with this?

JAVA

Nope.

TYLER

Well can you tell us what's wrong with the cases?

JAVA

The audit cases? Nope.

KIA

(standing)

Let's go. We're wasting our time.

JAVA

Relax I'm just playing.

KIA

If you want to play games, play one of these machines, not us.

JAVA

Look I'm sorry. I've been holed up here with these tombstones for two weeks. And I don't know whether you've noticed but they don't talk much and when they do it ain't all that interesting. Please sit down.

(Kia hesitates)

Please.

Kia sits back down.

JAVA (CONT'D)

I know why you're here and the reason I can't tell you what's wrong with the chip or the cases is because there's nothing wrong with them.

TYLER

They were designed to fail?

JAVA

No. They were designed to be manipulated. Look it will be easier if I show you. Either one of you chipped?

INT. ABANDONED FAIRGROUND - ARCADE - OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Java is at a computer console from which two cables connect directly into Tyler's nostrils. Tyler sits on a chair with a glass of water on the armrest.

JAVA

Okay. This is going to feel a little strange, like I'm smothering your brain with a pillow.

Tyler gives Kia a worried look. Java taps away.

JAVA (CONT'D)

Sorry. Bad analogy. Just try not to panic. Can you stand for me?

Tyler seems slightly confused by the request. Then realizes something...

TYLER

I can't.

JAVA

(more tapping)

Now try picking up the glass with your left hand.

Tyler reaches out but with his right hand, clearly struggling to stop it from moving. He picks the glass up.

KIA

Oh my god.

JAVA

You thirsty?

TYLER

Stop it.

Again, Java taps on his keyboard. Tyler puts the glass to his mouth and begins drinking involuntarily. He chokes and coughs. Water dribbles down his chin.

KIA

Stop it.

Tyler drops the GLASS. It SHATTERS.

KIA (CONT'D)

You can control people?

JAVA

I can use his NuLife to override his motor cortex and generate my own neural impulses, control an arm or a leg, but that's all. To do what you're thinking I'd need a much better piece of kit.

TYLER

So you're saying it's possible?

JAVA

If it wasn't you wouldn't be here.

Java walks over to a 3-D printer. He types in a code and the PRINTER comes to life, SHOOTING backwards and forwards.

JAVA (CONT'D)

Marchand wanted to push the limits of what the NuLife chips could do. They'd been around for three decades but strict regulations meant they could only be used to treat neurological disorders or in the NuLife program. So he put together a team. Allowed us to run in whatever direction we wanted as long as where we ended up broke new ground.

TYLER

Like brainwashing.

JAVA

We'd test on rehabs. Guide them through and manipulate narratives they'd create using their own memories.

(MORE)

JAVA (CONT'D)

When they awoke the fake memories were indistinguishable from their real ones. We gave them a reason to do things we wanted them to do and made it seem like it was their idea. Then we'd come back and wipe away any trace we were ever there. Only thing is...

KIA

A trace of the memory remained.

JAVA

The original case would always pick up a red light. So cases which we knew would be used to audit rehabs we had tested on were replaced with ones that wouldn't return a fail.

TYLER

But why rehabs?

JAVA

Because getting someone to do something that isn't in their nature is a lot trickier than getting them to do something that already is.

TYLER

Like kill.

JAVA

Marchand doesn't inhabit the same world we do. He's marooned on his very own planet and on Planet Marchand, there are no boundaries only extremes. Our research made NuBrain chips possible.

KIA

All this so we could stream make-up tips and porn into our brain.

JAVA

They can do much more than that, we literally have the ability to choose how we evolve inside our own heads.

KIA

How far did you take it?

JAVA

He gave us a list of names,
senators, rival CEO's, anyone who
he wanted eliminated. Told us to
start from the bottom and work our
way up.

TYLER

But if you were only using rehabs
it wouldn't take long before
someone realized what was going on.

JAVA

Which is why we developed a way to
manipulate anyone with an implant.

TYLER

How?

JAVA

We're all capable of committing
extreme actions. Both good and bad.
You just need to tease out what it
is that's holding them back and
then... erase it. It's trickier.
You have less control of the
narratives and run into more walls.
But, if you're good enough, you can
get them to do anything.

KIA

This is all just a game to you.

JAVA

Hey, I'm not happy about my part in
all this. But I fixed myself.

(points to his head)

This is my new life.

(beat)

You can't blame me for what I did
anymore than you can blame Tyler
for whatever Doug did.

KIA

Yet here you are about to leave one
monster for another?

JAVA

I know too much and when the most
powerful man on the planet wants
you dead, there aren't too many
options. Mowsa needs someone like
me in her operation and I need
someone like her to protect me.

TYLER

We need to do something. Tell someone.

The PRINTER flashes 100% complete. The new glass is ready. Java takes it and begins pouring himself a soda.

JAVA

We? Oh no. In two days I'm being moved out of here and you'll never see or hear from me again. Besides you don't need me. You've got the chip. You've got the cases. You just need to get them to someone who can help.

KIA

(sarcastically)

Right. People will be falling over themselves to help us go against the most powerful man on the planet.

JAVA

Shame either of you don't know Senator Fox.

Kia turns to Tyler.

EXT. THE CLOUD - PASSENGER STREET LIFT - DAY

Large, glass, cylindrical passenger LIFTS ZOOM off into the skies above. Kia and Tyler stand in the queue waiting to be processed by heavily armed security teams before being allowed to board. Tyler looks nervous.

TYLER

(whispers)

You sure this is going to work?

JAVA (V.O.)

(through an earpiece)

I've uploaded your fake IDs to their system. As long as they don't ask any questions you'll be fine.

TYLER

What do you mean?

JAVA (V.O.)

Your implant -- it doesn't allow you to lie.

Tyler and Kia stop in front of the LIFT GUARD.

LIFT GUARD
Business here today?

Tyler looks at him, dumbfounded. The Guard glares back.

KIA
Audit.

The Guard notes their cases.

LIFT GUARD
Name of the person you're seeing?

KIA
That's confidential.

LIFT GUARD
I'll need to see your ID.

KIA
Of course.

The Guard scans Tyler's ID pass and looks up.

LIFT GUARD
Warren Jukes...

Tyler smiles.

LIFT GUARD (CONT'D)
Have a nice day. Next.

Tyler and Kia walk towards the glass lift.

INT. THE CLOUD - GLASS LIFT - MOMENTS LATER

The doors close and the LIFT SHOOTS off into the sky. The pair look out as they leave the city behind and literally make their way through clouds.

JAVA (V.O.)
You'll need to make your way to
level three, Core C. Office three
hundred and fifteen.

EXT. SKY - CONTINUOUS

They passes through the clouds. High above them, the city supported by mega stilts.

JAVA (V.O.)

Welcome to The Cloud. The Venice of the skies. Home to hundreds of tech, financial and banking firms. Anyone and everyone too important to live amongst us plebeians.

INT. THE CLOUD - GLASS LIFT - CONTINUOUS

Kia looks over at Tyler inspecting his reflection in the glass. The doors open to reveal the busy people of The Cloud going about their everyday business.

INT. THE CLOUD - OFFICE CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS

Tyler and Kia stand in front of office 315. No one else is in the hallway. A red light on the door handle.

KIA

Can you get us in?

JAVA (V.O.)

Already done.

The light flashes green. The door slides open. They enter.

INT. THE CLOUD - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A glass window shows off the curvature of the earth. Kia looks out at the view. Tyler inspects the digital photos displayed on the wall. In the photos, we see Doug's wife, Tristan and his daughter, Ellie, captured in happy moments. Tyler's face shows no recognition.

TYLER

Do you have children?

KIA

What?

TYLER

Back at the hospital, you said you had a family to get back to.

KIA

I have a daughter.

TYLER

(staring at Ellie)
Do you miss her?

KIA

Very much.

TYLER

(staring at Ellie)

I don't know what that feels like.

The office door slides open. Tristan enters and sees Kia.

TRISTAN

What the hell are you doing in my office? I'm calling security.

TYLER

Tristan. Wait.

Tristan freezes at the sight of Tyler. The office door slides shut behind her.

CUT TO:

INT. THE CLOUD - OFFICE - LATER

Kia leans against the glass wall. Tyler and Tristan sit opposite each other. On the table between them are the two open cases connected to a small unit housing the NuBrain chip. Doug's case has a flashing red light.

TYLER

If Fox is elected he'll try and push through legislation curtailing the use of implants. Restricting their use in the workplace, schools, blocking any new research by Nova.

TRISTAN

They're going to try and assassinate him.

KIA

It wouldn't be the first time.

TRISTAN

No... it wouldn't.

TYLER

Only this time they'll try and use someone close to him. Someone with an implant.

TRISTAN

Well that narrows it down to about eighty percent of people he knows... Who else knows about this?

KIA

Apart from the people trying to kill us? No one.

TRISTAN

The senator is flying in for a rally tomorrow...

KIA

Can you arrange for us to meet?

TRISTAN

You think that's a good idea? How do we know you haven't been brainwashed into being his assassin? No. I'll meet with him the moment he lands. But you both should probably stay here. I can arrange security --

KIA

The fewer people who know we're here the better.

Tristan sits looking at Tyler. An awkward silence fills the air. Kia gets the hint.

KIA (CONT'D)

I'll give you guys a few minutes.

Kia leaves. The doors slide shut behind her, leaving Tristan and Tyler staring at each other. Beat.

TRISTAN

You've lost weight.

TYLER

I don't know, I don't remember.

TRISTAN

Rehab's been good to you.

(beat)

This is so hard. You have no idea how much hate I have for you. But you're just a ghost in possession of someone else's body.

TYLER

Can I ask you what I did?

TRISTAN

To who? Me? The daughter you left behind, or the three people you were responsible for having killed?

TYLER

I'm sorry. I really am.

TRISTAN

That means nothing coming from you. It literally means nothing. But for what it's worth we're good now. Ellie is good.

TYLER

Is that our daughter?

TRISTAN

My daughter. You going away was the best thing that ever happened to her. She's free to be a little girl, instead of trying to be the adult in our relationship.

(beat)

And I finally got the help I needed.

TYLER

What do you mean?

TRISTAN

The NuLife program considers us to be every bit a victim as you were. They provided us with help to adjust to our new lives. I was given an implant to help me deal with my depression. They don't like to say cure but that is what it did.

JAVA (V.O.)

Oh, fuck. Tyler, I don't mean to eavesdrop but if she has a NuLife chip you need to get the fuck out of there. Now.

TYLER

Why?

TRISTAN

Excuse me?

JAVA (V.O.)

Nova have access to all the information streamed through their chips. They just need to put alerts out for keywords like Tyler, Kia...

TRISTAN

What's going on?

TYLER

We need to get out of here. Now!

Unexpectedly, the office door opens and two HENCHMEN in tan, weathered, suede long coats stroll in. Guns drawn. Henchman #1 motions to Tyler with his gun to stay seated.

Tyler does as he is told. The henchmen walk over to the cases and closes each one.

TRISTAN

I've already called security.

Henchman #1 places his index finger over his lips. Tristan looks helplessly at Tyler.

TYLER

It's going to be okay.

Henchman #2 takes out a small laptop and cable which he inserts into Tyler's nostrils. He begins typing away.

Henchman #1 sits on the coffee table between Tyler and Tristan. Facing Tyler, he takes his gun and places it in Tyler's hand, index finger on the trigger.

He then raises Tyler's arm and presses the gun to his own forehead and lets go. Tyler's raised arm remains frozen.

Henchman #1 smiles and slides out of the way to reveal Tristan sitting in direct line of the gun.

TRISTAN

Tyler, what are you doing?

TYLER

Please don't make me do this. Java, do something?

JAVA (V.O.)

I'm trying but I, I can't override a direct link.

Henchman #1 removes Tyler's ear piece and crushes it.

TRISTAN

Please. Don't do this.

Tyler scrunches his face, desperate to regain control. Instantly, the struggle disappears. A calm look takes over.

DOUG

Tristan? What the...

BANG. Doug FIRES the GUN. The bullet strikes Tristan in the forehead. Her head recoils back.

DOUG (CONT'D)

JESUS FUCKING CHRIST!

Henchman #1 walks round, placing the gun under Doug's chin.

DOUG (CONT'D)

YOU MOTHER-FUCKER! You...

Suddenly, the door slides open again, but this time no one is there.

Henchman #1 walks towards the door to inspect.

Doug remains seated, gun pressed against his jaw, unable to turn away from Tristan. Tears flow down his face. Doug fluctuates between sadness and anger.

The sounds of a STRUGGLE are heard. Henchman #2 runs towards the door. Beat.

Kia comes INTO FRAME hoisting Henchman #1 high in the air with her enhanced arm. She sends him smashing into the table behind Doug. The ensuing fight between Henchman #2 and Kia knocks Doug over - disconnecting the cables from his nose.

Henchman #2 stands and pulls out another gun, pointing it at Kia. BANG. BANG. BANG. Holes rip through Henchman #2 as he falls dead to the ground.

Doug holds the smoking gun. He walks over to the barely conscious Henchman #1 and FIRES until no bullets are left.

Kia takes the gun from Doug.

KIA

We need to go.

INT. THE CLOUD - MOMENTS LATER

Kia and Doug make their way speedily through the bustling Cloud, back towards the glass lifts.

INT. GLASS LIFT - CONTINUOUS

Kia and Doug step into the empty lift. Doug still in shock.

DOUG
I killed her.

KIA
That wasn't your fault. Doug look at me, that was Marchand. He made you do it. Doug?

DOUG
I -- I -- killed her.

A young family enters the lift. A MOTHER, FATHER, and a young BOY and GIRL. The siblings run into the lift and press themselves up against the glass, looking out the window. The Mother smiles at Kia as they stand behind their children.

The doors begin to close when a hand stops them. The doors reopen and in walks a CLOUD GUARD.

He smiles at the couple then at Kia and Doug. The lift doors close as they begins making their way down.

GIRL
My stomach always goes funny when it starts going down.

FATHER
Mine too.

BOY
And mine.

GIRL
Dad why do we go slower going down than when we go up?

FATHER
You know what, I don't know.

CLOUD GUARD
Because if you go down too fast it can become uncomfortable on your ears.

BOY
Will my ears explode?

CLOUD GUARD
No. You don't have to worry about
that.

Kia turns to Doug and notices a tear rolling down his
cheek. She holds onto his hand and squeezes it gently.

DOUG
I never ever meant to hurt her.

KIA
(whispers)
This isn't the place, let's just
get out of here.

BOY
Why aren't you wearing that?

The Guard looks down at the boy who is pointing to his helmet
under his arm.

CLOUD GUARD
I only wear it when I'm working.

BOY
Can I try it on?

MOTHER
Leave the man alone, honey.

CLOUD GUARD
I don't mind. It's a little big for
you but...

The Guard places the oversized helmet over the boy's head.

CLOUD GUARD (CONT'D)
And you know what's really cool? If
I flick this switch, tell me what
you see.

The Guard flicks a switch on the side of the helmet and a
huge smile emerges across the boy's face.

BOY
You're a skeleton!
(turns to his mum and dad)
You're a skeleton too! And you!
(turns to his sister)
And you!

(MORE)

BOY (CONT'D)
 (turns to Kia and Doug)
 She has a gun.

Kia quickly forms a gun with her hands and fires at the Boy.

KIA
 Bang! Bang!

The Boy smiles and counters with his own hand gun.

BOY
 Bang! Bang! Bang!

Kia pretends she's hit.

FATHER
 Okay stop now. Give the man back
 his helmet before you break it.

The Father removes the helmet and gives it back to the Guard.

GIRL
 Dad look I can see the city.

The lift makes its way down through the clouds. The Guard taps his ear.

CLOUD GUARD
 (re: earpiece)
 Go ahead. Yeah. Yeah.

Kia looks at the reflection of the Guard as the city begins to appear below. The Guard turns slowly towards Kia and Doug.

CLOUD GUARD (CONT'D)
 Yeah. Yeah.

Kia slowly lets go of Doug's hand, turning to face the Guard. Everyone's focus is on the city below, apart from Kia and the Guard who just stare at each other.

BOY
 You're not looking.

The Guard doesn't take his eyes off Kia.

CLOUD GUARD
 I've seen it before.

The lift comes to an abrupt stop.

The Guard pulls out his gun and points it at Kia.

CLOUD GUARD (CONT'D)
DON'T FUCKING MOVE!

Kia lunges forward. BANG. The Guard FIRES but hits Kia in her enhanced arm.

Kia and Cloud Guard struggle for control of the gun which he continues to FIRE, SHATTERING GLASS and hitting Doug in the midsection. The fight continues around the lift.

Doug finally jumps in grabbing the Cloud Guard, hoisting him into the air and ramming him into the shattered glass.

EXT. GLASS LIFT - CONTINUOUS

The Guard flies out of the glass lift. Doug is about to follow, but Kia grabs Doug by the top of his trousers.

INT. GLASS LIFT - CONTINUOUS

Kia pulls Doug back inside. They both collapse on the floor, exhausted. Doug looks at the blood on his shirt.

DOUG
(re: Kia's worried look)
It's just a graze.

Kia looks over at the scared family.

KIA
Are you all okay?

MOTHER
Please don't hurt us.

DOUG
What do we do now? We go up we're
dead. We go down we're dead.

Another lift comes down to meet them, packed with armed security all pointing their guns at them.

DOUG (CONT'D)
And if we stay here. We're dead.

Kia walks over to the lifts control panel where there's a blue light behind a glass case. She BREAKS the GLASS and places her finger over the button.

KIA
Hold on.

She presses the button.

FADE TO BLUE.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - PLATFORM - NIGHT

Doug jumps awake. A TRAIN SHOOTS by at high speed. Kia sits to the left of him on a bench.

KIA
We need to keep moving.

DOUG
And go where? Who are we gonna
get killed now?

KIA
That wasn't your fault.

DOUG
Just because someone else made me
do it doesn't make me feel any
better. We shouldn't have involved
her.

A train begins pulling up in front of them. Doug stands up.

KIA
Where are you going?

DOUG
I don't care, Kia. I really don't
care anymore.

The doors open and Doug gets on. Kia grabs both suitcases and jumps on just time as the doors close.

INT. TRAIN - MOMENTS LATER (MOVING)

Doug lies back in his chair staring out the window as the lights of the city begin to fade into the distance. Kia sits opposite him. The carriage is completely empty.

DOUG
I don't remember anything. I'm
trying but I can't.

KIA
Remember what?

DOUG

Of my life with Tristan before it turned bad. How can I love her so much and not remember why that even is?

KIA

The same day I lost my arm I lost my dad. We were caught in traffic driving home one night when a freeway collapsed on top of us. It had been standing there for a hundred and twenty years and it chose the two minutes that we were under it to collapse. I've had this arm for fewer years than the one I was born with yet I don't remember what it feels like to not have it.

(beat)

And I don't remember the sound of my dad's laugh even though it was the last sound I ever heard him make. When I picture him in my head he's like an actor in one of your silent movies.

(closes her eyes)

But I know it was there once. I just need to give myself the chance to find it.

Doug and Kia mirror each other as they both look out of the window.

DOUG

I hate silent movies.

KIA

Course you do.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TRAIN - LATER (MOVING)

Kia sleeps. Her head rests against the carriage window. Doug begins to fade too. Fighting to stay awake. Each time his eyes close the carriage lights begin to power down and then power back up as he opens them again.

Beat. Doug finally notices the phenomenon.

Doug reaches out to Kia wanting to wake her but hesitates. He stares unblinking at the lights.

INT. TRAIN - TOILET - NIGHT (MOVING)

Doug leans over the sink, splashing water on his face. As his mind begins to clear, he notices the blood stain on his shirt. He removes his shirt to reveal no wound. Running his hand over his abdomen, he struggles to recall.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

(Flashback) Doug, Kia and Cloud Guard fight in the lift. Cloud Guard FIRES his GUN. Doug is hit and keels over. Kia presses a blue button.

Doug stares at his reflection in the mirror. He knows something is amiss.

(Flashback) Mowasa's eyes turning green.

MOWSA

What do you think you would see if
you saw the world through my eyes?

(Flashback) Doug falls from the roof of the cinema. The henchman lands with a splash. Doug lands unharmed.

Doug struggles to accept what this could mean.

(Flashback) The waiter is shot. Blood sprays onto Tristan. Doug sits being questioned.

DETECTIVE (O.S.)

Doug... Doug...

Doug looks up to the Detective but sees himself.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

I need you to focus.

INT. TRAIN - LATER (MOVING)

Doug marches back down the empty carriage. Kia stands looking out of a window. Concerned.

KIA

We're slowing down.

Doug grabs Kia and roughly spins her to face him.

DOUG

You lying bitch!

KIA

Let go of me.

DOUG
You've been lying to me this whole
time.

KIA
What?

DOUG
The lift. How did we escape the
lift?

KIA
I have no idea what you're talking
about...

DOUG
We were cornered with nowhere to go
but somehow we made it onto this
train.

KIA
You kept blacking out after Tristan
was shot.

DOUG
And what about when I was shot?

KIA
I don't know what --

DOUG
(squeezing her shoulder)
Don't lie to me!

KIA
Get off me.

DOUG
Why, does it hurt?

Kia pushes Doug away.

KIA
Yes!

Doug pushes back. Kia shoves harder and floors him. Doug
doesn't seem to care and begins to laugh.

DOUG
None of this is real.

SCREECHING, the train comes to an abrupt stop. Kia
immediately grabs the cases.

KIA
We need to get off this train.

Doug slowly gets to his feet.

DOUG
I don't need to do shit, kiddo.

KIA
Doug...

Doug walks past Kia and sits down at the bar.

Kia looks down the carriage and sees the suede coat henchmen approaching them. She looks behind her, more henchmen. She turns back, takes a deep breath then charges.

She fights ferociously using her enhanced arm to her advantage. Breaking jaws. Limbs. Sections of the carriage.

Doug pours himself a drink and ignores the chaos as more henchmen run past him towards Kia.

MARCHAND (O.S.)
Mind if I join you?

Marchand takes a seat next to Doug and smiles.

DOUG
Have the barman put it on my tab.

MARCHAND
(looking passed Doug)
She does take a beating.

Kia is punched in the face but retaliates with a punch of her own. The man is no more.

DOUG
And keeps on ticking. Now what do you make of that?

MARCHAND
Intestinal fortitude?

DOUG
I know this is an audit.

MARCHAND
How many of those have you had?

DOUG
Not nearly enough.

MARCHAND

Few enough to listen to a story?

DOUG

I'm all yours.

Marchand nods as he pours himself a drink.

MARCHAND

Several years after launching NuLife we began receiving reports that some rehabs, after being audited, were exhibiting signs of what we now call nihilistic delusions. A belief that the world they inhabited was no longer real. The idea would become so ingrained that they became a danger to themselves and others, and we were left with little choice but to wipe their identities and start again.

DOUG

So you're saying I'm having a psychotic breakdown.

MARCHAND

I'm saying decisions have consequences and if the idea you're buying into is that this is all just an audit, be sure of the price that comes with it. Some debts can never be paid off.

Doug turns to Kia being held by the henchmen. One stands in front of her. Arm cocked back, ready to unleash another blow.

DOUG

That's enough.

The henchman stands down as a tired and bruised Kia is given some respite.

MARCHAND

Let her go.

Kia takes a seat next to Doug. Her nose bleeding. Doug can't bring himself to look at her.

MARCHAND (CONT'D)

Would you like a drink?

KIA

Sure.

Marchand slides Kia a drink. She throws it straight back in his face. He smiles, takes a napkin from the bar and dries his face.

KIA (CONT'D)

So what now, you kill us both?

MARCHAND

No. I want you to bring Jave to me.

DOUG

And we're going to do this why?

Kia and Doug stare at their reflections in the mirror opposite.

MARCHAND (O.S.)

Because you have a daughter. And I have your daughter.

Doug jumps from his seat, grabs Marchand by the throat and begins choking him. Marchand simply smiles as the guards rush in and pull Doug off.

MARCHAND (CONT'D)

I don't always need a chip to get people to do what I want.

Marchand removes his tie and unbuttons his shirt's top button.

MARCHAND (CONT'D)

I don't like loose threads and Java is a particularly long one I need cut. You have his trust. You can get as close to him as you are to me now.

KIA

Even if we do what you want and somehow make it out, you'll still kill us.

MARCHAND

Or I could just have your memories wiped, give you new identities. Who knows, I may even give you both a helping hand.

EXT. DESERT - DAWN

Marchand steps off the train into a barren desert. On the horizon the sun begins to rise. A handful of vehicles await their passengers. Doug and Kia follow, flanked by henchmen.

MARCHAND

Four years ago you were nothing.
Now look at you, you've stepped
into the ring with the undisputed
champion of the world.

A henchmen leaves the train carrying both cases, and hands Claude's chip to Marchand. Marchand crushes the chip under his foot and walks towards his car, pointing to a spare car.

MARCHAND (CONT'D)

You can keep this one. Let it take
you wherever you need to go.

Marchand and his men drive off into the night. Doug walks towards the remaining car followed by Kia.

KIA

You can't do this.

DOUG

I don't have a choice.

KIA

Doug. Listen to me. Please.
They've taken our cases.
Destroyed Claude's chip. We have
nothing. Java is the only one who
can help prove what Marchand has
done. Is capable of doing.

Doug opens the car door and gets in, slamming the door shut behind him.

INT. CAR - DESERT - MOMENTS LATER

The passenger door opens as Kia climbs in. Doug stares straight ahead.

KIA

We're going to need a plan.

Kia begins disconnecting one of her fingers.

DOUG

You even think about double
crossing me --

KIA
-- You'll what?

Doug grips the wheel tighter, knowing she can kick his ass. Kia places the finger in the glove compartment and slams it shut. Doug turns the car on and they drive off.

EXT. ABANDONED FAIRGROUND - MID MORNING

Doug pulls into the fairground - now swarming with guards.

EXT. ABANDONED FAIRGROUND - ARCADE - MOMENTS LATER

Kia and Doug approach the arcade where they see Ape sitting on the steps leading into the entrance.

APE
You left without getting my number.

KIA
You left without leaving an impression.

Ape stands. Doug steps between them.

APE
Well, look who's gone and grown a set.

Ape and Doug face-off.

JAVA (O.S.)
Jesus I did not think I'd be seeing you two again.

Java greets them at the entrance. He hugs Kia and then comes between Doug and Ape. He tries to hug Doug, who steps back.

DOUG
Right face. Wrong guy.

JAVA
You must be Doug. Come on, let me get you guys a drink.

INT. ABANDONED FAIRGROUND - ARCADE - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Java hands Kia and Doug a glass of soda each. Java notices Kia's missing finger.

KIA
Mind if I use your printer?

JAVA
Sure.

DOUG
What's with the militia outside?

Kia types in a code on the printer.

JAVA
Today's the big day. I'm finally getting out of here. Got myself a real nice place far, far away. Would show you pictures but it wouldn't be much of a safe house if I did.

The PRINTER STARTS UP and begins SHOOTING back and forth.

JAVA (CONT'D)
So I'm assuming you didn't come all this way to wish me farewell?

KIA
We want to break into Nova and we need your help to do it.

JAVA
No seriously, what can I help you with?

DOUG
She is being serious.

JAVA
Get the fuck out of here.

KIA
We don't have our cases. We don't have the chip and you're not going to turn yourself in...

JAVA
Fuck no...

KIA
So any proof of what they've done will be at Nova. We need you.

JAVA

You can't even do it with me.
You're asking me to help you break
into the most heavily fortified
private facility on the face of the
Earth.

The 3-D PRINTER continues. A shape now visibly forming...
but it's definitely not a finger.

DOUG

There must be a way.

JAVA

I'm sorry guys, but you'd have a
better chance of me turning
myself in than trying to --

Kia looks on and doesn't react. Java's smile fades as it
slowly dawns on him why they are really there.

The 3-D printer finishes and a green light flashes. A newly
formed GUN now sits in the case.

JAVA (CONT'D)

Oh hell no...

Java goes to stand and run out of the room, but Doug grabs
him and forces him down to the ground.

Kia grabs a gun from the printer.

The guard outside turns to see what the commotion is. He goes
for his gun. Kia FIRES. BANG. BANG. The GLASS SHATTERS and
the guard falls, dead.

EXT. ABANDONED FAIRGROUND - ARCADE - CONTINUOUS

TWO GUARDS sprint towards the office FIRING their GUNS.

INT. ABANDONED FAIRGROUND - ARCADE - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

GLASS EXPLODES inside the office. Doug, Kia and Java dive for
cover.

The control panels are riddled with bullets, creating micro
EXPLOSIONS and setting off a chain reaction that activates
the whole fairground and all the machines in the arcade.

Doug pulls Java up as Kia throws Doug the gun.

KIA

Let's go.

INT. ABANDONED FAIRGROUND - ARCADE - CONTINUOUS

Doug and Kia drag Java out of the office, into the arcade and through the maze of exploding machines.

The two Guards enter. Doug FIRES, sending them for cover. His gun CLICKS empty.

DOUG

I'm out.

KIA

Wait here.

Kia pushes Java towards Doug then stealthily moves off behind them.

Taking cover behind an arcade machine, one Guard slowly peers around it. Instantly, Kia's fist SMASHES through the screen, connecting with his face.

The other Guard sees this and begins firing at Kia but she's too quick and ducks behind the machine. He moves to where she should be but only finds the unconscious guard.

Kia surprises him from behind. Knocks the gun out of his hand and CRUSHES him headfirst into the side of the machine.

Rejoining Doug and Java, she points to some stairs.

KIA (CONT'D)

Up there. Go.

The three race up the stairs to a long hallway with a door at the far end. Kia kicks open the door. They step out into...

EXT. ABANDONED FAIRGROUND - G-FORCE PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Below them, the whole fairground has now come alive.

BANG! BANG! Gunshots from behind. Kia slams the door shut.

JAVA

I was nothing but nice to you both.

KIA

(to Doug)

Now what?

The roller coaster slowly pulls up alongside the platform, but doesn't stop.

DOUG

Jump on.

Kia pushes Java into the front carriage and repeatedly yanks at the safety barrier to push it down. TRAPPING him in.

Doug goes to jump on but TWO GUARDS grab him and knock back onto the platform. Kia see this and LAUNCHES herself onto them from the carriage.

The roller coaster moves off holding just Java, SCREAMING as he goes. Doug and Kia wrestle with the guards when, behind them, Ape SMASHES through the door -- wearing an enhanced exoskeleton suit with a cage-like helmet.

Doug looks at Kia and nods at the guards.

DOUG (CONT'D)

You got this?

Kia elbows a guard in the nose. Nods back.

Doug charges towards Ape. He dodges Ape's wide, cumbersome punches and manages to get a few sharp jabs into Ape's unprotected areas, pissing him off even more.

Kia goes toe-to-toe against the two guards. Both soon lie unconscious at her feet. She picks up one of their discarded guns and races over to help Doug.

She fires at Ape but he coils up into a ball. The bullets RICOCHET off his suit.

The ride returns with a very pale looking Java, covered in his own vomit.

JAVA

Somebody get me off this thing!

Kia pulls Doug towards the ride.

THREE GUARDS BURST through the platform door. Doug and Kia dive into a middle carriage for cover as the guards send bullets spraying across the carriages before jumping into the back carriages.

EXT. ROLLER COASTER - CONTINUOUS (MOVING)

Kia weakly pulls at the carriage's barrier and turns to Doug.

KIA
Help me with this.

Together they wrench it down as far as they can just as the roller coaster spins up and around. One guard is flung off. And then another -- bouncing off the tracks like a pin ball until he hits the ground below.

Bullets WHIZZ past Doug's head.

DOUG
Son of a bitch.

The ride finally makes its way towards to the G-Force section and slows a little as it begins its ascent.

KIA
I can't believe people used to ride these for fun.

DOUG
Hold on.

KIA
I am.

DOUG
To me. I'm can't hold on by myself.

Kia locks her mechanical arm around the barrier and grabs Doug. Now at the top, the roller coaster begins to make the crawl towards the thousand foot vertical drop.

At the peak, the ride stops, hangs for a beat and then the reverse rocket takes off. The ride launches forward. Doug and Kia hold onto each other as the ride nears G-Force speeds. The final guard can no longer hold on and is flung off.

The ride goes through more twists, turns and loops before it finally begins to level off and pull back into the platform.

Kia looks and sees the guards waiting for them. One tries to release Java from his seat, while another tries to grab Kia. She kicks him away.

The guard wrangles Java - releasing him from the barrier.

JAVA
Thank God.

Doug points to Java. Kia reacts instantly, jumping from carriage to carriage up towards to him. Doug goes to follow but is stopped by Ape who lands with a THUD in front of him.

Up front, Kia arrives in the nick of time. She SMASHES the guard in the face. He falls back clutching at his broken nose. She forces the barrier back down on Java.

The ride begins its cycle again.

JAVA (CONT'D)
 (almost crying)
 Oh come on!

Down the carriages, Ape and Doug fight - it's brutal and bloody. This time, Ape has the advantage and it's Doug who takes the PUMMELING as they hurl around the tracks.

Again, the G-Force ascent approaches. The carriages begin to make the climb. Ape loses his balance only for a split second - just enough for Doug to kick out from underneath him.

Pulling himself up one carriage at a time, Doug climbs towards the front. Behind him, Ape gives chase, making light work of the climb with help from his suit.

The ride reaches the top of the G-Force section and begins to approach the descent. Kia pats Java on the shoulder.

KIA
 Stay here.

Kia begins climbing the carriages back towards Doug. She knows he won't be able to hang on by himself during the descent. The carriages begin to drop over the edge just as Kia and Doug reach each other.

KIA (CONT'D)
 I got you.

They fall into a carriage as the ride rockets down. They grip each other tightly.

The ride reaches the bottom and races off around the final section of its circuit. SUDDENLY Doug is grabbed by APE. Doug, Kia trade blows with Ape who takes an almighty swing at Doug -- knocking him over and OUT of the carriage.

Laughing, Ape turns, his full attention now on Kia.

APE
 I'm going to enjoy this.

Ape and Kia launch at each other. Ape begins SMASHING his fists down onto Kia's mechanical arm, now almost useless.

The ride loops around, Kia throws a punch, but it's mistimed. Ape grabs her arm and begins to twist, almost to breaking point. Kia SCREAMS in pain and lies helpless as Ape looms over her.

APE (CONT'D)

(re: her arm)

Looks like I'll be beating you to death with this.

But then, a glimmer of hope flashes in her eyes and she smiles. Confused, Ape turns to see... Doug!

But Doug isn't quick enough. Ape grabs him by the throat and cocks his fist back. Just as he is about to unleash the killer blow, Kia reaches out and rips a handful of cables from out the back of APE's exo-suit.

Ape's punching arm violently locks out breaking it in one swift motion. Ape lets out an almighty ROAR, releasing Doug.

Kia tears out more cables and wires. The suit begins to malfunction, throwing Ape's body into spasms until... SNAP! Ape's head spins violently round, breaking his neck.

Beaten, and tired, Doug gives Kia a bloodied smile.

KIA

You okay?

DOUG

I've been better.

Kia points to the platform below, now swarming with guards.

KIA

What now?

DOUG

Jump?

Kia looks at the distance between them and the water.

KIA

We'll never make that.

DOUG

I... I don't know what to do. I...

Kia turns to see a blue button on the dash board of the carriage.

CLOSE ON DOUG. Shakes his head. Trying to clear it. Then, suddenly focused, he looks at Kia. Tyler has returned.

He takes in his surroundings, looks at Ape's body and then at the tracks ahead and below them.

TYLER
I've got an idea.

Tyler climbs over to Ape and tries to lift his body.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Give me a hand. We've only got one
shot at this.

Kia climbs into Tyler's carriage and helps lift up Ape's body. The ride continues to rocket around and loop over its own tracks.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Get ready.

The ride approaches the final loop. Doug and Kia brace themselves, wedging themselves in tight.

TYLER (CONT'D)
Now!

Tyler and Kia throw Ape overboard. His body falls and CRASHES HARD onto the tracks below. The ride completes its loop, racing towards where Ape's body just landed. Kia and Doug grab Java who watches on in horror.

JAVA
You guys are insane!

The ride SLAMS into Ape - the mangled mass of the exo-suit and body parts sends the carriages flying off the tracks, and soaring into the air.

Doug, Kia and Java are CATAPULTED high and far over the lake. Then down, SLAMMING into the water.

Behind them, the whole ride collapses. Bits of metal and debris from the tracks and the ride rain down from above onto the platform and the guards below.

EXT. LAKE - MOMENTS LATER

Deep in the water, Kia struggles to swim back to the surface.

Tyler reaches out and pulls her up to safety.

EXT. SHORE - MINUTES LATER

Java lies face first in the black sand. He turns around and sees Tyler helping Kia onto the sandy shore towards him.

JAVA

FUCK!

Tyler helps Kia out of the water.

TYLER

You okay?

KIA

Tyler? Am I glad to see you. I don't have much time to explain --

TYLER

You don't have to, I know. We need to get Java to Senator Fox.

Tyler drops to the floor.

DOUG

NO! GET OUT OF MY HEAD YOU FUCKING LOSER!

Doug smashes his fist into the sand.

DOUG (CONT'D)

HE'S COMING WITH ME YOU FUCKING PARASITE. THIS ISN'T YOUR LIFE. IT'S MINE.

KIA

Doug?

DOUG

DON'T YOU TOUCH ME. DON'T YOU FUCKING COME NEAR ME.

Doug stands and grabs Java by the arm, dragging him through the sand. Kia tries standing up but her mangled arm stops her from doing so.

KIA

Doug, please don't. They'll kill him. We'll lose any chance we have of letting the world know what Marchand has done.

JAVA

Listen to Kia, Doug. I promise I'll help you. I'll tell Fox everything.

(MORE)

JAVA (CONT'D)
Please, I'm begging you. Don't take
me to Marchand.

Doug yanks at Java's arm.

DOUG
SHUT UP! You're coming with me or
I'll kill you myself.

KIA
Doug, you're right. The world is
fucked up. But this is your chance
to change it. This is the one
chance we have to make a
difference. If we don't do
something now that's it. We'll
never have this chance again.

Java falls to the floor, infuriating Doug. Doug places his
head in his hands and falls to his knees.

TYLER
Please don't do this. She's right.

DOUG
What would you know? You were
programmed to think that way. I
make my own choices.

Doug looks up at Kia.

DOUG (CONT'D)
I make my own choices.

Doug stands back up and walks towards Kia.

DOUG (CONT'D)
I can't change who I am, Kia.

He crouches down in front of Kia and pulls out his gun.

DOUG (CONT'D)
I'm a bad man. No one can change
that.

He takes Kia's hand and drops the gun into it.

DOUG (CONT'D)
But it doesn't mean I always have
to make the wrong choice.

Then, Doug walks over to Java as Kia looks on.

DOUG (CONT'D)

I need you to do one thing for me.
And then I promise you'll never see
me again.

CUT TO:

INT. ABANDONED PRISON - NIGHT

Doug stands amongst the ruins of the neglected prison.
Fallen ceilings and walls expose the night sky.

A light in the sky makes its way towards Doug - who stands
all alone. The light comes from a DRONE. It FLIES above and
around Doug.

Lights appear in the distance as cars make their way
towards him.

Four cars pull up. Out come the men in the tanned, suede
coats, followed by Marchand. Marchand walks through the
collapsed exterior wall of the prison.

MARCHAND

I'll show you mine if you show me
yours.

DOUG

I want proof she's here.

Marchand nods. A car door opens and out comes Ellie.

Ellie runs towards Doug as they exchange a tight embrace.

DOUG (CONT'D)

I love you so much, Ellie.

ELLIE

I knew I would see you again.

DOUG

Did they hurt you?
(Ellie shakes her head)
Let me look at you. You've gotten
so tall.

ELLIE

You've lost weight.

Doug smiles and hugs her again.

MARCHAND

Well?

DOUG

Java's dead.

MARCHAND

And the girl? The Juggernaut. She's dead, too?

DOUG

They were ready for us. If you don't believe me, you can scan my NuLife, I'm sure you have a way of downloading my memories.

MARCHAND

I don't, and we do.

A bodyguard opens a case and pulls out a visor and cables. Doug leads Ellie to one side.

DOUG

It's okay. It's going to be okay.

The guard pushes the cables up Doug's nostrils, then hands Marchand a visor. Marchand places the visor on.

MARCHAND

We are but two specks of dust, thrown together by chance, and upon this moment, the fate of the world rests.

Doug and Marchand begin to micro-convulse as Marchand reviews Doug's memories. The bodyguard monitors his case. The panel turns green. He removes the visor from Marchand and then from Doug.

MARCHAND (CONT'D)

Well, it's not like you didn't try... but I know you're lying.

DOUG

I don't know what you mean.

MARCHAND

You think of all people that I wouldn't be able to tell the difference between what's fake and what's real in the event someone ever tried to trap me in one of these things.

DOUG

I'm not lying.

Marchand pulls out his gun.

MARCHAND

My father believed that as long as even one prison remained open, no society could ever call itself civil. That if we closed each and every one, we would only be faced with more patients to treat. But the truth is, there are many kinds of prisons and we can no more exist without them than we can without the air we breathe. Prisons are what we create to define who we are. After all, who would I be without all my successes, and you, without all your failures?

BANG! Marchand FIRES his GUN.

Doug startles, momentarily stunned as it slowly dawns on him that he hasn't been shot. Doug looks down and sees Ellie lying on the floor. Blood pooling around her body.

Doug drops to his knees and grabs Ellie in his arms covered in blood.

DOUG

NO! OH GOD, NO. PLEASE. ELLIE.

Doug tries to stop the pouring blood with his hands. Marchand drops his gun to the ground.

MARCHAND

There's one left in the chamber.
I'll let you decide what you do
with it.

Marchand and his guards walk off back towards their cars and drive off.

Doug

NO! ELLIE. Baby. Please.

Doug holds her lifeless body close to his. The lights from the cars momentarily swipe across them both and then disappear into the night.

Doug rocks back and forth with Ellie in his arms.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ABANDONED PRISON - DAWN

Doug looks into the distance as the top of the sun pops up over the horizon. The blood on his face and hands dried.

Tyler crouches down in front of him.

TYLER

This wasn't your fault.

Doug looks down at Ellie's lifeless body in his arms and brushes her hair to one side. He gently rests her down onto the ground.

DOUG

No. It was yours.

Doug takes Marchand's GUN from the ground and SHOOTS Tyler in the head. Doug falls forward, unconscious.

FADE TO WHITE.

INT. ABANDONED PRISON - CONTINUOUS

A helmet is placed into a metal case. The case is closed.

A cat with a dead pigeon by its feet watches on.

FOOTSTEPS are heard WALKING away as the cat follows the figure with its eyes.

Doug sits unconscious on the sofa. The blood on his face and clothes gone.

The cat drags its prey along the overgrown courtyard where Ellie's body previously lay - but that is also now gone.

A driverless car with its doors open awaits on the other side of the ruins. Two large men begin to untie Doug from the sofa.

EXT. ABANDONED PRISON - MOMENTS LATER

Doug is carried over to the car and placed into the back.

INT. DRIVERLESS CAR - CONTINUOUS

One of the men touches the touchscreen windscreen as a list of options appear. He scrolls through them until he gets to one that says, "HOME". He highlights the option with his finger.

EXT. ABANDONED PRISON - CONTINUOUS

The car drives off. Closely followed by another.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The apartment is identical to Tyler's. The only noise comes from a 3-D PRINTER SHOOTING back and forth.

A large digital screen set to come on at 07.00 comes to life. Two NEWS READERS sit behind their desk.

NEWS READER #1

Presidential elections may still be more than a month away, but a new poll released this morning shows Senator Fox now six points clear of his nearest rivals.

The PRINTER continues to SHOOT back and forth.

On the wall are large digital posters of old movies - notably one for The Cabinet Of Dr. Caligari and one for Once Upon A Time in the West.

NEWS READER #1 (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Right across the country, both blue and red are falling in behind Fox, turning this election on its head. And who would have predicted even as little as a year ago, that an openly gay presidential candidate would have been able to do that?

NEWS READER #2 (V.O.)

So what's driving this surge?

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Doug lies unconscious on a large bed.

NEWS READER #1 (V.O.)

There are large swathes of this country which have never experienced the benefits that came when our economy transitioned from a service based one to a technology based one.

Doug begins to come to.

NEWS READER #1 (V.O)

And it's in those states where people have been impacted most by A.I., by automation, and who are now looking at the prospect of having to compete in a job market alongside cognitively enhanced individuals, that Fox is proving to be most popular.

Doug sits up, slowly realizing he doesn't know where he is.

NEWS READER #1 (V.O) (CONT'D)

Fox, unlike any of his rivals, has proved time and again, that he is willing to go up against the likes of Nova and its CEO Alex Marchand with proposals to...

Doug looks at his clean hands as panic sets in. He looks at his pristine white shirt and tugs at it.

He stands up from the bed and rips it off.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Doug jumps into the shower and scrubs furiously all over his already clean body.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

A smartly dressed MAN approaches the front door of the apartment. We can't see him but he is flanked by two large BODYGUARDS. He opens the front door to the apartment and steps in. The guards turn and stand on guard.

One of them is Ape.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Doug sits naked on the corner of his bed. Staring into the distance. In the background the TV continues.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The smartly dressed man throws his coat on the sofa. He walks over to the digital screen and mutes it.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The jarring silence of the TV wakens Doug from his trance. He begins to hear NOISES coming from the living room.

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Doug enters and freezes, confused to find, Alex Marchand, standing in front of him. Marchand, speaking on his phone, turns to see Doug naked in front of him.

MARCHAND

That's great news.
 (holding the phone away
 from his mouth)
 Doug, are you okay?

Doug doesn't respond. Marchand smiles warmly but concerned.

MARCHAND (CONT'D)

(to Doug)
 Give me one second. I just need to
 finish this call.
 (back into the phone)
 I really appreciate your support.

Doug looks passed Marchand and for the first time, he sees the 3-D PRINTER shooting back and forth. Doug steps towards it, but keeps his eyes firmly on Marchand.

MARCHAND (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Yes. Yes, of course. We should
 definitely hold a joint press
 conference on this. I'll be in town
 on the -- hang on --

Marchand walks over to a digital panel on the wall and swipes through his calendar. Next to the panel is a digital photo of him and Doug holding hands and smiling. Another shows them with Ellie playing on a beach.

MARCHAND (CONT'D)

Okay, I'm going to be in town on
 the fifth.

Doug walks over to the PRINTER.

MARCHAND (O.S.) (CONT'D)

That's great to hear. And thank
 you, again.

Marchand hangs up and turns back to Doug who's looking at the printer.

MARCHAND (CONT'D)
Are you going to tell me what's
going on? I couldn't get a hold of
you last night.

We now focus on the PRINTER and see it's FORMING a GUN. A digital display on the machine shows that it's 80% complete. The handle and barrel are virtually fully formed.

Marchand steps toward Doug.

MARCHAND (CONT'D)
Doug, you're worrying me. Where
were you last night?

Doug stares intently at the gun.

MARCHAND (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Ellie missed saying goodnight to
you.

The mention of Ellie's name is enough to set an explosion off in Doug. He grabs the incomplete gun out of the case. Instantly an angry error message flashes red on the screen.

Doug turns and points the gun at Marchand.

MARCHAND (CONT'D)
Jesus, Doug! What are you doing?

Doug FIRES but the incomplete GUN EXPLODES in his hand. Doug lets out a primal-like SCREAM as his hand is no more.

EXT. APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The bodyguard turns to Ape, having just heard the explosion.

BODYGUARD
Did you hear that?

Ape turns to the door and knocks.

APE
Senator Fox, is everything okay?

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Doug is bent over in pain as blood gushes from his hand. Marchand, however, doesn't run. Concerned for Doug.

MARCHAND
Doug. Oh my God.

Doug looks up, ignoring the pain. He jumps Marchand, hoisting him into the air and slamming him against the wall, sending the mounted photos falling down around them.

Marchand tries to fend Doug off but he's no match for the vicious animal he is confronted with.

Doug slams Marchand down. Marchand tries clawing at Doug's face, but even with one hand he is no match. Marchand's skull caves in but Doug continues to pound until Marchand's arms fall limp.

The front door is furiously kicked in by Ape. Both he and his fellow bodyguard enter with their guns drawn. Beat.

Doug stops, remaining on his knees over Marchand's body. He notices the fallen, now shattered, photos. Happy family memories of himself alongside Marchand and Ellie.

Ape turns the corner and points his GUN at Doug's head. BANG!

CUT TO:

EXT. CAFÉ - CONTINUOUS

BANG! A COFFEE CUP DROPS. Coffee spills over a table. A WAITRESS runs over.

WAITRESS

You okay, hun?

Kia sits at the table, eyes welling up as she forces a smile.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)

Don't worry about it. I'll clean this up and get you another. I'll be right back.

The lady walks off. Kia removes her ear piece as she cries.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Nothing but a calm blue ocean can be seen for miles around. A completely normal view until... we see Kia, in the middle of all this, sitting above the water, on a wooden chair.

Opposite her, a FIGURE, also sitting on top of the water in another chair. We only see his back.

FIGURE

They tell me you want your chip removed.

KIA

They tell you I want my daughter back too?

FIGURE

If you did what I asked.

Kia

I've done everything you asked. You wanted me to manipulate Doug into killing Fox. I did that, he's dead. They're both dead...

FIGURE

Then I will keep my word and honour our agreement...

KIA

It was never an agreement. I never had a choice.

FIGURE

And neither did I.

(beat)

We're both just puppets, Kia, playing on a cosmic stage and our strings, they reach all the way back to the big bang.

KIA

You kidnapped my daughter. You threatened her life. Those were the strings you pulled.

FIGURE

If that's what you believe then you didn't have to kill Fox.

KIA

You think you can do almost anything, build the world how you think it should be, but that's only because a psychopath like you can never be a part of it the way it really is.

The Figure raises from his chair and stands up on the water but doesn't sink. He looks off into the horizon.

FIGURE

I'll keep my promise and return
your daughter. As for your other
request. I'll take it under
consideration. Goodbye, Kia.

Then, he dissolves and vanishes.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

The headset is removed. A Guard stands in front of Kia. He packs away the headset in its case and exits the room. Kia, alone, begins to cry.

Behind her, the door opens again and a young GIRL (12) runs in. Kia jumps out of her chair and runs towards her, falling to her knees to embrace the child.

NEWS REPORTER #1 (PRE-LAP)

A nation continues to mourn.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY (NEWS FOOTAGE)

Mourners gather as two coffins are carried to their final resting place.

INSERT - PHOTO

Doug and the man we thought was Alex Marchand, standing happily together in what looks like a wedding photo.

NEWS REPORTER #1 (V.O.)

One month from the tragic murder of
Senator Fox and suicide of his
husband Douglas Clayton, pressure
continues to mount on
investigators...

EXT. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE - DAY

A NEWS REPORTER #1 stands on the steps of the offices.

NEWS REPORTER #1

...here at the Bureau Of Criminal
Reform, where Douglas Clayton had,
himself, worked as a federal agent
overseeing the NuLife program.

CUT TO:

INT. SURGICAL ROOM - DAY

Morgan sits on a stool holding a chip in his hand. Kia approaches him slowly.

KIA
What's wrong?

MORGAN
He wants me to replace your
NuBrain chip.

KIA
With what?

MORGAN
A NuLife.

KIA
Son of a bitch.

MORGAN
Kia, he won't let you walk out of
here without it. Either of you.

Kia takes the chip out of Morgan's hand, her fingers briefly touch his.

KIA
(whispers)
We won't remember you, will we?

Kia lies back on an operating chair. Her head now shaved. Morgan turns on his instruments and begins the procedure.

CUT TO:

INT. NOVA SUMMIT - MORNING

A packed auditorium of journalists and fans await the arrival of the first guest speaker.

PRESENTER (O.S.)
Ladies and gentlemen, please put
your hands together for Nova's
CEO, Alex Marchand.

The crowd goes wild. A well dressed man confidently walks onto the stage. But this is the man who we believed, who Doug believed, was Fox.

Marchand soaks up the adulation.

MARCHAND

It's been almost fifty years since my father first addressed this conference...

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - MORNING

Kia lies asleep on a large bed, on top of perfectly white sheets. She slowly wakes and looks around. Confused. On her arm, a scrambler. Floor to ceiling windows look out onto a forest. Kia realizes she is alone.

MARCHAND (V.O.)

Just five days shy of his thirtieth birthday, he stood on this stage and shared his vision of a future where diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and crime would be as alien to our generation as smallpox was to his.

INTERCUT MARCHAND AND KIA

MARCHAND

A future where no one would ever again be a victim of their own misfiring brain. On that day he changed the world forever. On that day he gave it NuLife.

The crowd applauds enthusiastically.

Panicked, Kia frantically rushes through the house, looking briefly in each room.

MARCHAND (V.O.)

I often think about, had he had more time, how else he would have helped shape our world? What tools he would have given us to become the very best of ourselves, not just as individuals, but as a collective?

A large glass wall at the far end of the room looks out onto a pristine lake. Staring out of the window is her daughter. On her arm is also a scrambler.

Kia stands behind her daughter and hugs her. They both look out onto the lake.

MARCHAND

We share this world with billions of people, yet a mind like his only comes around once in a generation. Somehow, that doesn't seem right to me. The math just doesn't add up. How many more must there be out there...

Marchand addresses the audience.

MARCHAND (V.O.) (CONT'D)

In here, like him, just waiting to unlock their full potential, but missing the key to doing so? Why is it that we live in a world where we are able to enhance almost every part of ourselves but the one part that matters the most, our brain?

Kia and her daughter stand on the edge of the lake. Kia pushes her in. Her daughter pops out laughing. Kia jumps in after her.

MARCHAND (CONT'D)

Many have tried to convince me that what I'm about to show you here today was impossible. That there are nowhere near enough stars in the universe for me to wish upon to turn my dream into reality.

Marchand maintains a soft expression.

MARCHAND (CONT'D)

And there may have been a time when that was true...

(beat)

But the universe is infinite, and new stars are born every minute.

Kia and her daughter float on their backs, looking up at the sky.

MARCHAND (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentleman it gives me great pleasure to present Nova's crowning achievement, NuBrain, the future of a new you.

FADE OUT.

THE END.