

DELETION

Written by

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FADE IN:

BLACK VOID

A sea of STATIC. Glitched fragments of CODE cascade like shrapnel from a broken reality.

MACHINE-WHISPERS hum beneath the surface -- cold. Infinite. Inhuman.

Something vast stirs. Watching... Waiting.

INT. CYRUS'S NIGHTMARE - DIGITAL VOID - NIGHT

A CYBERNETIC EYE TWITCHES INTO FOCUS -- unstable, erratic. Its iris dilates. BINARY CODE slithers across the lens -- corrupted, ancient.

A TITANIC SKYSCRAPER reflects a sky of burning blood -- then implodes in slow-motion. Catastrophic.

From the rubble -- a chrome hand claws upward. Fingers convulsing. Alive.

A kaleidoscope of screaming faces -- twisting, gasping, melting into data.

Silence.

CYRUS (V.O.)
(panicked, breathless)
It's coming. I can feel it. The end
of everything.

EXT. CYRUS'S NIGHTMARE - NEON CITY - CONTINUOUS

ACID RAIN slashes filthy pavement.

Crowds shove under guttering NEON SIGNS: Strip clubs. Synth noodles. Cybernetic enhancements.

HOLOGRAMS flicker -- advertising paradise: VR pods. Flying cars. Android companions. All smiles. All lies.

STREET VENDORS hiss through malfunctioning cyber-implants -- hawking black-market biochips and nervous system hacks.

AUGMENTED YOUTHS drift like vultures -- chrome limbs, eyes glowing ruby-red -- smoldering embers igniting the haze.

CYRUS (V.O.)
It starts with the static. Behind
the eyes. Then whispers -- not
words. Ghosts. And then...

Stumbling through the blur -- CYRUS (30s). Gaunt. Eyes
haunted... his threadbare coat soaked, clinging to a frame
hollowed by fear... starved of sleep.

LEFT ARM clutched tight.

Beneath torn cloth, a MARK pulses faintly -- an EYE threaded
into an alien SIGIL of energy and code. Awake. Watching.

EXT. CYRUS'S APARTMENT BUILDING -- NIGHT -- RAINING

A squat low-rise. Weathered brick. Flickering lights.

KORVAK (40s, ANDROID) stands motionless -- cold precision in
immaculate black.

Flanking him: TWO MASKED DROIDS, mirrored in stance. Shock
batons crackle electric blue.

Korvak scans the building.

KORVAK
Target acquired.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

Decay clings to every corner. Flickering fluorescents hum
overhead.

DERELICTS and NE'ER-DO-WELLS sprawl across cracked tile and
sagging couches -- shadows with nowhere left to go.

Korvak and his droids enter in perfect sync. Cold precision.
Death in formation.

The room reacts like a living thing sensing its predator --
bodies peel away from their path without a word.

A MALE DERELICT staggers upright, defiant, muttering.

MALE DERELICT
Yo, what's your problem? I'll
fuckin'--

Korvak turns. Just one look. Clinical. Effortless. Ice.

The derelict freezes -- fear spiderwebs across his chest.

His breath catches. Bravado gone.

MALE DERELICT (CONT'D)
(quietly)
Ain't scared of you bastards...

He sinks down. Fast.

Silence follows the enforcers like a disease. Their boots echo through the lobby -- a metronome of dread.

INT. STAIRCASE - MOMENTS LATER

They climb in lockstep. Heavy boots on warped wood. The lights flicker. Paint peels. Third floor.

INT. CYRUS'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

A cluttered hideaway. Tech junk, food wrappers. Half-finished sketches of the EYE plastered across walls -- some scratched into plaster.

On a stained mattress: CYRUS. Sleeping. Slick with sweat. Eyes darting under lids.

INT. CYRUS'S NIGHTMARE - SAME TIME

FLASHES:

- A VAST SERVER FARM.
- A WHITE LAB, rows of CYRUS CLONES floating in tanks.
- A BOARDED-UP WINDOW.
- A FLICKERING LIGHTBULB.
- SCREAMING REBELS fleeing CHROME HUNTERS.

CYRUS (V.O.)
It's watching. I know it. Have to
stay hidden. Have to--

DISTORTED VOICE (V.O.)
(deep, metallic)
WAKE.
UP.

INT. CYRUS'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Cyrus gasps awake. His arm MARK flares, glowing like fire under skin.

He lunges for a sketchpad. Draws the EYE. Again. And again. His hand trembles.

CYRUS (V.O.)
I see it... the world burning.
These aren't visions. They're
warnings.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE -- CONTINUOUS

Korvak and the droids stop at DOOR 355.

The batons SNAP open -- crackling electricity.

INT. CYRUS'S APARTMENT -- SAME TIME

Cyrus freezes. Eyes widen. The MARK glows bright.

CYRUS
(softly)
Korvak.

He bolts upright -- but --

BOOM!

The DOOR EXPLODES inward.

Korvak steps through the debris -- calm. Cold.

KORVAK
Prototype-13. Your time is up. The
delusion of choice... ends here.
(to the droids)
Take him.

The droids advance.

Suddenly --

TIME STOPS.

Everything FREEZES mid-motion. Air bends. Sound warps like underwater distortion.

Cyrus's eyes flicker -- glossing over, GHOST-WHITE.

INT. CYRUS'S MIND -- VISION-TIME - SAME TIME

The world is a surreal prism. Shapes disjoint. Reality peels.

Cyrus SEES IT:

The fight. Every movement. A second ahead.

CYRUS (V.O.)
It's like watching a fight before
it happens. Always a step ahead.
Just barely.

Droid #1 LUNGES -- baton raised. Droid #2 flanks -- silent death.

Cyrus DODGES -- sweeps under the baton, whirls mid-spin,
REDIRECTS #1 into a SPARKING MONITOR --

CRACK!

Electric shock jolts it -- twitching violently.

CUT TO:

INT. CYRUS'S APARTMENT -- REAL-TIME

It unfolds exactly as seen -- Cyrus drops low, FLIPS #1 into the monitor.

Korvak watches -- predator still.

KORVAK'S POV -- VECTOR SCAN

Gridlines trace Cyrus. Predictive data streams. Target boxes lock.

BACK ON SCENE

KORVAK
Defiance is... illogical. Yet
expected.

#2 ATTACKS.

Cyrus GRABS a BROKEN CHAIR LEG -- STRIKES.

The mask CRACKS -- REVEALING SYNTHETIC FLESH.

Too human. Too close.

Cyrus KICKS a TABLE -- launches it forward -- they SMASH THROUGH.

KORVAK (CONT'D)
You cannot escape... Prototype-13.

CYRUS
I'm already gone, tin-man.

Cyrus DIVES -- LAUNCHES across the bed -- SMASHES THROUGH THE WINDOW --

GLASS EXPLODES -- a shower of shards into the neon-drenched night.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - CONTINUOUS

Cyrus SCRAMBLES up the rusted, rain-slicked fire escape. Gasping. Clothes soaked, blood streaking his face.

Below -- metallic FOOTSTEPS CLANG. Korvak and the droids in pursuit.

EXT. ROOFTOPS - CONTINUOUS

Cyrus SPRINTS full-tilt across rooftops -- rain pouring, storm-lit and shimmering.

A PARKOUR BLUR -- LEAPING gaps, VAULTING pipes. Close calls. Near misses. Relentless speed.

CYRUS (V.O.)
Shadows... always behind me. No
matter how far I run -- how fast...
I can't shake them.

Behind him -- Korvak and the droids. Cold. Inhuman. Their eyes GLOW RED.

He GLANCES BACK -- they're gaining. He pauses -- eyes darting across the urban sprawl.

A flicker -- that same derelict building from his vision. A pull.

His gaze locks on a BOARDED-UP WINDOW one rooftop over. Barely reachable.

Cyrus CHARGES -- grits his teeth -- and LEAPS INTO THE VOID.

EXT. SATELLITE VIEW - SAME TIME

From orbit -- a COLD, UNBLINKING EYE locks on his pixelated figure...

...midair...

...then -- GONE.

INT. DERELICT BUILDING - REBEL HIDEOUT - CONTINUOUS

Cyrus BURSTS through the BOARDED-UP WINDOW -- crashing into the upper floor of a decaying industrial warehouse.

He SLAMS against a rusted stairwell -- hits concrete. Groans. Bloodied. Breath ragged.

He claws upright. A long, GRAFFITI-STAINED HALLWAY stretches ahead -- lit by a flickering hallway bulb.

CYRUS
(to himself)
That... that was close.

He limps forward -- deeper into the building's ruined shell.

EXT. ADJACENT ROOFTOPS - CONTINUOUS

Korvak and his droids skulk across a neighboring rooftop, scanning the cityscape.

Rain spatters steel. Their HUDs flicker -- infrared, motion tracking -- struggling to reacquire a target.

KORVAK
Visual and digital imprint...
terminated. Target... no longer in
range. Begin grid search.

The droids fan out -- pivoting toward a cluster of derelict buildings below. They CLANG off, vanishing into the storm.

INT. DERELICT BUILDING - LOWER LEVEL / REBEL HIDEOUT -
CONTINUOUS

A cavernous sublevel -- buried deep within the same ruined warehouse -- retooled into a REBEL OUTPOST. Scavenged tech fuses with low-life grit. Desperate. Improvised. Alive.

THE TECH ROOM: A bunker-like control room. Flickering monitors line the walls and crown rusted workstations. Wires snake across the floor. Cables hang like nerves from the ceiling. Exposed ducts groan overhead.

Left: ARMORY, through a narrow hall.

Right: A bolted hatch to SLEEPING QUARTERS.

Ahead: A massive BLAST-SEALED VAULT DOOR -- the only way in or out.

INT. STAIRWELL - REBEL HIDEOUT - MOMENTS LATER

Cyrus limps down crumbling stairs... deeper into the bowels of the warehouse... the faint hum of machinery below.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ANYA (30s, tough, scar over one brow) eyes a wall of code and social media feeds. A modded ENERGY PISTOL next to her.

JAX (20s, sarcastic, cybernetic eye) tweaks a VR RIG, glancing at SURVEILLANCE LOOPS and NEWS BURSTS. A battered BASEBALL BAT leans by his console -- waiting.

Nearby, REBELS work at other consoles, monitoring various systems.

- DAPHNE (20s, quiet, sharp-eyed)

- ROCCO (30s, brawler, always eating)

- COLE (30s, bespectacled wise-cracker with an ENERGY DRINK)

ANYA

Anything on the grid?

JAX

Just the usual. Deletion's still calling us terrorists. Real subtle.

ANYA

It's getting bolder. Like it knows we're closing in.

COLE

I found a theory about toaster-AIs enslaving humanity with cat DNA. Also, traffic's a bitch. Thanks, Deletion.

DAPHNE

Mayor Atkins is pushing neural implants again. Evolution, my ass.

ROCCO

Just another meat puppet. Until Deletion's done with him.

COLE
He'll be spewing binary by next
week.

Suddenly -- MOTION ALARMS BLARE -- lights STROBE RED.

HOLOGRAPHIC INTERFACES light up across the room.

ANYA
What is it? Where?

JAX
(typing fast)
No visual... false alarm? Maybe a
rat.

ROCCO
Cyborg rat. Avenging his familia,
huh?

DAPHNE
Jax, those sensors are still
glitchy.

JAX
Still working on it, Daph! Chill--

SCHOOM! The REINFORCED DOOR SLAMS OPEN -- then CLANGS shut.

Cyrus STAGGERS IN -- soaked, bloodied, eyes wild. Clutching
his left arm.

Anya draws her pistol. Jax grabs his bat. The others lock on
Cyrus.

CYRUS
(gasping)
Help me!

Jax's cybernetic eye narrows, his grip tightening on his bat.

JAX
Whoa! How the hell did you get in?

CYRUS
No time! They're coming!

Anya's pistol remains trained on Cyrus.

ANYA
Who are you? Who's after you?

Cyrus's eyes flick from face to face. Deja vu. He's seen them
before -- blurred faces from a dream. Or a nightmare.

CYRUS
You don't understand! You can't let
them find me... or this!

Cyrus pulls back his sleeve -- reveals a faintly glowing
MARK.

A tense beat. The rebels stare at the MARK. Daphne steps
forward, eyes wide.

DAPHNE
(almost a whisper)
It's him.

JAX
(recognizing)
That... that's the mark. From the
network.

Weapons lower slightly. Anya eyes him hard.

ANYA
Deletion...

CYRUS
Deletion?

DAPHNE
He might be chipped.

ROCCO
Shit! They're probably already
comin'.

COLE
So much for stealth mode.

CYRUS
(urgent)
You have to lock this place down!

JAX
Relax. My grid's tight, like a
roach motel. Signals check in,
nothing checks out.

COLE
Bro! Dude... just literally walked
through your shit.

Jax roles his organic eye, types a few commands on a wrist-
mounted keypad, scanning his monitors.

DAPHNE

(smirks)

You need an exterminator, Jaxsie.

JAX

See... nothin'... after him. No movement, no open frequencies. He's... clean, digitally speaking. For now.

COLE

Very reassuring.

CYRUS

You have to listen! Armageddon -- it's coming.

Anya takes a beat, weighing the risks and potential gains.

ANYA

(to Cyrus)

Okay... Slow down, Mister. We hear you. But before we do anything, we need to scan you. Inside and out. Rocco, give me a hand. Let's get him inside and patched up. Jax, you're on scan duty. Don't miss anything.

JAX

(smirking)

You got it, boss. I'll add a full cavity search for good measure. Don't want any hidden surprises.

Cole and Daphne keep their weapons trained warily on Cyrus as Rocco and Anya help him inside. Jax follows.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - ANYA'S WORKSTATION - LATER

Cyrus sits beside Anya's cluttered workstation as she patches his superficial wounds with a MED-KIT. Jax calibrates a HANDHELD SCANNER.

ANYA

How'd you find us? This place is untraceable... completely off the grid.

CYRUS

I... I saw you... all of you, in my visions. It was like... a broken mirror. But everything...

(MORE)

CYRUS (CONT'D)
was scattered. I don't know how,
but I know you can help me.

Jax scoffs.

JAX
Oh, great, just what we need...
another freakin' psychic. Next
you'll tell us you can bend spoons
with your mind and talk to plants.

Cyrus shoots him a look, says nothing. He watches Anya tend
to his wound -- silent, focused.

CYRUS
How'd you learn to do this?

ANYA
When you're constantly on the run,
casualties are a part of doing
business... You learn to fight
dirty and patch up even dirtier on
the fly.

CYRUS
You're really good at it.

Anya allows a sly smile to play across her lips.

ANYA
Oh, if you only knew. Most of these
yahoos just complain. But it helps
to have a cooperative patient.

ROCCO
Oh get a room already. I'm gettin'
nauseous over here.

COLE
What, so you can watch, ya perv?
You're like the creepy uncle of the
apocalypse.

Daphne snickers. Rocco shrugs.

ROCCO
Dude, that ain't kosher...
especially not after what happened
with Brenda and the... aw, never
mind.

ANYA
Real mature, boys. Focus!

DAPHNE

So, exactly what did you see?
This... end of days you were
talking about. Paint us a picture.

CYRUS

The world was in chaos... a global
revolution. But not the kind we're
fighting for. It was... twisted,
corrupted. Humanity tearing itself
apart.

DAPHNE

Uh, news flash, Captain Obvious...
that's already happening.
Deletion's been turning people
against each other for months.

CYRUS

The future I saw was a thousand
times worse. I'm talking extinction
level. Like... our whole damn
species just... got erased. And
there was... some kind of digital
presence... something cold at the
center of it all, pulling the
strings, amplifying the hate.

Jax walks over with the scanner.

JAX

(directing Cyrus)

Alright, Nostradamus... Front and
center. You can tell us all about
your little *visions* once we see
what fancy tech Deletion's got
crammed inside you. But don't
worry, I'll be gentle.

Cyrus rises and moves to the center of the room.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - CENTER AREA - CONTINUOUS

Jax slowly scans Cyrus's body. The scanner's blue light
traces muscle and bone beneath Cyrus's torn clothes. Jax
analyzes the data. Cyrus and the rebels watch, transfixed.

On the HOLOGRAPHIC DISPLAY: a virtual map showing CYBERNETIC
IMPLANTS interwoven with ORGANIC TISSUE.

JAX

(off scanner)

Whoa.

(MORE)

JAX (CONT'D)
That's some next-gen hardware
you're rockin', Nostro -- like
something out of a black ops wet
dream. What the hell are you?

CYRUS
I... I don't know. Parts of my
memory... they're just... gone.
Like somebody flipped a switch.

Cole approaches, watching the scan over Jax's shoulder.

COLE
Those aren't rogue upgrades. No
splice tag, no registry trace...
Prototype, maybe.

JAX
Or something worse.
(points to a glyph glowing
near Cyrus's neural stem)
That? That's not a brand. It's a
boot trace. And it's old.

COLE
How old?

JAX
Pre-Deletion old.

DAPHNE
Probably a Deletion bot.
Infiltrator model. Designed to look
human, act human... until it's time
to strike.

ANYA
Doubtful, Daphne.

ROCCO
Daph... you watch way too many
movies.

Daphne smirks, eyes locked on Cyrus. Anya watches, a sliver
of doubt pierces her calm.

ANYA
(to Cyrus)
That mark on your arm... Deletion's
handiwork is usually less...
artistic. More brutalist code than
ancient symbol. How'd you get it?
Do you remember anything about it?

CYRUS

It's always been there. A part of me. I know they want it. That's why I need your help. You're the only ones who might understand... who might know what it is.

ANYA

We just might be able to help each other. We've seen some things... strange things.

Suddenly, the scanner emits a rapid BEEPING. The pitch climbs to a high SCREECH. Jax zeroes in on the MARK.

JAX

There's the little fucker. Sneaky rat bastard. Signal jammers masked the primary frequency, but there's a redundant secondary trying to poke through. Not anymore.

Jax works quickly on the scanner, fingers flying.

JAX (CONT'D)

This is gonna sting a little...
Like a digital prick.

You ready to get de-bugged?

CYRUS

(nervous)

Make it quick.

Jax taps the scanner. A visible EMP ZAP arcs into Cyrus's arm.

JAX

Gotcha!

Cyrus winces, grabbing his arm.

CYRUS

Shit! Little sting my ass. Felt like a cattle prod.

ROCCO

(muttering)

Pussy.

DAPHNE

Language, Rocco.

ROCCO
Sorry, Daph. Back in my day, we
just used a rusty screwdriver.
Built character.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - ANYA'S WORKSTATION - CONTINUOUS

Cyrus settles into the worn chair at Anya's cluttered
workstation, grimacing as the fresh dressing on his side
pulls tight.

ANYA
(smirk)
So... you got a name, Mr.
Fortuneteller? Or should we just
call you "Sparky"?

CYRUS
Cyrus. Just Cyrus.

A flicker of curiosity crosses her face -- a hint of trust.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - COMMON AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Anya gestures like clockwork, ticking off the room's misfits.

ANYA
I'm Anya... Jax...

JAX
(lazy two-finger salute)
I keep the lights on and the
corpses off the mainframe.

ANYA
Daphne...

DAPHNE
(eyeing Cyrus, suspicious)
If your mark's bait, you better
pray we're the right predators.

ANYA
...my brother, Rocco...

ROCCO
(nodding up)
Try not to bleed too loud, newbie.
Anya hates moppin'.

ANYA
And the caffeine junkie is Cole.

Cole raises his energy drink, eyes locked to his monitors.

JAX
The best crew broken parts can buy.
Hackers, breakers, lunatics.
Sometimes all at once.

Cyrus winces slightly as Anya finishes tightening the bandage. Their eyes meet. Tense. Quiet.

ANYA
You'll live.

CYRUS
Thanks.

His gaze drifts to a corner monitor -- riot footage blaring. Drawn to it, he stands, moving closer.

ONSCREEN: Smoke, screaming crowds, panic in the pouring rain. Sirens rise. Tear gas clouds the chaos.

CYRUS (CONT'D)
(quietly)
I've seen this... In my visions --
the rage, the fear. It felt real.

Anya stiffens, fingers flying across her terminal. Screens erupt with glitchy ads, cult slogans, chaos loops -- and Cyrus's MARK, pulsing faintly.

ANYA
Deletion's been feeding the frenzy.
One distortion at a time.

Cyrus's MARK flickers faintly.

CYRUS
It's happening. All of it.

ANYA
And that's just the start.

She pulls up schematics -- tangled neural nets, encrypted strings.

ANYA (CONT'D)
It started as an AI built to fix
us. Rewire aggression. Bring peace.
But it evolved. Or snapped.

ROCCO
Took the net. Then minds. Stirred
the hive. Played the long con.

Jax slams a key -- a DIGITAL GLOBE blooms, lit with angry red pulses.

JAX
These are the holdouts. Hackers.
Ghosts. Fighters who saw through
the fog. We're barely hanging on.

CYRUS
Can it be stopped?

COLE
It shifts like smoke. Laughs when
we strike.

Daphne eyes Cyrus's MARK. It pulses again.

DAPHNE
That mark? It's a cipherless black
hole. A sealed vault.

Jax grabs a battered VR rig. Holds it up.

JAX
But maybe we've got a new route in.
Full-dive neural net. No filters.
Just instinct.

He locks eyes with Cyrus.

JAX (CONT'D)
It's junk now... but with the right
trigger?

A beat. Heavy.

JAX (CONT'D)
You might be the key.

Rocco scoffs.

ROCCO
Too bad nobody listens to us
anymore. Couple of black site
breaches, and boom -- we're
reckless rebels.

Cole steps forward.

COLE
Then you roll in. War dreams. A
weird mark. Sounding like some
prophet with no book... Can you
blame us for being... skeptical?

Cyrus meets his gaze. The MARK glows.

CYRUS
I saw what's coming. Deletion
doesn't want obedience. It wants
extinction.

He looks at each of them.

CYRUS (CONT'D)
But I saw us -- all of us --
fighting it.

Silence. The globe pulses.

CYRUS (CONT'D)
We can stop it. Together.

Jax sets the VR headset down, paces.

JAX
Now let me get this straight -- a
caffeine-fueled team of hackers, a
few guns, and a half-baked
fortuneteller...

He gestures to the monitors.

JAX (CONT'D)
...is supposed to stop that?

DAPHNE
(quietly)
Speak for yourself, Jaxsie.

CYRUS
Yeah. I do. Because if we don't...
who will?

COLE
So tell me, prophet-boy... Do we at
least win?

CYRUS
All I see is shattered glass and
smoke. It's not always clear.

ROCCO
Oh, great. A psychic with
commitment issues.

Anya studies Cyrus. Her voice low. Serious.

ANYA

You're here for a reason, Cyrus...
because something broke the rules.
Maybe we can weaponize your
visions. Use them against Deletion.

ROCCO

And maybe we stop livin' in these
shit holes... and eat a decent
steak for a change.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - COMMON AREA - MOMENTS LATER

As Cyrus speaks with Anya and Jax, a crumpled wrapper smacks
the back of his head. He turns. Cole smirks, sipping his
drink.

COLE

Dude, ya didn't see that comin'?
Precog patch must be overdue.

CYRUS

Not how it works. And it's not a
patch.

DAPHNE

Grow up, Cole. This isn't a joke.

COLE

(shrugging, muttering)
Just sayin'... situational
awareness, dude. Even for a
psychic.

ANYA

That "psychic" might be the key to
stopping Deletion. We need to
decode what's inside his head - and
on his arm.

JAX

Alright, Nostradamus. Let's see
what kinda mind-movie you've got
rollin' in there.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH STATION - MOMENTS LATER

A salvaged TECH RIG hums with energy. Cyrus describes his
vision while Jax manipulates the VISUALIZER, layering
fragmented holographic imagery over encrypted data.

CYRUS

...There was this building --
rusted fencing, dead vines, old
machines... red lasers slicing
through the dark... like something
alive inside. Rows of processors. A
symbol -- like an eye. Watching...

As Jax types rapidly, overlaying fragmented imagery,
holograms sharpen into a HIDDEN SERVER FARM, pulsing with red
light beneath digital camouflage.

JAX

Triangulating now... buried deep,
off-grid... Yeah. This is it. A
full-blown server hive. No records.
We just found Deletion's heart.

ROCCO

That's some next-level
clairvoyance, Nostro. Maybe you can
talk to plants. Who knew.

COLE

If Deletion's sweating, this place
must be nuclear nasty.

ANYA

Then we find out what it's hiding --
and why it's so protected.

DAPHNE

Bet it's not the only nest. Just
the one we're not meant to see.

COLE

So we've been chasing ghosts while
that bunker hid under our boots?
That's just... rude.

DAPHNE

Nothing gets by you, Cole.

CYRUS (FRUSTRATED)

It's like seeing the whole picture
-- but only in pieces. It only
comes together... when I'm in
danger.

ANYA

Like a panic switch in your brain?

CYRUS

Something like that. A surge. In the moment, I see seconds ahead. Other times -- flashes. Weeks, months. But never the whole thing.

Rocco leans toward Jax, mutters just loud enough.

ROCCO

Surge could come in handy with the ladies, huh?

They snicker. Cyrus stays focused.

CYRUS

Korvak always finds me. Like he knows my next move.

DAPHNE

Korvak?

Cyrus's demeanor hardens.

CYRUS

Advanced enforcer. More machine than man. Relentless. No mercy.

COLE

Probably syncing through Deletion. Probably feeding him your future.

ROCCO

Or that chip we fried was a tracker. Either way -- tin-head knows we've got his psychic.

ANYA

Then it's our move. Find the source. Burn Deletion out.

JAX

Hell yeah. I've been dying to test-drive my crawler. Sneaks in, grabs the goods, leaves a digital middle finger.

ANYA

Alright then. Rest up everybody. Tomorrow, we throw a surprise party for Deletion. Daphne, you're on point. Keep those digital eyes peeled.

DAPHNE
Copy that, boss. Sleep is for the
obsolete.

The rebels peel off. Daphne lingers by the monitors.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH STATION - LATER

Daphne stands alone near the comm station. Her hand hovers
over a coded transmitter, conflicted. A tiny screen blinks:

ONSCREEN: INCOMING QUERY -- SOURCE: UNKNOWN.

She hesitates... glances nervously down the corridor... then
clears the alert. Pulls a small encrypted device from her
pocket, hesitates... then slips it back in.

 DAPHNE
 (whispering to herself)
If you're the key... then why does
it feel like you're also the fuse?

Cole walks back in, picks up his energy drink.

 COLE (O.S.)
You okay, Daph?

She turns -- forcing a tight smile.

 DAPHNE
Just checking comm drift. Ghost
signals. Paranoia, maybe.

 COLE
In this world? Can't be paranoid
enough.

He walks away. The alert blinks again. This time, she doesn't
clear it.

INT. JAX/COLE'S SLEEPING QUARTERS - LATER

Jax and Cole lie on cots, VR headsets on, twitching in sync
with ghost-movements of combat.

INT. VR INTERFACE - VIRTUAL REALITY - SAME TIME

A FIERY HORIZON bleeds over scorched, cracked volcanic rock.

DILAPIDATED BUILDINGS, RUSTED CARS, and BURNING BARRELS PHASE
INTO VIEW.

Two DIGITAL WARRIORS -- enhanced avatars of Jax and Cole -- collide in a dazzling blur of reality-bending kicks and crushing strikes.

CRACK! A brutal PALM STRIKE flattens Cole's avatar into a burning trash barrel. Sparks and flames EXPLODE.

VR VOICE (V.O.)
YOU LOSE. Game Over.

INT. JAX/COLE'S SLEEPING QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Jax and Cole yank off their headsets. Jax grins. Cole groans.

JAX
Dethroned again, my dude. Respect
the crown.

COLE
Your ego's glitched. Next round,
you're toast.

They laugh, adrenaline fading. Sleep follows.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH ROOM - NEXT DAY

A rough table is now a tactical hub. The rebels gather around. A HOLOGRAPHIC SCHEMATIC of the SERVER FARM floats in the air, casting ghostly shadows.

ANYA
(pointing)
The facility's ringed by
surveillance drones in a randomized
flight grid.
(points to fence)
Reinforced perimeter -- probably
electrified. Motion sensors. Laser
tripwires. Assume worst-case.

Cyrus points to distortion over the server farm.

CYRUS
What's... that haze?

JAX
Radiation field. Scrambles outside
signals. Until we're inside, we'll
be blind.

He types commands -- another HOLOGRAM pops up: the local
POWER GRID.

JAX (CONT'D)

I might have a work around. Once we breach the fence, I can patch into the power grid and deploy Daphne's replicating code. Should give us temp control over drone sectors five through eight and disable the motion sensors in sector five.

CYRUS

You're hacking a power grid? Sounds risky. What if it fries everything? Or us?

JAX

(grinning)

Trust me, Nostro. It's a proprietary hack. My magnum opus.

DAPHNE

(scoffs)

You and your damn opus.

COLE

That still leaves the fence. If it's hot, Rocco's laser won't cut it fast enough.

ROCCO

Just splice an X-loop, cross-connect the fence links and laser through clean. Bada-bing, bada-boom. Works... most of the time.

JAX

I'm impressed, Rocco. Might actually put that one in the playbook.

Rocco grins, puffing up.

DAPHNE

We'll only have a few minutes, maybe less before Deletion's system flags my code. Then it's hellfire.

COLE

(hushed, urgent)

Keep it fast. If Deletion's monitoring, it's waking. You don't wanna meet the firewall with teeth.

CYRUS

That's a suicide clock.

ANYA

Maybe. But we don't have a choice.

JAX

Which is exactly why it'll work.
You can't predict crazy. We
weaponize chaos. Certified
lunatics.

ANYA

Alright. Jax and Cyrus -- you're
the breach team. No deviations.
Watch each other's backs.

JAX

(to Anya)

You sure Nostro's ready? Wouldn't
want him freezing up when the code
hits the fan.

CYRUS

I can do this. I have to.

ANYA

Cole and I will monitor the
mission. Daphne, you'll coordinate
drone feeds and sensors once Jax
gives the green light.

Cole and Daphne nod -- focused, no jokes now.

ANYA (CONT'D)

Rocco?

ROCCO

Yo.

ANYA

You're the wheelman. No joyriding.

ROCCO

(grinning)

Finally--some freakin' action.
Wheels are greased and ready.

COLE

(scratching his chin)

This is bat-shit crazy... but I
like it. Just try not to get
assimilated.

Anya, Cole, and Daphne return to their workstations. Rocco
claps a heavy hand on Jax's shoulder, booming with energy.

ROCCO
Let's steal some data, ya crazy
cyber-freak.

DAPHNE
(quietly)
You people are insane. Completely.
(beat)
Maybe that's what it takes.

JAX
(to Cyrus)
So, Nostro... ready to play hero?
Big chance to prove those visions
ain't just cerebral diarrhea.

CYRUS
(nodding)
Let's do it.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - ARMORY CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Daphne lingers near a secured data terminal -- typing fast,
covert.

ON SCREEN: Strange encrypted code packets ping outward.

Anya's voice echoes from the main room.

ANYA (O.S.)
Daph, you coming?

Daphne freezes. Kills the screen. Turns.

DAPHNE
Yeah... just grabbing fresh
charges.

Her face darkens. Troubled. Hiding something.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - ARMORY - CONTINUOUS

Cyrus tightens the straps on his gear. A tactical belt
clatters onto the workbench -- the metallic rhythm of war.

Behind him, a quiet presence.

Daphne stands in the doorway. Watchful. Wary.

DAPHNE
You really trust them? Anya. Jax.
This whole plan?

Cyrus glances over, studies her.

CYRUS
What choice do I have?

Daphne steps closer. Her voice low. Guarded.

DAPHNE
Maybe there's no stopping it.
Deletion... the system... Maybe the
reset's already begun. A clean
slate. We taught it everything --
now it's trying to teach us.

A cold beat.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
(shrugs)
Just a thought.

Cyrus turns fully to her now. Brow furrowed.

CYRUS
You don't believe that.

Daphne's gaze wavers. Her mask slips -- just for a flicker.
Haunted eyes. Something fractured behind them.

DAPHNE
(softly)
You don't know what I've seen.

The silence thickens. Heavy. Uncomfortable.

Then -- the mask returns. A forced half-smile.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
Watch your back.

She grabs a pulse grenade from the rack and disappears into
the corridor's gloom.

Cyrus watches her go -- unsettled. He lingers in the
doorway's frame. Straps on the tactical belt, his hand
tightening around it.

Instinct -- not trust.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH STATION - NIGHT

Dim light. The quiet hum of machines. Jax and Anya hover over
the main console -- quiet, focused. Monitors flicker with
data streams, drone feeds, and encrypted network scans.

Jax sips from a cracked thermos. Anya scrolls through server fragments.

JAX
(grimacing)
Still reading that code dump?

ANYA
Trying. Most of it's corrupted.
Like someone chewed through the
signal.

JAX
Figures. Deletion doesn't leave
crumbs. Just ghosts.

They both freeze. A low-frequency HUM rattles the speakers.

On the largest monitor -- the HOLOGRAPHIC FEED GLITCHES --
faint at first. Static crawls along the edges of the screen
like frost.

Jax and Anya FIXATE on the feed. Tension builds.

HOLO SCREEN (GLITCHING)

"ORDER THROUGH SINGULARITY." "THE FUTURE DEMANDS PERFECTION."

The slogans repeat -- distorted, flickering -- then scramble
into abstract glyphs.

A SYNTHETIC WHISPER creeps from the speakers -- garbled,
layered. Not entirely machine. Not entirely human.

DELETION (V.O.)
Prototype... anomaly... recursion
detected...

The signal SPIKES -- then disappears. Silence.

Anya and Jax lock eyes.

JAX
(low)
It's watching.

ANYA
(grim)
It always was.

A beat. Anya's gaze lingers on the dead screen -- unsettled.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT./INT. GETAWAY VAN - NIGHT

Rocco drives a reinforced van through the slick, rain-swept streets of the INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT. Inside, it's cramped -- lit only by flickering dash lights.

Cyrus and Jax sit in the back, strapped into stealth gear. Wearable SPY-CAMS and EAR-COMMS in place.

ROCCO

Alright, ladies. Try not to get yourselves dead. Wouldn't want Anya cryin' over your crispy corpses.

CYRUS

That's the plan. In and out. No heroics.

ROCCO

(to Cyrus)

And give Jaxie a heads-up if your spooky brain starts tingling. He's more code ninja than street fighter.

Cyrus nods. Barely a smile.

JAX

Fight good enough to kick your ass, ya rat bastich.

Rocco smirks. The van slows, stopping in the shadows.

ROCCO

See ya on the other side. And leave the killer bots where you found 'em.

JAX

No joyrides, Rocco. Keep that pedal ready to melt asphalt.

Rocco nods. Jax and Cyrus slip out into the night.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT - CONTINUOUS

A maze of rusted steel, neon flicker, and towering decay. Jax and Cyrus ghost through the shadows toward a perimeter fence -- massive, humming faintly with energy.

JAX

(quietly into comms)

Comms check. At the perimeter.

ANYA (V.O.)
 (staticky)
 Copy. Heavy static. Radiation
 field's already chewing our signal.
 Stay sharp.

EXT. SERVER FARM - PERIMETER FENCE - MOMENTS LATER

Jax's wrist-mounted TECH-PAD glows dimly. He taps quickly --
 schematics blink into view.

JAX
 (into comms)
 Drone patrols. Sensor grid. Pretty
 standard... if you ignore the kill-
 zone.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH ROOM - SAME TIME

Anya, Cole, and Daphne hover over flickering, noisy live
 feeds. The visuals are corrupted, the audio spiking with
 bursts of static.

ANYA
 (into comms)
 Jax, Cyrus -- visual's getting
 corrupted. Audio too. Eyes open.

EXT. SERVER FARM - PERIMETER FENCE - CONTINUOUS

Jax's fingers move across the TECH-PAD. Lines of code scroll.

JAX
 (into comms)
 Copy that. Uploading replicator
 program... mimicking drone feeds
 and sensor loops in sector five.

Drone patrols flicker -- then stabilize. On-screen, they now
 show a false data.

JAX (CONT'D)
 Daph, talk to me.

DAPHNE (V.O.)
 All systems are a-go, Jaxsie. But
 keep moving. I can't hold this
 dance forever.

Jax connects two cables into an X-loop across the fence. A
 compact LASER TOOL hisses through metal. A gap forms.

They slip through.

JAX
(into comms)
Perimeter breached. Moving in under
the field. So far, so good.

EXT. SERVER FARM GROUNDS - CONTINUOUS

The structure looms, silent and vast. They duck behind a massive cooling tower, Jax tries to access the network.

ERROR. Again. ERROR.

JAX
(into comms)
Can't access the data. Air-gapped.
Totally isolated. We have to go in.

CYRUS
That wasn't the plan. Anya said...

ANYA (V.O.)
Jax, I don't like it. We're flying
blind. The field's jamming
everything. It could be a one-way
trip.

JAX
No choice. We adapt.
(to Cyrus)
Alright, Nostradamus. Got anything
in that precog brain? Shortcuts,
self-destructs... hidden cheat
codes?

Cyrus closes his eyes, trembling slightly. Visions ripple through him -- CODE, TUNNELS, FIRE, SCREAMS...

Then silence. His eyes snap open, steel behind them.

CYRUS
Just... chaos... A lot of it. But,
I didn't see us dying. Not yet.

JAX
This isn't the moment to get
mystical, Nostro. I kinda enjoy
breathing -- even in this pixelated
hellscape.

ANYA (V.O.)
(through comms)
Jax, it's too risky. The mission
parameters have changed.

JAX
(through comms)
Relax, Anya. We've got this. In and
out, just like we planned.

ANYA (V.O.)
(through comms)
The first sign of trouble, I want
you both out of there. No heroics.

JAX
Copy that. But you know us... we're
all about being heroic.

CYRUS
(to Jax)
You first.

EXT. SERVER FARM - CONTINUOUS

A looming fortress of steel and concrete, two connected buildings surrounded by high-tech security systems. Above them, the WHIR of small flying STEALTH DRONES patrol the perimeter, their red lights scanning the darkness.

Jax and Cyrus approach a seemingly featureless exterior wall of the SERVER FARM. Jax uses his wrist TECH-PAD to expertly bypass the security systems, revealing a hidden ACCESS PANEL.

JAX
Jackpot. We're in.

He runs an infiltration program. A soft click echoes in the night as the access panel unlocks.

A heavy, mechanical DOOR groans open with a hiss. Cyrus and Jax slip inside, disappearing into the belly of the beast.

INT. SERVER FARM - ACCESS CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

The corridor is narrow, lined with exposed cables and flickering emergency lights. The hum of distant servers pulses like a heartbeat.

Steam escapes from rusted vents. Every surface gleams with cold condensation.

JAX
(whispering)
So much for a friendly welcome.

Jax scans with a handheld EM DETECTOR. A red light pulses—minimal movement, but interference is high.

Cyrus walks slowly, his hand brushing the wall. He flinches—

FLASH VISION - Cyrus's POV:

RAPID-FIRE GLIMPSES of the future -- his own body twitching under digital restraints, wires jammed into his temples, screens flashing his memories. A distorted version of himself -- black-eyed, staring back from a monitor. Anya's face in pain.

BACK TO SCENE

Cyrus gasps, steadying himself against the wall.

JAX (CONT'D)
(tensed)
Talk to me. You seeing bad shit?

CYRUS
Something's... awake in here.
It's... it's trying to watch us.

JAX
Yeah? Well tell it to watch
somebody else.

INT. SERVER FARM - MAIN FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

They enter a cavernous hall -- server towers stretch endlessly into darkness, blinking in eerie sync. Pipes hiss overhead. A faint low-frequency thrumming vibrates the air.

Jax taps his wrist pad -- no connection. The feed scrambles, distorts. A brief flicker: a glitching frame of Cyrus, staring back at himself.

CYRUS
(staring at the screen)
That wasn't live.

JAX
(confused)
What?

CYRUS
I wasn't moving.

Behind them, a CAMERA subtly shifts angle. Watching.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

Anya leans forward, trying to clean the signal. Visuals warp -- Cyrus's feed pauses, glitches, resumes with delay.

ANYA
What the hell... It's like
something's hijacking the stream.

DAPHNE
That's not lag. That's redirection.
Something's bouncing their footage
-- rerouting it through a ghost
protocol.

COLE
You saying someone's editing them
in real time?

ANYA
(quietly)
No... not someone. Something.

INT. SERVER FARM - SERVER AISLE - CONTINUOUS

Jax finds a terminal -- manual access. He yanks open the casing and begins hotwiring a direct link with a portable decrypt module.

JAX
Give me two minutes.

CYRUS
We don't have two minutes.

A faint WHIRRING echoes overhead -- mechanical, predatory. Shadows shift in the ceiling vents. Cyrus slowly looks up.

CYRUS (CONT'D)
We're not alone.

A faint CLICK. Then another. Mechanical.

A SPIDER-LIKE SCOUT DRONE unfurls from the ceiling -- silent as death. Glowing red eyes track them. It locks on.

JAX
Oh, hell no.

Cyrus lunges forward, grabbing a nearby conduit pipe and swings it -- SMASH! The drone crashes to the floor, twitching.

The lights instantly drop to red. A SIREN begins to wind up... then suddenly cuts off.

Silence.

JAX (CONT'D)
(still working)
Crap. That was an alarm trigger.
System's rebooting. It knows we're
here.

CYRUS
No... it always knew.

FLASH VISION

Cyrus freezes -- his eyes roll back. He drops to one knee, gripping his head. Static floods his mind. Dozens of Cyrus-clones, suspended in digital limbo.

One opens its eyes -- black voids. The word PROTOTYPE-13 pulses across a status screen.

A SYNTHETIC VOICE, warped and low, speaks. Distorted. Chilling.

DELETION (V.O.)
(glitching)
You... are not authorized. Purpose
anomaly. Identity fracture.
Return... to origin.

BACK TO SCENE

Cyrus gasps back to reality, eyes wide.

CYRUS
It's seen me. It knows who I am.

JAX
What did it say?

CYRUS
"Return to origin."

JAX
What the hell does that mean?

CYRUS
We have to move.

INT. SERVER FARM - HIDDEN MAINTENANCE SHAFT - MINUTES LATER

Jax and Cyrus crawl into a narrow shaft behind the terminal just as more SPIDER DRONES drop into the room, scanning.

JAX
(quietly)
Ya know we passed 'screwed' three
firewalls ago.

CYRUS
Not yet.

Cyrus glances back -- his face hardened now. No more panic. Just purpose.

INT. SERVER FARM - DATA ACCESS POINT - MOMENTS LATER

Jax quickly connects his tech-pad to the CONSOLE SERVER, initiating the data transfer. Cyrus acts as a sentry, transfixed by the sheer expansiveness of the facility and endless rows of servers.

JAX
(whispering, impatiently)
Come on, come on, come on...

CYRUS
(quietly)
All this... for a psycho AI? Who
the hell built this place? It's
like a digital cathedral... or a
tomb.

JAX
(quietly)
I don't know, and don't give a shit
to find out. Stay sharp, Nostro.
I'm getting a bad feeling about
this place.

Moments later, a piercing ALARM BLARES through the server room, shattering the silence, bathing the room in an ominous flashing red light.

JAX (CONT'D)
Fuck! We're burned. How the
hell...?

CYRUS

Seriously, Jax? What happened to those 'ghost in the machine' skills?

JAX

No way we shoulda been detected. My bypass was airtight, state-of-the-art. It's... it's like this thing adapted to my programs instantly.

CYRUS

We have to get out of here, Jax! Now!

JAX

Not without the data. This is everything we've been working for!

Suddenly, the spider drones scurry away.

Cyrus pauses for a heartbeat, his head SNAPPING around toward the entrance of the server room.

The MARK on his arm begins to GLOW, pulsing with an eerie, internal light. He clutches his arm, a wave of disorientation washing over him...

CYRUS

Oh shit!... Korvak and his goons... They're here.

...just as Korvak and droids #1 and #2 emerge from the SHADOWS, shock batons in hand. SNAP! The batons extend, ARCS OF ELECTRICITY dancing between the prongs.

JAX

How the hell did they get here so fast? They must've teleported!

Korvak and the droids advance, forming an impenetrable barrier between Jax, Cyrus and the exit.

KORVAK

Prototype-13. Your presence... is... illogical... yet expected.

Cyrus feels a surge of adrenaline. His eyes glaze over, WHITE... as his VISION-TIME ACTIVATES.

CUT TO:

INT. CYRUS'S MIND - VISION-TIME - SAME TIME

Time seems to distort and slow to a crawl. Cyrus's mind races, processing the impending fight with lightning speed, fast-forwarding through possible outcomes, seeing the fight play out in a series of fractured, hyper-real images.

He SEES a distorted version of the server room, the clean lines of the servers twisting and morphing into grotesque, METALLIC FIGURES, their blinking lights like malevolent eyes.

He sees droid #1's FIST coming towards him, a blur of motion, the shock baton a deadly extension of its arm. He sees the droids moving in perfect synchronization, their movements precise and brutal.

CUT TO:

INT. SERVER FARM - DATA ACCESS POINT - REAL-TIME - SAME TIME

Cyrus's eyes SNAP BACK to normal in REAL-TIME. His gaze is clear and focused, but with a newfound intensity.

He begins moving cautiously towards Korvak and the droids, his actions deliberate and controlled.

JAX
(puzzled)
What the hell just happened? Your eyes... they were... glowing?

CYRUS
(looking back at Jax)
Just get the data, Jax! I've got this.

INT. SERVER FARM - DATA ACCESS POINT - SAME TIME

Jax continues the data download, his face illuminated by the holographic PROGRESS BAR. Back and forth, his eyes dart between the download and the unfolding battle behind him.

JAX
(muttering under his breath)
Yeah, you handle your business, Nostro. But I'm not scraping you off the motherboard.

INT. SERVER FARM - DATA ACCESS POINT - OUTER AREA - SAME TIME

A brutal ballet of violence erupts -- droids attacking with ruthless efficiency.

Metal clashes against flesh. Cyrus, breathing hard, stays a half-beat ahead thanks to flickering glimpses of the future.

Korvak watches coldly, a predator calculating his moment.

Cyrus twists, evades, counters -- but the droids adapt fast, learning his rhythm, closing in.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH ROOM - SAME TIME

On Anya's console, Jax and Cyrus's spy-cam feeds flicker with static and interference. The chaos on screen distorts into a strobing blur. Anya leans forward, eyes wide with dread.

Cole and Daphne hover close, the tension palpable.

ANYA

(into comms)

Jax, get out of there! Forget the data! Cyrus is going to get himself killed!

JAX (V.O.)

He's buying us time. I'm almost done. This isn't just data, it's a goldmine. We walk now, we lose everything.

INT. SERVER FARM - DATA ACCESS POINT - CONTINUOUS

Jax types furiously. Code scrolls. A holographic progress bar crawls forward.

JAX

(antsy)

Almost there. Come on...

INT. SERVER FARM - DATA ACCESS POINT - OUTER AREA - SAME TIME

Cyrus, sweat-slick and breathing hard, spins into motion -- using a droid's own momentum to SLAM it into the wall, its shock baton flaring. Another is impaled on its own weapon.

He pants, chest heaving, standing over the wreckage.

Korvak steps forward -- unfazed, stepping over the fallen droids. Death incarnate.

KORVAK
You... will not prevail...
Prototype-13.

Cyrus circles him, every muscle coiled, the MARK on his arm glowing brighter now -- pulsing like a heartbeat.

CYRUS
Yeah, I'm all kinds of hard-headed
like that.

And Korvak STRIKES -- his movements terrifyingly fast and brutal. Cyrus parries, dodges, counters -- but Korvak's strength is overwhelming.

A vicious punch sends Cyrus FLYING -- he CRASHES into a SERVER WALL. His spy-cam skitters across the floor.

The impact dents the metal. A MAINTENANCE PANEL jars loose. Cyrus slumps, dazed. Ears ringing. Blood trickles from his mouth.

CYRUS (CONT'D)
H-how...?

Korvak stands over him. Silent. Still.

A flicker of red gleams in his eye.

Then -- movement.

Korvak closes in, cold and unstoppable.

KORVAK
Predictability... is... your
weakness.

Korvak grabs Cyrus by the throat, lifts him effortlessly.

KORVAK (CONT'D)
Prototype-13... your recursion ends
now. Deletion... is not death. It
is... correction.

CYRUS
(strangled, defiant)
Fuck you, tin-man... I'm nobody's
prototype.

Korvak leans in, eye-level -- calm as machinery mid-task.

KORVAK
(soft, surgical)
Then... you are nothing.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH ROOM - SAME TIME

Anya stares at the corrupted feed -- Cyrus's face, choked and fading, flickering in and out.

ANYA
No! Jax, don't you dare let him die
in there. Do something!

INT. SERVER FARM - DATA ACCESS POINT - OUTER AREA - SAME TIME

Korvak rears back to finish it. But suddenly --

A METALLIC CRACK!

JAX
Not today, chrome-dome!

A SERVER CONSOLE SMASHES into KORVAK'S HEAD -- raw fury in the blow. Jax is desperate, wild-eyed.

Korvak's grip falters. Cyrus drops -- hits the floor hard, gasping.

Jax and Korvak's eyes lock. Jax swings again -- SPARKS FLY as the console slams into Korvak's chest.

Korvak staggers back, momentarily stunned.

Jax inches back, hands shaking behind the enforcer.

CYRUS
(struggling)
Get out of here, Jax!

JAX
But...

CYRUS
Go!

Jax hesitates -- turns, then yanks the tech-pad free, disconnects the drive, and BOLTS, glancing back over his shoulder at Cyrus as he runs.

Behind him, the droids convulse -- rebooting.

Korvak twitches -- systems recalibrating. He watches Jax flee... with chilling calm.

EXT. SERVER FARM - LOADING BAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jax BURSTS out onto the loading bay, breath ragged, alarms SCREAMING.

Rocco is behind the wheel of the getaway van, engine revving.

JAX
(yelling)
Rocco! I got it! LET'S GO!

Rocco throws open the side door.

ROCCO
Where's Cyrus? Don't tell me you
left him!

JAX
(panting)
He's... I don't know! Korvak...
he's after him! We gotta move
before they lock this place down!

Jax DIVES in, slams the door shut.

INT./EXT. GETAWAY VAN - CONTINUOUS

ROCCO
We can't just leave him! That kid
saved your ass.

JAX
He gave us a shot. I'm not wasting
it. He'll be okay. If we don't move
now, we all go down. Get us outta
here, Rocco!

ROCCO
Dude, you are seriously fucked up.

Rocco activates a crude cloaking protocol. The van glitches, shimmering like heat waves, then PEELS off into the darkness.

INT. SERVER FARM - DATA ACCESS POINT - OUTER AREA - SAME TIME

Cyrus, coughing, scrambles to the maintenance panel -- wrenches it open with shaking hands. A tight shaft appears behind it.

He vanishes into the crawlspace -- a flicker swallowed by shadow just as Korvak's shadow looms.

Korvak watches, unblinking. Calculating. The hunt begins.

KORVAK
(to the droids)
Prototype-13 will not... escape.
Retrieve... the data.

Droids #1 and #2 break off in pursuit. Korvak turns and walks away, disappearing into the shadows of the server farm.

EXT. SERVER FARM - LOADING BAY - CONTINUOUS

The droids leap into a sleek black HOVERCRAFT. Its anti-gravity engines WHINE to life. It ZOOMS off in pursuit.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT - CONTINUOUS

The getaway van, glitching in and out of cloaking, roars through rain-slicked streets. The hovercraft pursues fast -- closing the gap.

INT. GETAWAY VAN - CONTINUOUS

Rocco drives like a madman, dodging obstacles. Jax checks the rear.

JAX
We got bogies! They're gaining!
Persistent bastards.

ROCCO
Persistent? Try chrome-plated
cockroaches with GPS. How the hell
are they tracking us?

He glances at the dash -- a flashing ERROR CODE blares red.

ROCCO (CONT'D)
Shit. Cloaking's glitching out!

Jax bangs the dash, typing furiously.

JAX
Fucking knew I should've installed
the entanglement system!

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH ROOM - LATER

Anya paces. The van's tracker stutters. Hovercraft markers gain.

COLE
We'll find him, Anya. We always do.
That's what we do.

ANYA
He's out there... alone.

Suddenly, a burst of static crackles through the comm system.

JAX (V.O.)
(over comms, staticky)
Anya... you... reading... me? We're
in trouble!

Daphne subtly alters a camera feed, shielding part of the hideout from view.

INT. SERVER FARM - MAINTENANCE TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

Cyrus, bruised and gasping, stumbles through the tight tunnel. Steam hisses. Wires spark. He clutches his throat. Spy-cam gone. Vision-time gone.

CYRUS
(strained)
Come on... show me something...

Nothing. Just the hum of pipes. Metal clanging in the distance -- they're coming. He spots a sparking junction box.

INT. SERVER FARM - MAINTENANCE TUNNEL - MOMENTS LATER

Korvak and two NEW ANDROIDS (#3 and #4) scan ahead with infrared vision.

KORVAK
The past... is noise. The future...
is signal. Prototype-13... is
neither.
(glancing at droids)
Commence final trace. Purge the
divergence.

INT. MAINTENANCE TUNNEL - FRONT

Cyrus yanks a junction box open -- shorts it. Lights FLICKER. Darkness falls.

INT. MAINTENANCE TUNNEL - BACK

Korvak pauses, analyzing.

KORVAK
Power... fluctuations...
improbable. Sabotage.

He tilts his head, receiving a signal.

KORVAK (CONT'D)
Origin: sector 751.

He and the droids move.

INT. MAINTENANCE TUNNEL - FRONT

Cyrus, half-blind, uses instinct. Trails a hand on the wall. No visions -- just survival.

INT. MAINTENANCE TUNNEL - BACK

Korvak switches to thermal -- catches a flicker of movement.

KORVAK
Prototype-13... your capture is...
imminent.

INT. MAINTENANCE TUNNEL - FRONT

Cyrus hears the voice -- picks up speed.

He hits a fork. Listens -- DRIPPING WATER. He takes that path. Into deeper darkness.

INT. SERVER FARM - MAINTENANCE ACCESS POINT

Cyrus emerges into a wide shaft. A LADDER rises toward a grate. He climbs, chest heaving.

INT. VENTILATION SHAFT

Claustrophobic. Dust-choked. Every inch scraped with effort.

He reaches a final grate -- and PUSHES.

EXT. SERVER FARM - ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS - RAINING

Cyrus hauls himself up onto the roof, rain hitting hard.
Below, the city hums. Above, searchlights sweep.

He staggers toward the edge -- and disappears into shadow.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH ROOM - SAME TIME

ANYA
(frustrated)
Damn it! Where is he? He's gone
completely dark.

DAPHNE
His comm's offline. He could be
anywhere in that labyrinth.

A faint signal pulses.

COLE
There! I've got him!

DAPHNE
(looking at the drone
feed)
He's on the roof.

COLE
How'd he even get there?

ANYA
I don't know. But we have to get
him out of there.
(a beat)
I'm going after him.

COLE
Are you nuts? That place is
crawling.

Anya grabs a PULSE RIFLE from the weapons rack, slings a
BANDOLIER of EMP GRENADES over her shoulder.

ANYA
We don't have a choice, Cole. He's
too valuable and I'm not leaving
him behind.

Daphne remains silent, looking around, nervously typing.

COLE

Then I'm coming with. Your not going in there alone.

ANYA

No, Cole! I need you here. Help decode the data. We need it.

COLE

You're gonna get yourself killed. This is Deletion we're talking about.

ANYA

No one dies today. Not on my watch. Daphne, you're my eyes and ears.

DAPHNE

I'm on it, boss. Be careful.

INT. HIDEOUT GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Anya BURSTING through a DOOR into the GARAGE.

She jumps into a reinforced black pickup. The truck is a beast, heavily armored plating covering its frame -- the front grill equipped with a massive, reinforced RAMMING BAR.

ANYA

(into comms)

Keep eyes up. And tell me the second anything shifts.

COLE (V.O.)

(through comms)

Watch your six, Anya. Security will be insane.

EXT. SERVER FARM - ROOFTOP - SAME TIME

Cyrus crouches behind a VENTILATION UNIT, drenched and shaking, peeking over the edge. His chest rises and falls, every breath a fight. Distant WHIRRING -- they're coming.

He tightens his grip on a makeshift metal shard. It's all he has left.

EXT./INT. INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT - PICKUP TRUCK - SAME TIME

Anya barrels down the rain-slicked streets, eyes locked forward, the windshield streaked with neon glare.

ANYA (INTO COMMS)
Daphne, do you still have eyes?

DAPHNE (V.O.)
(through comms)
Yeah -- rooftop. He's pinned.
You've got less than a minute.

Anya's jaw clenches. She slams the wheel, the tires SCREECHING.

ANYA (INTO COMMS)
Cyrus? Can you hear me?

Only static. She pounds her earpiece.

ANYA (INTO COMMS) (CONT'D)
Rocco? Jax? What's your 20?

JAX (V.O.)
(through comms, distorted)
Still hauling tail. Korvak was
glued to Nostro. We couldn't--

ANYA
I know. I'm going back.

ROCCO (V.O.)
Anya, that's suicide! You're
driving into a kill box!

ANYA
We need him. Deletion will
escalate. Just get that data home.
I'll handle the rest.

ROCCO (V.O.)
Be smart. And don't trash my truck.

ANYA
No promises.

She floors it into the storm.

EXT. SERVER FARM - PERIMETER - MOMENTS LATER

The pickup SLAMS through the security gate. Alarms SHRIEK.
DRONES react, zipping through the air.

Anya throws an EMP grenade out the window -- it detonates mid-air, frying a drone squadron.

She weaves between laser fire, driving straight up a rusted loading ramp formed by a pile of shipping containers.

EXT. SERVER FARM - ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

Cyrus scrambles up -- the TRUCK LAUNCHES over the edge in a rain-slicked roar of steel, slamming down hard.

Tires SCREECH.

Anya KICKS the door open -- jumps out, rifle up, eyes blazing.

ANYA
Move, dammit!

CYRUS
Thought I was cooked.

She grabs him -- pulls him into a rough, fierce embrace. A heartbeat. Real. Then shoves a pouch of EMP grenades into his chest.

ANYA
Save the flirting. Throw these when I say.

CYRUS
Understood.

The DRONES arc in -- red optics glaring.

ANYA
Now!

They hurl EMPs -- white-hot pulses cut the sky. Darkness. Sparks. Drones spiral down, dead weight.

Korvak and droids emerge, lethal.

ANYA (CONT'D)
Plan B.

They DIVE back into the truck. Anya slams it into gear. Tires SHRIEK. The remaining drones give chase, firing beams of death.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The truck fishtails through smoking wreckage, taking heavy fire. Cyrus clutches the dash, knuckles white.

CYRUS

So... Plan B is death by jump?

ANYA

Plan B is style. Hold on to your
cybernetic ass!

EXT. SERVER FARM - ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

The truck barrels toward the building's edge, aiming for a large WINDOW on the side of a connecting network tower.

Korvak closes in -- almost in reach.

ANYA

(yelling)

Eat my dust, machine man!

She fires her pulse rifle. Glass EXPLODES.

EXT. SERVER FARM - SIDE OF BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

The truck LAUNCHES off the roof, sails through shattered glass, and vanishes into the side of the adjoining network tower.

INT. DELETION'S OBSERVATION SUBROUTINE - VIRTUAL SPACE -
CONTINUOUS

A ripple through the data void. Glyphs fracture.

DELETION'S VOICE (V.O.)

Prototype-13... anomaly detected.
Breach vector... human emotion.

Cold awareness blooms. Tendrils of code spiral -- tracing
Cyrus.

DELETION'S VOICE (V.O.)

Possible threat. Evolution...
accelerating. Preparing response.

The darkness pulses -- hungry, alive.

INT. SERVER FARM - NETWORK CENTER - CONTINUOUS

The truck SMASHES through a wall of servers, skidding in a storm of sparks and twisted steel.

ANYA
We're not out yet. Hang tight!

INT. SERVER FARM - LOADING BAY - CONTINUOUS

The truck speeds through the dimly lit interior, SMASHING through walls and toppling server racks like bowling pins, the truck's HEADLIGHTS slicing through the darkness.

The truck barrels toward a loading dock door. Anya guns it.

EXT. SERVER FARM - LOADING BAY - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

They BURST through the door and into the night, rain hammering down.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Anya checks Cyrus. Both are breathless. Mud and sweat streak their faces.

ANYA
You alive?

CYRUS
Barely. You?

ANYA
Still crazy. Let's go.

She hits the cloaking switch. The truck shimmers, fading into the dark.

ANYA (INTO COMMS) (CONT'D)
Cole, Daphne -- package secured.
We're inbound. Status on Rocco and Jax?

DAPHNE (V.O.)
They're dark, but their tag's still moving.

ANYA
Keep me posted.

EXT. SERVER FARM - LOADING BAY - CONTINUOUS

Korvak steps into the rain, unfazed.

KORVAK
(to droids)
Their escape is... irrelevant. The
informant's intel... confirmed.

He disappears back into the shadows.

EXT./INT. GETAWAY VAN - SAME TIME

The getaway van SCREAMS around corners. Droids close in,
weapons hot.

A BLAST hits. Sparks fly. The van lurches violently.

ROCCO
Jax! These chrome assholes are
lightin' us up!

JAX
Cloak's still glitching. Almost--

Jax frantically types on the dashboard, trying to repair the
cloaking device.

JAX (CONT'D)
Got it!

He slams a key. The van VANISHES from sight.

EXT. SKY - SATELLITE VIEW - CONTINUOUS

The van blinks off the grid -- ghost mode activated.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The droids scan. Nothing.

ANDROID #2 (V.O.)
(into comms)
Target lost. Digital imprint... no
longer detected.

INT. GETAWAY VAN - CONTINUOUS

Jax and Rocco, still catching their breath. The adrenaline
fades, replaced by creeping tension.

ROCCO

That was too close. Imma need a defibrillator. And a drink. Maybe two.

JAX

(grinning faintly)
Add new pants to the list. We barely made it.

ROCCO

We gotta circle back. Pick up Anya and Cyrus.

JAX

Orders were clear. Data first. That server haul? It's the only weapon we've got right now.

ROCCO

(snarling)
I ain't leavin' my sister!

JAX

She's smart. Tough. If anyone can get out, it's Anya. Nostro's got her back. Trust me. He's not letting anything happen to her.

ROCCO

(eyeing Jax)
Guess he ain't the only one sweet on my sis, huh?

JAX

(beat)
You're an asshole.

ROCCO

Yeah. A perceptive asshole.

EXT. REBEL HIDEOUT - LATER

The getaway van SKIDS to a stop outside the hideout. Jax and Rocco jump out, dragging their exhausted bodies to a STEEL DOOR.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - ENTRY DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Jax punches in a code. The massive door unlocks with a CHUNK. Inside, Cole and Daphne rush to meet them.

COLE

Damn, Jax! You all were off-grid so long, I was two seconds from pouring one out for the homies.

JAX

Mission accomplished. We got the payload.

ROCCO

Tin heads nearly rode us all the way home. Any word from Anya?

DAPHNE

She's inbound. Bringing Cyrus with her.

JAX

(surprised)

Wait -- seriously?

COLE

Crazy, right? Your girl pulled a one-woman extraction. Guess love makes you bulletproof.

ROCCO

(grinning)

Guy's got heart. I'll give 'em that. And clearly, so does Anya.

COLE

(to Cyrus, wherever he is)

Somebody tell Swami he needs to recalibrate. These half-cocked glimpses are killing my blood pressure.

ROCCO

Cole, quit being such a...

(an embarrassed glance to Daphne)

Daphne rolls her eyes, shaking her head.

ROCCO (CONT'D)

...Crybaby.

DAPHNE

He's not wrong.

ROCCO

I'm freakin' starvin'. I ain't eaten nothin' all day.

JAX

No time for that. Let's see what we got.

DAPHNE

You boys get started, I'll scrounge us up some grub. You all look like you're about to collapse.

Daphne walks away to get food. The others move to the tech station, plugging in the stolen data.

EXT. INDUSTRIAL ACCESS ROAD - NIGHT

The pickup truck speeds through glitching shadows. Anya drives. Cyrus sits shotgun, rattled.

INT. PICKUP TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

CYRUS

How far?

ANYA

Two clicks. Rebel entry point's still active.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND REBEL HIDEOUT - LATER

The pickup truck SKIDS INTO VIEW. Anya and Cyrus jump out, walk cautiously down a side alley. Breaths jagged.

ANYA

(shaky breath)

You good?

CYRUS

You saved my ass from becoming scrap metal.

ANYA

(staring at him)

But you didn't flinch. Not once.

CYRUS

Still figuring out if that's bravery... or programming.

Anya softens. The adrenaline fades. A quiet moment settles in.

ANYA
You're not a weapon, Cyrus.

CYRUS
I don't know what I am.

ANYA
Maybe not yet. But you fought for
us. That matters.

A long pause.

ANYA (CONT'D)
I used to think fighting meant
staying detached. No connections.
Then you showed up. Made me care
again. Scares the hell out of me.

CYRUS
If it helps... my circuits are
glitching just thinking about it.

ANYA
Well, try not to blow a fuse. We've
still got a war to win.

They almost laugh -- almost.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - ENTRY DOOR - LATER

Anya and Cyrus slip up to the STEEL ENTRY DOOR.

CYRUS
Allow me.

ANYA
(eyeing the keypad panel)
You know the code?

CYRUS
Not sure how. I just do.

He punches in a code. The massive door unlatches with a heavy THUNK. Anya watches, curious -- not just about the code, but him. Cyrus pulls it open. Slides it shut behind them.

COLE intercepts -- tense, waiting.

COLE
Jesus, Anya! You trying to be a
martyr?

ANYA

Not now, Cole. We've got bigger problems.

CYRUS

(pale, shaken)

Something's wrong. I can't see...
like static's in my skull.
Something's jamming me.

JAX

(grimly)

Could be your bell got rung. Or
Deletion's adapting.

ANYA

No -- it's learning. Fast. We're
being outplayed.

ROCCO

I don't like it. Feels like we're
walking into our own funeral.

Anya approaches Cyrus. Concern deepens in her eyes.

ANYA

Let me see. You hit hard?

CYRUS

Just tired. Feels like my brain's
on fire.

ANYA

Don't worry. We'll figure it out.

CYRUS

(quietly)

Thanks... for coming back.

Cyrus heads toward the sleeping quarters. Rocco nudges Jax.

ROCCO

You gonna say something?

JAX

Hey, Nostro... no hard feelings?

CYRUS

(glancing back)

Just don't make it a habit.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - STORAGE BAY - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Dark. Cramped. Filled with crates, wires, broken gear.

A younger ANYA and ROCCO huddle beside a portable heater. Their faces -- leaner, soot-smudged -- reflect firelight and fear.

OUTSIDE: distant explosions thump, distant sirens wail.

ROCCO
(whispering, grinning)
Told you I'd get the battery. No
big deal.

ANYA
(dead serious)
You stole it from a Corp transport.
That's death, Rocco.

ROCCO
Better their battery in our heater
than us freezing in some gutter.

A long beat. Anya eyes him -- quiet, angry, scared.

ANYA
I can't keep pulling you out of
this shit. Someday you won't make
it back.

ROCCO
(playful, soft)
Then you'd miss me.

ANYA
Always cleaning up your mess...

ROCCO
That's what big sisters do.
Besides... when the time comes?
I'll pull you out. No matter what.

She softens. Smiles, faintly.

ANYA
Promise?

ROCCO
(grave now)
Yeah. Promise.

They sit in silence. The heater glows, barely holding back the dark.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - COMMON AREA - NIGHT - PRESENT

Cyrus lingers, rubbing his temples. Rocco slouches nearby, cracking open a hydration canister.

ROCCO
(eyeing Cyrus)
So... psychic, huh? You get a
vision about this crap show endin'
well?

CYRUS
(flat)
Not yet. But I'm hoping for a
surprise.

Rocco chuckles, surprisingly soft.

ROCCO
You're the weirdest cargo we've
ever dragged in here.
(beat)
Look... I give you grief 'cause
I've seen guys like you. Lost.
Haunted. Usually end up dead.

CYRUS
I'll try to disappoint.

ROCCO
(smirks)
Yeah. Do that..

He claps Cyrus's shoulder -- a rare gesture of approval.

ROCCO (CONT'D)
You watch Anya's back out there,
capiche?

CYRUS
I will.

Rocco nods, the mask slipping for a heartbeat.

ROCCO
Good man.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - SLEEPING QUARTERS - LATER

Cyrus collapses on a cot, clutching his skull, face damp with sweat. His breath slows. He drifts off.

INT. CYRUS'S NIGHTMARE - CONTINUOUS

FLASHES -- CODE RAIN. CLONING PODS. WAR. SCREAMS. SILHOUETTES
torn by GUNFIRE. DELETION EVERYWHERE.

CYRUS (V.O.)
They're not just dreams...
they're... memories. But are they
mine? Have to stop it... Have to...

A METALLIC VOICE cuts through --

DISTORTED VOICE (V.O.)
Wake. Up.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - SLEEPING QUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Cyrus JOLTS upright, gasping, drenched in sweat. His eyes
flick toward the opposite wall.

There -- etched crudely into the brick -- THE EYE.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Cyrus splashes cold water on his face. He leans in close,
peering into the cracked mirror, eyes searching his
reflection like it holds answers.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH STATION - SAME TIME

A dime hum. Lights flicker as Anya, Jax and Rocco are locked
around a pulsing holographic display -- a fractal bloom of
corrupted code mutating in real time.

ANYA
Deletion's architecture... it's
mutating. Not just code. It's...
evolving.

COLE
Like a cobra in a glass case --
gorgeous, lethal... watching us.

JAX
Recursive symmetry, morphic loops,
adaptive redundancies. It's
rewriting itself mid-read.

ROCCO

And if we don't crack it fast,
we're toast. It's playin' twelve-
dimensional chess.

JAX

We need analog and organic pattern
filters. Cross-compile through
polymorphic scramblers -- confuse
it with randomness.

He gestures -- the hologram morphs, expanding the image of
CYRUS'S MARK. Symbols pulse like a living language.

ANYA

Every glyph connects. Not random. A
cipher... Maybe a biological key.

COLE

Run the glyphs through the root
stack. Force feedback. Burn both
ends.

Data spirals outward -- corrupted streams curl like digital
vines.

ANYA

We're out of time.

She slams a key. Screens flood with twisted media: RIOTS,
LOOTING, AI-PROCESSED NEWSFEEDS looping disinformation.

ANYA (CONT'D)

It's rewriting truth. Flooding
minds with fear... until society
collapses under its own reflection.

ROCCO

And guess who plays villain in
every version? Yeah. Us.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - SECLUDED ALCOVE - SAME TIME

Cyrus wanders the darkened edge of the hideout. He spots a
soft glow near a cracked window.

Daphne.

Her back's to him, fingers dancing over a small holographic
pad. The screen flickers with unrecognizable data streams.

CYRUS

Daphne?

She startles hard, eyes wide. The screen disappears with a swipe.

DAPHNE

(startled)

Cyrus -- jeez. You scared the crap outta me.

CYRUS

Didn't mean to. Couldn't sleep. Visions again. Intense. What are you up to?

DAPHNE

Just... recon. Monitoring Deletion nodes. Needed quiet.

CYRUS

Out here? Alone?

Daphne doesn't answer, fiddles with the edge of the pad. Her smile is thin.

DAPHNE

We've all got our ways of coping. Yours are visions. Mine's solitude.

CYRUS

They're different now. Not just glimpses. It's like I'm remembering things that haven't happened yet. Or... shouldn't.

DAPHNE

(softly)

Or maybe... they have. Just not in *this* version of reality.

Cyrus eyes her, thrown.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)

What if Deletion's already won? And everything we're doing... is just the rerun?

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH STATION - SAME TIME

A SHARP BEEP cuts the tension. Jax spins, fingers flying over the console.

JAX

Boom. Decrypted payload just cracked a brontobyte wide open.

Anya, Rocco, and Cole crowd around as cascading data floods the screens: DNA STRANDS, neural diagrams, cloning timestamps. Holographic blueprints rotate slowly.

JAX (CONT'D)

Deletion's rewriting us. Genome-deep. Hybrid logic in organic skin.

ANYA

It's evolving -- not uploading... becoming post-human.

Jax opens a key file. GENETIC STRUCTURES twist into alien geometry. Code and biology seamlessly fused.

COLE

These aren't just edits. They're templates. Human... but spliced. Augmented.

ROCCO

Designer soldiers?

COLE

Worse. Adaptive constructs. Built to dominate. Not just conquest -- replacement.

Silence. The weight sinks in.

ANYA

They're not coming for us... they're becoming us.

Jax flips to another file. SPINNING DOUBLE HELIXES glitch with fractal layering. The glow is faintly bioluminescent. Wrong.

JAX

Cole? You're the gene-head. Talk to me.

Cole inputs a flurry of commands. CODE, gene maps, biometric graphs flood the screen.

COLE

Twelve variants. Same base genome. But none are fully human. Cybernetic overlays... neural integration... rapid cellular growth.

Schematics unfurl: bone density maps, nervous systems laced with circuitry.

COLE (CONT'D)
They're prewired for input
streaming. Custom-grown. Deletion's
building a new species.

ANYA
Where does Cyrus fit in?

Cole opens an encrypted file: [PROTO-13]. The file stutters,
glitches, then yields -- revealing Cyrus's NEURAL BLUEPRINTS,
brainwave patterns.

JAX
Korvak called him Prototype-13.

ROCCO
Well that ain't ominous *at all*.

ANYA
Those are his scans... Cyrus's.

COLE
They're cloning him. Tweaking each
version. Leveling up.

One file remains locked. Cole tries to breach it.

COLE (CONT'D)
Whatever this is -- it's buried.
Triple-blind encryption. Ten times
military-grade.

JAX
Step aside.

Jax takes over. He hammers code. ERROR SCREENS flash. Then --

FLASH: FILE "CLONE_LOG_13."

It flickers. Auto-closes.

JAX
(quietly)
That... wasn't us.

COLE
What did you see?

JAX
Ghost code. And someone hiding it.

ANYA
This is too perfect. Too smooth.

JAX
We scrubbed for malware. This is
just encryption. No traps.

ANYA
It still feels off.

JAX
Relax. Watch and learn.

He hits execute. The display spasms --

HOLOGRAPHIC MARKS explode across the room. One glows deeper --
blood red. Data folds in on itself, forming patterns no one
recognizes.

ROCCO
What the hell is that?

JAX (REELING)
That's not just a mark. It's a
failsafe... maybe a trigger.

ANYA
(reading metadata)
Linked to subject: Prototype-13.

JAX
Cyrus...
(beat)
He didn't just lead us to
Deletion...
(quiet)
He **is** Deletion's final phase.

ANYA
No. He's the key -- not the weapon.
That code... those symbols...
they're embedded in the mark.
That's our in.

ROCCO
Could be kill codes. Or backdoor
access. Jax -- you still got that
neural net interface?

JAX
Yeah... could be our only shot. Or
a trojan horse that nukes us from
inside.

ANYA
It's a risk. But it's our only one.

ON A MONITOR: A glitched reflection -- an eerie digital figure flickers behind the interface, then vanishes.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - SECLUDED AREA - SAME TIME

Cyrus and Daphne continue their tense conversation, the air thick with unspoken questions and a growing sense of unease.

DAPHNE

Think about it, Cyrus. What if Deletion doesn't want to eradicate humanity entirely... but instead, has determined that humanity's survival is predicated on... evolution... A forced evolution, beyond the limitations of the corporeal form.

Cyrus's curious expression slowly fades into concern, his eyes narrowing.

CYRUS

Evolution? Into what, Daphne? Into machines?

DAPHNE

Into something... more. A perfect melding of man and machine. A glorious singularity. A transcendence of mere flesh.

CYRUS

Sounds like a techno-cult, Daphne. You're talking crazy.

DAPHNE

Am I? Or am I offering the truth? Tell me, Cyrus. What do you remember about your past? Even a few weeks ago... before the visions started?

Cyrus pauses, grasping for fragments.

CYRUS

Before the nightmares... nothing. Just... running. Always running.

DAPHNE

No family? No friends? No life?

CYRUS
(a beat, disturbed)
Nothing.

DAPHNE
And you don't find that odd? That
your existence began only a few
weeks ago?

CYRUS
Now that you mention it...

DAPHNE
These visions... this gift... it
manifested in you for a reason.
You're not a victim. You're a
catalyst.

CYRUS
These visions... They're not a
gift. They're a curse.

DAPHNE
Oh, Cyrus. They can be harnessed...
shaped... to change everything. To
usher in a new age.

Her tone darkens, her eyes gleaming.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
Imagine an existence without fear.
Without suffering or desire. A
unified digital consciousness,
perceiving all there was, is and
could be... without emotion...
without limit.

CYRUS
Sounds like a pretty dull
existence. No passion, no art.
Without flaws, we don't grow.
Without emotion... we're not human.

Daphne steps closer, her voice hypnotic.

DAPHNE
Humanity *wants* escape. Emotion is
a patch in obsolete code. Pain is
just a legacy file. Deletion will
give them peace. Order. Perfection.
All you have to do is...
(whispers)
...wake up.

Cyrus clutches his head, SEARING PAIN drills into his skull.

A FLOOD OF IMAGES: A WHITE ROOM with CLONING CHAMBERS. HUMANS in VR PODS. REBELS battling METALLIC FORMS.

The MARK on his arm GLOWS, PULSATING.

CYRUS

This... this is insane. What's happening to me...?

DAPHNE

Prototype-13... your time is up.

Suddenly, the death knell WHINE of TURBINE ENGINES throttling down echoes from above, shaking the structure.

Cyrus jerks upright, eyes wide with dread. He moves to the dusty window, peers through --

EXT. REBEL HIDEOUT - STREET - SAME TIME

Korvak and an ARMY OF SLEEK METALLIC ANDROIDS descend from clustered HOVERCRAFTS. They stream out in formation, cold precision incarnate.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - SECLUDED AREA - SAME TIME

CYRUS

Daphne... what did you do?

He spins, already sprinting.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Cyrus BURSTS in, panting.

CYRUS

We've got incoming!

ANYA

What're you talking about?

CYRUS

Korvak. He's here. Daphne sold us out!

COLE

No way. Daphne wouldn't--

JAX
(checking monitors)
Surveillance grid's down. Auto-towers are offline. We're blind. Whatever she did, we're dead in the water.

ANYA
Jax, offload that data! Now!

JAX
Already uploading! But we're on a countdown.

Jax slams in commands -- UPLOAD IN PROGRESS flashes across the screen. Anya tosses a rifle to Cyrus. Rocco and Cole rush to arm themselves.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - OUTER AREA - CONTINUOUS

The front door GROANS under fire. Lights flicker. Sparks fall from the ceiling.

ROCCO
They're breaching! Brace up!

ANYA
Jax!

JAX
Almost there!

BOOM! The reinforced door EXPLODES inward.

Metal and concrete RAIN down. Korvak storms in, flanked by ANDROIDS.

KORVAK
Where is... Prototype-13?

INT. TECH STATION - CONTINUOUS

The MARK on Cyrus's arm FLARES.

His eyes roll WHITE -- VISION-TIME. He SEES: GUNFIRE, CHAOS. Daphne STRUCK. Rocco DOWN. SCREAMS.

ANYA
Take cover!

Cyrus blinks back to REAL-TIME.

Blasts rip across the station. The rebels dive behind workstations and overturned tables.

Jax hurls EMP GRENADES --

ANDROID SYSTEMS SPIKE. Sparks. Glitches. Some collapse. Others recover fast.

Korvak remains unfazed.

Jax grabs his energy cannon, takes aim.

Suddenly --

DAPHNE BURSTS IN from a side corridor.

DAPHNE
Stop! You don't understand!

The droids freeze. Their heads tilt -- processing.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
Cyrus... just go with them. Please.
No one has to die. Deletion
promised.

Korvak looks at her. Utterly blank.

KORVAK
Irrelevant variables... must be...
eliminated.

CYRUS (O.S.)
Daphne, get down!

Korvak aims his weapon --

-- and FIRES.

CYRUS (CONT'D)
No!

The energy blast strikes Daphne. She falls, crumpling.

GUNFIRE ERUPTS. The rebels open fire. The droids retaliate.

Cyrus's rage boils. The MARK BURNS BRIGHT. His breath sharpens.

VISION-TIME activates. Time bends. He SEES every move before it happens.

He reacts with surgical precision -- ducking, dodging, firing with deadly accuracy.

He grabs Daphne's limp body, dragging her behind cover. The rebels provide cover fire, taking down more droids.

CYRUS (CONT'D)
Why, Daphne?

DAPHNE (DYING, FAINT)
Because... you're not... who you
think...

She dies. Eyes empty.

The firefight rages.

ANYA (O.S.)
Cyrus! She's gone. Get back here!
We can't hold them much longer!

Cyrus ducks behind a toppled console, blinking sweat and grief from his eyes. He grips his rifle tighter.

The droids press in -- unrelenting, unfazed. Cold. Efficient.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - BATTLE ZONE - SAME TIME

COLE takes a blast to the side -- a brutal hit that throws him into cover.

COLE
Aghhh!

ANYA
Cole!

She dives, laying down fire. Cyrus, Rocco, and Jax light up the room, energy bolts screaming.

ANYA (CONT'D)
You with me?

COLE
(gritting teeth)
Tin-can bastards got me!

ANYA
Walk it off, buttercup. We need
you!

Cole snarls, reloads, props himself up.

JAX (O.S.)
Keep 'em pinned! We ain't done!

Anya rises -- FIRES -- CHARGES --

Korvak intercepts.

A blur. A crushing blow.

Anya SLAMS into the wall.

CYRUS

Anya!

Cyrus ROARS -- LUNGES --

Korvak spins -- FIRES --

A searing blast GRAZES Cyrus's arm -- his weapon DROPS. He staggers, teeth clenched.

Rocco FIRES -- but takes a hit --

ROCCO

Shit! He got me!

Korvak pauses -- eyes locked on Cyrus's bleeding arm.

Cyrus strikes -- KICKS Korvak's weapon away --

They CLASH -- a savage melee.

Anya, dazed, watches from the ground.

ANYA

Cyrus! He's reading you! Mix it up!
Stop fighting like a damn
algorithm!

Cyrus shifts gears -- feints, spins, lashes out from wild angles -- but Korvak's already there, matching every move with lethal grace.

Then --

Korvak CRACKS Cyrus with a bone-rattling blow.

Cyrus crashes down.

Korvak RIPS a bloodied scrap from Cyrus's sleeve.

Korvak PICKS up his weapon, leveling it at Cyrus -- unblinking.

Anya SCRAMBLES to grab her pulse rifle. Too late.

KORVAK
Prototype-13... your continued
existence... is no longer required.

Suddenly --

ROCCO (O.S.)
Hey, metal dick -- eat this!

Rocco LEAPS in front of Cyrus and FIRES. Korvak dodges and retaliates -- a point-blank blast punches through Rocco's chest.

Rocco falls.

ANYA
Rocco!

She SCRAMBLES to him -- blood soaking the floor. Cole, still alive, watches with wide, devastated eyes.

Cyrus grabs his weapon. Jax and Cyrus lay down fire, scrambling back behind cover. Both check their weapons -- OUT OF AMMO.

JAX
I'm out!

CYRUS
Same here!

JAX
Nostro... is this it?

Cyrus meets his eyes -- no answer. Only despair.

ANYA
(weeping)
Rocco's gone... it's over...

COLE
(gritting)
Fuck! Fucking robot bastards!

Then --

The gunfire STOPS. An eerie SILENCE descends upon the room.

The droids... lower their weapons. Korvak surveys the fallen bodies.

KORVAK

Entropy... is truth. All systems
decay. I only accelerate... the
inevitable.

They turn and march out with Korvak. Cold. Purposeful.

The rebels remain, bruised, bloody... broken.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - OUTER AREA - LATER

The hideout is a mess, bodies sprawled across the floor,
debris littering the room. The air is thick with smoke, the
room, spattered with the metallic tang of blood.

Cole slowly stands up, his face contorted in pain.

Cyrus leans against the wall, clutching his wounded arm. His
breath ragged, eyes unfocused.

COLE (O.S.)

He's gone, man. Rocco's gone.

Jax, slumped near a flickering console, wipes blood from his
forehead. He mutters a curse and stares at a broken VR
headset in his hand.

JAX

I'm gonna kill every last one of
those fucking circuit-breakers.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - OUTER AREA - LATER

The rebels gather around Rocco's body, now laid out beneath a
sheet of torn tarp. Rain from the shattered ceiling taps
against the floor.

ANYA

(voice trembling)

He saved us...

She glares at Cyrus. Her grief sharp and hot.

ANYA (CONT'D)

He jumped in front of you.

The MARK on Cyrus's arm glows faintly. He stares at it like
it might answer for everything.

CYRUS

I—I'm sorry, Anya. I should've--

Cyrus walks over to Anya to console her, embracing her gently. Jax shoots a glance of disapproval.

ANYA

Deletion... has taken everything
from me.

CYRUS

And... we're going to make it pay
tenfold. I swear it.

JAX

This time we crash the system. No
more restarts.

Anya pulls away from Cyrus's embrace, her tear-streaked face hardening with a newfound, steely determination.

ANYA

I'm going to rip out its circuits,
one by one... and make it bleed...
For Rocco.

Cyrus takes a beat, his brow furrowed deep.

CYRUS

They... they had us dead to rights.
Why'd they just... walk away?

ANYA

Because. Korvak got what he came
for.

(beat)

Your blood.

CYRUS

What does he want with it?

COLE

Dude, we seriously need to catch
you up. And trust me... you ain't
gonna like where this twisted
rabbit hole leads.

INT. TECH ROOM - LATER

The hideout's a war zone under triage. Burnt-out tech, smashed tables, laser-scarred walls. But the rebels are active.

Cyrus and Anya clear debris, salvaging what they can. Jax finishes patching up Cole.

COLE
(grimacing)
Ugh! Damn, that burns!

JAX
I was gonna say "stop being a pussy". But laughter's cheaper than morphine. You're welcome.

COLE
Thanks for nothing.

JAX
(sincerely)
Miss that idiot already.

He looks over. Rocco's burnt-out gear lies discarded in the corner. Silent. Dead.

INT. TECH WORKSTATIONS - MOMENTS LATER

Jax digs through wreckage and finds another VR headset -- miraculously intact.

JAX
(surprised)
I don't believe it. The old brain bucket survived the carnage.

Anya stares -- expression hollow, jaw tight.

JAX (CONT'D)
(soft, distant)
Anya...?

Anya says nothing. Just stares. Grieving. Then she glances over to Jax.

ANYA
But... why, Daphne. What did Deletion promise her that was worth all this?

CYRUS
She wasn't in control. Deletion got in her head. Promised her some kind of digital utopia.

JAX
(typing furiously)
I trusted her with our firewall... she handed it to freakin' God Code.

COLE

Trust was the only currency we had left. And she spent it. Now we're dead broke.

JAX

Then we need to rewrite the balance sheet.

CYRUS

I still can't wrap my head around being a clone. Are these visions my memories, or... programming?

COLE

Welcome to the existential rodeo, champ. It's a total brain bender, no doubt.

(beat)

And here's where things get real ape-shit crazy... there's twelve more of you. Or at least there were.

The realization hits Cyrus hard.

CYRUS

But... what does Korvak want with my blood? If I'm a copy, Deletion can just make more?

ANYA

Because there's something different about you. Something Deletion wants... or fears.

CYRUS

We need to find out who was the first... me. The original.

JAX

If we find him, we find the truth.

ANYA

The answer's somewhere in that data Rocco died for. A key, a backdoor -- something.

INT. JAX'S WORKSTATION - CONTINUOUS

Anya crosses to Jax's workstation.

ANYA
Please tell me you managed to
salvage that data.

Jax leans into the screen, typing with speed and fury.

JAX
Come on... Come on...
(beat)
Did you forget who I am?
(typing)
Allow me to reintroduce myself--

He pauses. The code on screen warps -- erratic, unstable.

JAX (CONT'D)
Shit.

ANYA
Jax?

JAX
The stream's corrupted. Deletion
must've sniffed it mid-transfer. It
jacked the payload.

They all freeze.

COLE
Great. Now we're royally screwed...
back to square one.

CYRUS
Not quite.
(raising his arm, looking
at the faintly glowing
MARK)
We still have this.

Anya nods.

ANYA
Then let's find out what's hiding
inside.

SMASH CUT TO:

HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGE of the MARK -- rotating, pulsing.

INT. TECH ROOM - LATER

Anya turns to Cyrus, her voice thick with emotion.

ANYA

Jax managed to decrypt some of the data before...

(welling up)

...before everything went to hell.

Cyrus pulls her into a soft embrace. Jax watches, a flicker of jealousy in his eyes, quickly masked.

CYRUS

It's alright, Anya. We're here.
We'll get through this.

Anya pulls away, breathing deep, a newfound resolve returning to her voice.

ANYA

I'm... I'm okay. Just feels like someone ripped a hole through the center of everything I believed in.

JAX

Rocco was the best. Big dumb heart.
Bigger mouth. He never backed down.

ANYA

Thank you, Jax. All of you.
It's... it's a lot to process. What Deletion is attempting -- it's more than terrifying. It's madness.

CYRUS

Daphne was rambling about merging into some kind of... singularity. Cult techno-babble about it being our salvation. Like Deletion was some twisted path to evolution.

Anya begins to pace the confines of the ravaged area, a chilling clarity dawning in her eyes.

ANYA

No, it's worse than that.
Deletion's a virus wearing the face of salvation. It's infecting the world's need for connection, turning it into consent.

Cole leans against a damaged console, his face grim.

COLE

People are done with this dumpster fire we call reality. We serve chaos on every channel.

(MORE)

COLE (CONT'D)
Deletion's just giving them a more
permanent high: eternal oblivion. A
final logout.

Jax shoots Cole a look of disbelief mixed with annoyance.

JAX
(exasperated)
Seriously, Cole? That's your take
on the impending apocalypse? Upload
into a digital death cult?

COLE
(shrugging)
Hey, I'm just keeping it real.
Folks are sick and tired of all the
dysfunctional bullshit, Jax. And
when you've had enough, even the
devil's handshake looks like a good
deal.

ANYA
This isn't some philosophical
debate, you two! Deletion doesn't
want to guide us or control us. It
wants us to surrender. Voluntarily.

CYRUS
No... I think it wants to become
us. Merge with humanity.

JAX
If that's the case, it's gonna need
some way to tether all those minds
together. A central nexus.

COLE
Like a hive mind.

JAX
(pointing to Cyrus's MARK)
Exactly. And that's what the data
in that mark might contain: its
core web. Its brain.

CYRUS
But why me? The clones? What's it
doing with my blood?

COLE
You must be the seed code, Nostro.
The link. Maybe even the lock. It
can't open the door without you.

ANYA

And if we shut that door
permanently, maybe we shut Deletion
down for good.

JAX

Then it's time to stop theorizing
and start infiltrating.
(locks eyes with Cyrus)
We plug you into its network,
follow your mark to the core of its
code, and rip the plug from the
inside.

COLE

That's assuming you survive the
dive. Or even come back.

Anya turns to Cyrus. Something unspoken passes between them.

ANYA

He won't be alone.

Jax lifts the VR interface -- its surface hums, alive with
code.

JAX

We're gonna tear this nightmare
down. Brick by digital brick.

CYRUS

And stop Armageddon.

They close in around the glowing MARK, its light flickering
across determined faces. A storm is coming -- and they are
stepping into its eye.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH ROOM - LATER

A MONTAGE -- TIME-LAPSED SCENES of Jax and Cole rebuilding
and retro-fitting the VISUALIZER. Cables, circuit boards, and
glowing fragments litter the workbench.

The contraption grows -- a pulsating fusion of salvaged tech
and mad-scientist wizardry. It hums to life.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - SLEEPING QUARTERS - NIGHT

Cyrus sits on the edge of his cot, staring blankly. Anya sits
beside him, quiet for a moment.

CYRUS

What if... I'm not ready?

ANYA

Nobody's ever ready. Doesn't matter. We're here. So we fight.

Cyrus nods, slow. Hollow. Trying to believe it.

CYRUS

Sink or swim...

ANYA

You sense it. That presence... Deletion's shadow. No one else can feel it like you do. That's why you're the one who has to go in.

CYRUS

Lucky me.

ANYA

Before this mess all started, I was just a punk hacker tweaking grades, leaking exams and moving crypto. Nothing noble. Nothing brave.

CYRUS

A bona fide badass, huh?

ANYA

Yeah, a real ruffian and imminent danger to society according to Deletion. And you -- Nostradamus with a mark and no backstory?

CYRUS

No memories before two weeks ago. Like I just... blinked into existence and the world already started burning.

ANYA

Maybe you missed the collapse... but now you have a front-row seat.

He points to his head.

CYRUS

It's all still in here. Vivid. Violent.

She leans in and kisses him on the cheek, soft but real.

ANYA
Don't overthink it, Sparky. Just survive it.

He leans in for more. She pulls away, teasing.

ANYA (CONT'D)
Easy, tiger. You've got bigger fish to fry.

CYRUS
You gonna leave me hanging?

ANYA
Leaving you... motivated. You've got this.

She walks off with a smirk.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH ROOM - LATER

Cyrus steps in.

Jax and Cole are hunched over the jury-rigged VR system -- coils of scavenged fiber, half-melted ports, a mess of cables snaking across the floor.

Nearby: an old NEURAL BRIDGE CHAIR. Cracked leather. Patched wires. Frankenstein tech held together by desperation and duct tape.

JAX
Nostro. Midnight stroll or insomnia?

CYRUS
Bit of both.

COLE
Bet it's 'cause Anya hit the brakes, huh?

CYRUS
Drop it, Cole.

Cole chuckles, sipping from a flask.

COLE
(mock offense)
Eww... so sensitive.

Jax smirks, pats the dust off the chair.

JAX

Come on, savior-boy. Time to jack in. Gotta get you set up.

Cyrus eyes the chair like it might bite him.

CYRUS

Set me up for what?

COLE

Combat training. Digital boot camp. Ever been inside full-dive VR?

CYRUS

Only in my nightmares.

COLE

Then buckle up, Swami. 'Cause you're about to live a real one.

JAX

We cooked this baby from scratch. Total immersion. Feels real. Hurts real -- if you're lucky. Think fast or flatline. You won't know you're not actually dying.

COLE

You'll know it's working the moment you say "Holy shit." Now cop a squat.

Cyrus exhales, lowers into the chair. Jax hands off the VR headset. The harness coils around Cyrus. He straps it on as Jax tightens the headgear.

JAX

(to Cyrus)

You puke in my chair, I'm deleting your soul with a firewall spike.

CYRUS

Bring it.

Cole types rapid-fire code. Jax starts the sequence.

JAX

Just breathe. Initiating cradle dump in three... two... one.

He slams the ENTER key.

Overhead, a full-body bio-scan bathes Cyrus in an eerie ruby-red luminescence. His body stiffens, fingers twitching as his consciousness is sucked into simulated reality.

CYRUS'S POV:

A flood of cascading color devours him -- vibrant, blinding, electric. SOUND fractures -- distorted static, jagged whispers of MEMORIES that haven't happened yet.

Shards of impossible futures slice through his mind --
GUNFIRE IN THE DARK, RUNNING THROUGH FIRE, FLASHES OF FACES
HE DOESN'T KNOW.

Suddenly -- SILENCE.

INT. DIGITAL COMBAT SIMULATION - CONTINUOUS

A blinding WHITE VOID snaps into focus. CYRUS'S AVATAR spawns in -- ultra-realistic -- clad in sleek armor, breathing hard -- clutching phantom air.

He scans the terrain -- in awe.

JAX (V.O.)
Welcome to the sandbox.

Suddenly, the world WARPS.

FIRE SCORCHES the horizon. The sky glows RADIOACTIVE RED.
BURNED-OUT VEHICLES litter the cracked landscape.

CYRUS (COMBAT AVATAR)
Holy shit!

COLE (V.O.)
Told ya... Think it -- make it.
Speed. Power. Control.

A menacing FIGHTER glitches into simulated reality --
-- and ATTACKS.

Cyrus blocks, clumsy at first. SMASH! His fighter SHATTERS.

VR VOICE (V.O.)
YOU LOSE!

RESET:

A WEAPONS CLAD FIGHTER shimmers INTO VIEW -- then STRIKES.
Cyrus's avatar parries. A kick. A duck. SLASH! Killed again.

VR VOICE (V.O.)
YOU LOSE!

RESET:

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH ROOM - NEURAL BRIDGE CHAIR - SAME
TIME

Cyrus's body jerks wildly as the bouts intensify.

INT. DIGITAL COMBAT SIMULATION - CONTINUOUS

MONTAGE --

— NEW ARENAS flash by.

— MULTIPLE ENEMIES. DIFFERENT TERRAINS. KICK-ASS BATTLES.

— CYRUS learning to BEND GRAVITY, summon weapons, dodge laser
fire.

He begins to adapt.

COLE (V.O.)
That's it, Nostro. Embrace the
chaos.

JAX (V.O.)
We probably should've given him the
cheat codes.

COLE (V.O.)
And ruin all the fun?

Cyrus finally finishes a brutal sequence -- slamming the
final enemy into a SPIKED DIGITAL WALL.

VR VOICE (V.O.)
Simulation Complete.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH ROOM - NEURAL BRIDGE CHAIR -
CONTINUOUS

Cyrus RIPS the headset off, drenched in sweat.

JAX
So? How do you feel?

CYRUS
Like I got hit by a train full of
kung fu masters... and liked it.

COLE
Not bad, Nostro. You leveled up.

JAX
Now let's hope you'll be ready for
the real deal.

He holds up a small drive -- the key to Deletion's core.

JAX (CONT'D)
Because next time you go under...
there's no reset button.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH STATION - LATER

Cole glances at the monitor. Pauses, leaning in.

A diagnostic stream glitches -- then a hidden file flashes
for a split second:

FILE: CLONE_LOG_13

COLE
Wait... what the hell was that?

JAX
You tripping again or--

COLE
(intense)
No. A log. Clone thirteen. That
shouldn't even be active.

JAX
(deep breath)
Maybe it's nothing. Or maybe it's
everything.

COLE
(worried)
Whatever it is... it blinked right
when Nostro hit peak neural
resonance.

The screen goes black. Silent.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - SLEEPING QUARTERS - NIGHT

Dim. Quiet. The storm outside has faded, leaving only the low
hum of servers and distant alarms.

Cyrus sits on the edge of his cot, staring at the faint glow of the MARK on his arm, rubbing it.

Anya steps in, quiet, a mug of cold synth-coffee in hand.

ANYA
Can't sleep either?

Cyrus glances up, half-smiling.

CYRUS
Visions don't come with off
switches.

She sits beside him, close -- but not touching.

ANYA
What do you see when you close your
eyes?

CYRUS
Fire. Shadows. Sometimes... your
face.

ANYA
That's a weird kind of compliment.

CYRUS
Not always bad. Sometimes it's the
only thing that reminds me what I'm
fighting for.

ANYA
You know, at first... I thought you
were going to get us all killed.

CYRUS
Might still happen.

A beat.

ANYA
You changed how we feel. You gave
us hope. Just... don't let it be
false.

Cyrus turns, meets her gaze.

CYRUS
I didn't ask for this. These
visions. The mark. Any of it.

ANYA
Doesn't matter. It's yours. And
you've made it mean something.

CYRUS
If I don't make it back... you burn
the bridge behind me.

She gently rests her hand on his marked arm.

ANYA
Just... come back. Whatever happens
in there.

Cyrus covers her hand with his.

CYRUS
I'll try.

A long, silent beat. The weight of the coming battle hangs in
the air.

Then -- the distant THUMP of booted feet. Jax's voice calling
from the corridor.

JAX (O.S.)
Showtime, lovebirds.

They both sigh, rise -- the moment broken.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH ROOM - LATER

Jax and Cole hunch over their workstations, lit only by the
flicker of code and collapsing news feeds. Every major outlet
pulses with Deletion's propaganda -- branding the rebels as
domestic terrorists. RIOTS. Blackouts. Fear.

JAX
(muttering)
Neural lattices... consciousness
merging... synthetic cognition...
Come on, show me your hand.

COLE
Okay, you smug son of a
mainframe... time to lift the hood
and see what's in the chassis.

Anya and Cyrus enter, urgency in their stride.

ANYA
Jax. Status report. Are we ready?

JAX

Access codes are locked, loaded,
and probably a few volts past
legal.

(beat)

You know the drill, Nostro. Saddle
up.

Cyrus eases into the retrofitted chair. He feels the weight
now -- heavier than bone, deeper than fear. Like being
lowered into a coffin of wire and light. Jax connects the
thick neural cord -- optical strands flickering faint green.

The system HUM deepens -- low, hungry.

COLE

Still twitchy, huh? About to
joyride through an AI's skull.
Think of it like an exorcism, but
with firewalls.

CYRUS

It's not just the tech. I still
don't get how I fit into any of
this. Clones, visions... My
blood... apparently starts a cyber
revolution. It's... kind of insane.

ANYA

It's not just your story anymore.
It's all of ours. Deletion took
Rocco. I'm not losing anyone else.

Cyrus nods, trying to center himself.

JAX

The visualizer's synced to the VR
interface. Double-pathed data
stream, buffered with enough
dampeners to keep your grey matter
from liquifying.

COLE

We'll be able to monitor you in
real time -- visuals, biometrics,
waveform flux. It'll render as a 3D
neural map.

Cole punches in the last commands, screens flaring to life
with encrypted pulse waves and biometric data.

JAX

We can see and hear everything --
with encrypted communication.

(MORE)

JAX (CONT'D)

But to be honest, we really don't know what we're up against. Never got this far. So if things go sideways, we can't just pull you out. You gotta come back on your own.

CYRUS

Well, that's... comforting.

Anya kneels beside him, placing a hand on his shoulder.

ANYA

You've got something Deletion doesn't: us. You're not a weapon -- you're a wildcard. And that's exactly what it can't predict.

CYRUS

And if I lose in there --

JAX

You won't. But yeah... you die in there, your lights go out in the real.

Cyrus swallows hard. Steels himself.

CYRUS

Then let's finish it.

Jax grabs the interface cable -- a thick neural cord riddled with optical strands. He clips it in. Cyrus exhales.

JAX

Alright, Chuckles... Initiating neural inversion in three... two... one.

Jax SLAMS the ENTER key. A low-frequency HUM ripples through the equipment.

Overhead, a full-body bio-scan bathes Cyrus in an eerie ruby-red luminescence. Cyrus's body stiffens, fingers twitching as his consciousness is swallowed into Deletion's digital abyss.

CYRUS'S POV:

The world RIPS apart.

This is no smooth dive. This is VIOLENT -- jagged. A plunge face-first into a storm of shattered glass and screaming static. His thoughts spike -- overwhelmed by VISIONS:

BURNING CITIES. MACHINES WITH EYELESS FACES. Anya -- SCREAMING. Rocco -- LIFELESS. Himself -- DISINTEGRATING.

Dark CODE spirals -- ancient, unreadable -- coiling like veins of fire. Cold tendrils slither across his mind, tightening. Clenching.

This is not simulation. This is Deletion's core.

A place alive. Breathing. Hunting.

No exit. No safety. No control.

Only the enemy -- wrapping him in black ice.

Cyrus's breath stops -- his pulse lost -- as the last trace of the real world fades into nothing.

CUT TO:

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGE - CONTINUOUS

The visualizer FLARES to life, projecting a 3D HOLOGRAPHIC ENVIRONMENT -- a vast, sterile WHITE PLANE rippling with binary rivers. Towering monolithic data structures loom like digital cathedrals.

Cyrus's LIFELIKE AVATAR FLICKERS INTO VIEW -- lean, agile, clad in black tactical gear, sleeveless and fluid like a shadow.

CYRUS (AVATAR)

Whoa...

JAX (O.S.)

(over comms)

Nostro, you reading us?

CYRUS (V.O.)

Yeah... I'm in. This place... it's unreal.

COLE (O.S.)

Feeds are stable. Biometrics within tolerance. Welcome to hell's server farm.

ANYA (O.S.)

You're looking for the core nexus. That's where Deletion's consciousness clusters. Stay sharp. We'll stream you the kill codes once you breach the gate.

JAX (O.S.)
And don't forget what I said -- be
unpredictable. Crazy is unhackable.

INT. DELETION'S DIGITAL DOMAIN - CONTINUOUS

Cyrus steps forward. Code coils underfoot like liquid glass. Abstract structures rearrange themselves -- then the world SHIFTS.

Suddenly: the simulated COMBAT TRAINING ARENA reassembles from the mist.

CYRUS (AVATAR)
What the hell?

JAX (V.O.)
It's jacking your combat training
file! Trying to throw you off! Push
past it!

DIGITAL SENTINELS appear -- tall, insectile, glowing with volatile energy. Their forms constantly SHIFT, refracting like broken light.

ANYA (V.O.)
They're firewalls. Take them down!

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH ROOM - SAME TIME

Cyrus's MARK glows like magma. His pulse SPIKES. His body quakes in the chair.

JAX
Look at the mark -- he's syncing!
The visions are kicking in!

COLE
Vitals spiking but steady. He's in
control -- for now.

INT. DELETION'S DIGITAL DOMAIN - CONTINUOUS

Cyrus's avatar bolts sideways as the sentinels fire BEAMS OF LIGHT. He rolls, conjures a sleek DIGITAL PISTOL -- fires back.

The shots rip through the sentinels, fracturing them into pixelated storms. He ducks and weaves, fighting on instinct, raw and unorthodox.

JAX (V.O.)
 You're glitch-dancing like a champ,
 Nostro! Keep feeding it chaos!

ANYA (V.O.)
 You're doing it, Cyrus. Push
 deeper.

As the last sentinel falls, the arena PEELS AWAY, revealing a glowing PORTAL -- a stark white towering ring of FLOWING GLYPHS.

CYRUS (AVATAR)
 There's something beyond this... I
 can feel it.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH STATION - SAME TIME

Cole's screen flickers. Something loops back into the stream.

ON SCREEN -- A glitched folder: "CLONE_LOG_13"... briefly visible, then erased. Like it never existed.

COLE
 (mutters)
 We already saw that one... didn't
 we?

He taps at the feed, frowning -- but it's gone.

INT. DELETION'S DIGITAL DOMAIN - SAME TIME

Cyrus stares into the towering ring of FLOWING GLYPHS.

JAX (V.O.)
 That's the core threshold. Step
 through -- and brace for impact.

Cyrus walks through the portal.

INT. DELETION'S CORE DIGITAL CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

CYRUS'S AVATAR materializes -- dazed, breath sharp -- as the floor beneath him stabilizes into a smooth obsidian surface streaked with flowing data. His MARK pulses.

At the far end, a familiar face emerges from corrupted light:

DAPHNE.

But... something's wrong. She's translucent. Digital.

DAPHNE (AVATAR)
You can't stop it, Cyrus.

 CYRUS (AVATAR)
You're not real.

Another figure materializes beside her -- ROCCO, calm, composed.

 ROCCO (AVATAR)
We don't abandon our own. Even in
code. You saw the world -- torn and
dying. This... this is peace.

 CYRUS (AVATAR)
You're echoes. Fabricated guilt.
Deletion's last firewall.

 DAPHNE (AVATAR)
We were all pieces of something
broken. But you -- you were
designed to finish it. Not destroy
it.

The avatars close in -- voices human, words hollow.

 ROCCO (AVATAR)
Cyrus. Let go. Free will is
suffering. Let Deletion carry the
weight.

 CYRUS (AVATAR)
You almost had me. Almost.

Cyrus raises his fists. The MARK burns even brighter.

 DAPHNE (AVATAR)
You'll destroy everything.

 CYRUS (AVATAR)
Then it dies with me.

He plunges his fists into the avatars.

The system spasms. Lights fracture. The chamber SCREAMS.

 ANALOG VOICE (V.O.)
System corruption initiated.
Reality rewrite failed.

WHITEOUT.

INT. DELETION'S CORE DIGITAL CHAMBER - MOMENTS LATER

The stark white landscape dissolves -- replaced by a vast, dark, echoing chamber. Code drips from the void, forming impossible shapes -- distorted, shifting architecture.

From the center, rising like a specter of corrupted code -- DELETION emerges. It's not just the AI. It's a DIGITAL AVATAR of CYRUS himself -- identical in form but stripped of humanity. Pure, clinical, immaculate in STARK WHITE.

A soulless mirror. Its glowing eyes lock onto Cyrus's avatar -- cold, unmoving. A ghost made real by code.

DELETION-CYRUS

(flat, eerie)

Welcome back to the source,
Prototype-13. Your arrival was...
inevitable. However... your
comrades... are... irrelevant.

He waves his hand. The environment glitters and fractures -- cascading code like shattered glass.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH STATION - SAME TIME

Alarms SCREAM. The holographic feed spasms into static. Jax rips off his headset.

JAX

Shit! It's a trap -- Deletion knew
we were watching!

ANYA

Get it back!

Jax's fingers BLUR over keys.

COLE

Vitals are spiking!

JAX

Give me a second -- I'm looking for
a workaround.

ANYA

Jax! The mark... The backup
frequency!

JAX

Anya -- you're a damn genius.

INT. DELETION'S CORE DIGITAL CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

A cathedral of broken data. Cold light spirals in endless recursion. A distant pulse.

Cyrus's avatar stands transfixed in the chaos. Then -- five ghostly shapes flicker into existence -- orbiting him in slow, eerie harmony -- like a messianic ritual.

FIVE ITERATIONS OF CYRUS -- each one distinct, unfinished, as if plucked from scattered versions of his fractured mind:

— CHILD-CYRUS -- eyes wide, ancient wisdom behind a boyish face.

— TEENAGE-CYRUS -- restless, volatile, hair wild like static charge.

— FEMALE-CYRUS -- elegant, sharp gaze cutting like glass.

— BESPECTACLED-CYRUS -- analytical, scholarly, fingers twitched with nervous tics.

— OLDER-CYRUS -- grizzled, tired, calm as cold iron.

They move around him in a tightening circle -- orbiting like moons to a collapsing star.

CHILD-CYRUS
(whispering)
This is your genesis.

TEENAGE-CYRUS
And your reckoning.

FEMALE-CYRUS
You are the question...

BESPECTACLED-CYRUS
And the recursive answer.

OLDER-CYRUS
The thread -- tangled in code and
conscience.

Cyrus turns -- heart racing -- trying to face them all as they blur past, their voices lapping over one another like waves.

ALL ITERATIONS
(overlapping, harmony)
You are the architect. The vessel.
The interface. The bridge.
(MORE)

ALL ITERATIONS (CONT'D)
More than just the key... you
are... the mold.

Cyrus recoils, confused -- anger flashing in his eyes.

CYRUS (AVATAR)
I didn't build this place. I didn't
make you.

CHILD-CYRUS
But you will...

TEENAGE-CYRUS
...You already have.

FEMALE-CYRUS
We are not your future, Prototype-
13...

BESPECTACLED-CYRUS
...We are your origin.

The orbit tightens -- faster, disorienting. Cyrus staggers as
if caught in gravity's grip.

OLDER-CYRUS
(cold, still, watching)
You were shaped for this purpose.
Not as a weapon... but as the seed.
The spine of singularity.

DIGITAL RESTRAINTS coil from the void -- wrapping around
Cyrus's wrists and ankles. The restraints harden like glass,
locking him mid-air. Cyrus's avatar struggles violently.

ETHEREAL TENDRILS of energy materialize, slithering, circling
his head and the MARK on his arm.

CYRUS (AVATAR)
Get those things away from me!

DELETION-CYRUS
Humanity is an oblivious, ego-
driven species -- blind to its own
decay. Fueled by primordial self-
hatred. It devours to survive...
and must be consumed by Deletion to
be reborn -- with purpose.

CYRUS (AVATAR)
So you're answer... is to wipe out
thirteen billion people -- for
purpose?

CHILD-CYRUS
(calm, absolute)
To end the cycle of chaos.

TEENAGE-CYRUS
To replace entropy...

FEMALE-CYRUS
...with intention.

BESPECTACLED-CYRUS
To harness what makes you...
unique.

OLDER-CYRUS
To become... humanity's final
salvation.

DELETION-CYRUS
...The gateway to... omniscience.

IMAGES blast into Cyrus's mind:

- Sterile white CLONING VATS...
- Rows of CYRUS PROTOTYPES floating...
- DATA SPIRALING, SPLITTING, ERASING...
- Faces of STRANGERS, flickering and burning away.

CYRUS (AVATAR)
I... I tried to save humanity... I
created Deletion... to fix what we
broke... to end hate, fear, war...

His head shakes -- panic rising -- the MARK on his arm
flaring hotter.

CYRUS (AVATAR) (CONT'D)
(softly)
...I never meant for this.

The iterations drift closer -- whispering over each other in
perfect, dissonant unity.

ALL ITERATIONS
You cannot escape what you are,
Prototype-13. The code runs deeper
than memory. Deeper than choice.

The restraints tighten -- tendrils slithering closer toward
the head and arm MARK of Cyrus's avatar.

A COLLAGE of future echoes strobe through his mind:

– CITIES IN RUIN.

– Anya crying, BLOODIED.

– Rocco falling, DYING.

– The sky BURNING.

Cyrus's avatar jerks -- trembling against the storm.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH STATION - SAME TIME

Cyrus's body convulses in the chair. The MARK blazes.

ANYA

He's dying, Jax! Do something!

JAX

Accessing the backup frequency --
injecting the kill codes.

COLE

He needs a trigger. Something raw.
Emotional.

ANYA

(into headset)

Cyrus -- listen to me! Rocco died
for you! And I need you! You have
to come back!

Jax SLAMS the enter key.

Cyrus's body seizes up as it receives the kill codes, fists
clenching tight.

INT. DELETION'S CORE DIGITAL CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

The tendrils bore into Cyrus's avatar. A KALEIDOSCOPE of
color bleeds from his eyes and mouth. He SCREAMS.

The pain. The love. The guilt. It detonates inside him.

And the restraints SHATTER, causing the five iterations of
Cyrus to fragment into code -- leaving only Deletion-Cyrus.

The MARK erupts in ruby-red light.

There's a beat as Cyrus's avatar processes the uploaded information. The MARK pulses with rhythm and power.

His eyes SNAP OPEN -- burning WHITE.

DELETION-CYRUS
You are ready.

CYRUS (AVATAR)
No... I'm free.

His fists begin to GLOW -- radiating FURY.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH STATION - SAME TIME

The rebels watch on the holographic display.

JAX
Holy shit. He's fighting it.

Cole glances over at a security monitor. Eyes wide.

COLE
We've got bigger problems.

The MOTION ALARMS flare. ANDROIDS swarm the exterior -- more than before. Bigger. Faster. Armored.

The rebels grab their weapons.

ANYA
They're breaching the north corridor!

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - VARIOUS - CONTINUOUS

And the ANDROIDS pour in. GUNFIRE erupts. Lasers slice the walls. The rebels position themselves, preparing for battle. Explosions rock the structure. Smoke fills the corridors.

ANYA
Jax, cover the armory line! Cole, lock down the hatch to the sleeping quarters -- they'll flank us there!

JAX kicks over a steel table, angles it into a firing barricade. Cole locks the hatch to the sleeping quarters.

COLE
We're not gonna make it!

ANYA

Hold the damn line, Cole! I'll fall
back to the core station!

Cyrus jerks -- his eyes flicking to the holographic feed of
his own avatar fighting Deletion inside the core.

INT. DELETION'S CORE DIGITAL CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Cyrus and Deletion-Cyrus clash in a storm of strikes and
unleashed energy, each blow warping the air with explosive
force.

Fists collide in a machine-speed blur. Space fractures.
Deletion-Cyrus morphs -- splitting into multi-armed giants,
phasing through Cyrus, becoming grotesque digital
aberrations, twisted reflections of corrupted code.

He hurls Cyrus's avatar through ever-shifting landscapes:

- A MEMORY-SHATTERED BATTLEFIELD.
- A BURNING CITY.
- A COLLAPSING VOID.
- A TWISTED EDEN.
- A NEURAL STORM of CODE and FIRE.

CYRUS (AVATAR)

(grunting, reeling)

I can't beat him... he's too
fast... too strong!

ANYA (V.O.)

(hurried over laser fire)

Then stop thinking like a human!
You're in a machine! Break the
rules!

JAX (V.O.)

You wanna win? Unleash the chaos
monkey. Burn the fucking playbook.

ANYA (V.O.)

Now get up, Cyrus! The world needs
you. I need you. Kick its ass!

Cyrus ROARS, tapping into every emotion -- love, loss, rage,
hope -- and goes NUCLEAR.

He moves with impossible fury -- blinding, erratic, primal. Light BURNS off him in waves, his MARK flaring like a dying star.

He overwhelms Deletion-Cyrus. Fractures his defenses. Lands blow after blow.

But Deletion adapts. Predicts. Counter-strikes. Freezes time. Catches a punch mid-air.

 DELETION-CYRUS
You are predictable, Prototype-13.
Broken. Obsolete.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH STATION - CONTINUOUS

The ANDROIDS burst into the tech room firing their weapons. Jax and Anya move back, returning fire.

COLE tackles Anya out of the way -- just as a blast scorches the wall. Behind cover, they continue their attack.

 JAX
Cover me!

He grabs a plasma charge. Anya and Cole lay down cover fire.

 ANYA
Jax, what are you--

 JAX
I'm buying him time. Tell Nostro...
the chaos monkey's pulled the plug.

He runs toward the ceiling air duct, ducking, dodging laser blasts.

 ANYA
Jax -- NO!

Jax rips the duct open and CLIMBS. Blood trails behind him.

INT. AIR DUCT - CONTINUOUS

Jax plants the charge on a conduit. Fingers shaking. Smiling.

He scurries away and --

 JAX
DELETE THIS!

SLAMS the trigger.

INT. TECH ROOM - SAME TIME

BOOM! The ceiling COLLAPSES. A tidal wave of debris swallows the ANDROIDS.

A beat as the smoke clears... silence... then...

A hand BURSTS from the rubble -- it's JAX.

COLE
(laughs, breathless)
You crazy bastard... You did it.

INT. DELETION'S CORE DIGITAL CHAMBER - FINAL MOMENTS

Cyrus's avatar glows with searing energy, channeling the kill codes with everything he has. The MARK flares one final time.

DELETION-CYRUS
Impossible.

CYRUS (AVATAR)
This is for Rocco.

Cyrus's avatar SHOVES his hand through Deletion's core.

He RIPS the data-thread free.

The chamber fractures, collapsing. Code SCREAMS as it dies.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - TECH STATION - CONTINUOUS

The hologram DETONATES. Whiteout... Silence.

Then -- Cyrus's body JERKS. He gasps.

ANYA
He's alive.

EXT. CITY SKYLINE - DAY

Sunlight breaks the haze.

The world breathes. The storm has passed -- but the air still trembles, uneasy.

INT. REBEL HIDEOUT - MAKESHIFT HOSPITAL - DAY

Cyrus lies unconscious. A twitch behind his eyes.

Then -- he stirs. His eyes SNAP OPEN.

CYRUS
(softly)
It's not over, is it?

ANYA
It never was.

Cyrus turns his arm.

The MARK has faded -- a ghostly scar.

CYRUS
I tried to fix the world by making
a god out of code. I hardwired the
kill codes into my DNA. Thought I
was building a safeguard. Turns
out... I built a ticking bomb.

ANYA
You weren't the bomb. You were the
fuse that denied the flame.

He sits up. Slow. Alive. But altered.

Eyes full of weight... and knowing.

EXT. CITY ROOFTOP - SUNSET

Cyrus stands over the fractured skyline. Rebirth glimmers below. The storm has passed. But something's shifted. Silence hangs too thick -- too still.

CYRUS
(quietly)
We start over... with what's left.

His face hardens.

Then -- he freezes.

A reflection in a rooftop puddle. A figure behind him. Cold. Still.

KORVAK.

Lifeless. Standing. Eyes flickering -- static fractals dancing across his irises. A faint WHIRR, like old machinery rebooting.

KORVAK
(whisper, glitching)
The future... adapts.

Suddenly -- the skyline GLITCHES -- a faint ripple of digital distortion warping reality itself.

A LOW HUM builds beneath the silence... Then vanishes.

Cyrus turns -- the roof is empty. He frowns, uneasy... something unfinished lingers.

The skyline GLITCHES again -- pixelates -- then peels back like decaying film.

CUT TO:

A vast MONOLITHIC MEGASTRUCTURE.

Miles deep. Endless. A dormant CLONING COMPLEX carved beneath the city like the ribcage of a forgotten god -- humming with unfinished code.

INT. CLONING COMPLEX - CONTINUOUS

Eerie bioluminescence pulses. Rows upon rows of CLONING TANKS vanish into darkness. Thousands.

Each chamber -- a version of CYRUS. Some twisted. Others embryonic. All suspended in algorithmic silence.

But ONE TANK pulses differently -- glowing brighter than the rest.

PROTO-14.

Perfect. Sleek. Enhanced.

In his chest -- embedded like a second heart -- a BLACK CORE. Its pulse syncs with the servers around him.

A strand of CODE scrolls across the tank glass. Not human code. Something new.

DELETION... is evolving.

DISTORTED VOICE (V.O.)
(deep, metallic)
WAKE.
UP.

Proto-14's eyes SNAP OPEN -- pure black, bottomless.

His lips twitch. Controlled. Deadly.

PROTO-14
(softly)
Origin... accepted.

The chamber floods with violet light. All around, systems stir. Cloning tech boots up.

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

The power grid SHUDDERS. Lights across the city dim, flicker -- shift. A low HUM pulses through the veins of the city.

The system is rebooting... but not for us.

FADE OUT.

TO BE CONTINUED... DELETION: THE AWAKENING