

**Scene: "Fireline Access"**

**[SCENE START]**

**EXT. CALGARY SUBURB - DUSK**

(same location as Echoes Before the Flash ext. shots)

Anarchy in motion. A suburban downtown urban center street has become a riot warzone. The air is a toxic cocktail of tear gas, burning plastic, and propane from an overturned BBQ. A street dumpster is on fire, blocking the front door.

Protesters, faces hidden by bandanas and gas masks, clash against a barricade of overwhelmed riot police. Flashbang "9 bangers" detonate with deafening CRACKS, momentarily painting the chaos in stark white and black. Flags—provincial, national, and separatist—wave like angry ghosts in the smoky twilight.

A flaming dumpster careens down the street, pushed by silhouetted figures, and smashes into a police cruiser.

**INT. LOOTED CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS**

(same location as Echoes Before the Flash)

Darkness, dust, and the smell of stale coffee. The storefront window is shattered, offering a fractured, terrifying view of the riot outside. The aisles are a disaster of overturned shelves and scattered merchandise.

ELIAS (38), grim and half-soaked in sweat, crouches low behind the cashier's counter. A deep gash weeps blood at his temple. His hands are rock-steady as his eyes dart between the chaos outside and a tactical tablet propped against a looted cash register.

On the tablet screen: a map of the area, overlaid with garbled data streams. Red icons blink and disappear.

**ELIAS** (Quietly, to himself) "Too many variables... they're not clustering."

From deeper within the store, where she's peering through a grimy back window, MAYA (26) yells, her voice tight with urgency.

**MAYA (O.S.)** "They're pushing the riot line toward the park—your safe route's collapsing!"

**ELIAS** "Then we need a new one."

He reaches to his chest rig and pulls out a secure access key—a matte black USB stick with a subtle, gold VSI hex-key logo. He plugs it into the tablet. The garbled map vanishes. The screen goes black.

Then, stark white text appears.

[DIRECT AEGIS ACCESS REQUEST RECOGNIZED] CONFIRM LOCATION LOCK →  
GAMMA ALPHA NODE AUTHORIZATION: WARZONE EXFIL – OVERRIDE 16B/FOXTROT

Elias presses his thumb to the tablet's bezel, activating his comms link. His voice is loud and clear, a stark contrast to the muffled roar outside.

**ELIAS** (Shouting to comms) "ASSET TEAM GAMMA ALPHA! REQUEST AEGIS ACCESS DIRECT TO OUR POSITION FOR EXFIL PLAN!"

JOSH's voice crackles in his earpiece, a burst of adrenaline-fueled laughter cutting through the static.

**JOSHAWA (V.O.)** "Did you just scream that like it's f\*\*\*ing Halo 3? God I missed this."

**MAYA** (Stepping out from the back aisle) "He's serious, Josh. We're boxed.get down from the roof , looks like we are about to get moving."

A beat of electric silence, then a low, resonant HUM emanates from the tablet. The screen flares to life, not with a flashy graphic, but with brutal, tactical precision. The Aegis Interface.

It's a terrifying flood of information, resolving into clarity:

A PULSE MAP shows human density shifting, red masses flowing like blood clots through the streets.

THERMAL VECTORS overlay the map, predicting the riot's flow.

A TEXT FEED scrolls with machine-like certainty:

"CROWD SURGE SOUTH: 94% CONFIDENCE" "ROUTE WEST: COMPROMISED. POLICE LINE COLLAPSE IN <02:17" "NEW EXFIL PATH CALCULATED: PROBABILITY OF SUCCESS: 88%" "OBJECTIVE: VEHICLE. GHOST-CLASS SUV. ASSIGNED ASSET : ELIAS ."

**JOSHAWA (V.O.)** (Voice hushed, serious now) "...it's pulling live? Holy shit. It's really pulling live."

Josh is seen coming out of a door in the back eating a donut and a long barrel M4A1 with a bipod slung over his shoulder.

**ELIAS** "This is not a drill. Josh, scope off, its CQB from here on out."

He grabs his rifle, slamming a palm on Maya's shoulder as he passes. His expression is placid, his voice calm. The technician is in his element.

**ELIAS (CONT'D)** "Go. Now. Aegis says the window is optimal."

#### **EXT. BACK ALLEY BEHIND STRIP MALL - CONTINUOUS**

The team moves with disciplined speed, boots crunching on broken glass and refuse. Graffiti-covered walls blur past. Behind them, a Molotov cocktail arcs through the dusk and smashes against a squad car, which erupts in a ball of flame.

**JOSHAWA (V.O.)** "That SUV better be there, Elias!"

**MAYA** "If it's not, you're carrying him out."

A HUD overlay flickers across the inside of Elias's tactical glasses—a direct feed from the Aegis system. A glowing green line snakes through the alley ahead of them.

CONFIRMING EXIT TRAJECTORY — ADAPTIVE ROUTING: ACTIVE

Suddenly, they skid to a halt.

A SINGLE FAMILY—two parents and a young child—stands silhouetted at the far end of the alley, frozen in terror.

The team freezes. Josh and Maya instinctively raise their rifles. Elias does not. He looks at the child, then glances at Maya, whose own operational focus is momentarily fractured by the sight.

**ELIAS** (Quietly, to the system) "Override. Civilian obstruction. Recalculate."

For a heartbeat, the green line on his HUD wavers. The feed delays as the system processes the illogical, inefficient command.

Then, new text flashes.

"PAUSE 10 SECONDS. ALLOW CIVILIAN EGRESS. RISK INCREASE: 4.7%." "EXFIL TRAJECTORY REMAINS OPTIMAL."

They wait. Ten seconds that stretch into an eternity. The family finally scrambles away into the darkness.

The team sprints past, diving behind a large industrial dumpster just as a volley of rubber bullets ricochets off the brick wall behind them.

They make it to a service road. Parked there is a non-descript, slightly dented Ford Explorer. A ghost vehicle.

Elias clicks his fob. The headlights flash once and the doors open slightly.

They pile in. The doors slam shut with the heavy, insulated *thunk* of ballistic armor. The pull away as rubber bullets and tear gas cans bounce off the outside as the riot police and CAF start moving in.

#### **INT. VSI GHOST VEHICLE - LATER**

The interior is silent. Maya sits in the passenger seat, taking a long, shaky breath. Josh is in the back, checking a magazine with fidgety energy. Elias drives, his expression unreadable. He pulls the access key from his vest and places it into a slot on the console.

**ELIAS** (To himself, almost a whisper) "I have never been able to do that before...that was cool as hell. I can't believe it knew they would move that fast."

**JOSH** "Don't ask me how it knew that. Just be glad it did."

Elias doesn't answer. He just drives, the only sound the quiet hum of the engine and the faint, rhythmic clicking of the turn signal as he disappears into the night.

**FADE OUT.**

**[SCENE END]**

#### **Edited Scene: "Fireline Access"**

**[SCENE START]**

#### **INT. VSI GHOST VEHICLE - NIGHT**

The interior of the Ford Explorer is an island of insulated calm, a stark contrast to the chaos they just escaped. The air is thick with the smell of sweat, cordite, and the sterile ozone of fried electronics.

In the passenger seat, MAYA leans her head back against the rest, her eyes closed, taking a long, shaky breath as the tension finally begins to bleed out of her.

In the back, JOSHAWA is wired, practically vibrating with leftover adrenaline. He leans forward between the front seats, a wide, manic grin plastered on his face.

JOSHAWA

*> Jesus that got out of hand fast. Like that could have gone REALLLLY wrong there guys.*

Elias says nothing. His expression is placid, unreadable, his hands steady at ten and two on the wheel. He reaches forward, his knuckles brushing the console, and turns on the radio. A generic rock song fills the cabin, tinny and jarringly cheerful.

He's about to change the station when the music cuts out abruptly, replaced by a clipped, serious news anchor's tone.

RADIO ANCHOR (V.O.)

>BREAKING NEWS THIS HOUR AS A BLAST IN A CALGARY SUBURB CITY TAKES HUNDREDS TO HOSPITAL OR WORSE, MORE ON THAT AT 10.

The grin slides off Joshawa's face as if physically wiped away. He stares at the radio, dumbfounded.

Maya's eyes snap open, and she sits bolt upright, her hand instinctively going to her mouth. Joshawa turns off the radio.

MAYA

>Joshawa

(break)

WHAT THE FUCK HAPPENED.

Elias's knuckles turn white on the steering wheel, his gaze flicking from the dark road to the radio and back again. The air in the car becomes heavy, unbreathable.

JOSHAWA

*> I DON'T KNOW MAYA WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU THINK HAPPENED! CAUSE WHAT I JUST HEARD A REALLY FUCKING HOPE I DIDN'T*

The words hang in the air, an obscenity.

At that exact moment, they round a corner. Ahead, the road is blocked. Bathed in the harsh, sterile glare of portable floodlights is a hastily assembled CHECKPOINT. Two armored CAF LAVs are parked in a staggered V, forcing any traffic into a bottleneck. Soldiers in full tactical gear move with tense, jerky motions. And in the center of it all, the unmistakable, brutalist silhouette of a C6 machine gun mounted on a tripod, its barrel aimed directly at them.

JOSHAWA

>We turn around we die

He says calmly and seeringly.

MAYA

>There is no way we don't look suspicious. And given the news usually hears last... they know who we are.

She says in a calm shudder.

Elias's foot eases off the accelerator. The SUV glides forward, its engine a soft hum against the sudden, ringing silence in the cabin. He doesn't answer. His eyes are locked on the checkpoint, processing, calculating. He brings the SUV to a slow, deliberate stop about a hundred yards out.

For a beat, nothing happens. A soldier raises a hand, signaling them to wait.

Then, Elias shifts the vehicle into reverse.

MAYA

>UHH ARE WE DOING THIS?

They are. And she is shit scared.

It's the wrong move.

Instantly, the world turns into a blinding, strobing hell as the checkpoint's searchlights lock onto them. The deep, terrifying

**thump-thump-thump** of the C6 machine gun erupts, a sound that isn't just heard but felt deep in the chest.

**THUNK. THUNK. THUNK-THUNK-THUNK.**

Heavy 7.62mm rounds hammer into the SUV's grille and windshield. The impacts are deafening inside the cabin, each one a physical blow. The GhostShield ballistic glass holds but spiders into a dense, opaque web in front of Elias, the flashing red and blue lights of the pursuit vehicle now a distorted, nightmarish kaleidoscope.

He stomps on the accelerator. The tires scream in protest as the SUV fishtails violently, the rear end trying to overtake the front. Elias wrestles with the wheel, his calm demeanor shattered, replaced by pure, focused aggression. He's driving blind.

JOSHAWA

>I'M ON THE 50, WHEN YOU CAN GET OUR ASS TO THEM!

Joshawa says in a clear loud commanding tone.

Joshawa dives to the floor, the confined space a tangle of legs and gear. He rips up a floor panel, revealing a hidden compartment lined with foam. He pulls out a compact M249 SAW. He shoves the rear passenger door open a crack, the wind roaring in, and braces the weapon on the trunk cargo net, trying to get a bead on the pursuing CAF vehicle.

He squeezes the trigger. The SAW roars to life, the noise inside the SUV absolutely deafening, brass casings pinging off the interior. He goes through 6 ammo boxes, barely scratching the metal of the pursuing LAV's tires are hit by the pursuing CAF vehicles and with the back of the SUV facing the pursuers the thunks are much louder as they hit the open rear hatch door. before the fifth where it fires a three-round burst before—

**CLICK.** The jam is sickeningly loud in the sudden silence. The charging handle, rocketing back, slams into Joshawa's thumb with the force of a hammer.

JOSHAWA

>MERDE!

(break)

IT'S JAMMED!

He yanks his hand back, his thumb already swelling, a dark, angry purple blooming under the nail. The SAW is useless.

Another volley of rounds slams into the rear of the SUV, one punching clean through the tailgate, missing Joshawa's head by inches.

MAYA

>YOU HURT?

Maya twists, grabbing a green canvas pouch from behind her seat and tossing it into the back without looking.

Joshawa rips the pouch open, scattering gauze and tape across the floor. His eyes scan frantically for anything useful. But they stop on something else. Tucked neatly between rolls of bandages, nestled in custom-cut foam, are two olive-drab, pineapple-skinned spheres. M67 fragmentation grenades.

The pain in his thumb vanishes, replaced by a surge of pure, manic, almost religious adrenaline. A slow, wicked grin spreads across his face. He holds one of the grenades up, its pin glinting like a diamond in the strobing lights of their pursuers.

JOSHAWA

>I THOUGHT THAT BAG WAS HEAVY.

(His voice, thick and raw with his real New Orleans accent, cuts through the roar of the engine and the thudding of bullets)

> OHHHHH SHIT *MA CHERIE*! LADIES AND GENTS WE HAVE GRENADES!

Joshawa kicks out what's left of the rear glass of the SUV and throws the grenades at the pursuing vehicles, disabling them and letting them get away.

ELIAS

>WE FUCKIN' GOOD BACK THERE YOU FUCKING LUNITIC?

Elias says barely holding onto the steering as the torn run flat tires scream for life

JOSHAWA

>FUCK YOU TOO ASSHOLE! ITS HANDLED. YOUR WELCOME.

Joshawa says in a humorous way back to Elias who smiles through the stress and enters the location of Maya's home base into the Aegis GPS.

[SCENE END]