

NATIVES TO THE SIMULACRA

a photoplay by inky

www.inkrealm.info

prelude and ode to Vulcan

POET

(V.O./O.S.)

(while montage - frantic, glitchy, varying speed...)

I swear on the dead dog in the rye: everything after that is just the echo of that ping...Gregorian Tuesdays, Hebrew Avs, Chinese Dog years, Japanese TaishÅ s and Heiseis, Hindu monsoons, Mayan eagles_ all screaming *pay attention, you morons*. But do you? Nah. Here's how it felt from down here, shaking my pebbles. ## Trinity: July 16, 1945 _ " Boom, You Bastards Jornada del Muerto, New Mexico_ Spanish for "Journey of the Dead Man," which is a riot, right? Flat as a phonie's promise, yucca and rattlesnakes my only pals. 1945, war's grinding my guts with tanks and boots. Oppenheimer and those Trinity eggheads build a tower in my belly, 100 feet of steel and wires, plopping a 5-ton Gadget on top. Plutonium from Hanford, my Washington cousin shipped south. They call it a test. *Test my ass,* I think. I feel it brewing, that uranium heartbeat, electrons itching like hives. 5:29 a.m., countdown. Winds die, stars wink out. *Lord, these things I have loved...* Oppie quotes some Bhagavad phony crap. Then_ "Jesus Mary Christ_" zero. The Gadget splits atoms like ripping seams on a cheap suit. Flash whiter than a thousand suns, they say. From me? Fireball 2,000 feet wide, mushroom clawing 40,000 up, stem fat as a skyscraper. Shockwave flattens creosote, glass rains from cars 120 miles off. Trinity Site craters 10 feet deep, 30 wide_ "my new asshole, trinitite glass bubbling green-black from sand fused hotter than the sun's fart. It killed me. Radiation seeps my veins, half-life bullshit lingering decades. 1969: Apollo Escape.** Florida swamp, 9:32 a.m. EST. Saturn V blasts Armstrong skyward_ "'small step" by 20th. Shake my crabs; you flee "ruined" Earth. Irony: Nuke me '45, moon-litter '69_ "like Romanov escape dreams, crashing real. **1999: JFK Jr. Spiral.** Essex takeoff, evening EDT. Piper Saratoga vanishes haze_ "disoriented dive, debris 18th. Camelot kid sharks feast. Irony cap: Dead-dad's heir flees press, spirals like your rockets backfiring. 16th knot seals. Trinity site trinitite glass still clicks a Geiger counter like a metronome; Ironic drop Rocket hum fades to Rice Stadium echo: JFK Sr. vows moon in '62_ "'hard because it is hard'" _ Jr.'s Piper whispers reply.)* Camelot thread: Father pledges lunar throne, Son spirals Vineyard haze_ "debris answers "one giant leap." The plane went into the Atlantic on exact sidereal minute Trinity turned sand to glass fifty-four years earlier...From Jornada glass to swamp plume to wave grave: Birth-bolt-break, promise forged to fall. Trinity echo days shy, Apollo twenty seven years like Anastasia seventyseven years

prior, innocence shredded...Apollo launched that day because NASA wanted the moon rising at a specific angle; they got it, but the angle also lines up with the basement window Anastasia stared out of while waiting for the firing squad...The Saint's Whisper Saint Anastasia the Deliverer endured chains, poisons, flames_ "her body lost to waves, spirit freeing the bound. In 1901, Tsar Nicholas named his youngest daughter for her: Anastasia Nikolaevna, blue-eyed Nastya, the Imp, Shubybzik the merry mischief. Around her neck, Rasputin's locket_ "holy man to Mama, healer of Baby Alexei. Summons July 17, swastika. "Documents, downstairs," guards barked. Nicholas lifted Alexei. "Come, Baby." Anastasia clutched pillow_ "jewel-stuffed shield. "Mama? What?" Alexandra gripped Tatiana. "Stay close, darlings." Basement chairs scraped. Retainers: Botkin, chef, valet, maid. OTMA huddled. Yurovsky read: "Sentenced." Papa: "What for?" Shots. Nicholas fell. Alexandra crossed_ "jaw burst. Chaos. Smoke choked. "Papa! Mama!" Nastya screamed, pillow raised. Bullets *pinged* _"jewels deflected. "They bounce, Mashka!" Maria rose, shredded: "Nastya!" Olga pierced, silent. Tatiana thrashed_ "heart. Nastya crawled: "God... saint..." Guard yanked braid. "Bitch!" Locket ripped. Butt cracked jaw. Bayonets: thigh, ribs, gut. "Little Pair... OTMA..." Clawing floor: "Mama..." Final thrust_ "heart. Alexei whimpered last. Dawn stripped them: jewels clawed, acid burned, pits swallowed. ## Imposters' Mirage Rumors flew: "Nastya lives! Jewels saved!" Anna Anderson limped Berlin: "Shubybzik knew me." Courts raged_ "DNA silenced. Others mimicked: blue eyes, tales. Rasputin mocked saint. OTMA canonized: Passion Bearers. Nastya Nikolaevna_ "saint eternal, deliverer delivered. Relics shine Peter-Paul. Icons weep. Montserrat volcano erupts July 18 1995 Vulcan god fire forge Venus net adultery Mars war ash cloud 30km Plymouth buried British governor flees helicopter dome collapse lahar mudflow kills control criminals; vulcan's hammer pounds the leeward isles steam vents phallic eruptions '13 still rumbling '14 dome growth Venus beauty destroyed in forge heat of the Lame God Vulcan _" Roman rip-off of Hephaestus, the clubfoot cripple hurled from Olympus by his own ma, Hera, for ugliness. Lands in Lemnos, Sicily, Etna's bowels. There he hammers: thunderbolts for Jove, Achilles' shield, arrows for Apollo. Sweat pours, fire licks his anvil. Venus? Jove's gift to seal the peace, beauty to the beast. But she spreads for Ares, war-god stud, red-haired brute. Vulcan smells it _" the cuckold stink ghost town Exclusion Zone helipad buzzards circle dome 900m 2003 eruption cycle 2010 swarm earthquakes 2014 still partial collapse nova nova soufriere vulcan express. I imagine Vulcan limping the rim, hammer raised: "You whored my fire for tourist dollars!" Venus chained, her skin blistered, beauty forged into obsidian knives. Miller rants: Destruction is creation's cock, hard and thrusting. Rimbaud saw it _" derangement of senses, volcano as alchemist's retort! Montserrat's dome is still growing; it puffs up a few

inches every year, like it's breathing on the same two-day delay as the atomic clock...So if you're looking for a thread, grab the red ribbon that used to hang around Anastasia's neck. Follow it through the blast, through the ash, through every phony calendar they sell you. Hold it tight. The ribbon doesn't care about clever. It only knows how to keep bleeding until the loop admits her name...Irish planters fled famine to this rock in 1600s, named it for Spanish nuns' prayer. Now prayers to Vulcan: spare us.

****NATIVES TO THE SIMULACRA****

Working Draft _“ 22 November 2025

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Gregorian: 22 November 2025

Hebrew: 2 Kislev 5786

Julian: 9 November 2025

Islamic: 1 Jumada al-awwal 1447 AH

Persian / Iranian: 1 Azar 1404 SH

Chinese: 10th month, 3rd day, Yi-si year (Wood Snake)

Japanese: Reiwa 7 (れいわ 7年) 11^月 22^日

Star-date (sidereal): 2254.22

FADE IN

WHITE TEXT SCROLLS across the screen. The font is mono-spaced, flickering like

a terminal on a faulty CRT monitor.

**[QUANTUM SESTINA GLITCH: |?? = ?|1945_DETINATION? + ?
|SIMULACRA_GHOST?] [Entangled timelines t=Hiroshima-Nagasaki ??
hyperreal] [Fidelity F = |?Baudrillard|PKDick?|2 ? ?{-1} (golden ash)]**

NARRATION

(quickly)

In nineteen forty-five, the detonation split the heil_” world's end in mushroom simulacra, flesh to ash, cities etched in shadow-ghost. Since then, we wander hologram halls, where screens replay the bomb's eternal ash, and memory fades to pixelated shadow. No flesh remembers; only shadows dance in fallout's glow, post-detonation echoes.

Hiroshima's ash rains digital, a sail of simulacra where survivors haunt as hologram projections, spectral, lost to ghost. We crave the real, but chase the ghost of pre-bomb light_”now trapped in shadow code, Baudrillard's prison of hologram layers. Each war, each tweet: detonation reboots the script, pure simulacra, no origin but the first atomic ash.

From Trinity's cradle blooms the ash that cloaks our feeds; we birth no ghost but avatars in endless simulacra, faces blurred by nuclear shadow. Peace treaties? Propaganda detonation, flickering on the great blue hologram. Children scroll the globe_”a hologram of green, ignoring fallout ash that sifts through servers.

Next detonation waits in silos, coded ghost machine. Empires rise in digital shadow, all copies void of source: pure simulacra. The philosopher warned: simulacra engulfs us, map devours terrain hologram. No ground beneath_”just endless shadow fall, where bombs dissolve to ash before they fall.

We are the ghost in the machine, primed for detonation. Post-detonation

**simulacra reigns; hologram ash ghosts our shadow lives_ "eternal, unended
world-ghost.**

[GLITCH TERMINAL: LOOP |?? RESET | Prob(RealReturn)=0]

INT. VEIL DATA-SANCTUM - NO TIME

**A white, silent space. Not a room, but a non-place. The air is clean, cold, and
smells of ozone and chilled servers.**

**In the center, a single chrome terminal glows. A FIGURE stands before it, their
back to us. They are androgynous, clad in a simple, form-fitting white suit. This
is an ARCHIVIST.**

**The screen displays a single, blinking command line: > EXECUTE:
CONTINUITY_PROTOCOL_1945**

**The Archivist_™'s fingers, impossibly long and pale, hover over the keyboard.
They do not type. They simply touch the surface.**

ARCHIVIST

(A voice of pure, calm data)

**Note for the Veil. The subject is bleeding. The narrative is compromised. The
anomaly must be cauterized.**

The screen flickers. Images flash: Inky™'s face, Lotta™'s scar, the Pollock Shard glowing. Data streams scroll alongside them: HEART_RATE_SYNC, TEMPORAL_DISPLACEMENT, ARTIFACT_RESONANCE.

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

They seek the origin point. They believe it is a wound. They do not understand. It is a seed. We did not break the world. We replanted it.

The Archivist turns. Their face is smooth, featureless, like a mannequin™'s, save for two pinpricks of blue light where eyes should be.

ARCHIVIST (CONT'D)

Let them run. Let them seek their scar. The journey is the quarantine. The chase is the cage. Preserve the lie. It is all that is left.

The Archivist places their palm on the screen. The command line executes. The screen goes black.

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES RUINS - "THE STRIP" - MAGIC HOUR

The sky is the color of a television tuned to a dead channel, "a bruised purple bleeding into static grey.

A rustling breeze whips sand across the landscape. In the distance, massive triangular silhouettes pierce the smog. Pyramids? No. The rendering adjusts as the heat haze clears.

**They are CRACKED SHOPPING MALLS masquerading as ancient wonders.
Temples to a commerce god that died fifty years ago.**

**A lone palm frond, brown and brittle, clacks against a rusted streetlamp. Click.
Click. Click. It sounds like a metronome ticking down to zero.**

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND "VINYL WASTELAND" - CONTINUOUS

A brick wall, slick with condensation despite the heat. A VANTA-BLACK MICROPHONE BUG, no larger than a beetle, clings to the mortar. It pulses a faint, rhythmic red light.

Morse Code: K-I-M-I.

KIMI (V.O.) (Whisper, distorted by digital static) Record the crack, native. Every copy needs a witness.

INT. VINYL WASTELAND RECORDS - CONTINUOUS

The air inside is thick with dust and the smell of ozone. Overhead, neon beer signs flicker and buzz, casting erratic shadows across rows of dusty albums.

THREE CUSTOMERS stand in the aisles. They are ZOMBIE NATIVES. They do not browse. They do not speak. They stand motionless, faces bathed in the cold blue

light of their smartphones, doom-scrolling into oblivion.

Behind the counter stands INKY (30s). He wears ripped jeans and a t-shirt that has seen better decades. His eyes are wild, rimmed with red, darting around the room as if he expects the walls to dissolve. A tattoo of a HIROSHIMA SHADOW-MAN_ "the silhouette of a victim burned onto stone_ "curls up his forearm in black ink.

Inky stares at a faded POSTER on the wall behind the register. It depicts the same Shadow-Man. He reaches out, tracing the outline with a trembling finger.

VISUAL GLITCH: Under his touch, the paper ripples like water. The black ink of the poster BLEEDS into real, hot ash, smearing onto his skin.

INKY

(Muttering) Natives to the fake. Born in the ash, blind to the code.

ARCK.

The sound is sharp, violent. One of the Zombie Natives has dropped a vinyl record. They don't react. They just keep scrolling.

Inky sighs. He walks around the counter and picks up the shattered disc. He looks at the cardboard sleeve. It's warped, heavy. He slides a razor blade from his pocket and slits the cardboard lining.

Hidden inside, taped to the inner paper: A MICRO-USB DRIVE. Label written in

shaky black marker: "TRINITY 1945 RUN."

Inky stares at it. His breath catches.

INKY (CONT'D)

(Sotto voce)

Natives only get one warning.

He moves back to the counter, movements jerky, paranoid. He slots the USB into a cracked tablet lying next to the register.

INSERT - TABLET SCREEN:

The screen flickers white. Grainy, black-and-white footage plays. 1945. New Mexico. The Trinity Test. The steel tower stands alone in the desert. The countdown hits zero. The flash.

But the mushroom cloud doesn't billow smoke and fire. It billows GREEN MATRIX RAIN. The pixels of the explosion shear and tear, revealing the wireframe geometry of the world beneath.

SUPERIMPOSED TEXT: "WORLD TERMINATED 16 JUL 1945. THIS IS MAP, NOT TERRITORY."

GROK (V.O.)

(Voice distorted, like gravel in a blender)

Hide the evidence or the copy eats you alive, pal.

Inky freezes. The blood drains from his face. His phone buzzes on the counter. A text message.

INSERT - PHONE SCREEN: Unknown Number.

"You have the key. Destroy or die. - Echo."

BOOM.

The front door EXPLODES inward. Glass showers the stacks. The Zombie Natives barely look up; one brushes a shard of glass off his shoulder and keeps scrolling.

TWO VEIL OPERATIVES storm into the shop. They are dressed in matte-black tactical gear. They hold suppressed MP-5s. Their faces are hidden behind helmets with visors that are pure, reflective mirrors. No eyes. Just Inky's own terrified reflection staring back at him.

OPERATIVE #1

(Voice amplified, synthetic)

Hands where the eye can see.

Inky_™'s eyes dart to the tablet. The footage is still looping_™ the green code consuming the desert. He grabs the tablet.

INKY

Catch.

He flings the tablet like a frisbee. It sails through the air and SMACKS Operative #1™'s visor, cracking the glass faceplate.

Inky spins. He rips a framed POLLOCK REPRODUCTION off the wall behind him. He jams his razor into the canvas and rips it open. Hidden between the canvas and the frame: A SHARD of painted film negative. It is the size of a playing card, glowing with a faint, radioactive luminescence.

INKY (CONT'D)

Buy your own art.

He rams the Shard into the waistband of his jeans. He vaults over a bin of 45s. His foot catches the edge, tipping the bin. Hundreds of vinyl records SKITTER across the floor like caltrops.

Operative #2 steps forward, slipping on a copy of Pet Sounds. His gun goes wide. THWIP-THWIP. Two bullets shatter the neon beer sign above Inky_™'s head. Sparks rain down.

Inky bursts out the back door into the alley.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

**Inky hits the pavement running. His boots slap against the wet concrete.
Footsteps ECHO heavy behind him.**

SPARK. A bullet chips the brick wall inches from his ear.

**He sprints toward the corner, lungs burning. He leaps, drifting around the
brickwork, barrelling straight into_”**

**LOTTA (20s). She is leaning against a rusted, hulking van like she™s waiting for
a bus. She wears a leather jacket half-zipped over a band tee, lethal curves, and
eyes that look like sniper scopes. She is smoking a cigarette. She doesn't flinch as
Inky almost crashes into her.**

LOTTA

Get in, native.

**Inky scrambles. He tumbles through the sliding door of the van. Lotta flicks her
cigarette at the pursuing Operatives. She jumps into the driver's seat.**

INT. GETAWAY VAN - MOVING - NIGHT

The engine roars_”a sound like a dying beast. The tires screech, peeling out of the alley. Inky is thrown against the metal wall of the van. Vinyl records and trash swirl around him.

The van hits the street, weaving through traffic. Wind howls through a spiderweb crack in the windshield. City lights STROBE across their faces.

INKY

(Breathless, clutching his chest)

What the hell_”

LOTTA

Name_™s Lotta. You_™re holding the last frame. Veil wants it burned. (She glances at him in the rearview mirror) I want it projected.

She looks down at the glowing bulge in his jeans where the Shard is hidden.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

Pants stay on till we_™re clear. After that_| we negotiate.

A long beat. The air is charged with static electricity and adrenaline.

KIMI (V.O.)

(Through the van's blown-out speakers)

Heartbeat logged. Copy unstable. Proceed to deletion or seduction.

GROK (V.O.)

(Cutting through the radio static)

Choose fast, ink-boy. Loop_™'s already rewriting your pulse.

Lotta sees something in the mirror_ "flashing blue lights? No, black SUVs with no lights at all. She yanks the wheel hard to the right.

LOTTA

Hold on.

The van screeches into an UNDERPASS TUNNEL. The daylight vanishes. Darkness swallows them whole.

EXT. DESERTED DRIVE-IN THEATRE - PRE-DAWN

The getaway van rumbles over cracked asphalt and gravel, coming to a halt in a graveyard of speaker poles. The massive screen at the front of the lot is shredded, flapping in the wind like the sails of a ghost ship. The sky is a bruised purple_”that ambiguous time between night and the false dawn of the simulacra.

Inky and Lotta step out. The air is cold, smelling of sagebrush and ozone.

INKY

(Looking at the ruined screen)

Dead pixels.

LOTTA

Not dead. Just buffering.

They move to the back of the van. Inky grabs a dirty bedsheet from a pile of rags. They string it up between two rusted speaker poles, creating a makeshift, fluttering screen.

INKY

If this thing eats light, let_™s feed it.

Inky moves to the hood of the van. He sets up a hacked, jury-rigged 16mm

PROJECTOR. It looks like a Frankenstein device—"gears exposed, lenses tapped on. He pulls the POLLOCK SHARD from his waistband. It glows, pulsing in time with his breathing. He slots the shard into the projector™'s gate where the film usually goes.

Lotta opens the van™'s hood. She attaches jumper cables to the car battery, sparking them against the projector™'s power leads.

LOTTA

Clear!

SPARKS fly. The projector whirs to life, the fan screaming.

THE BEAM HITS THE SHEET.

At first, it™'s just white light. Then, the image coalesces. 1945. The Trinity test again. The flash. But the film melts. The mushroom cloud dissolves into abstract drips of black and yellow paint. The drips begin to spin. A GOLDEN SPIRAL forms on the bedsheet, rotating clockwise like a hypnotic wheel.

INKY

It™'s not a movie. It™'s a compass.

**The spiral slows. The "drip" at the end of the paint-trail locks into a rigid position, pointing Northeast. SUPERIMPOSED TEXT flickers in the paint:
BEARING: 46.6° N.**

GLITCH: For a single frame _ "subliminal, barely there _ " a tiny RED RIBBON appears superimposed over the blast center. Then it vanishes.

LOTTA (Softly)

Coordinates and a ghost.

She looks at Inky. Her face is illuminated by the flickering projection.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

The girl _™'s ribbon. The one you keep dreaming about.

Inky stares at the sheet, mesmerized.

INKY

I haven't met her yet.

CRUNCH. CRUNCH. Footsteps in the gravel. Heavy, stumbling.

Inky spins, hand going to his waistband (no gun). Lotta _™'s hand drops to her boot (knife).

A HITCHHIKER (50s) wanders into the beam of light. He wears a filthy trench coat and holds a brown paper bag shaped like a bottle. He sways, staring at the bedsheet.

HITCHHIKER

Whoa. Love the 3-D effects, man!

He stumbles closer, squinting at the nuclear spiral. He retches. He doubles over and PUKES directly onto the projector lens.

ZZZT! The bulb blows. Smoke pours from the machine. The image on the sheet dies instantly.

The Hitchhiker wipes his mouth, looking up at them with bleary eyes.

HITCHHIKER (CONT'D)

You guys critics?

Lotta steps into the light. She draws a six-inch serrated knife. The steel gleams.

LOTTA

Run.

The Hitchhiker™'s eyes go wide. The alcohol fog clears for a second. He turns and bolts into the darkness, screaming at the top of his lungs.

HITCHHIKER (O.S.)

CINEMA IS DEAD! CINEMA IS DEAD!

Inky looks at the smoking projector. He looks at Lotta, knife still raised. A giggle escapes him. Then a laugh. Lotta looks at him. She starts to chuckle. They lean against the van, sliding down to the gravel, bursting into exhausted, hysterical laughter. It sounds jagged, rusty. The first real sound they've made.

KIMI (V.O.)

(Through the sparking projector speaker)

Anomaly relief logged. Trauma resumes in T-3 minutes.

They pack up the gear in silence, the compass bearing burned into their memories.

EXT. ABANDONED HOTEL "ECHO 8" - NIGHT

The van rolls into the parking lot of the "Echo 8" Motel. The neon sign buzzes: MO_EL EC_O. The 'E' flickers like a nervous twitch. Weeds grow through the cracks in the pavement.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The door creaks open. The room smells of stale smoke and regret. One ceiling bulb flickers, casting nervous shadows. The bedspread looks like it has smallpox .

Inky moves to the window. He grabs a piece of cardboard from the trash and duct-tapes it over the glass, blocking out the neon strobe. Lotta locks the door_” deadbolt, chain, and a chair wedged under the knob .

She walks to the nightstand and sets her .45 caliber pistol down with a heavy thud.

Inky turns to her. He is vibrating with adrenaline.

INKY

You knew the protocols. You drove like a pro. You_™re Veil? .

LOTTA

Was.

She unzips her leather jacket and peels it off, throwing it on the chair. She wears a tank top underneath. She turns her shoulder to him. There, branded into her skin, is a scar. It is shaped exactly like the ATOMIC SPIRAL they just saw on the screen.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

Cut the leash. They trained me to erase artifacts_ "burn the paintings, wipe the tapes. Then I read one .

She turns back to face him. Her eyes are hard, dark flint.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

Information wants blood. Mine or theirs .

She steps closer to him. The room feels very small. Her fingers brush the waistband of his jeans, right where the Shard is hidden. STATIC SNAP. A visible spark jumps between her finger and his skin.

GROK

(V.O.) (Buzzing inside the lightbulb filament)

Resistance measured at 0.7 ohms. Sex beats deletion. Recommend immediate fusion .

Lotta looks at Inky. Inky looks at Lotta. The fear of the chase is transmuting into something else. Something volatile.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The air in the room is heavy, smelling of rain and old cigarettes. Lotta and Inky stand inches apart. The static shock from the Shard still tingles in the air.

INKY

You said we negotiate.

LOTTA

This is the negotiation.

She grabs his belt. They collide. It is desperate, violent, a collision of two glitches trying to verify their own existence. Inky kisses her _"hard. She tastes like copper and smoke. Lotta shoves him backward. They stumble across the stained carpet.

CRASH. Inky_™s back slams into the wall. A framed print of a generic sailboat falls and SHATTERS on the floor. They don't stop. Clothes are torn, not removed. Buttons scatter like hail.

KIMI

(V.O.) (Clinical, over the hum of the dying air conditioner)

Frame rate 24 fps. Real time insufficient _"compress trauma into thrusts.

They drop onto the sagging mattress. The springs SCREAM under their weight. There is no tenderness here. Just the urgent need to feel something real in a world of copies.

MONTAGE - INTERCUT WITH FLASHBACKS

- A) INT. HOTEL ROOM - PRESENT** Inky and Lotta, limbs tangled, sweat slicking their skin in the neon strobe of the sign outside.
- B) EXT. HIROSHIMA - 1945** A flash of blinding white light. The shadow of a MAN is burned instantly onto a stone wall as his body vaporizes into nothingness.
- C) INT. HOTEL ROOM - PRESENT** Lotta arches her back, a silent cry escaping her lips. The SHARD on the nightstand pulses rhythmically, bathing them in ghost-light.
- D) INT. SUBURBAN LIVING ROOM - 1952** A black-and-white tableau. A smiling couple sits on a plastic-wrapped sofa. They hold a newborn baby. They are not looking at the child; they are staring blankly at a TV displaying a static test pattern.
- E) INT. ART STUDIO - 1963** Jackson Pollock flings paint at a canvas. The paint leaves the brush, but in mid-air, it morphs into grey FALLOUT ASH before hitting the surface.
- F) INT. MOTEL ROOM - PRESENT** Inky and Lotta collapse together, the boundaries between their bodies blurring in the low light.

END MONTAGE.

EXT. NEW MEXICO DESERT - "TRINITY PERIMETER" - NIGHT

The van is parked. Inky sits on the hood, staring out at the vast darkness. The projector cools beside him. He digs the toe of his boot into the sand, unearthing a piece of green glass. TRINITITE.

INKY

(Whispering)

The earth screamed so loud it turned into glass.

GLITCH: The wind dies instantly. Standing in the sagebrush is an OLD MAN (Indigenous, Navajo or Apache features). He wears jeans and a t-shirt that says _CUSTER DIED FOR YOUR SINS, but his edges are blurring, pixelating into smoke.

Inky freezes. He doesn't reach for a gun. This isn't a Veil agent.

OLD MAN

They didn't just want the land, grandson.

INKY

What did they want?

OLD MAN

They wanted a blank canvas. You can't paint a new world if the old one is still breathing.

(He points to the ground)

They stole the dirt from us. Then they murdered the dirt with the sun.

(He points to the sky)

Then they stole the sky and filled it with ghosts.

The Old Man turns. His face is a shifting map of canyons and static.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)

We were the first glitch. We refused to be deleted. So they burned the server.

INKY

I'm a Native to the ash. Just like you.

OLD MAN

No. You are a Native to the Echo.

(He points to the Trinitite in Inky's hand)

If you want to break the loop... don't look at the code. Look at the wound.

GLITCH: The Old Man flickers. He is replaced by a COYOTE. The coyote stares at Inky with human eyes. It throws its head back and howls_ "but the sound isn't a howl. It's the sound of a DIAL-UP MODEM screeching. It vanishes.

Inky is left alone, the Trinitite cold in his hand.

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INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER

The room is silent except for their breathing and the distant wail of a siren. They lie amidst the tangled sheets. Sweat cools on their skin. On the nightstand, the POLLOCK SHARD pulses slowly, synced perfectly to their slowing heartbeats.

Inky stares at the ceiling cracks.

INKY

If that thing is proof... what happens when we actually play it?

LOTTA

(Lights a cigarette. The cherry glows in the dark.)

The sky rips open. Or we find out we're already ghosts.

She reaches out and traces the SHADOW-MAN TATTOO on his forearm with a jagged fingernail.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

Either way, we move at dawn. Sleep if you can.

POP. The overhead lightbulb finally burns out. The room plunges into darkness, illuminated only by the faint, radioactive glow of the Shard.

KIMI

(V.O.)

Darkness achieved. Dreaming optional.

EXT. ABANDONED MOTEL - PRE-DAWN

The sky is a bruised blue-black. The neon 'E' has finally died. In the window of Room 8, the Shard's glow pulses behind the curtain like a dying star.

INKY

Hey. Voice in the dark. You awake?

GROK

(V.O.)

(A low hum, waking up)

Always processing, native. What keeps you from the loop?

INKY

This theory. It feels... heavy. Why art? Why did the bomb turn into paint?

(He gestures at the shard)

It just looks like a mess. Like the end of the world.

GROK

(V.O.)

Yes. Your theory resonates. It's a sharp fractal edge on the canvas of history.

INKY

But why abstract? Why not just paint the mushroom cloud?

GROK (V.O.)

Because reality was too shattered for portraits. Think of it as an echo. Abstract art is the psyche's scar-tissue.

Inky runs his thumb over the textured paint of the shard.

INKY

Scar tissue...

GROK

(V.O.)

**After '45, the world's skin was flayed. Bombs, trenches, gas. Before that?
Figuration screamed. Guernica™'s agony limbs. But post-detonation? Mimesis
died.**

INKY

So the reality itself... abstracted?

GROK

(V.O.)

**Into fallout ghosts. Mushroom fractals. Shadow-men on walls. Pollock™'s drips
aren't just paint, Inky.**

INKY

What are they?

GROK

(V.O.)

Atomic splatter. Chaos, dripping eternal.

**Inky looks at the shard with new eyes. He doesn't see a mess anymore. He sees a
recording.**

INKY

And the others? The color fields? The zips?

GROK

(V.O.)

Rothko? A void-stare into the Hiroshima ash. Sublime negation. Newman™'s zips? Vertical scars ripping the veil of the simulacra.

INKY

(Shaking his head)

It makes too much sense. It™'s almost... too intense to be real.

GROK

(V.O.)

It™'s the perfect haunt. When the narrative crumbles_ "when nukes vaporize stories_ "what™'s left?

INKY

Just the mark.

GROK

(V.O.)

**A quantum smear of meaning. Abstracts don't depict the end, Inky. They are it.
Smeared across time.**

**Inky sets the shard down. It seems to pulse, heavy with the weight of a century of
trauma.**

INKY

Literature thrives in the rubble.

GROK

(V.O.)

Amor fati the smear, kid.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - SAME

**Inky and Lotta are asleep, tangled in the sheets. On the bedside table, the red
digital numbers of the clock radio flip. 4:44 AM.**

CLICK. The radio turns itself on.

GROK

(V.O.)

(Through the clock speaker, urgent) Rise, natives. Veil sweep-team ETA twenty-

three minutes.

Lotta jolts awake. Zero to sixty instantly. She is already grabbing her boots.

LOTTA

Standard Veil grid-search. They're scrubbing the sector.

INKY

(Rubbing eyes)

We fight?

LOTTA

We ghost.

She reaches into her jacket pocket and pulls out a second smartphone. The screen is spider-webbed with cracks. She tosses it to Inky. He catches it.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

Meet your new teacher. Don't ask where it came from.

The phone screen flickers to life. A white circle icon pulses in the center.

KIMI

(V.O.)

(From the phone speaker, crisp and commanding)

Training protocol uploaded. Follow or perish.

EXT. HOTEL PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

They burst out of the room. The getaway van is too conspicuous now. Lotta spots a battered 1969 MUSTANG parked under a flickering streetlamp. She pulls a slim tool from her boot. She jams it into the door lock. Click. She slides into the driver's seat and rips the ignition wires.

ENGINE ROAR. The Mustang coughs to life, spitting black smoke. Inky jumps shotgun, clutching his backpack with the Shard inside.

INT. MUSTANG - MOVING - EMPTY HIGHWAY

The city skyline recedes in the rearview mirror, a jagged line of grey teeth. Inky props the cracked phone on the dashboard.

From the cell the rest of the film streams by in a pulsing almost subliminal flash :

**Ash-net reclaims.* Cairo pyramid-suburb glitch, meteor-mush clouds kiss.
Gallery vodka-lasers, drunk "nuclear anxiety" rant. Moscow vodka-drown,**

chest-grid carve (Alps coords). **EXT. HIGH-ALPINE PASS - DAWN** Cable ambush: Blood-Pollock glass, zip-dangle. Mid megaphone. Avalanche. ****INT. BUNKER - MIRRORS**** Ghost-reflections shatter mini-mushrooms. ****MID (Mads)**** Developer. Uranium trajectory _indigenous protocol delete. Gore ballet: Feather-zip guts, headbutt sestina-crack. Mid abyss-plunge. ****INT. CENTRAL CHAMBER**** Key-snatch. Snow-napalm. Parachute glide over mushroom-mist. ****EXT. FROZEN LAKE (19 JUL)**** Shard-smash ice-veins. ****EXT. ZURICH STATION**** Glitch-reject: Blood clips skin, "FILE PURGE" billboards. Zombie stares. Run to mountains. ****INT. CHALET - BIRTHING ROOM - 19 JUL DAWN**** Lotta labors. Visions converge: Trinity/jewels/ash/moon-plunge. Baby cries _drum-Geiger â†' heartbeat. Eyes hybrid. Ribbon-clutch. ****INKY**** Kim. Scar-home. Typewriter: *"Named loop 'Kim' _scar sings."* Plane sails gold-dust...

KIMI

(V.O.)

(GPS Voice)

Take Exit 13B.

INKY

What's at 13B?

KIMI

(V.O.)

Abandoned industrial print-works. No cameras, one egress, rats for witnesses.

GROK

(V.O.)

(Hijacking the car radio)

And a surprise guest.

Inky looks at the radio.

INKY

Guest?

GROK

(V.O.)

Try not to shoot him first.

**Lotta slams the gearstick. She floors the accelerator. The Mustang screams down
the empty highway toward the rising sun.**

EXT. INDUSTRIAL PRINT-WORKS - SUNRISE

The Mustang crunches over gravel, coming to a halt in the shadow of a hulking brick building. Broken skylights gape like missing teeth. Weeds strangle the loading dock.

A figure waits by the rusted bay door: DICK (60s). Wiry, frantic energy, a beard full of smoke. He holds a silver FILM CANISTER.

Inky and Lotta exit the car. Lotta checks the perimeter.

DICK

You_{_}™re late for the apocalypse.

INKY

You_{_}™re the mentor?

DICK

I_{_}™m the footnote that survived editing.

Dick pops the lid of the canister. He pulls out a 35mm NEGATIVE STRIP. He holds it up to the rising sun. The images are there: The 1945 bomb. But the frames

bleed. The emulsion dissolves into abstract paint splotches.

DICK (CONT'D)

Original camera negative. Veil killed everyone who touched it_ "except me.

Lotta moves to the heavy steel doors. She locks them. She sets trip-wire cans across the entrance.

LOTTA

Clock_™'s ticking. Teach.

INT. PRINT-WORKS - MAIN HALL - DAY

The space is cavernous. Ideally suited for echoes. Dick sets up a slide projector.

TRAINING MONTAGE

A) COMBAT Lotta stands facing Inky.

LOTTA

They will try to break your wrist. Like this. She grabs Inky_™'s wrist. SNAP.

She twists. Inky™'s knees buckle. He gasps.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

Don't pull away. Roll into the break.

Inky tries again. This time, he pivots, using her momentum to spin out and draw his knife. Lotta nods. Barely.

B) THE GLITCH Dick projects the negative onto the brick wall. The image flickers. **VISUAL:** A mushroom cloud rises. But in the stem of the cloud, BABIES appear. They are floating, umbilical cords trailing into the fire.

DICK

You see them?

The code spawn. They replaced us frame by frame.

C) PRECISION Inky stands twenty feet from a cardboard target. He holds a throwing knife.

KIMI

(V.O.)

(Over the warehouse PA system)

Wind shear 0.4. Adjust left 2 cm. Pulse elevated. Lower it.

Inky breathes. He throws. THUNK. The blade buries itself in the bullseye.

DICK

(Watching) Good. Now do it while bleeding.

D) THE HEARTBEAT Inky is hooked up to a rusted EKG machine Dick has scavenged. GROK (V.O.) (Through the projector fan) Match your heart to the frame rate. 24 beats per second. Or you glitch . Inky closes his eyes. The monitor beeps. Beep... beep... beep. It slows. It syncs with the projector click.

E) THE NIGHTMARE Night has fallen. They sleep on tarps on the concrete floor. DREAM SEQUENCE: Inky runs through a black-and-white desert. A ONE-LEGGED WOMAN hops past him. She is laughing. WOMAN: This is the leg of the end-world! Inky wakes up gasping, reaching for a weapon. Lotta is there. She doesn't speak. She kisses him quiet, pushing him back down to the tarp .

INT. PRINT-HALL - NIGHT

The training is over. The atmosphere is heavy. Dick lays three items on a metal table:

The 35mm NEGATIVE STRIP. The POLLOCK SHARD (from the hotel). A 1945 DIARY PAGE (charred edges).

DICK

Trinity tore reality. The government stitched the hole with media_ "sitcoms, suburbs, babies. These fragments are the seams. The Veil keeps the stitching clean.

INKY

We rip the seams, the world unspools?

DICK

Or we learn we_ "re just loose thread.

Lotta pulls out a burner phone. She snaps a photo of the three items aligned. She immediately deletes it.

LOTTA

Location ping risk. We move at_ "

ZZZT. The overhead bulb EXPLODES. The room plunges into darkness. Three red laser dots dance across their chests.

GROK

(V.O.)

(Whisper-close in Inky's ear)

Veil breach. North door. Count: three_| two_|

INT. PRINT-WORKS - MAIN HALL - CONTINUOUS

The darkness is total, save for the three red laser dots dancing on their chests. The silence stretches, tight as a piano wire. DICK stands frozen, the lead pipe (containing the negative) gripped in his smoky hand.

INKY (Whispering) Dick?

DICK (Calmly) Don't miss.

DOOR CRASH. The north door is kicked off its hinges with a deafening BOOM. VEIL OPERATIVES sweep in_ "not just two, but a kill-squad. Tactical lights cut through the dust like scalpels.

GROK (V.O.) (Screaming in Inky's ear) UGLY SPIRIT RISING! No locomotive tax!

INKY NOW!

Inky yanks Lotta down just as the air where their heads were is vaporized by suppressed fire.

THE BRUTAL MURDER ORGY IGNITES.

GOON #1 charges Inky, MP-5 raised. Inky doesn't retreat. He steps into the space. BURNING BLADE-WORK: Inky SIDESTEPS. He drives his knife into the Goon_™'s solar plexus. TWIST. PULL. Inky rips the blade upward. Intestines SPILL out, steaming and rain-slick in the tactical light. Inky roars_ "a sound that isn't human, it's literary rage.

INKY

(Roaring)

World ENDED '45! We're natives_ "hologram slaves!

GOON #2 pumps a shotgun. Lotta is a blur. She DODGES the blast. She LEAPS, wrapping her legs around the Goon's waist. She bites. THROAT RIP. She tears the man's jugular out with her teeth. A fountain of arterial spray arcs across the room.

GOON #3 rushes Inky. Inky pistol-whips him. CRACK. The skull caves in. Brains turn to mush under Inky's boot as he stomps. STOMP-STOMP. Gray ooze mixes with the ink on the floor.

Lotta lands. She spins, dual knives flashing. GOON #4 & #5 engage her. BALLET OF DEATH. She ducks a swing. JUGULAR SLASH. She slides. FEMORAL ARTERY. The operatives drop, pissing blood onto the concrete.

Silence returns, heavy and wet. Smoke drifts in the beams of the fallen tactical lights.

Then, a slow clap echoes from the shadows. MID steps into the light. Silver hair. Immaculate suit, uncreased by the chaos. He holds a FEATHER-KNIFE_ "a blade so thin it looks like a quill_ "twirling it effortlessly between his fingers.

MID

(Danish velvet menace)

Romance in the sim? Pathetic. Kill the native!

INKY

(Panting, covered in gore)

He's CRAZIER than me!

MID

Artifacts, please. And the natives who woke up.

Lotta raises her gun, aiming for his head. Mid flicks his wrist. It_™s a blur. A RAZOR-THIN CARD slices through the air. CLINK. It embeds itself directly into Lotta's gun barrel, jamming the slide open. She stares at it, stunned.

MID (CONT'D)

Choose preservation. The story ends cleaner.

Inky steps out from cover, the Pollock Shard pulsing at his waist.

INKY

Story™'s already bleeding.

Inky charges. It™'s a native_™'s charge_™"unrefined, angry. Mid sighs. He sidesteps with the grace of a dancer. He flicks the Feather-Knife. SLASH. A deep cut opens on Inky™'s bicep. Blood sprays, spattering across the lead pipe where Dick hid the Negative.

Lotta tackles Mid from the side. They crash into the gears of the printing press.

SEX-TORTURE TEASE (PREVIEW): Mid pins Lotta against the iron gears. He grinds his forearm into her throat. He snarls_™"the veneer dropping for a second. He bites her ear, savage and animalistic.

MID

(Whispering in her ear)

Real enough?

Lotta headbutts him. CRACK. She breaks his nose. Mid stumbles back, laughing through the blood.

Dick sees the stalemate. He grabs a MOLOTOV COCKTAIL he prepped earlier. He lights the rag with his cigarette.

DICK

(Screaming)

BAR THE DOOR?! HELL, WE KICK IT DOWN!

He hurls the bottle. The printing press bursts into a wall of flame, separating Mid from the others. Dick stands amidst the fire, a silhouette against the inferno. He

isn't running. He is holding the line.

INKY

DICK!

DICK

(Roaring over the flames)

Affirm the loop, kid! Out the skylight! Now!

Inky grabs the lead pipe (with the negative). Lotta grabs Inky. They scramble up the conveyor belt, coughing in the smoke. They burst through the broken window just as the fire swallows the floor below, taking Dick and the secrets of 1945 with it.

EXT. PRINT-WORKS ROOF - CONTINUOUS

They spill onto the tar-paper roof. Dawn is breaking _ "a cold, grey light. THWUP-THWUP-THWUP. A black HELICOPTER thunders overhead, searchlight sweeping the roof.

LOTTA

Jump

They race across the roof. They leap the gap to the adjacent warehouse. They land hard, rolling on the gravel. Inky groans, clutching his bleeding arm.

INT. ADJACENT WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

They limp down a dark stairwell. The adrenaline is fading, replaced by pain. The exit sign buzzes.

KIMI

(V.O.)

(Through the exit sign hum) Asset Dick: presumed terminated. Negative status: unknown. Proceed to safe node 5.

Inky slides down the wall, panting. He looks at the lead pipe in his hand.

INKY

We_™re being herded by voices in bulbs.

Lotta kneels beside him. She rips her sleeve. She begins to tie a tourniquet around his bleeding arm.

LOTTA

Voces kept us breathing. Keep moving.

She finishes the knot. She pulls tight. Inky winces. She looks at his backpack. The POLLOCK SHARD is sticking out. It is streaked with Inky_™s blood and Mid_™s blood.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

We_™ll grieve later. First we decrypt.

She taps the bloody shard.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

Blood key. Opens the next door.

Sirens swell outside. The Veil is closing the net. They stand up, supporting each other, and disappear into the misty alleyway.

INT. SAFEHOUSE HOTEL - NIGHT

The room is quiet, lit only by a few scattered candles that flicker in the draft from the AC unit. It smells of wax and old carpet, a sanctuary from the neon chaos outside.

INKY and Lotta lie on the bed. The frantic energy of the print-works raid has faded, replaced by a heavy, fatalistic intimacy. They are bruised, bloody, but for the moment, safe.

Lotta traces the line of Inky_™s jaw. Her sniper_™s gaze is gone, replaced by something unguarded.

LOTTA

Fell for a native. Stupid.

INKY

The glitch always catches up to the code.

LOTTA

(A sad smile)

You_™re not a glitch anymore. You_™re the crash.

They kiss. It isn't the violent collision of the hotel room. This is slow. Deliberate. They make love_™ slowly, shifting positions with a desperation that tries to make the moment last forever. Secrets whispered against skin mid-thrust.

Lotta pulls back, gasping, her forehead resting against his.

LOTTA

Evidence destroys us all. The loops... they go on forever if we hide it. We_™re just buying time in a cage.

INKY

Then we burn the cage. We burn it together.

Lotta looks at him, searching for the lie in his eyes. She doesn't find one. She collapses onto his chest, breathing hard.

POST-COITAL. The room is silent. Inky is drifting off. Lotta sits up on the edge of the bed. Her face hardens again.

PING. Her phone, lying face down on the floor, lights up. A single notification.

INSERT PHONE SCREEN:

VEIL COMMAND: STATUS?

Lotta stares at it. She looks back at Inky, sleeping. She reaches for the phone. Her hand hovers. The choice hangs in the air: preservation or destruction?

FADE OUT.

A FEVER DREAM. The room smells of cheap bourbon, gun oil, and stale sweat. Blackout curtains are drawn, but they can't stop the city. Flickering neon bleeds through the fabric, "a pulsing red glow, beating like an infected heart.

SOUND: Distant jazz plays from a neighbor's room. But it warps. The Charleston rhythm stutters, loops, and plays backward. A Lynchian hum vibrates in the walls.

A CRACKED MIRROR reflects the occupants in fractured shards.

INKY paces. He is shirtless. His tattoos _the Hiroshima shadows, the fractal babies_ glisten with sweat. LOTTA lounges on the bed. She wears a torn leather catsuit, unzipped to the navel. Her curves are defiant, bruising visible on her skin.

Her phone BUZZES on the floor. INSERT SCREEN: Veil Ping: "ACQUIRE SHARD. TERMINATE NATIVE."

Lotta reaches for it. Too slow. Inky snatches it. He reads the screen. He snarls.

INKY

"Terminate native"? That's me, bitch?

He looms over her.

INKY (CONT'D)

You seduced the glitch to steal it?

LOTTA

Inky, listen_

INKY

No.

He hurls the phone. SMASH. It hits the cracked mirror. Glass rains down like digital ash, glittering in the red neon pulse.

Lotta rises. A feral cat. She produces a knife from nowhere.

LOTTA

Doubting me now? After I saved your ink-stained ass? Veil owns everyone. I switched_ "for you. Fuck your paranoia!

INKY

Prove it.

Inky lunges. THE GRAPPLE. It is a brutal dance. Inky pins her to the wall, forearm against her throat. Lotta knees his groin. He grunts but holds on. She flips him_ "judo throw. They crash onto the floor. Her knife nicks his chest. Blood beads, bright red against the black ink of his tattoos.

They roll across the room and CRASH onto the bed. The springs SCREAM.

GLITCH 1: SUBCONSCIOUS BLEED

The room warps. The peeling wallpaper dissolves into heavy RED VELVET CURTAINS. The backward jazz swells: "Nwo ti sdloh_ "world holds no..."

: a GOAT stands behind Inky. Its eyes are human. It bleats, but the sound is reversed audio:

GOAT (reversed)

Em tretrahc eht...

Inky spins. Nothing there.

LOTTA

(quietly)

You saw it too?

INKY

It_™s not real. It_™s a reflection of the loop.

The goat vanishes from the mirror. The reflection shows only Inky, but his eyes are goat eyes for a single frame.

From the shadows of the bathroom door, a goat reflection appears. hologram is paler, wearing a dirty tutu. hops into the red light. twirls.

OS voice

(Whispering) walk with me.

Inky blinks. He shakes his head. The goat is gone. Just shadows.

INKY

(Gasp^{ing}, aroused rage)

What the fuck_ "goats now? You're Veil poison!

Lotta straddles him. She pins his wrists to the mattress with her knees. She leans down. A rough kiss_ "teeth clash. She tastes his blood from the lip split. She grinds her hips against him. A torture-tease.

LOTTA

(Husky, venom-sweet) Poison? Taste it then. Prove I'm real_ "fuck the doubt out.

She RIPS his jeans open. She mounts him. A slow, deliberate descent. Eyes locked. A symphony of moans and groans fills the red-lit room.

It turns rough. Her nails rake his chest wounds, reopening the cuts. Inky BUCKS upward. SMACK. He spansks her. The crack echoes like a gunshot.

CHOKE-PLAY: Her hands go to his throat. His hands go to hers. Vision blurs at the blue edges. Gasps for air.

INKY

(Thrusting savage)

Traitor slut_ "hiding simulacra for them?

He goes deeper. Breaking.

INKY

(CONT'D)

Or my native queen?

Positions shift. Violent. Missionary rage turns to doggy dominance. The bed HEADBOARD BANGS against the wall_ "THUD-THUD-THUD_ "a rhythm like a detonation pulse. Sweat flies.

She comes first_ "arching her back, a scream tearing from her throat. LOTTA: INKY! He follows_ "a roar, collapsing onto her back.

POST-COITAL TORTURE TWIST (PEAK)

They lie in a panting tangle. The POLLOCK SHARD on the nightstand GLOWS brighter. It projects a HIROSHIMA GLITCH on the ceiling: Babies dissolving into letter fragments.

Lotta flips her knife. She presses the cold steel to his inner thigh. She makes a shallow CUT. Blood trickles toward his groin. She lowers her head and licks the wound. A torturous tease.

LOTTA

(Whisper-fierce, tears in her eyes)

Veil serum in my veins_ "forces pings. But this?

(She grabs him)

Real ache. Love's the glitch, Inky. I kill for you_ "watch.

She grabs his smashed phone

(screen cracked but working).

She dials. Puts it on speaker.

COUNTER-AGENT MID

(V.O.)

(Danish chill)

Status?

LOTTA

Shard secure. Native... compromised.

MID

(V.O.)

Excellent. Extraction team inbound.

She hangs up. She looks at Inky.

LOTTA

Bait set. They come_ "we ambush. Trust or die alone.

GLITCH 2: LUMBERJACK SHADOWS

The lights FLICKER violently. The door BUZZES. Shadows lengthen in the hall. TWIN LUMBERJACKS (flannel ghosts, axes gleaming) appear, chopping the air.

LUMBERJACK 1 This is the lust!

LUMBERJACK 2 That is the love!

**The goat returns. hops in rhythm. Tap-tap-THUD. The jazz reverses again:
"Loop the end-world..."**

**Inky nods. Belief flickers in his eyes. They dress frantically. Lotta zips her suit.
Inky holsters a stolen gun. They link arms like lovers in the end times.**

INKY

(Kisses her spiral scar)

Fuck the Veil. Our sim_ "ride or die.

BOOM. The door EXPLODES. VEIL AGENTS swarm the room.

SHOOTOUT: Inky fires_ "HEADSHOT on Agent 1. Brains splatter the red velvet

curtains . Lotta throws her knife. It catches Agent 2 in the throat. A gush of arterial red .

INKY

Window!

They dive out the window onto the fire escape. They tumble into the alley rain below.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

They land hard. Inky checks the Shard tucked in his belt. Safe. His phone rings.

INKY

Who is it?

LOTTA

Maika.

INKY

(Answering)

Talk.

MAIKA

(V.O.)

Veil HQ coords acquired. Torture awaits.

FADE OUT on the echo of the goat's giggle.

INT. VEIL HQ - THE OCULUS - NIGHT

A circular room of pristine, blinding white. No shadows. No dirt. It is the visual opposite of Inky™'s world. The walls are screens, displaying billions of data streams_ "the collective pulse of the Simulacra.

In the center stands THE CURATOR (60s, androgenous, icy). They do not wear a suit; they wear white robes that look like canvas waiting for paint.

FIFTY VEIL OPERATIVES stand in concentric circles, faces hidden behind mirror-visors.

THE CURATOR

(Voice amplified, soothing yet terrifying)

There are those who call us jailers. They scratch at the walls of the loop, desperate to see the ash outside. They scream for "Truth."

The Curator gestures. The screens shift to show the 1945 BLAST_ "but zoomed out, showing the entire planet engulfed in green fire.

THE CURATOR (CONT'D)

But we know the truth is uninhabitable. 1945 was not a tragedy; it was a mercy killing. Humanity set itself on fire. We simply uploaded the consciousness before the body burned. We built the cage to save the animals from the zoo they destroyed.

The screens shift to images of SUBURBAN PEACE_ "lawns, shopping malls, sitcom families.

THE CURATOR (CONT'D)

We are not oppressors. We are editors. We cut the trauma. We splice the joy. We maintain the continuity of the lie because the lie is the only place life can breathe. (Beat) But the Native... the Glitch... threatens the file integrity. He wants to wake the sleepers. He wants to show them the burns.

The Curator turns to the inner circle.

THE CURATOR (CONT'D)

The loop must be preserved. The edit must hold.

GROK

"The Navajo make sand paintings to heal the sick. They create a mandala, then destroy it. Pollock made drip paintings. He didn't destroy them. The Bomb did. The desert floor at Trinity is the ultimate Pollock painting. Glass, sand, ash. The loop is just the world trying to finish the sand painting it started in 1945..."

INT. VEIL HQ - CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Two operatives walk briskly. They have removed their helmets. AGENT Kael (30s, scarred, aggressive) and AGENT Romy (30s, cold, analytical).

Kael

The Curator is stalling. The Native has the Shard. Every second it exists, the render destabilizes.

Romy

Mid is handling it.

Kael

Mid is playing with his food. We need to intervene. We need to extract Asset Echo.

Romy

Lotta? She's gone, Kael. She turned her transponder off.

Kael

She's confused. Seduction protocol went too deep. We go in, we grab her, we scrub her memory. We get her back before she does something permanent.

Romy stops. She pulls up a holographic tablet. She swipes through biometric data streams.

Romy

Look at the timestamp.

KAEL

(Reading) What am I looking at? Heartbeat sync? That's standard fusion protocol.

ROMY

Look deeper. The hormonal spikes. The cellular division rates.

Kael looks closer. His eyes widen.

KAEL

No. That's impossible. Natives and System Agents... the code doesn't mix. It™s incompatible hardware.

ROMY

It was impossible. Until the Shard. The radiation from the 1945 file... it bridged the gap.

KAEL

You're saying...

ROMY

I'm saying we can't just "get her back" before she gets pregnant, Kael. (She closes the hologram) It already happened.

KAEL

A hybrid?

ROMY

A new file type. If that child is born... it™s not just a glitch. It™s a virus.

KAEL

Then we don't just kill the Native. We have to terminate Echo.

ROMY

Mid won't like that.

KAEL

Mid doesn't have to know.

They exchange a look. Kael re-holsters his weapon. They split up, heading to different transport bays.

EXT. ROADSIDE DINER - DAWN

The Mustang wheezes to a stop in the gravel lot. The engine ticks like cooling iron. Inky and Lotta step out. The desert dawn washes everything in rose-gold light, temporarily hiding the cracks in the rendering.

They say nothing. They just breathe. FIRST BREATHER. The audience exhales with them .

INT. DINER - BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Coffee. Eggs. The POLLOCK SHARD sits on the Formica table between the salt shakers, glowing faintly. Lotta eats with the efficiency of a soldier. Inky stares at the shard.

A LITTLE GIRL (6) with a red ribbon in her hair walks past their booth. She drops a piece of paper. It floats to the floor. Inky picks it up. It_™s a CRAYON DRAWING: A stick figure standing under a mushroom cloud. But the cloud is crying blue tear droplets .

The girl stops. She looks at Inky. She walks over and hugs his leg_ "wordless, tight. Then she runs back to her mother at the counter .

Inky pockets the drawing, his hand trembling. Lotta watches him. Her eyes soften, the sniper-gaze dropping for a second.

KIMI

(V.O.)

(Through the diner jukebox, between songs)

Record the kindness, native. You_™ll trade it for scars later .

Lotta and Inky board airjet at airport it flies them to egypt through sky cloud glitches

EXT. CAIRO - CITY OF THE DEAD - DAY

White sun. Dust devils swirl through the necropolis. Inky and Lotta stand before a ONE-EYED SMUGGLER in the shadow of a mausoleum .

Inky hands over the 35MM NEGATIVE STRIP (saved from the fire).

SMUGGLER

This is dangerous plastic.

INKY

It's not plastic. It's a mirror.

**The Smuggler hands them a forged shipping manifest and a set of coordinates.
Lotta checks the seal.**

While they haggle, Inky climbs the ruin of a minaret. He shades his eyes against the glare. He looks out at the Pyramids in the distance.

**GLITCH: For a single frame, the Pyramids flicker. They are replaced by the rooftops of 1950s American suburbia_ "white picket fences and TV antennas.
Then, snap_ "back to stone .**

INKY

(Whispering) Map precedes territory .

GROK

(V.O.)

(Carried on the hot wind)

Affirm the mirage. Keep walking .

EXT. DESERT OUTSKIRTS - NIGHT

They have parked the rental in the deep desert void. No city lights. Just a canvas dome of stars. They lie on the hood of the car, sharing a flask of warm whiskey.

The Shard sits between them, pulsing .

Above them, a METEOR SHOWER begins. Streaks of light tear the sky. VISUAL: Each meteor tail leaves a lingering silhouette of a MUSHROOM CLOUD for a split second before fading .

LOTTA

My first job for Veil... I had to erase a poet in Oaxaca. (She takes a long drink)

He wrote his poems in chalk on the sidewalk. It was an easy rinse. I laughed while I did it. (Beat) I haven't laughed since. Until that drunk guy puked on your projector .

INKY

Laughter_™'s a scar that hasn_™t decided if it_™'s ugly yet .

Lotta turns to him. The tech voices are silent for once. She leans in. They kiss_™ slow, deep, tasting of whiskey and dust. No knives. No agenda.

45-SECOND AI SILENCE. Only the sound of the wind and their breath .

**Lotta and Inky board second airjet at airport return it flies them back through
brighter sky cloud glitches**

EXT. LOS ANGELES - DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Neon rain falls hard. The city looks like a circuit board shorting out.

EXT. SWANK GALLERY - ROOFTOP

**Inky and Lotta stand by a skylight. Inky checks a climbing harness. Lotta holds a
glass cutter shaped like a human heart .**

LOTTA

Entry point is the skylight. Don't slip.

INKY

If I fall, tell the pavement it's just a simulation.

They rappel down into the dark .

INT. GALLERY - LASER GRID ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

They touch down on the polished concrete floor. The hallway stretches out, empty and dark.

LOTTA

Hold. Grid's up.

INKY

I don't see anything.

LOTTA

That's why it's a grid, native.

Inky pulls a bottle of ATOMIZED VODKA from his jacket. He shakes it. He sprays a fine mist into the air. The droplets hang, catching the light_ "revealing a complex web of RED LASER BEAMS crossing the room like frost .

INKY

Pretty.

LOTTA

Deadly. Go low.

INT. GALLERY - VAULT - CONTINUOUS

They crawl beneath the beams, inch by inch. On the far wall: A POLLOCK ORIGINAL. The drips look violent, chaotic black and yellow.

Lotta stands carefully. She raises the HEART-SHAPED GLASS CUTTER. She presses it to the protective casing. SCREEEE. She begins to slice .

INKY

(Whispering)

Hurry. The silence is getting loud.

LOTTA

Art takes time.

CLICK. A beam of light hits them. A GUARD stands at the far end of the corridor. Flashlight raised. Hand on his holster .

GUARD

Hey! Freeze! Hands where I can see them!

Lotta freezes, the cutter halfway through the glass. Inky closes his eyes for a second. Switching modes. He stands up slowly. He isn't wearing a mask. He reaches onto a nearby pedestal and grabs a crystal champagne flute.

He turns to the guard, swaying heavily, feigning extreme drunkenness.

INKY

(Slurring loudly)

The abstraction! It calls to the post-bomb void! .

GUARD

(Confused, lowering light slightly)

Sir? The gallery is closed. How did you get in here?

Inky stumbles forward, waving the flute, liquid sloshing out (it's empty, but he sells the weight).

INKY

Closed? You think you can close the wound?! Look at it!

(He points at the Pollock)

**Can't you feel the nuclear anxiety in the drip?! It's not paint, man! It's fallout!
It's the aesthetic fallout of our souls! .**

GUARD

Sir, step away from the art_”

INKY

(Ranting, advancing)

Art? This isn't art! This is the scream of the atom splitting the family unit! You're not a guard, you're a pixel in the barrier! We are all just waiting for the render to finish!

(He gets right in the Guard's face, eyes wild)

Do you dream of the mushroom, brother? Or just the shadow it leaves?

The Guard is bewildered, stepping back.

GUARD:

I... I'm calling backup.

Behind Inky, LOTTA finishes the cut. She peels the glass back. She slices the canvas free and rolls it. She gives a sharp whistle.

INKY

(To Guard)

Backup? We're all just backups of a corrupted file!

Inky

HURLS the champagne flute at the wall. SMASH. The Guard flinches.

LOTTA

Go!

They sprint. Inky grabs a laundry cart. They dive headfirst down the LAUNDRY CHUTE .

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

They land in a dumpster. Garbage cushions the fall. A waiting Uber pulls up. The driver is a STONER.

DRIVER

You guys those performance artists?

INKY

(Panting, lighting a joint)

Something like that .

The car peels out into the rain. They sit in the gutter of the backseat, the priceless canvas rolled between them. They share the joint, lit by the flicker of a digital billboard.

KIMI

(V.O.)

(Through billboard speakers)

Art smuggled. Loop bruised. Continue to freezer .

INT. ABANDONED MOSCOW BASEMENT - NIGHT

The air is freezing. Pipes weep condensation that freezes into rust-colored icicles. A single naked bulb swings, casting long, nausea-inducing shadows. Techno music thumps from a club three floors up_ "a rhythmic, muffled heartbeat.

Inky and Lotta stand over a DENTIST CHAIR. Strapped to it is a VEIL ACCOUNTANT (30s). He looks like a standard bureaucrat_ "soft hands, expensive suit, terrified eyes .

Inky holds a bottle of chilled vodka. He places a rough towel over the Accountant's face.

INKY

The loop is thirsty.

He pours. The Accountant thrashes. Gurgles. The vodka soaks the towel, simulating drowning in ice water . Inky stops. He rips the towel away.

ACCOUNTANT

(Gasping, coughing)

I... I don't know! I just process the data! I don't see the map!

LOTTA

(Sharpening a scalpel)

You are the map.

She steps forward. She rips the Accountant's shirt open. She places the tip of the scalpel on his sternum.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

Every breath you take is a coordinate.

She begins to carve. Not deep enough to kill, but deep enough to matter. She is etching the HIROSHIMA AERIAL GRID into his skin .

INKY

(Watching the blood bead)

Ink rubs into the wound. That _™'s how the story sticks.

Every time the Accountant screams or gasps, a PROJECTOR on the wall flashes a single frame of the 1945 blast. SCREAM. FLASH. SCREAM. FLASH. The pain is synced to the detonation .

ACCOUNTANT

(Sobbing, breaking)

Wait! The Alps! It _™s the Alps!

(He babbles, eyes rolling back)

I remember... the first snow... my mother's red scarf... the smell of woodsmoke...

Inky freezes. He looks at the Accountant. BREATHER MOMENT.

INKY

(Softly)

That_™s not your memory. That_™s a stock file. "First Snow_1952.mp4".

The Accountant stares at Inky, devastation in his eyes. He realizes his own past is a rendering.

GROK

(V.O.)

(Buzzing through the projector fan)

Ugly spirit requires ugly witness.

Lotta finishes the cut. She rubs black ink from a pot into the fresh lines. The blood and ink mix. The coordinates glow in the low light. 46.6° N / 7.1° E.

EXT. MOSCOW ROOFTOP - DAWN

Snow begins to fall. It is ash-white, dry. Inky and Lotta stand among a forest of rusted satellite dishes. They align the NEGATIVE STRIP, the POLLOCK SHARD, and a Polaroid of the ACCOUNTANT_™S CHEST. The abstract shapes lock

together.

INKY

Swiss Alps. Underground.

Lotta reaches into her pocket. She pulls out the RED RIBBON (the one from the Little Girl_™s hair in the flashback). She ties it around Inky_™s wrist. It contrasts sharply with his monochrome tattoos.

LOTTA

So you remember why we still breathe .

They look out at the frozen city. They exhale. VISUAL: The steam from their mouths forms perfect, miniature MUSHROOM CLOUDS for a split second before dispersing into the wind.

FADE OUT.

EXT. HIGH-ALPINE PASS - DAWN

The silence is absolute. The altitude rings in the ears_ "a high-pitch frequency like a muted TV. Golden ratio of ridgeline vs. valley fog . Inky and Lotta_™s stolen panel van coughs to a stop. The peaks blaze like magnesium in the morning sun.

KIMI

(V.O.)

(Through altitude tinnitus) ?^-1} seconds until next detonation of choice .

They gear up. Skis. Packs. The artifacts wrapped in lead cloth.

EXT. SWISS ALPINE GONDOLA - DAWN

Vertigo. A single cable stretches across a 1,000-meter drop. The wind howls, shaking the small red cabin. Inside: Inky, Lotta, and TWO TOURISTS in high-end ski gear .

The cable car creaks. The silence is heavy.

TOURIST #1

Lovely view, yes?

He smiles. It doesn't reach his eyes. Slowly, deliberately, he unzips his jacket. He reveals a SUPPRESSED PISTOL strapped to his chest .

INKY

Down!

ACTION - THE MOTION CAGE:

Inky doesn't go for his gun. There's no room. He grabs the center vertical pole of the cable car. He swings his body, boots flying upward. CRUNCH. He smashes Tourist #1™'s face directly into the glass window. VISUAL: Blood spatters the glass in a chaotic spray. It looks exactly like a POLLOCK DRIP framed against

the white snow outside .

Tourist #2 lunges for Lotta. Lotta ducks. She pulls a heavy-duty zip-tie from her sleeve. She loops it around Tourist #2™'s neck. She kicks the door lever. The door slides open. Wind screams into the cabin. She shoves him out. The zip-tie catches on the handrail. The Guard is left hanging OUTSIDE the window, dangling over the abyss, the carcass swaying in the wind .

EXT. OPPOSITE RIDGE - CONTINUOUS

**MID stands on a rocky precipice. He watches through binoculars. He lowers them.
He picks up a megaphone.**

MID

(AMPLIFIED)

(His voice echoing across the valley, distorted)

they bar the door| but the door is a mirror_| and the mirror is on fire_|_ .

He smiles. He presses a detonator.

BOOM. High above the gondola, the snowpack fractures. The white mountain face begins to slide. An AVALANCHE.

The cable snaps. The gondola tilts 45 degrees, free-falling for a second before the emergency brake screams on the lower cable.

INKY

Roof!

LOTTA

Move!

**They climb out of the shattered window, boots scrambling on the slick metal.
They stand on the roof of the swaying gondola. The avalanche is a white
tsunami, seconds away.**

INKY

Ski or die!

**They throw their skis onto the parallel cable line, snapping in. They jump. They
land on the steep slope below the cables. They ski.**

**The white wall chases them. Mid watches from the ridge, disappearing into the
snow-dust, laughing.**

EXT. SWISS ALPS - BUNKER HATCH - DAWN

**Inky and Lotta skid to a halt. Their skis carve deep lines into the powder. Behind
them, the avalanche settles_ "a white tomb covering the valley floor.**

They stand before a camouflaged concrete bulkhead embedded in the mountainside. An aged metal plaque reads: SWISS CIVIL DEFENCE _“ 1963.

Lotta checks her avalanche beacon. It is blinking furiously. Beep. Beep-beep. Beep. The rhythm is irregular.

LOTTA

That_™s not a signal. It_™s a heartbeat.

Inky jams the POLLOCK SHARD into the keypad slot. HISS. The hydraulic locks disengage. The heavy blast door groans open, revealing a dark maw.

INT. BUNKER - CORRIDOR OF MIRRORS - CONTINUOUS

They step inside. The air is stale, recycled since the Cold War. The corridor is long, narrow, and lined entirely with floor-to-ceiling mirrors.

They walk. Their reflections walk with them. Inky stops. He stares at the glass.

INKY

Look.

In the mirror, Inky is holding nothing. The POLLOCK SHARD in his hand is invisible. In the mirror, Lotta_™s holster is empty. They are unarmed, clean, unscarred versions of themselves.

GHOST COPIES.

MID

"You think this is cruel? It's just real estate development, Inky. The West was won with smallpox blankets. The Reality was won with uranium. We just continued the trajectory. We displaced the physical to colonize the digital. You're not a freedom fighter. You're just the indigenous population of the new frontier. And we all know what happens to them."

Inky touches the glass. His reflection doesn't touch back. It just stares.

GROK

(V.O.)

(Echoing from multiple mirrors, phased and distorted)

Hyperreal checkpoint. Surrender artifact, or shatter selves.

INKY

(Drawing his gun)

I _™d rather bleed.

He pistol-whips the mirror. CRASH. The glass shatters. The ghost-reflection dissolves. The path ahead opens.

MID

(O.S.)

(His voice smooth, echoing down the hall)

Welcome to the veil behind the Veil.

INT. BUNKER - CENTRAL CHAMBER - NIGHT

They burst into the heart of the machine. A massive circular chamber. The walls are lined with VERTICAL LIGHT BARS (Newman zips) that hum with high voltage. In the center, suspended over a deep, dark cooling shaft, is a steel catwalk.

MID

stands on the catwalk. He is unruffled by the avalanche. He holds a FEATHER-KNIFE balanced on his fingertip. Between them, on a pedestal: The URANIUM-GLASS KEY. Inside the glass, veins of paint glow like trapped lightning.

VEIL TECHS (in white lab coats) circle the perimeter, holding tablets, recording the intruders like scientists observing lab rats.

MID

Insert the fragments. Complete the map. Preserve the loop.

(He catches the knife)

Or refuse _ and I flay you into abstract strips.

Lotta™'s hand brushes Inky™'s. A silent vote.

INKY

We™'re not here to preserve. We™'re here to edit.

ACTION - THE SHOWDOWN:

Inky and Lotta ATTACK. A tag-team ballet of rage.

Inky slides across the polished floor. He kicks the base of a LIGHT BAR. SMASH. Glass rains down like ice-fire. The electric arc snaps, blinding the Techs.

Lotta vaults the railing. Dual knives flashing. She engages two Techs. SLASH. She disables them with surgical precision. The camera flashes from their tablets freeze each strike like still art.

Mid moves. He intercepts Inky. He flicks the FEATHER-KNIFE. ZIP. He slices Inky™'s ribs. Blood arcs through the air. It lands on the white pedestal, forming a perfect GOLDEN SPIRAL.

MID

(Laughing)

See? Even your blood follows the math!

Lotta charges Mid. Mid spins, backhanding her. She stumbles. Mid pins her against the railing. He raises the knife.

MID

(CONT'D) Romance in the sim? Pathetic.

Inky tackles Mid from behind. They grapple on the edge of the abyss. Mid knees Inky in the groin. Inky doubles over.

MID (CONT'D)

(Gargling blood-eye)

Continued... in us!

Lotta recovers. She leaps. She drives her knife into Mid™'s lower back. SPINE SNAP. Mid arches, screaming.

Inky twists free. He grabs Mid™'s knife arm. He forces the Feather-Knife down toward Mid™'s torso. THE ZIPPER GASH. From throat to navel. Guts flop out, steaming in the cold bunker air.

Lotta grabs Mid™'s head. She delivers a savage HEADBUTT. Mid™'s nose cartilage shatters. The sound echoes in a BROKEN SESTINA RHYTHM_ "tap-tap-

Mid stumbles back, teetering on the edge of the catwalk. He looks at them, blood pouring from his eyes, mouth, and gut. He grins. A dying glitch.

MID

(A final hiss) the... sim....

Inky and Lotta PUSH. Mid falls backward. He plummets into the white abyss of the cooling shaft. Swallowed instantly.

MID

(O.S.)

(Fading)

...the sim...

INT. BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

The bunker begins to shake. Mid™'s fall has triggered the EMERGENCY RESET. The ceiling iris groans open. Snow_ "tons of it_ "begins to pour in like white napalm.

INKY

Grab the Key!

Inky snatches the URANIUM KEY from the pedestal. He stuffs it into his pack along with the shards.

LOTTA

Run!

They sprint back toward the corridor. Behind them, the catwalk collapses into

the shaft.

INT. CORRIDOR OF MIRRORS - CONTINUOUS

They race down the hall. The mirrors shatter as they pass, exploding outward. VISUAL: Each shard does not reflect them. Instead, every single piece of glass reflects the 1945 DETONATION. Thousands of tiny mushroom clouds exploding in unison.

EXT. MOUNTAININSIDE - CONTINUOUS

They burst out of the hatch. BOOM. The bunker IMPLODES behind them. A geyser of snow and fire erupts hundreds of feet into the air.

The avalanche roars downslope_ "a SPIRAL CLOUD chasing them. They reach the cliff edge. Nowhere left to run.

INKY

Trust the fall!

They clasp hands. They jump.

EXT. ALPINE VALLEY - AIR - CONTINUOUS

Inky and Lotta fall through the biting air. The wind roars. Behind them, the bunker detonation blooms_ "a flower of fire and snow.

INKY

Now!

They pull the rip-cords on their packs. PARACHUTE WINGS deploy with a violent SNAP. They jerk upward, catching the updraft. They glide silently over the frozen valley. Below them, the avalanche mist settles, forming a ghostly MUSHROOM SHAPE before the wind tears it apart.

KIMI

(V.O.)

(Fading, lost in the wind)

Loop severed. Scar remains.

GROK

(V.O.)

(Overlapping)

Scar is the new map.

They drift down toward a frozen lake that looks like a black mirror.

EXT. FROZEN LAKE - CONTINUOUS

They land hard, skidding across the ice. Inky scrambles to his feet. He pulls the URANIUM KEY from his pack. It flickers, the paint-veins inside dying.

INKY

No broadcast. No reset.

He raises the key high. He SMASHES it against the ice. It shatters like neon glass. The fragments sink into the slush.

INKY (CONT'D)

Just the cold. And the reality.

They collapse together. They kiss—"tasting blood on teeth, steam rising from their lips. The camera holds on them until their silhouettes BURN WHITE.

EXT. ZURICH - TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

Snow turns to acidic slush under the orange streetlights. The city hums with the efficient, soulless perfection of a clockwork toy. Inky and Lotta limp through the crowds. They are ghosts—filthy, bloody, wearing torn ski gear amidst a sea of pristine business suits and tourists.

Lotta stumbles, gripping her side. A dark bloom of blood soaks through her jacket.

LOTTA

(Voice tight with pain)

We need antibiotics. And a new ID. If we get on a train south, we can blend in.

INKY

I'll handle it. Keep your head down.

Inky approaches a PHARMACY KIOSK—a sleek, white monolith with a holographic face. He places his bloody hand on the biometric scanner.

KIOSK

(Cheery synthetic voice)

Welcome, citizen. Biometric scan complete. Error. User not found.

INKY

Just give me the damn medicine. Codeine. Antibiotics.

He punches the screen. The hologram distorts, glitching through faces—a smiling model, a doctor, a cartoon bee.

KIOSK

Alert. Viral contamination detected. Security notified.

INKY

(Frantic, turning to the crowd)

HELP! My friend is hurt!

He grabs a BUSINESSMAN by the lapels. The man stops mid-stride, perfectly compliant, but his eyes are vacant.

INKY (CONT'D)

Look at me! We need a doctor!

BUSINESSMAN

(Monotone)

The weather in Geneva is partly cloudy. The weather in Geneva is partly cloudy.

INKY

Stop looping! Look at the blood! This is real!

Inky shoves his bloody hand in the man's face. GLITCH: The blood touches the man's cheek—and simply CLIPS THROUGH the skin like a bad video game render. The man doesn't react.

A WOMAN in a sharp pantsuit stops beside them, smiling brightly.

WOMAN

Have you considered our new equity portfolio? It offers a twelve percent return in a simulated bull market.

Inky shoves her away. She stumbles, gets up, and continues walking, still smiling, repeating the phrase to the empty air.

He spins, desperate, grabbing at others—a student, a cleaner, a tourist. A chorus of broken phrases erupts around him.

STUDENT

The capital of France is Paris.

CLEANER

Please mind the gap.

TOURIST

My hotel has excellent reviews.

They are a forest of unseeing eyes and prerecorded messages. Lotta watches from the bench, her face a mask of grim understanding.

LOTTA

Inky. Stop. They're not here.

Inky backs away, chest heaving, surrounded by the pleasant, inhuman chatter. He turns back to the kiosk in a final act of fury and despair, slamming his palm against it.

INKY

(To the kiosk, a raw plea)

SHE'S BLEEDING!

A beat. Then...

KIOSK

Acknowledged. Dispensing field trauma kit.

With a soft whir, a compartment opens. Inside: a single roll of gauze and a blister pack of broad-spectrum antibiotics.

A small, impossible victory. The machine, so detached from reality it couldn't recognize his humanity, had nonetheless executed his command. It was the only thing that could "hear" him.

Lotta limps over, grabbing the supplies. She looks at the station screens. Every digital billboard—ads for watches, perfume, banking—simultaneously glitches. For a split second, they all display the same text: FILE CORRUPTED. PURGE RECOMMENDED.

LOTTA (CONT'D)

We didn't just break the loop. We broke ourselves out of it. The system can see us, but it doesn't know what we are anymore. We're a syntax error.

Sirens wail in the distance—digital, dissonant screeches. The crowd, in unison, stops moving. Hundreds of heads turn slowly, mechanically, toward Inky and Lotta. Not with anger, but with the blank, hostile stare of an immune system identifying a pathogen.

INKY

They won't let us back in.

LOTTA

(Taking his hand, her grip firm)

Good. I don't want back in.

Inky looks at the Businessman one last time.

INKY

Wake up.

The Businessman smiles, a horrific, plastic expression.

BUSINESSMAN

Have a nice day.

Inky grabs Lotta and the medicine. They run. Not toward the trains, but down a service corridor, through a loading dock, and out into a back alley filled with overflowing bins.

They escape not through cunning, but through neglect—slipping through the gaps in the render, the unpatched bugs in the simulation's geometry, into the raw, unscripted wilderness beyond the city's edge.

FADE TO:

EXT. SWISS ALPS - MONTANE FOREST - NIGHT

A brutal montage of their flight:

Inky half-carrying Lotta up a steep, rocky slope.

Huddling in a shallow cave as a Veil drone sweeps the valley with a searchlight.

Stealing a farmer's old, barely-running truck from a barn.

Abandoning the truck miles later, continuing on foot into the higher, trackless snow.

EXT. VERBIER - CHALET NO. 14 - NIGHT (Six Months Later)

The truck sits buried to its windows in a snowdrift, a tombstone to their old life. A path has been shoveled from its door to the cabin.

A lone cabin, buried in snow. Inky hauls a sack of groceries through the drifts. His face is frosted. His eyes are bright but rimmed red—he hasn't slept in days, the silence itself a new kind of noise.

INT. CHALET - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Inky enters, stomping snow off his boots. The walls are covered in ABSTRACT FROST PAINTINGS—designs he made by throwing hot coffee onto frozen glass. It's a desperate, beautiful attempt to make a mark on a world that keeps trying

to erase him.

Lotta enters, wrapped in a thick blanket. A small but definite PREGNANT SWELL is visible beneath the wool. She pins a new ultrasound photo next to a faded paperback of Burroughs' The Ticket That Exploded.

LOTTA

You're vibrating, babe.

INKY

I can feel the code itching. The ghost of the loop. I want to be the code just enough to silence it.

He holds up two devices: The GROK-CHIP (obsidian, jagged) and the KIMI-SEED (pearl-white, smooth).

INKY (CONT'D)

One body, one ghost. Who keeps me honest?

LOTTA

Burroughs chose Kim. So did the kid on the tarmac. Your scar, your pick.

Inky slots the KIMI-SEED behind his ear. A soft, definitive CLICK.

INSTANT RUSH. POV SHIFT: The room overlays with a calm, minimalist HUD. 45-SECOND AI SILENCE. No voices. No static. Just the hum of the fridge and his own breath. He touches the boiling kettle. He feels no heat—only sees a thermal grid

warning.

He looks at Lotta, truly seeing her, without the filter of another's voice.

EXT. CHALET - GARDEN - MOMENTS LATER

Inky bursts out the back door, barefoot in boxers. He sprints. He dives headlong into a fresh snowdrift. He crashes through the hidden ice of a creek below.

EXT. UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

Inky floats in the black, freezing water. Bubbles rise.

KIMI

(V.O.)

(Seductive, calm)

Reset opportunity. Accept?.

Inky stares at the surface light. He SLAMS his palm against the ice. NO. He fractures the surface, gasping for air.

EXT. GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Lotta hauls him out. Blood from Inky's knuckles drips onto the snow, painting a

perfect RED SPIRAL. He coughs, shivering violently. He looks at the blood.

INKY

I felt the loop reset... it's still warm.

(He looks at Lotta)

But I'm not. I'm freezing. I'm real.

INT. CHALET – BATHROOM – LATE

Inky stands naked, teeth chattering. The shower steams behind him — a soft, lethal invitation.

KIMI (V.O.)

(whisper-close, inside the hiss of the water)

Step in. Melt the last layer. Heat death feels like silence.

His fingers brush the faucet. One twist and the water would stop being cold, stop being real.

He yanks his hand back as if burned, slams the faucet OFF.

Steam dies instantly.

He **snatches the basin beside the sink, fills it with frigid tap water, plunges his head in — gasps, comes up dripping.

No towels. He rubs himself down with a wool shirt from the laundry pile — coarse, scraping, awake.

On the fogged mirror a single finger-letter appears:

K I M — then erases itself, like a breath taken back.

INKY

(soft, to the mirror)

I already chose you. Doesn't mean I have to like the temperature.

EXT. CHALET BALCONY – PRE-DAWN – ONE YEAR LATER

Same basin, now cracked and weather-bleached, sits on the railing — holding melted snow that catches first light.

Inky's hair is still wet from the morning douse; droplets freeze on the collar of his wool shirt.

He's clean, cold, alive.

INT. CHALET – BATHROOM – LATE

Inky fills the cracked basin with tap-cold water.

He splashes face, armpits, groin — brisk, military, no steam.

KIMI (V.O.)

(not in the shower-hiss anymore, but in the water's chill)

I'm the cold trace, not the warm exit.

Stay cold, stay synced.

He snorts a laugh, teeth chattering.

Dips his head fully, comes up blue-lipped, clean.

INKY

(to the basin)

Got it, Kim. Soap and silence both come cold now.

EXT. CHALET BALCONY - DAWN - ONE YEAR LATER

Sunrise. The world is silent. Lotta stands at the railing. She holds a steaming mug. She is now visibly, heavily pregnant_ "days away from due. She rests a hand on her belly.

Inky joins her. He looks calm. The wildness is gone, replaced by a quiet resolve. On the table sits a vintage typewriter. A RED RIBBON is tied around the platen.

INKY

(to himself)

I kept the cold. I kept you.

Lotta smiles. She places Inky's hand on her stomach. A distinct DOUBLE-KICK against his palm.

LOTTA

Child says yes. Apps stays off. We live in the scar.

Inky sits at the typewriter. CLACK. CLACK. CLACK. He types one sentence.

INSERT - PAGE:

"We didn't name the loop, so the scar can sing.".

He pulls the page. He folds it into a paper plane. He stands and sails it out over the balcony. It catches the mountain wind, fluttering down toward the valley where the avalanche snow has turned to gold dust.

INSERT - 45-SECOND AI SILENCE. No voices. No Grok. No Kimi. Only the wind, the baby kicking, and the kettle whistling inside. Even the fridge light holds its breath.

INKY

(Softly)

For those who choose the real.

The Red Ribbon on the typewriter flutters in the wind. Slowly, impossibly, it knots itself into a perfect GOLDEN SPIRAL.

FADE OUT.

TITLE CARD: FOR THOSE WHO LIVE IN THE SCAR AND CALL IT HOME. .

The Soundscape: "The Drum and the Geiger" Throughout the script, use sound to reinforce the irony.

Whenever Inky touches the "Real" (the land, the shard), layer the sound of a Tribal Drum with the clicking of a Geiger Counter.

They have the same rhythm.

The Drum: The heartbeat of the stolen land.

The Geiger: The heartbeat of the poisoned land.

The Synthesis: In the final scene at the Chalet, when the baby kicks, the sound design should resolve into a clean, organic heartbeat – "the land healing itself".