

METROPOLIS

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. MANHATTAN - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Freezing wind shutters through the shadows. Relentless darkness. No sign of life, save for --

The SOUND of determined footsteps.

INT. HIGH RISE APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The doorman at his post flipping through a magazine, rap music pounding from his radio.

Glass suddenly shatters as a gloved hand punches through the window, reaching in, unlocking the front door.

Two men in dark suits blur inside. The doorman rushes to stop them, only --

DEX, the taller of the two men, slams the barrel of his gun into the doorman's throat.

DEX

Life can be an illusion.

(low and deadly)

Sometimes we see what isn't there,
and sometimes we don't see what is
there.

The doorman, wide eyed with terror, nods his consent.
Dex removes the gun.

Doorman plants himself in the chair, eyes glued to his magazine, making it clear he doesn't 'see' the men as they stroll into --

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Old fashioned steel box struggling its way up the shaft.
Fluorescent yellow light stabbing through the grating.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENT LATER

Dex slaps a small plastic strip on an apartment door as both men turn away, shielding their eyes.

A blinding flash of light as the door is blown apart.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The men rush inside and straight into --

INT. BEDROOM

Candles flicker on the dresser. A syringe on the bedside table, next to a sleeping figure curled up under the sheets.

Both men starting to pull guns, but --

DEX

This one's personal.

Dex's partner shrugs, holsters his weapon and steps back through the doorway, watching as --

Dex spins and fires.

Not the traditional booming gunfire, but rather the strange sound of electronic hissing as laser-fire rips the person to shreds.

Dex finally stops firing and moves to the bed to verify the kill, only on close inspection he sees it's not a person.

He's just blown the hell out of a MANNEQUIN.

Dex smiles, blows out the candle and heads out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - DUSK

A lone PRIEST lights the sacrament candles, the sound of his breathing reverberating through the empty church.

He suddenly stops, snaps his head around --

A man in a wheelchair stares at him from the doorway.

The man is CHRISTOPH. Dark robes shroud his shriveled, decaying body but his eyes still burn with life.

CHRISTOPH

(raspy voice which
labors to be heard)

May I trouble you with a confession?

Even in the flickering half-light of the candles, the Priest can see that Christoph is dying.

PRIEST

Never a trouble.

The large statue of Jesus over the alter staring down as the Priest leads Christoph into --

INT. CONFESSORIAL BOOTH

Christoph's voice is weak, knowing each word could be the last.

CHRISTOPH

Forgive me Father, for I have
coveted.

PRIEST

What have you coveted?

CHRISTOPH

(anguished whisper)

Life.

A small smile of compassion escapes across the Priest's lips.

PRIEST

God gave us all the need for life.
And when the end begins to near, we

all crave more time. No sin.

CHRISTOPH

(hesitantly)

But there's what I would do for more
time.

PRIEST

What would you do --

A sharp hissing sound --

The laser burns through the confessional wall and straight
through the priest's chest.

Face frozen in a listening pose as the body crumples to
death.

Christoph slowly lowers his weapon with a look of genuine
contrition.

EXT. MANHATTAN - HELL'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

It's the near future and the neighborhood is covered with
graffiti scrawled in machine code and billboards
projecting holographs advertising malt liquor and
pleasure-dipped cigarettes.

A slick-black JET COPTER drops silently from the sky.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Pieces of advanced computer technology lie scattered about
the large work table. A small kitchen and bedroom in the
back.

Speakers pour in one of Handel's aching melodies.

The music suddenly pierced by the shriek of a giant Bird
of Prey diving across the room.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

A tight knot of bodyguards disgorged from the copter.
Tense eyes sweeping the street, they finally give the all-
clear signal.

HALDEN, a charismatic bull of a man, emerges from the
copter. He moves with the confidence of someone who knows
he can't be touched.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The sound of Handel's concert mixes with the sound of
claws tearing apart flesh.

TANNER sits in the middle of the room. He is early
forties, athletic build, and a face that holds too many
memories.

His insomniac-stained eyes studying the Holographic Chess

Board as the knight mounted on the Bird of Prey slaughters
a pawn.

DISEMBODIED VOICE (O.S.)

Visitors.

Tanner snaps his attention to --

INT. WALL SIZE MONITOR

Halden and his men head toward the warehouse.

INT. WAREHOUSE

Tanner's eyes harden at the sight of Halden. A long beat,
then he finally shakes his head in resigned disgust.

TANNER

Permit entry.

The sound of dead bolts automatically sliding open.

MOMENTS LATER

The bodyguards stand motionless in the corner, doing their
best to look like furniture.

Halden moves through the holographic chess board, his eyes
on Tanner.

HALDEN

A legend fell tonight.

His stare now ripping into Tanner.

HALDEN

The unrunnable maze. Impossible to
get through.

(thick smile)

Well, some kid just danced it like
it was some six bit video game.

Tanner doesn't blink. His voice matter-of-fact.

TANNER

He had keys.

HALDEN

Of course the legend would like to
think that. But no one has keys.

(fierce)

Your maze was run.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - MOMENT LATER

Halden and his men escort Tanner to the waiting copter.

CUT TO:

INT. VACANT CITY STREET - THAT NIGHT

Christoph stands naked in the middle of the vacant street,

staring down at himself in reverent awe.

It is as if he's been reborn. His body no longer decrepit, but rather pulsing with an almost inhuman vitality.

He heads down the street, the walk becoming a run, then a sprint, his head back, mouth open, tasting the wind.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANHATTAN SKY-LINE - CONTINUOUS

A jet-copter screams across the night sky, while inside --

INT. JET-COPTER - CONTINUOUS

Tanner studies the holographic image of the maze projected in front of him:

A constantly shifting sea of lines swirling furiously in random directions.

A small BLUE SQUARE rockets into the maze. Sound of laughter as the square dodges, feints, spinning it's way down into --

The center of the maze. A pattern so intricate it seems to be a solid wall of light with no way through --

Only the square suddenly shoots up, twisting, somehow finding the smallest of fissures and blurring through.

The square is gone. Only the laughter remains.

HALDEN

He had fun ripping your maze, that's good.

(tight smile)

Now that it's obsolete for security purposes, maybe we can turn it into an amusement ride.

Tanner silently snaps off the hologram as the jet-copter banks sharply for a landing onto --

CUT TO:

EXT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - ROOF

A towering black monolith which seems to burst straight up through the heavens.

INT. VSI CORPORATE BUILDINGS - CONTINUOUS

Halden leads Tanner down the long hall.

Dex, who has traded his dark "assassin's" suit for a VSI standard issue gray pin-stripe, stands waiting for them.

He keeps his eyes on Halden, as if Tanner wasn't even there.

DEX

We just tracked the runner to the hotel district.

Halden nods as all three of them head into --

INT. CONTROL ROOM

Long rows of programming consoles manned by engineers wearing wireless 'tele-com' headsets.

Dex directs Halden's attention to one of the high-def monitors lining the walls. The monitor showing --

INT. SAVOY HOTEL ROOM

Rock music pounds the room as silver confetti drops from the ceiling.

A KID, sixteen at most, watches excitedly from the bed as the two Playmates, Barbie-Doll bodies, slow-dance a striptease.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

Dex finally acknowledges Tanner's presence.

DEX

Still going through puberty and he shreds your maze.

(hard)

That's gotta hurt.

Tanner remains silent. Eyes locked on the monitor as Halden turns to EMMA, VSI's senior security engineer.

HALDEN

Get some internal police there.
Tell them to run a perimeter.

TANNER

But have them wait for me 'till they move in on him.

Halden turns, shooting him a surprised look. But Tanner ignores it as he heads for the door.

Dex goes to stop him, but something in Tanner's eyes makes him think twice about it.

A frozen beat, then Halden snaps a silent command to Dex to let Tanner go.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERFACE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rows and rows of unconscious bodies strapped to interface seats, the room looks like a warehouse full of people in comas.

Tanner climbs into an interface seat as a TECHNICIAN wheels up his medi-cart and starts preparing an IV.

TANNER

Shouldn't be in that long.

The technician shrugs, returns the IV to his cart and starts hooking Tanner to a bio-monitor.

Dex strides into the room, staring down at Tanner.

DEX

Been a while since you've been
inside.

(off Tanner's
silence)

Going to look up old friends?

Tanner meets Dex's stare. A deadly exchange.

DEX

(grins)

You know she asks about you all the
time --

Tanner plunges his finger into the CONNECT BOX, his eyes thrusting back in his head, body going slack.

INT. THE NET - CONTINUOUS

Cool silent blackness of the void.

Eternal stretch of nothingness.

Then the blink of a light racing toward us.

Colors so intense you can feel their heat.

DISEMBODIED VOICE (O.S.)

Destination?

TANNER'S DISEMBODIED VOICE (O.S.)

Hotel district.

The faintest sounds can be heard. Almost sounds like music.

DISEMBODIED VOICE (O.S.)

Security clearance approved.

Welcome Tanner. Enjoy your stay.

Dropping down. Into the lights. Embraced by the colors.

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT CITY

It's as if someone took the best parts of the world's night spots and put them together in one neon-drenched city.

Only this is the digital world.

Picture-perfect architecture. No pollution or decay. And colors that are just a little bit more vibrant than the real world.

Music pounds the air as crowds of people roam the streets, exploring the countless pubs, casinos and night clubs.

EXT. NIGHT CITY - HOTEL DISTRICT - CONTINUOUS

Tanner heads down a street lined with some of the world's most famous hotels.

Unlike the partying people all around him, Tanner is all business, staring straight ahead with laser-like intensity.

EXT. THE SAVOY

A group of INTERNAL COPS wearing tele-com's and Night City Police uniforms, stand huddled in the shadows across from The Savoy.

The SERGEANT greets Tanner with a curt nod.

SERGEANT

Corp must really want this guy to have sent the legend himself.

TANNER

Just didn't want you boys having all the fun.

The sergeant gives the signal. The cops fan out.

INT. NIGHT CITY - VIRTUAL HOTEL ROOM

The kid's still on the bed, sucking down a beer. One of the Playmates leans over, lets him unhook her bra.

He smiles at her overly perfect body.

She bites her lip in staged ecstasy, tracing her fingers down his chest, pulling at his belt as --

The door burst open. The cops and Tanner rush inside.

The kid flies off the bed.

A cop tries to grab him, only the kid grabs a chair and SMASHES it hard into the cop's face, dropping him hard to the floor --

INT. VSI CORPORATE BUILDING - INTERFACE ROOM

The cop's real body lies strapped to an interface seat, twitching as the pain sears through his consciousness --

INT. NIGHT CITY - HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The other cops ready to charge, but Tanner gets in front of them, freezing the kid with a look.

TANNER

Look, we're going to trace you.

The confetti still swirling through the room.

TANNER

So be smart about this --

KID

-- You're the big man. Big fucking cop.

He laughs as he makes an imaginary 'gun' with his fingers and points it at Tanner --

KID

No guns on the system. That's how it's programmed, right?

(pulls the 'trigger')

So what are you going to do, huh big cop? Can't shoot me.

TANNER

Look, I know you didn't run it. You had keys.

Kid shakes his head, full of bravado.

KID

That maze's nothing. I could run it blind on a sixty-meg board.

SERGEANT (INTO TELE-COM)

(whispers)

This is a waste of time. How about a little encouragement?

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTROL ROOM

Everyone in the room watching the scene playing out in the hotel.

EMMA (INTO TELE-COM)

Here's something which ought to help him talk --

Her fingers race over the console.

INT. NIGHT CITY - HOTEL ROOM

Tanner still has the kid pinned with his stare.

TANNER

Fine, you ran it. That's felony system fraud. Gets you thirty years.

(lets that sink-in)

Or you tell us where you got the keys and we start talking a deal.

Kid's eyes reveal he's thinking this one through, only --

A huge DOBERMAN explodes through the window.

Insane growl, deadly stare, rocketing for the Kid, who freaks, throwing one of the Virtual Playmates into its path --

Powerful claws rips through her, flinging her against the wall. She lies there shredded, but for some reason, not bleeding.

Kid throws himself out the window. Doberman flies after him, with Tanner just a heartbeat behind.

EXT. THE SAVOY

The kid races down the crowded street with the Doberman chasing after him.

TANNER (INTO TELE-COM)

(yells)

Lose the God-Damn dog!

A couple crosses the street, getting between the kid and the dog --

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTROL ROOM

Emma slams in the commands --

EXT. NIGHT CITY - STREET

The Doberman about to tear through the couple, but flickers, then disappears.

INT. NIGHT CITY - CASINO - CONTINUOUS

Slightly featureless waiters and waitresses deliver drinks. On stage, a young Billy Holiday belts out a soulful blues tune.

The kid tears through the room.

EXT. CASINO - CONTINUOUS

The cops rush into the casino. But Tanner stays on the street, racing around the side of the building.

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTROL ROOM

The casino is now up on the monitor. Emma's eyes following the kid.

EMMA (INTO TELE-COM)

Grid eighteen. Heading for exit six.

INT. NIGHT CITY - CASINO

The cops charge across the casino, but unable to get to the kid before he bolts out the exit --

EXT. CASINO - ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

The kid comes flying out into the alley. There's Tanner, bearing down on him.

Kid takes off, running as fast as he can, turning the corner to --

EXT. THE GATES

The sprawling structure where people enter and exit Night City.

A crush of excited customers pushing past the HOSTESS who welcomes them with programmed cheerfulness.

HOSTESS

And don't miss The Tivoli, with fireworks every hour on the hour.

(smiles)

And please remember to follow all safety rules while --

The kid racing through the crowd with Tanner in hot pursuit.

INT. NIGHT CITY - STREET

Sound of rock music bouncing off the buildings.

The kid sprints out of the crowd and up and over a hill. Tanner follows, finding himself in the midst of --

EXT. NIGHT CITY - CONCERT

A colored light show screaming down from the heavens.

The huge crowd of people gyrating to the music pounding from the band on the river-front stage.

Tanner pushes into the frenzy as an USHER quickly steps up to him.

USHER

(very politely)

I'm sorry sir, but there is a premium charge for this event --

Tanner pulls his ACCESS CARD from his pocket and runs it through the thin slot in the usher's torso. A beat, before...

USHER

Access approved. Enjoy the concert, Tanner.

The usher steps away as Tanner slices through the crowd, eyes probing for the kid.

TANNER (INTO TELE-COM)
Where the hell is he?

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTROL ROOM

Emma is studying the monitor, trying to find the kid in the churning sea of humanity --

EMMA (INTO TELE-COM)
I'm working on it.

EXT. NIGHT CITY - CONCERT

The band finishes the song. The audience yelling for more as the light show suddenly snaps off --

Pitch blackness.

A new song. Even louder. Audience screaming along as strobe lights rip through the night.

Tanner trying to focus in the quick bursts of illumination.

EMMA'S VOICE (FROM TELE-COM)
He's north-east of you. Heading to
Crimson street --

Tanner spins, cutting a path through the throng. Picking up speed. But suddenly freezes --

A face. KATIE. Effortlessly attractive. The warmest of smiles not quite able to hide the sadness.

Her expensively dressed male companion's arm wrapped tightly around her waist as they watch the concert.

Tanner stares at her. Doing everything he can to hold it in.

The lights strobing her face. Tanner struggles to pull his eyes away. Only now she looks over. Sees him.

They stare at each other for a long tortured beat.

Katie turns to her companion, whispers something, then hurries over to Tanner. Only he's no longer there.

Her eyes spinning through the crowd. Catches a glimpse of Tanner as he disappears into the darkness.

EXT. NIGHT CITY - STREET - CONTINUOUS

The kid breaks out of the concert crowd. Races up the street and over a bridge to --

EXT. NIGHT CITY - RED LIGHT DISTRICT

Modeled after Amsterdam. Canal-lined streets brimming with businesses catering to every and any erotic desire.

Kid comes running off the bridge and suddenly stops. A pair of cops charging him. The kid turns, rushing into --

INT. DEVIL'S LAIR

Customers browse the ten stories worth of Virtual Playmates enclosed in small glass cubicles.

The cops push through the crowd, racing after the kid.

EXT. STREET

Tanner sprints for the fire escape on the side of the building.

INT. DEVIL'S LAIR

The kid racing for an exit, but can't find one. The cops almost to him, so he bolts straight for a cubicle --

Covering his face, he throws himself through the glass, flying past the stunned Playmate and out the cubicle's back door --

INT. STAIRWAY

The kid charges up the stairs to the top floor and out onto --

EXT. ROOF

The kid throws the door shut behind him as --

TANNER'S VOICE (O.S.)

Time to be smart.

Kid spins. Tanner is right there.

TANNER

Not too late to cut a deal.

(coaxing)

All you've got to do is tell me
where you got --

The kid backs away from Tanner, but quickly runs out of roof, teetering on the edge of a ten story drop.

A frozen beat, then the kid looks up at Tanner with a twisted grin.

TANNER

(realizing)

DON'T --

But the kid's already laughing as he lets himself fall backward into the air.

Tanner dives after him, smashing face-first into the roof, grabbing the kid's foot before it disappears over the edge.

He reels the kid back onto the roof, slamming his stare into him --

TANNER

This isn't one of those virtual reality systems you're used to playing on!

The kid shrugs, unfazed.

TANNER

This is hyper-reality. Full Immersion.

KID

Big deal --

TANNER

-- If you had come in through the gates like you were supposed to, you'd know.

(intense)

Full Immersion. You die on this system, your consciousness dies.

The kid stares at Tanner as this sinks in. But he still keeps up his tough guy look.

KID

Why the hell do you care?

Tanner wipes the blood from his chin as he rips all traces of compassion from his face, matching the kid's stare.

TANNER

I don't. I just need you alive so you can tell me where you got the keys.

Tanner hurls the kid back into the arms of the waiting cops.

TANNER

Trace him.

COP

Be my pleasure.

They drag the kid down the stairs, leaving Tanner alone on the roof, sound of music swirling through the darkness.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTROL ROOM

An engineer studying his screen as location grids flash by.

One of the grids suddenly freezes.

The engineer punches a command into his console, enlarging the grid to show a cross-section of city streets.

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT CITY - STREET - CONTINUOUS

Tanner heads down the crowded street toward the flashing lights of the --

EXT. CONCERT

Tanner stands on the outskirts of the concert, staring into the area where he had seen Katie.

The strobe lights flashing across his face.

He finally forces himself to turn away from it, heading alone down the street,

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
(calls out)

Tanner.

Frozen beat. Katie steps from the shadows.

A long, tortured silence.

KATIE
Least you could do is say hello.

He slowly looks at her. Working hard to keep it under control.

TANNER
Hello.

This isn't easy for either of them.

KATIE
What brings you inside?

TANNER
Cleaning up a mess.

KATIE
(small smile)
Some things never change, do they?

Sees the dried blood on his chin. Old reflexes taking over, she puts a soothing hand on his face.

He stands rigid. Barely breathing. Forces himself to turn away.

TANNER
I've got to get back.

KATIE
Tanner.

Her eyes plead into his. Takes everything he's got to remain firm.

TANNER

Sorry.

He heads down the street. She calls after him --

KATIE

You know I wanted to tell you, but
they wouldn't let me --

But he's already disappeared into the darkness.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - BLUES BAR - A LITTLE LATER

The crowded joint watching as the late blues legend
'Howling Wolf', lets lose on stage.

Tanner finds a spot at the bar and orders a drink, his
eyes still dark with memories.

The drink arrives. As Tanner picks it up, a drop of blood
falls from his chin, crimson spot smearing through the
amber liquid.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

It's good luck. Means your real.

Tanner looks next to him at --

GENA, sexy, chatty, sense of longing. She motions to the
employees.

GENA

The programs don't bleed.

Tanner nods, waits a polite beat, then turns back around,
taking a hit of his drink, but she's still talking to him.

GENA

Where you plugged-in from?

TANNER

(beat)

New York.

GENA

I'm South Dakota.

She sips from her drink, eyes still on Tanner.

GENA

That's what you gotta love about
this place. Drink whatever you
want, your real body doesn't gain an
once.

(beat)

But you wanna know what's a drag?

He drains his drink and motions for a refill.

TANNER

What?

GENA

The weather.

EXT. THE BAR - CONTINUOUS

Christoph stands outside, watching them through the window.

INT. BAR

Gena leans in toward Tanner.

GENA

Always a warm summer night. Which is a shame, because there's nothing like making love in the rain.

(flirty)

Don't you agree?

He looks at her, not sure how to respond. She reads the silence.

GENA

(disappointed)

What's her name?

TANNER

Who?

GENA

The woman you're stuck on.

TANNER

(quiet)

There is no --

His tele-com buzzing, then Emma's voice in his ear.

EMMA'S VOICE (FROM TELE-COM)

Nailed the trace. Kid's in Memphis.

Tanner talks into the tele-com.

TANNER (INTO TELE-COM)

Good, kick him out.

EMMA'S VOICE (FROM TELE-COM)

You sure? We can handle collection.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTROL ROOM

Emma is watching Tanner and Gena on a monitor.

EMMA (INTO TELE-COM)

I mean, I don't want to interrupt anything --

TANNER'S VOICE (FROM TELE-COM)

-- You're not. Kick me out.

Emma shrugs, turns to the console.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - BAR

Tanner motions the bartender to refill Gena's drink, tossing down credit to cover it.

TANNER

Take care.

GENA

Take care? Where the hell are you going --

He flickers, then disappears into --

INT. THE NET - DARKNESS

The last thing Tanner sees is Gena's insulted face blurring into the swerve of lights bending into each other as --

Tanner is pulled out into the blackness of the net. Eternal silence. Finally --

A shaft of light slices the darkness.

Eerie green glow, the echoing sound of an electronic heartbeat.

Struggling to make out images. A line smearing up and down.

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - INTERFACE ROOM

Tanner blinking back to consciousness. The weaving line is on the bio-monitor tracking his vitals.

A bored technician unplugs him from the monitor.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN

Just lay there a few minutes.

But Tanner forces himself to get up. His chin shows no sign of the wound received in the digital world.

He looks around groggily at the sea of motionless people plugged into the system. Place feels like a morgue.

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT CITY - BAR - CONTINUOUS

Christoph moves straight for the now-empty seat next to Gena.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - DAWN

First light streaks peacefully through the windows.

The place is sparsely furnished. Empty beer kegs are used as chairs and textbooks lie scattered about.

The stillness is shattered as --

The front door explodes open --

Heavily armored MEMPHIS SWAT TEAM rushing in, along with Dex and a couple of VSI security guys --

Weapons drawn, everybody's dead serious.

Tanner follows them in, watching as they rip through the place, kicking in doors, searching everything, until finally --

SWAT TEAM AGENT'S VOICE (O.S.)

(from basement)

Down here!

Everyone rushes down into --

INT. BASEMENT

The kid lies unconscious on a cot, his fingers stuck in a connect-box wired to an old laptop computer.

Swat team leader starts to pull the kid up off the cot, but Dex's hand shoots out, stopping him --

DEX

Bad idea.

Dex whips a mini-cell phone from his pocket. Swat leader turns a confused eye to Tanner.

TANNER

Pull him off the system before he's ejected and he goes brain dead.

DEX (INTO MOBILE PHONE)

We got him. Kick him lose.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - HOLDING CELL - CONTINUOUS

The kid is sitting in the middle of a black cube. He suddenly flickers, then disappears --

CUT TO:

INT. MEMPHIS HOUSE - BASEMENT

The kid's body twitches. Eyes fluttering open. First impulse is to run, but as his focus sharpens --

A wall of laser guns trained on his face.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - BAR

Christoph settles into the seat next to Gena. He orders a drink, then turns his attention to her.

CHRISTOPH

Might I interest you in a question?

She turns, gives him the once over, then flashes him a playful smile.

GENA

As long as it's not 'what's your sign?'

CHRISTOPH

If you could meet God, what would you say to him?

She stares at him. He's serious.

GENA

That's a strange question. You a strange man?

CHRISTOPH

There you are, sitting next to the creator, what do you say?

GENA

(amazed laugh)

This is how you pick up women --

CHRISTOPH

-- No.

The intensity in his stare unsettles her. But something about it keeps her from moving away. She looks at him, shrugging.

GENA

I'd probably say something like why'd you let the world get so fucked-up?

He nods, eyes aching with compassion.

CHRISTOPH

Your life that bad?

GENA

No, not me, I've been lucky. But I've seen what happens to other people --

CHRISTOPH

-- If your life's so good up there Gena, what are you doing down here?

She stares at him.

GENA

How'd you know my name?

His drink arrives as he calmly meets her stare.

CHRISTOPH
Do you believe in miracles?

GENA
I'm serious, how did you know my
name?

He smiles, dangerous charm.

CHRISTOPH
(toasting)
To miracles.

She's still staring at him, not exactly sure what to make
of this guy, but intrigued enough to join him in the
toast.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANHATTAN SKY - A LITTLE LATER

The storm has finally arrived. The jet-copter slashing
through the dark rain.

INT. JET-COPTER

Tanner is holed up in the back with the kid's laptop
computer. Programs racing down the screen.

He stops on a program, eyes blazing in vindication.

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT CITY - THE TERRACE - CONTINUOUS

Flawless gothic architecture complete with Gargoyles
growing down from the roof.

The building is dark and seemingly empty save for the
outdoor glass elevator climbing up its side.

INT. OUTDOOR GLASS ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Gena and Christoph stand next to each other in the
elevator, staring down through the window at the fireworks
raining over --

EXT. THE TIVOLI

Night City's digital carnival.

A roller coaster with no track, cars rocketing through
thin air over a merry-go-around with real horses.

The carnival is surrounded by The Track, where people race
Ferrari's at full speed.

One of the cars loses control, hurtling toward the wall,
but freezes at the last second to allow the driver to
climb out
unhurt --

INT. OUTDOOR GLASS ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Gena turns, catching the flicker of almost child-like awe in Christoph's eyes as he looks out over Night City.

She smiles, moving a little closer to him. The elevator glides to a stop. He looks at her.

CHRISTOPH

You were right.

GENA

(beat)

About what?

The doors open and he leads her out onto --

EXT. THE TERRACE - ROOF

A brass bed surrounded by unlit candles sits in the midst of the elegantly designed roof garden.

CHRISTOPH

Making love in the rain.

She looks from the bed to him, confused.

GENA

But it doesn't rain here --

The first raindrops beginning to fall as --

Sultry jazz music envelopes them. The candle wicks crackle to life, flames dancing in the night.

Gena's stunned, shaking her head, insisting.

GENA

It can't rain here. Not the way
it's programmed.

Her eyes dart out over the roof. It's not raining anywhere else. Just here on the roof. Just on them.

She stares at him, fascination mixed with fear.

GENA

Who are you?!

CHRISTOPH

(quietly)

Someone who believes in miracles.

He pulls her to him, warm rain caressing their bodies.

CUT TO:

EXT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

The jet-copter twists down through the rain for a landing.

INT. HALDEN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Halden's office is on the top floor of the building, windows offering up God's eye view of the storm battered Manhattan.

Tanner marches in and before Halden can react, slams a mini-disk into the wall player.

A matrix of data swirls down the wall monitor.

TANNER

Recognize it?

Halden's silent. Tanner's stare digging into him.

TANNER

Kid had keys.

(matter-of-fact)

The maze is unrunnable.

Halden is still silent, a sour eye on the monitor.

HALDEN

Doesn't make sense. How the hell does some fucking teenager get to the keys?

TANNER

Sorry, I just design the maze.

(tight smile)

Keeping the keys secure is your job.

He turns for the door as the monitor buzzes, now showing --

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The kid sits like a statue in his chair. He doesn't look up as the VSI LAWYER enters and takes a seat across from him.

The lawyer stares at the kid as if this could somehow make him break down and confess. Finally...

LAWYER

Care to tell us how you came into possession of an illegal access program?

KID

Look, I'm doing mute 'till I have a mouthpiece here who's on my side.

LAWYER

You don't need a lawyer.

(holds up the disk)

We found the program on your laptop.

INT. HALDEN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Tanner has stopped in the doorway, his eyes on the

monitor --

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

The kid stares impassively at the lawyer.

KID

Don't know what you're talking
about.

LAWYER

Of course you do.

(dead serious)

And the only shot you've got of
keeping your ass from sinking in a
sea of shit is to tell me where you
got this program.

The kid shakes his head, laughing.

LAWYER

What's so funny?

KID

This. No point to it.

LAWYER

Why not?

KID

Because you'll never believe me.

LAWYER

Try me.

The kid slowly stops laughing, his voice seemingly
genuine.

KID

It was just there.

LAWYER

There?

KID

My uni-net account. I log on. The
program's there.

LAWYER

Just like that?

KID

Just like that --

INT. HALDEN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Halden is still watching at the monitor, not noticing as
Tanner turns and silently slips out into --

INT. HALLWAY

The voices playing from the monitor are just barely audible as Tanner heads down the long hallway.

LAWYER'S VOICE (O.S.)
Any idea how the program got there?

KID'S VOICE (O.S.)
How the hell do I know? Maybe it was a gift from God?

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT CITY - THE TERRACE - ROOF

Rain streaming down on Christoph and Gena as they have sex.

She studies him. His eyes are burning with intensity, savoring each and every sensation.

GENA
You don't have much sex up there in the real world, do you?

CHRISTOPH
(barely audible)
No...

Hard to tell if it's rain or tears which streak down his face.

EXT. VSI BUILDING - ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Tanner moves through the dark rain and into the waiting --

INT. JET-COPTER

Tanner climbs in, practically having to yell to be heard over the storm.

TANNER
Ninth and Hudson.

The PILOT punches it up on the nav-board. The location popping-up on the grid.

PILOT
Hell's Kitchen. Talk about your shit holes. What's there?

TANNER
My home.

Takes the pilot a full beat to realize Tanner isn't joking.

PILOT
(trying to cover)
Cheap rents. Close to the waterfront. I hear the area's making a comeback.

He quickly turns his attention to engaging the thrusters.

Tanner stares straight ahead, watching the rain slam into the windshield.

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT CITY - THE TERRACE - ROOF

It has stopped raining. Gena lies asleep on the bed. She is alone.

CUT TO:

INT. JET-COPTER

Thrusters groaning to life. High-pitched whine, almost sounding like laughter.

Tanner is watching the blasts of rain battering the windows.

The jet-copter twisting up into the sky.

A rain drop zig-zags across the windshield, running into another droplet, making one single, bigger drop racing down the glass.

Tanner staring at the windshield. Suddenly realizing --

TANNER

Land it.

PILOT

Sir?

TANNER

Take me back down.

Pilot shrugs, floats the copter back down to the roof.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTROL ROOM

Tanner rushes through the control room to Emma.

TANNER

I need playback on the kid's run.

She reads the urgency in his voice and pulls it up --

INT. ON THE HIGH-DEF MONITOR

A holographic image of the maze. The glowing blue square racing through it, accompanied by the unmistakable sound of laughter.

TANNER'S VOICE (O.S.)

Freeze it.

(she does)

Now pull-up play-back of the kid's interrogation.

A beat. The maze replaced by VSI'S interrogation room.

KID (ON MONITOR)
Don't know what you're talking
about.

LAWYER (ON MONITOR)
Of course you do. And the only shot
you've got of keeping your ass from
sinking in a sea of shit is to tell
me where you got this program.

The kid starts laughing.

TANNER'S VOICE (O.S.)
Freeze it --

The lawyer and the kid suddenly motionless.

INT. CONTROL ROOM

Tanner staring at the kid's frozen image on the monitor.

TANNER
Can you isolate and voice-print the
last sixty audio-bits of both play-
backs?

Emma punches in the command.

The sound of the kid's laughing, playing alongside the
sound of laughter from the maze run.

Tanner staring at the voice prints on the audio-board.

TANNER
Better get Halden down here.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - STREET

Christoph hurries down the street, the sound of nearby
partying echoing all around him.

He turns the corner, finding himself in a --

EXT. DEAD-END ALLEY

A holographic map of Night City shimmers in front of him.

DISEMBODIED FRIENDLY VOICE (O.S.)
You are here.
(a red X glows on
the map)
To reach the club district simply
turn around and head east on Crimson
Street.
(dotted lines show
the path)
To reach the Mardi Gras, simply --

Christoph reaches through the holograph, sliding an access card into an all but invisible slot in the wall.

The map disappears as the wall slides open. Christoph heads through the opening --

INT. PITCH DARKNESS

Christoph's voice echoing through the blackness.

CHRISTOPH'S VOICE (O.S.)

Lights.

The lights snap on, revealing Christoph standing at the entrance of a long utility tunnel which snakes down under the ground.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTROL ROOM

Halden, Dex, and Tanner watch as Emma plays back the maze run.

TANNER

That's the runner's laugh.

Emma plays back the kid's interrogation. The kid laughing.

TANNER

That's the kid's laugh.

(beat)

We ran voice-print. It's not the same person.

Everyone stares at him.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - TUNNEL

Christoph sprints through the tunnel. It winds around into --

INT. DIGITAL EMPLOYEE STORAGE CENTER

A large room full of reserve employees.

Motionless waiters, bartenders, playmates and bellhops stacked along long racks, staring out into space with empty eyes.

Christoph races through the room to the stairs in the back.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTROL ROOM

Halden still staring at Tanner, realizing --

HALDEN

Two maze runners.

TANNER

(nods)

Someone sends the kid a copy of the access program, then runs the maze at the same time the kid does, using the same codes.

EMMA

Why?

TANNER

Because that way, the system only registers a single runner.

(beat)

We go after the kid, leaving the other person free and clear to do whatever the hell they want.

A long terrified beat for this to sink in.

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT CITY - STAIRS

Christoph rushes down the stairs and into --

INT. HALLWAY

A pair of GUARDS stand sentry in front of a large door.

GUARD

Need to see your work orders, sir --

Christoph nods, slamming his fist into the guard's windpipe with deadly force, then spins, snapping the second guard's neck.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI CORPORATE BUILDING - INTERFACE ROOM

The guard's flesh and blood bodies twitching, then fall still as the bio-monitors tracking their brain activity FLATLINES.

An ALARM pounding the room.

Medical technicians rush to the bodies.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTROL ROOM

A warning light erupting on a console. A stunned engineer staring at his screen.

ENGINEER

(calls out)

Two Internals down right outside the Nexus.

The room spins silent. Everyone staring at the monitor which shows the two guards laying dead on the floor.

Halden snaps at Emma.

HALDEN

Pull up the Nexus --

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Christoph punches numbers into the door's keypad. A buzzing, then the door opens for him.

He pulls a HOODED MASK from his pocket, throwing it over his head as he rushes inside --

INT. THE NEXUS CENTER

A large room dominated by a web of catwalks providing access to the several stories worth of program panels lining the walls.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTROL ROOM

Everyone staring at the monitor as the hooded intruder races down a catwalk and opens a program panel.

Inside is a program keyboard and screen. The intruder begins typing on the keyboard.

EMMA

(stunned)

Jesus Christ, he's interfacing.

Tanner spins to Halden.

TANNER

Eject the system!

DEX

(jumps in)

Are you crazy?!

TANNER

You don't have a choice, he's interfacing with a core program --

DEX

-- Trying to interface.

Halden nods, siding with Dex.

HALDEN

He won't get through the security codes.

DEX

(to Emma)

Get every cop who's in the area.

Tell them to rip this fucker out of
there.

TANNER
Won't be time if he gets access --

HALDEN
-- He won't.

His tone clearly indicating end of discussion.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - NEXUS CENTER

Christoph, still wearing the hooded mask, whistles the
Lord's Hymn as his fingers dance across the keyboard.

EMMA'S VOICE (O.S.)
Internal Police in position --

HALDEN'S VOICE (O.S.)
-- Send 'em in!

Several dozen Internal Cops rush in through the door --

Christoph's up above them on a catwalk --

The cops sprinting up the stairs after him --

Christoph typing as fast as he can, furiously trying to
break through the security codes --

CUT TO:

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Everyone's eyes glued to the monitors. Watching the cops
split into two groups.

Christoph's in the middle of a catwalk.

Cops charge him from either direction.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - NEXUS CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Christoph's fingers blurring over the keyboard --

The cops getting closer and closer --

Christoph typing as fast as he can --

The cops are just heartbeats away --

Nothing Christoph can do --

Suddenly stops typing --

Smallest flicker of a smile.

Spins to face one of the charging groups of cops.

CHRISTOPH

(genuinely)
I'm sorry.

LASER CANNON materializing in Christoph's hands --

The cop's face frozen in stunned terror.

Laser cannon erupts --

Blasts through the cops --

Sharp screams of pain as bodies drop --

Christoph spins. Fires on the other group --

CUT TO:

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - INTERFACE ROOM

The internal cops' real bodies lined up in their interface seats.

One by one, down the line, twitching, like some grotesque Rockettes show. Screen monitoring brain activity flatlining --

ALARMS pounding the room.

Medical technicians rushing to bodies. But nothing can be done.

The cops suffering full cerebellum arrest. Instant brain death.

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Everyone watching the massacre in stunned horror. Tanner the first to react, yelling at the engineer --

TANNER
Eject the System!

Engineer turns to Halden.

HALDEN
Do it!

Engineer reaches for his command console.

Dex spins, flash of steel, laser hissing --

Burns a neat hole in the back of the engineer's head, dropping him dead.

Halden whips around, staring at Dex, shocked.

The control room's security force pulling lasers on Dex, but he ignores them as he fires into the eject console --

Sparks fly as metal disintegrates. Twisted remains of circuitry.

Security guards open up fire, lasers carving up Dex's body --

Dex dies, face frozen in a jeering smile.

INT. NIGHT CITY - NEXUS CENTER

Silence. None of the cops alive to scream.

Christoph's surrounded by twisted bodies, blood pooling at his feet.

His eyes burning in genuine anguish.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTROL ROOM

Tanner spins to an engineer, motioning to Christoph's image on the monitor.

TANNER

Run a trace.

Engineer nods, begins the trace.

Tanner stares down at Dex's corpse, then up at Halden --

TANNER

(realizing)

He had access to the keys --

HALDEN

-- Yes.

Halden moves away, that's all he's going to say.

The engineer looks up at Tanner, shaking his head.

ENGINEER

Guy's got one hell of a relay going.

He motions to the multiple grids popping-up on the screen. Each grid showing a different location from around the world.

ENGINEER

We're going to have to search through each possible grid to find him. It's going to take a while.

Tanner studying the screen as if it were a chess board.

Long beat, before --

TANNER

Grid fourteen.

ENGINEER

How do you know?

TANNER

It's the most recursive. Take the longest to search.

(beat)

If he's smart, that's where he is.

Engineer shrugs, might as well try. Eliminates the rest of the grids.

ENGINEER

Let's hope he's smart.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - NEXUS CENTER

Christoph turns back to the program panel and punches in commands. He moves with the confident sense of someone who has total control.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTROL ROOM

Halden stands over Emma, watching as she inspects the smoking remains of the console.

HALDEN

How long 'till we can eject?

EMMA

We're going to have to reconfigure.

HALDEN

How long?

EMMA

At least a day.

Not what Halden wanted to hear. For the first time, a look of real panic in his eyes.

The engineer snaps his eyes up to Tanner, impressed.

ENGINEER

You called it. Dead center in the grid.

TANNER

How far away?

The tracing matrix flashing a single-point coordinate.

ENGINEER

Two hundred and sixty-one kilometers.

Tanner and Halden exchange a look. Smallest flicker of hope.

TANNER

We can be there in fifteen minutes and rip him off the system.

HALDEN

Go!

EXT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - ROOF - MOMENTS LATER

Tanner and the assault team rush to the waiting jet-copters.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - NEXUS CENTER

Christoph has resumed humming the Lord's Hymn. His fingers racing over the keyboard, causing --

CUT TO:

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTROL ROOM

All hell to break lose. Alarms POUNDING the room. Monitors going blank, engineers punching keys in futile frustration.

ENGINEER

He's locked-it up!

EMMA

Completely sealed-off. No one gets in and no one gets out.

ENGINEER

System's running on pure auxiliary.

HALDEN

How long?

Emma's eyes spin down to a monitor.

EMMA

Just over two million people plugged-in.

(runs the calculations)

System can run seven hours before it crashes.

Slowly looks up at Halden.

EMMA

Then everyone dies.

CUT TO:

INT. JET-COPTER - CONTINUOUS

The copter clawing its way through the savage storm.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - NEXUS CENTER

Christoph strips off his mask and grabs a tele-com from a fallen cop. He calmly turns to the monitor.

CHRISTOPH (INTO TELE-COM)

Put on Halden.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTROL ROOM

Emma tries to hand her tele-com to Halden, but he's frozen in place, eyes locked on the monitor.

Christoph, on the monitor, smiles at Halden.

Halden looks like he's staring at a ghost. Finally takes Emma's tele-com.

HALDEN (INTO TELE-COM)

This is Halden.

CHRISTOPH (ON MONITOR)

Halden, how nice to hear your voice.

HALDEN (INTO TELE-COM)

What do you want?

CHRISTOPH (ON MONITOR)

I have found in life that what one wants isn't nearly as important as what one needs.

HALDEN (INTO TELE-COM)

(evenly)

What do you need?

CHRISTOPH (ON MONITOR)

I need to take back what's mine.

Halden stares at him, trying to keep his voice calm.

HALDEN (INTO TELE-COM)

There are two million people in there with you.

CHRISTOPH (ON MONITOR)

Yes.

HALDEN (INTO TELE-COM)

They have nothing to do with this --

CHRISTOPH (ON MONITOR)

-- Two million people lost in the digital night. What do they seek?

Christoph waits for an answer. None is offered.

CHRISTOPH (ON MONITOR)

Do they seek escape? The comfort of eternal night? Or perhaps it's more.

(beat)

Unanswered sins. The taste of death.

He turns to the keyboard, programming --

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - SKY - CONTINUOUS

A small burst of fire falls from the corner of the sky.

EXT. NIGHT CLUB - ROOF

The flames drift down, searing straight through the roof --

INT. NIGHT CLUB - CONTINUOUS

The place is packed full of people. The fire swirling down, looking like part of the light show.

INT. NEXUS CENTER

Christoph's watching the night club on his monitor. A flicker of private torment in his eyes at what he knows is coming.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - CONTINUOUS

The flames drift down onto a YOUNG WOMAN --

Dropping her to the dance floor, writhing in tortured anguish.

She yells for help through the slowest of death as the flames burn through her body.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - TELEGRAPH HILL - CONTINUOUS

The San Francisco VSI public interface center sits perched under the shadows of Coit Tower.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO INTERFACE CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Thousands of customers lie motionless in interface seats. The soft glow of bio-monitors checking vital signs.

One of the monitors begins to buzz.

Several MEDICAL TECHNICIANS rush over, whipping a curtain around the interface seat.

It's the young woman from the night club.

Her eyes thrust back in her head, body contorting in searing pain. Then finally, mercifully, it's over.

Her body limp, bio-monitors showing her brain activity flatlined.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - NIGHT CLUB - CONTINUOUS

More fire cascades down through the roof.

The dancers screaming in panic, pushing and shoving to get

out of there but the doors lock, trapping them inside.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI CORPORATE BUILDING - CONTROL ROOM

Halden's watching on the monitor as the flames rain down.

HALDEN (INTO TELE-COM)

(yells)

God-Damn you!

CHRISTOPH (FROM MONITOR)

Yes, I believe he has --

HALDEN (INTO TELE-COM)

-- You've made your point! You've
got control of the system.

INT. NIGHT CITY - NEXUS CENTER

Christoph nods, punching in commands for --

INT. NIGHT CITY - NIGHT CLUB

The fire flickers, then disappears. No one else has to die.

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTROL ROOM

Christoph turns back from the keyboard, looking out at Halden.

CHRISTOPH (ON MONITOR)

But instincts are so hard to over-
ride.

(matter-of-fact)

Yours will be to try and send
someone in to stop me.

Halden says nothing.

CHRISTOPH (ON MONITOR)

The system's locked-up, so the only
way in is through the maze.

(stares at him)

Which is why I've changed it. Your
access program will no longer work.

He scoops up the laser cannon, aiming for a program panel.

Halden's mind spinning, trying one last tact.

HALDEN (INTO TELE-COM)

System's running on auxiliary. Only
seven hours before it crashes.

CHRISTOPH (ON MONITOR)

True.

HALDEN (INTO TELE-COM)

You're in there. Everybody dies,
you go with them --

CHRISTOPH (ON MONITOR)
-- But don't you remember?
(pointed)
I'm already dead.

He spins, laser cannon HISSING.

Destroys the program panel, causing the rest of the control room's monitors to plunge into darkness.

Sudden, eerie silence as the corporation is now completely cut off from Night City.

CUT TO:

INT. JET-COPTER - CONTINUOUS

The jet-copter shuddering through the storm. Lightning slashing at the night.

Pilot's eyes on the nav-grid. Flashing red.

PILOT
(to Tanner)
We're right above him.

Search lights pounding the darkness. Glinting off some large metal object. It looks like a steeple.

EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

The jet-copter drops through the tempest, landing in the field across from the church.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Powerful search lights screaming through the stained glass windows, washing the church in an ethereal mosaic of color.

The sounds of the storm crashing into the walls.

A flash of lightning revealing the doors and windows have all been rigged with trip wire booby traps.

EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Tanner leads the assault team as they rush across the field.

INT. CHURCH

The doors crash open as Tanner and the men charge in.

The trip wires broken.

An explosion --

Of sound as organ music suddenly blares out.

Recording of a choir kicking in, heavenly voices blasting from all directions.

The assault team standing rigid in place, staring up at --

Christoph hanging crucifixion style from the blood-streaked cross.

He is dead, a wire running from his finger down to a portable computer on the alter.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - CONTINUOUS

Halden hurries down the hallway with Emma at his side.

HALDEN

Have communications contact all interface centers. Tell them due to high demand, we're at full capacity and so temporarily there's no room for anyone else on the system.

EMMA

What about the customers with reservations?

HALDEN

Have the staff apologize profusely and issue credit vouchers.

(adamant)

But remember, it's a capacity problem. That's all.

Emma nods, understands.

HALDEN

And send someone through the maze.

She stares at him, not sure she heard this right.

EMMA

The maze has been changed --

HALDEN

(snaps)

-- He says the maze has been changed.
I need to know for sure.

He turns the corner, disappearing out the door before she can respond.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

The assault team takes Christoph's corpse off the cross and lays him out on the alter.

ASSAULT TEAM LEADER

(stares at Tanner)

Thought you were just talking to
this guy?

TANNER

We were.

ASSAULT TEAM LEADER

Yeah, well feel this fucker's skin.
Ice cold.

(trying to understand)

I guarantee you this sonofabitch's
been dead at least half a day.

A beat for this to sink in. Everybody staring at
Christoph's corpse like they were looking at the Devil.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - NEXUS CENTER

Christoph punches a command into the keyboard. Bodies and
the blood disappear, leaving no sign of the killing.

Sound of clapping. Christoph whirls. It's Dex.

DEX

Ah, the perks of paradise. So easy
to hide your guilt.

Both men stare at each other.

CHRISTOPH

Remember, I'm not the one who chose
this.

DEX

Yes, so which one of us does that
make the coward?

A deadly smile on Christoph's lips as he lets this one go.
He turns and heads down the catwalk.

DEX

Where the hell are you going?

CHRISTOPH

Unfinished business.

DEX

And what about the reconfiguration?

CHRISTOPH

Perfect opportunity for you to
demonstrate your continued worth.

Christoph disappears down the stairs.

Dex leans over the railing, waiting until Christoph comes
out onto the ground floor, yelling to him --

DEX

You sure he's going to come?

CHRISTOPH

(calls back)
It's his nature.

DEX
But what if he doesn't --

CHRISTOPH
-- He will.

He heads out through the door.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - INTERFACE ROOM

Emma watches as an ENGINEER climbs into an interface seat.

EMMA
You don't have to run the whole
thing. Just probe the first few
seconds.

ENGINEER
Piece of cake.

He gives her a thumbs-up, no point in showing the fear.
Then sticks his finger into the connect-box.

INT. THE NET - CONTINUOUS

Blackness of the void.

A blink of a light. Colorless. Racing into the maze --

An explosion of color and shapes hurtling all around with
blurring speed --

The engineer navigates around the first corner, cutting a
safe path, the "keys" seeming to be working, only --

Suddenly everything shifting. Get the hell out of there.
Only behind him, the maze morphing --

Dizzying design of color. Breath-taking beauty. Closing
in on him. Nowhere to run --

Flash of bright light.

The sound of a tortured SCREAM.

Then nothing. Silence...

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

The rain has started to slow.

The assault team's outside, smoking cigarettes,
bullshitting with each other, trying to forget what they
saw in there, as --

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Tanner probes through Christoph's blood stained computer.
Stops on a program. Complex codes flashing down the
screen.

TANNER
Voice activate.

SYNTHETIC VOICE (FROM COMPUTER)
Activated.

TANNER
Program name?

SYNTHETIC VOICE
Resurrection.

TANNER
Describe program function.

A soft whir as the machine checks.

SYNTHETIC VOICE
Resurrection.

Tanner stares at the codes, his face torn with revulsion.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - NEXUS

Dex stands alone in the middle of the Nexus.

He punches a command into the programming panel, causing
the small roll of fat to disappear from his gut.

He smiles in satisfaction, then throws in another command.
His hair thickening, flecks of gray evaporating.

He enters one last command. Last fifteen years of lines
melting from his face.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

The roar of a jet-copter fills the church.

Tanner snaps his eyes out a window. Halden and his men
pouring from the copter.

Tanner whips his attention back to the computer, talking
as fast as he can.

TANNER
Transmit copy of program via
satellite north uplink.

SYNTHETIC VOICE
Destination?

TANNER
Tanner-eighteen-six-two-nine.

SYNTHETIC VOICE

Checking connection.

CUT TO:

EXT. TANNER'S WAREHOUSE LOFT - CONTINUOUS

The place is dark and empty.

The storm crashing against the windows as the wall monitor snaps on to the garbled sound of machines talking to each other.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Tanner stares out the window, watching as Halden and company rush toward the church.

SYNTHETIC VOICE

Connection approved. Ready to
transmit --

TANNER

-- Transmit now!

CUT TO:

INT. TANNER'S WAREHOUSE LOFT - CONTINUOUS

The program codes racing down the monitor.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

Halden and his men head straight for the alter, staring down at Christoph's corpse in disgust.

Tanner's eyes burning into Halden.

TANNER

You had no right!

Halden calmly turns to face him.

HALDEN

You're jumping to conclusions.

TANNER

He's not plugged-into the system.
He's in the fucking system!

Halden doesn't argue.

TANNER

Who the hell do you think you are --

Halden snaps a silent command for his men to clear out. He waits until they're out the door before turning back to Tanner.

HALDEN

We caught him working on neural map

transfers. We dug through his system. He was trying to transfer genetic modules into data-molds. His employment was instantly terminated.

(seemingly genuine)
Corporate hands are clean.

Tanner's eyes dig into him.

TANNER
Try harder.

HALDEN
Christoph had spinal cancer. His body kept rejecting gene therapy. He was desperate.
(insists)
It was him, it wasn't us --

TANNER
-- I saw the program.

This freezes Halden.

TANNER
Corporate fingerprints all over it.

HALDEN
Of course they are.
(explains)
Christoph was stealing every piece of code he could get his hands on.

TANNER
And you weren't involved.

It takes all of Tanner's energy to hold back the rage.

TANNER
Because why the hell would you be interested in a program that allows people to live inside your machines?
(locks eyes with him)
I mean how much profit could there possibly be from owning the universe and selling space in it to people who are dying, or people who are just God-Damned sick of this world --

HALDEN
-- Come on, you know F.C.O. regs. Anyone caught with their R and D hand in the bio-digitization cookie jar spends the rest of their life in federal penitentiary.
(swears)
It's not worth it.

Tanner studies Halden for several long beats, then shakes his head.

TANNER

You're loosing your touch.
(pointed)
Used to be a hell of a lot harder to
know when you're lying.

He turns and heads for the door as --

HALDEN
He sealed-off the system.

Tanner doesn't stop, almost near the door.

HALDEN
The only way to eject it is from the
inside.

TANNER
(without turning)
You've got the keys, send someone
in --

HALDEN
-- Christoph changed the maze.

This freezes Tanner.

HALDEN
I need someone who can run it blind.

Search lights blare through the stained glass windows,
smearing Tanner's face in color.

HALDEN
Two million people in there, Tanner.

Tanner slowly turns around.

HALDEN
And if the system crashes, they all
get to spend the rest of their lives
hooked-up to God-Damn coma machines.

Tanner stares at him. No choice. Halden smiles.

TANNER
One condition.

HALDEN
What?

TANNER
The truth.

Halden studies Tanner. No negotiation. Halden's smile
fades.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - THE TERRACE - PENTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The penthouse apartment is completely barren except for a
beige couch.

CHRISTOPH'S VOICE (O.S.)

Enlarge to one-hundred and seventy.

The couch increases in size.

CHRISTOPH'S VOICE (O.S.)

Bump to one-hundred and eighty.

The couch gets a little bigger.

Christoph sits on the floor, studying the image of a couch which flickers on the screen of the small rectangular viewer he holds.

CHRISTOPH

Off-white pleats.

The pleats appear on the couch across from him.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - A LITTLE LATER

Halden escorts Tanner down the corridor.

A small knot of GUARDS stand rigidly in front of an office. Halden nods to them and they unlock the door, stepping away.

INT. CHRISTOPH'S OFFICE

Halden motions Tanner into Christoph's office.

HALDEN

Exactly as Christoph left it.

The office is perfectly clean and organized.

A dialysis machine next to the desk. Several computers. Wall size monitor.

Tanner looks through the desk. A couple of disks. Empty morphine vials. A hypodermic. Not much else.

The work table dominated by a scaled model of a building.

TANNER

What is it?

HALDEN

The Terrace. First building
Christoph ever programmed for us.

TANNER

A hotel?

HALDEN

It's not used for anything.

Tanner looks up at him for an explanation.

HALDEN

Christoph was a brilliant
programmer, but very eccentric.
(beat)

He insisted it be kept vacant.

TANNER

Why?

HALDEN

He wouldn't say.

Tanner stares at him.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TERRACE - PENTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The apartment is now fully furnished in perfect Park Avenue chic.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Christoph sits in an antique chair across from the large canopy bed, staring in rapt fascination at --

INT. VIEWER SCREEN

Various unconnected images flash by in dream-like quality:

A young freckled-face boy being tucked into bed.

A rat-hole of an apartment, broken windows, and blood stained walls.

Two teenage boys with baseball bats beat the shit out of a young girl.

A sickly looking man taking a shower.

A black dress is pulled from a store rack, a hand turning around the tag so the price can be seen. The dress is quickly put back --

INT. BEDROOM

Christoph looks up from the viewer, his eyes sliding to the closet.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI BUILDING - CHRISTOPH'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Halden watches as Tanner probes through Christoph's computer files.

TANNER

Christoph was in charge of designing building modules.

HALDEN

That's right.

TANNER

Then what's with all the staffing programs in his account?

HALDEN

Good question.

Tanner looks up, but Halden isn't going to give him any help on this one.

The computer screen flashing images of waiters, waitresses, hosts, playmates, bell-boys.

Tanner staring at the pictures of digital employees whipping across the screen, slowly realizing...

TANNER

Modules.

He stares back up at Halden.

TANNER

Takes you a long time to build a staffing program from the bottom up.

Halden's not saying a damn word. Tanner looks disgusted as he puts it together.

TANNER

Be a hell of a lot easier to digitize a real person, then strip them down to a module you can use to make as many employee programs as you need.

HALDEN

(long beat)

Yes, in theory, I suppose that would work.

But Tanner isn't interested in theory, his eyes tearing into him.

TANNER

Who did he digitize?

HALDEN

Listen to yourself. Digitization.

(smiles)

You know that officially that's a pure fantasy --

TANNER

-- Who did he digitize?!

A frozen beat, then Halden meets Tanner's stare.

HALDEN

Christoph had complete autonomy.

(seemingly genuine)

Because I didn't want to know.

He snaps off the computer, signaling the end of the conversation.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - THE TERRACE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The candle-opera has been placed on the dresser, bathing the room in golden light.

Gena materializes on the bed. She is naked.

She looks around the room disorientated.

A long beat, then she climbs to her feet, moving unsteadily across the hardwood floor. It is almost as if she is drunk.

She freezes as she catches her reflection in the mirror. She looks surprised that she is naked.

INT. WALK-IN CLOSET

The closet is full of clothes. She stares at them with a puzzled expression, then pulls a dress off a hanger.

It is the black dress that was seen in the viewer.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI HEADQUARTERS - HALLWAY

Emma stands in front of the interface room, waiting for Tanner and Halden as they head down the hallway toward her.

She holds up a mini-disk for Tanner to see.

EMMA

We're sending you in with a top-level access card. It'll get you into every program, including the core.

Halden locks eyes with Tanner.

HALDEN

Obviously, not something Christoph should get his hands on.

Tanner nods as they head inside --

INT. INTERFACE ROOM

Emma leads them across the room to an interface seat.

EMMA

We've rigged the card so it should stay attached to you as you run the maze.

(beat)

So once you materialize inside, it should be on the ground right next to you.

TANNER

Good.

She loads the mini-disk into the interface seat.

EMMA

With the access card it should be easy. All you've got to do is get into the core program and hot-wire the eject sequence.

(warns)

But be prepared, it'll be a hard eject --

A technician wheels up his medi-cart.

EMMA

All the infrastructure gets dumped, then everyone's ripped out into the net.

Tanner nods, then turns his attention to the technician.

TANNER

Adrenaline. 140 cc's.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN

(filling the syringe)

Man likes his juice.

TANNER

And once I'm through, bring me down fast with Dexaline.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN

(under his breath)

If you get through...

Emma shoots him a hard look. Technician shrugs, calls it as he sees it.

Tanner rolls up his sleeve as he climbs into the interface seat.

TANNER

Let's do it --

The technician sticks the needle into Tanner's arm.

Only a beat before the adrenaline hits Tanner's system. His body shaking, eyes rolling back in his head.

The technician eyes the bio-monitor, waiting until Tanner is peaking before plunging Tanner's finger into the connect-box.

INT. THE NET - BLACKNESS

Slice of color racing toward us. Hyper-fast.

Tanner hurtling toward it. Explosion of light. Blinding intensity.

Tanner rips through the maze, navigating at dizzying speed through the interlocking patterns.

Dodging and twisting through the blur of obstacles.

Under it all, a sound. Almost a voice. Female. Too faint to hear. Calling out 'Tanner'.

Dropping down. Into the maze's heart. Lines slamming at him. No way to beat it, only he's --

Spinning between the lines. Always changing. Too fast to see. Making it down into --

The center of the maze.

An intricate pattern so dense it looks like a solid, impenetrable wall of light --

The wall collapsing in on Tanner. No escape --

He rockets straight into it. Inevitable death --

Only he screams straight up, twisting, spinning, hurtling through the tiniest of fractures and out the other side into --

Nothingness. Empty blackness.

Then the muffled sound of breathing. Dull thud of a heartbeat, followed by music. Louder and louder. A hard driving samba.

A thick mist covering fluttering images.

There are people here. Too many of them. Screaming. A hideous sound.

INT. NIGHT CITY - MARDE GRAS SQUARE

Tanner materializing in the midst of the pulsing street party.

Ornate costumes. Vivid colors. Crush of celebrants gyrating to the music.

The ACCESS CARD materializes on the ground next to him.

Tanner picks up the card, his eyes blinking, fighting for clarity.

But the adrenaline pounding his vision. Everything distorted. Grotesque...

A face cuts through the chaos. Angelic beauty. Katie --

Tanner stares at her. She sees him, face breaking into a smile.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - PENTHOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gena, wearing the black dress, stumbles out of the bedroom and around the living room in growing confusion.

Christoph sits on the couch, calmly watching her.

She finally turns to him.

GENA

It's all here...

CHRISTOPH

(proud)

Yes.

She shakes her head, stunned.

GENA

But it's everything. Everything
I've seen. Everything I've
wanted...

(barely audible)

Only I know about all of this --

Her eyes suddenly frozen at the photos on the mantle.

They're her photos. Baby picture. High school
graduation. Wedding photo.

She is beginning to tremble.

The doorbell rings.

Several digital waiters and waitresses head out of the
kitchen, carrying silver trays of hor d'oeuvres and
champagne.

Christoph stands, kissing Gena on the cheek.

CHRISTOPH

The guests are here.

GENA

(whispers)

Guests?

CHRISTOPH

Just like you always wanted.

A digital jazz band materializes in the corner.

CHRISTOPH

Get out of South Dakota and move to
New York where you can throw
cocktail parties in your Park Avenue
apartment.

She's trying to process all of this, but it's too
overwhelming. The only words she can manage are --

GENA

But this is impossible.

CHRISTOPH

That's the grace of this world.

(smiles)

Nothing's impossible.

The doorbell rings again. He motions to her bare feet.

CHRISTOPH
Better get some shoes on.

He turns to answer the door.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI BUILDING - INTERFACE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The medical technician's eyes are glued to the bio-monitor.

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN
(amazed)
He made it! Son-of-a-bitch actually
ran it!

Emma's eyes involuntarily flick down to her watch.

EMMA
Just under five hours left before it
crashes.

Halden's face is impassive, revealing nothing.

The medical technician shoots Tanner up with dexaline.

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - MARDE GRAS SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Tanner is still fighting his way to Katie. She's laughing, urging him on.

The dexaline starting to clear his consciousness.

He's finally able to focus. The street. Buildings. And Katie. Only it's not Katie.

Just someone that looks a little like her. The woman laughing with her companion.

Tanner stands frozen in the middle of the street. He looks out of place. Haunted eyes in the midst of wild celebration.

He quickly turns and heads out of the square.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TERRACE - HALLWAY

About a dozen well-dressed GUESTS stand waiting outside. They all hold invitations.

The door opens and Christoph greets them with a warm smile.

CHRISTOPH
Please, come on in.

As they head into the apartment, the elevator arrives in the hall, bringing more people.

Christoph ushers in this new group, then slips into the elevator.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Gena still stands barefooted in the middle of the room.

The band starts up, pouring sultry jazz throughout the room.

More and more people are filtering inside. Gena stands there rigid, a sense of growing panic in her eyes.

She can feel people beginning to stare at her.

Someone pops open a champagne bottle. Sound of laughter.

More guests arrive. A man in the corner smiles at her, beckoning her over.

She backs away from him, moving unsteadily through the party and out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE TERRACE - ROOF TOP GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Gena remains asleep on the brass bed.

The sound of distant jazz music fills the air, waking her up.

As her eyes open, she sees Christoph heading silently toward her. He motions for her to close her eyes.

CHRISTOPH

It's okay, go back to sleep.

But something about his voice sets her on edge.

GENA

What's happening?

CHRISTOPH

(soothing)

Nothing, go back to sleep.

But she sees the glint of steel in his hand. The laser he has hidden down by his side.

She bolts upright --

GENA

What the hell's going on?!

He looks uncomfortable, this isn't a confrontation he was expecting. Finally...

CHRISTOPH

It's time to wake up.

GENA

Wake up?!

CHRISTOPH

From the dream.

She doesn't know what the hell he's talking about and she doesn't want to know. She flies off the bed, only --

He moves with blurring speed, grabbing her, throwing her back onto the bed. She's pleading now.

GENA

Don't fucking do this. I've got a son. I'm all he's got. So don't you dare fucking do this --

Hissing of a laser.

Burns a hole right between her eyes.

A blood trickle smearing the mattress.

Christoph's face is a study in anguish.

The jazz music still bathing the roof. He whips around.

Gena stands across the roof staring at him. The digitized Gena, the one who is barefooted and wearing the black dress.

She is shaking, her face white as a ghost.

CHRISTOPH

It's okay.

DIGITAL GENA

(barely audible)

Okay...

CHRISTOPH

(reassuring)

It's all been transferred.

She doesn't understand. He moves to her, his voice impassioned.

CHRISTOPH

Genetic codes. Consciousness.
Unconsciousness. Every single
dream. Every kiss, real or
imagined. The shadows of her soul.
It's all in you.

She stares at him, her voice trembling.

DIGITAL GENA

Why?

CHRISTOPH

To live forever.

His face burns with compassion as he explains.

CHRISTOPH

People plug-into this world, but

remain linked to their flesh and blood body. Such an encumbrance.

(beat)

Even if their bodies are kept on machines, nourished by IV's, the laws of nature eventually will be respected. The body grows old and dies. Then they're gone from both worlds.

Somewhere deep inside, she is beginning to understand. But it brings her no comfort.

Christoph heads for the elevator, motioning for her to follow. But she doesn't.

DIGITAL GENA

She said I have a son...

CHRISTOPH

No, she said she had a son.

(quiet)

In a dream she once called life.

She stares at him.

DIGITAL GENA

How come I can't remember?

CHRISTOPH

Because I took it out of your memory.

DIGITAL GENA

(beat)

Why --

CHRISTOPH

(spins on her)

-- Because there'll be no remorse.
Not in my world.

A private darkness in his eyes as he turns and disappears into the elevator, leaving her alone on the roof.

The sound of partying echoing through the night.

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT CITY - STREET

Tanner moves down the crowded street, passing --

EXT. THE GATES

A growing mob of angry people bottlenecked out front.

HOSTESS

The gates are temporarily closed for routine maintenance. But they will reopen soon --

OLDER MAN

-- Been saying that for an hour,
now!

HOSTESS
It won't be much longer.
(cheerful)
And we do appreciate your patience.

DISTRAUGHT WOMAN
But I need to get back now. I've
got to pick my kids up from school!

The hostess keeps smiling, it's all she's programmed to do.

HOSTESS
To help make the short wait more
enjoyable, drinks are on the house
across the street at Dante's Tavern.

But there are no takers. Everyone keeping their place in line as these people need to get home.

Tanner cuts through the crowd, his eyes burning with determination.

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT CITY - TIVOLI PARK

Tanner moves pass the carnival and is about to turn the corner, but stops as he catches a glimpse of a familiar building.

The Terrace is right across the street.

The building is dark except for the flashing lights from the top floor.

Tanner stares up at the lights.

INT. THE TERRACE - LOBBY

The marbled lobby is like a museum. Priceless paintings and tapestries fill the walls.

Tanner heads through the lobby and into --

INT. OUTDOOR GLASS ELEVATOR

He pushes the button for the penthouse.

The elevator glides effortlessly up the side of the building.

The colored lights of Night City swirling through the glass.

INT. THE TERRACE - PENTHOUSE

Tanner slowly steps inside. He's tensed, not really knowing what to expect.

The party is in full-swing. Someone offers Tanner champagne but he declines.

He looks around the room, his eyes stopping on the mantle.

He picks up one of the photos of Gena --

OLDER WOMAN

You looking for her?

Tanner looks up at the woman.

OLDER WOMAN

She went up.

TANNER

Up?

OLDER WOMAN

(points)

To the roof.

EXT. THE TERRACE - ROOF

Tanner moves slowly across the roof, the candles throwing flickering images across his face.

He stops at the brass bed. It is empty save for the blood stain.

GENA'S VOICE (O.S.)

You work for them, don't you.

Tanner spins. The digital Gena sits in the corner. She tries to force a smile.

DIGITAL GENA

That would explain your little disappearing act in the bar.

He takes a slow, cautious step toward her.

TANNER

What happened here --

DIGITAL GENA

-- He works for them too, doesn't he?

TANNER

(beat)

Who?

DIGITAL GENA

The sonofabitch who did this.

She pierces her arm with a broach pin. She doesn't bleed.

DIGITAL GENA

(quiet shame)

I'm not real, am I?

He stares at her, doesn't know the answer to that one.

She meets his stare, terrified of the answer.

DIGITAL GENA
And I can't go back, can I?

Tanner wishes he could lie. But can't.

TANNER
That's right.

She absorbs this in steely silence. Longest of beats.

DIGITAL GENA
He failed.

She stares at him, trying to keep back the emotions.

DIGITAL GENA
I'm making a sandwich. Just like my mom would. It's raining outside. The sandwich isn't for me. It's for him. And that makes me feel something.
(barely audible)
No words for it. But I'll never forget.

Her eyes are wet. Her voice coming out in a tortured whisper.

DIGITAL GENA
All the memories around him are still there...

He watches her, tormented by the fact that he can't find anything comforting to say.

She turns her eyes out into the night, giving him silent permission to leave.

EXT. THE TERRACE - MOMENTS LATER

The elevator deposits Tanner down on the street as the Tivoli's fireworks show starts overhead.

Colored explosions raining down as Tanner disappears into the night.

INT. DEAD-END ALLEY - A LITTLE LATER

Tanner heads into the alley. A holographic map of Night City shimmers in front of him.

DISEMBODIED FRIENDLY VOICE (O.S.)
You are here.
(red X glows on the map)
To reach the club district, simply turn around and head --

Tanner reaches through the holograph, sliding his access card into the slot on the wall.

The map disappears as the wall opens.

INT. DARKNESS

Tanner's voice calls out.

TANNER'S VOICE (O.S.)

Lights.

The lights flicker on as Tanner races down the tunnel, sprinting around the bend and into --

INT. DIGITAL EMPLOYEE STORAGE CENTER

The long rows of storage racks are empty, the reserve employees no longer there.

Tanner stares uneasily at the barren racks as he makes his way through the room and down the stairs into --

INT. HALLWAY

Tanner slides his access card into the door. It opens for him, revealing --

INT. NEXUS CENTER

The place is buzzing with activity.

Dex supervises an army of digital employees as they move across the catwalks rewiring the program panels with cables.

Tanner silently slips into the room and up the --

INT. STAIRS

Tanner makes his way up around the corner, suddenly coming face to face with a WAITER --

Only unlike the usual polite cheerfulness programmed into Night City's waiters, this guy has been given a hard, glaring face.

The waiter pulls his laser --

Tanner hurls himself forward, knocking both of them to the floor.

It's Tanner who manages to come up with the gun.

The waiter squeezing Tanner's throat with savage force as Tanner fires, again and again.

The waiter twitching, then falling motionless. His body sliced with holes but not bleeding.

Tanner pockets the gun and heads up the stairs --

INT. CATWALK

The catwalk is crawling with digital employees, all of them armed.

INT. STAIRS

Tanner takes a deep breath, then walks right out onto --

INT. CATWALK

Tanner walks briskly, eyes down on the steel grating, assuming the attitude of someone who belongs there.

He opens a program panel, typing commands into the keyboard.

SYNTHETIC VOICE (FROM PROGRAM)
Food and service program sub-six.
Access codes required.

Tanner pulls out his access card and slides it into the panel.

A clicking sound as data glitters across the screen.

Tanner steals a quick look around.

Dex is heading out onto the catwalk. He has his back turned to Tanner and hasn't seen him yet.

Tanner spins back to the program, data still whipping across the screen. Tanner silently urges it on, faster and faster.

And finally it buzzes --

SYNTHETIC VOICE
Access granted.
(beat)
Male or female?

TANNER
Male.

SYNTHETIC VOICE
Waiter, busboy, Maitre-De --

TANNER
-- Waiter.

Dex is now turning in Tanner's direction.

SYNTHETIC VOICE
Standard, modern, upscale --

TANNER
-- Standard.

SYNTHETIC VOICE

Scanning body type.

Tanner turns to the wall, trying to keep his face hidden as Dex approaches.

Long frozen beat.

Dex is almost right on top of him --

The program buzzes --

Tanner is now wearing a waiter's uniform.

Dex's hand slams down on the back of Tanner's shoulder --

Tanner tenses, hand reaching for his laser, only --

Dex twists Tanner's head so it's looking up at the open program panel.

DEX

Keep this one shut, we're not wiring
it.

Tanner nods, keeping his back turned to him.

Dex moves on, continuing with his inspection. Tanner pulls the access card from the program and heads back to the --

INT. STAIRS

Tanner, still in a waiter's uniform, heads up to the --

INT. FIFTH FLOOR CATWALK

He moves to another program panel and opens it, typing into the keyboard.

SYNTHETIC VOICE

Core program. Access codes
required.

Tanner starts to slide in the access card but freezes.

Still heartbeat. Tanner whirls to the side.

CHRISTOPH is a hair's breath away. Perfectly still. Calm smile of someone who's been standing there a while.

CHRISTOPH

An honor. The legend visits.

Tanner's hand dives for his laser.

CHRISTOPH

Mistake --

Tanner is fast. But Christoph's a blur. Beyond human speed.

Snaps the laser from Tanner's hand and flings it harmlessly down the catwalk.

Christoph turns, regarding Tanner with genuine respect.

CHRISTOPH
Maker of the perfect maze.
Impossible to run. So many try,
none succeed. Yet, you're here.
(impressed)
You succeeded.

Tanner stares at him, trying to understand.

TANNER
The patterns were moved around, but
they weren't changed.

CHRISTOPH
True. But why?

He lets the question hang there, then takes a step toward Tanner.

CHRISTOPH
Halden sent men to kill me in my
sleep, but simple illusions won out.
(beat)
So he now sends the legend to finish
the deed.

TANNER
No.

CHRISTOPH
Then what?

Tanner is silent. Christoph's eyes burn into him.

CHRISTOPH
Eject the system?

Christoph steps even closer. Tanner can feel his breath.

CHRISTOPH
But what would happen to me? I have
no body to return to.

TANNER
Not my problem.

CHRISTOPH
So wrong --

He moves so fast, impossible for Tanner to react.

Picks up Tanner and hurls him down the catwalk.

Tanner crashes hard into the steel grating. Searing pain as he fights for a breath.

He sees his laser not that far away.

Tanner lunges, one fluid motion, grabs the laser, spins and fires --

Only Christoph is no longer there.

Tanner's shot burning through a wall.

Christoph is now on the other side of Tanner. Foot blurring down, pinning Tanner's gun hand to the ground.

CHRISTOPH

I will not die. Not again.

(intense)

One of the perks of divinity.

Tanner stares at him.

TANNER

Divinity?

CHRISTOPH

Yes.

TANNER

You are not a God.

CHRISTOPH

In here I am.

No bravado in how he says it. Merely a statement of fact.

CHRISTOPH

God creates man, man creates technology, technology creates God.

(beat)

End into beginning.

TANNER

In a computer program.

CHRISTOPH

The new world.

TANNER

It's not real.

CHRISTOPH

Not real?

His foot suddenly smashing into Tanner's gut.

CHRISTOPH

The pain is real.

Rips a STEEL POLE from the railing and slams it into Tanner.

CHRISTOPH

Deliciously real.

He pulls Tanner to his feet.

CHRISTOPH

And if I kill you?

Dangles Tanner over the railing. Hell of a drop.

CHRISTOPH

Your body could live up there. But
on a machine. No mind. No dreams.

(hisses)

So tell me this isn't real.

Silence. Pain spasms through Tanner.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Enough.

A frozen beat. Then Christoph pulls Tanner back up to the catwalk.

KATIE is there.

Tanner stares at her. She starts to say something but Christoph stops her cold with a look, then turns to Tanner.

CHRISTOPH

Such a kind man, your employer.

(beat)

Allowing you to fall in love with a program.

Katie can no longer look at Tanner, her eyes down on the grating.

CHRISTOPH

But she wasn't a designed program.

Not this angel.

(reverently)

We digitized her from flesh and blood.

His eyes flick from Katie to Tanner.

CHRISTOPH

I was going to tell you, but Halden wouldn't allow it. His nature demands no lose ends.

(quietly)

So the flesh and blood Katie was killed.

Tanner's face is a mask, revealing nothing. Christoph locks eyes with him.

CHRISTOPH

Yet she lives on in here, mind, body and soul.

His stare now ripping into Tanner --

CHRISTOPH

So you of all people, should know this world is just as real, if not more than the nightmare you call the real world.

(disgust)

People praying to Gods who don't listen. Violence and decay. No

rhyme or reason. To be young and told you are dying. Nothing can be done. Promise of life gone. That will never happen here.

Tanner meets his stare.

TANNER

You were the one who was dying.

CHRISTOPH

(a whisper)

Yes...

Tanner's eyes burn with rage.

TANNER

You sealed off the system. When it crashes, everyone dies with you.

CHRISTOPH

Yes, but only in the dream they call life.

TANNER

Dream?!

CHRISTOPH

And all dreams, no matter how appealing, must eventually end.

Tanner stares at him as if looking at insanity.

Christoph smiles, eerie calm as he turns to close the open program panel.

Tanner dives with savage speed, grabbing the laser from the ground.

The Nexus Center erupts with the SOUND of people pulling guns --

KATIE

Tanner --

Hundreds of lasers being trained on Tanner --

Tanner grabs Christoph, using him as a shield, the laser jammed into Christoph's back.

Only Christoph fades away. Just like that.

Tanner standing exposed on the catwalk.

The sound of lasers FIRING.

Tanner racing for cover.

INT. GROUND FLOOR

Christoph materializes next to Dex, watching up above as --

INT. FIFTH FLOOR CATWALK

Lasers carve the air around Tanner.

Hissing and popping as chunks of metal disintegrate.

Tanner dives across the catwalk, throwing himself down into the relative safety of --

INT. STAIRWELL

Tanner pulls his laser as he races down the stairs.

INT. GROUND FLOOR

Christoph grabs Dex's gun and calmly fires into a program panel.

The panel sparks, circuitry destroyed, causing --

INT. STAIRWELL

The stairs to flicker, then disappear. Tanner falling through empty space --

INT. GROUND FLOOR

Tanner crashes hard to the ground with an explosion of pain.

He comes up limping as laser fire slams all around him, He hurls himself through the door and out into --

INT. HALLWAY

He tries to run but his leg buckles, sending him sprawling to the floor. He picks himself up, clawing his way up the stairs --

INT. HALLWAY

Tanner is forcing himself to limp-run down the hallway, pushing himself as fast as he can.

Behind him, he can hear the footsteps of Dex and the men quickly gaining on him.

CUT TO:

INT. THE TERRACE - ROOF - CONTINUOUS

The party has migrated to the roof.

The digital Gena stands silently in the corner, staring out at the people. They all seem so happy.

She grabs a glass of wine from a passing waiter.

She moves out into the center of the roof, drinking the wine and swaying to the jazz music.

Several of the single men trying to establish eye contact with her.

She begins to smile. It's the kind of smile that could turn to tears at any moment.

A dreamy look on her face as she walks across the party and straight off the roof.

Falling through the night.

EXT. NIGHT CITY - SIDEWALK

Her bloodless body laying twisted on the ground.

The soft breeze tugging at her coat, opening it enough to see the photo nestled against her chest.

It's a photo of Gena as a small child. The saddest of smiles...

CUT TO:

EXT. DEAD-END ALLEY

Tanner heads out through the alley and into the --

EXT. STREET

His eyes searching for a place to hide. Sees the dance club across the street.

Tanner limps for the club as Dex and his men come screaming out of the alley in hot pursuit.

INT. HADES DANCE CLUB

Strobe lights slash the darkness.

Swirling sea of people.

Loud, angry, music.

Hard to make out faces in the flashes of illumination.

Tanner tries to lose himself in the anonymity of the crowd.

Christoph has joined Dex and the men as they slice through the club, eyes darting back and forth.

Tanner angles for the rear exit.

A slam-dancer crashes into him, sending him sprawling to the floor.

Christoph cutting across the club toward Tanner.

Tanner tries to stand but can't, his leg no longer able to hold his weight.

He sees Christoph heading toward him.

Tanner trying to scramble out of the way.

Christoph's eyes are scanning the faces around him, and it appears he doesn't see Tanner down on the floor.

The song ends, people stop dancing.

Tanner finds a table and holes up under it --

INT. UNDER THE TABLE

Tanner allows himself a deep breath.

A sudden EXPLOSION of sound.

Tanner spins, laser pointed.

But it's just the next song starting. Tanner exhales.

The table is no longer there.

Christoph has ripped it off the ground and flung it out onto the dance floor.

Tanner swings the laser around.

CHRISTOPH
(shakes his head)
Halden's little killer, who --

Tanner FIRES!

The shot slams through Christoph's face but does absolutely no damage.

CHRISTOPH
Can't kill a God.

Tanner fires again. And again.

The shots hit Christoph but don't hurt him.

Christoph reaches down, pulling Tanner to his feet.

Dex and the rest of the men crowd around, guns drawn.

Christoph kisses Tanner on the check, then steps away.

Tanner looking for a place to run to, but he's surrounded.

Dex and the men firing --

Music drowning out all sound.

Strobe lights carving quick bursts of images.

Laser fire slamming through Tanner --

Hit from all sides. Again and again --

His eyes straining to hold on to life.

Muzzle flashes. More shots. Tanner's body twisting.

Music screaming down from the heavens.

Lasers ripping through his body.

Eyes finally going blank as he crumples to the floor.

Christoph motions to Dex.

CHRISTOPH

His access card.

Dex bends down for it, but suddenly freezes --

There's no blood.

Not one single drop.

Dex whips his eyes up to Christoph in stunned realization --

DEX

Son-of-a-bitch digitized himself!

But Christoph's no longer there --

CUT TO:

INT. NIGHT CITY - NEXUS CENTER - CONTINUOUS

The real Tanner stands on the catwalk, plugging his access card into the core program panel.

Data swirls across the screen. Several long beats.

DISEMBODIED VOICE (FROM PROGRAM)

Access approved.

Tanner begins punching in the eject command.

Codes streaking down the screen.

He suddenly stops, grabs his laser and whirls.

A person in the shadows.

Tanner is about to shoot when the person steps forward.

It's Katie. Standing very still. Watching him.

His gun aimed at her.

KATIE

You have to do this?

He slowly lowers the weapon.

KATIE

Someone you have to get back to?

TANNER

No.

She nods, her eyes aching. She steps toward him, struggling for the words.

KATIE

I asked Christoph to take it out of
my memory.

Data smearing down the program screen, reflected off her
face.

KATIE

But he wouldn't.

Her voice is suddenly very small and vulnerable.

KATIE

So every single time I close my eyes
it's there. All of it.

Searching his face. Afraid of the answer.

KATIE

You?

Long beat. The words crawling from his throat.

TANNER

I remember.

She slowly reaches out. Touching his face. So familiar.

KATIE

Isn't it better than whatever you
have waiting for you up there?

He doesn't answer, his body suddenly shaking. A tortured
silence.

Her lips reaching for his.

Christoph materializing on the catwalk --

Rushing for Tanner. Speed of a Demon --

Tanner no longer thinking, merely reacting, spinning and
slamming in the last of the eject command --

CHRISTOPH

NO --

But it's too late.

The god-awful noise, quickly getting louder and louder.

The sound of the end.

The walls disappearing.

Katie's eyes locked on Tanner, trying hard to be brave,
but it finds a way out of her mouth.

KATIE

What happens to me --

He wishes he knew...

EXT. NIGHT CITY - STREETS

The moon and stars fade away.

Then the buildings. Only the people left.

The LIGHT screaming for them. Everyone it touches, blasted into emptiness.

There is no escape from the light, it finds everybody.

INT. NEXUS CENTER - CONTINUOUS

The light explodes through.

It touches Christoph first, ripping him into darkness.

Then Katie.

Then Tanner --

INT. THE NET - DARKNESS

For a still heartbeat, Katie's face is visible --

Before it smears into the silent blackness of the net as --

Tanner is hurled into the darkness, spinning toward the blink of cold colors.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANHATTAN - GLOOMY AFTERNOON

The rain hasn't let up. Blanketing the city in wet darkness.

INT. INTERFACE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Tanner's eyes fighting open.

The room is full of shadows. Very eerie.

The sound of rain slamming against windows.

Tanner forces himself to sit.

The shadows come into focus.

They are empty interface chairs. Tanner is alone. He reaches down, ejecting the mini-disk from the chair.

EXT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Tanner uses the wall for balance as he pushes himself down the hallway.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

He hits the button for the top floor. His eyes starting

to clear as the rage burns through the fog.

INT. HALDEN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The room is dark.

Halden is behind his desk, staring out the window at the storm.

The faintest of sounds. Halden doesn't look surprised.

Tanner is in the doorway. Dead silence.

Halden's face erupts in one continual grin.

HALDEN

There was never a doubt, buddy!

Tanner steps into the office, slamming shut the door behind him.

Halden keeps that grin plastered on his lips.

HALDEN

Tanner comes through!

Tanner heads straight for him. Smell of violence.

Still smiling, Halden's on his feet. A laser trained on Tanner.

HALDEN

I just need the disk back, then we can put this whole thing behind us --

Tanner rips away the weapon with savage speed, then grabs Halden by the wind-pipe and slams him back against the wall.

TANNER

She was real!

Halden trying to say something, but all that comes out is some awful garbled noise.

TANNER

You son-of-a-bitch!

Halden's face turning weird shades of red. Then touches of blue. Eyes going slack.

Tanner finally lets go. Halden collapses, hacking for air. A while to suck in enough to get out words.

HALDEN

What did he tell you?

TANNER

The truth.

HALDEN

(shakes his head)

Not his style.

TANNER

Katie was digitized.

Halden nods. Tanner stares down at him.

TANNER

Then you had her killed.

HALDEN

Why would I do that?

TANNER

To hide the evidence.

Halden climbs to his feet, struggling to regain some semblance of authority.

HALDEN

We drugged her. So she wouldn't remember.

TANNER

Try harder.

HALDEN

There was no need to kill her.

TANNER

Then where is she?

HALDEN

Come on Tanner, think this through.

Tanner levels the laser on him.

HALDEN

She has no memory of it. She won't know who you are.

Tanner's face tightens.

TANNER

Last time I ask. Where is she?

Halden stares at Tanner. Tanner will pull the trigger.

Halden blurts --

HALDEN

An interface attendant.

TANNER

Where?

HALDEN

Times Square.

Tanner nods, then fires the laser, again and again into --

The window. Blows out the glass. Tanner hurls the gun out into the storm.

EXT. HALLWAY

Tanner hurries for the elevator. Halden charging after him.

HALDEN

One last piece of business.

Tanner doesn't stop. Elevator doors opening.

HALDEN

Need the disk back!

TANNER

Insurance.

HALDEN

Insurance?

TANNER

(holds up the disk)

If she's alive, you get it back.

He zips the disk into his jacket pocket as he steps into --

INT. ELEVATOR

Tanner jabs at the button. The doors sliding shut.

Last thing Tanner sees is Halden's smiling face.

HALDEN

Don't forget, Tanner.

(amused)

She won't know who the hell you
are --

Door close. Tanner is alone. Halden's words echoing around him.

CUT TO:

EXT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - MOMENTS LATER

A solid sheet of rain drenching the world.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - THAT DAY

The rain seems even worse, pounding the neon-strobed hell hole.

It's a mob scene outside of the VSI Interface Center.
Aftermath of the system being ejected.

Tanner slices through the crowd, fighting his way inside.

INT. VSI INTERFACE STATION

A small handful of overwhelmed VSI employees passing out credit vouchers to a crush of angry customers.

Tanner moves through the crowd, searching, but not finding.

Working his way to the center, looking everywhere, and finally --

Katie.

In the back corner. Managing to keep a professional calm as she hands out vouchers.

Tanner is so close now he could touch her. She turns to him. Waiting for something. Then finally...

KATIE

I'm sorry sir, we need your debit card before we can issue a credit --

TANNER

(quiet intensity)

-- Katie.

His eyes burning into her's. She looks at him, confused.

KATIE

Do I know you?

Long beat. Truth tearing at him. Finally...

TANNER

Lance Stanworth. His father's station wagon and sixteen year-old promises.

She tenses, studying his face.

KATIE

You went to my high-school?

TANNER

No.

KATIE

Then how do you know about --

TANNER

-- You told me.

KATIE

What are you talking about?

The patrons thrusting debit cards in her face. He practically has to yell to be heard.

TANNER

Your mother told you your father died in a car crash.

(beat)

Wasn't until you left for college that your uncle finally told you the truth.

She's staring at him. No longer noticing anyone else.

TANNER

Most nights you wake up crying.
Never knowing why.

KATIE

Who are you?!

He motions toward the back. Away from the people.

INT. BACK OF THE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Katie and Tanner stand alone in the open doorway.
Outside, the storm smothers the empty alley.

TANNER

We worked together on the inside.
You were on my programming team --

KATIE

-- The inside?

TANNER

Night City.

She stares at him like he's crazy.

KATIE

I've never been inside.

He looks at her.

KATIE

My synapses wouldn't connect. They
say it happens with some people.

A still silence as he's suddenly not sure he should tell
her.

KATIE

What?

He eyes the ground. Rivulets of light reflected off the
black water.

Her voice pounds into him. Needs to know.

KATIE

Tell me --

He grabs her arm, pulling her out into --

INT. BACK ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Dark storm battering them as he leads her into --

INT. KINKO'S - CONTINUOUS

Antiseptic light drips down onto the newest
telecommunications toys. Salaried men and women crowd the
terminals.

Tanner leads Katie to the back. Old fashioned color Xerox machine in the corner. He grabs a price list.

TANNER

They took you.

Slams the paper into the machine. Punches the button. Machine kicks out the Xerox.

TANNER

And made a copy.

Holds up the two pieces of paper, side by side.

TANNER

Identical. One's you. One's digital.

KATIE

That's not possible. No one can do that.

TANNER

Corporation can.

This hangs there. Katie fighting back believing.

TANNER

That's why they told you you can't go inside.

(beat)

They can't have you running into her.

KATIE

Her?

He holds up the Xerox.

TANNER

You.

Katie stares at it, trembling, barely holding on.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - MOMENT LATER

Tanner and Katie in the back. She's still struggling to understand.

KATIE

You said we were on the same programming team.

TANNER

Yes.

KATIE

(shakes her head)

But I don't know anything about programming.

TANNER

Once they digitized you, they added it.

She stares at him.

KATIE

Why?

TANNER

It was a test.

KATIE

For what?

Tanner's face darkens. Working hard to stay emotionless.

TANNER

To see how long it would take for me to realize.

KATIE

Realize?

TANNER

(quiet)

You weren't real.

She's still staring at him.

KATIE

And how long did it take you?

His voice is suddenly very small.

TANNER

They had to tell me.

He's suddenly no longer looking at her. But her eyes remain frozen on him. Starting to get it.

KATIE

It was more than work, wasn't it?

A long beat before he finally forces himself to meet her stare.

KATIE

And it meant something.

TANNER

(barely audible)

Yes.

She nods, her eyes aching.

KATIE

I don't know what that's like.

He's looking at her. Like he's done so many times. Then he kisses her.

She pulls away. Shaking, trying to say something, but it won't come out, so she kisses him back.

A terrified connection.

CUT TO:

INT. TANNER'S WAREHOUSE LOFT - A LITTLE LATER

Muted light sifts through the windows.

The door slides open. Tanner and Katie silently enter.

Her mouth on his as she tugs at his jacket. It falls to the floor.

KATIE

Candles. Get candles.

She waits as he heads into --

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Tears apart the cupboards. Finds several mismatched candles. Grabs matches, returning to --

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

It's empty. His coat has been picked up and neatly hung on the hook. He moves into --

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Katie's sitting on the bed, staring at him with trembling eyes.

KATIE

Pretend I'm her. We're inside.

(quietly)

Show me what it was like.

Sound of rain slamming into the window. He lights the candles, throwing wicked shadows across the room.

He turns to the bed looking down at her.

Flicker of emotion. So much held back.

Falls down on top of her. Both fully clothed. His mouth tracing the lines of her neck. Her breaths coming faster.

His hands roaming her body. Raw passion.

She flips him over, climbing on top. Kissing him. Hungry. But suddenly stopping.

Staring at him in troubled silence.

TANNER

What?

KATIE

Way you kiss me.

SOUND of the rain drilling the metal walls.

KATIE

Like you've done it so many times.

He stares up at her, not sure how to answer.

Her voice wrapped in darkness.

KATIE

I wasn't with you.

TANNER

I know.

KATIE

But you were with me.

TANNER

Not you. A copy.

KATIE

What's the difference?

The rain drumming against the windows.

A jet-copter screams by overhead.

He's like a statue, watching her.

Something burns deep in her eyes.

Moves her mouth down to his.

He's not breathing. Just staring at her.

She kisses him. He erupts --

Throws her off of him --

Blurring into --

INT. KITCHEN

Claws through the drawer for a knife.

INT. BEDROOM

He returns to the bed. She sees the knife in his hands.

KATIE

What the hell's going on --

He grabs her arm. Her eyes now locked on his.

KATIE

You sure you want to do this?

He raises the knife.

KATIE

Because this time can be different.

(pleads)

This time we can stay together --

The blade flashes down, piercing her flesh.

No blood. Not one single drop. She suddenly won't look at him.

INT. HALLWAY

He rushes to his jacket, unzips the pocket, reaches inside. It's empty. No disk.

Whirls around. Katie staring at him from the bedroom.

KATIE

I'm sorry.

TANNER

Sorry?!

KATIE

There was no other choice.

He comes at her. Eyes wild. Deadly.

TANNER

None of this was real!

Her voice now trembling.

KATIE

I do love you.

She flickers. Tears staining her eyes.

KATIE

(soft)

More than I should.

Then she's no longer there.

Tanner is standing alone in the middle of the room.

Eyes pounding with rage.

He spins, punching through the window!

Hand bloodied, keeps punching, harder and harder, until there's no more glass left.

But the rain doesn't come into the room. Stopped by some invisible barrier.

A primal scream ripping from his throat.

Taste of the beast.

He attacks the walls, clawing them down into darkness.

CHRISTOPH'S VOICE (O.S.)

I couldn't let you eject the system.

Tanner whirls. Christoph stands across the room.

CHRISTOPH

Because I've seen the world you
would have returned them to.

He steps toward Tanner, voice ripped with anguish.

CHRISTOPH

And I have too much compassion for
that.

Tanner slams his stare into him.

TANNER

But this world doesn't last!

Christoph calmly meets Tanner's stare.

CHRISTOPH

What if it could?

The question hangs there as the walls dissolve into
nothingness, plunging them into --

EXT. PITCH BLACKNESS

Jazz music pierces the darkness.

Then a flicker of light, expanding out to --

EXT. THE TERRACE - ROOF - CONTINUOUS

The party is gone. Tanner and Christoph stand alone on
the roof, the lights of Night City spread out before them.

CHRISTOPH

What if we take it out onto the net?

The question hangs there. Tanner shakes his head,
couldn't have heard it right.

CHRISTOPH

Unlimited energy out there. Enough
to run this world for all
eternity --

TANNER

-- But you'll never be able to get
it through the maze.

CHRISTOPH

Me? Of course not.

(smiles)

That's why you're here.

He locks eyes with Tanner.

CHRISTOPH

Your maze. You designed it. You
can lead us through it.

Terrified understanding beginning to flash through
Tanner's eyes.

CHRISTOPH

He comes to deliver them from a land
of affliction and bring them to a
good land, a land flowing with milk
and honey.

There is a sense of almost relief in Christoph's eyes.
The secret finally told.

CHRISTOPH

With the energy from the net, we can
program this world anyway we want.
(beams)
Redwood forests. Oceans.
Mountains --

TANNER

-- Two million people plugged-in
here.

CHRISTOPH

Yes.

Tanner is horrified at putting it together.

TANNER

You can't let them go.

Christoph says nothing. Tanner's eyes bore into him.

TANNER

Until you're on the net where the
corporation can't touch you, you
can't open the system. They'll
eject it if you do.

CHRISTOPH

One would assume so.

The fireworks show starts up over the carnival down below.

Tanner doesn't seem to notice, his eyes frozen on
Christoph.

TANNER

But once the system touches the net,
all links are severed.
(beat)
Everybody dies.

CHRISTOPH

Only up there in the dream they
called life.

TANNER

And down here --

Christoph holds up the access card.

CHRISTOPH

-- Thanks to you, we can reconfigure
the system to free up enough power
to digitize everybody who is

plugged-in. Every last soul...
(intense)
And bring them to a better world.

Tanner's eyes glow with fury.

TANNER
And if I refuse?

Christoph calmly meets Tanner's stare.

CHRISTOPH
Then the system crashes.
(matter-of-fact)
And you have let two million people
die.

He fades away. Leaving Tanner standing alone on the roof.

EXT. NIGHT CITY - STREET - CONTINUOUS

The streets are crowded with people heading in and out of bars.

The fireworks from the carnival raining down overhead.

Nobody noticing the small clouds creeping in over the horizon.

EXT. THE TERRACE - ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Tanner stares out at the slowly approaching clouds.

Tormented realization tearing at his face.

EXT. GLASS ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Tanner rides the elevator down the side of the building.

He watches through the window as more clouds drift overhead.

The elevator glides to a stop, depositing Tanner out onto --

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

He heads out into the middle of the street.

Huge explosions tear apart the darkness as the fireworks boom across the sky.

In the quick bursts of light Tanner can see the clouds are getting darker and darker.

The air filled with the screams of people riding the digital roller coaster.

The first drops of rain beginning to swirl lazily to the ground.

People stopping what they're doing and staring up into the sky. Stunned that it's actually raining.

Tanner instinctively pushing through the crowd, yelling --

TANNER
Get inside! Get back inside!

But no one paying him any attention.

The rain coming down harder now.

More and more people pouring out onto the streets as word begins to circulate that it's raining.

INT. NEXUS CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Dex and Christoph stand silently in front of a program panel, watching the monitor across the room which shows --

EXT. NIGHT CITY - STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Tanner is still fighting his way through the crowd.

Up above, the fireworks explode in the rain, creating prisms of flickering color.

Tanner suddenly freezes. Sees --

Katie across the street. She is watching him. Tears in her eyes.

And then it happens.

A horrific SOUND roars across the sky.

Hard to tell if it's thunder or laughter, as --

The clouds unleash their rage.

The storm ripping apart the night. Rain as thick as steel.

Knocking people to their knees. Struggling to stand.

And it keeps coming. Slamming down harder and harder. Threatening to wash the whole damn city away.

INT. NEXUS CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Christoph pulls his eyes away from the monitor.

A long beat, then he silently nods to Dex, who punches the commands into the program panel.

Christoph keeps his stare away from the monitor, not wanting to watch as --

EXT. NIGHT CITY - STREETS - CONTINUOUS

The savage rain storm continues as a small burst of fire

falls from the sky.

The flames swirl through the rain.

Tanner, like the crowds all around him, is pinned to the ground by the crush of water.

The balls of flames burn right through him --

His body convulsing on the ground in anguished pain --

He is probably screaming, but it would be in vain as the storm drowns out all noise --

CUT TO:

EXT. CHICAGO STREET - DAWN

A peaceful street in the downtown area, dominated by VSI's Chicago Public Interface Center.

INT. CHICAGO INTERFACE CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Rows and rows of people strapped unconscious to interface seats.

An alarm pierces the room.

A Medical Technician rushes to the sound, sweeping a curtain around the person. Takes one look down at the person, and --

MEDICAL TECHNICIAN
(yelling)
I need help here!

The bulking man in the interface seat is in the throes of violent spasms, his eyes thrust dangerously back in his head.

Then mercifully, it's over. He flatlines.

CUT TO:

EXT. NIGHT CITY - STREET - CONTINUOUS

Tanner struggles to his feet, the rain crashing down on him.

He fights his way over to Katie --

Flames now falling from every square inch of sky.

A solid blanket of death floating down onto the city.

Tanner locks eyes with Katie, screaming as loud as he can --

TANNER
Christoph as God!

It is impossible to tell if she can hear him over the howling tempest.

But there is the slightest shift in her face. Some tortured realization.

Tanner turns back into the street.

The flames drifting down through the rain. Only heartbeats away from hitting the people.

Tanner stares straight up into the heavens, screaming --

TANNER

Enough! They will not die --

INT. NEXUS - CONTINUOUS

Relief spills through Christoph's face as he turns to the program panel and throws in the commands for --

EXT. NIGHT CITY - STREETS

The flames disappear. Just like that.

Then the storm stops.

A silent stillness.

The crowds in the street still shaking, not yet willing to believe it's really over.

The first glint of light as the night fades.

For the first time ever, the sun rises over the Night City. Dawn in the new world.

Tanner and Katie flicker, then fade away.

INT. NEXUS CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Tanner and Katie materialize on the --

FIFTH FLOOR CATWALK

They are flanked by Christoph and Dex, along with an army of armed digital employees.

Katie silently stares at Tanner. Something being communicated.

Christoph smiles at Tanner.

CHRISTOPH

And Moses said, 'Who am I, that I should lead them to the Promise Land?'

Tanner turns and stares at him in steely silence.

CHRISTOPH

Nine minutes before the system crashes.

Tanner's eyes reflexively spin down the catwalk toward the

core program.

Christoph holds up the access card --

CHRISTOPH

You don't have access to it. You
can't eject.

(dead serious)

So the only way everybody lives is
out on the net.

Tanner catches a quick glimpse of Katie as she slips
through the guards and down the stairs.

Dex motions to the program panel in front of Tanner.

DEX

This program interface will get you
into the maze.

The longest beat. Then Tanner nods.

FOURTH FLOOR CATWALK

Katie rushes to a program panel and throws it open,
punching in commands. Data whips across the screen.

FIFTH FLOOR CATWALK

Christoph hands the access card to Dex who in turn slides
it into the program panel in front of Tanner.

Several long beats, then the program buzzes.

DISEMBODIED VOICE (FROM PROGRAM)

Access approved.

Dex pulls out the card as Tanner calls out --

TANNER

Now --

His hands rocket out with blurring speed. One hand
grabbing the card as the other grasps onto the program
panel --

FOURTH FLOOR CATWALK

Katie slams in the last of the commands --

FIFTH FLOOR CATWALK

The catwalk flickers, then disappears.

Christoph, Dex, and the digital employees plunging down
through thin air.

Tanner hanging onto the panel --

FOURTH FLOOR CATWALK

Katie punches in more commands and now --

FIFTH FLOOR CATWALK

The catwalk reappears.

GROUND FLOOR

Christoph, Dex, and the men crash hard to the ground.

FIFTH FLOOR CATWALK

Tanner races down the catwalk to a program panel. He throws in the access card.

GROUND FLOOR

Christoph is the first one to his feet. His eyes spin up to Tanner on the catwalk.

CHRISTOPH

(bellows)

KILL HIM --

The army of digital guards springing to their feet, lasers drawn.

FIFTH FLOOR CATWALK

Tanner slams in the last of the commands, causing --

A LASER CANNON to materialize next to him.

STAIRS

The guards charging for Tanner. There's too many of them. He'll never kill them all.

FIFTH FLOOR CATWALK

Tanner aims the cannon down onto the second floor and FIRES --

A program explodes. The program that controls the waiters.

The guards who are reprogrammed waiters disappear.

Tanner fires into another program.

The guards who are reprogrammed busboys disappear.

Tanner keeps firing. Destroying the employee programs.

INT. STAIRS

The last of the guards flicker, then are gone.

Dex is the only one left on the stairs as he races up to the catwalk.

INT. GROUND FLOOR

Christoph stares up as Tanner rips open the core program and throws in the access card.

FIFTH FLOOR CATWALK

Data whips across the screen, reflecting off Tanner's face.

Tanner suddenly spins.

Dex is up on the catwalk, laser trained on Tanner.

Tanner reaches for his gun, but he is too late.

The HISSING of a laser.

Small neat hole burned through Dex's forehead.

He crumples to the ground, bloodless face frozen in death.

Tanner whirls around. Katie stands behind him, laser in hand. She is staring at Dex's body. First time she has killed.

A buzzing breaks the silence --

DISEMBODIED VOICE (FROM PROGRAM)

Access approved --

GROUND FLOOR

Christoph yells up at Tanner --

CHRISTOPH

One thing you need to know!

(beat)

There is no Katie out there!

(intense)

Halden really did have her killed.

(explains)

That's why the digital one is
allowed to stay in here --

CATWALK

Christoph's warning echoing around Tanner and Katie.

She slowly lowers the gun, her eyes shaking as she looks up at Tanner.

An anguished silence, broken by Christoph's yelling --

CHRISTOPH'S VOICE (O.S.)

You hear me, Tanner?! She only
lives in here!

Katie stares at Tanner, struggling for the words, but they won't come.

So she leans over and kisses him. Both of their bodies trembling.

KATIE

(tortured whisper)

I'm already dead...

Her eyes wet, she kisses him again, knowing it will be the last time.

He forces himself to turn back to the program panel, slamming in the eject sequence.

Christoph materializes on the catwalk --

CHRISTOPH

NO --

He hurls Tanner away from the program panel. Only he's too late --

That god-awful noise. Louder and louder.

Christoph's face wracked with realization. Last thing he will do is turn to Tanner --

CHRISTOPH

Life is too precious --

The Nexus Center's walls fade away --

EXT. NIGHT CITY - STREETS - CONTINUOUS

The buildings are all gone.

The LIGHT sweeps down for the people --

INT. NEXUS CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Katie's eyes locked on Tanner.

The light explodes through, ripping them all into nothingness --

INT. THE NET - DARKNESS

Tanner is thrown out into the darkness, spinning helplessly through the blackness.

The faintest of light. Growing brighter and brighter, as --

CUT TO:

INT. VSI CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS - INTERFACE ROOM

Tanner's eyes flutter open, struggling for focus.

Several blurry shapes. Tanner pushes himself to sit.

The shapes are people. Halden's bodyguards. One of them grabs the disk from the chair's interface.

TANNER

I need to see Halden --

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

-- I'm sorry.

Tanner turns. It is EMMA. She looks tortured by what she must do.

EMMA

He's not taking visitors.

She motions to the bodyguards, who hustle Tanner to his feet and out the door.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

The rain has slowed to a drizzle. A mud gray day.

Emma wishes she didn't have to be the one who had to do this.

EMMA

F.C.O. regulations require all system providers to test their emergency eject sequence at least once a year.

(quietly)

Our records will show that's exactly what transpired.

Before Tanner can respond, she disappears back inside.

The sidewalk's crowded, people brushing against Tanner, but he stands there not moving, staring up at the top of the building.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI BUILDING - HALDEN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Halden sits behind his desk staring out the window.

Emma heads inside, laying the disk on the desk.

Halden's eyes remain silently out the window.

Emma leaves, shutting the door behind her.

Halden looks down at the disk. Smallest flicker of guilt.

CUT TO:

EXT. HELL'S KITCHEN - WAREHOUSE - THAT DAY

A beat-up taxi drops Tanner out front.

INT. TANNER'S LOFT - CONTINUOUS

The place is dark. Tanner hits the switch.

The monitor snaps alive, bathing the room in eerie blue light.

TANNER

Display program received from uplink.

Clicking sound as the program drips down the screen.

TANNER

Program name?

SYNTHETIC VOICE

Resurrection.

Tanner nods, making himself a drink.

TANNER

Connect to public access.

SYNTHETIC VOICE

(buzzes)

Access established.

TANNER

Select uplink for Federal
Communications Office. Department
of Enforcement.

SYNTHETIC VOICE

(beat)

Uplink selected.

Tanner settles into a chair, taking a hit of his drink.

TANNER

Uplink Resurrection program.

Tanner sits there in the darkness listening to the
machines talking to each other.

SYNTHETIC VOICE

(buzzes)

Uplink received.

He nods, a flutter of satisfaction.

A NOISE from the bedroom. Sounds like a woman's voice
calling out for him.

He downs the drink, grabbing his gun and moving into --

INT. BEDROOM

It is empty. The noise is just the wind howling against
the window.

He stares at the bed. Several long beats. He doesn't
move.

CUT TO:

INT. VSI TIMES SQUARE - INTERFACE CENTER - THAT DAY

The aftermath of the system being ejected.

VSI interface attendants passing out credit vouchers as
fast as they can to the crush of complaining customers.

Tanner squeezes his way inside.

His eyes spinning to the back toward Katie, but she's not
there.

He moves through the crowd trying to find her. Finally makes his way to the front desk.

TANNER
I'm looking for Katie Hall.

The SECURITY GUARD at the desk looks at him like he's crazy.

SECURITY GUARD
You expect me to find someone in this crowd --

TANNER
-- Not a customer. An employee.

SECURITY GUARD
(shakes his head)
No Katie works here.

TANNER
Are you sure?

SECURITY GUARD
I've been here since we opened.
Never been a Katie.

Long beat. Realization ripping through Tanner.

He stands there frozen for several dark moments. Then finally turns and heads out the door.

Almost outside when he hears the voice.

He spins.

Katie.

In the back, passing out vouchers. But then the crowd shifts, blocking his view.

He cuts a path to her, his eyes tense, was he imagining her?

But he's now standing right next to her. Can feel her breath.

KATIE
Can I please have your debit card.

He's staring at her. Fierce intensity.

KATIE
Sir, your debit --

He looks down at her name tag. It reads 'Katherine'. He nods, of course.

TANNER
They changed your name.

KATHERINE
Who did?

He stares at her, needs to know. He reaches out with lightning speed and plucks off her name tag.

Before she can react, he grabs her arm, nicking it with the pin from the name tag.

She spins, yelling to the security guard --

KATHERINE

FRANK --

The security guard, Frank, hurries over.

Tanner watches her arm. Thin ribbon of blood rising to the cut. Flicker of relief shudders through him.

He stares her straight in the eye --

TANNER

You grew up in Vermont.

She stays silent, not wanting to say anything that'll set this guy off.

TANNER

When you were six, your father went out to buy a newspaper and never came back.

(beat)

Your mother lied, told you he was killed in a car accident --

Frank is there now, wrenching Tanner's hands back, twisting them behind his back.

Tanner doesn't resist, his eyes locked on Katherine --

TANNER

You have trouble remembering your dreams.

(beat)

But there's one you always have.

She's staring at him.

TANNER

A baby's crying. But no one comes to help it. So it keeps crying. All night long --

Frank cuffs Tanner, then drags him away.

Tanner's eyes struggling for Katie's face, but it's swallowed up by the crowd.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Tanner is uncuffed and hurled out into the alley.

The sound of the door slamming shut behind him, dead bolts sliding into place.

A jet-copter screams by overhead.

An old man, face stained with illness, lays on a bed of newspaper next to Tanner.

Sounds of the real world filtering down the alley. A family arguing. Groups of friends laughing. Someone screaming.

Tanner slowly turns around.

Katherine is in the doorway, watching him.

Sunlight pierces through the clouds.

She tries to keep her voice from trembling.

KATHERINE

Who are you?...

Tanner stares at her, does something he hasn't done in a long time. He smiles.

FADE OUT.

THE END