

FADE IN:

EXT. KARNIS - BLACK CHAIN SECTOR - DAWN

A cold, barren moon. Jagged ridges. Thin atmosphere. The faint glow of ELYON - the parent planet - hangs massive in the sky.

A fortified complex stretches across the surface: THE BLACK CHAIN SECTOR. A maximum security prison built into the rock itself. No ornament. No comfort. Pure function.

A shuttle descends toward the landing pad, engines kicking up dust.

INT. KARNIS - ARRIVAL BAY - CONTINUOUS

The shuttle doors open. WARDEN STRADE (40s), disciplined, sharp-eyed, steps out. He wears the uniform of someone who has spent years inside this place - not afraid of it, but shaped by it.

A JUNIOR OFFICER, nervous and eager, approaches.

JUNIOR OFFICER
Morning, Warden. Systems check is
ready for your review.

Strade nods, already scanning the bay with a practiced eye.

STRADE
Let's get to it.

INT. KARNIS - SECURITY CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Strade and the Junior Officer walk the long corridor. Thick walls.

Reinforced doors. The hum of containment fields.

Guards stand at intervals - alert, disciplined, but tired. This place wears on people.

Strade notices a flickering panel.

STRADE
Why is that still unresolved?

The Junior Officer stiffens.

JUNIOR OFFICER
Maintenance logged it as a sensor
fault. They said it wasn't
critical.

Strade stops. Looks at him.

STRADE
Everything is critical in Black
Chain.

The Junior Officer nods quickly, embarrassed.

INT. KARNIS - CENTRAL CONTROL - CONTINUOUS

A circular room filled with consoles, holographic displays,
and operators monitoring every sector.

CHIEF TECH RELL (50s), gruff and competent, turns as Strade
enters.

RELL
Morning, Warden. We've got your
route loaded. Standard inspection.

Strade studies the displays - prisoner vitals, containment
grids, movement logs.

STRADE
Anything unusual overnight?

Re'll hesitates - just a beat.

RELL
One of the deep□wing sensors dropped
offline for about thirty seconds.
Came back on its own.

Strade's eyes narrow.

STRADE
Which sensor?

Re'll taps a display. A sector map highlights a node deep in
the facility.

RELL
D-47. Probably nothing. Old wiring.

Strade doesn't buy it.

STRADE
Show me the log.

Rell pulls it up. A simple timestamp. No error code. No diagnostic signature.

Strade frowns.

STRADE (CONT'D)
Sensors don't go dark without
leaving a reason.

The Junior Officer shifts uncomfortably.

JUNIOR OFFICER
Could be a glitch.

Strade turns to him – not angry, just firm.

STRADE
There are no glitches in a facility
that holds political offenders.

He taps the console.

STRADE (CONT'D)
Flag it. Full diagnostic. I want a
technician down there within the
hour.

Rell nods, already typing.

INT. KARNIS – LOWER ACCESS TUNNEL – LATER

Strade leads the inspection team – the Junior Officer and a SECURITY SERGEANT – through a narrow tunnel. Pipes. Conduits. The underbelly of the prison.

The Sergeant checks his scanner.

SERGEANT
D-47 is just ahead.

They reach a junction. A small access panel sits open – not broken, not forced. Just... open.

Strade kneels. Studies it.

STRADE
Who logged maintenance here?

The Sergeant checks his device.

SERGEANT
No one, sir. No work orders in this
sector for the last two weeks.

Strade's jaw tightens.

STRADE

Then someone was here who shouldn't
have been.

A faint vibration runs through the floor – subtle, almost imperceptible.

Strade feels it.

STRADE (CONTACT^{ED}) (CONT'D)

(to the team)
Stay sharp.

He reaches for the panel

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. KARNIS – LOWER ACCESS TUNNEL – CONTINUOUS

Strade studies the open panel. Wires exposed. A diagnostic port still active – someone accessed it recently.

He runs a finger along the edge. No dust. No corrosion.

STRADE

This was opened within the last
hour.

The Junior Officer swallows hard.

JUNIOR OFFICER

Sir... no one's scheduled down here.

Strade doesn't answer. He pulls a small handheld scanner from his belt and runs it across the panel.

A faint BEEP.

The screen displays: UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS – LEVEL 3 OVERRIDE.

Strade's expression darkens.

STRADE

Level three? Who the hell has that
clearance?

The Sergeant checks his wrist console.

SERGEANT

Only senior staff. You, me, Rell...
and Control.

Strade stands.

STRADE

Control didn't authorize this.

He looks down the dim tunnel – a long stretch of pipes and
conduits

disappearing into shadow.

STRADE (CONT'D)

(to the team)

We sweep the sector. No
assumptions. No shortcuts.

They move forward.

INT. KARNIS – DEEP WING ACCESS – MOMENTS LATER

The tunnel opens into a wider chamber – a junction of
multiple maintenance corridors.

A faint flicker of light pulses from deeper inside.

Strade raises a hand, signaling the team to stop.

STRADE

Lights.

The Sergeant taps a control on his rifle. A mounted beam
snaps on, cutting through the darkness.

The beam lands on–

A SECURITY DRONE.

Its casing is scorched. Its lens shattered. It lies on its
side, motionless.

The Junior Officer steps closer, nervous.

JUNIOR OFFICER

Drone 12-B... it's supposed to patrol
this entire wing.

Strade kneels beside it. He turns the drone over.

A clean, precise puncture mark sits in the chassis – not an accident, not a malfunction.

STRADE
This wasn't a fall. Someone
disabled it.

He checks the drone's internal log. The last entry:

SIGNAL JAM – SOURCE UNKNOWN.

Strade exhales slowly.

STRADE
We're not dealing with a glitch.

The Sergeant scans the floor.

SERGEANT
Sir... you need to see this.

Strade stands and follows the beam of the Sergeant's light.

Footprints.

Not guard boots. Not prisoner shoes.

Soft soled. Civilian. Fresh.

Leading deeper into the restricted wing.

Strade's jaw tightens.

STRADE
(to the team)
Weapons ready.

They draw their sidearms.

Strade steps forward, following the prints.

INT. KARNIS – DEEP WING CORRIDOR – CONTINUOUS

The corridor narrows. Pipes overhead. The hum of the facility grows louder – mechanical, strained.

Strade moves with controlled precision. The team follows.

A faint metallic CLANG echoes from ahead.

The Junior Officer freezes.

JUNIOR OFFICER
(whispering)
Someone's still down here.

Strade signals for silence.

They advance slowly.

Another CLANG - closer now.

Strade rounds the corner-

And stops.

A MAINTENANCE DOOR stands slightly ajar. A restricted door.
One that should require dual authorization to open.

A faint draft of cold air slips through the gap.

Strade steps forward, hand on the door.

He looks back at the team.

STRADE
On my mark.

He pushes the door open-

A BLAST OF COLD AIR hits them.

Inside: a darkened service chamber. A single access hatch
hangs open, leading down into the sub levels.

Strade shines his light inside.

The ladder is still vibrating - someone climbed down moments
ago.

Strade's voice is low, controlled.

STRADE (CONT'D)
We've got an intruder in the deep
wing.

He looks down into the darkness.

STRADE (CONT'D)
And they're not working alone.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. KARNIS - SUBLEVEL ACCESS SHAFT - CONTINUOUS

A narrow vertical shaft drops into darkness. The ladder vibrates from recent use.

Strade clips a light to his vest.

STRADE
(to the team)
Sergeant, you're with me. Officer,
seal the upper corridor and alert
Control.

The Junior Officer hesitates.

JUNIOR OFFICER
Shouldn't we wait for backup?

Strade meets his eyes - calm, firm.

STRADE
If we wait, we lose whoever's down
there.

The Junior Officer nods, swallows, and runs back toward the junction.

Strade grips the ladder and begins his descent. The Sergeant follows.

INT. KARNIS - SUB LEVEL 3 - MOMENTS LATER

Strade drops down the last few rungs and lands quietly. The Sergeant joins him.

This level is colder. Older. Pipes hiss softly. The lighting is dim, flickering.

Strade scans the floor.

Footprints. The same soft soled pattern.

STRADE
They came this way.

He moves forward, weapon drawn.

INT. KARNIS - SUB LEVEL 3 CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

A long corridor stretches ahead. Storage alcoves. Maintenance lockers.

A low hum from the power conduits.

Strade stops suddenly.

A MAINTENANCE LOCKER stands open.

Inside: a uniform. A guard's jacket. Folded neatly.

The Sergeant frowns.

SERGEANT

Someone changed clothes.

Strade checks the tag.

STRADE

This belongs to Officer Loran.

SERGEANT

He's on leave this week.

Strade's expression hardens.

STRADE

Someone used his credentials to get
in.

He steps back into the corridor.

INT. KARNIS - SUB LEVEL 3 - POWER NODE CHAMBER - MOMENTS
LATER

Strade and the Sergeant enter a small chamber filled with
humming equipment. A central power node glows faintly.

A diagnostic panel is open. Tools scattered. A portable
access device still plugged in - active.

Strade approaches it carefully.

The screen displays:

OVERRIDE IN PROGRESS

AUTHORIZATION: MASKED

TARGET: DEEP WING CONTAINMENT GRID

Strade exhales - controlled, but shaken.

STRADE

They're going after the deep wing.

The Sergeant checks the surrounding consoles.

SERGEANT

Sir... this isn't just sabotage. This is a coordinated breach.

Strade disconnects the device and pockets it.

STRADE

We need to get ahead of them.

He turns toward the exit-

INT. KARNIS - SUB LEVEL 3 CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

A distant metallic THUD echoes through the corridor.

Strade freezes.

Another THUD. Closer.

The Sergeant raises his weapon.

SERGEANT

That's coming from the containment sector.

Strade moves quickly, decisive.

STRADE

Control needs to lock down the deep wing. Now.

He taps his comm.

STRADE (CONT'D)

Control, this is Strade. We have an active breach in Sub Level Three. Lock down all access points to the deep wing immediately.

Static.

No response.

Strade tries again.

STRADE (CONT'D)

Control, respond.

More static.

The Sergeant checks his wrist console.

SERGEANT
Comms are being jammed.

Strade's jaw tightens.

STRADE
Then we move without them.

He starts down the corridor at a run.

The Sergeant follows.

INT. KARNIS - DEEP WING APPROACH - MOMENTS LATER

They reach a reinforced door - the entrance to the deep wing
containment sector.

A red indicator flashes:

ACCESS OVERRIDE - IN PROGRESS

Strade steps forward, breath steady.

STRADE
They're already inside.

He draws his weapon fully.

STRADE (CONT'D)
We breach on three.

He places his hand on the manual release.

STRADE (CONT'D)
One...

The Sergeant braces.

STRADE (CONT'D)
Two...

A final metallic CLANG echoes from behind the door.

STRADE (CONT'D)
Three.

He pulls the releaseâ€”

The door slides openâ€”

And a blast of cold, recycled air hits them.

Strade steps inside.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. KARNIS - DEEP-WING CONTAINMENT SECTOR - CONTINUOUS

The reinforced door slides open. Strade and the Sergeant step inside, weapons raised.

The deep wing is colder. Darker. Rows of reinforced containment doors line the corridor. Red emergency strips glow faintly along the floor.

A low mechanical rumble vibrates through the walls - the sound of a system under strain.

Strade moves forward cautiously.

STRADE
Check the grid status.

The Sergeant taps his wrist console.

SERGEANT
Containment fields are fluctuating.
Not down... but close.

Strade scans the corridor.

A SECURITY CAMERA hangs from the ceiling - wires cut cleanly.

STRADE
They knew exactly what to hit.

He moves deeper into the wing.

INT. KARNIS - DEEP-WING CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A small control room overlooking the containment corridor. Dark. Dead screens. A single console flickers weakly.

Strade enters, sweeping the room.

On the floor – a GUARD lies unconscious, breathing but injured.

The Sergeant kneels beside him.

SERGEANT
Pulse is steady. He's alive.

Strade checks the console.

A single line flashes on the screen:

MANUAL OVERRIDE ACCEPTED

AUTHORIZATION: MASKED

CONTAINMENT DOOR 12 – UNLOCKED

Strade's breath tightens.

STRADE
Door twelve... who's in twelve?

The Sergeant checks his slate.

SERGEANT
Political detainee. High-risk.
Tribunal classification red.

Strade stares at the console – the override timer still counting down.

STRADE
They're not here to sabotage the
wing.

He turns toward the corridor.

STRADE (CONT'D)
They're here to extract someone.

INT. KARNIS – DEEP-WING CORRIDOR – CONTINUOUS

Strade and the Sergeant move quickly toward Containment Door 12.

The red indicator above the door flashes:

UNLOCK SEQUENCE - 72% COMPLETE

Strade steps forward, urgency rising.

STRADE

We need to stop that sequence.

He taps the manual lockout panel - nothing.

He tries again - sparks fly.

SERGEANT

They burned out the manual
override.

Strade looks at the countdown.

UNLOCK SEQUENCE - 81% COMPLETE

STRADE

(to himself)

Damn it..

He turns to the Sergeant.

STRADE (CONT'D)

We force it. On three.

They brace themselves -

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL - ALERT CHAMBER - SAME TIME

A sleek, circular room. Holographic displays. Advisors and analysts monitoring system-wide security feeds.

A console CHIMES sharply.

ANALYST

We have a priority alert from
Karnis.

The holographic display shifts - showing a red flashing icon over the moon of Elyon.

SUPERVISOR

What's the nature of the alert?

The analyst reads quickly.

ANALYST
Deep-wing containment breach.
Multiple system overrides. Possible
extraction event.

The supervisor stiffens.

SUPERVISOR
Send it to the Council. Now.

The alert is transmitted – a cascading series of encrypted signals shooting across the Orbis network.

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER – MOMENTS LATER

The massive chamber lights shift to amber – the emergency color.

Governors look up from their desks as a holographic banner appears:

PRIORITY ALERT – KARNIS BLACK CHAIN SECTOR

DEEP-WING BREACH IN PROGRESS

Governor VEYNA rises immediately, eyes sharp.

VEYNA
What happened?

Governor DORR slams his console.

DORR
I knew that facility was a
liability!

Governor HALVEK looks shaken.

HALVEK
Who's in the deep wing right now?

The High Councilor, MALRIX, stands slowly – unsettled.

MALRIX
Get me the Warden. Now.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. KARNIS - DEEP-WING CORRIDOR - SAME TIME

The unlock sequence hits:

A heavy CLUNK echoes through the corridor.

The door begins to slide open

Strade and the Sergeant brace themselves

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. KARNIS - DEEP-WING CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

The heavy containment door completes its unlock cycle with a deep, mechanical CLUNK. A thin line of cold air escapes as the seal breaks.

Strade and the Sergeant stand ready, weapons raised.

The door slides open-

Revealing an EMPTY CELL.

Lights flicker overhead. The containment field emitter hums weakly, cycling in and out of stability.

The Sergeant steps inside first, sweeping the corners.

SERGEANT

Clear.

Strade enters behind him, scanning the walls, the floor, the ceiling.

The cell is pristine. No signs of struggle. No signs of forced removal.

Just... empty.

Strade checks the prisoner log panel beside the door.

The display reads:

DETAINEE: CLASSIFIED

STATUS: REMOVED

AUTHORIZATION: MASKED
Strade's jaw tightens.

STRADE
They walked him out. Clean.
Controlled.

The Sergeant looks unsettled.

SERGEANT
Sir... who was in here?

Strade doesn't answer. He stares at the blank authorization field.

STRADE
Someone with access we don't have.

INT. KARNIS - DEEP-WING CONTROL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Strade and the Sergeant return to the control room. The injured guard still lies unconscious on the floor.

Strade kneels beside the main console and pulls up the last recorded camera feed.

Static.

He scrubs backward - more static.

He scrubs further - a single frame appears.

A FIGURE in a maintenance uniform. Hood up. Face obscured. Moving with purpose.

The Sergeant leans in.

SERGEANT
That's not one of ours.

Strade zooms in - the figure carries a compact device, wired into the panel.

STRADE
They bypassed the grid manually.

He switches feeds - another angle shows the figure guiding a second person out of the cell.

A detainee. Shackled. Head covered.

The Sergeant stiffens.

SERGEANT
They extracted him.

Strade's voice is low, controlled.

STRADE
And they knew exactly where to go.

INT. KARNIS - DEEP-WING CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Strade steps back into the corridor, thinking fast.

He taps his comm again.

STRADE
Control, this is Strade. Deep-wing
containment breach confirmed.
Detainee removed. We need full
lockdown and OTA support.

Static.

The Sergeant checks his wrist console.

SERGEANT
Comms are still jammed. Whoever did
this is blocking everything below
Level Two.

Strade looks down the corridor - the direction the intruders
must have taken.

STRADE
They're heading for an exit route.

He turns to the Sergeant.

STRADE (CONT'D)
We cut them off.

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER - SAME TIME

The emergency alert still pulses across the holographic
display.

Governors speak over one another - tension rising.

DORR
This is a coordinated attack! We
need OTA deployment immediately!

HALVEK

We don't know the scope yet. We
need confirmation from the Warden—

VEYNA

(interjecting)

We need facts, not panic. Who
authorized deep-wing access?

Malrix raises a hand, trying to regain control.

MALRIX

We will not escalate until we have
a full report from Karnis.

VEYNA

Then get it. Now.

A tense silence fills the chamber.

The alert continues to flash.

PRIORITY BREACH — DETAINEE REMOVED

STATUS: UNKNOWN

CUT BACK TO:

INT. KARNIS — DEEP-WING CORRIDOR — CONTINUOUS

Strade and the Sergeant move quickly, weapons ready,
following the intruders' path.

The facility hum grows louder — not mystical, just mechanical
strain.

Strade's expression hardens.

STRADE

(to himself)

This wasn't a breach.

He steps into the darkness ahead.

STRADE (CONT'D)

It was an extraction.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. KARNIS - DEEP-WING SERVICE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Strade and the Sergeant move quickly, following the intruders' path.

The corridor narrows, pipes overhead rattling from the strain on the facility's systems.

A faint alarm begins to pulse - low, intermittent, not yet a full lockdown.

SERGEANT

They're forcing the grid into overload.

Strade checks a wall panel - the power readings spike erratically.

STRADE

They're covering their exit.

He moves forward.

INT. KARNIS - SERVICE INTERSECTION - MOMENTS LATER

A junction of three corridors. A MAINTENANCE CART sits abandoned, tools scattered across the floor.

Strade kneels, examining the mess.

A portable jammer lies half-buried under a wrench - still active, emitting a faint hum.

SERGEANT

That's what killed comms.

Strade picks it up, studies it.

STRADE

This isn't prison issue. Someone smuggled this in.

He pockets the jammer and rises.

INT. KARNIS - LOWER TRANSIT PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Strade and the Sergeant emerge onto a small transit platform - a freight lift used for moving supplies between levels.

The lift is gone.

Strade steps to the edge and looks down the shaft – the lift is descending fast, lights flickering as it drops.

SERGEANT
They're heading for the outer
access ring.

Strade hits the manual override panel – ACCESS DENIED.

STRADE
They locked us out.

He turns sharply.

STRADE (CONT'D)
Stairs. Now.

They sprint toward a side door.

INT. KARNIS – EMERGENCY STAIRWELL – MOMENTS LATER

A narrow metal stairwell spirals downward. Strade and the Sergeant descend quickly, boots echoing.

Halfway down, the lights flicker – then stabilize.

SERGEANT
They're manipulating the grid from
below. Trying to blind the sensors.

Strade keeps moving.

STRADE
They planned this. Every step.

INT. KARNIS – OUTER ACCESS RING – CONTINUOUS

Strade bursts through the stairwell door into a wide circular corridor that wraps around the facility's perimeter.

A faint alarm echoes through the ring – not loud, but urgent.

The freight lift sits at the far end, doors open.

Empty.

Strade approaches cautiously.

Inside the lift: a dropped ID badge. Strade picks it up.

The name reads: OFFICER LORAN.

The Sergeant exhales sharply.

SERGEANT

They used his credentials to move
through the facility.

Strade pockets the badge.

STRADE

They're heading for an exit point.
There are only two on this ring.

He looks down the corridor – one direction leads toward the
cargo airlock, the other toward the maintenance tram.

Strade thinks fast.

STRADE (CONT'D)

Cargo airlock is too exposed.
They'll take the tram.

He starts running.

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER – SAME TIME

The chamber is tense. Governors speak over one another as the
alert updates in real time.

The holographic display now reads:

DEEP-WING DETAINEE REMOVED

BREACH TEAM ACTIVE

COMMS DISRUPTED
Dorr slams his hand on the table.

DORR
This is an organized extraction! We
need OTA intervention!

Halvek shakes his head.

HALVEK
We don't have confirmation of the
detainee's identity-

VEYNA
(interrupting)
We don't need a name to know this
is a catastrophic failure.

Malrix raises his voice, trying to maintain order.

MALRIX
We will not escalate until we have
a direct report from Karnis.

VEYNA
Then get Strade on the line.

Malrix hesitates - he knows comms are down.

MALRIX
We're attempting to reestablish
contact.

Dorr scoffs.

DORR
Attempting isn't good enough.

The chamber grows louder, more fractured.

The alert continues to pulse.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. KARNIS - OUTER ACCESS RING - CONTINUOUS

Strade and the Sergeant sprint down the corridor toward the
maintenance tram station.

The hum of the facility grows louder – the grid straining under the sabotage.

Strade's expression is focused, controlled.

STRADE
They're close.

He rounds the corner–

And sees the tram doors sliding shut.

A shadowed figure inside.

Strade raises his weapon–

STRADE (CONT'D)
Stop!

The tram launches forward, accelerating down the track.

Strade fires – sparks erupt as rounds hit the tram's rear panel.

The tram disappears into the tunnel.

Strade lowers his weapon, breath steady but tight.

STRADE (CONT'D)
(to the Sergeant)
They're heading for the surface.

He turns toward the emergency access ladder.

STRADE (CONT'D)
We're not letting them leave this moon.

He climbs.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. KARNIS – EMERGENCY ACCESS LADDER – CONTINUOUS

Strade climbs fast, boots hitting the rungs with controlled urgency.

The Sergeant follows close behind.

The metal shaft vibrates – the facility's systems straining under the sabotage.

A distant ALARM begins to pulse – louder now, more insistent.

SERGEANT

They triggered a sector alert.

Strade keeps climbing.

STRADE

They're forcing Control to focus on
the wrong wing.

He reaches the top hatch and pushes it open–

INT. KARNIS – SURFACE ACCESS CORRIDOR – CONTINUOUS

A long, dim corridor leading toward the surface-level transit
hub.

Emergency lights flash in slow intervals.

Strade steps out, scanning the floor.

Fresh footprints. Same soft soled pattern.

STRADE

They came through here.

The Sergeant checks a wall panel.

SERGEANT

Surface sensors are cycling.
Someone's trying to blind the
perimeter grid.

Strade moves forward, weapon raised.

INT. KARNIS – SURFACE TRANSIT HUB – MOMENTS LATER

A wide chamber with multiple exits leading to the moon's
surface infrastructure – cargo bays, shuttle pads,
maintenance tunnels.

The main doors to the EXTERNAL TRAM PLATFORM stand partially
open.

Strade approaches cautiously.

A SECURITY GUARD lies slumped beside the door – alive, but
unconscious.

The Sergeant kneels, checking his pulse.

SERGEANT

Same as the deep wing. Non-lethal
takedown.

Strade studies the guard's uniform – no weapon missing, no
struggle.

STRADE

They're avoiding casualties. They
want this clean.

He steps through the doors.

EXT. KARNIS – EXTERNAL TRAM PLATFORM – CONTINUOUS

Cold air hits them. The platform overlooks the rocky surface
of Karnis.

A tram track extends toward a distant outpost.

A tram sits at the platform – doors open, engine humming.

Empty.

Strade moves inside, scanning quickly.

On the floor: a discarded hood. Same fabric as the intruder's
disguise.

The Sergeant checks the tram's console.

SERGEANT

Departure logs wiped. Manual
override used.

Strade looks down the track – faint dust still settling.

STRADE

They took a surface transport.

He turns back toward the facility.

STRADE (CONT'D)

They're heading for a shuttle
point.

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER – SAME TIME

The chamber is louder now – governors arguing, advisors
rushing between stations.

The holographic display updates:

BREACH TEAM MOVING TOWARD SURFACE

DETAINEE LOCATION: UNKNOWN

COMMS: PARTIAL FAILURE

Dorr rises, furious.

DORR

This is a system-wide security
threat! We need OTA deployment now!

Halvek shakes his head, trying to maintain calm.

HALVEK

We don't have confirmation of who
was taken—

VEYNA

(interrupting)

We don't need confirmation to know
this is coordinated.

Malrix raises his voice.

MALRIX

Order! We will not authorize
military action without verified
intelligence.

Dorr points toward the display.

DORR

You have verified intelligence! A
detainee has been extracted from
the deep wing!

VEYNA

(to Malrix)

We need Strade's report. He's the
only one with eyes on the ground.

Malrix hesitates — he knows comms are still down.

MALRIX

We are attempting to reestablish
contact.

Dorr scoffs.

DORR

Attempting isn't action.

The chamber fractures further – voices rising, alliances forming.

EXT. KARNIS – SURFACE TRAM PLATFORM – SAME TIME

Strade steps to the edge of the platform, scanning the horizon.

A faint glint – movement far down the tram line.

Strade narrows his eyes.

STRADE

There.

The Sergeant follows his gaze.

SERGEANT

They're heading for Outpost Seven.
That connects to the shuttle pads.

Strade's voice is steady, controlled.

STRADE

Then we intercept them before they
get off this moon.

He turns toward the emergency vehicle bay.

STRADE (CONT'D)

Come on.

They run.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. KARNIS – EMERGENCY VEHICLE BAY – CONTINUOUS

A row of rugged surface transports sits under a reinforced canopy.

Engines cold. Dust settling from the facility's alarms.

Strade and the Sergeant burst in.

The Sergeant checks the ignition panel.

SERGEANT

This one's hot. Prepped recently.

Strade climbs into the driver's seat.

STRADE
They won't beat us to Outpost
Seven.

The Sergeant jumps in beside him.

Strade hits the ignition – the transport roars to life.

EXT. KARNIS – SURFACE – MOMENTS LATER

The transport speeds across the rocky terrain. Karnis' surface is harsh and uneven, lit by Elyon's pale glow overhead.

Dust trails behind them as they race along the tram line.

The Sergeant grips the dash as they hit a rough patch.

SERGEANT
If they reach the shuttle pads–

STRADE
They won't.

He accelerates.

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER – SAME TIME

The chamber is in full emergency mode. Advisors rush between stations.

Governors argue across the floor.

The holographic display updates:

BREACH TEAM MOVING TOWARD SURFACE

POTENTIAL SHUTTLE EXFILTRATION

CONTACT WITH WARDEN: LOST

Dorr stands, furious.

DORR

We're watching a detainee walk off
a penal moon in real time! How is
this not an OTA matter?

Halvek tries to keep his voice steady.

HALVEK

We don't know who was taken. We
don't know the motive—

VEYNA

(interjecting)

We know enough. This was planned.
This was coordinated. And someone
inside Karnis helped them.

Malrix raises a hand.

MALRIX

We will not authorize military
action based on speculation.

Dorr steps forward.

DORR

This isn't speculation. This is a
breach of the deepest wing in the
system.

Veyna turns to Malrix.

VEYNA

We need Strade's report. He's the
only one who can tell us what's
happening.

Malrix hesitates — he knows comms are still down.

MALRIX

We are attempting to reestablish
contact.

The chamber grows louder, more fractured.

EXT. KARNIS – SURFACE – CONTINUOUS

Strade's transport races across the terrain, closing the distance to

Outpost Seven – a small cluster of structures near the shuttle pads.

A faint dust plume rises ahead – the extraction team's tram.

The Sergeant points.

SERGEANT

There! They're almost at the outpost!

Strade narrows his eyes.

STRADE

Not if we cut them off.

He veers the transport off the main path, taking a rougher, faster route across the rocks.

EXT. KARNIS – OUTPOST SEVEN – MOMENTS LATER

A small, fortified outpost sits at the edge of the shuttle perimeter.

Lights flash. Automated turrets track movement.

The extraction tram screeches to a stop at the platform.

Two FIGURES in maintenance uniforms jump out – one guiding the hooded detainee, the other carrying a portable jammer.

They sprint toward the shuttle access tunnel.

Strade's transport skids to a halt nearby.

He jumps out, weapon raised.

STRADE

Stop!

The figures don't hesitate – they run faster.

The Sergeant takes cover behind the transport.

SERGEANT

They're making for the tunnel!

Strade moves forward, determined.

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER — SAME TIME

The alert display flashes again:

BREACH TEAM APPROACHING SHUTTLE PERIMETER

DETAINEE EXTRACTION IMMINENT

The chamber erupts.

DORR

This is it! They're leaving the moon!

HALVEK

We need confirmation before—

VEYNA

(interrupting sharply)
If they reach a shuttle, this becomes a system-wide crisis.

Malrix looks shaken — the first crack in his composure.

MALRIX

Get me Karnis. Now.

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. KARNIS — OUTPOST SEVEN — CONTINUOUS

Strade sprints across the platform, closing in on the extraction team.

The figures reach the shuttle access tunnel — a reinforced door begins to slide open.

Strade raises his weapon—

STRADE

Don't move!

The lead figure turns — face still obscured — and throws a small device onto the ground.

A burst of white smoke erupts.

Strade covers his face, coughing.

The figures disappear into the tunnel with the detainee.

The door slams shut behind them.

Strade reaches it too late - slamming his hand against the sealed metal.

STRADE (CONT'D)

Damn it!

He steps back, breath tight, eyes burning from the smoke.

The Sergeant catches up, coughing.

SERGEANT

They're inside the shuttle perimeter.

Strade stares at the sealed door, the realization settling in.

STRADE

They're getting off this moon.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. KARNIS - SHUTTLE ACCESS TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

The sealed tunnel door stands between Strade and the extraction team.

He pounds the control panel - nothing.

STRADE

Override! Come on-

The panel flashes:

ACCESS LOCKED

AUTHORIZATION: MASKED

The Sergeant wipes smoke from his eyes.

SERGEANT

They're already inside the shuttle bay.

Strade steps back, breathing hard, thinking fast.

STRADE

We need another way in.

He scans the outpost – vents, maintenance hatches, emergency ladders.

He spots a narrow service conduit running along the exterior wall.

STRADE (CONT'D)

There.

He moves toward it.

INT. KARNIS – SHUTTLE BAY – SAME TIME

A sleek, compact shuttle sits on the pad – engines warming, lights cycling through pre launch checks.

The extraction team moves quickly:

- The lead figure inputs a code into the shuttle's hatch.
- The second figure guides the hooded detainee up the ramp.
- The portable jammer sits on the floor, still active.

The shuttle hatch closes with a heavy CLUNK.

EXT. KARNIS – SERVICE CONDUIT – CONTINUOUS

Strade climbs the narrow conduit ladder, the metal cold under his hands. The Sergeant follows, struggling to keep pace.

SERGEANT

Sir– the shuttle engines–

A deep RUMBLE vibrates through the conduit.

STRADE

Move!

They reach a small maintenance hatch. Strade forces it open–

INT. KARNIS – SHUTTLE BAY OVERLOOK – CONTINUOUS

Strade emerges onto a narrow catwalk overlooking the shuttle bay.

Below – the shuttle's engines glow brighter, dust swirling around it.

The Sergeant climbs up beside him.

SERGEANT
We're too late.

Strade raises his weapon anyway, aiming down at the shuttle.

STRADE
Not while it's still on the ground.

He fires – rounds spark off the shuttle's hull.

The engines surge.

A blast of exhaust forces Strade to shield his face.

The shuttle lifts – slowly at first, then with accelerating force.

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER – SAME TIME

The holographic display updates with a sharp CHIME.

A new alert flashes:

SHUTTLE LAUNCH DETECTED – KARNIS

DETAINEE SIGNAL: LOST

STATUS: ESCAPED
The chamber falls into stunned
silence.

Then–

DORR
(erupts)
There it is! Confirmation! A
detainee has escaped a black chain
facility!

Halvek looks pale.

HALVEK
Who... who was taken?

VEYNA
(quiet, sharp)
Someone the Tribunal buried deep
enough to hide from us.

Malrix stares at the alert, shaken.

MALRIX

Get me Strade. Immediately.

EXT. KARNIS - SHUTTLE BAY - CONTINUOUS

The shuttle rises into the thin atmosphere, engines roaring.

Strade steps to the edge of the catwalk, helpless as it climbs.

The Sergeant watches the shuttle disappear into the sky.

SERGEANT

They're gone.

Strade lowers his weapon slowly.

STRADE

Not gone.

He stares at the empty sky.

STRADE (CONT'D)

Taken.

He turns toward the exit - jaw set, eyes cold.

STRADE (CONT'D)

We're not letting this die in a report.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. KARNIS - SURFACE - MOMENTS LATER

Strade and the Sergeant race back toward the facility in the transport.

Dust kicks up behind them as alarms echo faintly across the barren terrain.

The facility looms ahead - lights flickering, emergency beacons flashing.

SERGEANT

Control's going to be in chaos.

Strade grips the wheel tighter.

STRADE
Then we bring order back.

INT. KARNIS – MAIN SECURITY CORRIDOR – MOMENTS LATER

Strade and the Sergeant push through a corridor filled with frantic movement.

Guards rush between stations. Technicians argue over failing systems.

Emergency lights pulse overhead.

A SECURITY LIEUTENANT approaches, shaken.

LIEUTENANT
Warden– we've lost full grid stability. Comms are down across half the facility. We can't reach the surface teams.

Strade corrects him sharply.

STRADE
Governor. And what about the detainee?

The Lieutenant hesitates.

LIEUTENANT
Gone, sir. Shuttle cleared the perimeter.

Strade absorbs that – a quiet, controlled devastation.

STRADE
Lock down every remaining wing. No one moves without my authorization.

The Lieutenant nods and rushes off.

INT. KARNIS – CENTRAL CONTROL – CONTINUOUS

Strade enters. The room is chaos.

Operators shout over one another. Screens flicker. A holographic map of the facility shows multiple sectors in red.

Rell, the Chief Tech, turns as Strade enters.

RELL

We're stabilizing what we can, but whoever did this knew the system better than half my staff.

Strade steps beside him.

STRADE

I want a full trace on every override. Every access point. Every badge used in the last six hours.

Rell hesitates.

RELL

Sir... that's going to point inward.

Strade's expression hardens.

STRADE

Good. That's where we start.

He turns toward the observation window overlooking the facility.

STRADE (CONT'D)

(to himself)

This place failed on my watch.

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER - SAME TIME

The chamber is now in full formal session. The emergency seal glows above the dais.

Governors sit at their stations. Advisors line the walls. The air is tense, electric.

Malrix stands at the center podium, trying to project control.

MALRIX

We will proceed in an orderly fashion. This chamber will not descend into speculation or panic.

Dorr rises immediately.

DORR

Panic? A detainee has escaped a black-chain facility! That's not speculation, that's a system failure!

Halvek lifts a hand, trying to calm the room.

HALVEK

We need clarity before we escalate.
We don't know who was taken—

VEYNA

(interrupting)

We know enough to act. A
coordinated extraction. Internal
sabotage. A shuttle launch without
authorization.

She turns toward Malrix.

VEYNA (CONT'D)

And we still don't have a direct
report from Karnis.

Malrix's composure cracks.

MALRIX

Comms are down. We are working to—

Dorr slams his console.

DORR

Working? We're watching a crisis
unfold in real time while you
"work" on it!

The chamber erupts — voices overlapping, alliances forming,
fear rising.

INT. KARNIS — CENTRAL CONTROL — SAME TIME

Strade stands at the center of the chaos, watching as guards
and technicians scramble to stabilize the facility.

He looks exhausted. Determined. And something else —
disillusioned.

The Sergeant approaches quietly.

SERGEANT

Sir... this wasn't your fault.

Strade doesn't look at him.

STRADE

Everything that happens in this
facility is my responsibility.

He watches a team struggle to reboot a failing grid node.

STRADE (CONT'D)
And today... I lost control of it.

The Sergeant hesitates.

SERGEANT
What are you saying?

Strade finally turns – eyes steady, voice low.

STRADE
I'm saying this job ends today.

The Sergeant absorbs that – stunned.

Strade looks back at the failing facility, the alarms, the chaos.

STRADE (CONT'D)
I'll finish stabilizing the sector.
Then I'm stepping down.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. KARNIS – CENTRAL CONTROL – LATER

The chaos has settled into a grim, exhausted rhythm. Systems flicker back online. Guards move with shaken purpose.

Strade stands alone at a console, typing a formal report. His posture is rigid, controlled – the weight of failure pressing on him.

The Sergeant approaches quietly.

SERGEANT
Sir... the Council is demanding a
full incident breakdown.

Strade doesn't look up.

FADE IN:

INT. KARNIS – CENTRAL CONTROL – LATER

The facility is stabilizing, but the atmosphere is brittle. Guards move with shaken urgency. Systems flicker back online in uneven waves.

Strade stands at a console, reviewing breach logs. His uniform is scuffed, his expression controlled but exhausted.

A COMM OFFICER approaches, tense.

COMM OFFICER
Warden Strade.. the Council is
requesting a preliminary report.
Immediate.

Strade nods once.

STRADE
Open the channel.

The officer hurries to comply.

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER – SAME TIME

The chamber is still in emergency session. The governors sit in rigid silence as the holographic link stabilizes.

Strade's image appears – tired, resolute.

Malrix steps forward, voice measured but strained.

MALRIX
Warden Strade. This chamber
requires a preliminary account of
the breach.

Strade stands straight.

FADE IN:

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER – DAY

The chamber is still under emergency seal. Governors sit in rigid, fractured silence. Advisors hover behind them, whispering updates.

A holographic prompt flashes:

INCOMING TRANSMISSION – WARDEN STRADE

REQUESTING DIRECT ADDRESS

Malrix stiffens.

MALRIX
Patch him through.

The hologram stabilizes – STRADE appears, standing in a dim corner of

Karnis Central Control. His uniform is scuffed, his posture rigid.

A hush falls over the chamber.

MALRIX (CONT'D)
Warden Strade. You may proceed with your statement.

Strade takes a breath – steady, controlled.

STRADE
Members of the Council... I have completed my preliminary report. The breach was coordinated, precise, and supported by internal knowledge of Karnis systems.

Murmurs ripple through the chamber.

Dorr leans forward.

DORR
Internal knowledge? Are you accusing your own staff?

Strade doesn't flinch.

STRADE
I'm stating the facts. Someone with access helped them.

Veyna watches him closely – seeing the weight behind his words.

Strade continues.

STRADE (CONT'D)
The detainee was removed under masked authorization. The overrides were executed with clearance above mine.

The chamber reacts – shock, anger, fear.

Halvek rises.

HALVEK

Warden... are you saying the Tribunal
itself-

STRADE

I'm saying the system failed.

A long, heavy silence.

Strade straightens - the moment he's been carrying since the
breach.

STRADE (CONT'D)

And because of that failure... I am
resigning as Warden of Karnis.

The chamber erupts - overlapping voices, outrage, disbelief.

Dorr slams his console.

DORR

You're abandoning your post during
an active crisis!

Strade's voice cuts through the noise.

STRADE

I am refusing to be the scapegoat
for a breach this Council enabled.

The room freezes.

Malrix steps forward, furious but trying to maintain
composure.

MALRIX

Your resignation is noted. But this
chamber will determine
responsibility-

STRADE

Responsibility begins with
oversight.

He looks directly into the camera - not defiant, but
resolute.

STRADE (CONT'D)

I will not stand in the way of your
investigation. But I will not be
the shield you hide behind.

Veyna rises slowly - the only one who understands the
gravity.

VEYNA
Warden... what will you do now?

Strade's expression softens – just slightly.

STRADE
What I've always done. Tell the
truth.

He ends the transmission.

The hologram collapses.

Silence.

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER – CONTINUOUS

The chamber explodes into chaos.

DORR
He just admitted the Council
failed!

HALVEK
He said the authorization was
masked– that means someone at the
Tribunal–

MALRIX
Enough!

He slams his hand on the podium.

MALRIX (CONT'D)
We will restore order. We will
appoint new leadership on Karnis.
And we will control the narrative.

Veyna steps forward, voice sharp.

VEYNA
Control the narrative... or bury the
truth?

Malrix doesn't answer.

Dorr seizes the moment.

DORR
We need a Tribunal inquiry. Now.

The chamber fractures – alliances forming, voices rising.

Veyna watches the chaos with a cold, calculating clarity.

VEYNA
(under her breath)
Strade... you just changed
everything.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. KARNIS – CENTRAL CONTROL – NIGHT

The facility is dim, running on partial power. The chaos has settled into a grim, exhausted rhythm. Strade stands alone at a console, reviewing the last of the breach logs.

A COMM OFFICER approaches, hesitant.

COMM OFFICER
Sir... the Council has issued a new
directive.

Strade doesn't look up.

STRADE
Another inquiry?

COMM OFFICER
No, sir. A... position.

Strade finally turns.

STRADE
What position?

The officer swallows.

COMM OFFICER
Governor of Karnis.

Strade stares at him – stunned, then angry.

STRADE
Karnis doesn't have a governor.

COMM OFFICER
It does now.

Strade steps closer, voice low.

STRADE
Who proposed it?

COMM OFFICER
The Council. Unanimous vote.

Strade's jaw tightens - he knows what that means.

STRADE
A ceremonial role.

The officer doesn't answer.

STRADE (CONT'D)
A muzzle.

Still no answer.

Strade turns away, pacing once.

STRADE (CONT'D)
They want me out of the
investigation. Out of command. Out
of the way.

COMM OFFICER
Sir... they want you to accept.

Strade stops.

STRADE
No.

The officer blinks.

COMM OFFICER
Sir?

STRADE
Tell the Council I decline.

COMM OFFICER
They said you would say that.

Strade's eyes narrow.

COMM OFFICER (CONT'D)
They also said refusal will be
noted as non cooperation during an
active breach review.

A beat - the threat hangs in the air.

Strade steps forward, voice cold.

STRADE
They're trying to bury me.

COMM OFFICER
Sir... I don't think they care what
you think. They just want you
contained.

Strade exhales – furious, but controlled.

STRADE
I won't be their symbol. I won't be
their shield.

COMM OFFICER
Should I send your refusal?

Strade looks at the deep wing schematic on the screen – the
breach, the masked authorization, the unanswered questions.

He clenches his jaw.

STRADE
Yes. Send it.

The officer nods and hurries off.

Strade stands alone in the dim light. a man who knows he's
being cornered, and refuses to step into the cage.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER – MOMENTS LATER

The chamber is still under emergency seal. Governors sit in
tense silence as a new alert flashes across the holographic
display:

WARDEN STRADE – APPOINTMENT DECLINED

A stunned beat.

Dorr is the first to react – loud, incredulous.

DORR
He refused? He refused a direct
Council appointment?

Malrix stiffens, jaw tightening.

MALRIX

This is unacceptable. He was given a stabilizing role. A symbolic gesture of confidence.

Dorr laughs sharply.

DORR

Confidence? It was a leash and he knew it.

Halvek leans forward, uneasy.

HALVEK

We can't force him into the position. Not publicly.

Malrix turns sharply.

MALRIX

We don't need to force him. We need to make it clear that refusal is not an option.

Veyna rises – calm, but her eyes are sharp.

VEYNA

Or we could acknowledge what this really is.

Malrix bristles.

MALRIX

And what is that, Governor?

VEYNA

A man who refuses to be buried under a title with no authority.

The chamber murmurs – some agreeing, others irritated.

Dorr seizes the moment.

DORR

His refusal proves he's not cooperating. We should escalate to a Tribunal review.

Halvek shakes his head.

HALVEK

A Tribunal review during an active breach? That will look like retaliation.

Malrix slams his hand on the podium.

MALRIX

He is undermining the Council's
attempt to restore order!

Veyna steps forward, voice steady.

VEYNA

No. He is refusing to be silenced.

A beat – the room quiets.

VEYNA (CONT'D)

If we push him, we make him a
martyr. If we punish him, we look
guilty. If we ignore him, he
becomes a symbol.

She lets that sink in.

VEYNA (CONT'D)

But if we bring him inside the
system... we control the narrative.

Malrix studies her – suspicious.

MALRIX

You're suggesting we offer it
again?

VEYNA

I'm suggesting we make it clear
that the position is not a
punishment. Not a muzzle. A
necessity.

Dorr scoffs.

DORR

It *is* a muzzle.

Veyna doesn't deny it.

VEYNA

Then let him believe it's something
else.

The chamber shifts – governors exchanging looks, calculating.

Malrix exhales, frustrated but cornered.

MALRIX

Very well. We will issue a second directive. Stronger language. More urgency.

Halvek nods reluctantly.

HALVEK

And if he refuses again?

Veyna answers before Malrix can.

VEYNA

He won't.

Malrix narrows his eyes.

MALRIX

And how do you know that?

Veyna's expression is unreadable.

VEYNA

Because I'll speak to him.

A beat – the chamber falls silent.

Malrix realizes he has no better option.

MALRIX

Very well. Governor Veyna will handle the matter privately.

Dorr mutters under his breath.

DORR

This is going to blow up in our faces.

Veyna turns away, already preparing to contact Strade.

VEYNA

Only if we underestimate him.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. KARNIS – OBSERVATION DECK – NIGHT

The facility is dim, running on partial power. Through the reinforced glass, Karnis' barren surface stretches under a pale glow.

Strade stands alone, staring out at the moon he no longer commands.

A soft chime.

INCOMING PRIVATE TRANSMISSION – GOVERNOR VEYNA

Strade hesitates – then accepts.

The hologram flickers to life. VEYNA appears, lit by the cool blue of the Council chamber. She looks composed, but there's urgency in her eyes.

VEYNA
You refused the appointment.

Strade doesn't turn.

STRADE
It wasn't an appointment. It was a cage.

Veyna studies him – the exhaustion, the anger, the clarity.

VEYNA
You're not wrong.

Strade finally faces her.

STRADE
Then why call?

VEYNA
Because you're about to make a mistake that helps the people who caused this.

Strade's jaw tightens.

STRADE
I won't be their symbol.

VEYNA
You won't be. Not if you understand what they're really doing.

She steps closer to the holographic field.

VEYNA (CONT'D)
They created the governorship to keep you close enough to control... but far enough to silence.

Strade exhales – bitter.

STRADE
Exactly why I refused.

Veyna shakes her head.

VEYNA
Strade... listen to me. If you walk away, they control the narrative. They decide what happened. They decide who's blamed. They decide what the public hears.

A beat.

VEYNA (CONT'D)
And they decide what disappears.

Strade looks away – the truth landing hard.

VEYNA (CONT'D)
But if you accept... you stay inside the system. Inside the investigation. Inside the Council's line of sight.

Strade steps closer, voice low.

STRADE
With no authority. No vote. No power.

VEYNA
Power isn't always in the title.

She lets that sit.

VEYNA (CONT'D)
You'll have access. To the guards. To the logs. To the families. To the facility. To everything they don't want you to see.

Strade absorbs that – the first crack in his resistance.

VEYNA (CONT'D)
And you won't be alone.

Strade meets her eyes.

STRADE
Meaning you.

VEYNA

Meaning the governors who still
believe in accountability. Halvek.
Rellin. Me.

She steps even closer, voice soft but firm.

VEYNA (CONT'D)

We need someone on Karnis who isn't
compromised. Someone who saw the
breach from the inside. Someone who
won't bend to pressure.

A beat.

VEYNA (CONT'D)

We need you.

Strade looks down – conflicted, torn.

STRADE

They think they're burying me.

VEYNA

Then let them think it.

She leans in, intensity rising.

VEYNA (CONT'D)

Take the title. Take the access.
Take the proximity. And use it.

Strade's eyes sharpen – the soldier, the investigator, the
man who refuses to be silenced.

STRADE

You want me to be your eyes on
Karnis.

VEYNA

I want you to be the truth on
Karnis.

A long, quiet beat.

Strade straightens.

STRADE

If I accept... they'll watch me.

VEYNA

Good. Let them. They'll never
suspect you're watching back.

Strade nods slowly – decision made.

STRADE
Send the directive again.

Veyna allows herself the smallest hint of relief.

VEYNA
I already have.

Strade steps closer to the hologram.

STRADE
Then tell the Council...

He takes a breath.

STRADE (CONT'D)
I accept the appointment.

Veyna's expression softens – respect, trust, and something unspoken.

VEYNA
Welcome to politics, Governor
Strade.

The hologram fades.

Strade stands alone on the observation deck – no longer a Warden, not yet a pawn, but something new:

A man with purpose.

A man with access.

A man with a mission.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER – DAY

The chamber is arranged for a formal ceremony. A small dais stands at the center, draped in the colors of Elyon and Karnis.

Strade enters through the side doors.

He is no longer in uniform.

Instead, he wears simple, clean civilian attire – dark trousers, a pressed shirt, nothing ornamental. The absence of rank or insignia is striking.

A few governors exchange glances – some surprised, some disapproving.

Malrix forces a diplomatic smile.

MALRIX
Governor designate Strade. Please
step forward.

Strade approaches the dais.

On a velvet pad rests the newly created **Karnis Governor's Robe** – a formal garment of deep charcoal fabric with a subtle silver trim,

bearing the minimalist crest of Karnis. It is ceremonial, elegant, and clearly designed for optics rather than authority.

Malrix lifts the robe.

MALRIX (CONT'D)
This garment symbolizes the office
of Governor of Karnis – a role of
unity, stability, and service.

Strade stands still as Malrix drapes the robe over his shoulders.

The robe settles around him – heavy, unfamiliar, almost theatrical.

Strade adjusts it slightly, not out of vanity, but to ground himself.

He looks up at the chamber – a man transformed not by power, but by political necessity.

Malrix steps back.

MALRIX (CONT'D)
By authority of the Orbis Council,
you are hereby appointed Governor
of Karnis.

Polite applause echoes through the chamber.

Veyna watches him closely – and for the first time, Strade looks like a political figure, not a warden.

Strade steps to the podium.

STRADE
I accept this responsibility. And I
will use this position to ensure
the truth of what happened on
Karnis is brought forward.

A ripple of discomfort moves through the chamber.

Malrix forces a smile that doesn't reach his eyes.

MALRIX
Transparency is always welcome.

Dorr mutters under his breath.

DORR
Not in this room.

Veyna steps forward as the ceremony concludes. She leans in just enough for Strade to hear.

VEYNA
(quiet)
They think the robe hides you. It
doesn't.

Strade nods once – a silent promise.

He turns and walks out of the chamber, the robe trailing behind him like a symbol of both confinement and opportunity.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. KARNIS – GOVERNMENT COMPLEX – DAY

A new structure rises from the rocky surface of Karnis – sleek, angular, and unmistakably political. It's still half finished: scaffolding, construction drones, and workers move around the perimeter.

A landing shuttle descends, escorted by two OTA security craft.

The shuttle touches down.

The ramp lowers.

Strade emerges wearing the newly appointed GOVERNOR'S ROBE — charcoal fabric, silver trim, the crest of Karnis at the collar. It hangs on him like a weight he didn't choose.

Behind him, an OTA SECURITY DETAIL fans out — armored, disciplined, impersonal.

A CONSTRUCTION FOREMAN approaches, nervous.

FOREMAN

Governor Strade. The complex is still under development, but your office is ready for occupancy.

Strade nods once, barely acknowledging the title.

STRADE

I won't be staying long.

The foreman blinks, confused.

Strade moves past him toward a waiting transport.

The OTA detail follows.

EXT. KARNIS — THE BLACK CHAIN — LATER

The transport glides across the barren terrain toward the massive, fortified structure known as THE BLACK CHAIN — the deepest, most secure wing of the facility.

Strade watches it approach through the window — the place he once commanded, now under someone else's authority.

The transport lands.

Strade steps out, robe trailing behind him, flanked by OTA guards.

The NEW WARDEN, a stern, by the book officer named WARDEN KERRON, approaches with two TOP GUARDS.

KERRON

Governor Strade. Welcome back to Karnis.

Strade studies him — assessing, measuring.

STRADE

Warden Kerron.

Kerron gestures toward the entrance.

KERRON

We've prepared a briefing on the breach, the current lockdown protocols, and the status of the deep wing investigation.

Strade walks beside him.

STRADE

I'll need access to all logs, personnel files, and surveillance from the last forty eight hours.

Kerron hesitates – just enough for Strade to notice.

KERRON

Some of those files are under Tribunal review. Clearance is pending.

Strade stops walking.

STRADE

I used to have full access.

Kerron meets his eyes – respectful, but firm.

KERRON

You're not the Warden anymore, sir.

A beat – the truth lands hard.

Strade nods once, controlled.

STRADE

Then show me what I *can* see.

Kerron gestures to the guards.

KERRON

This way.

They lead Strade into the Black Chain.

INT. BLACK CHAIN – SECURITY BRIEFING ROOM – CONTINUOUS

A holographic table flickers to life, displaying breach schematics, timelines, and personnel movements.

Kerron begins the briefing.

KERRON

The extraction team entered through a maintenance corridor. They bypassed three checkpoints using falsified credentials. We believe they had inside assistance.

Strade studies the hologram – sharp, focused.

STRADE

What about the masked authorization?

Kerron stiffens.

KERRON

That file is sealed. Tribunal order.

Strade's jaw tightens.

STRADE

Of course it is.

One of the top guards, a veteran named RESS, steps forward.

RESS

Sir... there's something else.

He taps the console.

A section of the timeline flickers – a missing block of data.

RESS (CONT'D)

This feed was wiped. Clean. No trace.

Strade leans in.

STRADE

Who had access to this terminal?

Kerron exchanges a look with his guards – uneasy.

KERRON

That's what we're trying to determine.

Strade straightens, the robe shifting around him like a mantle he's still learning to wear.

STRADE

Then let's determine it.

The guards nod – some relieved he's back, others wary of the politics he now represents.

Strade looks around the room – the place he once commanded, now a battleground of secrets.

STRADE (CONT'D)
This isn't over.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. BLACK CHAIN – SECURITY BRIEFING ROOM – DAY

The holographic table hums with data. Strade stands beside
WARDEN

KERRON and two senior guards, reviewing breach schematics.

Kerron points to a section of the timeline.

KERRON
This is where the masked
authorization overrode the deep
wing locks. We still don't know
who–

A sharp chime interrupts him.

All eyes turn to the console.

A new notification flashes across the display:

TRIBUNAL CLEARANCE UPDATE

GOVERNOR STRADE – LEVEL 7 ACCESS APPROVED

Kerron freezes.

The guards exchange uneasy looks.

Strade steps closer, reading the notification again – as if expecting it to vanish.

STRADE
Level Seven...

Kerron straightens, suddenly formal.

KERRON
Governor... that clearance supersedes
mine.

Strade looks up.

KERRON (CONT'D)
It supersedes every operational
officer on Karnis. Including the
Tribunal liaisons.

A beat – the weight of that lands.

Strade absorbs it, controlled but shaken.

STRADE
When did this go through?

Kerron checks the timestamp.

KERRON
Just now. Direct authorization from
the Tribunal Council.

Strade's eyes narrow – he knows this wasn't meant to happen
yet.

STRADE
They didn't expect it to be
approved.

Kerron hesitates.

KERRON
No, sir. They didn't.

Strade turns to the guards.

STRADE
Open every sealed file. Every
masked authorization. Every
restricted feed.

Kerron steps forward.

KERRON
Governor... with this clearance, you
can override any lock on the moon.
Any department. Any Tribunal
restriction.

Strade nods once.

STRADE

Then let's start with the missing
feed.

Kerron gestures to the console.

KERRON

Yes, sir.

Strade pauses – then turns back to Kerron.

STRADE

Warden.

Kerron stands at attention.

STRADE (CONT'D)

You have the full backing of the
Orbis Council. If anyone tries to
block this investigation – anyone –
you report it directly to me.

Kerron absorbs that – a mixture of relief and renewed
purpose.

KERRON

Understood.

Strade steps to the console and places his hand on the
biometric scanner.

The system scans him.

A new prompt appears:

GOVERNORIAL OVERRIDE – ACCESS GRANTED

Files begin unlocking. Redacted sections dissolve. Masked
authorizations unmask. Sealed logs open.

The guards watch in stunned silence.

Kerron exhales – a quiet, reverent sound.

KERRON

Governor... with respect... this
changes everything.

Strade's expression hardens.

STRADE

Good.

He taps the console.

STRADE (CONT'D)
Because I'm done being kept in the
dark.

CUT TO:

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER - SAME TIME

A notification flashes across Malrix's console.

He reads it - and goes pale.

MALRIX
No...

Halvek leans in.

HALVEK
What happened?

Malrix slams the console shut.

MALRIX
His clearance was approved.

Dorr smirks.

DORR
You gave him a title. Now he has
teeth.

Veyna watches silently - exactly as she planned.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER - NIGHT

The chamber is in chaos. Governors rush to their stations as alarms pulse softly - not a security breach, but a political one.

A holographic alert flashes:

URGENT: COUNCILOR MALRIX - UNACCOUNTED

SHUTTLE MISSING – TRANSPONDER DISABLED

Veyna enters, composed but alert. Dorr storms in behind her.

DORR

This is what happens when we ignore
the truth!

Halvek tries to calm the room.

HALVEK

We don't know what happened yet–

A COUNCIL AIDE rushes to the podium, breathless.

AIDE

We received a report from Karnis.
Two guards confessed to cooperating
with a Council aide... from Malrix's
office.

The chamber freezes.

Veyna's eyes narrow – she already suspected.

Dorr slams his console.

DORR

There it is. Proof. He was
involved.

HALVEK

We don't know the extent–

A second alert flashes.

SHUTTLE 3-DELTA – DEPARTED WITHOUT CLEARANCE

LAST TRAJECTORY: VELAR PRIME CORRIDOR

The room erupts again.

GOVERNOR 1

He fled?

GOVERNOR 2

Why Velar Prime?

GOVERNOR 3

Is he seeking asylum?

Veyna steps forward, voice cutting through the noise.

VEYNA
He's running to the only place that
would protect him.

Silence.

Dorr leans in.

DORR
Vassel's loyalists.

Halvek looks shaken.

HALVEK
This means the breach... the escape...

Veyna finishes for him.

VEYNA
...wasn't random. It was
orchestrated.

The chamber falls into a stunned, horrified quiet.

Dorr turns to the others.

DORR
We have a Councilor on the run. A
bribed aide. A compromised
investigation. And an escaped
political extremist.

He points to the empty seat where Malrix once sat.

DORR (CONT'D)
This is no longer a breach. This is
a conspiracy.

Veyna meets his eyes – for once, they agree.

VEYNA
And it's only just begun.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. BLACK CHAIN – OPERATIONS FLOOR – NIGHT

The facility hums with low, tense energy. Guards move with purpose.

Screens flicker with new data from the reopened logs.

Strade stands with Warden Kerron, reviewing the decrypted files his

Tribunal clearance has just unlocked.

A COMM OFFICER rushes in – pale, breathless.

COMM OFFICER
Governor– urgent transmission from
Elyon.

Strade turns sharply.

STRADE
Put it through.

The officer taps his wrist console. A holographic window opens, displaying a COUNCIL SECURITY DIRECTOR – shaken, sweating.

SECURITY DIRECTOR
Governor Strade... we have a
situation.

Strade's eyes narrow.

STRADE
What kind of situation?

The director hesitates – then forces it out.

SECURITY DIRECTOR
Councilor Malrix is missing.

Kerron stiffens. Strade's expression hardens.

STRADE
Missing?

SECURITY DIRECTOR
His shuttle departed without
clearance.

Transponder disabled. Last trajectory indicates a vector toward Velar Prime.

A beat – the weight of that sinks in.

Kerron exhales sharply.

KERRON
Velar Prime... Vassel's base of
support.

Strade steps closer to the hologram.

STRADE
When did he leave?

SECURITY DIRECTOR
Forty minutes ago. We believe he
was alerted to the interrogation of
the guards you detained.

Strade's jaw tightens.

STRADE
So he ran.

The director nods grimly.

SECURITY DIRECTOR
We've convened an emergency
session.

Governor Veyna requested you be informed immediately.

Strade absorbs that – Veyna is already moving.

STRADE
What evidence do you have?

The director pulls up a data packet.

SECURITY DIRECTOR
Financial transfers. Aide level
communications. A shell account
traced to Velar Prime. Enough to
open a formal inquiry.

Strade's eyes burn with controlled fury.

STRADE
And now he's gone.

SECURITY DIRECTOR
Yes, Governor.

Strade turns away, pacing once – the robe shifting around him like a mantle of responsibility he never wanted but now fully owns.

Kerron watches him – waiting.

Strade stops.

STRADE

He fled because he's guilty. And because someone warned him.

Kerron nods.

KERRON

Inside the Council.

Strade looks back at the hologram.

STRADE

Tell Veyna I'm on my way to the briefing. And lock down every file tied to Malrix's office. No one touches anything without my authorization.

SECURITY DIRECTOR

Understood.

The hologram flickers out.

Strade stands in the dim light of the Black Chain – a man who has just realized the conspiracy is deeper, wider, and closer than he imagined.

Kerron steps forward.

KERRON

Governor... what now?

Strade turns, eyes sharp.

STRADE

Now?

A beat.

STRADE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Now we stop pretending this was a breach.

He steps toward the exit.

STRADE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

This was an operation.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER – NIGHT

The chamber lights blaze at full intensity – a rare sign of crisis.

Governors rush to their seats. Advisors whisper urgently. Security officers line the walls.

A holographic alert pulses above the central podium:

COUNCILOR MALRIX – UNACCOUNTED

SHUTTLE 3-DELTA – DEPARTED WITHOUT CLEARANCE

LAST TRAJECTORY: VELAR PRIME CORRIDOR

Veyna enters, composed but tense. She takes her seat as Dorr storms in, furious.

DORR

This is what happens when we ignore
the warning signs!

Halvek raises his hands, trying to calm the room.

HALVEK

We don't know the full situation
yet–

A SECURITY DIRECTOR appears on the central display – shaken, sweating.

SECURITY DIRECTOR

Governors... we have confirmation.
Malrix left Elyon forty minutes
ago. His shuttle disabled its
transponder shortly after
departure.

The chamber erupts.

GOVERNOR 1

He fled?

GOVERNOR 2

Why would he run?

GOVERNOR 3

Is he in danger? Was he threatened?

Dorr slams his console.

DORR
He wasn't threatened. He was
exposed.

The room quiets – confused, unsettled.

VEYNA
(to the Security Director)
What triggered his departure?

The director hesitates – then brings up a new data packet.

SECURITY DIRECTOR
A report from Karnis. Two guards
confessed to cooperating with a
Council aide... from Malrix's office.

A stunned silence falls over the chamber.

Halvek sinks back in his seat.

HALVEK
No... no, that can't be right.

GOVERNOR 4
An aide? Acting alone?

Dorr scoffs.

DORR
Aides don't move political
prisoners alone.

Veyna leans forward, voice steady.

VEYNA
What else did the guards say?

The director swallows.

SECURITY DIRECTOR
They claimed the aide told them the
transfer was Tribunal-authorized.
Off record. High-risk detainee.

The governors exchange horrified looks.

GOVERNOR 5
Tribunal-authorized? That's
impossible.

GOVERNOR 6
Unless someone forged the order.

GOVERNOR 7

Or someone inside the Tribunal
issued it.

The room spirals into panic.

DORR

And now Malrix is running to Velar
Prime. To Vassel's loyalists.

Halvek shakes his head, devastated.

HALVEK

This means the breach... the escape...

Veyna finishes for him.

VEYNA

...wasn't a failure. It was an
operation.

The chamber falls silent – the truth settling like a weight.

Dorr rises, voice sharp.

DORR

We have a Councilor on the run. A
bribed aide. A compromised
investigation. And an escaped
extremist with a loyal network.

He points to Malrix's empty seat.

DORR (CONT'D)

This is no longer a matter of
protocol. This is treason.

Gasps ripple through the chamber.

Halvek looks around, shaken.

HALVEK

What do we do?

Veyna stands – calm, resolute.

VEYNA

We issue a warrant for Malrix's
detention. We freeze his accounts.
We seize his communications. And we
cooperate fully with Governor
Strade's investigation.

The room quiets – her authority cutting through the chaos.

VEYNA (CONT'D)

This Council must show unity. Or we
will fall apart before Vassel ever
lifts a finger.

Dorr nods – for once, aligned with her.

DORR

Agreed.

Halvek exhales, defeated but accepting.

HALVEK

Then let the record show... the
Council

declares Malrix a fugitive.

The holographic display updates:

STATUS: MALRIX – FUGITIVE

WARRANT ISSUED – DETAIN ON SIGHT

Veyna watches the update – not triumphant, but grim.

VEYNA

(quiet, to herself)
And this is only the beginning.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL COMPLEX – OUTER CORRIDOR – NIGHT

The corridor leading to the Council chamber is lined with OTA
security.

Not ceremonial guards – real soldiers. The atmosphere is
tight, anxious.

Strade approaches, wearing the Governor's robe. It moves
differently now – not awkward, not heavy. Purposeful.

Two OTA OFFICERS fall in behind him as he walks.

A COUNCIL AIDE steps forward, nervous.

AIDE

Governor Strade... the Council is
already in session. They're waiting
for you.

Strade nods once.

STRADE

Open the doors.

The aide hesitates – then signals the guards.

The massive chamber doors begin to part.

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER – CONTINUOUS

The room is loud – governors arguing, advisors whispering,
security

officers monitoring the perimeter.

The moment Strade steps inside, the noise dies.

Every head turns.

Some governors stiffen.

Some look relieved.

Some look terrified.

Veyna watches him enter – calm, steady, a flicker of respect
in her eyes.

Dorr leans back, arms crossed, studying Strade like a new
variable in an equation.

Halvek looks shaken but hopeful.

Strade walks down the central aisle, the robe trailing behind
him like a shadow of authority the Council never meant to
give him.

He reaches the central podium.

No one speaks.

Finally, Veyna breaks the silence.

VEYNA

Governor Strade. Thank you for
coming on such short notice.

Strade meets her eyes – a silent acknowledgment.

STRADE
I received your message. Malrix
fled.

A ripple of discomfort moves through the chamber.

Dorr stands.

DORR
And you have evidence tying his
office to the breach.

Strade doesn't flinch.

STRADE
I do.

Gasps. Murmurs. A few governors exchange panicked looks.

Halvek rises, voice trembling.

HALVEK
Governor... how much do you know?

Strade steps forward, placing a data slate on the podium.

STRADE
Enough to confirm the breach was
not an accident. Not a failure of
protocol. Not a lapse in security.

He looks around the room – every governor held in place by
the weight of his words.

STRADE (CONT'D)
It was an operation. Coordinated.
Funded. And assisted from inside
this Council.

The chamber erupts – shouts, denials, fear.

Veyna raises her voice, cutting through the chaos.

VEYNA
Order!

The room slowly quiets.

Veyna turns to Strade.

VEYNA (CONT'D)
Governor... you have the floor.

Strade nods – then activates the data slate.

A hologram flickers to life above the chamber:

- financial transfers
- aide-level access logs
- masked authorizations
- Malrix's shuttle trajectory

The evidence hangs in the air like a verdict.

Strade speaks with calm, lethal clarity.

STRADE

This is only the beginning. And if
we don't act now... Malrix won't be
the last to run.

The chamber falls into stunned silence.

Veyna watches him – and for the first time, the Council sees what she already knows:

**Strade is no longer a warden.

He is a political force.**

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL COMPLEX – PRIVATE CORRIDOR – NIGHT

The Council chamber doors slam shut behind them, muffling the chaos inside. The corridor is dim, quiet – a stark contrast to the storm they just walked out of.

Strade steps away from the doors, exhaling slowly. The Governor's robe hangs heavy on his shoulders, but he carries it with purpose now.

Veyna approaches from behind, her footsteps soft but deliberate.

VEYNA

You handled yourself well in there.

Strade turns, still simmering with controlled intensity.

STRADE

They're only listening because
they're afraid.

Veyna stops a few feet from him – close enough for honesty,
far enough for caution.

VEYNA

Fear makes people pay attention. It
doesn't make them act.

Strade studies her – reading the subtext.

STRADE

You knew Malrix would run.

Veyna doesn't deny it.

VEYNA

I suspected. Men like him don't
stay to face consequences. They
look for protection. Or for someone
to hide behind.

Strade steps closer, voice low.

STRADE

Vassel.

Veyna nods once – the name hangs between them like a shadow.

VEYNA

Velar Prime is the only place he
could go without being arrested on
sight. And the only place where his
betrayal might be rewarded.

Strade clenches his jaw.

STRADE

This wasn't just corruption. This
was coordination.

Veyna's eyes sharpen.

VEYNA

Yes. And that's what terrifies
them.

She gestures back toward the chamber.

VEYNA (CONT'D)

Half of them still think this is a
political embarrassment.

(MORE)

VEYNA (CONT'D)
The other half think it's a crisis.
None of them understand what it
really is.

Strade steps closer, voice steady.

STRADE
Then tell me. What is it?

Veyna meets his gaze – unwavering.

VEYNA
A fracture. One that's been forming
for years. Vassel didn't create it.
He just knew where to push.

Strade absorbs that – the weight of it settling in.

STRADE
And Malrix?

VEYNA
A symptom. Not the disease.

A beat – quiet, heavy.

Strade looks down the corridor, thinking.

STRADE
They're going to fight me. Every
step of this investigation.

Veyna steps closer – the closest she's ever stood to him.

VEYNA
Yes. They will. Some out of fear.
Some out of guilt. Some because
they'd rather protect the system
than admit it's broken.

She pauses – then softens, just slightly.

VEYNA (CONT'D)
But you won't be fighting alone.

Strade looks at her – surprised, but not questioning it.

STRADE
You're putting yourself at risk.

VEYNA
I already was. The moment I chose
to believe you.

A long, quiet beat.

Strade nods – a silent acceptance of the alliance forming between them.

STRADE

Then we move forward. Together.

Veyna allows herself the faintest hint of a smile – not warmth, but resolve.

VEYNA

Good. Because the next part will be worse.

Strade raises an eyebrow.

STRADE

Worse?

Veyna steps past him, heading down the corridor.

VEYNA

We still don't know who helped Vassel inside the Tribunal.

Strade watches her go – the realization hitting him like a blow.

She stops, glancing back.

VEYNA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

And that's where the real danger begins.

She walks away.

Strade stands alone for a moment the robe shifting around him, the weight of the truth settling on his shoulders.

He turns and follows her.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. BLACK CHAIN – DATA ARCHIVE VAULT – NIGHT

The vault is cold, dim, and lined with towering data pillars. Only a handful of people on Karnis have ever been inside. Strade and Kerron stand before a central console, its interface glowing with newly unlocked files.

Strade places his hand on the biometric scanner.

SYSTEM
Governorial clearance confirmed.

Rows of encrypted logs dissolve into view.

Kerron exhales – impressed and uneasy.

KERRON
I've never seen this level of
access. Not even as Warden.

Strade doesn't answer. He scrolls through the logs –
financial transfers, masked authorizations, sealed
communications.

Then something catches his eye.

STRADE
Stop.

He enlarges a file – a partial communication flagged as
"TRIBUNAL

PRIORITY – REDACTED."

Kerron leans in.

KERRON
That's a Tribunal channel. Why
would a Council aide have access to
that?

Strade opens the metadata.

A single line is visible:

AUTHORIZATION REQUEST: TRANSFER OF HIGH-RISK DETAINEE

REQUESTOR: UNKNOWN

APPROVED BY: JUDGE ID – 7B-4

Kerron stiffens.

KERRON
A Tribunal judge approved the
transfer?

Strade shakes his head.

STRADE

No. Someone used a judge's ID. Or a judge used their own.

He scrolls further – more redactions, more missing data.

KERRON

Can you unmask it?

Strade tries – the system denies the request.

SYSTEM

Access restricted. Tribunal seal active.

Strade's jaw tightens.

STRADE

They're blocking it. Even from me.

Kerron steps back, thinking.

KERRON

Governor... look at the timestamp.

Strade checks it – his eyes narrow.

STRADE

This was sent six hours before the breach.

Kerron's voice drops.

KERRON

Someone authorized the extraction before the attack even happened.

Strade scrolls again – another anomaly.

A second file.

A different aide.

A different department.

STRADE

There's more.

He opens it – a list of access logs from the night of the breach.

Kerron reads over his shoulder.

KERRON

These aren't guards. These are...
aides.

From multiple governors' offices.

Strade nods slowly.

STRADE

Not the governors. Their staff.

Kerron looks up – realization dawning.

KERRON

A network.

Strade taps the console again – a final file unlocks.

A routing code.

A destination.

A name.

STRADE

Velar Prime.

Kerron exhales sharply.

KERRON

So Malrix wasn't the only one
talking to them.

Strade closes the file – his expression darkening.

STRADE

No. He was just the first to run.

A beat – the weight of the discovery settles.

Kerron steps closer.

KERRON

Governor... what do we do with this?

Strade turns toward the exit, the robe shifting around him
like a shadow of authority.

STRADE

We take it to the Council.

He pauses – then adds, quieter, more dangerous:

STRADE (CONT'D)
And we see who panics.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER - DAY

The chamber is quieter than usual - not calm, but stunned. Governors sit rigidly, advisors whispering behind them. The air feels heavy, charged.

Strade stands at the central podium, the hologram of the newly uncovered files hovering above him:

- Tribunal authorization fragment
- Three aide access logs
- Velar Prime routing code
- Timestamp predating the breach

Veyna watches him from her seat - composed, but her eyes are sharp.

Dorr leans forward, jaw tight.

Halvek looks shaken, hands clasped.

The hologram flickers as Strade finishes his briefing.

STRADE
This is coordinated. Three aides,
three departments, one Tribunal
level authorization. All within the
same hour.

A long, suffocating silence.

Then-

GOVERNOR TALAN
(voice cracking)
This... this can't be real. My aide
would never-

Dorr cuts him off.

DORR
Your aide accessed a restricted
channel the night of the breach.
That's not nothing.

Talan bristles.

TALAN
He said it was a clerical error!

Dorr scoffs.

DORR
Clerical errors don't route
prisoners to Velar Prime.

Murmurs ripple through the chamber.

Halvek rises slowly.

HALVEK
Governor Strade... are you saying
this was planned? Before the
breach?

Strade meets his eyes.

STRADE
Yes.

Gasps. A few governors look physically ill.

GOVERNOR 3
But that would mean—

VEYNA
(interrupting)
—someone inside the Tribunal helped
them.

The room erupts.

GOVERNOR 4
Impossible!

GOVERNOR 5
The Tribunal is neutral!

GOVERNOR 6
This is an accusation of treason!

Strade raises his voice — calm, controlled, cutting through
the noise.

STRADE

I'm not accusing anyone. I'm showing you the evidence.

He gestures to the hologram.

STRADE (CONT'D)

Someone used a Tribunal judge's ID to authorize the transfer. Whether it was the judge or someone with access to their credentials... we don't know yet.

Veyna stands – her presence quiets the room.

VEYNA

But we do know this: Malrix wasn't acting alone. And he wasn't the highest link in the chain.

A cold, collective realization settles over the chamber.

Dorr rises, voice low and dangerous.

DORR

This Council has been infiltrated.

Silence.

Halvek sinks into his seat, devastated.

HALVEK

How far does it go?

Strade answers without hesitation.

STRADE

Farther than Malrix. Farther than the aides. Farther than Karnis.

He steps closer to the governors – the robe trailing behind him like a shadow of authority.

STRADE (CONT'D)

This wasn't a breach. It was an extraction. And someone with power made sure it happened.

The chamber is frozen – no one breathes.

Veyna steps beside him, her voice steady.

VEYNA

We need to act. Now. Before anyone else runs. Before anyone else destroys evidence. Before this network goes underground.

Dorr nods sharply.

DORR

Agreed.

Halvek looks around the room – fear in his eyes.

HALVEK

What do you propose?

Veyna and Strade exchange a look – aligned, united.

Strade turns back to the Council.

STRADE

Full audit of all aide communications. Immediate suspension of Tribunal liaisons. Lockdown of all Council channels. And a formal inquiry into Judge ID 7B-4.

Gasps. Panic. Outrage.

GOVERNOR 7

You can't investigate the Tribunal!

VEYNA

We can. And we must.

The chamber falls into stunned silence.

Strade steps back from the podium – calm, resolute.

STRADE

This is bigger than any of us. And if we don't confront it now... we won't get another chance.

The governors look around – shaken, divided, terrified.

Veyna watches them, her voice quiet but firm.

VEYNA

This is the fracture. Choose which side you're on.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL COMPLEX – VEYNA'S PRIVATE OFFICE – NIGHT

The office is dim, lit only by a few suspended holo-panels. Outside the

window, Elyon's skyline glows with cold, distant light.

Strade stands over a table covered in data slates, Tribunal logs, and

Council reports. Veyna moves with quiet precision, sorting files,

cross-referencing timestamps.

VEYNA

Judge 7B4 hasn't presided over a public

case in months. Their docket went

classified after the Vassel sentencing.

Strade studies a redacted authorization.

STRADE

And now their ID is tied to a transfer

order six hours before the breach.

Veyna nods – not surprised, but troubled.

VEYNA

The Tribunal will stonewall us. They'll

claim it's a clerical error. Or a

security breach. Anything to avoid

admitting one of their own was involved.

Strade looks up.

STRADE

So we don't ask permission.

Veyna meets his eyes – approving.

VEYNA

Exactly. We open an inquiry under Council emergency authority. They can't block it without admitting they're hiding something.
Strade taps a data slate.

STRADE

We'll need a list of every case Judge

7B□4 touched in the last year. Every liaison they worked with. Every aide assigned to their office.
Veyna pulls up a holo□display – a web of connections appears.

VEYNA

Already started. Look at this.

Strade steps closer.

Several names glow red – aides from multiple governors' offices.

STRADE

These are the same aides who accessed

restricted channels the night of the breach.

Veyna nods.

VEYNA

Judge 7B□4 didn't just approve the transfer. They coordinated it.

Strade absorbs that – the scale of the conspiracy expanding.

STRADE

This goes deeper than the Council.

VEYNA

It always did.

A beat – quiet, heavy.

Strade straightens.

STRADE

We take this to the Tribunal
tomorrow.

Veyna gives him a sharp, knowing look.

VEYNA

And be ready. They won't let this
go

quietly.

CUT TO:

EXT. VELAR PRIME – ORBITAL APPROACH – NIGHT

Malrix's stolen shuttle drifts toward the planet – a world of
dark

oceans, jagged continents, and storm-lit skies. The atmosphere
glows

with electric turbulence.

INT. SHUTTLE – CONTINUOUS

Malrix sits alone, sweating, shaking. His hands tremble as he
grips the

controls. He keeps glancing at the rear sensors – paranoid,
hunted.

MALRIX

(whispering to himself)
Come on... come on...

A coded signal pings on his console.

VOICE (V.O.)

(distorted)
Shuttle 3-Delta, transmit clearance.

Malrix fumbles with the controls.

MALRIX

This is Councilor Malrix. I- I'm
seeking

asylum. I have information. I-

The voice cuts him off.

VOICE (V.O.)

We know who you are. Hold position.

Malrix freezes.

Outside the viewport, a massive shadow emerges – a Velar Prime patrol

craft, sleek and predatory.

The shuttle shudders as a docking clamp locks onto it.

INT. VELAR PRIME – DOCKING BAY – LATER

The shuttle hatch opens with a hiss.

Malrix steps out, disheveled, terrified. The docking bay is dim,

industrial, lit by flickering overhead lights.

A group of ARMED LOYALISTS waits for him – masked, silent, disciplined.

Their leader steps forward – a tall figure in dark armor.

LOYALIST LEADER

Councilor Malrix. Welcome to Velar

Prime.

Malrix forces a smile – desperate, hopeful.

MALRIX

I... I can help you. I have information.

Names. Logs. I-

The leader raises a hand – silencing him.

LOYALIST LEADER

You ran. That was wise.

Malrix swallows hard.

LOYALIST LEADER (CONT'D)

But understand this.

He steps closer – Malrix flinches.

LOYALIST LEADER (CONT'D)
You are not here for protection.

A beat.

LOYALIST LEADER (CONT'D)
You are here because you are
useful.

Malrix's face falls – the realization hits him like a blow.

LOYALIST LEADER (CONT'D)
For now.

The loyalists close in around him.

The hatch seals behind them.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. TRIBUNAL HALL – DAY

The chamber is austere, ceremonial. The three TRIBUNAL JUDGES sit

elevated behind their dais – formal, composed, unreadable.

Strade and Veyna stand below.

JUDGE 1
Governor Veyna. Governor Strade.
The

Tribunal acknowledges your petition.

VEYNA
We are opening an inquiry into
Judge

7B□4. Their authorization code was used
to approve a detainee transfer prior to
the Karnis breach.

The judges exchange a measured, almost offended look.

JUDGE 2
The Tribunal is aware of the
allegation.

STRADE

Then you understand why we need
access

to the judge's communications and case
logs.

JUDGE 3

Access is denied.

Veyna's tone remains calm, diplomatic.

VEYNA

On what grounds?

JUDGE 1

On constitutional grounds. The
Tribunal

conducts its own internal reviews. We do
not submit our judges to external
investigation.

Strade steps forward.

STRADE

This isn't about optics. A Tribunal
ID

was used to facilitate an escape.

JUDGE 2

And we will determine how that
occurred.

Internally.

Veyna studies them – seeing the political calculus.

VEYNA

You're trying to protect the
Tribunal's

credibility.

JUDGE 3

We are protecting the balance of
power.

If the Council investigates us today,

the Executive will investigate you tomorrow. That is not how this system functions.

Strade's voice sharpens – not confrontational, but resolute.

STRADE

Then what do you propose?

The judges lean forward – unified, formal.

JUDGE 1

We will conduct a full internal review

of Judge 7B□4 and all related personnel.

JUDGE 2

Our findings will be turned over to the

Orbis Investigations Bureau upon completion.

JUDGE 3

This preserves the integrity of all

branches.

Veyna exchanges a look with Strade – she sees the political logic, but

also the danger.

VEYNA

And how long will this review take?

A beat.

JUDGE 1

As long as necessary.

Strade steps closer – controlled, but firm.

STRADE

We don't have that time.

JUDGE 2

Then you will have to trust the system.

Veyna's eyes narrow – not in anger, but in recognition.

VEYNA

Trust is earned. And right now, the public is losing it.

The judges remain still – formal, insulated, unyielding.

JUDGE 3

Our decision stands. The Tribunal will

handle its own investigation. The OIB will receive our findings when the review is complete.

Strade and Veyna turn to leave – not defeated, but galvanized.

As the doors close–

JUDGE 1

(quietly)
They will push this further.

JUDGE 2

Then we must be prepared to defend our

branch.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL COMPLEX – STRATEGIC OPERATIONS ROOM – NIGHT

A secure, windowless chamber deep beneath the Council building. The

lights are low. A holo-table displays Malrix's last known movements,

financial traces, and aide communications.

Strade stands at the table, arms crossed. Veyna enters, carrying a

data slate.

VEYNA

The Tribunal won't cooperate.
They'll

run their own internal review and hand
whatever they choose to the OIB.

STRADE

Which means we can't wait for them.

Veyna sets the slate on the table – Malrix's profile appears.

VEYNA

No. We move on Malrix now. Before
he

destroys evidence. Before he runs again.

Strade studies the display – the web of connections, the
timestamps,

the routing codes.

STRADE

The Council has jurisdiction over
its

own members. But once we issue a warrant
for a sitting governor...

VEYNA

...the OIB takes over.

Strade nods – the weight of that decision settling in.

STRADE

And the OTA?

VEYNA

They'll act the moment the OIB
confirms

he's a flight risk. Which he is.

She taps the slate – a holo□window opens showing Malrix's
unauthorized

shuttle departure logs.

VEYNA (CONT'D)

He already fled once. That's enough
for

OTA intervention.

Strade steps closer to the table.

STRADE

We need to be precise. Clean. No leaks.

No political theater.

VEYNA

Agreed. This isn't about optics. It's

about containment.

She brings up a new file – a draft Council resolution.

VEYNA (CONT'D)

This authorizes the OIB to open a formal

case against Malrix. And grants the OTA

temporary authority to detain him if he

attempts to flee again.

Strade reads it – then signs his authorization code.

STRADE

Send it to the Council floor.

Veyna signs as well.

VEYNA

It'll pass. Even his allies know they

can't protect him now.

Strade looks at her – a quiet acknowledgment of the political shift.

STRADE

Once the OIB moves, Malrix will panic.

VEYNA

He already has. That's why we're doing

this now.

She turns to leave – then pauses.

VEYNA (CONT'D)

Strade... once he's in custody, this doesn't end. The Tribunal will still conduct their own review. And they'll expect us to stay in our lane. Strade meets her eyes – resolute.

STRADE

We will. But we won't stop. Veyna nods – a silent pact.

CUT TO:

EXT. ELYON – GOVERNORIAL RESIDENCE DISTRICT – NIGHT

A quiet, affluent neighborhood. Lights flicker inside Malrix's estate.

Unmarked OIB VEHICLES glide into position. OTA OFFICERS in dark

tactical gear move silently through the shadows.

INT. MALRIX'S ESTATE – CONTINUOUS

Malrix frantically packs a travel case – data slates, credits, a

forged diplomatic pass.

He hears a distant thud.

Then another.

He freezes.

A voice booms through the estate's comm system.

OIB AGENT (V.O.)

Councilor Malrix. This is the Orbis Investigations Bureau. You are ordered to stand down and surrender yourself

immediately.

Malrix's face drains of color.

He bolts toward a side exit—

The door SLAMS open.

OTA OFFICERS flood in, weapons raised.

OTA COMMANDER
Councilor Malrix! Do not move!

Malrix drops the case, hands trembling.

MALRIX
Wait— wait— I can explain— I—

OIB AGENT
You can explain at Eylon Prime

Correctional.

Malrix collapses to his knees.

The officers move in.

CUT TO:

FADE IN:

INT. EYLON PRIME CORRECTIONAL FACILITY — OIB INTERROGATION
SUITE — NIGHT

A sterile, windowless room. Bright overhead lights. A single
table.

Two chairs.

Malrix sits cuffed, pale and sweating. His clothes are
rumped from

the arrest. His hands shake.

Across from him sits OIB INVESTIGATOR RANE — calm,
methodical, a

professional who has done this a thousand times.

An OTA OFFICER stands in the corner, silent, observing.

Rane taps a console. The recording light turns red.

RANE

For the record: Councilor Malrix,
detained under Council Resolution
E0470C, charged with conspiracy,
corruption, and aiding the escape of a
high-risk detainee.
Malrix flinches at the word "Councilor."

MALRIX

I- I want legal counsel.

Rane nods politely.

RANE

You'll have it. After preliminary
questioning.
Malrix swallows hard.

RANE (CONT'D)

Let's begin with the aide from your
office. The one who contacted the guards
on Karnis.
Malrix's eyes dart away.

MALRIX

I didn't authorize anything. He
acted on

his own. I had no idea-

Rane slides a holo-slate across the table.

A message appears:

MALRIX: "Proceed. Keep it quiet."

Malrix's face drains of color.

RANE

This was sent from your console.

MALRIX

I- I didn't write that. Someone
spoofed

my credentials. It happens all the time
in politics—

Rane raises an eyebrow.

RANE
Spoofer credentials don't route
through

your personal encryption key.

Malrix's breath quickens.

RANE (CONT'D)
Let's talk about the transfer
order.

He brings up the Tribunal authorization fragment.

RANE (CONT'D)
You knew this existed. You knew
someone

inside the Tribunal was involved.

Malrix shakes his head violently.

MALRIX
No. No, I didn't. I only knew— I
only

knew the transfer was happening. I

didn't know who approved it.

Rane leans forward — not aggressive, but precise.

RANE
Then why did you flee?

Malrix freezes.

RANE (CONT'D)
If you were innocent, you would
have

come to the Council. You would have
cooperated. Instead, you ran to Velar
Prime.

Malrix's voice cracks.

MALRIX
Because I was told to.

Rane's eyes sharpen.

RANE
By whom?

Malrix hesitates – torn between fear and desperation.

MALRIX
I... I can't say.

Rane taps the table – a subtle signal to the OTA officer.

The officer steps forward.

OTA OFFICER
Councilor, refusing to cooperate
will

result in additional charges.

Malrix breaks.

MALRIX
It wasn't my idea! I was told the
Tribunal wanted the detainee moved. That
it was political. Sensitive. That I
shouldn't ask questions.
Rane's voice stays calm.

RANE
Who told you that?

Malrix's eyes fill with tears – not from guilt, but from
terror.

MALRIX
I don't know his name. He wasn't
one of
ours. He had Tribunal credentials. He
said the order came from "higher than
the Council."

Rane exchanges a look with the OTA officer – the first real
confirmation

of a deeper conspiracy.

RANE
And Velar Prime?

Malrix nods, trembling.

MALRIX
They said if anything went wrong... I
should go there. That I'd be protected.
Rane sits back – the picture forming.

RANE
You weren't protected.
Malrix laughs – a broken, hollow sound.

MALRIX
No. They left me there to rot.
Rane ends the recording.

RANE
This concludes preliminary
questioning.
Your cooperation will be noted.
Malrix slumps forward, defeated.
The OTA officer escorts him out.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER – DAY

The chamber is tense, silent. Governors sit rigidly, advisors
behind

them. A holo□display hovers above the central podium, paused
on the

OIB interrogation timestamp.

Strade stands at the podium. Veyna sits beside him, composed
but alert.

Dorr leans forward, jaw tight. Halvek looks pale, shaken.

The OIB DIRECTOR appears via holo□projection – formal, precise.

OIB DIRECTOR
Governors, this is the preliminary
interrogation of Councilor Malrix,
conducted at Eylon Prime Correctional.
He taps a control.
The recording plays.

MALRIX (V.O.)
"I was told the Tribunal wanted the
transfer. That it was political.
Sensitive. That I shouldn't ask
questions."
A ripple of shock moves through the chamber.
The recording continues.

MALRIX (V.O.)
"He had Tribunal credentials. He
said
the order came from 'higher than the
Council.'"
The recording ends.
Silence.
The OIB Director folds his hands.

OIB DIRECTOR
This concludes the relevant portion
of
the interrogation. Malrix has confirmed
contact with an unidentified individual
claiming Tribunal authority.
The holo□projection fades.
The chamber erupts.

GOVERNOR 1
This is impossible!

GOVERNOR 2
A Tribunal operative? On our soil?

GOVERNOR 3
We need confirmation! This could be
a

misinterpretation—

Dorr slams his console.

DORR
He fled the planet! That's not a
misinterpretation.

Halvek rises slowly, voice trembling.

HALVEK
We must be careful. A single rogue
operative does not implicate the entire
Tribunal.

Veyna stands — calm, authoritative.

VEYNA
No one is accusing the Tribunal.
But we
cannot ignore that someone with access
to their credentials coordinated this.
She gestures to the paused holo□image.

VEYNA (CONT'D)
Malrix didn't act alone. He was
guided.

Protected. And then abandoned.

Strade steps forward.

STRADE
We now have confirmation that the
breach

was premeditated. That the transfer was

authorized before the attack. And that Malrix was instructed to flee to Velar Prime.

Gasps. Fear. Realization.

GOVERNOR 4
Velar Prime... that means—

Dorr finishes it.

DORR
Vassel's network.

The room falls into stunned silence.

Veyna looks around the chamber — her voice steady, controlled.

VEYNA
The Tribunal will conduct their
internal

review. The OIB will continue its investigation. But the Council must act now to protect the integrity of this government.

Halvek nods — shaken, but resolute.

HALVEK
What do you propose?

Strade activates a new holo \square display — a Council resolution.

STRADE
We formalize Malrix's removal from
all

Council duties. We authorize the OIB to pursue all leads tied to his confession. And we prepare for the possibility that this network extends beyond our borders.

The governors exchange looks — fear, anger, resolve.

Veyna steps beside Strade.

VEYNA

This is no longer about Malrix.
This is

about the fracture he exposed.

A long, heavy beat.

Then—

DORR

Let's vote.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL CHAMBER — DAY

The chamber is full. Every governor is present. Advisors line the

perimeter. Security officers stand at attention.

A heavy silence hangs over the room.

Malrix's seat is empty — its absence louder than any voice.

Veyna stands at the central podium, composed and resolute.

VEYNA

Governors, we have heard the OIB's preliminary findings. We have reviewed the interrogation. We have confirmed that Councilor Malrix fled jurisdiction, coordinated with unauthorized actors, and obstructed a lawful investigation. She pauses — letting the weight settle.

VEYNA (CONT'D)

The Council must now decide whether to

remove him from office under Article

Seven of the Orbis Charter.

A murmur ripples through the chamber.

Dorr rises, voice sharp but controlled.

DORR

This is not a political vote. This
is a

vote to preserve the integrity of this

body. Malrix betrayed his oath. He

betrayed this Council. And he betrayed

the people we serve.

Halvek stands – shaken, but principled.

HALVEK

I knew Malrix for years. I never
thought

he was capable of this. But the evidence

is clear. We cannot allow personal

history to cloud our duty.

Strade steps forward – not as a prosecutor, but as a
governor.

STRADE

This vote is not about punishment.
The

Tribunal will handle that. This vote is

about responsibility. About ensuring

that no one – not even a governor –

stands above the law.

The chamber quiets.

Veyna nods to the clerk.

VEYNA

We proceed to the vote.

The CLERK activates the holo \square display. Each governor's name
appears with

two options:

REMOVE

RETAIN

One by one, governors cast their
votes.

A soft chime marks each decision.

Dorr: REMOVE

Halvek: REMOVE

Talan: (hesitates) ... REMOVE

Governor 3: REMOVE

Governor 4: REMOVE

Governor 5: REMOVE

The tally climbs.

Finally-

Veyna casts her vote.

VEYNA: REMOVE

The holo□display flashes:

RESULT: REMOVAL PASSES

VOTE: 12-0

A heavy silence follows – not
triumph, not relief. Just the
weight of

what they've done.

The clerk reads the formal declaration.

CLERK

By unanimous vote, the Orbis
Council

hereby removes Councilor Malrix from

office, effective immediately. His

duties, privileges, and immunities are

revoked.

Strade exhales – not victory, but closure.

Halvek bows his head.

Dorr stares at the empty seat – grim, resolute.

Veyna closes the session.

VEYNA

Let the record show: the Council
has

acted. Now we must face what comes next.

She steps back from the podium.

The chamber remains silent.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. TRIBUNAL INTERNAL CHAMBER – NIGHT

A stark, circular room deep beneath the Tribunal Hall. No
windows. No

ornamentation. Just a single obsidian table and three chairs.

The TRIBUNAL JUDGES enter – their robes removed, replaced
with plain

black tunics. This is not a public session. This is internal.

JUDGE 1 activates a secure holo□display. A seal appears:

TRIBUNAL INTERNAL REVIEW – LEVEL OMEGA

JUDGE 2

The Council has overstepped.

JUDGE 3

They acted under emergency
authority. It

is within their rights.

JUDGE 2 bristles – not at guilt, but at the implication.

JUDGE 2

They are implying misconduct within
our

branch.

JUDGE 1

They are implying nothing. They are
reacting to evidence.

A beat – the first hint of unease.

JUDGE 3

We must determine how Judge 7B□4's
authorization was used. Whether by the
judge or by an external actor.

JUDGE 2

The Council will assume the worst.

JUDGE 1

The Council always assumes the
worst.

JUDGE 3 brings up the authorization fragment – the same one
Strade and

Veyna presented.

JUDGE 3

This code is genuine. It originated
from

our system.

Silence.

JUDGE 2

Then we have a breach.

JUDGE 1

Or a compromise.

JUDGE 3

Or a judge acting without
oversight.

The room tightens – the possibility none of them want to say
aloud.

JUDGE 2
We do not speculate. We
investigate.

JUDGE 1 nods.

JUDGE 1
Begin with Judge 7B□4's docket.
Every
case. Every sealed file. Every liaison
assignment.

JUDGE 3
Their aides?

JUDGE 1
Interview them. Separately. Without
notice.

JUDGE 2
And the judge?
A long, heavy beat.

JUDGE 1
Not yet.
JUDGE 3 looks up – surprised.

JUDGE 3
If they are involved–

JUDGE 1
If they are involved, confronting
them
now will drive them deeper underground.

JUDGE 2
Or alert whoever used their
credentials.
The logic settles.

JUDGE 1
We proceed quietly. Thoroughly. And
when
we have answers, we will turn our
findings over to the OIB.

JUDGE 2
And until then?

JUDGE 1
We say nothing.

JUDGE 3
The Council will push.

JUDGE 1
Let them.

A beat – the weight of institutional pride.

JUDGE 1 (CONT'D)
We are the Tribunal. We do not
answer to

pressure. We answer to the Charter.

The holo[display] shifts to a list of sealed files – dozens of
them.

JUDGE 3
This will take time.

JUDGE 1
Then we begin now.

The judges lean in, activating the first file.

The door seals behind them with a heavy, echoing thud.

CUT TO BLACK.

MONTAGE – TRIBUNAL INTERNAL REVIEW

– INT. TRIBUNAL INTERVIEW ROOM – DAY

AIDE #1 sits rigidly at a metal table. A TRIBUNAL
INVESTIGATOR in a

plain black tunic asks quiet, precise questions.

AIDE #1
I never saw the judge approve
anything unusual.

The investigator makes a note – expression unreadable.

– INT. TRIBUNAL HALLWAY – DAY

Two investigators walk briskly, passing sealed doors. Their footsteps

echo in the sterile corridor.

– INT. TRIBUNAL RECORDS ROOM – NIGHT

AIDE #2 stands before a holo display of case logs.

TRIBUNAL INVESTIGATOR
Did Judge 7B4 ever leave their
console unattended?

AIDE #2 hesitates – then nods.

AIDE #2
Sometimes. During late sessions.

– INT. TRIBUNAL INTERVIEW ROOM – DAY

AIDE #3, nervous, wrings their hands.

AIDE #3
I didn't know the authorization was
used. I swear.

The investigator slides a data slate forward – the timestamp glowing.

AIDE #3's face falls.

– INT. TRIBUNAL DATA CORE – NIGHT

Investigators sift through encrypted logs. One finds a corrupted access

record – the same timestamp Strade uncovered.

They exchange a look – concern, not guilt.

– INT. TRIBUNAL INTERVIEW ROOM – DAY

AIDE #4, older, composed.

AIDE #4
Judge 7B4 was meticulous. If
something happened... it wasn't
carelessness.

The investigator pauses – absorbing the implication.

– INT. TRIBUNAL OBSERVATION ROOM – NIGHT

The three Tribunal Judges watch the interviews on a wall of holo□screens.

Their faces remain stoic, but tension simmers beneath the surface.

– INT. TRIBUNAL INTERVIEW ROOM – DAY

AIDE #5
(voice cracking)
Someone accessed the judge's
console after hours. I reported it.

The investigator looks up sharply.

TRIBUNAL INVESTIGATOR
To whom?

AIDE #5
(whispers)
I... I never got a name.

– INT. TRIBUNAL INTERNAL CHAMBER – NIGHT

Investigators present preliminary findings to the three judges.

Fragments of evidence hover in the air:

- the authorization code
- access anomalies
- aide testimonies
- a corrupted login trail

The judges exchange a heavy, silent look.

END MONTAGE.

FADE IN:

INT. TRIBUNAL HALL – SECURE CONFERENCE CHAMBER – DAY

A stark, circular room of obsidian and white light. No windows. No ornamentation. A long table separates the TRIBUNAL JUDGES from the OIB

DELEGATION.

The atmosphere is cold, formal, and heavy with unspoken tension.

JUDGE 1 sits at the center, flanked by JUDGE 2 and JUDGE 3. Across from them: OIB DIRECTOR RANE and two senior investigators.

A sealed data case rests between them.

JUDGE 1

Director Rane. As requested, the Tribunal has completed its preliminary internal review regarding the misuse of Judge 7B-4's authorization code.

Rane nods – respectful, but not deferential.

RANE

We appreciate your cooperation.

JUDGE 2

This cooperation is voluntary. The

Tribunal maintains full jurisdiction

over its internal affairs.

Rane doesn't react. He's heard this before.

JUDGE 1 opens the data case. A holo□display rises, projecting a series

of files:

- access anomalies
- corrupted login trails
- aide testimonies
- sealed case logs

JUDGE 1

Our findings indicate that the authorization code was used without the judge's knowledge. The access occurred after hours, from a secondary console.

Rane leans forward slightly.

RANE

A breach?

JUDGE 3

A compromise. Subtle. Precise. Whoever did this understood our systems.

Rane exchanges a look with his team – this is worse than expected.

JUDGE 2

We found no evidence that Judge 7B-4 participated knowingly. Their aides were interviewed. Their case logs reviewed. Their movements verified.

Rane studies the judges – searching for cracks.

RANE

And the individual who accessed the console?

A beat.

JUDGE 1

Unidentified.

Rane's jaw tightens.

RANE

Meaning?

JUDGE 3

Meaning the actor masked their identity with a level of sophistication we have not encountered in decades.

The room chills.

JUDGE 2

We are continuing our review. But at this stage, we cannot confirm whether the breach originated internally or from an external actor with stolen credentials.

Rane nods slowly – absorbing the implications.

RANE

And your recommendation?

The judges exchange a look – unified, formal.

JUDGE 1

We recommend a joint investigation with the OIB. Limited in scope. Focused on the breach itself, not the Tribunal's internal processes.

Rane considers this – a political compromise.

RANE

We can work with that.

JUDGE 2

Our full findings will be delivered upon

completion of the review. Until then, we expect confidentiality.

Rane closes the data case.

RANE

You'll have it.

A long, heavy silence.

JUDGE 1

Director... whoever orchestrated this had access to multiple branches. Multiple systems. Multiple jurisdictions.

Rane meets his gaze – steady, resolute.

RANE

We're aware.

JUDGE 3

Then you understand the gravity.

Rane stands.

RANE

We do. And we intend to find them.

The judges rise as well – a gesture of respect between equals.

The OIB delegation exits.

The doors seal behind them with a deep, echoing thud.

The judges remain still – the weight of the breach settling over them.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. VELAR PRIME – CAPITAL OUTSKIRTS – NIGHT

A storm rolls across the horizon. Lightning flashes over a sprawling industrial district – abandoned factories, rusted towers, flickering lights.

INT. LOYALIST SAFEHOUSE – CONTINUOUS

A dim, underground command room. Maps of Velar Prime's political districts glow on the walls. Dozens of encrypted consoles hum quietly.

A group of LOYALIST OPERATIVES stands around a central table. Their faces are masked, their movements disciplined.

The LOYALIST COMMANDER enters – tall, calm, authoritative.

LOYALIST COMMANDER

Malrix has been taken.

A murmur of tension.

OPERATIVE 1

The Council moved faster than expected.

OPERATIVE 2

And the Tribunal is cooperating with the OIB. That was not part of the projection.

The commander studies a holo display showing Malrix's arrest footage.

LOYALIST COMMANDER
He served his purpose. His removal
was inevitable.

OPERATIVE 3
What about the breach? The
authorization trail?

The commander taps a console. A new display appears – a list
of names, locations, and encrypted channels.

LOYALIST COMMANDER
The Council is closing in. The
Tribunal is digging. The OIB is
connecting threads.

He looks up – eyes cold behind the mask.

LOYALIST COMMANDER (CONT'D)
So we sever the threads.

The operatives straighten – waiting.

LOYALIST COMMANDER (CONT'D)
Activate Protocol Veil.

A ripple of shock.

OPERATIVE 1
That will expose our assets.

LOYALIST COMMANDER
It will protect the core.

He brings up a map of Velar Prime – several districts glow
red.

LOYALIST COMMANDER (CONT'D)
Every aide, every sympathizer,
every contact tied to Malrix...
remove them from play. Quietly.

OPERATIVE 2
And the judge's console breach?

The commander's voice lowers.

LOYALIST COMMANDER
Erase the access trail. All of it.
If the Tribunal finds nothing, they
will assume internal error.

OPERATIVE 3
And if they don't?

The commander pauses – then taps a final command.

A holo image appears: VASSEL, silhouetted, standing before a crowd on

Velar Prime. His presence is magnetic, commanding, dangerous.

LOYALIST COMMANDER
Then we accelerate the plan.

Lightning flashes – illuminating the room.

LOYALIST COMMANDER (CONT'D)
Vassel will announce his candidacy
ithin the month. The largest nation
on Velar Prime is leaderless. The
people are restless. They want
strength.

He turns to the operatives.

LOYALIST COMMANDER (CONT'D)
And we will give it to them.

The operatives disperse – silent, efficient, deadly.

CUT TO:

EXT. VELAR PRIME – CITY STREETS – NIGHT

A series of quick shots:

- **Aide #1** receives a message, looks terrified, and disappears into a crowd.
- **Aide #2's** apartment is empty – cleared out in minutes.
- A Tribunal data node flickers as **access logs vanish**.
- A loyalist courier drops encrypted packets into street terminals.
- A political mural of Vassel is painted overnight – bold, defiant.

CUT TO:

INT. LOYALIST SAFEHOUSE – COMMAND ROOM – NIGHT

The commander watches the operations unfold on multiple screens.

LOYALIST COMMANDER
(quietly)
The Council thinks they've won a
battle.

He turns off the screens.

LOYALIST COMMANDER (CONT'D)
They have no idea what war looks
like.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. OIB HEADQUARTERS – SECURE BRIEFING ROOM – DAY

A holo display flickers with Malrix's interrogation transcript. OIB

Director Rane stands at the head of the table. Strade and Veyna sit opposite him, reviewing the final report.

RANE
The Tribunal has completed their
preliminary review. They've
confirmed the authorization breach
originated from inside their
branch.

Strade absorbs that – the weight of it.

STRAD
And Malrix?

Rane taps the console. A new file opens.

RANE
The Tribunal has scheduled
sentencing.

Tomorrow morning.

Veyna leans forward – composed, but sharp.

VEYNA
They're moving quickly.

RANE

They want to close their part of
this before the public starts
asking questions.

Strade nods – understanding the political calculus.

TRADE

And the Council?

Rane hands them a sealed data slate.

RANE

Your vote made it clear. Malrix is
no longer under your jurisdiction.
The Tribunal will handle the
sentencing. The OIB will continue
the investigation.

Veyna studies the slate – her expression unreadable.

VEYNA

This won't end with Malrix.

Rane meets her eyes.

RANE

No. It won't.

CUT TO:

EXT. VELAR PRIME – CAPITAL CITY – NIGHT

A storm rages over the skyline. Lightning illuminates
towering skyscrapers and crowded streets.

INT. LOYALIST COMMAND CENTER – CONTINUOUS

The Loyalist Commander stands before a wall of holo screens.
Each screen shows a different district of Velar Prime –
protests, rallies, armed patrols, political broadcasts.

OPERATIVE 1

The Council has removed Malrix. The

Tribunal will sentence him tomorrow.

The commander doesn't react.

LOYALIST COMMANDER

Good. His usefulness is over.

OPERATIVE 2

The OIB is closing in on our outer network. Several aides have gone dark.

The commander taps a console. A map of Velar Prime appears – several regions glow red.

LOYALIST COMMANDER

Then we move to Phase Two.

OPERATIVE 1

Already?

LOYALIST COMMANDER

Vassel will not wait for the Council to stabilize. He will strike while they are fractured.

He brings up a holo image: VASSEL, standing before a massive crowd, their faces lit by torchlight.

LOYALIST COMMANDER (CONT'D)

Tomorrow, while they sentence Malrix... Vassel will announce his return.

OPERATIVE 2

To what end?

The commander turns – eyes cold, voice steady.

LOYALIST COMMANDER

To claim what is rightfully his.

He taps another command.

A new image appears: the emblem of Velar Prime's largest nation – the one with the strongest economy, the deepest fractures, and the most desperate population.

LOYALIST COMMANDER (CONT'D)

He will run for Head of State.

A beat – the operatives exchange looks of awe and fear.

LOYALIST COMMANDER (CONT'D)

And we will ensure he wins.

CUT TO:

EXT. VELAR PRIME – CITY STREETS – NIGHT

A series of escalating shots:

- ****Loyalist graffiti**** spreads across walls: VASSEL RETURNS
- ****Encrypted broadcasts**** hijack public terminals
- ****Crowds gather**** in the rain, chanting Vassel's name
- ****Political opponents**** receive anonymous threats
- ****Aide #5****, who confessed to the Tribunal, is escorted into hiding
- ****A convoy of armored vehicles**** moves through the capital

CUT TO:

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL COMPLEX – STRADE'S OFFICE – NIGHT

Strade stands alone, watching a newsfeed of Velar Prime unrest.

Veyna enters quietly.

VEYNA

It's starting.

Strade doesn't look away from the screen.

STRADE

Yes. And Malrix was only the beginning.

Veyna steps beside him – the storm outside reflected in the glass.

VEYNA

Film 2 won't be about a breach.

A beat.

VEYNA (CONT'D)

It will be about a revolution.

Strade exhales – steady, resolute.

STRADE

Then we prepare for it.

The storm intensifies.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. ORBIS COUNCIL COMPLEX – OBSERVATION TERRACE – NIGHT

The city stretches out below – lights flickering under a gathering storm. Wind sweeps across the terrace, carrying the distant hum of traffic and tension.

Strade stands at the railing, the glow of a holo screen reflecting off his face. Veyna steps beside him, silent, composed.

On the holo screen: a LIVE BROADCAST from Velar Prime.

A massive crowd fills a public square – thousands of people pressed together, chanting, waving banners, their voices rising like a tide.

A podium stands at the center. Empty. Waiting.

A chyron scrolls across the bottom:

"BREAKING: VASSEL TO ADDRESS THE NATION."

Strade's jaw tightens.

Veyna watches the crowd – the energy, the fervor, the hunger.

VEYNA
(quietly)
There it is.

Strade nods – not surprised, but changed.

STRADE
He's not hiding anymore.

The crowd roars as a silhouette steps toward the podium – just out of focus, just enough to feel mythic.

The broadcast camera adjusts, trying to capture the figure.

Veyna turns to Strade.

VEYNA
This is the beginning.

Strade meets her eyes – a silent pact, a shared understanding of the storm that's coming.

STRADE

Then we face it.

They look back to the screen.

The silhouette reaches the podium.

The crowd erupts.

The broadcast feed sharpens—

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF FILM ONE.