

THE LAST SIGNAL
(Original Screenplay)

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EXT. OLYMPIC STADIUM - DAY

A DEAFENING ROAR.

Eighty thousand voices collapse into a single wall of sound.

ETHAN COLE (early 30s) stands at the starting line.

Still. Centered. Almost detached.

The CAMERA MOVES IN slowly - his breathing is slow, controlled.

His fingers twitch once. Then stop.

Around him, other athletes shake out nerves, bounce on toes.

Ethan doesn't move.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

And there he is - Ethan Cole.

Unbeaten this season.

No false starts. No breakdowns. No excuses.

A beat.

The stadium NOISE FADES.

The world around Ethan BLURS - crowd, flags, lights smear into abstraction.

We hear only his BREATH.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They say his greatest weapon isn't speed..

...it's control.

The START GUN FIRES.

Ethan EXPLODES forward - perfect form, no wasted motion.

CUT HARD TO:

MONTAGE - GLOBAL SPORTS DOMINATION

- TOKYO. Indoor arena. Ethan crosses the line first. Barely breathing.

- BERLIN. A false start - everyone jumps except Ethan. He reacts AFTER the whistle. Still wins.

- PARIS. Rain-soaked track. Others slip. Ethan adjusts mid-stride, instinctively.

- A BIOMETRIC MONITOR: heart rate steady, abnormal under pressure.

- SLOW-MOTION: sweat lifts off his skin like mist.
Crowds scream. Flags wave.
Ethan never celebrates.
PODIUM. Gold medal placed around his neck.
FLASHES explode.
Ethan stares straight ahead, eyes unfocused.
Applause crashes around him.
He is completely alone inside it.
HOLD on Ethan.

INT. MEDIA STUDIO - NIGHT

Bright lights. Clean lines. A sleek sports talk show.
ETHAN sits opposite a charismatic HOST.
They're mid-conversation.

HOST

You've broken records people thought were untouchable.
Analysts say you don't just train harder -
you think differently.

Ethan shrugs slightly.

HOST (CONT'D)

They're calling you the most disciplined mind in modern
sport.
Is that something you're born with?

Ethan considers. Silence stretches.

ETHAN

No.

The Host waits, encouraging.

HOST

Then what is it?

ETHAN

Training.
And learning how to ignore noise.

HOST
Noise like critics?
Ethan shakes his head.

ETHAN
No.

Noise like doubt. Panic. Fear.
The Host leans in.

HOST
Fear is noise?

A beat.
Ethan looks directly into the camera.

ETHAN
Fear is the loudest one.

The studio goes quiet.
The Host smiles – he knows he has a quote.
CUT TO:

- HEADLINES spin across screens: THE MACHINE ATHLETE
- Podcasts break down Ethan's psychology.
- Animated BRAIN SCANS highlight abnormal focus centers.
- Commentators debate whether Ethan is "human or engineered."

Ethan exits the studio hallway alone.
He never looks at the screens.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Ethan walks toward his room.
The corridor is silent.
A HOUSEKEEPER pauses as he passes – freezes just a second too long.

Ethan clocks it without turning his head.
He continues walking.

EXT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - DAY

Crowded. Loud.
Ethan moves through security.
A FACIAL RECOGNITION CAMERA tracks faces.
It glitches on Ethan - a brief DIGITAL STUTTER.
No alarm.
No reaction.
Ethan notices. His jaw tightens slightly.
He keeps walking.

INT. UNKNOWN CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Dark. Windowless.
Multiple MONITORS show Ethan from different angles.
His face is frozen mid-frame.

A MAN (O.S.)
(low)
Confirmed.

A pause.

A WOMAN (O.S.)
Proceed.

The screens stay locked on Ethan.

EXT. TRAINING FACILITY PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Rain begins to fall.
Ethan reaches his car.
BLACK SUVs slide in silently - perfectly timed.
Men step out. Calm. Professional.
No weapons raised.

AGENT #1

Ethan Cole.

Ethan stops.

ETHAN

Yes?

AGENT #1

You're coming with us.

ETHAN

For what?

The agent shows a badge – multiple international seals.

Inside the SUV, a TABLET lights up.

Images scroll:

Bank transfers. Satellite stills. Security footage.

AGENT #1

International security violation.

You're implicated.

Ethan studies the images.

ETHAN

That's impossible.

No one responds.

The door shuts.

The SUV pulls away.

Rain streaks the window.

Ethan watches the city recede.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM – NIGHT

Glass walls. One-way mirrors.

Three OFFICIALS sit apart. Different accents. Same restraint.

OFFICIAL #1

State your whereabouts three nights ago.

ETHAN

Berlin. Training camp.
You already know that.

OFFICIAL #2

We know what you were meant to say.

Ethan leans back slightly, studying them.

ETHAN

You're not asking questions.

A beat.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

You're checking reactions.

Silence.

One official shifts - interested.

OFFICIAL #3

Do you understand the scale of what you're facing?

Ethan meets his gaze.

ETHAN

Not yet.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The lights dim.

SCREENS flicker on.

Financial trails. Satellite paths. Messages.

OFFICIAL #1

This is you.

ETHAN

That's a fabrication.

OFFICIAL #2

It's corroborated.

Ethan studies the data longer now.

ETHAN

Too clean.

They wait.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Real life doesn't line up this perfectly.

A subtle exchange of looks.

They've learned something.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - LATER

The room feels colder.

OFFICIAL #3

There will be no trial.

ETHAN

Then why am I here?

OFFICIAL #3

Because you're valuable.

Or disposable.

A pause.

OFFICIAL #1

Black-site detention.
No record. No release.

Ethan's jaw tightens - barely.

OFFICIAL #1 (CONT'D)

How long do you think discipline lasts without hope?

Ethan holds their gaze.
Says nothing.

INT. BRIEFING THEATRE - NIGHT

A massive SCREEN ignites.
Neural networks. Combat simulations. Human silhouettes overlaid with data.

OFFICIAL #2

A classified enhancement program.

Images flash - candidates convulsing.

OFFICIAL #3

Most candidates fail.

Flatlines. Silence.

OFFICIAL #1

You won't be cleared.

Ethan processes this.

ETHAN

Then why would I agree?

OFFICIAL #1

Because you'll still exist.

That lands hard.

INT. BRIEFING THEATRE - CONTINUOUS

Ethan steps closer to the glass.
Calm. Controlled.

ETHAN

One condition.

The officials wait.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

When this ends -
my name is cleared.

Silence.
One official almost smiles.

OFFICIAL #2

Why does that matter?

Ethan answers immediately.

ETHAN

Because I'm not who you say I am.

The smile fades.

INT. UNDERGROUND CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Ethan is escorted.
Each door LOCKS behind him - heavy, final.
The air thickens.
The corridor opens into-

INT. ECHO VAULT - CONTINUOUS

A vast underground facility.
Scientists. Machines. Neural rigs.
This is not a prison.

This is a factory.
Ethan stops at the threshold.
No one answers his question.
The door closes behind him.

INT. TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT - NIGHT

The cabin is dark, unmarked, functional.
Ethan sits restrained, wrists free but legs locked.
A low ENGINE HUM fills the space.
Across from him, an AGENT scrolls through a tablet without looking up.
Outside the narrow window, clouds roll endlessly.
A MAP animates on a screen near the cockpit - borders pass silently: Germany. Turkey. Mediterranean.
Ethan watches the map without emotion.
He measures time by vibration, altitude changes, engine pitch.

ETHAN

Where are we going?

No answer.
The agent adjusts his earpiece.

AGENT

You won't remember the route.

Ethan looks up.

ETHAN

I already am.
The agent pauses, then resumes scrolling.
The aircraft banks sharply.
The map goes dark.
Only coordinates remain.
Ethan exhales slowly, steadying himself as the plane descends into darkness.

EXT. OFFSHORE BLACK-SITE FACILITY - NIGHT

A violent STORM.

Rain lashes an isolated steel structure rising from the ocean.

The aircraft touches down on a narrow runway barely visible through fog.

Floodlights snap on in sequence.

Ethan exits under guard, coat snapping in the wind.

Waves crash violently below the platform.

This place is not on any map.

Doors slide open with hydraulic force.

Ethan is guided inside.

The storm disappears behind sealed steel.

Silence replaces chaos.

The facility swallows him whole.

The outside world is gone.

INT. ECHO VAULT - MAIN CHAMBER - NIGHT

The doors part.

Ethan steps into a cavernous underground chamber.

Multi-level walkways. Glass walls. Endless screens.

Neural rigs line the floor like machinery in a factory.

Data streams pulse in real time.

Technicians move with rehearsed precision.

This is not experimental - it is operational.

Ethan stops, absorbing scale.

A holographic schematic rotates above the chamber: THE HUMAN BRAIN, layered with circuitry.

A voice echoes.

DR. HALE (O.S.)

Welcome to Echo Vault.

Ethan doesn't respond.

He looks up at the scale of it all.

The trap is no longer theoretical.

INT. ECHO VAULT - OBSERVATION CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Ethan is escorted past glass chambers.

Inside, OTHER SUBJECTS train, convulse, recover.
Some stare blankly.
Some scream silently behind soundproof walls.
One subject laughs uncontrollably during a drill.
Another fails to respond to commands.
Ethan watches closely.
He sees intelligence without control.
Strength without restraint.
This is what failure looks like here.
An agent notices Ethan watching.

AGENT

They weren't like you.

Ethan replies without looking away.

ETHAN

Neither am I.

INT. SERVICE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

A side corridor. Narrow. Clinical.
Two TECHNICIANS wheel covered gurneys past Ethan.
Black bags. Zipped. Heavy.
A drop of blood trails briefly before being wiped away.
No one speaks.
No alarms.
No ceremony.
Ethan tracks the movement precisely.
Counts the bags.
One. Two. Three.
He looks back toward the chambers.
This program doesn't end careers.
It ends people.
The weight of that settles in.
Ethan's breathing remains steady - but his eyes harden.

INT. ECHO VAULT - DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

DR. MARCUS HALE (50s), calm, brilliant, dangerous, stands behind glass overlooking the chamber.

He turns as Ethan enters.

DR. HALE
Ethan Cole.

You exceeded every projection we had.
Ethan studies him.

ETHAN
You framed me.

Hale smiles slightly.

DR. HALE
We selected you.

Framing was logistics.
Hale gestures to the chamber.

DR. HALE (CONT'D)
This is evolution under discipline.

Ethan meets his gaze.

ETHAN
Or slavery with better lighting.

Hale doesn't deny it.
That's the most unsettling part.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - NIGHT

Ethan stands alone as rules appear on a screen.
IDENTITY ERASED.
NO FUTURE PROMISED.
NO EXIT WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION.
Hale's voice continues calmly.

DR. HALE (V.O.)

Your name will not exist here.
Your past will not matter.
Your future is conditional.

Ethan reads every word.

ETHAN

And if I refuse?

Hale's voice remains steady.

DR. HALE (V.O.)

Then you disappear quietly.

A long beat.

Ethan nods once.

Acceptance, not surrender.

INT. MEDICAL WING - NIGHT

Ethan enters a stark, controlled room.

LENA WARD (early 30s), sharp, composed, intelligent eyes,
adjusts equipment.

She turns.

This is their first real meeting.

A charged silence.

LENA

I'm Dr. Ward.

Neural communications.

Ethan studies her the way he studies opponents.

ETHAN

You're the one who keeps people conscious.

Lena meets his gaze.

LENA
I try.

Their eyes lock.
Recognition without understanding.
Something immediate passes between them.
Neither comments on it.

INT. NEURAL PREP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lena preps Ethan with practiced precision.
Sensors attach.
Vitals monitor.
Ethan watches her hands. Steady. Confident.
LENA
If anything feels wrong, say it.

ETHAN
What if everything feels wrong?

Lena pauses, then continues.

LENA
Then we slow it down.

Their intelligence clashes softly.
Testing. Measuring.
Ethan's instincts read her as capable.
Lena reads him as dangerous - but controlled.
A silent standoff beneath professionalism.

INT. NEUROLOGICAL SCAN CHAMBER - NIGHT

Ethan lies inside a massive scanning rig.
Lights rotate.
Low-frequency tones vibrate through the room.
Lena watches from behind glass.
DATA streams across monitors - unusual stability.

A technician whispers.

TECH

His baseline focus is off the charts.
Lena leans closer.
Ethan closes his eyes.
The machine reads deeper.
Patterns form.
Something rare.
Something valuable.
Lena exhales quietly, realizing the truth.
This man is not just a subject.
He is the reason this place exists.

INT. ECHO VAULT - TRAINING THEATRE - NIGHT

A wide circular room. Transparent walls.
ETHAN stands at the center while holographic diagrams rotate around him.
DR. MARCUS HALE steps into view, calm, authoritative.

DR. HALE

This isn't about making you stronger.
Strength is crude.

He gestures and the hologram shifts to neural pathways.

DR. HALE (CONT'D)

We remove hesitation.
We compress decision-making.
We eliminate emotional delay.

Images show simulations - soldiers reacting faster than thought.

ETHAN watches closely.

ETHAN

You're not training instincts.
You're replacing them.

Hale smiles faintly.

DR. HALE
Instinct is unreliable.
Discipline can be engineered.

Ethan processes this silently.

DR. HALE (CONT'D)
You won't feel smarter.
You'll feel quieter.

The room dims.
The philosophy settles like a threat.

INT. NEURAL UPLOAD CHAMBER - NIGHT

ETHAN is strapped into a vertical rig.
Cables snake into neural ports.
LENA stands at the control console, composed but alert.
LENA
First upload is limited.
If you feel pain-

ETHAN
-I won't say it.

She looks at him sharply.

LENA
Say it anyway.
The system powers up.

A LOW FREQUENCY HUM builds.

Ethan's muscles tense involuntarily.

Data floods the screens.

Ethan gasps as images, movements, reflexes crash into his mind.

His breathing accelerates.

Veins stand out along his neck.

LENA

Ethan, regulate your breathing.

He tries. Fails.

The pain spikes brutally.

Alarms chirp.

Lena hesitates, then pushes through.

This is violent knowledge being forced inside a human mind.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK - CONTINUOUS

Adjacent chamber.

ANOTHER CANDIDATE undergoes the same process.

Less controlled.

He thrashes violently.

Technicians shout overlapping commands.

His vitals spike.

Flatline warning flashes.

DR. HALE watches without emotion.

The candidate screams once - then nothing.

The machine powers down.

A long, sterile silence.

Technicians remove the body efficiently.

No announcement.

No pause.

Ethan, still in his rig, hears the distant echo of the scream.

His jaw clenches.

This is the cost.

INT. NEURAL UPLOAD CHAMBER - LATER

Ethan's vitals fluctuate dangerously.

Sweat drenches his body.
Lena watches numbers that don't make sense.

TECHNICIAN

He's not stabilizing.

LENA

He is.

Just differently.

Ethan's breathing slows – by force of will.
Pain washes through him in waves.
He doesn't scream.
The system adjusts.
The data begins to settle.
A miracle by their standards.
The upload completes.
Ethan slumps forward, barely conscious.
Alive.
Hale nods once.

DR. HALE

Noted.

INT. MEDICAL RECOVERY WARD – NIGHT

Ethan lies unconscious on a medical bed.
Monitors beep steadily.
Staff exit one by one.
Shift ends.
LENA remains.
She removes her gloves slowly.
Sits.
Watches him breathe.
The room is quiet now.
This isn't protocol.
She knows it.
She checks his vitals again – unnecessary, but grounding.

Her eyes linger on his face.
The human cost of the program weighs on her.
She stays.

INT. MEDICAL RECOVERY WARD - LATER

Ethan stirs.
Eyes flutter open.
Confusion. Pain.
He notices Lena beside him.

ETHAN
Did... I pass?

Lena almost smiles.

LENA
You survived.
That's not the same thing.

Ethan exhales weakly.

ETHAN
I'll take it.

A small, real moment.
No machines.
No observers.
Just two people breathing in the same space.
The first human pause since his arrest.

INT. MEDICAL RECOVERY WARD - CONTINUOUS

Lena adjusts a monitor gently.
Her touch is careful.
ETHAN watches her.

ETHAN
You stayed.

Lena doesn't look at him.

LENA
Someone should.

Ethan studies her expression – controlled, but not cold.
Something shifts inside him.
He recognizes compassion where none is required.

ETHAN
You're different from them.

Lena finally meets his eyes.

LENA
Don't make that mistake.

But the concern in her voice contradicts the words.
Ethan files that away.

INT. EXECUTIVE OBSERVATION ROOM – NIGHT

Dr. Hale and senior officials watch playback footage.
Ethan's upload metrics stabilize on screen.

DR. HALE
Authorize second test.

OFFICIAL
Already?

Hale doesn't hesitate.

DR. HALE
We don't slow down success.

The approval code is entered.

Lights change across the facility.
In the medical ward, Lena feels the shift.
She looks toward the ceiling.
Something is coming.

INT. DATA ANALYSIS HUB - NIGHT

Massive displays stream Ethan's neural data.
Patterns emerge that weren't predicted.
Reaction time compression.
Cognitive silence under stress.

TECHNICIANS whisper urgently.

TECH

His efficiency curve just broke our ceiling.
Another technician pulls historical data.

TECH #2

No subject has ever crossed this threshold.

Graphs spike higher.
Numbers don't lie.
Ethan is no longer a test subject.
He's an outlier.

INT. SURVEILLANCE CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

A glass-walled room overlooking Echo Vault.
Hale stands with senior intelligence figures.
Ethan's face fills a central monitor.

OFFICIAL

He's adapting too fast.

DR. HALE

No.

He was built for this.

Another screen shows Lena beside Ethan.

OFFICIAL #2

And her?

Hale watches silently.

DR. HALE

She's part of the equation now.

The surveillance feeds multiply.

Eyes everywhere.

Interest has turned into intent.

The machine has chosen its asset.

INT. ECHO VAULT - OPERATIONS FLOOR - NIGHT

A shift change ripples through the facility.

LENA WARD stands before DR. MARCUS HALE and two SENIOR OFFICIALS.

A digital file floats between them — ETHAN COLE'S metrics climbing steadily.

DR. HALE

Effective immediately, you're reassigned.

Primary stabilizer. Full-time.

Lena processes this.

LENA

That's not standard rotation.

OFFICIAL

Neither is his performance.

Hale studies Lena carefully.

DR. HALE

Your presence keeps him coherent.

We're not interested in why.
Only that it works.

Lena nods once.
Professionally.

But her eyes flick briefly toward the chamber where Ethan
trains.

The responsibility settles in.
She is no longer support staff.
She is part of the experiment.

INT. DATA REVIEW SUITE - NIGHT

Rows of analysts study Ethan's live feeds.
Graphs hover in the air, updating in real time.
One analyst tags a segment of data.

ANALYST
Flag this.

A note appears on screen: SUBJECT EXCEPTIONAL
Another analyst hesitates, then adds a second note: HE'S
SPECIAL
The words linger longer than the data.
A supervisor frowns.

SUPERVISOR
That's not a technical term.

ANALYST
It's accurate.

They watch Ethan complete a drill flawlessly.
No hesitation.
No visible strain.
The room grows quiet.
When people stop talking, it means something has crossed
a line.

INT. TRAINING CHAMBER - NIGHT

Ethan runs a complex simulation.
Targets appear, vanish, reappear unpredictably.
He reacts before cues complete.
Lena watches from the console.
Ethan pauses suddenly.
His breathing changes.

LENA
Ethan?

ETHAN
Something's wrong.

LENA
Vitals are stable.

ETHAN
That's not what I mean.

He scans the room.
Feels watched - not by cameras, but by intent.

ETHAN (CONT'D)
They're pushing faster than before.

LENA
They believe you can handle it.

Ethan nods slowly.

ETHAN
That's what worries me.

The simulation resumes.
Despite instinct screaming caution, he continues.
Because stopping is not an option here.

INT. MEDICAL RECOVERY ALCOVE - NIGHT

Ethan sits on the edge of a recovery bed.

Sweat. Fatigue. Controlled calm.

Lena hands him water.

Their fingers brush - accidental, electric.

They both notice.

Neither comments.

A quiet moment stretches.

ETHAN

Do you ever think about life outside this place?

Lena hesitates.

LENA

I try not to.

ETHAN

I think about silence.

No machines.

No voices telling me who I am.

Lena studies him.

LENA

And what are you there?

ETHAN

I don't know yet.

Something unspoken settles between them.

Not love - but possibility.

The seed is planted in stillness.

INT. ECHO VAULT - SECURITY CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Heavy doors slide shut behind Ethan as he's escorted deeper into the facility.

New clearance lights activate – red to green.
ACCESS LEVEL UPDATED.
He passes a biometric scanner.
His name disappears from the system display.
Replaced by a designation.
SUBJECT E-01
Ethan notices.

ETHAN

What does that mean?

The guard doesn't answer.
Another door seals.
Ethan stands alone momentarily, enclosed by steel and
silence.
This is no longer temporary.
This is ownership.

INT. ECHO VAULT – TRAINING CHAMBERS – DAY/NIGHT

A relentless MONTAGE spreads across time and geography.
Combat simulations.
Language acquisition.
Urban navigation.
Close-quarters reflex training.
Global environments upload directly into Ethan's mind.
His body adapts unnaturally fast.
Lena monitors constantly, adjusting parameters.
The world floods into Ethan – cities, threats, skills not
learned but absorbed.
His face shows strain but not collapse.
What breaks others sharpens him.
The system hums louder, alive with success.

INT. NEURAL OBSERVATION ROOM – NIGHT

Ethan exits a simulation barely sweating.
Technicians exchange looks.
Lena reviews cognitive maps – expanding, stabilizing.

TECH

He's not fighting the uploads.

He's integrating them.

Lena zooms into a neural pathway.

Unusual calm during stress peaks.

LENA

He's adapting faster than the system predicts.

A warning icon flickers, then clears.

Ethan meets her gaze through glass.

He doesn't look confused.

He looks aware.

That's what unsettles her most.

INT. TRAINING CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Lena enters the chamber, standing closer than protocol allows.

Ethan steadies his breathing instinctively when she arrives.

LENA

Slow inhale.

Hold.

Release.

Ethan mirrors her rhythm.

His vitals stabilize.

LENA (CONT'D)

Focus on one sound.

Your breath.

Nothing else.

The chaos inside his mind quiets.

Their synchronization is visible on monitors.

Two signals aligning.

A technician watches, uneasy.

This connection wasn't programmed.

INT. MEDICAL WARD - NIGHT

Late hours.
Lights dimmed.
Most staff gone.
Ethan lies awake.
Lena sits nearby, chart in hand.

ETHAN

You could've left.

LENA

I chose not to.
A pause.

ETHAN

Why neuroscience?

LENA

Because the brain lies beautifully.

ETHAN

And you?

LENA

I listen for the truth underneath.

They share a quiet laugh.
Not relief – recognition.
The walls listen, but they forget for a moment.

INT. MEDICAL WARD - LATER

Conversation deepens naturally.

ETHAN

I used to train alone.
That's when I was best.

LENA

I grew up surrounded by people.
Still felt alone.

They sit with that.
Different paths. Same emptiness.

ETHAN

Maybe that's why this place chose us.

LENA

Or why we survived it so far.

Their eyes hold.
Not romantic yet.
But intimate.
The system watches quietly.
Love is beginning – under surveillance.

INT. MEDICAL RECOVERY WARD – NIGHT

Ethan sits upright on the bed, IV lines still attached.
Machines hum softly.
Lena reviews charts on a tablet, professional distance maintained.
Ethan watches her for a long moment.

ETHAN

They say I did things I don't remember.

Lena doesn't look up.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

But I know my mind.
I know what I'm capable of.

She pauses.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

And I know what I'm not.

Lena finally meets his eyes.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

I didn't do what they're saying.

Silence fills the room.

This isn't a plea.

It's a statement of identity.

Ethan's breathing stays steady.

His voice doesn't shake.

He's asking to be seen – not rescued.

INT. MEDICAL RECOVERY WARD - CONTINUOUS

Lena studies Ethan carefully now.

Not as a subject.

As a person.

She cross-checks vitals, neural patterns, stress indicators.

Nothing spikes.

No deception response.

She sets the tablet down.

LENA

I've listened to hundreds of people say they're innocent.

Ethan doesn't interrupt.

LENA (CONT'D)

Most of them are convincing.

She holds his gaze.

LENA (CONT'D)

You're not convincing.

You're consistent.

A beat.

LENA (CONT'D)
I believe you.

The words land quietly – but decisively.
Ethan exhales for the first time since arriving here.
A weight he didn't know he was carrying loosens.

INT. MEDICAL RECOVERY WARD – MOMENTS LATER

Lena adjusts a monitor, pretending professionalism.
Ethan watches her, processing what she said.
Then – something subtle changes.
The corner of his mouth lifts.
A genuine, unguarded smile.
Brief. Almost unfamiliar.
Lena notices.
She stops mid-motion.

LENA
What?

ETHAN
Nothing.

The smile fades quickly, like it surprised him.
But it was real.
The first since his arrest.
Lena turns away, hiding her own reaction.
She knows the system records everything.
But some moments aren't meant for data.

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CHAMBER – DAY

Ethan moves through a demanding recovery routine.
Resistance bands. Balance platforms. Micro-adjustments.
A THERAPIST calls out metrics.

Lena observes from the side, offering corrections.

LENA

Shift your weight forward.
Trust the left side.

Ethan complies.
His body trembles under strain.
Sweat beads.
He doesn't stop.
Pain is present – but controlled.
The therapy intensifies beyond standard limits.
The system pushes.
Testing not just muscle, but obedience.
Ethan finishes barely standing.
He nods once.
Still here. Still functioning.

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CHAMBER - LATER

The routine escalates.
Weights heavier. Movements faster.
Pain spikes visibly now.
Ethan's jaw tightens.
His hands shake.
Lena watches numbers rise – cortisol, neural stress.

THERAPIST

He's hitting threshold.

LENA

He can manage it.

Ethan stumbles, catches himself.
A sharp intake of breath.
The pain is no longer background noise.
It's demanding attention.
Ethan refuses to acknowledge it.

The system keeps pushing.
Because pain reveals limits.
And they want to find his.

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

A warning alert flashes on Lena's screen.
Protocol dictates shutdown.
She hesitates.
Ethan pushes forward, vision blurring.

LENA
Stop.

The therapist looks at her.

THERAPIST
That's not your call.

Lena steps closer to Ethan.
Overrides a setting.
The machine slows.
Alarms chirp briefly – then silence.
LENA
It is today.
Ethan steadies, breathing ragged but controlled.
She just crossed a line.
And she knows it.

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CHAMBER - MOMENTS LATER

Ethan lowers himself onto a bench, exhausted.
Lena kneels to check his pulse manually.
Her hand brushes his wrist.
Instinctively – without thought – Ethan reaches out.
His fingers close gently around her hand.
Not gripping.
Grounding.
Both freeze.

The contact lasts a second too long.
Then Ethan releases.
No apology.
No explanation.
Something unspoken has passed between them.

INT. PHYSICAL THERAPY CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

The air feels charged now.
Lena stands, re-establishing distance.
Ethan avoids her eyes.
Heart rates remain elevated – both of them.
The machines don't understand why.
Lena clears her throat.

LENA

You should rest.

ETHAN

I know.

Neither moves immediately.
Emotion hangs unresolved.
Not romantic yet – but dangerous.
Because it wasn't planned.
And nothing unplanned survives here.

INT. SURVEILLANCE ANALYSIS ROOM - NIGHT

Live feeds from the therapy chamber replay.
Officials watch the moment frame by frame.
Graphs spike during the hand contact.

OFFICIAL

Did you see that?

ANALYST

Emotional response triggered stabilization.

They rewind. Replay.
The data doesn't lie.
Something unexpected improved performance.
The room grows attentive.
Interest sharpens into calculation.

INT. DATA LOGGING SUITE - NIGHT

A technician inputs observations.
A formal note appears in the system log:
SUBJECT PERFORMANCE IMPROVES IN PRESENCE OF DR. WARD
Another line is added beneath it.
SHE STABILIZES HIM
The cursor blinks.
The decision has already been made.
Across the facility, Lena and Ethan remain unaware.
The system has identified a control mechanism.
And it plans to use it.

INT. NEURAL UPLOAD CHAMBER - NIGHT

The chamber is reconfigured. More cables. Deeper ports.
ETHAN stands at the center as mechanical arms lock into place.
LENA watches the interface, tension masked by professionalism.

TECHNICIAN

Initiating Level Three integration.

LENA

That's not scheduled.

DR. HALE (O.S.)

It is now.

The system powers up with a deeper, more aggressive HUM.
Ethan braces.
The upload hits harder - faster, denser.
Images slam into his mind: combat scenarios, urban chaos,

foreign streets.
His body jerks involuntarily.
Lena watches vitals spike past safe margins.

LENA

You're pushing too much data.

No response.
The system continues.
This isn't training anymore.
It's extraction.

INT. NEURAL UPLOAD CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Ethan's knees buckle.
Alarms shriek.
He collapses inside the rig, body convulsing.
Technicians rush in.
Lena pushes past them.

LENA

Ethan, stay with me.

His eyes roll back.
Heart rate plummets.
A flatline almost forms - then pulls back.
The system cuts power abruptly.
Silence crashes in.
Ethan lies motionless.
A long beat.
Then - a breath.
Weak. But present.
Lena exhales shakily.
Against all projections, he survives.
Hale watches through glass, expression unreadable.

INT. OPERATIONS OFFICE - NIGHT

Lena stands before Hale and two officials.
Tension crackles in the room.

OFFICIAL

You're reassigned effective immediately.

LENA

No.

The word surprises even her.

DR. HALE

Your judgment is compromised.

LENA

My judgment kept him alive.

A pause.

Hale studies her carefully.

DR. HALE

You're too close.

LENA

Then replace the system - not me.

Silence.

A risk assessment scrolls on screen.

Hale waves the officials out.

DR. HALE (CONT'D)

You stay.

For now.

Lena nods, knowing what that costs.

INT. MEDICAL RECOVERY WARD - NIGHT

Ethan lies asleep, sedated.

Lena sits beside him, quiet.

No machines intrude on the moment.
Just breathing.
She watches his chest rise and fall.
Her hand hovers – then rests lightly near his.
Not touching.
Yet close enough to feel warmth.
This is not romance in words.
It's proximity.
Presence.
Care growing in silence.
Love, forming where it shouldn't.

INT. MEDICAL RECOVERY WARD - LATER

Ethan stirs awake.
Groggy, weak, but conscious.
He turns his head toward Lena.

ETHAN

When this ends...

She looks up.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

I want to wake up somewhere quiet.

No alarms.

No screens.

Just... space.

He closes his eyes again.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

I don't need much.

Just freedom.

The word hangs heavy.
Lena listens without interrupting.
She knows how unlikely that dream is.

INT. MEDICAL RECOVERY WARD - CONTINUOUS

Lena forces a small, reassuring smile.

LENA

You'll get there.

Ethan nods faintly, trusting her.
She turns away quickly, hiding her expression.
Fear flashes across her face – sharp, uncontained.
She knows the truth.
Freedom isn't part of the design.
She steadies herself, regaining control before he sees.
Profession restored.
Emotion buried.
For now.

INT. MEDICAL RECOVERY WARD - NIGHT

Lights dimmed.
Ethan sits upright now, steadier.
Lena checks a monitor, closer than necessary.

ETHAN

You don't have to stay.

LENA

I know.

A quiet beat.
Something unresolved pulls between them.
Ethan reaches out – slow, uncertain.
Lena doesn't pull away.
Their faces draw closer.
A brief, secret kiss.
Gentle. Unplanned.
Immediately regretted – and needed.
They separate quickly.

No words.

Just the knowledge that something irreversible has happened.

INT. DATA ANALYSIS HUB - NIGHT

Metrics spike across every display.
Reaction times compress further.
Stability curves smooth out unnaturally.

TECHNICIAN

This doesn't make sense.

SUPERVISOR

Run it again.

The data repeats.
Performance has jumped beyond previous ceilings.
No system change logged.
Only one variable differs.
Lena's presence.
The room goes silent.
Someone smiles.
Breakthrough achieved.

INT. EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Hale sits with senior intelligence executives.
Large screens display Ethan's performance graphs.

OFFICIAL

We're seeing unprecedented control.

DR. HALE

It's not the tech.
It's the stabilizer.

Another official leans forward.

OFFICIAL #2

The doctor?

Hale nods slowly.

DR. HALE
She's the regulator.

A calculated silence follows.
Decisions begin forming without discussion.

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

A new protocol loads into the system.
PRIMARY REGULATOR: DR. LENA WARD
Authorization codes cascade.
Hale watches the confirmation lock in.

DR. HALE
Then we use her.

Across the facility, Lena sits beside Ethan, unaware.
The system has solved its final equation.
Love has been converted into control.

INT. ECHO VAULT - EXECUTIVE BRIEFING ROOM - NIGHT

A quiet alert flashes on Lena's tablet.
MANDATORY BRIEFING. SOLO ATTENDANCE.
Lena hesitates before standing.
She looks once toward the medical ward where Ethan rests.
Then she walks.
The briefing room doors seal behind her with a heavy click.
DR. MARCUS HALE and two SENIOR OFFICIALS wait inside.
No pleasantries.
No seats offered.

DR. HALE
This concerns your involvement with Subject E-01.

Lena remains standing, composed.

LENA

My involvement is professional.

An official taps a console.

OFFICIAL

That's what we're here to discuss.

The lights dim.

Screens activate.

Lena senses this is not a routine review.

This is a separation.

INT. EXECUTIVE BRIEFING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Files open across multiple screens.

CLASSIFIED stamps flood the room.

Psychological profiles. Intelligence summaries.

Lena scans quickly – trained, precise.

OFFICIAL

You've only seen his medical layer.

This is the rest.

Images shift to mission overlays.

Dates. Locations. Casualty counts.

Lena's breath tightens slightly.

LENA

These aren't in his cognitive record.

DR. HALE

Because they were suppressed.

For stability.

A beat.

OFFICIAL

You were never meant to see this.

Lena steps closer, eyes narrowing.

Something feels wrong – but the volume of data is overwhelming.

Truth buried under certainty.

INT. EXECUTIVE BRIEFING ROOM – CONTINUOUS

The screen isolates incidents.

Bombings. Targeted assassinations.

Deaths labeled collateral.

A highlighted figure appears repeatedly: ETHAN COLE.

OFFICIAL

He was active long before you met him.

Lena shakes her head slowly.

LENA

That's impossible.

His baseline profile–

DR. HALE

–was curated.

Silence follows.

OFFICIAL

You weren't lied to.

You were protected.

Each crime stacks neatly.

Too neatly.

But doubt begins seeping into Lena despite herself.

Because the evidence is relentless.

Designed to be believed.

INT. EXECUTIVE BRIEFING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Video footage loads.

Grainy surveillance clips.

A man moves through shadows - Ethan's build, Ethan's posture.

Weapons fire.

A target drops.

Lena steps back instinctively.

LENA

That's not-

OFFICIAL

Enhancement alters movement patterns.

He wouldn't look the same.

The footage slows.

Facial mapping overlays Ethan's biometric markers.

A match percentage appears: 97.8%

Lena's eyes glisten.

She wants to reject it.

But the system she trusts is telling her this is real.

That is the cruelty of it.

INT. EXECUTIVE BRIEFING ROOM - LATER

The screens go dark.

The room feels smaller.

DR. HALE

He isn't a victim, Lena.

He's a weapon who forgot what he was built for.

OFFICIAL

Your presence makes him stable.

That's why he's convincing.

Lena struggles to breathe evenly.

LENA
You used me.

DR. HALE
We needed you functional.

A pause.

DR. HALE (CONT'D)
And now you need to be careful.
The implication lands hard.
Ethan isn't innocent.
He's dangerous.
And she has been helping him.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - LATER

Lena stands alone now.
Officials gone.
The room silent except for a faint electrical hum.
She stares at the blank screens.
Her composure fractures.
Breath shudders.
Hands tremble.
Tears well despite resistance.
Every moment with Ethan replays - reframed.
The smile.
The kiss.
The trust.
She sinks into a chair, devastated.
Not just by the revelation -
but by the possibility that she was wrong.
That love made her blind.

INT. EXECUTIVE BRIEFING ROOM - NIGHT

Hale returns alone.

His tone is almost gentle.

DR. HALE

You have two options.

Lena looks up, eyes red but focused.

DR. HALE (CONT'D)

Detach emotionally and continue as regulator.

Or step away – permanently.

LENA

And him?

DR. HALE

He'll destabilize without you.

That's not a threat.

It's math.

A long silence.

Lena understands the leverage.

Her love is now a weapon – against Ethan.

INT. EXECUTIVE BRIEFING ROOM – CONTINUOUS

Lena stands.

Straightens her coat.

Reclaims professionalism.

LENA

I'll do my job.

Hale studies her closely.

DR. HALE

Good.

LENA

But strictly within protocol.

Hale nods, satisfied.

DR. HALE

That's all we ask.

Lena turns toward the door.

Outwardly composed.

Internally shattered.

She has agreed to betray the only person she cares about.

INT. MEDICAL RECOVERY WARD - NIGHT

Lena enters.

Ethan looks up immediately.

Something in her demeanor has changed.

Cold. Controlled. Distant.

ETHAN

Hey.

She checks a monitor without meeting his eyes.

LENA

Vitals look stable.

ETHAN

Is everything okay?

She pauses, then answers clinically.

LENA

We're proceeding according to protocol.

No warmth.

No reassurance.

The space between them widens visibly.

The system has its regulator back.

INT. MEDICAL RECOVERY WARD - CONTINUOUS

Ethan watches Lena move around the room.

Professional. Efficient. Gone.

He senses the loss before understanding it.

ETHAN

Did I do something wrong?

Lena doesn't respond immediately.

LENA

Rest, Ethan.

She exits without looking back.

Ethan remains seated, confused.

The silence feels heavier than pain.

Something vital has been removed – not from his body, but from his world.

The first true loss sets in.

INT. ECHO VAULT - OPERATIONS FLOOR - NIGHT

A red alert pulses quietly across control consoles.

TECHNICIANS stop mid-task.

Dr. Hale steps onto the floor, authority immediate.

DR. HALE

Prepare the final integration.

A technician hesitates.

TECHNICIAN

He hasn't recovered from the last cycle.

DR. HALE

He won't fully recover from any of them.

The command is entered.

FINAL TEST AUTHORIZED.

Across the facility, lights shift to warning amber.

In the medical ward, Ethan feels the change before it happens.

He sits up slightly, breathing shallow.

ETHAN

Something's coming.

No one answers.

The system has made its decision.

INT. CONTROL OBSERVATION DECK - NIGHT

Lena stands behind glass, watching Ethan being secured into the rig.

Her hands clench unconsciously.

She steps forward.

LENA

He's not ready.

No one responds.

She watches cables lock into place.

Mechanical arms descend.

Ethan looks up, searching the room.

Their eyes meet through layers of glass.

He tries to read her face.

She gives him nothing.

Because if she does, the system will see it.

The countdown begins.

Lena stays rooted, helpless.

This is what obedience feels like.

INT. NEURAL UPLOAD CHAMBER - NIGHT

The system activates at full capacity.

A violent surge of data slams into Ethan's mind.

His body arches against restraints.

Breathing becomes erratic.
Images overload – streets, targets, screams, commands.
His neural pathways light up chaotically.
Lena watches graphs spike beyond red.

LENA

Abort the test.

The request is ignored.
Ethan's scream cuts through the chamber.
Soundproofing fails to contain it.
This is not enhancement.
This is neurological annihilation.

INT. ECHO VAULT – SYSTEMS HUB – CONTINUOUS

Monitors begin to flicker.
Warning messages cascade faster than technicians can respond.

TECHNICIAN

We're losing synchronization.

DR. HALE

Maintain output.

Another screen blacks out.
Power fluctuates.
Backup systems fail to engage properly.
The system was never designed for this load.
It was designed for compliance.
Alarms rise in pitch.
The facility trembles slightly.
The machine is breaking itself trying to keep Ethan alive.

INT. NEURAL UPLOAD CHAMBER – CONTINUOUS

Ethan convulses violently inside the rig.
Muscles seize uncontrollably.

Blood trickles from his nose.
His eyes flutter wildly, unfocused.
The restraints strain under the force of his movements.
Lena slams her hand against the glass.

LENA
Stop it!

Technicians rush toward the chamber.
The system refuses to disengage.
Ethan's body is no longer responding to commands.
Only raw neurological chaos remains.

INT. NEURAL UPLOAD CHAMBER - MOMENTS LATER

Emergency protocols finally override the system.
Power cuts abruptly.
The rig releases with a violent hiss.
Ethan collapses onto the floor.
Medical teams flood in.
Defibrillator paddles charge.

MEDIC
Clear!

Ethan's body jolts.
Once.
Twice.
A weak pulse returns.
Lena drops to her knees beside him.
She listens for breath.
It comes - shallow, fragile.
He's alive.
But something has been lost.

INT. MEDICAL DIAGNOSTIC LAB - NIGHT

Brain scans rotate on a massive screen.
Doctors whisper urgently.

Sections of Ethan's brain glow erratically.
One area remains dark.
Completely inert.
Lena studies the image, dread settling in.

DOCTOR
The damage is extensive.

DR. HALE
Define extensive.

DOCTOR
Permanent.

The word hangs in the air.
No amount of technology can reverse this.
The cost has been paid.

INT. MEDICAL DIAGNOSTIC LAB - CONTINUOUS

The scan zooms further.
Labels appear.
HIPPOCAMPAL FAILURE.
MEMORY CENTER NON-RESPONSIVE.
Lena's breath catches.

DOCTOR
He won't form new memories.
He may lose existing ones.

DR. HALE
What remains?

DOCTOR
Instinct.
Reflex.
Fragments.

Lena turns away, tears threatening.
The man she knew is already disappearing.

INT. EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Senior officials assemble urgently.
Hale addresses them without emotion.

DR. HALE

The program is compromised.

OFFICIAL

Public exposure risk?

DR. HALE

Too high.

A decision is entered.
PROGRAM SHUTDOWN - PUBLICLY.
Cover stories activate.
Data locks begin.
ECHO VAULT is erased from official existence.
But the room understands this isn't mercy.
It's containment.

INT. EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hale watches Ethan's vitals on a secondary screen.
Unstable but alive.

OFFICIAL

What do we do with him?

Hale answers without hesitation.

DR. HALE

He's no longer an asset.
He's a liability.

A new order appears quietly on the console.
SUBJECT TERMINATION - PENDING.
Across the facility, Ethan lies unconscious.
Officially alive.
Unofficially condemned.

INT. EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

A heavy folder slides across a polished table.
Inside: a single page stamped TERMINATION AUTHORIZATION.
DR. MARCUS HALE stands while SENIOR OFFICIALS observe.

OFFICIAL
Public shutdown stands.

DR. HALE
Of course.

He picks up a pen.
Hale hesitates only a fraction of a second, then signs.
Ink dries.
Another official countersigns.
No names spoken aloud.
The order is uploaded.
PRIVATE KILL ORDER: SUBJECT E-01.
Hale closes the folder.

DR. HALE (CONT'D)
No spectacle.
No recovery.
No record.

A nod from the room.
Somewhere deep in the facility, a clock starts counting
down.
Ethan's life has been converted into a logistical
problem.

INT. MEDICAL HOLDING ROOM - NIGHT

Ethan's eyes snap open.
Bright light. Harsh. Unfamiliar.
His breathing spikes.
He tries to sit – restraints stop him.

ETHAN
(hoarse)
Where–

The room swims.
Monitors beep irregularly.
Fragments flash through his mind – not memories, but
sensations.
Impact. Pain. Noise.
A nurse enters cautiously.

NURSE
Easy. You're safe.

Ethan scans her face.
No recognition.

ETHAN
Who are you?

The nurse freezes, then forces calm.
NURSE
You're in recovery.
Ethan tests his body.
Instinct intact.
Memory... not.
Something essential is missing, and he knows it.

INT. MEDICAL HOLDING ROOM – CONTINUOUS

LENA WARD steps into view.
Ethan's eyes move to her immediately.
Something in him reacts – heart rate stabilizes.
But his expression remains blank.

LENA
Ethan.

He studies her like a stranger on a train platform.

ETHAN
Do I know you?

The question lands like a blow.
Lena hides it fast.

LENA
I'm Dr. Ward.
I helped oversee your treatment.

Ethan nods politely.

ETHAN
Then why does it feel like you're lying?

Lena swallows.

LENA
You've been through trauma.

ETHAN
I don't feel confused.
I feel... reset.

He looks away.
Whatever they shared is gone.
Only the echo remains.

INT. ECHO VAULT - SECURITY CORRIDORS - NIGHT

ALARMS erupt without warning.
Red lights strobe.
LOCKDOWN ANNOUNCEMENT echoes.

SECURITY TEAMS mobilize, weapons ready.
Technicians run in conflicting directions.
Doors slam shut automatically – trapping some, isolating others.
Lena is pulled aside by an OFFICIAL.

OFFICIAL

He can't leave this level.

Across the floor, Ethan senses movement before seeing it.
His head turns just before armed guards round a corner.
He reacts instantly – no thought, only motion.
Chaos consumes the facility.
The system that once controlled him is tearing itself apart.

INT. SERVICE TUNNELS - NIGHT

Ethan moves through narrow maintenance corridors.
No map. No guidance.
Just instinct.
He ducks before a camera rotates.
Stops before a door opens.
Times his movements perfectly.
A guard enters – Ethan is already gone.
He climbs ladders, squeezes through vents.
Breathing steady.
Mind strangely clear.
He shouldn't know how to do this – but he does.
The facility throws obstacles at him.
He flows around them.
Not escaping consciously.
Being expelled.

INT. UTILITY PASSAGE - NIGHT

Ethan freezes mid-step.
His vision fractures.
Suddenly – images overlay reality.
A hallway ahead.

Armed men entering seconds later.
Gunfire.
Pain.
Death.
Ethan gasps as the vision snaps back to now.
Empty corridor.
Silent.
He staggers, gripping the wall.

ETHAN

What the hell was that...

Another flicker – different outcome.
Different timing.
He realizes these aren't memories.
They're previews.
The future leaking into his present.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Footsteps echo below.
Ethan closes his eyes – and sees again.
Two guards ascending.
One slips.
The other fires.
Ethan opens his eyes.
Moves before they appear.
Positions himself.
The guards emerge exactly as seen.
Ethan acts a second ahead of them.
Disarms one.
Uses momentum, not force.
The second raises his weapon –
Ethan is already gone.
The vision collapses.
Reality aligns.
Ethan stands shaking.
He just outran time.

INT. LOADING BAY - NIGHT

A final vision slams into Ethan's mind.
A guard firing point-blank.
No escape path.
Ethan reacts before thinking.
The struggle is fast. Brutal.
A gun discharges.
The guard drops.
Silence.
Ethan stares at the body.
First kill.
Defensive.
Necessary.
He waits for panic.
For guilt.
Instead - something else happens.

INT. LOADING BAY - CONTINUOUS

The visions stop.
No noise.
No overlays.
No future bleeding into now.
Just silence.
Ethan's breathing slows.
His hands stop shaking.
The unbearable pressure in his head lifts.
He looks around - hyper-aware, but calm.
For the first time since waking, his mind is quiet.
The cost registers slowly.

ETHAN

(soft)

It stopped...

The realization unsettles him more than the violence.

EXT. FACILITY PERIMETER - NIGHT

Ethan slips into the storm outside.
Rain pours.
Searchlights sweep behind him.
He pauses beneath cover.
Another vision threatens to form - then doesn't.
He understands now.
Violence silences the storm in his head.
Killing brings peace.
The knowledge horrifies him.
But it's undeniable.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

I don't want this...

Yet his body steadies.
His mind clears.
The system may be gone -
but it left him with a terrible equation.
SURVIVAL EQUALS SILENCE.

INT. INTERNATIONAL SECURITY PRESS ROOM - DAY

A packed press hall. Flags from multiple nations line the backdrop.
CAMERAS flash relentlessly.
A SENIOR OFFICIAL steps to the podium.

OFFICIAL

Earlier today, a classified operative known as Ethan Cole
escaped containment.

Murmurs ripple through the room.

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

He is considered extremely dangerous.

A large screen behind him displays a still image of
Ethan - cold, clinical.

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

All member states are authorized to assist in his capture.

A reporter raises a hand.

REPORTER

Is this a terrorism case?

The official pauses just long enough.

OFFICIAL

Yes.

The word detonates across global media feeds.

In real time, the manhunt begins.

INT. MEDIA BROADCAST MONTAGE - DAY/NIGHT

News anchors across continents repeat the same headline.

INTERNATIONAL TERRORIST ON THE RUN

Footage loops of Ethan fleeing Echo Vault.

Edited. Cropped. Decontextualized.

Experts speculate.

EXPERT (V.O.)

A rogue enhanced asset is the worst-case scenario.

Graphics label Ethan as a threat.

Social feeds explode with fear and condemnation.

Ethan watches part of it from a shadowed café.

The sound fades as he stares at his own face on screen.

He turns the display off.

This is how history is rewritten - instantly.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS COMMAND - NIGHT

A massive digital map fills the wall.

Red zones pulse across countries.

KILL TEAMS receive briefings.
Team leaders listen in silence.

COMMANDER

Shoot-to-kill authorization confirmed.

Images of Ethan rotate on screens.

COMMANDER (CONT'D)

No extraction. No interrogation.

Just confirmation.

Weapons are checked.

Helmets secured.

Across the room, Lena's name briefly appears as archived personnel – then vanishes.

The hunt is global.

And it is final.

EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS - MONTAGE - NIGHT/DAY

Ethan moves through borders like a ghost.

A rain-soaked alley in Istanbul.

A crowded street market in Marrakesh.

A rural crossing in Eastern Europe.

No passport. No plan.

Only instinct and brief flashes of foresight.

He avoids cameras seconds before they pan.

Leaves rooms moments before raids.

Sleeps rarely.

Eats barely.

The world feels hostile, compressed.

Every place temporary.

Every face a potential threat.

Running isn't a choice.

It's existence.

EXT. COASTAL CITY - DAY

A high-scale pursuit erupts.

Ethan sprints through traffic-choked streets.
Police vehicles converge.
He vaults barriers, narrowly missing collisions.
CUT TO:

A PORT – containers stacked high.
Ethan weaves between them as shots ring out.
CUT TO:

A TRAIN STATION – crowds surge.
Ethan boards just as doors close.
Kill team members force entry seconds too late.
The train pulls away.
Ethan collapses into a seat, breathing hard.
The city recedes.
So does safety.

INT. ABANDONED TRAIN CAR - NIGHT

A kill team corners Ethan mid-journey.
The fight is close. Violent.
Each move pre-empted by fractured visions.
Ethan survives – but at cost.
A body lies still.
Then another.
Ethan stands shaking.
The silence returns – calm, cold.
But it feels heavier now.
The peace doesn't comfort him anymore.

ETHAN

(whispers)

I didn't want this.

The visions recede.
But guilt stays.
Each survival leaves a scar.

INT. ARCHIVED DATA WING - NIGHT

Lena sits alone at a terminal.
She bypasses permissions methodically.
Deep archive files surface.
Original mission logs.
Raw footage.
Unedited timelines.
Her eyes widen as discrepancies stack up.

LENA

No...

She compares files – real versus released.
Fabrications become undeniable.
Time stamps altered.
Faces inserted.
Events rearranged.
Ethan was never the perpetrator.
He was the cover.

INT. ARCHIVED DATA WING - CONTINUOUS

Lena digs deeper.
Authorization trails lead back to Hale.
To executive councils.
To deliberate construction of guilt.
She leans back, breath shallow.
Every command she followed now reframes itself.
She wasn't stabilizing Ethan.
She was helping weaponize him – then erase him.
The truth locks into place.
The manipulation is total.
Systemic.
Designed.
Lena's hands tremble over the keyboard.
The weight is unbearable.

INT. ARCHIVED DATA WING - LATER

Lena sits on the floor, back against cold metal cabinets.
Files glow above her, damning and final.
Tears fall unchecked.
Every memory with Ethan replays – now painfully clear.
His innocence.
His trust.
Her withdrawal.
She covers her mouth, stifling a sob.
Guilt crashes over her in waves.
She didn't just abandon him.
She helped turn the world against him.
Resolve begins to form through the pain.

INT. SECURE COMMUNICATIONS ROOM – NIGHT

Lena activates an unregistered channel.
Hands shaking, she enters coordinates.
A pause.
Static.
Then a distorted signal connects.

ETHAN (V.O.)
...Who is this?

Lena swallows hard.

LENA
It's me.

A beat of stunned silence.

LENA (CONT'D)
They lied.
About everything.
I can prove it.

Another beat.

ETHAN (V.O.)

Why should I trust you?

Lena closes her eyes.

LENA

Because I won't survive if you don't.

The line remains open.

For the first time since the escape –

Ethan doesn't hang up.

INT. ABANDONED SAFEHOUSE – NIGHT

Static crackles through a secure handset.

Ethan sits in darkness, back against a concrete wall.

His breathing is erratic.

The edges of a vision threaten to form.

LENA (V.O.)

Ethan.

Her voice cuts through the noise.

His breathing slows instantly.

Heart rate steadies.

The fractured images retreat.

Ethan closes his eyes, anchoring to the sound.

ETHAN

Whatever this is...

Don't stop talking.

LENA (V.O.)

I'm here.

I won't disappear again.

Silence settles – not empty, but calm.

The effect is undeniable.

Her voice does what violence did before.
It brings peace.
Ethan realizes it with quiet awe.

EXT. BORDER TOWN STREETS - NIGHT

Ethan moves through a crowded foreign street.
Lena's voice guides him through the comm.

LENA (V.O.)
Left at the café.

Pause.
Ethan obeys without question.
A second later, armed men rush past where he would've
been.

ETHAN
How do you know this?

LENA (V.O.)
I don't.
I trust you.

Ethan senses pathways opening – not as visions, but
instinct sharpened by her presence.
He moves with certainty.
Not running.
Following something deeper.
Her.
For the first time, he's not alone inside his own head.

INT. DERELICT APARTMENT - NIGHT

A door creaks open.
Lena stands framed in low light.
Ethan freezes.
His mind shows nothing – no memory.
But his body reacts immediately.
Pulse stabilizes.

Shoulders drop.
Breathing evens out.
They stand a few feet apart, studying each other.

LENA

Hi.

ETHAN

I don't remember you.

LENA

I know.

A beat.

ETHAN

But... I know you.

Not logically.

Physically.

Recognition without recollection.
They don't touch.
Yet something ancient reconnects.

INT. DERELICT APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Lena steps closer slowly.
Ethan doesn't retreat.
Monitors on his wrist show vitals dropping into optimal range.

LENA

Your body remembers what your mind can't.

ETHAN

It feels like...

(swallows)

Like the noise stopped.

She reaches out – hesitates – then places her hand on his arm.

Ethan exhales deeply.

The calm deepens.

Not sedation.

Alignment.

Whatever the system broke, this survived.

And it terrifies her – and gives her hope.

INT. DERELICT APARTMENT – NIGHT

They sit opposite each other.

Lena speaks carefully, choosing honesty over comfort.

LENA

You were framed.

I helped them – without knowing it.

She details Echo Vault.

The uploads.

The lies.

The kill order.

Ethan listens without interruption.

No anger.

No disbelief.

Only focus.

ETHAN

So they made me into this...

LENA

Yes.

ETHAN

And you tried to stop it.

LENA

Too late.

The guilt lingers between them.
But the truth is finally spoken aloud.

INT. DERELICT APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Ethan considers everything.

ETHAN

I don't remember trusting you.

Lena braces.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

But my instincts don't lie.

He meets her eyes.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

And they say you're safe.

Lena's breath catches.

LENA

I don't deserve that.

ETHAN

Maybe not.

A pause.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

But I need you anyway.

Trust is rebuilt - not through memory, but choice.

EXT. DERELICT APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gunfire erupts suddenly.

Kill team vehicles flood the street.

Lena freezes.
Ethan reacts instantly.

ETHAN
Move.

He pulls her behind cover just as bullets tear through the doorway.
Visions flicker – but fade when Lena shouts directions.
They move together instinctively.
Up stairwells.
Across rooftops.
Lena slips – Ethan catches her without looking.
They escape by seconds.
Breathing hard.
Alive.
Together.

INT. SAFE VEHICLE - NIGHT

Lena wipes blood from her sleeve.
Ethan drives, focused.
News alerts light the dashboard.
SCIENTIST ASSISTS TERRORIST ESCAPE
Lena watches her face appear onscreen.

LENA
That's it.

I'm done pretending.

ETHAN
They won't stop now.

LENA
Good.

She looks at him.

LENA (CONT'D)
Neither will I.

The line is crossed.
She is no longer collateral.
She is a target.

INT. SECURE GOVERNMENT OFFICE - NIGHT

Officials watch Lena's profile expand on screen.
Addresses.
Family records.
DR. HALE studies them coldly.

OFFICIAL
Apply pressure.

CUT TO:
Lena's mother being escorted from her home.
Phones confiscated.

OFFICIAL (V.O.)
She'll comply.

Back to Hale.

DR. HALE
Everyone does.

The threat is personal now.
And deliberate.

INT. TEMPORARY SAFEHOUSE - NIGHT

A secure message flashes on Lena's device.
Images of her family under guard.
A single line follows:
CONTROL HIM. OR LOSE EVERYTHING.
Lena's hands shake.

Ethan watches her reaction, senses danger.

ETHAN

What did they say?

Lena looks at him – torn between love and fear.

LENA

They want me to control you.

A long silence.

ETHAN

Can you?

She doesn't answer.

Outside, sirens approach distantly.

The final choice has been placed in her hands.

And whatever she chooses will destroy something.

INT. ABANDONED SAFEHOUSE - NIGHT

Ethan jolts upright, drenched in sweat.

His vision fractures instantly.

He sees a MARKETPLACE – crowded, ordinary.

A man drops a bag.

Explosion.

Bodies.

Children.

The image SHIFTS – a subway platform.

Gunfire erupts.

People scream.

Another shift – a diplomatic convoy.

Fireball.

Ethan clutches his head, gasping.

The visions don't stop.

They stack.

Multiply.

Every outcome branching outward — each death a ripple.
Ethan staggers to his feet, knocking over a chair.

ETHAN

No... no, no—

The visions finally snap back to the present.
Silence crashes in.
Ethan realizes the truth with horror.
These aren't possibilities.
They're scheduled consequences.
Collateral deaths written into systems already in motion.
And he can see them all.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ethan sits on the floor, back against the wall.
Breathing slows deliberately.
The visions threaten again — he forces them down.

ETHAN

(quiet, resolved)

This doesn't stop with me.

He stands.
Looks at weapons on the table.
Looks away from them.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

They'll keep building this.
Keep erasing people.

He understands now — running only delays the damage.
The system will outlive him unless it's destroyed.
Ethan grips the edge of the table, decision settling in.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Then it ends at the source.

Not revenge.
Not survival.
Containment.
The calm in his posture is unmistakable.
This is purpose, not rage.

INT. MOBILE COMMAND VAN - NIGHT

Lena projects a holographic map between them.
Multiple locations light up across continents.

LENA

Echo Vault wasn't singular.
It was a prototype.

She expands the display.
Hidden facilities appear - Asia. Europe. North America.

ETHAN

How many?

LENA

Enough to rebuild even if one falls.

She isolates one node.

LENA (CONT'D)

But this is the core.

Data routing. Command authority.
All kill permissions originate here.
Ethan studies it, already seeing outcomes branching from
the location.

ETHAN

If this goes down...

LENA

Everything downstream collapses.

They exchange a look.

This isn't theory.

This is the heart of the machine.

INT. MOBILE COMMAND VAN - CONTINUOUS

Lena overlays schematics.

Security layers. Kill corridors. Neural firewalls.

LENA

We don't destroy the buildings.

We destroy the node.

Ethan watches paths form in his mind - futures collapsing cleanly.

ETHAN

One entry.

One exit.

No fallback.

LENA

If you hesitate-

ETHAN

-I won't.

A beat.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

But if I lose control-

LENA

I'll pull you back.

She means it literally.

Emotionally.

They finalize the route.
No speeches.
No dramatics.
Just inevitability.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - LATER

Power is low.
City noise distant.
Ethan and Lena sit close, shoulders almost touching.
Not planning.
Just breathing.
Lena rests her head briefly against his shoulder.
He doesn't move - afraid to break the moment.

ETHAN

If we survive this..

Lena lifts her head, gently stopping him.

LENA

Don't.

A small smile.
Sad. Honest.
They hold hands quietly.
No urgency.
No fear.
Just presence.
For once, the future is silent.

INT. SAFEHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

They stand to leave.
Gear ready.
Lena hesitates, then speaks softly.

LENA

We don't promise anything.

Ethan nods.

ETHAN

Promises change outcomes.

LENA

Exactly.

They share one last look.

Not romanticized.

Grounded.

Two people choosing truth over comfort.

They turn away together.

Equal.

Committed.

EXT. CORE NODE FACILITY - NIGHT

Rain pours.

The facility rises from the terrain - sealed, silent, lethal.

Ethan and Lena move through shadows.

Guards pass inches away - Ethan adjusts a second early.

Vision flickers.

He corrects course instantly.

They breach a service entrance.

Inside - sterile corridors.

Motion sensors sweep.

Ethan freezes - then moves before they trigger.

Lena monitors systems remotely.

LENA

You're clear.

They descend deeper.

The heart of Echo Vault awaits.

INT. CORE NODE CHAMBER - NIGHT

Chaos erupts.
Alarms. Gunfire. Automated defenses activate.
Ethan moves through it like water.
Each action preempted by flashes of foresight.
Guards fall.
Drones shatter.
Explosions ripple through infrastructure.
Lena races against counter-hacks.

LENA

Thirty seconds!

Ethan fights toward the core console.
This is war compressed into minutes.
Precision replaces brutality.
The system fights back – violently.

INT. CORE NODE CHAMBER – CONTINUOUS

The visions return – overwhelming.
Hundreds of outcomes slam into Ethan at once.
Blood. Fire. Failure.
He stumbles, clutching his head.

ETHAN

Too much–

Shots miss him by inches – he barely reacts in time.
Pain spikes.
The calm is gone.
He's drowning in futures.
His body keeps moving, but his mind fractures.
He drops to one knee.
The system senses weakness.
Closing in.

INT. CORE NODE CHAMBER – CONTINUOUS

Lena's voice cuts through the noise.

LENA

Ethan. Look at me.

He turns instinctively toward the sound.
Her face fills his vision – not fractured.
Singular.

LENA (CONT'D)

Breathe with me.

In.

Out.

The visions collapse inward, narrowing.

Ethan rises.

Focus restored – not through violence.

Through connection.

He slams the final command.

The core node overloads.

Systems cascade offline.

Silence spreads outward – global.

Ethan and Lena stand amid falling lights.

The machine dies.

And for the first time – the future is unwritten.

INT. CORE CONTROL CORRIDOR – NIGHT

Emergency lights strobe red.

Ethan and Lena sprint through a narrowing corridor as
blast doors slam shut behind them.

Steam vents hiss. Warning sirens overlap in chaotic
layers.

Lena skids to a stop at a reinforced door.

LENA

This is it. Control room.

Ethan steadies himself, vision flickering at the edges.

He presses his palm to the biometric panel.

The panel flashes—ACCESS DENIED—then flickers again.

Ethan exhales, focuses.

The panel unlocks.

The door opens into—

A vast control room packed with servers, holographic interfaces, and pulsing conduits.

This is the nerve center.

The heart.

Ethan steps inside and the noise drops to a low, ominous hum.

They've reached the core.

INT. CORE CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lena rushes to the main console.

She types rapidly.

A massive countdown clock ignites on the central display.

CORE PURGE: T-05:00

ETHAN

Once this starts—

LENA

—it can't be paused.

The room vibrates as subsystems begin shutting down.

Remote feeds blink out one by one.

Global nodes disconnect.

The countdown ticks louder now, amplified.

Ethan grips the console edge as a vision slams in—

Cities dimming.

Systems collapsing.

Lives narrowly spared.

He steadies himself.

This is working.

But the cost is coming.

INT. CORE CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Multiple screens flicker alive.

DR. HALE and SENIOR OFFICIALS appear via secure link.

DR. HALE
Dr. Ward.
Lena freezes.

DR. HALE (CONT'D)
Maintain the signal.
Re-establish regulation immediately.

Ethan turns toward the screens, jaw tight.

OFFICIAL
If you sever control, he dies.

Lena looks from the screens to Ethan—his breathing shallow, eyes unfocused.

DR. HALE
You know what you are to him.
You're the only thing holding him together.

The implication is clear.
Love, weaponized again.
The countdown continues behind them.
T-03:40

INT. CORE CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lena's hands hover over the console.
The signal interface glows—active, demanding.
Her voice has been guiding Ethan, stabilizing him.
She hesitates.

ETHAN
(weak)
Lena...

She looks at him—really looks.
At the strain.
The damage.

The cost of being controlled by connection.

DR. HALE (V.O.)

This is what you were made for.

Lena closes her eyes.
Her breathing wavers.
The room feels unbearably small.
T-02:55

INT. CORE CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ethan's knees buckle.
He drops to one knee, gasping.
The visions surge violently—
Failures.
Deaths.
Him collapsing mid-command.
Lena rushes to him, kneeling.

LENA

Stay with me.

Ethan tries to focus on her voice—but it hurts now.
The signal strains him, tearing at what's left.

ETHAN

It's... too much.

He looks up at her, eyes clear for a moment.

ETHAN (CONT'D)

Don't... hold me together like this.

The truth lands.
Hard.
T-02:10

INT. CORE CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lena stares at the interface.
Then at Ethan.
Then at the officials on screen.
Understanding crystallizes.

LENA

You didn't stabilize him.

She looks directly at Hale.

LENA (CONT'D)

You were killing him slowly.

Silence on the screens.
Hale doesn't deny it.
Lena's voice steadies with clarity.

LENA (CONT'D)

He doesn't need control.
He needs freedom—even if it breaks him.

The countdown pulses.
T-01:35

INT. CORE CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lena takes Ethan's face gently in her hands.

LENA

Love isn't control.

Ethan meets her gaze, breathing ragged.

LENA (CONT'D)

It's choice.
Presence.
Letting go.

A tear slips down her cheek—but her hands are steady now.
Ethan nods faintly.
For the first time, there's no fear in his eyes.
Only acceptance.
T-01:00

INT. CORE CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DR. HALE
Do not do this.

OFFICIAL
You will lose everything.

Lena turns back to the console.
Her finger hovers over the signal termination.
She exhales.
Presses it.
SIGNAL TERMINATED
The room goes quiet.
The officials' screens cut to black.
The countdown continues—unstoppable.
But the leash is gone.

INT. CORE CONTROL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ethan convulses once—then stills.
Lena holds him, terrified.
A beat.
Then Ethan inhales—deep, painful, real.
He pushes himself upright, trembling.
No visions.
No noise.
Just agony—and clarity.

ETHAN
(hoarse)

It hurts...

He stands anyway.

Broken.

Free.

Lena rises beside him.

They face the core together.

T-00:15

INT. CORE CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

The countdown hits zero.

The core overloads.

Light surges through the conduits, then collapses inward.

Servers melt.

Holograms shatter.

A thunderous silence follows.

Every screen goes dark.

Ethan and Lena stand amid the wreckage, illuminated only by emergency glow.

No signals.

No commands.

No control.

The system is dead.

Ethan exhales, exhausted but alive.

Lena squeezes his hand.

Outside, somewhere far beyond this room, the world keeps turning—

Unwatched.

Unwritten.

INT. VARIOUS GLOBAL FACILITIES - NIGHT/DAY - INTERCUT

Across the world, identical alerts flash.

CONTROL ROOMS in distant countries freeze mid-operation.

Redundant servers power down.

Armed personnel stop receiving commands.

Neural rigs disengage abruptly.

Subjects collapse into medical teams' arms.

In one facility, a technician pounds a console in

frustration.

In another, a commander stares at a dead screen.

The ECHO VAULT network goes dark node by node.

No announcement.

No explanation.

Just silence spreading across continents.

The machine that once watched everything now sees nothing.

INT. SECURE ARCHIVE VAULT - NIGHT

Deep underground, sealed doors open.

Hard drives are removed methodically.

Paper files fed into industrial shredders.

Digital records wiped, overwritten, purged.

An OFFICIAL supervises, expression bored.

OFFICIAL

Confirm zero recoverability.

A technician nods.

TECHNICIAN

Nothing left to trace.

The evidence of Echo Vault disappears not in flames—
but in procedure.

Clean.

Legal.

Invisible.

History is being edited in real time.

INT. PRIVATE BOARDROOM - NIGHT

Well-dressed figures sit comfortably.

No uniforms. No insignia.

Only influence.

A news ticker plays silently: CLASSIFIED PROGRAM
DISCONTINUED

A man pours wine.

MAN

Unfortunate optics.

WOMAN

Temporary.

They discuss losses like market corrections.
No names spoken.
No guilt expressed.
A phone buzzes.

MAN

We're clear.

The group relaxes.
Power doesn't fall.
It adapts.
And moves on.

INT. REMOTE MEDICAL FACILITY - NIGHT

Ethan lies unconscious on a narrow bed.
His breathing is shallow.
Machines monitor minimal vitals.
A medic watches closely, uncertain.

MEDIC

He shouldn't be alive.

Another medic shrugs.
Ethan's eyes flutter.
Pain crosses his face.
He exhales weakly.
Barely here.
Barely holding on.
But alive.
Against all logic.

Against design.

INT. GOVERNMENT RECORDS OFFICE - DAY

A clerk types calmly.
ETHAN COLE - STATUS: EXPUNGED
Files disappear from databases.
Photos blur, then vanish.
Biometrics deleted.
Travel history erased.
The system confirms: NO MATCH FOUND
Ethan ceases to exist on paper.
No trial.
No closure.
Just absence.

INT. INTERNATIONAL PRESS ROOM - DAY

A brief statement is read.

OFFICIAL

Ethan Cole is presumed dead following a classified
incident.

No questions taken.
No details provided.
Cameras click.
News headlines spread fast.
ENHANCED TERRORIST DEAD
The story is simple.
Final.
And false.
But truth has no clearance level.

INT. GOVERNMENT OFFICE - NIGHT

Lena signs a final document.
An OFFICIAL slides it away.

OFFICIAL

Your cooperation is appreciated.

Lena doesn't respond.

OFFICIAL (CONT'D)

You are released from obligation.

She stands.

No escort.

No apology.

Just freedom delivered quietly.

She walks out into the night—

Changed.

Unacknowledged.

Alive.

EXT. RURAL LANDSCAPE - DAY

Months later.

Wind moves through tall grass.

No sirens.

No screens.

No alerts.

A small cabin sits isolated.

Smoke rises gently from a chimney.

The world feels slower here.

Ordinary.

Healing in its stillness.

INT. CABIN - DAY

Ethan sits at a wooden table.

Older clothes.

A beard beginning to form.

He fixes a broken chair leg with careful hands.

No hurry.

No urgency.

Outside, birds call.

He pauses, listening.

Peaceful.

Unremarkable.
Alive in a way he's never been allowed to be.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Ethan lies awake in bed.
The dark presses gently around him.
Fragments drift through his mind—
A voice.
A hand.
A flash of light.
Not memories.
Echoes.
He exhales slowly, letting them pass.
He doesn't chase them anymore.
The past exists only in pieces.
And for now—
that's enough.

EXT. SMALL TOWN STREET - MORNING

Ethan walks through a quiet street carrying a paper bag
of groceries.
Sunlight is soft. Ordinary.
He pauses mid-step.
A faint flicker crosses his vision—
A cyclist swerves ahead.
A car door opens too fast.
The image dissolves before panic forms.
Ethan exhales slowly, grounding himself.
The visions are weaker now.
Fragmented.
Like ripples instead of waves.
He blinks once.
The street remains calm.
He continues walking, aware but unafraid.
Whatever was done to him still whispers—
but no longer commands.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

A crowd gathers loosely around a street performer.
Ethan stops near a café.
His head tilts slightly.
A flash—
A child runs.
Trips.
Falls hard.
Before it happens, Ethan steps forward.
Catches the child instinctively.
No hesitation.
The child laughs, unhurt.
The parent rushes over, grateful.

PARENT

Thank you. That was—

Ethan just smiles politely.

ETHAN

It's okay.

He steps back into anonymity.
No credit.
No explanation.
Just instinct guiding him quietly through the world.

EXT. OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Across the square, Lena stands partially obscured by the crowd.
Older coat. Softer eyes.
She watches Ethan from a distance.
Doesn't approach.
Doesn't interrupt.
She sees him laugh with the child.
Sees the calm in his posture.
The absence of fear.
This is the life she hoped for him—
even if it doesn't include her.

She remains still, unseen.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Ethan's smile fades slightly.

He pauses again.

Not a vision-

a feeling.

A subtle familiarity presses against him.

Like a memory that never formed.

He turns his head a fraction.

Scans the crowd slowly.

Something important is nearby.

Something gentle.

His breathing steadies as he searches the sensation-

not anxious.

Curious.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Ethan stops searching.

He doesn't turn fully.

Doesn't look back.

The feeling doesn't demand action.

It simply exists.

He accepts it.

Then lets it go.

Ethan resumes walking, blending back into the rhythm of the town.

The moment passes without resolution-

and that feels right.

EXT. OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Lena watches him walk away.

Her eyes fill, but she doesn't wipe the tears.

They're not painful tears.

They're relief.

He's alive.

He's free.

And he didn't need her voice to be whole.

She smiles—small, sincere, proud.
This is not loss.
It's completion.

EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

Lena turns away from the square.
Walks down a narrow street lined with old buildings.
Each step lighter than the last.
No pursuit.
No regret.
She disappears into the crowd, choosing distance over
disruption.
Love expressed through restraint.
The world keeps moving.

EXT. STREET MARKET - DAY

Ethan passes a small electronics shop.
An old radio sits near the entrance.
Static crackles softly.
A half-formed melody tries to break through the noise.
Ethan slows.
Listens.
The static rises, then steadies.
For a moment, the sound resembles a voice—
then fades back to nothing.
The shopkeeper adjusts the dial.
Music returns.
Ordinary again.

EXT. STREET MARKET - CONTINUOUS

Ethan closes his eyes briefly.
Breathes in.
Breathes out.
No visions interrupt.
No futures collide.
Just presence.
He opens his eyes, calm settled deep within him.
The noise of the world feels manageable now.

Human-sized.

EXT. HILLS OUTSIDE TOWN - SUNSET

Ethan stands alone overlooking the valley.
Wind moves gently through the grass.
The sky darkens gradually.
No sound but nature.
No signals.
No commands.
Silence returns—not empty, but earned.
Ethan sits.
And rests.

BLACK SCREEN

White text fades in slowly:
THE LAST SIGNAL
The words linger.
Then fade to black.

BLACK SCREEN - POST-CREDITS (MID)

A single data server hums in darkness.
Unmarked.
Unregistered.
A lone indicator light blinks once.
Then again.
A corrupted file attempts to restore—
fails.
Retries.
Succeeds partially.
A fragment of code scrolls unreadable.
The light steadies.
Cut to black.

BLACK SCREEN - POST-CREDITS (IMAX ECHO MOTIF)

Silence.
Then—
a faint echo of the neural tone once used in Echo Vault.

Distorted.
Incomplete.
It fades before forming.

BLACK SCREEN

A heartbeat.
Slow.
Human.
Not synced to any system.
It stops.

BLACK SCREEN

Static again—
but weaker than before.
Almost dying out.

BLACK SCREEN

A whispered breath.
Indistinct.
Not Ethan's.
Not Lena's.
Unidentified.

BLACK SCREEN

A line of corrupted text flashes for a frame:
E-01 // BACKUP INCOMPLETE
Gone instantly.

BLACK SCREEN

Silence stretches longer this time.
Unbroken.

BLACK SCREEN

One final flicker of light—
then nothing.

BLACK SCREEN

No sound.

No signal.

Just silence.

Hold.

END.