

Zone of Silence
by
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INT. SKY - AERIAL - EARLY MORNING

We soar high over miles of untouched terrain—rolling hills, arid brush, and distant mountains. Civilization fades behind us. The camera glides effortlessly, homing in on a fortress-like estate nestled deep in an isolated valley, surrounded by barbed wire, private roads, and armed watchmen.

The compound is vast: multiple villas, tennis courts, a private airstrip, fountains gushing blue-chlorinated excess into the desert heat.

TITLE CARD: SIERRA DEL NIDO - NORTHERN MEXICO

As the camera dives lower, we hear the distant hum of a fountain, wind rustling palm leaves, and faint overlapping Spanish voices echoing off polished stone walls.

EXT. ESTATE TERRACE - BACKYARD - MORNING

A sleek glass table stretches across a massive tiled terrace overlooking a canyon. Cartel leaders sit beneath a custom-built shade structure, surrounded by armed bodyguards in black suits.

The Boss of Bosses, EL PATRÓN, reclines at the head of the table—mid 50s, pristine white suit, skin like stone. He does not smile.

The table is flanked by:

* RAFA "El Jaguar" Mendoza - a practical tactician with scars and cold eyes.

* DON CARRASCO - old-school, portly, cigar always burning.

* LA MADRINA - icy, elegant, with silent killers at her back.

* EL TOPO - twitchy, paranoid, always watching the sky.

* And others—rival drug kings with uneasy alliances.

An armed waiter pours mezcal for everyone, hands shaking slightly. No one drinks.

WIDE SHOT - ABOVE THE TABLE

The group is surrounded by silence and tension. Each man eyes the others like predators in a cage. The only sound is wind whistling off the nearby cliff face.

CLOSE ON - EL PATRÓN

He leans forward, voice calm, deliberate, dangerous.

EL PATRÓN

The DEA has burned five labs in two months. That is five losses for me... for you... and for the people we pay to look the other way.

He glances to La Madrina.

EL PATRÓN (CONT'D)

They have drones that see through trees. Satellites that read your tattoos from the clouds.

DON CARRASCO

(gruff)

Traitors inside, too. Someone's feeding them.

RAFA

Or it's tech. They cracked the encrypted channels. Nothing is safe.

EL TOPO

(gritting teeth)

They followed a shipment through lead shielding. I was told that was impossible!

Voices rise. Accusations. A man slams his fist on the table.

LA MADRINA

(into the chaos)

What do you want from us, Patrón?

A long pause. El Patrón stands, walking to the edge of the terrace. Below him: the deep canyon, endless and ancient.

EL PATRÓN

I want silence.

He turns slowly to face them all.

EL PATRÓN (CONT'D)

There is a place... where the sky cannot hear us. Where the satellites die. Where signals vanish and men become ghosts.

The leaders exchange cautious glances.

EL PATRÓN (CONT'D)
A dead zone. Between Durango and
Chihuahua. La Zona del Silencio.

A young lieutenant approaches El Patrón, whispers something
in his ear. He nods once, never looking away from the table.

EL PATRÓN (CONT'D)
We move the operation there. All of
it. Production. Training.
Distribution.

DON CARRASCO
Are you out of your mind? RAFA
That's cursed land. There's a
reason no one builds there.

LA MADRINA
Or it's the one place the gringos
can't follow.

EL PATRÓN
(smiling faintly)
We either disappear... or we die
seen.

He raises his glass of mezcal. Slowly, hesitantly, the others
do the same.

EL PATRÓN (CONT'D)
To the new silence.

They clink. From the sky, we pull back—past the stone walls,
past the guarded gate, past the silent hills. A meeting of
kings... ready to vanish into myth.

SCREENPLAY TITLE: Zone of Silence

INT. SKY - AERIAL - EARLY MORNING

Wide aerial shot over an endless expanse of scorched Mexican
desert—beautiful, brutal, and unsettling. The rising sun
casts long, golden shadows across cracked earth, dead brush,
and rusted animal skeletons. There's no movement, no
sound—only the howling wind.

TITLE CARD: ZONA DEL SILENCIO - NORTHERN MEXICO

The camera glides low, revealing long-forgotten military ruins, decaying watchtowers, and sand-swallowed bunkers. Distant tumbleweeds roll across an abandoned airstrip.

OVER RADIO STATIC (V.O.)

(English and Spanish
overlap, breaking up)
"...last known location-si, pero la
señal está muerta... moving southwest
across... interference too strong..."

As we soar lower, we pass over a line of military-style SUVs, their tires carving a path into the nothingness. Men with radios bang on the dashboards, frustrated. Nothing works.

The camera pushes in on the convoy leader, a thick-necked man with a dead stare and face tattoos: RAFA "EL JAGUAR" MENDOZA, 40s. Hardened. Respected. Ruthless.

INT. SUV - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Inside, Rafa stares ahead at the vanishing point of the desert. The hum of the engine is the only sound. A younger sicario rides shotgun, nervously adjusting the frequency on a military radio.

YOUNG SICARIO
(half-whisper))
Nada. It's like we're already
ghosts.
That's the point.

He leans forward and turns the radio off completely. The silence is deafening.

EXT. DESERT CAMP - LATER

The convoy pulls up to a makeshift base—a handful of armored tents, supply trucks, and hastily-installed solar panels. Armed men fan out, scanning the horizon with automatic rifles. In the distance: the sun hits the earth with a blinding white glare.

There's something off about the air. A low-frequency hum, just at the edge of perception.

RAFA

(to his men)

From this point on, no calls. No signals. You see a drone, you shoot it. If they can't find us... they can't stop us. One of the men spots something in the distance: a crumbling stone obelisk, half-buried in sand. Strange symbols etched into it--faded, ancient.

OLDER SICARIO

What the hell is that?

Rafa walks toward it slowly. The sound fades entirely. For a moment, he hears whispers--faint, unintelligible, in a language not of this Earth.

He freezes. The camera pulls high again--drifting slowly above the group. Tiny figures in the vast nowhere. Shadows ripple unnaturally across the ground.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD FADES IN: ZONE OF SILENCE

INT. DEA REGIONAL COMMAND CENTER - EL PASO, TEXAS - NIGHT

The hum of computers. Flickering monitors. Tense agents hover over glowing screens. A giant wall map of northern Mexico is covered in red tracking dots, most of which are blinking normally--except one.

A large dead zone--a digital black hole--flickers on the screen near the Durango/Chihuahua border.

AGENT CASSIDY (30s, sharp, methodical) leans forward, chewing a pen cap, eyes locked on a flatline signal.

CASSIDY

We had visual on Mendoza's convoy until they crossed into the Zona del Silencio. Since then--nothing. Radios, GPS, satellites, all blind.

AGENT RAMOS (40s, ex-military, hard-nosed) paces behind her, arms crossed. He doesn't like this.

RAMOS

What do you mean nothing? That place isn't even supposed to be on any active routes. You're telling me the most dangerous men in Mexico just vanished?

CASSIDY

No digital footprint. They ghosted us the second they crossed that line.

She taps a button and the screen zooms in on the Zone—a hazy satellite image with a strange distortion in the center, like the image is glitching or refracting.

RAMOS

(grim)

Son of a bitch.

CASSIDY

We tried to fly a recon drone in an hour ago. Lost comms thirty seconds after breaching airspace. Same thing with the backup.

RAMOS

(drained)

Jesus.

A silence settles over the room. The other agents look uneasy.

CASSIDY

It's like something in that desert's eating signals alive. Ramos picks up a secure phone and hesitates. He looks out the command center window into the darkness.

RAMOS

(quietly)

We lost a Predator drone over Afghanistan once. Mechanical failure, maybe. This? Feels different.

AGENT MARTINEZ

(off-screen)

You think the cartels found a way to jam satellites?

RAMOS
(shakes head)
I think they found something
worse.

The camera slowly pushes in on the glitching satellite image—colors warping unnaturally. Just before we cut, a faint low-frequency hum builds under the silence.

SMASH TO BLACK.

EXT. CARTEL BASE - ZONE OF SILENCE - NEXT MORNING

Blistering heat. The camp crackles with tension. Armed men sweat under the sun, squinting into the haze. A few drink beer for breakfast. Others pace nervously. Flies buzz.

Rafa "El Jaguar" Mendoza sits beneath a tarp, sunglasses on, watching as his men unload weapons crates. Nearby, El Rojo (30s, wild-eyed, superstitious) stands at the edge of the camp, staring into the desert.

EL ROJO
(whispering to himself)
It's too quiet. Even the wind's
gone.

A young recruit, CHECO, approaches with a radio in hand.

CHECO
Jefe, still nothing. No reception,
no drone feeds, not even local
chatter.

RAFA
Then they're not listening. Which
means we're winning.

INT. DEA COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

Cassidy reviews archived surveillance of the desert—normal conditions, normal static—then flips to live feed of the Zone. The screen begins to twitch and fuzz again.*

CASSIDY
There. Did you see that?

She rewinds, plays frame-by-frame. The desert glitches—a split-second frame of figures standing motionless in the sand. Distorted. Inhuman.

RAMOS
What the hell was that?

CASSIDY
Frame interpolation bug?

RAMOS
That wasn't no bug.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT OUTSKIRTS - ZONE OF SILENCE - SAME TIME

El Rojo, drawn by a faint sound-like whispering static-wanders away from the camp. He clutches a gold crucifix and keeps glancing over his shoulder.

Heat ripples. The desert horizon warps subtly, as if space is bending.

Suddenly-the sun shifts position slightly. He looks up, confused. He checks his watch. It's blinking 12:00.

EL ROJO
What the f-?

A voice-faint, mechanical, feminine-echoes from nowhere.

MYSTERIOUS VOICE (V.O.)
You're not supposed to be here.

He spins. No one. Just sand. And then-he hears his mother's voice, soft and familiar, whispering in Spanish.

MOTHER'S VOICE (V.O.)
Mi hijo... ven conmigo...

El Rojo drops his rifle and begins walking, eyes glazed, toward a distant shimmer.

CUT TO:

INT. DEA COMMAND CENTER - LATER

Ramos, now visibly disturbed, steps outside into the cold desert night air. He lights a cigarette. Cassidy joins him.

CASSIDY

There's something else. I ran a heat scan... the Zone isn't holding temperature like the surrounding areas.

RAMOS

Meaning?

CASSIDY

Meaning... something's interfering with the atmosphere itself.

Ramos exhales smoke, watching it swirl unnaturally.

RAMOS

Get me clearance for a manned chopper. We need eyes in that desert.

CASSIDY

Are you serious? We don't even know if signals are getting out.

RAMOS

Then maybe it's time someone went in.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT RIDGE - LATER THAT DAY

We see El Rojo again—now shirtless, sunburned, trembling. He's curled up on the ground, sobbing hysterically, eyes locked on the sky. A circular burn mark is seared into the ground near him, his boots missing.

Above him, the clouds swirl in an unnatural spiral.

EL ROJO

(screaming))

No more, mama... por favor... make them stop...

Camera pans up to the empty, humming sky. A faint metallic whine echoes as a silvery shape passes behind a cloud, gone before we can process it.

CUT TO BLACK.

EXT. CARTEL BASE - MIDDAY

The sun is brutal overhead. Rafa kneels beside El Rojo, now back at camp. The man's eyes are swollen, face streaked with tears and desert dust. His shirt is torn, hands trembling uncontrollably. Several sicarios stand at a distance, whispering.

RAFA
(quietly)
What happened to you, cabrón?

EL ROJO
(whispers, trembling)
They came down... I saw them.
Light... eyes like glass... like
mirrors...

RAFA
Who?

EL ROJO
They took me, Rafa... they opened
me... and then put me back wrong.

Rafa exchanges a look with his lieutenant, TORO (50s, ex-military, stoic).

TORO
Sun cooked his brain. We can't
afford weakness here.

RAFA
He's not faking.

TORO
Then we have a problem.

El Rojo suddenly grabs Rafa's arm like a child clinging to a parent.

EL ROJO
We don't belong here. It's not
ours. We're trespassing.

Rafa yanks his arm free. He looks at the desert—something in his expression has shifted. Doubt.

CUT TO:

INT. DEA OPERATIONS ROOM - NIGHT

Inside the glass-walled nerve center of the DEA compound, Cassidy and Ramos stand before a table covered in satellite printouts, thermal maps, and a digital topography of the Zone.

A tech agent enters, holding a tablet.

TECH AGENT

Sir—authorization for a manned recon just came through. We've got a team prepped out of Holloman Air Base.

RAMOS

((intense)

Two men. No weapons. Just recon gear and biological sensors.

CASSIDY

They won't make it back, will they?

RAMOS

We're not sending them in to make it back. We're sending them in to learn something.

Cassidy watches Ramos in silence. He seems haunted.

CASSIDY

What are you not telling me?

RAMOS

I've seen this before. Not here—but in Fallujah. Kandahar. Weird ops no one talks about. Guys disappearing... coming back wrong. Or not at all.

He grabs the tablet and leaves the room. Cassidy just stares at the glitching map.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARTEL BASE - DUSK

Rafa walks alone toward the strange stone obelisk again, half-buried in the sand. His radio crackles—static only. He's holding El Rojo's crucifix.

The wind picks up. A low hum builds in the air—not wind, but frequency. Rafa stops. He hears something faint.

VOICE (V.O.)

Rafa...

He spins. Nothing. Then something moves quickly in the corner of his eye—a silhouette darting just out of focus.

VOICE (V.O.)

You shouldn't have come here...

A glint in the sand—he looks down. A human tooth, clean, polished, lying atop the dirt. His own reflection stares back at him in the tooth's shine.

Behind him, Toro shouts from camp.

TORO (O.S.)

¡Jefe! You better come see this!

CUT TO:

INT. MILITARY CHOPPER - LATER THAT NIGHT

A slick DEA recon helicopter hums through the night sky. Inside: two special operatives, faces covered, scanning the terrain below with high-tech scopes. One holds a thermal sensor.

PILOT (V.O.)

Crossing into Zone airspace now...
No comms past this point.

As they cross an invisible line over the desert, all cabin lights flicker. The HUD glitches. One operative grabs his headset.

OPERATIVE 1

We're losing guidance.

OPERATIVE 2

It's like something's scrambling
us from inside the cockpit.

Below them, the desert flickers like a mirage. A ring of faint lights—unmoving—sits in the sand like a landing site. Then: darkness.

PILOT (V.O.)
I'm getting vertigo. Pulling back—

CRACK! All screens go black.

STATIC.

SMASH TO BLACK.

EXT. CARTEL BASE - ZONE OF SILENCE - NEXT DAY

The base has expanded. Trucks roll in and out. Armed guards man perimeters. Makeshift fences and towers now dot the landscape. A giant tent—camouflaged and heat-shielded—sits at the heart of the operation.

Heat waves ripple across the desert, but everything inside the camp is efficient and clean—for now.

CUT TO:

INT. CRYSTAL METH LAB TENT - DAY

Inside the tent: an elaborate setup of makeshift chemistry tables, industrial fans, and armed chemists in surgical masks. Blue crystals dry on racks. Plastic tubs full of finished product are being labeled and packed.

Supervisors bark orders. Workers move fast. A few smoke nervously, wiping sweat from their brows.

RAFA (O.S.)
We're weeks ahead of schedule.

CUT TO:

INT. STRATEGY TENT - MOMENTS LATER

Rafa stands at a map table with Toro, several lieutenants, and LARA, a logistics expert in her 30s, sharp and organized. Distribution routes are drawn across the map, avoiding major highways and border checkpoints.

LARA
We've got three 18-wheelers
disguised as fertilizer hauls ready
to roll next week.
(MORE)

LARA (CONT'D)
Drop point just south of El Paso.
From there, L.A., Chicago,
Atlanta—clear channels.

TORO
No drones, no eyes. We're off the
grid. They'll never see us coming.

Rafa nods, but his mind is elsewhere. He glances toward the distant ridge where El Rojo had wandered.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASE - LATER

A heavy dust cloud builds on the horizon. Vehicles. Black SUVs with bulletproof glass. Armed escorts on dirt bikes. The wind kicks up as the convoy pulls into camp.

Men straighten up. Silence falls. Engines shut off. Doors open.

Out steps... EL PATRÓN, the Boss of Bosses. Late 50s, serpentine calm, perfectly tailored suit despite the desert heat. A face like carved stone. Eyes unreadable. He surveys the camp like a man inspecting ants.

Rafa approaches and kisses his hand. Others follow.

CUT TO:

INT. STRATEGY TENT - MOMENTS LATER

The room is full, but silent. El Patrón sits alone at the head of the table. He doesn't remove his sunglasses.

RAFA
Señor, the lab is running at full speed. Distribution begins next week. We have safe passage into the States—through silent roads. No signals, no satellites.

El Patrón doesn't speak. He lights a cigarette and exhales slowly.

RAFA (CONT'D)
We're invisible here. Untouchable.

TORO
And we've begun training new
guards. No cell phones. No radios.
We've adapted.

LARA
Production can triple in a month.
No risk of exposure.

El Patrón leans back in his chair. Long silence.

EL PATRÓN
And what of the man who cried in
the dirt?

They freeze. No one answers.

EL PATRÓN (CONT'D)
They say he pissed himself. Called
for his mother. Said aliens were
peeling his bones.

TORO
He was... weak, señor. He's been
dealt with.

El Patrón stares at nothing. Another long pause.

EL PATRÓN
It doesn't matter. Let the desert
eat who it wants. As long as the
trucks roll, and the money flows,
let the sky fall.

He stands. No further words. The room parts for him.

As he exits, we hear a faint ringing in the air—just for a
second—like a high-pitched tone only some of them can hear.
Rafa flinches.

EL PATRÓN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
((tired, distant))
This land has always belonged to
the dead.

And he's gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. DIRT ROAD - SOMEWHERE BETWEEN ZONE & BORDER - NIGHT

A full moon over endless terrain. One of the cartel's disguised 18-wheelers rolls through the desert, escorted by two armed SUVs.

The driver hums nervously, sweat dripping down his neck. The CB radio crackles—no signal. He glances in the rearview mirror.

Nothing.

He blinks. The SUV that was behind him is gone.

TRUCK DRIVER
¿Qué carajos...?

He taps the brakes. Looks around. Desert silence. The horizon seems to pulse.

Suddenly, the headlights flicker. The truck's engine sputters. Every dial on the dash spins wildly, then drops to zero. The radio bursts with distorted voices—layered whispers and distant screams.

A bright light flares in the sky above—no source, no sound—then vanishes.

The truck is now alone.

SMASH CUT TO BLACK.

INT. CARTEL BASE - METH LAB - EARLY MORNING

Machines whir. Fans spin. Then... everything stutters.

Glass beakers shatter on their own. A centrifuge spins backward. One chemist screams as the blue crystal inside a flask turns pitch black, then melts the container.

Lara rushes in, pistol drawn.

LARA
¡Cállense! What happened?

A tech points to the computer—a diagnostic screen looping nonsense code. Then it flashes a single word in English, over and over:

"RETURN"

CHEMIST

It's the third time. We reset everything. The chemicals... they're reacting like they're alive.

TORO (O.S.)

((to Lara, grim)

We need to burn the lab.

CUT TO:

INT. DEA MOBILE COMMAND TRAILER - NIGHT

Back in El Paso, Cassidy and Ramos meet with COLONEL ERIC BISHOP (50s, practical, with a "no-BS" face). They stand over a topographical map of the Zone.

COLONEL BISHOP

Our drone teams are refusing to fly back in. They say they're seeing things—hearing things. We're getting refusals across the board.

CASSIDY

It's psychological. They've read the reports. Mass suggestion.

RAMOS

No. It's not suggestion. It's the Zone.

Bishop eyes them both, considering.

COLONEL BISHOP

We've got three operatives trained for deep terrain recon. No tech. Just boots and eyes.

He lays out a desert infiltration plan—an approach from the south ridge, a drop-in zone, and a two-day window before extraction. A real gamble.

COLONEL BISHOP (CONT'D)

They go in, they record what they see—on film, not digital. They don't engage. And they don't stay longer than necessary.

CASSIDY
And if they don't come back?

RAMOS
Then we stop playing games and call
in black ops.

Cassidy looks over at the screen showing static from the missing cartel truck's last GPS ping. The blinking light pulses slower... slower... then vanishes.

CUT TO:

INT. MEXICAN NEWSROOM - NIGHT

A flashy TV set. Background screen shows a graphic of Rafa "El Jaguar" Mendoza with "DESAPARECIDO" in bold red letters beneath. Tense theme music plays. A crisp-suited anchor, LUPITA MORALES, early 40s, sits at the news desk, looking grim.

Footage of burning cars, bullet-riddled roads, and cartel graffiti plays behind her.

ON TV - LIVE BROADCAST

LUPITA MORALES
(in Spanish; subtitled)
Good evening. Breaking news tonight: Rafael Mendoza, also known as El Jaguar, the feared enforcer and regional commander of the Sinaloa splinter faction, is missing and presumed dead following what authorities are calling a coordinated strike by rival cartels.

Cut to shaky cellphone footage—a rural road littered with debris. Gunfire in the distance. A blurred figure lying face down.

LUPITA (V.O.)
Sources close to the investigation report a bloody ambush outside of Guachochi, Chihuahua. Five bodies were recovered.

(MORE)

LUPITA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
None officially identified—but
unconfirmed reports suggest
Mendoza's vehicle was found among
the wreckage.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - SOMEWHERE IN MEXICO

A group of young men watch from a couch, stunned. One wears a Sinaloa jersey. Another nervously texts.

YOUNG MAN
If Rafa's gone... it's open season.

CUT TO:

INT. DEA OFFICE - SAME NIGHT

Cassidy watches the same report on a small TV while updating intel folders. Ramos walks in, sees the footage.

RAMOS
They think Mendoza's dead?

CASSIDY
Or they want people to think that.

She glances at her screen—all cartel radio chatter has gone dark.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)
But someone's still pulling
strings.

BACK TO TV BROADCAST

Lupita now sits in front of a map showing northern cartel zones, red areas flashing. Headlines scroll beneath.

LUPITA MORALES (SUBTITLED)
If true, Mendoza's death could
trigger a violent power vacuum in
the north.

(MORE)

LUPITA MORALES (SUBTITLED) (CONT'D)
 Border towns are already on high
 alert, and security forces have
 been mobilized in Durango and
 Sinaloa.

Another photo of Rafa appears—smiling with a jaguar tattoo on
 his throat.

LUPITA
 But as always in cartel
 territory... dead men have a way of
 coming back.

FADE OUT.

EXT. ZONE OF SILENCE - ABANDONED MILITARY OUTPOST - NIGHT

A crumbling bunker half-buried in sand. Floodlights hum
 overhead, casting warped shadows across jagged concrete and
 twisted barbed wire. Wind howls in short bursts, then dies
 completely.

Inside the outpost, Rafa "El Jaguar" Mendoza sits alone at a
 rusted metal table, shirt unbuttoned, face bruised, silent.
 He sips tequila straight from the bottle, staring at a desert
 map pinned to the wall, hand-drawn supply routes marked in
 red.

A young soldier, PEQUE, early 20s, nervous but loyal, walks
 in holding a tablet and a patched-together satellite phone
 that only works within feet of the command tent.

INT. ABANDONED OUTPOST - CONTINUOUS

PEQUE
 Jefe... you're not gonna believe
 this.

He slides the tablet across the table. The screen plays a
 pixelated news broadcast—Rafa's photo, the headline "RAFA
 MENDOZA PRESUMED DEAD IN AMBUSH."

Rafa stares. Eyes narrow. He leans in as the broadcast
 continues.

LUPITA (V.O., FROM TABLET)
 ...found among the wreckage,
 unrecognizable. Federal authorities
 say it's likely Mendoza was among
 the dead...

He exhales slowly, processing. Then leans back in his chair.

RAFA

So... I'm a ghost now.

PEQUE

Everyone thinks you're gone. The streets are talking. Some say you got lit up by Carrasco's people. Others say you faked your death to run.

RAFA

(smirking)

I didn't even know I was dead.

PEQUE

Should we send word? Let them know you're alive?

A long pause. Rafa stands, walks to the open doorway. He looks out into the endless, dark desert—nothing but stars and silence. The hum in the air feels like it's vibrating his bones.

RAFA

(sharp breath)

If I stay dead... I lose power.

Beat.

RAFA (CONT'D)

But if I come back... they know where to look.

PEQUE

You think this place is safe?

Rafa glances up at the sky, still haunted by El Rojo's breakdown, the vanished truck, the lab incident. He runs a hand across his face.

RAFA

This place doesn't care if you're alive or dead.

Another long beat. The wind shifts. Somewhere outside, a faint metallic sound echoes—like a scream wrapped in static, distant but not natural.

PEQUE

Jefe?

RAFA

Give it 24 hours.

PEQUE

And then?

RAFA

If this desert doesn't eat me by
then... I decide who I want to be.

Rafa takes another swig of tequila and turns back toward the table. The screen flickers—Rafa's face frozen in grayscale.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. EL PATRÓN'S PRIVATE STUDY - NIGHT

Golden lamplight. A spacious, silent room filled with old-world opulence: leather chairs, mahogany shelves lined with rare books, religious icons beside antique firearms. A record player softly hums an old bolero tune.

El Patrón stands near a floor-to-ceiling window, backlit by candlelight, sipping espresso. He's in a silk robe, barefoot on polished marble. The serenity is unnerving.

A large TV screen on the wall shows the same news broadcast reporting Rafa's presumed death. The anchor's voice plays faintly in the background.

TV ANCHOR (V.O., SUBTITLED)

...remains unconfirmed, but sources
indicate that Mendoza's
disappearance may be part of a
growing turf war...

He turns the volume off with a remote-click.

Footsteps echo softly behind him as MONTERO, his chief intelligence officer (bald, quiet, deadly), enters holding a file.

MONTERO

The Americans are buying it. So are
the federales. Even Carrasco's men
think Rafa's been buried.

EL PATRÓN

((softly))
But you don't.

MONTERO

(smiling slightly)
He's too proud to die in someone
else's lie.

El Patrón turns, taking the file. Inside: satellite images, intercepted cartel chatter, and a thermal drone image showing movement in the Zone of Silence—barely readable, distorted by interference.

MONTERO (CONT'D)

We've been tracking power spikes and irregular movement inside the Zone. Only one group entered recently. And none have come out.

EL PATRÓN

Then he's alive.

He closes the file gently. Sets his espresso down.

EL PATRÓN (CONT'D)

Rafa is in a place where power doesn't behave the way he understands. Where loyalty bends. Where identity dissolves.

MONTERO

Should we retrieve him?

EL PATRÓN

No.

He walks slowly toward an elaborate wooden altar on the far wall, where a single candle burns beneath a figure of Santa Muerte dressed in gold.

EL PATRÓN (CONT'D)

Let him wrestle with the silence.
Let him decide who he really is.

A pause. The candle flickers violently—though no wind is present.

EL PATRÓN (CONT'D)

Only the ones who return from that place deserve to rule.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. EDGE OF THE ZONE - NIGHT

A military-style off-road vehicle creeps through rocky terrain. The stars above are unnaturally bright—too many, too still. Three DEA special operatives ride inside, dressed in desert camo, stripped of all digital gear. Just analog cameras, notebooks, and nerves.

TEAM LEADER (AGENT DELANEY, 40s) checks a compass—the needle spins in slow circles.

AGENT RAMOS (V.O., RECORDED BRIEFING)
Once you're inside the Zone,
nothing is trustworthy. Not your
GPS. Not your watch. Not your
senses.

They pass a rusted sign, barely legible in moonlight:

ZONA DEL SILENCIO - PELIGRO

EXT. CARTEL BASE - SAME NIGHT

Rafa stands by a fire pit, staring into the flames. Around him, guards patrol with flashlights, cigarettes glowing in the dark. It's too quiet—the kind of silence that presses on the eardrums.

Suddenly—a scream pierces the night. Sharp. Human.

RAFA
¡Luz! ¡Ahora!

Guards race with flashlights, heading toward the southern fence. One stumbles on something in the sand—a rifle, twisted like it melted.

CUT TO:

EXT. INSIDE THE ZONE - NIGHT

The DEA vehicle halts. The agents step out, flashlights sweeping the area. They breathe heavy, already on edge.

DELANEY
Eyes up. No radio chatter unless
we find proof of cartel activity.
Stay tight.

Suddenly, Agent Lee (30s, ex-Navy) points up.

AGENT LEE
Is that... smoke?

A thin column of dark smoke drifts in the distance—but no flames, no glow. Just smoke... rising from cold earth.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARTEL BASE - CONTINUOUS

Rafa reaches the body. It's one of his lieutenants—half-buried in the dirt, his face frozen mid-scream, but no wounds, no blood. A strange circular burn etched on his chest. No signs of a struggle.

TORO

He walked patrol ten minutes ago.

LARA (O.S.)

Where's the camera?

They check his body cam. The feed is corrupted—white static, then frames of flickering light, a tall, featureless silhouette, a low hum before it cuts out.

RAFA

(silent, furious)

Something's hunting us.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZONE RIDGE - DEA TEAM - LATER

The team climbs a low ridge, cresting it—they stop. In the valley below: the faint glow of campfires, trucks, silhouettes moving. The cartel base.

DELANEY

There they are. Whole damn operation in plain sight.

AGENT LEE

We're the first ones to see it from the outside.

Suddenly, their analog camera clicks by itself. They freeze. The lens turns on its own. Then—

CLICK.

It takes a photo. No one's touching it.

AGENT DELANEY
What the hell?

The photo slowly prints out. They grab it.

It shows them—from behind.

SMASH TO BLACK.

EXT. EDGE OF CARTEL LAB SECTOR - NIGHT

Moonlight washes over a vast, silent stretch of desert. Crates, generators, and metal barrels lie scattered like a ghost town. No voices. No guards in sight.

The DEA team—Delaney, Lee, and Cruz—move slowly through the darkness, masks on, night-vision goggles active, pistols with silencers drawn. Their comm gear is dead. No buzz. No static. Just an unnatural hum—low and vibrating their ribs.

AGENT LEE
Nothing on infrared. It's like
they just vanished.

AGENT CRUZ
I don't like this. Where are the
trucks? Where's the lab?

DELANEY
We go in. Get visual evidence. Then
get the hell out.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT PATHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The agents sweep a line of rusting lab equipment—burned tents, melted coolers, barrels with strange black fluid leaking into the sand.

Suddenly—movement. Two cartel soldiers break from a ruined trailer, sprinting for the hills. One looks back, clearly panicked.

CRUZ
Contact—two o'clock!

Gunfire erupts—suppressed shots cracking through the silence. Muzzle flashes blink like fireflies. The cartel men shoot back and disappear into the dark.

DELANEY
Move! Let's go!

The agents give chase—running through the desolate expanse, boots pounding sand. The hum gets louder, sharp, almost like teeth grinding in their skulls.

CUT TO:

EXT. DEEPER INTO THE ZONE - MOMENTS LATER

They reach a dry riverbed. The sound suddenly cuts out entirely—like the world goes mute. No footfalls. No breathing. Just the hum.

Then—a flash. A vertical slit of blue-white energy rips open in the air like tearing fabric.

A portal—twisting, shimmering, alive with unnatural movement. Inside: darkness and stars, or maybe oceans and bones—it keeps changing.

The cartel soldiers stop running and stare. So do the agents.

AGENT LEE
What... the hell is that?

Too late. The hum spikes—like a scream from inside the earth. The portal pulses, and Whoosh... All five are yanked forward. They don't jump. They don't fall. They just VANISH.

The portal collapses into itself like crushed metal. Silence returns. The desert is empty again.

CUT TO:

WIDE SHOT - DESERT - NIGHT

Just wind now. No footprints. No sound. The only sign something happened: a small black scorch mark in the shape of a spiral... slowly fading.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. DEA COMMAND CENTER - EL PASO - NIGHT

The control room glows with pale monitors and tension. Cassidy stands over the operations desk, eyes fixed on a flatline signal. A red dot blinks—then fades. The last known position of the recon team.

TECH ANALYST

We lost the beacon again. Same as last time. Clean cutoff.

CASSIDY

That was analog gear. No satellite relay. It shouldn't just vanish.

Ramos enters, eyes bloodshot, holding a fresh mug of coffee. Cassidy points to the screen.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

They were twenty clicks inside the Zone. Radio silent as ordered. Then gone.

RAMOS

How many minutes since contact?

CASSIDY

Thirty-two. No flares. No failsafe pings. It's like the desert ate them.

Cassidy flips through the team's analog tracker photos—one is blurry, another shows a wide-angle of empty desert terrain. Then she stops cold on the last one.

A photo taken seconds before blackout: faint silhouettes in the distance... five figures standing still. Blurred. Too tall. Out of proportion.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZONE OF SILENCE - CARTEL BASE - SAME NIGHT

Meanwhile, at the cartel camp, Toro and Lara walk the perimeter under flashlights. A headcount is underway. The tension is high.

TORO

You seen Jacinto or Quino?

GUARD

They left an hour ago to check the storage tents. Never came back.

Rafa exits a bunker, overhearing.

RAFA

What do you mean never came back?

LARA

No gunfire. No sign of struggle. They were last seen running from the lab ruins.

Rafa looks out into the vast desert. Then to the old stone obelisk, half-buried nearby—its surface glowing faintly blue in the moonlight. His jaw tightens.

RAFA

Start digging where they were last seen.

TORO

Dig? For what?

RAFA

Just dig.

CUT TO:

INT. DEA COMMAND CENTER - SAME TIME

Cassidy plays the team's last bodycam audio on loop. At first, it's wind. Footsteps. Then a voice—Agent Lee.

AGENT LEE (RECORDED)

((whispering)

Something's here. It's watching us. I think it's—

The audio distorts violently. Then a tone—like a frequency that's not meant to be heard by human ears.

Cassidy yanks off her headphones, eyes wide.

CASSIDY

Jesus...

Ramos looks over her shoulder. The screen shows a new file uploading from the team's analog camera.

CASSIDY (CONT'D)

They tried to send something
back...

The image begins to load slowly—a still frame.

A warped landscape. A spiral sky. A field of identical faces, standing shoulder to shoulder.

Each one is staring back at the camera. And one of them is Rafa.

SMASH TO BLACK.

INT. JOINT OPERATIONS FACILITY - EL PASO - NEXT MORNING

A secure underground meeting room. Cement walls, buzzing fluorescent lights, no windows. The atmosphere is thick with mistrust and urgency. American coffee on one side, Mexican bottled water on the other.

A large steel table is flanked by representatives from:

DEA - Cassidy and Ramos, clearly shaken but composed.

FBI - Special Agent Brynn Keller, late 40s, straight out of Langley briefings.

AIC (Mexico) - Director Ignacio Romero, 50s, sharp suit, with two younger analysts behind him.

A map of northern Mexico and the Zone of Silence is projected on the screen. Areas are marked in red. Circles indicate last known agent positions.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ROMERO (AIC)

Three of your agents disappear...
and you tell us it's because of a
desert?

RAMOS

Not the desert. The Zone.

KELLER (FBI)

There's no confirmed threat. No
digital trace. No hostiles on
satellite. We can't even prove
they're dead.

CASSIDY

They're gone. Along with two
cartel foot soldiers. At the exact
same time. Same place. And they
were chasing each other.

Romero leans back, unimpressed.

ROMERO

The Cartel kills people and buries
the bodies. It's not supernatural.
It's just Mexico.

CASSIDY

We intercepted a signal. Right
before they disappeared. You wanna
hear it?

She presses a button. The same distorted audio clip plays:
Agent Lee's last words, then that haunting frequency
spike-high and unnatural.

ROMERO

(turning to his analysts,
uneasy)
That's not cartel radio.

RAMOS

No. It's not radio at all.

CUT TO:

ON SCREEN - THE MAP

Ramos pulls up a still image—the last one received. The same distorted field, the five figures frozen mid-step as the portal snapped shut. Romero's analysts whisper to each other in Spanish, unnerved.

KELLER

We need to pull back all ground ops
in the area. Full denial of access.
Until we figure out what we're
dealing with.

ROMERO

((scoffing))
You want to lock down a hundred
miles of Mexican territory because
of a photograph?

CASSIDY

I want to know what the hell
opened up in your desert.

Beat. No one speaks.

RAMOS

I say we send in another team.

KELLER

Absolutely not. Not until we
understand what this is.

ROMERO

Or who's behind it.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE BRIEFING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Cassidy and Ramos walk side by side, both deeply unsettled.

CASSIDY

They think this is cartel tech, or
a drug hallucination.

RAMOS

It's neither.

He stops, lowers his voice.

RAMOS (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
What if this whole time we've been
tracking a war we don't even
understand?

FADE OUT.

EXT. ZONE OF SILENCE - DIG SITE NEAR THE CAMP - LATE
AFTERNOON

The desert sun hangs low—orange, angry, oppressive. A group of cartel soldiers dig aggressively into the brittle earth with shovels, pickaxes, even their hands. Sweat pours, dust coats their faces.

The stone obelisk looms nearby, half-buried and now faintly glowing in the shadows. No one mentions it. They all feel it.

CLOSE ON - TWO WORKERS, ARMANDO & CHACÓN

ARMANDO
(grunting)
We bury bodies. We don't dig 'em
up.

CHACÓN
(panting)
You ask me, Rafa's losing it.
First he sees ghosts. Now we're
grave robbing?

ARMANDO
Grave robbing who? There's nothing
here but sand and bones.

He stops digging for a moment and pulls off his bandana, catching his breath. His fingernails are bleeding from clawing rock.

CHACÓN
This whole place feels cursed.
Every night I hear sounds... like
the wind crying.

ARMANDO
Nah. That ain't the wind.

EXT. DIG SITE - CONTINUOUS

Another soldier, CISCO, hits something. Metal on stone. The impact echoes too long—like it struck something hollow.

CISCO
¡Oye! Got something!

Everyone stops. Rafa approaches silently from the shadows, eyes locked on the hole.

RAFA
Keep going.

CHACÓN
Boss, we've been at this six hours.
Nothing here but rock and
heatstroke.

RAFA
There's something here. I felt it.
Just keep digging.

ARMANDO
((low)
He felt it, he says...

CHACÓN
((sarcastic))
Next thing you know he's gonna say
the desert talks back.

The men laugh quietly—nervous, forced. Rafa doesn't react. He just stares into the pit, stone cold. The laughter dies fast.

Cisco digs deeper, brushing away dirt. Something starts to take shape—a ring of smooth black stone, polished like obsidian, engraved with symbols that don't belong to any known language.

As he brushes it, the hum begins again—low, steady, felt more than heard.

CISCO
What the hell is this?

The stone pulses faintly with light.

RAFA
((silent, almost
reverent)
The entrance.

CUT TO:

WIDE SHOT - THE DIG SITE

The cartel men stand frozen, surrounding the exposed ring. Shadows lengthen. The glow from the stone increases, bathing their faces in pale blue.

Above them, clouds begin to spiral slowly. Something is changing.

FADE OUT.

EXT. CARTEL BASE - NIGHT

A storm brews overhead—clouds spiral, thunder rumbles without lightning. The glowing ring unearthed at the dig site now sits exposed under a tarp, guarded but never touched. No one goes near it.

Rafa paces near a dim campfire, eyes wild and sleepless. He watches his men move like ghosts. The desert feels smaller, like it's closing in.

EXT. BASE PERIMETER - CONTINUOUS

He signals to TORO, his most trusted soldier. Late 50s, weathered, calm, a survivor. Toro steps aside with him. The wind howls low, whispering across the sand like it's speaking.

RAFA
(quiet, urgent))
It's not working.

TORO
What's not?

RAFA
The plan. The Zone. The silence.
All of it.

Beat.

RAFA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
We're not ghosts. We're prisoners.

Toro studies him, guarded.

TORO
You think the DEA found us?

RAFA
Worse. Something else did.

A long silence. Thunder cracks in the distance. The dig site's tarp flaps violently, even though the wind isn't strong enough.

RAFA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Take three men. Go to the city.
Find El Patrón. Tell him we need to
pull out. All of us. Burn the site,
abandon everything.

TORO

You're asking me to contradict the
man who built this whole operation?

RAFA

Tell him.. "The desert is
speaking." He'll know what I mean.

Toro looks at him a moment longer, then nods—no words. He turns and walks into the dark, signaling three trusted men to join him. They gather gear fast, loading into a black SUV.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARTEL BASE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Rafa watches from the ridge as their vehicle disappears into the horizon. The glowing tarp behind him pulses faintly, casting long, jagged shadows.

He mutters to himself, almost a prayer:

RAFA

If he listens, we live..

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. EL PATRÓN'S ESTATE - NIGHT

Rain falls softly as Toro's black SUV pulls up the cobblestone drive of El Patrón's sprawling villa. Armed guards step forward, recognize him, and wave him through. Lightning flickers across the hills. Everything is too quiet.

The estate is even more opulent than before—marble, gold, and shadows. The smell of expensive cigars and aged leather clings to the walls.

CUT TO:

INT. EL PATRÓN'S STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

The same study as before. El Patrón sits behind a massive desk carved from obsidian and oak. A cigar burns untouched in a crystal tray. He stares at Toro like he's already read the whole conversation in advance.

Toro stands soaked, hat in hand. He looks tired, but resolved.

TORO

Señor... things are bad out there. Rafa sent me to speak plain. We need to pull out. Something's wrong with that place.

EL PATRÓN

(stern, unbothered)

Rafa always lacked the stomach for unknowns.

TORO

It's not fear. He's seeing things. We're seeing things. Men disappearing. Machines melting. Sounds we can't explain.

EL PATRÓN

Then he's broken.

He rises and walks slowly to the tall window overlooking the hills. A flash of lightning reveals dozens of stone statues in the courtyard—each eerily human, as if frozen mid-motion.

EL PATRÓN (CONT'D)

I gave Rafa the tools of empire. And he brings back fairy tales and panic.

Beat. He turns back to Toro.

EL PATRÓN (CONT'D)

I want you to replace him.

Toro stiffens, eyes narrowing.

TORO

Señor... I didn't come here for a promotion.

EL PATRÓN

You came here to deliver a message. I've heard it. And now I've given you mine.

TORO

He's a good man. Loyal. Maybe too loyal to things he doesn't understand. But he still has command of the men.

EL PATRÓN

Not for long.

He moves to the altar of Santa Muerte, lights a match, and lets the flame catch slowly.

EL PATRÓN (CONT'D)

Tell Rafa if he can't silence the Zone... I will.

He turns to Toro, eyes cold.

EL PATRÓN (CONT'D)

And if you stay loyal to him, you'll join him in whatever hell he's found.

Toro swallows hard. The candle flame reflects in his eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. ESTATE - MOMENTS LATER

Toro exits the villa, steps into the rain, breath trembling. His men wait by the vehicle.

GUARD

What did he say?

Toro doesn't answer. He looks up at the dark sky, then back at the house. He knows this is bigger than a power struggle.

TORO

We ride at dawn.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. FEYNATAL LAB - NIGHT

The lab glows under dim red emergency lights, most of the normal power having been rerouted to guard the camp perimeter. Beakers bubble on open flames. Strange, bluish powdered compounds sit in trays, surrounded by cold steel and sweaty chemists in lab coats.

A nervous but brilliant lead chemist, Dr. Navarro (40s, glasses fogged from the heat), approaches Rafa, who stands by the door watching through the observation window, arms crossed, jaw tight.

INT. FEYNATAL LAB - CONTINUOUS

DR. NAVARRO

Señor Mendoza...

Rafa doesn't turn. Just nods slightly for him to speak.

DR. NAVARRO (CONT'D)

The latest batch... synthesized stronger than expected.

Rafa finally turns, chewing his cheek, exhausted and wired.

RAFA

Stronger? How much stronger?

DR. NAVARRO

Rough estimate—about one hundred times more potent than standard street-grade. A single drop could tranquilize an elephant. Maybe even kill it.

RAFA

(beat, nodding slowly)

That's good, right?

DR. NAVARRO

(uneasy)

Not... not exactly. If we cut it wrong—if it's dosed even slightly off—people will die almost instantly. It'll hit the streets like napalm.

RAFA

So cut it better. We dilute it like the coke. We do that every day.

DR. NAVARRO

You don't understand. This isn't cocaine. This is something else. The molecular stability is off—like it's reacting to the air here. I think...

He hesitates. Rafa steps in closer.

RAFA

You think what, Navarro?

DR. NAVARRO

(whispering)

I think the Zone is changing it.

A tense silence. The bubbling beakers hiss behind them. Rafa stares, a twitch in his jaw. His breathing quickens.

RAFA

You think I need this shit right now?

He SLAMS a nearby tray of glass vials—shattering them. Blue powder erupts into the air like smoke.

RAFA (CONT'D)

I've got men vanishing into thin air, soldiers whispering to walls, rocks humming at night—and now you tell me the one thing that's working... might be too good?

DR. NAVARRO

(terrified, trembling)

I—I just wanted to be honest, señor.

Rafa grabs him by the collar, shoving him against the metal shelves. Glass clinks and rattles.

RAFA

Then fix it. Cut it. Stabilize it. Water it down. I don't care what you do. Just make it move.

He releases Navarro, breathing heavy. The chemist nods, stumbling backward, dazed.

RAFA (CONT'D)

You have forty-eight hours. After that... either it ships, or you do.

Navarro nods quickly and hurries away. Rafa stands in the center of the lab, surrounded by bubbling poison, lit by the red glow of warning lights. The hum begins again—low, throbbing. He rubs his temples.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. DIG SITE - ZONE OF SILENCE - EARLY MORNING

The first light of day creeps over the desert. A bone-dry wind sweeps across the dig site, flapping torn tarps and stirring dust. Half a dozen cartel men work in silence, sunburned and paranoid. The uncovered black stone ring now sits untouched, surrounded by shallow trenches and scattered equipment.

At the edge of the site, Lara kneels with a flashlight, brushing dirt off something hard and curved—not rock.

LARA

(to herself)

What the hell are you?

She clears more dirt and reveals a matte-gray metallic surface. It's unnaturally smooth and cold to the touch—even in the desert sun. The surface has strange grooves, forming symbols or possibly circuitry.

CUT TO:

EXT. DIG SITE - MOMENTS LATER

Rafa arrives, flanked by two guards. He's tense, on edge. Lara points to the uncovered section.

LARA

We thought it was old military—maybe Cold War. But look at this.

She holds up a thin, transparent shard of what looks like glass, but it's flexible and emits a faint pulse when touched. Rafa takes it and watches it flash a glyph-like pattern, then go still.

RAFA

That's not glass.

LARA

No. And it's not human.

They both look at the partially exposed surface—now cleared to reveal a seamless hatch-like shape embedded in the desert floor, leading down. It's rimmed with the same obsidian-like stone from the portal.

CUT TO:

INT. MAKESHIFT CAMP LAB - LATER

Navarro nervously examines one of the metallic shards. He holds a Geiger counter near it—spikes. He shines UV light on the surface—new symbols glow that weren't visible before.

NAVARRO

(quietly, to himself)

This isn't reacting to us. It's reacting to here.

He glances out the tent flap toward the ridge in the distance—where the mountain rises. A massive shadow, unmoved for centuries.

CUT TO:

EXT. DIG SITE - AFTERNOON

The cartel diggers have uncovered more: a vast, curved metal wall buried in layers of desert rock.

Geometric shapes protrude—unnatural, non-Mexican, too precise to be ancient and too old to be modern.

CHACÓN

Y'all sure this ain't some government shit?

ARMANDO

No government builds sideways into a mountain like this.

LARA

They weren't building. They were hiding.

Rafa stares at the mountain, his eyes tracing its shape. He realizes the dig site curves inward, like the edge of a massive buried structure.

RAFA

It's not under the mountain.

RAFA (CONT'D)

The mountain's covering it.

WIDE SHOT - THE ZONE RIDGE

From high above: the dig site is one edge of a massive circular depression hidden by erosion and time. The mountain is not natural—it's a capstone. A lid.

FADE OUT.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - JUST OUTSIDE THE ZONE - LATE AFTERNOON

A dusty black SUV kicks up sand as it roars down a desolate road cutting through cactus and brush. Inside sits Toro, jaw clenched, eyes fixed straight ahead. His three men ride silently with him, the tension so thick it hums.

TORO (V.O.)

(quiet, steady)

He gave me everything. Territory. Men. The right to speak freely. But no man can lead if he's lost to ghosts.

CUT TO:

INT. SUV - MOMENTS LATER

Toro's phone rings. He checks the number—a secure line. He hesitates, then answers.

TORO

Sí.

MALE VOICE (FILTERED)

He already knows.

TORO

(slowly)

Knows what?

MALE VOICE

About your visit. About the mountain. About Rafa's fear.

A pause. The voice drops lower, direct.

MALE VOICE (CONT'D)

He says if Rafa wants to crawl out of the desert... he should stay buried in it.

The line goes dead.

Toro slowly lowers the phone, jaw tight. His men glance at him, confused.

SOLDIER

All good, jefe?

Toro doesn't answer. He just watches the road disappear beneath the tires.

CUT TO:

INT. EL PATRÓN'S ESTATE - PRIVATE STUDY - SAME TIME

*El Patrón sits alone at his desk, watching live drone footage from above the Zone. The dig site is barely visible, partially obscured by swirling dust and interference, but the ringed structure glows faintly beneath the surface.

A voice crackles over his private comms line—Montero, his intelligence chief.

MONTERO (V.O.)

He's still loyal. But he's unsure. Too unsure.

EL PATRÓN

Good. That's when men are most useful.

He pours a glass of mezcal. Doesn't drink it.

EL PATRÓN (CONT'D)

If Toro returns... let him bring the fire. And if he doesn't—

He looks at a map of the Zone. Several markers pulse red. One marker blinks directly over the dig site.

EL PATRÓN (CONT'D)

Then the desert can keep both of them.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. ZONE OF SILENCE - ENTRANCE ROAD - SUNSET

The desert glows red-orange. Toro's SUV approaches the makeshift cartel checkpoint. The guards step aside, surprised to see him return so soon. He gives a short nod, but his expression is hard—tense.

INT. FEYNATAL LAB - SAME TIME

Dr. Navarro works alone, gloves on, goggles in place. He has several fragments of alien material under microscopes and light filters. His hands are shaking slightly.

He carefully places one shard under a micro-spectral scanner. The screen pulses, trying to interpret the material. Lines of unknown characters fill the screen. A *3D image builds slowly—a design.

A spiral. A ring. A blueprint of the mountain.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARTEL BASE - DIG SITE - NIGHT

Toro walks past the dig site. It's deeper now. Wider. More exposed. He notices new cracks in the ground, glowing faintly under the surface. One of the soldiers is sitting alone, rocking slightly.

TORO

Where's Rafa?

SOLDIER

(dazed)

He won't come out of the command tent... says the mountain's watching us now.

CUT TO:

INT. LAB - CONTINUOUS

Navarro overlays the scan onto a topographic map. It aligns perfectly with the surrounding terrain... and the mountain.

NAVARRO

(whispers)

Oh my God...

He taps through more layers. A structure forms beneath the surface—multi-tiered, non-Euclidean, pulsing faint energy along invisible channels. At the center: a core, shaped like a massive black eye.

Suddenly, the lights in the lab flicker. The monitors begin to glitch, displaying a string of alien glyphs repeating over and over.

"???-AWAKEN-???"

Navarro backs away from the screen, terrified.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARTEL BASE - TORO APPROACHES COMMAND TENT - NIGHT

Toro reaches Rafa's tent. He pauses, then enters slowly.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMAND TENT - NIGHT

Rafa sits alone, staring at a map, surrounded by candles. His eyes are sunken, and his hands shake slightly. He doesn't look up.

RAFA
You went to him?

TORO
I did.

Beat.

TORO (CONT'D)
He wants you replaced. Said you lost the desert.

RAFA
He's wrong.

TORO
(quietly)
Is he?

Rafa finally looks up. His eyes are bloodshot but clear.

RAFA
No. I didn't lose it.

He stands, points toward the dig site.

RAFA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)
It's waking up. And we're still standing too close.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. COMMAND TENT - ZONE OF SILENCE - NIGHT

Wind howls outside the flapping canvas. The lights flicker—powered by failing generators. Inside, Rafa stands over a hand-drawn map of the dig site and the mountain beyond. His fingers tremble, but his eyes are clear. Focused.

Toro enters with a flask, watching Rafa closely.

TORO

The lab's stable again. Navarro's tweaking the formula like you said. Security's back on rotation.

RAFA

It doesn't matter.

TORO

What do you mean?

Rafa looks up, voice low and calm—eerily detached.

RAFA

I want the labs emptied. All of them. No equipment. No product. Move it out.

TORO

(confused)

Move it where?

RAFA

Anywhere but here. Burn what you can't carry. No traces left.

TORO

And El Patrón?

RAFA

I don't care about El Patrón.

Toro freezes. That's not something you say lightly.

TORO

Rafa... if you're thinking of walking away from the operation, you better be ready to run.

Rafa steps closer, voice just above a whisper.

RAFA

This is beyond operations. Beyond shipments. Beyond money.

He holds up Navarro's printout—the alien glyphs glowing faintly under blacklight.

RAFA (CONT'D)
This isn't cartel territory. It's something else. Something buried. Something that's waking up.

TORO
What are you saying?

RAFA
I'm going to call Comisario General.

TORO
(staggered)
You're calling the intelligence service?

RAFA
They study things like this. They've known about the Zone longer than we have. Maybe... just maybe... they'll know what to do.

TORO
You trust them?

RAFA
No. But I trust this less.

He looks toward the flap of the tent, beyond which the mountain looms in darkness, and something pulses faintly beneath the earth.

RAFA (CONT'D)
Tell the men to start loading. We're not dealers anymore—we're passengers.

FADE OUT.

NT. CNISP HEADQUARTERS - MEXICO CITY - NIGHT

A secure, sleek, subterranean command center. Low lighting, glass walls, and shadowy corridors. Monitors display encrypted chatter, satellite scans of the northern desert, and video archives labeled "ZONA DEL SILENCIO - CLASSIFIED."

Director VELASCO, 50s, poised and precise, reviews an urgent encrypted transmission. A tech analyst beside him stares at the screen in disbelief.

ANALYST
It's from Rafael Mendoza.

VELASCO
The enforcer?

ANALYST
Yes sir. He's requesting
contact... and intel.

VELASCO
About what?

ANALYST
He mentions structures beneath the
mountain. Non-human. He says the
Zone is "waking up."

Velasco leans back, folds his hands, and thinks for a moment.
A long silence. Then:

VELASCO
Forward this to Black Section. Mark
it "Obsidian." Scramble a ghost
team to Juárez. No uniforms. No
trace. I want to know if this is a
trap... or a breakthrough.

ANALYST
And Mendoza?

VELASCO
Let him believe he's the one
making contact.

CUT TO:

EXT. EDGE OF ZONE - TORO'S CAMPFIRE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Toro sits alone, the flames licking shadows across his face.
He pours mezcal into the dirt, an old ritual. Rafa's orders
weigh heavy.

A young soldier approaches quietly.

SOLDIER
The men are packing up the lab
like you said. No one's asking
questions. Yet.

TORO

Good.

The soldier nods and walks off. Toro stares into the fire, then reaches into his coat—pulls out an old burner phone. He dials a number from memory. It rings... and rings...

A voice finally answers.

EL PATRÓN (V.O.)

So... it's true.

Toro doesn't speak at first. Just breathes.

TORO

He's calling Comisario General. He wants out.

Pause.

EL PATRÓN (V.O.)

Does he know he's not allowed to leave?

TORO

He knows. He just doesn't care anymore.

EL PATRÓN (V.O.)

And you?

Beat. The fire crackles. The wind carries faint whispers.

TORO

I'm still deciding.

EL PATRÓN (V.O.)

Decide fast, hermano. Because if he opens the wrong door... we're all going through it.

Toro hangs up. Stares at the mountain—which now pulses faintly with a low, unnatural light from somewhere deep within.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. ABANDONED RANCH HOUSE - TEMPORARY CNISP FIELD HQ - NIGHT

Inside a dusty, decrepit ranch house on the edge of the Zone, Rafa sits across from two CNISP operatives in plain clothes.

Minimal lighting. A generator hums outside. Director Velasco joins them via encrypted video on a cracked laptop screen.

CNISP AGENT #1

We've confirmed seismic activity below the dig site. Whatever's down there... it's not natural.

RAFA

It's not from here. You know that already, don't you?

CNISP AGENT #2

We know enough to listen.

RAFA

Then listen close: El Patrón isn't going to let me walk out of here. He's sending soldiers. Maybe tonight. Maybe already.

VELASCO (ON SCREEN)

And you expect us to protect you?

RAFA

I expect you to understand that if I die, you'll lose your one witness. Your access. I've seen things. Heard things. And I still have men down there digging like it's gold.

VELASCO

And if you're lying?

RAFA

Then shoot me now and deal with him yourself.

A long beat. Velasco nods to the agents.

VELASCO

Give him safe ground. Watch the ridge. If the mountain opens, I want eyes inside.

CUT TO:

EXT. DIG SITE - NIGHT

One of the younger cartel soldiers, ROJAS, stands alone near the glowing portal ring, breathing hard. The hum rises around him. He hears whispers... his missing friend's voice.

VOICE (O.S., distorted)

Rojas... over here...

Rojas takes a breath and steps into the portal. He vanishes instantly.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND ALIEN BASE - MOMENTS LATER

Rojas drops into a tunnel made of smooth, wet-looking black material. The space bends oddly, defying geometry. Pulses of bioluminescent veins run through the walls.

He stumbles through a corridor until he hears a faint whistle—a human signal.

DEA AGENT LEE (O.S.)

Over here! Keep low!

Rojas crawls through a crevice and emerges into a dark cavern where three cartel men and two DEA agents huddle together, half-starved, eyes wide.

ROJAS (whispering)

You're alive?

AGENT CRUZ

Barely. We've been moving through these tunnels for days.

CARTEL MAN #1

They don't see like we do. They move when the humming stops.

ROJAS

What are they?

A low, thunderous vibration ripples through the chamber. Everyone goes silent. In the distance, something massive moves—its silhouette pulsing with light.

AGENT LEE

We don't know. But whatever this place is... it's not a base.

Beat.

AGENT LEE (CONT'D)

It's a womb.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. ZONE OF SILENCE - DAWN

The horizon is blood-orange as a convoy of matte-black SUVs and modified armored trucks rolls across the desert floor toward the dig site. Flying dust veils the Patrón kill squad—a mix of ex-special forces and cartel executioners.

The convoy is led by COMMANDANTE LUNA, mid-40s, ruthless, tactical, cold as the mountain wind. He speaks through a throat mic to his men.

COMMANDANTE LUNA

Tango target is Rafa Mendoza. You see him, you drop him. No questions.

CUT TO:

EXT. CNISP LOOKOUT RIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Two CNISP operatives spot the convoy from a ridge above the site.

CNISP SNIPER

We've got movement. Heavy. Military-grade.

CNISP SPOTTER

Shit... they're here to clean house.

They radio to HQ.

INT. DIG SITE - MOMENTS LATER

Rafa stands near the portal ring, its glow faint, unstable.
Lara runs up to him, breathless.

LARA

Trucks coming. Not ours.

RAFA

How many?

LARA

All of them.

He looks at the unearthed structure, at the ring, and the mountain beyond. The humming begins to rise again... like it's reacting.

CUT TO:

EXT. DIG SITE - BATTLE IGNITES

The Patrón convoy breaks through the outer perimeter—gunmen spill out in tactical gear, shouting commands.

COMMANDANTE LUNA

Secure the lab. Kill everyone in the command tent.

Rafa's men respond with gunfire—a brutal, chaotic firefight erupts across the site. Bullets chew through tents, crates, and bodies. Dust clouds fill the air. Explosions rock the compound.

But the earth begins to rumble—low at first... then rising. A frequency builds beneath the gunfire. It hits the soldiers like a shockwave.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND ALIEN BASE - SAME TIME

The survivors huddled in the caverns freeze. The walls pulse violently. Something is waking up.

AGENT LEE

Whatever they're doing up there... it's waking the whole system.

CUT TO:

EXT. DIG SITE - CONTINUOUS

Suddenly, the portal flashes to life—a beam of blinding white-blue energy erupts skyward, vaporizing a communications tower nearby. The ground splits, revealing more of the buried structure.

Men scream. Some drop their weapons and run. Others stand, mesmerized, blood dripping from their ears. A few are lifted off the ground, their bodies frozen midair—twitching, then gone.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIDGE ABOVE - CNISP SNIPERS - CONTINUOUS

The agents watch in horror.

CNISP SPOTTER

Jesus... what the fuck is that?

CNISP SNIPER

It's not a dig site anymore.

CUT TO:

EXT. DIG SITE - FINAL MOMENTS OF BATTLE

*Rafa and Lara duck behind a truck. He reloads, breathing hard. Everything is shaking. The wind is howling with voices now-not human.

RAFA

(into comms)

Tell Comisario General the war's started.

A distant explosion rips open the earth. A glowing fissure spreads toward the mountain, lighting up the landscape like a circuit board coming online.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. RAFA'S BUNKER - UNDERGROUND - NIGHT

A cold, dimly lit chamber carved into the rock beneath the Zone. Steel walls, old military panels, flickering LED strips. Dust hangs in the air like smoke. It's part cartel panic room, part war room. The hum of distant tremors never fully fades.

RAFA stands over a steel table scattered with maps, radio schematics, and infrared prints of the mountain's underground structure. He's flanked by Director Velasco and two CNISP field operatives, all visibly rattled by what just happened topside.

RAFA

I built this place after the first crew went missing. In case we had to disappear for real.

VELASCO

You were expecting an ambush?

RAFA

I wasn't expecting a war between men and whatever the hell that is under our feet.

CUT TO:

INT. BUNKER - ADJACENT ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lara paces nervously near a bank of old analog monitors. One screen shows a blurry top-down feed of the dig site—fires still burning, bodies scattered, trucks overturned. Static rolls across the screens. The portal ring still pulses faintly.

BACK TO MAIN
ROOM

CNISP AGENT

We've lost contact with the ridge team. No signal. No comms. Only seismic data.

RAFA

Then the mountain's jamming everything now. It's... defending itself.

VELASCO

So we're blind?

RAFA

No. We still have eyes inside.

He pulls out a small, beat-up analog transceiver with a direct line to the survivors underground—DEA agents and his missing men.

RAFA (CONT'D)

One of my soldiers made it through the portal. Found the others. They're alive... for now.

Velasco eyes Rafa carefully.

VELASCO

You understand what this means?

RAFA

(quiet)

It means we were never in control. Not of this place. Not of the silence. We were just... tolerated.

A distant rumble shakes the room. The lights flicker.

LARA (O.S.)

That wasn't an explosion. That came from below.

CUT TO:

INT. SURVIVORS' CAVERN - INTERCUT

Back underground, Rojas and the group of survivors crouch as a deep, guttural sound echoes through the tunnels—like machinery groaning awake. The walls vibrate, and faint pulses of light race down unseen corridors.

AGENT LEE

Whatever this place is... it's not done opening.

CUT TO:

INT. RAFA'S BUNKER - FINAL MOMENTS

Rafa opens a steel locker. Inside: old military records, Soviet maps, photos labeled "1970 - Recovered Object - Durango Sector." He holds up a torn satellite photo showing the mountain from above... and something dark shaped like a spiral emerging beneath it.

RAFA

(to Velasco)

They buried it under a mountain to keep it asleep.

He looks up, haunted.

RAFA (CONT'D)

We just gave it a reason to wake up.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. DIG SITE - TWILIGHT

Smoke still rises from burnt trucks and busted generators. Flames crackle. The air buzzes with static. Dead bodies—Rafa's men, Patrón's soldiers, even a few CNISP operatives—lie scattered like discarded dolls.

A line of black SUVs pulls up slowly, tires crunching over ash and bone. The doors open.

EL PATRÓN steps out in a custom tailored black suit, no tie, collar open. Impossibly calm. At his side is his trusted right-hand man, MONTERO, and two bodyguards with assault rifles.

They walk slowly through the devastation, stepping over corpses. El Patrón doesn't flinch.

MONTERO

What happened here?

EL PATRÓN

History.

EXT. CENTER OF THE DIG SITE - MOMENTS LATER

They reach the portal ring, now fully exposed and pulsing with faint white-blue light. A visible rift has opened in its center, like molten air, distorting space.

El Patrón studies it as the wind picks up. Sand and ash spiral around him like a slow, silent tornado. One of the bodyguards begins to tremble.

BODYGUARD

Señor... we shouldn't be here.

EL PATRÓN

Then go.

The guard doesn't move. The portal pulses brighter.

MONTERO

What is that?

EL PATRÓN

Whatever it is... it doesn't belong to them.

He steps forward and calmly walks through the portal. Montero hesitates, then follows. The guards glance at each other... and step through as well.

INT. ALIEN CORRIDOR - UNKNOWN TIME/PLACE

Silence. Thick, almost physical. The group emerges into a vast corridor of obsidian-like material, glowing veins of light running through the floor and walls. Geometry folds in impossible ways.

They walk slowly, breathing shallow. Then—movement.

Four small figures appear in the corridor ahead: gray-skinned, thin, black-eyed beings with elongated limbs and glowing fingertips. Classic grays—but unsettlingly still.

The aliens don't speak. They stare.

El Patrón and the men stop in their tracks, frozen... yet their eyes glaze over. Breathing slows. Their hands drop their weapons, unaware they've done it.

MONTERO

(whispers, terrified) I... I can't move...

The aliens tilt their heads in unison—inhuman, mathematical—and raise their fingers. A hum builds, low and soothing.

El Patrón's pupils dilate. His face slackens. Then: peace.

EL PATRÓN

(softly)

They've been here... a long time.

The aliens turn and glide away, never touching the floor. The men hypnotized, obedient follow them deeper into the structure.

The portal closes behind them with a whisper, leaving nothing but fire and dust behind.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. RAFA'S BUNKER - EARLY MORNING

Dim lights buzz overhead. The silence is thick. Rafa stands alone, gripping the steel door that leads up to the desert above. A soft hum in the distance—like a machine sighing in its sleep.

He closes his eyes for a moment, then opens the door.

EXT. DIG SITE - DAWN

Ashes drift like snow. The desert is eerily still. Smoke curls from smoldering wreckage. Trucks burned. Generators overturned. Bullet casings litter the ground.

Rafa walks slowly through the carnage. His boots crunch on broken glass and blood-soaked sand. The humming is gone... but the silence is louder now.

He rounds a destroyed supply crate and stops—six of his men lie scattered across the ground. One of them is Armando. Another is Chacón. Their eyes still open, faces frozen in shock.

Rafa kneels beside them. He doesn't speak. He just takes a moment, resting a hand on each shoulder.

A breeze moves through the site, whispering through the remains like a ghost's breath.

MOVE TO:

EXT. NEAR THE PORTAL SITE - CONTINUOUS

The portal ring is still embedded in the earth, but now dim, lifeless—dormant again. Whatever energy surged through it is gone... for now.

In the dirt nearby, Rafa finds something half-buried—a bracelet worn by Lara. Burned. Twisted. But no sign of her.

CUT TO:

INT. RAFA'S BUNKER - LATER

Rafa returns. Dusty. Hollow-eyed. He walks into the main control room where Director Velasco waits, arms crossed, face grave. One CNISP agent glances up from a radio, still scanning empty frequencies.

RAFA

They're gone. Most of them.

VELASCO

How many?

RAFA

Too many. My best. Most loyal.

He drops Lara's bracelet on the table. Velasco stares at it, jaw tightening.

VELASCO

What about the portal?

RAFA Shut. For now. It looks... dead. But it's not.

Beat.

Rafa wipes blood from his jacket. His voice drops.

RAFA (CONT'D)

That thing... it doesn't want war. It wants obedience. It waited for us to fight. Then it opened.

Velasco exchanges a glance with his men. Nobody argues.

VELASCO

Then we prepare for what comes next. Quietly.

RAFA

Or not at all.

They sit in silence, surrounded by dim screens and a growing understanding that everything has changed.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. ZONE OF SILENCE - ABANDONED DIG SITE - LATE MORNING

The sky is pale. The fires are out. The desert is quiet now, as if holding its breath after something holy—or horrible—has passed.

In the distance, law enforcement and CNISP units pack up their gear. Hummers are lined up in convoy formation. Satellite dishes, analog tech, crates of evidence—all being loaded for exfil.

Near the edge of the burn zone, RAFA kneels in the sand, head bowed, hands folded tight. Before him are the bodies of his fallen men, laid in makeshift rows, covered in tarps or blankets. Some are just shapes beneath the dust.

He whispers a prayer in Spanish. His voice cracks.

CUT TO:

EXT. STAGING AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Director Velasco oversees the pack-up, barking quiet orders. One of the CNISP agents approaches, nods toward the ridge.

CNISP AGENT

He's still down there. Praying.

VELASCO

I'll get him.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIDGE - CONTINUOUS

Velasco walks slowly toward Rafa. He stops a few feet away, quiet.

VELASCO

Rafa.

Rafa doesn't turn. Velasco waits a beat, then steps closer.

VELASCO (CONT'D)

We're pulling out. Going back to HQ to regroup... bring in scientists. People who've studied this kind of crazy.

RAFA

(flatly)

You won't find anyone who understands it.

VELASCO

We'll try anyway. Come on, Rafa. You're one of us now.

Rafa finally stands. His eyes are red. His hands still trembling.

RAFA

I want to stay. Just long enough to bury them right. My way.

VELASCO

(shakes head)

No time. And no backup. This place... it's quiet now, but that could change.

Beat. Velasco softens his voice.

VELASCO (CONT'D)

I'll send a crew back. We'll make sure every one of them gets a proper burial. You have my word.

Rafa

looks at him. Long. Searching. Then finally nods—slow, reluctant.

RAFA

Alright.

Velasco claps a hand on his shoulder.

VELASCO

You did good, hermano.

They walk toward the convoy. Rafa looks back only once—at the bodies, the mountain, and the ring of blackened earth.

CUT TO:

EXT. HORIZON - LATER

The convoy of Hummers rolls off into the open desert. In the rear vehicle, Rafa stares out the window—haunted but alive. A man who's lost everything but gained something no one else has: the truth.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. FEDERAL INTELLIGENCE HEADQUARTERS - MEXICO CITY -
BRIEFING HALL - NIGHT

A large underground room. Concrete walls, dim lights. Rows of government officials, military officers, FBI, DEA, and CNISP analysts fill the space—no cameras, no recordings. Everything is analog, off-grid.

At the front, Rafa stands in the center of a semicircle of decision-makers. He's in civilian clothes now. Hands folded. Quiet but commanding. His presence carries weight.

Projected behind him: satellite footage of the Zone. Glowing fissures. Flashes of blue light. Then... the top of the mountain opening like a flower.

SCIENTIST

Two days ago, our sensors caught this. A seismic event at the Zone's core. Moments after, all readings flatlined. And then... it closed. Just like that.

He clicks a remote. The footage shows the top of the mountain folding inward and sealing—as if nothing was ever there. Gasps around the room.

CUT TO:

DOORS OPEN - SHAMAN ENTERS

A hush falls over the room as an elderly Indigenous SHAMAN enters, draped in traditional robes, eyes clear and piercing. He's accompanied by a CNISP liaison and one of the scientists.

SCIENTIST

We invited someone with... deeper knowledge of the land.

The shaman walks to the center. Everyone watches, uncertain. He places a carved wooden idol on the table. Then he speaks—measured, soft, but filled with gravity.

SHAMAN (IN SPANISH, SUBTITLED)

"They are not new. They have always been here. Watching. Waiting. We called them Star Shadows. Others called them Sky Fathers. You call them Anunnaki."

"The mountain was theirs. A sacred place of silence. A door to the stars. My grandfather saw them when he was a boy. A light from the summit. Men with long fingers and dark eyes walking without sound."

"They never spoke. But they could be heard. In dreams. In wind. In silence."

"When the world grows loud, they sleep. When man remembers who he is, they wake."

THE ROOM - REACTIONS

No one speaks. The scientists look stunned. The generals are confused. The agents are still processing. Only Rafa watches with quiet understanding.

SCIENTIST

So what now?

Volasco

We have to go back.

Cut to:

EXT. ZONE OF SILENCE - DIG SITE - DUSK

A convoy of black SUVs and armored transport vehicles creeps across the barren desert. Dust rises behind them as the sun sinks low. The vehicles slow to a halt at what was once the dig site. It's quiet now—eerily so.

Mexican and American officials step out. Among them: DIRECTOR VELASCO, the FBI DIRECTOR, the DEA CHIEF, and the SHAMAN, walking calmly in ceremonial robes.

They approach a shallow crater—scorched earth, no sign of the portal. Just silence and wind.

FBI DIRECTOR
If this is a wild goose chase—

SHAMAN
(softly)
Wait.

The wind stops. A subtle hum begins to rise. The crater trembles. Cracks form in a perfect spiral, and the ground draws inward like a mechanical iris—

The PORTAL RETURNS.

INT. ALIEN PASSAGE - CONTINUOUS

The officials descend, flashlights in hand. The walls hum and glow faintly. Symbols briefly flare on the surface, then vanish.

From the shadows ahead, THE GRAYS appear—slender, black-eyed beings. They pause and bow—not to the humans, but to the SHAMAN.

One Gray gently touches the Shaman's hand. A flood of vision—constellations, stone temples, starlight encoded in memory.

SHAMAN
(awed)
They remember me. Or my blood.

VELASCO
What did they say?

SHAMAN
We have come full circle.

The Grays turn and lead them deeper into the passage.

INT. OBSERVATION LEDGE - SAME

High above the tunnel, hidden in shadow, AGENT LEE, ROJAS, and several cartel men watch, stunned.

ROJAS
That's Velasco...

AGENT LEE
And those are the same ones we saw below. But they're not hostile.

CARTEL MAN #2
(afraid)
They bowed to him. Why?

AGENT LEE
This isn't an invasion. It's... a meeting.

CARTEL MAN #1
So what do we do?

ROJAS
Follow them. Or wait.

AGENT LEE
(beat)
If they're going where I think they're going... they're not coming back the same.

INT. INNER SANCTUM - MOMENTS LATER

The tunnel opens into a vast crystal-lit chamber. Pillars stretch like illuminated trees. At the far end, the ANUNNAKI LEADER appears, surrounded by shifting light.

The SHAMAN steps forward. The others follow. The Grays stay behind.

ANUNNAKI (V.O.)
You have returned... willingly.

SHAMAN
Yes. But not for answers.

ANUNNAKI (V.O.)
No. For memory.

A holographic sky appears overhead, constellations spiraling in motion.

INT. OBSERVATION LEDGE - SAME

Agent Lee watches, breathless.

AGENT LEE
Holy shit...

ROJAS
You still want to wait?

AGENT LEE
(quiet)
No. Let's find out what we are.

INT. ANUNNAKI CHAMBER - LATER

Columns of living metal hum around them. The floor pulses with golden light. The ANUNNAKI LEADER stands motionless. EL PATRON stands beside him, his eyes glowing faintly—speaking as the translator.

EL PATRON (TRANSLATING)
(resonating)
You fear what you do not remember.
But your blood remembers us.

Holograms swirl—ancient humans mining, temples, DNA strands.

EL PATRON (CONT'D)
You were created to survive. To
dig. To evolve. And you did.

DEA CHIEF
Why tell us now?

The chamber ripples. Cosmic glyphs scroll like a galactic scroll.

EL PATRON
Galactic law has changed. We are
allowed to prime you—for what comes
next.

VELASCO
Prime?

EL PATRON
To prepare your minds. The Council
watches.

EL PATRON (CONT'D)
You may speak of this, or stay
silent. The choice is yours. Use
your free will wisely.

EXT. BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN - PRE-DAWN

The group emerges from a glowing stone pathway. The GRAYS escort them to the base of the mountain. Survivors—DEA, cartel, military, Rafa, the Shaman—all stand together.

No guns. No orders. Just presence.

The wind carries the hum of something ancient.

The top of the mountain splits open. Stone petals fold outward.

A SHIP ascends—sleek, obsidian, shaped like a teardrop. It hums not with engines, but with thought.

The GRAYS bow.

The ship hovers, emits a gold pulse, and vanishes—utterly silent.

All stand frozen. United.

CLOSE ON RAFA - his face stained with dust and tears.

WIDE SHOT - ALL TOGETHER, watching the mountain close again.

FADE TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD:

They were not gods. Not invaders. They were the architects.
And we... were the silence between their echoes.