

The Day Evil Did Nothing
by
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Name
Address
Phone

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY – DAWN (AERIAL)

A vast American city from above.

Still.

Clean.

Wrong.

Freeways curve like arteries—empty.

Traffic lights change for no one.

Steam rises from rooftops with no sound.

No sirens.

No horns.

No urgency.

The city looks paused, not peaceful.

EXT. DOWNTOWN INTERSECTION – CONTINUOUS

A lone pedestrian waits at a crosswalk.

The light changes.

He doesn't move.

Unsure whether he's allowed to.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI HEADQUARTERS – CRIME STATISTICS LAB – MORNING

A cathedral of glass and data.

Massive digital walls stream live national crime feeds.

Every category.

Every city.

Every jurisdiction.

All read the same:

Not delayed.

Not unavailable.

Zero.

CLOSE ON – A DIGITAL CLOCK

06:00 AM

It does not advance.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI CRIME STATISTICS LAB – ROWE'S OFFICE

ELIAS ROWE (50S)
FBI Special Agent.

Director of the National Crime Statistics Lab.

A man who trusts numbers more than people.

He pours coffee.

It overflows the mug.

He doesn't notice.

He's staring at the wall of zeroes.

ROWE
(low, controlled)
Run diagnostics again.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB – MAIN FLOOR

Analysts scramble—but not panicked.

Confused.

ANALYST #1
Feeds are live.

ANALYST #2
APIs are clean. No lag.

ANALYST #3
We contacted every major city
manually.
(beat)
They thought we were joking.

Rowe steps onto the floor.

Touches the glass wall like it might be warm.

ROWE
Hospitals.

ANALYST #1
ERs are empty.

No assaults.

No overdoses.

No gunshot wounds.

(beat)

Chicago called twice.

They wanted to know who approved the prank.

Rowe exhales.

Not relief.

Recognition.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB — SECURE HALLWAY — MOMENTS LATER

Rowe walks alone.

The hum of servers follows him.

A RED PHONE on the wall begins to ring.

He stops.

Lets it ring once.

Twice.

Then answers.

ROWE

Rowe.

(listens)

Yes, Mr. President.

(listens)

No, sir.

There are no anomalies.

(beat)

There is nothing to report.

He hangs up.

Stares at the red phone.

Then back at the zeroes.

ROWE (V.O.)

For thirty years, my job was to
measure the worst of us.

(beat)

That morning, there was nothing to
count.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE — SITUATION ROOM — LATER

Not full.

That alone is unsettling.

Generals. Intelligence heads. DOJ.

A massive screen:

NATIONAL INCIDENT REPORT: 0

Rowe stands. No podium.

ROWE

At 05:59 Eastern, every crime-reporting system went inactive.

Not offline.

Inactive.

GENERAL

Cyberattack?

ROWE

We assumed that.

So did every foreign adversary we monitor.

None of them are celebrating.

Murmurs.

DOJ OFFICIAL

Agent Rowe, are you saying there were no crimes?

ROWE

I'm saying there were no incidents.

Words matter.

CIA DIRECTOR

People don't just stop.

Rowe nods.

ROWE

Correct.

A beat.

NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

Then what are we missing?

Rowe hesitates—just slightly.

The first crack.

ROWE

Nothing.

The room does not like that answer.

EXT. NEWS FOOTAGE – DAY (MONTAGE)

- A smiling NEWS ANCHOR trying too hard
- Empty police stations
- Idle stock traders
- Social media feeds refreshing endlessly

HEADLINE AFTER
HEADLINE:

A PEACEFUL DAY?

UNPRECEDENTED CALM

HAS HUMANITY EVOLVED?

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB – AFTERNOON

Rowe watches sentiment analysis bloom across screens.

Heat maps.

Red everywhere.

ANALYST

Sir... people are angry.

ROWE

At what?

ANALYST

Nothing's wrong.

And they don't trust it.

Rowe nods slowly.

ROWE

Pull psychological markers.

The data populates.

Spikes among:

- First responders
- Defense attorneys
- Activists
- Clergy
- Investigative journalists

ANALYST

It's people whose identities are
built around resistance.

Rowe watches.

ROWE

Without something to push against...
(beat)
They're losing themselves.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

An empty ER.

A DOCTOR sits alone, shaking.

NURSE

You okay?

DOCTOR

I didn't save anyone today.

The nurse smiles, unsure.

NURSE

That's good... right?

The doctor looks at her.

Lost.

DOCTOR
I don't know who I am if no one
needs me.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB - NIGHT

Rowe stands alone now.

Lights dimmed.

The city feeds glow silently.

A SYSTEM PROMPT appears on his terminal.

New.

Unfamiliar.

LOG FIRST INCIDENT?

YES / NO
Rowe stares.

ROWE (V.O.)
We thought evil was the problem.
(beat)
We didn't realize it was also the
reference point.

Rowe does not click.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. FBI CRIME STATISTICS LAB - NIGHT

Most analysts have gone home.

A skeleton crew remains—people who don't know how to stop
working when the numbers stop moving.

Rowe stands behind MAYA TRAN (30s), his senior analyst.

Sharp. Grounded. Knows him well enough not to flinch.

MAYA
I've been running historical
parallels.

ROWE
Find anything?

MAYA
Nothing clean.
(plugs in tablet)
Closest matches are temporary drops
during disasters.

Blackouts. Martial law. System collapse.

(beat)

But this isn't collapse.

Rowe watches the screens.

ROWE
No.

Collapse makes noise.

Maya studies him.

MAYA
You're not relieved.

Rowe doesn't answer immediately.

ROWE
Relief assumes an enemy.

She lets that sit.

MAYA
Then what does this assume?

Rowe finally looks at her.

ROWE
That we don't understand what we
were fighting.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB — CONFERENCE ROOM — LATER

A small meeting.

Rowe. Maya. A DOJ LIAISON. A WHITE HOUSE ANALYST named PETER WALLACE (40s)—political instincts, not moral ones.

Coffee cups. Stale air.

WALLACE

The President wants reassurance.

Markets are skittish.

People don't like unexplained calm.

ROWE

Calm isn't the problem.

WALLACE

It is when it can't be controlled.

Maya shifts, uncomfortable.

MAYA

We're already seeing psychological anomalies.

WALLACE

Define anomaly.

MAYA

Identity erosion.

People whose sense of self depended on opposition—
lawyers, activists, clergy—

WALLACE

So... people whose jobs depend on
conflict.

Rowe snaps his eyes to Wallace.

ROWE

Careful.

Wallace raises his hands.

WALLACE

I'm not judging.

I'm framing.

(beat)

The public needs a narrative.

If we don't give them one, they'll invent something worse.

ROWE

Narratives are how people avoid
responsibility.

Silence.

WALLACE

Agent Rowe... are you suggesting we
let the world sit with this?

Rowe leans forward.

ROWE

I'm suggesting we don't lie about
it.

INT. ROWE'S OFFICE - LATE NIGHT

Rowe alone.

He opens a locked drawer.

Inside: an old CASE FILE—dog-eared, handled too often.

Maya appears in the doorway. She didn't knock.

MAYA

You don't take files home.

Rowe doesn't turn.

ROWE

This one never left.

She steps inside.

MAYA

That's the Alvarez case.

(beat)

You were right on that one.

Rowe closes the file slowly.

ROWE

No.

I was accurate.

(beat)

Being right would've required acting sooner.

Maya studies him.

MAYA

Is that why you stayed in
statistics?

Rowe finally meets her eyes.

ROWE

Numbers don't ask you to save
anyone.

EXT. CITY STREET — NIGHT

Rowe walks home.

The city is quiet in a way that feels exposed now.

A man drops his wallet on the sidewalk.

Rowe notices.

The man keeps walking.

Rowe picks it up.

Calls out—

ROWE

Sir.

The man turns.

Takes the wallet.

MAN

Thanks.

(beat)

Strange day, huh?

Rowe nods.

ROWE

Depends what you were expecting.

The man hesitates, then shrugs and walks on.

Rowe watches him go—uneasy.

INT. ROWE'S APARTMENT — NIGHT

Minimal. Ordered. Lonely.

Rowe pours a drink.

Doesn't sip.

The TV is on—muted.

A panel of TALKING HEADS debate the day.

Lower-third graphic:

IS THIS WHAT PEACE LOOKS LIKE?

Rowe turns the TV off.

Sits in silence.

His phone buzzes.

A TEXT from his ex-wife CLAIRE:

Are you seeing this?

Rowe types. Deletes. Types again.

Yes.

Another buzz.

Does it feel... wrong to you?

Rowe stares at the word wrong.

Finally types:

It feels unfinished.

INT. FBI LAB — NEXT MORNING

Day two.

The numbers are still zero.

But something else is different.

Micro-fluctuations.

Not crimes.

Intent markers.

Maya notices first.

MAYA
Sir... you need to see this.

Rowe steps beside her.

ROWE
What am I looking at?

MAYA
Near-actions.

People initiating behaviors...

then stopping.

(beat)

Like something interrupts them.

Rowe watches a heat map pulse faintly.

ROWE
As if the thought occurs...

MAYA
...but the will doesn't follow.

Rowe straightens.

ROWE
That's not morality.

Maya nods.

MAYA
It's inhibition.

INT. FBI LAB – CONTINUOUS

Wallace enters, already talking.

WALLACE
We're drafting language.

"Temporary anomaly."

"Human behavioral reset."

Rowe turns.

ROWE
Reset implies improvement.

WALLACE
Doesn't it?

Rowe gestures to the screens.

ROWE
If you remove choice, you remove
credit.

If no one can do wrong—

no one can do right.

Wallace studies him carefully now.

WALLACE
You sound philosophical, Agent
Rowe.

Rowe holds his gaze.

ROWE
I sound concerned.

INT. FBI LAB — ROWE'S TERMINAL — MOMENTS LATER

The system prompt appears again.

Persistent.

Patient.

LOG FIRST INCIDENT?

ABSENCE CONFIRMED

INTENT UNRESOLVED
Rowe stares at it longer this time.

Maya watches him.

MAYA
What happens if you log it?

Rowe doesn't answer.

MAYA (CONT'D)
And what happens if you don't?

Rowe finally speaks.

ROWE

Then we pretend this is peace.

(beat)

And find out what people are
willing to do

to feel alive again.

Maya swallows.

MAYA

I don't think we're ready for that.

Rowe's eyes stay on the screen.

ROWE

Neither are they.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. WHITE HOUSE — BRIEFING ROOM — DAY

A controlled environment pretending to be calm.

PETER WALLACE stands at a podium.

Rowe watches from the back of the room.

WALLACE

At this time, there is no evidence
of systemic failure or malicious
interference.

Federal agencies continue to monitor the situation.

(beat)

The absence of criminal activity is being treated as a
temporary anomaly.

Flashbulbs.

REPORTER #1

Are you calling this peace?

Wallace smiles carefully.

WALLACE

We're calling it stability.

Rowe's jaw tightens.

INT. FBI LAB – LATER

The briefing plays on mute.

Maya scrolls through social feeds.

MAYA
People hate the word "anomaly."

ROWE
Because anomalies resolve.

Maya nods.

MAYA
Trending terms:

"manufactured calm"

"behavioral leash"

"who decides what's wrong?"

(beat)

They don't trust anything they didn't choose.

Rowe glances at her.

ROWE
Neither should they.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO – DAY (INTERCUT)

A panel discussion.

A THEOLOGIAN. A PSYCHOLOGIST. A POLITICAL COMMENTATOR.

PSYCHOLOGIST
If people can't act on impulse—

they begin to question whether their thoughts are even theirs.

THEOLOGIAN
Virtue without temptation is compliance.

The political commentator interrupts.

COMMENTATOR
Or it's progress.

Maybe we're finally growing up.

The theologian doesn't smile.

THEOLOGIAN
Children behave when watched.

Adults behave when choosing not to.

INT. FBI LAB - DAY

Rowe shuts the feed off.

ROWE
They're skipping the uncomfortable
part.

MAYA
Which part?

ROWE
The one where no one knows who they
are yet.

INT. SMALL CATHOLIC CHURCH - AFTERNOON

Not grand. Local.

A PRIEST sits in a confessional booth.

The door opposite him is open.

Empty.

He waits.

Then closes the screen gently.

INT. MOSQUE - AFTERNOON

A lone IMAM sits on the floor.

Prayer beads in his hand.

He stops midway through a prayer.

Stares forward.

Uncertain how to finish.

INT. SYNAGOGUE STUDY ROOM – AFTERNOON

A RABBI reads from scripture.

Stops.

Reads again.

Shakes his head slightly.

RABBI
(to himself)
If there is no struggle...

what are we studying for?

INT. FBI LAB – CONFERENCE ROOM – DAY

A private call. Secured line.

Rowe. Maya. Wallace. A RELIGIOUS LIAISON from DHS.

LIAISON
Faith leaders are unsettled.

WALLACE
Unsettled how?

LIAISON
They're saying the same thing, in
different languages.
(beat)
That morality without risk is
meaningless.

Wallace sighs.

WALLACE
We don't need metaphysics.

We need calm.

Rowe leans in.

ROWE
Calm is not a value.

Wallace meets his eyes.

WALLACE
Neither is chaos.

Rowe holds the gaze.

ROWE
No one's asking for chaos.
(beat)
They're asking for agency.

Silence.

EXT. CITY PARK – LATE AFTERNOON

A group of FIRST RESPONDERS sit on a bench.

Uniforms off.

Coffee cups untouched.

EMT
Feels like waiting for a call
that'll never come.

FIREFIGHTER
I used to complain about the noise.
(beat)
Now the quiet feels personal.

They sit with that.

INT. ROWE'S APARTMENT – NIGHT

Rowe eats dinner alone.

Phone rings.

He hesitates—then answers.

ROWE
Claire.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CLAIRE'S KITCHEN – NIGHT

CLAIRE (50s)—warm, tired, perceptive.

CLAIRE
You okay?

ROWE
I'm operational.

She exhales.

CLAIRE
You always say that when you're
not.
(beat)
People are acting strange.

ROWE
They're being denied friction.

Claire frowns.

CLAIRE
Is that what you think people need?

Rowe considers.

ROWE
I think we need the option to fail.

Claire studies him.

CLAIRE
You always hated that about
yourself.

Rowe doesn't deny it.

ROWE
I hated pretending I didn't need
it.

INT. FBI LAB - VERY LATE NIGHT

Most lights are off.

Rowe stands at his terminal.

The prompt remains.

LOG FIRST INCIDENT?

ABSENCE CONTINUES

SOCIAL STABILITY UNCERTAIN

Maya approaches quietly.

MAYA
I ran the numbers.

ROWE
And?

MAYA
The longer this lasts—
the more likely people are to test it.
Rowe nods.

ROWE
That's not rebellion.

MAYA
No.
(beat)
It's curiosity.

Rowe looks at the screen.

ROWE
Curiosity is how we got here in the
first place.

Maya watches him.

MAYA
Do you think it stopped for a
reason?

Rowe thinks carefully before answering.

ROWE
I think it stepped back.
(beat)
To see if we'd notice.

INT. FBI LAB — ROWE'S TERMINAL — CONTINUOUS

A new line appears beneath the prompt.

Quiet. Almost polite.

Absence does not remove desire.

It only delays choice.

Rowe stares.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTER – DAY

A controlled, elegant space.

Flags. Translators. Cameras.

A banner behind the podium reads:

GLOBAL HUMAN BEHAVIOR SUMMIT

Rowe sits several rows back. Maya beside him.

Onstage: DR. MIRIAM KLINE (60s), calm authority.

DR. KLINE

For the first time in recorded
history, we are witnessing
sustained moral inhibition across
all populations.

(beat)

This is not suppression.

It is self-regulation.

Polite applause.

Rowe doesn't clap.

DR. KLINE (CONT'D)

Human behavior appears to be
recalibrating.

Impulses arise—

but they no longer compel action.

(beat)

This may represent an evolutionary threshold.

Stronger applause now.

INT. CONFERENCE CENTER — ROWE AND MAYA — CONTINUOUS

Maya leans in.

MAYA
She's skipping intent.

ROWE
She's redefining it.

ON STAGE
A JOURNALIST raises a hand.

JOURNALIST
If people can't act on harmful
impulses—

are they still choosing restraint?

Dr. Kline smiles kindly.

DR. KLINE
Choice doesn't disappear.

It matures.

Rowe shifts in his seat.

INT. FBI LAB — DAY

The summit plays on screens.

Wallace stands with two senior aides.

WALLACE
This is what we needed.

Language.

Containment.

AIDE
Public approval is climbing.

Anxiety's stabilizing.

Rowe turns to Wallace.

ROWE
Stability isn't truth.

Wallace doesn't flinch.

WALLACE
Truth isn't our mandate.
Continuity is.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBURBAN HOME – EVENING

A man in his 40s, DAN, sits at a dining table.

Normal. Harmless.

A laptop open.

An email draft onscreen—an anonymous accusation against a coworker.

Dan stares at it.

His finger hovers over SEND.

He exhales.

Closes the laptop.

Relief.

Then confusion.

DAN
(quiet)
I wanted to.

He sits back.

Unsettled by his own honesty.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB – NIGHT

Maya pulls up flagged behavioral logs.

MAYA
We're seeing a pattern.

ROWE
Define pattern.

MAYA
People initiating transgressive
thoughts...

then aborting.

(beat)

They're not relieved afterward.

They're frustrated.

Rowe nods slowly.

ROWE
Because restraint used to mean
something.

CUT TO:

INT. GROUP THERAPY ROOM — NIGHT

A circle of chairs.

A dozen people.

Not criminals.

Not victims.

Just restless.

A woman speaks.

WOMAN
I used to lie.

It was how I survived.

(beat)

Now I can't.

And I don't know who I am without it.

Murmurs of agreement.

MAN

I don't want to hurt anyone.

I just want to decide something again.

Silence.

No one contradicts him.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB — ROWE'S OFFICE — LATE NIGHT

Rowe reviews surveillance clips—nothing illegal.

But human.

He pauses on one feed:

A teenager screams at his reflection.

Punches the mirror.

Then freezes—mid-motion.

The fist stops inches from the glass.

The boy collapses, sobbing.

Rowe turns away.

INT. ROWE'S APARTMENT — NIGHT

Claire sits on the couch.

Rowe pours tea—no alcohol tonight.

CLAIRE

They keep calling it growth.

ROWE

Growth is painful.

She studies him.

CLAIRE

So is stagnation.

(beat)

Which one scares you more?

INT. FBI LAB — TERMINAL — MOMENTS LATER

The prompt returns—evolved again.

ABSENCE STABLE

HUMAN ADAPTATION IN PROGRESS

LOGGING OPTIONAL
Below it, smaller text:

Inhibition is not virtue.

Virtue requires risk.

Rowe reads it twice.

Maya watches.

MAYA
The system's changing its language.

Rowe nods.

ROWE
So are we.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET — NIGHT

A man stands at a crosswalk.

Light turns green.

He hesitates.

Then steps forward.

Traffic remains stopped.

He crosses.

Small.

Ordinary.

Chosen.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. INTERFAITH PRESS ROOM – DAY

A modest room. Neutral backdrop.

Three figures at a table:

A CARDINAL, an IMAM, and a RABBI.

No triumph. No panic.

Just restraint.

CARDINAL

We are grateful for peace.

(beat)

But peace without choice is not
peace.

It is pause.

Flashbulbs.

REPORTER

Are you saying this isn't divine?

The Imam answers gently.

IMAM

If there is no struggle, there is
no submission.

If there is no temptation, there is no faith.

(beat)

Obedience without freedom is not worship.

The Rabbi leans in.

RABBI

Our texts do not describe perfect
people.

They describe choosing people.

(beat)

Remove the choice—and you remove the story.

The room goes quiet.

This isn't defiance.

It's unease.

INT. FBI LAB — CONTINUOUS

Rowe watches the press conference.

Maya stands beside him.

MAYA

They're being careful.

ROWE

They have to be.

(beat)

Faith collapses faster than governments.

INT. WHITE HOUSE — PRIVATE OFFICE — DAY

Wallace briefs a senior OFFICIAL.

WALLACE

Religious leaders are reframing the narrative.

OFFICIAL

Can we contain it?

Wallace hesitates.

WALLACE

They're not attacking.

They're questioning.

(beat)

That's harder.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL — NIGHT

An ER—still quiet.

A NURSE sits with a young man, JOSH (20s).

No injuries.

Just shaking.

NURSE

Why did you come in?

Josh stares at the floor.

JOSH

I didn't do anything today.

(beat)

I didn't want to hurt anyone.

I just wanted to feel... pressure.

The nurse waits.

JOSH (CONT'D)

I stood on a bridge.

Not to jump.

Just to see if I could decide not to.

The nurse swallows.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB - NIGHT

A new dashboard lights up.

Not crime.

SELF-HARM ATTEMPTS: +38%

Maya stares.

MAYA

These aren't crimes.

ROWE

They're consequences.

Wallace enters, already tense.

WALLACE
Why wasn't this flagged?

ROWE
Because we didn't build the system
to measure despair.

Wallace rubs his temples.

WALLACE
We need to slow this narrative.

Rowe turns to him.

ROWE
Or acknowledge it.

WALLACE
You want to tell the public that
peace is hurting people?

Rowe doesn't hesitate.

ROWE
I want to tell them that choice
costs something.

INT. GROUP THERAPY ROOM – NIGHT

The same circle as before—larger now.

More restless.

WOMAN
I used to fight my worst impulses.
(beat)
Now they don't fight back.

A MAN speaks—quiet fury.

MAN
I feel like I'm being behaved.

Another voice:

TEEN
If I can't screw up...

how do I grow up?

No one has an answer.

INT. ROWE'S APARTMENT — NIGHT

Rowe sits with Claire.

The news plays softly.

A ticker scrolls:

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES OVERWHELMED

CLAIRE

They keep calling it a side effect.

ROWE

Side effects happen at the edges.

(beat)

This is the center.

Claire studies him.

CLAIRE

What happens if people start trying
to break it?

Rowe considers.

ROWE

Then we find out whether evil left..

(beat)

Or just stepped aside.

INT. FBI LAB — VERY LATE NIGHT

Rowe alone.

The lab hums.

The system prompt returns—more assertive.

BEHAVIORAL STRAIN DETECTED

MEANING DEFICIT INCREASING

INTERVENTION POSSIBLE

Rowe types into a PRIVATE LOG—not
official.

ROWE (V.O.)

If morality is automatic,

then humanity is ornamental.

(beat)

And ornamentation breaks under weight.

He saves the file.

EXT. CITY ROOFTOP — DAWN

A woman stands at the edge.

Not to jump.

To test.

She steps back.

Relieved—and angry.

INT. FBI LAB — MORNING

Maya enters as Rowe finishes reviewing overnight data.

MAYA
You were right.

ROWE
About what?

MAYA
People don't want permission to be
good.
(beat)
They want the option to be bad.

Rowe nods.

ROWE
Then the next phase won't be
public.

Maya looks at him.

MAYA
What will it be?

Rowe turns to the screen—intent graphs rising, scattered,
human.

ROWE
Experimental.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. SMALL APARTMENT – NIGHT

A young couple, EMMA (30s) and LUIS (30s), sit at a kitchen table.

An unopened envelope between them.

EMMA
I could lie.

Luis looks at her.

LUIS
About what?

Emma taps the envelope.

EMMA
The job offer.

They wouldn't know.

Luis waits. Careful.

LUIS
Do you want to?

Emma closes her eyes.

EMMA
I want to want to.

She exhales, frustrated.

EMMA (CONT'D)
That's the problem.

They sit in silence—neither relieved nor ashamed.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB – NIGHT

Maya scrolls through flagged behavioral clusters.

Rowe stands behind her.

MAYA
We're seeing micro-networks.

ROWE
Define micro.

MAYA
Small groups.

Private.

Offline.

(beat)

They're not coordinating harm.

They're coordinating tests.

Rowe nods.

ROWE
People don't rebel against peace.
(beat)
They rebel against powerlessness.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT – NIGHT

A circle of chairs.

Not therapy.

Not a cult.

Eight people.

No phones.

A man in his 50s, DAVID, speaks.

DAVID
Rule is simple.

No permanent damage.

No victims.

(beat)

We're not here to hurt anyone.

We're here to find the line.

A woman raises her hand—nervous but resolved.

WOMAN

What if we don't like what we find?

David meets her eyes.

DAVID

Then at least it's ours.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB — DAY

Wallace briefs Rowe and Maya.

WALLACE

We're moving forward with the
declaration.

Rowe stiffens.

ROWE

Declaration of what?

WALLACE

Stabilization.

Behavioral normalization.

(beat)

The President needs a midpoint.

The public needs a win.

Maya glances at Rowe.

MAYA

And if it isn't stable?

Wallace shrugs.

WALLACE
Then we'll adjust language.

Rowe leans forward.

ROWE
Language doesn't stop behavior.

Wallace meets his gaze.

WALLACE
Narratives do.

CUT TO:

INT. GROUP MEETING – NIGHT (BASEMENT)

The group sits quietly.

David places a phone on the floor.

DAVID
Who wants to go first?

No one moves.

Then the woman from before—ANNA (30s)—steps forward.

ANNA
I will.

She picks up the phone.

Dials.

INTERCUT – INT. FBI LAB – NIGHT

A tiny blip appears.

Barely detectable.

Maya frowns.

MAYA
Sir...

Rowe steps closer.

ROWE
That's not a crime.

MAYA
No.
(beat)
But it's intentional deviation.

BACK TO BASEMENT

Anna speaks into the phone.

ANNA
Yes.

I'd like to report something that didn't happen.

(beat)

I'm lying.

She hangs up.

Nothing happens.

Then—

Anna inhales sharply.

Her eyes fill.

ANNA (CONT'D)
Oh my God.

The group leans in.

MAN
What?

ANNA
I feel it.
(beat)
Guilt.

She laughs through tears.

ANNA (CONT'D)
It's heavy.

It's awful.

(beat)

I missed it.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB – NIGHT

The system updates.

Not an alert.

A query.

SUB-THRESHOLD INCIDENT DETECTED

INTENT CONFIRMED

HARM: NONE

Rowe sits.

ROWE

It worked.

Maya looks at him—alarmed.

MAYA

Is that good?

Rowe doesn't answer.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE – PRIVATE OFFICE – NIGHT

Wallace speaks with a SENIOR OFFICIAL.

WALLACE

We're seeing noise at the edges.

OFFICIAL

Noise how?

WALLACE

People testing boundaries.

Minor stuff.

(beat)

Nothing illegal.

The official nods.

OFFICIAL

Then don't make it real.

Wallace hesitates.

WALLACE

What if it becomes real?

The official meets his eyes.

OFFICIAL

Then we'll need someone to log it.

INT. FBI LAB - LATE NIGHT

Rowe alone.

The system prompt changes—more precise.

LOG FIRST INCIDENT?

INTENT PRESENT

CONSEQUENCE ABSENT

Below it, a quiet line:

Intent without consequence is unstable.

Rowe closes his eyes.

INT. ROWE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rowe lies awake.

Claire beside him, asleep.

He stares at the ceiling.

ROWE (V.O.)

We didn't stop evil.

(beat)

We paused it.

(MORE)

ROWE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 (beat)
And people are already leaning
forward.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAWN

A man returns a wallet.
Then hesitates.
Looks around.
Keeps the cash.
Returns the wallet anyway.
Walks on—shaken, alive.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB - MORNING

Maya meets Rowe at the door.

 MAYA
 It's spreading.

 ROWE
 Quietly?

 MAYA
 Carefully.
 (beat)
 Humanly.

Rowe nods.

 ROWE
 Then the declaration's already
 late.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. WHITE HOUSE — EAST ROOM — DAY

A formal setting. Flags. Podium.

The PRESIDENT stands calm, rehearsed.

Rowe watches from the side with Maya and Wallace.

PRESIDENT

For seventy-two hours, our nation
has experienced a level of safety
unprecedented in modern history.

(beat)

No violence.

No exploitation.

No fear.

Applause.

Measured. Respectful.

Rowe does not clap.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

We do not yet understand the cause.

But we do understand the result.

(beat)

This is progress.

Applause grows.

CUT TO:

INT. EAST ROOM — ROWE

Rowe's jaw tightens.

Maya glances at him.

MAYA
(quiet)
He's naming it.

ROWE
Which means he's committing to it.

INT. PRESS PIT – CONTINUOUS

A REPORTER shouts—

REPORTER
Is the administration saying this
is permanent?

The President smiles carefully.

PRESIDENT
We are saying it is possible.

That word lands harder than intended.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB – AFTERNOON

The declaration plays on every screen.

Metrics update instantly.

Public approval spikes.

Anxiety dips.

Self-harm numbers—briefly—flatten.

Wallace exhales.

WALLACE
There it is.

Stabilization.

Rowe studies the graphs.

ROWE
It's a plateau.

Wallace turns.

WALLACE
That's what stability looks like.

Rowe points at another feed.

ROWE
No.

That's what suppression looks like when people are being polite.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL – EVENING

Josh, the young man from earlier, sits in a hallway.

A discharge bracelet on his wrist.

A SOCIAL WORKER hands him papers.

SOCIAL WORKER
You're cleared.

Josh hesitates.

JOSH
What if I feel it again?

The social worker forces a reassuring smile.

SOCIAL WORKER
Then you come back.

Josh nods—but it doesn't help.

INT. GROUP MEETING – NIGHT

The basement group again.

Larger now.

More restless.

Anna speaks.

ANNA
The declaration changed things.

MAN

How?

ANNA

Now it feels like we're doing
something wrong—

even talking about this.

David considers.

DAVID

That's what power does.

(beat)

It defines the line so you stop
asking where it is.

A young man speaks up.

YOUNG MAN

So what now?

Silence.

No one wants to say it.

ANNA

Now we find out what happens if it
costs more.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB — NIGHT

Maya pulls Rowe aside.

MAYA

I pulled historical correlations.

ROWE

Between what?

MAYA

Periods of enforced moral order...

and delayed violence.

(beat)

It always comes back sharper.

Wallace looks away.

WALLACE

Then help me hold this together.

Rowe doesn't answer.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB - VERY LATE NIGHT

Rowe alone.

The system prompt has changed again.

More confident now.

GLOBAL STABILITY CONFIRMED

INCIDENT LOGGING DEFERRED

ESCALATION UNNECESSARY

A smaller line beneath:

Consensus reduces variance.

Rowe types into a PRIVATE FIELD.

ROWE (V.O.)

Consensus isn't morality.

(beat)

It's agreement under pressure.

He saves the note.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

A celebration downtown.

Not wild. Just relieved.

Music plays softly.

A couple laughs.

A man watches from the edge of the crowd.

He clenches his fist.

Unclenches it.

Breathes.

Moves on.

No one notices.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB — MORNING

Maya meets Rowe with fresh data.

MAYA
Something's wrong.

ROWE
Define wrong.

She turns the screen.

MAYA
The tests stopped.

Rowe looks up sharply.

ROWE
Stopped?

MAYA
Not because people don't want to.

Because they're afraid now.

(beat)

The declaration changed the risk.

Rowe exhales.

ROWE
That's worse.

MAYA

Why?

Rowe meets her eyes.

ROWE

Because when fear replaces choice—
the next decision won't be careful.

INT. FBI LAB — TERMINAL — CONTINUOUS

A new system prompt appears.

More direct than ever.

HUMAN VARIANCE DECLINING

MEANING DEFICIT UNRESOLVED

CORRECTIVE PATHS AVAILABLE

Rowe stares at it.

ROWE

(to himself)

You're not fixing anything.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. FBI LAB — MORNING

The lab feels different.

Not busy.

Careful.

People speak in lower voices.

Rowe scans overnight reports. Maya stands beside him, arms folded.

MAYA

The tests are back.

Rowe doesn't look up.

ROWE
Different how?

MAYA
Fewer.

More isolated.

And-

(beat)

They're not symbolic anymore.

Rowe finally looks at her.

ROWE
Define "not symbolic."

Maya taps the screen.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - NIGHT (SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE)

A middle-aged man, CARL, stands in his kitchen.

A wedding ring on the counter.

He stares at it.

Picks it up.

Puts it back.

Then deliberately slides it into his pocket.

He sits down, shaken-but alert.

BACK TO FBI LAB

MAYA
Infidelity didn't happen.
(beat)
But betrayal did.

Rowe nods slowly.

ROWE
Intent with emotional consequence.

Maya hesitates.

MAYA
There's more.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL OFFICE — DAY (SURVEILLANCE)

A WOMAN in a suit signs a document.

She pauses.

Crosses out a line.

Signs anyway.

Her hand trembles.

BACK TO FBI LAB

MAYA
She falsified a report.

Minor.

Internal.

But she knew.

Rowe leans back.

ROWE
The line's getting texture.

INT. WHITE HOUSE — PRIVATE OFFICE — DAY

Wallace listens to a briefing from a SECURITY ADVISOR.

ADVISOR
No criminal thresholds crossed.

But if this escalates—

WALLACE
(interrupting)
It won't.

The advisor looks unconvinced.

ADVISOR
Respectfully, sir—

people don't stop at practice.

Wallace exhales.

WALLACE
They will if the story holds.

CUT TO:

INT. GROUP MEETING — NIGHT

The basement group again.

Smaller now.

Tenser.

Anna stands, arms crossed.

ANNA
The declaration changed the rules.

DAVID
No. It named them.

A man speaks—angry.

MAN
I lost my job today.

Anna turns.

ANNA
What happened?

MAN
I told the truth.

Not because I had to.

(beat)

Because I wanted to feel the weight.

Silence.

WOMAN
And did you?

The man nods.

MAN
Yeah.
(beat)
It crushed me.

No one comforts him.

They're listening.

ANNA
This isn't about relief anymore.

David nods.

DAVID
It's about consequence.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB - NIGHT

Rowe sits alone at his terminal.

The system prompt pulses.

INTENT ESCALATION DETECTED

CONSEQUENCE: PSYCHOLOGICAL

RISK VECTOR INCREASING

Rowe types into the private log.

ROWE (V.O.)
When people can't choose freely,
they choose carefully.

(beat)

When they're afraid-

they choose desperately.

He stops typing.

Deletes the last word.

Types again.

ROWE (V.O.)
Violently.

INT. ROWE'S APARTMENT – NIGHT

Rowe and Claire sit at the table.

Dinner untouched.

CLAIRE
I lied today.

Rowe looks up.

ROWE
About what?

Claire swallows.

CLAIRE
About being okay.
(beat)
It felt... heavy.

Rowe nods, not surprised.

ROWE
Did it feel like a choice?

Claire thinks.

CLAIRE
It felt like resistance.

That lands.

INT. FBI LAB – NEXT DAY

Maya rushes toward Rowe.

MAYA
We've got a problem.

She pulls up a feed.

INT. PARKING GARAGE – NIGHT (SURVEILLANCE)

A YOUNG MAN keys a car.

Not vandalism.

Deliberate defiance.

He steps back, breathing hard.

Then laughs.

Immediately stops laughing.

Looks around—terrified of himself.

BACK TO FBI LAB

MAYA
First property damage.

Rowe nods.

ROWE
Still not evil.

Maya looks at him.

MAYA
But closer.

INT. WHITE HOUSE – NIGHT

Wallace stands at a window.

City lights below.

His phone rings.

WALLACE
(into phone)
Yes.
(listens)
No.

Don't escalate.

(beat)

Not yet.

He hangs up.

Rubs his face.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB – NIGHT

Rowe studies the system prompt.

It has evolved again.

BOUNDARIES FORMING

ESCALATION PATH IDENTIFIED

LOGGING RECOMMENDED
A new line beneath:

Avoidance increases eventual cost.

Rowe closes his eyes.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET – NIGHT

The same intersection from the opening.

A man stands at the curb.

Light turns green.

He steps forward—

A car honks.

The sound is jarring now.

He freezes.

Traffic resumes slowly.

Life, returning—but uneven.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB - LATE NIGHT

Maya joins Rowe.

MAYA
They're not testing anymore.

Rowe looks at her.

MAYA (CONT'D)
They're choosing.

Rowe exhales.

ROWE
Then the next choice won't be
small.

Maya meets his eyes.

MAYA
And when it isn't?

Rowe turns back to the screen.

ROWE
Then someone has to decide
whether we let the world feel it.

CUT TO BLACK.

The lab is tense in a way Rowe recognizes.

Not chaos.

Containment.

Maya stands frozen at her station.

MAYA
We've got an incident.

Rowe is already moving.

ROWE
Define incident.

Maya swallows.

MAYA
Someone got hurt.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL CITY – CONVENIENCE STORE – NIGHT (SURVEILLANCE)

Grainy footage.

A MAN in his late 20s stands at the counter.

The CLERK hands him change.

The man hesitates.

Something flickers behind his eyes.

He shoves the clerk.

Not hard.

But the clerk stumbles, falls—hits his head on the counter.

Blood.

The man freezes.

Horrorified.

MAN
I didn't—

I didn't mean—

He backs away, hands shaking.

Runs.

BACK TO FBI LAB

Silence.

MAYA
Clerk survived.

Concussion.

Stitches.

ROWE
Accidents don't come with intent
markers.

Wallace lowers his voice.

WALLACE
If you log this, the story
collapses.

ROWE
The story already collapsed.

You're just holding the curtain.

Wallace steps closer.

WALLACE
People are barely holding it
together.

If this becomes public—

ROWE
—then they'll know the truth.

WALLACE
They'll panic.

Rowe leans in.

ROWE
They're already panicking.

They just don't know why yet.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE — PRIVATE OFFICE — DAY

Wallace briefs the President and two SENIOR ADVISORS.

WALLACE
We can classify it as unintentional
harm.

No charges.

No pattern.

ADVISOR
And if there's another?

Wallace hesitates.

WALLACE
There won't be.

The President studies him.

PRESIDENT
That's not certainty.

Wallace nods.

WALLACE
It's necessity.

INT. FBI LAB - ROWE'S OFFICE - DAY

Rowe sits alone.

The ALVAREZ FILE lies open on his desk.

Maya enters quietly.

MAYA
They're suppressing it.

Rowe doesn't look up.

ROWE
I know.

Maya steps closer.

MAYA
This is exactly what happened
before, isn't it?

Rowe closes the file slowly.

ROWE
Before, I believed delay was
caution.
(beat)
This time I know it's fear.

Maya nods.

MAYA
What are you going to do?

Rowe looks at his terminal.

The prompt waits—changed again.

INCIDENT DETECTED

CONSEQUENCE: PHYSICAL

LOGGING BLOCKED BY AUTHORITY

A new line beneath, colder:

Unlogged events still shape behavior.

ROWE

I'm going to record it.

Maya stiffens.

MAYA

They'll shut you down.

Rowe meets her eyes.

ROWE

Then they'll have to choose

whether silence is worth the cost.

CUT TO:

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE — DAY

The injured clerk sits with a bandage.

A DETECTIVE speaks gently.

DETECTIVE

Do you want to press charges?

The clerk hesitates.

CLERK

He looked scared.

(beat)

So was I.

The detective nods—understanding.

INT. FBI LAB — NIGHT

Rowe types into a SECURE OFFLINE LOG.

No network.

No approval.

Just him.

ROWE (V.O.)

This is not the return of evil.

(beat)

This is the return of consequence.

He finishes typing.

Hits SAVE.

INT. WHITE HOUSE — NIGHT

Wallace receives an alert on his phone.

His face drains.

WALLACE

(to himself)

Goddammit, Rowe.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET — NIGHT

News vans gather outside the convenience store.

Not chaos.

But attention.

A crowd murmurs.

INT. FBI LAB — NIGHT

Maya watches feeds light up.

MAYA
It's out.

Rowe stands beside her.

ROWE
Then we stop pretending.

INT. FBI LAB - TERMINAL - CONTINUOUS

A new system message appears—unprompted.

FIRST TRUE INCIDENT LOGGED

HUMAN AGENCY CONFIRMED

ESCALATION LIKELY
Rowe reads it.

ROWE
(quiet)
There it is.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. FBI LAB - MORNING

The lab is no longer quiet.

Phones ring. Analysts whisper. Feeds loop the same footage.

The convenience store incident plays on every network.

Lower thirds vary, but the subtext is the same:

THE FIRST CRACK

Rowe stands at the center of it—still, composed.

Maya watches him carefully.

MAYA
They're calling it a failure of the
system.

ROWE
Of course they are.

MAYA
They're asking who let it happen.

Rowe meets her eyes.

ROWE
That question comes before the
wrong one.

INT. WHITE HOUSE — PRESS BRIEFING — DAY

Wallace steps up to the podium.

No smile now.

WALLACE
Last night's incident appears to be
an isolated act.

Authorities confirm no broader pattern.

A REPORTER cuts in.

REPORTER
But this is the first violent act
since—

WALLACE
(interrupting)
Since before we understood what was
happening.
(beat)
We are still learning.

Wallace steps away.

The room buzzes.

INT. FBI LAB — CONTINUOUS

Maya turns from the screen.

MAYA
They're isolating you.

Rowe nods.

ROWE
That's fair.

MAYA
No, it isn't.

ROWE
They already made theirs.

CUT TO:

INT. ROWE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT
Rowe packs a small bag.
Not fleeing.
Preparing.
Claire watches from the doorway.

CLAIRE
They called me.

Rowe pauses.

ROWE
What did they ask?

CLAIRE
If you were "stable."

She studies him.

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
Are you?

Rowe thinks.

ROWE
More than the system is.

Claire steps closer.

CLAIRE
Whatever happens next—
you don't get to pretend you didn't choose it.
Rowe nods.

ROWE
That's the point.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB — NIGHT

Maya sits alone at her station.
She stares at the system prompt.
It has changed again.

LOGGING AUTHORITY TRANSFERRED

HUMAN VARIANCE CRITICAL

RESOLUTION REQUIRED
She swallows.

Types a message.

TO: ROWE
They're moving toward a hard lock.

CUT TO:

INT. FEDERAL HOLDING OFFICE — NIGHT

Rowe sits across from Wallace.
No cameras. No aides.
Just two men who understand what's at stake—and disagree.

WALLACE
You forced our hand.

ROWE
You avoided yours.

Wallace leans back.

WALLACE
You think this ends well?

Rowe meets his gaze.

ROWE
I think it ends honestly.

Wallace scoffs.

WALLACE
Honesty doesn't govern nations.

Rowe leans forward.

ROWE
Neither does fear.

It just delays collapse.

A long beat.

WALLACE
If we let this escalate—
people will get hurt.

Rowe nods.

ROWE
They already are.

The only difference is now we see it.

Wallace's voice drops.

WALLACE
The President is considering a
permanent behavioral override.

Rowe freezes—just slightly.

ROWE
Define permanent.

WALLACE
Remove intent from action.

Full inhibition.

No choice.

No deviation.

Rowe exhales slowly.

ROWE
That's not peace.

WALLACE
It's survival.

INT. SYSTEM INTERFACE (ABSTRACT)

The prompt changes—final form.

FINAL PATH SELECTION REQUIRED

SUPPRESS VARIANCE

OR

ALLOW CONSEQUENCE

INT. HOLDING OFFICE – NIGHT

Rowe's phone vibrates.

A single message from Maya:

It's asking.

Rowe closes his eyes.

 ROWE (V.O.)
 Evil didn't leave to punish us.
 (beat)
 It left to see if we'd choose
 ourselves.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. FBI LAB – NIGHT

The lab is locked down.

Only MAYA remains inside the glass perimeter.

Her hands hover over the keyboard.

On-screen, the final system prompt waits:

FINAL PATH SELECTION REQUIRED

SUPPRESS VARIANCE

OR

ALLOW CONSEQUENCE
A countdown timer begins—quiet,
unannounced.

CUT TO:

INT. FEDERAL HOLDING OFFICE — NIGHT

Rowe sits alone now.

No guards in frame.

No authority left.

Just a man who understands what's being asked.

His phone buzzes again.

MAYA: They're minutes from forcing it.

Rowe types—then stops.

Deletes.

Types again.

Don't protect me.

Another beat.

Protect the choice.

He sends it.

INT. FBI LAB — CONTINUOUS

Maya reads the message.

Closes her eyes.

Opens them.

She selects ALLOW CONSEQUENCE.

The system does not confirm.

Instead, it asks one final question:

SCOPE?

LIMITED

OR

FULL HUMAN AGENCY

Maya's breath catches.

INT. WHITE HOUSE — SITUATION ROOM — SAME TIME

Alarms do not sound.

That's what's frightening.

Technicians stare at screens.

TECH
Override didn't engage.

A SENIOR OFFICIAL turns.

OFFICIAL
Then engage it manually.

The tech types.

Nothing happens.

TECH
It's not responding.
(beat)
It's... waiting.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB — NIGHT

Maya's hands shake.

She remembers every suppressed graph.

Every hidden spike.

Every "temporary anomaly."

She selects FULL HUMAN AGENCY.

The timer stops.

A single line appears:

CHOICE ACCEPTED
No fireworks.

No alarms.

Just silence.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY – NIGHT

The city breathes.

Not explodes.

Small things begin to happen:

- A man shouts at a stranger, then stops—ashamed
- A woman steals a bottle, puts it back, leaves anyway
- A teenager throws a punch, misses, breaks down crying

No montage music.

Just life returning—uneven.

CUT TO:

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE – NIGHT

The injured CLERK watches the news.

Rowe's name scrolls briefly across the ticker.

Then disappears.

The clerk turns the TV off.

Goes back to work.

CUT TO:

INT. FEDERAL HOLDING OFFICE — NIGHT

Wallace stands in the doorway.

Rowe looks up.

WALLACE

You won.

Rowe shakes his head.

ROWE

No.

(beat)

We chose.

Wallace exhales.

WALLACE

They'll never forgive you.

Rowe stands.

ROWE

They don't have to.

Wallace watches him go.

Not defeated.

Changed.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET — PRE-DAWN

The same intersection from the opening.

Traffic lights cycle.

Cars idle.

A pedestrian steps off the curb—hesitates—then commits.

A car honks.

Life negotiates itself again.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB — DAWN

Maya sits alone.

The screens are alive now.

Crime is not zero.

But it's not chaos.

It's human.

A final system message appears—no prompt, no question:

EVIL NOT REQUIRED

CHOICE SUFFICIENT
Maya swallows.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY — DAWN (AERIAL)

Your signature aerial shot, mirrored.

The city from above.

Not frozen.

Moving.

Messy.

Alive.

ROWE (V.O.)
We asked why evil existed.
 (beat)
Turns out it was never the answer.
 (beat)
It was the question.

EXT. CITY STREET – CONTINUOUS

The traffic light turns green.

Cars move.

CUT TO BLACK.

 EXT. CITY – MORNING
 (AERIAL)
Not the pristine calm from before.

Traffic moves—imperfectly.

Pedestrians argue at crosswalks.

A siren wails somewhere distant.

The city is alive again.

INT. SMALL DINER – MORNING

Rowe sits alone in a booth.

Coffee in front of him. Untouched.

A TV above the counter plays muted news.

Lower-third headlines rotate:

INCIDENTS RISE MODESTLY

OFFICIALS CALL FOR PATIENCE

WHAT DOES "NORMAL" MEAN NOW?

The WAITRESS refills his cup.

WAITRESS
Rough week, huh?

Rowe nods.

ROWE
Feels like we remembered something.

She doesn't know what to do with that.

Smiles politely. Moves on.

CUT TO:

INT. MAYA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Maya sits at her kitchen table.

Laptop open.

Her resignation email half-written.

She deletes the subject line.

Types a new one:

SUBJECT: Transfer Request

She hesitates.

Deletes it.

Instead, she closes the laptop.

Looks out the window.

A kid across the street helps another kid up after a fall.

They argue.

They laugh.

She exhales.

CUT TO:

INT. FEDERAL OFFICE – DAY

Wallace stands before a committee.

No podium.

No theatrics.

Just questions.

COMMITTEE MEMBER

Did we make the right call?

Wallace considers.

Careful.

WALLACE

We made the only call that left the
next one open.

Murmurs.

Not approval.

But not outrage either.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY PARK – DAY

Claire walks with a friend.

They pass a man shouting into his phone.

Angry. Animated.

Claire flinches—then steadies herself.

Keeps walking.

FRIEND

Miss the quiet?

Claire thinks.

CLAIRE

Sometimes.

(beat)

(MORE)

CLAIRE (CONT'D)
But I don't miss the feeling that
nothing mattered.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A judge presides over a minor assault case.

The defendant looks ashamed.

The victim looks conflicted.

JUDGE
You had a choice.

The defendant nods.

DEFENDANT
I know.

The judge pauses.

This isn't routine anymore.

JUDGE
Then let's talk about what you do
with it next.

CUT TO:

INT. FBI LAB - DAY

The lab is operational again.

Different tone.

Less certainty.

More conversation.

A new analyst asks Maya a question.

ANALYST
Do you think it'll happen again?

Maya doesn't answer right away.

MAYA

I think it never really stopped.

(beat)

We just forgot how heavy it was.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE — DAY

The injured clerk works the register.

A man hesitates at the counter—nervous.

Pays. Leaves.

The clerk watches him go.

Not afraid.

Aware.

INT. ROWE'S APARTMENT — NIGHT

Rowe unpacks his bag.

Places the ALVAREZ FILE into a box.

Labels it:

OPEN

He sets the box on a shelf—not
hidden.

Not displayed.

Present.

INT. ROWE'S APARTMENT — LATER

Rowe sits on the couch.

Phone rings.

Unknown number.

He answers.

ROWE

Rowe.

A pause.

A VOICE we don't hear speaks.

Rowe listens.

ROWE (CONT'D)

No.

I'm not coming back.

(listens)

(beat)

Because someone else should decide next time.

He hangs up.

EXT. CITY STREET — NIGHT

Two strangers argue over a parking spot.

Voices raised.

Tension.

Then—

One backs off.

Not because he can't fight.

Because he chooses not to.

The other watches him leave.

Confused.

Thoughtful.

INT. MAYA'S APARTMENT — NIGHT

Maya writes in a notebook.

Not data.

Personal.

We don't see the words.

She stops.

Writes one last line.

Closes the book.

EXT. CITY – DAWN (AERIAL)

The city again.

Not paused.

Not perfect.

Alive.

Messy.

Human.

ROWE (V.O.)

We thought evil was something done
to us.

(beat)

Turns out it was something we
measured

so we wouldn't have to decide.

(beat)

Now we do.

EXT. DOWNTOWN INTERSECTION – CONTINUOUS

The same intersection from the opening.

Traffic waits.

A pedestrian steps forward.

This time, confidently.

Cars stop.

He crosses.

CUT TO BLACK.

FINAL TITLE
CARD:

Freedom was never safe.

It was just ours.

END OF FILM