

PSEUDO G

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. OMNION - STREET SIDE - DAY

*Murky skies douse a barren sidewalk. Heavy raindrops patter louder than the humming sedans gliding down the street. A faint, pattering hum grows closer.*

*A rusting sedan coasts through the intersection. Through a moderately tinted window --*

I/E. DEXTRA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

MERRITT DAWN, 16 -- capricious teenager, calculated -- gazes out at the passing world. His pale skin and *diamond stud earring* illuminate with every streetlight.

The driver, DEXTRA DAWN, 40s -- resilient, perspicacious, disguised as an elderly white male -- glares through the drenched windshield. Deep in thought. *Note: Her voice changes to match each disguise.*

Both have a *blue dot tattooed behind their right ears.*

They glide to a stop in front of "UNION BANK."

DEXTRA

We can figure something else out.

MERRITT

I can do it.

(off Dextra's concern)

Trust me.

DEXTRA

I love you so much.

Dextra goes to kiss Merritt's forehead -- he pulls away.

MERRITT

I'll see you soon.

... reaching for the door handle.

DEXTRA

Merritt, don't forget ...

Dextra hands Merritt a briefcase.

DEXTRA (CONT'D)

Scan your surroundings, stay to yourself, and --

MERRITT

Ma ... I know.

He hops out of the car and climbs the stairs. Dextra watches longingly as he saunters into --

INT. UNION BANK - CONTINUOUS

FRONT LOBBY

A spacious concourse -- resembling Grand Central Station -- radiates bourgeoisie prestige. At the entrance --

Merritt struts toward a security checkpoint. He drapes his soaked overcoat on his forearm. Three-piece fitted suit. *Gold tie-clip*. Oxford shoes. Leather briefcase. A facade.

TWO OFFICIALS -- Type A vs. Type B in black combat suits -- goof off at a security table perched beside glass walk-through metal detectors... They notice Merritt.

OFFICIAL A

Damn little man.

(off Official B's chuckle)

It ain't even Sunday yet.

Merritt speaks in a Standard British dialect.

MERRITT

Special occasion.

Official B nods as he opens the briefcase -- empty.

OFFICIAL B

Alright, big man. Go ahead.

... gesturing to the metal detector.

Merritt removes his earring... tapping the blue dot behind his ear twice -- it glows twice. He tosses the earring in the security bin and saunters to the metal detector.

The blue dot behind Merritt's ear glows as he coasts under the detector.

The lights flicker.

Once Merritt clears, the blue dot dulls and the lights steady.

OFFICIAL B (CONT'D)

What was that?

Official A stops the small flood of patrons entering the front doors.

Merritt grabs his briefcase and the diamond stud.

MERRITT  
Heed the monsoon.

OFFICIAL B  
Crazy.

OFFICIAL A  
Folks, two words ... Strip search.

OFFICIAL B  
No. No. He's just joking.

Merritt chuckles as he struts off... He made it.

VAULT HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Merritt trails behind a BANK TELLER -- stout older woman.

BANK TELLER  
Such a surprise, Mr. Kitchens. We  
were expecting the courier later.

MERRITT  
This is a personal matter.

She releases a bubbly giggle as she leads Merritt to --

VAULT - CONTINUOUS

-- *safe-deposit box "275"*

Merritt flips open his suitcase ... rips off his tie clip and clenches his fist until it snaps.

Behind him, the Bank Teller taps the corner of the deposit box. A *hand-scanning touchpad* ejects.

As Merritt expands his hand, the clip transfigures to a bed of gold nano-mites that blanket his palm ... camouflage.

Merritt shuffles to the touchpad... Low-key apprehensive...

A polychromatic line traces his hand... Red.

His hand locks onto the touchpad...

He can't move... Fuck.

His free hand whips a *quantum-based pistol* from beneath his shirt and holds it flesh against the Bank Teller's forehead.

MERRITT  
(natural dialect)  
Override it.

BANK TELLER  
I-- We -- please don't...

Merritt clicks the safety...

MERRITT  
(Off the bank teller)  
Scream and we both go under.

The Bank Teller pulls it together... Terrified, but smart.

She swipes her finger across the box -- it scans her eyes.  
The line around Merritt's hand turns green.

He smiles and opens the security box...

The alarm blares...

He turns back to the guilty Bank Teller -- her finger still behind her ear.

MERRITT (CONT'D)  
So close.

VAULT HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

They both scurry toward the lobby.

BANK TELLER  
Please don't --

MERRITT  
Don't talk.

They trot into the --

TELLER LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Both Security Officers stand guard, guns drawn.

OFFICIAL A  
Big man, what's going on?

MERRITT  
Put your guns down!

Police sirens trumpet in the distance.

I/E. DEXTRA'S CAR - SAME

Dextra stares longingly at the bank doors... Where is he?

Her sedan zooms from the bank -- police cruisers race in.

INT. UNION BANK - TELLER LOBBY - SAME

Merritt takes a deep breath. He glances around the Bank Teller's head -- his mouth directly behind her ear.

MERRITT  
(whispers)  
Please forgive me.

Tears stream down her face.

BANK TELLER  
Please ...

He releases her.

Dazed and confused -- She revs up to a sprint toward the front doors.

Merritt slowly lowers the pistol and briefcase to the ground... drops to his knees with his hands up.

The security officers glance at each other.

Officer A cautiously detains him.

Officer B inspects his empty suitcase.

Merritt smirks -- a diamond stud missing from his ear.

CUT TO:

INT. DUSTIN'S APARTMENT - 2 DAYS LATER - MORNING

LIVING ROOM

DUSTIN HEMINGS, 27 -- determined, yet pliable -- slumbers on his reclined swivel chair. Three computer monitors are perched on a disheveled desk ahead of him. The blue dot behind his ear begins flickering.

The recessed lights aggressively blink as static looms on a flat screen television in the background. Eerie.

As Dustin's eyes glide open, everything returns to normal.

"The Daily Report" -- The Don Lemon Show meets The Young Turks -- plays on the television as the lights settle.

MONICA

Last night was a busy night in  
Omnion ...

Dustin focuses --

ON THE CENTER MONITOR

where a "Timed Out" error message appears in front of the Sinai's -- *Sensory Integration Enterprise for Artificial Intelligence* -- logo.

BACK TO SCENE

Dustin thrashes his body against the swivel chair. He stares at a *beach family picture* -- a young Dustin and Nassandra cheesing ahead of parents, William and Dextra... Sigh.

DUSTIN

Fuck!

MONICA (O.C.)

... last night was busy for the Mr.  
O, who passed an unprecedented, 35  
updates.

DUSTIN

(mutters)

Not again.

Dustin shifts his gaze to the --

TELEVISION

Two news anchors, SUSAN and MONICA -- conservative & liberal, respectively -- sit behind a curved table.

MONICA

Did I miss the census vote?

Susan swiftly side-eyes Monica ... WTF?

SUSAN  
Here's a brief statement.

THE OVERSEER, elderly male in a creme suit, stands behind a podium. Six officials in black combat suits loom behind him. He looks sick... Ghostly.

THE OVERSEER  
We must be vigilant and direct in  
our efforts to protect our vision.  
This was to do such.

The Overseer raises his arms straight up -- *Evita* style. A crowd of reporters return the gesture.

THE OVERSEER (CONT'D)  
Ever upward!

REPORTERS  
(together)  
Upward forever!

The Overseer has a coughing fit into a napkin. Him and his officials vanish into stardust.

Back to the News Anchors.

MONICA  
There you have it. "This was to do  
such." ... 35 statutes. To. do.  
such ... Weeks before the decennial  
updates ... "Ever up --

The camera focuses on Susan...

SUSAN  
Over the next few hours, thousands  
of Academy graduates will embark on  
Sinai's first wave of internships.

BACK TO SCENE

Dustin gazes at his watch. His eyebrows furrow at the time.

DUSTIN  
Sandy?  
(off silence)  
Fuck.



Dustin hops out of his chair and shuffles to the front door -- dodging clothing and liquor bottles littered across the floor.

A red light pulsates on a touchpad beside the door.

"Urgent Message from Sinai Corp."

His eyes widen as he glances at his computers. Fuck. He scurries out of the room.

The second he leaves, everything turns off.

MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The lights turn on.

Dustin scrambles in and places his hand on a touchpad next to the doorway. A polychromatic line traces his hand ... Green.

He takes a deep breath.

In the middle of the room, a *hologram* of ALEXSEI KITCHENS, late-40s -- charming, deceitful -- stands with an automated smile.

ALEXSEI  
Hello Mr. Hemings, how's your morning?

Dustin stands apprehensively.

DUSTIN  
Good.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
Unfortunately, we have a pressing issue that requires your immediate attention.

Dustin anxiously shifts his weight.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
M-- M-- May I ask what the issue --

ALEXSEI  
Please report to the S.B.A. desk for further instructions. Ever upward.

Alexsei's hologram vanishes.

Dustin stands frozen.

His phone rings -- startling him into action.

The caller is: UNKNOWN

He answers.

DUSTIN

Hello?

Silence.

He hangs up and scurries out of the room.

The lights turn off.

INT. DUSTIN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

HALLWAY

Dustin scrambles out of his apartment and places his hand against the touchpad.

An *opaque barrier* appears in his doorway, and a red strip glides across.

As he strides down the hallway opposite his apartment, a dog snarls and barks behind an apartment door. He flinches and quickens his pace. This continues at every doorway he passes.

LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Dustin bursts through a translucent doorway and peers down a long corridor. A wide doorway on the far side reveals a stagnant train.

He bolts...

The doorway begins transitioning to opaque...

As he approaches, he pulls out a *black device* -- the size of a baby carrot. A gold strip on the device glows...

The barrier freezes... Dustin slips out to --

EXT. HYPERLOOP PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

His phone starts ringing -- the caller is: UNKNOWN.

He ignores the call and joins the wave of migrating people on the platform.

MAYA (O.C.)  
(deep female voice)  
Ay, cabrón ...

Dustin turns to MAYA AGUILAR, 27 -- Hispanic, witty, resourceful -- coasting behind him on a worn skateboard.

DUSTIN  
Oh, I'm a goat now?

Maya stumbles off her skateboard as she cackles.

MAYA  
(normal voice)  
Boyy --

DUSTIN  
I know. I'm --

MAYA  
Shut yo ass up.

Dustin smirks and keeps walking.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
Old ass.

DUSTIN  
(off Maya's skateboard)  
Maya. You serious?

Maya cradles her board like a baby.

MAYA  
(To skateboard)  
Shhh. He didn't mean it. Mr. Sinai  
thinks he's hot shit.

DUSTIN  
I am hot shit.

MAYA  
Hot bull shit.

They both laugh.

DUSTIN  
Wait. Did you skip internship?

Maya taps Dustin's jugular.

MAYA  
(off Dustin's confusion)  
Sorry, you were gaggin on yourself.  
You good now?

Dustin pushes her off as she laughs hysterically.

WHOOSH. *A mile long, six-story hyperloop train* whips by and slows to a halt -- its opaque doorways transition to transparent. Defined currents of people swarm in and out.

INT. HYPERLOOP TRAIN - MOMENTS LATER

*A semi-crowded floor of business class booths with a small store in the center.*

Maya gazes at Dustin -- smirking from across the booth.

MAYA  
(off the prestige)  
This is, cushy... How was your  
adventure last night?

DUSTIN  
I missed it.

MAYA  
How did you ...  
(off Dustin's guilty  
smirk)  
Again?

DUSTIN  
It takes so long.

MAYA  
Takes so long...  
(hushed)  
You're risking everything for what?  
Something that's better off lost?  
What happens when you get caught?

DUSTIN  
Might be finding out in a few  
minutes.

Maya glares at him... Fucking Idiot...

INTERCOM (V.O.)  
Public service announcements ...  
Keep track of your belongings.  
(MORE)

INTERCOM (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Anything suspicious should be  
reported to the nearest transit  
employee or official ...

They both break their gaze with a smirk.

MAYA  
Cabrón.

The train decelerates.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)  
Updates are coming up! Remember,  
your selections are final for three  
hundred and sixty-five days. Choose  
wisely.

DUSTIN  
We should go for a hike later.

MAYA  
Fourteen hundred?

Dustin gently nods.

AUTOMATED VOICE (V.O.)  
Thank you, and have a great  
morning.

The train stops and the doorways open.

MAYA  
See ya ... Oh, and cabrón doesn't  
mean goat.

DUSTIN  
What does it mean?

Maya chuckles and walks off.

Dustin's phone rings. The caller is once again: UNKNOWN

He answers.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
Hello?

Silence.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
Look. Who is it?

Silence -- He hangs up.

I/E. ZONE 15 - SAME

ASEEMA AUSTIN, early-30s -- woman of color, compassionate, warrior -- stands in a *phone booth* with the receiver to her ear. She is dressed in all black with only her darting eyes showing.

ASEEMA  
My name is ... Hello?!

Nothing. She **slams** down the receiver.

A distant swinging light attracts Aseema's attention. She walks out to the middle of the street and peers through a small pair of --

BINOCULARS

In the distance, Sinai officials zoom toward her -- on foot and in flying cruisers.

BACK TO SCENE

Aseema drops the binoculars onto the *soaked ground* and bolts down a side street. As she sprints, she blares a whistle in drawn-out bursts.

INT. ABANDONED APARTMENT BUILDING - SAME

LOBBY

A generator connects to a *doorway-shaped portal* blanketed with a *melting pot of smokey colors*. A line of about twenty-five adults and children shuffle into the portal.

QUAZION JOHNSON, 17 -- caucasian, urban, attentive -- scans their surroundings from beside the portal. He is also dressed in all black with only his *electric blue eyes* showing.

A faint whistle is heard in the distance. The line of people panic and rush the portal. Quazion safely guides them through.

As the last person scrambles through the portal, Aseema bolts into the lobby.

ASEEMA  
Let's go!

QUAZION  
Right behind you!

Quazion slams a red button on the generator and takes off after Aseema.

The portal disappears right as the officials flood the lobby.

Aseema and Quazion burst into a --

STAIRWELL

and straight out of the emergency exit. The officials are in close pursuit.

EXT. ZONE 15 - ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Aseema and Quazion dart into a junction of alleyways. A car, parked straight ahead, revs on. Officials close in on both sides of them.

Aseema clears the officials' path, but Quazion is grabbed from behind. As he falls, he tosses a golf ball-sized metal sphere into the air -- a flash bomb that stuns everyone nearby.

Aseema reaches the car and hops into the passenger seat.

The car ascends and zooms off.

The officials pin Quazion down and detain him.

INT. OMNION POLICE CRUISER - MOMENTS LATER

Quazion thrashes onto the back seat -- the door slams behind him.

The car revs on as two officials get in the front. They lift off the ground and ascends into the air. Dozens of cruisers surround them.

Quazion looks down at the "Activate" and "Cancel" options on his watch.

QUAZION  
(muttered)  
Ever upward, bitches.

Quazion selects "Activate."

INT. ABANDONED APARTMENT BUILDING - LOBBY - SAME

About a dozen officials scan the lobby for clues.

INTERN OFFICIAL  
When did it rain?

SARCASTIC OFFICIAL  
Inside?  
(scoffs)  
Interns.

INTERN OFFICIAL  
Then, what is it?

The CHIEF OFFICIAL -- with a Sinai emblem on the lapel of his suit -- wipes the gel-like liquid and smells it ... Nothing.

The generator starts clattering as black smoke bellows.

The Chief Official puzzles things together.

CHIEF OFFICIAL  
To your cruisers! Now!

The officials dart out as flames peek out of the generator. Sparks flare and immediately ignite the gel-covered ground.

The fire sweeps through the lobby and out onto the street.

EXT. OMNION - SAME

DISTRICT 15

The fire blazes through the whole neighborhood -- sending a flaming mushroom into the sky. A handful of police cruisers manage to escape.

Quazion gazes through the back window of a police cruiser -- a sadistic amazement.

The cruisers zoom off, *revealing a vast metropolis -- the centerpiece being two conjoined skyscrapers dwarfing everything around it. A giant golden "S" is located on one building ... a giant golden "I" on the other.*

*VROOM. Automobiles and trucks zip by through the air. Higher up, planes zoom in various directions.*

A truck honks and zooms toward --

MATCH CUT TO:



CORPORATE DISTRICT - SAME

A truck zooms by as Dustin froggers across the street. He stumbles through a life-sized marketing hologram before a dense block of people halt him in his tracks.

They gaze at "The Daily Report" -- broadcasted on the window of an electronics store. Same news segment, minus Monica.

Dustin snakes his way through the crowd.

SUSAN (O.C.)  
... heavy storm clouds shut down  
the Interstratus is Zone Three.  
Travelers are being detoured to the  
ground. Expect delays ...

DUSTIN  
(Overlapping)  
Excuse me ... Sorry ...

People barely move as Dustin slides through the cracks.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
Sorry ... Just trying to get --

SUSAN (O.C.)  
Breaking news just in. Another  
fatal fire has done significant  
damage to Zone Fifteen...

Dustin pauses and looks at the segment.

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
... At an acre and a half, this is  
the fifth and largest fire in  
Omnion history. Expect delays ...

Dustin overhears SHADY WOMAN, middle aged, and CYNICAL WOMAN, middle aged, gossiping.

SHADY WOMAN  
Three in one year?

CYNICAL WOMAN  
Monica's husband thinks it's arson.

SHADY WOMAN  
He also thinks the overseeing twat  
is --

Cynical Woman shushes her as they both chuckle.

SUSAN (O.C.)  
... Sinai's archive department ...

Dustin tunes back in.

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
... was, once again, the victim of  
a cyber attack. The hacker was  
unsuccessful, but Sinai will  
proceed with manual checkins as  
they continue to investigate.  
Expect delays ...

Dustin whips his head to the looming "S" tower. Crowds of  
people gather out front. He takes a deep breath.

DUSTIN  
Shit.

EXT. SINAI "I" TOWER - ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE - SAME

*Opaque walls stretch down a long hallway. Most rooms host one  
or two human silhouettes.*

*Black frosted walls stretch down the latter half of the  
hall... "Technician Operating Room" is engraved on a name  
plate.*

*The hallway flows into a small, but elegant lobby with a  
round receptionist desk in the middle.*

FRONT LOBBY

Maya struts through an opaque barrier -- skateboard in hand  
and headphones on full blast. As she walks, DYLAN, mid-30s --  
level-headed eye candy -- grabs a tablet and intercepts her  
path. She begrudgingly removes her headphones.

MAYA  
Hey Boss Man ...

DYLAN  
Dylan, and you're late.

MAYA  
The party don't start till --

DYLAN  
(playfully rolls eyes)  
You have two pseudos waiting, and  
about 15 more on the way.

MAYA  
I'm leaving at fourteen hundred.

Dylan holds out the tablet, then pulls it back.

DYLAN  
(hushed)  
No meltdowns. Not today. I'm  
rooting for you.

Maya rolls her eyes and gestures to the tablet.

MAYA  
What's with the dinosaur?

DYLAN  
Our cloud is on lockdown. We're  
doing everything manually.

MAYA  
Today'll be too much fun.

She snags the tablet from Dylan.

DYLAN  
And I'll take this to your locker.

He grabs her skateboard as she passes. She rolls her eyes and struts away.

DYLAN (CONT'D)  
Chip, next, chip, next. Keep it  
moving --

MAYA  
Bye Boss Man, you're making me late  
for work.

INT. SINAI "S" TOWER - ANALYSIS - SAME

OFFICE AREA

Dustin bolts into a *cubicle-filled office space*.

SENIOR BIOCHIP ANALYZER CUBICLE - CONTINUOUS

Dustin approaches the SBA cubicle.

The nameplate reads:

ASEEMA AUSTIN

## SENIOR BIOCHIP ANALYZER

The only things on the desk are a monitor and a half-full cup of coffee.

ALEXSEI (V.O.)  
Hello, Mr. Hemings.

Dustin startles and turns to Alexsei standing behind him.

ALEXSEI  
Please report to my office for  
further instructions.

DUSTIN  
About this morning, it will never --

Alexsei strolls to the next cubicle.

ALEXSEI  
(to employee)  
No mobile phones during business  
hours.

DUSTIN  
Shit.

Dustin sheepishly saunters into --

## ALEXSEI'S OFFICE

*Cryptocurrency, genetics, and artificial technology books line glass bookshelves along the walls -- separated in various spots by portraits. Stacks of scientific journals sloppily blanket a small tea table beside two recliners. A well-kept, all-glass desk sits perched in the center.*

Alexsei stands in the far left corner, gazing at the vast metropolis through a transparent wall.

Dustin clears his throat, but Alexsei doesn't budge.

ALEXSEI  
Beautiful. Isn't it?

Alexsei places his hand against the wall -- it ripples to translucent.

DUSTIN  
Yeah.  
(after awkward silence)  
You wanted to see me?

ALEXSEI  
Are you wealthy?

They both sit at the desk.

DUSTIN  
Uh, well, I mean --

ALEXSEI  
It's a simple question really. Are  
you thriving where you're at?

Dustin shifts anxiously in his seat.

ALEXSEI (CONT'D)  
Are. you. rich?

DUSTIN  
No.

ALEXSEI  
Do you want to be?

Dustin gazes at Alexsei's smirk.

DUSTIN  
Uhh --

ALEXSEI  
Good. Here you go.

Alexsei hands Dustin a --

TABLET

"INITIATIVE 400"

appears on the screen.

BACK TO SCENE

DUSTIN  
What is this?

ALEXSEI  
Our latest health and wellness  
update. We want you to lead the  
trial and analysis.

DUSTIN  
(confident)  
Nice. Tell me more.

Dustin scans Alexsei's face for the punchline.

ALEXSEI

How's your diet?

(off Dustin's confusion)

Do you eat too much junk? Or  
procrastinate? Or spend your  
savings?

DUSTIN

All of the above... except  
procrastinate...

Alexsei chuckles.

ALEXSEI

Well, this is designed to help curb  
those temptations. You're pretty  
familiar with Zone Thirteen, right?

DUSTIN

Not really.

(off Alexsei's surprise)

I've travelled through though.

ALEXSEI

Well, I'm sure from what you've  
seen, drugs run rampant.

Dustin gives an approving shrug -- just smile and nod.

ALEXSEI (CONT'D)

This will help them too.

DUSTIN

This all sounds great.

ALEXSEI

Good. We have some volunteers  
that'll be helping us work out the  
kinks -- straighten out some loose  
ends.

Dustin stares at the tablet for a moment.

ALEXSEI (CONT'D)

Smile, Mr. Hemings. Two years of  
excellent work. You deserve this.

Dustin smiles...

DUSTIN

When do I start?

ALEXSEI  
 Immediately. The participants will  
 be arriving shortly. We will just  
 need to elevate your clearance.  
 Five minute procedure.

Dustin starts to stand.

ALEXSEI (CONT'D)  
 We will be providing you a million  
 coin bonus ... For the short  
 notice.  
 (off Dustin's  
 bewilderment)  
 And take the SBA desk. Recent  
 opening.

DUSTIN  
 Thank you so much.

Alexsei reaches to shake hands with him.

ALEXSEI  
 We can depend on you, right?

DUSTIN  
 Of course.

ALEXSEI  
 You're the perfect one for this  
 job.

Dustin grins from ear to ear.

DUSTIN  
 Thank you.

He strides through the opaque barrier... Lit.

I/E. STATE PENITENTIARY - SAME

*Layers of fence and bobbed wire enclose a massive stone  
 building. There's nothing high-tech about this building. It's  
 energy is still. It's aura.. black. Designed to break souls.*

CELL BLOCK

Three Prison Guards march into one of the cells. Commotion  
 echos as two books soar out of the cell.

One Prison Guard heaves a handcuffed teenager out of the  
 cell.

The second Prison Guard carries out a preteen restrained in full-body shackles. The third Prison Guard follows behind the rest, taser in hand.

They all round a corner to a --

HALLWAY

where Merritt, holding a pillow and bed sheets, trails behind a Prison Guard. He eyes the constrained teens as they pass -- subtly scanning his surroundings.

They settle in front of a cell with two bunk beds, a small toilet, and a sink. Merritt wanders to the only empty bed.

Quazion -- lean, stunning -- strolls into the cell.

QUAZION

Wassup man?

Merritt nods, then continues setting his bed.

Quazion approaches and reaches out his hand.

QUAZION (CONT'D)

Quazion, but people call me Q.

They shake hands.

MERRITT

Merritt.

QUAZION

Merritt? ... Have we met before?

Merritt gazes at Quazion.

MERRITT

No.

Quazion shrugs and plops onto the bed across from Merritt.

QUAZION

Well, welcome to paradise.

MERRITT

Thanks. How long have you been here?

QUAZION

Two weeks.

Merritt peers at the disheveled bunk beds.



MERRITT  
Where are they?

QUAZION  
Neverland.  
(off Merritt's confusion)  
They've just been shipping us off.

MERRITT  
(to himself)  
Us?

Lights out.

INT. SINAI "I" TOWER - TECHNICIAN OPERATING ROOM - SAME

Maya marches in and props against a desk.

Two stretchers, with body bags, loom ahead of her -- separated by a large rectangular black barrier on the ground. Her morose gaze shifts between stretchers as she slides on protective glasses.

MAYA  
You is smart. You is strong. You  
will not meltdown.

She slips gloves on with a POP.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
Alright. Who's first? ... You seem  
eager.

She approaches a stretcher and leans the tablet against a stand. A supply tray lays next to her -- the order isn't right. She shifts a few tools.

Reading off the tablet:

MAYA (CONT'D)  
Pseudo Sapien. Commercial Use. Shot  
to the chest. 15?

Maya unzips the body bag with one swift swoop. A teenager lays in front of her -- gunshot wound to his chest.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
Why?

Maya scalpels an incision over the blue dot behind his ear. She holds it open with a retractor, and extracts the biochip with a pair of forceps. The biochip glows as she places it in a vial.

On the --

TABLET

A green icon says: "Recycle"

BACK TO SCENE

MAYA

Lucky you.

Maya selects "Recycle." The stretcher lowers into the floor.

She places the vial in a holder on the desk -- replaces her gloves -- and ventures to the next body.

INT. STATE PENITENTIARY - PRISON CELL - CONTINUOUS

Merritt tosses and turns in his sleep.

Quazion blankly stares at the ceiling.

Merritt lets out a soft grunt.

Quazion peers at Merritt as he jolts awake.

QUAZION

You good?

MERRITT

Sorry. Nightmare.

Quazion chuckles...

QUAZION

How'd you end up here?

MERRITT

Armed robbery.

QUAZION

Where?

MERRITT

Union.

QUAZION

The bank?

(off Merritt)

Well, that was stupid.

Merritt shrugs.

MERRITT  
What about you?

QUAZION  
You don't wanna know.

Merritt gazes at Quazion.

MERRITT  
Was it worth it?

QUAZION  
Dreams are priceless.

MERRITT  
(hushed)  
... You're one of them?

They gaze at each other.

QUAZION  
One of who?

Abruptly, three PRISON GUARDS unlock their cell and walk in.

ALPHA PRISON GUARD  
Dawn. Johnson. Time to go.

Alpha (APG) and Beta (BPG) Prison Guards pull Merritt and Quazion out of bed.

QUAZION  
Go where?

The prison guards handcuff and yank them out of the cell.

INT. SINAI "I" TOWER - TECHNICIAN OPERATING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maya leans the tablet on the second stand.

She slides a supply tray closer and shifts the position of the same few tools.

Reading off the tablet:

MAYA  
Pseudo. Blank. Shot to the head.  
Blank. Blank. Blank ... What the fuck?

INT. STATE PENITENTIARY - CONTINUOUS

HALLWAY

Merritt and Quazion are escorted through a vault-styled steel door. They catch a glimpse of each other --

WARDEN'S OFFICE

The Prison Guards force Merritt and Quazion into seats opposite the WARDEN, 50s/60s.

WARDEN  
How are you young men doing?

QUAZION  
Livin' the dream.

Merritt nods his head.

WARDEN  
Well, I have some good news for you. The big O is offering express rehabilitation.

The Warden places touchpads in front of Merritt and Quazion.

QUAZION  
What's the catch?

WARDEN  
No catch. You can leave here today and begin rehabilitation at Sinai.

QUAZION  
For what?

The Warden's glare provides more answers than his struggling smile.

WARDEN  
They'll explain more when you get there.

QUAZION  
So just like that?

WARDEN  
(tensing)  
You don't have to go.  
(MORE)

WARDEN (CONT'D)  
If you want to rot in your cell,  
that can be arranged. We'd prefer  
that actually.

Quazion sits back in his seat -- skeptical, but curious.

The Warden's smile returns.

WARDEN (CONT'D)  
Place your right hand on the pad  
and start your path to freedom.

Merritt immediately places his hand on the pad. A  
polychromatic line traces his hand ... Green.

Quazion hesitantly places his hand on the touchpad. A  
polychromatic line traces his hand ... Red.. It locks onto  
the touchpad.

The Warden smirks.

WARDEN (CONT'D)  
Thought you looked familiar. How  
many of you are in here?  
(off Quazion's silence)  
Very well.

The Warden gestures to Merritt.

WARDEN (CONT'D)  
Send him on his way.

MERRITT  
(To Quazion)  
What are you doing?

Quazion ignores him.

APG yanks Merritt from behind. Merritt whips around ... steps  
on the chair ... and head-butts him.

Blood streams out of APG's nose.

MERRITT (CONT'D)  
Q!

The other guards subdue Merritt and hold him in place.

ALPHA PRISON GUARD  
Test him again!

The guards force Merritt's hand onto the touchpad. A  
polychromatic line traces his hand ... Green.

WARDEN  
Take him!

MERRITT  
(To Quazion)  
Come on man!

A golden portal ripples to life on a wall near them.

APG glares between Merritt and Quazion as they drag Merritt to the portal.

ALPHA PRISON GUARD  
Wait.

APG raises a *traditional glock pistol* flesh against Quazion's head.

Quazion glances at Merritt and cracks a smile.

**BLAOW.**

Merritt's panic shifts to confusion as metal shrapnel fly across the room...

APG approaches Merritt.

ALPHA PRISON GUARD (CONT'D)  
Convincing, aren't they?

Merritt spits in his face.

APG knocks him out.

INT. SINAI "I" TOWER - TECHNICIAN OPERATING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maya unzips the second body bag and swings the flap back -- revealing Quazion's mangled head.

She hyperventilates between gags.

Quazion is dressed and groomed differently than before -- but those blue eyes are unmistakeable.

Maya calms herself and searches behind both ears for the blue dot ... Nothing.

MAYA  
The fuck?

Maya continues to examine his head and neck. As she maneuvers him to his side, she spots a small triangle on the nape of his neck. She scalpels an incision and extracts what looks like a biochip -- a melting pot of colors radiate as she raises it to the light.

On the --

TABLET

A red icon says: "Dispose"

BACK TO SCENE

Maya looks between the tablet and the chip. She selects "Dispose" -- places the biochip in a vial -- and seals it.

The floor beneath Quazion tilts and dumps his body through the black rectangle in the floor.

Maya places the second vial in the holder.

INT. SINAI "S" TOWER - ANALYSIS - MOMENTS LATER

SENIOR BIOCHIP ANALYZER CUBICLE

Dustin sits and places the tablet on the cleaned desk. He logs into the --

COMPUTER

A news article pops up. The headline says:

"Disappearances Skyrocket:  
Footprints of A Dying Stronghold"

BACK TO SCENE

Dustin, confused, closes out of the webpage.

DAKOTA AGUILAR, 25 -- attention-seeker, rebellious, untrustworthy -- approaches the cubicle and grabs the tablet.

DAKOTA

Ayo.

DUSTIN

Oh hey. I just saw your sis on the loop.

Dakota rolls her eyes as she swipes through the tablet.

Dustin takes it back...

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
That's classified.

DAKOTA  
Always so dramatic.

She rolls her eyes again.

ALEXSEI (V.O.)  
Over here is the Analysis  
Department ...

Alexsei strolls into the room with the interns.

DUSTIN  
(To Dakota)  
You better get back.

DAKOTA  
My family built this place.

An Alexsei clone approaches from behind Dakota.

DAKOTA (CONT'D)  
I know where the bathroom is.

Dustin clears his throat.

ALEXSEI  
Hello Dakota ...

Dakota freezes.

ALEXSEI (CONT'D)  
... you will be notified when it's  
time for a break. Please return to  
the tour.  
(To Dustin)  
After your procedure, please report  
to AR-13.

The clone strides around the corner.

DAKOTA  
Procedure? Good luck.

DUSTIN  
Same.

Dakota rejoins the tour.

Dustin grabs his tablet.



HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Dustin strides down the hallway and stops at "Analysis Room 13."

The doorway is guarded by a red barrier. He places his hand on the touchpad ... green -- the doorway transitions to opaque.

GREGORY (O.C.)

Excuse me! How may I help you?

Dustin steps back as GREGORY STEINER, 30s/40s -- male, android w/human face, deceiving -- approaches him.

DUSTIN

Uh.. Hey. I was sent down here to --

GREGORY

Oh! Hello! Please provide your full name for verification.

DUSTIN

Dustin William Hemings.

Gregory's eyes glow...

GREGORY

Your identity has been confirmed.

Gregory reaches out to shake Dustin's hand.

Dustin returns the gesture.

DUSTIN

And, you?

GREGORY

Gregory Steiner. I've been assigned as your assistant.

Gregory hands Dustin a bound, disheveled folder of documents.

GREGORY (CONT'D)

Now we have lots to get done. This folder was provided by the penitentiary. Highly sensitive information.

DUSTIN

Penitentiary?

Dustin skims through the folder...

GREGORY  
Within, you'll find information for  
your first 15 --

DUSTIN  
Inmates?

GREGORY  
(off Dustin's reaction)  
We can depend on you, right?

DUSTIN  
Uh. Yeah. Definitely.

GREGORY  
Good. You're the perfect one for  
this job.

Dustin's eyebrows twitch when he hears it -- it has a  
sinister undertone this time.

GREGORY (CONT'D)  
Now, time is precious.

Gregory trots away.

ANALYSIS ROOM 13 - CONTINUOUS

Dustin enters to Merritt glaring at him. He freezes.

DUSTIN  
Sorry. Um ... How old are you?

Merritt doesn't budge.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
Just, one second.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dustin exits and scans for Gregory ... Nothing.

ANALYSIS ROOM 13 - CONTINUOUS

Dustin reenters and plants himself at the table -- briefly  
skimming the tablet and folder.

Merritt's gaze doesn't waver.

Dustin pushes the folder to the side.

DUSTIN  
What's your name?  
(off Merritt's silence)  
Last name?

Silence.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
Look. I need you to help me out.

Merritt jiggles the handcuffs on his wrists.

MERRITT  
Can you help me out?

DUSTIN  
Oh, I don't have ... I think it's  
best if you ... Let's just ...  
Good, you speak English.

Dustin swipes the surface of the tablet a few times.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
This looks like you ... Merritt  
Dawn?

Silence.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
(Mutters)  
Great.

Dustin languidly flips through the folder, then pushes it  
back to the far end of the table.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
(To Merritt)  
Not much is filled in. This'll be  
fun.

Dustin chuckles -- Merritt remains unamused.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
I'm just going to quick fire a few  
questions. Answer any ... Please.

Silence.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
Great. When's your birthday?

Silence.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
Where were you born?

Silence.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
Mother's name?

Silence.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
Father's?

Silence.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
Education ... or anything you want  
to tell me?

Silence.

Dustin peers at the empty slots on Merritt's file. He takes a deep breath.

On the --

TABLET

Under

"Convictions"

Dustin sees

"Attempted Armed Robbery."

BACK TO SCENE

DUSTIN  
Armed robbery? ... You want to tell  
me about that?

Merritt glares at Dustin.

MERRITT  
Is this an interrogation?

DUSTIN  
No. I just ...

Dustin leans closer to Merritt.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
Look, bro. I want to get through  
this just as bad as you. I'm trying  
to do this the easy way.

Merritt softens his gaze for a moment -- then jiggles his  
handcuffs.

Dustin sits back in his chair.

There's a knock at the doorway.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
(To Merritt)  
One second.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dustin exits to Gregory standing with two Officials, in all-  
black scrubs.

GREGORY  
Fifteen more participants just  
arrived. We need you to move  
faster.

Gregory hands Dustin another folder.

DUSTIN  
I just got in there, and most of  
this is... is he a minor?

GREGORY  
Verify it's him and take him to the  
diagnostic. That will give you most  
of the answers. The rest will be in  
the folders.

DUSTIN  
But --

GREGORY  
There's no time to interview each  
one. Who knows if you can even  
trust what they say?

DUSTIN  
Well if they lie --

GREGORY  
We can depend on you, right?

DUSTIN  
... Yeah, I got it.

Dustin walks back into --

ANALYSIS ROOM 13

DUSTIN  
(slightly annoyed)  
Time for testing.

MERRITT  
What?

DUSTIN  
We're on a time crunch.

The two officials walk in with a *hover chair*.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
(to officials)  
Hold on.  
(to Merritt)  
This will be way easier if you just  
cooperate.

MERRITT  
And what if I don't want to?

DUSTIN  
Well...

Dustin grabs the tablet and stands back.

One of the officials grabs Merritt's arm. He yanks it away and sits in the hover chair on his own. His gaze stays on Dustin as the officials lock him in.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Merritt and Dustin travel beside each other -- trailed by the officials.

Merritt observes his surroundings.

Dustin looks at the folder and tablet in his hand. He peers around him and down the hall.

DUSTIN  
I ... I forgot a folder.

Dustin places a hand on the pad next to "Analysis Room 15."

The doorway shifts from red to opaque.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
You guys go ahead.

As he walks away, Merritt gazes back at him.

Dustin strolls into --

ANALYSIS ROOM 13 - MOMENTS LATER

The folder sits on the far end of the table.

He picks it up and flips through it. Each page presents a kid/teenager of varying demographics.

He takes a deep breath.

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dustin swipes through the tablet as he strides down the tranquil hallway.

Dustin is enwrapped in the tablet as he enters --

ANALYSIS ROOM 15

An empty syringe breaks under his foot -- he halts.

He slowly looks up from the tablet and gawks at the supplies thrashed across the floor. Both Officials lay unconscious.

Dustin just stands there. Frozen. Terrified.

DUSTIN  
Fuck.

He presses on the blue dot behind his ear -- Merritt looms behind him. The lights in the room turn red and a siren **blares**.

Merritt clutches Dustin's shirt, and pushes a pen into his back.

MERRITT  
This will be way easier if you just cooperate.

DUSTIN  
Come on man --

MERRITT

Let's go.

Merritt yanks Dustin into the --

HALLWAY

He scans his surroundings as they hasten past rooms.

DUSTIN

We're just trying to --

MERRITT

Shut up.

They start to pass a maintenance room.

MERRITT (CONT'D)

There we go. Open it.

Dustin, confused, places his hand on the touchpad ... green.

The doorway becomes translucent.

MAINTENANCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Merritt shoves Dustin inside and places him in a corner, facing the wall. He digs the pen further into Dustin's back.

DUSTIN

Take it easy --

MERRITT

Don't move.

Merritt runs over to a table *littered with rags, paint, paint thinner, cleaning supplies, and other random tools.*

He rummages through a pile of boxes and removes a double-edged razor from one.

DUSTIN

You're wasting your time. You won't make it past the elevators.

Merritt grabs another box and removes two matches.

MERRITT

I'm not taking the elevator.

He pulls a syringe and empty vial out of his pocket.



MERRITT (CONT'D)  
Who's in charge here?

Merritt extracts some paint thinner and fills the vial.

DUSTIN  
I am.

MERRITT  
(laughing)  
No. Really.

He shoves the vial up his rectum.

DUSTIN  
Seriously.

MERRITT  
No. They're up in an office  
somewhere.

He creeps toward Dustin.

MERRITT (CONT'D)  
Who do you answer to?

Dustin senses Merritt approaching -- he grabs a metal tray next to him and clocks Merritt.

He tries to grab Merritt, as he stumbles to catch his balance, but can't get a firm grip on him.

Merritt swings around -- bodyslams Dustin to the ground -- and shoves the pen further into his back.

MERRITT (CONT'D)  
I don't want to hurt you, bro.

Merritt slams the pen down in front of Dustin's face.

MERRITT (CONT'D)  
(hushed)  
Please forgive me.

Dustin eyes the pen -- it was a bluff.

Merritt puts the razor and matches in his mouth as he saunters out to the --

HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Dustin darts out to Merritt kneeling with his hands up. Officials rush up and push him down to detain him.

As they lift him up, Dustin spots a brown patch on Merritt's forehead... it shifts back to his skin tone.

MERRITT  
(To Dustin)  
See you tomorrow.

The Officials drag Merritt away.

DUSTIN  
Search him!

Out of nowhere, Gregory appears next to Dustin.

GREGORY  
Exciting day. Huh?

Dustin flinches.

DUSTIN  
Yeah, uh. I don't know if this is  
for --

GREGORY  
You're the perfect one --

DUSTIN  
Yeah, you keep ... Look, this isn't  
what I signed up for.

Gregory's eyes glow as he processes this information.

GREGORY  
Alexsei would like to speak to you  
in his office.

Dustin scoffs and marches off.

ALEXSEI'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Dustin charges into the office.

DUSTIN  
Ok, so ...

Alexsei isn't in the room.

A light reflecting off a glass structure on a bookshelf grabs Dustin's attention -- he approaches. On the far side, it looks like a boat.

Alexsei strolls in.

ALEXSEI  
Curiosity's a dangerous friend.

Dustin flinches.

DUSTIN  
Sorry, I was just --

ALEXSEI  
Anything I have to hide won't be on display.

DUSTIN  
Oh no, I wasn't --

ALEXSEI  
(chuckling)  
I'm joking.

Alexsei approaches the bookcase.

ALEXSEI (CONT'D)  
Beautiful, isn't she?

Dustin  
Yeah.

ALEXSEI  
Grandpap's legacy. Have a seat.

Alexsei sits in one of the recliners.

Dustin catches another glance of the --

#### GLASS STRUCTURE

*This side the boat reveals a model cruise-city equipped with restaurants, farms, living quarters, amusement parks, trains, etc. The massive stature of the ship would fit tens of thousands of people.*

*Engraved on a plaque at the bottom of the structure is the word:*

"AEQUI"

#### BACK TO SCENE

Dustin slides into the other recliner.

DUSTIN  
I don't know if I --

ALEXSEI

This was my fault.

(off Dustin's puzzlement)

It was ambitious of me to think the first day would run smoothly. What can I do to help you?

Dustin initially searches for his words, but it eventually just spills out like vomit.

DUSTIN

I could use more time. I could use more assistants. I could use more security ... This software could alter the physiological makeup of their brains. You can't expect me to just do this without thoroughly analyzing each participant. Especially seeing as we also seem to be testing this on minors -- which is morally questionable. And ...

Dustin abruptly stops talking.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)

Sorry, I just ...

Alexsei rises and meanders to the translucent wall. He lays his hand on it -- it slowly ripples to transparent.

ALEXSEI

Come.

Dustin approaches.

ALEXSEI (CONT'D)

The minds of the youth are so valuable, you know? A single generation can shift the course of an entire civilization.

Alexsei looks at Dustin.

ALEXSEI (CONT'D)

Do you have kids?

DUSTIN

No.

ALEXSEI

Yes. Yes you do.

Alexsei gazes out the window.

ALEXSEI (CONT'D)

These are our children. We are responsible for their health and safety, by any means necessary ... This software will help us all.

DUSTIN

But --

ALEXSEI

Everything we do is for a better tomorrow. You have a chance to help change people's lives.

MERRITT'S SLEEPING QUARTERS - SAME

Merritt is thrown into a room that resembles a psychiatric jail cell -- there is a *single twin bed, a small sink, a toilet, and padded walls.*

The only source of light comes from the meal slot in the door.

ALEXSEI (V.O.)

You have a chance to change the course of that troubled boy's life.

Merritt looks toward the door and smiles... razor perched between his teeth.

The meal slot shuts.

INT. SINAI "S" TOWER - ALEXSEI'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Alexsei glances back at Dustin.

ALEXSEI

You have a chance to change the course of your own life. Are you really going to pass that up?

Long pause as Dustin locks eyes with Alexsei.

MAYA (V.O.)

And? What'd you say?!

EXT. OMNION NATIONAL PARK - AFTERNOON

Dustin and Maya smoke a blunt with their feet dangling off a cliff.

The vast Omnion stretches as far as the eye can see.

DUSTIN

I said fuck you, where's my money?

Maya bursts out laughing.

MAYA

You ain't say that.

A smile breaks across Dustin's face.

DUSTIN

He offered a higher bonus, six months of housing services, another assistant, and added two weeks to the trial.

MAYA

Shit! Can I get beat up too?

DUSTIN

Alright, chill. I didn't get beat --

MAYA

You whole time got beat up by a kid.

DUSTIN

He wasn't a kid --

MAYA

I've known you since 13. You're smart, not tough.

They both chuckle, then peer back out at Omnion.

DUSTIN

I've just ... It's a lot ...

MAYA

What?

He shakes his head.

DUSTIN

You ever just think about all this?  
... Omnion, Aequisun, --

MAYA

No. I smoke.

Maya hands Dustin the blunt -- he takes a long drag.

DUSTIN  
It used to be a boat.  
(off Maya's confusion)  
Aequisun. He had a model of a boat  
with Aequi on it.

MAYA  
What made you think of ...

DUSTIN  
The past few days have just felt --

MAYA  
Chaotic?

DUSTIN  
... like deja vu.

Maya hesitantly pulls a vial out of her pocket. The biochip  
seems to bleed vibrant colors within the vial.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
What is that?

MAYA  
A chip I found in a Pseudo.

DUSTIN  
In a pseudo?

Maya nods her head.

MAYA  
One of ten. Had to destroy the  
others. Check it out. Might explain  
--

DUSTIN  
This is from Sinai?

MAYA  
Can't be. Never seen anything like  
it.

Dustin holds the vial up to the sun. The colors radiate  
inside.

Maya's phone starts ringing. It's an incoming call from:  
UNKNOWN.

DUSTIN  
I kept getting those this morning.  
Just ignore it.

The phone goes silent, then starts ringing again -- Maya answers.

MAYA  
Hello?

DUSTIN  
We don't want none!

They both giggle.

Confusion sweeps across Maya's face.

MAYA  
What?

Maya looks at Dustin.

MAYA (CONT'D)  
Yeah ... It's for you.

Maya passes the phone.

DUSTIN  
(To Maya)  
Who is it?

Maya shrugs.

DUSTIN (CONT'D)  
Hello? ... Aseema?

Bewilderment strikes his face.

I/E. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Aseema, in all black with just her eyes exposed, looks at the driver and nods.

Next to her, Quazion's electric blue eyes gaze forward.

EXT. OMNION - CONTINUOUS

The same car as earlier zooms off into the air.

Through a layer of birds ... past the flying cars and trucks ... beyonds the clouds ... to the edge of the atmosphere is a thin opaque barrier.

On the other side -- water ... everywhere.

Omnion, a massive opaque dome, is perched on the ocean floor.



Whales and other exotic marine animals whoosh by. The higher the altitude, the smaller the fish.

Life ends when the water becomes murky. The higher the altitude, the darker the hue.

Above the water's surface is a barren wasteland. Fires and lava flow as far as the eye can see.

Earth...

FADE TO BLACK.