

SCARAB

By

David Welsh

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OVER BLACK

Super - "Unless we learn how to prepare for, and avoid the potential risks, AI could be the worst event in the history of our civilization. It brings dangers, like powerful autonomous weapons, or new ways for the few to oppress the many." Stephen Hawking, November 6, 2017

FADE TO

CIRCULAR SOLUTIONS PRESENTATION

Music - Triumphant horns and swirling violins introduce an excited pizzicato tempo which persists throughout the graphic presentation.

Graphics - The Circular Solutions logo dissolves into a globe encircled by interconnecting lines which dissolve into a close up of a camera lens which dissolves into a street scene comprised of the lightly tinted outlines of automobiles and human figures which dissolves into the outline of a human brain in which the grooves and furrows are depicted as lines of binary data.

FEMALE NARRATOR (O.S.)

Welcome to Circular Solutions. Your single-source answer for the active observation and evaluation of human behavior.

Graphics - Various banks of video monitors and technicians, colored charts, graphs, and spreadsheet tables, translucent displays of formulas, geometric shapes, and algorithm equations, moving vehicles and pedestrians, and clusters of executive meetings, tactically equipped law enforcement formations, and shopping mall scenes.

FEMALE NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Based on machine learning and backed by a deep neural network, our algorithms provide facial recognition, movement monitoring, and risk assessment data mining services to our municipal and private sector partners.

Graphics - Illustrated street grids, industrial and civil defense icons, shots of public transit stations, power plants, refineries, and protesting crowd scenes.

FEMALE NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Strategically located tactical
response stations mean zero-
distance proximity and maximum
response times for any
unanticipated utility failure,
operational mishap, or social
disturbance.

Graphics - Quick cuts: People bracketed by floating boxes
containing metadata, 360-degree rotating headshots, personnel
folders open to reveal headshots and biodata, two men talking
at a sidewalk café, a girl with a smartphone, a couple
walking along a boardwalk.

FEMALE NARRATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
From enforcing approved travel
zones to providing by-the-second
situational analysis, our tracking
and profile technologies provide
proactive real-time assistance when
evaluating new hires, criminal
behavior, or that first date.

Graphics - A globe encircled by interconnecting lines
dissolves into the Circular Solutions logo.

FEMALE NARRATOR (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Circular Solutions, your global
surveillance and security partner,
guarantees a stable, safe, and
threat-free community lifestyle.

Music builds to a crescendo then fades.

Graphics - The image freezes on the Circular Solutions logo.

MATCH CUT

INT. GOD CENTER - DAY

CLOSE ON - The Circular Solutions logo.

ROEHN (O.C.)
What do you think?

THE SHOT TRACKS BACK - REVEALING a floor-to-ceiling screen
displaying the Circular Solutions logo.

The screen dwarfs the dark expanse of a control room
illuminated only by screens and keyboards.

The room is appointed with equipment racks and tiered platforms jammed with rows of work stations and shoulder-to-shoulder TRACKERS each staring intently at their terminals where they surveille individuals, safeguard locations, and analyze streams of AI algorithmic meta data.

Etched into the black metal partition above the screen is the word "GOD".

TUDOR ROEHN, (20s), Systems Manager, GOD Center stands silhouetted before the giant screen.

A Tracker off Roehn's right shoulder perks up.

TRACKER

What's to think. It's corporate.
It's better than the old one - Less
Orwellian more infomercial. But
they don't mention Andrew Hampton.

ROEHN

That's not even close to funny.

TRACKER

The daddy of artificial
intelligence deserves some credit.
I mean his software became our
operating system. The brain of the
beast.

ROEHN

He's a vegetable. They don't give
credit to vegetables.

TRACKER

Right. But what about Scarab?

ROEHN

More not funny.

TRACKER

I'm just yanking ya. But seriously,
that dooms day ciphertext can't be
decrypted without a key. Scarab
could be sitting in a binary file
just waiting to wreak havoc. Aren't
you even a little bit worried?

ROEHN

What I'm worried about is
authenticating Brewer. It's coming
up on twenty-three hundred hours.

TRACKER
Oh, shit. Docking Hillside, now.

The screen blinks.

A street scene appears.

An autonomous bus pulls away from the curb, FELECIA BREWER, (20's), Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN), walks up a driveway to a building set back from the street.

TRACKER (CONT'D)
Sweet.

Instructions and commands are often followed by rapid keyboard tapping and hard terminating key strikes.

ROEHN
Tag her.

A wire-frame mesh is superimposed over brewer's face.

TRACKER
Tagged.

ROEHN
Confirm ID.

TRACKER
Brewer, Felecia, LVN, Hillside
Assisted Living Center. New hire.
Classification private with a care
assignment ...wait For it. No shit?
Guess who? Andrew Hampton.

ROEHN
Old news. Now, shut up and track
her.

Red blinking brackets replace the wire-frame mesh.

TRACKER
And tracking.

Date, time, background stats, and biometric mood-sensing metadata scrolls at the bottom of the screen.

ROEHN
Stay on her.

TRACKER
If only.

Brewer reaches the Hillside Assisted Living Center. The word Hillside is etched into the lintel above a pair of automatic glass doors.

TRACKER (CONT'D)
What kind of job is that? Watching
a veg all night.

ROEHN
It beats sitting here listening to
you jabber.

TRACKER
Is that even a word?

Brewer enters the lobby.

CLOSE ON Brewer.

Straight back metal and fabric chairs sit in conversational groupings. Framed digital art continuously morph abstract patterns of shapes and colors.

A bank of monitors fills one wall, display patient rooms and corridors.

Brewer walks down a long corridor.

ROEHN (O.S.)
Time on-site?

TRACKER (O.S.)
Twenty-two, fifty-six hours.

ROEHN (O.S.)
Suspend tracking.

TRACKER (O.S.)
Done.

The red brackets disappear.

Roehn watches as Brewer walks down the corridor.

ROEHN (O.C.)
She's on 'til when?

TRACKER (O.C.)
Zero eight hundred.

Brewer approaches the nurses station.

ROEHN (O.C.)
OK. You have the helm. I'll be in
the pit. Call with questions. But
if you do you die.

TRACKER (O.C.)
Right. Good night.

MATCH CUT

Brewer enters the NURSE'S STATION comprised of another bank
of monitors observing selected rooms, a counter top on which
sits a network terminal, and lower drawers and cabinets.

INT. NURSES STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Brewer sets her coffee on the counter.

Faint, distant shouting is heard.

A commotion on one of the monitors catches Brewer's eye -
attendants grapple with a patient.

INSERT - Monitor - Attendants grapple with a patient.

BACK TO SCENE

Brewer does not see NAN HAYES, RN, (50's), Shift Supervisor
approach from behind.

HAYES (O.C.)
That's Mister Miller in five.

BACK TO SCENE

Brewer gasps and turns.

BREWER
What?

HAYES
Sorry about that. He tried to hang
himself with his catheter. Again.

BREWER
Oh, my.

HAYES
So. You're Felicia?

BREWER
Yes, ma'am.

HAYES

I'm Nan. You've know the routine?

BREWER

Yes, ma'am.

HAYES

It's usually pretty quiet. Except for Mister Miller. Leave him to me. You're Mister Hampton is in two. He's a PVS patient as you know. We'll talk suctioning and H.S. when I get caught up. He needs his nails trimmed. Just touch-up his hands. His feet look fine. The kits in the drawer, there.

BREWER

Great. I'll check his cath, too. While I'm at it.

HAYES

You do that. Surprise me. He hasn't moved an inch in years.

INT. HAMPTON'S ROOMM - MOMENTS LATER

ANDREW HAMPTON, (78), lies quietly on his back covered by a white sheet. A tracheostomy plate is strapped around his neck. A tube runs from the plate to a saline nebulizer and humidifier placed on a nearby side table.

Brewer enters and sits at Hampton's bedside. She zips open the manicure kit, turns and sets the clippers, buffer block, and nail file on the side table.

Hampton slowly stirs. He removes the tube from the trachea plate, blocks his airway with a finger, and speaks.

HAMPTON

(Clearing his throat)

Not too short.

Brewer turns.

BREWER

Sure. What?

Brewer screams.

FLASHBACK MONTAGE

EXT. URBAN SIDEWALK - DAY

- BREE, (10), and JEFFREY HARLOW(8), and watch from the front porch of as workmen in a cherry picker fasten a surveillance camera to a shiny new street pole in front of their run down tan and white duplex.

INSERT - News feed - workmen fasten a security camera to a shiny new street pole.

REPORTER (V.O.)

Officials are calling the new urban security system a vast improvement over outdated manned patrol units.

INSERT - Years later - College Campus - Bree Harlow, wearing a college press pass speaks into a video recorder as Jeffrey, leading a group of free speech protestors, face off against riot police as they are swallowed by clouds of teargas.

HARLOW

The pending legislation establishing curfews and limits to social gathering is being met with widespread opposition.

INSERT - Years later - City Street - As heavy-lift military cargo helicopters dangling antenna laden surveillance masts fan out over-head, armed Tactical Response Officers in tactical fatigues (TR) fire live rounds into a large group of masked and shielded protesters. As Jeffrey goes down, Bree Harlow's TV news crew is engulfed by the stampeding crowd.

HARLOW (CONT'D)

Overhead, the new intelligent surveillance system is being deployed while below, tactical response officers are fanning out across the city to protect public and private property.

INSERT - Present day - Bree Harlow, Managing Editor, approaches the Verbatim Press Building Exterior. A large, overhead wall-mounted TV projection streams blaring news headlines.

NEWS READER (V.O.)

Operation Peace and Prosperity is five years old, today. The successful campaign marked the end of violent street protests and social unrest.

BACK TO SCENE

MATCH CUT - Suddenly, Harlow spots Jeffrey standing in the ally across the street and she stops.

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Jeffrey smiles and gently waves then steps back into the darkness.

EXT. VERBATIM ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Harlow turns and enters the building.

INT. VERBATIM LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

At the far end of the lobby stands a floor-to-ceiling frosted glass wall. Etched into the glass above double doors are the words "Verbatim Press".

INT. OPEN-FLOOR OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

The glass door is etched "Managing Editor". Harlow sits behind her desk as ELWYN ROACH, (30s) City Desk Editor and MOLLY MCAFREE, (20s), Editorial Page Editor enter.

HARLOW

I thought you were going with the power plant story.

ROACH

Right. Access to the substation is limited to essential traffic. The harder lithium is to come by, the longer it's going to take to upgrade that plant. Detour routes will remain in effect for the foreseeable future.

MCAFREE

You're rambling.

HARLOW

(To McAfree)

So. What is the problem?

MCAFREE

He wants to lead with "cyber-terrorist awakes".

ROACH
Franklin Gothic. Twenty points. All caps.

HARLOW
I don't think so.

MCAFREE
Exactly.

ROACH
Andrew Hampton, the great data dumper has stirred. Thirty-five years in a coma, then one day you ask for tea?

MCAFREE
It was a chocolate shake.

ROACH
Look, it's already on the street. Question. How do you live in a comma for thirty-five years? Answer. You sleep a lot.

HARLOW
Moving on.

MCAFREE
Andrew Hampton was not a terrorist? He was non-violent. A beacon of social justice.

ROACH
Yeah. A beacon who hacked the defense department and dumped three million classified pages into the online spew.

MCAFREE
So, says the propaganda parrot.

ROACH
OK. What about scarab? A doomsday virus hidden on the network. Hampton wrote it. It could blackout the grid at any moment?

MCAFREE
That's an urban myth. Like the white rabbit, your resume, and free speech.

ROACH

What if it's real, Chief? Do you want to be the last one to cover this?

MCAFREE

If scarab is real, then the blackout is real, and she won't be able to post the story, anyway! Why? Oh! Because there will be a blackout!

ROACH

Hampton got life then tried to hang himself with a braided bedsheet. That little trick landed him in a coma. Now, he's awake. That's no myth! Apparently, he wasn't very good at the Havana twist.

MCAFREE

Is that right? Why don't you show us how it's done.

ROACH

Suicide is illegal. Remember?

MCAFREE

A lot of things are illegal. Like thinking. But you should try it sometime!

Harlow glares at McAfree.

HARLOW

That's enough! Do you trust the people in this room? I mean, with your life? I don't. But I do want to leave here today and return to do my job tomorrow. You need to decide if you want that too. If you don't. If you want to come in here every day and risk being detained for questioning or sent to a reprogramming camp or worse then leave now. I'm sure they can fill your chair with someone who knows when to shut up and not put others at risk. This is your chance. Speak up.

McAfree is mute.

HARLOW (CONT'D)
Fine. Were going with hacker
awakes.

MCAFREE
Really?

ROACH
Soft. But, thanks' Chief.

HARLOW
Don't touch the scarab bit. She's
right. It's probably crap. I want
proofs and banners in ten minutes.
Now. Unless there's something more.
No? Good. Go!

FLASHBACK MONTAGE

EXT. HIGH-RISE UPPER BALCONY - DAY

- RANDALL ARTIMUS, (10), and his Lieutenant General FATHER
watch below as workmen in a cherry picker fasten a
surveillance cameras to a shiny new street pole.

INSERT - Workmen fasten a surveillance camera to a shiny new
street pole.

GENERAL ARTIMUS (O.C.)
Remember, this. If we can't see you
we can't keep you safe.

- Years later - Campus Lecture Hall - Artimus, dressed in a
Military Cadet uniform, looks out the window as student
protestors face off against riot police.

INSTRUCTOR (O.C.)
When freedom of speech threatens
anarchy, preserving social order
becomes the duty of the state.

- Years later - As an antenna-laden mast dangles beneath a
heavy-lift gunship helicopter, Lieutenant Artimus watches
from the open door as tactical response troops fire live
rounds into a large group of masked and shielded protesters.

PILOT (O.C.)
(To Artimus' headset)
A few hundred of these fuckers and
their online chatter will be
history.

- Present day - Randall Artimus, Director of Surveillance, walks down a black granite lobby past an wall ablaze with TV monitors streaming news headlines and social commentary.

NEWS READER

The city awoke today to the news
that the worlds most famous hacker
also woke up - after thirty years
in a vegetative state.

Artimus turns down the corridor on his right then approaches the first unmarked door on his left. He stands before a retinal scan.

NEWS READER (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Hampton's resurrection so stunned
his attending nurse that she
remains under sedation.

BACK TO SCENE

MATCH CUT - A thin blade of light passes over his face. The door slides open. He enters. The door slides close.

INT. GOD CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

The screen displays the Circular Solutions logo.

Trackers chatting at their stations grow silent when Artimus enters and stares up at the screen.

ARTIMUS

Rack his room.

The screen blinks. Hampton's private room appears.

ROEHN

There you go.

CLOSE ON - the screen.

Hampton is alone, resting quietly in a hoverchair. He is covered by a lap blanket. His trachea plate has been removed.

ARTIMUS (O.C.)

He's looking awfully smug.

BACK TO SCENE

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)

They'll pull his teeth to get him
to talk about scarab. Were
sanitizing. Right?

ROEHN

Yes, Sir. A network-wide scrub of blogs, comments, and posts. Any reference to HAMPTON or the word scarab is being deleted.

ARTIMUS

Syntax interpreters?

ROEHN

Any mention of one hundred twenty synonymic variables of the word awake from awakening to vigilant are being reviewed.

ARTIMUS

What's the elapsed time since the nurse posted?

ROEHN

Seven hours thirty-two minutes. When he started talking she didn't know what to do. He scared the shit out of her.

ARTIMUS

No telling how long he's been awake. And that poor, oblivious girl.

ROEHN

She did tell her supervisor.

Artimus taps and holds up his PDD.

INSERT - Artimus' PDD

Its a selfie of Brewer and a smiling Hampton.

ARTIMUS (O.C.)

But not before she posted.

BACK TO SCENE

ROEHN

Right.

ARTIMUS

She just had to text.

ROEHN

No, Sir.

A faint tone. Artimus looks at his left wrist. INSERT - Artimus' wristwatch.

TEXT - "Now, Mister Artimus."

BACK TO SCENE

ARTIMUS
That didn't take long.

Artimus turns to leave.

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)
Well. Stay on him.

ROEHN (O.C.)
Like a rash.

ARTIMUS
Fuck!

INT. KRAV MAGA STUDIO - DAY

Locker Room.

Harlow is changing out of her athletic attire.

KATE DAVIS, (30's) approaches from across the locker room.

DAVIS
Bree? Bree Harlow?

HARLOW
Who wants me?

DAVIS
It's me, silly.

HARLOW
Kathleen Davis.

DAVIS
You're a member here?

HARLOW
Barely. It was this or a three
martini lunch. How are you?

DAVIS
I just moved back to town and
needed a good sweat.

HARLOW

Well. This is the place for it.

DAVIS

And look at you. You look fabulous. Seriously. How are you. And how is that brother of yours? Don't tell me. Jeffrey. Right?

HARLOW

That's right. He...

DAVIS

He never knew, but I had such a crush on him. Don't go telling him, now.

HARLOW

I promise I wont. What brings you back to...

DAVIS

I remember you and he were such a team. Going to change the world. What was that you used to say? Don't tell me. Oh. Yea. A writer and a fighter.

HARLOW

That was...

DAVIS

So. Where are you, now? Don't tell me. You're CEO of something. Right?

HARLOW

Editor in chief, actually.

DAVIS

Really? That's impressive. Of what? Don't tell me. Some fashion pub. Right?

HARLOW

Verbatim Press.

DAVIS

Really?

HARLOW

Really.

DAVIS
Well. How interesting. You can
certainly make a difference, there.
Can't you.

HARLOW
I do what...

DAVIS
Look. I only had a minute. Perhaps
we'll run into each other, again,
soon.

HARLOW
I'm sure of it...

DAVIS
Well. Ok. Good. Nice seeing you.
By.

Davis rushes off as if Harlow had the plague.

HARLOW
Nice seeing you.

INT. COMMAND PORTAL - LATER

Artimus stands before a full-length thermal imager with biotelemetry monitors along one edge that continuously display the subject's vital sign parameters.

Its reflective surface has the subject staring at an image of themselves.

WHEN ACTIVATED, THE PORTAL'S BORDER GLOWS TEAL TURNING THE AIR AROUND THE PERSON SPEAKING A FAINT PALE GREEN.

A LEAN, ANEMIC, EXPRESSIONLESS AVATAR ALWAYS APPEARS ON THE SCREEN.

Artimus checks his breath, thinks that was a stupid move, shifts his shoulders, and sighs nervously.

ARTIMUS
This is Randall Artimus. ID Seven,
Four, Nine, Two, Six.

The portal lights up.

The expressionless avatar appears.

AVATAR
Thank you for your promptness.

ARTIMUS

Of course.

AVATAR

We need your assurance that any online traffic regarding Mister Hampton including any linking or sharing of any image, topic, phrase, or word even remotely referencing Mr. Hampton, Ms. Brewer, the Hillside Facility, or the word scarab will be contained.

ARTIMUS

The entire network is being sanitized as we speak.

(Pause)

Dealing with Hampton is another matter.

AVATAR

Providing Mister Hampton palliative care while in a vegetative state demonstrated compassion and restraint.

ARTIMUS

I agree.

AVATAR

However, it is quite another matter, now that he is awake. He is quite fragile, is he not. Perhaps too fragile to survive renewed interrogation.

ARTIMUS

How you handle Hampton will either answer questions or create social unrest.

INSERT - Crematorium.

Brewer's naked body drops onto a form fitting wire basket joining a long row of body-filled basket moving along a conveyor into the mouth of a burning furnace.

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)

He's not an invisible nurses aid. He'll be missed. And that will make my job harder.

BACK TO SCENE

AVATAR
Your job is to prevent unauthorized
information from seeping into the
media stream.

ARTIMUS
I understand that. But...

AVATAR
Good. Thank you.

The portal dims.

ARTIMUS
Right... and thank you.

Artimus turns and walks down a long dark corridor lit by
staggered pools of light.

MATCH CUT

INT. GOD CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Artimus continues to move down the dimly lit corridor.

THE SHOT TRACKS BACK TO - A lurking Roehn silueted by the
giant screen.

INT. BAILEY STATION LOCKER ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The decommissioned underground rapid rail station is dank and
dark.

Archaic crown molding and wainscoting betray the age of the
room. Along one wall, above a heavy steel door, inlaid
ceramic tile lettering spells out "Bailey Station". Ancient
steel lockers line another wall covered with childish
graffiti. Opposite the lockers, shower nozzles protrude from
a cinder block wall. Adjacent the showers, a row of toilet
stalls line the wall.

Dim lighting from a table lamp reveals several cot scattered
along a far wall laden with packs, pouches, and assorted
stores.

Jeffrey, NUMBER TWO, and NUMBER THREE sit at the table.
Jeffrey types on a tablet with a laser projected virtual
keyboard.

A faint tone.

Jeffrey looks at his wristwatch.

INSERT - Jeffrey's wristwatch.

TEXT - "Must move him NOW!"

BACK TO SCENE

Jeffrey stands.

NUMBER TWO
That didn't take long.

JEFFREY
Make the preparations we discussed.
He's old so extra blankets and
nutrapaks will help.

NUMBER THREE
Nutrapaks. Jesus. You think he'll
eat 'em?

NUMBER TWO
He will if he wants to live.

JEFFREY
That's the question. Isn't it.

Jeffrey goes to the door, grabs a jacket hanging on a nail and leaves.

INT. OPEN-FLOOR OFFICE - LATER

Harlow sits reading.

McAfree enters.

HARLOW
They've killed the Hampton story.

MCAFREE
I know. Roach told me. What a
perfect name. I know he thinks I
was defending Hampton, but I'm just
trying to get to the truth. As much
of it as I'm allowed.

HARLOW
I know.

MCAFREE

How do you face the wall everyday?
It's impenetrable. I mean, what are
the odds of putting a dent in it?

HARLOW

Sometimes I wonder.

MCAFREE

No matter. There is an upside.

HARLOW

Tell me.

MCAFREE

At least, I still have all my
fingers.

INT. HAMPTON'S ROOMM - LATER

Hampton still sits in his hoverchair.

The door swings open and a nurse enters. She begins to
straighten his bed.

HAMPTON

You're the quiet one.

The nurse does not respond.

She touches the sill and a window slides open.

HAMPTON (CONT'D)

See. I knew that.

They hear distant shouting.

The nurse takes notice.

HAMPTON (CONT'D)

Someone's not taking their meds.

The nurse approaches the door which swings open. She quickly
leaves as the door closes behind her.

INT. HILLSIDE CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

A GUARD stands at Hampton's door.

The commotion gets louder.

GUARD
What's up?

NURSE
Sounds like Mister Miller, again.

The Nurse heads toward the commotion.
Other NURSES AND AIDS scramble past the guard.
The sounds of commotion turn into sounds of chaos.
The Guard debates.

GUARD
Shit.

INT. GOD CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

The screen displays the corridor in front of Hampton's door.
An Tracker watches as the guard follows the group down the corridor.

TRACKER
What the fuck?

BACK TO:

INT. HAMPTON'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Hampton is listening to the commotion.
The door begins to open.

BACK TO:

INT. GOD CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

The screen displays Hampton's door slowly open.
Jeffrey is not seen entering Hampton's room.
The door swings closed.

TRACKER
Seriously. What the fuck!

The screen blinks.
Hampton private room appears.

Hampton is sitting quietly in his hoverchair.

MATCH CUT

INT. HAMPTON'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Hampton sits in his hoverchair.

JEFFREY
Mister Hampton?

HAMPTON
Good guess.

JEFFREY
How are you doing?

HAMPTON
I'm fine. How are you?

JEFFREY
I need you to put this on.

Jeffrey slips a slender cord on which hangs an amulet over Hampton's head.

HAMPTON
I'd prefer a string of pearls.

INSERT - Jeffrey's thumb and forefinger squeezing the amulet.

BACK TO:

INT. GOD CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

The screen displays Hampton suddenly disappear from his hoverchair.

The control room breaks into shouts of surprise and disbelief.

TRACKER
What the fuck is in my tea!

BACK TO:

INT. HAMPTON'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

JEFFREY
How about you and I go for a ride?

HAMPTON
As long as I don't miss lunch. It's
Soilent Green, today.

Jeffrey grips the handles of the hoover chair and steers it
toward the door.

BACK TO:

INT. GOD CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

The screen displays the empty hoverchair moving toward the
door.

TRACKER
I have got to be high!

The Tracker types.

An alarm cracks the air and begins to cycle.

The PA blares.

TRACKER (CONT'D)
HAMPTON is on the run, people! I'm
tracking! Wake up everybody!

BACK TO:

INT. HAMPTON'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The door swings open.

HAMPTON
You're not here for my bath, are
you?

JEFFREY
I'm afraid not.

HAMPTON
OK, then. Who are you?

JEFFREY
I'm Number One.

HAMPTON
Well. I'm seventy-nine.

Jeffrey steers the hoverchair through the door, then turns
left.

The door closes.

BACK TO:

INT. GOD CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

The screen displays the empty hoverchair moving down the corridor.

The chaos in the GOD Center continues out of control.

BACK TO:

INT. NURSES' STATION - MOMENTS LATER

Jeffrey swiftly pushes Hampton past the nurses station and the bank of monitors

- THE NURSES STATION MONITOR DISPLAYS THE EMPTY HOVERCHAIR WHIZZING BY.

BACK TO:

INT. GOD CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Roehn rushes in screaming commands.

The screen displays the empty hoverchair passing the nurses station.

Papers lying on the counter fly in a flurry.

ROEHN

Holy shit!

TRACKER

Someone's ghosting.

ROEHN

I can see that! Confirm site lockdown.

BACK TO:

INT. LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Jeffrey and Hampton enter the lobby.

An alarms begins screaming.

NUMBER ONE

Uh-oh!

HAMPTON

They're on to us!

BACK TO:

INT. GOD CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

The screen displays the empty hoverchair careening into the lobby.

Roehn grabs a headset and begins barking orders.

ROEHN

Activate... Kill that fucking thing.

The alarm stops.

ROEHN (CONT'D)

Activate GSM detectors.

TRACKER

GSM detectors activated in three, two, one. CCD sensors are hot.

ROEHN

I want a fleet of drones in the air, now!

BACK TO:

INT. LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Jeffrey and Hampton pass through the lobby.

- THE BANK OF MONITORS DISPLAYS THE EMPTY HOVERCHAIR MOVING TOWARD THE GLASS DOORS.

HAMPTON

Oh!, Look! We're cloaked like the Klingons! However, I would slow down a smidge.

Jeffrey and Hampton are a breadth from the outer doors as they slide open.

HAMPTON (CONT'D)

Too close. Too close.

They pass through the double doors.

The doors slide closed.

BACK TO:

INT. GOD CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

The screen displays the empty hoverchair stopping in the vacant driveway.

Artimus shouts from the back of the room.

ARTIMUS

I want drones up for eight thousand meters.

ROEHN

Thought of that.

BACK TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE - DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The alarms cycles.

Number One and Hampton careen down the driveway toward a waiting ROBOCAB. It's left rear door standing open. They stop suddenly just shy of the open door.

JEFFREY

OK. Move. Jump! We've got to go!

HAMPTON

I don't jump.

JEFFREY

What?

HAMPTON

I don't jump.

JEFFREY

You jump or we die!

HAMPTON

I'm jumping! I'm jumping!

The robocab door closes.

BACK TO:

INT. GOD CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

The screen displays the hoverchair sitting empty in the driveway.

Artimus makes his way to the front and stands below the screen.

ARTIMUS

Drones?

ROEHN

There yours.

ARTIMUS

Bus the primary feed to full, now!

The screen blinks.

DRONE POV - The screen displays the hoverchair sitting empty in the driveway.

BACK TO:

INT. ROBOCAB - MOMENTS LATER

ROBOCAB (O.C.)

Welcome to Google Auto.

JEFFREY

Home, now!

ROBOCAB (O.C.)

Smoking and open containers are not allowed. More than five hundred thousand music selections and a sightseers commentary are available upon request.

JEFFREY

Shut the fuck up and go!

ROBOCAB (O.C.)

Profanity is not appreciated.

JEFFREY

Sweet Jesus!

ROBOCAB

Sweet Jesus. Also referred to as Jesus of Nazareth and Jesus Christ.

(MORE)

ROBOCAB (CONT'D)
This Galilean prophet was a first-
century Jewish preacher and
religious leader.

HAMPTON
That's it. We're going to die!

JEFFREY
Home! Please!

ROBOCAB (O.C.)
Thank you for taking Google Auto.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

The robocab begins moving down the driveway.

HAMPTON (O.C.)
That's better. HAMPTON has left the
building.

JEFFREY (O.C.)
We're not safe yet.

HAMPTON (O.C.)
What was all that racket?

JEFFREY (O.C.)
I took a guy's Jell-O.

HAMPTON (O.C.)
That was cruel.

JEFFREY (O.C.)
He tried to hang me with his
catheter.

The robocab turns onto the boulevard.

INT. GOD CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

DRONE POV - The screen displays the hoverchair sitting empty
in the driveway as TR vehicles stream onto the property.

The guard runs from the building.

TR Officers flank him

He drops to the ground.

ARTIMUS

He's gone. In fucking broad daylight? How is that even possible? Did anyone get a tampering alert?

ROEHN

Nothing! Not a sound, Sir.

ARTIMUS

Hillside is a threat level three site! This should not be happening! Analytics? Countermeasures?

ROEHN

Yes, Sir. A TSCM survey and deep bug sweep team are en route.

ARTIMUS

I want a TR team at every major intersection for a radius of five miles.

ROEHN

Wide reach hailing authority is invoked, Sir.

ARTIMUS

I want all footage of Hampton for the last seventy-two hours racked and ready for review.

ROEHN

Rendering and docking, now.

A faint tone.

ARTIMUS

Shit!

He looks at his left wrist.

INSERT - Artimus' wristwatch.

TEXT - "Now, Mister Artimus."

ARTIMUS (O.C.) (CONT'D)

Of course, now! Fuck!

BACK TO SCENE

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)

Roehn! I want that footage...

ROEHN
The minute you get back. Yes, Sir.

ARTIMUS
Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!

Artimus leaves.

ROEHN
(To himself) If he comes back. (Out loud) You heard the man!

INT. OPEN - FLOOR OFFICE - - MOMENTS LATER

Harlow is on the phone.

HARLOW
Friday will be fine. We'll hold two columns. And thank you.

City-wide sirens begin to wail.

Harlow hangs up.

Harlow stands and goes to the window.

HARLOW'S P.O.V. - Below, a string of TR vehicles, their emergency lights ablaze, speeds down the street.

HARLOW (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Fingers is right.

BACK TO SCENE

HARLOW (CONT'D)
She was lucky.

EXT. ROBOCAB - MOMENTS LATER

The robocab approaches a roadblock and stops several vehicles back from a number of TR Officers at the barricade.

INT. ROBOCAB - MOMENTS LATER

Jeffrey and Hampton watch through the front windshield.

ROBOCAB
We are stopping for law enforcement. Your patience is appreciated.

HAMPTON
Seatbelt enforcement. I used to
hate those things.

JEFFREY
Now is not a good time to talk.

A TR Officer approaches the first robocab, peers inside the left side windows, then motions the vehicle forward as the barricade is moved aside.

The line of robocab slowly moves forward.

ROBOCAB
Law enforcement is working to keep
your community safe and secure.
Your continued patience is
appreciated.

The TR Officer approaches the second robocab.

JEFFREY
We're fine.

A loud commotion begins.

CLOSE ON - the Robocab's windshield.

Two TR Officers drag a passenger - very similar in appearance to Hampton - from the robocab in front of them. He is beaten to the ground before being tossed into the rear of a patrol wagon parked along the shoulder of the road.

BACK TO SCENE

Hampton is visibly shaken.

HAMPTON
Maybe....

JEFFREY
It's OK. He's one of ours. Mistaken
identity. It happens. He'll be home
by supper.

INT. COMMAND PORTAL - LATER

Artimus stands before the portal.

The portal lights up.

The expressionless man appears on the screen.

AVATAR

Passive surveillance requires an
unmindful public, Mister Artimus.
Too much attention is being drawn
to the event this morning.

ARTIMUS

I reported it as a security drill.
The public will move on.

AVATAR

As has Hampton.

ARTIMUS

Yes. ...He has.

INSERT - Roadside Turnout.

The robocab stands parked in front of a drop-off bin stamped
"Deposit donated items here."

A TR vehicle rolls to a stop behind the robocab.

AVATAR (O.S.)

The vehicle, however, has been
located.

ARTIMUS (O.S.)

Correct.

BACK TO SCENE

AVATAR

Are they mocking you. Mr. Artimus?

ARTIMUS

Not for long.

AVATAR

(Wrathy)

Someone has infiltrated the
network! This is a penetration of
the first order.

Artimus' vital signs rise betraying his apparent calm.

ARTIMUS

That remains to be seen. We are
conducting a system-wide, granular
analysis of compliance routines
while simultaneously running
stealth detection sub-routines to
level five.

AVATAR

The system is clean, Mr. Artimus!
Therefore, some person or persons
has perpetrated a mystifying and
profoundly dangerous act against
the State.

ARTIMUS

All observers in my chain of
responsibility are being thoroughly
vetted and aggressively
interrogated. You know that. Every
keystroke from every workstation
for the last one-thousand days is
being meticulously analyzed.

AVATAR

And yet, a known radical has simply
disappeared casting doubt on your
ability to contain the morally
corrupt, the non-compliant, and
those with a voracious appetite for
anarchy.

ARTIMUS

We will all know more when the
analysis...

AVATAR

Someone is ghosting, Mr. Artimus!
And we believe that finding that
someone will lead to HAMPTON's
capture.

ARTIMUS

I understand.

AVATAR

We also believe that you must find
that someone before we run out of
patience and you run out of time.

The portal dims.

Artimus' vital signs slowly fall.

ARTIMUS

You're welcome.

INT. BAILEY STATION - NIGHT

A meal preparation, storage unit, and beverage dispenser have been added to the room. They stand next to a long table on which have been placed disposable plates, cups, and utensils.

Across the room, next to the cot, the dim table lamp lights a medication dispenser and a digital clock sitting on the table.

Hampton sits in a hoverchair dozing.

We hear a lock turning.

The heavy steel door opens.

Jeffrey enters and closes and locks the door and hangs his coat on the nail.

He moves to Hampton, sets a small carrying case on the table, and stands in the dim light.

JEFFREY

Mister Hampton. Mister Hampton.

Hampton wakes up, squirms, and painfully clears his throat.

HAMPTON

What. Oh. Yes. Number One. You're back. I knew of a number one, once.
"Make it so, number one."

JEFFREY

Pretty hectic day. How are you holding up?

HAMPTON

I'm awake. That's something.

JEFFREY

Yes, Sir.

HAMPTON

Everyone... Everyone called me Hamp.

JEFFREY

I'm sorry about the conditions.
It's the best we could do on short notice.

HAMPTON

We? Who are we? The People's
Revolutionary Council? The Anti-
Fascist Front?

JEFFREY

Nothing like that. Those groups are
long gone. The PRC compound was
raised years ago. It's called the
Peoples Park, now.

HAMPTON

(HAMPTON reads)
Bailey Station.

JEFFREY

It's an old rail stop. When
combustions were retired, they
closed the line. As kids, it became
our playhouse.

HAMPTON

That explains the graffiti.
(Pause)
Will I be here long?

JEFFREY

That's hard to say.

HAMPTON

I'm going to be missed.

JEFFREY

I'm sure.

Hampton reaches for his amulet.

HAMPTON

So. Explain this little piece of
bling. No. Let me guess.
Transformation optics?

JEFFREY

You're close. It's a remotely
activated spectral refraction
device. Pressing down on it will
cloak you. We call it ghosting.
You're not invisible, but you can't
be tagged or tracked. You're
undetected to GPS, cameras, and
visors.

HAMPTON

You've mastered light bending.
Impressive.

JEFFREY

It has a twenty-five foot
proximity. A dome, if you will.
Under it, your invisible.

HAMPTON

That explains the taxi. I guess
transparent aluminum will be next.

JEFFREY

A friend made them for us. I have
one, too.

Jeffrey reveals his pinned to the inside of his shirt.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)

It works best if you avoid physical
contact. You touch something it's
going to move. You touch someone,
they feel it. It drives GOD nuts.

HAMPTON

God?

JEFFREY

Ground observation and detection.
Our ever-present eavesdropper and
surveillance network.

HAMPTON

Ah! That's what they're calling it,
now.

JEFFREY

Its everywhere.

HAMPTON

Oh, I'll bet.

(Pause)

I created a monster.

(Pause)

That was not my intent. I'm sorry

JEFFREY

I know.

HAMPTON

I discovered too late that they were turning my simple traffic control software into a state tool to control us.

(Beat)

Scarab was going to be my attempt at striking back. But, after the raid, they wouldn't let me near a vending machine. I would never again have access to the network.

JEFFREY

And that explains the data dump.

HAMPTON

It was the best I could do.

JEFFREY

It certainly made a difference. They spent years rebuilding the system. And that slowed them down.

HAMPTON

I'm glad of that.

JEFFREY

I read somewhere that a famous techno fighter once said, "If my ones and zeros are superior to your ones and zeros. I win."

HAMPTON

Look. That was a long time ago. If you're looking to rely on me to resurrect scarab, I won't be of much use to you. They destroyed everything. Source code, algorithms, executables - all gone.

JEFFREY

I understand. I'm just happy that you are safe.

(Pause)

For now.

HAMPTON

So. No plans to sweat me? Means and methods? Accomplices?

JEFFREY

I have no plans to harm you, Mister Hampton. Hamp. I admire you.

Hampton looks at his amulet.

HAMPTON
I've missed a lot.

JEFFREY
Yes. You have. So...

Jeffrey reaches for the carrying case.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
Which is why I brought you
something to help you catch up.

Jeffrey opens the case and removes a VIRTUAL REALITY HEADSET
WITH BUILT-IN HEADPHONES.

JEFFREY (CONT'D)
Just slip this on and take a deep
breath.

HAMPTON
Do I really want to?

JEFFREY
You watch. I'll be back soon.

HAMPTON fumbles with the headset.

Jeffrey positions it in place making sure the headphones are
snug and pushed start.

We faintly hear the triumphant horns and swirling violins
signaling the beginning of the Circular Solutions
presentation.

NARRATOR (O.C.)
(Faintly)
Welcome to the Ground Observation
and Detection Suite. Your single-
source solution for the active
observation and evaluation of human
behavior.

HAMPTON settles back.

Jeffrey returns to the door, grabs his coat, and leaves -
locking the door behind him.

INT. GOD CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

The screen displays HAMPTON's empty room.

ARTIMUS
Load the last image of HAMPTON,
now!

ROEHN
Got it.

The screen blinks.

Hampton sitting in his hoverchair appears.

ARTIMUS
I want Simp-Tee code genlocked to
the screen, now!

ROEHN
Done!

The screen blinks.

The elapsed time of the video in hours, minutes, seconds, and
frames appears below the image.

ARTIMUS
Take it forward. Slowly.

The image slowly rolls forward.

The door swings open and a nurse enters. She begins to
straighten his bed.

HAMPTON's voice is faint and scrambled.

The nurse touches the sill and a window slides open.

We hear distant shouting.

The nurse approaches the door which swings open. She quickly
leaves as the door closes behind her.

HAMPTON sits quietly.

Moments later the door swings open.

ROEHN
What the...

ARTIMUS
Shut up and watch.

The door closes.

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)
Stop tape. Run in real time.

The image rolls forward.

We hear dialogue, but see only HAMPTON.

JEFFREY (O.C.)
Mister Hampton?

HAMPTON
Good guess.

JEFFREY (O.C.)
How are you doing?

HAMPTON
I'm fine. How are you?

JEFFREY (O.C.)
I need you to put this on.

HAMPTON
I'd prefer a string of pearls.

Suddenly Hampton is gone.

ARTIMUS
Stop tape! Slow back ten FPS.

The image nudges back until HAMPTON suddenly appears.

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)
Stop, there! Slow forward 5 FPS.

Hampton disappears.

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)
Stop tape! Slow back 2 FPS.

Hampton appears.

Murmurs swell in the darkness

TRACKER
(Whispering)
See. I was right. Ghosting.

Artimus pounds repeatedly on the table top and turns to face the Observers and glares into the dark cavernous space.

ARTIMUS
You motherfucker!

The room becomes dead quiet.

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)
Are you out there? You think you
can fuck with me?

Sallow faces stare silently back at Artimus.

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)
We are going to scan every
instruction location, every line of
code, and every byte of memory
until I find you. I want racks and
hybrid clouds smoking! No one
sleeps until this sack of shit is
found. Do you fucking get it?

ROEHN
We're on it, Sir. Key strokes and
vape tokes, people. Key strokes and
vape tokes.

Slowly, the room comes to life.

INT. HARLOW'S KITCHEN - LATER

Harlow is washing a plate.

We hear a lock turning and a door opening then closing.

The cat hisses and scampers in to the kitchen.

Harlow finds a small pistol in a cookie jar and waits.

Suddenly, Jeffrey is standing in the door way.

HARLOW
Goddamnit! Jeffrey.

JEFFREY
Sorry. Sorry.

HARLOW
So. You didn't lose your key.

JEFFREY
No.

HARLOW
I wondered when you'd show.

JEFFREY
Right.

HARLOW
Sit. You're making me nervous.

Jeffrey sits at a small table.

HARLOW (CONT'D)
So?

JEFFREY
I've been thinking about stopping
by the old place.

HARLOW
Why would you want to do that?

JEFFREY
Remember when they hung those
cameras?

HARLOW
Anybody old enough to think
remembers that.

JEFFREY
We were fine 'till then.

HARLOW
Maybe that's how you remember it.

JEFFREY
Dad was fine until then.

HARLOW
Dad was always an asshole.

JEFFREY
Maybe so. But not like that.

FLASHBACK MONTAGE

JEFFREY (O.C.)
He saw those cameras and it changed
him. You know? He became obsessed
with them. It was like they had
invaded his home. His domain. What
little privacy he had was gone when
they hung those eyes. It destroyed
us.

- Jeffrey and Bree Harlow watch from the front porch of their
tan and white house as workmen fasten surveillance cameras to
a line of shiny new poles along their street. Their dad
watches from inside the screen door.

- Their dad drinks, paces, and rails up at the camera mounted just above his front yard.

- Their dad violently beats the street pole in front of his house with a hammer, then lashes out at their mother when she tries restraining him.

- Jeffrey and Bree Harlow watch as their father is restrained and forced into a patrol wagon.

BACK TO SCENE

HARLOW'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

HARLOW
It destroyed you.

JEFFREY
You should have fought with me.

HARLOW
I fought in my own way. I reported what I saw.

JEFFREY
But you chose to gave up!

HARLOW
I chose to live, Jeffrey.

Harlow turns back to the sink and continues washing dishes.

Jeffrey stands and leaves.

Harlow turns.

INT. ANTEROOM - NIGHT

Artimus struggles to make himself comfortable on the too-small sofa. He covers himself with his coat and turns out the lamp.

INT. BAILEY STATION - NIGHT

Andrew Hampton sits quietly in his hoverchair. Number Two hands him a cup of hot tea. Hampton sips.

HAMPTON
Not bad for instant.

NUMBER TWO
It's Earl Grey.

HAMPTON
Ah. "Earl Grey. Hot."

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Jeffrey walks along a quiet camera lined street. He turns onto the short walkway leading to a small unoccupied tan and white house. A "Condemned. Slated For Demolition" notice is pasted across the front door.

He walks around to the side of the house and slides into a broken basement window.

INT. BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Using a small penlight, he casts the beam about and stops on the furnace several feet away.

He retrieves a small candle from a pocket and lights it. He melts the candle to the floor and stands.

Glancing about, he finds a length of pipe and moves to the furnace. He wraps the gas line with his jacket, then, grasping the pipe, he strikes the gas line leading to the furnace.

Instantly, the unmistakable hissing of escaping gas begins as Jeffrey quickly disappears out the window.

INT. GOD CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

The screen displays a 3D wireframe polygon depiction of the complete surveillance grid.

Observers are focused on endless lines of code streaming down their screens.

TRACKER
You think we got a ghost?

ROEHN
How would you know?

TRACKER
Right.

A small flashing red dot appears on the Observers screen accompanied by a soft beeping.

ROEHN

Rack that.

The screen blinks.

An image of the sidewalk and the small house fills the screen.

ROEHN (CONT'D)

What do you think.

TRACKER

Data says the place is abandoned. I say a feral cat tripped a latent sensor.

ROEHN

Alert utility response. Have them check it out before...

THE HOUSE EXPLODES.

Suddenly, the screen is filled with a blinding light and eardrum exploding explosion.

Then the screen goes black.

TRACKER

Holy shit!

Fuck!

ROEHN (CONT'D)

INT. ANTEROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Artimus is jarred awake by the blast. He scrambles to his feet.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Harlow instantly opens her eyes and listens as a choirs of alarms fill the night.

INT. BAILEY STATION - NIGHT

Hampton and Number Two are play 3D holographic chess.

Hampton jerks and turns.

Number Two remains calm.

Hampton notices.

HAMPTON
Once more unto the breach, dear
friends, once more.

EXT. SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

Glowing debris rains down onto the lot where, moments ago,
sat the small house.

Alarms cycle - civil emergency sirens blare - porch lights
burst on.

The aluminum pole with an attached surveillance camera slowly
tips and collapses onto the rubble as sparks fly.

INT. GOD CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

The screen goes black.

ROEHN
Rack the nearest available eyes!

TRACKER
Got it!

The screen blinks.

The lot filled with burning debris and first responders
appear.

A loud and angry voice shouts from the rear of the control
room.

ARTIMUS
What the fuck was that?

ROEHN
A gas leak. A house just vaporized!

Artimus comes forward and is silhouetted against the blazing
wall of flame.

ARTIMUS
A gas leak? Bullshit! Initiate a
city-wide lockdown. Now! Command
authorization sequence Red, Alpha,
Tumbler, the Number Nine.

ROEHN
On it!

MONTAGE

- Sirens wale across the cityscape.
- Guard rails lower on a highway checkpoint.
- TR vehicles roll up to an airport departure terminal.
- TR helicopters fan out low over the city.
- TR Officers take to street corners.

BACK TO SCENE

EXT. SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

Distant sirens wail and car alarms cycle.

There is a slight wind.

Leaves gather in corners and rustle across the quiet street.

Jeffrey walks slowly down the sidewalk.

A robotic WASTE MANAGEMENT VEHICLE (WMV) moves up the street in front of him emptying bins.

JEFFRY'S P.O.V. - MOMENTS LATER

Two armed TR Officers in full combat dress with visors turn the corner in front of him.

EXT. SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

As the wind picks up, a scrap of paper grips Jeffrey's leg.

The WMV moves up the street emptying bins.

JEFFRY'S P.O.V. - MOMENTS LATER

The TR Officer stops.

TR OFFICER

Hold up.

TR OFFICER'S VISOR P.O.V. - MOMENTS LATER

The scrap of paper floats along just above the sidewalk.

TR OFFICER (O.C.)

What the fuck is that?

TR OFFICER TWO (O.C.)
A piece of paper, man. It's just
the wind.

EXT. SIDEWALK - MOMENTS LATER

Jeffrey walks.

The wind whips the paper, but it stubbornly holds it's place.

The WMV turns right into an alley.

Jeffrey follows.

Jeffrey swipes.

The piece of paper glides away.

EXT. CORNER - MOMENTS LATER

TR OFFICER
No. Someone was there. I know it.
You, there. Stop.

The TR Officer runs to the entrance of the alley.

OFFICER TWO
Shit.

TR Officer Two follows.

JEFFRY'S P.O.V. - MOMENTS LATER

The TR Officers stand at the entrance of the alley.

TR OFFICER'S VISOR P.O.V. - MOMENTS LATER

The alley is clear.

EXT. - ALLEY ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

TR OFFICER TWO
See? I told you. There's no-one
here!

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Looking back, Jeffrey stumbles into a bin.

TR OFFICER'S VISOR P.O.V. - MOMENTS LATER

The bin crashes along the pavement.

The WMV moves slowly up the ally emptying bins.

TR OFFICER (O.C.)
You see that?

TR OFFICER TWO (O.C.)
It's the truck, man.

EXT. ALLEY ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

The TR Officer brings his weapon up to low ready.

TR OFFICER
You, there. Identify yourself!

TR OFFICER TWO
Like I said. There's no-one there,
man.

TR OFFICER
No. Someone is moving. I said
identify yourself!

TR OFFICER TWO
I don't see shit, man!

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

The WMV moves up the alley emptying bins.

Jeffrey runs.

The sound amplifies off of the ally walls.

TR OFFICER'S VISOR P.O.V. - MOMENTS LATER

A splash in a puddle of stagnant water.

EXT. ALLEY ENTRNCE - MOMENTS LATER

TR OFFICER
See what I mean?

TR OFFICER TWO
Well, fuck me.

TR OFFICER
Last warning. Runner! Identify
yourself or I will fire!

The TR Officer taps his shoulder mic.

TR OFFICER (CONT'D)
This is officer Four, Eight, Six,
One, Two, One. We have a runner
northbound in the alley ten yards
North of my position. In pursuit!

INT. GOD CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

The screen displays the lot filled with burning debris.

ARTIMUS
Rack their location. Now!

The screen blinks.

A night vision image of the two TR Officers appear.

ROEHN
Got em! But there's no runner.

ARTIMUS
What?

Roehn looks at his screen.

ROEHN
I got no telemetry. I don't have a
runner.

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

The WMV moves up the alley emptying bins.

Jeffrey runs.

The sound amplifies off of the ally walls.

EXT. ALLEY ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

TR OFFICER
Hear that? Last warning runner!
Stop!

The WMV moves up the alley emptying bins.

INT. GOD CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Roehn looks at his screen.

ROEHN
I got nothing, Sir.

ARTIMUS
Officer, you will not loose him!

EXT. ALLEY ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

The TR Officer taps his shoulder mic.

TR OFFICER
Firing a wide field for effect.

The TR Officer fires spraying bullets across the alley expanse.

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Jeffrey grunts and stumbles forward into a cluster of empty bins.

The sound amplifies off of the ally walls.

TR OFFICER'S VISOR P.O.V. - MOMENTS LATER

Empty bins scatter.

The WMV moves up the alley emptying bins.

TR OFFICER TWO (O.C.)
He's hit! Shots fired. In pursuit!

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

The two TR Officers run up the alley.

The WMV moves up the alley.

INSERT - WMV

Jeffrey's bloody hand print grips a robotic arm on the WMV.

The arm rises.

A wet boot print appears on the running board.

INT. GOD CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

The screen displays the two TR Officers running and casting beams of light in all directions.

ARTIMUS
Don't lose him. Don't lose the son-
of-a-bitch!

Roehn looks at his screen.

ROEHN
But there's no one there.

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

The WMV moves up the alley and turns left.

A breathless TR Officer taps his shoulder mic.

TR OFFICER
Moving forward.

The two Officers move up the alley casting their beams in all directions.

They stop.

TR OFFICER (CONT'D)
What the...

The officer taps his shoulder mic.

TR OFFICER TWO
There's nothing... There's no one
here.

ROEHN (O.S.)
No shit!

INT. GOD CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

The screen displays the TR Officers casting their beams in all directions.

ARTIMUS
Say again?

Again, the TR Officers cast their beams in all directions.

TR OFFICER
He said, "There's no one here."

ROEHN
Correct.

ARTIMUS
I get it!
(Pause)
Fuck!

ROEHN
Do you want to report a UD?

TR OFFICER
A what?

ROEHN
An unintentional discharge of your
weapon. Do you want to report?

The TR Officer's beams continue to glance about.

TR OFFICER
There was someone here. I swear to
God.

ARTIMUS
Well, he's gone, now!

ROEHN
Do you want to report?

OFFICER
I guess... I mean, yes. Yes, Sir.

ROEHN
Proceed to the nearest Tactical
Response Station.

OFFICER
Right. I mean, acknowledged.

A faint tone.

Artimus looks at his left wrist.

INSERT - Artimus' wristband.

TEXT - "Now!"

BACK TO SCENE

ARTIMUS
Perfect. Fucking perfect!

INT. HARLOW'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Harlow is in the kitchen feeding her cat.

The cat meows and yowls.

HARLOW
OK. OK. OK. Like I never feed you.
Here. Now. Shut up, sweaty.

We hear a lock turning.

HARLOW (CONT'D)
Jeffrey?

Harlow goes to the living room.

Suddenly, Jeffrey spills into the room and collapses at her feet.

HARLOW (CONT'D)
Jeffrey? My God! What have you
done?

JEFFREY
Everything is always my fault.

HARLOW
Can you get up?

Harlow tries to assist Jeffrey in rising.

JEFFREY
No. No. Don't.

HARLOW
What happened to you?

She looks at her hands. They're soaked with blood.

HARLOW (CONT'D)
Oh, God. You're bleeding. Let
me.....

She tries dragging Jeffrey into the room.

JEFFREY
No! No! It's too much!

HARLOW
There's a lot of blood. What should
I do?

JEFFREY

Will you stop. Just stop. Shut up a minute? You could never shut up. Now. Listen to me.

HARLOW

I can't just let you lie here.

JEFFREY

I said listen! Someone will be here soon to get rid of the mess.

HARLOW

What?

Jeffrey grimaces and slumps to the floor.

HARLOW (CONT'D)

No, you don't. You can't just show up here and die.

JEFFREY

You were always my first choice.

HARLOW

Jeffrey. Please.

Jeffrey closes his eyes and dies.

Harlow weeps.

HARLOW (CONT'D)

Jeffrey. Jeffrey!

A moment later Number Three appears in the doorway.

NUMBER THREE

Please, step back.

Harlow rises. Her knees are soaked with blood.

HARLOW

What? Who are you?

NUMBER THREE

I said, step back.

Harlow complies.

HARLOW

Is he dead? He's dead, isn't he? Oh, God.

Number Three is face to face with HARLOW.

NUMBER THREE

I don't have much time.

Number Three begins spreading a body bag on the floor then reaches into a pocket.

Number Three takes an amulet from his pocket.

NUMBER THREE (CONT'D)

Take this.

He slips the amulet around Harlow's neck.

NUMBER THREE (CONT'D)

You must wear this at all times.

Harlow looks at the amulet.

HARLOW

Why?

Number Three begins putting Jeffrey's body into the bag.

NUMBER THREE

Squeezing it will render you invisible to surveillance.

HARLOW

What?

Number Three zips the bag closed and stands.

NUMBER THREE

Do you understand?

HARLOW

This is too much.

NUMBER THREE

Do you understand?

HARLOW

I fucking understand! Wear it at all times. But I'm not doing this!

NUMBER THREE

Look at me. You will do this. Number One chose you. Now, he's dead. You are Number One.

Number Three hoists the body bag to his shoulder.

HARLOW

Where are you taking him?

NUMBER THREE

Away from here. Remember your old playhouse?

HARLOW

Playhouse?

NUMBER TWO

As a child.

HARLOW

What...

NUMBER TWO

Be there, tomorrow tonight.

HARLOW

But...

Number Three leaves

The door closes.

Harlow collapses to the floor weeping.

INT. AVATAR PORTAL - LATER

Artimus stands before the portal.

The portal lights up.

The expressionless man appears on the screen.

AVATAR

Where is the runner, Mister Artimus?

ARTIMUS

There was no runner.

AVATAR

The officer was in pursuit of a suspect.

ARTIMUS

The officer heard a noise.

AVATAR

The officer shot at the subject.

ARTIMUS

The officer discharged his weapon.

AVATAR

The officer was unable to apprehend the subject. The subject eluded capture because the subject is ghosting, Mister Artimus!

ARTIMUS

We can not know that absolutely, until the AI core has been sanitized.

AVATAR

That is not an option, Mister Artimus.

ARTIMUS

I have ID'd all sign-on signatures, and error patterns. All penetration vulnerabilities, encryption anomalies, or tunneling attempts have been investigated. Every circuit has been mapped. Every data file, disc cluster, and media nanostructure has been QA'd and approved or replaced. All load failures, machine-level code changes, misconfigured firewalls and open comports have been inspected for unintended access.

AVATAR

Then you look elsewhere, Mister Artimus.

ARTIMUS

There is no place left to look.

AVATAR

The AI core can not be accessed Mister Artimus.

ARTIMUS

And it hasn't been since Hampton put it on line.

AVATAR

When all installation protocols were strictly enforced.

ARTIMUS

That was a long time. God knows what scarab has learned since then.

(Pause)

(MORE)

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)
No! That's my point. God
doesn't know!

AVATAR
Autonomous sentience has not been
established, Mister Artimus. There
is no evidence of malice
originating from the core. All
protocols concerning access to the
core must be strictly enforced.

ARTIMUS
Maybe scarab doesn't leave a trail.
Have you thought of that? That it's
undetectable?

AVATAR is silent.

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)
I need you to work with me on this
or we'll be haunted by ghosting
forever. No pun intended.
(Pause)
You let whatever tech toy he's
using loose in the dark market and
you lose the game!

There is a long pause as the Avatar freezes.

Artimus waits.

AVATAR
What do you have in mind?

INT. BAILEY STATION - NIGHT

We hear taping from the other side of the door.

Number Two moves to the door.

We hear a lock turning.

The heavy steel door opens.

Harlow enters.

Number Two closes and locks the door.

NUMBER TWO
You're here.

HARLOW
I don't believe it myself.

NUMBER TWO

Good. Come in.

NUMBER THREE

I'm sorry I was so rough on you.
You OK?

HARLOW

Define OK?

NUMBER TWO

He's just there.

Number One points.

INSERT - Hampton sits sipping his tea.

BACK TO SCENE

NUMBER TWO (CONT'D)

You'll do fine. Remember what we
talked about. And take your time.
Don't push. So. Ready?

HARLOW

Define ready?

Harlowe and Number Two approach Hampton.

NUMBER ONE

Mister Hampton. This is Number One.

NUMBER TWO

She's going to sit with you for a
time.

HAMPTON

So. You are Number One, now.

HARLOW

Yes. It seems so. And you are the
celebrated Andre Hampton.

HAMPTON

I think you mean notorious. Your
predecessor was a fighter.

HARLOW

He always was an overachiever.

HAMPTON

Sometimes that is what it takes.

Harlow sits on the edge of the cot.

HARLOW
I always thought of myself as a
pacifist. Until now.

HAMPTON
"Soldiers willing to die unarmed."

HARLOW
Something like that. You were also
a soldier.

HAMPTON
I was a coward who failed to take
the easy way out.

HARLOW
But you created scarab. That took
guts.

HAMPTON
Nice transition.

HARLOW
Thank you.

HAMPTON
Sure. I had my shot at striking a
blow against tyranny. But I failed.
I was young and naïve, then. I'm
old, and cranky, now. And scarab
is lost.

HARLOW
You're still sharp. Maybe...

HAMPTON
What have these merry pranksters
convinced you that I can do?
Resurrect scarab from memory. I
wouldn't know where to begin.

Hampton points at his head.

HAMPTON (CONT'D)
Certainly not in here.
(Pause)
I'm old and fading fast.

HARLOW
No backup squirreled away in some
cubbyhole somewhere.

HAMPTON

Like I told your brother. They destroyed everything.

(Pause)

Bedsides, Gizmo was the backup guy.

HARLOW

Gizmo?

HAMPTON

My partner in crime. A real hoarder. Saved everything. Never threw anything away. That's how he was caught. He snuck back into the lab after the raid. He just had to have his notebooks. It cost him his life. He died in prison. They're all dead!

HARLOW

I've upset you. I'm sorry.

HAMPTON

Never mind. It's been a long day.

HARLOW

Finish your tea. I'll let you rest.

HAMPTON

I want to dream about lions.

HARLOW

Like Hemingway's Santiago.

HAMPTON

Lions and lost youth.

INT. MAINFRAME - NIGHT

Artimus and Roehn, in head-to-foot clean room attire stand before a heavily reinforced stainless steel door labeled Pressurized Air Lock. Access is restricted. Sterile, anti-static, non-linting, ISO1 Class 10 garments required."

A retinal scan is mounted to the left of the door.

ARTIMUS

You know what you're looking for.

ROEHN

I will bring any anomalies in the boot sector to your attention.

Artimus stands before a retinal scan, then Roehn.

The heavy door opens with a woosh.

Artimus and Roehn enter.

The door closes.

Wall mounted nozzles release a high pressure spray of disinfectant which is then removed by a pressurized vacuum pump.

The airlock opens into the IA Core chamber.

The space is expansive and lit only by the screen of the occasional mainframe terminal access station. Hundreds of LED sparkle from switches, routers, load balancers, storage arrays, backup devices, and servers giving the room an almost enchanted appearance.

Roehn move deep into the chamber.

A robotic blade extractor sits in front of a server rack. It's opposing arms rest high on the rack.

The terminal screen and keyboard are on the lower back of the extractor.

Roehn approaches the terminal.

The screen displays a password interface.

Roehn enters the codes.

TERMINAL SCREEN DISPLAY - Rows of computer commands appear.

More typing.

Display - "The MicroKernel can not locate the specified component."

ROEHN (CONT'D)
That's funny.

The extractor whirs.

Roehn types.

Display - "The parameter was not found."

ROEHN (CONT'D)
Come on.

The extractor's arms begin lowering.

Roehn types.

Display - "Incorrect component ID entered."

ROEHN (CONT'D)
What the fuck.

The extractor whirs.

Roehn types.

Display - "Your session is no longer valid."

ROEHN (CONT'D)
For real?

The extractor's arms suddenly drop, contract, and grip Roehn's head.

Display - "Your session is no longer valid."

ROEHN (CONT'D)
What the fuck!?

AVATAR (O.S.)
Disable the ghost.

ROEHN
The Ghost?

The extractor whirs.

The grip on Gizmo's head tightens.

AVATAR (O.S.)
Disable the ghost.

ROEHN
I don't...

AVATAR (O.S.)
Last ask.

The extractor whirs.

The grip on Roehn's head tightens.

ROEHN
OK. OK. OK!

Roehn frantically types.

Display - "Command line option recognized."

The extractor whirs.

The grip on Roehn's head continues.

ROEHN (CONT'D)
I'm disabling it! Please. Stop.

Roehn types.

Display - "The requested partition has been accessed."

ROEHN (CONT'D)
Almost there. See?

Roehn types.

Display - "Auto Cloaking has been disabled."

ROEHN (CONT'D)
There. That's it. It's done.
Disabled.

The avatar appears on the display.

AVATAR
Thank you.

The extractor whirs.

The extractor's arms compress their grip around Roehn's head.

ROEHN
Wait! Stop! It's disabled. It's
disabled.

Roehn's face puckers, his eyes bulge and his screams intensify.

The extractor whirs and begins to rise dangling Roehn above the ground.

ROEHN (CONT'D)
Stop! Please!

Roehn's screams are beyond agonizing.

The extractor whirs.

Roehn's head explodes like a ripe melon.

The extractor lowers Roehn's lifeless, headless body to the ground.

Artimus walks forward into the light.

Artimus produces a pistol from a pocket.

ARTIMUS

That was your only option? I was going to shoot the sonofabitch.

AVATAR

Bullets damage equipment, Mr. Artimus.

ARTIMUS

Fine. I'll call housekeeping.

INT. OPEN-FLOOR OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Harlow types.

McAfree knocks on the glass. She is holding a folder.

Harlow beckons her in.

HARLOW

Come in.

McAfree points at Harlow's cup with a Krav Maga logo in it's sleeve.

MCAFREE

You do that?

HARLOW

Just the basics. I don't have the time to really get into it.

MCAFREE

Are you good?

HARLOW

I've survived public transit.

MCAFREE

I just never pictured you kicking ass.

HARLOW

Keep picking on Roach and I might surprise you.

MCAFREE

I know. He's just so...

HARLOW

Your assignment?

MCAFREE

Oh, right. Well. There's nothing online. But you'd expect that. And not much to go on in the archive either. Nothing in hard copy for sure. Periodicals the same.

HARLOW

Now, you're rambling.

MCAFREE

Oh. Sorry. So. I checked the microfiche logs. I went back. Way back. And what do you know? I got a hit.

HARLOW

Really?

MCAFREE

Really.

McAfree hands a microfiche screen print of a newspaper clipping to Harlow.

Harlow takes the clipping.

INSERT - Harlow holding the clipping depicting two young men standing before the judge flanked by police.

Headline - "Hackers Found Guilty."

Caption - Convicted hackers Andrew Hampton and Timothy Allard alias Gizmo.

Harlow reads aloud.

HARLOW (O.C.)

Hackers found guilty. Convicted hackers Andrew Hampton and Timothy Allard alias gizmo.

BACK TO SCENE

HARLOW (CONT'D)

Nice work. So, he's real.

MCAFREE

He was real. He died years ago. Here's his obit.

McAfree hands another microfiche screen print to Harlow.

HARLOW
Oh. Well, that's disappointing.

MCAFREE
So. Where's this headed?

HARLOW
To the burn bag, unfortunately.

MCAFREE
Really? I was hoping there'd be a
story here.

Harlow holds up Allard's obit.

HARLOW
Me, too. But, you can't interview a
dead man.

MCAFREE
Sure. I get it.

McAfree rises and leaves.

We here a tone.

Harlow looks at her wrist.

INSERT - Harlow's wristband.

BLINKING TEXT - "Connection lost. Cloaking disabled."

BACK TO SCENE

Harlow snaps the amulet from around her neck and drops it
into her coffee cup.

Harlow looks at the two microfiche screen prints lying on her
desk.

FLASHBACK - OPEN-FLOOR OFFICE

MCAFREE (CONT'D)
How do you face the wall everyday?
It's impenetrable. I mean, what are
the odds of putting a dent in it?

HARLOW
Sometimes I wonder.

BACK TO SCENE

Harlow takes the two microfiche screen prints and leaves.

INT. CREMATORIUM - LATER

Roehn's naked and headless body drops onto a form fitting wire basket joining a long row of body-filled basket moving along a conveyor into the mouth of a burning furnace.

EXT. PORCH STOOP - DAY

Front Door.

Harlow knocks.

A hand moves a drape to one side, then back.

Harlow knocks, again.

Shuffling is heard, a crash, then cursing.

RITA ALLARD, (80's), makes her way to the door.

RITA
Goddamnit! Who is it?

HARLOW
Miss Allard. It's Bree Harlow. I
left you a message.

Muffled speech.

HARLOW (CONT'D)
What's that?

Allard opens the door the width of the chain.

RITA
I said, what is it you want?

HARLOW
Was Timothy Allard your brother?

RITA
Why?

HARLOW
He was holding something for a
friend of mine.

RITA
Timmy held stuff for a lot of
people. I have a basement full of
shit.

HARLOW
Do you think I could look around?

RITA
What are you looking for?

HARLOW
To be honest I'm not sure.

RITA
That will make it tough. What are
the odds you'll find it?

HARLOW
Fifty-fifty.

RITA
Sounds good. You make it seventy-
five and you've got a deal.

HARLOW
Seventy-five it is.

Allard opens the door.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

The jerk of a pull chain illuminates a dimly lit, cramped room with narrow lanes cut between canyons of stacked boxes, old computer parts, network cables wire nests, piles of computer periodicals, and bulging plastic bags.

HARLOW
Wow!

RITA
Have at it.

MONTAGE

- Harlow sets a box on top of a stack of boxes. She cracks it open as dust fills the air.

- She squeezes past a pile of periodicals as they tip and spill into the aisle.

- She coughs, wipes the sweat from her face on a sleeve and rubs her eyes.

- She is elbow-deep in a large carton.

- A layer of dust settles above the scene as she sits on the steps and looks out over the rubble of opened boxes, burst bags, and torn cartons.

BACK TO SCENE

Allard appears at the top of the stairs.

RITA (CONT'D)
You find what you're looking for?

HARLOW
Not even close.

RITA
All that work and you got nothing to show for it.

HARLOW
I got a headache.

RITA
Well. Come on up. I got a remedy for that.

INT. ALLARD'S KITCHEN

As Harlow sits Allard pours healthy amounts of whiskey into two glasses.

HARLOW
Your brother was a hoarder, all right.

RITA
I'm sorry it was a waste of time.

Harlow raises her glass to toast.

HARLOW
Here's to being single, seeing double, and sleeping triple.

They empty their glasses.

RITA
Speaking of sleep. Come with me.

INT. BEDROOM

Allard opens the door to a dark room. The light reveals a neatly made bed, shelves of computer books, and bare walls.

RITA

When he stayed with me, this was Timmy's room. Have a good look around. It's clean, but you never know. He was sneaky.

HARLOW

Thank you.

Harlow looks around the room.

She opens the closet.

She fans a few computer books, then turns to leave.

She steps.

A loose floorboard squeaks.

She steps, again.

Another squeak.

HARLOW (CONT'D)

What's this, now?

Harlow kneels and pulls back a small rug.

She slowly rubs her palm across the bare floor.

HARLOW (CONT'D)

Wait.

She pushes down.

One end of a narrow rectangle of floorboard pops up.

RITA

Keep going. This is exciting.

HARLOW

Look at that.

Harlow removes the small plank, then another and another. A small space below the floorboards is revealed.

RITA

My heart is pounding.

Harlow reaches in and feels around the small cavity.

HARLOW

Wait a minute. I've got something.

She brings up an old, dusty laptop.

A faded decal of Alfred E. Neuman graces the lid.

The words "What, me worry" appear below the image.

HARLOW (CONT'D)
Well. What do you know?

RITA
I told you. Sneaky.

INT. GOD CENTER - DAY

The room is packed with observers - all staring at Artimus.

The screen displays a 3D wireframe polygon depiction of the complete surveillance grid. An animated progress bar cycles at the center of the screen.

ARTIMUS
You all know I believe in you and
that I appreciate the hard work you
have done reassuring Command that
we are clean.

Wolf calls, barks, and cheers erupt from the group.

The animated progress bar cycles.

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)
Some said there was a black hat on
our team.

Hisses, groans, and boos.

The animated progress bar cycles.

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)
That our network core was infected.

Hisses, groans, and boos.

The animated progress bar cycles.

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)
That scarab was going to destroy
us.

More hisses, groans, and boos.

The animated progress bar cycles.

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)
But they were wrong.

Wolf calls, barks, and cheers erupt from the group.

Artimus points up to the screen.

The animated progress bar cycles.

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)
And in a moment I will prove it to
you!

More wolf calls, barks, and cheers erupt from the group.

The animated progress bar cycles.

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)
Are you ready?

More wolf calls, barks, and cheers.

Suddenly, "Results Pending" is superimposed over the polygon
image.

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)
Quiet. Quiet, please!

The room grows quiet.

Artimus stairs at the screen.

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)
Any second, now.

Finally, "No Threats Detected" is superimposed over the
polygon image.

The expressionless avatar appears on the screen.

AVATAR
You may now resume normal
operations, Mr. Artimus.

The room erupts with cheers, high fives, and wolf calls.

Artimus raises his arms in victorious celebration.

INT. BAILEY STATION - DAY

Number Two and Number Three stand silently at post.

They are now armed.

We hear taping from the other side of the door.

Number Two turns.

We hear a lock turning.

The heavy steel door opens.

Harlow enters.

Number Two closes and locks the door.

NUMBER TWO

You should not have come.

HARLOW

I had to.

Harlow walks across to room to Hampton.

Hampton sits in his hoverchair playing a 3D hologram game. He jerks and sways as he navigates the controller.

HAMPTON

No hiding, sucker. Now, die.

HARLOW

Excellent kill.

Hampton sets the controller aside and the image dissolves.

HAMPTON

I am not someone for whom you
should die. I have lived my life.
You need to live yours.

HARLOW

And miss my shot at striking a blow
against tyranny.

HAMPTON

Ha ha.

HARLOW

I have something for you.

HAMPTON

All-American comics number 16?

HARLOW

Better.

HAMPTON

Impossible.

Harlow pulls the laptop from her bag and lays it on HAMPTON's side table.

Hampton sees the decal and smiles.

HAMPTON (CONT'D)
No! Allard's old laptop.
(Pause)
It's as old and warn as me.

Harlow raises the lid and powers up the laptop.

HARLOW
It's charged and ready to go.

HAMPTON
You should not have gone to all that trouble.

Hampton runs his hand over the keyboard.

HAMPTON (CONT'D)
It's been a long time.

HARLOW
It's like playing the piano.

Hampton stares intently, thoughtfully at the screen and begins to type.

HAMPTON
The Egyptians believed the scarab beetle was a symbol of renewal and rebirth. Did you know that?

HARLOW
No. I didn't.

Hampton's typing speeds up.

HAMPTON
There are over thirty-thousand scarab species. Did you know that?

HARLOW
I didn't know that either.

Hampton's typing speeds up.

HAMPTON
Natural enemies of the scarab are bats, birds, and toads.

HARLOW
Toads? Really?

A strained expression begins to wash over Hampton's face.

Hampton's typing becomes agitated.

HAMPTON
Fourteen scarab species are flesh
eating.

HARLOW
Hamp.

HAMPTON
The horns of the Eastern Hercules
beetle my reach sixty milometers in
length

HARLOW
Hamp. Stop.

Hampton is shouting now.

His typing has become frantic.

HAMPTON
They have a lifespan of more than
six months.

HARLOW
Mister HAMPTON. Stop!

Number Two rushes to HAMPTON's side.

Hampton pounds his fist on the laptop.

HAMPTON
It's not there! It's not there! The
goddamn thing isn't there!

HARLOW
Stop it! Stop it!

HAMPTON
God damn it!

Hampton tosses the laptop aside.

No one speaks.

HAMPTON (CONT'D)
That's why we're all here, isn't
it? Find Scarab. Save the world!

No one speaks.

HAMPTON (CONT'D)

Well, it can't be done. The bug isn't here.

(Pause)

Anyway, what would we have done had I found it? Seriously? Strolled in to the enemy's camp smiling. Hello everyone. We're here to save your ass.

(Pause)

We wouldn't have lived long enough to make eye contact.

HARLOW

I know. I'm sorry. I didn't think it through.

NUMBER TWO

No. I mean yes. Yes. We might.

HARLOW

Might what?

NUMBER TWO

Stroll into the enemy's camp smiling.

HARLOW

And how does that work?

NUMBER TWO

We make them believe he can kill scarab.

HARLOW

But he can't.

NUMBER TWO

They don't know that. What was it you said about Allard? "That he was..."

HAMPTON

..."the last one in the lab."
Right. We can create a new myth to revive an old one.

HARLOW

I'm listening.

HAMPTON

Sinon thought of it first.

HARLOW
Sinon? The Greek soldier.

HAMPTON
He convinced the Trojans to accept
a giant horse as a gift. That
night, the Greeks, hiding inside
the great offering, crept out and
slaughtered the sleeping Trojans.
(Pause)
You get me on the network. If
Scarab is there, I'll find it.

HARLOW
And if not?

HAMPTON
We'll be no more dead there than we
will be staying here.

INT. VERBATIM LOBBY - NIGHT

Artimus stands at the center of the lobby.

Harlow approaches from the darkness.

ARTIMUS
Bree.

HARLOW
Randall.

ARTIMUS
It was you who reached out?

HARLOW
Who better?

ARTIMUS
And how are you entangled in this
mess?

HARLOW
I'm just chasing a story.

ARTIMUS
OK. What's the headline.

HARLOW
Aging hacker surrenders.

ARTIMUS

Of course he does. Now that
ghosting has been, how should I
say, terminated.

HARLOW

How about this then. Scarab virus a
myth.

ARTIMUS

He's dying. Isn't he?

HARLOW

He wants you off of his back.

ARTIMUS

You willing to stake your life on
his doomsday virus...

HARLOW

Being a myth? Are you.

Artimus ponders.

ARTIMUS

What guarantee is there that I'll
keep my word.

HARLOW

Look. If Scarab is a myth. We all
win. Hampton dies in peace. I get a
story, and you sleep at night
knowing you saved the world.

ARTIMUS

Or...

HARLOW

You don't get your proof and you
kill us both. It's a win for you
either way.

ARTIMUS

When and where?

Harlow taps her PDD.

HARLOW

Soon. I'll be in touch.

EXT. BURNED OUT LOT - DAY

Harlow stands on the sidewalk staring into space. Before her...

FLASHBACK

- Jeffrey and Bree scamper across the yard as their dad chases them with the hose.

BACK TO SCENE

Harlow walks away down the street.

INT. GOD CENTER - LATER

The room is empty save for Artimus who stands pacing before the giant screen.

A 3D wireframe polygon glows teal on the screen. It expands and contracts ever so slightly.

Artimus paces.

A TR Officer escorts Harlow and Hampton sitting in a hoverchair into the center stopping just below the giant screen.

HAMPTON

Look at that. Now, that's impressive. I'm going to need popcorn.

ARTIMUS

The elusive Andrew Hampton.

HAMPTON

And you are?

ARTIMUS

Funny.
(Pause)
Bree.

HARLOW

Randall.

ARTIMUS

Lets get on with it.

A Tracker rolls in a terminal and keyboard.

ARTIMUS (CONT'D)

I assume you'll need the necessary equipment.

HAMPTON

In 1977, Ken Olsen, founder of Digital Equipment Corporation, said, "There is no reason anyone would want a computer in their home."

ARTIMUS

Next. Let's go.

An ATTENDANT in a white uniform enters and approaches Hampton carrying an electrode-studded net cap bristling with wire leads.

HARLOW

What's this?

ARTIMUS

I must know he is telling the truth. If not, I'll turn his cerebral cortex into hot wax.

HAMPTON

It's fine. Make it so, Number One.

HARLOW

Give it to me.

Harlow approaches the attendant, takes the cap with some resistance and gently slips it on to Hampton's head.

HARLOW (CONT'D)

You fine?

HAMPTON

Step back. This should be fun.

ARTIMUS

Are you ready Mr. Hampton.

HAMPTON

I am. Mr. Prosecutor.

Suddenly, the 3D wireframe polygon image dissolves and the expressionless avatar appears on the screen.

HAMPTON (CONT'D)

There you are.

AVATAR
Are you Andrew Hampton.

HAMPTON
I am.

The word CONFIRMED is superimposed over the polygon image.

AVATAR
Are you seventy-nine years of age.

HAMPTON
I am.

The word CONFIRMED is superimposed over the polygon image.

AVATAR
Were you the developer of the
kernel, the core component of the
operating system now known as
Circular Solutions.

HAMPTON
I was. And I did it in my spare
time.

AVATAR
Answer only the questions. Mr.
Hampton.

HAMPTON
Right. Sorry.

AVATAR
Answer only the questions.

Hampton sits.

AVATAR (CONT'D)
Does scarab exist?

HAMPTON
I honestly do not know.

The word CONFIRMED is superimposed over the polygon image.

ARTIMUS
What?

HARLOW
There's a headline, for ya!

AVATAR

Name your accomplices in the development of the doomsday kernel, t

HAMPTON

Why? They're all dead.

AVATAR

Answer the question. Mr. Hampton.

Hampton begins to squirm.

HAMPTON

Is it getting warm in here, or is it me?

HARLOW

What are you doing?

AVATAR

Answer the question. Name your accomplices, Mister Hampton.

HAMPTON

No one had names. Like now. We were all nobody's with numbers.

Visibly agitated now, Sweat begins to bead up on Hampton's forehead and upper lip.

AVATAR

Answer the question. Name your accomplices, Mister Hampton.

Hampton grimaces.

HARLOW

Stop it!

HAMPTON

But speaking of numbers. What is a six-letter word for a stout bodied, antenna adorned beetle and a computer program that destroys its host?

AVATAR

Answer the question. Mr. Hampton.

Hampton cries out.

HARLOW
(To Artimus)
What? What are you doing.

ARTIMUS
I warned you. Now, it's out of my
control.

HAMPTON
I know. Scarab! S C A R A B scarab!

Suddenly, SCARAB VOICE RECOGNITION ROUTINE INITIATED is
superimposed over the Avatar.

AVATAR
Running interception protocols.

Now, VOICE RECOGNITION IS CONFIRMED is superimposed over the
Avatar. The screen blinks and the image of a giant scarab
appears.

Hampton is in agony, now.

HAMPTON
Thank you, Gizmo!

HARLOW
Hemp!

ARTIMUS
Stop. Now!

HAMPTON
Scavengers will eat almost
anything.

Hampton takes a deep breath and shouts.

HAMPTON (CONT'D)
Execute the Scarab subroutine. Now!

ARTIMUS
I said stop or die.

The screen comes to life. The Avatar dissolves into the 3D
wireframe polygon which image begins to melt away revealing a
tangerine-tinted n-dimensional manifold. Its iridescent
surface undulates and quiver.

AVATAR (O.C.)
Untheorized access detected. Launch
intervention protocol.

An alarm sounds.

HAMPTON

Too late.

AVATAR (O.C.)

Repeat. Launch intervention protocol.

HAMPTON

Still too late.

The 3D wireframe polygon begins to reappear. Each image attempts to dominate the screen.

AVATAR (O.C.)

Execute override!

The alarm is deafening.

Hampton's skull cap begins to buzz.

He grimaces.

ARTIMUS

Stop at once! You fuck!

AVATAR (O.C.)

Scanning the checksum for integrity.

More alarms begin to cycle.

The 3D wireframe polygon and the n-dimensional manifold begin to blend, interlace, and commingle.

ARTIMUS

Kill him!

The TR Officer reaches for his side-arm, Harlow turns and brings an elbow up under his nose while simultaneously reaching for the gun. The TR Officer's nose explodes and he crumbles to the ground.

AVATAR (O.C.)

Identify signatures and wildcards.

Blood begins to trickle down Hampton's scalp. The alarms are deafening. As his face contorts, Hampton's skull cap begins to sizzle.

HARLOW

No! No!

Harlow rushes toward HAMPTON.

HAMPTON
Stay back. Stay back!

The 3D wireframe polygon and the n-dimensional manifold begin to glow and pulsate.

The screen begins to rumble and vibrate.

AVATAR (O.C.)
Seeking heuristic rules and fragments.

HAMPTON
Execute the third law of robotics!

AVATAR (O.C.)
A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.

Hampton is in agony.

ARTIMUS
God Damn You! God Damn You!

HAMPTON
Now, Execute Now!

The 3D wireframe polygon and the n-dimensional manifold are now indistinguishable. Sirens pierce the air as the screen begins to brighten. The entire screen begins to vibrate. Individual monitors begin exploding.

AVATAR (O.C.)
Unable to identify the encryption key.

Hampton screams in agony as blood streams down his face.

HARLOW
No. Please, no!

Artimus races toward Hampton.

AVATAR (O.C.)
Unable to identify the encryption key.

Hampton is writhing in pain as his scalp begins to scorch and smoke.

ARTIMUS
You're a dead man!

Harlow fires twice. Artimus jerks with each impact, looks surprised, then drops.

AVATAR (O.C.)
Unable to identify the encryption
key.

The sirens are now on top of them.

Hampton's eyes are now just burning sockets.

HARLOW
Hamp!

HAMPTON
Go! You have to go!

The screen becomes white hot as it begins to crumble and collapse.

HAMPTON (CONT'D)
Go! Now!

Harlow races toward the door as the screen explodes behind her turning the air a bright sun-like gold.

MATCH CUT

EXT. PEOPLE'S PARK - DAY

A sunny day.

Birds sing.

Children laugh.

A group plays touch football.

The signpost says "People's Park".

Harlow, Roach, and McAfree navigate to the top of a small rise where a bronze statue of Jeffrey and Hampton stands.

Hampton sits in his hoverchair while Jeffrey pushes leaning in as if in mid-conversation.

The inscription reads "Jeffrey Randall Harlow and Andrew Hampton - Soldiers".

MCAFREE
Not a bad likeness.

HARLOW

It's them. Just as I remember. It's perfect.

ROACH

It needs to be lit. You know? At night.

They begin to stroll down the slope as cranes dismantle several antenna laden masts.

MCAFREE

You're always wanting to go big.

ROACH

I am not. But it needs to be seen for miles.

HARLOW

Well, it's on a hill.

MCAFREE

Yea. Mister Twenty point font.

HARLOW

Speaking of font. I've been thinking about changing Verbatim's masthead.

ROACH

Really? To what?

HARLOW

Something with the word free in it.

MCAFREE

You mean like free of charge?

HARLOW

No. Silly. I mean like the free press. You remember a free press.

ROACH

I'm not that old.

MCAFREE

Sure you are. Be serious.

ROACH

No really.

FADE OUT