

"I N B O U N D"

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2nd draft

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PAGE 1

INT. PRECINCT - HOMICIDE BULLPEN - MORNING

A fluorescent-lit aquarium of exhaustion and motion.

Phones ring. Coffee spills. Cops argue without energy. The city is already dying in duplications before noon.

DETECTIVE JAMES REED (42) moves through it all with quiet, economical focus. Not burned out. Not hopeful. The rare middle state of a man who still believes truth exists but knows it doesn't announce itself anymore.

He drops a thin case file on his desk.

Stamped across the top:

JOHN KLINE - CARDIAC FAILURE - NO TRAUMA - NO TOX

Reed opens it.

Medical photos. Hospital report.

Time of death: 11:42 PM.

His eyes narrow slightly.

This is the third one this week.

INT. REED'S DESK - CONTINUOUS

MARA VALE (40s), his partner, slides him a battered coffee.

VALE

You've been staring at dead hearts
like they owe you money.

Reed taps the timestamp.

REED

Three people. Same TOD. Different
neighborhoods.

Vale shrugs.

VALE

So they synchronized their dying?

Reed doesn't smile.

PAGE 2

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

Whiteboard. Crime scene photos now paired with hospital telemetry.

A city map sprawls across the table.

Reed circles three locations. They form no clean line.

REED

No toxins. No drugs. No prior
conditions severe enough to explain
timing.

Vale leans against the table.

VALE

So what are you saying?

Reed hesitates.

This is where credibility dies.

REED

I'm saying the absence of cause is
clustering.

Vale studies him.

VALE

You think someone is killing people
without touching them.

Reed doesn't answer right away.

REED

I think someone is timing them.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Children explode through the doors at dismissal.

Parents cluster along the sidewalk.

Reed waits across the street.

His daughter SOFIA (12) runs out laughing with friends. She spots him. Smiles.

That smile still works.

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INT. REED'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Sofia scrolls on her phone in the back seat.

SOFIA

Mom says you missed my debate thing.

Reed winces.

REED

I'll make the next one.

She doesn't answer.

He glances in the mirror. She's already gone back to her screen.

INT. REED'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Small. Clean. Lived-in without sentimentality.

Reed stirs pasta badly on the stove.

Sofia does homework at the table.

Muted news murmurs from the TV:

"...authorities confirm no signs of foul play..."

Reed glances at the screen. Another cardiac death.

SOFIA

Is that your guy?

REED

All of them are my guys.

INT. SOFIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Reed tucks her in.

She pretends to sleep before he leaves.

He still watches the rise and fall of her chest longer than he needs to.

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INT. PRECINCT - NIGHT

The bullpen is half-empty now.

Reed stands at a corkboard.

Five photos.

Five neat cardiac deaths.

Different faces. Different lives.

Same TOD: 11:42 PM.

Reed draws circles around the locations.

They don't radiate outward.

They orbit inward.

That's wrong.

INT. EVIDENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Plastic bins. Fluorescent glare.

Reed inventories victim belongings: wallets, keys, phones.

One item stops him.

A cheap burner phone.

He powers it on.

No contacts. No call history.

One unsent draft message:

"I see you now."

Reed exhales slowly.

INT. REED'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

His ex-wife LENA (40s) waits inside, tense.

LENA

Your partner called. You vanished.

Reed checks the time.

It's after midnight.

REED

I lost track.

She studies him.

LENA

You always do when something scares you.

He doesn't answer.

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INT. BALCONY - MOMENTS LATER

Reed smokes alone, phone in hand.

Unknown number calls.

He answers.

Silence.

Then a man's voice:

VOICE (V.O.)

You mapped it wrong.

Reed stiffens.

REED

Who is this?

VOICE (V.O.)

The deaths don't orbit inward.

Click.

The call ends.

Reed looks down to the street below.

A man stands beneath a flickering streetlight.

MICHAEL TORRANCE (50s).

Clean posture. Stillness that feels predatory without effort.

Their eyes lock.

Three seconds.

Four.

Reed's heart stutters violently in his chest.

Torrance smiles faintly.

Then turns and walks away.

INT. REED'S BEDROOM - PRE-DAWN

Reed lies awake.

The phone vibrates.

A text from the unknown number:

"Tomorrow you'll understand the pattern."

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EXT. CITY STREET - PRE-DAWN

Blue-gray light. The world barely awake.

Reed walks toward his car.

A shape detaches from a doorway behind him.

A gun lifts.

Reed barely has time to turn—

GUNSHOT.
White silence.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL BATHTUB - NIGHT

ICE WATER.
Reed GASPS AWAKE submerged.

He thrashes upright screaming.

In a body that is not his.

Steam curls from the tub.

His hands are wrong.

Older. Scarred.

A folded note floats beside him.

He grabs it with shaking hands and reads:

"They killed you.

24 hours.

Find the next host or you're gone."

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Reed stares at the message, water dripping from his face.

He looks at his reflection in the motel mirror across the room.

A stranger stares back.

Breathing hard.

Not him.

A sudden crushing pressure grips his chest.

Reed clutches his sternum, gasping.

On the nightstand beside the tub, a burner phone vibrates to life.

A digital countdown appears:

23:59:17
Reed stares at it in terror as the
seconds begin to fall.

INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - NIGHT

Reed clutches the phone.

The countdown ticks:

23:59:02... 23:59:01... 23:59:00...

He staggers out of the tub, water and ice crashing to the tile.

He catches himself on the sink, breathing hard.

He looks up.

A cracked mirror.

A stranger's face stares back at him. Late 30s, harder, leaner than Reed. Faint scar along the jaw. Stubble.

Reed touches his cheek.

The reflection copies him.

REED

No. No, no—

Something else is written on the mirror in black marker, half-fogged:

THEY KILLED YOU.
24 HOURS.
FIND THE NEXT HOST OR YOU'RE GONE.
TRUST NO ONE.

Underneath, a signature in familiar handwriting:

JAMES REED.

Reed stares. His own name looks foreign.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cheap bed. Cigarette burns in the carpet. Heavy curtains drawn tight.

Reed stumbles out of the bathroom, still dripping, still clutching the phone.

On the nightstand:

- A wallet
- A second burner phone (dead)
- A handgun in a cheap nylon holster

Reed ignores the gun. Grabs the wallet.

Inside:

ID for ERIC HOLLIS.

A few twenties.

A key card for the motel.

Reed checks his reflection in the dark TV screen.

It matches the ID photo.

REED

Eric Hollis...

He drops onto the bed, breathing hard.

The phone vibrates in his hand again.

A new TEXT appears from an UNKNOWN NUMBER:

YOU HAVE 24 HOURS FROM FIRST WAKE.

Reed types back with shaking fingers.

REED (TEXT)
Who is this?

Three dots flicker.

Then:

YOU.

Reed stares at that.

The clock keeps ticking.

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INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER

Reed dressed now in Hollis's clothes: jeans, t-shirt, jacket.

He moves around the room with a detective's eye.

Trash can:

- Empty pill blisters
- Mini liquor bottles

Dresser drawer:

- A small notebook
- Extra ammo

He flips open the notebook.

Pages of numbers and street names. A few first names. No context.

He pockets the notebook and the loaded gun on pure habit.

The PHONE buzzes again.

23:41:13.

A small icon blinks on the screen now: a pulsing red dot over a vague map.

Reed frowns.

REED

You've got to be kidding me.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Reed steps out into cold, damp air.

He squints at the parking lot.

Nobody seems to recognize him.

A BUS rumbles past on the street.

He jogs to it, climbs aboard.

INT. CITY BUS - MOVING - NIGHT

Reed stands near the back, gripping the overhead bar, keeping his head down.

The phone's map slowly adjusts, the red dot sliding across the crude city outline as the bus moves.

A YOUNG WOMAN nearby glances up from her headphones and accidentally catches Reed's eyes.

They hold for a beat.

One second.

Two.

Three.

Reed looks away fast, heart pounding.

The young woman keeps nodding to her music, oblivious.

He exhales shakily.

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EXT. CITY STREET - LATER

Reed steps off the bus downtown.

The map dot on the phone pulses faster, settling near a cluster of blocks.

He zooms in. A familiar street name appears.

The Medical Examiner's office.

REED

Of course.

He starts walking.

EXT. MEDICAL EXAMINER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Muted sodium-vapor lights. The building is low, practical, anonymous.

Reed hesitates at the door.

He looks like Eric Hollis.
He feels like James Reed.

He goes in.

INT. M.E. RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

A bored NIGHT CLERK flips through a magazine.

CLERK

We're closed to the public.

Reed leans on the counter, trying to sound like himself and not himself.

REED

Detective Reed, Homicide. I need to view a body.

The clerk eyes him. Then the gun under his jacket catches the man's attention more than the face.

He sighs, buzzes the door.

CLERK

Ten minutes.

INT. MORGUE - AUTOPSY BAY - MOMENTS LATER

Cold. Stainless steel. The smell of disinfectant and something underneath it.

A TECH pulls open a drawer, slides out a covered gurney.

TECH

You sure you wanna do this alone?

Reed nods.

The tech leaves.

Reed pulls back the sheet.

His own face stares up at him.

JAMES REED.

Neat entry wound through the right
eye.

The Y-incision is stitched.

Reed grips the edge of the gurney until his knuckles whiten.

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He studies the wound like it's a crime scene instead of his
old skull.

Angle. Powder burn. No stippling on the hands.

REED

That's not suicide.

He reaches out, touches the dead man's wrist.

Cold.

He swallows.

The PHONE vibrates.

He checks it.

22:56:40.

The clock has barely moved.

This is not about distance.

This is about time lived.

Reed looks down at his own dead body one more time.

REED (SOFT)

What did you get yourself into?

He covers the face, replaces the sheet.

INT. MORGUE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Reed exits the bay, shaken.

The Tech nods at him as he passes.

Reed avoids eye contact, keeps his head down.

His chest tightens suddenly – a flare of pressure, not quite pain.

He presses a hand to his sternum, steadies himself on the wall.

The Tech notices.

TECH

You okay, man?

Reed nods quickly.

REED

Bad lunch.

He keeps moving.

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EXT. M.E. OFFICE - NIGHT

Reed steps out into the street.

Cold air hits his face. He sucks it in like a drowning man.

He checks the phone.

22:41:03.

The countdown is moving normally now.

He pockets it, starts walking.

EXT. REED'S HOUSE - LATER

A modest brick house. Lights on inside.

Reed stands across the street, half in shadow.

Through the front window, he can see LENA moving in the kitchen.

SOFIA appears, says something, laughs. Lena flicks a towel at her.

It's domestic. Warm.

A man steps into frame behind them, puts an arm around Lena's waist.

Reed's jaw tightens.

He takes one unconscious step toward the house—

Then stops.

He is a stranger on this sidewalk now.

If he goes to the door, they see Eric Hollis.

Not him.

He feels his throat tighten.

The phone vibrates.

22:12:18.

Time is bleeding away while he watches a life he can't enter.

He backs into the dark.

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EXT. 24-HOUR DINER - NIGHT

A cheap neon sign flickers.

Reed sits alone in a booth, untouched coffee in front of him.

The wall clock above the grill reads 1:17 AM.

He stares at the phone on the table:

21:31:09.

A WAITRESS, late 20s, bleached hair, slides by to refill.

WAITRESS

You want anything besides caffeine and staring?

Reed looks up automatically.

Their eyes meet.

One second.

Two.

Three.

A faint stirring begins in his chest. A subtle gravitational pull.

Four.

He breaks eye contact, looks down.

The sensation subsides.

REED

I'm good. Thanks.

She moves on, oblivious.

Reed realizes how close that was without knowing exactly why.

He glances around.

Mirrors. Windows. Silverware.

The world is full of reflective surfaces that can bounce eyes together.

This is going to be hell.

INT. DINER - BATHROOM - LATER

Reed splashes water on his face.

He forces himself to meet his borrowed eyes in the mirror.

REED

Okay. Rules.

He looks at the ticking phone.

REED (CONT'D)

Twenty-four hours. New body. Clock resets.

He looks at his reflection.

REED (CONT'D)

If it hits zero—

He doesn't have the end of that sentence yet.

He just knows it's bad.

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The pressure in his chest pulses again. Not pain. A reminder.

He pockets the phone, leaves.

EXT. CITY STREET - PRE-DAWN

The sky is starting to pale.

Reed walks, hands in pockets, eyes mostly on the ground.

The city feels different when you're supposed to be dead.

He passes a HOMELESS MAN curled up in a doorway under a thin blanket.

The man's eyes flicker open.

They lock with Reed's.

One second.

Two.

Three.

Something different happens this time.

The man's pupils dilate unnaturally wide.

He flinches, pulls the blanket over his face, shivering.

Reed staggers, the pull snapping between them like a stretched wire.

He yanks his gaze away.

The sensation breaks.

Reed stands in the middle of the sidewalk, breathing hard.

REED

You felt that too.

The homeless man mutters, rocking under the blanket.

HOMELESS MAN

No more rides. No more rides..

Reed stares.

He's not the only one who knows what this is.

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EXT. CITY OVERLOOK - SUNRISE

Reed stands at a railing as the city turns gold and gray beneath him.

He checks the phone.

19:57:42.

A quarter of a day gone. Almost nothing to show for it except terror.

He opens the NOTES app on the burner, thumbs clumsy.

REED (V.O.)

(quiet, to himself)

They killed you. Twenty-four hours. New host. Clock resets. Eye contact does something. Some people feel it. Some don't.

He types as he talks.

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

They want you using this. Want you burning through people.

He looks at the city.

At all the lives down there.

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

So rule one: don't look at anyone longer than you have to.

He finishes typing, pockets the phone.

We stay with the screen a beat as the note auto-saves.

Title:

RULES FOR STAYING DEAD.

Reed turns away from the sunrise.

Walks back into the city with twenty hours left.

EXT. CITY STREET - MORNING

Commuter traffic thickens. The city wakes fully.

Reed moves with the flow, head down, fighting the instinct to look up at faces.

The pressure in his chest pulses again. Stronger now.

He stumbles slightly.

No one notices.

INT. PHARMACY - MORNING

Reed leans on the counter, pale.

PHARMACIST

You alright?

Reed nods too quickly.

REED

Just dizzy.

The pharmacist studies him, unconvinced, then hands him a small cup of water.

Reed downs it. The water tastes metallic.

The pressure subsides... slightly.

He backs toward the door.

EXT. PHARMACY - CONTINUOUS

Reed steps outside.

The world tilts suddenly.

His knees buckle.

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EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

Reed collapses hard onto the concrete.

People shout. Someone kneels beside him.

BYSTANDER

Hey-hey, can you hear me?

Reed's vision tunnels.

The phone vibrates wildly in his pocket.

19:03:11.

The pressure becomes agony.

Black creeps in at the edges.

REED (WEAK)

Hospital...

Darkness takes him.

INT. AMBULANCE - MOVING - MOMENTS LATER

Sirens. Red light pulses.

An EMT straps Reed down.

EMT #1

BP's dropping.

EMT #2

No trauma. No signs of overdose.

Reed's eyes flutter.

REED

Don't... look at me...

The EMTs exchange confused glances.

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INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Bright. Chaotic. Controlled panic.

Reed is rushed through swinging doors.

Doctors shout vitals.

DOCTOR

Cardiac activity is unstable.

Reed grips the edge of the gurney.

REED

I need... a private room..

They ignore that.

He's wheeled past curtains, beds, faces.

So many eyes.

He forces his gaze to the ceiling lights.

INT. ER BAY - CONTINUOUS

Reed lies on the bed, hooked to monitors.

A NURSE starts an IV.

NURSE

Name?

Reed hesitates.

REED

Eric. Eric Hollis.

The nurse types it in.

NURSE

Any known conditions?

Reed shakes his head.

That's a lie for both men.

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The monitor BEEPS unevenly.

Reed's chest tightens in a new way. Not just pressure.

This body is failing.

REED

(hoarse)

How long?

The doctor doesn't answer that question directly.

DOCTOR

We're going to stabilize you.

Reed looks at the monitor.

The numbers disagree.

The phone buzzes in his pocket.

He can't reach it.

The NURSE notices the vibration.

NURSE

Is that yours?

Reed's eyes widen.

REED

Don't touch it.

She freezes, startled.

INT. ER HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Through the glass, Reed sees an OLDER MAN (70s) in a wheelchair being rolled by.

IV stand beside him. Oxygen mask.

Their eyes drift toward each other.

Reed feels it immediately.

Not a pull.

An invitation.

The man's gaze is steady. Knowing.

The orderly looks down at the man.

ORDERLY

Still want to go through with this,
Mr. Carver?

The man nods once.

MR. CARVER

I'm ready.

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Reed jerks upright against the restraints.

REED

Wait--wait--

The doctor presses him gently back down.

DOCTOR

Easy. You're not going anywhere
right now.

Reed locks eyes with Mr. Carver through the glass.

One second.

Two.

Three.

The pressure changes direction.

Pull becomes surge.

Four.

Five.

Six.

Reed's vision fractures into white lines.

The monitors spike.

NURSE

What's happening to his heart—

Seven.

Eight.

Nine.

Ten.

The world violently inverts.

INT. WHITE VOID - INSTANT

Sound implodes.

No pain.

No pressure.

Just falling through weightless light.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Reed GASPS AWAKE into air that smells like disinfectant and plastic.

Older lungs burn.

Older hands grip the blanket.

A steady heartbeat echoes in his ears.

Slow.

Strong.

The first thing he sees is the phone on the bedside table.

It lights up.

23:59:59

The clock resets.

Reed sits up slowly.

He feels... solid.

Different weight. Different breath.

He swings his legs over the side of the bed.

The body responds with practiced weakness, not crisis.

A NURSE enters.

NURSE

Mr. Carver? You gave us a scare.

Reed tests the name.

REED

Carver...

NURSE

Your heart stabilized on its own.
That doesn't usually happen at your
age.

Reed forces a weak smile.

REED

Guess I'm stubborn.

The nurse chuckles and leaves.

Reed exhales.

He's alive again.

At someone else's expense.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Reed sits alone.

He checks the NOTES app.

His list is still there:

RULES FOR STAYING DEAD

He adds a new line with shaking thumbs:

Transfer requires sustained eye contact. About ten seconds.

He hesitates.

Then adds:

Feels consensual if they're ready.

He stares at that word.

Ready.

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INT. HOSPITAL - PALLIATIVE WING - DAY

Reed, now in MR. CARVER'S body, walks slowly with a cane.

He pauses outside a room across the hall.

Inside: a TINY OLD WOMAN sits with two adult children.

They're crying quietly.

A nurse closes the door.

A small sign flips to VACANT.

Reed understands.

Carver traded places with him on purpose.

He lowers his head.

REED

Thank you.

No one hears it.

INT. HOSPITAL EXIT - DAY

Reed steps outside into sunlight.

Fresh time.

Fresh body.

Fresh guilt.

He checks the phone one more time.

23:41:22.
Almost a full day again.

Almost.

Reed pockets the phone and walks into the city — already knowing he will not survive this once with clean hands.

EXT. CITY PARK - LATE AFTERNOON

Reed, in MR. CARVER'S elderly body, sits on a bench feeding crumbs to pigeons.

Families pass. Joggers cut through. Normal life at normal speed.

Reed checks the phone discreetly.

22:03:11.
Too much time.

He watches people pass, fighting instinct.

Every face is a doorway now.

A little GIRL trips nearby. Her FATHER scoops her up.

Their eyes meet Reed's for a moment.

Reed looks away immediately.

His chest tightens faintly anyway.

EXT. PARK - LATER

The sun dips lower.

Reed stands slowly, joints protesting.

The phone buzzes again.

21:31:09.
No new messages.

No guidance.

Just the clock.

REED
So that's how it is.

He walks.

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INT. PAWN SHOP - EVENING

Small. Cluttered. Bars on the windows.

Reed browses more out of instinct than need.

The OWNER watches him carefully.

A TEENAGER at the counter argues with the owner about a broken laptop.

TEENAGER

You said twenty!

OWNER

For a working one.

The argument escalates. Voices rise.

The Teen shoves the counter.

The Owner reaches under the glass.

For a gun.

People freeze.

Reed feels the surge before anything happens.

Not pain.

Command.

REED

(too fast)

Don't-

The Owner looks at Reed.

Their eyes lock.

One second.

Two.

The gun wavers.

Three.

Four.

The pressure rushes forward violently—

Reed jerks his gaze away with effort.

The spell breaks.

The Owner blinks, confused.

The Teen bolts for the door and runs.

The danger passes.

But Reed staggers, dizzy.

The system wanted that transfer.

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EXT. PAWN SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Reed leans against the brick wall, breathing hard.

The phone vibrates aggressively.

20:55:02.

The time drop is sharper than it
should be.

He squints at it.

REED

You just penalized me.

A new TEXT arrives instantly:

YOU DECLINED A VALID EXIT.

Reed's mouth goes dry.

He types:

REED (TEXT) (CONT'D)

You'd have killed him.

The reply is immediate:

THAT IS THE MECHANISM.

Reed stares at the words.

Then deletes the thread and pockets the phone.

EXT. BUS STOP - EVENING

Reed sits on a bench, still shaken.

Across the street, two MEN argue loudly.

One pushes the other into traffic.

A horn BLARES as a car swerves.

The victim tumbles hard onto the asphalt, stunned but alive.

Reed feels the pull again.

Closer.

Stronger.

The man in the street looks up.

Their eyes meet.

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One second.

Two.

The man's pupils dilate wide, unnaturally.

Reed feels his consciousness stretch toward the man like a tearing muscle.

Three.

Four.

Reed snaps his head down brutally.

The connection breaks.

The man scrambles to his feet and runs.

Reed collapses back on the bench, drenched in sweat.

REED

You really don't like hearing no.

The phone answers without being prompted.

19:46:01.
Another unnatural drop.

INT. CARVER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A small, neat one-bedroom.

Everything is labeled.

Medications in rows. A calendar on the fridge.

Reed sits at the kitchen table going through Carver's mail.

Hospice notices.

Bills.

A handwritten note taped to the fridge:

"TRANSFER COMPLETE. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO RETURN."

Reed stares at it.

REED
You planned this.

The note feels heavier than a confession.

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INT. CARVER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Reed lies on the bed, staring at the ceiling.

The phone on the nightstand glows:

18:03:55.
Minutes are vanishing too fast now.

He sits up, alarmed.

REED
You're speeding it up.

The phone buzzes — no message, just the vibration.

A warning.

INT. CARVER'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

Reed paces.

The pressure in his chest is constant now.

It doesn't ebb.

It only waits.

Suddenly, a SCREAM echoes from the alley outside.

A WOMAN'S voice.

Reed hurries to the window and looks down.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS (THROUGH WINDOW)

A WOMAN is being dragged by a MAN toward a dumpster.

She fights, hitting his arms.

WOMAN

Help! Somebody!

The man turns and looks up—

Directly at Reed.

Their eyes collide.

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The surge is instant. Total.

Reed's vision tunnels.

The woman's screams become muffled, distant.

One second.

Two.

Three.

The pull becomes unbearable—

Reed tears his gaze away with a roar and stumbles back from the window.

The connection snaps.

Outside, the man blinks in confusion.

The woman breaks free and runs.

The man stands alone, shaken.

Reed slams against the wall, gasping.

REED

That was your exit.

His phone vibrates violently.

17:12:19.

A massive chunk of time is gone.

Reed slides down the wall onto the floor.

For the first time since waking up, he understands the rule clearly:

Good choices shorten his life.

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INT. CARVER'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Reed sits on the floor in the dark.

The glow of the phone is the only light.

16:58:44.

He lifts his head slowly.

REED

You don't want me alive.

No reply.

Just the ticking.

He rises unsteadily.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

Reed walks with new purpose now.

Not hope.

Strategy.

He scans faces more deliberately.

Criminal energy. Desperation. Predatory posture.

He is no longer avoiding selection.

The system has made its preference clear.

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EXT. ABANDONED CAR WASH - NIGHT

Reed spots a MAN harassing another man near the darkened bays.

The aggressor shoves hard. The victim slips and falls.

Reed approaches.

REED

That's far enough.

The aggressor turns, sneering.

AGGRESSOR

You lost, old man?

Reed meets his eyes.

One second.

Two.

Three.

The pull becomes a roar inside his skull-

Four.

Five.

Six.

The aggressor's face goes slack.

He collapses.

Reed lurches forward as the world turns inside out again—

INT. WHITE VOID - CONTINUOUS

Sound warps.

Light stretches sideways.

Reed is pulled forward violently—

INT. ABANDONED CAR WASH - NIGHT

Reed GASPS BACK INTO A BODY that is not old.

Strong lungs.

Fast heart.

Hands shaking with adrenaline instead of weakness.

He staggers and looks down.

The AGGRESSOR lies crumpled on the concrete nearby.

Not dead from the fall.

Dead from the transfer.

Reed's new hands are younger. Scarred. Knuckles split and healed wrong.

He looks around wildly.

This body is wired for violence.

The phone buzzes in his pocket.

Reed yanks it out.

23:59:58

The clock has reset again.

Reed stares at the screen with revulsion.

REED

You give me more time when I kill.

Silence from the phone.

But the point has already been made.

PAGE 32

EXT. CAR WASH - CONTINUOUS

Reed stumbles out into the street.

His new gait is confident without permission.

His shoulders settle naturally into menace.

He passes a cracked window and glimpses his reflection:

JACK LANTON (30s) - thick neck, shaved head, tattoos climbing the jawline.

Reed flinches.

INT. JACK'S CAR - NIGHT

Reed drops into the driver's seat without meaning to.

The keys are already in the ignition.

The dashboard is a mess of fast-food wrappers and loose rounds.

A POLICE SCANNER crackles.

SCANNER

-possible assault in progress,
Carver Alley-

Reed's breath catches.

He was the assault.

The scanner keeps talking.

If he stays in motion, they won't find him.

If he stays in motion, the monster keeps living.

PAGE 33

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Reed pulls into a small lot.

Neon hums above the windows.

He sits behind the wheel shaking.

He grips the steering wheel too hard.

REED

You want me becoming this.

He checks the phone.

23:41:06

Still fresh.

Reed gets out of the car.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

A CLERK watches TV behind the counter.

Two DRUNK MEN argue loudly near the beer case.

Reed moves past them, eyes down.

But this body's instincts keep tugging his attention upward.

The Drunks shove each other.

A fist flies.

Reed feels the old surge begin - faint, anticipating.

He backs away toward the exit.

The surge doesn't follow.

Not yet.

PAGE 34

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - CONTINUOUS

Reed steps into the night fast.

He presses against the brick wall, breathing hard.

REED

This body is primed.

He checks the phone.

23:12:44

This time, the clock is normal.

Not punishing restraint.

Yet.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A filthy studio.

Weapons on the table.

Drugs on the counter.

Photos taped crookedly to the wall - surveillance shots of random strangers.

Stalking trophies.

Reed backs into the door, nauseated.

REED

Who were you hunting next.

His hands tremble.

This body has a history of selecting.

PAGE 35

INT. JACK'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Reed splashes water on his face.

He stares at the stranger in the mirror.

REED

You don't get to keep hunting.

The mirror stares back.

Unconvinced.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Reed walks again.

This time scanning for authority.

Lights.

Cameras.

Crowds.

He wants friction.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Low-lit. Loud. Bodies packed close.

Perfect storm of eye contact.

Reed pushes through.

A MAN bumps him hard.

MAN

Watch it.

Reed meets his eyes for a fraction too long—

The familiar pull sparks.

Reed jerks away instantly.

The pull snaps.

But it was close.

This body is tuned to connect.

PAGE 36

INT. BAR BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Reed is at the sink, gripping the porcelain.

The phone vibrates.

REPORT RECEIVED
A new line appears beneath it:

HOST PROFILE: JACK LANTON — VIOLENT OFFENDER.

TRANSFER CLASS: OPTIMAL.
Reed stares in horror.

REED
You keep records.

The phone vibrates once.

Confirmation.

INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

Reed pushes back out.

He buys a drink he doesn't want.

He sets it down untouched.

This body wants chaos.

Reed denies it.

Time passes.

Nothing explodes.

The phone stays quiet.

PAGE 37

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

Reed steps outside.

Police lights flash faintly several blocks away.

The scanner in his pocket crackles softly.

He turns it on.

SCANNER
—possible fatal collapse at Carver
Alley, male suspect fled—

Reed closes his eyes.

It's official now.

There is a body on the ground behind him.

Dead where he stood.

INT. JACK'S CAR - NIGHT

Reed drives again.

This time slower.

More deliberate.

REED (V.O.)

First one doesn't stay theoretical.

He checks the phone.

21:48:03

Plenty of time.

Too much.

PAGE 38

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - HOMICIDE BULLPEN - NIGHT

MARA VALE leans over a report.

Another PHOTO slides onto the board.

The AGGRESSOR'S BODY.

Time of death: 11:42 PM.

Vale freezes.

She looks at the previous cluster.

Same TOD.

Same clean cardiac.

She looks up slowly.

VALE

That's not a coincidence anymore.

INT. WAR ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Detectives gather.

A map lights up.

VALE (CONT'D)

We may be looking at a moving
epicenter.

Confused looks.

DETECTIVE

You're saying the deaths are
traveling?

Vale nods.

VALE

I'm saying they're following
something.

PAGE 39

EXT. INDUSTRIAL STREET - NIGHT

Reed parks the car and just sits.

He is breathing normally now.

Too normally.

This body likes this life.

He hates that.

The phone buzzes again.

A new TEXT:

YOU ADAPTED QUICKLY.

Reed types back:

REED (TEXT)

You picked me because I wouldn't.

Three dots.

Then:

THAT IS WHY YOU WERE SELECTED.

Reed stares at the reply.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Reed sits on the floor among the weapons.

The glow of the phone lights his face.

20:12:26.
Still ticking.

REED

You want me becoming your filter.

No answer.

Just the clock.

PAGE 40

EXT. JACK'S APARTMENT - DAWN

The city shifts into morning.

Reed steps outside.

Sunlight on a violent face.

He pulls the hood up.

This is the first time he truly understands the scale of
what's happening:

He is not just surviving.

He is being trained.

And somewhere not far away, the police are finally starting
to follow his shadow.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Reed wakes on the floor where he passed out.

Sunlight cuts through dirty blinds.

For half a second he forgets who he is.

Then the weight of the body returns. The tension in the jaw.
The coiled violence in the shoulders.

The phone vibrates beside his face.

19:18:55

Reed exhales sharply.

REED

Still me. Still here.

He forces himself to stand.

INT. JACK'S KITCHENETTE - MORNING

Reed pours stale coffee into a chipped mug.

His hand shakes with withdrawal that isn't his.

This body wants substances. Wants chaos.

Reed stares at the drugs on the counter.

Then shoves them all into the trash.

The urge spikes hard. His vision swims.

REED

Not today.

PAGE 42

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Reed steps outside into foot traffic.

Commuters brush past him.

The pull flares again and again, faint and constant, like
static in his chest.

He keeps his eyes down.

A MAN brushes his shoulder intentionally.

MAN

Watch where you're going.

Reed almost looks up.

Almost.

He clamps his gaze to the pavement and keeps walking.

The man mutters and moves on.

Reed breathes through the surge.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

Reed sits alone at a corner table.

Crowded. All glass and reflection.

Worst possible place.

He shields his eyes with the brim of his hood.

The phone buzzes.

A new line beneath the timer:

18:44:03

Then text:

FAILURE TO UTILIZE OPTIMAL HOST RESULTS IN ACCELERATION.

Reed types back:

REED (TEXT)

So I'm livestock now.

Three dots.

Then:

YOU ARE INFRASTRUCTURE.

Reed shuts the phone off.

PAGE 43

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - WAR ROOM - MORNING

The Task Force has doubled.

More uniforms. More analysts. More tension.

Mara Vale stands at the map.

The new red marker joins the cluster.

VALE

We now have six clean cardiac
deaths, same TOD window, all within
a drifting two-mile radius.

An analyst overlays new data.

ANALYST

The epicenter moved southeast after
the last fatality.

Vale traces the line with her finger.

VALE

That's a walking pace.

A beat.

VALE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Whatever we're tracking... it moves
like a person.

PAGE 44

EXT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - LATE MORNING

Reed sits on the steps, studying the neighborhood.

Normal people. Ordinary tells.

He is hunting exits without wanting to use them.

The phone buzzes.

17:59:12

Reed rubs his face.

REED

You're tightening the leash.

No response.

Just the clock.

INT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Quiet. Rows of computers.

Reed chooses a station facing a wall.

No one directly in front of him.

He searches his own name.

News article:

DETECTIVE JAMES REED FOUND DEAD IN MOTEL ROOM - SUICIDE
SUSPECTED

His stomach drops.

Below it: a photo of his own face.

REED

That was fast.

He scrolls.

No suspicion. No questions. Case closed.

He looks up at the rows of unaware people.

He is officially a ghost.

PAGE 45

INT. LIBRARY - LATER

Reed closes the browser.

A YOUNG MAN across from him glances over.

Their eyes brush.

One second.

The familiar surge licks up Reed's spine.

He snaps his gaze away.

The phone vibrates instantly.

17:32:41

A penalty.

Reed's jaw tightens.

EXT. LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

Reed exits into bright noon light.

He feels hunted from the inside.

PAGE 46

INT. JACK'S CAR - MIDDAY

Reed drives aimlessly.

Police cars pass in the opposite direction more often now.

The scanner crackles.

SCANNER

-task force units establish mobile
perimeter along River Ward-

Reed jerks upright.

River Ward is two blocks from here.

EXT. RIVER WARD - CONTINUOUS

Reed slows as he enters the area.

More people. More storefronts. More eyes.

A controlled risk.

He parks.

Steps out.

PAGE 47

EXT. RIVER WARD - SIDE STREET - DAY

Reed walks toward a small crowd gathered around an argument.

A DELIVERY DRIVER and a MAN in a hoodie are chest-to-chest.

DRIVER

You clipped my mirror!

MAN

You were speeding!

Hands shove.

Shouts rise.

Reed feels the surge intensify like a pressure front.

The driver turns suddenly and locks eyes with Reed.

One second.

Two.

The driver's pupils widen too much.

Reed feels himself lean forward without permission.

Three.

The hoodie man shouts—

HOODIE MAN

Hey! What the hell, man—

Reed jerks his gaze away with a groan.

The surge snaps.

The driver blinks, disoriented.

The crowd breaks apart in confusion.

Reed stumbles back, clutching his chest.

PAGE 48

EXT. RIVER WARD - CONTINUOUS

Police sirens rise several blocks away.

Too close.

Reed turns and moves fast but casual.

Blending, not running.

The phone buzzes.

16:41:09

Another steep cut.

Reed slows to a stop in an alley, breath ragged.

REED

You're trying to starve me into it.

Still no reply.

INT. POLICE CRUISER - MOVING - SAME

Mara Vale rides shotgun.

Eyes on a tablet tracking live incident reports.

VALE

We're corralling without knowing
it.

The OFFICER driving looks over.

OFFICER

Corralling what?

Vale doesn't have a good answer.

VALE

Something that doesn't like
pressure.

PAGE 49

EXT. ALLEY - AFTERNOON

Reed leans against a brick wall, sweating.

The pressure is constant now, a low-level burn.

A SHADOW moves at the alley mouth.

Reed tenses.

A KID on a skateboard rolls past, oblivious.

Missed connection.

Reed laughs weakly.

REED

You really want blood today.

The phone vibrates with no message.

Only time falling:

15:55:37

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Reed paces between walls.

The weapons glint from the table.

He stops in front of them.

His hands hover.

The body knows how to use every one.

Reed clenches his fists instead.

REED

You don't get to choose how I
survive.

The pressure surges in response.

PAGE 50

EXT. JACK'S APARTMENT - SUNSET

Reed steps out into the dying light.

Police lights flicker in the distance.

He pulls his hood lower and melts into the crowd.

The phone ticks:

15:02:11

Half the day already gone.

And this body is still alive.
Still dangerous.
Still not what the system truly wants.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dark now.

Reed paces in tight loops. Faster. Tighter.

The pressure in his chest is no longer a pulse — it's a constant static roar.

He stops at the mirror.

His reflection smiles.

It is not his smile.

Reed blinks.

The smile vanishes.

REED

You don't get a turn.

His reflection doesn't answer.

But the urge spikes anyway.

INT. JACK'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Reed's hand moves without his permission.

It grabs one of the weapons from the table — a short, ugly knife.

Reed looks down at it in horror.

REED (CONT'D)

No. No, no—

He drops the knife like it burned him.

It CLATTERS on the floor.

The phone vibrates hard:

14:48:03

The time drop is aggressive.

Punitive.

PAGE 52

EXT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Reed bursts out into the hallway, slamming the door behind him.

Tenants peek from cracked doors.

Someone whispers.

Reed keeps moving fast, head down.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Police sirens echo closer now.

The perimeter has shifted again.

Reed feels it tightening – not just spatially.

Psychologically.

The phone buzzes.

A TEXT appears:

OPTIMAL CONDITIONS DETECTED.

Reed looks up.

Ahead: a crowded outdoor night market under string lights.

Hundreds of people.

Eyes everywhere.

Doors everywhere.

Reed's breathing becomes ragged.

REED

You're sick.

The phone answers with time only:

14:12:41

PAGE 53

EXT. NIGHT MARKET - CONTINUOUS

Reed is pulled into the crowd like a tide.

Music. Laughter. Food vendors.

He moves through bodies packed shoulder to shoulder.

He cannot avoid eye contact now.

The pressure surges in chaotic waves.

A WOMAN laughs and turns suddenly.

Their eyes meet.

One second.

Two.

She blinks, sways slightly.

Reed tears his gaze away.

Behind her, a MAN looks up at the same time.

Another surge.

Reed spins aside.

Another connection almost forms.

He staggers.

REED

Too many-too many-

EXT. NIGHT MARKET - CONTINUOUS

Police lights flash at the far entrance.

People murmur.

Someone shouts.

The crowd compresses.
Reed is squeezed from all sides.
Faces inches from his own now.
The pull becomes unbearable.
His vision fractures.
Multiple surges overlap.
His body leans forward as if magnetized.

PAGE 54

EXT. NIGHT MARKET - CONTINUOUS

For the first time, Reed loses partial control.
He locks eyes with a MAN directly in front of him.
One second.
Two.
Three.
The man gasps.
His pupils blow wide.
A nearby WOMAN also meets Reed's eyes by accident.
Another surge stacks on top of the first.
Reed feels his consciousness start to split directionally.
A scream tears out of him.

REED

NO—

He throws his hood over his face and drops to his knees.
The connections SNAP simultaneously.
The man he almost took collapses forward, coughing violently
but alive.
The woman stumbles backward into someone's arms.

People scream.

Panic erupts.

EXT. NIGHT MARKET - CONTINUOUS

Police push into the chaos.

OFFICER (O.S.)

Everybody back! Back!

Reed crawls on hands and knees through dropped bags and overturned tables.

His phone vibrates wildly:

13:26:19

A catastrophic penalty.

He's dying faster now.

PAGE 55

EXT. ALLEY OFF THE MARKET - CONTINUOUS

Reed staggers into darkness.

He braces against a wall, barely upright.

Sweat pours down his face.

REED

You almost made me take three at once.

The phone vibrates again.

A new line appears beneath the timer:

CONFLUENCE TOLERANCE EXCEEDED. SYSTEM INSTABILITY NOTED.

Reed laughs weakly.

REED (CONT'D)

Good.

INT. POLICE MOBILE COMMAND - SAME

Vale watches chaotic live feeds from the night market.

People scattering. Medics rushing in.

VALE

What triggered that?

An analyst shakes his head.

ANALYST

No weapons. No explosives. No
conventional cause.

Vale stares at the screen.

VALE

Then it was proximity.

PAGE 56

EXT. INDUSTRIAL BLOCK - NIGHT

Reed stumbles deeper into abandoned streets.

No crowds.

No exits.

The pressure eases slightly — just enough to move.

He checks the phone.

12:49:10

Almost half the remaining time is
gone.

REED

You're accelerating the decay now.

Silence.

EXT. UNDERPASS - NIGHT

Reed collapses onto cold concrete beneath the bridge.

He curls inward, gasping.

The predator body shakes violently.

For the first time, Reed feels the host's own impulses pushing back at him.

Not just urges.

Resistance.

Two wills inside one nervous system.

REED (CONT'D)

You're fighting me too now.

The body jerks in response.

PAGE 57

INT. WHITE FLASH - DISJOINTED

Not a full transfer.

Not nothing.

A fractured sensory overlap:

Blood.

Heat.

Hands gripping someone else's throat.

A scream that isn't happening now.

Reed jerks back into full awareness, choking.

EXT. UNDERPASS - CONTINUOUS

Reed slams his fists against the concrete.

REED

You don't get to pilot me.

The phone vibrates weakly:

12:01:44

A warning tremor through the number.

PAGE 58

INT. POLICE WAR ROOM - NIGHT

Vale traces the new epicenter shift.

VALE

He's no longer moving like a predator.

Briggs frowns.

BRIGGS

What is he moving like?

Vale answers grimly:

VALE

Something wounded.

EXT. UNDERPASS - NIGHT

Reed forces himself to his feet.

The pressure is lower here.

Sparse population.

He can breathe.

For a moment.

He pockets the phone and starts walking.

Not away from the city.

Through it.

PAGE 59

EXT. TRAIN YARD - NIGHT

Rusting railcars. Open darkness.

Reed moves between them like a ghost.

The city noise fades behind him.

He checks the phone one more time.

11:34:55

Under half a day now.

And this host is already degrading.

REED

You're burning this one out too.

The phone finally responds with text:

ALL HOSTS ARE TEMPORARY.

Reed nods.

REED (CONT'D)

So am I.

EXT. TRAIN YARD - NIGHT

Reed staggers between silent railcars.

The predator body is failing now – breath shortening, joints misfiring.

The pressure in his chest spikes sharply, then drops, then spikes again.

He clutches at his sternum.

REED

You're done... you're almost done.

The phone vibrates.

11:02:13

Too fast.

Way too fast.

EXT. TRAIN YARD - CONTINUOUS

A SECURITY LIGHT flicks on at the far end of the yard.

A lone SECURITY GUARD (50s) steps out of a booth, flashlight in hand.

SECURITY GUARD

Hey! You can't be back here!

Reed freezes.

The guard starts walking toward him.

Flashlight beam cuts across Reed's face.

Their eyes are going to meet.

Reed backs away slowly.

PAGE 61

One step.

Another.

The predator body wants to charge.

Reed fights it.

REED

No. Not this time.

The guard keeps approaching.

SECURITY GUARD

I said stop right there!

The distance closes to just a few yards.

Eye contact is inevitable now.

Reed suddenly turns and dives between two railcars, breaking line of sight.

The guard shouts and runs.

Reed crawls through gravel and darkness, barely staying ahead.

The urge tears at him like a hooked nerve.

But he keeps his eyes down.

No transfer.

No reset.

EXT. FAR END OF TRAIN YARD - MOMENTS LATER

Reed tumbles out onto open concrete.

He rolls onto his back, gasping.

The pressure pauses.

The phone vibrates.

10:35:41

No penalty.

No reward.

Just time.

He lets out a broken laugh.

REED

That's new.

PAGE 62

EXT. RIVER EMBANKMENT - PRE-DAWN

Reed stumbles along the water's edge.

The predator body is deteriorating fast now.

Hands shaking. Vision blurring.

He checks the phone.

09:58:06

Under ten hours.

REED

You forced me into him... now you're
taking it back.

The city skyline glows faintly across the river.

Reed slips on wet rocks and goes down hard.

He doesn't get back up right away.

EXT. RIVER EMBANKMENT - CONTINUOUS

Reed tries to push himself to his feet.

His right arm doesn't respond.

The predator body is failing neurologically now.

Partial shutdown.

The phone vibrates.

09:31:54

Reed stares at the number.

REED

You're going to make me choose
again.

PAGE 63

EXT. RIVER EMBANKMENT - MORNING

Sunrise.

Reed lies half-curved by the water.

The pressure is back — not sharp, but wide.

A silhouette approaches along the path above him.

A TEENAGE BOY (16) jogging with earbuds in.

The boy slows when he sees Reed.

TEEN BOY

Hey, man... you alright?

The boy steps closer.

Reed looks up despite himself.

Their eyes meet.

One second.

The boy sways slightly.

Reed FEELS the connection begin.

Two seconds.

The boy blinks, confused but still present.

Three seconds.

The pull strengthens.

Reed forces his eyes shut and turns his head away with a cry.

The connection snaps.

The boy stumbles back, frightened.

TEEN BOY (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Whoa—what's wrong with you?

Reed waves him off desperately.

REED

Go. Please just go.

The boy hesitates once more, then runs.

The pressure crashes inward violently.

PAGE 64

EXT. RIVER EMBANKMENT - CONTINUOUS

Reed convulses on the ground.

The predator body seizes.

Limbs locking.

Lungs spasming.

He claws at the dirt for air.

The phone vibrates relentlessly:

08:44:10

08:44:09

08:44:08

Reed laughs weakly through gasps.

REED

You wanted me to take the kid.

The numbers keep falling.

REED (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

You wanted him because he was easy.

The seizure intensifies.

His vision tunnels.

EXT. RIVER EMBANKMENT - CONTINUOUS

Footsteps again.

Another figure approaches.

This time slower.

He forces his eyes closed.

REED

Don't look at me..

A gentle voice replies:

WOMAN (O.S.)

I'm not scared.

Reed peeks despite himself.

A WOMAN (30s) kneels beside him. Calm. Ordinary. Soft eyes.

A worn grocery bag hangs from her wrist.

PAGE 65

Their eyes meet.

One second.

No surge.

Two seconds.

Still no pull.

Reed blinks in confusion.

REED

Why don't you feel it?

Three seconds.

A faint tremor this time – but weak.

The woman steadies him.

WOMAN

Because I don't want to go
anywhere.

That lands harder than any threat.

The predator body spasms again.

Reed winces.

REED

You need to leave. Now.

She looks at him gently.

WOMAN

You're dying.

Reed nods.

REED

Yeah.

She considers that calmly.

WOMAN

Do you want to?

Reed doesn't answer.

He can't.

PAGE 66

The phone vibrates.

07:59:41

The woman finally glances at the
screen.

Her eyes widen slightly.

WOMAN

That's not normal.

REED

None of this is.

She adjusts his head, props him against her knee.

WOMAN

My name's ANNA.

Reed breathes shallow and fast.

REED

James.

A real name.

For the first time in a long while.

EXT. RIVER EMBANKMENT - CONTINUOUS

The predator body convulses again.

Harder.

Reed cries out.

Anna grips his shoulders to steady him.

Their faces are inches apart.

Eye contact is unavoidable.

One second.

Two.

The surge flares brightly -

Then... stalls.

Reed feels resistance.

Not from the system.

From her.

PAGE 67

Three seconds.

The pull weakens instead of strengthening.

Reed stares at her in disbelief.

REED

You're blocking it...

Anna's voice is steady.

ANNA

I'm staying where I am.

Four seconds.

The connection fails entirely.

The predator body spasms violently one last time.

Reed feels the internal pressure release in a sickening rush.

Then —

Nothing.

The host body goes still.

EXT. RIVER EMBANKMENT - MORNING

Silence.

Anna slowly lowers Reed's body to the ground.

She checks for breath.

Nothing.

The predator host is dead.

And Reed did not transfer.

PAGE 68

EXT. RIVER EMBANKMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Anna backs away in shock.

She stares at the dead man, hand over her mouth.

ANNA

Oh my God...

She fumbles for her phone.

Reed is gone.

Not transferred.

Not in her.

Nowhere.

INT. WHITE VOID - TIMELESS

No light.

No sound.

No falling.

Just suspension.

Reed hangs in nothingness.

No pain.

No pressure.

For the first time since the motel -

No clock.

Then a faint digital echo manifests in the dark:

CONSCIOUSNESS UNSUPPORTED.
SEEK IMMEDIATE HOST.

Reed floats, alone.

INT. WHITE VOID - TIMELESS

Reed drifts in nothing.

No body.

No heartbeat.

No breath.

Only awareness.

The digital echo returns, clearer now:

CONSCIOUSNESS UNSUPPORTED.
DEGRADATION IMMINENT.
SEEK IMMEDIATE HOST.

Reed turns in the dark though he has no form.

REED

So this is what zero looks like.

A faint pressure builds — not in a chest, but in identity itself.

Pieces of memory begin to flicker.

Sofia's laugh.

Vale's voice.

The motel tub.

They stutter, unstable.

REED (CONT'D)

No. You don't get to take those.

PAGE 70

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT (DISJOINTED)

Reed suddenly SNAPS INTO A LOCATION WITHOUT A BODY.

He moves through the hallway like a camera, not a man.

Doctors pass through him.

No one sees him.

A MAN on a gurney is rushed past, unconscious.

Reed is dragged toward the man violently—

Then repelled.

The connection fails.

Reed is yanked backward into darkness.

INT. WHITE VOID - CONTINUOUS

New warning appears:

NO CONSENSUAL ACCESS.
TRANSFER BLOCKED.

Reed understands with sudden terror:

He can no longer brute-force entry.

REED

I need permission now.

Silence confirms it.

PAGE 71

Memories begin to drop out.

Reed tries to remember his badge number.

It slips away.

He focuses on Sofia's face.

It blurs slightly at the edges.

REED

Not her. You can't take her.

A new signal pulses faintly in the void — not a command.

A location.

A pulse of warmth in another direction.

REED (CONT'D)

...someone's calling.

He moves toward it instinctively.

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - NIGHT

Reed emerges without a body, suspended in space.

A woman stands near the edge of the platform.

ELIZA (40s). Calm. Focused. Eyes shut.

She opens her eyes.

And looks directly at him—

Even though he has no face.

ELIZA

James Reed. If you can hear me... you don't have much time.

Reed feels himself pulled toward her voice.

PAGE 72

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

A TERMINAL MAN (50s) sits slumped on a bench nearby, coughing. Oxygen tank at his side.

Eliza places a gentle hand on the man's shoulder.

ELIZA

You still willing?

The man nods weakly.

TERMINAL MAN

I'm done already.

Eliza looks straight at where Reed is.

ELIZA (CONT'D)

Eye contact still matters. Even without eyes.

Reed doesn't understand—

Until the TERMINAL MAN opens his eyes and looks directly into the space Reed occupies.

INT. WHITE FLASH - TRANSFER

For the first time, the transfer feels invited.

Not seized.

Not forced.

Accepted.

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - NIGHT

Reed GASPS INTO A NEW BODY.

Older.

Fragile lungs.

Cancer-worn.

But alive.

The terminal man slumps sideways, empty.

Eliza catches him before he hits the ground.

She closes his eyes gently.

PAGE 73

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Reed slumps back on the bench, shaking.

The phone is already in his pocket.

It vibrates.

23:59:58

The clock is back.

Reed looks up at Eliza in disbelief.

REED

You waited until I was dead-dead.

ELIZA

No. I waited until you chose not to kill.

That lands harder than any threat he's faced.

INT. ABANDONED SERVICE TUNNEL - LATER

Eliza leads Reed through a hidden access door beneath the platform.

They descend into dim industrial corridors.

REED

You've been watching me.

ELIZA

We've been watching all of you.

PAGE 74

INT. SANCTUARY - NIGHT

A vast abandoned underground station.

Cots. Medical tables. Privacy curtains.

People of all ages — all hosts — all travelers.

Some scared. Some numb.

Some strangely peaceful.

Reed stares.

REED

How many of us are there?

Eliza answers quietly:

ELIZA

Too many.

INT. SANCTUARY - CONTINUOUS

A woman convulses on a cot as her timer expires.

Eliza kneels beside her, locking eyes gently.

The woman nods once.

Transfer.

The old body goes still.

A YOUNGER BODY on another cot gasps awake.

No panic.

No chaos.

This is regulated survival.

PAGE 75

Reed turns away, shaken but understanding now.

REED

You built a farm.

Eliza meets his gaze without flinching.

ELIZA

We built a hospice.

INT. SANCTUARY - QUIET CORNER

Eliza hands Reed water.

ELIZA (CONT'D)

You broke the primary rule.

REED

Which one?

ELIZA

You let a body die without taking another.

Reed thinks of Anna.

The river.

REED

She wouldn't let me.

PAGE 76

Eliza studies him.

ELIZA

That shouldn't have been possible.

REED

Then your rules are incomplete.

That unsettles her.

INT. SANCTUARY - MONITOR ROOM

Security feeds show police units canvassing streets above.

Vale coordinates movements.

VALE (ON MONITOR)

Expand the perimeter. He passed through here.

Eliza watches calmly.

ELIZA

They're getting closer.

Reed looks at the screen.

REED

She's good.

Eliza tilts her head.

ELIZA

You trained her.

PAGE 77

INT. SANCTUARY - BUNK AREA - LATE NIGHT

Reed lies on a cot staring at the ceiling.

The timer glows faintly from his pocket.

23:18:04

He can't sleep.

REED

Who built this place?

Eliza sits nearby.

ELIZA

People who got tired of running.

Reed exhales.

REED

That's not an answer.

She hesitates.

ELIZA

Michael Torrance did.

That name hits Reed like a physical blow.

PAGE 78

REED

The man who watched me die.

Eliza nods.

ELIZA

The man who made sure you woke up.

Reed sits up sharply.

REED

He turned me into this.

Eliza meets his eyes.

ELIZA

No. He trapped you inside it.

INT. SANCTUARY - OBSERVATION DECK

High above the cots, hidden behind reinforced glass--

A lone figure watches.

MICHAEL TORRANCE.

Unblinking.

Waiting.

INT. SANCTUARY - QUIET CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Reed walks beside Eliza through dim service tunnels.

Generators hum behind concrete walls.

REED

You said he built this.

ELIZA

He funded it. Designed it. Then he stepped outside it.

REED

Why?

Eliza stops walking.

ELIZA

Because he refused to use it.

Reed studies her.

REED

You didn't.

She doesn't answer immediately.

They keep walking.

PAGE 80

INT. SANCTUARY - MEDICAL PREP ROOM - NIGHT

Clean. Stark. Surgical.

A YOUNG MAN lies on a table, weak but conscious. Eliza checks his IV.

YOUNG MAN

Timer's at six minutes.

Eliza nods, calm.

ELIZA

Your sister's ready.

The young man closes his eyes in relief.

Reed watches, unsettled.

REED

Family transfers are allowed?

Eliza meets his eyes.

ELIZA

They're requested.

The young man's breathing slows.

Eliza looks at Reed.

ELIZA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

Watch.

Reed nods reluctantly.

INT. PREP ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The sister on the opposite table locks eyes with her brother.

Both crying.

One second.

Two.

Three.

The brother exhales and goes still.

The sister gasps into the body.

Alive.

Together again.

Reed turns away sharply.

PAGE 81

INT. SANCTUARY - QUIET CORNER - LATER

Reed sits with Eliza.

REED

That's still killing.

ELIZA

It's chosen dying.

REED

It's still blood on your hands.

She holds his gaze.

ELIZA

Yes.

No denial.

INT. SANCTUARY - RECORDS ROOM

Eliza slides open a metal drawer.

Inside: dozens of folders.

CARRIER PROFILES.

Names. Dates. Transfer counts.

Some stretch back forty years.

Reed reads one.

REED

They never stopped.

ELIZA

Some never wanted to.

PAGE 82

REED

That's immortality.

Eliza doesn't correct him.

ELIZA

It's eviction avoidance.

Reed opens another file.

Politician. CEO. Judge.

REED

They're everywhere.

ELIZA

They learned early what power
really meant.

INT. SANCTUARY - OBSERVATION DECK

Torrance watches the cots below.

Still.

Unmoving.

An ADMIN (60s) stands nearby.

ADMIN

You could have lived forever with
them.

Torrance never looks away.

TORRANCE

Then I'd never stop dying.

PAGE 83

ADMIN

You built the machine.

TORRANCE

I built a firewall.

ADMIN

And Reed?

TORRANCE

He is the flaw they can't predict.

INT. SANCTUARY - QUIET CORNER

Reed flips through another folder and freezes.

JACK LANTON.

REED

You were tracking him.

Eliza nods.

ELIZA

We track all violent optimals.

REED

So you let me reach him.

She hesitates.

ELIZA

We didn't think you'd fight him
from the inside.

PAGE 84

REED

You thought I'd become him.

ELIZA

We thought you'd adapt.

Reed closes the folder slowly.

REED

That makes you complicit.

Eliza doesn't defend herself.

INT. SANCTUARY - BUNK AREA - LATER

Reed lies awake again.

The clock glows:

22:17:09

Eliza sits nearby.

REED

How did you learn to jump?

Eliza stiffens.

PAGE 85

INT. SANCTUARY - SIDE CHAMBER - NIGHT

Eliza finally speaks.

ELIZA

I was dying when it happened.
Cancer. Everywhere. Thirty days
left.

Reed listens.

ELIZA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

They brought me a volunteer. Brain-
dead. Perfect match.

She swallows.

ELIZA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

My husband held my hand. The
volunteer's wife held the other.

Reed's jaw tightens.

ELIZA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

They told me it would be seamless.

INT. SIDE CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

ELIZA

I woke up healthy.

Beat.

ELIZA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

My husband was still holding my
hand.

But he was looking at someone else.

PAGE 86

Tears come quietly now.

ELIZA

My daughter screamed when she saw
my face.

Then she told me to go away.

Reed doesn't interrupt.

ELIZA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

I jumped twice after that.

Trying to feel less like a ghost.

She shakes her head.

ELIZA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

It doesn't work.

INT. SANCTUARY - OBSERVATION DECK - SAME

Torrance watches Eliza from above.

His face is carved from regret.

PAGE 87

INT. SIDE CHAMBER - NIGHT

REED

So why build all this?

Eliza meets his eyes.

ELIZA

Because I couldn't stop living. And
I couldn't stand watching others
die alone.

Reed absorbs that.

INT. SANCTUARY - MONITOR ROOM - SAME

Alarms chirp softly.

Police positions blink closer.

ANALYST

They're within four blocks now.

Torrance's eyes never leave the screen.

TORRANCE

Good.

PAGE 88

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - NIGHT

Reed stands at the edge, overlooking the cots.

REED

You can't keep hiding.

Eliza nods.

ELIZA

We were never meant to.

She glances up toward the observation deck.

ELIZA (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

He's been waiting for you to stop running.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK - CONTINUOUS

Torrance finally turns from the glass.

For the first time, uncertainty crosses his face.

INT. SANCTUARY - MONITOR ROOM - NIGHT

Red indicators multiply across the security grid.

ANALYST

Perimeter breach on the east stairwell.

Eliza looks to Torrance through the glass above.

ELIZA

They're coming in blind.

Torrance nods once.

TORRANCE

So were we.

INT. EAST SERVICE TUNNEL - SAME

A steel door SHRIEKS as it's forced open.

Flashlights stab into darkness.

VALE leads the stack.

VALE

Police! Identify yourselves!

No answer.

The tunnel swallows their voices.

PAGE 90

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - NIGHT

People on cots stir in panic.

Timers glow in the dark like dying stars.

Reed stands frozen at the rail as fear ripples through the room.

REED

If they see this-

ELIZA

-everything ends.

Sirens echo faintly through concrete.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK - CONTINUOUS

Torrance detaches from the glass.

For the first time, he moves toward the exit.

PAGE 91

INT. SANCTUARY - STAIRWELL ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Vale's team pours down metal steps.

They reach the landing and skid to a stop.

Below them -

Rows of bodies. Machines. Timers. People waking into strangers.

A rookie VOMITS into his helmet.

ROOKIE

Jesus Christ...

Vale stares, horrified.

VALE

What... did we just find?

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - SAME

Reed and Eliza step into the open.

Hands raised slowly.

ELIZA

No one move. No sudden eye contact.

Vale recognizes Reed's posture instantly - even in another body.

VALE

James...?

Reed swallows.

REED

Hi, Mara.

PAGE 92

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - CONTINUOUS

Guns raise instinctively.

VALE

Don't come any closer.

REED

If you shoot the body you're aiming at, you won't get me.

That rattles the line.

REED (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

But someone else might.

Eliza steps beside him.

ELIZA

We're not your enemy.

Vale studies the people on the cots.

Timers.

The impossible truth pressing in.

VALE

Then explain this.

Reed exhales.

REED

It started with my murder.

PAGE 93

INT. SANCTUARY - OBSERVATION DECK - SAME

Torrance watches from above as Reed talks.

The moment has arrived.

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - CONTINUOUS

REED

They didn't kill me to stop my investigation.

He looks upward toward the glass.

REED (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

They killed me to make me evidence.

Torrance's reflection appears faintly in the glass above.

PAGE 94

INT. OBSERVATION DECK - NIGHT

Torrance activates the microphone.

His voice echoes down into the sanctuary.

TORRANCE

You were never meant to survive,
Detective.

All eyes turn upward.

TORRANCE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

You were meant to move.

INT. CENTRAL WALKWAY - CONTINUOUS

REED

You turned me into a serial killer
pattern.

TORRANCE

No. They did.

Reed clenches his jaw.

PAGE 95

TORRANCE (CONT'D)

The network you were tracking has
existed longer than your badge.

REED

Immortal brokers.

TORRANCE

Term landlords of human vacancy.

Vale tries to process that.

VALE

You're saying powerful people are
wearing other people like clothes.

Torrance doesn't deny it.

PAGE 96

TORRANCE

They recycle influence through
fresh faces.

REED

And I was their trash trail.

Reed steps closer to the observation deck glass.

REED (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

So why let me live?

Torrance's face hardens.

PAGE 97

TORRANCE

Because you were the first carrier
who resisted.

REED

That wasn't resistance.

TORRANCE

It was.

TORRANCE (CONT'D) (CONT'D)

You slowed the machine.

Silence.

Reed absorbs that.

REED

So I'm a wedge.

TORRANCE

You're a stress fracture.

PAGE 98

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY

Alarms change pitch.

Another team breaches a secondary entrance.

Chaos builds.

VALE

We're losing control down here!

Eliza looks at Reed urgently.

ELIZA

If they panic, the eyes will link everywhere.

Reed looks out over the crowded cots.

Timers nearing zero.

A hundred potential doorways at once.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK - SAME

Torrance keys in final commands.

TORRANCE

Then let's end the experiment.

PAGE 99

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - CONTINUOUS

Emergency lights switch to deep red.

Every timer across the room accelerates by several seconds at once.

Panic spreads instantly.

CARRIER (O.S.)

My time jumped!

ANOTHER CARRIER

What's happening?!

Reed spins toward the glass.

REED

What did you just do?!

Torrance meets his eyes coldly.

TORRANCE

I forced the final condition.

PAGE 100

TORRANCE (CONT'D)

All transfers are now lethal.

A collective gasp.

REED

You'll wipe them all out.

TORRANCE

Or you'll stop it.

Reed understands the trap instantly.

REED

You want me to jump into the network.

TORRANCE

I want you to poison it.

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - NIGHT

Red lights pulse.

Timers across the room now bleed downward faster than natural time.

Panic becomes a physical force.

REED

You turned every jump into murder.

TORRANCE (V.O.)

It already was. Now it's honest.

Reed scans the room.

Too many faces. Too many doors.

REED

You built a fire and handed me gasoline.

TORRANCE (V.O.)

No. I handed you a match.

INT. WAR ROOM ABOVE - SAME

Analysts shout over each other.

ANALYST #1

Transfers are spiking globally!

ANALYST #2

They're panicking-jumping blindly!

A map ignites with red dots across continents.

PAGE 102

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - CONTINUOUS

A MAN on a cot SCREAMS as his timer hits zero.

Eliza grips his hand.

ELIZA

Don't jump. Stay.

He resists the instinct, convulsing-

Then goes still.

Eliza bows her head.

One death.

No replacement.

Vale orders shouted commands.

VALE

Eyes down! Everyone eyes down! Do NOT lock gaze!

Officers scream for medics.

Two transfers fail in different corners of the room.

The mechanism is breaking.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK - CONTINUOUS

Torrance watches the map metastasize.

Not satisfaction.

Resolution.

TORRANCE

The network doesn't survive starvation.

PAGE 103

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - CONTINUOUS

Reed steps forward into the chaos.

REED

You said I slowed it once.

TORRANCE (V.O.)

You destabilized it.

REED

Then let's finish destabilizing.

Reed lifts his head.

Looks directly into the crowd.

INT. WHITE FLASH - NETWORK ENTRY

Reed does not jump into one host.

He is absorbed sideways into many.

Fragments of dozens of lives explode through him:

Boardrooms. Bedrooms. War rooms. Private jets. Sickbeds.

Immortal carriers across the world feel a foreign presence
invade their transitions.

PAGE 104

INT. MULTIPLE HOST SPACES - DISJOINTED

Rapid cut sensation without editing:

Reed inside a senator mid-speech.

Inside a CEO at a gala.

Inside a war contractor watching drone footage.

None can fully accept him.

Every entry causes systemic rejection.

Their timers malfunction.

Some hosts collapse instantly.

Others drop to their knees.

The network is being overwritten from within.

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - SAME

Every timer in the room goes haywire.

Some freeze.

Some accelerate.

Some vanish.

Reed's body remains standing - but rigid.

Eyes open.

Distant.

PAGE 105

INT. WAR ROOM ABOVE - CONTINUOUS

Global monitoring spikes off the scale.

ANALYST #1

They're losing inter-host coherence!

ANALYST #2

The immortal tier is dying first!

Torrance finally allows himself a breath.

TORRANCE

Good.

INT. MULTI-HOST OVERLAY - REED'S POV

Reed fights through the network toward a familiar signal.

One presence is anchored deeper than the rest.

Shielded.

Hidden behind layers of proxy hosts.

Michael Torrance's killer.

PAGE 106

INT. SUBTERRANEAN BUNKER - UNKNOWN LOCATION - NIGHT

A middle-aged man in surgical scrubs jolts as nearby hosts collapse.

This is MICHAEL TORRANCE'S KILLER.

Multiple burner phones ring at once.

He answers one.

KILLER

What's happening?

Only static answers him.

His timer suddenly appears on-screen.

00:17:55

For the first time in decades—

a real limit.

INT. NETWORK OVERLAY - CONTINUOUS

Reed chases that dwindling countdown like a flare in a storm.

REED (V.O.)

There you are.

PAGE 107

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - SAME

Reed's physical body begins to fail.

Blood trickles from his nose.

Eliza grips his shoulders.

ELIZA

James, if you don't come back—

VALE

We can still shut power to the deck!

Torrance stops them cold.

TORRANCE

If he disconnects now, the network stabilizes.

Reed is the only thing keeping it broken.

INT. NETWORK OVERLAY - CONTINUOUS

The Killer senses Reed approaching.

He stares into a reflective steel panel—

And sees Reed staring back from the wrong side.

PAGE 108

INT. BUNKER - CONTINUOUS

The Killer scrambles for a new host.

Eyes wild.

He opens a steel door to a room of bound volunteers.

Desperate.

He lunges for the nearest one—

And stops.

Because Reed is already there.

They lock eyes.

One second.

Two.

The transfer begins—but the system is unstable.

The pull fractures mid-stream.

INT. SPLIT CONSCIOUSNESS - WHITE FRACTURE

Reed and the Killer collide halfway.

Neither fully leaves.

Neither fully arrives.

They merge incorrectly.

PAGE 109

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - SAME

Reed's body convulses.

Then goes still.

His eyes remain open.

Two voices speak through one mouth.

REED / KILLER (OVERLAPPED)

I am Detective James Reed—
I am Michael Torrance's shadow—
I am—
We are—

Vale stares in horror.

Eliza covers her mouth.

Torrance closes his eyes.

INT. WAR ROOM ABOVE - SAME

The global map collapses to normal.

Red dots extinguish one by one.

The immortal network is dead.

PAGE 110

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sirens echo closer.

The police regain forward momentum.

But everyone is frozen around Reed's body.

The overlapping voice continues, breaking apart mid-sentence:

REED / KILLER

—don't—
—who—
—I was—

The voice cuts out.

Silence.

Timers across the room go dark.

Forever.

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - NIGHT

Stillness.

Reed's body stands at the center of the room, eyes open, unblinking.

No timer.

No voice.

Just a human shell with something broken inside it.

Vale lowers her weapon slowly.

VALE

James...?

No response.

Eliza approaches cautiously, hand trembling as she reaches for him.

The body jerks.

A spasm runs through it.

Reed's mouth opens—

Nothing comes out.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK - SAME

Torrance watches the room below.

The global network feeds are dark.

No transfers.

No pulses.

Just flat telemetry.

ADMIN

It's over.

Torrance doesn't answer.

Not yet.

PAGE 112

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - CONTINUOUS

Reed's body convulses again.

A whisper finally leaks out, distorted:

REED (FRAGMENTED)

Mara...

Vale steps forward immediately.

VALE

I'm here. I'm right here.

The body tilts as if pulled by an unseen force inside itself.

Reed's eyes flicker—

Then a different darkness passes through them.

KILLER (SOFT, THROUGH REED)

You opened the door.

Vale stiffens.

VALE (CONT'D)

James, fight him.

A pained twitch crosses Reed's face.

Two expressions crossing one skull.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK - SAME

Torrance's jaw tightens.

TORRANCE

The merge is unstable.

ADMIN

Meaning?

TORRANCE

Meaning they won't separate.

PAGE 113

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - CONTINUOUS

Reed's spine arches as another internal surge passes.

REED (GASPING)

He—

He's locked into me—

KILLER (INTERRUPTING)

He invited me.

Chaos trembles beneath the words.

Eliza steps forward now.

ELIZA

James, listen to me. The network is
dead. He can't jump. But neither
can you.

Reed's eyes track to her.

For a moment — only Reed is there.

REED

Then I'm the cage.

The killer's presence surges again.

Reed screams.

INT. SANCTUARY - MONITOR ROOM - SAME

Residual energy surges spike dangerously.

ANALYST

If they destabilize again, we could
see a secondary cascade!

Torrance finally moves.

PAGE 114

INT. OBSERVATION DECK - STAIR ACCESS - NIGHT

Torrance descends the metal steps alone.

Each footfall echoes.

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - SAME

He steps into the open.

Uniforms part instinctively.

He stands several feet from Reed's body.

Reed's head turns toward him.

REED / KILLER (OVERLAPPED)

You built this-

You hid from it-

Torrance doesn't react.

TORRANCE

I stayed so the dead wouldn't be forgotten.

Reed's face fractures again under a surge of the killer's will.

KILLER

You stayed because you were afraid to live inside others.

A beat.

That lands.

PAGE 115

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - CONTINUOUS

Torrance steps one pace closer.

TORRANCE

You took everything from him.

The killer stirs inside Reed.

KILLER

You let me.

TORRANCE

I watched you long enough to know
you always needed permission.

Reed shudders violently.

The killer's grip falters for the first time.

REED (WHISPERING)

Now... I'm taking mine back...

The voices overlap in a violent echo—

REED / KILLER (CONT'D)

I—am—

No—

We—

Reed screams.

The sound rips through the room.

INT. WAR ROOM ABOVE - SAME

Energy spikes to catastrophic levels again.

ANALYST

He can't contain both
consciousnesses!

PAGE 116

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - CONTINUOUS

Eliza moves without thinking.

She steps directly into Reed's line of sight.

ELIZA

James. Look at me.

The killer surges desperately—

KILLER

Don't—

Reed's eyes lock with Eliza's.

One second.

Two.

No pull.

No activation.

Just recognition.

ELIZA (SOFT)

You don't have to carry him.

Three seconds.

Four.

The killer's presence thrashes violently inside Reed.

KILLER (SCREAMING)

You can't send me nowhere—

Reed's face floods with tears.

REED

You already are.

PAGE 117

INT. WHITE FRACTURE - SPLIT REALITY

The killer is torn free—

But there is no host waiting.

No network to catch him.

No clock.

Just open erasure.

He falls into nothing screaming—

And vanishes.

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - NIGHT

Reed collapses to his knees.

Human again.

One identity.

One voice.

Eliza catches him.

REED (BREATHING HARD)

Is he—?

Torrance answers quietly from behind them.

TORRANCE

Nowhere.

PAGE 118

INT. SANCTUARY - CENTRAL WALKWAY - CONTINUOUS

Sirens flood the tunnels.

Police flood in fully now.

Medics move among the survivors.

Elapsed timers remain dark.

Dead as objects.

Vale kneels beside Reed.

VALE

You're staying in this one, right?

Reed almost laughs.

REED

I'm out of doors.

Vale grips his shoulder.

VALE

Good.

INT. OBSERVATION DECK - LATER

Torrance stands alone again.

The admin approaches cautiously.

ADMIN

You ended immortality.

Torrance stares at the empty sanctuary.

TORRANCE

No. I ended recycling.

PAGE 119

INT. HOLDING AREA - LATER

Eliza sits alone on a cot.

Police activity continues around her.

Vale approaches.

VALE

You're not under arrest.

Eliza doesn't look up.

ELIZA

That's worse.

Vale pauses.

VALE

It's not over for you.

Eliza finally meets her gaze.

ELIZA

It never is.

INT. HOSPITAL RECOVERY ROOM - DAWN

Reed lies in a hospital bed.

Stable.

Real.

Alive in one body.

Vale sits beside him silently.

Outside the window, real sunlight climbs.

Reed exhales.

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INT. HOSPITAL RECOVERY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Reed opens his eyes.

For the first time since the motel-

No timer.

No vibration.

No pressure.

Just a heartbeat.

REED

So this is what staying feels like.

Vale almost smiles.

INT. OBSERVATION HALLWAY - SAME

Torrance stands outside the room looking through the glass.

Reed notices him.

Their eyes meet.

No transfer.

No pull.

Just two men still bound by consequence.

Torrance gives the slightest nod.

Then turns and walks down the corridor alone.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - FINAL

Reed looks back at the window.

At his own reflection.

Just one of him now.

He closes his eyes.

CUT TO BLACK MID-BREATH.