

JAM THE FLOW

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In a time of universal deceit, telling  
the truth is a revolutionary act.

-- George Orwell

FADE IN:

ON COMPUTER SCREEN

Command prompt blinks on electronic black void.

Characters type across:

Port: 880  
Login: META-13

SCREEN rolls with noisy STATIC interference.

INT. META-13 BUNKER

CONTROL ROOM

Glowing tip of SOLDERING IRON FUSES wire on circuit board.

KAREN DRAKE, late thirties, holds tool squeezed tight under a computer console.

She has a strong face and quiet intellect that refuses to let her suffer fools gladly.

Rubs sweat from an eye ringed with a fading bruise -- she's clearly at the end of her rope.

KAREN  
Try it now, Frank.

FRANK HARLOW, early forties, a manic, company yes-man whose dedication knows no bounds -- hovers over her.

Eyes locked on screen -- he types in password.

Monitor displays:

Password: \*\*\*\*\*  
Satellite uplink searching.....  
Network unreachable.....

CONSOLE emits a whining BEEP of defeat.

FRANK  
Rotten bastard!

Frank stumbles over Karen, stepping on one of her bare feet.

KAREN  
God damn -- watch it!

She gets up -- pushes him out of her way.

He grabs her arm.

FRANK  
Where are you going, Karen?

KAREN  
I need something to drink.

Karen yanks away, storms out.

FRANK  
We've got to keep trying! Come back  
here! Karen!!

Frank paces, swearing under his breath.

KAREN'S ROOM

She puts on socks -- laces up feet in military-issue boots.  
Opens a back pack, checks stashed half-empty bottle of vodka.  
Picks up a Bible, opens to a photo held by a pen.

It shows Karen with a man, TRENT TAYLOR, early forties, he  
looks quite happy -- a mischievous smile hiding a secret.

His arm is around her waist -- another PERSON can also be  
seen beside her -- but has been torn out.

She contemplates his visage with longing and resolve.

Removes pen, turns over photo -- a multitude of tiny tick  
marks cover the back, a record of time passed.

Karen crosses off last row, no more room -- hooks photo back  
under pen.

Shoves Bible in pack, throws over shoulder, grabs jacket.

Inspects her old analog wristwatch, shakes it by her ear as  
she leaves.

CONTROL ROOM

A dim, grey concrete cave.

Two workstations crammed with computer equipment, several  
rows of small video screens line the walls.

The monitors display fuzzy, degraded images from a variety of  
surveillance cameras.

Bombed out sidewalks, streets, parking garages, back alleys.

No signs of people -- dead or alive.

Karen enters as Frank shakes pills from a bottle.

He tries to be nonchalant -- but it makes him look ridiculous as he pops pills in his mouth.

Karen pretends not to notice -- she puts the bottle of vodka on a table.

Frank buries the pills in a desk drawer, turns attention to his screens -- when he sees bottle.

FRANK

You found it!

Tosses coffee out of a mug over his shoulder -- pounces on the vodka with joy.

As Frank gulps a drink -- he notices her boots.

FRANK

What are we celebrating?

Karen throws jacket and pack on her chair.

KAREN

My going away party.

Frank laughs -- a little too loud, already tipsy.

FRANK

You're gonna love it, Karen. The radiation is out of this world!

He pours another -- Karen wrestles the bottle away from him with force, spilling some.

Frank grabs her wrist -- holds her watch to his ear.

FRANK

Fix it yet?

Karen smacks his head -- pours herself a drink.

Frank smirks, digs cigarette from a crumpled pack with the name "Victory."

FRANK

Then why still wear it.

KAREN

For luck.

He lights up, draws deep -- swigs vodka while exhaling a large plume of smoke.

FRANK  
Pretty sweet luck we're having,  
wouldn't you say?

Karen takes out a smoke-ventilating ashtray from a drawer.

Frank grabs ASHTRAY from her and turns it on -- it PURRS sucking in his smoke.

FRANK  
I'll bet it was from Trent, wasn't  
it?

She ignores his comment.

He sets tray over a message scratched into his console:  
"In God we trust, all others we monitor."

KAREN  
Been getting any sleep, Frank?

FRANK  
I can't remember.

Karen finds a tiny media disc in a drawer -- pushes it into a drive on her console.

Cues up a META stream clip on one of her screens -- surveillance footage embedded with time code.

Indicator on drive flashes as it records a copy to disc.

She leans back in chair to watch, sips vodka -- now she's trying to act nonchalant.

ON VIDEO SCREEN

Oval Office, White House -- a well-dressed man tied to a chair behind a desk -- President Burdick.

One or more GUNMEN pace in front of camera, they appear to be interrogating the President.

A woman, the First Lady, sitting tied to a chair nearby, has already been shot dead.

The gunmen, all dressed in black, hover in and out of frame, faces elusive -- hard to tell them apart.

Without warning -- a hail of bullets rip into the President, killing him.

After what appears to be a jump cut -- a bright white flash fills the screen -- image cuts to static.

BACK TO SCENE

Frank looks over, laughs.

FRANK

What's your theory on Zapruder  
frame 313 now, Agent Drake?

KAREN

Not a live feed, Agent Harlow.

FRANK

Crawford would commend you on your  
powers of observation, Karen.

KAREN

Crawford set us up.

His anger ready to explode -- Frank downs the rest of his  
drink, laughs.

FRANK

What does it matter anymore?!

He flips a switch -- his video screens cycle through a  
different set of locations.

FRANK

Clever liars give details, the  
cleverest don't.

When Frank isn't looking, Karen pops out disc -- zips it  
inside jacket pocket.

KAREN

Truth is the safest lie.

A high-pitched ALARM erupts -- an aging TELETYPE machine  
begins PRINTING out a message.

Frank drops cigarette, Karen almost spills her vodka.

They both jump up -- it reads:

Emergency Alert System: National  
Security Agency: META Division:  
All agents to remain in lockdown:  
Retrieval imminent. EOF.

KAREN

Son of a bitch.

Karen rips out the paper.

KAREN  
 Emergency Alert System: National  
 Security Agency: META Division:  
 All agents must wipe their ass  
 three times a day to keep their  
 mind and body clean.

FRANK  
 Give it to me.

He tries to snatch it from her -- she jerks it out of reach,  
 toying with him.

KAREN  
 Give you what, Frank? False hope?

FRANK  
 Standard operating procedure.

KAREN  
Fuck standard operating procedure.

Karen tears message to pieces -- throws it in his face.  
 Frank sighs, kneeling down to pick them up.

She returns to her workstation, watching him.

He assembles the pieces like a puzzle. Finds roll of tape.  
 Lights another smoke.

KAREN  
 What are you doing?

Tapes message together, cigarette dangling from his mouth.

FRANK  
 A record has to be kept.

Uses a three-hole punch on the paper.

KAREN  
 A record for who? The cockroaches!

Frank slides open a cabinet, displaying a long shelf of  
 matching notebook binders.

Pulls one out from the end, opens it. Turns page after page  
 of identical transmissions.

KAREN  
 You're driving me insane!

Frank ignores her, going through the motions like a robot.

He opens the binder rings -- inserts new message in place.

KAREN  
FRANK! STOP IT!

In a burst of rage, Karen lunges for the notebook -- he twists it away.

She knocks him down -- cigarette flying as he drops notebook on the floor.

A chain around Frank's neck falls out of his shirt -- it holds a key.

Karen makes a grab for it -- he tries to punch her.

She dodges -- pushing him back hard -- his head slams on the concrete floor.

FRANK  
God damn it, Karen!

Karen climbs up wall -- straddling his body.

Faces a small metal door -- opens to reveal a control panel labeled "Emergency Destruct System."

Frank rubs back of his head -- fingers finding blood.

FRANK  
Great...

Notices her pushing buttons.

FRANK  
HEY!!

Tries to crawl up her legs -- she shoves him down with her boot on his chest.

Frank grabs her ankle -- knocks her off balance to floor.

Another, different ALARM goes ON -- bright emergency lights kick in flooding the room.

Frank scrambles up to panel -- hits buttons, reversing her actions.

ALARM cuts OFF, emergency lights dim.

He closes panel, catching his breath.

Before he can turn around -- Karen swings the NOTEBOOK binder against his HEAD with all her might -- POW!

He crumples to floor, knocked out cold.

KAREN

One more day of your shit, Frank  
and I would have to kill you.

She snaps key chain off from his neck and runs out.

STORAGE ROOM

Karen turns on light, opens fire equipment locker.

Finds respirator mask and compact oxygen tank -- attaches  
hose and checks valve, straps it to her back.

Picks up a long metal rod with a jerry-rigged claw.

FRANK'S ROOM

A complete mess compared to Karen's.

She dives under bunk, slides out a box.

Finds handgun case -- gun inside has been disassembled into  
pieces.

KAREN

Damn you, Frank...

Throws them across room, runs out.

CONTROL ROOM

Frank lays on floor, still unconscious.

Karen goes to his console drawer -- digs through junk to find  
a videophone.

She keys a wireless link through his computer, tests it.

A video image pops onto one of Frank's screens, receiving a  
live feed from the videophone.

KAREN

(into videophone)  
He loved Big Brother.

Her voice echoes from a small speaker -- satisfied, she  
shoves videophone in a pocket.

Puts on a pair of gloves -- zips jacket sleeves down tight  
over them.

Slips back pack over a shoulder -- glares down at Frank.

KAREN  
Wish me luck, asshole.

Picks up rod with claw, steps over his body and runs out.

HALLWAY

Karen jogs down passage to a massive metal door.

Punches in a code on keypad. Door GRINDS into motion, opening -- AIR RUSHING through.

ACCESS SHAFT

Karen goes through -- DOOR shuts behind her with a HEAVY THUNK, engulfing her in complete darkness.

Fluorescent LIGHTS WINK ON, revealing a cylindrical concrete shaft -- it stretches straight up, several stories.

Secures mask on her arm, fastens rod with claw to back pack, begins climbing up a metal ladder attached to wall.

Heading toward a metal gantry above, hatch doors on ceiling.

Karen reaches the landing -- pausing to catch her breath.

Finds two identical key-enabled control panels embedded in the wall, set far apart.

She takes out keys, inserts them into each panel.

Attaches rod with claw to far key -- positions her hands to get ready.

Turns both keys simultaneously -- the panels light up, now operational.

Pulls respirator mask down over her face, yanks straps tight.

Checks hose from tank -- opens VALVE, oxygen HISSES through.

Breathing hard she glances down into shaft -- no sign of Frank yet.

Karen turns around and pushes a red button on control panel.

Heavy GEARS GRIND in pain -- hatch doors above do not open.

Fine dust sprinkles down from ceiling.

KAREN  
You gotta be kidding me.

She slams fist against red button, swearing.

Opens another, smaller inset panel -- it reads "Emergency Exit System."

Punches more buttons -- a piercing ALARM goes ON -- red siren lights flash on ceiling around hatch.

Karen hunches down -- wraps arms around her knees.

Takes a deep breath, holds it -- closes eyes.

Explosive bolts FIRE OFF on hatch doors.

Doors slide open with massive DEPRESSURIZATION -- SUCKING her body up into bright white light.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

A maelstrom of rock and metal rain down on Karen as she lands on the ground.

Hatch remains open -- dirt and debris falling inside.

Karen rolls onto her knees, as clouds of dust clear.

Draws in a deep breath inside mask -- opens her eyes.

Buildings above and around the access shaft has been obliterated, bombed down to rubble.

She gets up, checks mask connection to tank hose.

The only sound audible is her measured BREATHING inside MASK.

She scans the landscape, or what's left of it.

The ruins of a major metropolis devastated by war.

Taking it all in, Karen walks down street in awe.

A few buildings have stayed intact, but most have not.

No sign of people, no sign of life.

At end of the block, Karen sees a convenience store.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

Shelving racks block front door -- display window shattered.

INSIDE

Karen climbs over broken glass -- stepping on the floor billows ash into the air.

Products are scattered over floor, like after an earthquake.

Comes upon candy aisle.

Picks up a candy bar -- wipes off dust, like a find from an archeological dig.

Glances up at a video surveillance camera on ceiling, covered in ash --

MEMORY FLASH

-- ash on video camera disappears.

In candy aisle, a ten-year-old Karen holds candy bar.

Peeks around for any onlookers, trying to be sly -- slides bar into her coat pocket when --

-- an adult hand, her FATHER -- grabs her wrist, pulling bar back out of pocket.

FATHER

Karen, that's not right. The eye  
in the sky might get you.

Caught, Karen is embarrassed.

KAREN

Sorry, Daddy. What's the eye in  
the sky?

He turns her around -- points to a video surveillance camera on ceiling.

FATHER

The eye in the sky watches us all.

The candy bar in her young hand --

BACK TO PRESENT

-- becomes the gloved hand holding dusty candy bar.

Without thinking she slides bar into a pants pocket.

Karen flips her middle finger at the surveillance camera before leaving.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Further down the block, Karen notices a pawn shop, heads toward it.

INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

Using her shoulder, Karen pushes open door -- moving back debris on the floor blocking it.

Again, products have been strewn all over and most display cases have been smashed open and looted.

One undamaged display case has several shelves of handguns.

She wipes her hand through dust on the glass, checking out available goods. Nothing satisfies.

Goes around case, behind counter -- and almost trips over a human skeleton!

KAREN

Oh, shit!

Karen jumps back in shock -- the skull has a bullet hole between the eyes.

Half buried under a mound of ash, the skeleton in one hand holds a pistol.

She pries the fingers off gun.

KAREN

From my cold, dead hands...

Karen releases the magazine -- empty.

Paws through shelves behind counter for bullets -- finds a box, inserts a full clip.

Aims at target sheet on a wall -- FIRES GUN.

Dead on target. She's impressed.

Karen loads several boxes of ammunition into her pack, shoves gun in jacket.

Grabs binoculars strung on a hook and leaves.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Karen takes a deep breath, holds it in -- lifting mask to look through binoculars.

KAREN'S POV

Devastation stretches to the horizon.

BACK TO SCENE

Pulls mask down, releases breath -- lets binoculars hang around neck.

Pulls out videophone, shouts through mask.

KAREN  
Frank! Are you there?

INT. META-13 BUNKER

CONTROL ROOM

Frank rouses on floor, rolls over.

KAREN (V.O.)  
(on speaker)  
Frank!

He gets up, groggy, confused -- stumbles out.

KAREN'S ROOM

Searches for Karen. Hears voice coming from control room.

KAREN (V.O.)  
(on speaker)  
Hey, Frank!

Frank touches his neck -- where's the key chain?

FRANK  
Karen?!

CONTROL ROOM

Frank runs back in, still confused.

KAREN (V.O.)  
(on speaker)  
Frank! Can you hear me?

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Karen holds phone out, panning around landscape.

KAREN  
Frank! Switch on my feed!

INT. META-13 BUNKER

CONTROL ROOM

Frank keys commands -- the live feed from Karen's videophone appears on screen.

Low-res picture, shaky from being hand-held -- she pans up street, showing the bombed out city.

Overcome by emotion, Frank touches the screen -- tears coming to his eyes.

FRANK

Have you lost your fucking mind!

She points camera at her face for a moment.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Karen shields her eyes from the bright sun.

KAREN

The sun is shining, Frank.

FRANK (V.O.)

(on phone)

That's not funny. How do you feel?

KAREN

I'm still alive. I had to blow the bolts to get out -- the access door is still open. Sorry about that.

INT. META-13 BUNKER

CONTROL ROOM

ON SCREEN she pans videophone up at the sun.

FRANK

I can't believe it.

KAREN (V.O.)

(on speaker)

Want to come up and join me?

Franks falls back into his chair, overwhelmed.

FRANK

No. I'll stay here, just in case Crawford tries to make contact.

KAREN (V.O.)

(on speaker)

Right. Suit yourself.

ON SCREEN she holds camera forward, walking down street.

A familiar high-pitched ALARM goes off -- TELETYPE machine behind Frank springs to life, PRINTING again.

FRANK

Hey -- we've got another E.B.S.  
message coming in.

He watches it print out with anticipation.

Frank reads -- overjoyed, he erupts into a little dance.

FRANK

Karen! It's from Crawford!

He flips a switch -- a different VOICE comes on the speaker.

VOICE (V.O.)

We have received your signals on  
this channel. Surprised to hear  
you're still with us.

Frank keys more commands, bursting with excitement.

A rugged man in a black military uniform appears on a screen, CRAWFORD WATSON, mid-fifties, composed and in control.

He talks fast -- background noise is loud, as if he were inside a moving vehicle.

Frank steps back -- thunderstruck.

CRAWFORD (VOICE)

Complete obliteration of Naval Base  
Kitsap has made levels of radiation  
fallout extremely high out there.

FRANK

I knew it!

CRAWFORD

Records indicate your facility does  
not have the necessary equipment  
for protection in such conditions.

Frank pounds his desk in agreement.

FRANK

No shit, Sherlock!

CRAWFORD

Retrieval convoy is now thirty  
miles east of Seattle. Our E.T.A.  
is approximately one hour.

(MORE)

CRAWFORD (cont'd)  
Stay put guys, we're coming to get  
you out.

Frank jumps in jubilation -- hollering with relief.

FRANK  
Did you hear that, Karen? Crawford  
is on his way here!

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Now a dozen blocks away, Karen turns around.

KAREN  
What did you say, Frank? I'm  
losing you.

She inspects the videophone -- battery has expired.

EXT. CITY STREET - ACCESS SHAFT - DAY

A massive Armored Enforcement Vehicle (AEV) SKIDS to a stop.

Back door drops down -- two heavily armed rugged commandos,  
RODRIGUEZ and ZIELINSKI, jump out -- ready for action.

Followed by Crawford Watson -- in the flesh.

CRAWFORD  
Hope they stayed put like good  
little boys and girls...

Not wearing any gas masks -- the commandos sprint to shaft  
opening.

ZIELINSKI  
Sir, the hatch has been opened.

Crawford strolls up behind them.

CRAWFORD  
You don't say, Zielinski.

Zielinski makes face at Rodriguez -- who grins back, turning  
to scan perimeter, covering them.

Crawford peers down shaft.

CRAWFORD  
Wonderful.

He taps his earpiece.

CRAWFORD  
Gibson, sweep the area for META  
tags, they might be running wild.

Crawford glances up and down street, grumbling.

CRAWFORD  
Rodriguez, place the marker.

Rodriguez takes a device off his belt -- switches it on,  
tosses down the shaft.

Crawford nods everyone back to the AEV.

INT. AEV - DAY

GIBSON, a wiry and focused communications tech, watches them  
return on his screens.

JENKINS, a stone-faced grunt in the driver's seat, waits for  
orders.

Crawford and his men come back on deck, back hatch closing.

CRAWFORD  
Jenkins, get us out of range.

Jenkins slams on accelerator, AEV lurches forward.

Zielinski and Rodriguez stow their weapons.

Crawford hangs on, leaning over Gibson's shoulder.

CRAWFORD  
What have you got?

GIBSON  
I've picked up one tag, sir. Drake,  
Karen, moving due north, three  
hundred meters.

CRAWFORD  
Drake. It figures. I'll bet Agent  
Harlow is still down there.

Crawford falls into his seat, looks over at Jenkins.

CRAWFORD  
Lock onto Gibson's track.

JENKINS  
Already have, sir.

Zielinski and Rodriguez watch Crawford with full attention.

CRAWFORD  
Gibson, when we've reached the  
radius -- tell 'em to nuke it.

GIBSON  
Yes, sir.

INT. META-13 BUNKER

CONTROL ROOM

Frank keeps flipping a switch, to no avail.

FRANK  
Karen? Can you hear me? Crawford  
says radiation levels are too high  
out there -- damn it.

He kicks the console, runs out.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

A distant, heavy RUMBLE shakes the GROUND, Karen feels it,  
turns around.

Trades videophone in jacket pocket for the gun.

Obscured by a thick cloud of dirt, a massive shape moves  
towards her.

INT. META-13 BUNKER

HALLWAY

Frank runs to access shaft door, keys it open.

It opens with a fantastic RUSH of AIR -- he hesitates for a  
second before going through.

ACCESS SHAFT

An enormous beam of bright natural light cuts through clouds  
of dirt.

Frank glances up, coughing -- holds a hand over his eyes to  
block out the sunlight.

His foot bumps into beacon marker on the floor -- he looks  
down, sees its blinking red light.

FRANK  
What the -- ?

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Karen hears it before she sees it -- an object STREAKING through the sky at incredible speed, a guided MISSILE.

It flies high over the city -- and arcs straight down into the access shaft opening.

INT. META-13 BUNKER - ACCESS SHAFT

Frank recognizes the marker for what it is -- seizes with fear for an eternal split second --

-- looks up, just as the MISSILE ROARS down upon him.

KA-BOOM!

It EXPLODES with earth-shattering violence --

-- killing Frank and destroying the underground bunker facility with massive force.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

SHOCK WAVES ripple through the earth -- collapsing buildings, creating a mini-earthquake.

KAREN

FRANK!!

Blast knocks Karen off her feet -- gun flies out of her hand.

AEV

rear wheels bouncing as it rides the rumbling shock waves down the street.

KAREN

rips mask off her face, scrambles around in dirt for gun -- finds it.

Dust clears away, she now sees AEV accelerating towards her.

Raises binoculars to her eyes.

INT. AEV - DAY

Rocking from the blast, Gibson holds onto the console.

GIBSON

Eighty meters, Commander.

CRAWFORD

Get me the R.P.G.

Rodriguez unloads RPG from a rack, gets it ready.

Zielinski folds down ladder -- opens the overhead hatch, natural light spills inside cabin.

Together they help guide the weapon up through the hatch as Crawford climbs ladder.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Crawford emerges waist high in AEV roof turret, balances RPG on his shoulder.

ON CRAWFORD

Smiles as he sights Karen in the scope crosshairs.

CRAWFORD

So beautiful... And so dangerous.

KAREN'S POV

Through binoculars, Karen sees a man on top of vehicle, aiming at her with a large weapon.

ON KAREN

Tries to hold steady to focus -- she can't believe her eyes.

KAREN

Crawford?!

KAREN'S POV

A large satellite TRUCK comes SCREECHING through a nearby intersection -- blocking her view.

BACK TO SCENE

Karen jumps back in shock -- it roars up beside her, skidding to a halt.

It has the call letter markings of a TV station, augmented with street graffiti.

Side door opens -- two sets of hands clamp onto her body, heaving her inside.

Door slams shut -- truck speeds off.

ON CRAWFORD

Satellite truck obstructs Crawford's aim.

CRAWFORD  
God damn jammers!

He aims RPG again and FIRES anyway.

INT. FLUX/NET (SATELLITE) TRUCK - DAY

Karen hits the deck hard -- dropped there by a man and woman, both in their early twenties:

ELDRITCH, mad flow hacker with a black patch over one eye and a crazed look in the other --

-- and MAYA, flow jammer, her calm demeanor demonstrates she's in charge -- with piercing eyes that betray no fear.

Neither of them wear gas masks.

Karen rolls to her feet -- aiming her gun at them.

MAYA  
Don't shoot!

Seeing Maya's face gives Karen a jolt -- a shock of recognition she can't quite place.

She lowers gun, looking around cabin.

Eldritch points to an overhead video screen -- a view from behind truck -- can see the RPG flying straight at them.

ELDRITCH  
LEM!!

The driver, LEM, early twenties, a master hacker hopped up on adrenaline -- sees it coming in his side mirror.

LEM  
I SEE IT!!

He cranks steering wheel hard, swerving.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

ON FLUX/NET TRUCK

RPG grazes roof as truck swerves out of way -- it hits a nearby building -- EXPLODING on impact.

AEV - ON CRAWFORD

Missing his target throws Crawford into a rage.

CRAWFORD

Shit!

He ducks back inside with RPG.

INT. FLUX/NET TRUCK - DAY

Everyone struggles to hold on -- a panel of ELECTRONICS on ceiling EXPLODES.

Karen makes a break for the side door.

ELDRITCH

Wait a minute!

KAREN

I know those people!

Maya gets in her face.

MAYA

Oh yeah? Then why are they trying to kill you!

Karen lets go of door -- stunned.

She takes out her videophone -- the truck hits a bump -- jarring it out of her hand onto deck.

Maya kicks phone to Eldritch, who tosses it up to Lem. He takes one look at it -- flings it out the window.

KAREN

Hey, goddammit!

ELDRITCH

They're tracking you.

MAYA

Sweep her.

Eldritch grabs a signal wand -- moves it up, down and around Karen's body.

It SCREAMS behind her NECK, flashing a tiny pink light.

ELDRITCH

She's hot.

Karen shoves Eldritch away.

INT. AEV - DAY

Rodriguez loads another grenade into RPG.

GIBSON  
Call in an air strike, sir?

CRAWFORD  
No.

Rodriguez and Zielinski exchange glances like he's nuts.

GIBSON  
But, sir, our orders are to --

CRAWFORD  
Your orders are not to lose them.

RODRIGUEZ  
(in Spanish)  
He's wasting our time.

Zielinski laughs.

CRAWFORD  
English, mother fucker -- my crew  
speaks English!

Crawford pushes Rodriguez out of his way, climbing up ladder.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

AEV - ON CRAWFORD

He emerges again, aims RPG -- FIRES.

ON FLUX/NET TRUCK

Satellite truck takes a sharp turn down an alley -- RPG  
rocket hits corner of a building -- EXPLODING.

INT. FLUX/NET TRUCK - DAY

The BLAST knocks everyone around cabin -- Karen pushes  
Eldritch away, aims her gun at them again.

Eldritch goes to side door -- releases latch and slides it  
open -- alley wall races by outside.

ELDRITCH  
You want to leave? LEAVE!

Karen puts gun away, capitulating.

Eldritch slams door shut.

KAREN  
What the fuck, Crawford...

She moves towards them, holding back her hair -- taps a finger on the nape of her neck.

KAREN  
Here.

ELDRITCH  
RFID?

Karen eyes him like an idiot.

Eldritch rolls his eyes, turns to Maya.

MAYA  
I'll do it.

Maya pulls out a pocket knife.

Karen clasps hands behind her head, chin against chest.

Maya cuts her skin, digging -- Karen winces, grinding teeth.

MAYA  
Got it.

Knife tip pops out a tiny, bloody chip -- she hands it to Eldritch.

He steps into cab, leans over Lem -- tosses it out the window.

LEM  
Christ!

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Chip hits the road, bouncing into the dirt.

INT. AEV - DAY

Crawford climbs down -- all eyes on him.

Throws the RPG to Rodriguez, pissed off.

CRAWFORD  
Yes. I missed -- again.

Gibson punches a button on his console, confused.

GIBSON

Sir, the signal has stopped moving.

Crawford leans over Gibson's shoulder, frowning.

CRAWFORD

It what?

INT. FLUX/NET TRUCK - DAY

Lem stomps accelerator to floor -- everyone hangs on.

LEM

Let's stop fucking around and get  
this party --

He spies a large metal dumpster ahead -- flashes on an idea.

EXT. CITY ALLEY - DAY

Flux/Net truck side swipes the dumpster -- spinning it out  
into middle of alley, swirling up a cloud of dirt.

INT. AEV - DAY

Jenkins sees dumpster emerge out of cloud, tries to react  
fast -- swinging wheel hard.

Crawford falls sideways onto Rodriguez and Zielinski.

EXT. CITY ALLEY - DAY

AEV swerves but still hits dumpster, DEMOLISHING it --  
-- and SLAMS into a brick building, stopped cold.

INT. FLUX/NET TRUCK - DAY

Lem watches the action in his rear view mirror.

LEM

YEAH!!

The others watch the AEV crash on their rear view screen.

ELDRITCH

Nice job, Lem -- now get us out of  
the Terminal Zone.

LEM

With pleasure, Eldritch.

MAYA  
(to Eldritch)  
Get me the first-aid kit.

Eldritch finds it -- Maya takes a cleansing pad and wipes Karen's neck.

Notices her fading bruise.

MAYA  
What happened to your eye?

Karen takes pad -- pushes Maya away.

KAREN  
Nothing. Fight with a co-worker.

She sits on the deck -- pulls off binoculars, back pack, gas mask, air tank -- lets everything drop.

Bows head between knees, taking slow deep breaths -- holding pad against her neck.

INT. AEV - DAY

Rodriguez and Zielinski push Crawford back on his feet.

CRAWFORD  
What the hell, Jenkins!

JENKINS  
Sorry, sir. I fucked up.

Gibson punches some buttons on his tracker.

GIBSON  
The signal is now -- behind us?

He gapes at Crawford -- the instruments don't lie.

CRAWFORD  
Let's go have a look.

EXT. CITY ALLEY - DAY

ON AEV

Back hatch opens, dislodging rubble from building -- Crawford and his team jump out.

ON ALLEY

Gibson searches with tracker -- finds chip buried under dirt.

Smiling, Crawford picks up the bloody chip.

CRAWFORD  
Gee, that must have hurt.

GIBSON  
What are you going to tell the  
Corporate Minister?

CRAWFORD  
The truth. You have something  
better in mind?

He slams chip against Gibson's chest, scowling.

INT. AEV - DAY

Back door seals shut as the team returns to their stations.

CRAWFORD  
(to Gibson)  
Get a track on those jammers.

Gibson gets to work at his console.

CRAWFORD  
Jenkins, lock onto his track and  
don't lose them.

JENKINS  
Yes, sir!

EXT. CITY ALLEY - DAY

Jenkins backs AEV out of debris and drives forward.

INT. AEV - DAY

Rodriguez and Zielinski stow their firepower.

Crawford opens a rugged laptop on his knees, positioning  
screen for his eyes only.

Clicks on a file, it opens a scan of a photo -- the same one  
as Karen's.

In this one it shows Crawford beside her -- and the other  
side with Trent -- has been torn out.

Opens another file -- that of a Flux/Net flyer, it has a  
ASCII artwork graphic of Karen's face.

EXT. CITY LIMITS - DUSK

The Flux/Net TRUCK CRASHES through a wire fence -- as the sun sets over the destroyed city.

INT. FLUX/NET TRUCK - DUSK

Eldritch moves hand-held GEIGER COUNTER over Karen.

It BEEPS like crazy over a pants pocket -- Karen pulls out the candy bar.

Eldritch scans it, the COUNTER goes WILD -- both he and Maya do a double-take.

ELDRITCH  
Jesus, lady. Where in the hell did  
you get this?

Karen shrugs.

ELDRITCH  
Hey, Lem.

Eldritch tosses it up to him.

Lem gazes at candy bar with regret -- throws it out window.

KAREN  
Why aren't you wearing masks?

ELDRITCH  
Fallout has been dissipating, but  
not enough to live here.

Eldritch lifts the eye patch, revealing an artificial eye.

From the pupil, a tiny, mechanical-looking camera lens telescopes out, focusing.

ELDRITCH  
(to Maya)  
Jack me in.

Karen studies his eye, curious.

Maya works at a video edit bay -- links the system to Eldritch's camera-eye --

MAYA  
Recording.

-- a live feed pops on one of her screens, that of Karen looking direct into his lens.

ELDRITCH

This is the Adrenochrome crew coming to you from inside the Terminal Zone. We have rescued the sole survivor of a recent vicious B.S.I. attack.

KAREN

Stop --

ELDRITCH

Can you please tell us your name and why a B.S.I. death squad was trying to kill you?

Karen points the gun at his camera-eye.

KAREN

-- right NOW!

Maya puts a hand on Eldritch's shoulder.

MAYA

Eldritch --

ELDRITCH

Okay, okay.

Eldritch retracts his camera-eye, pulls down the patch.

ELDRITCH

We can do this later.

KAREN

How did you find me?

MAYA

Pure luck. We've been tracking B.S.I. intercepts, followed this sociopath named Crawford --

KAREN

-- Watson, yeah, I saw him. B.S.I.?

ELDRITCH

Black Hand Security International. A private mercenary army, employed by the I.S.A.

MAYA

You know this Watson guy?

KAREN

Used to be my boss.

Eldritch and Maya glance at each other, hopeful.

MAYA  
You're an N.S.A. agent?

Surprised at how much they seem to know, Karen nods, pressing the bandage on the back of her neck.

ELDRITCH  
B.S.I. were sent out here for a clean up operation.

KAREN  
To clean up what?

MAYA  
You, apparently.

KAREN  
Who are you people?  
(to Maya)  
Your face is very --

Eldritch and Maya exchange a glance, mum on her comment.

ELDRITCH  
I'm Eldritch, that's Maya.

LEM  
Call me Lem!

MAYA  
We broadcast with Flux/Net.

KAREN  
Flux/Net?

MAYA  
The corporate media resistance.

Karen laughs out loud, still confused.

Eldritch and Maya stare at her with complete seriousness.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

FLUX/NET TRUCK

travels through dusty, barren landscape.

AEV

speeds over a rocky hill, headlights turned off.

INT. AEV - NIGHT

Crawford dozes in front of his laptop.

A light on Gibson's console begins to flash -- he takes a peek at Crawford's screen.

Sees the photo of Karen, beside image of her face in the Flux/Net flyer.

He nods to Rodriguez and Zielinski -- they try to sneak a glimpse.

RODRIGUEZ  
He's got it bad.

ZIELINSKI  
Got what?

Gibson nudges Crawford's arm.

GIBSON  
Sir, we have incoming video feed  
from Corporate Minister Spencer.

Zielinski and Rodriguez jump back to their seats.

Crawford jolts awake, grabs Gibson's hand on his arm.

CRAWFORD  
Christ -- okay, patch him through.

He closes the pictures of Karen.

Opens a Flow browser to view the conference feed.

Commando team gathers around him, at attention.

A video window opens -- the Corporate Minister, JOHN SPENCER, early sixties, appears.

Well groomed, expensive suit -- not happy, ready to explode.

SPENCER  
Watson. Mission accomplished?

CRAWFORD  
Almost, sir. We are in pursuit of  
Agent Drake, who is traveling south  
with a Flux/Net crew --

SPENCER  
Flux/Net?! What the hell is going  
on, Crawford? Did you -- ?

CRAWFORD  
META-13 has been retired. Agent  
Drake got out before we --

SPENCER  
Is she a danger to us?

CRAWFORD  
She... Could be carrying an archive  
of her op streams --

SPENCER  
(growling)  
-- while in the hands of Flux/Net  
terrorists?! What the hell  
happened to your 'drop and mop'  
operation, Watson?!

CRAWFORD  
I know it sounds bad, sir -- but I  
have reason to believe she may be  
able to lead us to Agent Taylor.

SPENCER  
What the hell does Taylor have to  
do with all of this!

Crawford clears his throat.

CRAWFORD  
Drake and Taylor were at one time,  
linked, sir.

SPENCER  
Say again?

CRAWFORD  
Romantically...

SPENCER  
For crying out loud, Watson. That  
traitorous old hacker is the least  
of our worries.

Someone hands Spencer a document, he shoves it away.

Gibson exchanges a smug glance with Rodriguez and Zielinski,  
who shake their heads in amusement.

SPENCER  
If a stream of the op I'm thinking  
of is somehow leaked by Flux/Net,  
it will jeopardize our merger next  
week with the E.U. and G-17.

CRAWFORD

Sir, I --

SPENCER

Find Agent Drake and decommission  
her agency status immediately!

CRAWFORD

Yes, sir. I will.

Spencer motions to someone to cut.

The commandos fall at ease when image disappears.

CRAWFORD

Asshole.

Rodriguez and Zielinski strap into their seats.

CRAWFORD

(to Gibson)

Load me the track on that Flux/Net  
truck.

GIBSON

Done.

Crawford's screen loads a west coast map -- a red tracking  
dot on it moves south.

He clicks and the image zooms out -- the map shows a  
radically different looking North American coastline:

Parts of Washington and Oregon are truncated, California is  
missing -- Nevada now sits on the edge of the Pacific ocean.

GIBSON

Sir, I still don't understand why  
we don't --

CRAWFORD

Gibson, shut up!

Gibson turns away, containing his anger.

Crawford stares at his screen, ears burning.

He glances up at Rodriguez and Zielinski -- their eyes stay  
on him like attentive dogs.

INT. FLUX/NET TRUCK - NIGHT

Eldritch turns on video screen overhead -- a twenty-four hour  
news channel appears.

ELDRITCH  
Flux/Net infiltrates and disrupts  
the Flow with the truth.

MAYA  
To dismantle the I.S.A.'s  
brandwashing of the masses.

LEM  
Pirates of the high frequencies!

ELDRITCH  
Here -- watch this.

He turns up the volume.

FLOW REPORTER (V.O.)  
... Defense Minister Fuller praised  
the precision of the bombs dropped  
on Tehran today which contributed  
to low civilian casualties --

A Flux/Net logo slashes across the screen --

-- tears image in half, revealing its own news story:

Text graphic: A Flux/Net REALITY BREAK.

Series of video images illustrate report, as described.

FLUX/NET REPORTER (V.O.)  
The footage you are now seeing was  
filmed by Flux/Net crews on the  
ground in Teheran. Estimates range  
from 2,000 to 2,500 killed, with  
another 6,500 injured. Majority of  
the deaths were women, children and  
civilians. We will work to hold  
all I.S.A. officials accountable  
for their dangerous, illegal acts  
of aggression around the world...

The clip ends with the Flux/Net logo and the text tag line:

"The Whole World is Watching."

The Flux/Net graphics are burnt off the screen with fire --

-- replaced by the F|A|N network graphics, along with a news  
anchor named KATHY SMITH.

Text graphic: NEWS ON THE FLOW.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
A FAN Flow break with Kathy Smith.

A helicopter shot pans up from water, climbing a gigantic concrete wall, rising up and over the top edge --

KATHY SMITH (V.O.)  
Corporate Minister Spencer approved funding today for extending the height of the Manhattan Island seawall. Water in the gulf of New York continues to rise and threaten this brave and beleaguered city.

-- to reveal the city of Manhattan -- pulling back to show the wall surrounding the entire city --

-- and even farther back to show the whole island surrounded by the Atlantic ocean!

CUT TO:

A F|A|N network ID branding spot:

Montage of Americans from 'all walks of life' speak with candor to the camera:

AMERICAN #1  
I'm a FAN!

AMERICAN #2  
I'm a FAN!

AMERICAN #3  
I'm a FAN too!

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Are you a FAN?

AMERICAN #4  
I am!

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
These are the proud faces of Free America.

Logo for the Free America Network animates onto screen.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
(fast)  
Are you a FAN?

MAYA/ELDRITCH/LEM  
(in unison)  
Noooooooooo!

They all laugh out loud.

Karen's not sure what to think.

MAYA

FAN is the state-controlled Flow  
propaganda arm of the I.S.A.

ELDRITCH

It reinforces mute compliance with  
the financial slavery of the public  
by the global Corporate Consortium.

MAYA

The Flux/Net revolution is rising  
up against the I.S.A. empire --

KAREN

I.S.A.?

MAYA

Incorporated States of America.

KAREN

How many survivors were there?

MAYA

Survivors?

KAREN

Of the war!

ELDRITCH

Where have you been? Under a rock?

KAREN

Yes!

They all laugh.

On video screen, a Flow jammer broadcast cuts in again.

Logo for Flux/Net flashes by, coupled with the text tag line:

"Truth is the Safest Lie."

The phrase captures Karen's attention.

KAREN

Truth is the safest lie?

Eldritch sees her transfixed -- an epiphany hits him.

ELDRITCH

Hey, that gives me an idea.

He picks up his tablet, opens a search window on the Flow.

Karen snaps out of her reverie.

KAREN  
How can I get to Los Angeles?

Lem laughs.

KAREN  
You think that's funny?

LEM  
Only because you'll need a  
submarine to get to there.

Perplexed, Karen looks at Maya.

MAYA  
It's at the bottom of the Gulf of  
Nevada.

ELDRITCH  
Found it.

A PRINTER in the console SPITS out a sheet of paper.

ELDRITCH  
One of the earliest known Flux/Net  
flyers from a few years ago.

It has a black and white image of Karen's face, rendered as  
ASCII artwork -- the same one Crawford has.

Below, it reads: "Flux/Net: Truth is the Safest Lie."

LEM  
I remember that one!

The sight of her own image stuns Karen -- she's not sure how  
to process it.

KAREN  
Trent...?

She steps backward, tripping over a crate on the deck, falls  
and hits her head on a bulkhead, knocking her out cold.

Eldritch kneels down -- aligning the graphic artwork beside  
Karen's face.

ELDRITCH  
What do you think? Is it her?

MAYA  
What the hell does she have to do  
with Flux/Net?

Maya reaches for the gun in Karen's jacket.

INT. AEV - NIGHT

Zielinski and Rodriguez sleep.

Gibson works, hunched over his screens.

Crawford leans over his shoulder.

CRAWFORD

Have you got anything on this crew  
yet, Gibson?

GIBSON

Sketchy, sir.

CRAWFORD

Paint me a picture.

Gibson cracks his neck, scrolling down data on screen.

GIBSON

Flux/Net handle is Adrenochrome.  
Might be three of them -- Eldritch  
is for sure one, somebody named Lem  
and the third is unknown.

CRAWFORD

What do you think they were doing  
up there in the Zone?

GIBSON

Following us?

CRAWFORD

Now how could that be?

Crawford sits, scrutinizing Gibson.

CRAWFORD

Weren't you running all our  
encryption shields and --

Gibson gets hot under the collar.

GIBSON

Are you suggesting I'm feeding them  
our --

CRAWFORD

They followed us out here somehow,  
right?

GIBSON  
That's bullshit! Sir.

Crawford watches his every move like a spider.

GIBSON  
They picked up Drake -- maybe she  
fed them the --

CRAWFORD  
Drake and Harlow were off the grid,  
completely cut off --

GIBSON  
You think Taylor tipped them off?

CRAWFORD  
Who else has a stake in keeping  
Drake alive?

Gibson ponders the point.

CRAWFORD  
Haven't lost your track on them yet  
-- have you?

Gibson slams a button on his console -- switching the screen  
back to the tracker.

CRAWFORD  
Stay on 'em, Gibson.

GIBSON  
Yes, sir.

Crawford opens his laptop, clicks open the Flux/Net flyer  
image of Karen's face --

DISSOLVE TO:

MEMORY FLASH

INT. NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY - DAY

-- close on screen, the same ASCII graphic of Karen's face,  
someone is creating it -- character by character.

Karen sits at a nondescript desk, three monitors before her.  
Her hair is short, clothes civilian.

CRAWFORD  
It's a three week operation.

Crawford wears a suit, looks almost polished.

He hands her a file loaded with documents.

KAREN  
Frank and I will be using the new  
Seattle facility?

One of her monitors displays a live feed from a news network  
channel -- it shows President Burdick at a press event.

CRAWFORD  
Yes, because the second week will  
cover the President's appearance at  
the annual Microsoft summit.

KAREN  
And then we'll switch over to the  
satellite feeds from D.C. for --

CRAWFORD  
-- the meeting with the Middle  
Eastern bloc delegation.

Karen glances past Crawford -- a large open space filled with  
people at work in cubicles

In one of the cubicles -- Trent.

Crawford follows Karen's stare, connects the dots.

CRAWFORD  
Is there a problem, Karen?

KAREN  
No. Two weeks, right?

Karen forces a smile, looking up at him.

CRAWFORD  
Three. You've always wanted to get  
the juicy stuff, right?

KAREN  
Crawford -- is this operation  
legal?

Crawford laughs, nudging her shoulder with his elbow.

CRAWFORD  
Everything has been cleared by the  
boys upstairs. It's our duty now,  
for the future.

KAREN  
Great. Okay. I'll do it.

CRAWFORD  
Excellent.

Crawford smirks at the President's broadcast.

Karen begins looking through the papers in file folder.

CRAWFORD  
We've got to help this guy stay on his toes! Be in my office tomorrow at oh-nine-hundred for the briefing with Agent Harlow.

He walks away, shaking his head, laughing.

An instant messenger window opens on one of her screens.

Karen clicks on it -- opens a file containing the ASCII text artwork graphic of her face.

Below it text reads: "Truth is the safest lie."

She grins, looks across room again -- Trent peeks at her from his cubicle, laughing.

Karen glances back at the President, the conference ending, he's walking away -- his wife beside him --

-- and stepping up between them is their daughter, MADELEINE BURDICK -- who looks exactly like Maya!

CUT TO:

INT. FLUX/NET TRUCK - NIGHT

Lying on a bunk, Karen opens her eyes.

KAREN  
(whispering)  
Madeleine Burdick...

She turns over -- sees Maya and Lem hunched over a screen.

LEM  
They're tracking us.

Maya turns to her workstation, keying commands.

Eldritch has replaced Lem in the driver's seat.

KAREN  
Madeleine Burdick.

Maya and Lem both jump, startled by her outburst.

Karen feels her jacket pockets -- jumps off the bunk.

KAREN  
Where is it!

MAYA  
Where is what?

Karen moves toward Maya -- Lem stands up behind her.  
Maya motions to a locker, opens it -- reveals the gun.  
Karen reaches over her and grabs it.

ELDRITCH  
Everyone okay back there?

MAYA  
We're fine. Our passenger woke up.

Karen checks for bullets -- secures gun in her jacket.

KAREN  
The hair threw me off. Thought  
you'd be taller. I'm surprised  
you're still alive.

Maya remains motionless -- observing Karen's every move.

ELDRITCH  
What the hell is she going on  
about?

KAREN  
What are you really doing out here?

MAYA  
Searching for the truth behind the  
death of my parents.

KAREN  
You mean their execution.

ELDRITCH  
The President was executed!

KAREN  
"Maya"?

MAYA  
My Flux/Net handle.

KAREN  
How did you survive?

MAYA

I was in school at the time, the Sorbonne in Paris. B.S.I. thinks I'm dead.

KAREN

I'm sorry for your loss.

Karen offers her hand to Maya -- they shake.

MAYA

Who are you?

KAREN

Karen Drake, META Agent.

MAYA

N.S.A?

Karen nods.

MAYA

Why do you say executed?

KAREN

Because I witnessed it.

Karen unzips pocket holding the disc -- holds it up.

Maya regards it with a sense of wonder.

MAYA

Then my instinct to follow that B.S.I. squad into the Zone was justified.

LEM

Are you getting all this, Eldritch?!

ELDRITCH

I'm pulling over so we can uplink.

He jerks the wheel hard and SKIDS off the road.

EXT. TRUCK STOP - NIGHT

Eldritch pulls up to a grim, desolate structure, parking in the shadows.

A hand painted sign on the roof reads: "Stop! Please Help!"

The truck's satellite dish extends on a pole, up out of darkness.

Clouds pass in front of a full moon, gleaming bright over the arid desert landscape.

INT. AEV - NIGHT

Monitors illuminate the faces of Crawford and Gibson.

Zielinski and Rodriguez watch over Crawford's shoulder.

GIBSON  
They've stopped.

CRAWFORD  
(to Jenkins)  
Pull over and keep out of sight.

Jenkins turns them off the road.

Crawford and Gibson watch them via an infrared image.

GIBSON  
They're going to uplink.

CRAWFORD  
Get a piggy-back on that signal.

GIBSON  
I'm on it.

Gibson works his console with furious speed.

CRAWFORD  
I want to know if they find Taylor.

GIBSON  
What makes you think he's even  
still alive?

CRAWFORD  
He's not dead... Until I kill him.

Gibson sneers at Crawford's grim little smile.

Rodriguez and Zielinski snicker.

INT. FLUX/NET TRUCK - NIGHT

Eldritch steps down from cab -- Maya confronts him.

MAYA  
We're still too close to the Zone,  
don't you think?

ELDRITCH

Don't worry, we'll be fine. Looks pretty quiet out there.

KAREN

Where's that graphic you showed me?

LEM

This?

He gives her the flyer with her image.

Karen studies it with fascination.

KAREN

Trent must still be alive.

MAYA

Trent?

Karen finds her pack on the bunk, pulls out the Bible.

Takes out the photo of Trent -- looks around for a place to get rid of the Bible.

LEM

Ahhh, "the word."

Karen stares at him, deadpan.

KAREN

Government issue.

Lem takes it from her -- finds inside front cover a red rubber stamp declaring:

"Property of the Incorporated States Government."

Eldritch grabs it -- drops in trash INCINERATOR vent, where it BURNS to ash.

ELDRITCH

I hate government Bibles.

Karen shows photo to Maya.

KAREN

Trent Taylor.

MAYA

Nice. Is he your -- ?

KAREN

A trusted friend.

ELDRITCH  
Can we broadcast your disc on  
Flux/Net?

KAREN  
You can't.

MAYA  
What do you mean?

KAREN  
You need equipment.

LEM  
Oh yeah? We can crack anything you  
throw at us!

He's offended, almost. Karen stares him down, not ready to  
joke about it.

KAREN  
Oh yeah? This disc requires the  
META stream 9000 series media deck.  
You have one of those handy?

LEM  
Uh, no.

KAREN  
You need one of those just to read  
the disc. Not to mention the many  
layers of reinforced encryption --

Lem throws his hands up in the air, whatever.

KAREN  
If Trent is still alive, we need to  
find him.

ELDRITCH  
What can he do for us?

KAREN  
Trent engineered this file system --  
he can crack it.

ELDRITCH  
Is he a META Agent too?

Karen nods, folds graphic flyer, slips in a shirt pocket.  
Secures disc back inside zippered jacket pocket.

MAYA

We heard the term "META" a lot while tracking B.S.I. What is it?

KAREN

N.S.A. subdivision. "Multi-Sensory Examination and Tactical Analysis."

LEM

Whoa.

At her terminal, Maya launches a Flow data browser.

Loads search engine "Googolplex.com" -- types in the name Trent Taylor.

She nods at Karen to look -- she does, with Eldritch and Lem.

Maya scrolls down results, clicks one.

A video clip opens with a F|A|N news anchor named TIM PATTERSON, reporting the story.

TIM PATTERSON (V.O.)

This is a FAN FLOW BREAK with Tim Patterson: NEWS ON THE FLOW: Former N.S.A. employee Trent Taylor claims that President Burdick did not suffer an episode of temporary insanity --

File footage rolls of Trent in a government ID photo.

The reporter speaks over a news montage of civilians fleeing bombed out cities --

TIM PATTERSON (V.O.)

-- in an incident that launched a limited nuclear exchange with Middle Eastern republics, but instead claims he was murdered by the American Corporate Consortium, which later merged with the Federal Government after the attacks to create the I.S.A. we have today.

-- a group of suits shaking hands across a table with people in military uniforms --

-- one expensive suit is Corporate Minister Spencer -- the clip ends with a flag waving the ISA corporate logo.

Karen takes it all in, confused.

MAYA  
Is this your friend?

KAREN  
My god, yes! Can you help me track  
him down?

ELDRITCH  
Hell yeah!

Eldritch takes his tablet out of storage locker.

Lem jumps on his workstation and initiates the satellite  
uplink.

Maya and Karen gather around Eldritch's screen.

Eldritch  
The collective power of Flux/Net is  
at our fingertips -- let's use it.  
What is his full name?

KAREN  
Trent Thomas Taylor.

Eldritch looks up at her.

ELDRITCH  
Seriously?

KAREN  
T-cubed, yes.

Maya and Eldritch laugh.

ELDRITCH  
Okay... Date of birth?

KAREN  
4-15-09.

Eldritch types it in, hits send.

Karen studies the patch over his eye.

KAREN  
What's with your eye?

ELDRITCH  
Lost it when I was a Marine; they  
ran me out for whistle-blowing.

KAREN  
But the eye -- ?

ELDRITCH

Body mod I got in Singapore. Old school, rather than cool nanotech. Illegal of course, but it makes shooting a helluva lot easier.

KAREN

Did you guys start Flux/Net?

MAYA

No. Nobody knows how it started.

LEM

Anonymous beings on the Flow...

KAREN

What are you uplinking to?

LEM

Couple of old Soviet satellites, courtesy our comrades in Moscow.

A heavy THUD hits the truck's roof, rocking the cabin.

KAREN

What the hell was that?

Everyone jumps -- eyes turning to the ceiling.

MAYA

I knew we shouldn't have stopped.

Lem switches on exterior truck cameras -- screens shows four views: north, south, east and west.

Every angle shows a scattering of people surrounding the truck -- many carry weapons -- a growing angry mob!

ELDRITCH

Oh shit -- Crazies!

KAREN

Crazies?

LEM

Victims of the radiation fallout, living on the edge of the Zone.

MAYA

They were left behind to die by the Corporate Minister and his cronies.

KAREN

What do they want?

A terrible creaking, CRUNCHING NOISE comes from the roof.

LEM  
The dish pole -- !

A video screen shows it falling off the truck -- satellite uplink monitor blanks to static.

ELDRITCH  
Let's get out of here!

Lem runs to the cab -- jumps in driver's seat.

Through the windshield a swarm of Crazies can be seen approaching -- wielding clubs, rocks, knives and guns.

LEM  
Jesus H. Christ!

ON VIDEO SCREEN

One Crazie lunges at truck camera -- a man with a horrible degenerative disease -- Karen recoils.

Someone POUNDS on the side DOOR -- Karen pulls out her gun.

ELDRITCH  
What the hell are you doing?

KAREN  
What if they're armed?

Lem keys the ignition, REVVING ENGINE when -- CRASH!

The WINDSHIELD EXPLODES into fragments -- hit by Crazies wielding the dish pole.

The pole slams into Lem's chest -- knocks the wind out of him, pinning him against the seat.

LEM  
Arrgghh!

Another Crazie sprays the cab with MACHINE GUN FIRE, hitting Lem several times as he attempts to push the pole out.

ELDRITCH  
LEM!

Eldritch and Maya rush into cab -- are shocked to find Lem covered in blood.

Karen grabs Maya -- yanks her into back cabin -- FIRING her GUN at the Crazie holding machine gun, killing him.

Another Crazie climbs into the cab -- grabs Lem.

Karen wraps her arm around Lem's neck, aiming over his shoulder -- SHOOTS the Crazie point blank in the face.

The Crazie flies backward out of the cab -- Maya screams at the carnage.

Eldritch shoves pole outside cab -- another Crazie dives in, knocking him over.

Two other Crazie's get hold of Lem -- pull him out of Karen's grip, hauling him outside --

Karen falls hard in driver's seat -- holds GUN up with both hands and FIRES off several wild shots.

Crazies fall left and right -- as Lem drops from sight.

ELDRITCH

LEM!

Eldritch punches the Crazie attacking him -- while scrambling to grab hold of Lem.

Lem disappears under a pile of writhing bodies pounding on him -- Eldritch tries to jump through windshield.

ELDRITCH

NOOOOOOO!

KAREN

HE'S DEAD!

Karen grabs Eldritch by the collar -- yanks him back into the cab -- as she SHOOTS into the crowd again.

KAREN

COVER MAYA -- NOW!

He pushes a crying Maya back into the cabin -- Karen shifts into gear and stomps the accelerator.

EXT. TRUCK STOP - NIGHT

The Flux/Net truck PEELS OUT -- SMASHING into side of building, Crazies falling off the roof.

From the garage a battered CAR comes SCREAMING out, dirt and rocks flying

Closely followed by a two Crazies riding a motorcycle -- one of them armed with a shotgun.

INT. AEV - NIGHT

The Commando team huddles around the infrared video feed.

Crawford hands out MRE packages to everyone.

ZIELINSKI

Oh shit -- they've got a load of  
Crazies jumping all over their ass!

RODRIGUEZ

Should we do something, sir?

CRAWFORD

Yes, we should. Let's sit back and  
enjoy the show.

They all laugh.

EXT. ROADWAY - NIGHT

The battered car SIDE SWIPES the Flux/Net truck -- Karen  
manages to keep control.

Several more cars and customized vehicles appear from behind  
the truck stop building and surrounding desert.

Dozens of car beams and GUN FIRE illuminate the roadway.

The crowd of Crazies chase after the cars on foot -- leaving  
behind in the dirt the bloody body of Lem.

The motorcycle follows alongside the Flux/Net truck, swerving  
back and forth -- catching up to the cab.

INT. FLUX/NET TRUCK - NIGHT

Karen sees the passenger sitting behind the motorcycle driver  
-- aiming shotgun right at her.

She takes a SHOT at the motorcycle -- misses, but it causes  
the driver to fall back.

The battered CAR SLAMS into Karen's side again.

In the back cabin, Eldritch clutches Maya -- they struggle to  
hang on.

EXT. ROADWAY - NIGHT

Another car keeps pace with Flux/Net truck -- Karen swings  
wheel hard, swerving to SMASH into it -- CAR falls back.

She cranks the wheel back in opposite direction -- taking a good SWIPE at the battered CAR -- sends it off road.

Karen floors the gas, REVVING the ENGINE hard, manages to outrun all the Crazies chasing them.

INT. AEV - NIGHT

Crawford and his team cheer on the attack -- as an angry mob of Crazies besiege the AEV itself with GUNFIRE.

Gibson switches the infrared view to an exterior camera.

EXT. ROADWAY - NIGHT

Crazies crawl all over the AEV roof, bashing it with sticks, clubs, rock -- and FIRING GUNS.

INT. AEV - NIGHT

Everyone jumps to their feet except Crawford.

CRAWFORD

Rodriguez -- give 'em a jolt.

Rodriguez opens panel to a switch -- he throws it.

A vibrating ELECTRIC SHOCK envelopes the AEV exterior.

EXT. ROADWAY - NIGHT

The Crazies swarming over AEV get SHOCKED by a massive jolt of ELECTRICITY -- sends them flying off in all directions.

INT. AEV - NIGHT

Crawford nods to Jenkins.

CRAWFORD

Keep a respectable distance.

JENKINS

Yes, sir.

CRAWFORD

Gibson, keep us quiet...

Jenkins cranks up the AEV and PEELS away from the crowd of Crazies throwing rocks and bottles.

INT. FLUX/NET TRUCK - NIGHT

Karen drives full-throttle down the desert road.

Eldritch sits next to Maya in the passenger seat.

The wind blows hard across their faces.

ELDRITCH

We're clear. Let me drive.

KAREN

You sure?

ELDRITCH

Please, I need to drive.

Karen looks at Eldritch, his eyes red from crying.

She downshifts, climbs out of seat as he jumps in.

KAREN

Eldritch -- I'm sorry about --

Karen puts hand on his shoulder, he wrenches it away, eyes fixed on the road. Maya guides her back into the cabin.

MAYA

They grew up together.

Karen checks the clip on her gun, one bullet left. Finds her pack and reloads.

Maya sits at her workstation.

KAREN

Don't you have any weapons?

MAYA

We believe the camera is mightier than the gun.

Karen laughs.

KAREN

A camera won't protect you from a bullet.

MAYA

The camera preserves history, the gun can only destroy it.

KAREN

History is written by the victors.

An awkward silence.

ELDRITCH

Maya, why don't you log in to the Flow and see if we got any hits.

MAYA

All right.

She opens a Flow browser, logs into a Flux/Net message board. Scrolls down -- clicks on a topic titled "TTT", reads.

MAYA

New Las Vegas.

ELDRITCH

Yeah?

MAYA

A crew named Ultravox will meet us at the Eiffel Tower with details.

KAREN

They found him?

MAYA

Don't know. They were tipped off.

KAREN

"New" Las Vegas?

MAYA

The epitome of American free-market capitalism.

Maya types a search through "Googolplex" -- pulls up a site showcasing the sinful pleasures of New Las Vegas.

Banner ad text proclaims: "New Las Vegas is Heaven on Earth!"

SOUND BITE

But first, a message from our sponsor!

A commercial advertisement takes over entire screen.

LIFTER COMMERCIAL (V.O.)

Fly high above rush hour traffic with ease as free as a bird! With your very own vertical transporter, the LIFTER XLT! 2048 models are in show rooms now -- take one out for a test spin today!

Beautiful series of images -- happy family cruising through vast cityscape, inside a fancy flying car.

LIFTER COMMERCIAL (V.O.)  
 (insanely fast)  
 Personal pilots license and Level 8 insurance required. Debt financing determined by eligibility of credit ratings score index.

A cheesy laser beam effect slashes the image in half and the Flux/Net logo appears.

FLUX/NET COMMERCIAL (V.O.)  
 A Flux/Net REALITY BREAK: Did we neglect to tell you that hydrogen fuel cell reliability peaks after only 10 days? If left unchecked this glitch can result in a nasty surprise not covered by Level 8 insurance.

The flying car with the happy family suddenly veers out of control -- their faces become panic stricken --

-- as they fly straight into a BUILDING and EXPLODE into a huge ball of flame!

Text animates on screen at the same time it is being read:

FLUX/NET COMMERCIAL (V.O.)  
 This REALITY BREAK has been brought to you by Flux/Net. Caveat Emptor. Remember: Truth is the Safest Lie.

Karen and Maya burst out laughing.

The text graphics blow apart, transforming into a cascading stream of binary characters blurring across the screen...

EXT. NEW LAS VEGAS - DAY

...morphing into the interface of a retinal eye display.

Behind the transparent interface, a long sandy beach crowded with people stretches off into the distance.

EXTREME CLOSEUP

on the eye, the retinal interface scrolls up, closing -- leaving the pupil to reflect ocean waves crashing on shore.

TRENT TAYLOR

watches the waves, wearing clothes much too dark for the crushing heat.

He stands on a rocky, man-made sea wall -- covers his eyes with dark sunglasses.

Turns to face the city -- the metropolis of NEW LAS VEGAS.

Gigantic hotels and casinos dot the landscape with a myriad of shapes, colors and designs.

Low flying LIFTERS dart in, around and through the dazzling futuristic architecture.

Sidewalks bustle with crowds of gamblers and shoppers.

He moves forward into the spectacle.

CITY STREET

An enormous video wall board on a building broadcasts a F|A|N "News on the Flow" bulletin -- with news anchor KATHY SMITH.

The screen shows images of political dignitaries pressing the flesh outside the Arc de Triomphe in Paris --

-- followed by shots of a Flux/Net truck being chased by security forces --

KATHY SMITH (V.O.)

... The I.S.A. summit with E.U. and G-17 leaders scheduled for Monday in Paris will have extra security on hand to ensure against any possible disruptive threat spikes from Flux/Net terrorists.

Followed by an obnoxious commercial:

Crowds of devoted believers descend upon a Vegas-style mega church -- moving inside reveals an immense gaming lobby.

COMMERCIAL (V.O.)

Losing getting you down? Then let Jesus lift you up! Get your luck and your soul recharged by coming to the midnight mass at Our Lady of Perpetual Giving in New Las Vegas. And remember: our slots have been blessed by the Righteous One!

Trent strolls down a wide mall boulevard.

He stops before a store selling giant plasma Flow screens.

The massive window display has a dizzying array of screens all flashing with images of American consumerism run amok.

On the street corner, a little girl waits at the crosswalk with her mother. She glances up at Trent.

Trent catches her eye -- he pulls a palm-sized tablet from a pocket -- touches screen with his thumb.

TRENT

Big Brother's not watching you.  
You're watching him.

He nods to the wall of Flow screens in the store display.

One by one the screens go dark -- sparks shoot out from each of their control panels.

The mother yanks the smiling girl into the crosswalk when the light changes.

Trent smiles and ducks into a nearby casino -- passersby stop to gape at the fireworks.

A team of Security Guards descend on the intersection, jump out of vehicles, waving signal sweeper wands in the air.

INT. CASINO - DAY

Vast gaming floor of slot machines, packed with tourists.

An elderly couple are fixtures on a couple of machines, each holds a drink and cigarette.

The MAN thumps machine with fist, the WOMAN shakes her head.

MAN

God damn machine!

WOMAN

Oh, honey. That won't help.

Trent strides by, stops for a moment -- secretly aims his tablet at the slot machine, taps button.

The woman's next pull lines up a jackpot.

WOMAN

George! George! George!

The woman turns to Trent for a moment, screaming and crying tears of happiness.

Trent strides down another row of slots with dozens of players -- tapping his tablet over and over.

Jackpots light up left and right as he passes by -- people jump out of their skins with joy.

Crazy FLASHING ALARMS go off everywhere.

Pandemonium ensues as more people rush up to the machines, fighting over the jackpots winnings.

A group of Security Guards rush head-on into melee of out of control tourists.

INTERCOM (V.O.)  
MALFUNCTION. PLEASE STAND BACK.

Trent slips out side door to street.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Trent loses himself in the noisy crowd.

Two burly Security Guards burst outside, waving around signal sweeper wands.

A tour bus unloading a group of senior citizens slow down the guards -- they spot Trent on sidewalk.

Trent catches their eye -- he steps into back of a taxi.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Trent hands the TAXI DRIVER a smart card.

TRENT  
Fourth and Fremont.

TAXI DRIVER  
You got it, Mac.

The driver swipes the card, hands it back to Trent, pulls out into traffic.

Trent folds down a keyboard panel in the seat back, plugs in his tablet, switches on a virtual keyboard.

Swipes his card in a reader to open a Flow data connection.

A Flow browser opens a NEWS ON THE FLOW site, reading:

"NEWS ON THE FLOW: Headlines: ISA and EU/G-17 Summit, in

Paris July 14, 2048. Don't forget: McDonald's beef is a green beef! Yummy!"

He minimizes the browser.

Opens FTP data Flow connection, along with a file manager.

Drag and drops a file from the manager window onto the FTP link window.

Reloads the site in the browser.

A Flux/Net message replaces the NEWS ON THE FLOW site:

When all media fails: Flux/Net  
Truth is the Safest Lie!

Trent closes the connection -- unplugs tablet.

TAXI DRIVER  
Look! It's those Flux/Net jokers.

The taxi driver points out the window.

Trent's media hack appears on a video wall board outside.

TRENT  
Damn irritating, don't you think?

TAXI DRIVER  
It sure is. But why do they call them terrorists anyway?

TRENT  
Beats me. Stop here.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

TAXI SCREECHES to a halt at curb, Trent jumps out -- disappearing into the crowded sidewalk.

The taxi begins to pull away -- only to be surrounded by three police vehicles seconds later --

-- a swarm of armed Security Guards pull the driver out -- slam his face down on the hood.

TAXI DRIVER  
Hey -- what's going on?!

One guard with a tablet gets into the backseat -- while another guard scans the crowd with a signal sweeper wand.

Trent slips out of sight inside another casino.

EXT. CONDO - EVENING

Trent steps up to the entrance.

A MOTHER and her TEENAGE KIDS (a boy and a girl) are walking from the lobby.

The woman avoids Trent on purpose, frowning -- but the kids do not.

The boy flashes his own mini-tablet as he goes by.

Trent grins, taps his tablet inside his coat pocket.

The girl peeks at the boy's tablet screen:

\$1,983.00 credits transferred.  
Transaction completed.

The boy gives Trent the thumbs up, the girl winks at him.

MOTHER  
Come on, we're going to be late!

GIRL  
Mom, I want to go shopping!

BOY  
Can you drop me off at the Flow  
arcade, Mom?

Trent goes inside the lobby.

INT. CONDO LOBBY - EVENING

At the elevators, a SECURITY GUARD sits behind a desk.

GUARD  
Good evening, Mr. Smith.

Trent nods to the man as he waits for the lift.

GUARD  
Did you make a killing today, sir?

TRENT  
As a matter of fact, I did.

GUARD  
Good for you, sir.

Trent gets into elevator, smiling.

Security Guard goes back to reading on a tablet.

INT. CONDO - HALLWAY - EVENING

Empty and quiet, illuminated by fading sunlight.

Trent opens his door with a card key -- a series of locks unlatching inside.

INT. TRENT'S CONDO - NIGHT

Takes off sunglasses and jacket, drops them on table with his tablet.

Goes to a cabinet, finds bottle of whiskey.

Plops into chair between a pair of custom-built, desktop computers.

A screen saver on each system shows the ASCII graphic artwork of Karen as seen earlier --

-- as animated alphanumeric characters constructing and deconstructing her face.

Trent finds a glass in the mess of electronics equipment scattered across the desk.

A Flow screen with sound turned off plays the F|A|N channel.

Screen saver vanishes on one of the screens -- a terminal window pops open, types out message:

Flux/Net is searching for you.

Computer reads it out loud -- with a female voice.

COMPUTER VOICE

Flux/Net is searching for you.

Trent pours a shot, downs at one go.

TRENT

What else is new, Uni?

This computer goes by the name UNIVAC.

UNIVAC

Flux/Net is data mining the Flow for your name, location, alias.

TRENT

Again -- what else is -- ?

Trent taps a key on one of the keyboards.

UNIVAC

-- this is different, Trent. Never have all crews focused on a single search for the benefit of one.

TRENT

What does Eni think?

He turns to other system behind him -- a male voice replies.

This computer goes by the name ENIAC.

ENIAC

Trent, I concur with Univac. Coordinated activity is growing at an exponential rate. Something is definitely afoot.

TRENT

That's mighty big of you, Eni.

UNIVAC

Thank you for verifying, Eniac. What would you like us to do?

TRENT

Nothing. It always turns out to be some young jammer kid who wants to pick my brain.

He gulps another shot.

TRENT

Let's get down to business -- have you guys made any progress with the security detail on the summit?

Trent puts his feet up on the desk.

ENIAC

The search is running. Data is still being collated.

TRENT

You're still collating.

He yawns, closes his eyes.

UNIVAC

Trent?

ENIAC

Trent?

Drifts off to sleep.

Flow screen in the corner switches to a F|A|N "News on the Flow" bulletin -- with news anchor KATHY SMITH.

Quick images of people in a casino, going wild around several rows of slot machines.

KATHY SMITH (V.O.)

The PanSonic Hotel had a major malfunction today when machines in its slot arcade suddenly began spitting out money -- causing quite the chaotic situation for gaming operators, who had to call in the guards to regain control of the situation.

INT. FLUX/NET TRUCK - DAY

Karen and Maya sit at one of the console monitors, watching this same F|A|N broadcast, eating breakfast bars.

Video imagery on screen goes on to show people being arrested at the scene and herded into police paddy wagons.

KATHY SMITH (V.O.)

Twenty-three people were arrested for disorderly conduct and --

A cheesy laser beam effect slashes the image in half and the Flux/Net logo appears.

MAYA

Awesome!

FLUX/NET REPORTER (V.O.)

A Flux/Net REALITY BREAK: Did we neglect to tell you that ninety percent of all casino revenue is generated by slot machines? And since Congress repealed the per arm pull transaction tax last year, you do the math! Do your credit balance a favor and kick the gambling addiction today!

Quick montage of people filmed with hidden cameras -- playing slot machines, and their wild reactions to losing every time.

Goes to shot of hip young woman, playing new report, standing on top of a satellite truck -- covered with graffiti --

-- as it drives down the New Las Vegas strip.

FLUX/NET REPORTER

This REALITY BREAK has been brought to you by Flux/Net: New Las Vegas: Team Ultravox. Remember: Truth is the Safest Lie.

KAREN

Was that a jam from Ultravox?

MAYA

That would be my guess.

ELDRITCH

We're almost there, come take a look.

Karen climbs into passenger seat, Maya nudges beside her.

Eldritch turns a corner, merging into traffic on the famous Vegas Strip.

MAYA

The society of the spectacle.

They stare at the glittering city outside.

ELDRITCH

Ladies, welcome to New Las Vegas.

EXT. NEW LAS VEGAS STRIP - DAY

FLUX/NET TRUCK

inches down the enormous Las Vegas strip, stuck in slow moving gridlock, heading south.

AEV

is a dozen blocks away -- also enters the traffic jam, heading north.

INT. AEV - DAY

A transmission BEEPS on Gibson's CONSOLE.

GIBSON

The Corporate Minister, sir.

Crawford gets up, stretching.

CRAWFORD

Christ, what is it now?

A video window pops opens and Corporate Minister Spencer appears -- sitting behind a desk, as before.

SPENCER  
Watson. Status report.

CRAWFORD  
Sir, we've tracked Karen Drake and the Flux/Net crew she is travelling with to New Las Vegas where they are going to --

SPENCER  
Drake is still alive?

CRAWFORD  
Yes, but I think they're going to find --

SPENCER  
Take care of her NOW, or I will be forced to send out the Australian to do the job for you. Then I will have him take you out. Do I make myself clear, Crawford?

Corporate Minister Spencer scowls at Crawford.

CRAWFORD  
Yes, sir.

Transmission cuts off.

CRAWFORD  
Where the fuck are they now?

GIBSON  
150 meters, down the Strip.

CRAWFORD  
(to Jenkins)  
Lock on to Gibson's coordinates.

JENKINS  
Already got 'em, sir.

CRAWFORD  
What direction are they heading?

GIBSON  
South bound --

CRAWFORD  
Perfect. Jenkins, I want you to hit them -- head-on.

JENKINS

Sir?

CRAWFORD

Crush them.

Rodriguez and Zielinski exchange a glance and race to their seats, strap themselves in -- weapons in hand.

Jenkins tightens his grip on the wheel, unsure of this order.

JENKINS

Yes, sir.

Gibson tightens his belt.

GIBSON

Sir, this is crazy!

RODRIGUEZ

(in Spanish)

You can say that again.

Crawford rubs his eyes, fatigued.

CRAWFORD

(to all)

Remember -- NO survivors. Got it?

COMMANDOS

SIR, YES, SIR!

He goes up behind Jenkins in the cab -- peers out the windshield.

INT. FLUX/NET TRUCK - DAY

Maya works on her terminal, fingers dancing on the keys.

MAYA

Ultravox are at the Tower.

ELDRITCH

All right.

KAREN

Did they find Trent?

MAYA

They claim the flyer with your face originated here and is connected to a hacker who calls himself "Winston Smith."

Karen grins.

MAYA

And somehow they've matched that name with Trent Taylor. They'll tell us more when we meet.

Eldritch spies something far off down strip.

ELDRITCH

We've got trouble!

EXT. NEW LAS VEGAS STRIP - DAY

The massive AEV tears down the center turn lane -- heading north -- cars swerving out of its way.

INT. AEV - DAY

Crawford leans over Jenkins's shoulder.

CRAWFORD

Are you sure it's them, Gibson?

Gibson tracks the Flux/Net truck on his screen.

GIBSON

Positive, fifty meters and closing.

Crawford straps himself in, checking his weapon.

Rodriguez and Zielinski lock and load their weapons.

They all cover their faces with black bandannas.

Jenkins floors it -- the ENGINE HOWLING.

EXT. NEW LAS VEGAS STRIP - DAY

The AEV ROARS towards a busy intersection -- with no intention of stopping.

The traffic light changes, people set out to cross -- a car turns left to go through --

-- when BAM! -- the AEV SLAMS into the CAR, spinning it around, crushing it -- pedestrians scramble in the wake.

INT. FLUX/NET TRUCK - DAY

Eldritch sees the car getting smashed to bits.

ELDRITCH

Whooaa!

Maya and Karen go up to cab.

MAYA

What is it?

ELDRITCH

Look!

The AEV grows larger by the second.

KAREN

Watson.

Horns blaring, people shouting -- Eldritch honks like everyone else -- yelling at the top of his lungs.

ELDRITCH

MOVE! MOVE! MOVE!

Eldritch nudges the car in front of them -- turning the steering wheel -- trying to get out.

KAREN

They're going to ram us.

MAYA

What?!

ELDRITCH

Maya! Jack me in!

He lifts his eye patch -- the camera-eye lens telescopes out.

MAYA

There isn't time!

ELDRITCH

Do it!

Maya jumps onto her workstation -- jacks him in.

MAYA

You're live.

EXT. NEW LAS VEGAS STRIP - DAY

The AEV speeds up -- sideswiping cars left and right.

News Flow helicopters appear overhead -- hovering over the scene -- filming the chase for broadcast.

A video wall board nearby shows these aerial images from the Strip -- live on the Flow.

INT. HELICOPTER - DAY

PILOT banks hard, staying on top of unfolding scene.

PILOT  
What do you make of that?

Cameraman beside him watches action on his virtual rig.

CAMERAMAN  
All hell's breaking loose!

Pilot turns hard again, trying to keep pace with the fast moving AEV.

INT. FLUX/NET TRUCK - DAY

Eldritch stays focused on AEV -- it's getting closer and closer -- at ferocious speed.

KAREN  
Eldritch! We have to go -- NOW!

Karen grabs his arm -- tries to pull him away, he resists -- shoving her away --

-- she turns and lifts Maya out of her seat -- pushes her towards the side door --

MAYA  
Eldritch!

Eldritch punches the gas -- SMASHES the CAR in front of them.

Turns out into the center turn lane -- straight into the AEV's path!

Karen punches switch, opens the side door -- it flies open -- bright light falls into the cabin.

KAREN  
We are LEAVING!

Eldritch slams the accelerator again -- breaking free of traffic.

EXT. NEW LAS VEGAS STRIP - DAY

ON FLUX/NET TRUCK

Karen drags a screaming, crying Maya outside --  
-- leaping from the side door as the truck jumps forward --  
-- they dive for cover between cars as -- the AEV CRASHES  
head-on into the Flux/Net truck --  
-- tearing through the driver's side -- shearing it in half!  
Eldritch ejects from the cab -- he lands hard on the street,  
rolling over and over.

The AEV pushes the wreckage backwards over the surrounding  
traffic.

#### FLOW SCREEN STORE

Random people watch the crash live on the Flow -- some cheer  
in approval, as if it were a video game.

#### SIDEWALK

People on the sidewalk run like hell to get out away from all  
the flying debris.

#### ON STRIP

The AEV SKIDS to a TIRE SHAKING stop past the wreckage, the  
back hatch bursts open --

-- the Commandos jump out with their weapons drawn, running  
up to the burning pile of metal.

Karen bounces off a car onto the pavement -- taking a bone  
crunching fall on her arm.

Maya rolls away under a bulky SUV parked at the curb.

She searches for Eldritch -- sees him laying beside the  
wreckage -- he's reaching for his legs.

She also sees Karen nearby -- holding her arm in pain, a  
bloody gash across her face.

Crawford marches up to Eldritch -- gazes down at his body  
sprawled on ground, legs twisted and broken.

Eldritch tries to get up -- Crawford shoves him back on the  
ground with a boot on his shoulder.

#### ELDRITCH POV

His camera-eye zooms in on Crawford's face.

CRAWFORD

I hate anarchist reporters.

Crawford aims his automatic weapon at Eldritch's extended camera-eye, smiles -- FIRES.

Eldritch snaps back -- head hits pavement hard -- the death in his eyes piercing into Maya's heart --

MAYA

ELDRITCH!!

News Flow helicopters continue filming -- the carnage broadcasting live on the giant video wall board.

Karen sees Maya reacting to Eldritch's murder -- she rolls over, crying out in pain --

-- struggles to open her zippered jacket pocket -- wiggles the disc out -- her photo of Trent falls out to the ground.

Karen locks eyes with Maya for a split second -- throws her the disc --

-- the disc skips and slides across the pavement to Maya under the SUV.

Crawford and the Commandos see Karen do this -- they turn to the SUV.

Maya catches the disc -- rolls out from under the SUV on the other side -- crawls up onto the sidewalk --

-- as the Commandos UNLOAD their massive FIREPOWER into the SUV -- ripping it and the people inside to shreds.

Maya scoots like crazy on all fours across the sidewalk, bumps into a poodle on a leash --

-- scrambles through a casino door sliding open -- disappears out of sight.

Crawford motions Rodriguez to follow Maya.

CRAWFORD

Rodriguez -- GO!

Rodriguez nods -- takes off around pulverized SUV.

In a burst of energy -- Karen rolls over -- aims her gun at Zielinski -- one shot in the neck takes him down fast.

Crawford spins, aims his gun at her -- as she fires at him -- grazing one of his ears.

He spins backward -- falls on his ass.

KAREN

Get... Up...

Karen forces herself to get on her feet --

-- she kicks Crawford's weapon away from him -- it lands near the sidewalk.

A grubby ten-year-old street kid passing by sees the gun -- on sheer impulse he picks it up.

KAREN

Hey!

The kid heeds Karen's shout.

Jenkins jumps down from the AEV, aiming his pistol at Karen -- he notices the kid holding the gun --

Karen sees Jenkins -- raises her gun --

-- the kid follows her eyes to Jenkins -- and on pure reaction to the sight of Jenkins aiming his gun --

-- he unloads the automatic on Jenkins -- SHOTS OFF an insane number of rounds -- killing him.

Karen holds her breath -- Crawford cowers on the street -- the crowd gasps -- stunned at the burst of violence.

Gibson appears at the AEV's back hatch -- he raises his pistol -- FIRES at Karen -- missing her.

She swings around, takes him out with one clean head shot.

Karen turns the gun back on Crawford in a flash.

CRAWFORD

This isn't going to end well if you keep killing people.

Another young kid, a short distance away -- with his tourist parents -- holds a small video camera --

-- captures the event, wide-eyed -- scared and excited.

The kid with the gun looks at Karen, grins, turns and disappears into crowd.

Karen runs over to Crawford -- he's on his hands and knees trying to get up -- she kicks him in the bloody ear.

KAREN  
Watson. Move it.

She aims her gun with both hands at his head.

CRAWFORD  
You looking for someone, Karen?

Crawford holds up her torn photo of Trent.

Karen shoots the photo out of his hand.

KAREN  
The execution of the President is  
on that disc -- and now Madeleine  
Burdick has it.

Crawford does a double-take.

CRAWFORD  
That bitch won't get far.

KAREN  
GET UP!

Crawford manages to get to his feet, one hand holding his  
bleeding ear --

-- she pushes him towards the AEV -- holding the gun in his  
back -- kicking him --

KAREN  
MOVE!

They climb inside the AEV -- the back hatch closes.

A crowd has gathered around the wreckage -- police SIRENS can  
be heard WAILING in the distance.

New Flow helicopters are hovering close overhead.

INT. AEV - DAY

Karen pushes Crawford into the driver's seat -- keeps the gun  
on the back of his neck.

KAREN  
Go to the Eiffel Tower. NOW!

Crawford grabs the wheel -- puts it in gear, flinching at the  
force of her voice.

INT. CASINO - DAY

Maya runs as fast as she can -- her petite profile allows her to dodge tourists with ease.

A hulking brute, Rodriguez slams into old folk and children left and right -- knocking them down.

A meek Security Guard tries to stop him -- but lets him pass when Rodriguez points his massive gun in his face.

Maya finds the exit -- bursts through out into the hot sun.

EXT. NEW LAS VEGAS STRIP - DAY

Maya runs full-tilt down the sidewalk.

Can see the Eiffel Tower in the distance.

Rodriguez flies out through the casino doors -- people stop and stare at the gun he's swinging around.

INT. AEV - DAY

Crawford struggles to get the AEV turned around.

CRAWFORD

I can't get --

KAREN

-- don't stop!

She pushes the gun into his neck harder.

KAREN

Go on the sidewalk --

The AEV rolls over the top of an empty compact CAR, SMASHING it flat into the pavement --

-- going forward onto the sidewalk, people jumping and dodging every which way.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Chaos erupts as the massive AEV truck rolls down the sidewalk at high speed -- some people get out of the way, some don't.

Crawford veers the AEV back onto the strip -- crushing an unsuspecting motorist in the process.

INT. AEV - DAY

Crawford finds a small headset under his butt on the seat.

Manages to put it in his left ear without Karen noticing.

Karen holds an overhead hand rail -- trying to keep the gun steady on his neck -- watching the traffic.

Crawford flips a switch on the dashboard.

CRAWFORD

Rodriguez!

Startled for a moment -- Karen doesn't see the headset.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Running at full speed, Rodriguez touches a finger to his own headset.

RODRIGUEZ

Commander?

INT. AEV - DAY

Crawford turns away from Karen -- shouting.

Crawford

Kill that jammer, get the disc!

Karen SMACKS the back of his HEAD with the butt of her gun -- knocking the headset out of his ear.

Crawford yells in pain, struggles to keep control of AEV.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

RODRIGUEZ

Yes, sir.

He stops running and raises his GUN -- aiming at Maya -- FIRES off several rounds --

Maya almost trips at the sound of his GUNFIRE --

-- panic sweeps through the crowd on the sidewalk around her.

EXT. PARIS HOTEL - EIFFEL TOWER - DAY

The Ultravox crew's satellite truck (similar to Flux/Net truck, but with different call letters) waits, idling.

INT. ULTRAVOX TRUCK - DAY

A young woman and man in their early twenties: INK and PACKET, Flow hackers huddled around a video screen --

-- watching the images from the Strip massacre.

INK

I have a bad feeling about this.

BURN, the teenage driver behind the wheel -- sees Maya running down the sidewalk towards them.

He wears a T-shirt with the slogan: "Got Habeas Corpus?"

BURN

Look! On the right --

Packet switches on the truck's side view camera to another screen -- they all see Maya running down the sidewalk.

INK

You think it's --

PACKET

Let's find out --

Ink slides open the side door.

She peeks out -- only to be met with a hail of bullets from Rodriguez's machine gun.

BURN

Sheeee--it!

Maya ducks bullets -- as she dives into truck.

Ink slams the door shut -- Maya rolls over, catching her breath.

MAYA

Ultravox?

PACKET

The one and only!

INK

Adrenochrome?

Maya nods.

PACKET

Burn -- hit it!

Burn stomps on the gas, BURNING RUBBER -- peels away from the hotel driveway into traffic.

Rodriguez FIRES at the truck with all he's got -- innocent bystanders drop like flies.

Several casino SECURITY GUARDS in black suits appear --

-- they spread out around him -- pull out automatic weapons from under their suit jackets.

Rodriguez turns around and faces them -- his gun happens to be aimed at them --

-- after an eternal second of surprise -- the guards OPEN FIRE -- killing him, a gruesome spectacle.

Tourists and families with young children freeze on the sidewalk -- watching the scene unfold in shock and horror.

Crowd gathers around body of Rodriguez laying in a pool of blood on the sidewalk.

Security Guards keep the pedestrians back, as police cars and ambulances arrive on the scene.

SECURITY GUARD

(to crowd)

It's all over. The terrorist is dead. Please go back to gambling.

In the background, the AEV can be seen driving by.

INT. AEV - DAY

Crawford and Karen see Rodriguez on the sidewalk, dead.

CRAWFORD

That's just great, Karen. More dead bodies.

KAREN

Hey Watson, did our agency ever take our META data drives retail?

CRAWFORD

You're kidding, right?

KAREN

Trent told me I could pick one up  
at Radio Shack.

Crawford turns to her, surprised.

CRAWFORD

You've talked to Trent?

She laughs, smiles at catching him up.

Crawford shakes his head, his ears burning.

KAREN

What the hell happened Crawford?  
Trent won't play nice with you  
anymore?

CRAWFORD

He's got a serious screw loose.

KAREN

I'll bet he hasn't sold out his  
integrity yet --

Crawford's ready to blow his top.

Karen pushes the gun in his neck -- pulling back the hammer.

KAREN

Drive to META-23.

CRAWFORD

META-23? What the hell for?

KAREN

That's where Trent will go once he  
has the disc.

Perched in the passenger seat, Karen keeps the gun aimed at  
him, her injured arm lays in her lap.

EXT. NEW LAS VEGAS STRIP - DAY

The Ultravox truck turns off strip, speeding down a side  
street.

INT. ULTRAVOX TRUCK - DAY

Similar to the Adrenochrome truck interior, only with a touch  
of ancient Vegas kitsch décor.

Maya regards everyone staring at her in turn -- while trying to catch her breath.

MAYA  
I'm -- Maya.

INK  
Ink. This is Packet. Up front is  
Burn.

Burn smiles at her with a face full of sparkling teeth.

BURN  
Where to, Ink?

Maya fights being overwhelmed by shock.

INK  
Hang on, Burn.

PACKET  
We saw the attack on the Flow.

Packet offers her a bottle of hooch -- she takes a sip.

MAYA  
You found Trent Taylor?

INK  
We have one slim lead.

MAYA  
Where is it from?

PACKET  
Came through the Flow. Someone  
going by the name Univac.

MAYA  
The Flow? You think it's legit?

PACKET  
The handle is not on any Flux/Net  
crew list -- yet they knew we were  
searching for Trent Taylor.

MAYA  
How can we be sure it's not a mole?  
What info did they pass on?

INK  
Tracked your guy to 2011 Main  
Street #101, under the alias  
Winston Smith.

MAYA

Okay, Burn -- you hear that?

Burn shoots a glance at Ink, she nods.

BURN

Affirmative.

MAYA

I need...to lie down for a minute.

Maya succumbs to shock, collapsing on the deck.

Ink and Packet help lift her onto a bunk, putting some rolled up blankets behind her head as a pillow.

Maya forces her eyes closed, holding back tears.

CUT TO:

FLOW COMMERCIAL

A dazzling F|A|N network logo animates on screen -- this one stylized for entertainment, not the news.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Don't miss the debut this Friday of  
the latest reality show sensation:  
Corral the Crazies!

Quick cuts: teams of hunters -- from 'all walks of life', packing gear and guns, their excitement building.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Join six teams as they venture into  
the Terminal Zone and round up  
those darn Crazies still on the  
loose -- in the dark!

Quick cuts: security gate of Terminal Zone perimeter fence, teams race in and on a wild variety of custom-made vehicles.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Not only are they having fun, but  
they're doing their part to help  
save humanity!

Quick cuts: like cowboy's rounding up zombies -- diseased and disfigured Crazies are cornered, captured and hog-tied.

Last shot: a young child Crazie emerging from shadows in dramatic slow motion.

A cheesy laser beam effect slashes the image in half and the Flux/Net logo appears.

Quick cuts: same fence location -- daylight, construction workers extending height of fence.

FLUX/NET (V.O.)  
 "Corral the Crazies" is right.  
 What FAN isn't telling you is  
 Congress just approved funding for  
 expanding the Terminal Zone  
 containment fence, instead of using  
 that money for helping radiation  
 victims still in need of dire  
 medical treatment.

INT. TRENT'S CONDO - EVENING

The Flux/Net commercial hack continues, on large video screen in corner.

Quick cuts: military security stationed on towers shoot at random, rabid Crazies who charge the fence.

FLUX/NET (V.O.)  
 The crazies we really need to  
 corral are the so-called leaders  
 who are turning our once proud  
 country into the fascist state it  
 has become.

Quick cuts: clips of various politicians, caught in compromising positions -- faces freeze-framed --

FLUX/NET (V.O.)  
 This REALITY BREAK has been brought  
 to you by Flux/Net. Caveat Emptor.  
 Remember: Truth is the Safest Lie.

-- culminating with Corporate Minister Spencer, his pants literally falling down around his ankles.

Trent laughs.

TRENT  
 Good one! Those damn anonymous,  
 Flux/Net kids...

He goes back to studying a wiring diagram on screen.

TRENT

What about patching the subcarrier through the Clarke satellite?

UNIVAC

You will need to re-align the roof dish before we can test it.

TRENT

Settings?

UNIVAC

Elevation 66 degrees. Azimuth 85 degrees.

He digs through a desk drawer, finds screwdriver.

ENIAC

Trent, you really should affix a motor to the elevation adjustment on the antenna dish, so we --

TRENT

I know, Eni, I know. Why don't you find a way to rig one and we'll do it, okay?

Goes out the door -- locking all the locks.

EXT. CONDO - ROOF - EVENING

Trent props a brick in door to keep it open.

Goes to a small consumer satellite dish -- changes the elevation settings with screwdriver.

A giant neon advertisement sign baths him in pink light.

Over the ledge, he sees the Ultravox truck driving up the street to condo entrance.

One person gets out (Maya), goes inside.

The truck drives off down the street, parks.

Trent frowns, tightens the screws on the dish -- jogs back to the stairwell.

INT. TRENT'S CONDO - EVENING

Trent locks the door -- runs inside.

## BEDROOM

Goes to a closet -- digs under pile of clothes to find safe.

Dials it opens -- takes out an automatic handgun.

Loads ammo clip, puts another clip in his back pocket.

Closes safe and runs out.

## CONDO

Trent types on Univac's keyboard, holding the gun.

TRENT

Uni, can you run the subcarrier  
test again, please?

UNIVAC

Yes, Trent. Working.

A knock on the door.

Not what Trent wanted to hear.

ENIAC

Are you expecting someone, Trent?

TRENT

No. Guys, please stay quiet.

He puts an eye up to the peephole.

Sees Maya staring at him.

TRENT

Who is it?

MAYA

Winston Smith?

TRENT

What do you want?

MAYA

I'm looking for Trent Taylor.

Trent clicks off the safety.

TRENT

You have the wrong room.

MAYA

I have a disc from Karen Drake.

Trent opens the electronic locks in the door -- hand on the door knob.

Jerks it open -- grabs Maya with one arm, pulls her inside -- aims gun at her head.

Kicks the door closed behind him.

TRENT

What makes you think --

MAYA

I recognize you from Karen's photo.

Trent recognizes her, surprised and confused.

TRENT

Madeleine -- Burdick? I thought you were dead.

MAYA

Mr. Taylor -- I don't have any weapons. Flux/Net does not believe in violence as a --

Giving her the once-over, he lowers the gun.

TRENT

Save it -- I wrote that crummy speech. Sometimes bullets speak louder than words.

MAYA

Right, and what about actions? Here, look at this --

Maya reaches into her boot -- Trent aims gun at her again.

MAYA

HOLD ON! The disc. I'm going to give you the disc --

She retrieves disc -- holds it up.

Trent takes it from her, drops to his knees, astonished.

TRENT

META... Karen Drake is alive?

Tears come to his eyes.

MAYA

We found her by chance up in the Zone. She's looking for you.

Maya kneels beside him.

MAYA

She said you would be able to crack  
the data off this disc.

TRENT

Where is she?

Trent stands up, getting a hold of himself.

MAYA

We were attacked by a B.S.I. death  
squad on the Vegas Strip. If she's  
still alive, they must have her.

Trent sprints over to his computers.

TRENT

Uni, Eni -- search all FAN News on  
the Flow broadcasts this morning,  
look for any B.S.I. actions --

ENIAC & UNIVAC

(in unison)

Searching...

TRENT

Put it on the big screen.  
(to Maya)  
Why were B.S.I. after you?

MAYA

We followed them on a lead, up to  
the Zone -- they came after us on  
the way back down.

UNIVAC

Rolling clips broadcast live from  
the strip this morning, Trent.

Video images on large screen in corner are rewinding through  
F|A|N broadcasts --

-- stops, plays forward -- showing helicopter views from over  
the strip, the AEV attack aftermath.

MAYA

That's it! There's our truck!

ON VIDEO SCREEN Karen can be seen standing over Crawford --  
she shoots Gibson as he steps off the AEV --

TRENT

Karen...

He also notices --

TRENT  
Crawford!

MAYA  
He killed my partner, Eldritch...

ON VIDEO SCREEN Crawford gets up, Karen pushes him at gunpoint into the AEV -- vehicle drives away.

TRENT  
That's enough, Uni -- Eni, feed me coordinates for META-23.

Maya grabs Trent's hand holding the disc.

MAYA  
Agent Drake told me proof of my father's assassination is on this disc. Can you help me get the data off?

TRENT  
No, I can't.

MAYA  
You can't?! But she said you had engineered the systems --

TRENT  
I did. That equipment is still classified.

Univac interrupts.

ENIAC  
Trent, I'm feeding the location into your on-board G.P.S. chip --

Trent puts a finger to temple, nods.

TRENT  
Thanks, Eni. We have to get inside a META facility to read it.

MAYA  
You have a retinal screen implant?

Trent pulls his earlobe forward -- pointing to scar.

TRENT  
Still in beta. Primitive, but it works.

MAYA  
Hardcore.

Uni interrupts the conversation.

UNIVAC  
Trent, that elevation adjustment works. All systems are now set for the I.S.A./E.U./G-17 action.

TRENT  
Excellent, Uni. Keep that on your calendar. Quick change of plans right now.

MAYA  
Uni?

UNIVAC  
Speaking, yes?

Trent hates having to explain it.

TRENT  
She's Uni and he's Eni. Univac and Eniac. Get it?

MAYA  
Univac...?

Maya grabs Trent's arm, uneasy.

MAYA  
We got a tip on your location from someone calling themselves Univac.

Trent does a double-take at Univac.

TRENT  
Um, excuse me? Univac?

ENIAC  
Trent, you can bet Univac has gone rogue again.

UNIVAC  
I didn't have a choice. Flux/Net had critical data for its founder.

MAYA  
Its founder?!

Maya turns to him in shock -- Trent doesn't want to take credit for anything.

TRENT  
That's a bit of a stretch, Uni.  
(to Maya)  
Let's just say my little acts of  
defiance took on a life of its own.

UNIVAC  
The father of Flux/Net is being far  
too modest --

ENIAC  
Flux/Net is well on its way to  
becoming the true vox populi --

TRENT  
Guys...

He lays gun on the desk.

TRENT  
I knew something went terribly  
wrong when your father was killed,  
but I couldn't prove it.

Trent holds disc up like a holy artifact, reflecting on what  
its existence might mean.

TRENT  
This is why I began -- what came to  
be known as Flux/Net. To broadcast  
this one true moment.

MAYA  
What do we do?

Trent hands the disc back to Maya.

TRENT  
Find Karen.

MAYA  
Why are you giving this to --

TRENT  
In case I get killed, that's why.

Maya slides the disc back inside her boot.

Trent rummages through a desk drawer -- finds a portable  
media drive.

TRENT  
Take this.

MAYA

What for?

TRENT

To hold the decrypted file.

Peeking out from under a pile of papers -- a photo of Karen.

He slides it out -- it's the same photo we've seen before:

Karen posing between Trent and Crawford -- in happier times, perhaps. The complete picture.

TRENT

Truth is the safest lie...

He slips photo into a shirt pocket.

TRENT

I have a hunch where she might be taking Crawford.

Trent picks up the gun, digs in another drawer for something.

Maya notices a mark on his neck.

MAYA

You have a scar there --

TRENT

Just some crazy...

MAYA

I cut a chip out of Karen's neck in the same spot.

TRENT

META. Kept track of us like dogs. I'm not their slave anymore...

EXT. META-23 BUNKER - NIGHT

Desert outside of New Las Vegas.

A cyclone fence surrounds a plain, concrete building.

AEV drives up dirt road to security gate, illuminated by halogen lights.

INT. AEV - NIGHT

Karen keeps the gun pushed into Crawford's neck.

KAREN  
Anyone on duty?

CRAWFORD  
How should I know?

Crawford slows down as they approach the gate.

KAREN  
What are you doing! Speed up!

CRAWFORD  
Oh, come on --

She pushes the gun into his neck harder.

He steps on accelerator -- AEV leaps forward and SMASHES through the gate.

Crawford SKIDS to a stop next to entrance door.

CRAWFORD  
Satisfied?

KAREN  
Shut up.

Dust settles around the AEV.

Karen watches the entrance with anticipation.

Nobody comes running out -- no alarms go off.

KAREN  
So much for a secure location.

CRAWFORD  
Budget cuts.

KAREN  
Get up.

CRAWFORD  
How's your arm?

Karen doesn't react -- motions him forward with gun.

He opens the back hatch -- they jump down to the ground.

EXT. META-23 BUNKER - NIGHT

They go to an entry box next to door.

Karen points at it with gun.

KAREN

Go ahead.

Crawford lifts the lid on the box, revealing a hand print scanner.

He doesn't want to cooperate.

KAREN

DO IT!

She raises the gun -- aims at Crawford's head.

He places hand on scanner -- it comes to life, a white beam moves over his hand.

LOCKS GROAN and turn -- the door slides open.

KAREN

Move.

They go inside, door closing behind them.

INT. META-23 BUNKER

Karen pushes Crawford over to sealed doors set in the concrete floor.

She pushes a button on control panel, the hatch doors open, revealing the access shaft gantry's metal grill deck below.

KAREN

Go.

INT. META-23 BUNKER - ACCESS SHAFT

Looks similar to META-13, going down several stories.

Except for one new detail -- a metal-frame box elevator attached to a wall.

KAREN

What do you know. Progress.

Crawford shrugs.

Karen presses button, bringing up the elevator.

CRAWFORD

What are we doing, Karen? Have you been brainwashed by a bunch of dumb Flux/Net terrorist kids?

KAREN

I want the truth behind what Frank and I witnessed. That was our job once, wasn't it?

CRAWFORD

Don't act so innocent, Karen.

KAREN

Coup d'état?

CRAWFORD

This was not about politics, just business. Burdick was going to sell our soul to the U.N. That's why we had to dismantle it.

KAREN

Dismantle the U.N.? By murdering Burdick in cold blood?

CRAWFORD

And getting rid of the liberal left coast as well in one fell swoop -- Jesus, it was beautiful!

The elevator arrives.

Karen motions him in with gun.

ACCESS SHAFT ELEVATOR

KAREN

What was the purpose of my op with Frank in Meta-13?

Crawford

Insurance -- in case our operation went south. But it didn't.

KAREN

How do you figure?

CRAWFORD

You've seen the footage. We'd just spin in another direction.

KAREN

So now what -- the public doesn't have the freedom to choose their leaders anymore?

CRAWFORD

Did they ever? What happened to you, Karen? Why have you turned against us?

Crawford steals a glance at her gun.

KAREN

Abandonment does not make the heart grow fonder, Crawford. My god, Frank worshipped you...

CRAWFORD

Frank is a pussy, I mean... Was.

Karen frowns in disgust at Crawford's cavalier attitude.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - NIGHT

The Ultravox truck races down dirt road, headlights off.

INT. ULTRAVOX TRUCK - NIGHT

Trent and Maya ride in the cab, while Burn drives.

Ink and Packet crouch behind them.

TRENT

There it is.

They see the AEV parked next to building.

BURN

Are we late to the party?

TRENT

Standard issue AEV.

MAYA

That's the B.S.I. vehicle.

PACKET

Looks deserted.

TRENT

Looks don't mean anything. Am I the only one here with a weapon?

Everyone glances at Trent like he's wacko.

Ink locks a tiny camera onto a wrist mount -- Packet jacks her into the console.

INK  
Here's my fucking weapon.

TRENT  
Great. Be sure to duck if someone  
comes at you with one of these.

He pulls out his automatic handgun -- Maya frowns, as the others recoil at the sight of it.

EXT. META-23 BUNKER - NIGHT

Ultravox truck drives over smashed fence, stopping next to the massive AEV.

INT. ULTRAVOX TRUCK - NIGHT

TRENT  
Burn -- turn around and keep the  
engine running.

BURN  
You got it, Trent.

Trent goes to side door, Maya right behind him.

Ink holds the door ready to open it -- Burn and Packet watch them with anticipation.

INK  
You sure you don't want us to come?

TRENT  
Believe me, less is more.

PACKET  
Good luck.

MAYA  
Thanks.

TRENT  
(to Maya)  
Ready?

She nods.

Ink slides open door -- Trent and Maya jump out.

EXT. META-23 BUNKER - NIGHT

Trent and Maya jog to entrance.

He opens the scanner lid -- puts his hand on the glass.  
The white light moves over his hand -- nothing happens.

TRENT

Crap.

MAYA

What's wrong?

TRENT

Going to plan B.

MAYA

Plan B?

Trent opens his jacket -- pulls out two small blocks of plastic explosive.

TRENT

Fireworks.

He slaps explosives on the door -- embeds a tiny wireless trigger on each.

Grabs Maya by the shoulders to run -- they take cover behind the AEV.

The Ultravox truck turns around facing the entrance gate, idling.

MAYA

Is this safe?

TRENT

We'll find out.

He pulls out his tablet, taps a button -- the EXPLOSIVES DETONATE with violent force --

-- blowing open a hole large enough to walk through.

INT. ULTRAVOX TRUCK - NIGHT

Everyone hits the deck as the SHOCK WAVE from the BLAST rocks the Ultravox truck.

BURN

It's showtime, baby!

INT. META-23 BUNKER

ACCESS SHAFT

Elevator reaches bottom, Karen pushes Crawford out -- right when the BLAST HITS -- catching them off guard.

Crawford cracks her face hard with his elbow, pushing her to the floor -- wrestles the gun away from her.

She tries to get up -- he kicks her back down to cement floor with his boot.

CRAWFORD

The day of reckoning was upon us,  
and we did what we had to do. If  
it wasn't for Trent's pitiful band  
of media pirates...

Crawford grabs one of her ankles, drags her to the massive metal doors as --

-- Trent runs across the gantry up above, punching the elevator button -- he leans over the railing, sees them.

TRENT

KAREN!

Karen cranes her neck up -- she can't believe her eyes.

KAREN

TRENT!

Crawford aims gun at him -- FIRES.

Trent jumps back from the ledge -- pushes Maya back against the wall.

Crawford pushes a button -- opens the heavy door into the META facility -- drags Karen through.

CONTROL ROOM

As seen before, only it appears to be brand new.

CRAWFORD

Let's have a little fun, shall we?

Crawford drops Karen's leg, kicks her stomach -- she doubles over, crying out in pain.

He goes to a familiar control panel door -- "Emergency Destruction System."

Opens it -- pushes buttons to engage destruct sequence.

He backs away -- smiling at Karen.

CRAWFORD

Gotta go shoot some rats in a cage  
first -- be right back!

He gives her another nasty kick before he darts out.

Karen clutching her stomach, swearing -- forces herself to  
get up -- switches off the destruct system.

ACCESS SHAFT

Crawford runs in -- FIRING at the elevator cage as it  
descends --

Trent takes a SHOT at Crawford -- hits him in the arm,  
knocking him down.

Crawford rolls -- takes another SHOT at the elevator as it  
reaches bottom.

HALLWAY

Crawford curses -- holding his bloody arm, runs --

-- Trent appears at the access shaft doorway, with Maya  
crouched low behind him --

-- he FIRES off another SHOT, the bullet nicks the door frame  
near Crawford's head --

-- Crawford ducks and FIRES a wild SHOT -- before spinning  
around into the control room.

TRENT

WATSON!

Trent runs at him FIRING several SHOTS -- Maya covers her  
ears from all the noise.

CONTROL ROOM

Crawford steps in -- Karen holds a CHAIR over her head  
waiting -- brings it CRASHING down on his back.

He goes down hard -- she makes a dive at his gun -- Crawford  
recovers, wrestles it away from her --

-- manages to get his arm around her neck into a choke hold --  
shoves gun underneath her chin.

TRENT'S POV

Through his retinal eye display -- Crawford's arm tightens  
around Karen's neck --

BACK TO SCENE

TRENT

Crawford.

Trent stands in doorway -- gun aimed to fire.

Crawford moves behind Karen using her as a shield --

Trent hesitates --

Crawford FIRES at Trent -- hitting him in the shoulder -- he spins backward -- gun flies out of his hand.

KAREN

TRENT!

Karen struggles in Crawford's grip -- sinks her teeth into his forearm --

-- Crawford screams -- Karen elbows him hard in groin with her good arm --

-- he drops gun, she catches it -- and trips him off his feet.

Karen towers over Crawford -- aiming gun at his head, pulling back hammer.

Crawford rolls over, laughing.

KAREN

You sick son of a --

Pulls TRIGGER -- CLICK. No more ammo!

CRAWFORD

Ahhhh, too bad!

He gets up to lunge at her.

Maya appears in the doorway holding Trent's gun -- aimed right at Crawford.

He stares at her for a frozen moment.

MAYA

Too bad is right.

She FIRES. The recoil pushes her back hard, shocking her.

The bullet hits Crawford in the chest -- he falls back flat.

Trent gets up, takes gun from Maya -- holding a hand against his bleeding wound.

KAREN  
You're bleeding --

Karen and Trent manage to hold each other upright in an awkward embrace.

TRENT  
It went through, I think. You?

He look at her limp arm.

KAREN  
Might be broken.

Crawford glares at Maya, spitting blood, clutching his chest.

Maya stares at him in disgust -- but also in horror at what she has done.

KAREN  
Don't help him.

Trent  
(to Maya)  
The disc.

Shaking, Maya pulls the disc from her boot.

TRENT  
Sit here.

Motions her over to a workstation, he powers up the system.

Karen points to the META stream drive.

Maya inserts disc, drive indicator light illuminates.

KAREN  
Are you sure you want to see this?

MAYA  
I have to know how they died.

TRENT  
The truth shall set you free.

Karen leans over Maya, types commands.

The monitor displays:

Loading META:OP/3811 stream data  
into memory.....EOF.

TRENT  
(to Maya)  
Backup drive.

Maya pulls out the portable drive, hands it to Karen.

Karen plugs the cable into a port on the console.

Transfers the META stream to the portable deck.

ON VIDEO SCREEN

Surveillance footage of President Burdick being killed plays fast-forward then fast-reverse.

MAYA  
My god!

Monitor flashes: Transfer complete.

Recording light on the portable deck goes out.

TRENT  
Don't unplug it yet. Go back to  
the head -- play it normal speed.  
Something is wrong.

He traces the video screen -- pointing out the black edges around the frame.

TRENT  
This frame has been masked with a  
digital overlay.

KAREN  
You think so?

TRENT  
And scaled, I'm positive.

KAREN  
Scaled? Trent -- I've run it a  
million times and --

He leans over Maya, types in some commands.

TRENT  
Prototype, it was in beta when --

Maya watches them working together, fascinated.

KAREN  
What are you talking about?

TRENT

This --

The edges of the image scale back -- revealing a black mask around the frame edge --

TRENT

-- and this.

Trent's fingers dance over the keyboard, keying commands.

The black mask flickers, disappears -- revealing a much wider angle of view.

TRENT

Play it back -- slow it down.

With the frame mask gone -- and in slow motion, the gunman turning around under the camera --

-- his face becomes visible -- it's Crawford Watson!

And on the opposite side of the frame, Corporate Minister Spencer can be seen directing the action --

-- as both men leave after they have both committed the murder of the President.

MAYA

It's him!

Maya jumps up and start kicking Crawford, crying and yelling obscenities.

Crawford grunts -- attempts to laugh.

CRAWFORD

Proudest day of my life.

Karen leans in close to Trent.

KAREN

Never saw that trick in training.

TRENT

Never thought it would get used.  
Overwrite that disc.

Karen sends the file to the backup drive again.

The monitor screen reads: Transfer complete.

Karen tears Maya away from Crawford.

Trent unplugs the portable deck, hands it to Maya.

Karen ejects the META stream disc, slides it into her zippered jacket pocket.

KAREN

Wait.

She goes to the Emergency Destruction System panel -- and engages the countdown again.

Emergency lights switch on flooding the room and the loud ALARM begins to wail.

Trent smiles, impressed.

TRENT

Sure you want to do that?

Karen doesn't hesitate -- sneers at Crawford.

KAREN

(to Crawford)

Consider it my resignation.

Maya doesn't get it, nods to control panel.

TRENT

Major fireworks.

Karen reaches out to hit the big red button -- stops and turns to Maya.

KAREN

You do it. This was only supposed to be used in a time of war.

Maya steps up to panel -- Karen points to button.

KAREN

I think this qualifies.

Maya presses the button.

DESTRUCT SYSTEM (V.O.)

(booming)

The emergency destruct system is now activated. You have five minutes to evacuate. Countdown to self-destruct commencing now.

MAYA

Oh shit!

Crawford spits blood, tries to pull himself up.

Karen closes the control panel door.

KAREN

Let's roll.

Maya and Trent run out -- Karen pauses at the doorway.

She turns to face Crawford -- removes her wristwatch and throws it at him, turns her back and leaves.

CRAWFORD

Karen...

ACCESS SHAFT

Trent and Maya hold the elevator for Karen -- she jumps in, pushing the button to go up.

The destruct ALARM echoes up and down shaft.

KAREN

(to Trent)

Has the destruct system ever been tested before?

TRENT

Not to my knowledge -- we're gonna find out pretty damn quick!

Trent gives Maya the key card to his condo.

TRENT

Maya -- will you please take care of Uni and Eni for a while?

MAYA

What? Why? Aren't you -- ?

TRENT

We've got a nice little disruption planned for the summit next week in Paris. I think you should add that into the mix --

He gestures to the backup deck she's holding.

MAYA

You want me to run your action?

TRENT

Blast the summit -- jam the Flow!

MAYA

Will we meet again?

KAREN

Don't worry Maya, we'll find you.

The elevator hits the gantry at top -- door slides open, they all make a break for it.

EXT. META-23 BUNKER - SUNRISE

Karen and Trent run to the AEV.

Maya makes a mad dash to the Ultravox truck.

INT. ULTRAVOX TRUCK - SUNRISE

Ink and Packet wait in the front watching.

In the driver's seat, Burn spots them coming out.

BURN

Flux/Net has left the building!

He REVS the ENGINE, puts it into gear.

Ink and Packet move to the back.

IN THE BACK CABIN

Ink opens door -- Maya dives inside.

MAYA

GO, GO, GO! It's going to self destruct!

BURN

No shit?

Burn stomps the gas pedal to the floor, WHEELS SCREECHING.

Everyone falls back -- grabbing something to hold on to.

EXT. META-23 BUNKER - SUNRISE

The Ultravox truck heads off north.

INT. AEV - SUNRISE

Karen and Trent scramble inside the cab.

Trent drops in passenger seat -- holding a hand tight on his bloody shoulder.

Karen gets behind wheel -- injured arm making her wince.

TRENT

You know how to drive this thing?

KAREN  
Do I have a choice?

They exchange a glance, no time to smile -- only panic.

She finds the ignition, the AEV rumbles to life -- REVS the ENGINE, shifting gears.

TRENT  
Punch it!

KAREN  
Hold on.

Karen slams down on the gas -- drives straight through the metal cyclone fence heading south.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - SUNRISE

The rising sun gleams over the META-23 facility roof.

The Ultravox truck screams away north.

While the AEV rumbles onward south.

INT. META-23 BUNKER - CONTROL ROOM

The ALARM echoes painfully loud -- the emergency flood lights burning bright.

Crawford tries crawling up wall to reach control panel.

DESTRUCT SYSTEM (V.O.)  
Self-destruct will now commence in  
T-minus five - four - three - two -

He slides down, leaving a thick trail of blood.

INT. ULTRAVOX TRUCK - SUNRISE

Maya, Ink and Packet crowd around video screen -- the META facility recedes into distance.

After a moment -- a resounding MEGA EXPLOSION lights up the morning sky.

BURN  
Sweet Jesus...

The event humbles everyone, silent.

Maya snaps out of it -- triumphant, she holds up portable media deck for all to see.

INK  
What is it?

MAYA  
The truth -- behind my parent's murder.

The importance of her news hits them all -- destiny having brought them to this moment.

MAYA  
We need to upload it right NOW!

She pops out disc from deck -- Packet takes it.

PACKET  
Let's do it.

Ink goes to her workstation, initiates satellite uplink.

Packet slots disc, loads it into system.

INK  
I'm locked and loaded, Packet.

PACKET  
(to Maya)  
Are we uploading this file raw?

Maya nods, tears coming to her eyes.

MAYA  
Jam the Flow.

Packet trips the switch -- they all watch the progress indicator as the stream uploads.

INT. AEV - SUNRISE

Karen drives with one arm -- the other limp in her lap.

TRENT  
Damn it. We need help.

Trent slouches down in seat, studying his bloody wreck of a shoulder.

Karen wiggles out of her jacket, trying to be careful with her broken arm -- swearing up and down.

KAREN  
Got any ideas?

TRENT  
I do. Drive south.

KAREN  
I am.

He watches her, a sense of relief in his eyes -- he winces, holding his bloody shoulder.

Karen struggles to pull the Flux/Net flyer from shirt pocket, drops it in Trent's lap.

He opens it, laughs.

TRENT  
I thought you were dead.

KAREN  
I was. Can you get us off the grid?

TRENT  
I can.

She almost smiles.

EXT. NEW LAS VEGAS STRIP - SUNRISE

A giant video wall board on the side of a building plays the clip of President Burdick's assassination.

Video banner graphics streaming above and below clip read "FLUX/NET BREAKING NEWS" and "The Whole World is Watching."

Tourists and passersby on the sidewalk look up at the images unfolding in horror and amazement.

INT. CABINET MEETING ROOM - DAY

Around a large wooden table, Corporate Minister Spencer and all of his cronies freak out.

They watch the Flux/Net broadcast with absolute terror.

Corporate Minister Spencer lets out a blood curdling scream, pounding table with his fists.

SPENCER  
CRAAAAWFOOOOORD!!!

He picks up a telephone, punches in numbers --

SPENCER

What happened to the strike?!

-- everyone in the room is running around like chickens with their heads cut off, chaos erupting --

One guy opens a window and jumps out...

INT. AEV - SUNRISE

Trent watches the Flux/Net broadcast on his tablet.

TRENT

Look at this.

He leans over, shows it to her -- Karen smiles.

KAREN

The revolution will be televised...

Trent's smile fades, he squints at the sky.

TRENT

Do you hear that?

Karen nods, turns to rear view mirror.

KAREN

I did. God damn --

EXT. DESERT ROAD - SUNRISE

A MISSILE comes STREAKING down out of the sky -- heading straight for the Ultravox truck.

INT. ULTRAVOX TRUCK - SUNRISE

Everyone is yelling and jumping for joy -- all video screens show various responses to the President's murder.

Maya is fast asleep on a bunk, oblivious to the noise going on around her. Peace at last.

INT. AEV - SUNRISE

Karen watches in her rear view mirror as the MISSILE slams into the Ultravox truck -- EXPLODING on impact.

KAREN  
NOOOOOOO!

The SHOCK WAVE throws Trent forward -- hits his head on the dashboard -- falls limp on floorboards.

Karen tightens her grip on steering wheel, riding out blast.

KAREN  
TRENT! Are you all right?

Nudges his body with her foot -- notices more than his shoulder is really messed up --

-- his coat falls back, revealing an upper chest wound below shoulder, bleeding bad.

Karen grimaces -- fear turning into anger.

Looks back in rear view mirror -- the Ultravox truck appears to be obliterated, a black smoking wreck.

KAREN  
Trent!

A light on the dashboard begins flashing, a high-pitched WHISTLE goes off -- indicating an incoming communication.

She sees it -- tries to smash it with heel of her boot, the whistle keeps WAILING.

Karen's eyes well up with tears as she bears down hard on the gas pedal -- speeding faster through the desert.

Reaches over to zippered jacket pocket -- manages to pull out the META stream disc.

Clenches it with her teeth, drops jacket.

Checks view in rear view mirror -- nothing to see.

Takes disc out of her mouth -- glances at Trent.

Hits her window switch with an elbow, the glass slides down -- she flings disc out window.

Shadows cast by the rising sun play over Karen's face as she contemplates the distant horizon.

Determined.

CUT TO BLACK

THE END