

BINARY

"PILOT"

Written by

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The America you knew is gone.

Various shots of rubble from collapsed buildings, HOMELESS CHILDREN glare down the barrel as they huddle for warmth, a dog searches for their owner. The only thing missing is a Sarah McLachlan song to *really* drive this home.

(A voice-over erupts with the masculine energy of Don LaFontaine, and thanks to AI Deep-Fake tech-- it's him!)

VOICE-OVER

They hit us hard. Harder than we've
ever been hit before. The days of
"Are you in or are you out?" are
over.

A flashlight appears. WE TRACK to find a futuristic authority figure. This is an OCCUPATION ENFORCEMENT AGENT.

VOICE-OVER (CONT'D)

And guess what? Everyone. Is. In.
We all have a role. We will
rebuild. You will rebuild.

The Agent finds a POOR SOUL, cold and scared. He reaches a hand out to his brother-in-arms. When they finally clasp hands, a magical lens flare transition transports us to--

"LIVING IN AMERICA EXT. DANCE VERSION" by JAMES BROWN PLAYS.

A CONSTRUCTION WORKER (Poor Soul) carries a steel beam over his shoulder with the same bravado Schwarzenegger blessed us with in the opening scene of *Commando* (1985). Fireworks pop off in the background and flying freight cars zoom past as a technologically advanced city begins to rise via time-lapse.

VOICE-OVER (CONT'D)

Rebuild, restore, renew.
We. Are. America.

The homeless children from earlier crudely fade in behind the Hero. Arm in arm they smile-- and like the cover of an Animorphs book, the children evolve into agents: Occupation Enforcement, Population Enforcement, Robotics Assembly, etc.

VOICE-OVER (CONT'D)

Don't wait to be drafted.
Choose your occupation today.

MADDIE

(mocking)

...Don't wait to be drafted.
Choose your occupation today.

CHYRON: October 10, 2043

CLAIRE "MADDIE" MADDOX, 14, spins around on the chair in her father's office while watching television on a Holocube-- as one does in 2043. **LIONEL MADDOX**, her father, is working on equations "*Iron-Man-Style*" pinching the air and throwing numbers against a smart board. Maddie stops spinning.

MADDIE

When are they gonna change that?
They've been playing the same
commercial since I was a kid.

LIONEL

You're still a kid.

MADDIE

Hey! I mean-- when I was *little*
little.

LIONEL

What do they need to change it for?

Maddie takes a smart-ring off the desk, twists to activate, and throws numbers at a Holoboard like her father, albeit artistically. Stacked "1's" for a stem, a zero on top, and a 360-degree pattern of "3's" around the zero create a flower.

MADDIE

I dunno, it's... old?

LIONEL

Like you?

MADDIE

I mean, probably as old, right?

A bunch of tilted green "7's" make a field of grass.

LIONEL

Probably.

MADDIE

I just think it's outdated. Y'know,
very 80s.

A zero for the sun and "1's" for the rays. ASCII boredom.

LIONEL

What do you know about the 80s?

MADDIE

What do you know about the 80s?

LIONEL

Look, styles come back around every so often. The 1980s were the rage after the war, you had two sides: the people who were rebelling and the patriots.

MADDIE

What side were you on?

LIONEL

(reticent)

Well, I guess there was a third side that didn't really care.

MADDIE

I could make a better commercial.

Lionel breaks focus and turns to Maddie for the first time, acknowledging his daughter's conviction.

LIONEL

You could?

She spins in the chair again.

MADDIE

Definitely. A little research and boom. I'd make it glossy for sure.

LIONEL

(scoffs)

I don't think their vision for America lines up with *glossy*.

Lionel says glossy the way a 40-year-old says "rizz" in 2025. Maddie stops spinning, almost pukes at the *cool-dad* attempt.

MADDIE

Thanks for the encouragement, Dad.

She takes the smart-ring off, the drawing abruptly corrupts like removing a USB drive without ejecting first. Lionel stops what he's doing. He twirls the ring on his finger and the equation disappears-- a proper shut down.

LIONEL

Hey. Look at me.

A glance from Maddie.

LIONEL (CONT'D)

Who knows, by the time you're older, maybe the-- maybe the country'll be ready for art again. I used to do a little art stuff when I was your age.

MADDIE

You did?

LIONEL

It's in our blood. Nanny and Pappy, you remember. They'd talk about all the creative things they did, the people who followed them. I was gonna-- Eh, it doesn't...

Lionel digs into a hidden pocket.

MADDIE

The government, did they--

LIONEL

--Here, the vintage shop on Pico, show them this.

He hands her a PECULIAR CHIP.

MADDIE

They did, didn't they? What's the point?

Lionel forces eye contact with his daughter.

LIONEL

Don't let anyone ever tell you what you can or can not do. Not even me.

MADDIE

But isn't that against--

Lionel gently pushes her out of the room, when she turns back, he winks at her, sweetly.

3

EXT. MERCURY HQ - PROMENADE - DAY - ESTABLISHING

3

A futuristic promenade with hologram billboards, hover scooters, fully automated vehicles, vertical farms, and solar decks. One of the billboards features the charming and charismatic **CORBIN LACHES**, 40s. *"A special thank you to everyone on the front lines. - Corbin Laches, Mercury C.E.O."*

In the sky are SLEEK CARGO TRANSPORTS moving like planes. These are MERCURY MOVERS. Package delivery of the future. The "Y" in the Mercury logo is a caduceus with lightning bolts where the snakes would be. In the far, far distance are the ruins and remains of the war.

None of this is new to Maddie, she crosses the promenade and heads around the corner.

4

INT. NESTO'S ANTIQUITIES - DAY

4

Electronics, parts, guts, shrines, old computers, 8-tracks, VHS players, MacBook Pros, kindles: A museum of technology. Maddie walks in and is greeted by a small "**NEATO**" bot.

NEATO

We-We--Welcome I'm Neato. Ask me anything.

Maddie takes the chip out.

MADDIE

Uh... I have this? What do I do with it?

ERNESTO NEGRON, stocky, Puerto Rican, enters from the back, clocks the chip, and hits a button on his wrist.

NEATO

Reconnecting in 1... 2...

ERNESTO

Neato. Shut down.

Ernesto runs over and turns Neato toward the wall and takes him off the counter.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)

Sorry about that, I was testing him out. You know those old models... testy. Or-- I guess this one's before you. What you got there, lemme see.

Maddie hands Ernesto the chip.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)

Wait. No. You're Lionel's girl? Claire, right?

MADDIE

Maddie. I mean, yes, but I don't like that name.

ERNESTO

Well, Maddie, I'm 'Nesto. You see anything in the store you like, it's yours. No charge.

Maddie raises a skeptical eyebrow. "Yeah?" She starts to peruse a bit. Notices the sign, "Nesto's Antiquities."

MADDIE

Antiques would make more sense, right? Aren't antiquities supposed to be from hundreds of years ago?

ERNESTO

Not necessarily. Antiquities are generally a result of archeology, and everything in here I salvaged from the rubble of the war.

MADDIE

So, more like a technicality, huh? Walking a fine line there.

Maddie turns to Ernesto.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Dad said you have like art stuff?

Ernesto is struck. Smirks.

ERNESTO

Old school. Alright, wait here.

Ernesto grabs a basket and steps into his backroom. We follow.

5 **INT. NESTO'S ANTIQUITIES - BACK ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)** 5

A sharp contrast to the shop, everything in this room is extremely high-tech: Surveillance equipment, weapons, and a supercomputer that would make Batman jealous.

He opens a closet and fills the basket with paper, pens, crayons, and fancy colored liquid gel pens.

6 **INT. NESTO'S ANTIQUITIES - FRONT DESK - DAY** 6

The Neato Bot REACTIVATES and SPINS its head around *Exorcist* style.

NEATO POV: A fish-eyed view of Maddie spinning the chip between her fingers. ENHANCE. Zooms closer on the chip.

Nesto walks back in. Most of this plays from Neato's POV.

ERNESTO

I'd wager you've never seen a blank piece of paper.

MADDIE

Mmm... A couple of times.

Ernesto hands her the basket. Maddie lights up, she immediately goes for the gel pens. She's confused.

ERNESTO

The top. You take the top off.

She takes one and puts it to the paper. Ernesto laughs.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)

Careful now, don't waste it.

MADDIE

I'll turn it into something cool, don't worry.

Ernesto nods in approval. Maddie goes to hand the chip as payment. Ernesto immediately closes her hand.

ERNESTO

(stern)

Put that back in your pocket.

Maddie hides her hand, taken aback by Ernesto's tonal shift.

ERNESTO (CONT'D)

That chip. That goes right back to your dad, hear me? Don't show that to anyone else.

Maddie acknowledges. She goes to leave but is interrupted--

ERNESTO (CONT'D)

--Also, have your dad reach out when he's not busy.

Maddie nods and leaves. Neato watches her-- turns to Ernesto.

NEATO

It's Saturday, October 10, 2043.
The weather is--

Ernesto's face has genuine shock, he runs over to the Neato and looks for a manual off switch-- he can't find it, so he repeatedly SMASHES Neato against the wall.

NEATO (CONT'D)

Hi. I'm Neato. Ask me-- Hi. I'm
Neato. I'm--

A PHONE RINGS. Ernesto turns to a locked drawer, sweat beading. He runs over, fumbles with his keys. Opens the drawer. The drawer is empty except for two things-- a FLIP PHONE and a similar PECULIAR CHIP. Ernesto answers.

ERNESTO

Is--Is this about the Nea--

UNKNOWN

Get out of there, now! Don't grab
anything, just go!

Ernesto breaks the phone in half and scrambles. He goes back for the chip.

7 **EXT. MERCURY HQ - PROMENADE - DAY**

7

Maddie walks with her new basket of goodies. Multiple whizzing sounds get louder and **louder**. Maddie looks up.

Low angle wide behind Maddie looking up as a SHOWER of MERCURY MOVERS FALL FROM THE SKY. One is aimed straight for Lionel's office at Mercury Headquarters. A MAN SNAPS A PHOTO.

8 **INT. MERCURY HQ - LIONEL'S OFFICE - DAY**

8

Lionel is very much in his tech-zone. A phone RINGS. *The same ringtone as Nesto's phone*. Lionel slowly turns towards the sound, a panicked look. He hurries to his desk, SOMETHING catches his attention, he turns his head when--

9 **EXT. MERCURY HQ - PROMENADE - DAY**

9

Maddie drops the basket and runs towards her Dad's building as-- **CRASH!!** Maddie FLIES backwards from the impact.

CUT TO BLACK. Silence.

Maddie's heavy breaths become subtle whimpers that slowly fizzle and fade out. Only the crackles of the embers linger.

She struggles to maintain consciousness. With each blurry blink, the chaos devolves into an absurd fireworks display.

TUCSON (O.C.)

Claire! Claire!

CLEAN DISSOLVE TO:

10

I/E. POPULATION ENFORCEMENT VEHICLE - DUSK

10

CHYRON: October 10, 2053. Ten Years Later.

CLAIRE "MADDIE" MADDOX 2.0, now 24, wakes up in a huff from her nightmare. Reflections of FIREWORKS bokeh against the windshield. She looks around to find **TUCSON "TWO" LEVY**, 26, her senior officer and partner, struggling to subdue a YOUNG PREGNANT WOMAN, white. Maddie grabs her chest, sharp pain.

PREGNANT WOMAN	TUCSON
What right do you have?! What	Claire! Open the door! Ma'am
right?! Let me go! I swear to	let me do my job. Open the
God if you don't let me go!	door!

The woman, **KIMBERLEIGH**, BREAKS FREE from Tucson in a feat of adrenaline and motherly instinct. Maddie exits the vehicle and DRAWS her weapon. She sets the safety from RED to BLUE and fires a dart that pierces and TASES the woman.

The look on Maddie's face says it all. She's disgusted with herself. Tucson walks over and pats Maddie on the shoulder.

TUCSON (CONT'D)
Nice work.

MADDIE
Sorry for hanging back.

TUCSON
You needed the rest, feeling
better?

Maddie hits Tucson with a strong side eye. He gets the hint.

TUCSON (CONT'D)
She damaged my link with the car,
can you--

Maddie waves the car over with her arm, it instinctively backs up to where the pregnant woman is on the ground.

MADDIE
Door.

The door opens as they lift Kimberleigh into the POPULATION ENFORCEMENT vehicle. The two of them get in the front seats.

A long, heavy sigh from Maddie. She doesn't need to say it, we know she hates this job.

11

I/E. POPULATION ENFORCEMENT VEHICLE / CITY STREETS - DUSK 11

Aerial view of the Population Enforcement vehicle roaming the streets. Other sleek automated cars WHOOSH past. Garbage Workers load a truck with the help of a BURLY RUBBERY ROBOT. Graffiti on the buildings say "NEVER FORGET 10/10" and "CORBIN LACHES IS A MURDERER" with several digital and printed out wanted posters for Corbin Laches spread about.

TUCSON

Ten years... man. Still miss her.

Long beat.

TUCSON (CONT'D)

Wrong place, wrong time. Just walking past a building and... whoosh-- debris got her.

Maddie turns her head toward the window.

MADDIE

Plenty of us lost people that day.

TUCSON

Not trying to compare.

MADDIE

Never said you were.

TUCSON

Just solidarity.

MADDIE

(reciting a mantra)

Sorry. I'm doing it again. I, uh, I acknowledge that you have struggled as well, I-- acknowledge that you also feel pain. I acknowledge that I'm not the only one who hurts.

TUCSON

I went to a few meetings too.

MADDIE

Yeah?

TUCSON

Sure, everyone feels like they're the only one who hurts at first.

Kimberleigh starts to stir.

MADDIE

Any time I saw someone smiling or laughing after-- I just-- I thought it should have been a crime. Y'know? Look, I didn't--

KIMBERLEIGH

Please. Just let me go, I won't tell nobody. I don't wanna lose my baby-- Please!

TUCSON

I can't make those calls, Ma'am.

KIMBERLEIGH

Sure you can!

Maddie buries her head in the window.

TUCSON

Ma'am. You know the rules.

KIMBERLEIGH

And which one did I violate? Huh?! Which one?! I'm just tryna live!

TUCSON

I'm not sure which one specifically. But if you're in the system, it means you either already have two children--

KIMBERLEIGH

--I don't. No kids. Nuh uh.

TUCSON

Okay. Look, uh--

Tucson looks at the data screen for Kimberleigh's name, hoping to establish a brief connection. Brief pause.

On Screen: KIMBERLEIGH PORTER. TEN WEEKS DELINQUENT.

TUCSON (CONT'D)

Kimber-lee, right?

KIMBERLEIGH

Kimber-lay.

TUCSON (CONT'D)

Kimberleigh, look, I'm just doing my job. Perhaps you're carrying one of the many diseases the CDC is aiming to eradicate.

KIMBERLEIGH
Haven't even been to the doctor
yet, so don't believe that one!
Glad we figured it out. Let me go!

She starts kicking the door.

MADDIE
Then it's clear that you failed
your exam proving mental and
financial stability for your child.

KIMBERLEIGH
Oh, you wanna speak now?

MADDIE
Huh?

KIMBERLEIGH
Yeah, you! Buried in the window. If
you're gonna kill my kid, the least
you can do's look me in the eye.

Maddie turns around and makes eye contact with her.

KIMBERLEIGH (CONT'D)
Ohoho. And here I thought only men
were Poppies. How you live with
yourself? Goddamn sellout.

If Maddie could astroproject and punch herself, she would.

MADDIE
Divider.

The car raises a soundproof divider between them. Maddie
slinks back around and shrinks in her seat. The RINGING of
the distant "Binary Day" fireworks transitions us to...

PRELAP: Muffled SCREAMS...

12 **INT. POPULATION ENFORCEMENT HQ - DETERGENT ROOM - NIGHT** 12

Maddie leans against the far wall of the cold, metallic
"Detergent Room." In the background, Kimberleigh is strapped
to a chair with stirrups, SCREAMING-- pleading for the life
of her baby. Maddie's soul is crushed.

13 **INT. POPULATION ENFORCEMENT HQ - BULLPEN - LATER** 13

Maddie shuts down her workstation. Tucson walks over.

MADDIE
All done with the report?

TUCSON
Filed and logged. She processed?

MADDIE
(forcing the vocabulary)
Deterged and elutriated.

TUCSON
Great.

MADDIE
Now, if you'll excuse me-- I need
to go home and *elutriate myself*.

TUCSON
Hey-- Hey. Long day, how about I
get you a drink? We can call it a
"celebration of life" toast.

Maddie's about to decline when they both clock commotion from
the deeper offices.

MADDIE	TUCSON (CONT'D)
Is that...?	Goddammit. It's Moose ain't it?

They walk over for a closer look... Sure enough.

MUSTAFA "MOOSE" SUKRESHI, tall, imposing, smug, a champion
when it comes to no eye contact small talk as he scans around
you for the most opportunistic venture.

SILVIA LOPEZ, wild hair, the type you would expect to be
covered in tattoos under her uniform.

Both are clad in full Occupation Officer gear as they exit a
boardroom. Behind them is a pack of SUITS led by **DIRECTOR
XIAN MA**, 50s. If an eyelash fell on the floor, he'd pick it
up and wish to be back home in Xinjiang.

Moose clocks Tucson and gives him a knowing wink.

MOOSE
Tulsa, right?

TUCSON
Tucson.

MOOSE
Knew it was some town. Hey. No hard
feelings, right?

TUCSON

This has to stop. I'm tired of putting the work in for you guys to just come in and swoop the credit.

MOOSE

Hey, guy, if you've got a problem, you need to take it up the ladder.

Tucson turns to Director Ma, his top superior.

TUCSON

He just walks in and gets the case?

XIAN MA

She was avoiding her appointed role in society.

MOOSE

See, the moment they stop going to work-- ain't nobody care about babies no more.

MADDIE

How are any of us supposed to maintain a clearance rate when 90% of all women violating Quill Code go into hiding thinking that it'll save their child?

MOOSE

'Spose if I were you, I'd make sure my clearance rate was ten percent.

Silvia laughs. Maddie and Tucson stand defeated, Moose exits.

14

INT. BAR - NIGHT

14

A glass slams the counter. Tucson's ready for more. Maddie, who normally would be besting him, babysits her water.

TUCSON

Not drinking?

MADDIE

I'm good. No worries.

TUCSON (CONT'D)

I got it.

Before she can insist against it, he's off to the dispenser.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Tucson.

Tucson turns around.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Really. I'm good. I'm taking it easy today. If you really want, just, uh, get me a seltzer.

Tucson nods, totally gets it. The Holoscreen plays aerial coverage of a robotics facility bombing in the background.

REPORTER

Almanac Robotics is still reeling from Tuesday's bombing in Muskett by disgruntled employee Jeffrey Calloway. Thankfully, no human casualties. An official close to the company has stated that "this was a cowardly act." Displaced employees had differing opinions.

Tucson inserts his ID card, followed by a credit chip. He chooses their drinks via the on-screen options, much like those computerized coke machines at fast-food restaurants.

INTERVIEW #1

Since no real people got hurt, I can say this. Good. They treated those rubber-heads better than us. That's what they get.

A POSTER by the dispenser looks *very familiar*, it's a PHOTOGRAPH of the Mercury Movers falling with MADDIE at the center of the promenade, "NEVER FORGET 10/10" written across.

REPORTER

We're going live now to the President's 10/10 memorial event.

Maddie, preoccupied, twirls the straw in her water. Tucson sets a club soda down in front of Maddie.

TUCSON

Hey, I listened.

She smiles a half smile and takes a sip. The presentation turns to **PRESIDENT JON QUILL**, 60s, Robert Redford type.

QUILL

Today marks ten long years, but we'll never forget those lost that day. We'll never forget the joy they brought when they were with us. And we'll never forget that we are stronger having made it to today from whence we came. God bless America. Sorry for your loss.

MADDIE
(mocking)
Sorry for your loss. Unreal.

OFF Tucson's confused look.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
"Sorry for your loss." Hate it.
Everyone says it.

TUCSON
I thought he was genuine, for once.

MADDIE
He's patronizing. Sorry for your loss is like when you're at the office and you walk past someone and say, "Hi, how're you doing?" And they respond with, "How're you doing?" Neither of you answers the question. You just keep walking. It's empty. Like, don't cop out with me. Tell me what that person meant to you. Tell me how they enriched your life. How they made it better. Give me a piece of what they gave you to fill that loss. And if you didn't know them, but you feel the need to let me know that my loss affects you, just let me know what I mean to you I guess.

Tucson takes what she says to heart.

TUCSON
So basically, what I tried to do this afternoon in the car?

Maddie acknowledges the burn.

MADDIE
Okay. Okay. I deserve that. I shouldn't have interrupted you earlier. The fireworks just--

TUCSON
It's all good, I get it. I do. I just thought after four months, we should be more than just strangers.

Maddie gives Tucson a knowing look.

MADDIE
We're more than just strangers.

Maddie raises her seltzer, changing the subject.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
This is a celebration of life
toast, right? So, who we
celebrating?

Tucson sees her game and raises his glass.

TUCSON
To my aunt, Bridgette Levy. The
woman who raised me.

MADDIE
To Auntie B!

They drink.

TUCSON
I told you bout how my folks got
hooked on Nova in the '30s. Well,
Auntie B's the one who came and
scooped me so I wouldn't have to
fend in the system 'til the draft.
No kids, so they allowed it. She
was tough man, a real badass.

MADDIE	TUCSON (CONT'D)
Two...	Fell back in the system after 10/10 and badged up at 18.

Tucson looks to Maddie with open eyes, inviting her to open
up too. Maddie looks over to the poster of her, defeated.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
What can I say about me that hasn't
already been said for me?

They've done this song and dance before, Two's over it.

TUCSON
So, the share stick makes its way
back around the room, and you're
gonna cop out on me?

MADDIE
People literally wear the worst
moment of my life on T-shirts, and
I can't do anything about it. Is
that what you want me to talk
about? That photo is everywhere. I
can't escape it.

A clearer shot of the poster. "National Binary Day 10/10"

A beat. Maddie sighs and turns to Tucson.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

See that building on the right?
That's my dad's office. He's in one
of those windows, you can't see
him, but he's there-- seconds away
from being murdered by a man who is
still out there, free.

Tucson is stunned, she's never opened up like this.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

They gave me a medal. For what?
What did I do? Thousands of people
died that day. Hundreds of dads,
hundreds of dad-less kids.
Aunt-less kids. What made me
special? People treat me like I
invalidate their pain. As if I
believe what I went through was
worse than what anyone else went
through. All because the country
prostituted my image for its own
goddamn propaganda. No protection.
No one was in my corner. I don't
even get the rights back to my own
likeness until 2063. So what do I
feel? I feel like I need an acid
bath every day.

Maddie almost grabs Two's drink-- stops herself.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Sorry.

Two goes to console her with a hug.

TUCSON

--Can I?

She hesitates-- accepts. It's held for a few beats. She wipes
her eyes. They break and make eye contact. Tucson rests his
hand on the bar. Maddie puts her hand on top of his.

TUCSON (CONT'D)

Claire-- Didn't we...

MADDIE

--Call me Maddie.

15

INT. MADDIE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - MORNING

15

A lavish image of beachfront property. The crash of the waves creates a serene lullaby as a reddish glow crests through the open blinds until-- Bzzzt. Bzzzt. The Holowall and its projected image begin to short, switching back and forth between the beach scene and a plain white wall with a loading circle. The audio buffering is absolutely grating.

Maddie wakes up-- begrudgingly, smacks the watch on her end table. A Holomenu rises, she spins some options, and turns the Holowall off. Maddie turns, almost lovingly, to the other side of the bed where-- her hand finds an empty area still distressed from last night's activities. Maddie sighs.

16

INT. MADDIE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - BATHROOM - MORNING

16

Maddie, eyes closed, spaces out under her shower head. Her hair is full of soap, but she's too busy letting the water smack her in the face. Temporary peace.

A timer on the wall looms, 00:17, 00:16, 00:15. Beep.

Maddie opens her eyes and shakes back to reality, cursing up a storm as she knows she's *done it again*. As she starts to let the water wash the soap out of her hair, the timer stops, and the water turns off. Maddie feels her hair: Still soapy.

MADDIE

Homer!!

A bathroom tile turns translucent as **HOMER** flies in along the smart-tile. (*Think a Sci-Fi Cartoon Bee/Tinkerbell "Alexa."*)

HOMER

Hi, Maddie! How can I help?

MADDIE

Homer, I need another minute of water please.

HOMER

Bzz. I'm sorry Maddie, but your reservoir allotment for October has been used. Conservation is key!

MADDIE

Homer, trade a visitor pass please.

HOMER

You got it-- one visitor pass remaining. Your reservoir will replenish in 20 days. Is that all?

Sigh. Maddie hits the button next to the timer: It resets to three minutes, and Homer disappears as Maddie finishes up.

17

INT. MADDIE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - MORNING

17

Now in her work uniform, Maddie finishes her routine in front of a mirror. Just as she starts to put her hair in a ponytail, the mirror turns into an ad:

ADVERTISEMENT (V.O.)
 Enjoying the free version of
 "Mirror Pro 7?" Pay for PREMIUM now
 to remove ads and customize frames!

Maddie grunts and walks over to her "love corner." Plenty of abstract art pieces. Paintings, sculptures, and a somewhat political piece with a bunch of 1's and 0's, except all of the zeroes are crossed out with X's. She heads to the table with the painting of her father Lionel-- draped across is the same peculiar chip from when she was a kid: Now, a NECKLACE.

Maddie takes a brush, dips it into her color wheel, and adds a sideways hatch mark to the other nine already on the bottom of the piece-- indicating ten years. She grabs the necklace and tucks it under her collar before leaving.

18

INT. POPULATION ENFORCEMENT HQ - WAR ROOM - DAY

18

Maddie, Tucson, **RAMIREZ**, and **JOHNSON** are being briefed by Director Ma. Holoscreens show both the **TARGET** and **SECRETARY OF DEFENSE**, **PERRY GORMAN**, who has dialed into the briefing.

SECRETARY GORMAN
 Delilah Jones. 26. Been on the run since June, you figure that's-- four, five months along. We doubt she'll be doing much running now.

XIAN MA
 Sources say she's hiding in a Nova Den just outside of Muskett. Two teams, Levy, Maddox, you're on the ground. Ramirez and Johnson, you're on the perimeter in case she runs. This is a joint effort with the Department of Defense, so we're on our best behavior out there.

Sir. TUCSON

Sir. RAMIREZ

MADDIE

She's been on the run since June?

XIAN MA

As you can imagine, she needs to be questioned thoroughly. Top priority. No mess.

MADDIE

It's just that-- If she's been out since June, there's likely a case at the O.C. Office on her as well. If Moose, or some other guy, is just going to come in after us and--

XIAN MA

What's your job, officer?

MADDIE

Uh, to secure, deterge, and elutriate individuals who violate federal and state pregnancy laws.

The director gives a look, "*Know your place.*"

XIAN MA

Dismissed.

Maddie and Tucson head for the exit, Tucson turns back.

TUCSON

She's not wrong. Forgive me for interjecting, Director Ma, but it's not just some "morale" thing. It's a larger bureaucratic issue that needs to be addressed. We're basically always doing their jobs for them. If we became, say, a division of the O.C. Offices, then--

Maddie is impressed that Tucson is standing up for her.

XIAN MA

--That Bohemian rubbing off on you, Levy? If you want changes, you should have gone into politics. Now, go get her before we lose her.

Offended by Ma's comment, Maddie exits, followed by Tucson.

19

EXT. NOVA DEN - DAY

19

A run-down three-story complex, left to rot with no post-war improvements. The outer fence can't decide if it's keeping the unwanted out or the riffraff in. **WIRE**, a bearded junkie, 40s, leans against the fence and gets spooked. Individuals closer to the building can be seen starting to scramble.

The Pop Force vehicle pulls up, Maddie and Tucson step out.

WIRE

(exhales cigarette smoke)

Y'all Ockies? My paper's straight.

TUCSON

We're not here for you.

Wire clocks the logo on the car. Runs inside the fence.

WIRE

Poppies, y'all! Poppies!!

Tucson and Maddie share a "*this guy*" look as they duck under the gate and walk toward the building. Maddie sighs, Tucson looks back at her, "You okay?" She goes to say something when they both notice Moose and Silvia casually leaning against a patrol car on the other side of the West fence.

SILVIA

Took you guys long enough.

MOOSE

Hey Tulsa! When you grab her just throw her in here, capiche?

MADDIE

Go and get her yourself.

MOOSE

Now why would I do that when I have you two?

TUCSON

I guess we'll just see you at the station later.

Moose and Silvia laugh. Maddie and Tucson press on.

MADDIE

Can you believe those guys, just sitting there?

TUCSON

I can. You were saying something?

MADDIE

Oh. Right. I was-- I was gonna say thanks.

TUCSON

For?

MADDIE

You didn't have to stick your neck out for me, you know? But you did.

TUCSON

Someone's gotta. Well, at least someone should-- since most haven't. You know what I mean.

Tucson kicks around an injector that resembles the mouth of a Viper-- the distribution model of choice for the drug Nova.

TUCSON (CONT'D)

Watch your step-- lotta fangs on the ground.

MADDIE

Yeah, I see 'em.

They get to the door. Tucson waits for it to open. Maddie walks up and pulls it manually. They enter.

20

INT. NOVA DEN - LOBBY - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

20

The inside has a tent-city skid-row aesthetic.

A few steps in, a SPARK flies from Maddie's ear. She rips her comms out.

MADDIE

Gah! Fuck!

TUCSON

What? What's up?! You alright?

MADDIE

Jammers. We didn't even get five feet inside. Wait. You didn't...?

TUCSON

Oh shit.

MADDIE

You forgot to replace your link.

Tucson recognizes his gaffe. Wrong day for a rookie mistake.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
 What the hell is a place like this
 doing with high-grade jammers?

More fangs litter the ground next to a slew of sleeping bags and shopping carts. Tucson bends down and picks up one of the fangs, an existential crisis bubbling beneath him.

21

INT. POPULATION ENFORCEMENT HQ - WAR ROOM - DAY

21

Director Ma and other officials react to the feed going dark.

XIAN MA
 (to the tech)
 Let me know if it comes back
 online. Send CI's to recover what
 the ground team finds.
 (to Gorman)
 Next time Quill wants my help, tell
 him he can call me himself.

Xian Ma goes to exit, but is interrupted by Gorman.

SECRETARY GORMAN
 You're just going to leave?

XIAN MA
 Clearly, you've underestimated Ms.
 Jones and whoever is helping her.

22

INT. NOVA DEN - FIRST FLOOR - DAY

22

A NOVA-HEAD throws bottles in Maddie and Tucson's direction. They dart around a corner. Heavy sighs.

Wire slides towards Maddie and Tucson.

WIRE
 Yeah, I just checked there's nobody
 pregnant here, y'all good.

They ignore him and walk down the hallway.

WIRE (CONT'D)
 Huh? I said y'all good. What y'all
 doin'?

Tucson snaps. He steps to Wire.

TUCSON
 Oh, we're good? *We're good?*

Tucson pushes him against the nearest wall and, fang in hand, places it a centimeter from Wire's neck.

MADDIE

Two!

TUCSON

You tell me. We good?

Wire is speechless. He keeps looking upstairs. Maddie clocks this and looks upstairs as well.

MADDIE

Two. Enough.

Tucson puts the fang closer. Maddie goes to intervene--

WIRE

Nah, it ain't like that. Yo. Easy!

TUCSON

This is a federal investigation.
Stop. Interfering.

Tucson drops the fang. Wire runs. Tucson tries to calm himself down, Maddie stares at him, "*Who are you?*"

MADDIE

I don't know what the fuck that
was, but I'm going upstairs, you
can cool off down here.

Maddie heads upstairs, Tucson is torn-- follow her? No.

23

INT. NOVA DEN - SECOND FLOOR - DAY

23

One side of the hallway is blocked and boarded by a makeshift tower of furniture. LOOKY-LOO RESIDENTS duck their heads back in and close their doors. Lock sounds are heard.

Maddie starts down the open path until CLANG! Maddie whips around and rips apart the furniture tower. She removes enough to see a FIGURE run across from one apartment to another.

MADDIE

Hey! Stop right there!
(yelling toward Tucson)
I've got something!

Maddie starts to wiggle through the small crevice she created WHEN-- she's GRABBED and pulled back out by **TWO NOVA-HEADS**.

Maddie twists herself around and UPPERCUTS her palm into the first one's NOSE-- he's OUT, writhing on the ground. The other tries to put Maddie in a lock.

24 INT. NOVA DEN - FIRST FLOOR - DAY 24

Two's in the middle of reading rights to a RESIDENT.

TUCSON

...Section 34-C of the Quill Code--

25 INT. NOVA DEN - SECOND FLOOR - DAY 25

Maddie, still in a lock, backs up against the wall. Upon impact, the Nova-Head loosens his grip enough for her to flip out of the grasp. She kicks him back, draws her weapon, and fires a stun shot (taser effect). He's out. Looky-loos run as Maddie addresses a sharp pain in her abdominal area.

26 INT. NOVA DEN - FIRST FLOOR - DAY 26

Two turns towards the sound of the taser and rushes back.

27 INT. NOVA DEN - SECOND FLOOR - DAY 27

As Maddie wiggles her way through the barricade, her NECKLACE GETS TANGLED, and the CHIP from her father FALLS to the ground. Maddie fails to notice, and runs for the door.

Knock. Knock. KNOCK.

JOHANNA, 60s, Dominican, opens the door, chain attached.

JOHANNA

Hmmm?

MADDIE

Population Enforcement. I have reason to believe there is an illegally pregnant individual on the premises. Under section 34-C of the Quill Code, you are ordered to comply. Please open the door.

JOHANNA

¡Espérete! ¡Espérete!

She closes the door. Fumbles with the lock for longer than necessary. Maddie pushes it open once the chain is loose.

Two makes it upstairs. Looks left, then right. He sees her enter the apartment through the furniture tower opening.

28 **INT. NOVA DEN - APARTMENT 2N - DAY (CONTINUOUS)** 28

Gun drawn, Maddie canvases the apartment, checking every corner like a true professional. Johanna follows, shouting.

JOHANNA
(*in Spanish*)
*You broke my door, you idiot! You
better pay for that! Get out, get
out! What are you doing? There's
nothing here. Leave!*

29 **INT. DELILAH'S BEDROOM - DAY** 29

Top to bottom, the room looks like a Rube Goldberg Machine. **DELILAH JONES**, 26, humble yet militant, tosses whatever she can scramble into her bag-- which is efficiently CONNECTED to a rope and pulley system that leads out the open window.

30 **INT. NOVA DEN - SECOND FLOOR - DAY** 30

Struggling to reach Maddie, Tucson breaks down more of the "furniture tower" to get through. He's close.

31 **INT. DELILAH'S BEDROOM / EXT. NOVA DEN - DAY** 31

Delilah tosses the bag out the window. It glides slowly down.
THUD.

32 **INT. NOVA DEN - APARTMENT 2N - DAY** 32

Maddie hears the thud outside, rushes to the bedroom. Johanna's pleas for Delilah and the child muffled behind her.

33 **INT. DELILAH'S BEDROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)** 33

Delilah turns from the window to find Maddie has her at gunpoint. Unfazed, Delilah pulls the rope tighter, which is now fastened safely to her belt. She rests her hands on the sides of the window, ready to jump.

MADDIE
Delilah Jones.

DELILAH

Yes?

MADDIE

Please step away from the window.

Delilah winces. Maddie seems concerned, clocks the belly.

DELILAH

(with kind eyes)

Sorry, she's kicking.

It suddenly becomes real for Maddie. They're usually not this far along. There's something there. Something alive. Maddie's intensity grows as her resolve wavers. Her muscles tighten, and her finger hovers over the trigger.

DELILAH (CONT'D)

This is bigger than us, you know?

Delilah's candor cracks through Maddie's shell. Maddie has to remain professional, she's holding back tears.

MADDIE

(forcing it, impassioned)

You have violated Quill-Code
Section 4, I have been appointed to
remand you to a detergent facility.
The window. I won't repeat myself.

She's had it. Every single ounce of her is at war with the woman she's become. The antithesis of her ideologies. She can't do it. Her breath escapes her and the gun goes limp.

DELILAH

Are you okay?

Delilah stares at the weapon and acknowledges Maddie's impotent intention. Maddie backs away cautiously. Delilah nods. Nothing is said. Nothing needs to be said.

34 **EXT. NOVA DEN - DAY (CONTINUOUS)**

34

Delilah slides down the window and makes a break for it.

35 **INT. DELILAH'S ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)**

35

Maddie slumps against the wall. The floodgates open, ashamed of what they wanted her to do-- what she almost did.

Tucson rushes in, immediately clocks the window and then notices Maddie on the floor.

He steps over her to see Delilah running away outside. The wheels turn, but the jump is too high. Johanna rambles as Tucson steps away to comfort Maddie.

TUCSON

It's okay. It's okay.

MADDIE

She-- She got away.

TUCSON (CONT'D)

I know. I know. It's okay.

36

INT. NOVA DEN - SECOND FLOOR - DAY

36

Moose and Silvia are at what's left of the furniture tower. Silvia notices something BLINKING on the ground, it's THE CHIP. She picks it up, and shows it to Moose. The top has CRACKED -- REVEALING a USB CONNECTOR INSIDE.

MOOSE

Log it.

SILVIA

What is that?

MOOSE

Looks like an early-generation storage device. Whoever she's in league with could be using outdated tech to organize.

SILVIA

Would make sense. Considering how she's gotten this far. Do we even have anything to read th--

A call comes over the analog walkie on Moose's belt:

TUCSON (O.S.)

Suspect on the run. I repeat, suspect heading North-East along Eberly. Patrol units respond.

RAMIREZ (O.S.)

Copy. Mobilizing.

MOOSE

I knew they'd blow it.

SILVIA

We should have stayed outside.

MOOSE

And let the CIs find that? Nah, we're the winners here.

37

INT. POPULATION ENFORCEMENT HQ - WAR ROOM - DAY

37

The **HOLOTECH** starts to get fuzzy audio and video from the holoscreens.

HOLOTECH
We're getting something.

SECRETARY GORMAN
Get Xian Ma back in here.

38

INT. NOVA DEN - APARTMENT 2N - DAY

38

Tucson, analog walkie in hand, wraps up his call. Maddie is still inconsolable.

TUCSON
Second floor, N like November.

RAMIREZ (O.S.)
CIs are en route.

Tucson puts the walkie down, calmly turns to Maddie.

MADDIE
Two.

TUCSON
Yeah?

MADDIE
Are we doing the right thing?

Long beat.

TUCSON
They'll be here soon. We gotta go.

MADDIE
I'm serious. Who decided any of this was okay?

TUCSON
You have to understand the logic, I felt it firsthand. My parents were not mentally or financially there for me. It's no life for a kid.

MADDIE
You can't really believe that, I mean, you realize that if the laws were what they are now back then, you wouldn't be here-- right?

TUCSON

That's why I have to make a difference. Because realistically, I shouldn't be.

MADDIE

You can't think like that. You're here. It's not a mistake that you exist. What they did to that, what-- what we've done to these women... that's the mistake. No one should be involved in the process of our bodies. You know?

Maddie shoves her face in her hands, a deep breath.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Two. There's something I need to tell you.

TUCSON

Maddie, we're already gonna get shit for this, we can't be here when the CIs get here.

Maddie pulls herself together. As she stands up-- !!! A sinking feeling overcomes her. The necklace! The chip!

MADDIE

(rambling, chaotic)
N-n-no-no-no! Shit!

Maddie starts looking at the ground. Panicking.

TUCSON

What?

Maddie composes herself like a paper tiger.

MADDIE

Nothing. Go ahead. I'll catch up.

TUCSON

What are you talking about?

MADDIE (CONT'D)

I need a minute or two to collect myself, please.

TUCSON (CONT'D)

Collect yourself outside, come on.

MADDIE

(feral)
Go.

Tucson leaves. The search begins.

39

EXT. NOVA DEN - DAY

39

Tucson, focused, rushes out of the den. He spots Moose and Silvia getting in their car on the other side of the fence. Moose gives Tucson quite a look.

TUCSON

What? Say it already!

MOOSE

No time for jokes today, sorry! Big mess to clean up!

Tucson scowls as he watches Silvia and Moose drive away.

40

INT. NOVA DEN - SECOND FLOOR - DAY

40

The furniture tower is now completely dismantled as Maddie scours for the necklace. She's on the verge of physical sickness from all of the stress, clocks Wire down the hall.

MADDIE

Hey! You!

WIRE

Yo! I'm done with y'all, I got nothing for you!

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Was anyone else down this hallway?
Besides us?

WIRE

Just you two and the other two.
When ya'll leaving?

Maddie processes that and continues searching on the ground.

WIRE (CONT'D)

Oh, hol' up, you lost somethin'?
Hold on, I got you. I got you.

MADDIE

No, please. I'm good. Please!

WIRE (CONT'D)

(yelling)
Yo! Hop out, this Poppy
dropped something, let's help
her out!

Within seconds, a DOZEN RESIDENTS pop out and start looking at the ground, all ready to "help."

RESIDENT

What we lookin' for?

Maddie's defeated, she knows she'll never find it now. Exits.

41

EXT. NOVA DEN - DAY

41

Maddie spots Tucson leaning against an inner gate waiting for her. She jogs to catch up, gets about halfway, and VOMITS.

TUCSON

Whoa! You okay?

Tucson rushes over to Maddie.

TUCSON (CONT'D)

Easy. Easy. Is it all out? You feel better?

Maddie composes herself, heads for the car.

MADDIE

Let's go.

42

INT. POPULATION ENFORCEMENT HQ - WAR ROOM - NIGHT

42

TOP OFFICIALS crowd the room. Maddie's nausea is rampant.

SECRETARY GORMAN

You lost the asset, there's no body cam footage. Best we've got is spotty audio, most of which sounds like someone looking for her keys.

XIAN MA

(turning to Tucson)

Let's hear the report.

TUCSON

They had jammers in the building, sir, enough to blow our comms on entry. As the S-O with the only analog walkie between us, I should have never let the two of us split up. That was our first mistake.

MADDIE

Respectfully, that was our second mistake. Our first mistake was going in there without all of the information.

The pot is stirred.

SECRETARY GORMAN

We gave you what you needed.

MADDIE

If you got the tail end of that run on tape that means the jammer was mobile. How? What are we dealing with here? A pregnant woman with military tech? Is that why the D.O.D. is phoned in? Who is she? Who's helping her? What-- Ugh...

Maddie gets up and runs out of the war room.

XIAN MA

Excuse her, Mr. Secretary.

43

INT. POPULATION ENFORCEMENT HQ - BATHROOM - NIGHT

43

Maddie rushes for one of the toilets. Violently opens the stall door and vomits again. She gets it all out and hugs the bowl. After a long beat, she sits back on the floor with her head tilted back against the paper dispenser.

MADDIE

Ugh. Fuck.

She rubs her stomach and holds it, motherly.

44

INT. OCCUPATION ENFORCEMENT HQ - BULLPEN - NIGHT

44

Silvia has an inaudible conversation with **CAIDEN**, 40s, when Moose, holding a 2010 model desktop computer under his shoulder, catches their attention. Monitor in his other arm.

MOOSE

Yo, Sil! Got one!

SILVIA

Is it even going to boot up before the shift's over?

Moose smirks and enters a side-room office.

45

INT. POPULATION ENFORCEMENT HQ - BATHROOM - NIGHT

45

Maddie, still reeling from her sickness, turns to her wrist.

MADDIE

Computer.

The wrist-comm brightens, and an "Andross / Matrix-esque" face appears, moving fluidly across the display.

COMPUTER
How may I help?

MADDIE (CONT'D)
Personal mode. Input code one
zero one zero.

COMPUTER (CONT'D)
Ten minutes of unpaid personal
mode, starting now.

Computer vanishes. From the side of the display, Homer flies
in with some buzzing noises.

HOMER
Hey Maddie. Quick reminder, your
payment is due on the 17th, would
you like to make a payment?

MADDIE
Homer, run a diagnostic.

HOMER
Home or health?

MADDIE
Health.

HOMER (CONT'D)
Stand by.

Vitals are shown on the elaborate display. Heart rate, blood
pressure, temperature. A list of possible diagnosis options
floods until reaching a set of answers with probabilities:

- (1. Nausea: 100%
- (2. Progesterone levels elevated: 100%
- (3. Deficiencies: Iron, Folate, Vitamin D.
- (4. Pregnancy: 93% Probability.

Maddie rubs her stomach.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
Ugh, I just want you to tell me if
they're okay.

HOMER
Would you like me to set up an
appointment with a maternity
specialist? Your work schedule is
clear through next week.

MADDIE
Clear through next week? How? Wait--
Homer, I'll handle it. Thank you.

HOMER
Reminder set for three days. I'll
check back then. Will that be all?

46

INT. POPULATION ENFORCEMENT HQ - BULLPEN - NIGHT

46

THREE CLERICALS gawk and gossip as Maddie exits the bathroom.

CLERICAL #1
The one from the poster?

CLERICAL #2
Yeah. I've been telling you for
months, it's her. Binary Girl.
Trust me. I heard it from Nancy on
the second floor.

CLERICAL #3
Yeah? Well, Nancy would know.

CLERICAL #1
So she did all of those
protests years ago too?

CLERICAL #2
Yeah, the political art ones, I
remember the memes.

They all laugh.

CLERICAL #1
How the hell'd she end up here?

Maddie glares back at the Clericals. Deer in headlights.

CLERICAL #2
Shit, you think she can hear us?

MADDIE
Oh don't stop I'm learning so much.

The Clericals break apart and awkwardly split up. Maddie
heads toward the science division area.

47

INT. OCCUPATION ENFORCEMENT HQ - SIDE ROOM - NIGHT

47

Windows 7 Logo. Ta-da.

MOOSE
See? Told you. Took eleven
different computers, but I got one.

SILVIA
Eleven? I'm surprised any of them
worked.

MOOSE

You've got it, right? Try it.

As Silvia grabs the USB, she HITS A BUTTON ON HER WRIST.

SILVIA

Slide over.

First, Silvia puts the USB in the ethernet. Wrong. Then, in the right socket, but the wrong way. Flips. Caiden pops in.

CAIDEN

Moose, boss needs you.

Moose heads for the door. Silvia correctly inserts the drive. A FLOOD of .exe files install themselves, activate the network settings, and begin uploading various GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS and files on MERCURY INC. Silvia's eyes go wide.

MOOSE

Alright-- Hold up. He can wait, I'm in the middle of something.

Moose heads back. Silvia stands frustrated at a black screen.

SILVIA

This piece of shit shut off!

MOOSE

What? It sounds like it's still running.

SILVIA

I'll try to get it working, you go.

Moose sighs, and leaves. Silvia nods to Caiden and sits back down. She deliberately *turns the monitor back on*. Upload 50% complete. It's stuck. It won't load any further. Requires a password. She thinks for a second and types something in.

A VIDEO pops up-- it's **LIONEL**. Maddie's father. Pre-recorded from at least 10 years ago.

LIONEL

You're not my daughter. If you're him or are working for him, then you know the deal. Protect her. She's the only one who can open it.

INT. POPULATION ENFORCEMENT HQ - DETERGENT ROOM - NIGHT

Cold, metal walls. About as inviting as a morgue. A chair with stirrups in the center. Glass cabinets all around, some refrigerated, filled with equipment or genetic material.

Maddie enters, it's empty. Immediately, she darts for a cabinet with thick metal tubes. WHOOSH, the door opens behind her. **NEVEAH**, 40s, the elutriation specialist enters.

NEVEAH

Hi. Can I help you?

MADDIE

Oh, hey. Just looking around. You know, I've been here a few mon--

NEVEAH

Let me guess, worried you'll get the chair?

MADDIE

Oh, uh, how did you--

NEVEAH

Nobody comes in here voluntarily.

A sigh of mutual understanding. Woman to woman.

MADDIE

Haven't been in here since they first gave me the tour. They basically opened the door and said, "*Well, you can imagine what goes on in here.*" And moved over to the break room. This is how you do the testing now, right?

Maddie points to the cabinet she was at. Neveah nods.

NEVEAH

You take one of those canisters, place it on the side of the toilet, and the strip extends into the-- you get the idea. Much more sanitary than the old days.

MADDIE

I guess. You're still peeing on a stick.

NEVEAH

Sounds like you need peace of mind.

Maddie is flustered. Unsure of how to handle being caught.

MADDIE

I, uh--

NEVEAH

Don't use it here if you want to keep it quiet for the time being. You'll be auto-logged into the system, and there's trackers on them. You wouldn't believe how many people leave them in the bathrooms.

MADDIE

But at home it won't register?

NEVEAH

Unless you live around the corner, it'll work just fine. It'll need a range amplifier to send anything further than that back to us.

MADDIE

Can you get in--

NEVEAH

If it's positive, I truly hope you get to keep them.

Maddie exits, opens her palm to glance at the CANISTER. Her wrist-comm beeps. "Meeting with Ma. Now."

49

INT. OCCUPATION ENFORCEMENT HQ - BULLPEN - NIGHT

49

The computer is completely shut down and unplugged. Silvia is moving everything outside of the side room. Moose gets back.

MOOSE

Don't know what that was about, the boss isn't even in right now. Whoa, whoa, what's going on?

Silvia hands Moose the computer monitor.

SILVIA

Everything's fried, the drive too. My shift's up, so I'm out. You good with the cleanup?

FOLLOW Silvia's exit. She grabs her coat, her bag, and affixes a large magnet under her sleeve to a desk.

HOLD on the magnet.

50

INT. POPULATION ENFORCEMENT HQ - MA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

50

Maddie enters Ma's office with her desk cleaned out.

MADDIE
How long?

XIAN MA
I'm sorry?

MADDIE
The suspension.

XIAN MA
This meeting is to determine
whether one is necessary.

MADDIE
My schedule has been wiped already,
so if it's all the same I don't
want to play games, sir.

Director Ma smirks. He appreciates her tenacity.

XIAN MA
Fine. I think you let Jones go
today.

MADDIE
Why? Because, hey, we're both
women. Solidarity, right?

XIAN MA
No.

Long beat. He plays back a segment of the spotty audio from
her conversation with Tucson at the Nova Den.

XIAN MA (CONT'D)
I know you didn't choose this job.
I can pull some strings, throw you
back into the draft pool. Take a
week to decide. Maybe second time's
the charm?

Maddie is taken aback. A second chance? Something different?

51

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

51

Fangs on the ground, a **BUM** lying on cardboard. Female boots
enter frame.

BUM

Oooh. You lost, baby? Lemme help
get you where you going.

Silvia flashes her badge. The bum turns pale and runs off. A
phone rings. Silvia takes out a burner flip phone.

SILVIA

I know you need the rest of it. A
video popped up when I typed the
wrong password in. He said, "She's
the only one who can open it," and
that you had a deal to protect her.

An audible sigh on the other end.

SILVIA (CONT'D)

What does that mean?

CLICK. UNKNOWN hangs up. Silvia breaks the phone and tosses
the remains.

52

INT. POPULATION ENFORCEMENT HQ - BULLPEN - NIGHT

52

Maddie's on her way out, spots Tucson.

MADDIE

Two, I really have to talk to you.

TUCSON

What's there to say, Maddie? I just
got my ass served to me on a
fucking platter. I might as well
forget any promotions I was up for.
I-I just don't understand how you
can be so myopic. Like, I know you
didn't choose this life. But I did.

Gut punch. Maddie thought Two was drafted, like she was.

TUCSON (CONT'D)

Look, I put in a partner transfer
request. It's nothing personal,
Maddie, just damage control.

MADDIE

--You can call me Claire.

Maddie leaves, her view of Tucson crushed, her world crushed.

53 **EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

53

Security cameras reposition and eerily follow Maddie as she enters a restaurant. She's too preoccupied to notice.

SECURITY CAMERA POV: No human employees. All ROBOTS. Maddie orders some food and sits in a booth. A robot brings her some water. The camera zooms in. Ominous. Uneasy.

54 **INT. MADDIE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT**

54

Maddie enters, she's doing the "Gotta pee" dance and takes off her jacket, bag, and pants.

HOMER

Welcome home, Maddie! Did you have
a g-g-good day?

The lights flicker, Homer goes in and out. Weird. Maddie runs for the bathroom. Oops. She forgot the device-- runs back for it and takes it into the bathroom.

Privacy view from outside the door. *We know what's going on.*

Maddie's finished. The strip retracts back into the canister, and a purifying aerosol sprays before Maddie picks it up.

| Loading . . . |

Maddie takes a seat in the chair next to her artwork. DING.

| + PREGNANT + |

Before she's even had a second to process this... Homer FABRICATES a CGI *Volume-Like* showcase as the walls line with streamers, balloons, fanfare, and giant "Congratulations!" & "We're having a baby!" signs.

MADDIE

Homer, enough.

It all stops. Silence.

Maddie heads to her bed and throws her comforter over her.

55 **INT. MADDIE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT (LATER)**

55

The lights flicker. Homer appears and glitches over to where the canister is. Homer reaches out to it, and the canister starts blinking. The tracker has been activated.

56

INT. MADDIE'S STUDIO APARTMENT - MORNING

56

Sun beams through the "window." Maddie starts to stir.

HOMER

Rise and shine, Maddie. You've got
a mandatory doctor's appointment!

MADDIE

What? What are you talking about?

Maddie notices the canister is blinking.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Oh shit. Shit shit. Fuck.

57

INT. MATERNITY FACILITY - DAY

57

Feels more like a DMV than a hospital. A nearby Holocube is
turned to the news.

REPORTER

Police are still on the hunt for
Jeffrey Calloway, responsible for
blowing up an Almanac Robotics
Warehouse in Muskett. Any
information leading to an arrest...

Maddie's wrist-comm lights up like one of those beepers at a
restaurant letting you know your table is ready.

INTERCOM

Claire Maddox. Claire Maddox. A
testing room has now opened.

58

INT. MATERNITY FACILITY - TESTING ROOM - DAY

58

There is no doctor, just Maddie and an interactive Holowall.
Reminiscent of K's diagnostic scans in *Blade Runner 2049*. A
long beat, Maddie looks around. Finally, a message appears on
the Holowall. It's President Quill. Maddie rolls her eyes.

QUILL

On behalf of our country, I would
like to thank you. Having a child
is the greatest service you can
perform. As you know, pandemics,
wars, and technology have all
caused great suffering. Our
freedoms were challenged, and to
protect our citizens, the Quill
Code was enacted.

(MORE)

QUILL (CONT'D)

A set of rules intended to improve our quality of life for generations. Permitting that you are healthy, mentally fit, and financially prepared for this journey, your child will grow and contribute to our bright future.

The Holowall turns into the American flag as a part of the wall drops, and a floating cylinder appears. A piece of the floor opens, and another cylinder rises.

INTERCOM

Please insert left and right arms.
When the light turns red, stop.

Maddie complies. A needle pokes out of the right cylinder and draws blood. The left cylinder shrinks to her bicep. It takes her blood pressure, but will also act as a lie detector.

INTERCOM (CONT'D)

State your name, age, date of birth and occupation for the record.

MADDIE

Claire Maddox, 24, 01/01/29,
Population Enforcement Agent.

INTERCOM

Thank you. Parents' names and status for the record, please.

MADDIE

Lionel and Cassandra Maddox.
(grits her teeth)
Both deceased.

59

EXT. FIELD - DAY (FLASHBACK)

59

YOUNGER MADDIE, 5, picks flowers with Lionel and **CASSANDRA MADDOX**. Another **MAN** is in the background. The sun is beaming, plenty of laughter. She's happy. She reaches for her parents as an echo gets louder and louder.

INTERCOM

Cause of death?

60

INT. MATERNITY FACILITY - TESTING ROOM - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

60

INTERCOM

Repeat. Cause of death?

Maddie is seething.

INTERCOM (CONT'D)
Your blood pressure is rising,
should we skip to the next
question?

MADDIE
Murder. My father was murdered.

INTERCOM
Thank you. Your mother?

MADDIE
I don't know.

INTERCOM
Thank you. Next question. Father of
the child's name, age, date of
birth, and occupation for the
record.

Long beat. Maddie is toying with several things to say.

INTERCOM (CONT'D) MADDIE
Repeat. Father of th-- --Skip.

INTERCOM (CONT'D)
I will return to that question
later. Are you married? Or engaged
to be married?

MADDIE
No.

INTERCOM MADDIE (CONT'D)
Are you in a committed relationship? No.

INTERCOM (CONT'D)
Will the sole burden of raising
this child fall on you?

The incredibly deafening white walls close in on her.

61

INT. MATERNITY FACILITY - WAITING ROOM - DUSK

61

A closed-off room that feels more like a drunk tank than anything else. Several WOMEN pace back and forth waiting for the results of their test. Some have their MALE S.O.'s. Maddie leans against a wall, looks up to the ceiling.

62

INT. MATERNITY FACILITY - DOCTOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

62

DR. STRAUCH, male, 40s, sits across from Maddie. She might as well be listening to Charlie Brown's teacher.

DR. STRAUCH

Do you understand what I've just explained?

MADDIE

Thalassemia. A rare blood disease that, if severe, could cause heart failure by 30. Got it. The home assessments I expected, but this, I just-- I just don't understand how I've never been told this before.

DR. STRAUCH

It's an inherited gene. Do you know of anyone in your family who has had this?

(scans her answers)

Your mother, perhaps?

MADDIE

I don't know. I was young, and I can't ask my father.

(a mental lightbulb)

...But she was 30.

DR. STRAUCH

Medical history was one of our greatest assets before the war and 10/10. No one has much to go off of these days. Honestly, it's a miracle that you're even here with us today. Thalassemia is a Level 4 elimination under Quill Code now. Am I being too candid? Sorry. I just know you understand our line of work. Do you want to set up the elutriation at your facility, or with us? Probably yours, right? I can call ahead.

MADDIE

I'm sorry, I just-- I need some time to process all of this. I understand what is required of me and I'll get it done. I've been here all day, I haven't eaten. I need some rest, and I'll take care of it tomorrow or the next day.

DR. STRAUCH
If you refuse to act upon this
today, I'm forced to insert a nano-
implant for tracking purposes.

MADDIE
I work in Population Enforcement,
that won't be necessary.

DR. STRAUCH
All the more reason to cooperate.

Maddie processes all of this. A powerful choice is made.

63

INT. MATERNITY FACILITY - HALLWAY ONE - NIGHT

63

CLOSE ON the doorknob as Maddie gingerly exits the office.

NURSE
All set, Ms. Maddox?

Maddie smiles and heads for the locker with her belongings.

MADDIE
Oh! Yeah, great. I'm just going to
change and head home.

NURSE
Says here we have to fit you for
your tracker. Follow me.

Maddie pulls out her bag, wrist-comm, clothes, and sneakers.

MADDIE
Oh, no. No. Dr. Strauch and I
talked about it. See, I'm in Pop
Enforcement, so I'm just gonna have
Naveah handle everything over
headquarters. No worries!

Maddie leaves. The Nurse walks over to Dr. Strauch's door.

64

INT. MATERNITY FACILITY - DOC'S OFFICE - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

Nurse peeks in to see Strauch holding his head, struggling to
get up off the floor.

DR. STRAUCH
She's got every code to the
building, get her!

Nurse RUNS out of the room.

65

INT. MATERNITY FACILITY - HALLWAY TWO - NIGHT

65

CLOSE ON: Maddie, still in her gown, putting her sneakers on.

FLASH!! Red siren ALARMS everywhere. Maddie looks up, sighs.

MADDIE

Knew I wouldn't have time to
change.

She shoves the clothes in her bag and runs down the sally-port corridor. A computerized door at the far end. Locked.

She looks behind her to see a flood of ORDERLIES running for her. She opens up her wrist-comm and logs into the facility using her access codes from work.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Come on, come on, come on.

The door opens. She runs through and locks it from her end.

The orderlies fumble with their wrist-comms. They're all basically pulling on a car door when the other person is pressing the button to open it. Doesn't work.

66

INT. MATERNITY FACILITY - HALLWAY THREE - NIGHT

66

Maddie rounds the corner, elevators in sight when THWACK!! She's hit with a flying tackle by a **SECURITY GUARD**. He pins her down while another **ORDERLY** tries to sedate her. She KICKS the orderly in the shin, and he trips into the guard. She uses this momentum to BREAK FREE from the pin.

She sprints for the elevators. **SECURITY GUARD #2** rushes her into the wall. She grabs the baton off of his belt and WHAM! WHACK! One, two, combo. Before she can take a breath, the Guard and Orderly are back up and after her. She books it.

67

INT. POPULATION ENFORCEMENT HQ - BULLPEN - NIGHT

67

An alarm sounds within the HQ. Every Holoscreen loads a photo of Maddie's face. "CLAIRE MADDOX, ILLEGALLY PREGNANT, ASSAULT AGAINST A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL, REFUSED TRACKING." Maddie's co-workers each tune in to a **REPORTER** laying it all down.

REPORTER

...Assaulting multiple medical
personnel during her escape. The
true twist of this story is her
occupation.

(MORE)

REPORTER (CONT'D)

Claire Maddox is, get this, a
Population Enforcement Officer.
Yeah. Current whereabouts unknown.
Updates as details unfold.

Director Ma raises a very surprised eyebrow. Naveah smirks.

Tucson exits the break room to see the bulletin and
immediately drops his coffee mug. A multitude of feelings and
emotions. He rushes into the bathroom in a cold sweat.

68 **INT. POP ENFORCEMENT HQ - BATHROOM - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)** 68

Tucson pushes a CO-WORKER out of the way as he rushes over to
the sink. Breathing heavily, he puts his hands under the
faucet and throws the water on his face. Head down, he lets
the water drip onto the sink.

Long beat. Deep, deep breath.

He raises his head, makes eye contact with himself, resolved.

69 **EXT. MATERNITY FACILITY - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT** 69

Maddie, starved and tired, bursts through the emergency exit
running for her life, for the life of her child.

70 **INT. POPULATION ENFORCEMENT HQ - BULLPEN - NIGHT** 70

Tucson weaves through the bullpen with conviction, all the
while feeling the piercing, inquisitive, and invasive eyes of
his peers. He reaches the exit when Director Ma approaches.

Brief stare down. Time is of the essence, Tucson leaves.

71 **INT. OCCUPATION ENFORCEMENT HQ - NIGHT** 71

Moose sees **REPORTER #2** dish about Maddie and laughs.

MOOSE

Isn't that? Yeah! That's that
girl! Where's Sil? She's
gotta see this.

(shouting across
bullpen)

When this hits our queue,
this one's mine! I'm calling
this case!

REPORTER #2

Don't recognize her yet?
Let's spin her around! It's
Binary Girl! Now a federal
fugitive. Child stars, am I
right?

72

EXT. MADDIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

72

Police have Maddie's complex surrounded with both ground and drone units.

Maddie racks her head for options as she watches in the bushes far enough away.

MADDIE

...They put more people on me than
Delilah Jones. This is--

She runs her fingers through her hair, twists her fingers, and wrings a bit with a muffled scream. Deep sigh. It's over. Her wrist-comm powers on, a phone call. Tucson.

TUCSON

Looks like you're back in the
spotlight, Binary Girl.

MADDIE

Matter of time, I guess.

Maddie notices the drones by her complex are turning around.

TUCSON

You want to tell me where to get
you? Or do I have to track your
wrist-comm?

MADDIE

We really doing this?

TUCSON

If you drag this situation out any
longer, it's going to be a lot
harder to get you reinstated,
Claire.

MADDIE

That's at the bottom of my
priorities, Levy.

She ends the call, powers down her wrist-comm, and runs.

73

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

73

Maddie jumps into an alley and swiftly tries to change out of the hospital gown.

VOICE

If I can see you, how long will it
take them?

Maddie turns her head to the sound of the voice, it is coming from a car. Maddie leans to make out who it is-- SILVIA.

SILVIA
Don't run! I'm not after you.

MADDIE
I know. It's too early to see you guys. Why are you here?

SILVIA
Get in.

MADDIE
Are you nuts?

Maddie tosses the gown and starts to rush out of there.

SILVIA
Maddie!

Maddie stops. *Silvia wouldn't know to call her that.*

Maddie turns around, sees Silvia holding her necklace-- The peculiar chip.

MADDIE
How do you--

SILVIA
Get in.

74

INT. SILVIA'S CAR - NIGHT

74

Silvia hands Maddie a bag of fast food in the car.

SILVIA
You're probably hungry.

Maddie gives in and starts demolishing the fries.

SILVIA (CONT'D)
Give me your wrist-comm.

MADDIE
(mouth full)
Already turned it off.

SILVIA
Not good enough.

Silvia affixes an electromagnetic chip onto her wrist-comm.

MADDIE
That's, uh, not going to work
again, is it?

SILVIA
How do you think I found you?

Silvia hands Maddie the necklace back. Maddie looks it over.

MADDIE
It's really it. You had it. I never
thought I'd see this again.

She notices the broken part where the USB exits.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
Wait. What happened to it?! You
broke it? What is this?

SILVIA
That's how we found it.

MADDIE
We?

SILVIA
Moose and I.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
Moose? Hold on, why am I in
your car?

SILVIA (CONT'D)
I'm not turning you in. And Moose
has nothing to do with this.

MADDIE
Then why are you helping me.

SILVIA
Because of that. Look under the
broken area.

MADDIE
A USB?

SILVIA
You know about them?

MADDIE
My Dad was into vintage tech like
this. I guess I'm not surprised.
It'll probably be impossible to
find out what's on it, though.

SILVIA
Better not be.

MADDIE
Where are we going?

SILVIA
Somewhere safe. I know there's a
lot going on, just relax.

OFF Maddie giving Silvia some bombastic side-eye.

75

EXT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

75

The roll gate lifts, Silvia pulls her car in as a **MAN** pulls the chain to lower the gate.

76

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

76

Silvia and Maddie exit the car. Inside the warehouse are THREE MUSCLE CARS from the 70s, and an '08 Kia Sorento.

MADDIE
Manual cars?

SILVIA
You're not going to be able to
travel on the grid any longer.

MADDIE
I'm not going to be able to travel
off the grid either. I have no idea
how to use any of those.

JEFFREY "FREE" CALLOWAY, male, 28, a cerebral African-American mechanic, finishes closing the gate and walks over.

FREE
That's what I'm here for.

SILVIA
Claire, this is Jeffrey Calloway.

FREE	MADDIE
Call me Free.	It's Maddie.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
Free? Alright. Guess neither of us
like our names.

FREE
(laughs)
Well, mine is at least part of my
name, but that's cool.

SILVIA

Her last name is Maddox. I guess that's where it comes from.

FREE

Ah, cool, cool.

Silvia grabs a hard copy paper map from her satchel, sprawls it out over the hood of a car.

SILVIA

Maddie, you know how to read a map?

MADDIE

I can learn.

SILVIA

Better learn fast. We're here. The areas with the black X's are towns that aren't rebuilt yet, the roads are hazardous. Avoid them. Follow the blue line path to the red X. Another map will be there waiting. That one will take you where you need to go. Same rules apply. I have to get back before someone tries pinging my car. Good luck, and don't get caught.

Silvia heads for her car. Maddie stops her, holds the chip.

MADDIE

What the hell is so important about this thing?

SILVIA

I can't tell you that. But he can.

Maddie turns to Free, "*him?*"

SILVIA (CONT'D)

(shaking her head)

No, not him.

Silvia gets in the car. Free already has the gate up. He ties the chain off momentarily. Maddie instinctively walks to the muscle cars. Free heads for the Sorento.

FREE

You comin'?

MADDIE

Oh, I thought--

FREE

Nah, we need four-wheel drive for this trip! Hop in!

Maddie gets in. Free turns the engine, Maddie is startled.

MADDIE

Is it... supposed to make that noise?

Free laughs, hands Maddie the map.

FREE

Good thing we didn't grab the other one.

77

EXT. DESERTED ROAD - NIGHT

77

MONTAGE: The Sorento rides off into the night.

Various shots show the destroyed roads and crippled towns. Think Centralia, Pennsylvania, but everywhere.

78

INT. KIA SORENTO - NIGHT

78

Maddie looks at the map and points along the road.

Free, having gone the wrong way, backs up and resets himself.

Maddie starts to nod off, Free pushes her awake.

FREE

You can nod off after we get to the next town. We'll be on that road for a while based on the map.

A WHIRRING sound in the distance. Free stops the car. Turns off the headlights and rolls the seat back.

MADDIE

What? What's going on?

FREE (CONT'D)

Surveillance drones. Shh. Stay still.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

Here?! We're in the middle of nowhere.

FREE

That's the point. Shhh.

Long beat.

Long beat.

FREE (CONT'D)
Should be good.

MADDIE
Can I ask? How did you get roped in with Silvia?

FREE
I don't know how she found me. But she did. Said my goals lined up with her boss, that they wanna end the oppression. Fix the world. I said to them, I said, "Well, shit. My name ain't Free for nothin'."

Maddie smiles and falls into Free's pace.

MADDIE
Where'd they have you shackled?

FREE
Almanac. On the line, building and fixin' the bots. Hours were shit, mandates, all that. They controlled you. Told you when to arrive, when to go to the bathroom, when to go home. Didn't care if your next shift started in three, four hours. Nothing... They wouldn't let me go to my sister's funeral, man. Locked me in the body shop. You believe that? The "cotton" was that important. Then they told me two days later that the next group of rubber-heads were going to be able to repair themselves. That they were downsizing. Take a day off if I needed it. That was it for me. I said, all ya'll motherfuckers gonna get a day off.

It hits Maddie like a ton of bricks.

MADDIE
...You're the Almanac Bomber from the news.

FREE
Hey, I made sure no one was in the building. Just the bots.

Sheesh-- Maddie admires his "*stick it to the man*" approach.

FREE (CONT'D)
How bout you?

MADDIE
Me? I don't even know, it all
happened so fast, I--

A CELLPHONE RINGS.

MADDIE (CONT'D)
What the hell is that?

Free opens the center console to find a burner phone. "Toss after use" is written on it. Free answers. Underneath the phone are flowers. Maddie picks one up, a memory rushes.

UNKNOWN
Good work dodging that drone.

They both start looking out the windows.

UNKNOWN (CONT'D)
This time, I want you to *follow it*.

FREE
What about the second map?

Unknown hangs up. The whirring returns. The drone flies by.

FREE (CONT'D)
Shit. Hol' on.

Free starts up the car again, hits the lights, and floors it.

Maddie puts the flower in her pocket, and closes her eyes.

79

INT. KIA SORENTO - DESERTED ROAD - MORNING

79

Free nods his head on the road as he follows the drone. Maddie's passed out. A FIGURE is standing in the middle of the desert, obscured by heat haze. Free wakes Maddie.

MADDIE
Huh?

FREE
You see that?

MADDIE (CONT'D)
Is that a person?

FREE
I think so.

80

EXT. DESERTED ROAD - MORNING (CONTINUOUS)

80

ANGLE ON the UNKNOWN MAN from behind. The car pulls up.

CLOSE ON MADDIE ENRAGED. She exits the car, bubbling with an intensity we've yet to see. Free exits. Maddie tackles him to the ground. WHAM! Punch after punch, the man doesn't resist.

MADDIE

Is this a sick joke?! A fucking game?! How dare you bring me here!

Free rushes in to pull Maddie off the man.

MADDIE (CONT'D)

(To Free)

Are you in on this?! He's a murderer!

(To Unknown)

Murderer! You killed my--!!

Maddie is resisting, trying to break out of Free's hold.

FREE

Whoa! Calm down.

Unknown sits up, low-angle chest shot. He dusts the sand off his pants and uses his shirt to clean his hands.

UNKNOWN

I didn't kill your dad, Maddie.

TILT UP to find UNKNOWN is **CORBIN LACHES** (Locks). Yes. The most wanted man in the world. 50s, the charisma of Tony Stark and the fortitude of Mark Cuban rolled into a tight package. His gray hair, shaggy beard, and relaxed clothing paint a very different picture than the billboards of yesteryear.

LACHES

Why would I? Don't you remember the old days?

81

EXT. FIELD - DAY (FLASHBACK)

81

The same flashback of Maddie picking flowers, just clearer. The other **MAN** is and always was **LACHES**. Nesto's behind him.

LACHES

You know what those are, Claire?

YOUNG MADDIE

What?

LACHES
Those are Blue Anemones.

YOUNG MADDIE
Ne-Maddies?

LACHES
A-nem-uh-knees. They're said to represent a forgotten love. Keep one in your pocket to protect you from bad things. Just like that.

82

EXT. DESERTED ROAD - MORNING (CONTINUOUS)

82

Maddie takes the blue anemone flower out of her pocket, conflicted. She throws it at the ground and steps on it.

MADDIE
Ten years too late for flowers.

Innocence lost. She's not a little girl anymore. A long knowing beat from Laches. He wipes the blood from his chin.

FREE
Hey, I'm Free. Just saying wassup.

Laches raises a "not now" hand in Free's direction.

LACHES
(to Free)
Read the room. I'm having a moment with my Goddaughter.

His claim of ownership enrages Maddie, she runs at him again.

LACHES (CONT'D)
Stop-- Not healthy for your baby.

Maddie seethes. Retreats.

LACHES (CONT'D)
I don't expect you to trust me. You want proof? It's around your neck.

Maddie grabs her necklace. Looks at the Caduceus on it, and acknowledges the correlation between it and Laches. Laches hits a button on his wrist, and a port hatch to an underground bunker rises from the ground.

MADDIE
So you have something to read this?

ERNESTO, the Antique Shop Owner on 10/10, pops up from below.

ERNESTO

We sure do. Good to see you again.

(long, soft beat)

Did you ever get to draw?

Maddie tears up a bit. It's all so overwhelming. Her quivering face gives Nesto a very complicated "*kinda*." Laches goes to comfort Maddie, she retreats, and bursts.

MADDIE

No! You built those things! You did this! It's your fault! You built--!

ERNESTO

He tried to save him-- To save all of us.

LACHES

I didn't pull that trigger.

MADDIE

(to Laches, stern)

Then. Who. Did.

LACHES

...Quill.

CUT TO BLACK.

TO BE CONTINUED.