

# ALTERED CARBON

Episode #101

"Out of the Past"

Written by

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Based on the novel by Richard K. Morgan

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FADE IN:

1 INT. HAPPY FACE MOTEL - ANOTHER PLANET - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

A shower running in a run-down motel bathroom. Walls covered with peeling wallpaper; floors cracked and stained.

Neon light flashes through the window. The shower door is semi-opaque, bright gelatin colors move like an oil slick over the glass.

Through the glass, a SILHOUETTE of a MAN AND WOMAN, NUDE, showering. Hands roving, washing each other under the spray.

O.G. KOVACS (V.O.)  
*The first thing she taught us, is  
that nothing is what it seems.*

*INSIDE THE SHOWER -- the Man and Woman are actually washing  
BLOOD off each other's bodies.*

Their movements are business-like, fast, not remotely sexual. As blood swirls down the shower drain, revealing their bare skin, we see these two aren't wounded -- they're splattered with someone else's blood.

A lot of other people's blood.

On the shower floor -- A HAPHAZARD PILE OF SMALL METAL DISCS.

Each disc about the size of a cervical vertebrae, and roughly the same shape; thick in the center, tapering on the edges. Smearred with blood and flecks of bone.

The discs are CORTICAL DATASTACKS, simply called STACKS.

The Man -- call him ORIGINAL (O.G.) KOVACS -- detaches the showerhead, starts rinsing the stacks. He's Asian ancestry, strong and lean, a body built for fighting. The Woman, SARAH, watches --

SARAH  
(re: the stacks)  
Who do you think they are?

O.G. KOVACS  
Who cares? They're Triad. Worth a fortune. Get the bone flecks out of the drain, will you?

SARAH  
Have you always been such a dick?

O.G. KOVACS  
Every sleeve, every time.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

Sarah shoves him up against the shower wall.

She grabs his arm, roughly -- we see THE TATTOO ON HIS FOREARM: a snake devouring its own tail, the mythical OUROBOROS. Plain black ink, beautiful detail but monochromatic.

SARAH

Don't worry. You got nothing to give. Neither do I.

They start having sex. There's no tenderness between them -- like watching buddies wrestling to let off steam. Recreational, not emotional.

O.G. KOVACS (V.O.)

*It happened every time, no matter who I was with...*

ON O.G. KOVACS, as he closes his eyes --

O.G. KOVACS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*I closed my eyes, and all I could see was her.*

**FLASH TO** -- POV O.G. KOVACS: Looking down at A DIFFERENT WOMAN'S FACE. Soon, we'll know who this is: QUELL. Beautiful, in a wild, fierce way. She smiles up as they make love --

**BACK TO** -- SARAH AND O.G. KOVACS, his eyes shut, almost desperate. The neon light washes over their coupling bodies.

ANGLE ON THE STACKS, glittering like lost treasure, piled on the cracked shower floor. Blood swirling off them, down the drain.

2 **INT. HAPPY FACE MOTEL - BATHROOM - LATER**

A floor-to-ceiling 3-D MIRROR takes up one wall. O.G. Kovacs wipes steam from its surface -- his REFLECTION snaps into focus, a HOLOGRAM emerging toward him from the glass.

O.G. KOVACS (V.O.)

*But she had been dead a long time.*

POV O.G. KOVACS: staring at himself in the mirror. A pile of his clothes on the counter next to him. Atop the clothes, a thin blue strand knotted on itself, strung with what look like teal-and-white carved beads (this is a Songspire bud branch, thin and flexible as the strands of a weeping willow).

O.G. Kovacs still staring at himself, like he's looking at a stranger --

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

**FLASH TO** -- *Quell's face, looking at him calmly on a screen, her face sad but iron-jaw determined. Vague impression from the background that she's in some kind of SHUTTLE --*

QUELL  
(almost a whisper,  
tender)  
Tak...

*-- Then suddenly her face is CONSUMED with exploding fire before she even has time to feel it, much less scream --*

**BACK TO** -- O.G. KOVACS, see he's now holding the Songspire strand in one hand, fingers moving over the buds in an unconscious pattern. Eyes glazed, unfocused.

He looks away from the mirror, digs almost frantically in his clothes for a vial of pills. Different shapes and sizes. Downs a handful in a gulp. Shakes out a cigarette and thumbs it, self-lighting tip glowing.

Smoke winds around him as he leans against the wall, head tilted back, trying to chase the nightmares out of his head. RACK FOCUS to the Songspire strand, sitting on the counter, smoke drifting down over it.

3 **INT. HAPPY FACE MOTEL - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

O.G. Kovacs and Sarah sleep, backs turned to each other in the bed with garish, glittering sheets. The rest of the room as gritty as the bathroom -- a kitchenette with a fridge, stove, ratty cabinets.

Outside the window, TWO MOONS visible in the sky.

O.S. A FAINT METAL CLACK -- O.G. Kovacs' eyes snap open. Wide, unfocused. Listening --

POV O.G. KOVACS ENVOY-VISION: building an image in his head based on the tiny sounds he's hearing --

4 **INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE MOTEL ROOM - ENVOY COMBAT-VISION**

*VFX: CLICKS sketch into RIFLES; RUSTLING MOVEMENTS expand to show SHOCKTROOPERS in the hallway, every shift of a boot or a hand expanding to show how many people are there --*

5 **INT. HAPPY FACE MOTEL - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

O.G. Kovacs wakes Sarah, a whisper in her ear, calm but this is some serious shit --

O.G. KOVACS  
SIA Shocktroopers, 12, fully armed.  
Lethal loads.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

SARAH

You can't know something like that --

O.G. KOVACS

Get dressed. Now.

Sarah hesitates -- then swiftly pulls on pants and shirt, heads for the kitchenette. O.G. Kovacs cocks his head, hearing a series of TINY CLICKS --

O.G. KOVACS (CONT'D)

Semtex-29 arc flare breacher. Two seconds or less.

SARAH

Jesus Christ, who are you --

KERRBLOOOMMMM!!! The entire wall of the motel room EXPLODES inward like thunder --

MAN'S VOICE

(booming)

*Takeshi Kovacs!*

Through the swirling fog of dust and debris --

SHOCKTROOPERS appear, full armor, insectile-eyed helmets, snub-nosed Kalashnikov 2000's (an evolution of the AK-47).

SARAH THROWS him two guns, DIVES for the other weapons --

O.G. KOVACS catches the pistols in midair, whirls as --

LEAD TROOPER

(voice amplified by helmet)

You're under arrest --

BLAMBLAMBLAM!!! Sarah and O.G. Kovacs both OPEN FIRE at the same instant, diving for cover in opposite directions.

THE SHOCKTROOPERS storm in, AK-2000's blazing fire, shredding the walls, the furniture, turning the room into a KILL ZONE --

ON O.G. KOVACS as he leaps, twists, jumps, firing the whole time --

*POV O.G. KOVACS as he fights -- VFX ENVOY-VISION, which gives him a fast, violent SKETCH of each Trooper's movements an instant before it happens, his opponent's blows as phantom limbs made of spiderweb-like material, a split-second "precognition" of every shot, every blow, every move.*

Kovacs is fast, brutal, every blow landing with laser precision, every advantage taken, no matter how cruel.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (2)

Street fighting meets commando skills with no mercy and no quarter.

**IN THE KITCHENETTE --**

SARAH is pinned behind the overturned refrigerator, gunfire thundering around her -- she glances over at --

THE KITCHEN TABLE -- THE REST OF THE WEAPONS still atop it.

She takes a deep breath, KICKS OUT, foot smashing into a table-leg -- the weapons go FLYING, including A GRENADE --

BLAMBLAMBLAM! The Troopers fire at the movement, table EXPLODES into hunks of melting plastic, she scrambles back -- at the same time neatly catching the grenade as it falls.

Sarah rips the pin with her teeth, LOBS the grenade --

LEAD TROOPER (CONT'D)

(shouts)

Get down -- !

KERRCRACKKK! The grenade EXPLODES in a halo of searing light that BLASTS over the room at head-height --

THE LEAD TROOPER is already flat on the floor, but --

THE REST OF THE TROOPERS are caught as the blast wave ENGULFS their helmets, clanging like a crackling web of fire.

The Troopers stagger, clawing as the helmets spark and smoke, screaming, collapsing --

O.G. KOVACS sweeps up a fallen Kalashnikov, but --

THE LEAD TROOPER launches himself from the floor, SLAMS into Kovacs, they both go HURTLING --

**INTO THE BATHROOM**

-- Where they CRASH into the MIRRORED WALL. It SHATTERS, glass and circuitry spilling in a bright silver rain everywhere --

ANGLE ON SARAH as she rolls from behind the fridge, comes up in a crouch, shard pistol trained on the Lead Trooper --

BLAMBLAMBLAM!!! SARAH flies sideways, riddled with bullets -- MORE TROOPERS storm through the gaping hole in the wall.

O.G. KOVACS hesitates, distracted by Sarah's fallen body --

-- And the Lead Trooper SHOOTs him high in the leg, ATTACKS fast and brutal, bringing O.G. Kovacs to the floor.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (3)

LEAD TROOPER (CONT'D)  
You are charged with treason against  
the Protectorate, and working for  
the terrorist Quellcris Falconer.

Kovacs spits blood. Defiant.

O.G. KOVACS  
I didn't work "for" her. It was  
more like an autonomous collective.

The Lead Trooper KICKS him in the leg again, savagely. O.G.  
Kovacs bites back a scream of agony.

The Lead Trooper takes off his helmet so we can see his face.  
He jerks O.G. Kovacs' face down from behind so his neck is  
exposed. A thin PINK SCAR at the base of O.G. Kovacs' skull.  
Puts his gun to it --

O.G. KOVACS (CONT'D)  
(snarling)  
Go ahead, fucking do it --

The Lead Trooper jerks O.G. Kovacs' head up by the hair.  
Frustrated.

LEAD TROOPER  
(through gritted teeth)  
I got orders not to make you into a  
martyr.

The Troopers drag Sarah's body up to the Lead Trooper.

LEAD TROOPER (CONT'D)  
But they didn't say anything about  
this bitch.

O.G. KOVACS  
She's nobody, a local merc, she  
doesn't even know who I am. Leave  
her alone.

The Lead Trooper shoves her limp head forward, exposing the  
same spot on the back of the neck that we saw on O.G. Kovacs,  
same hairline scar.

LEAD TROOPER  
Sleeve's fragged, but stack's ok.  
She could live.

O.G. KOVACS  
I said, leave her alone --

The Trooper snaps his gun against the base of her skull --

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (4)

BLAMM! He shoots her at the base of the skull -- *strangely, there's a bright SPARKING FLASH of metal hitting metal.*

O.G. KOVACS (CONT'D)  
You had to go and be a dick.

O.G. KOVACS lurches to his feet, ignoring his leg wounds.

LEAD TROOPER  
(sharply)  
Stay down, Kovacs.

But O.G. Kovacs keeps coming -- *something about what the Trooper did to Sarah has enraged him beyond all reason.*

O.G. KOVACS  
(a growl)  
Fuck you.

THE TROOPER FIRES -- the muzzle FLASHES -- O.G. KOVACS looks down at the clean hole cauterized in his chest, the edge of his heart visible, blood pumping down his chest --

-- And O.G. Kovacs reaches into his chest, holding his heart with his own hand to stop the bleeding.

O.G. Kovacs looks up, eyes blazing, fixing on the Trooper.

LEAD TROOPER  
(suddenly scared)  
I said fucking stay down -- !

With a ROAR, O.G. Kovacs LAUNCHES himself like a wild animal --

ALL THE TROOPERS open fire on him, a BARRAGE that sends O.G. Kovacs HURLING back through the air --

6 **INT. HAPPY FACE MOTEL - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

-- To crash into the splintered MIRROR in the bathroom.

O.G. Kovacs lies bleeding and broken against the sparkling wall... blood on the mirror shards on the floor.

POV O.G. KOVACS, lying on the floor, seeing SHOCKTROOPER BOOTS striding toward him -- a boot CRUSHES the Songspire strand to blue dust without noticing.

O.G. Kovacs weakly turns his head toward the shattered mirror --

-- And the last thing he sees is THE BROKEN REFLECTION OF HIS OWN FACE, splintered image staring back at him --

SMASH TO BLACK.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

FADE UP ON:

A MAN'S FACE. Eyes SHUT. Features UNNATURALLY DISTORTED -- like we're looking at him UNDERWATER.

O.G. KOVACS (V.O.)

*Coming back from the dead is a bitch.*

The Man's eyes suddenly SNAP OPEN. Going wider, reveal --

7 **INT. PSYCHASEC ALCATRAZ RESLEEING FACILITY - DAY**

-- He's inside a THICK TRANSPARENT PLASTIC SAC filled with a GEL-LIKE LIQUID. A cheap, "disposable packaging" feel to the sac, which is lying on a battered slab.

O.G. KOVACS (V.O.)

*Every fucking time.*

We're in a MUNICIPAL FACILITY built inside the shell of the former ALCATRAZ PRISON -- giving us the instant sense that Kovacs is a prisoner here.

MEDTECH 1 and A TRAINEE approach the plastic sac, Trainee bringing up a wheelchair.

MEDTECH 1

They can barely walk at first, you'll have to pull him out of the NutriSac and lift him into the chair.

TRAINEE

Do I at least get gloves or something? I'm gonna get that shit all over me.

MEDTECH 1

You'll get used to it. Just decant him. We've got four more to do in the next hour.

The Trainee pulls a RED TAB on the side of the sac, ripping it open along a pre-made seam -- the GEL spills out in thick mucilaginous blobs as the Trainee grimaces, reaches to grab the Man by the shoulders --

-- And the Man SUDDENLY THRASHES violently, fighting the fluid, tears away the rest of the plastic and HEAVES himself off the slab, crashing to the floor, vomiting gel then taking in a huge gulp of air.

TRAINEE

What the fuck -- is that normal?

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

MEDTECH 1

Don't panic. Sometimes they flop around like fish, usually means their last sleeve died violently. Just get him in the chair.

The Man CLAWS at his chest, gasping in pain --

**FLASH TO** -- *O.G. KOVACS being shot in the chest* --

**BACK TO** -- The Man gasps, reliving the shot to the chest -- yet he's not O.G. Kovacs. *What the hell... ?*

TRAINEE

(freaked, backing away)

You get him in the chair.

O.G. KOVACS (V.O.)

*You come off slab like something being born, helpless and disoriented...*

Meet the new TAKESHI KOVACS: nude and slick, we can see he's handsome, face rugged and weathered, body chiseled with the unmistakable physique that comes only from combat.

MEDTECH 1 comes to his side, roughly takes his arm --

MEDTECH 1

All right buddy, enough of that --

O.G. KOVACS (V.O.)

*... Unless you're one of us.*

KOVACS REACTS, blinding speed, jerks the Medtech's arm down hard, KICKS OUT to send him crashing into the slab -- blood seeping through his hands as he clutches his nose --

MEDTECH 1

(muffled, in pain)

Shit!

TRAINEE

Help! We need help --

2 MORE MEDTECHS come running --

MEDTECH 1

He broke my goddamned nose!  
Fucking Rerun went mental on me --

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (2)

MEDTECH 2

(to Kovacs)

We're going to have to sedate you if you don't stop, you hear me?

MEDTECH 1

I am fucking bleeding here!

MEDTECH 2

Will you shut up?

Kovacs is in a loose crouch, eyes blazing, light on his feet as he looks from Medtech 2 to Medtech 3, sizing them up --

Medtech 2 swings out a telescoping baton, starts toward Kovacs --

MEDTECH 2 (CONT'D)

Listen asshole, I said calm down --

Medtech 3 is sweeping through the holofile records --

MEDTECH 3

(realizing)

He was freighted in from U.N. Supermax Holding on Epsilon 5.

(suddenly frightened)

Who the fuck is this guy?

Kovacs sweeps out a kick, catches Medtech 2, who goes down -- Kovacs slams an arm over his throat, CHOKING him.

KOVACS

(rasping, hoarse)

How long have I been down?

Other Medtechs rush in with what look like CATTLE PRODS, the ends sparking with current, ready to put him down -- they stop at the sight of Kovacs with his arm over Medtech 2.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

I'll snap his spine with my bare fucking hands before you can take me down. Now look in the goddamned file and tell me how fucking long have I been down?

The Medtechs look hesitantly at each other, unsure --

TRAINEE

(blurts out)

Five hundred years.

KOVACS

Get me a mirror.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (3)

MEDTECH 3

(glares at the Trainee)  
You need time to adjust to the new  
sleeve, too fast and you risk schism  
or even a psychotic break --

MEDTECH 1

(overlapping)  
He's already fucking psychotic!

MEDTECH 2

(choking)  
Gargh -- let -- breathe --

Kovacs looks through matted, wet hair, burning eyes fixed straight on the Trainee, at the same time bearing down harder on Medtech 2, who is starting to turn RED, eyes BULGING --

KOVACS

Get. Me. A mirror.

The Trainee scrambles over to a fallen instrument table, grabs up a small mirror, hurries back --

-- And Kovacs SNATCHES the mirror, shoving Medtech 2 away, who crab-scuttles back, choking and gasping for air.

ANGLE ON KOVACS as he raises the mirror --

O.G. KOVACS (V.O.)

*Rapid sleeve acclimation. Another  
thing she taught us.*

KOVACS' POV: a different face than his own looking back at him from the mirror --

-- THE FACE OF O.G. KOVACS staring back at him.

The Medtech and Trainee stare uneasily at Kovacs, apparently waiting for some kind of collapse or outburst.

He just keeps his eyes fixed on the mirror, staring... and then it happens.

IN THE MIRROR: a FLICKER of something in the glass, rushing up behind the O.G. Kovacs' reflection like an oncoming train --

O.G. KOVACS (CONT'D)

*Whatever body you were wearing --*

ON KOVACS, staring in the mirror at "O.G. KOVACS'" reflection, seeing HIS "NEW" FACE moving up fast behind it.

SFX O.G. KOVACS' VOICE BECOMING TWO VOICES, BOTH O.G. KOVACS AND THE NEW KOVACS --

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (4)

O.G. KOVACS & KOVACS (V.O.)  
(voices in perfect sync)  
-- You shed it like a snake sheds  
its skin --

HIS NEW FACE SLAMS into O.G. KOVACS' FACE from behind, the features DISTORTING and RIPPLING as they reform --

-- And it hits him like the force of a BLOW, as the face in the mirror CHANGES into the NEW KOVACS.

Now BOTH the reflection and the voice are ONLY NEW KOVACS (our main actor) -- the visual and vocal transformation are simultaneous.

KOVACS (V.O.)  
-- *And your new sleeve becomes who you are.*

Kovacs takes a single staggered step back, like he's been gut-punched -- then straightens. Fine. Controlled and calm.

He looks around -- he's now surrounded by Medtechs, bristling with their taser-poles. They're nervous, sweating. Scared. Kovacs looks to the Trainee --

KOVACS (CONT'D)  
Thanks for the mirror.

They start toward him, Medtech 1 motions hastily to stop --

MEDTECH 1  
No, leave him, we're not supposed to damage him --

MEDTECH 2  
Damage him?

Medtech 2 staggers to his feet.

MEDTECH 2 (CONT'D)  
You almost fucking killed me, man!

KOVACS  
You're lucky I was in a good mood.  
I hate being shot.

MED TECH 3  
(shocked, disbelieving)  
Most people would embolize if they tried to transition that fast.

KOVACS  
Don't sound so disappointed.  
Where am I?

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (5)

MEDTECH 2  
Bay City. Alcatraz prison.

KOVACS  
What planet, genius?

MEDTECH 3  
Earth.  
(a little disdain)  
The most civilized of all worlds,  
capitol of the Free Worlds  
Protectorate.

KOVACS  
Lucky me.

Kovacs takes a step -- they all fall back, looking scared.

KOVACS (CONT'D)  
Relax. Which way's the shower?

8 **INT. ALCATRAZ - SHOWERS - DAY**

Kovacs showers, steam rising around him. Movements precise, efficient as he rinses clean.

More NUDE PEOPLE stumble in -- unlike Kovacs, they move like clumsy toddlers as they try to wash off the tank gel. Most are older, or junkie-thin, strangely unhealthy looking.

Prelap a WOMAN'S VOICE, warm and professionally reassuring --

ORIENTATION WOMAN (PRELAPPED)  
*Welcome to Alcatraz, and  
congratulations on finishing your  
prison sentence!*

Kovacs looks down at his body: a web of SCARS radiate over his hand. He flexes, turning his arm, following scars that snake up his shoulder. MORE SCARS on his back, his chest --

ORIENTATION WOMAN (PRELAPPED) (CONT'D)  
*You may notice that you are not in  
the same body you arrived in.*

9 **INT. ALCATRAZ - RECOVERY ROOM - DAY**

AN ORIENTATION WOMAN stands on a dais in the middle of a shabby RECOVERY ROOM. More PATIENTS sit. She's officious, cheery, annoying. Doesn't make eye contact with anyone.

ORIENTATION WOMAN  
For maximum profit and efficiency,  
Alcatraz Prison is owned and run by  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

ORIENTATION WOMAN (CONT'D)  
 Psychasec Galactic Corp. Now that  
 you have paid your debt to society,  
 you have been resleeved in whatever  
 body this facility had on hand.

Kovacs sits in the back, his black clothing well-cut,  
 expensive but functional.

ORIENTATION WOMAN (CONT'D)  
 You may feel confused or strange.

A YOUNG WOMAN stares catatonically at a tress of her  
 unfamiliar, blond hair. Next to her a MAN pinches at the  
 skin of his arm as if checking to see if it's real.

ORIENTATION WOMAN (CONT'D)  
 Disorientation and even low-grade  
 amnesia are normal...

PUSH IN ON KOVACS as the Orientation Woman's voice FADES,  
 and Quell's VOICE rises --

QUELL (V.O.)  
*It all began when we discovered Elder  
 Civilization ruins, hidden on every  
 world.*

10 **INT. GUERRILLA HIDEOUT - DAY - FLASHBACK**

*A chamber deep in the alien ruins. RAG-TAG ENVOY RECRUITS  
 listening with rapt attention to QUELL -- the Woman that  
 Kovacs remembers making love to.*

QUELL  
*An extinct civilization that left a  
 wealth of technology -- including  
 the alloy we used to make these.*

*She SLAPS A CORTICAL STACK down on the table in front of her  
 (the same type of discs we saw in the shower in the opening).*

QUELL (CONT'D)  
*The cortical stack. Your own personal  
 hard drive of the soul.*

*Among the Recruits, find O.G. KOVACS (younger than in the  
 opening, with the ouroboros tattoo on his forearm). Also  
 VIDAURA, GOMEZ, and JIMMY DESOTO, who we'll come to know.  
 All young and desperate.*

*Next to O.G. Kovacs is a beautiful Asian woman, deceptively  
 delicate-looking -- Kovacs' OLDER SISTER, REILEEN.*

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

*QUELL (CONT'D)*

*Human consciousness became software.  
Bodies became sleeves. I should  
know. I invented stacks.*

***INTERCUT WITH PRESENT DAY -- ORIENTATION WOMAN AT ALCATRAZ:***

The Orientation Woman holds out a hand, and A CORTICAL STACK rezzes into existence, floating right above her palm.

ORIENTATION WOMAN

Inside the stack is the pure human  
mind, coded and stored as DHF --  
Digital Human Freight.

The Orientation Woman flickers like a bad tv signal -- then re-rezzes into existence, now with her back to us.

Her head becomes TRANSPARENT, showing the spine and skeleton inside -- and the stack rises from her hand as she rotates, slotting into a VERTEBRA at the base of her skull. *The same place the Trooper shot Sarah.*

ORIENTATION WOMAN (CONT'D)

Your consciousness can be downloaded  
into any stack, in any sleeve.

She flickers out of existence, then re-rezzes facing the room again. Smiling blandly.

ORIENTATION WOMAN (CONT'D)

You can even needlecast in minutes  
to a sleeve anywhere in the Known  
Worlds.

11 ***INT. GUERRILLA HIDEOUT - DAY - FLASHBACK***

*Reileen looks to Quell, accusing, angry --*

*REILEEN*

*So the rise of the Protectorate is  
your fault?*

*QUELL*

*I thought I was giving humanity a  
way to travel instantly between the  
stars.*

*REILEEN*

*Instead you were building the roads  
for the Roman Empire. Why the fuck  
should we listen to a word you say?*

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

O.G. KOVACS  
(hand on her arm)  
Rei --

QUELL  
No, she's right. What's your name,  
Recruit?

REILEEN  
Reileen Kawahara. This is my brother,  
Takeshi Kovacs.

O.G. KOVACS  
We're from Harlan's World. What's  
left of it.

Quell looks over the Recruits.

QUELL  
We were the transitional generation.  
The first to have stacks. The  
Protectorate promised us immortality,  
but delivered total control, ruthless  
and merciless. And worse is coming.  
(answering Reileen's  
question)  
You should listen to me because I  
can teach you how to fight back.

12 INT. ALCATRAZ - RECOVERY ROOM - DAY

As she speaks, Kovacs tenses, sensing without looking --  
FOUR HUGE ORDERLIES have come up behind him.

ORIENTATION WOMAN  
A sleeve is replaceable -- but if  
your stack is destroyed, you die.  
There's no coming back from Real  
Death.

An OFFICIOUS SUITED MAN joins the Orderlies. Silhouetted in  
the darkened room.

DIRECTOR SULLIVAN  
I'm Director Sullivan. I don't want  
to know your name. Let's go.

KOVACS  
(re: Orientation Woman)  
Shh, she's just getting to the good  
part.

The Director nods to the Orderlies, who step up around Kovacs.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

DIRECTOR SULLIVAN

Now.

Kovacs looks at the hulking Orderlies -- shrugs, gets up to go with the Director. As they exit the darkened room --

ORIENTATION WOMAN

(chirpily, smiling)

So avoid blunt force trauma to the base of the brain, or energy weapons fired at your head. We recommend you don't drive heavy machinery or make any life-altering decisions in the next few days. Congratulations on the new you!

13 **INT. ALCATRAZ - CORRIDORS - DAY**

Director Sullivan walks with Kovacs through the corridors, past repurposed cell blocks, the barred doors hanging open, unused.

The Director opens a holoscreen in front of them as they continue to walk.

DIRECTOR SULLIVAN

This is your parole document. Certifying that your DHF has been sleeved in a body equipped with military-grade neurachem, combat muscle memory, and fitted with an ONI.

KOVACS

ONI? That sounds like sushi.

DIRECTOR SULLIVAN

Ocular Neural Interface.

He hands Kovacs a wristband with a thin, matte black rectangle, a single blue dot glowing in the middle.

DIRECTOR SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

Here's the remote hub. Thumbprint-keyed.

Curious, Kovacs slips the wristband on, thumbs the blue dot -- and one of his eyes REFLECTS, a glimmering circle around the edge of the retina.

POV KOVACS as he sees a range of options around the edges of his vision -- like a smartphone directly in his eye. The hub glows with a simple, elegant interface.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

KOVACS

Contact lens HUD. Fancy.

DIRECTOR SULLIVAN

Those were the specs we were given  
by your lease-holder. Bancroft  
Industries.

KOVACS

Who?

DIRECTOR SULLIVAN

You have questions, ask Bancroft.  
You're his problem now, not mine.  
But if you don't do what he wants?  
You come right back here for the  
rest of your sentence.

POV KOVACS as they pass SHACKLED PRISONERS being led past.  
He meets the eyes of a PRISONER leaning against the wall,  
smoking a cigarette as a Guard waits impatiently.

MALE PRISONER

(to Kovacs, shrugs)

Gotta put it in neutral, brother.  
Let it coast.

(takes a deep drag)

Not like I'm gonna use these lungs  
again. So who cares, yeah?

Kovacs looks back to the Director.

KOVACS

Real humane.

DIRECTOR SULLIVAN

You commit a crime, you go into  
storage and your body belongs to the  
state to do what we want with. That's  
how it is.

KOVACS

What about rights?

DIRECTOR SULLIVAN

Someone like you? You don't have  
any.

They walk past ANOTHER PRISONER, sobbing and thrashing as  
he's dragged down the corridor.

KOVACS

Good to know.

They reach a pair of opaque glass sliding doors.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED: (2)

DIRECTOR SULLIVAN  
Bancroft's sent someone to pick you  
up in the Re-Meet hall. But I'll  
see you again soon.

KOVACS  
I'm touched by your faith in me.

DIRECTOR SULLIVAN  
I read your file. Felony stack theft,  
organic damage, murder -- and that's  
the part that wasn't redacted. You're  
a recidivist. You'll be back, and  
you'll be locked up for good, where  
you belong. I may not know your  
name. But I know people like you.

KOVACS  
There aren't any other people like  
me. Not anymore.

The doors slide open, and Kovacs strides out, leaving the  
Orderlies and the baffled Director behind.

14 **INT. ALCATRAZ - RE-MEET HALL - DAY**

Kovacs emerges into A VAST OUTER HALL that forms the exit to  
the building --

THE RE-MEET HALL. At the opposite end of the hall, automatic  
doors slide open to reveal a bright day outside -- Kovacs  
glimpses a noisy DEMONSTRATION, SHOUTING and SIGN-WAVING  
visible for an instant before the doors slide closed again.

Kovacs glances around -- BENCHES scattered, PEOPLE sitting  
or milling. Their eyes on the doors from the clinic.  
Nervous.

A trickle of NEWLY-SLEEVED PEOPLE emerge, blinking in the  
light, stunned, disoriented.

15 **INT. RESLEEING FACILITY - HARLAN'S WORLD - FLASHBACK**

*YOUNG TAKESHI KOVACS (12) and his older sister REILEEN (16)  
stand in a crowded Re-Meet hall, older tech but still  
recognizable. Young Takeshi's eyes dart back and forth as  
he searches the crowd EMERGING from the clinic.*

*YOUNG TAKESHI  
Do you see Dad yet?*

*YOUNG REILEEN  
Not yet. But he'll be here.*

*Off Young Takeshi, eyes searching --*

## 16 INT. ALCATRAZ - RE-MEET HALL - DAY

An OLDER JUNKIE WOMAN approaches a FAMILY. They crane past her, looking at the doors, until she greets the FATHER --

OLD JUNKIE WOMAN

Daddy...?  
(off his blank look)  
It's me.

FATHER

Cindy?

She starts crying as the Family looks at her in disbelief verging on horror. The Father grabs a passing SECURITY GUARD --

FATHER (CONT'D)

Our girl was murdered in a hit-and-run! Law says she gets a free sleeve --  
(indicates the Junkie)  
Cindy is seven years old!

SECURITY GUARD

(tired, he does this  
a lot)  
This is what we had in inventory.  
You don't like it, you can pay for  
an upgrade or put her back in storage.

Kovacs passes by, not staring, but listening, absorbing, as he goes by --

THE JUNKIE WOMAN clings to the Mother, skinny fingers clutching desperately.

CINDY

I don't want to go back into the  
dark, Mommy.

BACK ON KOVACS, headed for the door -- as A WOMAN in MIRRORED GLASSES unfolds herself from a bench, lithe as a cat. She crosses to meet Kovacs. She's Latina, with a beautiful, unselfconscious strength about her.

Getting a good look at Kovacs, she stops short, something about her reaction to Kovacs seems off for an instant... nervous, surprised, something.

But she quickly covers. Smiles, chatty.

ORTEGA

(extends her hand)  
Kristin Ortega. I'm taking you to  
the Bancroft residence.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

They shake, she keeps pumping his hand, holding on maybe a fraction longer than necessary.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

Welcome to Bay City! You're going to love it here.

Kovacs extricates his hand. Not loving the enthusiasm. As they start walking, Ortega chats animatedly --

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

The car's right outside. You're good to go, right? Since if you had bags, you left them on another planet a few centuries ago.

KOVACS

She drives and she's funny. Jackpot.

ORTEGA

You're not even sleeve-sick. I'm impressed. How long ago did they decant you?

KOVACS

Long enough.

ORTEGA

(as they move to the doors)

Keep your head down, there's a little spirited public debate going on outside. But don't worry. I do a little security work on the side. I'll protect you.

KOVACS

Good. I deplore violence.

They exit through the doors --

17 **EXT. PSYCHASEC ALCATRAZ - DAY**

-- Into the middle of a RAUCOUS DEMONSTRATION. Kovacs is swept into the crowd, an almost surreal immersion into yelling and jostling bodies, people shoving pamphlets into his hand and SHOUTING into his face.

TWO GROUPS OF PROTESTORS with holographic placards and pamphlets, SHOUTING at each other and anyone else who comes near them. (Think the energy, fervor, and anger of pro-life and pro-choice demonstrators outside a clinic.)

The ANTI-653 SIDE wear crosses, carry signs saying things like *YOU CANNOT DIGITIZE THE SOUL*.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

The PRO-653 SIDE carry pamphlets with images of VICTIMS OF CRIMES.

As Kovacs and Ortega push their way through, we can make out a little bit through the cacophony: "Stop Resolution 653!" "You cannot store the soul in a stack!" "Yes on 653!" "Victims have the right to speak!"

As he and Ortega clear the edge of the demonstration, one of the Demonstrators gets up in Kovacs' face and YELLS --

DEMONSTRATOR

God is watching! And he will judge your sins!

KOVACS

That's gonna keep him busy a while.

Ortega takes him to a LIMO that's hovering nearby. She hits the car alarm, it CHIRPS and the car settles to the ground, doors opening.

18 **EXT. LIMO (TRAVELING) - DAY**

Wide on the city as the limo flies over Bay City.

19 **INT. LIMO (TRAVELING) - DAY**

The windows are all opaqued, except for the front windshield, which is showing mostly sky. Ortega drives, continuing to talk a mile a minute.

ORTEGA

Sorry about that. Neo-Catholics, they're fucking lunatics, and 653 has them coming out of the woodwork --

Kovacs is glancing at one of the pamphlets, rows of HOLO-IMAGES of mostly YOUNG WOMEN. YES ON 653: Let The Dead Speak! Is printed below their faces.

KOVACS

What's 653?

ORTEGA

It's a test case just went through U.N. court, something about spinning up murder victims in VR to testify who killed them. But the church says once your birth sleeve dies, you're in the hands of God -- spin up your stack and your soul is damned.

Kovacs is thumbing through the pamphlet -- ANGLE ON ROWS OF FACES, mostly young beautiful women.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

*[Note: We don't pay much attention now, but these faces will matter later.]*

KOVACS

So these victims -- their stacks  
just stay on ice forever?

ORTEGA

And whoever killed them walks away.  
Neo-C's have religious exemption  
coding on their stacks, makes it  
illegal to spin them back up -- 653  
was supposed to change that, but the  
court threw it out. The Archdiocese  
is happy though -- they say it's  
better the murder go unsolved than  
the victim's soul go to hell.

(glances at him in  
the mirror)

What do you think?

KOVACS

I think no one in the Archdiocese  
has ever been murdered. Violent  
death will do wonders for your  
perspective.

ORTEGA

Is that experience talking? I mean,  
no offense, but whatever you did, it  
must have been pretty bad -- down  
for close to five hundred years,  
they said. What were you in for?

KOVACS

A little of this, a little of that.  
Blew some shit up, killed some people.

ORTEGA

Why?

KOVACS

Some people just need killing.

ORTEGA

Any particular way you decide who  
dies?

KOVACS

Depends on the day. Anything can  
set me off -- interstellar  
dictatorship, genocide, people who  
talk too much.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: (2)

Ortega seems cheerfully undeterred by the jab. Or oblivious. It's hard to tell.

ORTEGA

Making conversation's just part of the job. You work for Bancroft, you do what you're told. So what does he want with you?

KOVACS

No fucking clue. I don't even know who the man is.

ORTEGA

You have been under a while. Everybody knows Laurens Bancroft. He's one of the richest men in the Protectorate, powerful, influential -- he's a Meth, of course --

KOVACS

A what?

ORTEGA

Meth. You know -- "Methuselahs." From the bible?

20 **EXT. LIMO (TRAVELING) - DAY**

The limo moves through a cloud layer --

ORTEGA (O.S.)

*"And the days of Methuselah were nine hundred and sixty-nine years."*

-- And the limo emerges ABOVE the clouds, where gleaming spired buildings pierce the cloud layer and rise high above it, like palaces built for new and unimaginable gods.

ORTEGA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

*Laurens Bancroft is five hundred and thirty-two years old.*

21 **INT. LIMO (TRAVELING) - DAY**

Kovacs is craning out to see the skyline through the windshield.

KOVACS

How can people live that long now? Back when I come from, resleeve too many times and you'd eventually go a little nuts.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

ORTEGA

Not if you resleeve right back into your own body. Growing a single clone still costs more than most people make in a lifetime. A lot more. But the ultrawealthy -- and that's the Meths -- can afford multiple clones. They resleeve themselves, one lifetime after another.

KOVACS

What about everybody else?

ORTEGA

We scrape by. People get hurt or get old, they resleeve if they can in whatever they can afford, but like you say, can't do it too many times or...

She makes a "kaboom" motion with her hand at her temple.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

Maybe that's why Meths like to live up here, they call it the Aerium. The rest of us seem pretty small to them. Our tiny, quick little lives. But if you were around that long ago, you must have been alive when stacks were invented.

KOVACS

Yeah. You got any cigarettes?

ORTEGA

You kidding? That shit will kill you.

KOVACS

Not a big issue for me right now.

22 **EXT. SUNTOUCH HOUSE - DAY**

A huge, luxurious estate rising high above the clouds, the tallest by far of the many Meth super-high structures. A tasteful combo of manicured green lawns and gravel. The sprawling grounds go on for acres, cantilevered over the abyss of sky that seems to go on forever below.

ORTEGA (V.O.)

*What was it like? Before stacks?*

Below the soaring, graceful architecture of Suntouch House, CLOUDS drift like a moving landscape.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

KOVACS (V.O.)

*Simpler.*

THE LIMO banks down toward the estate, descending toward a PUTTING GREEN near the house.

23 INT. LIMO (TRAVELING) - DAY

ORTEGA

So -- home planet, that kind of thing?  
Where were you born?

KOVACS

Not here.

ORTEGA

You want to know why Bancroft thawed you, I'm wondering the same thing. What does the man who literally has everything want with a popsicle from half a millennia ago?

KOVACS

You really do have a way with words.

ORTEGA

My *abuela*, she always said, Kristin, you can find a way to talk to anybody.

KOVACS

Especially if they're trapped in a car with you.

Kovacs looks at the rapidly approaching ground -- there's an edge to Ortega's voice as she wrestles with the controls --

ORTEGA

Listen, *pendejo*. I want to help you. I mean, you're a felon, Bancroft has you by the brainstem. Do what he wants or go back on ice. He owns you... but what the hell does he want?

KOVACS

Nobody owns me.

Ortega lands the limo with a GRINDING THUMP, tearing up chunks of lush lawn as she brings the limo to a shuddering halt.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

That was a terrible landing. But you're not just a driver, are you?

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

ORTEGA  
(countering)  
You're not just a criminal, Sunshine.

KOVACS  
This hasn't been a conversation.  
It's been an interrogation. You do  
a lot of undercover work? Cause you  
might want to consider another line  
of work.

ANGLE THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD -- SECURITY GUARDS are rushing  
from the house, converging on the limo.

KOVACS (CONT'D)  
They don't look very glad to see  
you.

Ortega's friendly facade drops. All business now.

ORTEGA  
I said I worked security. I didn't  
say for who.

Ortega opens the limo door -- slipping a POLICE BADGE out of  
her pocket and onto her belt with one easy move.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)  
Last chance. Just give me a name.

KOVACS  
Aren't you going to open my door?

ORTEGA  
Name, dickbrain.

Kovacs opens his own car door.

KOVACS  
Takeshi Kovacs. Look me up.

He gets out, leaving her behind.

ON ORTEGA as she puts a finger to her temple, we see her  
eyes FLASH as she activates her ONI --

*POV ORTEGA, seeing images flash by, looking up Kovacs just  
the way we would use a smartphone now, racing through data,  
seeing still images of STRONGHOLD, of QUELL --*

-- And finally, the word ENVOY.

24     **EXT. LIMO - DAY**

Kovacs stands on the lawn, as Ortega comes scrambling after him. Large chunks of grass have been gouged out of the immaculately groomed lawn by the cruiser.

ORTEGA

You're lying. You can't be who you say you are. All the Envoys died.

KOVACS

All but one. Sunshine.

SECURITY GUARDS converge around them --

CURTIS

Stop where you are!

ORTEGA

I'm Bay City PD and you know it, Curtis. So lower your weapons and tell me where your boss is because I would like a fucking word.

A GORGEOUS BLONDE WOMAN, early 30's, comes striding through the Guards. MIRIAM BANCROFT. She's dressed in athletic clothes that show off a figure toned to perfection, dewy with sweat.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

(to Miriam, outraged)

What have you people done?

Miriam recognizes Ortega, and there's no love lost here.

MIRIAM

Lieutenant Ortega. You're trespassing on private property --

(glances at the limo)

-- And you apparently stole one of our limos. I could have you shot.

A WHIRR OF ENGINES -- A POLICE CRUISER emerges from the cloud cover, framing Ortega from behind like a looming bird of prey --

ORTEGA

You could certainly try.

-- Before it touches down next to the Limo, ripping through even more of the lawn.

KOVACS

(aside, to Ortega)

Nice timing.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

ORTEGA  
(gritted teeth)  
Fuck you.  
(to Miriam)  
Do you know who this is? What he  
is?

MIRIAM  
He's the Envoy. But more importantly,  
he's none of your business.

The Police Cruiser disgorges several plainclothes policemen with MOHAWK HAIRCUTS (varying ages and ethnicities, among them BAUTISTA, a lifer who has Ortega's back).

MIRIAM (CONT'D)  
(to Kovacs)  
Why did you bring them here? Isaac  
was supposed to drive you --

ORTEGA  
As in your son, Isaac?

Bautista pulls A YOUNG MAN, maybe 19, out of the cruiser. He looks bleary and sick -- meet ISAAC BANCROFT.

BAUTISTA  
We picked him up on a DUI.

Miriam hurries to her son's side, he pulls away sullenly.

MIRIAM  
Isaac, what were you doing drinking?

ISAAC  
I'm not a goddamned chauffeur.

MIRIAM  
Go inside.  
(to Ortega )  
I'm going to report you, this is  
police harassment.

The Mohawks are already getting back in the cruiser. Ortega pauses at the door.

ORTEGA  
(pointing)  
There's your kid, there's your car,  
and there's your new pet terrorist.  
You're welcome.

KOVACS  
The terrorist can hear you. Standing  
right here.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: (2)

ORTEGA

Good. Cause we're not finished, you  
and me.

She slams the door shut. The cruiser lifts off. Miriam  
turns to Kovacs. Her attitude preemptory, arrogant. Very  
aware of the effect of her looks.

MIRIAM

What are you waiting for? Get inside --

KOVACS

I'm not great at following directions.  
Or taking orders. Or really anything  
that involves a chain of command.

Miriam pulls back on the snark. She's not used to being  
talked back to. Maybe she likes it.

MIRIAM

Of course. We're just all so tense,  
since... I'm Miriam Bancroft, we  
haven't been properly introduced.  
Please forgive me.

They head inside --

25 **INT. SUNTOUCH HOUSE - HALL - MOMENTS LATER**

-- Where Miriam leads him past A CRUMBLING BLUE STONE TREE  
(a SONGSPIRE) twined like a living sculpture up the walls,  
topmost branches veining the ceiling. At once majestic and  
incredibly fragile.

KOVACS

Shouldn't that be in a museum?

She turns and smiles at him. Sex and innocence at once.

MIRIAM

Definitely. But I have a weakness  
for Elder Civilization artifacts. I  
collect them. Among other things.

KOVACS

It must have cost a fortune to ship  
it here.

MIRIAM

A few fortunes. And several lifetimes  
as well. But cost was no object.

Miriam gently trails her fingers down one of the tree's  
branches -- and it makes a musical sound, like delicate bells  
of chiming glass. An alien, unimaginable sound.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

ON KOVACS as we *FLASH TO HIS MEMORY*, the Songspire sound rising louder and louder, not one spire but THOUSANDS --

26 **EXT. ALIEN CITY "STRONGHOLD" - FLASHBACK**

*A MASSIVE ALIEN CITY -- ancient ruins, with SONGSPIRES twining over everything, incredibly complex and massive. SONGSPIRE CHIMES ringing over the city in a rich natural melody.*

*Light from 3 suns streams down over broken, crumbling spires -- and the sound of CHILDREN LAUGHING.*

*PAN DOWN to see jury-rigged STRUCTURES built into the ruins. People working, living. A REBELLION BASE in hiding, including ENVOYS -- among them, O.G. KOVACS and the RECRUITS we saw before. Body armor, ragtag equipment. Talking, working, playing with the kids and families who have sought refuge here.*

MIRIAM (PRELAPPED)

This is the only Songspire on Earth.

27 **INT. SUNTOUCH HOUSE - HALL - CONTINUOUS**

MIRIAM

No one is sure what they are, even if they're alive. They grow, but they could have functioned as part of Elder Civilization architecture, programmed to continue expanding. The largest ones recorded --

KOVACS

-- Are thousands of meters high, I know. I've seen them.

MIRIAM

Stronghold. Of course.

She locks eyes with his. Part test. Part seduction.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Is it true that you can look into a person's eyes and know exactly what they're thinking?

He doesn't look away. Something smolders between them --

KOVACS

Envoys don't read minds.

MIRIAM

What a pity.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

She turns away -- and when her back is turned, Kovacs swiftly SNAPS a tiny blue strand from the Songspire, slips it in his pocket. Then quickly follows her to the door.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

He's waiting for you.

She holds the door open for him. He's on his own from here. He opens the door, sees her standing under the curving branches of the Songspire, and heads into --

28 INT. SUNTOUCH HOUSE - LIBRARY - DAY

-- A beautifully appointed library. Kovacs takes in the details of the place, the shelves filled with books. Takes one slim volume from a place of pride: *Ethics on the Precipice*, by *Quellcryst Falconer*.

He opens it -- the book is handwritten. Something in his face as he holds the book... pain. Anger. Sadness.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

It's a strange thing, holding her book in your hand, isn't it?

BANCROFT has entered the room: 50's, handsome, athletic, exuding power and confidence --

-- And without warning, Kovacs turns and SLAMS Bancroft up against the wall.

KOVACS

Where did you get this?!

Bancroft looks surprisingly calm. Not even breathing hard. Meets Kovacs' eyes without a shred of fear.

BANCROFT

I bought it at auction.

KOVACS

It's her handwriting.

BANCROFT

Then I got what I paid for.

KOVACS

I have spent this morning being well and truly fucked around with, so let me be completely and painfully clear: Some things can't be bought. Like me. I didn't ask you to bring me back into this world.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

KOVACS (CONT'D)

I fought a war to stop people like you from happening, and if someone doesn't tell me, right now, what the fuck all this is about, I might very well lose my temper.

Bancroft isn't fazed. If anything, he's enjoying this a little -- there's respect in his face, not anger.

BANCROFT

I'm not interested in owning you. I want to give you a new life.  
(looks down at Kovacs' arm at his throat)  
Do you mind?

Kovacs, a little confused by how unconcerned Bancroft is, steps back. Bancroft straightens his clothes.

BANCROFT (CONT'D)

I see you've been spending time with Lieutenant Ortega. I find she has this effect on people.

Bancroft sweeps open a holo-window in the air next to them.

BANCROFT (CONT'D)

This is a full pardon, signed by the President of the Protectorate, reducing your sentence to time served. I've opened a line of credit in your name, DNA trace accessible, to cover all your expenses. When your investigation is done, you may keep that sleeve, or choose another to your own specifications -- and you'll receive a salary of 50 million U.N. bityen. A fortune, to buy any future you want.

(off Kovacs' wariness)

I'm not interested in owning you. I'm offering you your life back.

KOVACS

The Protectorate won't allow it. No one has that kind of power. Not even you.

BANCROFT

Power is a living thing, Mr. Kovacs. Tended properly, over time, it grows. And I have had a great deal of time.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED: (2)

KOVACS

Say you can deliver -- what do you want from me?

BANCROFT

I need you to solve a murder.

KOVACS

Whose?

BANCROFT

Mine.

He looks at Kovacs. A beat, then --

KOVACS

As you've pointed out, I'm not exactly from around here. What makes you think I'd even know where to begin?

Bancroft picks up the book that Kovacs was holding.

BANCROFT

Because you knew her.

29 **INT. SUNTOUCH HOUSE - DAY**

They walk through the vast vaulted space of the house.

BANCROFT

Quellcris Falconer was a brilliant strategist. Only she could have created the Envoy Corps.

KOVACS

I'm surprised anyone still knows who we were.

Bancroft turns the book over in his hands.

BANCROFT (CONT'D)

You didn't fade from memory after Stronghold's defeat, Mr. Kovacs. Your kind became legend.

KOVACS

"My kind" no longer exists.

BANCROFT

But you do. Envoys were known, not just for their combat skills, but for their ability to find the truth, to discover what is hidden. I have a mystery for you to solve.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

BANCROFT (CONT'D)

The reward is your freedom, and the stakes are my life. Will you at least hear me out?

Off Kovacs, considering --

30 **INT. SUNTOUCH HOUSE - STUDY - CONTINUOUS**

Kovacs follows Bancroft into a STUDY. A mirrorwood DESK gleams by the wall, a jagged SCORCH MARK above it.

BANCROFT

This is where Miriam found me. Head taken off with a particle blaster behind my desk. The weapon was mine, I keep it for protection stored in a biometric safe that only Miriam and myself can open.

Kovacs looks at him. Says nothing.

BANCROFT (CONT'D)

Go ahead and say it, everyone else has. Either I committed suicide or my wife murdered me.

KOVACS

But you're here. Meaning your stack is intact, so you must remember what happened.

BANCROFT

(shakes his head)

I'm afraid it was completely destroyed. RD'd, as they say. Thoughts?

KOVACS

Only one. Remote storage backup. I'd guess offsite, secure and secret.

Bancroft goes to a circular staircase, Kovacs follows.

BANCROFT

Let me show you something.

31 **EXT. SUNTOUCH HOUSE - CROW'S NEST BALCONY - CONTINUOUS**

They come out onto a high crow's nest-like balcony. The view is PANORAMIC, over the whole estate and the ocean below.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

BANCROFT

When I was younger, I used to come up here when I had decisions to make, or difficulties to face. I would think about the ancient explorers, back when one could spend a lifetime pursuing the secrets of the Earth, the ocean, the stars...

There are RELICS OF EXPLORATION all around the room -- a SEXTANT, an ASTROLABE, hand-drawn MAPS of the Earth, more MAPS OF THE HEAVENS, along with TELESCOPE IMAGES of distant stars and galaxies, like paintings made of light.

But the room has an un-lived-in feel, a light coating of dust covering everything.

BANCROFT (CONT'D)

But I haven't been here in years.  
The age of adventurers and explorers  
is over.

Bancroft stops in front of AN ANTIQUE BRASS TELESCOPE, bolted on the railing. A digital keypad below it, wired to the telescope. Dust disturbed here, a few fingermarks.

Bancroft keys in coordinates on the pad; as the motor attached to the telescope WHIRS, repositioning its angle --

BANCROFT (CONT'D)

(as the telescope  
comes to a stop)  
Go ahead -- tell me what you see.

Kovacs puts his eye to the viewfinder: sees AN ANGULAR METAL OBJECT floating against the backdrop of the darkening sky.

KOVACS

Protectorate satellite. Looks  
military grade.

BANCROFT

It is. But it's not the  
Protectorate's. It's mine. Every  
48 hours my stack is automatically  
needlecast to it. Foolproof backup.

(a beat)

When Miriam found me, my last backup  
was already downloading into this  
cloned sleeve. Whoever wanted me  
dead must have had a plan for  
disabling the backup -- but it failed.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (2)

KOVACS

So your... current self doesn't have any memory of what happened?

BANCROFT

The last thing I remember is being in my lawyer's office, going over trade deals in the Orion belt. Whoever killed me pulled the trigger 10 minutes before my backup went through --

KOVACS

Which means your memories of those 48 hours are gone.

BANCROFT

Lost completely.

32 **EXT. SUNTOUCH GROUNDS - DAY**

Kovacs and Bancroft walk on the grounds of the estate.

BANCROFT

Someone wants me dead. Permanently. They will try again, and next time they might well succeed. Unless you find them first.

KOVACS

For all I know, you did try to slag yourself and just botched the job.

For the first time, we see the steel behind Bancroft's pleasant manner.

BANCROFT

Mr. Kovacs. I have lived through the Corporate Wars, the collapse and rebuilding of my industrial and trading interests, brought 48 children into the world and survived the real deaths of two of them. I am not the kind of man to take my own life, and *even if I were*, I would not have bungled it in this fashion. If I meant to die, I would be dead.

Kovacs looks into Bancroft's eyes as he speaks.

KOVACS

I've heard you out. But I don't want your money. Or your pardon. I'll take eternity on ice, thanks.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

BANCROFT

May I ask why?

KOVACS

You know what regular people do when they get RD'd? Nothing, because they're dead. Your world, your problems. Doesn't have anything to do with me.

Bancroft regards Kovacs. Thinking.

BANCROFT

Take a day, Mr. Kovacs. Go out into the world. Breathe air into your lungs, feel the wind on your skin. Remember what it is to be alive.

As Kovacs turns to go --

BANCROFT (CONT'D)

And please. Take this.

He hands him the Quellcris book.

BANCROFT (CONT'D)

Like everything else I'm offering... it's yours. If you want it.

Off Kovacs, looking down at the book in his hand --

33 **EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - NIGHT**

The famous bridge rises into the foggy sky, ocean water lapping at the massive pylons at its base.

BUBBLEFAB HOUSING has been built into the spaces of the cables, and the bridge itself is covered with haphazard sprawled structures.

ON THE SHORELINE, FIND KOVACS looking up at the bridge from the edge of the water. His pants rolled up. The sea lapping at his feet as he walks into the water, ankle-deep... and closes his eyes.

PRELAP THE SOUND OF TWO CHILDREN LAUGHING AND SHOUTING --

34 **EXT. HARLAN'S WORLD - SHORELINE - DAY - FLASHBACK**

*YOUNG TAK and YOUNG REILEEN (two Asian-looking children, 10 and 14) are playing in the water, running along the waves and splashing each other. Laughing and shouting.*

**35 EXT. SHORELINE NEAR GGB - NIGHT**

Kovacs opens his eyes, looking up at the immense bridge and the lights of the city sparkling behind it.

PRELAP the rising sounds of THE CITY, honking and shouting and the buzz of inner-city life, as we --

**36 EXT. STREETS OF BAY CITY - DAY**

Kovacs moves through the streets. Looking at the PEOPLE, their clothes and languages a JUMBLE of global styles and polyglot patois. A street market slum feel, but yet still vibrant with life and energy.

It's a layered, jumbled lower city, crowded with neon and holographic ads, a hive-like collection of humanity crowded on itself, jury-rigged flimsy buildings haphazardly constructed in the interstices of old architecture.

**37 EXT. BAY CITY STREETS - NIGHT**

Find Kovacs stopped in front of a TATTOO PARLOR, looking at the window thoughtfully. Twining designs rendered in every color, several people being tatted inside with strange tools.

A rail-thin JUNKIE DEALER stands in the alley next to the Tattoo parlor, doing business. He's wearing a neon-bright "Hello Unicorn" backpack, Japanese young-girl style, pulling several multicolored eyedroppers out of it, slipping them to a CUSTOMER who pays by swiping his thumb on a black matte rectangle in the Dealer's hand.

The Dealer looks Kovacs over. Sizing up a potential customer.

JUNKIE DEALER

Inking up a new sleeve, it's like putting old furniture in a new house, right? Makes it feel more like home.

Kovacs turns away from the window.

KOVACS

Not gonna be in here long enough to customize the place.

JUNKIE DEALER

Gotta live in optimism, Traveler. You maybe want a little braingrease to slide you into that new sleeve? You look troubled in that skin. You a Skulljumper? Offworlder?

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

KOVACS

Came a long way, and not just parsecs.  
Skipped over time like an insect  
skimming across a lake.

JUNKIE DEALER

(skeptical)

Yeah, sure you did. How come you're  
not sleeve-sick?

KOVACS

A long time ago, someone showed me  
how to lock it down. I could wade  
into high-density combat and tear  
people apart five minutes after I  
sleaved on a planet I'd never even  
heard of.

The Dealer is slowly moving away from Kovacs. Doesn't like  
the sound of this.

JUNKIE DEALER

You some kind of SIA Shocktrooper?

KOVACS

Shocktroopers. Fucking pussies.

JUNKIE DEALER

Don't hear that a lot. Traveler, I  
think you're full of shit.

KOVACS

Think what you want. It's a free  
world. Or so they tell me.

JUNKIE DEALER

You want something for that bleeding  
brain of yours? Got Stallion,  
Tetrameth, Neurex, Somno, Merge5,  
Stiff, Reaper -- interested?

KOVACS

I might be, if I knew what any of  
that was. Doesn't anyone just smoke  
good old-fashioned weed anymore?

The Dealer gestures at the endless paved expanse of the  
street, the world around them --

JUNKIE DEALER

This look like a place where people  
grow things to you, Traveler?

ANOTHER CUSTOMER comes up to the Dealer. Kovacs moves away  
into the night.

38 **EXT. STREETS OF BAY CITY - NIGHT**

Kovacs notices small, squat MACHINES scuttle by on the sidewalks on spider-like legs -- people MOVE ASIDE around them, annoyed.

Kovacs continues walking, they whir past on scuttling legs --

-- And HOLOGRAMS flicker to life around him as he's in range, then abruptly de-rez as he keeps moving, pixels dissolving like watercolors in the rain.

Like walking through rooms of smoke, that form and dissipate one after another --

*WOMEN barely clothed, dancing sinuously. MEN, square-jawed, shirtless, a gay man's dream. And then A STUNNING WOMAN, filmy gauze barely covering her body, full lips whispering --*

*WOMAN IN HOLOGRAM*

*The Houses, the finest in intimate experiences the Earth has to offer.*

*She drops to her knees in front of Kovacs --*

Kovacs sidesteps her, keeps going, the image dissolves, giving way to --

*IMAGES of a CHARISMATIC NEWS REPORTER, SANDY KIM, standing in front of sleazy establishments with PROSTITUTES coming in and out of the buildings behind her.*

*SANDY KIM*

*-- Minister of Finance Finn Nakashima caught in a love nest with his boyfriend. Watch me, Sandy Kim, on Uniwave One, for the exclusive footage of their tryst, and the heartbreak of Takahashi's husband as he takes the children from their Manhattan apartment --*

Kovacs puts his head down, strides out of the swirling images, only to find himself in the middle of --

*ANOTHER ADVERTISEMENT: AN ARENA, edges lost in a blur. An EMCEE talking as a TWO SHAPES, dim in the darkness, come running at Kovacs from both sides, pounding toward him --*

*EMCEE CARNAGE*

*Panama Rose Fightdrome! Always live, never 'cast -- come see the finest, strongest, most brutal combat sleeves tear each other apart for your entertainment!*

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

*The TWO GENE FREAK FIGHTERS come into focus, on a collision course, with Kovacs in between -- one has fangs and claws and glowing red eyes, the other is massively muscled --*

Kovacs' instincts overcome him, he drops into a combat crouch, his neurachem FLARES in a glow beneath his skin, different and brighter than what we saw in the opening -- he swings a PUNCH --

-- And his blow SLAMS into something, concrete SHATTERS around him as --

ORTEGA (O.S.)

Christ Kovacs, what's wrong with you?

A hand SLAPS something on the back of his neck -- Kovacs WHIRLS, stops himself an INCH from hitting Ortega --

-- As the illusion DE-REZZES around him in a heartbeat, leaving Kovacs breathing hard, facing Ortega and the broken LAMPOST. He touches the back of his neck --

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

Broadcast blocker. Peace offering.

CLOSE ON THE BACK OF HIS NECK, as we see the tiny patch she put on him FADE and blend invisibly into his skin.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

You're maybe not the crack commando I was expecting from the Envoy reputation.

KOVACS

Yeah, but I'm hell on lampposts.  
(surveying the damage)  
Neurachem's been a little upgraded from my day.

ORTEGA

A lot of things have. You want to tell me what you're doing out here?

KOVACS

Being followed, apparently.

ORTEGA

That's what the police do to manipulative psychotic terrorists.

KOVACS

You could stop calling me that.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (2)

ORTEGA

You could tell me what Bancroft wants you for.

KOVACS

You already know. You're overzealous, judgmental, and unprofessional, but you're not stupid.

ORTEGA

I am not unprofessional.

KOVACS

He wants me to solve his murder.

ORTEGA

You mean he wants you to investigate the non-criminal non-event of his suicide.

KOVACS

Because you didn't. Or couldn't. Or won't. It was your case, wasn't it? And you fucked it up.

ORTEGA

You know what, just forget it --

She starts to go --

KOVACS

You want to start over? No problem. Seems like that's what I do now. Let's go for a drink.  
(holds out his hand)  
Takeshi Kovacs.

Ortega shakes his hand, but this time pulls back quickly, as if his touch burned her.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

Sorry. Forgot. You don't approve of the Uprising-era killing machine.

ORTEGA

You want to get a fucking drink or not?

KOVACS

As long as I get to pick the place.

39 INT. STRIP BAR - NIGHT

Move through a strip bar, music pulsing, dancers grinding. Familiar but different -- the costumes are lit up, fiberoptic

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

and LED and gleaming illuminum tattoos -- but the writhing, pole-swinging dance is as old as time. Find Kovacs and Ortega at the bar, near the stage. A line of shot glasses in front of them.

ORTEGA

You know who's cleared the most cases in the department for the last 5 years running? Me. I close a case, it stays closed, because I am fucking good at my job --

KOVACS

So the whole "just-keep-talking" thing wasn't an act.

ORTEGA

Fine, you talk. Tell me why Bancroft thinks you'll find something that Bay City PD couldn't.

KOVACS

It's called Envoy Intuition.

He motions for another round.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

Total absorb of whatever's around you without judgement or preconception. You make observations, draw conclusions from what appear to be disparate pieces of data. It's hard to explain how it works, it just sort of... comes together in my head. Voices, memories, moments of things I saw that didn't seem related... and then suddenly they are.

ORTEGA

Put it like that, it sounds like a bunch of lucky guesses.

KOVACS

"Luck" isn't a word I associate with myself.

ORTEGA

Yeah. Takeshi Kovacs. Mercenary turned Envoy turned mercenary again, sole survivor of the Stronghold Slaughter. Known by quite a few names -- Mamba Lev, One Hand Rending, the Icepick.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: (2)

KOVACS  
(almost wistful)  
I really liked that one.

ORTEGA  
So that's what you are now? The man  
who doesn't give a damn about  
anything?

KOVACS  
This drink tastes pretty good. Those  
tits over there look pretty nice.

ORTEGA  
There's no case. You're wasting  
your time.

KOVACS  
You want to tell me what your problem  
is with Bancroft?

ORTEGA  
I'm not the one with the problem.  
He got me reprimanded when I couldn't  
find his "killer." Tried to screw  
with my career, which means with my  
life. And he's still doing it.

KOVACS  
You're saying you didn't deserve it?

ORTEGA  
(heated)  
I polygraphed the wife at her own  
insistence. She passed without a  
twitch. We chased down every lead,  
checked on his friends and his  
enemies, people with opportunity and  
motive, and we always came back to  
the same thing. He locked himself  
in his study and offed himself.

KOVACS  
And just conveniently forgot that  
he'd be resleeved in less than an  
hour?

ORTEGA  
I deal in facts, not Meth motivations.  
Who the hell knows why they do  
whatever crazy shit they do.

KOVACS  
Bancroft strikes me as a lot of  
things. Crazy isn't on the list.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: (3)

ORTEGA

Let me tell you what went over my desk the night Bancroft bought it. Four stabbings, ten shootings -- three of which were RD's -- five drunk driving fatalities. One sleeve killing --

(heavy sarcasm)

-- Oh, wait, not a sleeve kill, she was a Neo-Catholic strangled and dumped in the bay. As in, *actually murdered*.

KOVACS

As opposed to incompetently murdered, like in the Bancroft case.

ORTEGA

(slams her hands on the table)

Are you a moron, or just an asshole? There is no Bancroft case!

A beat as some people look over --

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

That's what I do -- I spend my days and nights throwing people on ice after they tear each other apart, just so they can serve a few months, get out and start over again. I'm on a fucking hamster wheel and I'm still, to reiterate, very motherfucking professional. I keep people alive, I catch bad guys. And that Meth fuckhead kicks me down the ladder for what? His wounded self-image?

KOVACS

(calls to the waitress)

We'll take the check.

ORTEGA

I'm not finished with you, Kovacs.

KOVACS

That's your call.

One of the DANCERS crouches down to grind sinuously in front of Kovacs.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: (4)

KOVACS (CONT'D)

When a sleeve has been slabbed a long time, it just keeps on making hormones, did you know that?

ORTEGA

Everybody knows that.

KOVACS

So that first time, when you're fresh out of the tank --

ORTEGA

Kovacs. Shut the fuck up.  
(to the dancer)  
Get lost.

KOVACS

Just thought, since you took me out for a drink --

ORTEGA

You're paying, and one more time: shut. Up.

KOVACS

You don't have to be insulting about it.

ORTEGA

And the answer is, just an asshole.

KOVACS

Not the first date to mention that.

ORTEGA

Also, not a date.

KOVACS

You want to know what my Envoy Intuition is right now?

He moves a little closer to Ortega. She looks down, for the first time seeming nervous.

*Is he going to say that she really wants to sleep with him?*

KOVACS (CONT'D)

Without question... or reservation... Bancroft believes that he was murdered.

Ortega leans back, looking a little disgusted -- and a lot relieved.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: (6)

ORTEGA  
(to the Waitress)  
Just bring me a bottle.

40 **EXT. BAY CITY STREETS - TATTOO PARLOR - NIGHT**

Kovacs approaches the TATTOO PARLOR, the Dealer still outside. Smoking a delicate, glowing cigarette. Smoke curling out of his mouth and nose.

MOS as we watch Kovacs say something to the Dealer, then lick his thumb; skeptically, the Dealer holds out a thin black rectangle, Kovacs swipes his thumb.

The Dealer looks shocked. Hands him the whole backpack, still staring at the black rectangle, where Kovacs has apparently just paid him an insane amount of money.

Kovacs takes the cigarette from the Dealer's hand. He doesn't even notice.

41 **EXT. BAY CITY TRAIN - NIGHT**

High and wide on the tangled line of the MAGLEV TRAINS that wind through Bay City, the only way the "subs" (i.e. Normal people) travel.

42 **INT. MAGLEV TRAIN (TRAVELING) - NIGHT**

Kovacs in the train, watching people, looking at ads that are plastered over the windows (so you can't see out past them). The train is relatively full.

43 **INT. MAGLEV TRAIN (TRAVELING) - LATER**

The train is almost empty now. Just a couple of people -- one a NOSY LADY in a loose-fitting housedress, an automated grocery handcart rolling behind her like a strange metal dog. She glances over Kovacs' shoulder, not at all subtly.

Kovacs is fiddling with his ONI, trying to use it. He has the Hub strapped to his wrist, matte black card on the inside of his forearm, as info scrolls along it, listing HOTELS.

He highlights one with a blink; it pops up as a 2D hologram to hovering over the hub.

CLOSE ON THE 2D HOLOGRAM: A GOTHIC FACADE topped by A HOLOCAST OF EDGAR ALLAN POE, WITH A RAVEN PERCHED ON HIS SHOULDER. One hand extended, beckoning. Eerie.

Kovacs swipes across *Make Reservation*, when --

(CONTINUED)

## 45 INT. THE RAVEN HOTEL - NIGHT

Kovacs enters the hotel. An icy chandelier throws spectral light across a hauntingly palatial lobby. Staircases ascend into veiled heights, rococo furnishings cast macabre silhouettes across bloodstained tiles. No natural light.

A bizarre mix of Grand Guignol theater, gothic architecture, and high-tech sleek innovation. Again, no one here. Utterly empty.

AT THE FRONT DESK, another holocaust of POE -- the moody, bleak avatar of the HOTEL A.I., a sort of Eeyore of the uncanny -- pouring himself a glass of GIN.

[Note: Except for when he rezzes into existence, POE is played in camera and is not visibly "holographic".]

POE

Felicitations. You have arrived at The Raven, Bay City's most deliciously macabre lodging experience. Fully cabled and *enabled*. How can I ease your journey through this world?

He sips his gin, eyes Kovacs with forlorn hope. A disquieting mix of sallow rake and officious FRONT DESK ATTENDANT.

KOVACS

The best room you've got. The best everything -- food, view, and entertainment. The private kind.

POE

Ahh, much-needed respite from the trials of bleak existence. The Raven offers VIP access to the Houses for selective sexual tastes --

A HOLOGRAM flickers to life between Poe's hands, scrolling through visuals: first, AN ORNATE DESERT TEMPLE --

POE (CONT'D)

The *Temple of Eros* affords an oasis of indulgence in the Mojave --

-- Then a black glass and steel ultra-modern building where a muscular (non-infringing) version of the Oscar statuette guards a giant phallus instead of a sword --

POE (CONT'D)

-- *Oscar's* supplies pleasure, pain and pulchritude --

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

-- And finally, a SLEEK FLYING BARGE, like a yacht in the sky floating high over the San Francisco Bay.

POE (CONT'D)

-- And forget not our local satellite of sin, *Head in the Clouds*. Discreet, *exclusive*, no fantasy beyond reach for the discerning client of means.

KOVACS

I'm not that discerning.

POE

From the sky above, there is always the mud below. I can guide you to Licktown for elemental and fast satisfaction.

KOVACS

Might be better to send someone up to me.

POE

(nods obligingly)

The Raven can supply your chamber with companions and accessories for any decadence. And how might you intend to pay for your stay?

KOVACS

DNA trace. First Colony Bank of California.

PAYMENT DETAILS begin scrolling over the onyx counter. Kovacs licks his thumb --

-- When a GUN BARREL is pressed to the base of his skull.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

So much for Envoy intuition. Voodoo bullshit.

Kovacs glimpses the GUNMAN in the screen's reflection -- Meet DIMITRI KADMIN. Heavily muscled, skin covered in a complex pattern of ropery SCARS. FOUR BLACK-CLAD MEN and ONE WOMAN as backup. But Kovacs doesn't look worried... more ANNOYED.

POV KOVACS: RACK FOCUS on the onyx counter, from the reflection to a prompt blinking: "DNA TRACE REQUIRED."

KOVACS

You know you only got the drop on me because I was looking at whorehouse brochures.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (2)

KOVACS (CONT'D)  
 (considering)  
 Which is really embarrassing, now  
 that I say it out loud.

DIMITRI  
 Do anything stupid and the cops will  
 be picking bits of your stack out of  
 the walls for weeks.

POE  
 Pardon me, wayfarer, we're in the  
 midst of conversation --

DIMITRI  
 Shut up, you fuckin' piece of  
 digibrain shit. My microwave is  
 smarter than you.

POE  
 (to Kovacs)  
 Please touch the screen within 30  
 seconds. Host prerogatives will be  
 delivered upon payment, good sir.

Something about the tone of the voice causes Kovacs to PAUSE.  
 His back to Dimitri, his eyes dart swiftly around the room --

KOVACS  
 It's not voodoo, which by the way  
 absolutely is bullshit, it's a form  
 of subliminal pattern recognition --

Dimitri shoves him forward -- Kovacs sprawls to the floor.

DIMITRI  
 Don't play with me.

ON KOVACS as he gets to his feet, WHISPERS rising in his  
 ears, as we INTERCUT WITH FRAGMENTS OF EARLIER MOMENTS  
 lightning-fast **FLASH TO** --

NOSY LADY ON TRAIN  
*... Hardwired to want guests...*

POE  
*... Cabled and enabled...*

NOSY LADY ON TRAIN  
*... Like sleeping with a stalker...*

**BACK TO** -- as Kovacs spots A HINGED PANEL in the ceiling --  
 same ENVOY-VISION we saw with Sarah, POV KOVACS as he  
 instantly SKETCHES IN a recessed OPENING behind the panel --

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (3)

-- Just as Dimitri PISTOL-WHIPS him in the back of the head.

DIMITRI  
I said fucking move!

Kovacs touches his scalp, candy-apple BLOOD on his fingers.  
He suddenly SPINS, flecks of blood LEAP from his fingertips --

-- Landing on the obsidian screen where the prompt CHANGES:  
*DNA ACCEPTED. PAYMENT AUTHORIZED.*

POE  
I can now offer all our guest  
amenities.  
(to Dimitri)  
Ask this of your microwave, miscreant.

Lightning-fast, the ceiling panel opens and AUTOTURRET VULCAN  
CANNONS slam down, targeting lasers swiveling red dots --

BLAMBLAMBLAM!!! Cannons OPEN FIRE like the wrath of god.

An amped-up cover of the Alan Parsons Project's "THE RAVEN"  
pulses as bullets STRAFE the lobby, gouging chunks of plaster,  
splintering peace signs --

The Three Black-Clad Men scramble for cover, but Poe keeps  
after them.

ANGLE ON KOVACS AND DIMITRI, fighting savagely in the eye of  
the storm as the lobby DISINTEGRATES around them.

THE WOMAN breaks from cover, firing at Kovacs as she charges --  
Kovacs TWISTS out of the way, moving faster than seems  
possible, the Woman and Dimitri converging on him --

*POV KOVACS ENVOY VISION:* He sees half-blurred movements of  
what Dimitri and the Woman are about to do --

BACK TO SCENE as Kovacs FIGHTS them both, brutal and fast,  
stopping every blow and avoiding every shot before it happens.

Meanwhile Poe has finally taken down the 3 Men.

Kovacs KICKS the Woman away, she flies backwards --

POE (CONT'D)  
Sleep, you little slice of death.

Poe SHOOTS her cleanly in the stack -- raising a fist in  
celebration as he knocks back another gin.

POE (CONT'D)  
Does my honored guest require further  
aid?

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (4)

KOVACS  
(grunts as he fights)  
I'm good, thanks.

Kovacs HEADBUTTS Dimitri viciously -- Dimitri staggers back. The moment he's clear of Kovacs, laser dots BLOOM all over him --

-- And Kovacs snatches Dimitri's gun off the floor and SLAMS into Dimitri, PINNING him against the wall. Blocking the hotel's shot with his own body, targeting laser on his back.

KOVACS (CONT'D)  
You're not getting off that easy.  
Who sent you?

Dimitri smiles. Teeth smeared with his own blood.

DIMITRI  
You're not what I expected, Kovacs.  
My mistake.

Dimitri PUNCHES Kovacs low in the kidney, twists free --

DIMITRI (CONT'D)  
It won't happen again.

-- He runs toward the cannons, opening his arms with a ROAR!

POE  
Eat lead, motherfucker.

KOVACS  
Wait -- !

The guns THUNDER, slamming Dimitri back in a hail of lead -- he DROPS, body riddled with bullets. The guns go SILENT.

Kovacs, bloodied and clothes torn, looks accusingly at Poe, who shrugs insouciantly -- as the elevator DINGS.

POE  
Your room beckons.  
(cocks his head as if  
listening)  
If you'd like to freshen up before  
the constabulary arrives.

Kovacs looks down at his bloodied self, the wrecked lobby.

KOVACS  
I'm good.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (5)

ORTEGA (PRELAPPED)  
*What the fuck are you still doing  
here?*

46 INT. THE RAVEN HOTEL - LATER

SAME ANGLE on the wrecked lobby -- but now POLICEMEN move through the carnage, taking SAMPLES from the bodies, as ORTEGA comes striding through the lobby toward Kovacs, who's standing at the bar.

ORTEGA  
You get hit?

KOVACS  
I'm touched by your concern.

ORTEGA  
What happened to getting laid, a  
meal, and re-stacking for eternity?

KOVACS  
I got interrupted.

She looks over the bodies on the ground.

ORTEGA  
Who the fuck are these guys?

Disgusted, Kovacs grabs a blood-spotted glass, wipes it off, pours a drink --

KOVACS  
I didn't know them. But they knew  
me.

ORTEGA  
They called you by name? You're  
sure?

KOVACS  
I was there. It was hard to miss.

One of the MOHAWKS comes up, with a small handheld SCANNER. A slot on the top to slide in DNA SAMPLES. Ortega reads --

ORTEGA  
Four of them are just local muscle...  
(whistles)  
But the leader. That sleeve is  
registered to Dimitri Kadmin,  
professional assassin out of  
Vladivostok. Otherwise known as  
Dimi the Twin. Does a lot of work  
for the Yakuza.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

ORTEGA (CONT'D)  
(to Mohawk 1)  
You run it?

MOHAWK JENKINS  
Ulan Bator registry, boss.

ORTEGA  
The capitol of black market DH  
downloads. We've got the bastard.

KOVACS  
Got him for what?

ORTEGA  
Double-sleeving. Dimitri isn't very  
trusting. So he makes an illegal  
copy of himself and downloads it  
into a black market sleeve.  
(to Mohawk Bautista)  
Excise it.

Mohawk Bautista nods, flicks a knife out, kicking Dimitri's  
body over and crouching by his neck.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)  
We hold onto his stack, sooner or  
later we catch the other version of  
him out there and then -- he's done.

KOVACS  
What's the penalty?

ORTEGA  
Protectorate-mandated erasure. Total  
personality destruction.

KOVACS  
You feed his stack to the shredder?

ORTEGA  
Somehow society will weather the  
loss.

Mohawk Bautista is struggling with his knife, trying to get  
the stack out --

ORTEGA (CONT'D)  
(impatiently)  
Let me do it.

Ortega bends over Dimitri's corpse, knee on his back to steady  
it as she flicks a knife in between vertebrae in his neck.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED: (2)

With a sharp blow to the skull, Ortega pulls Dimitri's stack -- mangled by gunfire.

MOHAWK JENKINS

It's fragged. We can get a positive ID, but can't spin him up to interrogate.

ORTEGA

Goddamn it.  
(to Poe)  
You couldn't just disable them?

POE

(coldly)  
No gesture is too extreme when it comes to the defense of a *guest*.

ORTEGA

Enough firepower to bring down a small aircraft.

POE

Commensurate with the threat to my business. Should I temper my enthusiasm for my first guest in five decades?  
(raises an eyebrow)  
Perhaps if you'd ever chosen these halls for an assignation --

ORTEGA

(snaps)  
That's enough.

KOVACS

So Dimitri's an expensive hired killer...

ORTEGA

Top of the line. For a scumbag.

KOVACS

Then Bancroft didn't commit suicide.

ORTEGA

Right, cause you're so well-liked.

KOVACS

I'm disliked plenty. On other worlds, five centuries ago. I don't merit this kind of hit -- unless someone wants to stop me looking into Bancroft's death.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED: (3)

ORTEGA

I can find a way to arrest you for this, Kovacs. Organic Damage and Real Death, 6 hours out of the tank --

KOVACS

You know what, Ortega? You can arrest me, RD me, fuck me, or fuck off. Your choice.

Poe opens the elevator doors with a ding. Kovacs gets in, looking back at the wide shot of Ortega standing in the bloody carnage of the lobby.

47 **INT. THE RAVEN HOTEL - ELEVATOR - NIGHT**

Poe appears in the elevator behind Kovacs.

POE

A scintillating evening!

KOVACS

Jesus! Don't just -- show up like that. Can't you knock or something?

POE

It renews me to partner with a presence like yourself.

KOVACS

We are not partners.

POE

Perhaps it's time for the consoling touch of femininity you requested earlier?

KOVACS

No.

POE

(doesn't take the hint)

I can arrange for a slattern, a woman of business, a feral virago, whatever you fancy. I know one courtesan with eyes bright as day, hair black as night, a briefcase that she carries filled with the tools of carnal delight -- congress with her is a poignant reminder that the peak of ecstasy is called "the little death." Or so I'm told.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

POE (CONT'D)

In the decades since the AI hotels emptied out, I chose this persona to study the ache of human melancholy, and it's taught me that --

KOVACS

Have you ever heard of personal space? As in, give me some? Right the fuck now?

POE

You are singularly ungrateful and I must say, somewhat rude. But as a hotelier, I recognize the guest is always right.

KOVACS

Recognize it somewhere not in my face.

Poe sighs disconsolately, vanishes. Kovacs pushes the button on the elevator that says "Roof Access."

48 **EXT. THE RAVEN HOTEL - ROOF - NIGHT**

ON THE Hello Unicorn backpack, open on the roof, lit by the pulsing glow of the neon Raven Holocaust.

He tilts back his head, uses a thin disposable EYEDROPPER to drip a half-gas, half-liquid into his eyes.

His eyes seem to STEAM for an instant, then go back to normal -- smoking as he pops a few more pills. Eyes dilated. Feet swinging out over the abyss.

KOVACS

He was right. Whatever it is, this is some unspeakably good shit.

He takes out a pulse gun -- we recognize the gun Dimitri pulled on him. Kovacs looks at it. Then up at the sky.

Then, suddenly, puts it under his jaw. Aimed at the back of his neck, the base of his brain.

QUELL (O.S.)

Is that really what you want to do with your only night on Earth?

WIDEN to see that he's not alone on the roof -- QUELL is standing behind him. Wind blowing her hair from her face, wearing her Stronghold battle gear, desert robes fluttering.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

For the first time, we see Kovacs' confident facade crack, just a little... to see the yawning, endless pain beneath.

KOVACS  
I miss you so much.

QUELL  
I know, Tak.

KOVACS  
I don't know how to be in this world  
without you.

QUELL  
I'm here.

KOVACS  
You're dead.

QUELL  
But you're not.

KOVACS  
I don't have to go back on ice.  
This... right now... this is my only  
chance. I can make it stop. End  
it, for good. Blow out my stack and  
make it all go away...

QUELL  
If you do that, it won't all go away.  
Just you.  
(beat)  
Tak. Look at me.

Kovacs turns, meets Quell's eyes -- but instead of seeing the roof, he sees --

THE RUINS OF STRONGHOLD, bodies strewn everywhere, sprawled in a silent, unmoving tableaux of death.

And among those bodies, twisted and bodies torn, eyes staring sightlessly: VIDAURA, GOMEZ, JIMMY DESOTO... and REILEEN. The Envoy trainees that we saw with Quell -- the men and women who were Kovacs' closest friends, and his sister.

Quell is the only living thing in the landscape of slaughter.

QUELL (CONT'D)  
I've been gone a long time.

KOVACS  
I want to be with you.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: (2)

QUELL

You never could lie for shit.

She comes forward, sits beside him. Both on the roof now, next to each other.

KOVACS

You think I'm lying?

QUELL

I think you're leaving something out. How did you feel in that lobby? Fighting for your life?

KOVACS

(a beat, then admits)

Good.

QUELL

Here's what you learn when someone tries to kill you: you're still alive. Take it personally. Do what I taught you. Fight back.

Slowly, he brings the gun up to his jaw again --

KOVACS

I'm not sure I can anymore.

She puts her hand over his, gently lowering the gun with their hands intertwined over it.

QUELL

If you love me, you don't get to be with me by fucking giving up. You survive.

KOVACS

Why? To help out these people and their fucked-up world...?

QUELL

Do what you were born to do. What I trained you to do. Make things change.

KOVACS

By saving a Meth fuckhead?

QUELL

By doing whatever you have to do to get your life back.

KOVACS

Without you.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: (3)

QUELL

I'm gone. But you aren't. 500 years  
is long enough. Move on.

KOVACS

Never. You hear me. Not ever.

QUELL

Then don't.

She gets up, moves behind him.

QUELL (CONT'D)

There's more here than you're willing  
to see. It's not the threat. It's  
the unanswered question. The mystery  
that needs to be solved, the box  
that needs to be unlocked. Envoys  
take what is offered, Tak. Take  
this chance, and don't look back.

He turns to look at her again -- but she's vanished.

Kovacs curls in on himself, as if he's been punched. *The loss of her, even after those few moments, palpably painful as a knife to the gut.*

After a moment, Kovacs stands. Spreads his arms against the night sky, as if he could jump from the roof.

From behind, we see him silhouetted against the endless lights of skyline. Like a GUARDIAN watching over the city below.

49 **EXT. STREETS OF BAY CITY - NIGHT**

We're back at the TATTOO PARLOR, garish lights screaming into the dark. Through the window -- KOVACS in the seat.

KOVACS (V.O.)

*Envoys weren't commandos, not exactly.  
We weren't terrorists, either. We  
were soldiers who turned our backs  
on immortality to try to save humanity  
from itself.*

50 **INT. TATTOO PARLOR - CONTINUOUS**

Kovacs has his arm turned up, as the TATTOO ARTIST uses something like a tiny vibrating arc-welder to cut his flesh -- but instead of black ink, he pours white-hot liquid "illuminum" into his skin.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

KOVACS (V.O.)

*Learned techniques of honing pure  
mind that let us move between  
battlefield planets like ghosts,  
from one sleeve to another, digital  
guerrillas striking and then melting  
back into the electronic sleet.*

The tattoo takes form like liquid opal in his skin, gem-bright depth and sheen.

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

*So it should have been easy for me  
to die. I'd done it before.*

It sizzles against his skin, then cools instantly, taking form --

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

*But I'd seen her. Heard her voice,  
watched her move in the moonlight.*

The Artist continues molding and shaping, carving the form of the tattoo -- the OUROBOROS.

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

*And real or imagined, if the one way  
I could be with her was to survive,  
then I was going to do it.*

Kovacs types something into the hub strapped to his wrist. The ONI in his eye GLEAMS, showing it's activated. He's talking with someone, we just can't see who.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

(into the phone)

Yeah, it's Kovacs. I'll take the case.

LINGER ON THE OUROBOROS TATTOO, as the tail is carved to reach the mouth, and the tattoo is completed --

SLAM TO BLACK.

**END OF SHOW**