

OFF ... ON.

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EXT. HIGHWAY OVERPASS — EVENING RUSH HOUR

Gridlocked traffic across an overpass, stretching over the highway below, forming a lop-sided X of red taillights.

In the background of the X, a glass tower looms over the highway — 12 stories tall, wide as a football field, and lights on in every office. Like the center of a panopticon.

Down on the overpass, in the foreground of the office tower, a single green tent on the sidewalk, beside the roadway.

PUSH IN ON THE OVERPASS

As we move closer to the cars, we see drivers and passengers through windows, with their eyes glued to phone screens.

PUSH IN ON A CAR IN TRAFFIC

We enter through the right passenger window, and on to the DRIVER behind the wheel, alone in the car.

He slumps in the driver's seat, in a white office shirt, wrinkled and untucked around the waist.

His eyes are on his phone at the bottom of the steering wheel, scrolling through short videos in a feed.

The occasional honk of rush hour adds some color to the white noise of the air conditioning, with all of the idling engines and road vibrations and car radios humming in the background.

PUSH IN ON THE PHONE

A viral video plays on the phone screen, as the driver clicks a HEART icon below the video.

PUSH IN ON THE PHONE SCREEN

Moving closer to the glass, and going THROUGH IT ...

Black.

A moment later, a massive block of CODE starts EXECUTING down the black screen, with some familiar words like "heart" and "favorite" in the wall of text.

As code reaches the bottom of the screen, and a loading indicator *blinks* ...

CUT TO

Another WALL OF CODE, more backend and harder-to-read, filled with an illegible arrangement of functions ...

And eventually some blocks of text we can understand – personal information:

```
NAME: "JOHN REYNOLDS",
EMAIL: "johnr1994@gmail.com",
PHONE: "+1 514 233-1463",
AGE: 29,
LOCATION: {85.967, -43.2984},
TIME_GMT: 22:54:01:56,
TIME_LOCAL: 18:54:01:56,
IP_ADDRESS: 192.168.4.10.,
DEVICE_ID: f7823bc2-382c-4e64-b0db-1972c5a98a42,
WATCH_TIME: 00:00:08,
SESSION_TIME: 00:24:15
```

SCROLL through HUNDREDS OF ROWS of data like this ... the algorithms that govern our culture, media, and lives ...

```
RECOMMENDED_VIDEOS: [ ... ],
RECENTLY_WATCHED: [ ... ],
RECENT_REACTIONS: [ ... ],
RECENT_SEARCHES: [ ... ],
RECENT_CREATORS: [ ... ],
FAVORITE_CREATORS: [ ... ],
FAVORITE_TOPICS: [ ... ],
FAVORITE_COMMENTS: [ ... ],
RECOMMENDED_ADS: [... ],
```

... PULL BACK FROM THE CODE

Rising from the black screen, as the text gets smaller, we pull out to a small black rectangle on a gold background –

A COMPUTER CHIP, sitting on ...

A computer BOARD, where the chip stands like a rectangular building, surrounded by a parking lot of pins and widgets ...

Encased in a ...

Thin metal box around the board ...

With green LED lights, *blinking* rapidly on the box ...

Alongside dozens of other boxes on a shelf, all of their lights *blinking* in dissonance with one another ...

On a wall full of these servers and blinking lights, reaching down to the floor and 8 feet into the air ..

PULL BACK ...

To walls and walls of these servers, stretching across a blue-gray climate-controlled room, as cavernous as a football field ...

All of the lights across all of the walls *blinking* with the world's activity, like static dead fireflies. The likes, the content, the pictures, the porn, the directions, the advertisements, the ChatGPT, the delivery orders, the emails, the DMs, the Google Docs ...

PULLING BACK ...

Out from the WALLS of servers, back into the corner of this cavernous room, and passing through the CEILING ...

Into the CRAWLSPACE between the walls ... filled with PIPES, buzzing with the sound of electricity and rushing water ...

And PULL OUT TO ...

The outside air at NIGHT, tinged by a fluorescent white glow ...

On a flat ROOF, amidst HVAC units and vents on the building's exterior ...

And out to an aerial view over the DATA CENTER.

A four-story box on a sprawling parking lot, with a grid of illuminated private roads and fluorescent streetlights, all looking like the patterns on the computer chip on the server.

Beyond the edge of the data center, a low stream trickles through a riverbed, dark in the night – just tinged by the fluorescent light pollution.

Beside it, power transmission lines lead out from the data center, into the nature beyond.

TRAVEL ALONG THE POWER LINES – FAST

Leaving the light pollution of the data center behind, and going into the darkness once more.

We zoom along agricultural land, passing through sections of dark forest that the power lines intersect, across the yard of the occasional farmhouse.

We pass through the natural world at night, the countryside, the dark peace and quiet and beauty of it.

Eventually, the fluorescent white glow returns – power lines leading to a POWER PLANT lit up in the night, surrounded by a chainlink fence.

Inside the perimeter, giant curved towers and stacks of the plant chug white-ish clouds of CO2 and pollution into the night sky.

Power lines connect the power plant to a GENERATOR STATION, with all of the round and spherical Edison-contraptions, that put power into the power lines.

We push in on one of those POWER LINES, and FLASH ALONG it at the speed of light, for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of miles ...

Coming out to ...

A floppy old power line hanging in the night, in a RUN-DOWN COMMERCIAL AREA. Like where the naked Terminator first appears in a ball of electricity.

We travel over the old power line across the road and night traffic below, as we pass the second-story of a GYM – bright lights shining into the night, illuminating a row of 20+ TREADMILLS and WALKING MACHINES, filled with people getting their nightly exercise while watching videos and listening to music on the devices in their hands.

Continuing along the power line, we pass over a homeless encampment on a worn-out and desolate strip of the street, with barely even a sidewalk.

Continuing along the old power line, we approach a GAS STATION.

The lights of the interior store shine bright into the night, as cars sit at the gas pumps, and one electric car charges on a plug. On the back-side of the building, an 18-wheel FUEL TRUCK makes a delivery.

From the power line, we drift down towards the pumps, and towards the electric car plugged into the charging station, with sound coming out of its speakers.

We GO IN the ELECTRIC CAR through the passenger window, passing a plastic bottle of water and a receipt on the passenger seat, as we hear voices in the car and on the speakers.

In the driver's seat, a MAN (early 40s) scrolls through a video feed on his phone on mute, as a voice talks on the car speakers.

WOMAN'S VOICE ON SPEAKERS (V.O)
Where are you now?

DRIVER
(distracted with videos)
Charging station, I'll be back
pretty soon. Check-up said we'll
have to get new tires, these ones
are wearing out. Apparently that
happens faster with EVs, with the
battery weighing like five thousand
fucking pounds
(chuckles, like a person
who multi-tasks
conversations with loved
ones and doesn't
understand where rubber
comes from)

On the dashboard, the BATTERY METER shows 75%.

HARD CUT

Articles on the screen –

- Increasing demand for car tires becoming leading source of deforestation (Yale 360)
- 30% of Global GHG emissions linked to urban sprawl (TU Delft)
- Microplastics in plastic water bottles linked to skyrocketing cancer rates (The Guardian)

More articles flash across the screen, faster and faster –

- Microplastics in breastmilk
- Rapid melting of the Doomsday glacier
- Humanity to resort to cannibalism by 2050
- Widespread species extinction
- 2°C expected by 2041
- Sixth mass extinction well underway
- Scientists shocked by how quickly temperatures are rising

ANITA (O.S.)
(screams)
STOOPPPPPPPPP!!!!!!!!!!

BLACK.

The *bum-bum-bum bum-bum-bum-bum-bum* of MR. SANDMAN by the Chordettes plays us back in softly.

INT. APARTMENT LIVING ROOM - DAWN

With MR. SANDMAN playing in the background, the early hour news plays on a television in a quaint apartment.

On the News:

ANCHOR

— in case you missed that
confrontation between an energy
official and a protestor, here it
is —

The news program cuts to smartphone footage of an event with rows of seats pointed towards a podium, where an OFFICIAL (early 60s) is speaking.

The camera turns to a young-ish PROTESTOR (26), rising from the crowd in an over-sized suit and starting to accost the official with full-throated indignation:

PROTESTOR

You are expanding natural gas
infrastructure when we're already
dying! How do you have
relationships with people?! How do
you look your wife and children in
the eye — knowing what you're
doing, and what you're causing?!

PAN BESIDE the television, as voices continue shouting on the broadcast ("You ever tried keeping a house warm in the winter with solar panels?!"), and onto a WOMAN (mid-30s) in her pajamas, walking from the living room into the KITCHEN of her apartment, as MR. SANDMAN continues playing.

This is ANITA.

Anita walks up to a stove beside a refrigerator.

She lifts a pan off a wall rack and sets it on the stovetop.

She *clicks* on the burner, and a small flame alights beneath the pan.

She opens the refrigerator, and pulls out an assortment of yesterday's leftovers — a half-onion, a can of beans with an open lid, a third of a tomato, a tupperware box of chopped broccoli — placing them on a cutting board beside the stove.

MR. SANDMAN plays us into -

INT. SHOWER - MINUTES LATER

CLOSE on Anita's face, breathing and relaxing in the steam of the shower.

INT. KITCHEN TABLE - MINUTES LATER

In a bathrobe and wrapped hair, Anita sits alone at the table with a bowl of sautéed vegetables and a purple smoothie. As she eats breakfast, she scrolls through news and a feed on her phone.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAWN

In the dark blue quiet of dawn, Anita walks from a parking lot into a big box GROCERY STORE. She is the first customer of the day, as usual.

Outside the sliding entrance doors, a homeless WOMAN (late-60s/early-70s) sits with a CARDBOARD SIGN next to an upside-down purple COWBOY HAT with sequins.

GIVE A LITTLE,
GET A LITTLE
GOD BLESS

As she passes, Anita bends down and puts a few bills in the cowboy hat, smiling and seeing the homeless woman.

ANITA
I love your hat. Good morning.

She grabs a cart from the full line of grocery carts, and pushes it into the store.

INT. OFFICE DESK - MORNING

In a standard corporate office, Anita wears an over-the-head COVID mask as she types at her computer.

Somewhere else on the office floor, someone hacks up a cough - really hacking up a lung.

Anita shakes her head, and focuses on the flyer and marketing materials on her screen.

INT. OFFICE BOARDROOM - 11AM

Anita sits across a sturdy oak table from an older white
MANAGER (mid-50s) with balding hair and a bland suit-and-tie.

Anita's eyes flash with anger, over her face mask, as the
Manager explains to her —

MANAGER

... more flexibility, more autonomy,
the ability to manage yourself and
really own the work.

As the Manager finishes his proposition, he looks at Anita.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

(nervous, expectantly)
... Do you have anything you want
to say?

Cooling herself down, Anita gathers her thoughts ...

ANITA

It sounds like you want AI to do
the first draft, so you can move me
onto a contract without benefits.

MANAGER

(prepared)
It is a .. policy .. we'll be
moving to across the company. Even
for the developers.

ANITA

And the managers?

After a moment, a look of concern cracks across the Manager's
disaffected face — starting to consider it for the first time
himself.

He opens his mouth to respond to Anita — then closes it, at a
loss for words.

INT. ANITA'S DESK - LATER

Anita stares at papers of a legal contract on her desk.

She scans through the pages, coming to the last page — and
the empty line for her signature.

ANITA HILL

She picks up a pen, rolling it between her fingers.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Fuck this.

She drops her pen and opens a job website on her computer.

She types "designer, marketing" and hits SEARCH. The page loads, and a listing of jobs appears.

INT. CAR - EVENING

On the drive home from work, Anita listens to a podcast in her car.

PODCASTER (V.O.)

- even self-driving cars. They call it "self driving", but there's actually 1.5 people staffed for every single car whenever it's on the road. It's a total gift, we would have had trains and buses across the state if not for that an the Uber bullshit 10 years ago -

ANITA

Assholes ... all of them ...

INT. ANITA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sitting on the couch, Anita scrolls through a feed on her phone.

Bored, she puts her phone down and picks up a remote control, turning on the TV.

As the TV turns on, a meteorologist speaks on the weather

METEOROLOGIST

- flares from increasing solar
activi -

Anita opens a video streaming platform, with a *ding!*, and she starts scrolling through the TV and movie selection.

INT. ANITA'S BEDROOM - TWILIGHT BEFORE DAWN

In the dark silence of early morning, Anita twitches in her sleep - then takes a breath.

Coming awake at the start of the day, she breathes and rubs her face.

In the dark, she rolls out of bed.

Walking through her bedroom in the dark, passing objects she can't see and knows by heart, she picks up something.

As the backlight turns on, it's her phone – it GLOWS on her face in the dark room. 5:24 AM.

She turns off airplane mode and unlocks the phone, as she blinks and stretches her eyes, waking up for the day.

As airplane mode turns off, Anita looks in confusion at her phone.

No new notifications.

On the top of the screen, the battery reads 55%, and the WiFi signal *blinks* – searching for a network.

Shaking her head, she turns off the WiFi and opens a social media application.

She swipes down on the feed to load it –

No connection available

ANITA
(groggy, confused)
Huh ... ?

Anita reaches for a light switch on the wall.

The plastic switch *flicks*, but the room stays dark.

Anita looks at the wall, holding the phone up for light.

ANITA (CONT'D)
What the fuck? ...

She flips the light switch several more times, looking up at the ceiling. The room stays dark.

INT. ANITA'S LIVING ROOM – MOMENTS LATER

The room is pitch black, along with the world outside through the windows. Not even the ambient lighting from LEDs and appliances in the apartment. It's all DARK.

Using her phone to chart a path, Anita walks through the living room into the kitchen.

She holds her phone up to the oven. The digital clock is OUT and DARK.

She turns the phone to the microwave. The digital clock is OUT and DARK. She presses a button on the microwave. No sound. No reaction.

She uses her phone light to walk back into the living room, and bends down to a power strip plugged into the wall.

On the power strip, the translucent orange switch is DARK.

She flips the switch. It stays dark.

She flips it the other way. It stays dark.

She flips it several more times. The switch stays dark.

ANITA

What the fuck ...

Tracing the power strip to the wall outlet, she unplugs the strip from the wall and plugs it back in.

Still dark.

She tries flipping the switch on the power strip.

Still dark.

Shaking her head, she rises and walks towards the floor-to-ceiling window along her living room.

Outside, the street and apartment buildings across the way are all dark and silent.

The only lights are pinpoints – smartphones backlights in some apartments, a flashlight beam in another. The rest is DARK.

Anita looks down at the street three stories below. No lamps. No store lights. No traffic signals.

It's all DARK. Everything fading into the darkness.

EXT. STREET – MINUTES LATER

Standing on the dark street, Anita glances at her phone – 5:36 AM. The top bar on the screen shows the cell and data and WiFi connections all still searching.

She walks down the street, looking up at a sky darker than she can ever remember. The metal streetlights poles blend into the surroundings, rising into headlamps you can barely make out from the sky.

Anita stops and holds out her phone light out into the road, showing the white paint of a crosswalk beside her.

In front of her, the traffic lights and walk signals at the intersection are all empty dark bulbs, barely visible.

She looks back down the block behind her -- all of the shop windows and store interiors, all completely dark.

INT. ANITA'S CAR - MINUTES LATER

Sitting in the driver's seat, Anita looks through the windows. Everything is pitch black.

By muscle memory, Anita inserts her key in the ignition - and *twists*.

The engine starts and the interior lights come on, along with the front headlamps -- illuminating a few cars opposite Anita, in the concrete and pavement of a PARKING GARAGE.

Anita exhales gratefully, for some light at least.

She plugs her phone into the car's charger, as the charging bolt appears next to the phone's battery level: 53%.

She switches the car's audio system from Bluetooth to FM Radio - and STATIC blasts over the speakers.

Flinching, she turns down the volume to a low static garble.

She hits the >> button on the dashboard, going to the next radio station.

Static garble.

She hits >> again.

Static garble.

She continues hitting >>, scanning through radio stations, all of them STATIC -- as Anita starts realizing something is very wrong.

She hits >> faster. Jamming the button.

STATIC - STATIC - STATIC -

As she shakes her head and bites her lip, holding back tears.

RADIO VOICE (V.O)
- We did man~~~

Anita's finger stops before hitting >> again, as the garbly voice continues talking on a weak signal.

RADIO VOICE (CONT'D)

- ~ge to get a backup s~~s--em on
fr~~m last year, a~~pp~rs a
~g~~r~rid o~~tage on
tran~~s~~m~~sion li~es, cau~~~se~
t~ b~ de~er~~ined.

Hearing some explanation, Anita exhales. As she looks down at her phone, the cell and data and WiFi signals searching, it makes sense.

After a beat, she switches the gear into DRIVE, and slowly pulls out of her parking spot in the dark, with only the headlamps to guide her, driving carefully through rows of cars in the pitch black parking garage.

INT. ANITA'S CAR / EXT. STREET — 5:48 AM

Anita drives slowly down the road, only by the light of her headlights, as she approaches an intersection. The traffic lights, dead and lifeless, hang like corpses over the street.

As she slows into the intersection, in the periphery of her headlights, she sees a MOTHER (early 30s) holding a BABY (6 months) on the sidewalk.

Anita leans forward, surprised to see someone else. She gently flashes her brights, waving the mother on.

Anita watches through the car's headlights as the mother crosses the crosswalk. She waves gratefully to Anita.

As the woman reaches sidewalk on the other side of the street, Anita rolls her window down and starts to open her mouth —

By the time she does, the mother has disappeared in the darkness.

Anita shakes her head and rolls up her window, leaning forward to look both ways through her windshield — and SPEEDS through the blind intersection under the dead lights.

Coming to the other side, she stops and takes a breath — then continues driving on slowly.

EXT. GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT — EARLY DAWN

Above the big box grocery store, the dark sky is just turning to the blue hues of dawn.

Anita's car is one of the only cars in the sprawling parking lot surrounding the store.

Inside the store, everything is completely dark.

INT. ANITA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Anita stares through her windshield at the big box store. An entire building that is OFF.

The voice on the car radio continues crackling.

RADIO VOICE
E~~MERGEN~~CY BROADC~~ST COMING
NOW, BE~~~AR W~~TH US ~~~~~

Anita waits for the news, looking at the fuel gauge in her car. The meter is just below the halfway point. She glances at her phone. The charge is at 74%.

A new voice, deep and official, sounds over the garbly radio transmission.

OFFICIAL VOICE
~~~WIDESPREAD O~~TAGE OF  
~~ENERA~~ORS AND TRAN~~~MISS~~ION  
SY~~TEMS ~~~

Anita's phone BUZZES.

She instinctively reaches for it, looking at the screen -

EMERGENCY ALERT

GRID DISRUPTION. ELECTRICITY MAY BE UNACCESSIBLE. STAY HOME AND KEEP DEVICES POWERED. TUNE TO RADIO AND EMERGENCY BROADCASTS FOR UPDATES.

ANITA  
What the fuck ...

Beat.

Anita sets down her phone, and hits the brake, and jerks the car back into REVERSE.

As she grips the wheel and moves her foot to the pedal -- she pauses, looking out at the big box store in front of her.

Beat.

She moves the car back into DRIVE, and drives quietly through the parking lot towards the store.

EXT. FRONT OF GROCERY STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Parked parallel to the sliding doors of the store, Anita steps out of her car.

She walks around the front of the car towards the entrance.

In her usual place, the old homeless woman is sitting outside, with her sign and upside-down cowboy hat in the morning air.

HOMELESS WOMAN

Folks are late today. Lights have been off all night, almost.

ANITA

Did you see anything happen?

The woman shakes her head.

HOMELESS WOMAN

It just went dark.  
(shrugs)  
Made it easier for me to sleep.  
They should do that every night.

Anita and the woman turn towards the dark interior of the store together, through the windows and sliding doors.

EXT. GROCERY STORE ENTRANCE / INT. CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Anita reaches into the glove compartment of her car through the passenger window and pulls out a small tool. It almost looks like a screwdriver, with a hexagonal flat tip.

She explains the tool to the homeless woman, with a bit of embarrassment.

ANITA

It's for .. emergencies ...

Anita turns from the homeless woman to the sliding glass doors of the grocery store, sealed tight.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Help me with this, just shine what I'm doing.

She turns on the flashlight on her phone and hands it to the homeless woman.



The homeless woman follows Anita with the phone light, as Anita presses the flat-tip tool against the glass pane on the sliding door.

ANITA (CONT'D)

Watch your feet.

Anita *pushes* the tool into the glass, leaning with her body and applying pressure gently.

After a few *pushes*, the glass pane starts to *splinter*.

The homeless woman takes a step back, still holding the phone light on the door, as Anita continues *pressing*. Slivers of glass start to fall, cracking against the floor. Anita tries to press without the falling glass getting into her.

She looks up at the sky, and the morning getting bluer.

With urgency, starts *pressing* harder and faster.

More of the glass door *splinters* and falls in a mess of glass around Anita's feet, bouncing off the pavement and her shoes, everywhere underneath her --

CRACK --

Anita makes a BIG CRACK through the whole glass door, that spiders out through the whole panel of glass. One move from shattering and falling all apart.

HOMELESS WOMAN

Step back and turn the other way.

Anita looks at the homeless woman, seeing something in her hand opposite the phone light. On her instruction, Anita backs away from the door, turning her body and holding a hand over her eyes as she watches through the side.

-- Something CRASHES through the top of the glass, as it all shatters and falls apart and CRASHES to the floor.

-- Another CRASH through the bottom of the glass door -- Anita flinches at the sound and blast of the exploding glass.

As Anita covers her head, looking away, the homeless woman walks up to her and hands her the phone back.

HOMELESS WOMAN (CONT'D)

You can hold this now.

Anita takes the phone back from the homeless woman, turning the light to the mess of glass around the door frame, as the woman drags a welcome carpet over the broken glass and tosses it out across the entrance of the door.

The homeless woman pulls two grocery carts out of a line, and pushes them both towards Anita, pulling one out for herself, with a spring in her step.

HOMELESS WOMAN (CONT'D)

Let's go.

Holding out the phone for light, Anita follows the homeless woman on the welcome mat over the bed of broken glass into the store ...

HOMELESS WOMAN (CONT'D)

Water, nuts, sanitizer ...

ANITA

Beans, protein powder, anything fresh if they have it ...

EXT. GROCERY STORE ENTRANCE - DAWN

As the sun starts to rise over the big box store, the parking lot is still empty. The main roadway has the occasional passing car.

Anita and the homeless woman stand with two grocery carts behind Anita's open trunk. The TRUNK is already filled 75% with:

- Power generators.
- Cases of water.
- Shrinkwrapped cans of beans.
- Bulk plastic bags of protein powder.
- Cardboard boxes of bananas, oranges, apples, onions.
- Bulk packages of toilet paper.
- Smaller packages of batteries, a handheld radio, a power drill, playing cards, dice, dominos, notebooks and pens.

Anita and the homeless woman glance out at the roadway, with more cars starting to *rush* along the empty road, as they quickly cram everything from the grocery carts into the trunk.

With the trunk nearly overflowing with supplies, Anita reaches up and SLAMES the trunk closed. She puts her hands on the trunk and JUMPS, pushing down on it, to make it all fit and lock closed.

Anita and the homeless woman SHOVE the grocery carts back towards the cart line, and hurry around to the driver and passenger seats.

INT. ANITA'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

In the front seats, Anita starts putting the key in the ignition, as the homeless woman settles into the passenger seat with the purple cowboy hat sitting on her lap.

Behind them, the rear seats are FILLED with more food and supplies: boxes of snacks, bags of flour, hygienic products.

After Anita turns the car on, she reaches into her door pocket. She pulls out two face masks, handing one to the homeless woman, as she starts putting hers on.

HOMELESS WOMAN

We already did it. I don't think  
the cameras are working anyway.

ANITA

It's for our health.

The homeless woman looks at Anita, and then looks away. Anita looks in the mirror – and sees the hurt on the woman's face.

ANITA (CONT'D)

I do it everywhere. At work too.  
We gotta protect ourselves ...  
(trailing)  
... especially now ...

Anita starts driving and rolls the windows down part way. The homeless woman looks back at Anita, driving in the mask.

HOMELESS WOMAN

(getting on page)  
If that's what we're doing ...

The homeless woman fiddles to lift the mask straps over her head, and adjust the straps around her neck and the bridge over her nose to make it comfortable.

Anita's car accelerates out of the empty lot towards the main roadway. Car headlights start appearing more frequently in passing, as the SIRENS of ambulances and police vehicles ring in the distance.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - 6:13 AM

A long boardroom table, in a room without windows and with low ceilings. At the end of the table, 4 soggy pizza boxes lean in a stack like the Tower of Piza.

The seats around the table are filled with older men in suits, and the occasional hawkish older woman in a suit. All of them are turned towards a man sitting at the center-side of the table, in a blue suit with a pin.

This is the PRESIDENT (mid-60s).

PRESIDENT

What is going on?

This is somewhere deep in the belly of Washington.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

— And why is it happening.

The President looks expectantly at the officials surrounding him.

One of those officials, feeling a duty to respond, speaks up.

OFFICIAL

We don't have an official cause yet, but from our intel, this has also struck near peers — so it's unlikely it was an aggression.

Another official speaks up.

OFFICIAL 2

From them at least.

PRESIDENT

Are we at risk?

OFFICIAL

From what, exactly .. ?

PRESIDENT

Our infrastructure being down, and bombs flying over our heads!

OFFICIAL

There don't appear to be any urgent threats, and the National Guard is setting up backup systems on generators.



AIDE (CONT'D)

Nuclear meltdowns, because plants can't offload their fucking electricity! Cities dying in the heat, because they don't have AC! There is no fucking MONEY! Water treatment stations are off! We are full of fucking threats, and none of them have to do with bombs!

As he finishes, the Aide takes a breath ... sits back in his seat. Steeling himself and his words to the eyes of all the officials around the table.

PRESIDENT

Do we have a plan for solar or wind, for emergency installations?

AIDE

*We don't have a grid.*

PRESIDENT

Well .. gas, generators?! What can we do?!

The Aide looks around the table – incredulous that all of these people are looking at him for guidance.

AIDE

To offload power from a nuclear plant? I don't think so, sir. Nice we can use them for anti-missile systems though.

The President HITS the table with his palm.

PRESIDENT

When can we get things back online?

The table turns to a face we recognize – the ENERGY OFFICIAL, who was shouted at in the protest video on the news.

ENERGY OFFICIAL

Reports from some generator stations indicate a mix of hardware and software failures. In certain areas, we may be able to get it back faster -- but ...

(painful)

... we should plan on a timeframe of *weeks* ...

It's like a death sentence.

Except to the Aide, who chuckles at the Fucked Up Beyond All Recognition of the situation.

The President shoots him a glance.

PRESIDENT

You have an idea to share with all  
of us?

Still wearing a smirk, emboldened by the end of the world, the Aide glances from the President to the Energy Official -- and the smirk fades, as the Aide realizes that nobody actually does have a plan ...

EXT. OFFROAD BRUSH – SUNRISE

As the orange sun starts to rise over a bramble of bushes and shrubs, Anita and the homeless woman – now wearing her purple cowboy hat – sit on the hood of Anita's car, looking out to a clearing that shows an overpass over a highway. It's that overpass from the start, with the giant office tower rising through the middle, and the small green tent on the cracked sidewalk along the road.

The roadways are filled with gridlock traffic, distant sounds of honking and people yelling bloody murder at each other, along with sirens all around.

Anita turns from the gridlock mayhem towards the windshield behind her, to all of the supplies piled up in the back seats.

She turns to the homeless woman, who is looking up at the clouds and breathing the fresh air and enjoying the morning.

ANITA

Where do you want to go?

INT. BLACK SUV – MORNING

In a bumping and speeding SUV, a GUY (late 20s) in a wrinkled t-shirt and flannel pajamas rides in the middle row – as he braces himself on the door handle and the seat cushion, and sirens BLARE outside.

We recognize the guy, from somewhere ...

GUY

I didn't do anything! What the  
fuck!

The DRIVER (mid-40s) up front, a big dude in a black suit with a head shaved to a glint, looks at the guy in the mirror and then back on the road.

EXT. WASHINGTON DC — CONTINUOUS

The Black SUV SPEEDS and BUMPS along the sidewalk, as gridlocked traffic sits in the street, alongside the National Museum of African American History.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM — MINUTES LATER

The Driver delivers the disheveled guy from the backseat into the briefing room. The driver nods to the officials in the room, and steps back through the door, closing it shut behind him.

In his pajamas, with sleep in his eyes and drool marks around his lips, the guy is standing in front of the national security apparatus of the United States.

And we now recognize him as the PROTESTOR from the news, who disrupted the energy official, who is sitting at the table and staring at him HARD.

PROTESTOR

I didn't do anything! I had tickets! —

The younger Aide lifts a hand, trying to help him out.

AIDE

It's okay —

PROTESTOR

— I paid to be there! —

AIDE

Shut .. up.

On the Aide's instruction, the protestor goes quiet, looking at the officials around the room with wide eyes -- and eventually, the President of the United States.

PROTESTOR

Am - am I being detained?

PRESIDENT

The power grid of the United States is out.

The protestor looks momentarily relieved he isn't arrested — then, *oh shit* ...



PROTESTOR  
... Umm, what?

ENERGY OFFICIAL  
You wanted to turn off the gas,  
kid! It's off! What do you want  
to do about it now?

The protestor's mouth slowly widens agape -

PROTESTOR  
Oh ... oh ...

Oh shit.

ENERGY OFFICIAL  
(sarcastic)  
There's pizza, at least ...

He gestures towards the soggy pizza boxes at the end of the table.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - 30 MINS LATER

The protestor now sits at the table in his wrinkled t-shirt, wiping tomato sauce from his mouth with his wrist. He sits beside all the other officials, across the table from the Aide - the only other person in his generation there.

PRESIDENT  
Where do we start?

The officials look expectantly at the protestor, in his t-shirt and pajama bottoms.

PROTESTOR  
Is there anything ... urgent? Are  
people dying? Yet, I mean?

Officials shake their heads in disgust, at his aloofness.

AIDE  
Nuclear plants are within 1 week of  
problems, our water treatment  
plants are out, and our hospitals  
doesn't have power.

PROTESTOR  
... And ... and you're asking me?

ENERGY OFFICIAL  
The fucking phone lines are down!  
You're here.

PROTESTOR  
 (realizing)  
 Oh ... okay ...

PRESIDENT  
 My staff has heard you yelling  
 "*End fossil fuels!*: for years.  
 Surely you had a plan, all this  
 time?

PROTESTOR  
 (rubbing his head, nervous)  
 ... The phones lines are down?  
 Like, cell too?

OFFICIAL  
 We can't reach anybody.

AIDE  
 - But we can move people.

Beat.

PROTESTOR  
 Can we go somewhere?

OFFICIAL  
 Where?

PROTESTOR  
 Do we have, umh, a helicopter or  
 something?

EXT. FARM - CENTRAL VIRGINIA - MORNING

The gust and *whir* of helicopter blades kick up dirt and  
 grass, as the bottom of a helicopter lowers to the ground.

As the helicopter LANDS in dirt, the surroundings are crop  
 fields and an old wide farmhouse. The farmhouse has some  
 glass panels all along the roof - not solar panels, something  
 else.

Behind the helicopter, a BARN, with dark solar panels on top.

A person in a WELDING HELMET walks out of the barn door,  
 holding a SOLDERING IRON in their hand. The tip crackles  
 with the blue light of electricity, as the person in the  
 welding helmet presumably stares in shock at the helicopter  
 in their yard.

## EXT. BARN SHELTER - MINUTES LATER

The FARMER (early-50s), who we see now without the welding helmet, has unruly hair and a gray beard. He holds the hand of a young BOY (4) as he talks with the Protestor and the Aide and the Energy Official, and another official with them.

FARMER

I've been trying to talk with you  
all for years.

ENERGY OFFICIAL

Sorry about the delay, there's .. a  
lot on our plates. We're grateful  
to be with you now though.

(points to the barn)

You still have power?

FARMER

When the sun is shining.

The farmer nods for them to follow along, as the farmer walks into the barn, and the guests look up at the dark solar panels on the roof.

## INT. BARNHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Inside the barnhouse, the walls and tables are filled with mechanical equipment and machines and power tools and a welding station - all of them on CORDS, which lead into the barn wall.

The Energy Official picks a power drill off a stack of hay. He looks at its CORD, leading out to the wall and up to the ceiling.

He presses the trigger gently - the motor *whirs*.

He shakes his head, impressed.

FARMER

All this runs on DC power,  
connected directly to the solar  
panels up top. As long as the sun  
is shining, we got power.

OFFICIAL

And when it doesn't?

FARMER

We don't.

AIDE

It's not tied to the grid, there's no storage?

FARMER

We have a few little nickel iron battery kits, for the lights and phones and all, but that's about it. You know nickel iron?

The Aide and Energy Official exchange glances and shake their head. The Protestor has a little smile, seeing all of this take place, after orchestrating it.

The farmer walks over to a wall, to a little steel box on the ground. He lifts a lid off the box, showing a series of nickel iron battery cells inside – each of them a block with some wires, about the size of a subway sandwich.

FARMER (CONT'D)

Around since Edison. Last forever, damn cheap, don't need any of the cobalt or lithium y'all are enslaving people for.

(catches himself)

Excuse me, um, that *some people* are enslaving folks for.

ENERGY OFFICIAL

(ignoring the comment)

But all of the tools, plugged into the cords –

FARMER

Direct drive power, right off the solar panels. Whole workshop runs with two old panels on the roof.

EXT. WIDE FARMHOUSE – LATER

The Farmer leads the officials and his young boy on a tour outside the wide, two-story farmhouse – with glass panels all along the roof.

FARMER

Those are hot air collectors and solar thermal panels. Sun heats up whatever behind the glass, water or air, and we pass that through the ducts, to heat stuff in the house. That's how we do pretty much all of the heating, which is most of the energy cost. Hardly costs a thing.

(MORE)

FARMER (CONT'D)

(continues)

Cooling is a bit trickier, we've mainly done that through insulation and lots of windows and cross-drafts, so things are pretty manageable even on the worst days. Still gotta keep cool, use ice, be smart.

ENERGY OFFICIAL

And no gas, no batteries, no storage, no nothing? And it all runs?

FARMER

(shrugs)

A little bit of biogas from the grass clippings and the house now and then, and that's about it.

EXT. PICNIC TABLE — MINUTES LATER

The Farmer sits at a wooden picnic table that he made with his own hands, along with his four-year-old, sitting across with the Protestor, the Aide, and the Energy Official.

FARMER

I just thought the cell service was out. We had everything working out here.

AIDE

It's all out — I mean the grid, everywhere. Even overseas.

FARMER

Jesus ... what the hell did that?

The Energy Official shakes his head. They don't know.

FARMER (CONT'D)

What's y'all's plan?

The Energy Official and the Aide exchange glances, and then at the Protestor who brought them here, and then back at the farmer.

AIDE

That's ... what we're here for.

FARMER

(chuckles)

To what? Power the whole country?

As the Aide nods back at him, the Farmer stops laughing.

He turns from the suits across the table, looking back over his shoulder at his farmhouse – the glass, the panels, the hot air and water systems.

He puts a hand on his boy's shoulder.

END PART ONE