

Altered Carbon

based on the novel by
Richard Morgan

Adapted by
John Pogue

Revised by
Albert Torres

Current revisions by
Joshua Marston

November 1, 2007

Silver Pictures
Warner Brothers

EXT. CITY SKYLINE - DAWN

Not our world... A yellow haze drapes over the celestial foreign sky.

SUPERIMPOSE: HARLAN'S WORLD - THE 11TH PLANET

INT. HOTEL SUITE/BEDROOM - DAWN

SARAH KOVACS(8) cowers under the bed of this modest room, hiding... Listening... For the FOOTSTEPS now approaching.

Floorboards creak as a pair of feet slowly enter. The sight drives her further into her hiding place, slithering back quietly.

A few more steps and the boot clad feet stop directly before her... And suddenly they are out of her line of sight, creaking somewhere in the room. And without warning --

-- an unseen force YANKS HER FROM UNDER THE BED BY THE ANKLES. She screams as she is scooped up by --

-- a lean, battle scarred man, holding her upside down by her feet. And just as suddenly as her screams began, they transform into... A GIGGLING LAUGHTER.

SARAH
Stop it, Daddy!

TAKESHI KOVACS(30s) gently tosses her on the bed and proceeds to tickle his little girl.

KOVACS
You need to find better hiding places.

SARAH
Why? You always find me anyways.

Kovacs pulls Sarah to her feet, leading her by the hand to the door. On the way he scoops up her shoes from the floor and hands them to her.

KOVACS
All the more reason to keep trying.
Now come on. Get dressed. We have to get going.

As she takes the sneakers, Sarah suddenly remembers something and darts back toward the night stand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOVACS (cont'd) (CONT'D)
What are you doing, sweetie?

At the night stand, Sarah recovers what she forgot: A SILVER JEWELLED BUTTERFLY BARRETTE.

SARAH
Mom's barrette...

Sarah looks into the mirror, awkwardly trying to clip her hair back. As Kovacs watches her we notice HE'S ABSENTLY RUBBING AN OLD SCAR THAT RUNS ALONG HIS JAW.

He likes watching his daughter do things for herself. After a moment, he can't help himself --

KOVACS
Here... Let me help you.

He steps over, taking the barrette from her and scooping her hair into a ponytail.

SARAH
What was mommy like?

He'd be caught off guard if he hadn't heard the question so many times before. The memory brings a subtle pain to his gaze...

KOVACS
You know... I've told you before.

SARAH
Tell me again.

Kovacs turns Sarah to face him. It's hard to speak the words, but anything for his little girl.

KOVACS
She was... Let's see...
Beautiful... Definitely that.
Brilliant... And most of all...
She was... just like you.

Their eyes meet. Sarah loves hearing this... And he knows it.

Kovacs SNAPS HIS FINGERS ON BOTH HANDS and CLAPS them together, then makes a PSHOO sound which turns into a KISS on her forehead. She giggles.

SARAH
I wanna hide again?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KOVACS

No, sweetie... We can't. We have to go. We don't have time.

DIGITAL SNOW EVERYWHERE --

-- quickly replaced by a video image. A black screen, static popping, until finally a tiny PIN-HOLE in the center of the screen grows larger. The source of this image burrows through wood and plaster until we see --

INT. HOTEL SUITE/LIVING ROOM - DAWN

SURVEILLANCE POV FROM ABOVE KOVACS --

As he enters from the BEDROOM.

RADIO VOICE #1

Target acquired.

Abruptly halting directly underneath the PIN-CAM, he looks at his feet, then crouches down, placing his index finger on the dark hardwood floor.

RADIO VOICE #2

What's Kovacs doing? Punch in.

THE SURVEILLANCE POV FROM ABOVE zooms in to Kovacs' finger, close enough to see a TINY WHITE SPECK OF PLASTER.

RADIO VOICE #1

Shit.

THE SURVEILLANCE POV PULLS OUT just as Kovacs stands and slowly looks up directly at the PIN-CAM. He knows.

RADIO VOICE #1 (cont'd) (CONT'D)

We're made. Move in now! Go! Go!

INT./EXT. U.N. ENVOY ORBITAL TRANSPORT/SKYLINE - DAWN

The aircraft hovers high above the city as an ENVOY ASSAULT TEAM, cloaked in GRAV-SUITS, swiftly step out through an open hatch, arms at their sides -- FREE FALLING

POV LIVE OCULAR RECORDING DEVICES -- Eye implants in each of the Officers record every move of the assault --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- as we follow the team plummeting toward the loft, finally activating their GRAV-SUITS and coming to a floating halt at the windows of the hotel suite.

INT. HOTEL SUITE/LIVING ROOM - DAWN

Kovacs immediately spots the OFFICERS at the window and whips around toward the hallway.

KOVACS

Sarah!

In that instant an EXPLOSIVE PULSE fills the room as THE FRONT DOOR COMES CRASHING DOWN.

Kovacs instinctively whips around and with a calculated grace, grabs the coffee table and FLIPS IT TOWARD THE INCOMING ENVOY OFFICERS. The lead OFFICER fires his weapon --

-- SHATTERING THE TABLE into a cloud of splinters.

Kovacs leaps over the couch as TRACER BULLETS pierce the cushions. The screams coming from his daughter's room somehow rise above the din of fire.

Flattening out on the floor, Kovacs reaches for an ankle holster and pulls out a 9mm FOUR-PHASE PISTOL. It's old-fashioned, 23rd century, a striking contrast to the futuristic weaponry of the police.

He presses the gun against the fabric of the couch. Firing clean through, with surgical precision, the shot hits the Officer in the neck -- the only unarmored portion of his body. He stumbles back, then collapses. Dead.

The TWO OFFICERS behind, pull back, taking cover in the outside hallway.

THROUGH THE WINDOW -- another Police Officer HOVERS for an instant then CRASHES THROUGH, glass spraying everywhere.

An instant later, staying low, Kovacs muscles the couch forward, JACK-KNIFING IT into the window invader and flipping him back out the way he came.

His Grav-Suit still active, the Officer HOVERS outside window, flailing out of control.

But only until Kovacs fires one precise shot, propelling him away as the Grav-Suit fizzles. He drops.

Kovacs back-peddles into the --

KITCHEN --

-- firing toward the front door, keeping his predators at bay. But more importantly watching the hallway. A fear for his little girl in his eyes.

KOVACS
(calling into the other
room)
Sarah! Don't move!

SARAH
Daddy!

Kovacs swings around the doorjamb, out of the line of fire and slides on his knees under the kitchen table --

-- where he retrieves an AUTOMATIC RIFLE taped to the bottom. He darts back to the doorway.

OFFICER (O.S.)
Sergeant Kovacs! Don't do this!

Kovacs peers around the corner, his eyes darting between the demolished doorway and the hallway leading to his daughter.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Sarah, crying, cowers under the bed. She SCREAMS at the sight of another OFFICER quietly FLOATING IN THROUGH THE WINDOW.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

SARAH'S SCREAM drives Kovacs around the doorway, only to be pushed back by SHOTS FIRED, splintering the door frame.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Another OFFICER coming in fast THROUGH THE WINDOW. Fear in his eyes. He knows what happened to the first guy.

Sarah bolts from the hallway, entering the eye line of the scared Officer.

Kovacs peers in from the kitchen, horrified.

KOVACS
NO! SARAH!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Then, in an instant... A MONTAGE OF LIVE ACTION AND OCULAR SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE:

-- THE KITCHEN WINDOW behind Kovacs EXPLODES. Glass spraying everywhere. Kovacs hits the deck, face down.

-- OUTSIDE THE KITCHEN WINDOW an ORBITAL POLICE TRANSPORT hovers a few yards away, a SNIPER perched from an open hatch, ready for his next shot.

-- Sarah, crying tries to cross the living room and finally --

-- the Scared Officer, whips around, FIRING BLINDLY.

In the blink of an eye, Sarah goes down. A SHOT TO THE CHEST.

Kovacs watches, the blood draining from his face. His soul dying inside him... Losing everything.

With a maddening fury, Kovacs springs to his feet, brandishing the weapon like an extension of his own body --

-- firing at anything that moves. First the scared Officer. His chest explodes. SYNTHETIC FLESH BURNS. INTERNAL WIRES SNAKING OUT AS HE DROPS.

Kovacs SHOOTS AGAIN, despondent, spraying gunfire into the wall by the doorway... Hoping to hit something... Anything...

But only until the ORBITAL SNIPER GETS A CLEAR SHOT --

-- and FIRES. Through the kitchen window... Into the living room... A direct hit in Kovacs' back. He crumples, dazed.

-- TWO OFFICERS hover in front of Kovacs, their weapons trained on him.

-- Kovacs looks down at the two-inch hole in his chest. It's bad.

OFFICER
Drop your weapon!

-- Kovacs looks at the Officer hovering in front of him. His eyes shift to the room behind the officer...

-- SARAH'S DEAD BODY on the ground.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
Don't make me do it, Kovacs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

-- But you can see it in Kovacs' gaze... Death is better than the sight of his own fallen daughter. He raises his gun and YELLS as...

-- the Officer BLASTS first, another shot through his chest.

-- Kovacs falls back. Lifeless.

COMMANDING OFFICER (O.S.)
Hold your fire! Hold your fire!

A COMMANDING OFFICER appears in the doorway, assessing the destruction.

POV OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER -- His ocular surveillance unit. He steps toward the lifeless body of Kovacs.

THE POV SWINGS AROUND, settling briefly on Sarah --

COMMANDING OFFICER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Goddamn it...

-- THEN SWINGS BACK toward Kovacs, standing over him now.

The Commanding Officer pulls out a small SCANNING DEVICE, powers it up and presses it against the BACK OF KOVACS' NECK.

COMMANDING OFFICER (O.S.) (cont'd)
(CONT'D)
Cortical stack implant
identification... Positive.
(a deep sigh, then)
Sergeant Takeshi Kovacs... You're
under arrest.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. BAY CITY CORRECTIONS FACILITY/RESLEEING ROOM - DAY

A concrete room with dull florescent lights casting their glow on a row of, LARGE UPRIGHT CASKET-LIKE GLASS AND METAL CYLINDERS lining the back wall of the chamber, each with a stainless steel table placed before it.

A TECHNICIAN mans a console of computers, preparing for some sort of procedure as a metal door across the room slides open, making way for another TECHNICIAN. He carries a small metal SHIPPING CASE, the size of a jewelry box.

Setting it on a table, he unlocks it, opens it and reveals --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A TINY CHIP ENCASED IN A HARD GLASS CYLINDER. A Stack. Digital Human Consciousness. The electro-protein filaments pulse and move. Part electrical, part living organism.

TECHNICIAN #1

Who the hell is this guy? You know how much it costs to ship this thing from up there?

TECHNICIAN #2

Don't know. Don't care.

As the Technician delicately removes the chip (a "stack"), A MULTI-ARMED SURGICAL ROBOT descends from the ceiling and gently plucks it from his fingers.

And now we see inside the UPRIGHT CYLINDER, submerged in a clear amnio-fluid, a MALE BODY, dark hair, naked, 30-years-old, muscular, yet somehow weathered.

A transparent oxygen mask covers most of his face. But it's clear this is not the man we just saw killed.

The top of the large canister slides open as the body is raised out by a series of attached cables. It's pulled horizontally then suspended above the stainless steel table.

The surgical robot positions itself above the body and goes to work.

ANOTHER SURGICAL ROBOTIC ARM creates an incision at the base of the body's skull, followed by the insertion of the chip.

As soon as it's in the bio-elements of the stack engage, as if it's coming to life, bonding with nerve endings of the base of the skull.

A THIRD ROBOTIC ARM slides in, soldering the stack to the spinal cord.

A moment later the body is lowered onto the table as a LARGE METALLIC BRACE IS FASTENED AROUND THE NECK.

TECHNICIAN #2 (CONT'D)

Here we go. Zap him.

Technician #1 steps over to the cylinder, tapping a command onto an attached keyboard.

TECHNICIAN #1

Initiate resleeving in five, four, three, two... Welcome to Earth, Kovacs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

A whirl of electricity buzzes as the BODY SPASMS, MUSCLES CONTRACTING VIOLENTLY... And suddenly we are swept into --

A MONTAGE, IMAGES FLASHING BY:

Memories of Sarah... Laughing... Playing... A cacophony of sound erupts, Sarah's voice rising above it, "Daddy!" And finally... THE MOMENT OF HER DEATH.

CLOSE ON a pair of closed eyes as they -- SNAP OPEN.

An instant later the body bolts upright, clutching his chest in the exact spot where TAKESHI KOVACS took the blast.

A choking cough follows as Kovacs relives his last breath of life. He spits up fluid, gagging, his eyes bulging in terror.

KOVACS

Sarah!

The two Technicians move in quickly, attempting to restrain Kovacs. As they take hold, Kovacs' arm shoots up, lightning fast, GRASPING TECHNICIAN #2 BY THE THROAT.

TECHNICIAN #1

Whoa! Whoa! Take it easy!

Gathering his bearings, Kovacs coughs out more fluid, his furious eyes fixed on the man he holds by the throat. He slowly loosens his grip as Technician #2 wrenches free.

TECHNICIAN #1 (CONT'D)

Easy... You're alright...

Congratulations. You got yourself a new sleeve.

Breathing heavy, surveying his chest, Kovacs looks for a wound that's not there. He struggles to get his words out.

KOVACS

My daughter... Sarah... Where?

The Technicians exchange a look as they remove the face mask.

TECHNICIAN #1

Don't know anything about a daughter, pal.

Even through Kovacs' disoriented stupor, the lack of news is disheartening as he clears more Amnio-fluid from his nose.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOVACS
Where am I?

Technician #1 grabs a towel and wipes Kovacs' face clean as THE NECK BRACE RELEASES. He does the same to the back of his neck, the base of his skull, where --

-- WE SEE a dime-sized, red irritation.

TECHNICIAN #1
Bay City, Earth.

KOVACS
Fantastic.

INT. BAY CITY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY/CORRIDOR - DAY

Two burly armed GUARDS escort Kovacs, now wrapped in a towel, down a long white tiled hallway, his legs still a little wobbly as coordination seeps in slowly.

A GLASS WALL lines the left side of the corridor. Beyond it, high ceilings allow for the towering metal racks holding what seems like THOUSANDS OF STACK IMPLANTS.

A RETRIEVAL ROBOT glides down the center of the room. Shooting an arm up, it delicately pulls down an implant.

GUARD
The joint pain you're feeling is
normal, Mr. Kovacs --

KOVACS
I got it. I've done this before.

Reaching the end of the hallway, they stop before a steel door. A sign above it reads: SHOWER.

INT. SHOWER - DAY

Steam permeates as the scalding water pours over Kovacs. He slowly rolls his head, cracking his neck and rubbing the little irritated spot of skin on the back of his neck.

THE SHOWER ROOM

With a towel wrapped around his body, Kovacs cautiously moves toward a full length mirror. He hesitates, then steps before it... Surveying his new body, his new face, his new...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kovacs takes in his reflection, slightly apprehensive at the stranger staring back at him. He rubs his jaw where his scar used to be.

INT. BAY CITY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY/CORRIDOR - DAY

Stepping out from the shower room, Kovacs comes face to face with WARDEN SULLIVAN(50s). Imposing and severe, he eyes Kovacs with a hint of disdain, the same he has for all his inmates. The two Guards flank him.

Sullivan taps the screen of a DIGITAL FILE TABLET he holds in his grasp. He turns and walks away as he reads. The Guards prod Kovacs to follow.

WARDEN SULLIVAN

Takeshi Lev Kovacs. Former United Nations Envoy. Two weeks into serving one hundred and eighteen years for the murder of a suspect and the synthetic damage of seven Harlan's World Envoys.

KOVACS

I want my daughter's stack.

Ignoring the demand, Sullivan taps the tablet, pulling up another document. He scribbles his signature on the screen with a stylus.

WARDEN SULLIVAN

This is a leasing agreement certifying you were received intact from Harlan's World Justice Administration and sleeved into the body you now inhabit. You are now officially on lease for a period of six weeks, under the guardianship of the PsychSec Corporation.

Kovacs bristles at the mention of the name "PsychSec."

KOVACS

You gotta be kidding me.

WARDEN SULLIVAN

Sign.

Warden Sullivan hands him the tablet and the stylus. Kovacs glares at him, not taking it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WARDEN SULLIVAN (CONT'D)
You wanna be a free man or not?

Kovacs grabs the stylus with his left hand and goes to sign.
It immediately feels wrong. He pumps the muscles his hand.

KOVACS
Fuck.

Annoyed, he tries to sign with right hand. Typical.

KOVACS (CONT'D)
It had to be a right-handed sleeve.

INT. BAY CITY CORRECTIONS FACILITY/LOBBY - DAY

Sliding doors part as Kovacs and Sullivan enter the spacious waiting room. The Guards right behind them.

Kovacs, suddenly distracted, catches sight of a WOMAN and her DAUGHTER -- more or less the same age as Sarah -- sitting in a corner. The sight of the girl sparks a pained memory.

The Mother and Daughter look up, hopeful, searching for recognition from Kovacs. Kovacs gives them a slight shake of the head. He's not the one they are waiting for.

WARDEN SULLIVAN
(unsympathetic)
Kid's father is being released
today. For all they know, he could
be sleeved in my body.

A young woman COP approaches from across the lobby. This is KRISTEN ORTEGA (30), piercing eyes and intelligent beauty. Her police uniform bears a stand-issue COLLAR that rises up to protect her stack.

She peers at Kovacs like she's seeing a ghost.

WARDEN SULLIVAN (CONT'D)
Kovacs, this is Lieutenant Ortega.

ORTEGA
(cold, efficient)
We need to get going.

KOVACS
Nice to meet you, too.

Ortega shoots him a dirty look, clearly not happy to have this detail.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Sullivan nods to the guards, signaling them to take hold of Kovacs' wrist. They hold him steady, opening his hand and branding the back of it with a small pen-like device... AN INK TRACER. It leaves a faint black mark in the center: I.D. Number 91005.

WARDEN SULLIVAN

See you soon, Kovacs. I'm sure.

Ortega steps away.

ORTEGA

Let's go.

KOVACS

I'm not going anywhere until you tell me why you had my stack shipped across the universe.

ORTEGA

You don't sound too grateful to be off prison stack.

KOVACS

I don't know what's going on. But I can guess this isn't charity.

ORTEGA

It's definitely not that. For any of us. Apparently your services have been requested by someone with means.

Kovacs stares her down, waiting for more.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

A murder investigation. Supposedly.

KOVACS

Whose?

ORTEGA

Laurens Bancroft. Founder of PsychSec and the creator of--

KOVACS

I know who Laurens Bancroft is.

He peers at Ortega suspiciously. Neither one cares for the other.

EXT. BAY CITY CENTRAL/CITY STREET - DAY

A thin haze of permanent fog covers the imposing city of SAN FRANCISCO.

Daylight is scarce as the IMMENSE SKYSCRAPERS block out what little sunlight there is.

AERIAL TRANSPORTS encounter their own form of gridlock while the ground below is crowded with pedestrians -- a class line drawn here. The sidewalk is for people on foot. The "street" is for people "walking" in human-carrying biped robots (seats molded onto robotic walking legs that move at the pace of a jog). If you've ever wondered what over-population would look like, this is it. A bevy of nationalities and languages all melted into one world.

Kovacs trails Ortega out of the building, followed by the pair of Armed Guards. They descend the stone steps and walk toward a POLICE TRANSPORT hovering at a parking dock fifteen-feet off the ground.

As he hits the bottom step, Kovacs scans the area, his eyes alert, searching for opportunity...

ORTEGA

It was a real death. His stack
implant was destroyed. A beam gun
severed his head.

KOVACS

Sorry to hear it.

Kovacs isn't really listening. Instead he turns to the Armed Guards, smiles and then --

WITH LIGHTNING PRECISION, SNATCHES THE WEAPON OUT OF ORTEGA'S HOLSTER... SHUTTLES THE BUTT INTO ONE GUARD'S FACE, KNOCKING HIM OUT COLD... Then levels the barrel at the other Guard's nose.

Without a word, Kovacs disarms the second guard. Ortega watches helplessly, giving Kovacs a searing stare.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

You were wrong... I am grateful.
Thanks.

And with that Kovacs darts away, carrying both weapons and vanishing into the dense foot traffic.

EXT. BAY CITY STREET - DAY

Lost in the crowd now, Kovacs hurries along, weaving through the hundreds of PEDESTRIANS.

Kovacs catches sight of A POLICE TRANSPORT FLYING LOW ABOVE FOOT TRAFFIC, trailing him. He breaks into a run. And as the Police Transport catches up --

Kovacs cuts a sharp left, shuttling into a --

NARROW ALLEY

Too narrow for the Police Transport to follow. A maze of claustrophobic passages. Kovacs moves swiftly. Quick rights and lefts, until finally he hits a DEAD END...

A TEN FOOT FENCE... And on the other side...

A WASTELAND OF DEFUNCT TROLLY CARS TURNED INTO MAKESHIFT HOMES...

It's Squalor. A metropolis of Bay City's poor. ELDERLY MEN AND WOMEN. DECREPID SYNTHETIC BODIES, OLDER MODELS, all falling apart. The misery is disarming.

FLASHING LIGHTS and THE SOUND OF SIRENS closing in drive Kovacs up the tall fence. His agile climb comes to an abrupt halt when suddenly KOVACS' HAND SEIZES UP, trembling, the muscles locked in contraction... And that's when he see it...

The spot where the Ink Tracer was stamped. The I.D. number raising on his skin as the veins in his hands BULGE, TURNING BLACK...

The ink spreads up his arm, pulsing through the veins of his torso, his neck, everywhere until he loses all control and FALLS TO THE GROUND WITH A PAINFUL THUD. His motor functions gone.

And as he writhes in pain, fighting the seizure, he rolls over to find --

Ortega and Warden Sullivan, flanked by the TWO ARMED GUARDS, standing over him. In Sullivan's hand, a small remote device. He switches it off releasing Kovacs from the grips of the Ink Tracer.

A gathering of poor Bay City CITIZENS watches the action from the other side of the fence. Ortega sneers at Kovacs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ORTEGA

Try that once more and you'll be back on stack. For another three hundred years.

The Guards move in, dragging Kovacs away.

INT./EXT. POLICE TRANSPORT/BAY CITY - DAY

Cruising through the dense city, the police transport glides along a "road" of an energy beam (something like the third rail on a twenty-first century subway or the overhead cables on an old-fashioned electric bus). When vehicles moves from aerial road to aerial road they float/leap to catch the next energy line. The traffic runs not only between the immense skyscrapers, but also THROUGH some, which have been built with "traffic tunnels" a hundred stories off the ground.

Ortega's transport goes through one of these tunnels (glimpsing into modern offices, passing a fancy shopping concourse) and comes out into the open space of the coastline. It glides out next to a MIGHTY SUSPENSION BRIDGE, once know as the GOLDEN GATE. But now a historical relic. Trafficked by foot- and robo-leg traffic. The vehicles segregated on --

TWO MORE "BRIDGES" on either side. Streams of energy that support enough aerial traffic to give the impression of being physical bridges.

INSIDE ORTEGA'S TRANSPORT -- Kovacs rubs the ink tracer mark on his hand, regaining his bearings. His motor functions slowly returning. Next to him, Ortega passes him a DIGITAL FILE TABLET.

Kovacs eyes the tablet, finding a headshot labeled LAURENS BANCROFT. He casually taps at the screen pulling up a few CRIME SCENE PHOTOS, giving them a cursory glance.

ORTEGA

Bancroft was my case.

KOVACS

Was?

ORTEGA

Case is closed. Open-and-shut suicide. The gun was lying next to the body, brain splattered across the wall.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOVACS
So what I am here for?

ORTEGA
He claims he was murdered.

KOVACS
He's still alive? I thought you
said it was a Real Death, stack
blown apart.

ORTEGA
Remote Storage.

Kovacs is a step behind. Ortega takes pity on him.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)
Haven't you heard? PsychasSec's
handy new invention. His stack was
backed up. Transmitted via
needlecast and stored remotely.

Kovacs tries to grasp the implications of this.

KOVACS
In other words...

ORTEGA
It's not enough guys like him
transfer their stacks from body to
body for hundreds of years. Now
they want to be immortal.

KOVACS
Sounds like you don't care much for
this guy.

ORTEGA
What? You're gonna defend a fucking
Meth? Spare me.

Kovacs has got under her skin already.

KOVACS
A Meth?

ORTEGA
(condescending)
Thus all the days of Methusela were
nine hundred and sixty nine years.

KOVACS
Genesis...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ORTEGA

People get to living that long and
they think they're gods.

KOVACS

You in your birth body, Ortega?

ORTEGA

What's it to you?

He eyes her.

KOVACS

Nothing... It suits you.

EXT. SUNTOUCH HOUSE/MAIN GATE - DAY

A massive coastal estate. What sets the house off in particular is GREEN. This is the first time we've seen TREES, GRASS, SHRUBBERY... NATURE. It's a valuable commodity in this world.

The house itself is designed in a way that accents its natural setting: instead of paint, the exterior facades are treated with a chameleon substance that changes color along the edges of the house, blending in to the natural setting around it. Whereas everything in the cityscape had been hard lines and edges, here it's almost impossible to tell where the natural surrounding stops and the man-made structure begins.

At the moment, though, the peaceful atmosphere is being disturbed by a cacophony of noise, belted out by a MASS DEMONSTRATION gathered at the GATES OF THE HOME.

NEWS CREWS document every move of the ONE THOUSAND PEOPLE chanting slogans and holding up HOLOGRAPHIC PLACARDS reading: *No to Remote Storage! Your soul cannot be saved remotely!*

ON BOTH SIDES OF THE GATES the house is surrounded with a veritable battalion of PRIVATE SECURITY and LOCAL POLICE.

INT./EXT. POLICE TRANSPORT - DAY

The police transport approaches Suntouch House, hovering above the demonstration -- Kovacs, intrigued, watches the controlled mayhem.

KOVACS

Looks like he's got plenty of
enemies.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ORTEGA
They're Believers...

The police transport glides over the main gate.

KOVACS
Zealous.

ORTEGA
U.N. Special Council's about to
vote on whether to allow Remote
Storage onto the public market.
It's got 'em all up in arms.

Ortega brings the police transport down --

EXT. SUNTOUCH HOUSE - DAY

-- just outside of SUNTOUCH HOUSE amid a dozen armed security
guards and police.

As Ortega and Kovacs get out of their transport a Zealous Man
speaks through a VOICE-AMPLIFIER (a small disc that wraps
around his neck and hovers in front of his mouth).

ZEALOUS MAN
...because human consciousness
cannot be digitized. The human SOUL
cannot be digitized. There is only
one true Judge. Only the Lord our
God can save your soul.

A police officer aims a small pistol at the Zealous Man,
adjusts a dial and holds down the trigger, sending a sound-
canceling wave at the voice amplifier. The Zealous Man's
voice is muted for a second, until he dodges out of the way,
behind another demonstrator.

ORTEGA
Religious freaks.

KOVACS
My wife was a Believer.

ORTEGA
You serious?

She looks at him, half with pity, half with scorn.

MIRIAM (O.S.)
You must be Takeshi Kovacs?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIRIAM BANCROFT (27) steps up, tennis racket in hand. She wears a white tennis suit that clings to her very attractive body. Her skin glistens, which causes us to realize that her clothes are perfectly DRY. When she dabs her neck with a small towel made of the same wafer-thin material, it instantly evaporates her sweat.

KOVACS

And you are?

MIRIAM

Miriam Bancroft. You were supposed to be met at the storage facility.

KOVACS

I was.

MIRIAM

Not by the police.

(eyes Ortega)

I assume it was you who arranged for my chauffeur to be pulled over.

Over Miriam's shoulder, Kovacs' gaze is drawn to the odd sight of a LITTLE GIRL (12), in rumpled clothes, standing along --

THE PERIMETER OF THE DEMONSTRATION

Her placid, apathetic gaze a clear sign of her lack of conviction as she listens to the Zealous Man's tirade. It's almost like she doesn't belong there. She cocks her head to the left, a strangely adult gesture, as if cracking the vertebrae in her neck.

Reaching into her pocket, the Little Girl removes a small metallic vile, test tube size, uncorks it and pours out a SILVER LIQUID METAL onto the ground.

Kovacs watches as the liquid pools at her feet, only a few inches in diameter, perfectly still. Until suddenly the fluid compound bubbles, then --

-- STREAMS AWAY, winding swiftly, snake-like, through the demonstrators feet with purpose, a destination.

It finally settles, pooling under an UNMANNED POLICE TRANSPORT, on the Suntouch House property.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ORTEGA
(to Miriam, smirking)
I don't have any jurisdiction over
Traffic Division.

KOVACS watches the Little Girl: she hurries away from the crowd. And suddenly he realizes...

UNDER THE POLICE TRANSPORT --

The liquid metal bubbles furiously now, until finally --

IT ERUPTS INTO A CONTAINED EXPLOSION --

POLICE AND SECURITY PERSONNEL all pull their weapons, forming a perimeter around the front door.

Stunned, the demonstrators turn to face the explosion. Then as they watch the security force scramble, the calm beyond the gates disrupted, THEY CHEER IN VICTORY.

But only until a POLICE ASSAULT TEAM drops from a set of HOVERING TRANSPORTS, and begins to roughly disband the gathering, arresting those who choose to fight back.

Kovacs watches the ensuing mayhem, searching the crowd for the Little Girl, but she's nowhere to be seen. Miriam recovering from the shock, looks on, repulsed.

MIRIAM
Armed propaganda. The coward's call
to action.
(to Ortega)
If you'll excuse us, Lieutenant. It
seems you have some work to do.

Kovacs shrugs at Ortega, smug. She's left watching as Miriam leads Kovacs away, into the Suntouch House.

ORTEGA
(to Kovacs' back, snide)
Have fun.

INT. SUNTOUCH HOUSE/CORRIDOR - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Lavish decor and gaudy opulence line the passageway as Kovacs and Miriam flow through the maze of SECRET SERVICE AGENTS rushing past them toward the front door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A PAIR OF UNIFORMED BAY CITY POLICE OFFICERS follow. They eye Kovacs, a bit confused -- as if they know him. He senses their stares, but opts to let it go.

Reaching a set of double doors, Miriam and Kovacs enter --

AN ORNATE BALLROOM --

The space, currently converted into an auditorium of sorts, is filled with HUNDREDS OF JOURNALISTS and HOLOGRAPHERS, most on their feet, concerned about the commotion outside. There's a phalanx of POLICE around the room's perimeter.

REILEEN KAWAHARA, a tall, slender Asian woman, with hair pulled back, stands at a podium, trying to restore order to a PRESS CONFERENCE.

KAWAHARA

Everyone, please... There's nothing to be concerned with. Security and the police have everything under control. Please take your seats.

The room slowly returns to order. Miriam and Kovacs watch from the back.

KAWAHARA (CONT'D)

Mr. Bancroft...

Kawahara turns and nods to a man behind her: LAURENS J. BANCROFT (50s), alive and well. He steps back up to the podium to resume what he was saying. His demeanor is calm, his air knowing and wise. Pale blue rays from the holographers' cameras bathe him as he speaks (we can see miniature holograms of the man floating in their "viewfinders").

BANCROFT

Thanks to Remote Storage I stand alive and well before you, fully restored. All 257 years of me. With this new advance, anyone will be able to have their cortical stack backed up every forty-eight hours through a secure needlecast transmission to the PsychSec main frame. Never again will we have to live in fear of physical destruction of the cortical stack. Thanks to remote storage, Real Death as we know it will be a thing of the past.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOURNALIST

Mr. Bancroft, how do you intend fight the opponents who say that remote storage presents human liberties concerns we can't even conceive of?

Next to Kovacs, there's whispering among several of the Police Officers and curious glances in Kovacs' direction. One of them leans over and WHISPERS --

POLICE OFFICER

Ryker? You out?

Kovacs eyes the cop.

KOVACS

Sorry. Wrong number.

The cops look confused and a little disappointed.

ON BANCROFT, at the podium --

BANCROFT

PsychaSec is trans-universal corporation with 1.2 million employees on forty-two worlds. We are a very public entity, completely within the laws and regulations that govern stack handling and processing...

INT. SUNTOUCH HOUSE/MAP ROOM - DAY

A museum-like space. Two rows of table top exhibit cases, each containing its own ANTIQUE MAP. The walls covered in more of the same. Some terrestrial. Some not.

Miriam escorts Kovacs into the room.

MIRIAM

He shouldn't be much longer.

Kovacs wanders the room, admiring the collection. Miriam studies him. One map in particular catches his eye: Hand drawn. Celestial. Clearly a foreign planet.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Syrtis Minor.

Kovacs continues to saunter, an undeniable energy between the two of them as the silence hangs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

They say you're thought of as a dangerous man on Harlan's World.

KOVACS

Where I come from, directness is not considered a virtue.

MIRIAM

What is?

KOVACS

Poise. Control... Restraint.

MIRIAM

Sounds a bit dull.

Kovacs eyes her.

KOVACS

I didn't say I was a good citizen where I come from.

The sound of APPLAUSE can be heard in the next room. A moment later the door opens. Laurens Bancroft enters.

MIRIAM

How did it go?

BANCROFT

Couldn't have been better. Complete with dramatic explosions.

Miriam cues his gaze, as if warning him, to Kovacs' presence.

MIRIAM

This is Takeshi Kovacs.

Bancroft puts on a smile and walks over to Kovacs, hand extended.

BANCROFT

Ah, Mr. Kovacs. Your reputation precedes you.

Bancroft turns to Miriam.

BANCROFT (CONT'D)

Miriam, would you leave us alone for a while. I'm sure Mr. Kovacs has endless questions, and it's likely to be boring for you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MIRIAM
(a shade resistant)
...Of course.

The two men watch her leave. Bancroft follows Kovacs' gaze.

BANCROFT
(after she's gone)
She looks good for a hundred and
ninety-six, I'm sure you'll agree.

KOVACS
Your daughter?

BANCROFT
My wife.

Kovacs grins to himself. Of course it's the wife.

BANCROFT (CONT'D)
You're very highly spoken of, Mr.
Kovacs. I understand your...
"investigative" work as an Envoy on
Harlan's World was admirable.

KOVACS
I've got a prison sentence that
would argue that.

BANCROFT
Yes... Although from what I
understand, things are never quite
as they seem.

Kovacs peers at Bancroft cautiously.

BANCROFT (cont'd) (CONT'D)
You made some interesting
discoveries about your fellow
Envoys. A distraction from their
Off-World policing duties...
Running a nice sideline,
distributing the wares of an
illegal sleeve farm. A discovery
like that would make you quite a
liability.

Kovacs looks at Bancroft, annoyed at the depths of his
information.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BANCROFT (cont'd) (CONT'D)
I find it difficult to believe an
Envoy of your standing would be
fool enough to make a mistake like
the one you were convicted for.

KOVACS
Framed for, you mean.

BANCROFT
I admire your tenacity... It's an
uncommon trait, sadly. A trait that
I have particular need for at the
moment.

Bancroft heads for the door.

BANCROFT (CONT'D)
Shall we?

Kovacs follows. Grudgingly.

INT. SUNTOUCH HOUSE/CORRIDOR - DAY

At the opposite end of a grand hallway, Miriam speaks quietly
to Reileen Kawahara, an intimacy between them. Kovacs notices
them as Bancroft comes out of the map room behind him.
Bancroft leads Kovacs in the other direction.

BANCROFT
I trust the sleeve I provided you
is suitable.

KOVACS
A little tight in the shoulders,
but it'll do... Whose is it? The
way I was getting eyeballed out
there, I'd say it either belonged
to a cop or criminal.

Bancroft eyes Kovacs, impressed at his guess-work.

BANCROFT
Elias Ryker, one of Bay City's not-
so-finest, stuck currently in
holding. Riding a cop's sleeve
might be of some help in your work.

KOVACS
Very thoughtful of you.

Reaching an elaborate STAIRCASE, the two ascend.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOVACS (CONT'D)
I hear you got your head blown off.

BANCROFT
Unpleasant to say the least.

KOVACS
Police seem to think it was
suicide. I hear you claim
otherwise.

BANCROFT
I don't simply claim it.

KOVACS
But no-one's paying much attention
to what you're claiming, are they?

Bancroft shoots Kovacs an annoyed look.

KOVACS (CONT'D)
You said you're all there, all 257
years. But that's not exactly true.

BANCROFT
Not quite.

KOVACS
(a calculated guess)
Let me guess. You were at the tail
end of your back-up cycle.

Bancroft nods at Kovacs' correct deduction.

BANCROFT
Two days of my memory, including
the identity of whoever murdered
me. Gone forever.

KOVACS
(snide)
That must be a bit frustrating for
a man of your... power.

They reach the TOP OF THE STAIRS and Bancroft stops in front
of a set of double doors. He turns to Kovacs for emphasis.

BANCROFT
I've lived through three universal
wars, four economic collapses, and
the colonization of two dozen
worlds... And now my own murder.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BANCROFT (CONT'D)

I am not satisfied with the results
of the police, to put it mildly.

KOVACS

But why me? The transportation
charges from Harlan's World alone--

BANCROFT

Don't be disingenuous, Mr. Kovacs.
Your work on the Euripides bombing?
And the Halloran tides? Word gets
around.

KOVACS

So what? There's plenty of other
Envoys.

BANCROFT

Not with your attribute scores and
you know it. Your perseverance
index alone... I've profited from
technology, but I'm also aware it
makes people lazy.

Kovacs would tend to agree. But he's not telling Bancroft.

BANCROFT (CONT'D)

Instinct and tenacity are hard to
come by nowadays. But what I'm most
interested in is--

KOVACS

(realizing)
Vengeance.

BANCROFT

Someone out there wants me dead,
and that's not a comfortable
feeling.

INT. SUNTOUCH HOUSE/BANCROFT'S OFFICE - DAY

The ornate double doors swing wide as Bancroft enters.
Kovacs, close behind, comes to a halt in the doorway. He
scans the room, the decor, the wealth. It's everywhere.

BANCROFT

You can see the blast mark on the
wall there.

Kovacs crosses to examine it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOVACS
No sign of blood.

BANCROFT
I have a good cleaning staff.

KOVACS
And the weapon?

BANCROFT
It was mine.

He opens a case to reveal a gun.

KOVACS
Who else knew you kept it here?

BANCROFT
Just my wife... Go on, Kovacs. Say it. Everyone else has. Either I committed suicide or my wife murdered me. There's just no other explanation. I've been hearing it since they pulled me out of the tank at Alcatraz.

KOVACS
Well, you'll admit it's a lot to believe that someone broke in here, got past security, and murdered you with your own gun without creating a disturbance.

(off Bancroft's look)
And yet you have reason to believe...

BANCROFT
Starting with the fact that I'm back standing here in front of you. You can't kill me just by wiping out my cortical stack. Remote Storage...

KOVACS
I heard your speech out there.

BANCROFT
Neither I nor my wife could have pulled that trigger. We both knew it wouldn't be enough to kill me. No matter how unlikely it seems, it had to be a stranger...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Bancroft settles into a throne-like chair behind his desk.

KOVACS

Supposing I'm not interested in
becoming your private snoop.

BANCROFT

You'd prefer to serve out the
remainder of your hundred and
eighteen years?

KOVACS

Maybe I'd prefer that to working
for you.

BANCROFT

Perhaps it's easier to face when
you're on your own.

(wickedly)

I hear you don't have much family.

Kovacs gives Bancroft a penetrating stare, deeply annoyed by
the flagrant reference to his loss.

BANCROFT (CONT'D)

(false sympathy)

I'm sorry, Mr. Kovacs. I should
have begun all this by offering my
condolences. I realize it must have
been very difficult to lose a
daughter. I'm sure she meant
everything to you. So in order to
convey how much this investigation
means to me, allow me to make an
offer to you.

Bancroft reaches into his desk and produces a small case
which he opens to reveal a STACK. He inserts it into a stack-
ID unit on his desk. And instant later -- A HOLOGRAPHIC
STILL IMAGE OF SARAH appears hovering over the desk, staring
ahead.

Kovacs is immediately affected by the sight of her.

BANCROFT (CONT'D)

Stacked felons are not the only
thing I have access to on Harlan's
World.

Kovacs shifts his gaze from Sarah to Bancroft.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KOVACS
(calm, demanding)
Let me have a minute with her.

BANCROFT
Of course. I understand
completely.

INT. SUNTOUCH/LIBRARY ROOM - DAY

The Suntouch Library is half old-fashioned, with books lining the walls, and half high-tech, a stack-reading room with an array of HOLO-PANELS to one side.

Kovacs lies in an AUTO-MOLD RECLINER while a TECHNICIAN applies a web of electrodes running from his temples around to the stack in back of his neck. He places a HYPNO-PHONE on Kovacs's eyes and ears.

TECHNICIAN
We don't have the specs of your
last sleeve, so you'll go in as
your current sleeve representation.

The Technician steps over to the control unit and inserts Sarah's stack into the reader. Kovacs closes his eyes. Sending us into...

A BLACK VOID -- VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT

Kovacs MATERIALIZES.

IN THE CENTER a liquid mercury pools out. First forming into grass covered ground. Then the pieces of --

A PLAYGROUND, ON HARLAN'S WORLD. THE SKY YELLOW.

A swing set. Monkey bars. Merry-go-round. All rising from nothingness.

Kovacs scans every inch of the deserted park. A RUSTLING OF LEAVES behind him draws his attention. He turns. And there she is... SARAH. His little girl.

KOVACS
Sarah... It's me daddy...

He steps toward her but she shrinks back, scared, confused, not recognizing the man standing before her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOVACS (CONT'D)
Don't be scared...

Sarah takes another step back, growing increasingly nervous.

KOVACS (CONT'D)
I know I don't look like me. This
is just another sleeve... I
promise, it's me, daddy...

He steps forward. But SHE RUNS AWAY. Kovacs bolts after her.

KOVACS (CONT'D)
Sarah! Wait! Sarah!

He catches up to her, gets her wrist. She tugs away from him.

SARAH
You're not my daddy!

KOVACS
It's me. Sarah, honey, it's me.

SARAH
Let go! LET GO!

He's pulling her closer but she's squirming and punching.

KOVACS
(angry)
Sarah - stop it!

She bites him.

KOVACS (CONT'D)
Ou!

He lets go instinctively. And she runs away, over by the slide.

SARAH
You're not my daddy. My daddy's up
in heaven with my mommy.

Kovacs looks pained, impotent to do anything.

He takes a step forward and just then SARAH DISINTEGRATES
INTO DIGITAL DUST. The entire virtual environment VANISHES.

INT. SUNTOUCH/LIBRARY ROOM - DAY

Kovacs swings his legs off the recliner onto the floor. He slowly peels off the electrodes and removes the hypno-phone.

Emotionally depleted, he can only stare at his feet.

BANCROFT

I'm sorry your visit had to be so brief. But she'll be right here waiting for you. I'll even arrange for remote visitation so you can see her. Anytime you like.

The Technician removes the Sarah's stack from the READER, then places it in a case and exits with it. Kovacs stands up.

BANCROFT (CONT'D)

Find out who murdered me, you get a full pardon. And your daughter's stack back.

KOVACS

(eyes Bancroft)

I want new sleeves for both of us. On Harlan's World.

BANCROFT

(suddenly amiable)

Something worth being free for after all.

KOVACS

You go back on this and I'll make you wish Real Death was an option.

Bancroft meets Kovacs' glare with a thin satisfied smile.

BANCROFT

I'm glad we have an understanding.

EXT. SUNTOUCH HOUSE - DAY

Kovacs comes out of the house and turns away from the crowd at the gate toward a waiting LIMO-TRANSPORT. The DRIVER opens the door for Kovacs.

KOVACS

You got everything sorted out with Traffic Division?

The DRIVER sneers at him.

INT./EXT. LIMO-TRANSPORT/BAY CITY - DUSK

The Bancroft Limo-Transport filters through the heavy sky traffic.

INSIDE THE TRANSPORT -- Kovacs sits in back.

Kovacs eyes an IN-GLASS MONITOR playing in the lower right corner of the windshield. A NEWS BROADCAST. The sound muted. Kovacs notices the image on the screen:

A man in a suit ID-ed as U.N. SECRETARY TOMAS ANCHIA, swarmed by REPORTERS.

Kovacs points a finger toward the image. The sound comes up.

SECRETARY ANCHIA

As the head of the U.N. Special Council, I pledge that we will ask those questions and think long and hard about whether to approve Remote Storage for public--

Kovacs flicks the channel to news coverage of a mob of ANGRY DEMONSTRATORS led by a speaker waving his fist.

SPEAKER

As Believers we are humbled before our maker not before technology. Death is natural. Death is the glorious transition to the hereafter. Those who would kill death must be stopped.

A floating-ID tag wafts out from the screen: this is WILLIAM BANCROFT.

Kovacs registers the name.

KOVACS

William Bancroft wouldn't be any relation to Laurens Bancroft, would he?

DRIVER

His grandson.

KOVACS

No kidding. His own grandson, a Believer. That must have gone over well.

Kovacs peers at the driver from the back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOVACS (CONT'D)

Where you taking me?

DRIVER

Mark Hopkins Hotel. Best in the city. Mr. Bancroft's favorite.

KOVACS

No. Take me somewhere else.
Somewhere close to the Believers.

The Driver hesitates, then peels the transport away from the flow of traffic, heading south toward San Francisco's MISSION DISTRICT.

EXT. HENDRIX HOTEL/MISSION STREET - DUSK

The transport FEATHERS DOWN, hovering, waiting to pull up to a parking dock.

People below, moving like an organism.

The outside walls of the buildings are all embedded with hundreds of giant holo-screens -- ALL PLAYING PRODUCT ADS.

Even the sky between the towering buildings is blanketed with HOLOGRAPHIC COMMERCIALS, casting a muted colored glow on everything.

The rear hatch of Limo-Transport opens and Kovacs gets out, stepping onto a sort of "running board" of vehicle. The platform detaches and floats him down to the sidewalk.

As he steps into the thriving metropolis, Kovacs's foot lands on one of many DIGITAL LEAFLETS LITTERING THE STREET (wafer thin "paper screens" with animated text). Just then, one of a pair of BELIEVERS handing out the leaflets to passing pedestrians puts one in Kovacs's hand.

BELIEVER

Save your soul, brother.

The Believer moves on. Kovacs looks at the piece of "paper": COME. HEAR THE WORD. EVERY DAY. OLD SAINT MARY'S CATHEDRAL against a video image of the cathedral.

Kovacs stuffs the leaflet into his pocket, then pushes past the dense FOOT TRAFFIC, walking into the building before him. A glowing neon sign above the door reads: THE HENDRIX HOTEL.

INT. HENDRIX HOTEL/LOBBY - DAY

Vast and mostly empty, except for a few leather armchairs. A hotel lounge can be seen off to one side. A few TOURISTS enjoy cocktails and come and go through the lobby.

A MASSIVE SCREEN, the length of the room, lines the perimeter walls emitting silent video snow.

Kovacs steps in, quickly scans the room and zeros in on the check-in counter at the far end, another screen perched atop it. This one plays the ANIMATED HOTEL LOGO.

As Kovacs passes the room-long screen, each segment comes to life with the same hotel logo and a display of the hotel amenities. When he reaches the counter the screen before him flashes the word: WELCOME.

KOVACS

I need a room.

A HOLOGRAPHIC HOSTESS materializes in front of the screen -- beautiful and enticing. We'll know her simply as THE HENDRIX. Simultaneously, A LASER LIGHT SCANS the back of Kovacs' neck, zeroing in on the stack location.

THE HENDRIX

Welcome to the Hendrix Hotel, Mr. Kovacs. We have a number of rooms available, all fully cabled to the city's information and entertainment hubs. Do you have a preference?

KOVACS

The biggest and highest.

A 3-D FLOOR PLAN of a suite flashes onto the screen.

THE HENDRIX

The Watchtower Suite. Three rooms, thirteen point five meters by--

KOVACS

Fine.

THE HENDRIX

Very well, sir. How long will you be staying with us?

KOVACS

Indefinitely.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE HENDRIX

Please complete your DNA signature
for sleeve identity confirmation
and finance transfer.

Kovacs suddenly stiffens. Something's wrong. It's only a
second later we see --

-- the MUZZLE OF A GUN pressed to the base of his skull.

Grasping the weapon, a tattoo-faced behemoth of a man. We'll
know him as KADMIN. His itchy finger rubs the trigger.

KADMIN

That's exactly what you think it
is. So take it easy or they'll be
picking your cortical stack out of
that screen for weeks.

Another assailant stands next to Kadmin, a slender, platinum
haired synth-woman. Her skin, pale, plasticine. A BEAM GUN in
her grasp. Her name: TREPP.

Seemingly oblivious to the current situation, The Hendrix
prattles on, requesting check-in information:

THE HENDRIX

Please key your DNA signature into
the pad beside the screen.

KOVACS

Look, I don't have any currency--

KADMIN

Quiet, Kovacs.

Kovacs stiffens at the mention of his name.

KOVACS

How'd you know my na--

KADMIN

(digging the gun deeper
into his neck)
I said, shut up.

THE HENDRIX

Please key your DNA signature into
the pad beside the screen.

Trepp slides up next to Kovacs, a small scanner in her palm.
As she activates it Kovacs eyeballs her, his gaze
disconcerted as it settles on her EYE SOCKETS --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

-- ALL WHITE, NO PUPILS, ONLY A FEW SPIDERY RED VEINS. She leans in, close to Kovacs' ear, grotesquely seductive.

Her hot breath makes Kovacs grimace as she scans him with the device. Head to toe.

TREPP

He's clean.

KADMIN

Kovacs, you arrogant prick. Hitting the streets without any hardware.

KOVACS

Who the hell are you?

KADMIN

Alright... We're going to turn around slowly and walk out that door. Got it?

Kovacs nods as The Hendrix addresses him once again, this time oddly carrying a subtle hint of urgency in its tone.

THE HENDRIX

I cannot assume host prerogatives without payment, sir.

Kovacs' eyes suddenly glint with understanding. An instant later he's forcing a COUGH.

KADMIN

Knock it off... Or I'll put a tickle in your throat you won't be able to scratch.

Kadmin cracks the side of Kovacs' head with the weapon. As Kovacs goes down --

-- he manages TO SPIT, the saliva landing precisely on the DNA SIGNATURE PAD.

THE HENDRIX

Thank you, Mr. Kovacs. Welcome to the Hendrix.

KADMIN

Mr. Kovacs won't be needing his reservation.

Kadmin shuttles a kick to his gut.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

THE HENDRIX
(sweetly)
Please refrain. I am engaging guest
services security system.

Instantly, a ceiling panel slides open, dropping a TWIN
MOUNTED AUTOMATIC CANNON.

The weapon UNLEASHES A HAIL STORM OF BULLETS BEFORE IT EVEN
SETTLES INTO PLACE.

Screams rise through the room as Trepp's chest RIPS OPEN,
taking the brunt of the fire. She collapses onto Kovacs, a
dead heap of sparking wires.

Kovacs instantly scoops up Trepp's weapon and from his prone
position takes aim at the fleeing Kadmin --

-- who dashes for the exit. As the doors slap shut the cannon
SWIVELS, SPRAYING A TRAIL OF GUNFIRE AT HIS HEELS.

Kovacs gets one shot off, but misses, his aim thwarted by a
YOUNG TOURIST seeking cover in the vast lobby as Kadmin fires
back at him.

As Kadmin shuttles between an OLD ASIAN COUPLE, the gunfire
"smartly" avoids the tourists, carving a bullet ridden path
around them.

An instant later Kadmin levels his weapon, DISCHARGING A
LASER PULSE... The doors explode. A shower of glass and metal
as Kadmin barrels through. Gone.

And as sudden as the brutal cacophony began, it ends. A dead
silence. Kovacs flips the Synth wreck off himself, rising to
his feet, quietly gaining his bearings. Dusting himself off,
he slips Trepp's weapon into his belt line at the small of
his back.

He notices the Old Asian Couple frozen with fear, bullet
holes at their feet forming a perimeter around where they
stand.

KOVACS
(gesturing toward Trepp)
Tried to run out on her bill.

INT. HENDRIX HOTEL/LOBBY - A HALF-HOUR LATER

CLOSE ON Trepp's dead face as A HAND pulls her eye-lids back,
revealing the ALL WHITE, VEINY PUPILS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ORTEGA (O.S.)
Black market synth. What a
surprise.

Standing over her, Kristen Ortega shaking her head, not too happy. A young UNIFORMED OFFICER stands next to her. Ortega notices TWO METAL VIALS in Trepp's exposed chest cavity.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)
Pull that thing's stack, will ya.
See if you can trace the sleeve.
And be careful. She's got a blast
cell in her.

The Officer peers at the Synth nervously.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)
Still no weapon?

OFFICER
Nothing yet, Lieutenant.

Ortega eyeballs KOVACS sitting in a lobby armchair as a MEDIC tends to his head wound. She approaches.

ORTEGA
(to the Medic)
You can go.

The Medic hesitates, assesses she's serious, then steps away.

KOVACS
You a cop and a doctor?

Ortega ignores the comment.

ORTEGA
Looks like Bancroft's paying you
enough for a place with built-in
security. Lucky for you.

Kovacs doesn't respond.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)
(re: Trepp and Kadmin)
Who're your friends?

KOVACS
(annoyed)
I've been on this planet exactly
six hours. I've talked to four
people, you being one. So
unfortunately, I didn't know them.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KOVACS (CONT'D)

But whoever they were they knew me.
They called me by name. *My* name,
not my sleeve's.

ORTEGA

What other name's did they call
you?

Kovacs gives her a look.

Just then, a hotel uniformed employee steps up with a large
tray containing a small pack of CIGARETTES.

HOTEL EMPLOYEE

The cigarettes you ordered.

The hotel employee steps away as Kovacs tears the pack open.
Ortega eyes him.

ORTEGA

You're not a smoker.

KOVACS

The hell I'm not.

Kovacs flicks the filter end of the cigarette with his thumb,
zipping a pulse of electricity up the rolling paper to the
opposite end, where it ignites. Self-lighting.

He takes a deep drag and promptly HACKS HIS LUNGS OUT.

KOVAC

What the hell?

ORTEGA

Like I said, you're not a smoker.

KOVAC

(understanding her now)
Son of a --

He tries another drag, more cautiously. Coughs again.

ORTEGA

Why don't you take it easy? The
owner of that sleeve might be
sentimental about breathing without
a tank.

KOVACS

This sleeve belong to a friend of
yours?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

No response... But the look on her face betrays her silence.

KOVACS (CONT'D)
Maybe even a close friend.

ORTEGA
(icy)
I have an interest.

Kovacs peers at the cigarette, then stubs it out. But he continues to hold onto it, unlit.

The two cops working on the synth have chopped out of a section of the spine to get to the base of the skull and are digging around the gore with the point of a knife.

COP
Shit! I thought I had it there.

KOVACS
So, I guess this undoes your
suicide theory.

ORTEGA
How do you figure?

KOVACS
(points at Trepp)
If Bancroft killed himself like you
say who the fuck's paying her to
Real Death me? Whoever sent those
two knows I'm working for Bancroft.
And has something to hide.

He's got a point. Ortega scowls.

ORTEGA
So Bancroft was hit as well. Maybe.
So what?

KOVACS
What, Bancroft doesn't deserve a
proper investigation because he
happens to be an arrogant Meth?

ORTEGA
There are people out there who need
us a lot worse than Bancroft.
Organic damage cases who don't have
the money to get re-sleeved unless
the state can prove some sort of
liability against someone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Kovacs stands and looks her in the eye.

KOVACS
Re-open the case.

ORTEGA
For such a talented Envoy, you
don't have very good hearing. The
case is closed.

They stare at one another, each waiting for the other to
blink. Neither does.

KOVACS
I guess I've got my work to do
then.

He flicks the unlit cigarette, turns and walks away.

ORTEGA
Kovacs.

He stops, faces her.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)
Give me the gun.

He reaches behind his back, pulling out the beam gun and
hands it to her with a smirk. Then striding past him --

ORTEGA (CONT'D)
Riding a cop's sleeve doesn't mean
you can act like one.

EXT. OLD SAINT MARY'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

A preserved monolith from centuries past, its spires piercing
the sky, disappearing into the ever-present fog. Kovacs
approaches weaving through the dense FOOT TRAFFIC. He holds
in his hand the LEAFLET he was passed with the image of the
cathedral on it.

INT. OLD SAINT MARY'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

The cavernous space is FILLED TO CAPACITY WITH BELIEVERS,
listening attentively to a stately PASTOR HUFF (50s) perched
at the pulpit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PASTOR HUFF

...and the soul is the one thing in
our world which cannot be mass
produced or bottled and turned into
code.

Kovacs enters the back of the cathedral, standing quietly in
the rear, amid the overflow of people. He scans the room.
People of all ages, families, children.

PASTOR HUFF (CONT'D)

If you have wealth, you will never
be faced with your mortality. And
in turn, you will never be faced
with accountability to a higher
power. What price, then, will you
pay for your selfish deeds?

Kovacs listens intently, the words somehow ringing true.

And then he notices --

-- WILLIAM BANCROFT, who was sitting in one of the chairs
behind the Pastor, standing and leaving through a door behind
the pulpit.

A FEW MINUTES LATER --

The service ends and the congregation begins to filter out as
Kovacs weaves down the center aisle, his eye on Pastor Huff.
Kovacs sees him disappear through the heavy door behind the
pulpit.

He approaches the door, pushes on it and treads carefully
into --

OLD ST. MARY'S/BACK ROOM --

-- where Kovacs finds the Pastor hanging up his robes.

KOVACS

That was a very stirring sermon.

PASTOR HUFF

(startled)

I'm afraid you'll have to wait
outside.

KOVACS

I'm afraid not. Police business.
Detective Elias Ryker.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Pastor eyes him warily.

KOVACS (CONT'D)
I need to speak to William
Bancroft.

PASTOR HUFF
A recent but important member of
our faith. I'm proud to say I was
one of the ones who facilitated his
entry into our congregation.

KOVACS
And how did you do that?

PASTOR HUFF
He had questions about his prior
existence. We provided answers.

KOVACS
An awfully lucky catch for you, the
grandson of Laurens Bancroft.

PASTOR HUFF
I can assure you that all Believers
are equal in the eyes of the Lord.

KOVACS
Nevertheless, he must be useful in
conveying your message to the
public.

Pastor Huff eyes Kovacs.

PASTOR HUFF
Perhaps you ought to tell me the
nature of your police business,
Detective.

KOVACS
It's regarding a matter for William
Bancroft. Personally.

The Pastor makes his decision.

PASTOR HUFF
I'm sorry but it's a very stressful
time for Brother Bancroft. He
hasn't been himself these past
weeks. I'm sure you'll forgive him.

Pastor Huff turns toward the door opposite but Kovacs catches
him by the wrist.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KOVACS

I'm sure he can make time.

PASTOR HUFF

I'm quite sure he can't.

Pastor Huff tries to turn and break free but Kovacs TWISTS THE PASTOR'S WRIST and presses him against the wall. The man CRIES OUT in pain, pinned with his arm twisted behind his back.

KOVACS

Maybe I should ask again, more nicely.

A NARROW STAIRWELL --

The two men move down a set of narrow marble stairs, saying nothing to one another.

They come out into --

A PASSAGEWAY

They continue walking down the long stone hallway until they pass through a door at the end into --

A VAULTED READING ROOM

They've come into an long rectangular space with vaulted ceilings, stained glass windows high above, and a series of tables where robed priests read (digital manuscripts) and converse in whispers.

PASTOR HUFF

Wait here.

Pastor Huff leads our gaze to WILLIAM BANCROFT (20s), naturally handsome and smooth-skinned. He sits at a long table writing fervently. Huff whispers in his ear and William looks up at Kovacs.

CHURCH OFFICE --

William leads Kovacs through another heavy wooden door, into a church office. Books line the walls. The door shuts behind them with a resonant echo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILLIAM

If this is about my grandfather's death--

KOVACS

Tell me, are you and he close?

WILLIAM

What do you think?

KOVACS

I think you might take this campaign against Remote Storage personally.

WILLIAM

Are you asking if I killed my grandfather?

Kovacs holds William's gaze, waiting to see what he might get out of him.

KOVACS

Police scans show your fingerprints in the room where your father was killed.

WILLIAM

Fingerprints? That's a bit old fashioned, isn't it? You think I showed up in my own sleeve and did him in?

KOVACS

I don't imagine Believers are much for re-sleeving.

WILLIAM

Believers respect life.

KOVACS

But you also respect death.

William tries another tack.

WILLIAM

How old are you? Subjectively, I mean?

Kovacs remains stone-faced.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Most people can't afford more than two sleeves, maybe three if they're lucky. It takes a special kind of person who wants to have two hundred, two hundred fifty years on the planet, walking around in the body of a thirty-five-year-old.

KOVACS

Are you speaking from experience?

WILLIAM

You start off curious, wanting the time to see things, achieve things, accumulate experiences. But then something terrible happens. You know what that is? You become bored by life. So you begin to do unspeakable, sordid things just to see if you can.

KOVACS

What sort of unspeakable things have you done?

WILLIAM

(ignoring him)

In the end, one of two things happens. Either you come to understand the true value of death. Or you end up like my grandfather, a depraved, insatiable shell of a human being who has forgotten what it means to live but is too cowardly to embrace death.

KOVACS

How long did it take to figure all this out?

WILLIAM

I'm one hundred and thirty-seven if that's what you're asking.

William stares Kovacs in the eye.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

If you're looking for whoever killed my grandfather you'd do better looking among his own kind.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KOVACS

Meaning?

WILLIAM

Go to the vice houses. In Licktown.
That's where Laurens Bancroft takes
his twisted communion. A place
called Jerry's Closed Quarters.
There's a fanclub of people --
Girls -- who'd like to see him
dead, I'm sure.

KOVACS

Sounds like you've spent some time
with them.

WILLIAM

We minister to all those need us.
We don't discriminate.

William steps closer.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Have you thought about where your
soul lives? Not in your stack.
There is life beyond death but it
is not in this world. You can
choose. There's freedom in death.

Kovacs stares at William, hating the jargon, but thinking
somehow of his daughter.

EXT. LARKIN & GREEN ANTIQUES - DAY

Nestled high on an inclined street of Russian Hill, Kovacs'
transport lands before the old fashioned store front.

INT. LARKIN & GREEN ANTIQUES - DAY

A graveyard of ancient gadgetry. iPods. Digital cameras.
Phones and TV's dating back to the 23rd century.

Kovacs stands over a vintage 20th century music player and a
stack of old-fashioned compact discs. He places one inside
and hits play: COLTRANE PLAYS THE BLUES. He reads the liner
notes on the sleeve. At another time, he'd probably even be
enjoying it.

The opposite wall is veritable museum of the store's main
trade: vintage firearms spanning the last several centuries.
A BEAT UP OLD SYNTH emerges from the back room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Obviously a first generation model (a mandroid). His name: CLIVE. He holds a SMITH & WESSON FOUR-PHASE PARTICLE BLASTER in his grasp.

CLIVE

The master plays the blues... Good choice.

In no mood for small talk, Kovacs just takes the gun from Clive.

CLIVE (CONT'D)

Very rare... We also have the ammunition pods. Black market. It's nice to see someone who can appreciate a good antique.

Clive gives him a handful of ammo. Kovacs loads the gun.

KOVACS

Yeah... Something about the older models. Almost like an extension of your body when you pull the trigger... You have a firing range? Somewhere I can try this out?

CLIVE

Of course. In back.

A VIRTUAL-TARGET FIRING RANGE --

SHEILA, a bikini-clad virtual assassin runs back and forth ducking amid trees, firing off shots at us as a series of virtual pedestrians, synths and small animals scurry about her feet. (Coltrane continues under.)

Kovacs aims his gun and fires. He misses the first few shots and looks self-conscious in front of Clive, who raises an android eyebrow.

KOVACS

My last sleeve was left-handed.

He puts the gun in his left hand and fires again. Taking three shots to finally kill Sheila. He gives a self-justifying glance to Clive, who nods in approval.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

I'll take it.

Kovacs slips the gun into his belt at the small of his back.

EXT. LARKIN & GREEN ANTIQUES - DUSK

Kovacs emerges to find Ortega waiting under his transport.
Her vehicle, parked behind his.

KOVACS

You following me, Ortega? I'm going
to start getting the wrong idea.

ORTEGA

You got plenty of those.
(pause)
What'd you buy in there?

KOVACS

Can't tell you that. What if it's a
birthday present for you?

Ortega scoffs. "Cocky bastard."

ORTEGA

Let's go.

KOVACS

No thanks. I got my own ride.

ORTEGA

Don't piss me off, Kovacs. Just get
in the transport. I'll take you
anywhere you want to go.

He eyes her. Waiting for the catch.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

But first, we're spot checking the
security detail of the Council
Chief's transport convoy.

On Kovacs: this might be interesting.

KOVACS

They don't have their own security?

ORTEGA

They do. But your boss isn't the
only paranoid Meth in this town.
And I might have use for an Envoy
with high Absorb skills.

INT./EXT. POLICE TRANSPORT/DOWNTOWN SKY - NIGHT

Ortega sits at the controls with Kovacs at her side. The transport cuts through the sky amid the towering corridor of buildings, each one hundreds of stories high. The city's FINANCIAL DISTRICT.

Ortega turns to Kovacs, quietly taking him in. Staring. Kovacs notices.

KOVACS

What?

ORTEGA

You carry yourself different than the owner of that sleeve.

KOVACS

Previous owner.

Ortega clenches her jaw, annoyed.

ORTEGA

Exactly what is Bancroft promising you anyway?

Kovacs turns away. His attention is focused on everything going on outside: observing, *absorbing*, looking for anything out of the ordinary. His senses finely tuned.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

(taking a guess)

It's your daughter, isn't it? I heard what happened.

Kovacs doesn't reply. The sky traffic comes to a sudden halt amid the downtown canyon.

A CONVOY OF U.N. LIMO TRANSPORTS -- smaller than the one we saw earlier, yet still escorted by a handful of POLICE AND SECURITY VEHICLES -- shuttle past the gridlock. Secretary General Anchia's Limo-transport amid the security.

As Kovacs watches the dignitaries pass, something catches his eye high amid the towering buildings.

KOVACS

What the hell...

Ortega looks up. Her heart skips a beat when she sees A MAN JUMP OUT OF A MOVING TRANSPORT -- A HEAD FIRST BASE DIVE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The jumper plummets into a controlled sky dive, heading straight for the U.N. Convoy. Kovacs and Ortega watch helplessly as the jumper free falls, maneuvering closer and closer to the U.N. Limo-Transport.

Finally, as he falls past it, only a few feet away, he manages to throw a small metallic object at the vehicle. The object MAGNETIZES, STICKING TO THE SIDE OF THE LIMO-TRANSPORT for a brief moment before --

-- IT EXPLODES. A THUNDEROUS REVERBERATING FIREBALL bellows through the corridor of buildings.

Entire floors of windows shatter from the force of the blast as the SURROUNDING SECURITY VEHICLES are blown clear, demolished as well.

Ortega's Police Transport is rocked by the quaking explosion as Kovacs watches with stunned disbelief. Reacting quickly, he spots the falling man/ASSASSIN, still plummeting, all the way down, SPLATTERING AGAINST THE GROUND.

Kovacs winces at the sight and then looks up through the raining debris and spots THE BLACK TRANSPORT which the suicide bomber leapt from.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

Up there!

Instantly, Ortega takes her Police transport up, giving chase to the fleeing vehicle.

Weaving amid the impossibly high skyscrapers, both transports come dangerously close to colliding with the mammoth buildings as they gain altitude, leaping from one aerial path to the next.

A sudden sharp turn by the bomber's vehicle and it seems as though he's about to fly head-on into one of the many towers ahead.

ORTEGA

What the hell's he doing? He's going to fly right into it!

At the last possible moment, the transport goes into a radical dive, careening straight down along the side of the tower. THE BUILDING WINDOWS SHATTER from the proximity of the turbines as --

-- Ortega changes trajectory, following him. Again, it seems like this guy is going to fly right into the ground traffic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

But with only a few feet to spare, he takes a near ninety degree turn, latching onto a low-level energy rail and gliding just above the pedestrian traffic and into the narrow streets of the FINANCIAL DISTRICT.

Ortega takes the same ninety degree turn pulling out of the dive, a little more room to spare -- enough to be flying on a "road" JUST ABOVE THE BLACK VEHICLE.

The assassin's vehicle SUDDENLY PULLS UPWARD, knocking into the undercarriage of the police transport.

Ortega bears down on the steering column, trying to maintain control. She collides with the top of the assassin's transport. METAL GRINDS AND SPARKS FLY.

Ortega relents, only to be slammed from underneath once again. This time she loses control. Her transport fishtails, its rear CRUNCHING AGAINST one of the imposing buildings.

And suddenly, open skies ahead as they reach the edge of the city and rocket toward --

THE GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE

Ortega and Kovacs follow as the black vehicle jets onto one of the "energy bridges" adjacent to the old Golden Gate, full of aerial traffic.

Narrowing the gap at devastating speeds, Ortega uses a ricochet effect off an energy rail to jolt her transport over the vehicle in front of her, and pull up SIDE BY SIDE to the black vehicle.

Kovacs peers from the passenger window into the assassin's transport. The DRIVER is focused on the traffic in front of him. He cocks his head to the side -- a vaguely familiar tic -- and then turns to look directly over at Kovacs. The two men are close enough to hold one another's gaze.

It's barely perceptible, but there's a pleasantly surprised smile from the Driver as he SIDE SWIPES ORTEGA'S TRANSPORT, sending her careening through the energy rail, floating, teetering, almost plummeting but for Ortega's quick maneuvering: she latches onto to the energy line of the lower deck but finds herself moving the wrong way at high speed toward on-coming aerial traffic. A vehicle swerves to dodge her and careens downward, just barely missing the Bay below, landing on the old Golden Gate and sending foot traffic scattering.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ortega looks up at the black vehicle above her. She ricochets herself back up onto the upper level and jumps over a few vehicles to catch up to her target. She's side by side with him again.

But he turns into her transport and GRINDS AGAINST IT. Metal crunches, her drivers side window SHATTERING AGAINST THE ELECTRIC RAIL as Ortega tries to return the assault.

Finally, Kovacs has had enough. Reaching behind his back, he draws his S&W Four-Phase leveling it toward the Driver.

ORTEGA

Kovacs! Don't!

At the sight of the weapon, the Driver pulls away from Ortega's transport... But only to gather momentum... And that he does, heading right at her for another massive sideswipe.

Kovacs FIRES BUT MISSES terribly.

KOVACS

Fuck!

He swaps the gun to his RIGHT HAND as the Driver sideswipes them again.

Kovacs puts a stop to it, FIRING ROUND AFTER ROUND into the Assassin's engine.

An instant later, his transport careens through the electric rail, plummets down, smashes off the edge of the old Golden Gate, and then flips end-over-end, down INTO THE ICY BAY.

Ortega and Kovacs watch the black transport swallowed by the murky water.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

Where the *hell* did you get that gun?

KOVACS

Happy birthday.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - AN HOUR LATER

MULTIPLE POLICE TRANSPORTS line the energy bridge.

Kovacs watches from the railing as a POLICE TOWING UNIT hovers above the bay, lifting the wreckage out of the water.

Ortega steps away from a group of OFFICERS and approaches.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ORTEGA

Give it to me.

Kovacs rolls his eyes as he hands her his blaster.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

You shouldn't have done that.

KOVACS

They'd probably be fishing us out of there if I hadn't. This way you got your bomber and his driver, too. His stack anyway.

ORTEGA

There is no stack. No body. Nothing. He must have got out before the thing sank.

Kovacs turns to her, gravely.

KOVACS

What about Anchia?

ORTEGA

His stack's still buried in the wreckage. They're digging it out now.

Kovacs ponders the pieces for a moment.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

We got the stack of the bomber.

KOVACS

Let me put him in virtual. I can be a persuasive interrogator.

ORTEGA

Fraid not. Whoever he was, he was a Believer, stamped Do Not Resleeve. No-one's putting him in virtual without a court order, which ain't gonna happen. Not against a DNR. Not even for this.

KOVACS

First Bancroft, then Anchia...

ORTEGA

You gotta hand it to them. A Real Suicide bomber. It's a dramatic way to make a point.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

A long penetrating look from Kovacs before he walks away.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)
Where are you going?

KOVACS
Licktown.

Ortega watches him, baffled and irked at his agenda.

ORTEGA
Nice to see you've got your
priorities straight.

EXT. LICKTOWN/CITY STREET - NIGHT

Fog and a fine mist of rain blanket the night. The dregs of humanity criss-cross through the street, lined with endless flashing neon announcing VICE HOUSES.

As Kovacs weaves through the foot traffic, he passes through THREE DIMENSIONAL HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGES of SCANTILY CLAD WOMEN, all trying to shepherd prospective clients into their clubs.

Kovacs keeps his head down, avoiding the rain as he turns a corner onto a DEAD END STREET and approaches one of the establishments.

A liquid neon sign above the doorway slithers into different shapes and intermittently flashes the words: JERRY'S CLOSED QUARTERS.

As Kovacs nears, a small time drug deal goes down a few feet away from the entrance. As money's exchanged, the DRUG DEALER pulls out a small pen-like device and gives his CLIENT a booster injection of Neuro-nef. Instant high.

Kovacs steps up to a SYNTH-BOUNCER at the door.

SYNTH-BOUNCER
Cabins or bar tonight?

KOVACS
What's the difference?

SYNTH-BOUNCER
Bar's look, no touch. Cabin's pay
as you go. If you know what I mean.

The Synth-Bouncer cackles out a lascivious laugh.

INT. JERRY'S CLOSED QUARTERS - NIGHT

Kovacs walks through the club. Dancers twirling on poles. Music thumping. Men and women drinking. Gambling tables line the perimeter of the room.

Kovacs stares at one of the dancers, sexy as hell. A GUY WITH AN EARPIECE steps up to him.

GUY WITH EARPIECE

We got sleeving tables in back.
Make it with any one of our lovely
ladies in whatever body you want...

He whips out a hand-held holo device and scrolls quickly through a dozen possibilities.

GUY WITH EARPIECE (CONT'D)

You wanna be the best endowed stud
on the planet? Maybe you wanna see
what it's like to go chick on
chick. You wanna play daddy?

An old man comes up on screen.

KOVACS

You gotta be kidding.

GUY WITH EARPIECE

You laugh but the chicks're into
it. Whatever rocks your boat, we
got a hundred sleeves to choose
from.

(leans in)

Throw in a dose of Neuro-chem to
smooth the sleeve swap and you'll
swear you're in your birth body.

Kovacs grunts and moves on. He's not here for this.

As he heads toward a set of descending stairs marked, BIO-CABINS, various PATRONS take notice, peering at him.

Kovacs, alert, notices everything, but walks on.

INT. JERRY'S CLOSED QUARTERS/BASEMENT - NIGHT

Kovacs descends into this long hallway lined on both sides with a number of stalls: The Bio-Cabins.

INT. BIO-CABIN - NIGHT

Kovacs enters and takes a seat on a metal chair as the door behind him automatically slides shut. In front of him, a small debit console and a frosted glass wall.

BEHIND IT a shapely female silhouette, slithers seductively.

Kovacs presses one of a four buttons (each with a different denomination of UN dollars). A light pulses behind his head, reading his stack, deducting the charge. The frosting on the glass **MELTS AWAY** giving a clear view of the shapely female. Exactly what you would expect in a dancer named ANEMONE.

The glass wall slides open.

ANEMONE

I thought you'd never ask.

Anemone steps through the partition, slithers up to Kovacs and slides onto his lap. Kovacs shifts, a bit uncomfortable, trying desperately to keep his mind on his agenda.

KOVACS

I'm... uh... looking for some help.

ANEMONE

Well, you came to the right place.

KOVACS

There's this friend of mine.
Laurens Bancroft. You seen him
here?

She leans away from him, wary. She knows the name. Anyone would.

ANEMONE

Maybe.

KOVACS

Do you and him...?

ANEMONE

No way. He tried once. Things on
your friend's list of a good time,
not my speed.

KOVACS

Who does he go with regularly? I
want her.

Anemone slides off his lap, her look darkening now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANEMONE

You a cop?

KOVACS

No. I just want to talk to her.

She turns, stepping through the partition as the glass wall begins to shut. Kovacs grabs the metal chair and SWIFTLY WEDGES IT IN, HOLDING THE DOOR OPEN.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

(grabbing her wrist)

Wait --

ANEMONE

What the hell are you doing?! Let go of my arm!

KOVACS

I'll pay you. Just a couple questions and you can go back to work.

ANEMONE

We can't talk about clients. House rules.

KOVACS

Why did you look that way when I asked about her?

Something softens in Anemone's eyes again. Kovacs hits a button on the debit console. A soft chime as his stack is swiped and more money deducted.

The door slides fully open. Anemone relents. She steps into the cabin and they stand together in the small space.

ANEMONE

(hesitates)

Her name's Lizzie... Lizzie Elliot.

KOVACS

How can I find her?

ANEMONE

She quit three weeks ago. She said she'd call but she never did.

Something nervous comes over her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANEMONE (CONT'D)

Look, that's all I can say. I
should be working.

Thinking quickly, Kovacs assesses the girl and tries another
tactic... His demeanor shifts into something gentle, sincere.
A perfect performance.

KOVACS

Look... I didn't want to say. I'm
trying to keep a low profile...
But... I'm her mother.

Anemone looks at him like he's nuts.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

I put every penny I have into
leasing this sleeve. A fifty-year-
old woman in this part of town
wouldn't get very far. No-one's
heard from her. I need to find my
little girl...

Anemone softens, starting to believe him.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

Please... I need your help.

Cautiously, Anemone gives in.

ANEMONE

She talked about you. She said she
wanted to go home.

Playing his part Kovacs turns his look to jelly, his eyes get
misty.

KOVACS

When was the last time you saw her?

ANEMONE

The day she left. She got in a
fight with Jerry cause he wouldn't
give her any kind of advance. She
was getting real desperate. With
the baby and all.

Kovacs stifles his surprise, calculating the implications.

ANEMONE (CONT'D)

Shit... I shouldn't have said
anything... Don't tell I told you,
okay? She'd kill me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KOVACS

It's fine. I won't...

ANEMONE

Jerry told her she should just take care of it and get back to work. But she wouldn't, being a Believer you know... She even had her stack stamped, Do Not Resleeve.

Kovacs registers this as well.

KOVACS

Where was she living?

ANEMONE

Free Trade. Deck 21-17.
(off Kovacs' look)
Old Wharf District. You can't miss it.

KOVACS

Thanks.

Anemone works up her nerve to ask what she's afraid of.

ANEMONE

Do you think Bancroft did something to her?

KOVACS

That's what I'm trying to figure out.

ANEMONE

Mrs. Elliott... Promise you'll come back and tell me if you find anything out.

Kovacs nods his promise to the girl.

EXT. EMBER WHARF DISTRICT - NIGHT

San Francisco's PIER 39. Currently however, it holds only traces of its ancient past. Now dilapidated docks, barely standing, creak in the ebb and flow of the water.

But it's the GIANT AIRCRAFT CARRIER, run aground, which dominates the area. Rusted tons of steel, serving as a low rent tenement. Although, by the looks of it, it's more a squatters paradise. The side of the ship marked with the name: FREE TRADE ENFORCER.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kovacs' transport filters down through the foggy darkness, making its final approach. He comes to a stop, scanning the area before getting out.

EXT. FREE TRADE ENFORCER - NIGHT

Fires burn as a small army of HOMELESS PEOPLE try to keep warm amid the toxic smoke.

Kovacs approaches the rickety gang plank, stopping to question an OLD HOMELESS MAN. He points at the defunct ship.

INT./EXT. FREE TRADE ENFORCER/FLIGHT DECK - NIGHT

Kovacs steps onto the rusted, debris-covered deck.

As he makes his way to the LOWER DECKS, he passes one lone, decaying F-16 FIGHTER JET, sitting collapsed on the runway.

INT. FREE TRADE ENFORCER/LOWER DECK - NIGHT

Dark, cramped rusted steel corridors make a perfect home for the rats scurrying about. As Kovacs creeps through, scanning the numbers on the cabin doors, the sounds of other tenants can be heard echoing through the ship.

Reaching NUMBER 21-17 and finding the door slightly ajar, he quietly pushes it open and steps into --

THE CABIN

Kovacs recoils from a palpable stench as he peers into the makeshift apartment. Six bunk beds line the walls. One set of three currently folded up, saving space.

Not much else in the room, except an old hot plate and a sequined bikini hanging from the door marked: Latrine.

His eyes fall on a dark puddle beneath the folded bunks. Kovacs crouches down, touching it and coming up with a A DARK RED STAIN ON HIS FINGER TIP.

He squints as he notices something in the puddle: The remnants of A CRUSHED STACK IMPLANT.

He picks it up, looks at the folded bunks, then steps back. And as he pulls open the top one --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A DEAD BODY ROLLS OUT, LANDING ON TOP OF HIM and knocking him off his feet.

Kovacs swiftly pushes it off, sprawling the body onto the floor and giving a clear view of a murdered YOUNG LADY, her throat slit, precisely where the stack was removed.

Gruesome, but Kovacs deals like a professional. Stoic.

But only until he hears a clank coming from the latrine. He slowly approaches, reaching the door as it WHIPS OPEN, smashing into his face --

-- and making way for a SQUATTER, racing out through the cabin door. Kovacs recovers quickly, following him into the --

LOWER DECK CORRIDOR

The Squatter's fast enough to make it to the end of the hall, hitting a set of stairs full speed. He descends. Kovacs follows, closing the gap as he reaches --

THE NARROW STAIRWELL

It goes deep into the bowels of the ship. The Squatter clanks down with Kovacs gaining. Suddenly the Squatter loses his footing and falls down the final flight, landing in an --

AIRCRAFT HANGER

Injured from the fall he staggers to his feet and quickly limps away into the massive space, littered with more crippled FIGHTER JETS.

Kovacs swings into the empty room, halting and surveying. He finds nothing... Until a small RAT scurries out from behind the wheel of one of the jets.

ANGLE ON -- The Squatter, cowering inside the A JET'S HUGE WHEEL WELL. Scared and breathing heavy... When suddenly an unseen force YANKS HIM FROM HIS HIDING SPOT AND --

-- sprawls him out at Kovacs feet. Kovacs looms over him, holding on to the guy's ankle. The Squatter flops around like a fish out of water until Kovacs plants a foot on his throat.

The Squatter stops flopping, terrified.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SQUATTER

What do you want, man? I didn't do anything.

KOVACS

What are you doing hiding out in a dead girl's cabin?

SQUATTER

Hey man... I didn't kill her. I swear. I was just looking for something to eat. I swear!

KOVACS

You know her?

The squatter doesn't answer. Kovacs picks him up by the collar, holds him close, looking into his eyes. He flinches at the stench of his breath.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

Any idea who paid her last visit?

INT. FREE TRADE ENFORCER/CABIN - NIGHT

CLOSE ON -- A digital file tablet. An image comes up. A beautiful 20-year-old girl. The name beneath the 2D: ELIZABETH ELLIOTT. The dead girl.

The Squatter sits on a bunk eating a bowl of take-out noodles while an OFFICER questions him.

KOVACS

Scum bag's useless. Doesn't know anything.

ORTEGA

Not exactly the sort of place where people get too personal, I guess.

Kovacs stands with Ortega eying the digital file as the tablet spits out a hard copy. He pulls out his pack of cigarettes and puts one in his mouth. But he doesn't light it.

Another OFFICER enters the cabin carrying a small metal case. He sets it on the floor, opens it and pulls out a BLACK CONE-SHAPED DEVICE -- a crime scene scanner.

OFFICER

Can we clear the room, please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Everyone steps out into --

THE CORRIDOR

KOVACS

You're not going to find anything.

ORTEGA

Is that right? You took a mental picture and figured out there's not one clue in there?

Kovacs smugly waves her off. "Suit yourself."

THROUGH THE CABIN DOOR -- We see the Officer activate the SCANNER. He quickly steps out of the room as --

-- a 360-degree blue laser light combs the room, creating a 3D representation of every detail. The light pulsates as it collects data. Fingerprints. Hairs. Fibers. All illuminated.

KOVACS

Makes your job easy, doesn't it? No point in you being here, really.

Ortega ignores the dig. Kovacs puts the cigarette in his mouth.

ORTEGA

You gonna light that thing?

Kovacs' eyes stays fixed on the scanner.

KOVACS

I happened to like being a smoker.

ORTEGA

I'm crying my eyes out.

The scanner finishes up. The Officer steps back into the room and picks up the cone. He looks at a readout at the bottom.

OFFICER

Nothing, Lieutenant.

Kovacs smirks, his point proven.

KOVACS

Nice work. Another thing your little scanner's not going to tell you... She was pregnant.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ORTEGA
How the hell do you know that?

KOVACS
Police work. You should try it.
It's old-fashioned but it works
sometimes.

He turns to go.

KOVACS (CONT'D)
If you'll excuse, I've got a few
questions for her boyfriend's wife.
Have fun cleaning up.

Ortega looks at his back bitterly.

ORTEGA
Screw you, Kovacs.

EXT. PSYCHASEC COMPOUND/BAY CITY HARBOR - DAWN

Perched on a rock island in the middle of the bay, the compound is an expanded, modernized, high security development once known as Alcatraz Prison.

KOVACS' TRANSPORT skims above the surrounding waters, rising to reach the external LANDING DOCK of the compound.

Beyond the main buildings of the compound, a collection of NEEDLECAST TOWERS pierce the sky.

INT. PSYCHASEC COMPOUND/RECEPTION - DAY

Sterile and pristine, the cavernous room recalls the luxury of a high-end spa.

Kovacs stands before a somewhat irritated Kawahara.

KAWAHARA
I know who you are, Mr. Kovacs. But
unfettered access does not mean
unscheduled.

KOVACS
I'd apologize but I wouldn't mean
it. I was told Mrs. Bancroft was
here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAWAHARA

She's undergoing a procedure. I'll take you back, but you'll have to wait.

INT. PSYCHASEC COMPOUND/STACK WAREHOUSE - DAY

Kawahara takes Kovacs through this MASSIVE space. Rows and rows of towering racks, each with its own ROBOTIC ATTENDANT, rolling along, filing and retrieving STACK IMPLANTS.

Kovacs jaw drops. There must be BILLIONS OF STACKS HERE.

KOVACS

Holy mother of...

KAWAHARA

God? You're not a Believer, are you, Mr. Kovacs?

Kawahara's is a dry sense of humor. They begin walking.

KOVACS

How many stacks do you have here?

KAWAHARA

Forty-nine billion approximately. Since the invention of the technology not many people choose to have their stacks destroyed. There's always that hope, that maybe someday some interested descendent who's come into money might want to have them resleeved. Surely you've been curious about meeting your great-grandparents... We offer free climate-controlled stack storage.

KOVACS

Which guarantees a steady business in resleeving and virtual stack accessing. Clever.

Kawahara gives him a look. Not appreciating his attitude.

INT. REMOTE STORAGE DATA BANK/ENTRY WAY - DAY

Kawahara and Kovacs stand before a sealed door as a SECURITY SCANNER lowers from the ceiling and scans the back of her neck, reading her implant.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The doors (composed of horizontal strips with infrared sensors) slide open, accommodating the precise outline of each person walking through.

INT. REMOTE STORAGE DATA BANK - DAY

Kovacs and Kawahara stride through, passing a SEVEN FOOT GLASS PYLON in the center of this atrium-like space. Inside lies the intricate workings of the Remote Storage technology.

Across the room, a massive wall of windows gives view to the FIELD OF NEEDLECAST TOWERS (like a fabric of glowing stalagmites reaching up into the sky).

KAWAHARA

(unable to contain her
pride)

Our satellite uplink operates through a network of no less than eighteen secure clearing orbital platforms, leased in random sequences. For security, no orbital is leased for more than twenty seconds at a time. Once received, remote storage updates are stored on an array of twenty-three separate discs in different parts of the building. Random code distribution insures that only the central processor knows the pattern.

Kawahara eyes the data bank, proudly admiring her work.

KOVACS

So if you're so brilliant, how come it took so long to pull off Remote Storage?

KAWAHARA

Cortical stacks are not purely digital. They're part biological. Each one unique. Mapping, translating and transmitting the neural and protein sequences of a given stack is not an easy process.

KOVACS

Until now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAWAHARA

Until now, only the Bancroft family
has benefited from the technology.

KOVACS

If you can map and transmit a
stack, you can duplicate it. Seems
a bit dangerous, don't you think?

KAWAHARA

I can assure you, once the council
vote goes through, Remote Storage
technology will be safeguarded by a
strict set of regulations. Soon
anyone who wants will be able to be
backed up, inoculated against
death, every forty-eight hours.

KOVACS

And how much does Psychasec plan to
charge for that nifty service?

Kawahara shoots him an annoyed look. As they reach the other
end of the space, Kovacs turns back a moment, slightly awed
by the technology.

KAWAHARA

(off Kovacs' look)

Psychasec is one of a kind in the
universe.

INT. PSYCHASEC COMPOUND/REPLICA VAULTS - DAY

Kawahara leads Kovacs along another stretch of hallway.

KOVACS

Tell me. You and Mr. Bancroft
drinking pals?

KAWAHARA

I've been here fifty-three years.
Bancroft started as a sort of
mentor to me. I owe him everything.
Laurens is a genius.

KOVACS

Yes, but are you close?

Kawahara takes a beat to look at Kovacs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAWAHARA

You should be interrogating Mr.
Bancroft's enemies. Not his allies.

KOVACS

And who might his enemies be?

Kawahara seems to get nervous for an instant. Whatever she was about to say, she's changed her mind.

KAWAHARA

I'm sure you're better at
determining that than I. It is your
profession after all.

They continue to walk. The wall to the right, all glass and displaying ENDLESS ROWS OF UPRIGHT CASKET-LIKE GLASS CYLINDERS, reminiscent of the one which housed Kovacs' inanimate body upon his resleeving.

KAWAHARA (CONT'D)

This vault is where we house our
client's replicas.

Kovacs stops, eying the contents of the caskets -- FULLY DEVELOPED HUMANS, suspended in the tanks, a web of intravenous tubes and wires protruding from the limbs and torsos.

KOVACS (cont'd)

Bancroft keep his in there too?

KAWAHARA

No. The Bancrofts have a private
family vault.

Kawahara indicates the door across the room with his gaze.

KAWAHARA (CONT'D)

Two replicas each.

Kovacs eyes Kawahara, waiting for her to lead the way.

KAWAHARA (CONT'D)

The operative word I think you
missed was private. As I said, you
have to wait until Mrs. Bancroft is
through.

Kovacs nods, "If that's the way you want it..." Then marches across the room, toward the private vault. Kawahara follows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Kawahara (CONT'D)
Kovacs! You can't go in there.

Reaching the vault, Kovacs taps a sensor, allowing the pressurized door to slide open. He strides into --

THE BANCROFT PRIVATE VAULT

A vault only in name. Salon would be more accurate. Soft lighting. Gentle music. Pure relaxation.

As Kovacs steps in, Kawahara still right behind him, he comes face to face with Miriam Bancroft. She stands in a short silk robe, her feet bare. She barely flinches, completely comfortable in front of his gaze, enjoying it even.

MIRIAM
(pure seductress)
Mr. Kovacs, a pleasure to see you.

KAWAHARA
I'm so sorry, Mrs. Bancroft. I tried to stop him.

MIRIAM
It's alright, Reileen. You can go.
I'll be fine.

Kawahara glances angrily at Kovacs. Kovacs shrugs, taunting her. Kawahara exits the room.

MIRIAM (cont'd) (CONT'D)
To what do I owe the honor? Have I become part of your investigation?

Kovacs can't help taking in her body. His eyes drift down to an ugly gash on her bare calf and a black-and-blue ankle.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
Polo injury.

He eyes the cut, maybe not believing her. As she takes a step she has a very SLIGHT LIMP, a twisted ankle.

KOVACS
Nothing a little re-sleeving can't solve, I'm sure.

MIRIAM
Just giving it a chance to heal properly.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Minimizing the wear and tear on the sleeve... You sound resentful.

Miriam drops her robe to the floor -- fully aware of Kovacs -- and slides onto one of the two luxurious re-sleeving tables in the center of the room, pulling a silk sheet over her body.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Don't be shy. If you're going to accuse me of killing my husband, we should get to know each other first.

Kovacs smirks, appreciating her bluntness.

KOVACS

I'm not accusing anyone yet.

The pressurized door slides open again. A Psychasec TECHNICIAN enters, stopping mid-stride.

TECHNICIAN

I'm sorry, Mrs. Bancroft. I thought we were ready.

MIRIAM

We are. Just ignore our little audience. I'm sure he'll forgive us.

The technician approaches the liqui-form computer console. Taps in a series of commands as --

-- Kovacs makes his way to ROWS AND ROWS OF REPLICA CYLINDERS, THE BANCROFT FAMILY AND ITS GENERATIONS OF DESCENDENTS.

Kovacs is transfixed by this eery army of hundreds of inanimate clones, two of each person, ready to become living sleeves.

He stares at a LAURENS BANCROFT REPLICA, and then shifts his gaze to the more disconcerting sight in the cylinder behind it, where A SECOND CLONE OF BANCROFT IS HALF-FORMED, looking something like a six-foot fetus, with Bancroft's features half-visible.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

The police have my statement. Whatever I tell you won't be any different.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KOVACS

You were home then?

Kovacs continues past their various children and grandchildren and stops in his tracks when he comes to -- a REPLICA OF WILLIAM BANCROFT, floating in a cylinder. He takes note that cylinder behind it has a SECOND CLONE OF WILLIAM THAT IS HALF-FORMED, like Bancroft's.

MIRIAM

If that's what the report says,
then yes. I was asleep. You can
check my needlecast records if you
don't believe me.

Kovacs, his gaze led by a robotic arm moving in the same direction, stops in front of the MIRIAM REPLICAS. The front cylinder opens from the top. Her nude body is slowly lifted from the container.

Miriam glances at Kovacs, his eye grazing on her inanimate, yet perfect body (without polo injury). He is just a man, after all.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

It's impolite to stare, Mr. Kovacs.

He turns to Miriam, maybe just a little embarrassed.

Miriam leans back, relaxing onto the table, a smug affirmative smile gracing her lips as her replica is laid out onto the table next to hers.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

I hope you realize Laurens is
simply indulging a whim.

Kovacs stands by the door watching as a SURGICAL ROBOT uses a laser to cut a tiny incision in the back of the neck on MIRIAM'S REPLICA.

KOVACS

Your husband seems to indulge quite
a lot of whims... Do you know a
girl named Elizabeth Elliott, Mrs.
Bancroft?

MIRIAM

Should I?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KOVACS

Word is your husband does. Spent quite a bit of time with her in Licktown.

Miriam eyes Kovacs, cool.

MIRIAM

Am I supposed to be offended by that? Telling me my husband is fond of the vice houses?

TECHNICIAN

(a little uncomfortable)

We're... Um... Ready, Mrs. Bancroft.

Miriam nods, allowing the Technician to gently place a thin tube into her nostrils. She closes her eyes, trying to relax.

KOVACS

Did you know Ms. Elliott was murdered?

MIRIAM

Should I be saddened?

KOVACS

You the jealous type? Maybe you felt like teaching your husband a lesson. Nothing like blowing someone's head off to make a point. Especially when, next day, it's like it never happened.

MIRIAM

It wouldn't be much of a lesson if he can't even remember it happening.

Kovacs knows she's got a point.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

I'd hoped for my husband's sake you were a better investigator.

TECHNICIAN

Okay, Mrs. Bancroft, sedation in five... four... three...

Kovacs steps a little closer. Makes sure he can see her face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

KOVACS

Did you know the girl was pregnant?

Miriam's eyes flicker open as the words leave his mouth.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

and a Believer?

TECHNICIAN

... two ... one.

A quick blast of air through the tubing and she's out cold.

In one swift motion, the surgical robot extracts Miriam's stack from the back of her neck, and delicately implants it into her Replica. The process takes mere moments.

The old replica, with its polo scar, is rolled automatically off the first sleeving table and conveyed to the SLEEVE DISPOSAL UNIT where, behind glass, it is doused with a fine mist of synthetic acids that burn it down instantly, bone and all.

A few seconds later MIRIAM REPLICA'S EYES POP OPEN... trying desperately to hide her dismay at the last thing Kovacs said.

KOVACS

Sorry, I didn't quite catch that.
Was that a yes or a no?

She sits up as the Technician helps her slip on her silk robe.

MIRIAM

I love my husband, Mr. Kovacs...
But murdering the girls he sleeps
with would be a full-time job...

She slides off the table. Their eyes penetrating each other.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Now if you'll excuse me.

He watches her leave.

KOVACS

Pleasure chatting with you, Mrs.
Bancroft.

INT. PSYCHASEC COMPOUND/RECEPTION - DAY

Kovacs strides through, his attention suddenly diverted as he notices the NEWS REPORT PLAY ON A HOLO-SCREEN:

NEWSCASTER

...reports are now official. Police have given up any hope of recovering the cortical stack of U.N. Special Council Chief Tomas Anchia, who was killed yesterday in a shocking attack. Hours ago, in response to the news about Mr. Anchia, Laurens Bancroft offered every member on the U.N. Special Council remote storage policies, free for eternity. He said that Remote Storage is the only way to protect the council from what he called, "cowardly acts of terrorist intimidation."

As he listens, Kovacs unconsciously rubs his jaw where he used to have a scar. He is clearly fitting this news into the larger puzzle. He heads out at double his previous pace.

INT. TOP OF THE MARK RESTAURANT - NIGHT

An elegant floating eatery. Bancroft sits in a leather booth enjoying lunch, bodyguards standing nearby. Kovacs walks up to the table. Bancroft takes a sip of wine.

BANCROFT

Have you found my killer?

KOVACS

You don't seem to have lost your appetite over the death of Tomas Anchia.

BANCROFT

These Believers. Nothing but cowardl--

KOVACS

Cowardly terrorists. Yeah, I heard that one already.

Bancroft's gaze darkens.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BANCROFT

I'm not paying you to fixate on Anchia's untimely demise. You should be concentrating on other, more important things... Like the life of your little girl.

Kovacs takes a pause. Daggers from his stare.

KOVACS

Yeah well, maybe his assassination and your own aren't so unrelated. You seem to have a knack for turning these deaths into some nice publicity against the Believers.

BANCROFT

They don't need my help for that.

KOVACS

Why don't you tell me about the most prominent Believer working against you? William Bancroft.

Bancroft scowls.

BANCROFT

Fortunately, I have accumulated more than one grandchild over the past few centuries.

KOVACS

But William's the one that you disowned. He's the one that infuriates you.

BANCROFT

Did you come here to tell me anything I don't already know?

KOVACS

I don't know. Let's find out.

Kovacs tosses down a crime scene 3D. Bancroft flinches at the sight of Lizzie Elliott. He's clearly upset by it.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

That's what she looked like when I came across her.

BANCROFT

I'd prefer it if you didn't intrude on my personal affairs, Mr. Kovacs.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BANCROFT (CONT'D)

What does this have to do with my murder?

Bancroft's anger betrays a strange emotionality. He seems flustered.

KOVACS

Lab report speculates she was killed, with child, close to two weeks ago. Right before you.

Bancroft furrows his brow.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

Not ringing a bell?

Bancroft looks up at Kovacs. Kovacs isn't sure what to make of Bancroft's lack of response.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

Maybe someone felt a little put out by the way you solve your personal problems. Maybe someone actually cared about her and decided to convey their sentiments.

BANCROFT

I'll thank you not to use my small memory loss as an invitation to make false accusations.

Bancroft finds his poise. Goes back to his salad.

BANCROFT (CONT'D)

I'd say you have a lot more investigating to do, Mr. Kovacs. Maybe you better get to work.

Kovacs leans in, hovering over Bancroft as he eats his salad.

KOVACS

If I find out you faked your murder and had Anchia assassinated to scare the council... Immortality's the last thing you'll be crying for when I'm done with you.

Bancroft watches him storm out, his confident glare fading.

EXT. LICKTOWN/CITY STREET - NIGHT

Kovacs stands across the crowded street from JERRY'S CLOSED QUARTERS. He takes a beat, considering how to break the news about Lizzie to Anemone.

He weaves through the foot traffic approaching the club. And if it wasn't for the densely packed PEDESTRIANS passing on either side of him he'd see --

-- THE FIST FLYING INTO HIS FACE. Stunned, he stumbles back flooring a handful of Pedestrians. Regaining his footing --

-- Kovacs finally sees his attacker: Kadmin.

And he lunges forward, ready to return the attack, Kovacs' hand suddenly seizes, trembling as he writhes in pain and we realize --

THE INK TRACER HAS ONCE AGAIN BEEN ACTIVATED. Kovacs' veins bulge. The ink spreading as he drops to the ground, convulsing. It's then he sees Kadmin standing over him, the Ink Tracer device firmly in his grasp.

TREPP, the platinum haired synth-woman we saw gunned down at The Hendrix Hotel stares down at Kovacs, smiling with a detached amusement.

TREPP

Nice to see you again, Kovacs.

Kovacs is confused to see her again. And then Kadmin appears next to her, unleashing a savage pistol whipping. Kovacs goes out cold.

INT. WAREHOUSE/OPERATING THEATER - NIGHT

KOVACS' POV -- Waking up, pained and groggy.

A glaring light hangs from the ceiling. He's clearly on his back. Turning away, his POV gives view to a table with an ARRAY OF SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS that look half-futuristic and half-archaic, with blades and gears evident. Beyond it a resleeving table, a nondescript body on top.

THE SOUND OF A DOOR OPENING and Kovacs sees Kadmin approaching with a Thug trailing behind. Kadmin takes a seat, a big ugly smile plastered on his face.

KADMIN

You know, Kovacs... You really should start carrying a gun.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KADMIN (CONT'D)

(pause)

Boy, I wish you could see your face
right now. Oh, wait --

Kadmin turns to a Thug as he is handed a small mirror.

KADMIN (CONT'D)

Look --

ON THE MIRROR -- as it captures Kovacs' reflection -- at the moment, THE FACE OF ANEMONE -- beaten, fragile. Fear flashes in her/his eyes, the certain horror of what's coming next.

A FULL VIEW OF THE ROOM and we see the diminutive female body Kovacs has been sleeved into, laying on a dirty cot. She/He sits up, desperately trying to muster some courage.

Across the room, KOVACS' REAL BODY lies on a rickety sleeving table, a rusted out surgical robot dangling above it. The bloody incision on the back of his neck, where his stack was removed, still fresh.

KADMIN (CONT'D)

What do you say we do this the old
fashioned way. How about we start
with, what exactly you've found out
about Laurens Bancroft's murder.

The Thug moves in quickly, restraining Anemone (Kovacs) as Kadmin reaches for an CIRCULAR INSTRUMENT. The device looks like a CUFF which Kadmin closes around Anemone's (Kovacs's) calf.

KADMIN (CONT'D)

Bet it feels nice. Stack all cozy
inside such a pretty thing...
(cackling)
You're probably not the first.

A set of blades spin, slicing into the skin just one millimeter. Small pincers on the device grab the skin, and it becomes clear (without us seeing too much) that the instrument is designed to peel the skin off the limb, feeding it neatly onto rollers as it moves up the limb.

INT. WAREHOUSE/SURVEILLANCE ROOM - NIGHT

Trepp stands before a video screen, watching the torture. Even she winces at the UNRELENTING SCREAMS coming through the tiny intercom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Behind Trepp, in the shadows, face unseen -- A FIGURE stands, watching as well. Trepp looks over her shoulder at the figure, wondering if this is really necessary.

The stillness from the silent observer implies -- It is.

INT. WAREHOUSE/OPERATING THEATER - HOURS LATER

Kovacs -- back in Ryker's sleeve again -- lays face down on the sleeving table, the surgical robot having just completed the procedure.

He wakes, the memory of the torture fresh, clarity fleeting, as he surveys the room, trying to gather his bearings.

In a dark corner, Kovacs spies Trepp and Kadmin in quiet conversation with SOMEONE, the same Figure watching the torture earlier. As Kovacs stirs, rolling onto his back, Trepp turns to look, then walks over, leaving Kadmin and the Shadowy Figure behind.

TREPP

Welcome back. You put up quite a fight in there, friend. Impressive.

KOVACS

Fuck you.

She nods. An understandable comment considering the circumstances.

Kovacs struggles to sit up, slowly becoming more lucid -- a hatred brewing in his eyes -- as a couple of THUGS approach and drag Kovacs off the table and onto his feet.

TREPP

How about it, Kovacs? Last chance to come clean.

Through his stupor Kovacs' gaze falls on something across the room. Lifeless on the dirty cot... It's Anemone. A subtle remorse falls over him.

It brews into anger as he eyes Trepp and the Thugs, speaking slowly with conviction.

KOVACS

You're all... going... to die.

The Thugs share a laugh, while Trepp remains stoic, almost believing him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TREPP

Real death it is, then.
(to the Thugs)
Make it look like accident. Dump
the sleeve in Licktown.

She turns, walking away. Kovacs, still hanging limply in Thug's grasp, looks the Thug #1 in the eyes.

KOVACS

I meant... what I said.

THUG

Whatever, buddy.

And almost on cue, Kovacs lunges his head at the Thug #1, BITING DOWN HARD ON HIS EAR. Thug #1 releases his hold, yelping as Kovacs wrenches free from Thug #2 as well, flinging him away.

With lightning precision, Kovacs reaches into the Thug #1's coat, unholsters his weapon --

-- and puts him out of his misery with a BLAST TO THE GUT.

A split second later, Kovacs is leveling the weapon at Trepp, FIRING and stopping her mid-draw. She flails back, wires and tubing spiraling out of her synthetic body as she crumples to the floor.

Amid the mayhem, Kadmin and the Shadowy Figure slip out though a darkened doorway.

Instantly, Thug #2 recovers, unleashing a kick, dislodging the weapon from Kovacs' grasp and sending it careening across the room. Thug #2 charges --

-- and with an acrobatic grace, Kovacs instinctively reaches above his head, grabbing on to one of the dangling surgical robot arms, extending it down with a brutal force and --

-- IMPALING THE CHARGING THUG #2 with the hypodermic needle through the forehead. Thug #2's eyes go wide, disbelieving as Kovacs grabs him by the collar with one hand, retracts the robot arm with the other --

And just for good measure, impales him one more time. Thug #2 stares at Kovacs as his body goes limp -- AND DIES.

Kovacs staggers toward the door, scooping up Trepp's weapon on the way.

EXT. WAREHOUSE/PORTRERO HILL - NIGHT

Kovacs bursts through a metal door just as a TRANSPORT TAKES FLIGHT, zipping into the night sky. He takes aim, but the thing's already too far away.

He surveys his location: AN ABANDONED WAREHOUSE overlooking the fog covered city in the distance.

INT. ORGANIC DAMAGE DIVISION/ORTEGA'S OFFICE - DAY

Kovacs barges in finding Ortega multi-tasking; sifting through files, typing a report and having breakfast at her desk.

A bevy of activity buzzes in the hall behind Kovacs as an OFFICER brushes past him, hands Ortega a file tablet and leaves. She buries her head in it, scrolling through info. She looks up and sees Kovacs.

Without a word, Kovacs digs into his pocket, pulls out Trepp's stack implant, CRUSHED INTO PIECES, and tosses it onto Ortega's desk.

ORTEGA

What the hell did you do? Who is that?

KOVACS

A certain platinum-haired synth friend of yours.

ORTEGA

What are you talking about? We pulled her stack at the hotel.

KOVACS

What can I say? Maybe she had a twin sister. Maybe there's triplets. She and the other goon just spent three hours peeling the skin off my body.

Ortega sits up, suddenly concerned.

KOVACS (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Relax. They did me the favor of sleeving me into a twenty year old girl. You might want to file a report.

A subtle relief washes over Ortega.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOVACS (cont'd) (CONT'D)
What time is it?

ORTEGA
Nine a.m.

KOVACS
Close enough.

INT. BAR - CLOSE ON A PAIR OF SCOTCH GLASSES - DAY

as the liquor is poured in.

WIDEN -- Kovacs and Ortega sit at the bar, the lone customers. Kovacs picks up his glass, admires the contents.

KOVACS
Centuries of progress... And the
best way to make a good scotch is
exactly the way they did it
hundreds of years ago. The barrel
wood, the water and the grain.
(takes a sip)
Some things are better left alone.

Ortega watches him drink. Knows it's not scotch he's talking about.

Kovacs reaches toward a bowl of PEANUTS on the bar. He's about to put them in his mouth when ORTEGA LUNGES AT HIM, grabs his hand. Kovacs grabs her wrist with his other hand.

KOVACS (CONT'D)
What are you--?

It's a two-handed arm wrestle for a second. Then the peanuts go skidding across the floor.

KOVACS (CONT'D)
What the hell?

ORTEGA
Your sleeve's allergic to peanuts.
You'd have had about five minutes
to get to a sleeve-triage site.

Kovacs takes it in.

KOVACS
Fuck. I can't eat peanuts?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ORTEGA
Don't blame me.

The two of them face forward and take a beat. Kovacs looks at her.

KOVACS
I suppose you know about the scar
on my thigh.

She blushes.

KOVACS (CONT'D)
(sarcastic)
This is comfortable.
(beat)
So was it serious?

ORTEGA
What?

KOVACS
You and Ryker.

ORTEGA
The only reason Bancroft put you in
that sleeve was to piss me off.

KOVACS
For closing his case before he was
satisfied.

She nods. A flicker of sympathy grazes Kovacs' face.

KOVACS (CONT'D)
What's he in for?

ORTEGA
...For me. That's what.

Kovacs looks at her, curious.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)
We were busting a black market
sleeve-dealer... I got careless.
Went in guns blazing. And I took
out the buyer instead of the
dealer. Some rich Meth's kid.
Looking for a cheap sleeve to party
in.

KOVACS
And Ryker took the rap for you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ORTEGA

(nods)

Turned himself in before I even had a chance to say anything. He's been up on stack for four and a half years. He gets out in two and a half weeks.

Kovacs nods, a shade of respect for the man whose sleeve he's riding.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

...What about you? How'd you end up with a hundred and eighteen years?

Kovacs hesitates... Not sure if he wants to relive it.

KOVACS

(can't help but laugh)

Bancroft called it a distraction from the off world policing duties... Group of Envoys come across a sleeve farm. Shut it down... On paper anyway. Then they start unloading the bodies in the slums. Pawning them to poor people with terminal illnesses and no sleeve insurance, people desperate for new bodies.

Kovacs stares into his drink, lost, as Ortega realizes --

ORTEGA

You were going to turn them in.

No need to respond. His face says it all as he takes a swig.

KOVACS

So I got set up... Some sleeve dealer gets Real Deathed... They pin it on me.

ORTEGA

You could have just kept your mouth shut.

He says nothing... But it's clear... No, he couldn't.

KOVACS

When you apply for the Envoy corps they give you a set of problems to solve. Only they don't tell you the problems don't have answers.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KOVACS (CONT'D)

They just sit back charting the
dopa output in your limbic system.
The more you refuse to give up, the
higher the index...

ORTEGA

Let me guess. You scored high.

KOVACS

Highest they'd ever seen. Like a
starved dog going after a bone...
Sometimes I think it's a curse.

A glimmer of new found respect grazes Ortega's eyes.

As he broods, Kovacs rubs his jaw. Ortega notices.

ORTEGA

Bancroft's offering you your
daughter's stack back, isn't he?

KOVACS

(nods)

Son of a bitch shouldn't even have
her. Legally, I should have been
entitled to her remains.

ORTEGA

You gonna have her re-sleeved?

It's a good question. Kovacs struggles with it.

KOVACS

...I can tell you what my wife
would've said.

He stares at his empty shot glass a beat, then turns it over.
Slides off his stool.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

I'm beat.

ORTEGA

You want a ride.

It ought to be an innocent offer. But there's a connection
between the two of them.

KOVACS

No thanks.

INT. HENDRIX, LOBBY / ELEVATOR - DAY

Kovacs passes through the lobby toward the lift. The elevator doors open and he steps inside.

He's about to press the 130th floor. Thinks about it. Decides instead to press a Basement floor.

INT. HENDRIX, A VIRTUAL TRANSMISSION SPA - DAY

Kovacs comes out of the elevator and into a strange version of a hotel gym, only instead of exercise machines it's filled with Auto-mold Recliners and hotel guests lying back with their eyes shut. Soft music in the background.

Kovacs lies down on an available recliner. A pair of small robotic arms move in toward his temples. His stack is scanned.

THE HENDRIX
Welcome, Mr. Kovacs.

KOVACS
I want to establish a remote link
to a stack on file at PsychSec
Corporation. Sarah Kovacs.

THE HENDRIX
Searching...

He closes his eyes...

THE HENDRIX (CONT'D)
Your transmission is now beginning.
Please enjoy.

And we enter into...

INT. VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT, PLAYGROUND - DAY

There's familiar RUSTLE of leaves in the empty park. The sky is yellow, the atmosphere is chilled.

Kovacs MATERIALIZES and looks around, getting his bearings. His eyes find SARAH crouched under the slide, afraid, hiding.

He approaches carefully, afraid he might scare her again.

KOVACS
Honey?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She tucks her head into her arm, squinting her eyes shut, afraid. Kovacs keeps his distance. Then he gets an idea.

He snap-claps his hands and makes his familiar PSHOO sound. Slowly, Sarah opens her eyes.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

It's me. Daddy.

Maybe she believes him. Just a little. But she's not inviting him any closer.

SARAH

Where are we?

Kovacs hesitates, not sure how to explain.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Is this heaven?

KOVACS

Sarah, honey, I don't know if we're going to heaven.

Sarah takes this in.

SARAH

Are we dead?

KOVACS

Do you miss home?

(she nods)

Do you miss your friends? ... What would you say about going back home?

Sarah thinks about home.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

We can go back. We can have new sleeves.

SARAH

But mommy said we wouldn't be put in new sleeves. She promised we'd meet in heaven. I want to be with mommy.

Kovacs is anguished, trying to find the right thing to say.

KOVACS

Sarah...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SARAH
(beginning to cry)
I don't want to go back. I want to
go to heaven and be with mommy.

Her tears rip Kovacs apart.

The virtual environment slowly dissolves away until Kovacs is
sitting alone in the dark, pensive.

KOVACS
(calling into the void)
Cue stack memory. Sarah Kovacs.
December fourth, 2462. Two-fifteen
PM.

Suddenly the space is filled with a burst of bright images,
flitting by at a mile a minute, encompassing the space around
Kovacs (snippets of Sarah, a woman...) until (seconds later)
they freeze on an exact scene --

A LITTLE GIRL'S BIRTHDAY PARTY. Other kids. Mercury balloons.
A cake with candles.

KOVACS (CONT'D)
Play record.

THE HENDRIX (V.O.)
Authority required.

KOVACS
She's my daughter. I'm legal
guardian.

THE HENDRIX (V.O.)
One moment... Authority verified.
Playing record.

And now the scene begins to unfold. Subjective, as if from
the little girl's POV.

KOVACS
Calculate objective landscape.

The scene becomes objective, Sarah a part of it. We see her
blowing out the candles. Kovacs (in the body we first met him
in) kissing her on the forehead. And then kissing a beautiful
woman, HIS WIFE. The children all celebrate.

Sitting amid the projection, the current Kovacs (in Ryker's
body) watches this memory of his daughter's: she throws her
arms around her father and hugs him. Kovacs's eyes get misty
as he remembers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KOVACS (CONT'D)
(almost to himself)
Happy birthday, Sarah.

INT. HENDRIX, HALLWAY - LATER

Kovacs walking down a corridor of the Hendrix. He stops in front of the door to his room. His stack is scanned and an image of The Hendrix appears.

HENDRIX
You have a visitor.

KOVACS
What?

HENDRIX
You have a visi--

KOVACS
Yeah, I heard you. Who is it and where are they?

HENDRIX
She identifies herself as Miriam Bancroft. Subsequent records search confirms this stack identification. I have allowed her to wait in your room since she is unarmed.

KOVACS
(annoyed)
Outstanding.

INT. HENDRIX, KOVACS' ROOM - DAY

Kovacs comes into his room to find Miriam standing at the small bar, pouring herself a drink.

KOVACS
You might say thank you for the drink.

MIRIAM
Thank you for the drink. Though, in point of fact, I believe I'm the one picking up the tab here.

KOVACS
Your husband, you mean.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIRIAM

It's the same the thing, Mr.
Kovacs.

Kovacs pours a drink. Not bothering to argue the point.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

I want to know what progress you've
made on my husband's... murder.

KOVACS

I report to him, not to you.

MIRIAM

Splitting hairs again.

KOVACS

Mrs. Bancroft, you'll have to
excuse me but I've had sort of a
long day and--

MIRIAM

I'd like you to drop the case.

Kovacs eyes her.

KOVACS

And why would I do that?

MIRIAM

Because I might ask very nicely...
And because I might be willing to
double whatever my husband is
paying you.

KOVACS

Suppose it's not the sort of thing
that can be doubled?

MIRIAM

I'm sure you can't have too
personal a stake in this little
investigation.

KOVACS

Maybe I've become curious.

MIRIAM

(stepping closer)
Maybe I could satisfy your
curiosity.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KOVACS

Yeah? Did you kill your husband,
Mrs. Bancroft?

MIRIAM

I'm not talking about your little
game of detectives. You are...
curious about other things, are you
not?

KOVACS

I'm sure I don't know what you
mean.

MIRIAM

Do you know what Merge Nine is?

KOVACS

Empathin?

MIRIAM

(stepping still closer)
Empathin derivatives intertwined
with Satyron and endorphin
enhancers. It makes sex without it
seem like -- dental work. This
sleeve... is state-of-the-art bio-
chem. I secrete Merge Nine when...
aroused. In my sweat, in my saliva,
in my... everywhere, Mr. Kovacs.

She leans in close so that his nose is in the crook of her
neck. A bead of sweat rolls down her neck. Kovacs inhales,
desperate to resist.

KOVACS

This isn't going to happen.

MIRIAM

No?

She kisses his neck. CLOSE ON - her saliva penetrating the
pores of his skin.

KOVACS

(already giving in)
No.

She presses her body against his, wrapping her arms around
him. And then it's all over... What follows is the most hot
and steamy sex scene you've ever seen in a PG-13 movie.

INT. KOVACS' ROOM - LATER

The room is a mess - sheets strewn everywhere, chair cushions on the floor, mattress askew. Day has turned to night.

Kovacs and Miriam lie in bed next to one another. Kovacs pulls a cigarette out of his cigarette pack.

MIRIAM

Are you going to offer me one?

He gives her the cigarette. Takes another for himself. Puts it in his mouth, unlit, and stares at the ceiling.

She holds off lighting her cigarette. Peers at him curiously.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Did you like what we did?

KOVACS

I didn't dislike it.

MIRIAM

Perhaps we could do it on a more regular basis.

KOVACS

I wonder what Mr. Bancroft would think of that.

MIRIAM

When you've lived as long as my husband and I have, the difference between the physical and the emotional becomes... clearer. Emotions clarify. Love takes on a deeper, more philosophical meaning.

Kovacs eyes her. Decides to ask what's been bothering him.

KOVACS

Tell me. You knew about your husband and Lizzie Elliot.

She takes a beat.

MIRIAM

Yes.

KOVACS

Who else knew?

She looks away. Doesn't answer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kovacs takes a stab.

KOVACS (CONT'D)
Your grandson. William. Did he
know?

She turns too quickly. Betraying herself. Making it clear,
he's struck a nerve.

MIRIAM
Leave my grandson out of this.

KOVACS
As a favor?

Miriam looks at Kovacs.

MIRIAM
The world is full of favors. Favors
are exchanged all the time.

KOVACS
How convenient.

MIRIAM
It could be convenient for you. For
some time to come.

KOVACS
If I drop the case.

MIRIAM
No need to be pedantic.

Kovacs looks at her. Then gets up out of bed. Naked.

KOVACS
Don't get me wrong. It's been fun.
But like I said before, I've had an
exhausting day.

With that, he heads into the bathroom.

EXT. HENDRIX - DAY

Another day, full of bustling activity, passes in front of
The Hendrix. Ortega's police cruiser is parked out front.

INT. HENDRIX, KOVACS' ROOM - DAY

Sunlight floods the space. Kovacs is pulling on his pants when The Hendrix materializes.

THE HENDRIX
Mr. Kovacs. Good morning.

KOVACS
You could knock first.

THE HENDRIX
(confused)
Sir?

KOVACS
What is it?

THE HENDRIX
William Bancroft calling for you.
Shall I put him through?

KOVACS
Yeah.

Kovacs pulls on his shirt. William Bancroft's image materializes in the middle of the room. It's beyond holographic - it is, for all intents and purposes, as if he is in the room.

WILLIAM
Mr. Kovacs.

KOVACS
How can I help you?

WILLIAM
I need to speak to you.

KOVACS
Go ahead.

WILLIAM
(nervous)
In person. Could you come to the
cathedral?

Kovacs eyes the image of William.

INT. HENDRIX LOBBY - DAY

Ortega is standing in the lobby of the hotel, leaning up against one of the art-deco columns next to a holographic incarnation of The Hendrix, when Kovacs comes out of the elevator. He's still looking a bit ragged.

ORTEGA

I gather you've been probing Mrs.
Bancroft.

Kovacs looks up and sees her. He can't get a break.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

The Hendrix and I have become good
friends.

KOVACS

(to The Hendrix)

You really don't have any
understanding of privacy, I see.

THE HENDRIX

It just slipped out.

KOVACS

Are you filing reports to Bancroft?

ORTEGA

Relax, it was just some idle girl
chat. I have to say, what with your
reputation and all, I imagined a
little more professionalism.

Kovacs starts walking. She follows.

KOVACS

Yeah? You telling me the department
doesn't have rules against
fraternization between fellow
officers?

ORTEGA

She's a suspect. It's a bit
different.

Kovacs stops and looks at her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOVACS

Maybe you should wait 'til someone
you actually know is in this sleeve
before you start acting like you
own it. What are you doing here,
anyway?

ORTEGA

We traced the lease on that synth
unit.

KOVACS

Does this mean you're actually
working the case?

ORTEGA

PsychaSec.

Kovacs takes a deep breath, processing. He turns and walks on
past her.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

Kovacs stops and turns, exasperated.

KOVACS

You re-opening the case?

ORTEGA

Maybe.

KOVACS

Well then, Detective, maybe you
better come and find out.

He continues walking out of the hotel.

INT. ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

The cathedral is virtually empty, echoey and vast. Without
the people inside, it feels like a different place. Eerie in
a way.

Kovac and Ortega stand near the front. There are a couple
people deep in the pews, praying silently.

Kovacs paces slowly back and forth, waiting. His eyes fall
on a woman leaving the cathedral, the clicking of her heels
echoing through the space. She passes a lone congregant,
seated in a rear pew.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

William comes through the door behind the pulpit to find Ortega and Kovacs, standing waiting.

WILLIAM

You said your name was Ryker.

KOVACS

And you said the Believers weren't interested in killing anyone.

WILLIAM

We're not.

KOVACS

What was it you wanted to tell me.

William looks nervous.

WILLIAM

Who is she?

ORTEGA

Detective Kristin Ortega. Bay City Police. Organic Damage.

KOVACS

Talk.

WILLIAM

My father was seeing a prostitute in Licktown named Lizzie Elliott. I just found out she's been killed.

KOVACS

Just found out, huh? How'd you come by that information.

WILLIAM

Lizzie was my first convert. We remained close.

KOVACS

How close?

WILLIAM

I think my grandfather may have had something to do with it.

KOVACS

You seem awfully interested in pointing fingers.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KOVACS (CONT'D)

Come to think of it, I think you
were the one who sent me to
Licktown in the first place.

WILLIAM

My grandfather is a depraved man.

KOVACS

Maybe it runs in the family. Maybe
you've some wrong ideas about using
me to bring your father's
indiscretions some public
attention. You think you can drag
me into your little family feud?

WILLIAM

I don't need you to. I've decided
on a more personal means of
retribution. I've decided to take
my final communion and have myself
stamped Do Not Resleeve.

KOVACS

Retribution, huh? Maybe that's why
you've got your Believers killing
Tomas Anchia.

WILLIAM

That was not a--

KOVACS

While we're at it, when was the
last time you saw Lizzie Elliott?
Alive.

WILLIAM

I thought I might be helpful to
your investigation. But I can see--

As William turns to walk away Kovacs grabs him by the wrist.

KOVACS

You wanna help me, then tell me
something I don't already know.

WILLIAM

I don't know what--

Kovacs slams William up against the stone wall. Ortega looks
over her shoulder at the handful of people praying. Two of
them scurry out, past the Lone Congregant.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KOVACS

Maybe you killed Lizzie to get at
your father.

WILLIAM

No--

KOVACS

Maybe you thought you could use me
to pin it on your grandfather.

With their backs to the pews, Kovacs, Ortega and William fail
to notice the peculiar sight of a SILVER LIQUID METAL -- the
same as from the demonstration -- seeping along the floor.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

Why are your fingerprints all over
your father's office?

WILLIAM

I don't know.

KOVACS

When was the last time you were
there?

Just then, Kovacs raises his gaze, in time to see the mercury-
like compound slithering between William's feet and his own.
He reacts instantly --

KOVACS (CONT'D)

Get down!

He grabs Ortega and pulls her to the ground, shielding her
body with his own, just as --

THE METALLIC LIQUID EXPLODES! Splintering the wooden pews,
shattering the stained glass window, demolishing the pulpit.

With debris still raining down, Kovacs quickly surveys
Ortega, still sheltered beneath him.

KOVACS (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Ortega! You OK?

Disoriented from the blast, she manages to nod. She's OK.

Kovacs looks over to William, who's crumpled on the ground
but uninjured. Then he looks up to see the Lone Congregant
racing out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Kovacs swiftly reaches into Ortega's coat, PULLING OUT HER BEAM GUN and dashes toward the back of the cathedral. He sees --

-- the HOODED CONGREGANT, rushing away, almost to the front doors of the cathedral.

As the man shoulders through the door, he stops, turns back and allows Kovacs to get a look at his face: KADMIN. And then he's gone.

EXT. ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL - DAY

Kovacs bursts through the doors, swallowed by the foot traffic. He quickly spots Kadmin steam-rolling through the impossible crowd.

He follows, desperately weaving, crashing into pedestrians.

Reaching a corner, Kadmin bolts into the street, full of people riding on robo-legs. He dodges through sea of eight-foot legs.

Kovacs gets to the corner and dives into the throng of legs, giving chase. It's like running through corn-stalks, only they're moving.

Kadmin crashes into one, sending it toppling. The rider is thrown and is about to say something when Kadmin punches him and grabs the legs.

Kovacs sees Kadmin up ahead and realizes he's going to have to act fast. He commandeers an idle pair of legs from an unwitting pedestrians, and takes off.

Kadmin jams his robo-legs into high gear, and now we can see the real attraction to these things. They're incredibly nimble, and fast. Like riding on the legs of a eight-foot tall running back.

He weaves around the corner, cutting in and out between the other robo-leg riders. A hundred yards behind him, Kovacs moves onto the other side of the road, weaving head-on into the fray.

Kadmin steers onto the sidewalk, nearly trampling the pedestrians on foot. He approaches a long set of stairs leading up to an outdoor concourse. His legs spring right up it, bound the stairs three at a time, walkers ducking for cover.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kovacs takes the stairs right behind him and gives chase through the outdoor mall area.

Kadmin gets to the end of the walkway. Dead-end. Kovacs is nearly up to him. Kadmin looks over the edge of the concourse, three flights up: it's nothing but aerial traffic streaming by.

Kadmin backs up a few robo-paces and then runs forward and, jamming the throttle forward, takes a huge robo-leg LEAP and LANDS ON AN AERIAL TRANSPORT, startling the riders inside.

Kovacs is right behind, making a running leap onto another transport just behind. Kadmin leaps from transport to transport. Kovacs stays with him.

The aerial road heads through a building tunnel and Kadmin "crouches" his robo-legs just in time to avoid being taken out by the roof. Kovacs stays right with him.

Coming out the other side, Kovacs pulls out his blaster and takes aim but fails to shoot as --

Kadmin leaps onto the roof of an aerial TROLLEY TRANSPORT. An over-sized, flying homage of the famed San Francisco public transportation. Packed with PASSENGERS.

Kovacs makes the leap to follow but one leg bends the wrong way. It skids toward the edge. Kovacs ejects the legs just in time not to be dragged down. Letting them fall a hundred feet to the ground.

He clings to the edge of the trolley as it ascends. Kadmin turns his legs around and walks them back toward Kovacs.

Kovacs has just pulled himself fully onto the roof when WHOOSH a KICKING ROBO-LEG just misses his head. He dodges and weaves the length of the roof and Kadmin uses the legs to kick at him.

Kovacs is at the other end with nowhere else to go, a robo-leg kicking high, when HE SHOOTS THE OTHER LEG OUT. Kadmin falls back. Ejecting his legs. Kovacs is taking aim at Kadmin, about to finish him off, when the transport shifts wildly.

INSIDE THE TRANSPORT -- A PANICKED DRIVER veers his aircraft away from the flow of traffic as --

Up top, Kadmin lunges desperately at Kovacs. The two of them wrestle for control of the beam gun. Eye to eye. A mutual hatred. Both gripping the weapon now. Wedged between their bodies. But only until --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANOTHER PULSE FROM THE BEAM GUN suddenly brings their struggle to stand still.

Kadmin's eyes go wide with fury -- and agony as it becomes clear, Kovacs has blasted a HOLE CLEAN THROUGH HIS TORSO.

KOVACS

Finally remembered a gun, asshole.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE PARK/JAPANESE TEA GARDEN - A MINUTE LATER

The Panicked Driver CRASH LANDS his vehicle amid the ancient tourist attraction. He spills out of the vehicle. The famous LARGE BRONZE BUDDHA etched in the background.

Kovacs throws Kadmin's corpse off the top of transport. Slides off himself. Exhausted. Looks at the Driver.

KOVACS

You got a knife? Anything sharp, really?

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERES/ELEVATOR - NIGHT

Ortega and Kovacs, side by side, both still battered from the evening's activities. Kovacs eyes a stack implant, pinched between his fingers, the glass casing still blood stained.

ORTEGA

(re: stack)

Dimitri Kadmin. Wanted in, what, four, five continents. This guy would skin his mother for the right price.

Kovacs says nothing. Just a weary stare. Closes his fist around the stack implant.

ORTEGA (cont'd) (CONT'D)

Thanks for that... Back there.

A slight nod.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS/SYNTH WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Deep in the bowels of the station an elevator door opens into a cavernous dimly lit space.

As Kovacs and Ortega step out, he discovers the chilling sight of literally --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HUNDREDS OF PERFECT HUMAN FORMS, laying prone, stacked on shelves lining the walls. Top to bottom. Each clad in assault armor. It's hard to tell they're not real humans.

Sleeving tables and dormant surgical robots line the center of the room. Along the walls, an arsenal of weaponry: Rifles, beam guns, explosives, etc.

KOVACS
Assault synths.

ORTEGA
Yeah. Bay City Police gives each of us a synthetic sleeve for high risk operations.

They come up to RYKER'S SYNTH SLEEVE. Kovacs stares at the inanimate version of his current self.

KOVACS
You ever take this one out for a spin?

Kovacs' joking seems a little more friendly than it used to.

ORTEGA
Very funny.

Ortega can't help a little smile.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS/VIRTUAL CABIN - NIGHT

A compact space lined with AUTOMOLD RECLINERS. Kovacs and Ortega settle in, laying back, as a TECHNICIAN applies electrodes and HYPNOPHONE headsets to each.

TECHNICIAN
All set.

VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT -- INTERROGATION ROOM

A steel room, empty until, in the center, a liquid mercury bubbles out, creating a chair and a table --

-- and a moment later Kovacs and Ortega materialize, forming out of digital code. Cleaned up now, they stand before the table... Waiting.

Another figure begins digitizing to life, seated in the chair. But something's wrong...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ORTEGA
What the hell?

The figure forms into a HORRIFIC AMALGAMATION of different human features and parts -- Pieces of multiple humans, bubbling to monstrous life.

KOVACS
Patchwork.

ORTEGA
No way. I've never seen one.

TECHNICIAN (V.O.)
Lieutenant, we're reading an anomaly on Kadmin.

ORTEGA
No kidding... Let it through. This ought to be interesting.

And there he is -- Kadmin, grotesque as his multiple sets of features continue to morph, fighting for dominance. He hisses in a LAYERED VOICE:

KADMIN
(faux sentimentality)
Kovacs... You... missed... me.

KOVACS
Who are you working for?

Kadmin cocks his head to the side -- a strangely familiar tic -- and then mocks Kovacs with a gurgling cackle.

Kovacs notices the strange gesture but he can't quite place it. He steps to Kadmin, leaning over the table. Their eyes meet, Kadmin's bubbling as they continue to morph.

KOVACS (CONT'D)
(whispering)
You're never going to see flesh again if you don't start talking, Kadmin.

KADMIN
(quietly)
Yes... I suppose you'll try.

Kadmin leers, then speaks up, looking at Ortega.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KADMIN (CONT'D)

You should have heard him --
scream. Like a little girl.

(to Kovacs)

Oh wait, you WERE a little girl. I
should have pulled the trigger when
I had the chance. I could have Real
Deathed you and blown away Ryker's
sleeve all in one go.

(to Ortega)

Wiped away both your boyfriends at
the same time.

In a flash of fury, Kovacs FLIPS THE TABLE UP into Kadmin. A
futile move as the table DISSIPATES IN MIDAIR -- TURNING TO A
SPRAY OF DIGITAL DUST.

An instant later, Kovacs becomes a BLUR OF VIRTUAL MOVEMENT
as he flashes forward, flipping Kadmin off his chair,
slamming him hard onto the floor.

Kovacs settles firmly on top of him, knee planted on his
chest. Face to face. Kadmin's features SHIFT RAPIDLY now, as
he cackles in Kovacs' face.

KADMIN (CONT'D)

You can't hurt me, little girl.

KOVACS unleashes a brutal punch, landing it square on
Kadmin's face. An ineffectual blow as HIS HAND IS SWALLOWED
INTO A DIGITAL PUDDLE.

And then, as Kadmin's multiple faces (past sleeves) continue
to shift through the maniacal laughter, a flash of TWO IN
PARTICULAR brings pause to Kovacs' assault. A familiar face.

Kovacs bolts to his feet, a realization coming over him.

KOVACS

Freeze the scene! Now!

Ortega has no idea what Kovacs is up to, but --

ORTEGA

(looking up into the void)

Freeze him!

Kadmin's morphing features FREEZE INTO A GROTESQUE MIXTURE,
caught between faces. Kovacs and Ortega remain mobile.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

What are you doing, Kovacs?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

KOVACS

Have them play back Kadmin's last few seconds.

ORTEGA

Do it.

Kadmin, still on the ground and on his back, suddenly STARTS RETCHING IN REVERSE. His morphing scrolling backward until --

KOVACS

Right there. Stop. Go forward. Slow.

The reverse movement on Kadmin's face stops. The moves forward in SLOW MOTION.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

Stop. That face.

Ortega peers at the face of a LITTLE GIRL, GROTESQUELY PLASTERED ON KADMIN'S BODY -- IT'S THE GIRL BEHIND THE EXPLOSION AT THE PROTEST.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

That little girl...

(remembering)

She set off the explosion at Bancroft's house... Go forward again. Couple of seconds.

Kadmin's shifting features scroll forward and stop as Ortega takes a close look.

Another face -- THIS ONE BELONGS TO THE TRANSPORT DRIVER FOR ANCHIA'S ASSASSIN.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

The transport driver for Anchia's assassin. Kadmin sleeved himself into that body and the little girl to make it look like the Believers were behind the explosion.

ORTEGA

And Anchia's death... So whoever Kadmin is working for is trying to frame the Believers.

KOVACS

Kadmin was working with Trepp and Trepp was licensed to PsychSec.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Kovacs and Ortega look at one another, stunned and perplexed.

ORTEGA
(incredulous)
So William's innocent? I don't buy
it.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS/ORTEGA'S OFFICE - DAY

Ortega comes into the office holding a piece of digital
paper, out of breath. Crossing toward Kovacs.

ORTEGA
Get this. William Bancroft's
already been registered as stamped
Do Not Resleeve.

KOVACS
Either he puts on a good act...

ORTEGA
Guess what day he was stamped DNR.
May 23rd. The morning Bancroft was
killed.

KOVACS
...Or maybe he doesn't remember he
was already stamped.

ORTEGA
You said he had a replica half-
formed at the Bancroft. Like maybe
he'd been re-sleeved recently.

Kovacs nods, impressed at what she's putting together. He has
to give it up to her.

KOVACS
You think he caught himself a case
of amnesia?

ORTEGA
Just like his grandfather, maybe.

Kovacs hops out of his chair.

KOVACS
I need a better look at something.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERES/FORENSICS LAB - DAY

CLOSE ON -- a SCENE SCAN CONE as Ortega pulls it out of its digitally-coded mini-vault.

The police lab, divided into two is filled with hi-tech forensics gadgetry. Technicians working on other cases go about their business as Ortega and Kovacs stand on the opposite end of the room, devoid of all furnishings and equipment.

Ortega sets the CONE on the floor and activates it --

The device suddenly emits a LIFE SIZE BLUE GLOWING 3-D HOLOGRAPHIC STILL IMAGE OF BANCROFT'S MAP ROOM. A perfect representation of the crime scene.

Bancroft's body, the head severed, slumped in the chair behind his massive desk.

KOVACS STEPS INTO THE IMAGE, surveying every detail. The body. The blast mark on the wall.

KOVACS
Weapon trajectory.

A glowing blue line appears showing the beam gun's point of entry on the decapitated body and the blast marks on the wall behind it.

KOVACS (CONT'D)
When was this image captured?

ORTEGA
Eleven PM. Coroner put the time of death at approximately seven.

KOVACS
And who reported it?

ORTEGA
Miriam Bancroft.

KOVACS
(to the computer)
Finger prints.

As he speaks the command, every finger print in the room becomes illuminated, glowing as if under black light. Each one with a name identifying it. There are more than a dozen different sets of prints.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Kovacs peers at them: Laurens' are all over... Miriam's... WILLIAM'S...

KOVACS (CONT'D)

Suppose William found out about Lizzie Elliott. He comes up with the same plan he came up with today. Gets himself stamped DNR. Comes to confront his grandfather. Maybe they get into a fight... William goes for his grandfather's weapon?

He bends down at the image of the GUN on the floor. The only fingerprints on it belong to Laurens.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

(still thinking out loud)
Or it's Laurens who goes for the gun...

He looks up at Ortega.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

Outraged at his grandson, he levels the gun...

Kovacs mimes the action, aiming toward a wall.

ORTEGA

Where's the second set of blast marks then?

Kovacs lowers his imaginary weapon. Thinks a second.

KOVACS

OK... In the heat of the moment, Bancroft uses his bare hands.

They're on a roll, hand in glove. Ortega picks up the thread.

ORTEGA

Horrificed at what he's done, he turns the gun on himself?

Kovacs begins to SMILE.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

Who cleans up the mess?

She looks at Kovacs. He stares back at her knowingly. Suddenly, she realizes. They share a moment. It's clear they've figured it out. Together.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS/TECH LAB - NIGHT

CLOSE ON -- A HOLOGRAPHIC MONITOR -- NEWS FOOTAGE

-- of various U.N. council members exiting the U.N. Headquarters, each one surrounded by SECRET SERVICE TEAMS.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

Earlier today the U.N. Special Council declared the conclusion of its deliberation and announced its decision to *approve* by a unanimous vote the marketing of Remote Storage technology to the public. Laurens Bancroft welcomed the news at a press conference...

We pull back from images of a smiling Laurens Bancroft to Ortega, who's watching the news.

ORTEGA

Looks like Laurens Bancroft is a happy man.

KOVACS (O.S.)

Not for long.

She turns to face Kovacs, who is LYING IN AN AUTOMOLD RECLINER. There's a device with a small, pulsing red light attached to his stack at the back of his neck. A Police Technician sits near them, working at a liqui-form computer. Otherwise the place is empty.

ORTEGA

(to the Technician)

How close are you?

The red light changes to a quick-flashing yellow.

TECHNICIAN

...Almost there...

And then light goes to solid green with a subtle CHIRP.

The Technician wheels over and detaches the device from the back of Kovacs' neck. Kovacs sits up.

The Technician holds the device out in his palm for Kovacs to take.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)

I pieced it together from the RS transmitter off your guy in holding. It's set to bounce off a platform off Anders-8.

Kovacs examines the gizmo.

KOVACS

Is it gonna work?

It's clear from the look on his face, the Technician's not making any promises.

EXT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS/ROOF LANDING PAD - NIGHT

The landing pad of Police Headquarters is situated ninety-five floors up. The view is spectacular: the various levels of transports creating intertwining rivers of light in three-dimensions, weaving in and around the skyscrapers, with a half-dozen old and new bridges running across the Bay.

Kovacs stands, looking out at it all. Ortega's police transport is parked behind him.

Ortega walks up from behind and stands beside him. They stare out, not facing one another directly.

ORTEGA

Did you tell Bancroft to expect us?

KOVACS

It's all set.

ORTEGA

How do you feel?

KOVACS

Like nothing's different. Even though it is... Anyway, now you can stop worrying about your boyfriend's sleeve.

She looks at him.

ORTEGA

Listen. About that. I'm sorry I've been so...

KOVACS

You don't have to. It's been an unusual situation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ORTEGA

It's funny. I feel like I'm working
with my old partner... but not.
You'd make a good cop.

KOVACS

I guess that's a compliment.

Ortega cracks a smile. The tension lifts just a bit.

ORTEGA

You decided what you're gonna do
about your daughter?

Kovacs takes a beat. He hasn't got it figured out yet.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

I hope it works out.

Kovacs nods. There's a space between them.

ORTEGA (CONT'D)

Can I...? I just... I don't know
how to ask for this without it
seeming...

Kovacs looks at her. Slowly he understands, allows her
something with his gaze. She leans in and kisses him on the
lips. And then they kiss more intensely. Just as it begins to
heat up she pulls away.

KOVACS

Sorry.

ORTEGA

No. That's OK. It was nice...
Different... but --
(she draws a breath)
Nice.

There's an awkwardness between them. Kovacs breaks it.

KOVACS

I think it's about time I got my
daughter back.

INT. / EXT. POLICE TRANSPORT - NIGHT

Kovacs skims over the bay heading toward the PsychSec
compound.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Nearing the facility the transport rises, flying toward the row of NEEDLECAST TOWERS.

INT. PSYCHASEC/FAMILY VAULT - NIGHT

Kovacs walks into the vault. Bancroft sits at an ornate mirrorwood desk with holographic impressions in-laid. He operates multiple screens like organist moving fluidly among the touchpads.

BANCROFT
(without looking up)
Mr. Kovacs. I was beginning to
worry.

He looks up.

KOVACS
Really. I didn't think you had it
in you.

Bancroft reaches across his desk and produces a familiar SMALL CASE, the box that contains SARAH'S STACK. He holds it up.

BANCROFT
I know how eager you are to wrap
this up.

INT. PSYCHASEC/CORRIDORS - SAME TIME

Miriam moves urgently through the hallway. She reaches the closed door of the vault, stops and pulls herself together. The SECURITY SCANNER descends from the ceiling and scans the back of her neck.

INT. PSYCHASEC/FAMILY VAULT - CONTINUOUS

The doors opens and Miriam steps through to find Kovacs and her husband standing the center of the large space.

BANCROFT
Miriam... Perfect timing. Mr.
Kovacs was about to reveal who
killed me.

Miriam approaches, desperately trying to quell her nerves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BANCROFT (CONT'D)
(to Kovacs)
Please go on... Who pulled the
trigger, Mr. Kovacs?

Kovacs' gaze penetrates Miriam. An infinite moment.

KOVACS
Actually, your wife can be quite
helpful. Can't you Mrs. Bancroft?

Bancroft eyes Kovacs, baffled... Then looks to Miriam, her
stony gaze revealing nothing.

BANCROFT
Perhaps you'd better start
explaining, rather than playing
games.

Kovacs strolls toward the cylinders of BANCROFT REPLICAS.

KOVACS
It's very impressive seeing the
entire Bancroft clan. In duplicate.
An indication of cool, calculated
self-preservation. But there's one
member here who represents the less
rational side of your 257 years.
Someone who has no business being
here. Given that you effectively
disowned the real one.

He stops at an eery WILLIAM BANCROFT floating in a cylinder.

BANCROFT
Call me sentimental.

KOVACS
Perhaps you should have been more
attentive. You might have noticed
that one has been decanted
recently.

As Kovacs leads Bancroft's eye to the cylinder behind the
floating William, Bancroft appears genuinely surprised to see
that the second replica is only HALF-FORMED.

KOVACS (CONT'D)
William wasn't the only person you
were sentimental over.

Bancroft watches Kovacs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KOVACS (CONT'D)

Your wife claims you two have a sort of understanding. Something about the difference between love and lust. But that wasn't the case with Lizzie Elliott, was it? Things were more complicated.

MIRIAM

Mr. Kovacs, this is NOT necessary.

KOVACS

Why? Have you got something to hide? You may have developed an immunity to death, but you're not immune to basic human emotions, are you?

(to Bancroft)

Desire. Yearning... Love.

(to Miriam)

Jealousy. Anger. Hatred...

Murderous hatred.

Bancroft stares at his wife. Beginning to understand.

BANCROFT

(to Miriam)

You...? You killed her?

Miriam looks back him.

MIRIAM

She was so... You'd become attached. It was unbearable.

BANCROFT

I don't believe it.

Bancroft looks caught between rage and dismay.

KOVACS

William didn't believe it either. He knew she was pregnant. He assumed you killed her. To get back at you he had himself stamped Do Not Resleeve.

BANCROFT

That's ridiculous. He's misguided but he's not suicidal.

KOVACS

No, not suicidal. Devout.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Bancroft shows a physical revulsion at the word.

KOVACS (CONT'D)

William came here. He told you what he'd done. Told you he planned to go public. Just to anger you. And it worked. Isn't that so, Mrs. Bancroft?

MIRIAM

Stop. Stop it!

KOVACS

You didn't take the news so well, Mr. Bancroft.

Indeed, he's not taking it well now. He sits down, looking dazed, confused.

BANCROFT

Then what happened?

MIRIAM

I insist you stop this, right now!

BANCROFT

(shouting over her)

AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED, MR. KOVACS?

Kovacs draws a breath. Bancroft stares at him, expectantly.

Kovacs looks over at Miriam. Tears in her eyes, pleading with him not to go on.

KOVACS

Mrs. Bancroft, we could certainly get a subpoena for your needlecast record. Of course, that would take some time to do...

She looks at her husband. His gaze is determined.

BANCROFT

Miriam. Your needlecast record.

SAME - MOMENTS LATER

At the other side of the room, there are a series of Auto-mold Recliners. Kovacs, Miriam and Bancroft each lie down in one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KAWAHARA stands by Miriam's bed, making specific adjustments, and then crosses to the main console.

KAWAHARA
Ready when you are.

The three of them shut their eyes sending us into the darkness of...

VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT -- A BLACK VOID

One by one each of them materializes: Laurens, Kovacs, and then Miriam.

And then the space forms around them --

BANCROFT'S OFFICE -- the scene of the events.

KOVACS
(calling into the void)
Cue needlecast record.

Bancroft is riveted as he watches his own dead body materialize before him, its head blown off, the blaster by his side.

Kovacs watches the live Bancroft carefully as --

-- WILLIAM'S DEAD BODY MATERIALIZES. Bruises on his visibly broken neck.

The live Bancroft bends over his grandson's body, horrified.

BANCROFT
My own grandson. I killed him?

KOVACS
You were horrified by what you'd done. So you went for the blaster. You knew you were at the tail end of your update cycle. If you waited you'd lose any possibility of erasing the memory of what you'd done.

The live Bancroft looks up at Kovacs.

KOVACS (CONT'D)
You were too distraught to realize there was another solution. Fortunately, your wife was more clear-headed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MIRIAM
(tragically)
He's never been one to think
clearly in such situations.

Bancroft looks from Kovacs to Miriam and back to Kovacs.
Confused.

BANCROFT
(calling into the void)
Play needlecast record.

And now the three of them watch:

MIRIAM'S NEEDLECAST RECORD OF WHAT HAPPENED NEXT --

As the scene goes into motion around them we realize that the
view of the scene was MIRIAM'S POINT OF VIEW from the doorway
as she discovered the mess of what had happened.

KOVACS
(calling into the void)
Calculate objective landscape.

And now they watch a projection, no longer point of view, of
Miriam going into action. She begins DRAGGING WILLIAM'S BODY
out of the room.

KOVACS (CONT'D)
(narrating)
It couldn't have been very easy for
you.

MIRIAM
You have no idea how difficult it
was.

The scene around them jumps forward to --

-- THE PSYCHASEC CLONING LAB where, with the help of
KAWAHARA, Miriam disposes of William's body in the SLEEVE
DISPOSAL UNIT.

The virtual Miriam and the real Bancroft are emotional,
watching as William's corpse is robotically sprayed with
chemical agents which burn the body down, bones and all, in a
matter of seconds.

The scene jumps forward to --

-- THE FAMILY VAULT where Kawahara decants one of WILLIAM'S
REPLICAS, the robotic arms pulling its dripping body from the
tank.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KOVACS

(narrating)

Your wife remembered what you did not. That there was still an RS back-up on file. Of course, it was several months old.

-- The virtual Miriam watches the virtual Kawahara tap a series of keys on a holographic key-screen and then step over to a STACK BURNER as an array of lasers chisel away at a new stack.

MIRIAM

(adding)

If we'd had the needlecasts from before he'd converted I would have gone back even further.

The virtual Miriam lifts the stack off the burner and holds her newly-minted grandson in the palm of her hand. The stack ripples and breathes.

KOVACS

William is still alive. Still a Believer. But with no awareness of anything that happened. Like yourself... Until now.

As he watches Laurens and Miriam, KOVACS TAKES A FEW SUBTLE STEPS BACKWARD, out of their peripheral line of sight. The two of them are rapt by the images of what took place.

Behind them, we see Kovacs DEMATERIALIZE out of the virtual landscape. But Miriam and Laurens don't notice. Instead...

-- The Bancrofts watch as the virtual Miriam stands at a resleeving table over the newly revived William. His eyes flutter open, looking confused and disoriented, until he sees his grandmother smiling down at him.

The real Bancroft looks from the virtual Miriam to the real Miriam, his eyes burning.

Finally, Bancroft can't take anymore.

BANCROFT

Enough! Stop it! Stop it!

Laurens Bancroft turns angrily at where he thinks Kovacs is standing behind him. But Kovacs isn't there. Bancroft looks at Miriam.

INT. PSYCHASEC/FAMILY VAULT - CONTINUOUS

KOVACS stands at the console, one hand holding a blaster trained on Kawahara. The other hand holding Sarah's stack. It pulses and ripples, almost alive in Kovacs' palm.

Across the room, Miriam's eyes open, lying in the recliner. Next to her, Laurens sits up. Their gazes immediately find Kovacs as --

He slips Sarah's stack in the STACK READER on the console, her holographic face appearing in the view-window. He reaches in his pocket for the SMALL TRANSMITTER which the Police Tech gave him. Kovacs squeezes and it comes to life with a CHIRP.

But before he can connect it, A BLAST EXPLODES just next to him. He looks up and sees BANCROFT COMING TOWARD HIM, GUN IN HAND.

Kovacs dives away and fires back. Kawahara takes advantage and bolts to the side. Bancroft dodges to the side and KOVACS'S SHOT HITS A REPLICA TANK blowing a hole through one of the bodies and sending amniotic fluid cascading.

BANCROFT

It's an incriminating little piece
of family history you've uncovered,
Mr. Kovacs.

Kovacs takes another shot at Bancroft and misses. Miriam runs to the far side of the space.

KOVACS

Just doing my job.

BANCROFT

Nonetheless, I can't really let you
walk away, given what you know.

Kovacs's eyes go to Sarah's image hovering holographically above the reader. Bancroft notices.

BANCROFT (CONT'D)

If she were Remotely Stored you'd
have had no cause to fear for her.
Such a shame.

Bancroft points his blaster at the stack reader. Kovacs, too far away to save his daughter, shoots at Bancroft's gun and sends it flying out of his hand.

Kovacs aims his blaster at the old man. Unarmed now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BANCROFT (CONT'D)
You think you can kill me?

Bancroft begins LAUGHING loudly.

BANCROFT (CONT'D)
Surely, you have to be kidding.

KOVACS
Old habit, I guess.

Just then A SHOT EXPLODES by Kovacs's head. It's KAWAHARA FIRING AT HIM. Miriam stands just behind her.

Kovacs ducks for cover as he fires blindly.

The shooting dies down for a second. Kovacs taking cover behind a corner of the wall.

BANCROFT
We are all immortal, you see. There is nothing you can do to touch any of us.

Kovacs looks over at the console. At Sarah's stack.

KOVACS
Maybe... Maybe not...

Kovacs makes a desperate run toward the console, FIRING as he goes. EXPLODING ONE REPLICA TANK AFTER ANOTHER. SHOOTING UP THE WHOLE PLACE.

Kawahara shooting at him at the same time.

Kovacs dives under cover of the console. He reaches the stack reader (in the console) with Sarah's stack. HE INSERTS THE TRANSMITTER INTO IT and ACTIVATES IT. The red light begins PULSING. Transmission in progress.

He looks across the room toward the open doorway and RUNS toward it. Kawahara fires at him. Missing. Kovacs makes it into--

THE REMOTE STORAGE AREA

THE SEVEN FOOT GLASS PYLON looms in the center of the space.

A BLAST HITS KOVACS IN THE BACK OF THE SHOULDER.

He goes down for an instant. Fifteen yards from the pylon.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Behind him, the massive wall of windows with a view to the field of NEEDLECAST TOWERS.

MIRIAM

Give up, Kovacs.

Miriam's pointing a blaster at him. Kovacs gets up slowly. He turns to see her and Bancroft approaching. Kawahara with them.

BANCROFT

You can't fight technology, Mr.
Kovacs. You ought to know better.

Kovacs eyes them.

Slowly, Kovacs takes a step back. And then another. Toward the pylon behind him.

Kovacs TRANSFERS HIS GUN SLOWLY FROM RIGHT HAND TO LEFT. Then RAISES IT.

MIRIAM

Put the gun down.

KOVACS

I could get a shot off before you
even finished pulling your trigger.
So go ahead, shoot me.

Miriam looks like she just might.

A long, infinitely tense moment passes. Guns poised. Everyone frozen... Ever so subtly, Kovacs's gaze shifts to a spot behind them, across the room: THE PULSING RED LIGHT ON THE TRANSMITTER GOES TO FLASHING YELLOW. TRANSMISSION NEARLY COMPLETE. And now --

Kovacs does the unthinkable. He lowers his weapon. Surrender.

Bancroft smiles. His vengeance near.

BANCROFT

Look at you. What an embarrassment.

Kovacs takes one more step back, inches from the pylon. He drops his gun to the ground. His nerve is solid. His eyes piercing.

The flashing yellow light on the transmitter turns to SOLID GREEN. Kovacs's sees it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

His arms slowly spread away from his body, welcoming his death sentence. Miriam becomes unsettled. It can't be this easy.

BANCROFT (CONT'D)

Shoot him!

MIRIAM FIRES! A pulse of ENERGY BLASTS from the WEAPON --

-- and hits Kovacs IN THE CHEST. He goes down, sprawling across the floor. A dead heap before THE DATA PYLON. Face down.

But there's no blood. Miriam and Bancroft look on, confusion spreading across their faces as they see Kovacs slowly rolling over. An ounce of life remaining as --

A FEW SPARKS CRACKLE FROM HIS TORSO, wires spilling out of the gaping hole in his chest. And they realize --

THIS IS A DUPLICATE OF KOVACS, SLEEVED IN RYKER'S POLICE ASSAULT SYNTH!

He lies on the floor, slowly dying, the moment oddly reminiscent of his capture on Harlan's World. He rolls over, his eyes on his assailants, struggling for his final words --

KOVACS

Thanks... for the cop's sleeve...
Bancroft. It's been real... useful.

And suddenly a realization hits Kawahara --

KAWAHARA

Police synths don't have blast
cells... Do they?

This one does. And that's when KOVACS'S TORSO ERUPTS --

A FIERY EXPLOSION ENVELOPS THE ROOM, consuming Bancroft, Miriam and the Remote Storage Data Bank. The windowed wall shatters into a spray of glass and debris. Everything destroyed. A BURNING WHITE envelops all as we CUT TO:

EXT. BAY CITY HARBOR - SAME TIME

The entire PscyhaSec compound goes up in a huge explosion. A half-dozen fireballs light up the sky and create a glow that illuminates the surrounding city.

We pull back to reveal we're getting the view through the windows of--

INT. BAY CITY POLICE/TECH LAB - SAME TIME

-- as the explosion is being watched by ORTEGA and... THE ORIGINAL KOVACS, in Ryker's human body.

Kovacs looks at Ortega. Nods subtly. A hint of relief and satisfaction on his face.

Behind them, the Police Technician sits at the console.

TECHNICIAN

Got it. Pulling down the echo from
Anders-8 platform now.

CUT TO:

INT. VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT, PLAYGROUND - DAY

We're back in the playground. The sun feels warmer now.
Kovacs approaches his daughter by the swings.

SARAH

Daddy!

She runs to him. He bends down.

KOVACS

Hi, honey. How you doing?

SARAH

I missed you... It's you, right?

KOVACS

Yeah, honey. It's me.

She looks at him.

SARAH

Do I have to go back? In a
different body?

Kovacs takes her in.

KOVACS

No, sweetie.

SARAH

What's gonna happen?

He searches for what to say.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KOVACS
I don't know, exactly. But...

SARAH
Am I gonna go back to sleep?

KOVACS
Uh huh.

She considers this, tries to imagine it.

SARAH
Will you still visit me?

Kovacs' eyes begin to tear up just a little.

KOVACS
In my mind I will.

SARAH
Not here?

KOVACS
You're gonna be with mommy.

SARAH
But you'll visit us, right?

KOVACS
Some day. Soon. I'll be with both
of you.

SARAH
After you're dead?

Kovacs laughs. He nods. She's smart for her age.

He gives her a snap-clap PSHOO. She laughs.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I love you, daddy.

KOVACS
I love you, too.

He pulls her to him, hugging her tightly. Savoring the
feeling of her in his arms, capturing it in his memory.

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS/ORTEGA'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE ON -- A HOLOGRAPHIC MONITOR -- NEWS FOOTAGE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Aerial coverage. The smouldering remains of the destroyed PsychSec. Emergency vehicles hover above the bay, extinguishing the remnants of the blaze.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

...And as a result of the yet unexplained industrial accident which destroyed the corporation's latest advancement, known as Remote Storage, the United Nations today nullified it's vote to sanction the new technology--

Ortega, leaning on her desk, switches off the monitor. As she heads to her desk chair --

KOVACS (O.S.)

Surprise.

Ortega turns to discover Kovacs standing in the doorway. A subtle difference to him. His posture less sturdy. His face less confident.

ORTEGA

Kovacs.

Kovacs furrows his brow. Perplexed annoyance. And it's about to be clear why... THIS IS NOT KOVACS.

KOVACS/RYKER

What the hell are you talking about? Who's Kovacs?

It dawns on her instantly.

ORTEGA

Ryker... You're out.

RYKER

Yeah. I'm out. What the hell happened to my body while I was away?

No answer right now. Just a knowing smile. Maybe missing our Kovacs just a bit.

FADE OUT.