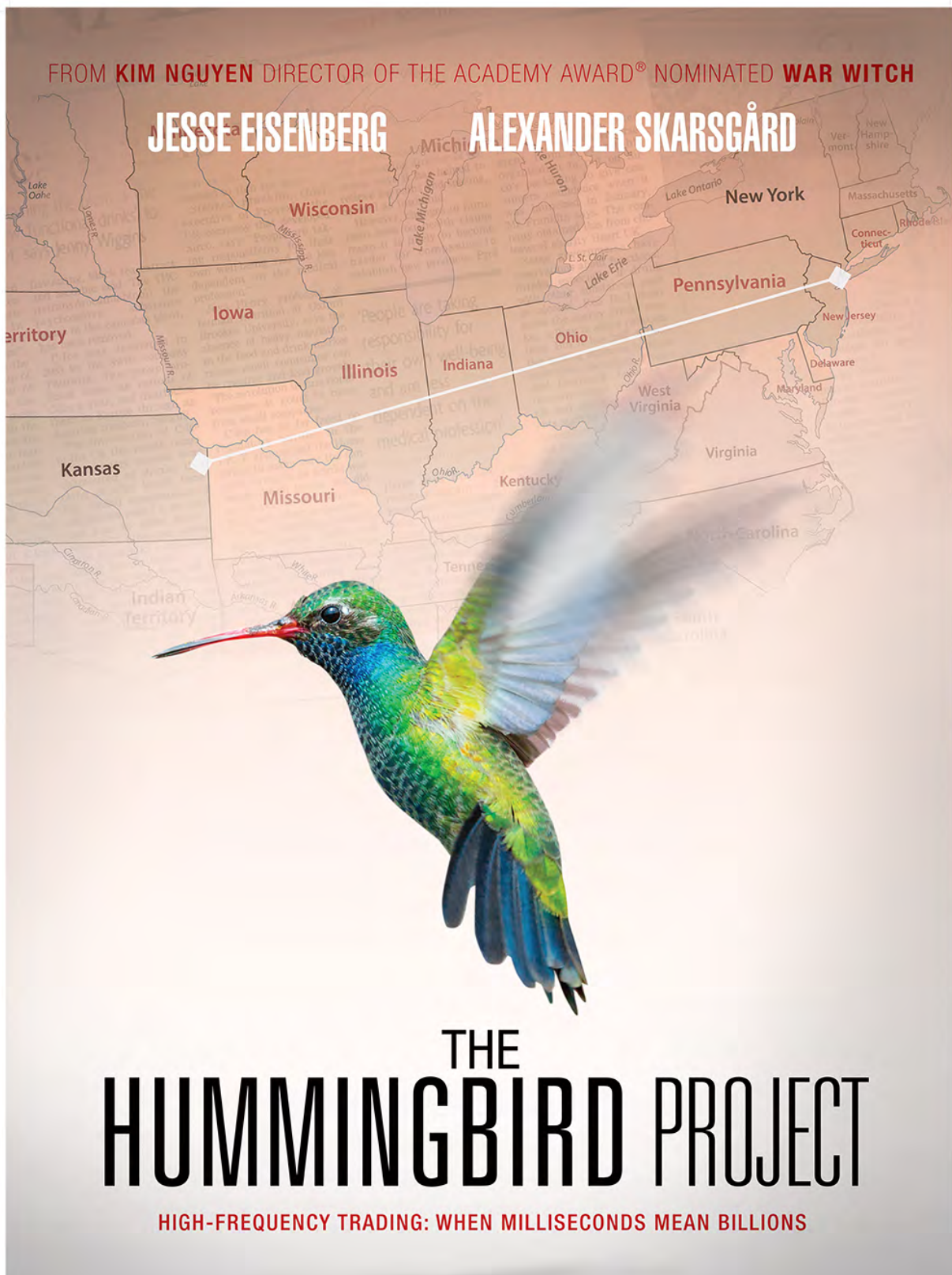


HanWay
FILMS

FROM **KIM NGUYEN** DIRECTOR OF THE ACADEMY AWARD® NOMINATED **WAR WITCH**

JESSE EISENBERG

ALEXANDER SKARSGÅRD



Writer/Director
KIM NGUYEN

ANNOUNCING

THE HUMMINGBIRD PROJECT

CREDITS

WRITER/DIRECTOR	Kim Nguyen Academy Award nominated- Best Foreign Language Film - WAR WITCH, Upcoming - EYE ON JULIET
PRODUCER	Pierre Even - Item 7 Productions WAR WITCH, BROOKLYN, C.R.A.Z.Y.
EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS	Brian Kavanaugh-Jones - Automatik LOVING, MIDNIGHT SPECIAL, TAKE SHELTER, INSIDIOUS Fred Berger - Automatik Academy Award nominated - LA LA LAND, THE AUTOPSY OF JANE DOE
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY	Nicolas Bolduc Camerimage winner - WAR WITCH, ENEMY
PRODUCTION DESIGNER	Emmanuel Fréchette WAR WITCH
COSTUME DESIGNER	Renée April BLADE RUNNER 2049, ARRIVAL
SOUND RECORDIST	Pierre Mertens THE MAN WHO KILLED DON DON QUIXOTE, THE PIANIST
CASTING DIRECTOR & EXECUTIVE PRODUCER	Heidi Levitt MARY SHELLEY, MEDICINE MAN, THE ARTIST

Credits non-contractual

CAST



Jesse Eisenberg as *Anton*

Academy Award nominated - THE SOCIAL NETWORK,
BATMAN VS SUPERMAN, NOW YOU SEE ME 1 & 2, CAFÉ SOCIETY



Alexander Skarsgård as *Vincent*

THE LEGEND OF TARZAN, BATTLESHIP, TRUE BLOOD [TV],
BIG LITTLE LIES [TV], Upcoming - MUTE, THE AFTERMATH



Salma Hayek as *Linda Raulston*

Academy Award nominated - FRIDA, TALE OF TALES

Credits non-contractual

SYNOPSIS

In this epic tale of humanity versus corporate greed, director of Academy Award nominated WAR WITCH, Kim Nguyen exposes the ruthless edge of our increasingly digital world.

Cousins from New York, Anton (**Jesse Eisenberg**) and Vincent (**Alexander Skarsgård**) are players in the high-stakes game of High Frequency Trading, where winning is measured in milliseconds. Their dream? To build a fibre-optic cable in a straight line between Kansas and New York, making them millions.

But nothing is straightforward for this flawed pair. Anton is the brains, Vincent is the hustler, and together they push each other and everyone around them to breaking point on their quixotic adventure. Breathing down their necks is their old boss Linda Raulston (**Salma Hayek**), a sociopathic trader who will stop at nothing to see them fail.

No matter what the cost, Vincent and Anton are determined to cut through America, only to find redemption at the end of their line, not through money, but through family and reconnecting to the land.



Credits non-contractual

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WIRED

Raging Bulls: How Wall Street Got Addicted to Light-Speed Trading

JERRY ADLER BUSINESS 08.03.12. 5:53 PM

THE 2012 NEW York Battle of the Quants, a two-day conference of algorithmic asset traders, took place in New York City at the end of March. [...]

One of the major themes of this year's conference was "the race to the bottom," the cost-is-no-object competition for the absolute theoretical minimum trade time. This variable, called latency, is rapidly approaching the physical limits of the universe set by quantum mechanics and relativity. But perhaps not even Einstein fully appreciated the degree to which electromagnetic waves bend in the presence of money. Kevin McPartland of the Tabb Group, which compiles information on the financial industry, projected that companies would spend \$2.2 billion in 2010 on trading infrastructure—the high-speed servers that process trades and the fiber-optic cables that link them in a globe-spanning network. And that was before projects were launched to connect New York and London by a new transatlantic cable and London and Tokyo by way of the Arctic Ocean, all just to cut a few hundredths of a second off the time it takes to receive data or send an order.

High-frequency traders are a subset of quants, investors who make money the newfangled way: a fraction of a cent at a time, multiplied by hundreds of shares, tens of thousands of times a day. These traders occupy an anomalous position on Wall Street, carrying themselves with a distinctive mixture of diffidence and arrogance that sets them apart from the pure, unmixed arrogance of investment bankers. A pioneering high-frequency trading firm, Tradeworx, has its relatively humble offices two flights up from an Urban Outfitters in a sleepy New Jersey suburb. Twenty people work there, about half of them on the trading floor, monitoring on triple screens the fractions of a penny as they mount up, second by second. Roughly 1.5 percent of the total volume of stocks traded on US exchanges on a given day will pass, however fleetingly, through the hushed, sunlit, brick-walled room.

Now it is the high-speed server linked to a financial exchange by fiber-optic cable as short as physically possible, because each mile adds about eight microseconds of latency. There is so much money to be made that any expenditure on research and infrastructure to shave those microseconds is worth it.



Flashboys: Cracking the Money Code review – Michael Lewis exposes the international money markets

Tim Adams

Monday 7 April 2014 09.04 BST

A new breed of parasitic financial players has discovered a novel way of fleecing the global public many times over in the blink of an eye.

Lewis's tale begins with him following his nose on two stories that don't seem to make sense. [...] The second was the story of the laying of a cable.

The cable, which was to run between Chicago and New Jersey, was unlike any cable that had been laid before in that it was, as near as possible, to travel those 825 miles in top secret and in a near dead straight line. The cost of laying the fibre-optic cable through mountain ranges and under rivers and towns on that route was \$300m. But, Lewis discovers, that was a fraction of what it was worth. The straightness of the cable, the brainchild of a Chicago options trader called Dan Spivey, bought time. To be precise, it accelerated the speed at which data could be sent from stock exchanges in New Jersey to those in Chicago by about 3 milliseconds. In those fractions of moments, as Spivey knew, untold fortunes could be made.

The stories provided the clues for Lewis to the literal underground world of high-frequency automated trading, a practice that had come to make up nearly half the volume of business on Wall Street but which few people even within the big banks properly understood. Following those stories led him to the trading screen of an employee of the Royal Bank of Canada, Brad Katsuyama. Katsuyama had lately noticed that the stock market on his screens no longer gave him the information he wanted. The moment he went to make a trade – to buy 10m available shares in Apple, say, for a pension fund – the price instantaneously shifted upwards. It was as if the market knew his order in advance.

As Katsuyama's extraordinary, stubborn further investigation of the problem showed, that was precisely what the market did know. By exploiting the millisecond differences by which his order to buy reached different stock exchanges, high-frequency trading algorithms would pick up the order, buy the stock and then a nanosecond second later sell it to Katsuyama at a higher price, digitally trousering the difference. The process was called front-running and it was practically undetectable in what was supposed to be an open market. It was as if, Katsuyama observed, "only one gambler were permitted to know the scores of last week's NFL games".

Front-running explained the astronomic value of straight cables [...].

FINANCIAL TIMES

FT Explainer: Keeping up with high-frequency traders

Experiments with timestamping are yet to provide enough accuracy

SEPTEMBER 5, 2016

by: Philip Stafford



Modern trading can take place in barely comprehensible measurements of time. Banks and high-frequency traders often boast of executing orders on stocks and futures exchanges in milliseconds, or thousandths of a second. The bar is constantly being raised and already some trade in microseconds (millionths of a second) and even nanoseconds — billionths of a second. To put this into perspective, the average time it takes a human finger to click a mouse is a leisurely 150,000 microseconds.

Director's Statement

What I love about this story is how we get to bring a sense of journey, of an odyssey, to a theme - the financial markets - that is often a challenge to make visceral, raw, infused with not just an intellectual sense of yearning but a physical one as well. In our case, we get to quite literally drag our characters through the mud, all the while still questioning essential but rather esoteric themes such as what is the nature of the stock market in the 21st century.

One of the first things I asked myself, as the story evolved was what should the general feeling of the film be? Is it a drama? A comedy? What is it? To me, it is an ironic tale infused with genuine, authentic actor performances. Where comedy arises, it is a comedy of situations, not a comedy of performers trying to be funny. You could think *Magnolia* meets *A Most Violent Year*. You could also think *No Country for Old Men* meets *Rain Man*.

The filmic style will be quite restrained, in the sense that I feel the eeriness is already on the page and with the camera I want to preserve a sense of coherence and fluidity as I capture the images of the film.

Characters will often be close to the center of the frame, and the eye-lines will be very close to the lens in order to keep the spectator engaged with the characters.

The sound editing will convey that weird contrast between Vincent the stockbroker walking in a deep forest, walking in a pungent swamp. Forest ambiances will be wide and deep.

I already have quite a few ideas for the score of the film but it is too early to bring them to paper at the time. One thing I do know is that the tracks playing in the various cars will be chosen by the Actors themselves (within a limited budget).

The nature will be dark and moody, as if we are in a jungle scene straight out of *Apocalypse Now*. There even is homage to this film, as Vincent is with Ophelia on a freight boat, carrying gigantic machinery on the river, in the fog. This dark nature is important to the film: it illustrates the depths these guys can go to, all in the name of gaining a couple of milliseconds edge on the stock market. I love this idea of Vincent going in the muddy swamp with his freshly ironed, two thousand dollar suit.

The digging machines will be treated as creatures accompanied by their Masters (the machine operators). The night digging, with its stark lighting, with its silhouetted workers, with the fog and with its tall trees in the wind, will be quite surreal.

We will use vintage-style anamorphic lenses (such as Hawk lenses) to give this bigger than life feeling to the screen. For some specific wide shots of nature, we will use a bigger-sensor capture medium (such as the Alexa 65) to have a very narrow depth of field, or we will make subtle use of tilt-shift lenses, to enhance the feeling of those small, ant-like humans facing a bigger than life nature.

In retrospect, there is something about bringing forward what seems to be a metaphoric world, when in fact most of what is in the script is in some way true to life.

Kim Nguyen

THE HUMMINGBIRD PROJECT

THEIR CHALLENGE:

1000 miles of pipe
0.016 seconds difference
\$460 million a year profit

ANTON: "Say you're an investor in Kansas, and I'm a trader, also in Kansas [...] you want to buy shares from a Guatemalan Tomato Company. So let's say you want to buy... One thousand shares, and let's say you want to buy them at a maximum price of one dollar each."

BARMAID: "Let's do it."

ANTON: "So a chunk of brokers, me included, get this order. But I have something special. I have the fastest line... What does it mean? It means my computer can buy stock in New York before everybody else."

BARMAID: "I guess... "

ANTON: "So I'm ahead of the game, I look at who is selling shares at 99 cents or less, and I buy 1000 of them, when I know you're willing to buy them for a dollar each. I can send my 1\$ offer back to Kansas and be the first one in line with 1000 shares of Guatemalan Tomato Company, and your computer buys them automatically because that's what you told it to do. This all happened in about... sixteen milliseconds."

BARMAID: "What's sixteen milliseconds?"

ANTON: "It's one single hummingbird's wing flap."

BARMAID: "So you're doing all this for ten dollars?"

ANTON: "No, because I'm doing 200 000 transactions like this a day, every work day, all year. 200 000 times 10\$ times 230, that's 460 million dollars a year, with no risk and almost no investment. It's like time travel. It's like seeing the lottery's next winning numbers before they're announced."

(Extract from the screenplay)

IT'S SUMMER.

A colorful HUMMINGBIRD furiously flaps its wings 4000 times a minute, staring straight at us.

Above the bird, over the image, THERE ARE NUMBERS SHOWING MINUTES, SECONDS, THOUSANDTHS OF SECONDS PASSING BY - the passing milliseconds are just a blur on the screen.

The timer nears one minute:

"00:59.991"... "00:59.992"...

TIME SLOWS DOWN. A second now lasts 10 seconds... Everything keeps slowing down until the bird's wings become sharper, more visible. Things keep slowing down... NOW, ONE SINGLE MILLISECOND LASTS A SECOND. The hummingbird seems to float in mid air... ONE SECOND (one thousand milliseconds...) has elapsed on the timer (01:00.000)

The milliseconds keep moving up, one millisecond now lasts 1 second... (01:00.001, .002, .003)

A single, isolated hummingbird's wing flap starts it's movement, almost seized in time. It reaches its folded position at ONE SECOND AND SIXTEEN MILLISECONDS.

"01:00.016"

TIME FREEZES. So does the timer. WE CREEP IN on those last numbers frozen on the timer, those 16 milliseconds...

VINCENT (V.O.)
What's your dream Anton?

ANTON (V.O.)
Country home on a hill. Small road.
Hummingbirds.

VINCENT (V.O.)
Say it again.

ANTON (V.O.)
Country home on a hill. Small road.
Hummingbirds.

WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF WINTER.

An old, uninspiring chinese noodle shop that also serves beer; poker machines at the end of the room. VINCENT ZALESKI, 35, too slim (who's voice we heard in the previous scene) and ANTON ZALESKI, 38 (who's voice we also heard in the previous scene), are sitting at a table, Anton finishes eating noodles and dumplings, Vincent finishes a noodle bowl while reading the financial section of the NY Times.

On the cover of the financial section, the title says:

"How Would Obama's Re-Election Impact the Stock Market?"

With a date on the right hand corner of the paper:

February 5th, 2012

Around them, on tables and at the counter, FIFTEEN OTHER CLIENTS are having food and beer in the middle of the day.

MARK VEGA, mid 30's, African-Latino-American, with a big briefcase, walks in the place, clearly unsure if this is where he's supposed to be.

Vincent drops his newspaper, discretely waves at him, Mark walks towards them.

VINCENT
Mark? I'm Vincent.

They shake hands.

MARK
Hi Vincent, sorry, traffic.

VINCENT
That's okay. Have a seat.

Mark sits in front of them. Anton doesn't really look at him - as a matter of fact, it feels like Anton usually avoids stares in general.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Are you hungry?

MARK
No thanks...

VINCENT
Drink?

MARK
Huh... No, thanks, I'm fine.

VINCENT
Sure?

MARK
Yeah.

VINCENT
You have the NDA?

MARK
The what?

VINCENT
The "Non Disclosure Agreement", the PDF I sent you. You signed it?

MARK
Oh! Yeah, yeah... Here.

He takes a 30 page contract from his briefcase, hands it to Vincent who flips quickly through every single page, looking at the bottom right corner for Mark's initials, and then for his full signature at the end of the document.

On the front page, amongst other things, is written:

"Project: Hummingbird"

"Non-Disclosure Agreement"

MARK (CONT'D)

That's a long "NDA"... Never had to sign one of those before.

VINCENT

Yeah... I know. Sorry about that. So. I read your resume, I talked to Jimmy and he says you can handle any shit that hits the fan.

MARK

Well, I did see a lot of funny stuff out there. What can I do for you?

VINCENT

We want to dig a four inch fiber tunnel that goes from the BATS Global Stock Exchange in Kansas to the New York Stock Exchange in Manhattan.

MARK

(estimating in his head)
Kansas to New York... That's like a...

VINCENT

(interrupting)
It's a straight, 1000 mile long, four inch wide fiber tunnel that needs to pierce right through the Appalachians.

Dumbfounded look on Mark.

MARK

What would be the main purpose of this line?

VINCENT

Lets just say it needs to be fucking fast and it's gonna make all of us very successful.

MARK

How "straight"?

VINCENT

Straight-straight. Whatever's in the way, we need to dig through it. It has to be a totally straight line.

MARK

Rivers?

VINCENT

Straight.

MARK

Mountains?

VINCENT

Straight.

MARK

Swamps?

VINCENT AND MARK

Straight.

Long beat.

VINCENT

Did you bring what we talked about?

MARK

Yeah...

He takes out a thick folder, opens it, flips through old maps and contracts.

MARK (CONT'D)

So... This is a fiber tunnel line we pulled from San Francisco to L.A., I ran fifteen crews working for about six months on it. Plus six months for securing the real estate and analysing the soils, so that's about a year from start to finish. We delivered two months ahead of our estimates, actually.

VINCENT

Very interesting.

(beat)

My cousin Anton here has a little test for you, I was wondering if you'd mind having a look at it?

Anton's mind is elsewhere...

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Anton. Gimme the test.

Anton comes back to Earth, reaches for a folded paper tucked in his back pocket, unfolds it, revealing handwritten doodles:

ANTON

Say you want to dig a tunnel from here to here, and you want to run fiber through it. I'd like you to tell me how many amplifiers you'll need to put up on the line, thinking about stuff like refraction and, you know, the kind of things you should worry about.

MARK

Okay...

Mark just stares at Anton's doodle, scratches his head.

VINCENT

Are you all right Mark?

MARK

Yyyyeah... I have another question though.

VINCENT

What is it?

Mark grabs his pen, starts drawing a curved line (the earth's curvature) on Vincent's piece of paper, and then, whatever he says next, he exemplifies on the doodle:

MARK

Do I have to account for the Earth's curvature, or can I be super sci-fi and dig straight, like... straight-straight through the Earth? Or, can I dig straight, reach a hub outside, then dig back straight for a while, get to the next hub, straight, hub, straight, hub, like a... like an octagon or something, you know what I mean?

Vincent and Anton look at each other... A smile slowly comes across Vincent's face.

VINCENT

I think that's an excellent question.

3

EXT. NYC CHINATOWN EATERY - NIGHT

3

Mark, Vincent and Anton are outside of the eatery, just about to go their own way.

MARK

(walk and talk)

How involved would you want to be on this project? If you don't have time to travel too much, what I did for the San Francisco-L.A. line is we set up a dropbox online where I would update progress maps, scan contracts as they got in, send updates and all that. The client never came on site, I handled everyth--

VINCENT

(walk and talk,
interrupting)

-- No no no we're not putting anything online this is a secret project. I'm gonna be on the field every step of the way. On site, interviews, meetings, planning, I wanna be there. No middle men.

MARK

And what about securing the real estate contracts?

VINCENT

About ninety percent will be taken care of by me and my team. You handle the rest.
(beat)

MARK

You sure you wanna do all that? I mean... You know we're talking forests and mud and dirt, right?

VINCENT

I'm very aware of that, yes.

MARK

All'right, well I guess that's good.

VINCENT

Thank you Mark, we'll get back to you shortly.

They shake hands.

MARK

It sure is a strange project you got there...

VINCENT

Just think of it as David walking on the stock exchange floor and pulling out the biggest slingshot ever, so he can bring Goliath down to the ground.

MARK

David and Goliath... I like that. We're David right?

Awkward beat.

VINCENT

Yes. We're David.
We'll get back to you very soon.

Mark goes one way, Anton and Vincent head the other way.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

(while they walk)

So?

ANTON

He over-estimated the amplifiers by about eight percent.

VINCENT

Okay but aside from that? Is he the man for the job? Are we in good hands or are we not?

ANTON

I'm not sure... I'm really not sure.

VINCENT

You're a theoretical physics engineer and you can't tell if a man's right for the job?

ANTON

Humans are much more unpredictable than quantum physics.

VINCENT

Well I think he's gonna pull through.

4

INT. ANNA ZALESKI'S APPARTMENT - DAY

4

We are in an old, two bedroom Manhattan appartment with faded carpets and mid-eighties furniture. The place is far from fancy - we can kind of guess it was purchased a long time ago, when middle-class folks could afford to buy apartments in Manhattan.

There's too much stuff on display - silverware, candelabras, antique-like sculptures.

ANNA ZALESKI, in her mid 70's, with a formal black dress, prepared an extravagant traditional Russian dinner - blinis and caviar, smoked fish, pickled vegetables, all laid out on the table. Someone knocks at the door, she goes and opens: Anton and LAETITIA, 30, blonde, beautiful but neurotic, are with their two daughters, OLENA, 5 years old, and KATIA, 11. The young family

members are conservatively dressed for some kind of formal reunion.

A MAN AND A WOMAN IN THEIR SEVENTIES, LEON AND MILENA (Anton's parents), walk to Anton and his family, greet them warmly.

LEON
There's my sweethearts...

OLENA AND KATIA
Grandpa!

The girls have a NYC accent.

ANTON
(to Milena)
Hi Mom...

Leon kisses his grandchildren on the cheek lovingly but with just a tad too much pressure. The kids are amused by the grandfather who immediately takes 20 dollar bills out of his pocket and hands them to both kids.

Vincent is already there, by the table, eating a salmon roe blini and drinking an ounce of vodka from a very small crystal glass. The alcohol burns his stomach... He lets the burn pass.

In the corner of the room, the picture of ALBERT ZALESKI (Vincent's deceased Father) stands on a table - this is an informal mourning anniversary.

Anton goes to his cousin Vincent, hugs him.

CUT TO:

Vincent raises his small crystal glass filled with vodka to his departed father's shrine.

VINCENT
To you Pop. The classiest plumber in all of New York. You were tough on me, and it made me stronger.

They drink.

CUT TO:

All the family members are around the table, plates empty, most of the dishes consumed.

Vincent is talking loudly with his uncle, Leon, while Anton's wife Laetitia is playing with her older daughter, and the younger daughter is asleep on the couch.

Anton is next to Vincent, silent, looking at the table, playing with a spoon.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
(to Leon)
...what you want to do before you do any kind of tiling is you strip the pipes and you get some 3/4 inch copper in there.

LEON
Change everything to 3/4 inch???

Anton's older daughter Katia comes up to him, points at the half-opened bathroom door, DOWN THE HALL.

KATIA

Why is the light inside the bathroom
yellow and the light outside blue?

ANTON

Because the lightwaves from the bathroom
light are slower than the lightwaves from
the light from the windows... slower
lightwaves go from yellow to orange to
red, and faster lightwaves are bluer.

KATIA

Why is that?...

CLINK CLINK CLINK

Clink clink clink!

Grandma Milena is hitting her crystal glass with a silver spoon.

GRANDMA MILENA

Katia, Katia, I didn't get my song today.

Katia smiles shyly, leans on her mother's shoulder.

LAETITIA

Ohhhhh she's right, you didn't sing
Grandma her song...

KATIA

Okay... Daddy, go to the piano.

Anton does as his daughter says, he goes to the piano. Katia goes
to her grandma Milena, sits on her lap.

And then, ANTON PLAYS A CLASSICAL, HAUNTING MELODY. Truly
beautiful and eerie.

Young 5 year old Katia starts singing, and the ensemble is truly
moving... That mix of ancestry and naive youth is mesmerizing.
Anna looks at Anton and his children, moved at first, then sad...

ANNA

(in Russian, to Vincent)
When are you going to give me
grandchildren? I would be so happy...

Vincent just nods, feeling inadequate. He serves himself another
glass of vodka, looks at Anton, not without envy...

5

INT. ANTON'S BROOKLYN APPARTMENT - NIGHT

5

Laetitia opens the door to a basic two bedroom appartment with a
view of Brooklyn - they are back from Aunt Zaleski's home. Anton
walks inside holding his two sleeping daughters in his arms, goes
to their room.

IN THE GIRLS BEDROOM, he tucks one in each bed. Katia, still half
asleep, affectionately reaches out for her dad's wrist.

KATIA

Stay five minutes daddy...

He happily complies, lies down next to her for five minutes. She
rests her head on his chest.

LATER, Back in the living room, Anton goes to Laetitia who has her back turned to him, goes towards the beautiful back of her elegant neck.

She turns, kisses him passionately.

LAETITIA
(hungry for him)
Come to bed.

ANTON
I have to work on something...

LAETITIA
Work on it later. Come.

He smiles shyly, she leads him to the bedroom, starts undressing. They start making love in the bedroom.

6 INT. NYC CHINATOWN EATERY - NIGHT

6

Vincent is by himself with headphones at the Chinese eatery, eating noodles, having a beer, facing his laptop on which are on display: an excel sheet, a map of Eastern USA with a line that goes from Kansas to New York, and in the corner of his desktop, there's an episode of *Breaking Bad* (the tv series) playing.

He doesn't look exactly sad, perhaps he's used to being by himself.

7 INT. ANTON'S BROOKLYN APPARTMENT - NIGHT

7

LATER, in the middle of the night, Anton is now by himself, in pyjamas, working on some small metal box that currently has its guts out in the open, next to his laptop. (For future reference, we will call this THE SLOW-DOWN BOX)

One odd thing: an activated pay-per-usage cell phone is inside the device, with wires soldered to the insides of it.

Anton runs the software, picks up his own cell phone (not the one in the box), makes a call. The pay-per-usage phone inside the box lights up. Immediately, numbers appear on Anton's computer:

"Latency: 0.020 seconds"

He smiles.

Laetitia walks in her everyday flannel pyjamas.

LAETITIA
What are you doing?

ANTON
Just working...

LAETITIA
Working on what?

ANTON
Just work stuff I need to get done before I leave.

She just stares at him, weary.

LAETITIA
Are you sure about this Anton?

ANTON
About what?

LAETITIA
Your project. I'm worried.

ANTON
Don't worry... It's gonna work. And then
we're gonna be free to do whatever we
want.

She keeps staring, she's still worried...

ANTON (CONT'D)
I'll be there in fifteen minutes okay?

LAETITIA
Come now... You're gonna wake me up and
then I won't be able to go back to sleep.

ANTON
Okay five minutes.

She sighs again, annoyed, goes back to bed.

8 INT. RAULSTON FLOOR/HIGH FREQUENCY TRADING ROOM - DAY 8

This is a 10 000 square feet bare bones, concrete floor mishmash of twenty computer stations (each with a six LCD screen array) and, behind these, twenty R&D stations (computers, testing gear, cables and gutted computer parts).

Not much sounds are heard except for the loud ventilation system cooling all those machines. 20 YOUNG MALES in pants, pale blue shirts and sleeveless fleece jackets, are staring at their monitors, clicking and entering values every five seconds or so - they're basically monitoring the movement of markets.

On the screens: LINES FLUCTUATE LIKE MONITORS IN A HOSPITAL. Some sine waves pulse like a heartbeat, others are much longer sines, waving gently up and down within "safety thresholds" that are represented by a yellow area, then a red area.

Some ODD SOUNDBYTES - warning beeps - are heard once in a while. Duck sounds, funny human sounds, even burp noises are used as warnings, which reminds us these young men are kids-with-bigger-toys type of adults. Vincent is one of those people monitoring the lifelines of the company's stocks.

FURTHER DOWN THE LARGE SPACE, in the --

9 INT RAULSTON FLOOR/HF TRADING ROOM/LAB - DAY 9

TWO MEN are installing circuitry boards on a SERVER HUB. We see through a window the start of what is probably a very big server room.

Anton walks by them, and installs his ELECTRONIC METAL BOX (the "slow-down box" he was fiddling with at home, the one that has a cell phone hidden inside) next to other similar boxes hooked up to this hub. He does this very casually, not trying to hide what he's doing.

QUANT 1
(casually)
Hey Anton. What are you doing?

ANTON
'shortened the cabling inside. Less cross-talk.

QUANT 1
Cool.

Anton hooks up two fiber optic cables to the slow-down box, plugs a power source and walks back towards the other end of the room, where there's a "deep research" lab with a large bay window: Anton's lab.

10 INT. RAULSTON FLOOR/HF TRADING ROOM/ANTON'S OFFICE - DAY 10

Back in the lab, Anton manually writes math code on a notebook. Computer parts are laid out all over his space, with monitors displaying the data speeds of calculations and computer gear.

At other tables, other Quantitative Analysts (QUANTS: physics geniuses commonly used to get an edge on the stock market): JENNY (32), SAM (48) and HAJAR (24).

ON THE WALLS: "Post it" notes with math and physics formulas.

THERE IS A SURVEILLANCE CAMERA in the corner of the room.

On another worktable, TWO COMPUTERS are connected at each end of an optical fiber roll coiled along a two feet high, one foot wide roll. Written on top of the roll, in black ink:

"OPTICAL FIBER
1320 FEET | 1/4 MILE
(REFRACTION COMPENSATED)

Anton types a command on computer "A", clicks "send", then moves to computer "B" on which numbers appear instantly:

Processing: 7.126572 milliseconds
Fiber: 0.00033625 milliseconds

He goes to his main computer, starts writing some indecipherable C++ code, and then suddenly stops, struck by an idea. He grabs a post-it note, writes a couple of math gibberish on it, puts it in his pocket. He goes back to work.

His phone rings, he takes the line.

ANTON
Yeah?

VOICE FROM PHONE (V.O.)
MS Raulston would like to see you.

He freezes for a second.

ANTON
Okay.
(to the others)
Meeting!

They stop what they are doing, walk passed the mishmash of computer stations and lab stations, and walk accross the trading floor where VINCENT'S COMPUTER STATION IS LOCATED. From his desk,

Vincent sees Anton and the other Quants heading towards Linda Raulston's office, gets worried.

Anton opens a big, fancy wooden door that leads right into --

11 INT. RAULSTON FANCY OFFICE ENTRANCE - DAY

11

It's the total opposite of Anton's workspace and the warehouse he walked across everything is flashy white and clean. A BEAUTIFUL BLONDE RECEPTIONIST stands at the reception desk made out of 2 inch thick marble. The floor is also made out of marble. Facing the reception desk there is an open-concept waiting room space with expensive leather couches.

There are two more big, fancy wooden doors: the entrance door, and the door leading to an executive office.

RECEPTIONIST
(to the Quants)
You can go in.

Anton walks towards the executive office door.

12 INT. LINDA RAULSTON'S OFFICE - DAY

12

LINDA RAULSTON, 45, sits at her large, empty desk, facing Anton and the other Quants.

LINDA RAULSTON
What do you have for me guys?

HAJAR
We're still working on microwave towers...

ANTON
(interrupting, annoyed)
We're not working on microwaves.

HAJAR
You're not. I am.

ANTON
It's pointless.

LINDA RAULSTON
Why is it pointless?

JENNY
Because we're years away from getting the right pulse shaping algorithms, and that means that by the time we get 'em right we're going to get our asses kicked by laser towers.

LINDA RAULSTON
Huh... Okay, Laser Towers. I love it.

JENNY
Short term I think we should put our efforts on getting an exclusive fiber deal between Harrisburg and Allentown that way we can skip the detour to Philadelphia and save at least half a millisecond...

HAJAR

(interrupting)

Linda I completely disagree. We should keep working on the microwave towers. If we get them to work we'll round-trip Kansas-New York in less than fourteen milliseconds.

ANTON

Microwaves is a waste of time and a waste of money. It's gonna take at least three years to get it going.

HAJAR

Well I know one thing that's a waste of time, it's your neutrino messaging project, now that's a major waste of time and money...

ANTON

Oh yeah? Really?

HAJAR

Yeah, really!

ANTON

What do you know about Neutrino Messaging?

HAJAR

I know it's bullshit!

ANTON

Yeah? Well fuck you.

LINDA RAULSTON

All'right calm down.

ANTON

I'm sorry but I don't have time for this. This guy doesn't know what he's talking about.

LINDA RAULSTON

Lets focus. Please.

Awkward beat.

JENNY

Okay I got something. I just heard we should hook into NYSE by the back of their room because a guy I know told me they coil the fiber optic cable for the connections closer to the server and that creates cross-talk issues...

LINDA RAULSTON

What??? They're screwing us...

JENNY

...So I know it's counter intuitive but we need to get in from the furthest point of the room to their servers, that way the cable they give us is not coiled. And I think we should run through our system to double check any coiled cable issues.

LINDA RAULSTON

All right. Jenny you try to find us a dedicated dark fiber line between Harrisburg and Allentown. Hajar, you work on the microwave thing on your own - just in case. Anton you get us that new input into the NYSE, the uncoiled one.

(to Anton, Sam and Hajar)

Meanwhile I want you guys to give me a ballpark for the laser towers.

HAJAR

Its years of research, Linda. Maybe decades.

LINDA RAULSTON

I don't care. Do it. I'm not in it for the money.

Everybody shuts up, stares at serious Linda, perplexed.

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)

That was a joke. Get to work.

They exit the office...

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)

Anton I want to talk to you.

She walks to him. Long awkward beat.

ANTON

What?

LINDA RAULSTON

You're not holding back on me, are you?

ANTON

What do you mean?

LINDA RAULSTON

Well, I guess we didn't get a lot of new ideas from you recently, have we? We mostly hear you bitch about Hajar and the cell towers.

ANTON

I'm still working on neutrino messaging, it's...

LINDA RAULSTON

(interrupting)

Neutrino messaging is the long shot of a long shot. I want more day to day solutions. More day to day results. Okay? Less esoteric. More pragmatic.

13

EXT. RAULSTON OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

13

Vincent and Anton walk out of the office building, revealing MIDTOWN NEW YORK. They walk on the busy street, Vincent is completely panicked.

VINCENT

(as they walk)

How did she say it??

ANTON

She just said " You're not holding back on me, are you?"

VINCENT

Fuck! Did it feel like she was suspecting something?

ANTON

I don't know...

VINCENT

What do you mean "you don't know"?

ANTON

I mean I don't know!

VINCENT

Well think Anton, what did she mean!?

ANTON

GET OFF MY BACK VINNIE!

People on the street turn towards them, watchful, INCLUDING THREE SOLDIERS WITH M16s DOING THEIR ROUNDS in the financial district (they are now part of every day life in downtown NYC).

VINCENT

All right all right...

(he ponders)

Lets just stick to the plan, there's nothing we can do anyway, right?

ANTON

Vinnie... I can't slow them down much longer. They're going forward with the cell tower research. We really gotta hurry. Only three or four hurdles left and they'll be able to do it.

VINCENT

How long?

ANTON

Three years tops. Once they figure out the pulse shaping, they're almost there.

Vincent, weary, sighs.

VINCENT

We make our money in a year or two, then we get out of it and we get you a country home on a hill. Good?

Anton nods.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

I'll see you on Monday.

He tenderly slaps Anton on the cheek - a cousins kind of thing - and stops a yellow cab on the road, gets in.

A big, soulless, windowless aluminium siding building facing a soulless highway. Vincent and Mark are on the other side of the 4 lane highway, equipped with a digital tablet, a GPS and a *Total*

Station Theodolite (TST): a telescope-like tool used by land surveyors to map land coordinates.

Next to them is MARK'S PIMPED, ALL-BLACK PICKUP TRUCK - the biggest there is on the market.

VINCENT
(pointing at the building
behind them)
The BATS Stock Exchange servers are in
there...

Mark slowly walks along the highway, looks at his GPS, moves an extra step, then takes out a can of orange spray paint. He PAINTS A DOT ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD. Vincent looks around to make sure nobody's looking.

Mark places the Total Station Theodolite (TST) on top of the painted dot, looks through the lens, aims towards a field on the other side of the highway...

MARK
That gas station, at the end of the field.

15

EXT. GAS STATION IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - DAY

15

Mark and Vincent are in a GREY FORD EXPLORER SUV, Mark parks the car in front of the gas station. Vincent gets out, walks towards a 15 YEAR OLD TEENAGER with the stare of a fearless Marine Corps. Mark stays by the car, looks at some landmarks around the site, takes detailed notes.

YOUNG TEENAGER
Can I help you?

VINCENT
Ah yeah... I'd like to speak to the owner?

YOUNG TEENAGER
What's this about?

VINCENT
Uhhh... It's about this property.

Young teenager turns and screams towards the back of the store.

YOUNG TEENAGER
DAD! SOME GUY WANTS TO TALK ABOUT OUR
PROPERTY!

GAS STATION OWNER
(O.S.)
TELL HIM I'M BUSY!

YOUNG TEENAGER
(to Vincent)
He's not available.

Awkward beat...

We hear footsteps - A man in his sixties (GAS STATION OWNER) comes from the garage, grey beard tainted with nicotine.

GAS STATION OWNER
(suspicious)
What can I do for you?

VINCENT

Yes hi Sir my name is Vincent, I work for Magenta Fiber Tech, we're a networking company and we want to expand our operations to this area. I was wondering if you were the owner of this property?

GAS STATION OWNER

Yeah.

VINCENT

That's good. That's amazing.

GAS STATION OWNER

How is it "amazing"?

VINCENT

Ha ha. What do you mean?

GAS STATION OWNER

How is it "amazing" that I own this property?

VINCENT

I don't know... It's just a saying.

Awkward beat.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Anyway, we're exploring ways to stretch our lines of communication to your area and I'm in charge of checking out who would be interested in selling a stretch of land so we could, you know... huh... Stretch our lines of communication.

GAS STATION OWNER

I ain't selling my land.

VINCENT

Oh no, no no no no of course not. All we're looking for is access to a strip of land to spread our lines. A really thin strip.

GAS STATION OWNER

How thin.

VINCENT

Real thin. About...

He spreads his hands apart by about a foot.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

...This wide. For the length of your property.

GAS STATION OWNER

You wanna buy a twelve inch strip off my property?

VINCENT

Yeah. And it's just to bury our line, the line's not even twelve inches, it's four inches actually. In a month you won't even know it's there. 'Could even be like a... ten year lease or something.

GAS STATION OWNER
You got all this written down somewhere?

VINCENT
Yeah I do.

He pulls out a twenty page contract from his briefcase.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
I...
(lays the contract on the
counter)
Do.

CUT TO:

Vincent goes back to the SUV holding a signed contract, Mark is standing by.

16 EXT. VINCENT MOBILE HEADQUARTERS/NEW JERSEY PARKING LOT - DAY 16

WIDE on a large parking lot, with highways and New York scenery as a backdrop. A YELLOW CAB drives towards a MOBILE OFFICE on wheels, Vincent and Mark get out of the cab, walk towards the office.

17 INT. VINCENT MOBILE HEADQUARTERS - DAY 17

We are in the MOBILE HEADQUARTERS. Harsh ceiling neons light up the area.

THE EXACT SAME CONTRACT held by Vincent's hand in the previous scene, on top of four more signed contracts lands on a pile of other contracts resting on the desk of AMY, whiz kid, 22.

AMY
What'd you get today?

She's talking to Vincent:

VINCENT
Eleven miles. BATS exchange to about...
(he points on a map of
Kansas area on her desk)
Here.

AMY
Excellent.

In the background, Mark hangs white foamcore panels adorning a list of fifty contractors on one of the walls.

Some of the contractor names have a green dot, some a yellow dot, some red. TWO OTHER ASSISTANTS, mid-twenties, are working on a large map of North-Eastern USA, with a dotted line stretching from Kansas to New York.

Different color-coded pins are laid out along the line. This is the PROGRESS MAP (we will refer to it later in this story).

BACK AT AMY'S DESK,

GARY, another whiz kid, early thirties, drops a very big pile of contracts on Amy's desk.

GARY
Hey Amy...

AMY
What's this???

GARY
All land owners between Arrowrock and Martinsburg.

VINCENT
You signed all of them???

GARY
Yeah baby.

VINCENT
Excellent!

MARK (O.S.)
Vinnie!

Vincent turns towards Mark's voice: A CONTRACTOR (ELLIOT, 30) has arrived.

CUT TO:

Vincent is in the middle of reading a contract aloud while Mark is right behind, listening.

VINCENT
...You are not to engage in any discussions with other contractors you could encounter on the line. You are not to discuss any details of your work with any individual outside of the team that has been designated to work with you...

SMASH CUT TO:

Same office, but the light has changed - it's later in the day. THREE CONTRACTORS, new ones, are with Vincent and Anton.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
...You will abstain from making any inquiries that are not directly related to your tasks...

SMASH CUT TO:

Vincent keeps on reading the contract clauses, now facing one single NERVOUS CONTRACTOR in his forties.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
...You recognize that a breach of this non-disclosure agreement could result in your obligation to reimburse in full the sums Magenta Fiber Tech invested for the completion of this project.

The contractor signs, nervous.

CUT TO BLACK

TITLE CARD ON BLACK:

"6 MONTHS LATER"

CLOSE on Linda Raulston, in front of a white board with markers. She's making a presentation but we can't see who's attending.

On the board: EIGHT CIRCLES OF DIFFERENT SIZES, WITH "BUYER/SELLER" WRITTEN INSIDE OF IT, are disorderly drawn, like floating particles.

LINDA RAULSTON

...What we do, basically, is we position we position ourselves in between the buyer/seller particles. We explode the old atoms and create a new space for trading. So what we're doing... is we're inventing a market where it didn't exist before, but at the "sub-particle" level. From within.

CLOSE on a MAN IN HIS LATE FIFTIES WHO IS LISTENING. He's sitting next to TWO MALE COLLEAGUES, same age.

HFT INVESTOR

Okay. Why do we need you to do that for us? Why can't we, or anybody else do that?

LINDA RAULSTON

'Cause we're the fastest ninety percent of the time. We're obsessed with speed at every level. Our whole R&D is about speed. Speed of the line, speed of the algorithms, speed of the processing. There's no number two for this to work. You gotta be number one. Which we are.

HFT INVESTOR

Run it by me one more time please. Like I'm a five year old.

LINDA RAULSTON

Okay...

She thinks for a second, goes back to the board, starts drawing arrows and other things from one "buyer/seller" bubble to the other, trying to better explain her concepts.

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)

You got all these purchase orders flying around, this one goes there, this one goes there... Okay? Well. If we read that order from this buyer, and then we can outrun him, we can get to the market next door knowing his price. So we can buy everything cheaper than his price, and by the time he reaches that same market, just a few milliseconds later, we can sell it to him at the price he was asking. Profit at no risk. But, there can only be one. One faster than the others. And right now that's us.

Dumbfounded look on the man in his late fifties.

HFT INVESTOR

Waitwaitwaitwaitwait... You're allowed to do this??

LINDA RAULSTON

It's what our business is about. It's what we do...

HFT INVESTOR (O.S.)
(interrupting)
...what you do sounds like what a scalper
does...

LINDA RAULSTON
(insulted, interrupting)
...What we do is Market Making. We're sub-
atomic financial engineers. It's
lightyears away from scalping.
(beat)
And yes, you need us.

The HFT Investor sighs, perhaps because he realizes she's one step
ahead of him. Literally.

THROUGH LINDA'S GLASS WALL (we can't hear through the glass),
Vincent and Anton hand two letters and a piece of paper to the
puzzled receptionist, then ask her to sign the paper - a
confirmation of delivery. She signs, throws a confused look at
Linda through her glass wall.

HFT INVESTOR
All'right... How do we get into your
Market Making shenanigan? What kind of
clients are you looking for?

Linda notices what's happening by the corner of her eye, she loses
her concentration.

LINDA RAULSTON
(distracted)
We're only looking for about ten partners.

The cousins head out, Anton head low, while Vincent waves goodbye
to Linda.

HFT INVESTOR
What kind of partners?

LINDA RAULSTON
(more distracted)
Partners at one hundred million each.
(looking towards the main
entrance)
I'm sorry, could you excuse-me for just a
minute? I'll be right back.

19 INT. STAINLESS STEEL ELEVATOR - DAY

19

Vincent is with Anton in a stainless steel elevator, waiting to
reach the ground floor.

VINCENT
Deep breaths.

Anton tries to take deep breaths.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
When the doors open, just walk out, don't
look back, no matter what. You're doing
the right thing. Just one more year and
you're free.

Ding! Elevator doors open.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Let's do this.

20 EXT. RAULSTON OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

20

Anton and Vincent walk out of the building, they walk and talk.

VINCENT
Tell me your dream Anton.

ANTON
Country home on a hill. Small road.
Hummingbirds.

VINCENT
Again.

ANTON
Country home on a hill. Small road.
Hummingbirds.

Linda Raulston bursts out of the building holding the two letters handed to the receptionist, looks for the two cousins, locks eyes on them.

She catches up to them cocky, authoritative, like she owns them.

LINDA RAULSTON
(to Anton)
Hey... HEY! What's this!?

VINCENT
Our resignation.

LINDA RAULSTON
I'm not talking to you, I'm talking to him!

She stays on Anton's heels, breathing down his neck.

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)
(to Anton)
What are you doing Anton? After all I did for you?? After all the firm has done for you?? How can you do this?

VINCENT
(to Anton, like a conciliare)
Don't listen...

LINDA RAULSTON
Anton, I just want you to think for a second about what will happen if you give anybody else our codes... Don't do anything stupid... You could get in serious trouble.

VINCENT
(to Linda)
They're his codes, Linda.

LINDA RAULSTON
"HIS" CODES?? THERE'S NO "HIS"! "HIS" IS OURS! WHAT'S IN HIS HEAD IS OURS! WE OWN HIM!

They walk away, turn the corner... Linda ponders for a second, while the Receptionnist comes out of the same building and catches up to her.

RECEPTIONNIST
(panicked)
Miss Raulston, your clients are about to leave!

Linda just stares towards where Vincent and Anton turned the corner.

RECEPTIONNIST (CONT'D)
What do I do???

Long beat.

LINDA RAULSTON
You handle it...

She runs towards where Anton and Vincent turned the corner.

21 EXT. WILLIAM STREET, NY - DAY

21

Linda Raulston runs, looking for Vincent and Anton, stuck in a crowd that's mostly heading in the opposite direction. She gets a visual of Anton and Vincent who are 100 feet away. She hurries and catches up to them.

FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD,

Vincent and Anton walk at a quick pace, didn't notice Linda following them. Vincent reassuringly puts his hand on the back of Anton's head as they walk, a cousin thing.

VINCENT
Are you good?

Anton nods.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
All right.

Vincent looks around, sees someone walking towards them: it's Linda.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Motherfucker...

She catches up to them, they stop walking, in the middle of the busy street.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Linda, please. You got the letter, it's done. We're out.

LINDA RAULSTON
I'm not talking to you. You stay quiet or I'll scream and make sure they arrest you for groping me.

Long beat. She looks at Anton for a long time, silent.

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)
(to Anton)
I'm sorry for what I said. I didn't mean

it. I got carried away because I care for you. You know that, don't you?

No answer

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)
Have we taken you for granted, Anton? Is that how you feel? 'Cause I would never want for you to feel I've taken you for granted. In a way, you're almost like a son to me...

VINCENT
Oh please...

LINDA RAULSTON
(interrupting)
I even paid for your tuition, Anton. I made you who you are. You owe me. You can't just leave. It's not just your contract, it's your moral obligation.

Long beat. He slowly turns to her.

ANTON
My algorithms paid you back.

VINCENT
Yeah, sorry Linda we're moving on to bigger things.

Linda's jaw tenses... She points at Vincent while keeping her eyes on Anton.

LINDA RAULSTON
Just remember I hired this little fella for you, Anton. We didn't need him. Giving him a job was your bonus. He's disposable.

Vincent laughs, head shaking.

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)
This is going to be painful. I promise. You can still change your mind.

VINCENT
All right that's great, you take care Linda.

He takes Anton by the arm and pulls him away.

22 EXT. NARROW STREET NYC - END OF DAY

22

Vincent and Anton are walking, weary and exhilarated at the same time.

VINCENT
You all right?

Anton nods.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
I got an hour to kill, lets get some drinks and go through the game plan.

Anton feels bad for what he's about to answer.

ANTON

I can't... I gotta go home.

VINCENT

Come on, just a drink. Go over a couple of details.

ANTON

I really gotta go home, Vince.

VINCENT

All right...

He closes up.

ANTON

I promised I'd be back for dinner...

VINCENT

(interrupting)

Don't worry about it. I'll go through the details, you go to the family.

He leaves, Anton still feels bad.

23

INT. VINCENT MOBILE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

23

(New Jersey Parking Lot)

A woman in her MID-30's, OPHELIA TROLLER, dressed in clean black jeans and a long-sleeved, white dress shirt, walks towards Vincent's table, uneasy about the meeting. Mark is there with him.

The room is now filled with boxes of contracts and maps with red lines and pins are laid out all over the walls. Five assistants are busy typing things, looking at maps, calling people.

VINCENT

Ophelia?

OPHELIA

Mr. Zaleski. Hi.

They shake hands.

VINCENT

Please, call me Vincent.

OPHELIA

Vincent.

Mark puts his hand out.

MARK

Mark.

They shake.

VINCENT

Thanks for flying in.

OPHELIA

Yeah. So what's this about?

MARK

We have some digging to do around this area, it's a pretty big project, and I heard you have the type of crew we're looking for.

OPHELIA

Okay...

VINCENT

So... one of our biggest challenges is to keep this extremely secret from the competition.

OPHELIA

Is this thing legal?

VINCENT

Yes, of course! Of course. Nothing illegal. But very secret. I would need for you to sign this Non-Disclosure Agreement. It's just a contract that says you won't talk about our project.

(beat)

To anyone.

OPHELIA

I don't know... I'm a pretty straight forward kind o' gal...

VINCENT

It's just a formality.

She grabs the thick N.D.A. contract with "Project: Hummingbird" on it.

OPHELIA

A 30 page "formality"?

She flips through the pages.

VINCENT

It's a pretty big job. I think you're gonna like it.

OPHELIA

I don't know...

Vincent is a little offended.

OPHELIA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I hope you don't take it the wrong way, I think I'd rather not get involved, I'm not too comfortable with a 30 page contract just to listen to you talking. I'm more like "okay, lets shake on this and lets go", you know?

VINCENT

This project is a little too big for a handshake.

OPHELIA

Still, I don't want to lose your time.

Vincent is offended but he tries to hide it.

VINCENT

All right, all'right. This is the deal: We're digging a fiber tunnel around this area and we have a long stretch of land that's protected by the parks. We're looking for someone who would be able to go under that area in one single pass. We're talking... About fifteen miles. That's as much as I can tell you for now.

Dumbfounded look on Ophelia.

OPHELIA

Fifteen miles of fiber in one single stretch?? No connection points?

VINCENT

It's all wild forest. No access roads and absolutely no way to get permission to build one.

OPHELIA

You know what kind of machine this would require, right? Like... We're talking ship it from the other side of the planet kind of thing.

MARK

We know.

Ophelia just stares at them, then laughs.

He turns the N.D.A. contract over, grabs his pen.

VINCENT

I'm gonna write down a couple of figures behind this contract to give you an idea of the kind of job we're talking about.

Ophelia reluctantly takes the N.D.A. with the figures written at the back of it, reads it, ponders for a second.

OPHELIA

Listen, I've been doing this for a while and I've seen my father do this for a while, and these big deals that happen over night, well... They never happen. We always get screwed. So unless you're able to wire a one million dollar deposit upfront, I really don't want to play ball with you.

Long beat.

VINCENT

Are you serious?

OPHELIA

Are you?

Awkward beat. Vincent just hands her a big file.

VINCENT

There's no way I'll front you a million dollars, all right? But this is what I'll do: I'll take a leap of faith and give you these documents explaining the project. You just read them and get back to me as

soon as you can if it sounds interesting,
all right?

They look at each other for a long time.

OPHELIA

Okay, I'll have a look at it.

24 EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE/ACROSS NEW YORK CITY ISLAND - DAY 24

The green shrubs and the falling leaves floating in the air give us a sense that IT'S EARLY AUTUMN.

Workers are on a small construction site with a construction helmet, surrounded by a FOUR MEN CONSTRUCTION CREW. An OPERATOR sits atop A TRENCHER/FIBER LAYING COMBO MACHINE: a very specific type of yellow construction truck equipped with a trenching "shovel" and a huge roll of orange optic-fiber tube rolling out cable into the freshly dug trench (the fiber goes in the orange tube).

A WINCH ON A TRUCK pulls the trencher/fiber laying combo machine. Behind the combo machine, the chains of another truck tap the open trench back down.

OVER THE LOUD NOISE, Mark and Vincent look at the work, Vincent highly excited. Mark points at the machines and explains the whole process (we don't hear what they are saying, we just see them talking).

25 INT. VINCENT MOBILE HEADQUARTERS - DAY 25

Vincent is in A NEW BUSINESS SUIT, around a small conference table where a map and various logistic documents are laid out. Behind him, on other fold-out tables lining the mobile office, five other people are busy planning.

THROUGH THE WINDOW of the mobile office, five CREW MEN are busy preparing some kind of road expedition.

At the end of the trailer, on another fold-out table, Anton is coding on his laptop.

FOUR OLDER EXECUTIVES walk into the mobile headquarters, one in a suit, others in jeans, shirt and vest. One of the executives is BRYAN TAYLOR, 60. Vincent sees them, gets a little nervous.

VINCENT

(from across the trailer)

Anton! They're here.

Anton looks up, walks through the whole trailer to Vincent, they greet the guests.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Bryan how are you?

BRYAN TAYLOR

Good. So this is the Batcave...

VINCENT

Yeah... I guess.

Bryan looks at all the documents on the table.

BRYAN TAYLOR

Lets get down to it. Why don't we take it from the top.

VINCENT

Yeah, I think that's a good idea 'cause so much is going on at the same time right now.

Vincent unfolds a map on the table. ON IT, A RED LINE THAT GOES FROM KANSAS CITY TO NEW YORK.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

This is the state of affairs. We signed deals with fifty four crews to build the line and we signed a land deal with 95% of the people we need to sign with. On Monday, work is gonna start on 80% of the line.

He points to four green dots along the Kansas - NY line.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

We got headquarters here, here, here....

He points to the final dot, located 40 miles West of the Appalachian mountains.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

And that's where I'll be most of the time. That's where ninety percent of our problems are. We got protected forests with no roads and no construction allowed, we got rivers to cross, we got swamps, you name it.

Bryan points to a forty mile area where the red line doesn't go straight, it surrounds a mountainous, green, uninhabited area - a pretty big detour.

BRYAN TAYLOR

Why isn't it straight around here?

VINCENT

That's one of the problems we're working on. The Appalachians. National Park. A big granite mountain to dig through. It's protected. There's no access, no roads, no railway that can take us there.

BRYAN TAYLOR

How much are we losing?

They all turn to Anton who goes towards the map, and starts by pointing at Kansas city.

EXTREME CLOSE-UP ON THE FINGER AND THE MAP.

ANTON (V.O.)

(pointing at Kansas)

Kansas BATS exchange: system sends the purchase order and heads North of Saint Louis that's 2.3 milliseconds,...

He moves his finger in a straight line from Kansas towards the Pennsylvania Appalachian mountains.

ANTON

North Louis to the Appalachians is 2.5,
total 4.8.

His finger reaches the Appalachian Mountains.

ANTON (CONT'D)

Appalachians to Harrisburg, going around
is 2.6., straight through the rocks is
1.5. That's 7.4 going around the
mountains, 6.3 going straight.

He brings his finger to New York City.

ANTON (CONT'D)

ANTON (CONT'D)

Harrisburg to New York Stock Exchange is
1.7, plus point five milliseconds for
processing. So for the round-trip, that's
a total of 17 milliseconds if we're
totally straight, a total of 19.2
milliseconds if we're going around the
mountains.

Everybody jumps at Anton saying "17", Vincent included.

BRYAN TAYLOR

(upset)

What??? "Nineteen"? "Seventeen"?
Vincent, we said sixteen. Not seventeen,
certainly not nineteen. Seventeen
milliseconds is useless, there's probably
dozens of market makers that'll do under
seventeen in a year or two...

VINCENT

(interrupting)

No no no, don't worry, what he means is
we're at seventeen with our beta
software... Anton don't scare them to
death please? We're still stripping the
code, that's where the last millisecond
will come from... And obviously there's no
way we're going around the mountains we're
losing to much speed.

At this, Anton freezes, stares straight at Vincent, getting more
and more agitated. The execs are starting to take notice...

BRYAN TAYLOR

Shit... Don't scare us like that...

VINCENT

Sorry about that.

BRYAN TAYLOR

How are you getting through those
mountains?

VINCENT

Well... two things need to get done. We
need government clearance to bring a crew
in there, and we need to figure out how to
bring our gear.

BRYAN TAYLOR

Clearance is easy.

VINCENT

Well if it's easy for you it's great for us, that's the first step. For the rest, we're working on a couple of scenarios. If we can get those special clearances I'll figure it out.

BRYAN TAYLOR

I'll get on it. Gimme a couple of days. Good work guys. Awesome work.

VINCENT

Thanks Bryan.

(beat)

Now if you'll please excuse us, we gotta a tunnel to dig from New York to Kansas.

BRYAN TAYLOR

(to Anton)

All right Dorothy, you go to Kansas now.

ANTON

Excuse-me?

BRYAN TAYLOR

Wizard of Oz? Kansas?

ANTON

Oh. Sorry I didn't understand your reference.

BRYAN TAYLOR

That's all right.

He laughs politely.

VINCENT

(to his crew)

All'right lock it down.

The crew starts to get the mobile office ready for transport: they tie the chairs to rings on the walls, secure boxes with straps, etc.

26

EXT. VINCENT MOBILE HEADQUARTERS/PARKING LOT - DAY

26

The four executives walk out revealing the mobile office trailer is in the middle of a big PARKING LOT.

The execs shake hands with the two cousins, then head to a Cadillac Limo-SUV, while Vincent and Anton head in the opposite direction.

VINCENT

(lower voice)

What did I tell you??? Don't tell them seventeen!!

ANTON

(lower voice)

Well why did you say sixteen milliseconds??? We're not at sixteen milliseconds, we're at seventeen milliseconds. How are you gonna cut one millisecond off?

VINCENT

I won't. You will, I told you.

They walk by two more of those mobile office-trailers hooked up to big pick-up trucks, parked in the parking lot. FURTHER AWAY, outside the parking lot, TASSO CASILIERIS, 45, chiseled face and faint acne marks, is in his Chevrolet Impala, observing the two cousins - surveillance work.

ANTON

Oh, I will? How?

VINCENT

We give them a faster, proprietary software that we bundle with the dark fiber subscription. One that shaves one millisecond off. Seventeen minus one is sixteen.

ANTON

That still doesn't answer my question: how? How am I supposed to design a software that's one millisecond faster when we already tore out everything that could be torn off the code?

VINCENT

I know you can do it. Just give yourself some time.

Further down the parking lot, Mark is holding a map, talking to TWO DRIVERS.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

(to Mark)

MARK! Let's go!

ANTON

You're insane! You can't take a whole millisecond off of the software, it can't be done!

VINCENT

You need to find us one millisecond or we don't have a purpose, the whole project becomes useless. You don't find a millisecond somewhere, we fail. We lose all of it.

They reach a Ford Explorer SUV, go inside. Mark catches up to them, heads to the driver's seat.

CUT TO:

Minutes later, the travelling caravan made of the Ford Explorer and FOUR MOBILE OFFICE TRAILERS are lined up, exit the parking lot.

27

INT./EXT. SUV AND MOBILE HEADQUARTERS ON THE HIGHWAY - DAY

27

The SUV and the four mobile office trailers ride down the highway, we can see MANHATTAN IN THE BACKGROUND.

CUT TO:

27A At an exit leading to some place called "Allentown", one of the mobile office trailers exits highway 78, while the rest of the caravan moves on, heading West.

28 EXT. HIGHWAY/TASSO'S CHEVROLET IMPALA - DAY

28

TASSO, THE PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR, IS DRIVING BEHIND THE REST OF THE CARAVAN, TAILING THEM. Next to him is RYAN, 45.

They pass by a sign by the side of the road that says:

"Pittsburg, 92 miles"

"Colombus, 212 miles"

"Kansas, 580 miles"

Another mobile office trailer exits the highway, heading towards a city by the name of "Altoona" - the caravan is now a two vehicle affair.

Tasso takes his cell phone, speed dials, waits for someone to answer.

29 INT. RAULSTON FLOOR/HIGH FREQUENCY TRADING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 29

Linda Raulston walks across the shared lab space where quantitative analysts and optical fiber engineers are hunched over computers, trying to accelerate data transfer speeds.

Her cell phone rings.

LINDA
(as she walks)
Yeah?

TASSO
(from phone)
They're heading somewhere between
Pittsburg and Kansas.

LINDA RAULSTON
Pittsburg and Kansas??
(beat)
Kansas... That's the BATS Global Stock
Exchange...
Find out where they're staying and get
back to me.

TASSO
(from phone)
Yep.

30 EXT. NONDESCRIPT ROAD - NIGHT

30

Total darkness except for some eerie light that blast over the face of An OLD BEARDED MAN running toward us, tormented, angry, sad, covered in sweat, short of breath...

(this is part of a nightmare, Vincent will refer to it later)

31 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

31

Vincent wakes up, still in his new suit, sweating, pale, coming out of a nightmare - it's as if somebody held him underwater right until the edge of death. He looks around: he's in the passenger seat of a rented SUV.

Mark is driving, Anton is in the backseat, staring out the window.

MARK

Having some nightmares Vinnie?

VINCENT

(confused)

Where are we?

MARK

On our way to Kansas...

Anton finishes a line of code.

ANTON

So... What kind of challenges do you face in your field of work?

MARK

Challenges?

ANTON

Yeah, what's the worst thing that can happen in your type of business?

MARK

Worst-worst?

ANTON

"Worst-worst", yeah.

MARK

That would have to be positive shit.

ANTON

"Positive shit"??

MARK

Positivafuckingshit.

(beat)

I go do this job. Gotta get some pipes running underground for about... Half a mile from municipal to a couple of brand new Mc Mansions, so they can have water, 'right?

Anton nods.

MARK (CONT'D)

So you got all these Mc Mansions. About... thirty of them. They're waaaaay lower than the municipal pipes. So to get them fresh water, no problem, 'cause water comes from the town, and down the hill to their houses, right? Gravity does its job. But after they drink, after they eat, they gotta piss and they gotta shit, right? So you gotta bring all that piss and shit back up to the sewers, against gravity.

ANTON

That's an interesting impediment.

MARK

What do you do? You get them a positive-shit-machine: a big pump working 24/7 to shoot the shit up the pipes, up the hill back to the sewer up there. I'm talking... Tons of piss and shit each day. You followin' so far, Mr Brains?

ANTON

I am.

MARK

...So about an hour after we start digging, boom. We hit something. And then, there's a smell from Hell. It's the pressurized, positive shit being pushed into the tubes: busted. It's coming out, but it's non-stop. All over the bourgeois backyards, there's an inch of shit seeping over the green... then two inches, then three inches of pure, unadulterated piss and shit.

ANTON

Wow, that must have been upsetting.

MARK

I know right? And now the shit is rising faster and faster 'cause with all that fluid coming out of the tubes, the central pump feels the pressure coming down so it pumps harder and harder...

ANTON

Did you stop the pump??

MARK

No, 'cause only municipal is authorized to access the water system and it's only seven thirty a.m., nobody's home! So now by the time the boss comes you got a fountain of shit creating a lake of shit on the intricately designed backyards, and I'm like... I don't know what to say... So I tell him: "I think we have a problem."

VINCENT

That's all you said??

MARK

Swear to God that's all I said.

VINCENT

So what did he say?

Mark tries not to start laughing but he can barely talk.

MARK

He had his arm on his face to cover the smell, he was green... he said... he said... "Fuck... I feel woozy..."
HA HA HA HA HA HA!
"I feel woozy!"
HA HA HA HA HA!!

That's it, Vincent can't help but laugh as well.

MARK (CONT'D)
Positivafuckingshit dude.

ANTON
Crazy.

FROM OUTSIDE, from a field, we follow the car driving down the road.

32

EXT. TRUCK STOP DINER AND ROAD SIDE MOTEL - NIGHT

32

The rented Ford Explorer and one last construction trailer park by the side of the highway, in front of a diner and roadside motel that hasn't been renovated for the last 30 years.

They get out of their vehicles with small suitcases, the construction trailer driver and helper smoke a cigarette outside.

MARK (O.S.)
What about you? What's the worst that's happened to you?

Mark Vincent and Anton get out of the car, the conversation goes on.

They walk and talk.

VINCENT
(to Anton)
Tell him about our startup.

ANTON
You tell him, I suck at stories.

VINCENT
Come on just tell it.

ANTON
No you do it.

VINCENT
Okay fine.
(to Mark)
So about fifteen years ago me and Anton, we're... You know... barely legal, and Anton comes up to me with an idea for some software. He calls it... The... The...

ANTON
(interrupting)
"The Trend Setter XYZ".

VINCENT
"The Trend Setter XYZ", yes!

MARK
Terrible name.

ANTON
It's a good name. It illustrates the multi-dimensional predictive algorithm.

VINCENT
We were gonna change it. Anyway, what the software is supposed to do...

ANTON
(interrupting)
...If you had given me proper deadlines...

VINCENT
(interrupting)
...was to gulp up as much data as it could from what was out there in the newspapers, on the internet, and then process the data, and integrate it into some kind of... like put a random thing to it.

ANTON
A "model-perfecting chaos generator".

VINCENT
Ha ha! That's what you called it that's true I forgot!

ANTON
It was a great idea. It's still a great idea. Chaos like a river smoothing the rocks. Defining the flow of things.

VINCENT
Whatever. So what it's supposed to do, is to scan through current newspapers, scan through a number of selected media outputs, and then kind of... feel, suggest what the "average" consumer would want to do in the coming years, or what it wants to buy next. "What's the next big thing", you know?

MARK
Okay... How did it do that?

Anton jumps in.

ANTON
It combined elements of the zeitgeist showing up on media sources, passed through a couple of algorithms, and then the model was perfected through the chaos generator.

VINCENT
(interrupting)
But the problem was that fifteen years ago we didn't have sophisticated, fractal based algorithms and shit like that. It was just words picked up randomly, shaken together by the "chaos generator", you know, and then voilà.

MARK
Voilà what??

VINCENT
Well... That's how we got the results.

MARK
What results??

VINCENT
So we get this huge meeting with startup experts ready to invest a couple of millions in our software. We take out all

our money, buy suits, save up to pay for this fancy lunch, and the most expensive thing for us at the time was to subscribe to all these online newspapers to get access to the data, you know?

MARK

Okay...

VINCENT

So. We get to lunch, it's time to make the presentation, right? Anton takes out his laptop, loads the software. He clicks on a couple of options, presses enter. The eyes on the investors, they're big like this you know, they're thinking they're gonna make gazillions off of this "Trend Setter XYZ Software" that can read into the future, you know? So Anton's laptop takes like... forever to process. I think it was at least ten real minutes of just watching the idle icon going round and round. And then, the results come. There's only three words, no context, no suggestion, no instructions on how to use them. Trend Setter XYZ brings up: "Shallots", "Trombones", "Brazilian waxing"

Dumbfounded Mark bursts with laughter.

MARK

What the fuck does that mean??

Anton jumps in.

ANTON

They were three fields or areas of the market in which they should look into for future growth, and as a matter of fact the demand for Brazilian Waxing spiked by three hundred and seventy seven percent since XYZ predicted it would.

VINCENT

(interrupting)

It's bullshit is what it is! And so you got these billionaires looking at: "shallot", "trombones", "Brazilian waxing", and then they start looking at Anton who, I swear to God, is super excited by these results because he thinks these guys are going to invest billions by looking at shallots-trombones-Brazilian-waxing, but they're not sure if he's just laughing at them, so these guys stand up and ask Anton if he's fucking with them, and Anton, who immediately turns cocky in these situations, says "no, I think I want you to Brazilian wax my dick".

MARK

SHIIIIIT!

VINCENT

And then they fight! Right there in the fancy restaurant they're throwing punches at each other!

ANTON

I have very little tolerance for low IQ's.

They reach the entrance to the diner. As the door closes behind them:

VINCENT (O.S.)

Well all that to say that you are still a genius Anton, it's just the technology that's not ready for your brains.

ANTON (O.S.)

Exactly my point.

33

INT. TRUCK STOP DINER - NIGHT

33

Vincent finishes a fish and chips, Anton and Mark a steak and fries. On the table is a printed map of Eastern USA on which A STRAIGHT, HAND DRAWN RED LINE GOES FROM KANSAS TO NEW YORK.

Tasso is already in the diner, sitting at a table with his colleague Ryan. They start showing each other pictures from their smartphones, smiling - it feels out of character.

MARK

I'm working on something for the mountains.

Vincent looks up.

MARK (CONT'D)

I have a friend who owns a couple of choppers. Says we could strap his drilling rig to a Sikorsky 64 helicopter.

VINCENT

Sikorsky helicopter?

MARK

A big fucking chopper. Says it can lift about twenty thousand pounds but we gotta have air traffic authorization to get it at the bottom of those mountains...

VINCENT

How much?

MARK

The chopper is eighty thousand dollars per day.

VINCENT

A day???

MARK

Including fuel and flight time, yeah.

VINCENT

Fuck...

AT THAT MOMENT, Tasso holds his smartphone up, camera pointed at Ryan, BUT IN FACT ALSO FRAMING VINCENT'S TABLE, BEHIND RYAN, and a glimpse of the red-lined map that Mark is holding up towards him. He takes the picture and quickly lowers his smartphone, shows the picture to Ryan like a tourist who just took a picture of the Eifel tower - still out of character. Vincent didn't notice any of this.

BACK AT VINCENT'S TABLE, Mark pushes his finger along the map, looks for the right mountains.

MARK
And we need to find a place to land...
Around here somewhere.

MARK (CONT'D)
What?

VINCENT
Not: "around here".

He points to one very specific point on the red line, over the mountains on the map.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Here. Exactly here. On the line. Not there, there or there. Here. If we zig zag all over, we don't have a purpose. We're nothing. Straight line is our purpose. It's why we're here. It's how we'll be remembered. How we will be recognized. Are we clear on this?

Awkward beat.

MARK
Of course Vince.

Vincent sighs, overwhelmed by the stress. He gets a sudden pain in the stomach.

VINCENT
Ah fuck...

ANTON
What's wrong with you?

VINCENT
I think there's something wrong with my fish...

MARK
I'd say it's more like "something's wrong with your budget" is what's giving you heartburn...

VINCENT
My turn to feel "woozy"...

He waves to the waiter.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
(from across the room)
Get me another beer will you?

The waitress complies, goes to the bar.

45 INTERCUT: INT. LINDA RAULSTON'S OFFICE AND TASSO'S PARKED CAR 45 NIGHT

Linda Raulston (Vincent and Anton's ex-employer/newly found enemy) is in her breezy office, with large bay windows that face downtown New York, holding her cell phone to her ear while looking at a picture on her computer, on her e-mail browser: IT'S THE PICTURE TAKEN IN THE DINER, with Tasso's colleague in the foreground, out

of focus, and to the left of the frame, Vincent, Anton and Mark looking at their map with the red line connecting Kansas to New York.

Linda zooms-in and zooms-in until things are just pixels... But she makes out the map of the US and the red line connecting Kansas to New York.

LINDA RAULSTON
(to his phone)
Motherfuckers...

TASSO
(to his phone)
What the fuck are they doing?

LINDA RAULSTON
They're building a line. A straight line.

TASSO
What are you talking about?

LINDA RAULSTON
They're building a straight fiber optic tunnel from the BATS exchange in Kansas to the fucking New York Stock Exchange. If they get this thing up and running, we're FUCKED!

She paces back and forth, back and forth, going ballistic.

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)
I'm gonna hurt them... I don't know how, but I'm gonna grind them to the ground...

She hangs up, presses on her secretary's speed dial button.

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)
(to office phone speaker)
Get our quants down here...

CUT TO:

Hajar, Jenny and Sam, the quants, walk in.

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)
I need you to get the microwave towers to work... I don't care how you do it but just get it fucking working. Get me the pulsing thing...

JENNY
(correcting)
Pulse shaping?

LINDA RAULSTON
Pulse shaping. Get me the pulse shaping algorithms. NOW.

HAJAR
I already told you we can't.

LINDA RAULSTON
I DON'T CARE! HIRE MORE QUANTS! WE NEED TO DO ROUND TRIP KANSAS-NEW YORK IN 15 MILLISECONDS OR LESS, YOU HEAR?!

Long, awkward beat.

HAJAR

Linda, I just don't see how...

LINDA RAULSTON

(interrupting)

I think I didn't make myself clear: you give me the pulse shaping or you give me your resignation. Is that clear enough?

Hajar just shakes his head, out of words.

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)

Now... Tomorrow I will start building the towers, you get to work on pulse shaping, and we're gonna make everything come together right in time.

INT. RAULSTON FLOOR/HIGH FREQUENCY TRADING ROOM - NIGHT

Hajar, Jenny and Sam walk at a fast pace along the computer stations.

HAJAR

(walking)

This is shit...

SAM

(walking)

We're fucked.

JENNY

(walking)

Come on lets focus... We need to go through all the research that's going on right now. Anything that's related to data shaping...

34 EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING

34

Only the SUV and one single mobile office are left of the caravan.

A ROAD SIGN announces

"Appalachian Mountains

Tuscarora State Forest"

35 EXT. EBENSBURG HOTEL - 30 MILES WEST OF APPALACHIAN CLIFF - DAY

35

The scenery gives us a sense that we are in MID-AUTUMN.

Mark parks the SUV in front of a generic Hotel facing pines and hills (Hampton Inn type of hotel chain).

The three men walk towards the entrance with their large luggage.

36 INT. ANTON'S SUITE - DAY

36

Anton and Vincent walk into a large suite accompanied by the hotel clerk who brings in Anton's suitcase and gear case. As the door closes behind them, we catch a glimpse of a brass "Presidential Suite" sign hanging on it.

Rather than being presidential, the generic cachet of the hotel makes the suite look like a bland condo from the eighties.

There's a big desk facing the room's bay window.

VINCENT

Okay... Well, that's the best they had.

The Hotel Clerk presents the "presidential" amenities.

HOTEL CLERK

So you have your televisions: bedroom, dining table, bathroom. You have your phones: kitchen, dining table, bedroom, bathroom.

ANTON

There's four phones?

HOTEL CLERK

That's right Sir. A presidential suite needs a lot'a phones for emergencies. We also have a pillow bar if your pillow isn't quite to your tasting.

Vincent hands a ten dollar bill to the clerk.

VINCENT

Thank you, I'll be right out, can you give us 5 minutes?

HOTEL CLERK

Yes of course Sir.

He looks out the window where we catch a pretty decent view of the MISSOURI RIVER, 8 floors down below.

VINCENT

(pointing at the desk)

You can set your computers here, let the river inspire you while you're coding.

No answer...

VINCENT (CONT'D)

I'll see you later tomorrow okay? You keep working on that millisecond.

ANTON

Okay.

Vincent exits. The door closes with a loud CLONG.

Anton unlocks a large electronic gear case, takes out a big rackmount-type server computer next to which, inside the gear case, is that familiar two feet high, one foot wide roll of optic fibre Anton had in his office. Written on it:

"OPTICAL FIBER
1320 FEET | 1/4 MILE
(REFRACTION COMPENSATED)

He also takes out a smaller device that fits in the palm of his hand - an optical regenerator with a sticker on it:

"Optical Regenerator JBT145 SX"

CUT TO:

Anton now has the big computer tower running, and next to it, his own laptop. The big computer is looped to the quarter mile-long fiber coil, the other end of the fiber coil is connected to the electronic amplifier, and the amplifier is connected to Anton's laptop by a much shorter optic fibre cable.

He runs a data transfer speed test by clicking somewhere, numbers appear on his laptop. He's really stressed by the result...

Something catches his attention, from outside his window, down by the river, under a tree: It's a house... Not a big house, a home made BIRD HOUSE that fell from the tree. It sits on the grass, and from Anton's distance it could look like a real-size house, coming straight out of a fairy tale.

37 INT. VINCENT'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

37

Vincent wakes up, panicked, lying in the bed of a normal-sized hotel room, not a presidential suite. He doesn't feel well at all.

He goes to the bathroom, splashes water on his face, pale. He chugs down a shot of Pepto Bismol. He gets another sharp pain, curls up on the bathroom floor.

He walks out, grabs his cell phone, presses a quick dial number.

MARK'S VOICE

Yeah?

VINCENT

Yeah it's me, my stomach is still killing me, I think I need to see a doctor... It's probably something I ate.

Beat.

MARK'S VOICE

All right meet me downstairs.

VINCENT

Mark?

MARK'S VOICE

Yeah?

VINCENT

Don't tell Anton.

38 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

38

VERY CLOSE on a tube that is about to be inserted into Vincent's mouth - it's an endoscopy device (used to take internal organ samples for tests).

FADE TO BLACK

CUT TO:

Vincent, now in A HOODIE AND JEANS, is facing DR BLOOM (37), a woman. She looks at him, worried.

DR BLOOM

Mister Vincent, there's no easy way to say this.

VINCENT

What do you mean?

DR BLOOM

You have stomach cancer. You have to undergo chemotherapy immediately. I'm sorry.

Long, shocked beat.

VINCENT

Could I get another opinion?

DR BLOOM

You could but the X-Rays are pretty clear. I'm really sorry.

Vincent gets a kind of rapid-eye-movement fit, he's processing... Then his eyes lock in one position: something hits him.

VINCENT

Is it why I'm having these nightmares?

DR BLOOM

Nightmares?

VINCENT

I've been having this nightmare, is it because of the cancer?

DR BLOOM

I don't know...

VINCENT

I'm in Siberia or something. This old Russian man is chasing me in the cold... He's got a big beard and he's dressed in this formal outfit but he's really fast. And I don't know if he's trying to kill me or save me from something...

DR BLOOM

(interrupting because he doesn't want to go there)
I don't think it's related...

VINCENT

And I can't turn around to ask him because if he's trying to kill me, he'll be able to catch up to me. So I decide to shout over my shoulder, while I'm running, "are you trying to kill me or save me from something?" But I can't remember the Russian word for "save."

DR BLOOM

(interrupting)
Mr Zaleski I really don't think it's related.

VINCENT

And he chases me to the end of the road where it becomes dark, and I realize that I'm going to either drown in the sea or get killed by this old man...

DR BLOOM

(interrupting)
Mr. Zaleski, please, I'm not a psychiatrist.

VINCENT

And I'll never know if he was just trying to save me. I won't even get to find out.

Long beat, as Vincent stares at the floor.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

It's related, isn't it? These visions and the cancer?

DR BLOOM

I'm sorry, I really can't help you. I don't have the training. You have to talk to a psychiatrist. All I know is you have stomach cancer.

VINCENT

How long do I have?

DR BLOOM

It's too early to tell. I don't like to give these kinds of deadlines.

VINCENT

Why?

No answer.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Are they like self-fulfilling prophecies?

DR BLOOM

They can be.

VINCENT

(emotional)

Don't worry about me. I'm very pragmatic.

DR BLOOM

If you don't follow treatment you could live for anywhere between 6 months and 3 years. But with the proper treatment you could also be 100% cured in a couple of years.
It's not a death sentence, but it's very serious.

Vincent ponders for a long time, looks everywhere in the room, as if he wanted to make sure he wasn't in a bad dream.

VINCENT

Can this thing wait a few months? I'm in the middle of something really important. Really really important.

DR BLOOM

(flabbergasted)

No, it can't. You would seriously put your life at risk.

Vincent just looks at the ground, stunned. A SMILE COMES ACROSS HIS FACE... Perhaps he's thinking "how ironic".

Vincent sits in Mark's pickup truck. Mark finishes sending a text message to someone.

MARK

Hey... Are you okay?

VINCENT

Yeah, it's nothing.

MARK

They kept you for six hours for nothing???
Are they stupid???

VINCENT

They needed to run some tests, but I'm good.

MARK

Sure? You're still a little pale Vinnie...

VINCENT

Yeah I'm good, lets go.

Mark starts his pickup.

40 EXT. RIVER FACING THE HOTEL - SUNSET

40

Vincent walks along the river, still in shock. He looks to the river, he looks up to the sky, hoping for some kind of answer from above. He leans his forearms on a tree, his head sunk in, taking deep breaths.

He goes down in the grass, DEEPLY DISTRAUGHT, completely alone.

He keeps on taking deep breaths, slowly puts his distress back in hiding, inside his guts.

CROSS FADE

41 EXT. SMALL ROAD LEADING TO THE APPALACHIANS/WILD PARKING - DAY 41

Vincent, in his hoodie and jeans, and Mark are riding on a small road, looking up ahead where the majestic APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS stand above them.

Vincent is clearly tormented, probably still processing yesterday's horrible news...

VINCENT

(at the mountains)

There they are. The monsters...

41A Vincent and Mark PARK THEIR TRUCK where the path ends, they get out. 41A

42 EXT. APPALACHIAN RIVER CROSSING TO SITE - DAY

42

Vincent and Mark follow RAY, 48, African-American, probably played football in his college years. He leads the way through a dense forest of tall weeping willows. Ray wears tall rain boots and expedition gear, carries a big plastic bag.

Ray stops at the edge of a river. On the other side of the river, above the trees, we catch a glimpse of a HUGE, 500 FEET TALL CLIFF. He empties the contents of his big plastic bag on the floor: there's one RUBBER OVERALLS, and one pair of THIGH-HIGH RUBBER BOOTS.

RAY
(pointing at the swamp)
It's further down there...
You're sure?

Vincent goes to the boots, puts them on. Mark does the same with the overalls.

RAY (CONT'D)
All right, let's go...

He steps into the river, moves forward... They follow. Their feet get sucked into the thick clay.

VINCENT
Fuck...

MARK
You okay Vinnie?

VINCENT
Yeah...

Ray can't help smirking at the soiled businessman.

They sink deeper and deeper... So does Ray. The thick clay is harder and harder to get out of, it now goes all the way to the middle of their knees.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
How much deeper?

RAY
I think that's it.

But it still goes a little deeper... Now, the mud turns into murky water, which makes it easier to walk across.

VINCENT
(as he walks)
You didn't say there was a swamp.

RAY
(as he walks)
There wasn't. It rained.
(beat)
So why do you need such a straight line?
Why can't we go around the mountains?

MARK
"No questions":
it's on your contract.

RAY
Contracts... What's a contract around here? It's just a piece of paper to wipe your ass with.

MARK
That contract is paying you a lot of money...

RAY
And what's a dollar bill around here? Hun?
I'd say it's just about the same damn thing, don't you think? Just a little something to wipe your ass on...

MUSIC STARTS over the end of the scene, as the men walk in the swamp.

43

EXT. BOTTOM OF UNCLEARED APPALACHIAN CLIFF - DAY

43

MUSIC GOES ON...

IN SLOW MOTION, they reach the other side of the river, keep walking. A rumble that turns into a roar of chainsaws gets closer and closer...

SIX MEN WITH HUGE CHAINSAWS are clearing a 100 x 100 feet strip of forest that stands right next to a TALL CLIFF. A couple of trees fall as the group arrives.

A CONTRACTOR comes and shakes the trio's hands, starts explaining some technical details (we don't hear the conversation).

EXT. HOTEL LOBBY SPORTS BAR - END OF DAY

Anton sits at the bar with his laptop already on. He flips it open, continues to work on his codes at the bar.

BARBARA, the barmaid, comes up to him - she's gorgeously voluptuous, wears tightly fitted spandex jeans.

ANTON

I'll have a vodka please.

BARBARA

Vodka. All right.

She punches the order in, comes back with the vodka. Anton looks at it, gulps it down.

ANTON

Could I have another?

She serves him another vodka. This time Anton sips it, looking wearily at the counter. Meanwhile, the barmaid cuts slices of lemon and puts them in a jar for future drinks.

Anton types code...

BARBARA

(while cutting)

I love the way you talk... I wish I had that kinda talk. 'You from New York?

ANTON

(while typing)

Yeah.

BARBARA

I knew it.

ANTON

My grand parents were from Russia.

BARBARA

Do you speak Russian?

ANTON

A little.

BARBARA

Say a few words.

ANTON

"Golodnyye zhivoty net ushey"

BARBARA

What does it mean?

ANTON

"Hungry bellies have no ears."

BARBARA

Hungry bellies have no ears??? What does that mean?

ANTON

I don't know. Nobody could ever explain it to me. I always thought it was the strangest saying...

BARBARA

You sure you got it right?
"Bellies have no ears"??

ANTON

That's the saying, I swear.

She laughs.

BARBARA

Well for that, I'm having a vodka too.

She pours herself a shot of vodka, raises her glass to Anton.

BARBARA (CONT'D)

(poorly pronounced)
Narsdey... rowvia.

ANTON

Nasdrovia!

They drink it all in one gulp. He asks the barmaid for another vodka, she serves him one.

BARBARA

You like vodka don't you.

ANTON

Please don't tell my wife...

And there: in a second, Anton has playfully set his boundaries and Barbara felt it. She gently, furtively adjusts her posture, starts wiping the counter to gain some distance. Anton looks down at his glass, perhaps feeling a little stupid about his last line.

BARBARA

You look like you need to confide
something in someone .

ANTON

Me??

BARBARA

Yeah, you do. Come on. I'm a total stranger. You're never gonna see me again. Tell me why you're here in the middle of nowhere hitting on that keyboard like your life depended on it.

He looks at her, gauges her trustworthiness.

ANTON

Give me that napkin.

She reaches for a cocktail napkin.

ANTON (CONT'D)

You have a pen?

She hands him her pen.

ANTON (CONT'D)

Full name please?

BARMAID

Barbara Lehman. What about yours?

ANTON

Anton Zaleski.

He finishes writing, hands the napkin back.

ANTON (CONT'D)

If you sign this I will tell you what I'm doing.

BARMAID

(reading)

"I, Barbara Lehman, swear not to divulge any information related to Anton Zaleski's professional activities."

She smiles.

BARMAID (CONT'D)

You know this will never hold in court, don't you?

ANTON

It's a moral engagement, not a legal obligation. Sign it and I'll tell you what I do.

She signs the napkin, hands it to Anton.

ANTON (CONT'D)

All right. I'm here to make digital information travel in sixteen milliseconds or less between the BATS exchange in Kansas, and the NYSE. Round trip.

BARMAID

Say that again?

ANTON

I'm here to make digital information travel between the BATS exchange in Kansas, and the New York Stock Exchange, and then back, in less than sixteen milliseconds.

BARMAID

Okay, why do you do that?

ANTON

Say you're an investor in Kansas, and I'm a trader, also in Kansas.

BARMAID

I don't even know what a trader exactly is...

ANTON

I'm one of the in-between guys that sells you the shares you want. Now say you want to buy... What do you want to buy?

The barmaid looks around, sees a tomato laying around, looks at the little sticker on it - it says "made in South Africa"...

BARMAID

I want to buy... a South African Tomato Company.

ANTON

(correcting her)

Good, you want to buy shares from a South African Tomato Company. So lets say you want to buy... One thousand shares, and lets say you want to buy them at a maximum price of one dollar each.

BARMAID

Lets do it.

ANTON

You send this request in the system, you type "I would like to buy one thousand shares of *South African Tomato Company* at a maximum of 1\$ a share."

BARMAID

Okay. Perfect.

ANTON

So a chunk of brokers, me included, get this order. But I have something special. I have the fastest line...

BARMAID

(interrupting)

By the way I already have a headache.

ANTON

...What does it mean? It means my computer can buy stock in New York before everybody else. So I know you want to buy shares at one dollar, I go to the New York Stock Exchange and buy all the stock that sells for sale for less than a dollar. All right?

BARMAID

I guess...

ANTON

So I'm ahead of the game, I look at who is selling shares at 99 cents or less, and I buy 1000 of them, when I know you're willing to buy them for a dollar each. I can send my 1\$ offer back to Kansas and be the first one in line with 1000 shares of *South African Tomato Company*, and your computer buys them automatically because that's what you told it to do. This all happened in about... sixteen milliseconds.

BARMAID

What's sixteen milliseconds?

ANTON

It's one single hummingbird's wing flap.

BARMAID

Okay, then what?

ANTON

That's it. That's the whole thing. I made 1000 times 1 cent, so I made 10\$ without any risk.

BARMAID

So you're doing all this for ten dollars?

ANTON

No, because I'm doing 200 000 transactions like this a day, every work day, all year. 200 000 times 10\$ times 230, that's 460 million dollars a year, with no risk and almost no investment. It's like time travel. It's like seeing the lottery's next winning numbers before they're announced.

She reflects on all that's been said...

BARMAID

Sixteen milliseconds, hun?

ANTON

Yeah.

BARMAID

And the farmers?

ANTON

What do you mean?

BARMAID

What do the tomato farmers in South Africa get for this? Do they get a commission?

ANTON

The farmers aren't relevant.

BARMAID

How can they be irrelevant?? They're the ones growing the tomatoes!

ANTON

They're not an important variable in this system. It's really... Mathematically, for our business plan, they're irrelevant. He's out of the

BARMAID

Well... I guess I wouldn't want to be the farmer who's mathematically irrelevant to your business plan.

Awkward silence. She went too far. Anton suddenly goes autistically distant on her.

BARMAID (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I have a really big mouth...
I'm gonna shut up now.

ANTON

No... It's an interesting question. It raises a lot of epistemological questions. Thank you. Check please.

He starts coding again.

44

INT. VINCENT MOBILE HEADQUARTERS/APPALACHIAN BASE - DAY

44

MUSIC GOES ON...

ON A PROGRESS MAP: ASSISTANT HANDS are working on the Kansas - New York map of the line. On what used to be the dotted line, there are strips of colored tape indicating the progress of the digging. Little bits of the line are covered with green strips, most of the dotted line is in orange strips.

47

EXT. PENNSYLVANIAN SUBURBIA - DAY

47

A horizontal drilling machine shoots ten foot tube sections underground, beneath the road. Up ahead, a worker holds his portable scanner, following the line underground moving forward. Marc is on site, checking up on them.

Meanwhile, on site, Vincent is with a man from the area, on the road, asking for a signature on a land contract. They shake hands, he walks back towards his car.

As he walks, he catches a glimpse of one of those sketchy CHINESE MASSAGE PARLOR places that line the highways and the downtowns of America:

"Chinese Massage and Reflexology"

With a flashing "open" neon sign next to it.

He gets a SHARP PAIN in the stomach, it doesn't let go, he takes deep breaths... He tries to breathe the stomach pains away.

Vincent's cell phone rings.

VINCENT
(aggressive)
Yeah?

OPHELIA
(from phone)
Huh... this is Ophelia, for the drilling job?

Vincent tries to remember...

OPHELIA (CONT'D)
The "Hummingbird" project? I didn't want to sign your thirty page "Non-Disclosure Agreement", remember?

VINCENT
Oh! Yeah, hi, how are you?

OPHELIA
Fine, thanks. I read your proposal.

For some reason Vincent is a little flushed. They reach the SUV, Mark goes inside, Vincent stays outside to finish the conversation.

OPHELIA (CONT'D)
Hello?

VINCENT
Yeah, yeah sorry the connection is bad. So you read it? What'd you think?

OPHELIA
You're right, it's a pretty big job.

VINCENT
Yeah?

OPHELIA
Like... Probably the biggest thing our company ever handled. Only four inches right?

VINCENT
Yeah, only four inches.

OPHELIA
Four inches is good.

VINCENT
Yeah, four inches is good.
(realizes the bad connotation)
I mean...

He slaps his forehead, freezes at the awkward qui pro quo...

OPHELIA

Going 10 miles under a forest and a river.

VINCENT

Yeah.

OPHELIA

I can do it for half your price, in half the time you want it to be done.

Dumbfounded look on Vincent.

OPHELIA (CONT'D)

But I need two hundred fifty thousand upfront.

VINCENT

How are you going to do this twice as fast, for half the money?

OPHELIA

I can't tell ya.

VINCENT

Why's that?

OPHELIA

'Cause you'd have to sign a non-disclosure agreement.

Vincent smiles - she nailed him.

VINCENT

(smiling)

Okay I'll sign your N.D.A.

48

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD/CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

48

Vincent and Mark are now on a back country road, heading towards a construction site. Elliot, the young contractor, is with four other men, THEY ARE ALL PACKING UP THEIR GEAR while construction trucks are being loaded on flat bed trucks... The crew is deserting the construction site.

VINCENT

(in his car)

What the fuck!?!... What are they doing!?!...

They park on the side of the road, Vincent gets out, mad as hell.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

(to Elliot)

HEY! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?

Elliot sees Vincent, sighs, keeps packing up.

ELLIOT

(to his crew)

KEEP MOVING!

(to Vincent, cocky)

We're terminating our contract.

VINCENT

That's a breach of contract, you can't do that.

ELLIOT

Of course we can. It's expensive, but we can. We owe you thirty thousand dollars. You'll get a check by Monday.

Dumbfounded stare on Vincent.

VINCENT

Why are you doing this?!

ELLIOT

We got offered a better pay for much less work.

VINCENT

So you're just leaving!?

ELLIOT

Look... I got so many bills to pay, I just couldn't say no. It's only business Vincent, nothing personal.

VINCENT

Who gave you the contract? WHO?

ELLIOT

I signed a Non Disclosure Agreement.

BAM. Vincent knows who's behind this:

VINCENT

It's Linda Raulston, isn't it...

ELLIOT

I can't tell you.

Vincent grabs Elliot's arm.

VINCENT

IT'S LINDA RAULSTON! SAY IT!!

Elliot shoves Vincent away.

ELLIOT

Back off.

VINCENT

If you told her anything about our project I'm gonna fuck you up.

ELLIOT

Careful what you wish for buddy...

Mark reaches for Vincent, takes him away.

MARK

Come on Vinnie, lets leave these ladies alone.

Vincent turns his back on them, heads to the car.

MARK (CONT'D)

(to Elliot)

Back in the days there use to be something

called a "code of honor". "Pride".
"Loyalty". It's what real men are all
about. Guess you rats never heard about
that, huh?

ELLIOT

Fuck you.

MARK

Fuck you too.

Mark catches up to Vincent who's pacing back and forth in front of
their SUV...

MARK (CONT'D)

What do you think they're up to? Building
their own line?

VINCENT

No way... We're too far ahead of the
game...

(beat)

They're just trying to screw us.

MARK

What do you want me to do?

VINCENT

Give this contract to someone else and see
if they stole more of our crews... Double
their wages if you have to but keep'em
working...

49 INT. ANTON'S SUITE - DAY

49

Anton is working hard at trying to strip his software code down,
typing C++ code on his laptop, jotting down notes on post-its...
His forehead is beading with sweat.

A SPAGHETTI OF TANGLED CABLES has "grown" out of all his gear.

CROSS FADE

50 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD/CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

50

Near the road, TREE ROOTS HAVE THE SAME SHAPE AS THE SPAGHETTI
CABLES... and next to it, along the road, a TRENCHER machine is
digging away a section of the 1000 mile long, four inch wide
tunnel.

CROSS FADE

51 INT. HOTEL POOL - DAY

51

Anton is by himself in the hot tub section of the bland neon-lit
interior pool, trying to get his head straight. He gets an idea,
WRITES DOWN A COUPLE OF LINES OF CODE on a stained notepad from
the hotel.

A FEMALE HOTEL CLIENT, barefooted but with a skirt and shirt,
walks up to the hot tub part of the pool, puts her feet in the
water, sits on the tile floor - THIS CLIENT IS... LINDA RAULSTON,
HIS OLD BOSS. Anton, taking notes, focused, does not notice who it
is at first... But then he feels awkward having this stranger
sitting too close to him.

LINDA RAULSTON

Anton...

Anton REALLY jumps at the sight of his old boss, feet in the water, so close.

ANTON

Linda... W... W... What are you doing here?

LINDA RAULSTON

I needed to see you.

Anton looks around, starting to freak out.

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)

It's not the same since you left... I'm still trying to understand what happened, why you treat me this way. We gave you a scholarship, I got personally involved to make sure you had a future. To make sure that you were safe in this crazy business. I nurtured your talent.

No answer.

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)

I feel betrayed... I keep trying to understand why you sabotaged our relationship... Why you want to steal our codes.

ANTON

I don't care about these codes. They're archaic.

LINDA RAULSTON

Well, see, that's the thing, Anton. It will be hard for you to prove that you did not develop what you're working on right now while you were working for me. And it will be really hard for you to not use a single line of code that doesn't have similarities with what you did for us in the past.

Anton processes this...

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)

Have you heard of Vladimir Egorov? A fellow Russian? Some kind of math genius?

No answer.

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)

He rewrote some code for the McMinster Fund 8 years ago, gave them a 10 or 12 milliseconds edge on the network, made them hundreds of millions. He did the kind of stuff you do, you know? Make the software faster, leaner... One day, he decides to leave the firm. When he leaves, he takes a couple of lines of code with him. Nothing special, just... pretty generic code, you know? So he left the firm, went out there and got hired by a competitor. McMinster didn't like that. So they threw

the FBI on Egorov. They said he was a "threat to national security". They said that he stole codes from them, and now they claimed he could make the whole financial system crash if he wanted to. The feds found the couple of lines Egorov had on his laptop. They didn't have a clue what it was, so... I guess because they didn't want to look stupid, they agreed that it was a huge "threat to national security". They locked him up with no bail...

(long beat)

He's been in jail for the last 8 years. He's still waiting for a Supreme Court ruling, which he will probably win. But... meanwhile, he spent 8 years in jail. And McMinster will get nothing, no punishment, not even a slap on the wrist.

Anton tries hard to hide his fear...

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)

8 years is a long time. Of course Egorov didn't do anything wrong. But it goes to say how someone can make your life hell if they decide to. How old would your daughters be after eight years?

That's it: Anton wants to kill her. Literally.

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)

Do you see where I'm going with this? It doesn't really matter if you're right or wrong, Anton. The Company owns you for the rest of your life. It's how it is. It can really fuck you up if it wants to.

ANTON

Do you really think I just left you without getting myself some insurance policy, Linda? Do you think I'm that stupid? I have a post-doctorate in Quantum Physics. Everybody knows you're a psychopath.

She leans in towards him...

LINDA RAULSTON

That's right. And I won't leave you alone until you come back. You can't turn your back on this. 'Cause I won't.

She steps out of the hot tub, heads out.

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)

Come back to your family, Anton.

52 INT. ANTON'S SUITE - DAY

52

The entrance door slowly opens, Anton walks in, dressed with his bathrobe, freaked out. He looks around for traces of a break in, of someone spying on him.

He goes to his computer, looks around, makes sure nothing has been moved.

He goes to the window, looks at the river that is faintly lit by distant lights, where four or five humans walk along the river, by the hotel...

In Anton's eyes, they are suspicious characters. He pulls on the curtains, darkness ensues. He takes another look around the room, feels he's being watched.

And then, he hits the computers, troubled, scared. It's as if he was trying to relieve some of the pressure by coding.

53

EXT. HOTEL PARKING - DAY

53

Vincent and Mark drive to the hotel parking lot... Mark is already on the phone, talking to all his contractors.

INSIDE THEIR CAR:

VOICE (FROM HANDSFREE SPEAKER)
(to Mark)
We're gonna pay the penalties. We're out.
That's it. I'm sorry. What else do you
want me to say?

MARK
(to his handsfree)
I want you to say you're a fucking
ungrateful piece of shit! That's what I
want you to say you bastard! We fucking
offered you the moon on this job and now
you back out!?

A low rumble gets louder - thud thud thud thud thud: the blades from a helicopter.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD, Vincent sees a small chopper at a distance: IT'S LINDA RAULSTON, her assistant and the pilot

VINCENT
(to himself)
Motherfucker...

VOICE(FROM HANDSFREE SPEAKER)
I'm gonna hang up now...

Vincent bursts out of the car that's still moving, Mark hits the brakes, Vincent runs towards Linda Raulston's chopper as the blades turn faster and faster

VINCENT
Hey! HEY!!!

They can't hear him, Vincent catches up to them as the chopper starts to levitate.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
GET OUT YOU BITCH!

She just looks at Vincent, smiles, and gives him the finger. The chopper flies away...

VINCENT (CONT'D)
GET OVER HERE YOU PIECE OF SHIT!!!

The chopper is long gone... Vincent is freaking out. Mark catches up to Vincent.

MARK

What the fuck's she doing here??

Vincent is really upset...

VINCENT

What's the count?

MARK

Eighteen crews are ditching us. They're all paying the penalties with a smile. I have no idea how much they're payin' em but it's much more than what we can afford. They're shelving them.

VINCENT

Fuck... FUCK!
(he thinks, looks at Mark,
suspicious)
Are you a mole?

MARK

What? What's a "mole"??

VINCENT

ARE YOU A MOLE!? ARE YOU WITH LINDA!?

MARK

WHO THE FUCK IS LINDA??

Vincent sees that Mark is not lying... He calms down.

MARC

What the fuck man... You're getting
fucking paranoid.

Vincent paces back and forth, back and forth...

VINCENT

All right... See who in our team can handle these jobs and get me replacements for what's left. Fly them in if you have to.

54

INT. ANTON'S SUITE - DAY

54

Anton opens his hotel room door, revealing crazy-eyed Vincent, staring straight at his cousin.

VINCENT

How's it going?

ANTON

Good. Busy.

VINCENT

(accusing)
"Good?" You sure?

Anton feels the eyes stabbing him, looks away.

ANTON

Yeah, good.

VINCENT

You don't have anything to tell me?

ANTON
What do you mean?

Beat.

VINCENT
I know, Anton. I know Raulston was here.

ANTON
Vinnie, I'm sorry...

VINCENT
Why did you hide it from me?

ANTON
I don't know... I... She told me some
fucked up shit and I didn't want to get
you upset.

VINCENT
Are you sure that's why you didn't tell
me?

Anton processes Vincent's last words... Something switches in his
mind.

ANTON
What do you mean? What are you saying?

VINCENT
I don't know Anton, I mean... this bitch
buys our crews, comes over and meets you,
and then you tell me everything's all
right? You lie to me!? What am I supposed
to think!? Should I wonder if my own
cousin is starting to fuck with me?

ANTON
Don't worry all'right?!

VINCENT
Why are you telling me not to worry?!
Should I be worried?? Is that what you're
saying?!

ANTON
I'M JUST WORKING! I'M FUCKING DOING ALL I
CAN TO FIND YOU YOUR FUCKING
MILLISECOND!!!

Vincent reaches out to put his hand on Anton in a demeaning way.

VINCENT
Talk to me Anton...

ANTON PUSHES VINCENT'S HAND AWAY, struggles not to just punch him
in the face - that's his limit, right there.

There's anger and sadness in his eyes. HE SHOVES VINCENT AGAIN,
but this time Vincent pushes back.

ANTON
AFTER ALL THE SHIT WE'VE BEEN THROUGH, YOU
THINK I WOULD BETRAY YOU LIKE THAT?
REALLY? DO YOU REALIZE HOW MUCH THAT HURTS
VINNIE?!
You don't have a clue, don't you... You
really think I'm doing this for a stupid

country home on a hill, you think I'm doing this for fucking hummingbirds? I can get hummingbirds if I want, I can buy a stupid country home on a hill if I want to Vinnie... As a matter of fact I could buy ten of those country homes if I wanted to.

Vincent just processes Anton's words, feels like shit.

ANTON (CONT'D)

Now get out of here. Get outta my face.

VINCENT

Anton..

ANTON

GET THE FUCK OUT!

They look at each other for a long time, deeply distraught. Vincent leaves... Anton goes back to his computers.

55 EXT. PRAIRIE - DAY

55

There's a sign by the side of the road, right in front of a prairie: "Jesus is here. Read John 14:6"

There's a loud engine noise that gets louder and louder. Distant.

ACROSS THE PRAIRIE, A BIG LONESOME TRENCHER cuts right across the land, splitting the prairie in two. Behind it, men place the iconic orange tube down the trench while a second truck rolls over the trench to tap the earth back in place.

EXT. EBENSBURG HOTEL - 30 MILES WEST OF APPALACHIAN CLIFF - SUNSET

Vincent paces back and forth, looking at the trees, looking at the river, troubled, feeling guilty...

The sun is setting.

MINUTES LATER, Vincent is sitting on a desolate bench, staring at the ground. He looks around, reaches to grab a little branch that fell off a tree, and... HE VERY SLOWLY DRAWS A LONG LINE on the ground, tries to keep it as straight as possible - the way he does it is a little creepy, like he lost his mind.

BACK IN ANTON'S ROOM,

Anton is furiously working on his codes, disturbed...

57 EXT./INT. VINCENT MOBILE HEADQUARTERS/APPALACHIAN BASE - DAY 57

OUTSIDE, Ophelia walks towards the mobile headquarters, sees Vincent talking with two assistants through the window. She knocks on the door, Vincent comes out instead of letting her in.

VINCENT

Hi... What's this?

She grabs two small rocks laying around, lies the satellite map down on the ground and holds it flat with those rocks. She squats down over it, he follows her lead.

OPHELIA

Okay. So this is a satellite of the area you want dig through. You want the biggest, most expensive digger on the face of the Earth to dig this one long strip along these forests and then under that river here, because you're thinking they'll never let you dig an access road through a National Park, so you assumed it's the only way to do so, right?

VINCENT

It is.

OPHELIA

Well, not exactly. Look here...

She points to a tree-like network of waterways that fans across the forest - SMALLER RIVERS; ONES YOU CAN BARELY SEE FROM ABOVE.

OPHELIA (CONT'D)

You got nine little rivers here.

He's starting to understand...

OPHELIA (CONT'D)

I can get you four mini-diggers on rafts, rack'em up along your line on those rivers, and get them to work at the same time. So... for half your budget, I can hypothetically finish the work about four times faster.

Dumbfounded look on Vincent.

VINCENT

On the phone you said twice as fast, not four.

OPHELIA

Murphy's law. I'm a pessimist.

VINCENT

Okay we have a deal. Just one thing.

OPHELIA

Tell me.

Vincent smiles like a five year old:

VINCENT

I wanna come on the boat.

58

INT. RAULSTON FLOOR/LAB - DAY

58

Linda Raulston looks at a thick printed document, standing next to Jenny the quant.

LINDA RAULSTON

What's this??

JENNY

It's a thesis. Twenty three year-old kid out of NYU. I think he solved our problem.

Linda grabs the document - a doctorate thesis, flips through pages and pages of mathematical formulas.

LINDA RAULSTON

Go get him.

JENNY

He's already here.

Jenny goes to the door, signals to JIMMY TRAN, 23, Asian, to come in.

JIMMY TRAN

Hey.

Beat.

LINDA RAULSTON

(showing the thesis)

You did this?

JIMMY TRAN

Huh... I guess, yeah.

LINDA RAULSTON

You can do the pulsing?

JIMMY TRAN

...?

JENNY

She means Pulse Shaping.

JIMMY TRAN

Oh... Yeah... It's theoretical but yeah. I don't see why it wouldn't work.

Linda smiles at Jimmy.

LINDA RAULSTON

(to Jenny)

Could you give us a minute?

The staff exits the room.

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)

How are you, Jimmy?

JIMMY

I'm fine, thank you.

LINDA RAULSTON

I can't tell you how happy I am to meet you.

Awkward smile by Jimmy.

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)

This family relies on geniuses like you. Without you, we're nothing. If you are interested in being part of this, we will see you as a member of the family. As a partner... We're also here to nurture your talent, to protect you from this crazy world.

JIMMY

Thank you. I mean... This is a beautiful office.

Jimmy realizes that was a stupid comment.

LINDA RAULSTON
 ...How can I help you, Jimmy? Do you have
 issues with tuition fees, rent, anything?
 We're here to help.

JIMMY
 This is really nice of you...

LINDA RAULSTON
 No, not at all Jimmy, the way I see it
 you're a superstar. I'm like your agent.
 Your super agent. I want to make sure
 you're given that perfect, fertile soil so
 you can blossom.

Awkward beat.

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)
 I would like to offer you two hundred
 thousand dollars a year so you can work
 for us and share your ideas.

Happy, dumbfounded face on Jimmy Tran.

59 INT. ANTON'S SUITE - DAY

59

Anton is at his computer, coding unintelligible C++ code, similar
 to stuff like this:

```
//file name: stockType.h
#ifdef H_stockType
#define H_stockType

using namespace std;

(etc.)
```

Something hurts his concentration... He looks through the narrow
 opening between the closed drapes, out the window: IT'S THAT BIRD
 HOUSE THAT FELL FROM A TREE BY THE RIVER, it draws all of Anton's
 attention.

BEEP BEEP BEEP!

The phone by the bed rings: Anton freaks.

BEEP BEEP BEEP!

He goes to the phone, looks at it like it was a monster, answers.

ANTON
 Hi.

LAETITIA
 (upset)
 Anton why aren't you calling?? It's been a
 week!

ANTON
 Huh... I'm sorry... I've been busy.

CUT BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN LAETITIA IN NYC AND ANTON IN HOTEL ROOM

At their apartment, Laetitia is back from work, still in high
 heels, grey skirt white shirt and a grey vest. The daughters are
 running around, noisy as kids should be.

LAETITIA
Busy??? God do you realize the work I have
to do with the kids and my job??

ANTON
I'm sorry... Guess I didn't... I was
really busy.

Long beat.

LAETITIA
You sound like a stranger Anton. I'm
worried.

Anton walks back to the window, pulls on one of the curtains, eyes
locked on the bird house under the tree...

ANTON
Don't worry. I'm okay.

LAETITIA
I'm worried about us.

Long beat.

LAETITIA (CONT'D)
These last months You've been talking to
me like some annoying stranger...

ANTON
What?? That's not true...

LAETITIA
Yes, listen to yourself for a second Anton
you really are.

ANTON
I'm not.

LAETITIA
Yes you are!

Long beat.

LAETITIA (CONT'D)
Stop treating me like I'm some dumb bimbo,
you have to let me in we're together in
this. I also have a job, and I'm taking
care of your two kids at the same time,
that makes me an investor tooNo answer.

ANTON
I'm sorry... I have to get back to work...

LAETITIA
How convenient...

ANTON
Anyway it's too late to back out. Too many
people are depending on me.

LAETITIA
Vincent is depending on you that's for
sure.

ANTON
And I depend on him.

LAETITIA

No, you don't.

Anton gets emotional.

ANTON

Vincent is the reason I'm still here. He's the one that got me through high school without killing myself. If it weren't for him I probably would be in a mental institution right now, or worse.

(beat)

He's the only friend I have. The only one.

60

EXT. RIVER FACING THE HOTEL - END OF DAY

60

Anton walks along the river, towards the bird house that fell under the tree. *The phone conversation continues over this scene.*

LAETITIA (O.S.)

*I gotta go. You
call me tomorrow if you feel like it.*

ANTON (O.S.)

Babe... Don't hang up this way.

LAETITIA (O.S.)

Bye.

Clic. She hung up.

Anton reaches the bird house leaning on its side, bends down, contemplates it, a gentle smile on his face. It is on a patch of grass surrounded by puddles of water.

There's an empty kids' swing, swaying to the wind.

All we hear now are sounds from the present, next to the river.

Anton gently pulls the house up from its side so that it stands again, on the grass, AS IF IT WAS A REAL SIZE HOUSE ON A PRIVATE ISLAND. He smiles...

His smile slowly turns to horror: A DEAD BIRD is stuck halfway inside the bird house, partly decomposed.

Anton freaks out, very slowly walks backwards as if facing a zombie, then turns and walks away, almost running, deeply disturbed.

61

EXT. FROM HELICOPTER IN THE SKY - CLEARED APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS - DAY

Linda Raulston and Scott hover above a construction site at the top of a tall hill.

Scott points to a 150 FOOT TALL CELL TOWER SLOWLY BEING RAISED IN ONE SINGLE 150 FOOT SECTION BY A CRANE. It's now standing at a 70 degree angle, two thirds of the way up. We are at an angle, so we don't really see the crew on the ground - they are blocked by the trees at the bottom.

Scott points towards the horizon. He screams over the helicopter noise.

SCOTT
BATS in Kansas...

He turns 180 degrees, points in the opposite horizon.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
...New York Stock Exchange.

Scott points back towards Kansas.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Eighteen towers that way,...

He turns 180 degrees, points towards New York.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Fifteen towers that way.

Linda just stares at the distant horizon, towards New York.

LINDA RAULSTON
Where are they digging?

Scott hands her binoculars. FAR AWAY, WE CATCH A FAINT GLIMPSE OF VINCENT'S CONSTRUCTION SITE AT THE APPALACHIAN CLIFFS.

SCOTT
Right at the bottom of that cliff: that little patch with less trees there in the forest facing the cliff, that's the digging.

62 INT. ANTON'S SUITE - JOUR

62

Anton, four day beard, is typing C++ code on his laptop, pale. There's a knock on the door. He keeps coding. Another knock.

ANTON
NO HOUSEKEEPING!

VINCENT
(o.s.)
It's me!

Anton finishes typing a line, opens the door and goes back to his laptop. on, that is justified by Vincent who just learned he has cancer.

Vincent walks into the room where FOOD AND TRAYS LEFTOVERS FILL THE ROOM.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Hey.
Fuck Anton... open your windows for God's sake it smells like a dead corpse in here.

Vincent opens the window, keeps all the bad news to himself.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
So. Where are we?

Anton stops typing, turns to Vincent with stabbing eyes.

He types a command, presses enter. A result immediately appears on the screen:

Processing: 2.3203437 milliseconds
Opt. Regenerators: 0.0131554 milliseconds
Fiber: 0.0003361 milliseconds
Simulation result: 17.220493 milliseconds

ANTON

That's where we are. I only cut one tenth of a millisecond. Why? Because I already told you that I can't shave a whole millisecond off the code. Did I mention that already? Yes, I did.

VINCENT

All right, well, a tenth of a millisecond is a start.

He studies some code on the screen - gibberish.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

What's all this?

ANTON

Code. You have to send your orders in native code. It saves processing time.

VINCENT

Code??? You're serious?

ANTON

Inputting that way saves point zero zero two milliseconds.

Vincent paces around, ideas rushing through his head.

VINCENT

God... it really reeks in here... What'd you do?? Kill a guy??

Vincent notices something on Anton's desk, in the upper corner:
THE ROTTING DEAD BIRD FROM THE FALLEN BIRD CAGE.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

What the fuck is that?

ANTON

It's a bird. Dead bird.

VINCENT

Why is it on your desk?

ANTON

It's a reminder of what'll happen to me if I fail.

VINCENT

You feelin' all right man?

ANTON

I'm perfect. I'm great.

VINCENT

Come on. Talk to me.

ANTON

I don't think you can understand.

VINCENT

Oh I can't? Try me.

ANTON

Your project doesn't consider the entire variables. It's epistemologically flawed.

VINCENT

Oh is it? What the fuck are you talking about Anton?

ANTON

If we take into account the entire financial ecosystem, we're bound to fail. No matter what. The smaller base units will eventually run out and the whole system will implode.

VINCENT

"The smaller base units"??? What are you talking about???

ANTON

Smaller units. Farmers. Workers. Our system doesn't create positive feedback, it just sucks their resources until they fail. And then we fail. It can take fifty years, it can take one thousand years, but the result is always the same.

Nothing is said for a while.

VINCENT

You know what? You and me are going on a little road trip. Have a look at the line. Get your mind off the coding for a couple of hours. Better: a couple of days. What do you say? It'll help you think.

ANTON

(while coding)

I need to work.

VINCENT

Yyyyeah... I don't think I'm asking, cuz. Come with me have a look at the work. Get some fresh air. We'll be back in two or three days.

Anton keeps coding on his computer.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

(with authority)

Please Anton. That bird is fucking creepy you need to get out.

Anton stops, sighs.

ANTON

As you wish.

Anton and Vincent are in a rented Ford Explorer on a secluded, empty road. Vincent is driving in hoodie and jeans, Anton is coding in C++ on his laptop.

VINCENT
I thought we said "no coding"...

ANTON
I'm just fixing a couple of things.

KAPOW!

CLOPACLOPACLOPA...

VINCENT
Shit... What the fuck was that?

ANTON
Flat tire.

VINCENT
Are you serious??

OUTSIDE, THE CAR STOPS TO A HALT, the tire is totally exploded.

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE, Vincent just finished replacing the tire with a spare. He lets the jack go down, the car slowly leans on the spare tire he just installed, and then...

SHHHHHHHHHH! AIR LEAK. Bad spare tire.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Shit! FUCK!

He kicks the car...

CUT TO:

Minutes have passed, Vincent is on his phone talking to someone.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
(over the phone)
Wh... What?? For how long??
(he listens)
An hour!?
(he listens)
All right all right just hurry please we
got a big thing waiting for us.

He sighs, stressed out. Anton sees the vast expanse of rolling hills by the road.

ANTON
Come on.

He grabs his bag with his laptop, walks towards the side of the road, near a tree. Vincent finds this odd but follows him.

64

EXT. HILLY ROAD 20 MILES FROM APPALACHIAN CLIFF - DAY

64

HALF AN HOUR LATER, Anton is sitting by the road, typing on his laptop. Vincent throws rocks trying to hit a road sign. Anton suddenly stops typing.

ANTON
That's it. It's dead.

He puts his computer away. Vincent still has stomach cramps, tries to hide it, but Anton takes notice.

VINCENT

You think when this is done I could take your kids out? Like... For ice cream or something?

We can read it on Anton's face: this is the first time Vincent asks something like this.

ANTON

Yeah, yeah, of course. They'd really love it.

VINCENT

I never did that type of thing, I think I'd like to. If we have the time.

ANTON

Anytime.

VINCENT

Thank you.
(beat)
I'm sorry I doubted you.
Really, really sorry.

CUT TO:

AN HOUR HAS PASSED, Anton and Vincent are by the water, trying to catch frogs. Anton gets his hands closer to one... He dives for it, catches it!

Good old times.

They hear a truck honking, look towards the road: the towing service.

They grab their stuff, walk back towards the road, somewhat lighter hearted.

65

EXT. BOTTOM OF CLEARED APPALACHIAN CLIFF - DAY

65

Vincent, Anton and A DOZEN CONSTRUCTION WORKERS are looking at the sky.

A low rumble gets louder, then gets sharper...

UP IN THE AIR, The gigantic SIKORSKY 64 HELICOPTER, 70 feet long, two floors high, appears from the sky, carrying a 25 foot long freight container. Everybody on the ground is blasted by the wind, the cousins have a HUGE smile on their faces.

INSIDE THE CHOPPER, Mark, with helmet and integrated headset, has the smile of a five year old.

MARK

YEAH BABY!

On the ground:

VINCENT

That's a big motherfucker...

The Sikorsky hovers above the site, brings the container over it, while all the crew is blasted by the wind coming from the giant blades.

CLONG! The helicopter lands the container, the impact blasts dust away from under it.

The cable is released, falls over the container.

The chopper now leaves...

In the chopper:

MARK
THAT'S THE SHIT!

CUT TO:

66 EXT. BOTTOM OF CLEARED APPALACHIAN CLIFF - SUNSET 66

Anton and Vincent get closer to the container, as A CREW OF 10 PEOPLE carry heavy machinery parts out from it, and assemble them right in front of the tall cliff, inside a freshly cleared hole; it's A BIG HORIZONTAL DRILLING MACHINE.

CUT TO:

67 EXT. BOTTOM OF CLEARED APPALACHIAN CLIFF - NIGHT 67

The powerful drilling machine starts drilling a four inch hole through the rock at the bottom of the cliff...

Ray is hurt by the sound of the drill on the rock as if it was a dentist drilling his teeth.

RAY
Jesus that's hard rock. It's way harder than I thought. Hope you got time...

VINCENT
I don't. How long??

RAY
Too early to tell... Shit that's a lot of heat... TOMMY KEEP THE WATER COMING!

TOMMY
I AM!

RAY
IT'S SMOKING LIKE HELL! STOP! STOP IT!

Another worker presses on the emergency stop button on the big machine.

VINCENT
What's happening??

RAY
It's the rock... It broke the drill bit.

VINCENT
How did this happen?!

RAY
I don't understand... It's way harder than our samples. I gotta have some kind of replacement part but it's gotta be in

carbide... And I gotta find a way to cool this thing down...

VINCENT

Find a way. Get through this mountain. And I don't want you telling me it's gonna cost me more, 'cause I have no more.

RAY

Wow wow wow take it easy... I couldn't predict this, it's part of the game, it's full of surprises.

VINCENT

Read your contract. The surprises are on your side.

Ray laughs out the frustration building inside.

RAY

I think we're off to a really bad start here.

VINCENT

Well I don't know what to say Ray, it's all there on paper. You're responsible.

Ray looks at a distance, really distraught.

RAY

I thought I was gonna make a little bit of money on this...

68

INT. VINCENT MOBILE HEADQUARTERS/APPALACHIAN BASE - DAY

68

ON THE PROGRESS MAP: ASSISTANT HANDS are working once again the Kansas - New York map of the line - the progress map with hand-taped strips of colored tape indicating the progress of the digging. The line now has a lot more green strips than the last time we saw it...

There's progress.

69

EXT. ON THE JUNGLE RIVER - DAY

69

Ophelia, Vincent and a GUIDE are on a small boat with an overboard motor, riding down a narrow river blanketed by overhanging trees - it feels like the jungle. Behind them, another small boat with THREE EMPLOYEES is following them through the eerie setting coming straight out of Heart of Darkness.

OPHELIA

So were you born in New York?

VINCENT

Yeah... My parents came here in the sixties, from Russia: "Smolensk". My father was twenty two or twenty three when he got here, they stayed in a two bedroom apartment with a couple other Russian families...

OPHELIA

Russian immigrant in the sixties... That must have been fun.

Vincent smiles.

VINCENT

Just two weeks after he got here two policemen came in the apartment and threw him in the back of their car. They were sure he was a spy - which he wasn't. They brought him to some secret place, interrogated him for four weeks. Never saw the light of day.

OPHELIA

Wow... That's crazy. I didn't know they did that.

VINCENT

My Mom told me he really changed after it happened. Like... He was a different person. Angry.
I was born a couple 'years later. From that moment up to the time I stood over his death bed, he always told me:
"Whatever you do, make sure you own your freedom."...
Which I always found weird because it's probably the least communist thing a Russian could say at the time.

They look at the river...

OPHELIA

Doesn't having to own your freedom kind of... defeat the purpose of freedom?

VINCENT

Probably.
I also remember he forced me to read Franz Kafka's "The Trial" by the time I was eleven.

OPHELIA

Oh that's harsh.

VINCENT

You read it?

OPHELIA

I'm absolutely certain I didn't.

She looks at the horizon...

OPHELIA (CONT'D)

What a strange project you have...

VINCENT

Do I?

OPHELIA

Yeah, come on. You know that.

VINCENT

I guess we can't always explain why we do what we do... We just do it.

OPHELIA

Is that right? But really, why are you building this?

VINCENT

All I can say is I need to build the fastest fiber optic line between Kansas and New York City and it'll make us filthy rich.

OPHELIA

But... Apart from the money, I'm sure there's something hidden deep down inside that makes you do this. We all do.

VINCENT

Do we?

OPHELIA

Of course. I'm in this business 'cause I want to prove my father wrong - I always felt he was kind of disappointed he never had a boy - he thought I couldn't handle the family business.

VINCENT

That's horrible.

OPHELIA

Well, it's honest. He never told me, but I could always feel it.

OPHELIA (CONT'D)

Come on, your turn.

Vincent wants to open up but can't... His lips actually tremble for a second.

OPHELIA (CONT'D)

We're in the middle of the jungle, outside of the world, come on just say it.

VINCENT

Should I lie down on a couch or something?

She makes a face.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

All right... My father always said I was bony and that I'll crack in two when the shit hits the fan. From the moment I could speak all the way through high school he kept saying it. 'Said I'd never make it in life 'cause I'm too bony. So... There you go. The shit is hitting the fan every day for the last six months, and I will not crack in two until this is done. I promised myself. I'm gonna deliver the fastest fucking fiber optic line from Kansas to New York city. No matter what.

OPHELIA

Good, you made it a positive thing.

VINCENT

I guess...

Up ahead, as the river turns, a strange figure is walking right in the middle of the river, water up to his waist... IT'S A WORKER WITH A PORTABLE SCANNER, dressed in rubber overpants. He's tracking the drilling head of a horizontal digging machine.

OPHELIA

We're here.

The boat gets closer to a freshly cleared, five hundred square feet area by the side of the river where a MINI HORIZONTAL DIGGER is already in action, digging under the riverbed.

Vincent just contemplates the eerie, strange moment. A construction crew in the middle of the jungle...

70 EXT. CLEARING FACING THE JUNGLE RIVER - DAY

70

IT'S SUNSET

The man in rubber overpants is almost across the river, still in the water, tracking the drilling head underneath, exhausted.

Vincent looks at the sunset, at the river, at the sky above, exhilarated, then weary.

CROSS FADE:

71 EXT. CHINESE MASSAGE & REFLEXOLOGY PARKING - NIGHT

71

Vincent is in his car, just staring at the Chinese Massage and Reflexology sign, really nervous. *(note: in an earlier scene, we witnessed Vincent seeing this place as he passed by it once before, while driving from point A to point B with Mark Vega).*

72 INT. CHINESE MASSAGE & REFLEXOLOGY PARLOR - NIGHT

72

Vincent walks in the massage parlor, a buzzer rings. He looks around, notices some certification diplomas on the wall. A CHINESE WOMAN IN HER MID THIRTIES appears from a room in the back, greets him.

MESSAGE THERAPIST

Hello Sir how can I help you?

VINCENT

Yeah huh... I'm sorry I just wanted to know... Are all your services... Legit? Like... Legal?

MESSAGE THERAPIST

Yes yes of course. Real massage. Reflexology. Heal. Relax.

VINCENT

No trouble right? All legal?

MESSAGE THERAPIST

Yes. Just therapy massage, relaxation massage, foot massage, reflexology massage. No "extra" here. Real massage. No trouble.

Oddly, Vincent is swept away by a sea of mixed emotions... Relief, desire of letting go are definitely part of that mix.

73 INT. MASSAGE THERAPY ROOM - NIGHT

73

SLOW MOTION on Vincent, eyes closed, letting go of things, as the massage therapist makes long gestures along his frail body. It hurts but it's a good hurt - as if the massage was bringing out a lot of things that he's been holding in.

This is the most vulnerable that Vincent has ever been for a long, long time... At last, tears come to his eyes.

74 INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

74

Vincent is in an airplane, in a lower grade business class - worn leather seats, eighties style. He closes his eyes, tries to rest for a few minutes.

CACLANG. CACLANG. Turbulence. Vincent jumps up, calms down again.

CACLANG CACLANG CACLANG. More turbulence...

PILOT

Sorry 'bout that folks, we're going through some nasty turbulence, I'm gonna take the plane down a few hundred feet and I think things should get smoother...

This makes Vincent smile with overwhelming irony.

75 INT. BRYAN TAYLOR'S NYC OFFICE - NIGHT

75

Vincent, wearing a suit, is in Bryan Taylor's 30th floor office. He is in the middle of a conversation, nervous...

VINCENT

There's been a couple of delays. The drilling in the mountains is a pain in the ass. Literally.

Awkward beat. MR SIMON, part of Bryan Taylor's team, seems concerned.

MR SIMON

(irritated, to Vincent)

Does that change our calendar? Will we still be able to take the company public next month?

VINCENT

I really don't know at the moment.

BRYAN TAYLOR

Jesus... Sometimes I wonder... Do you really know what you're doing Vinnie? You tell us we should invest in your crazy project, you tell us it's all taken care of, and then we've had nothing but surprises since the beginning.

VINCENT

No, that's totally untrue. We knew we were going to have surprises. We budgeted for them...

BRYAN TAYLOR

(interrupting)

It sounds like you're in over your head.
It sounds like we are in over our heads...

VINCENT

(interrupting)

I'm on top of things Bryan. It's just a
little harder on that one spot, that's
all.

Long beat. Bryan sighs.

MR SIMON

It's a big payment we're about to give
you...

VINCENT

I know, I know...

BRYAN TAYLOR

Are you being one hundred percent honest
with us?

Vincent looks out the window, sighs.

VINCENT

(nervous)

All right. I'm not gonna bullshit you. The
line might not be one hundred percent
operational in a month. But if not, it's
gonna be like... ninety nine point nine
percent operational. So I think that once
99 percent of the line is done, we'll be
able to prove our line is the fastest, at
less than sixteen milliseconds, and I
think that when we establish that, our
stock will skyrocket into the fucking
stratosphere in a microsecond.
Personally? I want to be in when that
happens. But I need the next payment or I
can't go forward. I got a drill that costs
me 120 000 bucks a day to rent. I... I
have a seventy foot long Sikorsky
helicopter to pay. I mean...

BRYAN TAYLOR

(interrupting)

One question.

VINCENT

Yeah.

BRYAN TAYLOR

Are we getting our money's worth, or are
you trying to screw us and give yourself a
big departure bonus when the shit hits the
fan?

VINCENT

Jesus Bry you think we buried five hundred
miles of fiber from Kansas to Indianapolis
just for fun?? Come on... Gimme some
credit here. I mean... We're more than
halfway done...
This line is gonna be fucking fast and
we're gonna get fucking rich. You're
getting more than your money's worth. I
promise. No asshole bonuses.

BRYAN TAYLOR

Don't fuck us Vinnie, I trust you.

Vincent stares straight at Bryan, doesn't blink.

VINCENT

I won't. I'm not. I didn't work on this for the last two years just to get up and leave.

(long beat)

I'm doing this as if it was the last thing I had to do in my life. But to do that, I really need the next payment.

Everybody stares silently at Vincent.

BRYAN TAYLOR

All right Vinnie. All right.

Bryan takes his smartphone, loads a financial app. He looks at account numbers written on a page on his table, taps on one or two things, taps on "electronic wire".

BRYAN TAYLOR (CONT'D)

(to Mr Simon)

What's the amount?

Mr Simon looks on a contract, reads an amount:

MR SIMON

Fifty three million, five hundred thousand dollars.

Bryan types the number in. Meanwhile, Vincent takes out his own smartphone, loads the same financial App.

Bryan counts the zeroes next to the first numbers, making sure he didn't put one too many -

"53 500 000.00\$"

Yep, all good. He clicks on "Accept". The App responds:

**"Are you sure you want to wire 53 500 000.00\$
to account #05341 100 347?"**

He taps on "yes". There's a five second wait.

"Transfer completed. Your confirmation number is BT76534"

BRYAN TAYLOR

Done. Can you check?

Vincent refreshes his account balance directly from his app. It goes from **"127 534.23\$"** to **"53 627 534.23\$"**

VINCENT

(deeply relieved)

Thank you.

Vincent walks out, nervous and excited.

His phone rings.

VINCENT

Yeah?

MARK (FROM PHONE)

Vinnie! God, where are you?? I left you like 20 messages.

He walks out of the waiting room, continues talking --

VINCENT

What's happening? Where are you?

MARK

I'm in Pennsylvania, where are you?

VINCENT

I'm in New York.

MARK

New York?? Why are you in New York??

VINCENT

Tell me what's the problem.

MARK

We're digging on the railroad lot but there's a whole bunch of land that turns out doesn't belong to the rail. You gotta get your ass down here.

VINCENT

What do you mean, it doesn't belong? We have the papers, we cleared it!

MARK

We thought we had but there's a chunk of land they don't own. Even the railroad guys didn't know they didn't own it.

VINCENT

That's bullshit. Who said they own it? They're playing with you.

MARK

I checked their papers. Its legit Vinnie, they own a piece of the land. And they're not cooperating. At all.

VINCENT

So what are you saying?

MARK

"You need to get down here" is what I'm saying.

77

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - DAY AND NIGHT

77

Between Kansas and New York, on various sites (at least three), construction crews are building the fiber optic line.

AT NIGHT, in VARIOUS PLACES OF NORTH EASTERN US, workers with LED flashlights on their forehead, holding portable sonars in their hands, walks slowly in the middle of darkness - they are tracking the the end of the drill digging underground, but THEY LOOK LIKE WANDERING ZOMBIES.

IN DAYTIME, the warlike trenchers (trucks with what looks like giant, eight foot high, twelve foot long chain saws in front of them) are moving forward, tracing the line one foot below ground.

78

EXT. TRADITIONAL AMISH FARM - DAY

78

Vincent drives up to the wooden gate of a TRADITIONAL FARM encircled with an old wooden fence. He steps out of his car, goes to meet Mark who is already at the entrance, next to another SUV.

MARK

Hey Vinnie.

VINCENT

Hey.

Vincent studies the entrance, thinks for a while...

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Wait for me here.

He walks through the property gates, crosses paths with a couple of YOUNG AMISH FARMERS working with forks on a huge pile of hay. They are dressed in dark pants, blue or gray long sleeve shirt, and their characteristic long-edged felt hats. THE FARM HAS NO TRUCKS OR POWERED MACHINERY IN SIGHT.

They stare suspiciously at Vincent passing by. Further down the path, 4 WOMEN walk side by side, dressed in their typical long dresses and head coverings. Kids of all ages dressed exactly like the adults play volleyball on 3 different volleyball courts laid out on the lawn. Oddly, there are TWO CAMELS on the lot (for milk).

The property seems endless, it must be a 500 acre lot (1 mile long by 1 mile deep).

An AMISH ELDER in his fifties, that is highly resemblant to the old Amish Man in Vincent's dream, and his SON, late 20's, walk up to Vincent, already in a pissed off mood.

AMISH ELDER

Good day Sir. Are you with that man that came yesterday?

Vincent is extremely confused.

VINCENT

We know each other, don't we?

AMISH ELDER

I don't think so, no.

VINCENT

I saw you before.

AMISH ELDER

I don't remember meeting you, Sir.

Long awkward beat as Vincent just stares at the Amish Elder.

VINCENT

You were in my dream. You were in a glass jar.

AMISH ELDER

Excuse-me?

Vincent realizes he's in the middle of a *faux-pas*, snaps out of it.

VINCENT

I'm sorry... You look exactly like a man that was in a dream I had.

Vincent still can't help staring at him, he's identical to the man from his dreams - it's uncanny.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

My name is Vincent Zaleski, I work for Magenta Fiber Tech. I was wondering if you were the owner of this property?

AMISH ELDER

We all are. We already talked to your partner.

VINCENT

Well, first of all, I wanted to apologize. I wasn't there, but I think my partner was probably a little rude when he came in and approached you.

No reply.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

So... We want to expand our operations to this area and bring all sorts of new opportunities to the community. We want to bring in a high speed fibre network, and we'd like to see if we could buy a very narrow strip of land, not more than 1 foot wide, to hide a small tube underground - like, 6 inches wide. We would come in, install it in a week or two, hide it underground, and leave. It wouldn't leave a trace. We would compensate you for the trouble, of course.

AMISH ELDER

We're not interested, thank you. But I'm sure our neighbors will be, you should go and talk to them.

VINCENT

It could also be a lease. Like a... 10 year lease.

Awkward beat.

AMISH ELDER

Again, I'm sorry.

VINCENT

We would pay you two hundred thirty thousand dollars for this right of way.

The son's eyes grow bigger, the Older man doesn't flinch.

AMISH ELDER

230 000 is a lot of money. I'm sure our neighbors will be interested.

Vincent stands there, aghast - this is probably the first time someone refuses his generous proposals without at least making a counter offer.

AMISH ELDER (CONT'D)

Was that all that you came to talk about?

VINCENT

Hum... I mean... I just wanna make sure you understand: this line is gonna be hidden 6 feet underground. No one will see it. We come in, take 2 weeks to install it and hide it, than leave you with a 230 000\$ check. That much money can go a long way towards preserving your heritage. Your traditions.

AMISH ELDER

Yes that's exactly what I understood, and I said we are not interested. We live simple lives, at the service of God. High speed is not our priority, and money can be a source of conflict.

VINCENT

Could you do like a... A group vote on this?

AMISH ELDER

Please, don't make this difficult.

VINCENT

Look... all I want is help bring prosperity to this area. Make things better.

AMISH ELDER

We don't believe that making things faster makes things better. As a matter of fact we believe the contrary. We believe all this new technology makes us more distant and isolated. And that's why we do not want to have your high speed tube under our land.

VINCENT

Well I'm disappointed to hear that. So... what do we do now?

AMISH ELDER

I don't understand.

VINCENT

How can we find a common ground?

AMISH ELDER

We don't. This is the Lord's ground. There's nothing "common" about it. We're here to take care of it, at his service. I'm sorry Mr. Zaleski. You have a nice day.

VINCENT

Don't be stupid Sir.

Mark, sensing things are going the wrong way, walks up to Vincent.

AMISH ELDER

I think we're done.

VINCENT

You definitely were in my dream, in that giant jar... You were about to go through a meat grinder.

The older man turns and walks away.

MARK

What the fuck Vinnie?? Why'd you tell him that creepy shit?!

VINCENT

'Cause it's the truth.

79

EXT. END OF THE FOREST - NIGHT

79

We are at the end of the forest, there is a road ahead of us. A small, FOUR MEN CREW is on standby, in front of a grave-sized trench.

Up ahead, Ophelia holds a portable sonar in her hand, looks for a pulse - she's a hands-on kind of a person.

She gets a pulse, tries to locate the source, bingo: she's right above it. She takes a couple of steps, while the LCD screen shows the tip of the digger getting closer to the trench.

She slows down before falling in the trench - the final destination.

OPHELIA

Okay watch your step watch your step...

VRRRR... On the sidewall of the trench, THE HUGE FOUR INCH DRILLING BIT pops out from the sidewall of the trench, almost horizontal, screwed to a four inch tube section. On the opposing wall of the hole, another tube is already there, idle - came from the opposite direction.

OPHELIA (CONT'D)

(she smiles, proud)

Ooooookay... That's... One and a half inch off the exact coordinates, YEAH!

One of the crew members already in the hole unscrews the self-guiding drilling head from the four inch wide tube it is attached to.

Ophelia jumps down the hole, takes a measuring tape from her pocket, measures the distance between the two tubes poking from opposite walls (they are to be connected). She grabs her walkie-talkie strapped to her waist.

OPHELIA (CONT'D)

(to the talkie)

Okay give us thirty three more inches.

She puts workers gloves on. Very slowly, the tube starts turning again, moves forward, one inch at a time, towards the other tube.

OPHELIA (CONT'D)

(to the talkie)

Sloooooowly... Slower...

The tube gets closer and closer to the other one...

OPHELIA (CONT'D)
(to the talkie)
Okay stop for a sec.

She hands her walkie-talkie to her assistant who holds it to her mouth.

OPHELIA (CONT'D)
Go.

The tube moves forward by three more inches AND CONNECTS TO THE OTHER SECTION.

OPHELIA (CONT'D)
GOT IT.

The tube stops moving, stops turning. The two sections are perfectly connected. She claps, Vincent claps, the proud team claps.

OPHELIA (CONT'D)
Good job guys.

She climbs herself out of the hole, takes off her gloves, goes to Vincent.

OPHELIA (CONT'D)
How's that for you hun?

VINCENT
It's amazing.
(he looks at her)
You're amazing.

OPHELIA
(grinning)
You're pretty "special" yourself. And that's an understatement.

She gently puts her hand on his shoulder and walks past him to manage her crew.

Mark drives up to the site, gets out with a couple of papers in his hand. He walks right up to Vincent, takes him a little further away.

VINCENT
(speaking over the noise)
So?

MARK
(speaking over the noise)
The State Legislation allows prospectors to dig at a depth lower than 100 feet as long as these diggings are for... "the collective well being of the people and the long term prosperity of the State". So basically, anyone can dig under 100 feet: you, me, anybody! It's intended as a blank check for oil companies, but we can definitely argue that by speeding up data transfers in the area, our line is for "the collective well being". But the problem is that our crews don't have a horizontal drill that can cross their entire land without coming up for air. SO...

Vincent waits.

MARK (CONT'D)
I got us the biggest fucking horizontal
drill available in the State. It's on its
way. Will get there soon.

Vincent does not have the enthusiastic response Mark was expecting
- guilt perhaps.

MARK (CONT'D)
Awesome, right?? We dig right under their
toes and don't come out until we're on the
other side!

VINCENT
(unenthusiastically)
Yeah... Awesome. Do it.

80 INT. ANTON'S SUITE - NIGHT

80

Anton is annotating things on the big North Eastern US map,
bloodshot eyes, sweaty, still trying to shave an extra millisecond
off the line.

Something flashes in his mind... He pulls a small electronic
device from one of his big technical metal cases (this gizmo fits
in the palm of his hand) - this is an OPTICAL REGENERATOR. He
ponders, thinks, flips the electronic device over to find the name
of the company: "RegenTech". Total exhilaration fills his veins.

CUT TO:

Anton is on the hotel phone, impatient.

SALES ASSOCIATE (O.S.)
Yes this is Peter from sales?

ANTON
(bluntly)
Huh yeah... I need some information.

VOICE FROM PHONE
Okay...

ANTON
(he reads the model number
on electronic device)
...Regarding Optical Regenerator JBT145
SX.

VOICE FROM PHONE
Yeah?

ANTON
It says "rated at one thousand meters",
but what kind of tolerance did you
implement in the device?

VOICE FROM PHONE
I don't know...

ANTON
Ballpark?

VOICE FROM PHONE

I think all our regenerators have around 10%, I guess?

Long, dumbfounded beat.

ANTON

Did you say 10%?

VOICE FROM PHONE

Yeah.

ANTON

So... If I had two thousand regenerators on a line, and I could do like... a selection process to keep only the ones that cover the entire 110%, **I could space out the regenerators to one thousand one hundred meters instead of one thousand meters?**

VOICE FROM PHONE

(hesitant)

Yyyyeah... I guess? Risky, expensive, but maybe.

ANTON

Are you aware that each regenerator makes the line lose 2.5 thousandths of a millisecond? Over two thousand regenerators, round trip, **that's a whole millisecond faster.**

VOICE FROM PHONE

I don't know, is that a fact?

ANTON

(excited)

Yes, it is. Thank you.

He hangs up, stands, RAISES HIS ARM UP IN THE AIR LIKE HE JUST PULLED THE FINAL WINNING TOUCH DOWN AT THE SUPER BOWL, his body rushing with adrenaline. We slowly creep in on him...

81 INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

81

IN SLOW MOTION, Anton walks out of his room and into the hotel corridor, weary, head full of thoughts. He passes by a cleaning person's maintenance cart (with a trash can, replacement sheets, towels, etc.).

He turns the corner, takes another corridor leading to the elevator: facing him, further down, are THREE MEN in navy blue suits, among which AGENT SANTANA, 46. No way they're here just for fun. Anton freezes.

AGENT SANTANA

(from across the corridor)

Mr. Zaleski?

Anton slowly turns around and walks away.

FBI AGENT 2

Mr. Zaleski! Stop!

Anton stops. The agents walk towards him.

AGENT SANTANA
Anton Zaleski?

No answer.

AGENT SANTANA (CONT'D)
Are you Anton Zaleski?

ANTON
Yeah.

AGENT SANTANA
My name is Santana Lopez. FBI. You are under arrest for committing Stock Market Fraud by stealing proprietary code from Raulston & Thatcher Capital. You have the right to...

ANTON RUNS AWAY! HE'S FAST!

AGENT SANTANA (CONT'D)
STOP!

Anton turns the corner and heads towards the cleaning person's maintenance cart, looks for an open door. There: a CLEANING MAN in his forties is cleaning a room, vacuuming around the bed, back turned.

ANTON RUNS INSIDE THE ROOM, closes the door, LOCKS HIMSELF IN THE BATHROOM...

IN THE BATHROOM,

He pulls out his smartphone from his pocket, tries to dial a number, but he's shaking...

Agent Santana furiously bangs on the bathroom door.

AGENT SANTANA (CONT'D)
OPEN UP! YOU'RE UNDER ARREST!

CRRRRACK! They knock the door down before he can finally dial, they grab and immobilize him.

ANTON
Let me go! Let me go!

AGENT SANTANA
(breathing heavily)
As I was saying, you are under arrest for committing Stock Market Fraud by stealing proprietary code from Raulston & Thatcher Capital. You have the right to remain silent when questioned. Anything you say or do may be used against you in a court of law. You have the right to consult an attorney...

SMASH CUT TO:

A BIG DIGGING CREW is setting up a VERY BIG HORIZONTAL DRILLING MACHINE - the biggest one we have seen so far - on a vacant property just 2000 feet away from the Amish community entrance

(almost half a mile) - trucks, shovels, drilling machines: nothing subtle.

Vincent's lawyer, THE AMISH CASE LAWYER, is also there, stands by, ready for confrontation, sure of himself.

The WHOLE AMISH COMMUNITY comes walking and running, horrified, disgruntled. Younger Amish men and women arrive first, screaming at the digging crew to leave.

The Amish Elder catches up, running with a steady foot - he's in very good shape.

AMISH ELDER
YOU CAN'T DIG UNDER OUR LAND! THIS IS
GOD'S LAND! LEAVE OR WE CALL THE POLICE!

The lawyer walks up to the Elder, grabs a court ruling from the inside pocket of his suit, hands it to the Amish Elder.

AMISH CASE LAWYER
Sorry, law says under 100 feet it belongs
to everybody. Read it.

AMISH ELDER
THIS PLACE DOES NOT BELONG TO YOU! YOU
CAN'T PUT YOUR THINGS HERE!

AMISH CASE LAWYER
Actually it does. We bought this lot, it's
ours. We can do whatever we want. So we're
digging about 100 feet down, then... phew!
across your land, and then back up again.

A younger woman walks up to the elder.

YOUNG AMISH WOMAN
He can't do this! It's our land!

AMISH CASE LAWYER
Sorry Miss, but to the State, as long as
there could be oil or gas under there,
below 100 feet belongs to everybody.
(beat)
Welcome to the 21st century Grandpa...

The lawyer heads to his car, leaving the Amish community angered and in shock.

83

INT. RAULSTON FLOOR/HIGH FREQUENCY TRADING ROOM - DAY

83

Linda Raulston is next to Jenny, facing one of the many HFT trading computer stations. Some quants are behind them, the whole room is very excited, including Jimmy Tran the new Quant.

Jenny finishes typing a couple of lines on the computer, presses enter.

JENNY
Okay. The line is up. Market opens in...
ten seconds.

Linda looks at the screens, at one specific area where you can read:

- The date

- "average return on investment:" and a percentage (it's at 0%)
- A revenue figure. (it's at 0.00\$)

JENNY (CONT'D)
Market... is... opened.

CUT TO:

84 EXT. TOWERS FROM KANSAS TO NEW JERSEY - DAY

84

MONTAGE SEQUENCE:

ALL ACCROSS THE COUNTRY, in total silence, WE CUT FROM ONE CELL TOWER TO THE NEXT, five towers in all, located mostly amongst hills and valleys: it's Linda's new cell tower line.

CUT TO:

85 INT. RAULSTON FLOOR/HIGH FREQUENCY TRADING ROOM - DAY

85

ON THE COMPUTER STATION SCREEN:

The numbers at the bottom start moving. In a matter of seconds, "average return on investment" rises by the second, from 0% to 5%, 10%, 20%, 50%, 80%, 100%, 120% and still rising!

LINDA RAULSTON
Holy shit it's working. We're the fastest.

The revenue figure also rises by the second: from 0.00 to 100 000.00 to 500 000.00 in a matter of seconds.

JENNY
We just made five hundred thousand dollars in thirty seconds... Five fifty...

HFT TRADER 1
It's working... IT'S FUCKING WORKING!!

HFT TRADER 5
WE'RE PRINTING MONEY BABY!!!

MANY TRADERS
YEAHHHH!!!

THE WHOLE FLOOR GOES BONKERS, SCREAMING INSANITIES, JUMPING. Linda keeps her cool, eyes on the numbers that keep going up.

LINDA RAULSTON
This is insane...

JENNY
I know, right?

Something darker shows up on Linda's eyes... As if "this is insane", but not in a good way.

LINDA RAULSTON
(dark)
It's really insane. Insanity.

JENNY
Are you all'right Linda?

86 INT. ANTON'S SUITE - DAY

86

Anton is sitting at his hotel suite dining table, being interrogated.

AGENT SANTANA

I'll ask you again Anton... What was this code doing in your computer?

ANTON

It's just some code... Even you could write it. Your daughter could write it.

Long beat.

AGENT SANTANA

How do you know I have a daughter?

ANTON

"Daughter", "Son", I just used it as an example.

AGENT SANTANA

Don't use my personal life as an example, all right? 'Makes me edgy. Just stick to the codes.
Why were they on your computer?

ANTON

Any programmer has lines like this in his computer! It's like... A Spanish 101 class. These are the "Hi, my name is 'x', how do you do? I'm fine thanks, how are you?" lessons. There's nothing special about them.

AGENT SANTANA

It's not what your previous employer says. She says...

He grabs a file, flips through the papers, reads from a report:

AGENT SANTANA (CONT'D)

"...these lines of code shorten the transaction time by 2 microseconds. Giving access to this proprietary code gives an unfair advantage to other parties. Using them outside of the employee's duties is a serious breach of contract that puts this firm in financial jeopardy. Considering the billions of dollars involved, the previous employee," - that's you, "...the previous employee should be persecuted under the criminal code, in as his actions threaten this country's economic stability and therefore should be considered a threat to National Security."

ANTON

Agent Santana, do you write code? Do you know how to read code?

AGENT SANTANA

I can't say I do, no.

Anton sighs.

ANTON

These lines of code are generic, and they do not threaten National Security. These guys just want to make sure I don't go work for somebody else. It's their way of scaring anybody who would think about leaving the firm. They're abusing me, they're abusing you.

AGENT SANTANA

As I said, I can't read code.

ANTON

(cocky)

So why are you here, interrogating me?

Ouch. Bad strategy.

AGENT SANTANA

It's not about the code, Mister Anton. It's the principle of you carrying important, copyrighted information outside of work, and putting National Security at risk by doing so.

ANTON

But basically, this code just says something like "if A is blue, put it in box B. If A is red, put it in box C." That's all!

As proof, Anton shows the printed excerpt of code to Agent Santana... who doesn't have a clue what this code means.

AGENT SANTANA

It's the principle. The principle.

ANTON

(exasperated)

I'm sorry Agent Santana, but I don't see any use in talking to you anymore. You do not have the competence to understand the details of this. I hope you're not offended, but I will stop talking.

Long, dumbfounded beat by Santana.

AGENT SANTANA

Oh no Einstein. I'm not offended at all. I'm so not offended, you can't imagine how unoffended I am.

(he points at himself)

Look at this, look at this. You see this? That's the pure, unadulterated image of unoffendedness. See?

He shows an unoffended face... Kind of.

AGENT SANTANA (CONT'D)

"Unoffended Santana":
That's what you're staring at.

ANTON

(dismissive)

Agent Santana, could I get my phone call? I have the right to a phone call right?

AGENT SANTANA

Yeah you got a call. As a matter of fact, after they get you settled in I'll give you five minutes to do all the calls you want, Mister Davinci Code.

87 EXT./INT. VINCENT MOBILE HEADQUARTERS/APPALACHIAN BASE - DAY 87

AN OLDER MAN in an unusual attire steps out of a van, accompanied by his son: it's the Amish Elder; some good samaritan drove him here (religion prevents them from driving cars).

He rushes towards the mobile headquarters.

INSIDE, in the office,

Vincent is singing some paperwork at the front desk. The Amish Elder barges in, walks towards Vincent, hurt, far away from the Amish community.

VINCENT

What are you doing here? How did you find me?

AMISH ELDER

(authoritative)

We have our ways. We have a community.

VINCENT

What do you want?

AMISH ELDER

Please do not pursue what you're doing under our land. It's unholy. If not for us, for your own sake.

VINCENT

I can't do that.

AMISH ELDER

Vincent... Listen to me... That line, in the face of God, it's useless. Follow the line inside of you, the line of your heart... The line inside that tells you what's right and what's wrong. And this is wrong. Your own conscience will punish you for this. It will turn against you.

Vincent still looks at the wall, unable to look at the elder in the eye.

VINCENT

I have to finish it. I'm sorry.

The man leaves, hurt...

88 INT. PRISON/PUBLIC PHONE - DAY

88

Anton, now dressed in a prisoner's attire, is on a public phone, looking over his shoulder, distressed, scared... He dials a number...

89 INT. CONSTRUCTION SITE PORTABLE TOILET - DAY

89

Vincent, in his suit, still affected by his meeting with the elder, is at the urinals of the mobile toilet, his stomach is killing him.

HIS URINE IS STAINED WITH BLOOD.

VINCENT

Ah Jesus... Not now... Please... Fuck...

90 EXT. VINCENT MOBILE HEADQUARTERS/APPALACHIAN BASE - DAY

90

Vincent walks out of the blue portable bathroom, heads back towards his mobile office.

His phone rings.

VINCENT

Yeah?

ANTON

(o.s.)

Vinnie? It's me.

VINCENT

Where are you?

ANTON

Huh... I'm in jail.

VINCENT

What???

91 INT. PRISON/PUBLIC PHONE - DAY

91

ANTON

The FBI threw me on the ground and handcuffed me. They say I could be in here for 10 years.

(trembling voice)

You said I had nothing to worry about Vinnie... Why did they do this?

92 FROM HERE WE CUT BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN VINCENT AND ANTON

92

Anger and concern grows on Vincent's face.

VINCENT

(trembling)

These motherfuckers... I'm gonna fucking kill them... Let me talk to the guy in charge...

ANTON

I'm in jail Vinnie...

Vincent can't say a word, he's too angry.

ANTON (CONT'D)

I wanna hurt them... I really wanna hurt them Vinnie.

VINCENT

You don't do anything and you don't say anything, okay? It's my fault, I'm gonna take care of it. You hang in there and I'm gonna get you out, okay? And I swear to you once you're out they're gonna pay for this, I'm really gonna hurt them. You don't tell them anything else until the lawyers get there, you hear me?

No answer.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

You hear me Anton??

ANTON

I gotta go. I got things to take care of.

VINCENT

Anton... What are you gonna do Anton? Anton!?

93 INT. PRISON/PUBLIC PHONE - DAY

93

Clic. Anton hangs up, distraught but determined.

98 INT. VINCENT MOBILE HEADQUARTERS/APPALACHIAN BASE - DAY

98

Vincent blasts inside, panicked, mad. His crew is busy, Mark is on the phone, Amy is working on piles of paperwork.

VINCENT

AMY!

Amy turns, concerned.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

The FBI's on Anton... He's in jail.

AMY

What? In jail? Why???

VINCENT

I don't know... I need you to get our lawyers on this NOW! You send them over there right away.

Mark senses it's not the right moment, but he goes to Vincent...

MARK

Vinnie... We got another problem.

VINCENT

You handle it I gotta go.

MARK

Ray says it's a big one. He says we should get to the cliff. Now.

Vincent takes a deep breath, overwhelmed by all that's happening.

VINCENT

Okay... Okay... Amy you call the lawyers. I'll be back in about two hours and we're going to get Anton out. Be ready to leave.

AMY

Okay...

99 EXT. SMALL ROAD LEADING TO THE APPALACHIANS/WILD PARKING - DAY99

Vincent, still in his suit, and Mark are riding alone on the small road leading towards the majestic APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS, pale, cold sweats beading on his forehead.

There is a big arrow pointing towards the top of the mountains, and:

“Look up: tower

Round-trip Kansas to New York:

11 milliseconds

THAT’S FOUR MILLISECONDS FASTER THAN YOU

Love, Linda”

And then, at the very bottom, a lipstick kiss.

VINCENT

What is this...

RAY

Somebody put it there.

VINCENT

Who??

RAY

I don’t know it was already there when I got here.

Ray hands a pair of small binoculars to Vincent, points toward the top of the mountains.

RAY (CONT'D)

See the little white line?

Vincent looks up with the binoculars, SEES LINDA’S NEW MICROWAVE TOWER.

VINCENT

What the fuck...

MARK

Looks like a microwave tower... And it looks like they’re four milliseconds faster than us.

Vincent, pale and hurting, paces around, panicked.

VINCENT

Bring me up there. Now.

101 EXT. MUDDY TRAIL UP THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS - DAY

101

Pale Vincent is on the passenger seat of a GMC pickup driven by Mark.

MARK

We gotta get you to a doctor Vinnie, you don't look too good.

VINCENT

I'm fine. Just bring me to that tower.

The GMC pickup struggles to go through a muddier passage. Mark is pretty agile with the vehicle, but the wheels are getting deep in it...

The pickup stops... Mark steps on it, VRRRRRR... It's not moving, not by an inch.

MARK

Fuck...

He gets out, lands on the mud, his feet sink all the way to the middle of his calves. The wheels are sunken in mud all the way to the axle... Not good.

MARK (CONT'D)

FUCK!

He grabs his cell phone to call for help: no reception. He considers his options...

MARK (CONT'D)

(to Vincent)

We gotta go back.

Vincent jumps off the pickup, dizzy like a drunk - not feeling any better.

VINCENT

(dizzy)

No way.

Get me. The fuck. Up there.

101A He starts walking up the trail. Mark sighs, follows him. 101A

VINCENT (CONT'D)

(as he walks)

Bring your chainsaw.

MARK

Why???

VINCENT

Just bring it.

MARK

Vinnie, I don't feel good about this...

VINCENT

GO GET YOUR CHAINSAW!!! I'm stuffing your mattress with money so just go and get your chainsaw!!!

Long beat. Mark's still not sure he should do it.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Please. I'm not gonna hurt anybody, I just want the chainsaw...

(pointing at the tower)

He's there Mark... Right there...

MARK

Who?

VINCENT

Goliath. We have to bring him down Mark...
I'm not gonna hurt anybody I swear...

MARK

I can't do that I'm sorry.

And so Vincent goes in the back of the pickup and grabs a dirty chainsaw.

He starts walking up a steep hill in the dense forest, towards the tower.

MARK (CONT'D)

Come on Vinnie man... Don't do this!

Vincent struggles to climb the hill, sometimes on hands and knees, pulling the chainsaw with him as best he can. He's pale, breathless, dillusional, talking to himself...

Mark follows him, can't believe what's happening.

VINCENT

I'm gonna tear you the fuck down... I'm
gonna tear you.. the fuck... down... I'm
gonna tear you.. the fuck...

We see it clearly through the trees now: the finished tower.

Vincent's heart is pumping, the adrenalin in him gives him extra strength.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Oh yeah... I'm gonna...

BUT THEN, HIS BODY FAILS HIM: HE COLLAPSES IN THE FOREST.

MARK

VINCENT! WAKE UP!
(to himself)
Motherfucker...

Mark checks if he's now getting some kind of signal on his phone: he is. He makes a call.

MARK (CONT'D)

Vincent is down, we gotta get him to a
hospital...
(beat)
I... I don't know what's wrong with him.
We're at a microwave tower about forty
degrees North of our site. Can you figure
out a way to locate us?

Mark struggles to bring Vincent back down to the truck...

INT. BRYAN TAYLOR'S NYC OFFICE - DAY

Bryan is at his laptop, Mr. Simon barges in, completely distraught.

MR SIMON
Bryan!!! They're cancelling their
contracts for the line! Or stock is
falling we already lost forty percent!

BRYAN TAYLOR
WHAT!? WHAT THE FUCK IS HAPPENING??

MR SIMON
I don't know! Everybody's cancelling their
connection on our line!

INT. PRISON/PUBLIC PHONE - DAY

At the inmate public phones, ANTON DIALS A NUMBER.

94 INT. RAULSTON FLOOR/HIGH FREQUENCY TRADING ROOM - DAY 94

We are facing the wall of rackmounted servers inside the Linda Raulston lab. We hear a very faint cell phone vibration that is coming from one of the various metal boxes installed all over the rackmounts - THIS SPECIFIC METAL BOX IS ANTON'S SLOW-DOWN BOX, the one he installed by himself a while ago, the one he built in the middle of the night in his apartment.

We get closer to the box, and then we go --

INSIDE THE METAL BOX,

Where the hidden cell phone lights up, which activates the circuitry board to which it is connected to - THIS IS WHAT ANTON'S CALL FROM PRISON IS ALL ABOUT.

95 INT. PRISON/PUBLIC PHONE - DAY 95

Anton hears a beep, he dials "1", hopes for the best...

96 INT. INSIDE THE METAL BOX - DAY 96

The phone is still on, and a little LED light inside the box turns green - THE DEVICE IS NOW ACTIVATED.

INT. RAULSTON FLOOR/HIGH FREQUENCY TRADING ROOM - DAY

In a matter of seconds, all over the computer stations, curves drop dangerously down, get into their yellow warning zones, closer to their red zones.

ALL HIGH FREQUENCY TRADERS looking at their screens look up, freak out.

HF TRADER 1
Wow wow wow... What the fuck...

HF TRADER 5
What's happening???

HF TRADER 1
PUT YOUR TRESHOLDS TO SIX POINT TWO!

HF TRADER 3
We're losing crazy speeds... Something's wrong.

Quant 3 studies data off a screen...

HF TRADER 3 (CONT'D)
I'm... Almost twenty milliseconds down!

HF TRADER 5
Me too!

HF TRADER 6
We're all twenty milliseconds down!

HF TRADER 5
(towards the back of the room)
JENNY!! WE'RE DOWN TWENTY MILLISECONDS!
WE'RE LOSING MILLIONS!

Jenny rushes out of her secluded lab, freaked out.

JENNY
What?? What are you talking about?

HF TRADER 5
The whole network is twenty milliseconds down! What's happening???

JENNY
I don't know!... What did you do right before it happened??

HF TRADER 3
We were just riding our curves and all of a sudden we dropped by twenty!

HF TRADER 2
We're losing vicious amounts of money here...

JENNY
EVERYONE PUT YOUR TARGET LEVELS TO ZERO!
DUMP YOUR STOCKS!

All the quants go to input lines on their interfaces and hurry to type zero. Jenny goes to one of the computer stations, frantically types and checks statistics from the system.

JENNY (CONT'D)
What's going on??...

HF TRADER 1
IT'S THE FUCKING APOCALYPSE!

EXTREME SLOW MOTION as we move across panicked High Frequency Traders looking at their screens, on which ALL SINE WAVES are getting closer and closer to the red zones. All these scared faces looking at their screens like at God's anger, It's like a religious Gothic tableau straight out of the 18th century.

As panic sets in we get another glimpse of Anton's inconspicuous little metal box hooked up to the servers, his SLOW-DOWN box: the culprit.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. LINDA RAULSTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Linda walks in the office. Jenny, one of the quants, has been waiting for her. She's completely panicked.

JENNY

Linda, we have a problem. Our line is twenty milliseconds slow.

LINDA RAULSTON

(ballistic)

What do you mean, it's "twenty seconds slow"?? The whole system is congested or...

JENNY

(interrupting)

It's a perfect, constant, twenty millisecond delay. It's not arbitrary. It's a sharp chunk.

(beat)

Somebody rigged our network.

Linda takes it in, thinks for about three seconds, and then it hits her: she knows who did this.

SMASH CUT TO:

103 INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

103

Vincent is in an ambulance with Mark, slowly regaining consciousness. He opens his eyes, confused, and then he discovers he's strapped to a stretcher, unable to move... He freaks out!

MARK

Don't move... we're taking you to the hospital.

VINCENT

GET THESE STRAPS OFF OF ME! I'M FINE!

MARK

We're taking you to the hospital, it's all right! Calm down!

VINCENT

Where's my phone...

MARK

I got your phone, don't worry. Just calm down.

VINCENT

Give it to me.

MARK

Now?

VINCENT

Gimme the phone, Mark.

MARK

Why??

VINCENT

Just gimme the phone.

MARK
Vinnie you just need to relax, take it
easy...

VINCENT
GIVE IT TO ME!!! NOW!!!

Mark, annoyed, looks around for Vincent's phone in his pockets,
hands it to Vincent.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Unstrap my arm. Please.

Mark ponders, then unstraps the arm.

Vincent grabs his phone, looks for a phone number in his contacts.
He looks and looks...

MARK
Who do you gotta call that's so urgent?

Vincent finds the right contact, dials.

DIDIER GERBACH RECEPTIONIST
*Willkommen in der Klapp Gruppe, wie kann
ich Ihnen helfen?*

VINCENT
Yeah, do you speak English?

DIDIER GERBACH RECEPTIONIST
Yes of course, how can I help you?

VINCENT
Could I speak to Didier Gersbach please?
My name is Vincent Zalesky, it's urgent.

DIDIER GERBACH RECEPTIONIST
Please hold.

Vincent gets another cramp... He struggles not to make any grunts.

VOICE ON THE OTHER END
Mr. Gerbash is in a meeting, he will be
available in approximately 5 minutes, do
you wish to hold?

VINCENT
Huh... Yeah I'll hold.

MARK
Vinnie... Put the phone down.

VINCENT
(to Mark)
I'm holding.

104

EXT./INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ENTRANCE AND CORRIDOR - DAY

104

Two nurses rush to the ambulance, Vincent gets pulled out of the
helicopter, still holding his phone, with an I.V. in his arm. They
talk as they move the stretcher at a fast pace.

NURSE
Sir give me your phone.

VINCENT
I just need 5 minutes.

NURSE
Give us your phone Sir.

Vincent hands it to Mark.

VINCENT
(to Mark)
Put it on speakerphone.

Mark sighs, grabs the phone and figures out how to put it on speakerphone as Vincent gets pulled inside on a stretcher. The whole mechanics of Vincent on a stretcher pulled by two nurses, and Mark holding the phone next to them, is inefficient and clunky.

DIDIER GERBASH
(from phone)
Hello, Mr. Zaleski?

Vincent grabs the phone and turns off speakerphone mode. The annoyed nurses let him off the hook... Probably not for long.

Vincent does everything in his power to act and speak normally...

VINCENT
Hi Mr. Gerbash, how are you?

DIDIER GERBASH
I'm fine Mr. Zaleski, I'm sorry I can't hear you well.

VINCENT
Yeah, I'm sorry I'm on my way to a meeting and I had to call you before I close a deal.

DIDIER GERBASH
It's all right, we'll speak loudly then.
What can I do for you?

Vincent is pushed through a door, he's now...

INSIDE THE EMERGENCY, still pushed at emergency pace.

NURSE 1
Hang up that phone or I'm taking it.

Vincent ignores him.

VINCENT
(to the phone)
Yeah, huh, I'm about to acquire some real estate and I'm thinking of leveraging it with my shares from Magenta Fiber Tech, so... The bank would give me a better rate if the position of my shares was insured, and then Bryan was thinking it was a great idea, so he said we should cover all our stock the same way.

DIDIER GERBASH
What kind of insurance are we talking about?

VINCENT

Huh... A one month put for 50% drop of today's price. Or maybe some kind of derivative on our stock? Something like that.

Long beat.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Hello?

NURSE 1

Sir, you got 10 seconds to hang up.

DIDIER GERBASH

What I think I could do is design a custom "put" option for you. I don't see how Magenta can go down 1 month from now. I heard you do Kansas-New York-Kansas in 16 milliseconds??

VINCENT

Yeah.

DIDIER GERBASH

That's amazing.

Vincent is relieved.

VINCENT

Thank you, thank you that's great.

(beat)

What will be the rate on an insurance like this?

DIDIER GERBASH

Well I still need to have a look at it, but it should be something like 2 or 3 cents on a dollar.

VINCENT

That's great. Lets "put" our entire stock then.

NURSE 1

That's enough now.

The nurse reaches for the phone, Vincent fights back to keep it, they struggle as he talks.

DIDIER GERBASH

Mr. Zaleski? Are you there?

VINCENT

(while struggling with nurse)

Yeah, yeah I'm here. All right... I have to go to my meeting, I'll call you in two or three hours so we can close the deal. Send the paperwork to my office all right? I'd like to have this done by the end of the day.

DIDIER GERBASH

I'll do my best.

VINCENT

Sorry, I'm losing the signal...

The nurse grabs the phone and closes it.

NURSE 1

That's enough. We need to get you to the
Gastroenterologist.

Vincent is relieved on the financial side, but the pains from his
stomach come back two fold.

VINCENT

You know what I just did?

MARK

Tell me later Vincent...

VINCENT

I just made a deal where if the company
goes down, an insurance pays us shitloads
of money and we become rich.

MARK

All right, that's good Vinnie. Keep quiet
now you need to rest.

VINCENT

...I invest three cents for a dollar in
case our company fails, and when it fails,
because I know it will, we make a dollar
off of each of those three cents. You know
what return that represents?

MARK

A lot?

VINCENT

It's a two thousand, three hundred percent
return. For betting on my own failure. And
I know I'm gonna fail. Guaranteed.

MARK

How can you do that?

VINCENT

Easy... It's easy... Everybody does it.
The whole stock market is rigged that way.

MARK

Good for you Vincent.
Not for the rest of us, but good for you.

VINCENT

I know.

MARK

Lets get you healthy again so you can
enjoy it.

VINCENT

There's something really important you
need to do.

MARK

What's that Vinnie?

VINCENT

You have to go get Anton out of jail. We gotta get him out. I don't care how much it costs...

MARK

Yeah Vinnie. For sure. And I'm gonna finish the line, you don't worry about a thing all right? I'm taking care of it you just get back on your feet.

VINCENT

You swear?

MARK

I swear, yeah.

A doctor and two nurses arrive running, they hurry to plug things in Vincent's body while he is still being pushed through the corridor, while he's slipping in and out of consciousness...

105 INT. PRISON VISITING BOOTHS - DAY

105

Anton sits on one side of a reinforced glass window, where his beautiful wife LAETITIA waits for him, on the other side of the glass. Anton is in a bright orange prisoner uniform.

He picks up the phone.

ANTON

Hi.

LAETITIA

Hi.

(beat)

I thought it's better if the girls don't see you here.

He nods.

LAETITIA (CONT'D)

What did you do Anton?

ANTON

I didn't do nothing illegal.

LAETITIA

You're saying that and it sounds like you're guilty of something.

ANTON

I'm not.

No reply. Tears come to Laetitia's eyes.

LAETITIA

Why are they doing this if you didn't do anything? How can that be?? How long is it gonna last? Are they gonna let you out?

ANTON

(restless)

I don't know, I really don't...

LAETITIA

This job's hurting you... You need to get out of it. Use your amazing brain for

something that makes you feel good about yourself.

ANTON

I can't let Vinnie down. He's been there for me all my life.

LAETITIA

What about us Anton? You have to be there for us too.

ANTON

I'm sorry baby... I'm so sorry...

CROSS FADE

106 INT. PRISON VISITING BOOTHS - DAY

106

Same booth. Probably a couple of days later. Linda Raulston is facing Anton, separated by the reinforced glass window.

LINDA RAULSTON

Hi Anton.

ANTON

You're late.

No answer.

ANTON (CONT'D)

Twenty milliseconds late.

LINDA RAULSTON

Funny.

(beat)

That's a smart move.

Anton just stares at the table in front of him.

ANTON

Could be worse Linda, really worse. Right now all I did is slow your line down by twenty milliseconds. You're probably not making any money, but you're probably close to breaking even.

LINDA RAULSTON

(interrupting)

Don't fuck with me Anton. Gimme back my milliseconds.

ANTON

...But I can also slow it down by eighty milliseconds.

Dumbfounded look on Raulston.

ANTON (CONT'D)

Eighty milliseconds is pretty late in the game. I figure you'll lose about five or ten million dollars a day. It's just a phone call away.

LINDA RAULSTON

What do you want.

ANTON

You drop the charges. You sign a release absolving me of any wrong doing past present or future. You stay away from me and Vincent.

(beat)

And you confess.

LINDA RAULSTON

"Confess"??

ANTON

Confess.

LINDA RAULSTON

To what? I'm not breaking the law. You are.

ANTON

There are other laws. Unwritten laws.

LINDA RAULSTON

You're insane.

ANTON

You're a sociopath.

LINDA RAULSTON

Gimme back my twenty milliseconds first.

Long beat. Linda lets out a weird laugh.

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)

Tell me, what do you think is the biggest lie humans ever invented?

ANTON

God?

Linda smiles at this...

LINDA RAULSTON

Pretty close.

Money. The biggest lie in history. Trillions of little green contracts of indentured servitude. One. Big. Fiction.

ANTON

If we're in a big fiction, then what about the farmer growing tomatoes in Guatemala? What's his role?

She reflects on this...

LINDA RAULSTON

Maybe he's the narrator, the omniscient mind, he's the one watching from outside, telling himself: "these people, these animals, they really don't have a clue how much their whole life is a fake."

(beat)

So... you want to hear my "confession". Are you ready for it?

He nods.

LINDA RAULSTON (CONT'D)

I guess you could say I am The closest thing to what "Evil" is. Or at least... the empirical description of it.

(beat)

Not this monster on the other side of the wall, no... I'm the Evil that surrenders its sense of decency for comfort and greed. I'm that Evil that slowly lets go of her ideals and lets the numbness of consumerism come in, eat away at my principles. But you're not that far away from me Anton, we're all part of this. You're just one circle away from mine. Happy? Satisfied?

(beat)

Do you have that release with you?

Anton takes four pieces of paper out of his pocket, unfolds them.

ANTON

I wrote it down. In two copies.

He hands the very simple identical copies of the contract that fits on two pages.

Linda reads it, smiles. She takes a pen from her purse, signs both copies, hands them to Anton who signs as well, and at the bottom of Linda's copy he writes a phone number down. He hands the copy back.

ANTON (CONT'D)

Dial this number. When you hear a beep, dial three. Not two. Very important. You won't like two.

LINDA RAULSTON

That's it? That's how I get my twenty milliseconds?

ANTON

That's it.

Linda dials the number, waits... We hear a faint "beep". She dials "3", hangs up, and makes another call.

JENNY

(from phone)

Linda?

LINDA RAULSTON

Yeah... Are we back?

Long beat.

JENNY

Yeah, we just got back, like... now. How did you do that?

She hangs up, looks at Anton.

LINDA RAULSTON

I'll tell them to drop the charges. You take care Anton. You could have made billions, you know?

She exits.

107 NONDESCRIPT HOSPITAL SPACE

107

CLOSE on Vincent's face, as a surgeon brings a surgical camera to his mouth...

108 INSIDE VINCENT

108

The camera reveals his intestine, the camera moves deeper and deeper into the abyss...

109 INSIDE A FOUR INCH TUNNEL

109

A monitoring camera moves forward inside a four inch tunnel, it's as if we were still in Vincent's intestines BUT WE ARE IN THE BARE FIBER TUNNEL going from Kansas to New York.

110 OUTSIDE, AT A RELAY MANHOLE, RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF A SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD

110

The four inch drill bit pops out of the side wall of a perfectly grinded manhole. Next to the drill bit: Mark puts his thumb up, whistles as a sign to stop drilling. Mark, big smile on his face, dressed for a special occasion - white shirt, black pants and a tie - is on the walkie-talkie and says to stop drilling. TEN WORKERS ARE THERE, excited.

CLOSE ON THE DRILL THAT SLOWLY COMES TO A COMPLETE STOP.

He unscrews the drill bit, signals to give the tube a couple more turns. The empty tube starts turning again, gets closer and closer to another tube on the opposite wall of the manhole...

Everybody on site is holding its breath... The tube gets closer and MAKES CONTACT. The crew screams and yells.

MARK
ONE THOUSAND AND THIRTY FOUR FUCKING MILES
BABY!

Mark POPS A CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE, people applaud. Yes, the line is done.

CROSS FADE:

111 INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ENTRANCE AND CORRIDOR - DAY

111

Vincent is walking in the hallway pushing his own IV, in a hospital gown, skinnier, tired, pale. He comes face to face with an unexpected visitor: BRYAN TAYLOR is staring straight at him!

Long, dumbfounded beat.

VINCENT
Bryan...

BRYAN TAYLOR
You're being punished for what you did.

VINCENT
I tried to bet against us, I really did, I swear. I had the "put" option for 3 cents on a dollar, Gerbash was handling it... They took my phone away and then I passed out. When I woke up it was all too late. I...

BRYAN TAYLOR
You screwed us and now the whole company's
going down.

VINCENT
I tried to save us... I really did...

BRYAN TAYLOR
YOU FUCKED US!!! YOU FUCKING PIECE OF
SHIT!!!

Bam. The whole corridor turns towards them. Bryan calms down.

BRYAN TAYLOR (CONT'D)
(to the people around)
Sorry. I'm fine. I'm fine.

The people around go back to doing their thing. Long tensed beat.

VINCENT
It was gonna go down one day or the other.
Was all a question of time. Right?

BRYAN TAYLOR
Take care Vincent. I hope you die a quick
death.

VINCENT
This is not a death sentence, actually.
It's kind of a fifty/fifty thing.
Sixty/fourty maybe.

BRYAN TAYLOR
Oh. I'm sorry to hear that.

He leaves.

SLOW CROSS FADE

112 EXT. AERIAL VIEWS OF THE APALACHIANS - DAY

112

FROM THE SKY, We travel across the old Appalachians, get a sense of the wide expanse, of the endless mountains. We don't hear the wind in the trees, we hear weird, undefinable sounds that are perhaps what lightwaves and data flowing through optical fiber would sound like...

MARK (V.O.)
Okay Vinnie, are you ready?

VINCENT (V.O.)
Yeah... Do it.

113 INT. ANNA ZALESKI'S APPARTMENT - NIGHT

113

A HAND holds a smartphone on which we see Mark video-conferencing himself via his own smartphone. He's in some kind of bland office. The hand holding the smartphone is Vinnie's hand - he's lying on his mom's sofa - she's taking care of him.

MARK
(on smartphone screen)
Three... two... one...

He moves his smartphone away from his face, towards a computer screen.

He clicks on an icon with "TEST SIGNAL", and instantly, next to that icon, a time duration appears: 0.001573 seconds.

He swish-pans his phone cam back to his face.

MARK (CONT'D)

Fifteen point seven milliseconds! HA HA!
You did it Vinnie!

Vincent smiles - his 1000 mile long fiber optic line works at last!

VINCENT

Yeah... We did it. We're obsolete, but we did it.

MARK

Sometimes it's the road that counts
Vinnie, not the final destination.

VINCENT

I don't see how that relates to our particular project, but I'll take your word for it.

MARK

Good. You get better now so you can play with your new videogame, all right?

VINCENT

The most boring videogame, ever.

MARK

Signing out. Take care Vinnie.

VINCENT

Thank you Mark. For everything.

Connection ends.

CUT TO:

Vincent is asleep, pale. Anton walks into the living room with both his daughters and his wife Laetitia. Vincent slowly opens his eyes, sees the beautiful young family. He smiles, there's relief in his eyes - despite everything, Anton is okay.

ANTON

(to his daughters)
Go say hi to Uncle Vinnie...

They walk to him, try hard to look unaffected by his condition.

BOTH DAUGHTERS

Hi Uncle Vinnie...

They hug him out of love, but you can feel they are put off by the hospital smells, by pale and hairless Vincent, and by the intravenous plugged in his arm.

Laetitia kisses Vincent on the forehead.

LAETITIA

Hi Vinnie... How are you?

VINCENT

I'm good. I'm great.

LAETITIA
(to the girls)
Hey girls lets go out and let daddy with
his cousin all right?

VINCENT
When I feel better how about we go for ice
cream?

They smile, suddenly out of Vincent's sickness.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
All'right... Triple scoops. No. Quintuple
scoops. The tallest ice cream cones in the
world. We'll bring popsicle sticks to hold
them together...

Their eyes light up, excited. They exit the living room, leave
Vincent and Anton alone. They stand there, looking at each other.
Vincent smiles.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
We lost it all. They won't pay.

ANTON
Doesn't matter. It's fake money anyways...

Anton throws a napkin on Vincent's bed - it's filled with
mathematical equations.

VINCENT
What's that?

ANTON
Some ideas for Neutrino Messaging.

VINCENT
Neutrino messaging?

ANTON
We shoot neutrinos that are set up so they
carry information - stock market purchase
orders for example - right through the
Earth's crust. So we don't lose time going
around the globe, we shoot right through
it with a particle accelerator. The
neutrinos travel through rock, through
concrete, through anything, and it's not
slowed down by Jack shit. It's the fastest
way to get to New York. Something like
nine milliseconds.

Vincent just stares at the mathematical equations, perplexed,
stunned.

ANTON (CONT'D)
We'd kick their ass, big time. New York-
London. London-Tokyo. We would own Wall
Street.

Vincent just stares at the futile project, smiles gently.

ANTON (CONT'D)
I just thought I'd show it to you...
Thought you'd like it.

VINCENT
So what do we do after we own Wall Street?

Anton ponders for a while, something switches inside, and then he just lets go and says what he would really want to say:

ANTON

Well, I guess we use these resources to optimize the global financial system. Send more resources back to the base units. To the core.

VINCENT

You mean the farmers and the workers?

ANTON

Yes. The core. They're the most important assets. No core no system.

Vincent looks at Anton with a question mark on his face.

VINCENT

Come here...

Anton goes to his cousin, leans over him, lets himself fall in his arms.

114 EXT. AMISH FARM - DAY

114

Anton and Vincent walk towards the Amish farm, leaving their car behind. Vincent is pale, skinnier.

They walk on the path, head to where the Amish community is in the middle of a good old baseball game. "Spectators" are sitting on boxes and on the ground.

Vincent and Anton watch the match from afar, curious, somewhat dumbfounded.

IN THE SMALL CROWD of TEN AMISH SPECTATORS, there is the Amish Elder. Vincent's eyes catch the Amish Elder's eyes. Anger grows in the man's eyes for the first seconds of seeing Vincent, and then, noticing the missing hair, the sickness, the anger slightly dissipates.

Vincent walks towards the "stands", basically four wooden benches. The Amish spectators turn towards him, so do both baseball teams who stopped playing.

VINCENT

Could I watch the end of the game?

One of the Amish spectators, saddened by Vincent's chemo side effects, invites them to sit.

AMISH SPECTATOR 1

Please.

They sit, watch...

ON THE FIELD, the pitcher goes back to the game, he throws... the batter bats... CLAC! He runs, the small audience cheers, and then there's a long WHISTLE. Game over. The winning team and the losing team shake each other's hands, happy, it's not about winning or losing.

People leave the stands, except for the Elder, Anton and Vincent who stay on the benches, by themselves. About ten feet separate the Elder and the cousins. They mostly stare at the horizon.

The Elder sighs, perhaps trying to breathe the anger out.

AMISH ELDER
You have cancer?

VINCENT
Yeah... I got cancer.

AMISH ELDER
Why did you come back here?

VINCENT
We just wanted to tell you that last week
I took out the portion of the tunnel
that's under you. So don't worry about the
world going faster and faster under your
feet, it's outta there.

They stay there, silent, for a long time. Vincent puts his hand in the dry earth, lets the soil seep through his fingers... He keeps doing that, lost in thought.

The Amish man turns towards him.

AMISH ELDER
Come with me. Both of you.

They walk all the way to a nearby field, Anton follows...

AMISH ELDER (CONT'D)
I think you should help us. Help us with
this garden. I feel it's what you need to
do.

VINCENT
(surprised)
Really?

AMISH ELDER
Really.

VINCENT
All right... How do I help you with this
garden?

AMISH ELDER
Take off your shoes, it'll make you feel
better. You should feel the dirt on your
feet. Connect with the things around you.

VINCENT
All right...

He takes off his shoes, his socks, walks on the field.

AMISH ELDER
(to Anton)
You too. Try it.

Anton complies. The Elder leads the cousins to two shovels next to the dirt. The Amish Elder grabs two shovels, hands them to the two cousins.

AMISH ELDER (CONT'D)
You continue digging this trench here, all
the way to the other lot, down there. Same
width, same depth.

Vincent stays there, pondering...

AMISH ELDER (CONT'D)

Trust me.

Vincent grabs the shovel stares at the earth, starts digging...
Anton does the same.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE:

Vincent digs the trench, sweat beads off his brow, Anton does the same, but he mostly keeps an eye on his recovering cousin. The day passes, it's now the end of the afternoon.

END OF SEQUENCE

Vincent stops for a second, out of breath, exhausted.

VINCENT

I think I'm done for today...

CUT TO:

Vincent drinks water from a glass, he pulls his head back until water drips down his cheeks, and in that sweeping motion he decides TO POUR THE WATER on his face and burgeoning hair, like a purification ritual. It feels immensely good.

CUT TO:

The two cousins are leaning on a fence, resting, absorbed in thought.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Sometimes I wonder... if all the time that was given to me was only like... sixteen milliseconds, and I had no past memory, nothing carved in my mind before those sixteen milliseconds, that if all that was left imprinted in my brain were only the images and smells and feelings of those sixteen milliseconds...
How do you think I would experience that?

ANTON

I don't know...

MONTAGE SEQUENCE OVER VINCENT'S VOICE:

We travel across all the building sites that Vincent has supervised in the last months, and at every site, we see something eerie and magical that lasts only sixteen small milliseconds. A piece of earth dislodged by a drill and floating in the air. The wings of insects as men cut trees down. The flap of the Sikorsky helicopter blades slowed down to a halt, the explosion in the Appalachian provincial park, and many more magical moments seized in time.

ANTON (CONT'D)

(V.O. over the 16
millisecond images)

I think... maybe your mind would find a lifetime of experiences in that small amount of time. I think your conscience would somehow decompress all those small grains of time, those tiny moments, and turn them into monumental life changing events... Cascades of energy, and bursts of colors, fountains of emotion... I think maybe your life would feel exactly as long

as someone who lived for 100 years. But it
would have lasted only sixteen
milliseconds.

BACK TO THE AMISH FARM

We discover the Amish Elder standing by their side: they didn't
notice his arrival.

AMISH ELDER

Would you like to do an experiment on the
passage of time?

They turn towards him, curious.

AMISH ELDER (CONT'D)

Just sit here and watch the sunset.

He sits on the grass, they watch the sunset... Multitask Vincent
feels the seconds go by...

VINCENT

So... you're born here?

AMISH

Lets not talk until it's completely dark,
okay? We just watch the sun go down, and
let time go by.

(beat)

If the silence makes you nervous, just
take a deep breath and listen to the wind.

VINCENT

Okay.

4000 milliseconds (four seconds) go by. Vincent takes a deep
breath...

FADE TO BLACK
THE END