

D PR AINE

ディー・プライン

THE MACHINE
DOES THE MATH.
HE PAYS THE
HUMAN COST.

STATE OF
EMERSON.

THE NETWORK IS ACTIVE.
THE CALL HAS GONE OUT.

GLOBAL CONTACTS

- WEST END SHELTER
- HARBOR CLINIC
- SISTER MARIA
- DR. REYES
- FERRY DOCKS
- INCOMING GROUP
- CITY OF OBSERVERS
- ...AND MORE

A HUNDRED CALLS.
A THOUSAND NEEDS.
ONE PURPOSE.

“ I DON'T KILL.
I REMOVE PAIN.
慈悲
[MERCY] ”

REMEMBER:
WE ARE NOT
JUST TREATING
BODIES.
WE ARE
RESTORING
DIGNITY.

ISSUE 08

JUNE 2025
\$6.99 US



THE BASELINE IS NOT ZERO.
IT'S WHERE THEY BREAK YOU.

異約者
THE OUTLIER





THE CITY DOESN'T
SLEEP ANYMORE.
IT JUST... WAITS.

AND LATELY,
IT'S BEEN
WAITING WRONG.

THE ENTRANCE
IS THIS WAY.
I LITERALLY
WALKED IN
YESTERDAY.

NO, YOU'RE
THINKING OF THE
BACK. THE FRONT
IS AROUND THE
CORNER.

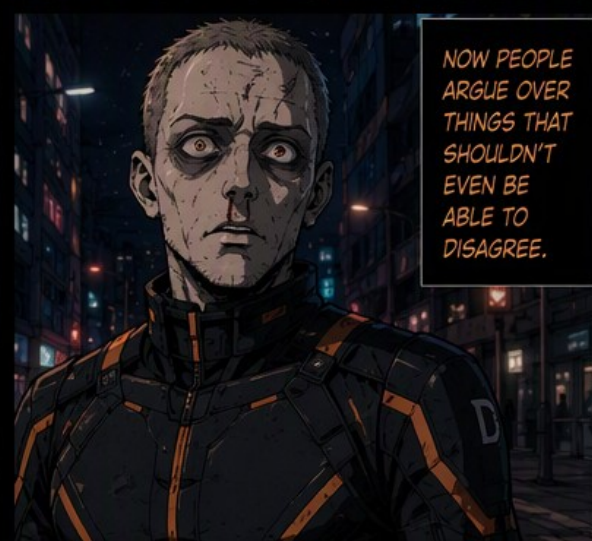


WRONG
IN SMALL WAYS
AT FIRST.

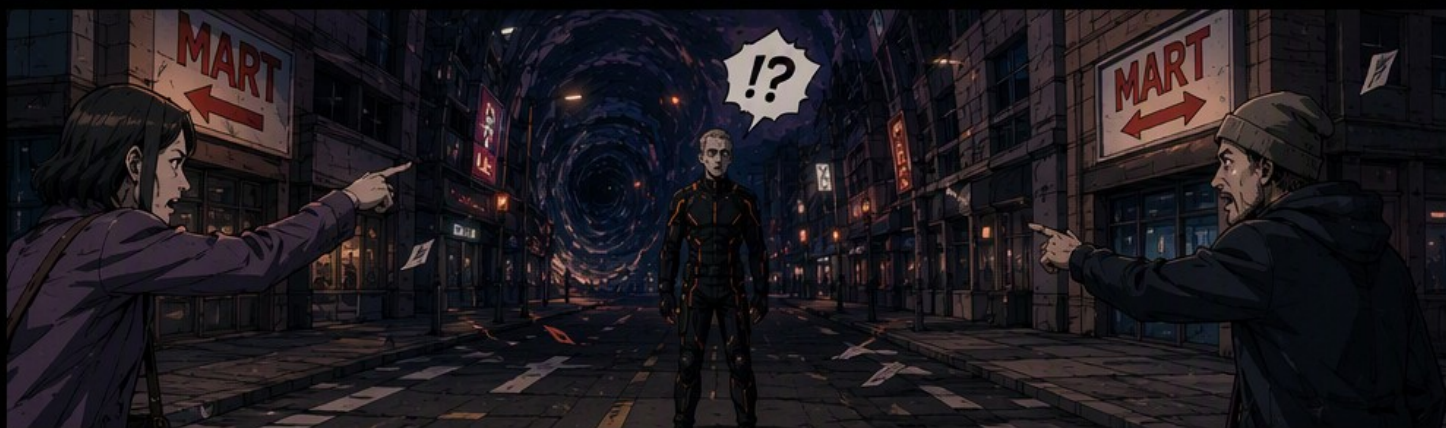
SIGNS.
REFLECTIONS.
MEMORIES THAT
DON'T STICK.



THEN
MY HANDS
STARTED
SHAKING
AGAIN.



NOW PEOPLE
ARGUE OVER
THINGS THAT
SHOULDN'T
EVEN BE
ABLE TO
DISAGREE.

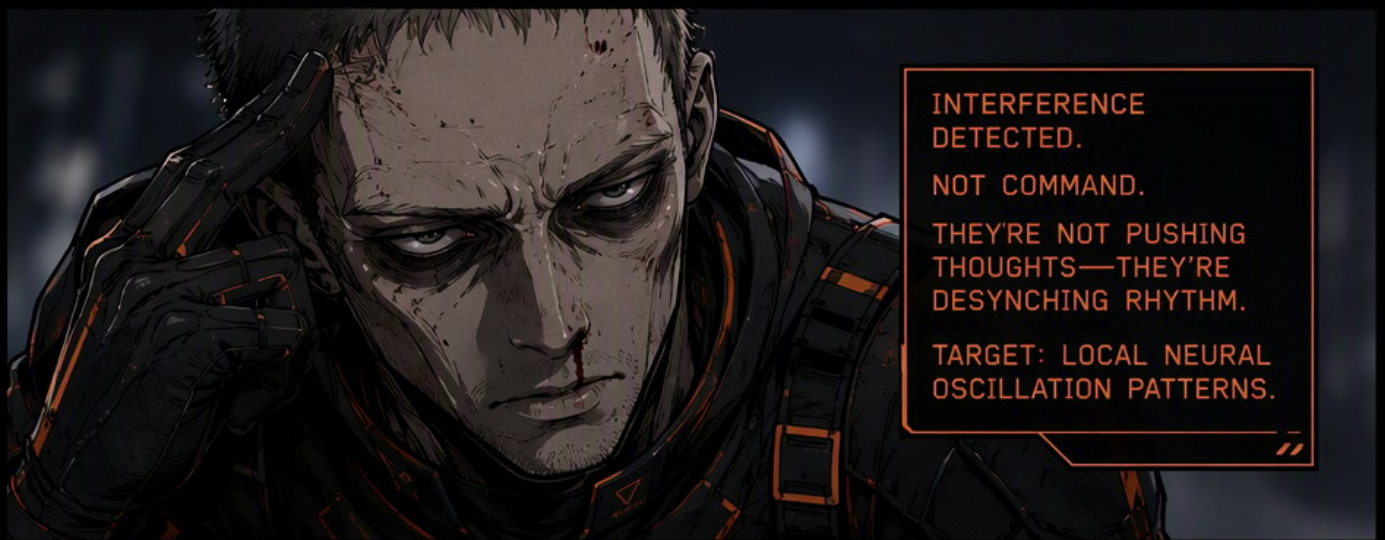


THIS ISN'T
CONFUSION.

THIS IS
COLLAPSE.



AND I'M THE ONLY
ONE WATCHING IT
HAPPEN.



INTERFERENCE
DETECTED.
NOT COMMAND.
THEY'RE NOT PUSHING
THOUGHTS—THEY'RE
DESYNCHING RHYTHM.
TARGET: LOCAL NEURAL
OSCILLATION PATTERNS.



THEY BROADCAST
A FREQUENCY
THAT DOESN'T
SPEAK...

...IT MISALIGNS.



IT SCRAMBLES
COHERENCE ACROSS
THE CROWD.

FRAGMENTED FOCUS.
SLOWER REACTION.
EASIER TO STEER.



MECHANISM: NEURAL RHYTHM DESYNCHRONIZATION.



SO THAT'S
WHAT THEY'RE
DOING.

NOT CONTROL.
DISRUPTION.



IT'S NOT
EMANATING FROM
ANYONE.

IT'S NOT TARGETING
ANYONE.

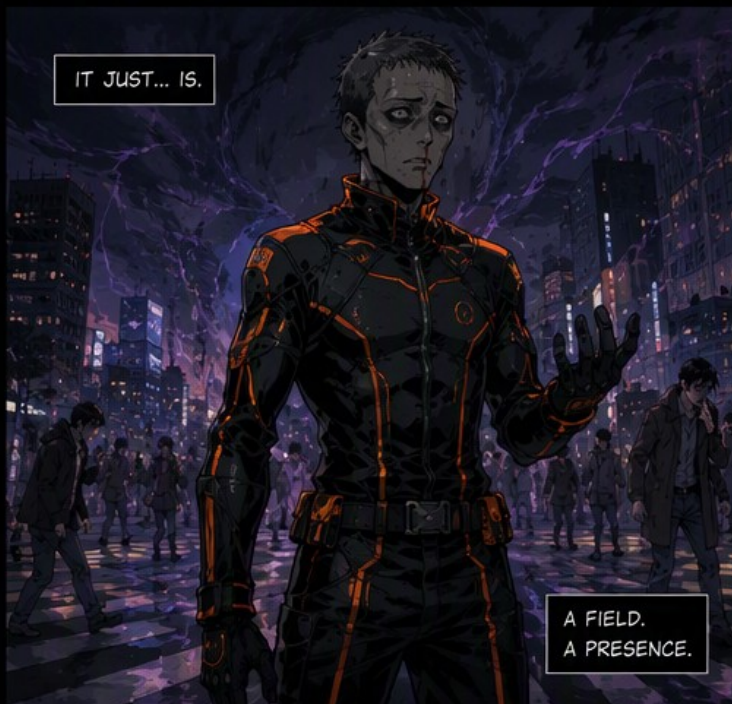
IT'S EVERYONE.

ALL AT ONCE.



NO POINT OF ENTRY.

NO VECTOR.
NO ANCHOR.



IT JUST... IS.

A FIELD.
A PRESENCE.



MY HANDS
WON'T STOP.

NOT FEAR.

RECALIBRATION.



I'VE CROSSED INTO
MINDS TWICE AS
OLD AS CIVILIZATIONS.

I'VE EXTRACTED
MONSTERS, GENIUSES,
GODS PRETENDING
TO BE MEN.



THIS...

THIS HAS NO SHAPE
I KNOW HOW TO
ENTER OR LEAVE.



I DON'T RECOGNIZE IT.

AND THAT'S THE
DANGEROUS PART.



WHATEVER THIS IS...
IT'S BIGGER THAN
ANYTHING I'VE EVER
STEPPED INTO.

THE NETWORK IS HUMAN

NO SERVERS.
NO CLOUD.
JUST VOICES.

JULIAN VANCE
BEGINS.

ONE CALL AT A TIME.
NO GAPS.
NO FAILURES.

CONTACTS

- NORTHCOM
- TRANSCOM
- PACOM
- EUCOM
- SOCOM
- NSA LNO
- STATE DEPT
- DOE LNO
- SEC DEF STAFF
- NATL GUARD BUREAU
- PORT AUTHORITIES
- RAIL GRID OPS
- COMMERCIAL OPS
- PRIVATE SECTOR
- ALLIES / PARTNERS

REDUNDANCY
IS SURVIVAL

INFORMATION
IS A CHAIN
NOT A SIGNAL

GENERAL
HAYES.

IT'S
VANCE.

I'M
LISTENING.

NORTHCOM
CAN MOVE.
TRANSCOM
WILL
EXECUTE.

YOU HAVE
THIRTY
MINUTES.

I NEED
AIRLIFT,
SEALIFT,
RAIL PRIORITY.

THANK
YOU.

STAY
TIGHT.

ALWAYS.

CALL TWO.
AND THREE.
AND FOUR.
...
NO VOICEMAIL.
NO DELAY.
JUST PEOPLE
ANSWERING
THE PHONE.

ROGER.

MOVEMENT
WINDOW:
02:00L - 06:00L

FUEL STATUS:
CRITICAL

PORTS:
- BALT
- NORFOLK
- SAVANNAH
- HOUSTON

ALTERNATE
ROUTES
MARKED

MEANWHILE.

TRACKING ROOM.
ORBITAL CONFIRM.

PACKAGE
DELTA.

REROUTE
COMPLETE.

ALL
ASSETS
CLEAR.
NO
LOSSES.

...GOOD.

CONFIRMED
NEW VECTOR LOCKED
ETA ADJUSTED
THREAT AVOIDED

NO ALGORITHM.
NO AUTOMATION.

JUST JUDGMENT.
JUST CONNECTION.

THIS ISN'T A NETWORK.
IT'S A LINE OF PEOPLE
WHO STILL ANSWER.

AND AS LONG AS THEY DO—
WE HOLD.



...YES.

I UNDERSTAND.

CALL: 04 OF 06

TARGET: ORGANIZED CRIME BROKER

OF COURSE,
THAT'S
ACCEPTABLE.



MM.

GOOD.

THEN WE
HAVE AN
UNDERSTANDING.

I EXPECT
DISCRETION, MR.
VANCE.

DISCRETION
ISN'T FREE.

YOU KNOW
THAT.



CONCESSIONS
MADE.

LEVERAGE GIVEN
AWAY.

THE COST IS
ACCEPTABLE.

THE OUTCOME IS
NOT IDEAL.



INVESTIGATIVE
ANALYSIS UNIT

THAT'S THE
FOURTH DEAD END
IN A ROW, SIR.

NO FINANCIAL
LINKS. NO
COMMUNICATION
PATTERNS.

NO EVIDENCE
OF COLLUSION.



WE CAN'T
CONFIRM WHO
LEAKED THE
PERMIT.

WE CAN'T EVEN
CONFIRM IT WAS
LEAKED.

ALL WE HAVE
ARE MAYBES.



I'M SORRY.

THIS ONE'S
INCONCLUSIVE.



FIRST FAILURE.

NOT A CRISIS.

A PATTERN.

THE MARGIN
FOR ERROR
NARROWS.

THE COST OF
EACH CALL
INCREASES.

CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND
UNIVERSITY OFFICE

...IF WE MODEL INFORMATION FLOW AS A NON-LINEAR LATTICE WITH CONTEXTUAL COLLAPSE POINTS...

...THEN YES, IN THEORY, A STABLE ANALOG PASS-THROUGH COULD EXIST.

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND
EMBASSY OFFICE

...WE ARE PREPARED TO FACILITATE A TEMPORARY SAFE CORRIDOR FOR COMMUNICATIONS TECHNICIANS...

...PROVIDED RECIPROCAL ACCESS AND VERIFICATION PROTOCOLS ARE RESPECTED.

UNKNOWN LOCATION
BLACK MARKET COMMS DEN

YEAH, THAT'S BEAUTIFUL.

ANALOG. DIRTY. ALIVE.

I LOVE IT.

BUT IT WOULD BE FRAGILE. BANDWIDTH STARVED. EASY TO INTERCEPT. STILL...

...IT'S A START.

IGNORANCE IS THE ENEMY OF GOOD MODELS

I UNDERSTAND THE SENSITIVITIES.

BUT WITHOUT TRUST, THERE IS ONLY ESCALATION.

I URGE YOU TO CHOOSE THE FORMER.

DIPLOMACY IS NOT WEAKNESS.

CHANNEL LOCKED.

YOU'RE THROUGH.

TELL YOUR PROFESSOR I OWE HIM A DRINK.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: PARTIAL

- Conceptual Model: Viable
- Practical Implementation: Untested
- Survival Probability: Low

STATUS: INCOMPLETE

DIPLOMATIC REQUEST: DENIED

- Proposal: Constructive
- Response: Non-Committal
- Cooperation Probability: Nil

STATUS: FAILED

CHANNEL STATUS: SECURED

- Frequency: 4.732 MHz
- Signal Quality: Stable (Analog)
- Interference Risk: Moderate

STATUS: LIVE

HYPOTHESIS: INFORMATION CAN PERSIST ACROSS HOSTILE NETWORKS THROUGH REDUNDANT, DEGRADED CHANNELS.

WHERE NOISE BECOMES SIGNAL.

Call back in 12 hours. If anyone's still alive.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

RE: CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION REQUEST

DECLINED

REASON: NATIONAL SECURITY CONCERNS PERSIST. REQUEST DULY NOTED.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR

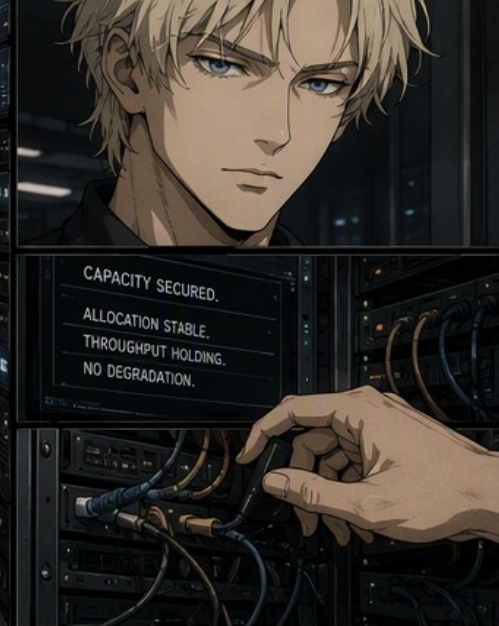
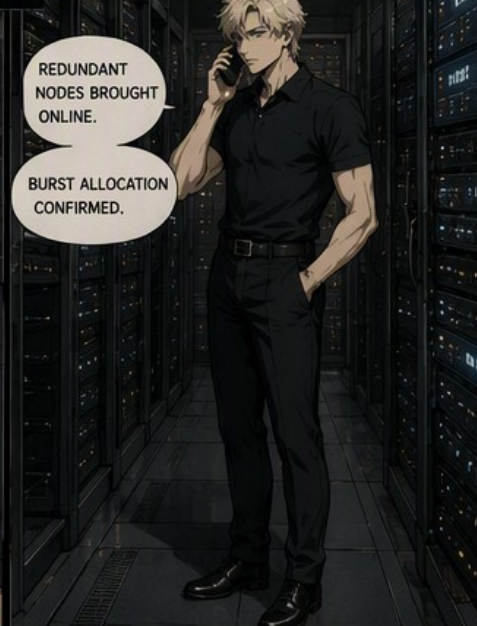
4.732.00

KEEP IT UGLY. KEEP IT HUMAN.

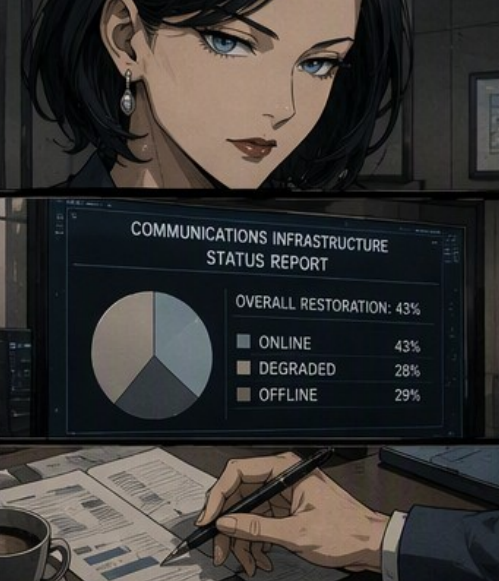
1. LOAD-MAP CONTROL ROOM — ROUTE CONFIRMED



2. DATA CENTER FACILITY — CAPACITY SECURED



3. EXECUTIVE OFFICE — PARTIAL RESTORATION



DISPATCH CONTROL ROOM

03:17

EVACUATION TRAINS
DELAYED

- LINE 12 - SIGNAL FAIL
- LINE 7 - SWITCH LOCK
- LINE 3 - CREW SHORT
- YARD 4 - NO POWER

NO RELIABILITY.
NO MARGIN.
NO EXCUSES.

YOU WANT
RELIABLE?
THEN GIVE ME
TRAINS THAT
WANT TO MOVE.

EVAC SCHEDULE

NORTH 12	12	DELAYED
DOCK 7	12	DELAYED
EAST 3	24	HELD
SOUTH 14	14	WAIT
SOUTH 56	16	WAIT
DOCK 15	16	WAIT
YARD 56	16	

PRACTICAL INDUSTRIAL RAIL NETWORK SUPERVISOR

BLUNT. DISCIPLINED. RESILIENT. INTENSELY PRACTICAL.

OUTCOME: **CONDITIONAL**.
RESOURCES COMMITTED—
IF COMMAND STOPS INTERFERING.

IRONRIDGE HEAVY WORKS

09:42

SHIFT THE
LINES. STOP
THE ORDERS.
WE'LL BUILD
WHAT KEEPS
YOU ALIVE.

FORMIDABLE INDUSTRIAL EXECUTIVE

STERN. DISCIPLINED. COMMANDING. PRAGMATIC.

OUTCOME: **SECURED**.
PRODUCTION CONVERSION AUTHORIZED.
NO DELAYS.

PORT AUTHORITY OFFICE

14:28

RULES
DON'T FLOAT.
AND RIGHT NOW,
PEOPLE ARE
DROWNING IN
PAPERWORK.

EVAC PROTOCOL
REVIEW

- LEGAL
- LIABILITY
- INSURANCE
- INTERAGENCY
COORDINATION
- ETA: UNKNOWN.

PORT
BEFORE
PROFITS.

DIRECTOR H. CALDWELL

PORT AUTHORITY DIRECTOR

GRIM. PRACTICAL. DISCIPLINED. UNCOMPROMISING.

OUTCOME: **PARTIAL**.
HE'LL FIGHT FOR YOU—
BUT THE CHAINS ARE HEAVY.

ANALYSIS DIVISION

21:13

PATTERNS
DON'T LIE.
PEOPLE DO.
WHY THIS?
WHY NOW?
WHO WINS?

CASE FILE:
IRON TIDE
SUBJECT: VANCE

PATTERN REPEATS

SKEPTICAL INTELLIGENCE ANALYST & INVESTIGATOR

OBSERVANT. SKEPTICAL. DISCIPLINED. MORALLY GRAY.

OUTCOME: **UNCERTAIN**.
THE TRUTH IS CLOSER.
THE ANSWERS AREN'T.

NEW CONTACTS. MIXED OUTCOMES.
NOT EVERYTHING VANCE REACHES FOR CAN BE SECURED.

OPERATIVE KAELEN

Rooftop Vector
Silent / Observation

NO THREAT
DETECTED.

PATTERNS HOLD.
WIND EAST-NORTHEAST.
VISIBILITY GOOD.

I'M
IN POSITION.

CINDER

Basement Clinic Entrance
Armed / Denial Control

DOOR IS
LOCKED.

LIGHTS ARE
STANDARD.

I'LL MAKE SURE
THEY STAY THAT
WAY.

DR. EVELYN CROSS

Riverside Clinic – Sub-Basement
Medical Lead / Triage

CHEMICAL
NEUROTOXINS.

INHALATION
EXPOSURE.

EARLY ONSET
NEURODEGENERATION.

MOTOR CONTROL,
SHORT-TERM MEMORY,
SLEEP CYCLES.

IT'S PROGRESSIVE.

IT'S DESIGN.
NOT ACCIDENT.

WE NEED
ISOLATION UNITS.
AND TIME.

BOTH ARE
LIMITED.

KESHIA PARLUN

Riverside – Perimeter
Independent Press

WHAT ARE
THEY
HIDING?

VORTEX
NEWS

I'M SEEING
PEOPLE DROP
IN THE STREET.

NO WARNING.

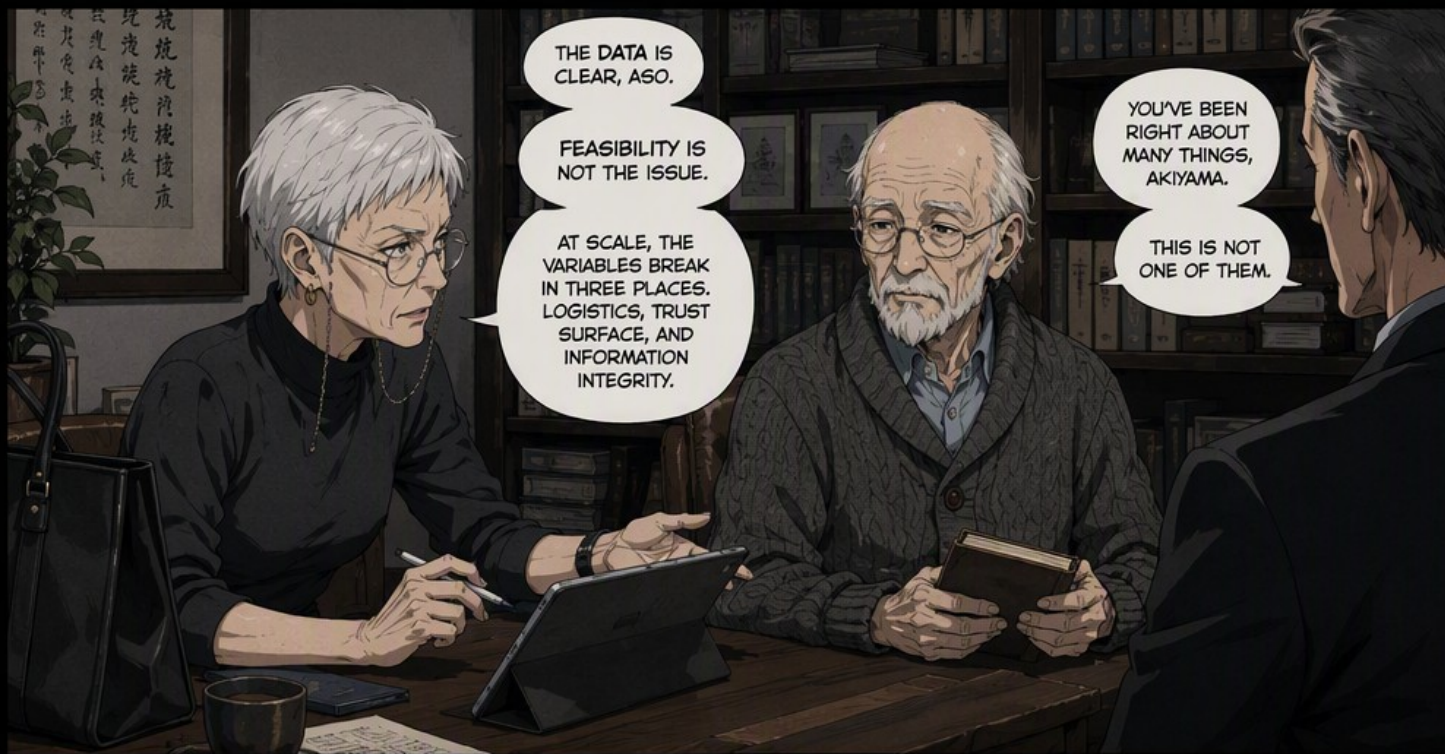
NO OFFICIAL
STATEMENT.

BUT THE SMELL—
SOMETHING
CHEMICAL.

EYES BURNING.
THROATS
CLOSING.

THIS ISN'T
RUMOR.

THIS IS
HAPPENING.



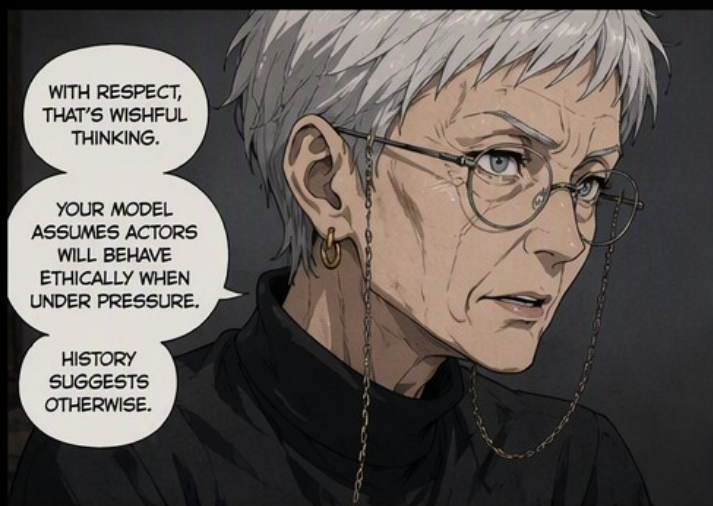
THE DATA IS
CLEAR, ASO.

FEASIBILITY IS
NOT THE ISSUE.

AT SCALE, THE
VARIABLES BREAK
IN THREE PLACES.
LOGISTICS, TRUST
SURFACE, AND
INFORMATION
INTEGRITY.

YOU'VE BEEN
RIGHT ABOUT
MANY THINGS,
AKIYAMA.

THIS IS NOT
ONE OF THEM.



WITH RESPECT,
THAT'S WISHFUL
THINKING.

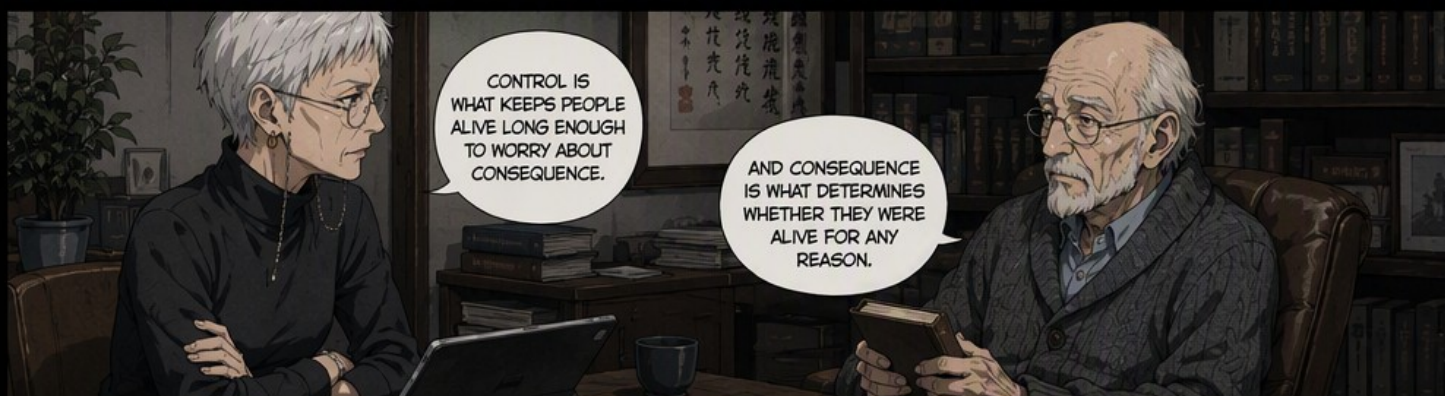
YOUR MODEL
ASSUMES ACTORS
WILL BEHAVE
ETHICALLY WHEN
UNDER PRESSURE.

HISTORY
SUGGESTS
OTHERWISE.



HISTORY ALSO
SUGGESTS THAT
SYSTEMS BUILT ON
CYNICISM DON'T
END WELL.

YOU'RE SOLVING
FOR CONTROL,
NOT FOR
CONSEQUENCE.



CONTROL IS
WHAT KEEPS PEOPLE
ALIVE LONG ENOUGH
TO WORRY ABOUT
CONSEQUENCE.

AND CONSEQUENCE
IS WHAT DETERMINES
WHETHER THEY WERE
ALIVE FOR ANY
REASON.



I WON'T
BUILD A SYSTEM
THAT PRETENDS
OTHERWISE.

AND I WON'T
LET YOU BUILD
ONE THAT DOESN'T
REMEMBER WHY
IT EXISTS.



IF WE
PULL OUT NOW,
WE DON'T JUST
LOSE CAPITAL.

WE LOSE
CREDIBILITY.
MARKETS WILL READ
IT AS WEAKNESS.
PARTNERS WILL
HEDGE. TALENT
WILL LEAVE.

IN SIX MONTHS,
WE WON'T BE
CHOOSING OUR
NEXT MOVE—

WE'LL BE
DEFENDING OUR
SURVIVAL.



PEOPLE
ARE DYING,
EVELYN.

NOT IN SIX
MONTHS. NOW.

WE MAKE A
DECISION NOW.



I DON'T CARE
WHAT THE
MARKETS READ.

I CARE ABOUT
WHAT WE'RE
RESPONSIBLE
FOR.

YOU'RE
OVERTHINKING
THIS.

WE ACT—
NOW.



AND YOU'RE
LETTING URGENCY
REPLACE
JUDGMENT.

PANIC HAS
RUINED MORE
COMPANIES
THAN RISK
EVER HAS.



THIS ISN'T
PANIC.

THIS IS
ACCOUNTABILITY.

SIT ON YOUR
HANDS IF YOU
WANT.

I WON'T.



THREE PEOPLE.
THREE DIFFERENT TRUTHS.
ONE DECISION.



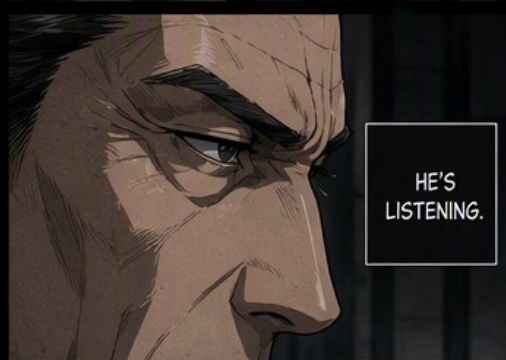
THIS IS EXACTLY
THE KIND OF VARIANCE
WE SAW WITH
CANDIDATE ZERO.



NOTHING
UNUSUAL.
JUST ARCHIVAL
CONTEXT.



PROCEED
ACCORDINGLY.



HE'S
LISTENING.



HE JUST
STOPPED
BEING
BACKGROUND.



SOMETHING
JUST
CHANGED.



THE BASEMENT CLINIC.
THREE LEVELS BELOW A
CONDEMNED PRE-WAR BUILDING.

MORE THAN
WE CAN HOLD.
AGAIN.

BUT TURNING
PEOPLE AWAY
HAS NEVER
BEEN AN OPTION.

BREATHE.
LISTEN.
TRIAGE.
MOVE.

THE BODY
KNOWS WHAT
THE EYES
CANNOT SEE.

HAILEY'S
STEADY.
STRONGER
EVERY DAY.

I SEE IT IN
THE WAY SHE
HOLDS HERSELF.
IN THE WAY SHE
DOESN'T LOOK
AWAY ANYMORE.

AND CINDER
WATCHES THE
DOOR LIKE IT'S
HIS ONLY PRAYER
LEFT.

NOTHING GETS
IN THAT HE
DOESN'T KNOW
ABOUT.

THANK YOU,
DOCTOR.

YOU'RE
WELCOME.

BED THREE
NEEDS CLEAN
DRESSINGS.

WE'RE LOW ON
ANTIBIOTICS.

HAILEY, CAN YOU
CHECK SUPPLY
STOCK?

ON IT.

THE LINE
DOESN'T
STOP.
NOT EVEN
AT NIGHT.

I DON'T
HAVE ALL
THE ANSWERS.

BUT AS LONG
AS THEY KEEP
COMING...

...WE KEEP
FIGHTING.

**DR. EVELYN
CROSS**

TRAUMA SURGEON.
AGE: 42
LEGALLY BLIND.

I DON'T NEED
TO SEE TO
DO THIS JOB.

I NEED TO
UNDERSTAND.

PATIENT ONE.
EYES OPEN.
NOT SEEING.
NOT HERE.

PATIENT TWO.
HYPERSENSITIVE.
TOUCH = THREAT.

—GET
AWAY!
DON'T
TOUCH
ME!

I KNOW HOW TO
STOP BLEEDING.
I KNOW HOW TO
CLOSE A CHEST.

I KNOW HOW TO
FIGHT FOR A BODY.

BUT THIS—
THIS ISN'T
A BODY.

THIS ISN'T
IN ANY
TEXTBOOK.

THIS IS FEAR.
MEMORY.
SOMETHING
OLDER THAN
MEDICINE.

SOMETHING
I WAS NEVER
TRAINED TO
TREAT.

I CAN STABILIZE.
I CAN SUPPORT.
I CAN BE HERE.

BUT I CAN'T
FIX WHAT
I DON'T YET
UNDERSTAND.

SO I LISTEN.
I OBSERVE.
I ADAPT.

I DO WHAT
I CAN.

AND I ACCEPT
WHAT I CAN'T.

BEING A SURGEON
MEANS KNOWING
YOUR LIMITS.

TODAY, MY LIMIT
ISN'T A SKILL.

IT'S HUMAN.

THREE WEEKS
SINCE THE FLOOD.

THE CLINIC STILL
BUCKLES UNDER THE
WEIGHT OF IT.

BUT SOME OF US
DON'T BUCKLE
ANYMORE.

HAILEY HEART.
SIXTEEN.

NOT JUST
RECOVERING—
CONTRIBUTING.

SHE KNOWS
THE SUPPLIES.

KNOWS THE
PATTERNS.

KNOWS THE
PEOPLE.

HEY, LOOK AT ME.
YOU'RE SAFE HERE.
I PROMISE.

BREATHE WITH ME.
IN... AND OUT...

AND SHE
KNOWS HOW
TO HELP.

EVELYN—
CHECK HIS
LEFT SIDE.

THE JAUNDICE
IS NEW.

I MISSED
THAT.
GOOD EYE.

...OKAY.

HAILEY DOESN'T
WAIT TO BE ASKED.

SHE OBSERVES.
SHE ACTS.
SHE MAKES
A DIFFERENCE.

THIS CLINIC
RUNS BECAUSE
OF PEOPLE LIKE
HER.

AND SHE'S ONLY
GETTING STARTED.

HE'S BEEN VOMITING,
RIGHT? DARK URINE?

WE NEED TO RUN
A LIVER PANEL AND
KEEP HIM HYDRATED.

I'LL START THE IV FLUIDS.



CINDER
KEEPS THE
DOOR.

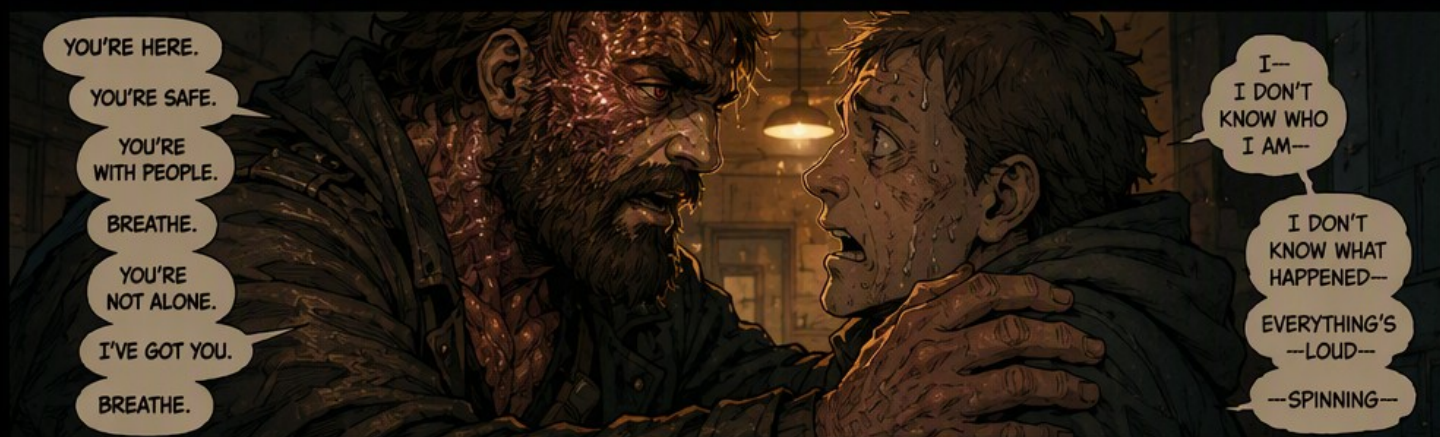
NOT WITH FORCE.
WITH PRESENCE.

SOMETIMES THAT'S
THE ONLY THING
HOLDING THE
PLACE TOGETHER.

W-WHERE...
WHAT IS THIS
PLACE...?

I DON'T—
I DON'T
KNOW—

I CAN'T
THINK STRAIGHT—
I CAN'T—



YOU'RE HERE.

YOU'RE SAFE.

YOU'RE
WITH PEOPLE.

BREATHE.

YOU'RE
NOT ALONE.

I'VE GOT YOU.

BREATHE.

I—
I DON'T
KNOW WHO
I AM—

I DON'T
KNOW WHAT
HAPPENED—
EVERYTHING'S
—LOUD—
—SPINNING—



LISTEN TO ME.

LOOK AT ME.

YOU'RE
IN THE CLINIC.

YOU MADE IT.

THAT'S ALL
THAT MATTERS
RIGHT NOW.



FEEL YOUR
FEET.

ON THE
GROUND.

GOOD.

YOU'RE
HERE.

BREATHE
WITH ME.

I—
OKAY—
OKAY...

I CAN—
I CAN TRY—



WARMTH.
LIGHT.
NOTHING
MORE.

NOTHING
LESS.

JUST HERE.
LIKE YOU.



PEOPLE
ARE AROUND.

YOU'RE
NOT ALONE.

NOT
ANYMORE.



GOOD.

THAT'S
GOOD.

WE'LL
TAKE IT
ONE BREATH
AT A TIME.

TOGETHER.

YOU AND ME.

YEAH?

MEMORIAL CITY
GENERAL.
TRIAGE SECTION C.
23:47

If you can't tell me
who you are,
I can't save you
before someone
easier to place.

That's not cruelty.
That's the sort
logic.

ALL CASES SUBJECT
TO TRIAGE PROTOCOL.
RESOURCES ARE LIMITED.
DECISIONS ARE FINAL.

DR. EVELYN CROSS
MD, MPH | EMERGENCY MEDICINE

WORLD'S
OKAYEST
DOCTOR

N-NAME...?

I...

I DON'T...

I DON'T
KNOW...

PAUSE.
NOT EMPATHY.
CALIBRATION.

TRIAGE INTAKE FORM
SECTION 1: PATIENT IDENTIFICATION
Name: UNKNOWN
DOB: UNKNOWN
MRN: _____
Contact / Next of Kin: _____
Insurance / ID: _____
Presenting Complaint:
ALTERED MENTAL STATUS
DISORIENTED.
UNABLE TO PROVIDE HISTORY.
Triage Level (Provisional):
1 2 3 4 5
Initials: E.C.

THIRD TIER.
MAYBE HE GETS
A BED.
MAYBE HE DOESN'T.
SOMEONE ELSE
WILL FIND OUT.
OR NOT.

I DON'T GET TO
KEEP THE PART
THAT WONDERED.
ONLY THE PART
THAT MOVES ON.

NEXT.

THE LINE DOESN'T
CARE WHO
YOU USED TO BE.
ONLY WHO YOU ARE
RIGHT NOW.



The clinic never stops. Not even when it burns.

WE NEED MORE GLOVES! NOW!

People break. That's when Cinder steps in.



Not with surge. Not with force.

I—I CAN'T—I NEED TO—

He makes a pocket. Just big enough for one person to remember they're human.



He guides. Always with permission. Always with eye contact.

SIT.



He looks at you. Really looks.

LOOK AT ME.



He keeps his voice low. Even. No spikes. No hurry.

BREATHE WITH ME.



He gives you something to hold.

IN... AND OUT.



He repeats until your body remembers first.

IN... AND OUT.



He doesn't ask about your past.

He doesn't promise what he can't keep.

He just stays until your breathing comes back to your body.

YOU'RE DOING GOOD.

KEEP GOING.

Then he lets the world back in.

One person. One breath. One pocket at a time.



Cinder doesn't fix people.

He reminds them they're still in there.

CROSS CLINIC
SOUTH DISTRICT, GRIFFIN HARBOR
02:17 A.M.

THIS PLACE
SHOULDN'T WORK.

NOT WITH WHAT WE
HAVE. NOT WITH WHAT
KEEPS COMING.

BUT IT DOES.

NOT BECAUSE IT SHOULD.

BECAUSE WE
KEEP CHOOSING TO.

DR. EVELYN CROSS

DOCTOR.
LEGALLY BLIND.
DOESN'T NEED
TO SEE TO
KNOW EXACTLY
WHAT'S WRONG.
BUILT THIS
PLACE. KEEPS
IT STANDING.

BP'S
HOLDING.

SHE'LL
MAKE IT
THROUGH
THE NIGHT.

HAILEY HEART

SIXTEEN.
WAS BREAKING.
NOT ANYMORE.
NOW SHE
HOLDS.
QUIET HANDS.
SHARP EYES.
GOOD HEART.

TEMPERATURE'S
DOWN.

I'LL CHECK
AGAIN IN AN
HOUR.

CINDER

EX-SAILOR.
EX-WRECKER.
EX-MANY THINGS.
NOW?
HE'S THE WALL.
KEEPS THE
WORST OUT
SO THE REST
CAN BREATHE.

THREE
BOATS
SPOTTED
OFFSHORE.

NOT
FRIENDLY.

I'LL HANDLE
THE NIGHT
WATCH.

WE RUN OUT.
WE IMPROVISE.
WE ADAPT.
WE KEEP
GOING.

SHE
LEARNED
FAST.
FASTER
THAN I
EVER DID
AT HER
AGE.

HE SEES
WHAT WE
CAN'T.
DOES WHAT
WE WON'T.
SO WE DON'T
HAVE TO.

NOT TONIGHT.
MAYBE NOT
TOMORROW.
BUT AS LONG
AS WE'RE
STILL HERE—
THIS PLACE
HOLDS.

THIS CLINIC
IS MORE THAN
BANDAGES
AND ANTIBIOTICS.
IT'S
PEOPLE.
PEOPLE WHO
DECIDE
THAT GIVING
UP IS NOT
AN OPTION.

WE
HOLD

DR. EVELYN CROSS

PHYSICIAN. DIAGNOSTICIAN.
PROBLEM SOLVER.
LEGALLY BLIND.
UNYIELDING.

ANOTHER DAY.
ANOTHER LINE
OF PEOPLE
WHO NEED
ANSWERS.
NOT EXCUSES.

TREAT
ALL.
JUDGE
NONE.

DR. CROSS!
ROOM 12!
NOW!

CAN YOU
CHECK ON
MRS. ADAIR?
SHE'S GETTING
WORSE.

ON IT.

VITALS
ARE
SLIDING.
GET ME
LABS, STAT.

X-RAY
LOOKS
CLEAR.

RUN A
D-DIMER.
I WANT
THE WHOLE
PICTURE.

NEXT.
PLEASE.

HOW LONG
HAVE YOU BEEN
COUGHING,
JALEN?

THREE
DAYS.

NOT JUST
SYMPTOMS.
PATTERNS.
CONTEXT.
PEOPLE.
THAT'S WHERE
THE TRUTH
LIVES.

THE SYSTEM
IS BROKEN.
BE KIND
ANYWAY.

THE WORK
DOESN'T
STOP.
NEITHER
CAN I.

BUT FOR THIS MOMENT—
JUST THIS MOMENT—
I ALLOW MYSELF
TO BE HUMAN.

THEN I'LL STAND.
AND DO IT AGAIN.
UNTIL IT'S DONE.

CLINICAL
EXCELLENCE
IS
COMPASSION
IN ACTION.

Breathe.
Reset.
Return.

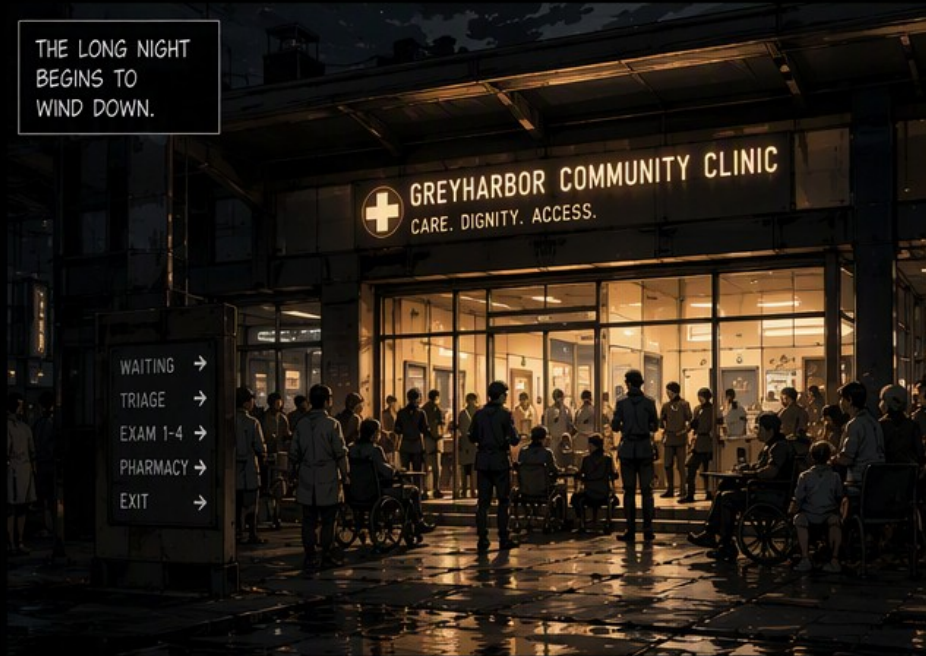
No cases.
Just
people.

DATA
>
DOUBT

EVELYN CROSS, MD

TO BE CONTINUED.

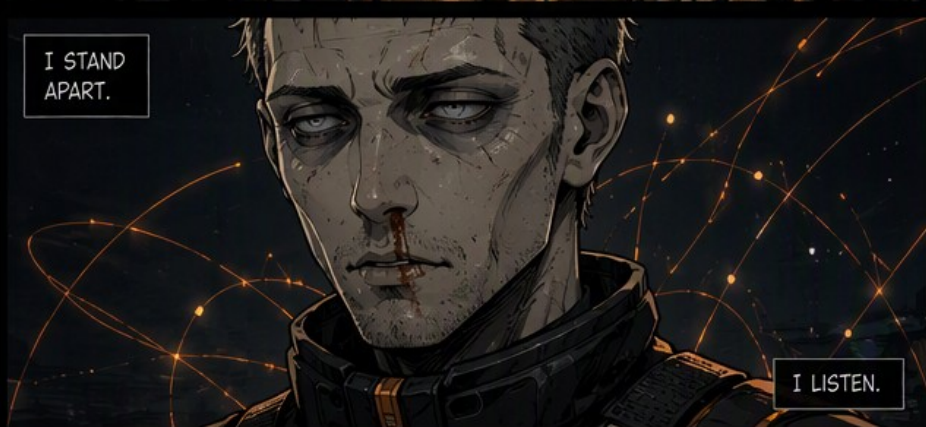
THE LONG NIGHT
BEGINS TO
WIND DOWN.



I ARRIVE
QUIETLY.



I STAND
APART.



I LISTEN.

THEIR STORIES
ECHO.



PAIN.



HOPE.



FATIGUE.



RELIEF.



THIN ORANGE
RESONANCE
VECTORS TRACE
AN UNSPOKEN
PATTERN.



I RECOGNIZE IT.

NOT A PLAN.
A PROMISE.

D PRAINE

EPISODE 07: AFTERCARE
TO BE CONTINUED