

Underwall

by

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FADE IN:

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Armored Security Agents in flak vests and helmets move through darkened hallways.

Flashlights on the ends of rifles float beams of illumination across chipped paint and flaking drywall.

INT. NEWMAN'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door of a one-room apartment flies in off its hinges.

COLE NEWMAN stands in a corner of the room staring out a shattered floor-to-ceiling window.

Though it is night, artificial light from the street outside streams brightly through the window.

SECURITY AGENTS move into the room and train their rifles on Newman.

Newman turns to the door. A belt of explosives is strapped around his chest with wires leading to a detonator in his hand.

NEWMAN

Back!

Newman holds the detonator out at the Security Agents as a threat. He flips a safety covering the trigger.

One of the Security Agents steps forward from the group.

Newman takes another step back and waves the detonator side to side at the arc of agents. His eyes don't quite seem to focus on the scene before him.

The Security Agent stops his approach and lowers his rifle.

SECURITY AGENT

Let's all just calm down here.

Newman's eyes snap to focus on the Security Agent.

NEWMAN

Stay back!

The Security Agent removes his helmet. He is AARON KOHLER.

AARON
Nobody has to die here.

NEWMAN
Better here than at the Tower.

Aaron starts unclipping his armored vest.

AARON
My men can each put three bullets
through your head before you have a
chance to press that.

NEWMAN
If I die, this blows.

Aaron slips the vest off and lays it on the floor. He pulls his rifle strap over his head and lays the gun next to the vest. He looks around the room, the first time he has taken his eyes off Newman.

In one corner is a bare, stained mattress.

In another is a rusted toilet. A frayed privacy curtain hangs on a rack by it.

AARON
Is this where you live?

NEWMAN
Make yourself seem vulnerable
before the suspect. Make them trust
you. Make them believe you are
their friend. I know the protocols
too.

Aaron advances another step. Newman backs away once more. His foot slides up against the edge of the broken window.

AARON
If you talk to me I'll listen. I'll
do everything I can to keep you
safe.

Newman laughs coldly.

NEWMAN
No, I'm dead either way. At least
here I get to say when.

And Newman steps backwards out the window.

EXT. TENEMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Newman falls through the air from a window some twenty stories up. About fifty feet from the ground he disappears into a brilliant ball of flames. The concussion shatters the windows of the building and of security cars arrayed around the base of the tenement.

INT. NEWMAN'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The blast knocks Aaron back from a perch leaning out the window. He falls back into the room, winded without the protection of his armor, but otherwise unharmed.

EXT. THE TOWER - DAY

THE TOWER, an enormous sky-scraper, rises up twice as high as the next largest building in the city's center. It is constructed of matte black stone and has no windows higher than a third of the way up its considerable height, except at the very top level.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - LOCKER ROOM - LATER - DAY

Aaron has changed into civilian clothes. He wears his badge on a chain around his neck. He hangs his helmet in a locker next to his flak suit.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - HALLWAYS - MOMENTS LATER

Aaron steps out of the locker room and is surprised by LIEUTENANT CAMPBELL, his immediate superior, who leads him off down the hall.

CAMPBELL

Congratulations, Aaron. I hear the raid went well.

AARON

Thank you, sir.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - DETECTIVE'S FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

The Detective's Floor is a large, open space that serves as heart and hub of the Domestic Security Office.

Desks are arranged across the floor in rows with DETECTIVES working at them. One wall is formed of glass-walled private offices.

There are no windows looking outside.

Campbell and Aaron emerge from one of several halls leading out onto the Detective's Floor.

CAMPBELL

Nearly fifty pounds of explosives recovered without a single casualty.

AARON

Except the suspect, sir.

CAMPBELL

A shame we won't be able to interrogate him. Word is you were quite the hero in there, though. Kept him from blowing the whole squad to pieces.

AARON

Yes, sir.

They have arrived at an unoccupied desk. Aaron pulls the chair out from behind it. A nameplate on the desk reads "DET. AARON KOHLER."

CAMPBELL

No one could've brought him in alive if he didn't want it.

AARON

If that's all, sir, I'd like to get started on the paperwork.

CAMPBELL

Don't worry about it. Got a few of the patrolies on it. You go home. Rest. Brass wants to see you first thing tomorrow morning.

AARON

I don't mind the paperwork, sir. And it was my operation, I should --

CAMPBELL

Go home, Aaron.

Campbell puts a hand next to Aaron's on the chair and slides it back under the desk.

EXT. TOWER PLAZA - DAY

Aaron comes out the front doors of THE TOWER, into an open plaza surrounding it.

The streets are beginning to fill with morning traffic. Tall sky-scrapers line the road. We might almost be in Manhattan. Except that where we would expect to see billboards and advertisements are giant television screens, each displaying the same NEWS ANCHOR.

Speakers are mounted along streetlights. Cameras protected in black plastic globes hang below them and from corners of buildings.

The sky-line is dominated by a WALL that rises just above the top of every building except the Tower. The Wall extends around the entire city in a circle with the Tower at its center.

NEWS ANCHOR

Private Taylor's mother accepted the posthumous medal for her son's heroic sacrifice at a ceremony yesterday afternoon. President Sabe was in attendance.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Aaron makes his way through thickening pedestrian traffic as rush hour starts to get into full swing. Though he wears civilian clothes, his badge hangs prominently from his neck. As people pass him they habitually step aside, hardly even aware of their own deference.

NEWS ANCHOR

Citizens residing near Factory Quarter awoke early this morning to the detonation of a small explosive. This was part of a major raid by domestic forces against a group of terrorists planning to interrupt our food supply.

A group of kids runs past on their way to school. They make a game of weaving through the crowd and run past Aaron without any regard for his badge.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

The Tower reports the operation was a complete success.

(MORE)

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

The planned attack is believed to have been the work of Jonathan James.

The average pedestrian pays little attention to the constant news feed surrounding them, but Aaron listens to this story as he walks.

The News Anchor's visage is replaced by that of PRESIDENT SABE, a comforting, grandfatherly-looking man.

SABE

My fellow Citizens, it is at times like these that I am reminded not only of the importance of what we have already accomplished, but also the necessity that we not fail to complete what we have set out to do.

A group of uniformed workmen scrubs graffiti from the wall of an alley. Though it is mostly tags, there are a few anti-draft and anti-curfew slogans on the wall as well.

SABE (CONT'D)

It is easy to feel safe here behind our Wall, protected by those brave souls who have sacrificed themselves to keep at bay the forces which would destroy us.

EXT. FOOD COUNTER - CONTINUOUS

A cluster of people stand around a food counter ahead of Aaron. He takes a place in line.

SABE

It is easy to forget that the wasteland from which this city arose remains, just beyond our shields, ready at the slightest sign of weakness to break through and consume us all.

The people on the streets seem to be tuning out the rhetoric coming from the screens above them. In line at the food stand, Aaron catches a woman staring at him as she eats her breakfast. She quickly averts her eye. This is LEILA THORNSMYTHE.

SABE (CONT'D)

It is easy to ignore the terrible lessons of our past, easier to go blindly through the day's work; heads down, eyes closed, willfully ignorant of the fact that we are beset from all sides.

Aaron hands a few bills to the VENDOR and takes his food. He looks back at Leila. She is staring at him once more, and this time she holds the glance and smiles. An invitation.

Without reaction or acknowledgement, Aaron turns and walks away.

SABE (CONT'D)

Beyond our wall lies the rage of a planet long abused by our forebears. Beyond our wall are the last vestiges of an untamed humanity that would destroy what small measure of peace we have managed to carve out for ourselves.

EXT. AARON APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Aaron's apartment building looks classy, but not ritzy; posh, but not opulent.

Sabe continues to deliver vitriol from the ever-present television monitors.

As Aaron approaches the front door, a uniformed DOORMAN stands and opens it for him.

DOORMAN

Good morning, Mr. Kohler.

Aaron, lost in thought, almost passes the man right by.

AARON

I'm sorry?

DOORMAN

I said, good morning, sir.

AARON

Oh, good morning.

DOORMAN

So you were a part of that business last night?

AARON

Yes. You've heard the reports then?

DOORMAN

More than that, sir. I live near the factories. Woke me up in the middle of the night. Terribly frightening stuff.

AARON

You don't have to worry about anything. That's what we're here for.

DOORMAN

Of course, sir. I didn't mean anything by it.

AARON

No. I'm sure you didn't.

INT. AARON'S APARTMENT - DAY

Aaron's apartment looks much like the exterior of the building would suggest: well decorated; fastidiously clean; designed to display comfort but not extravagance. And yet, it does not quite look lived in, but rather like a recreation of a room from a magazine.

Aaron enters and hangs his keys from a hook next to the door, then his badge on a hook next to them.

He goes to the kitchen and pours himself a drink, then moves around the apartment closing the window shades.

He sits in an arm chair and moves to turn on the television, then thinks better of it.

FADE OUT.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - DETECTIVE'S FLOOR - DAY

Aaron walks across the open detective's floor.

Campbell spots Aaron from his office and heads him off just as Aaron is arriving at his desk.

CAMPBELL

Aaron, we've been waiting for you.

INT. TOWER PRESS ROOM - DAY

Sabe stands at the podium of a press room. Arrayed behind him are a number of advisors. One of them, LAUGHLIN, a squat and pock-faced man, holds an ornate wooden box.

SABE

In these days when the threat of attack from within the protection of our wall looms so large, when those who would destroy our society have managed to pass themselves off as members of it, the importance of the work done here by the domestic security forces is greater than ever.

Campbell and Aaron enter the back of the room.

AARON

(whispering)

What's this about, Campbell?

CAMPBELL

Shh. Just wait.

One of the members of the audience is a man about the same age as Sabe, except where Sabe appears wizened by his years and experience, this man, FRANK, has an air of the eccentric and the energy that comes along with it. Unique among the members of the audience, his focus is entirely on Aaron, while everyone else stares forward at Sabe.

SABE

And there is one agent on that force who has been an exemplar of the work and dedication which has kept us safe for so long. As leader of the recent action in the factory district, he dealt a decisive blow to those who would do us harm.

Laughlin steps forward and hands the box to Sabe, who holds it open for the reporters to see. It contains a medal.

SABE (CONT'D)

And so, it is with great honor and
humblest thanks that I present to
Detective Aaron Kohler the Medal
for Distinguished Service.

Campbell pushes Aaron to the dais as the reporters applaud,
shutters click, and bulbs flash.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - CAMPBELL'S OFFICE - DAY

Campbell's is the largest of the private offices attached
to the open detective's floor. Through the glass we can see
television screens with the News Anchor talking. He is
discussing a picture of Aaron and Sabe shaking hands, the
medal on Aaron's breast.

Aaron and Campbell enter the office. The medal is gone from
Aaron's chest and he holds the box awkwardly under one arm,
unsure of the amount of reverence one should treat it with.

AARON

You could have given me some
warning.

CAMPBELL

I was told not to.

AARON

I looked like a fucking idiot.

CAMPBELL

Wouldn't have thought you'd care.

AARON

It doesn't exactly instill faith in
the people when we go on TV looking
like fools.

CAMPBELL

You looked just how you were
supposed to. A humble officer
simply fulfilling his duty.

Campbell smiles wink-wink at Aaron, expecting the knowing
joke to be acknowledged. Aaron manages a fleeting upturn to
his lip.

AARON

Yes, sir.

CAMPBELL

Glad we're in agreement, then,
because I've got more good news.

Campbell digs through his desk and pulls out an overstuffed folder. From it he draws a hefty handwritten document in a plastic evidence bag. He slides it across the desk to Aaron.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

Our bomber's manifesto. Brass was impressed with how you handled the raid, which is why you're running the follow-up investigation too.

AARON

What's left to investigate, sir?

CAMPBELL

Not a whole lot, our man was nice enough to lay out his whole life story for us here.

AARON

I don't think I understand then --

CAMPBELL

We need a report about who this guy was. We know James turned him, and the people want to know how. We just need you to look into what happened. Shouldn't be too hard.

AARON

Yes, sir.

CAMPBELL

Aaron, this is a career case, and all you need to do is sit in one of those offices for a few days, then tell us what we already know.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - AARON'S OFFICE - DAY

Aaron sits in one of the private offices off the detective's floor. It is a simple and small affair with little beyond a desk, chair, and computer monitor. Several folders lie in a pile on the desk.

Aaron sits behind the desk reading the manifesto. There is a knock on the door and a LAB TECH enters with a folder under his arm.

Aaron glances up, then returns to his reading as he talks to the Lab Tech.

LAB TECH

Detective, we have an ID on the bomber. Cole Newman. Thirty-two. Worked in one of the nutrient plants. I have his personnel file here if you want it.

AARON

Please. And pull any surveillance with him on it from the past three months.

The Lab Tech puts the folder down on top of the pile.

LAB TECH

We're already running his face through the archives.

AARON

Any report on the explosives he used?

LAB TECH

He was smart. Looks like we're dealing with pretty common stuff. Probably won't get much from it.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

It is early evening and the streets are once more filled as people wend their way home from work.

The television news discusses the latest developments in the bombing case. There aren't any, but the news cycle must continue unabated. Aaron's face is flashed up on the screens repeatedly.

More than the subconscious deference shown him earlier, people now quickly recognize then look away from Aaron and clearly and consciously move away to give him room on the sidewalk.

EXT. FOOD COUNTER - NIGHT

Aaron walks up to the food stand and takes a place in line. The Vendor sees and recognizes Aaron and motions him forward to the serving window.

Aaron reluctantly moves to the window and takes a proffered plate of food. The Vendor rejects Aaron's money when he tries to pay. Aaron is painfully conscious of the eyes of everyone around staring at him.

EXT. FOOD COUNTER - LATER

Aaron sits at the long counter next to the serving window eating. The seats on either side of him are empty, though every other seat is taken and there are clearly enough customers to fill the entire counter. He keeps his head down.

Leila takes the seat next to him. She does not look at him. After a moment he glances up and is surprised to recognize her.

AARON

I'm sorry if I was rude to you yesterday.

She doesn't stop eating and still doesn't turn to him.

LEILA

Don't worry about it.

AARON

I was a little distracted is all.

LEILA

It's not a big deal.

AARON

I hadn't slept in a while and --

LEILA

I said not to worry about it.

Her tone ends the conversation and silences Aaron as he returns to his food. He glances at her, then back at his food, then speaks almost to himself.

AARON

I just didn't want you to think I was ignoring you.

She makes a decision and puts down her fork as she turns to meet his eye.

LEILA

Weren't you?

Aaron decides to take it as a joke, meets her eye, and smiles. He extends his hand.

AARON
I'm Aaron.

LEILA
I know.

After a beat, she takes his hand.

LEILA (CONT'D)
Leila.

AARON
It's nice to meet you, Leila.

She nods and half smiles, then turns back to her food.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Aaron and Leila walk down the street. It is empty except for them. More than empty, though: desolate. There is no life or sign of life anywhere. Street lamps eliminate any shadows or darkened corners and the street seems somehow wrong.

There is no trash in the gutter or collected in the lee of buildings. There is none of the detritus of human life which one would expect from a city of this size.

The television screens are dark and silent.

Leila and Aaron walk close to each other, but Aaron is careful to maintain a bit of space between them.

LEILA
It's eerie, isn't it? The city
after curfew.

AARON
I like it. It's quieter.

The dull thrum of a distant engine echoes down the street.

LEILA
I've looked out at the streets
before, but it's different when
you're actually out here, you know?

AARON

I guess I don't think about it that much.

The thrum grows and Leila glances over her shoulder, tenses and slows.

LEILA

Hey.

She grabs Aaron by the arm and they stop. Aaron turns too. A patrol cruiser is making its way down the street. It slows as it approaches them. Leila steps closer to Aaron, her hand still on his arm. Aaron holds his badge out and it continues on its way.

Leila watches it drive away and turn at a corner a few blocks away.

AARON

Relax.

Her hand lingers another moment on his arm then slides down and off it.

LEILA

You sure we're allowed out here?

AARON

I outrank any patrolman and just got a personal commendation from the President. What are they gonna do?

LEILA

Hmm. Yeah.

Leila makes a clear and conscious effort to dispel her unease.

LEILA (CONT'D)

So where else does that badge let you go?

AARON

I can't tell you that.

His response is straight, serious, and automatic.

LEILA

Oh. Sorry.

It takes him a moment to realize that her question was more flirtation than serious inquiry. He tries to recover and respond in kind.

AARON

How do I know I can trust you? The city is full of enemies. You could be a terrorist, for all I know.

She looks at him sideways.

LEILA

Well so could you, for that matter.

She bumps her shoulder into his in mock-fight and laughs. It is a surprising sound in the quiet of the city and she overcompensates, becoming suddenly quite serious, which makes her laugh again.

Aaron looks at her and smiles. Confused and unsure, but willing to go along for it.

LEILA (CONT'D)

This is where I live. But I suppose you knew that already.

Aaron begins to prepare a flustered defense, then catches the joke, but before he can respond she leans in and kisses him quickly, and just as quickly steps back.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Goodnight, detective.

She smiles, then turns and enters her building.

Aaron stands until the door is fully closed.

INT. AARON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Aaron comes home and hangs up his keys and badge. He is smiling.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - AARON'S OFFICE - DAY

Aaron has spent some time in his private office now and is a bit more comfortable in the space. The desk is littered with files and papers.

Aaron sits behind the desk reading through the manifesto.

Campbell knocks on the door and enters before Aaron responds.

CAMPBELL
What's the good word?

AARON
You were right. He lays the whole thing out for us right here.

Aaron indicates the manifesto and Campbell reaches out for it. Aaron hands it to him and Campbell begins reading it aloud.

CAMPBELL
Chaos is the birthright of humanity. Man was born free without yoke or obligation beyond himself. The history of civili --

AARON
Go back a few pages, it's just like you said. If you can wade through the ranting, he tells his whole story. Grew up the youngest of four boys in a poor family during the heavy rationing. His father died in a factory accident, then all his brothers got drafted in the first wave.

CAMPBELL
So a happy life.

AARON
His mother killed herself not long after that, and he tried twice. Got a job in the same factory where his dad died, drank away his paycheck every week. It was around then that James got to him.

CAMPBELL
So we can pretty safely say why he turned crazy, then?

AARON
It's like you said. It's all in there.

CAMPBELL
Can't ask for more than that.

AARON

Yeah.

CAMPBELL

You don't sound convinced.

AARON

It's just that: I couldn't ask for more. If I were to describe the perfect piece of evidence to find in a perp's apartment, this would be it. And nothing in our job is ever perfect.

CAMPBELL

Guess you just got lucky.

The Lab Tech knocks on the door of the office.

LAB TECH

Detective?

CAMPBELL

Get that report to me as soon as you can.

AARON

I want to check out a few more things first.

CAMPBELL

You've got everything you need in that letter. Type it up and send it to me.

Before Aaron can respond, Campbell leaves. Aaron turns to the Lab Tech.

AARON

What've you got for me?

LAB TECH

Surveillance of Newman.

The Lab Tech lays several pictures pulled from a surveillance camera onto the desk. They were taken outside the building where the police raid was held and show Cole Newman meeting with a tall man in his forties. Ten years ago the man would have been heavily muscled, but now he is starting to soften. This is DANNY MORIARTY.

AARON

What are these?

LAB TECH

That's Danny Moriarty he's meeting with. The James task-force has him flagged as a civilian contact for James.

AARON

I asked you for all the footage, not just a few stills from it.

LAB TECH

Sorry. Lieutenant Campbell said not to bother you with all that. Besides, the computers can run through it faster than you ever could.

AARON

I want all of the footage from this location from the past three months. Not a picture or two. All of it. Do you think you can manage that?

LAB TECH

Yes, sir.

AARON

Good. Then get it done.

LAB TECH

I'm sorry.

AARON

Don't apologize. Do your job.

Aaron turns back to his desk and the Lab Tech, realizing he has been dismissed, leaves.

Aaron digs through the folders on his desk and pulls out the personnel file on Newman. He flips through it and writes down an address in his notebook then puts one of the pictures in his jacket pocket as he leaves the office.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - DETECTIVE'S FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Aaron makes his way across the detective's floor.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - CAMPBELL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Campbell looks up and sees Aaron leaving. He hurries out onto the floor.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - DETECTIVE'S FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Campbell comes out of his office. Aaron is all the way on the other side of the detective's floor. There is a loud buzz of ambient conversation, and Campbell tries to cut through it.

CAMPBELL

Aaron! Where are you going?

Aaron hears, but does not acknowledge, Campbell. He simply continues walking away and out the door.

INT. LANDLORD'S APARTMENT - DAY

Aaron knocks on an apartment door and Newman's LANDLORD opens it a crack. He is a scummish sort of man who resents his station in life. He catches sight of Aaron's badge and opens the door a bit more to slide out into the hallway.

He provides only the briefest glance through the door at his apartment behind. It looks worn and under-furnished, but at one point might have barely qualified as trashy, then the Landlord closes the door behind himself.

INT. NEWMAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

The door to Newman's apartment has been re-hung, but the lock has not been replaced and only splintered wood remains where it once was. An X of yellow crime-scene tape hangs across it.

The Landlord swings it open, and he and Aaron step under the tape and into the apartment. The light of day does not do the room good, but merely illuminates the squalor of it.

The floor is bare except for small numbered triangles, which mark where what meagre furniture there was rested.

LANDLORD

So this is it. The home of the famous Newbody.

AARON

Newman.

LANDLORD

Whatever. This guy.

He waves one of the surveillance pictures of Newman at Aaron as indication of who he means.

AARON

How long was he one of your tenants?

Aaron pulls his notebook out of his pocket. As he talks to the Landlord he walks around the room looking at it from various vantage points, scribbling notes on his pad. The Landlord remains rooted at the door.

LANDLORD

Oh, I don't know. A few years?
Transferred down from the
reclamation plant, I think.

AARON

Mm-hmm. What can you tell me about him?

LANDLORD

He's the usual sort of fuck-up we
get here. I was about to evict him
when you guys killed him, you know.
Owed two months rent on the place.

AARON

He ever talk about his family?

LANDLORD

How should I know that?

Aaron turns back and looks at the Landlord for the first time since he entered the room, then writes something down and returns to his ambling.

AARON

The other man in the picture, did
you ever see him around the
building or talking with Newman?

Aaron's aimless walk brings him to the shattered window. He stands at it and looks out at the city. The window faces the Wall, which looms hugely over the buildings here. We are much closer to it than the Tower and its enormity is immediate.

LANDLORD

Him? Ah, I dunno. It's just my job to take these fuck-ups' money, you're the ones supposed to be watchin' 'em.

AARON

So you've never seen that other man?

LANDLORD

Eh, I guess I've seen him around once or twice.

AARON

Ever see him talking to anyone besides Newman?

LANDLORD

I don't --

AARON

You don't know. Right. Is there anything you do know?

The Landlord stares sulkily back at Aaron, then turns his gaze to the floor.

AARON (CONT'D)

Great. Well, if by some miracle you should come to know something, give me a call.

Aaron hands a card to the Landlord, though he knows it is a vain gesture. The Landlord pockets the card.

Aaron starts to leave the room.

LANDLORD

How long before I get the room back? You guys are costing me money here.

This earns the Landlord another long stare from Aaron.

AARON

I'll see what I can do.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - AARON'S OFFICE - DAY

Aaron is once more behind the desk in his office. Playing across his monitor is the surveillance footage from outside Newman's apartment that he requested.

He watches in fast forward as people move past the building in waves, slowing the footage when somebody approaches the front door or something else happens to catch his eye.

As he watches, he switches between various angles to get the best view of the people he is studying.

The people walking this street, and indeed the street itself, do not have the same air of urbanity which has pervaded the areas of the city where Aaron lives and works. The men dress in heavy work shirts and denim more than suits. Trash collects in the gutters and alleys.

At one point Aaron slows the footage to watch a group of kids graffiti a wall. At another he watches a drunken resident of the building in question stumble home on near-empty streets.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - CAMPBELL'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The sun has set and most of the detective's floor has emptied out. Campbell is talking obsequiously into his telephone. Each sentence is punctuated by a long pause as Campbell listens to someone on the other end of the line.

CAMPBELL

Of course, sir. I understand sir.

Aaron knocks on the office door and Campbell motions him in, but holds up his hand for silence.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

Yes, sir. I'll tell him right now, sir.

Campbell hangs up the phone and Aaron immediately starts talking.

AARON

Lieutenant, I --

And Campbell immediately cuts him off.

CAMPBELL

Kohler, I just spent thirty minutes talking with my boss, who wants to know why he doesn't have a report on Newman on his desk right now.

AARON

Lieutenant, look at this.

Aaron lays a picture of Laughlin pulled from the press conference earlier on Campbell's desk.

CAMPBELL

That doesn't look like my report.

AARON

No, sir.

Aaron slides the picture aside to reveal a second one below it. This is a surveillance still of Laughlin standing outside Newman's apartment. Aaron slides both pictures across the desk to Campbell.

CAMPBELL

Then why do I care about these?

AARON

(re: the first picture)

This is Laughlin. Sabe's right hand and go-to strategist.

(re: the second picture)

And this is Laughlin outside Newman's apartment two weeks before the raid.

Campbell gives the pictures only a cursory glance, then pushes them back to Aaron.

CAMPBELL

Aaron, you need to write down on a piece of paper everything that Newman wrote in his letter, sign it, and hand it to me.

AARON

But it's not as simple --

CAMPBELL

Your report will be on my desk first thing in the morning.

Aaron takes the pictures back and crams them into his jacket. At the door, Campbell stops him.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

You look tired. You should relax a bit. Take that girl of yours out to a nice dinner.

AARON

How do you know about Leila?

CAMPBELL

Leila. Right. I couldn't remember her name earlier. Its a pretty name, Leila. Pretty girl.

Aaron begins to react, then thinks better of it. He sets his jaw and leaves the office fuming.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Aaron has, it would seem, taken Campbell's advice. He and Leila are out at dinner at an upscale looking restaurant.

LEILA

And this guy -- ?

AARON

Laughlin.

LEILA

Laughlin. What would he be doing at the apartment of one of James's agents?

AARON

He wasn't at Newman's apartment, just the building. I have no proof that the two ever actually met.

LEILA

Well, right, but --

AARON

The whole area is up for redevelopment. He could have been doing a survey for that.

LEILA

Do you believe that?

AARON

I don't know.

LEILA

And you can't ask him why he was there?

AARON

No. I can't ask the second most powerful man in the city if he was involved in a plot to destroy it.

LEILA

Is that what we're talking about here? Something as big as that?

Aaron grows silent and doesn't respond.

LEILA (CONT'D)

What?

AARON

I shouldn't be talking about this with you. It's an open investigation.

Leila mulls this over for a minute.

LEILA

There's something else bothering you.

AARON

Nothing. It's nothing. I'm just blowing things out of proportion.

LEILA

From what you've told me it doesn't seem that way.

AARON

No, not about this.

LEILA

Then what?

AARON

Something my boss said. It's -- oh I don't know. Never mind.

Aaron's tone ends the conversation, but what wasn't said hangs heavy over it.

LEILA

There's someone I want you to meet.

AARON

Who's that.

LEILA

An old friend of my family's. He looked after me when my parents died.

AARON

I'm sor --

LEILA

It was a long time ago. But I think he might be able to help you out a bit. Plus he's been wanting to meet you.

AARON

You told your friends about me?

LEILA

I know it's a bit early, but -- is that OK?

AARON

Yeah. It's nice.

EXT. OUTSIDE FRANK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A door opens to reveal behind it the curious visage of Frank, whose expression shifts to pleased surprise.

Leila and Aaron stand at the door of his house, which is a proper free-standing home rather than apartment.

FRANK

Leila! Come in, come in. Before the hoodlums get you for breaking curfew.

He draws Aaron and Leila into his home and pokes his head out the door to glance down the street in either direction before closing it.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - ENTRANCE HALL - CONTINUOUS

Frank's home is impressively posh. High ceilinged and well-lit, it is designed to immediately impress upon the guest a sense of the owner's importance, while not being so crass as to overtly declare this.

LEILA

Hello, Frank. How've you been?

FRANK

Excellent, Leila. Only better now.
And who is your friend? Oh, no --
this isn't?

LEILA

Frank, may I introduce to you Aaron
Kohler. Aaron, this is Frank Moore.

Frank winces dramatically as he takes Aaron's hand.

FRANK

Pleasure to meet you, Aaron.
Terribly sorry about the hoodlums
remark. I have nothing but respect
for you and your ever-vigilant
comrades, of course. And I am sure
you are a hoodlum of the highest
caliber.

Aaron is slow to react to this until Leila intercedes.

LEILA

Please, Frank. Play nice.
(leaning in)
I like this one.

FRANK

Of course.

He turns and heads off into his house, assured of the fact
that Leila and Aaron will follow.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Can I offer you a drink? Is wine
too formal? Coffee, perhaps, from
the personal store.

Leila smiles apologetically at Aaron, then pulls him off
after Frank.

LEILA

Coffee would be lovely. Thank you.

INT. FRANK'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Frank sits in an over-sized Victorian-era smoking chair.
Aaron and Leila sit opposite him on an art-deco couch.

Between them is a coffee service on a post-industrial table.

Aaron looks around the room with no small measure of confusion at the wildly conflicting styles which make it up. Frank notices his glances and smiles largely.

FRANK
Beautiful, isn't it?

AARON
Um, yes?

The questioning tone earns him a gentle elbow from Leila. Frank doesn't notice either tone or castigation, but continues on blindly.

FRANK
It's all pre-war. Everything in the room. It seems like my only comfort sometimes, excepting, of course, our mutual friend.

He inclines his head indicatively at Leila.

Aaron sips at his coffee, completely unsure how to react to this man before him.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I've spent no small sum collecting these pieces, saving them from the reclamations. Even a man such as yourself must concede that there is something from what came before that is worth preserving.

AARON
Hmm.

Frank takes Aaron's noncommittal grunt as assent.

FRANK
It wasn't all terrible before the war, you know. We had our problems, to be sure, and brought this fate upon ourselves, but there were things of beauty then, too.

AARON
You were alive before the war?

FRANK
Alive? I was more than alive. I built this city.

He pauses for a reaction from Aaron, but Aaron simply looks at Leila for some indication of how to take all this.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Well, sure, I didn't do it alone, but I owned a quarry not a hundred miles from here, and after the bombs went off and the diseases started spreading, Sabe showed up with his militia and protected us while myself and a few concerned citizens started looking to our future.

AARON

So you built all of this?

FRANK

You don't think a city this size just springs up from the earth, fully formed? We had an advantage, of course, in the existing infrastructure, and we were surely lucky not to have been hit in the first wave, but the city was smaller then, I suppose. Hardly the most tactical of targets.

Frank glances briefly over at Leila.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Still, we did not get through the conflict unscathed,
(back to Aaron)
and when Sabe showed up with the promise to protect us, well we jumped at the opportunity.

Aaron adjusts his weight on the couch, getting comfortable, preparing to be sitting for quite some time.

EXT. AARON APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Aaron and Leila walk down the once-more empty streets. They are nearly to the front-door of Aaron's apartment building.

LEILA

I'm sorry Frank spent the night lecturing you.

AARON

I had a good time.

LEILA

Really?

AARON

He's important to you. I'll sit through a history lesson for that.

They arrive at Aaron's apartment building.

AARON (CONT'D)

Come up for a drink?

LEILA

(dry)

I haven't much of a choice, do I? If I say no, I lose my escort to break curfew.

AARON

I'm sorry. I didn't mean that at all. Of course I'll walk you home.

Leila laughs and steps closer to Aaron.

LEILA

Joke, Aaron. I'd love a drink.

INT. AARON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Aaron opens the door to his apartment and turns on the light. Leila follows him in as he takes his badge off from under his shirt and hangs it and his keys by the door.

Leila strolls around the room, conducting an "investigation" of the premises.

LEILA

Nice. Clean. Clean is good.

Aaron walks over to her and takes her coat off. He moves towards a coat-rack by the door to hang it up.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Thank you. Where are the drinks?

AARON

In the kitchen, through there. But don't worry about it, I'll get them.

Leila has already moved to the kitchen.

LEILA (O.S.)
Please, it's no trouble. Glasses?

Aaron takes off his own coat and hangs it on the rack.

AARON
Above the sink.

LEILA (O.S.)
Ah. Found them.

A clink of glass on glass, then silence. And a moment more of silence. Aaron heads to the kitchen.

AARON
Leila?

INT. AARON'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Leila is standing in front of the table, a bottle of liquor in one hand, two glasses in the other. She is staring at something on the table.

AARON
Leila? What's wrong?

LEILA
Aaron, what are those?

Aaron moves up to stand beside her.

INT. DOMESTICE SECURITY - CAMPBELL'S OFFICE - DAY

AARON
What the hell is this, lieutenant?

Aaron tosses a stack of glossy pictures down onto Campbell's desk. Each is a picture of Leila in some different location. With Aaron. Without Aaron. Walking the street. At home. In an office building.

Campbell and Aaron are in Campbell's office; Aaron looking visibly distressed.

CAMPBELL
I have no idea, Aaron.

AARON
You think that threatening Leila will get me to close my case?

CAMPBELL
I assure you I did not do this.

AARON
Right, because you would never threaten her, right?

CAMPBELL
I can't expect you to believe me, but it is the truth.

AARON
And if you didn't do it, then who did?

The question hangs between them. The answer obvious, neither wanting to say it.

CAMPBELL
Alright, Aaron. This has gone on long enough. You're investigation is over.

AARON
Lieutenant, I'm on to something here. Why else go to all this trouble to stop me?

CAMPBELL
We can't willingly put a civilian in danger. You will turn over all your case notes to the James task force, and if they deem your investigation important, then they will follow it up accordingly.

AARON
This is my case, lieutenant!

CAMPBELL
No, Aaron. Your case is closed. You filed the report last night.

This stops Aaron's argument dead and it takes him a minute to recover.

AARON
What did you do?

CAMPBELL
I protected your career.

Campbell pulls a jewelry box out of a drawer of his desk.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)
Incidentally, command was so pleased with your report that they instructed me to give you these.

He tosses the box to Aaron, who opens it to find two oak clusters.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)
Congratulations, detective first-class. I expect your case notes on my desk in an hour. This matter is over. Are we understood?

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - AARON'S OFFICE - DAY

Aaron has several large storage boxes on his desk. He is moving the contents of his desk and office into these boxes, and not making a particularly emphatic effort to keep the files organized in his anger.

As he moves stacks of paper from desk drawer to box, he thinks of something, and after only a moment's consideration sits down and starts typing at his computer.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - CAMPBELL'S OFFICE - DAY

Campbell is sitting at his desk. The phone rings. He answers.

CAMPBELL
Campbell.
(Beat)
Right.
(Beat)
Right.
(Beat)
I understand.

He hangs up the phone. He is clearly disappointed.

He stands and makes his way out onto the police floor.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - DETECTIVE'S FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Campbell walks purposefully from his office to Aaron's.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - AARON'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Aaron is sitting at his desk, staring at his computer. The box has been moved to the floor and Newman's personnel file sits open on the desk.

Campbell doesn't knock on the door, he just strides right in.

CAMPBELL
Detective Kohler.

AARON
Lieutenant, look. Newman's file says that he had three brothers. A family of six.

CAMPBELL
This case is closed, Aaron. You will stop what you are doing immediately.

AARON
But look at this. This is the food requisition data from when he was a kid and his family only needed enough for three people.

CAMPBELL
Please, Aaron, for your own sake stop.

AARON
Three people. Father. Mother. Son. One son, not four. Lieutenant, Newman didn't have any brothers.

CAMPBELL
Detective Aaron Kohler, for failure to follow a direct order from a superior officer I am suspending you from the force without pay.

AARON
Lieutenant, something is wrong with this file. There is more going on here than you or I can see.

CAMPBELL
Pending investigation you are stripped of rank and privilege.
(MORE)

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

You are currently in a controlled area and will leave immediately or face arrest and further prosecution.

AARON

Lieutenant --

CAMPBELL

You are dismissed, Citizen.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Aaron walks down the street. Noon-time foot traffic is light, but present. Stripped of the buffer between himself and other pedestrians provided by his badge, Aaron finds himself being lightly buffeted by those walking in the direction opposite him.

NEWS ANCHOR

The Tower released a report earlier today detailing the investigation into the attempted bombing of the food factories by Jonathan James.

Aaron pulls out a phone and dials a number.

AARON

Pick up the phone. Pick up the phone. Pick up the phone!

This last shout draws the attention of passers-by, but Aaron continues onward unnoticing and uncaring. He hangs up the phone and jams it back into his pocket.

NEWS ANCHOR

A high-ranking official who asked not to be named reported suspicions among Sabe's advisors that James was likely receiving support from an organization outside the Wall. Our source suggested that an increased military presence outside the Wall might soon become necessary.

INT. AARON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Aaron lies awake in bed.

A half-drunk glass of some clear liquor sits on the table by his arm chair.

His keys hang from their familiar hook by the door.

The hook next to them where his badge would be is empty.

INT. AARON'S APARTMENT - DAY

Aaron has finally fallen asleep, though he has kicked most of the covers off the bed over the course of the night.

His fitful rest is broken by the shrill ringing of a telephone. He rolls over and paws at the receiver before managing to flip it out of the cradle. It drops to the floor.

He picks up the fallen receiver and holds it to his ear.

EXT. TOWER PLAZA - DAY

Aaron comes running up to the foot of the Tower.

Parked along the side of the road is a black sedan. Aaron bangs on the window which rolls down to reveal Frank.

I/E. FRANK'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Aaron slides into the passenger side seat of Frank's car. Like everything else about the man, the interior of his car is garrulously fancy, but made ever so slightly off by his disposition to place pre-war objects in positions of reverence, regardless of their pre-war value.

His pink fuzzy dice mirror ornament, as such, hardly matches with the seats' sleek black leather.

AARON
They arrested Leila?

FRANK
I called you as soon as I heard.

AARON
On what charges?

A hard stare from Frank confirms Aaron's fears.

AARON (CONT'D)
Shit. You can't do anything?

FRANK
I was hoping you might be able to.

AARON

Aren't you the one who built the whole damn city? Why can't you just call somebody?

FRANK

Yes, well, I tried, and Sabe does truly wish he could help, but, uhh, no special treatment, you see? He was quite clear on the point.

AARON

Then what do you expect me to be able to do?

FRANK

You are our resident domestic security agent, are you not?

AARON

I got suspended yesterday.

FRANK

Well, now. That does throw a wrench into the works.

AARON

And even if I weren't, there's nothing I could do. Once someone is brought in for something like that...

Aaron trails off, unwilling to voice Leila's probable fate.

FRANK

I could try Sabe again. See if we could at least get the charges reduced.

But both men know this avenue is worthless.

AARON

Wait here a minute, alright?

Before Frank can respond, Aaron is out the door of the car.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - DETECTIVE'S FLOOR - DAY

Aaron strides across the police floor, making directly for Campbell's office. A SECURITY GUARD hastens after him.

SECURITY GUARD
Detective Kohler, with all due
respect to your position, you are
not supposed to be here right now.

Aaron completely ignores the man.

Drawn by the commotion on the floor, Campbell steps out of
his office and catches sight of Aaron.

CAMPBELL
(to the guard)
It's alright. Let him through.
(To Aaron)
Aaron, come on in. I was hoping to
get a chance to speak with you.

Aaron, his dead-straight stare still unbroken, walks past
Campbell and into the lieutenant's office.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - CAMPBELL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Aaron reaches Campbell's desk and finally turns to
acknowledge him.

Campbell steps into the office and closes the door.

CAMPBELL
Now look, Aaron. First off, I just
want to say --

AARON
You arrested her?

CAMPBELL
Aaron, we had no choice in the
matter.

AARON
You could have warned me.

CAMPBELL
No. We couldn't have, and you damn
well know it. We received a
credible tip on her that checked
out. We had to bring her in.

AARON
Bullshit. You want to get back at
me for breaking orders? Sack me.
Don't go after her.

Campbell pulls a file and slides it across the desk to Aaron.

AARON (CONT'D)
What's this?

Campbell just nods down at it.

Aaron picks it up and flips through a stack of surveillance photos showing Leila meeting with Danny Moriarty.

CAMPBELL
Danny Moriarty.

AARON
Yeah, I know who it is.

CAMPBELL
Aaron. I didn't want to suspend you. There's no reason that after a disciplinary period you can't come back. We'll just pick up everything where it was before this whole mess started.

AARON
They're doctored. I know Leila. She isn't with James.

CAMPBELL
You've barely known this girl a week, Aaron. Let it go. For your own sake, just forget about her.

Aaron puts down the folder and looks up at Campbell.

AARON
Let me talk to her.

CAMPBELL
You know I can't do that.

AARON
You want me to accept that she's with James? I need to hear it from her. Besides, she trusts me. Maybe I can get something out of her that you can't.

CAMPBELL
You are asking a lot, Aaron.

AARON
Please, sir.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Leila sits at a table in a cement room. Her face is badly bruised and the skin is split in several places.

An INTERROGATOR sits opposite her. A camera sits perched in the corner of the room.

On the Interrogator's side of the table is a pitcher of water and two glasses: one empty, one full. The Interrogator takes a sip from the full one as the door opens.

Aaron and Campbell enter.

Leila doesn't look up and Aaron puts forth a strong effort at keeping his face cold at the sight of her.

Campbell motions the Interrogator over and the two leave Aaron and Leila alone.

AARON
Leila?

Leila doesn't respond as Aaron walks over to her and pours water into the clean glass. He puts it in front of her.

She jumps as he touches her shoulder, the first sign of life she has shown since he entered the room.

AARON (CONT'D)
Leila. Hey, it's Aaron.

LEILA
No.

AARON
Leila. Leila, look at me.

He takes her chin and lifts her head to face him. Her eyes slowly focus on his.

LEILA
Aaron.

AARON
Yeah. Aaron.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - GUARD'S STATION - CONTINUOUS

Campbell and the Interrogator stand behind a GUARD who is operating a bank of security monitors, each displaying an interrogation room. Their attention is focused on the one showing Aaron and Leila.

The three men stand in a small guard's station at the end of a hallway dotted with regularly spaced doors. Behind each is an interrogation room.

INTERROGATOR

You trust him alone in there with her?

CAMPBELL

No.

INTERROGATOR

Then why -- ?

CAMPBELL

Because he deserves better.

(Beat)

Let me know if he does anything, yeah?

INTERROGATOR

Sure thing.

A buzz sounds as the door to the room unlocks and Campbell leaves. On the monitor Aaron is trying to get Leila to drink from the glass.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

AARON

Come on, Leila. Drink up. You need the fluid.

Aaron pulls his shirt sleeve down over his hand and dips it into the Interrogator's glass of water. He uses the wet cloth to clean some of the blood off Leila's face. She cringes as he dabs it against the fresh scabs.

AARON (CONT'D)

There. That's not so bad now, huh?

LEILA

Let me work on you for a while, then you tell me.

She manages a harsh laugh and it turns to a cough then a wince. She takes a sip from the glass of water, then begins sucking down the water as quickly as her bruised muscles will allow.

AARON
How're you doing?

LEILA
Hmph. I've been worse.

AARON
Right. Can you walk?

LEILA
Yeah, I think.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - GUARD'S STATION - CONTINUOUS

The Interrogator watches the monitor in confusion, then surprise, then anger as Aaron stands up from the table and pointedly walks towards the camera.

He stares directly into it for a long moment, then reaches up and unplugs it from the wall. The image goes dark.

INTERROGATOR
Call the lieutenant.

The buzz again and the Interrogator walks out of the room
...

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

... And comes out in the hall of interrogation rooms. He walks down it past identical door after identical door until getting to the one he wants. He draws his pistol from its holster on his hip and flicks the safety off, then pushes the door open.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The interrogation room appears empty. Where Leila had sat the desk is wet and covered in the shattered remains of one of the glasses.

The Interrogator moves through the doorway and points his gun at the corner of the room. Also empty.

The door swings shut behind him and Leila moves quickly from behind it. She holds a shard of glass - the remains of one of the glasses of water - to the Interrogator's throat.

LEILA

Put the gun down.

A drop of blood appears at the tip of the glass as it presses into the Interrogator's neck. Leila is gripping it tightly enough that more blood runs down her hand from where it is cutting into the flesh of her palm.

The Interrogator slowly lowers the hammer of his pistol then drops it to the floor. Aaron moves from the corner and picks it up. He trains it on the Interrogator and Leila steps back.

INTERROGATOR

You're throwing your life away.

LEILA

Go sit in the chair.

He sits in his chair.

INTERROGATOR

You can't escape. You have to know that, right?

LEILA

Other chair.

The chair he has sat in is free-moving. The other, the prisoner's chair, is bolted to the floor. The Interrogator moves to the other chair.

INTERROGATOR

You've nowhere to run. Even if you make it out of the Tower, you're still trapped.

LEILA

Cuff yourself to it.

He does so.

INTERROGATOR

You're dead.

Aaron steps over to the Interrogator and swings the pistol hard at his face. It hits just under the right eye with a wet thud. Blood runs down the Interrogator's face as a gash opens on his right cheek.

INTERROGATOR (CONT'D)
I'll fucking kill you myself.

Aaron inverts his grip on the pistol, holding it by the barrel, and swings it down again, this time connecting with the Interrogator's nose, shattering it. The Interrogator spits out the torrent of blood now running down his broken face.

INTERROGATOR (CONT'D)
Fuck you.

Aaron is winding up for another swing when Leila takes his arm and pulls him away.

LEILA
We need to go.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Aaron and Leila step out of the interrogation room and into the hallway. It is, for the moment, empty.

LEILA
Where are we?

AARON
Security headquarters. Basement of the Tower.

LEILA
So how do we get out?

AARON
Haven't thought that far ahead.

They start off down the hallway in the direction the Interrogator came from.

As they approach the guard's station they hear the buzz of the door opening.

Aaron reaches a hand back and takes Leila's, seemingly to keep her calm, but also to hide the pistol.

The Guard steps out of the booth and sees the two of them. His hand goes to the holster on his hip

GUARD
Now just what the hell is --

In one motion Aaron steps to the Guard and swings the grip of the pistol into his head. The Guard goes down hard.

Aaron draws the pistol from the Guard's holster and hands it to Leila.

AARON

Come on, we'll take the back way
around.

They continue down the hallway to a T-intersection. Aaron pulls Leila down the right-hand hall, which ends in a door. They push it open to come out on ...

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - DETECTIVE'S FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

... The detective's floor. It is crawling, unsurprisingly, with police.

Across the floor they catch sight of Campbell striding angrily towards a doorway.

Just as Campbell disappears from sight, a loud alarm bell erupts from every speaker in the room.

ALARM VOICE

(repeating)

Detainee Escape. Alert. Detainee
Escape.

Everything on the floor is suddenly in motion, and Leila and Aaron take advantage of the momentary chaos to move across the floor towards the exit.

They get about two-thirds of the way there when --

LAB TECH

DETECTIVE!

They turn and see, about twenty feet away, the Lab Tech standing with pistol in hand aiming at them. He fires and the bullet goes wide and high, lodging itself harmlessly in the industrial cement wall behind them.

As the report of the gun-crack echoes across the room, all of the police turn and find its source.

As one they draw their weapons.

Aaron steps fluidly in front of Leila, one arm crooked behind himself to hide his weapon, as she raises her own gun and places it at Aaron's temple.

AARON

Don't say anything to them. The door behind you. Slowly. Go.

The only sound is the whooping of the alarm and its droning, synthetic female voice as Aaron and Leila slowly back the fifteen feet to the door.

All around them, police follow their movements with their guns.

Breaking through the alarm's din is the ominous and instantly recognizable click-click-click of a safety being thrown off and a hammer drawn back.

Aaron and Leila reach the door. It is a security door and Aaron finds the keypad next to it with his free hand and, without looking, punches in a 5-digit code.

The lock snaps free and they back through the door.

INT. GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

The door swings shut, and Aaron and Leila are alone.

Aaron pulls his gun free from behind his back and fires three quick shots into the door lock.

From somewhere in the distance, echoing around the parking garage, comes the shunk-shunk-shunk of large numbers of armored feet moving in formation.

AARON

Come on. Almost there.

They take off running.

They get to an upwards leading ramp and start up it just as an armored response team turns the corner at the top end. They turn and go back around the corner as the armored team opens fire.

They swing around the corner and drop down onto the downward-leading ramp directly below the one with the armored team. They take off down this and head in another direction.

Which takes them to an elevator bank with a door next to it.

The armored team finds them and opens fire just as they are disappearing through the door.

INT. STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

The door led into a cement stairwell.

AARON
You doing OK?

LEILA
Yeah.

AARON
Can you keep up?

LEILA
Get out first. Worry later.

They start up the stairs.

After two-and-a-half stories, the armored team comes through the door below them, and another team appears a story above them.

Aaron fires wildly up and down the central shaft of the stairwell for cover and they climb the last half-flight and break through a door which leads to ...

EXT. TOWER PLAZA - CONTINUOUS

They have come out a one-way emergency door onto another side of the plaza surrounding the Tower where Aaron met with Frank earlier.

Concealing both his and Leila's pistols, Aaron starts leading her out across the plaza towards the road. Right when they get there, Frank's black sedan come squealing out of traffic to a halt at the curb next to them.

The passenger-side door opens and Aaron helps Leila in, then slides into the back seat himself.

The sedan takes off once more into traffic.

I/E. FRANK'S CAR - DAY

Frank's attention is split between checking Leila's injuries and keeping the car traveling in a relatively straight line.

FRANK
How are you getting on?

LEILA
I've been better.

Frank turns around completely in his seat to look at Aaron.

FRANK
How is she?

AARON
She'll live. Watch the road!

The car swerves back into its proper lane.

Aaron leans forward to look at Leila across the shoulder of the seat.

Fresh blood runs down from a cut on her cheek.

He again prepares his sleeve as rag.

AARON (CONT'D)
Come here. You broke a scab.

She winces at the touch of the dry cloth.

AARON (CONT'D)
Sorry.

Behind them appears a number of police cruisers, sirens blaring full force.

FRANK
Ah. I take it your departure from your former employer was a less than amicable one?

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Surveillance Room is a massive open floor with row after row of TECHNICIANS sitting at stations, each a bank of monitors displaying the feeds from the city's surveillance network.

At the head of the room is a FOREMAN, whose station is set physically apart from the rest. Campbell stands behind the Foreman, talking on the phone and watching the monitors intently as the Technician taps at his station's controls.

The monitors are tracking the progress of Frank's car through the city. The black sedan can never be seen in fewer than three monitors.

CAMPBELL

Yes, sir.

Campbell hangs up the phone and reaches for a dispatcher's radio handset, hanging from the side of the station.

I/E. FRANK'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Aaron turns around with surprise and watches as the police cruisers, which had been following them, turn off their sirens and turn down various side-streets.

AARON

They're breaking off the pursuit.

FRANK

Well of course they are. They are the government while we are the criminals, which means that they are smart, while we are not.

AARON

They're hoping we'll lead them to James.

FRANK

Precisely.

AARON

Can we lead them to James?

FRANK

For now, let us worry about escape in a city covered in cameras with no way out.

AARON

Yeah, how do we plan on doing that?

FRANK

Connections. It is all about who you know.

With that, Frank pulls a cell phone out from his jacket's breast pocket, punches at the keypad, then holds it to his ear.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Campbell and the Foreman continue to watch the car's movement through the city.

A constant hum of conversation has arisen in the room as Technicians seem to be abandoning their regular duties either to watch the car's progress or discuss the inevitableness of its capture.

The car does not seem to be making even the slightest attempt to evade or lose its watchers, but instead just continues dead-straight along its path at constant speed.

CAMPBELL

Aaron, Aaron, what are you thinking? How does this end well for you?

And the room goes black.

EXT. THE CITY - CONTINUOUS

All across the city, the power drops out. Lights turn off. Screens go dark.

And the city stays dark for fifteen long seconds before it all clicks right back on, continuing as though it had never been interrupted.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The surveillance monitors flicker back to life as the Technician taps away at the console, trying to restore order to his system.

Confused shouts echo through the large room as everybody tries to figure out what is going on.

CAMPBELL

Where are they?

FOREMAN

One minute. I'm looking for them.

The screens begin flashing through a series of street scenes.

Cars starting to move again. People looking around for some explanation to arrive from the television screens.

CAMPBELL

Where are they? And what the fuck happened to the power!?

FOREMAN

Found 'em.

One of the screens flickers onto a shot of the sedan parked askew at the curb. Three doors sit open.

INT. UNDERGROUND - ENTRANCE AREA - DAY

The entrance to the Underground is the basement of a building: cement walls, exposed pipes. It is a service access area.

Frank leads the way down the hallway with Aaron and Leila following him. Leila has to lean on Aaron for support.

FRANK

How's she doing?

AARON

We need to rest soon.

FRANK

Not much further.

AARON

Where are we?

FRANK

Remember that this city was built where another one once stood?

AARON

Yeah.

FRANK

Well that city was built on top of one before it, and that on one before it. The city is hundreds of years old, and every time they needed a new building they'd just tear one down and put another on top of it. But while it was easy to demolish what was above ground, it wasn't so easy to destroy what was below, so instead they just covered it up.

AARON

So right now?

FRANK

We are in the service tunnels, basements, and sewers of all those old buildings. There was at least four generations' worth of old infrastructure sitting under the city when Sabe came to build here. Rather than try to incorporate it all, he just had us seal it up.

AARON

But you didn't?

FRANK

Oh, I did.

They have come to a thick metal door.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Give me a hand with this.

Aaron helps him swing the door open. It is heavy, but rides smooth and quiet on its hinges. Beyond is darkness.

From a cubby-hole by the door Frank produces a pair of flashlights. He takes one and gives the other to Aaron.

INT. UNDERGROUND - TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

The tunnels of the Underground are unlit, except by the flashlights. They are an amalgamation of several centuries' worth of building technology and range from cement sewers to rough-hewn rock tunnels to enormous caverns supported by iron-banded wooden poles.

FRANK

I'm a quarry man, so once I decided to open the tunnels again, it wasn't so hard to break through the seals.

AARON

And Sabe?

FRANK

Not to worry. As far as Sabe is concerned, these tunnels, the Underground, no longer exist.

Leila stumbles and falls to one knee.

AARON

You OK?

LEILA

I just need to sit for a minute or two.

She slides backwards from a kneeling to a sitting position and leans against the wall.

FRANK

No time for that now. We're almost there.

Frank starts off again without a glance back.

AARON

Frank! Wait a minute.

Frank turns and looks over his shoulder, then starts walking once more.

FRANK

Just a few minutes more.

Aaron turns back to Leila.

AARON

Alright, then. Up you come.

Aaron throws Leila's arm around his shoulder and picks her up, holding her in a cradle carry.

AARON (CONT'D)

Frank, you sure you know where you're going?

FRANK

Of course. Like nobody else.

INT. UNDERGROUND - THE HIDEOUT - LATER

A door opens and Frank and Aaron enter. Aaron still carries Leila, who has passed out in his arms. Based on Aaron's exhausted expression, it has apparently been more than just a few minutes.

Frank moves into the room and throws a heavy switch. A spark jumps across the connection and then overhead electrical lights hum into action.

The room they reveal is remarkably comfortable looking, given its surroundings. It is decorated in the same eclectic style as Frank's smoking room.

FRANK
Ah, my home away from home.

AARON
Is there a bed somewhere?

FRANK
Door over there.

INT. UNDERGROUND - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Aaron carries Leila through the door and lays her down on the bed he finds there: an enormous colonial four-poster.

INT. UNDERGROUND - THE HIDEOUT - MOMENTS LATER

Aaron comes back out into the main room. Frank is no longer there.

FRANK (O.S.)
Over here, Aaron.

Aaron follows his voice through an open doorway and into a large kitchen.

Frank is in the pantry, which is even larger than the kitchen. It is stacked floor to ceiling with box upon box of canned and dried food.

Frank emerges from the pantry with a bottle of scotch in one hand and two tumblers in the other.

He pours three fingers into each and hands one to Aaron.

FRANK (CONT'D)
To life on the lam.

He tips his glass to Aaron, but stops when Aaron does not toast as well.

AARON
Frank --

FRANK
Please, Aaron. Just one moment of peace, that's all I want.

AARON

Frank, we need to talk.

Frank takes Aaron's glass back with a sigh, then puts both down on the counter.

FRANK

Very well. You want to know about James?

AARON

Do you work for him?

Frank weighs his answer carefully. Aaron sits patiently for him to begin, letting the silence grow between them, encouraging Frank to fill it.

FRANK

Do you trust me, Aaron?

AARON

Honestly?

FRANK

Of course.

AARON

No. I don't trust you.

FRANK

Good.

Frank turns from Aaron and picks up his tumbler once again. He sips it cautiously, then, pleased, drinks a bit more.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Then you won't be offended if I say that I don't trust you either?

Aaron nods his assent.

FRANK (CONT'D)

It's not that I don't like you, and Leila is a good judge of character, so you have two points in your favor right there, but I just don't know you. So you have to understand that I am in just as awkward a position here as you are.

Aaron settles into an interrogation mind-set and bites back a retort.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Let's say -- hypothetically -- that I work for James, and I take you to see him. I've no guarantee that you won't arrest us all on the spot.

AARON

I think it's pretty safe to assume I've lost that authority.

FRANK

And Sabe is hardly a forgiving man, but I bet he'd make an exception for whoever finally brought in Jonathan James. You made a snap decision based on emotion. I wouldn't blame you if you started trying to think of a way back into Sabe's good graces.

AARON

I stand by my decision.

FRANK

Or maybe everything that's happened today has been an elaborate sting to get an agent inside James's organization. So let's say -- still hypothetically -- that I don't work for James. When you find this out, you've no reason to continue, so you cut your losses and just bring in me. I've certainly shown you enough already to warrant that.

AARON

So all you'll say is that you might work for James?

FRANK

And that I just as likely might not. We've a long time to get to know one another. Let's just concentrate on keeping a low profile for a bit, OK?

Aaron is clearly not satisfied with this, but is going to get nothing more out of Frank for now and knows it. He once more nods his reluctant acquiescence, and Frank hands him back the second tumbler.

INT. UNDERGROUND - THE HIDEOUT

Leila is on a couch in the main room of the hideout. There is a TV on in the corner.

The bruises on Leila's face have already moved through the purple and green phases and are now a faded sort of yellow.

NEWS ANCHOR

The Tower broke its extended silence today and released the identities of the terrorist agents who escaped detention three days ago.

Pictures of Aaron, Leila, and Frank appear on the screen.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Anyone with information regarding Leila Thornsmythe, Frank Moore, or Aaron Kohler is asked to inform a domestic security agent immediately. Do not attempt to act against these individuals.

The news report switches from the studio set to a street interview with the Doorman. A caption reads MARC STILLIS: AARON KOHLER'S DOORMAN

DOORMAN

Mr. Kohler? Yeah, I guess he always seemed a bit off, you know? Like he'd be going out in the middle of the night, and he always kept to himself, you know? Never having people over or going out to see anyone. No he'd just walk around all alone.

From the street it cuts to the press room where Laughlin is speaking to assembled reporters.

LAUGHLIN

Aaron Kohler's treason is certainly tragic, but it was not entirely unexpected. His record was riddled with disciplinary measures for his constant refusal to obey the chain of command. Still, it serves as a harsh reminder of just how tenuous--

The TV snaps off.

Aaron stands behind the couch, looking like he just woke up. He holds the TV remote and looks at the screen in disgust. Leila turns around and looks up at him.

LEILA

Hey.

Aaron doesn't acknowledge her, but just drops the remote onto the couch.

Frank comes into the room from the kitchen.

FRANK

Hello, everyone.
(to Leila)
How are you feeling?

LEILA

Like a very angry man beat the shit out of me a few days ago.

FRANK

Pleasant.
(to Aaron)
There's coffee in the kitchen. Not the freshest in the world, but not terrible, all things considered.

AARON

Thanks.

FRANK

I think I'm going to go take a walk, would anyone care to join me?

LEILA

I can hardly move.

AARON

I'm OK for now.

FRANK

Alright. Don't stay cooped up in here forever, though. You'll drive yourselves mad.

INT. UNDERGROUND - THE HIDEOUT - MOMENTS LATER

Aaron is in the kitchen. He pours himself a mug of coffee. He sips it and winces.

LEILA
That bad?

AARON
Almost undrinkable.

He takes another sip.

LEILA
He's not so terrible, you know.

AARON
Do you trust him?

LEILA
Unconditionally. He took care of me
when no one else would.

Aaron again lets the silence grow, urging Leila to
explicate further and fill it.

LEILA (CONT'D)
My parents were killed in one of
the last outbreaks before the Wall
was completely finished.

Aaron starts to offer condolences.

LEILA (CONT'D)
I told you already, it was a long
time ago. Dad worked for Frank,
and, well I dunno, I guess Frank
thought he owed him or something
cause he took me in.

Leila steps around Aaron and starts to pour herself a cup
of coffee.

AARON
So you understand the importance of
this city, right? The same
terrorists who killed your parents
with a weaponized disease are
trying to destroy it again.

Leila still stands with her back to Aaron. Her face has
gone cold.

LEILA
Are you really asking that
question?

AARON

Leila --

She turns and shoots a silencing glare at Aaron.

LEILA

You are using my dead parents to
ask me if I am working with James?

Aaron glances down, weighs his options, then looks back up
and meets her stare.

AARON

Are you?

LEILA

No.

She steps around him once more and leaves the kitchen. A
door closes solidly. Not a slam, but certainly emphatic.

AARON

Shit.

INT. SABE'S OFFICE - DAY

Sabe's office is an incredibly long room dominated on one
side by a large mahogany desk. The wall behind the desk is
completely occluded by heavy curtains.

Halfway down the length of the room, along one wall, is a
conference table large enough to seat twelve. At the
opposite wall is a circle of four leather armchairs placed
around a coffee table. Laughlin stands in front of one of
them.

At the other end of the room is a double-door set in a
Gothic arch. Sabe is just closing the door behind Campbell.

SABE

Lieutenant Campbell, thank you for
joining us.

CAMPBELL

It's an honor, Mister President.

Sabe leads Campbell over to the armchairs.

SABE

I presume you already know my chief
of staff, Herbert Laughlin.

Laughlin nods stiffly as Sabe and Campbell approach. As they round the chair with its back to the door, Campbell sees that there is another man sitting here. Sabe indicates him.

SABE (CONT'D)

And of course, Frank Moore.

Frank turns in the seat and offers a hand to Campbell, who stares back mutely.

FRANK

A pleasure, lieutenant.

Campbell looks to Sabe, who provides no indication how Campbell is to react. Hesitantly, Campbell takes Frank's hand.

Sabe moves to the chair with its back to the near wall and indicates that Campbell is to take the final open chair.

SABE

Have a seat please.

Sabe takes his seat, and only then do Laughlin and Campbell. Sabe talks quickly and fluidly and never takes his eyes from Campbell's. He is in absolute control of the conversation and the flow of words stops only when he expects a response from Campbell.

SABE (CONT'D)

Now, lieutenant, I am sure you have many valid questions and I wish I had time to answer them all, but this is unfortunately not the case.

CAMPBELL

Yes, sir.

SABE

So I will instead give you my most sincere assurances that Frank has the situation well in hand. You are in no way responsible for the escape of Mister Kohler and Miss Thornsmythe. They are free because I wish them that way. You executed your duty admirably and you have my gratitude.

CAMPBELL

Thank you, sir.

SABE

I apologize that you had to be kept in the dark, but if you did not believe in the game, then neither would they. When I am ready to bring the fugitives in, you will be contacted by Mister Moore who will tell you how to find them. Have you any questions?

Sabe neither expects nor desires questions.

CAMPBELL

No, sir.

SABE

Very good, lieutenant.

Clearly a dismissal. Campbell nods perfunctorily to Laughlin and Frank, then stands and leaves the room. Sabe waits until the door has closed behind Campbell to begin speaking again.

SABE (CONT'D)

Alright, Frank. How goes the operation?

FRANK

Quite well, I think.

SABE

You're sure you can bring Kohler over?

FRANK

The crumb trail is there. Now it's just a matter of time before he starts to pick it up.

SABE

He has to hate me, Frank, truly hate me. He has to prefer death to returning to the fold.

FRANK

He will.

SABE

The city is slipping out of control. We need something to scare them or else everything we've done will be for nothing.

FRANK

Of course. You'll get your traitor.

Laughlin is growing uncomfortable at the intensity seeping into Sabe's voice and glances between Sabe and Frank.

LAUGHLIN

And the girl?

Sabe is surprised as Laughlin's interruption, but it draws the conversation and Sabe's attention back to the concrete.

FRANK

Leila is playing her part. You needn't worry about her.

SABE

Good. You recommended her for the project. Don't make me regret accepting her.

FRANK

I needed someone who wouldn't get lost in the tunnels, and it would have taken too long for one of your agents to learn their way around down there.

LAUGHLIN

I still think we should have picked someone with more training in this sort of thing.

Sabe silences Laughlin's offhanded comment with a glare.

SABE

An opinion you have voiced before.
(back to Frank)
But regardless, at this point it is moot. We're waiting on your move now, Frank. Get in touch with the lieutenant when you're ready.

FRANK

Of course.

INT. UNDERGROUND - THE HIDEOUT

Aaron sits on the couch looking angry. His now-cold cup of coffee sits in front of him.

He jumps at the sound of someone at the door of the hideout and turns, immediately alert as Frank enters. He relaxes when he sees who it is.

FRANK
How are you doing?

AARON
Fine.

Aaron sits back down and prepares to ignore Frank.

FRANK
Where's Leila?

AARON
I dunno. Her room?

FRANK
You alright?

AARON
I'm fine.

INT. UNDERGROUND - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Leila lies on her bed. Her eyes are puffy and red from crying. There is a knock at the door and she rolls to turn her back to it.

LEILA
Go away.

The door cracks and Frank slips through then closes it behind himself.

LEILA (CONT'D)
I told you to fuck off.

FRANK
Leila.

Leila rolls back over in surprise to face the door. She sits up and swings her legs over the side of the bed.

LEILA
Frank! Sorry, I thought you were --

Her face contorts itself and she struggles to keep herself in check. Frank sits down beside her. He wraps an arm around her shoulder and pulls her to him. He talks softly so as not to be overheard by Aaron outside.

FRANK

You wanna tell me what happened?

LEILA

We just had a stupid fight. He's worried and confused and pissed off because he doesn't know what's going on.

FRANK

You knew what this entailed when you agreed to it. When you begged me to let you help.

LEILA

I know. I just wanted to do something for you, to repay you.

Frank's voice loses its comforting tone and takes on a harsh edge, though it remains quiet enough not to carry.

FRANK

Leila, your task was quite simple: get control over Aaron Kohler. Right now you've lost that, so pull yourself together and go make peace with him, OK?

She tries to pull out of his embrace, but he holds her, arms pinned to her sides, unable to move.

FRANK (CONT'D)

OK?

LEILA

Yeah.

He lets her go, then takes her chin and pulls her head up to face him.

FRANK

Between the bruises and the crying you look terrible.

Leila slips her chin from his hand and looks at the ground, inching away from him on the bed.

LEILA

I'll clean up then talk to him.

FRANK

No. Go like that. He'll like it.

INT. UNDERGROUND - THE HIDEOUT - MOMENTS LATER

Aaron is still on the couch just where he was before. Leila steps around the far side of the couch and sits down.

She watches the side of his immobile face as he stares forward.

LEILA

I'm sorry. You had every right in the world to ask me those questions. After what you've done, what you've given up for me. I shouldn't have snapped at you. I'm sorry.

Aaron glances up at her and meets her gaze, taking in the pathetic state of her face, then turns back to his coffee mug. Not quite acceptance, but neither is it rejection.

INT. UNDERGROUND - BEDROOM

Leila is asleep in the oversized colonial bed.

She starts awake at a creak from outside the bedroom door.

She gets quickly and quietly dressed as she hears somebody leaving the hideout as quietly as they can.

INT. UNDERGROUND - THE HIDEOUT - MOMENTS LATER

Leila comes out into the common room. A bulb burns in the kitchen, casting a little bit of light around the room, but not much. Aaron is asleep on the couch.

There is only one flashlight on the shelf by the door.

With a quick glance back at Aaron to be sure he is asleep, Leila takes this second flashlight and cracks the door of the hideout.

She slips through the crack and closes the door behind her.

INT. UNDERGROUND - TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

Leila comes out into the tunnels of the Underground.

Keeping her flashlight off, she sees the dull glow of the second light reflecting around a corner up ahead. She follows it.

She turns the corner to see Frank, some ways ahead of her, walking purposefully through the tunnels with the light.

She follows him silently.

INT. UNDERGROUND - TUNNELS - LATER

Leila continues to follow Frank for a great distance.

INT. UNDERGROUND - TUNNELS - LATER

Leila has followed Frank to a tunnel that is unlike any of the others we have seen so far. It is longer than the light of Frank's flashlight will reveal, nearly twenty yards wide, and about as tall. It curves at an almost imperceptibly shallow angle off to the right.

Every single door leading off of this tunnel also leads off to the right.

Except, hidden between two load-bearing struts protruding from the left wall, is a small door the same color as the surrounding cement. Without knowing it was there, you could walk past it a hundred times and never be the wiser.

Frank turns and disappears through this hidden doorway. After waiting a safe time, Leila follows.

INT. UNDERGROUND - HIDDEN STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

The doorway leads to a steep staircase. Leila climbs it and comes to another small door.

She pushes it open. There is light on the other side.

INT. UNDERGROUND - THE HIDEOUT

Frank and Aaron stand at the sink in the kitchen doing dishes. Aaron is staring at the wall, his eyes unfocused, thoughts lost elsewhere, with a towel in his hand.

Frank rinses a plate and hands it to him. Aaron doesn't react.

FRANK

Aaron, come back to us.

Aaron starts then takes the plate.

AARON

Sorry. I was just thinking.

FRANK

Care to share?

Aaron puts the plate away and Frank passes him a pot.

AARON

Newman, the guy who blew himself up, James's man, I was assigned to his case. I wasn't happy with the official report and I guess I've just been so distracted by -- well, by everything that's happened, I haven't thought about it.

FRANK

Pots go under there. What was bothering you about it?

Aaron moves over to the cabinet Frank indicated and puts the pot away.

AARON

He wrote a letter. Said "Chaos is the birthright of humanity."

FRANK

So James is an anarchist. No news there.

AARON

But all that James's attacks have ever done is increase Sabe's control. James blows up a building and Sabe restricts movement through the city, starts curfew an hour earlier...

FRANK

So you're saying --

AARON

Before all of this I started getting threats from someone telling me to stop my investigation.

(MORE)

AARON (CONT'D)

I assumed they were from James, but
-- I need to go to the surface.

FRANK

What? Are you crazy?

AARON

Probably, but I need to talk to
someone up there.

Aaron hurries from the kitchen out into the common room. He slips his jacket on and starts rifling through the pockets.

Frank remains standing at the sink, but he turns to follow Aaron's movements.

FRANK

Absolutely not. You're the most
wanted man in a city covered with
cameras. There's no way you're
going up there.

Frank now follows Aaron out into the common room.

AARON

They have maybe a hundred guys
watching tens of thousands of
cameras. They don't check faces on
the live feed, it's mostly just
archived in case something actually
does happen.

Aaron pulls a few sheets of papers out of the pocket of his jacket, glances at them to reassure himself they are there, then stuffs them back in.

FRANK

Your face is plastered to every
flat surface in the city. You're on
the news twenty-four hours a day.

AARON

So I'll keep my head down.

Aaron heads to the door and grabs a flashlight. He opens it.

FRANK

Aaron, you can't go up there.

AARON

Stop me.

Aaron goes out into the tunnels and closes the door.

INT. LANDLORD'S APARTMENT - DAY

Newman's Landlord opens the door to the knocking of a heavy fist.

Aaron, his head pulled down into his shoulders and the collar of his jacket flipped up over his neck, pushes his way into the room past the Landlord.

LANDLORD
Hey, now!

AARON
Close the door.

The Landlord doesn't move so Aaron steps around him and closes the door himself.

LANDLORD
Now don't make me call the police.

AARON
Oh you wouldn't want to do that.

Aaron raises his head and looks the Landlord in the eye. Recognition spreads across the man's face.

LANDLORD
You're that cop who's with James.

In Aaron's left hand he holds the pistol he took from the Tower. He doesn't need to wave it around. Both men recognize the threat.

AARON
What should concern you right now
is that I'm that cop who you lied
to.

Aaron reaches into his jacket with his right hand, where he still has the two security pictures. One of Moriarty, the other of Laughlin.

AARON (CONT'D)
Now I don't have a lot of time and
I have even less patience so I'm
going to ask you some questions. If
you tell me the truth, then I'll be
gone in five minutes. Deal?

LANDLORD
Yeah. OK.

Aaron holds out the picture of Moriarty.

AARON
You said you saw this man talking
with Newman on multiple occasions.

LANDLORD
Yes.

AARON
Truth?

LANDLORD
No.

AARON
Have you ever seen this man before,
talking to any of your tenants?

LANDLORD
No.

AARON
Good.

Aaron holds out the picture of Laughlin.

LANDLORD
I know him.

AARON
How?

LANDLORD
He's the one who told me to say I'd
seen the first guy.

AARON
Had you ever seen him before then?

The Landlord hesitates to answer and Aaron steps
threateningly toward him.

LANDLORD
Yes.

AARON
When?

LANDLORD

He and Newman knew each other.
Seemed like every time I saw them
together, though, they were
fighting.

AARON

What else?

LANDLORD

Well, Newman always seemed nervous
around him. This guy made him
afraid.

AARON

That it?

LANDLORD

Yeah.

Aaron studies the Landlord's face. The Landlord cringes
away from the intense scrutiny, and Aaron decides he isn't
lying.

AARON

Alright, then.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Aaron walks down the street. As when he entered the
Landlord's apartment, he keeps his head down and his collar
up.

Of course, after taking only a single glance at the people
he is passing it becomes immediately apparent that even
these perfunctory measures he has taken to protect himself
are unnecessary.

Nobody looks at anybody else. Everybody keeps their head
down and their shoulders hunched. Everybody walks intently
and purposefully, staring only at the ground two feet in
front of them. These people want to get from where they are
to where they need to be as quickly and efficiently as
possible.

There is no conversation, no laughter, but nor is there the
jostling one would expect with this many people on the
street. The foot traffic has spontaneously resolved itself
into two lanes, one going in each direction, to eliminate
the chances of one walker running into another and being
forced to acknowledge them.

INT. UNDERGROUND - THE HIDEOUT

Aaron pushes open the door to the hideout and puts the flashlight on its shelf.

Frank is sitting in the main room waiting for him, like a father waiting up for his teenage child to come home at 3 AM.

FRANK

Well, welcome home.

Aaron pushes the door closed.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Aaron, it is because of precisely this refusal to listen to reason that I cannot trust you. If you continue to act wildly --

AARON

Frank, listen to me. James wasn't behind the bombing.

INT. UNDERGROUND - THE HIDEOUT - LATER

Aaron, Frank, and Leila are in the kitchen, sitting around the table. Aaron talks nervously and excitedly.

AARON

Something about the case never seemed right. If James wanted to bring about anarchy, then he should have learned by now that attacking the city isn't the way to do it. That just strengthens Sabe's grip. So if James knew he wouldn't benefit from this attack, then it hardly makes sense for it to have been his responsibility, right?

Frank looks calmly at Aaron, remarkably unperturbed by Aaron's implications.

FRANK

Right.

Leila looks from Aaron to Frank, studying his face for some reaction which isn't there. Frank turns to her, and she looks away quickly. Too quickly. Aaron registers none of this.

AARON

So if you want to know who is responsible, you look at who benefited. And the only person who benefited was Sabe. It wasn't James who tried to bomb the factories, but Sabe attacking his own city!

Leila looks expectantly at Aaron, as though she wants something more from him. Frank nods grimly.

FRANK

So you understand now, why he has to be removed?

AARON

You knew all this. Why didn't you tell me?

FRANK

If I had would you have believed me?

AARON

And you work for James.

Aaron looks to Leila for some reaction. She drops her gaze to the table, then turns to Frank, putting the decision in his hands. After considering for a moment, he responds slowly.

FRANK

I do, and, Aaron, I need you to consider very carefully before you respond, but if you want me to, I'll get you in touch with his men.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Aaron and Leila walk down the street. In keeping with the other pedestrians they do not stand too close together and they keep their heads down.

NEWS ANCHOR

Tower spokesmen announced earlier today that military efforts to reclaim the land beyond the Wall are going more slowly than originally anticipated.

(MORE)

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

A stricter rationing scheme will likely be announced within the next few days, and sources hinted that the military will soon begin a campaign for new recruits to fight in the city's defense.

EXT. MORIARTY'S HOUSE - DAY

Aaron and Leila arrive at a nondescript, middle-class apartment building, much like any other in the area. It is not quite as nice as Aaron's and has no doorman, but it is certainly a far cry from the trash-strewn residence of Newman.

Leila pulls Aaron aside and they start down an alley between two buildings across the street from Moriarty's. They crouch down behind a dumpster in the alley in a vantage which hides them well from the street while giving them a clear view of the building front.

Leila checks a watch.

LEILA

He should be here in about thirty minutes. Frank said that if everything was clear, Moriarty would be carrying a grocery bag.

They settle into their concealed position and prepare to wait.

EXT. MORIARTY'S HOUSE - LATER

Some time has passed. Aaron and Leila both look bored, but while Aaron seems content to sit in silence with Leila, she is far more anxious.

LEILA

Aaron, do you believe in this fight?

Aaron turns to look at Leila, who keeps her eyes pointed carefully forward at the street.

AARON

Well, sure, I suppose

LEILA

I mean, if you didn't have to be a part of it, would you still?

AARON

And just stay in Frank's hidey-hole forever? That's hardly a life.

LEILA

No, what if we could get away from everything. From Sabe and Frank and the city and the Tower and the Wall. Just leave it all behind forever and disappear, would you want that?

Aaron takes this as a hypothetical designed to test his loyalty, but as he is considering it --

LEILA (CONT'D)

Moriarty's here.

Danny Moriarty walks up to the front door of the building. Under one arm he carries a sack of groceries.

Aaron stands up. Leila is slow to follow.

AARON

Let's go then.

Leila stands, and she and Aaron hurry across the street as Danny, not seeing them, opens the door to the building.

Danny gets the door open and steps inside. He lets the door fall behind him, but just before it closes, Aaron gets a hand on it. He pushes it open, and he and Leila step inside. The door falls shut behind them.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Leila and Aaron find themselves at the base of a staircase leading up to the various apartments. Danny is two-thirds of a flight ahead of them.

LEILA

Mister Moriarty.

Danny turns on the staircase and considers Aaron and Leila for a moment.

DANNY

Come on then, before someone sees you.

He finishes climbing the stairs and opens the door to his second floor apartment. He enters and leaves the door ajar.

Aaron starts to follow him, Leila two steps behind. Just before reaching the door, Leila stops and puts a hand on Aaron's arm.

He turns back to look at her.

LEILA
Yes or no, Aaron.

DANNY (O.S.)
Hurry up and get in here.

Neither Aaron nor Leila acknowledges him.

LEILA
If you could leave it all with me
right now, would you, Aaron?

AARON
I don't understand.

Danny's footsteps sound as he moves back towards the door.

DANNY (O.S.)
Both of you get up here now.

LEILA
We need to go, Aaron.

AARON
What?

LEILA
Right now. We need to go. Domestic
security is on its way.

AARON
What? How do you know?

Danny's footsteps have reached the door.

DANNY
Alright --

Suddenly Leila throws herself forward and into the door. It swings inward and into Danny, who is standing just on the other side, knocking him back. He held a pistol in his hand, which is knocked loose and scatters across the floor.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Her momentum carries Leila, falling, into Danny's apartment. Aaron follows a step behind her.

AARON
Leila, what's going on?

Danny and Leila are both regaining their feet and both see the gun simultaneously.

They scramble towards it. Leila gets there first and trains it on Danny. She moves to a window on the wall and cracks the curtain to look out.

LEILA
Come here, Aaron.

Aaron looks through the window. Coming down the street from both directions are domestic security cruisers.

She hands the gun to Aaron.

LEILA (CONT'D)
Keep this on him.

Aaron takes the pistol and aims it at Danny as Leila takes a tie-rope from the curtain and uses it to quickly tie Danny's ankles and wrists. A rush job, but it needn't hold for long.

AARON
Leila?

LEILA
I'll explain later. Right now we need to get out of here.

She moves across the room to a window in the far wall leading to a fire escape. She opens it.

LEILA (CONT'D)
Come on.
(to Danny)
Don't move.

Aaron follows Leila through the window and down the fire escape.

EXT. ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

Aaron and Leila drop the last few feet to the alley between buildings. The squeal of tires and slamming of doors can be heard from the street in front of Danny's apartment.

They take off running in the opposite direction.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

They come out of the alley onto another street. Traffic is light and they run across the street and into a far alley as police cruisers screech to a stop where they just were.

They run down this alley and then Leila indicates a door. Aaron kicks it in.

INT. SHOP - CONTINUOUS

They are in the back room a clothing store of some sort. Leila pulls Aaron through the maze of boxes and storage and they come out into the main sale floor. It is completely empty except for two sales clerks who stare at them in shocked amazement.

They run through the store and out the front door, pursued moments later by two policemen.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

They come out onto a main pedestrian thoroughfare in which everyone is doing the same heads-down shuffle. They join the crowds and try to blend in.

Up ahead, though, they can see a group of policemen methodically making their way through the crowd, checking faces. They are fifty feet away.

Aaron looks at Leila, but she glances downward significantly and he returns his gaze to the ground. Do nothing to stand out from the crowd. Do not even look around.

Forty feet ahead of them, the policemen continue picking their way through the crowd.

Aaron hazards a glance backward to find policemen at a similar task starting at the other end of the block and moving towards he and Leila.

The policemen are thirty feet away, growing rapidly closer. As each pedestrian walks past they are forced to show their faces, then allowed to continue on their way. The police are being methodical and meticulous. Aaron and Leila are boxed in.

Leila manages with a quick tilt of her head to grab Aaron's attention, then she points from her hip at an alley ten feet ahead of them.

The policemen are twenty feet away.

Leila, who is a step ahead of Aaron, has reached the front lip of the alley. She slips to the edge of pedestrian traffic.

Aaron follows suit. He too has reached the front lip of the alley. Leila is nearly past it.

The policemen are ten feet away.

Just as Leila is about to pass the entrance to the alley, she turns and takes off down it at a dead sprint. Aaron follows.

The policemen push their way through the crowd and start off after Aaron and Leila, but they are several seconds behind.

INT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Leila runs down the alley and leaps up to grab the rim of a dumpster. She scrambles up to the top just as Aaron is starting to climb.

From there she jumps up to grab the sill of a small patio and climbs up onto that. Aaron follows her here too and she helps him over the railing as the policemen below draw their weapons and begin firing upwards at them.

Leila breaks the glass window in the patio door with a potted plant to reach through and turn the handle.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

A family hides crouched in the corner of the kitchen as Aaron and Leila plow through the apartment and out the front door.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

The door leads to a hall, which in turn leads to a stairwell. It is a square helix with a several foot opening in the center that leads straight from the top of the building into the basement.

Policemen run through the front door of the building on the ground floor below them and start up the stairs as the two police who were following in the alley come out into the hallway.

Leila takes Aaron's hand and leaps over the railing. They fall two stories and land in a heap on the basement floor.

Leila quickly rolls them out of firing range of the policemen above them, who hurry to head down the stairs to follow them.

Leila stands and pulls Aaron to his feet. They take off down a hallway in the basement. Leila breaks down a door labeled EQUIPMENT.

INT. JANITOR'S CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

This is a deep closet lined on either side with shelves full of cleaning supplies. In the back, beneath the lowest shelf, is a heating duct. Leila grabs a broom, then pulls the screen off the duct and crawls through. Aaron follows.

After a few feet the duct opens up on a small room with a nondescript door. Hanging from a peg at the door is a flashlight. Leila takes the light, opens the door, and leads Aaron once more into the Underground.

INT. UNDERGROUND - TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

Leila closes the door behind them and jams the broom through the handle, barring the door.

She flicks on the flashlight and heads out through the tunnels.

AARON

Where are we?

LEILA

The underground. Same as before,
just took a different entrance this
time.

The whole time they are talking, Leila walks Aaron through the maze-like tunnels with clear purpose and sense of direction. She is leading him somewhere.

AARON

There's more than one entrance.

LEILA

Sure, there's tons of 'em, all over the city. Frank only showed you the one so that even if he lost you, he'd know how to find you.

AARON

Can you explain to me now what's going on?

LEILA

I thought you had it all figured out, for a minute at least. Back at the Hideout when you were explaining about Newman. You were so close.

AARON

No more games. I think I've a right to know.

LEILA

Newman was Sabe's man, not Jonathan James's. You know this because Sabe stood to gain more from the attack than James possibly could. What good would it do James to starve out the Citizens?

AARON

If he wants to bring down Sabe, why give Sabe ammunition to seize more power?

LEILA

Exactly. Now ask the exact same question of the attack before last. The suicide bomber in the bus, or the gunman taking the school hostage. James gets nothing from these. Only Sabe benefits.

AARON

But if James isn't planning the attacks, then what is he doing?

And even as Aaron asks the question he makes it through the logic.

AARON (CONT'D)

There is no Jonathan James.

LEILA

Oh I've no doubt there was a Jonathan James. Some poor sap way back when the city was founded that Sabe convinced to kill himself in some dramatic way to scare the people into following. After that it was easy enough to put everything on his shoulders.

Aaron and Leila have come out into the long, slightly crooked tunnel where Leila followed Frank earlier. Aaron recognizes that this tunnel is somehow different in import than all the others they have walked through.

AARON

How do you know all this, Leila?

Leila keeps walking, perhaps a little faster now, and ignores the question.

AARON (CONT'D)

Leila. How do you know that James isn't real? That Sabe is behind all this?

Still no response. Leila is definitely walking faster now. The beam of her flashlight flicks across the double-support which hides Frank's door. Leila hurries toward it.

AARON (CONT'D)

Don't make me ask you a third time, Leila.

Leila stops suddenly and turns to face Aaron.

They stand quite close in the enormity of the tunnel.

Aaron takes a step back.

LEILA

Answer me first.

AARON

What?

Aaron continues backing away from Leila.

LEILA

If you could put it all behind you,
leave the city and this whole mess
and never look back and disappear
away with me. If you could do all
that, would you?

Aaron stares hard at Leila, wanting to say yes and sure
that five minutes ago he would have, but now he cannot get
his own question out of his mind.

FRANK (O.S.)

Why don't you go on and tell him
the truth, Leila?

Frank steps out from behind the far support beam. In one
hand he holds a pistol, with the other he presses a
flashlight to its barrel in a policeman's grip. He aims the
pistol at Aaron. There is, by now, quite some distance
between Aaron and Leila.

FRANK (CONT'D)

The man asks a fair question.

Leila and Aaron both stare at Frank in surprise. Leila
takes a step towards the wall, away from both of them.
Frank pivots to aim the gun at her. She stops moving.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I heard you following me the other
night. Wasn't too hard to figure
out where you'd go when you decided
to back out.

Aaron has used Frank's momentary distraction to reach
slowly behind himself and draw his own gun. By the time
Frank catches the movement in the darkness and turns, it is
too late. Aaron has a pistol pointed right at Frank.

AARON

Put the gun down, Frank.

Frank swings the gun back to point at Aaron.

FRANK

Are you sure I'm the one you want
to be pointing that at right now?

AARON

Put down your weapon and then we
can talk, but not before.

FRANK

Oh you're good, you know?

(To Leila)

He's quite good.

(Back to Aaron)

No wonder you were able to talk that Newman chap down from his ledge. In a manner of speaking.

Aaron pulls the trigger once and a bullet rips through the flesh of Frank's right forearm. Frank drops his gun in pain.

Leila moves to pick up the gun, but Aaron swings his arm around so he is pointing his weapon at her.

AARON

Don't move, Leila.

Leila looks up at Aaron and registers the weapon.

LEILA

I'm sorry. I never wanted to lie to you.

AARON

Somehow I find that hard to believe.

Aaron starts stepping towards Frank, who is lying on the ground, writhing in pain.

He picks up Frank's dropped pistol and places it in his belt, then moves to Leila and quickly but efficiently pats her down with his free left hand.

LEILA

You can hate me if you want, I'll understand, but you still need to see what's through this door.

He steps back to where he can have both Leila and Frank in his sights at the same time.

AARON

Get up, Frank.

FRANK

After all this, you are still going to listen to what she has to say?

AARON

Get up.

Frank laboriously rises to his feet. Never aiming the gun away from the base of his skull for a second, Aaron pats Frank down as well, then backs off several feet.

AARON (CONT'D)

You first.

Leila looks to Aaron for some indication that this acquiescence represents a greater movement, but he refuses to meet her eyes.

With Frank at the head followed closely by Leila, and Aaron two steps behind, gun raised, they file through the small doorway.

INT. UNDERGROUND - HIDDEN STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

And Aaron finds --

AARON

More stairs.

LEILA

Through there.

Leila points to the door at the top of the stairwell.

Frank makes his way up the stairs. Aaron motions for Leila to follow Frank, then once more brings up the rear himself.

Frank reaches the top and pushes the door open with his one good hand. Light spills through the opening, surprising in its intensity in contrast to the blackened Underground.

Frank steps through. Leila follows. After a moment, Aaron does too.

EXT. CAVE - CONTINUOUS

After taking a moment to adjust to the light, Aaron finds that they are in a cave, near the entrance.

The door they just came through swings shut behind Aaron. It was carved directly out of the stone and blends nearly seamlessly with the rock face. If he didn't know exactly where to look and what he was looking for, he would never find it again.

Leila is standing by the entrance to the cave, Frank stands unhappily between her and Aaron.

FRANK

Now look here, Aaron. You just turn back now and let's see if we can't work out some amicable solution to this whole problem. Get you a nice desk job somewhere, let you stay out of the way and out of the papers for a bit.

LEILA

Aaron, come here. You need to see this.

Aaron starts heading towards the entrance to the cave. Frank walks backwards to stay between Aaron and Leila.

FRANK

Mmm, or perhaps you went undercover into James's organization? Risked life and limb and reputation but brought down the big man himself. James has more than served his purpose anyway. Sabe'll have to get rid of him at some point. So why not sooner rather than later. Let's get you reinstated as savior of the city, eh?

AARON

Give it up, old man.

Aaron steps into the direct sunlight.

EXT. CAVE MOUTH - CONTINUOUS

Aaron and Leila stand at the mouth of a cave at the top of a hill. A vast forest extends to the distance in one direction, and in the other is acre after acre of plowed farmland, the crops just starting to come in. A few miles away can be seen a collection of a few small buildings. Similar towns speckle the fields, which extend far into the distance where they fade into indistinction. Miles beyond them is a mountain range.

Continuing round the panorama, the pastoral idyll gives way to the city. Though enormous by any human measure as home to some several million souls; though the black facade of the wall stands out strongly against the surroundings; though the Tower rises sharply above anything closer than the blue silhouettes of the distant mountains, there is nevertheless something small about the city, and it is dwarfed by its surroundings.

AARON
It's ...

LEILA
I know.

AARON
But this is supposed to be ...
nothing.

LEILA
If Sabe can lie about Jonathan
James and hurl bombs at his own
people, why can't he lie about some
biological weapons and call a
paradise a wasteland?

AARON
Who else knows?

LEILA
About the outside? If I had to
guess I'd say it's only Sabe and a
few top advisors, but it's hard to
tell. I was never really a part of
this.

AARON
And this door?

LEILA
The door, I think, is Frank's
little secret. I'm pretty sure only
the three of us know.

At the mention of Frank's name, Aaron turns to check on
him. Frank is back in the cave, trying desperately to heft
a large boulder, but his severely injured arm is preventing
him from making much headway.

AARON
I told you to give it up.

LEILA
We have to kill him, you know?

AARON
What?

FRANK
What's she saying to you?

Frank starts shuffling over to Aaron and Leila.

LEILA

(to Aaron)

If we don't get rid of him, he'll turn us in first chance he gets.

FRANK

I've only ever had your best interests at heart. You want to stay outside? Disappear? Whatever. Do what you will. What's it matter to me?

LEILA

(still to Aaron)

If we let him live we will never be free. We'll spend our lives looking over our shoulder, waiting for him to show up with Sabe's men.

FRANK

Why would I do that?

Leila finally turns to Frank.

LEILA

I don't know, Frank. Spite not a good enough reason anymore?

AARON

You are talking, Leila, as though when I disappear I will want you with me.

LEILA

Don't you?

AARON

If I can't trust Frank, I can't trust you. But you are right about him.

Aaron raises the gun from his side to point at Frank.

Frank prostrates himself before Aaron. The blood loss and pain make the fall to his knees awkward and pathetic. He cuts a sad figure.

AARON (CONT'D)

If he lives, then I can never get away from this city.

Aaron swallows hard and steels himself for what he has to do.

FRANK

Now, Aaron, be reasonable here. You don't trust me not to go back to Sabe, that's fine. I won't go back to the city, then. I'll head off one way, you go the other, I'll live out my days in the woods here, you'll never --

Aaron pulls the trigger and the bullet tears through Frank's forehead and explodes outward where his skull attaches to his spine. With the neck broken, his head lolls sickly too far to the side and the shift in mass carries the rest of his crumpling body over.

Without further ceremony, Aaron turns from the clearing and starts heading downhill towards the fields and distant town.

Leila drags Frank's body out of the clearing and into a nearby thicket, then hurries after Aaron.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Aaron is walking along the furrow between two rows of crops.

Leila comes running up behind him.

LEILA

Aaron!

Aaron doesn't respond.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Aaron, wait!

Aaron's face reacts with anger, but he manages to keep his gait steady and shoulders square so that he seems unresponsive from Leila's point of view.

Leila falls into step a few feet behind him.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Right, just ignore me. Fantastic, Aaron.

Aaron continues forward and does not react to her.

LEILA (CONT'D)

So you'll do what now? Head out into the wilderness? Aaron Kohler, woodsman. I don't buy it.

AARON

Does this look like wilderness to you, Leila? There are people here. I am going to find them.

LEILA

And you'll trust them?

AARON

More than you.

LEILA

Can I at least stay with you till we find people and then figure out somewhere to go from there? We'll be safer if we're not on our own.

Aaron stops walking, but he does not turn back.

AARON

Go back to the city, tell your boss whatever you need to. I'm done.

LEILA

Aaron, I'm as much an exile from there as you are. That much was the truth.

He starts walking again. She does too, but she does not attempt to walk any closer than several steps behind.

AARON

As soon as we find someone, you're on your own.

EXT. UNDERWALL - MAIN ROAD - DAY

Aaron and Leila walk down the empty main road of a small town. The buildings which line the dirt street were built without any industrial tools, and show it. They are constructed from hand-cut timbers secured with wooden pegs and daub. There is no glass in the windows. There are also no people in the town.

AARON

Hello? Anyone here?

CARTER (O.S.)
'alio down there!

CARTER's head pops up over the roof of one of the buildings then disappears again. The sounds of him climbing down a ladder come from around the back of the building, then he comes striding out towards the road.

Carter is a man in his forties whose body reflects years of heavy manual labor. He wears denim pants and has a rag thrown over one shoulder, damp and dirty with sweat, but has little else in the way of clothing. A hammer is slung through his belt.

He slows in surprise as he approaches Aaron and Leila and then stops altogether about ten feet away from them. He stares at Leila in silence, seeming not to even notice Aaron's presence.

AARON
Hello.

He turns slowly to look at Aaron.

CARTER
You're from the city.

AARON
Yeah.

LEILA
How'd you kn --

At the sound of her voice he turns back to her.

CARTER
And you're a woman.

LEILA
... Yes.

CARTER
It's been twenty-three years since
I saw a woman.

AARON
I'm sorry, but, who are you?

CARTER
I'm Carter.

AARON
And what is this place?

CARTER

This is Underwall.

Carter looks to the city behind Aaron and Leila and it is obvious where the name comes from. Even from this distance, the city is enormous, taking up well over ninety degrees of the arc of the horizon. From outside, the city's skyline is simply the uniform top of the Wall punctuated in the center by the Tower.

INT. CARTER'S HOME - LATER

The interior of Carter's home looks very much like the exterior. A large hand-made table sits in the central area. Aaron, Leila, and Carter sit around the table drinking water from tin cups.

CARTER

I grew up in the city, on the outside edge of Market Quarter. I got drafted when I was twenty-two but instead of teaching me how to be a soldier they dropped me out here with all the rest of the recruits.

AARON

So there's no army?

CARTER

Nobody for them to fight.

AARON

But what about the other survivors from the war? The militias trying to destroy the city?

CARTER

You see any militias around here? Far as I know there were no other survivors, or if there were they're as willing to keep to themselves as we are. Course, we're not exactly a hub of information here, so it's always hard to tell.

AARON

What do you do out here?

CARTER

If a recruit wants to stick around then the guys who worked the farms before help him get set up. If not, he's free to go off in whatever direction he wants.

AARON

Why would people stay?

CARTER

Most still have family in the city. Without us providing raw materials, the city would fall apart. So people look after their families in the only way left to them, always hoping for a way back in.

Carter pauses here for Aaron or Leila to interrupt, but neither does, so he continues.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Every harvest we put the crops on trucks they give us and drop 'em at a depot by the Wall. They send out new recruits - always men - and the whole thing starts over.

AARON

They told us it was a wasteland out here. Weaponized diseases and crazed tribes of survivors bent on killing us all.

LEILA

Imagine what would happen if everyone inside learned the truth.

There is a pause as all three people realize what is suddenly possible.

AARON

We could show them.
(to Carter)
How many men work farms within a day's drive of here?

CARTER

A couple hundred. You two weren't released from the city were you?

AARON

No. We escaped.

CARTER

The way you got out, could you ...

AARON

Get you back in? Yeah.

EXT. TOWER PLAZA - DAY

The television screens along the roads of the city show the familiar News Anchor's face.

NEWS ANCHOR

In a dramatic shoot-out in the Market Quarter earlier today, domestic security forces were able to corner fugitives Aaron Kohler and Leila Thornsmythe in the basement of a residential building.

The news cuts from the Anchor in the studio to a shot of the building which Aaron and Leila fled into. It is surrounded by domestic security cruisers and patrolmen. EMTs take two body-bags with what appear to be corpses in them through the door and load them into the back of ambulances.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Both Kohler and Thornsmythe were killed during the conflict.

From there it cuts to a shot of ...

INT. TOWER PRESS ROOM - DAY

... Sabe standing at the dais of the press room.

SABE

The removal of these two criminals as threats to this city is but the latest in a series of triumphs delivered by our domestic security forces. But Aaron Kohler's betrayal serves as a stark reminder of the extent to which these terrorists have managed to penetrate every area of our society. With this in mind, I must reluctantly extend the current terms of the increased security protocols.

Sabe steps down from the dais and walks out of the room with his advisors in tow. As he does so, a SPOKESMAN steps up to the podium.

SPOKESMAN

Full curfew will now last from the hour of eight PM to the hour of eight AM. Any gatherings of more than six persons outside of families with children are forbidden and will be treated as conspiracies. Further --

INT. SABE'S OFFICE - LATER

Sabe and Laughlin stand at Sabe's desk in his office. The heavy curtains over the window have now been drawn open, revealing that this office sits at the very top of the Tower. From here the entire city unfolds beneath us and beyond that the vast expanse of fields and forests extends, even from this favored vantage, further than the human eye can see.

A bit of the fluidity has drained from Sabe's voice and he paces nervously behind his desk.

SABE

Any word from Frank yet?

LAUGHLIN

No, sir.

SABE

Damn it. How could he have let this situation get so out of control?

LAUGHLIN

With respect, sir, it's not as bad as it seems. We've gotten what we want and it's only a matter of time before they mess up and get themselves caught. In the meantime, they're just three people running around in the sewers, what harm can they do?

SABE

Oh no, no, no. We chose Kohler because he was smart enough to solve the puzzles we left for him and idealistic enough to fight for what he believed. No, we need to find him and end this. Now.

LAUGHLIN

Yes, sir. I'll handle it personally.

SABE

See that you do.

Laughlin leaves the office.

INT. SABE'S WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Outside Sabe's office stands another ADVISOR. He and Laughlin get on an elevator which opens only when Laughlin presses his hand to a print reader on the wall.

LAUGHLIN

He's getting paranoid. Starting to crack, I think.

ADVISOR

So what do we do?

LAUGHLIN

For now? Nothing.

EXT. UNDERWALL - MAIN ROAD - EVENING

Carter and Aaron stand on the stoop of Carter's house.

CARTER

You sure you want to do this?

AARON

Yeah, I am.

CARTER

All right, then.

He turns from Aaron to face the road, on which is gathered about twenty men. The men who live in the town and work the farms of Underwall.

Aaron steps forward.

AARON

I'm not -- I don't do speeches that well, and I suspect you all already know what I'm gonna say anyway, but I know a way into the city. I know a way we can get you back in to see your families and tell everyone that it's safe, that they can come out into the world and live their lives beyond the bounds that some man at the top of a tower sets out for them. This world is bigger than one man. It's better than any single person and I think we can prove that, but we're gonna need more help.

EXT. UNDERWALL - MAIN ROAD - LATER

The group of men, led by Carter, walks down the road to the largest building in the town.

AARON (V.O.)

We're gonna need every able bodied person you can find and we're gonna need them quick because I don't know how long my way back into the city is going to last.

The group reaches the barn-like structure, and Carter takes the handle of one of the large doors while Aaron takes the other and together they pull them open. Inside are row after row of oversized supply trucks of the sort militaries use to transport infantry.

EXT. UNDERWALL - MAIN ROAD - NIGHT

The supply trucks are heading out from the town in every direction, driving out across the fields.

AARON (V.O.)

So I need you to go and get every man within a day's ride of here that you can.

INT. CARTER'S HOME - NIGHT

Leila is sitting at the table with several large sheets of paper in front of her.

She is drawing an intricate and finely detailed maze of lines across the page. She works by candlelight.

Carter comes in with two steaming tin cups of coffee. He offers one to her, which she gratefully accepts.

He stands behind her, watching her work.

CARTER

It's amazing that you can remember all that.

LEILA

I suppose.

CARTER

How do you mean?

LEILA

Well, I've always been able to do it, so it doesn't seem too amazing to me.

CARTER

Hmm.

After letting this sit in the air for a moment, Leila realizes how it sounded.

LEILA

What I meant is, I just, I understand how things fit together in space.

CARTER

Even so, to be able to draw a map of all that from memory. Mmph. Incredible.

LEILA

(genuine)
Thank you.

CARTER

You should try and get some rest, though.

LEILA

You should too.

CARTER

Finish these in the morning. You'll ruin your eyes working in this light.

LEILA

Yeah, I suppose you're right.

CARTER

On the topic of sleep, I hope you won't think me indelicate, but as regards the sleeping arrangements, will you and Aaron require, uh --

LEILA

Separate beds. Where is Aaron?

CARTER

He's in my bedroom. I had offered it to him thinking that ... but I'm sure I can convince him to join the troops on the floor in here if you'd like it.

LEILA

No. But thank you.

INT. CARTER'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Carter's bedroom is simple, austere, and functional, like all the rest of the house. The bed sits in one corner and is itself simply a straw mattress raised above the ground by four stumps with a mesh between them.

On the other side of the room is a drafting table with a few unlit candles. A lamp burns on a stand next the bed.

Aaron is lying on the bed, but he is clearly awake.

He sits up at a knock on the door.

LEILA (O.S.)

Aaron, can I come in?

AARON

Yeah. How're the maps going.

Leila walks over and stands by the bed.

LEILA

Fine. I'm stopping for the night, though, it's too dark to work.

She sits down on the lip of the bed, careful to keep some distance between herself and Aaron.

AARON

Hmm. Makes sense. You'll have time to finish them tomorrow?

LEILA

Yeah.

She sits there in silence for a long moment, trying to formulate her thoughts.

LEILA (CONT'D)

Aaron, I --

AARON

Please don't, Leila.

LEILA

Sorry.

AARON

We're both tired. Let's just get some sleep, OK?

LEILA

OK.

AARON

You take the bed, I'll sleep out with Carter tonight.

He climbs off the bed at the foot to avoid having to move past her closely.

LEILA

No, no, it's fine. The floor is fine for me.

AARON

I'm sleeping outside. If you want to sleep on the floor, that's OK, but it seems a shame to waste the bed.

He closes the door behind him as he walks out.

EXT. UNDERWALL - MAIN ROAD - NIGHT

The night never quite darkens beyond twilight with all the light pollution from the city.

Aaron sits on the small porch of Carter's home, looking out across the empty streets, eerie in the half-light.

He turns at a creak behind him. Leila stands in the doorway. He turns back to the street.

LEILA
Mind if I join you?

AARON
No.

She walks over and sits down next to him, a body's width between them.

LEILA
I'm too nervous to sleep.

AARON
Hmph.

They sit in silence as Leila tries to compose her words, and Aaron tries to ignore her away.

LEILA
I'm sorry, Aaron, I really am.
Everything that's happened,
everything that's been done to you,
you never deserved any of it.

AARON
Your pity is appreciated.

LEILA
You know I didn't mean it like
that.

AARON
Do I? How do I know anything about
you, Leila? Everything you've said
has been a lie.

LEILA
Not all of it. Not most of it,
even. The best lies are the ones
that are true.

Aaron stands up and begins pacing around the street in front of the porch.

AARON
Great. Now I feel better.

LEILA
Would you rather none of it had
happened?

(MORE)

LEILA (CONT'D)

Knowing what you do now, do you wish you could go back to domestic security, be a good little agent for Sabe?

AARON

That doesn't make what you did right.

LEILA

No. I suppose it doesn't, but if you can't trust me, then this will never work.

Aaron stops pacing and looks at the city, light leaking up around the Wall, the Tower a bright black spire against a dark black sky.

AARON

I'll trust you on this because I have no choice. After that, we're done.

Leila stands up and moves over to him.

LEILA

What happens to it after tomorrow?

AARON

We set the city free. We tear down the Wall.

LEILA

The farmers out here have trouble getting a few thousand recruits settled. How are they going to manage the city's several million?

AARON

So we'll take it slow. We don't just let the city loose on the world. We make our way out a little bit at a time.

LEILA

So you'll keep them all in the city.

AARON

Not forever.

LEILA

You think you can tell them about everything out here and just expect them to sit still and wait for you to declare them ready?

AARON

If we just plunge these people into chaos and then leave them to fend for themselves, we're no better than Sabe is.

LEILA

So instead you'll just control their lives. Say what they can do and when. That doesn't make you better than Sabe. That makes you exactly like him.

AARON

We'll do better. We'll give the people hope, and when the city is stable enough to take care of itself, then we'll set it free.

LEILA

Right.

Warning, reprimand, and doubt all in one word. Aaron looks from the city to Leila to the city again.

AARON

Get some sleep. We'll need it tomorrow.

He turns and heads back to Carter's home.

EXT. UNDERWALL - MAIN ROAD - DAY

The first of the trucks returns to town, full of men.

INT. CARTER'S HOME - DAY

Leila is once more sitting at the table scratching out maps of the Underground.

On the other side of the table Aaron and Carter stand over a map discussing their strategy.

Leila looks up and watches them. Aaron feels her gaze and turns his eyes in her direction. She quickly returns to her work.

EXT. UNDERWALL - MAIN ROAD - DAY

More trucks are coming into the town and the men they bring have set up camps around the road and outskirts of the town.

Here a group of men stands around a cookfire with a pot of something in it.

There another group plays craps with a pair of wooden dice.

One man keeps a solemn and solitary vigil, looking out towards the city, sitting against the wall of a building with a flask in hand.

INT. CARTER'S HOME - DAY

Carter and Aaron explain their strategy to a group of farmers who stand around them in semi-circle looking at the map.

Leila answers the questions of another farmer and draws out a proposed route on one of her maps.

EXT. UNDERWALL - MAIN ROAD - EVENING

A truck moves slowly through a massive expanse of men who have spread out through the entire town and much of the surrounding area.

It honks celebratorily as it moves through the crowd, drawing cheers from those on the ground around it.

Farmers clamber down from the truck bed and are greeted by those already on the ground.

The truck pulls into the barn and takes the last available space there. Aaron and Carter close the doors to the barn as the driver gets out and leaves the building.

INT. CARTER'S HOME - NIGHT

The main room of Carter's house is full of farmers drinking coffee or water or liquor and talking with nervous excitement at the prospect of returning to the city.

Aaron elbows his way through the crowd until he catches sight of Carter.

AARON

Carter, can we go somewhere quieter?

INT. CARTER'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Carter leads Aaron into his bedroom, which is devoid of farmers.

Carter sits in the small chair in front of the drafting table and indicates the bed with his hand. Aaron sits on the corner of the mattress.

CARTER

What's on your mind?

AARON

There's one part of the plan I haven't told you about yet.

Carter waits silently for Aaron to continue.

AARON (CONT'D)

No matter what we manage to do, none of it will mean anything if we don't take out Sabe.

CARTER

Isn't that what we're trying to do here?

AARON

I don't mean take him out of power. We need to get into the Tower. We need to find Sabe. And then we need to kill him. If we don't he'll find a way to turn all this to his advantage. Make it all mean nothing.

Carter stands and paces the room.

CARTER

Hmph. And how do you propose we do that?

AARON

Leila can get us in through the basement, from there -- how many men do you think we have with no families inside, nobody waiting for them?

CARTER

Not many. Most of the ones with no connections shove off for the wilds not long after they get drafted.

AARON

Do you think you can get twenty?

CARTER

Yeah, probably. What do you need men without families for?

AARON

Because there's a good chance that whoever goes into the Tower won't be coming out. I need men who can fight, but they also have to be men who can die.

CARTER

Right.

Carter looks out the window.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Sun's set.

AARON

The sun has set.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

The hundreds of men who had bivouacked at Underwall are now on the move through the fields. They swarm across the open flatlands towards the hill with the cave and the door to the city.

Yet these are all farmers, so even as they cross the fields en masse they remain careful not to trample the crops, dividing instead into files and following the furrows.

EXT. CAVE MOUTH - NIGHT

Aaron, Leila, and Carter are at the helm of this make-shift army. They lead the march through the half-light to the cave mouth.

The moon has by now moved well past its zenith.

Aaron looks around, surprised and gladdened to find that Frank's body has been moved. He tries to scuff the dirt a bit with his shoe where Frank's blood splattered the ground.

Aaron, Leila, and Carter pause at the mouth of the cave to look back over the farmers. Then Leila turns and starts into the cave, followed by Carter, and finally Aaron.

EXT. CAVE - NIGHT

Leila adeptly finds the hidden door in the wall of the cave and draws it open.

Carter smiles with amusement at the cleverness of the deception, so simple in execution yet nearly impossible to discern.

Leila slips through the open door and with that the mass return to the city begins.

INT. UNDERGROUND - TUNNELS - LATER

Leila, Aaron, and Carter stand in the large tunnel directing the farmers as to where they should go and pointing out on maps where they are now.

Occasionally, Carter will grab a man and pull him aside. These men remain as their groups head off to their destinations. They are to form Aaron's fighting squad.

EXT. CAVE - LATER - NIGHT

The last of the farmers heads into the cave. Overhead, the sky is beginning to lighten slightly.

INT. UNDERGROUND - TUNNELS - LATER

Farmers move through the tunnels in groups, consulting their maps frequently.

One group finds where they are supposed to be going. They open the door: a stairwell. They climb.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The street is quiet.

The screens are dark.

Nothing in the city moves.

A door opens. A farmer steps into the artificial light of the city streets and looks around.

He walks out into the street and another farmer appears at the door. Then another, and another.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - SURVEILLANCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

One of the TECHNICIANS has caught this movement on his monitor. He picks up the radio at his station.

TECHNICIAN

This is surveillance. We have a large group of citizens on the streets in Low End.

DISPATCHER

(filtered)

How many in a large group?

TECHNICIAN

It looks to be about twenty.

DISPATCHER

(filtered)

Copy that. I'll send some cruisers over now.

He replaces the radio handset.

A light buzz of conversation rises in the room. A group of farmers has appeared on the monitors at a second station.

Then a third.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Back with the farmers in Low End, they are now just standing around the corner mulling about.

A few recognize where they are and figure out where they want to be and head off in that direction. The rest follow.

The loudspeakers screech to life with a whooping siren that quickly cuts off, leaving dead silence in its wake for a brief moment before --

LOUDSPEAKERS

All Citizens are reminded that curfew is in effect until eight A.M. Please remain indoors until that time or you are subject to arrest. Gatherings of more than six persons in public or private will be considered conspiracies and are grounds for arrest. All Citizens are reminded that ...

The message plays on repeat, waking up all the people along the streets. They come to their windows and look out at the commotion.

One of the dispatched cruisers arrives at the scene and two PATROLMEN get out.

PATROLMAN

Disband and return to your homes immediately!

The farmers just look at him stupidly

PATROLMAN (CONT'D)

(into radio)
We're gonna need backup in Low End
(to farmers)
Return to your homes immediately or we will disband you forcibly.

LITTLE GIRL (O.S.)

Daddy!

In a window several stories above the ground, a girl of about seven stands with her MOTHER.

The farmers and Patrolmen look up at the sound of the girl's voice.

FARMER

Tracy? Tracy!

TRACY

DADDY!

The farmer, a younger man who is apparently TRACY'S FATHER, steps forward from the rest of the group.

The Little Girl, TRACY, disappears from the window. Her mother stares mutely down at the road before realizing her girl is gone and disappears after her.

The Patrolmen draw their billy clubs and move towards the group of farmers, but the farmers stand their ground.

The Patrolmen's movement brings them between the farmers and Tracy's building.

The Patrolmen continue to advance on the farmers, who continue to not move.

PATROLMAN

This is your final warning,
Citizens. You will disband and
return home immediately.

No reaction from the farmers.

A Patrolman swings his billy club hard at the face of the nearest farmer, Tracy's father. It catches him across the cheek and is followed by a quick jab into his stomach, which brings him to his knees.

Just as Tracy emerges from the building.

TRACY

Daddy!

TRACY'S FATHER

Tracy, stay back, honey!

Tracy ignores her father's words and runs straight for him. Her Mother runs after her.

TRACY'S MOTHER

Tracy, get back here right now!

The Patrolman swings again at the farmer's face and connects. Tracy screams and jumps into her father's arms. He hugs her tightly.

CITIZEN

You leave them alone!

A cry from someone watching from his window.

The Patrolmen look around, and see nothing but unfriendly faces. Any one of them could have shouted it.

Tracy's Mother has nearly reached the Farmer and her daughter.

MOTHER
Tracy, come here!

At the voice so close behind him, the Patrolman turns and without thinking swings the billy club again. It takes the Mother in the temple and she goes down hard, her unconscious head slapping into the concrete with a solid crunch.

This is too much and the farmers start moving forward against the Patrolmen now.

A rock flies down and catches one of the Patrolmen in the arm.

In the distance can be heard the echoing pop-pop-pop of semi-automatic fire.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - SURVEILLANCE ROOM

The Surveillance Room is in chaos.

The Technician watching Low End stares in horror as his entire bank of screens is filled with scenes of increasing violence.

The Technician signals the Foreman, who calls up the same images at his own station. The Foreman picks up his phone.

FOREMAN
Lieutenant, we have patrolmen firing on Citizens in several locations, multiple officers down, violent groups are appearing all over the city. At least ten locations so far.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - ARMORY

Armored feet pound past racks of automatic weapons and riot shields. The armored police corps prepares to take to the streets.

INT. UNDERGROUND - TUNNELS

Aaron, Leila, Carter, and their team of Farmers remain below ground, waiting at the bottom of a stairwell for some unknown signal. The Farmers have all managed to acquire some sort of basic blunt instrument from the tunnels: pipes, mostly.

Even down here the pop-pop-pop sounds faintly.

People are too tense for any conversation, all their concentration focused on the noise echoing down from above.

Cutting through the general din comes the rapid rat-a-tat of a controlled automatic burst.

Aaron straightens up and raises his hand for complete silence. The rat-a-tat comes again, then another, and another.

Their signal has come. They head up the stairs.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - STORAGE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A door in a storage room creaks open. It is the only sound. Aaron and Carter sidle through, each carrying a pistol.

They quickly and quietly clear the room, then bring the rest of the troops forward.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Aaron slips out a doorway and into a hall. He checks both directions. Clear.

Leila and The Farmers come out and follow Aaron in a file down the hall.

Carter brings up the rear, covering the other end of the hall, then moves down the line to stand with Aaron.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - DETECTIVE'S FLOOR - MOMENTS LATER

The entirety of the police floor is empty.

The same process repeats as Aaron swings out first, followed by Carter, and they clear the area, then the Farmers and Leila follow.

CARTER
Where is everyone?

AARON
Outside, dealing with the riot we
just started.

CARTER
And here is just empty?

AARON
Not completely, so stay alert. Wait
here a minute.

Aaron heads into Campbell's office.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The once quiet street at Low End has descended into
absolute chaos.

A group of Farmers and Citizens stands over one of the
patrolmen beating him mercilessly. The other patrolman is
nowhere to be seen.

Tracy's Father, blood running down his face, stumbles
through the violent crowd.

TRACY'S FATHER
Tracy! Tracy! Where are you Tracy?!

One Citizen has opened the trunk of the cruiser and pulls
from it a shotgun as another runs up behind him with a
Molotov cocktail.

He throws the flaming bottle through the window of the
cruiser and the first man barely has time to jump back as
flames spread through the car. The crowd moves cautiously
away from the vehicle and a few seconds later the fire
reaches the gas tank and the car explodes.

The mob begins moving through the street.

Further down the block a group of people overturns cars
parked along the side of the road.

Then through the noise of the riot comes the steady
thumping of marching feet and row after row of armored riot
troops hiding behind carbonate shields makes its way down
the street.

Canisters of gas fly over the front ranks of troops and land amidst the rioters.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - CAMPBELL'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Aaron digs through the drawers of Campbell's desk until he finds what he is looking for, a key ring. He pockets it.

Aaron turns to head back out to the floor, then crouches down for cover when he sees what is happening on the Detective's Floor.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - DETECTIVE'S FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

A PATROLMAN has surprised Carter from behind and now holds the entirety of the group at gun point.

Aaron cracks the door open and slides out in a belly crawl.

PATROLMAN

(into radio)

I've found a large group of armed intruders on the detective's floor.

A crackly response starts coming out of the radio when Aaron fires two rounds, one into the Patrolman's head, the other into his chest.

The voice on the other end of the radio continues to crackle.

Carter and the Farmers are shocked still at the sudden appearance of death.

AARON

We need to move now before somebody responds to that radio call.

The Farmers shake themselves out of their stupor and will themselves to ignore the dead Patrolman.

Leila takes the pistol from his pliant grip.

Carter recovers his own weapon from the floor.

Aaron leads the troop off in another direction.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Aaron leads the group down another hallway

AARON

They've set up defenses at the elevators by now. Without them, we can't get to Sabe.

CARTER

So what's the plan?

AARON

The armory. With forces stretched thin it should be unprotected. All the weaponry is behind four inches of bullet-proof glass. You can't get past it without the key.

CARTER

So what do we do?

He brandishes the key-ring he took from Campbell's office.

INT. DOMESTIC SECURITY - ARMORY - MOMENTS LATER

Aaron comes striding around the corner leading to the armory. As he thought, it was left unguarded except for the ATTENDANT, an aging man too infirm to serve in the riot guard.

The Attendant begins pounding desperately on an alarm button, which starts a siren going and a flashing light overhead, but seems to do little else.

The attendant lifts a pistol and aims it at Aaron.

Aaron walks up to the door, puts the key in the lock and turns it. He opens the door and reaches his hand around.

The Attendant begins firing wildly and Aaron pulls his hand back. The Attendant is hardly skillful or calm enough to hit it.

The Attendant's clip is soon empty. Aaron walks around the corner and fires once into the Attendant's head.

The Farmers come around the corner and Aaron begins distributing body armor, rifles, and shields among them.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A group of RIOTERS flees from a contingent of armored troops. The Rioters turn a corner to find this street blocked by another wall of shields. They are trapped.

They compress into a tighter group, herd mentality taking over, each person trying to get another between them and the riot police, as the two shield walls advance.

A moment of relative quiet. Machine gun fire echoes down the streets from some other skirmish, but here each group waits tensely for the other to move first.

Then from the middle of the mob of Rioters a Molotov cocktail arcs towards the second shield wall. It clears the rioters, but shatters uselessly several feet short of the police, creating a wide circle of flame on the asphalt.

And each side waits once again for the repercussions of this attack.

And then at some unheard signal both groups of riot police open fire on the Rioters.

INT. ELEVATOR BANK - LATER

Sticking closely to protocol, the only armed forces on the floor seem to have concentrated at the elevator bank, where a large force of RIOT GUARDS has formed a semi-circle barricade with their shields and taken up position, ready to shoot out in any direction.

Opposite the elevator bank is a large staircase leading up to the lobby.

Four grenades clatter around a corner and towards the embanked Guards.

They scatter up the stairs as one grenade starts belching smoke.

The other three grenades explode, killing one Guard and dazing several other, but most of them got up the stairs to safety.

Where they now turn and drop their shields to the ground once more and prepare to face their attackers.

Under cover of the smoke screen, Aaron pokes around the corner and fires a controlled burst with his rifle.

The bullets easily pierce the riot shield of one Guard and kill him.

The rest of the Guards immediately open fire on the spot where Aaron just was.

The rifle fire subsides and Aaron peeks around the corner and immediately snaps his head back to safety as the Riot Guards all open fire again.

CARTER
If we get you to the elevators, can
you end this?

AARON
Yes.

CARTER
Hmph. OK.

Carter turns to the Farmers.

CARTER (CONT'D)
OK, four rows of five.

Carter collects shields and armor from each of the Farmers. He stacks two shields together and then drapes several armored vests over this as the Farmers form up into rows.

He takes the double-thick, armored shield and sticks it out around the corner. Rifle fire, and he pulls it back.

The front is covered in bullet holes, but they don't seem to have made it all the way through.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Alright, then. Front row each gets
one of these.

The farmers in the front row hurry to create armored shields of their own and then hold them out before them in an overlapping formation, leaving no open spaces between them.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Everyone else hides behind them.
Move slowly and as one. Stay as
hidden as you can and fire over the
top. Ready?

They nod yes.

CARTER (CONT'D)
(to Aaron)
Ready?

AARON
Ready.

CARTER
Right step!

The Farmers takes a step to the right, exposing the furthest column to fire. It seems to be holding.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Right step!

The next column moves into the line of fire.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Right step!

One more column in the line of fire, and still the formation holds.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Right step! Right step!

And all five columns are now in the open, with Carter bringing up the rear.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Move forward! Fire!

They start moving forward and the rear rows peak out from behind the armor to fire at the Riot Guards.

They manage to get two right off the bat, but one of the Farmers falls as well.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Forward!

The formation starts moving forward at a steady pace, sacrificing safety for momentum.

They hit the bottom of the stairs and have killed four more Riot Guards, though another Farmer has fallen as well.

The Riot Guards begin a retreat.

Aaron and Leila move forward and press the call button on the elevator. One of the banks of doors slides open and they step inside.

As the doors close they see Carter's formation crest the top of the stairs, where it is caught in an unprotected cross-fire. Carter and the Farmers stand no chance.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUOUS

Aaron presses the top call button on the elevator then digs out his key-ring again. He flips through it until he finds a key smaller than the others, which he fits into the fireman's key slot on the elevator panel. He turns the key to "No Stops."

INT. ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL - RECEPTION - MOMENTS LATER

The elevator doors slide open and Aaron and Leila step off.

They are in a reception room. A few chairs sit along one wall. A large desk with several workstations faces the elevators. An open doorway at one side of the desk leads off to the rest of the level, which is obscured by a double L-bend.

A television hangs in the corner of the room, showing the Newscaster urging people to remain indoors and threatening those outside with violence.

The room is completely deserted.

LEILA

Is this it?

AARON

It's the top floor.

Aaron starts towards the open doorway and Leila follows.

INT. ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL - COMMON AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Aaron and Leila come around the double bend and into a large rectangular room. The two walls adjacent to the one from which the hallway leads are lined with large private offices.

The central area of the room is dominated by a glass walled conference room. Slatted blinds give this room the option of complete privacy, though for now they are open, giving a slightly occluded view of the opposite wall.

On the far wall is another long reception desk. This one has open doorways on either side of it.

Even at this great height, the shouts and gunshots outside can be heard, confused and reverberated by the flat building faces into a steady din occasionally punctuated by the heavy concussion of an explosion.

This room, like the previous one, is completely empty and still.

Aaron and Leila cross the room and head through one of the open doorways on the far side.

INT. ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL - ELEVATOR AREA - MOMENTS LATER

The hallway quickly turns inward, mirrored by the hall the other door led to, forming an open loop.

At the center of the loop is a single elevator door.

Aaron and Leila approach it, disappointed and angry.

LEILA

It's just another elevator.

AARON

No. This is it.

He points to the top of the elevator door: at both corners sit security cameras, gazing down at them.

Where a normal elevator would have a call button, this one has just a flat panel with the outline of a hand drawn on it.

Aaron approaches it and takes his hand off the grip of his rifle, letting it hang from its strap around his neck. He puts his hand against the panel. A light scans his hand, then blinks out. Nothing else happens, not that he really expected it to.

Aaron studies the mechanism, too engrossed to notice a soft click to one side, but Leila hears it and looks up. Surprise flashes across her face.

LEILA

Look out!

She grabs Aaron by the shoulder and shoves him roughly aside at the crack of a pistol shot, amplified by the small space of the hallway.

Leila stands where Aaron just did and he turns to look at her.

Her cheek has collapsed inwards and blood begins dripping from a hole just below her eye. She collapses, turning as she does so, to reveal that most of the back of her skull has been removed by the bullet's exit.

Instinctively, Aaron turns, raises his rifle, and fires three rounds. Standing at the end of the hallway, his own pistol raised, the last wisps of smoke curling from its barrel, is Campbell. Aaron's shots strike home: two in Campbell's chest, one in his head.

Aaron turns back to Leila. She has fallen against the wall, just below the hand-print reader. The angle of her head exposes the edge of the gaping hole in the back of her skull. Then he looks away and makes a conscious effort not to let his glance fall on her again.

He drops the rifle and stiffly walks over to Campbell's body and drags it by the arms to the elevator.

Keeping his face strictly controlled, he drops Campbell and lifts Leila, moving her aside. He composes her body, sitting against the wall, and arranges her hair to hide the back of her head.

He turns back to Campbell and flips his boss's corpse over from its back to its stomach. He presses Campbell's still hand against the print reader. The light scans it, then blinks out.

The doors slide open.

He drops Campbell, whose body crumples unceremoniously against the wall, then steps onto the elevator.

The doors slide closed.

INT. SABE'S WAITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Aaron walks through the waiting room.

INT. SABE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Sabe stands at the window looking out at the city and the lands beyond. The first rays of morning are beginning to arc across the horizon, though the sun has not yet crested it, and the light is not high enough to come over the wall.

Sabe doesn't react as the doors to his office slam open.

AARON

Sabe!

Nor does he react when Aaron calls his name.

Aaron starts walking across the room to where Sabe is standing. As he does so he reaches behind himself and pulls his pistol from his belt.

Sabe's office is unseemly long and it takes Aaron some time to cross it.

At the circle of armchairs, an empty glass sits on the table next to an ashtray with a half-smoked cigar.

As he passes the chair with its back to the door, Aaron sees the still form of Laughlin sitting there. Foamed saliva mixed with runny vomit dries on his chin and shirt. His eyes stare lifelessly forward. Another cigar lies in his lap, burnt out.

SABE

I value nothing so much as loyalty,
Detective Kohler. I have no use for
a man I cannot trust, and
unfortunately, I could no longer
trust Mister Laughlin.

Sabe's voice is controlled, but his words are clipped and cold. Aaron turns from Laughlin's body to Sabe.

Sabe has turned from the window and now looks directly at Aaron.

SABE (CONT'D)

Come over here for a moment. I want
you to see this.

Aaron fingers the grip of his pistol and clicks off the safety, but otherwise doesn't move, simply staring back at Sabe.

After a moment Sabe breaks the glance and turns back to the window.

Aaron hesitantly walks over to the window and stands several feet away from Sabe. He never takes his eyes off of Sabe.

SABE (CONT'D)

Look.

Aaron follows Sabe's gaze out the window.

In the streets beneath them, no individual actions can be made out, but the large black masses of Riot Guards and the flickering red and smoky fires are easy enough to recognize.

SABE (CONT'D)

It is chaos, humanity. Without someone to impose order upon it, it will destroy itself.

AARON

Is that what gives you the right --

SABE

Somebody must, and I can. That is what gives me the right.

Surprised at the suddenness and vehemence of the response, Aaron turns from the window to Sabe, who remains immobile, staring out the window.

SABE (CONT'D)

You are here to kill me, I assume.

AARON

Yes.

SABE

And what will you do with this? You have promised a better world to an angry mob. What happens when you cannot give them it?

Sabe turns to Aaron, who can give no response.

SABE (CONT'D)

Let me help you, Detective Kohler. Together we can lead them beyond the Wall.

AARON

And you will only enslave them once again.

SABE

At least they will be alive!

AARON

That's hardly a life.

SABE

Don't be naive. You didn't see it before.

(MORE)

SABE (CONT'D)

The bad days after the war when it truly was a wasteland out there. I have given these people everything and you offer them empty promises. Destruction.

AARON

We'll learn from your mistakes. We'll do better.

SABE

People don't learn and they don't get better. People are animals. They must be tamed or they will tear you to shreds.

AARON

And you're the worst of them all. You would kill your own people to stay in power. Those who trusted you to keep them safe.

SABE

And how many more would die, detective, if I were not here? Had I left them to their own devices then there would be no humanity left. They tried to kill themselves once before. They'll try it again. I do only what is necessary to save them from themselves.

AARON

And so do I.

EXT. THE TOWER - DAY

A riot rages at the base of the Tower and throughout the city.

Here a line of police fires into a crowd of unarmed Citizens.

There a group of Citizens throws whatever dense or flammable projectiles they could find down upon police from their windows.

And at the top of the Tower is a single window. The darkened glass illuminates for just a moment with the flash of a gunshot.

FADE OUT.