

LIMIT ONE

EPISODE 01

Written by

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EXT. 24 HOUR DINER NIGHT

The diner is sparsely occupied. It has long bay windows and an excess of neon and advertising, that is both subtle and unavoidable. If the painting NIGHTHAWKS, by Edward Hopper was built in a not to distance future. We see only one figure sitting in a window booth while the rest of the customers are at other tables. We can not make out the form as this person is awash in dark rotating colors and data reflections.

INT. 24 HOUR DINER

Sitting at a booth by the window, is JANICE, brown skin female in her 30's. She wears an outfit that is built for discretion and mobility. The booth is a blend of 20th century kiosk and 21st century accessibility. The table has your common items, salt and pepper and the like, but it also has data ports for plug in on each side. Janice taps at the menu screen built into the table itself. She swipes and swipes out of annoyance. A waitress comes by, whose face we don't see, and she waves a hand away before she can speak. Janice looks up and out of the window. Sparse traffic dots the road. In the background, a TV plays the news. The ANCHOR speaks in Mandarin with English an dub underneath.

ANCHOR

New anti-reports are now in for the third time this month. Supreme Leader Warren has come under fire once more for the undefined cost of the labor programs that is a part of the national environmental budget. While the water rights war has ended, future citizens growth numbers remain unstable. We now go to Aircon One for the forecast.

Janice checks the time on table. The clock is counting down from 16:19.

JANICE

(Softly) This is not a good decision Janice. You are so much better than this, how did you become so sloppy? And this guy, fuck, sounds way to excited.

She takes a sip from her large cup of coffee. She picks at her nail bed on her left index finger. Her hands appear worn, a few faded scars but still capable of warmth. Moments later, a digital chime is heard from the direction of the door. We hear the loud CLOPPING of boots coming closer.

From the back we follow FELIX, an average size man. His wardrobe seems out of place. Layered scarves, a stuffed over the shoulder bag, heavy jacket and a hat that would not be taken for a donation. He dances out the way of customers and a waitress as he makes his way to the booth with Janice. He slides in with an untrusting smile.

FELIX

Howdy. Yes, yes time. I know, you know so let's skip, ok? Great. What's good here? Wait, doesn't matter. Intake is intake am I right?! Coffee though, that's the important thing. I can never start nor finish these things without. Is it decent? How many cups are you on? May I?

Felix reaches over to her cup with a quickness and grace she wasn't expecting. He takes a deep drink, emptying it. Placing the cup back on her side, he taps the menu facing him.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Ok, ok, that's alright. It's a little more bitter than I like. I'll replace. Do you spike yours? Nah...you seem too stiff. So far so good.(To himself)

Felix swings his bag on he table. It is full of items. He pulls out his audio recorder.

JANICE

No. Not what we agreed.

FELIX

Yes, yes. Right. I thought maybe. No worries.

JANICE

Wrong. Time ticks.

Felix puts the recorder back into his bag. He scrounges around in it for a few moments. We can't see what else is in there. The annoyance on Janice's face spreads like a virus. As if time slows, the look on Felix's face goes from confusion to joy. He looks around the diner without being obvious about it. He pulls out a pen, and carefully places it down. He goes back into his bag and begins remove a small paper note pad, an artifact from the 80's. Before it is all the way out of the bag, Janice slaps her hand on top of his and the pad.

JANICE (CONT'D)
 Are you mad? You actually brought
 paper?

FELIX
 Yes.

JANICE
 And you know what can happen if you
 are caught with that contraband
 yes?

FELIX
 I do.

Janice and Felix stare in silence for a moment. She removes
 her hand and checks the parking lot and the timer on the
 table.

JANICE
 Fine. I deny all of it if you get
 removed. Name?

FELIX
 I'm Felix. I am grateful to be
 here. I have to say, finding you
 was...

The waitress comes over with two cups of coffee and places
 them on the table. Felix is able to slide the small pad into
 his sleeve before the waitress can notice.

FELIX (CONT'D)
 Why thanks darling! Say, you
 wouldn't happen to have any real
 milk back there would you? I would
 be mighty grateful.

WAITRESS (O.C.)
 Real, milk? I, hmmm, I don't know.
 Jerry might has some...

FELIX
 Great! Go ask Jerry ok? Great, bye
 now.

The WAITRESS walks away.

JANICE
 Shitty.

FELIX
 Oh well. So tracking you down, and
 getting you to agree to meet..

JANICE

Blackmail.

FELIX

I like the classics. Regardless,
this is the story of my swan song.
The edge of a moderately successful
career.

Felix opens his note pad to a blank page, passing sketches,
blurry printouts, a mashup of short hand writing.

JANICE

Begin. I have an arrival and timing
is important.

FELIX

Oh right, right. You all don't call
them "cases". Why is that? Why not
the unlucky ones or day 327 of my
soul sucking job?

JANICE

Fuck you.

Felix chuckles softly. The Waitress comes back, she plops the
small glass jar of milk down without a word and leaves.
Without missing a beat, Felix takes it and begins the pour it
into his large cup. It flows then clops. Janice now shows a
smile for the first time.

FELIX

Don't care, don't care. Begin now,
yes?

He takes a swig, stretches and leans in.

FELIX (CONT'D)

Tell me why do you do it? From what
I found, the pay is outstanding,
but the weight of it on your
soul...surely?

JANICE

Do you think credits is my driver?

FELIX

Maybe? Actually, no, no. I feel
something else from you. You have't
changed your breathing at all since
I sat down. You give no indication
of me setting you up. You know it's
a risk but you don't seem to mind.

JANICE

Do you think I did not vet you?
This place? All possibilities?
Signals both ways? I am not new, or
afraid. I am trapped, in this
moment and only this moment with
you, for this. This goes bad, only
I go home.

FELIX

(a beat) Ha. You are good. That
answers many questions I had.

JANICE

Time ticks.

FELIX

Yes, yes. In this current climate
and status of the future that THEY
tell us is coming, do you believe
that is the best way to solve our
problem? This is a vicious way of
control.

JANICE

Have you seen much of what is left
out there? I'm not talking data
streams, actually traveled? Not the
hubs, but the production zones. The
actual places that makes all of
this work? It's a fragile tower.
The weight we make, if not
controlled, will crush us all. Then
what?

Janice sips, places her cup down near timer.

FELIX

Let it fall.

JANICE

Are you really this blatantly old-
fashion?

FELIX

Yep, devil's advocate and all that.
Say it falls, like it did before,
and we get up like we did before.
Why is that so bad? They always
overstate the dangers, rarely is it
actually true...

JANICE

It is. True, all of it. The teeter is real, there is no coming back if left unchecked.

Janice leans in close to him, true concern marks her.

JANICE (CONT'D)

What I do, what we do, is necessary. Vital. I sleep great. I wake with a purpose. And I do it all again proudly.

FELIX

Have they prepped you for me? I mean come on! No one, no matter how tough they think they are can come out of this clean. You have been doing this for what 4 years now?

JANICE

Seven.

FELIX

And in all that time, all those screams, all those betrayals, nothing has stuck to you?

JANICE

No.

FELIX

Bullshit!

The waitress comes back.

WAITRESS

Did you enjoy your milk sir? Can I get you anything else.

FELIX

Yes, yes. Cute and no.

The waitress leaves.

FELIX (CONT'D)

I don't know you like that, but I know you deeply Janice. Due diligence and all. And skipping my impartial reporting for a second. This is fucked. The fact that no one knows about this, yes there are a thousand rumors and guesses..

JANICE
There is a reason.

FELIX
Okay, I hear what you are saying.

JANICE
The reason is to keep this all under control. Do you think this will all last if this was known? Do you remember the Water Wars? This equivalent would label that as a skirmish. Do I understand this is difficult? Of course. Do I wish my skill set was unneeded? No. I am damn good at what I do. Proud of what I do. And until my hands are incapable of performing what I do I will serve with honor.

The timer goes off softly. The stare in silence again.

JANICE (CONT'D)
Time.

FELIX
Wow. I didn't expect such dedication.

JANICE
Time.

Janice begins to gather her things.

FELIX
Wait, wait! Just tell me why! Why do you do it? This interview won't be posted until after your death, just like we agreed. I just need to know, what if you are on the other side?

JANICE
Then you can post it early.

Janice leaves the both. Felix leans back and scribbles furiously into his note pad.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING NIGHT

The building is nondescript. Modern, four stories tall. Janice stands at the entrance looking up to one of the few windows that has the a light on.

Like Father Karras before he enters to start the *exorcism*. The light is blue while the others are white. On her face is a sense of dread. She walks up the steps to the front door of the building and enters.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING NIGHT

Janice walks down the hallway. The interior is cluttered, on the verge of a slum den. Worn adverts, overfilled trash cans and debris adorn the path. A sickly glow from the overhead lights wash her in a Spastic pulse. Janice comes to the elevator at the end of the hall. The *elevator* is an older model with a pull metal gate. She calls it. An argument is heard from an apt behind her. It's muffled. She taps her watch to raise the volume of her MUSIC.

We hear FOLK IMPLOSION—Nothing Gonna Stop playing. She waits for the elevator. She around as the door opens. Two KIDS, early teens, come bounding out and almost knock her over without a care. The kids are talking and laughing at each other as they head towards the entrance. Janice stares at them with a look of emptiness. She ENTERS the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR

The elevator is empty and surprisingly clean, compared to the hallway. She hits the button for her floor.

JANICE

I am grateful this old box works.

She checks the time, looks in her bag, as if doing an inventory check.

JANICE (CONT'D)

Felix. Did I make a mistake I can't walk back? I will have to make a visit to Privacy One to lock my access down. What the hell am I paying them for.

The elevator stops on the second floor. Standing at the entrance, is LARRY, the maintenance man, he is in his 50's. Faded tattoos, scars and a weariness on his face. He is looking at a data pad angrily. His face lights up when he sees Janice. He is startled. Janice pulls out her head phones.

LARRY

Howdy Miss! I didn't expect anyone up this time of night, cept those damn kids! They think this building is some sort of VR playground.

Larry enters the elevator with his cleaning cart. He stands too close to Janice. She moves to the back of the box.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Marking up the space with AR tags and shit. Like some freaky museum exploded, you know?! Oh well, it keeps me in credits, so I don't really care. Pass the time and all.

Larry takes a long look at Janice. Checking her out and not knowing what to make of her. He notices some bandages in her bag. She sees him trying to get a better look and promptly closes it tight.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Oh don't mind old Larry! I don't mean no harm. Killing time you know. (in a whisper) Say, are you going to see the Kims in 404?

Larry speaks as if the elevator is full of other people.

LARRY (CONT'D)

I don't mean to pry, but when you haunt these halls as long as I have, you hear things. All I'm saying is, I know is Mrs. Kim has been sick for months now. I hear her sometimes you know...moans of pain and tears and the like.

JANICE

Why do you think I am here for that?

LARRY

Well, bag for of bandages, late night. Hell, only the cheap doctors come out to this district. I know the Kim's ain't rich...

JANICE

Do you always try to interrogate every stranger you meet here?

LARRY

Oh, oh say now. No harm, no harm.
Passing the time is all.

The elevator stops and the door opens to the fourth floor. They both stare at each other for a second. Larry moves his cart into the hall.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Look, I don't mean no offense Miss.
Please don't report me, I need this
job. No boundaries broken right??
Ima move on now ok? Ok.

Larry quickly shuffles off to the left. He begins whistling a tune. After a moment Janice exits and heads to the right.

INT. HALLWAY FOURTH FLOOR

Janice walks down the hallway slowly. She takes a subtle look behind her and sees Larry turning a corner. She picks up her pace a little. She scans the door numbers until she finds the one she is looking for.

JANICE

Fucking Larry.

We see that the apt number is 404. Frantic muffled sounds can be heard. Janice looks up and down the hall before she knocks softly, four times, with a pause after two. Suddenly there is complete silence from behind the door. Janice leans her head to the door, listening intently. She reaches her hand into her bag and keeps it there. After a few moments, we hear someone coming to the door.

DANIEL (O.S.)

Is it going to rain today?

JANICE

We should be so lucky...I like to
stay dry.

Multiple locks are heard turning. Janice steps back from the door. She takes a stance of readiness. The door opens slowly. We see DANIEL, an Asian man in this mid 50's, slim and easy on the eyes. He is sweating, topless and looks exhausted. He steps to the side. Janice relaxes her stance.

DANIEL

Come on, come in! Hurry, please!

Janice enters the apt and the door closes behind her.

INT. DANIEL'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

The apartment is dark and lived in. It has standard items that can only be seen by the dimly lit lamps. Daniel looks around for a moment then points to a room off to the side. The door of the room is cracked slightly. We see a figure on the bed. Sounds of muffled pain is heard. Daniel and Janice walk towards the door.

INT. BEDROOM

The bedroom is messy, as if a different person lives here compared to the bedroom. Medical equipment is thrown around. Gauze and towels are on the bed next to ISSABEL, a female in her late 30's. Issabel is holding on hand over her mouth, trying to hold back screams, tears run down her face. We see that she is very pregnant. Her other hand reaches out to Daniel. Daniel goes to her. Janice surveys the room and begins to assemble the medical equipment.

JANICE

How far apart are the contractions?

DANIEL

I, I don't know. Maybe 6 mins?
Please, please...she hurts!

JANICE

She might be close. Let me see.

Janice reaches into her bag and pulls out a SCANNER. It's a small hand held device that she uses to scan Issabel. On the scanner's screen we see the baby moving fast and kicking. Janice puts the scanner away and sets up the IV.

ISSABEL

Is the baby ok? Please tell me it's ok?

JANICE

The baby looks fine. What is your name?

ISSABEL

Issabel

JANICE

Issabel, Daniel told me your situation. Everything is going to be fine. This is your second child right?

ISSABEL

Yes. Yes it is. Oh god, we didn't mean to..

JANICE

I know, I know. That's why I'm here. You will be fine. Where is your other child?

DANIEL

We sent Marcus away on a school trip. He has been so good at being quiet about this.

JANICE

That's good, that's good. Kids shouldn't be here for this part. Daniel, did you get everything on my list like I asked?

DANIEL

Yeah, everything. We had to scour the dark web for some of these things.

JANICE

I told you that this wouldn't be easy.

Janice raises Issabel up to a birthing position.

ISSABEL

Daniel, you got everything right? We can't lose..

DANIEL

Damnit, yes! I got everything. Everything will be fine Izzy...

An alarm goes off on the scanner.

JANICE

I think it's time. Daniel, I need you to follow my instructions to the letter. Do you understand?

DANIEL

Yes, yes whatever I need to do.

Daniel reaches down and kisses Issabel. They share a moment while Janice looks at them in sadness. Janice takes off her coat and other items until she is just in an athletic fitting shirt. Armed with surgical gloves, she climbs onto the bed at the rear of Issabel.

JANICE

Ok Issabel, when I say start pushing, you give it everything you have ok?

ISSABEL

Okay...just...the baby's life is more important than me ok?

DANIEL

Don't! Don't talk like that? We hired the best..everything will be fine and then we can move away like we talked about. We will live in a place were no one has to go through this..

MONTAGE

1. Issabel, screams of pain and breathing
2. Daniel, sweating handing items to Janice
3. Janice, between Issabel's legging giving commands
4. Issabel, grabbing the sheets with tight fingers
5. Daniel, holding Issabel's hand
6. Janice, smiling as she lifts up a new born baby

JANICE (O.C.)

Say hello to your son.

Janice hands the CHILD to Issabel and Daniel.

DANIEL

You did it baby! Look at him!

ISSABEL

Oh my baby boy...daddy's eyes.

Janice gives Issabel a shot in the leg with a INJECTION DEVICE.

JANICE

This will help with the post pain.

ISSABEL

Janice, Janice right? We can't thank you enough.

Issabel begins to seem woozy.

DANIEL

Yes, yes. You are a life saver. We plan to leave in 4 hours. That's the min for travel yes?

JANICE

You are correct. But, I recommend taking all the time you can right now to enjoy these moments. Daniel, do you want me to give you something to bring down your adrenaline?

DANIEL

Um, ok. Will I still be able to get them to the port?

JANICE

Yes, you will be perfectly fine.

Janice INJECTS Daniel with a dose from a smaller DEVICE. She begins to dress and back out of the bedroom.

JANICE (CONT'D)

I will give you two some time before we wrap up here. Ok?

Daniel and Issabel nod in agreement as they fawn over their newborn.

INT. DANIEL'S APARTMENT LIVING ROOM

Janice has all her gear back on. She looks back into the bedroom for a moment. She reaches into her coat and pulls out a phone. She makes a call.

JANICE

Officer number...1619. Onsite. Delivery successful. Send recovery team now.

She hangs up the phone. She walks toward the front door of the apartment.

JANICE (CONT'D)

Daniel, it's time.

Daniel rushes out the bedroom toward her. He seems a little high. Janice pulls out the scanner, which now has an invoice on the screen. We see funds account transfer with a thumb print button next the word send.

DANIEL

Wow, you weren't kidding about this making be mellow. This feels like the Green Dolphin days...haha. Do you remember those? Nah, you are probably to young...for..for..

Janice guides his hand to the scanner.

JANICE

No, I have no idea of what you are talking about. Right here Daniel. There we go. My time is up. I must leave.

DANIEL

Mhmmm...ok. I have another son! Hehe. I'm so, so happy.

JANICE

I know Daniel. Goodbye.

Janice exits the apartment.

DANIEL (O.S.)

Hey! Thanks for all you did! You're the best ever.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING NIGHT

Janice walks out of the front of the building. We see a SWAT like team at the entrance. One person, who looks like a DOCTOR is in the middle of them. The team looks at Janice. She pauses for a moment.

JANICE

Apartment 404, both subjects dosed.
Child, male, in good health.

The team leader nods and signals the group to advance. Janice walks down the steps and lights up a smoke. She leans on a fence and picks at her hands. Pedestrians walk the street, oblivious of her evening. A few moments later, yelling can be heard behind her. A baby cries. The sounds get closer. The first of the Recovery Team is coming out. Daniel and Issabel are in handcuffs with bags over their heads. They are both fighting and kicking as they are being lead to a van.

DANIEL

You fucking cunt! Did you do this?
Was this you? You destroyer!!

ISSABEL

How could you do this? This isn't right and you know it? This is my baby, my family! You lied to us.

DANIEL

Filthy fucking...taking away our child?! For what, to save a few dollars? It's our right to have as many children as we want...

ISSABEL

We were leaving, we weren't going to be a burden on the system! How could you, how could you?!!

Daniel and Issabel are loaded into the van. The Child is taken away in another VECHILE. Janice walks away, not looking back. She turns the corner and leans against a brick wall. She slides to the ground with her hand on her mouth sobbing. She puts a hand on her stomach.

CUT TO BLACK.

INT. NEWSPAPER BULLPEN

The open floor plan office space is crowded and bustling. The light reflecting off the REPORTERS faces is everywhere. Felix walks in and heads to his desk. Just as he sits down a scream is heard. MARION, a black woman in her late 60's, sharply dressed storms out of the central office. She furiously taps her tablet.

MARION

Felix J. Little! Surely you aren't just getting in here at this hour? I mean there is no possible reason for you to come in today unless you have an epic tale of woe and misery?

The other reporters slow down what they are doing. Some try to stifle their laughter.

MARION (CONT'D)

Oh Lord! Let that be the case! Let this poor soul, who used to be your shining messenger, bring forth such vaulted wisdom to lift up your mere mortal servants...

FELIX

Marion, look look, I have to connection..

MARION

Please Lord, don't make me have to fire this Asshole again Lord! You know I'm trying to be good!

A soft amen is heard somewhere in the back. Marion walk towards Felix's desk. The floor parts like the Red Sea. She sits on the edge of his desk like a queen and stares at him fiercely. Felix meets her eyes and doesn't flinch.

FELIX

Marion, listen. I've got it. I have the interview that will shake the foundation, that will start a revolution! It's the whale...

Marion holds up her hand to stop him.

MARION

Let me stop you there Mr. Little. You know I like you yes? I've been good to you? I've turned both blind eyes to your old world obsessions, your paper and the like. You have brought many eyes to our streams over the years. And we are grateful, but baby, you are batting way below your average.

FELIX

I know that you indulged me for some time now.

MARION

Some time? It's been 5 months since you have had a byline worth printing. I let you play your Ahab game for far too long. You know how this game works? If you are not in print,

FELIX

...then your really a reporter.

MARION

Exactly! I shouldn't have to tell you this.

(MORE)

MARION (CONT'D)

(Whispering) I know you feel in your gut that this thing is real and I trust in your instincts, but you have got to give me something soon baby. Or it's rotation time for you. And you don't want to have to rebuild again? You barely made it last time. This pit is vicious.

Marion gets off his desk and walks back to her office. A reporter comes up to her and tries to speak to her.

MARION (CONT'D)

No time!

Felix grips his desk with both hands, looks around the office, takes a deep breath and gets up to follow Marion.

INT. MARION'S OFFICE

The office is immaculate. Multiple monitors, displaying news feeds surround the desk. Marion sits and begins to study them. Felix walks in strongly.

FELIX

Look, look Marion. What I have found will shake the foundation of everything. I haven't been stalling for time, I haven't been stringing you along. This is real. This is pure pain.

MARION

And? Show me.

FELIX

I can't just yet.

MARION

Why? Nothing tangible, nothing printable. You know that. You of all people should know that.

FELIX

But if you

MARION

Time? Is that what you are going to ask for? How much have I given you? Do you know that so many on the lower levels are drooling for your spot?

(MORE)

MARION (CONT'D)

Yes, you have broken major stories in the past, helped us expand. And the owners are very grateful. But it comes down to credits. More eyes to our screens, the more credits we make. That's the game.

FELIX

I...I have an interview.

MARION

Wait, what?!

Marion presses a button on her desk and the door closes.

MARION (CONT'D)

You actually found a Snatcher? An honest to God employee?

FELIX

Yes. It wasn't easy or cheap, but I got her.

MARION

Her? Makes sense

FELIX

I met with last night. It's all true, the deception, the Family, everything.

MARION

Then sugar, what the hell are you waiting for! Transfer everything over and we will shuffle tomorrow's release.

Marion hits a button on her desk data screen.

MARION (CONT'D)

Steve! Where are we on first screen?

STEVE (OC)

80% formatted ma'am.

MARION

Perfect! Stop where you are, incoming.

FELIX

I can't.

MARION
Hold one Steve.

STEVE
Yes ma'am.

MARION
What do you mean you can't? You have it? Notes, sources, details all the shit you have been whispering about for years?

FELIX
I do, but I had to make a deal with her. I gave her my word that I would not print until after her death.

Marion looks at him quizzically.

MARION
Hahahahahahaha! Your word?! My god you are stuck in that stupid past. No one goes around giving their word? It's illogical. She can't hold you to that.

FELIX
I hold my myself to that. I believe in protecting my sources. If for not any other reason, then it's the right thing to do.

MARION
Right thing? You know what the right thing is, you still having a job. I have indulged you long enough Felix. Does she have anything on you? Our company?

FELIX
Well no, she knows who I am.

MARION
Kill her.

FELIX
What?!

MARION
We have contractors for this, so you won't have to do it yourself, don't you worry yourself sugar.

FELIX

You can't be serious. This is bad, bad. I can piece out a little of this story without putting her in danger.

MARION

You know this game Felix. A snack won't hold the public's hunger. It's a full meal or this story is just another crackpot stroking himself. You need hard and firm, deep inside their little minds. They need the shock and the shame.

FELIX

This is too big for the fluff! This will rip out beliefs.

MARION

You have 30 seconds, tell me your solution.

FELIX

I think I can crack her, get her on the record. I felt that she is tired of this life, all that pain she is responsible for. Give me 48 hours.

MARION

Time ticks.

EXT. FAMILY FOUNDATION CENTER

The building looks like monolith. It sits isolated in a large valley between mountains. Vehicles come and go. The spiral at the top is a lighthouse that pulses in it's rotation. It's covered in COMMUNICATION DISHES. In the distance is the city behind it.

INT. FAMILY FOUNDATION CENTER

Janice walks in and goes through the security check in. Full bio scan and DNA match. The SENTRIES nod as she passes through. She walks down a long hall to the elevator.

INT. FAMILY FOUNDATION CENTER ELEVATOR

Janice enters. The elevator is empty.

JANICE
38th floor.

The elevator closes and ascends. Floor to ceiling monitors come to life on every wall. It's like she's in VR sim. Scenes of sunflower valley shines brightly. A voice comes on over the intercom.

ELEVATOR
Welcome 1619. Mission status phase three complete. Case closing in 48 hrs. Debrief will commence in 7 minutes. Is there anything you require?

JANICE
No Aloy, I'm fine.

ELEVATOR
Your bio metrics are very elevated. Would you like something for your nerves 1619?

JANICE
I said I'm fine.

ELEVATOR
Aggression is a sign of unbalance. Admitting countermeasures.

Suddenly two bursts of gas is pumped into the elevator.

JANICE
I....thank you Aloy.

ELEVATOR
Your are most welcome 1619. Family is all.

The elevator stops and the doors open.

JANICE
Family is all.

She exits in room on cubicles that are pod shaped with people working. She heads toward an empty one, hers, and sits in. She pulls out her device and plugs it in. The overhead monitor comes on and face appears. ORTHENIA, a non-binary person, comes on the screen. They smile and checks something off screen.

ORTHENIA
Janice, operator 1619, welcome back.

JANICE
Thank you Orthenia.

ORTHENIA
Data dump now yes?

JANICE
Yes.

ORTHENIA
Perfect. Any complications to report?

JANICE
None. Extraction complete. Subjects contained. I...

ORTHENIA
Yes?

JANICE
Nothing, proceed with debrief.

ORTHENIA
Excellent. I know it is customary to go offline after a long case like this, but I need you.

JANICE
Seriously? I just did a nine month stint. Surely there must be someone else available..

ORTHENIA
This next case is a simple one. Parent's at term, agreement needs to be decided and signed. They are at a private facility now.

JANICE
Fuck. Apologies operator.

ORTHENIA
Understandable. There location is on the path of your downtime location. Go, access and conclude the situation. This couple is an Ultra Credit sponsor.

JANICE
Ah. Well then, we mustn't keep them waiting.

ORTHENIA

Indeed. You are one of our best.
Extended service bonus will be
applied once completed.
Transferring data packet now.

Janice looks down at her tablet as the screen fills with faces and bio info. She swipes through a few screens and nods.

ORTHENIA (CONT'D)

Secondly...

JANICE

Wait more?

ORTHENIA

Bring your confrontation kit.

JANICE

Expecting trouble on this one?

ORTHENIA

Probability is low, but PREDICTS
has a fluctuation on the outcome.
Father has past issue that might
not make this smooth. His work and
family stance, while accepting of
our work, goes against their
religion.

JANICE

Fuck, one of those.

ORTHENIA

Yes, but with Ultra level, it's a
gentle touch that is needed.

Janice packs her things, including a rifle that is folded down to something that would fit in a medical bag and rises to leave the pod.

JANICE

Retrieval team will be briefed for
possible worst outcome?

ORTHENIA

Yes. BLAKE's 7 squad is at your
disposal. Download complete. Family
is all.

JANICE

Family is all.

Janice leaves the pod and heads back to the elevator.

INT. TRANSPORT VAN

Daniel and Issabel are on their knees, shackled and facing each other with a foot in-between them. There are illuminated collars around their necks holding the hoods. The van is large. Soldiers stand around them in silence.

ISSABEL

Daniel...Daniel? Are you there?

DANIEL

Issy? Yes baby, I can't see you but I'm right here.

An armed human hits Issabel in the back of the head with the butt of his baton.

FAMILY ASSISTANTS

Silence.

Issabel lurches forward from the blow and bangs into Daniel. She rests on him.

DANIEL

(Whispering) I'm right here. I'm right here.

ISSABEL

(Whispering) Are they going to kill us? Where is our baby?? What will happen to Marcus?

Issabel is suddenly yanked back to her upright position by one of the FA. The ride becomes bumpy and shakes everyone inside around for a few seconds then smoothes out. We get a sense the van is slowing down then stops. From the outside we hear muffled noise, very faint. The rear door opens and the FA's file out.

EXT. WORK CAMP EARLY MORNING

The work camp is like a digital quarry made over next to body of water. A large road that goes deep into the structures also splits the area in half. Many workers in jumpsuits and collars work on both sides. There are very few guards. It is hard labor. The workers wear two different color of jumpsuits, blue and grey.

FAMILY ASSISTANT

Come on, come on! Move it, out of
the van!

Daniel and Issabel are unshackled and pulled out of the van.
Daniel tries to resist.

DANIEL

No! To hell with you! I hope...

His collar lights up silently and he convulses. They grab his
body and throw him to the ground.

ISSABEL

Daniel! Daniel! Baby!

FAMILY ASSISTANT

I really don't want to have to
silence you like your husband. To
much damn paperwork. So if you know
what's the best thing right now,
just remain quiet.

Issabel and Daniel are stood up, some distance from the van.
They are surrounded but FAs, then a path opens up in the
circle. In walk the foreman, D'MOND. He is a large gruff
looking man in his 60's. His face is scarred and he looks
like he can still hold his own. He walks over to Daniel and
Issabel, while looking at his data pad on his arm. He never
looks at them until he stands before them.

D'MOND

Kinda late for a drop, yes? Is this
it?

He looks into the back of the van.

FAMILY ASSISTANT

It was a planned appointment. It
should be in your incoming
inventory list.

D'AMOND

Shit, you think we get quantum
updates out here? With the output
of both sides, I'm lucky I get my
matches.

FAMILY ASSISTANT

Go Gunners!

D'MOND

You got damn right. Ok, I see it here now. Let's get this over with.

He nods to the FAs and they remove the hoods off of Daniel and Issabel, while leaving the collars. D'amond inspects them slave auction style. The couple adjusts their eyes to the light.

D'MOND (CONT'D)

You two souls have the fortunate pleasure of being now in the property of the Family. My name is the only one you need to know for the rest of your sentence. I am D'mond. I run this, I work this, I am your life line and your executioner. Facts, work here, hard hard. I can be easier or way worse than the rumors you have heard.

D'mond hits a button on his arm data pad and the remaining shackles fall off the couple. They both look at each other and him quizzically. The FAs return to their van.

D'MOND (CONT'D)

I got it from here.

Dust and mist picks up. D'mond backs up a few feet. The van drives away. Issabel tenses up some, eyes darting all around. D'mond turns around and begins to walk to an office.

D'MOND (CONT'D)

(Whispering to himself) I do love this part. Ok! Let's go.

Daniel begins to follow him, Issabel puts a hand out to stop him and nods to the water to right of them. There are only three guards insight, with hundreds of workers laboring. Nothing stands between them and the water. D'mond begins to whistle.

D'MOND (CONT'D)

Air's not to bad today. Those new filter upgrades might actually do us some good.

Daniel shakes his head "no" to Issabel. Her face pleads for him. Suddenly she gets into a sprinter stance and takes off for the water. She runs around tools and debris, hurdling like an Olympic racer. D'mond looks at his arm screen. His smile is almost a sigh. Aloy face comes on the screen.

ALOY
Probability of discipline 87% and
rising.

Issabel is almost to the water. She leaps in.

ALOY (CONT'D)
Discipline activated.

D'mond turns around. His arm screen returns to prior display. The collar around Issabel's neck, pulls her back mid jump. With the force of yanking a dog's collar. She lands roughly on her back. She struggles for air and tries to remove the collar. As soon as her first hand touches it, a light flashes light a photograph. Daniel and D'mond shield their eyes from it.

ISSABEL
Ahhhhhhhh! No, no, no!!!

The light is gone and we see Issabel holding part of what use to be her hand. It has melted into the equivalent of a meat shovel.

DANIEL
Issy!!

Daniel runs to her. He grabs her and tries to comfort her.

D'MOND
Now you know. There was a time we told folks about the risk of trying to escape, but it got soooo exhausting. Plus this is perfect demo. Pick her up and let's go get you signed in. Oh and don't worry, we will replace her hand, how else is she going to work?

INT. ORINTATION ROOM

The room is large, an-ship building layout. It is packed with machines running non-stop, fabricating items. A small desk sits in the middle of the room. A guard OLIVER, early twenties, clean cut and wearing an officer version of the uniform, sits looking bored. Daniel and Issabel are directed to him. On the table are jumpsuits, neatly piled and size labeled.

OLIVER
Size and color?

DANIEL

What?

OLIVER

Size....and....color.

ISSABEL

We don't understand.

OLIVER

Really? D'mond didn't tell you that part of your sentence?

Oliver checks his data tablet. He scrolls until he finds their case file. He clears his throat.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Ok, here we are. Issabel and Daniel Kim. Convicted of limit one rule violation, life creation over the number allowed. Sentenced to one generation of labor. Uterus removed and vasectomy completed. All current credits confiscated to be used for the child integration.

ISSABEL

What has happened to our baby?!

OLIVER

C-lv426 is being processed and will join the cause of making our nation stable place.

DANIEL

What? I don't understand. Will we see him while we are here?

Oliver chuckles.

OLIVER

No, you don't get to see him? You will not know his name. You will not know his location. Now as for the first inquiry, size is easy. Your color is a choice. Choose grey and you work on the air scrubbers in the great towers. Choose blue and you work on the water treatment plant down below.

DANIEL

Is there another choice.

OLIVER

You can forfeit your sentence and
choose death now.

Daniel and Issabel look at each other nervously.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Once chosen, there is no reset. I
know the one I would pick.

INT. FANCY DELIVERY ROOM

The space is large and decorated as if done by Hermes. Nurses shuffle around. Large windows let in soft sunlight. The view is high above the city. Security guards are at the exits. On the delivery bed is PIPER, a white woman in her 30's. Her medical gown is more fashion runway than hospital. She is in labor. Next to her is Hassim, a middle eastern man in his 40's. Janice walks in briskly. On a smaller table is one baby crying. The DOCTOR is delivering another.

JANICE

Status.

DOCTOR

Child one delivered without issue.
Child two is breached.

PIPER

You did this to me! Do not cut me.
I cannot have a scare.

HASSIM

Darling, you will be fine, but we
need to decide now.

PIPER

Already? They can't wait until I'm
done?!

Piper screams in pain.

DOCTOR

Push now yes?

Janice pulls out her equipment. She scans the already birthed child as the nurses cleans it.

JANICE

Hassim and Piper Bashir, I am a
representative of the Family. You
are in violation of the Limit One
accord of 2042.

(MORE)

JANICE (CONT'D)

In accordance of sub-section 9791 part 7, the twin rule, you have the following choices.

DOCTOR

You are doing great ma'am. Push more.

HASSIM

We know the damn rules! My family co-authored the charter. I did not want this...

PIPER

I...I don't know. Can we speak freely?! Ahhhhh!

DOCTOR

Yes, yes the child is 80% removed.

HASSIM

Of course we can, we are Ultra. What do you want to do my love?

PIPER

How much juice do we have?

Hassim looks at Piper, then Janice and back to Piper.

HASSIM

We have enough.

The doctor pulls out another baby girl and hands the screaming child to nurse.

DOCTOR

Good work ma'am.

JANICE

Time.

Piper pulls Hassim down close to her, she is sweaty and her makeup is ruined. She speaks softly.

PIPER

I WANT THEM BOTH.

Hassim's face makes no expression change. He pulls away and taps on his arm pad. All the guards in the room, taps earpieces and slowly begins to move in.

HASSIM

May we see them before we make our choice?

JANICE
Of course sir.

The nurses hands both children to Piper's arms. She shines with pride as she looks down on them. She looks up to Hassim and nods every so slightly. Janice is going through her gear. She is setting up a TRANSPORT CARRIER, it looks like futurist pet carrier. She spots a guard unfolding an assault rifle.

JANICE (CONT'D)
No, this isn't possible. You know the penalty for breaking the arrangement.

Janice pops up with her weapon drawn. All the guards have theirs pointed at her. The doctor and nurses rush out of the room.

HASSIM
We are changing that rule. I am Ultra and you do not have a choice. Stand aside. I will ratify the after action report.

JANICE
I can't let you do that sir, regardless of your status.

PIPER
Are you serious? You do know who we are yes? Twin's are an anomaly not planned. I want them both.

JANICE
That is not your call. I will get Family on vid, please hold.

Janice tries to make a call with one arm. A guard taps his arm pad moments before.

JANICE (CONT'D)
Signal jamming? You have just added another violation to your list. The longer this last, the more time will be added to your sentences.

Hassim laughs and gives a signal to the guard closest to him. The guard grabs hovering wheelchair and begins to help Piper and the children onto it.

JANICE (CONT'D)
Halt. Do not make me proceed further.

PIPER
I'm taking my kids.

HASSIM
Do you like your life, agent? We
can improve it or dismantle. Your
call.

Janice taps a button the side of her weapon. The gun extends and morphs into a larger weapon. Piper is slowly being pulled out of the room. Silence is everywhere, outside the hum of the machines. One of the twins cries. The shooting starts.

INT. LUXURY BUILDING STAIRWELL

Janice is bruised, bleeding and running down the stairwell. Bullets come down around her like rain. She holds one of the twins in her arms. The child is bleeding through it's wrapped blanket. Floor after floor she descends, stopping occasionally to return fire at those above. She reaches the last door on the bottom floor and it's locked. She places a breaching device on it, takes cover and blows the door open.

JANICE
Hang in there kid.

They exit the building. The child is crying.

EXT. LUXURY BUILDING STREET

Janice flies out the door, knocking over a well dressed man. She checks her comms again.

JANICE
Damn it, still jammed!

She looks back as she runs, two guards are 30 yards behind. The guards fire at her, hitting pedestrians around her. The bodies fall like they were just turned off. She takes a corner and heads down an alley.

JANICE (CONT'D)
Stun charges, smart.

She looks for a place to hide, there is none. It's a dead end. She reaches in to her shoulder bag and pulls out half a meter ROD. She quickly turns around and slams it into the ground. The rod opens and extends, it scans the area in a 180 degree path at Janice and the wall behind her. Suddenly a energy shield fills the area.

On the other side an image of the end of the alley is seen, just as the Guards coming running into the alley. Janice and the child has disappeared. She checks the baby and there is more blood.

GUARD 3

Wait, target lost.

GUARD 1

Retask drone to this sector.

The guard scans with his arm and doesn't detect anything. They turn and continue running down the street. Janice quietly uncovers the child and it's not moving. A way of anger and sadness covers her face. A recovery van screeches to a halt at the entrance of the ally.

JANICE

You will pay for this.

CUT TO BLACK