

SECRET
EYES ONLY

THE STUDY: EXPERIMENT ONE

by

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Human Trials Division

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Subject Group: CIVILIAN
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Project Name: [REDACTED]

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Subject Count: 6

Prepared by:

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NOTE:
All observations herein are factual.
Moral assessments are outside the scope of this study.

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"All I saw before me were acres of skin... It was like a farmer seeing a fertile field for the first time."

- Albert Kligman, Dermatologist

Test 1

DEMONS

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Classical music strums as a pair of well-manicured female hands sporting bright red nail polish take a pencil and carefully sharpen it before sweeping out a pristine notebook and turning to the first empty page.

A rugged male hand pulls at heavy levers, causing high-voltage meters to spike before eventually balancing out.

Another pair of hands, male but nowhere near as brawny, hits a mechanical switch on a metal panel labelled RECORD.

Monitors show grainy footage of a small, shadowy room with bare metal walls.

The same hand flicks a switch marked LIGHTS.

The feed to the screens overexposes for a few seconds, then adjusts to show what appears to be six people slumped around a table in the centre of a shipping container.

The hand rotates a dial to a low position and hovers above a button that reads SHOCK.

The pencil taps against the notepad with increasing excitement.

The music cuts.

INT. CONTAINER 1 - CONTINUOUS

BUZZ!!! DANNY, middle-aged and rough around the edges, jolts to his senses to see the perilous eyes of EMILY, a young woman with bright colored hair, staring back, a metal device attached to each of their heads.

They both turn to see TANYA, a tattooed woman pulling at chains that bind her wrists to the table, also wearing a similar device.

TANYA

What the fuck, yo?!

Danny and Emily look down to see that their wrists are bound too, and then across to CALLAHAN, an older, well-groomed guy trying to shake his device free.

CALLAHAN

Where are we! Hello?

He looks next to him to see KAREN, a well-dressed woman close to his age, who's following the network of heavy-duty electrical cables running to each device.

CALLAHAN

Where are we?

KAREN

I don't know! I don't know!

TANYA

HEY! HEY!

Danny cranes his neck to see large mirrored glass panels on the wall behind him.

He then snaps back to see KYLE, an unkempt, overweight man sitting opposite, motionless and defeated, not trying to remove the chains or head device at all.

EMILY

HELP! HELP US!

CALLAHAN

IN HERE!

KAREN

SOMEBODY HELP!

DANNY

Hey! Hey! Hey! Listen! If we all shout together, it'll be louder.
Three-two-one-

EVERYONE

HELP!

DANNY

Three-two-one-

EVERYONE

HELP!

DANNY

Three-two-one-

EVERYONE

HELP!

They wait, eyes darting around as hope gradually fades, and go back to pulling at their chains.

CALLAHAN

This some kinda prank?

TANYA

This sure don't feel like no prank.

KAREN

All I remember was I was doing an interview... and then I woke up here.

EMILY

A survey? Were you doing a survey?

CALLAHAN

Yeah, I was too.

DANNY

Me three.

TANYA

The one where they pay you a thousand dollars?

CALLAHAN

Wait? They said twenty thousand.

TANYA

Twenty?!

KYLE

Really? I was only offered five hundred.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The hand moves from the SHOCK button to a microphone, which is drawn to the mouth of PROF. CARLTON, a sharp-eyed man in a shirt, tie, and lab coat.

INT. CONTAINER 1 - CONTINUOUS

The crackle of speakers gets everyone's attention.

PROF. CARLTON (O.S.)

(through speaker)

In front of you, you will find six buttons, each corresponding to your respective seating position.

They all look down to see a crude metal panel with six buttons in front of each of them.

PROF. CARLTON (O.S.)
(through speaker)
You must all vote for another participant. The participant with the majority of votes will be executed in fifteen minutes. If any of you fail to vote, you will all be executed. If the group fails to form a majority, you will all be executed. Please begin.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Standing right beside Prof. Carlton, with a wry smile on her face, is DR. AMY GRACE, a younger woman also in a lab coat and wearing heavy makeup.

DR. GRACE
Here. We. Go.

She notes down the time and writes "Experiment begins".

INT. CONTAINER 1 - CONTINUOUS

Danny goes back to jolting at his chains. He's strong but not strong enough. Tanya glares at Callahan.

TANYA
How the fuck were you offered
twenty thousand dollars?

Like Danny, Callahan is consumed with trying to get free.

KYLE
I was only offered five hundred.
(to Karen)
Where were you offered more than
five hundred?

Karen nods.

KYLE
More than a thousand?

KAREN
I was told five thousand.

TANYA
Why the fuck you getting five
thousand? What makes you so
special, bitch?

Karen responds by voting for Tanya, causing a light in front of her to illuminate.

TANYA

I was only asking! Fuck you!

Tanya immediately hits the button for Karen.

EMILY

How can you... Why are you participating in this?

CALLAHAN

(to Experimenters)

Look! Whoever you are, listen! I have money! I have money, and I'm more than happy to comply with a hostage situation.

Silence from the speaker.

A light comes on in front of him.

CALLAHAN

Who did that?

Tanya looks back.

CALLAHAN

That was you, wasn't it?

She stays silent, but can't hide it.

CALLAHAN

Well, two can play at that game!

Callahan jabs the button for Tanya, now causing two lights to illuminate in front of her. She growls with frustration.

KAREN

(to Callahan)

Is that true? That you're rich? You think you can really buy us out?

CALLAHAN

Maybe. If I die, they'll never know!

KYLE

Well, seems they're ignoring your offer.

Callahan's hand hovers over the button for Kyle.

KYLE

Ah, ah, ah! If you switch your vote for me, she loses her majority.

TANYA

I can just as easily switch mine too, fool.

KAREN

You should.
(nodding to Callahan)
This man's our ticket out of here.

TANYA

Consider it done-

With a smirk, Tanya switches her vote back to Karen.

TANYA

-Bitch.

Tanya looks up at the counter to see that 13 minutes are left.

TANYA

Just a reminder, y'all need to vote.

EMILY

I can't! I can't pick someone!

TANYA

Well, if you don't, we all die!

Emily shakes her head and reels back in her seat.

EMILY

No. I won't.

DANNY

We don't even know if what we're doing is real. It could be fake. Maybe that's the real test. People have done stuff like this before, where it seems real, but it isn't.

KAREN

Oh come on! Like what?

KYLE

He's right. Like the, ummm... The Milgram Experiment.

TANYA

The Milligram... What?

KYLE

The Milgram Experiment. People were asked to electrocute someone over and over, lethal shocks sometimes, and because the person asking them to do it was basically wearing a lab coat, they just did what they were told to do.

CALLAHAN

Did they, by any chance, drug those people and chain them up in a mysterious location, too?

Danny and Kyle both wince.

CALLAHAN

Yeah, thought not.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton watches carefully through the one-way mirrors and the monitors while Dr. Grace takes notes.

PROF. CARLTON

Subject Three questioning the legitimacy of the test. Limited reasoning. Possible disassociation.

Various readouts show vital signs such as pulse rate.

DR. GRACE

Classic denial.

INT. CONTAINER 1 - CONTINUOUS

As Emily squirms in her seat, trying to wriggle free, she realizes she's wearing a metal device around her torso, and so are all the others.

CALLAHAN

Plus, we were pretty much tasered awake! So, whatever we're wearing clearly works just fine!

Tanya blinks back tears, her face illuminated by the two lights in front of her, showing she has the majority vote.

TANYA

I don't wanna die! Please! I got kids! I got family!

Callahan and Karen remain stone-faced.

TANYA

I don't wanna play no more! I'll take my vote back!

Tanya tries to unvote for Karen, but the panel won't allow it, never mind how hard she jabs at the button.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton watches a close-up of Tanya's teary face.

PROF. CARLTON

Subject Five switching strategy to soliciting empathy, bargaining. Appears to have comprehended the severity of possible outcomes.

Dr. Grace smirks as she writes.

DR. GRACE

Kinda hoping this one keeps the majority, if I'm honest.

INT. CONTAINER 1 - CONTINUOUS

Tanya looks to Kyle, tears streaming down her cheeks.

TANYA

Please! I'm being ganged up on here! You seem like a nice guy!

Kyle winces sympathetically and, after a long pause, switches his vote to Karen, matching her total with Tanya.

KAREN

Traitor!

KYLE

What's that supposed to mean?

KAREN

You know exactly what it means!

KYLE

I was creating a stalemate! Why are you both picking on a girl, anyway? How about you go fuck yourself?

Spitefully, Karen switches her vote for Kyle.

CALLAHAN

(to Karen)

What the hell? Now you've given yourself the majority!

Karen switches back to Tanya as Callahan switches to Kyle.

KYLE

What the fuck, dude?

CALLAHAN

You protected someone, now I'm protecting someone.

KYLE

Well, looks like it's eye for an eye now, motherfucker.

Kyle switches votes from Karen to Callahan, putting them all in a stalemate with one vote each.

They lock glares for a moment before hitting buttons and switching votes in a petty squabble, Tanya and Karen being vindictive, Callahan playing politics, and Kyle mocking it all by idly switching back and forth between Karen and Callahan.

Lights flash on and off as Callan looks to Emily and Danny.

CALLAHAN

You two need to start taking things seriously and vote!

EMILY

I can't!

DANNY

Yeah, no way, man! I'm not being part of this!

CALLAHAN

Okay, well, how about I take what they offered you to do this test, and double it? How about now?

Danny and Emily look to one another and back at Callahan, unconvinced.

KAREN

No! That's bribery! That's against the rules!

CALLAHAN

I don't remember hearing much about rules.

(to Emily)

You need to grow up.

(to Danny)

And you need to man up.

That comment almost gets a rise out of Danny.

CALLAHAN

Ah! One of those types, eh? My money not good enough for you, but my insults are? Don't you worry. I got plenty of both.

Callahan grins deviously.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton adjusts a camera to focus on Callahan.

PROF. CARLTON

Subject One posturing for control. Switching strategy to antagonization. Appears to enjoy the feeling of dominance.

DR. GRACE

Strange time to pick a fight.

INT. CONTAINER 1 - CONTINUOUS

Danny goes back to seeing if he can escape while Callahan sneers at him.

CALLAHAN

Come on! Vote, you pussy! Even if it's for me!

DANNY

I vote for you, and it gives you and her an excuse to gang up on me.

Callahan's bluff has been called.

DANNY

And if I wanted to do something about you telling me to man up, I'd do that face-to-face. See how much of a man you are then.

Tanya checks the countdown, now only five minutes left.

TANYA

Time's running out! We all need to pick someone!

Nobody dares do anything.

KAREN

Well, I sure hope y'all have been good Christians. I know I have.

Callahan shakes his head at Danny and Emily.

CALLAHAN

Look at you two, sitting there all high and mighty, acting like you're the peaceful ones. You're killing all of us, you know?

EMILY

That's the game's choice, not mine!

KAREN

Oh, come on now! Who do you think you are? How about you take some responsibility?

DANNY

Nobody really knows what they're responsible for right now, so that's not fair.

KAREN

So, that's it? We all die then?

They all sit in silence, reflecting on their situation, the counter ticking through the seconds.

KYLE

Pick me.

Everyone looks shocked at Kyle.

KYLE

Truth is, I want it to be me. I've just been fucking with you this whole time. Vote for me.

DANNY

You're crazy. You don't even-

CALLAHAN

-Hey! Let's hear the man out!

Kyle painfully adjusts his obese body and looks at them with absolute sincerity.

KYLE

Well, truth be told, life's not exactly tickety-boo for me, and it hasn't exactly been great for a while now. I live with my mom. Big surprise to you all, I'm sure. Girls only take a second look at me AFTER they've crossed to the other side of the street. I've got no prospects. No training. No skills. I mean, just look at me, right? I'm a cliché. A fucking morbidly obese neckbeard. People keep telling me over and over that I'm not worthless, but they sure don't treat me like I have any worth. I take meds, but they ain't working anymore. Fact is, I don't like being alive at all, and I think about how I want to end it every morning, like I did this morning, and the morning before it. The way I see it, this is my chance to do it in a way that actually matters.

They take that onboard.

KYLE

You just gotta make a promise to me. You tell people Kyle Jacobs was a fucking hero afterwards.

Tanya reluctantly smiles a little.

CALLAHAN

You are a hero, son. Shame the World isn't full of more men like you.

KAREN

Okay. Well, I'm only doing this because you insist.

Karen switches her vote from Tanya to Kyle.

KAREN

I know in my heart Jesus will be waiting for you. What you're doing technically isn't suicide; it's a sacrifice. Just like he did for us.

Kyle looks to Tanya, waiting for her vote.

TANYA

We're on the same side! You stood up for me, dawg! Don't make me turn on you!

KYLE

But it's what I want. You'd be doing me a favor.

TANYA

I'd be stabbing you in the back!

KYLE

Okay. I can see that. Then let's make it self-defense.

Kyle switches his vote to her.

KYLE

Now you owe me... Dawg.

TANYA

Fuck! This ain't right!

After some deliberation, Tanya switches her vote to Kyle and turns away from him, shamed by guilt.

TANYA

This ain't right at all.

Kyle looks Danny in the eye.

KYLE

Dude, you said you don't even think this is real, so there's no harm voting for me, and you'd be doing everyone here a big favor.

DANNY

I didn't say I didn't think it was real, just that I couldn't be sure.

CALLAHAN

You should listen to what he's telling you.

TANYA

Jeeze! Will you just shut the fuck up!

KYLE

Guys chill. You'd be giving me a gift. I fucking hate this life, man. I'm done. I want out. This is my opportunity.

DANNY

No. You can get better.

KYLE

You saying that from experience?

DANNY

(long beat)

I've had my demons, yeah.

CALLAHAN

Pah! Big Deal! You think that makes you something special? We all got our demons, buddy!

Kyle continues to look Danny in the eye.

KYLE

(to Danny)

So, you know the pain, and, if you're honest about it, you know not everyone makes it out. Think about it. This way, my mom will be proud of me rather than disappointed. Girls will think I'm a legend rather than a loser. And, given that you've managed to beat what I'm going through, brother, that makes me want to see you go on even more, because, if you don't, winning that battle will have all been a waste. You got any kids?

DANNY

Yeah. Separated though.

KYLE

Then do it for them.

Danny thinks for a while and, after letting out a deep sigh, votes for Kyle.

DANNY

I just hope to God this isn't real.

Kyle now turns his attention to Emily, who sniffs back tears and refuses to look back.

EMILY

Don't look at me! Don't try to make me vote! I won't vote!

KYLE

I'm pleading with you. Don't make my last moments knowing everyone in this room is about to die, and I could have stopped it. That his kids have lost a father, and her kids have lost a mother.

KAREN

Hey, I got kids too.

CALLAHAN

And me.

EMILY

Please! Stop!

KYLE

Give me peace.

Emily jolts with tears as she gets more upset.

EMILY

Please! Please don't make me do this!

Callahan looks to the clock, just over a minute left.

CALLAHAN

Oh, c'mon! What more do you fucking want?

KAREN

He's asking you to do it!

CALLAHAN

You've got your excuse now! Do it!

KAREN

Think of the children!

The counter keeps ticking.

CALLAHAN

He's already got the majority! It's just a superficiality now!

KAREN

This will be on you! If we all die,
it will be on you!

TANYA

Just do it already!

Emily looks to Danny, who looks back indifferently.

TANYA

Don't kill us all!

KYLE

Please.

Thirty seconds left.

KAREN

THERE'S NO TIME!

KYLE

Let me be free.

CALLAHAN

GIVE HIM WHAT HE WANTS!

Emily screams in pain as she lunges forward and presses the button for Kyle, causing the room to go silent as she trembles with emotion and sniffs back tears, her eyes pressed closed and mascara running down her face.

Illuminated by the warm glow of the six lights in front of him, Kyle smiles contentedly.

KYLE

Thank you. Given the situation, it
was nice to meet you all.

He sits back, straightens up, and masks his fear with dignity as they all watch the counter eventually reach zero.

Silence. Nothing. Their eyes dart around as they wait.

BANG! Callahan smacks the table.

CALLAHAN

So, it was fake! Jeeze! Well, this
couldn't be more awkward.

TANYA

(relieved)

Yeah, you're a fucking asshole.

(to Karen)

And you're a fucking bitch.

Danny lets out a long, relieved sigh and looks to Emily, who shakes her head, shivering and riddled with guilt.

A low hum in another room builds rhythmically, getting gradually louder and higher-pitched.

They all look at one another, their eyes widening.

Kyle nods and smiles to himself.

BZZZZZZZZZZ!!!! His entire bulk goes rigid and lifts in his seat as thousands of volts shoot into his head.

Everyone watches in horror. He clenches his teeth and grips the arms tightly, his trembling fingernails turning black as the current runs through him.

Tanya screams. Callahan ducks away from it all. Karen prays for herself.

Danny stares into Kyle's bloodshot eyes as smoke starts to pour from the device on his head.

Emily gasps as she looks the other way.

The screeching of the generator gets louder and louder until it eventually subsides, allowing Kyle's body to relax and slump back into the chair, his eyes closed and face peaceful.

TANYA
WHAT THE FUCK?! WHAT THE FUCK?!

CALLAHAN
GET US THE FUCK OUTTA HERE! NOW!

KAREN
PLEASE, LORD! NOT LIKE THIS! DON'T
LET THIS BE HOW I GO!

Danny sits staring at Kyle, disappointed and solemn as the others tug at their chains and scream.

BUZZ! The restraints release, and they can't get out of their seats fast enough. Everyone removes the devices from their heads and throws them down.

Callahan tries to get his chest plate off, but has no luck. He taps it to find it's made of metal.

CALLAHAN
Can anyone get these off?

Tanya and Karen try, but shake their heads.

Gradually calming down, Emily takes in the sight of Kyle dead before them. She looks to Danny, who seems just as regretful.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton flicks various switches.

PROF. CARLTON
Test one completes successfully
with Subject Six selected and-

He checks a pulse reading to see the gauge at zero.

PROF. CARLTON
-Eliminated. All subjects complied
despite visible distress, which
persisted without emotionally
flattening as expected.

Dr. Grace scribbles that down and lights up a cigarette, a look of deep satisfaction on her face.

VAUGHAN, a towering beast of a man, charges down the generator and turns to a control panel with a look of complete indifference.

VAUGHAN
All as expected.

Dr. Grace exhales smoke and continues to stare at Kyle.

DR. GRACE
Fuckin' A.

INT. CONTAINER 1 - CONTINUOUS

Danny doesn't waste time looking for a way out. He thumps on the metal walls and tries various fixings to see how sturdy and firmly attached they are.

BUZZ! A door opens. They all tentatively approach it.

INT. CONTAINER 2 - CONTINUOUS

The subjects all enter the second room as the lights flicker on to reveal guns tethered to the walls, documents plastered everywhere, and a table in the center.

EMILY
This isn't just one game.

Test 2

PLAY STUPID GAMES, WIN STUPID PRIZES

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Prof. Carlton picks up the mic and stares through the mirrored glass.

PROF. CARLTON

Around you is important information about the other participants. You must use it to determine which one of you is least fit to proceed.

INT. CONTAINER 2 - CONTINUOUS

The Subjects inspect the room, taking in mug shots, criminal reports, and news articles.

EMILY

Where would we even vote if we wanted to?

TANYA

Maybe we don't this time.

Danny checks out one of the guns, which has a laser pointer on it and is tethered to the wall with a steel cable.

CALLAHAN

I don't think those are here for us to play laser tag with.

Emily maneuvers around the room while avoiding the guns.

EMILY

We're not wearing those electrocution things anymore, right? Nobody here wants to shoot each other, right?

Karen spots that one of the mugshots on the wall is of Tanya.

EMILY

We just refuse to play. We make a pact. Who's in?

A screen at one end of the room slides up to reveal an OLD LADY sitting behind thick glass, knitting while wearing a pair of headphones and oblivious to what's going on.

Emily walks up to the glass and gasps in horror as she sees a gun mounted directly behind the Old Lady's head.

PROF. CARLTON (O.S.)
(through speaker)
Failure to select a participant
will result in the execution of the
subject behind the window. You may
now begin.

BUZZ! The counter starts once again.

Emily bangs as hard as she can on the glass between her and
the Old Lady.

EMILY
HEY! HEY! CAN YOU HEAR ME?! HELLO?

They don't respond at all.

EMILY
FUCK!

Danny handles the gun he's inspecting and finds that both the
safety and the mag release are fused solid.

DANNY
I can't tell if this is even
loaded.

Callahan, making sure he keeps everyone in sight, shifts up
to the mirrors and near a gun.

CALLAHAN
So, maybe put it down.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton studies Callahan via camera and the readouts.

PROF. CARLTON
Subject One showing acute distrust.
Heart rate raised. Employing a
strategy of self-preservation.

DR. GRACE
You think he'll try to barter
again?

PROF. CARLTON
We'll see.

INT. CONTAINER 2 - CONTINUOUS

Karen snaps around from the information she's been studying on the wall and glares at Tanya while pointing at a mugshot.

KAREN

You're a drug dealer!

TANYA

What? What's that shit say?

KAREN

She's a criminal! It says it all here! I knew it!

TANYA

Oh, you knew it, did you? Yeah, I did some shit a while back, okay? I had no choice! Sorry for just trying to feed my family.

DANNY

Everyone is just trying to feed their family.

KAREN

She's an ex-con! She went to prison!

TANYA

And I served my time! Let's see what shit they got on you, little miss Stepford fucking housewife.

Tanya looks at the wall and tries to make sense of the information pasted to it, most of which looks like Facebook comment screenshots.

TANYA

Holly fuck! No way! No fucking way!

Everyone looks to Tanya, intrigued. She turns back to Karen with a devious smile.

TANYA

A sexual fucking predator?!

KAREN

Oh, that nonsense! Don't pay any attention to it! How'd they even get that?

TANYA

I knew it! I fucking knew it! The second that God-bothering shit came outta your mouth, I just knew you'd be part of the kiddy diddling squad! And you judge me!

KAREN

Oh please! That's nothing but gossip and rumors!

CALLAHAN

Sure wouldn't be written off as gossip if it were a guy.

Callahan looks to Danny, who nods in agreement.

TANYA

Well, it sounds to me like, if there's anybody we need to be protecting our families from, it's Karen here. Ain't that right, Karen?

KAREN

Absolutely not, and the Lord knows it!

TANYA

Yeah. Right. Whatever. If he wants to pop down and confirm it, I'm all ears.

KAREN

It's just some stupid kid! Some stupid kid at school made something up for attention! Should have been raised right! But the parents, well...

(nodding to Tanya)

...you know.

TANYA

Hey! I ain't the one diddling kids!

KAREN

And I aren't the one dealing drugs!

EMILY

The evidence. Is it just, like, accusations? Not that accusations shouldn't be taken seriously, but is that, like, all it is?

KAREN
(ominously)
Yeah. Sure. I mean, I dunno. Seems pretty serious to me.

Emily looks at Tanya dead seriously.

EMILY
Is it, you know, just people talking? Facebook. Comments and stuff? Or actual evidence?

TANYA
Evidence? What's the poor kid supposed to do? Provide a fucking paper trail and an alibi or some shit?

EMILY
I'm just saying, a friend of mine went through a false accusation, and it ruined his life.

CALLAHAN
Bingo. *His* life.

EMILY
It's important we stick to facts, not rumors. Not that we should even be doing this at all.

KAREN
Well, just like your poor friend, I am the victim! I've been through hell with this! It's not fair!

DANNY
Maybe. Maybe you're the victim.
(to Emily)
Innocent until proven guilty, right?

EMILY
Right.

CALLAHAN
Oh, I see, and I guess you two are appointing yourselves as the jury?

TANYA
Seriously? Guys! You're putting a kiddy fiddler above me? Fuck all of you! I told ya'll, I was providing for my babies!

(MORE)

TANYA (CONT'D)

(to Danny and Emily)

What dirt we got on you two, hey?
For all we know, you might be a
drug lord, and this one might be a
serial killer?

Callahan scans through surveillance photos and online activity reports.

CALLAHAN

Well, this says Kyle back there was on a watchlist. I mean, I want to say I'm surprised, but here we are. How's this for gossip? Police had him down as a potential mass shooter.

DANNY

The police said that?

CALLAHAN

According to this report, yeah. Guess we only sped up the inevitable by giving him the chair.

DANNY

He seemed like a pretty nice guy to me, and he took a bullet for everyone else.

CALLAHAN

Well, the question is, who's going to take a bullet now?

Emily looks through a load of press cuttings and spins around to Callahan, shocked.

EMILY

Oh my god! You're Richard Callahan the third!

The others have no idea what that means, but Callahan clearly looks pensive about them knowing it.

TANYA

What? Spill the tea. Why does this motherfucker sound like he's the king of England, or some shit?

EMILY

He owns a huge corporation. Code Red Industrial.

KAREN

Why have I heard that name?

EMILY

Because Code Red is one of the biggest construction firms in the state. The press did an exposé on them last year. It was everywhere. Huge government contracts. Shady deals. Wasted public funds. Ignoring regulations. Dumping toxic waste.

TANYA

That Code Red Industrial. The toxic waste guys. Now, you some shady motherfuckers, bitch.

CALLAHAN

Bullshit! It's all bullshit! PR created by competitors, designed to tar and feather! I don't do anything they don't do! The press just lap it up without question! It's just more ragebait to sell to the masses!

DANNY

It ain't all made up. I've contracted for Code Red. You don't give a shit about regulations.

CALLAHAN

So we've got some sloppy site managers we need to address! Is that a crime? Really? Look, I clean up the streets, unlike dirty drug-pushing peddlers such as her!

TANYA

Fuck you!

CALLAHAN

Fuck you too, honey!

KAREN

My friend lives near one of your waste dumps. She gets migraines from the fumes. She can't open her windows. She can't use her garden. Sometimes she's too sick to go to work.

EMILY

Exactly, Code Red's ruined people's lives. I should know. I've attended the protests.

CALLAHAN

Then you're hardly unbiased, are you? Tell me, do you see anything criminal on that board, or just journalists trying to stir the pot? They're the irresponsible ones! Go march against them!

EMILY

No! You haven't been charged because you set up subsidiaries and shut them down before people can get compensation!

CALLAHAN

Oh, is that how it works?

EMILY

Yeah, I ain't stupid!

CALLAHAN

Then you should know I'm just doing business. Speaking of which.

Callahan leans close to one of the mirrored panels, still making sure to keep his eye on everyone.

CALLAHAN

(to Experimenters)

I know you're listening, so how about we reopen that little conversation about what it'll cost to get out of here. You know who I am. You know I got a few pennies to rub together. If you contact my wife, she can pull a few strings. I'd say a man's life is worth maybe a million dollars?

Callahan waits for a response.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton, Dr. Grace, and Vaughan all watch Callahan through the glass, only a couple of feet away.

PROF. CARLTON
Subject One resorting to bartering
with observation staff again.

DR. GRACE
Bartering poorly. Strategy or
stress, do you think?

PROF. CARLTON
Hard to say.

Dr. Grace leans forward until she's mere inches from
Callahan's face, and, completely unaware to him, blows him a
sarcastic kiss.

DR. GRACE
Not so big and powerful now, are
we, little man?

INT. CONTAINER 2 - CONTINUOUS

Karen shoots Callahan a dour, judgmental look.

KAREN
So, that's it, you're gonna use
your blood money to buy your way
outta here?

CALLAHAN
Hey! You should be on my side! You
know what it's like to be on the
receiving end of an accusation,
although it ain't kids I'm
supposedly touching.

EMILY
No, you just poison those.

CALLAHAN
(into mirror)
Well? You guys ready to deal or
what?

Callahan grows increasingly embarrassed and frustrated as the
silence drags, only seven minutes left on the timer already.
He catches Danny smirking.

CALLAHAN
You think you're so smart? Let's
see what they got on you.

Callahan doesn't have to search hard to find a work ID for
Danny. He tears a document off the wall next to it.

CALLAHAN

Here we go. Daniel Reyes. Court hearing and deposition.

Everyone watches as Callahan reads.

CALLAHAN

Oh my. Oh my, oh my.

They all draw in as Danny backs away with a guilty look.

Callahan looks up from the document with a wry smile.

CALLAHAN

Well, how about that? You're a killer, Daniel Reyes.

KAREN

What!?

TANYA

Oh, shit no! You actually are a serial killer! I called that shit?

DANNY

No, but someone did die. It was an accident.

Callahan flicks the document as he studies it.

CALLAHAN

Sure reads like negligence to me.

DANNY

Yeah, it was. Company negligence.

Callahan winces as he looks through the evidence.

CALLAHAN

You winched a co-worker through a twelve-inch hole? And you have the audacity to question what I do?

Everyone gasps as Danny's face sinks.

CALLAHAN

No further questions, your honor.

DANNY

We fucked up, man. Really fucked up. It should have been me. Hell, I wish it had been me.

Danny takes a moment to compose himself.

DANNY

I couldn't see what was happening down below. I was relying on my guys, but they couldn't communicate with me. It was so fucked up. He was a good guy, a great guy.

BANG! Danny pounds the wall, causing Emily to jolt.

EMILY

Hey, it's-

DANNY

-The fucking PA system was on some bullshit delay! That's what got him killed, I swear! But yeah, it was my hands on the controls when it happened, so it is what it is.

CALLAHAN

"It is what it is". Now, this, this is what I'm talking about. Workers giving companies like mine a bad name by dropping the ball.

Danny snaps around and looks like he's gonna kill Callahan, the gun still in his hand.

CALLAHAN

Woah! I'm not saying in your case specifically. Just in general. The point is, all this is a lot more complicated than it may appear.

TANYA

Damn right it is.

CALLAHAN

Except yours. You've been convicted.

TANYA

Fuck sake!

Emily watches Danny rest against the wall and massage his temple, clearly full of stress and regret.

EMILY

Well, I guess it's best we put it all on the table. Where's mine?

She looks for her stuff, as do the others, but they can't find anything.

Then they all notice the large box file on the table in the centre of the room.

EMILY

Oh.

Karen, Tanya, and Callahan all move in and pull out papers, which they glance through.

KAREN

Criminal Mischief in the First Degree. Unlawful Assembly. Interference with Lawful Business Operations.

CALLAHAN

You're damn right on that last one. Obstruction of Highways. Reckless Endangerment. Inciting a Riot. Resisting Arrest. Assault on a Law Enforcement Officer.

TANYA

Stalking. Obstruction of Justice. Perj... Perj...

Tanya winces as she struggles to read.

CALLAHAN

Perjury.

TANYA

Perjury. Domestic Terrorism-Related Offense.

CALLAHAN

Wow! WOW!

Karen shakes her head at Danny and Emily.

KAREN

So, you're a murderer, and you're a terrorist.

TANYA

Ho-lee-shit. I'm almost impressed.

CALLAHAN

You holier-than-thou types are the worst. No wonder you tried to appoint yourself judge, jury, and executioner.

KAREN

Terrorism though! How could you commit crimes against your own country?

EMILY

Actually, pretty easily when my country commits crimes against me.

Callahan sniggers at that comment.

CALLAHAN

Cute. Looks to me like this all comes down between the killer and the communist.

TANYA

What's a communist?

CALLAHAN

Never you mind. You're not off the hook either.

KAREN

Yeah, you dirty rat.

Tanya turns to Karen, deeply offended.

TANYA

I'm sorry. What the fuck did you just call me?

KAREN

I called you a rat! Because you're a rat! What am I supposed to call you, a good law-abiding citizen?

DANNY

Hey! It's like she said, she served her time!

KAREN

Doesn't make her any less of a rat! Trying to feed her family! More like trying to buy a Bentley! That's all rats do. They look out for themselves at the expense of everyone else!

TANYA

Bitch, you need to back the fuck off!

KAREN
You see! Violent too!

With the tension rising, everyone bar Emily makes sure they are close to a gun.

EMILY
Okay, everyone needs to calm down!
Now!

CALLAHAN
No! We need to make a choice!

She looks at the clock to see only a couple of minutes left.

EMILY
Fuck!

Tanya and Karen lock eyes with one another.

TANYA
Oh, don't you worry! I made my
choice!

KAREN
Yeah? Me too!

TANYA
The world could sure use one less
pedophile.

Karen grabs a gun and points it at Tanya, the laser hitting her chest plate and causing one of the three bars on it to illuminate.

KAREN
Don't you dare call me a pedophile!
Who are you to call anyone
anything?

As Tanya goes to grab a gun, Danny instinctively aims his at Karen and stands in front of Emily.

DANNY
Back down! Now!

A bar lights up on Karen's chest.

Tanya also aims at her, illuminating a second.

EMILY
What the hell are you doing?

DANNY
Defending her.

EMILY
I think you just cast a vote.

DANNY
Okay, nobody pull a trigger!

Callahan edges toward a gun with his eye on Emily.

CALLAHAN
That's the thing, though, Danny. We
have got to pull the trigger!

DANNY
No, we don't!

With his eye still on Emily, Callahan slowly reaches out for
a gun. Less than a minute left on the counter.

TANYA
We're running out of time!

KAREN
Then let the old bitch die! None of
us even knows her anyway!

EMILY
We can't just let her die! She
doesn't even know what's happening!

KAREN
Good! Then she won't see it coming!

TANYA
Woah! That's some cold shit, Karen!

Danny spots Callahan edging for a gun.

He tries to put himself between Callahan and Emily while
still aiming at Karen, but the tether isn't long enough.

DANNY
(to Emily)
Get behind me.

Emily remains frozen and upset. Callahan's fingers wrap
around a gun. He clenches it and--

CLICK!

Everyone snaps around to see Karen has pulled the trigger.
Tanya stands there, frozen in her sights.

Karen then aims at Danny. CLICK! Nothing again.

She then swings around to Callahan. CLICK! Still nothing.

CALLAHAN
You backstabbing, bitch!

Callahan draws the gun he's grabbed.

DANNY
Stop! This might still be a bluff!

CLICK! CLICK! CLICK! Tanya, still aimed at Karen, desperately pulls at her trigger, but nothing happens.

Callahan aims at Karen, and the third bar lights up on her chest.

Nobody knows what to think. Her chest plate beeps.

BANG! Karen jolts before dropping to the floor, blood splattered on the wall behind her.

The Old Lady pauses knitting for a second.

EMILY
No, no, no, no, no!

Emily runs to Karen's aid and drops to her knees.

Danny draws back his weapon to show he's no longer a threat.

DANNY
Who fired?

CALLAHAN
Not me!

TANYA
I didn't do shit!

CALLAHAN
(to Danny)
Did you fire?

DANNY
Of course not! I just asked who fired!

CALLAHAN
Okay! Wow! Just asking.

DANNY

This doesn't make any sense! None
of us fired, man! That's not fair!

BUZZ! The door to container three opens while Emily checks to see if Karen has a pulse.

EMILY

She's dead! She's fucking dead! Who
cares if any of you fired or not?
She's fucking dead!

Tanya stares down at Karen's body with little sympathy.

TANYA

Good.

CALLAHAN

Yeah. Good. She kinda had it
coming.

Emily stands back up with blood on her hands, fury in her eyes as she glares at all of them.

EMILY

You don't get it, do you?

They all stare back.

EMILY

Good? Good? Don't you see? We've
ALL got it coming! This is going to
keep going, and going, and going!
It's going to go on and on until
there's none of us left! That's the
game!

Emily tries to flick the blood off her hands and wipes tears away with her arm.

EMILY

That's the fucking game.

Everyone shares a somber moment, knowing she's right.

Danny looks pained with guilt for what's just happened.

Callahan seems almost amused by it.

CALLAHAN

What are you so upset about?
Certainly not the first time you've
had blood on your hands.

Test 3

RATHER THEM THAN ME

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Classical music plays once again as Vaughan, Dr. Grace, and Prof. Carlton make their way to a new section of the observation room, this one with a partition in the middle where two of the containers meet.

Dr. Grace smokes as she struts ahead of Prof. Carlton.

DR. GRACE

Things are going well.

PROF. CARLTON

Better than expected. In terms of the primary data, what we're seeing is nothing short of remarkable.

DR. GRACE

You know, I still can't decide if I preferred the gunshot or the electrocution. The gunshot was brutal and bloody, but there's just something about the tease of the electric chair that's so enchanting in the moment. It's like you're literally watching the soul get tasered out of the body.

The monitors show the Subjects checking out the next room, which has knives wired to the wall and ledgers on a table.

Prof. Carlton still seems a little pensive. Dr. Grace rubs his arm affectionately.

DR. GRACE

You'll get your secondary objective. I believe in you.

VAUGHAN

Wanna bet?

DR. GRACE

Yeah, what are the odds on the brains vs the brawns, Vaughney? You're just the muscle, so why don't you act like it?

VAUGHAN

You gonna let her talk to me like that?

PROF. CARLTON

Stay focused. We still have some way to go.

Dr. Grace sticks her tongue out at Vaughan as they get into position, and the music cuts.

INT. CONTAINER 3 - CONTINUOUS

Tanya goes straight for a knife and takes up a defensive position, her eyes wild and breathing rapid.

Callahan positions himself near a knife. Danny does the same.

CALLAHAN

What are those? Ledgers? What do you think's in them?

DANNY

Feel free to take a look.

CALLAHAN

Nice try. I'm not turning my back on you.

DANNY

Looks like we finally agree on something.

EMILY

I'll look.

Looking somewhat defeated, Emily creeps toward them, putting her back to Danny.

Callahan looks Danny in the eye and nods toward Emily, hinting that he should take her out.

Danny clutches a knife and readies it. Emily's back to him as she focuses on what's on the table.

Tanya watches intently, waiting to see what he does, but--

BUZZ!

CALLAHAN (O.S.)

(through speakers)

THE EXPERIMENT HAS NOT BEGUN.

TANYA

Fuck the experiment!

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton wafts away cigarette smoke as he glares into the room.

PROF. CARLTON

(into mic)

Before you is important information about the other participants. You must use it to determine which one of you is least fit to proceed. If you wish to form a majority, you may, but you do not have to do so.

He nods to Vaughan, who presses a button.

INT. CONTAINER 3 - CONTINUOUS

A screen goes up to reveal a PREGNANT WOMAN, again peacefully listening to music but also blindfolded, and with a knife she can't see aimed at her abdomen, which she strokes as she mimes along to some of the lyrics.

BUZZ! The counter starts.

EMILY

What do you mean, we don't have to form a majority?

CALLAHAN

Seems pretty clear to me. Looks like it's dog-eat-dog.

Tanya starts to weep and looks like she's about to collapse.

TANYA

I can't do this anymore! I want to go home!

DANNY

This is sick! This is real fucking sick!

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

With a fascinated smile on her face, Dr. Grace eagerly makes notes as Prof. Carlton observes.

PROF. CARLTON

Potential breaking point of Subject Three observed. Unexpected depth of response. Vital signs beyond expected limits.

DR. GRACE

Now we're cookin'.

INT. CONTAINER 3 - CONTINUOUS

Emily goes back to creeping toward the ledgers.

DANNY

What are you doing?

EMILY

What else can we possibly do?

CALLAHAN

Maybe there's clues or something.
Maybe there's something we can
figure out.

TANYA

Nothing can be worked out! Either
one of us dies, or an innocent baby
dies!

BANG! Callahan slams the wall with frustration.

Emily takes one of the leather-bound ledgers and sees Kyle's name on it.

EMILY

You're right, they're ledgers.
Looks like one for each of us.

CALLAHAN

Open it.

EMILY

I suggest we each only open the
ones that aren't ours. It'll stop
us from being biased.

CALLAHAN

Sure. Whatever. Just get on with
it.

TANYA

I don't want him looking in mine.

Emily opens Kyle's ledger to find just one page inside.

DANNY

Whose is that?

EMILY

Kyle, the guy in the first room.

CALLAHAN

Well?

EMILY

It's a breakdown of his entire life, like a summary.

CALLAHAN

A top sheet.

EMILY

Sure. Whatever.

CALLAHAN

Well, what does he have?

EMILY

It's just like he said. Nothing. No job. No savings. No education. No partner. Nothing really at all.

CALLAHAN

I want to see Karen's.

EMILY

Knock yourself out.

Emily forcefully slides a ledger off the table so it crashes on the ground at his feet.

Being careful to still keep an eye on everyone and a hand free to grab a knife, Callahan opens the ledger.

CALLAHAN

Let's see. Net worth of about three-hundred-and-fifty-grand. Four-bedroom house owned outright. Married almost thirty years. Grown up kids. Worked as a school assistant. That's about it.

Danny and Tanya look at each other with palpable guilt.

EMILY

What do you mean, "about it"? What are you omitting?

CALLAHAN

I'm not omitting anything?

EMILY

You are. You're keeping something from us. What does it say?

Emily stares Callahan down.

CALLAHAN

Well, if you must know, and I don't see why any of this is relevant to us now she's gone, she gave a lot to charity, like a hell of a lot. Seems, in that sense, she actually was a good Christian.

TANYA

Nah. You saw what happened. She pulled the trigger first. We acted in self-defense.

DANNY

Look, we didn't even know if the guns fired.

CALLAHAN

Well, from what I can tell, these knives definitely stab.

EMILY

They're making it more physical each time. That's what they're doing. Making it more personal.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton watches Emily, impressed.

PROF. CARLTON

Subject four showing remarkably strong observation and reasoning despite extreme stress.

DR. GRACE

Just a lucky guess. She's not so smart.

Vaughan smirks to himself.

INT. CONTAINER 3 - CONTINUOUS

Callahan tosses Karen's ledger aside.

CALLAHAN

We're wasting time with people who've already been picked. Who should we look at next?

He looks to Tanya.

TANYA

And I'm saying, I don't want you reading my file! I don't trust you!

CALLAHAN

Likewise, honey.

TANYA

Don't call me fucking honey!

CALLAHAN

Whatever! They're all gonna have to be read at some point anyway!

DANNY

Shut up! Jeeze! For fuck's sake! Open mine. I've got nothing to hide.

Emily finds his ledger and opens it.

EMILY

Okay, well, you're a small business owner. Around two-hundred-and-fifty grand in construction equipment, mostly leased. Apartment rented. A few casual employees. Not much education, but lots of training. Immigrant parents-

DANNY

-What the fuck's my parents got to do with anything?

EMILY

Hey! I didn't write this, okay? Immigrant parents. Both alive. Three kids, but separated, like you said. It says here you've declared yourself bankrupt before.

CALLAHAN

Bankruptcy. Always a great way for someone to run away from what they owe.

DANNY

It ain't like that. Lawyer fees from that accident ruined me. I still pay child support, if that's what you're getting at.

CALLAHAN

I wasn't getting at anything, but it's interesting you brought it up.

TANYA

You see your kids much?

DANNY

(long beat)
Not enough.

TANYA

Because you can't or you won't? You a deadbeat dad?

DANNY

Would you believe me if I said I wasn't?

Tanya stares back indifferently.

TANYA

Fuck it. Do mine. I want this shit over with.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

With a door blocking his view a little, Vaughan shuffles up to Prof. Carlton and Dr. Grace so he can get a better view, irritating them in the process.

INT. CONTAINER 3 - CONTINUOUS

Emily looks at Tanya's file.

EMILY

So, you're a nurse-

TANYA

-Yeah. I earn minimum wage wiping old people's asses all day. Let's just get that out there so ya'll can look down on me again.

EMILY

You, umm, rent a house. Have four kids. No support from the father... I mean fathers.

Callahan smirks.

TANYA

I saw that! Fuck you!

EMILY

Your mother's still alive. You're upside down on your car payments, umm, a lot of credit card debt. I don't get this. What are we even supposed to be judging here?

CALLAHAN

Who cares. Keep reading.

EMILY

You're, umm, going to night school, and you have a small candle-making business. That's it.

TANYA

Guess that Karen was right. When you see it like that, I am a rat.

EMILY

No, you're doing your best.

CALLAHAN

Oh c'mon! Selling drugs is hardly "doing your best"! Tell me, can you even see your kids after prison?

Tanya tries to remain dignified as she starts to cry.

TANYA

I'm a good mom.

CALLAHAN

I'm sure you think you are, and I'm sure Mother Teresa here will be more than happy tell you that you are too.

Emily takes out the next ledger and places it on the table.

CALLAHAN

(pensively)
That mine?

EMILY

Actually, it's mine.

CALLAHAN

Well, then you certainly can't be trusted to read it.

DANNY
I'll do it. I'll read it.

CALLAHAN
No, no, no, no, no. No way. You two
are in cahoots.

Callahan points to Tanya.

CALLAHAN
She can read it.

TANYA
I don't wanna read it!

CALLAHAN
You can't sit this out! Read it!

TANYA
Fine. Whatever. Hand it over.

Emily hands over the ledger to Tanya.

TANYA
(struggling to read)
Mature student with a degree in
Gender Studies. Currently
completing a Master of Social Work.
A hundred-and-fifty-thousand owed
in student debt. Works in retail as
a barrister.

CALLAHAN
I've got a strong feeling that
actually says "barista".

TANYA
Huh?

EMILY
Just go on.

TANYA
Lives in a house share. Car lease.
Middle-class parents. No kids or
long-term partner. Streamer.

CALLAHAN
Wait. What's a streamer?

EMILY
If you must know, it's someone who
plays computer games while others
watch.

CALLAHAN
That's a job?

EMILY
Does it matter?

Callahan rolls his eyes.

TANYA
What's a Master of Social Work?

CALLAHAN
It means she's training to come
take your kids away.

TANYA
Huh? That true?

DANNY
Don't you see what this fucking
game is doing to us? It's designed
to sow division! That's the whole
point! This is all about finding a
reason to hate one another! It's so
fucking obvious!

EMILY
I just don't see what we're
supposed to make of all this?

DANNY
It doesn't matter! We'll still make
something of it, and they know
that! Hey, I wanna see his file!

CALLAHAN
You can't be trusted to read that!

Danny points to Tanya, pissed off.

DANNY
Then have her read it!

CALLAHAN
You kidding me? I trust her even
less than I trust you! None of you
can be trusted! She's a criminal,
you're a killer, and she has an
agenda!

DANNY
I'm not a killer, man! You gotta
stop saying that shit!

EMILY

Okay, so we pass it around-

A cooling fan whirrs, and a light blinds them as Callahan's details are projected onto the wall.

The others are all aghast at what they see. Callahan has millions and makes millions. He's on his second wife, has grown kids that are doing very well, rich parents that passed away and left him money, and little education.

CALLAHAN

Well, seeing it all laid out like that sure makes me wish my ex-wife was in here with us.

DANNY

You offered them a million to buy your way out. Made out like you could maybe scrape it together. You have over fifty times that.

CALLAHAN

I have dependents! Besides, wealth isn't always cash, but I wouldn't expect any of you in here to understand that, would I?!

DANNY

You didn't even try to buy anyone out with you. Not even the old lady. You only tried to save yourself.

CALLAHAN

And I was supposed to somehow know that was an option? You don't know what I was prepared to negotiate! They didn't respond anyway, so what does it even matter?

DANNY

Well, there's something I wouldn't expect you to understand.

Callahan backs right up to the mirrored panel.

CALLAHAN

(to Experimenters)

Final offer, if you guys are even listening. You clearly know how much I'm worth. Every last dime sees me walk out of here alive.

(MORE)

CALLAHAN (CONT'D)

Now, I don't care what kinda psycho torturer type you may or may not be, but that's a lot of cash to leave on the table just for some indulgence in here, and you won't be seeing a cent of it if I die.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vaughan looks to Prof. Carlton, his eyes wide and clearly interested in that prospect.

PROF. CARLTON

We're here for data. Now back to your station.

Vaughan moves back into the other room, a little pissy.

INT. CONTAINER 3 - CONTINUOUS

Callahan sighs as his final offer is met with silence.

CALLAHAN

Looks like buying a ticket outta here isn't an option, so how are we gonna do this? Seems the numbers speak for themselves. Out of the four of us left, I'm clearly worth the most.

EMILY

Yeah, on paper.

CALLAHAN

Is paper not real or something? What am I missing here?

EMILY

Wealth isn't the only value someone has to society.

Callahan can't help but laugh at that.

CALLAHAN

Oh, come on! Spare me the bullshit! This whole test is clearly about wealth! Why even have the ledgers then?

EMILY

The ledgers that show education, family, even what people give to charity? Those ledgers?

DANNY

She's right. You don't get to decide the rules, man. What was it they said, pick the one least fit to proceed?

CALLAHAN

I don't remember, but I'm clearly the only one playing by the rules! It's you two who keep moving the goalposts! We went through this in the last room when we found out you were one of the only two convicted criminals in there!

DANNY

Not convicted. Not a killer.

CALLAHAN

Whatever! Get real! Wealth is everything! That's what's being shown here. You might not like it, but that's the truth. That's what we're all chasing, and I've been chasing it a lot harder for a lot longer than any of you! You should respect that, you're in business too! You care about profit!

DANNY

I care about independence.

CALLAHAN

Oh, that may be so, but you sure still care about that bottom line, don't ya?

Danny reluctantly nods.

EMILY

It's like he says, you don't decide the rules!

CALLAHAN

And you, you aren't getting into all that student debt to live a poet's life. It's an investment.

(MORE)

CALLAHAN (CONT'D)

A pretty fucking stupid one, if you ask me, but, no less, you clearly think it's going to pay off nicely for you one day.

TANYA

So, it's me who's fucked then? I'm the poorest motherfucker here! I got no house! I got no prospects!

EMILY

Don't say that! You've got plenty of prospects!

CALLAHAN

Fuck you for your disingenuous, pandering bullshit! She's right. Let her be right, even if it does make you feel guilty to hear it.

Everyone stares at one another, their chests heaving.

CALLAHAN

Let's mix things up a bit. See this watch I'm wearing? It's a Rolex, a Rolex Daytona to be exact. Now, believe me when I say it, last time I checked, one of these puppies is worth a hundred and twenty thousand dollars.

He winds it off his wrist and throws it at Tanya's feet.

CALLAHAN

Pick that up. You're now worth more than those two put together.

TANYA

A hundred twenty grand? You sure? It looks ugly as shit.

Danny can't help but snigger.

CALLAHAN

What's so fucking funny?

DANNY

I guess money really can't buy taste.

EMILY

Or class either.

CALLAHAN

And what would you know about class?

EMILY

I agree. I think a conversation about class would be very pertinent right now, especially when some of us get a head start because of what they're born into.

CALLAHAN

Oh please! Last time I checked, Dr. Dre was born into the ghetto and is a lot richer than me.

EMILY

It's not like that.

CALLAHAN

Is it not? Really? I'd ask you to explain, but right now, I don't need a lecture from someone with more pronouns than work experience.

EMILY

You've no idea what it's like to be born at the bottom, do you?

CALLAHAN

Do you? Do you have any idea? Do you not see what a hypocrite you actually are? You think making soy lattes in a warm coffee shop is somehow real hardship? You think a few late nights writing an essay is working your fingers to the bone? I've mixed cement! I've carried bricks on my back in the midday sun no less. I've paid my dues only for people like you, who've had it easier than me since day one, to claim it never happened! And it's exactly what you're doing now!

Callahan holds up his palms

CALLAHAN

These hands have worked, and I can see from here that his hands have worked too. If you check her hands, I'm sure you'll find the same. You talk about society. We are society. What have you ever contributed?

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton leans forward with interest, his face close to Dr. Grace's, which she seems to very much enjoy.

PROF. CARLTON

Subject One demonstrating a notably profound depth of reasoning. Might be genuine, might be a strategy.

DR. GRACE

Intense, is it not?

Vaughan stares at the watch through a monitor.

INT. CONTAINER 3 - CONTINUOUS

Emily narrows her eyes at Callahan, ready to debate.

EMILY

Fine, if you want to play that game, then I'd say a nurse is a damn sight more valuable to society than a businessman.

CALLAHAN

Does that apply to him, 'cause he's a businessman too?

(to Danny)

You hearing this?

DANNY

I'm a contractor, that's different.

CALLAHAN

Is it?

DANNY

I work for people like you, man. We're not the same.

EMILY

Exactly! And it's people like you who keep people like him and people like her relatively poor?

CALLAHAN

Oh, the whole 'eat the rich schtick', very original! So, me giving him paid work is somehow me keeping him poor? How the hell's that supposed to work?

EMILY

You know exactly how it works!

CALLAHAN

I still want to know, what do you contribute to society, because you seem awfully good at judging everyone else! So, please, enlighten us all!

EMILY

(long beat)

I fight for what's right!

Callahan makes a buzzer noise.

CALLAHAN

ERRR! Wrong answer! You know what you really are? You're a self-centered attention seeker with performative morals and bumper sticker political views, whose idea of making a difference is hanging out with your they/thems at whatever protest suits your identity that weekend, competing over whose placard will get the most retweets! That is, until you become a government-sponsored child snatcher getting paid from other people's taxes, taxes raised almost entirely from people like me!

DANNY

Dude, you need to back the fuck off!

EMILY

Taxes! You want to make this about taxes? Like you pay your fair share? We all know about the government subsidies! We all know about you cutting corners! We all know about your offshore accounts! It was in the press! You're the biggest welfare queen in the room!

DANNY

You need to back off too!

Emily walks away to calm down, turning her back on Callahan, who's poised to strike.

DANNY

Hey! Look at me. You stab her in the back, and this game is getting sped up with two dead bodies.

TANYA

Might as well do it anyway and just get it all over with.

CALLAHAN

By all means, take each other out! Probably best to just move on since we can't even agree what the fucking game is about anymore! Maybe she can move the goalposts around in the next room!

Emily shakes as she starts to cry, sniffing back tears.

EMILY

Don't talk to me about moving the goalpost when you lobby the fucking government! You're just a bully! That's all you are, a bully!

CALLAHAN

Don't blame me for the system! The fact of the matter is, I employ over two hundred people in this city alone, building infrastructure that creates even more jobs! You work because of me! You're educated because of me! Your kids go to school because of me! If anything, you should be thanking me!

DANNY

No, that doesn't make you better than everyone else.

CALLAHAN

Doesn't it, because I think it does! You exist because of me! You can eat because of me! Your family can eat because of me!

DANNY

Oh, fuck you, man! You're crazy!

CALLAHAN

Okay, if you want to be like that, forget any contracts you have with Code Red! Fuck you too!

DANNY

Shove it up your ass!

CALLAHAN

That's the power I wield! I can make any one of you, and I can break any one of you! I might as well be your god, so how about a bit of fucking respect?! You may not like it, you may be jealous, but it's true! So, fucking suck it up and deal with it!

Danny squares up and moves closer, knife in hand, as Callahan turns his attention to Tanya.

CALLAHAN

The fact is, you're replaceable, and I'm not! If I die, this whole city suffers, not a bunch of degenerate kids who'll only bring more crime!

TANYA

My kids need their mother!

CALLAHAN

Yeah? Were you thinking that when you went to prison?

TANYA

Actually, I was, motherfucker, and let me show you a few things I learned while I was in there!

Tanya closes in on Callahan, too, who lunges at them and swings, driving them back.

CALLAHAN

THIS IS WHAT THIS GAME IS ALL ABOUT! KILLING OFF THE WEAKEST LINK, AND I SURE AIN'T NEVER BEEN THE WEAKEST IN A ROOM! SO, LET ME DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE!

Before he can swing at Tanya, Callahan suddenly freezes.

Tanya and Danny reel back, stunned.

Callahan, now trembling, reaches down to find a knife in his side. He looks around to see Emily stepping backward, covering her mouth, just as shocked as he is.

He drops to his knees, clutching his wound.

CALLAHAN
What?! You! You?

Callahan collapses into a heap as Emily shakes violently.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton watches, stunned and silent. Dr. Grace grabs his arm as she watches Callahan slowly expire right before them.

Vaughan shakes his head, astonished, as he looks through a monitor.

VAUGHAN
No. Shit.

INT. CONTAINER 3 - CONTINUOUS

Tanya looks at Callahan, dead on the floor, and back up at Emily.

TANYA
What the fuck, Girl?! You just
shanked the shit outta Richy Rich!

Emily, almost throwing up with emotion, cries at what she's done. Danny goes to comfort her, but she doesn't want to be touched.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton comes back to his senses and points to Vaughan as Dr. Grace continues stroking him.

PROF. CARLTON
Open room four.

INT. CONTAINER 3 - CONTINUOUS

BUZZ!! The door to the next room opens.

Emily just stares at the pool of blood weeping around Callahan's corpse.

DANNY
C'mon. You did what had to be done.

Test 4

MYSTERIOUS WAYS

INT. CONTAINER 4 - DAY

The lights flicker on to reveal what looks like medical reports and X-rays on the walls, and three baseball bats stacked in the middle of the room.

TANYA

Yeah, that's a big nope from me.

DANNY

I'm done, man. I'm fucking done.

Emily, unable to function, has to sit down.

EMILY

Yeah, I'm not playing anymore.

She stares into the distance.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vaughan obsessively stares at the gold watch in Container 3, which is now empty except for Callahan's dead body.

He shifts to a door and carefully unlocks it.

PROF. CARLTON

Vaughan.

VAUGHAN

I can do this.

INT. CONTAINER 3 - CONTINUOUS

One section of the mirrored panels creeps open, and Vaughan sneaks out, tip-toeing toward the glimmering watch.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton watches through the one-way mirror, far from impressed as Vaughan takes careful steps.

DR. GRACE

Idiot!

PROF. CARLTON

Sadly, a useful idiot.

INT. CONTAINER 4 - CONTINUOUS

Silence as Danny, Emily, and Tanya stare at those baseball bats. Danny thinks he hears something nextdoor.

INT. CONTAINER 3 - CONTINUOUS

Vaughan sweeps up the gold watch, makes his way back to the door, and carefully closes it.

It latches just as Danny tentatively peers around the corner.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton stares at Vaughan with gritted teeth and anger in his eyes.

PROF. CARLTON

Would it be too much to ask for
some professionalism?

VAUGHAN

You think I'm letting one-hundred-
and-fifty grand go to waste? Given
what you pay me? You sure you even
want to continue? You got what you
want.

PROF. CARLTON

You're right. I have what I need.

DR. GRACE

But, we have to continue. We have
deliverables.

PROF. CARLTON

There's certainly no harm in it.
Set up for experiment four.

INT. CONTAINER 4 - CONTINUOUS

Danny walks back in, clearly thinking to himself.

EMILY

What?

DANNY

I thought I heard something.

EMILY

Did you?

PROF. CARLTON

(through speakers)

Before you is important information about the other participants. Use it to determine which one of you is least fit to proceed. If you wish to form a majority, you may, but you do not have to do so.

TANYA

Yeah, yeah, yeah...

Tanya takes a bat and leans back against the wall.

DANNY

Seriously? I thought you said you weren't playing?

TANYA

I don't know what the fuck I'm doing.

EMILY

All I know is, there's nothing they can hold to ransom that will make me beat someone to death with a baseball bat.

Screens making up the entire end of the container flicker on one by one, revealing six different low-bandwidth feeds of LOVED ONES, including CHILDREN, all smiling into the cameras, happy and oblivious to what's going on.

Tanya and Emily's mouths drop. Danny turns angry.

TANYA

Way to jinx it.

DANNY

This is crossing a line.

EMILY

Where do you think they are?

Danny shakes his head. He has no idea.

EMILY

What do you think they'll do to them?

She looks to Tanya, who stares back ominously.

EMILY

What do we do?

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

POP! Prof. Carlton opens a bottle of champagne and pours three glasses before handing them out and raising a toast.

PROF. CARLTON
To a breakthrough.

DR. GRACE
To a breakthrough.

She positions herself for a kiss but only gets a peck on the cheek.

Vaughan studies the gleaming watch on his wrist.

VAUGHAN
I definitely get to keep this,
right?

Prof. Carlton nods.

INT. CONTAINER 4 - CONTINUOUS

Tanya watches her KIDS on a screen, her face contorting with sadness. Danny watches his FAMILY.

DANNY
This is why they asked us for our
next of kin.

Emily takes a look at what's on the walls.

EMILY
The paperwork. It's medical reports
for everyone.

DANNY
What are we part of here?

EMILY
Something they've been planning for
a long time.

DANNY
I'm starting to think you were
right, none of us are supposed make
it out of here alive.

EMILY
They've already got three dead
bodies on their hands. What's a
couple more?

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)

Plus, we're accessories, right?
We're a liability.

TANYA

They're listing! Stop giving them
ideas!

EMILY

It just makes logical sense. I
mean, where even are we? We could
be underground in the middle of
nowhere for all we know.

DANNY

We're inside shipping containers. I
know that.

EMILY

Can we cut our way out?

DANNY

Sure. You got an oxy-acetylene
torch?

She looks back matter-of-factly.

EMILY

Sorry. Usually, I never leave the
house without it.

He manages a slight smirk.

TANYA

You guys keep it down! You want
your family dead?

They go quiet and think while Tanya looks at the records.

TANYA

Shit. Richie-Rich back there beat
cancer.

Emily winces with guilt.

TANYA

And Karen had an STD. Sure didn't
see that coming. Freaky bitch.

Danny just stares at the screens, deep in thought.

DANNY

I know I keep saying this, but this
time I really do think it's a
bluff.

EMILY

Why? It's not been a bluff so far.

DANNY

It's like you said, liabilities. Six bodies, yeah, but another dozen dead? In multiple locations? That's a lot to bury.

TANYA

Can we maybe not talk about "burying" anything right now?

DANNY

They all tie back to us. They all tie back to what they're doing here. That's too much risk.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton pauses celebrating and watches the monitor closely as Danny works things out.

PROF. CARLTON

Quiet.

INT. CONTAINER 4 - CONTINUOUS

Tanya shakes her head at Danny.

TANYA

You're deluding yourself.

She goes back to looking at the medical data.

TANYA

How the hell they got so much on us? They even got scans here from when a guy beat my ass.

EMILY

You got beaten up?

TANYA

Broke my damn jaw.

EMILY

So, you have had it tough.

TANYA

Yeah. Shoulda cut his damn balls off when I had the chance.

DANNY

I might be deluded, but my gut is screaming, you know? Bumping off this many people? Different locations? I don't buy it.

TANYA

Hate to tell you, but if we were going with your gut, we'd all have died in the first room.

DANNY

I know, but I can be wrong then and right now. Besides, think about it, they needed us for the other games, right? You really think they would have electrocuted all of us and ended it there? They needed to see this through.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton listens carefully to what Danny's saying.

DR. GRACE

What's the matter?

INT. CONTAINER 4 - CONTINUOUS

Emily studies the screens with Danny for a few moments.

EMILY

This isn't live.

DANNY

Huh?

EMILY

The feed. It isn't live.

TANYA

How would you know?

Emily moves over to the screens and studies one closely.

EMILY

I'm a streamer, right? So, you gotta go with me here, but it's too stable.

Danny and Tanya look back at her, perplexed.

TANYA

Huh?

EMILY

A live stream is, well, live. You can see it in the pixels. The compression is different. It can't predict the next few frames, so it reacts more. Stuff like sudden changes in light. Lots of movement.

They don't know what the hell she is talking about.

TANYA

Don't make me use this bat on you.

Emily moves in even closer, focusing on just one part of the feed, and a cluster of compressed pixels that come and go.

EMILY

You never been in a Zoom meeting or Facetimed someone, and the feed suddenly looks like Lego, or the whole thing blurs? That's the bitrate suddenly dropping. It's having to adjust all the time. What we're looking at isn't live at all. It's too perfect. It's a recording.

DANNY

From when?

EMILY

I don't know. I don't see my parents much, so this could have been months ago.

DANNY

My ex hasn't said anything.

TANYA

Last week, my mom said she was at the mall after school, and some people asked if the kids wanted to see a new video game or some bullshit. Said it was for some consumer research, or something. I think this is that. Your gut's right. This is fake as fuck.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton snaps around and glares at Vaughan.

VAUGHAN

What?

DR. GRACE

Bad Vaughan!

INT. CONTAINER 4 - CONTINUOUS

Danny squares up a little as he watches the screens.

DANNY

Well, as far as I'm concerned, if our families aren't really in danger, we fight or die.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton starts rapidly hitting switches.

PROF. CARLTON

Initiate lockdown protocol, now.

Vaughan unlocks a drawer and takes out a pistol.

INT. CONTAINER 4 - CONTINUOUS

The feeds to the screens go off, and the counter stops.

TANYA

Holy shit! We just called them out!

DANNY

We need to move fast. Here. Pull.

Danny grabs the bat, Tanya's holding, and jolts it as hard as he can against the tether. Tanya and Emma join him.

DANNY

Wait! Wait! On three! One-two-three-

They heave. The bracket bends a little.

DANNY

One-two-three-

It bends a little more.

DANNY

One-two-three-

They heave again with everything they've got. The metal of the bracket distorts and snaps, causing them to fall over.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton and Dr. Grace retreat into one side of the observation room.

Vaughan cocks the slide on the pistol and stands guard.

INT. CONTAINER 3 - CONTINUOUS

Danny runs back into Container 3 with the bat in his hands and Emily and Tanya in tow.

He leaps onto the table and smashes the light, allowing them to see through the mirrors into the observation room, with the Experimenters staring back.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton dives for a switch and knocks off the lights in the observation room. They wait in silence.

BANG! One of the huge one-way mirrors in front of them shatters into bright white spiderwebs. BANG! Another.

PROF. CARLTON
How strong's this glass?

VAUGHAN
Reinforced.

INT. CONTAINER 3 - CONTINUOUS

Emily checks for the Pregnant Lady. She's Gone.

Working with the little light they have, Danny wraps one of the wires tethering a knife around the baseball bat handle, and levers it against the wall until it shears.

He hands the knife to Tanya.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vaughan moves through the partition and scans through the various buttons and switches on the control panel.

VAUGHAN

We need to shut this down!

Prof. Carlton watches what's unfolding on the cameras, their night vision showing the Subjects running into Container 2.

Vaughan flicks up the cover to a red button marked "Terminate" and hovers his palm over it.

PROF. CARLTON

Don't you dare!

Vaughan pauses, shocked.

PROF. CARLTON

The experiment goes ahead!

INT. CONTAINER 2 - CONTINUOUS

The Old Lady is gone. Danny starts to repeat the process of using the baseball bat to break away one of the guns.

EMILY

What are we doing?

DANNY

We need guns.

TANYA

But they don't work.

DANNY

They will.

Emily and Tanya help him break away another two.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton looks up from the monitors to the door.

VAUGHAN

They can't get through.

INT. CONTAINER 3 - CONTINUOUS

Danny, Emily, and Tanya drag Karen's body into the room and up against the hidden door.

DANNY

Now Callahan.

They dash over to Callahan's corpse and grab it by the arms.

DANNY

It wasn't a gun that fired. None of us pulled a trigger. Her vest exploded when we aimed at her. That's what made it a majority.

They sit Callahan on top of Karen, getting blood all over themselves in the process, and sit him up against the door.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton and Dr. Grace watch the monitor intently.

DR. GRACE

I don't like this.

INT. CONTAINER 3 - CONTINUOUS

Danny aims for Callahan's vest. The first light illuminates.

Tanya carefully aims. The second light illuminates.

Struggling to handle the gun, Emily tries to aim, the laser jerking around Callahan.

DANNY

You can do it. Relax.

She steadies her arms. The dot of the laser twitches less as she brings it toward Callahan's chest.

TANYA

C'mon. You can do it, girl.

Emily grits her teeth and focuses. The laser aligns with the chest plate, and the third light finally comes on. BEEP!

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

BANG! The lock blows out on the door. Vaughan dashes to it and tries to hold it closed with his free hand, the gun ready to shoot in the other.

The door pulls back a few inches, enough for Danny, Emily, and Tanya, to claw their bloody fingers around it and get more purchase.

Vaughan looks desperately back to Prof. Carlton.

VAUGHAN

Help! I can't hold it!

However, Prof. Carlton just stares back, shocked and amazed at what he's witnessing.

PROF. CARLTON

Incredible.

Callahan's Torso flops down into the gap, stopping Vaughan from potentially getting the door closed. His feet slip in the blood. He aims the gun, but the knife slashes his wrist, and he drops it.

VAUGHAN

ARGH! Help me!

Prof. Carlton crosses over to Vaughan and stares at the wild eyes of Danny, Emily, and Tanya through the gap.

He picks up the gun and, instead of helping Vaughan, steps back behind the partition and closes the door between them.

Vaughan stares back through the glass, betrayed, before being dragged through the door.

Prof. Carlton and Dr. Grace huddle over a monitor, watching infrared footage of the subjects beating and stabbing Vaughan to death like primal animals.

DR. GRACE

Enjoy it, darling.

Prof. Carlton watches fascinated, adjusting the cameras to capture everything he can.

BANG! The hidden door flies open, and Danny dashes in.

Prof. Carlton and Dr. Grace cower down on the floor.

Danny spots them through the partition, just in time to see Prof. Carlton carefully aiming the gun.

BANG! Prof. Carlton shoots through a glass panel and hits Danny in the leg. He tumbles behind the partition.

Emily runs in. Prof. Carlton aims. Danny grabs her arm and pulls. BANG! The shot misses, and Emily falls onto him.

Tanya leaps through the door. BANG! Prof. Carlton misses.

Test 5

EXPENDABLE

INT. CONTAINER 3 - DAY

In almost complete darkness, the dead bodies of Vaughan, Callahan, and Karen lie sprawled on the ground in pools of their own blood, the paperwork from the ledgers scattered everywhere.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Slumped together on the floor, Prof. Carlton keeps the gun aimed at the partition door with Dr. Grace clutching him.

On the other side of the partition, Danny nurses his bleeding leg while Emily and Tanya look through all the switches, monitors, and paperwork.

EMILY

Look! The cameras!

Emily switches through the cameras until she gets to an unlit room.

TANYA

That a way out?

EMILY

I don't know.

She finds a button marked LIGHTS and presses it. The room illuminates and is completely empty.

TANYA

That another room? There's no weapons.

EMILY

Maybe that was the idea.

Emily looks to Tanya.

EMILY

Hand-to-hand combat.

Repulsed at the idea, they go back to the switches and flick one marked CAPTIVE.

They watch a screen in the room rise up, but can only see a small, shadowy figure behind the glass.

TANYA

Who is that?

EMILY
I can't tell.

Emily finds a button marked RELEASE CAPTIVE. She presses it, and a door opens, but she doesn't see anyone escaping.

She cycles through the cameras again and suddenly stops.

TANYA
Holy shit!

Their eyes light up as they stare at a row of shipping containers in a huge warehouse.

TANYA
That's us! That's where we are! We
ain't in the middle of nowhere!
We're still in the city!

They study the image closely.

TANYA
Look! There! That a door?

Tanya points to a slightly ajar door on one of the containers, unable to be closed due to all the cables running into it.

TANYA
That's a fuckin' door!

Tanya counts down the row of containers.

TANYA
One, two, three, four! That's a way
out! C'mon!

EMILY
Wait! He can't-

Tanya turns and runs for it. BANG! Prof. Carlton fires, but she's too fast.

Emily looks to Danny and his injured leg, knowing there's no way he'd make it.

Instead, she turns back to the monitor and flicks through the cameras until she catches Tanya running into Container 4.

INT. CONTAINER 4 - CONTINUOUS

Tanya hurries and grabs one of the bats.

TANYA

C'mon!

She looks at the screens in front of her, playing nothing but static, and raises the bat.

TANYA

Beastmode, motherfuckers!

Screaming as she swings, Tanya hits the screens over and over again, relentlessly. Glass smashes. LEDs shine through the cracks. Plastic shatters.

She hits, over and over, grunting with determination as she does so, eventually revealing a temporary wall behind one.

It's all she needs. Tanya grabs the screen and tears it down before punching and clawing a hole into the plasterboard, behind it a sliver of daylight.

TANYA

Guys, c'mon!

Tanya pulls out chunks of boarding and squeezes through the hole, only just wriggling her way through, and drops into the back of the container with a CLANG.

She throws herself at the heavy door, and it squeaks open.

Tanya looks around the empty warehouse and is almost blinded by the light of a shutter door only partly down.

TANYA

I'm coming, babies. Mama's coming.

Smiling relieved with her chest heaving, she takes a deep breath and runs to the light.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Emily covers her mouth, tears in her eyes as she watches Tanya run to freedom.

EMILY

Oh my god! Yes! Run! Run!

Danny struggles up to join her, watching the escape.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Tanya focuses on the outside as she tries to run with a limp, a huge smile growing on her face.

As she gets further from the containers, one light on her chest plate lights up, then another, and another.

BEEP! BANG!

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Emily and Danny watch as Tanya falls to the ground and lies there motionless.

EMILY

No! No! NO!

They wait in the hope of seeing her get up, but Tanya's body remains still, blood pooling around it.

EMILY

Fuck! Fuck!

Danny looks down at his chest plate.

DANNY

These things must have proximity sensors.

Defeated, they slump down together, no idea what to do as Danny continues to bleed out.

EMILY

You think someone will find us?

DANNY

Maybe. I don't think I've got long.

Emily looks around for something to use as a makeshift bandage, dumping paperwork on the floor in the process.

She finds some wires and ties them around Danny's thigh as a crude tourniquet.

DANNY

Thanks.

EMILY

Maybe there's a phone in here?

They gaze around, no sign of one.

EMILY

What if nobody comes?

Danny just looks back. That's a very real possibility.

As they sit thinking, Emily looks at one of the papers scattered on the floor and sees it's titled "Voting Intentions via Behavioral Threshold Science" with the letterhead of a company named "Valharix Analytics".

She picks it up and studies it.

EMILY

Voting Intentions via Behavioral
Threshold Science?

DANNY

What's that supposed to mean?

EMILY

I don't know, but I think it's what
we're taking part in.

DANNY

Hey! Who the fuck are you guys?

EMILY

Who are Valharix Analytics? That
you? That your boss?

Prof. Carlton smirks to himself as he toys with the gun.

PROF. CARLTON

Have you never heard the saying,
curiosity killed the cat?

DANNY

I know you've killed four fucking
people, you psychos! I want to know
why!

PROF. CARLTON

You really don't.

Emily flicks through the cameras until it shows Prof. Carlton and Dr. Grace sheltering on the other side of the partition.

Prof. Carlton has already done the same on his side.

EMILY

We deserve to know.

PROF. CARLTON

Would you believe me if I told you
there was a greater good?

DANNY

Try us, asshole.

PROF. CARLTON

Well, it's all very simple. What do we do when there are too many people in this world? Do you have a solution? If so, the people tasked with tackling this rapidly impending issue would sure like to hear it. Climate change. Rising waters. Population explosions. Automation. Our financiers have tasked us to help answer some very difficult questions. Namely, how do we thin the herd or, more importantly, how do we best let the herd thin itself?

Danny looks into a monitor to see Prof. Carlton staring ominously back.

DANNY

You call that science? Putting people in rooms and making them play games until they kill one another?

PROF. CARLTON

Every time you drive a car, catch a plane, or cross a bridge, you accept that there is some statistical probability of death, perhaps not with same awareness of those who have engineered them, but still with the understanding that some won't always make it, and what happens to those that don't make it will be studied in detail to protect those who do. That's the ugly side effect of progress. Like everything, it comes at a cost, and that's why science is best when it has intellectual entitlement to other people's suffering.

EMILY

You think what you're doing is somehow justified? Seriously?

PROF. CARLTON

Let me put it into terms you can both understand: if you want to make an omelet, you have to crack a few eggs.

Danny and Emily stare into the camera, disgusted, much to Prof. Carlton's pleasure, who zooms in on their faces.

PROF. CARLTON

When an astronaut climbs aboard a tower of fuel, and we light the fuse, we don't mourn, we cheer, and we don't cheer for them individually, we cheer for humanity as a whole. Their choice to be at the forefront, for best or worst, ultimately makes them a sacrifice to data.

DANNY

Exactly! Their choice! They sign up! We didn't! Not for this!

PROF. CARLTON

Then let me ask you this, did you ever sign up for society, because that's the biggest experiment we've ever ran, and today you simply saw a simulation of the choices we make every day. Maybe not with guns, knives, or bats, but absolutely with reason, voting, and finding a majority. There is nothing going on in here that isn't going on out there. Suicide, justice, poverty, poor health: these are the deaths we don't just accept but willingly allow while choosing to look the other way. The fact of the matter is, I could put six of you in a room and simply wait and see who you eat first. In fact, I might just do that next.

DANNY

You people are monsters.

Prof. Carlton remains emotionless while Dr. Grace just stares at the ground, clutching his arm.

PROF. CARLTON

We're not trying to act as people; we're acting as scientists. You simply don't know what's good for you. All pain is acceptable if it reveals something fundamental about who we are. It's no different from the mice we use to help cure cancer. Are their lives in vain?

EMILY

So, that's it. We're just lab rats to you.

PROF. CARLTON

Some truths lie behind walls only violence can break.

(beat)

Our greater goal, however, was to witness what I call a moroclasm.

DANNY

A moro what?

PROF. CARLTON

A complete psychological collapse of moral code. Someone engaging in an act previously unthinkable to them and completely at odds with their humanity. Some call it the red mist. Others call it five minutes of madness. Truth be told, I questioned if it could even be brought about under clinical conditions at all.

DANNY

Wait, questioned? So, you made it happen? With us?

Prof. Carlton adjusts the camera to focus more tightly on Emily.

PROF. CARLTON

Oh yes. Absolutely.

DANNY

Well, good for you, asshole. I hope it was worth it. Now, how do we get the vests off?

Prof. Carlton remains silent, still staring at Emily.

DANNY

C'mon! Your experiment's over! Let us go! Give us the key or whatever!

PROF. CARLTON

Key? There's no key!

EMILY

Because the plan was for us all to die in here, wasn't it?

No response from Dr. Carlton.

Danny looks around the room and notices a feed from a battery of large oxygen tanks, the purge valve within his reach.

DANNY

What are the tanks for?

Prof. Carlton remains silent.

DANNY

You know, I may not be educated, buddy, but sure I ain't dumb. I know what a room full of pure oxygen can do.

Emily turns to Danny, worried.

EMILY

What are you gonna do?

DANNY

What I think they were gonna do when they'd finished. Burn this place to the ground.

Before she can respond, Danny grabs the purge valve lever and holds it open, causing oxygen to violently rush out and blow around the paperwork.

Prof. Carlton watches without emotion.

With the white noise in his ears. Danny looks at Emily and focuses on the innocence in her eyes. He releases the lever.

DANNY

Here.

He claws at Emily's vest and, with all the strength he can muster, tries to slide it from her torso. She screams with pain.

DANNY

You're thin. You can do this. You can escape.

Emily holds up her arms and endures as he heaves, managing to get some movement between them.

PROF. CARLTON

Wait! Stop!

They stop and wait.

PROF. CARLTON

Okay! We can make a deal! I'll set you free! Just hand the girl over! That's all I ask! Give her to me!

Dr. Grace looks at Prof. Carlton, shocked.

After a moment of deliberation, Danny and Emily go back to working on her vest.

He scoops some blood from his wound and smears it to reduce the friction. Combined with her sweat, it causes the vest to slide a little over her shoulders.

PROF. CARLTON

Think about it! You can walk free! We can do a deal! Just let me have her! I need to study her!

Emily moans as her shoulders are crushed, her skin cutting as Danny growls with determination and manages to remove the device completely before throwing it down the room.

Emily can't believe it. She looks back at Danny, shaking with emotion, covered in sweat and blood, and goes to grab his vest. He shifts away, shakes his head, and clutches the purge valve lever.

DANNY

You go. I stay.

Emily shakes her head as tears fill her eyes. She runs her hand down Danny's face and stares gratefully.

Prof. Carlton watches angrily.

PROF. CARLTON

No! NO!

Danny nods respectfully back at Emily and, with a mean look of determination, pulls on the purge lever, causing the room to fill with white noise.

Emily peers around the corner at Prof. Carlton, who aims the gun at her. She instinctively freezes and waits for the shot, but nothing. She opens her eyes to see him staring back, unable to pull the trigger.

Emily flees through the door.

Danny grits his teeth and pulls the lever as hard as he can, papers flying everywhere around him.

INT. CONTAINER 4 - CONTINUOUS

Emily runs straight past the hole Tanya used to escape and heads for Container 5.

INT. CONTAINER 5 - CONTINUOUS

Emily enters to see that everything is themed around war.

She looks to the screen at the bottom, and to her shock, she sees a DOG cowering by the open hatch.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Prof. Carlton sits there defeated, longingly looking at the monitor on which he was watching Emily.

Dr. Grace turns, looks him in the eye, and holds his chin like she's about to kiss him.

DR. GRACE

You want to see the red mist?

She sweeps out her lighter and holds it up to him.

INT. CONTAINER 5 - CONTINUOUS

Emily sprints down the container to grab the confused dog.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Grace's beautifully manicured thumb draws down on the lighter's sparkwheel, grinding it against metal until hot shards erupt from it like fireworks, turning into balls of pure plasma as they float into the highly flammable air.

Prof. Carlton's widening eyes dilate, his black pupils gradually glowing red as the air around the lighter combusts into a crescent of burning oxygen.

The growing ball of fire engulfs the room and bursts into the next, smothering Danny in flames as he still desperately clutches onto the purge valve lever.

INT. CONTAINER 3 - CONTINUOUS

The one-way mirrors blow out, and Callahan's silhouetted corpse is incinerated by the blast as shards of glass shoot through the air.

INT. CONTAINER 4 - CONTINUOUS

Emily runs for the escape hole with the Dog in her arms, wincing as the fireball emerges through the doorway and the searing heat hits her.

INT. CONTAINER 2 - CONTINUOUS

The mugshots and paperwork on the walls contract and wrinkle as flames lick over them and turn them black while the blood from Karen's body caramelizes on the floor.

INT. CONTAINER 1 - CONTINUOUS

Still hunched over the table, his face solemn and an electrocution device on his head, Kyle's body ripples in the wave of blazing hot air that precedes the boiling mass of tumbling combustion consuming every molecule it can as everything turns pure white.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A serene, picture-perfect day in an industrial part of the city. The blue sky contrasted with tall port cranes on the horizon. Ship horns echo in the distance.

WOOF! Thick black smoke erupts from the shutter door of the warehouse and crawls into the sky, causing a concerned CROWD to gather as traffic stops and alarms start to ring.

Then silence, as the fire inside burns out as quickly as it started. Nobody knows what to think.

Out runs the Dog, tongue hanging out as it pants, scared and unsure where to go, but alive nonetheless.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Everything inside the room a monotone of charred black. The sound of calling voices in the distance and sirens blaring.

Dr. Grace's sprawled out body lies on its front, her clothes black, hair burnt away, and skin blistered.

Her body rustles, debris is dislodged, dust is disturbed, and a quivering hand emerges from under her to shift her aside, revealing the scarred face of Prof. Carlton.

THE END