

FADE IN:

AN EYE

Wide open by metal clamps, stares with panic at a needle that slowly approaches the iris.

INTERROGATOR (O.S.)
(mechanical voice)
How do you communicate?

The eye belongs to...

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

DARREN (30), fixed to a metal chair by straps fastened around his wrists, breathes heavily; through an oval window, bright sunbeams lighten the sweat drops that roll down his forehead.

DARREN
We don't. You blocked all
communications, remember?

The INTERROGATOR, a biped robot with four arms and sharp torture instruments as fingers, has a big syringe filled with black liquid close to Darren's eye.

INTERROGATOR
Seventy five hours ago, eight rebel
attacks took place in eight different
states at the same time, crippling our
response capacity.

Darren views his own scared face reflected on the sharp metallic tools of the interrogator.

INTERROGATOR
Preliminary tactical reports, suggest
a 99.8% probability of coordinated
enemy action.

The needle approaches Darren's eye a bit more.

INTERROGATOR
Tell me how do you communicate.

DARREN
You're not even checking my heart
rate, blood pressure, respiratory rate
or electro-dermal activity to see if I
lie.

He chuckles.

DARREN
Whatever I say, you were ordered to go
all the way, right?

The interrogator stares at Darren with mechanical and emotionless eyes.

DARREN
Then let's get started.

The syringe's needle pierces Darren's iris; he screams.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Heavy rain falls from a dark grey sky over a city saturated with skyscrapers; some of them rise above cloud level. Floating vehicles speed along the street.

Pedestrians stroll on the sidewalk with handleless umbrellas that follow them floating over their heads; oblivious to a COMBAT ROBOT, horn-like spikes all over his body, that walks among them, holding a big rifle-like weapon.

LYNN (25), no umbrella, very pregnant, wearing a long overcoat, strides past the combat robot; a lock of black hair falls between her green teary eyes.

She cries staring at the sidewalk. Her pace quickens a bit. Still crying, she looks up; her eyes now stare ahead.

Her pace increases; she jogs.

Some pedestrians shoot curious looks at her big belly.

She jogs faster... and runs; pedestrians become blurry images passing quickly by her side.

She turns right into

A DESERTED ALLEY

where she runs faster, her boots splash on rainwater puddles, gaze fixed ahead.

She takes her overcoat. Leaves it behind. A rounded backpack with a huge hand gun strapped at its side is where her pregnant's belly should be.

Snatches the gun. Places the back pack on her back. Runs at full speed, exhaling loudly, like an athlete about to perform a jump. Stares ahead at the end of the alley, which leads to another street; beyond there's a...

EXT. MILITARY FACILITY

Two-story building with oval windows surrounded by a high barbed-wire fence; its closed entrance guarded by a combat robot which raises its weapon just as --

Lynn, running towards the fence, fires; WHOSH! a small comet-like disturbance in the air comes out the barrel towards --

CRANK! the robot's head shatters into hundreds of metal fragments, chips and broken wires; it falls to its knees.

She jumps towards it. Her boots land on its shoulders, jumps again. Leaps over the high fence in a Christ-like posture; the sharp barbed-wire's edges scratch her well worked abdominal.

Rolls forward in mid-air, lands on the other side and runs. Takes some dark glasses from the backpack and puts them on. Presses a button on the frame and scans the building with

INFRARED VISION

which shows only one red and yellow human figure, seated somewhere in the second floor. The image becomes...

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

Darren cries blood from his totally black eyes and screams as the interrogator applies a big syringe to his left ear.

DARREN

Pop corn! Damn it! Pop corn!

INTERROGATOR

You must tell me what's exactly pop corn's role in rebel communications in order to stop this procedure.

A loud intermittent alarm sounds; Darren smiles.

INT. HALLWAY

The same alarm. Lynn puffs as she sprints along the immaculate white hallway; desperation is all over her face. She fires her gun just as a combat robot appears from a side door ahead; its chest bursts into pieces.

She snatches a radio from its hip just before it collapses to the floor; keeps running while listening to a...

MECHANICAL VOICE

(from the radio)

Units one, two and three, hold your positions. The intruder is only one rebel and precariously armed. Nature of the threat: light.

The alarm stops. She glances at one camera on the wall that follows her run and shoots it.

MECHANICAL VOICE

Unit four proceed and intercept the rebel at the end of corridor five. It must be captured alive for further interrogation.

She reaches the end of the hallway which makes a 90° degree turn to the left. Stops before it.

Grabs a quadrangular metal device from the backpack and throws it to the roof; it gets stuck and a tiny lens projects Lynn's hologram below.

She presses a button in a bracelet around her wrist; the hologram runs.

Peeks around the corner and watches as two cameras follow the hologram's sprint. Runs behind it, unseen by the cameras. Stops at a side door, presses a button and it slides open; she disappears into another room just as...

Ten combat robots appear at the end of the hallway and point their guns at Lynn's hologram.

AT A SPIRAL STAIRS

Lynn climbs frenetically.

COMBAT ROBOT (O.S.)
 (from below)
 Stop right there, rebel.

She presses a button from her bracelet.

HALLWAY

Lynn's hologram stops and raises her hands.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM

The doors slide open; Lynn enters, points her gun and shatters the interrogator's head into a hundred pieces.

Shoots at the door's switch; doors slide shut.

Runs to Darren and releases him.

LYNN
 Did you tell them?

Darren turns his head to her like a blind man.

DARREN
 Lynn?

LYNN
 Darren, do they know?

DARREN
 I didn't get to explain the whole procedure...

She checks his black bleeding eyes and smiles a bitter smile.

LYNN
 You did fine.

DARREN
 I can't hear any choppers.

LYNN
 The Commander decided that any mobilization of military equipment before the attack could give away the location of our secret bases... I came alone.

DARREN
 He ordered a code five...

LYNN
 It was the only choice.

DARREN
 Why you?

Tears fill her eyes.

LYNN
 I volunteered.

DARREN

Why?

She kisses him... and he kisses back.

DARREN

I would have done the same.

They hug, ignoring the bright red spots that appear at the walls and roof. Each one leaving a black burnt trail while drawing a circle.

LYNN

I'm sorry.

DARREN

Me too.

Lynn shoots at Darren's head; blood splatters her face.

Combat robots enter the room from various circular cavities burnt along the walls and the roof; they aim at her.

COMBAT ROBOT

Drop your weapon, rebel. You have no chance of escaping.

LYNN

I know. I always knew it.

She points the gun to her forehead and shoots; blood splatters against the oval window.

EXT. BACK STREET - NIGHT

Narrow and dark, bright neon signs cast their reflection upon rain puddles on the floor.

DASH (16), unusual mature gaze for his age, walks by a demolished building; his shoes step between pieces of concrete, steel bars and metal plates.

He takes out a coin from his pocket.

DASH

Pop corn.

A flying pop corn machine with a smiling bag of pop corn painted in its black cover, glides from a drug store's open door towards him. He's about to deposit his coin inside when... A humming sound breaks the silence.

He looks past the machine; there's a floating vehicle some metres ahead, a cannon-like weapon attached to its roof turns slowly to point at him.

WHOOSH! the cannon fires a small missile!

With one foot he steps violently on a big rectangular metal plate located over the rubble; it's catapulted upwards forming an improvised shield between him and --

BOOM! the missile turns the pop corn machine into a ball of fire that sends Dash and his shield-plate flying backwards towards a pile of rubble.

He coughs, sets the plate apart and watches as the vehicle advances along the street; it stops metres ahead just as a loudspeaker emits a...

MECHANICAL VOICE

Pop corn.

A pop corn machine from another store glides towards the vehicle; it fires and the machine explodes.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

The same machine is shown in a big plasma screen; a dozen ROBOT LEADERS, black with glowing red eyes, seated around a large table, watch it burn. A big oval window permits the view of thousands of city lights.

A robot ANALYST stands by the plasma screen. Raises a finger that points a red laser at the burnt machine at the screen.

ANALYST

This is how the rebels communicate.

ROBOT LEADER N°1

Impossible. Our sensors would pick up any kind of transmission signal sent by these machines.

ANALYST

They are not sending any signals.

Points another finger at the screen and its image changes to a pop corn machine in perfect state, located...

IN A DARK ROOM

where a single beam on light illuminates it.

ANALYST (V.O.)

These devices are equipped with precarious central processing units.

MONTAGE

Inside a store, a kid puts a coin inside a pop corn machine.

ANALYST (V.O.)

Which are capable of storing basic operative data.

The kid gets his pop corn.

In a dark garage, a rebel mechanic lifts a pop corn machine's cover and checks its "naked" inner circuits.

ANALYST (V.O.)

Primary storage capacity of some of these machines have been increased in order to store additional data.

A coin, with thin green lines at its sides. The mechanic that holds it, puts it inside the machine.

ANALYST (V.O.)
 Allowing rebels to secretly store
 tactical and military information.

The coin travels down a dark passage until the lines at its sides meet similar lines inside the machine, provoking tiny sparks of green light; they travel around the lines that extend along a dark labyrinth of passages till they reach the central processing unit.

ANALYST (V.O.)
 Data that can also be easily
 retrieved.

The mechanic puts a coin with yellow lines inside the machine. Gets a bag of pop corn and finds the coin with yellow lines inside. Puts it inside a tiny slot of a laptop and watches its screen with a smile on his face.

A floating truck with a smiling pop corn bag painted on its side travels a deserted route.

ANALYST (V.O.)
 While all borders are closed to human
 migration, pop corn machines can be
 delivered all across the country like
 any other supply.

The truck crosses another, travelling in opposite direction.

ANALYST (V.O.)
 Each of the vending units is regularly
 transported back to the production
 central for general maintenance.

A pop corn truck speeds along another route.

ANALYST (V.O.)
 And then delivered to other states.

The smiling pop corn bag painted on the truck is shown...

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

...on the plasma screen; the robots stare at it.

ANALYST
 An altered vending unit can travel
 through twelve different states in
 just a year, keeping the data flow
 between regions slow, but steady.

ROBOT LEADER N°2
 Our database of known and potential
 rebels have been increasing
 exponentially. And these machines are
 restricted to function only in public
 places. Why didn't our patrols spot
 any profiled rebel operating these
 machines?

INT. UNDERGROUND HANGAR - NIGHT

Huge, dimly lit by rusty hanging lights, dozens of armed choppers at its sides; Dash runs between armed women and men that stroll around.

He stops just before a big table filled with maps; men and women that scrutinize them look up to...

DASH

They destroying them! Every goddam machine, they're blowing them to pieces. And I heard they blew up the production central as well.

REBEL

They broke Darren...

The COMMANDER (55) shoots a concerned look at Dash.

COMMANDER

Did you get it?

DASH

I'm sorry, sir. They blew up the machine before I could.

Some rebels around the table sigh; the Commander closes his eyes... Then looks up to them.

COMMANDER

We may have lost the advantage of coordinated action with rebel bases at other states, but we are still going to launch an attack at tentative targets.

SELENNE (O.S.)

I told you not to send a kid.

Everyone turns to SELENNE (20), the kind of beauty that can turn men into boys, she walks towards them.

COMMANDER

A kid getting some pop corn was less likely to get attention than an armed squad, Selenne.

SELENNE

Send a team to retrieve the data from the back-up at the movie theatre in Nightingale. It could still be functional.

COMMANDER

No, I won't.

TALL REBEL

But aren't our selected targets, time of the attack and main strategy directives stored in that pop corn machine, Commander?

Dash, looking at the tall Rebel, slowly turns his stare to Selenne; his eyes seem involuntarily attracted by her beauty.

COMMANDER

Does anyone wonder why are they destroying all those machines instead of trying to retrieve the data from them?

Everyone stares at him silently, except Dash still looking at Selenne; wakes up from his trance and looks at the...

COMMANDER

Because they don't know which ones are the ones that hold tactical information. It's faster to shoot them than to hack into their systems, so destroying them all is their best shot to prevent us from accessing the data.

He shakes his head.

COMMANDER

If we make any attempt to retrieve the information from that machine at Nightingale and they spot us...

TALL REBEL

They'll know that's the machine they need.

COMMANDER

We'll let them destroy it. If we can't access that information, neither will they.

DASH

I can get it.

COMMANDER

You're brave, kid. But things have changed. I don't want you near one of those machines. You can leave.

INT. UNDERGROUND HANGAR - LATER

Dash, carrying a backpack strides to the exit; Selenne catches him and makes him stop.

SELENNE

Where do you think you're going?

DASH

Why do you care?

Selenne opens his jacket; there's a gun in the inside pocket.

SELENNE

Because I saw what you stole on your way out. Where are you going?

DASH

To get some pop corn.

Selenne catches his arm and takes him to...

A DARK CORNER

beside a chopper; he looks into her blue pretty eyes as...

SELENNE

I was your age once... and I know what you're thinking right now.

DASH

Really?

SELENNE

You think that nothing can stop you. Have you ever fired a weapon at the enemy?

DASH

No.

SELENNE

Have you ever seen the torture instruments of an interrogator?

DASH

No.

SELENNE

You're throwing away your life.

DASH

It's my life.

She snatches the gun from his jacket and points it at him.

SELENNE

I won't let you go. If you get that information and they capture you --

DASH

What's your first memory?

SELENNE

What?

DASH

What's the first thing you remember?

She chuckles.

SELENNE

My dad... bringing me chocolates.

DASH

Me too. But I remember him being shot for "resisting authority". He was speeding because my mom was about to give birth and we got stopped by a traffic robot.

SELENNE

Save it. I won't let you go out of pity.

DASH

She was bleeding... But that wasn't an excuse for speeding according to the fucking Traffic Robo-Code.

(MORE)

DASH(cont'd)

So when my dad decided he couldn't loose more time in getting a traffic ticket, he "resisted".

SELENNE

I'm sorry, but still --

DASH

You had a life once, that's why you're so afraid to loose it. But I'm not. I don't know if I can shoot a combat robot. But I'm pretty damn sure I can blow my head off before being captured.

Doubt creeps into Selenne's determined stare.

DASH

I'm not a kid, I'm a soldier. And I know what a Code Five is. The Commander couldn't send a kid to what could turn to be a suicide mission, but deep inside, just like you, he knows it's the right move.

Selenne slowly lowers the gun.

DASH

And when you said you knew what I was thinking... You were wrong.

SELENNE

What were you thinking?

Dash kisses her; she doesn't kiss back but doesn't resist. He takes the gun from her, turns and walks away, leaving her staring at him with a puzzled look.

EXT. ROUTE - SUNRISE

Golden sunbeams shine through black smoke from industrial chimneys. Dash, mounted on a floating motorbike, speeds along the deserted route. Another motorbike catches along with him, he turns surprised and looks at...

SELENNE

Civilians usually like company when going to the movies, soldier. And you'd better look like one of them.

He offers her a gun; she looks at it.

DASH

I've got another... Take it. Just in case that --

She takes the gun.

A TOP A DISTANT HILL

The Commander, seated on a floating motorbike, watches them go using a pair of binoculars. He puts them down and stares at the horizon.

COMMANDER

Good luck, kid.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

Dash and Selenne pace a long a crowded street, hand in hand, smiling; just another couple in the crowd. They walk past a combat robot and stop smiling when they're out of its sight. They head for a wide opening that leads to a lobby filled with vending machines that float around.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - LOBBY

Dash and Selenne stride past a...

KID

Candy!

...and the Candy Machine that glides towards him.

They reach one of the lobby's corner, far from the entrance, and survey fifteen pop corn machines floating around between several customers.

SELENNE

It's the one with the "2342" code.

He approaches a pop corn machine being used by an old lady, and while pretending he's in line, he checks a serial number printed on its side: "1450".

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE

A floating vehicle with a cannon-like weapon attached to its roof stops near the entrance.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - LOBBY

Dash and Selenne exchange a terrified look when they hear...

MECHANICAL VOICE (O.S.)

(from outside)

Pop corn.

A pop corn machine glides towards the entrance; Dash sprints towards it, dodges some customers, reaches to it and checks its serial number. Stops running and shakes his head "no" towards Selenne.

He runs to check another machine.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE

A missile welcomes the pop corn machine; people scream and walk away from its flaming remains.

MECHANICAL VOICE

Pop corn.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE

Another pop corn machine glides to the entrance; Dash sprints towards it and checks its number: "2342". Shoots a terrified look at Selenne and hugs the machine trying to stop it.

The machine moves slowly towards the entrance, dragging Dash along the way. Sellenne hugs the machine as well; it reduces its pace but it still moves forward.

Dash stares at the exit: far away but slowly coming near.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE

The machine, alone, glides out and it's shot by a missile.

INT. VEHICHLER

Two combat robots sit behind the controls.

COMBAT ROBOT

It took quite long to come out.

THE OTHER ONE

It shouldn't. Vending machine's voice response controls are programmed to give priority to authorities over civilians.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE

One of the vehicle's doors slides open; a combat robot steps out. Walks towards the flaming remains and picks up something from the floor: a burnt candy bar.

His vision splits in two: one half displaying the candy bar, another half displaying a digital representation of a bag of pop corn. Both of them spin while fast rows of data fall down at its sides.

Till a big red sign occupies his entire vision: "NO MATCH".

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

All the robots look at plasma screen which shows...

COMBAT ROBOT (V.O.)

A pop corn machine's exterior cover and voice response control were removed and placed on the candy machine that was destroyed.

ROBOT LEADER N°1

Someone is trying to hinder the real pop corn machine's destruction.

ROBOT LEADER N°2

All machines at that location must be recovered intact.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - LOBBY

Darren gets a bag of pop corn from a vending machine with no cover. Finds the coin at the bottom of the bag.

SELENNE

Check it. Then we're out of here.

INT. BATHROOM - CUBICLE

Dash takes a laptop from his backpack, opens a tiny slot from its side and places the coin on it. Closes the slot and they both look at the data flowing on the screen.

DASH
The attack is today.

Lights go out; the faint light of an emergency fluorescent tube shines on Dash and Selenne's scared faces.

DASH
They're here.

SELENNE
Maybe the lights just --

DASH
No. They've got night vision. That's why they shut the power down. They're here. An army of them. You can count on it.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - LOBBY

Now dimly lit, an army of combat robots point their guns at the screaming people; they kneel and lie down on the floor. Their screams can also be heard in...

INT. BATHROOM - CUBICLE

Dash and Selenne sit on the floor, listening...

DASH
We must do something. If they find that friggin' machine --

SELENNE
Give me the coin.

He does.

SELENNE
Once the data is retrieved from the source, it's automatically deleted.

She shows the coin to Dash.

SELENNE
It's only here.

Throws the coin into the toilet and flushes.

Dash touches his head.

DASH
It's also here.

Touches her head.

DASH
And here.

SELENNE

I know.

Selenne, eyes fixed on Dash, slowly reaches for her jacket's inside pocket... And takes out her gun.

He takes his gun too.

Hand shacking, she points the gun to her head.

He caresses her, his fingers runs down her long black hair till they reach the weapon; he activates a small switch.

DASH

The safety was on.

Her finger toys with the trigger applying a bit of pressure... and a bit more... it moves...

BANG!

The gun points to the roof while Dash holds her wrist.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - LOBBY

Dash and Selenne, pointing their guns to their heads, slowly walk circled by an army of combat robots that aim their weapons at them.

DASH

The data retrieved from the pop corn machine has been destroyed and we are the only ones who have it.

A TRANSMISSION ROBOT, floating sphere with multiple lens, glides around them.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

The leader robots watch Dash and Selenne's image at the plasma screen.

ROBOT LEADER N°2

Rebels have record of terminating their own existence in order to avoid being interrogated.

Robot leader N°1 presses an intercom button.

ROBOT LEADER N°1

Their self harm threats must not be disregarded, Captain.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE

DASH

I want a transmitter capable of breaking your blocking signals.

A CAPTAIN ROBOT steps forward.

CAPTAIN ROBOT

What for?

DASH

I want to transmit to the rebel leader the information I just retrieved from the machine.

CAPTAIN ROBOT

And why do you think I will let you do that.

DASH

Because you want to hear that information too.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

The leader robots look at the screen where...

DASH (V.O.)

And there's no other way you can do it.

ROBOT LEADER N°3

He could transmit false tactical information in order to mislead our military forces.

ROBOT LEADER N°2

But he would be misleading the rebel forces as well. His transmission should be useful to us.

ROBOT LEADER N°1

Unless the rebels can communicate in a code we cannot understand.

ROBOT LEADER N°2

Rebel communications have been shut down for years. The eventual development of communication codes should be considered purposeless and highly improbable.

Robot leader N°1 presses an intercom's button.

ROBOT LEADER N°1

Proceed, Captain.

INT. UNDERGROUND HANGAR

A rusty metal box filled with switches emits a loud static.

DASH (V.O.)

Commander Ravner... Commander Ravner... Can you hear me?

Two rebels stare at it as if they were watching a ghost.

ONE OF THEM

It's working...

INT. UNDERGROUND HANGAR - LATER

The commander and fifteen more rebels gather around the rusty metal box, listening to...

DASH (V.O.)
I repeat: the attack is one hour from
now. Your primary targets are the
military bases located west of the
Naman Plains.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

The leader robots look at the screen: Dash holds a transmitter.

DASH (V.O.)
Good luck, Commander Ravner.

Robot leader N°1 presses the intercom button.

ROBOT LEADER N°1
All units prepare for a massive rebel
attack within the hour. Units eight to
nineteen proceed to the west boundary
of Naman Plains.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - LOBBY

Guns pressed to their heads, Selenne and Dash watch the robots
storm out of as if they were no longer useful; the captain
snatches the transmitter away from him.

INT. UNDERGROUND HANGAR

The commander stares at the rebels.

COMMANDER
Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

REBEL N°1
He called you Ravner.

REBEL N°2
Your name spelled backwards.

The commander smiles.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

A squadron of choppers cross the full moon at great speed.

Dash and Selenne, hand in hand, stand between the burning pop
corn machines staring at the sky.

DASH
They got it right, they're flying
east.

FADE OUT.