

"W A T C H M E N"

Season 2, Episode 201
"THE SIDE EFFECT"

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WATCHMEN

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TEASER

BLACK.

A wall of overlapping AUDIO – compressed, distorted, invasive.

NEWS CLIPS. PODCASTS. BODYCAM FEEDS. TIKTOKS. SENATE HEARINGS.

VARIOUS VOICES (V.O.)

"...Phase-X syndrome—"

"...forty-two percent of Americans—"

"...mask mandates reinstated—"

"...non-lethal neutralization authorized—"

"...metahuman is a slur—"

"...they knew about the side effects—"

"...my kid won't stop glowing—"

The sounds stack. Bleed. Collapse into one another.

A single, SHRILL HUM begins to dominate – high-frequency, invasive, almost physical.

The HUM peaks—

CUT TO:

EXT. PHILADELPHIA – CENTER CITY / CITY HALL PLAZA – NIGHT

A MASS PROTEST in motion.

Not a crowd – a system. Tens of thousands of bodies moving as one organism.

Masks everywhere:

KN95s. Surgical masks. Tactical half-faces. Superhero cowls retrofitted with respirators. Handmade cloth masks painted with slogans, sigils, scars.

Drones hover overhead, their red recording lights blinking.

Placards rise and fall:

CORVAXA SAVED LIVES — NOT CONSENT
I TOOK THE SHOT. NOW I GLOW
NO MORE CAGES

At the center of it all stands ROXY FLORES (27).

Afro-Latina. Trans. A presence that doesn't ask permission.

She livestreams on her phone as she speaks, voice amplified through a portable speaker system — raw, unpolished, furious.

ROXY

They told us it was safe.

They told us it was necessary.

They told us if we didn't take it, we didn't care about our neighbors.

The crowd responds — CALL AND RESPONSE, like church, like a rally, like a trial.

ROXY (CONT'D)

They didn't tell us the shot would rewrite our bodies.

They didn't tell us the side effects would be criminalized.

They didn't tell us the same people who forced us to take it would get to decide which versions of us were allowed to exist.

CHEERS. ANGER. APPLAUSE.

Phones are up everywhere. This moment is being recorded from a thousand angles.

IN THE CROWD

DEVON REED (19) pushes through bodies, overwhelmed.

Black. Skinny. Too young to be carrying this much fear.

It's his first protest. His first time being visible.

Beside him, MAYA (19) — South Asian, non-binary, sharp eyes, protective posture — clocks Devon immediately.

Devon is sweating. Trembling.

The air around him feels wrong.

A faint HUM begins – low, almost subsonic.

Maya leans in close, speaking directly into his ear.

MAYA

Hey.

Hey – look at me.

You good?

Devon nods too fast.

DEVON

Yeah. Yeah. I'm fine.

The HUM grows louder.

Reality around Devon wobbles – streetlights bending,
reflections lagging behind movement.

Maya's eyes widen.

MAYA

Dev.

You took your suppressant, right?

A beat.

Devon nods again.

He is lying.

ROXY – CONTINUOUS

Roxy finishes her thought, voice cracking with something
dangerously close to grief.

ROXY

Consent doesn't end when the emergency does.

Survival doesn't mean surrender.

We don't owe them our bodies just because we're still alive.

The crowd ERUPTS.

The HUM spikes.

THE INCIDENT

It happens without warning.

A KINETIC SHOCKWAVE detonates from Devon's body.

- Windows EXPLODE outward
- Drones drop from the sky, smoking
- People lift off their feet, thrown like debris

Time SLOWS.

We move through the chaos in fragments:

- A COP losing his footing, weapon skidding away
- A TRANS WOMAN clutching her protest sign like a shield
- A SMALL BOY on his father's shoulders, screaming – first in joy, then terror

At the epicenter –

Devon rises several feet off the pavement.

His eyes glow – not with power, but with pure panic.

DEVON

(whispering)
I didn't–
I didn't mean–

POLICE BODYCAMS SNAP TO LIFE.

TARGETING BOXES lock onto Devon's floating form.

OFFICER (V.O.)

Meta in the crowd.
I repeat, we have a meta in the crowd.

The HUM becomes unbearable.

Reality buckles inward.

Devon looks down at the destruction below him.

Horrified.

Ashamed.

Terrified.

SMASH TO BLACK.

MAIN TITLES.

ACT ONE

EXT. WEST PHILADELPHIA - ROW HOUSE BLOCK - MORNING

SUPER: 24 HOURS EARLIER

A quiet neighborhood.

Too quiet.

Security cameras on porches. Ring doorbells blinking.

A yard sign flaps in the breeze:

REGISTERED PHASE-X HOUSE - WE REPORT

INT. WELLS APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MORNING

TANYA WELLS (40s) stands at the counter, exhausted already.

Black. Practical. The kind of woman who learned a long time ago not to ask for help because it doesn't come.

She places a SUPPRESSANT PILL on the counter.

Hesitates.

Takes a kitchen knife.

Cuts the pill cleanly in half.

At the table sits LILA WELLS (13) - bright, guarded, watching milk FLOAT gently above her cereal bowl.

Tiny points of light orbit her head - like glow-in-the-dark stars come to life.

Lila notices her mother watching.

The milk drops back into the bowl.

The stars dim.

LILA

You're doing the knife thing again.

Tanya forces a smile.

TANYA

I'm doing the "we don't have insurance" thing.

She slides the HALF PILL across the table.

Lila doesn't take it.

A beat.

Then Lila picks it up herself.

LILA

I'll take it today.

Tanya looks up, surprised.

TANYA

You don't have to—

LILA

I know.

But if I don't, you're gonna worry all day.

Lila swallows the pill.

The air dulls — like a dimmer switch turned down on reality.

The stars vanish completely.

Lila blinks, disoriented.

LILA (CONT'D)

I hate the quiet part.

Tanya looks away.

She hates it too.

ACT ONE (CONT'D)

EXT. WELLS APARTMENT - FRONT STOOP - MORNING

Tanya locks the door behind her and Lila.

Lila slings her backpack over one shoulder. The straps vibrate faintly, reacting to her suppressed energy.

Across the street, MR. HOLLIS (60s) stands in his driveway.

White. Retired cop posture that never retired.

He's hammering the final nail into his yard sign:

REGISTERED PHASE-X HOUSE — WE REPORT

He notices Tanya watching.

Smiles like it's neighborly.

HOLLIS

Morning, Tanya.

TANYA

Morning.

Lila stiffens.

Hollis wipes sweat from his brow, gestures at the sign.

HOLLIS

Just trying to keep everyone safe.
You know how things are now.

Tanya doesn't respond.

Hollis crouches slightly, bringing himself eye-level with Lila.

HOLLIS (CONT'D)

School today?

LILA

Yeah.

HOLLIS

Good.
Normal's important.

A beat.

HOLLIS (CONT'D)

You, uh... still taking your medication?

Tanya steps forward – instinctive, protective.

TANYA

That's not your business.

Hollis straightens, hands up.

HOLLIS

Just asking.
City says we're all responsible now.

He taps the sign.

HOLLIS (CONT'D)

See something, say something.

Lila's backpack trembles again.

Tanya notices.

She grips Lila's shoulder — grounding her.

TANYA

Come on. We're late.

They walk away.

Hollis watches them go.

His smile fades.

INT. SEPTA BUS - MORNING

The bus rattles through West Philly.

Ads plastered above the windows:

PHASE-X? YOU'RE NOT ALONE
FREE SCREENING AT APPROVED CLINICS
REGISTRATION IS PROTECTION

A security camera hums softly.

Lila stares out the window, unfocused.

Tanya watches her reflection instead.

TANYA

You feel okay?

LILA

I feel...
like my head's underwater.

Tanya nods. Knows that feeling.

LILA (CONT'D)

Mom?

TANYA

Yeah, baby.

LILA

Are you scared of me?

The question lands harder than any siren.

Tanya doesn't answer right away.

Then—

TANYA

I'm scared for you.
Big difference.

Lila absorbs that.

The bus camera swivels slightly.

Watching.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - MORNING

Kids pile off buses.

Parents linger, scanning other children — watching for signs.

Lila steps off.

For a split second, the concrete beneath her sneaker
spiderwebs with cracks.

She freezes.

No one notices.

The cracks fade.

Lila exhales, shaky.

Tanya watches from the bus window as it pulls away.

She does not look reassured.

INT. METAHUMAN STABILITY AGENCY - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Clinical. White. Too bright.

A large seal on the wall:

METAHUMAN STABILITY AGENCY
Protecting the Public. Preserving
Order.

DANIEL DREIBERG (60s) sits at the head of the table.

Older. Heavier. His brilliance dulled by exhaustion rather than age.

Screens light up around him.

AGENT MARSH (30s) stands beside the display — Black, non-binary, precise.

MARSH

Overnight Phase-X incidents: thirty-two.

Data flashes:

- Convenience store implosion
- Traffic pileup suspended midair
- Domestic dispute escalated by thermal event

MARSH (CONT'D)

Twelve injuries.
Three fatalities.

Dan closes his eyes briefly.

DAN

Geographic clustering?

The map shifts.

Red blooms over low-income districts. Essential worker corridors.

MARSH

Same pattern as last week.
Early vaccine rollout zones.

DR. JIA LIN (40s), CDC liaison, leans forward.

JIA

Suppressants are degrading faster than expected.
Efficacy varies by metabolism, stress, and—
(chooses words carefully)
body chemistry.

DAN

Say it.

JIA

They work worse on people who were already medically underserved.

Silence.

An aide slides a tablet toward Dan.

On-screen:

TEMPORARY EMERGENCY REGISTRY EXPANSION
PRE-AUTHORIZED NON-LETHAL
CONTAINMENT PROTOCOL

Dan scrolls.

The language is clean. Legal. Brutal.

DAN

"Non-lethal" is doing a lot of work here.

MARSH

It's still better than what local PDs are doing.

Dan looks up.

DAN

Which is?

MARSH

Calling everything a threat.
Shooting first.
Letting the courts sort it out.

Dan leans back.

DAN

Or not.

A beat.

JIA

If we don't centralize response, this becomes fifty different disasters.

Dan stares at the tablet.

At the words MANDATORY REPORTING.

At TEMPORARY, underlined in reassuring blue.

DAN

Temporary always outlives the emergency.

No one disagrees.

Dan signs anyway.

The system CHIMES.

Protocol activated.

Dan exhales — like he just swallowed something sharp.

INT. MSA HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Dan walks alone.

Staffers avert their eyes. Some nod respectfully. Others... don't.

A TV mounted on the wall plays cable news.

DR. RENATA KLEIN appears mid-sentence.

KLEIN (TV)

We didn't create inequality.
We responded to a crisis.

Dan stops.

Watches.

Something tightens in his chest.

INT. SENATE HEARING ROOM - DAY (ON TV)

Klein sits before a semicircle of senators.

Unflappable.

KLEIN

The vaccine was deployed where it was needed most.
Where exposure was highest.
Where labor was considered essential.

A murmur.

KLEIN (CONT'D)

If that decision now makes us uncomfortable,
perhaps the discomfort predates Corvaxa.

Dan turns the TV off.

Stares at his reflection in the black screen.

Older. Tired. Complicit.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA STREET - EVENING

ROXY FLORES walks fast, phone pressed to her ear.

ROXY

No, I'm not calling it a "riot."
It's a protest.
Words matter.

She passes a PHARMACY with a handwritten sign:

NO SUPPRESSANTS IN STOCK

Inside, a heated argument spills out.

Roxy clocks everything.

She hangs up.

Checks her group chat:

PHX SAFEHOUSE TONIGHT - BASEMENT - 7PM

She types:

BRING WHOEVER NEEDS IT.

Hits send.

Roxy looks up as a POLICE DRONE floats past overhead.

She glares at it.

The drone lingers.

Then moves on.

Roxy keeps walking.

ACT TWO

INT. DEVON'S BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Dark. Curtains drawn.

DEVON sits on the edge of his bed, hoodie pulled tight around himself.

His hands tremble - not violently, but like something underneath is pushing against skin.

On his desk: – Empty SUPPRESSANT bottle
– Crumpled protest flyer
– His phone, face-down, buzzing with unread messages

MAYA stands near the door, arms crossed. Hurt sharpened into anger.

MAYA

You said you took it.

Devon doesn't look up.

DEVON

I meant to.

MAYA

That's not what I asked.

A beat.

Devon's voice cracks – quiet, ashamed.

DEVON

I wanted to feel... normal.
Just for one night.

Maya exhales hard.

MAYA

You don't get to "just for one night" in a crowd like that.

DEVON

I didn't plan–

MAYA

I know you didn't plan it.
That's the problem.

The HUM creeps in – barely audible.

Maya clocks it immediately.

She steps closer.

MAYA (CONT'D)

Hey.
Stay with me.
Feet on the floor.

Devon presses his palms to the carpet.

The HUM recedes.

DEVON

They called me a weapon.
On the livestream comments.

Maya softens – but doesn't let him off the hook.

MAYA

They call everything they don't understand a weapon.
That doesn't mean you help them aim.

Devon finally looks at her.

DEVON

What if I hurt someone?

MAYA

Then we deal with it together.
Not by disappearing.

She holds his gaze.

MAYA (CONT'D)

You don't get to volunteer yourself for the cage.

That lands.

Devon nods, barely.

INT. PHILADELPHIA SUBWAY – EARLY EVENING

A crowded car rattles underground.

Fluorescent lights flicker.

ROXY stands near the pole, scrolling through messages.

A KID – maybe eleven – stands nearby in a SPIDER-MAN MASK,
too big for his head.

He stares at Roxy, awestruck.

KID

You're her.

Roxy smiles despite herself.

ROXY

Depends who's asking.

KID

My mom says you're dangerous.

ROXY

Your mom sounds tired.

The kid laughs — then freezes.

Blood drips from his nose.

The HUM pulses — sharp, brief.

The subway car SHUDDERS.

Tiles beneath the kid's sneakers CRACK, hairline fractures racing outward.

Passengers gasp.

Then — it stops.

The cracks seal themselves.

The HUM vanishes.

The kid wipes his nose, embarrassed.

His MOTHER rushes over, panicked.

MOTHER

It's asthma.
He gets nosebleeds.

She drags him away.

Roxy watches them go — unsettled.

She looks down.

The tile beneath her foot is still cracked.

Just a little.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER — NIGHT

A tired building in a tired neighborhood.

A handmade sign taped to the door:

PHX SAFEHOUSE — BASEMENT

Roxy heads down the steps.

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Fluorescent lights buzz.

Folding chairs in a loose circle.

This is not a meeting.
It's triage.

People sit awkwardly, guarded.

DEVON and MAYA enter quietly.

ROXY clocks Devon immediately — recognizes him from the protest footage.

She doesn't say anything yet.

Others present:

CAL (30s) — Black, broad-shouldered, prosthetic leg humming faintly with mechanical whine.

A LATINA MOM (40s) clutching her purse, breath frosting the air every time she exhales too hard.

A TRANS-MASC PERSON (20s) — tattoos along their arms subtly shift, ink crawling under skin when they're anxious.

No introductions.

Roxy closes the door.

ROXY

Okay.
Ground rules.

She gestures to a battered lockbox.

ROXY (CONT'D)

No phones.
No recordings.
If you livestream this, you don't come back.

People reluctantly comply.

Roxy meets their eyes.

ROXY (CONT'D)

This isn't training.
This isn't recruitment.

This is a room where nobody calls you a threat.

Silence.

Then Cal clears his throat.

CAL

Homeland Security came to see me.

Every head snaps to him.

CAL (CONT'D)

They called it a "special response unit."

Said my... condition made me uniquely qualified.

He taps his prosthetic. It emits a low HUM — not unlike Devon's.

CAL (CONT'D)

They didn't ask what I wanted.

They asked how fast I could deploy.

The Latina mom's breath fogs harder.

LATINA MOM

Did you say yes?

CAL

No.

DEVON

Why not?

Cal looks at Devon — sees the fear instantly.

CAL

Because the second you let them point you,
they never stop pulling the trigger.

Roxy steps in.

ROXY

They're calling it the Minutemen.

A ripple of reaction.

ROXY (CONT'D)

Government-approved masks.

Emergency authority.

"Non-lethal."

She makes air quotes.

ROXY (CONT'D)

Scared people build cages faster than clinics.

Devon swallows.

DEVON

What if...
what if I can't control it?

The room stills.

DEVON (CONT'D)

What if the safest thing for everyone
is me turning myself in?

Roxy doesn't answer right away.

She steps closer. Lowers her voice.

ROXY

You didn't ask for what's inside you.
Neither did I.

She gestures around the room.

ROXY (CONT'D)

That doesn't make us property.

Devon looks down.

The HUM stirs — soft, sad.

Maya reaches for his hand.

Grounds him.

The HUM fades.

INT. DAN DREIBERG'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

Quiet. Dim.

Dan sits at his dining table, surrounded by printed drafts:

FEDERAL METAHUMAN RESPONSE FRAMEWORK
MINUTEMEN INITIATIVE (WORKING
TITLE)

Handwritten notes in the margins:

- Non-lethal first
- Consent??

- Civil rights vs existential threat
- Masks = hypocrisy

He rubs his eyes.

Reaches for a photo frame on the table.

Hesitates.

Flips it face-up.

A younger Dan. An older woman beside him. A hint of costume in the background.

History staring back.

The lights FLICKER.

A low HUM fills the room.

Dan freezes.

His HUD visor flickers on instinct.

A DISTORTION appears near the bookshelf – human-shaped, wrong.

It RESOLVES into–

THE MASKED STRANGER.

Featureless mask. Glowing blue hourglass.

Reality bends subtly around him.

STRANGER

You're writing a script, Daniel.

Dan stands slowly.

DAN

You broke into a federal officer's home.

STRANGER

You built a prison on paper today.
I thought you might want notes.

The Stranger lifts his hand.

Dan's papers RISE – suspended midair.

Certain words glow faintly blue:

CONTROL
SUPPRESSANT
REGISTRY

STRANGER (CONT'D)

You think the problem is uncontrolled power.

Dan steps closer — defiant, tired.

DAN

I think people are scared.

STRANGER

They always are.
Fear is older than masks.
Older than viruses.

The Stranger looks directly at him.

STRANGER (CONT'D)

You know what happens when fear gets a badge and a cape.

Dan doesn't blink.

DAN

Yeah.
You get Watchmen.

A beat.

STRANGER

Then don't build another prison.

DAN

If I don't, someone worse will.

The Stranger tilts his head — almost pity.

STRANGER

That's what everyone says
right before the doors lock.

The HUM spikes.

The Stranger PHASES — leaving behind a lingering frequency
spike in Dan's HUD.

On Dan's legal pad, new words appear — written by no visible
hand:

WHO WATCHES THE SCARS?

Dan stands alone.

Breathing hard.

ACT FOUR

EXT. PHILADELPHIA - CITY HALL PLAZA - NIGHT (PRESENT)

The protest has grown.

What was a demonstration is now a pressure cooker.

More drones. More cameras. More police.

MSA RAPID RESPONSE UNITS line the perimeter — armored, masked, disciplined. Not cops. Something worse: authorized.

A massive digital banner unfurls across City Hall:

EMERGENCY CURFEW 9:00 PM - 6:00 AM
PHASE-X DEMONSTRATIONS PROHIBITED

The crowd responds instantly.

CROWD

NO MORE CAGES!
NO MORE CAGES!

ROXY stands at the front, microphone shaking slightly in her hand.

DEVON and MAYA flank her now — visible, exposed.

Roxy clocks the MSA line. Knows exactly what this means.

ROXY
They're scared because they can't put the genie back in the bottle.
So they want to put us in it instead.

CHEERS. ANGER.

In the crowd, phones tilt toward Devon.

Recognition spreads.

Whispers ripple.

"THAT'S HIM."

"That's the meta from the clip—"

DEVON feels it.

The HUM creeps back in — low, insistent.

Maya leans close.

MAYA

Hey.
Breathe.
We can step back.

Devon shakes his head.

DEVON

If I leave now..
it looks like they were right.

The HUM grows louder.

EXT. CITY HALL BALCONY — CONTINUOUS

A figure emerges quietly from a service stairwell.

NITE OWL.

Modernized armor. Muted blue-gray. Respirator integrated into the cowl.

DAN DREIBERG, masked again for the first time in decades.

He does not strike a pose.

He watches.

Below, AGENT SIMS (40s) — MSA Commander — keys his comm.

SIMS

We're reading an energy spike.
Permission to neutralize before escalation.

Dan watches Devon through his HUD.

Targeting boxes bloom automatically.

Threat probabilities scroll.

Teenager. Untrained. Afraid.

Dan's jaw tightens.

DAN

Hold.

Sir—

SIMS

I said hold.

DAN

Sims doesn't like it.

IN THE CROWD

The HUM is now audible to others.

People look around, unsettled.

The ground beneath Devon's feet vibrates.

He panics.

DEVON

Maya—

I can't—

The HUM SPIKES.

This time, the shockwave PARTIALLY DISCHARGES.

A PARKED CAR FLIPS onto its side.

A CONCRETE FACADE fractures, raining debris.

People SCREAM.

MSA targeting systems snap from yellow to red.

SIMS (V.O.)

Authorize now!

Dan doesn't answer.

He steps onto the stone railing.

Looks down.

A long way down.

For a split second, we see fear — real fear — cross his face.

Then—

DAN JUMPS.

THE INTERVENTION

Time slows.

Nite Owl falls through frame — not graceful, not godlike.

His glider field deploys late.

He hits the pavement HARD — armor screaming on stone.

Pain. Impact. Consequence.

The crowd GASPS.

Phones surge upward.

Holy shit—

PROTESTER

That's—
That's Nite Owl.

ANOTHER

Dan rises slowly.

Every joint protesting.

He plants himself between Devon and the MSA line.

The HUM howls — the kinetic field swelling around Devon like a forming storm.

Dan steps closer.

Removes his medical mask, leaving only the owl-cowled respirator.

He speaks — calm, deliberate, human.

Kid.
Look at me.

DAN

Devon's eyes lock onto the mask.

The HUM wavers.

DAN (CONT'D)

You took a vaccine because someone told you it was the right thing to do.

You showed up tonight because someone told you this city belonged to you too.

The kinetic field trembles.

DAN (CONT'D)

That doesn't sound like a bomb.
That sounds like a good person who got used.

Devon sobs.

The shockwave pulls inward – slowly, painfully.

Not clean. Not perfect.

The HUM diminishes.

Devon collapses to his knees.

Dan lunges forward, catches him.

Silence crashes down.

A single voice breaks it.

VOICE

Minutemen...

Another voice, louder.

ANOTHER VOICE

No.
That's the owl guy.

Roxy stares at Dan – rage, calculation, reluctant hope
colliding in her face.

Dan looks up at the MSA line.

Raises his hand.

DAN

Nobody touches him without talking to me first.

Sims hesitates.

Then lowers his weapon.

The crowd EXHALES.

The line has been drawn.

ACT FIVE

INT. OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

The PRESIDENT (50s, woman of color) watches three live feeds:

- Nite Owl holding Devon
- Dr. Klein mid-testimony
- A national map blooming with Phase-X alerts

Advisors argue around her.

She doesn't look away.

PRESIDENT

We told people to show up during the pandemic.
Now they've shown up changed.

She turns.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

We need to show we're not scared of them.
We're scared for them.

A beat.

PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

Swear him in.
Tonight.

INT. MSA - CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Dan stands alone.

An ATTORNEY reads from a document.

ATTORNEY

Do you accept the duties of this office
and the authority granted herein?

Flashes assault Dan's mind:

Blood on snow.
Headlines.
A god-shaped absence.

He swallows.

DAN

I accept.

The weight settles.

INT. MSA INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

DEVON, MAYA, and ROXY sit at a metal table.

Not arrested.

Processed.

Dan enters.

Removes his cowl.

Sits.

No performance.

DAN

You have every right to be angry.

Roxy doesn't blink.

DAN (CONT'D)

At me.

At this agency.

At the people who told you to "trust us" about a shot that rewrote your biology.

He slides three folders across the table.

Each bears a new emblem:

An owl's eye inside a clockface.

DAN (CONT'D)

I'm building a team.

Roxy scoffs.

ROXY

Mascots.

Dan shakes his head.

DAN

Witnesses.

That word hangs.

DAN (CONT'D)

Proof that power and accountability can exist in the same room.

He meets Devon's eyes.

DAN (CONT'D)

You don't have to like me.
You don't have to join.
But if you want a say in how this goes—
this is the table.

Roxy studies the folder.

ROXY

Why us?

Dan stands.

DAN

Because you're the ones the cameras already found.
And the ones they never want to see.

He exits.

The door shuts.

Silence.

They open the folders.

We don't see what's inside.

TAG

INT. WELLS APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT

Tanya sits in the doorway of Lila's bedroom.

Lila sleeps.

Above her bed, the glow-stars orbit faster now.

Forming patterns.

Intentional.

Tanya's face tightens with fear.

EXT. EARTH - HIGH ORBIT

The planet from space.

A faint, invisible CLOCKWORK GRID assembles around it.

Ghost-images of people flicker in and out.

Catalogued.

Measured.

INT. UNKNOWN LOCATION - DARK

Banks of monitors.

Footage of: — the protest

— Devon's shockwave

— Lila's cereal bowl (captured by a smart fridge camera)

— the subway kid

THE MASKED STRANGER sits before the screens.

He removes his mask.

We only see the back of his head.

His skin glows faintly blue — not divine, but residual.

MASKED STRANGER

They wanted a vaccine.

He watches Dan's image.

MASKED STRANGER (CONT'D)

They got a variable.

His eyes flare brighter.

The planetary grid HUMS in response.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE 201.