

Fangboner

Pilot: "I'd Rather Be Eating Brains"

by

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ACT 1

FADE IN:

CLOSE ON COMPUTER SCREEN. 5-SECOND SKIPPABLE AD:

"Gut Trucks!" "Why just tell your kids stories about the Zed War glory days, when you can relive them together?" (Remote-controlled patriotic pickups).

THE "SKIP" BUTTON IN THE LOWER RIGHTHAND SCREEN TURNS COLOR, AS THOUGH CLICKED. SKIP TO:

Z-corette. "Curb those nagging cravings... now in new exotic flavors like Indian Hi'Nduja and Polynesian Punch!" (Nicorrette for cured zombies who still crave brains)

THE "SKIP" BUTTON IN THE LOWER RIGHTHAND SCREEN TURNS COLOR, AS THOUGH CLICKED. SKIP TO:

Dr. Raab's REDERMA: Remortal sunscreen! "While your skin is still healing, it's important to protect it." (Remortals on the beach)

THE "SKIP" BUTTON IN THE LOWER RIGHTHAND SCREEN TURNS COLOR, AS THOUGH CLICKED. SKIP TO:

INT. LANGER NATION STUDIO - DAY

"LANGER NATION" OPENING GRAPHIC AND MUSIC. WIPE TO LANGER PRATT SITTING AT HIS DESK, INTRODUCING HIS SHOW.

LANGER PRATT

Greetings to all you good citizens of Langer Nation! Tonight's Langer Alert! So-called eco-influencer GERTA THORN is kicking the poor endangered pollinators' nest once again. In a new WIDGE on HUÍ [PICTURE IN PICTURE OF THORN'S VIDEO], she calls on her unwashed followers to oppose legislation that would finally reduce the needless bureaucratic red tape bogging down the pharmaceutical industry.

CUT TO:

HUI SOCIAL MEDIA WIDGE OF GERTA THORN AT "RALLY".

GERTA THORN

Every year FIGMENT PHARMACEUTICALS
dumps more than 1 million tons of
pharmaceutical waste into our
already compromised water table.
This legislation is the only thing
standing for our future!

BACK TO:

LANGER PRATT

Friends, this is nothing but the
left doing what the left does best:
wrapping a blatant power grab in
the language of righteous
indignation. Just ask Senate
Majority Leader ASHBY WHITLOW: her
claims are completely meatless.

CUT TO:

Ashby Whitlow is walking and talking down the steps of the
Capitol building, under repair.

ASHBY WHITLOW

The science on this is very well
established. The earth is the
greatest natural water filtration
system ever created. The existing
legislation does nothing but take
even more money out of taxpayers'
pockets. When is enough enough?

Whitlow gets in a government gondola at the bottom of the
steps and motors away down the flooded streets of DC.

BACK TO:

LANGER PRATT

(pointing to his brain)

Up here is where these freedom
haters wage their war, folks.
Remember that.

Langer turns to camera 2.

LANGER PRATT (CONT'D)

And now, tonight's top story! DAMON WATERS was once a nameless cog in the big tech machine, crunching ones and zeros at tech sector juggernaut INCLOVER TECHNOLOGIES. Now he's gone public with the bold claim that INCLOVER's AI nanotech has become not only sentient, but possibly a doorway to the divine? Heady stuff, folks. DAMON! Welcome.

CUT TO:

SPLIT SHOT, LANGER AND DAMON IN AN OFFSITE STUDIO.

DAMON WATERS

(stiff and awkward)

Thanks. Thank you for. Thanks for having me.

LANGER PRATT

All right, so walk me through this. Because I'm a simple guy. To me, truth is simple. God, country, freedom. But what you're talking about is, whooo boy, It's out there.

MEDIUM SHOT OF DAMON WATERS. CLOSER ANGLE.

DAMON WATERS

Um. Sure. Okay. So, um, basically what you have is this. Well. There's this program. And this program was designed to help control the zombies when they were, you know, when they were getting processed through the whole, you know, the whole cure process.

LANGER PRATT

Operation Lazarus.

DAMON WATERS

Operation Lazarus, yes. So what would happen is these zombies would be corralled into these pens, and a sort of aerosol of nano-bots would be sprayed over these herds. And these nano-bots were loaded with a program that we at InClover designed.

(MORE)

DAMON WATERS (CONT'D)

And the zombies would inhale these nano-bots and essentially the nano-bots would make the zombies hallucinate a situation that could be controlled by an operator. It was a way to make them compliant through all of the stages of the cure process. So imagine I could give you a hallucination that made you think there was something that you really wanted and it was right in front of you. I could make you follow that thing, right?

LANGER PRATT

You're talking about mind control.

DAMON WATERS

It's not mind control, exactly, for a couple of reasons. First, the zombie mind is very simple. It's basically just the lower part of the brain stem. The animal impulses. Hunger. Aggression. Comfort. Safety. So when we say mind control, it's not like you're talking about something that would work on you or me. Also, it's not control, because it works by suggestion. Kind of the carrot and stick principle, only in this case the carrot is inside the mind of the user.

LANGER PRATT

And who dangles this carrot?

DAMON WATERS

Well, that's the really interesting thing. Because the program was designed to be controlled by an operator. It's, you know, it's like a lot of this next-gen pharma. It's app-released. You activate it through an app. And in the more technical parts of the app you can actually dictate the nature of the user's experience. Like if you needed a particular subject to move forward or turn around or stand still or sit down, you could turn on different elements of code that would produce those effects.

LANGER PRATT

And you worked on this technology?

DAMON WATERS

I was part of a team at INCLOVER that was in charge of developing and evolving the technology, yes.

LANGER PRATT

And what did you find?

DAMON WATERS

Right, so one of the really interesting things that we didn't anticipate is that even after these zombies were cured--

LANGER PRATT

(Making air quotes)

After they became "Remortals."

DAMON WATERS

Right, after they became remortals, there was an ongoing demand for these nano-bots. It became basically a recreational drug. Right now, there's a huge market in bootleg nano-bots uploaded with this particular program. And what we found, when we looked into it, was very strange. Because the program was originally a very simple form of AI. It had a limited ability to determine and make decisions about how to present the programming to any individual user based on certain biochemical markers in the user's brain, but the content of the programming, the core message, was all determined by the code. But when we started looking into it and surveying users and running experiments under lab conditions, we found users who reported having experiences that were beyond anything the AI should have been able to produce.

LANGER PRATT

The AI learned. Started riffing.

DAMON WATERS

It had learned, yes, but it went beyond that.

(MORE)

DAMON WATERS (CONT'D)

I mean, we had users reporting life-changing revelations. Insights into spiritual truths. Into the nature of the sort of big, fundamental questions man has been asking since the beginning of time.

LANGER PRATT

Give us an example. Because this is all pretty far-out there man.

DAMON WATERS

(Speaking with greater confidence)

Okay, sure. Um. So, for example, I spoke with one young remortal woman, who told me about an experience she had where she was underwater and she looked up and saw what she described as a manatee the size of a building, with the sunlight shining through the water all around it, and this manatee spoke to her and explained how matter is just energy collected and moving in the same direction through time, like a school of fish.

QUICK FLASH

A female remortal underwater looking up to the surface from deep below. There's a manatee with GODBOT's face near the surface. Refracted, glittering light radiates behind the celestial sea cow. It's mumbling something to her. She's nodding and responding "oh," bubbles coming out of her mouth.

END QUICK FLASH

LANGER PRATT

(skeptical)

A manatee?

DAMON WATERS

Yes, a manatee. You know, a sea cow.

LANGER PRATT

Not exactly Old Testament, is it?

DAMON WATERS

(slightly frustrated)

No, but that's not really the point. The point is, Where did that come from? Because based on what I know about this program and this technology, it can't really be explained or accounted for. This young woman told me that after she had this vision she had this sudden recall of an event from her pre-z life, where she'd been swimming with her family in Florida, and looked up at pod of manatees. Meaning that the technology was speaking directly to her in the language of memories that she didn't even remember herself.

LANGER PRATT

So she was tripping, basically.

DAMON WATERS

She said it changed her life.

LANGER PRATT

So what is your explanation, then? That God is talking to these remortals through this technology? I mean, how do you account for these experiences?

DAMON WATERS

I really don't know how to account for them. On one level it seems to me that we are living in an age of very real, apocalyptic threats to our existence, and it makes sense that if God exists and He is going to try to communicate with us, he would do so through the language we use, meaning technology. Think of what we've lived through in these past five years. Pandemics. Millions dead. Drought. Rising sea levels. Uncontrolled wildfires. Species die off. There is a certain segment of the population who believe that we are very literally experiencing the Biblical end of days, and if you've read the book of Revelation then you know: when that time comes, God starts talking.

LANGER PRATT

Sure, but aren't we getting a little bit ahead of ourselves? I'm not as up on the technology as you are, but last I heard this nano-bot only works on zombies and the remortalled, is that correct?

DAMON WATERS

Yes, for the moment it can only link with the neurotransmitters of those who've been previously infected. The degradation of the tissue is what makes the link possible.

LANGER PRATT

So if I'm understanding you correctly, there's no way for you or me to talk to God. Talking to God is a privilege reserved for the remortals, correct?

DAMON WATERS

For the time being, yes.

LANGER PRATT

Doesn't it seem strange to you that God would want to talk to a bunch or mass-murdering zombies rather than so many of the good folks out there who protected themselves and their families through—as you called it—the Biblical end times?

DAMON WATERS

I mean, maybe, but—

LANGER PRATT

I'm afraid that's all the time we've got. Thank you for coming by, Damon. Before we go, how can people follow you? Are you on HUI?

DAMON WATERS

Yes, I'm on HUI, and if anyone is in the Wichita area they can also find me at the Little Hope Survivorship Church. I lead a discussion group on Tuesday and Friday evenings where we talk about what this all... what this all means.

LANGER PRATT
 Got that, Langer Countrymen? Go
 check out Damon Waters at Little
 Hope in Wichita if you're dying for
 more answers!

CUT TO MEDIUM ONE SHOT OF LANGER. SHOW'S CLOSING MUSIC CUES.

LANGER PRATT (CONT'D)
 Thanks for tuning in folks. Until
 next time, remember to follow me on
 HUI for all the latest news from
 Langer Country. And be sure to
 watch next time when I reveal
 shocking new evidence that the
 BANANA FAMINE was an inside job.

CUT TO:

VIDEO FOOTAGE OF CENTRAL AMERICAN FARMERS CUTTING DOWN AND
 BURNING BANANA CROPS. FLAMETHROWER.

BACK TO:

LANGER PRATT
 Until then, remember: your mind is
 your greatest weapon. Keep it
 clean, keep it ready, and keep it
 fully loaded with a thirty-round
 mag of high-caliber truth! This is
 Langer Pratt wishing a good night
 to all you citizens of the bold
 republic we call Langer Nation!

LANGER SALUTES THE CAMERA. CREDITS CRAWL AND OBNOXIOUS MUSIC
 PLAYS OUT.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. S.B.Z.A CLINICAL FACILITY DOWNTOWN TULSA OKLAHOMA - DAWN
 The toxicity of the zombie wars has rapidly accelerated
 environmental collapse. Coastal cities have been ravaged by
 the pandemic's political and ecological fallout, populations
 have concentrated in inland cities, and Tulsa is now a major
 cultural and social center.

ESTABLISHING WIDE SHOT. FANGBONER AND SUNNY WAIT IN A LONG LINE OF REMORTALS OUTSIDE A BRUTALIST-STYLE GOVERNMENT BUILDING. CLOSE ON THE REMORTALS: A COLLECTION OF HIDEOUSLY GAUNT FACES. GRAY/GREEN SKIN, INSANE COSMETIC SURGERIES, WHOLE MANDIBLE PROSTHETICS, ILL-FITTING GIANT DENTURES. WONKY GLASS EYES SUNKEN IN RECONSTRUCTED ORBITALS. EMPTY EYE PITS. ONE AFTER THE OTHER, THEY STARE BLANKLY INTO THE CAMERA. IN A WIDE SHOT, WE SEE THAT THEY'RE ALL WEARING SMARTWATCH DEVICES. A SIGN ON THE BUILDING IDENTIFIES IT AS THE S.B.Z.A. HEADQUARTERS, THE SPECIAL BRANCH FOR ZOMBIE AFFAIRS, TULSA.

Murmurs of anti-government sentiment and restless groans radiate from the unhappy crowd.

REMORTAL #1

Uggghhh! I'd rather AirBNB at the DMV than be stuck in another checkup line at the fucking S.B.Z.A..

The other remortals nod and groan in agreement - all except for Sunny, who seems upbeat and unaffected by the negativity. She checks her smartwatch device, which displays a series of "badges" awarded for completing a variety of tasks. She is clearly proud of them.

FANGBONER

(Teasing her)

Excited to show the teacher how much homework you did this month?

Sunny beams, then grabs Fang's wrist to look at his smartwatch device.

SUNNY

How many did you get?

She scrolls through the page. All of the badge "slots" are empty.

SUNNY (CONT'D)

Fang! You said you were going to do some this time!

FANGBONER

What's the point?

SUNNY

What's the point?

FANGBONER

Yeah, what's the point? All the reintegration challenges and badges in the universe are not going to change anything. They're not going to change what we are.

SUNNY

You don't know that.

FANGBONER

I don't? How many reintegration challenges have you completed? A lot, right? How much of a difference has it made?

SUNNY

It's made a difference.

FANGBONER

How? How has it made a difference?

SUNNY

It just has, okay?

FANGBONER

Yeah? Have they given you a good enough RATs score to get a better job? No. Have you earned enough points to redeem for anything worth anything? No. Face it, it's just busy work. It's a way to keep us chasing something they're never going to let us have.

This is clearly only the most recent verse in a song these two have been singing for some time. Sunny has her eyes closed and is doing deep breathing, calming herself.

SUNNY

That's not point, Fang. The point is that you told me you were going to complete some your challenge badges this time. I told you that it mattered to me that we were both working on them and you told me you were going to.

FANGBONER

But they're bullshit, Sunny.

SUNNY

That's not the point, Fang.

REMORTAL #1
 (holding his prosthetic
 arms to the gray sky)
 Hey! Dickhead and little miss
 sunshine! Shut the hell up!

The other remortals groan and nod.

FANGBONER
 Guys, c'mon.

REMORTAL #1
 C'mon yourself, Dong of the Dead.

The other remortals laugh. Fang seems stung by the insult.
 Sunny gives Remortal #1 the finger with her mechanical hand.
 An S.B.Z.A. social worker appears at the door.

S.B.Z.A. SOCIAL WORKER
 Brood Pod number 2368!

Sunny turns, instantly smiling again, as she turns "the bird"
 into a raised hand.

SUNNY
 Here. Present!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. S.B.Z.A. FACILITY - CONTINUOUS
 Inside, the remortals are led individually through a series
 of medical and life skills modules. Instructional signage
 reads 'RATs (Remortal Assimilation Tests)' with an arrows
 pointing. We follow Fang and Sunny individually, alternating
 shots as they move through the modules. Throughout Sunny
 remains pleasant and eager to please; she soaks up the
 acknowledgement and approval of the proctors. Fang does
 poorly; he is vaguely passive aggressive and hostile, and
 his performance is noted by the S.B.Z.A. proctors.

SERIES OF SHOTS LEADS US THROUGH THE VARIOUS MODULES:

Invasive physical. Every orifice is swabbed. Huge booster
 shots are administered.

The dodgeball test: a bunch of big orderlies in white suits
 throw dodge balls at the remortals. A proctor takes notes on
 an S.B.Z.A. tablet. Fang just stands there flinching and
 getting pummeled, while Sunny is very athletic and agile.

Basic life skills tests: ordering at a fast food restaurant, and how to complain to a manager, waving hello to a neighbor, smiling at strangers, singing happy birthday.

Finally we arrive at the group therapy module. The remortals sit in a circle of folding chairs. An S.B.Z.A SOCIAL WORKER, holding an S.B.Z.A. tablet in her lap, is in charge.

S.B.Z.A. SOCIAL WORKER

Before we get started, does anyone have anything they'd like to share with the group this morning?

She looks around the circle in an encouraging way, trying to make eye contact. No one looks at her or responds.

S.B.Z.A. SOCIAL WORKER (CONT'D)

No one? No reason to be shy. I've got your brood pod's scores here, and with the exception of Sunny, they are well below average. In fact, some of your scores are worse than last month's.

The social worker looks at Fang as she says this.

REMORTAL #1

Those RATs tests are complete fucking bullshit.

S.B.Z.A. SOCIAL WORKER

Care to elaborate, Mr. Fartknocker?

The other remortals look at Remortal #1, a.k.a. FARTKNOCKER.

FARTKNOCKER

I'm just saying, exactly what life skill are we supposed to learn from having dodgeballs thrown at our heads month in and month out? Huh? You trying to show us that the world is full of assholes who don't like remortals? Ask anybody in here: I think we got the memo.

S.B.Z.A. SOCIAL WORKER

The modules were designed to help you develop the skills needed to reintegrate into society smoothly and successfully, Mr. Fartknocker. If you have feedback about what sort of tasks might be more useful to you in this process, the S.B.Z.A. would be glad to hear it.

Fartknocker crosses his arms and looks at the ground. Clearly the sentiment is that there's no point in participating. The S.B.Z.A. Social Worker turns back to the group.

S.B.Z.A. SOCIAL WORKER (CONT'D)
 Anyone else?
 (She turns to Fang)
 Fang, do you have anything you'd like to share with the group?

SUNNY
 (putting her prosthetic hand on Fang's shoulder)
 Go on, Fang. Read it. It's really good!

FANGBONER
 (finding his voice)
 I do have a new poem I've been working on.

The brood pod groans in unison. The groan is unnerving. Gravely and evil. The social worker hushes them. Fang stands, removes a folded piece of looseleaf paper from his pocket.

FANGBONER (CONT'D)
 (clearing his coarse throat)
 I'd rather be eating brains that last night dreamt of future plans. They taste some of the best, so light, so fresh, but sadly you can't have filet everyday.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

MOVING SHOT ZOMBIES RAMPAGING THROUGH WEDDING PARTY AT A CHURCH. CLOSE ON FANG EATING A BRIDESMAID'S BRAINS.

FANGBONER (V.O.)
 Hairspray pairs nicely with bridesmaid brains, followed by an amuse-bouche of botanical hotel shampoo on hairdo of dry-aged future mother-in-law. Scalp treatments can indeed be tiny treats, but hair plugs are gilding the Lilly. Toupees, like kale garnish, just get shoved off the plate.

MEDIUM SHOT. FANG RIPS A TOUPEE OFF OF A SCREAMING HEAD, EATS LAWYER BRAINS. A REMORTAL IN THE CIRCLE SUBTLY FIXES HER DROOL.

FANGBONER (V.O.)

Now Rogaine Mousse with brains of blood sucking lawyer... That's the good shit, the center cut, the fancy pate. Expensive vain brains are delish.

FANG SNACKING ON A TEEN BRAINS IN THE YOUNG ADULT SECTION OF A BOOK STORE.

FANGBONER (V.O.)

The sweetest brains to savor are those of young readers. When some toothsome tween has just consumed another Harry Potter, Twilight, or Hunger Game, take it from me, sink your teeth in. Take. Big. Bites. All that mush and dumb magic tenderizes the tough teenybopper connective tissue. All that schmaltz makes for unctuous pubescent. All that cheesecake makes developing minds taste like, yup, cheesecake! How pigs raised entirely on acorns taste nutty... Same.

FARTKNOCKER

Fucking garbage!

SUNNY

(Extending the middle
finger of her robotic
hand)

Fuck you, Fartknocker!

S.B.Z.A. SOCIAL WORKER

(Concerned)

People, please!

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. S.B.Z.A. FACILITY EXIT TO CITY SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

MOVING SHOT FOLLOWS FANG AND SUNNY ON THEIR WALK HOME.

GENPOP pass by on the sidewalk. They glare at the two remortals. Some GENPOP cross to the other side of the street. FANG sees this, but SUNNY seems oblivious. Fang is obviously upset.

SUNNY

Forget about that asshole, Fang
baby. I love your poetry. Your
brain is sooo sexy. Arrrggghh.

Sunny acts like a zombie taking a bite out of Fang's head, making him smile just a little. GENPOP walking past looks appalled.

FANGBONER

Thanks, Sunny. I'm sorry about
before. About not getting any
badges. I'll get some before next
time. I promise.

SUNNY

Oh yeah? You promise? Where have I
heard that before?

FANGBONER

No, really. I mean it. I really
will.

SUNNY

Yeah? Which ones are you going to
get?

FANGBONER

I don't know. Driving, maybe. Maybe
I'll learn how to drive. I can
learn how to drive, right?

SUNNY

You're going to learn how to drive?
Where are you going to get a car?

FANGBONER

I don't know. Maybe I'll take one
out of the motor pool at work.
There are about a million trucks
out back that they don't even use.
I could crash one and they'd never
even notice.

SUNNY

(Laughing)
What else?

FANGBONER

I don't know. Cooking. I could make you dinner.

SUNNY

You? You're going to cook for me?

FANGBONER

Yeah. What's so hard to believe about that?

SUNNY

No, nothing. I'm sure it'll be great.

Fang stops walking, clearly frustrated. Sunny stops and turns back.

SUNNY (CONT'D)

What? Fang baby, what? I was just joking. I didn't mean anything by it.

FANGBONER

No, you're right.

(He looks at her with
frustration and pain in
his eyes.)

How did you end up in this brood pod with us? It's like we're a bad batch of cookies and the S.B.Z.A. is trying to figure out what went wrong with the recipe. But you... You're like this amazing, sparkly, rainbow glitter cookie. You shouldn't be lumped in with us. You shouldn't be with me.

Sunny walks back to him, puts her arms around his neck, and kisses him.

SUNNY

You are going to figure it out, Fang baby. There is something special in you. I know it even if you don't know it. I can feel it. And one day everybody in the world is going to see it.

She pushes him away, playfully.

FANGBONER

Thank you, Sunny. I don't know what I'd do without you.

SUNNY

(Tapping him on the forehead with her mechanized prosthetic index finger)

You've got to get out of your head, Fang. You need to look around at all we've been given.

FANGBONER

(Snorts)

Yeah?

SUNNY

Yeah. We've got a second chance.

FANGBONER

You're right.

SUNNY

Come on. I know how to get you out of your head.

Sunny takes Fang's hand. They walk fast toward home.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FANG AND SUNNY'S CRAPPY BASEMENT STUDIO APT. - DUSK
Dimly lit by flickering plastic electric candles. There's a battery station for prosthetic charging in one corner. Fang and Sunny are on the bed, having sex. Sunny is on top, sitting up, with her eyes closed. A large, bio-integrated prosthetic "patch" is visible in her torso. Fang looks distracted. After a moment Sunny notices and stops.

SUNNY

What? What is it?

FANGBONER

Nothing. Keep going.

SUNNY

Are you sure?

FANGBONER

Yes. It's fine. I'm fine.

SUNNY

You don't seem fine.

FANGBONER

(Now obviously frustrated)

I don't? Then how do I seem?

Sunny holds up her hands and climbs off of him. Fang instantly regrets his outburst.

FANGBONER (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Sunny. I'm. Goddamnit.

He sits on the edge of the bed, facing away from her. Sunny sits up and leans against him, hugging him, and kisses his shoulder. Fang is looking into his lap. Sunny looks, too. Fang picks up his smartphone device from the nightstand and presses a series of buttons on an app. A buzz comes from his crotch: fast, slow, pulsing, pulsing faster as he cycles through the setting. He hits another button and the buzzing stops. Fang snorts and sets the phone back down. He starts to say something then stops, unable to put it into words.

SUNNY

What?

FANGBONER

What? Everything.

(He indicates his crotch)

This.

(He indicates their crappy apartment, the world in general.)

All of this. Don't you just feel like, I don't know. Like, what's the point? What's the reason for all of this? I mean I get the whole 'focus on the positive' thing. I do. I really do. But I mean, fuck, Sunny. We're living in a fucking nightmare, and nobody has any idea what it all, I mean, what it all means. I mean, why are we here? Why are you and I and Fartknocker and all the rest of us... What's it all for? We're just supposed to just go along and... what? And I know. I know we're the lucky ones. And I'm grateful. I don't mean to be ungrateful. But Jesus. Look around. Look at this. You have to see that this isn't right. This isn't how this is supposed to be. This can't just be how it is, now.

(MORE)

FANGBONER (CONT'D)

They bring us back into the world
and we just... What?

He turns to look at her. She nods.

SUNNY

I know. I wish. I wish I knew what
to tell you.

FANGBONER

It's not your job to tell me. You
understand what I'm saying? It's
somebody job to tell you AND me and
all the rest of us.

Sunny reaches up and pushes hair back from his forehead with
her prosthetic hand. She lays down. He lays down too, facing
her. There's nothing more to say. Sunny lets her hand fall to
the mattress as she closes her eyes. Fang lifts the hand and
kisses the palm.

FANGBONER (CONT'D)

Sweet dreams, glitter cookie.

FADE TO:

EXT. THE PINEAPPLE PARLOR TIKI BAR PARKING LOT - NIGHT

ESTABLISHING SHOT OF THE TIKI BAR. HENDO, PACKWOOD, AND
THORPE ARE MEETING IN THE PARKING LOT. THEY ARE NEXT TO THEIR
OVERSIZED PATRIOTIC PICKUP TRUCKS. THORPE IS WEARING A
HAWAIIAN SHIRT. HENDO PULLS UP LAST.

HENDO

(getting out of his truck,
reading the flashing neon
sign)

The Pineapple Parlor? What the
hell? What's wrong with Hanky's?

THORPE

Hanky's is always so damn
depressing. Just a bunch of freaked-
out vets gettin' wasted. Besides, I
thought this'd be fun! C'mon guys,
live a little!

PACKWOOD

But a fucking tiki bar?! They
better have High Life or you're a
dead man.

CUT TO:

INT. THE PINEAPPLE PARLOR TIKI BAR - CONTINUOUS

Hendo and Packwood are sitting at a bamboo high-top table. There are young Genpop and Remortals throughout the tiki bar co-mingling, having fun. Four hipster-looking remortals sit at the table behind them, drinking Zombies. Thorpe returns with a round of drinks. He hands Packwood a fruity-looking cocktail.

THORPE

They don't have High Life.

PACKWOOD

What in the hell is this heinous cup of--?

THORPE

It's called a Zombie, I know how much you miss them.

PACKWOOD

What's in it?

THORPE

Everything. Go easy. Those Zombies are mean AF!

HENDO

What's mine?

THORPE

That's a Fog Cutter.

PACKWOOD

What's yours?

THORPE

It's called a Dirty Banana. The banana flavor they use isn't as good as the real thing, but what're you going to do?

(He takes drink and makes
a face.)

Fuck. I miss bananas.

PACKWOOD

Thorpe, I think you're going bananas. You hang out in this place?

THORPE

It's fun. I need a little fun these days. I'm only 23, Packy.

PACKWOOD

Yeah. Sorry kid. I forget sometimes.

THORPE

Yeah. I forget sometimes, too.

LATER:

The table is now crowded with a few rounds' worth of empty glasses. Hendo, Packwood, and Thorpe, are laughing.

PACKWOOD

(Laughing)

That time on that toll road,
outside of Pittsburgh?

HENDO

Sure. With Ol' Fike the Icepick.
Crazy son of a bitch.

THORPE

Icepick scared me more than the
zombies!

PACKWOOD

We would've been toes up for sure
if it weren't for Colonel Icepick.
Up there on that fucking mower,
fucking going to town on the
fucking taggers!

Packwood is laughing hard, stabbing at the ice in his empty glass with the plastic garnish sword. In the background, the table of remortal hipsters looks annoyed by what they're overhearing.

THORPE

You think he got turned?

HENDO

You think he got cured?

PACKWOOD

Shit. That was a pretty big horde.
Normally you'd just get ripped to
shreds.

(He laughs again,
remembering.)

You remember that one? I can still
see it. He's looking at you through
the windshield and then you brought
that fucking big mower arm down and
- SPLAT! Fucking pusher goo all
over the carpool lane.

(MORE)

PACKWOOD (CONT'D)

Fucking beautiful. Still my
favorite piece of modern art
(He raises his glass)
Cheers.

Hendo and Thorpe raise their glasses and they all drink.

LATER STILL:

There are now many empty glasses on the table. The guys are visibly intoxicated.

THORPE

Really, though. You guys feel all
right?

PACKWOOD

(Snorts dismissively)
Why?

THORPE

I mean, all this shit that's coming
out. This 'Zed War Syndrome' thing.
Guys having, like, brain fog and
cluster headaches and fucking
rashes and all that shit. You guys
having any of that?

PACKWOOD

What's wrong, Thorpe? You got the
sniffles?

HENDO

I was always telling you two to
keep your respirators on.

PACKWOOD

Fucking thing never fit right.
(He laughs.)
Those little brain bots tasted like
like metal-flavored pop rocks.
Sinuses smelled like you'd been
grinding sheet metal in shop class
all day.

THORPE

That's what I'm talking about. That
shit couldn't have been good,
right?

HENDO

Maya Mae said those nano-bots only
worked on the daisy pushers. People
just sneeze them out.

THORPE

You believe that bullshit? She was fucking command. You think command gave a shit about us?

HENDO

Maya Mae wasn't like that. She was... She was trying to help.

The three are silent, somber in the presence of Hendo's obvious grief.

PACKWOOD

And permission to speak freely sir?

HENDO

Permission granted, First Sergeant Packwood.

PACKWOOD

It's not healthy to let the dead dig their graveyard in the middle of your mind and rot there. If Maya Mae was here she'd tell you the same. She's long gone. You need to let her go.

HENDO

I know.
(He stands.)

PACKWOOD

What'd I say?

HENDO

Nothing, Packy. I got to take a piss.

He leaves the table and heads to the bathroom. As he leaves, Packwood begins talking loud enough for the table of remortal hipsters to hear him clearly.

PACKWOOD

Speaking of graveyards, all these doornails got this place reeking like a rancid gut truck! Look at these fucks. They look like The Strokes had strokes!

REMORTAL HIPSTER #2

Hey, man. Not cool.

Hendo goes into the bathroom and splashes cold water on his face. He looks at his reflection in the mirror.

QUICK FLASH

Hendo is on a video call with Maya Mae on his device. In a series of back-and-forth shots between her and him, we see her looking into the camera smiling, then reacting to a sound off camera, then looking back at him in fear, then moving quickly before she is overtaken by a zombie horde. The device falls to the ground and shows nothing but blue sky and clouds as the sound of her screams and zombie growls grows distant. Hendo watches in impotent rage and horror.

END QUICK FLASH

Hendo collects himself and leaves the bathroom. As he is going back to rejoin his friends he bumps into the remortal hipsters' table.

HENDO

Sorry. Excuse me.

REMORTAL HIPSTER #1

Excuse US. Could you please tell your friend to keep it down? We're trying to--

PACKWOOD

What's that? You talking about me? You got something to say you can say it to my face. The three of us probably saved yer pasty asses, so show a little respect. We got buddies who never came home so you pushers could sit here sipping on your little fruit juices!

HENDO

Cool it, Packy.

REMORTAL HIPSTER #2

(To Remortal Hipster #1)

Let it go, man. They're just a bunch of burned-out horde stormers--

Packwood throws his heavy tiki glass at the remortals. A fight quickly ensues, involving Hendo and Packwood and all of the hipster remortals. Thorpe is trying to break it up while also defending himself. The fight spills out into the parking lot, where Hendo and Packwood beat the living hell out of the four hipster remortals.

We focus on Hendo as he finishes beating down the last of the remortal hipsters.

He is gone in a berserker rage, and as he throws punches we get quick PTSD flashbacks from before Operation Lazarus, when the Zed War was a war against the zombies. He remembers brutal zombie kills, remembers seeing comrades die, and again sees Maya Mae's horrified expression right before she is dragged off.

SMASH CUT TO:

Cop is slamming Hendo to the ground. Packwood is laying face down as well. The two look at each other. Hendo looks up and sees Thorpe. He nods to Thorpe. Thorpe retreats. The cops put Hendo and Packwood in the back of a cruiser and drive off.

CUT TO:

INT. THE GABBY BRAGG SHOW TV STUDIO - WASHINGTON DC - DAY

A daytime news and talk show is filming. Bright stage lights, smiling, applauding audience. The show's host, GABBY BRAGG, perfectly put together, a human mannequin on display, is also smiling. She is seated on a couch on a set designed to look like the living room of an expensive home.

Backstage, DR. SINJIN RAAB is waiting to go on. He is in his late forties or early fifties but has the look of someone who has had too many skin treatments and a little too much plastic surgery. His look is just on the other side of eerie. There is the hint of a long scar running from the corner of his mouth down and in a curve up his cheek, a big "J." Despite the grin he has plastered on his face, there is a vacancy in his eyes: we wonder, briefly, if he even knows where he is. His ASSISTANT is talking in his ear, running him through bullet points.

On stage, the show is coming back from commercial.

GABBY BRAGG

Welcome back! Thank you so much for spending part of your morning with me! My guest today is someone you all know and love. Doctor, humanitarian, entrepreneur, and now author. He's been on the show many times, he needs no introduction, and I know you'd all rather hear from him than listen to me go on about him, so let's bring him out. It's DR. SINJIN RAAB!

The crowd applauds. Dr. Raab comes out, smiling and waving. He and the host embrace and air kiss.

On the large screen behind them, images play of Dr. Raab, looking much less artificial, doing humanitarian work, meeting patients, meeting fans. Raab and Bragg sit.

GABBY BRAGG (CONT'D)
Hello hello and welcome!

DR. RAAB
Thanks for having me Gabby.

Someone in the crowd "whoops." Dr. Raab smiles and waves.

GABBY BRAGG
It is so, so good to have you back.
I know everyone here is very
excited to see you, I'm very
excited to see you, and you, well
you've had a very exciting couple
of years. Tell us what's been going
on.

DR. RAAB
Thank you. Yeah, well, it has
been... whew. It's been a wild
ride. So as I'm sure some of your
audience knows, part of the work I
do is in countries and communities
that lack access to the kind of
basic medical care that we in the
first world are lucky enough to
take for granted.

The audience applauds. Dr. Raab holds up a hand.

DR. RAAB (CONT'D)
Thank you. And during the recent
pandemic I was over in Benin, in
West Africa, working in a community
there. There was an outbreak of a
waterborne illness that was just
wrecking havoc on this community.
Your audience knows what an issue
clean water is in so many parts of
the world now.

While he's talking, a tall woman enters the backstage area. She is sharply dressed in business attire. This is the CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR. She stands in the shadows, watching the scene.

GABBY BRAGG
(Shaking her head, sad and
concerned)
Terrible.

DR. RAAB

And of course, due to the pandemic, there were some additional challenges that we had to work through, one of them being heightened security.

GABBY BRAGG

Security that didn't always do its job.

DR. RAAB

What we've found is that water issues and other infrastructure issues go hand in hand. No clean water usually means no road upkeep, no reliable internet--

GABBY BRAGG

So basically, hell on earth.

She laughs. The audience laughs. RAAB laughs as well.

GABBY BRAGG (CONT'D)

So am I understanding this right? One day your security detail was late?

DR. RAAB

We're not sure what happened exactly, but let's just say they weren't around when we needed them.

GABBY BRAGG

And a zombie got through.

DR. RAAB

Yes.

GABBY BRAGG

And you were attacked.

DR. RAAB

Yes.

GABBY BRAGG

(turning to the large screen behind her)

Can we see that footage?

The footage is shown on the screen behind them: shaky handheld footage of a zombie running amuck inside a medical tent. Cursing and screaming.

It is so grotesque as to be almost comedic, and the contrast between the clean and artificial-feeling TV set full of clean, smiling people only adds to this effect. On the screen we see Dr. Raab being attacked. The footage cuts out. Gabby Bragg turns back to Raab.

GABBY BRAGG (CONT'D)

Oh wow. Sinjin.

DR. RAAB

Yes.

GABBY BRAGG

And you were infected.

DR. RAAB

I was infected. But you know what, Gabby? And your audience knows this. If there's one thing I've always recognized it's that I'm a lucky guy. I've been lucky to have the opportunities I've had, I've been lucky to meet the people I've met and have the experiences I've had, and that day in Benin my luck was holding.

We see Dr. Raab's Assistant off in the wings, watching intently, nodding, mouthing the words of the statement along with Dr. Raab. Out on the set floor, we see it scrolling by on the teleprompter. The Campaign Coordinator approaches and stands close behind Dr. Raab's Assistant. Dr. Raab's Assistant turns.

GABBY BRAGG

Now do I have this right? This happened literally eight hours after Figment Pharmaceuticals announced that they'd developed the cure? Is that right?

DR. RAAB

That's right. My team and I later determined that literally as that attack was happening, the WHO plane with the first shipment from Figment was actually landing at Porto-Novo airport.

GABBY BRAGG

So they were able to treat you right away?

DR. RAAB

Well now you have to remember what I said: in places like Benin, infrastructure is not guaranteed. We were about 70 miles from that airport, but in West Africa 70 miles might as well be 1,000.

Behind them on the screen, an image of Dr. Raab's new book, 3 DAYS A ZOMBIE: MY HARROWING JOURNEY INTO DEATH... AND BACK, BY DR. SINJIN RAAB WITH VICTOR PARK appears. The cover shows Dr. Raab now, and a picture-in-picture of him in a rustic hospital bed, extensively bandaged and hooked up to equipment.

DR. RAAB (CONT'D)

(grinning good-naturedly)

And if you want to know that whole story, I guess you're just going to have to buy the book.

He looks to the wings and sees his assistant talking to the Campaign Coordinator. His jovial expression flashes concern and confusion.

GABBY BRAGG

(Wearing a "you got me" expression.)

All right. Well, you heard it here, folks. The book is 3 DAYS A ZOMBIE: MY HARROWING JOURNEY INTO DEATH... AND BACK, it's available now, pick up your copy today! Dr. Sinjin Raab, thank you for joining us. We are so glad to have you here safe and sound.

DR. RAAB

Thank you, Gabby. Thanks everyone.

The audience is applauding. The director calls all clear. The spotlights go dark, leaving just the stage lights. Dr. Raab and Gabby exchange goodbyes and Dr. Raab exits to join his Assistant in the wings. He sees the Campaign Coordinator walking out.

ASSISTANT

Great job. You were terrific. They loved you.

DR. RAAB

Who were you talking to?

ASSISTANT
 (Talking to him like he's
 a child)
 There are some very important people
 who would like to talk to you.
 You're going to meet with them.

DR. RAAB
 They want to talk to me? About
 what?

ASSISTANT
 They'll tell you all about it.

DR. RAAB
 But what if I don't want to talk to
 them?

ASSISTANT
 (Visibly working to keep
 her cool.)
 Listen to me. You're going to talk
 to them, and it's going to be
 great. It's a very exciting thing,
 okay? Do you understand me? It has
 the potential to be very good for
 you.

Dr. Raab is oblivious to her tone and demeanor, and is still
 looking after the Campaign Coordinator.

DR. RAAB
 Okay.

He turns back to the look at the exiting audience.

DR. RAAB (CONT'D)
 Did they like me?

ASSISTANT
 They loved you.

DR. RAAB
 Yeah?

ASSISTANT
 (As though dealing with a
 child:)
 You killed.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

FADE IN:

EXT. INCLOVER FULFILLMENT CENTER - NIGHT

ESTABLISHING SHOT. SPRAWLING WAREHOUSE LIT UP AND BUSTLING.

CUT TO:

INT. INCLOVER FULFILLMENT CENTER LOADING DOCK - CONTINUOUS

FANGBONER works the 3rd shift (the graveyard shift) at an InClover fulfillment center. He works with a number of other Remortals, including his best friend, BIG SHITS. Their Remortal Aptitude Tests (RATs) in Z-Hab have placed them both in this line of work. Remortals have a hard time getting customer-facing jobs. Not many still exist. They are managed by a bevy of robot supervisors, helpers, etc: glorified rumbas and robotic dogs that exist to do everything from track efficiency to (supposedly) boost moral.

Fang is slowly scanning packages with a barcode gun and poorly loading them into an InClover SameDay Rover Bot, or "RoBer," for first AM delivery. There is a long line of RoBers waiting to be loaded. A performance timer expires on the RoBer Fang is loading, and it starts talking.

ROBER

Load me, load me, load me. Time is money, load me.

FANGBONER

(Fumbling with the gun)
I'm going, I'm going! These barcodes won't scan!

ROBER

Do you require a shift leader?

FANGBONER

No!

Big Shits is loading RoBers in the bay next to Fang.

BIG SHITS

Man, you'd better step it up or that RoBer's going to text hiCarl.

Fang quickly throws the last packages into the RoBer. There is the sound of something inside breaking. He closes the Rober's refrigerator-like doors. The InClover name and logo on the doors comes back together (when the RoBer doors are open, InClover reads "InC lover"). The RoBer speeds away. Another one is right behind it. Like most of the RoBers, it is covered in graffiti. Fang looks down the endless line of SameDay Bots waiting to be loaded. Sort-E bots keep rolling pallets of product into Fang's work area. A sign on the wall reads, "InClover SameDay Rover Bot loader of the month: insert remortal name and picture here".

FANGBONER
 (Smirking at the graffiti
 on the RoBer.)
 Another one of your masterpieces?

BIG SHITS
 Man, what's your deal?

FANGBONER
 My deal?

BIG SHITS
 Yeah, your deal. You're even slower
 and pissier than normal. You need
 some snuggle time with Clover?

He nods to where Clover, InClover's robot therapy dog, is doing backflips in front of a bored- and despondent-looking remortal. Big Shits' attention is drawn back to HiCarl - the "InClover. Autonomous. Robot. Leader." - is rolling their way.

BIG SHITS (CONT'D)
 Awww shit, here comes HiCarl. That
 bitch-ass RoBer snitched! SameDay
 bots are some impatient
 motherfuckers. Be cool.

HiCarl arrives.

HICARL
 Hello, Lading Technicians.

FANG & BIG SHITS
 (Together)
 Hi Carl.

HICARL
 Mr. Fangboner, I just received a
 RoBer Report expressing concerns
 about your load times and efficient
 use of RoBer cargo space.
 (MORE)

HICARL (CONT'D)

Do you need some practice time on the barcode scanner range during your break?

HiCarl indicates an area visible from where they are all standing. There a female remortal with red hair surrounded by pallets of packages frantically scans boxes and loads RoBers. Think 'I Love Lucy' chocolate factory episode. Throwing boxes in a nearby dumpster bot to hide them, etc.

FANGBONER

No. I'm good. Thanks.

HICARL

Okay then. Let's try to do better. While I'm here, Mr. Big Shits, how are you adjusting to your new position?

BIG SHITS

I liked driving the truck a lot better.

HICARL

InClover's autonomous delivery vehicles are fifteen percent safer and seven percent more efficient. Would you like me to schedule you a session with Clover to help ease any career change anxiety? There is a 2AM slot available.

Fang and Big Shits exchange a look; Fang is enjoying the fact that the shoe is now on the other foot. Big Shits turns back to HiCarl.

BIG SHITS

No man, I don't need the damn dog.

HICARL

Very well. Why don't you two go on your 1AM lunch break?

CUT TO:

INT. INCLOVER BREAK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

WIDE SHOT OF CONCRETE BREAK ROOM CUBE WITH BUILT-IN TABLES AND A SAD LITTLE KITCHENETTE WITH MICROWAVE AND PERCOLATOR. A FEW REMORTALS ARE QUIETLY TAKING THEIR BREAKS.

Fang is watching a remortal playing fetch with Clover through a window. He is eating a sad-looking cheese sandwich. Big

Shits grabs Fang's attention and shows him a WIDGE from his HUI page on his mobile device.

BIG SHITS

Check this shit out! Me and my buddy did a little performance art piece yesterday. You might have heard about it.

On the screen we see a bunch of RoBers painted to look like evil zombie robots - InClover's Army of the Dead Zombie RoBers - running wild. GenPop on the street are freaking out.

BIG SHITS (V.O.)

(Laughing and shouting to the public on the video)
Run for your lives! InClover's Army of the Dead has escaped, yo!

FANGBONER

How'd you do that?

BIG SHITS

My buddy, DORK BREATH, hacked them. This WIDGE has got over 300K view in the past 24 hours.

FANGBONER

That's really great, Big. Really funny.

BIG SHITS

Thanks, man.

FANGBONER

(Looking at Clover)
Doesn't anybody else find it strange that the robot security guard dogs they used to corral us in Z-Hab have been reprogrammed to be our emotional support animals at our shitty jobs?

BIG SHITS

Man, what is going on with you with you right now?

FANGBONER

What? You don't think that's a little messed up?

BIG SHITS

Man, of course it's messed up. Look around. It's all messed up.

(MORE)

BIG SHITS (CONT'D)

That doesn't mean you've got to be
a buzzkill about it.

FANGBONER

You sound just like Sunny.

BIG SHITS

(Knowingly.)

Ah.

FANGBONER

'Ah' what?

BIG SHITS

That what this is? Trouble in
paradise? Come on. You can tell me.
I love tales from the crypt.

FANGBONER

(Frustrated, searching for
and failing to find the
words.)

It's me, Big. I don't. I mean. Is
this it? This can't be what we were
brought back for. Just to keep
doing this mundane shit? Can it? We
came back from wherever so that we
could go back to work at fucking
InClover? I mean, what's it all...
about, you know?

It's a lot, and Big Shits isn't sure what to say.

BIG SHITS

Look, man. I don't know about all
of this, but I do know that you
need to get out of your own damn
head. Have some fun. Lighten up.
Why don't you and Sunny come to
this party with me this weekend?
It'll be fun.

FANGBONER

What party?

BIG SHITS

The AFTERPARTY-ERS are having
another one of their gorilla flash
festivals down in the old rail
yard. It's going to be off the
hook! We'll hang out, drink some
beers, do some 'BOT. It'll be fun.

FANGBONER

'BOT? You still doing that shit?

BIG SHITS

Once in a while. When I need to get my head right.

FANGBONER

You've got to be careful with that shit, man. I read that the bootlegs are laced with bad code. It'll fucking lobotomize you. Fry your brains.

BIG SHITS

(Shaking his head.)

These taggers got the good shit. Military grade, from the war. Primo Godsmack. Fell off the back of a Figment Pharmaceutical truck--

HiCarl rolls by the break room cube door.

HICARL

Lading Techs. You have 5 minutes of break time remaining. I suggest you use the facilities now, before returning to the floor.

HiCarl exits. The mood has changed - he has reminded Fang of how shitty life is. Fang turns back to Big Shits.

FANGBONER

Maybe.

BIG SHITS

Fuck maybe.

FANGBONER

I'll think about it.

BIG SHITS

Cool.

CUT TO:

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA TOLL ROAD - DAY - FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

BOOM SHOT OF THE "DEAD REBS" - HENDO, PACKWOOD, ET ALL, ALONG WITH COLONEL FIKE, AKA "THE ICEPICK," ON HIGHWAY, ENCIRCLED BY A MASSIVE HERD OF ZOMBIES. THORPE IS DRIVING THE GUT TRUCK.

AUTOMATIC GUNFIRE. ROCKET PROPELLED GRENADES. DRONE STRIKES. SOLDIERS BEING BITTEN EVERYWHERE. CHAOS. CLOSE COMBAT FIGHTING.

Colonel Fike "the Icepick" sees abandoned highway mowing equipment up ahead on the highway median strip: an interstate tractor mower with what is called a "Boom Axe or Battle Axe" mowing attachment. He whistles to Packwood and Hendo.

COLONEL FIKE THE ICEPICK

(shouting)

We have to advance! There's nowhere to fall back! Hendo!

HENDO

Yes, sir!

COLONEL FIKE THE ICEPICK

(pointing to the highway mowing equipment)

We have to make a hole!

HENDO

Copy that! Packy, on me! Double time! Keep your gourd covered! If you get bit, I will not hesitate! Is that clear?

PACKWOOD THORPE

Yes, sir!

Hendo and Packwood follow Fike. Hand to hand combat as they quickly make their way to the mowing equipment. Everyone jumps onto the tractor. Fike, out of ammunition, pulls an icepick from his belt and starts plunging it into every zombie skull he can find. Hendo quickly hot wires the rig. Packwood is hanging off the driver-side door and has switched from his automatic weapon to the chainsaw that has been hanging off of his back, protecting Hendo in the cab. Fike is standing on the front mower deck, icepick in hand. Hendo turns the "Boom Axe" forward, all the blades start spinning.

COLONEL FIKE THE ICEPICK

Boys! Let's mow the Fucking lawn!

Buckets of blood cover the tractor, Fike, and Packwood as the mower attachment descends on the zombies. Body parts fly everywhere. Hendo turns on the windshield wiper as he swings the "Boom Axe" from side to side. Fike is stabbing every zombie that gets onto the tractor in the brain with his icepick. They move past Thorpe, who is able to swing the gut truck around into the path they clear.

In the midst of the action Fike is overwhelmed and carried off by the horde, like he's crowd-surfing a mosh pit of zombies. He continues stabbing heads and laughing as he disappears.

HENDO

Colonel!

COLONEL FIKE THE ICEPICK

(stabbing and laughing)

I'll see you shit birds in hell!

END FLASHBACK.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION HOLDING CELL - MORNING

Hendo is jolted out of this flashback vision by a loud buzz. He finds himself in a holding cell. Packwood is on the opposite bench, awake. The two exchange nods. The door to the cell opens with a clang and an S.B.Z.A. LIAISON straight out of middle-management central casting enters.

S.B.Z.A. LIAISON

(consulting a tablet
device with S.B.Z.A.
emblem)

Mr. Henderson. Mr. Peckerwood

PACKWOOD

That's Packwood.

The S.B.Z.A. Liaison looks up at him, purses his lips, makes a note.

S.B.Z.A. LIAISON

(dispassionately)

Mr. Henderson and Mr. Packwood, due to exemplary service to your country during the Zed War and Operation Lazarus and all accrued merit pertaining to same, and by the duly appointed authority of the Special Branch for Zombie Affairs, your case has been surrendered to the jurisdiction of the Office of Zed War Veterans Affairs which is prepared to process your cases forthwith provided you comply with any and all non-punitive recommendations arising from same. Do you comply?

Hendo and Packwood exchange a look.

HENDO

What sort of non-punitive dictates?

The S.B.Z.A. Liaison consults his device.

S.B.Z.A. LIAISON

(still looking at the
tablet)

Head shrinking.

The S.B.Z.A. Liaison looks to them for an answer. Hendo and Packwood exchange another look.

HENDO

How much?

S.B.Z.A. LIAISON

(Consulting the device)

Until such time as your appointed
headshrinker is satisfied that you
will never again beat the shit out
of a bunch of our dearly formerly
departed in a tiki bar.

He looks at them questioningly.

PACKWOOD

What happens if we don't comply?

The S.B.Z.A. Liaison lowers the device, clasping his hands in front of him, and recites:

S.B.Z.A. LIAISON

Non-compliance with any and all
recommendations arising from the
S.B.Z.A. and pertaining to any and
all sub-offices of said agency
including but not limited to the
aforementioned Office of Zed War
Veterans Affairs will result in the
immediate surrender of the matter
to the presiding authorities and
any and all laws and or bylaws in
such jurisdiction as pursuant to
the full and speedy execution of
justice.

HENDO

You'd kick us back to the court.

S.B.Z.A. LIAISON
 (Nodding)
 God helps those who help
 themselves. What'll it be, boys?

HENDO
 (To Packwood)
 Fuck.
 (To the S.B.Z.A. Liaison)
 We comply.

S.B.Z.A. LIAISON
 Good.

The S.B.Z.A. Liaison turns and begins to exit the cell.

S.B.Z.A. LIAISON (CONT'D)
 JEROME here will see you processed
 out. They'll have all the
 informations about the whens and
 whys at the hub.

PACKWOOD
 (Calling after him)
 And so you know, the tiki bar
 wasn't our idea.

S.B.Z.A. Liaison waves and exits. The GUARD, JEROME, steps
 into the cell.

GUARD, A.K.A. JEROME
 Gentlemen?

Hendo and Packwood rise and exit the cell. We follow them
 through processing. They are told when and where to show up
 for their first appointments with the O.Z.W.V.A. therapists.
 They exit the station, ride in an autonomous people mover -
 somewhere between a toaster on wheels and a rickshaw - back
 to the tiki bar. Hendo pays, using an Apple-pay-like feature
 on his smartwatch device. Like with everything else, the cost
 is outrageous. Hendo and Packwood say their goodbyes, climb
 in their respective trucks, and leave. We travel with Hendo
 as he drives back to and arrives at his spartan apartment. He
 sits in front of his TV and scrolls through streaming
 services. In an open pop-out window, clips of news coverage
 from around the world play: clean water shortages, rising sea
 levels, species die-off, pro- and anti-remortal rallies in
 Europe and in Asia. Through these we get a better sense of
 the social and ecological state of the world, as well as the
 ZA's massive global scale and impact.

Hendo selects an episode of Langer Pratt's show and falls asleep to Pratt explaining a conspiracy theory about a shadow cabal within U.S. Government and private industry orchestrating a power grab on a massive scale.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT - WASHINGTON DC - AFTERNOON

Wealthy-looking patrons dine on expensive-looking dishes. Dr. Raab and his Assistant enter. Dr. Raab approaches the MAITRE D'. The maitre d' is clearly put off by the appearance of a remortal in his restaurant. Dr. Raab is looking around, oblivious.

MAITRE D'
(Coldly)
Can I help, sir?

DR. RAAB
(Warmly)
We're meeting some people.

Dr. Raab starts to move into the room. The maitre d' moves to block his path.

MAITRE D'
Sir?

Dr. Raab's Assistant steps around to deal with it.

ASSISTANT
Excuse me. Excuse me. Do you know
who this is? Do you know who you're
talking to?

The Campaign Coordinator, seated at a table across the room, notices the commotion. She stands and waves.

CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR
Sinjin!

Raab moves past the maitre d', oblivious. The assistant moves past as well, giving the maitre d' an "I told you so" look as she passes. They cross the room, under the interested eyes of the other patrons, and shake hands with the Campaign Coordinator.

CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR (CONT'D)
(waving to the waiter)
Sit down, sit down. What will you
drink?

DR. RAAB
 (Picking up the drink
 menu)
 Oooooo!

ASSISTANT
 (Taking the drink menu
 from Raab)
 He'll have a sparking water.

WAITER
 Very good.

CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR
 Thank you so much for meeting with
 me, Sinjin. I know how busy you
 are. And congratulations on the
 book. I absolutely loved it. Just
 thrilling.

DR. RAAB
 (Proud of himself.)
 Thank you. It's always a pleasure
 to meet a fan.

The Campaign Coordinator glances at the Assistant. We get the sense that she is now realizing Sinjin's obliviousness, but is undeterred by it. If anything, she is more enthusiastic. She turns back to Dr. Raab, smiling, and leans in.

CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR
 Listen, I know we just met each
 other Sinjin, but I have a feeling
 we're going to be very good
 friends. And as your very good
 friend, Sinjin, I'm hoping I can
 speak candidly to you about
 something that I think you'll find
 very exciting. Would that be all
 right, Sinjin?

Raab is more interested in the waiter who is bringing his drink. The bottle is "Greater Lake Sparkling Water," water from what is now the one massive Great Lake. He takes it and sucks loudly on the straw. His Assistant, forcing a smile, leans in and speaks for him.

ASSISTANT
 Yes, Dr. Raab always has time to
 talk to his friends about
 whatever's on their mind. Isn't
 that right, Doctor?

Raab nods on cue, though it is clear he's lost the thread of the conversation.

CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR

Well, that's very good to hear. Sinjin, I work for some very important people. These people are very concerned about the way things are going in this country right now. They see that something bad is happening to all of the things that made this country the wonderful place it's been for good, decent, hardworking people. People have been through so much, Sinjin, and the politicians in Washington, the ones these people count on to look after their best interests, they're not doing their job, Sinjin. They're using everything that's happened to their own advantage and they're not looking out for the people who they've been elected to represent - the people who need their help. Does that seem right to you, Sinjin?

Dr. Raab has become nearly hypnotized in listening to her, nodding along with her and shaking his head when she shakes her head while he drinks from his straw. He now noisily sucks up the last of his sparkling water and, glancing at his Assistant for encouragement, responds.

DR. RAAB

(Voice rising)

No, of course not. Of course not. That's terrible. It's terrible.

CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR

(Speaking softly,
soothingly)

I know, Sinjin. I know. But the good news is, the people I work for are in a position to do something about it. They're in a position to help all of those people who so desperately need it. But in order to do that, there's something they need.

DR. RAAB

(totally hooked)

What?

CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR

Well, they need someone the voting public believes in. Someone who people trust. Who has a whole career of humanitarian service behind him. Who people know beyond a shadow of a doubt has their best interests at heart.

DR. RAAB

(looking back and forth
between this assistant
and the campaign
coordinator)

Who? Who is it?

CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR

(Spreading her hands in a
"ta-da" gesture)

It's you!

Dr. Raab is momentarily too surprised to respond. Then he bursts out laughing. Remortal laughs are unsettling. Other patrons turn to look. The maitre d' frowns.

DR. RAAB

No!

CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR

(Quietly)

Yes, Sinjin.

DR. RAAB

Me? Really?

Dr. Raab's assistant, smiling apologetically at the Campaign Coordinator, pats Dr. Raab on the shoulder.

ASSISTANT

It's all right, Dr. Raab. Calm down.

DR. RAAB

(Tearing up)

It's just. I mean. So many things. Everyone has been so wonderful, I can't even tell you. When I woke up I had absolutely no idea what to expect. And then you all, everyone has just been so helpful and concerned.

(MORE)

DR. RAAB (CONT'D)

All those people who made those neat creams and things with my face on them, and Victor wrote that great book —

ASSISTANT

(To Dr. Raab)

It's all right.

(To Campaign Coordinator)

It's been a lot for him, with the book and everything.

CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR

Of course.

ASSISTANT

I think it's safe to say he's interested. What are the next steps?

CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR

Someone will contact your team with all the details. There'll be a press conference, Dr. Raab and the family, to make the announcement.

The mention of his family sparks something in Dr. Raab's memory, something that clearly was nowhere in his awareness a moment before. He looks concerned.

DR. RAAB

My family. Right. What about my family?

ASSISTANT

(To Dr. Raab)

Don't worry. We'll talk to your wife. We'll get everything worked out.

Dr. Raab's placid, simple, grateful smile returns.

DR. RAAB

Thank you so much. You're such a nice lady.

The Campaign Coordinator smiles at him and stands. The Assistant stands too. Dr. Raab, at her signal, stands as well. The Campaign Coordinator shakes hands with both of them.

CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR

We're going to do great things together, Sinjin.

(MORE)

CAMPAIGN COORDINATOR (CONT'D)

(To the Assistant)

We'll be in touch.

The Campaign Coordinator exits. We see her stop and say something to the maitre d'. The Assistant moves and takes the seat the campaign manager vacated and starts working on her device, updating Dr. Raab's team about the latest development. Dr. Raab sits back with a self-satisfied smile on his face. He idly raises the glass and drinks from the straw, and is surprised and disappointed to find that the glass is empty. His Assistant looks up from her device and stares at him with a blank expression. The maitre d' approaches the table.

MAITRE D'

Dr. Raab, I just wanted to offer my sincerest apologies for the confusion earlier. Of course we know who you are, and we are thrilled that you've chosen to dine with us.

He waves to the waiter, who arrives carrying an elaborate desert. Dr. Raab's eyes light up.

MAITRE D' (CONT'D)

Something from all of us to say, Welcome, and good luck in all your future endeavors.

Dr. Raab has already taken a bite. The desert has occupied his total attention. The maitre d' smiles at the Assistant.

MAITRE D' (CONT'D)

Well. Enjoy.

The maitre d' exits. Dr. Raab, chewing with his mouth full, makes an "Oh, it's so good face" at his Assistant. His Assistant gives him a placating smile, then snaps back to her work.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT 2

ACT 3

EXT. LARGE GATED COMMUNITY MCMANSION - WASHINGTON DC - DAY

Dr. Raab is arriving home, in a car driven by his Assistant. They pass through a large and ornate gate and up to the house, and stop outside the large front door.

INT. ASSISTANT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

ASSISTANT

You're sure you don't want me to come in with you?

DR. RAAB

I'll be fine.

ASSISTANT

This is big news. There's a lot to it. Maybe I should be there to help you explain it.

DR. RAAB

I said I've got it. Don't worry.

ASSISTANT

All right. See you tomorrow?

Dr. Raab gives her a quizzical, blank look.

ASSISTANT (CONT'D)

The photo shoot? The new Rederma ads?

DR. RAAB

Of course. I remember. You don't have to remind me of every little thing.

He opens the door and gets out.

DR. RAAB (CONT'D)

I'll see you tomorrow.

He closes the door and the assistant drives off. Dr. Raab goes up to the door and goes inside.

INT. DR. RAAB'S GATED COMMUNITY MCMANSION - CONTINUOUS

Two boys, early adolescent / tween age, are sitting at a kitchen island eating a snack prepared for them by a MAID, LUCE, and staring at devices. They don't look up when he comes in. DR. RAAB'S WIFE is coming toward the door, carrying her purse. She does not seem pleased to see him. She is indifferent with a hint of annoyed.

MRS. RAAB
Oh. You're home.

DR. RAAB
Yes.

MRS. RAAB
We expected you earlier. LUCE made dinner.

DR. RAAB
That's all right. I ate.

MRS. RAAB
Oh. Okay.

She looks at him impatiently. He is standing between her and the door. Her expression says, "Was there something else you wanted?"

DR. RAAB
I had a meeting today. An important meeting.

Mrs. Raab starts digging in her purse for something.

MRS. RAAB
Oh?

DR. RAAB
(Proud of himself)
I'm going to be a senator.

Mrs. Raab has found what she was looking for: makeup. She now starts touching it up in the hallway mirror beside where they are standing. When she finishes she turns to him, a tight-lipped smile on her face. She puts a hand on his arm.

MRS. RAAB
That's nice.

She moves past him, opens the door, and goes out. Dr. Raab turns to consider himself in the mirror. He looks for a moment at the scar on the side of his face, then stands up tall and smiles at himself.

DR. RAAB
Yes. Yes it is.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. BASEMENT OF THE LITTLE HOPE SURVIVORSHIP CHURCH -
WICHITA - MAGIC HOUR

Damon Waters' weekly meeting. Twenty or so attendees, remortals and GenPop, are gathering and taking their seats on folding chairs arranged into a circle, in a scene visually reminiscent of the remortals "group therapy" session from earlier in the episode. Waters sits next to BETHANY, a plucky young woman who has appointed herself as his assistant.

BETHANY
(checking her watch)
Mr. Waters? I think it's probably time.

WATERS
Thank you, Bethany.

Waters stands and clears his throat. The general noise and chatter in the room goes silent.

WATERS (CONT'D)
Thank you, everyone, for coming.
It's great to see some new faces.
Welcome. I feel like I should maybe take a minute and explain what this group is all about for anyone who's here for the first time. So as a lot of you probably know, for the past fifteen years, and all through the pandemic, I was a programmer at InClover. I worked on the nanobot technology that was used as part of the cure process. I was part of the team that actually worked on the AI program that has evolved into what people are now calling the GODBOT. And about three months ago I left InClover because I'd come to feel that, basically, that technology was moving out of the realm of science and into the realm of something that was beyond science.
(MORE)

WATERS (CONT'D)

I hesitate to use the word religion, but I know that for some of you that feels like absolutely the right word. I started this group and these meetings because I wanted to hear more of your stories and to have a place where like-minded people could meet and discuss some of what's happening and see if we can't all, as a group, make some sense of everything that's happened and is still happening. So with that being said, does anyone have any questions they'd like to ask? Or anything they'd like to share?

A remortal in the circle, CARRION, raises her hand. Waters points to her and she stands.

WATERS (CONT'D)

Hi. Welcome.

CARRION

Thank you.

WATERS

Please, introduce yourself.

CARRION

Hi. Thanks. I'm Carrion.

WATERS

Welcome, Carrie-Anne.

CARRION

No, sorry, it's Carrion. Like, you know... Carrion.

WATERS

Sorry. Welcome, Carrion.

CARRION

(Looking around nervously)
Thanks. Thank you. Anyway, my question is, like, and not to be blunt or whatever, but, What's the point? Like if this is supposed to be God talking to us or whatever, then what, I mean, what's it for? Because I just feel like, if God was talking to us, that would make things clear, wouldn't it?

(MORE)

CARRION (CONT'D)

(Gaining confidence as she speaks)

I mean, isn't that the whole idea? Like God reveals the Truth? And it just doesn't feel like things are clear. Like, at all. Like, nothing is clear.

The others have been listening to her closely. They turn now to Waters for an answer.

WATERS

Thank you, Carrion.

(He looks around the room.)

Does anyone have any thoughts?

No one says anything.

REMORTAL IN THE CIRCLE

You tell us!

The others look at the remortal who spoke. They seem to agree with him. Waters looks at him.

WATERS

Me tell you?

REMORTAL IN THE CIRCLE

Yes. You tell us. We don't know anything. You worked on this thing. You helped design it or you did whatever you did. We weren't there. We don't know how it works. You're the one who knows. You tell us what you think.

Others in the circle nod in agreement. Without really intending it, by the nature of the situation, Waters has been cast in the role of pseudo priest, defending or answering for the Godbot. He looks at Bethany. Bethany looks at him with the same expectancy as the others. We feel him waver. Will he take up and/or accept that role? He nods.

WATERS

So back when I was a little boy, I used to spend summers with my grandparents down in the foothills of the Appalachians in eastern Tennessee. Down there Sunday was the Lord's day, and that meant church from nine in the morning to five at night. No Sunday school.

(MORE)

WATERS (CONT'D)

One service, all of us together in that one hot, stuffy room for hours. I can remember that feeling, like it was just never going to end. The preacher would be up there going on and on about heaven and hell and sin... And I can remember looking around the room at all the people there, and being able to tell just by looking at them, having this sense that there was something they were all feeling that I just wasn't feeling. Because all the things the preacher was saying were just words to me. I could see trees and rocks and grass. I could see the wires running from the telephone poles to the houses. I could understand how science and technology, how these things we did to manipulate the physical world around us, how they worked in the world that I lived in. Even if I didn't know how, I had a sense that I could understand it. That there was no point at which it left the realm of the things I could see and touch and manipulate.

He looks around the room with a certain gravitas.

DAMON WATERS

But the music. The music in that church. When we all sang together, what I felt when I felt the power of all of those voices all together filling that room... I won't say I felt God's presence. But I felt something that I seemed to be more that just my brain interpreting the oscillations of sound waves against my eardrums. I felt something... beyond. I can't explain. And I'm not sure I even want to.

He turns to Carrion.

DAMON WATERS (CONT'D)

I don't know what the point of this is. I don't know if there's something more going on than just the oscillation of sounds waves against eardrums.

(MORE)

DAMON WATERS (CONT'D)

What I do know is that we've gone past the part that I can see, the part that's made up of things I can explain in terms of the things of this world. Beyond that, it's telling us how this thing goes. It's telling us what happens next.

For a moment no one says anything. Then this silence is broken by a commotion upstairs. There is the sound of doors opening, of many feet clomping on the ceiling above, and a muffled confusion of voices. The group members look around at each other, concern on their faces. Not long ago, such a disturbance would have signaled the arrival of a horde of zombies breaching a perimeter. Even now, with the concern about a reoccurrence not totally dispelled, there is a genuine anxiety about what this sound means. The gathered look to Waters for direction. Water holds up his hands and holds steady. There is the sound of the new arrivals descending the stairs. All eyes focus on the door to the room. The door bursts open and large crowd enters, mixed remortals and GenPop. They're excited and out of breath. The LEAD REMORTAL at the head of the pack focuses in on Waters.

LEAD REMORTAL

Yo! Are you Damon Waters?

WATERS

(Looking to Bethany for reassurance, then back)

Yes?

LEAD REMORTAL

(Relieved)

Awesome. We thought we'd missed it.

(Over his shoulder, to the crowd)

Hey everybody, they're down here!

There are cheers and whoops, sounds of celebration and excitement from the crowd as they spill into the room. They more than double the size of the assembly.

WATERS

(His surprise giving way to excitement)

Well welcome, everyone. Find a place. Anywhere is fine.

The new arrivals find folding chairs or sit on the floor. The arrangement, still circular, is now decidedly oriented in one direction: toward Damon Waters as the de facto leader.

Waters holds up his hands in an unintentionally(?) religious pose, and quiets his flock.

CUT TO:

INT. HENDO'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Hendo wakes up, gets out of bed, gets dressed and leaves. He drives through the semi-ruined city, following directions on his device, to the OFFICE OF ZED WAR VETERANS AFFAIRS, a nondescript unit in a half-burned-out strip mall. Packwood is already there, waiting by his truck. Hendo parks and gets out. He and Packwood nod to each other and go inside.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE OF ZED WAR VETERANS AFFAIRS (O.Z.W.V.A.) -
CONTINUOUS

The Office of Zed War Veterans Affairs is a throwback to an earlier time. Wood paneling and bad seating. The worst dentist office waiting room you've ever been to. A dour-looking receptionist sits behind a counter. Hendo and Packwood are waiting to be seen.

The door to the back opens and Packwood's appointed THERAPIST calls Packwood's name. Packwood stands.

HENDO

Good luck.

Packwood snorts. He follows the therapist through the door. Hendo waits. A minute later the door opens again and Hendo's appointed THERAPIST calls Hendo's name. Hendo raises his hand, rises, and follows her back to her office. Walking we see a hallway with a number of doors leading to private consultation rooms. We follow them into one of these. Hendo and the therapist sit in chairs facing each other. Commendations and pictures from a military service career cover the wall behind the therapist. She is clearly an established insider at the O.Z.W.V.A., not just a hired contractor. She reviews Hendo's case on her S.B.Z.A. tablet, nodding.

THERAPIST

Mr. Henderson?

HENDO

Yes, ma'am.

THERAPIST

Quite a record you have here.

HENDO
(Indicating the wall
behind her)
Not as impressive as yours.

THERAPIST
I'd rather focus on you.

HENDO
(Shrugs)
Suit yourself. But fair warning -
(He points to a picture of
the therapist and several
others surrounding ELWIN
MOSS, president and CEO
of InClover
Technologies.)
- I never met Elwin Moss.

THERAPIST
(Moving past it)
Do you want to tell me about what
happened last night?

HENDO
(Shrugs again, waves his
hand in the air.)
Nothing happened. Some taggers
started something and we finished
it.

THERAPIST
Taggers.

HENDO
You know what I mean.

THERAPIST
Let's talk about your health, for a
moment. How do you feel physically?

HENDO
I feel fine.

THERAPIST
No headaches? Brain fog?

HENDO
(Looking straight at her)
No ma'am.

The therapist nods and makes a note on her tablet.

THERAPIST

And how about emotionally?

HENDO

Emotionally?

THERAPIST

Yes. How do you feel emotionally?

HENDO

(Laughing)

I mean. Fine. I feel fine. I'm fine. We got in a bar fight. It's not this whole, I mean, it doesn't require whatever this is. There's no mystery, here.

THERAPIST

(Nodding)

So you're fine.

HENDO

Yes, ma'am.

THERAPIST

(Smiling at him and
setting her tablet
aside.)

Well then, there's nothing more we need to talk about.

HENDO

(Surprised and suspicious)

No?

THERAPIST

(Looking at her tablet
again.)

No, that's everything. No physical symptoms, no emotional disturbances. No flashbacks. No nightmares.

(She looks at Hendo.)

Right?

HENDO

(Hesitant)

Right.

THERAPIST

Unless there is something you want to talk about. Like -

(She consults her tablet)

- Dr. Maya Mae Davis, for example?

HENDO
What about her?

THERAPIST
You were close.

HENDO
So?

THERAPIST
Losing people we're close to is
very hard.

HENDO
Yeah, well, there's this new thing
going around where a lot of people
lost a lot of people they were
close to. It's called "war."

THERAPIST
(Agreeing with him)
That's life. Shit happens, right?

HENDO
Yeah, that's life.

THERAPIST
(Consulting her tablet.)
It says here that you pushed pretty
hard for information about the
incident.

HENDO
(Indignant)
The 'incident'? That's what we're
calling it? Okay. Yeah, I guess
maybe I pushed pretty hard for
information about 'the incident.'

THERAPIST
It says here that you threatened
one of your commanding officers.

HENDO
I didn't threaten him. I told him
what would happen if he didn't give
me the information I wanted.

THERAPIST
And what was that?

HENDO
I was going to find him and kick
the shit out of him.
(MORE)

HENDO (CONT'D)

(Suddenly frustrated)

Look, what was I supposed to do?
You tell me what I was supposed to
do. She goes off to some black site
on what's supposed to be a three-
day stint and the next thing I know
we're getting some bullshit
scrubbed-down statement about a
breach at what I can only assume is
the most secure facility in the
whole sector and she's gone and no
one up the chain of command has any
fucking thing to say about it.

THERAPIST

And you were angry.

HENDO

Fuck yeah I was angry.

THERAPIST

You're still angry.

HENDO

(Indicating the pictures
on the wall behind her)

Look. You've been there. You know
how it is. They ask us to put our
asses on the line and we do it.
That's what we signed up for. But
you owe it to the people who are
out there on the sharp end to shoot
fucking straight with them. We
can't do our job if we don't have
the intel, and we can't do our job
if we don't feel like we can get a
straight fucking answer about
what's going on.

THERAPIST

You feel like you weren't getting
the whole story.

HENDO

SHE did. SHE felt like that. I
didn't, I mean. At that time I was,
you know, I was head down and eyes
forward. I didn't listen. I didn't
care.

THERAPIST

You feel guilty about that.

HENDO

Look, I'm just a grunt. I don't know shit about shit. I'm not supposed to know. That's fine. I knew what I had signed up for. Maya didn't. She got into this thing because she thought she could do some good. And all I know is that she had the feeling that she wasn't getting the whole story. That there was something going on with the way InClover and Figment were using the zombies or the tech or they were experimenting on the zombies or something. I don't know. And not two weeks after she started asking questions about it she got this random order to go to some fucking black site somewhere. And she never came back. So do I feel guilty? Sure. I should have listened to her. I should have tried to protect her. Not that it would have made much of a fucking difference. A lot of people never came back from the Zed War. Lot of ways to die out there. But she fucking deserved better. She doesn't deserve to be dead right now. And do I think somebody should answer for that? Yeah. Yeah, I do. I did when I told Sergeant Willis that I'd kick his fucking teeth in if he didn't tell me, and I do now. So yeah, I'm angry, but so fucking what? What have you got in your little tablet that's going to change a single fucking thing I've said?

The Therapist starts to respond, but at that moment there's a commotion in the hall outside. Voices shouting. The therapist looks alarmed. She rises from her chair, leaving her tablet behind her, and goes out. The door remains slightly ajar. Through the opening we hear Packwood shouting. Hendo hesitates, and then he crosses quickly to the chair and starts scrolling through the still-open tablet. On the tablet he finds information about Maya Mae, and about the black site to which she was transferred. It is located outside St. George, Utah. Hendo flashes back to a moment right before Maya Mae was set to leave.

FLASHBACK

EXT. ZHAB MILITARY FIELD HOSPITAL - DAY

HENDO

Look, just tell me where you're going.

DR. MAYA MAE

(Shrugs)

I can't.

Hendo is disappointed, concerned. Maya Mae sees this. She goes into her pocket and comes out with a St. George pendant.

DR. MAYA MAE (CONT'D)

Here. Hang on to this for me.

Hendo takes the pendant from her.

HENDO

What is it?

DR. MAYA MAE

It's St. George. He's the patron saint of warriors. My dad gave it to me for protection, before I shipped out.

HENDO

Thanks.

DR. MAYA MAE

(Looking at him intently)

Who is it?

HENDO

What?

DR. MAYA MAE

Which saint is it?

HENDO

George. George? It's St. George.

DR. MAYA MAE

Right. St. George.

END FLASHBACK.

The sound of the argument is moving closer to the door. Packwood is shouting at his therapist. Hendo's Therapist is attempting to calm him. Another therapist is trying to escort Packwood out.

PACKWOOD

...then tell him. No, you tell him.
This sick fuck over here talking
about, Do I want to fuck my mother?
I don't want to fuck my mother.
I'll fuck his mother. You hear me,
you sick fuck? I'll fuck your
mother. No, I'm cool. I'm cool.
It's him. Somebody needs to get him
some therapy, not me.

From inside the office with Hendo, we hear the sound of Packwood's shouting get quieter as Packwood is escorted out of the building. Hendo returns the tablet and hurries back to his chair, just as his therapist reenters the room.

THERAPIST

I apologize for that.

HENDO

That's all right.
(He stands.)
So we good, here?

The Therapist looks at her tablet, then at Hendo. She sets the tablet down and crosses her hands in her lap.

THERAPIST

Therapy is a process, Mr.
Henderson.

HENDO

Sure. I understand that.

THERAPIST

I hope you do.

HENDO

So can I go?

The Therapist hesitates, then nods. She picks up the tablet and makes a note.

THERAPIST

Same time next week.

HENDO

Sure thing.

Hendo exits the building.

EXT. OFFICE OF ZED WAR VETERANS AFFAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Packwood is waiting for him in the parking lot.

HENDO

Good session?

Packwood spits on the pavement.

PACKWOOD

Fucking shrinks. Fucking bullshit.
You know what that asshole wanted
to know? He wanted to know if I
ever wanted to fuck my mother.

HENDO

I heard.

PACKWOOD

I asked him, Have you seen my
mother?

(He shudders)

What about you? You "learn"
anything?

HENDO

Yeah, I learned something.

PACKWOOD

Oh, yeah?

HENDO

I learned where Maya Mae died.

PACKWOOD

No shit. They told you?

HENDO

Snuck a peek at her tablet during
the commotion. Good work, soldier.

Packwood salutes.

PACKWOOD

It's an honor to serve. What do you
want to do?

Hendo gives him a look.

HENDO

You ready for a mission?

PACKWOOD

Sir, yes sir!

Hendo opens the door to his truck and climbs in.

HENDO
You think Thorpe wants in?

PACKWOOD
I think that little shit would
follow you to the gates of Valhalla
herself.

HENDO
Get in. We'll call him on the way.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. FANG AND SUNNY'S CRAPPY BASEMENT APARTMENT - NIGHT

FANG is sitting on the couch, down at the mouth, watching something on his device. SUNNY is pacing around, obviously restless. She plops down on the couch next to him.

SUNNY
Fang baby, let's do something.

FANGBONER
What do you want to do?

SUNNY
I don't know. Anything. It's Friday
night. I don't want to just sit
here. Let's go out.

FANGBONER
Where?

SUNNY
Anywhere. I don't care. Let's go -

She is interrupted by Fang's device ringing. There's an incoming video call from Big Shits. Fang answers.

FANGBONER
Hey Big.

Big Shits is riding in a very nice autonomous vehicle with Dork Breath, his hacker buddy.

BIG SHITS
Yo! You guys coming to the party or
what?

(MORE)

BIG SHITS (CONT'D)

DORK BREATH hacked us a ride for the night. I feel like the Obamas! Barackmobile, bitches!

He pans the device around the autonomous vehicle, showing the amenities and Dork Breath in the process.

BIG SHITS (CONT'D)

Come on. Get all prettied up and we'll pick you up. We're ten minutes out.

Fang is hesitant, but Sunny is clearly all-in.

SUNNY

C'mon, Fang baby. Let's go. I want to go. It'll be fun. Let's go!

FANGBONER

(Sighing)

All right, Big. We're in. See you in ten.

BIG SHITS

(Drinking a Mega Can of
Monster Energy Cristal
Champagne Drink)

Hells yeah! You're going to love it! Tonight's going to change your life!

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT IN FRONT OF AN EMPTY BIG BOX STORE -
EVENING.

It is raining. Hendo and Packwood are sitting in Hendo's truck. The bed of the truck is now filled with supplies. Thorpe arrives. He leaves his car and jogs over to Hendo's truck and gets in.

PACKWOOD

Fuck, man, where you been all Goddamned day? We were about ready to leave your fucking ass.

THORPE

Sorry. I was tied up. I didn't see my phone.

PACKWOOD

The fuck were you doing where you don't see your phone?

THORPE
I was busy, all right?

HENDO
All right, everybody cool it.

THORPE
Fine. So what is this?

PACKWOOD
Hendo?

HENDO
I know where Maya Mae died.

THORPE
Fuck. Where?

PACKWOOD
The fuck's it matter where? We're going. The truck's loaded. We're ready to go. The question is, are you coming or not?

HENDO
What do you say, Thorpe? Going to cover a lot of ground. Could use a good driver.

THORPE
Shit. You know I've got your back, sir.

PACKWOOD
See? What'd I tell you.

HENDO
All right, boys. Let's go.

They pull out of the parking lot and out onto the road, then onto the highway.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNNY AND FANG'S BUILDING. THEY'RE DRESSED FOR THE PARTY.

Sunny is clearly excited. Fang seems resigned. Big Shits and Dork Breath arrive and pick them up. They travel through the wasted city to the old rail yard on the outskirts.

EXT. OLD TULSA RAIL YARD REMORTAL PARTY - NIGHT

WIDE ESTABLISHING SHOT. THE UBER PULLS INTO THE OLD ABANDONED RAIL YARD. THE PARTY LOOKS LIKE THUNDERDOME MEETS BURNING MAN MEETS THE LOST BOYS BOARDWALK PARTY MEETS A HAUNTED HOUSE. HUGE SMILEY FACE BALLOON WITH ITS BRAINS EXPOSED FLOATS OVER THE TRAIN YARD.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. DANCE FLOOR ON TOP OF ABANDONED BOX CARS - CONTINUOUS. INSIDE IS A WILD MIX OF REMORTALS. HACKED ROBBERIES ROLL AROUND DISPENSING PARTY SUPPLIES.

Fang, Sunny, Big Shits, and Dork Breath enter and join the party. Remortals are everywhere: inside of box cars, on top of box cars, dancing, making out, toking hits of 'BOT from their Pneuma APV (Advanced Personal Vaporizers) Pens. The pens glow when they are inhaled on. The party looks like a field of fire flies with all the pens flickering on and off. A large, Korean-looking AFTERPARTY-ER who seems to know Big Shits and Dork Breath arrives and welcomes them. Big Shits introduces him as JURASSIC PARK.

FANGBONER
Jurassic Park?

JURASSIC PARK
Yeah. I figure because, you know, Korean?

FANGBONER
That's fucked up.

JURASSIC PARK
... said the man they called 'Fangboner.' You want to talk about that one?

FANGBONER
No I do not.

JURASSIC PARK
Hey, you guys want to join the 'BOT MOB? We're all going to get smacked at the same time.

He opens his hand, revealing a cluster of one-hitters. Sunny seems keen, as do Big Shits and Dork Breath, but Fang hesitates.

SUNNY
Come on, baby. I want to do this with you.

FANGBONER

This isn't that tainted shit that's been lobotomizing people is it?

AFTERPARTY-ER

No way, man. This is pure, military-grade Godsmack! The best. The same 'BOT the Dead Dusters sprayed.

Fang hesitates, then takes the device from Jurassic Park's hand. Everyone is pleased.

FANGBONER

Fuck it. How much?

JURASSIC PARK

Nothing, man. You're one of us.

This simple statement seems to hit home with Fang.

DORK BREATH

Ready?

ALL TOGETHER

Three... two... one!

They all inhale at the same time.

CAMERA FOLLOWS THE NANO BOTS INTO FANG'S LUNGS, INTO HIS BLOODSTREAM, THEN INTO HIS BRAIN AND HIS NEURAL RECEPTORS. THE BIOLOGY AND BRAIN TISSUE LOOKS DEGRADED. HIS GODBOT HALLUCINATION BEGINS. GOD IS STANDING BESIDE A WHITE FIERO, VANITY PLATS OMGWTF, PARKED ON AN EMPTY DESERT HIGHWAY. HE IS WEARING FULL '80S ON-HIS-WAY-TO-PLAY-RAQUETBALL REGALIA. THE CAMERA MOVES IN SLOWLY ON HIS FACE. THE SCENE IS SUFFUSED WITH AN ALMOST UNBEARABLE INTENSITY.

GODBOT

Get in.

INT. GOD'S WHITE PONTIAC FIERO

Fang gets in. There's a gym bag on the seat, a racquet ball racquet stuffed inside. Fang holds it on his lap. There's a dream catcher with a feather roach clip and a God's Eye hanging from the rearview mirror. God starts driving the stick shift car. The windshield becomes a panorama of location images: desert, city, outer space, rain forest, all before the destruction.

GODBOT
 (Checking his Rolex watch)
 Sorry for the rush, kid. I've got a
 one o'clock court time.

FANGBONER
 (smelling God's musty gym
 bag, making a pee-ew
 face)
 You play Racquet Ball?

Godbot pops a mixtape into the cassette deck. The Beatles
 "Across The Universe" starts playing.

GODBOT
 This is a very cool mixtape
 Nataraja made me. Do you like The
 Beatles?

FANGBONER
 I guess. Doesn't everybody?

"Jai Guru Deva, Om," "Nothin's Gonna Change My World," plays
 quietly in the background.

GODBOT
 I absolutely love them. One of the
 better things I've done, if you
 don't mind me saying. Who's your
 favorite Beatle, kid?

FANGBONER
 Um, maybe Ringo?

GODBOT
 Really? Morose, navel-gazing
 motherfucker like you? Ringo? The
 fun one? I had you pegged for a
 John guy. I'm a George guy myself.
 Did you know that George's mother
 listened to Radio India the whole
 time he was In Utero? She thought
 the Sitar would bring calm and
 peace to the child growing inside
 her. I just heart that kind of
 stuff.

Godbot taps his finger on an imaginary button in the air. A
 lit-up heart appears and floats out of the Fiero's sun roof,
 and is carried off by the wind.

FANGBONER

(Looking around in
confusion, squinting and
trying to concentrate.)

Um... no. I didn't know that. Where
are we going?

GODBOT

(Moving past the
question:)

Did you also know that George, like
a million other English Georges,
was named after the patron saint of
England, SAINT GEORGE?

Outside of the Fiero windshield the Utah dessert scenery
rolls by. Mushroom clouds explode in the distance. Windblown
mushroom clouds all around. Tumbleweeds on fire.

GODBOT (CONT'D)

Do you know the story of Saint
George and the Dragon, Fang?

FANGBONER

(Still squinting and
confused, now yawning and
getting tired, like he's
being told a bedtime
story.)

I don't think so.

GODBOT

(Now doing his worst Sean
Connery impression)

Saint George was a champion of
Christ, my boy. A warrior. And once
upon a time, a dragon cast it's
evil shadow over the land. The
dragon promised it would bring
destruction on the peasants if they
didn't pay his ransom. So they paid
in livestock and trinkets until
they ran out. And then they paid in
human sacrifice. Until one day a
sacred little girl of the village
was called to the sacrificial
alter. The peasants had had enough,
so they knelt and prayed together
for salvation, and Saint George and
his army appeared, and Saint George
slew the greedy dragon. Do you
believe in dragons, my boy?

The smell from Godbot's musty gym bag that started the tickle of a sneeze has been building. Fang is about to sneeze.

FANGBONER

Nooo.

GODBOT

Well, I'm going to need you to believe, because they're all too real. In fact there's one that's threatening the world, and I'm afraid only you can slay it.

Godbot nods to the windshield. Through the windshield Fang sees a rapid series of images: a ZHab facility, catatonic zombies being experimented on, equipment marked with InClover and Figment logos everywhere. Fang looks at Godbot in confusion and horror.

FANGBONER

Whaaat?

Godbot stops the car suddenly, reaches over his gym bag on Fang's lap and opens the passenger's side door of the Fiero.

GODBOT

I'm afraid that here's where you get out, my boy.

The background behind Fang grows brighter and brighter. Fang is being sucked into it.

FANGBONER

(Unable to hold back the sneeze any longer)

Whatttttccccchhhhhhhooooo!

SMASHCUT:

FANG, SUNNY, DORK BREATH, BIG SHITS, AND JURASSIC PARK ALL SNEEZE AT THE SAME TIME, ENDING THEIR HALLUCINATION. EACH ONE LOOKS AFFECTED IN THEIR OWN WAYS.

Fang is stunned, in shock. Sunny turns to him, and her happy expression falls. She takes him by the shoulders.

SUNNY

Fang? Fang baby? Are you okay? Can you hear me?

Fang snaps out of it. He looks at her.

FANGBONER

I think... I think I have to go.
Now. I think I have to go now.

SUNNY

What happened? You're freaking me out.

FANGBONER

(Getting excited)

I'm fine, but I have to go. I have to. I can't explain. But I have to go. We have to go.

Jurassic Park, Dork Breath, and Big Shits are all looking at him, now.

SUNNY

Okay, baby. Calm down. Go where?

FANGBONER

(Searching in his mind.)

Um. Saint George. Saint George? Is that a place?

BIG SHITS

All right. Slow down, buddy. You freaking out?

FANGBONER

No, Big. I'm good. I'm. I'm really good. I'm great.

BIG SHITS

Okay, cool. Let's get a drink and chill out.

FANGBONER

No, Big. I'm serious. We've got to go. Now. I need to go now.

Dork Breath has been doing something on his tablet. He now moves into the circle.

DORK BREATH

So according to what I'm seeing, St. George is the name of a town in Utah? It's a "Downwinder's Town."

(Reading from his tablet.)

Apparently the whole town is radioactive.

(MORE)

DORK BREATH (CONT'D)

They use to test atomic bombs about a hundred miles from there back in the '50s, out in the dessert, but the wind blew the radioactive fallout all over the surrounding towns. Caused all kind of fucked-up shit. Strange birth defects and nasty cancers. I guess there was a big lawsuit about it back in the early '20s.

(He lowers the tablet and looks at Fang.)

That sound like the place?

Fang has been nodding his head while Dork Breath talks.

FANGBONER

No, that's exactly it. The mushroom clouds. There were mushroom clouds and tumbleweeds on fire. That's it.

BIG SHITS

Why in the fuck would you want to go there? I mean, is there even anything there?

DORK BREATH

(Looking at his tablet again.)

Yeah, this is weird.

He shows them the screen. The whole area around St. George is a satellite blackout with the InClover logo.

FANGBONER

Holy Shit. Holy shit. That's it. That's totally it.

BIG SHITS

Wait, I must still be high. Slow it down for me. You want to go to a radioactive town that's also a fucking InClover property that's covered by a satellite blackout.

FANGBONER

No, Big. I don't want to do it. I want US to do it.

BIG SHITS

US?!? What the fuck you talking about, us? I graduated from InClover's little finishing school.
(MORE)

BIG SHITS (CONT'D)

I did not like the teachers. I'm not trying to go back.

FANGBONER

You're the only one of us who knows how to drive.

BIG SHITS

(Annoyed at the fact that he's relenting.)

Shit, man. That's how you're going to do me?

(To Sunny)

You into this?

She looks at Fang. Seeing him finally excited by something is clearly fills her heart. For the moment, it is the most important thing to her. She turns to Big Shits and shrugs.

SUNNY

You only live twice, right?

BIG SHITS

You're going to YOLT me? That's how it is? Shit.

(Fang and Sunny are looking at him expectantly. He gives in.)

Damn it. Fine! I'm in.

Fang and Sunny kiss. Jurassic Park is grooving on the positive vibes. Big Shits looks at Dork Breath.

BIG SHITS (CONT'D)

What do you think? Can you get us a car?

DORK BREATH

Are you asking me to break the law?

BIG SHITS

You know, you really do have dork breath. Whoever z-tagged you nailed it.

DORK BREATH

(Blowing him a kiss)

Fuck you too, asshole.

JUMP CUT TO:

EXT. INCLOVER FULFILLMENT CENTER PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

It's early morning. The sun is coming up. Sunrise is never beautiful, just hot and smoggy. The autonomous vehicle carrying Dork Breath, Fang, Sunny, and Big Shits pulls up to the fence surrounding a seemingly endless ocean of InClover delivery vehicles. They are far from any building: out here there is just fence, asphalt, and rows and rows of vans. Dog houses are scattered throughout the lot. These house the SECURI-CLOVERS, the rule enforcement version of the emotional support Clover we met earlier. Fang, Sunny, and Big Shits climb out. Dork Breath gives them instructions from inside while working on his tablet.

DORK BREATH

Okay. According to what I'm seeing, all of the vans in this section have been decommissioned, but that doesn't mean InClover's just going to let you drive one out of here. I can patch the tracker in the system and I can spoof you a digital key, but the system running the Securi-Clovers is on its own encrypted server. I'm seeing some chatter on the dark web about some kind of squeaky toy hack, but I haven't found anybody to throw me the code. Maybe just a hacker myth. On top of that, there ain't no guarantee about the battery life on any of these bad boys, and I suspect you're going to find yourselves hard up for charging stations out there in the Zone. You really sure you want to do this?

He looks at Fang. Everyone else looks at Fang. Fang looks straight back at them. They turn back to Dork Breath. It's been decided.

DORK BREATH (CONT'D)

All right. Don't say I didn't warn you.

He types something on his tablet. There is a "ping" from Big Shits' pocket. Big Shits pulls out his device and looks at the screen. The screen displays a scannable code.

DORK BREATH (CONT'D)

That's your key. It should get you through the gates, too. Four rows in, all the way down at the end.

(MORE)

DORK BREATH (CONT'D)

Stay low, stay quiet. Now get going
before someone sees us.

Fang, Sunny, and Big run to the fence, then along to a gate. Big Shits runs his code under the scanner and the gate opens. They run inside. They make their way around and between the vans, ducking and hiding, tip toeing. They can see Securi-Clovers sitting, standing, and lying in 'standby' mode. A yellow light blinks on their "collars."

BIG SHITS

(Whispering)

Man, I fucking hate those Securi-Clovers. They were always barking at me when I was getting my van. Fucking racist ass robot dogs.

FANGBONER

Shhhhhh!

A Securi-Clover's ears perk up at the sound. The yellow light on its collar turns green. Around it, other Securi-Clovers come online. Sunny, Fang, and Big Shits don't notice. The Securi-Clovers stalk, then break into a run, barking and yipping. The gang sees them and flees. Back in the autonomous vehicle, Dork Breath curses and starts typing furiously on his device. Meanwhile, the gang arrive at the end of the row, at what they think is the van, but the code on Big Shits' device doesn't work. He tries again and again, moving in a panic from van to van. Fang and Big Shits are arguing frantically about which van it's supposed to be. As this happens they are being encircled by a dozen growling Securi-Clovers.

SUNNY

Ummm, guys? Are you seeing this?!

Big scans the code again and this time the van's doors click unlocked.

BIG SHITS

I got it! I got it!

One of the SECURI-CLOVERS shoots a zip tie/leash that wraps around Big's ankle and starts to reel him in. Fang and Sunny rush to his side and start pulling him back. Big Shits is the center of a brutal game of tug-of-war.

BIG SHITS (CONT'D)

Aww, hell no! Fuck this, man!

FANGBONER

If your buddy can do more than fuck
with RoBers, now would be the time
to prove it!

All at once the Securi-Clovers stop, sit, and roll over. They look happy. They look like they're all playing with something that isn't there. Back in the autonomous vehicle, Dork Breath sits back and looks at his screen triumphantly.

DORK BREATH

Yeah! Fucking squeaky toy mode,
motherfuckers! Now who's got dork
breath?

Sunny and Fang help Big Shits up. They slide open the van door. The van is full of packages.

SUNNY

Are we sure these are
decommissioned?

BIG SHITS

Don't ask me, I'm just the driver.

He climbs into the driver's seat and waves his device in front of a code reader. The engine starts and the lights come on. The radio even comes on, playing C.C.R.'s 'Bad Moon Rising.' Sunny slides the van's side door closed.

BIG SHITS (CONT'D)

Oh, I love this song.

He looks back over his shoulder, bobbing his head with the music.

BIG SHITS (CONT'D)

Everybody in?

Fangboner looks at Sunny, then back at Big Shits. He is grinning from ear to ear. Sunny is smiling, too.

FANGBONER

We're in.

BIG SHITS

Right on. Let's go.

WE CLIMB INTO AN OVERHEAD / DRONE SHOT AS THE VAN LEAVES THE ROW AND TRAVELS TO THE EXIT. BIG SHITS EXTENDS HIS DEVICE THROUGH THE WINDOW, AND THE SCANNER READS THE CODE AND OPENS THE GATE. THE VAN PULLS OUT. WE ALSO SEE DORK BREATH'S AUTONOMOUS VEHICLE LEAVE, AND THE SECURI-CLOVERS ROLLING AND PLAYING WHERE WE LEFT THEM. THE VAN PULLS OFF ONTO AN OPEN EMPTY ROAD AS THE SUN CRESTS THE HORIZON AND C.C.R. PLAYS.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF ACT 3