

INT. STUDIO BACKROOM - DAY

A STUDIO BACKROOM, full of life and chaos. An interview is about take place.

The AD makes a signal and moves through a curtain into -

INT. STUDIO - DAY

The studio is well lit. There is movement and life. The NEWS ANCHOR (40s professional) sits behind a desk, straightening out notes.

AD

We are live in five, four, three, two...

NEWS ANCHOR

Good evening. Breaking news as we can confirm that the internet, which was disabled in the global blackout eleven months ago, will be returning in thirty days.

(pause)

This comes as leaders of the world confirmed at yesterday's UN assembly that the time has come for the world to be reconnected.

(pause)

As of today, it is unclear if the Great Reconnect, as it as been termed, will reinstate the internet as it was eleven months ago.

(pause)

Joining us is tech mogul Evren Grayson one of the influential figures behind the Great Reconnect.

GRAYSON (40s, casual) sitting at the desk, nods at the News Anchor.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

Miss Grayson, thank you for joining us. Could you start by telling us, why now, why the Great Reconnect?

GRAYSON

A great question. Simply put, our society has become stagnant. The internet was one of humanities greatest creations.

(MORE)

GRAYSON (CONT'D)

We no longer feel that this needs to be safeguarded from the general populace.

NEWS ANCHOR

Well, obviously, the disconnect was introduced to stop the uncontrolled spread of misinformation and subsequent manipulation of citizens. What assurances do you have that we won't be in the same position again in a years time.

GRAYSON

Look, Richard, it's important to understand. We have come a long way since then. Look outside, look at what the people of the world have become. We've returned to the dark ages. I refuse to believe that there will be much opposition to the Great Reconnect. And if there is... so may it show itself.

INT. DANIEL'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The room is dark and untidy, curtains drawn tight. Newspapers and photos cover one wall, takeaway boxes and bottles scattered on the floor. A muted TV glows in the corner, Grayson's face frozen mid-speech.

DANIEL (30s, scruffy) leans forward and glares at Grayson's face on TV. A loathing expression.

He takes and downs a glass of whiskey. Grimaces. And stands. In the background the TV continues.

NEWS ANCHOR (V.O)

The cyber terrorist group 404 have refused to comment on the Great Reconnect...

Standing reveals a photo of LUCY (Early 30s) pinned to the wall. She is smiling. The photo is surrounded by newspaper articles and string. He takes the photo from the wall.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

Daniel, dressed in hooded top, walks tentatively down the alleyway. He notices some artwork on the wall (a 404 errorist message) and shakes his head.

As he approaches, he hears mumbling. A shadow emerges from the darkness and steps in front of Daniel. It is another hooded figure a DIAL-DEALER.

DIAL-DEALER

Lost?

Daniel shakes his head. Behind the Dial-dealer is a DIAL-HEAD sitting, rocking back and forth whilst studying a smart phone. Daniel looks at him with disgust.

DIAL-DEALER (CONT'D)

What do you need?

Daniel extracts the photo of Lucy and shows it to the Dial-dealer.

DIAL-DEALER (CONT'D)

Ahh I see... a location?

Daniel shakes his head.

DANIEL

Just a photo.

The Dial-dealer chuckles.

DIAL-DEALER

Photos. Are you joking?

(pause)

What are you? The offline police?

Daniel snaps and seizes the Dial-dealers jacket and slams him against the wall. The Dial-head remains oblivious.

DANIEL

Just give me what I fucking asked for.

DIAL-DEALER

Okay! Okay, okay...

The Dial-dealer reaches into his pocket and pulls out a smart phone. Daniel snatches it and releases him. He then steps back and walks away into the night.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Daniel sits alone in the dark. He sits looking the phone. He is studying Lucy's social media profile and finds a photo of the two of them together. They are arm in arm smiling.

Daniel takes a drink out of a bottle and grimaces.

INT. DANIEL'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

The sound of a phone ringing. Daniel slowly sits, nursing a hangover. He reaches angrily for the phone.

DANIEL

Yeah?

POSTMAN STEVE (V.O.)

Danny! Where you at?

Daniel groans and looks at his watch. He's late.

POSTMAN STEVE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Did you hear the news? It's coming back!

DANIEL

Yeah... I heard. Tell the boss, I'll be late... I've got an appointment.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Daniel sits at a table, he sips coffee and looks around the room. A TV in the corner of the room shows the interview with Grayson.

Daniel glares before someone sits opposite. It is TOM.

TOM

The prodigal son returns.

DANIEL

Don't call me that.

TOM

You seem to forget that your reputation is still very strong in our community.

DANIEL

I noticed your painters handiwork around the city.

TOM

They do good work.

DANIEL

Good work? It's meaningless.

TOM

It's a message.

DANIEL

A message they don't listen to.

TOM

Well why don't you come talk to us... tell us what we need to do.

DANIEL

You know what you need to do.

Tom sighs and is apprehensive.

TOM

We already do so much -

DANIEL

But not enough! You've got the right idea... but you were never willing to go far enough.

Pause.

TOM

I'm being interviewed by a reporter who-

Daniel throws up his arms in frustration.

DANIEL

Words... more words. Words won't stop people dying Tom.

Daniel stands.

TOM

Daniel... don't let it consume you.

Daniel is angry. He exits the building being watched by KEITH and WOMAN.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Daniel walks away from the CAFE. He looks back and notices KEITH and WOMAN watching him. He turns to talk away quicker and they follow. Sensing this he turns this into a sprint and darts down an alleyway.

They sprint after him. A chase ensues before they round a corner and Daniel has disappeared.

They look around but there is no sign. They sprint off.

A beat.

A bin lid opens, and Daniel emerges. He looks around and climbs out. Before leaving, he extracts the Dial-dealer phone and drops it in the bin.

INT. DANIEL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel sits alone in the dark. He studies the walls around him. He occasionally reaches out and writes notes. The TV is on in the background.

INTERVIEWEE (V.O.)

We are concerned, our libraries have seen a great resurgence in memberships, people are reading books again... with the internet coming back, yes we are worried what this will mean for us.

REPORTER (V.O.)

And libraries are not the only institutions concerned. However some are more optimistic.
(pause)
Mr Peacock has written in to say that the return of dating apps will be a godsend.

Daniel freezes mid writing and turns to face the TV. His jaw clenches.

INT. THERAPY ROOM - DAY

The room is open and bare. Four chairs in the middle of the room in a small square.

Daniel sits alongside two others OLIVIA and IAN whilst the INTERNET THERAPIST sits opposite, holding a notepad.

OLIVIA

Doom scrolling, that's what scares me. I've been recovering and now it's coming back... I'm scared. How will I resist?

INTERNET THERAPIST

Perhaps think about what has given you joy these past eleven months. Consider distractions that have worked, and how you can use them after the Great Reconnect.

Olivia smiles weakly and nods.

IAN

I've missed the language learning models... I've been using those Natural Intelligence guys... but they don't help in the same way.

INTERNET THERAPIST

I reckon there'll be many who'd agree with you there.

Ian nods. The Internet Therapist looks to Daniel.

INTERNET THERAPIST (CONT'D)

Daniel, only one week to go. Anything to share?

Daniel looks around and shakes his head.

INTERNET THERAPIST (CONT'D)

Nothing at all? Nothing that worries you?

DANIEL

If you were to take a guess... what do you think most people feel?

INTERNET THERAPIST

We're not here to talk about them... this is for you.

DANIEL

I know, but humour me.

The Internet Therapist thinks.

INTERNET THERAPIST

I think most are excited, I guess many will feel like we were frozen... now the future is exciting.

DANIEL

See that's the issue... we were so blind before... and now that it's coming back we will blind again. People forget, they always forget the dangers.

INTERNET THERAPIST

And what are these dangers?

Daniel takes a long pause.

DANIEL

The internet lets predators thrive.
Anonymous, free and without
consequence.

INTERNET THERAPIST

Did you encounter this personally?

Daniel stares silently.

DANIEL

You know... men like Grayson...
they don't care. They don't think
about these things. They don't care
about us.

INTERNET THERAPIST

He says this is a new chapter. A
fresh start.

DANIEL

Yeah... it's fresh... until the old
ways continue... and we suffer the
consequences.

INT. DANIEL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Daniel stares at the photo of Lucy. For the first time, the
headings of the newspaper cuttings are revealed.

Headlines read *'Woman murdered'* and *'Lucy Strickland suspect
still at large'*

Daniel takes a deep drink of whiskey. Sitting in a chair
staring at the wall.

A beat.

He stands and moves over to a chest in the corner. He kneels
down and removes the boxes covering it. He opens it and
reaches down. Slowly, he pulls out a pistol.

Daniel is nervous. He is not trained with the weapon. With a
novice hand he stands and aims it.

EXT. APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

Daniel stands outside the APARTMENT BLOCK. Grayson is inside.
He observes two men (SECURITY) in suits climb out of a car
and enter the building.

Daniel takes a deep breath and then enters.

INT. GRAYSON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Grayson walks through into her kitchen. She drinks a green smoothie on the counter. She stares out across the city, his expression blank.

There is a creek behind her. She freezes.

Daniel steps out of the shadows holding a pistol, aiming.

GRAYSON

I guessed it was only a matter of time. I thought this would've happened much sooner. And if you've got past security there's probably no point in me calling them.

She turns to look at Daniel, she is calm.

GRAYSON (CONT'D)

What are you? UpSta? FBO? 404?

DANIEL

None.

Grayson nods.

GRAYSON

An individual then.

(she moves forward)

Mind telling me why you're here?

DANIEL

The Great Reconnect.

GRAYSON

I see... You know, it's strange. Some people think the internet saved lives. Others swear it killed more than it ever prevented.

DANIEL

That's not strange. That's truth.

GRAYSON

Truth depends on where you were standing at the time.

DANIEL

I know exactly where I was standing. Next to a grave.

GRAYSON

So was I.

Daniel hesitates.

DANIEL

Then you should understand why I'm here.

GRAYSON

I didn't say I lost someone before the blackout. It was after.

DANIEL

After?

GRAYSON

(nods)

A hospital without connection is a blind machine. One error... and a life is gone.

Daniel tightens his grip on the pistol.

DANIEL

And now you want to switch it back on? To let it all start again?

GRAYSON

Or to stop it from happening again.

DANIEL

(starting to shake)

You think connection saves lives? That it protects people?

GRAYSON

I know it can.

DANIEL

(quiet, bitter)

That's not what it did for her.

GRAYSON

Her?

DANIEL

Lucy. My wife. She thought she'd found someone... someone better. A stranger with the right smile and the right words. He wasn't better. He wasn't even real.

GRAYSON

I'm sorry. Truly. I wish I could tell you that pulling that trigger will fix it.

DANIEL
(through gritted teeth)
It'll stop you.

GRAYSON
No. It won't. Someone else will
step in. The system will still come
back. And you'll still wake
tomorrow with Lucy gone.

Daniel falters. His eyes glassy, hand trembling.

GRAYSON (CONT'D)
If you've been running as I did...
stop. The road never ends.
(fighting back emotion)
Face it if you can.

Daniel is breathing heavily.

GRAYSON (CONT'D)
Do what you came here to do.

Daniel stares at her. His finger hovers on the trigger. He
exhales, broken.

There is a long pause. And then—

GUNSHOT!