

# **DISTRICT FIVE**

by

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EXT. DARK ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

A drug addict sits leaning to the wall on the right. Bright purple neon lights seep through the opening of the alleyway, illuminating his face. He appears to be half asleep.

Suddenly, a dark figure hastily enters the alley. The addict is awoken. THE STRANGER sits down opposite to him, clutching their stomach. He blinks repeatedly, trying to quickly adjust his eyes to the light, to see who this person might be.

He tries to speak to them but is cut off by the sounds of stomping of metal feet before the words come out of his mouth. He hides behind a dumpster and waits for it to pass. Eventually the sound dies out. He comes out from hiding only to discover THE STRANGER is gone, and a towering hunk of metal stands where he once sat, its synthetic crimson eyeballs scanning the place. He quickly hides himself again.

A cold sweat runs through him as he hears the loud, disturbing sound of mechanical parts die out and eventually cease to exist. He comes back out. Nothing this time. He is completely sober now. As he wipes his sweat away, he notices little bits of red reflecting off of the dumpster's surface. He gulps. BANG.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

OFFICER J wakes up, startled by a loud noise. He is a man in his 40s. His expression shifts from alert to annoyed in a matter of moments. He has heard this before. Too many times, in fact.

ALICE  
(groggy)  
What's wrong, honey?

J  
Nothing, nothing. Go back to sleep.

ALICE  
You know you can sleep upstairs,  
right? It won't be as bad maybe.

J  
No. I'm fine. Really. Just not used  
to it yet. In time... In time.

ALICE  
I'm not sure that's a good thing.

They lie back down together. The sound of raindrops beating off windows is heard. Suddenly a phone rings.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

A glowing pink sign above a door that seems to say "Tux's" flickers in the rain. The light on the letter "X" does not seem to work. An empty dilapidated bar can be seen through the glass on the door.

RIVER enters the bar. She is a tall woman with streaming white hair that covers the right side of her face. She is wearing a trenchcoat. She takes a seat at the counter.

BARTENDER

(smiling)

So, what can I get you today?

RIVER

I don't have time for this. Call him out.

BARTENDER

Uh, I'm sorry I don't know what you mean.

RIVER

Get TUX. It's urgent, and I don't remember the words.

The bartender looks at her for a moment and then exits. Shortly after he brings out the man known as Tux.

TUX

RIVER! Been a while, eh?

He leans on the counter. River avoids looking him in the face. He grabs her chin and raises her head upwards.

TUX

Care to tell me why you don't remember the code and why you look like shit?

River moves her face away in a sudden gesture.

RIVER

I need a gig, and I need it quick. No time for explaining.

TUX

Your old man again?

RIVER

Yeah. He's slipping.

TUX

Sure, I got a couple holos just yesterday. Let me see what I can dig up for you. You looking for something big? Anything specific?

RIVER  
Anything, TUX. Anything.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT

OFFICER J drives his car through a homeless-ridden street. A few items are thrown at the car by bystanders but he ignores them. A small picture of a teenage girl sits at the dashboard. As he brings his car to a halt outside Tux's, he sees RIVER walk out, hastily. He stares at her for a moment, unaware another man is knocking on his window.

OFFICER JIM  
HEY!

J snaps out of it. He opens the car door to let his colleague in. He tries to take one last look at RIVER as OFFICER JIM is getting in, but she seems to be gone.

OFFICER JIM  
(mockingly)  
Welcome back Mister. How's the  
dream world looking today?

J  
(annoyed)  
Not in the mood.

OFFICER JIM  
Sure, whatever. God forbid a man  
tries to lighten the mood in this  
shithole once in a while.

J  
Just tell me what's so important.  
Rather get it over with soon and go  
home.

OFFICER JIM  
Yeah, I don't think that's  
happening today. Security detail.  
Apparently some big shot from the  
the upper levels is here.

J  
What's a corpo rat doing all the  
way down here in the muck of  
District Five? Thought they didn't  
like to bother with the likes of  
us.

Two drunkards can be seen fighting not too far away from the car, just outside the bar. J shifts his gaze to them.

OFFICER JIM (O.S.)

I don't know. I'm not paid enough to ask. Anyway, it's gonna be a tough job. Or long at the very least. Every motherfucker within a 20 mile radius is gonna be gunning for that scumbag. J! J! JULES!

JULES snaps out of it.

OFFICER JIM

(sighs)

We're gonna get zeroed if you keep that up. Let's go.

They drive away. One of the drunkards lays dead on the pavement.

CUT TO:

DREAM SEQUENCE - EXT. LAWN - MORNING

SLOW MOTION: A girl strolls through a lawn on a bright sunny morning. Her parents following behind her. The parents' faces are not visible. She gets quite a bit ahead of them and turns around, only to find them gone. She is puzzled. Suddenly her father's hands come up from behind and cover her eyes. She starts laughing.

CUT TO:

INT. ? - NIGHT

A man's dirty hand smothers the girl as she cries. He takes his hand off and she screams. It is inaudible. Suddenly she winces as a splatter of blood covers her face. A static sound slowly builds up and when it is at its peak...

END DREAM SEQUENCE

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

RIVER stands naked and motionless under the shower, staring at the bathroom floor. She is missing a right arm. Her face is scarcely visible due to her long hair in the way. She turns off the water.

CUT TO:

INT. RIVER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

We see RIVER standing in front of a mirror from the back. The camera is slowly moving towards her. An EKG monitor can be heard faintly beeping in the background. She is wearing a tank top. She attaches a bionic right arm and ties her hair in a bun. She dons her trenchcoat. She loads a gun and exits the frame. An out of focus hospital bed can be seen in the

reflection of the mirror.

CUT TO:

INT. LUXURIOUS VEHICLE - NIGHT

A little girl wearing headphones listens to music as she stares out the window into the neon city below. Three other people are seated in the vehicle. The driver, a bodyguard, and an obese man sitting next to her. It seems to be her father. His eyes glow blue as he stares at his holopad.

THE FATHER

How much longer till we get there?

DRIVER

Just a few more minutes, sir.

THE FATHER

I trust you've taken the necessary precautions? I would prefer not to catch something while I'm here.

BODYGUARD

Everything's taken care of, sir. You'll be safe.

THE FATHER

Good. What of the protection? Surely it can't just be you.

BODYGUARD

I've received word that we'll be getting two local officers. They should already be there.

THE FATHER

(annoyed)

What use do I have for beat cops, that too from the lowest fucking level?

BODYGUARD

Rest assured, sir. They're NOVAs. Quite a bit more modded up than your average D-5 rat. If that is some consolation.

THE FATHER

It isn't. Keep a VULK on standby.

BODYGUARD

As you wish.

The car cruises through the sky. Faint music can be heard coming from the girl's headphones. She seems to have fallen asleep.

CUT TO:

EXT. EMPTY ROAD - NIGHT

The vehicle lands outside an old, dilapidated warehouse. OFFICER J and his partner stand outside the warehouse, sharing a cigarette. They throw it away as the passengers approach.

The bodyguard shakes OFFICER JIM'S hand.

OFFICER JIM

Nice to meet you. I'm Jim, this is my partner Jules.

J

I prefer J.

OFFICER JIM

Right. Don't mind him. So, how's it looking?

BODYGUARD

Clear so far. We'd better go inside. Too risky out here in the open.

The vehicle lifts off and leaves. OFFICER JIM tries to greet the father but he is ignored. They make their way into the warehouse.

CUT TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The warehouse is dark and damp. OFFICER JIM tries to switch on the lights but is stopped by the bodyguard.

BODYGUARD

We'd rather play it safe. Minimal lights or sound. Let's do a sweep first.

OFFICER JIM

We took care of that.

BODYGUARD

Again.

J stares at the girl sitting on her father's lap, looking around as the other two men sweep the area. She notices J looking at her. He averts his gaze.

BODYGUARD

Area's clear, sir. We can begin.

THE FATHER

Right.

The two NOVAs stand in the back, looking at the corpo as he fiddles with his holopad. A nearby container suddenly pops

open, revealing a bright red glow. The bodyguard and his employer whisper something to each other as a grin comes onto the corpo's face.

J

Any guesses as to what's in there?

OFFICER JIM

No. And I don't plan to guess.  
Better that we don't know.

The two men join the officers again as the container closes shut. THE FATHER seems to be happy.

THE FATHER

I think we're done here. Call in the transport. RIO? Where's RIO?

J

She was-

THE FATHER

(infuriated)

YOU INCOMPETENT FUCKS WHERE'S MY DAUGHTER?

BODYGUARD

Calm down, sir, she must be arou-

BANG. The bodyguard goes limp. Everyone is frozen for a moment.

THE STRANGER

Right here.

Within a split second the two officers turn to the direction of the voice with inhumane reflexes, unholstering and aiming their pistols before the bodyguard has even hit the floor.

The corpo with his slow reaction time turns to find a masked stranger holding a gun to his daughter's head, and the two NOVAS with their weapons trained at him, their eyes glowing a dark purple.

THE STRANGER

Don't try it.

THE FATHER

YOU-

J

SHUT UP!

THE FATHER is speechless.

J

What do you want?



THE STRANGER

Give me the contents of the container or I blow the kid's head off.

THE STRANGER puts his finger on the trigger.

OFFICER JIM

You're not doing that. You're outnumbered here, and we've got a VULK on standby. Hand her over and maybe you'll live to see another day, even if it's behind bars.

THE STRANGER

Your scare tactics don't work on me, officer. I'll take my chances against two beat cops. And VULK or not, the girl dies. That's not exactly a favourable outcome for you. So cut the shit, give me what's inside and maybe I'll let YOU live.

J

(whispering)

You stupid fuck.

The officers hesitantly lower their weapons. THE FATHER looks at them confused as they move towards the container.

J

Open it.

THE FATHER

(confused)

What are you doing?? You can't just give it to him! Find another way.

J

You're disgusting.

J takes the holopad from the corpo and proceeds to unlock the container.

THE STRANGER (O.S.)

QUICKLY!

The officers take out what seems to be a glowing red stone.

THE STRANGER

Careful with that. Don't wanna touch it with anything organic. Unless you'd like to lose your arm.

They carefully put it in a small box and slide it over to THE STRANGER.

J

Now hand over the girl.

THE FATHER

Wait, please! That item is very important to me! I'm sure if we talk it out we can come to an agreement!

Before THE STRANGER himself realises it, a bullet is already travelling through the air, headed straight for THE FATHER. He falls with a thud. The little girl is free, already on her way to the two officers.

J raises his gun and shoots. THE STRANGER, just now come to his senses and realising what he has done, barely manages to dodge the bullet, but not before it shatters the right side of his mask. The bullet bounces off a railing and goes through the warehouse roof. A single stream of moonlight falls on THE STRANGER's face, illuminating her white hair. It is RIVER.

J hesitates for a moment after looking at RIVER. Enough for her to recover and take another shot in desperation. He doesn't aim to kill, only to create a window for escape. Only, the bullet finds a mark. OFFICER JIM reels.

J stands dazed near the body of his dead comrade. RIO looks on the massacre in HORROR. RIVER'S voice echoes in the warehouse.

RIVER (O.S.)

THIS IS WHO YOU SERVE? SOMEONE WHO  
HESITATES WHEN IT COMES TO  
BARGAINING FOR HIS DAUGHTER'S LIFE?  
HIS OWN FLESH AND BLOOD?

J does not care. J does not think. He calls it in.

J

OFFICER N-17 to HQ. Men down.  
Activate VULK.

He picks up the little girl and makes for the warehouse entrance. Too late. The warehouse door blasts open, sending them flying.

J wakes up a few moments later to see a towering figure with crimson eyes slowly walk through the entrance. The VULK scans the room, and locks on to J. J tries to get himself up as it moves towards him. SUDDENLY its head turns to the left in a quick motion. It dashes in the other direction and before J can come to his senses, both the girls are gone as well.

He picks himself back up and walks back home. It has started to rain.

CUT TO:

INT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - NIGHT

J sits on the bed in a dimly lit room looking at a framed image of his daughter. Unknown to him ALICE looks at him caressing his daughter's belongings from the doorframe.

ALICE  
What happened?

J notices her.

J  
What do you mean?

ALICE  
Come on, Jules. You haven't come up here in months. You don't, unless something's the matter. Tell me.

She goes and sits beside him.

J  
Nothing, it's just.. I-

She hugs him.

ALICE  
I know.

The rain gets heavier outside.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF DISTRICT FIVE - NIGHT

RIVER runs for her life carrying the little girl in her arms. She's passed out. She does not know why she picked her up in the chaos of the blast. She does not know what she's going to do with her or where she's going to take her. All she knows is that she must run.

The stomping of heavy metal feet inching closer and closer by the second instills in her a fear she has never felt before. Slowly, the sound is drowned out by the falling of rain on the street. She goes into an empty store to catch her breath and hides behind a counter.

She cannot hear anything except for the rain. She looks over the counter. Nothing. No movement. Only the blinking lights of the neon hell she calls home. She shifts her gaze to the girl who now seems to be staring at her with wide eyes. She moves to cover her mouth with a hand...Too late. She screams.

The VULK comes crashing through the window. She ducks, just barely surviving the onslaught of hundreds of tiny pieces of glass sent flying. They stare at each other a moment. The sound of the VULK's mechanical breathing seems to dwarf even the rain.

They move at the same time, the VULK slightly faster. She sweeps the floor with her leg, sending pieces of glass that temporarily slow it down, making it miss its mark. Back to running. The beast is even more pissed now.

As she runs she finds herself puzzled as to why she still hasn't left the dead weight behind. The VULK keeps up the chase, vaulting over an empty police car, almost flattening it in the process. As she runs she spots a rail track in front of her, with a train approaching fast. One chance.

She puts the kid on her back, trying not to let her little kicking and biting affect her. She approaches the tracks, with the VULK on her tail, fast as ever.

SLOW MOTION: She slows down for a split second. All the energy she has conserved till now finds its way to her leg implants. The VULK almost has her. She releases it in an explosive burst that propels her forward faster than she can process it, narrowly missing the super fast train. It is not so for the VULK. It almost makes it through because of its highly reinforced body. Almost. The train hits it and it goes revolving through the air. Not enough to kill it. But enough to put some distance between them. END SLOW MOTION

She quickly finds a place to hide in a secluded area. She has never been this tired. Her legs finally go limp as he drops the girl and falls down. The girl sees an opportunity to escape but is quickly held back by RIVER.

Dazed and unable to see clearly, RIVER feels a punch in the gut. Except it hurts more than it should. It burns. She looks down to see a shard of glass embedded in her stomach.

RIVER

You-

FADE TO BLACK

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The phone rings. OFFICER J gets up from beside his wife and picks it up. She looks at him.

J

Hello?

DISPATCH

We got a rough estimate of where your culprit is.

J

(scoffs)

This a joke?

DISPATCH

Negative, Officer.

J

So you mean to tell me the VULK  
hasn't nailed her yet?

DISPATCH

We don't know WHERE the VULK is.  
Lost contact about a half hour ago.

J

All right, where?

DISPATCH

Last known location is an alleyway  
at the corner of 12th.

J

I'll check it out. What about JIM?

DISPATCH

We cleaned him up. You can see him  
tomorrow when his family visits.

J

...

DISPATCH

Be careful, Officer. Zeroing a VULK  
is no joke.

J

You don't know that. Probably just  
a comms malfunction. Over and out.

He hangs up the phone.

ALICE

Going again?

J

Yeah. Kind of important. I'll see  
you soon.

He kisses her on the forehead, takes his coat and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - NIGHT

Empty train tracks. A severed robotic arm lies on them. The camera pans to the VULK booting up. It scans its surroundings. Footprints glow in the dark. They lead in only one direction.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF DISTRICT FIVE - NIGHT

RIVER walks slowly, clutching her stomach and leaning on a wall. Her hair is undone and her mask is broken. She was out

for a long time, and her speed is considerably slower. She knows it is catching up to her. The only question is when. She goes into a dark alleyway. Another person seems to be sitting there. She pays him no mind. All she can do now is sit and wait for her eventual demise. If only she wasn't bleeding out.

She hears a sound. A sound she's all too familiar with by now. It almost seems peaceful now. The other man gets up and runs away into hiding.

No. It is not peaceful. Nothing is peaceful about that machine. She's afraid. She picks herself back up and leaves. If she's going to die anyway, she'd rather die trying.

Time is inconsequential now. Seconds blur into minutes that blur into perhaps hours. At least it feels like that. She feels like she is about to pass out.

BANG.

She is awoken by a sound far off into the distance. It is him. She knows it. There is no running anymore. She stops and turns around. She reaches for her holster, only to find it empty. Her gun is lost. No matter. She clutches her fists and waits.

A small figure appears in the distance. Humane, but she knows it is not human. It stops for a moment and looks at her directly. Then it starts to run.

This is it. Kill it, or die trying. The VULK gets bigger and bigger. STOMP. STOMP. STOMP. She hears the concrete break under the sheer weight of its strides. It almost reaches her when out of nowhere a police car comes in between them. They are both surprised.

OFFICER J gets out of the car. He looks at her and then the VULK.

J

Badge Number N-17. I'll take it from here. You establish communication back with HQ, they're worried to death.

He flashes his badge. The VULK stares at him with its synthetic eyes. It raises its gun.

J

What the hell are you doing? I said-

BANG. The robot is fast. But it is damaged. And J is faster. Barely, but enough for the bullet to only graze his forehead. RIVER watches.

J  
DISPATCH! COME IN! DISPATCH! WE'VE  
GOT A ROGUE BOT! SEND I-

The VULK kicks him before he can finish. He crawls behind a car. A useless gesture. The car is lifted up and thrown away right in front of his eyes. He reaches for his gun, but the the robot shoots his arm. He winces in pain. This is his moment. He will join her soon.

J  
Please...I-

The VULK turns around quickly and raises its right arm. RIVER lands a clean hit. Blocked, but a hit nonetheless. She shatters her bionic arm in the process, and the VULK's as well. It is blown back by the punch.

J realises what is going on and recovers quickly. He dashes to the the VULK's dropped gun while RIVER tackles the robot. They are enemies. But they cooperate faster than the bot's computer can process its own demise.

BANG.

It is over. A clean shot through the head. No more VULK.

But there is no time. Not even to breathe a sigh of relief. J quickly shifts the gun's sights to the girl.

J  
(panting)  
It's over. End of the line.

The rain doubles down.

RIVER simply nods. The OFFICER looks at her. No resistance. A light breeze blows, long enough to blow back her hair and let him look at the burn scars on her face. Suddenly she seems like a child. Just like the one back at the warehouse.

His arm begins to slowly go down. She looks at him with big eyes. He holsters the weapon. Police sirens can be heard in the distance.

J  
Go.

RIVER does not hesitate. She runs.

J leans on a wall and lights up a cigarette as multiple police cars arrive and officers come onto the scene.

OFFICER  
Are you all right, sir?

J  
...

OFFICER

First time I'm hearing of something like this happening.

J

Well, it happened. And that ain't good news for Vorexo.

OFFICER

You bet. Where's the girl?

J

She escaped.

He walks away. The rain has stopped.

CUT TO:

INT. RIVER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

RIVER sits beside a man laying on a hospital bed. She is dirty, her hair is unkempt and she has a dead look in her eyes.

RIVER

He was just like you, you know.  
Like how you used to be. I wonder  
if you would've done the same to  
me. For business.

She moves to a life support machine near the bed. It is connected to an electric terminal. She lightly touches the switch for a moment before quickly pulling her hand away.

She stands near the man's face.

RIVER

I wish you were like the other one.

Tears fall on the man's face.

THE END