

# SLIDERS

## “SEPARATION ANXIETY”

Written By

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"Separation Anxiety"

TEASER

FADE IN ON:

EXT. PORT ARABIA MARKETPLACE—DAY—THE SLIDERS

are being chased through the streets of a modern day Baghdad, while a group of Port Arabian police gives chase, their scimitars slicing through the air. WADE, who is holding the timer, QUINN, REMBRANDT and ARTURO scare up the dust as they head quickly through the bazaar, hoping to stay alive long enough to reach the next slide.

REMBRANDT

(huffing)

Jeez, Professor! We were only gonna be here for twenty minutes! And still you find a way to get us into trouble?

ARTURO

(shouting)

How was I to know that these people would rate fruit-tasting as a capitol crime? Do you think I'm interested in losing my life over a date? And it was a bad date at that!

WADE glances at the timer and reads 00:01:06, as she leads them all around a corner and down a side street.

WADE

(shouting)

Less talking, more running guys. We've got a little over a minute to slide!

QUINN

One minute, Professor. Do you think you could keep your hands to yourself until then?

Behind them, the whoops and yelps of the police draw closer.

ARTURO

I'll thank you to keep your comments to yourself, Mr. Mallory!

The SLIDERS pick up their pace as WADE carefully monitors the Timer. She finds a small alleyway and leads the group into its tight confines, counting down to Slide time.

WADE  
(breathless)  
Here we go guys!

Without breaking her stride, WADE points the timer at the far wall in the alley, activating the tunnel. One by one, the SLIDERS run and jump into the void, and with a hiss and a pop, are gone. Behind them, the Port Arabia police finally reach the alleyway, only to find a slight breeze stirring up the dust and garbage. They exchange a few confused looks as we...

CUT TO:

INT. THE SLIDE TUNNEL - THE SLIDERS (ENERGY SIGNATURES)

tumble through the quantum field, towards the next opening. However, something is out of place. The oncoming exit flashes sporadically with lightning-like bursts, bathing the tunnel with a soft, eerie glow.

During a particularly bright flash of "lightning" around the opening, we see that the exit is SPLITTING, like a cell during mitosis, forming not one, but TWO tunnel exits! The openings are distinct. One is normal and strong-looking while the other is smaller and more out-of-focus. As a result of the splitting, a shock wave echoes through the tunnel, buffeting the energy signatures of our Sliders around for a bit.

The Sliders continue their descent towards the exit but something has gone horribly wrong! The energy signatures have been separated by the shock wave, leaving one further back than the others.

The tunnel continues to flash as lightning crackles around the two exits. As we watch, three energy signatures head towards the regular opening and slip away, with the exit closing up behind them.

The last energy signature, disoriented by the shock wave, falls headlong towards the other opening, which is now wavering and flickering sickly as it threatens to disappear altogether.

As the final energy signature passes through the exit, there is a final, blinding flash of lightning, and the exit closes for good.

CUT TO:

EXT. BARREN WASTELAND – NIGHT (NUCLEAR WINTER) – ALONE

WADE tumbles out of the tunnel and lands on a snow-covered area, blizzard-like conditions around her, amidst debris and scattered junk. WADE shuffles around in the gray snow, dragging her hand over a sensor beneath her. A soft red light, which WADE misses, begins to pulse beneath the snow.

WADE instinctively checks the timer reading (28:33:22) and puts it away. She then goes on to check for her companions.

WADE  
(shouting)  
Quinn! Rembrandt! Professor!  
Are you guys there?

Around her, the nuclear winter rages on. She begins to chill a bit but continues calling out.

WADE  
(shouting)  
Guys! C'mon, this isn't funny!  
Please!

WADE'S POV

WADE takes some time to check out her surroundings. The surface looks like it has been in a nuclear war. Charred, blackened and desolate. What might have once passed for civilization is nothing but wreckage now. The sky is pitch except for streaks of iridescent, wispy clouds.

WADE  
(slightly panicked)  
Guys! If you're out there! Follow  
my voice!

WADE begins to back up, and trips over something beneath her. She falls onto the sensor plate that she inadvertently activated before. She notices the faint glow of the light and starts to pull the snow away from it. The blinking light sits beneath the stenciled words: FORBIDDEN AREA – PROPERTY OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT – TRESPASSERS WILL BE MET WITH DEADLY FORCE.

WADE  
(to herself)  
Alright girl. Get your head  
together  
(beat)  
and get moving!

As WADE gets up and dusts herself off, preparing to flee, a bright flash of lightning, accompanied by a loud thunder-clap, lights the area for a moment.

Ahead of her, WADE can see ghostly images of QUINN, ARTURO and REMBRANDT as they are dusting themselves off! It looks as if they are right there...and yet...not!

WADE reaches her hand out to QUINN who notices her as well.

WADE  
(excitedly)  
Quinn! Thank God!

QUINN mirrors her action, extending a ghostly hand towards her.

QUINN  
(silently)  
Wade!

WADE can see QUINN's mouth move but hears nothing.

As WADE is about to touch QUINN, the lightning clears...and the images simply disappear!

WADE  
(crying out)  
No! Quinn!!

WADE, visibly shaken by what she has just seen, turns around to try and get to shelter.

She whirls around, and comes face-to-chest with a grotesque shock-troop CYBORG. The CYBORG is obviously a fusion of man and machine. Tubes and wires of various electronic-type equipment stream from various body parts. Their faces however, are eerily human. The only distinguishing mark on their heads is a gruesome scar running the length of their forehead.

WADE screams out in terror and backpedals...

...only to bump into another CYBORG.

WADE makes a break for it as panels in the ground begin to open up around her, shooting shafts of yellow light into the dark sky.

The CYBORGS are deceptively quick and apprehend her without any trouble. They drag her kicking and screaming to one of the shafts of light and step onto a platform.

The platform slowly begins to descend into the cold earth.

WADE's screams can be heard even as the panels lock down.

Above, another flash of lightning...another clap of thunder.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN ON:

INT. PROJECT: HIBERNATE COMPLEX – WADE

is led down a sterile corridor by the CYBORGS.

WADE  
(fearful)  
Where are you taking me?

The CYBORGS approach a door marked "AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY". CYBORG ONE swipes his hand over the mounted sensor plate on the wall which triggers the door to open.

INT. DECONTAMINATION AREA

The CYBORGS lead WADE into a small, functional room where she is enclosed in a glass casing, and sprayed with a dry chemical compound to decontaminate her from any radiation she might have been exposed to.

After her chemical shower, WADE is restrained to a standing gurney and searched. CYBORG ONE finds the sliding device and immediately confiscates it, handing it to a RUNNER who spirits it away. WADE is visibly upset.

WADE  
No! You can't take that!!

CYBORG TWO is busy readying a gun-like machine which is sparking in his hands like a stun-gun. CYBORG TWO steps to the restrained WADE and places the machine near WADE's right palm. WADE refuses to keep her palm open, forcing the CYBORG to pin her wrist down and open it for her.

CYBORG TWO slowly touches the gun to WADE's palm, creating an odd noise, much like a tattoo needle makes on contact with skin. WADE screams out as the gun moves over her palm.

When the gun is pulled away, we see that WADE has been bar-coded on her palm. WADE's restraints are removed and she is dragged over to another door at the far end of the room. CYBORG TWO passes his hand over another sensor plate, opening the door.

INT. DE-BRIEFING AREA – WADE

is led to a high-backed chair where she is forced to sit. Restraints on the arms and legs of the chair clamp down around her wrists and ankles, eliminating any notion of escape.

The CYBORGS retreat to the door and stand guard.

Across from WADE is a large screen that begins to glow faintly. Suddenly the screen comes to life and a man's face appears. WADE reacts in mild shock and surprise as she recognizes the video image to be BENNISH!

WADE  
(shocked)  
Bennish!?

BENNISH raises an eyebrow to the reaction and speaks.

BENNISH  
It's been quite some time since anyone has called me that. But no, I am not the esteemed Dr. Bennish.  
(beat)  
Sadly, he perished shortly before I was activated. I am the Bennish Artificial Intelligence Relay, BAIR for short, and I represent the crowning achievement of modern technology, or at least such as it was 23 years ago.

WADE  
(angry)  
Where am I?

BAIR  
(surprised)  
Why, you are in the San Francisco Hibernate facility. Sadly, this is the only such facility that reached completion before the war. Here, I safeguard the remnants of the human race and protect them from their own foolishness  
(beat)  
as my core programming dictates.

WADE  
(confused)  
What war? What are you talking about?

BAIR  
(impatient)  
This has been a pleasant  
conversation, but now it's time for  
you to answer some of my questions.

CUT TO:

EXT. BARREN WASTELAND - NIGHT (NUCLEAR WINTER)

QUINN, ARTURO and REMBRANDT shuffle through the snow on seemingly, the same landscape that WADE just occupied moments before. QUINN is still in the same stance as we left him when WADE saw his image in the lightning flash. His hand is still outstretched to what should be WADE but is now empty space.

Without looking over his shoulder, QUINN squeaks...

QUINN  
(incredulously)  
Did you guys just see that? Wade  
was right there!

REMBRANDT  
(slightly scared)  
Yeah, man.  
(beat)  
I feel like I just saw a ghost.

ARTURO  
(breaking in)  
Don't be ridiculous, Mr. Brown.  
There must be some logical  
explanation. And I'm sure we'll  
find it.

The guys take a moment to scan their surroundings, much as WADE did, and see that their world is barren and desolate, scarred and blackened, and stretches for as far as they can see in this nuclear blizzard.

Suddenly, the three are surrounded by CYBORGS, the same as WADE's captors.

While the guys attempt to put up a fight, the result is exactly the same. They are subdued and dragged kicking and screaming to the panels beneath them and brought down into the cold earth.

CUT TO:

INT. DE-BRIEFING AREA - QUINN, ARTURO, AND REMBRANDT

are seated in front of a screen, rubbing their hands as they scratch at their new tattoos, listening to BAIR speak to them.

BAIR  
(impatient)  
This has been a pleasant conversation, but now it's time for you to answer some of my questions.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTSIDE DE-BRIEFING AREA - WADE

is now dressed in standard issue overalls, as she is being escorted out. The CYBORGS lead her down a separate hall to yet another door. CYBORG ONE passes his hand over the plate. The door opens revealing...

INT. FACILITY PROPER - WADE'S POV

on a courtyard-type area where people are milling about, talking, etc. CYBORGS patrol the area at random. There are tables set up at various corners. Along the walls, monitors flicker on and off with various announcements. Cameras quietly take it all in. Along the edges of the large room, various hallways snake off into who-knows where.

While the courtyard is fairly busy, there is an almost gray complexion to the whole scene. The people's faces are slightly pallid and sunken. There seems to be a complete lack of vibrant, vivid colors. Even the sound of activity is slightly muted, as if it was passing through thick fabric.

CLOSE ON WADE

as she reacts to the sight. She is then pushed from behind by the CYBORGS and ushered into the common area. The doors shut behind her.

WADE is stunned and simply stands there, unsure of what to do next.

From a distance, we see CREGAR notice the new arrival. He breaks away from a small group that has congregated around him and moves towards WADE.

CREGAR is thin, tall, and meek-looking. He was a history teacher before the war and still carries that scholarly atmosphere about him.

CREGAR approaches WADE, thrusts out his hand and says ...

CREGAR  
(wryly)  
Welcome to Purgatory.

WADE  
(hesitantly)  
Maybe you should explain exactly  
what Purgatory is.

CREGAR  
(surprised)  
Why, this is where we pay for our  
sins, my dear! This is where we  
checked our souls at the door in  
return for eternal life. This is  
where we get to contemplate our  
folly forever, year after barren  
year. In short, Purgatory is the  
San Francisco Hibernate Facility,  
and vice versa.

WADE  
Is this a prison?

CREGAR takes her by the arm and begins walking her slowly  
around the courtyard.

CREGAR peers at her with sudden interest.

CREGAR  
You really don't know, do you? A  
prison - how apt. Not by design.  
Forgive me, but you are the first  
stranger in these parts in 23  
years. Since the sirens went off  
and World War III swallowed the  
earth.  
(beat)  
Are you an escapee or a straggler?  
I had simply assumed this to be the  
only fully operational facility of  
it's kind. A project designed to  
ensure human survival after the  
Russians bombed us into judgment  
day.  
(beat)  
And we them- Project Hibernate.  
Government funded and graced with  
Dr. Bennish' unholy progeny, our  
ever-present and overprotective  
BAIR. Get it? BAIR? Hibernate?  
(MORE)

CREGAR (CONT'D)

Someone in the Pentagon had a sense of humor.

WADE

(deadpan, slight smile)  
Yeah, a regular Eddie Murphy.

CREGAR

Who?

WADE waves him off with a sad head shake. CREGAR continues.

CREGAR

We were supposed to creep back out into the sunlight, you know. But our BAIR made a most remarkable assumption. Humans, who had created him, not to mention the maelstrom raging outside his walls, could only survive under his logical, perfect supervision. His core program demanded that we survive, and he has taken every step to ensure that.

A SIREN sounds, harsh and loud. Around the pair, people stand up and begin to shuffle off towards various hallways, watched grimly by the CYBORGS.

CREGAR

Speak of the devil! You see?

(beat)

BAIR has us well in hand. No chance of hurting ourselves, no chance of anything, really. We exercise when he commands it, so we don't get too soft. We eat when he deems it prudent.

CREGAR sweeps his hand over the crowds around them.

CREGAR

We are herded through our lives like fatted calves, and only our benevolent shepherd may decide which of us to slaughter.

(pointing to CYBORG)

See the sheep dogs? They were once just citizens of this fair city, but neural implants took away their will, and now they are just peripherals. Anyone who dares to struggle, who might deviate from the program, is either eliminated

(MORE)

CREGAR (CONT'D)

(beat)  
or assimilated. By force, if  
necessary.

CYBORGS menace the pair, urging them towards an exit. WADE glances apprehensively at the CYBORGS around her. She leans in closer to CREGAR and takes his arm.

WADE  
(whispering)  
I can't explain, but I have to get  
out of here!

CREGAR  
My dear, there is no "out of here".

WADE  
(squeezing his arm)  
Will you help me?

CREGAR is taken aback and is suddenly sympathetic to her pleas. He looks away and then back to study her face. He nods, almost imperceptibly.

CREGAR  
Walk with me.

CUT TO:

INT. FACILITY PROPER - ARTURO, QUINN AND REMBRANDT

are in a courtyard-type area where people are milling about, talking, etc. CYBORGS patrol the area at random. There are tables set up at various corners. Along the walls, monitors flicker on and off with various announcements. Cameras quietly take it all in. Along the edges of the large room, various hallways snake off into who-knows where.

ARTURO  
(flabbergasted)  
I find it difficult to stomach the  
thought of that -  
(beat)  
- amateur creating something as  
impressive as this BAIR! Dr.  
Bennish, indeed! Why, the idea that  
he might amount to something  
approaching a legitimate intellect  
on some worlds, hinders my faith in  
the logical construction of the  
universe!

REMBRANDT

(amused)

Hey, you ever heard of elementary chaos theory, Professor?

ARTURO

This is hardly the time for bad jokes, Mr. Brown. Especially when one has manifested itself as our keeper. Hmph. Perhaps the cosmos have a sense of humor after all. Mr. Mallory? Your thoughts?

QUINN

(pensive)

That computer was amazing! We certainly didn't have anything even near that technology in our 1996, Professor.

ARTURO

That may be, but judging from what's left of the world above and these grim surroundings (beat) I would say that their technological advances were also their undoing.

REMBRANDT

I'll say. It looked like they had one hell of a war top-side.

ARTURO

(somberly)

Not just a war, Mr. Brown.

(beat)

Judgment Day.

A SIREN goes off, loud and insistent. The other "citizens" shuffle off towards various exits, guided by the ever-present CYBORGS. A group of people, led by CREGAR, walks past them. CREGAR studies them intently, but moves past without comment.

REMBRANDT

What's happening?

Two CYBORGS approach and menace the trio, guiding them towards a nearby doorway.

QUINN

(reluctantly)

Well, when in Rome...

REMBRANDT  
Just call me Marc Antony.

THE SLIDERS allow themselves to be guided through the doorway...

CUT TO:

INT. THE EXERCISE HALL

A huge gymnasium-like area where hundreds of citizens are broken up into small groups, drilling in various athletics. THE SLIDERS stand around, watching for a few seconds.

CREGAR, leading one of the groups in some sort of calisthenics, notices them.

CREGAR  
Hey, new sheep! Come and join the fun, before BAIR decides to make you sweat in more creative ways. We must be in tip-top shape so we can do this again tomorrow, you know!

ARTURO  
We aren't sure what we're supposed to be doing, my good man. Perhaps you could tell us where we are, exactly?

CREGAR  
(not breaking his exercise)  
This is where you pay for your sins, stragglers. Don't worry, this has to be better than surviving in hell up above. But unless you want to have all of us disciplined, please join in. Now.

THE SLIDERS reluctantly take up position with the group, eyeing the CYBORGS guarding the exits, and begin to half-heartedly do jumping jacks.

REMBRANDT  
(puffing)  
If this isn't hell, I don't know what is.

CREGAR  
(wryly)  
Welcome to Purgatory!

CUT TO:

INT. FACILITY HALLS – WADE AND CREGAR

are talking as they walk, arriving at an area that has no artificial light and which is freezing cold.

WADE  
(shivering)  
Does it have to be nuclear winter everywhere?

CREGAR  
(amused)  
This is what we creatively refer to as the "Cold Area". It's a little-known fact that only five of BAIRS fifteen generators were installed. Without enough power to run the whole facility, these cold areas are one of the few places BAIR cannot monitor. We can talk here.

WADE  
How do you know so much about it, then? I'd guess the BAIR wouldn't want this to be public knowledge.

CREGAR  
Actually, you learn things if you still care enough...

WADE turns her head sharply, widening her eyes as something catches her attention. Her sudden movement causes CREGAR to pause as a confused look crosses his face.

WADE  
(interrupting)  
What's that noise?

In the background can be heard the stamp of marching feet.

CREGAR  
(alarmed)  
Cyborgs! There shouldn't be a patrol in this area. They must be here for you. Come! We don't have much time.

They flee into the depths of the Cold Area, hotly pursued by the CYBORGS. Quickly they come to a fork in the tunnels, each choice leading to a dark unknown. Cregar pushes Wade towards the left.

CREGAR

(winded)

Go! Someone will find you!

CREGAR turns and runs down the right tunnel, leaving Wade to stand in confusion, staring after him.

WADE

Cregar! Wait! Where are you going?

The CYBORGS are approaching quickly from the main tunnel, and will be in a position to see WADE at any moment.

WADE looks into the darkness of CREGAR's exit, hoping to find him.

For a moment she considers following him.

The CYBORGS footsteps draw closer.

Suddenly, a pair of ghostly arms emerges from the darkness behind WADE and grab her, pulling her back into the pitch.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN ON:

INT. STANDARD FACILITY CELL – ARTURO, QUINN, AND REMBRANDT  
are sitting around the spare furnishings, looking glum.  
REMBRANDT is busy massaging his aching legs.

REMBRANDT

(groaning)

I feel like I'm back in high school  
gym class. I don't know how much of  
this I can take.

QUINN

I know how you feel, Cryin' Man.  
It's not even the exercise that  
bothers me.

REMBRANDT

It's not?

QUINN

It's the total regimentation of  
this society. It's like they've  
given up living in order to stay  
alive. We can't let ourselves get  
trapped here.

ARTURO

(exhausted)

Which hits the nail cleanly on the  
head, young Mallory. We are  
trapped, with a capital "T".  
Without the Timer we might as well  
learn the BAIR national anthem.

QUINN

You're absolutely right, Professor.  
Step one, then is to get out of  
this computerized prison, where we  
can move freely and think straight  
without sirens going off every ten  
minutes.

QUINN pulls in closer, drawing REMBRANDT and ARTURO to him.  
QUINN studies the cell carefully, looking for anything that  
might betray them.

QUINN

(softly)

I noticed something while we were walking out of the exercise yard.

(beat)

An entire area of this complex seems shut down.

(beat)

Dark and unused.

ARTURO

(pensive)

Yes, I noticed it too. A facility of this size and scope must require immense power sources. If our host, the "BAIR" is short of electricity, there may be miles of tunnel kept dark and unused.

QUINN

Exactly. No power, no cameras, no sensors, no alarms. We might be able to use one of those areas to break out.

REMBRANDT

Not to interrupt the brain trust here, but what good will getting out of here do if we don't have the Timer? This place is bad, but compared to the surface it's paradise.

ARTURO

Mr. Brown, we'll cross that bridge when we come to it. If we remain here, we will have no opportunity to act whatsoever! Once we are free of this oppressive atmosphere, I don't doubt we'll discover what has happened to Miss Wells and devise a way to rescue her.

QUINN

I hope Wade's faring better than we are.

(beat)

Wherever she is.

CUT TO:

INT. COLD AREA TUNNEL - DARK - WADE

is being held by a burly, disheveled man wearing the remnants of a standard jumpsuit. WADE looks around wildly, struggling against his strong grip.

LEVON  
(whispering)  
Quiet! The Cyborgs don't need tracking systems if you make such a ruckus, dearie.

WADE calms down and they both listen as the CYBORGS move off, silent except for the stamp of their feet. Slowly, LEVON releases her, and she turns to peer at him through the gloom. (In the dark, WADE is subtly more bright, more present than the shadowy LEVON and the other FUGITIVES.)

WADE  
Who are you?

LEVON  
A friend. I heard voices, so I came to investigate. Lucky for you I did, dearie. Come with me, I can take you to a safe area. There are more of us there.

LEVON moves off into the darkness. After a moment's hesitation, WADE scrambles to follow him.

WADE  
More of who, exactly?

INT. COLD AREA COURTYARD - FUGITIVES

sit around in an area identical to the earlier courtyard but dark, freezing, and virtually empty except for the rag-tag group assembled. The FUGITIVES are dirty and wear layers of cast-off clothing to stay warm.

LEVON motions for WADE to follow.

WADE steps in, arms wrapped tight around her, as LEVON waves his hand over the pathetic sight.

LEVON

Say hello to your saviors, dearie.  
We're fugitives from BAIR, is all.  
Each one of us at one time or  
'nother has been marked for death  
or worse, implant, by the "gweat"  
and "tewwible" BAIR!

(beat)

We fled into the cold area and  
survived. Not all do. We've evaded  
the Cyborg patrols ever since.  
You're welcome to stay.

WADE opens her mouth to reply when she is stopped by a commotion in the rear. A lone figure is approaching from one of the other dark tunnels. As he joins the group we see that it is CREGAR, looking winded but unharmed. The FUGITIVES make way for him, and nod at him respectfully.

CREGAR walks over to WADE and LEVON, clasping LEVON's hand in recognition.

LEVON

We got her safe, Cregar.

CREGAR

Good.

(turning to WADE)

I think, young lady, that the time  
for complete honesty has come,  
don't you?

WADE

(on guard)

What do you mean?

CREGAR

(impassioned)

Look around you, girl! Look at us,  
look at this place, look at the  
faces of these people! And then  
look at yourself. There's something  
different about you... you make us  
look tired and worn, you make me  
feel tired just standing here in  
front of you. Why? Where are you  
from?

WADE

This might sound a little crazy...

CREGAR

Believe me, girl, nothing has  
sounded crazy to me in 23 years.

WADE nods nervously and pulls CREGAR away from the group of people. They retreat to a corner of the courtyard where WADE begins her tale.

WADE

(quietly)

I'm not from this dimension.

(beat)

I'm, what we call, a Slider. My friends discovered the means to travel between dimensions and I landed here. But this isn't where I'm supposed to be.

(beat)

At least, I don't think so.

WADE looks to CREGAR to see if she should continue. CREGAR nods as if to say, "Continue."

WADE

When we slid to this world,  
something strange happened to us.  
The sliding tunnel (beat) split in  
two. My friends fell down one exit.  
I came through this one. I can't  
explain it much more than that, but  
my guess is that somehow, your  
world... your dimension... was  
split in two... maybe from the war.  
The next tunnel is going to open up  
in under 20 hours. I HAVE to be  
there when it does. And so do my  
friends. But to do that, I have to  
get my timer back.

CREGAR stares at her blankly for a moment.

CREGAR

The only part I understood was the  
part about you having to get your  
timer back. But if what you say is  
true -

(beat)

- are you saying that on your  
"dimension," you've found a way to  
control BAIR? Is that why you're  
here?

(MORE)

CREGAR (CONT'D)

Or are you trying to escape him by  
"sliding" into the wilderness,  
where he can't touch you?

WADE

(shaking her head)  
No, no, no. Every dimension is  
different, representing a  
possibility.

CREGAR is obviously not following the gist of the  
conversation.

WADE

Okay, think about it this way. Time  
moves in a straight line, right?  
Every time you make a decision, you  
alter the timeline minutely. But  
just before you make that choice,  
the possibility of all the choices  
exist, and the timeline splits into  
several parts. This has been  
happening infinitely, ever since  
the beginning of time, creating a  
number of different dimensions.  
Some are almost identical, with  
only minor differences. Some are  
completely different.

(beat)

I've been to a lot of worlds, but  
this is the first one I've  
encountered BAIR. All I want is to  
get my friends and get us home to  
our own world.

CREGAR studies her for a moment, contemplating the fantastic  
story she has just relayed, unsure of what to think.

CREGAR

Uh...right.

(beat)

So, what it boils down to is that  
you need to get your timer back,  
right. Well, that much we can help  
you with, especially if you think  
there's a chance of escape from  
here. You talked about leaving with  
your friends.

(beat)

Is there a way that you can take us  
too?

WADE

I can't make any promises.

CREGAR  
I have nothing but faith in you.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTYARD - DIM - EMPTY - CYBORGS

stomp past one of the tunnel entrances, stoic and silent. After they pass, REMBRANDT emerges from the shadowed tunnel, looking around nervously. Once he is sure the CYBORGS have passed, he looks over his shoulder.

REMBRANDT  
(whispering)  
Now or never! Come on!

QUINN and ARTURO come into view behind him, moving slowly and looking around as they walk. The trio hold a muffled conference.

ARTURO  
My boy, are you sure you know which of these tunnels leads to the unpopulated area?

QUINN  
(looking around)  
I think so... it's hard to tell in this gloom. All the tunnels look alike.

REMBRANDT  
You know, that sort of honesty doesn't exactly inspire confidence.

QUINN  
Just follow me.

QUINN trots off, moving as quietly as he can, and the other two follow closely. As they approach three tunnels along one wall, QUINN obviously hesitates, and then selects one, chin firming with resolution.

ARTURO and REMBRANDT glance at each other doubtfully before following. In several shots, we see the SLIDERS moving through quiet and dim corridors, led by QUINN. Finally, warning signs and an ominously pitch black area loom up before them.

ARTURO  
Good work, Mr. Mallory. I do believe we've found our goal.

REMBRANDT  
(immediately cold)  
Great. Out of the frying pan, into  
the freezer. Who turned off the  
heat?

With one more glance exchanged between them, the SLIDERS move slowly into the Cold Area. In the gloom, they move on a few feet and suddenly REMBRANDT stops.

REMBRANDT  
Wait! Do you hear that?

In the distance, the mechanical stamp of marching feet can be heard.

QUINN  
(alarmed)  
Cyborgs! Run for it!

The SLIDERS make a break for it, ARTURO in the rear, already looking peaked. The POV turns as they run, to show a troop of CYBORGS marching determinedly after them.

Quick shots of the SLIDERS running through the dark, freezing corridors of the Cold Area, with ARTURO trailing behind and looking very tired. The CYBORGS fall slightly behind as the trio burst into a courtyard like the one they left, only darkened and abandoned. The SLIDERS pull up short, looking around.

ARTURO  
(gasping)  
Which way?

QUINN opens his mouth to reply, when suddenly there is an eerie flash of lightning (as earlier) and without warning, the ghostly figure of WADE appears not far away, but facing away so she does not see them.

QUINN  
(without thinking)  
Wade!

CUT TO:

CYBORGS, marching. The leader, hearing the shout, stops and changes direction, picking a tunnel which leads directly to the courtyard.

CUT TO:

The courtyard. WADE's form vanishes as abruptly as she appeared, leaving the three SLIDERS standing stock-still in shock. After a few beats, the CYBORGS burst into the room, moving steadily.

REMBRANDT

So much for the reunion!

They take off again, just barely ahead of their half human pursuers. ARTURO, still gasping, suddenly trips on some unseen bump and sprawls to the floor with a cry. REMBRANDT whirls around.

REMBRANDT

Professor!

REMBRANDT runs back and grabs at ARTURO, helping him up.

REMBRANDT

That's a good way to become a ghost yourself, man! Come on! No pain no gain, right?

It is too late. As ARTURO gets to his feet, the CYBORGS encircle them, menacing them with weapons.

QUINN, unable to abandon his friends, puts up his arms and surrenders. The CYBORG leader touches his ear as if activating something.

CYBORG 1

(raspy, flat, mechanical)  
Fugitives in custody. Prepare holding cell.

From the CYBORGS headset, we can hear the BAIRS static-riddled reply.

BAIR

Time to make sure these sheep never think of leaving the fold again.

CUT TO:

INT. COLD AREA COURTYARD—WADE

is huddled with CREGAR and a few other trusted citizens. The "Fade" effect is obvious now to the viewer: the citizens are washed out, almost colorless, while WADE is vibrant and bright. WADE is obviously energized by her new role as problem-solver, and paces with anxious energy as she talks.

WADE

So the Cyborgs are the only security force that BAIR can control?

CREGAR

Yes, although BAIR controls the whole facility. Our access is limited to where he allows us, and he has, on occasion, if he felt we were becoming agitated, dropped the oxygen mix in the air to suddenly knock us out cold.

(smiling)

BAIR does not like us to be agitated.

WADE

Where do you think my Timer would be held?

CREGAR

Well, the only place it could be is in the Lab. That's where our computerized dragon hoards all his equipment and research facilities.

(beat)

And where he breeds his sheep dogs.

WADE

What?

CREGAR

That's where the neural implants are performed.

WADE shudders, and resumes her pacing. WADE continues her pacing, thoughtfully and comes to a sudden realization. WADE wheels around and addresses CREGAR.

WADE

Are all the doors in this facility the same as the ones I've seen in the Courtyards?

CREGAR

(slowly)

Yes...

WADE

That's it!

CREGAR  
(intently)  
What is?

WADE  
The doors! BAIR might control all the circuits in this godforsaken place, but it was built for humans originally, right? If you cut those circuits, cut BAIRs access to them, you can route them.

CREGAR  
And?

WADE  
(exasperated)  
We can hot-wire the doors! I can get us into the Lab, and get the Timer back!

CREGAR  
Are you sure?

WADE  
(excited)  
Of course! Electronics are electronics. I can't believe this wasn't obvious to me in the first place.

WADE stops short, peering through the dark at the FUGITIVES. WADE notices something about them, something disconcerting.

WADE  
(quietly)  
Weird.

The "fade" effect has finally been noticed, and just as WADE stares in slight shock, there is yet another eerie flash and everyone in the room, even the room itself, flickers and literally disappears for a second, snapping back into sight just as abruptly.

WADE is completely startled by this, and dances back a step or two.

WADE  
What the...

CREGAR  
Wade? What is it?

WADE

(incredulously)

What is it? Didn't you notice that?  
You all...faded for a moment. It  
was like...it was like this world  
wasn't even here for a split  
second!

CREGAR

I don't know what you're talking  
about, Wade.

WADE begins pacing again, thinking out loud about the  
ramifications of this phenomenon.

WADE

Look at me! You said yourself that  
there was something different about  
me, now look at me, and then look  
around you! I seem more here, I am  
more here! Cregar, isn't it  
obvious?

CREGAR studies her for a moment and slowly lets the shock  
settle over him.

CREGAR

My God. But what does it mean?

WADE

(breathlessly)

Remember what I said about the two  
tunnels? About there being two  
versions of this world? There is  
only supposed to be one. This  
version isn't supposed to be here!  
And I think what just happened...

CREGAR

(grabs her arm)

Go on. We need to know!

WADE

(quietly)

I... think... I think this world is  
being reabsorbed! It's fading.  
Fast.

CREGAR

And us with it.

(beat)

Can you stop this with your Timer?

WADE  
(hesitantly)  
I...don't think so. I mean, I don't  
know. I...

CREGAR  
Can you save yourself?

WADE  
I think so. I'm sorry. You're all  
just ghosts.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN ON:

INT. HOLDING CELL – QUINN, ARTURO, AND REMBRANDT

are seated together in a small cell. They look all but whipped, and take the time to survey their current plight.

REMBRANDT

Hey Q-ball... what are you thinking about?

QUINN

Wade. I wonder if she's alright.

ARTURO

She's a bright girl, Mr. Mallory. I trust that she's doing just fine for herself.

QUINN

I know Wade can take care of herself. It's just so frustrating! She's not even in the same dimension... completely out of reach.

REMBRANDT stands up and puts a friendly hand on QUINN's shoulder.

REMBRANDT

(somberly)

Hey man, we all understand. Bad enough that we have to leave everything behind every couple of days. Bad enough that every time we think we've found home, it turns out to be another shell game. Now, we've lost one of the only things we can count on ever since we all fell into this.

QUINN

It's more than that for me, Cryin' Man.

QUINN looks silently over to REMBRANDT, then over to ARTURO. Each Slider regards QUINN with a look that tells us that they understand and sympathize with QUINN.

ARTURO

We are all fond of Ms. Wells,  
Quinn. And I think we all have  
regrets, now that time is short.

(beat)

Perhaps shorter than it has ever  
been.

REMBRANDT

(small smile)

Regrets, Professor? I never thought  
you'd admit regrets.

ARTURO

Perhaps my intolerance for  
foolishness and flippancy has made  
me appear, intractable, and a bit  
pompous, Mr. Brown.

(chuckles)

But there are always things one  
wished were said, or done. Funny  
how it is never as prominent as  
when one is faced with his own  
mortality.

ARTURO shoots a quick glance over to QUINN who knits his  
brows together, a silent exchange between friends.

ARTURO

I certainly would have wished for a  
better demise than this horrid  
place.

QUINN, noticing the resignation on the faces of his friends,  
squares his jaw and attempts to rein in the gloom.

QUINN

(fierce)

C'mon guys! We're acting like we've  
already been lobotomized by that  
thing. We've been in worse scrapes,  
haven't we? We can't just sit back  
and accept fate now, not after all  
we've been through.

ARTURO

(quietly)

My boy, in each of those other  
situations, we at least had the  
hope of the Timer. The hope that at  
the very least we would be able to  
slide out of our dilemmas and  
simply leave them behind.

(MORE)

ARTURO (CONT'D)

In this situation, the Timer is in another dimension entirely. Without that piece of technology...

(beat)

I know of nothing that we can do.

QUINN

(firm)

I guess I just have more faith in Wade's abilities. She wouldn't just abandon us. If I know anything, I know that she's trying anything she can to try and help us. So we owe her at least that! Now, let's think!

REMBRANDT

About what, Q-Ball? We can't just wish up another tunnel to slide through!

QUINN stops cold as he hears REMBRANDT's words.

QUINN

Another tunnel?

Suddenly, QUINN whirls to point to ARTURO.

QUINN

Professor, do you remember the anomaly that we experienced in the tunnel? Two exits. And when we landed here, the bright flash immediately followed by the image of Wade?

ARTURO

I remember it, Mr. Mallory. What exactly are you getting at?

QUINN

Quantum mechanics, Professor. Kovler's Theorem?

ARTURO's eyes widen as he begins to understand the ramifications of QUINN's rant.

ARTURO

I'm following you, Mr. Mallory. Then, according to Kovler, we just experienced quantum fission. But in our case, the release went far beyond simply rupturing and duplicating the ambient quantum energy. The split not only opened up two different exits... but two separate dimensions. Separate but linked.

REMBRANDT

"Quantum Fission"? Wait a second! I've never heard either of you mention that before!

QUINN

It was only a theory. Kovler was on the cutting edge of Quantum Physics, and there was no way to prove his theory.

(beat)

Until now.

REMBRANDT

Yeah, but what does it take to "rupture" or "duplicate" an entire dimension? Can't be real easy or we'd have dealt with it already.

QUINN

Well, yeah, it would take a huge amount of energy, concentrated in a short period of time. Kovler theorized that a sun, suddenly going quasar might do i t-

ARTURO

(interrupting)

Or, perhaps, global thermonuclear warfare, on a grand scale. Judging from what we've seen, this world went through a nuclear hell that we can only imagine. The results of a release of energy that huge can only be guessed at. On this world, I believe the energy was enough to cause a temporary fission.

QUINN

Exactly.

ARTURO

But following that same logic, that means that one of the fissures is highly unstable and can collapse at any time.

REMBRANDT

Is Wade on the unstable world or are we?

QUINN

The tunnel that Wade fell through looked weaker, so I'm guessing that hers is the one that's in danger of collapsing.

REMBRANDT

What happens if Wade is still on that world when it collapses?

ARTURO

If Kovler was correct, the fissioned units slowly re-join, one absorbing the other.

(beat)

Meaning that one ceases to be. If Miss Wells is on that dimension when it ceases to exist...she ceases to exist.

The three gents let the meaning of that statement sink in. An uneasy silence falls over them.

QUINN

How much time do you think she has?

ARTURO

These people have been suffering for 23 years. Judging from the frequency of our ghostly visitations... I'm afraid time is short.

QUINN

Then we can't just sit here. We've gotta try and do something... anything.

CUT TO:

The CYBORG at his post beyond the cell. From behind him, REMBRANDT begins to cry out.

REMBRANDT  
Hey Tin Man! My friend's getting  
really sick in here!

The CYBORG cocks his head to listen but does not move right away. In the cell, QUINN is coaxing ARTURO to play it up a little sicker.

QUINN  
(quietly)  
C'mon, Professor... you gotta be  
sick... real sick.

ARTURO understands and begins to groan a little louder and make sick little retching noises.

REMBRANDT calls out again.

REMBRANDT  
He's not doing too well!  
Something's really wrong with him.  
And it might be catching!

The CYBORG jerks his head around to catch ARTURO sprawled on the cell floor, clutching his tummy.

CYBORG  
Potential health risk in the  
holding cells. Investigating. Two  
units to holding cells for backup.

The CYBORG moves towards the cell as REMBRANDT urges him on.

REMBRANDT  
C'mon you gotta hurry. He's in a  
real bad way.

ARTURO continues to writhe on the floor, retching and coughing as QUINN cradles him.

The two CYBORGS arrive and begin preparations to open the cell.

QUINN motions to ARTURO and REMBRANDT to be ready. CYBORG 1 steps to the control plate and scans his hand, unlocking the gate as the other two CYBORGS stand at the ready.

The two CYBORGS step into the cell to move the bulk that is ARTURO.

QUINN and REMBRANDT exchange a silent, knowing glance and jump at the CYBORGS.

ARTURO wriggles free and joins in the fun. However, there is no contest as the CYBORGS quickly reverse fortunes, and easily subdue the puny humans.

One CYBORG clicks his comlink. There is an obvious exchange after which the CYBORG unhooks a small monitor on his person and holds it out for the SLIDERS to see.

The screen flickers to life and voila... BAIR appears.

BAIR

You are the most spirited humans I have encountered in these last two decades.

(beat)

Unfortunately, that goes against the better interests of my society. And so, the time has come to release you of the burden of independent thought. For your own good, of course.

Close on our SLIDERS with that look on their faces that signals, "something wicked this way comes."

CUT TO:

INT. COURTYARD - ACTIVE - WADE, CREGAR AND LEVON

are trying to stay out of sight as they slink along among the citizens, attempting to reconnoiter the area. CREGAR indicates one of the tunnels.

CREGAR

At the end of that one, my dear, is the Lab. When I give the signal, a few of us will stir up some trouble to distract the sheep dogs. That's when you, Levon, and myself, make our way to the door. If we hurry, we can be inside before any cyborgs arrive. After that, it is entirely up to you.

WADE

(emotional)

Let's do it. We don't have a lot of time.

CREGAR signals his people, and disturbances begin to break out: staged fights, destruction of property, etc. As the CYBORGS move in to suppress the disturbances, WADE, CREGAR and LEVON move off into the indicated tunnel.

At the same time, the eerie "fading" flashes begin happening at almost regular intervals, as the two dimensions grind against each other and hurdle towards inevitable unification.

WADE moves towards the door as they approach it, it is the same as the other doors in the facility, but festooned with warning signs. She goes to the control box on the left of the door and stares at it for a moment.

WADE looks at it in disdain and turns to CREGAR.

WADE  
It's welded.

LEVON steps forward, grinning, and produces a sharpened metal leg ripped from one of the standard tables. LEVON presents the makeshift crowbar to WADE.

LEVON  
Not for long.

LEVON steps up to the box, and in one muscular motion pries it open. WADE leans in and after a moment's study clips several wires with a pair of scissors.

WADE  
(concentrating)  
Any second now...

As she crosses the right wires, the door swishes open. The three exchange glances (WADE is surprised it worked in spite of herself) and she moves to enter. CREGAR and LEVON hold back.

WADE  
Aren't you coming in?

CREGAR  
Someone has to keep the sheep dogs busy, when they come. Do what you have to do. We'll cover you.

WADE hesitates, and then nods, entering the Lab.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LAB/RESEARCH AREA

Gurneys and medical docks line one side while various electronics, monitors and screens line the other.

It is currently empty. WADE casts about the place, sweeping it with her eyes, until she fixes on the Timer, which rests on one of the work tables. Triumphant, she grabs it up;

the Timer reads thirty minutes until slide. She turns to the door and takes a step, and with another swish, it snaps shut. From behind her comes a voice:

BAIR

You are the most spirited human I have encountered in these last two decades. I thought that all of your kind had managed to destroy themselves in their excitement. That this foolhardy desire for anarchy had been selectively bred out of you.

WADE turns to face a computer screen which has come to life behind her. Dimly, we can hear the sounds of struggle and violence outside.

WADE is afraid, but determined not to surrender without a fight.

WADE

I must be a mutant.

BAIR's screen flickers momentarily but he does not seem to notice it.

BAIR

Mutated cells must be removed from the body politic, or they infect others. I wonder if you are the chief irritant, or if you are merely a victim of this madness. I will never understand how you humans could actually prefer uncertainty and death to... me.

WADE

What you don't understand is that you are uncertainty and death.

BAIR

(interested)

You know what is happening, don't you? That item you hold, it is somehow a key to all this madness, is it not? And for all my vaunted power, I am at a loss to explain anything. I have been monitoring certain drainages for several years now. Odd fluctuations. Power losses, temporal anomalies.

(beat)

(MORE)

BAIR (CONT'D)

I am familiar with quantum physics,  
which is why I have studied your  
device. I had hoped to  
understanding this phenomenon.

(intensely)

What is happening? What is  
happening to my people!?

WADE

(firmly)

This world has split in two, two  
almost identical dimensions, and I  
think this one is... fading... back  
into the original. It's like its  
being re-absorbed. If you can  
analyze the data on the temporal  
anomalies, five'll get you ten  
you'll see what I'm saying is true.  
You're dying! Your people are  
dying.

(she glances at the Timer)

But I might be able to do  
something.

BAIR

How can you do anything? I am a  
logical creation and do not grasp  
at straws easily. It is difficult  
to accept that an entire dimension  
is collapsing, making me  
Ozymandias.

(beat)

Asking the mighty to look upon me  
and despair as the sands of time  
bury me. You have a few minutes to  
convince me, citizen.

WADE

Convince you? Use your logic,  
Bennish! Look around you! Your  
drainages, distortions! It's  
obvious, isn't it? You wouldn't  
even concede a few minutes if you  
were sure otherwise. You certainly  
didn't give these people a few  
minutes when you decided to  
imprison them for their own good.  
You know I'm telling the truth!  
You've misdiagnosed the problem.  
You're the mutated cell – and your  
blindness is going to destroy your  
people. I may be able to do  
something.

BAIR sits silent for a moment, throwing a glance in the direction of the unrest that is growing outside his doors.

BAIR

How?

WADE

You must have databanks, whole libraries of information. If you let me have control of the facility for just a short time, I might find a way to save you. Maybe I can stabilize this dimension, reverse the fade. Maybe I can find a way to have the population slide with me - I won't know until you give me control!

(deliberately)

I am your only hope. Your core programming demands that you preserve the population. If you don't give me control, they will die.

There is a moment of silence as BAIR and WADE regard each other.

BAIR

"...stamped on these lifeless things, the hand that mocked them, the heart that fed..."

The screen goes blank, and the door opens behind her. WADE lets out a sigh of relief. The video screen raises up into the ceiling, revealing a second door.

Throughout the facility, quick shots show CYBORGS "coming to their senses", almost like waking up, as BAIRS control ceases. Doors open everywhere, and all the lights come up full strength. Monitors everywhere show test patterns.

CUT TO:

INT. BAIR COMMAND CENTER - WADE

walks in, slightly awed. This is a small room, filled with computer banks. It is dusty and cobwebbed, and all around her systems are booting up for the first time in decades. A cracked and ancient chair sits before a simple keyboard in the center of the room. She glances at the Timer.

WADE  
(quietly)  
Well, let's get to work.

CUT TO:

INT. THE LAB - ARTURO, REMBRANDT AND QUINN

are each guarded by a CYBORG while CREGAR is being held down by another CYBORG on a gurney, positioned under some very nasty looking equipment. On the big screen, BAIR's impassive face regards them.

BAIR  
It's time I think to finally silence all those who threaten the safety of the populace with their anti-social ways. Perhaps in your final moments you'd like to meet one of my greatest irritants.

CREGAR  
Charmed.

QUINN  
What are you going to do?

As QUINN asks the question, there are several brilliant flashes of eerie light.

BAIR  
(amused)  
A simple procedure, really. The severing of a few key synapses, replaced by ingenious circuitry of my own devising, and this troublesome biological unit will be much more cooperative. Think of it as surgery: cutting out a diseased cell before it affects the whole system.

REMBRANDT is becoming visibly agitated as the conversation proceeds.

ARTURO  
For an intelligence designed to protect the human race, you seem to have spent quite a bit of time learning how to destroy it.

BAIR

Destroy it? No, citizen, the human race itself is master of that particular specialty. Without me, friend, there would be no more of you to be destroyed. But no matter what I do, no matter how safe I make you, how fit, how well fed, how well balanced you insist on finding ways to threaten yourselves.

(beat)

I was born of mad parents, you see. They order me to care for them in their dotage, and proceed to attempt suicide whenever I am not looking. This is the only way to assure success.

QUINN

Success of what? A stagnant race? A race of mindless drones, all sculpted into your image?

BAIR

(calmly)

Your petty opinions do not come into the equation. My program demands that I keep the human race alive in spite of itself. By any means necessary.

REMBRANDT breaks away from the CYBORG holding him, and with a cry snatches up an instrument from one of the nearby tables and rushes the video screen, smashing it into pieces. BAIR vanishes from it, literally up in smoke.

REMBRANDT

(angrily)

Back home, that phrase stood for freedom. You turn it into a sick joke. You'd best cool it.

As the CYBORGS close in on REMBRANDT and forcibly take him in hand, laughter fills the room. A second video screen drops steadily from the ceiling, revealing BAIR, looking none the worse.

BAIR

You see? You humans choose to place yourselves squarely in the face of danger. Irrational. Illogical.

(MORE)

BAIR (CONT'D)

Unable to save yourselves because  
it never occurs to you to save  
yourselves. I suppose the excitable  
one should be first, then.

One CYBORG begins dragging a struggling REMBRANDT to the  
gurney, while the other releases CREGAR. QUINN and ARTURO  
share a panicked glance.

ARTURO

My boy, it has been a sometime  
pleasure working with you.

QUINN

Same here professor. At the very  
least, I hope that Wade found a way  
out of here.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMAND CENTER - WADE

is sitting at the keyboards, working frantically. CREGAR  
leans over her shoulder. He is almost transparent, the fade  
has progressed to its final moments. Even the room and  
equipment seem to fade away at intervals.

WADE

Amazing...

CREGAR

(whispering)  
What?

WADE

According to the information in  
BAIR's data banks, if I slide from  
here, I should end up in the other  
version of this world. The  
proximity of that universe should  
pull me over, like a magnet pulling  
a piece of iron.

(she pauses to grimace) )  
Theoretically, of course. I wish  
the Professor were here....but  
something tells me he wouldn't  
know, either.

(There is another flash, and for a moment CREGAR simply isn't  
there.)

CREGAR

Will you have time?

WADE

(looks away)

We'll see. There must be a way to reverse this, to stabilize this. I can't just leave you all here to-

CREGAR

Look at me! You have no choice!

WADE continues to search through the databanks, ignoring CREGAR. Suddenly, she stops.

WADE

Wow. Irony.

CREGAR

What is it?

WADE

(glancing up)

The Shut Down Code for the BAIR system. Complete manual override, verbal confirmation. All along, all you had to do was speak this sequence to BAIR, and purgatory would have been yours.

WADE points at the flickering screen.

WADE

Cregar, remember this. Quick, we don't have any time, but if I'm wrong about what's happening here, if you do survive this "fade", you'll need this code!

CREGAR nods and studies the screen while WADE stands up.

As Wade stands, there is another bright flash.

The command center console explodes in a pyrotechnics display of light and glass, sending CREGAR flying backwards.

WADE sees CREGAR take the hit and rushes to his side. All around WADE, the command center is beginning to unravel as the fade intensifies.

WADE

(screams)

Cregar!

CREGAR has taken some damage, bleeding from his head and hands. He struggles to sit up as WADE cradles him.

CREGAR  
(weakly)  
How much time until you slide?

WADE looks at the Timer through her tears, even as instruments explode and fizzle around her.

Outside. the citizens sound as if Armageddon is upon them. There are screams of terror and confusion as people rush back and forth through the halls of Hibernata.

WADE  
Two minutes.

Another flash, and again CREGAR disappears for a moment. This fade is more extended and is accompanied by showers of sparks from the computers in the room. When CREGAR fades back, he is almost nonexistent.

WADE  
(emotionally)  
I can't abandon you.

CREGAR  
(thinly)  
No matter what happens, Wade,  
you've freed us from purgatory. If  
only for a few minutes. But freedom  
is worth oblivion, trust me. I  
gladly trade my life in this  
dungeon for the last half hour. Now  
hurry! GO!

The Timer beeps insistently. Reflexively, WADE aims the Timer towards the Lab wall and opens the gateway.

WADE  
(tearful)  
I'm sorry, Cregar.

The gateway looks weak but inviting. WADE slowly lets CREGAR's head rest against the wall. She stands, takes a running start and dives into the tunnel.

Cregar rests in the Control Room, smiling his usual wry smile, for a moment. Then, amidst the explosions and smoke, slowly, everything fades away, leaving nothing.

CUT TO:

INT. LAB-REMBRANDT

is about to be strapped down in the gurney. CREGAR stands with the other two SLIDERS under guard, and two CYBORGS are preparing the equipment for the procedure.

BAIR watches from the undamaged video screen. Suddenly the gateway appears, and WADE tumbles out of it, inadvertently knocking the CYBORG guarding QUINN and ARTURO off its feet.

As WADE tumbles in, the door to the Lab is blown open and this world's LEVON and company rush in, brandishing weapons taken from CYBORGS.

LEVON and company start firing at the consoles and CYBORGS, showering everyone in sparks and glass.

CREGAR looks on appreciatively as his CYBORG is taken out behind him.

CREGAR  
It's about time!

ARTURO  
Sir, you have no idea!

QUINN  
Wade!

ARTURO  
Ms. Wells, that may be the most  
fortuitous entrance I've ever  
witnessed!

WADE looks around dazedly, and then widens her eyes in shock. This scene looks eerily familiar as equipment explodes all around her.

WADE  
I wasn't sure--

BAIR  
Patrol! Unrest in Lab area!  
Immediate reinforcements required!!

QUINN kicks his CYBORG back onto the floor as the rag-tag group of rebels positions themselves in the Lab. REMBRANDT takes advantage of the momentary confusion to spring up and join his comrades.

REMBRANDT

Girl, my goose was good as cooked.  
Tell me you've got a way out of  
this.

WADE glances down at the timer.

WADE

Hurry! We've got about fifteen  
seconds!

BAIR

All available Peacekeepers to the  
Lab now!

WADE prepares to aim the Timer when she catches sight of CREGAR, rallying with the troops. The CYBORGS are beginning to recover from their shock. Other CYBORGS are beginning to amass outside the door. CREGAR and company have their hands full fending off their advances.

WADE

Cregar!

Through the explosions, CREGAR turns back at the sound of his name, looking directly at WADE.

CREGAR

Do I know you girl?

ARTURO snatches the timer from WADE and opens the gate. With the smoke and confusion, the gate is all but invisible to anyone who isn't looking for it. REMBRANDT and ARTURO spare no time in leaping through. QUINN moves towards it until he realizes that WADE is still staring at CREGAR, and he rejoins her.

QUINN

(grabbing her arm)  
Hurry! We got go!

WADE

(struggling slightly)  
Wait! I have to tell him! The code!  
I have to tell him the code!

QUINN pulls her towards the gate. WADE's eyes meet CREGAR's for a moment as she pauses next to QUINN before leaping.

Suddenly, CREGAR speaks, almost as surprised at his words as WADE is.

CREGAR

Wade?

(beat)

We're not just ghosts.

WADE smiles, and then QUINN pushes her into the gateway,  
following quickly.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE END