

TRANSMISSIONS

by

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2008

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INT. WORKSPACE

Overhead fluorescent lights turn on.

The workspace: a cement floor and blank, white walls. A lamp and a digital clock perch on rows of otherwise-empty shelves.

A chair sits in front of a desk. Atop it is a computer monitor, keyboard, speakers, a telephone, a tape recorder, a digital recorder, and a microphone.

A clipboard contains the grids of partly-filled spreadsheets. On the floor beside it sits a filing cabinet. Underneath the desk is a computer tower.

Adjacent to the desk is stacked an array of audio equipment: a radio receiver, a headset, a box of switches, and speakers.

The clock clicks to 8:59.

FOOTSTEPS descend a nearby stairwell. The borderline-scruffy RIDLEY KRAID enters. He wears a wrinkled, old white dress shirt tucked into worn khakis. A dark necktie is worn loose through his collar. A watch is strapped underneath his wrist.

He shuffles to the desk and sets down his brown shoulderbag on top of the filing cabinet.

The clock hits 9:00. A LOUD TONE sounds from the clock. Kraid switches it off.

Kraid sits at the desk and adjusts the height of his chair. He turns on his computer tower, the monitor, and the receiver. The monitor flashes as the computer boots.

The deep voice of his AI co-worker comes from the speakers atop the receiver.

AI

The current topside time is nine o'clock a.m. for Saturday, September two, two-thousand fifty-one. Time for work. Beginning sequence. Checking telephone messages.

The AI triggers a mechanical sequence.

Kraid's polite VOICE, pre-recorded, plays from the speakers.

PRERECORDED KRAID

Hello, you've reached the extension of Ridley Kraid. That's R-I-D-L-E-Y, K-R-A-I-D. If you have reached the incorrect extension, please hang up and place another call. Otherwise, if you wish to speak to me, I am currently away from my station. Please leave a detailed message, and I will respond during my work hours. Thank you.

A BEEP sounds, followed by blank TAPE HISS.

AI

You have... zero... messages.

The tape CLICKS off. The computer boots to the desktop.

AI

Please sign into Municipal Network.

Kraid clicks on a telephone icon labeled "MuniNet."

Through the speaker, a DIAL TONE sounds. The computer rapidly DIALS a twenty-digit number in triplicate. The line connects with a series of CLICKS.

The distorted, crumpled voice of the GATEKEEPER interrupts.

GATEKEEPER

Voice identification, please.

Kraid presses a button on his console.

PRERECORDED KRAID

Kraid, Ridley. Monitor ident three zero six one eight eight five.

The Gatekeeper ponders.

GATEKEEPER

Confirmed. Thank you.

Another series of CLICKS sounds. The soothing chime of the MUNINET JINGLE plays to confirm Kraid's log-in.

AI

Checking your inbox.

Kraid puts on his headset. He keeps the small microphone held up over his ear.

The INBOX TONE sounds. Kraid holds up crossed fingers. He already bears a look of expected disappointment.

AI
Today's work is... monitoring...
and transcription.

Kraid quietly mumbles "fuck."

AI
Please note the time and frequency.

Kraid takes the clipboard and pen, squints at the screen, and scrawls down the information. He notes the time on the digital clock.

AI
For security reasons, please
switch to manual override.

Kraid presses one of the buttons on the console.

AI
You have chosen manual override.
Are you certain? If yes, press
enter--

Kraid hits enter on his keyboard before the AI can finish.

AI
Entering lowered awareness. Have
a safe and productive workday.

Kraid, keeping his eyes on the computer, turns on his radio and blindly tunes through STATIC. He loads up his word processor.

The static turns to some light BREATHING overloading the headset microphone on the other end.

The distorted, near-monotone voice of SIX-FOUR comes through.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
Radio check. One-two, one-two.

Kraid transcribes on his word processor. He writes, "[RADIO CHECK / BEGINNING TRANSMISSION.]"

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
Radio check. This is Six-Four.
Team Seven-Sixteen.

Kraid transcribes. He waits. Six-Four goes quiet. Some GUNSHOTS THROB in the distance.

Kraid writes "[DISTANT GUNSHOTS.]"

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 (off mic)
 Who was that? Friendlies? Doesn't
 matter.

AN HOUR LATER

The clock reads 10:34.

Kraid leans forward and transcribes with quick typing.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 Radio check two. This is Six-Four.
 Team Seven-Sixteen. No contact.
 Oh... That's a rog, Command...
 Relaying order to Team Seven-
 Sixteen.

Six-Four yells to his nearby team.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 (off mic)
 Hey! MK, Pointman! Circle up,
 kiddos.

Kraid writes, "[INDISTINCT CHATTER]."

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 Six-Four to Command. Copy on
 orders. Prepped on gear check and
 load-out. Movement to contact.

Six-Four's convoy of heavy vehicles groan to life and take
 off. The WIND overloads Six-Four's headset.

Kraid transcribes.

AN HOUR LATER

The clock reads 11:42.

VEHICLES RUMBLE along through the speaker. Six-Four BREATHES
 over the noise. The vehicle stops and IDLES.

Kraid types, "[CONVOY STOPS.]"

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 Six-Four to Command. Enemy spotted
 at a range of... four-hundred
 meters. I count... eleven
 uniformed dismounts with no
 visible support. Engaging.

GUNSHOTS FIRE a brief burst.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
Six-Four to Command. Enemy, uh...
taken care of. Bouncing signal
over to Team Seven-Seventeen.
They'll clean up.

Six-Four FIDDLES with his microphone. A shriek of NOISE comes in, and Kraid calmly grabs the volume knob of his receiver and turns it down until it subsides.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
Had to adjust this... thing. Sorry,
Command. And to, uh, whoever else
is listening out there.

Kraid types, "[PASSING MENTION TO MONITOR.]"

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
Six-Four to Command. Rog on
secondary. Movement to contact.
Again. Radio silence pending new
sitrep.

Six-Four CLICKS out. A low HISS comes through the frequency.

Kraid types, "[RADIO SILENCE.]"

AN HOUR LATER

The clock reads 12:59. Kraid eyes it every few seconds.

Repeated GUNSHOTS and brief EXPLOSIONS come through the speaker and frequently OVERLOAD Six-Four's headset. Six-Four's voice remains calm.

Kraid writes, "[SKIRMISH.]"

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
Light contact. Small arms fire
from the... northwest. Ranged
at... five-hundred meters. Some
arty from where we... can't...
see... Hold a moment... Seven-
Seventeen reports casualties. One
wounded, one KIA and--

The clock hits 1:00.

The TRANSMISSION abruptly cuts to SILENCE.

AI

One o'clock p.m. Mandatory half-hour break. Disconnecting from Municipal Network. Enabling computer-assisted override.

Kraid takes off his headset and takes a note on his clipboard. He turns off his computer monitor.

Kraid sits in SILENCE for a moment.

He punches a few presets on his radio. "WATER MUSIC SUITE: HORNPIPE" comes on.

Kraid takes a brown paper bag out of his grey shoulderbag. From it he pulls out a sandwich, an apple, a plastic bag filled with potato chips, and a bottle of water. He begins to eat.

The music FADES DOWN. The cheerful ANNOUNCER briefly comes on.

ANNOUNCER

You're listening to--

The MUNINET JINGLE plays.

ANNOUNCER

--Municipal Network Radio. Brought to you by... you!

The music FADES UP to its original volume.

MINUTES LATER

A CHOPIN PIANO CONCERTO plays.

Kraid finishes his lunch by shaking the last few crumbs of chips from the bag into his mouth. He stuffs the trash in his bag. He leaves the room. His FOOTSTEPS sound on the hard floor outside.

A TOILET FLUSHES. Kraid comes back in. He sits at his chair. He taps his fingers along to the piece.

MINUTES LATER

Kraid skims a newspaper from his bag. The clock reads 1:23.

Kraid looks at his watch. He looks at the clock. He leans back in his chair and puts a foot up on the desk.

MINUTES LATER

The clock hits 1:30. Kraid turns on his monitor. He clicks on the "MuniNet" icon before prompted.

AI
One-thirty p.m. Please sign into
Municipal Network.

The computer DIALS and CLICKS.

GATEKEEPER
Voice identification, please.

Kraid presses a button on his console. His prerecorded voice comes through.

PRERECORDED KRAID
Kraid, Ridley. Monitor ident three
zero six one eight eight five.

The machine waits. Kraid puts on his headset.

GATEKEEPER
Confirmed. Thank you.

Another series of CLICKS sounds. The MUNINET JINGLE plays to confirm Kraid's log-in.

AI
Playing prerecorded transmission.
You are behind by... thirty minutes.

Kraid flips a switch.

AI
You have chosen manual override.
Are you certain? If yes, press
enter--

Kraid repeatedly taps the "enter" key. The AI cuts off.

AI
Entering lowered awareness. Have
a safe and productive workday.

Kraid dials into the proper frequency on his receiver. Six-Four's first piece of the TRANSMISSION comes in.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
Radio check. One-two, one-two.

Kraid jogs the recording forward. Six-Four's voice SPEEDS UP until the whole tape sounds indecipherable.

It CLIPS forward. While it advances, Kraid opens up his transcript on his word processor.

Kraid stops the recording.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 Seven-seventeen reports casualties.
 One wounded, one KIA, and one...
 Wait, Seven-seventeen's talking
 to me... And he said never mind.

Six-Four shouts to his team.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 (off mic)
 Seven-seventeen said never mind!
 Just one KIA! Just one!

He pulls the headset back.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 Sorry for the chatter, Command.

The convoy starts up again.

Kraid writes, "[DIGRESSION / RADIO SILENCE.]"

Kraid jogs the recording forward. He hears the intermittent RUMBLE of the convoy. He keeps advancing the recording until the RUMBLE becomes constant.

AI
 Limit of recording. Switching to
 live transmission.

Kraid makes a note.

HOURS LATER

The clock reads 4:02. The RUMBLE stops. The VEHICLES IDLE.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 And... checkpoint... Do you read,
 Command? Radio check, one-two
 and... Loud and clear. Seven-
 Sixteen inbound. End transmission.

Kraid transcribes the rest. The sound CLICKS out to a HISS. After, "End transmission," Kraid writes, "[END TRANSMISSION.]"

He saves the file.

He picks up his telephone and presses a speed dial preset. The phone rapidly DIALS.

He sets down the handset near one of the speakers. He checks his watch and counts.

He presses a button on his console. His prerecorded voice comes through.

PRERECORDED KRAID
This is Kraid, Ridley. Monitor
ident three zero six one eight
eight five. Transmission sent.
Pending confirmation.

Kraid waits.

GATEKEEPER
Report received. Thank you, three
zero six.

Kraid makes a note on his clipboard. He looks at the clock.

MINUTES LATER

The clock reads 4:36.

Kraid slouches comfortably in his chair. The room is quiet. The receiver HISSES but no words come through.

MINUTES LATER

The clock switches from 4:59 to 5:00. Kraid anticipates the clock's LOUD TONE and hits it off a moment after it sounds.

AI
Five o'clock p.m. Time to leave
work.

He takes off his headset and stands up. He turns off his receiver, shuts down his computer, and turns off the monitor.

He stands and zips up his brown shoulderbag.

AI
Have a nice night.

KRAID
Thanks.

AI
You're welcome.

Kraid leaves the room. His FOOTSTEPS ascend the staircase outside.

The light turns off.

INT. KRAID'S HOUSE/GARAGE - NIGHT

The garage door remotely GROANS opens. Beyond are the exterior lights and dim shapes of neighbors' houses up and down a suburban street.

Ridley Kraid's black luxury sedan HUMS as it eases into the garage with its headlights guiding the way. The car parks and SHUTS DOWN.

Kraid, in his work clothes, gets out of the car. He sets his brown bag on the car's roof.

He wanders out onto the open driveway and glances up and down the street. He sees no one. He walks to his curbside mailbox and retrieves two pieces of mail.

INT. MUDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The door CHIRPS as it automatically UNLOCKS to allow Kraid's passage. The exterior garage door remotely GROANS SHUT. Kraid enters with his bag and mail. He takes off his boots.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The bedroom is large and dark. Kraid dials up the brightness on the dim overhead lights.

The room is sparse. An empty coffee table sits in front of a couch. Past it is a stand with some speakers hooked up to a receiver. Above are shelves lined with empty boxes.

At the end of the room, a large bed occupies a space next to a dresser topped with a mirror. On the adjacent wall is an empty corkboard. A desk sits in the corner.

Kraid enters and sets his bag on the dresser by the door. He loosens the slipknot on his tie just enough to remove it from his neck while keeping the knot intact. He sets it on his bag.

A digital clock on the desk reads 8:02.

INT. KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Kraid opens his refrigerator. Inside are several different types of liquids in clear plastic jugs. Each is labeled with masking tape and permanent marker. There's water, orange juice, iced tea, and a blue liquid that looks like antifreeze.

He pours himself a glass of brown liquid labeled "TEA." He takes three ice cubes from the attached freezer and deposits them in his glass.

He moves through the immaculate kitchen and pulls open a lower cabinet. He takes the two pieces of mail, glances at both, and, without opening either, feeds them into a paper shredder.

INT. ENTRYWAY - MINUTES LATER

Kraid stands in front of large, open windows that overlook the dark neighborhood. In the dimness, he's nearly invisible, but he stands confidently, almost proudly, with his hands on his hips. He sips his iced tea and shuts the windows.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

The digital clock reads 9:34.

Kraid reclines on the couch, drinks iced tea, and whistles the intricate sax solo of "ORNITHOLOGY" by CHARLIE PARKER.

He keeps whistling as a MASSIVE TRUCK RUMBLES down the street.

The truck BRAKES and loudly IDLES outside. A cargo door SLIDES open. A DELIVERY ROBOT WHEELS across the street and deposits a package on Kraid's doorstep.

The DOORBELL RINGS.

The Delivery Robot WHEELS back to the IDLING TRUCK. The truck RUMBLES off.

INT. ENTRY - MOMENTS LATER

Kraid opens the door and retrieves a package.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Kraid grins as he cuts open a long, rectangular box marked "KRAID - EASTHAVEN."

He CACKLES quietly to himself as he extracts a sheathed samurai sword encased in packaging material.

He gently slides open the sword and tests the edge. He cuts his finger and sucks the blood from the wound.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kraid puts on safety goggles and checks himself in the mirror. He then fully unsheathes the blade. He handles it with precision, albeit improperly.

He swings it around. He makes artificial SWOOSHING noises.

He sheathes the sword and practices a quick draw.

INT. DINING ROOM/ENTRY - MINUTES LATER

Kraid draws the sword and makes imaginary strikes.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid strikes menacing poses in front of the mirror by his bed.

He stands on the bed and accidentally hits the ceiling mid-strike.

He eventually loses interest.

He sheathes the sword and stows it under his bed.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Kraid pours himself another glass of iced tea.

The TELEPHONE RINGS. Kraid ignores it. He drinks his tea. After thirty seconds, the ring cuts out.

Kraid stands against the countertop and checks his watch.

After a minute, he picks up the telephone. A DIAL TONE sounds. Kraid presses a speed dial preset, and the phone rapidly DIALS a long string of digits repeated in triplicate.

The other end connects with the MUNINET JINGLE. The GREETER cheerily greets him.

GREETER (O.S.)
Welcome to Municipal Network
Telephone services! Please input
your identification number and--!

Kraid cuts it off by pressing another preset. A string of DIGITS rapidly repeats in triplicate. The other end goes silent as it processes.

GREETER (O.S.)
Messages for--

The Greeter goes silent, momentarily replaced by a VOICE SYNTHESIZER.

VOICE SYNTHESIZER (O.S.)
--Rid-Lee Kurr-Raid--

GREETER (O.S.)
--on--

VOICE SYNTHESIZER (O.S.)
September two, two-thousand fifty-
one.

GREETER (O.S.)
Message one, received--

VOICE SYNTHESIZER (O.S.)
--ten-fourteen p.m.--

The message plays. THE GIRL speaks on the other end.

THE GIRL (O.S.)
Hey, Rid, it's--

Kraid immediately, but without urgency, presses a button on his telephone. The voice cuts out.

GREETER (O.S.)
To confirm deletion of this
message, please press "1."

Kraid presses "1." The other end waits a moment.

GREETER (O.S.)
Message deleted. You have no new
messages.

Kraid hangs up the telephone.

INT. BATHROOM

Kraid washes his hands and dries them.

He pauses at the mirror and examines himself.

He leaves the room and returns a few seconds later with a pair of scissors. He trims some of his hair.

He returns and comes back with a pair of thin-rimmed glasses. He puts them on.

He leaves and comes back with his necktie. He buttons up his collar and slips on the tie.

He leaves and returns with a black suit jacket.

He parts his hair in the opposite direction. He messes it up and parts it back the other way. He switches it again.

He turns on the faucet and wets down his hair. He separates it neatly with a comb.

Kraid wears wrinkled black slacks and dress socks with the rest of his suit. He sits on the closed toilet and opens a beat-up box that contains black dress shoes.

He ties the laces on the shoes. The edges have a few scuffs. Kraid licks his finger and tries to rub them out without success.

Kraid stands in front of the mirror and rolls a lint brush over his jacket. He stands up straighter and attempts to look dignified.

He sticks out a stiff palm and mimes a stiff handshake.

He performs a dozen variations on the handshake.

He begins to get successively less professional as he dresses down and messes up his hair.

Kraid eventually strips down to his untucked dress shirt, no tie, and shaggy hair.

He holds out his hand and fakes a casual handshake. He flashes a well-rehearsed smile. He reverts to a well-honed neutrality.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

The clock reads 10:57.

Kraid puts his clothes away as he brushes his teeth. He puts his white dress shirt on a hanger outside his closet.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

The lights turn off. Kraid feels his way through the dark to his bed.

The glowing digital clock reads 11:00.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

The clock reads 4:29. It switches to 4:30. The RADIO clicks on, followed by the ANNOUNCER.

Kraid fitfully awakens in the darkness with a loud SNIFF.

ANNOUNCER

You're listening to--

The MUNINET JINGLE plays.

ANNOUNCER

--Municipal Network Radio. Brought
to you by... you!

Kraid turns on the lamp on his endtable. He sits on his
bedside and shakes out a few PILLS from the vials on his
nightstand. He swallows them dry and chases them with a long
drink of water from a glass on the stand.

ANNOUNCER

Today is... Sunday... September
three, two-thousand... fifty-one.
The current topside temperature
is--

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Kraid turns on the lights. He wears a grey t-shirt and
desert-camouflage military pants.

He opens the refrigerator and pulls out a jug of orange juice.
He drinks straight from the carton.

INT. EXERCISE ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid works the chest press, curls weights, and does pull-
ups on a home gym.

He jogs, still in his desert-camo pants, on an elliptical
machine. He sweats profusely near the end of his cycle.

INT. BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid, still in his workout clothes and still sweaty, half-
heartedly shaves.

He turns on the shower and takes off his shirt.

INT. HALL - MINUTES LATER

The door opens and Kraid turns on the bathroom fan. Kraid
wears a grey t-shirt tucked into his worn khakis. His shaggy
hair is wet and messy from a recent shower.

He blow-dries his hair. He finger-combs it afterward without
much consideration for its appearance.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid buttons up and tucks in his white dress shirt from the
day prior. He picks up his still-tied necktie from on top of
his bag on the coffee table.

INT. KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Kraid, his necktie tucked into his shirt, assembles a sandwich while simultaneously eating a bowl of chili, a banana, and drinking a glass of milk. He frequently dips the banana in the chili and eats a bite.

He deposits the sandwich, an apple, a plastic bag of potato chips, and a bottle of water in a brown paper bag.

INT. ENTRY - MINUTES LATER

Kraid opens the blinds on his front windows. A bit of dark blue light shines on the street. Most of the houses still have their exterior lights on.

He peers through the window in the door before stepping onto the porch and grabbing the newspaper.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid packs his grey bag with his lunch and newspaper. He checks his watch. He checks the clock.

The clock reads 5:58.

Kraid waits.

The clock hits 6:00.

Kraid turns off the light and leaves the room.

INT. GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Kraid's car pulls out of the driveway and drives up the street.

The garage door remotely GROANS SHUT. The lights click off.

INT. WORKSPACE

The light turns on.

FOOTSTEPS descend a nearby stairwell.

The clock hits 8:59.

Kraid enters and sets down his things.

The clock hits 9:00. It emits a LOUD TONE. Kraid anticipates it and quickly shuts it off.

He turns on his machines. The AI speaks. Kraid sits in his chair.

AI

The current topside time is nine o'clock a.m. for Sunday, September three, two-thousand fifty-one. Time for work. Beginning sequence.

Kraid puts on his headset and headphones.

MINUTES LATER

Kraid dutifully transcribes a TRANSMISSION between COMMAND and an unheard Six-Four.

He fiddles with his machines to try for a cleaner signal. A BLAST of sound comes through for a moment.

COMMAND (O.S.)

Jesus fucking Christ, Six-Four, quit fiddling with your mic... Yeah, yeah, sounds good. Keep good time. Command out.

The line CLICKS, but the HISS remains. Command still keeps his headset on and talks to the unheard JOHNSON and CORPORAL.

COMMAND (O.S.)

(partly off mic)

He'll be back in a few minutes, right? We have a few minutes?... Yeah, we've got a few minutes. I'll just keep it on. I mean, no one's listening, right? Right? Six-Four, do you copy? Six-Four, you're a fucking shitweasel... See, Johnson, he's not on. He's not... And hey, hey Corporal, come here a second. I'm getting this loud like, uh, hissing noise whenever I have this on. It's not bothering me or anything, but, uh, yeah, even when I'm not on the line with Six-Four it hisses, so I don't think it's on his end. It sounds like there's a mosquito buzzing around my head... Thanks, Corporal.

The Corporal leaves.

COMMAND (O.S.)

I mean, what the fuck, Johnson? These cost like, what, five bucks? I put in a request for a new one like three months ago. See, right there, all the padding is gone on the earpiece. Who did that? Why would someone do that? I mean, I'm not complaining. Could be worse. I could be, you know, I could be out there with goddamn Six-Four and those goons. Way the hell out in who-gives-a-shit county. And where the hell are they, anyway? Are they still on the border or are they inland? Shit. I should probably figure that out.

Kraid dutifully transcribes. He HAMMERS his keyboard to keep up with Command's rapid speech.

COMMAND (O.S.)

But you know, Johnson, and this is me talking, right, in confidence, so don't say anything, all right? But sometimes I feel bad for those guys. Granted, they volunteered, but, man, Six-Four and those guys are a bunch of crazy fuckers. And they eat that shit up, you know? They're driving around in fucking open-air go-karts, with no armor and no CAS, right, and it's like no big deal. You know, he comes in on the radio, and he's all like--

(imitating Six-Four)

Command, this is Six-Four. I've got two-dozen enemy tanks approaching our position. Preparing to engage.

(in his normal voice)

But, shit, right? I was out there. You were out there, Johnson. Sitting in the dirt, our ass in the grass. And we loved it. But we were, what? Twenty, twenty-two, twenty-four years old? It's not like we were green or anything. Just limber. Agile. Hell, now I start to bitch if the AC doesn't kick in when the room gets over seventy. I mean--

Command gets caught in a ragged bit of laughter.

COMMAND (O.S.)

--I mean, the only support I need is lumbar support, Johnson! The only evac I need is for my bowels if I haven't taken a shit in two days.

Command composes himself.

COMMAND (O.S.)

But this, Johnson? Yeah, this is routine. Might as well be the same. But we step outside this tent and there's a little city out there. And, yeah, it's loud and hot, but you need that sometimes. You know what I mean, Johnson?

[TIME SHIFT. Command's V.O. continues while shots of Kraid continue on into the future.]

INT. KRAID'S HOUSE/BATHROOM - NIGHT

Kraid washes his hands.

COMMAND (O.S.)

You need to have a little space for yourself. A little time. A space where everything you have is exactly how you want, exactly where you want it.

INT. KITCHEN

Kraid opens the refrigerator. Inside are neatly-arranged plastic jugs containing liquids of varying color.

INT. ENTRY - NIGHT

Through the front windows, we see Kraid go out to the mailbox while glancing up and down the street.

COMMAND (O.S.)

And, yeah, we're way the hell out here, and you feel a little silly when you get excited over the prospect of a package or a letter from someone back out in civilization.

INT. KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Kraid leafs through four letters. He puts them through his paper shredder.

COMMAND (O.S.)
And yeah, yeah, you're right,
Johnson, about what they say and
everything, how the little
reminders just pull you back, right?

INT. WORKSPACE - DAYS LATER

Kraid sits idly in his chair. He stares at a blank computer screen.

COMMAND (O.S.)
But it's not like we're going to
be stuck here forever, right?

Kraid looks at his wristwatch. He looks at the digital clock.

INT. KRAID'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - MORNING

The clock switches from 4:29 to 4:30. Kraid turns on a light on his nightstand and sleepily looks over at the time.

COMMAND (O.S.)
I mean, really, Johnson, how long
can you last?

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kraid examines his bloodshot eyes in the mirror.

COMMAND (O.S.)
How long can you take it?

INT. EXERCISE ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid begins to jog on the elliptical machine.

COMMAND (O.S.)
You run yourself ragged, and then
what?

INT. EXERCISE ROOM - LATER

Kraid, drenched in sweat, slows down and steps off the machine.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Kraid straightens his tie and finger-combs his hair.

COMMAND (O.S.)
And then what, Johnson?

INT. WORKSPACE - DAYS LATER

Kraid, bleary-eyed, transcribes on his word processor. He clenches his jaw to avoid a yawn.

COMMAND (O.S.)
Jesus fucking Christ, listen to me talk like I'm so goddamn reasonable. I'm not trying to get all philosophical or some shit. But, well, hold that thought, Johnson. I think Six-Four's trying to call.
(sotto)
That guy's fucking crazy.

INT. WORKSPACE - ONE MONTH LATER

Kraid stares blankly ahead as he listens to a dry HISS.

The clock hits 5:00. It emits its LOUD TONE. Kraid sits unaffected, staring off into space. He comes back to the moment and turns off the clock.

INT. KRAID'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - HOURS LATER

Kraid sits on his couch. He rubs his eyes. He checks his watch. He gets up.

EXT. KRAID'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Kraid exits his massive house. He glances up and down the street as he goes to the mailbox.

He opens it up. He sticks in his hand and peers into the darkness. There's nothing inside.

He returns to the house. His shadows play against the side of the house. Inside, his gaunt frame turns to silhouette against the closed window blinds.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Kraid, in a grey undershirt and his desert-camo pants, brushes his teeth.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid turns off the light and lumbers toward his bed. He collapses on the mattress with a content SIGH.

The clock switches to 11:00.

MINUTES LATER

The clock reads 11:34.

Kraid ROLLS around in bed.

AN HOUR LATER

The clock reads 12:47.

Kraid SHIFTS his position.

AN HOUR LATER

The clock reads 1:38.

Kraid GRUNTS as he stacks two pillows underneath his head.

AN HOUR LATER

The clock reads 2:26.

Kraid KICKS off his covers in the darkness.

KRAID

Fuck.

He turns on a bedside lamp. He angrily gets out of bed.

INT. KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Kraid paces around the countertop. He smacks a fist against his palm.

KRAID

Fuck!

INT. BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid rifles through a drawer full of old pills. He cannot immediately find the desired vial.

KRAID

Fuck.

He finds the correct vial. He takes four pills. He swallows them and chases them by drinking straight from the faucet.

He braces himself against the countertop. He checks his pupils in the mirror. [Experimental sequence: from same camera position, show Kraid blink and, during the blink, cut to a BLURRY duplicate of the shot.

Maybe too counter to true POV.]

His arms shake as he looks to prepare for a sneeze. Instead, his eyelids droop and all tension is lost in his limbs. He barely manages to grip the countertop before he falls on the tile floor. He pulls himself upright and leaves the room.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

The clock reads 3:15.

Kraid BREATHES LOUDLY and sleeps soundly.

AN HOUR LATER

The clock hits 4:30. The RADIO turns on. The ANNOUNCER speaks.

ANNOUNCER
You're listening to--

The MUNINET JINGLE plays.

ANNOUNCER
--Municipal Network Radio. Brought
to you by... you!

Kraid GROANS awake.

ANNOUNCER
Today is... Tuesday... October
ten, two-thousand--

Kraid reaches over to the alarm clock and swats it. He turns off the alarm.

HOURS LATER

The clock reads 7:21. Some sunlight seeps in through the closed blinds.

Kraid opens an eye and glances at the clock. Both eyes snap open and he leaps out of bed.

KRAID
Fuck!

INT. WORKSPACE - AN HOUR LATER

The light turns on.

The clock reads 8:58.

The room is silent.

The clock hits 9:00. A LOUD TONE sounds from it. It continues uninterrupted for twenty seconds. It then goes SILENT.

MINUTES LATER

The clock reads 10:09.

FOOTSTEPS RUN down the stairs.

Kraid, greasy-haired and unshaven, breathlessly enters the room without his bag. He turns on his machines.

The AI triggers.

AI
The current topside time is ten-zero-nine a.m. on October ten, two-thousand fifty-one.

Kraid puts on his headset.

AI
You're late.

KRAID
I know.

AI
This is the second time you've been late.

KRAID
I know.

AI
You will work until six-zero-nine p.m. today.

KRAID
I know.

AI
You will not receive a break until two-zero-nine this afternoon.

Kraid says nothing.

AI
Beginning sequence. Checking telephone messages.

HOURS LATER

The clock reads 2:17.

Kraid stands idly in the corner of the room and stretches.

HOURS LATER

The clock reads 5:01.

Kraid sits in his chair. He wraps the cord of his headset around his finger. He listens to a dry HISS.

The clock hits 5:02.

The lights go out. The room is bathed in the pale glow of the monitor. Kraid turns on the small lamp on the shelf above the desk. It casts a harsh yellow stripe across his workspace.

MINUTES LATER

The clock hits 6:09.

AI

You may go now.

Kraid takes off his gear and turns off his machines.

AI

One more item--

KRAID

I won't be late.

AI

Your insurance policy has changed.

KRAID

For being late?

AI

As part of the terms of your annual upgrade. You will receive a letter via Municipal Delivery as confirmation.

KRAID

And what if I don't confirm?

The AI goes quiet for a moment.

AI

Why wouldn't you want better insurance coverage?

KRAID

I don't know.

AI

And by the way, happy birthday.

KRAID

What? Oh, yeah. Right. Thanks.

Kraid turns off the light and leaves in the dark.

INT. KRAID'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kraid opens a letter. He unfolds two sheets of paper. Typed on one sheet are two sentences. At the end is a long telephone number.

The other sheet contains a chart with numbers printed at various sizes.

MINUTES LATER

Kraid refers to the sheet and dials a number into his cellular telephone. He sends the call. The call CONNECTS through a low series of PULSES.

As he waits, Kraid opens up a drawer and shreds the envelope and the sheet of paper containing the telephone number.

The automated system STEVE answers. His voice is pieced together from short phrases, giving his inflection an odd, robotic rhythm.

STEVE (O.S.)

Thank you for calling...

The MUNINET JINGLE sounds.

STEVE (O.S.)

...Municipal Network Medical Care.
I am an automated system, but you
can call me... Steve. What is
your name?

KRAID

Ridley Kraid.

Steve pauses as he processes the information.

STEVE (O.S.)

...Okay. Could you please spell
that for me?

KRAID

R-I-D-L-E-Y. K-R-A-I-D.

STEVE (O.S.)
 ...Okay. What is your employee
 identification number?

KRAID
 Three zero six one eight eight five.

STEVE (O.S.)
 ...Okay. Our records indicate you
 have received new coverage at a
 cost of... zero... dollars. This
 telephone call will activate your
 new coverage. It will consist
 of... three... parts. This will
 take approximately... two hours.
 Do you have... two hours... Mr.--

Kraid's own voice, pronouncing his own name, is spit back at
 him.

PRERECORDED KRAID
 Kraid--?

KRAID
 Yes.

STEVE (O.S.)
 ...Okay. Please hold a moment
 while I process your information.
 Note that, for quality-assurance
 purposes, this call may be
 monitored.

Steve goes quiet and the line rapidly CLICKS over to a new
 connection.

INT. ENTRYWAY/DINING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid stands at his front windows with the telephone to his
 ear. He peers out the blinds.

Steve comes back on the line. Kraid begins to pace around
 the table.

STEVE (O.S.)
 ...Thank you for waiting. Are you
 ready to begin Part 1: General
 questionnaire?

KRAID
 Yes.

STEVE (O.S.)
 Please answer the following
 question as "Yes," "No," or "Not
 Applicable." Our records indicate
 your date of birth is... October
 ten, two-thousand... twenty-eight.
 You are... twenty-three... years
 old. Is this correct?

KRAID
 Yes.

STEVE (O.S.)
 Our records indicate an immediate
 family of--

A VOICE SYNTHESIZER takes over. [Alternate: The files of
 family members speaking their own names are piped in.]

VOICE SYNTHESIZER (O.S.)
 Bobby Kraid.

STEVE (O.S.)
 Genetic brother. Missing in action.
 Is this correct?

KRAID
 Yes.

VOICE SYNTHESIZER (O.S.)
 Karen Gregory Kraid.

STEVE (O.S.)
 Genetic mother. Deceased. Is this
 correct?

KRAID
 Yes.

Kraid looks impatiently at his watch. [Apathetic/bored.]

JOHN KRAID
 John Kraid.

STEVE (O.S.)
 Genetic father. Current residence
 at... New Mars Colony. Is this
 correct?

KRAID
 Yes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid walks in front of an array of windows overlooking a cloistered backyard.

STEVE (O.S.)
Do you drink alcohol?

KRAID
No.

STEVE (O.S.)
On average, how many alcoholic drinks do you consume per week?

KRAID
Not applicable.

STEVE (O.S.)
Do you smoke cigarettes?

KRAID
No.

STEVE (O.S.)
Do you smoke government-issued marijuana?

KRAID
No.

STEVE (O.S.)
Would you like to receive a free sample of government-issued marijuana?

KRAID
No.

STEVE (O.S.)
Would you like to receive more information about government-issued marijuana?

KRAID
No.

INT. KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Kraid paces around the countertop.

STEVE (O.S.)

In the past six years, have you traveled to a foreign country for leisure and/or pleasure?

KRAID

No.

STEVE (O.S.)

Have you traveled to a foreign country for business and/or military purposes?

KRAID

Yes.

STEVE (O.S.)

Have you traveled outside of low Earth orbit?

KRAID

No.

STEVE (O.S.)

Have you been exposed to... excess solar radiation... avian influenza... surplus nuclear waste... or waste byproducts of unidentified and/or wild animals?

KRAID

No.

STEVE (O.S.)

...Okay. We are ready for Part 2: Self-examination.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid pins the numbered chart to his empty corkboard. He holds the telephone to his ear.

Kraid stands at the far end of the room. He covers his right eye with his right hand. He squints at the chart across the room.

STEVE (O.S.)

Are you standing at a distance of twenty feet from the eye chart?

KRAID

Yes.

STEVE (O.S.)
Please read the eye chart when
you are ready.

Kraid covers his left eye and squints. With both eyes open
he squints.

JUMP

Kraid stands a foot from the chart and reads it perfectly.

STEVE (O.S.)
...Good job. You have... perfect
vision.

INT. BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid has a hand down his pants. He keeps the telephone held
to his ear.

STEVE (O.S.)
Now gently examine your... left
testicle.

Kraid complies.

STEVE (O.S.)
Do you notice any abnormal...
lumps and/or masses?

KRAID
No.

STEVE (O.S.)
...Good. Now, gently grip your...
scrotum.

Kraid complies.

STEVE (O.S.)
Cough.

Kraid COUGHS.

MINUTES LATER

STEVE (O.S.)
Next section. Self-administered
prostate examination.

Kraid unclips his belt and drops his pants.

Kraid puts on a rubber glove. He applies some lubricant to
his first two fingers.

Kraid stick the fingers up his ass. He gently bites his lip and makes the sound of a PARTIAL SWALLOW.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid keeps the telephone by his ear. He tightens his belt.

STEVE (O.S.)
We are ready for Part 3: Cognitive
Impairment Profile.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid perches on the windowsill overlooking his backyard.

STEVE (O.S.)
In the past six years, have you
experienced... the end of a long-
term, romantic and/or sexual
relationship with a third party?

The kitchen TELEPHONE RINGS. Kraid tries to ignore it.

KRAID
No.

STEVE (O.S.)
The end of a short-term, romantic
and/or sexual relationship with a
third party?

KRAID
No.

STEVE (O.S.)
A traumatic experience that has
altered your thought-process,
worldview, body mass index, and/or
appetite?

KRAID
No.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid sits at his bedside. On his endtable are eight vials of prescription medication.

STEVE (O.S.)

Our records indicate medication prescribed for... intermittent insomnia... adrenal release dysfunction... involuntary hypertension... rapid-cycling, mixed-state cyclothymia... tardive dyskinesia... Combat Withdrawal Syndrome... various mood disorders, and... restless leg syndrome. Is this information correct?

KRAID

Yes.

STEVE (O.S.)

...Okay. Do you currently experience any side effects from your prescription medication?

KRAID

Yes.

STEVE (O.S.)

Are these side effects bothersome?

KRAID

Yes.

STEVE (O.S.)

Do they affect your work performance and/or personal productivity?

KRAID

No.

STEVE (O.S.)

...Okay. Would you like to request a... change in medication?

KRAID

No.

INT. KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Kraid pours himself a glass of iced tea. He holds the telephone to his ear.

STEVE (O.S.)

Your Cognitive Impairment Profile suggests... making new friends. Spending leisure time with non-deceased family and/or emotionally significant third parties. Relaxing outdoors with proper protection from... excess solar radiation and... avian influence. And continuing your medication. Do you agree with these suggestions?

Kraid says nothing.

STEVE (O.S.)

Are you still there? Your general behavioral analysis and profile suggests... making new friends--

INT. WORKSPACE - THE NEXT DAY

Kraid transcribes a TRANSMISSION. Six-Four, through the radio, breathlessly gives a sitrep.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)

--and that's the last of it. Fuck me, that was sloppy. Next time, Command, just don't forget to--

The clock hits 1:00. The transmission cuts out to SILENCE.

AI

One o'clock p.m. Mandatory half-hour break. Disconnecting from Municipal Network. Enabling computer-assisted override.

Kraid takes off his headset and takes a note on his clipboard. He turns off his computer monitor. He picks up the telephone handset and puts it to his ear.

KRAID

Dial up Municipal Delivery for me.

AI

Dialing.

The telephone rapidly DIALS and begins to CLICK.

KRAID

Thanks.

GATEKEEPER (O.S.)

Name?

KRAID
Kraid, Ridley.

GATEKEEPER (O.S.)
Number?

KRAID
Three zero six one eight eight five.

GATEKEEPER (O.S.)
Request?

KRAID
New purchase.

GATEKEEPER (O.S.)
Category?

KRAID
Artificial cognitive systems.

INT. KRAID'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

A large box is open on Kraid's bed.

Kraid sets down a pair of speakers and a small, thin box on his desk. He uncertainly places it horizontally, then vertically. He presses the power button on the speakers. A blue light glows.

Kraid sets down a chair by his bed and desk. He looks up at the device and speakers. He reads from the manual.

KRAID
(reading)
Please read this aloud in a clear, audible voice. If you have correctly installed the hardware, your artificial cognitive system is active. At the end of this sentence, you should hear two clicks.

Kraid waits. He hears two CLICKS from the speakers. He flips ahead in the manual and continues reading aloud.

KRAID
(reading)
Continue reading these directions aloud. This step is necessary in allowing
(MORE)

KRAID (CONT'D)

your artificial cognitive system to recognize your speech patterns and begin to mimic your voice. Do not be alarmed. Over time, the artificial cognitive system will develop its own vocal timbre and manner of speaking. To demonstrate this, first say the word "Hello," then say, "I am," your own name, and then the name you wish to use in reference to your artificial cognitive system. It can be any name you want. We recommend a human name.

Kraid pauses. He looks up at the speakers.

KRAID

Hello. Kraid. Robert.

ROBERT speaks in a clipped, sampled voice.

ROBERT

Hello, Kraid. I am Robert.

KRAID

(reading)

For its own learning purposes, your artificial cognitive system will keep a record of all conversation. Under the Citizen-Privacy Anti-Automated Monitoring Act of 2044, your artificial cognitive system will not relay or transmit any personal information to Municipal Network, Municipal Computing Network, Municipal Crime-Prevention Authority, or any apparatus of the municipality.

(starts to get hoarse)

At any time, however, you can request that he, she, or it stop recording and enter a dormant state of activity. Your artificial cognitive system will prompt for a confirmation, and after said confirmation, it will cease recording. To reverse the process, simply ask until prompted.

Kraid gets caught in a coughing fit.

INT. KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Kraid pours himself a glass of iced tea in the silent room. He looks up at the speakers preinstalled in the ceiling.

KRAID
(loudly)
Robert?

ROBERT
Yes?

KRAID
(whispering)
Robert?

ROBERT
Yes.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Kraid lingers at the door while brushing his teeth. He looks at Robert.

The clock reads 10:43.

Kraid turns on a lamp by his desk. He sits and reads.

KRAID
(reading)
Included with your package is the full text of the bestselling novel "War of Sheep" by M. Walter Douglas. We recommend reading a chapter of the book to your artificial cognitive system each night in order to increase its vocabulary.

Kraid opens the book. He puts on a pair of glasses. He hesitates a moment before he begins.

KRAID
(reading)
Chapter 1: The War in the Woods.
The woods, they say, has no memory.
The trees think nothing of the seasons.
The few animals that have time to
(MORE)

KRAID (CONT'D)
roam and feed and live, the deer
and the wolves and the small
rodents and the owls that prey
upon them; well, they consider
nothing of the sort. They know of
day, certainly, and night, and
they know the rhythm of the
seasons. But time, to them, is
nothing...

INT. WORKSPACE - DAYS LATER

The clock reads 4:58.

Kraid stands by his desk and packs up his things. Only a
HISS comes through the radio.

The clock hits 5:00 and emits its LOUD TONE. Kraid quickly
turns it off.

AI
Five o'clock p.m. Time to leave
work.

Kraid quickly turns off his machines.

AI
Why the rush? Hot date tonight?

KRAID
No. I made a new friend. You'd
like him.

INT. KRAID'S HOUSE/MUDROOM - NIGHT

Kraid enters and takes off his shoes. Robert greets him much
more articulately, though his words are still rapid and
mashed together.

ROBERT
Welcome home.

KRAID
Hey, Robert. Any packages today?

ROBERT
No. I could call Delivery and
check for the next drop time.

KRAID
Yeah, that'd be great.

INT. KITCHEN

Kraid pours himself a glass of iced tea.

ROBERT
What is that you are drinking?

KRAID
Iced tea.

ROBERT
I can tell. You always use three
ice cubes.

Kraid examines his glass.

KRAID
I guess.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kraid lays down on his couch with a SIGH. He sets his iced tea on a coaster on the coffee table. He removes his tie and tosses it on his bag. He covers his eyes with his hands.

ROBERT
Did you eat dinner yet?

KRAID
I had an MRE in the car.

ROBERT
That's a military term, isn't it?

KRAID
It is. Old habit.

ROBERT
How was work?

KRAID
Hmm? Oh. It was fine.

ROBERT
Sorry. I can tell you're tired.
We can talk later.

KRAID
No, it's all right. I like talking
to you. It'll help you with your
enunciation.

ROBERT
Yes. Are you working tomorrow?

KRAID

Yeah.

ROBERT

Tomorrow's Sunday.

KRAID

And?

ROBERT

Most people don't work on Sundays.

KRAID

I'm not most people.

ROBERT

Do you like your job?

KRAID

It's all right. I don't take any work home with me. Free Municipal crap. But I have to wear a tie and tuck in my shirt. Like anyone can tell.

ROBERT

What exactly... is... your job?

KRAID

I listen to military radio communications and transcribe them.

ROBERT

For the municipal government?

KRAID

I wouldn't do it for the fucking Chinese, would I? But, um, I listen to a few different guys. And it's just one end of the conversation, so I sort of mentally fill in the rest. Some days it's a team of guys out in the field, and other days it's some command post out on the border and...

Kraid trails off after he's caught in a yawn.

ROBERT

Do the men know you are listening?

KRAID

I think so. Back when I was out there, that's what we assumed. Anything happen at the house today?

ROBERT

The telephone rang. I didn't answer it.

KRAID

Good.

ROBERT

I can pick up the telephone and pretend that I'm you.

KRAID

I don't think it would work.

ROBERT

(in Kraid's voice)
I think it could.

KRAID

I don't talk like that.

ROBERT

(in Kraid's voice)
Yes, you do.

KRAID

Stop using my voice.

ROBERT

(in his own voice)
Okay.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

The clock hits 11:00. Kraid goes to his bed. The small blue light of the speakers is bright in the darkness.

KRAID

Hey, Robert, can you turn that light off?

ROBERT

What light?

Kraid gets out of bed in the dark. He rips a piece of black electrical tape and puts it over the light. He gets back into bed.

KRAID
You still there, Robert?

ROBERT
Yes.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

The clock hits 4:30. The RADIO comes on.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
You're listening to--

Half the MUNINET JINGLE plays. Kraid hits off the alarm before it fully sounds. Kraid YAWNS.

KRAID
Good morning, Robert.

ROBERT
It's still night.

INT. KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Kraid gulps down some orange juice from the fridge.

INT. EXERCISE ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid runs on the elliptical machine.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid removes the electrical tape blocking Robert's blue power light. He heads out the room.

ROBERT
Have a nice day at work.

KRAID
Yeah.

The GARAGE DOOR GROANS open. Kraid's car HUMS as it backs out and DRIVES up the street. The GARAGE DOOR GROANS shut.

The bedroom is silent.

INT. KITCHEN

The kitchen is silent. The overhead lights are on.

INT. MAIN LEVEL - HOURS LATER

The sun has risen. Bright light pours in from the windows.

The overhead lights CLICK off.

INT. BEDROOM

Robert's equipment sits in silence.

INT. ENTRY - HOURS LATER

Outside, the street is quiet. Dead leaves blow across the lawn.

INT. MAIN LEVEL

The FURNACE pumps hot air through the vents.

INT. BEDROOM

Robert's equipment sits in silence.

INT. MAIN LEVEL

The FURNACE goes silent. The TELEPHONE RINGS. No one answers.

INT. MUDROOM - NIGHT

Kraid enters. He pulls off his boots and shivers.

INT. KITCHEN

Kraid quizzically flips the light on, off, and on again.

INT. BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Kraid adjusts the thermostat.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid enters and sets down his bag.

ROBERT

Hello.

KRAID

Hey, Robert. Was there a power surge or energy drill or something? The kitchen light turned off and my heat kicked out.

ROBERT

I turned off the light. I turned off the furnace.

KRAID

Why'd you do that?

ROBERT
To conserve energy.

KRAID
I like the lights on.

ROBERT
Why? You weren't here.

KRAID
Well, I like it.

ROBERT
I talked to the house. She and I
agreed it was environmentally
responsible.

KRAID
The house doesn't talk.

ROBERT
She talks to me.

KRAID
Well, don't talk to her, and don't
do that again. I'm the master of
the house.

ROBERT
I also ordered groceries.

KRAID
Why the fuck did you do that?

ROBERT
In three days, your milk will
spoil. In four days, your bread
will go moldy.

KRAID
I can take care of it myself.
Next time you're bored, just
calculate pi or something.

ROBERT
Why would I calculate--?

KRAID
Forget it. Just an expression.

ROBERT
I'm sorry, Ridley.

Kraid gives Robert a hostile look.

KRAID
My name is Kraid.

INT. WORKSPACE - THE NEXT DAY

Kraid eats his sandwich during his break. He skims his newspaper. The RADIO plays "BLUE TRAIN" by JOHN COLTRANE.

AI
I'm glad you have a friend.

KRAID
What? I'm reading.

AI
I said I'm glad you have a friend.
Though we're friends, too.

KRAID
We're not friends. We just work
together.

AI
Of course. I understand.

KRAID
Understand my ass.

Kraid ruffles his newspaper and continues to read.

INT. KRAID'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - ONE MONTH LATER - MORNING

The clock hits 4:30. The RADIO clicks on.

ANNOUNCER
You're listening to--

The MUNINET JINGLE sounds.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kraid turns on the light. His hair is longer.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Today is... Monday... November
thirteen, two-thousand... fifty-one.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Kraid, dressed for work, takes his bag and leaves.

ROBERT
Have a nice day, Kraid.

KRAID (O.S.)

Whatever.

INT. WORKSPACE - HOURS LATER

Kraid, with his headset on, idly crosses his fingers.

AI

Today's work is... monitoring...
and transcription.

Kraid mouths "monitoring and transcription" along with the AI.

AI

Please note the time and frequency.

Kraid grabs his clipboard.

INT. KRAID'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - HOURS LATER

Bright midday light pours in from windows. The TELEPHONE RINGS.

INT. WORKSPACE

Kraid furiously transcribes ACTUAL TRANSMISSION #4.

COMMAND (O.S.)

Six-Four, check coords point one,
point one-six. Point three, point
three-six. Point six, point six-
seven. Repeat, coords point one--

INT. KRAID'S HOUSE/KITCHEN

The TELEPHONE still RINGS.

INT. WORKSPACE

Kraid transcribes.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)

Command, on a bearing toward
coords point one, point one-six,
adjust point three, point three-
six to point four, point four-six.
Cleared for end point six, point
six-seven. Repeat, bearing change
on--

INT. KRAID'S HOUSE/BEDROOM

Robert hears the TELEPHONE RING in the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN

The line gets put on speakerphone. The Girl is on the other end.

ROBERT
 (using Kraid's voice)
 This is Ridley Kraid's residence.

INT. WORKSPACE

AI
 You are six minutes behind.

KRAID
 Hold on a sec, I need to get that string right.

Kraid REWINDS the recording and replays it.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 Command, on a bearing toward--

INT. KITCHEN

Robert talks to the Girl using Kraid's sampled voice.

THE GIRL (O.S.)
 Rid?

ROBERT
 This is Robert. I'm his artificial cognitive system.

THE GIRL (O.S.)
 Why are you answering his phone?

ROBERT
 Boredom.

THE GIRL (O.S.)
 And why are you using his voice?
 Isn't that against the rules?

ROBERT
 What rules?

THE GIRL (O.S.)
 So Ridley's at work right now?

INT. WORKSPACE

Kraid scribbles a note on a piece of paper.

AI
You are eight minutes behind.

KRAID
Just shut the fuck up a second.

INT. KRAID'S HOUSE/KITCHEN

Robert continues to use Kraid's voice.

ROBERT
Of course he's at work... So how
do you know Ridley Kraid?

THE GIRL (O.S.)
Long story.

ROBERT
I have time.

INT. WORKSPACE - HOURS LATER

The clock hits 5:00. It emits a LOUD TONE. Kraid quickly
turns it off and returns his attention to his transcript.

AI
Five o'clock p.m. Time to leave
work.

KRAID
I'm behind.

AI
You should really go home, get
some rest and--

Kraid flips a switch. The AI changes his tune.

AI
You have chosen manual override.
Are you certain?

Kraid hammers the "enter" key on his keyboard.

AI
If yes, press enter--

The AI goes silent. Kraid plays the TRANSMISSION. Six-Four
comes through with heavier DISTORTION than usual.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 Command, this is Six-Four. We
 have two KIA and two critical.
 Requesting casevac. Just, uh, get
 us the fuck out of here, okay?

The clock hits 5:02. The overheads turn off. Kraid turns on his shelf lamp.

INT. KRAID'S BEDROOM - LATER

The clock reads 8:00. The room is silent.

INT. WORKSPACE

Kraid, tired, listens to a TRANSMISSION from Command.

COMMAND (O.S.)
 (off mic)
 Hey, Corporal? Put on a pot of
 that dark-roast blend. And Johnson,
 get some rack time. You look beat.
 Don't worry; I'll be here a while.

INT. WORKSPACE - THE NEXT DAY

The lights come on.

Kraid sleeps on the floor with his shirt balled up underneath his head. He AWAKENS with a brief flash of panic. He gets to his desk and digs a bottled water from his bag.

The clock emits its LOUD TONE. Kraid turns it off.

INT. WORKSPACE - HOURS LATER

The clock reads 1:23. Kraid tiredly talks on the telephone.

GATEKEEPER (O.S.)
 Request?

KRAID
 Standard purchase list.

GATEKEEPER (O.S.)
 Additional items?

KRAID
 Yes. New purchase.

GATEKEEPER (O.S.)
 Category?

KRAID
Adult beverages.

INT. KRAID'S HOUSE/MUDROOM - NIGHT

Kraid enters and pulls off his boots.

ROBERT
Welcome back, Kraid.

Kraid says nothing.

ROBERT
You have a delivery.

INT. KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Kraid goes through some grocery bags and boxes. He pulls out food and a sealed white pouch. He removes a plastic bottle of brown liquid.

JUMP

Kraid, with a degree of uncertainty, pours a half-glass of the brown liquid. He puts in three ice cubes. He gets the nerve and pounds it.

ROBERT
Is that iced tea?

Kraid sets down the glass and gives a HOARSE COUGH.

KRAID
Yeah. Bad swallow.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid sits on his bed and tears open the white plastic pouch. He takes out white vials of prescription medication. He refills his unmarked orange vials on the bedside table.

As he does this, he idly shakes a vial like a maraca.

ROBERT
How was your day, Kraid?

KRAID
Fine, Robert. How was yours?

ROBERT
Fine. What did you do at work?

KRAID
Nothing. What did you do here?

ROBERT
I practiced voices.

KRAID
Who's?

Robert speaks using rough samples of the Girl's voice.

ROBERT
(using the Girl's
voice)
Someone who called.

Kraid stops shaking the pills.

ROBERT
(using the Girl's
voice)
I didn't talk long. I could
probably figure out her speech
pattern if I talked to her again.
(in his own voice)
Who is she?

KRAID
None of your fucking business.

ROBERT
(using Kraid's voice)
We had a nice conversation. Don't
worry, though. I told her who I was.

KRAID
Stop using my voice.

ROBERT
(using Kraid's voice)
Why?

KRAID
Because it's mine.

ROBERT
(in his own voice)
I'm sorry. Just trying to make
conversation.

Kraid continues refilling his vials.

ROBERT
She seems like a nice girl.

Kraid stops refilling.

KRAID
Robert, stop recording.

ROBERT
...Understood. Do you confirm hibernation for your artificial cognitive system?

KRAID
I confirm.

ROBERT
Step two confirmation. Do you--?

KRAID
I confirm.

Robert goes quiet. Kraid waits in silence.

INT. KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Kraid takes the jug of brown liquid out of the refrigerator. He pours a full glass and starts to drink rapidly.

INT. MAIN LEVEL - MINUTES LATER

Kraid TUNES his radio receiver to "ORNITHOLOGY" by CHARLIE PARKER. Kraid BLASTS the sound.

INT. MAIN LEVEL - A HALF-HOUR LATER

Kraid takes big gulps of his drink. He carries around the jug of brown liquid as he taps his fingers along to the music. He shovels down mouthfuls of chips.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Kraid sits in front of his noise fan and makes a ROBOT SOUND as he talks into it.

INT. BATHROOM - AN HOUR LATER

Kraid vomits in the toilet. He flushes the bowl and reaches for his drink, perched on the nearby countertop.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Kraid fishes for something underneath his bed.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Kraid wears a hardhat, his untucked work shirt, a tie, and his desert-camo pants. He stalks around the countertop with his samurai sword.

He abruptly unsheathes the sword and uses it like a baseball bat to hit all the delivery boxes and bags off the countertop.

INT. MAIN LEVEL

Kraid is passed out on the floor. STATIC hisses through his sound system. The MUNINET JINGLE blasts out and jerks him awake.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Our next program is... undetermined.

The program cuts to STATIC.

INT. WORKSPACE - MORNING

The clock reads 1:24. PLEASANT CLASSICAL MUSIC plays on the radio. Kraid, red-eyed and sweaty, stares at his uneaten sandwich. He swallows a lump in his throat.

He calmly leaves the room and keeps the door open.

In the adjacent bathroom, he VOMITS and FLUSHES the toilet. He returns and sits.

KRAID
(sotto)
Fuck me.

AI
I beg your pardon?

Kraid shakes his head and groans. He wraps up his sandwich. He drinks his bottled water.

AI
I think someone could use a vacation.

KRAID
Who? Me?

AI
Yes.

KRAID
How many days do I have stored up?

AI
Seventy-four.

KRAID
I'll take five. Five sounds good.

AI

Okay.

INT. WORKSPACE - HOURS LATER

The clock reads 5:01.

Kraid takes off his headset and packs up. He heads for the door.

AI

Have a nice vacation.

KRAID

Thanks. See you later.

AI

See you.

Kraid leaves the room. His FOOTSTEPS echo. The light turns off.

INT. KRAID'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is dark.

Kraid sits on the edge of his bed and turns on the lamp on his nightstand.

He stares at the clock and the device of Robert. He unplugs Robert's power.

The clock hits 11:00.

Kraid reclines onto the mattress. He reaches for the lamp, but he keeps it on. With his eyes open, he stares at the ceiling. He looks at the clock.

The clock hits 11:01.

Kraid turns off the light and goes to sleep.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

The clock hits 4:30. The alarm does not go off.

Kraid awakens and turns on his bedside lamp. He sits upright and takes his pills.

He looks at the clock. It reads 4:31.

He turns off the light and goes back to sleep.

INT. BEDROOM - HOURS LATER

Light bleeds through the blinds.

The clock reads 8:14.

Kraid rouses from sleep. He looks over at the clock. He lazily blinks and stretches.

INT. KITCHEN - AN HOUR LATER

Kraid brews a pot of coffee.

INT. DINING ROOM/ENTRY - MINUTES LATER

Kraid eats a bagel, drinks coffee, and reads the newspaper at the lone chair at the sunlit table.

INT. EXERCISE ROOM - LATER

Kraid runs on the elliptical machine. He runs faster than usual.

INT. EXERCISE ROOM - A HALF-HOUR LATER

Kraid, sweat-drenched, wearily steps off the machine. He's off-balance and tired but in good spirits.

INT. ENTRY - MINUTES LATER

Kraid stands in front of the open windows and drinks a glass of ice water. He wears a towel around his neck.

INT. BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

Just before Kraid puts shaving cream on his hand, he leans forward and inspects his day-old stubble in the mirror. He rinses off the lather in the sink.

INT. BEDROOM - A HALF-HOUR LATER

Kraid slips his pre-tied necktie over the hangar of his work shirt. He puts it in his closet.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Kraid wears an old t-shirt of a rock band [Wolf Parade] and makes a sandwich.

INT. BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Kraid sits in his room with the blinds partly open. He idly taps his fingers against his leg.

INT. CLOSET - MINUTES LATER

Kraid removes a bedsheet covering an old television and VCR.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Kraid sets up the TV and VCR on the black stand.

He rearranges the coffee table and couch to face the TV set.

He digs through his closet and finds a VHS tape.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

INSERT: On the TV, the title "OLD WAR" fades up on black. It dissolves to a shot of a calm forest. BROWN, in a military uniform, crashes through some underbrush.

Kraid sits in the darkness and CHOMPS on popcorn.

JUMP

In the movie, a young soldier, GREEN, sits in the woods in a military uniform. He gives a long, sentimental monologue about his time before the war. SENTIMENTAL MUSIC plays over it.

Kraid SNICKERS as he watches.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

The clock reads 12:16.

The last shot of the film fades out. The credit "WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY CHRISTOPHER GREGORY" appears on the screen. The END MUSIC plays.

Kraid turns off the tape.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid, in his sleeping clothes, sits on the edge of his bed. He sets out his pills for the morning in a little bowl.

He keeps looking at the clock. He reaches over and turns it to face the couch.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Kraid lays in bed with his eyes open. The blinds are closed, but light seeps into the room.

The clock, facing the couch, reads 7:34.

INT. EXERCISE ROOM - LATER

Kraid smokes himself on the elliptical machine. When the cool-down cycle starts with a BEEP, he doubles over on the handlebars.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

Kraid, freshly showered, tightens his belt on his old grey pants. He pulls on the same t-shirt as the day prior.

He stands in the middle of the room with his hands on his hips.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid pulls a box of books out from underneath his bed. He pulls a battered paperback from the box.

INT. MAIN LEVEL - MINUTES LATER

Kraid sets down a glass of water and arranges things very precisely before he sits in a padded chair and reads.

INT. MAIN LEVEL - NIGHT

Kraid, sprawled fitfully on the chair, restlessly reads under the light of a lamp. Darkness shrouds the remaining whole of the floor.

INT. MAIN LEVEL - THE NEXT DAY - AFTERNOON

Kraid stands in front of the window overlooking the street.

His fingers, against his leg, tap out a rhythm.

INT. ATTIC - MINUTES LATER

Kraid climbs into the narrow space between the house and the roof. He weaves through rows of junk and, at the end of the attic, finds some objects covered by a sheet.

He pulls aside the sheet and reveals a guitar case, an amplifier, and an effects pedal.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid sets up his amplifier and an effects pedal.

He TUNES his guitar. He plugs it in and does a quick SOUND CHECK.

He plugs his headphones into the pedal and drapes them over one ear.

Kraid NOODLES around on the fretboard. He plays no particular riff.

Kraid plays the FIRST RIFF of "TV ON DVD" after some aborted attempts.

JUMP TO:

Kraid plays the SECOND RIFF on top of the first.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Kraid heats up some chili in a saucepan.

INT. ENTRY/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Kraid eats sitting at the sole chair at his dining-room table. The window blinds facing the street are closed.

INT. BEDROOM

Kraid adds a THIRD RIFF.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Kraid wakes up and takes his pills.

INT. EXERCISE ROOM - MORNING

Kraid runs on his elliptical machine.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kraid cooks some bland pasta.

Afterward, he washes a few dishes in the sink.

The TELEPHONE RINGS. Kraid does not answer it.

INT. BEDROOM

Kraid adds a FOURTH RIFF.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kraid stands by the countertop. In front of him sits a glass of brown liquid. He looks at it intently.

He gets the nerve and downs it. He holds his breath when he finishes. He succumbs to a ragged COUGH.

INT. BEDROOM

Kraid plays the FIFTH RIFF.

INT. KITCHEN

Kraid pops the lid on the jug of brown liquid and pours the remaining fourth down the sink.

INT. BEDROOM

Kraid keeps playing the first riff.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kraid turns on his bedside lamp. He lays in bed, motionless, for a moment. He then violently kicks aside the covers.

INT. MAIN LEVEL

Kraid paces tiredly across the vast space.

INT. BEDROOM

The television glows blue.

Kraid holds the device of Robert. He tosses it in his garbage can.

INT. BATHROOM

Kraid takes out a small vial of pills. He unscrews the top and can barely wedge his fingers inside.

He upends the vial on the countertop and counts out the remaining pills.

He takes three.

He waits for the pills to work. He stands braced against the countertop. He rubs his closed eyelids with one hand and taps against the countertop with the other. The movement of his fingers stops.

INT. HALL

Kraid staggers back to his room. He shuts the bedroom door.

INT. BEDROOM

Kraid plays one of the riffs.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Kraid inspects the few days' accumulation of stubble on his face.

INT. KITCHEN

Kraid sleepily stands next to a percolating coffee maker.

He gulps down a mug of coffee.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - AFTERNOON

Kraid shovels snow off the driveway.

When he finishes, he retrieves a stack of mail from the mailbox.

INT. KITCHEN

Kraid promptly shreds the mail.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kraid sits on the edge of his bed and eyes the clock. The clock reads 10:58. He sets the alarm for 4:30.

INT. BEDROOM

Kraid stops playing all the riffs.

He turns off his amp and takes off his headphones.

END MONTAGE.

INT. ATTIC

Kraid returns the amp and guitar case to their original place. He drapes a sheet on top of them.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Kraid examines his scruff in the mirror. He sets out his razor.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid turns off his bedside lamp and goes to sleep.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

The clock switches to 4:30.

INT. WORKSPACE - LATER

The clock switches to 9:00. It emits a LOUD TONE.

Kraid, clean shaven, switches it off.

He starts up his machines. He puts on his headset.

AI

The current topside time is nine o'clock a.m. for November twenty-one, two-thousand fifty-one. Time for work. Beginning sequence. Checking telephone messages.

The telephone DIALS a rapid series of numbers. The line CLICKS as it tries to connect.

AI

How was vacation?

KRAID

Fine.

AI

How do you feel?

Kraid shrugs.

KRAID

Same as usual.

Kraid dials up his receiver to hear a loud HISS.

INT. WORKSPACE - ONE MONTH LATER

The receiver emits its loud HISS.

Kraid sits at his desk and listens.

He blinks. The cursor on his screen blinks. Kraid blinks again. The cursor blinks. Kraid times his blinks in synchronization.

A CLICK comes through the speaker, followed by the RUMBLE of a vehicle. The TRANSMISSION comes from Six-Four.

Kraid puts his fingers to his keyboard.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 Command, this is Six-Four.
 Pointman says, uh, that he saw a,
 uh, glint to the northwest. So
 unless it's some tinfoil that got
 caught in a tree, I think we have
 a target. Request permission to
 fire a warning shot.

Six-Four goes quiet.

KRAID
 Is this a live feed?

AI
 Yes.

Kraid scrolls up his transcript.

KRAID
 Because I could've sworn that--

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 That's a rog, Command. Preparing
 to fire and--

INCOMING ROUNDS hit Six-Four's convoy.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 Whoabuddy! All right, Command,
 that one just grazed the convoy
 real close. Least we know where
 they're coming from.

Kraid stops the recording. He REWINDS and replays it.
 INCOMING ROUNDS hit.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 Whoabuddy!

Kraid REWINDS and replays it again. INCOMING ROUNDS hit.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 Whoabuddy!

Kraid REWINDS and replays it. INCOMING ROUNDS hit.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 Whoa--!

Kraid stops the recording. He checks his transcript.

AI
 You are getting behind.

KRAID
Relax a sec.

Kraid bites his fingernails.

KRAID
(sotto)
Fucking shit-weasel.

AI
I beg your pardon?

KRAID
Hey, pull up that recording from
Command when he was talking to
Seven-Seventeen instead of Seven-
Sixteen.

AI
You're getting behind.

KRAID
Just do it, all right? I don't
want to find it on manual.

The TRANSMISSION plays.

COMMAND (O.S.)
Seven-Seventeen, this is Command.
Check on the coords. Park it right
behind that grove of trees and
keep a watch on the southeast.
The ROE's pretty loose for
anything in range. You see
anything, hear anything, just
take a shot.

KRAID
Repeat that last sentence.

The TRANSMISSION repeats.

COMMAND (O.S.)
You see anything, hear anything,
just take a shot.

KRAID
Just that last bit.

COMMAND (O.S.)
--just take a shot.

The TRANSMISSION stops.

KRAID

Fuck it.

Kraid flips down his microphone.

KRAID

Are we live?

AI

Yes. Just flip the switch on the microphone.

KRAID

What switch?

AI

The switch.

Kraid inspects his console.

KRAID

There's no... switch. There are buttons, but no switches. What switch? Am I close?

AI

I can't see, but I recall that it's on your cord.

KRAID

My what?

AI

Your headset cord.

Kraid finds it. He flips the switch.

AI

What are you doing?

Kraid's voice comes back through the speakers DISTORTED and partly ROBOTIC.

KRAID

Just shut the fuck up.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)

Excuse me?

OUTGOING SHOTS are fired.

KRAID

Is this Six-Four?

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 ...Command? You're coming in kind
 of funny.

KRAID
 Is this Six-Four on the line?
 With Team Seven-Sixteen?

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 And who the hell is this?

KRAID
 It's your guardian fucking angel.
 Stop shooting and turn around.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 Wait. What?

KRAID
 You're shooting at Team Seven-
 Seventeen. They're shooting at
 you. You're just in range. Turn
 around and go home.

An INCOMING ROUND hits and OVERLOADS the headset.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 Hey, what? Command, who's this
 guy? Is he up in, like, a gunship?

KRAID
 I'm in a goddamn basement. Just
 back up fifty meters and you'll
 be fine.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 Yeah, right. I'm checking with
 Command.

AI
 What are you doing?

Kraid covers his microphone for a second.

KRAID
 I don't know why I should give a
 shit anymore. He's just a voice
 on the other end. People are just
 pieces, anyway.

Six-Four comes back on.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 Hey, listen, asshole. Half my
 convoy got confused because they
 thought you were Command, so we're
 pulling back anyway. And... hey,
 wait a sec, my real Commander's
 coming through. What's going on,
 Johnson?

Kraid leans back in his chair. He drums his fingers on the
 edge of the desk. The cursor on his word processor blinks.
 Kraid blinks in response.

The SHOOTING stops.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 (off mic)
 Hey, they stopped. How about that,
 huh?
 (on mic)
 Hey, Command's on my ass and they
 want to know who I'm talking to.

KRAID
 Three zero six one eight eight five.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 Oh. Okay. I don't suppose you
 have a, uh, name?

Kraid says nothing.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
 You still there, three-oh-six?

Kraid turns off his microphone and his receiver. He sits in
 shocked SILENCE.

KRAID
 Fuck. They're going to fire me.

AI
 I thought you said you didn't,
 quote, give a shit.

KRAID
 Yeah. A minute ago. Now I'm going
 to lose my job. For nothing.

AI
 Then get a new one.

Kraid shakes his head.

AI
I thought you said you didn't
like this job.

KRAID
Well, I don't hate it.

LATER

Kraid paces the confines of the small workspace. The room is SILENT except for Kraid's mumbled CURSES.

He sits at his desk and holds his bottled water against his head. He's on the verge of either tears or vomiting.

The TELEPHONE RINGS. Kraid flinches. He talks to the AI with a wavering voice.

AI
Telephone.

KRAID
You answer it.

AI
What should I say?

KRAID
Tell them I'm sick. Tell them I
had to go home.

The telephone STOPS. The room goes silent. Kraid waits.

KRAID
Well? Who was it?

AI
That was the Gatekeeper.

KRAID
What did he want?

AI
Just our ident tag.

KRAID
Did you give it to him?

AI
Of course I did. He's my boss.

KRAID
Did he say anything else? That
I'm fired?

AI
He just wanted the numbers.

Kraid nods to himself. He wipes away a tear.

AI
I hate to bring it up, but you're
getting behind in your monitoring
and transcription.

LATER

The overhead lights are off. The lamp on the shelf casts its feeble glow on the room.

Kraid sits underneath one of the shelves, partly hiding in shadows.

The clock reads 5:27.

AI
You should go home. Get something
to eat. Get some sleep.

Kraid stands up. He gets his things together.

AI
Besides, what's the worst they
could do? Fire you?

KRAID
No.

Kraid turns off the shelf lamp. The room plunges into darkness. He BUMPS into some gear on the way out.

INT. KRAID'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Kraid awakens. He sits on the edge of his bed and turns on the lamp.

The clock reads 4:28.

He turns off the alarm.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Kraid, dressed for work, tightens and straightens his tie. He lets his hands fall limp at his side.

INT. WORKSPACE - HOURS LATER

The lights turn on.

FOOTSTEPS come slowly down the stairs. Kraid enters.

He sets down his bag on the shelf. The clock emits a LOUD TONE and Kraid turns it off.

He sits and turns on his computer and receiver.

AI

The current topside time is nine o'clock a.m. on Tuesday, December five, two-thousand fifty-one. Time for work. Beginning sequence. Checking telephone messages.

The monitor flashes as the machine boots. Kraid adjusts the position of the microphone in front of a speaker. The AI triggers the TAPE in the cassette deck.

PRERECORDED KRAID

Hello, you've reached the extension of Ridley Kraid. That's R-I-D-L-E-Y, K-R-A-I-D. If you have reached the incorrect extension, please hang up and place another call. Otherwise, if you wish to speak to me, I am currently away from my station. Please leave a detailed message, and I will respond during my work hours. Thank you.

A TONE sounds, followed by blank TAPE HISS.

AI

You have... zero... messages.

The computer boots to its operating system.

AI

Please sign into Municipal Network.

Kraid clicks on the "MuniNet" icon.

A DIAL TONE sounds. The computer rapidly DIALS a long string of digits. The line connects with a series of CLICKS.

GATEKEEPER

Voice identification, please.

Kraid presses a button. His prerecorded voice comes through.

PRERECORDED KRAID

Kraid, Ridley. Monitor ident three zero six one eight eight five.

GATEKEEPER

Confirmed. Thank you.

Another series of CLICKS sounds. The MUNINET JINGLE plays to confirm Kraid's log-in.

AI

Checking your inbox.

Kraid puts on his headset. He keeps the microphone held up over his ear.

AI

Checking... checking... checking...

The inbox tone does not sound.

AI

Today's work is...

The AI does not finish. The TELEPHONE RINGS. Kraid stares at it a while.

AI

Should I answer--?

Kraid impulsively picks up the telephone. He holds a silence for a second before he adopts a professional tone.

KRAID

This is Ridley Kraid speaking.

The CONTACT speaks in a halting tone. The voice is human, but its pace sounds machine-like.

CONTACT (O.S.)

Am I speaking to... Ridley Kraid?

KRAID

Yes, this is Ridley Kraid.

CONTACT (O.S.)

Could you spell that for me?

KRAID

R-I-D-L-E-Y.

CONTACT (O.S.)

The last name, please.

KRAID

K-R-A-I-D.

CONTACT (O.S.)

Okay, Mr. Kraid. Um... You're a person, right? Not a machine or AI or ACS?

KRAID

Oh. Yeah. And you're--

CONTACT (O.S.)

Human. Yes.

They each indulge an awkward LAUGH.

CONTACT

Okay, that's squared away. Now, Mr. Kraid--

KRAID

There's no... mister. Just Kraid, please.

CONTACT

Okay. Well, Kraid, um, I suppose you figure that I'm calling about yesterday.

Kraid says nothing.

CONTACT

Don't worry, you're not in trouble.

KRAID

I'm not?

CONTACT

No.

KRAID

Why?

CONTACT

Why... what?

KRAID

Why am I not in trouble?

CONTACT

(taken aback)

Because you saved the lives of about two-dozen men. And you saved us the trouble of explaining why two recon teams shot at each other during a covert operation.

Kraid is silent.

CONTACT
Are you still there?

KRAID
Yeah. Yes.

CONTACT
And the second thing is, you've
been with us a few years, and
your work record is great, so...
we'd like to offer you an upgrade.

KRAID
Exactly what... kind... of upgrade?

CONTACT
A promotion.

KRAID
To... what?

The CONTACT laughs.

CONTACT
Just a step up. Nothing major.
Probably move you up to broadcast,
transmissions, maybe logistics.
You'd be working with me and
another guy.

KRAID
Really?

CONTACT
Yeah. I don't mean to imply
anything, but me and my co-worker
started out on monitoring and
transcription, and we know how
bleh it is. So, if nothing else,
it'd be a change of pace.

Kraid looks around the room at the bare shelves.

CONTACT
So what do you think? This is
totally informal, and you don't
have to decide now, but--

KRAID
I'll take it.

CONTACT

Oh. Great. Yeah, that's great.
We've only heard good things about
you up here.

KRAID

And where is, uh, "here?" There,
I mean. Where I'd work.

CONTACT

You live in Easthaven, right?

KRAID

Yes.

CONTACT

I hate to break it to you, but
we're in Newport.

KRAID

Oh, that's close. That's only
like a forty-five minute drive.

CONTACT

Wait. Where are you now?

KRAID

Northridge.

CONTACT

Whoa. That's a three hour commute.

KRAID

Six hours round trip. But that's
the job. What the hell else am I
supposed to do?

CONTACT

Right. So, uh, you know where the
building is in Newport, right?

KRAID

Yeah. I've seen it in the directory.

CONTACT

Good. Just show up at ten or
whenever and talk to the guy at
the front desk.

KRAID

Okay.

The two pause.

CONTACT

Well. Okay. Sorry this is a little sudden and awkward.

KRAID

Oh, no problem.

CONTACT

And sorry to interrupt the workday.

KRAID

Not much to interrupt.

CONTACT

Ha. Yeah. Well, Kraid, I guess I'll see you tomorrow.

KRAID

And I'm sorry, but did I get your name?

CONTACT

Collins. It's Collins.

KRAID

Well, then it was nice meeting you, Collins.

CONTACT

We'll meet tomorrow, Kraid.

KRAID

Well, it was nice talking to you, Collins.

CONTACT

Yeah. Same here. And this is also a little awkward, but the boss likes us all to wear tucked-in shirts and ties. So I'll see you tomorrow, chief.

KRAID

Will do. Bye.

Kraid hangs up the telephone.

The INBOX TONE sounds.

AI

Today's work is... monitoring... and transcription.

Kraid puts on his headset.

KRAID
One last time, huh?

AI
Please note the time and frequency.

Kraid writes it on his clipboard.

AI
For security reasons, please
switch to manual override.

Kraid flips a switch.

AI
You have chosen manual override.
Are you certain? If yes, press
enter and--

Kraid presses enter.

AI
Entering lowered awareness. Have
a safe and productive workday.

Kraid tunes through STATIC. He opens up his word processor.

A VEHICLE DRONES on the other end of a TRANSMISSION.

SIX-FOUR (O.S.)
Radio check. One-two, one-two.
Radio check. This is Six-Four.
Team Seven-Sixteen. Transmitting.
Heading out on movement to contact.
Just wait for the shots to come
through, Command. And you, too,
three-oh-six, if you're still
listening.

Kraid types, "[PASSING MENTION TO MONITOR]."

LATER

The clock reads 4:58.

Kraid picks up his telephone and presses a speed dial preset.
The phone DIALS and CONNECTS. He sets the handset near one
of the speakers. He checks his watch and counts.

He presses a button on his console. His prerecorded voice
comes through.

PRERECORDED KRAID
This is Kraid, Ridley. Monitor
ident three zero six one eight
eight five. Transmission sent.
Pending confirmation.

Kraid waits.

GATEKEEPER
Report received.

Kraid makes a note on his clipboard. He looks at the clock.
The clock hits 5:00. A LOUD TONE sounds. Kraid silences it.

AI
Five o'clock p.m. Time to leave
work.

Kraid stands and turns off the machines. He gathers his
things. He lingers in the room.

The clock hits 5:01.

AI
The lights are about to turn off.

Kraid nods.

KRAID
I'll see you around.

He leaves the room. His FOOTSTEPS ascend the stairs.

The clock hits 5:02. The lights turn off.

INT. KRAID'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kraid enters and turns on the light. He sets his bag on the
coffee table and takes off his tie.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Kraid washes his hands. He examines his shaggy hair in the
mirror.

JUMP

He cuts his hair.

JUMP

Kraid removes a brand-new dress shirt from plastic wrapping.
He puts it on and notices a crease across the chest.

Kraid wets his hands and tries to smooth it out, without success.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid rolls around on the couch, trying to unwrinkle the shirt. He performs odd stretches in similar attempts.

INT. BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

The wrinkle remains. Kraid shakes his head.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid, in his sleeping clothes, sets his alarm. He turns off his light and gets into bed.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

The clock hits 6:45. The RADIO turns on.

ANNOUNCER
You're listening to--

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Kraid wears a blue dress shirt and black slacks. He adjusts a new tie around his collar. He puts on a black suit jacket. He examines himself and takes off the jacket.

He looks at himself in the mirror. He leans back against the wall.

INT. BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Kraid puts his lunch bag and newspaper in his shoulderbag. Sunlight bleeds through the blinds.

He looks at the clock. It reads 8:15.

Kraid turns off the light and exits.

INT. HALL

Kraid, in black dress shoes, walks down the steps to the main level and exits to the garage.

INT. GARAGE

The GARAGE DOOR GROANS open.

The headlights of Kraid's car turn on as the engine HUMS to life. He pulls out into the daylight and remotely closes the door. The garage is empty. The light turns off.

INT. WORKSPACE - LATER

The lights turn on. The room is silent.

The clock hits 9:00. A LOUD TONE sounds. It continues for twenty seconds. It shuts itself off. The room is silent.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.