

SMARTVILLE, USA

Episode Three

Written  
by  
Lyndon Gaul

A tech billionaire's plan to modernize a fading  
Florida town runs into resistance when locals fear  
it's becoming too smart for its own good.

03B

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lydongaul@hotmail.com

*"A town too smart for its own good"*

SMARTVILLE, USA

"Episode Three"

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. AERIAL — SPRINGFIELD — DAWN

The town is still in darkness.

INT. FRANK'S BEDROOM — MORNING

By the light of the HUBi, Frank's sleeping face.

The alarm clock sounds. 4.30 am.

Frank opens his eyes. Sits up.

HUBI  
Morning, Frank.  
(beat)  
You're awake early.

FRANK  
Things to do.

SEQUENCE

Frank carefully buttons a freshly pressed SHIRT.

The PLASTIC NAME-TAG goes on — same place as always.

HUBI  
How about some music?

FRANK  
No thanks.

THE KITCHEN: Coffee percolates. Milk is poured.

Frank drains the last of his cup.

HUBI  
So, Frank. What's the pl—

A PLUG is pulled from a socket  
The HUBi's light dies, mid-thought.  
Frank carefully rolls the cord into a neat ball.

EXT. FRANK'S HOUSE — PRE-DAWN

Frank steps from the house and opens the trash.  
He drops the HUBi inside, closes the lid.

EXT. DEPOT — EARLY MORNING

The depot in darkness.  
Frank unlocks the main door. Lets himself in.

INT. FIRST FLOOR — DEPOT — MORNING

The first floor is dark. Only Rosie's office lit.  
Frank stands at the photocopier. Focused.  
IN THE PRINTER TRAY — endless copies of MARIE'S CAMPAIGN  
FLYER spool out.  
Print-spool. Print-spool. Print-spool.

INT. VEHICLE LOADING AREA — DEPOT — DAWN

The light of dawn seeps into the vehicle bay.  
The FOUR SMAILS sit in a neat line. Charging.  
Frank opens the first SMail. Inside sits a stack of  
Councilor Ford's flyers.  
Quietly, he replaces the flyers with Marie's flyers.  
He places a Councilor Ford flyer on top — to hide the crime.  
He closes the lid. Moves to the next.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET — MORNING

A SMail speeds along a residential street.

It stops at a mailbox, deposits mail, then a MARIE FLYER.

A cheerful MEEP-MEEP and it moves along.

SMAIL MONTAGE — DAY

SMail units move through different neighborhoods.

Mailboxes open. Letters delivered.

Each contains a MARIE HOLDINGS FLYER.

Different homes. Different people.

Each pausing on the flyer. Curious.

EXT. LARGE HOUSE — BAY AREA — DAY

A luxury home overlooking the ocean.

Councilor Ford, still in his dressing gown, ambles down the driveway and opens his mailbox.

He flips casually through his mail.

Stops on a MARIE HOLDINGS FLYER.

He looks up. Confused.

Then —

Ford pads across the street, rips open his neighbor's mailbox.

He rifles through their mail. Freezes.

Another MARIE HOLDINGS FLYER.

He stares at the Flyer, baffled.

MEEP MEEP

Ford turns to see a SMail trundle past.

SMAIL  
Morning, Councilor Ford.

INT. OFFICE — POLICE STATION — DAY

Deputy Travis sits back, boots on the desk, coffee in hand.

In his other hand: a Marie Holdings campaign flyer.

He reads, curious.

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
(to himself)  
"Out with the new. In with the—"

His desk phone flashes.

Reluctantly, he leans forward. Picks it up.

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
Travis.  
(listens; shifts)  
Put him through.

Travis sits up. Clears his throat.

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
Councilor Ford. How are you this  
morning?

BOMBASTIC SHOUTING blasts from the receiver. Travis pulls it from his ear.

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
No, Sir. I'm not trying to—  
(beat)  
With all due respect, Councilor,  
electioneering isn't exactly my line  
of—

He listens, mildly amused.

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
What is it you're asking me to do?

More SHOUTING. Then a sharp CLICK. The line goes dead.

Travis hangs up the receiver. Unsure whether to take it seriously.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET — DAY

Frank's SMail makes its way down a residential Street.

FRANK (SMAIL)  
*"VOTE FOR MARIE!" — "MARIE HOLDINGS  
for Councilor!"*

A PATROL CAR draws up behind. BLIPS its siren.

TRAVIS (TANNOY)  
Driver of the vehicle. Pull over,  
please.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET — LATER

The Smail has now stopped. The Patrol Car behind, red and blue cycling.

Deputy Travis climbs out. Proceeds toward the SMail.

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
(cautious)  
Anyone in there?

FRANK (SMAIL)  
Hey, Travis

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
Frank?... Is that you?

FRANK (SMAIL)  
I'm in a hurry. Could you let me  
off with a warning?

A loud "BLOOP" from the Patrol Car.

PATROL CAR (TANNOY)  
*"This conversation is being  
recorded. Anything you say could  
be used as evidence."*

EXT. DINER — DAY

Frank's SMail is parked at the DRIVE-IN next to Travis's Patrol Car.

The ORDER INTERCOM crackles to life.

BETSY (INTERCOM)  
*What can I get you?*

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
Coffee black, please, Betsy.

FRANK (SMALL)  
Make that two. And one of those  
caramel doughnuts with sprinkles.

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
Frank...  
(beat)  
You're in a drone.

EXT. DINER — LATER

WAITRESS BETSY attaches a tray to Travis's Patrol Car door.

On it, she places one coffee, then leaves.

Travis sugars his coffee, slowly —

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
Councilor Ford called — said someone  
was putting malicious flyers in  
people's mailboxes.

FRANK (SMALL)  
(carefully)  
Is that so?

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
Said it was electioneering and asked  
me to look into it.

Another beat.

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
So I did. Followed a trail, right  
back to the depot.

A sip of coffee.

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
When I got there... I found a bunch of  
Councilor Ford's flyers sitting in the  
trash.

Travis sets down his coffee.



DEPUTY TRAVIS  
You know anything about that, Frank?

FRANK (SMALL)  
I might.

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
That's what I figured.

Travis reaches into his vest pocket.

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
I also found this in my mailbox this morning. Posted by you.

He pulls out a crumpled Marie Holdings FLYER.

Silence.

FRANK (SMALL)  
You gonna arrest me?

Travis glances to his dash. FLIPS OFF a switch marked COMMS.

A red light extinguishes.

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
I ought to...  
(beat)  
But here's the thing... They've got us on a short leash now. Soon they'll replace me with something that just does what it's told...  
(beat)  
Then I'm just a guy on a pension.

Travis considers the flyer. Thoughtful.

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
"Out with the new... in with the old."  
(beat)  
I like it.

FRANK (SMALL)  
So... you're not arresting me?

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
I'm saying, I like the flyer.  
(quietly)  
I'm also saying, if you need help... my trunk's open.

The Patrol Car's trunk POPS open.

The SMail's onboard camera looks to the trunk, then Travis, then back to the trunk.

Quickly, the SMail reverses around the Patrol Car and opens its roof.

The mechanical arm grabs the entire stack of Marie's flyers and moves them into the Patrol Car's trunk.

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
Quick. Betsy's coming.

The mechanical arm SLAMS the trunk.

Like it never happened.

WAITRESS BETSY returns with the receipt.

Travis opens his wallet, pulls out a TEN.

WAITRESS BETSY  
Sorry, we don't take cash anymore.  
(beat)  
It's either card or crypto.

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE — DEPOT — DAY

Frank sits quietly. Listening.

Mike is by the window watching the GARBAGE TRUCK empty bins.

MIKE  
Councilor Ford called. Said someone switched the campaign flyers in the Smails.

FRANK  
Probably a mix-up. Could happen to anyone—

Mike turns, rattled.

MIKE  
C'mon, Frank. I know it was you.

Frank looks at the floor, one knee bouncing.

MIKE  
We're supposed to be supporting Councilor Ford and Smartville — not backing the other side.

FRANK

I'm not backing any side. I just want a fair election.

MIKE

So it was you.

(boiling)

Where are they? The flyers you took out?

SOUND OF THE GARBAGE TRUCK crushing stuff.

FRANK

I've no idea what you're talking about.

Mike stares at Frank. Frank stares back.

MIKE

You've changed, Frank.

FRANK

The world's changed, Mike. I'm still me.

#### EXT. COUNTY ROAD — DAY

A COUNTY ROAD with a long traffic tailback.

In the distance, a POLICE PATROL CAR is parked across the road, red and blues cycling.

Deputy Travis reclines in the driver's seat, radio mic in hand, speaking over the PA system.

DEPUTY TRAVIS (PA)

This is Springfield PD hoping y'all gonna vote for Marie Holdings.

(radio squark)

That's *Holdings* for councilor.

Hope to see you Tuesday.

DEPUTY PETE stands in the road, handing out FLYERS.

One motorist refuses to take one.

DEPUTY PETE

Take it.

(silence)

You want a ticket?

The driver reluctantly takes it and pulls away.

DEPUTY PETE  
(beckoning next car)  
Okay, nice and slow.

A YELLOW ROBOTAXI approaches.

The window lowers to reveal Mungo. He takes a flyer, reads it.

MUNGO  
Since when did police duties  
involve canvassing?

Mungo climbs out and walks toward the patrol car.

DEPUTY TRAVIS (TANNOY)  
*That's a big fat "tick" for  
Holdings. Marie Holdings for—*

Mungo leans in the open door, removes his shades.

MUNGO  
May I ask what you're doing,  
officer?

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
Taking a lunch break. What's it to  
you?

INT. ELIAS' ROOM — HOTEL — DAY

Mungo and Midge watch Elias study Marie's flyer. The paper trembles slightly in his hand.

MUNGO  
They hijacked the campaign. Used  
our HUBis to promote Holdings. They  
even got the local PD helping out—

ELIAS  
Call Frank. Have him talk them  
around.

MUNGO  
That's the problem. Frank changed  
sides.

Elias looks up, confused.

ELIAS  
Since when?

MIDGE

Since he went out to the lake. He took a robotaxi. They know, Elias.

ELIAS

KNOW *WHAT?*! That I'm trying to save their town?! Am I the bad guy here? Because if I am, please tell me!

Silence. Heavy.

MUNGO

Maybe it's time to get mean.

MIDGE

We're good at mean.

ELIAS

NO! Not in Smartville. We don't — get — mean.

(deep breaths)

I need to stay pure. In my heart of hearts.

Mungo and Midge exchange a look. Frustrated.

MUNGO

If we don't push back, Ford loses. And Smartville dies.

MIDGE

That's twenty million dollars and two weeks down the drain. For what?

Elias stands rigid. Jaw tight. He turns toward the window.

ELIAS

Just... let me think.

He stares out. The panic in his eyes settles into something else. A cold, cryptic focus.

ELIAS

(trance-like)

We don't fight back. We give back.

Elias grabs his cap and strides out.

ELIAS

(moving fast)

Follow me.

INT. ON THE MOVE — HOTEL — DAY

Elias bursts from the room and strides down the hall. Mungo and Midge scramble to keep up.

ELIAS

Of course, they're unsure. I mean,  
who trades their town for a HUBi  
and a robotaxi?  
(impassioned)  
But when they see the full picture...  
they'll change their minds.

MUNGO

What do you mean "full picture?"

They arrive at the elevator.

ELIAS

We give them everything.

He hits the elevator button. Waits a beat. Impatient.

He pivots to the stairwell door.

INT. STAIRWELL / LOBBY — HOTEL — CONTINUOUS

Elias takes the stairs three at a time. Emerges into the lobby. Doesn't break stride.

MUNGO

We can't keep throwing good money  
after bad!

ELIAS

It's not throwing. It's seeding.  
We give them the whole damn circus.  
By the time I'm done, they'll be  
eating and sleeping silicon.

INT. FUNCTION ROOM — HOTEL — DAY

The space is now dominated by the white architectural model of Smartville.

At the far end, TECHS type at terminals.

Elias strides in. Rolls up his sleeves.

ELIAS

Kodi, bring up the overheads.

KODI — a technician — flips a switch. A whirl of light as projectors mounted along the ceiling flicker to life.

Grids and schematics wash over the model.

Elias kicks off his shoes and steps into the model town.

He walks down Main Street. Eyes scanning. Calculating.

ELIAS

Put in a hundred EV's and a new traffic system.

(to Mungo)

We create a buyback scheme for their old cars.

He steps onto Vine Street. Points.

ELIAS

Give me two automated waste processors... And a Tram loop running down Main.

Kodi taps a key. A holographic tram glides along the projected street.

Elias keeps moving. Pointing. Building.

ELIAS

Every intersection gets overhead screens. Weather. Local news. Something to watch while they wait.

More projections bloom: glowing crosswalks, scrolling feeds, simulated vehicle flow. The model comes alive.

MIDGE

Elias, we're just burning cash.

ELIAS

It's an investment.

KODI

Want me to add some P4L units? Sharpen the aesthetic.

Elias almost laughs.

ELIAS

Get a load of this guy.

(but then -)

... add twenty, no fifty.

Programmed for kindness. Painting  
houses, cleaning yards - hell, they  
can even carry little old ladies  
across the road.

Kodi inputs the command. An army of sleek, headless robots  
materializes on the streets below.

Mungo and Midge exchange a look. Defeated.

Elias stands at the center, bathed in the glow of his  
creation. A circus of light and data.

ELIAS

When I'm done, they won't just want  
it... they'll need it.

(wild-eyed)

Addicted... body and soul.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE



ACT TWOEXT. RUNDOWN HOUSE – EVENING

Marie knocks on a BADLY PAINTED DOOR.

The door opens to reveal a YOUNG MOTHER holding a baby.

MARIE  
(offers up flyer)  
Marie Holdings for Councilor.

YOUNG MOTHER  
I already have one, thanks.

Marie steps back, checks the porch number, confused.

MARIE  
This is for Marie Holdings. Not  
Councilor Ford.

YOUNG MOTHER  
I know. And it's a good thing  
you're doing.

The Young Mother reaches for a side table and hands Marie her flyer.

YOUNG MOTHER  
(bouncing baby)  
Frank mailed it – or rather, that  
new drone he uses.

MARIE  
(confused)  
Frank Townsend? The mail guy?

YOUNG MOM  
Uh-huh.

Marie blinks. Now she's really confused.

EXT. FRANK'S PORCH – NIGHT

SOUND OF KNOCKING.

The door opens to reveal Frank. He freezes, wary.

MARIE  
(upbeat)  
Marie Holdings for Councilor!

Frank looks at the flyer. Doesn't take it.

FRANK  
What do you want, Marie?

MARIE  
I came to thank you. For  
delivering those flyers.

FRANK  
I did it for the town, not you.

Marie smiles, tries to stay professional.

MARIE  
Well, whatever the reason, it was a  
good thing you did.

Frank leans against the jamb, checks his watch.

FRANK  
Anything else you'd like to add?

MARIE  
(confused)  
No. I don't think so.

FRANK  
You're sure?

Marie frowns.

MARIE  
Positive.  
(then—)  
So, can we count on your vote  
tomorrow?

FRANK  
(closing the door)  
I'll think about it.

As the door closes, Marie quietly slides a flyer into the  
letter slot.

Suddenly, the flyer is snatched away inside.

A beat. Then —

The flap SWINGS open. Frank Peers out.

FRANK  
I'm still waiting on that apology.

MARIE  
(irritated)  
You don't apologize for going to college.

The flap closes. Then opens.

FRANK  
It wasn't the going. It was the staying.

The flap closes.

MARIE  
(boiling)  
At least we sorted that out!

EXT. MARINA AND FUEL STOP — NIGHT

Crickets chirr beneath a pale moon.

SAM sits alone at the end of the dock, enjoying a beer and the lakeside view.

As he moves to put down his beer, the planks rattle.

Another tremor. Stronger.

SOUND OF TRUCKS

Sam turns, looks back across the lot.

ON THE HIGHWAY — a huge convoy of trucks rolls towards town.

INT. ARNIE'S BEDROOM — MORNING

Arnie's sleeping face, wedged in a pillow.

SOUND OF heavy construction and shouting.

He opens his eyes, sees:

A giant manifestation of COUNCILOR FORD'S FACE peering in through his bedroom window.

COUNCILOR FORD (SCREEN)  
*"Smartville... A smart town for  
smart people."*

ARNIE  
(groggy)  
... the fuck?

EXT. ARNIE'S ELECTRICAL — MORNING

Arnie pads out in his bedwear. The street transformed.

An automated Dumpster Truck rolls past, empties his trash can. Moves along.

A line of colourful EV's drive by. Silent. Sleek.

On the other side of the road: a ROBOT in red overalls is cleaning the Salon windows.

Arnie squints, dumbfounded

ARNIE  
The hell is that?

P4L ROBOT O/S  
*That's a P4L.*

Arnie turns to see an identical ROBOT IN RED OVERALLS holding a take-out coffee.

P4L ROBOT  
*There you go. Just how you like it.*

Arnie stares at the robot, dumbstruck.

ARNIE  
(takes coffee)  
Thanks.

INT. OFFICE — ARNIE'S ELECTRICAL — DAY

Arnie rifles through his office. Finds the telephone. He dials frantically. The phone rings, someone picks up —

ARNIE  
(a sip of coffee)  
Nancy? You need to get over here,  
now! They got EV's and robots and—

EXT. NANCY'S PORCH — MORNING

Nancy stands on her porch in her robe.

NANCY  
(into phone)  
I know. I got two doing my garden.

One P4L Robot mows the lawn. Another trims the Gardenias.

A third strolls past, walking Perry's dog.

NANCY  
They're doing a really neat job.

EXT. MAIN STREET — DAY

Frank's SMail navigates Main Street, weaving between M4P robots and bemused residents.

An AUTOMATED REFUSE VEHICLE services a waste bin and rolls on.

Beyond, a huge LCD screen dominates the intersection.

INFO SCREEN  
Welcome to Smartville. Feel free to  
use our new automated tram service.

A DRIVERLESS TRAM glides up. Stops.

DING DING!

Passengers step off.

The tram departs.

INT. CONTROL ROOM — DEPOT — DAY

Frank tears off his headset. Looks to Simon.

FRANK  
Did they put in new tech?

SIMON  
Boy, did they.

Simon leans back, counts using his fingers.

SIMON

New fleet of EVs. Crosswalk upgrades. Daylight screens on every corner. P4Ls in half the shops already...

Frank watches his LIVE FEED. Main Street now saturated with shiny new tech.

SIMON

...automated refuse units. Driverless trams. Oh—and a digital payment system.

FRANK

This isn't right.

INT. ROSIE'S OFFICE — DAY

Rosie squints at her screen, typing away.

Frank bursts in and switches off her monitor.

ROSIE

Frank! That was a—

FRANK

... Put it on hold. We need to call a crisis meeting.

Frank grabs her desk phone and holds the receiver out to her.

FRANK

Call everyone we know. Tell them to meet at Benny's Bowls in thirty minutes.

ROSIE

It's Monday. People are at work!

FRANK

I don't care. If they don't walk out now, there won't be any work to walk back to.

(beat)

Well?

Rosie hesitates. Then takes the phone.

ROSIE

Where are you going?

FRANK  
To rally the troops.  
(moving fast)  
If Elias wants a war, he'll get  
one.

EXT. MAIN STREET — DAY

Frank pushes through a busy, automated Main Street.

EVs glide past in steady patterns. Crosswalks cycle without pause. A P4L assists a customer at the bakery entrance.

Frank moves on, arrives at Arnies Electrics, and pushes inside.

INT. ARNIE'S ELECTRICAL — DAY

FRANK steps in, freezes.

A P4L robot is behind the counter, balancing receipts.

FRANK  
(wary)  
Where's Arnie?

The Robot looks up. Beeps.

P4L ROBOT  
*Hey, Frank.*

FRANK  
How do you know my name?

P4L ROBOT  
*Everybody knows you. You're Frank.*

Frank glances around, nervous.

FRANK  
What have you done with Arnie?

P4L ROBOT  
*Arnie went to the Bowling Hall.  
Something about a "crisis meeting?"*

FRANK  
He told you that?

P4L ROBOT  
*No. I overheard him talking to  
Rosie.*  
(then —)  
*Are you going to the crisis  
meeting?*

FRANK  
Me? I, er... I don't...

He backs out, onto—

EXT. MAIN STREET — CONTINUOUS

A P4L hoses down the sidewalk.

P4L ROBOT  
*Hey! Watch your step, Frank.*

Frank nods automatically.

Turns, moves to cross the street, when —

A ROBOTAXI glides up. Blocks his path.

ROBOTAXI  
*Hey, Frank. Need a lift to Benny's  
Bowls?*

Frank freezes. Looks left. Right. No clean way through.

A beat.

He tries to cut across the road — instantly swallowed by the  
flow of EVs.

HORNS BLARE as EVs criss-cross in all directions.

CROSSWALK  
*Frank Townsend. WAIT!*

Frank freezes, trapped in the middle of the busy intersection.

Above him, a huge screen flickers —

COUNCILOR FORD's face fills the screen.

COUNCILOR FORD (SCREEN)  
*Frank Townsend. You're the kind of  
citizen this town is proud of.*

More EVs, then a tram cuts through.



TRAM  
*Next stop: Vine Street.*

Frank peers around, dazed.

His once-quiet town, now a high-tech dystopia.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY – DAY

A large crowd has gathered at Benny's Bowls. Some in their workwear, others with kids and groceries.

The crowd is being entertained by several P4L ROBOTS who have taken it upon themselves to "help out."

One P4L sweeps the floor. Another is behind the bar, serving drinks.

IN LANE THREE

A P4L demonstrates the perfect strike.

It LUNGES into the approach. Releases the ball and –  
STRIKE!

A round of impressed applause.

IN LANE ONE

Benny welcomes a P4L waiter holding a tray of drinks.

P4L WAITER  
*Beer for Brodie, Orange juice for  
Rose, Ice Coffee for Benny...*

BENNY  
You know the best part... no overtime.

The P4L serves Arnie a Pina Colada.

ARNIE  
I could get used to this.

FRANK PUSHES THROUGH THE DOOR

He hurries over, breathless.

FRANK

I just came from Main Street. It's like another world.

ARNIE

Sure is. Cheers.

P4L WAITER

*What would you like, Frank?*

Frank spins. The P4L Waiter is standing behind him.

FRANK

Some privacy, if you don't mind.

He waits for the P4L to leave, then climbs onto the plastic seating.

FRANK

(waving arms)

Alright - everyone. Please. Listen.

A collective sigh as the crowd gathers.

Several P4Ls gather too.

Frank looks at the P4Ls - watching him.

FRANK

(to Benny)

Is there somewhere more private we can talk?

CUT TO:

INT. SHOE AND BALL CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

Around fifty people stand shoulder to shoulder in the "Shoes & Ball closet." The bulb's out, so someone holds up their PHONE LIGHT.

Frank stands on an empty Soda crate. Voice already frayed from trying to hold the floor.

FRANK

... this is our town. We don't just roll over because they hand us shiny toys.

BENNY

These ain't toys, Frank. I got one doing the cleaning. Another behind the bar.

CONNIE

Yeah — they got one at the salon doing twin sets.

ARNIE

(holding his Pina Colada)  
They have a point, Frank. If Ford's offering a future, why not vote for it

FRANK

Because one day, your kids will want a job. And there won't be any.

VOICE FROM THE BACK

Who needs a job?

RORY

Right.

FRANK

Would you listen to yourselves!

The room fractures. Someone pushes.

ANOTHER VOICE

Who the hell is Marie Holdings, anyway?

People start talking over one another. Shouting erupts.

Frank stands on the crate. Chaos all around him.

INT. CORRIDOR — BOWLING ALLEY — CONTINUOUS

A P4L ROBOT mops the linoleum floor outside the "SHOE & BALL" closet.

The robot stops. Tilts its mechanical head, listening.

SOUND OF ARGUING

INT. FUNCTION ROOM – HOTEL – CONTINUOUS

Elias is at the far end of the room, making adjustments to the Smartville model.

Midge sits by the window, one ear to his laptop. He taps UP the volume, trying to make sense of the overlapping voices.

VOICES ON LAPTOP  
*Would ya'll – I said... If we  
can't talk like...*

ELIAS O/S  
What are you doing?

Midge jumps. Elias is standing over him.

MIDGE  
Just keeping an eye on things.

ELIAS  
Don't lie to me, Midge.

Midge sighs, caught.

MIDGE  
They're having a meeting at the  
bowling hall. One of our P4L's is  
listening.

Elias glares at him.

ELIAS  
Cheatin' again.

MIDGE  
Boss! If we don't cheat, how are  
we gonna win?!

ELIAS  
By playing fair. Or not at all.  
Turn it off.  
(Midge blinks)  
I said: Turn – it – Off.

Midge slams shut his laptop.

ELIAS  
No more. You hear, no more.

INT. BALL & SHOE CLOSET — CONTINUOUS

The closet has become one big argument. People talking over each other. Panic creeping in.

Rosie watches, concerned as Frank sits on the crate, head in hands.

ROSIE

Please. Everyone. Would you let him SPEAK!

The room quiets. All eyes turn to Frank.

ROSIE

Go ahead, Frank.

Frank sits on the crate. Rubs his face.

The fight's still there, but how to say it?

Then —

FRANK

You remember that old Dust Bowl movie — the one with...

(clicking fingers)

... Henry... ?

RORY

—Fonda — The Grapes of Wrath?

FRANK

That's the one. He said — "*a fella ain't got a soul of his own. Just a piece of a bigger one.*" Well, that bigger soul...

(beat)

... that's us. Springfield.

ON THE MANY FACES

*Rosie... Arnie... Nancy... Rory... framed in the darkness. Their lives shaped by a collective past.*

FRANK

These people. They'll sell us quietly. Make it feel so easy.

(shakes his head)

But when you pull someone's job, you don't just take their paycheck. You take their place in the whole.

BENNY

You can't stop the future, Frank.

FRANK

I don't wanna stop the future.  
Just make sure we're a part of it.

(he looks around)

I've walked these routes twenty  
years. I know who's sick. Who's  
barely holding on. And I know a  
town ain't a ledger. It's a living  
thing.

Frank gets to his feet, looks at the faces looking at him.

FRANK

This isn't their town, it's ours.  
Always was, always will be.

ROSIE

What do we do, Frank?

FRANK

What we have to do. Take it back.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREEEXT. ARNIE'S ELECTRICAL - DAY

A long line of people waits outside Arnies' shop.

The A-Frame sign now reads: "\$50 CASH! FOR YOUR OLD HUBi."

INT. ARNIE'S ELECTRICAL - DAY

Arnie is at the counter, dealing with a customer.

ARNIE  
(to customer)  
Sign here - where it says "Damage  
return."

The Customer signs as Arnie counts money.

ARNIE  
(hands over cash)  
Fifty dollars. Have a day.

The customer looks at him like he's nuts.

CUSTOMER  
You know I never paid for this?

ARNIE  
Go. Before I change my mind. *NEXT!*

The NEXT CUSTOMER steps up holding TWO HUBi's.

Arnie closes his eyes. Grunts.

ARNIE  
(calling out)  
Hey, Sam - this is the worst  
fucking business idea ever. I'm  
losing a thousand dollars an hour!

Sam appears from the workshop.

SAM  
But it feels good, right?

ARNIE  
No, it feels dumb. A dumb idea for  
a dumb town.

Sam carries the box of RETURNED HUBI'S into –  
THE BACK WORKSHOP

He sets the box down beside a large PILLAR DRILL.

He places a HUBi under the drill bit and puts a nice, fat hole through it.

He drops the dead HUBi in a TRASH CAN full of ruined HUBi'S.

INT. ROBOTAXI – MOVING – DAY

Brodie is driving a Robotaxi. Alert. Focused.

Colette is in the back, uneasy.

COLETTE  
It's only to the salon. I could've walked.

BRODIE  
I know. I wanted to drive you...  
(beat)  
...so I have a witness.

COLETTE  
Witness? For what?

They drive past another PARKED ROBOTAXI.

Brodie slows, then throws the car into reverse.

The Robotaxi accelerates backward –

SMASH!

It slams hard into the PARKED ROBOTAXI. Alarms sound.

ROBOTAXI (BRODIE'S VOICE)  
Obstacle detected. Avoidance  
system activated.

COLETTE  
You just hit your own taxi!

BRODIE  
I know.  
(considering)  
That was stupid, wasn't it?

Brodie nudges the car forward a few feet.



Then — without hesitation —

He reverses again.

A LOUD CRUNCH as the Robotaxi smashes into the parked Robotaxi.

COLETTE  
BRODIE! Are you drunk?!

BRODIE  
Never been more sober in my life.

A beat as —

He lines it up again.

BRODIE  
One more for luck.

EXT. CRASHED ROBOTAXIS — DAY

A METAL CRUNCH as Brodie's Robotaxi reverses HARD into the parked Robotaxi.

Hazard lights flash wildly. The alarm now hysterical.

Colette climbs out, stares at the wreckage, stunned.

BRODIE  
(lowering window)  
You have a great day, honey.

INT. ROBOTAXI — SAME TIME

Brodie is using the onboard helpline.

BRODIE  
... I think you need to do a recall. There was a serious malfunction. It just started crashing and slamming into things.

ROBOTAXI AGENT O/S  
You weren't doing anything unusual?

BRODIE  
Nothing. Just—you know—nothing. I'm a really careful driver. My wife thinks I drive like a woman.

INT. SUPERMARKET — DAY

The Supermarket is busy. Efficient. No staff.

Customers move calmly through the automated checkouts.

AUTO-CHECKOUT (NANCY'S VOICE)  
*Thank You. And remember to vote  
Ford for councilor.*

Nancy stands in line, holding a LARGE BOTTLE OF COLA.

AUTO-CHECKOUT (NANCY'S VOICE)  
*Next customer, please.*

Nancy steps up and opens the bottle of Cola. PSST.

Without hesitation, she POURS half the bottle over the screen.

The machine fizzes — BEEPING, flashing.

Nearby customers freeze.

Nancy considers it, frowns.

NANCY  
Maybe I'll try the other one.

Nancy steps up to the next checkout and empties the bottle over it. Machine two SPASMS into failure.

The MANAGER rushes over, panicked.

MANAGER  
Nancy? What's going on?!

NANCY  
No idea. It just burst open.  
(then —)  
If you need help...

She gestures to the MANUAL CHECKOUT.

NANCY  
I'm available.

INT. SUPERMARKET — LATER

Nancy sits behind the manual checkout, serving a line of customers.

She finishes bagging items, then reaches under the counter.

BENEATH THE CHECKOUT: a box of Marie Holding campaign flyers:

Nancy slides a FLYER into the bag. Hands it over.

NANCY

Don't forget to vote...

(a smile)

Marie Holdings for Councilor.

INT. ELIAS' ROOM — HOTEL — NIGHT

Steam billows from the open bathroom door.

Mungo hangs near the bathroom, pacing.

MUNGO

They wrecked the HUBi's. Smashed  
out EV's. I tell you, Elias, these  
people play a mean game—

Elias's voice echoes from the bathroom.

ELIAS O/S

I won't cheat, you hear!

MUNGO

If we don't do something—

MIDGE O/S

Hold up—

MIDGE is on the sofa, laptop open on his knees.

He raises a hand, eyes on the screen.

MIDGE

According to these stats, voter  
turnout is reduced by 30% during  
heavy rain.

He turns the laptop toward Mungo.

MUNGO

Interesting.

(then)

Hey, Elias — don't we own a  
cloud-seeding company?

ELIAS O/S

Weather-Con. Based in Colorado.

MUNGO

Let's call them. Have them do a flyover.

ELIAS O/S

That's cheatin'!

MUNGO

It's weather.

(To Midge, quietly)

Where are the voting stations?

MIDGE

(scrolling away)

One at the Golf Club. The other is at the United Brethren Church.

MUNGO

The Church on Main Street?

(loud: to Elias)

Don't we own that Church?

ELIAS O/S

No! We own the right to move it.

Mungo freezes. An idea crystallizing.

MUNGO

That's it—

(to Midge)

If we move the church... Holding's voters have to go all the way to the cemetery to vote.

Midge nods slowly, mulls it over.

MIDGE

Add in a little rain...

#### INT. ELIAS'S BATHROOM — CONTINUOUS

The bathroom has been ripped out. Elias lies in an OLD TIN BATH with a wash-towel over his face.

Mungo leans in the door.

MUNGO

What do you say, Elias? Move the church, throw in a little rain.

Midge joins Mungo in the doorway.

MIDGE  
C'mon, Elias - a walk in the rain  
never hurt anyone.

Elias sinks into the bath.

ELIAS  
I said no.  
(washcloth over face)  
Not while I'm bathing.

INT. POOL HALL - NIGHT

The construction crew is playing pool against a P4L robot.

They watch the P4L knock balls into pockets like there's no tomorrow.

Foreman Dirk leans on the bar, talking to Mungo.

FOREMAN DIRK  
Are you out of your mind?

MUNGO  
If we don't move that church  
tonight, you and the boys can pack  
up your bags and head home, 'cause  
Smartville, USA is over.  
Understand? Over.

FOREMAN DIRK  
Boy... they really got us over a  
barrel with this election, huh?

Mungo just looks at him.

FOREMAN DIRK  
Fine, but it'll cost you triple.  
And that's for my whole crew -  
juniors and Pikes.

MUNGO  
You get triple. The rest double,  
plus a 12-hour respite.

EXT. MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Dead quiet. Streetlights cast amber pools on empty asphalt.

A LOW RUMBLE breaks the stillness. Growing.

Headlights cut through the mist. Not cars. Heavy machinery.

THREE UTILITY TRUCKS lead the way, amber strobes pulsing.

Crew in high-vis vests walk alongside, radios to their lips.

Behind them – impossible, surreal – rides the UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH.

Mounted on a massive steel flatbed, hydraulic dollies replace its foundation. The whole structure groans as it rolls forward at a crawl.

The convoy moves like a slow parade through the sleeping town.

Then –

ON: A multi-core DATA CABLE hanging between pylons.

Foreman Dirk looks up, waves his arms.

FOREMAN DIRK

WAIT UP!

A rush of hydraulics and the rig grinds to a stop.

ON THE STEEPLE, rocking to a stop, inches from the cable.

#### INT. ELIAS' ROOM – HOTEL – NIGHT

In darkness, an old Bakelite phone rattles to life.

Elias fumbles for it, snatches it up.

ELIAS

What?...

(sleepy)

Say, what?

Elias sits up, groggy.

ELIAS

Why you moving it in the middle of the night?

(listens)

No wait. I'm coming over.

#### EXT. MAIN STREET – DEAD OF NIGHT

The church sits blocking the entire road and sidewalk.

Elias, still in his dressing gown, stares up at the data cable TOUCHING the steeple.

ELIAS

That's why I said, "wait." Until the cables were under the road.

FOREMAN DIRK

I know, but Mungo insisted.

ELIAS

Mungo told you to do this?

FOREMAN DIRK

Promised double time.

(exhausted)

Want me to take it back?

ELIAS

(glancing around)

Call Deputy Travis, tell him what's happened. Have the tech guys re-route the cables in the morning.

FOREMAN DIRK

Don't they have an election tomorrow?

ELIAS

Not my problem.

TIME CUT: MORNING

EXT. FORMER CHURCH SITE — DAY

The "POLLING STATION" sign points to an area of cleared ground where the Church once stood.

A crowd of confused voters gathers in the street.

Marie and Marge stare at the now-empty lot.

MARGE

I've seen some underhand ordure in my time, but takin' the church? That's the devil's work.

Connie hurries over.

CONNIE

They found it. It's stuck on Main Street.

MARIE

Is it still in one piece?

CONNIE

Totally. I mean like, totally.

EXT. UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH — MAIN STREET

The Brethren Church, still on the rig, stands wedged in the middle of Main Street.

Workmen have built a makeshift ramp from scaffold planks.

Connie stands beside it, directing voters inside.

CONNIE

One at a time — Watch your step.

A ROBOTAXI pulls up.

Elias and Mungo climb out.

Elias frogmarches Mungo up the ramp, into the church.

INT. UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH — CONTINUOUS

The interior is braced with steel scaffolding. Two temporary voting booths and a table sit in the middle of the nave.

Marie and Marge stand behind the table. They turn wary as Elias approaches.

ELIAS

Dr Holdings? I'm Elias Benjamin.  
This is my associate, Mungo Walsh...  
who has something important to say to  
you.

Elias looks to Mungo, who stands like a scolded child.

MUNGO

I apologize for moving the—er—

ELIAS

Louder.



MUNGO  
I'd like to apologize for moving the  
church.

Elias reaches the table, takes a voting slip, and offers it  
to Mungo.

ELIAS  
Take it.

MUNGO  
I'm not registered—

ELIAS  
Take it!

Mungo reluctantly takes the slip, pulls out a pen, and ticks  
the "MARIE HOLDINGS" box.

He slides it into the ballot box.

ELIAS  
(to Mungo)  
No more cheatin', okay?

MUNGO  
Okay.  
(off Elias look)  
OKAY!

ELIAS  
(to Marie)  
I wish you luck.

Marie and Marge watch incredulously as Elias and Mungo turn  
and walk out.

MARGE  
Them's one crazy pair o' yo-yo's.

#### INT. ROBOTAXI — CONTINUOUS

Elias and Mungo climb in. Wait for the doors to close.

MUNGO  
This is not how we win.

ELIAS  
Then we lose. With grace.

INT. MIKE'S OFFICE - DEPOT - DAY

Frank, Rosie, Colette and Simon sit quietly in Mike's office.

Mike perches on his desk - a shepherd to his flock.

MIKE

As you know, today is voting day.  
And - like past elections - our job  
is to transport the votes to the  
counting house.

Mike moves to a crudely drawn diagram on a whiteboard.

MIKE

This year, we'll be using the  
SMails - fully autonomous.

Mike uncaps a MARKER, a little too eager.

MIKE

Think of it like a two-ball game.  
SMail One starts at Springfield  
High. SMail Two at the Brethren  
Church.

(he draws a line)

At eighteen-forty hours, both  
SMails will advance—

(squeaky marker)

—converge on Main Street and push  
all the way through, landing at—

(taps the board)

Springfield Town Hall. Final count  
at 19:00.

(turns to team)

Questions?

Rosie raises a hand.

ROSIE

Do we huddle before kickoff?

EXT. SKY - 20,000 FEET - DAWN

A TRANSPORT PLANE cuts across a clear sky, leaving a faint  
chemical trail. The blue sky begins to dull.

INT. ELIAS' ROOM — HOTEL — DAY

Elias stands by the window, staring out at a stubbornly clear sky.

Slowly, his attention drifts down to the two parked Robotaxis, still crusted with dried foam.

His jaw tightens.

He grabs his jacket and walks out.

INT. PAVILION — GOLF CLUB — DAY

A handful of wealthy types in blazers and white trousers idle around the pavilion.

Councilor Ford and Mungo watch as a MALE ADJUDICATOR places the last of the votes into a half-empty BALLOT SACK.

COUNCILOR FORD  
A little thin, but I don't see a problem.

MUNGO  
You don't see a problem? I see a big problem.

EXT. GOLF CLUB — DAY

Beneath a clear blue sky, a SMail waits outside the pavilion, its roof open.

Deputy Travis stands beside, keeping watch.

Mungo steps from the pavilion. Looks up at the sky.

FEMALE ADJUDICATOR  
COMING THROUGH!

A FEMALE ADJUDICATOR hurries from the pavilion holding the HALF-EMPTY BALLOT SACK.

She places it inside the SMail.

Deputy Travis leans in, seals it with a SECURITY TAG.

DEPUTY TRAVIS  
Okay, Mike. All set.

A smattering of applause as the SMail drives away.

EXT. MARINA AND FUEL STOP — DAY

A slow day at the Marina. Sign swinging in the breeze.

The two Robotaxis drive into the lot. Stop.

Elias climbs out. Looks at the store.

INT. MARINA AND FUEL STOP — DAY

Elias selects a "Snappy" bar. Drops it on the counter.

Sam steps from the workshop, wiping his hands.

ELIAS

And two tokens for your Car Wash...  
Please.

SAM

Sorry. Out of order.

Elias watches Sam idly pick paint from his hands —

ELIAS

Do you have an "alternative" wash  
facility?

SAM

No, but if we did, it'd be out of  
order, too.

Elias flexes his neck. This kid's getting on his nerves.

ELIAS

Have I done something to offend  
you?

SAM

I don't know. Have you?

A beat.

ELIAS

You know... your little lecture on  
"kindness"... cost me a lot of money.

SAM

Good.  
(mocking)  
It was meant to.

Elias begins to boil.

ELIAS

You do realize I could still  
prosecute your sister? Make it so  
you have to sell this place to me?

SAM

But you won't — because that would  
make you a bad person. Something  
you're trying so hard not to be.

ELIAS

(softly)  
Don't tempt me.

Elias moves to the window. Looks out over the lake.

ELIAS

I don't get you people—  
(turns)  
I try to revolutionize your town.  
Bring wealth, prosperity... and  
you're fucking with me. Why?

SAM

Because, Mr Elias, you're a devil  
in a suit — who won't stop until  
you have us locked in some digital  
cage.

Elias raises his arms, incredulous.

ELIAS

I'm a businessman from California.  
I drive an electric car for  
Christ's sake.

SAM

Two electric cars.

Elias looks at him, jaw tight.

ELIAS

I'm going to buy this place. And  
when I do, I'll bury it in the  
ground.

SAM

The only thing you're buying around  
here is that Snappy bar... Or did  
you change your mind?

Elias leans in. Face filled with wrath.

ELIAS  
I changed my mind.

EXT. MARINA AND FUEL STOP — DAY

Elias exits the shop. Walks to the Robotaxis.

He glances back to the Shop.

Sam is watching him through the glass.

Elias takes out his PHONE. Hesitates.

A darkness rising.

EXT. UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH — DAY

A large crowd of HOLDINGS voters waits outside the Church for the final send-off.

Frank's SMail is parked outside. Roof open.

DEPUTY PETE and MIDGE stand nearby.

Midge looks to Deputy Pete.

MIDGE  
May I ask what you're doing here?

DEPUTY PETE  
Making sure there's no funny  
business.  
(beat)  
You?

MIDGE  
The same.

Midge's phone rings. He moves away, answers.

MIDGE  
Elias?

RESUME ELIAS

ELIAS  
(into phone)  
How's the weather?

MIDGE O/S  
Terrible. Not a cloud in the sky.

Elias covers his phone, cusses.

ELIAS  
And the turnout?

MIDGE O/S  
Not good either. We're in trouble,  
boss.

Elias looks up at the rusty CCTV camera.

Turns away.

ELIAS  
Listen, do you remember the problem  
we had on training day? When the  
SMail drove into the water?

RESUME MIDGE

Deputy Pete is watching him closely now.

Midge steps away, intrigued.

MIDGE  
Sure, I remember. It was chased by  
a dog.

RESUME ELIAS

He lowers his voice. Almost whispers.

ELIAS  
Exactly.  
(beat)  
Maybe you want to do something with  
that.

MIDGE O/S  
... Like?

Elias checks Sam again.

ELIAS  
(agitated)  
Something... nefarious.

MIDGE O/S  
You're saying cheat?

ELIAS  
I'm saying win.

Elias hangs up.

Stares at his phone.

He hurls it at the ground.

SMASH!

Elias looks up.

SAM is still watching through the glass.

ELIAS  
Happy now?!

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE



ACT FOURINT. UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH – DAY

The voting booths are now closed.

Marie and Connie watch a FEMALE ADJUDICATOR seal a VERY FULL BALLOT SACK and haul it outside.

MARIE  
Think we won?

CONNIE  
By a landslide.

Marie looks around fondly.

MARIE  
The last time I was here was my  
sister's wedding.

CONNIE  
Nice. How'd that work out?

MARIE  
He didn't show.

EXT. UNITED BRETHREN CHURCH – CONTINUOUS

The ADJUDICATOR carries the BALLOT SACK down the ramp.

She places it inside Frank's SMail. Deputy Pete attaches a SECURITY TAG.

They step back.

The roof closes.

DEPUTY PETE  
(pats roof)  
All set, Frank.

FRANK (SMAIL)  
Wish me luck.

The crowd cheers as the SMail pulls away.

Deputy Pete watches it go, then glances over at Midge.

Midge has gone.

INT. ROBOTAXI – DAY

Midge sits in the robotaxi, furiously typing code into his laptop. He highlights a line, pastes, deletes, and clicks return.

He sits back. Smiles.

MIDGE  
Congratulations on your  
re-election, Councilor Ford.

EXT. VINE AND MAIN STREET – DAY

Frank's SMail trundles down Main Street.

Suddenly, it veers across the road – into the path of an oncoming vehicle.

Horns blare as the SMail speeds off down a side street.

INT. CONTROL ROOM – DEPOT – DAY

Frank and the team watch, confused.

COLETTE  
Why's it going down there?

SIMON  
(checking screen)  
Somebody changed the route.

FRANK  
That's not good. Those votes need  
to be at the town hall.

MIKE  
(panicked)  
You have permission to take  
control.

Frank slides up to the controls – grabs the joystick.

FRANK  
(moving joystick)  
I'm locked out.

Rosie looks at the wall clock.

ROSIE  
You've got five minutes before  
the deadline.

Simon moves to his console, brings up a TERMINAL.

SIMON  
I'm locked out, too.

MIKE  
Okay, now what?

FRANK  
(moving fast)  
We go fully manual.

MIKE  
What's "fully manual?"

Frank grabs a WALKIE-TALKIE from the rack.

FRANK  
It's called a bicycle.

INT. VEHICLE PARK — DEPOT — DAY

Frank pulls at a pile of old bicycles. He grabs what looks like his trusty old USPS BIKE and pushes off.

EXT. POSTAL DEPOT — DAY

FRANK breaks from the depot on his trusty old USPS bike — chain squeaking like an old porch swing.

Mike, Simon, Colette, and Rosie watch through the control room window as Frank pedals off down the street.

SIMON (WALKIE TALKIE)  
Head for Main Street. I'll guide  
you.

FRANK  
Over and out!

INT. TOWN HALL — DAY

A long line of people sits at a table, counting votes from MAIL SACK A.

Pam speaks with one of the counters, then joins Marie.

MARIE

And?

PAM

Councilor Ford — three hundred and  
twenty. Marie Holdings...  
(wincing)  
Twelve.

MARIE

If those votes don't get here in  
the next five minutes, it's over.

EXT. TOWN HALL — DAY

Crowds scatter as the heavens open up. Rain pours down.

Connie shelters in the entrance, speaking into her phone.

Marie joins her.

CONNIE

(hangs up)  
That was Rosie from the depot.  
Our votes went AWOL. Frank's on a  
bicycle trying to save it.

MARIE

Frank Townsend?!  
(ruefully)  
It's the class of '99 all over again.

EXT. STREET — DAY

ON THE SKY: A dark, foreboding cloud rolls in.

Frank sees it, pedals faster.

FRANK

(into walkie-talkie)  
I'll never catch it, Simon. It's a  
drone. I'm a middle-aged man on a  
bicycle.

SIMON O/S  
Keep pedaling – it just stopped at a  
light. GO!

EXT. INTERSECTION – CONTINUOUS

A LITTLE OLD LADY crosses the road. Agonizingly slowly.

The SMail waits patiently.

RESUME FRANK

He stands on the pedals. Pumps.

A RUMBLE OF THUNDER.

He peers up.

THE HEAVENS OPEN.

Not romantic rain. Drowning rat rain.

Frank squints through the downpour, sees:

The SMail's RED TAILLIGHT, waiting at a crosswalk.

The old lady reaches the sidewalk. SMILES.

THE LIGHT CHANGES.

The SMail shoots forward.

EXT. MAIN STREET – CONTINUOUS

Frank cuts across a GARDEN. Through a SPRINKLER. Emerges MORE SOAKED, but determined.

Ahead: THE BRETHREN CHURCH. Still stuck on the rig in the middle of the road.

FRANK  
You have GOT to be kidding me.

The SMail doesn't stop. It zigs – under the rig. Between HUGE WHEELS and BOLLARDS.

Frank can't follow.

He squeezes the brakes.

NOTHING.

FRANK  
(panicked)  
The cable snapped!

EXT. CHURCH RIG – CONTINUOUS

Frank rides up a SCAFFOLD RAMP and flies – INTO THE CHURCH.

INT. BRETHREN CHURCH – CONTINUOUS

Frank speeds down the NAVE. Past the ALTAR, where two ELDERLY VOLUNTEERS look up.

FRANK  
Outta the way!

He SWERVES. Misses them.

And goes down the cellar stairs.

He bursts from the church at street level – just behind the SMail.

EXT. VINE STREET – CONTINUOUS

Rain in SHEETS.

The SMail swings LEFT.

Frank swerves, narrowly avoiding ONCOMING EV'S.

BEEEEEP!

He threads the gap.

INTERCUT:

SIMON, MIKE & ROSIE

Hunched in front of the screen. Rain streaks the camera feed.

SIMON  
He just entered Vine Street.

MIKE  
Isn't that where the dog lives?

ROSIE  
(horrificed)  
Perry's dog?

EXT. PERRY'S YARD — CONTINUOUS

Perry's DOG lies on the porch. Chewing an OLD INNER TUBE.

SOUND OF WHIRRING MOTORS. THEN FRANTIC PEDALING.

The dog looks up. Ears TWITCH.

EXT. VINE STREET — CONTINUOUS

The SMail races past Perry's House.

SWERVES HARD RIGHT — down an overgrown pathway.

Frank gravel-slides. Almost loses his front wheel. Regains control. Barely.

Rain streams down his face.

FRANK  
(shouting, getting soaked)  
It's heading for the water!

MIKE O/S  
How do you know?!

FRANK  
Because I trained it. When chased by  
the dog.

MIKE O/S  
(pure disbelief)  
Those things aren't waterproof.

FRANK  
I KNOW THAT!

EXT. VINE STREET — CONTINUOUS

Perry's dog BURSTS from a Gardenia bush. BOUNDS AFTER the drone. Ferocious.

It SNAPS at Frank's rear tyre. GRRR.

FRANK  
Not me! THE DRONE!

EXT. WALKWAYS — BAYOU — CONTINUOUS

A narrow wooden bridge. Old. Slick.

The SMail speeds over — AIRBORNE for one crazy second —

SLAMS DOWN hard. Sparks. Wobbles.

Frank pedals after. Wheels hammering boards.

BEHIND HIM: The dog. Tongue out.

AHEAD: The dark, murky water. Waiting.

INSIDE THE SMail: The Ballot Sack. Votes. The whole election.

FRANK  
(to himself)  
Not today. Not the water.

EXT. WATER INLET — BAYOU — CONTINUOUS

The SMail BURSTS from trees. Water ahead.

Rain hammers the ground like a thousand tiny drummers.

ON FRANK — hair plastered to his forehead. USPS shirt clinging.  
Pedaling, not for his life, but democracy.

FRANK  
(into walkie-talkie,  
desperate)  
Unlock the SMail's roof. You hear  
me?! UNLOCK. THE. ROOF.

INTERCUT — SIMON

Simon's fingers fly across the keyboard.

SIMON  
I'm in... come on... there!

CLICK.

SIMON  
It should be open—

They all peer at the screen. The water rushes closer.

COLETTE  
(hushed)  
Oh no.



EXT. WATERFRONT — CONTINUOUS

Three figures. Racing toward destiny.

The SMail — lid now UNLOCKED, FLAPPING.

FRANK — inches behind. Hand outstretched.

PERRY'S DOG — tongue out.

Frank reaches for the BALLOT SACK. Makes a grab —

THE SMAIL DARTS RIGHT.

Onto a WOODEN JETTY. Old. Splintered. Suicidal.

FRANK  
(clocks it)  
Oh, come on!

He follows.

EXT. WOODEN JETTY — CONTINUOUS

They TEAR down the jetty. Planks rattling.

The dog GAINING

END OF THE JETTY.

No warning. No railing. Just SKY.

THEY LAUNCH.

EXT. SLOW MOTION — AIRBORNE

Ultra slow-mo. The dramatic kind.

Frank, the SMail, and Perry's Dog — all hanging in mid-air.

The dog's JAW clamps onto Frank's rear tire.

FRANK looks down —

BELOW: The BALLOT SACK — floating out. Weightless. Cruel.

FRANK ROLLS MID-AIR — reaching.

BELOW HIM: The BICYCLE splashes into the water. KERSPLASH.

The DOG follows. KERSPLOOSH.

THE SMAIL – submerging.

But then –

THE MECHANICAL ARM UNFOLDS, reaches up for the Ballot Sack.

Frank REACHES DOWN.

THE BALLOT SACK – hovering between.

FRANK'S HAND – inches away.

FRANK

Arrrrrgh!

Fingers... Reaching. Almost touching.

Then –

CUT TO

EXT. TOWN HALL – DAY

Hammering rain.

A dented Robotaxi pulls up outside.

Mungo and Councilor Ford step out – composed, smiling.

COUNCILOR FORD

(getting wet)

Behold the future.

They button their suits. Head up the steps.

INT. TOWN HALL – EVENING

A LARGE ORNATE WALL CLOCK – Fifteen seconds to seven.

ADJUDICATOR / CROWD

Fourteen... Thirteen... Twelve...

Nancy and Rory stand among the crowd of locals.

Every eye is fixed on the clock.

Onstage, Marie and Councilor Ford await the result.

Ford clears his throat. Pulls out his speech.

As the Adjudicator reaches for the slip-

The MAIN DOOR BURSTS OPEN.

Pam comes running in.

PAM  
*Hold the VOTE!!*

FRANK - soaking wet and covered in MUD - stumbles through the doorway, holding the BALLOT SACK.

The crowd erupts in cheers and applause.

Councilor Ford grabs the microphone. Points an accusing finger.

COUNCILOR FORD  
Hold it right there, Frank Townsend.

Frank stops breathless.

The crowd falls silent.

COUNCILOR FORD  
How do we know those votes haven't been tampered with?

FRANK  
The bag's sealed, Sir. I'm the only one who handled it.

COUNCILOR FORD  
(mocking)  
With all due respect, Frank - how can we be sure you haven't tampered with it?

Frank looks genuinely hurt by this remark.

FRANK  
Because, Sir, twenty years ago I took an oath...

Dripping wet and caked in mud, Frank straightens.

He raises his right hand.

FRANK

(proudly)

*That I, Frank Townsend, solemnly  
swear to support and defend the  
Constitution of the United States  
against all enemies, foreign and  
domestic.*

Rory and Nancy join in.

FRANK, RORY & NANCY

*That I will bear true faith and  
allegiance to the same. That I  
take this obligation freely,  
without any mental reservation or  
purpose of evasion.*

Rosie, Simon, Colette, and Mike push through the crowd.

Join them.

FRANK & POSTAL TEAM

And that I will well and faithfully  
discharge the duties of the office  
on which I am about to enter. So  
help me God.

MARGE

Amen!

Frank drops the SACK onto the table.

FRANK

Let's get counting.

Mungo and Councilor Ford exchange a concerned look.

Reporter Ernie moves in and snaps a picture.

FLASH!

INT. HOTEL ROOM — EVENING

Elias sits on the bed, head down, phone to his ear.

ELIAS

I appreciate you letting me know,  
Councilor. Was a pleasure.

He hangs up. Expression unreadable.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAY

FRONT PAGE OF THE SPRINGFIELD GAZETTE: "HOLDINGS WINS"

A newspaper rack. Marie's smiling face beams from the front page.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Customers line up at Nancy's checkout.

The manager stands beside the unused self-checkout machines.

MANAGER

Feel free to use the auto-checkout.  
(to old lady)  
It's very simple.

OLD LADY

I'll wait for Nancy.

EXT. BOWLING ALLEY - EVENING

A warm summer evening. The colorful neon glow of the BENNY'S BOWLS sign washes over the street.

ROSIE O/S

As you probably guessed, Frank  
can't be with us tonight.  
(a collective sigh)  
I know - twenty years of loyal  
service. Who'd have thought?

A faint whir of ELECTRIC MOTORS.

A SMAIL trundles along the sidewalk toward the Bayou.

ROSIE O/S

*So in Frank's absence, Rory has  
agreed to take over the formalities.  
Let's hear it for Rory the Roller.*

Cheers and whistles spill out from inside the bowling alley.

EXT. MARIE'S HOUSE - EVENING

MARIE, in worn clothes, kneels on the porch, carefully painting the railings.

Sound of wheels crunching on gravel.

BEEP BEEP.

A SMail trundles down her driveway.

MARIE  
(without looking up)  
Little late for a delivery.

FRANK (SMAIL)  
It's me, Frank.

MARIE  
You don't say.

The SMail stops beside the porch.

FRANK (SMAIL)  
Listen, about what you said?

MARIE  
Please, Frank. Not like this—

Marie rises to her feet. Heads inside.

FRANK  
Marie. Wait.

Marie stops. Turns.

FRANK is standing at the end of the driveway.

FRANK  
Just hear me out, okay.  
(beat)  
I've been carrying this thing  
around for so long... maybe it's  
time to show it.

A LOUD CLUNK

The SMail roof opens to reveal a SMALL CANDLE burning inside.  
The flame flickers – tiny but unwavering.

Marie sees it. Her heart gives a little.

MARIE  
Is this you saying hello?

FRANK  
I guess it is.

EXT. MARINA AND FUEL STOP – MORNING

A slow morning at the Marina.

Sam has his head down, servicing the GAS PUMP.

A dusty RED BUICK rolls in, eases up to the pump.

The driver climbs out – mid-forties, slick black hair.

SAM  
(without looking)  
Ten's the minimum. Otherwise, it  
ain't worth the receipt.

Sam looks up. Freezes.

SAM  
Dad?

ROBBY  
Hi, Sam.

EXT. NANCY'S HOUSE – MORNING

Frank rides up on a new USPS e-bike. He coasts to a stop outside Nancy's house and hops off.

From the bike's cargo box, he retrieves a LETTER addressed to NANCY GOODWIN. He's about to deliver it when he notices –

The same RED BUICK parked in the driveway.

Frank hesitates. He rummages through the cargo box and finds ANOTHER LETTER, addressed to ROBERT GOODWIN.

He slides BOTH LETTERS into the mailbox.

FRANK  
Welcome home, Robby.

EXT. VINNY'S HOUSE – MORNING

A REMOVAL TRUCK is parked in the road.

Frank walks down the driveway as –

A YOUNG MAN exits the house.

FRANK

Hey—  
(warm smile)  
Where you from?

NEW RESIDENT

Miami. Bought a unit out at  
Brentwater.

FRANK

I know it. My cousin worked there.  
You setting up a business?

NEW RESIDENT

I got some ideas.  
(gestures to house)  
My wife, Shelley — she's a teacher.  
She'll be at the high school.

FRANK

I know that place, too.

NEW RESIDENT

Sounds like you've lived here a  
long time.

FRANK

(proudly)  
My whole life.

Frank looks around — thoughtful.

FRANK

An old friend of mine lived here.  
(remembering)  
A good friend.

WOMAN O/S

VINNY! Would you get in here?

They both look to the house — but for very different reasons.

NEW RESIDENT

Well, nice meeting you.  
(offering hand)  
I'm Vinny.

Frank hesitates, stunned — then shakes Vinny's hand.

FRANK

Frank.  
(turning to leave)



FRANK (Cont'd)  
Say, you don't happen to like  
bowling, do you?

VINNY  
Me? I hate bowling.

FRANK  
Of course you do.  
(under his breath)  
Of course you do, Vinny.

Frank hops on his e-bike. Rings his RUSTY OLD BELL.

FRANK  
*Have a day, Vinny.*

CUT TO

INT. ELIAS' ROOM - HOTEL - DAY

Elias stands beside the bed, holding his jean jacket.

A gentle knock at the door.

MUNGO O/S  
Elias?... Time to go.

Elias slips on his jacket. It doesn't fit. Not the clothes,  
the man.

MUNGO O/S  
You're sure you don't want me to  
call for the Heli?

ELIAS  
No. We leave how we arrived. By  
train.

EXT. ROBOTAXI - TAXI RANK - DAY

Elias, Mungo, and Midge approach a parked Robotaxi. They  
wait for the doors to open, and when they don't, Elias peers  
in through the glass.

The dashboard's lit up like a Christmas tree.

ROBOTAXI (BRODIE'S VOICE)  
*"This Taxi needs recharging.  
Please use an alternative vehicle."*

Elias glances around, sees –  
BRODIE'S OLD TAXI parked up by the road.  
He straightens up, heads over.

EXT. BRODIE'S OLD TAXI – DAY

Brodie is reclined in the driver's seat, newspaper over his face.

Elias knocks on the window. Wakes him.

ELIAS  
Brodie?  
(humbled)  
Could you drive us to the station?

Brodie sits up, amused.

BRODIE  
I'd drive you all the way to  
California if it meant not seeing  
your ugly faces again.  
(gestures behind)  
Get in.

INT. BRODIE'S TAXI – DAY

Elias slides into the back, between Mungo and Midge.

Brodie shifts into drive. ENGINE RUMBLES. A loose panel rattles.

Outside, the town slips by – indifferent.

Then, Elias's breath hitches.

He tries to swallow it, but fails.

Shoulders shake as he folds forward, face in his hands, trying to contain it.

Brodie's eyes flick to the rearview.

He gently clicks off the radio.

Mungo and Midge look away, out their respective windows as –

The cab fills with stifled tears and the faint, relentless rattle: Just a guy coming apart in the back seat of a cab.

Finally, Elias drags a sleeve across his face. Looks up.

He finds Brodie in the mirror.

They hold a beat.

Brodie's eyes return to the road.

BRODIE

(softly)

We'll take the back way. Less  
traffic.

Elias nods, composes himself. The demystification is done.

Somewhere inside, the rattle continues. Unstoppable.

FADE OUT.

THE END