

ZERO TECH - SHORT

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INT. WORK PIT, THE BIN - DAY, YEARS EARLIER

We open with a close-up of MAHT, a dead woman in her late twenties. Picture focus comes in and out. She lies stiff on the ground, eyes dilated with grim agony on her face.

Off-screen, we hear muffled voices arguing. Two are dissuading one determined voice.

DEV
(to the others)
...all we got. Give it to me!

We hear the sound of an automated defibrillator. KTHONK! Maht jerks from the shock. Muffled voices start again, but this time quiet and curious. Maht's eyes constrict and shiver as they try to focus. After a tense moment, Maht finally gasps for air.

JES
Oh, thank god!

DEV
Give her a minute. Breathe, Maht.

CUT TO:

DEV is a man in his mid-twenties hovers over Maht lovingly. JES, a woman in her late-forties, is on the edge of tears. CAM is a man in his forties, also on the edge of tears but is giving Dev a death stare. Maht catches her breath.

DEV (CONT'D)
Breathe. Hey.

MAHT
Hey... Wha- what the hell happened?

DEV
I dunno. I think you died.

Beat.

MAHT
(sarcastic)
Rii...iight.

CAM
Dev, get it out of sight.

CITY GUARD
(offscreen)
What's going on!

The trio spin around to look out of frame. Cam diverts.

CAM

A serious liability that's what.
Over there! Look over there. It
nearly killed her— Oof!

CITY GUARD

(offscreen)

Outta the way, trink. What is that?

Jes looks at Dev with grave concern. Dev is still holding the paddles of a futuristic but makeshift Automatic Defibrillator. The CITY GUARD marches straight for Dev. Deep grief overcomes Dev's face as he looks at Maht, who is still coming to. Picture focus goes in and out.

OVER BLACK:

We hear the sound of handcuffs.

CITY GUARD (CONT'D)

You're under arrest for possession
of unnatural technology.

INT. - MAHT'S HOME - PRE-DAWN, PRESENT

A makeshift orb droid, ZERO, rests in a pile of spare parts. With limited humanized features, its eyes are closed. In her bed, Maht wakes up and gets ready for the day: minimal shower cleaning, bachelor wardrobe.

Spare parts are strewn out everywhere: Piled in corners, hung on walls, overflowing bins; Maht walks past a brewing machine and activates it. Then walks by and activates Zero, the homemade, bucket-of-bolts orb droid.

Zero flickers on, opens its eyes, and floats up and hovers toward the kitchen. With mechanical arms and hands, it begins washing dishes as Maht watches. She catches herself lost in thought and steps outside onto the deck, sipping her brew. As the light grows from the impending sunrise, a faint sound of crackling fire is heard.

INT. REFUSE PROCESSING, THE BIN - NIGHT, MONTHS EARLIER

FOOM! A smokey orange glow from a raging fire fills the air. Excited voices call for evacuation. Huge broken piles of technology scatter the Bin's Refuse Facility, half are on fire. Maht and Cam enter to find Jes and CONNOR, a fifties man, fighting flames with buckets and manual pumps.

MAHT
Boss! What are you doing?

CONNOR
Grab a bucket!

MAHT
Bitchwhat? The fire's doing our job
for us. We get a few days off.
C'mon.

JES
Bad tech got through!

MAHT
"Bad t—" Where? And how bad is
"bad"—

Maht notices a large piece of advanced tech in the middle of
the area. A faint, half-scratched hazard label on one side.

CONNOR
Like "half-the-city-destroyed" bad,
if the fire gets to it!

Maht looks at her friends fight the flames. It's hopeless.
Maht looks at Cam.

CAM
Maht. No.

Maht disappears between the flames.

CAM (CONT'D)
No! Dammit.

JES
Cam, grab a bucket!

CAM
(defeated)
Won't have to!

JES
Wha—?

Suddenly, gushing water sprays out from pipes overhead. Maht
emerges holding a makeshift hose. The group is able to put
out the fire with the help of the new water sources.

The flames are reduced to a smolder. The pipes deplete to a
trickle. Maht drops the hose. The group catch their breath.
Maht looks at an empty, orb-shaped chassis lying in one of
the untouched piles.

Beat.

CUT TO:

Jes finishes tossing the hose onto one of the piles. She looks at the group.

CAM

Looks too conspicuous. We should burn it.

CONNOR

Doesn't matter.

JES

They'll find out by tomorrow.
Figure out what we built to save
this shit hole...

Jes looks at the hazardous bad tech.

JES (CONT'D)

...but refuse to acknowledge why.

Group appears defeated. Maht grabs the chassis and walks off.

EXT. MAHT'S HOME, LANDSCAPE - DAWN, PRESENT DAY

The chassis matches Zero's as it continues to wash dishes. Maht snaps out of her daze. Snow drifts tower over the house as far as the eye can see. The peeking sunrise colors the horizon. Her coffee is finished.

INT. MAHT'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Back inside, Maht gestures to Zero, who floats off-screen. Maht puts on heavy outdoor gear. Hat, coat, boots... Nearly out the door, Maht stops, again catching herself lost in thought. She marches back to the bedroom.

CUT TO:

Maht opens a wooden drawer and plucks out a small tin box. She opens it revealing a LOCK OF HAIR, held together by a rubber band. Maht closes the wooden drawer, revealing a framed photo of Maht and Dev. Maht passes another photo on the wall. Maht and Dev pose happily together. It's clear they're very close. She pockets the tin box and exits.

EXT. - MAHT'S HOME, TRANSPORT RIG - CONTINUOUS

Maht's house is half-buried by a snowdrift. Next to it is a large transport rig, nearly as tall as the house. Zero is already in the rig.

INT. TRANSPORT RIG - CONTINUOUS

Zero looks unamused but that's just its default expression. Zero sees Maht approaching and looks at the interior center console. Some lights on Zero flash and the interior lights up with indicators and sensors winding up.

"Engine on". A clanky turbo electric-diesel rumbles to life. "Heater on". Heating coils glow and ducts begin to blow warm air into the cabin. "Music", but no music plays. Zero casually notices this. Maht hops in and buckles up.

"Headlights". Exterior, forward-running and fog lights flicker on. The rig pushes itself out of its own snowdrift with ease, revealing its true size.

"Music" light is on but no music is heard. Zero stares a moment, then punches the dash. Music ramps up, mid-song. Techno rock fills the air. Off they go.

EXT. SNOW DUNES LANDSCAPE - DAWN

The huge rig rumbles through, around and over the enormous snow drifts.

INT. TRANSPORT RIG - CONTINUOUS

The ride is rough, jolting and pitching like rough seas. It adds to the humor of the moment. Zero glances at Maht, then back to the snowy terrain ahead. The engine's intensity rises and falls with the uneven terrain. Zero keeps glancing at Maht, who tries to ignore it. Another jolt. Zero smacks into the dash, then floats back over the seat, staring at Maht. Maht struggles not to react. Zero rotates back to the endless snow. Another jolt. Zero is off-screen, then slowly glides back into frame... still staring at Maht.

MAHT

Wut.

ZERO

This is when you say it.

MAHT

No I don't.

ZERO

You have said it at this time the last one hundred and thirty-seven time--

MAHT

It'll work.

ZERO

--thirty eight times.

MAHT

I mean it. This is the last piece.

ZERO

You've said that one hundred twenty-two times.

MAHT

Well, I never thought I could get a DNAT.

ZERO

Unfamiliar.

MAHT

A "D-NAT". "DNA Translator".

Maht pulls out the tin box containing the lock of hair.

MAHT (CONT'D)

A device that scans DNA and translates it into code.

ZERO

You have described previous components in similar fashion and labeled them "last". Shall I update my definition for the word "last"?

MAHT

No.

ZERO

The last component was the "last" but this "D-NAT" is also "last"?

MAHT

The last piece was last but the D-NAT is last.

Zero just stares. Maht sighs.

MAHT (CONT'D)
He would sarcastically agree.

ZERO
I agree, sarcastically.

MAHT
No. Don't spell it out like that.

ZERO
S-A-R-C-A—

MAHT
DON'T spell it out.

Zero stares.

MAHT (CONT'D)
He would say it like,
"Rii...iight." Y'know... sarcastic.

ZERO
Rii...iight.

MAHT
Yea, like that.

Lights on Zero blink rapidly, then stop.

ZERO
Personality data saved.

MAHT
This really is the last piece. Then
we can get off this ice rock and—

ZERO
Rii...iight.

MAHT gives a disapproving look but relents.

MAHT
Okay, not bad.

ZERO
Personality trait confirmed.

THOOMP! Another hard bump catches Maht off guard. She hits
her mouth on the steering wheel.

MAHT
AWGH!

Maht touches her lip and looks at her finger to see a generous amount of blood on it. She grabs a rag and presses it to the wound on her face.

MAHT (CONT'D)

Great. Last thing I need is to draw attention.

EXT. CLIFF BASE, OUTSIDE STONE CITY - MORNING

The lumbering truck clears one last giant snow drift and approaches the base of a sheer cliff. All the truck's lights turn off. The engine cuts out. The once rumbling rig softly coasts to a stop at the base of the cliff.

INT. TRANSPORT RIG - CONTINUOUS

Maht puts on her winter gear: coat, gloves, hat, goggles... Zero waits patiently.

MAHT

Just another day at the office.
Nothing unusual. One more day's shift. Nothing different.

Maht shrugs at Zero.

ZERO

Fat lip.

Maht touches her lip again. It's swollen. Maht sighs.

MAHT

C'mon.

Maht pops through to the back of the rig which resembles a squared off, cluttered interior of a cargo plane. Maht routinely grabs a pair of skis and wraps a harness around herself. The harness is attached to a cart with an unusual hole in the cart's bed.

MAHT (CONT'D)

'Ere we go.

ZERO drifts into the cart and fits snugly in the hole and blends in seamlessly. It just looks like a cart, cobbled together with unwanted spare parts. Maht pops open the rig's tailgate.

EXT. CLIFF BASE, OUTSIDE STONE CITY - MORNING

Maht deploys a ramp from the back of the rig and skis down it, pulling the cart behind her. She comes out from behind the rig and circles the base of the cliff to reveal OLD STONE CITY.

EXT. MAIN GATE, STONE CITY - MORNING

The city is unabologetically old-tech. Torch sconces on stone walls, chain-rolled gate, thatch and wood roofing... The citizens look like they're from an ancient past. As if the entire city were frozen in time. Swords are sheathed at the hips of the guards. Some have firearms of various size, but very few.

Guards stand at the city entrance harassing random arrivals. GUARD ONE sees Maht.

MAHT
(anticipatory)
No, I'm not.

JORGE THE GUARD
You're late—

MAHT
Not late.

JORGE THE GUARD
Always late—

MAHT
Never am.

Maht walks past.

JORGE THE GUARD
Halt!

Maht stops, her eyes stuck mid-roll.

MAHT
We do this every time, Jorge.

JORGE THE GUARD
Name's not Jorge.

MAHT
(in sync)
—not Jorge.

A hefty staff of a large polearm is planted in front of Maht, the Guard's hand firmly gripping it.

JORGE THE GUARD
You smell of—

MAHT
"—smell of oil. Must be genetic."
You need new material.

JORGE THE GUARD
Today's gonna be a good day. Muh
second shift is at the Bin. I get
to watch you squirm.

Maht is unimpressed.

JORGE THE GUARD (CONT'D)
Today's the day, trink. Ima catch
you swiping somethin' and you'll
never see the light of day again—
Hey, y'got a fat lip. Did ya meet a
good man to settle down with?

MAHT
In three seconds I'm gonna
demonstrate how dumb you are, using
one simple math problem.

The Guard scoffs.

JORGE THE GUARD
You couldn't prove a salmon trout's
IQ much less prove—

MAHT
Three oxen.

Maht nods past Jorge. A merchant with TWO hairy beasts approaches the gate entrance. Two, not three. Jorge marches at the merchant.

JORGE THE GUARD
Oi! Two beasts per visitor!

The merchant furrows his brow in confusion. Reveal Maht has been standing next to a sign stating "One beast per visitor".

MAHT
One beast.

JORGE THE GUARD
One beast per visitor. You'll have
to stable the other two!

MAHT
 (calmly)
 Three... two...

JORGE THE GUARD
 One! Grmph! Off your cart,
 outsider! Register your goods!

Jorge trails off as Maht continues through the city, pulling her cart behind her.

EXT. STONE CITY - MORNING

Maht strolls in the shadows of tall stone structures, lit by torch sconces in the early morning light. All around, ancient technology dominates Stone City, from pulleys to door hinges. Citizens dress in handmade clothes. A sign reads "ZERO TECH - Report all technology immediately". A man sheepishly puts his eyeglasses in his pocket. A merchant sneers at Maht's dirty clothes and makeshift cart. Maht navigates the street market, with guards posted all around.

MARKET GUARD
 Oi! You're under arrest!

Maht spins round as a market guard bumps past her.

MARKET GUARD (CONT'D)
 (gleeful)
 Little birdie told us you got tech
 on your person!

A scared citizen, MERV, yelps. His expression is fearful. He locks eyes with Maht. An alley is seen behind Merv.

CUT TO:

EXT. STONE CITY - YEARS AGO

In the alley in the background, Merv's facial expression is sly. He's explaining the defibrillator to Dev.

MERV
 It takes a second to charge. This
 tells you when it's ready.

Dev bags the device.

DEV
 Thanks, Merv.

MERV

Anytime, Dev. Stay sneaky. Maht.

Merv acknowledges Maht and exits, content and confident. Maht and Dev walk away in the opposite direction.

MAHT

This gets us a down payment.

DEV

Not this one. Leveraging it for something better.

MAHT

Off-world is better. This gets us there and you know it.

DEV

I got a link in the chain that's better.

MAHT

"Link"...

DEV

Let's not go 'round this again.

MAHT

You, me, Jess, Cam, Connor... our links in the chain. This one gets us the down payment off this rock, the next one gets them closer to the same.

DEV

This one is bigger than off-world, Maht. It could save one of us someday.

MAHT

Save the chain, you mean.

DEV

Which links to us!

MAHT

The underground tech chain lives on, Dev! Whether we're here, as links, or not.

Dev huffs. Maht takes a victory lap.

DEV

It's a—

MAHT
Delicate chain. I know.

DEV
We're one wrong step away from
arrest.

MAHT
Or death. I know.

DEV
They're sniffing us out.

MAHT
Gotta be careful.

DEV
You gotta be careful.

MAHT
I know.

DEV
Right.

The pair start walking out of the alley.

MAHT
You know, the five of us off this
rock, don't have to be so careful
anymore.

DEV
Right.

MAHT
Just have to listen to the captain.

DEV
Ri- Which is me... right?

Maht looks at Dev. Dev feels her stare.

DEV (CONT'D)
Rii...iight.

EXT. STONE CITY - PRESENT DAY, MORNING

The alley is small behind and off Merv's shoulder. Merv's
expression is that of panic.

MARKET GUARD

I been waiting for this day, trink!
An' your friends are next.

The Market Guard manhandles Merv with no regard for injury. As Merv is forced away, he slips a small piece of tech into Maht's hand. Maht knowingly pockets it and cleverly blends into the background.

Merv is aggressively taken away. Onlookers dissipate back to their routine day. Maht looks into her cart. Zero rotates to hide his mechanical eye, blending into the cart's structure.

EXT. THE BIN, STONE CITY - MORNING

Maht leans against a stone wall, glancing over her shoulder with her hand on a stone that is out of place, exposing an empty space. She hides the tech in the hole, puts the stone back in place, and rejoins other workers walking to the BIN, a towering refuse facility rising into the early morning sky.

INT. LABOR PROCESSING, THE BIN - MORNING

Maht parks her cart next to others, she scowls and closes Zero's eye who's still hidden in the cart. Zero rotates to conceal the eye and Maht joins the processing line to clock in. A man moves in line behind her. It's Cam.

CAM

Normal day today, Maht.

Maht keeps her eyes forward.

MAHT

Of course. Always is.

CAM

I'm serious. It's a normal day
today. The heat's too high.

Maht eyes a small cluster of guards in the distance.

MAHT

They're nothing. Today's easy.

The pair step forward as the line moves.

CAM

Not easy, Maht. Normal.

MAHT

Just the DNAT today, Cam. Nothing else. Then, everything else: normal. I promise.

CAM

It's not happening.

MAHT

You won't even know when I lift it. No one will.

CAM

No. It's not happening.

Maht turns to Cam.

MAHT

What do you—

Cam points with his eyes. Above ground level, a catwalk leads to an office perched above the work pit. The office is surrounded by guards. Through the office window, two figures can be seen. One standing, the other sitting in a submissive posture.

MAHT (CONT'D)

They nabbed Merv in the market. When you see him, tell him I put his hydracoil—

CAM coughs loudly. Cam elbows Maht forward

CAM

(feigning)

Keep the line moving!

A guard lumbers closely past them. Maht looks around and finally registers the excess number of guards. Maht's eyes squint with confusion.

CAM (CONT'D)

(low)

Take the hint, Maht: Heat's. too. High.

JES

(low)

I think we're done, ladies.

Jes shuffles along in front of Maht and Cam. She quietly blows her words over her shoulder.

JES (CONT'D)
They're shutting us down.

CAM
I dunno about that. It'll blow over.

JES
They passed a new law. They'll be allowing tech—

MAHT & CAM
What!

JES
Shutthefuckup. They're allowing tech to destroy tech. Y'know, automate the whole operation.

CAM
The supply chain is done then.

JES
Maybe we can work for the Phoenix. Heard they landed couple days ago. We'll all be looking for new lives tomorrow.

MAHT
They can't do that.

Jes scoffs.

MAHT (CONT'D)
I just need the DNAT and I'm done. Really done this time.

Cam gently puts a hand on Maht's shoulder. Jes turns around with sympathetic eyes.

JES
Listen, I know you miss him. We all miss him so much. You got so far. You got Zero.

CAM
Zero sounds just like Dev.

MAHT
But not exactly like him.

CAM
Practically acts like him, too.

MAHT

But not exactly like him.

JES

Maht, you built something great.
Something that learns how to be
like him more and more each day.

MAHT

The DNAT will finish the job.

CAM

You can finish the job without it.

MAHT

But it won't have his DNA! It won't
be him. Just a round metal
marionette that kinda acts like him
but isn't him. I'm getting the
DNAT.

Maht looks up and down the clock-in line in futile disgust.

JES

It's too risky right now.

CAM

We'll get it later, plan out-

Maht darts away, just as they had reached the front of the line. Jes clocks in and turns to watch Maht make her way to the office perched on the catwalk. Cam clocks in and joins Jes to look on. They have worried looks on their faces.

EXT. CATWALK, THE BIN - CONTINUOUS

Guards eye Maht as she approaches the office entrance.

INT. CATWALK OFFICE, THE BIN - CONTINUOUS

Maht bursts through the door.

CONNOR

Back to the floor-

MAHT

I need it!

Connor glares at Maht in shock. Three officers are in the office with him, two in the back. Maht notices them but doesn't skip a beat.

MAHT (CONT'D)
The work, boss. I need the work.

OFFICER
Excuse me—

MAHT
I am close to getting out of this
hell hole but not before...

The officer steps forward. Maht looks at Connor's desk.
Peeking out under a box of papers is an image of Dev, his
arms around Connor and Maht.

MAHT (CONT'D)
I need just one more—

CONNOR
(gritted teeth)
Back to the floor, Maht. I'm busy.

OFFICER
"One more" what?

Maht rises up in the officer's face.

MAHT
Is it true?

The Officer calmly waits, studying Maht's face.

MAHT (CONT'D)
You shutting us down?

OFFICER
Where did you hear this?

Maht glares at the officer. The officer stares past Maht.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
(to Connor)
Call for an all-hands.

The officer refocuses on Maht and gestures to a couch.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
(to Maht)
Please take a seat.

Maht marches out of the office.

EXT. CATWALK, THE BIN - CONTINUOUS

Connor exits the office next and calls out for an all-hands announcement. The Officer follows, his eyes glued to Maht as she charges down, back to the floor.

INT. WORK PIT, THE BIN - CONTINUOUS

Jes and Cam crowd in with other workers as Connor starts his announcement.

MAHT
(heedless, off-screen)
Where is it?

Maht walks up from behind them.

JES
Keep it down—

MAHT
You're right, Jes. They're shutting us down. Tell me where.

JES
Maht. No link in the supply chain is aware of the other. It's called the black market for a reason.

MAHT
It's over, Jes!

This is loud enough to interrupt Connor. Everyone around the trio look at them. Connor clears his throat and continues. Maht grabs Cam to face her.

MAHT (CONT'D)
This place is about to be turned upside down. They'll find the DNAT—

JES
Sshh!

CAM
You know the supply chain is sec—

MAHT
Fuck the supply chain! Cam, you know how much this means to me!

CAM
I'm not your drop! Connor is—

MAHT
He's busy!

Connor continues to address the crowd in the background. He alludes to change. Cam looks anguished.

JES
Cam.

CAM
I don't know for sure. Maybe Dev's old locker.

Immediately, Maht pushes her way through the crowd. Cam looks at Jes, who's looking past Cam, at someone off-screen.

PAN TO:

In the crowd, the Officer stands a short distance away, looking at Jes and Cam.

CONNOR
...have the unfortunate duty to inform you the facility has closed.

INT. CREW QUARTERS HALLWAY, THE BIN - CONTINUOUS

Groans are heard from the distant crowd as Connor recites further protocols. Maht sees guards already clearing equipment out of rooms, carelessly tossing tables, chairs, and bins into the hallway, which leads to the lockers.

FACILITY GUARD
Keep an order. Empty everything out. Record all contraband.

Maht flies past the Facility Guard, who turns in Maht's direction.

FACILITY GUARD (CONT'D)
The day of reckoning is here.

Guards reveal false bottoms and hidden compartments to find little trinkets: switches, wires, and circuit boards.

INT. LOCKER ROOM, THE BIN - CONTINUOUS

Guards are prying open lockers and sorting items. Maht slows her pace to a nonchalant march. She reaches locker 143 but there are too many guards around. She moves past the locker to an exit at the far corner.

With hands in her pockets, Maht steps just outside the doorway, leans against the adjacent wall, and pulls out two bolts. She tosses each one in quick succession. They clink down the hallway simulating quick footsteps.

MAHT
(imitating a guard)
We got a runner!

One by one, the guards quickly empty the locker room to chase the imaginary fugitive. Maht rolls her eyes and slides back into the locker room.

CUT TO:

Maht bangs on locker 143. It opens and she quickly discards the false back, revealing a large fist-sized device. Maht snatches it and closes the locker door, revealing Jorge the Guard. Maht spots him. Jorge smiles.

INT. CATWALK OFFICE, THE BIN - CONTINUOUS

Jes, Cam, and Connor are sitting on a beat-up couch opposite Connor's desk. The Officer is in an adjacent chair.

OFFICER
The first one to tell me gets a
ticket off-planet.

The trio stare at nothing in particular.

JES
You think it's that easy? Even if
we believe you, others get strung
up to die.

OFFICER
You don't know that.

Jes sighs.

CONNOR
I'll tell you one thing.

Everyone looks at Connor.

CONNOR (CONT'D)
It ain't no act of greed. Hell, it
ain't even no act of survival.

The Officer waits.

CUT TO:

As Connor talks, Maht is chased by—and fights—Jorge.

CONNOR (CONT'D)
 'Bout a year ago, half this city
 nearly blew to pieces. Some bad
 tech got through screening.

Jorge bursts through obstacles thrown by Maht.

CONNOR (CONT'D)
 Got mixed up in the piles. Piles
 caught fire. The blaze woulda
 burned down just The Bin here. No
 real loss to the city's precious
 way of life.

Jorge catches Maht and breaks his wooden baton over her arm.
 They get into a blood-spilling fight. Workers notice.

CONNOR (CONT'D)
 But had the fire got to the bad
 tech...

Guards notice. Everyone readies themselves.

CONNOR (CONT'D)
 ...whole city woulda burned.

A riot breaks out in the auxiliary areas of The Bin.

CONNOR (CONT'D)
 Lotsa mothers cryin' for their
 dead. But it never came to that.

CUT TO:

In Connor's office, the group listens. Guards in the
 background hurry offscreen (to help quell the riot).

CONNOR (CONT'D)
 Fire was stopped, by Maht. Used
 tech to stop it.

The officer holds his hand up.

OFFICER
 You owe her. I get it—

CONNOR
 I ain't finished.

Cam and Jes nod approvingly.

CONNOR (CONT'D)
 Long while b'fore all that, Maht's
 life was saved...

Connor holds up his picture of Dev.

CONNOR (CONT'D)
 ...by him, by using tech...

CUT TO:

In the thick of the riot, Maht and Jorge are on the ground,
 both straining to grab the DNAT. Past the device is a broken
 picture frame. The picture is of Dev. He's smiling happily.

CUT TO:

CONNOR (CONT'D)
 ...then he was killed—no, murdered—
 by you lot: possession of tech.

OFFICER
 I only arrived two days ago.

CONNOR
 Even so, no one owes nothin' to
 nobody living.

Beat.

JES
 You parked here day before last?

OFFICER
 That's right.

Jes thinks a moment. Cam and Connor fire prohibitive looks at
 her. Jes silently struggles in thought, then relents.

JES
 This ain't no one man show—

CAM & CONNOR
 Jes, no.

JES
 You think I got a chance out there
 after today?! We got a shot. I'm
 takin' it!

CUT TO:

Still on the ground, Maht and Jorge tussle. Jorge focuses
 intensely on the DNAT, which is just out of reach.

Maht spots Jorge's baton, now splintered, and snatches it. She jabs it through his ribs. Jorge lets out a gasping cry and doubles over. Maht snatches up the DNAT and hobbles offscreen.

INT. LABOR PROCESSING, THE BIN - MORNING

Maht, injured and weakened, labors to reach her cart. She finds Zero, still smuggled inside. She connects the DNAT device to Zero, and strains as she reaches into her pocket to retrieve Dev's lock of hair. She places it in the DNAT's small drawer, closes it, and presses a button. Lights flicker on both the DNAT and Zero. She disconnects the DNAT, and Zero slowly rotates until an eye is exposed. The metal eyelid twitches open.

MAHT

Dev?

The aperture in Zero's eye adjusts as the eyelid blinks rapidly and then stops. The eye's lens searches its surroundings until it finds Maht, who smiles in anticipation. But her smile turns to pain as a sound of a blade is heard as it twists through flesh. Jorge, hunched and gasping for air, stands behind Maht and pulls his blade out of her torso. Maht's eyes roll back and she slides down the side of her cart to the floor, dead. Jorge stands victorious over her lifeless body, but workers come round the corner. They process what they see and Jorge is quickly overpowered.

INT. OFFICE CATWALK, THE BIN - TIME LAPSE

The riot fades into workers surrendering, which fades into body retrieval. From a distance, Maht's body is bagged and carried away. The carts go unnoticed as other heavy equipment is carried out, rolled out, and tossed out. The time of day shifts with the phases of activity. The carts go untouched as someone mentions finishing tomorrow.

INT. PROCESSING, THE BIN, STONE CITY - NIGHT

The Bin sits empty and dark. No sounds are heard except for a wintery breeze outside. Zero's eye slowly opens just enough for the lens to search its surroundings. The bed of the cart shifts open, Zero emerges, and peeks over the side. On the floor is a sizable blood stain where Maht's body fell. Nearby is another blood stain, scattered by boot prints, where Jorge was mobbed by workers. Zero stares for a moment.

EXT. STONE CITY - CONTINUOUS

The street market lies empty. Zero traverses through the shadows and glides past the "Zero Tech" poster.

EXT. MAIN GATE, STONE CITY - CONTINUOUS

Two guards lazily flank the city's entrance. Staying just out of the light, Zero opens its hand to reveal a few nuts and bolts. Zero tosses them. The sound half resembles departing footsteps. The gullible guards leave and Zero coasts out.

EXT. CLIFF BASE, OUTSIDE STONE CITY - NIGHT

Zero approaches Maht's truck, still parked parallel to the cliff base. Snow drifts are halfway up the truck's wheels.

INT. CAB, MAHT'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Zero is in the passenger seat, staring through the dash. He comes out of deep thought and looks at the empty driver's seat. Zero starts to float toward it but stops. Lying on the driver's seat is Maht's blood-stained rag. Zero stares at it a moment. His eyes widen, looks up and around, searching.

Zero begins to rattle. A compartment door on his chassis opens, revealing the DNAT. Zero puts the blood-stained rag into the DNAT's small drawer and closes it, then looks around again in a circle. Zero's eyes stop on the radio console. He reaches around to connect the DNAT to the cab's console. Lights blink on the DNAT and the console, then stop.

Nothing happens.

Zero starts the engine. The truck rumbles to life. The console lights up. Zero fiddles with buttons and knobs. Sounds from the console go in and out with intermittent static until finally Zero slaps the side of it. Music faintly plays but fades out. Zero's eyes widen. Static, but then...

MAHT
(the rig's console)
Told you it'd work.

Zero recognizes Maht's voice. Then, without missing a beat...

ZERO
Rii...iight.

EXT. SNOW DUNES LANDSCAPE - CONTINUOUS

Maht's truck rumbles over snow drifts toward the horizon. We hear banter as they tease each other. Eventually, they say...

MAHT

What the hell happened?

ZERO

I dunno. I think you died.

Banter between the two continue as the rig disappears and reappears over the snow dunes.

PAN TO:

We slowly drop down to see the Officer standing atop a snow drift in the foreground. He watches the rig drive into the horizon.

THE END