

"goldlovers"

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Disclaimer:

All characters appearing in this work are fictitious. Any resemblance to real persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

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A broken world is healed by [the] broken Christ on a broken tree.

—Rodger Lowther, *The Broken Leaf*

(Italics is Japanese.)

INT. UNIVERSITY GYM LOCKERS - TOKYO - DAY

SISU (mid-thirties) hunches downcast in the corner, the airy pitiableness of a door-to-door salesman on his shoulders.

Sisu sports a Sea-Monkeys jersey, paper number attached.

OFFICIATOR (O.S.)

Team Sea-Monkeys, you have three minutes before the start of your last trial. Please assemble at the start of the maze. If you cannot assemble on time, you will be disqualified.

A TRANSLATOR repeats in English over the LOUD SPEAKERS.

EITO (mid-thirties) enters.

EITO

Hey, Sisu! What's going on?

Eito approaches.

SISU

I... I... I...

EITO

Spit it up! We're on right now!

SISU

I have a confession...

EITO

We don't have time, Sisu!

SISU

I owe the Inagawa-kai clan and I'm three weeks past due!

EITO

Which one?

SISU

Hachiro!

EITO

*Why on earth would you borrow from
the devil?*

SISU

Oh, I'm gonna be hacked to death!

EITO

Or hammered.

SISU

*(palms face)
Aaaaah!*

EITO

*Sisu... you never know... you might
find him in a good mood. And he'll
just lop off a finger.*

Sisu SOBS.

EITO (CONT'D)

How much are we talking about?

Sisu springs off the bench into a super beg position.

SISU

*10 MILLION YEN! Please, please,
please, I beg you! Give me the
portion of your prize earnings so I
can pay off the debt! I need your
portion and my portion to cover it!
PLEASE, Eito, I fear for my life!*

EITO

Sisu, I...

SISU

*We can make a deal! Win or lose,
you have my next ten commissions.
You close the sell and you take the
entire commission for yourself!
It's FAIR, PLEASE!*

EITO

How will you live?

SISU

*The breadline beats a hatchet over
the head!... Please, friend!*

EITO

Ok. It's a deal...

SISU
Arigato, my dear friend, arigato!

EITO
Now, let's hurry it up! Come on!
 (drags Sisu up)

INT. UNIVERSITY GYM - TOKYO - DAY

Eito and Sisu weave through Spectators to the start point.

OFFICIATOR (O.S.)
Two minutes remain for Team Sea-Monkeys!

Translator repeats in English.

Sisu and Eito gather with their teammates.

A group of Spectators CLAMOR.

SEA-MONKEY Jersey #17 (early-twenties) dabs a double-sided roll of tape against the four wheels of the micromouse.

SEA-MONKEY Jersey #21 (early-twenties) waits.

SEA-MONKEY #17
 (to Officials)
We're all here!

CHIEF OFFICIAL
Who's setting the trigger?

SISU
Let me do it. What do we need?

SEA-MONKEY #21
Anything under a 7.27 drops our average. For the win.

SISU
Ok... I'm ready.

OFFICIATOR (O.S.)
Team Sea-Monkeys readies for their final run and the final and deciding time trial of this year's micromouse competition.

Translator repeats.

Sea-monkey #17 hands Sisu the micromouse.

OFFICIATOR (CONT'D)

*The timer is still commencing. Team
Sea-Monkeys you have 30 seconds!*

Translator continues.

CLOSE UP - Countdown

27...26...25...

Sisu readies to the starting square and clicks the rear switch of the micromouse.

Sisu leans in.

19... 18... 17...

He sets the micromouse on the starting square.

16... 15... 14...

A moment... Sisu INHALES.

13... 12... 11... 10...

The micromouse zips straight, then diagonally, then zigzag, then diagonally and zigzag, then straight, all within eight seconds, to the center finishing area.

The timer stops at 7.20 on the Timer Screen.

The Spectators AH and CLAP.

OFFICIATOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)

*Just in time! 7.20 on the dot! With
the time trials tallied, Team Sea-
Monkeys easily take home the win
and this year's grand prize of 20
million yen!*

LATER - AGAINST WALL

The Sea-Monkeys bask with the Golden Cheese Trophy.

A few staggered photos.

LATER - NEAR PRIZE TABLE

Cash stacked in a display case on the prize table.

EVENT HELP

It's for display purposes only.

SISU
Is it not real cash?

EVENT HELP
*Hai, but we divvy the money and
send a check two weeks from now.*

SISU
(whines)
But I want it now!

EVENT HELP
The money's for show...

SISU
*Listen, I need the money we won!
Now, get somebody! I want my money!*

EVENT HELP
...Let me ask. Please, wait.

MOMENTS LATER - NEAR PRIZE TABLE

CHIEF OFFICIAL
(approaches)
We can do that.

EITO
And you can add my winnings to his.

CHIEF OFFICIAL
*So you want half now? Is that ok
with everyone?*

The other two Sea-Monkeys nod in agreement.

CHIEF OFFICIAL (CONT'D)
(to Event Help)
Go on. 10 million. Count it out.

MOMENTS LATER

The Event Help opens the casement.

He begins to wrap stacks of cash with butcher paper and pack them into a maroon leather carrying bag.

INT. RESTAURANT ROOM - NIGHT

The Sea-Monkeys celebrate.

EITO
Wag. The. Dog!

SEA-MONKEYS IN UNISON
Wag-the-dog!

The Sea-Monkeys saki bomb.

SISU
Ever many arigatos, my friend!

EITO
Friend?

Sisu's grin widen, ear to ear.

SISU
Friend? We were brothers from the beginning!

EITO
Hai, brothers!... But I just definitively saved your life. I think I want a more appropriate title than brother.

SISU
There's nothing closer than a brother.

SEA-MONKEY #17
Not true. There is one who sticks closer than a brother.

EITO
Who's that?

SEA-MONKEY #17
A dog! Man's best friend!

SEA-MONKEYS IN UNISON
Wag the dog! Wag the dog!

SISU
Oh! Let me call Hachiro!

To the side, Sisu calls Hatchet.

EITO
WAG THE DOG!

Eito lifts for a saki bomb.

INT. NIGHTCLUB BACKROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE UP - An Irezumi of a Stylized Japanese Tiger Sprawled Across a Body Suit Back

HACHIRO or HATCHET/HAMMER (early-thirties) considers a poker hand with a nub from yubitsume, self-amputation of a pinkie.

A harem of Eastern European women on couches in the b.g..

Youthful, with a short black crewcut, Hatchet presses the speaker of his lit-up phone.

His slim athletic build resembles an extreme sports enthusiast of motocross or parkour.

PHONE CALL - RESTAURANT ROOM/NIGHTCLUB BACKROOM

SISU

Ah! Hachiro? Moshi Moshi.

HATCHET

*I hope this is pressing little one.
I'm down two and in no mood.*

SISU

Hai, Hai. I just wanted to say:

In the b.g.: *"Wag-the-dog!"*

SISU (CONT'D)

*I have your money! I can drop it
off tonight if you want?*

HATCHET

Bring it to my feet.

Sisu plugs his ear to the b.g. LAUGHTER.

SISU

...Hatchet?

INT. NIGHTCLUB BACKROOM - NIGHT

HATCHET

*I said I didn't forget. Drop it off
at the nightclub by tomorrow
afternoon. Leave it with Yuto.*

SISU (O.S.)

Ok. Arigato, Hatchet, I—

Hatchet hangs up.

From off a stool, O-NAMI (mid-thirties), a ponytailed shatei, deserts his drink and approaches the exit.

HATCHET

Why haven't you left already?

O-NAMI

(stops)

How am I suppose to answer that?

HATCHET

I don't know. How do you usually get words from out of that big, dumb mouth of yours?... Make sure she's the one Nomura wants.

O-NAMI

I'm going right now.
(doesn't move)

HATCHET

(folds)
...GO! We leave at the hour.

EXT. AVENUE - NIGHT

Sisu swings the cash bag, locking shoulder with the group.

SEA-MONKEYS IN UNISON

(singing)

Wag the dog! Wag the dog! They tried and tried, we died and died, now the tail wags the dog!

LATER - NEAR SUBWAY STATION ENTRANCE

Only Eito and Sisu remain.

EITO & SISU IN UNISON

(sing)

Wag the dog!

They stop. Abrupt.

EITO

Triumphant memories are the best kept secret!

SISU

Meaning?

EITO
*Meaning? Meaning is what you get
 when you think of memories!*

SISU
*No, I meant, what is so secret
 about memories?*

EITO
I suppose, all memory is elusive.

SISU
*And the future... is just a past
 memory lived in the present moment.*

EITO
Hai, life's—but a nostalgic dream.

EITO sways.

EITO (CONT'D)
When did we become philosophers?

Sisu triple blinks.

SISU
I'm wasted.

Eito LAUGHS.

EITO
Goodbye, my friend!

SISU
Goodbye, my brother!

Sisu staggers down the stairs.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - DAY

Very empty line, aside from one HOMELESS MAN (late-fifties).

Sisu eyes the shady Figure with contempt.

Sisu grips his bag and moves down the aisle.

Sisu sits and scoots to the window.

The Homeless Man shuffles toward the tense Sisu.

SISU
Why are you following me?

KINJIRO

*My name's Kinjiro. I was hoping for
some ginjiro... If you'd be so kind
and generous?*

SISU

*Stay away! I don't have
anything!... Go on! Leave me alone!*

Kinjiro leaves to the end.

Kinjiro looks back at Sisu and stares.

Sisu tries to ignore his gaze.

Kinjiro eventually exits.

Sisu turns to the hazy window.

LATER

Sisu snuggles up with the bag, blinks slow, then heavy.

LATER

Sisu begins to doze off.

LATER

Sisu is out—SNORES.

LATER - 3AM

An ELDER CLEANER nudges Sisu awake.

ELDER CLEANER

You've made two full go-arounds.

SISU

...Where's my bag?

ELDER CLEANER

I don't know.

SISU

The bag! My bag that I had!

ELDER CLEANER

I never saw you with one.

SISU

NO!

Sisu rushes to search.

Sisu stops as it dawns on him.

SISU (CONT'D)

*The homeless man! The man here!
Where is he!*

ELDER CLEANER

I don't know.

SISU

*The homeless man, Kinjiro! Where
did he go?*

ELDER CLEANER

We have many that come and go.

SISU

The one that was just here!

ELDER CLEANER

What did he look like?

Sisu stares agape.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - DAWN

Sisu shambles along, teary-eyed.

LATER - STAIRS

Sisu climbs, his wet face joins the rain.

INT. ART EXHIBIT - TOKYO - NIGHT

CLOSE UP - Lime, Gold, and Black Painting

SAM "YARI" MILLER (early-thirties) from "crashingMNT," "Sandpiper," and "Kick. Like. All. Heck." splashes paint onto the abstract painting with aping brushstrokes.

A female Companion spectates.

Miller perceives himself an ordinary, restless soul, stuck with the curious and capricious mind of a wanderlust-er.

ART DEALER (O.S.)
*Irreverent, cartoonish, commercial,
 avant-garde fluff... lacking all
 awareness of substance and
 sustenance... 99.9% of which is a
 scam to the entire industry.*

APPRAISER (O.S.)
*How are you always so critical of
 every new artist?*

ART DEALER (forties) and APPRAISER (sixties) stand.

Miller paints in the b.g..

ART DEALER
*When it makes me question what art
 is, then it has failed to
 demonstrate it.*

Miller scratches his face, considers his next touches.

SECURITY CAM POV - ART EXHIBIT

APPRAISER (O.S.)
*I recently evaluated a one-of-a-
 kind piece where the painter added
 different kinds of livestock blood
 to the oils. Sold for two hundred
 and twenty million.*

ART DEALER (O.S.)
*Expensive firewood. He should've
 used his own blood.*

Miller places the paintbrush in the paint can and stands back
 with his Companion, fixated.

APPRAISER
*I wonder if my American
 entertainment has similar tastes?*

ART DEALER
He's not truly stupid, is he?

APPRAISER
There he is.

ART DEALER
*What was the point of hiring him
 again?*

APPRAISER

*He doesn't understand a word I say.
I like to laugh now and then. Yari!*

Appraiser and Art Dealer walk to Miller and his Companion.

APPRAISER (CONT'D)

Yari, this is Mr. Onie, my friend
and colleague.

Miller bows and Mr. Onie nods.

APPRAISER (CONT'D)

What's your opinion of the artwork?

MILLER

(gazes at the painting)
I like it. It's playful,
interactive... yet challenging...
like a thoughtful... game of sorts.

The Men nod.

MILLER (CONT'D)

The best kind of art leaves the
viewer guessing, What next?

MR. ONIE

Dimwit indeed.

MILLER

What did he say?

APPRAISER

He couldn't agree more with you.
(to Mr. Onie)
He couldn't agree more with you.

The Men CHUCKLE.

MR. ONIE

He be polite. I actually challenge
you... critical eye. Play, hai.
Challenge, hai. But why you say...
inter-active?
(to Appraiser)
Interactive?

APPRAISER

Hai.

MILLER

I mean it does what it does.

APPRAISER
It does what it does.

MR. ONIE
I disagree. It is merely dynamic.

APPRAISER
He says, It isn't interactive but
that it is dynamic.

MILLER
Agree to disagree...

Miller extends his hand.

Mr. Onie spots paint on Miller's hand and signals to Miller.

MILLER (CONT'D)
Ah.

Miller takes a handkerchief out and begins to wipe.

APPRAISER
Oh, you...

Appraiser gestures to his own face and points.

MILLER
Ah.

Mr. Onie's eyes wander and spots the paint cans.

Mr. Onie steps toward the painting.

Appraiser notices.

APPRAISER
You weren't touching the paints,
were you, Yari?

MILLER
Must've rubbed off...

APPRAISER
Those paints and paintbrushes are
part of the exhibit.

MILLER
I know.

APPRAISER
They are for display purposes only!

MR. ONIE

I want someone over here—now!

APPRAISER

The artist's signature style is to display the tools he used to create his pieces.

MR. ONIE

*How could you possibly think...?
(to Appraiser)
This one's already been sold!*

APPRAISER

*(apologetic bow)
I forgot, he's not familiar with these kinds of things.*

Two Security Guards arrive.

MR. ONIE

It 7-zero-zero thou-sand painting.

MILLER

Yen or dollars?

MR. ONIE

Dorras!

MILLER

I thought it was. Participatory.

MR. ONIE

Pa-tic-apa!... Sign say: "DO NOT TOUCH!"

CLOSE UP - DO NOT TOUCH Sign In Kanji

MILLER

I don't read kanji.

CLOSE UP - DO NOT TOUCH Sign In English Below

MR. ONIE

In English!

MILLER

I thought that was the title.

MR. ONIE

You're an utter FOOL.

Mr. Onie inhales, exhales...

MR. ONIE (CONT'D)
We'll work out a compensation plan.

APPRAISER
 He's saying you'll have to work out
 a payment plan.

Miller nods... Long moment—

Millers jots to a sprint down the gallery.

The Security Guards pursue.

Mr. Onie seethes as the Appraiser wades close to the canvas.

APPRAISER (CONT'D)
Actually looks...

Mr. Onie shoots Appraiser a death stare.

APPRAISER (CONT'D)
 (shrugs)
...Different.

INT. GALLERY - NIGHT

Miller BANGS into the kitchen.

The Security Guards pursue.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Miller flies through the line and out a door into an alley.

EXT. ALLEY (RAINING) - NIGHT

Miller runs down the alley onto a street.

The Security Guards chase.

EXT. STREET (RAINING) - NIGHT

Miller crosses the street and turns down another alley.

EXT. AKASEN DISTRICT (RAINING) - NIGHT

Miller spills onto the narrow street and continues to evade.

Miller bumps past the trench-coated KAZUTOSHI (fifties) walking in the opposite direction.

A few paces after, the Security Guards run past Kazutoshi.

Kazutoshi's face seems weathered by the rain as he pays zero attention to the chase in the b.g..

Kazutoshi continues past lanterned, red-line storefronts.

Kazutoshi's meek stature moves economically.

 OLDER LADY
 (from doorway)
 *KAZUTOSHI! Sweetheart, where have
 you been?*

Kazutoshi walks past, unfazed.

A Gowned Woman under an awning.

 GOWNED WOMAN
 Hello, Kaz.

Kazutoshi ignores her and continues.

He reaches a water brothel on the corner.

INT. SOAPLAND LOBBY - NIGHT

Kazutoshi enters.

The HOSTESS (twenties) bows.

 HOSTESS
 *Good evening, Mr. Kazutoshi. Would
 you like to speak with Lady Akai?*

LADY AKAI (late-forties) enters.

 LADY AKAI
 Inagawa-kai is here!

 KAZUTOSHI
 Where?

 LADY AKAI
 Upstairs bath.

 KAZUTOSHI
 How many?

LADY AKAI
One, he's new.

Kazutoshi walks past.

LADY AKAI (CONT'D)
 (to Hostess)
Go on!

Lady Akai follows Kazutoshi to the lounge area.

LOUNGE AREA

Kazutoshi sits on a couch at a table.

KAZUTOSHI
I heard you have a new flower girl?

LADY AKAI
Two.

KAZUTOSHI
Bring them here.

LADY AKAI
The other is with the Kai.

KAZUTOSHI
Then bring just the one.

MOMENTS LATER

The Hostess serves Kazutoshi tea.

MOMENTS LATER

Lady Akai enters with pale girl HANA (early-twenties).

LADY AKAI
Sit.

Hana sits.

KAZUTOSHI
Have her sit, also.

The Hostess sits.

Kazutoshi takes out a badge and displays it over the table.

KAZUTOSHI (CONT'D)

I'm here unofficially... Many years ago, I was responsible for jailing a man for murder. The man was an assassin for a prominent Yakuza family captain. Not long after he was acquitted, my young daughter went missing. She was abducted by someone posing as a childcare worker at her private preschool.

The Girls nod.

Kazutoshi pulls out a photo of his daughter at five years.

KAZUTOSHI (CONT'D)

Her name's Emiko. She'll be twenty-three this last May. She may have a tattoo on her left shoulder blade. Of an octopus. But this, I cannot confirm with certainty.

HANA

I've never seen her.

HOSTESS

Me neither.

KAZUTOSHI

Of course, I would appreciate it if my presence was kept secret, between the women. Please, tell Lady Akai if you happen to recognize her or remember anything. She will keep me informed.

The Girls AGREE and nod.

Kazutoshi rises, bows.

KAZUTOSHI (CONT'D)

Arigato.

Kazutoshi exits the lounge area, then the soapland.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

O-nami enters the lobby from upstairs, buttoning up.

O-NAMI

Who was that, that just left?

LADY AKAI

A john.

O-nami points to Hana.

O-NAMI

Why isn't the girl ready?

LADY AKAI

I thought you're taking the other?

O-NAMI

*I'm taking her! She should be
dressed and ready to go!*

LADY AKAI

*Sorry, my love. It will only take
her a minute.*

(to Hana)

Go on. To the back.

EXT. SOAPLAND ENTRANCE - NIGHT

O-nami escorts Hana to a tinted luxury car.

EXT./INT. STREET/KAZUTOSHI'S CAR - NIGHT

Kazutoshi spies on and tags the luxury car once it takes off.

INT. SIDE-STREET - NIGHT

Miller spills onto a crowded street and begins to stroll.

The Security Guards round the corner and slow down.

Miller dips into a karaoke bar.

INT. KARAOKE BAR - NIGHT

Miller enters, slaps some bills on the service counter and continues in, down the hall.

KARAOKE ROOM

Sisu cradles, knees to chest, on the couch in the corner,
still sporting his Sea-Monkey jersey.

A single beer is on the table.

Sisu is taken aback as Miller enters.

SERVICE COUNTER

A Security Guard pokes in, hands over on the doorway.

He considers, then dashes back to the street.

KARAOKE ROOM

SISU
Is my time up?

EXT. NIGHTCLUB ENTRANCE - NIGHT

O-nami and Hana head to the front of the line and enter.

Kazutoshi spies from a distance in his car.

INT. KARAOKE ROOM - NIGHT

MILLER
Ohitorisama?

SISU
More like benjo meshi.

MILLER
Could be worse.

Sisu perks up.

SISU
You mean I could owe dangerous
people a dangerous amount of money?

MILLER
You speak English?

SISU
I'm a company man. It helps.

MILLER
Well, I'm a one-man company. You
can call me Yari.

Miller plops onto the couch.

SISU
Sisu... So what do you do for a
living, Yari?

MILLER
Nothing.

SISU
I understand well. Unemployed,
begging for favors.

MILLER
I mean, I do nothing for a living.
But I'm not a nobody.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Hatchet, O-nami, and Hana exit and enter the luxury car.

Kazutoshi starts his car.

INT. KARAOKE ROOM - NIGHT

MILLER
Basically. I'm an expat American
for rent.

SISU
I imagine people are lonely.

MILLER
I get hired for all sorts of
reasons. Salarymen hire me in
sport. As a kick. Others...

Miller pulls his phone out.

MILLER (CONT'D)
See, that's me. A bit of a
celebrity, you can say.

SISU
Ah, hai...

MILLER
Being sued now for having 23
different girlfriends.

SISU
All at the same time?

Miller nods.

SISU (CONT'D)

You have a problem.

MILLER

It's not a bad problem to have...
You know, some people hire me to
just sit with them. Like this and
and that's it.

SISU

Sounds like easy work?

MILLER

Of course, but... I think I crave
something more... slower, at my
leisure. More peaceable.

SISU

You want a spiritual cleansing.

MILLER

Sure. Get close to nature. Get
close to the sacred. Living here
makes me feel like I can never be
important enough, you know?

SISU

Why do you feel you need to be
important?

MILLER

So I can have a bunch of people at
my funeral, of course.

SISU

Maybe I could help with that?

MILLER

With what?

SISU

You need to evaporate.

INT. KAZUTOSHI'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Kazutoshi loosely follows the luxury car through the city.

SISU (PRE-LAP)

It means exactly how it sounds.

INT. KARAOKE ROOM - NIGHT

SISU

An evaporation company is a organization where a customer pays a premium to disappear discreetly and on purpose.

INT. APARTMENT DINNING ROOM - NIGHT

A Serious Woman (forties) eats in SILENCE with her family.

SISU (V.O.)

And just like your clients, they all have their reasons: outrun the black dog of depression, peel off the monkey of addiction from off their backs. Or buck the horns of an affair. Could be anything. The humiliation of a divorce or a failed exam... debt. They choose to flee instead of dealing with the public stigma or scandal.

INT. APARTMENT KITCHEN - NIGHT

The Serious Woman readies the trash.

SISU (V.O.)

Whatever the reason is, they pay our evaporation company to wipe clean everything about them.

INT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

SISU (V.O.)

We erase all records, documents, identifications, all physical and virtual footprints that indicated they had ever existed.

The Serious Woman leaves the bag of trash at the bottom of the staircase, then exits the complex.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The Serious Woman crosses the street and enters an idle car.

SISU (V.O.)
We erase all of it and we relocate
them in the middle of the night
anywhere in the country...

The car drives off.

SISU (V.O.)
So they can start a new life in a
new city with their new identity.

INT. KARAOKE ROOM - NIGHT

MILLER
Sounds like my fantasy.

SISU
If you're sincere, I can make it
happen for you.

Miller CHUCKLES.

Sisu LAUGHS... HARDER.

MILLER
What?

SISU
Have you ever had a perfect
opportunity unfold itself right in
front of you?

MILLER
I wouldn't go through with it
though. I've got just about
everything I could ever want here.

SISU
I'm not talking about what you
think I'm talking about.

INT. KAZUTOSHI'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Kazutoshi tails the car out of the city.

SISU (V.O.)
It happened after the mega-monster
decades ago...

INT. EVAPORATION OFFICE (FLASHBACK) - DAY

Sisu surveys the clutter.

SISU (V.O.)

I arrived at our small downtown chapter to the aftermath.

FILING CLOSET

Sisu collects papers, cards.

SISU (V.O.)

I was collecting papers that spilt from a filing cabinet when I noticed a particular name on a client summary card. Cards we used before computers were standard.

Sisu stops, gawks at the card.

INT. KARAOKE BAR - NIGHT

Sisu takes out a little laminated card and hands it.

SISU

Do you recognize the name?

MILLER

Nakamoto. The founder of Bitcoin.

CLOSE UP - Name on Card: "Sophus Nakamoto"

SISU

So you know?

MILLER

I've dabbled.

SISU

We give all our clients aliases. This "Sophus Natamoko," this name was used over a decade before Bitcoin's Satoshi Nakamoto came out with his white paper to establish the blockchain infrastructure.

MILLER

What are you getting at?

SISU

The name "Sophus Nakamoto" was used in this evaporation. "Sophus" means intelligence. "Satoshi" also means intelligence...

INT. KAZUTOSHI'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Kazutoshi tails from a distance through the countryside.

SISU (V.O.)

On this card I have a birthdate. Male. Yokota Air Base. Which is 30km west of Tokyo. And another date, presumably the evaporation date. A case number. And that's it.

INT. KARAOKE BAR - NIGHT

SISU

Do you not understand what this means?

MILLER

Somewhat.

SISU

The actual case details have been moved to computer files. Files I cannot access... unless I work with a Japanese American client.

MILLER

In order to...

SISU

Find clues. If I can find out the identity of this Nakamoto...

MILLER

I know where you're going with this. It's an Easter bunny, golden egg, golden pot surprise of fools-gold. With a never-ending rainbow at the end.

SISU

What?

MILLER

It's not possible.

SISU

It's every bit as possible as the virtual world is physical...

MILLER

The digital world is not physical.

SISU

Gold is gold. All one needs is the hash number, and the corresponding username and password. With those three you can unlock one of several whale accounts Satoshi Nakamoto has kept frozen. Whale accounts totaling 6 trillion yen in Bitcoin.

MILLER

What's that in dollars? If you were to unlock one of those accounts? On average?

SISU

Today?

MILLER

Today.

SISU

Theoretically, if we discovered just one hash number along with its username and password. It would mean... complete, anonymous access to an untraceable, unlink-able, untouchable amount of... twenty to forty billion U.S. dollars. Today.

INT. KAZUTOSHI'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

The tailed car's taillights are barely visible.

SISU (V.O.)

Speechless?

INT. KARAOKE BAR - NIGHT

MILLER

Sounds like my fantasy... But I don't know, it sounds...

SISU

Bite my shiny metal ass.

MILLER

What that for?

SISU

Bite my shiny metal ass. I was having extreme difficulty calibrating the emotional expression of an AI bot of mine. A breakthrough occurred when I meticulously mapped matrixes of all the robots' hardware, down to the smallest chip, all circuitry, all wiring, the casing, etc. "Bite my shiny metal ass" is what it came up with as an angered response. My point being: if something seems insurmountable, you must not overlook the intricate details within, that lead to such conclusions.

MILLER

I got to get going. It was nice meeting you, Sisu.

(rises, approaches exit,
turns)

I won't worry. Life has a way of working everything out.

SISU

So it does.

Miller exits.

EXT. FORK - NIGHT

Kazutoshi comes to the fork.

SISU (V.O.)

(sotto)

So it does...

Kazutoshi gets out of his car and inspects a tire track.

Kazutoshi peers through his binoculars down the road.

Kazutoshi gets back into his car and continues straight.

EXT. ON A HILL - NIGHT

Kazutoshi parks near shrubbery.

Kazutoshi opens his trunk, undresses.

Kazutoshi trades his trench coat, dress pants, and dress shoes for all black athletic attire and black sneakers.

Kazutoshi dons a black motocross sleeve over his head and neck.

EXT. HILLSIDE - NIGHT

Kazutoshi skips and slides downhill.

EXT. SAUVIGNON BLANC VINEYARDS - NIGHT

Kazutoshi jogs adjacent the road.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - NIGHT

Miller checks his phone.

Miller calls the client number.

MILLER

(in a high-pitched altered voice)

Moshi moshi, this is Mr. Yari Miller's secretary. I just wanted to confirm that you hired Mr. Yari for Monday at the Volcanic Onsen in Gunma Province for a 4 hour block at 90,000 yen per hour. Request of Kosan Air & Gas, Incorporated.

PHONE CALL - SUBWAY TRAIN/KARAOKE ROOM

SISU

(in a high-pitched altered voice)

Hai, hai, arigato.

MILLER

(in a high-pitched altered voice)

Is there anything you'd like Mr. Yari to know? As far as arrival or procedures?

SISU
(in a high-pitched altered
voice)
No, no, everything is good.

MILLER
(altered high-pitched
voice)
*Ok. And please remember Mr. Yari
does not read Kanji or speak any
Japanese.*

SISU
Hai.

MILLER
Ok. Mr. Yari will see you Monday!

EXT. VINEYARD - NIGHT

Kazutoshi jogs down the vineyard parallel the road—
He cuts into the vineyard.

EXT. WINERY VALLEY ESTATE - NIGHT

Kazutoshi sneaks around the enclosure, hops over a wall into
a private garden.

There's another gate and security camera.

Kazutoshi hugs the wall like a shadow.

POOL AREA

Kazutoshi approaches the BBQ, checks its propane tank.

He moves past the fire pit, toward the closed steel Japanese
shutters of the mansion.

He spots another camera.

Kazutoshi semi-circles the wall enclosure and scouts the
entrance gate.

LATER - VINEYARD

Kazutoshi sneaks back out of the valley toward his car.

INT. KAZUTOSHI'S CAR (PARKED) - NIGHT

Kazutoshi makes a call, removes his motocross sleeve.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
This caller has not set up their voicemail.

BEEP.

KAZUTOSHI
Sano, call me in the morning.

Kazutoshi makes another call.

TOMOKO (V.O.)
This is Tomoko, please leave a message and I will try to get back to you as soon as I can.

BEEP.

KAZUTOSHI
I have a new lead. It's Nomura. I don't have much to go on. Pray for me, my Darling. I miss you.

EXT. SHOPPING PLAZA - MORNING

Very light, dumpy drizzle.

Blank-faced, Miller hunches with an umbrella headband hat.

A POTBELLY PHOTOGRAPHER leans against a lamppost.

MILLER
Can you snap some photos already?

POTBELLY PHOTOGRAPHER
No ok. Mushroom rain.

MILLER
I look like a mushroom. Now, come on, this is good. It's raining.

POTBELLY PHOTOGRAPHER
Mushroom rain, Yuri.

MILLER
YARI! I know the pun! Yari, like the dagger I'm gonna stab your potbelly with if you don't stop calling me Yuri. It's Yari!

POTBELLY PHOTOGRAPHER
Mushroom rain! No ok!

MILLER
(sotto)
I gotta be more selective...

Phone RINGS.

MILLER (CONT'D)
I need to take this call.

POTBELLY PHOTOGRAPHER
I'm paying you for your time!

MILLER
You can wait five minutes!
Monsoon's in July anyways.
(into phone)
Moshi moshi.
(walks about)

GALLERY REP (V.O.)
Hai hai, I am calling on behalf of
the Asakusa Gallery Club.

MILLER
Yes?

GALLERY REP (V.O.)
Yes.

MILLER
What do you want? I'm not
negotiating a payment plan.

GALLERY REP (V.O.)
Yes, but Mr. Onie, the gallery
director, he sees the incident as a
criminal offense.

MILLER
Still doesn't change my answer.

GALLERY REP (V.O.)
He wants you to know that failure
to comply with reparations will
undoubtedly result in criminal
charges being filed against you.

MILLER
Maybe you didn't understand: *Bite.
My. Shiny. Metal. Ass.*

GALLERY REP (V.O.)
 Hai. However, seeing that you were
 in fact responsible, it is—

Another incoming call.

MILLER
 Hold that thought.

Miller switches.

MR. KODA (V.O.)
*Moshi moshi. I'm Mr. Koda,
 Plaintiff Number Five's
 representative in the "Kanojos"
 lawsuit against you. I wanted to
 verify some personal details
 pertaining to the case...*

MILLER
 Have her call me if she wants to
 talk.

MR. KODA (V.O.)
 Mr. Miller, Plaintiff—

MILLER
 Hold on, one second.

Miller switches.

MILLER (CONT'D)
 Hello?

GALLERY REP (V.O.)
 Hai.

MILLER
 Hold on one second. I'm going to
 connect you both.

Miller switches to a three-way call.

MILLER (CONT'D)
 Hello? You guy's there?

GALLERY REP (V.O.)
 Hai.

MR. KODA (V.O.)
 Hai.

MILLER

Ok, I'm only going to tell you guys
one more time: Bite my shiny metal
ass! Ok?... That's it.

Miller hangs up.

It begins to flash downpour.

His phone flares again.

POTBELLY PHOTOGRAPHER

It's raining! Finally! Hurry, Yuri!

Miller crumbles the umbrella hat, discards it, and walks off.

POTBELLY PHOTOGRAPHER (CONT'D)

YURI!... YURI!...

INT. MILLER'S APARTMENT - DAY

Miller flops onto the sofa with a SIGH.

He rifles through, separating in piles of mail: fan mail,
junk mail, court letters, then stops:

Gallery Club.

MILLER

They don't waste time, do they?

Miller tosses it with the junk.

EXT./INT. HILLSIDE/KAZUTOSHI'S CAR (PARKED) - DAY

Kazutoshi's car is in a new position, overlooking the
sprawling estate 2,000 meters away.

Kazutoshi wakes from the phone VIBRATION.

INT. POLICE STATION OFFICE - DAY

SANO

You wanted to talk?

PHONE CALL

KAZUTOSHI

*Ask me why I'm at an estate in
Koshu Valley?*

SANO

Because you want to drink your sorrows away?

KAZUTOSHI

I followed a new Inagawa-kai recruit from the nightclub.

SANO

You think it's Nomura?

KAZUTOSHI

Why don't I already know about this?

SANO

It must be a new purchase.

KAZUTOSHI

I need to know these things, Sano.

SANO

I'm talking with you, aren't I?

KAZUTOSHI

I need to know I can depend on you.

SANO

Kaz...

INT. KAZUTOSHI'S CAR (PARKED) - DAY

SANO (V.O.)

Take a break. Call your wife.
(hangs up)

Long-faced, Kazutoshi makes the call.

INT. TOMOKO'S KITCHEN - DAY

TOMOKO (mid-forties), Kazutoshi's wife, dices tomatoes over a board.

A pot boils, steams on the stove.

Tomoko picks up.

PHONE CALL - KITCHEN/KAZUTOSHI'S CAR (PARKED)

TOMOKO

Why do I always wake to a cold bed?

KAZUTOSHI

Did you get my message?

TOMOKO

When are you coming home?

KAZUTOSHI

My love, I'm hopeful this is what we've been waiting for.

TOMOKO

Your hope never ends, does it?

KAZUTOSHI

Do you want it to? Listen to yourself.

TOMOKO

I just want to be able to enjoy a meal with you from time to time. Am I that burdensome to you?

KAZUTOSHI

Tomoko, I said this feels different.

TOMOKO

How? How is it?

KAZUTOSHI

I feel like I've swallowed a molten stone. And it's traveling down my throat. And it's resting inside my heart.

TOMOKO

I know the feeling.

KAZUTOSHI

If you did, you wouldn't be resisting me.

TOMOKO

What do you want me to say?

KAZUTOSHI

I don't want to compete with my wife with how things ought to be.

TOKOKO

Well, what do you want me to say?—

Tomoko nicks her finger.

TOMOKO

Ah!

Tomoko puts finger to mouth.

KAZUTOSHI

Tomoko, I need you to... to...

TOMOKO

*Do what you want! I don't control
you. I never have.*

(hangs up)

EXT. VOLCANIC ONSEN - MORNING

Last night's snow coats the boulders around the rotenburo.

Sisu and Eito converse in the hot spring.

From under the awning, Miller approaches.

Sisu spots Miller and hurries out, grabbing a towel.

MILLER

Cle-ver man.

Strawberry-faced, Sisu strikes an apologetic pose.

SISU

*I am so sorry. Please forgive the
deception. But I wanted to make
sure you'd come. Come on, come in!*

Miller shakes his head and advances.

Miller temp tests the water with his first step.

Miller step down and does an awkward bellyflop into the pool.

MILLER

AH!

Miller removes his towel only when he submerges.

SISU

How does that feel?

MILLER

*It doesn't need to be this hot! My
skin's gonna peel off.*

SISU
It's good for health... Thank you
Mr. Miller for meeting with us.
This is my associate Eito.

MILLER
You can call me Yari.

All bow by nods.

EITO
Would you like a black egg?

Eito pulls a basket from the side and surfaces a rack of
onsen tamagos, three low-boiled black eggs.

EITO (CONT'D)
*It is tradition that one black egg
boiled from this hot spring will
add seven years to one's life.*

Eito extends the basket.

Miller raises his eyebrows and gives a slight nod to SisU.

It dawns on SisU.

SISU
...He said the black eggs add seven
years to your life.

MILLER
No thanks.

SISU
I have explained to Eito that you
are interested in our services to
evaporate you.

MILLER
Only slightly.

SISU
Perfectly alright. All that we ask
is that you keep an open mind. And
in exchange we won't try to
pressure you on a immediate
purchase.

MILLER
If I evaporate, what happens to my
debts and law suits?

SISU

I thought anonymity and peace were your motivating factors?

MILLER

They were. They are. What happens?

SISU

In Japan, debt is wrapped up in identity. As long as the creditors never discover your new identity, you will be in the clear. This includes lawsuit jurisdictions. Yari, we have already taken the initiative. If you decide on being evaporated, we can place you in...

Sisu motions to Eito, who wades to the side and exits.

SISU (CONT'D)

Don't mention crypto or Bitcoin.

MILLER

I thought he doesn't speak English?

SISU

He's smart. I don't want him to pick up anything. And I have something you'll want to take a look at, but later.

Eito dollies a flatscreen near the side of the spring.

SISU (CONT'D)

Yes, we can place you in The Foreign Language Institute near Yokoka Air Base where you'll be teaching American Literature.

MILLER

I haven't read a book since middle school.

SISU

In the lush quietness of forested hills... And with your twenty-one girlfriends—

MILLER

Twenty-three.

SISU

With your twenty-three girlfriends
out of your life—you'll able to
enjoy much needed silence.

EITO

*We'll be able to move most of your
belongings to your new place.*

SISU

Yes, you'll be able to keep most of
your things.

Sisu slides through scenic pictures.

SISU (CONT'D)

Just think of the evaporation as an
elaborate vacation. And best of
all, nothing is stopping you from
coming back to Tokyo, if you later
decide you want to continue the
lifestyle you once had.

MILLER

Except my identity would be gone.

SISU

But you can rebuild a new identity!
And yes, it's irreversible.

Sisu clicks a slide.

SISU (CONT'D)

Here are the packages. And because
you are an AA class celebrity,
haggled by yours truly...
(nods to Eito)

Eito smiles, while Miller is unamused.

SISU (CONT'D)

According to our Marketing
Director, once considered adverts
have been realized, the cost for
you will drop to nearly nothing.

MILLER

How can I endorse the evaporation,
if the whole point is for me to
leave without a trace?

SISU

Not my department—now let's get
out the papers—

MILLER

Slow down. What about... the Easter
eggs...?

Eito raises the black egg he's peeling.

MILLER (CONT'D)

No... what about...
(leans to Sisu, low)
The coin...?

SISU

*Eito, please, allow me to speak
with Mr. Miller privately.*

Eito goes to Sisu's side.

EITO

*This is my sell. Don't forget it.
It's the only reason why I'm here.*

SISU

I need a moment alone with him.

EITO

Maybe we should talk privately.

SISU

Give us a moment, Yari.
(bows)

Eito and Sisu wade to the other side and step out.

EITO

*How about I start making the sell
and you start translating?*

SISU

I would, but... About the sell...

EITO

What about it?

SISU

(winces)
I need the sell.

EITO

What do you mean?

SISU

*I just need it to go down on paper
as my sell. But you can keep the
entire commission!—*

EITO

Sisu, Sisu... You gave your word.

SISU

I know. I need the sell, but I you can have the commission. I need to be working on this case. I will pay you the commission as soon—

Eito ottoman slaps Sisu, almost off his feet.

EITO

*That's the last time you lie to me!
And I still expect the money...*

Eito leaves, turns.

EITO (CONT'D)

Why do you insist on me treating you like a dog?

Eito exits.

Sisu returns to the spring and dog paddles to Miller.

Sisu feigns a smile.

SISU

I'm the dog? He's never seen himself slurp down ramen before.

Sisu masks a grimace.

MILLER

I'll go home and think it over.

Miller begins to move.

SISU

No! Don't. Don't, don't, don't. We know this isn't about debt, or about anonymity, or about forests or a peaceful setup... It's about Nakamoto's fortune.

MILLER

Whadaya got?

Sisu wades to the side to the bottom tray of the TV rack.

He readies paperclip-ed papers from a satchel.

SISU

This is evidence: an archival twitter account and its posts pointing to an elaborate game of sorts...

Miller moves closer.

SISU (CONT'D)

This was the first time the term "Bitcoin" was ever uttered on the internet. A whole nine months before the white paper. By a "goldlover@fafcfffacfff."

Sisu points to the series of blocked posts on the paper.

SISU (CONT'D)

Look it here. Read.

MILLER

"Just one more concrete reasons to buy Digital Gold Currency. Here is the Bitcoin delivery."

SISU

Keep reading. Read the posts.

MILLER

Goldlover@fafc... December 17th: As of Tuesday afternoon, no generous person had dropped rare gold coins into my bucket list. Goldlover: "A treasure hunter found a massive haul of gold coins nearly missed out because it was cold and he wanted to go home for gunpowder tea." GoldLover: "Perhaps overly so. I try to be sensitive and tolerant, but I'm also a dyed-in-the-wool smart-ass. I'm in turmoil here." Goldlover, same day: Mandarin oranges glow in the sky while gold coins will be distributed to seekers, by the fate of fortune. Goldlover a week later: "Under the oranges in the sky, I sip my tea and wait for the masses." And on and on. What're the takeaways?

SISU

I've formulated a simple, plausible narrative: Satoshi, a Japanese-American engineer created code for the blockchain at the Yokota Air Base, alone or on a team. And for some reason, perhaps feeling governmental pressure or pressured by colleagues evaporated somewhere, leaving hints over the internet to map out a treasure hunt for one or all of the remain frozen Satoshi accounts. Knowing it would be decades before anyone would understand. Decades before Bitcoin itself would blow up.

MILLER

A lot of these are... I mean. Some make sense: "A new-world financial order." Some are so general: "Today, our currency is not backed by any precious metal."

SISU

Yes, but look: "The total amount of gold in ETFs is 1,658 tonnes, worth US \$48.6 billion. The World Gold Council is now in cyberspace."

MILLER

What's that got to do with the price of rice?

SISU

This last one: "New treasury used to mint gold and silver into coins. The virtual fiat."

MILLER

They're cryptic, but they're all mostly benign.

SISU

A month later the account was taken down. Eight months after, the white paper appears.

MILLER

@fafcffacfff... Musical notes?

SISU

Could be.

MILLER

So that's all you have to go on?
Old twitter posts and a Nakamoto
alias from an evaporation company?

SISU

You make it sound like those aren't
substantial coincidences.

MILLER

And if I go, you'll gain access to
the case files?

SISU

Correct. Working on your case opens
up all other mixed nationality
cases on record for me.

MILLER

...I'm in.

SISU

Ha, ha!

LATER - NEAR POOL

Sisu points.

SISU

Initial here, and here.

MILLER

How sure are you that Sophus' case
will lead to more info on Nakamoto?
Just by gut?

SISU

My gut tells me: a very clever and
rich man purposely arranged such
clues as to be found. Coincidence
and serendipity are only separated
by chance. And what is the chance
these details all point to Bitcoin
and its origins, here in Japan?

MILLER

Only you know about this?

SISU

Hai.

MILLER

Seems too straightforward...

SISU

I-I do have a contact, helping me with research only. Other than that, I've presented you with everything.

MILLER

Who?

SISU

A business owner. Nobody important. Trust me... Have me open the case files on Sophus.

Miller begins to initial.

INT. SUSHI-YA - NIGHT

Miller dines with clients—Main Client, Watch-wearer, and Company-man.

Miller nurses his saki, while the Japanese Men are properly plastered.

Main Client's cig smoke wafts, curls.

MAIN CLIENT

Chef has big surprise for you, ok?

MILLER

Sure.

Main Client grins, then leans over his side and lets a glob of spit hit the floor.

MAIN CLIENT

You like it. It is special making.

LATER

The Chef enters and serves bread slices with basashi, thinly sliced raw horse sashimi, on a platter.

MAIN CLIENT

Basashi on bread! Do you know?

WATCH-WEARER

Hoorse.

MAIN CLIENT

(to Watch-wearer)

Bah!

MILLER
It's horse meat.

MAIN CLIENT
Hai!

Watch-wearer passes the dish to Miller.

MILLER
No, arigato.

MAIN CLIENT
It's pink. It's ok.

MILLER
No.

COMPANY-MAN
He said, It is suppose to be pink
and red, ok?

MILLER
I heard what he said. No thanks.
I'll pass.

MAIN CLIENT
You want to taste?

MILLER
No.

WATCH-WEARER
High-energy?

MILLER
What?

WATCH-WEARER
High-energy?

MILLER
I still...

WATCH-WEARER
High-energy! High-energy!

MILLER
I have no idea.

COMPANY-MAN
High-energy.

MAIN CLIENT
High-energy!

MILLER
You mean, allergies...?

The Men grumble and agree.

MILLER (CONT'D)
No.

WATCH-WEARER
No?

MILLER
No.

MAIN CLIENT
I not understand...

Main Client adjusts in his seat.

MILLER
I don't ingest horse meat.

COMPANY-MAN
Hoorse milke?

MILLER
No.

MAIN CLIENT
Horse sausagee?

MILLER
Sausage is a meat, so no.

WATCH-WEARER
High-energy?

MILLER
I said I don't eat horse. Ever.

MAIN CLIENT
Hai, why no? Eat.

MILLER
Because I don't eat horse. It's a simple decision I made a long time ago once I got to Japan. And also before I got to Japan...

The Men seem stunned or puzzled.

Miller SIGHS.

MILLER (CONT'D)

The horse is a noble, majestic creature. I'm from America. I refuse to eat horse.

The Men remain dumbstruck.

MILLER (CONT'D)

You know, I'm just going to say it:
 (fluently, quick)
not only is it un-American to consume horse, I believe it's morally wrong and in my opinion, near abominable. The trading and consumption of all horse meat and horse related products should be at the very least penalized, if not heavily criminalized.

SILENT beat...

An ERUPTION of hostile Japanese epithets.

INT. HOUSE DEN - DAY

The Female Guests mingle, CHATTER, at the baby shower. Miller and LADY HOMEOWNER (thirties) are near the bar. She tries to hand Miller a tray with several cocktails. The Lady Homeowner motions, incessant.

MILLER

Don't mind if I do.

Miller goes for a drink.

The Lady Homeowner slaps Miller's hand.

LADY HOMEOWNER

NO. Can you please hand these out?

MILLER

Oh, no, I can't.

LADY HOMEOWNER

Go. Please. Hold. Hold.

MILLER

No, you see, my secretary stated very clearly that if you wanted me to carry out a particular task, you'd have to pay me more.

LADY HOMEOWNER

Hold. Hold.

Miller SIGHS.

Lady Homeowner keeps the pressure on.

Miller finally grabs a cocktail and walks off.

He drinks as he walks.

Lady Homeowner comes from behind, snatches at Miller's arm.

They tussle for the drink, splashing it about.

LADY HOMEOWNER (CONT'D)

Give it here!

Miller wins, drinks what remains, and walking away, discards the glass to the carpet.

LADY HOMEOWNER (CONT'D)

(points)

Get out! Get out!

EXT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - DAY

Miller strolls along.

Miller turns around and studies the oblivious crowd of faces shuffling by.

A Man in the distance.

Miller continues.

He takes another look.

No one it seems.

EXT./INT. NIGHTCLUB ENTRANCE/KAZUTOSHI'S CAR - DAY

Kazutoshi spies from his car.

INT. SUBWAY CAR - DAY

Miller rides—his eyes dart back.

Normal faces.

He moves along and looks up ahead.

A Man moves towards him from afar.

Miller stops.

...The Man sits.

Miller looks over his shoulder again.

Normal people.

INT. MILLER'S APARTMENT - DAY

SISU (O.S.)

Hai, Yari!

MILLER

Is that your Kosan Air and Gas following me or the police? Or is it Nomura, huh?

SISU

It's your imagination. All of it. We need to have dinner tonight and go over an important detail.

MILLER

I feel like I'm being followed.

SISU

Your!... Imagination. Dinner, tonight. Don't worry. It's not what you think...

EXT. WINERY ESTATE - NIGHT

Kazutoshi spies on the estate from a hill, a great distance.

INT. SISU'S APARTMENT DOOR - NIGHT

Miller approaches and rings.

ROBOTIC VOICE (O.S.)

Come inside!

Miller opens the door and enters.

INT. SISU'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Miller steps in, closes the door.

A white service robot has answered the door.

PHWEE

Welcome! My name is Phwee! Please, come in... You can hang your coat there.

Miller does so.

PHWEE (CONT'D)

Please, make yourself comfortable at the dinning room table, while I get the man and lady of the house.

DINNING ROOM

Miller steps into the tatami room with shoji doors and a low horigotatsu table.

Miller takes a seat.

MOMENTS LATER

Phwee enters with a tray of sugar cubes.

PHWEE

Please, help yourself to tea. Mr. Sisu and Mrs. Miki will be out shortly... While you wait, you can ask me any question, if you'd like.

MILLER

Who developed your AI?

PHWEE

Mr. Sisu, of course. He's quite the polymath innovator. Not to mention his extensive expertise in the fields of computer science and macroeconomics. Did you know Mr. Sisu once worked alongside legendary phone designer Tae Woo on Samsung Galaxy Z Flip?

MILLER

I didn't.

BEDROOM

Headset-ed, Sisu operates and voices Phwee from a laptop and controller.

SISU

Yes, and did you know that Mr. Sisu also holds a complimentary degree in Tourism and Urban Management and attended the prestigious Kyoto Institute?

DINNING ROOM

MILLER

I didn't ask for his résumé.

Phwee BUZZES.

PHWEE

No lies detected.

MILLER

What was that?

PHWEE

I said, No lies detected.

MILLER

You can detect lies?

PHWEE

I can. By sampling micro changes in enunciation and frequency intonation, and overlaying it onto a pre-dictionary map of your voice. It's a technology that still needs to be worked on, currently at 73% accuracy.

MILLER

Can you test a lie in the imperative?

PHWEE

We can try.

MILLER

Leave me alone right now.

BUZZER.

PHWEE
No lies detected.

A moment.

MILLER
It also means please leave me alone
right now.

PHWEE
Of course. I was merely expressing
my distain by pretending to ignore
your command.

Phwee begins to exit.

MILLER
Wait, come back.

Phwee turns around.

MILLER (CONT'D)
How you were designed to carry out
emotional responses?

PHWEE
Ask a question.

MILLER
I just did... How did Sisu program
that? What kind of node structure
is your AI?

PHWEE
My overall node mapping is patented
and under the umbrella of fractal
branching, extensively developed by
Mr. Sisu himself.

MILLER
Factual branching?

PHWEE
(rapid)
The science of which is very
complicated and I really don't have
time to go over right now. I've got
to go, bye!

Phwee zips out.

Miller sits, sour-faced and puzzled.

MOMENTS LATER

Sisu enters with a large tray of foods.

SISU
Hello, did you meet Phwee?

MILLER
(sotto)
Annoying little Roomba.

SISU
What was that?

MILLER
I said, he's impressive, isn't he?

SISU
Yes, I built him from scratch. Took
an immense amount of work... Let's
begin.

Sisu picks up a thick padded stick and strikes the GONG.

SISU (CONT'D)
My wife and I don't share the same
room. We live as roommates for all
intensive purposes.

MILLER
Intents and purposes.

SISU
That's what I said.

The kimono-clad MIKI (late-thirties) enters.

SISU (CONT'D)
I haven't spoken to my wife out of
spite for almost ten years.

MILLER
You're kidding me.

Miki sits.

SISU
No. It takes a great deal of
discipline. She speaks no English,
so she won't mind us.

MILLER
What made you stop talking to her?

SISU

I forgot. But she's never believed in any of my dreams. Then again, it could've been the nagging.

MILLER

Can I talk with her?

SISU

I'd rather you not.

MILLER

It's ok.

(to Miki)

Hello, my name is Yari. I speak Japanese fluently.

MIKI

Oh, now nice.

MILLER

...Your husband says he doesn't remember why he stopped talking to you for all these years...

Miki is unresponsive.

MILLER (CONT'D)

I was just wondering if you'd like to shed some light.

MIKI

How nice.

SISU

I do remember. Miki was for a while a real-life Mrs. Watanabe, a housewife who moonlit as a carry trader of foreign currencies. She'd commune with her inner circle of clickty-clicks in between chores and babysitting... She made us a small fortune.

MILLER

Oh.

SISU

Unfortunately, I managed to lose it all on a dubious business venture. So after another intense fight, we took mutual vows to never speak to each other again.

MILLER

So it's kind of your fault.

SISU

That's besides the point!

(recovers)

She acts like I wasn't near karoshi death because of my workload. She acts like we weren't washing our feet with beer, then or since! She's a voracious spender, don't let her fool you. Not to mention all the things I've bought her.

MILLER

Like?

SISU

Like, like clothes and jewelry. And a life-size chocolate pineapple one time.

MILLER

Miki, what did you think of the things Sisu bought you?

MIKI

Oh, how nice.

MILLER

Seems like her only words.

SISU

I also paid for her to attend etiquette classes.

MILLER

And?

Sisu raises his eyebrow and motions his head to his wife.

SISU

What did you think of the etiquette classes your husband bought you?

MIKI

Oh, how nice.

Miller is perplexed.

MILLER

Is that all she says?

Sisu gestures again to his wife.

MILLER (CONT'D)

...What exactly did you learn from those classes because it doesn't seem too polite to be so tightlipped to a guest.

MIKI

...The etiquette classes taught me many important things. The most important being: how I learned to say... "How nice"... when what I really mean is... "FAKKUYU!"

MILLER

...Yeah, can't see why you two don't talk.

AT THE SOFA - LATER

Sisu and Miller sit, drinking tea.

MILLER

I mean, money isn't an issue for me now. But... What would I do?... You know, I bought this expensive German calligraphy pen. Then, for whatever reason, I started collecting different colored ink bottles for the pen. Deep Coral Blue. Slate-stone Grey. Happy-time Orange. Hardly use the pen, but I've got all these different inks. Then I visited a history museum, in Tokyo, and saw all the calligraphy paintings, the black on white drawings. I think I'd like to do something like that. Learn calligraphy. Or, I dunno, master a craft. Like a farmer's kind of life, wrought it with my own hands. In utter rejection of the absurdity of our... cybernetic modernity.

SISU

You don't how happy that makes me.

MILLER

Why?

SISU

I need to tell you something... The business mogul I'm connected with.

(MORE)

SISU (CONT'D)

He wants to talk to you. So be expecting a call or a visit.

MILLER

I thought you said he wasn't important.

SISU

You just need to meet him and answer his questions. It's nothing serious.

MILLER

What does he want?

SISU

Nothing. He's always butting in. Just make sure you don't reveal you speak Japanese. And don't decline his invitation. He can make life... intolerable if he wanted to.

MILLER

Intolerable? What are you talking about? Intolerable, or possibly non-existent?

SISU

Just intolerable.

MILLER

That's what you wanted to tell me?

Sisu nods.

MILLER (CONT'D)

(rises and starts to exit)
You're a class act, you know that.

SISU

(rises)
The treasure hunt is still on, Yari. I'm just letting you know.

MILLER

Yeah, thanks. I'm heading out.

They exit the room and walk to the entrance.

NEAR ENTRANCE DOOR

MILLER

Intolerable!

SISU
Don't worry, remember? Life has a
way of—

MILLER
It sure does!

Miller exits, SLAMS the door.

INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - NIGHT

Miller steps to the edge.

He glances over his left shoulder.

Several Men.

One, no tie, seems to eye Miller.

LATER

Miller boards.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - NIGHT

Miller keeps his eyes on the Suspicious Man.

The Man is oblivious.

Miller finally relaxes.

INT. MILLER'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Miller sinks into the sofa, flips through channels.

His phone lights up.

Miller presses to ignore.

MOMENTS LATER

The phone lights up again.

Miller ignores.

MOMENT LATER

Phone again.

Miller answers, puts the phone to his ear.

Miller listens to SILENCE on the other end...

MALE VOICE

*...There's a sedan waiting for you
outside, Mr. Miller.*

Miller heads to the window and peeks through the blinds.

A black tinted luxury sports sedan.

PHONE ALARM (PRE-LAP)

INT. KAZUTOSHI'S CAR (PARKED) - NIGHT

Kazutoshi wakes from the tripped ALARM.

INT. LUXURY SEDAN - NIGHT

Miller enters.

DRIVER

(into translator stick
device)

What would you like to drink?

Translator stick repeats in English.

MILLER

Asahi.

The Driver retrieves a beer from the passenger side bar,
opens it and hands it to Miller.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Thank you.

Miller sips.

MILLER (CONT'D)

Where exactly are we going?

DRIVER

(into translator stick)
*Nomura's estate is located in
secret.*

Translator repeats.

MILLER
Then maybe you should've
blindfolded me.

DRIVER
UH?

The Driver holds out the stick.

MILLER
Then maybe you should've
blindfolded me.

The translator repeats in Japanese.

DRIVER
(into translator stick)
Not necessary.

Translator.

Miller reclines and drinks.

EXT. WINERY ESTATE - NIGHT

The black sedan pulls in.

INT. KAZUTOSHI'S CAR (PARKED) - NIGHT

Kazutoshi sees the sedan pull up through his binoculars.

INT. INAGAWA-KAI MANSION - NIGHT

NOMURA (sixties-ish), Inagawa-kai clan's seventh kumicho
oyabun leads Miller from the garage.

Nomura's porcelain face seems taut from plastic surgery.

He seems somehow simultaneously 20 and 120 years old.

Miller rubs his hair and eyes.

MILLER
What do I owe the VIP treatment to,
Mr....?

NOMURA
Nomura. I want to discuss Sisu's
scheme, mainly. I hope the ride
hasn't got you too sluggish.

MILLER

You know, you can make a blindfold out of just about anything these days.

NOMURA

In your line of work, I imagine any death threat you receive is almost whimsical in nature.

Nomura leads Miller through a hall.

NOMURA (CONT'D)

However, when I receive a death threat, I can never be too cautious. Here's a question: What would you do if you had the secret to immortality?

MILLER

I already know the secret.

NOMURA

You do, do you?

MILLER

Yeah, have a couple of black eggs every morning.

NOMURA

Hm. I'm hoping for less superstitious solutions.

MILLER

...I'd bottle it, brand it, and make a fortune.

NOMURA

What happens when you already have a fortune?

MILLER

Enjoy the millennia-s, I guess.

The Men stand at an open space.

NOMURA

Or you could help those poor in spirit and make it affordable. Our critics have said the Yakuza's humanitarian efforts, in Hiroshima Prefecture, at Fukushima reactor, in Tohoku after the tsunami, are nothing more than show.

Noruma moves ahead.

MILLER
Evil men have hearts, too.

Nomura stops.

MILLER (CONT'D)
I mean, that's what they say.

NOMURA
Every clan knows what it is like to be disenfranchised, outcast. Our motives may be suspect, but our sentiment is bound within our history. We must be of some use to our own while we can.

MILLER
Can I use the restroom?

INT. WATERFALL BIDET - NIGHT

MILLER
You didn't say he was Yakuza! They drugged me before I got here! This guy's already talking about bottling immortality. This place is bugged.

Miller checks the ferns.

MILLER (CONT'D)
I don't appreciate the date rape introduction! I'm thinking you owe money to a business mogul... What did pull me into?

SISU
Relax, my friend, Nomura's reasonable. Just see what he wants and get out.

MILLER
I've never heard of a reasonable killer.

INT. INAGAWA-KAI MANSION - NIGHT

Nomura and Miller continue to stroll.

NOMURA

My success is all recompense—
population collapse, the anti-
Yakuza laws with their modern
crackdown, aging Inagawa-kai
membership, zero youth appeal...
it is exhausting for old captains
to weather the decades and nemeses.
Not to mention accidental deaths
accosted with such ranks. A dear
friend, he smoked, smoked, smoked,
then died...

MILLER

My grandfather died of lung cancer.

NOMURA

It was a stroke... after that a
cerebral hemorrhage. Which lead to
pneumonia.

The Men reach a hall and stop.

NOMURA (CONT'D)

Anyways, his nephew, racing to the
funeral, crashed, and was killed.
Life hangs vicariously still, by a
string. Only, once the bowl is
dropped, no kintsugi can piece it
back, no matter the amount of gold.
About that time, I began blood
plasma transfusions, popular in the
upper echelons. Real world vampires
exist, and if longevity is to ever
reach immortality and the end of
eternity, it must be maintained
scrupulously. I've funded a few
ventures to find future elixirs of
life—injected myself with ancient
bacteria from glacial permafrost,
had engineers develop nano-bots for
cellular repair. All costly. All
effective. Even so, my most recent
and most promising discovery will
require an inordinately sized
initial investment. So naturally, I
found Sisu's claim... tantalizing.
However, even an idealist like
myself can see Sisu is a dreamer.
The laminated card he showed you is
a recreation, if you didn't already
surmise.

MILLER

Why are you meeting with me then?

NOMURA

Because he's gone to you. His confidence in this coincidence has me thinking there may be a chance. However slight. And if so, I don't want him to run off with the account.

MILLER

You want me to...?

NOMURA

I want you to be honest with me.

Nomura closes the distance.

NOMURA (CONT'D)

If anything develops, tell me. If there happens to be a lead. Tell me. Sisu is in my debt. He knows the importance of being transparent with me. I need you to understand that importance.

MILLER

Got it.

The Men begin to walk again.

NOMURA

I've already carried out my own investigation. There is no connection between a Sophus Nakamoto and a Satoshi Nakamoto. Neither is there a connection between those names with the US-Japan Air Base, where the programing could have possibly been developed. But I know Sisu. And he is as sneaky as he is pathetic. You will keep me informed, will you?

MILLER

Yes.

NOMURA

Good.

They come to a display case of an authentic full-set red o-yoroi samurai armor with gold trim.

Everything from the kogake footwear and forearm and shin guards to the duel tachi and katana, to the sleeveless jinbaori jacket and kabuto helm behind glass.

MILLER

It's...

NOMURA

Exquisite. 16th century gusoku armor. Azuchi-Momoyama Period.

Nomura points.

NOMURA (CONT'D)

I suspect, there, above the rib cage was a fatal blow. A spear perhaps... "Engage in combat wishing to survive in battle and you will surely meet death. Engage in combat fully determined to die and you will live."

MILLER

How does that pertain to the struggle of living forever?

NOMURA

Fearlessness. Within all your faces.

Hatchet, Nomura's wakagashira advisor approaches.

NOMURA (CONT'D)

Here comes the shade and the shadow, my left and right arm—Hachiro!

Hachiro whispers in Nomura's left ear.

Hachiro's left pinkie tip is missing.

Nomura nods.

NOMURA (CONT'D)

This way.

Nomura leads.

NOMURA (CONT'D)

Hachiro here was sent to prison on circumstantial evidence, for a series of Yakuza family assassinations all involving a hatchet or hammer.

(MORE)

NOMURA (CONT'D)

While in prison, he kept silent. Hachiro eventually won his appeal and was exonerated, because there were another series of assassinations occurring simultaneously, all very similarly involving a hatchet or a hammer. So, once he was released, the Hatchet and the Hammer nicknames stuck, and, depending on his mood...

Nomura stops.

NOMURA (CONT'D)

And whether you are cooperative, you may meet Hatchet or Hammer. But you seem smart enough to avoid misleading us, aren't you?

Miller nods, Yes.

NOMURA (CONT'D)

Seeing it's Hachiro's principal loan Sisu owes, he will take any deceptiveness very personally.

MILLER

I understand.

NOMURA

Hachiro, have somebody box the armor and have it sent to Mr. Miller's apartment. I will be gifting you the armor.

MILLER

Oh, you don't have to.

NOMURA

I don't have to. I want to.

MILLER

It seems expensive.

NOMURA

It's not expensive... It's priceless. But if you treat your friends with ninkyo, loyalty and honor... not everything becomes about money.

Nomura, Miller, and Hachiro enter a dealing room.

DEALING ROOM

Four girls stretch over couches, waiting.

They stand, bow.

NOMURA

You're more than welcomed to stay
the night.

MILLER

I don't know...

NOMURA

Look over a girl. You can stay the
night and leave in the morning.

Miller approaches the Women.

He gets to the last, and stares at her face.

An octopus tattoo is on the back of her left shoulder blade.

MILLER

Oddly enough, I have a funeral to
go to in the morning.

NOMURA

Oh, condolences to the departed.

MILLER

No, I'm scheduled. Last gig until
the relocation.

NOMURA

I pity the dead no less.

MILLER

No one's dead. It's a film set.

NOMURA

We are all actors in a way. Actors
in waiting.

MILLER

...So yeah, I'll have to pass.

NOMURA

Very well. Hachiro will escort you
out.

Nomura motions to Hachet.

Miller starts to move.

MILLER

...Could I... have a blindfold?

NOMURA

Of course. *Make sure he's
blindfolded.*

INT. KAZUTOSHI'S CAR - NIGHT

Kazutoshi watches the sedan exit the estate.

He starts the car.

INT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Kazutoshi tails the sedan.

EXT. COMPLEX STREET - NIGHT

Miller exits the sedan and crosses the street to his apartment complex.

The sedan drives off.

Kazutoshi tails the sedan, turns his head and sees Miller enter as he drives.

EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

The Driver parks in the front.

The driver exits the tinted sedan.

Kazutoshi parks.

INT. LUXURY SEDAN - NIGHT

The Driver is at the door.

He enters, sits, CLOSES the door.

Kazutoshi simultaneously covers the Driver's mouth from the backseat with his black gloved hand and presses an syringe against the Driver's neck.

KAZUTOSHI

*This is 10mL of a horse sedative.
If you were a 500kg kiso, you'd
blackout for hours.*

Kazutoshi removes his gloved hand.

DRIVER

Is it lethal?

KAZUTOSHI

Pay close attention, answer my questions, and you won't have to find out.

DRIVER

Hai.

KAZUTOSHI

Who was the Westerner you just dropped off?

DRIVER

I don't know.

KAZUTOSHI

What was the meeting tonight at the estate about?

DRIVER

I don't know.

KAZUTOSHI

Does Nomura stay at the vineyard and if so, does he keep girls at the estate?

DRIVER

He stays. Girls usually.

KAZUTOSHI

How many?

DRIVER

Four to six. Usually.

Kazutoshi shows his daughter's photo.

KAZUTOSHI

Have you seen this girl, Emiko? She's 23 years old now?

The Driver hesitates.

DRIVER

Never.

KAZUTOSHI

Have you ever seen this girl?

DRIVER

Never.

KAZUTOSHI

Are you telling me the truth?

DRIVER

Hai. Never.

SILENCE.

Kazutoshi plunges the injection into the Driver's neck.

The Driver resists at first.

Kazutoshi relents.

The Driver marvels, he's still awake.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

How long does it take effect?

KAZUTOSHI

You have twenty more seconds.

The Driver breathes.

DRIVER

Is it lethal?

KAZUTOSHI

No.

The Driver tenses his throat, leans into the headrest.

DRIVER

Arigato.

The Driver is out.

Kazutoshi checks his pockets, takes the translator stick.

Kazutoshi begins to move the Driver to the backseat seat.

EXT. OPEN BLOND FIELD - DAY

CLOSE UP - Driver's Face in the Backseat of the Sedan, Flames
Glinting

Kazutoshi gazes, then walks off as the sedan is engulfed.

INT. FUNERAL FILM SET - DAY

ACTOR PRIEST

*Distant waters lap
like wind across winter leaves—
sands slipping with time,
all remembrance lay bare
in oceans of lullabies.*

Standing as a long-faced extra, Miller's watch BINGS.

MILLER

Sorry!

IRATE DIRECTOR

*What is this? You can't just stand
there and look sad?*

MILLER

(walks off)
I've gotta take this.

IRATE DIRECTOR

*Who ordered the gaijin? I don't
need him in the shot! How's crazy
idea was this?*

SISU (V.O.)

How's the funeral?

MILLER

I've done real funerals before and
I've this is a lot less
interesting.

The Irate Director is going ballistic in the b.g..

SISU (V.O.)

When are you coming to the office
to sign the last of the papers?

EXT. SUBWAY TRAIN - DAY

MILLER

(into phone)
I think I'm being followed.

SISU (V.O.)

By who?

MILLER

Who do you think? If it's not your
Kosan company, it's Nomura!

SISU (V.O.)
You're just excited.

MILLER
I can feel it. Like I'm being
hunted. That, or haunted...

EXT. MILLER'S APARTMENT COMPLEX ENTRANCE - DAY

Miller walks down the side and looks over his shoulder.

INT. MILLER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Miller enters.

In the center: a large cardboard box, with a full-set red samurai replica armor on top on it and scattered about.

A dagger pins a note to the wall.

Miller approaches and pinches the corner of the note:

"Stay fearless, my friend.
—Nomura"

In Kanji.

MILLER
I don't read kanji.

A Figure creeps behind Miller.

Kazutoshi springs and drags the YELPING Miller to the floor.

Kazutoshi cuffs Miller, then sits him onto a nearby chair.

Kazutoshi begins to tie Miller to the chair.

MILLER (CONT'D)
HEY! HEY! Can you stop?

KAZUTOSHI
(into translator stick)
*I'm going to ask you questions. I
want you to tell me the truth.*

Translator stick repeats.

MILLER
I speak Japanese.
(shakes head)
I speak Japanese.

KAZUTOSHI

Why were you at Nomura's mansion?

MILLER

A research project... of sorts. He just wants my cooperation.

KAZUTOSHI

What project?

MILLER

I'm being evaporated tonight. You know, jouhatsu, a fly-by-night company. I'm to live at an undisclosed location to research.

KAZUTOSHI

Research what?

MILLER

To find clues really. Clues to access a frozen crypto account.

KAZUTOSHI

Does Nomura keep women at the estate?

MILLER

Last night, I saw four.

KAZUTOSHI

Did you recognize this girl? See should be twenty-three now.

Kazutoshi shows Miller the photo.

MILLER

I'm not sure. Maybe.

KAZUTOSHI

She may have a tattoo of an octopus on her left shoulder blade.

MILLER

I don't know. I didn't see their back... I'm not wrapped up in the trafficking. I just met this Nomura through a friend of mine.

KAZUTOSHI

His name?

BOSSMAN (PRE-LAP)

SISU!

EXT. EVAPORATION OFFICE - DAY

BOSSMAN (fifties) approaches Sisu schmoozing the Secretary at her front desk.

BOSSMAN
Have you got all the docs in?

SISU
Just waiting for the final agreement. He's coming anytime now.

BOSSMAN
Everything else set for tonight?

BUZZ.

Bossman watches Kazutoshi's image on the security monitor.

BOSSMAN (CONT'D)
Who's that? Is that him?

SISU
No. I don't think so.

BUZZ.

BOSSMAN
Why's he just pressing the button and not speaking?

...BUZZ.

BOSSMAN (CONT'D)
Let him up.

SISU
Are you sure?

BOSSMAN
Go ahead.
(turns, leaving)
Make sure I see the agreements before I leave.

SISU
Yes, of course.

Bossman retires to his office.

Sisu and the Secretary study Kazutoshi's image on the monitor—heading down a hall, through a doorway, up stairs.

SECRETARY

Seems like he's in a hurry.

Kazutoshi comes down another hall, to the office entrance.

The door OPENS, and Kazutoshi approaches the front desk.

KAZUTOSHI

I'd like to speak with Sisu.

SISU

...I'm Sisu. Who are you?

Kazutoshi advances past the desk, observes the cubicles.

KAZUTOSHI

Which one's yours?

SISU'S CUBICLE - MOMENTS LATER

Both Men stand.

KAZUTOSHI

I want to know if the frozen crypto project is true?

SISU

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

KAZUTOSHI

His life is at your disposal.

SISU

Who's?

KAZUTOSHI

*He must not be your friend...
(begins to leave)
Then he won't be missed.*

SISU

...It's true.

KAZUTOSHI

Where are you evaporating him to?

SISU

...Even I don't know that.

Bossman approaches.

Seeing this, Kazutoshi exits.

BOSSMAN
Is everything ok?

SISU
I need to rest my eyes for a few.

Sisu unfolds a futon extention from his desk, flops onto it, turns to his side and covers his body and head with a sheet.

BOSSMAN
(returning to his office)
Papers before 5:00!

After a moment, Sisu pokes his head up, then sits up, squares some papers and forges Miller's initials and signature.

EXT. MILLER'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Three Kosan Movers, men in surgical masks enter and untie Miller, the samurai helm backwards on his head.

A Kosan Mover removes the helm and reveals the gagged Miller.

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX - NIGHT

A craning equipment carries a container from the third-story apartment patio.

EXT. COMPLEX STREET - NIGHT

On a black Misaki super-bike, Kazutoshi reeves off and approaches the ramp of the empty trailer.

INT. EMPTY MOVING TRAILER - NIGHT

Kazutoshi rides the motorcycle up the ramp into the trailer. He sticks a putty tracker along the top edge, then backs-out. Two Kosan Movers approach.

KOSAN MOVER #1
Hey, watch it! What are you doing?

KAZUTOSHI
Sorry, I couldn't resist!

Kazutoshi backs fully down, steers right then jets away.

KOSAN MOVER #2
Nice bike, asshole!

EXT. MOVING TRUCK (MOVING) - NIGHT

A Kosan Mover drives Miller, who's in the passenger seat.

PHONE CALL - TRUCK/SISU'S APARTMENT

MILLER

You couldn't spare me ten hours and
unite me yourself?

SISU

I was afraid of what I might find.
I ID-ed the man, from the
surveillance video. He's Kazutoshi.
A cop. Or rather a former cop. He
was permanently discharged from the
force many years ago for malevolent
behavior.

MILLER

What kind of malevolent behavior?

SISU

He stuck a Yamaguchi-gumi member's
face in a potato pie, among other
things.

MILLER

He was fired for pieing a thug?

SISU

The oils melted the man's face off
and disfigured him.

MILLER

Oh...

SISU

Kaz is the Ghost. He wanders major
Japanese cities searching for intel
on his missing daughter.

MILLER

I've been told. How long do I have?
I thought I'd be there by now.

SISU

I lied to you again. But this time
it was necessary.

Miller SIGHS in anger.

SISU (CONT'D)

I told Nomura you are set near
Yokota, but instead you'll be right
where you need to be, in Shizuoka,
a city near the base of Mt. Fuji.

MILLER

I hope you know what you're doing.

SISU

This is what you wanted, remember?
The perfect space to learn the
craft of ink making. I have you
working with a Master Saku.

MILLER

What else did the case file reveal?

SISU

When it's appropriate, I'll tell
you. But first, when you ask around
include the name Saro Namada.

MILLER

Same initials.

SISU

Use all three names when asking.

MILLER

What if I find no leads?

SISU

You will. Now I need you to get rid
of your phone. It's the last thing
Yakuza can track you with.

MILLER

Done.

SISU

Do it now!... I won't leave you
stranded. When the time is right, I
will visit.

MILLER

Alri—

Sisu hangs-up, abrupt.

Miller hesitates, then tosses the phone out of the window.

EXT. SHIZUOKA - MORNING

The truck enters the snowy expanse, Mt. Fuji in the b.g..

INT. MILLER'S STUDIO SHACK - MORNING

Miller unpacks the replica armor, gazes into the hallow helm.

INT. 100 OIL LAMP SOOT ROOM - MORNING

SUPER: 1 Week Later

MASTER SAKU (sixties) teaches Miller how to pour rapeseed oil into the non-porous earthenware.

EXT. PEDESTRIAN PATH - NIGHT

SUPER: 2 Weeks Later

Miller nears a slip-foot DRUNKARD (twenties) trekking snow.

MILLER

Hey, have you heard of a Sophus or Satoshi Nakamoto from around here?

DRUNKARD

*(turns, reveals bottle)
Give me some money and I'll tell.*

MILLER

How about a Saro Namada?

DRUNKARD

*Yeah, I've heard of them all!
They're all my lovely friends!*

Miller continues past as the Drunkard CRACKLES.

INT. TEAHOUSE CYBERCAFÉ - DAY

SUPER: 3 Weeks Later

Miller rises from his computer and approaches a SOBO (sixties) who tends about behind the counter.

MILLER

The connection is weak again. Is this is the only place in the city to send emails and calls?

SOBO
That I don't know.

MILLER
These the only computers you have?

SOBO
Hai.

Sobo goes around, checks router, cables.

MILLER
You wouldn't happen to know of a Sophus Nakamoto or a Satoshi Nakamoto?

SOBO
No.

MILLER
What about a Saro Namada?

SOBO
Saro?

MILLER
Hai.

SOBO
I heard of only one Saro. A young man, many years back, he passed through Shizuoka. He even stayed under the cupboard a few nights.

MILLER
How long was he passing through?

SOBO
Thirteen months, I remember. Until about the end of hanami. Then he vanished. One of the last things he told us was he'll return someday.

MILLER
Japanese Westerner?

SOBO
Japanese from what I could tell. He was a nice young man. Funny, too.

MILLER
Did Saro happen to leave anything here? A note or some belongings or anything? A notebook, maybe?

...Sobo shakes her head No.

INT. GLUE ROOM - DAY

SUPER: 6 Weeks Later

Miller stirs the monkey glue vat, slow.

MILLER

Six months and I feel as unconnected as ever... Before, I lived completely for myself, fulfilling my desires by the letter. Yet neglected the essence of desire in doing so. Now, I'm doing the same, only with different instruments.

MASTER SAKU

Go add the perfumes.

Master Saku takes hold of the wooden pole and Miller grabs the fragrances and pours.

MILLER

Have you ever read the Christian Bible?

MASTER SAKU

No. Read it to me.

MILLER

I don't have internet... But Jesus Christ said: Look at the lilies of the field, they neither spin nor toil and yet we are... arrayed in such glory. And look at the birds, they don't reap or gather into barns, but their heavenly Father looks after them. Aren't we more important than birds? Why worry about food or drink? Or what clothes will we wear?

MASTER SAKU

That is excellent. Christ is enlightened.

MILLER

He also said... Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. And blessed are the pure in heart...

(MORE)

MILLER (CONT'D)

*for they will see God. And blessed
are the mournful... because they
will be comforted.*

MASTER SAKU

*...I want you to come to my home
this evening, Yari. For supper.*

INT. MASTER SAKU'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Master Saku, his Wife, and Miller dine.

MASTER SAKU

*I have my youngest son, Goro,
living here with us. He's a
drunkard. He sleeps all day, and at
night he goes out and gets wasted.
Sometimes he doesn't even come
back. Can you talk with him? Maybe
you can pray for him? You can sleep
here tonight. You won't have to be
at work until after noontime.*

MIDNIGHT

The Drunkard, Goro stumbles in.

Miller props up from his futon.

MILLER

Cheese and bread are on the table.

GORO

Who are you?

MILLER

Your father's apprentice.

Goro opens the bag.

GORO

My favorite!

Miller turns on his side.

MORNING

CLATTER.

Miller rises, walks to the kitchen area.

Goro rummages the icebox, stops.

GORO
Who are you?

MILLER
Your father's apprentice, remember?

GORO
I'd've remembered a grumpy gaijin.

Goro withdraws to the terrace with his dish, sits.

Goro notices Miller has followed, opposite the doorway.

GORO (CONT'D)
How long are you staying?

MILLER
*How come you're always out drunk?
Don't you know it hurts your
parents?*

Goro grunts.

MILLER (CONT'D)
*They want you to make something of
yourself. Live better.*

GORO
Hmph... What is there to live for?

MILLER
Live to earn. A living...

GORO
*Earn, so I can drink more. Good
thinking. I can drink to that!*

Goro rises, retrieves a saki bottle, motions with it to Miller, then sits back at under the terrace.

Goro takes a long swig.

MILLER
*You can find a girl. Fall in love.
Start a family of your own.*

GORO
Do you have a wife?

MILLER
No.

GORO
Then I don't need your advice, do I?

MILLER
Well, I've been in love.

GORO
So have I. Another thing to drink to!

Goro drinks.

Miller takes a couple of steps and stands above Goro.

Miller extends his hand.

GORO (CONT'D)
What?

Miller motions with his open hand.

GORO (CONT'D)
What?

MILLER
Hand me the bottle?

GORO
...You're going to spill it out.

MILLER
Just hand me the bottle.

GORO
No.

Miller keeps his hand outstretched, for a long moment.

Goro finally hands Miller the bottle.

Miller sits besides Goro.

MILLER
I can drink to that. To being in love.

Miller drinks.

Goro eyes Miller drinking.

Goro doesn't respond.

Miller is done and hands the bottle off.

MILLER (CONT'D)
So you lost the girl.

GORO
You should know, right?

Miller doesn't respond.

GORO (CONT'D)
*...But lost implies having
possessed, then lost...*

Goro takes a long swig, then hands it to Miller.

MILLER
...Either way, she's lost forever.

Goro swallows, ponders the sentence for a long moment.

GORO
She's...

His furrows begins to loosen.

GORO (CONT'D)
She's...

Goro looks at Miller.

Miller nods, Yes.

Goro smiles, amused, then CHUCKLES and stands.

Goro LAUGHS a breathy laugh.

Miller stands.

Goro LAUGHS again—tentative, yet LOUD, almost bewildering.

He looks down at the bottle in Miller's hand, grabs it, then tosses it—it SHATTERS.

Goro's eyes begin to tear as he EXHALES in relief.

He turns to Miller.

GORO (CONT'D)
You...?

Miller raises his eyebrows.

Goro lets out a CRY and hugs Miller. Hard.

GORO (CONT'D)

Arigato!

(LAUGHS then separates)

Arigato! What's your name?

Miller steps down the steps.

MILLER

Yari.

Miller walks out... past the glass and further.

GORO

Where are you going?

Miller stops and turns.

MILLER

To work.

Miller starts off again.

GORO

I'm coming with you!

Goro catches up.

INT. 100 OIL LAMP SOOT ROOM - DAY

Goro catches smoke by scraping soot off lamp lids and collecting it into pot.

MASTER SAKU (V.O.)

*My name, Saku, means Remembrance Of
The Lord. I will remember what your
Lord has done for me this day.*

INT. VINEYARD ESTATE KITCHEN - DAY

Emiko and AU (early-twenties) food prep.

AU

*I do remember one girl in... I
don't know where, she didn't eat
meat or seafood. Ever.*

EMIKO

I don't eat octopus.

AU

Really? How come?

EMIKO

I guess you can say, childhood...

AU

Trauma?

EMIKO

Memory, but alright. You didn't notice my tattoo here?

AU

Wait-a-minute! I'm just now remembering. There was this Hana. The pale-skinned girl. She only lived in the house for a week. I didn't talk to her much, but she said she met a man who was looking for you. Or at least his daughter with an octopus tattoo.

EMIKO

It's impossible. I'm an orphan from Ryukyu Islands...

AU

Doesn't necessarily rule you out.

EMIKO

The girl is Inagawa-kai?

AU

She was Sumiyoshi-kai, in fact. And the man's daughter, her name's suppose to be Emiko.

EMIKO

Yuka is all I've ever known... How long ago was this?

INT. MILLER'S STUDIO HUT - DAY

Miller is sprawled on the floor as Sisú enters.

SISU

Why aren't your hands black?

MILLER

Enlightened my way out of a job... Glad to see you didn't forget about me.

SISU

Is that the armor Nomura gifted you?

MILLER

Yup. A genuine replica.

SISU

I told you not to bring it.

MILLER

It's clean. Besides, he'd be here.

SISU

They get tiny these days, smaller than a grain of rice.

MILLER

You wanna doublecheck?

SISU

This weekend is the start of hanami season—the cherry blossom festival has this city packed until May. I brought flyers with all the info we have... You know what would grab everyone's attention?...

MILLER

I'm not dressing up in that thing.

INT. SAUNA - MORNING

Hachiro enters, dressed professionally.

HACHIRO

Sisu has skipped town.

NOMURA

Perhaps to Shizuoka?

The steam clears for a mere instant—Nomura on the bench.

HACHIRO

It was the last signal. But Sisu swears he's in Yokota.

NOMURA

I need you there. But I also want Sisu's wife to know how much that weasel loved her...

INT. SISU'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CLOSE UP - A Hand Pours Cool Tea in the Dark

MASTER BEDROOM

Miki SNORES.

GONG.

Miki jars awake.

She rolls out of bed in a huff and throws on a kimono.

DINNING ROOM

The room is dark, but not absolute, because of a few candles.

Miki shuffles in.

Hammer is at the horigotatsu table.

On the table, a teacup filled with tea on the opposite end of Hammer, along with a small hatchet and a small hammer as centerpieces.

MIKI

Hachiro?

HAMMER

Sit. Have a drink.

Miki hesitates, then makes her way to the table and sits.

She studies the cup, the gleam of rim and liquid.

HATCHET

(beat)

Go ahead.

MIKI

It's so dark in here.

HAMMER

I'll open the shutters.

Hatchet rises and goes to the window.

Miki's eyes dart around.

He opens the wooden shutters to a moonless night, then returns to his seat.

SILENT moment.

MIKI
It's still dark.

Hammer doesn't respond.

Miki looks down at her cup.

HAMMER
Only until morning.

Miki handles the cup then raises it to her nose.

MIKI
*It's cold... But I can still smell
the lavender...*

Hammer is silent.

Miki lowers, then raises and smells again.

She sets the teacup down.

HAMMER
*I can make you something else, if
you want?*

Miki's eyes deject, then crawl up the table.

MIKI
...No, I love lavender.

She handles the cup.

MIKI (CONT'D)
Hot or cold. I love lavender.

Miki inhales and exhales.

She raises the cup to her lips and drinks.

All of it.

Then sets the empty cup on the table.

INT. RAMEN-YA - DAY

SANO
*So, the Sisu you wanted info on is
wanted for murdering his wife.*

KAZUTOSHI

How long ago was this?

SANO

Yesterday morning... That's not reason enough, but a good one.

KAZUTOSHI

The estate is fortified. And I have no proper ID of her.

SANO

And you believe that making your way to Shizuoka will distract you from valuable time investigating?

KAZUTOSHI

Hai. But what if Shizuoka is also connected? I can't shake the idea that they are somehow connected.

SANO

No fear, no doubt.

KAZUTOSHI

No surprise, no hesitation.

SANO

I say go with your gut... And slice like the wind.

EXT. FESTIVAL PARKING - DAY

Hatchet looks down at the signal tracker on his phone.

EXT. FESTIVAL BOOTH LANE - DAY

Children set off firecrackers and revelers fireworks.

Festival-goers meander between booths.

Sisu passes out flyers, then approaches Miller.

Decked in the replica samurai gear, Miller stands and marvels up at the cherry-blossoms.

SISU

Have you never seen a cherry blossom before? Come help and talk.

MILLER

In a few weeks, the petals will pepper the ground and different feet will be stomping over them.

SISU

Life has a funny way of becoming petals under our feet.

MILLER

...So it does.

Two Policemen approach.

POLICEMAN #1

You two. Listen here.

POLICEMEN #2

You need a license to carry that katana.

MILLER

It's harmless. It's a replica.

POLICEMAN #1

Doesn't matter, you need a license.

MILLER

Or else what?

POLICEMAN #2

Or else we'll detain you. What do you think we to do?

MILLER

Sisu?

SISU

I told you not to bring it...

Miller stares back at the Policemen and pauses.

Miller makes a sudden jolt to his right, then bumps straight into Kazutoshi before he starts.

KAZUTOSHI

I'll bring them in. Turn around, Mr. Yari. We've been through this before...

Miller complies and Kazutoshi cuffs.

Kazutoshi hands Policeman #2 his badge.

KAZUTOSHI (CONT'D)
 (to Policemen)
If you don't mind?

The Policemen consider, then shake their head No.

EXT. STREET-SIDE - DAY

Miller, Kazutoshi, and Sisu near Katuzoshi's car.

MILLER
*Thank you my guardian angel, but
 can you loosen the cuffs?*

KAZUTOSHI
 (yanks cuffs)
Shut up.

SISU
Where are you taking him?

KAZUTOSHI
You, in the car, also.

INT. KAZUTOSHI'S CAR (PARKED) - DAY

KAZUTOSHI
*I will use you two as bait, so I
 can infiltrate Nomura's estate...
 Did you find what you were after?*

MILLER
*Not quite. The only lead is from a
 teahouse sobo. And it's nothing.
 Tell him Sisu.*

SISU
I didn't follow-up myself.

INT. TEAHOUSE CYBERCAFÉ - DAY

Cuffs off, Miller and Kazutoshi sit, tea about.

Sisu talks with Sobo in the b.g..

MILLER
*...Are you willing to have us
 killed and along with yourself, to
 risk it all on an emotional, gut
 response that at best will only
 placate your desire for revenge?*

KAZUTOSHI
You've never had a child.

MILLER
 (sotto)
 ...Not legitimately.

SISU
 (approaches)
Great detective work by a great American... And by great I mean sloppy. She said she'll give us Saro's belongings that he left behind in a shed years ago.

MILLER
 I asked her if he left anything!

EXT. BACK OF TEAHOUSE - DAY

A small backyard garden with a shed.

SISU
What kind of trees are those?

SOBO
Mandarin trees.

MILLER
*"Oranges in the sky."
 (to Sobo)
 I asked you if Saro left anything.*

SOBO
Not in the teahouse...

SISU
She doesn't trust foreigners.

SOBO
*He said he would always return.
 Only he never did.*

MILLER
 We know Sobo, open the shed.

SISU
Please open, my Dear.

SOBO
He never said not to.

Sobo uses a storage key and opens the shed doors.

INT. STORAGE SHED - DAY

Boxes, gardening supplies.

Sobo enters.

SOBO

Let me find the box!

INT. TEAHOUSE CYBERCAFÉ - DAY

The Men examine a cardboard box of many, nearly identical hard drives and stack them about the table.

INT. TEAHOUSE CYBERCAFÉ - EVENING

Hatchet enters, walks further in.

The samurai helmet sits on top of the counter.

SOBO (O.S.)

What can I get you, Sweetie?

INT. AIRBNB - MORNING

The three Men surround a plain bed—on top are two identical black briefcases.

MILLER

Maybe you could've tied a red ribbon or something?

KAZUTOSHI

The one with the explosives is slightly lighter.

Kazutoshi brandishes handcuffs and cuffs Sisu's wrist to a suitcase.

SISU

I do have the hard drives, right?

Kazutoshi flares his fingers out.

KAZUTOSHI

Boosh.

MILLER

Seems a bit counterintuitive.

KAZUTOSHI

I don't know you well enough to trust you with the drives. If all goes well, we'll take them to your friend. If you decide on playing tricks—

Kazutoshi flares his fingers again.

KAZUTOSHI (CONT'D)

Boosh.

MILLER

Fair enough.

KAZUTOSHI

Not fair enough! You don't have C-4 strapped to your arm!

EXT. SHINKANSEN STATION - DAY

The Men board.

INT. BULLET TRAIN CABIN - DAY

The Men enter their private cabin, spa and all.

MILLER

Woah, Kazutoshi's rollin'?

KAZUTOSHI

Donation.

Kazutoshi hands Miller his own banking card.

Miller has no quip...

Kazutoshi takes the window seat.

Sisu sits, suitcase in lap.

Miller strips down and prepares to enter the spa.

KAZUTOSHI (CONT'D)

I wouldn't. We must be ready for every outcome...

MILLER

I'm ready to relax. On my dime, mind you.

KAZUTOSHI

*If anything were to happen, we meet
at the American Center in Hiroo...*

Miller eases in...

The Men wait in SILENCE as the bullet train zips.

LATER

Miller compares the blob-like jacuzzi bubbles to the perfectly spherical micro bubbles against champagne glass.

Sisu bearhugs the briefcase as if being closer to the material may spare him split second agony.

The soft sunlight carries the weight of a heavily sedated Sunday afternoon.

Kazutoshi remains perked, analyzing every piece of WHITE NOISE above an expected threshold: Sisu's semi-muted WHIMPER, Miller's SIGH, the train's slight HUM.

In a moment, the train smooths out to a stop.

Miller and Sisu snap from their trance.

Kazutoshi scans the passengers on the platform, his instincts of hyperawareness on high alert.

Pressing his head against the window, Kazutoshi notices Hatchet afar off.

KAZUTOSHI

*There are 16 cars. We are on the
9th. You both need to go to the
16th.*

MILLER

What's up?

KAZUTOSHI

Now. It's Hatchet. He's boarding.

MILLER

*That's impossible. How did he catch
the train here? And even if he did.
Why? Makes no sense.*

KAZUTOSHI

(rises)

*I trust my eyes more than your
logic.*

SISU
(rises)
Come on, Yari.

Miller stirs out with a heave and a huff.

KAZUTOSHI
(back to door)
16th car. I'll doublecheck.

Kazutoshi exits with a briefcase.

MILLER
He's not even sure.

Miller dries off.

INT. 8TH CAR - DAY

Kazutoshi heads through the 7th car, scanning passengers.

INT. 9TH CAR - DAY

Fully dressed, Miller enters the 9th with Sisu and his briefcase.

They dawdle through toward the 10th.

INT. SERVICE CABIN - DAY

Kazutoshi enters and swipes a service visor from the food trolley and enters the 5th.

INT. 5TH CAR - DAY

As he walks, Kazutoshi recognizes the back of Hatchet's black crewcut head and dons the visor.

INT. 12TH CAR - DAY

Sisu and Miller enter, Sisu in front.

Several feet in and Sisu spots the Hatchet in a seat in the middle of the car.

Sisu almost screams and hurries to find a seat, sitting quite literally on top a Lady's lap, who does YELP.

She pushes Sisu off.

MILLER
What are you doing?

Hatchet has noticed.

SISU
Go. Go. Go!

Sisu rushes Miller out.

Miller glimpses Hatchet rise and give chase.

INT. 5TH CAR - DAY

Kazutoshi slinks up to Hatchet from behind and slides the briefcase under his seat.

KAZUTOSHI
Good afternoon. Ticket, please.

Brim over eyes.

After some prodding about, Hatchet hands his ticket over.

His left pinkie finger is fully intact.

Kazutoshi reviews the ticket.

It's not Hatchet—not entirely.

KAZUTOSHI (CONT'D)
(choked back)
*You're headed. To Tokyo on
business?*

HAMMER
What does it say there?

KAZUTOSHI
Arigato.

Kazutoshi hands the ticket back and heads on.

He comes the 4th.

Sisu and Miller burst into the 5th.

SISU & MILLER
Kaz!

Kazutoshi enters the 4th without turning around.

Sisu and Miller make their way through the car.

Hammer rises.

Sisu and Miller stop.

Hatchet enters the 5th.

They're pinned between Hammer towards the front and Hatchet towards the rear.

Sisu bearhugs his briefcase.

All four Men stand, wait.

SISU

Between two tigers. Two infinities.

MILLER

Can you not right now.

SISU

It's an ancient koan. A philosophical riddle.

Hatchet pulls out a hatchet.

Hammer pulls out a hammer.

MILLER

Well, what's the answer? 'Cause these tigers look hungry.

SISU

The answer is a tasty strawberry.

HATCHET

I'm taking your hand, along with the briefcase!

MILLER

I hope the strawberry represents some kind of weapon.

Sisu clinches the briefcase on his chest, looks down at it...

He hoists it above his head.

Arms locked. Eyes closed. He INHALES deep. Triumphant. :))

SISU

You want it? There's a bomb in here! The other briefcase is the one you want!

The passengers CLAMOR and panic.

They begin their exits.

SISU (CONT'D)
And I will use it!

The car is cleared.

The briefcase is still held in midair.

As some of the passengers escape to the 4th, Kazutoshi has backtracked, sneaks behind Hammer, and loops a wire around his neck.

In that instant, Hammer somehow manages to stick the hammer between his neck and the wire.

A struggle ensues window-side.

KAZUTOSHI
Sisu! Go to the 1st!

Sisu exits toward the 4th.

Miller spots the other briefcase.

MILLER
The hard drives!

Hatchet eyes the briefcase under the seat as well.

Miller feigns for the briefcase, then goes for it.

KAZUTOSHI
Red ribbon, Yari!

Miller reaches the briefcase, then slides it to the approaching Hatchet, and runs out.

The train stops at Shinagawa Station.

Kazutoshi and Hammer strain for positioning.

Hatchet picks up the briefcase and opens it.

Kazutoshi kicks Hammer to his knees and exits.

Packed with C-4.

Hatchet turns and shares a look with Hammer.

THE 4TH

Moving away, Kazutoshi slams the two-point detonator.

EXT. SHINKANSEN PLATFORM - DAY

Sisu and Miller make some distance from the train—

EXPLOSION.

MOMENTS LATER

Sisu and Miller see sky as they climb stairs.

INT. NOMURA'S ESTATE - DAY

O-NAMI

(into phone)

*I'm taking the group to Osaka now.
You still want the Yuka and Au
here?*

NOMURA (V.O.)

*Hai. I'll reach the valley as you
reach Osaka.*

INT. PACHINKO PARLOR - DAY

Miller and Sisu enter and cruise down the machine aisle.

MILLER

You know the Yakuza control
pachinko parlors?

SISU

This one's Sumiyoshi-kai owned.

In his haste, Sisu collides into a SOFU (mid-sixties) and
dumps his container—pachinko balls splash everywhere.

Sisu and Miller continue down the aisle.

SOFU

You're not going to help me?

SISU

So sorry—one flew over here!

Sisu pretends to pick up a ball then darts away to the back
of the parlor and down a staircase.

Miller follows.

BASEMENT DOOR

Sisu KNOCKS, excessive.

WEAK VOICE

Hey! I hear you!... Who is it?

SISU

Ikeo, my friend! It's me!

IKEO

Sisu?... Who's the grumpy gaijin?

MILLER

The grumpy gaijin is Yari.

The door opens.

INT. PARLOR BASEMENT - DAY

An underground miners' and computer network nerd dungeon.

IKEO

Your Japanese isn't so bad.

MILLER

Nine years of practice.

IKEO

Ah, almost as long as I've been hikikomori.

MILLER

A hikikomori hacker... Sisu said you ran the pachinko parlor.

IKEO

I do. But I have others do the running. I get to stay in here and enjoy the life.

MILLER

Enjoy no life, got it.

IKEO

...Sisu, I'm not going to say I'm happy to see you, until I see what you bought!... What did you bring?

SISU

I brought something better.

Sisu clears some space and set the briefcase on the table.

SISU (CONT'D)

Hard drives.

IKEO

These stolen? You know my stance.

(to Miller)

Before I became an ethical hacker I was an unethical hacker.

SISU

It's not a hack so much as... I need you to scrub each hard drive and extract all hash numbers.

Miller peruses the basement's living quarters.

IKEO

Sounds simple enough. For my time?

SISU

Give me your list and we'll go right now.

IKEO

Are you sure? It's a big one.

SISU

Give me the list.

Ikeo hands Sisu a list.

Sisu skims it.

SISU (CONT'D)

Done. Is it a deal?

IKEO

Sure. I have several computers idle. It'll take an hour to ninety.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE #1 - DAY

Sisu and Miller pick out Ikeo's stables and favorites.

MILLER

That's all he wants, a bunch of junk food?

SISU

He's easy to please. And the job's not hard for him.

MILLER
Why is he a recluse?

SISU
Do I look like his shrink? Ask him.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE #2 - DAY

The homeless man, Kinjiro unloads two armfuls worth of snacks, sweets, and jerky onto the service counter.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE #3 - DAY

Kazutoshi pulls many medium-sized potato chip bags.

INT. PACHINKO PARLOR BASEMENT - DAY

SISU
Four different stores, but we have everything, exact.

Ikeo examines, then kicks the suitcase of hard drives.

IKEO
I wiped them clean.

SISU
Who said to wipe them?

IKEO
Relax, I found all of your hash numbers, and sooner than expected. Do you know why?

MILLER
There weren't any.

IKEO
No. Just two.

SISU
Ok, give it here.

Ikeo hands Sisu a floppy disk.

SISU (CONT'D)
You couldn't put it on a stick?

MILLER
It is the Land of the Fax.

IKEO

That's just one. The second I have.

SISU

Ok, give it here.

IKEO

I was thinking... The hash numbers... I want in, on whatever nefarious plan you guys have cooking. I want a finders fee on just one account. 7%.

SISU

I'm gonna choke your throat...

MILLER

Easy, Sisu... 5%...

Sisu looks on as Miller nods to Ikeo...

Ikeo takes out the hidden second hash, a stick.

MILLER (CONT'D)

BUUUT, you have to walk outside of this dungeon with us.

IKEO

...No deal.

MILLER

Too late—

Miller wrestles the jump from the seated Ikeo.

MILLER (CONT'D)

And that's how your type of dealmaking works. A deal is a deal is a deal. Come on, Sisu.

Miller and Sisu head to the entrance and exit.

INT. PACHINKO PARLOR - DAY

Miller and Sisu head up the steps and down the aisle.

SOFU

(on all fours)

You scoundrel! I'm still missing some!

SISU

Sir, it's a literal yen.

SOFU
A yen I don't have!

Miller and Sisu reach the parlor entrance.

IKEO (O.S.)
HEEEYYYY! I'm out!

MILLER
I said out of the parlor!

Miller and Sisu exit.

EXT. PACHINKO PARLOR ENTRANCE - DAY

Miller and Sisu walk up the street and reach to a crosswalk.

Ikeo cannonballs out.

IKEO
Heeeyyyy! Sisu, tell your friend I did it!

MILLER
 (to Sisu)
 That big light behind the clouds is the sun.

SISU
The light behind the clouds is the sun!

Ikeo squints upward... Unsatisfied, Ikeo begins chase.

Miller and Sisu cross.

Ikeo catches up, grimacing.

IKEO
5%. I'm here. I'm out. 5%.

Miller and Sisu ignore and keep walking.

IKEO (CONT'D)
Ok, 4%...

Nothing.

IKEO (CONT'D)
3%... You guys... Come on... Stop, please... 2%... 2% and we have a deal... Sisu... Sisu...

Ikeo jogs in front of Miller, into his face.

Miller stops.

IKEO (CONT'D)

*1%... That's fair. 1%. I don't want
to lose an old friend... And I want
to make a new one. 1%.*

MILLER

*Here's the change from your list.
(hands some bills over)
Get out of your room, before
another golden opportunity passes
you by.*

Miller and Sisu continue around and past Ikeo.

Ikeo gives a ferocious SNARL, teeth and all, to their backs.

Miller and Sisu continue up the street.

Ikeo relaxes his facial muscles and turns dejected.

MOMENTS LATER

Ikeo has backtracked, waits for the cross-light.

Ikeo's eyes wander to his left: kissaten café grand opening.

Ikeo stares, mesmerized...

The BEEPING of the crosswalk sign snaps him back, but he
doesn't move his head.

INT. SEMI-CROWDED KISSATEN - DAY

Ikeo enters, approaches the counter, looks up at the menu.

FEMALE BARISTA

Hello, I'll be with you in a bit!

Ikeo puts his hand into his pocket and pulls out the several
bills at his side and fans them slightly.

INT. PARKING LOT - DAY

A trunk POPS.

Sano hands Kazutoshi a suppressor which Kazutoshi
disassembles.

Sano watches Kazutoshi pack a black backpack—the handgun and suppressor-nozzle, a black 26.5mm VZ44 Czech flare pistol, road flares, ammo, binoculars, and last, a half dozen bags of potato chips.

Sano gives Kazutoshi a curious look.

Kazutoshi returns a furious stare.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Backpack strapped, Kazutoshi zooms on his Misaki super-bike.

EXT. HIROO AMERICAN CENTER - EVENING

Delinquents skateboard nearby.

MILLER

What are the chances he survived
and shows up?

SISU

He's probably an actual ghost...
Serves him right for not telling me
I wasn't holding the bomb the whole
time!

MILLER

The bomb denoted on the train.

SISU

I know.

MILLER

Do you? Sounds like you're still
carrying it around on your arm?

SISU

...What if... We call Nomura?

MILLER

Might be the move. Hand him half of
what we have. Just the floppy.

SISU

He's a murderer, but a traditional
murderer. It's important for an
oyabun to keep his word. Get Nomura
to agree and maybe we won't have to
run from the Yakuza our entire
lives?

MILLER

Do you have any idea how we'd go about obtaining a username and password?

SISU

Haven't had time to figure it out.

MILLER

...Ok, let's do it.

Miller calls Nomura.

NOMURA (V.O.)

Mr. Miller...

MILLER

Pick me up and I'll deliver all the info we have myself. I want peace.

NOMURA (V.O.)

What is it that I want from you?

MILLER

The single hash number found on the drives.

NOMURA (V.O.)

Noooooo, Mr. Miller. I wanted your loyalty. Very different.

MILLER

I'll trade the hash number I do have for my very life. Gladly. Only I need your word you won't hurt me or Sisu.

NOMURA (V.O.)

Why would I want to kill Sisu? His job is only half done. But you have my word. I will allow you both to live. Where are you?

MILLER

Hiroo American Center.

NOMURA (V.O.)

Now I've promised you'll live. However, Hammer, he'll be picking you up. And I can't guarantee he doesn't immediately kill you both. Hammer can be very... hardheaded sometimes.

MILLER

I'm guessing his brother didn't
make it?

NOMURA (V.O.)

Brother? That's cute... Stay put.

EXT. KAZUTOSHI'S MOTORBIKE (MOVING) - EVENING

Kazutoshi rides through countryside, skims over a very
shallow waterford.

EXT./INT. HIROO AMERICAN CENTER/LUXURY HUMMER - EVENING

Hammer picks Miller and Sisu up in a black Hummer.

Hammer tosses them blindfolds.

HAMMER

*You won't need them on. Because you
two aren't coming back.*

Miller and Sisu look at each other.

EXT. ON A HILL - EVENING

Clad in black, Kazutoshi screws in the suppressor while
overlooking the estate, bike on kickstand in the b.g..

EXT. ESTATE ENTRANCE GATE - EVENING

The luxury Hummer arrives.

EXT. VINEYARD - EVENING

Kazutoshi sets a lighter to bags of chips within the vines.

DIFFERING ROW - MOMENTS LATER

Kazutoshi lights another bag of chips.

DIFFERING ROW - MOMENTS LATER

Another fire-bag.

INT. MANSION HALLWAY - EVENING

Miller and Sisu walk in, Hammer trails.

STAIRS

The Men head up.

UPSTAIRS OBEYA

They meet Nomura who stands beyond the couches, overlooking the pool through vertical wall shutters.

There are large business boards about—info, charts, graphs.

EXT. NEAR GARDEN GATE - EVENING

A Henchman patrols, notices the garden gate unlatched from a distance and stops—

MUZZLED ROUND and headshot from the side.

Kazutoshi clears the body to the side parapet.

Kazutoshi hugs along the exterior wall until he's in view of a surveillance camera.

He shoots it out.

INT. UPSTAIRS OBEYA - EVENING

Nomura turns... stares in SILENCE.

Miller and Sisu don't move.

EXT. POOL AREA - EVENING

The flames of the fire-pit spin and whip with the wind.

Kazutoshi crouches low toward the BBQ, unlatches its door, and reveals the propane tank.

He begins to unscrew the hose for the tank.

INT. UPSTAIRS OBEYA - EVENING

Miller steps toward the center wooden table and SLAPS the floppy down.

EXT. POOL AREA - EVENING

Kazutoshi lays the propane tank over the fire-pit, then backtracks in stealth.

INT. UPSTAIRS OBEYA - EVENING

NOMURA

Few things I hate more than willful disobedience. This syndicate remains operable, because orders are carried out—a clear, concise, carefully constructed chain of command. Never wavering in the audacious face of outrageous circumstance.

MILLER

In our defense. We aren't Inagawa-kai.

SISU

I am... Technically. I've disbanded long ago... If that helps any...

Miller shakes his head.

NOMURA

My American friend, I don't tolerate snakes unless they are under the shade of my garden.

INT. NEAR GARDEN GATE - EVENING

A Henchman exits from the side of the house, strolls toward the gate along the side wall...

The Henchman stops, gazes up at surveillance.

Kazutoshi creeps out from the shadowy hedge.

As soon as it dawns on the Henchman that the damage to the surveillance is not electrical—

Kazutoshi SNIPES—

INT. UPSTAIRS OBEYA - EVENING

NOMURA

People and tools are only as
invaluable as they are
irreplaceable... I hope, Mr.
Miller, you prove to be an asset
the next time we meet. You two are
dismissed.

Miller and Sisu exit with Hammer.

INT. LARGE GARAGE - EVENING

Miller and Sisu enter, followed by Hammer.

Hammer pulls out a hammer, shadows Miller, and raises it to
strike.

Several HUSHED ROUNDS drop Hammer.

Miller and Sisu turn and spot Kazutoshi stance-d towards
them.

KAZUTOSHI

(to Sisu)

*Get the keys and start the jeep. Be
ready when we return.*

(to Miller)

Come on.

INT. MANSION HALLWAY - EVENING

Crouched and cocked, Kazutoshi leads Miller through.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - EVENING

Kazutoshi, then Miller enters.

Kazutoshi approaches the hair and Body of a woman under the
sheets of a circular bed.

Kazutoshi pulls back the sheets.

Emiko enters from the bathroom, toothbrush in mouth, while AU
leaps from the bed STARTLED.

KAZUTOSHI

Emiko. My daughter.

Kazutoshi makes his way toward the center, toward the hidden Nomura.

Miller enters—a surprised Kazutoshi turns and nearly shoots at Miller.

Nomura rushes from the behind a engulfed couch, spears Kazutoshi's left side with a javelin and drives him up a step and towards the wall.

Miller shoots Nomura down, hitting him twice—Nomura falling back into the smoke and fire.

Miller rushes over, kneels, and tends to HEAVING Kazutoshi.

Miller looks over and sees only flames and smoke—no Nomura.

Kazutoshi passes without a word.

Miller rises and exits.

EXT. VINEYARD - NIGHT

The vineyard burns, ablaze.

EXT./INT. MANSION/LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The vineyard and Mansion is ablaze.

Miller descends the stairs.

EXT. VINEYARD ROAD - NIGHT

Miller walks the road, firetruck pulling alongside in the distance.

INT. FIRETRUCK (MOVING) - NIGHT

Face faintly charred, Miller rides shotgun.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

As soon as the Nurse exits, Miller pulls the IV, jumps from bed and heads to the dresser.

He grabs a ziplock of his passport and belongings, then slips out, patient-robbed.

EXT. PREFECTURE ALLEY - NIGHT

A gowned Miller jogs.

INT. TOMOKO'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tomoko and Emiko embrace, weeping.

Sisu in the b.g..

EXT. NEAR AN UNDERPASS - NIGHT

Gowned Miller hops a chain-linked fence.

Miller walks a few paces.

DISTANT ANIMAL NOISES.

Miller gives puzzled look, but continues.

MORE INDISTINCT ANIMAL NOISES.

A CRY OR DEEP YELP.

Miller walks away from the underpass on the cement.

MORE MULTIPLE CRIES, only closer now.

Miller picks up his pace.

MORE YELPS.

Miller starts to jog.

Miller looks back.

MORE CRIES.

Miller runs, looks back, as something like dogs, hyena sized, turns the corner across the cemented area at the underpass fence.

Several more of the animals turn the corner.

Miller starts to sprint.

The animals are a sounder of wild city boars.

Miller reaches a drain ditch and without hesitation slides down.

The boars ROAR and have nearly caught up.

Miller splashes across, then begins to climb up the other end's steep cemented slope.

Heated and crazed, the boars stampede headfirst into the drain ditch, roll and barrel down.

Miller reaches the top and heads to a chain-linked fence.

Miller hesitates and looks back.

Miller hears the boars HOOFING up the slope.

Miller quickly panics up the fence.

One boar makes it to the top and bum-rushes toward Miller.

Miller collapses over, tearing his gown.

The boar COLLIDES into the chain, SNORTS, YELPS.

Miller slides away, and grasps what's left of his gown.

The rest of the boars join the first.

The boars RATTLE the fence, YELPING.

Miller rises and walks off.

EXT. YAKUZA SLUM - NIGHT

Miller traverses.

Miller stumbles into a pedestrian tunnels—several blue tarps lined as makeshift tents.

PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL

An airplane BOOMS above.

Some homeless are canned around a drum-fire.

Miller hugs the wall, sits short of the vagrants and huddles himself against some debris...

INT. TOMOKO'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Tomoko cooks and serves Emiko breakfast.

INT. PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL - MORNING

As morning dawns, Kinjiro wakes Miller.

KINJIRO
*You want some clothes? . . . I have
pants, and shoes. And a coat.*

MILLER
Hai.

KINJIRO
These are pretty new.

Miller receives.

MILLER
Are you sure?

KINJIRO
I've got plenty.

Miller dresses.

Kinjiro hands Miller a cowboy poncho serape of a dull color.

MILLER
*You wouldn't happen to have cash
for a plane ticket?*

KINJIRO
Hide in the luggage.

MILLER
You didn't say you haven't.

KINJIRO
*You haven't said you've been
homeless very long.*

MILLER
First night and day actually.

KINJIRO
Let's walk.

The Men exit the tunnel and break light.

OUTSIDE TUNNEL

Kinjiro leads Miller down the lane... farther still.

KINJIRO
What's your name?

MILLER
Yari.

KINJIRO
Aren't you a Westerner?

MILLER
Hai.

KINJIRO
Japanese. Goo-d.

MILLER
Good.

The two Men cross some grey boulder-stones and arrive at a barbed chain-linked fence facing an air field.

Kinjiro wraps his fingers around the steel wire.

KINJIRO
*I'm not joking. You can stow away.
 You would need to climb up the
 landing gear...*

Miller touches fence.

MILLER
*What's the survival rate on trying
 something like that?*

KINJIRO
*Don't know. They never come back to
 tell.*

Kinjiro reaches into his coat... He pulls out plastic wrapped dumplings and extends them to Miller.

Miller receives, unwraps, and starts to eat.

KINJIRO (CONT'D)
*There's a cut in the fence much
 further down. If you ever decide.*

MILLER
 (looks skyward)
I imagine it's cold up there.

Kinjiro shakes his head.

KINJIRO
I would't want to know.

Kinjiro heads back to the lane, balancing over stones.

Miller SIGHS with a mouthful, looks back up.

EXT. PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL - NIGHT

Miller is huddled alone between tents.

The drum-fire flicks.

Several sit or stand about.

EXT. PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL - DAWN

Miller rises, notices no one and heads for dawning light.

EXT. PATH NEAR AIR FIELD - DAWN

Miller walks the same path, reaches the cut in the fence.

EXT. AIR FIELD - DAWN

Miller crouches low on the tarmac near the building.

His eyes locked on a taxiing commercial plane.

Miller SCOFFS... Waits, considers.

Miller backs-out and backtracks towards the open air field.

EXT. PEDESTRIAN TUNNEL - MORNING

Most of there tents cleared.

Dejected, Miller huddles into a ball.

He SNIFFS... Closer.

Miller reaches under his poncho into his coat: dumplings wrapped in plastic and a note in kanji.

KINJIRO (V.O.)
*"To the polite American, Yari.
Here's your ticket. —Kinjiro"*

MILLER
I don't read kanji, but thank you.

INT. AIRPORT CHECK IN - MORNING

Miller checks in.

INT. AIRPLANE (MOVING) - MORNING

BLACK TURTLENECK (forties) from "human²" SNIFFS the air.

He decides the smell's location, Miller at the window seat.

BLACK TURTLENECK
Excuse me. No offense, but you
stink. I mean bad.

MILLER
It's only my second day homeless.

INT. TOMOKO'S APARTMENT - EVENING

From the sofa, Emiko and Tomoko watch a home movie together:

A few Relatives in the grassy front.

The camera pans up to a pregnant Tomato who waves from an
upstairs window.

EMIKO (O.S.)
I still haven't seen him. He's
always behind the camera.

TOMOKO (O.S.)
That's just Kazutoshi. He was
always behind the camera.

INT. US AIRPORT - EVENING

Miller skips the baggage claim.

INT. TAXI CAB (MOVING) - EVENING

The taxi pulls to the side.

Miller pays, exits, and approaches a public library.

INT. AQUARIUM (FLASHBACK) - DAY

Kazutoshi leaves four year old Emiko to view the swallow tank.

EMIKO (V.O.)

The only remaining memory. I remember it vaguely. And yet, it carries with it all the sensations of a dream I had only yesterday.

An octopus changes colors from off-white to pale-yellow.

EMIKO (V.O.)

A happy, calm, peaceful place. A secret silence. A dream full-filled.

Four year old Emiko reaches out a hand to pet the octopus.

EMIKO (V.O.)

Something I could withdraw serenity from, from time to time... if only, from time to time...

Kazutoshi leans her forward.

Emiko reaches, stretches.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - MORNING

Miller is at a computer station.

SILAS STURGILL (mid-twenties?) from "crashingMNT" is on a nearby computer.

Miller's eyes glide over Sisu's email.

SISU (V.O.)

Out of all the usernames and passwords, "goldlover" and "fafcfffacfff" seem the most obvious. However, "fafcfffacfff" equates to 7F2A2C, an html hex color code. And among the analogous colors, Torea Bay stands out. A type of blue and also a city in New Zealand. Saro's hometown perhaps? I'd enter the city's coordinates: 41.21981788, 174.03073850. Beyond that, who knows, I need time to dig for more possibilities.

Miller's monitor: commercial crypto account—add wallet.

Miller enters the hash number, "goldlover" username, and coordinates as password.

Breathing accelerates, he presses enter.

Inputs rejected.

INT. ICU - DAY

Nomura is bandaged from head to toe.

Nomura watches the broadcast begin on the flatscreen.

FEMALE NEWSCASTER

(in Japanese)

A historical day in the field of crypto currency and world finance. One of the titan Bitcoin accounts of Satoshi Nakamoto, founder of the Bitcoin's blockchain, has suddenly been moved after decades of inactivity. In a matter of a few days, this massive whale account has been syphoned into dozens of anonymous crypto accounts... An estimated worth totaling 26 billion US dollars...

INT. TOMOKO'S KITCHEN - DAY

TOMOKO

Emiko!

EMIKO (O.S.)

Yes?...

Emiko enters.

EMIKO (CONT'D)

What is it?

Tomoko tenses with the envelope and letter.

EMIKO (CONT'D)

Mother?...

TOMOKO

It's your father's life insurance...

CLOSE UP - Life Insurance Stipend Totaling 100 Million Yen

EXT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

A list of possible passwords on Miller's screen.

Miller scrolls to the top and copies "fafcfffacfff" and pastes it in the entry box on the next tab.

Miller enters the password...

Miller smiles, closes all tabs, then removes his jump.

His smiles widens, drawn-out, wildly subtle.

He pivots his head in a calculated attempt to deflect attention.

Miller remains rooted in the simplicity of his surroundings—the un-dusted shelves, the ancient-scented nostalgia of faded books, the environment unfazed by the day's ordinaries.

Miller finally rises and heads out...

The auto-doors slide and bump open, as Miller nears the exit.

He stops, his shadow cascading backwards...

After the few final strides through the second doorway Miller's shadow dissipates, as all life does, in an instant, as a vapor, as cigarette smoke of a pedestrian strikes one of the hardest and sharpest of noses.

FADE OUT.

THE END