

## THE HOUSE THAT SHADOWS BUILT.

### PART FIVE: THE FEAR OUTSIDE

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I woke up with a stabbing feeling, a sound I felt, the screeching of braking a train on the tracks. Awake but unable to move I knew that the Fat Man was in the room with me. I could smell the putrid dampness of his skin. After a moment my body suddenly let out all the coiled up tension and I sat up in bed screaming with a dry mouth. On my mattress was a greasy black handprint.

Once awake my mind was full of thoughts. How unprepared we all were, hunter gatherers searching for the migration patterns of a grazing animal in a world dripping in information, sweating patterns. Our brains were primitive calculators overstretched. They had to evolve. Some managed this alone of course, by will and effort, but others required manipulation.

We kept the windows covered so that none of the shadows escaped. The passing of the day defined by the schedule that me and The Kid had established. I had declared that we needed to be more active in gathering material. The daily

sessions were always full and over the last couples of days I'd seen people sitting on the steps because the seats were all taken. Not all were permanent residents of the house but a growing number were and I decided we needed to do two sessions a day to meet demand. Attendance to one of the two was compulsory for residents.

Despite this growth, The Kid was itching to get outside and stretch his legs. The arteries of the house were closing in on him, and his nicotine and speed amplified nervous system. As I watched he removed his cap and shook dandruff from his head; a cascade of dead skin, dust, flakes of paint and scabs. His pupils were rocking. His long hair had matted itself into ropes that whipped his back as he paced the impatiently aisles of the screen, like his father before him in the ashen burned out pews of that destroyed church.

The Kid had a plan. He wanted to break into the University and loot the editing suites. He had taken Dave with him and cased the place the joint the night before. They told me excitedly how the university had everything we could possibly need to take our production to the next level and although I was excited by the opportunity for growth I was worried about The Kid drawing heat, so far the cops had left us alone but that wasn't something we could take for granted.

The next night he gathered his gang in the foyer. Dave parked out front in a white van, made grey by grime and then scratched off again by kids in the shape of

swastikas and cocks. Some in the Kid's group some carried crowbars and torches, hammers, one fumbled with a butterfly knife. The Kid paced up and down his cap pulled down under a hood. They left the foyer, I heard a van starting up and leaving.

They returned triumphant just before dawn and the House buzzed with activity. Dave and the others unloaded boxes filled with computers and monitors. The Kid led the reconstruction of the university's editing suites with Sid and her team of editors. He commanded the action with bellows and dramatic waves of his arms, his hair whipping as he turned. His theatrical, dramatic bent rising to a new level as he took on the persona of prophet savant, spitting and coughing, sounds open for interpretation as percussive sermons.

'Doses' was in The Herd vernacular, what we called the hour long montages of what's under the skin of society; shiny pulpy ruptures, naked bone sticking through cheap sweatshop jeans, flesh upon flesh, flesh erupting through flesh, faces sucked of humanity, curves without sexuality, frozen sweat, broken skin - a landfill of human lives, mortality and fatality as a storm, a rushing storm that did more than erode our minds. Death was the sculptor, pain was the clay, were produced on an assembly line. It was probably a bit too much but we were too young to know that.

There was a momentum building, a feeling of direction, of being carried by the

current, of being right and the undeniable logic of our system getting clearer by the day. Locked away from the rest of the world but seeing it more clearly than those out there taking part in it.

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Three men in military uniform leaned on the refreshment counter. They passed a bottle of scotch between them and chased the burn of the whiskey with no brand supermarket lager. They rocked heel to foot, out of sync, just like their conversation.

“Fucking right”

“Was fireworks, fire fight, a fire fight in the fuckning desert”

“Fucking right”

“Big fuck off explosions”

“Fucking right, go on give us that, give us that”

They fumbled with the bottle. Splashed it on their faces like aftershave, none of the three noticed that they were missing their target.

Dave the Barman stood on the other side of the counter, his face was distorted through the orb that had once housed candy floss. From my vantage point further up the counter, next to the popcorn machine, I could hear everything they said.

“Jumped out listening to Britney Spears I did”

“Did you shit”

“I did”

“Did you fuck”

One of the three was drunker than the others, not a lot drunker, but just enough to be problem. He was the one proclaiming that he jumped out listening to Britney Spears. I crossed behind the bar and joined Dave.

“Did you fuck”

“Are you calling me a liar?” the drunk’s conundrum, ‘can I lie if I don’t know what I’m saying?’ The two of them kinda turned and kinda squared up to each other, but they’re anything but square on, diagonal up to each other, maybe. A slanted showdown.

“They’re not even veterans, three Walter fucking Mittys” Dave whispered in my ear, although I doubt he had to whisper, no-one was hearing anything.

“They’ve had this argument three times already”

Dave filled three glasses up and slid them over the counter.

“Each of them has had their turn starting it. They seem to be instinctively democratic”

“How do you know they’re not real veterans?”

“I just know, some street drinkers who found the uniforms somewhere, I can smell bullshit like it was my own”

Two of them started grappling, stumbling into walls, trying to trip each other, failing.

“Shit fucking judo”

Dave cracked up at his own joke and leaned over the bar and put one of his gammon hands on each of their booze sweating foreheads and pushed them apart.

“Fucking right” The third one said.

“I’m not a liar”

“Your both fucking liars”

Dave started laughing and the three men in military uniforms leaned back on the refreshment counter.

“What is this place anyway? You lot a bunch of fucking fucking commies or what?”

“Fucking terror lovers”

“Fucking right”

The scene looped. After one and half run throughs I decided I’d had enough. Dave was enjoying himself, laughing at the three of them, drinking. On each

repetition the scene got sloppier and on the umpteenth rotation, one of the men slipped and cut his forearm open on a glass. Dave took a photo, to be added to the growing gallery of injury snapshots that snaked across the walls of the house like jagged scars.

These sad tragicomedy slapstick scenes aside. The homeless population that had arrived at our doors courtesy of the cops had become a serious problem, they almost outnumbered those who'd come to us with an active interest in whatever it was me and The Kid were building. Initially we had been able to make them partake in the sessions, but after a few days the majority had a stopped.

We'd been forced to ban alcohol and drugs, or at least to appear to have banned them. More and more Dave was the enforcer, he had a way of bundling people out of doors by the scruff of their neck, it was an old school way to handle someone, like a film noir bouncer. Nothing had crescendoed yet but I knew it would. Among some of the group that had coalesced around The Kid there were paranoid rumours of it being a COINTELPRO op by the cops. I guess The Kid like that, he'd been wearing a leather trenchcoat and even a beret at one point. Playing the role of a scruffy white Huey Newton.

More and more reporters and photojournalists hung around the entrance taking photos and asking questions, poking portable recorders in the faces of members

of The Herd coming and going. Among the journalists who lingered in the car park out the front was a woman who wore suit jackets with padded shoulders that made her look like a school teacher. She didn't asked questions but was there everyday for a week, recording and listening. One day a couple of weeks later she reappeared. This time she had her teenage son with her and a suitcase.

"My husband was photojournalist. He worked in war zones. He died two years ago, shot by a stray bullet while embedded with a peace keeping force. My son heard a rumour at school here was footage out of the moment his dad was shot, and that it had been accidentally broadcast in the background of a report on a foreign news channel"

The boy in question was staring at the screen of his phone, his eyes focused on only that, in no way reacting to his mother's talking about him.

"He has three televisions in his room and spends every free moment he has channel hopping hopping to find it. He's installed illegal satellites on the roof of our house to pick up every possible international network. Every computer in the house is filled with hours and hours of downloaded news programmes and reports which he meticulously searches for the moment his dad died. I've tried to tell him it's not out there but he won't stop. He says it doesn't matter, that it's the search that brings him closer to his father. He tells me he continues the search in his dreams. He walks through deserts and half destroyed cities, carefully



checking the faces of the corpses that lie everywhere, hoping to find his dad among them”

The beginning of a tear appeared at the corner of her eye. She pushed it away using the sleeve of her jacket. She looked around at the gathered faces and seemed relieved to see that we were all listening attentively. With the exception of her own son all of our eyes were on her, waiting without expectation. At the least we who'd lived in the house had developed a unusual level of patience.

“I hoped you would understand him. I saw what you do here and I thought maybe you could help him, help us”

She cried and for the first time her son looked up from the screen, stood up silently and wrapped his arms around his mother, his own eyes glistening.

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The Kid slashed at the seat in front of him with his switch blade. He spat out a mixture of tar and saliva and drove the knife up to the hilt into the cushioning, twisting it as the blade thudded against the old wood inside. He took a cigarette from behind the ear of one the Herd members who sat in the row in front of him and lit it with a match.

“We need more material. Dave's poison is all dried up and we've squeezed the

web for all it's got"

"What do you suggest?"

"We hit the pig-pen"

"Why?"

The Kid kicked out at the back of a chair, fracturing the armrest.

"Because they've got it all in there"

When The Kid raised his voice people shifted uncomfortably in their seats. He was right of course, we had trawled the web. We had established a presence on the most obscure internet forums and corners where gore was gathered and displayed, but we still needed more. We all agreed it was working, we were making progress. Gaining a certain clarity, a sharpness of vision and strength of grip.

The Kid had made contact with a group in his home country who claimed they could gain access to all the CCTV vaults, but we were still waiting. We'd taken to re-editing and restructuring old material, but this had created a bad feeling. Repetition was important, in fact vital, but repetition of the same imagery didn't work. Not just because we'd already developed resistance to that particular image or articulation of the great hurt, but because it had to feel like a storm; like a rushing river, always the same but always different.

"But it's a huge risk. We don't all have your fetish for sleeping on blue foam"

The Kid's eyes seemed to grow larger in his skull. When he was frustrated he dropped his shoulders and bent his legs like a boxer looking for his shot. In these moments he gained mass - not in the sense that he seemed to grow, but in the sense that his gravity increased. The physical environment was affected by his own heavy force.

“OK, then not the police, the Hospital. It's brand new, state of the art, it's gonna have cameras all over the place. All those eyes watching all those final moments. It's slow yes, it's not car crash but fuck the adrenaline. It's more cerebral, it's a deeper wound, a slow bleeder”

A slit like smile spread across his face and his lips shone with saliva and specks of tar like dried blood. He was right of course. Up until then we'd concentrated ourselves on the shock of chopped neck or a shattered skull. The gut punch of watching a human body reveal itself for what it is - a delicate bag of fragile tragedy and innards, easily pierced. But there was of course another painful truth to be confronted and dealt with. The slow motion violence of decay and rot. The tragedy of mutating cells and demolished immune systems. I remember visiting my Grandma on one of the terminal wards. Long corridors partitioned with semi transparent plastic hanging curtains, behind which people turned grey as the life dripped out of them and their arteries were pumped full of chemicals. Alive and embalmed just long enough for their families to make some feeble ineffective

gesture of contemplation in the face of universal terror. Fucking grim and for someone reason someone had thought it a good idea to have a panorama photo taken of this scene and printed on one of the walls. Maybe our idea wasn't so new after all.

Someone started reciting statistics. "1,540 patient beds, 35 operating theatres (28 inpatient, 7 day case), 100 critical care beds - largest single-floor unit in the world, Six MRI scanners, five CT scanners, four gamma camera/SPECT-CT systems, eight ultrasound rooms, five fluoroscopy rooms and five interventional radiology suites. Home to 36-bed trauma ward for both civilian patients and military personnel injured whilst on deployment. 3,800 car parking spaces" The Kid rubbed his hands together.

"Okay you put together a group and we'll do it, but I want to come along this time"

I was sitting in the corner observing some new members of the Herd. A former supermarket checkout worker and a retired car park warden were taking part in their first intoxication when one of The Kid's inner circle came in and told me they were ready.

A man was being repeatedly kicked in the head. A young woman attempted to jump between two buildings stumbled and tripped, falling and impaling herself on the spiked fence below. The car park warden pinched the denim of his jeans

between his fingers. The check out worker stared at the screen as it changed into the image of a prison guard being ambushed by prisoners in jump suits.

Outside the sun was setting and it was silent. Our presence had expanded beyond the House, and all along the suburban side streets that led away from the roundabout were spray painted slogans lifted from my speeches and writings. It was cold and as we cycled towards the Hospital, it's outline already looming on the horizon, I pulled up my hood.

We followed the ramp to the lowest floor of the Hospital car park and The Kid quickly located the service lift using a hand drawn plan. The group were now disguised in nurses uniforms, they passed me one to change into and huddled around The Kid awaiting his instructions. I was only a passenger.

The Kid punched a code into the keypad of the service lift and the doors opened. We rode the lift to the tenth floor and got out into one of the endless corridors of offices and staff recreational areas and multi faith prayer rooms that dominated the higher floors. The walls were covered in reminders to wash your hands when entering and leaving the wards, as well as large illustrated posters explaining protocol both practical and bureaucratic, cartoony thumbs up and cartoony thumbs down. The Kid led the group along the corridors, breaking into banal conversation whenever we passed a shoe gazing member of staff.

The Kid dropped momentarily behind the group, wrapped an arm over my shoulder and leant in, whispering in my ear.

“They are gonna take the security room and get as much of the CCTV footage as they can. Me and you are gonna head to where they store patient records, x-rays and video recordings of surgeries and post mortem’s.”

There was a glee to The Kid’s words that I tried to ignore. I followed him as he turned a corner and took an internal staircase two floors down. The corridor was dark and The Kid slowed down to a creep. He found the door he was looking for and pried it open with a small crowbar he somehow hidden down one trouser leg. The door splintered around the lock and cracked open.

The room was full of old style filing cabinets and modern computers. Green lights flickered on huge hard drives built into the shelving units. The room was cool and hummed with the sound of spinning disks and cooling fans. The Kid removed his rucksack and took out a laptop and two hard drives of his own.

He opened up the laptop and plugged in the hard drives. He then took a cable out of his bag and connected the laptop to one of the computers in the room. He sat down leaning against the wall, took off his cap and lit a cigarette.

“This will take a short while”

Reaching into his bag he took out a bottle of whiskey. He took a swig then replaced the lid and rolled it across the floor to my feet. I picked up the bottle and took a swig. As the whiskey burned my gums and numbed my throat I thought about saying something to The Kid, asking him if he thought what we were doing was really working or if I was just acting on deep personal impulses, repressed heat, and tension. While I was running this thought over the Kid started to talk.

“When was the last time you went to the shops?”

“It’s been a while, why?”

“I went lifting the other day. I wanted to wander the aisles and listen to the sound of people suffering over decisions that actually make no difference. I wanted to look at the cleaning products with new eyes and see how immune I’ve become to the illusions of comfort”

“And?”

“It’s worked. As I waited in the line to pay I saw the conveyor belt for what it really was. A flattened whip of black leather. Blood dripped from the cashiers wrists.

She had the stigmata of a martyr, a martyr of consumerism”

The Kid reached out and took the bottle from my hands, gulping at it. There was a beep and The Kid looked over at the computer.

“It’s finished we better leave”

I followed The Kid back down into the bowels of the Hospital. My eyes were hurting from the clinical lights, and the way the corridors repeated, extended in symmetry, made me dizzy and somewhat queasy.

Back in The House the Herd got straight to work with the new materials. Sid and her team of assistants took over the main editing suite and began organising and categorising the new material. There were thousands of high quality photographs of injuries and x rays. Brain scans showing cancerous growths, too obscure to be shocking. Our material had to be emblematic and immediate. CCTV of the terminal wards as bridges between the gore of open heart surgery, time lapses of families huddled around beds, of nurses helping limping patients to offscreen toilets, then we're back into scalpels peeling back fat. Sid continued this for an hour; the essence of human fragility, the unpredictable cruelty of nature and the deliberate malice of people. That night we all gathered for the intoxication.

"We've become cut off from the outside world, it's dangerous"

"It's not dangerous, we're in isolation, hermitage"

I finished my glass of wine and The Kid produced another bottle of not so cheap red. There seemed to be plenty of wine, plenty of everything, I didn't ask where it all came from. I'd seen Dave and some other's collecting donations but that couldn't be all.



“How can we claim to be dealing with something we’re not in contact with”

The Kid tore back the curtain and let in the light.

“That’s not real”

He thrust his finger in the direction of the outside. His teeth were red from the wine, his face too.

“That’s the hallucination, we’ve got to abstain before we can be sure we’re not longer stuck seeing it, we have to reset, you said that”

“I did?” I didn’t remember it, but that feeling was coming more common. I’d never expected people to keep track of everything I said the way some of The Herd did. I’d seen them passing around a pamphlet of my sayings the other day and someone had produced a mosaic on in the room we ate in that contained a quote attributed to me I had no memory of.

“I’m going out there. I’ve been talking to some of these new kids, they said there’s a tangible fear on the streets, it might be reaching saturation point”

“Do what you want, but be careful, hypocrisy lurks around every corner” The Kid pointed the wobbling ember of his cigarette at me, his hands were trembling, with nerves or anger.

“What’s that supposed to mean?”

“You can’t be seen to contradict yourself, people look up to you now”

“That’s not what I wanted”

“It’s what you got and don’t give me that shit about ‘it’s not what you wanted’, you wrote the fucking, fucking manifesto”

He erupted in shaking, his body couldn’t hold what’s in him, in. He dropped the bottle of not so cheap red wine and it smashed on the floor. He gripped the wall for support and pulled himself out of it.

“What about you? You seem to enjoying being the leader”

“I do but only cause I believe, the idea, your idea. You have a responsibility to make sense”

He hastily reassembled the cigarette that fell apart during his ‘warp’. He lit up and the ember was much steadier now, like a laser sight on a sniper rifle.

“Just remember what I said”

He kicked the bits of broken bottle under a seat, the wine soaked into the carpet and then left.

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The pattern repeated itself at every station, until the first rush of the day was over; what all of them undoubtedly thought of as 'statistically dangerous'. Once in the office, while blackening their teeth with coffee, they called themselves, in their internal shrill voice, 'survivors'. I'd seen enough to know.

Without any design, a hierarchy has somehow evolved. After me and The Kid came a second tier of authority: early members of The Herd, or those who had made themselves particularly useful. Dave the Barman was The Kid's right-hand man for every and anything and among the editors Sid the Librarian was held in particular esteem for her meticulous attention to detail and her role in organising and archiving the intoxications.

As she'd become more comfortable with the technology she'd developed a certain style, a comfort with shape of intoxications, a rhythmic understanding of timing, the pacing of her cuts was exquisite, they felt like mad memories, or nightmares, the kind of hallucination that you could only achieve through telepathy. They were something special, The Kid had voiced concerns that Sid was becoming too much of an artist.

There was an undeniable creative instinct to her work. On one screen a journalist was speaking into a microphone, huddled under an umbrella to protect herself

from the rain. In the background a man was running to catch a bus. He slipped and was caught under the wheels of a car, instantly mangled. A young child watched everything but no one else noticed, until the child started to scream. On another screen darkness was momentarily broken, punctuated by tracer rounds, the whooshing of mortars and the crackle of radios reporting casualties.

Sid cut a section from the video by bashing two keys. Now the two images were intercut, the tracer bullets and the child's eyes. Accident and targeted murder. Sid pinched the meaning and squeezed it like a ripe spot. I watched entranced as she worked.

Her librarian's attention to detail and ability to draw out connections had made her a brilliant editor. Her work was not creative; rather than collaging to create meaning she was cataloguing, but rather than using filing cabinets or computer databases her medium was the montage.

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In the darkness of the cinema's basement The Kid's inner circle had created a private viewing room. Kept awake by gummy, pink-going base, they locked themselves alone in this small partitioned off section and for as long as they could take it watched doses back to back.

His circle had grown to around ten. Due to their basement practices the group was more familiar than anyone with Sid's archive of doses, and knew which scenes offered the hardest test; the most intense poison, they'd cut some of these together into their personal cuts. 'Double doses'.

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I had started to have thoughts I felt I couldn't tell anyone about. We were in one of the stock rooms that still contained filing cabinets, and an empty vending machine that had been turned on it's side and used as a bench. On the wall still hung a calendar from a popcorn company. Each month was accompanied by a photo of a different cinema foyer, smiling staff and customers gripping tickets and half litre cups of soft drinks. The photos reminded me of those short clips they used to show after film trailers on TV where families stood in front of cardboard cut outs and, bursting with energy, described the film they'd just seen.

There was a tooth in her palm, brassy where blood and the yellowy enamel mixed together.

"It's your tooth?"

"No"

"Who's tooth is it?"

"Some guy's. They were rolling around on the pavement while their cars blocked the road, crumpled into one and another. I saw the tooth and I thought you might want it"

“Why?”

“Well it’s like an artefact of what you’re always talking, about the hidden reality of the world”

I took the tooth from the palm of her hand and put it in my pocket.

“I’ve got more”

“More what? Teeth?”

“Artefacts. I have a shoe left behind by paramedics after a motorcycle accident and I have a rubber bullet the police fired into the crowd at a demonstration. It’s stained in blood”

“You just found them by chance?”

“I can’t stay in this place all the time I get panicked, like panic attacks, claustrophobia”

“This place can be claustrophobic”

“But it also helps, I mean the intoxications, they really help. This place it’s like the inside of my head and all these dark corridors, they are like those unexplored bits of my mind where the fear lives, where my imagination runs wild. The intoxications give these anxieties form and shape, then I can really look at them.

These things are like that too”

“So you think we should display them”

“Why not? It’s like you said you’re never more than a few streets away from something bad happening, a few questions away from discovering some dark secret some horror”

“I said that?”

“You did” I didn’t remember saying that.

I took the tooth back out of my pocket and brush off the fluff. I ran my finger over it’s contours. It had a filling and the enamel was smoke stained and rotten in places. The tooth was ground evenly flat from a lifetime of grinding. I saw a big pulpy man grinding his teeth like millstones. I saw his lip torn, dripping, I saw the teeth of his opponent bared in a grin and I saw his tooth resting in the gutter. I squeezed my eyes closed because suddenly my head lit up with pain like a spark, a flash, that finger pressing at the grey matter again like a hot poker.

When I opened up my eyes I found that I was sat on the floor. My head was resting against the wall, cushioned by a swelling. She was standing over me. I took her hand and pulled myself up.

“Take any room you want and put them on display”

“Like a museum?”

“A museum of everyday tragedy. To the slapstick nature of evil, the evolutionary malice of nature and sharpshooting eyes of mankind”

She smiled and picked the tooth up off the floor where it had come to rest in the blood that was dripping from the cut in my head. She reached around and touched the wound on my head. She took a piece of paper out of the pocket of

her jeans and pressed the blood onto it. Then she left the room without saying anything, carefully sliding the piece of paper into her back pocket as she did.

Over the next few weeks the last unoccupied and un-renovated stockroom was converted by her and some other members of The Herd into a display room for the artefacts they'd collected. An old kitchen cabinet was repurposed and its glass front compartments soon filled up with more teeth lost in the party zone, and other artefacts; the inhaler of a young child who had died of an asthma attack after becoming separated from his mother on a main shopping street, his pink fingered hand still soft like raw meat, grasping at strangers hands, that first fear of mistaking someone for a parent coupled with the panic of not-enough-breath choking under the bright lights of adverts; a broken screw from collapsed scaffolding, a worker stumbling into a smudged out oblivion, stubbed out on the pavement laid by earthly sweating wagers (read lifers), a slabbed mirror. A shred of bike tyre, a serrated bread knife found wrapped in a black bin bag in a suburban alley.

The glass became smudged with fingerprints and some lip marks. For the first time since we'd locked ourselves off from the outside world groups of The Herd began venturing more often into The City, sometimes for days on end, picking their way through streets like vultures picking flesh off a skeleton. As I watched them from my window, the highest point in The House, I saw the city as an immense beached whale, rotting from the outside, its organs erupting with



maggots in the same way the roads and shopping streets of the city rupture with violence. From the flopped open remains new species of maggot evolved, making a home in a corpse.

They returned with bags and pockets filled with artefacts, the veracity of which was contested by a group that had made the careful selection of artefacts for display. The location the artefacts were found was marked on a map and some of the group made pilgrimages to these spots to remind themselves

I watched from the doorway as I now so often found myself doing. I now wandered aimlessly from room to room watching as The Herd continued my work without me, like a brain tumour that takes over the functions normally reserved for the senses.

An out of body experience almost. Some members of The Kid's inner circle had become immediately recognisable from the way they'd all begun to grow their hair in the same style as The Kid.

Some even mimicked his 'warps' when they got emotional. They were carrying the windscreen of a car; a jagged crack ran from one corner to the other. She was angry.

"I've heard the rumours and this time I've got a witness. You caused the crash"

"That's bullshit"

“I’ve got witnesses”

One of The Kid’s disciples spat on the floor. The air became momentarily thick then they noticed me standing there and the argument stopped. I stepped aside and let the two of The Kid’s inner circle leave, still carrying the windscreen. I later saw it propped up in the foyer. It had now been spray painted with the slogan, ‘waiting is cowardice, watching is perverse’.

As I stood at the entrance to the stairs down to the basement I could hear the muffled sound of The Kid’s voice and the echo of rapturous applause.

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