

KARMAGEDDON

Written by

Robyn Opie Parnell

WGA registration: 2303751

INT. COUNTY MORGUE - VIEWING ROOM - NIGHT

Silent. Cold. Harsh overhead lighting.

EMILY WINTERS (15) lies on a steel table. Pale. Still. A single braid tucked over her shoulder. Her face is peaceful. Too peaceful.

The only sound: the distant hum of fluorescent bulbs. And... a faint whir.

Across the room, a monitor screen flickers to life – slow and glitchy. It boots into a sterile system UI... then corrupts. Pixels warp.

The "P" logo appears. Crimson. Pulsing like a heartbeat.

Then:

PAYBACK

Bold. Stark. Synthetic font.

On-screen text begins to appear – white on black:

MAKE THEM PAY.

YOU PICK THE TARGET.

JUSTICE IS PERSONAL.

Under it: a glowing red START button.

The room's lights flicker. The monitor distorts – lines of school surveillance footage, social media screenshots, Emily's face appearing for a frame and vanishing.

Overhead, a ceiling camera adjusts silently. Whirring to life. It turns – and points directly at Emily's body.

CUT TO BLACK.

TITLE CARD: KARMAGEDDON

INT. WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY OUTSIDE AUDITORIUM - MORNING

STUDENTS cluster reluctantly outside the auditorium doors.

A long line moves slowly as a TEACHER, bored, scans their TechShield wristbands at the entrance. The scanner chirps in time with the wristbands' pulse – emotion logged, identity confirmed, access allowed.

MINA PARK (17, analytical, carrying a tablet with complex coding) leans against the wall, engrossed in her screen despite the noise.

Her friend ZOE CARTER (17, artistic, camera slung over shoulder) pushes through the crowd to reach her.

ZOE
Any luck with the downvotes?

MINA
(smirking)
I traced the IP address. You're not going to believe who it is.

TYLER WEST (17, athletic confidence, varsity jacket) interrupts them.

TYLER
Another assembly about "safety."
Perfect way to waste the morning.

LUCIA DIAZ (17, empathetic, conflict-avoidant, hand-painted denim jacket) approaches with her brother CARLOS (13, shy). Tyler slings an arm around Lucia and fist bumps Carlos.

LUCIA
(to Carlos)
Don't forget, I'm picking you up for Dr. Patel at three-thirty.

Carlos nods and walks away, shoulders hunched. As he passes, KELSEY HARRIS (17, bleach-blonde, confident) deliberately bumps into him.

KELSEY
Watch it, stutter-boy.

Carlos flinches, his face burning red as he shrinks into the crowd.

A hallway kiosk displays: EMOTIONAL MONITORING: ACTIVE - YOUR SAFETY MATTERS.

OLIVER MILLER (16, scrawny, fogged glasses) trails behind Kelsey, clutching a sketchbook. He hesitates mid-step, glances back at Carlos, guilt rising - but Kelsey's shadow waits. He lowers his head and follows.

KELSEY (CONT'D)
(to Oliver, loud enough for others to hear)
Your sketches are garbage, Miller. What, they let you in art class to fill the loser quota?

Oliver winces, barely perceptible. His sketchbook shifts in his hands – defensive now, like a shield. Kelsey smirks, satisfied.

JAYDEN BROOKS (17, wealthy, entitled, designer clothes) slides up to the group, flashing his new phone.

JAYDEN

Dad's lawyer tried to get me
exempted. Failed, obviously.

Jayden flexes his wrist where the TechShield band pulses with blue light. They all have one.

TYLER

These bands creep me out – always
watching.

The doors open. As the friends move forward, their TechShield bands momentarily glow in unison – a brief pulse of synchronized blue, unnoticed by anyone.

Zoe leans close to Mina.

ZOE

So, who is it?
(off Mina's blank stare)
Who's been voting down my photos?

MINA

(dry)
Your biggest fan. Mr. Harmon.

Zoe gapes at her, stunned.

A camera pivots slowly, its lens adjusting with a soft mechanical tick as it tracks students. Its red status light pulses once, then dims.

INT. WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

The five friends sit midway through the auditorium, surrounded by restless students. Jayden scrolls his phone. Tyler leans in to whisper something to Lucia. Mina and Zoe actually watch the stage.

DR. SARAH WINTERS (40s, composed but weary) stands center-stage, a sleek digital presentation glowing behind her.

SARAH
TechShield's wristbands monitor
vitals – heart rate, blood
pressure, cortisol – to assess
emotional states in real time.

ON SCREEN:

A student profile appears, colorful graphs pulsing with
biometric data. The heart rate line spikes – turns red – then
settles.

In the lower corner, a debug log flickers for half a second:
EJW_37-19: BASELINE ERROR – CORRELATION PATTERN EXCEEDED –
FLAGGED FOR REVIEW

Mina blinks. Not sure she saw that right. No one else seems
to notice.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Everything connects through an
adaptive mesh network.

ON SCREEN:

An animated diagram: wristbands – surveillance cameras –
school systems. A seamless loop of data.

SARAH (CONT'D)
The system watches patterns. Flags
anomalies. Alerts the right people
– before anyone falls through the
cracks.

She pauses, letting the screen fade to black. Then she clicks
again. A photo of Emily Winters fills the screen. The
metadata in the corner reads: EJW_MEMORIAL.jpg

The five friends shift in their seats. Something about the
name. The face.

SARAH (CONT'D)
My daughter Emily was a student
here.

Her voice is calm, but tight. Controlled.

SARAH (CONT'D)
She struggled. Quietly. TechShield
is my promise that no one else will
be overlooked.

In the crowd, Kelsey leans toward Oliver.

KELSEY
(whispering)
Ugh. What is this, group therapy?

Oliver gives a nervous chuckle. Sarah doesn't react – but behind her, the image glitches, warps. Emily's eyes distort. Then the screen stabilizes.

Mina glances down at her tablet. Frowning.

ON TABLET:
A system log blinks briefly:
EJW_PROFILE ARCHIVED: INACTIVE

It vanishes before she can tap it. She looks up. Troubled.

INT. WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL - TEMPORARY TECHSHIELD OFFICE -
AFTER ASSEMBLY

Sarah sits alone at her laptop. Multiple monitors buzz – some displaying student biometric dashboards, others looping hallway footage.

A photo of Emily in a simple frame rests beside the monitor. Her smile is soft. Unassuming.

Sarah plugs in a USB. The screen prompts:
ACCESS RESTRICTED - ADMIN CREDENTIALS REQUIRED

She types.

ACCESS GRANTED - WINTERS, S.

ON SCREEN: TechShield's interface pulses alive. A heatmap of student distress levels glows orange and red in clusters.

Sarah selects a live feed: Kelsey mocking Oliver near the courtyard fountain. She tags both profiles:
PRIORITY MONITOR: ACTIVE

A faint "P" logo flickers in the corner of the screen. Then vanishes.

SARAH
(quietly)
No one slips through. Not this
time.

She drags a folder from the USB:
EJW_37-19

The system hesitates. A stutter.

ARCHIVED PROFILE DETECTED: WINTERS, E.

Surveillance footage glitches. Lights flicker briefly in the feed. Another tablet nearby vibrates. A notification flashes: NETWORK ANOMALY DETECTED.

Sarah doesn't turn.

She closes Emily's folder. The biometric dashboards continue pulsing around her.

SARAH (CONT'D)
(softly, to Emily's photo)
You'll never be ignored again.

INT. WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - AFTER ASSEMBLY

Students spill out of the auditorium in loose clusters. Some are quiet. Some are laughing too loudly, trying to shake off the weirdness of the assembly.

A janitor replaces a flickering bulb. A TechShield poster peels slightly from the wall. Surveillance cameras track the slow-motion exodus.

The five friends regroup near the lockers.

TYLER
(adjusting his new
wristband)
Okay, not to sound paranoid –
but did anyone else feel like Dr.
Winters kept looking at us?

MINA
I thought that too.

ZOE
You do sound paranoid.
(looks away)
We weren't exactly nice to Emily.

Overhead, a light flickers – just once. Not a full glitch. Just enough to make Mina glance up.

TYLER
(to Lucia)
USC scout's coming to practice.
(grinning)
Wish me luck?

LUCIA
(squeezing his hand)
Always.

MINA
I've got lab.

ZOE
Critique day. Great.

JAYDEN
(already walking backward)
Yo, catch you legends at my place
tonight.

They nod and part ways, drifting off toward their separate classes.

A security camera above swivels, red light flickering, locking onto Mina. The lens glints, zooming on her face.

As Mina approaches, the water fountain activates, splashing Kelsey – who jumps back, scowling, wiping uselessly at her wet top. Her eyes snap up, catching Mina's smirk.

KELSEY
Funny, huh? Not as funny as your
stupid face.

Mina's smirk fades. Oliver hangs back, clutching his sketchbook, shrinking under Kelsey's stare. He glances at Mina, then quickly looks away.

The security camera pivots to track Kelsey and Oliver, red light flashing once.

KELSEY (CONT'D)
(to Oliver, sharp)
Art showcase tonight. Better win,
or else.

Oliver freezes, eyes wide with panic. He nods shakily, voice caught in his throat. Kelsey struts off, oblivious.

INT. WESTLAKE HIGH SCHOOL - SCIENCE LAB - MORNING

Mina sits alone during free period, finalizing her enzyme catalysis research on her tablet.

The door opens as REBECCA CHEN (17, confident, calculated) enters, carrying her printed science project.

Mina glances up, her breath catching as she spots the title page of Rebecca's research: "Enzymatic Catalysis in Cellular Regeneration". Her body tenses.

MINA
(voice tight, barely
holding it together)
That's... my project.

REBECCA
It's similar, I'll admit. But I've
been working on this for months.

MINA
You stole my work!

Rebecca leans in, voice dropping to a whisper.

REBECCA
That's your opinion. Prove it.

Mina drops into her seat, fury shaking her fingers as she pulls up the academic submission portal. She finds her draft... still incomplete.

And Rebecca's version. Submitted. Accepted. Time-stamped.

Mina's face shifts – not shock anymore. Betrayal. Rage. Resolve. Her TechShield wristband flashes red. Stress spike.

Rebecca turns to go, satisfied.

An idle wall monitor flickers to life.

ON SCREEN: TECHSHIELD LOG – STRESS SPIKE DETECTED: PARK, M.

The corner pixel glitches – a red blur, gone before it resolves.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE – DAY

A sterile, institutional room. Academic awards line the walls. A TechShield-branded security camera watches from the ceiling corner, its red indicator light pulsing subtly.

Mina stands before Principal Walker, knuckles white as she grips her tablet.

ON SCREEN: a side-by-side comparison of her enzyme catalysis research and Rebecca's near-identical project.

MINA
(controlled anger)
The metadata proves it. File
creation dates, edit history,
citations – she copied everything.
Even my formatting errors.

The tablet glitches. Data rows scramble, replaced with system
code. A warning flashes: FILE INTEGRITY COMPROMISED.

Mina's wristband displays: STRESS DETECTED. ELEVATED
CORTISOL. A faint hum, like a coded heartbeat, pulses from
it. The Principal's wristband glows a calm blue.

PRINCIPAL
(not looking up)
She's already submitted. Maybe try
a different angle.

Mina's jaw tightens. She doesn't speak.

Her fingers flex against the edge of her tablet – white-
knuckled, fighting the urge to throw it.

Instead, she nods once. Too calm. Too controlled.

The tablet flickers again.
New data populates.
Tag: VULNERABILITY SCORE: ELEVATED.

She walks out.

INT. WESTLAKE HIGH - PHOTOGRAPHY CLASSROOM - DAY

MR. HARMON (40s, angular, black turtleneck, art world elitism
personified) glides along the critique wall, fingers hovering
over Zoe's black-and-white prints – desolate factory windows,
fractured beams, the skeletons of industry.

MR. HARMON
Derivative. Technically fine, but
no voice.

He holds up a shot: sunlight streaming through shattered
glass.

MR. HARMON (CONT'D)
You've got the lens. Not the why.

ZOE
(quietly)
I wanted to show light in decay...

MR. HARMON
Intent's not enough. Show me
something only you see – or don't
waste the paper.

The bell RINGS, sharp and slightly distorted. Students gather their things and file out. Zoe remains, expression tight, peeling her prints from the wall.

MR. HARMON (CONT'D)
Some sink. You've got time.

ZOE
(low, firm)
I'm not sinking.

She raises her camera – frames the empty wall through her viewfinder. Blank drywall. Leftover pins. Shadow outlines where her work hung.

CLICK.

In the viewfinder:
an image – the autofocus hesitates – then snaps on. White facial tracking brackets flicker over a section of the wall, locking onto a distorted region.

SCREEN LABEL:
DETECTION ERROR – PROFILE MATCH UNCERTAIN

A blink later – the algorithm corrects itself.

ZOE (CONT'D)
(to herself, shaken)
What the hell...?

She scrolls through her camera's gallery.

CAMERA SCREEN: Tucked among her shots is an unfamiliar image. The same wall -- but in the center: a distorted silhouette vaguely resembling her, too clean, too digital, AI-generated. A faint "P" logo pulses in its core, then fades.

Zoe stares. She swipes again. The image isn't just gone. It was never there. No metadata. No timestamp.

She powers off the camera. Gathers her prints. Packs silently. Leaves.

Behind her, the classroom monitor flickers.

MONITOR DISPLAY:
STUDENT: ZOE CARTER
STATUS: EMOTIONAL DISRUPTION FLAGGED

The screen returns to black.

INT. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - DAY

The squeak of sneakers and rhythmic bounce of a basketball echo through the gym. A USC SCOUT watches from the bleachers, clipboard in hand.

Tyler drives down the court, smooth and focused. He weaves between defenders with practiced precision, then sinks a perfect three-pointer. A few teammates nod in approval.

The electronic scoreboard updates with a soft chime.

FWEEEEEEET.

A shrill whistle slices through the gym.

COACH DAVIS (40s, crew cut, intensity of a drill sergeant) steps forward, eyes locked on Tyler.

COACH DAVIS
West, bench. Your attitude
yesterday cost you. Ethan, you're
in.

Tyler freezes mid-celebration. His eyes flick to the scout, who's making notes.

TYLER
Coach, this is my shot. I can't
sit.

COACH DAVIS
(sharp)
Mouth off again and you're glued to
that bench for the season.

Reluctantly, Tyler jogs to the sideline, fists clenched. As he drops onto the bench, his TechShield wristband flashes – faster than usual. Heart rate: elevated. Blood pressure: red zone.

The scoreboard flickers – digits stutter, static washing across the display. For a split second: "BENCH: WEST" glows in red.

Then it resets. Normal. But Tyler's wristband flashes the same message – warped and quick, like a glitch caught in a loop.

Tyler doesn't notice. His eyes stay glued to the court – and the scout.

Ethan fumbles his first pass, then blows a wide-open layup.
The scout grimaces. Checks his watch. Closes his notepad.

TYLER
(under breath)
No. No no no...

The scout stands and leaves without looking back. Tyler watches his chance walk away.

Tyler clenches his jaw. One hand curls into a fist, nails digging into his palm. He doesn't move. Doesn't breathe. Just stares at the door the scout walked through.

In the corner, a security camera pivots, its indicator light switching from green to blinking red, focusing on Tyler's face.

On the bench, Tyler's wristband displays:
VULNERABILITY INDEX: ELEVATED - INTERVENTION FLAGGED

INT. WESTLAKE HIGH - LIBRARY ALCOVE - DAY

Sunlight spills through tall windows. The library hums softly — students murmuring, reading, or lost in screens. A TechShield library kiosk glows nearby, syncing student check-outs.

Jayden lounges in a secluded corner, scrolling mindlessly through his social feed. His TechShield wristband glows a calm, steady blue.

A low-frequency THRUM builds from the kiosk, barely perceptible at first, slowly intensifying.

BUZZ. His phone jolts in his hand — the vibration sharp, almost painful. The device grows warm against his palm.

DAD (TEXT)
Allowance suspended. Cards frozen.
Hardware store with Uncle Steve
starts Saturday, 7AM.

Jayden snaps upright, disbelief wiping the boredom off his face. He jabs at the screen, dialing with urgency.

RING... The tone distorts, warping mechanically before resuming. RING... RING...

Voicemail clicks on:

DAVID BROOKS (V.O.)
(clipped, rehearsed)
This is David Brooks. If this is a
business matter, contact my
assistant. If this is Jayden – your
behavior has consequences. Learn to
earn your way. Like I did.

His dad's voice glitches – too deep, then too fast – like
it's being filtered through something it shouldn't.

JAYDEN
(controlled fury)
Not fair, Dad. This is so not fair.

His TechShield wristband flashes red. Stress: ELEVATED. A
thin red line pulses briefly before fading.

The kiosk's screen glitches – flickers of static and
distortion.

Jayden's phone buzzes again.

DAD (TEXT)
Boarding flight to Paris with
Amanda. Your attitude and disregard
for the Brooks legacy ends now.

The text appears letter by letter, each character landing
with a mechanical CLICK.

His banking app loads – then tears apart. Text warps. Buttons
vanish. A red bar flashes: ACCESS DENIED.

“DENIED” flashes – once, twice – in rhythm with his pulse.

The THRUM from the kiosk swells – a low, vibrating pressure.
Then – it dies. Total silence. Too quiet.

CRACKLE. The kiosk erupts in static. Jayden flinches, eyes
wide.

Overhead, a security camera pivots with a faint WHIR, its
recording light blinking from green to solid red.

The lights in his alcove dim, forming an isolating pocket of
shadow.

His phone flickers. The wallpaper warps – colors bleeding,
icons misaligning. For a second, the screen goes black. Then
resets. Normal. Almost.

Jayden stares, frozen.

Whatever that was – it wasn't normal.

EXT. HEALTH CLINIC - AFTERNOON

Late-afternoon sunlight glints off glass doors. A sign reads: WESTLAKE HEALTH CLINIC. Sterile white lettering glows against a steel facade.

Lucia and CARLOS (13) step out the doors. Carlos's shoulders hunch, eyes darting at every sound. His fingers twist his sleeve's frayed hem – a self-soothing gesture.

Lucia walks beside him, one arm wrapped protectively around his shoulders.

LUCIA
(softly)
Better session today?

CARLOS
(nodding, stammering)
Y-yeah. Ms. Patel s-says the b-
breathing helps.

Lucia squeezes his shoulder, scanning the street with vigilance – her routine as his shield.

Across the street, ALEX WHITNEY leans against a bike rack, casually scrolling his phone and nodding. He's animated – gesturing with exaggerated rhythm.

Carlos sees him and freezes. His breath shortens. Shoulders tense.

LUCIA
I see him. Stay behind me.

Lucia steps in front of him, protective. As she does, Carlos pulls down his sleeve – too late. Lucia glimpses bruising around his wrist. Finger-shaped. Fresh.

LUCIA (CONT'D)
(alarmed)
Carlos... where did this come from?

Carlos shakes his head, eyes wide.

CARLOS
(stammering intensifies)
N-n-nothing. I'm f-f-fine.

LUCIA
(quiet, fierce)
Did Alex do this?

Carlos doesn't answer. A tear slips down his cheek. It's all she needs to know. Lucia straightens, her stance shifting to dangerous.

Carlos's phone BUZZES in his pocket, an uneven, glitched vibration. A CRYSTAL CLEAR AUDIO CLIP cuts through ambient noise:

ALEX'S VOICE (UNNATURALLY CLEAR)
K-k-keep st-stuttering, l-loser.
Maybe next t-time I'll b-break both
your w-wrists.

The cruel syllables cut like glass. Carlos' hands shake. He looks ready to collapse.

Lucia's eyes shoot to Alex – but he's laughing at something on his phone, oblivious. Not even looking at them.

She frowns – something isn't right.

She grabs Carlos's phone, checks it – No message. No voicemail. No audio file.

The battery icon flashes red for no reason – then vanishes.

LUCIA
(confused, protective)
Let's go.

The clinic's biometric doors jitter open and closed – twitching like they can't decide. The security camera pivots toward them, its indicator light a steady red.

Lucia wraps her arm around Carlos tighter, guiding him into the street.

INT. COMPUTER LAB - DAY

Mina works alone, searching through school network files. She finds a corrupted folder labeled ARCHIVED_STUDENT_LOGS.

As she opens it, the screen distorts. Student records flicker past – fragments of deleted data.

One file catches her eye: EJW_EMOTIONAL_INCIDENTS_LOG

As she opens it, the screen pulses with digital static. Half-loaded waveforms and corrupted profile images jitter past – faces blurred, eyes wide, mouths open in silent distress.

A system hum rises – too low to be her machine.

Below the data, in corrupted text:

SUBJECT REQUEST: ASSISTANCE

SYSTEM RESPONSE: INSUFFICIENT THREAT LEVEL

SUBJECT REQUEST: PLEASE HELP

SYSTEM RESPONSE: REQUEST DENIED

Mina stares, disturbed. She doesn't yet know whose data this is, but the pattern is clear – someone was suffering and the system ignored them.

She copies the file to her drive. As it transfers, the initials briefly flicker, almost forming a name before corrupting again.

She absently scratches at her wristband.

CLOSE ON: Her wrist shows a distinct bruise-like pattern beneath the band – dark lines matching the device's circuitry.

She presses a command to disable the wristband. Nothing happens.

She slides a fingernail under the edge. The band tightens like a reflex, making a soft whir-click.

Her tablet screen briefly glitches, displaying:

WEARABLE DISCONNECT ATTEMPT: LOGGED

SECURITY PROTOCOL: ENGAGED

ADHERENCE REQUIRED

Mina winces, giving up. A drop of blood forms where the band's edge has broken skin.

She looks up instinctively. A lab camera stares back – lens focused directly on her, motionless.

She lowers her eyes, suddenly aware she's not alone.

INT. JAYDEN'S GAMES ROOM - NIGHT

LED lights bathe the room in a soft amber glow. A massive curved TV dominates one wall, RGB lights pulsing from a gaming PC. Neon controller signs flicker in the corner. Lo-fi beats play from smart speakers – calm, incongruous.

Empty pizza boxes. Half-drunk cans of soda. Jayden's curation of chaos.

The five teens are scattered around the room – Mina scrolling through code on her tablet, Lucia and Tyler curled up on the couch, Jayden sprawled across a gaming chair, Zoe flipping through photos on her camera.

JAYDEN

Pizza's en route. Mushrooms for
Zoe's weird-ass taste.

Zoe flips him off, playfully.

MINA

(frowning at tablet)
Anyone else notice their tech
acting strange today?

ZOE

My camera captured this weird
distortion I couldn't explain.

JAYDEN

Library kiosk went psycho. Thing's
probably fried.

TYLER

TechShield's wellbeing BS is
probably using too much bandwidth.

Suddenly, all five phones STUTTER in unison – screens freeze, flicker, then distort with digital artifacts. The smart speakers emit a low, synthetic TONE – not speech, just intent.

The house system processes with a slight delay, as if something else is siphoning processing power.

The lights dim momentarily. The TV screen flashes to static, then snaps back to normal.

JAYDEN

What the hell?

Their phones VIBRATE in perfect synchronization, an unnatural pattern that feels like Morse code. The screens glitch violently – pixels scrambling, displaying fragments of text messages, photos, and location data before settling.

MINA

(startled)
This app just installed.

ZOE

Same here. It's called Payback.

TYLER

"Submit a name, watch karma drop."

LUCIA

(quietly, to Tyler)

That's... wrong. We shouldn't touch it.

TYLER

It's a prank app. Relax.

JAYDEN

Hell, yeah, that prank shit rocks.
Who we gonna screw with?

Mina opens a diagnostic panel on her tablet. Her fingers move quickly, accessing logs and network traffic data.

MINA

No developer signature. It's
piggybacking on TechShield's
network. Like it was waiting.

(tapping frantically)

It's accessing everything. Social,
texts, location...

She turns her tablet to show them: snippets of their digital history being analyzed, emotional spikes being tracked.

She scrolls – and pauses. For a frame, there's a photo thumbnail from an old school directory. Emily Winters. Mina blinks – then it's gone.

MINA (CONT'D)

It's building psychological
profiles. Predicting who we'd
target.

The home security camera pivots slightly, focusing on the group. The room's LED lights flash red once.

The room is quiet. No one wants to go first. Jayden shrugs, deflecting discomfort with bravado.

JAYDEN

(grinning)

Well, I'm in. Way to go, Dad.
You're about to get punked.

The form loads. He inputs the name, the offense, the severity – no hesitation.

ON JAYDEN'S PHONE: NAME: RONALD BROOKS OFFENSE: EMOTIONAL AND FINANCIAL ABANDONMENT. FAKING FAMILY UNITY FOR IMAGE. SEVERITY: HIGH

He hits SUBMIT. The form closes. The phone's processor runs at maximum capacity for 2.3 seconds.

Tyler's phone activates its front camera on its own.

ON SCREEN: "Suggested target: COACH DAVIS"

A web of texts, emotional spikes, video thumbnails.

TYLER
(quiet, unnerved)
It knows I'm mad at Coach Davis.

He completes the form and taps "SUBMIT".

ON TYLER'S PHONE: NAME: COACH DAVIS OFFENSE: HUMILIATED ME IN FRONT OF THE TEAM. SABOTAGED SCHOLARSHIP CHANCE. SEVERITY: HIGH

ZOE
(hesitant)
I... I don't know about this. I'm not sure Mr. Harmon has a sense of humour.

Zoe stares at the screen, shaking her head.

MINA
Still burns that Rebecca steals my research and I have to switch to neural interface architecture. Six weeks of work down the drain.

JAYDEN
Burn, baby, burn.

ON MINA'S PHONE: NAME: REBECCA CHEN OFFENSE: STOLE MY WORK. THEN CALLED ME PARASITIC. SEVERITY: HIGH

ZOE
(grimaces)
Okay, I did it. I hope Mr. Harmon doesn't fail me.

ON ZOE'S PHONE: NAME: MR. HARMON OFFENSE: PUBLICLY HUMILIATED ME. REPEATEDLY. KNOWINGLY. SEVERITY: HIGH

They all turn to Lucia. Her TechShield wristband flickers from blue to red.

TYLER

You don't have to join in.

As Lucia stares at her phone, undecided, a photo of Carlos' bruised wrist appears on screen. She winces, as if feeling Carlos' pain.

The photo dissolves, replaced by the app's submission form. The fields shimmer faintly, responsive to her gaze. Like it's reading her intent.

LUCIA

Alex Whitney.

ON LUCIA'S PHONE: NAME: ALEX WHITNEY OFFENSE: LAUGHED WHEN CARLOS HAD A MELTDOWN. MOCKED HIS SPEECH. SEVERITY: HIGH

Their phones ping in unison.

ON ALL DEVICES: THANK YOU FOR YOUR INPUT. YOUR RESPONSE HAS BEEN LOGGED.

The screens go black.

Then — all five phones light up. A single symbol appears. A red "P" logo. Stark. Pulsing. It throbs once... twice... then syncs with their wristband rhythm.

A low-frequency hum vibrates in the air, almost imperceptible.

JAYDEN

(nervous joke))

That's not creepy at all.

LUCIA

Now what?

They all look at each other. No one knows.

BEAT.

The entire house goes dark. The LED lights shut off. The speakers cut mid-beat. The glow of the screens vanishes.

Silence. Shadows. Five glowing wristbands.

Then — the lights snap back on, exactly where they left off. But something's changed. In the room. In them.