

**EPISODE ONE: Some Chips You Don't Cash In**

1

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

1

CLINK-CLUNK. CLINK-CLUNK. FADE IN on the GROAN of METALLIC JOINTS and the HEAVY FOOTFALLS of a MAN CLIMBING A HILL.

EMMETT

(talking into radio)

Oscar, still with me?

(beat)

Oscar?

OSCAR

(weakly, through radio)

Yeah, I read. Are you in position?

EMMETT

Not yet. How are you holding up?

OSCAR

My stack is low. Real low.

EMMETT

Shut down everything except coms.

I'm almost there.

OSCAR

You really think this is a good idea? You know what happened last time we tried to get "help."

EMMETT

Just hang on.

Emmett picks up the pace.

EMMETT (V.O.)

The kid was right to be concerned. Sloughers like us avoid civilians. But these government issue implants were never designed to last this long. I got half a dozen part failures and Oscar's stack is redlining even worse than mine. He won't last the night unless I get him some power.

2

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

2

Emmett hits the ground with a THUD then crawls to a stop on the summit.

EMMETT

Oscar, I got eyes on the camp.

OSCAR

How does it look?

EMMETT

Typical tent city. Hockers, nomads, tweaks, pros. It's bigger than the last one.

OSCAR

Any juice?

EMMETT

Lemme see.

EMMETT COMS

(sound of coms initiating)  
Scanning... Scanning...Unable to confirm.

EMMETT

I need a closer look.

OSCAR

I should have gone with you.

EMMETT

You have to conserve power. I'll be fine.

OSCAR

Well watch your six. Mods you got, you're a walking ATM in there.

EMMETT

Don't have much of a choice, we don't get you charged up soon...

OSCAR

I know. Be quick about it.

3 EXT. TENT CITY

3

Emmett enters the encampment.

4

4

TRANSIENT

Cabal Christmas was an inside job!  
Cabal Christmas was an inside job!

TRANSIENT (CONT'D)

What are you looking at, slougher?

Emmett keeps going.

OSCAR

Keep an eye out for the law.

EMMETT

No cops are gonna bother with a  
hell hole like this.

OSCAR

It's not them I'm worried about.  
What else you see?

EMMETT

Couple sloughers worse off than us.

OSCAR

Hard to believe.

SOLDIER

Hey slougher, you fight in the SA?

EMMETT

Where else?

SOLDIER

Me too. Got these after a drone  
strike...

Soldier taps the metallic shell of his prosthetic.

SOLIDER

...Worked okay for a bit. Hey, you  
got PZT actuators?

EMMETT

None I can spare.

Emmett moves on.

OSCAR

Ever since they rolled out nano  
tech they stopped making parts for  
us sloughers.

EMMETT

No more surgery, now they just shoot 'em up with microscopic machines.

OSCAR

Face it, we're dinosaurs.

(weaker)

Listen, Emmett, if I don't make it, just keep going. Don't you come back for me.

EMMETT

That's not happening. Just hold on.

EMMETT'S COMS

Scanning... Scanning...

EMMETT

There.

EMMETT'S COMS

Confirmation. Multiple power supply units.

EMMETT

I got it.

Emmett starts for one of the merchant tables.

JUICE MAN

Juice! I got juice.

EMMETT

How much?

JUICE MAN

I take parts.

OSCAR

Just give him the bag. What else you been carrying it around for?

EMMETT

She was our friend.

OSCAR

You'd do the same to me.

EMMETT

I wouldn't.

OSCAR

I hope you do. I would you.

Oscar unzips the bag and PLUNKS a heavy OBJECT out on the Juice Man's table.

JUICE MAN  
This'll get you a full cell.

EMMETT  
I need a stack.

JUICE MAN  
Sorry slough. One cell is the best I can do. You want it or not?

MERCHANT 1  
Roll out, we got company!

JUICE MAN  
Ah shit.

The negotiation is cut short by a COMMOTION nearby. A half a dozen ELECTRIC TRUCKS arrive SIRENS BLARING.

OSCAR  
What is it?

EMMETT  
It's the law.

OSCAR  
That far from town it's a got to be a private force.

Car doors OPEN. FOOTSTEPS on the gravel.

JC  
(in the distance)  
Listen up. You all need to clear out now, we are authorized to use force.

SOLDIER  
(in the distance)  
Fuck you! Where we 'sposed to go?

The soldier grunts as he's grabbed by the lapels.

EMMETT  
The one in charge is modded.

OSCAR  
A slougher?

EMMETT

No, nano. I can tell from here he's pumped full of that shit.

JUICE MAN

That's Arlin.

EMMETT

Who is Arlin?

JUICE MAN

You don't want to find out--

BANG!

EMMETT

He just shot a guy!

OSCAR

Emmett get out of there!

Pandemonium breaks out.

MERCHANT 1, 2, JUICE MAN, TRANSIENT and PRO please ad lib variations of "NO NO" "LOOKOUT" "PLEASE" "STOP"

EMMETT

What about you?

OSCAR

(weakly)

We'll find another way just get out of there!

SCREAMS are heard from below as the Deputies destroy the encampment and everyone in it.

5

EXT. CLEARING - LATER

5

The SCREAMING and POLICE SIRENS FADE in the distance.

The sound of FROGS CROAKING. A NIGHT OWL hoots.

SQUISH. SQUISH. Emmett struggles to carry Oscar across a muddy field. Oscar cries out in pain.

EMMETT (V.O.)

I made it back to Oscar, but he's barely holding on. I gotta find somewhere to plug him in.

OSCAR

Wh- Where am I?

EMMETT  
Some field, I don't know.

OSCAR  
Put me down, dammit. You're gonna  
burnout.

EMMETT  
I'll be fine, man.

OSCAR  
(excruciating pain)  
My skin!

EMMETT  
It's haptic discharge. You hang in  
there...

OSCAR  
(grunts)  
I told you not to come back for me.

EMMETT  
And I told you that wasn't  
happening. Now do your thing. Find  
something.

Beat as Oscar powers his ultrasonics.

OSCAR  
I got nothing, man.

EMMETT  
Try again.

OSCAR  
Wait, up ahead. Something's  
powered.

EMMETT  
An irrigation hut. I see it. Just  
hang on.

A low HUM snaps Emmett's attention to the sky.

EMMETT (CONT'D)  
Drones.

OSCAR  
(crying out in pain)  
Arrghh!

EMMETT  
Quiet!

Emmett throws a hand over Oscar's mouth to mute his moans. They remain frozen until the HELICOPTER DRONES pass.

EMMETT (CONT'D)

We're almost there. Don't you die on me, soldier.

PRELAP: CLANG! CLANG!

EXT. CHEM-O-GROW IRRIGATION SHED - MOMENTS LATER

OSCAR

Breaking into Chem-O-Grow property'll get you killed.

EMMETT

We don't have a choice.

CLANG! CLANG! Emmett slams a rock on the door handle, each blow growing more and more desperate.

OSCAR

It hurts. Like knives stabbing me from inside.

EMMETT

Shut off your pain receptors. Don't be a hero.

OSCAR

No. I want to feel... something.  
(laughs bitterly)  
Look at us. More metal than meat.

EMMETT

Don't you go waxing poetic. I'll get you plugged in.

OSCAR

And then what?

EMMETT

Power up. Fix your stack. You'll be good to go.

OSCAR

Until the next thing breaks. Where does it end? I'm tired, Emmett. It might as well be here.

EMMETT

Just hold on.

CLANG! CLANG! The lock BREAKS. The door swings open.

EMMETT (CONT'D)  
I got it. C'mon.

Emmett drags Oscar toward the shed. He unzips the BAG and pulls out the CHARGING CABLE.

EMMETT (CONT'D)  
Got the cable, I'll find an outlet.

OSCAR  
No! Don't leave me alone out here.

Emmett ducks into --

6 INT. CHEM-O-GROW IRRIGATION SHED - CONTINUOUS 6

EMMETT  
Where is it...? There we go.

-- an industrial room with water PUMPS CHURNING NOISILY. Emmett disconnects a pump and plugs his own cable.

7 EXT. CHEM-O-GROW IRRIGATION SHED - MOMENTS LATER 7

Back outside, Emmett jams the cable into Oscar's port.

EMMETT  
There. You're plugged in.  
(Beat)  
You still with me?

A long tense beat as Emmett waits for Oscar to wake up.

EMMETT (CONT'D)  
You're plugged in, you should be charging. C'mon buddy...

EMMETT'S COMMS  
Usage restricted.

EMMETT  
What?

EMMETT'S COMMS  
This facility is for Chem-O-Grow customers and employees only.

Emmett fumbles with the cord, replugging it into Oscar's arm repeatedly.

EMMETT

Shit. C'mon! I'm not getting a pulse.

~~EMMETT COMS~~

~~Heart rate falling.~~

Emmett pumps the slougher's chest.

EMMETT

No. No. No.

Emmett sinks in recognition. Finally --

EMMETT (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.

EMMETT (V.O.)

Corporal Oscar Vasquez wasn't the first comrade I lost along the way. There was Sanjay, Tony, Emily. It was Emily's arm we were trading back at the encampment. Sloughers like us are worth more dead than we are alive. But I'll keep my word and bury Oscar. Some chips you don't cash in.

Oscar's dog tags JINGLE as Emmett lays them around his own neck. Emmett plugs himself in.

EMMETT (V.O.)

Times like this I think of my daughter.

EMMETT

Open O421. Enhance.

As we dip into Emmett's memory, the sound becomes garbled.

OLIVIA

Daddy! You're home! Do you want to see the castle I -

Olivia's voice is muffled as SOUNDS OF WAR: automatic gunfire, explosions, screaming grows louder and louder.

EMMETT

STOP!

EMMETT (V.O.)

Been like this since I can remember.

(MORE)

EMMETT (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Memory's a fickle fucker for an old  
 neural-linked slougher like me. It  
 gets all corrupted, like printing  
 the whole novel on the same page.  
 Too many bytes on one drive.  
 (beat)  
 At least Oscar didn't die alone.

We hear Emmett start to dig a grave for his fallen comrade.\*\*

8

EXT. COVIC FARM - FARMHOUSE - NIGHT

8

CREAK, CREAK. CREAK, CREAK. JELENA COVIC, 60s, rocks on the  
 porch of her weathered craftsman. Her WALKIE CHIRPS.

SHOOTER (OVER-WALKIE)  
 He's comin'.

COVIC (INTO WALKIE)  
 I seen him. Get ready. Only gonna  
 get one shot.

We hear Jelena LOAD a SHOTGUN as a truck skids to a stop.  
 Jelena coughs at the dust kicked up in the truck's wake.

The driver's door swings open. We hear a BOOT on gravel. Then  
 another. We hear TWO SETS of footsteps walking across the  
 drive.

COVIC (CONT'D)  
 Arlin Frey. To what do I owe the  
 pleasure?

ARLIN  
 Jelena Covic. You don't look  
 packed.

COVIC  
 Nothing gets past you, do it? ~~Must~~  
~~be those fancy nano eye balls.~~

ARLIN  
 You know why I'm here. The  
 Association gets what they're owed.  
 One way or another.

COVIC  
 I told you, I ain't paying and I  
 ain't leaving neither.

ARLIN  
 How is that fair to the folks who  
 paid on time?

Covic levels the shotgun at Arlin.

COVIC  
You ain't taking my farm.

Arlin sighs deeply, disappointed.

ARLIN  
Ain't your farm anymore. It belongs  
to Chem-O-Grow now. Why don't you  
come along quietly and not make  
this any more difficult than it has  
to be?

Arlin takes a step forward. Covic pumps the shotgun.

COVIC  
You seen this shotgun here? Next  
step I put a bullet in your chest.

ARLIN  
Why you want to go making trouble?

COVIC  
How do you sleep at night? Shaking  
down good people done seen you grow  
up. It ain't right.

ARLIN  
It is my legal right as head of  
security to collect a fee. Nothing  
comes free, you oughta know that.

COVIC  
I tell you what I know. This is my  
farm and I ain't leaving.

ARLIN  
You are. Tonight.

Covic scoffs.

COVIC  
You ain't the law.

ARLIN  
I'm as close as you got.  
(Beat)  
What are you looking at over there?

ROY  
Something's on the roo --

BANG! Arlin dodges the incoming bullet then swings back around, draws his COLT .45 and FIRES back.

SHOOTER

Ugh!

ROY

Wow great shot, boss!

A MAN rolls off the roof and lands with a heavy THUD followed by the clatter of a rifle.

ARLIN

Roy, go get that coward just rolled off the roof. He's dead.

COVIC

I'll kill you, you sonofabitch!

Covic levels her shotgun but Arlin fires first BANG! Covic collapses to the dirt, her leg gushing blood.

COVIC (CONT'D)

My leg! You shot me in the leg!

Arlin kicks her shotgun out of reach.

ARLIN

I told you not to make this difficult.

COVIC

He got a piece of you. You're bleeding!

ARLIN

Sure enough. That's fine. Always love watching these little guys do their thing.

WE HEAR thousands of GNAT-SIZED MACHINES, emerge from under Arlin's skin. Working as one, they stem the blood flow then cover the wound with a protective white coating. Their work done, they disappear back into his arm.

COVIC

What... what is that? Your arm it... just healed itself.

ARLIN

Best nanotech money can buy.

Covic spits in disgust.

COVIC  
You ain't even a man no more.

ARLIN  
I'm more than that. I'm invincible.

THUMP! Roy drops the shooter's body next to Covic.

ROY  
No good slougher. Musta missed him  
under the overpass.

COVIC  
Sloughers got rights, too!

ARLIN  
Sure they do. But vagrants and  
roustabouts do not. Not in my town.  
Just so happens most sloughers we  
see round here happen to be...  
what's phrase we're supposed to use  
now, I can't keep up...  
*"experiencing homelessness."*

Roy chuckles.

COVIC  
You're a rotten sonofabitch, Arlin  
Frey.

ROY  
Want me to finish her off, boss?

ARLIN  
No sir. She's going to County for  
attempted murder. And being a  
raging bitch.

ROY  
What about the slougher?

ARLIN  
Let's see. Older model. Arm's  
practically vintage. Leg looks new  
tho. Toss him in my truck. I'll see  
he gets where he needs to go.

9 EXT. CHEM-O-GROW IRRIGATION SHED - DAY

9

Emmett gasps awake.

EMMETT'S COMMS  
Alert. Battery: sixteen percent.

EMMETT

What the - shit. Must've burned through my charge burying Oscar.

EMMETT'S COMMS

Immediate recharge recommended.

EMMETT

(sarcastic)

Thanks for the tip.

The HUM of a nearby drone grows louder.

EMMETT (V.O.)

More drones. I can't be here.

10

EXT. ROAD - DAY

10

The familiar GROAN of Emmett's creaking prosthetics as he marches down the road.

A HORN BLASTS moments before a massive truck BARRELS by. Emmett throws himself into a ditch.

EMMETT (V.O.)

Robo-trucks will run you off the road rather than slow down. Part of their programming.

EMMETT'S COMMS

Alert, battery twelve percent. Proceed directly to nearest field base.

EMMETT

There are no more field bases, goddammit. Besides, I'm a civilian now. Search the closest public charging facility?

EMMETT'S COMMS

Twenty-two kilometers north northwest.

EMMETT

Current range?

EMMETT'S COMMS

Four kilometers.

EMMETT

Great. There's nothing on this road.

We hear CRICKETS coming from a nearby field.

EMMETT (V.O.)

Maybe there's tractor or something  
with a battery in one of these  
fields.

He stands up and starts TRUDGING through a field of soy  
beans.

11 EXT. CLARK FARM - DAY

11

Birds chirp good morning. CLINK. CLUNK. CLINK. CLUNK.  
Emmett's walking slows to a stop.

EMMETT (V.O.)

There's a farmhouse on the other  
side of this bramble. Few missing  
shingles but well kept. Proud. That  
barn by the road might have an  
outlet. Get in and out, no one the  
wiser.

Emmett starts to move but stops suddenly and retreats.

EMMETT (V.O.)

Someone's outside the barn. A  
woman.

Emmett adjusts his positioning to get a closer look.

EMMETT (V.O.) ALT

What's she doing? She's working in  
a garden, taking notes real  
methodical like. I should be able  
to sneak past without her noticing.

Emmett makes his way through the brush.

EMMETT (V.O.)

Shit!

Emmett ducks out of sight.

EMMETT (V.O.)

Did she see me? Doesn't look like  
it. She's heading into the house.

(Beat)

How far to the public charging  
facility?

EMMETT'S COMS

Seven kilometers.

EMMETT (V.O.)  
What's my range?

EMMETT'S COMS  
One kilometer.

EMMETT (V.O.)  
That barn might be my best shot. My  
only shot.

We hear the SCREEN DOOR to the house SLAM shut. Emmett starts  
for the barn.

12 INT. CLARK BARN - MOMENTS LATER

12

Emmett carefully slides the door closed behind him.

EMMETT (V.O.)  
This barn has seen better days.  
(BEAT)  
There's an outlet! I can plug in  
there.

Emmett plugs in.

EMMETT'S COMS  
Charging. Time to full power: six  
hours twenty one minutes.

EMMETT  
Just need enough to get me to town.  
(Beat, then)  
Looks like she's got some sort of  
lab set up in here. Sampling the  
soil from the looks of it.

Lowering himself to a milk crate, Emmett takes in the barn.

CLICK-CLACK. A shotgun is pumped.

REBECCA  
The hell are you doing in my barn?

EMMETT  
I'm just looking for a little power  
and then I'll be on my way.

REBECCA  
Are you alone?

EMMETT

Yes, ma'am. You can put the gun down.

REBECCA

Or I can keep it right where it is.

(beat)

Where you headed?

EMMETT

Into town.

REBECCA

This town? Why in the hell would you want to go there?

EMMETT

VA's holding a battery stack for me.

REBECCA

Remote Ops?

EMMETT

How did you --

REBECCA

Tattoo on your arm. Where were you stationed?

EMMETT

Uruguay.

REBECCA

Huh.

EMMETT (V.O.)

Doesn't take a neural implant to tell that struck a nerve. And the way she knew my unit from the tat. She's close to someone who served. Or was.

REBECCA

Rebecca Clark.

EMMETT

Emmett Lee. Thank you.

The sound of a vehicle pulling up the gravel drive.

REBECCA

Don't thank me yet. That'll be Arlin.

EMMETT (V.O.)

I knew that name. Law man from last night. Same bastard who shot that slougher in cold blood.

REBECCA

He must have seen you on the drone feeds. He asks, you're working for me. You know much about farming equipment?

EMMETT

No. But my neural implant let's me drive about anything.

REBECCA

That might do. Take this tablet. See that auger over there?

EMMETT

Yeah.

REBECCA

It hasn't worked in six years. But unless you want the meanest son-of-bitch with a badge to drag you off into the night, you'll get it working again. And fast.

**END OF EPISODE ONE**