

**STILL**

Written by

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SECOND DRAFT

**INT. MARA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING**

Grey light through thin curtains.

The room is quiet but not silent. A building settling. A refrigerator humming somewhere beyond the wall. The faint mechanical breath of the city outside.

MARA VOSS, early 40s, lies in bed. Eyes already open. She wasn't woken up. She was simply already awake.

The alarm goes off.

She turns it off before the second pulse.

Gets up.

**INT. MARA'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS**

She brushes her teeth. Looks at herself in the mirror. Not examining. Just checking.

She looks fine. She always looks fine.

She spits. Rinses. Leaves.

**INT. MARA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

She makes coffee. The machine is old and reliable.

While it brews she stands at the window looking out at the COURTYARD below. Snow on the ground. A single orange light above a doorway across the way. Nobody out there yet.

The coffee finishes. She pours a cup. Sets it on the counter.

Gets her coat. Gets her bag. Leaves.

The coffee sits on the counter. Cooling. Already forgotten.

**INT. T-BANE - MAJORSTUEN TOWARDS CITY CENTER - MORNING**

Mara sits. Headphones on. Not listening to music. Just blocking.

The train moves through the DARK between stations. Other passengers. Nobody looks at anyone. This is understood.

In the dark glass of the window opposite, her REFLECTION appears. She doesn't look at it. The reflection moves with her, but just slightly behind. The natural delay of dark glass.

She looks at her hands instead.

The train pulls into a station. Light floods back. The reflection disappears.

**INT. FORENSIC AUDIO LAB - MARA'S WORKSPACE - MORNING**

Darker than the rest of the building. Controlled lighting. Soundproofed walls. A room built to eliminate outside noise.

A room designed around silence.

Mara sits. Headphones on. Case file open. A large waveform blooms across the screen like a landscape.

She listens. Slows the frequency down. Isolates voices. Makes notes. Her hands move without her thinking about them. Completely automatic.

This is the last scene in the film where nothing is wrong.

**INT. FORENSIC AUDIO LAB - MARA'S WORKSPACE - LATER**

Her software flags something. A small notification in the corner of the waveform display. She leans forward.

In the waveform - in a section of SILENCE between two voices - there is a SHAPE. Brief. Barely visible. Like a word written in pencil and half erased.

She isolates it. Zooms in. A frequency that has no business being in this recording.

She runs a diagnostic. Equipment error. Obvious answer. She notes it in the file - ARTIFACT, SOURCE UNKNOWN - and moves on.

That's everything that happens.

But she doesn't take her headphones off for the rest of the day.

**INT. MARA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - EVENING**

She eats at the kitchen table. A Werner Herzog documentary plays on the television. The narrator's voice measured and slightly ominous even when describing something ordinary.

The narrator PAUSES between sentences. A natural pause. Two seconds.

Mara's eyes move slightly toward the television. Just an involuntary shift.

She looks back at her food.

Nothing happened. And yet.

**INT. FORENSIC AUDIO LAB - MARA'S WORKSPACE - NEXT MORNING**

A different case file. A different recording.

She works through it methodically. And then - in the silence between two voices - the software flags something.

She stops.

The same shape. Brief. Distinct. Identical.

She opens the previous case file alongside it. Lines up the two waveforms on her screen.

The shapes are identical.

Two recordings. Different cases. Different sources. Different equipment. Different locations.

Same shape.

She sits very still.

Her coffee is going cold again.

#### **INT. FORENSIC AUDIO LAB - LATE NIGHT**

Everyone else has gone home. Just her and the hum of the building.

She is pulling archive recordings. Older material. Each one loaded, scanned, the silence isolated and examined.

The shape is there. Not in all of them. Only in the silences. And the older the recording the more silences there are. Longer pauses between words. More room.

More room for it.

The building's automatic LIGHTS click off around her. She doesn't notice until she's sitting in near darkness with just her screen illuminating her face from below.

She looks up. Looks around the empty, dark office.

Turns the lights back on manually.

Sits back down.

Keeps working.

**INT. MARA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN TABLE - NIGHT**

She sits at the kitchen table with a PERSONAL NOTEBOOK.  
Personal, not work.

She writes. We don't see what yet.

She stops. Looks at what she's written for a long time.

Closes the notebook.

Goes to bed.

SCORE IN - barely there, like a frequency at the edge of  
perception. Four seconds. Then it stops.

The silence of the apartment is worse than before it started.

**INT. FORENSIC AUDIO LAB - MARA'S WORKSPACE - MORNING**

A third case file. She finds it before she's even looking for  
it. Like her eyes went straight to it.

Three waveforms. Three silences. Three identical shapes.

She gets up. Walks to her COLLEAGUE'S desk across the room. He  
looks up - friendly, distracted.

COLLEAGUE

Hey.

She stands there. Almost says something.

A beat. Two beats.

MARA

Never mind.

She goes back to her desk.

She cannot say it out loud yet. Because saying it out loud makes it real in a different way. And she is not ready for that.

She looks at the three identical shapes on her screen.

The screen looks back.

**INT. FORENSIC AUDIO LAB - MARA'S WORKSPACE - DAY**

An academic publication on screen alongside the waveforms. DR. ELIAS KAHN, University of Oslo. Neuroscience department, Blindern.

The paper is titled: TEMPORAL BINDING AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF PERCEIVED SIMULTANEITY.

She reads. Scrolls. Then opens her email. Types carefully.

Her message:

Is there a measurable frequency signature produced during the brain's reconstruction of the present moment? The binding process. The gap.

She reads it back. Sends it.

Goes back to work.

**INT. FORENSIC AUDIO LAB - MARA'S WORKSPACE - NEXT DAY**

She opens his reply. Reads it.

We read it too:

Yes - theoretically. The binding process should produce an extremely faint electromagnetic signature if you could isolate it from ambient noise. Nobody has managed to do this cleanly. It would look like a very brief, very faint--

Why do you ask?

She reads it twice. Then closes the email.

She does not answer for three days.

**EXT. UNIVERSITY OF OSLO - BLINDERN CAMPUS - MORNING**

Grey morning. Brutalist concrete buildings half-covered in snow. The campus feels removed from the city. Like it exists just slightly outside of normal time.

Mara walks toward the neuroscience building. She has made a decision by coming here and she is not second-guessing it.

**INT. NEUROSCIENCE DEPARTMENT - KAHN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

A room buried in paper and books and cold coffee cups. Maps of the brain on one wall. A whiteboard covered in equations half-erased.

DR. ELIAS KAHN, late 50s, opens the door. Warm. Distracted. Genuinely pleased to have a visitor.

She sits. He sits across from her, curious.

MARA

The binding process. The gap between stimulus and conscious perception. You said in your email there should be a signature.

KAHN

In theory, yes. The brain receives fragmented sensory information at different speeds and stitches it together into a unified experience of the present moment. That process isn't instantaneous. There's a window. Eighty milliseconds, roughly.

MARA

And something happens in that window.

KAHN

Everything happens in that window. What you experience as now has already happened by the time you experience it. You are always living in the recent past.

She watches him. He is enthusiastic. He loves this subject.

MARA

You said the binding process should have a measurable signature. What would it look like?

KAHN

Theoretically - a very brief, very faint frequency artifact. Present in any environment where human consciousness is active. Completely buried in noise under normal conditions. You'd need extraordinarily sensitive equipment to isolate it. And a very quiet room.

Mara opens her laptop.

**INT. NEUROSCIENCE DEPARTMENT - KAHN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

She turns the laptop toward him. A waveform on screen. The isolated shape. She plays it.

A sound that has no category. Not mechanical. Not organic in any familiar way. Present at the edge of what the ear can comfortably process. Wrong in a way that cannot be named.

Kahn listens. Then:

KAHN

That's interesting. Could be a lot of things. Equipment resonance, building vibration, even thermal expansion in the cabling.

MARA

I ran every diagnostic. I had two other engineers check it.

KAHN

And?

MARA

Three forensic recordings. Different sources. Different countries. Different decades. Identical shape.

A small pause. He is still skeptical but something has shifted in his attention.

KAHN

How many recordings did you search to find these three?

She tells him. A large number. He does the math silently.

KAHN

That's... statistically unlikely for equipment noise.

(beat)

KAHN

Play it again.

She does. He listens for longer this time.

KAHN

I'm not going to tell you this is what you think it is. But I'm not going to tell you it isn't, either.

(a long beat)

KAHN

This shape does match the theoretical signature. Almost exactly.

(another beat - the weight of this arriving)

KAHN

Which would mean... these recordings  
captured something that exists in the delay.  
In the gap. In the eighty milliseconds  
between what happens and what is perceived.

MARA

What does that mean?

KAHN

I don't know yet.

Yet.

SCORE IN - quiet, pressurized. It sits in the silence after yet  
and neither of them speaks and the audience feels it in their  
chest. Then it fades. And the silence is the score.

**INT. T-BANE - BLINDERN TOWARDS MAJORSTUEN - AFTERNOON**

She sits in the carriage. Other passengers around her.

The train moves through the dark between stations.

Her reflection appears in the dark glass opposite.

This time she looks at it. Just for a moment. She watches the  
reflection move with her - fractionally behind. The natural  
delay of dark glass.

She looks at it differently now.

She looks away.

**INT. MARA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT**

She sets up a portable RECORDER on the kitchen table. Positions  
it carefully. Checks the levels.

She sits across from it.

Presses RECORD.

Sits in complete silence.

CUT TO:

The recorder. The time stamp has moved forward by one hour.

Mara reaches over. Presses STOP.

Sits for a moment. Then puts her headphones on. Presses PLAY.

She listens.

Her face gives almost nothing. Just the smallest change around the eyes. Like something arriving that she knew was coming and still wasn't ready for.

She takes the headphones off. Very slowly.

Sits in the kitchen in the silence of her apartment.

The apartment that has always been the safest place she has.

It was never empty.

It was never only hers.

No score. The silence IS the score.

**INT. NEUROSCIENCE DEPARTMENT - KAHN'S OFFICE - DAYS LATER**

Kahn is different. The enthusiasm has a different quality now. More focused. Less joyful. He has been pulling recordings from his own archive - sensory deprivation research from the 1970s.

KAHN

I listened to the silence.

He plays her one of the recordings. The shape is there - in every silence. But with subtle variations. Each subject's silence slightly different from the next.

KAHN

The variations correlate with the individual. Different subjects produce different variations of the shape.

Mara is very still.

MARA

What does that mean?

KAHN

It means it isn't environmental. It isn't equipment noise. It isn't a technical artifact.

(a long beat)

KAHN

It responds to individual human beings.

The room holds this. Neither of them speaks.

MARA

How long has it been there?

Kahn doesn't answer. He looks at the waveforms on his screen. The question is too large for an immediate answer.

The way he doesn't answer tells them both everything.

**INT. FORENSIC AUDIO LAB - MARA'S WORKSPACE - LATE NIGHT**

Every recording in the archive. Hours of work. Boxes of external drives around her.

The shape is in all of it. Every silence. Every pause. Every moment between words across decades.

She opens the notebook. Writes:

We see what she writes:

ONLY SILENCES.

Always there. Different recordings.  
Different decades. Same shape.

She stops. Closes the notebook.

Takes her headphones off and just sits there. Not working. Just sitting in the soundproofed lab.

The room built to make silence visible.

The most silent room she has access to.

And it is full of something.

**INT. OSLO S - MAIN CONCOURSE - DAY**

Mara walks through the station. Thousands of people moving around her.

Her phone rings.

KAHN

(V.O. - urgent but controlled)

I found something. In the archive. A recording from 1963. You need to come to Blindern.

MARA

What is it?

KAHN

You need to hear it yourself.

She stops walking. Stands in the middle of the concourse.

Thousands of people flowing around her. All of them sealed inside their own eighty milliseconds. None of them aware.

She starts walking again.

**INT. NEUROSCIENCE DEPARTMENT - KAHN'S OFFICE - LATER**

Kahn plays her the recording.

A man's voice. Calm. Academic. A personal research log from 1963.

RESEARCHER (1963)

(V.O. - from recording, slight tape hiss)  
Day eleven. The sessions continue. I find myself less interested in the data and more interested in the silence itself. There is something about extended silence that...

He stops mid-sentence.

A long SILENCE follows. Longer than any silence in the film so far. Fifteen, twenty seconds. The audience knows what is in that silence. They can feel it.

When he speaks again his voice has changed. Not dramatically. Just slightly. The way a voice changes when something has shifted inside a person permanently.

RESEARCHER (1963)

(V.O. - subtly different. Quieter. More careful.)  
I have been sitting in silence for the last hour trying to feel the gap. The delay. The eighty milliseconds.

(a long beat)

RESEARCHER (1963)

(V.O.)

I think I can feel it now.

(the longest beat)

RESEARCHER (1963)

(V.O.)

It feels like being watched from inside.

The recording ends.

Mara and Kahn sit in complete silence.

After a very long moment:

KAHN

(very quietly)

There are no further logs from him after this date. No further publications. He simply stops appearing in the academic record.

Mara nods slowly. She already understood that.

No score. The silence must be total.

**EXT. UNIVERSITY OF OSLO - BLINDERN CAMPUS - LATE AFTERNOON**

Mara walks out alone. Winter dark already coming.

She stops. Stands completely still.

She is aware. Not of something external. Of the gap. The eighty milliseconds. The space between what is happening and what she experiences as happening.

She can feel it now. The delay. The seam between reality and perception.

And in that seam - something that has always been there. Not watching. Not hunting. Simply present. The way the dark between stars is simply present.

Two minutes. No dialogue. No score. Just her. Breathing. And the silence around her that is not empty.

And the audience, in their seats, beginning to feel their own silence. Their own gap.

**INT. NEUROSCIENCE DEPARTMENT - KAHN'S OFFICE - NEXT MORNING**

He is different. Something has shifted in him since her phone call. He has been sitting with it overnight and it has done something to him.

MARA

The shape in my recordings. My personal recordings. It's getting longer.

KAHN

I know. Mine too.

A beat.

MARA

Tell me why.

KAHN

Awareness of the gap widens it. The act of knowing it exists - looking for it - creates more silence inside a person. More room.

MARA

More room for what.

He doesn't answer. Because the answer is obvious and saying it out loud would make it smaller than it is.

MARA

Does it matter? Whether we know. Does knowing change anything?

He thinks about this for a long time.

KAHN

I don't think it changes what happens to us.  
I think it only changes what we are aware of  
while it happens.

She sits with that.

MARA

That's what makes it worse.

KAHN

(quietly)

Yes.

They sit in silence together.

**INT. NEUROSCIENCE DEPARTMENT - KAHN'S OFFICE - THREE DAYS LATER**

Mara arrives. The door is open. The office is exactly as it was  
- the maps of the brain, the half-erased whiteboard, the cold  
coffee cups.

Kahn is there. Sitting at his desk. Not working. Just sitting.

He doesn't look up when she comes in.

MARA

Elias.

He looks up. His eyes are the same eyes but something behind  
them has rearranged.

KAHN

I've been sitting here.

MARA

I know. You haven't answered my calls.

KAHN

I've been sitting in the silence. Listening.  
Like he did. Day eleven.

A long beat. Mara is very still.

MARA

How long.

KAHN

Since yesterday morning. I couldn't stop.  
Once you start listening you can't make  
yourself stop.

She looks at him carefully. He looks fine. He always looks fine.  
But the voice has changed - just slightly. The way the 1963  
researcher's voice changed.

MARA

Elias. You need to go home.

KAHN

There's nothing there either.

(a beat)

KAHN

That's what I've been sitting with. There's  
nothing there either.

Mara stands there looking at him.

She has done this to him. By bringing him the recording. By  
making him hear it.

He was safe. He was the man who had spent thirty years inside  
his thoughts and loved it. She came to his office and took that  
away from him.

She does not apologize. There is nothing to apologize for that  
would be sufficient.

MARA

Go home.

He nods slowly. Gets up. Gets his coat. Moves through the room the way a person moves when they are doing things automatically and their mind is elsewhere.

He stops at the door.

KAHN

(without turning around)

I keep thinking about the 1963 recording. He stopped. Just stopped appearing. I used to think that was frightening.

He turns and looks at her.

KAHN

Now I understand it was the most rational possible response.

He leaves.

Mara stands in his office alone. The maps of the brain on the wall. The equations half-erased. The cold coffee cups everywhere.

She is aware, for the first time with full clarity, that she has done something she cannot undo to another person. That knowledge is her to carry now. Alongside everything else.

**EXT. REGIONAL BROADCASTING ARCHIVE - DAY**

A small building. Completely ordinary. A parking lot with three cars. A sign above the entrance that would not make anyone look twice.

She parks. Sits for a moment. Gets out.

**INT. REGIONAL BROADCASTING ARCHIVE - STORAGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Shelves from floor to ceiling. Thousands of labeled boxes.  
Decades of silence preserved in magnetic tape.

Something preserved past its natural lifespan.

The receptionist leaves her there.

Mara stands in the doorway of a room full of decades of captured  
silence.

She walks in. The door closes behind her.

SCORE IN - the longest use of the score in the film. Building  
slowly. The pressure of it becoming almost physical. Then it  
cuts away before it resolves, leaving the audience suspended.

**INT. REGIONAL BROADCASTING ARCHIVE - STORAGE ROOM - HOURS LATER**

Boxes open around her. Laptop connected to portable playback  
unit. Headphones on.

She finds what she came for.

We don't see exactly what it is. We see her face as she listens.

And her face does something it has not done in the entire film.

It goes completely still.

Not frightened. Not shocked. Something beyond both. The  
expression of someone who has understood that there is no  
version of this that ends with things being normal again.

She takes the headphones off. Very slowly.

And then - briefly, once - she LAUGHS. Not hysteria. Not  
breakdown. The specific laugh of someone who has understood  
something so complete that for one single moment the only  
available response is something that sounds like laughter but  
isn't quite.

Then it stops.

And she sits in the silence of the archive.

No score. Just her and the room and what she now knows.

**EXT. REGIONAL BROADCASTING ARCHIVE - PARKING LOT - EVENING**

Full dark. Her breath in the cold air. She calls Kahn.

No answer.

She tries again. No answer.

She stands there for a moment. Then gets in the car.

**INT./EXT. MARA'S CAR - NIGHT - DRIVING**

The road is dark and straight. The landscape enormous and empty and silent beyond the glass.

She drives. Both hands on the wheel.

She tries Kahn again. The call goes straight to voicemail. His voice on the recording - warm, distracted, the same voice from before - gives his name and says he'll call back.

She doesn't leave a message. She hangs up.

And she thinks - we see this in her face - about Kahn. About the 1963 researcher. About what it means to know and what it means to stop appearing in the record.

About whether those two things are connected.

About whether she should drive to Blindern instead of home.

She doesn't. She drives home.

This is also something she will carry.

SIX MINUTES. No dialogue. No score. Just the road and the dark and the sound of the engine and her breathing.

And the silence in the gap between each breath.

The audience will feel this scene in their body. Because by this point they are not watching Mara drive home. They are sitting in their own gap. Aware of it for the first time.

**INT. MARA'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT**

She unlocks the door. Steps inside. Drops her bag.

She doesn't turn the lights on immediately. Stands in the dark hallway.

Then she turns the lights on. The apartment looks exactly the same. Everything in its place.

She goes to the kitchen. Fills a glass of water.

She sees the coffee cup on the counter. The one from this morning. The one she forgot. The permanent stain ring from a hundred forgotten cups before it.

She looks at it for a long moment.

Then she picks it up. Washes it. Dries it. Puts it away.

She goes to the window. Looks out at the courtyard. The same orange light. The same snow.

She stands there for a long time.

**INT. NEUROSCIENCE DEPARTMENT - KAHN'S OFFICE - NEXT MORNING**

She arrives early. Before anyone else.

The office is empty. Exactly as she left it. The coffee cups. The equations. The brain maps on the wall.

On his desk: his phone. His wallet. His keys.

Left behind. Neatly. Not forgotten - placed.

She stands in the doorway. Looking at what he left on the desk.

She understood. She had known before she got here that she would find something like this. The way she knew, in scene four, when she found the second recording.

She is very good at finding things.

She does not call the police yet. She stands in the doorway and gives herself one minute. Just one. To feel what this costs before she starts doing the things that need to be done.

One minute.

Then she takes out her phone.

**INT. OSLO S - MAIN CONCOURSE - DAY**

She walks through the station one last time. The same corridors. The same sounds.

She stops in the middle of the main concourse.

And looks at the people around her.

All of them sealed inside their eighty milliseconds. All of them carrying something in their gap they will never be aware of. All of them going home tonight to apartments they will lock and believe are only theirs.

She looks at them with something that is not quite pity and not quite envy and not quite love but contains elements of all three.

The specific tenderness toward people who are still safe inside their ignorance.

Then she keeps walking.

**INT. MARA'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN TABLE - EVENING**

The final scene.

She comes home. Takes her coat off. Makes tea. Sits at the kitchen table.

She opens the notebook. Looks at everything she has written. All of it. From the first two words to the drawn shape at the end.

She closes it.

She sits in her chair at her kitchen table in her apartment in Majorstuen.

Completely still.

The apartment sounds around her. The refrigerator - the same refrigerator from scene one. The building. The distant city outside the courtyard.

And in the silence between those sounds - her gap. Wider now than it was in scene one. Wider than it was yesterday.

She breathes in.

She breathes out.

In the silence between the exhale and the next inhale -

Something.

Not seen. Not heard. Not shown. Because showing it would destroy everything the film has built.

Just the silence. Just her face. Just the specific stillness of a person who is completely aware of what is in the room with them and has decided to simply be present with it.

Because there is nothing else to do.

Because there has never been anything else to do.

She reaches over. The coffee cup on the table - the tea she made. She picks it up. Drinks. Sets it back down.

She does not leave it to go cold.

The camera holds on her face.

Long enough that the audience begins to feel their own silence.  
Their own gap. The space between their own thoughts.

Then the screen goes dark.

Not dramatically. Just dark. The way a room goes dark when a  
light is turned off.

And the silence continues for five seconds after the image is  
gone.

Just the audience. In the dark. In their own gap.

Aware.

FADE OUT.