“WHAT HAPPENED TO THE DOLLAR”

A PLAY IN TWO ACTS

BY SAM GRABER

ESTIMATED RUN TIME – 95 MINUTES

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LOGLINE – WHAT HAPPENED TO THE DOLLAR

A small group of online gamers creates a virtual currency that destabilizes global banking and crashes the U.S. dollar.

SYNOPSIS – WHAT HAPPENED TO THE DOLLAR

What Happened to the Dollar asks: what would happen the day after the U.S. dollar crashed?

In an abandoned Blockbuster store, Shift and Kit spend their days and nights as part of a youth class that is unemployed, abandoned and finding meaning in online games. Van arrives, an Ivy league graduate, ashamed by what he believes is his first day as a new Blockbuster employee. The trio merges its talents and creates a new currency within a popular online game.

Meanwhile, their actions are countered by Donna Steelmint, Chair of the Federal Reserve, who believes radical action must be taken to prevent the fall of the dollar. The United States is too big to fail. Or is it?

Ultimately, the shadows between fantasy and reality merge, and all are trapped in the sorcery of controlling the ultimate app – the currency of the world.
CHARACTERS (3F, 2M)

DONNA STEELMINT, 50s, female
PRESIDENT, 50s, male
KIT, 20, female
VAN, 22, male
SHIFT, 23, female

TIME

Tomorrow.

PLACE

Minneapolis, MN: an abandoned Blockbuster store.
Washington, DC: a White House bathroom.
A lectern.

SCENES

ACT I. Game.

ACT II. Fallout.
PRODUCTION HISTORY

What Happened to the Dollar received its New York City premiere during May 2015 as staged by Abstract Sentiment Theatre Co., produced by Viktoria I.V. King, and directed by Vincent Scott, with cast: KIT, Mia Kang; SHIFT, Jeanne Lau; VAN, Fergus Scully; STEELMINT, Valeria Flower; PRESIDENT, Ken Dillon.

What Happened to the Dollar was first produced by Box Wine Theatre in Minneapolis, MN during May 2013 as directed by Bethany Simmons with cast: KIT, Ali Daniels; SHIFT, Suzie Cheng; VAN, Kyler Chase; STEELMINT, Kelvin Holve; PRESIDENT, John Hoy.

What Happened to the Dollar received a staged read by The Abingdon Theatre during February 2013 as directed by Vincent Scott.
THE STAGE

The primary set is an abandoned Blockbuster video store. Bent retail shelving frames are either half-standing or discarded. Carpentry is worn. Litter is splattered. Wires hang from cracked ceiling tiles. A couple tarnished movie posters remain. Where yellow and blue paint isn’t chipping off the walls are windows crudely covered with black paper, as if to block out indication of inside activity.

There are two laptop workstations: one seated workstation and a second standing workstation converted from a former retail counter. At this second workstation rests a small pot holding various flowers.

Both laptops lids are coated with gamer-style stickers.

Electrical wires run from both laptop workstations across the floor to a single outlet.

Counterpoised to this primary set is a White House bathroom, men’s. A standing urinal. Gleaming and shiny.

At extreme downstage left is a speaker’s lectern.
For Shani,

the greatest currency ever.
“And they who control the credit of the nation,

direct the policies of governments,

and hold in the hollow of their hand,

the destiny of the people.”

—Reginald McKenna
ACT ONE. GAME.

A1, S1. LECTERN.

A speaker’s lectern.

DONNA STEELMINT appears.

DONNA

Hello.

Put down your programs and turn off your phones because, yes, it’s me.

Halfway between deciding whether I should or shouldn’t get right to it I thought, you know Donna, screw the formalities, you people aren’t here for a bunch of carefully prepared remarks, you people are here for contrition.

So let’s just get right to it, hmm? Life’s too short for preamble.

Donna Steelmint is still, until word of this gets out, Professor Emeritus at Stanford, where I have been the Insert-Your-Donor Dean of Economics for way too long.

I graduated summa cum bigtime from Brown, fought for my Ph.D. at Yale, and then served in many prestigious banking positions before sleeping in certain positions to get a hard-earned seat on the US Federal Reserve, where I eventually became Chair.

Until the whole fiasco blew up in my face.

And since that fiasco is now behind us, it’s time for my first public statement on the matter.

To come clean.

To tell you what happened.

So.

Let’s get this party started.

Lights shift.
A1, S2. BLOCKBUSTER.

Minneapolis, MN.

An abandoned Blockbuster retail store.

From darkness.

SHIFT
PREPARE FOR ANNIHILATION, ZOMBIE SCREENFUCKERS!

Lights up on KIT and SHIFT at their laptops, controlling the action of the online game.

SHIFT punches her keyboard and gesticulates wildly. KIT grips a racing wheel game controller, attached to her laptop. Both wear gaming headsets: earphones and mics.

When in the game world they talk to each other without physically looking at each other.

KIT
I can’t see ‘em!

SHIFT
Cuz they rolled behind the rink.

KIT
[Sing-song] No.

SHIFT
[Sing-song] Yes.

KIT
How can you be sure?

SHIFT
Cuz I’m in charge here, that’s how I’m sure. Keep going.
Which way?

Straight.

I really don’t think they’re there.

And I really didn’t stay up all night tracking these bitches down for nothing. Increase to road rage.

I’m driving but they’re not there.

Wait, no, back.

Back?

No-no-no, left-left-left!

Where—

LEFT, Kit!

I don’t see—

Split your screen already and you’ll see ‘em.

Ewwwww.

Aw, yeah, zombie cluster at twelve o’clock.
KIT
Half their heads are missing.

SHIFT
’S new graphics card I stole from the lab.

KIT
Full-on frontal zombie brains.

SHIFT
Story of my life. Alright, enough chatter, aim to kill.

KIT
Puck bomb loading.

SHIFT
Gank some serious zombie ass.

KIT
Puck bomb still loading.

SHIFT
Aim for the center of the cluster.

KIT
And...puck bomb ready to fire.

We hear a chirping ring.

SHIFT
Holy fuck-nuggle.

KIT
What.

SHIFT
Goddamn newbie.

KIT
Not seeing it.

SHIFT
Next to the zombies.
KIT
Oh, yeah. She’s about to get ganked by them.

SHIFT

KIT
Should we let her ride the zamboni for protection?

SHIFT
Uh, negatory. I don’t want some newbie snarfing our kill. [Types] Stop trolling our rink or I’ll gank your face.

KIT
[Typing] I’m Kit, what’s your name?

SHIFT
Hey! I’m trying to annihilate zombies, not fraternize with newbie trolls.

KIT
Miss bitchy bitchness over here.

SHIFT
Go stuff your own tampon.

KIT
I’m not allowed to say hi?

SHIFT
‘S right. [Punching keys] See how this newbie likes a puck bomb up her nasal cavity.

KIT
Shift, c’mon, don’t do that.

SHIFT
Turn left.

KIT
That’s harsh.

SHIFT
Left, Kit.
KIT
It could be some kid, her first time.

SHIFT
Do I look like the Zombocalypse welcome committee? I ain’t getting admin status befriending every newbie trolling our rink, prepare to fire.

KIT
We’re supposed to kill zombies, not fellow players.

SHIFT
We’re supposed to do whatever it takes to get admin status.

KIT
She seems nice.

SHIFT
Nice? The rules of this game are as follows: kill. A lot. So prepare to fire.

KIT
You never know what the next person has to offer.

SHIFT takes off her headset.

SHIFT
Hey. I didn’t spend all night hunting a zombie cluster just to have some newbie interrupt at the last second.

KIT
I’m not inviting her into our rink, Shift, I’m just being friendly.

SHIFT
For all we know it could be a trap. You don’t wanna get your ass kicked by some twelve year old with pink sparkle skates trying to trick us with a cuddly little ‘hello’, do you?

KIT
Of course not.

SHIFT
You gotta know how to think like a gamer. All strangers are deceiving liars seeking to separate your head from your torso with a hockey stick of sliceness. Right?
KIT

Fine.

SHIFT

‘Course right. Now. Fire the puck bomb.

*KIT taps once.*

SHIFT

Ohhhhh, that feels good!

KIT

[Typing] Sorry.

SHIFT

You, newbie troll, is KIA. And spread the news to the rest of your weakling kin. This is our rink. Order of the Tulip! Kit.

KIT

Order of the Tulip.

SHIFT

What’s your beta?

KIT

Nothing. I just...can’t move my thumbs anymore.

SHIFT

And I got a raging case of gamer’s butt, but you see me dealing with it.

KIT

It’s just the taking of life. Even in fantasy.

SHIFT

IDK, Kit, the game’s called Zombocalypse, and since I found you you’ve done plenty of killing.

KIT

Zombies.

SHIFT

That’s what we do here.
KIT
In an abandoned Blockbuster building.

SHIFT
You say abandoned building, I say distraction-free gaming. With free electric and high-fly wi-fi. All to kill zombies. And anything else that gets in my way. Cuz this ain’t fantasy. What we’re doing isn’t play. This is how the peoples are gonna live and trade and—

KIT
Make money?

SHIFT
Oh dudet, money is so yesterday.

KIT
We need money to pay for things.

SHIFT
Not when you’re promised by the original game developers—

KIT
—to get admin status once you kill enough zombies.

SHIFT
You know, you were way sexier when you were the mean on the screen killing zombies all night long. Now you show up here at my place and it’s like you’re almost somebody else.

KIT
You know I’ve done plenty of killing.

SHIFT
Then keep doing it. Cuz what we’re doing is the future. Not even the future, it’s now. What we’ve been working toward. Especially since I know the original game developers with a chance to get admin status.

KIT
Okay, but to get admin status do you have to gank other players? It’s like you’re out to be the queen of antisocial networking.

SHIFT
Antisocial. Wow.
KIT

I should hydrate my plants.

SHIFT

You can’t kill zombies but you can water a bunch of fuckin’ weeds? C’mon Kit, what’s with you?

KIT

Don’t you think the game is about meeting new people?

SHIFT

The game is about whatever it takes to get ahead.

KIT

Shift, I just think if you explored the possibilities of people.

SHIFT

I’m not into people. I’m into persons. Like you. And what’s with you?

KIT

What do you mean?

SHIFT

I mean: I thought our partnership was beyond the game.

KIT

Oh.

SHIFT

Seriously, you show up here and it’s like…

KIT

You’ve been so kind taking me in, opening your place to me and my plants.

SHIFT

You’re sleeping in the bathtub.

KIT

Well, you know, your floor is kind of lumpy.

SHIFT

Well, you know, my bed.
KIT
Your hospitality has been amazing.

SHIFT
My amazing hospitality.

KIT
I’ll start killing again, it’s not a problem.

SHIFT
Water your fucking weeds. I’ll gank the zombies myself. Before I head off to the lab. I guess one of us needs to keep both of us going.

*SHIFT* puts back on her gaming headset and starts clicking.

Blackout.
A1, S3. BLOCKBUSTER.

Lights up on KIT alone at her laptop.

KIT
The internet is ripe, green and a young girl’s dream. Kill…kill…kill…

VAN enters through the upstage door.

He closes the door behind him, looks around, taken aback by the state of the room.

KIT
...kill…kill…

He’s confused: am I in the right place?

VAN steps to KIT, taps her on the shoulder.

KIT
AHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

VAN
AHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

KIT
What the hell?

VAN
Easy, easy!

KIT
Don’t touch me!

VAN
I’m sorry!

KIT
Oh my God, get away from me!

VAN
I’m sorry, hey!
KIT

Stay back!

VAN

Listen, hey, I’m sorry, okay?

KIT

Don’t touch!

VAN

I’m not touching anything!

KIT

Whoa.

VAN

Whoa.

KIT

Get back.

VAN

I’m back. I’m back, okay? I’m sorry, I didn’t know if I was supposed to come in or wait outside.

KIT

How’d you get in?

VAN

The door. I didn’t know where to report.

KIT

You reported?

VAN

I didn’t know where to report.

KIT

Look, I don’t have any money and I don’t have any drugs.

VAN

I’m, hey, HEY, I’m just showing up for my first day, okay?
KIT
Is this for Shift?

VAN
Exactly, yes, my first shift. I was told to report here for my first shift.

KIT
Did my Mom send you?

VAN
What? No, report to the University Ave location. Blue shirt, yellow pants.

KIT
My Mom didn’t send you.

VAN
Your Mom.

KIT
Shift didn’t send you.

VAN
Is this like a first day screw with the new employee thing? Or an interview? I was under the impression I was already hired.

KIT
Hired for what?

VAN
For Blockbuster.

They look around.

KIT
There is no Blockbuster.

VAN
You’re not the manager.

KIT
I drive the zamboni.

VAN
What the absolute hell.
KIT
Maybe there’s another Blockbuster?

VAN
University Avenue. Across from campus.

KIT
I guess that’s where this is. I just got to Minneapolis.

VAN
To work at Blockbuster.

KIT
I didn’t think Blockbuster was still in business.

VAN
Right. Right. Such an idiot.

KIT
You okay?

VAN
There is no Blockbuster. Just you. And your trowel.

KIT
Trowel, that’s right.

VAN
Pranked by online posts. Damnit!

KIT
So…are you planning to stay? I don’t have anything to offer you.

VAN
Like a job.

KIT
Actually, Shift has some leftover White Castle.

VAN
Yummy.
KIT
We don’t have a working bathroom here so Shift and I are always crashing the Castle next door.

VAN
Shift.

KIT
And voila! French for two thousand calories.

VAN

KIT
Least I can do for a random newbie.

VAN
This morning has now gone weird. And this place.

KIT
It’s a little like chaos but less organized. I don’t normally meet people who know this is called a trowel.

VAN
Landscaping. Only job I could find until I got fired my first day for not knowing what a trowel was. Still have like four of those things rattling around my backseat.

KIT
You really thought you were showing up for your first day at Blockbuster?

VAN
I don’t wear this shirt for the benefits.

KIT
Kinda cute.

VAN
At least something from undergrad paid off.

KIT
You went to college.

VAN
I minored in cute.
KIT
Where?

VAN
Brown.

KIT
Brown’s a color.

VAN
Brown’s Ivy.

KIT
Ivy’s a genus of evergreen.

VAN
Are you for real?

KIT
What do you mean?

VAN
I mean...what are you and all this doing in an abandoned Blockbuster?

KIT
Squatting.

VAN
Gaming.

KIT
No.

VAN
All evidence to the contrary.

KIT
Zombocalypse.

VAN
Ah.

KIT
You play.
VAN
No. No way. Gaming was how my college roommate flunked out. He couldn’t stop playing. Total moron.

KIT
You’re not a moron because you leave school.

VAN
He didn’t leave, he got kicked out.

KIT
For playing games?

VAN
For sitting in front of his screen all night and not making classes all day. I’m sure he and his gamer crew are probably earning a billion dollars a year at some gaming company while I get pranked to thinking there’s a job at Blockbuster to rent those very games.

KIT
Colleges now have scholarships for games.

VAN
Yeah, like football and tennis.

KIT
Online games. As a varsity sport.

VAN
Who told you that?

KIT
Shift. She works at the university computer lab and said the school’s starting to give full rides.

VAN
For the best fake sport.

KIT
More players than football and tennis. Most popular sport in the world. You wouldn’t believe how many people log on just to watch others play. Who wants to watch eleven players they don’t know run around some square field chasing a ball?
VAN
What’s the deal with this Zombocalypse anyway?

KIT
It’s basically a warzone where only hockey players survive the apocalypse and do constant battle with evil zombies.

VAN
Enchanting.

KIT
You create a profile. Then you try to get enough weapons to kill zombies attacking your rink.

VAN
So you’re a Zamboni-driving skater warrior person.

KIT
Yeah, I know how it sounds. I thought gaming was people who speak Elvish and forego hygiene, too. Except there were so many people playing, I thought some of them must be like me, just looking for a friend. But what hooked me? Each time I killed a zombie, for some reason a tulip seed appeared in the remains. It was a glitch, only lasted a short while. But while it lasted I was a machine, killing zombies and harvesting tulip seeds. Shift was the only player I found who seemed interested, cuz she already had like every weapon. We hit it off, teamed up. I planted tulips inside our rink. See?

VAN
[Reading off the screen] Order Of the Tulip.

KIT
That’s our rink.

VAN
So what’s the point of the game?

KIT
Supposed to be killing zombies.

VAN
And it’s just you…
And Shift.

Kit

Sitting in here.

Van

And fifteen million other people.

Kit

Sitting in here.

Van

Around the world.

Kit

Playing.

Van

Twenty bucks a month.

Kit

That’s enormous.

Van

I guess.

Kit

That’s three hundred million a month. That’s three point six billion dollars a year.

Van

I just know it’s addictive.

Kit

Three point six billion, trust me, game owners focus on the addictive.

Van

Shift said she knows the rogues who started it. They promised her admin status once she kills enough zombies.

Kit

While she squats here.
KIT
With me squatting under her squatting. I’m kind of having post-apocalyptic cash syndrome.

VAN
That’s a real thing?

KIT
When Mom kicks you out of the house over it, you know it’s real.

VAN
Damn.

KIT
Had nowhere else to go. Except Shift. Happens all the time, I bet, gamers crashing from host to host. I thought, take a chance! Who knows, maybe I’ll get here and meet Shift’s friends, find a place to stay. Maybe I’d get that scholarship. Grabbed my laptop, my plant, my trowel, hopped a long bus ride from Baltimore to a place that turned out to be…well, not what I expected.

VAN
You reveal a lot about yourself for a first date.

KIT
Your Mom must be thrilled.

VAN
Hardly. She made it to the top on her own, said I should do the same. I was progeny at Brown.

KIT
Progeny at Brown. Sounds like I should own all their albums.

VAN
Economics degree. Graduate with honors, of course.

KIT
Of course.

VAN
And then a bragga eleven job! Like any of us are working. It’s what, fifty percent of college graduates unemployed.
KIT
I only made it to high-school dropout. My Mom doesn’t know where I am.

VAN
Mine won’t talk to me either. Guess she’s more embarrassed than I am. Minimum wage at Blockbuster! And I can’t even get that right.

KIT
Maybe we’re getting it right and we don’t even know it.

VAN
How’s that?

KIT
Maybe we’re like the Rembrandt tulip. Hundreds of years ago they caused a major jolt in Europe. Tulip mania. Turned out to be just a mutation in the bulb. Maybe that’s us. Life’s mutation, now seeds borne by the wind.

VAN
Lately, I feel like the wind is about to blow me over.

KIT
Then you haven’t seen what the wind can do.

Beat.

VAN
I should go.

KIT
Okay.

VAN
Back to the real [world]… job search.

KIT
It’s okay.

VAN
And don’t worry, I won’t tell what’s going on here.

KIT
Not that it matters. Lately we’ve been attracting a lot of…
VAN
Progenies at Brown.

KIT
Right.

VAN
You know, it’s funny, we were told the world will someday be ours, yet here we are, a fourth of the way into our life, and it’s as unclear as ever.

KIT
How’s that funny?

VAN
Because we think we’re the ones who failed.

VAN exits.

Lights shift.
A1, S4. WHITE HOUSE BATHROOM.

Washington, DC. A White House bathroom.

PRESIDENT enters, carrying a golf club. He whistles Hail to the Chief and goes to relieve himself at the urinal.

DONNA enters.

PRESIDENT
How’d you get past the Secret Service?

DONNA
Told them I’d raise interest rates.

PRESIDENT
That’s what you told Congress.

DONNA
They didn’t know what I was talking about either.

PRESIDENT
Don’t you have your own bathroom?

DONNA
Usually a line.

PRESIDENT
You can’t cut off my balls on TV, so you’re going to do it here.

DONNA
[Showing a note] ‘Go see number one.’

PRESIDENT
Eddie’s idea. He wanted to use code.

DONNA
At first I thought my admin had lost it. It’s not often the Fed Chair gets summoned by the President.

PRESIDENT
It’s never. You were summoned by Eddie. He was pissed about you on all the talk shows.
DONNA
I believe the youth of America deserve to hear from the most powerful woman on the planet.

PRESIDENT
Except nobody understands half of what comes out of your mouth.

DONNA
Including Eddie.

PRESIDENT
Schedule an appointment. In the meantime, you have your bathroom to relieve whatever bile of doom you’ve been imbibing of late.

DONNA
We don’t have a meantime.

PRESIDENT
Donna, I’d hate nothing more than to waste my Presidential piss time hearing you whine, but I’m en route to a critically important event.

DONNA
The washing of the hands?

PRESIDENT
The Daughters of the Confederacy. Hosting a scramble tourney. Yes, I’ll be stroking a half-round at Fort Meade with the Daughters even though my ancestry fought union. Is that irony?

DONNA
[His club] That’s a wood.

PRESIDENT
Make an appointment with Eddie, okay? And keep up the terrible work.

DONNA blocks PRESIDENT’s exit.

DONNA
This is serious.

PRESIDENT
Serious is when the women of this great country provide me another four years. Don’t worry, Donna, you’re appointed for as long as you stay quiet.
DONNA
I thought with the student protests that the people of this country, including women, might start listening to what I have to say.

PRESIDENT
You got a recording device in there?

DONNA
I came in here because this is the one place the White House doesn’t record.

PRESIDENT
Yeah, how can you be so sure?

DONNA
Because Eddie wasn’t your first choice for Treasury Secretary.

Beat.

PRESIDENT
Two minutes.

DONNA
Signs of a fiscal collapse are unmistakable.

PRESIDENT
Ohhhh, God.

DONNA
We’ve reached levels of unprecedented danger. Global banks are failing.

PRESIDENT
It’s called a European problem.

DONNA
Yes, because they don’t discipline each other.

PRESIDENT
They’ve never disciplined each other. That’s why they hate us.

DONNA
There’s more. As of this morning the Chinese are done buying U.S. debt.

PRESIDENT
Where’d you get that?
DONNA

I pay attention.

PRESIDENT

Eddie didn’t say anything.

DONNA

Because Eddie isn’t doing anything. Besides, Treasury doesn’t control the dollar. I do.

PRESIDENT

The Chinese are posturing.

DONNA

You sent code for help.

PRESIDENT

I sent code to get you off TV. You were supposed to schedule an appointment so I could be absent and you and Eddie could talk.

DONNA

Forget Eddie, he’s worthless.

PRESIDENT

Um, okay, one minute left in our already forgettable tryst, you can worry all you want, but the dollar is too big to collapse.

DONNA

And you have limited understanding of the extraordinary issues at play. The economy isn’t some appliance with an on-off switch. You can’t continue to sit idle and do nothing. So far that’s got you a high unfavorable and a large and surly group of protestors starting to surround the White House.

PRESIDENT

Donna, I want you to listen close, because what I’m about to say will impact your political career.

DONNA

I’m not in politics. I’m an economist.

PRESIDENT

Who’s all over network talk.
DONNA
Because the dollar is in trouble.

PRESIDENT
Every day the dollar is in trouble. And every next day the dollar is doing just fine.

DONNA
I need you to enact my plans.

PRESIDENT
You just want to protect your own ass.

DONNA
My duty is protecting the American way of life’s ass.

PRESIDENT
Which is why you’ve back-channeled this to me.

DONNA
Confronting the President of the United States in a White House bathroom is not what I would classify a backchannel move. It’s kind of front-channel. We don’t have to make this political.

PRESIDENT
Number one lie in this city. Donna Steelmint: your overzealous alarmism undermines the security of the American conscience. Furthermore, this ain’t helping the woman vote. Golf tourney awaits.

PRESIDENT exits, whistling.

Lights shift.
A1, S5. BLOCKBUSTER.

Over darkness.

SHIFT

MOTHER OF ALL FUCKERY!

Lights up on SHIFT at her laptop, wearing headset, punching and clicking.

SHIFT

We got a large and surly group of zombies here! [Sing-chants] Gonna slay me some zombie; gonna shred me some undead; gonna slaaayyy me some zombie; fire puck bomb through their head. Some help I could use here! I said, I could use a little A-assistance with some killing! Yo, Kit!

KIT

Huh?

SHIFT

[Disrobing headgear] Come join me for some imaginative social play.

KIT

Sorry.

SHIFT

What’s wrong? You not get any last night? Sleep, I mean.

KIT

I was just thinking.

SHIFT

‘Bout you and I leading a massacre!

KIT

Something like that.

SHIFT

I’m telling you Kit, couple more years of this and we could be admin status. Get admin status and be in control. Get outta this place and head someplace warm, a climate suitable for land mammals. A beach, couple recliner chairs, and a long extension cord tapping electric from some cabana hut. So turn off the think and come kill.
KIT
My neck hurts.

SHIFT
Probably from sleeping in the bathtub. I could give a little rub-down. Start on the thumbs and work my way up the arms, to the neck, and wherever else needs a woman’s touch.

KIT
Uh, that’s okay.

SHIFT
You don’t want me to.

KIT
No.

SHIFT
You do want me to.

KIT
Your fingers must be sore.

SHIFT
Don’t make excuses for me. I’m not the weak one here. I’m kidding, damn, you take everything so serious. You need to lighten, okay? Maybe it’s me. Maybe I’ll lighten. Cuz I’m sitting here. I’m just sitting here, but maybe if I lighten and come over there, and maybe give your thumbs a rub, and then your arms, and then to the neck…

Knocking at the upstage main door.

SHIFT
Fuck a dick.

Another knock.

SHIFT
The cops!

KIT
Wouldn’t they say police?
KIT opens the door. There’s a bouquet of flowers.

KIT

It’s flowers.

SHIFT

Flowers.

KIT

An arrangement.

SHIFT

Oh my God, they know. They know.

KIT

Who knows?

SHIFT

They know where I am.

KIT

[Opens a note, reads] ‘Trying to learn what the wind can do. Meet again? Email yes to ilikeVan at gmail.’ Wow. He sent tulips.

SHIFT

Who did?

KIT

A guy.

SHIFT

A guy.

KIT

Van.

SHIFT

A guy in a van.

KIT

A guy named Van. I met him.
When?

This morning.

Where?

Here.

Here.

He walked in.

A troll.

A guy.

How’d he get in?

He just tapped me on the shoulder.

Some psycho rapist just waltzed in here.

He’s not a psycho, he’s from Brown. He thought he was coming to work here.

For the Tulip.

For Blockbuster.

There is no Blockbuster.
KIT

Well he knows that now.

SHIFT

So you didn’t open the door?

KIT

I thought he was some drug person coming to scrap the place.

SHIFT

How’d he get in?

KIT

He said the door.

SHIFT

How’d he leave?

KIT

He walked out.

SHIFT

You didn’t throw him out.

KIT

He was nice.

SHIFT

What he look like?

KIT

Um…cute. I guess.

SHIFT

I let you into this rink. You’re crashing at my pad.

KIT

I know that.

SHIFT

Have you been messing with me this whole time?

KIT

Shift, I’m telling you, he showed up unannounced.
SHIFT
Did you tell him what’s going on?

KIT
He’s this young guy, like us, and really sweet.

SHIFT
You fucking told him.

KIT
He already knew about gaming and everything. He swore to keep it all a secret.

SHIFT
After he somehow magically appeared, flicking your shoulder.

KIT
Shift, it’s not like that.

SHIFT
No, it’s like you, me, psycho scrapist, and some flower company psycho scrapist used to deliver flowers. That’s what it’s like.

KIT
Shift, calm, I was going to tell you.

SHIFT
We are blown. Exploded.

KIT
It was a random meet-up.

SHIFT
And you bought that shit? That’s 101 FBI lie shit. Look at this. I like Van. What kind of name is Van? And who even uses email anymore? The dot gov, that’s who.

KIT
Shift, c’mon.

SHIFT
No, Kit, you c’mon. You think you’re the only one who was kicked out? The only one abandoned? This game is making me important. This game is making me a winner.
KIT

It means a lot to me, too.

SHIFT

Forget what it means to you. We got problems. You’re letting trolls in.

KIT

He’s not a troll, he’s a person. How is it a crime to meet new people?

SHIFT

You gotta know how to defend like a gamer. I can’t have trolls here.

KIT

Is that what you think of me?

SHIFT

Who found you when you were nothing but a newbie slushputty getting ganked by zombies, huh? Who made you a member of my rink? Who was there for you when you flaked on high school? Who took you in after you got tossed by your Mom? Who’s the only one hosting you? Providing for you.

KIT

You are.

SHIFT

So why the fuck are weeds getting delivered to my door?

KIT

Alright. I won’t email him.

SHIFT

Did you even want to?

KIT

I’m sorry.

SHIFT

No, hey, it’s okay, look, you did the right thing. Some random FBI gov-nerd trolled in here and caused a freak but you tossed him. Now we’re on alert. You and me. Cuz that’s what this is about, right?

KIT

Fine.
SHIFT
‘Course right. Now. Can we get back to work?

*SHIFT puts on gamer headset, KIT holds the delivery card.*

*Lights shift.*
DONNA, at the lectern.

DONNA

I’m sorry. I’m telling you about what happened and I realized I forgot to start with a joke.

When speaking publicly you’re supposed to tell a joke.

Try this: what’s the difference between the dollar and football? You still get four quarters out of football.

Gee, Donna, they’re not laughing.

That’s okay, because I’m not laughing.

You know why I’m not laughing?

Because I’m choking.

The American Dream died the day we became a nation in debt.

Right now you’re choking on it.

See, there’s this trillion-dollar high skyscraper of debt.

It’s just towering, the tip far beyond our sight.

And at the bottom, its foundation, is your mouth, wide, your lifestyle appetite trying to swallow it all.

And you’re standing there, your heads tilted back, mouths wide, tip-toed on a wobbly rock of excess.

And you can’t keep up with all the debt I’m feeding you.

Yes, that I’m feeding you.

One hundred years ago, the Fed was created as neither a government entity nor a reserve, but a private corporation.

I run a private corporation that not only makes your dollar but charges you interest on each dollar I print.
DONNA [CONT.]

And lately I’ve been making lots of Franklins.

Because I have to.

Because nobody’s buying our debt.

Not China, not Brazil, not nobody.

That’s really the start of this fiasco.

We can’t even export our debt.

So we’re down to one mouth.

Wake-up call!

But you didn’t wake up.

You kept your eyes shut and mouth open while me and my private corporation kept printing more money, forcing the U.S. government to buy its own debt, which is really double-buying.

Not only is this dumb, it’s stupid.

It's obscene.

And totally unsustainable.

There.

How’s that for a joke.

Lights shift.
A1, S7. BLOCKBUSTER.

*From darkness.*

SHIFT

WHO WANTS AN ASS KICKIN’ FROM MAMACITA!

*Lights up on KIT and SHIFT at their laptops.*

KIT

They’re in the rink!

SHIFT

We got a troll breach!

KIT

How’d they get in the rink?

SHIFT

Coming through the visitor’s bench. Go to secure channel.

KIT

They’re trampling the tulips!

SHIFT

Bad-ass-tards.

KIT

That is so not very nice.

SHIFT

Troll breach now at center ice! Alright, ready about Kit, get left.

KIT

[Typing] Please stay off the tulips.

SHIFT

LEFT, Kit!

KIT

They’re fellow players. Maybe if we talk to them.
SHIFT
Maybe if we put a puck bomb up their rectum.

KIT
Damnit! Not the tulips!

SHIFT
You just invaded the wrong rink. Where’s my puck bomb?

KIT
Loading.

SHIFT
That’s my girl.

KIT
Two of them.

SHIFT
That’s my girl!

KIT
And puck bombs ready to fire!

SHIFT
BUENOS TARDES, ASSHOLES!

There’s a knock on the upstage main door.

VAN [OFF]
Kit! You in there? Hello! Kit! Hello?

SHIFT opens the door.

VAN
Whoa. Is Kit here?

SHIFT
Who the hell are you?

KIT
Van.
Kit!

Van?

Hi.

Hi.

Got your email.

What email.

[To KIT] You got the flowers.

We got ‘em. Then I threw ‘em in a bag with a bunch of screaming kittens and lit the whole thing on fire.

You must be Shift.

What.

It’s cool, Kit told me.

Kit doesn’t know what she’s talking about.

Thank you for the flowers.

Tulips are actually hard to find.
SHIFT
This place is actually hard to find.

KIT
I’m sorry, Shift sometimes suffers from rude. Would you like to come in?

SHIFT
No.

VAN
Thanks. [Offering a White Castle takeout bag] Here. Figured I owed you. I didn’t know what you like so I got a bunch of jalapeno crispy.

KIT
I love jalapeno crispy.

SHIFT
We hate jalapeno crispy. What are you doing here?

VAN
Sorry to drop by unannounced.

SHIFT
We just mutilated a bunch of trolls doing that very thing.

VAN
Look, I came back to talk to you. Both of you, actually.

SHIFT
There’s nothing you want to talk about we want to hear.

VAN
It’s cool, I mean I’d geek too if somebody bombed my setup.

SHIFT
Who is this guy?

KIT
This is Van. Brown, Blockbuster, nothing to do with gaming.

VAN
Has anyone created universal Zombocalypse money? Is there a control power or any exchange mechanism functioning as authoritative game currency?
Beat.

KIT

What.

SHIFT

I told you, Kit, a spy.

VAN

No see, I logged on. I joined. I created a hockey player profile. I traveled rink to rink taking on all these zombies in random fights. I have to tell you it was kind of boring.

SHIFT

You’re kind of boring.

VAN

But this Level 16 Assassination Goalie rolled up in this huge Zamboni. He asked if I wanted to join his rink. I was like, cool! Then he ambushed me. Cut me with a Skate Sharpener of Death. I sat there, helpless, staring at my screen, while this Level 16 Assassination Goalie laughed and took all my stuff. I was so angry. I spent all night looking for some serious weapon to get him back. At this one rink, I tried to buy a puck bomb, and they wanted fourteen helmets. Another rink wanted seven shoulder pads. No wonder nobody owns the game. Any true authority would stabilize a single currency. That’s what I came here for. To tell you. To talk about.

SHIFT

That’s what user groups are for.

VAN

This is a financial market waiting to happen. With instability comes opportunity for profit.

KIT

You’re talking a lot different than before.

VAN

I believe the Order of the Tulip can position its digital tulips to become Zombocalypse game currency.

KIT

You said you were landscaping.
VAN
How big is the Order of the Tulip? Are there others working for you? Game slaves?

SHIFT
Wow. This is all very interesting. Also very interesting is the finger. Now get out.

VAN
There’s nobody servicing money inside Zombocalypse. There’s no central bank.

KIT
You came back to talk about that?

VAN
Yes. Because at some point with these kinds of numbers someone’s going to establish fiscal authority. And I believe you have the power to get there first.

SHIFT
Please vacate right now if not sooner.

Your HQ.

VAN
That’s right, hetero-rectal, this is mine.

I don’t see your name on anything.

KIT
This is Shift’s place. Respect that.

VAN
Respect you have digital tulips. Tons of them. They can be the currency which rules all of Zombocalypse.

KIT
Maybe you should leave.

VAN
Two things matter: separating gamers from their money and making sure they come back for more.
KIT
That’s not a game, Van, that’s a drug.

VAN
Which fifteen million take for hours a day.

SHIFT
We would really be joyful if you accessorized the curb.

VAN
You know who owns this building? A real estate trust. Not unreal estate. That’s why you still have power. And once the real real estate finds out about what’s going on here, they might pull the plug.

SHIFT
Nobody pulls my plug but me.

KIT
And me.

VAN
You’d be kicked out, again.

SHIFT
[To KIT] You told him?

VAN
[To SHIFT] You want admin status?

SHIFT
How does this queef know so much?

VAN
How’d you like to be admin everything? You control the money, you control the everything.

KIT
With digital tulips.

VAN
I know nothing brings people together like money.
SHIFT
Yeah, you know you slipped in here and sweetened on Kit and caused a momentary lapse of brain, but I know what’s what and fancy education doesn’t equal smart.

VAN
Yeah, and sitting in front of a screen doesn’t equal work.

SHIFT
What are you, twenty-one?

VAN
Twenty-two.

SHIFT
Well, I’m twenty-three. So I kinda got the world figured out. And I didn’t come from fancy education, and I’m doing just fine.

VAN
Fine.

SHIFT
That’s right, fine.

VAN
Then keep on being the undead shooting the undead. ‘Cause that’s what you are. Look at us. Sitting around an abandoned Blockbuster. Not exactly the sparkling cider of society. At least that’s what we’re told. We’re told you gotta get the best school and the best degree to get the best job. And if you’re not a billionaire by the time you’re twenty-four then you’ve wasted your life. Go plant yourself in some cold city where lines are drawn saying this is theirs and not yours. Well that map is gone. There are no boundaries anymore. Our generation is making it obsolete, building new worlds online. And we’re everywhere. Sitting in a coffee shop, or a basement, or behind a White Castle, staring into screens and punching buttons. Fifteen million who all have the same problem: money. And this isn’t some first-world problem, and there’s no game cheat, there’s just who does it first. So welcome to the human credit union. Play or be played. Either you write the rules or they do. Those are the stakes. Do you want to stay undead or do you want to come back to life?

KIT
And this would bring people together.
VAN

There’s a lot of people playing games. But there’s nobody making money for those games. It’s the ultimate app.

KIT

Digital tulips.

VAN

What do you think a dollar bill is?

KIT

Dead tree.

VAN

Exactly. A means of exchange. But the woman who runs the dollar? She runs everything.

KIT

You seem different now.

VAN

I’m just like you, trying to bring people together to get ahead. Trying to find that mutation moment.

KIT

Digital tulips as game currency.

VAN

Start with your local rink.

KIT

And people will trade with it.

VAN

Money is a virus. It infects and spreads. Like wildfire. Forget driving a Zamboni. You’d bring together all gamers everywhere. And you’d be the one giving out admin status.

SHIFT

Even if we did offer digital tulips as trade bait, I’m not equipped to handle a surge.
Yes!

We’d need serious computing power.

How much power?

Dual GTX graphics processors, terabytes of ballistix sports memory.

Is anything you just said computers?

Problem is: it’s gonna cost money.

I can get money.

Big bing.

I can get big bing.

Listen, Vanilla, I don’t want you to get involved in things you don’t understand. That make you feel out of your element.

Don’t worry. This is gonna work out great!

You’re leaving?

I’ll be back with the money. Order Of The Tulip.

VAN exits.

Lights shift.
A1, S8. WHITE HOUSE BATHROOM.

A crowd noise and horn orchestra in the background.

DONNA waits.

The PRESIDENT enters, now in formal attire.

PRESIDENT

Oh! My little checkbook!

DONNA

Hail, King President!

PRESIDENT

You’re in my bathroom.

DONNA

That I’m paying for.

PRESIDENT

Go to hell.

DONNA

Working on it.

PRESIDENT

Saw you got your ass kicked on Meet the Press. Waving the burning flag of imminent demise. Well, nothing a couple political suppositories can’t help.

DONNA

Forget suppositories, I’ve been trying to inject the country with financial botox. But my medicine is now the poison.

PRESIDENT

Damnit, Donna, can a guy piss in peace?

DONNA

Not with the protest. It’s up to a hundred thousand out there.

PRESIDENT

Anyone ever tell you you tend to exaggerate?
DONNA
I was out there with them. It’s at least a hundred thousand. Lined up around the White House, shoulder to shoulder, lying on their backs, arms extended like street angels. And they’re chanting: ‘ommm’.

PRESIDENT
Bunch of goddamn kids.

DONNA
They’re pissed at the situation.

PRESIDENT
We’re not talking the annotated bibliography of forced labor. I’m not the one twisting their arms to pay ungodly tuition rates so they can have sushi in their dorm rooms. Missing class. When I was in college we were lucky to miss hazing. How’d you make it past the protest?

DONNA
Nobody knows who I am.

PRESIDENT
Your publicist must be ambulatory.

DONNA
It’s getting so loud the ‘ommm’ is vibrating windows.

PRESIDENT
Good thing I got bulletproof.

DONNA
Too bad you don’t extend that same protection to the dollar.

PRESIDENT
Student protests are 70’s theme parties.

DONNA
It’s everybody. Young, in their 70s, lying down, bending over.

PRESIDENT
Donna—

DONNA
Frustrated, scared, especially the elderly who can’t live on savings anymore.
PRESIDENT
Yes, it’s Donna Steelmint and her dollar downer routine! Fun for the whole family!

DONNA
I need you to enact my plans.

PRESIDENT
Want my autograph before you go?

DONNA
Two minutes.

PRESIDENT
We played this game already.

DONNA
Let me show you one thing. One thing.

PRESIDENT
What.

DONNA
This.

PRESIDENT
What.

DONNA
Our current national debt.

PRESIDENT looks at it. Turns it to the side, upside down.

DONNA
What’s so funny.

PRESIDENT
We can’t pay this off. We can’t pay this off!

More laughing, now almost from both.

DONNA
I guess I never really thought of it that way. Not paying it off.
PRESIDENT
I admit, it looks bad.

DONNA
It’s even worse that it looks.

PRESIDENT
But that’s not what people want to hear. That’s your problem. That’s why I get elected and you get appointed. People want drive-through government. I want this, I want that, I want it to fit in my mouth and go. The debt, the dollar, they’re not easy opinions. Easy opinions equal easy votes. So people don’t want to listen and the few that do want change right up until change hits their wallet. Capitalism is the curse of not being able to walk away from more.

DONNA
Capitalism is innovation over tradition. Which is why people are transferring their deposit cash to safe havens.

PRESIDENT
Donna.

DONNA
People are starting to pull out of the dollar.

PRESIDENT
Donna.

DONNA
Shifting to gold, whatever they think is safe.

PRESIDENT
Listen, c’mere, let’s get you out of the bathroom, okay? You have some drinks, dance to the orchestra, and stop going on TV.

DONNA
Doing nothing is no longer an option.

PRESIDENT
Donna, I’ve got a thousand problems to deal with.
DONNA
And the dollar is problem one. You can kiss problem two through the rest goodbye without the dollar. These transfers out of deposits grow into a full-on sprint [snaps fingers] like that. All it takes is one international buyer, desperate, to hedge any kind of emerging currency, and we’d have a domino-style free-fall.

PRESIDENT
The dollar’s got nothing to be afraid of.

DONNA
That’s what every country thinks right before its money becomes a collector’s item. The American people—

PRESIDENT
The American people perceive what we want them to perceive.

DONNA
Another founding father. Well I’m the reigning mother. And as much as it pains me to say it, I can’t do this alone.

PRESIDENT
What’s this plan of yours?

DONNA
For starters…a bank holiday, a resetting of debt.

PRESIDENT
I declare a bank holiday and we’d have total collapse.

DONNA
I can’t prevent the fall of the dollar without your help.

PRESIDENT
Alright, look, if something comes out of nowhere to somehow threaten the dollar, then I will shove, with my own two hands, the Treasury Secretary onto an oncoming Metro. I’ll even abandon seeking a second term.

DONNA
You’re serious.

PRESIDENT
But if nothing happens by reelection, then you will resign, and you will go back to wherever you come from.
DONNA
Minnesota.

PRESIDENT
Whatever. Nothing happens and you’re out.

DONNA
Get ready to shove with your two hands. Because we have a crisis.

PRESIDENT
If I knee-jerked every time I was handed an apocalypse my legs would fall off.

DONNA
Roosevelt managed. With half the banks closed. He inherited panic and paid it off. You...I don’t know what you’re doing.

PRESIDENT
Stick around long enough and find out. And why is it you think you can come in here and talk to me this way?

DONNA
Because I don’t work for you.

DONNA goes.

Lights shift.
A1, S9. BLOCKBUSTER.

Over darkness.

SHIFT
MY LIFE IS CRAZY SHIT!

Lights up on SHIFT at her laptop, pecking and punching.

SHIFT
SLAUGHTER AND RAMPAGE, BITCHES!

KIT
You wonder how he’s getting the money. No job. Mom won’t talk to him.

SHIFT
He ain’t coming back. And how do you know so much about his Mom?

KIT
I listened.

SHIFT
Listen to me now: he ain’t coming back.

KIT
What makes you so sure?

SHIFT
Cuz he’s a liar. One big thorn in the weeds. You heard the way he talks.

KIT
He sounded committed.

SHIFT
You gotta know how to sound like a gamer. Alright, look, if that walking Wikipedia of Annoying somehow shows up with an armful of money then I will shove with my own two hands digital tulips to the trolls. That is…unless...

KIT
You did it.

SHIFT
Surprise.
KIT

Without Van.

SHIFT

Fuck Van, what do we need him for?

KIT

You just did it.

SHIFT

Put the weeds out there.

KIT

And they’re all—

SHIFT

Using it.

KIT

Paying with it.

SHIFT

Trading with it.

KIT

At our rink.

SHIFT

Everywhere. Total verse.

KIT

But you said you needed all that stuff.

SHIFT

That was a ruse to get plain bagel outta here.

KIT

You lied.

SHIFT

Who cares?

KIT

I care, Shift.
SHIFT
Why do you care so much about some plebe you don’t even know? That guy is totally ortho. He doesn’t even have a visible tattoo! He ain’t one of us.

KIT
I thought he might make a nice addition to the team.

SHIFT
Yeah, well, that ain’t your decision to make. The Order of the Tulip is you-and-me and me. That’s the team.

KIT
What team are you on Shift? If this were a true team I’d know some things.

SHIFT
Like what?

KIT
For one thing your name.

SHIFT
Fine. Since you came all this way. I’ve never met anybody involved face-to-face, okay? You’re the only gamer whose ever seen me.

KIT
And I still don’t know your name! Being all secret doesn’t make you a winner.

SHIFT
It makes me a Level 50 Assassin. The game developers promised me admin status once I kill enough players, not zombies. Players get too good too fast and the developers don’t want imbalance. It’s all zipped lip that assassins are about, special weapons, kill-target orders, making sure nobody advances far enough so that everybody comes back for more.

KIT
I’ve been trying to involve people and you’re programmed to kill them.

SHIFT
KIT
Maybe this digital tulip thing is just what we need.

Knocking on the door.

VAN [OFF]
Hey! It’s me, Van! Kit, Shift! You there!

KIT opens the door. VAN enters, manic.

VAN
Sorry it took so long. Sold everything. Car, clothes, trowels, everything. Here you go. Seed money! Five thousand dollars. Whole time I was in the pawn shop, I never felt more sure of anything in my life. Just like you said, Kit, you gotta learn when that wind blows! Because this is nothing, by the time we’re done, this is gonna be tissue paper, we’re gonna wipe our nose with five thousand dollars. So! When can we start?

Lights shift.
A1, S10. WHITE HOUSE BATHROOM / BLOCKBUSTER / LECTERN.

DONNA waiting.

PRESIDENT barges in, holding a note.

PRESIDENT
You’re a persistent bitch, you know that?

DONNA
Oh, you’re listening now.

PRESIDENT
What the hell are you doing?

DONNA
Getting your attention.

PRESIDENT
By stomping around the rose garden?

DONNA
There’s been a development.

PRESIDENT
The press is out of control. Why is Donna Steelmint lying in the rose garden, chanting ‘ommm’?

DONNA
It was actually kind of peaceful.

PRESIDENT
[Referencing the note] ‘Fed Chair says to have a number two.’

DONNA
I don’t think the NSA will crack that one, either.

PRESIDENT
You’re insane.

DONNA
It would seem a new currency has emerged.

Lights shift.
KIT
Look at all these people! They’re everywhere!

VAN
Wildfire. What’re those guys called?

SHIFT
They’re not guys, nose job, they’re warrior class puck bombers.

KIT
You’re not upset we launched the digital tulip without you?

VAN
Launching’s the easy part.

SHIFT
Rink syndicate looking to pot their bulbs.

VAN
Organized crime?

SHIFT
My kinda team.

KIT
That’s not right.

VAN
Type the mob we’ll stash for a hosting fee. Right, wrong, we deal in applied interest.

Lights shift.

PRESIDENT
Hockey-playing zombies.

DONNA
Hockey players killing zombies, actually.

PRESIDENT
I’m getting dragged to the men’s by you for online zombie game money.
DONNA
These kids are funneling serious coin. Lying out there with their little handhelds, shifting the balance.

PRESIDENT
You’ve lost it.

DONNA
It’s enough to attract the attention of the real-world exchange. This is the kind of thing I warned about.

PRESIDENT
Have you been snorting the dollar?

DONNA
I need you to enact my plan.

PRESIDENT
Instead, maybe you can gather enough play money to pay for a real moving van to take you back to Minnesota.

Lights shift.

KIT
Uh-oh.

SHIFT
Figures.

VAN
Competition was bound to happen.

KIT
What are they calling their money?

SHIFT
The Schwarzenegger.

KIT
Maybe there’s room for two currencies. Maybe we could partner with them.

VAN
No. We have to take them out.
KIT
All those people?

VAN
What’s the most powerful weapon in the game?

SHIFT
Nuclear Hockey Stick.

VAN
Where can we get it?

SHIFT
The game developers haven’t released it.

But it does exist.

SHIFT
In theory.

VAN
In theory the tulip was just a flower. You really know the game developers?

SHIFT
You really got a pair?

VAN
Tell the developers we have five thousand dollars and a proposition. And release all the digital tulips to market. Flood supply.

SHIFT
Damn, Vanilla, if you wanted to be in business what the hell were you doing in school?

Lights shift.

At the lectern, DONNA as before.

DONNA
I should have stopped there.

I should have let it go.
DONNA [CONT.]

But another President who does nothing.

Every four years they come and they go but guess who has to stick around.

Me. I stick around. Banker in Chief. Cleaning up their mess.

I protect! I preserve!

The world’s most powerful woman, more powerful than the world’s most powerful man.

Who was making a mockery of it all.

No, that’s not entirely true.

The truth is that prediction is a humbling occupation.

But this time I thought I was right. I thought I knew what was coming. So clear it couldn’t be mistaken.

I personally drew the world to the new currency.

But I couldn’t stop the seed from growing beyond control.

 Ended up here.

Lights shift.

KIT

WELCOME TROLLS! FORM A LINE! Starting to feel a little rush here.

VAN

Simply the natural high from exploiting demand and supply.

SHIFT

Wow, that is so economics of you.

VAN

This is incredible! Total tulip takeover! With American values. Vision, teamwork, and bloody conquest all in the name of...oh, my God.

SHIFT

Holy. Shit.
KIT

What?

VAN

Oh. My God.

SHIFT

Holy. Shit-shit.

KIT

What’s wrong?

VAN

There’s a new buyer.

KIT

Who? Who’s buying?

VAN

Italy.

END ACT ONE.
ACT TWO.

A2, S1. BLOCKBUSTER.

From darkness.

KIT

WHO WANTS SOME MONEY!

Lights up on KIT and SHIFT at their laptops, with steering wheel and headsets, a la beginning of Act I.

KIT

Buongiorno! Ah, grazie! [To VAN] These Italians are very polite.

SHIFT

Y’all want some numbers?

VAN

Ask him what the Euro is trading tulips at.

KIT

Patience.

VAN

Yeah, I don’t have any of that.

KIT

Then it’s a good thing I’m customer service.

SHIFT

Hey! Who wants numbers?

VAN

I do!

SHIFT

Guess.

VAN

Let me have it!
Guess.

VAN

Ten thousand.

SHIFT

The number of registered Zombocalypse depositors at the Order of the Tulip is currently at: ten million.

KIT

What?

VAN

That’s gotta be a mistake.

SHIFT

What I got.

KIT

Ten million?

SHIFT

And rising.

VAN

Fantastic!

SHIFT

How am I supposed to handle ten million?

VAN

Wait, who’s that?

SHIFT

Where?

VAN

Right there, who’s that?

KIT

[Reading] SavageStamen.
Troll.

What nationality?

Brazil.

Troll!

Customer.

What’s the graffiti say on Stamen’s zamboni?

[Reading] ‘Zombocalypse is for lovers.’

You’re going down, bitch.

[To SHIFT] No.

Puck bomb loading.

No.

Then tell Stamen to send something nice from Havana.

Okay, that’s Cuba.

[Typing] Greetings, new friend!

[To KIT] Ask him what the centavo is trading tulips at.
[Punching a key] Too late!

VAN

Damn, Shift!

SHIFT

Now nine million, nine hundred and ninety nine thousand--

VAN

Knock it off! [To KIT] Wait, who’s that?

KIT

Where?

VAN

Left.

KIT

I don’t—

VAN

LEFT, Kit! There, with the AU.

KIT

Australia.

SHIFT

What’s that?

VAN

A suburb of New Zealand, you freak.

SHIFT

[Punching keys] Not anymore.

VAN

Stop killing everyone, will you?

SHIFT

If there’s one I could kill.

VAN

[To KIT] Did you ask that guy?
SHIFT
Why’s everyone in your world a guy?

KIT
What am I asking?

VAN
Just ask if there’s any stagflation.

SHIFT
Ew, sounds like what you get not wearing a condom, puck bomb loading.

VAN
Shift, I swear!

SHIFT
Ooooh, ya hear that tulip trolls? Shithead stagflation is swearing!

VAN
Did you ask him?

KIT
Okay, Van, just, STOP. Stop, okay? It’s too much. We’ve been at this all night. I can’t handle ten, let alone ten million. Just stop. Stop.

VAN
So you’re saying we should stop.

SHIFT
C’mere honey, no more vanilla slave driver for you.

KIT
All I see is the game. I feel like a zombie.

VAN
Which is why we can’t stop now. You heard Shift.

SHIFT
I don’t know what you heard from me but it sure wasn’t sit your ass in your chair and slave all night.
Gathering real-time data lets us know how to enforce the right rate on our exchange. Because ten million tulip swappers, inflation’s gonna jack. Is it really ten million?

What are you doing?

Checking your work.

You just touched my screen.

It can’t be ten million.

Never touch a woman’s screen.

Don’t you see? This has gone beyond the game. This is happening, really truly happening.

Yeah. Or...[clicking keys]...another dead one!

WILL YOU STOP?

Chill with the upper case voice, you purvo screen-toucher.

Hey, these fingers? They know how to touch their way through the big game now at play. These fingers [snaps his fingers] have snapped a surprise jab to the system. These fingers [snap] know we got momentum. And these fingers know we just entered round two of the big fight. But I bet each time I [snap] snap my fingers the federal reserves of the world fight back by creating more money.

Then maybe you should stop snapping your fingers.
VAN

What is your problem?

SHIFT

Gee, I don’t know, random Jimmy Johns in pleated knits meddling my affairs makes me sour.

VAN

I figured sour a preexisting condition.

KIT

Van!

VAN

She’s shooting all the customers.

KIT

While you’re fleecing them.

SHIFT

You’re not trying to change the world, you’re trying to control the world. Same old hetero white man power bullshit.

KIT

That’s the team spirit.

SHIFT

There’s only one team here and he’s not on it. I’m not even sure what his role is.

VAN

Economist.

SHIFT

‘Cuz they’re real useful. You money people are all the same: gimme more while I screw you over.

KIT

Shift, c’mon.

SHIFT

C’mon what? He’s a spy.

VAN

Right, I’m the econ spy from Games ‘R Us.
KIT
This is one of those incredible, life-changing, life-affirming moments which I’m too exhausted to enjoy and you’re both too *rowr!* to appreciate.

SHIFT
Me? He’s the one strutting around here, like he can lord over us, with his back straight, his chin up, his privilege hanging on every word, but I’m the one with a job.

VAN
To kill zombies?

SHIFT
Where’d you come from?

VAN
Let’s see…the real world.

SHIFT
Where money people are like gamers, except with more killing.

KIT
Just great.

VAN
The question is who are you, Shift? Really, we’re all waiting to hear! Especially about this job of yours, could you be a little more specific where that’s at?

SHIFT
By the time I get back, vanilla here better be extracted.

VAN
Aww, don’t leave sour, just leave.

SHIFT
I do what I want, how I want, whenever I want.

KIT
I’m logging off now.
VAN
Instead of stimulating the zombie-conomy let’s all take a little field trip to the university and ask: do you know this girl? Does she really work here? Because I know what it’s like to show up at a place in the real world without a job waiting for you.

KIT
Are you done? We finished? Because all this bickering gets us nowhere. It’s pointless.

VAN
Oh no, there’s a point. The point is that there’s ten million gamers depending on us to finance their addiction.

SHIFT
You hear this, Kit?

KIT
I’m trying not to listen.

VAN
[To SHIFT] Whose stuff is this?

SHIFT
Mine.

VAN
I don’t see your name on anything.

SHIFT
I built it. I earned it.

VAN
Are we in the lab? Is this some kind of lab? Did whoever or whatever you’re working for set this up?

SHIFT
I’m warning you. You try and mess with what’s mine--

VAN
And what? What are you going to do? Load a puck bomb?
SHIFT

[To KIT] We don’t need him.

KIT

What we need is to stop acting like random trolls looking for a fight. I’m not interested in playing along anymore if this is how it’s gonna be.

SHIFT

I thought this is what you wanted.

KIT

I don’t want this.

SHIFT

Yeah? Well what do you want?

KIT looks between SHIFT and VAN, but nothing.

SHIFT

Then we have a problem.

Lights shift.
A2, S2. WHITE HOUSE BATHROOM.

DONNA waiting, checks her watch.

PRESIDENT enters in bathrobe, hair now askew.

PRESIDENT
I just got out of an emergency summit with the Joint Chiefs. I was briefed that eastern Europe is descending into madness. Currency instability. Apparently the Euro is getting trampled. The biggest mess is in Italy.

DONNA
Yes.

PRESIDENT
Half of Rome is on fire. Community centers, churches, symbols of authority. The UN’s looking to send in ground forces. What have you done? I mean, there I was, listening to disaster unfold, when it struck me that this sounds a lot like the work of Donna Steelmint. I told everyone to take five so I could take a leak.

DONNA
I’m touched.

PRESIDENT.
This isn’t funny. This is people. What did you do?

DONNA
Something which days ago didn’t seem to concern you.

PRESIDENT
Days ago I wasn’t dealing with Brazil rationing sugar and mobs outside Australian banks.

DONNA
It’s what I told you would happen.

PRESIDENT
Yes, it’s exactly what you said would happen, isn’t it? You’re manic. You went from babbling on Charlie Rose to sneaking into my bathroom to destroying society.
DONNA
I warned you.

PRESIDENT
That was paranoia. We don’t take action based on paranoia.

DONNA
No, we do it on fear and greed, which is just a more advanced pendulum.

PRESIDENT
What are you, pouting? Nobody paying you enough attention?

DONNA
I was the only one paying attention.

PRESIDENT
This is what you’re going to do. You’re going to signal that the United States will take every necessary step to ease pressure off the emerging crisis.

DONNA
We’re at the financial equivalent of cubism. Every rule has gone sideways.

PRESIDENT
You will say the Fed’s taking action.

DONNA
It won’t work anymore.

PRESIDENT
Buy bonds, mortgages.

DONNA
No.

PRESIDENT
Not just ours, overseas.

DONNA
I can’t.

PRESIDENT
I’m asking nicely.
DONNA

You’re…asking me.

PRESIDENT

Stabilize the system.

DONNA

That game is over.

PRESIDENT

If you do nothing, we’ll get hit.

DONNA

I did do something. I told you to enact my plants and you didn’t listen.

PRESIDENT

You think you’re the one who struts in at that final moment, hauling the world up just before it slides down the cliff. I’m sure you and I have that tiny little thought that creeps into our heads, how it’s a no-win game, trying to sustain our superiority. No country lasts forever. There comes a point. But I don’t get to manage that point. You don’t get to manage that point.

DONNA

Economically speaking, there’s no sliding down. Superpowers tumble. Hard.

PRESIDENT

Stabilize.

DONNA

Fine.

PRESIDENT

Fine.

DONNA

But not with you.

PRESIDENT

Excuse me?

DONNA

The past is known, the present is known, but the future is unknown. Unless, of course, I can predict the future. And then I can control it.
PRESIDENT
Nobody wants you controlling anything.

DONNA
People expect the world’s power to preserve their way of life.

PRESIDENT
Which is my job.

DONNA
Your job is to win votes. I won’t let this nation fail. The exchange continues to grow. People are now selling their belongings, converting everything they can to digital tulips.

PRESIDENT
On this black market.

DONNA
It’s the only market in the black.

PRESIDENT
Whatever you’re doing won’t work.

DONNA
Money moves faster than politics.

PRESIDENT
And the military moves faster than money.

PRESIDENT goes.

DONNA
Not when their paychecks bounce.

Lights shift.
A2, S3. BLOCKBUSTER.

Over darkness.

VAN
THE DOLLAR DECLINES AND I FEEL FINE!

Lights up on VAN at laptop, headset on.

VAN
Yes, your one and only Zombocalypse bank with very generous terms, non-negotiable...easy there, Shanghai...you too, loser in Chinese.

KIT
I can’t keep my eyes open.

VAN
Shalom! Order of the Tulip!

KIT
Ugh.

VAN
Whoa, ease up there Jerusalem.

KIT
Van.

VAN
We’ll ease supply when I feel like it. What are you doing?

KIT
C’mon, let’s go.

VAN
Go where?

KIT
Away from here.

VAN
[To the headset] I’m sorry, who’s this?
KIT

Ugh.

VAN
Oh, you’d like to shove a digital tulip up my—

KIT
Van.

VAN
WHAT??? [Beat] Sorry. I just…

KIT
You haven’t slept.

VAN
Yeah, well, whatever it takes.

KIT
I don’t get you.

VAN
The internet is ninety-nine percent blah and one percent ahh! and our moment just hit. We can’t stop now.

KIT
People are starting to hate. Look. We’re getting flamed all over the boards. Die you mfing mfers. Die burning. Seriously harsh postings.

VAN
Yes, because internet plus opinion equals jerk.

KIT
I don’t see how you’re okay with it. It’s like the game is now broken. Nobody can get enough tulips. They’re furious at us.

VAN
Our handling of the economy is not votable.

KIT
I’m not voting. I’m telling you. Gaming is supposed to bring people together.

VAN
Well, now the goal is who can get the most tulips.
KIT

Count me out.

VAN

C’mon, Kit, look what we’re doing here. We just gave ten million people jobs!

KIT

By turning them into killers? Players are stealing from each other, nuking each other. How soon until they come after us?

VAN

It’s not like they know where we are. Besides, nobody’s about to attack our bank, otherwise the game would collapse.

KIT

Why hasn’t it collapsed already? Where are the game developers?

VAN

Wherever they are, they’ve got to be thrilled. All these new users paying subscription fees to create profiles. That’s why staying ahead is crucial. While everyone else plunders for more tulips in fantasy land, we hedge against real-world currencies. Whatever real-world currency looks best when this mess plays out, that’s where we park our fortune.

KIT

It’s like you’ve done this before. You know exactly what to do.

VAN

I study history.

KIT

So what’s gonna happen?

VAN

What always happens.

KIT

That doesn’t make you worried.

VAN

That’s history.
KIT
Which has gone berserk. Look at this one player, MoneyMessiah, screaming:
Order of tulip! Order of tulip!

VAN
Wait, go back. Did he just say Ay-Kay-four-seven?

Yeah.

VAN
Perfect.

KIT
Perfect?

VAN
We need an army.

KIT
Oh my God.

VAN
We loan them future equity in virtual seed, they protect the rink.

KIT
Listen to you. It’s like you said, sitting around an abandoned Blockbuster building means we’ve done something wrong.

VAN
Or we’re doing something right.

KIT
You’re perverting the one thing that’s made me feel important.

VAN
We’re creating this. You and me. A select few make the rules and the world follows. This is ours. We’re doing the next big thing.

KIT
I understand. I really do. I first soared on this drug.

VAN
Which is about to make us rich off the world’s dropouts.
KIT
And I’m one of those dropouts! Don’t you know me? All the kids like you were so informed and prepared. I didn’t fit in. So I gave up trying. The worse school made me feel, the more I sunk farther into myself, until I barely felt like anyone at all. I’d sit in the back of class, waiting, until I could get to my house, to my screen, to a world where I had dignity, where I could create the best version of myself. It all fell apart the night Mom stormed in my room: you’re so disillusioned, you’re gonna spend the rest of your life in some fantasy world? Real life was being forced to memorize facts about the French Revolution all while being told I can be anything I want, until some magic morning when Mom became head of the get-a-job club and started hawking me about making money. Sorry Mom, the only thing I’m trained for is discussing the collapse of some seventeenth century French monarchy.

VAN
Eighteenth century, actually. Sorry.

KIT
It’s our Moms who are supposed to tell us that it’s okay to be different. To take risks. To say it’s what we do while creating our life that’s our true calling. She thought dropping out was the end of the world and I thought it was the beginning. She still doesn’t know where I am. When Moms throw you out to the world, don’t you think they get worried?

VAN
They think it’s for our own good.

KIT
Maybe it is just a game. Which means when things fall apart here I’ll be back in Baltimore, that old pot built to kill the seed. But that’s the thing about this whole craze. For the first time I almost feel like there’s a real world, here, for me.

VAN
I thought you didn’t know what you wanted.

KIT
I want to open a flower garden. To take abandoned buildings and turn them into homes for flowers. A place, a real place, where those who’ve dropped out of life can come together. To build together.

VAN
You really are amazing, you know that?
KIT
You don’t get it. It took me years to finally like myself again.

VAN
I do get it, because it only took me a couple minutes.

He leans in to kiss her.

KIT
I can’t.

VAN
Oh.

KIT
It wouldn’t be nice.

VAN
No, it would be nice.

KIT
I mean: Shift.

VAN
I still don’t see her name on anything.

KIT
Van, you’re sweet, and really cute, but we’re on her team, too.

VAN
Our host.

KIT
Our host.

VAN
Who isn’t here.

KIT
Yeah. Where is she?

Lights shift.
A2, S4. LECTERN.

DONNA at the lectern.

DONNA

A banker’s best weapon is anonymity.

But by this point the President and the Treasury Secretary and everyone else with secondary power were fully aware.

I didn’t have much time.

I traunched the dollar deeper into the game, hedging against collapse.

What was happening around the world finally hit home.

The stock market crashed.

Traders had heart attacks right there on the floor, the ambulances couldn’t keep up.

Across the south, gangs started ransacking farms, trying to take over the Arkansas tulip fields.

Greenhouses were looted.

In the Northern cities, once the sick realized they couldn’t buy their medicine with cash or credit, that’s when the first shots were fired.

It would be easy for me to say I was appalled but then it would require me to utter those very tired words: senseless tragedy.

When history repeats itself over and over it’s not a senseless tragedy.

And it was repeating here.

Lights shift.
A2, S5. BEHIND THE WHITE CASTLE.

**SHIFT**, wearing headset, fingers pressed to her ears.

Noise in the background, people yelling, cars honking.

**SHIFT**

Look, I didn’t take him out.

Correct, we’re still under a hack attack.

Right, the troll who showed for ‘Blockbuster’ and then showed with five thousand dollars.

No, I can’t kill him for real because the plebe is in the room.

I’m outta ideas.

Sorry?

No, that’s not him, just a lotta peeps getting rowdy in the streets.

I’m behind the White Castle, kind of at the intersection of fucked and up.

No, not the White House, White Castle, small difference.

Look, I’m done playing games, okay? I’ve done everything you asked. Everything.

And I just transferred my entire server to you, tulips and all, so before I cross the border, I’d like to delete this guy so he never bothers us again.

Whaddya mean Steelmint?

*Lights shift.*
A2, S6. LECTERN.

The PRESIDENT, looking official.

PRESIDENT

My fellow Americans.

Along with you I have been watching the international situation unfold, and while turmoil was at first isolated to certain countries, the financial fallout has now penetrated the United States.

First, as a matter of security, I have deployed the national guard to all urban centers. I have recalled all active military from abroad, and will station immediate and appropriate use of force to assure domestic tranquility.

The naysayers will tell you the collapse of our country is now.

They will say look what happened to the dollar.

I say that marketing is the art of making people forget history.

When we ran out of food we broke ground on the Agro Revolution.

When we ran out of whales a man in Pennsylvania struck oil.

As of this morning we’ve run out of the dollar and I’m certain something will emerge from the fields of prosperity to carry us forward.

But it won’t be easy.

I’m not sure what our country will look like tomorrow, but I’m certain that our fields of prosperity will preserve.

Because goodness is easy credit.

Goodness is a bank in which we all have trust.

But the trust endowed to the Federal Reserve has trampled upon that goodness.

I have therefore ordered the military seizure of all Federal Reserve branches and the detainment of all executive committee bankers.

Treating them as enemies of the state.

Perhaps we’ve overvalued those who create the money.
PRESIDENT [CONT.]

I believe they’ve undervalued you.

So let us remember our founding sense of purpose for when the world turns to the sun, we will together be born, and we will together walk once more towards the fields of paradise.

Here are my plans taking immediate effect.

Lights shift.
A2, S7. BLOCKBUSTER.

VAN and KIT, as before.

SHIFT enters, wearing backpack.

Sounds of sirens and general societal destruction are heard from outside.

SHIFT goes to her workstation, types, then hands VAN the headset.

SHIFT

Check it. The President.

VAN

Of Zombocalypse?

SHIFT

Of the United States.

VAN takes, watches.

VAN

What?!?

KIT

What is it?

VAN

The President just declared a bank holiday, a resetting of debt. He’s frozen all activity at US banks. How do I switch to…?

SHIFT taps the keyboard, VAN watches.

VAN

Oh, no.

SHIFT

Oh, yeah.

VAN

They’re hitting. They’re stabbing.
Zombies?

KIT

People.

SHIFT

VAN

[Handing KIT the headset] He called it a national tulip rush.

SHIFT

Imagine that.

KIT

Where is this?

SHIFT

Everywhere.

VAN

We did this.

SHIFT

Yeppers.

KIT

The Army is shooting.

SHIFT

How ‘bout that new graphics card.

KIT

I’m gonna be sick.

SHIFT

I saw it.

VAN

Where?

SHIFT

I told you, white bread, everywhere.

KIT

Online.
SHIFT
Out there. It’s more than real, it’s real-real. Crazies dragging potted weeds outta buildings. Freaks axing shrubs with garden hoes. Bitches roller-blading down streets, ganking each other with hockey sticks. People are totally LARPing out there!

KIT
This can’t be. Why would they do this?

SHIFT
Pretty obvious why.

KIT
For digital tulips.

VAN
We’ve got to stop it.

SHIFT
What’s this we shit, vanilla. How are we going to stop it?

VAN
Maybe we pull the plug. We just pull the plug and it’ll stop, right? Everything will turn off.

SHIFT
There is no off. You think pulling a plug can stop millions of people around the world from gaming? You think flicking the switch will make it go away? Too late. But go ahead and yank that dong if it makes you feel VIP to have some power of your own.

KIT
The only thing I’ve ever been good at. Killing people.

SHIFT
People are killing people.

KIT
Using what we did.

VAN
I never meant for this.
SHIFT
Such a liar. Congratulations. You’ve created a real-world apocalypse. Peace out, USA.

VAN
I did this.

SHIFT
It sure wasn’t us, was it?

VAN
What’s that supposed to mean?

SHIFT
You know what I mean.

VAN
I don’t think I do.

SHIFT
Sure you do, agent spy.

KIT
I can’t log on.

SHIFT
Yeah, I had to block while everything transferred. To where the IPs are warm and the drugs are all-inclusive.

KIT
We’re leaving?

SHIFT
No shit, we’re leaving. It’s gone totally dollar-bolic out there. Minneapolis is fucked.

VAN
What about St. Paul?

SHIFT
They canceled the state fair. Whaddya you think happened to St. Paul? Everything’s either going or gone. Thanks to you.
VAN
I didn’t know.

SHIFT
You didn’t know. You got that government bug wound tight through your thieving back? You been recording us this whole time? You still recording?

VAN
Back off.

SHIFT
I knew it from the beginning. The second this federal stepped through the door I knew it. Just happened to appear. The way he talked about the game, about me, slick words about slipping the tulip to the market, to those in need, to the silent majority punching their keyboards.

VAN
Yes, because there was a chance to make money. I didn’t think this was going to happen.

SHIFT
Sure you did. You and your Mom. The President didn’t just shut the banks down. Go hear the rest. He took down something called the Federal Reserve. Like you said, the main bank of the world. Its name printed on top of every dollar. And there’s this woman who runs it. This woman named Steelmint.

VAN
No.

SHIFT
Apparently she did this.

VAN
What?

SHIFT
She put the dollar into digital tulips.

VAN
You’re insane.
SHIFT
Yeah, I’m insane. How the hell would I know about this bank shit? Got the Army and what not after her.

VAN
The Army?

SHIFT
Oh wait, you already know about it, don’t you. You’ve been in sneak all along. You worked inside. And you got Kit to open up. She open up for you? Was she part of your little mission?

KIT
It’s not like that.

SHIFT
It is like that. It’s like I’ve been sitting around my whole life asking what does clueless mean? Nothing is ours. It’s all theirs. We use it. We pass it along to each other. We play with it. We trade it. But it’s never been ours. And it never will be.

VAN
You’re making this up.

SHIFT
Am I now. In the process of transferring the bits and binary I was informed of the existence of the name Steelmint. Van Steelmint. This clapwheedle created his Zombocalypse profile using his actual name. Van Steelmint. The same name as the head honcho from this Reserve. His Mom is the bigwig behind all the dollars.

KIT
Your Mom?

SHIFT
I told you. Agent fucking spy.

KIT
Is this true?

VAN
I haven’t talked to her.

SHIFT
Since this morning.
VAN
Since she learned I graduated without a job.

SHIFT
Shut up. C’mon Kit, we’re hasta.

KIT
[To VAN] I can’t believe you.

SHIFT
Don’t waste another nano on this guy. He and his Mom, assassin economics, they worked both ends.

VAN
You have to believe me. It’s like I told you.

KIT
You didn’t tell me.

VAN
It’s not like you told me your Mom’s name. That came out wrong.

SHIFT
Everything’s come out wrong. Look outside.

VAN
When your Mom’s the comptroller of our days and nights…and here was this chance…to show her.

KIT
That’s what this was about.

VAN
I was going to tell you, both of you.

KIT
Van Steelmint.

VAN
Nice to meet you.

SHIFT
Speak for yourself.
VAN
I gotta see what’s going on at the Fed. The Army took it over?

SHIFT
Your problem now, bitch. Kit and I are adios.

KIT
Where?

SHIFT
Not in front of spy bot.

KIT
I’m not sure.

SHIFT
Not sure about what? The guy’s a thieving liar.

VAN
I never stole a thing. Unlike other people. How did we get to ten million so fast? If you didn’t have a gig at the lab, where was all this stuff coming from? Zombocalypse? Or somebody else? All I wanted was a job. At least when I sell out, I use my real name.

KIT
It doesn’t matter anymore. If we’re responsible for what happened, then we stick together and figure this out.

SHIFT
You’re gonna stick with him? Have you not been following current events? He and his Mams just botched Earth.

KIT
This is my team.

SHIFT
How about this for team: I just posted our location. Our actual real-world location. How soon until the street freaks come crashing through that door? Or the Army comes shooting? So you can stay here and die an ugly death with demon dick or you can roll with me.

Beat.
KIT
There was never a scholarship, was there.

SHIFT
How could you get a scholarship when you didn’t even finish high school?

KIT
You think a screen means it’s safe.

SHIFT
You gotta know how to survive like a gamer. I’m leaving.

Beat.

KIT
Then go.

Beat.

SHIFT
From one host to the next. See you never.

SHIFT goes.

Lights shift.
A2, S8. WHITE HOUSE BATHROOM.

DONNA and PRESIDENT.

DONNA
I don’t regret why I did it.

PRESIDENT
But you don’t regret what you did.

DONNA
I always believed the Fed was to not fall down helping others up.

PRESIDENT
We all start out thinking that.

DONNA
See you didn’t bother telling the American people it was actually my plan which stopped the madness.

PRESIDENT
Save it for the sentencing recommendation.

DONNA
Are they waiting for me? Outside?

PRESIDENT
No.

DONNA
So, political exile.

PRESIDENT
If you can make it out. Otherwise.

DONNA
I have a son.

PRESIDENT
So did a lot of people.
DONNA
It won’t change anything. I got here before, I’ll get here again. The two most powerful forces on earth will always be supply and demand. The future will look just like the past.

PRESIDENT
Not if we do it right. Anyway, one thing’s for sure.

DONNA
What’s that.

PRESIDENT
It’ll always happen within four years of election. Oh, I almost forgot, you won our little bet. Eddie jumped in front of a Metro this morning. And I won’t be seeking a second term. But the union will survive. I mean, that’s all you really wanted, right?

Lights shift.
A2, S9. BLOCKBUSTER.

Sounds of disorder and destruction.

VAN

THEY’RE GETTING CLOSER!

Lights up on KIT and VAN, collecting items.

VAN

Trowel, check. Crispies, check. What else do you need to survive? Tulips! They find we have these and they’ll really kill us. Help me move the desk against the door, Kit.

KIT

[Holding the extension cord] I’m gonna pull it.

VAN

She lied.

KIT

She lied about a lot of things.

VAN

We were held together this whole time by…?

KIT

It’s like we’re all held together by one little plug.

VAN

Then pull it.

KIT

I’m not sure what happens after.

VAN

History. Full reboot. And a bus ticket. To Baltimore. You should tell your Mom about what you did.

KIT

You bought me a bus ticket?

VAN

With digital tulips.
KIT

Mom’s never going to believe all this.

VAN

Oh, she’ll believe it now.

KIT

What about you?

VAN

Find mine before the Army does.

KIT

What are you going to tell her?

VAN

Some games aren’t meant to get the high score. And that I still need a job.

KIT

I’ll open that flower garden. Baltimore could use one.

VAN

Hard to start those alone, I hear.

KIT

Guess I’d need help.

VAN

Assuming Baltimore is still a city.

KIT

And if the buses are even running.

VAN

They’re probably the only thing running.

KIT

Order of the Tulip.

She pulls the plug. The whole place goes shut down.

KIT

It’s over.
VAN

No. It’s beginning.

Lights shift.
DONNA

So that’s it. That’s what happened.

I sat in that bathroom, waiting. They can come get me. But they never came.

After a while I left. No one stopped me. I went onto Pennsylvania. People were mulling around, calm. Still, no one noticed me. Not even a look of recognition. Just another woman in D.C.

I walked south. It was a grey sky, hovering low, my kind of Washington. It turned night, cold and clear. I crossed the mall, my eyes staring upwards at the tip of the monument, brightly lit, piercing upwards. With every step it swelled against the stars, towering, soaking up the black, as if an ancient gate, and with my head tilted back and mouth wide, for a brief minute I swore I could see that field of paradise someone once spoke of long ago.

Anyway.

I wish I could be here tonight under different circumstances.

But you deserve the truth.

And the truth is…

That you’re going to wake up tomorrow morning.

You’ll rediscover that comfortably common day.

You’ll pay for things: gas, socks, coffee.

You’ll pay for it all with a big caffeinated smile and warm feet and don’t worry.

Don’t worry!

Everything’s going to be fine. Really.

Because a bunch of people you don’t know at the Federal Reserve are taking care of it for you.

Blackout.

END OF PLAY.