

Format

Feature Film

Genre / Tone

Sci-Fi / Dystopian Thriller

The Matrix meets *1984*.

Budget / Buyer Lane

High-budget / VFX-heavy studio or streamer sci-fi

Netflix, Amazon MGM, Apple Original Films, Legendary, Warner Bros. lane

Core Hook

A loyal worker inside a synthetic utopia is thrown into the brutal real world underneath it, then has to help destroy the beautiful lie she once protected.

One-Sentence Pitch

When a loyal custodian of a synthetic utopia is forced into the brutal, unrendered world beneath it, she must team up with a hardened rebel to destroy the system she once served before it erases them both.

Why It's Timely

It taps into artificial reality, algorithmic comfort, propaganda, mass sedation, climate collapse, digital dependency, and the uncomfortable question of whether people actually want truth if the lie is easier to survive.

Main Characters

Wynn — A loyal Custodian inside the Citadel who believes she is helping maintain a beautiful, humane society. Her journey is from obedience to witness, and from witness to active rupture.

Lia — A hardened rebel from the unrendered world beneath the Citadel. She does not have Wynn's illusions, but she also has to learn that survival without trust is not the same as freedom.

Bex — A scarred, practical survivor and central defender of the Analogues. He distrusts Wynn at first, then becomes proof of what the system takes from people when it "realigns" them.

Dash — A pragmatic survivor who understands the cost of rebellion better than Wynn does. He helps ground the story in the day-to-day reality of living outside the illusion.

Kael — Wynn's rendered partner inside the Gloss. He represents the emotional comfort of the synthetic world and the life Wynn has to leave behind.

Story Snapshot

1. Wynn works as a Custodian in the Citadel, helping maintain the Gloss, a beautiful synthetic reality that keeps citizens calm and hides the decayed physical world underneath.
2. Lia slips Wynn a physical photograph, triggering a violent sensory desync and exposing flashes of the real industrial world beneath the rendered utopia.
3. As the system moves to pacify and erase Wynn, Lia destroys Wynn's neural node and pulls her into the underlay, where Wynn experiences pain, cold, hunger, and reality for the first time.
4. Wynn joins the Analogues in the Cistern and begins using her knowledge of Citadel systems to help them survive, until a betrayal exposes the camp and Enforcers purge it.

5. Wynn and Lia push deeper into the Citadel, trying to rescue Bex and reach the Main Sensory Hub, where Wynn discovers the Gloss is powered by scrubbed citizens wired into the machine as Dreamstock.

Ending / Final Image

Wynn crashes the feed and exposes the city to raw reality, but the citizens choose to restore the Gloss rather than live with the truth. Wynn and Lia retreat into the unmapped depths below the Citadel. The final image rises out of the underground and reveals the dead wasteland outside, where the Citadel is only one of many colossal black boxes scattered across the horizon.

Theme in One Line

The truth does not set everyone free. Some people choose the cage because it is warm.

Positioning

It's a dystopian sci-fi thriller about waking up from a beautiful lie and discovering that the hardest part is not exposing the truth, but accepting that most people may choose the lie anyway.

Materials Available

One-pager and full screenplay available upon request or through the private script library.

RYAN CLARKE

Screenwriter & Playwright | Albuquerque, NM

Dark Comedy | Satire | Character Drama | Social Thriller

Ryan Clarke is an Albuquerque-based screenwriter and playwright whose work blends dark comedy, social satire, and intimate character drama. Across a slate of 20+ feature scripts, his stories often follow deeply flawed people pushed into impossible situations, finding humor, tension, and humanity in characters who are entirely in over their heads.

His screenwriting recognition includes Grand Prize Winner, 30th Annual Fade In Awards Comedy Competition (*#FightForNoah*); Semifinalist, 30th Annual Fade In Awards Comedy Competition (*The Trencherman*); 2026 Top 10 Finalist, ISA Table Read My Screenplay at Cannes (*A Walking Shadow*); 2026 Quarterfinalist, Finish Line Script Competition (*#FightForNoah*); two-time Semifinalist, ISA Emerging Screenwriters Competition (*Flashbang* and *Ghost of the Highway*); and four additional 2026 Honorable Mentions from Finish Line (*The Finalists*, *How to Be a Human: A Musical with No Songs*, *Ghost of the Highway*, and *Dead Signals*).

As a playwright, Ryan is a three-time winner of FUSION Theatre Company's short works festival, "The SEVEN", in 2024, 2025, and 2026. The stage version of *A Walking Shadow* was also selected in 2026 for The Road Theatre Company's 17th Summer Playwrights Festival.

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