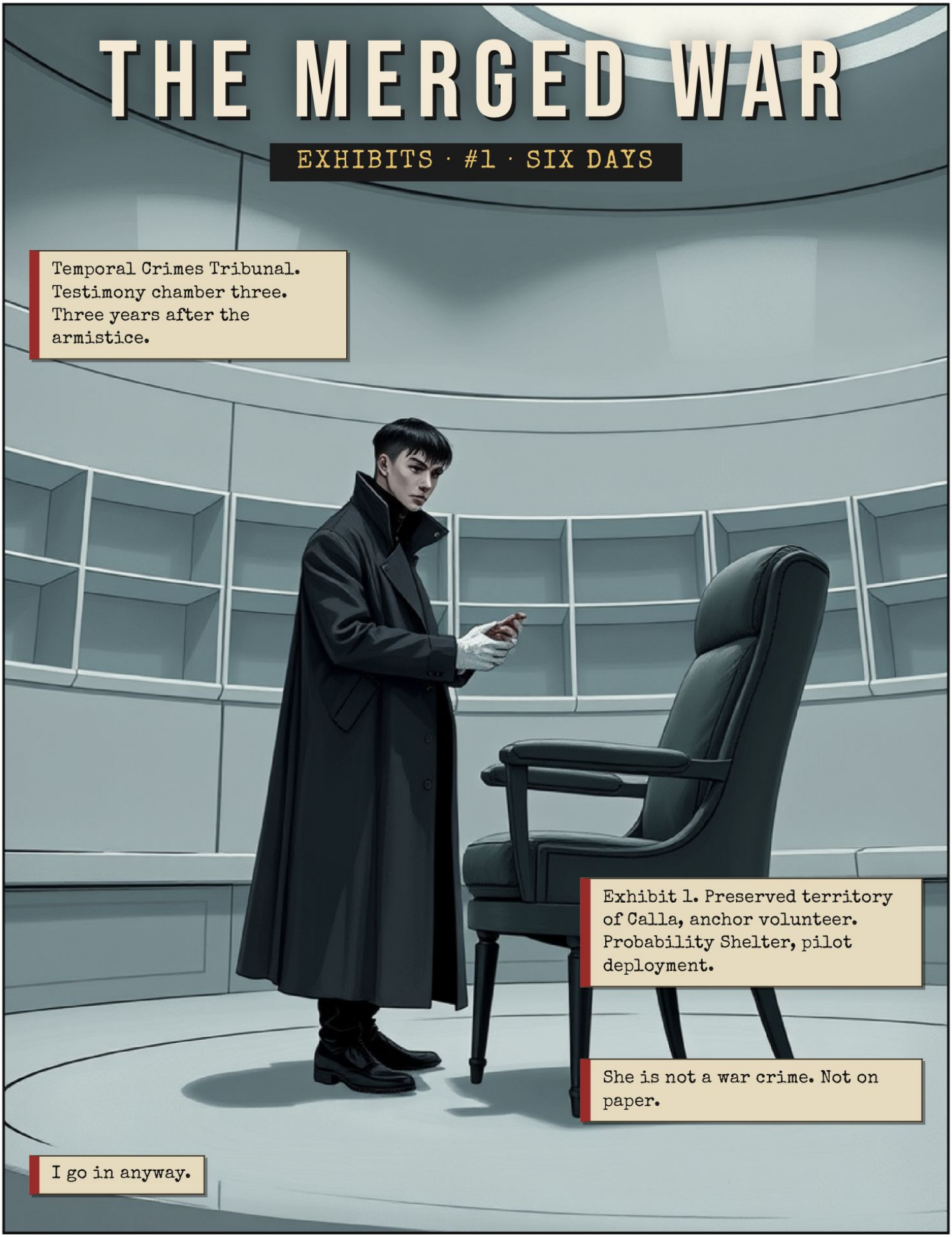
THE MERGED WAR

EXHIBITS · #1 · SIX DAYS



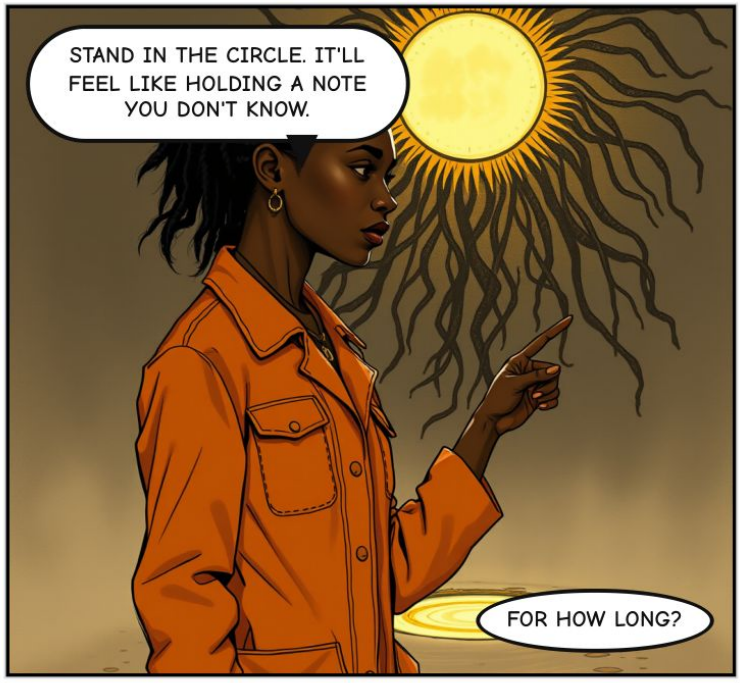


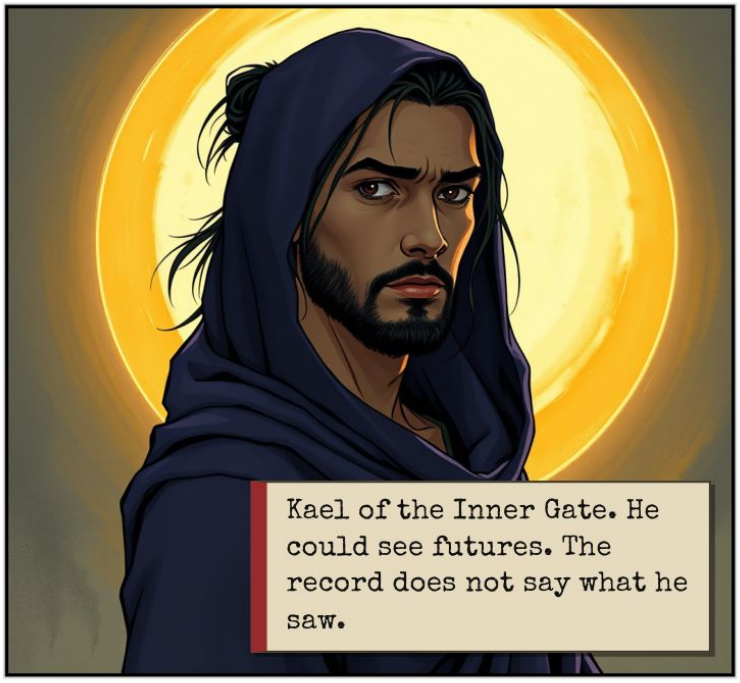




I SIGNED. I DIDN'T ASK WHAT "MEASURING" MEANT.
NOBODY DOES, THE FIRST TIME.







"Six days," she said. "Then we measure."


Day one.
YOU HOLD IT THE WAY YOU HOLD YOUR BREATH. EXCEPT YOU DON'T STOP.
A BOY WHO WOULD BE A BAKER.
A GRANDMOTHER'S LAST GOOD SUMMER.
EIGHT HUNDRED PEOPLE. I COULD FEEL EVERY ONE OF THEM.
NOBODY TELLS YOU HOW BEAUTIFUL IT IS.





A Future Cutter doesn't kill you.

It kills who you were going to be.

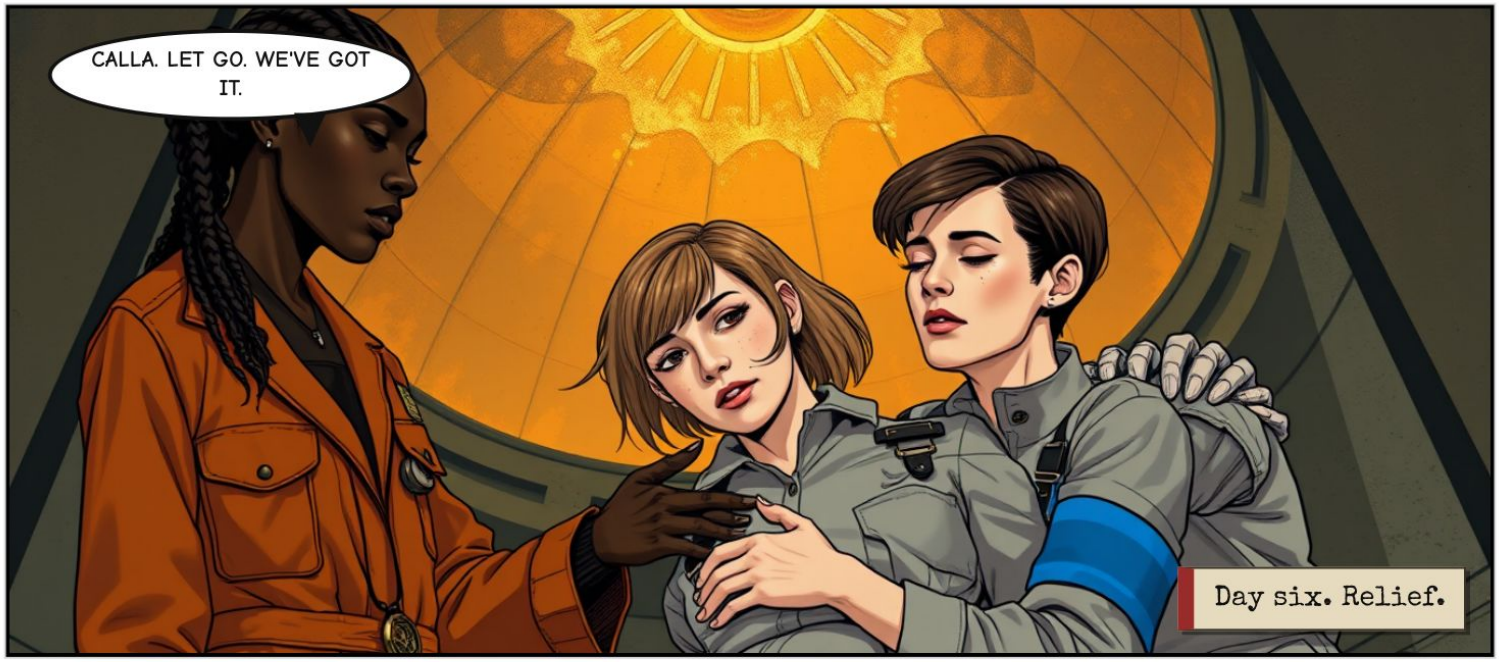



Day four.
ABOVE MY HEAD, ONE OF MINE WENT GREY.


I THINK SHE PAINTED. I THINK SHE WAS HAPPY.


I DIDN'T KNOW WHICH ONE IT WAS. I JUST FELT IT GO.
I KEPT HOLDING.

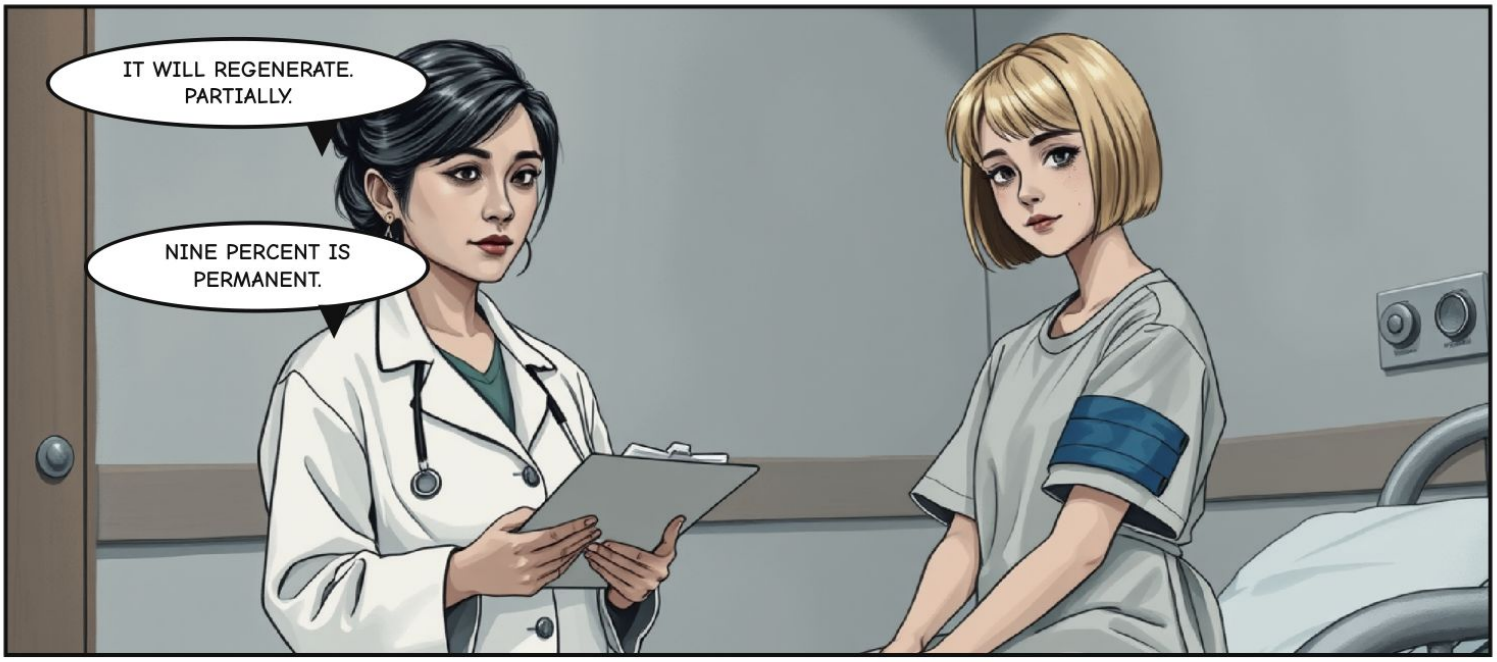

Day five. The heaviest attack of the pilot.
A LITTLE GIRL'S STRAND. ALMOST CUT THROUGH.
SNNKK
SO I GAVE IT WHAT I HAD LEFT. I DON'T REGRET IT. PUT THAT IN YOUR RECORD.

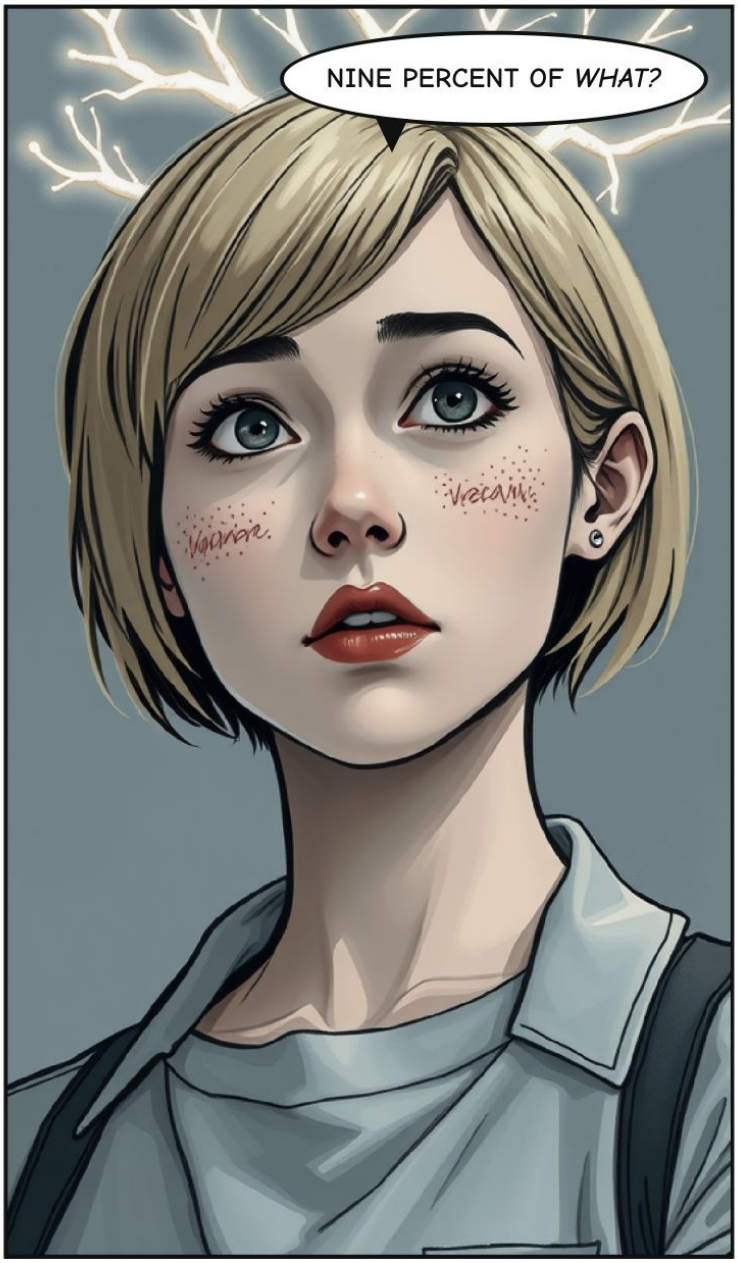






Probabilistic fatigue, onset day four.
Anchor relieved, day six.
Shelter integrity: 100%.





Nine percent of every future she had.

The tribunal has a form for this. It has one box.


YOU'RE THE PILOT. FIRST ANCHOR.
SIX DAYS. YOU?
THIRTY-ONE.
WHY DIDN'T YOU ROTATE?
NOBODY TO ROTATE WITH.







I believe her.

I have not decided yet whether that makes it better.





Each victim is a person, not a file.

I write that at the top of every page. Some days it is the only true thing on it.

— R. V.

NEXT EXHIBIT **FIRST STRIKE**