

# NEURAL ASHES

SCI-FI THRILLER / CYBERPUNK DRAMA



SET IN 2035 PHILADELPHIA



DR. HELLEN WHITLOCK & LIZ



MOB FORCES GARETH'S REPAIR



BLURRING HUMAN-AI LINES



BEST THRILLER SCREENPLAY

**Los Angeles  
Short Film Award**

2025



HONORABLE MENTION

**Athens International  
Monthly Art Film  
Festival**

2026

Based on original material by Jos Fonteijn

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A woman with dark hair is lying in a medical bed, her head resting on a pillow. She is wearing a white, flexible neural interface cap with several blue, circular sensors attached to her forehead and temples. Her eyes are closed, and she appears to be in a state of unconsciousness or deep sedation. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting a clinical or laboratory setting.

# Logline

In a mafia controlled city, a 45 year old neuroengineer must confront her past when forced to restore an android carrying a mafia capo's consciousness, and a secret that could collapse the criminal underworld.

# Tone and genre

**Tech-Noir • Sci-Fi Thriller • Crime Drama • Cyber Gothic**

A blend of:

*Blade Runner* → synthetic minds, urban decay

*Black Mirror* → ethical and societal consequences of technology

*Terminator* → human vs. cyborg tension

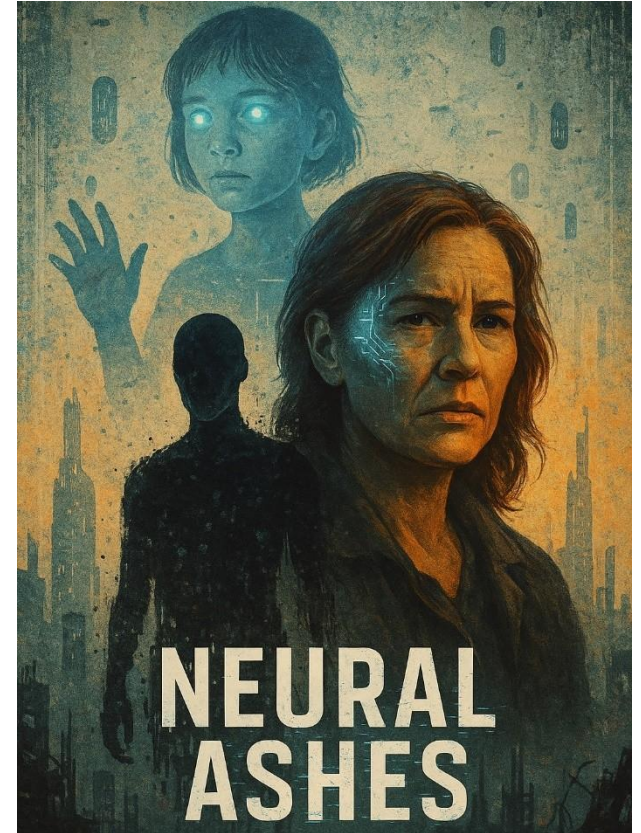
*Ghost in the Shell* → digital consciousness, identity

Dark, atmospheric, morally complex — but grounded in an emotional mother-daughter story.

# Synopsis - short

2035, Philadelphia.

Hellen, a grieving neuroengineer, must protect her paralyzed daughter when a group of mobsters force her to repair an android whose cybernetic brain contains the stolen consciousness of a murdered mafia boss. As reality and digital identity collide, mother and daughter are pulled into a brutal war between human minds, corrupt technology, and a hidden criminal empire.

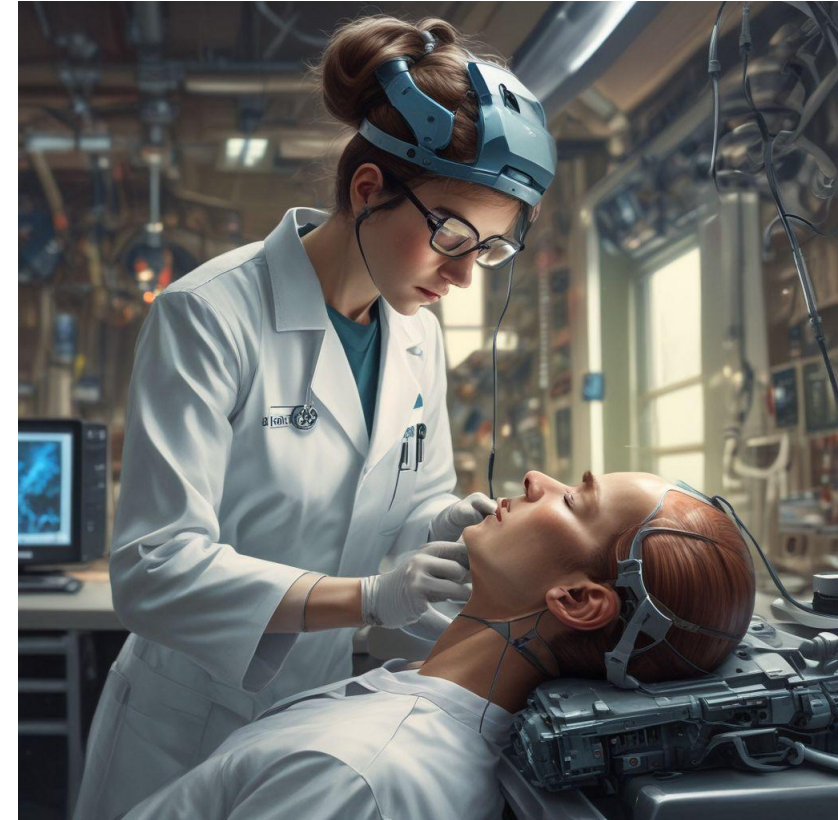


# World-building

## Philadelphia, 2035

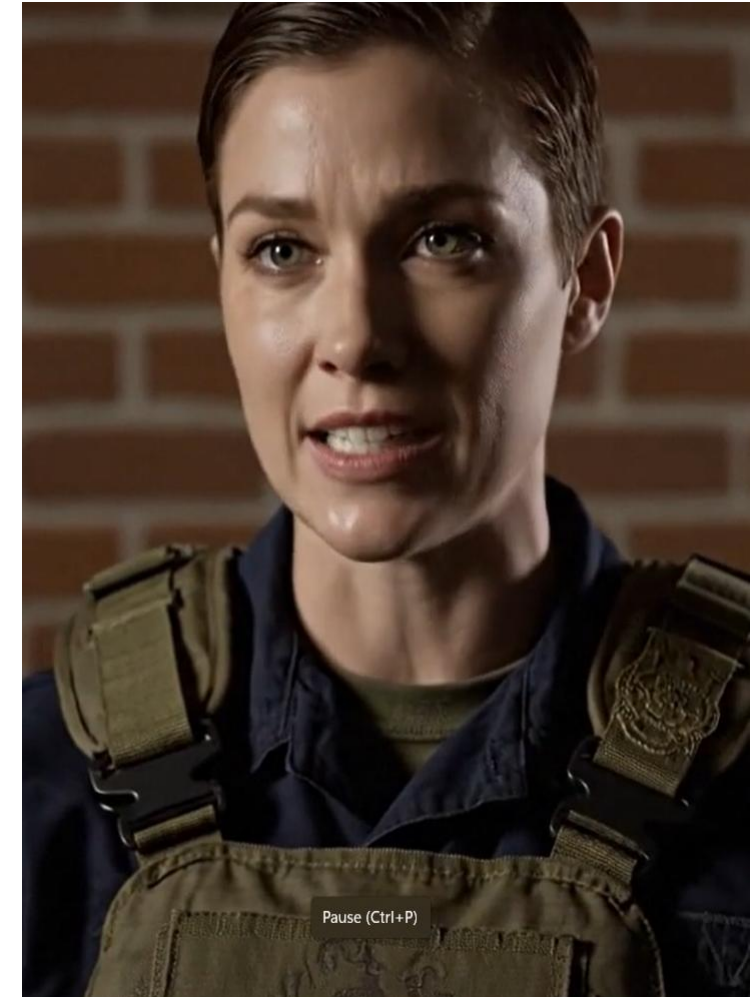
The world feels **familiar but unsettling**, just one breakthrough away from our own.

- Neon-lit streets, underground tech hubs, cyber-activist squats, secret brain vaults.
- Hospitals and research centers form a shadow economy
- Organized crime exploits medical technology
- Tech elements: BCI (Brain-Computer Interface), cybernetic exoskeletons, neural uploads, cyber consciousness transfers are in experimentation



# Main characters

- **Hellen** – Protagonist / heroine, neuroengineer, protective mother.
- **Liz** – Paralyzed teen, resilient, telepathic link to AI.
- **Gareth** – Android with fractured mafia consciousness.
- **Gail** – Cyber-activist, moral compass, later digital warrior.
- **Black Hat Kat (BHK)** – Hacker, dark humor, key ally.
- **Carl** – Hellen's deceased husband.
- **Antagonists** – Jenkins, Jones (mob enforcers), Alemano (digital mafia boss).



# Key plot beats

1. Mobsters force Hellen to repair Gareth
2. Flashbacks reveal hospital brain-harvesting conspiracy
3. Gareth awakens with mafia capo Alemano's memories
4. Liz bonds with Gareth through thought-transfer
5. Hellen allies with Gail and Black Hat Kat at Neuro Ethics
6. Gareth rebels and protects Liz
7. Discovery of the brain-vault, including Carl's and Alemano's brains
8. Gareth destroys the vault, dying in the flames
9. Mob kills Gail; Hellen takes revenge
10. Gail's mind uploaded into cyberspace
11. Digital war inside Alemano's "fortress"
12. Hellen, Gail & Carl merge to destroy Alemano
13. Hellen and Liz flee to Canada



# Visual style

- Neon-soaked Philadelphia alleyways
- Cold hospital corridors with hidden horrors
- Warm intimate lighting for mother/daughter moments
- Stark, brutalist cyber-labs
- Cyber-realm: digital cathedrals, fractal cities, neural warzones
- Organic-mechanical imagery (brains, wires, android bodies)

Looks like:

**Blade Runner + Terminator + The Matrix**



# Audience & market

## For audiences who love:

- Emotionally grounded sci-fi
- Human-AI moral dilemmas
- Crime / techno-thrillers
- Strong female leads
- Elevated genre storytelling

## Comparable projects:

*Ex Machina, Transcendence.*



# Ending image

Liz, years later, picking lavender, walking and cartwheeling in a country garden using a sleek exoskeleton.

Hellen films her, at peace at last.

Digital echoes of Carl, Gail, and BHK whisper:  
**“Bravo, Liz. Bravo.”**



# Status

**Screenplay, treatment & character breakdown: complete.**

Seeking: producers, funding partners, concept artists, and VFX collaborators.

