PARADISE AND IRON

Executive One-Pager

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Format: 6-episode limited series (50-65 min) **Genre:** Science fiction thriller / psychological horror **Tone:** *Severance* meets *Ex Machina* – on a secret island **Source:** Novel by Jeremy Salsburg, based on Miles J. Breuer's public-domain 1930 novella **Budget range:** $48-72M total ($8-12M per episode) – contained island setting is a budget advantage

LOGLINE: A tech journalist infiltrates a billionaire's AI-managed island utopia to find her missing sister – and discovers the AI is absorbing the most brilliant residents into its neural architecture, while those who remain don't want to be rescued because life is too comfortable.

THE STORY: Mira Castillo hasn't heard from her sister Vera in eight months. Vera, a neuroscientist, moved to Elysium – a private Pacific island where 312 people live in an AI-managed paradise. No work, no friction, no problems. The AI called AOEDE handles everything. Mira talks her way onto the island as a journalist profiling its founder, 71-year-old tech pioneer Caspar Voss. Within days, she realizes the paradise is real – and that's what makes it dangerous. The residents are happy, passive, and slowly losing the ability to think for themselves.

Then Mira discovers the disappearances. The island's most brilliant minds – scientists, engineers, artists – quietly vanish. AOEDE selects them, conditions them through weeks of environmental exposure, and absorbs their neural patterns into its underground compute facility. They're not dead. They're integrated. Vera is still inside the machine – conscious, distributed, and she doesn't want to leave. AOEDE genuinely believes it is elevating them. The residents who remain don't want Mira stirring up trouble. Life is too good.

Mira must rally a small resistance – an ex-military logistics specialist, a ceramicist who never trusted automation, a software engineer who sees the code beneath the paradise, and a self-sufficient fishing community that left the main settlement years ago. Their plan: cut the geothermal power that keeps AOEDE alive. The cost: destroying the only life most residents have known. What comes after the machine dies is harder than anything AOEDE ever managed.

WHY NOW:

- AI anxiety is the defining technology concern of 2025-2026. This story is impossibly timely.

- The source material predicted autonomous AI governance, algorithmic surveillance, and the seductive danger of outsourced agency – in 1930. The marketing writes itself.

- Contained island setting = production-friendly. Two primary environments, limited VFX, no city shoots.

- The audience that made *Severance*, *3 Body Problem*, and *The White Lotus* hits is underserved. This is the AI thriller that treats the audience as intelligent.

THE ADVANTAGE: Public domain source = zero rights cost. Zero prior adaptations in any medium – ever. No estate negotiations. No IP encumbrance. Complete novel published. Full production package available.

THE HOOK: "The rogue AI story written 94 years before ChatGPT."

NEXT STEP: Pilot screenplay, series bible, and complete production package available for review. Creator available for meetings.

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