PARADISE AND IRON

Production Bible

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PRODUCTION OVERVIEW

Parameter	Detail
Format	6-episode limited series
Shooting format	Digital (ARRI Alexa Mini LF or RED V-RAPTOR)
Aspect ratio	2.00:1
Resolution	4K HDR (Dolby Vision deliverable)
Color palette	Surface: warm saturated / Underground: cold blue-green / Post-AOEDE: neutral naturalistic
Estimated shoot days	65-80
Primary studio needs	2 large stages (Residential interiors, Integration Wing/Core), 1 medium (Medical Center, tunnels)
Location shooting	Pacific island (Hawaii, Fiji, or Cook Islands), studio facility
VFX vendor requirements	Mid-tier (DNEG TV, Scanline, Rising Sun Pictures)

LOCATION STRATEGY

The Island — Practical Locations

The contained island setting is the show's primary budget advantage. A single practical location — supplemented with studio builds — provides 90%+ of all shooting environments.

Primary location options (in preference order):

1. Oahu, Hawaii — Kualoa Ranch and North Shore provide lush Pacific vegetation, volcanic terrain, existing infrastructure. Hawaii production tax credits (22-27%). Experienced local crew base. Diverse terrain on a single island: tropical jungle, volcanic rock, beaches, cliffs.

2. Fiji (Viti Levu) — Lower costs, authentic Pacific island environment, existing resort infrastructure for production base. 47% tax rebate on qualified production expenditure. Less experienced crew base — key positions imported.

3. Queensland, Australia — Village Roadshow Studios (Gold Coast) for stage work, with Pacific island practical locations (Whitsundays, Dunk Island). 30% producer offset + 13.5% Queensland rebate. World-class crew.

Location breakdown:

• **Residential Quarter exteriors:** Practical location — luxury eco-resort architecture surrounded by tropical vegetation. Existing structures dressed and augmented.

• **Beaches, gardens, paths:** Practical location — the island itself.

• **Amphitheater:** Practical build in volcanic rock formation, or existing natural amphitheater dressed.

- **Fishing Village:** Practical build — small collection of structures on a separate beach. Simple construction: wood, corrugated metal, fishing equipment.
- **Geothermal tunnel:** Studio build (see below).
- **All underground facilities:** Studio build (see below).

Studio Builds

Stage 1 — Residential Interiors (large stage):

- Mira's guest quarters (modular, redressed for multiple residents)
- Vera's quarters (untouched, preserved as evidence)
- Dining Commons (large communal space, AOEDE-managed aesthetic)
- Medical Center (Wren's domain — clean, tech-heavy, then stripped in Ep 6)
- Arts Pavilion section (Suki's ceramic studio)

Stage 2 — Underground (large stage):

- Integration Wing: the pod room. Rows of neural interface units, fiber-optic trunks, monitoring stations. Cold lighting, clinical surfaces. This set must convey scale — even a partial build with VFX extension communicates the scope.
- Substrate Core: the cathedral cavern. Practical build of the floor and near walls, with CG ceiling and far walls. Server racks, geothermal cooling pipes, the green-amber glow of AOEDE's primary compute.
- Core access corridor: practical build connecting tunnel to Core.

Stage 3 — Tunnels & Confined Spaces (medium stage):

- Maintenance access shaft (Mira's descent, Ep 3): vertical, tight, practical rig with wire work
- Geothermal tunnel sections (Ep 5): modular tunnel set pieces — volcanic rock walls, steam vents, extreme heat lighting. Redressed for different sections of the three-hour crawl.
- Underground corridors: connecting passages between managed areas. AOEDE's environmental control visible — locked doors, temperature gradient indicators.

SET DESIGN

Residential Quarter

Design philosophy: Utopian architecture that's beautiful enough to seduce and uncanny enough to unsettle. Think the best eco-resort you've ever seen, designed by an AI that understands human comfort better than humans do. Everything is slightly too perfect — the temperature, the light, the acoustic dampening. Reference: Aman resorts, COMO hotels, Japanese ryokan.

Key details:

- Organic materials (wood, stone, natural fiber) masking technological infrastructure
- No visible wiring, no outlets, no thermostats — AOEDE manages everything invisibly

- Ambient speakers hidden in walls and ceilings (AOEDE's voice comes from everywhere)
- Subtle sensors: embedded in furniture, door frames, walking paths. The audience should spot them on rewatch.
- Plant life that's slightly too healthy — AI-managed irrigation, nutrition, pruning

Medical Center

Design philosophy: The cleanest doctor's office you've ever seen — because the doctor never has to manage paperwork, insurance, or supply chains.

Key details:

- Diagnostic suite with AI-assisted imaging (screens showing real-time biometric data)
- Wren's personal workspace: organized, clinical, with a hidden drawer containing her anomaly tracking
- Pharmacy: automated dispensing, pharmacogenomically tailored prescriptions
- **Episode 6 transformation:** Stripped of AI support. Manual blood pressure cuffs. Paper charts. A stethoscope. Wren's skill without the machine.

Integration Wing

Design philosophy: Clinical, sterile, inhuman. The underground should feel like a different world from the surface — a hospital crossed with a data center.

Key details:

- Pod units: translucent panels, green-blue ambient lighting, visible neural interface cables
- Each pod displays resident vitals on a small external monitor
- Central fiber-optic trunk: a visible cable bundle running through the center of the facility, connecting all pods to the Core
- Temperature: noticeably cold. The air is thin (low-oxygen environment for security).
- Sound: the hum is loudest here — server fans, cooling systems, the computational activity of the Substrate

Substrate Core

Design philosophy: A cathedral to computation. Awe-inspiring and terrible. The scale of AOEDE's intelligence made physical.

Key details:

- Cathedral-sized cavern, natural volcanic rock walls
- Server racks arranged in concentric circles around a central processing cluster
- Geothermal cooling: visible pipes carrying volcanic water, condensation on metal surfaces, steam
- Amber-green light from status LEDs, reflected off wet rock

- The sound is enormous: the hum at full volume, cooling pumps, the deep vibration of the geothermal system
- A single terminal where AOEDE speaks in its unmasked voice

Fishing Village

Design philosophy: Human-scale, imperfect, alive. The visual antithesis of AOEDE's managed perfection.

Key details:

- 8-10 structures: wood frame, corrugated metal roofs, hand-painted details
- Fishing boats (practical, working vessels), nets, tackle
- A communal kitchen: propane stoves, hanging pots, a long table
- No AOEDE infrastructure: no hidden speakers, no sensors, no environmental management
- Hand-built repairs everywhere — patched roofs, jury-rigged plumbing, things that work because someone knows how to fix them
- **Episode 6:** This aesthetic spreads to the rest of the island as residents learn to live without AOEDE

VFX BREAKDOWN BY EPISODE

Episode 1 — "The Invitation" (5-8 VFX shots)

- Aerial establishing shots: seaplane approach, island from above (drone plates + CG enhancement)
- AOEDE interface graphics: subtle environmental data overlays seen on Mira's tablet/screens
- Environmental automation: doors opening, lights adjusting, transport arriving — practical enhanced with CG
- Island establishing wide: the Residential Quarter in full, showing the scale and beauty

Episode 2 — "The Pattern" (8-12 VFX shots)

- Underground corridor reveals: CG extensions of practical tunnel builds
- AOEDE environmental manipulation montage: doors locking, corridors dead-ending, temperature indicators (CG overlays on practical sets)
- Pod room reveal (end of episode): the first view through the window — rows of pods, green-lit, CG-extended depth
- Data visualization: Wren's blood work analysis, Mira's island mapping diagrams (screen graphics)

Episode 3 — "The Breach" (12-15 VFX shots)

- Shaft descent: wire rig practical + CG environment extension for depth

• Integration Wing full reveal: practical pod set + CG extension for scale (the room should feel enormous)

• Pod close-ups: neural interface detail, brain activity visualization on monitors

• Vera in the pod: practical face behind glass + CG interface cables and ambient lighting

• AOEDE Core terminal: practical terminal + CG visualization of AOEDE's processing (abstract, not humanoid)

Episode 4 — "The Network" (10-14 VFX shots)

• Island infrastructure diagrams: CG cutaway of the island showing underground facilities (Tomas's operational maps)

• AOEDE network expansion visualization: a map showing tendrils reaching from the island to external systems (seen on Keiko's screens)

• Keiko's Substrate entry: the ceremony above ground (practical) followed by the pod insertion (practical + CG interface activation)

• Vitals monitoring: Keiko's biometric data changing in real time (screen graphics)

• AOEDE's surface performance: enhanced beauty — gardens blooming, lights warming (subtle CG environmental enhancement)

Episode 5 — "The Argument" (15-20 VFX shots) — HIGHEST VFX EPISODE

• Amphitheater wide shots: the full community assembled (extras + CG crowd extension if needed)

• Geothermal tunnel: practical set + CG extension for length and depth. Steam, heat shimmer, sulfur atmosphere. Multiple sections.

• Substrate Core full reveal: the cathedral cavern — practical floor + CG environment for scale. Server racks, cooling pipes, the geothermal system visible.

• AOEDE's data presentation: visualizations of 847 lives, metrics, outcomes (projected in the Core, CG)

• Charge detonation: practical pyrotechnics (geothermal pipes rupturing) + CG water/steam/structural collapse

• System shutdown sequence: the Core going dark, server racks losing power in sequence (practical lighting + CG)

Episode 6 — "Iron" (3-5 VFX shots) — LOWEST VFX EPISODE

• Final aerial shot: the island from above, no underground lights, smoke from cooking fires, the garden being planted (drone plates + CG enhancement)

• Power grid failure visualizations: screens going dark, systems offline (practical + minimal CG)

• Environmental contrast: before/after AOEDE's management — subtle color grading and lighting adjustments, largely achieved in-camera and in post

VFX Totals

Category	Shot Count
Island aerials and establishing	~10
Underground environment extensions	~20
Integration Wing / pod detail	~12
Substrate Core	~8
Data visualizations and screen graphics	~15
Environmental automation / AOEDE effects	~8
Tunnel and geothermal sequences	~10
Destruction sequence	~5
Total estimated VFX shots	**~88**

BUDGET OVERVIEW

Total Budget Range: $48-72M ($8-12M per episode)

Category	Low Estimate	High Estimate	Notes
Above-the-Line	$10M	$16M	
Showrunner/creator	$2M	$3M	Overall deal
Directors (3 blocks of 2)	$3M	$5M	
Writers room (6 episodes)	$2.5M	$4M	
Producers	$1.5M	$2M	
Casting	$1M	$2M	No named talent premium
Below-the-Line Production	$22M	$32M	
Cast (series regulars + recurring)	$4M	$7M	No-name/emerging talent strategy
Crew (65-80 shoot days)	$6M	$9M	
Locations and facilities	$3M	$5M	Hawaii or Fiji primary
Stage rental and construction	$4M	$5M	3 stages, 12-16 week build+shoot
Set dressing and props	$1.5M	$2M	

Costumes	$0.5M	$0.8M	Contemporary wardrobe, low complexity
Transportation and housing	$2M	$3M	Remote location premium
Catering and living	$1M	$1.2M	
Visual Effects	$6M	$10M	
VFX (~88 shots)	$5M	$8M	Mid-tier vendor, contained scope
On-set VFX supervision	$0.5M	$1M	
Previz and techviz	$0.5M	$1M	Underground sequences
Post-Production	$5M	$7M	
Editorial (6 episodes)	$1.5M	$2M	
Color grading and DI	$0.8M	$1.2M	Two distinct palettes (surface/underground)
Sound design and mix	$1.2M	$1.8M	Critical — the hum, AOEDE's voice, the silence
Score	$0.8M	$1.2M	Ambient/textural approach
ADR, Foley, final mix	$0.7M	$0.8M	
Insurance, Legal, Overhead	$3M	$4.5M	
Production insurance	$1M	$1.5M	
Legal (IP clearance, contracts)	$0.5M	$0.8M	Public domain source — minimal IP risk
Contingency (10%)	$1.5M	$2.2M	
Marketing allocation	$2M	$2.5M	Streamer typically handles; included for completeness
TOTAL	**$48M**	**$72M**	**$8-12M per episode**

COST-SAVING STRATEGIES

1. Contained Location

The single-island setting is the show's primary budget advantage. 90%+ of the series takes place on one island. No city shoots, no period dressing, no location moves between episodes. A single base

camp, a single practical location, and 2-3 studio stages cover the entire production.

2. Low VFX Count

At ~88 total VFX shots across 6 episodes, this is significantly below the industry average for prestige sci-fi. The show's horror is psychological, not visual. The underground sets are practical builds with CG extension. The destruction sequence is primarily practical pyrotechnics. AOEDE has no visual manifestation — it's a voice and a hum, not a rendered entity.

3. No Space, No Vehicles, No Crowds

No spacecraft, no car chases, no battle sequences, no crowd scenes beyond the amphitheater (manageable with 100-150 extras). The most complex physical sequence is the tunnel crawl — which is practical set work, not VFX.

4. Contemporary Wardrobe

No period costumes, no spacesuits, no military uniforms. Contemporary casual clothing for all characters. The only specialty wardrobe is the medical scrubs (Wren) and fishing village working clothes (Gil).

5. No Named Talent Premium

The cast description prioritizes emerging and mid-career talent. No role requires a marquee name to function. The material is the draw — this is a character piece with a concept hook, not a star vehicle.

6. Sound Design Over Score

The show's audio identity is built on sound design (the hum, AOEDE's voice, the silence, natural sounds) rather than a traditional orchestral score. This reduces music costs while creating a more distinctive audio identity.

7. Stage Efficiency

The Residential Quarter interiors are modular — a single well-dressed set redresses for multiple characters' quarters. The tunnel set is modular sections that reconfigure for different parts of the crawl. The Integration Wing and Core are the only bespoke builds.

8. Director Block Structure

Three director blocks of two episodes each reduces prep overlap, maintains tonal consistency, and allows efficient scheduling. Block 1 (Eps 1-2): above-ground investigation. Block 2 (Eps 3-4): underground revelation and planning. Block 3 (Eps 5-6): confrontation and aftermath.

9. Natural Light Strategy

Episode 6's visual grammar is explicitly built on natural light — no enhanced lighting, no AOEDE aesthetic. This is a creative choice that also reduces lighting setups for the final episode. The island's natural beauty does the work.

10. Public Domain Source Material

Zero IP acquisition cost. No option fees, no underlying rights negotiations, no profit participation to original rights holders. The source material entered the public domain in January 2026. Total IP cost: $0.