

Sci-Fi Adventure

iCer

"The answer to the things you can't see can be
found in the things you can."

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VOLUME 1

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In 1924 Doctor Hans Berger was the first to record human brain activity by means of EEG. By analyzing EEG traces, Berger was able to identify oscillatory activity in the brain, such as the alpha wave. It was the first step in man's ability to communicate with the human brain.

In the 1970, research began at the University of California on brain-machine interface (BMI) technology, a direct communication pathway between the brain and an implanted microcomputer. And in the year 2015, the U.S. Military successfully implanted the first BMI into a paraplegic soldier's brain, fully restoring his ability to walk again.

In the 50 years since, mankind developed BMIs that allowed humans to store massive amounts of information, develop advanced algorithms in their heads, make scientific breakthroughs never seen before, communicate with computer and wireless devices remotely, and upload/download information directly into their brains at the speed of light. This was seen as a way for man to keep pace with technology until the BMI equipped humans starting rapidly advancing in abilities beyond that of the average man.

As a result of the fear and panic in society, BMI technology was outlawed. A squad of experienced detectives from what was known as "The Agency" was assembled to track down and eliminate (ICE) the BMIs.

They became known as iCers. The best *iCer* amongst them was Detective Jon Thomas Ryker, aka JT.

It is the year 2065. The pollution in China and other third world countries has gone unchecked. The sky is black year round. There is no longer day on earth, only night; pollution now blocked out the sun, stars and sky above.

Big cities were bifurcated into two classes: the very rich (affluents) and the very poor (underlings.) The money gap between the affluents and underlings had become so substantial that there were only two classes left in society; the middle class was gone. A third class existed if you include the android population. The affluents lived high above the ground in skyscrapers guarded by armed security. They traveled in sky cars, attended lavish parties and dined at the most exclusive restaurants and bars.

Down below, the underlings lived in early 20th century run-down red brick and mortar buildings. Some worked at manual labor jobs, fixing, building, and cleaning up after the wealthy, but the majority of those jobs were slowly being taken by androids. For the sub-culture, the underlings on the streets, money was hard to come by. They stole, bartered for goods, sold drugs, prostituted themselves, and became involved in other illegal behavior to survive.

There were, of course, the areas outside of the big cities, but the general population didn't go there. There was no work or food for them. The country side farms of the past were now home to massive dome-covered nuclear powered greenhouse farms.

Although man has travelled to Mars, he has not gone much further. Visits to orbiting space hotels and the moon were common for the well to do.

Man had made many advancements in technology. Computers now controlled the skyway traffic, environmental conditions inside buildings, and the flow of money, all without any human input.

Other areas such as robotics and android technology were state of the art. Androids were able to operate autonomously. One the most useful advancements made for human use was the creation of a new device: the Communication and Control Device (CCD). They came in many models (from the basic plastic version often used by underlings to high-end diamond studded Rolex versions worn by the affluents). The CCD was small and worn on the wrist like a wrist watch. It was part supercomputer, watch, cellphone, remote control, and friend as they had their own memories and personalities. They were capable of solving problems asked by their user, predicting what the user might want, interfacing with computers to collect information and

controlling appliances and other devices. Everyone from the affluents to the underlings worn some type of CCD.

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Chapter 1 | The Interrogation

Our story begins as a futuristic space plane pulled into the desert spaceport and is taxied to the landing dock. Other futuristic space planes land and take off from the Mojave spaceport.

Inside the spaceport a man dressed in a dark trench coat named Terrack stood calmly in line for the security check before boarding. The flight schedules were digitally displayed in the air and could be seen from 360 degrees as you walked around them. They displayed inbound and outbound destinations. Los Angeles, London, New York, Space Station 23, Moonport 13, and the ever popular with the affluents, Virgin Orbit Hotel 6, were just some of the listed destinations. Other passengers stood in line and walked around the pre-boarding area. Terrack walked through the scanner. No alarms went off, but he wouldn't make eye contact with the human security guard. Android guards worked alongside the human security guards as they checked passengers and screened baggage; other androids cleaned the floors and performed other manual labor tasks.

The security guard at the airport asked, 'Sir, how are you today?' Terrack replied, "Fine."

The guard looked Terrack up and down and asked, "So where you headed?"

Terrack replied, "Los Angeles."

"Business or pleasure sir?" inquired the guard.

Terrack responded, "Business."

The guard started to become suspicious of Terrack and stated, "Well sir you're not very talkative."

Terrack stared directly back at the guard, sneered and said, "No, I'm not."

The security guard looked at his supervisor and lifted his head to get his attention. The security supervisor acknowledged him and the security guard told him in a soft voice (so Terrack could not hear), "He's showing evasive signs."

"Alright, let's escort him to the interview room," replied the security supervisor.

The security guard stopped the baggage screening process. The human guard and two android guards surrounded Terrack and escorted him out of the security line.

"Sir, please follow me," asked the guard.

"Of course. Is there a problem?" replied Terrack.

The guard assured Terrack, “No sir. I just need you to talk to another screener.”

“Okay,” replied Terrack.

Inside the screening room, Terrack had sat quietly in the interview chair. A man in a dark blue suit entered the room, set up a laptop on the interview table and powered on his portable screening system. As the system booted up, a 3D blue net of lines surrounded Terrack.

Terrack looked at his CCD and asked. “Can you hurry it up? My flight is in 30 minutes.”

“Sure” said the interrogator, “I just need to ask you a few screening questions before your flight.”

“And these lights?” asked Terrack.

“Just a device that helps me screen people.

Just be truthful,” replied the interrogator.

The interrogator started the test program as each question was answered, the computer highlighted the answer in red or green. The word truth lit up on the screen in green and the word deception lit up in red. Once the interrogator had verified the device was working properly, he started the test.

The interrogator started with his first question, “Okay sir, I just have a few questions?”

“Yeah, sure, go ahead,” replied Terrack.

The interrogator made notes on his tablet computer and asked, “Where were you born?”

Terrack looked up avoiding eye contact with the interrogator and replied, “New York.”

The computer displayed true in green. The interrogator continued his questioning and asked, “Your favorite color?”

Terrack replied, “Black.” The computer displayed true in green.

Then the Interrogator asked, “Your favorite animal?”

Terrack paused for a moment and responded, “Dolphin. Oh you mean mammals too?”

“Doesn't matter,” said the interrogator.

Terrack said, “Well then, dolphin.”

The computer displayed true in green. The interrogator looked closely at his computer screen. It displayed in green the words ‘Calibration Complete’. The interrogator started to become suspicious of Terrack because he continued to avoid eye contact and looked away from him when he asked each question. The interrogator continued his verbal drilling of Terrack by

raising the tone in his voice. "So, where are you headed today?"

Terrack replied, "London." Terrack started to sweat a little and stared intensely at the interrogator.

"Business? Pleasure?" asked the interrogator.

Terrack said, "What?"

The interrogator asked. "Are you going there for business or pleasure?"

Terrack grabbed the desk underneath He squeezed the desk out of frustration and replied, "Business."

The Interrogator asked, "What kind of business?"

Terrack paused for a few seconds. He started to sweat and act even more nervous. The interrogator paused as he looked at his computer. Terrack replied, "Is that it?"

"No, you seem a little nervous," said the interrogator.

Terrack, "No, no Just a little hot."

As the interview progressed the blue digital net that surrounded Terrack changed. It flashed from blue to red a couple times. Then back to a solid blue as it measured his responses. The interrogator continued and asked, "Okay. Add two plus two."

Terrack replied, "Four."

The interrogator then said, "Okay. A man approaches you on the street and asks for directions to a restaurant. What do you do?"

Terrack said, "What kind of question is that?"

The interrogator replied, "Necessary. Just answer the question."

"I'd ask my cell-map program for directions," replied Terrack.

The interrogator in a firm voice said, "Good. Now he asks if you have been to the restaurant."

Terrack, looked a little confused answered, "I haven't."

The interrogator started to speed up his pace of questioning to see if he could trip up Terrack in the answers he had provided. The interrogator asked, "How do you know? I didn't tell you which restaurant."

Terrack's face had tightened up in anger and he responded, "Okay, which restaurant?"

"Doesn't matter, next question," replied the interrogator.

Terrack then said, "Doesn't?"

“No. Now if your cell-map program told you it would take 4.5 liters of hydro fuel to get there, and that if you drove at 75 miles per hour you would avoid stopping at 35 lights, thus saving you .055 liters per light, how much would you save?” asked the interrogator.

“1.925 liters,” responded Terrack. The interrogator paused and stated, “That's correct.”

The Interrogator looked at the screen and it read, “Calculating BMI probability.”

Terrack inquired in a low tone of voice, “Everything Okay? Can I go?”

The interrogator responded, “Yes, just a couple more minutes. I just need to wait on the computer results.”

Terrack noticed that the interrogator had become scared as he read the results on the computer screen. Flashing on the screen was a message in green: “BMI Present.” As the interrogator touched the computer screen in an attempt to move the results out of Terrack’s line of sight, Terrack used the BMI in his brain to communicate with the laptop, causing it to overload, which sent a visible shock of light and electricity into the interrogator, killing him. The interrogator's head laid flat on top of the computer keyboard and a light amount of smoke emitted from his body.

Terrack looked at the dead interrogator and stated, "End of interview."

The lights flickered in the room and the blue light net that surrounded Terrack turned off. Terrack stood up, walked to the keypad on the wall and looked at it. It turned green. He used his BMI abilities to open the door. Terrack then caused the lights to go out in the entire facility, every room went dark. Terrack saw everything in light gray night vision, his BMI allowed him to see in the dark. Terrack then walked out past the security officers who were scrambling in the dark in an attempt to get the lights back on. Terrack was able to elude being captured and fled from the spaceport on foot.

Chapter 2 | Back In The Game

Futuristic sky scrapers existed in the heart of downtown Los Angeles. An indoor stadium glowed down below as a basketball game could be seen being played through the clear dome on top of the building. Large signs on all the buildings displayed digital advertisements in 3D as the people speaking in the advertisements could be heard by passersbys. Flying cars passed over the stadium and the high rise lofts (occupied by the elite). Old brick buildings lined the surface streets. It was noisy, dirty and packed with poorly dressed people walking on the sidewalks and in the street. If you traveled a few blocks from the stadium, you saw a three story red brick building with old oak framed exterior windows : JT's loft. JT was fast asleep in his bedroom. His living room and kitchen area had food, clothing, and junk scattered throughout. It was messy that you knew that he had to live alone. As he slept, his CCD (a chrome plated version) named Cella, lit up and spoke. Supervising agent Z called from the agency. Cella's in air virtual display projected "3:00 a.m." just above JT's head.

Cella announced, "JT, incoming call."

JT, fast asleep, was awakened by the announcement and told Cella, "Let it go to message."

Cella stated back, "JT, it's coded as urgent from the agency."

JT tried to get his wits about him and wake up. He asked, "Time?"

Cella answered back, "3:00 a.m."

"Ughhhh. Alright put 'um through," replied JT.

Z was on the line and asked, "JT. That you, Iceman?"

JT answered, "Yeah, Z."

"Yeah, you still selling your services to the one percenters? (referring to the very rich)", asked Z.

JT quickly replied, "When I can."

Z's office was very clean and sterile. White exterior walls enclosed the office and clear glass interior walls separated the interior offices from each other. Men in business suits walked up and down the hallways. Inside Z's office, television news was displayed on one of the glass walls. Z had fumbled with a laser pen between his fingers and said, "Have a job for you."

"What is it?" asked JT.

Z replied, "Ice some BMIs."

JT in a gravelly tone voice responded, "I'm retired. You can tell the agency to frack off."

Z replied, "Can't. We had an incident."

JT answered back, "Not interested."

Z emphasized, "JT, this comes from the top."

JT replied, "And?"

Z went on to explain the seriousness of the request. "We got a homicide. The suspect was identified as Quincy Terrack, one of the late model BMIs. He's in town, and is known to travel with four other BMIs."

JT sat up in his bed to show his lack of interest. He yawned, then flatly remarked, "Cella, hang up."

Z did not take no for an answer. "Don't hang-up. Listen, they'll cut off your pension. They're desperate."

JT answered, "I'm not."

Z reiterated, "They're not going to take no for an answer."

"Okay, then tell 'um, yes. I won't do it. This shit never ends," replied JT.

Z laughed and said, "Nope. But you can't be happy kissing rich people's asses forever."

JT replied, "I had my fill of hunting down BMIs. The long hours, the fights, getting shot at, hit the head with bottles, seedy bars, and loose women. Okay maybe not the loose women, but the rest of it just got old. "

Z stood up in his office and continued to talk, “No options, pal.”

JT realized he was going to have to play the game and cooperate. The game of shadows, hunting BMIs and putting them on ice would need to be played out once again. JT gave in and said, “Alright. What’s the time frame?”

Z replied, “In an hour, meet me at the Kings Café. I’ll brief you then.” JT acknowledged him, “Okay in an hour.”

Cella disconnected the call and asked, “Everything okay?”

JT replied, “Cella. Warm up those old circuits girl. We’re back in the game, my love.”

JT slowly got himself out of bed and worked his way to the bathroom. After his usual two to three days at a time of not shaving, he took out his laser shaver and swiped it over his face to remove his facial stubble. He looked at himself in the mirror and saw a forty-five year old man with a strong jaw and rough, but handsome exterior. JT said to himself aloud in the mirror, “You still got it,” reassuring himself that he still had what it took to hunt BMIs.

JT finished cleaning up, taking a shower, and walked out his front door to go meet Z at the café.

Chapter 3 | They'll Be Hunting Us

The BMIs met in up town on a busy corner near the high rise buildings in the business district. It was an area of town primarily filled with white collar business types and affluents. It was loud and noisy as people spoke on their CCDs. As the masses walked the streets and talked to each other, they pushed each other out of the way to get to where they were going.

Two men in suits bumped shoulders. One took his brushed aluminum briefcase and hit the other in the back of the head, knocking him off balance. He stumbled a little and looked at the guy that hit him for a moment. It was common place for people to lash out and hit each other when they thought the other person had pushed or bumped them too hard. It was a bit like travelling on a New York subway at rush hour. Everyone focused on where they were headed; they were rude and paid no attention to other pedestrian's personal space.

It was 9:00 a.m., rush hour, time to get to work. The BMIs slowly appeared from different locations: one from the skytrain exit, one from skycab that had landed, one from an older street taxi, and the other two from around the corner of distant buildings. They all walked to

the meet point in front of the Union Bank and continued to walk down the street as they formed their group.

The BMI leader, Grayson, said, "Not much time. I'll keep this brief." He motioned for the group to walk slowly with him as he talked. "Okay, I'm glad everyone made it. First off, Terrack killed a spaceport screener. They know we're in the country and they'll be hunting us."

BMI Peyton asked Grayson, "Who will?"

Grayson answered, "The agency, which means iCers."

Peyton then asked, "We still need money to operate?"

Grayson answered, "No, not for operations. We're covered. But I have a plan for diversion later that requires gold cards."

Peyton then asked, "Bank job?"

Grayson replied, "No, there's an underground casino, 3rd and Broadway, under the Bradbury building. It should be the perfect place to make a donation to our cause. It's an illegal gambling joint. They can't report crimes, which means no cops."

Grayson and the others were facing each other in a huddle formation when a lady dressed in a woman's

business suit walked through them, splitting their huddle in half. She was in a hurry and talked on her gold plated Montbalnc CCD when she pushed BMI Tosha out of the way. The lady yelled, "Move, underling!" at Tosha.

Tosha had pulled her right arm back and was about to punch the lady in the back of her head with a closed fist when Terrack grabbed her arm to stop her.

Terrack said, "Wait!"

Terrack looked and focused his attention on the lady and her CCD. The lady's CCD sparked and exploded; shards of plastic and glass hit her in the face. She grabbed her face and stood in the crowd dazed and confused as blood dripped down her face. The crowd just ignored her and continued on their way in both directions, too busy to have concern for a stranger.

Tosha tapped Terrack on the shoulder and said, "Thanks. That was better than a beat down she was about to get."

Terrack, Tosha, Grayson, Peyton, and the fifth BMI, Jagger, all laughed at the bewildered lady.

Down the street, the BMIs saw two uniform beat cops headed in the direction of the injured lady.

Grayson motioned for everyone to gather a little closer and told them, "Okay people. Now that you had

your fun everyone needs to separate. I'll send you the meeting time for the casino. Go now! I'll be in contact.”

The BMIs all walked in different directions and disappeared into the crowd.

Chapter 4 | The Café

A dark street in old town was poorly lit and some overhead Christmas lights were hung from the exterior edge of a red brick café. Mostly underlings walked by as JT walked up to a café table (located outside on the sidewalk) and sat down. Everyone looked like they were shady, criminal types. Some gambled, some smoked drugs, and some stole things when people had turned for just a moment. Homeless people, dirty down and out types known as gutters to the underlings aimlessly walked by the café mixed amongst the underlings. A gutter (a beggar) dressed in a dirty old brown plaid suit walked up to JT as he sat in his café chair.

The gutter asked, “Change?”

JT looked grumpy from the lack of sleep answered him, “Yeah?”

The gutter looked at JT. Held out a cup and shook it with change inside to try to get JT to put some change inside of it. “Change? You got some change?” asked the gutter for a second time.

JT said, “What?”

The beggar, thrown off by JT’s answer said, “You said you had change.”

JT gave him a hard look and said, "I do."

The beggar, still not giving up on his quest to get a little money, asked again, "Well, can I have some?"

JT, a bit of a wise ass at times, answered, "No. I said I have change, not that you could have some. Now get out here!"

The beggar, pissed off stated, "Okay. Okay. Hope you're never on the down and out."

JT just gave him another look to brush him off and said, "Move on!"

The beggar kept walking with the crowd and continued on his way. JT then visually scanned the area to see who was walking by. As an iCer he could never be sure if someone wanted revenge for taking out someone they knew. In any case, it was a cop's sixth sense, his paranoia of his surroundings, that had kept him alive this long.

Z walked up to the café table as the beggar walked away and sat with JT. JT acknowledged Z's arrival, "Z".

Z replied, "I see you're still popular with the public."

JT the old hard and crusty detective that he was answered, "Not in the mood."

An android waiter walked up to their table and inquired in a digital-sounding voice, "Can I get you gentleman anything?"

JT and Z replied, "I'll take the number nine breakfast special with a coffee, and just a coffee."

The android waiter took their orders and said, "Got it. I will process your orders."

JT pulled out two cigars from his jacket pocket, handed one to Z, and then bit the tip off his cigar. JT asked Z, "Light?"

Z replied, "Still smoking? Gonna kill yourself." JT stated, "Maybe? Rather die sick than healthy."

Z took a light from JT's lighter. JT coughed a couple of times then started smoking his cigar. The android waiter finished taking an order from the table next to JT and walked inside to process all of the orders. The café was eerie looking from the outside. It had a cold and uninviting atmosphere. The windows were blacked out and you couldn't see inside the restaurant as the waiter walked into the exterior glass door.

Z said, "Okay. I'll keep it brief. You have to track down and eliminate the rogue BMIs, preferably in the next 48 hours"

JT replied, "Not allot of time. What's so important about these BMIs?"

Z stated, "They're not the early model BMIs. These were the latest units developed by Cybernetics, before the ban went into effect."

JT asked, "As in Cybernetics Corporation?"

Z answered, "One in the same. And these were bred to receive implants as infants to allow for enhanced features."

JT looked a little thrown back and asked, "Cybernetics experimented on infants and they're still in business?"

Z replied, "At the time it was sanctioned by the government. As you know it's only immoral if it's unpopular."

The android waiter returned. It had been a quick turnaround on their orders.

The android waiter stated, "Here are your orders." The android waiter placed their food and drinks on the table and walked away.

JT loved how fast the android processed his order and said, "Droids, fast and no tip, my kind of waiter."

Z replied, "Not mine. I miss having a waitress who makes sharp remarks. It's also hard to gawk at an androids bum and flat metal chest. I'll take a real piece of bum any day of the week."

JT replied, “Man you just need to get out more. Oh and I'll still take a droid when it comes to my food.”

Z shook his head and said, “Yeah! You're still a cheap bastard.”

Z took a drink of coffee and JT started to eat as he listened to Z tell him about the BMIs. Z told JT, “Unlike the early BMIs that were implanted into adults, these later models have limitless potential, part of the reason they were outlawed.”

JT asked, “Where did they come from? I thought we cleaned house and they were going out of business.”

Z answered, “They were created here 20 years ago, but raised in Europe. Once we started icing the BMIs, most of them fled to liberal European countries. It was run or stay and risk being iced.”

JT stated, “It figures, liberal Euros. What do the BMIs want?”

Z answered, “Don't know why they came back. We're not waiting to find out either”.

JT asked, “Okay. What do you want done?”

Z replied, “Ice 'um. They're extremely dangerous. They already killed a spaceport screener in Mojave.”

Cella made an announcement, “Z, I'm downloading the suspect profiles for JT.” Cella projected the suspect

images in the air a couple of feet in front of JT. Z said, “Thanks, Cella,”

She replied, “Of course, Z. Displaying suspect profiles now.” A photo of each BMI was displayed in the air in front of Z, and JT. Cella announced each member’s profile:

“First, the ring leader: Grayson Newberry. Computer scientist. Twickenham, London. BMI model 1580.”

“Displaying next. Quincy Terrack. Former professional mixed martial arts fighter. Dublin, Ireland. BMI model 1550.”

“Peyton Brodrick. Former biologist with the Ministry of Defense. Paris, France. Model 1575”

“Jagger Diggs. Jazz musician. Liverpool, England. Model 1400.”

“And Tosha Holmes, known as the widow maker. A former British Intel agent. The most lethal in the group. We don't have a history on her prior to five years ago. British intelligence has an open contract out to terminate her on sight. She is listed by their agency as a rogue agent. She’s a model 1520.”

Z told Cella, “Thank you. Take care of JT. I have to go.”

“Always do,” replied Cella.

Z stood up from the café table. “Okay, JT. Need anything. Let me know. Otherwise, you’re own your own.” Z stood up and walked away. JT stood up shortly afterwards and walked towards the street.

Chapter 5 | Skycab For Hire

Standing at the curb outside the café, JT flagged down a skycab that hovered just down the street about twenty feet off the ground. The skycab driver landed his vehicle on the surface street. JT entered the skycab's rear seat. The driver and an older man with a Russian accent named Renlo greeted him. "Wair to?" JT replied, "Cybernetics Corporation."

They started to move upwards into the sky above, turning and dodging other cars as they tried to make it into the flight lanes. Renlo entered a flight lane (a path where flying cars move east, west, south, north, up and down around the city. Older conventional gas-powered vehicles drove on the dark and dirty surface streets. JT questioned the sky cabbie, "You're not a droid?"

Renlo replied in a strong Russian accent, "No. I hate those mevchanical devils. Da' are taking all the jobs."

JT looked through the interior partition window of the cab as he asked, "Little driodaphobic aaaaaa.?"

Renlo answered, "Ya. I'm one of the last human sky cabbies."

JT asked, "How long you been a cabbie?"

Renlo answered, "30 years, boss."

JT stated, "Long time."

The skycab continued to weave in and out of the traffic lanes as Renlo said, "Ya... It's the only reason I get to work a skycab. Grandfathered in before the droid bastards. You look like a cop."

JT then looked at him in the rear view mirror to see his reaction and answered, "A detective. What's your rate for 72 hours?"

Renlo looked at JT from the mirror and asked, "You mean by da hour?"

JT replied, "No! 72 hours straight. I'm going to need transport 24/7 for the next few days. Can you do it?"

"Da. For you. Five thousand credits," answered Renlo.

JT agreed to the price with a little sarcasm, "Done, and you'll get paid if I'm still alive on payday."

Renlo didn't get it and asked, "Vut? Vut you mean?"

JT pointed ahead and told Renlo, "Just fly." Then he turned his attention to Cella and said, "Transfer the funds to Mr. Renlo's account."

Cella completed his request and stated, "Transaction completed JT."

JT and Renlo continued to fly for ten more minutes until they reached the far side of the city.

As they approached Cybernetics they started to descend into lower flight lanes. A high-speed futuristic subway could be seen high above the ground. Flashing bill boards read "McDoogles Over One Trillion Bigums Sold." They made their descent over the lower, older parts of the city. It was dark and dreary. In the distance, a building could be seen far above the rest. It had a cylinder base outline extending fifty stories into the sky and a spaceport on the top.

Fancy high-end personal flying cars, skycabs, flying mass transit buses, and other city use vehicles zoomed by in the flight lanes around the city. There were no banged up trash heaps in the sky; the regulators wouldn't allow non-airworthy vehicles to transit the city skies. The underlings still use gas powered vehicles to get around town on the surface streets.

Upon final approach for landing they had to get into the landing pattern with other flying cars (that were landing and taking off from on top of Cybernetics.) On most buildings you could just land or take off at will, but heavy traffic buildings used sky controllers to keep landings and take-offs organized.

Renlo announced his attention to land, "Cybernetics Control, skycab 709 requesting permission to land with a passenger drop-off."

The controller answered, “709 approach from the south and follow the two skycars ahead of you in the pattern.”

Renlo acknowledged him, “Control entering the pattern from the south. I see the two ahead.”

Control stated, “Thank you and have a nice day sir.”

Renlo entered the pattern and followed the other two to the landing port. As they approached many other skycars were taking off. You could also see thousands of people through the exterior glass windows working in their offices.

Chapter 6 | Cybernetics

Renlo landed the skycab on the Cybernetics spaceport deck. A spaceship could be seen docked and pointed upwards towards the sky ready to launch. Cybernetic's spaceport had two main purposes: the first was to provide VIP and drop-off access for executives and the second was to provide several spaceship docks where spacecraft/spaceplanes could be launched directly into space. Only the most sophisticated high tech companies and government facilities had their own spaceports. Others like the affluents and business travelers used spaceports like the Mojave facility to travel into space. To date, you could stay at an orbiting hotel, travel from one international city to another in an hour or, if you were involved in space development, visit one of the moon production plants like the one owned by Cybernetics.

The sun was setting; the sky progressed to an even darker shade of black. JT entered a rooftop elevator and rode it down to the penthouse located a couple floors below the roof. The elevator was well lit. It took him to a large old Victorian-style study. The door opened and he exited.

JT walked into a large personal library. A very old man could be seen in the distance; the man known as Doctor Reynolds stood by the closed curtains with his back to JT. The curtains were very large and covered the study windows completely. The doctor started to open as JT approached the doctor. Outside the sun grew dimmer by the minute. JT and the doctor watched the window as a beautiful sunset of the same city landscape from fifty years prior was projected on it.

Doctor Reynolds turned and said to JT, “So beautiful. What a sunset used to look like. Good evening. My secretary tells me you’re a detective.”

JT answered, “Yes, I am. Good morning, doctor.” JT walked around the room, picked up hard cover bound books and looked at them. The scenery projected on the window changed to a morning view in the forest with deer and other wildlife eating the spring grass. A stunning view of nature before man damaged the environment. JT told the doctor, “You have a very interesting collection of books. I have never seen such a large collection.”

Doctor Reynolds answered, “Yes, the whole world went to digital books, but I still prefer the look and feel of paper. My collection of old books is a passion of mine.”

JT walked around the room looked up at the thirty-foot high bookshelves, “I’ve only seen a few hard cover books in my lifetime.”

Doctor Reynolds replied, "Amazing aren't they?"

JT responded, "Must be worth a fortune." JT found an old classic novel Don Quixote, by Miguel de Cervantes, and flipped through the pages.

Doctor Reynolds told JT, "Detective, I don't collect for their value. It's the ability to touch something real, turn pages, and smell the bindings." The doctor sat in his high back leather chair and turned towards JT. He said, "Detective, how can I help you?"

JT replied, "It's your late model BMIs. I have some questions." The doctor said, "Okay. Detective, we haven't made BMIs for 20 years. I don't think I can help you."

JT grabbed another book off a shelf, opened it, and said, "Doctor, some of your BMIs returned to the U.S. Why is that?"

"I have no idea. Most of them are dead. Those that haven't died will die soon," replied the doctor.

JT looked up from the book he was holding and asked, "Die. Why?"

Doctor Reynolds explained, "You see, detective. BMI implants were never supposed to last forever. They were supposed to be upgraded every ten years. Since we discontinued the program, they have been slowly dying off as their implants fail."

JT questioned the Doctor, "I was told you implanted infants?"

The doctor stood up. He paced back and forth in the room as he gave his speech on BMIs. "Yes, but you should understand. We were advancing the human race. We're not barbarians; our goal was to save mankind. Humans should realize that we can't progress as fast as computers. Someday they will surpass us in cognitive thinking. Machines will eventually do away with us as robotic technology advances. As a race, the human race is selfish, greedy, resource wasting and only partially productive. Machines are efficient, can work, think, build, and create 24 hours a day. Eventually, they won't need to keep us around. BMI technology, combining man and computer, was the only way to compete. Unfortunately, society feared the great minds we created by this technology. It's only a matter of time, detective, before the human race goes extinct; before our technology outgrows us."

JT picked up and looked at a photo of a beautiful girl on the doctor's desk. He said, "That's a dark forecast. Who's this?"

The doctor looked at JT to see what photo he was looking at and replied, "My daughter. She's on her way up from the lab now."

JT reiterated, "Great. How about a little speculation, doctor? Why do you think the BMIs have come to L.A.?"

"Detective, I just don't know," he replied.

The elevator opened and the doctor's daughter, Jennifer, exited and she walked up to JT asked him, "Who are you?"

He replied, "Detective Ryker. Most call me JT." Jennifer then asked, "Oh. Is there a problem?"

Her dad, Doctor Reynolds, answered, "No Jennifer. The detective was asking about the late model BMIs. I was just telling him we don't work with BMIs anymore."

JT turned to Jennifer, "So Jennifer, what do you know about BMIs?"

"Not a whole lot. I'm only twenty-five. A little before my time," she answered.

JT now looked to the doctor, "So doctor, what more can you tell me?"

The doctor advised JT, "Go home detective and call it a day. You don't stand a chance. You're not hunting down the old model BMIs you're used to. The late model BMIs are near perfection. They can out think and out fight you. You're just gonna get killed."

JT answered, "If you're trying to protect your creations, it's too late. One of them has already killed."

The doctor replied, "I wasn't trying to protect them. You're the one that's in danger detective."

JT got angry at what appeared to be the doctor's lack of cooperation and said, "Damnit, doctor. Are going to help?" The doctor gave JT some advice, "Detective, philosopher Ayn Rand once said, "The truth is not for all men, but only for those who seek it.""

The Doctor acted like he was worn out and tired from the conversation to get rid of JT. Jennifer thought her father was tired and told JT, "Detective, as you can see, my father is worn out. I'm going to have to ask you to leave."

Cella made an announcement, "JT, the facial recognition network has triggered an alert in old town."

JT acknowledged Cella, "Thanks."

JT then turned to Jennifer, "That's okay. That's all the questions I have for now."

Chapter 7 | Casino Heist

Welcome to the Edsen Bar, located in old town. A place where the affluents went to gamble on the bad side of town. The BMIs entered at the ground level from an alley door. A flight of stairs made of oak railings and marble steps extended three floors down to the basement level. Grayson, Tosh, Terrack and the others had entered the rear door where they were greeted by the receptionist, “Good evening.”

“Yes. Yes it is,” replied Grayson.

The receptionist asked, “How may I help you?”

Grayson walked up to the reception counter and said, “We are here to do a little gambling,” as he smiled at her.

She smiled back and said, “Yes sir. Members and their guests only. I’m sorry. I don’t recognize you. Are you a member?”

Grayson turned his head away from the receptionist and towards the others in the group trying to figure out his next move. He decided to use his abilities to communicate with the reservation computer. Grayson turned back towards the receptionist and said,

“Yes, of course. We're guests of the Kennedy's. Reservation code A687 for five guests. Please check your reservation system.”

The hostess looked at her computer screen and saw the reservation for five and said, “Yes sir. I see code A687, for five.”

Grayson then told the receptionist, “Now then, if there's nothing else, which way to the tables?”

She smiled politely, pointed to the stairs, and said, “Down those stairs. They will take you directly to the casino.”

Grayson and the others walked down the stairs and entered the main casino floor. The casino had the look and feel of something from the early 1900's. It had fancy carved oak ceiling panels, red leather couches and chairs. Crystal chandeliers hanging in the main room. Copper and antique statues throughout. The clientele were upscale high rollers. The men were mostly dressed in suits or tuxedos, and the women in glittery formal dresses. The patrons laughed, drank alcohol, and mingled as they walked the casino floors.

Slot machines, card games, roulette, craps tables were all packed with people gambling. The tables were operated by androids. Prior to going their own way in the casino, Grayson had given the group instructions, “Watch your winnings. Tosha take craps. Terrack, Jagger,

slots. Peyton, you watch my back on the high stakes poker table.”

The group responded, “Will do.”

They all separated and headed in different directions. Terrack and Jagger sat down at the slot machines next to each other. A human waitress dressed in a low cut cocktail dress approached them and asked, “Drink?”

Terrack and Jagger both answered, “Scotch on the rocks.”

Terrack slapped the waitress on her butt as she walked away to get them drinks. The waitress turned back towards Terrack, smiled, and kept walking. Terrack looked at the surveillance cameras on the walls. He also made mental notes that the employees had entered and exited the main floor from side doors.

Terrack made a sharp comment, “Look at the rack on her. Nothing beats the real thing, my friend.”

Jagger replied, “For a quick tumble, maybe.”

Terrack then said, “When we go home, I’m gonna find me a real woman to settle down with.”

Jagger laughed and said, “All yours. Real ones talk too much. Sexdroids are more to my taste. Anything, anytime. Turn ‘um off when you’re done. That’s my kinda

woman.” Both stopped talking and started to play the slot machines in front of them.

Tosha stood at the end of the craps table. A crowd surrounded the table and several people laid down bets. Tosha cradled the dice in her hand and prepared to roll them. Splitting her attention Tosha checked out the security guards as they walked around the room. She looked back over her shoulder and then back at the dealer. The craps dealer stated, “All right everyone, on the table.” Tosha put her money on number seven. The craps dealer motioned that he would no longer take bets and said, “Bets closed. Okay ma’am, your roll.” Tosha looked at the dice, played with them in her fingers and rolled the dice on the craps table. The dealer announced, “Winner! Number seven.”

People at the table had started to jump up and down from excitement. Tosha stayed calm and cool. She was dressed to kill in a long, black shiny, low-cut, formal dress. The craps dealer made the next call, “All bets on the table. All bets final.”

Tosha left her bet in place on number seven and said, “Let it ride.”

As she continued to play, Grayson could be found across the room. In an area off to the side were the high stakes tables. The area had several green felt top tables roped off with a two inch thick gold rope. Grayson and Peyton walked up to one of the tables. A previous winner

stood up and placed card shaped betting chips into his pocket. Peyton bumped into him and took a handful of cards from his pocket as he walked away. She then palmed them and handed them off to Grayson. The dealer looked at Grayson and wanted to know if he was going to buy into the game. He said, "Ten thousand dollar buy in. sir."

Grayson placed gold money cards on the table and slid his Annie to the dealer. The dealer called out the type of card game to be played, "Okay, sir. Five card stud, nothing wild." The dealer (an android) started to deal out cards. A woman named Candy sat in one of the seats. She wore formal dress with a sparkling diamond necklace. The second player Bob had a black tuxedo on. A third player Alex wore a t-shirt, blue jeans, and a white baseball hat. Several other players were already seated.

Candy yelled, "Let's get this game going. I don't want to spend all night collecting everyone's money."

Bob chuckled a little and said, "You can take anything you want from me, honey."

Alex was eager to play and said, "Just deal."

Grayson took his cards as Peyton stood behind him. The wall clock showed the time. Over a period of minutes, the betting chips shifted between players until Grayson and Alex had acquired most of the winnings. Grayson decided now was as good a time as any to take

his winnings. Grayson said, “Well ma’am, gentlemen. I'm going to cash out. Have a good night.”

Alex replied, “Well, thanks for your contribution.”

Grayson walked to the bar area. Tosha, Jagger, Terrack, and Peyton had all stood near each other. You couldn't hear what is being said, but it looked like they were planning something.

Grayson approached the cashier's desk. Tosha and Terrack moved quickly towards two armed guards. Peyton and Jagger separated, but were on to the right side of the cashier's desk. Grayson threw a few money-cards on the counter. Peyton asked Grayson, “Why didn't we just use our abilities to just win the money?”

Grayson replied, “They would have never let us leave with it.”

Peyton had backed up after Grayson talked to the cashier. Grayson raised his right hand next to his head (the go signal for the takedown robbery.) As Grayson moved up to the front of the cashier's line, the cashier had asked him, “How would you like your winnings, credit or in gold cards?”

Terrack and Tosha picked off the two armed android guards closest to them. Tosha grabbed a beer bottle off a passing waitress's tray, then hit the first android guard in the head, slightly stunning his visual sensors for a moment. She then grabbed his gun and

threw it to Grayson. Terrack simultaneously had grabbed a rope stand and hit the second android guard in his mid-section. The guard bent over and Terrack hit him in the face a second time, knocking his face plate off. Wires fell and an explosion omitted from his head. Grayson, fired the guards pistol, a blue flame omitted and causing red flames to emit from the first android guard, destroying his circuitry.

Grayson told the cashier, "In gold, ma'am. Hurry up!" The cashier, frightened, said, "Yes. Yes, I have it. I have it."

Grayson had pointed a gun at the cashier as he loaded a bag with gold cards. Terrack grabbed the other guard's gun and panned the room, pointing it at everyone nearby. Two additional security androids appeared at the top of the stairs. One shot at Grayson and missed, hitting the cashier's counter. The second android fired at Terrack. Terrack pushed an android waitress into the path. She exploded when she was hit, emitting a flash of light from her chest. Terrack fired and hit the android guard that had fired at him. The second guard fired again at Grayson, almost hitting the cashier. Grayson fired back, hitting the android. Fire expelled from his mid-section and he fell off the steps from two floors up, hitting the ground with a loud thump. Grayson yelled, "Let's go."

Grayson walked by the high-stakes table on the way out, took Alex's winnings, and said, "Thanks for the contribution." Alex looked shocked, dismayed, and said nothing.

Tosha, leading the way out, yelled, "Let's go. Let's go."

The group all walked up the stairs at a fast pace. The patrons inside remained quiet and whispered out of fear of being shot. The group headed for the door.

Terrack peeked out the door to make sure the coast was clear and said, "Clear. Let's get out of here."

Without any further resistance from security, they were able to flee the scene and make a clean get away.

Chapter 8 | Working On A Lead

JT entered a real flop of a hotel. This was the location where Cella's facial recognition alert had been set off. There was not much room in the lobby. It was old, musty, and had a very small entrance. So small that if you stood there too long, you could become claustrophobic. A man and a hooker laughed as they walked. JT walked up to the counter and the man, already known to JT as a two-bit local loser named Jake, turned around. Jake also recognized JT from his prior criminal activity on the streets and said, "No. Not you."

JT responded, "Been a while."

Jake backed up from the counter and said, "What do you want, iCer? Thought you retired."

JT answered, "What do I always want?"

Jake became nervous. He had the shakes due to his alcoholism. Jake told JT, "I ain't on parole. You can't touch me."

JT moved closer to Jake. JT whispered, "Let me tell you a little secret."

Jake moved in closer to hear what he had to say. JT then grabbed the back of Jake's neck and head butted

breaking his nose. Jake screamed, “Ohhhhhh. Ahhhh. Frack You broke my nose.”

JT looked Jake in the eyes and said, “Still don't have time to answer my questions?” Jake held his bloody nose and mumbled, “Yeah, yeah. Okay, okay. What do you want, iceman?” JT replied, “BMIs. Cella, display images.”

Cella displayed the images of the BMIs one at a time in the air. Jake said no to all but the last image, which was of Jagger Diggs. He said, “Wait! That guy. He’s staying here, but he went out. He’s not here.”

JT inquired, “Where then?”

Jake told him, “He asked about instrument karaoke bars. You know, where musicians randomly get up on stage and play instruments?”

JT then asked, “Did he tell you which one he was going to?”

Jake answered, “I only knew of one in the area. I told him to try the Perche. He’s probably there.”

Jake cleaned up his bloody nose and sat down on a chair located at the front counter. JT had reached down and took a few mints from the tray on top of the counter. JT leaned forward and said, “Jake, next time, save yourself a little pain and suffering. Just grass when asked.”

Jake replied, "You got what you came for. Please, just leave."

The Perche was located only a few blocks away, walking distance, so JT walked there. As he walked through this part of town it was filled with hotels, bars, and prostitutes. JT passed several hotels where women were displayed in the windows to entice men in. It was reminiscent of the old red light districts of Amsterdam. If you saw a woman you liked, you would enter the hotel lobby, negotiate a price for sex, and off you went to a back room. When JT passed by one of the bars two men came flying out the front door, fist fighting. Others inside the bar exited, holding money in their hands, waiting to see who won. Two local private security droids broke up the fight as the crowd booed them. They all had to cancel their bets and go back inside.

After a few minutes, JT found the Perche. It was a typical old brick building, but had been painted yellow. The windows were stained glass with a red and blue design. The window shutters and doors were painted bright red, and musical instruments were painted on the exterior doors. A big digital sign hung outside the location. It read, "Instrument karaoke night. Share your talent. Cold beer on 3 credits." Many patrons were seen walking in as you could hear music being played from the street. A man walked out drunk. Having a hard time keeping his balance, he leaned on JT's shoulder and said, "Thank you friend."

JT pulled the man's hand off his shoulder and proceeded to walk up to the front door.

Chapter 9 | First Ice

JT walked into the Perche. A rough crowd, long shore men, strippers on the stage, and women sitting on the men's laps filled the bar. BMI and musician Jagger Diggs sat in a back area where a woman kissed his neck and flirted with him. On a small stage located in the back of the bar, a man finished playing a guitar. He left it on the stage and walked back to his table. Other instruments were laid all over the stage for people to play. A digital sign located just above the stage read "The Perche Instrument Karaoke Night." The bartender yelled out, "Next! Who's up next?"

A man who was seated towards the front at a table raised his hand and volunteered to play next. JT walked slowly through the crowd and checked out the bar goers around him. He took a seat at the bar and looked in the direction of the stage. The volunteer was Jagger. He walked onto the stage and turned towards the audience. The bartender asked, "What are you playing, mister?"

Jagger said, "Sax." Jagger picked up the saxophone and started to blow some test notes to warm up.

The bartender yelled over the noise of the crowd, "Alright my man. Let her rip."

Jagger played the sax as the bartender looked at JT and asked him, "You want drink?"

"Bush Maker. Make it a double," replied JT.

Jagger played well and the crowd enjoyed it. Jagger finished his tune, exited the stage and sat back down at his table. JT walked up to Jagger's table and sat down next to him. JT told him, "Great tune. You play like a pro."

Jagger smiled and shook his head up and down in agreement. H said, "Thanks."

JT wanted to make sure he had the right guy before he took action, so he asked additional questions, starting with, "Do you mind if I sit here with you?"

Jagger replied, "No, not all. You play?"

JT told him, "No. Just here to enjoy the music."

Another artist, entered the stage and sung as he played the guitar.

JT continued his questioned with, "You from L.A.?"

Jagger replied, "No. Just passing through, man."

JT then asked, "Where did you learn to play?"
"Liverpool," he replied.

JT asked, "The Beatle's Liverpool?" and Jagger answered, "Yep, Scouserland. A musician's heaven."

JT slammed his glass on the table and said loudly, "Jagger!"

Jagger realized something was wrong. How did this guy know his name and replied, "Who?" JT said, "Jagger Diggs?"

Jagger looked around for a way to escape. He felt like a cornered rat about to be pounced on by a cat. He knew his options were limited and he would probably have to fight his way out.

Jagger yelled, "Frack! You're an iCer." JT started to reach for his gun and said, "Don't move!" Jagger flipped the table onto JT's lap and knocked him onto the floor. Jagger had run through the audience to escape. JT tried to grab him, but the crowd stood up and blocked his path. Jagger made it out the back door. The audience loved Jagger so much that they tried to help him make his escape. One of the men in the audience yelled at JT, "Where do you think you're going? JT pulled out his gun and fired; a blue muzzle flash emitted. JT shot the man from the audience in the leg for blocking his path. JT made one of his wise-ass remarks at the man he just shot, "Out the door. Anyone got a problem with that?"

Everyone in the room moved as the guy who was shot grabbed at his leg and moved aside. He said, "You shot me! You shot me, man."

JT started to walk out and several people in the bar started to slowly crowd the doorway.

JT warned them again, "Move or I'll shoot you too." The crowd backed up and parted.

JT exited the back door of the bar. He chased Jagger down the street near the Angel's Flight train. It was small historic train that only went up and down the hill. He ran from the seedy underling area to the affluents area on top of the hill. Once they exited the bar they had run through the outside flea market to the train platform. JT was about to catch up to Jagger when Jagger turned, pulled a gun from his waistband, and shot at JT. He barely missed. Jagger continued to run up the stairs that paralleled the Angel's Flight train's path up the hill. When he reached the half way mark, he shot at JT again. This time JT armed himself with his weapon and fired back. He too, missed Jagger. At the top of the hill there was a water display and a small concrete lined lake with colored lights on the walkways. The crowd changed from old town underlings to the affluents wearing futuristic clothes. Once more, Jagger turned to shoot. He missed, but this time, he killed a woman who was walking near JT. The crowd screamed. JT fired back at Jagger as he turned to run. JT hit him in the back, knocking him forward. He fell face down on a small table face first where two men were having a drink. They jumped up from the table and raised their arms above their heads. Both yelled, "Don't shoot."

JT approached Jagger and turned him over as he died. Jagger told JT, "You're making a mistake."

JT tried to ask him, "Why'd you come to L.A.?"

As Jagger took his last breath of life, he said, "More life. 1600. 1600."

Jagger eyes closed slowly as the life faded from his body. He was the first to be iced.

Chapter 10 | Call From Jennifer

JT sat down on the couch in his loft, picked up a bottle of whiskey located on his coffee table, and poured himself a drink. He leaned back and got comfortable he took a sip, “Ahhhhh. Burns a little, Just the way I like it. Just like getting kicked by a mule.”

JT called out, “Cella.” “Yes JT,” she replied. JT made a request, “Cella, we need to start tracking down the other BMIs. They're here for a reason. What do you have on the number 1600?” Cella checked online databases and stated, “JT I have over one hundred trillion records with 1600 in them. Can you narrow down your request?” JT didn't have any ideas for narrowing the search, so he just told her, “Disregard. That's all I got.” Cella replied, “Anything else?” JT replied, “No! I need to rest for a bit to recharge. Wake me in an hour.”

He closed his eyes and took a nap. About an hour later Cella announced an incoming call, “Incoming call.” JT asked, “Who is it?” Cella asked the caller to identify herself and she advised him, “She identified herself as Jennifer from Cybernotics.” JT responded, “Answer please.”

The call was connected and Jennifer said, “Detective.” JT listened and paused for a second, “Yes.”

Jennifer spoke quickly and asked, "Can I come see you? I need to talk." JT agreed to see her, "Of course, Cella send her my location." Cella transmitted JT's loft address to Jennifer and she replied, "Thank you Detective, I'll be there in a bit. Bye."

Cella had disconnected the call from Jennifer and told JT as he lay back down to sleep, "I'll wake you when she arrives." The room went dark as JT shuts his eyes.

Chapter 11 | Kidnap and Pursuit

The four remaining BMIs met at a factory building located across the street from the Cybernotics Corporation. As they walked into the abandoned factory they could see rats on the floor and hear them squeak as they scurried into the walls. Tosha approached Grayson and asked, "Grayson, where's Jagger." Grayson dipped his head and looked down towards the ground for a second, then looked up at Tosha with a grim face. Grayson replied, "Tosha, Jagger got killed by an iCer." Tosha's face turned red, she gritted her teeth, and clinched her fists in anger. Tosha wanted to know, "Who? Whoever did it is fracking dead." Grayson advised her, "Calm down. We all have to focus on the mission." Tosha caught her breath and replied, "Yes. Okay, but if I get my hands on the iCer that did it. He's dead!"

Terrack wanted to get down to business and asked, "What's the plan?" Grayson started to brief them, "We need to get to the creator, Doctor Reynolds. In order to do that, we need access to the facility. It's like a fortress. I've been watching the employees go in and out. We're going to snatch one of the lab techs. Terrack you're on watch first. Tosha, then Peyton."

The group acknowledged Grayson. Terrack looked out a window of a factory towards Cybernotics, waiting for a target. The others sat against the wall and waited.

After an hour Terrack had spotted a man in a lab coat, Tyler Slade use a rear exit. Terrack alerted the group, "We have a lab tech exiting the building. It's a go people."

The group made their exit out the back and walked at a very quick pace (so they could intercept the tech.) Slade had flagged down a skycab and was getting ready to enter the rear seat when Peyton and Terrack entered the rear doors. They pushed Slade into the middle of the seat and sandwiched him in between them. Grayson jumped into the right passenger's seat next to the driver. Slade thought they were trying to take his cab, "Hey, hey get out. This cab is taken." Terrack then told Slade, "Shut up!" Slade was confused and asked, "What's going on?" Peyton in a firm voice yelled, "Stay seated and be quiet!"

Tosha walked up to the driver's side door of the skycab and shot the android driver in the head. Smoke and wires popped out of his head. Tosha pulled him out onto the ground and jumped into the driver's seat.

Slade realized he was being kidnapped and pleaded, "Please! Please! Don't kill me!" Peyton pushed Slade down into the rear seat and said, "Just be quite!" Grayson wanted to get out of there as quickly as possible. He spotted the police coming their way and told Tosha,

“Go! Go! Go! Fly! Cops at our 12 o'clock!” Slade pleaded, “Let me out!” Peyton slapped Slade in the face and got him to be quiet. She yelled again, “Shut up!” Slade cowered in his seat and put his hands on his face. Slade complied and said, “Okay! Okay!”

The skycab zoomed upward into the flight lanes. At the same time a SCAR (Squad Car – flying police) flew overhead. The driver officer saw the kidnapping below and alerted his partner, “Down there!” His partner (the passenger officer) acknowledged him, “See it!”

The SCAR abruptly dove downward towards the stolen skycab with its lights and siren on. The pursuit was on and the passenger officer called it in to dispatch, “Eagle Seven. Show us in pursuit of skyjackers, at the Cybernetics building.” The skycab climbed upward through other vehicles and hit the corner of a building. A second SCAR joined in behind the first SCAR.

As they joined the pursuit the partner officer in the second SCAR advised dispatch, “Eagle Nine, show us in pursuit with Eagle Seven.”

Grayson had yelled at Tosha as she tried to evade the police, “Loose ‘um! Go! Go!” Tosha hit the accelerator and said, “Woo...baby I got this.” Grayson tried to help Tosha avoid hitting other skycars and yelled, “Right! Right and up.”

The skycab missed a bus and flew through other flying cars. Cars had honked at the skycab as several just miss being hit. The skycab leveled off into the flow of air traffic. Two SCAR's fell in behind and continued their pursuit. Terrack yelled out some more directions, "Damn. There! There! The tunnel."

The skycab headed down to ground level and drove into a street level tunnel used by surface vehicles. It had trouble clearing the top of the tunnel and the top of the skycab scrapped the tunnel entrance. Parts and debris flew off. Older conventional vehicles travelled in and out of the tunnel. The two SCAR's followed, lights and sirens flashing. Tosha had started to get an adrenaline rush and yelled, "Bam! That should do it!" Peyton then yelled, "They're still behind us."

Tosha flew at the top of the tunnel bumping and clipping the top of surface cars as she flew over them. When the skycab reached the end of the tunnel Tosha cut off a bus. The bus started to swerve from the right lane to the left. Just as the skycab exited the first SCAR barely made it and the second SCAR crashed into the rear of the bus and exploded. Parts, flames, and debris shot out of the tunnel from behind the bus when the SCAR impacted it.

The first SCAR continued the chase upwards after the skycab as they exited the tunnel and ascended. The skycab didn't have enough room as it flew in-between two vehicles above it. It bumped both vehicles and

knocked them apart (making room to climb to higher level traffic.) The SCAR then hit a flying car and caused it to spin out of control, on fire, towards the ground.

Grayson saw two more SCARS speeding towards them from behind and a third from their right. Grayson alerted Tosha, "Down! Down there!" Tosha assured Grayson she was under control and said, "Diving, diving. "

They dove back down and flew below the flow of the flying cars, just above the old cars on the surface street. They were clipping power lines, sparks flew, and neon signs exploded as they clipped them with the skycab. Now all three SCARS were behind them in hot pursuit.

The partner officer from the third SCAR asked dispatch, "Dispatch, Eagle Seven and Nine are down. Request permission to flame the evader." Dispatch gave permission to shot down the skycab, "Eagle Two, cleared to engage."

The two lead SCARS's flew side by side and had started to shoot at the skycab with large caliber energy guns (located in the front of their vehicles.) The skycab had made erratic and sharp turns around buildings to avoid being hit.

Grayson yelled, "Tosha!" and Tosha replied, "I know! I know! Give me a sec."

Tosha saw a tall building under construction in the distance and flew through the open areas where no windows had been installed. The three SCARS followed them inside.

The partner officer in SCAR 3 yelled, "Follow them, follow 'um in."

As they started to reach the other end of the building Tosha started to hit the columns in the building taking them out. As they reached the end of the interior of the building it collapsed as Tosha hit the last column and flew out the other end. SCAR 3 and the other SCARS were all crushed by the s collapse and falling debris. The partner officer from SCAR 3 screamed, "Shittttttt," as his car was crushed.

Explosions and debris flew out of the end of the building as the skycab made its escape. Grayson told Tosha, "A little messy," and she replied, "But a job well done, huh?"

The group continued by entering normal sky traffic and slowing down to match the flow of traffic. From a distance you saw the building that they had exited on fire with smoke billowing from the sides. The skycab was damaged with dents from end to end, but it was still air worthy and able to transport them to Slade's place.

Chapter 12 | Slade's Loft

Tosha landed the stolen skycab at Slades's loft. The group escorted Slade inside the building and down the hallway to his loft. The halls were lined with marble floors and low glow fancy lights with brass casings. The hallway floor and ceiling trim had carved designs with a white shiny finish. The group walked the hallways and pushed Slade every time he slowed down. Peyton asked, "Which one's yours?"

Slade pointed at unit 3015 and says, "Right there. 3015."

They walked up to the door. There was a computer screen located on the wall. As it turned on, it displayed an older male's face (the image was of an artificial digital butler). At the top of the screen, it read, "Mr. Reeves." The digital butler, Mr. Reeves, recognized Mr. Slade and said, "Mr. Slade. Welcome home. Shall I open the door?"

Slade replied, "Yes Reeves, open the door." The door opened and they pushed Slade inside. Mr. Reeves spoke as they all walked into his loft, "Mr. Slade, you have three messages."

Slade advised Mr. Reeves, "Hold, 'um." Mr. Reeves asked another question, "Would you like a

meal prepared?" Slade had turned to the group and asked, "Would you like anything?"

Grayson acknowledged Slade and answered for the group, "No thanks. Now, down to business. What's your position at the lab?"

Slade didn't think it was a good idea to answer, but he was afraid not to, so he said, "Senior Scientist. You're BMIs huh?"

Grayson looked directly at Slade and said, "We are. How'd ya' know?"

Slade visually scanned the group, looked back and forth, and said, "I helped develop your BMI processors. You're a 1520 (looking at Tosha), you're a 1550 (looking at Terrack), you're a 1575 (looking at Peyton), and you're a 1580 (looking at Grayson.)"

Grayson tried to read Slade's facial expressions and asked, "What do you think about us?"

Slade smiled and replied, "You're my life's work. You don't need to harm me. I'll help you."

Grayson and Slade continued to talk in the living room. The other's sat down in the room. Terrack grabbed fruit from a bowl on a table and started to eat it. Peyton talked to Mr. Jeeves and plopped herself on the couch. Peyton commanded, "Turn on the news." The television turned on and displayed the local news.

Grayson and Slade continued to talk. Grayson told him, “Good. That’s good. We could use your help.”

The other BMIs walked around the kitchen area, picked up, and ate food from the counter.

Grayson started to trust Slade and told him, “Slade, we don’t want to die. Our implants are expiring. Can you help us?”

Slade replied, “I think so.”

Grayson then asked, “How? How can you help? We heard that the final design, the 1600 series, has no end life.”

Slade responded, “You’re right, it doesn’t. But only Doctor Reynolds has the design.”

Grayson moved in closer and asked him, “Will you help us get into the Cybernetics Corporation?”

Slade answered, “Yes. Yes I can do that.”

Grayson slid his hand down Slade’s face and patted him on the top of his shoulder. Peyton stood next to Slade and hugged him. Grayson was pleased with his answer and told Slade, “You’re god-sent, brother.” Tosha and Terrack also thanked Slade for volunteering to help them.

Terrack walked back towards the bathroom and said, “I’m going to take a shower and get cleaned up.”

Grayson then said, “Good idea. We will all get cleaned up and rest here before we make our next move.”

Slade said, “Of course. Make yourselves at home. Mr. Reeves, please assist my guests with whatever food they would like prepared.”

Reeves answered, “Yes, Mr. Slade.”

Back at JT’s loft it was about to heat up.

Chapter 13 | JT Hooked Up

JT was at home. He was moving from his bedroom to the living room when the doorbell made a soft buzzing noise. He walked to the door and Jennifer stood there looking afraid. She was dressed in a long dress and a trench coat.

JT gazed at Jennifer; he couldn't keep his eyes off her. He said, "Come in."

Jennifer replied, "Thank you."

They walked to the kitchen and JT had offered her a piece of strawberry shortcake, "Desert?"

Jennifer said, "Sure."

JT replied, "So why you here?"

Jennifer made light of JT's dry sense of humor, "Mr. Sunshine, you intrigue me. Your cloak and dagger life must a constant adrenaline rush."

JT had become aroused. He thought she was hitting on him, so he answered, "Sometimes. You're very beautiful."

Jennifer teased JT by dipping a strawberry in whip cream. She ate it slowly and said, "Mmm. Strawberries. These are hard to find."

JT picked up a strawberry for himself and told her, “Just have to know where to go to get ‘um. Here, sit. Have a glass of wine.”

Jennifer took a glass of red wine from JT and started to sip it. Jennifer stood up, leaned back against a granite counter top, and said, “Yum. The wine?”

JT replied, “Yes, one of my favorites.”

Jennifer had moved in close to JT's face. JT responded by moving in closer to her, gave her a kiss, and said, “Are you sure?” Wanting to know if it was okay to kiss her.

Jennifer answered him with, “Yes. From day to day this world gets darker and darker. I don't know what tomorrow has to offer. I would prefer to live for the day than see what tomorrow has to offer.”

Jennifer and JT kissed slowly and JT pulled Jennifer tight into him. JT then lifted Jennifer up onto the counter and they become more fervent. They kissed faster and more passionately. Their foreplay escalated. JT lifted Jennifer up and carried her to his bedroom where they made love.

After they had finished, Jennifer jumped into the shower. Steam covered the shower door. Jennifer's naked outline could be seen behind it. Jennifer exited. She had put on a white robe and covered her lower body, but left her breasts showing until she finished putting on

the robe. Jennifer talked to JT through the open bathroom door. She said, "I have to get going. Call me later."

JT is looked out the window into the dark and dirty city outside. Cella announced, "JT."

He replied, "Yes Cella?"

Cella said, "Incoming call."

JT responded with the command, "Answer."

Z was on the line. He said, "They hit Cybernotics."

JT kept it short, "Details."

Z then gave JT the run down on what happen, "About an hour ago a senior scientist was kidnapped from Cybernotics. We don't know the motive. There was a short pursuit involving the police, but they got away."

JT then told Z, "Thanks. Got it. Bye," and then asked Cella, "Show source information."

Cella displayed the information visually in the air. Cella provided the requested information, "Yes JT. I scanned the records of the missing employee. His name is Tyler Slade. He spent 30 years with Cybernotics and is listed as the senior scientist."

JT instructed Cella, "Scan credit usage, ID, and door entry records on Slade."

Cella scanned the net and stated, "Scan complete. Last registered entry was on Slade's loft door 35 minutes ago. Door shows no exit record." Cella went quiet.

JT turned his attention to Jennifer who was now dressed. Her hair was still wet; she looked very sexy. JT smiled at Jennifer and said, "Hey, meet me in New Hollywood later. We can talk more then." Jennifer had begun to exit the door. As she shut it behind, she told JT, "Okay. Bye."

JT had Cella notify Renlo that he would be leaving shortly.

Chapter 14 | You First

JT had exited his loft's rooftop door and jumped into the rear of Renlo's skycab, slamming the door shut. The skycab was parked on the roof, which was filled with mud, bird feathers, pigeon crap, and clutter. It was not designed for flying cars like the skycab, but Renlo parked there anyways. Renlo was resting with his eyes closed at the wheel when the rear door was slammed. Renlo realized JT had just entered and asked him, "Hmm, Vair to Boss?" JT told him, "Uptown. 818 Olympic."

The skycab lifted off and Renlo asked, "So, who youz after?"

JT replied, "BMIs"

Renlo was familiar with BMI tech and voiced his opinion, "Notz the BMIs you have to worry about boss. It's the droids."

JT then told Renlo, "At the moment, my job is to take care of BMIs. Never had a problem with the droidz."

Renlo replied, "Boss. BMIs are intimidating, but at least they don't take all the jobs and are at least human. Droidz are pure efficiency. They have no souls."

JT answered in a muffled voice, "Souls. I'm not a priest pal. Just step on it."

Renlo replied, "Okay, you da' boss."

After they flew across the city, they arrived at the location Cella alerted JT. Renlo landed the skycab on the upscale carport (located on Slade's roof). Many skylimos, a flying Porsche, and other flying cars had landed there. Chauffeurs and valets helped people into and out of their flying cars. JT spotted the BMIs as they walked briskly with Remolds towards the valet pickup, located outside lobby. JT yelled at Renlo, "Put it down! Put it down!"

Renlo asked, "You see them?"

JT pointed below at them, "At the valet area. There! There!"

They had started to land in the middle of the other vehicles, when they drew attention from everyone. They were landing in an area where skycars normally don't land. Grayson looked up and spotted JT. He knew that something was wrong because the skycab was landing in an out of bounds area. Grayson got the attention of the other BMIs, "He's an iCer. Just jack a car. We got to get out of here now."

Terrack tried to rush his comrades along and yelled, "Move! Move! Move!" Terrack had pushed his way through the crowd towards a skycar that was being dropped off at the valet.

Tosha, still angry over Jagger's death, offered to take on JT to give them time to get away. She told the others, "He's dead. I'll take him out."

Tosha pushed through the crowd to confront JT as he exited the skycab. Grayson and Peyton walked on both sides of Slade towards the valet area.

The Valet said, "Sir."

The valet acknowledged Terrack as he walked up to him. A second valet took a cardkey (used to start cars) from a man dropping off a flying Mercedes. Terrack shoved the first valet into the crowd. The crowd yelled and started to scatter to get out of the way. Terrack snatched the cardkey from the other valet's hand and punched him in the face, knocking him out.

Grayson yelled, "Everyone in!"

Tosha continued to head in JT's direction and she told the others, "He's mine. You go."

Terrack jumped into the driver's seat of the stolen Mercedes. Peyton pushed Slade into the back seat and Grayson got in the front passenger's seat. They had to leave Tosha behind.

Tosha walked quickly up to JT. JT started to draw his gun, but was only able to get it halfway out of his holster when Tosha knocked it out of his hand. Tosha then kicked JT backwards into the skycab. JT fell to the

ground as Tosha grabbed a three-foot high, two-inch thick, yellow fiberglass antenna mounted on the back of the skycab, and broke it off. JT ran and tackled Tosha to the ground while she was still holding the antenna. Tosha got up and swiftly struck JT in the shoulder. The impact knocked him back onto the ground.

Tosha screamed, "You killed Jagger!"

JT had started to stand up again when Tosha struck him again. JT tried to get back on his feet several more times, but was knocked down each time he tried. Blood dripped down his face. Tosha told him, "You're dead, Iceman."

JT did a leg sweep and knocked Tosha to the ground. JT stood and backed away. He continued to fight back as he got closer to the of top three foot high wall that enclosed landing area. Surface traffic was moving below the high-rise. The people looked like ants and the cars like toys from forty floors up. Tosha and JT continued to fight, working their way towards the three foot protection wall, which was meant to keep people from walking over the edge. Tosha stood up, holding the antenna, and struck JT, knocking him over the wall. JT grabbed onto the top and hung on. Tosha raised the antenna over her head. Tosha yelled, "Die iCer! Die you fracking asshole!"

JT looked angry, like he knew he was about to die, but he wasn't giving up. Out of the blue, Renlo bumped

Tosha over the wall using the rear end of the skycab. He was floating in the air when he rotated it in a circle. Renlo's window was down as he yelled at Tosha, "You first."

Tosha fell over the side of the building screaming loudly. She tumbled to her death and splattered on the sidewalk below.

Renlo moved the skycab so JT could get in. Renlo made JT an offer, "Vride, Boss?"

JT started to climb into the skycab and said, "Renlo, buddy. I didn't know you had it in you, but I'm sure glad you did."

Renlo replied, "Sorry, boss. The bitch broke my antenna. I got no patience for vandals when they damage my vride".

JT said, "Sure glad you're on my side, buddy. Take me to New Hollywood. I have an appointment".

The other BMIs had gotten away for now. JT looked down towards the ground below as they hovered near the roof. People on the streets below started to crowd as they looked at Tosha's impression of a road pizza. JT asked, "Cella, please notify the agency that they have a cleanup at this location and that I'll file a report later."

Cella said, "Taking care of it JT."

Renlo flew off towards New Hollywood.

Chapter 15 | New Hollywood

In the city of darkness, one corner of the city still shone bright: New Hollywood. JT walked down the streets of New Hollywood. Many new high-rise units lined the area, mixing with some familiar landmarks. The Hollywood sign was now a flashing billboard. It displayed, "Welcome to New Hollywood. Let your fantasies run wild. Pose with your favorite celebrity hologram at the Hologram Museum. Hollywood Bowl concert tonight. Oldies but the goodies series. 65 year old legendary singer Justin Berberer appearing Live!" As you walked past the famous Chinese Theatre the stars on the sidewalk lit up. They were all digital now; no marble stone stars remained. Movie star names flashed on the digital stars with short video clips highlighting their careers. As JT walked in one direction, Jennifer approached him from the other. When they met, Jennifer blurted out, "JT, burrrr. It's cold out tonight." You could see Jennifer's breath in the cold air as she talked to JT.

JT said, "This town never gets old." Jennifer grabbed his arm and replied, "You're right. Even in these dark times Hollywood still has a little bit of glam and glitter."

The lights, signs, and billboards on the upper parts of the buildings illuminated New Hollywood's dark streets.

JT started to get hungry and asked, "Chinese okay?" Suddenly, a snapping sound could be heard down the street and the street the lights started to flash and then went dark. The lights in the city were flickering on and off.

Jennifer said, "Not again!" Then, all the power went back on. She said, "Wow! Glad we didn't get hit with another outage."

JT asked, "Did you have any trouble getting here?"

Jennifer replied, "No I had a skycab drop me off."

More popping noises could be heard. Once again, the street lights started to turn off. This time the power shut off completely, one block at a time. It moved from one end of the city to the other. In a period of a couple minutes, the whole city was dark. Once the lights had gone out, people avoided the traffic signals on the ground and crashed into each other. The same thing happened with the flying since the drivers couldn't see buildings in front of them until it was too late. It was complete havoc. JT knew they had to get off the streets fast and yelled, "Run!"

Jenifer agreed and said, "Oh my god."

JT grabbed Jennifer's hand and told her, "Follow me! We have to get off the streets."

JT and Jennifer jogged between the panicked crowds. As the crowd ran, screamed, pushed, and punched each other JT, and Jennifer pushed their way through.

Structure fires were started from the impact of skycars as they flew into the sides' buildings. JT and Jennifer ran through the door of Chong's Chinese Food Restaurant. Inside a Chinese female waitress said, "You. Gooo."

JT wasn't going anywhere. He told her, "Were coming in."

The waitress then said it again, "Uuu get out pwease."

The Chinese owner then said, "Weave. You weave now."

JT pushed his way in towards the booths and told the owner, "Lock the door. It's going to be a few hours." JT showed his badge and the gun on his belt.

The owner saw that he was a cop and replied, "Okay mizter. You stay. You can stay." The waitress also told JT, "I lock door. I lock door, you sit ovair there."

Someone else tried to push by the Chinese waitress as she locked the door. JT charged the guy, punched him in the face, and knocked him back out the door. The waitress managed to lock the door. Security doors closed to protect the windows as rioters outside started to smash store windows.

Owner Tang Wong told JT, “You sit. You sit po-wece man. I bring you tea.”

Tang then gave instructions to his waitress, “Hong Sing, bring po-wece man tea.”

JT and Jennifer sat down at an open table. The restaurant was mostly empty. With the exception of a few other people eating at the tables. You could hear the muffled noise of the rioting outside as things were being thrown against the walls. The inside was decorated with Chinese paintings. A gold painted Buddha sat on a stand at the front. Near the entrance, there was a large fish tank filled with robotic fish. Green, bright pink, and multicolor robotic fish of all sizes filled the tank. They were a dazzling sight to see in motion.

Jennifer started to talk about the blackout, “The blackouts are getting more frequent.”

JT replied, “Looks like a bad one. Hang on for a sec.”

The local news was on the s.v. (stream vision) and it showed a male newscaster. The Newscaster

commented, “We have breaking news. Another blackout appears to be under way here in Los Angeles. Authorities are asking that you stay inside until the power is restored.”

JT wanted an update, “Cella. Any additional information on the whereabouts of the BMIs?”

Cella advised, “No. I will continue scanning for activity.”

JT then asked if Cella had more information on the blackout, “How about the expected duration of the blackout?”

Cella said, “Will look into it.”

JT replied, “Thanks, Cella.”

Back on the s.v. news screen, two newscasters conversed with each other, “Maria, the blackouts seem to be getting worse.”

The other newscaster replied, “Yes, I agree. Over ten thousand people were killed in the last black out. Every time it happens, it’s disastrous.”

The other newscaster replied, “You’re right, Stan. Every time it seems to get worse and longer.”

JT and Jennifer sat at their booth. They continued to talk as the street was set ablaze by the out of control rioters. JT said, “The BMIs have targeted Cybernotics.

They kidnapped one of your scientists, Slade. You know 'um?"

Jennifer covered her mouth with the palm of her hand in dismay and said, "Yes, Slade. They took 'um. Why?"

JT replied, "Don't know. Was hoping you did."

Jennifer answered, "He was one of the original designers that worked on the BMIs. He knows just about everything about them. The only person that probably knows more about them is my father. My father know why they took him. You should ask him."

JT said, "Didn't get the impression your father would cooperate."

JT lit up a cigar and started smoke. He looked directly at Jennifer's face. She had very sharp, crystal blue eyes. It was like looking back in time when the waters of the Caribbean were still clear blue.

Jennifer explained, "Maybe not. He has been different for many years. Distant and cold. I love him, but we just don't connect anymore. Cybernetics has also changed. Most of the human employees have been replaced by androids and STRs (single task robots)."

JT continued with his questioning, "You said you felt like Cybernetics was different, eerie. Exactly how has it changed?"

Jennifer replied, "My father, the board of directors. They keep secrets. They're cold as steel. It wasn't like that years ago."

JT asked, "We're going to need to get inside Cybernetics to find out what's going on there. Can you get me in?" Jennifer said, "Yeah, I should be able to."

JT inquired, "Cella, please display exterior view of New Hollywood."

Cella displayed the current conditions outside in the air in front of them: Rioting, shootings, stabbings and people killing each other on the surface streets. The androids all stood against the walls and let the humans fight. Not even the security androids were trying to put a stop to the violence.

JT stated, "Everytime we have one of these, thousands die." Jennifer was saddened by the blackout and said, "It's awful." JT asked, "Do you think the BMIs are behind this?" "No. No I don't," answered Jennifer.

Cella gave JT another update, "I located the BMIs. Transferring location information."

JT was ready to leave and advised Cella, "Have Renlo meet us on the roof of Wong's Chinese."

Chapter 16 | Upgrade Us

On the roof of Slade's place, Slade and the BMIs went to the resident's parking area and entered Slade's personal flying car. They wanted to avoid detection because the skycab they ditched in the parking area was still probably on the police's most wanted list.

Slade volunteered to fly them to Cybernotics. He sat in the pilot's seat. Terrack still did not trust Slade, so he sat next to Slade so that he could keep an eye on him. Peyton and Grayson slid into the back seats and made themselves comfortable. They figured they could kick back until they arrived. They flew off to Cybernotics Corporation.

Normally, in order to enter Cybernotics roof top landing pad, you had to contact their control tower to get permission, but Slade used a side service vehicle pad, located on the bottom of the building. It was used by delivery vehicles and did not require clearance to land.

Grayson, Peyton, and Terrack entered the lobby with Slade at their side. They approached the security desk. No one else could be seen inside, it was dead quiet.

The human security guard sat behind the security desk dressed in a dark grey security jumpsuit with

Cybernetics security patches on both shoulders. He was watching the riot activity in the city on his computer monitors. Armed Cybernetics security androids were guarding the elevator entrances. They were chrome-plated with black trim. They were impressive and intimidating; more advanced than the average security droids on the streets. Grayson did not want to have to fight his way through the complex, and preferred to get to the doctor without trouble, but was prepared to do whatever it took.

The human guard greeted the group, “Good afternoon, how may I help?” Slade answered him, “I have some visitors with me. I need security passes for the lower level lab.” The human guard replied, “I need to verify their IDs,” He had recognized Slade as a long-term, high profile employee.

Grayson used his BMI implant to manipulate the Cybernetics computer and told the guard, “Verification should have been sent to your computer.” The guard looked at his computer screen and replied, “Sure, let me check.”

Grayson had forged digital profiles for the group which now appeared on the guard’s screen. The guard looked at the screen, verified the information, and said, “Yes Mr. Slade. Here are your guest passes.”

Slade took the passes. He handed them to Terrack, Grayson, and Peyton. They clipped them on their shirts

and walked to the elevators. When they entered the elevator area, they scanned their passes on a security podium. The podium was located in front of the android guard who verified that they were authorized to enter. The top of the podium turned light green as each pass was scanned and displayed the word “valid.” The group headed down one hundred floors below Cybernotics to the low-level experimental laboratories. Grayson asked Slade, “Where you taking us?”

Slade responded, “My lab.”

Grayson wanted to know why and said, “We need to see the creator.”

The elevator continued its descent swiftly. The floor numbers flash by on the elevator floor counter. The descent was so rapid they almost felt weightless. Slade responded to Grayson’s question with, “Doctor Reynolds? In time. First, I want to show you something in my lab.”

Terrack, suspicious of Slade, warned him saying, “Don't cross us.”

Slade reassured him, “As said, I'm on your side.”

They finally arrived. One hundred floors below the ground. Peyton said, “Floor one hundred. Why is your lab located so far down?”

Slade answered, "Security. It's the best way to protect against break-ins and thefts of our project details. Our lab and computer systems are the most advanced in the world. In fact, Cybernetics controls 75% of the world's major networks and is aiming for 100%. We also have the most advanced android manufacturing facilities in the world and most of our ground-breaking technology comes either from this lab or our moon facility."

Slade led the group into his section of the lab. Computer terminals and displays were located all over the room. There were human brains in clear glass cylinders, hooked to wires, with bubbling liquid inside.

Slade said, "Welcome home. This is where the BMI implants were developed."

Grayson was amazed of the scale and magnitude of what he saw. He whispered, "Incredible."

There was electronic equipment everywhere. Technicians walked throughout the lab, conducting experiments and testing equipment. Slade continued to explain, "It is incredible! I have been lucky to be involved in the most ground breaking technology projects that mankind has ever seen. Most of them happened right here in this very lab."

Slade picked up a square device about one inch wide and rotated it in-between his fingers.

Slade said, "This, my friends, is the type of device implanted in your brains. It's efficient, fast, and is what makes you better than the rest of us."

Slade then picked up a smaller device about half it's size and held it up for them to see. He said, "This was the future: the model 1600. Not only is it faster than your 1500 series implants, but it is powered by a miniature nuclear cell. That's what allows it to virtually run forever."

Grayson took the 1600 BMI from Slade's hand and said, "Upgrade our implants."

Slade explained, "That's just it. I can't. This one is non-functional. Only Doctor Reynolds has the blueprints and authorization to create and activate new ones."

Grayson said, "This lab looks active. We were told we were the last of the BMIs. Are there 1600 models out there?"

Slade replied, "You're the last of the 1500 series. When they became outlawed Doctor Reynolds had me cease further development and implantations"

Peyton jumped into the conversation and asked, "What about the 1600 series? How many were implanted?"

Slade replied, “Thousands, but not by me. Doctor Reynolds directly oversaw that program because it was illegal to continue our work.”

Grayson was surprised by Slade’s answer and said, “Thousands were implanted after the ban?”

Slade told them, “Yes, but in other countries where it was still legal. Since the ban every BMI that stayed here in the States was hunted down and eliminated.”

Grayson pleaded with Slade for help, “Slade, if we don't get upgraded soon, we'll die. We have nothing to lose at this point.”

Slade replied, “I understand.” Slade had walked them around the lab and explained some of the developments that were accomplished before they stopped implanting the BMIs.

Slade told them, “You need Reynolds. We never designed your implants to be upgradable.”

Peyton thought there may be no chance of getting upgraded and asked, “Does this mean there's no hope?”

Slade answered her, “No, no. I think Reynolds can do it? It’s just that the Doctor hasn't installed a BMI in several years. He is bitter and cold hearted now. I’m not sure if he will help.”

Terrack walked up to Slade, grabbed him by the throat by one hand and reminded him, “You and Reynolds should know we have nothing to lose. If we can die, so can you.”

Grayson calmed Terrack down and said, “Terrack, simmer down. He then turned his attention to Slade and said, “Mr. Slade the choice is simple. We live or you both die. We’re not violent by nature, but you have the ability to help us. If you don’t, it would be no different than you murdering us.”

Slade gave a straight forward response, “Understood.”

Terrack released his grip on Slade’s throat.

Chapter 17 | Time To Go

Back at the Chinese restaurant the rioting crowd outside the restaurant had started to break in the front door. A man charged through with a handgun and shot the Chinese owner in the shoulder. Everyone in the room screamed. JT drew his gun and fired. Boom! A blue flash emitted from the muzzle. He hit the man in the chest; flames flashed in the air as the energy from the weapon made contact. The man fell to the ground and lied there motionless. The crowd from outside continued to push themselves through the front door. JT and Jennifer headed up stairs to escape from the invading rioters.

JT yelled to Jennifer, “We need to get to the roof, now! We can barricade ourselves up on the roof until Renlo gets here.”

Jennifer saw a man at the bottom of the steps and yelled, “Look out!”

He aimed a gun at JT. JT fired at the man and hit him in the hand. Flames emitted from the guys hand as he dropped his gun. The room was filling below with people fighting, screaming and advancing on JT and Jennifer.

JT yelled to Jennifer, “Come on!”

Minutes later, Renlo responded from down the street. Rioters outside the restaurant were fighting, throwing rocks, breaking bus benches, and lighting trash cans on fire. The streets burned, flames and smoke were everywhere, cars were on fire, and many people laid injured or dead on the street. Someone shot at Renlo's skycab as he descended to land on Wong's, but they missed. Many rioters were shooting at anything that moved. On the streets, in the sky, everywhere. Flashes of light could be seen all over the city as rioters discharged their energy weapons into the sky.

Renlo notified Cella, "Tell da boss I'm here."

Cella let JT know and they entered the skycab from the rooftop. The skycab then climbed upward into sky traffic and zoomed over New Hollywood. The glim and glammer would return in a day or so, once the power was restored and the dead were hauled off to be incinerated.

Renlo looked at Jennifer as she entered his cab, and said, "Prevty woman boss."

JT wanted to just get the hell out of there and said, "Just fly, and get us in the air."

A wooshing noise was made as the skycab climbed rapidly, completely vertical. Renlo joked, "Like suverman, up, up, and away."

Renlo made it to the upper flight lanes. Skycars were driven erratically away. Renlo moved back and forth to avoid being hit. He was an old timer and crazy erratic flying didn't faze him a bit.

Cella gave an update, "JT, my net scan shows three suspects matching the description of the BMIs obtained security passes at Cybernotics. Slade also shows an entry record"

JT replied, "Thanks Cella."

Jennifer saw all the rioting below and told JT, "You can't get in Cybernotics during a riot."

JT grabbed Jennifer's arm and replied, "Haven't found a place I couldn't break into."

Jennifer suggested, "I might be able to get us by the perimeter security if that helps."

JT said, 'It's a start. Renlo head for Cybernotics."

Renlo acknowledged him, "Ya, boss."

Their journey continued as Renlo continued flying and swerving in-between and dodging other skycars. They finished traveling over New Hollywood. Older blacked out parts of the city had some sporadic structure fires. It was very quiet as they traversed the city skies. They could see Cybernotics building in the distance. It was the only building in the city that was fully lit.

Chapter 18 | Get The Doc

At Cybernetics, Slade and the BMI' started to travel up the elevator to Doctor Reynold's above ground penthouse. They stood quietly in the elevator as the floors passed by. The upper numbers rolled by as they counted down to zero. Then, they started counting up until they stopped at the Penthouse. The door opened. They were met by two android security guards. Terrack shoved the first guard, knocking him back. , he kicked the other, knocking him into a wall. The first guard charged Terrack. Terrack kicked the first guard, grabbed the guard by his neck and twisted it quickly frying his circuits. Sparks flew out of his neck and fired his circuits. The second guard pulled out an electric shock stick and a charge of electricity shot out about a foot from the tip. Slade then yelled to distract the guard, "Noo."

The guard was confused. It was enough time for Terrack to move closer and snatch the guard's shock stick. Terrack held it to the guard's head, shocked him, and sparks flew out.

Slade shouted, "Follow me!"

Terrack held the shocking stick in front of him and followed behind Slade. Peyton and Grayson followed behind them. As they turned the corner, there was

another guard. He drew his gun. Terrack moved fast and zapped him with the shock stick, knocking him out. They continued to walk down the hall as Grayson grabbed the downed guard's gun.

They made their way to the penthouse library. The door opened. Doctor Reynolds stood there, staring at them. Slade walked in first and the others followed behind. Slade said, "Doctor, don't panic. They're okay."

Grayson also tried to reassure the doctor, "Sir, we're not here to hurt you."

Doctor Reynolds backed up and said, "Then why have you destroyed my body guards?"

Grayson answered the doctor, "It was necessary. Doctor, we're BMIs. Hear us out."

Grayson wanted to buy more time, so he told Terrack, "Blow the gold casino cards. That will keep security distracted for a while."

On the street below, a van's top blew off. Gold money-cards (stolen from the casino heist) flew into the air and all over the street. The people on the street went crazy. They started to grab the cards and fight over them. Security guards from inside Cybernotics exited the building onto the street to confront the crowd. People in the crowd got angry and started to fight with the android guards.

Doctor Reynolds spoke loudly to all in the room, “You all should understand! I never gave up when BMI technology was banned. As a matter of fact, I have continued my work and made a lot of progress.”

Peyton asked, “Does this mean you’ll help us?”

Doctor Reynolds replied, “Yes, but not here. We must go.”

Grayson didn’t trust him, but has no choice. He asked, “Where?”

Doctor Reynolds replied, “To the plant.”

Slade then asked, “Which plant?”

Doctor Reynolds walked towards his desk. He grabbed some paperwork and a tablet computer. He answered Slade, “Cybernetics moon plant alpha site.”

Slade asked, “Why? Why the moon alpha plant?”

Doctor Reynolds walked out the door and told the group, “We need to leave now before the police arrive. We need to get to my spaceport on the roof immediately.”

Grayson didn’t think the distraction below would help them get away, “We’ll never make it.”

Doctor Reynolds pointed upwards in the direction of the roof and said, “Mr. Grayson, I have my own ship.

There is no security check. We're not leaving in a skycar. Now, can we go?"

Grayson motioned to the others in the group to follow him and said, "Let's go!"

The doctor and the others prepared to go to the roof. Simultaneously Renlo had landed the skycab on the street just in front of Cybernetics. Dirt and debris from the rioting crowds swirled in the air as the skycab parted the rioting crowd, which was focused on grabbing gold cards off the street. The distraction was successful. It allowed the BMIs to get away. It was also the lucky break for JT and Jennifer. They needed to get into the facility during the lockdown. In the confusion, Jennifer was able to sneak JT into the elevator and up to the library.

When the elevator door opened, JT and Jennifer saw the charred security droids on the ground. Jennifer stated, "What the hell happened? We must see if my father's okay."

The library doors were closed and locked. JT kicked the doors open and entered through the library door with Jennifer only find the room empty. A large sign on the wall was counting down from 15 minutes. Jennifer looked at the clock and said, "They're taking off. We need to move quickly. My father has a spacecraft docked on the roof."

JT said, "Clock says less than 15 minutes. Let's get up there."

They rushed out the door and headed to the roof.

Chapter 19 | Into Space

Doctor Reynolds and the others all took their seats in a futuristic spacecraft. It was large and made of metallic tritium fiber, the strongest, lightest material to date. The ship was one hundred feet from stem to stern with four large engines and smaller stabilizing engines at the bottom. The ship was positioned on a vertical launch platform pointing straight up into the sky. Workmen had just finished loading supplies and fueling the ship. A light amount of steam emitted from the engines as the pilot went through his pre-check flight list with the co-pilot.

The pilot called out the check-list, "Fuel level?"

The co-pilot replied, "Check. Tanks one through four full."

Pilot, "Flight panel gauges?"

Co-pilot, "Check. All flight gauges functional."

Pilot, "Cargo bay secure?"

Co-Pilot, "No, sir. We are still waiting for the passengers and cargo to be loaded."

Pilot, "Rodger that. Advise when they're loaded."

The pilot made an announcement, “Ladies and gentlemen. My name is Captain Jeffers and I'll be your captain for this flight. This flight currently takes approximately six hours and twenty minutes. Please take your seats and fasten your seat belts.”

A flight steward walked the isles, checked everyone's seat belts, and asked, “Please make sure your seatbelt is fastened tightly prior to launch.” They all fastened themselves in for the flight and moved around in their seats to get in a comfortable position.

Terrack said, “Steward, when we're stabilized in flight, please make sure to bring me an Irish coffee.”

The steward replied, “Of course, sir. It will be at least thirty minutes.”

Peyton also wanted a drink, “Can you make mine a triple whiskey sour on the rocks?”

The steward replied, “Yes, ma'am.”

JT and Jennifer rushed to the launch pad with about five minutes to spare. The crew had just about finished loading the cargo. The last two workers had walked away from the bay into the building to get a large cargo container.

JT and Jennifer saw the cargo loaders walk out of view and knew this was would be their opportunity to enter the ship undetected. JT said, “Move! This is our

chance to get aboard.” Jennifer and JT ran to the cargo bay and crawled inbetween some cargo containers in the back of the spacecraft. The loading crew showed up a couple of minutes later and finished loading the cargo. A cargo worker advised the co-pilot, “The ship is loaded. Cargo bay is secure.”

Co-pilot, “Rodger. Thank you.”

Co-pilot asked the steward, “Passenger status?”

The steward replied, “Passengers and flight doors secure.”

Co-pilot, “Rodger.”

The pilot made his final announcement, “Ladies and gentlemen, please stay seated. We are about to take off. We will notify you when it’s safe to walk around.”

The ship rumbled and shook as it took off. A vapor trail followed the ship as it flew through the lower atmosphere until it entered space.

Jennifer and JT had strapped themselves into seats located in the cargo bay. JT instructed Cella, “Track our path.”

Cella replied, “Tracking JT. I’ll update you with a projected destination and arrival time.”

Approximately one minute later, Cella said, “The calculated destination is Cybernetics alpha site located

on the moon. At the current rate of speed, we should arrive in six hours and ten minutes. JT told Cella, "We're going to rest. Wake us forty-five minutes from arrival."

Grayson sat next to the Doctor during the trip and asked, "Doctor, you going to be able to help us upgrade our BMIs?"

Doctor replied, "Yes, I think I will be able to. Our advanced laboratories are located on the moon plant. We have complete control there. No police, no government. There, I can do whatever I want. It has given me the ability to make many advancements. Soon, you'll understand."

Grayson smiled and said, "Good news for a change. All we want is a fair shot at living. The current BMI units are all terminating due to lack of power. Thanks, Doc."

As they flew to the moon port, Doctor Reynolds, the BMIs, and Slade all sat quietly in their seats.

Forty-five minutes until arrival, Cella informed JT, "JT, we are forty-five minutes from docking at the alpha site."

JT said, "Thanks. Jennifer, wake up. We need to do a little recon before we dock."

JT and Jennifer had worked their way up from the cargo bay to a cabin door near the restrooms. It had a spiral stairway that connected the cargo bay to the

passenger level. They opened the door to watch the BMIs and the doctor converse.

Twenty minutes before landing, the android security guards had appeared from down the hallway and walked towards them. Grayson asked, "What's up?"

Doctor Reynolds replied, "Just stay seated."

Grayson knew something was up and asked, "Doctor, why are there androids aboard?"

The androids approached the BMIs and Slade. A mist sprayed from above their seats, causing them to pass out.

JT, watching this happen said, "They just sprayed the BMIs."

Jennifer asked, "With what?"

JT replied, "I don't know. I think they're just knocked out."

JT pulled Jennifer back and closed the door. JT said, "We need to hide in the cargo bay and get off this ship undetected to find out what your father is up to."

Chapter 20 | Moonport Alpha

Six hours and thirty minutes later, they arrived. Grayson and the others remained in a drugged state. Androids worked with the steward to remove their seatbelts and carry them into the spaceport facility.

Waken in a secure holding area Terrack mumbled, “What happened? Why are we in restraints?”

The others listened as Doctor Reynolds responded, “Relax. You’ll be here a while.” He then exited the room.

Meanwhile, JT and Jennifer observed the group being carried off the ship.

JT said, “We need to stay out of sight until we can form a game plan. We are in some deep shit.”

Jennifer replied, “What are they going to do to Slade and the BMIs. I thought Slade was my father’s friend. I don’t get what my father is up to.”

JT and Jennifer quietly went their own way. They tried to use empty hallways to move around in the alpha site.

JT asked her, “What do you know about your father’s moon facility operations?”

Jennifer replied, “Not much. I know we assemble androids at this location for distribution on earth. Top units are made here like the security, assemblers, teacher, and scientist models.”

JT stated, “So, you have no ideas? You must have some idea of what is going on. Think!”

Jennifer and JT continued and walked down the hall until they found a computer terminal on the wall. Jennifer said, “These are the same terminal units we have at the Cybernetics facility on earth. I should be able to look at the schematics and figure out where we are at. Also, I’ll research what kind of labs and assembly sections are at this facility.”

JT asked, “What about where they took Slade and the BMIs?” Jennifer answered, “Possibly.”

They continued down a few hallways. The facility was massive. Its futuristic design was made up of white painted tritium metal beams and enclosed with clear tritium glass. The hallways lead from one structure to another. The moon facility’s main area covered a distance of approximately five miles in diameter. It was so large that it can be seen from earth with a standard consumer telescope.

Jennifer logged into a terminal and told JT, “Okay, I have the layout on screen.” They could see a diagram of

the facility in 3D. They could click on any area, zoom in, rotate around the area and even click to see inside in 3D.

Searching through the diagram, they saw the different areas. There was an assembly area, central processing unit development, research lab 1 through 27, the command center, administration, spaceport, and cargo bay. Another had been sectioned off with what looked like extra secure interior walls. Those areas were labeled “holding facility” and “cafeteria.”

JT said, “Something is off. I see manufacturing facilities, but why is there a large holding facility and a cafeteria in the middle. They’re isolated from the other sections. I don’t see normal living quarters, a recreation room, or a gymnasium. All the things you would expect to see.”

Jennifer looked closely at the screen and said, “You’re right. We need to head there, so we can really see what’s going on.” Jennifer pointed to a security control room on the diagram.” JT nodded his head and they both walked to the security room.

JT and Jennifer entered the security control room and were met by an android security guard, at the doorway. JT looked at the area near the wall. There was a cart loaded with tritium android parts, including a large cylinder bar. JT, without hesitation, grabbed the tritium bar and immediately bashed in the head of the android guard. The guard did not go down with one

blow. He had to strike it repeatedly until the head flashed and sparks flew. After beating it down to the ground, the lights in its head went dim, then out, as it completely powered off for good.

Once the guard was disabled, they locked the door behind them and familiarized themselves with the monitoring equipment. They located, viewed, and listened in on the holding area.

The Doctor returned to the holding area to explain his actions. Slade asked, “Doctor, why are we being detained?”

Doctor Reynolds replied, “Things have changed, and unfortunately for you, not in your favor. I want you to see something.”

Slade and the other BMIs looked to the left of the Doctor as large roll-up doors opened. They could see androids being assembled by humans on the assembly floor.

Slade asked, “Humans? On the moon facility? I thought this facility used androids and assemble androids.”

Doctor Reynolds had walked up to the window, looked down at the assembly area. Then turned. He looked back at Slade and the BMIs. JT and Jennifer looked on from the monitor and recorded the video feed, including what the Doctor said, “You see, the answer to

the things you can't see can be found in the things you can."

Grayson and the others were lost. Grayson asked, "Meaning what?"

Doctor Reynolds replied, "You see, gentlemen. It was inevitable that man would become outdated by technology. That's why I developed you BMIs. But when man became too afraid to accept the facts, they stopped me. I looked for a solution and it was right in front of me. That's when I realized that the next step in our evolution was not to compete, we shouldn't just add BMI technology to keep pace; evolutions purpose was to truly merge man and computer. To create the best of both worlds".

The doctor had walked next to the window, looked out over the factory floor and said, "Those workers below. Those are your fellow BMIs well, your brothers and sisters. Those are the thousands of advanced model 1600 BMIs we made after the ban. With some reprogramming, you too will soon work for me."

Terrack, in cuff restraints, tensed up, and tried to break free. He said, "Over my dead body."

Doctor Reynolds replied, "That won't be necessary. Once you're reprogrammed, you will belong to me like all the others. There is no way to fight me. Every BMI is either successfully reprogrammed or terminated."

Slade interrupted and asked, "And me? What are your plans for me?"

The doctor signaled an android guard. The guard walked up to Slade and drew his weapon. Slade screamed, "No!"

Bam! The guard fired into Slade's chest. Smoke emitted from the large gaping hole in his chest, simultaneously killing him. The BMIs were shocked that the Doctor would kill his long-time friend.

Peyton said, "He was your friend!"

Doctor Reynolds replied, "No, not for some time. He is no use to me now. His knowledge of this operation and the fact that I could not reprogram him decided his fate." The doctor motioned to the guards and said, "Take them for reprogramming."

Grayson wanted a better explanation. He said, "Wait! What did you mean by? 'The Answer to the things you can't see can be found in the things you can'."

Doctor Reynolds walked up to Grayson, rolled up his sleeve, and peeled back the skin on his forearm. Grayson saw electronic circuits pulsating, glass fibers with data flashing as it transmitted commands from the Doctor's brain to the rods and levers in his arm. He was no longer human. He had transferred his conscience to an android body.

The Doctor explained, “My answer to the problem was simple: I realized that adding a computer to man, BMI tech, was not enough. Two years ago, when Cybernetics started making intelligent androids, I found the answer, androids. I had to find a way to migrate man's mind into Androids. Well, two years ago, I did it.”

Peyton spoke up, “You’re insane!”

The doctor responded, “Am I? I am virtually immortal. I can simply upgrade my body when it wears down. My ability to learn and store information is equal to any computer. But unlike BMI tech where the body will eventually wear out, my solution has no limits. Technology can no longer surpass me because I am truly state of the art.”

The Doctor commanded the guards, “Take them to the reprogramming center.”

Jennifer and JT were still listening in from the security room. Jennifer looked shocked and said, “Oh my god. My father, he's dead. He's no longer human. He's a monster.” Jennifer cried as she mourned her loss.

JT said, “This is bad juju. We need to get off this station.”

Jennifer replied, “Detective, there’s something you should know.”

JT grabbed Jennifer's hand and tried to pull her. He said, "We don't have time this. I'm sorry your father is dead, but you will have to deal with this later."

Jennifer jerked her hand away from JT and approached one of the computer terminals in the security room. Without touching it, mass amounts of information flashed on the terminal. She said, "No! No! Wait!"

JT then stated, "Hurry, what is it? What are you doing there?" He still did not understand what was happening.

Jennifer turned to JT and confided in him, "Yes, detective. I'm a BMI. One of those advanced series 1600 models.

JT replied, "Right now, I don't care. Let's go!"

Jennifer finished her scan and told JT, "We can't. I just scanned the system. My father's plan isn't just to control things and become immortal, it's to eliminate the human race. BMIs like myself included. The blackouts, he has been creating them to kill off the underling population. Then, he plans on giving the intelligent, affluents and government officials a choice: submit to slavery or die."

JT said, "You're right. We can't go yet. Your father's maxim now makes sense. He has plan within a plan. Had we looked at the BMIs as a more of threat, we would

have seen the true threat: androids. That cabbie Renlo was right. Androids are the true threat, not BMIs like you. I thought we made the decision to ice BMIs, when, in fact, it was the droids that got us to do our own dirty work. We riot, kill each other, and pollute the water supplies all on our own. They've also been getting us to ice ourselves. Someday, they will have no need for slave labor either. Once they master self-replication, they will eliminate the BMIs, the affluents, all of us."

Jennifer used her BMI tech to scan the layout and said, "There is a weapons depository two floors down." She pointed to the screen.

JT replied, "Yes, let's get down there and arm ourselves. We're going to have to shoot our way off this rock. If possible, we need to do as much damage as we can first. The chaos might buy us a little time if we can jack a ship for our escape."

Chapter 21 | Rebellion

From end to end, energy rifles and pistols lined the weapon depot walls. JT and Jennifer selected weapons several of along with ammunition that they could give to the other BMIs. That's if they could free them.

JT and Jennifer sneaked through the plant and worked their way to the BMI reprogramming area. They entered the room where the BMIs were being held. Grayson recognized JT. He said, "You're the iCer!"

JT replied, "Yes, but I'm not here to ice you."

Terrack and Peyton jumped to their feet. Terrack said, "Maybe not, but I'm going to kill you!"

Grayson held up his hand and signaled Terrack to wait. Grayson said, "Wait! hear him out."

JT walked up to the BMIs and said, "We overheard Reynolds. The factory workers, they're BMIs like you, the 1600 series. And you heard 'um. If he succeeds, we're both gonna end up like the dinosaurs: extinct."

Grayson paused, then said, "He's right. What do you propose?"

JT sparked their interest. JT said, “Free the BMIs in the factory and blow the plant, with Reynolds in it. We may be mankind’s last hope.”

“How?” asked Grayson.

JT explained what they were going to do as they made their way to the space dock. He said, “Okay people. First we need to get into the lower power service tunnels. We can overload some of the power stations as a distraction. You two (pointing at Terrack and Peyton) go to the arms depot. Take one of the cargo carts in the hall. Load it to capacity. When the facilities power switches over to the auxiliary power, go to the plant floor and distribute the weapons to the BMIs. Terrack asked, “What if they stand there like deer in the headlights?”

JT replied, “That’s going to be their only chance if they want to escape. They’ll need to do their own fighting to get off this rock. We need to take care of ourselves.”

It was time to move. Terrack and Peyton were loaded up and ready. JT and the others had sabotaged the power generators. JT said, “Cella, contact the others and let them know it’s a go in five minutes.

Cella replied, “Yes JT, notification made.”

Five minutes later, the lights went dark for a few seconds as the main generators went offline. The auxiliary units kicked in and the power went back on, but every other light remained on in auxiliary mode. Peyton

and Terrack rushed onto the plant floor from started shooting at the security droids. The first two on their end of the building were caught off guard and destroyed with a single shot.

JT, Jennifer and Grayson entered from the other side, on the second floor. They were able to pick off some of the droids that were responding from the hallways as they entered the plant floor. Smoke and debris flew into the air as the droids were terminated. An alarm triggered and red strobe lights flashed on the plant floor.

Complete confusion and mayhem spread across the floor as the attack begun. Terrack yelled to the other BMIs working on the floor, "This is your chance to be free. Fight now our die on this rock." Several of the BMIs took energy pistols from Terrack and Peyton to join the fight. Others ducked and cowered, not knowing what to do.

Androids were being terminated one by one until two large doors that separated one part of the plant from other opened. On the other side were hundreds of android security guards standing side by side, about five hundred total. They were all armed and prepared to clear the plant floor.

Doctor Reynolds went on the intercom and said, "Stand down. Stand down."

The Doctor saw his daughter on the monitor and said, “Jennifer, Detective. I see you started a bit of a rebellion. I don’t want to see my daughter hurt. If you and the BMIs stand down now, I will not kill you. If you don’t, I will have no choice but to eliminate you and put down this rebellion.”

JT told Grayson, “I’m not staying here to be somebody’s prisoner or slave. I’m fighting. It’s do or die”

Grayson replied, “Agreed. We don’t have much time left as it is. We have to take control of this plant and capture Reynolds or we die anyways. My power cell is almost empty. The least I can do is help my fellow BMIs fight for their freedom.”

JT told Grayson, “I’m going to take Jennifer and head for the space dock.” Grayson replied, “I understand. Good luck!”

Two android guards approached from JT’s rear. He turned and fired at both droids. One was struck in the head and the other the chest. Flames and sparks had emitted from the fried droids as they collapsed to the ground.

Grayson shouted at Peyton and Terrack, “Fight! Fight! The battle is ours. The rest of you on the floor better take up arms or you’re going to die.”

Realizing that Grayson and the others had left them no options, the rest of the BMIs grabbed weapons

off the cart and armed themselves. They took up positions behind the equipment and prepared themselves for the oncoming advancement of droids.

In the meantime, JT and Jennifer had made it to the space docks. The security droids all went to the plant floor to do battle. A ship was prepared to leave and looked like it was just standing by.

JT and Jennifer had looked all directions; the coast was clear. They ran to the spacecraft's passenger entry door and rushed in. A steward greeted them and said, "Are you travelling with us today? Doctor Reynolds should be here shortly."

JT pointed his gun at the steward, and said, "No! No he won't. Secure the door and prepare to depart."

The steward replied, "I can't without the Doctor's permission."

JT pushed his gun into the steward's ear and said, "You can either do what you're told, or I'm gonna pull the trigger, and remove that thing you call a brain from your head."

The steward had shaken, cowered, and replied, "Okay, okay. I will secure the door."

He locked the door and JT headed to the cockpit. JT said, "Take off! Take off now!"

The pilot looked at him and saw the gun. He said, "Okay. No arguments here. I'll take off."

JT and Jennifer waited for the spacecraft engines to warm up as battle inside for control of the plant had begun.

Grayson and the other BMIs engaged the droid guards as they marched onto the plant floor and started firing on them. Floor machinery, computers, carts, and equipment all exploded as they were hit by energy weapons. Droid guards although massive in number, were dropping quickly because they had no tactical skills. They had advanced onto the floor in rows and become easy targets. The battle for control of the plant and the freedom of the BMIs continued as JT and Jennifer fled in Doctor Reynolds spacecraft.

Chapter 22 | Adiós Asshole!

Looking back at the plant, explosions and flashes of light could be seen inside. BMIs and droids were set in a death match; only one side would survive.

Doctor Reynolds observed his spacecraft fly away into space. He contacted the pilot and demanded his return, “Pilot, return my ship to the dock immediately.”

The pilot replied, “Sorry sir, but we were ordered to leave at gun point.”

Reynolds yelled, “Get whoever ordered you on radio now!”

JT overheard the request and said, “Doctor, there’s no way in hell we’re coming back. Matter of fact, Doctor, if you lose, you might never be coming back yourself.”

The doctor replied, “Detective, win or lose today, I will be back. My people. The droids. Control most of the world’s economies, police forces, armies and critical infrastructures. You can’t win. Your return to earth will be the end of you.”

Jennifer spoke, “Father, you have changed. You died when you became an android. You’re a machine, not a man and not my father.”

JT spoke again, and for the last time, “Doctor, win or lose today, the battle has just begun. Once I return to earth and show the recording we made of your doings, it’s War! And Doctor, I would bet on mankind any day of the week. ***Adiós, asshole!***”

Jennifer and JT stood next to each other and looked out the windows of the spacecraft. When they looked back at the planet, they saw complete chaos and havoc as the planet burned. Looking forward towards earth, they saw a grey, almost black, ball in the sky. The earth as seen from space had been covered by massive pollution over the years. It was depressing to look at. Space, still unpolluted, clear, beautiful and filled with stars, would be hard to leave behind, but its beauty offered hope. The earth and the human race was worth fighting for.

The fight would continue in six and half hours. JT’s and Jennifer’s adventures together had just begun...

The End!