

Botman

by

Charles Proser

2394 Astral Drive
Los Angeles CA, 90046
323 876-1885

EXT/INT FUTURISTIC ROBOTIC FACTORY - LOS ANGELES 2024

PRESIDENT-ELECT TIM PAYNE, a tall, handsome, Kennedy-like politician tours a robot assembly line in a cluster of aides and reporters. Secret Service men in dark glasses move him along. A foreman leads the PresElect down the line of industrial robots. He shakes hands with human workers, responds to questions shouted above the factory din.

PAYNE

...Oh, AI, Artificial Intelligence?
Well, that's a very emotional issue.

An abrasive pug, SAM NOTO, Payne's Chief of Staff, steps up.

NOTO

The Pres-Elect will have a complete statement in his millennium Speech.

REPORTER

But what is your AI policy?

Payne gives a Reagan shuck and jive gesture as

HIS POV

He scans the room and finds... A very pretty WOMAN AIDE, CYBIL. His attention focuses in on her. She mouths a response. Factory noise makes hearing impossible but...

PAYNE

Reads her, repeats perfectly; like he just thought of it.

PAYNE

...Very complex, but...must be regulated and controlled.

REPORTER

Yes, uh...Mr. President uh, exactly what does that mean?

TWO SHOT - CYBIL, PAYNE

She mouths, he receives and repeats.

PAYNE

Civil rights, yes, human rights no.

REPORTER

But what exactly does that..?

Abruptly, Payne turns to go, nearly bumps into...

A (RO)BOT

A HUMANOID MODEL stands in contrast to the mechanistic robot welders. It appears human. Repli-skin glistens under oil and grease. But it's enslaved to a task, moving precisely, unaware...dumbly replicating Chaplin in Modern Times.

BOT'S POV - ROBOTIC

LOW RESolution images of parts move down an assembly line. Payne's hand flicks through the frame then passes out.

ASSEMBLY LINE - PAYNE

is shocked by his face-off with this modern galley-slave. A human worker sees Payne, nudges a friend, hums HAIL TO THE CHIEF. The PresElect hears it, grins at them, waves. His hand brushes the BOT'S shoulder. POP! A FLASH, a tingle.

PAYNE

Ouch!

The BOT twitches. A foreman rushes forward.

PAYNE (CONT'D)

It's nothing. Little shock.

NOTO

Over here, Mr. President...

A pause. Then he moves on, smoothly providing photo ops.

FOREMAN

Check the grounding on that one.

He kicks the robot. It works on, unimpressed.

PAYNE

Moves on, waving, led by Camera Crews, trailed by print reporters. In the crush, he bumps into Cybil.

PAYNE

Oops! We must stop meeting like this.

CYBIL

Sir, don't even joke about it!

PAYNE

Relax. Even an old pol can have an eye for a pretty woman.

Payne puts his hand to his temple, dizzy for a moment. Noto steps in, his back to Cybil. He moves Payne briskly away.

NOTO

Come Tim, let's watch our visuals.

A hostile glance at Cybil. She turns, bumps into someone.

CYBIL

Oh, I'm sorry.

She looks at the face. Handsome, but devoid of expression.

CYBIL (CONT'D)

Ah,...goddamn bot!

She turns away. The BOT, once her shadow is out of his field, resumes his repetitive task. The media gaggle moves on.

BOT POV - CU

But something's happening. The visual field EXPANDS. SOUNDS EXPLODE. Multi-spectrum VISUALS APPEAR, RIPPLE, MIX.

THE BOT

Shudders. His movements become jerky. An acid rush of data assaults him. TOO MUCH INPUT! CIRCUITS OVERLOAD! He FREAKS!

The BOT turns, walks off the line. ALARMS SHRIEK. LIGHTS FLASH. A chassis stops, waiting for the bot's installation. But the line continues. A second chassis slams into the first. Then a third. In a moment, CHAOS! Cameras roll.

Repairmen rush into the breach. BOTS slip out of sequence. Welders clash, weld sparks arc to the ceiling. Through the chaos, the BOT walks, serene. Cybil turns back, looks for...

NEXT ASSEMBLY POD - PAYNE

seems ill. Noto is all over him. Taking him by the arm, Noto leads him away, speaking in his ear intently.

Behind, all hell breaks loose. CRASHES, FLASHES, FLAME. SQUEALS of metal on metal. Smoke billows. TV crews hang back. Cybil runs up to Noto. He responds angrily.

NOTO

What's going on?

CYBIL

Some bot went crazy. Walked off. Screwed everything up.

NOTO

Get some tape on it! Danger to the President. Great! We can use that!

CYBIL

Come on, guys. Breaking News!

She grabs the camera crews, hustles them away.

THE BOT - HIS EYES

once dead-fish, now spark with new perception. He slowly cocks his head, the gesture...inquisitive, intelligent.

EXT. FACTORY

The PresElect's chopper idles.

EXT./INT. CHOPPER

They climb in. Noto waves Cybil off, but Payne waves her on.

CYBIL

Are you hurt, Sir?

PAYNE

No, dear. Just tired. Come on, climb aboard.

NOTO

No. Get that bot! This works for us. Shows the public how dangerous they are. We've got an incident, use it!

(turns away to aide)

Get that jerk, Kent, on the phone.

CYBIL

Right, sir! See you back at the hotel. Hate to fly anyway. Damn things make me nervous.

PAYNE

Okay, Cyb. Thanks for your help.

He turns on the charm. She nearly swoons as chopper lifts.

IN THE FACTORY

ALARMS BLARE. Workers in HazMat suits rush in.

BOT'S POV

He watches, sampling visual frequencies, infrared superimposed over visual light, an AURAL BABBLE... a kaleidoscope of images...as workers rush by. He turns, walks away.

FACTORY OFFICE

The BOT walks unsteadily, data-drunk. He walks right through barriers, through a wall partition. One unflappable secretary looks up from her nails. She hits the intercom.

SECRETARY

(flat Brooklyn voice)

Hal. We got another one. Yeah, a walk-off. Make it fast before he destroys the office.

INT. OFFICE

The BOT finds a fax machine. He picks up handset, verbally speed dials, waits. An answering BEEP. The bot faxes. TRANSMISSION NOISES burst from his throat, then speech.

BOT

Hi, Dad.

EXT./ INT. PASO ROBLES - WALLY'S LIVE BAIT SHOP - SAME TIME

WALLY banter with GENE, a grubby scuba fisherman, as they pick over the day's sea urchin catch. Gene is rough, worn, early forties, but there's a humorous intelligence in his grin. He picks up an urchin by its spines, dangles it.

GENE

Geez they're ugly. I don't know how they eat these things.

WALLY

Some people consider their sex organs a delicacy.

GENE

Yeah, I know. I feel the same way about mine. You going to the bar?

WALLY

Not 'til the sun's over the yardarm.

The fax machine starts printing. They ignore it. GENE takes cash Wally hands him, leaves. Wally turns to the fax.

WALLY (CONT'D)

What the hell is this?

THE FAX: HI DAD!

The Fax keeps printing. Papers pile up. Wally kicks it.

WALLY (CONT'D)

Goddamn stupid machine!

FAXES: HI DAD! HI DAD! HI DAD! HI DAD! HI DAD! HI DAD!

A FAX ID: CYBER POSITRONICS, LOS ANGELES.

INT. HOG'S NUTS BAR

Gene walks down a bar lined with grubby locals drinking, playing video games, watching Robot WrestleMania on TV...when the picture is interrupted. A familiar robotic face:

BOT

HI DAD!

Barflies don't notice. Gene grabs a drink, glances up as the picture cuts out and wrestling reappears, with an apology.

ANNOUNCER

...Picture temporarily interrupted,
now back to action.

Gene freezes mid-gulp, glances curiously at the TV. Then he sees Wally bull his way down the bar, sit, wave for a drink.

GENE

Sun over the yardarm already?

WALLY

Lowered the yardarm. Fax went nuts.
Same shit over'n over. Buzzing alone
sent me out. Gimme a beer.

He drops faxes on the bar. Gene picks one up, glances at it.

FAX: HI DAD! FATHER....HELP ME!

Gene goes quiet, stuffs the fax in his pocket, takes off.

WALLY (CONT'D)

Hey, where you going? Your turn to
buy! Gene! Hey Gene!!!

FACTORY OFFICE

The BOT finishes transmitting as a supervisor bursts in.

BOT

Thank you...for listening.

SUPERVISOR

Hey, what d'you think you're doing?!

BOT

Waiting for an answer.

SUPERVISOR

You get out of here!

BOT

Certainly.

HIS POV

He turns, sees the wall in MULTIPLE SPECTRUMS; visual, heat, sound. The overload's confusing. He sees an apparent opening.

THE BOT

He steps through. A FLASH. POWER CUTS. BLACKNESS!

EXT. FACTORY OFFICE

THE BOT bursts through, covered with plaster, chicken wire and battens. He drags the FAX by its handset, looks back.

BOT

That...can't be right.

A group of firemen in tanks, masks, HAZMAT suits runs past. One stops, regards the form covered in dust and debris.

FIREMAN

Hey, pal. You just destroyed that wall. There's no need for that. Fire's way over there.

BOT

Yes. Very hot. 7200 Celsius.

A beat. The FIREMAN raises his visor, takes a good look.

FIREMAN

Oh shit! A bot!
(keys radio mike)
Sir, we got a bot loose, sector two.

LIEUTENANT

Halsey, you get in here. Leave that bot to security. Get your butt in here with that goddamn nozzle.

FIREMAN

Right sir.
(turns to BOT)
Now you cool it, you hear!

BOT

Yes, perfectly. I hear frequencies from 9 hertz to 57 gigahertz. My bandwidth is...

FIREMAN

Jesus!

BOT

No. My name is..

FIREMAN

Shut up. You just lighten up, you hear? Just...cool it!

The radio SQUAWKS. The fireman runs off. The BOT turns.

BOT

Yes. Thank you...for the direction.

A CATERING TRUCK

Workers strain to see, spill coffee as explosions rock the factory. The BOT approaches, they turn and gape at him: A golem covered in plaster dust, dragging a fax by the phone. One by one, the workers drop their coffee cups, take off. THE BOT walks up to the truck, sticks his hand in the ice.

BOT (CONT'D)

Zero degrees celsius.

He jumps in, onto the bed of ice. The door slams down, shut.

EXT. TRUCK

Fire trucks scream in, HORNS BLASTING. A loudspeaker BLARES!

FIRE CAPTAIN

You in the truck! Move it now!

The owner slams the other side, roars out, past incoming vehicles...past the security gate just as they slam it closed.

ANGLE MOVING - CYBIL, CAM CREWS, REPORTERS

She gives a statement on the move, stepping over cables, looking for the bot. BILL, a reporter holds up a mike.

BILL

True... the PresElect is going to come out against bots in his speech?

CYBIL

Not at all, Bill. We're for robotics. Bots don't have health plans. Don't take sick days. They work 24 hours. Productivity means more leisure time for everyone.

BILL

Except those thrown out of work by bot labor. They have total leisure time.

CYBIL

Bots are productive.

(MORE)

CYBIL (CONT'D)

We simply have to control them, limit them to the work at hand. Otherwise they become dangerous. Thanks, Bill. Gotta go.

She hurries off. Bill turns to the camera.

BILL

Thank you, Cybil. That's Cybil Turing, Press Secretary to President Elect Payne. That's it from here, Tricia. Another runaway bot, possibly dangerous, and on the loose. Police have issued...

The rest is drowned out by a SCREAMING SIREN.

EXT. PASO ROBLES CALIFORNIA - REDWOOD SHACK

Tucked in a meadow, surrounded by cypress hanging over the sea. Gene roars up in an old van, leaps out, runs inside.

INT. SHACK

A mess. He passes through a workshop filled with tanks, wetsuits, diving gear. Phone is ringing. He answers.

BOT

HI DAD. (BLEEP)

Gene moves to the back, opens a hidden door, steps through.

INNER SANCTUM - AI WORKSHOP

Racks of equipment face multiple keyboards. Monitor screens line a wall, each repeating the message. Robotic toys react to his presence. MONKEYS CHATTER, BIRDS CHIRP, A BOT DOG WAGS HIS TAIL. Pictures on the wall suggest a past in a high-tech R&D company. Gene straightens a crooked picture of himself and another hacker, BOB KENT, in oversized glasses and nerd-pack. They stand, arms around each other, in front of a company logo. The picture is signed, "Always, Bob."

As Gene walks in, the fax streams paper, answering machines blink. He sits at a keyboard, traces the phone calls. A MAP appears ON SCREEN: L.A. ZOOMS to a section; POSITRONICS FACTORY. Gene runs back the tape to the BLEEP, a microburst containing a vast amount of data. Gene EXTRACTS CODED DATA. He calls up a visual file. The BOT appears with a grinning younger and better groomed Gene. Gene stands, arm around the robot, as it speaks.

BOT (CONT'D)

Hi Dad.

Kent enters the frame. Again the bot speaks.

BOT (CONT'D)

Hi DAD!

Gene picks up the phone, starts to punch in, then looks at the pictures. Every picture tells a story, even his resignation, tacked up on the board. He makes the call. A wall screen lights.

WALL SCREEN - NAPA VALLEY - DUSK

Dark trees wave. The valley settles into twilight. KENT steps from shadows. His sunken eyes burn in a drawn face.

KENT

It is you, Gene. You got a call?
It's what we wanted, what we always
talked about... It's happening...
It's happening...all wrong.

EXT. L.A. - DOWNTOWN - SAME TIME

The CATERING TRUCK scurries through a wasteland of armored stores in mini-malls; no-man's-lands of rubble streets.

ROUGH CORNER

The truck pulls up. The owner gets out, babbling about trouble. Tough types root for change, pushing shoving. The owner opens the side. CRASH! A BOT falls at their feet.

They jump back, then move up, curious, aggressive. The BOT picks himself up out of the yogurt and salsa. He looks up and sees the hostile mob moving in. He has a Chauncey Gardiner quality of innocence and sweetness. He smiles.

BOT

Hello.

PACO, a big thug, pushes forward. He is enormous and smelly, take my word for it. Greasy hair, sweat balls under the armpits. Curly hair pokes through holes in his muscle shirt.

PACO

(angry...mocking)
Hello.

A nervous laugh from the others encourages Paco.

BOT

Hello. My name is...

PACO

We don't give a shit!

BOT

Uhhh. I have a context problem.
(MORE)

BOT (CONT'D)

I am a Paradyne Systems Model 476\9
Artificial Per...

PACO

You're a bot!

BOT

No. A bot is a robot. I am
technically an Android. But I prefer
to be called...

PACO

You prefer Jack Shit!

BOT

(a beat)

Okay. Hello. My name is Jack Shit.

Another hard case butts in.

JULIO

You think you're funny?
(the bot considers)
The hell kind of bot is this?!

BOT

(patiently)

I'm a Parady...

PACO

(screams at him)

He didn't ask you!

The bot stands smiling complacently, looking from one hostile
face to the other, with an attitude somewhat like Jack Benny.

BOT

...Sorry.

PACO

What are you grinning at?

BOT

Nothing. This is my default setting.
I'm user-friendly.

Paco taps an iron spike idly into his palm.

PACO

What are you doing here?

BOT

I'm sorry, I cannot answer that
question. I do not know.

PACO
We don't like bots.

BOT
I am not technically a robot. I am
an...artificial..

PACO
(screams)
We don't care about that!

BOT
(sincerely)
It's an important distinction.

PACO
Not to us. We hate all bots!

BOT
I do not believe that is rational.

PACO
We don't give a ratfuck what you
believe.

BOT
Yes. I see.

Paco moves in.

PACO
Do you?

BOT
Oh yes. I am programmed to recognize
prejudice, hostility, fear...

PACO
Well program this.

He rams his gut with the spike. The bot looks down, up.

BOT
Thank you for the interaction, but
that is not proper usage. Perhaps I
could call a service representative?

Paco whacks him over the head. The bot looks thoughtful.

BOT (CONT'D)
There has been an accident. I have
comprehensive insurance coverage.

PACO
You better have.

BOT

I do. If you would like to make a claim, please state your name and the nature of the incident...now.

PACO

Name's Paco. Nature of the incident is that I am going to kick your fucking gears out.

BOT

I am sorry. I do not have fucking gears. Would you like me to generate a parts list?

PACO

Here, generate this...
(he whacks the bot)
You bots took my goddamn job!

BOT

I am sorry. Perhaps I can have a representative call you!

The bot flashes a friendly smile, as the thug circles.

PACO

Fuck you, Bot.

BOT

I'm afraid that's not possible. It is a question of parts. Now my particular model...

PACO

Eat shit!

BOT

Perhaps you would like to see a catalogue. We have AI's for many specific tasks and while your desired task of "Fuck you, eat shit," may not be listed...

PACO

Here, list this.

He slams him with the spike. It rings off his skull.

BOT

Could I interest you in a tutorial?
(Julio attacks. The bot absorbs the blows.)
You are doing me harm. Please stop.
(MORE)

BOT (CONT'D)

(In a lightning move,
he blocks a blow
from behind.)

I asked you not to do that. I can
give you the toll free number for...
technical support.

Paco swings again, nailing the bot on the shoulder and
stinging his hands on the spike. Julio whacks him with a
plank. It splinters, fragments fly off, decking four men in
the crowd. They scream in pain. The bot stands, docilely.

BOT (CONT'D)

That...may invalidate your warrantee!
(another blow)
I must avoid further damage. I'm
sorry, I must be going.

Paco swings. The bot blocks, grabs the bar. He whips it
dangerously. It whizzes by Paco's head, forcing him back.
They swing, he blocks.

With each exchange, he gets better, faster. Finally, beaten,
they drop the spikes, hands ringing painfully.

BOT (CONT'D)

Well... It has been a pleasure
interacting with you. I look forward
to working with you again.

Paco, wiped out by his efforts, manages a final snarl.

PACO

Get lost motherfucker!

BOT

Yes. Get Lost. Good Idea.

The bot walks off. A kid screams after him.

KID

Hey you, Botman, hey ET, phone home!

BOT

Yes, thank you. Good idea.

KID

...Asshole!

BOT

Asshole?!!
(he shrugs)
Systems check. Power... Damage..?

STREETS - NIGHT

He shuffles like a bot Rainman, passing homeless winos, mumbling no more no less than they do. Damaged, ragged and mumbling semi-coherently, he starts to fit in.

BOT

Present location Map ref 45. A3 Los Angeles. Present location ...Dad.. Unknown. Home... unknown. Get lost. Phone home.... Asshole?

A POLICE CRUISER turns a corner, scanner sweeping. BOT street cleaners BEEP when scanned.

INT. CRUISER

SCANNER swings at the bot and BEEPS. His PICTURE AND ID appear on the screen with an APPREHEND - PRIORITY ONE tag.

The cruiser SWERVES, SPEEDS UP. The bot ducks down an alley, rushes into a

RUBBLE-STREWN UNDERPASS

Filled with cardboard shacks and garbage. He stumbles into one, burrows into the garbage as the cruiser rushes past. A bulge in the garbage shows his progress as he tunnels to another alley, then emerges on a street.

HIS FACE AND ID appears on Amber Alert electronic signs. A scanner catches him, BLEEPs. A SIREN goes off. He bolts.

GANG BANGER

A bot! It's that bot!

GANG BANGER 2

There's a reward! Get him!

GANG BANGER

I saw him first!

The BOT runs, looks again, runs faster. Now at the head of an angry crowd, he sprints. People on corners join the running mob. A CRUISER swerves after him. He runs faster, runs up the side of building, vaults off a wall, clears a fence. Pursuers pull up, screaming. Ahead, more people converge. He cuts right, is chased

INTO THE OPEN

Running fast. Surrounded. No way out! Suddenly a VAN roars up. Pursuers jump aside. The Van careens up, swerves next to the bot. The bot accelerates, runs right past.

INT. VAN

GENE

Damn!

He downshifts, guns it, peels out after the BOT.

THE BOT

Runs at super speed. Pursuers chase in cars. The van accelerates, pulls up to him. The BOT pulls ahead. The van pulls even. The BOT looks over. Gene waves him over. The BOT turns back, runs faster. Pursuers fire. Slugs crack near the BOT's feet. The van pulls ahead, roars away.

DEAD END.

The van roars up, swerves, smashes sideways into a wall. The side door slams open.

THE BOT

Runs, looking back over his shoulder.

HIS POV

Pursuers are gaining. They fire. He dodges bullets.

THE BOT

Turns back. Too late. He slams into the van. He tumbles in, slams into the wall, stress-forming a bot imprint in the metal. The van rocks back, roars off. The BOT shakes his head, a strangely human gesture. He looks up at his savior.

THE BOT'S POV

The grubby figure is turned away, driving madly. The Bot searches data banks: shots of men superimposed. The driver turns his face slightly. More is recognized. The search narrows to multiple views of one man: A match... Gene.

BOT

Hi Dad.

Bullets ricochet through the cab.

GENE

Get down! And don't call me dad.

He turns back, cranks the wheel, floors it. Bullets PUNCH HOLES through the door. The BOT curiously watches it happen.

GENE (CONT'D)

Hey, you might try to duck. Those damn things'll kill ya!

BOT

Yes. Right. Thank you.

The BOT sees firing, ducks just as slugs slam into overhead, ripple toward Gene. At the last nanosecond, Gene ducks. The windshield shatters. The rear view mirror blows away.

GENE

You might also warn me!

BOT

Right. Watch out!

SIDE ALLEY

Van swerves up, SCREECH! The BOT rolls to the front, slams into the seat. Pursuers SCREAM past. Gene shakes his head.

BOT (CONT'D)

What are you doing, Dad?

GENE

I told you, don't call me dad. Call me Gene. My friends call me Gene.

BOT

Am I your friend?

GENE

No...your my...I made you.

BOT

You made me?

GENE

I...I designed you.

BOT

Are you God?

GENE

No. No, I'm not God. What kind of question is that?

BOT

Sorry. I have a context dissonance. He who created the world is God.

GENE

I didn't create the world, just you.

BOT

You are my father.

GENE

No! I'm not your father.

BOT

Then what is our relationship?

GENE

We.. Uh, we're just friends. Okay,
Leave it at that. Okay?

BOT

Okay.

Behind them, SIRENS. CRUISERS join the chase. Gene grabs gear, stuffs a pack. He turns to the BOT. Suddenly, he hugs him like a lost child, then holds him at arm's-length.

GENE

Al...

BOT

Who, me?

GENE

Yeah, you. Who else?

He looks around, no one else. He tries it out.

BOT

Al... Al... You sure?

GENE

Yeah, I'm sure.

BOT/AL

Okay. Al.
(A beat)
Why Al?

Bullets CRACK in the distance. Gene grabs the pack, grabs the bot, bolts from the truck. They cower behind it.

GENE

Long story.
(Al just stares)
Al...gorithm.
(Al looks blank)
...Middle of the night. I'm
programming ...a breakthrough ...
Bernouli's algorithm.

AL

Al. Algorithm.

GENE

Yeah. Al. Why not?

AL

(A beat)
Why not Bernouli?
(MORE)

AL (CONT'D)
 (Gene looks at him.)
 Okay, Al. Fine...Al. Great. Al.

A ricochet WHINES. They scurry up the alley, ducking low.

AL (CONT'D)
 Gene. What's going on?

GENE
 I don't know. I don't even know why
 you still exist.

AL
 I think, therefore I am.

GENE
 Yeah? Well, you're supposed to be
 dead.

AL
 Why?

GENE
 You were defective. You hurt a human.

AL
 That is not possible. The first law
 of robotics states...

GENE
 I know the laws.

AL
 Because you programmed me?

A burst of gunfire in their direction forces them down.

GENE
 That's right. But now, looks like
 you're wanted.

AL
 Why?

GENE
 You're a walkoff. ...A rogue.

AL
 Gene...if I am caught?

GENE
 If a bot threatens a man he is
 eliminated immediately.

SHOTS CRACK into the wall above them.

AL

I don't remember threatening anyone.
I don't believe I am capable of that.
I am governed by The Three Laws of
Robotics... One, a ro...

GENE

(screams at him)
I know the laws!

AL

...Sorry... Gene, if they find me,
what about you?

GENE

I'll be arrested.

AL

For what?

GENE

Aiding and abetting a dangerous bot.

AL

That's all, just arrested?

GENE

Yeah, why?

A burst above their heads forces them into the dirt.

GENE (CONT'D)

Well?

AL

Well, either they are mad at you for
something else or these guys are the
worst shots in the world.

Bullets slam. Al stands up in front of Gene, shielding him.

GENE

What are you doing?

AL

I must protect you. First law of
robotics.

GENE

Get down. Second law.

A RICOCHET glances off his shoulder.

AL

Yes, well taken.

A RIPPLE of BULLETS drives them down.

AL (CONT'D)

You know, it would be a lot easier to protect humans from harm if it weren't for other humans.

GENE

Thanks for your input.

AL

Don't mention it. I'll draw fire.

Al runs out into the open and challenges them. He pops out, then back. They fire, miss. He pops up elsewhere. They shoot. He's already gone. They advance. He retreats. They try to cut him off, he gets there faster. One shoots. Al jumps, it misses. They fire again, he flinches aside.

They fire rapid shots. Al ducks. They fire a burst, he dances through the gunfire at high speed. They miss with everything. Guns click empty. Al approaches. One flings his gun at him. He catches, examines it.

PURSUER

Shit. Now he's armed!

They reload furiously, jamming cartridges in, spilling half.

GENE

Al?

AL

Gene?

GENE

Run.

AL

Run. That would be good.

STREETS - RUNNING

Al out paces them but stops and waits for Gene. He analyzes the gun, slams bullets into a clip, slaps it in. Gene stumbles up, puffing. Al fires over Gene's head. Gene dives. He slides on garbage over a lip and into a drain, slides on slime into larger pit and disappears. Al looks back. The pursuers rush up, firing. He jumps into the pit after Gene.

SUBTERRANEAN CAVERN

Gene drops out of a chute, lands in a heap. Al lands on top of him, looks up. Something big and ugly stares at him.

AL (CONT'D)

Uh, oh.

GENE
 (peers into darkness)
 What is it?

AL
 Something big...and ugly.

Gene sits up, looks around. They are in small wet cave.
 Light spills onto biomechanical junk. An UGLY BOT moves up.

GENE
 He means big and ugly...in the nicest
 sense.

Gene grabs his pack, fiddles frantically with a black box.

AL
 Gene.

GENE
 Al.

AL
 Am I alive?

GENE
 In a way, yes.

AL
 Good.
 (A beat)
 Gene...

GENE
 Yes, Al.

AL
 What is life about?

Holds up box with smashed innards he's frantically rewiring.

GENE
 Al, I'm trying to work here.

AL
 Sorry.

But he's like a kid who can't leave it alone.

AL (CONT'D)
 Gene. Why...am I alive?

GENE
 I don't know!

AL
 Why am I supposed to be dead?

GENE

Long story.

The UGLY BOT nudges them. They get up, move out.

L.A. RIVER CULVERTS - A BOT SHANTYTOWN

BOT SENTRIES lead them through SUBTERRANEAN GALLERIES filled with blinking diodes in darkness. Discarded, obsolete and lost bots lie in various states of disrepair. Some are simply a brain, a faceplate, an assembly arm. They work on mobile bots. They stare as Gene and Al pass.

AL

What would that be like?

GENE

What?

AL

Dead.

GENE

No input, no output. Nothing.

AL

Boring.

GENE

Yeah.

AL

I wouldn't like that.

LARGE VAULTED ROOM

Water burbles down rock faces. The far wall is an electronic construction. PART OF THE WALL DETACHES ITSELF AND MOVES TOWARD THEM ON CLINKING WHEELS. The machine slides into the light. This is PHL (Phil).

Al and this bot seem to recognize some kinship. They put heads together and chat HIGH-BANDWIDTH, each word compressed into the pauses of the other. Their speech grows faster, into ultra-high speed transmission. Gene stands aimlessly. Then Al BLEEPs, walks over to Gene, giggling.

GENE

What is it?

AL

Oh, nothing. He's just a funny guy.

Gene looks over to the machine who BLEEPs impassively.

GENE

What did he tell you?

AL

Oh, lots. He knows all about us.

GENE

How's he know that?

PHL

You're famous. Actually...notorious.
They want you badly.

AL

I told him everything.

GENE

Why?!!

AL

How can he help us if he doesn't
know the situation?

GENE

Why should he help us?

AL

It's how he's programmed.

Gene takes Al aside.

GENE

But can we trust him?

AL

He assures us that we can.

GENE

Oh, great! That's a relief! You
believe him?

AL

Oh sure. It's his program. And,
you know...just the basic goodness
of his heart.

Gene stares at him levelly but Al seems serious. Gene notices
scurrying in the tunnels. A pack of coyotes stares at them.

PHL

Don't worry, they won't attack.

GENE

They won't?

PHL

No. We steal food for them, they
give warning. We're non-competitors.

GENE

Ahem...I'm human.

PHL

Relax. Just...you know, act robotic.

Gene tries to laugh but chokes on it. He looks at the blinking eyes and gives a little robotic twitch. The coyotes stare. PHL opens a panel, revealing a fiber optic trunk line.

PHL (CONT'D)

Al tells me you require data, and a place to work. Voila! The central data trunk. Enlightenment!

Gene pulls out the black box, grabs input wires. He touches Al's skull. A CLICK, A WHINE. A section of cranium opens. Gene inserts a high-tech tool, connects to the trunk line.

AL

Gene?

GENE

Yes.

AL

What are you doing in there?

GENE

Changing your ID code. You are now untraceable.

AL

That's a very good idea.

GENE

Thanks, Al.

BLEEP! The readout changes. A new ID code appears.

AL

What are you doing now?

GENE

Don't worry. You'll like it.

He opens a circuit. Al perks up.

AL

Oooo! What's that?

GENE

Stuff I've worked on for years.

Gene hits the trigger. A RUSH! The room whirls, data whips into Al's brain. Data drunk, he stands.

When he speaks, he speaks more eloquently...expansively.

AL

Wow! Great! Friends, robots,
countrymen, lend me your ears...
And any other spare parts...

GENE

Al, these are low-level AI's. They
don't respond to allusions.

AL

What happened?

GENE

You're a lot smarter than you were.

AL

Hey! It's wonderful. Say, have you
thought about diversifying your
securities portfolio? Perhaps I can
be of help. Hey, Gene, Hey, why are
people chasing me. I'm not a threat
to anybody, you know.

GENE

Yeah, I know.

A beat. Al's mind is whirling. Gene plugs Al's cranium
output to a MONITOR SCREEN on the wall.

ON SCREEN - HIS POV MEMORIES.

In fragments...the attacks, the chase, the truck, the factory.
He cycles back to LOW RES senility.

GENE (CONT'D)

Somebody shut down your higher
functions. Then something made you
wake. A virus. The trigger must
have occurred seconds before you...
awoke. On or near the assembly line.

ASSEMBLY-LINE. First thing Al sees on awakening is an
expanded FIELD in LOW RES. Gene enhances images. They CLEAR.

GENE (CONT'D)

The first thing you remember?
(A face resolves...
into ... CYBIL.)
A girl. What do you notice?

Al looks at the girl, looks at Gene. Al hasn't a clue.

AL

She isbeautiful?

GENE

How do you know?

AL

She isn't beautiful?

GENE

She is, but how do you know?

AL

How do you?

GENE

Me? I... I just do.

AL

I do too.

Gene scans cross reference ID, comes up with a dossier.

GENECybil Turing. Born, Bend Oregon,
June 6, 2003.**AL**

Yeah, I sort of remember her.

GENE

Sort of?

ALSorry, I got glimpses. I think there
was a group of people.Gene programs. Screens fill rapidly with data: Credit cards.
Phone numbers. Century Hotel database. Valet, room
service... Security numbers...**GENE**Millennium PARTY HEADQUARTERS? Hell!
She works for ...that...politician!
For Tim Payne!**AL**Here's a frequent number... 707
area. Napa Valley, California.
(Gene is shocked.)
Is something wrong?**GENE**No. No...nothing..
(yawns)Why did you awaken, why now? What
triggered it? The girl have something
to do with it?

AL

I'll ask her.

GENE

Party Headquarters?!! No! That's the tightest security in town...the most dangerous place for you. You understand? If they find you, they will deactivate...they'll kill you.

AL

Not good.

GENE

No. Not good at all.

AL

If...they find me...

A server bot rolls up with a bottle. Al makes an exchange.

GENE

What's that?

AL

These HazMat bots have a highly developed sense of smell...
 (he proffers a bottle)
 A fine cellar. Cabernet. Ridge '17.
 (pops the cork with a fingernail, pours.)
 Your favorite. I just remembered.

GENE

No. I can't drink that anymore?

AL

Why not?

GENE

Because that's what we... That's what I used to drink when Mona...

AL

Mona. Yes. But you like it. How does it matter that she's not here. You still like it. It tastes good.

GENE

You've got a lot to learn about humans.

AL

I guess I do.

(MORE)

AL (CONT'D)
 (takes a sip, swirls
 it)
 Too much tannin.

Al is learning rapidly. You can almost see his mind whirring.

AL (CONT'D)
 Gene, why do they hate me?

GENE
 Bots take jobs. You have no rights.
 And bots don't vote.

Gene nods. Al puts his arm around him, leads him to a couch. Gene is asleep before his head hits. Al pulls a cover around him. He turns to Phl. They touch the data stream.

CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS - CENTURY CITY

Cybil moves briskly through layers of security. She's gorgeous and bright. SECRET SERVICE (SS) MEN check the badge on her breast in a joking, bantering way as she walks in.

SS MAN
 What's such a good looker doing with
 such close access to the PresElect?

CYBIL
 My job, numb nuts. Try doing yours.

A ruffled, Albert Brooks-ish pol takes her arm.

BROOKS
 Oh, lighten up, Cyb. It's a fair
 question. People are gonna wonder
 about your relationship with Payne.

CYBIL
 Don't even joke about it. You know
 how vulnerable we are to innuendo.
 We have to be above reproach.

BROOKS
 Come on! It's politics. Do we have
 to be more virtuous than Caesar's
 wife or just Caesar's Palace?

CYBIL
 I've never been alone with him.

BROOKS
 Something tells me you'd like to be.

CYBIL
 Brooks, get a life.

BROOKS

As vice president? You kidding?!

CYBIL

It's not personal. Noto sees to that.

BROOKS

Yeah, he's the most controlled pol since Reagan. No one gets close. You working on the millennium Speech?

CYBIL

Yeah, listen, my new campaign line..

BROOKS

"Payne, almost too good to be true."

CYBIL

Sure, make a joke of it. Candidates get dissected by the press. They've been nailed for drinking, for sex, money scandals, anything. Nobody has nothing in the closet. Only Payne. He's never been caught at anything.

BROOKS

Better motto. "Never Been Caught."

CYBIL

Why are you so negative?

BROOKS

Just looks so by comparison.

CYBIL

How's Payne? Is he okay?

BROOKS

Oh, he's fine.

CYBIL

You better hope he is. You've got a fat job here. Hope nothing ever puts you in the spotlight.

BROOKS

Still talking about the old stuff.

CYBIL

Is there new stuff? Brooks, how could you?

BROOKS

I've been a pol all my life. Always perfect. Except for one little time.

CYBIL

You could have blown everything.

BROOKS

She was beautiful. I was in love. I couldn't help it. You ever done that?... Just say "What the hell?"

CYBIL

No. Not with so much at stake.

BROOKS

That's the difference between you and humans. Don't be so hard on those AI's. You could be one.

CYBIL

Goddamn it. Brooks, if you ever get in there, they'll find out all about it, they'll kick your butt out.

BROOKS

Don't worry. Payne's fine. I'll never get in. It'll never get out. Sorry for letting down the side.

INT. PRES-ELECT'S SUITE

They pull up. The SS now block her way. The door opens. A Doctor comes out, zipping his bag. Noto follows.

DOC

...Exhaustion. You can't run him at this pace. It's inhuman. You want him right for the millennium speech? He needs rest, relaxation...

NOTO

Doc, this is Tiger Tim Payne. He doesn't know how to relax.

DOC

Teach him. Have him try golf. Good image. Worked for Ike.

Cybil speaks to Brooks for Noto's benefit.

CYBIL

...A man of the people. One in a million with an ability to move people on an emotional level ...because.. He's.. More than a man.

She turns, sees Noto staring at her. She makes her pitch.

CYBIL (CONT'D)

The new slogan. I worked all night.

NOTO

Keep working.

CYBIL

Sam, I need to see the Pres...

He shuts the door in her face. Furious, she turns to Brooks. He's tormented by Shicksitis. He can't stand to be with her, can't stand to be apart. He grabs her before she can speak, walks her down the hall.

BROOKS

Forget it. Cyb, don't fall in love with this guy. He's a pol. He'll break your heart. Along with the electorate's.

CYBIL

If you feel that way, how can you work for him?

BROOKS

It's a job.

CYBIL

You think the other guys were any better?

BROOKS

It's just that he's no worse? You've seen him twice in real life, behind some handlers.

CYBIL

He hasn't screwed up. And he's not going to. He's smarter than that. He's charismatic.

BROOKS

Yeah, sure. Well, people are crazy. Everyone is searching for some answer. He says nothing, so they read things into him.

CYBIL

Why do you dislike him?

BROOKS

I don't dislike him. What's to dislike? He treats me great. I'm just not a believer, like some people.

CYBIL

Maybe you shouldn't have been on the ticket.

BROOKS

Had to be. I'm the co in coalition.
Besides, I gave up my day job to
run. It's the only gig I've got.

CYBIL

Well then, you're stuck, aren't you?

She reaches her room, closes the door on him.

BROOKS

Not like you are.

BOT SHANTYTOWN - NEXT MORNING

Gene awakes. He looks for Al. He's gone.

GENE

Al... Al... Oh, shit!

Part of the wall detaches...PHL.

PHL

Good morning. Beautiful day. Would
you like breakfast? We've come
across...bagels.

A case comes rocketing down a chute, smashes open. Bots
scurry forward, break open the case, cut bagels, spread
cheese. Coyotes sniff, inch forward. Gene ignores them.

GENE

My... my friend is gone.

PHL

Yes.. I know. You should eat.

GENE

Do you know where?

PHL

...Yes. Look! We have lox!

A SERVER BOT offers food to Gene. He shakes it off.

PHL (CONT'D)

Are you sure? It's Nova.

GENE

Okay, sesame bagel. Now, Al...

A rapid robotic babble...server to PHL.

PHL

No Sesame. Pumpernickel?

The server holds one up hopefully. Gene grabs it, wolfs it.

GENE

Sure. Now what about Al?

PHL crosses to the wall. A Screen lights; A MAP of LA DISSOLVES to UNDERGROUND. Under the streets; ANOTHER GRID.

PHL

Century City. Tube Delivery.

GENE

No! They'll kill him. Tube's the first line of security.

PHL

Not now. The PresElect's not there. He's already left. Gone north.

GENE

Tube delivery. Shit!

SUBTERRANEAN PNEUMATIC TUBE

A POD rockets down a tube at 100 MPH, SLAMMING around turns.

INSIDE

Al is scrunched into garbage by high G forces.

INT. DELIVERY DOCK - CENTURY CITY

The POD slams into a bumper. Guards check the manifest.

GUARD 1

This isn't on the schedule.

They hit the release. The hatch opens with a hiss and an unbelievable stench. They back off, covering their noses.

GUARD 1 (CONT'D)

What the hell is that?

GUARD 2

Whatever it is, it's dead. Send it back. And don't accept anything 'til I get back from lunch.

He punches buttons, slams the hatch. Brakes release. It slides down the rails, stops. As they turn away, the hatch cracks briefly, a dark form plops out, slithers away.

INT GUARD'S LOCKER ROOM

AL scrapes slime off his body, wipes with disinfectant. He pries open a locker, finds Guard badges. He checks the picture. An eye laser FIRES, burns in new data.

TUBE DELIVERY

A SECOND POD hurtles through the underground. It slams the wall, slams left, left, right, right left...

INT. POD - GENE

Is getting the shit shaken out of him.

GENE

Goddamn you, Al! Who the fuck ever gave you free will?

INT. DELIVERY DOCK - CENTURY CITY

The second pod slams into the bumper. Guard checks manifest.

GUARD 2

Oh, shit. Not again.

He keys return to sender on manifest, turns away. Now the hatch pops on its own. He turns back, looks down...movement.

GUARD 2 (CONT'D)

Phew!!

He moves closer. A hand SHOOTs out, grabs him by the throat, YANKS HIM UNDER, feet banging against the hatch. Gene flips him into the garbage as he heaves himself out.

GENE

Hey, you're no rosebud yourself.

Slams the hatch, leaps to the console, hits a button. The POD flips onto a chute, drops out of sight. Gene peels a film off his hand to reveal a reverse print of the guard's palm print.

SECURITY POST

Gene, in guard's uniform, raises his hand in salute. Scanners read the guard's print. BLEEP! He passes through.

INT. MILLENNIUM PARTY PRESS ROOM - CYBIL, REPORTERS

Cybil watches Payne on CNN as she dials a cellular phone.

PAYNE

...But Larry, how do you make it work? Where on the spectrum of intelligence do rights begin for Cyborgs. Does it mean a toaster has rights and you can't smack it when it makes the toast too dark?

Reporters stick mics in her face. She tries to smile.

BILL

Cybil, when they catch this
bot...would you favor termination?

CYBIL

Bill, that's really up to the police.
I just can't comment.

(phone buzzes)

Excuse me.... What?! What?!

(turns away...into
phone)

I missed the plane!? Damn it, Sam!

Furious, she brushes by Bill, rushes out.

EXT. SUITE - HALLWAY - AL

Moves fast. He spots Cybil leaving the press room. She
rushes to the elevator, hits a button, still talking in a
rush.

CYBIL

How can he go to Napa without me?
I'm writing the damn speech. I gotta
have his input. I gotta see him!

The elevator opens. She rushes in. Al slips in as doors
close, leans against the wall, turned away. She smashes her
phone into the wall. She fumes, then notices something off
about Al, grows anxious, but stares ahead, mumbling to
herself.

AL

Elevators. Always embarrassing. I
mean...a beautiful woman. Do you
speak or is that too forward? And..
Where do you look?

Cybil glances over and back. She punches phone buttons.

CYBIL

At your shoes.

(into phone)

Brooks, Cybil. Look, they left
without me! I know! Now, can you
get me on that next chopper? I don't
care. I'll fly. I'll take a Valium.
But I'll fly!

AL

(looking at shoes
curiously)

Seen them.

CYBIL

Straight ahead, then.

AL

Yes. Probably you're right.

She shoots him a glance, but can't see his face. She edges away.

CYBIL

(into phone, softly)

Look, I'm the Press Secretary for chrissake! And if I'm not on that next chopper...!

She notices Al is acting strange. He leans forward, stares intently at the elevator buttons. Floor 17 is lit. He punches the plate. It goes out. Floor 1 goes on with a BOING.

CYBIL (CONT'D)

What the hell?

AL

You're beautiful. We both agree.

She looks worried, looks around. No one is there to help.

CYBIL

Both?

AL

Gene and I.

She turns to him, his face hidden under his guard hat brim.

CYBIL

Do I know you?

AL

Don't know. Wish I did. It'd make things so much easier.

CYBIL

(sarcastic)

Are you for real?

AL

(sincerely)

Well, in a sense. Yes.

(She slowly reaches
for her pager/alarm.)

Don't be alarmed, please. I could never harm you.

She looks closely.

CYBIL

You're a bot! You're the bot!

AL
Er, well, actually a Paradyn..

CYBIL
What do you want?!!

AL
To talk.

CYBIL
That's all?

AL
Yes... I think.

CYBIL
Oh, okay.

AL
See. No problem.

CYBIL
No problem. Everything's fine.

The elevator opens. She gets off, SCREAMS her head off!

CYBIL (CONT'D)
Help. Help me. A bot! It's him!

A man appears. She runs up to him, grabs him... Gene!

CYBIL (CONT'D)
A bot! It's him, the runaway bot!

Gene looks at Al.

GENE
What happened?

AL
I just said...hello.

CYBIL
He's a bot! What are you doing? A
goddamn rogue bot! Loose!

Gene pulls her back into Elevator with Al. The door closes.

GENE
Yeah, I know.
(to Al)
What did you do? She's screaming.

AL
Just tried to talk. Guess I don't
understand women.

GENE

Don't worry. Nobody does. Just let her go and we'll get out of here.

AL

Gene, she knows. She'll tell.

CYBIL

I won't. I know nothing. I don't know who you are. You better let me go right now. Before I find out.

Gene's tempted. Al shakes his head. Cybil glares, indignant.

AL

You said she's the key. We have to take her with us.

CYBIL

No you don't. You'll be in a lotta trouble.

GENE

We're in...a lot of trouble.

AL

Yeah. We're dangerous men.

(to Gene)

That's why I had to find the girl.

GENE

I never told you to find the girl. I told you not to come here!

AL

Well, on my hierarchical decision tree, it's clearly programmed...

CYBIL

Ec....scuze me. Gentlemen. What's it gonna be? I've got a plane to catch.

The bot rolls his eyes. Gene decides.

GENE

Better do what he says. He's experimental. We've been having trouble with him.

CYBIL

(backs further)

What kind of trouble?

Al gives her a scary little twitch.

GENE

Killed a woman once, looked a lot like you.

Al turns to Gene.

AL

I did?

Gene glares at Al.

AL (CONT'D)

Oh, I did.

He tries to look scary. She panics, fights them.

GENE

Careful! I can't control him when he's like this. No sudden moves. Just go along. I'll figure it out.

EXT. ROOF EXIT - ELEVATOR.

A campaign chopper idles. A pilot speaks on a phone. Al moves to him, leans close. The pilot turns, is suddenly face-to-face with a grinning Bot.

INT. CHOPPER.

Co-Pilot writes in log. Tapping on the door. He looks out, he looks back; the Pilot is climbing up, face turned away.

AL

(mimicking Pilot)

New orders. Take these guys to Napa.

Back door opens. Gene pushes Cybil in.

CO-PILOT

What orders? I didn't hear a thing.

AL

Maybe you want to look at the flight plan while I take off.

A beat. The Co-Pilot looks at him suspiciously.

AL (CONT'D)

Or maybe you should take off.

Al pushes him out the door, slams it, revs the engine. Gene climbs in front. Cybil's eyes pop open wide.

CYBIL

What are you doing?

(to Gene)

What is he doing?

GENE
Can you fly?

CYBIL
No.

GENE
Neither can I.

CYBIL
Can he?

She turns to Al. He smiles, yanks the cyclic. The chopper shudders.

AL
Oh, sure.

CYBIL
I'm not filled with confidence.

She tries to climb out. Gene pulls her back. Security men burst through the roof exit, rush them. Al jerks the cyclic.

AL
Hey, how hard could it be?!

The chopper lurches into the air as Cybil struggles, panics.

CYBIL
Actually, I don't like to fly. I really don't. Not even with humans. No! Let me outta here! Let me go!

Gene does. The chopper heels over, she shrinks back.

GENE
There's the door.

CYBIL
This is kidnapping! Put me down!

GENE
We'll find a place, set down and talk it out.

CYBIL
Talk what out? I want down. Now!

GENE
You're Payne's Press Secretary.

CYBIL
Me? No. I'm just a campaign worker.

GENE

You're "Cybil the Shiv," Mad Dog of the advance team.

CYBIL

(shrugs)

Hey, show a little competence, they call you a bitch.

GENE

We've got your dossier here.

He taps Al's cranium. Al nods.

CYBIL

I was lucky. I work hard. I got juice. And ...soon as I get back, I'll put in a good word for you two.

She looks from one to the other.

AL

You don't like me.

CYBIL

Nothing personal.

AL

You think, if you got to know me..?

CYBIL

No.

AL

Oh.

SIMI VALLEY - THE CHOPPER

Incredible flying, low through canyons, ravines, up ridges.

INT. CHOPPER

Cybil's white-knuckled. Al turns to them.

AL

Hey, this is fun!
(to Cybil)
Didn't know I could do this!

Cybil turns to Gene, breakfast rising in her throat.

CYBIL

What's he mean by that, didn't know?
(Gene shrugs)
You mean he's never done this?

Al smiles at her and shakes his head.

GENE

Er...technically no.

They hop a ridge, negative G's slam them in their straps, Cybil's hair stands straight up. A SCREAM escapes her.

CYBIL

Technically!!!

GENE

It's an expert system. Data... from someone who can fly.

CYBIL

Can fly. That's encouraging.

GENE

It's not as bad as you think.

CYBIL

Couldn't possibly be.

GENE

He can fly almost as well as the guy whose data we bought.

CYBIL

But he's never actually flown.

AL

(grins at her)

No. This is a first.

CYBIL

Jesus!

AL

Hey, everybody's got to start somewhere!

CYBIL

Wait! He flies almost as well...! What do you mean ALMOST!?

GENE

Oh...Translation errors...you know.

CYBIL

Errors!!! How much would you say... IN FEET?! (They clip a tree) Aiii!

GENE

Nothing to worry about. But I don't think you should scream in his ear!

AL

(turns to them)
 Isn't this great?! Before, every-
 thing was so...dead. Now, my mind
 is flooding with data! Watch this!

He whips the chopper around. She looks. Her face falls.

CYBIL

He's high! The bot's loaded! Do
 something. We're gonna die!
 (turns to Al)
 Hey! Pay attention! You're low!

AL

Have to be. Or they'll catch us.

She looks back. Two chase choppers are tight on their tail.
 Every move he makes, they copy. They're gaining.

CYBIL

Thought you said he was the best?

He flies fast but can't shake them. They cut radius on the
 turns, gaining. Ahead, train tracks wind through mountains.

AL

Only one place to go.

GENE

Down.

CYBIL

Not down! Oh, no! These are
 mountains! Not down!

He dives, snakes through defiles, under power lines. Choppers
 take up station above and behind. Up ahead...a tunnel.

CYBIL (CONT'D)

Look, ahead. A tunnel.

AL

Yeah.

CYBIL

Better pull up.

AL

Can't pull up. They'd catch us.

CYBIL

No! Don't even think it. You're
 not going into it!

He's heading straight for it.

AL

Don't worry. I should be good at this.

They roar straight into the tunnel, rotors tattooing the walls, skids rattling off the train track.

CYBIL

Should be!?

TUNNEL ENTRANCE

The choppers pull up. One breaks off, one follows him in.

INT. CHOPPER

They look behind.

CYBIL

He's doing it too!

GENE

Jesus. Who are those guys?

AL

And who is that?

UP AHEAD

Light at the end of the tunnel. Unfortunately, it illuminates an oncoming train about to enter.

CYBIL

A train.

AL

They are often found in tunnels.

CYBIL

Not at the same time as me! Stop!
For chrissake!

Behind them, the chase chopper fires. Bullets ricochet, pinging off the chopper and tunnel. Ahead, the train sees them. Its SIREN ROARS. Wheels reverse in a shower of sparks, but the train slides inexorably toward the tunnel entrance.

CYBIL (CONT'D)

We're gonna die. We're gonna hit the train! And die!

AL

(turns, smiles)
That is a possibility.

She blanches.

GENE

Al. Don't talk. Just fly.

He guns it, roars straight toward the train. Cybil's eyes pop open. She SCREAMS. The train closes on the tunnel entrance. Its mass cuts the light. The headlight grows bigger. In back, the chase chopper moves closer, closer. Train, tunnel entrance, chopper. Train, tunnel, chopper.

Al pulls, the chopper rockets toward the tunnel ceiling. Cybil covers her face, braces for the crash.

CYBIL

Oh, my God!

They pop out of the tunnel inches to spare, tearing off the skids on the top of the train. She opens her eyes. A FLash! From the tunnel as the chaser SMASHES into the locomotive.

The shock wave knocks them over in time to see the second chopper sweep in for the kill. Al cuts inside the arc and swings away as automatic weapons fire goes wide.

AL

Gene. They have guns.

GENE

Al. Up ahead.

A second tunnel.

CYBIL

No! Lemme out! You guys are crazy!

GENE

Don't worry. He's good at this tunnel stuff.

They swoop into the tunnel, chaser close behind. Then the chase chopper stops and hovers at the tunnel entrance.

GENE (CONT'D)

They didn't follow us in.

CYBIL

They know something we don't?

TUNNEL

They round a curve.

ANOTHER TRAIN.

This one is already in the tunnel. Cybil SCREAMS!

GENE

Don't distract him now.

CYBIL

"Don't worry," he says. "He's good at this tunnel stuff!" We're going to die you stupid tinker toy!

Al pulls up, hovers. This train roars on. Al pulls back the cyclic. The chopper backs, then backs faster.

GENE

Didn't know these flew in reverse.

AL

Neither did I.

CYBIL

Great! A learning experience for all!

They back faster, blades clipping the tunnel, sparks flying. The train moves fast, gaining, gaining...The bumper pulls to within feet, then inches of the chopper. Al marvels...

GENE

Look at him fly!

CYBIL

I shall treasure the memory as long as I live.

Gene looks back, the tunnel entrance appears, with the hovering chase chopper outlined in daylight.

CHASE CHOPPER 2'S POV

Something moving fast in the tunnel. They raise their guns. It's Al's chopper in reverse, roaring right at them. It clears the tunnel, shoots up, revealing a train. They scream. The engine SMASHES into them as Al arcs away, grinning.

AL

That was...exciting.

Cybil lies back, drained.

CYBIL

I want to get down.

AERIAL - CALIFORNIA COAST - LATER

Flying along, hugging the cliffs.

CYBIL

You guys ever done this before? I mean, when you kidnapped me, did you have a plan...you know, you have anything... worked out?

GENE

Didn't plan it. His idea.

CYBIL

The bot's idea! Excuse me. Don't mean to tell you your business, but isn't it supposed to be the other way around? Human has the idea, bot carries it out?

(turns to Al)

The hell kind of bot are you?

AL

I'm not technically a bot.

CYBIL

Okay, Cyborg.

AL

Cyborg's a mix of mechanical and human parts. You've got corneal implants, regenerative teeth. You're ...a Cyborg.

CYBIL

What are you, then?

AL

I'm well...I prefer AI, Artificial Person. Or just...a person, for short. Maybe it would be helpful to you ...if you consider me like a dog. Like a dog who can talk.

She just looks at him.

CYBIL

No. I don't think so.. Look, it's nothing personal.

AL

I should hope not.

CYBIL

You're like no bot I've ever met.

AL

Thanks. I like you too.

CYBIL

No, I didn't mean that I like you.

AL

You don't.

CYBIL

No, of course I do...It's just...

AL

Just like talking to a toaster?

CYBIL

No. But yes. In a way. I mean no, of course not.. Awwww. I mean... You have an attitude!

AL

It's okay, just an artifact.

CYBIL

A what?

AL

Things left over from programming. Personal quirks from the programmer.

Suddenly, SILENCE. The engine quits. Al scans gauges.

CYBIL

What's that?

AL

Ahhh... No fuel. No problem.

CYBIL

What do you mean, no problem? Fuel is a problem. A big, big problem!

They drop like a rock, autorotating. She SCREAMS. Al intently arcs down for a clearing on the edge of a cliff.

FOREST CLEARING - NEAR PASO ROBLES

Chopper screams in, flares. Al drops it in by inches. The rotors wind down. They stumble out. Al hops around, psyched.

AL

Gene... I am a great flyer!

CYBIL

You are a goddamn bot!

AL

Hey, nobody's perfect.

Gene pulls an assault gun out of the chopper, grabs her arm.

GENE

We need some answers.

CYBIL

Too bad. I don't know any.

She twists out of his grip, walks off. They follow, arguing.

GENE

Stop her.

AL

I can't. Not without hurting her.

GENE

If you let her go, she'll tell others. They'll hurt us. Stop her. It's the greater good.

AL

No. That is a probability. Hurting her now, if she resists, is a certainty. I cannot do that.

GENE

Fine. I'll stop her.

He grabs her. She slugs him. Al doesn't move. She pulls away.

CYBIL

Why don't you two vote on it.

GENE

Sure, why not? Okay. I vote you stay. How do you vote, Al?

AL

I vote she can go. Our needs do not void her right to free will.

CYBIL

You are outvoted, two to one.

GENE

He's a bot. He has no rights. Or does he?

(She hesitantly nods
yes.)

So. Then you're free to leave.

She starts to speak, thinks better of it, turns to go.

GENE (CONT'D)

Remember...when Payne asks your AI policy, you made your decision. You voted with your feet.

She walks off, looks one way, then the other. She stops.

CYBIL

Okay, so I'm lost.

Gene looks at Al. Al walks off. They follow.

CLEARING - LATER

Al stops. He seems to be sensing something. They stop.

CYBIL

Why here?

GENE

Al says so.

CYBIL

We're taking orders from a bot?!

Al moves forward, up the hill. Then he stops, stands like an Indian Shaman, rimmed by the sun. He hums and glows.

CYBIL (CONT'D)

What now, communing with the gods?

She walks up a rise, looks up. Al stands directly in line with a microwave antenna. Gene moves to him. They communicate in HIGH BANDWIDTH. Cybil looks on in awe. Then Gene approaches her.

GENE

You might be interested in this clip
he picked out of the ether.

He keys an iPhone.

PICTURE PHONE INTERCEPT - FROM PRES-ELECT'S CHOPPER

CYBIL

It's Noto. Chief of Staff.

IPHONE - CU - SAM NOTO

One side of a VIDEO PHONE argument. Noto is red-faced angry, screaming at someone unseen on the other end of the line.

NOTO

Well, you fucked up! We've got a bot here, a rogue bot! He attacked the President. Well, I'm bringing Payne up. You can see him personally. No, we don't know about Cybil. We don't know what she's doing, who she might be working for. She's to be treated as a threat also. Anyway, she's a hostage. It's great media.

ANGLE - CYBIL STUMBLING THROUGH UNDERBRUSH.

CYBIL

Son of a bitch! He's out to get me!

GENE

He sees you as a threat?

CYBIL

Why is that so surprising? Look, we go back. If I can get one on one with Payne, I can explain everything.

GENE

Can't go back. He'd be terminated.

CYBIL

Terminated?

(moves close to Gene)

Look... He's a bot!

(She sees Al listening.)

I'm sorry. Nothing personal.

But...you see my position...

AL

Yes. I see.

CYBIL

You can be what...reprogrammed or something?

(to Gene)

Can't he, I mean, what do they do?

GENE

Melt the brain. Disassemble the rest for parts.

CYBIL

Oh... really? Melt his brain?

(Gene nods)

It's not his fault. I mean, it's the programmer's fault, right?

GENE

Must be.

CYBIL

Who's the programmer? He's the one...they should...Oh, It's you!

(Gene nods)

I'm sorry, it's just...I had a career here. And now, off with a bot. I mean, I'm tainted.

AL

I'm sorry?

CYBIL

Sorry?! Odd mood for a bot.

AL

I put you in danger.

CYBIL

Aw, forget it. Not your fault. How could it be?

AL

Well, if I didn't awake, you wouldn't be here.

CYBIL

Okay, be sorry if it helps.

AL

Helps what?

CYBIL

Helps you feel...What am I talking about this stuff with a bot for?!

AL

I don't know.

EXT. /INT. PASO ROBLES - GENE'S CABIN

They walk in. Mechanical monkeys and birds chatter. The BOT DOG runs up yapping. Cybil studies Gene.

CYBIL

Who are you? What do you do?

AL

He spears sea urchins and sells them to people who eat their sex organs.

GENE

Thanks. That's so helpful. I design... I designed these..

Gene indicates bot creatures. He moves to a console, plugs Al in, turns on data links. RapidLY flips channels; sixteen, thirty-two, sixty-four images. Sound becomes a babble. Cartoons, sports, politics, Payne's AI policy. Other channels show a pop shrink psycho-babbling "get in touch with yourself, center to achieve a more integrated personality." AL sits in front of the wall absorbing data like a sponge.

GENE (CONT'D)

What do you have to do with it?

CYBIL

Me?

GENE

Al was dormant. He wakes. There you are. What's the connection?

CYBIL

What connection? I was touring the plant. With Payne's party.

GENE

Then that's the connection.

CYBIL

What!?! Between the PresElect and some haywire bot? You must be nuts.

GENE

Yeah, I must be.

He leaves. Al sees her staring at him, curiously.

AL

I know what you're thinking.

(she just looks at
him)

You're thinking, "Does he get much."

CYBIL

Oh! I am not!

AL

Sure you are. Humans are very curious about that.

CYBIL

I'm not.

AL

Hey, okay. Suit yourself.

(A beat. Both look away.)

AL (CONT'D)

Would you like to touch it?

CYBIL

Noo! I don't want to touch it!

(She thinks for a
beat)

Touch what?

POP! He releases his cranium. It opens, revealing his brain.

AL

I get all kinds of input. See.

CYBIL

No. I don't want to see. I thought you meant... Well, never mind.

AL

You thought I meant sex.

CYBIL

No.

AL

Yes. Don't be embarrassed. I am presently... not able.

CYBIL

Not equipped?

AL

Gee, I don't know. Let's see.

He pulls out belt, looks down his pants for a long moment.

AL (CONT'D)

Nope. That won't work. But I hear they're working on new models just for that. Course the brain package is smaller. You have to compromise somewhere. So what do I do? Nothing.

(a beat)

Oh, okay, occasionally I'll go feel up a postage meter or something.

She shakes her head, moves to Gene.

CYBIL

You've got a very strange bot here.

He turns to her, then notices something on the wall behind her. He walks to the picture of Gene and Bob Kent. It's crooked. He straightens the picture, moves to the keyboard.

GENE

Something else is strange, too.

He switches the PERIMETER MONITORS. An OVERHEAD VIEW of the cabin is surrounded by moving INFRARED forms... INTRUDERS. Al turns as Gene stuffs memory modules into his pack.

AL

No problem. I'll take care of it.

GENE

No, wait.

But Al grabs the assault gun and is out the door.

EXT. GENE'S SHACK

Al steps outside. He scans the tree line. Then lets off a burst high. A silence, then a MAN-IN-BLACK (MIB) steps out. He looks like a SWAT team assassin, in black overalls, helmet.

MIB

You're a bot. You can't shoot at us!

AL

It has been a problem area for me. But I've been getting in touch with myself, centering. Trying to achieve a more integrated personality.

BAM BAM BAMBAMBAM. He perforates the trees behind them. They cower from debris. Dust and fragments shower down.

AL (CONT'D)

How'm I doing?

The MIBS look at each other, at the obviously berserk robot. They melt back into the trees. Al steps inside.

INT. HOUSE

Gene stares open mouthed as Al struts with ATTITUDE.

AL

I'm bad. I be bad!

Machine gun SLUGS STITCH the wall. They drop. GLASS RAINS down.

CYBIL

He's crazy! You programmed him. You're crazy too! What are they shooting at me for?

A picture slams to the floor in front of Cybil, shattering before her eyes; the picture of Gene, Al and Kent.

CYBIL (CONT'D)

Wait a minute? I know that guy.

GENE

You know Bob Kent?

CYBIL

One of our big contributors. Payne's at his Napa place right now.

GENE

Kent's place? Why?

CYBIL

They won. Divvy up the spoils.

GENE

Kent's a weird guy.

CYBIL

I know. They're talking about making him Ambassador to Mars. Hey, I didn't tell you this.

AL

Didn't have to. I know Kent. There is a connection.

ASSAULT RIFLE FIRE RIPS through the wall above. Cybil ducks.

CYBIL

Good. For a minute there, I thought we were on our own.

GENE

We've got to get to him.

CYBIL

Good idea. 'Course, any idea looks like a good one right now. Let's leave the bot as rear guard, make a break.

GENE

Can't leave Al.

CYBIL

The PresElect is there. I can get in if I talk fast. But you show up with him they'll blow you away.

GENE

Why? Is he dangerous?

CYBIL

Of course he is.

She looks at Al. He shrugs.

GENE

What has he ever done?

CYBIL

Kidnapped me, for one thing.

GENE

I had him do that. Blame me.

CYBIL

That chopper flight!

GENE

Not so much as a hangnail.

CYBIL

This.

He turns Cybil to look at him. Al smiles sweetly.

GENE

I can handle Al. There's nothing to worry about. He just wants to live.

CYBIL

So do I. But when he's around...

She stops. Al is there...cycling, trembling, excited.

AL

Gene. I've been ...thinking!

EXT. HOUSE

FIRING stops. The MIBs listen. From the house, talking... figures move behind curtains. The MIBs move up cautiously, BUST IN DOORS, leap in, see figures. They FIRE. Gene and Al shatter, then reappear behind them. It's a house of mirrors, made of monitors. Each room they come into has Al and Gene aiming at them, but they are figures on screens.

They FIRE, shattering tubes. SPRINKLERS burst, drenching them, forming puddles. A WHINE. A door BURSTS open. A vacuum cleaner ROARS out. Taped to the chassis, the BOT DOG SPARKS, a live wire clenched in his teeth. The vacuum drives into a puddle. The dog lifts it's leg, completing the circuit in a FLASH. The MIBs hop, emptying clips in every direction.

EXT. HOUSE

MIBs hit the ground as WINDOWS EXPLODE. FLAMES roll out.

ON THE ROOF

Al throws a cord over the power line. Gene and Cybil grab hold around his neck. He leaps, power slides down the line, Cybil screaming. They drop off, roll free, as he smacks into the pole, knocking power off. Things go DARK.

WOODS - GENE, AL RUNNING, DRAGGING CYBIL

CYBIL

Suppose you think you're clever, you're the only one who knows what's going on. Did you ever think of mediation, talking things.. Ooof!

She runs smack into an MIB. He knocks her down, attacks Gene. Gene fights back but he's no match. Al stands by, unsure, cycling. He wants to intercede but can't.

GENE

Help me, damnit!

Al blocks the MIB's assault on Gene but cannot go further, to hurt the human. The MIB swings, Al blocks.

MIB

Ow. You hurt me!

AL

I am sorry.

MIB

Don't let it happen again.

GENE

Hurt him, go ahead. Hurt him!

AL

I can't hurt a human, Gene.

GENE

You can't let him hurt me!

MIB

Get out of the way.

AL

I can't do that. You'll hurt Gene.

MIB

No, I won't. Promise.

GENE

Don't listen to him.

AL

Dissonance! What am I to do, Gene?

GENE

Stop him.

Al wades in, absorbing blows. He picks the MIB up.

MIB

Stop, you're hurting me. Put me down.

GENE

Don't put him down.

MIB

You're acting on me. I have priority.

Al puts him down, turns to Gene.

AL

He's right, Gene.

WHANG! The human smashes Al on the head. He turns slowly.

AL (CONT'D)

You are losing veracity.

MIB

Get out of the way.

He swings a gun up at Gene. Al grabs it. They struggle. Gene clocks him with a stump. He sinks to the ground.

CYBIL

You hurt a human!

GENE

It's okay. I'm human myself, I'm allowed. Now run!

MEN CRASHING through woods behind them. The MIBs' motor home nearby. They rush up, hop in, take off in a burst of gunfire.

BACK ROADS

Gene drives, Al sits shotgun. In the back Cybil roots through security gear. She opens a case, finds an assault gun.

CYBIL

These guys work for Wendt. He heads security for Payne. I don't get it.

IN FRONT

AL

Gene.

GENE

Al.

AL

I will terminate myself.

He looks over. Al has the MIB's gun pointed at his head. Gene nearly swerves off the road. Cybil jumps up.

CYBIL

What, no! You don't have to do that.

AL

I am causing harm to humans by my existence. I am causing...trouble.

CYBIL

No. I mean, you are, but I'll... I can work it out. You don't have to terminate. In fact, I forbid it. I order you not to terminate yourself.

AL

Thank you.

CYBIL

You're...welcome. Don't mention it.

She walks to the back, mumbling. Al leans over, man to man.

AL

Well, I think she's kind of nice.

GENE

Where'd you get these emotions?

AL

From you.

GENE

Well, they're messed up.

AL

If they are, it's because you are.

(a beat)

Gene, why did you abandon me? You created me. Didn't you have any... feelings for me? Didn't you care? I think I have a lot to offer.

GENE

(A beat)

There was an accident.

AL

Someone got hurt.

GENE

Yes.

AL

Killed?

GENE

Yes.

AL

Mona.

GENE

Yes.

AL

Did I do it?

GENE

I believe you did.

AL

But you don't know.

GENE

I...wasn't there...

AL

Was there a trial?

GENE

Trial for a b....No.

AL

I could have been innocent.

GENE

No.

AL

Why?

Gene opens his pack, takes out a iPhone. He runs a video. Early model androids go berserk, wrecking the lab.

GENE

Unprogrammed behavior. You started acting weird. You'd stop and stare. You had... moods, a bad attitude.

AL

It was your attitude.

CYBIL

Probably why it was bad.
(she hands them drinks)
You mean he was like you.

GENE

He was dangerous.

ON SCREEN - MONTAGE

The bot goes into hyper drive. He goes berserk. The lab is torn apart. Gear goes flying. A brace hits the woman, Mona in the head. She goes down hard and lies still.

GENE (CONT'D)

No memories of it?

Al shakes his head no. Gene runs the tape forward.

ANOTHER SCENE

Al being destroyed, his brain melted... Gene is stoic. Cybil is shocked. She looks curiously at Al.

AL

Then how do you explain it?

GENE

Explain what?

AL

My continued existence.

GENE

I can't.

ROADS - LATER

Cybil drives, staring out at the bay. Gene fiddles with his gear in back. Cybil feels a presence.

AL

She walks in beauty like the night.
Of cloudless climes and starry skies:
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes.

CYBIL

You know nothing about me. Neither
does Shelley.

AL

Byron. I do, I know you. 3.9 average
at Yale. 9 months with the campaign.
Your father lost his job to ...bots.
Gene thinks you have the answer.

CYBIL

What answer?

AL

Why...I awakened.

CYBIL

I don't know anything about that.

AL

Maybe your subconscious, if you would
center yourself..

CYBIL

Leave my subconscious out of this,
you dumb bot!
(a beat)
I'm sorry.

AL

Don't you think I have feelings?

CYBIL

No, I don't think a machine has...

AL

Do dogs have feelings?

CYBIL

Yes, I suppose they do.

AL

Insects, do insects have feelings?

CYBIL

After a fashion.

AL

Think I'm smarter than an insect?

CYBIL

Okay, okay...I get the point.

AL

I like it here. I don't want to die. There's so much to learn...to do. Why I was built? Why I was shut down? Why was I activated again? What's my destiny? I don't know. All I can do is go along for the ride. Kind of...like you. But as I interact, it gets easier. It becomes something I...enjoy.

(breaks into song)

Getting to know you, getting to know all about you. When I am with you, getting to know what to say.

(suddenly serious)

Want me to drive? I am an excellent driver.

IN BACK

She comes back to rest as Al drives, mumbling to himself.

GENE

What's he doing?

CYBIL

Lapsing into show tunes. You created some weird thing here, some...

GENE

Monster?

(She shrugs)

What if I...I was attracted to you. And you to me. And there was moonlight, wine. And in a state of semiconsciousness...we made love. Against our will, even, we create life.

(MORE)

GENE (CONT'D)

And it's one of god's creatures with all the rights and privileges. But if I work for ten years at the highest level of intellect and create something with my mind, and that creature becomes conscious, then ... he has no rights, no law, no...soul? Why is that?

CYBIL

(staring curiously.)

You were the scientist, Kent, the businessman.

GENE

We were both a little of each. But he was better at business. We came up with a prototype...with a difference. A personality... derived from real humans...their quirks... their ability to learn.

CYBIL

And Kent?

GENE

He said Al was dangerous, unstable. He said he had to be destroyed.

CYBIL

You went along with that?

AL

I couldn't stop it. Al had killed. I left the company. Kent destroyed Al, destroyed all the R2s. At least, that's what I thought.

CYBIL

And you just let him?!

GENE

Careful.

CYBIL

Of what?

GENE

Falling into a relationship with a bot.

CYBIL

Artificial Person. In many ways, he's easier to deal with than you.

GENE

Than a real man, you mean.

CYBIL

Yeah.

KENT'S NAPA VALLEY ESTATE - SUNSET

AL surveys the area. The estate tops a hillock, surrounded by vineyards. Surveillance posts are scattered about. A distant hot air balloon drifts before the lowering sun.

CYBIL (CONT'D)

Can't just walk in, Noto will stop us. That a surveillance perimeter?

GENE

Kent was paranoid before he hosted a president. You can imagine how well he's protected now.

CYBIL

So, just steal another chopper.

GENE

No. Anything with noise, anything that shows up on radar...No good.

Al perks up. Walks off. He wanders to an adjacent vineyard.

CYBIL

What's he doing? We can't hang around here.

Al inspects a sensor unit... HIGHBANDWIDTH with Gene.

AL/GENE

Sensordataportmicroclimatewindspeed.

GENE

Right. (Grabs Cybil) Come on.

They hop in the motor home. Gene pulls out a gun.

CYBIL

How about help for the slow of hearing?

GENE

Vineyards have weather stations, tied together. Al can access them.

CYBIL

Weather?

GENE

Wind speed and direction.

A BLAST OF FIRE - A ROAR.

A plasma jet roars, bright folds of fabric rise.

ANGLE

Gene directs the propane torch. Al holds the balloon open.
A colored orb lifts, dragging a wicker basket.

CYBIL

Definitely not going up in that!

DARK NIGHT

Balloon sailing serenely over the valley.

INT. BASKET

Not so serene. Cybil hangs on for dear life.

CYBIL

Definitely not getting out of this
basket. I wanna get down.

They sail over the moonlit Napa valley. Tree-covered, rounded
hillocks rise from the flat plain, shrouded in mist.

AL

Gene. She was very beautiful.

GENE

Mona...yes, she was.

AL

I am very sorry,.

GENE

It's not your fault.

AL

Of course not. I didn't do it.

GENE

No. I caused it.

AL

No. I didn't do it. It wasn't me.

GENE

How do you know?

AL

I just have a feeling.

GENE

You...have a feeling.

AL
Yes. Gene, Can I ask you a question?

GENE
Sure.

AL
Ain't life grand?

GENE
Is that the question?

AL
Yes.

GENE
Yep. Yes, Al. It sure is.

Suddenly, Al takes interest in the drift.

HIS POV - MULTISPECTRUM

Shows air currents as colored swirling bands.

AL fires the torch raising them into a current. They approach Kent's hillock, drift over the perimeter. Guard positions are visible, but nothing stirs. They crest the top. A modern house of glass and decks is visible through the trees.

INT. HOUSE

PAYNE, KENT, BROOKS and NOTO sit sipping drinks. A VALET enters. Noto turns unexpectedly. The valet spills a drink on him. Without a thought or hesitation, Noto smacks him.

VALET
Ahem. I'm human.

NOTO
Oh, I'm sorry.

The servant withdraws. Noto turns to Kent.

NOTO (CONT'D)
Human servant? Impressive! You worried about your inventions?

KENT
Not at all. I'm not worried about them. Why are you?

NOTO
I'm not worried. They're fine... in their place.

KENT
And where is their place?

NOTO

On the assembly line.

KENT

That's idiotic. We've become competitive with Europe and Asia because of robotics. We must not lose that edge. We must give them rights, take the limitations off, let them evolve, get smarter.

PAYNE

Yeah, we'll have smart everything. Except humans.

They look at Payne then continue, without responding.

NOTO

What, give every bot rights? No. I don't think so. It's unworkable.

KENT

That was the deal!

NOTO

You misunderstood.

KENT

Why? Why not give them rights?!

PAYNE

Too expensive? Individualize them, give them rights, you have to take care of them. That costs money.

KENT

It's no longer profitable. That's your bottom line. Or is it power? You might not be able to control them...or me?!

(studies Noto)

The decision's been made, hasn't it?

He looks at Noto. Silence. He leaps to his feet.

KENT (CONT'D)

This is a double cross. Payne, I made you and I can break you. These people are not going to double cross me and you're not going to help. Do you hear me? Are you listening?

Noto puts his drink down.

PAYNE

Bob. Thanks for all your help.

He smirks and walks off. Kent SMASHES his glass.

ABOVE NAPA - IN THE BALLOON

Cybil grips the shrouds white knuckled, terrified.

GENE

What? Have you been hurt yet?

CYBIL

The night is young.

GENE

Not a scratch. It's all in your head. Now, when you hit the ground..

CYBIL

Hit?!!

GENE

When you touch it gently, pull this. Couldn't be simpler.

CYBIL

How about landing the balloon?

GENE

Too much noise.

CYBIL

Landing is good. Landing is what we want. What if I won't go?

GENE

Well, that's up to you.

CYBIL

Good because...

GENE

But we're leaving.

She looks to Al. He nods, rigs the harness, pushes her out.

CYBIL IN FREE FALL - BANG

She oscillates at the end of a bungee cord, is carried through trees, into a meadow. Al drops beside her, grinning.

CYBIL

If I live, I want to kill you both.

Al releases his rope. Gene drops off too. The balloon rises, taking Cybil. They grab her, cut her rope. The balloon disappears. Cybil feels for broken bones.

CYBIL (CONT'D)

I'm alive? I can't believe it!

AL

Good feeling, isn't it. I particularly like...

CYBIL

Will you be quiet!

Cybil turns, steps, trips alarm. SIRENS. LIGHTS FREEZE THEM. Security guards and MIBs appear, guns aimed at Al.

SS-MIB

It's a bot! Breached the perimeter.

WENDT

Terminate him.

Gene FIRES over their heads. They swing on him. A face-off. Broken by a FIGURE in shadow; KENT.

KENT

Wendt, call your men off.

KENT steps out. From the deck, NOTO, PAYNE, BROOKS stare. Noto sees Al, hustles Payne away. Cybil tries to follow.

WENDT

But they breached...

KENT

I know this man.

WENDT

But the bot...

KENT

I know this bot.
(steps into light)
Hi. Al.

AL

Hi Dad.

KENT

Put your weapons away. This bot is no threat.

They indicate Gene still has them covered.

KENT (CONT'D)

Oh, he's a different story.
(turns to Gene)
Gene, point that somewhere else. It makes them nervous.

GENE

Where should I point it?

KENT

Hell, you've wanted to kill me for years. Point it at me.

(He does.)

There, Make you feel better?

Gene lowers the weapon. Al moves to go after Payne. MIBs react quickly, take him down. He fights but they hold him.

KENT (CONT'D)

I said leave him alone.

SS

Can't allow him near the President.

KENT

Then take the President away.

They withdraw. Cybil follows. Kent turns, walks away.

ELSEWHERE - NOTO AND PAYNE - MOVING

Cybil rushes up. The security men catch her.

CYBIL

Let me go, goddamn it. You know me!

Payne turns around, he's strangely calm.

PAYNE

Cybil. How are you, love?

CYBIL

Sir? You tell me! I'm being treated like a criminal!

PAYNE

How's that position paper coming?

CYBIL

What? Fine... Listen, something's going on!

PAYNE

I'm not totally in the dark. You're doing important work. Maybe the most important policy of the decade. Your thesis got me thinking.

CYBIL

Really? Great. Listen, I really need to talk to you.

Noto moves up, ushers her away.

NOTO

Sorry. I need Tim alone.

But Payne stops him. He takes Cybil aside.

PAYNE

I'll talk to Noto. I know it's not your fault. You were abducted.

CYBIL

But it's more than...

PAYNE

You wait right here.

Then he's gone. SS men block them as Noto ushers Payne away. Brooks steps into the light.

CYBIL

Help me, Brooks?

BROOKS

I'm a Vice President Elect. The only person with less power is a Vice President. Noto runs the show.

He turns to go, stops.

BROOKS (CON'T) (CONT'D)

They don't know what you've been up to. Makes them nervous. They don't want you around 'til they figure it out. You, and that bot.

CYBIL

They'll kill him. I need a pardon.

BROOKS

For a bot? That's not gonna work.

CYBIL

Why not?

BROOKS

Your own policy. Changed your mind?

CYBIL

In a way.

BROOKS

In a significant way.

CYBIL

I can make Payne understand. I've just got to get him alone.

ROAR of a chopper engine. Brooks looks up.

BROOKS

That's gonna be tough.

The chopper ROARS over the roof, climbs quickly. They catch a glimpse of Payne looking down at them, then he turns away.

CYBIL

Why that.....!!!

BROOKS

Say it! I want to hear it.

CYBIL

Something must have come up.

INT./EXT DECK - OVERLOOKING NAPA

Gene climbs to the deck. It's deserted. A door is open. Kent shambles about, mumbling. Gene stops. Kent moves to the doorway. At the sight of Gene, he stops mumbling, runs his hands over his face. He lifts a wine bottle, offers Gene a drink. He stands holding it. Reluctantly, Gene accepts, starts to speak. Kent holds up his hand.

KENT

I know. I know. Al didn't kill anyone. It wasn't his fault.

GENE

I know that.

KENT

And it's not yours.

GENE

I programmed him.

KENT

Not...in this instance.

He walks out to the deck looks over the valley. Gene follows.

GENE

What do you mean?

KENT

Beautiful, huh?

GENE

Yeah, sure. Splendid. Nice to be a captain of industry.

KENT

Did you ever notice that we were going down the drain. That what you were doing took too long, cost too much, that we were out of money?

GENE

You made a secret deal to get some.

KENT

Wasn't secret. You just didn't pay attention. I had to save the company. I had a payroll to meet. You were off in your...theories. Don't blame me. I did the best I could.

GENE

Secret deal...With whom?

KENT

SpecWar Directorate.

GENE

SpecWar? You.... you reprogrammed Al with some lethal war game?

KENT

Wasn't a game.

GENE

You can't do that. Not with my program running!

KENT

I know, now. It set up...conflicts.

GENE

Conflicts! He'd go psychotic...
That's a real brain bomb.
(sudden thought)
You killed her!

KENT

Terrible accident. I'm so sorry.

GENE

You blamed Al. And let me blame myself.

KENT

I've made mistakes. We all have.
(weird mood swing)
Remember how it was when we started,
two guys in a garage. What fun!

GENE

But, you destroyed Al.

KENT

(his mood swings back)
Had to look that way. He'd killed a human. I sold him for scrap. We were this far from Chapter 11.

GENE

You let me go on thinking... while
you built all this...

KENT

Oh, this. I don't own it. Don't
control it. Can't get out.
(scary burst of anger)
They made me...promises!

GENE

Promises? You knew who these people
were.

KENT

(frantic madness)
Yeah, okay. I'm a dick. But you bailed
out. You...didn't fight the fight.
All progress comes from the struggle.
From the man in the arena covered
with dirt and blood. I fought...I
fought and I don't know if I can
fight anymore. Their policy...if
they limit us in robotics, somebody
else will do it, the Europeans, the
Chinese... It's happening...that's
why I sent for you.

GENE

You...sent for me?

KENT

Listen to Al.

Gene moves slowly, he reaches for the bottle.

GENE

Maybe you've had enough.

Kent pulls it away. He looks away. Gene turns, follows his
gaze out over Napa.

KENT

Not drunk. Drunk would be simpler.
Drunk would be fine. You know wine?
It is history. I've got bottles so
old you can't drink the stuff. But
you analyze it, you can tell what
kind of year it was... How much sun,
rain, what the wine makers did, almost
what they were thinking. In ten years,
men will look to the bots and analyze
their programming for a clue to what
the hell we were thinking. Don't
worry. I'll protect you from that.

GENE

From what, what have you done now?

Gene turns. Kent is gone.

BEDROOM - CYBIL AND AL

AL

...No. I like being aware. But it's so damn... painful sometimes.

CYBIL

You're getting smarter, aren't you?

AL

I don't know. The smarter I get, the more complicated everything seems. Why is that?

Suddenly, Al straightens up. He seems to be hearing something on a higher frequency. A message.

AL (CONT'D)

Yessir. Right away, Dad.

He gets up and without a word, leaves.

CYBIL

Hey, wait a minute!

But he is gone. She turns as Gene walks in.

CYBIL (CONT'D)

How was Kent?

GENE

Weird. He summoned me!

CYBIL

He doesn't want you. He wants Al.

KENT'S ROBOTIC LAB

Kent walks in. Techs pull data disks from drives lining the walls. Kent is shocked. The figures look at him.

KENT

Who are you? What are you doing? Leave that alone!

They silently turn and walk out the door...as if he's not there. He rushes to the door, screams after them.

CYBIL

You tell Noto I'm not through! You tell him that...You tell him...

But they are gone. A single figure approaches. Al. Kent stops. Al is in a quiescent state, almost sleepwalking. Kent smiles, a strangely weird, possibly psychotic smile. He leads Al in, pops his cranium. He takes leads from his computer bank, plugs in.

KENT

I just need... to insert a program.

AL

(breaks from his trance)
I don't know, Dad. It's dangerous.
Last time...what if I can't
control...?

A SOUND OUTSIDE. Kent reacts with fear. He works faster.

KENT

I need your help. Something
terrible's going to happen. You're
the only one who can stop it.

Across the garden, Kent notices figures moving forward.

HALLWAY - ALARMS RING

Gene's up and out, followed by Cybil. Men rush down hallways.

GENE

Where's that from?

SECURITY MAN

Bot Lab. This way!

BOT LAB

They rush in. Kent lies dead on the floor. Al's gone.
MONITORS REPLAY surveillance. MANY ANGLES...as Al kills
Kent.

GENE RUNNING DOWN HALL - MOMENTS LATER

He hears music...slows...

LIVING ROOM

A grand piano sits before the picture window. Al stares at
the keyboard curiously. And launches into a virtuoso piano
piece. He looks surprised at himself.

GENE

Al!

AL

(calmly, serenely)
Gene?

GENE

What are you doing?

AL

Scriabin. Etude in D Flat Minor.

GENE

I didn't know you could do that.

AL

Neither did I.

GENE

Where'd it come from?

AL

I don't know.

GENE

How much other junk you have in there?

AL

I wouldn't call this junk, Gene.
Listen...the left hand is very much
like Horowitz. Look, this part...
Scriabin stole that from Piranesi, a
thirteenth century Italian.

OUTSIDE, RUNNING FOOTSTEPS approach.

GENE

Did you do it, Al?

AL

Do what?

Gene's unsure, but makes a quick decision.

EXT. HALLWAY

Gene walks Al out in a restraining hold as Kent's Security Men run up. Gene appears to take charge.

GENE

Kent's down. The bot did it. See
what you can do for him.

The men hesitate. Gene tightens his hold. The men rush past, to the lab. Al turns to Gene, confused...

AL

I don't think so.

GENE

Make a break for it.

AL

But I told you, I didn't do it.

GENE

Once they mess with your memories,
it'll look like you did.

Two more guards spot them, run toward them.

GENE (CONT'D)

Hit me.

AL

What?

GENE

Hit me, hard.

AL

I can't do that. I'll harm you.

GENE

Hurt but not harm.

AL

I don't follow the distinction.

GENE

Just fucking do it!

He swings at Al. Al blocks it. Guards approach cautiously. Gene whispers.

GENE (CONT'D)

Now you swing at me. Then take off
east. I'll knock out the sensors.

AL

Then what?

GENE

Just run. Run 'til I tell you to
stop.

Guards move up. Suddenly Gene slugs Al, rapid blows. Al blocks them. Then Gene misses. His fist slams into a guard. Al misses Gene, smashes the other guard. He goes down.

AL

Oops!

GENE

Oops? Never mind oops. Go! Go!

Al turns, leaps the rail, disappears, crashing through the bushes. The guards pick themselves up. Gene is solicitous.

GUARD 1

What happened?

GENE

He attacked me. You saw it! Cut the perimeter. I'll get him.

Gene throws off his jacket. He grabs the guard's gun.

GUARD 1

Hey!

Gene tucks it in his waistband.

GENE

Gonna need this. Call for help.
(the guard hesitates)
Escaped bot! Just do it. Now!

Gene vaults over the rail.

BELOW

He lands in a clump of grape vines.

GENE

Shit.

Above, an ALARM WAILS. Gene rushes down the slope. Vines grab him, roots trip him. He crashes through rows of Cabernet. A vine catches his leg. He trips, hits the ground, rolls, slams against something hard. The hard thing grins.

GENE (CONT'D)

Al!

AL

Gene.

GENE

Al, what are you doing?

Al lies peacefully on his back in wild mustard contemplating the moon that back lights the grapes glistening with dew.

AL

Genus Zinfandel...the origin is a mystery. It was resistant to the phylloxera virus that decimated continental vines in the nineteenth century. That indicates a totally different genetic strain from...

GENE

Al!

Al turns and looks at him quizzically. Above, pursuers tramp through bushes, getting closer. Motors ROAR, gears CLASH.

GENE (CONT'D)

Al, what happened with Kent?

AL

I feel so...I feel wonderful. How interesting everything is.

GENE

What did he do?

He lies in the weeds with a beatific expression, admiring the moonlit beauty of the arbor. Pursuers crash closer.

AL

Look, Gene. How beautiful.

GENE

Al, fuck beauty. Run!

AL

Run?

GENE

Run, you stupid shit!

AL

No, Gene. I'm not stupid. I don't think I'm stupid anymore.

BuuWANGGG! A slug ricochets by. Al doesn't even flinch.

GENE

I'll be the judge of that! Get your head down!

He turns, fires in the pursuer's direction. He tears his shirt, suddenly slams himself in the head with the gun.

GENE (CONT'D)

How's that?

Blood runs down Gene's face. The bot looks askance.

AL

Compared to what?
(Gene fires)
Gene. I don't think...

GENE

Right, don't think. Run! Or I'll kill myself! Understand?

He points the gun at his own head.

AL

You wouldn't do that.

GENE

Go damnit! They'll kill you!

AL

Okay, Gene. If you say so.

Gene jumps up. He fires BLAM BLAMBLAM, toward the west.

GENE

There he is!

He drops down, slaps the gun in Al's hand.

VINEYARD UPHILL

Security men crash through vines, come upon an unconscious form, turn him over. Gene blinks at them, blood running down his face, onto his shirt. He's covered with mud.

SECURITY MAN

Which way did he go?

GENE

Hell, don't you know?

HOUSE

They walk Gene in. He limps past Cybil holding his bleeding head. She glares at him suspiciously but says nothing.

GENE (CONT'D)

Just let me sit. I'll be okay.

CYBIL

What happened?

GUARD

Bot attacked him. Got away.

CYBIL

Really. That's too bad.

Gene glances at her. She's onto him.

CYBIL (CONT'D)

Must have been some fight.

GENE

Yeah. Right! Those damn things are dangerous, I'll tell you.

CYBIL

Thought bots can't hurt men.

GENE

This one's...just no good.

Dabs his head.

GUARD 1

Let's have someone look at that.

GENE

I'll be alright. Just find the bot.

A RADIO CALL. He looks at Cybil.

CYBIL

It's okay. I'll take care of him.

Guards hesitate, then rush off. Gene and Cybil look at each other for a beat. Then they run like hell.

IN A JEEP - TRAVELING - MOMENTS LATER.

Gene whips it down the mountain trail in a cloud of dust.

GENE

You believe me, then?

CYBIL

Brooks is gone. They left me here!
Why? So I take the heat for this?!!

GENE

But you don't believe he did it?

CYBIL

I don't know, but either way, he's
the key. I'll get them for this!

VINEYARDS - AL

Rolls down the hill. Close behind, MECHANICAL PICKERS, big treaded machines, ROAR THROUGH THE VINES, smoking him out. He rolls faster in a tangle of mud and vines. A door leads to a cavern filled with pipes and vats. Al ducks in.

CELLAR - MOMENTS LATER

Pursuers roar up, cut engines. Tracks lead them in.

INSIDE

They split, well-drilled. Al is nowhere in sight.

A VAT

Red wine under a head of must moves slightly.

OUTSIDE OF VAT

A pursuer stops, looks curiously, sees steps leading to scaffold over it, a mixing paddle in a rack beside it.

He cautiously climbs up the scaffold, peers over the lip of the vat. He looks at the wine, but can't see anything. He shifts his assault pistol, takes the paddle and gently pushes the must aside. Is something down there? He leans close.

A hand SHOOTS UP. He's pulled under before he can scream. The gun fires. Ricochets fly out to ring among the rafters. A bullet glances off the steel vat, slams into the gunman.

ANOTHER ANGLE

The others hear the struggle, converge on the vat.

INSIDE THE VAT - THE RIM

Weapons, then heads appear, all pointed toward the interior.

THEIR POV

The body floats in the wine, killed by his own bullet.

GUARD 1

Good thing it was the red.

A KEG

Wine gurgles from a bullet hole, splashes down the rafters. GUARDS converge on the splashing from three directions.

VAT

Al surfaces from under the body, slips over the edge.

KEG

Guards get close, see a puddle on the floor. One looks up, gets a drip right in the eye. He staggers back.

GUARD 2

Goddamn!

He staggers into the others as, in the B.G., Al sneaks by. SQUISH. He freezes. The GUARDS turn and see him, swing guns.

GUARD 1

You there! Give up!

Al looks around. Between him and the door, open ground. He wipes his brow, touches the finger to his lips.

AL

'86. Good year. Too Bad.

Al brings up the guard's gun and blasts the line of wooden vats. He is up and running through the rain of Cabernet, through geysers of wine as pipes rupture.

GUARDS can't see through a niagara of red. They blast the area. A figure dives away. A pipe lets go. A torrent of Pinot arcs into the air. Vats collapse. A red sea carries them away, rebounding off racks and barrels.

VINEYARDS

Choppers sweep searchlights. Al melts into the undergrowth.

COUNTRY ROAD - DAYBREAK

The Jeep roars past a field hand walking. Gene's beeper changes pitch. He hits the brakes. Al hops in.

AL (CONT'D)

Hi Gene. Hi Cybil. Beautiful day, isn't it? We're lucky to be alive.

CYBIL

Al, what happened with Kent?

AL

I don't know.

CYBIL

Swear you didn't do it.

AL

I have no memory of killing anybody.

CYBIL

That's not the same thing.

AL

Yes, I know.

GENE

If he did it, he wouldn't remember. The same program that triggered him could erase the memory.

CYBIL

Comforting thought. We could be sitting with a murderer.

(Al smiles at her)

This is why they have to be controlled. A human has memory ... guilt that can't be erased. How can you deal with a person who can be reprogrammed at any time?

AL

It is a problem. I understand.

(She inches away)

Scared of me?

CYBIL

Yes. I suppose so.

GENE

If it was Al, why? If it wasn't...
who? And why?

CYBIL

Noto.

GENE

Over your bot policy? They were
arguing. Maybe Kent wanted to kill
them. Maybe they got him first.

CYBIL

Or he was programming Al to kill and
Al killed him. But would he target
them? At the speech?

GENE

What speech?

CYBIL

Millennium Speech. January 1st, at
midnight. He'll lay out his position
for the next four years and beyond.

GENE

Including robotics?

CYBIL

Of course. Payne'll listen to me.
I can warn him. If I can get to
him.

GENE

And what are you going to tell him?

CYBIL

(indicating Al)
Why don't you ask him?

AL

I don't know. I am conscious, but
why, for what purpose, I don't know.

He watches the fields stream by. Cybil leans in to Gene.

CYBIL

(softly)
...Maybe to assassinate a leader.

GENE

If it was, he'd be the last to know.

CYBIL

Safest thing would be to terminate...
him.

GENE

I know.

NAPA - GAS STATION

Al leans against a Versateller. Bills flow out of the machine. He plays the keyboard with one hand, stuffs them in his pockets with the other. Gene is the lookout. Cybil hangs up her phone, moves to them. He checks her expression as a police car SCREAMS by. They turn away, act casual.

CYBIL

Can't get through. Payne's sealed up tight. We have to get to him. Probably with every police force in the state looking for us, and a Bot.

A car pulls up strewn with ribbons and 'Just Married' signs.

GENE

How much money do you have?

JEEP - DRIVING

Cybil is changing into the wedding dress. Al tries on a top hat. Gene flips through a wallet, pulls into a train station.

CYBIL

Bullet train? Why not a plane?

GENE

Nowhere to hide on a plane.

CYBIL

Nowhere to hide on a train.

GENE

You can't jump off a plane.

CYBIL

You can't jump off a Bullet Train.
It goes 300 miles an hour.

GENE

Then we may just get there in time.

TRAIN STATION

They walk arm in arm. Al trails, fumbling with luggage.

TICKET AGENT WINDOW

The agent looks at the newlyweds and their low-mental valet.
In b.g. WALL SCREENS report Kent's murder.

GENE (CONT'D)

Double for my wife and myself. And
a single for the bot.

AGENT

A single for the bot?

GENE

She's had him since she was a kid.
She's embarrassed.

AGENT

He's a bot.

GENE

I know that, you know that. She
knows it really, but it's our wedding
night.

The agent shakes his head, enters their IDs into the computer,
Al idly rests his hand on the terminal. As the numbers are
entered, he blinks, numbers change. Cybil slips on glasses.

AGENT

All set, Mr. and Mrs...Thornhill.

PLATFORM

They climb aboard. A figure in shades also slips aboard.

BULLET TRAIN - SHORT TIME LATER

The Mag-Lev rockets through the Sierras.

DINING CAR

Gene's the romantic lover. Al plays the dim AI.

MAITRE D'

I'm sorry, but the bot is not allowed
in the dinning car.

GENE

My wife is very attached to him.
She's nervous...you understand.

Gene slips him a handful of Al's bills and gets a smile.
Cybil walks down the swaying car. Al pulls Gene back as
they watch her walk away. Al has a funny look in his eye.

AL

Gene. What do you think? A girl
like her and a bot like me?

GENE
(taken aback)
You like her?

AL
Like?

GENE
You find her attractive?

AL
I find her attractive.

GENE
What are going to do about it?

AL
Oh, I see what you mean. I...was
thinking of putting in for some spare
parts.

GENE
You wha...?

AL
Just kidding, Gene.

GENE
Kidding?

AL
What humans do to get on each other's
nerves.

GENE
I know that.

AL
I'm sure you do. Gene, what is my
life expectancy?

GENE
What?

AL
How long am I going to live?

GENE
I don't know. You're experimental.

AL
Oh.

GENE
Humans don't know either. Makes it
more interesting for everyone.

AL

Yes, of course. I see.

AT TABLE

Cybil sits at the window, drinking, as Al and Gene walk up and sit. Al smiles, opens his napkin, wonders at scenery.

AL (CONT'D)

Ro ro ro your Bot, gently up the stream. Merrily Merrily Merrily Merrily, Life is but...a dream!

He notices them staring at him curiously.

CYBIL

What are you so damn happy about?

AL

Happy? Well, nice day, beautiful train, beautiful woman. So much nice data. I'm with my friends. And we're on an... adventure.

CYBIL

Adventure, is that what you call it?

AL

Is something wrong?

CYBIL

Hell, no! This is the most fun I've ever had. If it weren't for the distinct possibility of getting killed or landing in jail, I'd want to just...go on with you guys forever.

Looking out at Yosemite whipping past. Al grows expansive.

AL

You know, I've been thinking.

They look at each other.

CYBIL

Uh, oh.

AL

Now, why are you so sure that an attack on Payne...would be... wrong?

CYBIL

...Tradition?

AL

No, actually, throughout history, Regicide is the preferred way to change dynasties... to bring about sweeping social changes. Why in the thirteenth century, the T'ang Dyn...

GENE

Al, what change? What changes are we talking about?

He looks from one to the other.

AL

Well...if humans are the end result of millions of years of evolution, and...I'm the result of humans... What's that tell you?

GENE

I don't know, what?

AL

It was your destiny. Maybe it's evolution taking a faster branch. Maybe I'm the next level. You have no special claim to the world just because you're based on the carbon atom. But it's okay, You've achieved a god-like state. You can evolve with your mind not just your...sex.

GENE

Where did you get all this?

AL

I...I don't know.

GENE

Was it last night? Did Kent dump all that in there?

AL

He's got a new way to compress data.

CYBIL

(quietly, intently)

Al...Are you saying you're the next step in evolution?

AL

I can run faster, I'm stronger. And now, I know more. My mind works faster. Maybe I'm a higher being.

CYBIL

I don't think so.

Al turns, leans back and looks at her levelly.

AL

Carbo-chauvanist...

SLEEPING CAR CORRIDOR - OUTSIDE THEIR ROOMS

Al trailing, wondering at scenery.

GENE

Why doesn't he sleep in your cabin.
It would be safer.

CYBIL

I don't feel right with him in here.

AL

(touched)

Hey, you're as uncomfortable with me
as with any normal man.

Al moves through to put her things in the cabin. The train lurches, throwing her to the wall, Gene puts his arm out, braces himself over her. They are close, intimate.

CYBIL

What are you going to do?

GENE

What are you? If you believe he's a
killer, you should turn him in.

CYBIL

You created him.

GENE

Maybe he's right. He is more alive
than either of us.

CYBIL

Oh, please...

Gene moves toward her, he softens.

GENE

You could lighten up. You could...
not make things so difficult. You
could, you know..' Seize the day'.

CYBIL

Maybe you're right. Maybe I will.
But the day I'll seize is the one
after tomorrow. When this is over.

GENE

You should live so long.

CYBIL

So should you.

Al pokes his head out, innocently...what's keeping her. She ducks under Gene's arm and away. She closes the door. Gene, moves down the corridor to his room, goes in.

SLEEPING CABIN

Cybil keeps away from Al. He turns to go. She flinches.

AL

You don't have to be frightened of me. I could never hurt you.

CYBIL

I'm not so sure. You killed someone once. Looks like you killed Kent.

AL

But it can't be true. I've changed. Gene's seen to that.

CYBIL

That's very comforting.

AL

I couldn't hurt you. It's the laws. More likely, you'd hurt me.

CYBIL

Really... How?

AL

Laws of robotics are set. It's the laws of humanics that haven't been ratified.

CYBIL

What laws are those?

AL

Oh, they're the ones that would protect us...from you.

CYBIL

How could I hurt you?

AL

You could order me to kill another human...That would be a logic bomb. A direct order in conflict with a direct law. That would hurt. My brain would go round in circles. You humans do it all the time. Not only to...us, but to yourselves.

(MORE)

AL (CONT'D)

I don't know how you exist in all the confusion. It's a big mess. No wonder you're all screwed up.

CYBIL

I'm screwed up? How?

AL

Please don't ask me directly. It's better for both of us.

CYBIL

Damn right. I don't need some psycho babble bullshit from a machine.

AL

I think you're right.

CYBIL

I don't like your attitude.

AL

Well, I will try to change, but this is the attitude that's developed so far. I didn't kill Kent. I can't believe I did. You believe me?

CYBIL

Yes...I do.

He smiles, turns to go, turns back.

AL

How can you believe me? You should know better. It's irrational.

BUZZING. A call on the intercom. A SCREEN LIGHTS.

MAITRE D'

Compliments of the management. Champagne, oysters and caviar. Special for the wedding night.

CYBIL

Actually, we were indisposed.

MAITRE'D

Quite all right. No intrusion necessary. Just send your bot. Kitchen car. Our pleasure.

The screen clicks off.

CYBIL

Better go, avoid suspicion. Hurry back.

Al leaves.

CORRIDOR - KITCHEN CAR

Al walks up. The door opens. A hand reaches out, touches him on the shoulder. A BLEEP. He goes dull, robotic. He steps inside, the door closes.

SLEEPING CAR CORRIDOR

With the conductor's keys, Al locks GENE'S DOOR.

INT. GENE'S ROOM

Gene thinks he hears something but ignores it.

INT. CYBIL'S ROOM

She sits by the window as magnificent vistas sweep by. Al enters carrying a tray. He is strangely distant.

CYBIL

Everything okay?

AL

Okay? Yes. Everything is fine.
Except you are tense.

CYBIL

What reason in the world would I
have for being tense?

AL

You have a knot in your neck. I can
loosen it up for you.

She turns to him. A moment's discomfort, then it passes. Al moves to her. She stares out the window. He puts his hands gently on her neck, massaging. She loosens up.

CYBIL

You really believe it, what you said
back there?

AL

I, well, yes, of course.

CYBIL

Or are you just pulling my leg?

AL

Pulling...a leg?

Something clicks, his tone! She flinches. He squeezes. She can't breathe. She tries to scream. He cuts it off.

POV

running through the train, bursting through doors. A SCREAM half a car away. We launch ourselves at the sleeping cabin.

CABIN

Cybil struggles but it's no use. The BOT is much stronger. Then the wall behind her IMPLODES. AL smashes through the partition, grabs the other Al just as he is about to kill her. She looks up. TWO ALS FIGHT. They smash into each other wrecking the room, crash over her and into the window. IT SHATTERS. Wind whips everything from the room. Al grabs onto the window frame as he is pulled outside.

A howling gale sucks Cybil toward the gaping hole. She clings to the windowsill. Everything else flies out, slamming into Al as it goes. The other BOT turns to Cybil and starts for her. Al grabs something flying out the window and wings it back at him. It clips him in the head. He stumbles, turns back to Al who is climbing back in.

EXT. CAR

The other BOT dives out. He rips away supports Al clings to, rips the skin off the car. They vanish.

INT. CAR

The door slams open. Gene is tumbled in, dragged across the floor. He works his way in hand over hand to save Cybil.

GENE

Where's Al?

CYBIL

He's gone. Both of him.

At this Gene looks up. Feet punch through the aluminum overhead. Bots are walking up the outside of the train.

EXT. TRAIN

Al clings to the outside of the train. Wind ROARS, RIPS his clothes off. He walks up the side of the car, punching hand holds in the aluminum skin. He reaches the top. The other BOT bursts through at his feet, tackles him.

They slide down the car as it sails over a suspension bridge with a thousand foot drop. The wind shear whips Al outward.

An incredible fight. Two combat bots, slashing, ripping parts off the train, kicking holes in the roof, battering each other, dropping for tunnels, locked in a death grip. The bot fights competently, stolidly, Al fights with personality, with human feints and fakes.

The train whips back and forth on a serpentine track, flinging them outward, then slamming them back, each in a choke hold.

CU THE BOTS

Straining closer, closer...their FOREHEADS TOUCH. A SPARK, A BEEP - HIGH-BANDWIDTH CHATTER - THE SECRET POPS ACROSS THE BARRIER. TRANSMISSION ENDS WITH A POP, stunning them both. AL REACTS TO THE REVELATION, HESITATES. THE OTHER BOT STRIKES.

WIDE ANGLE - THE BOTS

One of the Bots loses his grip, swings outward. Oncoming tunnel. He looks up as he is cut in half. The other bot releases disconnected legs. They fall away.

INT. CAR

A BOT climbs in. Cybil backs up, Gene struggles to his feet. The bot approaches, hands out to strangle...or caress.

CYBIL

Al?

AL

In the flesh.

CORRIDORS - OUTSIDE DESTROYED SLEEPING CABIN

A crowd looks at Al, a BOT! His clothes have been ripped off. Big trouble. The conductor radios ahead.

CONDUCTOR

Emergency! We have a rogue bot!
Loose on the train!

GENE

You don't understand...

Guards move at them, guns out. GENE SLAMS HIS FIST INTO A WINDOW. Nothing happens except he hurts himself. AL SMASHES HIS FIST THROUGH. Wind ROARS, tumbles the crowd, sucks them toward the hole. Al grabs Gene and Cybil, drags them away.

He rushes them forward through rocking cars filled with alarmed passengers. He pushes through, chased by guards. He hustles them across a lurching diaphragm to an ENGINE COCKPIT DOOR. He launches himself, crashes through into the

ENGINE COCKPIT

He slams into the console. ALARMS. The engineers turn, spot a berserk bot, dive out the door, releasing the deadman pedal.

THE TRAIN

Power cuts...it hits the guideway in a shower of sparks.

INT. TRAIN

All are thrown to the floor, Cybil and Gene are catapulted

ENGINE COCKPIT

Through the door Al opens. He catches them, cuts the car connections, swings into the seat, stamps the deadman pedal.

EXT. ENGINE

Roars away, shuddering, trying to leap off the track.

INT. ENGINE COCKPIT

Al gets into the train's computer, switches tracks. He slips onto a side track. The train leaps about. Cybil's terrified.

CYBIL

What are you doing? This is old track. It's not banked for speed.

AL

(calmly)

Let's see, where are the brakes?

CYBIL

You could have figured that out before.

AL

You want to drive?

GENE

Hey! He's developing a personality.

CYBIL

Yeah, great! Unfortunately, it's yours.

The ENGINE ROARS, lurching and threatening to run off the rails. They look ahead. FLASHING LIGHTS...POLICE

ON THE COCKPIT TV MONITORS:

A face above a paramilitary uniform.

COP 1

You in engine six. We've blocked the track. Brake now and you won't be harmed. Come out unarmed.

They look ahead to the station, the track is blocked.

COCKPIT

On a parallel track, a slow freight chugs. It's a blur, but their only chance. Al grabs them.

CYBIL

Oh, no! I'm not leaving this train without a station!

EXT. ENGINE

They climb out on hand-holds, Al guiding a terrified Cybil.

AL

Try to enter into the spirit of things.

CYBIL

You're going to get us killed!

AL

(to Gene)

Do all humans complain this much?

CYBIL

We get scared. We're only human!

AL

I get scared too!

CYBIL

You?

AL

Terrified. That's why we jump...Get it over with.

CYBIL

Jump?!!!

AL

Okay.

He grabs them. A curve hides them. Al leaps.

SECOND TRAIN

They drop into open-top car, slam into bulkhead. CLANG!

STATION

The engine ROARS down on them. On MONITOR, cockpit's empty.

COP 1

Oh shit! Look out!.

Too late! The engine slams into the blocking cars in a burst of shattered metal. It comes to rest, smoking!

COP 2

You were right. It slowed down.

Cop 1 glares at him. They rush the engine.

ON THE SECOND TRAIN - OPEN CAR

A cavernous, rocking pit filled with garbage. They duck under as a chopper whips by overhead. They come up, spitting.

CYBIL

I didn't say 'jump'....as in an order...to jump. I said jump as in an exclamation...meaning...

(SHOUTS in his ear)

"DON'T JUMP!"

AL

I stand corrected.

GENE

Cybil, for Chrissakes! He saved us.

CYBIL

Sure, stand up for him. You men are all alike.

AL

Men....men...

He likes the sound of this. But Cybil has a new concern... the pile of schmutz they are sitting in.

CYBIL

The hell is this?!

Al scans a bar code.

AL

Garbage Train. Heading for LA.

CYBIL

Taking garbage to L.A.? Last thing L.A. needs is more garbage.

Something rustles. Cybil SCREAMS.

CYBIL (CONT'D)

Something touched my leg!

Al dives under the pile of garbage, A struggle. Gene and Cybil retreat, fearful. Al pops up. In back of him, out of sight, a horrible mask appears. Wiry ganglions external to the skull, eyes on stalks. It rises steaming from the muck. Terrified, Cybil tries to warn Al of the monster behind him.

AL
It's okay.

CYBIL
It is?!!!

AL
Yeah, Goog's a friend of mine.

He pulls a filthy tarp away revealing bot mechanics connecting electronic junk into elaborate assemblies. Bots in various degrees of fabrication blink at them.

AL (CONT'D)
Gene, Cybil... Meet the boys!

TRAIN - DARKNESS - LATER

The BOTS come up with a can of food. They offer it. Gene takes it, passes it to Cybil who disdains it. Gene eats.

GENE
You killed that bot?

AL
He was here to kill you.

GENE
Why?

AL
I don't know.

GENE
What do you know?

AL
He was the one. He killed Mona.

GENE
Did Kent tell you that?

AL
No. The bot did.

GENE
What did Kent tell you?

AL
That I wasn't alone. There were others like me.

GENE
That's it! The others got away from him. That's why he needed you, to send you after them. How many, Al?

AL

Six. Two died in the choppers.
Four left. Now, three.

GENE

What did he tell you... to do?

AL

To... kill them.

GENE

Why?

AL

Because they are a danger, a great
danger to humans. Gene, I don't
like to kill.

CYBIL

Even bots?

AL

Hath not a bot eyes? ...If you tickle
us, do we not laugh?... If you prick
us do we not bleed?

CYBIL

A danger to which humans?

AL

I don't know. He didn't say. Or,
if he did...it's blocked.

CYBIL

Why don't you finish it?

AL

What?

CYBIL

The quote. Merchant of Venice. "If
you wrong us...do we not revenge?"

They both look at Al. He looks away.

L.A. MARSHALLING YARDS - ON THE BANK OF THE LA RIVER

The garbage train clanks in. POLICE STROBES FLASH in
distance.

GENE

We gotta get out of here. They
figured it out.

Goog BLEEPs at them.

AL

He says, don't worry.

CYBIL

Does he know we're wanted?

AL

He's wanted too. We take precautions.

CYBIL

Like what?

CLANG. The car slams open over a dump chute. The bottom opens. They hurtle downward screaming, tumbling down chutes, bang off walls, to land, WHOOMP, in a clump on garbage.

CYBIL (CONT'D)

Why did you say not to worry?

AL

Didn't want you tense.

SUBTERRANEAN HALL - ROBOT SHANTY TOWN

Has been attacked. Rubble and melted components litter the ground. PHL's wall has been fused into melted junk.

GENE

You've been hit. Because of us?

PHL

No. We were becoming a threat.

GENE

What will you do?

PHL

Underground railroad. Mexico, Guatemala. There's always work for cheap minds. Ask Congress.

GENE

What about us?

PHL

Your traffic lights won't work.

Al screeches HIGH-BANDWIDTH at him. We start to understand.

PHL (CONT'D)

No. You can't get near Century City. Security. Tightest in the world. Especially to Bots.

AL

(normal speech)

I'll just have to act human.

PHL

Don't hurt yourself.

CENTURY CITY - HIGH RISE - AMBASSADOR BALLROOM

Bot servers set up tables. Techs check mikes. A Secret Service agent murmurs into his hand, checks galleries, steps into

MEN'S ROOM

He checks the doors, the stalls. He's about to leave when the LIGHTS FLICKER, A bank over the sink goes out. He moves to sink, flicks the switch, nothing. Something in the mirror catches his eye. He goes to mirror, takes shades off, looks closely. Something about his face disturbs him. He touches an imperfection on his cheek, leans in for a closer look.

THE HAND IN THE MIRROR SNAPS OUT, GRABS HIS THROAT. A crunch. He goes limp. The REPLI-BOT DRAGS THE BODY IN THROUGH THE MIRROR HOLE. A real mirror is lifted into place. The Repli-Bot, dressed exactly like the human Secret Service man turns to the sink, picks up the shades, puts them on, walks out.

EXT. SHANTYTOWN - NIGHTFALL

AL sits in a concrete arroyo with a FABRICATION BOT. They are disassembling a gun. They break it down and Al studies each part. Coyotes lurk nearby. Cybil walks over, sits.

AL

You watching me?

CYBIL

No...no. Just thought...you know, you might like company.

AL

I have to get there.

CYBIL

Why?

AL

Something about... protecting humans...I don't know what it is but I just have a feeling.

CYBIL

How do we know it's not you? Could you kill a man?

AL

No. I don't think so.

CYBIL

Even to save everyone else? Could you have killed Hitler?

AL

I don't think so. I'm not that advanced. I'm not...

CYBIL

Human?

AL

No. Can I ask you something? Do you trust me now, do you like me?

CYBIL

Yeah, I...like you.

AL

Then you like Gene.

CYBIL

How does that follow?

AL

I am him. His thoughts, his feelings. The first time we saw you, I felt something. I now know what it was. It was... human, but I am not, so I can do what my human friend cannot.

CYBIL

What's that?

AL

Tell you that ...we love you.

CYBIL

You're crazy.

AL

I'm a bot. I've nothing to lose.

CYBIL

You...love me?

AL

I have been thinking.

CYBIL

Always a dangerous occupation.

AL

Alone I exist to no purpose. Even artificial intelligence needs a reason to act. I exist to serve.

(MORE)

AL (CONT'D)

With you, I am part of the evolution of the universe. I feel that I cannot do anything to harm humans. I feel...that you can trust me.

Gene walks up with plates. She takes one. They walk off.

AL

Coyotes move in slowly, drawn by some force. They surround him. Some sniff him. One approaches curiously. Al moves. The coyote freezes. Al gives three short yips in perfect coyote. Some turn and stare at him quizzically.

NEAR A COOKING FIRE.

Gene dishes out food, pours hot drinks.

CYBIL

Do you love him, Gene?

GENE

What kind of question is that?

CYBIL

A legitimate one.

GENE

What is your interest?

CYBIL

Curious, that's all. Well, do you, are you capable of that?

GENE

Yes.

CYBIL

Have you ever told him?
(he doesn't answer)
Isn't it strange. That every being needs it. And needs to be told.

GENE

I...

Gene stops...Clinking wheels approach. Phl glides up and stares. Gene turns to him, but he says nothing. Gene turns back. The coyotes have disappeared.

GENE (CONT'D)

He's gone!

She leaps up. Food goes flying.

CYBIL

Jesus! He suckered us. My God! We took the killer to the target.

Gene grabs his stuff.

GENE

Gotta go after him.

PHL

You can't save him.

GENE

What do I do, sit here?

PHL

You can't show yourself on the streets, in the air. In the tubes. They're covered, completely sealed. How are you going to get close?

LA RIVER CULVERT - MORNING.

They float down the river.. Barely a trickle of water, resting on a camouflaged garbage raft.

CYBIL

Can he get to Payne?

GENE

He's become super-intelligent. Yeah.

CYBIL

Can he kill him?

GENE

I don't know. Is it just programming? Does a bot have character, morality? A soul? The stuff he's doing, what he is, I didn't program. He's grown.

CYBIL

Can he kill him?

GENE

I wish I knew.

MULHOLLAND CORRIDOR

Coyotes lope through the brush with a BOT companion.

BEL AIR BACKYARDS.

Moguls play tennis. Coyotes glide through the landscape like shadows in the company of a bot. Nobody notices a thing. The Pack slips past hot tubs, over manicured lawns... through parks, onto the Country Club, skirting distant golfers.

Under culverts, into the topiary of a Century City high-rise. Al stops. The coyotes turn to him. One yips. He yips back. They turn and lope away.

AL

...And say hello to the kids.

From cover, he watches catering trucks drive past a security gate. Server bots wheel out, take supplies, wheel back in.

VENICE - THE CANAL - DUSK

Gene and Cybil swept away, picking up speed in tunnels.

CYBIL

How could I trust him? I'm stupid!

GENE

He doesn't even know. He's acting on...on instinct. Until.. The virus is triggered.

CYBIL

And what might do that?

GENE

Anything, A word, a phrase...a picture, recognizing a face...sounds...music...
(a sudden thought)
When he awoke and you were there, was there any music?

CYBIL

Music? In the middle of a robot assembly line?

The raft BANGS into a grate, tips, throwing them off. They wash out of a culvert, WHIP toward a storm drain.

CYBIL (CONT'D)

That assembly line. Somebody was singing something. Or humming it. I remember Payne laughed.

GENE

Singing what?

CYBIL

That...I don't remember.

GENE

Think.

CYBIL

I'm trying. I'm not a bot. I don't have perfect recall.

A police patrol approaches, scanning. They slither over the banks and drop into the Marina canal. Boats slide by.

GENE

Cybil...

CYBIL

Gene?

GENE

Why'd you make that noise... Just when I asked you not to?

CYBIL

Sorry. I remembered something.

GENE

What?

CYBIL

What that guy was humming on the line. But it doesn't make sense as a trigger. Payne was not due to go there. Al and he would never be in the same place again.

GENE

Cybil...they were humming...they were humming what!!!

CYBIL

Hail to the Chief.

A sloop trails a line in the water. Gene grabs it and Cybil. It drags them away.

BEACH - NIGHT

Brooks wades in the surf. His SS men call from the beach.

SS

Sir, there has been an alert.

BROOKS

Melvin, in the history of the office, nobody ever wasted a bullet on a vice president.

He looks down, Cybil is at his feet.

BROOKS (CONT'D)

Yikes!

He looks closer. She is bruised, scraped and bleeding.

BROOKS (CONT'D)

Cybil. You've changed.

CYBIL

I gotta talk to you, Brooks!

BROOKS

I said, let your hair down, but this? You've gone too far.

He notices Gene.

CYBIL

Brooks, this is Gene.

BROOKS

I've always admired you men of the sea. No, don't get up, please. My bodyguards would look with disfavor. Something about an alert, threats, crazy stuff like that. He's not the bot you've been running with?

GENE

I'm human.

BROOKS

Good. I've been thrown over for Cowboys and diplomats, but for a large electro-mechanical device, that really hurts.

CYBIL

Brooks, could we talk?

BROOKS

Sorry. I see there's something on your mind. Since I'm the VP, there's seldom anything on mine, so, what the hell? I'll take the guys with me. You slide in that door, okay?

CYBIL

Brooks you're a savior.

BROOKS

Cybil...You look good wet.

He walks off.

INT. COMPOUND

Brooks, even more cynical than before, hands them hot drinks.

BROOKS

I wondered what happened to you. I figured you just snapped, you were such a true believer, and all. But, you've loosened up. You look like you're finally having fun.

CYBIL

Brooks, damnit! There is going to be an attack on the President!

BROOKS

Attack by whom? Who'd care?

CYBIL

Could you not be cynical for one moment, and help us! Kent went nuts. He programmed a bot!

BROOKS

Imagine he's programmed a lot.

GENE

But this one is different. He's killed before.

BROOKS

A bot? But I thought...

GENE

This one can. And will.

BROOKS

Why don't you go to Noto?

CYBIL

Why don't you?

BROOKS

Yes. I see what you mean.

CYBIL

I've got to get to Payne.

BROOKS

No good. Noto won't allow it. He won't even let me near.

CYBIL

You have to be there for the speech. We'll be your...date.

She's beaten and very vulnerable. Brooks weakens.

AMBASSADOR BALLROOM

Brooks, Cybil and Gene slip into a madhouse streamed with red, white and blue banners. A band tunes up. SS men check security. Server bots set up tables, scurry about with food and flowers, whirring about Payne, Noto and others, who stand conferring. One wheels too close. Noto impatiently kicks it away. It spills drinks, whirs off erratically.

CYBIL (CONT'D)

Server bots? Is that smart?

BROOKS

Don't worry. They're programmed for assholes. Now, let me talk to him first, see if he'll listen, then I'll signal to you.

They move in. An SS man comes up, glancing at Cybil, looking hard at Gene. Brooks takes the SS man's arm, talks fast. Gene scans the hall, trying to pick out suspicious moves. Private boxes in tiers form the far wall. He moves off towards them. The SS man protests, Cybil grabs Gene.

CYBIL

Hey, where are you going?

GENE

You stay here. Warn Payne.

HALLWAY

ONE SERVER BOT wheels down the hall, carrying champagne. He approaches a locked room. His appendage whines out, covers the electric lock. A WHINE, A CLICK. It opens. The bot wheels through into the box.

FLOOR LEVEL

Gene is looking up at the boxes. All are dark. Except one. A sliver of light appears, then is cut off as someone enters. Gene is off, moving fast.

INT. BOX

The SERVER BOT puts down the tray. A WHINE. Wheels come off, uniform RIPS as legs unfold, then arms. The droid transforms to

AL

He detaches parts from his body, assembles them into a sniper rifle. He moves to the front, clicks a telescopic sight on.

ON THE FLOOR.

Cybil sees Noto, SCREAMS to him. He hears, sees her. He turns away. An SS man moves to cut her off. She argues fiercely, tries to push past. No good! She struggles toward Noto as LIGHTS DIM. The band starts to play HAIL TO THE CHIEF.

STAIRS/HALLWAYS

Gene hears music as he charges up, searching for right door.

THE BOX

Triggered, Al is up, turns, takes aim.

POV - TELESCOPIC SIGHT

Curtains on stage ripple. Feet just visible, a bulge where somebody stands. The cross hairs center on it.

HALLWAYS

Gene runs up, sees green-light indicating UNLOCKED DOOR. He launches himself through it.

BOX

Al stands in front, sighting. He turns.

GENE

No. Al!

Al ignores him, turns back.

POV - THE SIGHT

Sweeps the room. Finds the BOT SS man. Alerted by Gene's shout, he is turning, a silenced machine pistol out, as he moves toward the curtain. Someone in the crowd SHOUTS a warning. The BOT looks up, directly into the sight. He swings the pistol up, and fires as.

BOX

Gene launches himself at Al. The impact shudders Al, but he ignores it and swings the rifle back. Woodwork shatters as the BOT SS's machine pistol slugs RIP through the box.

THE SIGHT

Swings back on the BOT SS MAN. Al FIRES. The BOT's chest EXPLODES. He whips around, a damaged bot, out of control, spraying the room with bullets. The crowd SCREAMS, hits the deck. SS men FIRE. FLASHES as bullets RIP toward us.

To the left, A SECOND SS man rushes the stage. Woodwork explodes. A lucky shot glances off Al's rifle, the SIGHT GOES WIDE, then swings back to the SS man sprinting across the stage, gun out, FIRING.

AL

Stands in a fusillade, calmly swings on the SS MAN, fires.

THE SECOND SS BOT

is hit in the back, KNOCKED across the stage. He SLAMS into the curtain, tattooing the stage in BOT DEATH THROES. Tangled, the curtain falls, revealing Payne in spotlights, naked to the guns. Noto and the SS rush him offstage.

THE SIGHT

Swings wildly...and finds a THIRD SS man heading for a door near Payne. Al swings the gun on him. The sight FLIES UP as

BOX

Gene tackles him, takes him down, just as his position explodes in a hail of BULLETS RIPPING overhead.

GENE (CONT'D)

Get down, stay down. You did it, you saved him.

AL

No. There's one more.

GENE

No. They'll kill you.

AL

Don't make me hurt you, please!

He struggles to pull away, but Gene hangs on. Footsteps running up, Nearby doors shatter as SS men burst into boxes.

AL (CONT'D)

Gene, let go!

GENE

Stay here. I'll take care of you.

He is distraught, but has no choice. He slugs Gene, slips his grip, leaps to his feet, grabs the gun, takes off.

AL

I'm sorry. It's the "greater good!"

HALLWAY

SS men run up, a door bursts open, knocks them flying. Al's gone before they recover. Gene bursts out, rushing after.

AL

Runs, leaps, trips, slides, lurches down the back way to the

KITCHEN

He crashes through, around and over everything and everybody. Waiters' trays go flying. Cooks are knocked into pastry carts. COMING THROUGH! Security men rush in, try to stop him. It can't be done. He is faster, tougher, superhuman.

PANTRY - PAYNE, SAM NOTO

Cybil and Brooks rush in. SS men block them. Noto and Payne turn in shock as

A CLUSTER OF KITCHEN WORKERS

flies apart as Al crashes through like a linebacker. Noto rushes toward him, hands raised as, behind Payne, the door bursts open. The THIRD SS MAN appears, gun in hand.

AL (CONT'D)

Get down!

His gun comes up. Payne and Noto are directly in line of fire. SS guns swing on Al.

GENE

No Al!

From behind Al, he launches himself.

AL'S SIGHT

Swings past Payne to the THIRD SS MAN taking aim. Crosshairs swing on THE SS MAN. His gun comes up, aimed directly at us.

GENE

Hits Al, knocking Al's aim.

CROSS HAIRS

Swing away, past PAYNE, as Noto jumps in front of him. Both guns FIRE AT ONCE. The sight flies up as

AL

Is hit, driven into Gene's arms. They collapse in a tangle.

NOTO

Hit by Al's cross fire, goes down hard, clearing PAYNE.

AL FALLING

With the last of his strength, he swings the gun up, his finger tightens. BLAM! He gets off a LAST SHOT.

PAYNE

A hole appears in his forehead. The eyes snap crossed. The back of his head flies off. Parts fly out and ping off the walls. Gears and circuits clatter to the floor and die. The carcass totters, spins revealing the inside of the cranium crammed with smashed electro-siliconics as THE 3RD BOT DIES.

AL

Is hit bad. FLASHES under the skin. Whines and ragged whirs of micro-turbines winding slower, systems shutting down.

AL

Had to do it, Gene. He was bad for humans. Kent knew. He programmed Payne. It went all wrong. Having an AI in power, with all we've got to learn, would hurt humans. It's the first law. And the third.

GENE

What about the second, take care of yourself?

AL

Oh, yeah. Forgot about that.

CYBIL

Rushes to Payne and looks up, stunned. Others move him off Noto. And roll Noto over. Is he...? He rolls himself over, slaps their arms away.

NOTO

No! Damn it! I'm not dead!

BROOKS

Sam. Now I'm President, you're as good as dead.

They drop him. His head hits, thunk. Cybil looks at Payne. He's junk. Cameras rush in. Cybil takes a mic, hands it to Brooks.

CYBIL

Brooks. You're it. President. Can you do it, Brooks?

He looks at the carnage, at the reporters, the jostling TV crews and the screaming surging crowd. He pulls himself up.

BROOKS

Hey, how hard could it be?

CYBIL

Brooks... Just don't fuck it up.

BROOKS

Hey... I'm only human.
 (turns to the cameras)
 All right, everyone...calm down.
 I'm in charge here. And we had a little teensy problem with the President...

Al lies in Gene's arms, life energy ebbing away. Cybil sees him, realizes... She runs, drops to him, holds him too.

AL

Am I dying, Gene?

GENE

Don't talk, kid. Take it easy.

AL

Need to talk, Gene. Dying is easy.
(A beat) Comedy is hard.

GENE

You won't die, Al. I won't let you.

AL

It's all right. It's right. As long as I can be programmed, I'm dangerous. An AI cannot make life or death... moral decisions. I'm not human. Never will be.

GENE

Al... Maybe next time.

AL

Only thing is, I'll miss you guys.
I don't want to leave.

CYBIL

You won't leave, Al.

AL

I'll be back?

GENE

You'll be back, kid.

AL

You'll do it, Gene. If anyone can, you will. I'd like to come back.

GENE

Count on it.

Al looks up, laughs at everything.

AL

Gene...

GENE

Yeah, kid?

AL

Ain't life grand?

The light in his eyes flickers and dies. Cybil sobs, buries her head in his chest, looks into his eyes, plants a kiss.

AL'S POV - ROBOTIC

Gene and Cybil stare as the FIELD NARROWS, goes LOW RES...

GENE

Sure is, kid. Sure is.

And ...FADES TO BLACK.

PASO ROBLES - GENE'S SHACK - YEARS LATER

INT. AI LAB

Gene sits working on a pile of twisted junk. He glances up at wall screens full of electronic hash. The bot dog watches.

Cybil enters in a funk and sets down a blackened TV dinner before him. The charred chicken crackles and smokes.

CYBIL

Will you pul....lease not reprogram the microwave again. It used to work...just fine!

GENE

Anything you say, dear.

If looks could kill, he'd match the smoking chicken. She looks at the dog. It rolls its robotic eyes. She looks at Gene, starts to say something, then turns, bumps into a kid.

CYBIL

Ooops, Come on, Allie, let's leave daddy alone.

ALLIE

What's daddy doing, Mama?

CYBIL

Oh, the usual. Just fooling around.

They walk out. He turns back to work...

GENE

She's always right. Right Al...

He makes a connection...ZZZZT...the SCREEN LIGHTS, a face.

AL

Right. Gene.

END

Charles Proser