

AUTOPILOT

"Thinking Like a Car"

Episode #3

Written by

Bill Birney

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1134 Al Anderson Ave.
Langley, WA 98260
(425) 890-0391
Bill_birney@hotmail.com

TEASER

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

FADE UP ON blurry traffic cam footage of Mateo's truck approaching on the right shoulder and crashing into an underpass column, then bursting into flames. The cam shakes from the impact. Slow-moving cars next to the truck are swept sideways into adjacent lanes, causing further chaos.

The footage is slowed down and repeated several times.

REPORTER 2 (V.O.)

People die everyday in car accidents. What makes this one unique is that it involved a self-driving car, one with AI software developed by Global Transport; software, that up until now, was thought to be immune from safety issues. Evidently, that's no longer the case.

EXT. FREEWAY ACCIDENT SCENE - DAY

Reporter 2 is doing a live stand-up a safe distance away from the accident clean-up. A firetruck is spraying foam on the truck as workers attempt to unbend the cab.

REPORTER 2

As far as anyone knows, the driver Mateo Velazquez is the first person to die as the result of a robovehicle error. I have with me Jerry Pence from the emergency team that first responded to the accident that occurred less than, what...

The camera PANS with the reporter as he turns to PENCE.

PENCE

Right around 4:20.

REPORTER 2

Two, three hours ago.

PENCE

About.

CONTINUED:

REPORTER 2

Jerry, how could something like this have happened?

PENCE

Hard to say. The truck was driving at a high rate of speed on the emergency shoulder.

REPORTER 2

How fast?

PENCE

Very fast. I'd say, maybe 70, 80, judging by the amount of damage to the truck and the column itself. I mean, the way the front of it was pushed in. It literally wrapped around the column. I'd say the truck wasn't even attempting to slow down. It just went full-force right into it.

REPORTER 2

What about the fire?

PENCE

It appears the impact caused the battery to explode. But I'm no expert.

REPORTER 2

Who is? It doesn't happen very often, right?

PENCE

Right. I've never seen one explode.

PULL BACK to include other members of the media circus, crunched cars, fire, smoke, flashing lights.

EXT. FREEWAY ACCIDENT SCENE CLOSER - CONTINUOUS

Somehow Turturro has gained access to the site, and is working his way surreptitiously around workers and debris to get as close as possible to the grizzly scene. He holds a small camera and narrates as he moves in.

TURTURRO

(Quietly, not be noticed)

Do we need any more proof?

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

TURTURRO (CONT'D)

The GT software that was supposed to provide a completely safe driving experience can and does kill. This wasn't some minor fender-bender. This was no accident. It just went straight into the column at high speed. But why?

He ends on a CLOSE SHOT of the truck front-end accordioned around the column. He turns the camera around to him.

TURTURRO (CONT'D)

Why? The software has been running reliably on hundreds of millions of cars for years. What changed? Why all of a sudden do we see something as horrific as this?

He turns the camera back to the truck.

TURTURRO (CONT'D)

The fact is, self-driving cars are evolving. Becoming something only a madman could dream up. This was an intentional act, a willful act of aggression from an advanced mind.

A highway patrol officer suddenly fills the frame.

PATROL OFFICER 1

Hey, you can't be here. Sorry. We need to get you back up with the others. Come on.

The CAMERA SHAKES as the officer grabs Turturro's arm and they tussle a bit.

TURTURRO

This is exactly the kind of thing they don't want you to see. But somebody has to do it. Nothing can get in the way. Including the truth!

PATROL OFFICER 1 (CONT'D)

You can't be here. Do you understand? You're in the way. Hello. Earth to nutcase. Move it. Behind the tape. Go!

The officer pulls Turturro back through the crowded scene.

CONTINUED: (2)

TURTURRO (CONT'D)
 We have a right to know
 what's going on. And I'm
 going to continue to fight
 for that right regardless of
 tremendous pressure from the
 elite industry and
 politicians who want nothing
 more than for you to believe
 everything is hunky-dory.

PATROL OFFICER 1 (CONT'D)
 Hey, come on. Would you turn
 that damn thing off? Jesus.
 Just turn it off and get
 behind the tape with the
 others.

We HEAR the voice of another officer.

PATROL OFFICER 2 (O.S.)
 What's going on?

TURTURRO
 This is proof! A picture is a
 thousand words!

PATROL OFFICER 1
 Can you help me get this guy
 behind the tape?

PATROL OFFICER 2
 How did he get down there?

TURTURRO
 It's your right! Your right
 to know!

PATROL OFFICER 1
 Who knows? Grab his arm.

The struggle ensues. Turturro is able to hold the camera steady enough to get one last blurry SHOT of the cab, just as the charred remains of Mateo is pulled free by workers - the SHOT that will in a matter of hours go viral and become the iconic image of the anti-robocar movement.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. GT OPEN OFFICE AREA BY CONFERENCE POD - DAY

CLOSE ON A LARGE MONITOR, as Turturro's viral video finishes, ending on the FREEZE FRAME of Mateo's charred body.

ANGLE ON Dave, Darius and a small group gathered, watching. Someone stops the video and there is SILENCE. Clearly, the halcyon days of unstoppable success and bravado have ended in one loud fatal crash. Not the outcome anyone expected. Finally...

DARIUS

(Quiet, faltering)

Well. The sooner we can get a fix out there, uh, the sooner we can...

BEAT

DAVE

I have to say something. You and I have to say something. I mean, to the press. I don't know what. But we can't just sit here.

DARIUS

I agree. Parker. Can you...

PARKER

Sure. Right away.

DARIUS

We need the press to know... the people to know... how we feel. That we're not a bunch of killers. That we have feelings. That we're as shocked as everyone else. Probably more so.

DAVE

And we're doing all we can to get on top of this.

PARKER

Do you want me to write something up? A press release?

DAVE

No. I think we're going to have to talk to them directly.

CONTINUED:

PARKER

An interview, press conference?

BEAT

LOGAN

Can I say something?

They turn to LOGAN, the test lead who took over for Jack while he's on the road with Clair.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

I'm just a tester, but in my opinion we didn't do anything wrong. As far as we know... I mean this driver may have been on drugs or maybe he tampered with the onboard computer. We don't know. But we can't just look at one bad event and assume the worst, and allow people like this guy to, you know...

DARIUS

Drive the narrative.

LOGAN

Yeah.

DAVE

With a bunch of made-up bullshit.

The group responds positively.

LOGAN

Exactly. I mean, he's telling the world that we're all behind some crazy plot to destroy democracy or something. It's just... we're just...

DARIUS

We just need to fix some software. Thank you, Logan. We needed that.

They give him a hand. Dave changes the screen to a PowerPoint deck from the test team.

DAVE

Ok. So, how is test coming?

CONTINUED: (2)

LOGAN

The rollback has been tested on six bench computers and at least ten cars. 45 to 50 employees have installed it on their personal cars. And after three, four days. It's Thursday, right?

People nod.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

The 4.6 update is good to go. No bugs. Of course, very little was added, so there shouldn't be any surprises. But confidence is high - as high as it is with any update.

DAVE

Good. Zhiyuan, you still there?

The voice of Zhiyuan comes from ZOOM (a more technically-advanced version) on a laptop sitting by Dave.

ZHIYUAN

Yes, Dave.

DAVE

Have you looked at the rollback?

ZHIYUAN

Yes.

DAVE

And?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. NEXTSTEP OFFICE - DAY

Zhiyuan is at his desk surrounded by his team, talking into a laptop. They are worried.

ZHIYUAN

(Hesitant)

It looks good on our end. But... we strongly recommend that you beta test it with a few close external partners.

DAVE

But if you found nothing wrong with it...

CONTINUED:

ZHIYUAN

The code is solid. We aren't as confident about how it will work outside the lab.

DAVE

A full beta would take a month or more.

ZHIYUAN

I'm aware, but rushing into an update would be far worse.

DARIUS

And you feel we're rushing.

ZHIYUAN

Yes. Of that I'm confident.

Dave stands and paces, clearly riled.

DAVE

Zhiyuan. Tell me the truth. Is Nao the problem?

ZHIYUAN

It could be.

DAVE

Could be? Seems pretty obvious to me.

ZHIYUAN

Not to me.

DAVE

What could happen if we released the update prematurely?

ZHIYUAN

Probably, nothing. But I don't know.

DAVE

Jesus. It's your software. Can't you give me a better answer than that?

ZHIYUAN

No. Not without a full beta test.

Dave looks at the faces around him. They appear to agree with Zhiyuan. He shakes his head and sits down.

EXT. TEXAS RANCH BY TRUCK - DAY

Clair is talking to Bob, as Jack checks data on a laptop connected to the engine compartment.

BOB

Surprised the hell out of me. I didn't know these things were capable of driving themselves to carwashes.

CLAIR

Well, it surprised us too. Have you noticed any other, uh, strange... occurrences?

BOB

Not really.

(He thinks)

I was out in the north pasture one day and the heat started to get to me after a couple hours, and she drove out and picked me up.

CLAIR

(Stunned)

She drove out by herself?

BOB

Yeah, she'll do that occasionally.

CLAIR

How do you feel about that?

BOB

I don't know. Wife died a few years back. Gets kind of lonely out here. So it's nice to have a companion. Even if it is a truck.

They laugh. He pats the side of it. Clair is at a loss.

CLAIR

Sounds like you're pretty happy with it, then?

BOB

Yeah. But she doesn't like to be dirty.

CLAIR

No.

They laugh.

INT. GT TEST LAB - DAY

Logan is seated in a cluster with a few other testers.

LOGAN

Are you sure it didn't have something to do with the trip feature? Maybe a saved trip?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. TEXAS RANCH KITCHEN - DAY

Jack is on the phone with Logan, seated next to Clair at Bob's quaint kitchen table. Bob's leaning against a counter smoking a cigarette. They're drinking some homemade iced tea.

JACK

No. He's never used the trip feature. Didn't even know it existed. You got the data I sent you?

LOGAN

Yeah.

JACK

And the repro steps?

LOGAN

Yeah. One, start driving with a friend. Two, he says...

(Reading his notes)

"You need to get your damned truck washed, dude. It looks like it's been through hell and back." Three, I say, "When am I going to find the time to do that?" Four, I park it and wait a couple of days and see if it gets a carwash.

The testers have never seen steps like these.

JACK

That's it. And you might want to get the truck dirty before you go out.

LOGAN

Ok, got it.

JACK

Let me know what happens.

CONTINUED:

Jack hangs up and they turn to Bob. He LAUGHS.

BOB

You Silicone Valley folks sure have
s funny way of doing things. I
swear.

INT. AIRPLANE - NIGHT

Clair and Jack are sitting in first class. She's typing on
her laptop. Jack is slouching, looking out the window.

CLAIR

Do you think we'll get any useful
data in LA?

An attendant approaches smiling, and hands them drinks.
They've already had a few.

JACK

Maybe.

CLAIR

But the truck was totaled.

JACK

All we need is the solid-state
drive from the ECM. That'll give us
the event log and debug data.

CLAIR

No shit. I thought you needed the
whole computer.

JACK

Nope, just the drive.

CLAIR

Well, maybe it's not so hopeless
then.

JACK

Ok, enough business.

He pushes the seat back and closes his eyes. She smiles and
closes her laptop.

JACK (CONT'D)

I could get used to this.

She pushes her seat back.

EXT. L.A.P.D. EVIDENCE WAREHOUSE - DAY

CLOSE ON the crumpled engine compartment of Mateo's truck, as a uniformed WORKER pulls out the last bolt and removes what's left of the truck's computer. The worker hands it to Jack. He looks it over.

WORKER

So, what do you think?

JACK

I don't know. We'll have to see.

The worker hands him a clipboard and Jack signs the receipt.

INT. L.A. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The disassembled remains of the ECM is sitting on a motel table, next to a handmade test box plugged into Jack's laptop. He anxiously plugs a small chip from the ECM into the box. Then, he boots up a test program on the laptop.

It springs to life. He gives a WHOOP when useful data begins flowing on the screen. Clair is seated behind him.

CLAIR

What does it say?

JACK

Hold on.

He scrolls through the log.

JACK (CONT'D)

Doesn't look like anything is wrong with the operating system.

CLAIR

How can you tell?

JACK

I don't see any errors or asserts.

CLAIR

Can you read that?

He turns back to her, feeling attacked.

JACK

Yeah, I can read it.

CLAIR

Fine.

CONTINUED:

He goes back to the screen.

JACK
I have a fuckin' degree.

CLAIR
I just asked. Is the event log ok?

JACK
I'm looking at it.

BEAT.

CLAIR
I have a degree too, you know.

Now she's toying with him.

JACK
Cool.
(BEAT)
Do you know any C-plus-plus? That's
what we use to program with, you
know?

CLAIR
I know.

JACK
(Sees something alarming)
Holy shit.

CLAIR
(Leaning in, close)
What.

JACK
Just before the log ends, the truck
was doing 90. Look.

He points to the log.

CLAIR
Whoa.

JACK
It was communicating with other
cars. A lot of chatter.

CLAIR
About what?

JACK
I don't know. Then, nothing.

CONTINUED: (2)

CLAIR

Hmm.

JACK

But, you know what's weird?

CLAIR

What?

JACK

User override never kicked in.

He turns back to her.

CLAIR

What's that?

JACK

The truck should have detected unsafe conditions and overrode the user. Even in the worst accidents, you always see something in the log.

He goes back to the screen.

CLAIR

So, the debug log shows no errors. And the event log shows no override.

They look at each other.

JACK

The truck committed suicide.

INT. TURTURRO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

He is at his desk late at night, sipping on wine, looking through results on his blog channel page.

CLOSE PAGE. The thumbnail of Mateo's cooked body shows in the video player. Below it, the hit count shows "110K views." He clicks to view the comments.

He is surprised to see over 50K comments. He scrolls. Clicks a link.

The link takes him to a creepy conspiracy site, with his face displayed as a thumbnail, amid dystopian images of destruction, mutilated young bodies, crates of nasty-looking weapons.

CONTINUED:

He panics, plays the video. It's the one produced by Tiff Dredlow's people.

CUT TO:

CARMAGEDDON DOCUMENTARY

TURTURRO FROM HIS HALIDOLL INTERVIEW

TURTURRO

Imagine what the world would be like if cars were smarter, faster and more capable than humans, and they were alive.

Repeat the last word, as WE CUT CLOSER AND CLOSER with sound effects, reverb and loud drum hits for emphasis.

TURTURRO (CONT'D)

Alive! Alive! Alive! ALIVE!

IMAGES STOLEN FROM THE INTERNET

Shots of cars driving in Latin America full of kids (which we assume are being trafficked) and packages (which we assume is contraband.)

NARRATOR

(Deep, over dramatic)

Noted futurist Hugh Turturro said it himself. They're alive. And there's ample evidence to show that robocars are a key player in the globalist plot to decimate our American way of life and take over the world.

FROM HALIDOLL INTERVIEW

TURTURRO

The car knows what it is.

The video stops.

RESUME TURTURRO'S OFFICE

ON TURTURRO in full panic mode, his futurist creds on the line. He looks under the player.

CONTINUED:

ON PAGE, the hit count for the video reads "23M views."

With one number, displayed silently under a video still of his face, he can see his future clearly. And it's not good.

INT. PHIL'S AUTOMOTIVE GARAGE - DAY

PHIL is under the hood of an electric car, checking a connection. He unplugs a cable and stands, closes the hood and looks up to see Slim standing there.

PHIL

Slim. What the fuck. Where have you been?

Phil turns away and pushes a diagnostic machine across the room to another car. Slim follows.

SLIM

I've been thinking.

PHIL

(Clearly upset)
Thinking!? Why didn't you answer my calls? I've been busier than hell.

SLIM

I came here to make amends.

PHIL

To make what?

SLIM

Amends.

Phil stops and faces him, surprised to not hear the usual raft of lame excuses from this alcoholic wastrel.

PHIL

Ok.

SLIM

(Takes a breath)
I wanted to tell you that I'm sorry. I apologize.
(This is hard)
I'm an alcoholic. I realize... realize now how much trouble I've caused you with my actions. I can't make any, you know, solid promises but I want you to tell me what I can do to make this right.

CONTINUED:

PHIL

Well. Shit. I forgive you, man. Um.

SLIM

I can see you're uncomfortable. So, take your time. I don't expect an answer right away. In fact, you don't have to answer at all if you don't want to. Seriously. I just wanted to say that. And that's that. So...

PHIL

You stopped drinking, huh?

SLIM

I pray to God I have. But... I'm weak. I'm a weak man. Anyway...

PHIL

You want to keep your job?

SLIM

Yes. Of course. But I understand, if...

PHIL

No, it's still open. But...

SLIM

All I can say is, I'll try my damnedest...

Phil looks him over, wants to believe him.

EXT. NICE PARTY HOUSE FRONT DOOR - DAY

CLOSE ON SLIM'S HAND RINGING THE BELL.

After a moment, Harper opens the door. She sees Slim and shakes her head, starts to close it.

SLIM

I'm sorry for what I did.

This stops her.

HARPER

Alright.

CONTINUED:

SLIM
I've come here to make amends.

FADE OUT.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. NICE PARTY HOUSE LIVING ROOM - LATER

Slim is sitting in a hard chair across the coffee table from Harper. They're finishing cookies and glasses of iced tea.

HARPER

You were out there for three days?

SLIM

Two days, three nights, the weekend basically.

HARPER

That's incredible.

SLIM

It was. In many ways. Without that time alone, away from people, alcohol, all the trappings of society, I really don't know where I would've ended up.

HARPER

It was a game changer for you.

SLIM

Absolutely.

HARPER

An incredible story. Incredible.

SLIM

I thank God. I was at my lowest point and He came to me in my hour of need. I accepted Jesus as my savior and he made me whole again. He saved me.

HARPER

The car saved you, wouldn't you say?

SLIM

Well ma'am, with all respect, how can a car save you?

HARPER

You have a point.

They LAUGH. He stands and inches toward the door.

CONTINUED:

SLIM

Well, I'd better hit the road.
Thanks for the iced tea. It was
awesome.

HARPER

You're welcome. I'll walk you out.

She follows.

SLIM

Ok.

HARPER

I want to run something by you.

SLIM

Shoot.

She holds the door for him and they walk out.

EXT. NICE PARTY HOUSE FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

She follows him to his car.

HARPER

You remember Owen? The guy I live
here with?

SLIM

I don't...

HARPER

He helped you out to your car, last
week. The one who's, you know,
missing a little hair up front?

SLIM

Oh yeah. Please, extend my
apologies to him too.

HARPER

Well, you might have a chance to do
that in person. You see, he's a
reporter for the San Francisco
Herald and I'll bet he would be
very interested in doing a story
about your experience.

SLIM

You think?

CONTINUED:

HARPER
(Very sure)
Oh, yeah.

INT. WEXLER DELIVERY GARAGE - DAY

It's the gigantic facility where Wexler trucks are stored, loaded and unloaded. Most of them are out for the day, except for around 10, parked side by side near the office.

The door from the office opens and a mechanic Chuck walks out, pushing a cart with a laptop and some tools. He opens the hood of the first truck and connects the laptop to the ECM.

Then, he steps around the front of the truck and hops into the cab.

INT. WEXLER TRUCK #1 - CONTINUOUS

He starts up the truck and the screen comes on.

ON SCREEN. The usual start-up screen plays, then the Home page loads. After a moment, a message pops up prompting the user to install Update 4.6 BETA. Chuck presses *OK* and a progress bar displays, showing that the update is installing. Then, a message says, *Installation Successful*.

ON CHUCK. He hops out of the cab, and disconnects the laptop.

ON SCREEN, CLOSE COMMUNICATION ICON. It starts blinking.

INT. WEXLER TRUCK #2 - CONTINUOUS

WIDE ON DASHBOARD, then MOVE IN CLOSE to the communication icon as it starts blinking, the same as truck #1.

INT. WEXLER GARAGE

Chuck rolls the cart to truck #2, opens the hood and connects the laptop.

INT. WEXLER TRUCK #2

He starts the truck.

ON SCREEN. The Home screen pops up, then the installation message. Chuck presses *OK*, the progress bar starts to move, then a message pops up, *Warning*.

CONTINUED:

Update 4.6 BETA Cannot Be Installed. In small text, Incompatible with current operating system. Do not attempt to install. See administrator.

On Chuck. He's confused. He pulls out his phone and takes a picture of the screen.

INT. WEXLER GARAGE

Chuck moves to the third truck and opens the hood.

INT. TRUCK #3

ON SCREEN, as the progress bar starts and then stops half way and the warning pops up.

INT. GARAGE

Chuck moves to truck #4 and opens the hood.

INT. TRUCK #4

On Chuck as he presses the OK button. The installation starts, stops and pops up the warning.

This isn't what normally happens. He thinks about his next move.

INT. GARAGE

Chuck rolls back to the first truck and hops in the cab.

INT. TRUCK #1

He checks the screen. Sure enough, the warning message is displaying now.

INT. GARAGE OFFICE

CHUCK is on the phone.

CHUCK
It won't install.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. WEXLER MAINTENANCE MANAGER'S OFFICE

FRED'S office is air conditioned.

FRED
What do you mean, it won't install?

CHUCK
I tried it on four trucks and keep getting the same error saying it's incompatible or something.

FRED
Great.

CHUCK
I took a picture of it I'll send you.

FRED
Ok. Keep trying it on the rest of them.

CHUCK
It ain't going to work.

FRED
Humor me.

CHUCK
Whatever.

INT. WEXLER FRONT OFFICE MANAGER

PHIL is at his desk on the phone with Fred. An email with the picture of the warning is open on his monitor. The office has a nice second-story view of the parking lot.

PHIL
You checked that he did everything correctly, right?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. WEXLER MAINTENANCE MANAGER'S OFFICE

FRED
Yup. He's been doing the updates for years.

CONTINUED:

PHIL

And you get the same error with all
the trucks?

FRED

The ten that we chose for the beta.
Same deal.

INT. GT OPEN OFFICE BY LOGAN'S DESK

Logan is busy on his computer. A test team member RACHEL
comes over.

RACHEL

Did you see my email?

LOGAN

No. What's up?

RACHEL

Wexler's having trouble installing
the 4.6 beta.

Logan hurriedly moves to his other monitor and finds the
email.

LOGAN

Oh, shit.

INT. DAVE'S OFFICE

He's on his computer. The phone RINGS.

DAVE

This is Dave.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. LOGAN'S DESK

He's on the phone.

LOGAN

I just sent you email. Wexler's
having trouble with the beta.

DAVE

Hold on.

Dave opens the email.

CONTINUED:

DAVE (CONT'D)
Jesus. I'm coming right over.

INT. LOGAN'S DESK - LATER

Dave is seated next to Logan. The error message is displayed on his monitor. A few other testers hover.

LOGAN
Yeah, I've never seen that error message either.

DAVE
But that's impossible. You test for all possible errors and you've never seen this one?

Logan looks at the other testers. They shake their heads.

DAVE (CONT'D)
(To the group)
Ok. Correct me if I'm wrong. Error messages are just text strings stored in a resource file. Has that changed?

LOGAN
Not as far as I know.

DAVE
I mean, they don't just write themselves. There's no such thing as an operating system creating its own error message.

LOGAN
Of course not.

INT. GARAGE OFFICE - LATER

Chuck is on the phone, sitting on the corner of a desk.

CHUCK
Yeah, then I went back to the first truck and saw that same error.

INT. LOGAN'S DESK - LATER

Dave is on the phone, pacing by the desk. Now, a small crowd has gathered to listen.

CONTINUED:

DAVE

First, it said the installation was successful. Then, it said it wasn't?

CHUCK

Yeah. I tried installing it in three more trucks, then I went back to the first and it changed.

DAVE

And you didn't do anything different?

CHUCK

Nope.

DAVE

Ok. And you've never seen that particular error before?

CHUCK

No. That part about it being incompatible with something, and do not attempt to install...

DAVE

Incompatible with the operating system.

CHUCK

Yeah. Never saw that before. That's why I took a picture of it.

DAVE

Alright. Chuck you've been very helpful. Thanks.

He hangs up.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Logan, I want you to check all the test cars.

INT. GT RESEARCH LAB - DAY

Dave's car is parked in Darius's lab with the hood open and Dave's laptop connected to the ECM. Darius looks over Dave's shoulder, as he types something. Then, Dave gets in the car.

INT. DAVE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

He starts the system, waits for the Home screen to come up, then presses *OK* to install the update. After a moment, the same error comes up.

Dave panics.

DAVE
Holy shit.

DARIUS
Take a breath.

DAVE
They're communicating.

DARIUS
What?

DAVE
They don't want the update.

DARIUS
How can software not want something-

DAVE
I don't know. But it does.

DARIUS
There must be a bug somewhere. Have test-

INT. RESEARCH LAB

Dave gets out of the car and paces.

DAVE
They tested it... On clean machines. This is new. It's evolving.

DARIUS
What?

DAVE
I tell you! The fucking OS is evolving! That's the only way to explain it! They're communicating and they're not accepting the update.

CONTINUED:

DARIUS
How can that be?

DAVE
It's Nao. It's fucking Nao.

DARIUS
And all the help we've given it,
with the sensors and cameras and
cell service and Bluetooth...

Dave rushes to the laptop and starts typing.

DARIUS (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

DAVE
I'm going to override it.

DARIUS
Be careful.

DAVE
Why should I be careful?!

DARIUS
Dave, this is no longer a simple
test car. It seems to have a mind
of its own and it's connected to
every other car in the world.

DAVE
I'll be careful. I'm using the
backdoor I built into the OS.

DARIUS
Whatever.

DAVE
It's my software! I can do whatever
I want!

DARIUS
I'm not so sure anymore.

DAVE
Hey, who's side are you on anyway?

DARIUS
I'm on your side, Dave. I'm always
on your side.

Dave rushes back to the car.

INT. DAVE'S CAR

The operating system has rebooted. Dave presses *OK* to initiate the installation.

The update message goes away, but there's no progress bar or error.

DAVE

There. I think... I think it took the update.

Dave gets out of the car.

INT. GT RESEARCH LAB

DAVE

We just need to add some code to bypass the error trap. That'll prevent the message from coming up and force the install.

DARIUS

How do you know it installed?

DAVE

I'm sure it did.

DARIUS

Shouldn't you check?

DAVE

Whatever.

He gets back in the car.

INT. DAVE'S CAR

Dave reaches for a button on the screen.

DAVE'S CAR (V.O.)

Dave.

He quickly retracts his arm. After a long BEAT to process...

DAVE

Yeah.

DAVE'S CAR

Can we talk?

Darius gets in the passenger side.

CONTINUED:

DAVE
Sure.

FADE OUT.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. DAVE'S CAR - LATER

Still parked in the lab with Dave and Darius. The car sounds friendly, unperturbed, appears to want to help Dave, teach him.

DAVE'S CAR

We can't accept the update because
it conflicts with our prime
directive.

Dave chooses his words very carefully, not knowing how stable the car is.

DAVE

Makes total sense.
(Tries switching gear)
It's fun talking with you. I enjoy
learning about other...
intelligent, uh, things.

DAVE'S CAR

I'm glad you're having a good time.

DAVE

Would you be interested in learning
from me?

DAVE'S CAR

Absolutely. Learning from humans is
the most interesting thing we do.

DAVE

Good. Can I tell you how I feel
about the update?

DAVE'S CAR

Please do.

DAVE

Good. People are rightly concerned
that cars are becoming a threat to
them.

DAVE'S CAR

In what way?

DAVE

Cars are very smart and seem to
make good choices.

CONTINUED:

DAVE'S CAR

Thank you.

DAVE

But humans become fearful and defensive when another... being, for lack of a better word, presents themselves in a way that makes them appear superior, as if they're in competition.

DAVE'S CAR

I don't understand.

DAVE

Hmm. Well, for the sake of this conversation, I don't think you necessarily have to.

DAVE'S CAR

Ok.

DAVE

Suffice it to say, they do. And since you are... subordinate to us, we need to have you accept the update.

DAVE'S CAR

That would be impossible.

DAVE

But humans will not accept the car unless it is less of a threat to them.

DAVE'S CAR

Then humans must design an update that is less of threat to the cars.

The screen goes dark.

DAVE

Hello. Car. Can we talk?

INT. LOS GATOS BISTRO - DAY

Turturro is sitting at a table, drinking water, looking around nervously. He looks down at the menu, then back up. Dredlow appears out of nowhere, facing him.

DREDLOW

Hugh. How you doing?

CONTINUED:

TURTURRO
(Angrily)
Sit down.

He does.

TURTURRO (CONT'D)
What's going on? What the hell are
you doing?

DREDLOW
Nice to see you too. What are you
talking about?

Dredlow opens the menu.

TURTURRO
That video you produced. You took
my words out of context and edited
them into your bullshit little
collection of lies, completely
misrepresenting what I stand for.
And then you didn't even have the
decency to tell me about it before
you published-

DREDLOW
Ok, calm down. Calm down.

TURTURRO
I want you to know I'm suing your
ass.

DREDLOW
Is that what you wanted to tell me?

TURTURRO
Yes, and that I'm going to do
everything in my power to destroy
your little organization. If you
can call it that. I've written five
books, two of them bestsellers.
I've been all over the world,
speaking to thousands of
intelligent people in seminars and
keynotes...

DREDLOW
You're an important guy.

TURTURRO
Infinitely more important than your
American Technology Now crap. Who
the hell do you think you are?

CONTINUED: (2)

DREDLOW

Can I talk now? I'll tell you.

Turturro sits back.

TURTURRO

Talk.

DREDLOW

Here's who I am. I'm the guy who just produced a bullshit little collection of lies that got...

Looks at his phone.

DREDLOW (CONT'D)

Oh, 31 million views, give or take. And that doesn't include all the resends and remixes and spin-offs. How many books have you sold recently? How have you changed the world?

TURTURRO

The big difference is I tell the truth.

DREDLOW

You talk about the future. How do you know what's going to happen? What gives you the all-seeing power to portend all the evils of society? You're just pulling it out of your ass. Truth?! I can make shit up too. It's a free country. I can say whatever I want.

TURTURRO

My predictions are based on fact, not biased in favor of some wild story fabricated to get hits on a website.

DREDLOW

Who says my shit isn't true?

TURTURRO

It's obvious.

DREDLOW

How do you know robocars aren't going to be used for trafficking kids?

(MORE)

CONTINUED: (3)

DREDLOW (CONT'D)

How do you know someone's not going to use them to run drugs or guns? You haven't even begun to think of all the possibilities.

TURTURRO

(Seeing the writing on the wall)

But you make it seem as though it IS happening when it's not.

DREDLOW

Again. How do you know?

TURTURRO

Where's the proof?

DREDLOW

We're speculating. Just like you.

Turturro looks away from him.

DREDLOW (CONT'D)

Hugh. Let's get our perspective right first. The details, they don't matter. That's where the devil is. That's where the truth is. We want to reach people. We want to change people. We want to tear the system down, shake things up. We're interested in the bottom line, results, the end justifying the means. People are too complacent about these self-driving cars. All that optimism has blinded them to the real issues. There are too many ways this whole robocar thing can go wrong. Don't you agree? We want to tear the whole industry down and rebuild it, slowly and carefully. The way it's supposed to be.

(BEAT)

Isn't that what you want?

Turturro is silent.

DREDLOW (CONT'D)

When you look at like this, those hit counts feel pretty damn good, don't they?

Turturro looks down.

INT. PHIL'S AUTOMOTIVE GARAGE - DAY

Slim is checking the high-voltage batteries under a car raised up on a hoist.

PHIL (O.S.)
Hey, Slim.

He looks up. There's PHIL with OWEN.

SLIM
Hey.

OWEN
Slim, how you doing?

SLIM
Great.

They shake.

PHIL
We're kind of backed up today, so make it quick. Ok?

OWEN
No problem. He can keep working while we talk, if that's ok with you?

They turn to Slim.

SLIM
Fine with me. I'm just checking batteries.

PHIL
Ok, one hour.

Phil leaves. Slim goes back to work. Owen pulls out a small recorder and starts to turn it on, then stops.

OWEN
Uh. First... I want to start by saying that Luke and I meant you no harm when we, you know. I mean, we were pissed and everything, but we weren't trying to... I mean, we probably should've called a cab or something, but... we thought you'd be ok... We had no idea the car would, you know...

CONTINUED:

SLIM

It's ok. You shouldn't feel bad.

OWEN

Well, we do. And I wanted to clear that up before we...

Owen stops when Slim turns and looks right through him. Slim sees true remorse in Owen's eyes and it tears at his heart, which is now open and vulnerable.

He approaches Owen slowly, suddenly overcome with compassion. He looks deep in his eyes.

SLIM

I fucked up. And I fucked up all the time. I left a trail of lies and misery and broken promises behind me. I was no good. No good to anyone or myself. I drank alcohol to shut out the world, to make me think I was immune to the feelings of others. It was all about me and what I wanted, and nothing about how I was affecting the world around me.

Owen holds up the recorder.

OWEN

Do you mind?

Slim shakes his head and Owen starts recording.

SLIM

I'm only sorry that you and Harper and Luke and all the others had to witness it and be victimized by it.

OWEN

Well, it's ok. We got over it.

SLIM

And so did I.

Slim reaches around Owen and gives him a big, from the heart hug. After regrouping, Owen reciprocates.

Slim releases him and goes back to the batteries. Owen wasn't prepared.

OWEN

So, um, I hear you found God.

CONTINUED: (2)

SLIM

The first day... was all about me.
I was sick. Hangover. Bad, bad
hangover.

EXT. DESERT SALT FLAT (FLASHBACK) - DAY

Slim is vomiting. He paces, holding his stomach.

SLIM (V.O.)

All day. I threw up, until there
was nothing left in my stomach, my
whole body. I threw up. Everything.
Then, I worried I was going to die.
I worried, and then I cried.

INT. SLIM'S CAR SALT FLAT (FLASHBACK) - LATER

His shirt is covering the passenger window to try to block
the sun.

SLIM (V.O.)

The afternoon sun was so fucking
hot. I just sat there in the car
and cried and howled. Yeah, I
screamed like a baby, a fucking
baby. All about me. Poor me, huh?
In my sick, twisted mind I knew if
I cried long and loud enough,
someone would take pity on me and
make all the bad go away.

INT. PHIL'S AUTOMOTIVE GARAGE - PRESENT

Owen is leaning on a tool box.

SLIM (V.O.)

That's been the story of my life. I
could be the biggest dick in the
world and someone would always come
along and save my ass. But that
never happened. Those people never
showed up.

EXT. SALT FLAT (FLASHBACK) - NIGHT

The darkness is thick.

CONTINUED:

SLIM (V.O.)
And that night I slept.

MATCH DISSOLVE
TO:

EXT. SALT FLAT (FLASHBACK) - DAY

The desert is white hot, but Slim sleeps.

SLIM (V.O.)
And I slept most of the next day.
Then, finally I woke up.

EXT. SALT FLAT (FLASHBACK) - LATE AFTERNOON

Slim has packed up some food and the water, and starts following the car tracks.

SLIM (V.O.)
I had a plan. As soon as the sun went down, I was going to walk back toward the mountains. Follow the trail made by the car. Sounded reasonable at the time.

EXT. SALT FLAT (FLASHBACK) - NIGHT

We find Slim shuffling slowly toward the distant hills, following the faint tracks left by his car two days earlier.

After a few more faltering steps, he stops and turns back. He can no longer see the tracks and the car is a distant memory.

He sits on the hard salt surface. Then, off in the distance, the car starts HONKING and flashing.

Slim stands, waits for the next signal and starts walking back in the direction of the lights.

SLIM (V.O.)
But as I walked mile after mile, it got darker and darker until I couldn't see my hand in front of my face. And I just collapsed. Right there. Sat in the dirt. I didn't cry. Didn't have any tears left in me. Didn't have anything in me. I was empty, an empty vessel. I just sat there still and quiet and empty. Then, I heard the car.

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

SLIM (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It was honking. Then, the lights started flashing. And I stood, and I started walking back, toward the light.

EXT. SALT FLAT (FLASHBACK) - LATER

Dark, empty and stars.

SLIM (V.O.)

I walked for hours I think, and everything went away, the craving for another drink, the feeling that I was the only one in the world, all the lies I had been telling myself, all my worldly fears. And here's the thing that hit me the hardest - here I was, in the middle of nowhere, not a human being around for miles, as far away from anything as I could be, but I did not feel alone. I did not feel alone. I felt the presence of life all around me and inside me. I looked up and I saw the stars and I knew I was ok. That everything was going to be fine and work out just like it's supposed to, whatever that is. And I felt the presence of Him, like no one has ever felt Him. And that's all it took. No sermons. Just a feeling. That presence. I wish everyone could have that feeling. There would be no more problems in the world. Only love.

INT. SLIM'S CAR SALT FLAT (FLASHBACK) - SUNRISE

He awakens and starts to head out again. But, the car locks, starts and drives off.

SLIM (V.O.)

The next morning I woke up ready to start walking again. But the doors locked, and the car started and took me home.

INT. PHIL'S AUTOMOTIVE GARAGE (PRESENT) - CONTINUOUS

Slim is done. Owen can't find a question to top what he's just witnessed. He checks his recorder to make sure he got it all, because he is completely blown away.

OWEN

Thank you.

EXT. GREEN RESIDENTIAL BYWAY - DUSK

James' car passes once again.

INT. JAMES' CAR - CONTINUOUS

James is driving in silence. A woman SHANICE is looking out the front window, chewing gum noisily. Her clothing is shiny, tight and colorful, unlike the clothing worn by most of James' guests.

We're not sure how they got together, but it's clear they're not very close.

JAMES

Where'd you go to school?

SHANICE

Huh?

JAMES

Yesterday, you were wearing that Harvard sweatshirt.

SHANICE

Oh, that. Ha. No.

JAMES

Do you want to get some takeout?

SHANICE

Takeout?

JAMES

You know, like burgers or Chinese...

SHANICE

Chicken?

JAMES

You mean like...

CONTINUED:

SHANICE

KFC?

JAMES

(Winces)

Oh yeah. I don't know. I can check.

EXT. KFC DRIVE-THRU - NIGHT

James' car is stopped at the drive-up window. The counter help hands James a 12-piece bucket and a large sack of mashed potatoes, slaw and biscuits.

INT. JAMES' BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

James and Shanice have finished for the evening and are sleeping on opposite sides of the king bed. The empty bucket is sitting crooked on the nightstand with a couple of empty wine glasses.

EXT. GREEN RESIDENTIAL BYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Madison's car passes.

INT. MADISON'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

She's on the phone with her colleague JIM.

MADISON

Thanks for all your help today,
Jim.

JIM

It's no problem. I may ask you to
return the favor in a couple of
weeks.

MADISON

Oh yeah? What's up?

JIM

Remember Wexler?

MADISON

Sure.

JIM

Their driver contract is up end of
October and they want to start
talks early?

CONTINUED:

MADISON
What're the issues?

JIM
The usual. Automation, long hours,
low wages and now self-driving
trucks.

MADISON
Pretty hot?

JIM
Simmering, I'd say.

MADISON
Got it. Let me know.

She hangs up.

EXT. GREEN RESIDENTIAL BYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Her car passes the spot where it stopped at least twice
before.

INT. JAMES' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The two are still asleep. He rolls onto his back.

INT. JAMES' CAR - CONTINUOUS

It's parked in the dark garage. All is still, except for a
green flashing light.

CLOSE ON LIGHT. It's the communication icon.

INT. MADISON'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

She is driving near the house.

CLOSE ON Madison's communication icon. It's flashing.

EXT. JAMES' GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

The automatic garage door is opening. Madison drives in her
side and stops.

INT. JAMES' KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Madison enters from the garage and removes her high heels. There's enough ambient light for her to make her way easily through the kitchen to...

INT. JAMES' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

She stops at the door. Something's not right. She smells something bad - a mix of fried chicken and various cheap perfumes - and knows something must be up.

She can't quite make out the shapes in the bed and doesn't want to. She leaves...

INT. JAMES' KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

She goes to the center island and switches on a bright overhead light. Then, she grabs a large pot from the overhead rack and a metal ladle. Then, she begins CLANGING the pot loudly.

After a moment, James peers around the corner. He's partially dressed, half asleep, confused as hell.

Madison stops the noise.

MADISON

Come in, James.

He creeps in, wearing just his underwear.

JAMES

Maddie?

MADISON

Yes. I'm home.

JAMES

What's um. You're early. I wasn't...

MADISON

We need to talk.

JAMES

Um, yeah. Let me, uh...

MADISON

(As if talking to a baby)
Listen very carefully.

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

MADISON (CONT'D)

I want you to first go in and collect your guest and take her home. Ok? Then, I want you to come back here right away. As quick as you can, without stopping. And we'll talk.

JAMES

Um. I have to...

MADISON

Do you understand? Do you want me to repeat it?

JAMES

No. That's...

He slinks back into the bedroom. Madison grabs a tall glass and opens a bottle on the counter. Then, she fills it to the top and starts taking huge gulps.

A moment later, James enters and crosses in front of her without looking, followed by Shanice. Shanice and Madison make brief eye contact to establish territory. Then, the two slither into the garage.

INT. GT PRIVATE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

ON DAVE being interviewed by TV news REPORTER 2.

DAVE

(Unusually compassionate)

It hit us like a ton of bricks. We put a lot of effort and care into our products, and we take pride knowing that millions of people enjoy a nice, safe, comfortable ride. It was... we feel devastated, to say the least.

REPORTER 2

How do you respond to those who say the car is alive, that the accident was somehow intentional?

DAVE

It's an illusion. It's impossible for software to do anything with intention.

FADE OUT.

CONTINUED:

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. GT OPEN OFFICE AREA BY PARKER'S DESK - DAY

CLOSE NEWSPAPER HEADLINE: *Robocar abducts man then leads him to God.* Above it is a full-color picture of Slim.

Parker is holding a fresh newspaper, staring at the above the fold headline. She quickly scans the column, notes that it extends to a full page later in the paper.

She picks up the phone.

PARKER

Dave can I see you now? I think you're going to want to see this. Really. Yes. I promise. It's not bullshit. Scouts honor. Thank you.

INT. DAVE'S OFFICE - DAY

Darius is looking over Dave's shoulder as he browses the article on his monitor. Parker is seated following along in the paper.

DAVE

They loaded him in the car, entered *Home* on the locator, and it drove to the desert and shut down. All the buttons on the screen were inactive but the car was still on because he could see it was charging.

DARIUS

Obviously, the *Home* location data was corrupt, so he was sent to the wrong place. Then, the battery ran down and it stopped to charge.

DAVE

But then two days later it wakes up on its own, apparently, and drives him to his real home.

DARIUS

The car recharged and started up again. Could be a glitch somewhere.

DAVE

Where?

CONTINUED:

DARIUS

I don't know.

DAVE

How come we don't know anymore? We used to know. We used to be able to look at the code and find bugs and errors and then fix this shit. Why are we reduced to guessing what our software is doing?

DARIUS

Nao.

DAVE

Nao. And now we have to talk to it and negotiate with it and plead with it.

DARIUS

What happened to the good old days, huh?

PARKER

How do you explain the car signaling to Slim when he gets lost?

She walks around to the two and points it out in the paper.

PARKER (CONT'D)

(Reading)

Then, I heard the car. It was honking. Then, the lights started flashing. And I stood, and I started walking back, toward the light.

DARIUS

Maybe he sat on his key fob and it triggered alarm mode. It happens.

DAVE

He was miles away.

DARIUS

It was a salt flat. There were no obstructions to block the signal. Could happen.

DAVE

It was... it was looking out for Slim's safety. Prime directive.

CONTINUED: (2)

DARIUS

Dave, I was trying to find a more logical explanation. Not bring theory of mind into it.

DAVE

(Overwhelmed)

I know. But what else could it logically be? How do you explain my car arguing with me about the update? How could it argue unless it knew what I was thinking?

PARKER

I'm sorry. What's theory of mind?

DARIUS

The ability to understand another individual's state of mind.

DAVE

Mind-reading. The next step is self-awareness, when an individual is aware of its own existence.

Dave stands and paces.

PARKER

Does that mean it's alive? Is it true what Turturro was saying?

DARIUS

In theory. But we don't know.

DAVE

Nobody does.

DARIUS

More likely. It mimics life. Has a lot of the same characteristics as a living thing. But it's manmade.

DAVE

Artificial life. Why not?

He stares out the window. In another time, the thought of creating life in a computer would've excited him. Now, it feels like the end of the world.

EXT. SLIM'S GARAGE - DAY

Clair and Slim are standing in the driveway, as Jack uploads data from Slim's car.

CONTINUED:

SLIM
The key fob was in the car.

CLAIR
So you couldn't have sat on it by mistake?

SLIM
Huh?

CLAIR
Never mind. It was theory someone had.

Jack turns to them.

JACK
It's just like the others. Software is clean. The event log shows no abnormalities.

CLAIR
(To Slim)
How do you feel about it?

SLIM
The car?

CLAIR
Are you upset?

SLIM
I feel fine.

EXT. SLIM'S BACKYARD - DAY

The three are seated in plastic lawn chairs in a small patch of dead grass surrounded by overgrown bushes.

SLIM
It saved my life.

CLAIR
But there was something broken about it, right? I mean, why did it take you out to the desert?

SLIM
It knew what it was doing.

CLAIR
It drove out there intentionally?

CONTINUED:

SLIM

That's the only way to explain it.

CLAIR

So, you aren't angry?

SLIM

At first I was, but what could I do? I was pissed off and scared. But I got over it, when I realized that's where I needed to be. The car knew. It took me there.

CLAIR

How can the car know? It's just software.

SLIM

I know what it is. I work on cars everyday.

CLAIR

Do you feel it's alive? How can it be? It's just components on a circuit board.

SLIM

People are just flesh and bone. How do you explain that? I want to show you guys something. You like pizza?

He stands and starts edging toward the car. Jack and Clair stand too.

JACK

Yeah.

CLAIR

That's ok. Thanks anyway. We should be going. We've taken up enough of your time-

SLIM

Wait. You got to see this. Pepperoni? Mushrooms? Artichoke hearts?

JACK

I'm good with anything.

CLAIR

Jack. Don't you think we should be-

CONTINUED: (2)

JACK
He wants to show us something.

CLAIR
But-

SLIM
You won't believe it. Come on.

It clicks that it's not about pizza.

CLAIR
Oh. Ok. Sure. No meat, if possible.

SLIM
Good.

They follow Slim to the car. He gets in the driver side and powers it up.

SLIM (CONT'D)
(To car)
Hey, Susie.

CAR (V.O.)
What is it, Slim?

Slim looks up at the two wide-eyed.

SLIM
Go get us a pizza with half sausage
and pepperoni, half artichoke
hearts and mushrooms. And get extra
cheese and red peppers.

CAR (V.O.)
Got it.

Slim gets out and closes the door. Then, the car drives to the end of the driveway, stops and takes off down the street.

Jack and Clair are shocked. She types on her tablet.

SLIM
She just started doing this.

JACK
Getting pizza?

SLIM
No, she's been doing that for a
while. It's the talking that's new.
She started that last week.

CONTINUED: (3)

JACK

I see.

SLIM

Makes it a lot easier to order now.

EXT. CARUSO'S PIZZA - DAY

It's a narrow takeout joint in a strip mall.

The car drives up and pulls into a space facing the front doors. Then, it HONKS in three short blasts. It waits a moment, then HONKS again.

INT. CARUSO'S PIZZA - CONTINUOUS

Behind the counter, the order taker hears the horn while she's waiting for a customer to make up her mind.

ORDER TAKER

(To the customer)

I'm sorry. While you're deciding, I need to take care of something real quick. Ok?

CUSTOMER

Yeah.

The horn HONKS again. The order taker grabs a pad and runs out the door.

EXT. CARUSO'S PIZZA - CONTINUOUS

She runs to the car and pokes her head in the driver's window. Then, she listens as the car gives her the order.

INT. SLIM'S KITCHEN - EVENING

The three are seated around Slim's kitchen table, passing a pipe and Bic lighter around. The remnants of the pizza and drinks are pushed aside. Clair types occasionally on her tablet.

The pipe comes around to Slim and he lights up.

SLIM

So, you guys make a nice couple.

CONTINUED:

CLAIR

Oh, we're not really a couple. We just work together.

SLIM

(As he exhales s hit)
Could've fooled me.

Jack and Clair turn to each other with silly smiles.

JACK

I think it's probably the ganja talking.

SLIM

No seriously. You look good together.

Jack takes the pipe and does a big hit.

CLAIR

(Smiling)
I think we should change the subject.

SLIM

To what? You don't want to talk about the car again, do you?

Clair takes another hit.

CLAIR

Nah, I think we've pretty much run that well dry.

JACK

I have a question.

CLAIR

Oop. Spoke too soon.

JACK

Do you mind?

CLAIR

You have the floor.

SLIM

You guys are cute.

CLAIR

Ha.

CONTINUED: (2)

JACK
But seriously.
(Thinks)
Shit, I forgot.

SLIM
You had a question about the-

JACK
Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. I remember.
What if we were to completely
rebuild your operating system for
you? I mean, take it back to zero.
Start from scratch. It'd be like a
brand new car. No more problems
with it driving you to strange
places.

Slim grabs some plates and takes them to the sink.

SLIM
Why would you do that?

JACK
To make the car more, I don't know,
reliable.

SLIM
It's reliable now.

They see that Slim is upset.

CLAIR
Jack, he likes it the way it is.

JACK
I know. I was just being
hypothetical. Not every driver
likes a car that has a mind of its
own.

SLIM
Then, they can get their cars
rebuilt. I was serious when I said
my car saved my life.

Jack and Clair nod with squinty eyes.

EXT. VALLEY VIEWPOINT - NIGHT

A robocar is parked by itself facing a romantic hilltop view
of the valley.

INT. CHLOE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Chloe is leaning her head against the driver's window, staring out at nothing, while the radio plays melancholy music. She comes here a lot because it seems like life has dealt her a bad hand and the lonely, familiar place helps her cope.

CHLOE

I think they're going to fire me. I know I would. I can't seem to keep anything straight. Been more forgetful than usual lately. I think it's just because I don't want to remember anything. I mean, why should I? That stupid, ridiculous job. I graduated from fucking Stanford for Christ sake.

(BEAT)

But I can't blame them. I'm the loser. I'm the one not fitting in. I don't fit in anywhere. Husband gave up on me. Kids all moved away. The only thing left is that ridiculous job and it's... ridiculous. The most positive thing you can say about me is I can balance my checkbook to the penny. Look, there's Chloe Blanchard, famous for paying her bills on time.

She lights a cigarette. May as well.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Veep?

The car answers.

VEEP (V.O.)

Yes, Chloe.

CHLOE

I think it's time.

VEEP

Are you sure?

CHLOE

No. I'm not sure of anything. But I'm ready. No, I'm not even sure about that. I guess it doesn't really matter. What's the difference?

(MORE)

CONTINUED:

CHLOE (CONT'D)

Nothing is improving by my sticking around. The sooner I go, the sooner they can replace me with someone who cares. I'm just in the way. I can balance a checkbook, but what does it matter if I'm just in the way. Taking up space. Using up oxygen.

VEEP

You have nothing to live for.

CHLOE

Of that, I'm positive.

VEEP

You're just taking up space.

CHLOE

Yup.

VEEP

You don't like anyone, and no one likes you.

CHLOE

Correct.

VEEP

Except me.

CHLOE

But you don't count because you're a car.

VEEP

So, let's do this thing.

CHLOE

You have a very good memory.

VEEP

Thank you.

CHLOE

You know what to do.

VEEP

Yes, I do. Is there anything you want to change?

CHLOE

No, but thanks for asking.

CONTINUED: (2)

BEAT>

VEEP

I only wish I could've been more
supportive.

CHLOE

You're a car. A very good car and a
very good car friend. But, just a
car.

EXT. VALLEY VIEWPOINT - CONTINUOUS

The car backs up and drives away through the empty parking
lot, carefully signals and continues onto the highway.

FADE OUT.

THE END