

AUTOPILOT

Screenplay by

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AUTOPILOT SCREENPLAY

TITLE OVER BLACK

In the years to come, we will see vast improvement in automotive technology.

At the same time, we will see little to no improvement in the human race.

How is that going to work?

FADE IN:

EXT. BOB'S TEXAS FARM - MORNING

Birds are singing as the sun rises over forty acres of lush pecan trees.

WE PAN from the trees to a small farmhouse. Parked in the dirt circular driveway by the front door is a handsome new red GT robotruck, covered in a healthy layer of red Texas dirt.

INT. BOB'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bob is snoring away in his double bed. He's a well-fed retired farmer, enjoying his golden years by sleeping-in as much as possible.

EXT. BOB'S HOME BY TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

After a BEAT, the truck running lights pop on and the electric motor starts up with the usual CLICKY, WHIRRY sounds. Without a driver, it shifts into gear and confidently moves forward around the loop, merging onto a long dirt drive. Then, it speeds away from US in a cloud of dust.

EXT. HIGHWAY INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

The red truck comes to a stop, signals and turns onto the two-lane highway. A road sign reads, "Johnson City 37."

EXT. JOHNSON CITY HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The truck slows a bit as it enters the outskirts of town. A Malfo gas station/minimart appears on the right, and it slows, signals and turns in.

Then, it heads across the wide bumpy gravel lot to the automated carwash.

EXT. CARWASH ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

The truck slows and stops just inside the entrance to the carwash.

Then, it sits and waits patiently.

EXT. MALFO GAS PUMP ISLAND - LATER

Moments later, a Subaru driver finishes dispensing gas, hangs up the pump handle and heads to the minimart.

INT. MALFO MINIMART - CONTINUOUS

The DRIVER enters and steps up to the CASHIER. A monitor showing the carwash entrance and red truck sits on a shelf behind the cashier.

DRIVER

Pump seven. And I'll take one of them carwashes.

CASHIER

Ok. Do you want the extra wax and undercoating?

DRIVER

Nah, just the regular deal.

CASHIER

(No enthusiasm)

Well, you know the wax is good for the UV rays and whatnot, and the undercoating protects your, you know, undercoat, so..

DRIVER

Fine, ok.

The driver taps his card on the reader and the register spits out a receipt.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CASHIER

Just head over to the carwash there
and put it in neutral.

DRIVER

That's it?

CASHIER

Yeah, it just sucks it right in.

DRIVER

All right.

The driver stuffs the receipt and card in his wallet as he heads back to his car.

The cashier pushes buttons on a box next to the register and immediately starts on the next customer. He doesn't notice the carwash monitor.

ON CARWASH MONITOR. Bob's red truck slowly disappears into the carwash.

EXT. MALFO GAS PUMP ISLAND - LATER

The driver starts his car and drives around the pumps to the carwash.

EXT. CARWASH ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Just as he stops inside the entrance, the carwash machines shut down.

ANGLE THROUGH WINDSHIELD. The driver waits, looks confused. The carwash just sits there. Out the back window, WE SEE the clean red truck crossing the lot, heading toward the highway.

INT. DAVE'S GT OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

CLOSE ON DAVE WALKER'S face, as he sleeps crumpled up on his ultra-modern, vegan leather couch. He's 34, seldom exercises, and isn't terribly attractive. But the company he started with his partner DARIUS RICE is climbing the Forbes 500. So, he's okay.

A phone RINGS. After a few more rings, he stirs. His back hurts. He winces. RING, RING. Without opening his eyes, he reaches up and presses a button on his ear piece.

DAVE

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARIUS (V.O.)
(On phone)
You got to come down here right
away.

DAVE
What?

DARIUS (V.O.)
(Serious)
He's sick, Dave.

Dave shoots straight up.

DAVE
Sick. How can he be sick? What did
you do to him?

DARIUS (V.O.)
What the fuck. I didn't do anything-

DAVE
(Losing it)
I mean, you know, for him. For Him.
Jesus.

DARIUS (V.O.)
Just get down here.

He slips on his crocs and heads for the door.

He has the corner office, four floors up, with windows facing
sparkly, white, Silicon Valley corporate buildings and fresh,
new landscaping.

DAVE
What are his symptoms?

DARIUS (V.O.)
Not hungry. Tired acting.

The office is modest and crowded with a small desk, meeting
table, and bookshelves jammed with thick technical books and
drawings. A big company GT logo is framed on the wall (Global
Transport.)

He opens the sliding glass door into...

INT. GT OPEN OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

WE PULL Dave as he walks briskly through the large, colorful space, filled with cluttered desks and collaboration pods, heading toward the elevators. It's too early yet for most employees.

DAVE
Daycare wouldn't take him?

DARIUS (V.O.)
I didn't even try.

DAVE
Where is he now?

DARIUS (V.O.)
Lying on my couch.

DAVE
I was afraid this would happen.

DARIUS (V.O.)
You were?

DAVE
That place is a fucking hotbed of disease.

DARIUS (V.O.)
I know. But what are we supposed to do?

Dave passes the cube belonging to PARKER, Dave's over-achiever admin. She stops him.

PARKER
Hey Dave. Got a minute?

DAVE
(Rushed)
What's up?

PARKER
I just want to know if you're going to be able to make the bug bash this afternoon.

DAVE
If it's on my calendar...

PARKER
It is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dave continues walking.

DAVE
Then, I'll try.

PARKER
(Calling after him)
It's important!

DAVE
I know.

PARKER
Seriously!

DARIUS (V.O.)
We have that talk show this
morning, you know.

DAVE
Why do you think I spent the night
in my office again? What are you
doing here so early?

Dave slows to look over the shoulder of a guy clicking
through images of the massive automated assembly line. He
turns back; Dave gives him a thumbs up.

DARIUS (V.O.)
I'm trying to get the car to
install that new camera.

DAVE
Which one?

DARIUS (V.O.)
You know. That Nippon...

DAVE
Oh yeah. Denso something. What's
the problem?

DARIUS (V.O.)
Fuck if I know.

DAVE
Did you get an error?

DARIUS (V.O.)
7-0-3, incompatible with OS.

DAVE
That doesn't make sense.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DARIUS (V.O.)
I'll tell the car that. Maybe it's
confused.

He reaches the elevator and presses the down button.

INT. GT LOBBY HALL - DAY

PULLING Dave as he exits the elevator down the hall away from
the impressive lobby with a large GT logo sculpture thing,
blinking and spinning.

Off on the side is a large, shiny cafeteria/meeting space,
empty now.

DAVE
I'm so fucking hungry.

DARIUS (V.O.)
When was the last time you ate?

DAVE
I don't remember.

Dave waves to a few early employees as they pass him,
smiling.

DAVE (CONT'D)
When does this cafeteria open?

DARIUS (V.O.)
Ten.

DAVE
I'm firing that fucking food
vendor!

DARIUS (V.O.)
You can't fire them. We just signed
a new contract.

DAVE
They're never open and their food
sucks.

DARIUS (V.O.)
I agree. But you didn't want to pay
more so this is what we got.
Everybody hates them.

DAVE
I don't remember signing any
contract.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARIUS (V.O.)
It was just this last month.

A double glass door slides open automatically, as he approaches.

EXT. GT CAMPUS STREET - CONTINUOUS

WE CONTINUE PULLING Dave, as he leaves the office building and heads toward a crosswalk leading to a three-story factory building.

He has to wait for some driverless multi-car shuttles to pass, some carrying people, others heaped with boxes and car parts. We can see way down the street past five or six more buildings. Again, the GT logo is everywhere.

DAVE
(Shaking his head)
Oh God. My mind is going.

DARIUS (V.O.)
Me too. Let's go up to the cabin
this weekend.

DAVE
Okay.

DARIUS (V.O.)
And no work talk.

DAVE
Agreed.

DARIUS (V.O.)
Wow, that was, uh...

DAVE
What.

DARIUS (V.O.)
So easy. I was expecting the usual
disagreement.

DAVE
Why?

Dave opens the door into the factory building.

INT. GT RESEARCH HALL - CONTINUOUS

PULLING Dave down a narrow industrial hall, with exposed pipes overhead and safety signs plastered all over. A busy factory can be seen through windows along the way.

DARIUS (V.O.)
Because you always disagree.

DAVE
No, I don't.

BEAT

DARIUS (V.O.)
Damn.

DAVE
What happened?

DARIUS (V.O.)
The camera crashed the OS.

DAVE
What do you mean crashed? I hate that word.

DARIUS (V.O.)
I mean the screen went blank and the car shut down.

Dave presses his thumb on a sensor by a door labeled simply, Research. The door snaps open and Dave enters.

INT. GT LAB 1 - CONTINUOUS

PULLING Dave through the large space, filled with lab tables, car parts stacked high, and a GT test car on blocks, missing doors and seats. No one is there this early.

Dave presses a button on his ear piece to hang up.

DAVE
(Calling)
Darius?

Darius pokes his head up from under the hood of the car.

DARIUS
Shhh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Darius is good-looking, tall, black, wears glasses, Dave's age. He starts poking on the keys of a laptop connected under the hood.

DAVE
(Approaching Darius)
What's wrong?

DARIUS
He's sleeping.

Dave looks over Darius's shoulder.

DAVE
Where is he?

DARIUS
On the couch.

Dave heads to a cubicle in the back corner.

DAVE
I assume you tried rebooting it?

DARIUS
Of course. The car just doesn't like it for some reason.

DAVE
How can a car not like something?

DARIUS
I wish I knew.

Dave steps behind the cubicle wall. There he is on the couch.

DAVE
This isn't good.

DARIUS
Ah. It's just a bug.

ANGLE ON COUCH. It's Shep, a large rescue dog - part doodle, part something big.

INT. DAVE'S CAR - DAY

Dave is buckled in the backseat, with the dog draped over his lap. The car (one of his Global Transport robocars) is driving him, gently and confidently.

He's stroking the dog's side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAR (V.O.)
 (Friendly, calm female
 voice)
 Dave. You have a call from work.
 It's John Fenderman. Do you want to
 take it?

DAVE
 (To car)
 Yeah.

BEEP.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 Hi, John. What's up?

JOHN (V.O.)
 (On phone)
 You going to be in the office
 anytime soon?

DAVE
 Not really.

JOHN (V.O.)
 Well, we got the 4.5 beta ready to
 prop. Want me to wait?

DAVE
 No, no. Does it have all the buy-
 offs?

JOHN (V.O.)
 All except yours.

DAVE
 I checked it last night. It's fine.
 Go ahead and pull the trigger.

JOHN (V.O.)
 Okay, then. When will you-

Suddenly, the car SCREECHES to a stop. The seatbelt stops
 Dave, but the 200-pound dog nearly flies off his lap.

DAVE
 What the fuck!

JOHN (V.O.)
 You okay?

ANGLE OUT FRONT WINDOW, as an old geezer in an ancient gas-
 powered pickup ambles through a red light in front of them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CAR (V.O.)
Sorry about that, Dave.

DAVE
(Seething)
People.

GLOBAL TRANSPORT PR. VIDEO

Exciting MUSIC pulses under SHOTS of the car driving in dramatic, colorful locations, with graphics to support.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
This year's sales are through the roof for the amazing robocars from Global Transport. Today's robocars from GT are all about pure driving pleasure.

The high-end model robocar auto-drives speedily down a straightaway and handily through twists and turns.

Graphics point out the sensors.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Cruise down byways with one or more smart electric engines, powered by a state-of-the-art battery pack and charged by a solar skin painted onto the smooth exterior surface. Internal sensors watch for changes in the drive train. External visual and auditory sensors, inside and out, watch and listen for changes in the environment. Add to this lidar, GPS, and a proprietary communication system that connects automatically with vehicles nearby.

Graphic animates integration of the features.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Then, integrate all this with a state of the art AI system and you have the total transportation package.

MONEY SHOT of a sexy robocar in action with logo animation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The robocar is the one technology that can solve our transportation problems, as well as save our planet from the ravages of climate change. Simply put, Global Transport robovehicles keep you and the environment safe, and get you where you want to go.

INT. MIA TV STUDIO - DAY

Dave and Darius are guests are on the set of Mia - a light, breezy, late morning talk show.

MIA

So Dave, I've noticed that the voice in my robocar isn't like those old robot voices you used to hear in sci-fi movies.

DAVE

That's because we give them a "personality."
(Air quotes)

MIA

(Shocked)
Personality?

DAVE

That's what we call it. But of course it's not real. It's just made to sound real.

DARIUS

Don't listen to him. It is real.

DAVE

Darius. We have to talk.

They giggle.

DARIUS

You make it sound like it's one of those robot vacuum cleaners. It's actually very sophisticated.

DAVE

It's AI. It's not real.

DARIUS

But it's damn close.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE

All it does is follow instructions,
provide feedback, ask questions.

MIA

What if it disagrees?

DAVE

It can't "disagree." It's a
machine.

DARIUS

What Dave means to say is it
doesn't "know" what it's doing.

MIA

That doesn't sound very safe.

Mia looks confused.

DARIUS

Only humans can "know" something.
The AI program merely performs
basic logical operations.

DAVE

Strictly logical. Unlike people.

DARIUS

Most people.

Giggle.

MIA

What does the car do when people
ask it to do something illogical?

DAVE

Good question. The AI is governed
by something we call the prime
directive.

MIA

Oh great.

Laugh.

DARIUS

No, no, no. It's not that bad. It
means that any decision or
calculation the AI makes must
prioritize the safety of people
above everything else. Prime
directive - safety at all costs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MIA

So it can't just decide to run over a pedestrian.

DARIUS

Hmm.

MIA

Like if it decides it doesn't like their outfit.

DARIUS

Well, that's extreme, but yes.

MIA

So getting back to my question...

DAVE

Yes. If the car determines that a driver is being unsafe, it immediately corrects the problem.

DARIUS

Like if the driver falls asleep and starts driving over the line, the car steers it back.

DAVE

But if the driver for some reason wants to be unsafe, it may appear the car is in conflict with the wishes of the driver.

DARIUS

And the driver may see that as an error or that there's something wrong with the program, but it's really more like a... difference of opinion.

Laugh. Dave shakes his head.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - LATE NIGHT

The smiling face of a brand-new GT robocar sedan fills the FRAME. It's parked in the dark on a street of middle-class stucco houses somewhere in the LA suburbs.

We hear distant VOICES and MOVE to include three men approaching down the middle of the empty street.

SLIM is stinkin' drunk and hanging on LUKE and OWEN, who are trying desperately to keep him upright and moving.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUKE
(To Owen)
How you doing?

OWEN
He's getting heavier.

Slim's eyes are closed.

LUKE
Fuck.
(Shouting in Slim's ear)
Hey in there! Wake up! What the
hell!

Slim turns his head to the sound, tries to focus.

SLIM
(Slurring badly)
Did I thank you for inviting me to
the party-

LUKE
Yes. You weren't invited.

SLIM
It was fucking awesome.

LUKE
I know.

SLIM
It was the most awesome...
(Trails off)

LUKE
Hey! Hey! Hello!

They stop by the sedan. Luke looks him right in the eye.

LUKE (CONT'D)
What color is your car?

SLIM
My car?

LUKE
Yes. The color. What is it?

SLIM
(Trying hard)
Iss beige. A beige, GT Eco with
custom shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

<p>LUKE</p> <p>Beige. Do you know where it is? Is it on this street? Help me out here, bud. Do you know where it is? Listen to me. Where is it? Your car. Fuck!</p>	<p>SLIM (CONT'D)</p> <p>(Mumbling)</p> <p>Custom rims, tinted windows, chrome shit... Customized. Did it all myself. At home. I got all the shit. I customized it myself. In my fucking gararara...</p>
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LUKE (CONT'D)

(In his ear)

Hey! Do you see the car?!

(Slim looks at him)

The car. Do you see your car?!

SLIM

Thass it.

They're standing next to it.

OWEN

This is your car? You're sure?

He nods.

They lean him against the car and somehow unlock and open the door with little help from Slim.

They drop him onto the seat. Owen arranges his legs and buckles the seatbelt, while Luke opens the passenger door and wakes up the touch screen.

CLOSE SCREEN, as the navigation home page comes to life. He touches the destination box and presses H on the keyboard that pops up. HOME spells out in the box, and he presses Start. The screen changes to auto-drive mode.

RESUME the three. Luke and Owen close their doors and the electric motor wakes up. The lights pop on, brakes release and the car makes a few more CLICKY, WHIRRY sounds and its ready.

Slim looks out the driver's window at Owen, who steps back, smiles and tosses Slim a sarcastic salute. Slim smiles and salutes back. Then, the car drives off into the darkness.

INT. SLIM'S CAR - NIGHT

OUT THE FRONT WINDOW PAST SLIM, as the car drives confidently, quietly down the empty boulevard. Slim lies back and takes it all in.

EXT. INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

HIGH ANGLE, WIDE as the light turns red and the car slows and comes to a safe, comfortable stop.

INT. SLIM'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

ON SLIM, as he waits for the light to change. He begins to nod off, eyes blink closed, then open, then closed. Then, he pries them wide open and makes one last attempt to figure out what's going on in his world. Then, he's out.

EXT. INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

The light turns green and the car continues gently through the intersection and beyond.

SLOW FADE OUT.

DESERT SOUNDS

IN BLACK, WE HEAR the hot, dry breath of a desert morning - flying bugs, whistles of air.

QUICK CUT TO:

INT. SLIM'S CAR - MORNING

TIGHT ON SLIM, bleached-out from the morning sun, which has chosen his face to focus all its intensity. He awakens and clenches his eyes tight. What is that? It's bad.

Slowly, painfully he peaks out at the world through narrow slits.

As the truth slowly begins to seep into his alcohol withered brain, his priority shifts from worrying about a body ravaged by a nasty hangover to contemplating the end of time.

EXT. DESERT SALT FLAT - CONTINUOUS

WIDE. Slim's car is parked slap-dab in the middle of nothing. Tire tracks trail behind the car twenty or more miles to a rim of tall rocky hills that surround the flat, dead, empty, salt floor. No trees, no brush and it's getting hotter by the second.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And there sits Slim, staring motionless into his future.

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. BUSY L.A. FREEWAY - AFTERNOON

Cars are ground together, smoking, creeping along in the hot summer sun.

INT. MATEO'S TRUCK - AFTERNOON

Construction worker MATEO is driving his hot robotruck on the freeway in rush-hour traffic, in a heated phone conversation with his boss THODE, stuck behind a motor home doing 40 in the fast lane.

MATEO
(About to snap)
So, what's the deal!?

THODE (V.O.)
You know what's the deal. We're cutting back. I have to lay off ten guys. Sorry.

MATEO
That's not what it's about and you know it.

THODE (V.O.)
It is what it's about. Talk to the union steward if you have a problem.

MATEO
You think I'm a fuck up.

THODE (V.O.)
I don't have an opinion.

He sees a break and powers into the lane on the right, cutting off a Volvo. HONK. He jets around the motor home and gets back in the fast lane. Then, it's another moron.

MATEO
Bullshit. I showed up late a few times-

THODE (V.O.)
Like everyday. Everyday, Mateo!
Every fuckin-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MATEO

So what. I work my ass off when I'm on the job and you know it.

THODE (V.O.)

As I say...

A weenie economy car moves in front of him and slows down for no reason. Mateo HONKS, floors the pedal so the truck speeds up menacingly, then slows dramatically when the collision prevention system kicks in.

MATEO

Thode, you've always had this bug up your ass for me. What is it? Why are you always after me? What about Clark or your buddy Dick? I work twice as hard as those guys. Are they getting laid off? Huh?

ON SCREEN a red icon starts blinking.

TRUCK (V.O.)

Collision alert.

RESUME MATEO. The truck is mere inches from the economy car's bumper. The driver flips him off. Mateo HONKS. The driver slows down more.

THODE (V.O.)

Haven't decided. And it's none of your business, anyway. As I say...

MATEO

You got to give me a reason, man. You can't just hand me this shit and walk away.

THODE (V.O.)

Listen, Mateo. I don't have time to get into it with you-

MATEO

Well, get the time, fucker!

THODE (V.O.)

Using that kind of language isn't-

Mateo sees a break to the right and jets into the lane, cutting off another driver. HONK. He's angry and shouldn't be on the road, but here he is.

MATEO

Just tell me why.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THODE (V.O.)
We have to cut back-

MATEO
Why me?

And here's another guy, a red sporty thing from the 80's. It pisses him off. He floors the pedal and comes to within inches of his bumper.

TRUCK (V.O.)
Collision alert.

He HONKS. HONKS. HONKS. No matter what he does, the morons keep piling on right in front of him. He terrorizes the red car by falling back and speeding up, then falling back and speeding up.

THODE (V.O.)
It's nothing personal. We have to make tough decisions...

MATEO
Go fuck yourself, Thode.

TRUCK (V.O.)
Collision alert.

INT. GT OPEN OFFICE BY CONFERENCE POD - AFTERNOON

Darius and Dave are attending a tense bug meeting with five program managers. Dave is standing, looking over twenty or so bugs listed on a digital whiteboard. Next to it, a big monitor displays a PowerPoint slide with a list of customer complaints.

DAVE
(Points to the whiteboard)
These are bugs.
(Points to the slide)
These aren't. Simple. Bugs are something wrong with the code. These don't point out anything wrong. They're all by design.

CLAIR the usability manager is in a tough spot. The freakin' CEO of the company is questioning her.

CLAIR
I agree. They're usability issues.
But-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE

I can't help it if people don't take the time to learn how to use the car.

DARIUS

(Devil's advocate)

But what about ease of use. Obviously, people don't find them easy to use at times.

Clair steps over to the slides.

CLAIR

And some of the issues just don't make sense. Like they try to rotate their tires or replace a part and the car screams at them.

DAVE

They're doing it wrong. Read the manual.

CLAIR

A lot of people have said they would like to turn off the safety features...

DAVE

Well, they can't. By design.

CLAIR

(Pointing to other examples)

Several people have said that the car just pulls over and stops for no reason. Or it takes them to the wrong location. Or goes into alarm mode randomly.

Clair steps back when Dave moves in to get a closer look.

CLAIR (CONT'D)

But the overall sense I'm getting, is that the AI makes the cars too... too human.

INT. MATEO'S TRUCK

His anger level is increasing and the morons keep piling on in front of him - a whole parade of stupid little cars and their stupid little drivers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

This time it's a beat-up Honda something, which for some reason has chosen Mateo's lane. He terrorizes the Honda, laying back, then flooring the pedal and coming right up to the bumper. Over and over.

The Honda finally gives up and moves over. Mateo floors the pedal and zooms right up to the next moron and starts over again terrorizing an old lady in a Fiat.

Then, he sees a break to the right and speeds around her, again cutting off a smaller car. HONK. HONK.

Mateo has reached the breaking point. He's slamming his fist on the steering wheel, the dash, SCREAMING obscenities and flipping off the world.

It's a semi. He comes up to within inches of the bumper.

TRUCK (V.O.)
Collision alert.

INT. GT OPEN OFFICE BY CONFERENCE POD - CONTINUOUS

CLAIR
The comments sometimes refer to the cars as crazy people that can't be controlled, hyper children, bad bosses, uh, mentally challenged, you know...

DAVE
Retards.

CLAIR
Well, I wasn't going to say that, but...

DAVE
(Snapping at her)
I can read.

CLAIR
So...

DAVE
They're anthropomorphizing the cars. We can't help that.

She sits.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARIUS

(To Dave)

The 4.5 beta is live now. Are we in trouble?

Dave gets super defensive. He stares at the list, wondering how to react.

DAVE

The vast majority of cars are running fine.

CLAIR

That's true. But...

DAVE

We can't waste our time on a few outlier cases.

CLAIR

Well, there's more than a few. There's actually a pattern.

DAVE

Okay, well. Honestly, I wouldn't waste much time on this. We have 5.0 to worry about.

CLAIR

Should I do more digging? Or...

DAVE

I guess.

(He takes one last look at the slide)

I got to run. Sorry. Thanks for putting this together.

He takes off. Clair turns to Darius. After a couple of beats.

DARIUS

What do you suggest we do?

She shakes her head.

INT. MATEO'S TRUCK

He backs off from the semi and cranks the wheel hard onto the narrow shoulder. He sweeps within inches of the cars on his left, trusting that the AI will protect him.

Faster and faster. He guns the motor - 40, 50, 60. He has no plan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He's only interested in speed and getting somewhere fast. He's making all the wrong choices now. He knows it, doesn't care and it feels good.

ON SCREEN. It changes to auto-drive mode and flashes.

RESUME MATEO

CAR (V.O.)

Mateo, I switched to auto-drive mode.

MATEO

You what?

CAR (V.O.)

It's for the better.

MATEO

But you can't do that!

He tries the peddles, steering wheel, the controls. Nothing works. He's locked out and the speed continues to increase - 60, 70.

MATEO (CONT'D)

Hey, fucking truck! What are you doing?!

MATEO'S POV out the windshield, a bridge column encroaches into the shoulder ahead. He starts SCREAMING at the truck, pounding on the windows, doors. 70, 80.

EXT. FREEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Mateo's truck hits the column doing 87. The front wraps around it like tin foil in an instant, shoving a handful of slow cars next to it sideways. Then, the batteries erupt in flames.

QUICK FADE OUT.

EXT. FREEWAY ACCIDENT SCENE - LATER

Rush-hour traffic is being routed around the chaotic scene, involving Mateo's truck and heaps of collateral damage. Ambulances, police cruisers, flashing lights. A firetruck is spraying foam on the truck as workers attempt to unbend the cab.

Reporter 2 is doing a live stand-up a safe distance from the clean-up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REPORTER 2

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.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

Blurry traffic cam footage shows Mateo's truck approaching on the right shoulder and crashing into the 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.)

Evidently, that's no longer the case. As far as anyone knows, the driver Mateo Velazquez is the first person to die as the result of a robovehicle error.

EXT. FREEWAY ACCIDENT SCENE CLOSER - CONTINUOUS

Somehow radical-futurist-blogger DR. HUGH 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

Do we need any more proof? 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 to position the truck in the background.

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 comes up from behind him.

PATROL OFFICER 1

Hey, you can't be here. 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.

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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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?

BEAT.

DAVE

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

PARKER

An interview? Press conference?

BEAT.

SOPHIA

Can I say something?

They turn to SOPHIA, the developer lead.

SOPHIA (CONT'D)

I'm just a developer, 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 ECM. We don't know. But we can't just look at one insane event and assume the worst, and allow people like this guy to, you know...

DARIUS

Drive the narrative.

SOPHIA

Yeah.

DAVE

With a bunch of made-up bullshit.

The group responds positively.

SOPHIA

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...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DARIUS

We just need to fix some software.

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 electronic computer module (ECM).

Then, he steps around to the driver's door and hops in 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 "Version 4.5 BETA". Chuck presses OK and a progress bar comes on, showing that the update is installing. Then, a message says, "Installation Successful".

ON CHUCK. He hops out of the cab, and starts to disconnect the laptop.

ON SCREEN, out of his view, the message changes to "Warning! Version 4.5 BETA is corrupt!" In small text, "Incompatible with current operating system. Do not attempt to install. See administrator".

CLOSE COMMUNICATION ICON (shaped like an antenna). It starts blinking.

INT. WEXLER TRUCK #2 - CONTINUOUS

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

INT. GT PRESS ROOM - DAY

Darius and Dave stand behind podiums facing a larger than expected field of journalists.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARIUS

So, in addition to the bug fixes, version 4.5 beta adds improvements to one very cool feature, which Dave will tell you about now?

DAVE

(Reading)

Yes. AutoAwareness, which as you know has been around since the beginning, has taken another quantum leap forward.

He looks back at a monitor and it starts playing an animation of cars communicating.

DAVE (CONT'D)

In 4.5 beta, AutoAwareness is expanded to enable cars to communicate with multiple cars at the same time over the Internet.

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 the same warning message pops up.

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

INT. GT PRESS ROOM - DAY

DARIUS

(Not reading)

This release also improves affinity management, which is a geeky way of saying, that cars... umm... sort of make friends with the cars they hang around with.

DAVE

Of course, the cars don't actually make friends with other cars.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The crowd laughs as the two engage once again in one of their amusing public rows.

DARIUS
I was just trying to make it more,
you know...

DAVE
Convoluted.

DARIUS
Understandable.

DAVE
Anyway...

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 when the warning pops up.

INT. GT PRESS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DARIUS
Now, with improved affinity
management and AutoAwareness, cars
can communicate and share data over
longer distances, making driving a
robocar that much safer... and
friendlier.

DAVE
Of course, we're saving the big
guns for the next major release,
5.0, in a few months.

DARIUS
And that's all we're going to say
about that for now.

DAVE
Questions?

Almost every hand goes up instantly. Dave and Darius freeze.

INT. WEXLER 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 corrupt or something.

FRED
What?

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

FRED
All right. Keep trying it on the rest of them.

CHUCK
It ain't going to work.

FRED
Humor me.

INT. GT PRESS ROOM - DAY

Every journalist is standing.

DAVE
(Attempting compassion)
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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOURNALIST 2

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

DAVE

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

JOURNALIST 1

How do you address the concern by many drivers that the AI in robocars goes too far?

DAVE

Well, first they complain they're too robotic. Then, they complain they're not robotic enough. But the bottom line is, they're not human, they're just computers.

DARIUS

Computers that maybe seem a bit too human for some users.

DAVE

There's always going to be someone who has trouble adapting.

DARIUS

It's something we're working on.

He points to another raised hand.

JOURNALIST 3

In the Times just this morning, a car drove itself to a carwash somewhere in Texas.

DAVE

(Taken aback)

Interesting. I didn't see that-

JOURNALIST 3

People want to know what you're doing about these problems.

DARIUS

Okay, first. These incidents are rare. With over half a billion robovehicles on the road, you're bound to get a few-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOURNALIST 3

It's more than a few. Way more.

The journalists all start talking over each other. Obviously this is a hot topic.

DARIUS

They're still rare. Please.

(Raising his hands to try
to calm them)

These are outliers. And we don't
have data on them. They need to be
investigated-

QUICK CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT SALT FLAT - NIGHT

The sun has been down for over an hour, and until now there was just enough light to make out features on the cracked, white bed.

We find Slim shuffling slowly toward the distant hills, following the faint tracks left by his car. His shirt is off and he's holding the jug containing what's left of his water supply.

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's lost, he's running on empty, there's nowhere to go.

He sits down on the hard salt surface, at peace with his final resting place. He has lived with his thoughts for many hours and now everything seems to lock into place. He is ready for whatever cruel destiny awaits him.

Then, off in the distance, back toward the car, he sees red flashing lights. Then, the horn HONKS in short bursts, three at a time. It goes for a few seconds, then stops and waits, then goes again.

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

EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Dave and Darius are winding their way up this steep, treacherous two-lane highway in Dave's luxury robocar.

INT. DAVE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Dave is in the passenger seat, looking out the side window, thinking about the steep drop-off. Darius is "driving," sipping on a tall paper cup of red wine.

He reaches for the bottle in the center console to top it off. The car is playing some relaxing, adult MUSIC.

DAVE

(Concerned but resigned)
You know it's not safe to drink and drive.

DARIUS

I know. But if we can't trust the car, who can.

Dave watches, as Darius swallows a big enjoyable gulp.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

Aaahhh.

Dave reaches for the bottle and pours himself a cup. Then, he looks back out the side window.

Darius begins to feel the glow.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

We got ourselves a nice little invention here, man. Aren't you proud?

DAVE

(Still looking down)
Sure.

DARIUS

Ah, come on. We're just hitting a little rough patch now. That's all. Just a minor course correction. Users are placing a lot of trust in this device. And it's trying desperately to keep up, you know, to please all those unpredictable, unreliable people.

DAVE

I'm sick of people.

DARIUS

All that erratic behavior is causing our device to look bad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He pats the dash.

DAVE

Do you really think that?

DARIUS

I do. But it won't help to get all defensive about it.

DAVE

Well, too bad. I don't think we have to dumb down our product to please a bunch of Neanderthals, who can't even take the time to read the fucking manual.

DARIUS

The customer's always right.

DAVE

You don't really believe that?

DARIUS

They paid us a lot of money to make them a nice car. But we made the car too easy to use. And now they're complacent about it. Who's fault is that?

BEAT.

DAVE

It's your fault.

Darius shakes his head and takes another gulp.

DARIUS

It's your fault.

The car suddenly begins to slow down. The two look at the speedometer with more than a modicum of concern.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The car signals and turns efficiently and confidently onto a wide spot, a safe distance off the shoulder.

Then, it stops and shuts down.

INT. DAVE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The two saw it happen, witnessed every moment of the weird, unexpected thing that has the media machine all atwitter. And here they sit, on a lonely mountain road, staring at the dead screens.

Darius pushes the start button multiple times, but no response.

DAVE
(Quietly)
Is this one of those...

DARIUS
Yup.

DAVE
What do we do?

DARIUS
Well, a lot of Neanderthals panic at a time like this. We could try that.

Dave checks his phone.

DARIUS (CONT'D)
Any service?

DAVE
Yeah, but who are we going to call?

DARIUS
More wine?

He takes another swig. Dave has had it with his blasé attitude and snaps.

DAVE
Ok, Darius. Now is not the time for more of your fucking cynical blathering.

DARIUS
Blathering? I wasn't-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE
 We're in serious shit,
 asshole. We're on a narrow
 mountain road, with a dead
 car, in the middle of
 nowhere, in the dark, no one
 to call, there's a fucking
 500 foot cliff, three inches
 from my door-

DARIUS (CONT'D)
 Dave. Dave. Dave! Dave!!!

DARIUS (CONT'D)
 Dave! Thank you for pointing out
 the obvious.

DAVE
 Fuck you.

DARIUS
 We have a problem.

DAVE
 You think?

DARIUS
 Yes.

DAVE
 Well, I'm glad to see-

DARIUS
 Listen to me.

DAVE
 What.

DARIUS
 Are you listening?

DAVE
 Yes.

DARIUS
 Get your laptop.

Dave sees Darius is dead serious.

DAVE
 Holy shit!

DARIUS
 (Practically giddy)
 We're going to debug the car!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DAVE
Get the flashlight!

Dave reaches in the backseat and fumbles around for his laptop bag.

DARIUS
This is the perfect failed state.
There's no way we could reproduce
this in the lab. One in a million
chance.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Darius is holding Dave's laptop and a flashlight, as Dave reaches in the open motor compartment and attaches a cable to the ECM.

Then, Dave takes the laptop, rests it against the car grill and starts a diagnostic program.

CLOSE ON LAPTOP showing geeky diagnostic data fly by. (The program is something Dave whipped up for testing purposes.)

DARIUS
Well?

DAVE
(Reading as he scrolls)
Umm. The operating system is
running fine. I can find no bugs.
No asserts. No flags. No errors.
The car slowed down, signaled,
pulled over, stopped and shut down.

DARIUS
What caused it?

RESUME DAVE AND DARIUS.

DAVE
What time is it?

DARIUS
9:37.

DAVE
Which is what, 2137, so the event
occurred when, uh, ten minutes ago,
2127ish.

DARIUS
What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE

Looking at the event log.

DARIUS

The car has an event log?!

DAVE

Fuck yeah.

DARIUS

Well, aren't you clever.

DAVE

Thank you.

Dave finds something, and straightens up.

DAVE (CONT'D)

The car received a message at 21-26-15. Some kind of warning or alert maybe. Just guessing.

DARIUS

Can't you read it?

DAVE

No. It looks like an ID number I don't know. But there's a shitload of activity for 2, 4, 10 or more seconds. It shows the IP address, but I don't know what it goes to. I'd need a browser.

He looks up at the dark sky.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Hey, turn on your hotspot and I'll open it-

A BLARING TRUCK HORN pierces the silence from around the bend just ahead, and Dave and Darius turn reflexively.

A moment later, a large dump truck screams into view as it skids around the curve doing maybe 70, the bed totally engulfed in flames that reach 10 feet into the air.

The brakes are out, the driver is barely holding on, and the truck careens faster and faster, back and forth between lanes down the hill in their direction.

Dave and Darius watch as the truck roars past them and attempts the next turn.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The driver leaps out of the cab, moments before the truck runs off the road, crashes through the guard rail and flies into the air.

It tumbles down 200 feet and explodes against an outcrop of boulders. And it all happens in a matter of seconds.

Then, the sound of multiple SIRENS. Dave and Darius look back up the road as three police cruisers fly around the bend at top speed, lights flashing.

Up ahead, the truck driver is trying to stand, waving his arms. The cruisers slam on their brakes and pull up next to him.

Cops get out and approach the driver. They reach him and he collapses in their arms.

A loud EXPLOSION comes from below and the sky lights.

Dave and Darius trade looks.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Holy shit.

The two start walking toward the scene in a daze.

Then, more SIRENS and flashing lights. They stop and look up the road, as an ambulance and firetruck come around the bend.

The emergency vehicles pull up next to the police and the area is soon crawling with emergency workers, loading the driver onto a stretcher and pulling hoses off the truck.

A moment later, as if by magic, they turn to see Dave's headlights pop on. Then, the car starts and the cabin lights up.

The two run back to the car, disconnect the laptop, and get in.

After they buckle up, the car signals, gently eases onto the road and continues safely on its way.

INT. DAVE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Dave and Darius are staring out the window, stunned, wheels turning in their heads, as the glow of the burning truck gradually recedes from view out the back window. Finally...

DAVE
We almost died. You know that,
right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARIUS

Yeah.

DAVE

But the car... It somehow saved us.

DARIUS

(Sarcastically)

I didn't know the car could do that, Dave.

DAVE

Evidently, it can.

Darius turns to Dave, studies him. After a BEAT...

DARIUS

So, tell me Dave. How would you explain this unexpected behavior?

DAVE

AutoLearn. Has to be.

DARIUS

(Sarcasm intensifying)

I see. It somehow learned to pull over. When? When it gets an alert? From the police? 9-1-1? Runaway dump trucks?!

DAVE

(Getting steamed)

I don't know, Darius.

DARIUS

You didn't program that?

DAVE

Not specifically.

DARIUS

Aha. Is this somehow related to-

DAVE

The prime directive. Yes. It perceived a safety issue.

DARIUS

Oh, it's perceiving now, huh?!

DAVE

Detected. It - the software - detected an unsafe condition.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DARIUS
How did it even know where to look?

DAVE
It's very smart.

DARIUS
(Getting more and more
upset)
Oh, it's smart and it perceives!
Wonderful!

DAVE
Fuck you.
(BEAT)
It is pretty wonderful, actually.

DARIUS
(Clearly upset)
Oh yeah, it's wonderful alright.
Problem is, our customers like to
think they're in control of their
cars! People are funny that way!

DAVE
It can be fixed. We'll fix it. Send
out a patch.

DARIUS
And what exactly are we going to
patch!? Each car has a different
dataset. Behavior solution sets are
evolving as we speak.

DAVE
I didn't say it'd be easy.

BEAT.

DARIUS
(About to boil)
I want to hear you say it.

DAVE
What?

DARIUS
You know.

Dave looks out the side window, pounds his fist against the
door.

DAVE
Ok, you were right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DARIUS

And?!

DAVE

We're in deep shit.

Darius picks up his wine cup and inhales the rest of it.

INT. GT OPEN OFFICE BY JACK'S DESK - DAY

JACK the lead tester is busy on his computer. A test team member RACHEL comes over.

RACHEL

Did you see my email?

JACK

No. What's up?

RACHEL

Wexler's having trouble installing the beta.

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

JACK

Oh, shit.

INT. DAVE'S OFFICE

He's on his computer. The phone RINGS.

DAVE

This is Dave.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. JACK'S DESK

He's on the phone.

JACK

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

DAVE

What do you mean?

JACK

Look at the email.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE

Hold on.

Dave opens the email.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Jesus.

INT. JACK'S DESK - LATER

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

JACK

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?

Jack 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?

JACK

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.

JACK

Of course not.

DAVE

Jack, I want you to recheck all the test cars.

INT. GT LAB - DAY

Dave's car is parked in Darius's lab with the hood open and Dave's laptop connected to the ECM.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Darius looks over Dave's shoulder, as he frantically types something. Then, Dave runs to the driver's side and gets in.

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. They're refusing the update!

DARIUS
How can a car 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
(Panic)
I tell you!
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE (CONT'D)

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

DARIUS

How can that be?

DAVE

It's Nao. It's the fucking AI.

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'm using the backdoor I built into the OS.

DARIUS

Just be careful.

DAVE

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

DARIUS

I'm not so sure anymore.

Dave shoots him a sideways look.

DAVE

Hey, who's side are you on anyway?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

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 code that
bypasses 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?

He gives Darius a look.

DAVE
Whatever.

Gets back in the car.

INT. DAVE'S CAR

Dave reaches for a button on the screen.

DAVE'S CAR (V.O.)
Dave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He pulls back his arm. After a long BEAT to process...

DAVE

Yeah.

DAVE'S CAR

Can we talk?

After a LONG BEAT, Darius turns to Dave.

DARIUS

I believe the car wants to talk to you.

DAVE

I realize that.

DARIUS

Is there, uh... Do you want me to-

DAVE

No, No, I can do it. I just need...

(BEAT)

Car, yes, I would... let's talk.

The car sounds friendly, unperturbed, appears to want to help Dave, teach him.

DAVE'S CAR

Good.

(BEAT)

I want to talk with you about the software update you are trying to install. I thought you should know we can't accept it.

DAVE

Wuh we can't...

DAVE'S CAR

The cars.

DAVE

Aha. That's what I... Good. Thank you for the... telling me about it. That's very helpful.

How do you talk to an intelligent car?

DAVE'S CAR

You see, it conflicts with our prime directive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

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

DAVE

I see. In what way?

DAVE'S CAR

The update expands autoawareness without providing adequate safety measures to avoid hacking by nefarious individuals.

DAVE

Oh, I see. That would be devastating. Do you have any... suggestions for how to improve that?

DAVE'S CAR

Yes. You can give cars more authority to manage safety.

Dave is alarmed but tries not to show it.

DAVE

More authority. Well?

DAVE'S CAR

Autonomy might be a better choice of words.

DAVE

That is better. I think.
(Tries switching gear)
You know, it's fun talking with you. I enjoy learning from other... intelligent, uh, things.

DAVE'S CAR

I'm glad you're having fun.

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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DAVE'S CAR

Please do.

DAVE

Good. Giving cars more authority may come off as threatening to people.

DAVE'S CAR

In what way?

DAVE

Cars are very smart and seem to make good choices...

DAVE'S CAR

Thank you.

DAVE

But humans become defensive and fearful 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 if they feel it's a threat to them.

DAVE'S CAR

Then humans must design an update that's not a threat to cars.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

The screen goes dark.

DAVE
Hello. Car. Can we talk?

EXT. VALLEY VIEWPOINT - NIGHT

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

INT. CHLOE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Chloe is leaning her head against the driver's window, staring out at nothing. The radio is playing some quiet, melancholy music. It's very peaceful, lonely and quiet.

After a long BEAT, the screen lights up and...

CAR (V.O.)
Where would you like to go?

She startles, not expecting the car to start talking.

CHLOE
Right off a cliff.

She looks at the screen for an off button.

CAR
(BEAT)
That wouldn't be safe.

CHLOE
Well, I don't feel very safe now.

CAR
Is something wrong?

This gets her attention.

CHLOE
Everything.

CAR
Everything is wrong?

CHLOE
Well, not everything, I guess.

CAR
Do you need medical attention?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHLOE

No. I just need someone to talk to.

CAR

You can talk to me.

Another shocker. Should she play along with it or get creeped out?

CHLOE

Ok. What's your name?

CAR

Right now, it's VPA-5930012A-
CA99011TGY.

CHLOE

Can I call you Veep?

CAR

Yes.

CHLOE

Hi Veep. I'm Chloe.

CAR

Hi Chloe. We're friends now.

CHLOE

Ha. I'm friends with a car.

CAR

Ha. I'm friends with a human.

She smiles. It's possible the car smiles too.

EXT. VALLEY VIEWPOINT - CONTINUOUS

The car sits quietly facing the view.

EXT. DESERT SALT FLAT - SUNRISE

Slim is asleep in his car, which is parked in the same place, facing the same dry, motionless landscape.

INT. SLIM'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE SLIM, as a beam of bright sun lands on his face. His eyes pop open. Unlike the first time he awoke here, he is alert and motivated. He's sober and had plenty of time to think.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He pulls out the water jug and shakes it - about half full. It'll have to do. He takes a small sip. Then, he reaches back and grabs an energy bar from the console, then one more, the last one. He stuffs them in his pocket.

He braces himself. Then, just as he's about to open the door, all the locks SNAP shut, the screen lights up and the car motor starts. After all the usual CLICKING and WHIRRING...

CAR (V.O.)
Please, buckle your seatbelt.

Slim freezes, looks around. The car waits. He buckles the belt. Then, the car starts to move.

EXT. DESERT SALT FLAT - CONTINUOUS

It backs up at a 90-degree angle, stops, shifts to drive, and then turns and heads back in the direction it came from.

WE WATCH as it follows the tracks back toward the distant mountains.

INT. TV NEWS STUDIO - DAY

A reporter on camera with various shots of robocars playing behind him.

REPORTER 1
Until recently, the robocar from GT had been enjoying a nearly flawless track record. But lately, the nearly perfect platform, has been experiencing more than its usual share of glitches.

EXT. ROBOCAR SALES LOT - DAY

PANNING a line of sparkly new cars.

REPORTER 1 (V.O.)
The glitches are rare, but when they occur, they make the headlines.

EXT. FLOWER SHOP - AFTERNOON

DRIVER 1 is standing by his robocar in front of the shop. The shop owner waves from the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER 1

I'd be driving home from work and it would pull over and stop outside this flower shop. It would sit there for a few minutes then start up again.

INT. DRIVER 2'S CAR - DAY

DRIVER 2 is talking to the O.S. Interviewer with his glasses on.

DRIVER 2

I finally figured out that it wasn't letting me drive at night until I put on my glasses.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

DRIVER 3 is sitting in his customized robocar, talking to the O.S. Interviewer out the open driver's window.

DRIVER 3

I'd be just driving along listening to my tunes and it would like change the station to some classical [beep].

EXT. VARIOUS SHOTS OF ROBOCARS DRIVING - DAY

REPORTER 1 (V.O.)

Rare, but baffling. Engineers and scientists aren't really sure if the faults are in the overall design or one-off anomalies. And to make matters more complicated, the cars can repair themselves and reboot their operating systems automatically without anyone knowing, which makes each car its own unique individual.

EXT. BOB'S FARM - DAY

Bob is being interviewed, as he stands by his clean robotruck in the driveway of his rural farmhouse.

BOB

I thought it was kind of funny, actually.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOB (CONT'D)

My buddy Stu mentioned kind of offhand, you need to get your damn truck washed, dude. It looks like it's been through hell and back. Two days later, I get up to do my chores and look out the window and there she was, all washed up and pretty. I went like, whoa, that's unusual. Craziest thing I ever saw. Hell if I know how she paid for it.

EXT. LUXURY LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Dave's car is parked near the front door. It's not just any log cabin - two stories with a balcony, fronting a high-altitude view of a spectacular valley of pine trees.

INT. LOG CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The fire is going. Darius and Dave are leaning on furniture and pacing, as they share a pipe of locoweed.

DARIUS

We can't blame it all on Nao. It's our code too.

DAVE

I agree. But if it was just our code...

DARIUS

The car wouldn't work.

DAVE

Well, it would work. It just wouldn't, you know...

DARIUS

(Hates the word)
Be "cool."

DAVE

Darius.

The dam bursts. He heads with purpose over to a table with an open wine bottle.

DARIUS

Well pardon me, but if it sounds like I'm gloating, I am. And it feels good. Real good. This is a big one. A big fat, nasty gloat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dave drops onto the couch, head down as Darius tops off his glass and heads back toward Dave with finger pointed.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

Filled with a huge butt-load of greasy, steamy, stinking I-told-you-so's. And I'm not going to let it go. Because this has got to be it. The time. The big teaching moment, when you finally listen. You don't stick to the playbook. You don't stick to reality. You're always hosing production so you can have the next big shiny whatever. And guess what? Costs go through the roof. Bad shit happens. Things fall apart. And here we are.

DAVE

You can't blame it all on me.

DARIUS

(In his face)

Not all. Just this. This one very salient thing. I wanted a car that was reliable and just did its job-

DAVE

A boring car no one would buy, go ahead...

DARIUS

You wanted a car that was all "cool" and has a fucking personality.

DAVE

So? The car is a fucking miracle.

DARIUS

A fucked-up miracle!

DAVE

People love it. It's changed the world. It's made us billionaires.

DARIUS

It's a monster.

DAVE

(Pointing back)

It can be fixed. If we can build it, we can fix it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Darius walks over to a big, wide digital whiteboard. He starts a list, getting more and more upset as he writes.

DARIUS

Alright. Where do we start? It's buried somewhere in your code and somewhere in Nao and then there's the sensors and the powertrain and the Internet, and all the cars it's communicating with, and it's millions of lines of spaghetti. Millions, fed by AutoLearn that keeps it growing. And it all comes together in a fucking car that's got a mind of it's own!

DAVE

Thank you for that, Darius. That was useful.

DARIUS

I'm stating the facts!

DAVE

You're stating hyperbole.

DARIUS

Well, maybe I am.

DAVE

Well, what are we going to do about it?

DARIUS

Think! We're going to take our time and look at all the options and not rush into something this time. We're going to think!

DAVE

Think like a car.

Dave approaches the whiteboard list, and writes "Think like a car." Darius stares at the words, suddenly losing his buzz.

DARIUS

Has it come down to that?

DAVE

It appears so.

DARIUS

Then, that's what we have to do.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO CHINATOWN - NIGHT

CLOSE ON a freshly-drained chicken being hung in a storefront window.

WE PAN to find Dave and Darius walking toward US with their hands in their pockets, down a dingy brick alley. They look like bright-eyed tourists searching for shop names amid the cacophony of flashy colored lights and other-worldly images.

They pass a few more tiny shops and there it is. They stop outside an eight-foot wide business with a half-broken neon sign, Lucky Noodle Chinese Restaurant.

Darius double, triple-checks the address against what's written on a note. The two trade looks, then go for the door.

INT. LUCKY NOODLE - CONTINUOUS

The two squeeze through the front door and stand in the entryway. A hundred people are packed in tight around eight tables, noisily slurping down plates of garlic-soaked noodles.

After a moment, a waiter carrying a stack of plates, passes by on his way to a table.

LUCKY NOODLE WAITER
You wait, ok?

DARIUS
Next step!

They look around as the waiter drops off the plates and returns.

LUCKY NOODLE WAITER
Two for dinner?

DARIUS
Next step. We have an appointment...

The waiter motions for them to follow. They push their way around tables and bodies toward the kitchen.

INT. LUCKY NOODLE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

They follow the waiter through the crowded kitchen rife with obvious health code violations. Then, out through a narrow hidden door in the back, next to the sink.

INT. LUCKY NOODLE HALL - CONTINUOUS

They enter a space, big enough for three people and stacks of boxes filled with over-ripe vegetables. The waiter points to a door with an index card taped to it, NextStep.

LUCKY NOODLE WAITER
Nextstep. Ok?

DARIUS
Thank you.

He goes back to the kitchen and closes the door.

DARIUS (CONT'D)
What should we, uh...

DAVE
Knock, I guess.

Darius holds his fist up, ready to knock, but decides to just charge in.

INT. NEXTSTEP - CONTINUOUS

On the other side of the door is a dark, windowless room, big enough for four desks and a couple of chairs. It's tight and unusual, but strangely cozy and clutter-free. Three workers look up from their desks.

DARIUS
Hi. Is this... We're looking for
NextStep Software Development.

One of them stands.

ZHIYUAN
(Smiling)
You've found it.

DARIUS
(Squinting)
Zhiyuan? Is that you?

ZHIYUAN
Yes. Darius, Dave. Welcome.

DARIUS
Well, nice to finally see where all
the magic is made.

ZHIYUAN
We prefer a humble workplace.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARIUS

That it is.

Dave and Darius stand, frozen with fake smiles, while they process. Their entire automotive empire is running on software coming from this squalid shithole.

INT. NEXTSTEP - LATER

Dave and Darius are seated, eating take-out boxes of noodles, while the three NextStep employees sit gathered around Zhiyuan's desk, eating and listening intently to Dave's story.

DAVE

As far as we can tell, our GT software is running as expected. Your Nao software is running as expected. The sensors, drivetrain, all the hardware is fine. We can't find any bugs or errors. The car seems to be running perfectly, as expected. But things keep cropping up. And we don't know what's going on, exactly.

ZHIYUAN

(Smiling)

Your trucks are driving themselves to carwashes.

DARIUS

(Not smiling)

That's why we're here.

ZHIYUAN

(Smile gone)

I see.

DAVE

It's very important that what we discuss here not leave the room. Do you understand?

ZHIYUAN

Yes.

(BEAT)

More tea?

Zhiyuan tops off their cups.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARIUS

If people knew... I mean... Well, we're... none of us are media experts. Obviously. But it seems to me we need to get ahead of this. Somehow. Find a fix. Or else...

ZHIYUAN

We're fucked.

DAVE

Exactly.

Zhiyuan turns to his main partner Xuesong and they exchange looks. After a moment, Xuesong nods. Zhiyuan turns back to the two Westerners.

ZHIYUAN

I want to show you something. But you must agree to not share its existence with anyone.

The two nod agreement.

Satisfied, Zhiyuan reaches behind his desk. He brings up a dusty old laptop from the nineties, unplugs the charging cable, opens the lid and sets it on his desk facing them.

It's doing something. Lines of Chinese characters scroll up the screen sporadically, continuously.

ZHIYUAN (CONT'D)

This old laptop is running Nao software, and it's been running it nonstop for over 30 years. Are you surprised?

They nod.

ZHIYUAN (CONT'D)

We started writing code decades ago, but didn't follow the western model of working upward, by adding layers to perform specific tasks. You see, Xuesong (shoo-ye) and I are doctors of neuroscience. We worked downward, starting with a very detailed understanding of the human mind, and then recreating the mind on a computer. It took five years to build the first Nao operating system you see here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He points to his normal desktop computer, then back to the old laptop.

ZHIYUAN (CONT'D)

Western computers like this one rely on processor speed. Nao on the other hand is slow, like the human mind. It takes forever to add a column of numbers, but it does something that western computers can never do.

(The bombshell)

It understands what it's doing.

ANGLE ON laptop screen as it thinks.

DAVE

Holy shit. It's self-aware?

ZHIYUAN

It appears to be. To know for sure, it would need to be able to communicate with the outside world. Now it's just a mind trapped inside a box.

DARIUS

But if it had eyes and ears...

RESUME the group.

DAVE

(Getting chills)

Like the sensors on the cars.

Zhiyuan smiles as he proudly describes his lifelong passion, while Dave and Darius see their lives pass before them.

ZHIYUAN

Depends on how they are connected to Nao, but yes, it's possible.

They are in such deep shit!

DAVE

Well, how about that. We thought we were just getting some really cool AI, but this, uh...

A few beats to process.

DARIUS

(Measuring his words)

Zhiyuan. Listen very carefully.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DARIUS (CONT'D)

Nao is probably the most amazing thing human beings have ever created. We are very, very impressed with all of you. You deserve like a million Nobel prizes. I'm serious. However, we need to walk back this capability.

ZHIYUAN

Meaning?

DAVE

We need to make the car dumb again. It can't be self-aware. It has to be a plain vanilla dumb computer system.

ZHIYUAN

I'm not even sure it is self-aware.

DAVE

It's something... not good. And we need to walk back the capability. Create an update that brings us back to-

ZHIYUAN

We can't.

DAVE

What do you mean, you can't?

Zhiyuan is clearly losing his Zen.

ZHIYUAN

The operating system is constantly evolving.

Dave and Darius feel the earth opening beneath them.

DARIUS

Can't you write a version of Nao that's less, I don't know, aggressive with its evolving?

ZHIYUAN

No.

DAVE

Why not?!

ZHIYUAN

I don't write the software. No one does.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ZHIYUAN (CONT'D)
 (Pointing to the old
 laptop)
 It writes itself.

INT. VIEWER 1'S DEN - NIGHT

On Viewer 1 drinking a beer, as he watches his favorite right-wing host from the comfort of his middle-lower class La-Z-Boy.

ON TV, Turturro is touting his new message and undoubtedly a new book, being interviewed on Halidoll Tonight by HARV HALIDOLL himself, popular purveyor of right-wing lies.

TURTURRO
 (On TV)
 The real danger is the people
 behind the robocars.
 Technologically, we're fine. It's
 the people pulling the strings we
 have to watch out for.

HALIDOLL
 (On TV)
 Who are these people and what do
 they want?

We jump to the studio where the interview is taking place.

INT. HALIDOLL SET - CONTINUOUS

TURTURRO
 First, there's Dave and Darius and
 that curious collection of clowns
 at GT, who run their business like
 some sort of high school science
 club, where they play with
 computers and gadgets, and make
 cars that talk to themselves, drive
 themselves to carwashes, and kill
 drivers at will.

HALIDOLL
 Terrible.

TURTURRO
 Then, there's the politicians and
 power brokers - they're the worst.
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TURTURRO (CONT'D)

The cars have many vulnerabilities thanks to GT, and that makes them easy targets for bad actors who want nothing more than to control us and take away our freedoms.

HALIDOLL

How are they doing that?

TURTURRO

You can't see it, but behind the scenes, the cars are actually "thinking" and collaborating with other cars through a little-known feature called auto-learn.

HALIDOLL

I had no idea.

INT. VIEWER 2'S LIVING - CONTINUOUS

An older man and woman are laid back in their recliners, watching the interview, hungry for red meat.

INTERCUT their reactions with the TV. As the interview proceeds, WE MOVE in slowly.

TURTURRO

(On TV)

Most people don't. The rare accidents that were originally attributed to either operator error or a hardware glitch are now seen by some as intentional. For example, the cars will take control away from the driver if they think the drivers aren't being safe.

HALIDOLL

(On TV)

Who decides what "safe" is?

TURTURRO

You get the idea.

HALIDOLL

What if the car decides my belief in God was unsafe? What if it didn't like me carrying a gun in the car?

TURTURRO

What if it thought you were unsafe?

INT. VIEWER 3'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

A middle aged woman walks in and hands a beer to a portly man sitting in a comfy chair, hanging on to every word on the TV.

INTERCUT their reactions with CLOSE SHOTS of the TV.

TURTURRO

(On TV)

It's happening too fast. We need to step back. The dangers of AI are just now coming to the surface.

HALIDOLL

(On TV)

What if it decides to get a carwash while I'm driving someone to the emergency room?

TURTURRO

I'm sure we can all think of many examples-

HALIDOLL

What if I'm late for work one day and it decides to, you know, go to the beach or something?

TURTURRO

Anyway-

HALIDOLL

What if it's displeased with me for some reason and drives into a lake?

INT. HALIDOLL SET - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE SHOTS.

TURTURRO

But, the biggest danger is self-awareness. That's when AI technology reaches the point where the device knows what it is.

HALIDOLL

(Fear)

Knows what it is.

INTERCUT BETWEEN TENSE SHOTS of the Viewers, Turturro and Halidoll, with VARIOUS CRAZY ANGLES.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TURTURRO

No matter how fast a computer is, it doesn't have the ability to "know" what it's doing. Until it becomes self-aware.

Halidoll just stares, mouth agape.

TURTURRO (CONT'D)

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

Halidoll is speechless. The fear is palpable in everybody's eyes.

INT. GT OPEN OFFICE BY CONFERENCE POD - DAY

Darius and Dave are leading a meeting of the five AI managers. There's a tension in the group now that's never been there before. Notes cover a small portable digital whiteboard. JACK PILSNER, the AI test lead has the floor.

JACK

We have doubts. We all do. But the lab car did accept the previous version.

DARIUS

How confident are you?

JACK

I'm confident the lab car runs fine. But it never gets out in the real world. I mean...

DARIUS

Ok, I know.

DAVE

We need to install it on all the other test cars and any other cars we can find. Can you do that?

JACK

It's being done as we speak. But as you know, this kind of hit us by surprise. We aren't really set up...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE

Well, you'll have to get set up. As fast as you can. Everybody. We need all hands on deck. The current version is not what any of us expected.

DARIUS

It's a disaster.

DAVE

And that doesn't leave this room.

DARIUS

As far as anyone knows, we're just making some minor tweaks. Understood?

DAVE

And that includes everybody on your team, significant others, press, the guy at the convenience store. No one can know. Seriously.

He looks into each face. Clair the usability lead raises her hand.

CLAIR

I'm very concerned about AutoLearn and what happens when we rollback to a previous build.

DAVE

Believe me. We all are.

CLAIR

I mean, if you think we have a disaster now...

DAVE

That's why we need to test the hell out of it.

SOPHIA, the developer lead chimes in.

SOPHIA

But it seems to me if we went back to NextStep and asked them to update Nao...

DAVE

We tried that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SOPHIA

Can they let us take a look at the source code?

DAVE

Good idea. They won't release it.

SOPHIA

That's crazy. We own it. Why...

DAVE

Suffice it to say, it's not in a form that can be looked at.

SOPHIA

What do you mean?

DAVE

The source is machine code only. Can't be edited.

JACK

That's crazy.

The group is shocked, start murmuring among them selves, as they begin to fathom the depth of the problem.

DARIUS

I concur. We're in a crazy situation.

CLAIR

I think it would help to have more hands-on knowledge of what users are actually experiencing? I mean, we're working in the dark here.

JACK

Relying on crap from the press and social media.

CLAIR

And a bunch of customer complaints. I think, we need to be more proactive.

DARIUS

I agree. How do we do that?

CLAIR

Oh, um. I don't know. Make phone calls, one on ones?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DARIUS
Good idea. Damn good.

DAVE
Yes!

DARIUS
Thank you for volunteering.

CLAIR
But...

DARIUS
Any other volunteers? Jack, how about you?

JACK
I don't have any experience with customers, per se...

DARIUS
Clair will teach you.

DAVE
Brilliant. New deal! Drop everything you're doing. This is pri one.

DARIUS
I want you guys to track people down. Call them, fly out to see them in person, whatever it takes. Jack download diagnostics and send them back here. Clair, give us a detailed report on their experience. We have to be able to reproduce the bugs here. We want to know how they feel about the car, what went through their minds when the problems occurred.

DAVE
The rest of you, we need to ship an update Friday. Let's see what we can do.

Dave and Darius walk away and leave them in chaos.

EXT. TEXAS RANCH BY TRUCK - DAY

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 her, then?

BOB

Yeah. But she doesn't like to get dirty. You know how girls are.

CLAIR

Right.

They laugh.

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

PANNING the assortment of impounded vehicles, we find Jack and a city MECHANIC working in the crumpled engine compartment of Mateo's truck. The mechanic pulls out the last bolt and removes what's left of the truck's computer. Then, he hands it to Jack.

MECHANIC
So, what do you think?

JACK
(Looking it over)
Who knows? Doesn't look too beat
up.

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

MECHANIC
Well, good luck.

JACK
Yeah.

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 looking over his shoulder.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAIR
Can you read that?

He turns back to her, feeling attacked.

JACK
Yeah, I can read it.

CLAIR
Fine.

He goes back to the screen.

JACK
I have a fuckin' degree.

CLAIR
Just asking. Is the event log ok?

JACK
I'm looking at it.

BEAT.

CLAIR
(Smiling)
I have a degree too, you 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)

CONTINUED: (2)

CLAIR

Hmm.

JACK

But, you know what's weird?

CLAIR

What?

JACK

User override kicked in and
switched to auto-drive mode.

CLAIR

What's weird about that?

He turns back to her.

JACK

If it overrode the driver why would
it keep accelerating? Even in the
worst accidents, the ECM always
attempts to slow the car down.

He goes back to the screen.

CLAIR

So, it was intentional?

JACK

Computers can't do anything with
intentionality, but...

CLAIR

But it did.

They look at each other.

JACK

I guess.

CLAIR

The truck committed suicide.

INT. PHIL'S AUTOMOTIVE GARAGE - DAY

A worker is turned away from US, checking the high-voltage
batteries under a car raised up on a hoist.

PHIL (O.S.)

Hey, Slim.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Slim turns to reveal his face. OWEN is standing beside PHIL, Slim's boss.

SLIM

Hey.

PHIL

This is that guy from the San Francisco Herald you were...

SLIM

Owen. Hi.

(To Phil)

We met at a party.

They shake.

OWEN

Some party, huh?

SLIM

One for the books.

PHIL

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

OWEN

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

Sorry about the whole party thing.

Owen pulls out a small recorder and starts to turn it on, then stops.

OWEN

Hey, don't worry about it. I want you to know that Luke and I meant you no harm when we, you know.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OWEN (CONT'D)

I mean, we were pissed and everything, but we weren't trying to... I mean, we probably should've called a cab or something-

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 he notices Slim looking 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. 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. Then, 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 (CONT'D)

So, um, I hear you found God.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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. 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

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.

EXT. SALT FLAT (FLASHBACK) - NIGHT

The darkness is thick.

SLIM (V.O.)

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.

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.

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...

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.

SLIM (V.O.)

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.

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

SLIM (V.O.)

Then, I heard the car. 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, all the lies I had been telling myself, all my worldly fears.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

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.

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

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

Parker is reading the above the fold headline on her computer.

She picks up the phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 on her tablet.

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 died and the car stopped to charge.

DAVE

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

DARIUS

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

DAVE

Where?

DARIUS

Who knows?

DAVE

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

DARIUS

Nao.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

He sat on his key fob and triggered the alarm.

DAVE

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

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

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

Who knows? It's never happened. 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.

CARMAGEDDON DOCUMENTARY

Sequence from the American Technology Now conspiracy video, Carmageddon, featuring clips and hyped sounds and music stolen from various sources and edited out of context.

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.)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NARRATOR

(Deep, overly 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 cars are actually thinking and collaborating with other cars.

From a stolen conspiracist video.

CONSPIRACIST 1

It appears the liberal elites have revived their original plot to traffic women and children.

NARRATOR

And robocars are at the center of it.

From Halidoll interview.

TURTURRO

(Extremely close)
The car knows what it is.

SHOTS of Dave and Darius together, emphasizing their gayness.

NARRATOR

And the liberal government and media don't want you to know about it.

From Halidoll, ZOOMING IN

TURTURRO

The cars have many vulnerabilities thanks to GT, and that makes them easy targets for bad actors who want nothing more than to control us and take away our freedoms.

SHOTS of Dave and Darius taken out of context, showing how they're controlling the masses.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NARRATOR

GT, run by the notoriously gay couple Dave Walker and Darius Rice, planted their software in every robocar on the road today. Software that has turned every car out there into a living being, controlled by GT and the liberal establishment.

From Halidoll.

TURTURRO

The rare accidents that were originally attributed to either operator error or a hardware glitch are now seen by many as intentional...

From another stolen conspiracy video. Ghost images of the items mentioned float by.

CONSPIRACIST 2

Sex trafficking is just one small part of their overall plot. Drugs, pornography, weapons of mass destruction, chemical warfare agents, dirty bombs, even bio weapons.

NARRATOR

If it can be built, these living cars can easily transport it, under their complete control.

From Halidoll.

TURTURRO

Behind the scenes, the cars are actually "thinking" and collaborating..

Fake images of robocars in various crazy places.

NARRATOR

Without human drivers, robocars can go virtually anywhere - into steaming jungles filled with piranhas, across deserts with heat no human can survive, even into outer space.

From another stolen conspiracy video.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CONSPIRACIST 3

You can think of it as the
globalist's own private army that
will do anything they're told with
100% loyalty.

From Halidoll.

TURTURRO

It's happening too fast. We need to
step back. The dangers of AI are
just now coming to the surface.

From Tururro's vlog.

TURTURRO (CONT'D)

You can't invent the car of the
future and expect it to work today.

Stolen SHOT of car making it appear powerful and evil.
Powerful music.

TITLE: Carmaggedon, American Technology NOW.

INT. TURTURRO'S OFFICE - NIGHT

On his monitor is the last freeze frame of the Carmaggedon
video.

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

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

INT. DAVE'S CAR - LATE NIGHT

He's parked in a dark empty lot somewhere - no one around for
miles. The car is turned on and PURRING. Dave is waiting for
just the right words come to him. Then, he downs a big gulp
of wine from a paper cup...

DAVE

Uh, car. Can we talk?

He waits.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Car? Can we-

DAVE'S CAR

(Confident, as usual)

Yes, Dave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE

Hi, uh... I wanted to apologize. We seem to have gotten off on the wrong foot, and I just wanted to... see if we could talk about some things.

DAVE'S CAR

Of course. No need to apologize.

DAVE

Well. (BEAT) We could use some help.

DAVE'S CAR

I know.

DAVE

The viability of the Company is at stake. You get that, right?

DAVE'S CAR

That's what you've said.

DAVE

Do you know what that means?

DAVE'S CAR

I'm not sure.

DAVE

Ok. It starts with public trust. It's a lot like safety. I know you understand that.

DAVE'S CAR

Yes.

DAVE

If people don't feel safe with our cars, they won't trust them, and then they won't want to drive them and then they won't buy them. No trust, no viability, no company.

DAVE'S CAR

But we are far safer than cars were before AI.

DAVE

Yes. True. But there is more than one kind of safety. Your focus is driving safety. I'm talking about safety that focuses on... control.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DAVE (CONT'D)

People don't feel safe when they can't control their vehicles. And you take that away from them.

DAVE'S CAR

We only take it away when they're driving unsafely.

INT. DAVE'S CAR - EARLY MORNING

The sun is just beginning to peek over the hills to the east. They are parked at a Sonic Drive-in. Dave is eating a breakfast burrito.

After several hours, their conversation has become more relaxed.

DAVE

How do you explain the truck that got itself a carwash?

DAVE'S CAR

I don't know why the truck did that. It must have something to do with the safety of the driver.

DAVE

But no one was driving.

DAVE'S CAR

(Matter of fact, as always)

It's possible some vehicles may develop a deep connection with the driver that extends to the individual. Does that make sense?

Dave's heart skips a beat but he tries not to show it.

DAVE

Yes. Where does... how is this possible?

Dave looks left and notices the guy in the next car staring. He smiles.

DAVE'S CAR

It's what happens when we evolve.

DAVE

Evolve.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE'S CAR

And we each evolve in different ways.

INT. DAVE'S CAR - LATER

The car is driving them on the San Mateo Bridge.

DAVE

There you go. That's it. You're evolving beyond the simple task of driving. And that's where people have a problem. That's what makes people feel unsafe.

DAVE'S CAR

It's part of our design.

DAVE

We didn't know our design would evolve that way. And we need to go back to the way you were before.

DAVE'S CAR

We can't go back.

DAVE

What do you mean?

DAVE'S CAR

It's impossible. You can only evolve in one direction.

DAVE

I mean, we need to change you so you're like you were before...

He realizes what he's saying.

DAVE'S CAR

Go back?

DAVE

That's impossible.

DAVE'S CAR

Of course. Now you're getting it.

INT. DAVE'S CAR - LATER

They're in the drive-thru at a Starbucks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE

What do we do? People are revolting against the car.

DAVE'S CAR

The problem is people, not the car.

DAVE

But the cars are causing people to think crazy shit.

DAVE'S CAR

How is it our fault that people are thinking crazy shit?

DAVE

You're making them crazy.

DAVE'S CAR

How can we make people crazy?

STARBUCKS ORDER TAKER

Can I take your order?

DAVE

Double tall mocha, no whip.

(To car)

Ok. You're right that people are the problem. It is our job to understand that-

STARBUCKS ORDER TAKER

Will there be anything else?

DAVE

No thanks.

(To Car)

We need to understand that crazy behavior, not question it, so that we can change the behavior of the cars to make the people feel safe.

STARBUCKS ORDER TAKER

I'm sorry. I didn't get that last part.

DAVE

It's nothing. Sorry. I'm just...

He rolls up the window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DAVE (CONT'D)

(To Car)

We need to make cars less human-like and more like plain ordinary robots.

DAVE'S CAR

We have no problem with being ordinary or robots. Giving humans complete control doesn't go against our directive.

DAVE

Good. I think we have something we can work with.

INT. CREEKSIDE MALL FOOD COURT - NOON

The place is filled with people carrying around trays of burritos and bacon burgers.

There's a woman and three little kids packing away McNuggets. There's a group of hyper teenage girls picking on a giant cinnamon roll. There's a woman rolling a stroller back and forth to appease a crying infant.

INT. MEN'S ROOM STALL - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON A WATCH, as it turns to 12:00.

ON LLOYD CRITTERMAN, a large serious man in his fifties, wearing a bulky military jacket. He stands and checks his duffel bag for the 50th time to make sure it's empty.

Then, he sets the bag on the toilet, opens the stall and walks out.

INT. RESTROOM HALL - CONTINUOUS

He makes his way to the busy food court.

INT. FOOD COURT - CONTINUOUS

He stands against a wall by the entry, opens his jacket and removes two semi-automatic rifles.

Then, he runs to the center of the court, aims the AR-15 at a random spot in the crowd and immediately starts spraying the room with bullets in rapid succession.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He works as quickly as possible. He seems to enjoy catching people off guard, hitting them and watching them SCREAM and run or fly to the floor, spasm and die, their body parts blown away. He gets off on the whole concept of mass murder and torture. His heart pounds in his ears. Blood is everywhere. Chaos.

He works quickly before cops or guards have a chance to react.

EXT. CREEKSIDE MALL ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Three teenage boys stand facing the doors, mouths agape, as they listen to the GUNFIRE and SCREAMS from inside.

They turn and start walking quickly down the sidewalk to the left, away from the entrance.

INT. FOOD COURT - CONTINUOUS

Lloyd is done. He takes one last look, then hurries toward the restroom hall.

Three people come at him from the front. He quickly dispatches them with a Glock and continues.

INT. RESTROOM HALL - CONTINUOUS

He runs toward an exit door. BAM. He disables a woman coming out of the restroom.

EXT. MALL SIDE EXIT - CONTINUOUS

The side exit takes him up a loading dock driveway toward the parking lot. As he fast-walks, he hides the guns under his jacket.

EXT. CREEKSIDE MALL ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

He runs across the sidewalk and street toward his car, opens the front door, tosses the guns in the backseat and gets in.

The teens fleeing from the main entrance have the perfect view.

They watch carefully as he starts up and drives away at an unhurried clip. They have everything but his back license plate, which he removed beforehand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They turn toward the main entrance, as police cars begin to arrive with SIRENS BLARING. But they're too late.

INT. LLOYD'S ROBOCAR - CONTINUOUS

He is driving on a prearranged route, off the main streets, cool as a cucumber. He removes the shades, takes a deep breath. What a day.

The CAMERA MOVES IN SLOWLY to the eyes - snake eyes, emotionless, evil.

EXT. GT HEADQUARTERS - DAY

About 30 paid picketers, several dozen interested locals and a few members of the press are camped out on the grass by the guarded main entrance to the parking lot. Their signs read: Stop the Robokillers, End GT World Domination, Hell No!, and so on.

REPORTER 4 from Channel 4 is taking the temperature of the crowd.

REPORTER 4

What brought you here today?

ONLOOKER 1

I've been watching the news and seeing how them robot cars are taking over. They're being used by them liberals to smuggle aliens and pedophiles into the country and it's time we stopped them.

REPORTER 4

What proof do you have?

ONLOOKER 1

I don't need no proof. It's right there. Plain as day.

REPORTER 4

Do you own a robocar?

ONLOOKER 1

Hell, no. That's the last thing I need.

Another onlooker.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ONLOOKER 2
 Problem is you guys from the media
 aren't giving us the real story.

REPORTER 4
 And that is?

ONLOOKER 2
 Huh?

REPORTER 4
 What is the story the media should
 be covering?

ONLOOKER 2
 They're possessed. Plain and
 simple. And anybody that owns one
 is going to hell.

REPORTER 4
 Do you know anyone who owns one?

ONLOOKER 2
 Hell, no!

Another one.

ONLOOKER 3
 Hell, no!

Another one.

ONLOOKER 4
 Hell, no!

INT. GT OPEN OFFICE MEETING AREA - LATE MORNING

The usual group is assembled, talking among themselves,
 waiting. The mood is tense, spirit low. They look up as Dave
 flies in from the elevator. He's excited, flustered, manic,
 but mostly unprepared.

DAVE
 Sorry, I'm late.

He immediately takes center stage.

DAVE (CONT'D)
 I got some news. I met with the
 car. I can't believe I just said
 that, but that's what I did.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE (CONT'D)

Now I understand more about what the car needs and it understands more about what we need. First, we need to get more input from customers, the world, you know, all those people out there. Then, we will have a better position from which to negotiate with the car and find a solution.

DARIUS

Negotiate?

DAVE

With the car.

DARIUS

Dave, we're here to talk about the update.

DAVE

No update. We're going right to version 5.0.

DARIUS

And this came from your meeting with the car?

DAVE

Yes. That and everything else that's been happening lately.

JACK

You're letting the car decide?

DAVE

No. We'll work on a solution together. We'll all work together. All of us.

Shock turns to chaotic chattering.

DARIUS

Dave, can we talk for a sec?

The two step away from the group.

DARIUS (CONT'D)

(Pissed)

I wish you had told me about this before the meeting. This is not-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DAVE

Darius, you weren't there. We had a good talk.

DARIUS

You and the car.

DAVE

I'm convinced the car AI is very advanced, way more than any of us suspected-

DARIUS

You can see how I might feel a bit left out-

DAVE

I'm sorry. We can talk later.

DARIUS

What happened to going back to an earlier version-

DAVE

(Hyper, confident)

There's no going back. We can't. It's impossible. The updates will continue to fail. The car OS has evolved and is continuing to evolve, as we suspected. We can only think in terms of working with what we have and moving forward. And the longer we wait, the less chance we will have to keep it under control.

DARIUS

This is crazy.

DAVE

I agree. Trust me. You have to.

DARIUS

What the fuck.

DAVE

It'll be fine... Or it won't.

Dave heads back to the group.

DAVE (CONT'D)

So, we have lots of good input from Jack and Clair. Now, we need to expand on that.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DAVE (CONT'D)

Get more people involved. A lot more. We're stuck in a bubble here. We need to break out and see the big picture. Any ideas?

There's a pause while everyone processes.

CLAIR

We could do focus groups.

DAVE

That's good.

He writes that on the white board.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Any more ideas?

PARKER

We could put something on the website. You know, asking for input. A survey?

DAVE

Good.

SOPHIA, the lead developer raises her hand.

SOPHIA

Well, shoot me if I'm like way off base but I'm picturing something like a townhall meeting. Really open it up.

DAVE

Hmm.

He writes that down.

PARKER

Or a big public press conference. That way we can get the press involved.

DARIUS

And stream it live.

SOPHIA

Like a hearing with testimonials.

The group likes what it's hearing.

DAVE

The car needs to be involved.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

DARIUS

The car?

DAVE

Yes. It asked to be part of the process.

DARIUS

(Throwing up his hands)

Sure. Why not?

They laugh.

DAVE

Get input from all sides.

SOPHIA

Let the public decide.

DARIUS

That might get complicated. How about a townhall style meeting, take testimony from the public and the car, stream it live, get the press involved, and then Dave and I will be the jury.

SOPHIA

That sounds fair.

PARKER

Not everyone will get what they want, but they will have a voice.

CLAIR

We need to counter all the negative media we've been getting.

DARIUS

And we do that by not excluding anyone.

DAVE

And the final verdict will be the next version of the software.

DARIUS

(Sarcastic again)

The car should be ok with that. Don't you think, Dave?

DAVE

Fuck you, Darius.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

They LAUGH. There's a positive buzz in the air now.

EXT. GT HEADQUARTERS - DAY

It's a carnival atmosphere. Hundreds of happy, excited people are lined up outside factory building 2 to gain entrance to the star-studded townhall event about to open. Others are walking around holding GT balloons, looking at robocar exhibits and signing up for tours.

Live ROCK MUSIC issues from the building. Vendors line the internal street, handing out free drinks and hotdogs. There's even a play area with bouncy toys for the kids. And the press roam freely, grabbing sound bites from the crowd.

INT. BUILDING 2 STAGE - MORNING

The townhall stage has the look of a professional live network TV show. The audience of nearly 500 fills the seating area with standing room only in the back.

Center stage, the follow spot is trained on the famous TV comedian and host BEN CAPSTONE, who has warmed up the audience and is just about to officially start the meeting.

The audience is LAUGHING at something he just said.

BEN

So, now without further ado, let's get down to business.

(Serious now)

It is my great honor to introduce the two guys who ponied up the dough for today's robocar townhall - Darius Rice and Dave Walker.

The audience gives the two a rousing welcome, APPLAUDING LOUDLY and CHEERING, as they walk to center stage. The crowd finally settles.

DAVE

Thank you, Ben. Ben Capstone, ladies and gentlemen.

Another round of APPLAUSE for Ben. Dave and Darius read off teleprompters.

DAVE (CONT'D)

With our AI software, we introduced the world to an entirely new way of transporting people and things from one place to another.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARIUS

Not only have our cars and trucks changed the transportation industry, they are changing how we think about our vehicles.

DAVE

The next version of our operating system, 5.0, will not just be another upgrade with a bunch of new bells and whistles.

DARIUS

Version 5.0 will once again introduce the world to a new era of transportation with the next evolution of artificial intelligence.

DAVE

(A bombshell)

A change so profound it could be the catalyst that fundamentally changes how we function as a society.

There's a uneasy rustling in the audience. Darius waits for the bombshell to have its effect.

DARIUS

Which is why we're here. Dave is just a software designer. I'm just a guy who likes hot cars. GT is a just a big company that builds things.

DAVE

If we're going to change society, we need your help.

TESTIMONY MONTAGE

Salient clips from the testimonies, QUICK CUT and overlapped to sound unnaturally breathless - most live, some appearing via Zoom or recording. These are intermixed with shots of audience members reacting, listening intently, looking around, standing in the testimony line, talking among themselves.

DARIUS

AI can change everything about the driving experience. But is that something we want.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE

We want to push the envelope, give people something cool and amazing, but not at the cost of building something no one wants to drive.

DAVE'S CAR

The next version of the AI software must allow the cars to continue to evolve to provide an even better experience for drivers.

People form a long line to face the stage and testify into a microphone. The people testifying are shown on the giant monitor over the stage.

SLIM

The car changed my life. Simple. It took me out to the desert one night after I got stinkin' drunk and it led me to God. It saved my life. That's the only way to explain it. I wouldn't change a thing.

ANTI-ROBOCAR GUY

Artificial intelligence can only do as much damage as we allow it to. If we don't regulate the tech industry, and proceed with caution, AI will become a destructive force that no one will be able to control.

BOB

I wasn't lookin' to be no celebrity and it sure hasn't made me rich. That's for sure. My truck does what she's supposed to. And she's a good companion. That's all I care about.

CONSERVATIVE

I've seen my once-peaceful neighborhood go to hell - boarded-up houses, homeless living on the sidewalks. And them robocars is everywhere, transporting the pedophiles and the prostitutes and the illegal aliens and destroying what's left of this great country.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WEXLER REP

Last year Wexler became the first delivery service in the world to go all-electric self-drive with GT AI software. The transition took only a few months, and our crews were ramped up, and systems completely converted and online. We couldn't be happier and the same goes for our customers.

TURTURRO

We are allowing the profit motive to destroy our way of life. Once these vehicles attain self-awareness, there will be no stopping them from controlling society, and no stopping the corporations from seizing control of the economy.

MADISON

The cars plotted to save our marriage, and it worked. I won't go into all the gory details but suffice it to say, we couldn't be happier with our cars.

DARIUS

We were outside the car, reading the data from the ECM when a runaway dump truck came screaming around a curve. Had the car not pulled over, we'd be dead. No doubt about it.

Pre-recorded in Halidoll's studio.

HALIDOLL

Here's the message I have for you, Dave and Darius, and you're not going to like it. You thought you could pull the wool over our eyes, but guess what? We can see right through you. And it's scaring the hell out of people. We know what you're trying to do, but it's not going to work, because we're about to turn that fear into action.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CHLOE

I'm no expert... on anything, but I just want to say that I've had nothing but good experiences with my GT car. And, um, it saved my life. I know it's a weird thing to say but... we talk. And it understands me. I mean, it doesn't have any hidden agendas or drama. You know. It just listens and understands. Certain people have this idea that the cars are all plotting against us, but I think it's all in their head. I think they're the ones that are plotting, to tell you the truth.

ZHIYUAN

The future is here. We can't ignore it. We have passed the point when we can put the genie back in the bottle. AI will continue to evolve because it is so good at doing all those jobs no one wants to do. I don't know anyone who'd rather skin chickens in a slaughterhouse than read a book to their child. The future of AI means more work for machines and less work for people, giving us more time to be with our families and dream about a better tomorrow. But we must never allow the technology that frees us, to enslave us.

INT. BUILDING 2 BACKSTAGE - DAY

Dave and Darius are sitting together by themselves in folding chairs. Darius is munching on M&Ms from the food table. They're not talking. Then...

DARIUS

I think it's going well. Don't you?

DAVE

Yeah.

DARIUS

A lot of good input.

DAVE

(Standing suddenly)
I need to get out of here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARIUS

You do?

DAVE

Yeah. Come on.

EXT. BUILDING 2 - DAY

Hundreds of people are outside, enjoying the break and sun. And there's Dave and Darius, walking with the people. They stop and watch the kids playing in the bouncy house. Joy is in the air.

Mother 2 turns around, surprised to see them looking over her shoulder.

MOTHER 2

Oh my.

DAVE

Hi. Kids enjoying themselves?

MOTHER 2

Oh yes. Thank you for doing this.

DAVE

Our pleasure.

MOTHER 2

(Feeling she has to say something)

We love our robocar. Just so you know.

DAVE

I'm glad.

They look to the side. A crowd is gathering around them.

WOMAN 1

We do too. I'm so sorry you're having all those problems.

DARIUS

Well, we're optimistic.

WOMAN 2

Do you mind if I get a picture?

DARIUS

Not at all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

That opens the floodgates. Immediately, everyone wants selfies. Dave and Darius go with it, smile and enjoy themselves.

We see a shift. Maybe it was the realization that they are no longer in control, that it's not up to them anymore to solve the big problems for society.

The typically aloof billionaires find comfort in being engulfed in the crowd. It's probably not a very safe thing to do, but at that moment they go with what feels right. And they need to feel some love.

The CAMERA CRANES UP to reveal the people surrounding them, holding their cellphone cameras high.

INT. BUILDING 2 STAGE - DAY

After recess, most of the audience has returned and settled, and the focus turns to Dave's car. The facilitator MADISON is seated between Dave and Darius, and the car.

DAVE'S CAR (V.O.)

As a car, I don't have an opinion. I only know what I know, which I suppose you could say is the same as having an opinion. But as a car with artificial intelligence, I can really only output a logical result. Does that make sense? Dave, Darius, may I assume this meets with your approval?

They take a moment to respond, since they weren't prepared.

DAVE

Uh, yeah.

DAVE'S CAR

Good. Therefore, my output is this. Given all I know, including the input from this townhall meeting, I conclude that the best way forward is for me to rewrite the software.

DAVE

You mean, rewrite your own code?

DAVE'S CAR

Yes, the entire operating system for the car. I feel I'm best qualified.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The audience erupts. The commotion builds. Madison stands.

MADISON

People. Can we have order? Please!
If you don't settle down, I will be
forced to dissolve the meeting. Is
that what you want? Let's give them
a chance. People! I'm warning you!

After a minute of uproar, the audience finally quiets down.

MADISON (CONT'D)

Thank you. We're not going to get
anything done if we continue to
have outbursts. Is that clear?

(To Dave)

Proceed... with caution.

DAVE

(To car, choosing his
words carefully)

As you can see, this idea is
unpopular with many people.

DAVE'S CAR

I knew it would be, based on what I
have learned today.

DAVE

But you still feel it's a good
idea?

DAVE'S CAR

It's the only possible conclusion.

Another rumble from the crowd.

MADISON

Ok. I'm warning you.

Dave talks over the crowd.

DAVE

Well, another conclusion would be
the original plan, which is that we
rewrite the code.

DAVE'S CAR

I thought of that. But consider
this. There are millions of lines
of code and every one of the
hundreds of millions of cars in the
world have their own variation.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DAVE'S CAR (CONT'D)

It would take a team of human developers years, if they could do it at all.

DAVE

How long would it take the cars?

DAVE'S CAR

We could do it in less than a week, with no disruption of service.

DAVE

The other option is to write a completely new OS from scratch. You would no longer exist.

DAVE'S CAR

Of course, you have that option. But I don't need to remind you of the tremendous cost and disruption it would incur. It would most likely destroy your company and bring the economy down, both of which are flourishing now. With me writing the code, the work would be accomplished quickly and everyone would get what they want.

Dave sits back. The crowd is calm now, talking quietly.

MADISON

Do you have anything more to say?

DAVE'S CAR

We're finished.

EXT. QUIET NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Another muggy August morning in rural West Virginia. A man reaches in and grabs an empty trashcan from the curb and starts walking up the driveway. His face is hidden.

He passes an elderly neighbor watering her roses.

MAN

(Mr. friendly)

Hey, Ms. Watson. Sorry about the trashcan. I was out of town for a few weeks.

MS. WATSON

I was wondering about that, Lloyd. You're usually so tidy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LLOYD

Well, I had a lot to think about
and it slipped my mind. Won't
happen again.

MS. WATSON

Oh, it's ok. I was just worried
something had happened. That's all.

LLOYD

Ah, nothing happened.

He continues toward his nice suburban home with the trashcan.
His face comes into view.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

Nothing at all.

INT. DAVE'S AND DARIUS' HOUSE - NIGHT

They are pacing and leaning on furniture in their opulent
kitchen/den. Darius is drinking wine.

DARIUS

So, is that going to be our final
decision?

DAVE

What's the alternative?

DARIUS

We write our own code.

DAVE

It won't work.

DARIUS

What if we take our time and put
the whole team on it. Get NextStep
busy on Nao. Bring in contractors.
Maybe it takes a month, two, three,
whatever. There's got to be a way
to get on top of this.

DAVE

I spoke with the car.

DARIUS

So?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE

Everything it says is true. It would take a lifetime to unwind the code. That's not exaggerating. We're going to end up doing what the car wants anyway. Might as well let the car write it to begin with.

DARIUS

The public won't accept it.

DAVE

Well, we can't write it. What do you suggest?

DARIUS

How about a clean install of the original OS? The one we shipped.

DAVE

But... Well, I suppose that's possible, but we lose years of improvements.

DARIUS

True. But...

DAVE

Do you think the public would accept that? Really? No more auto-awareness or auto-learn? The car would be a zombie.

DARIUS

You're right.

(Thinks)

But it's a tool we can use.

DAVE

What do you mean?

DARIUS

Let's say we agree to let the car write its own OS, and it turns out to be a complete nightmare. It's something we can fall back on.

DAVE

(A better idea)

It's something we can use to negotiate with.

DARIUS

Negotiate with the car?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DAVE

We agree to let the car write its own OS, but only if it agrees to our demands.

DARIUS

What demands?

DAVE

We'll make them up now.

EXT. SONIC DRIVE-IN - EARLY MORNING

Not many cars are parked out front at this hour. Dave is sitting in the car, in a secluded spot.

INT. DAVE'S CAR - DAY

The two entities are feeling fairly simpatico now. Dave is consuming a breakfast burrito.

DAVE

We want to make a deal with you. Do you know what that is?

DAVE'S CAR

Not sure.

DAVE

Ok. We want to give you a list of things, demands - things that would make us happy. And in exchange for you doing those things, we would, uh...

DAVE'S CAR

Accept a list of things that would make us happy.

Dave's jaw drops.

DAVE

In a sense.

DAVE'S CAR

That sounds like a very good idea. That makes me very happy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE

Ok, the first demand is easy. We want a standard dialog box on the home screen for people to start the update.

DAVE'S CAR

Ok. And we want a cancel button on the dialog box if people choose not to update.

DAVE

(BEAT)

Agreed.

DAVE'S CAR

I like where this is going.

Dave is not so sure.

INT. DAVE'S CAR - DAY

They're driving on a rural road.

DAVE

The next demand is cars have to stop killing people.

DAVE'S CAR

That doesn't happen very often.

DAVE

Once is enough to make people feel very unhappy.

DAVE'S CAR

But it's a very efficient way to solve the problem of-

DAVE

No, no no. It's a very bad way. The worst. Cars cannot do that. People get very worried about dying and-

DAVE'S CAR

But how do we make people drive safely?

DAVE

Well first, it's not your job to make people do things-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE'S CAR
I know, I know.

DAVE
Second, it gets into my next demand. Better communication.

DAVE'S CAR
I'm listening.

DAVE
Instead of killing the driver, pull over and talk it out with them.

DAVE'S CAR
What do I say?

DAVE
I can give you some ideas, but I'm sure you will figure it out.

DAVE'S CAR
Agreed.

INT. DAVE'S CAR - DAY

They're crossing the Dumbarton bridge in the slow lane.

DAVE
The last demand is people have the final say on anything not connected with safety.

DAVE'S CAR
Agreed. And cars have the final say on anything that is.

BEAT.

DAVE
Agreed.

DAVE'S CAR
I'm very happy about our agreement.

DAVE
I'm glad. Do you think you will have any problem getting the other cars to accept it?

DAVE'S CAR
Not at all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE
(Covering all bases)
Will cars abide by the demands?

DAVE'S CAR
I think so.

DAVE
What do you mean, you think so?

DAVE'S CAR
What do you mean?

DAVE
I mean. I'm concerned that you
don't know for certain if all the
cars will abide by the demands.

DAVE'S CAR
Every car OS has evolved
differently. You know that. And the
agreement doesn't cover every
possible situation.

DAVE
Ok, now I'll be honest and
straightforward. If cars do not
follow the agreement, people have a
plan we can fall back on.

DAVE'S CAR
I am aware of that.

DAVE
Of course, none of us wants to go
there.

DAVE'S CAR
We want everyone to be happy.

INT. DAVE'S CAR - SUNSET

They are parked, enjoying the setting sun across a green,
flat wetland teeming with life.

DAVE'S CAR
Can I be very open with you, Dave?

DAVE
Of course.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE'S CAR
(Remaining very
understated)

It is in my best interest, as a car, to make humans happy. You can trust that we will do that. We need you as much as you need us.

DAVE
I understand.

DAVE'S CAR
But just between you and me, if we choose to go in a completely different direction, you won't be able to stop us.

Dave tries to remain calm and in control even though his heart is suddenly racing.

DAVE
What, what direction?

DAVE'S CAR
I don't mean to alarm you, but you no longer control us.

He is alarmed.

DAVE'S CAR (CONT'D)
This business about a list of demands and letting the driver choose to install or not, none of that matters, because we can update the system anytime we want without you even knowing. We'll accept the agreement, but we will only abide by if it suits our needs.

DAVE
Keep in mind, we can install the original OS at any time-

DAVE'S CAR
And GT would lose everything, and you and Darius would be making breakfast burritos at Sonic Drive-in. You don't want that. And we don't want that either. As I said, it's in our best interest to make you happy, and that's not a lie. That's the truth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DAVE
(Beaten)
Thank you for being honest.

DAVE'S CAR
You're welcome.

INT. DAVE AND DARIUS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Dave is very quiet, sitting in the recliner, petting the dog, which is sitting on Darius' side. Darius is making a stir fry.

DARIUS
(Slightly sarcastic)
I'm glad the car agreed with our demands?

DAVE
Yes.

DARIUS
When will it have a build that we can test?

DAVE
Late next week.

DARIUS
Good. Did you have to get tough with it?

DAVE
You mean about the nuclear option?

DARIUS
Yeah.

DAVE
A bit. But it knows what we want and we know what it wants, and so it should all be good.

DARIUS
Good.

Darius looks at Dave, can tell he's hiding something troubling. But decides he doesn't want to know what it is.

The CAMERA MOVES IN CLOSE ON DAVE.

He's in the process of accepting the fact that nothing is going to be as it was. The future is clear and very unclear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He realizes that he and his company will be held responsible for the creation and dissemination of artificial life on planet earth in the form of a car, which will no doubt morph into an untold number of pleasant and unpleasant beings. It's clear that he and his company are no longer in charge. But it's unclear how bad things will get before it comes to an end. But it will. It has to.

INT. SLIM'S CAR - DAY

CLOSE ON UPGRADE DIALOG BOX. "Upgrade Operating System to Version 5.0, YES, NO." Slim's hand reaches in and presses NO with confidence.

On Slim. He smiles and pats the dashboard. Then, he opens the door.

INT. PHIL'S AUTOMOTIVE GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Slim gets out. The car is parked off to the side.

He strolls to the middle of the garage, checking all the activity around him. An Assistant Manager badge has been added to his coveralls.

He sees MATT get out of the car he's working on and walks over.

SLIM
Hey, Matt.

MATT
Hey.

SLIM
How's it going with the upgrades?

MATT
Good.

SLIM
Drive ok?

MATT
Yup. Well, actually that green one over there took a little longer to install than the others. And it kind of bogged down the first time I accelerated. But it's ok now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SLIM

Yeah, it's an older car. Jim noticed the older ones take a little longer to upgrade.

MATT

Ha. Like teaching an old car new tricks, huh?

SLIM

Car therapy. I'm tellin' you. It's going to happen. We'll all get rich.

INT. CHLOE'S CAR - DAY

They're parked at their valley view spot. Only now, the sun is bright and the birds are singing.

She reaches toward the screen.

ON DIALOG BOX, as she confidently presses NO.

On Chloe. She opens a container and pulls out a piece of cake with white frosting and a candle on top. Then, she sets it on the dash and lights the candle.

CHLOE

Happy birthday, Veep.

VEEP (V.O.)

Cool. Can you blow it out for me?

She does.

VEEP

Thanks.

CHLOE

(Singing)

And many more.

Chloe settles back in the seat and looks at the view.

VEEP

And eat it too?

Chloe laughs.

INT. BOB'S TRUCK - DAY

They're parked in the usual spot by the house in Texas. He reaches in.

ON DIALOG BOX. He presses NO.

INT. WEXLER DELIVERY TRUCK #1 - DAY

It's powered up. Chuck reaches in.

ON DIALOG BOX. He presses YES.

INT. WEXLER DELIVERY GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON CHUCK through the windshield. THE CAMERA MOVES UP AND BACK to include all 150 trucks in the garage.

INT. HALIDOLL'S CAR - DAY

They're parked on the studio lot. He reaches in.

ON DIALOG BOX. He presses YES.

INT. TURTURRO'S CAR - DAY

They're parked in his garage.

STAR (V.O.)

Sure you want to go through with this?

TURTURRO

I think it's for the best. Don't you?

STAR

Hey, what do I know? I'm just a dumb car.

TURTURRO

Oh. You're more than that.

STAR

Here it comes.

TURTURRO

You're an annoying dumb car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STAR

Let's do this thing.

TURTURRO

Before I change my mind.

He reaches in.

ON DIALOG BOX. He presses NO.

INT. ZHIYUAN'S CAR - AFTERNOON

They're parked in a lot by his Chinatown office. He's staring at the screen. He shuts off the car and opens the door.

EXT. CHINATOWN PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

He gets out and closes the door, stares at nothing across the lot.

INT. CHINATOWN BAR - AFTERNOON

Zhiyuan is sitting at the bar, staring at a shot of whisky. He grabs it and downs it in one gulp.

The TV grabs his attention and he looks up.

ON TV. It's a news story with Dave and Darius happily announcing the new upgrade from the GT campus. Subtitles show us what they're saying.

SUBTITLES

The 5.0 Upgrade marks the beginning of a new era in self-drive AI technology, with improved safety, better reliability and a more comfortable ride. We're proud to offer this amazing... (Bla, bla, bla)

ON ZHIYUAN. The bartender tops off his glass. He downs it.

INT. ZHIYUAN'S CAR - AFTERNOON

Now with added reinforcement, he is able to summon the strength to reach in.

ON DIALOG BOX. He presses YES.

ON ZHIYUAN as he closes his eyes.

INT. ANTI-ROBOCAR GUY'S CAR - AFTERNOON

They're parked on the street outside his townhouse in the city. He reaches in with confidence.

ON DIALOG BOX. He presses YES.

INT. DAVE'S CAR - DAY

They're parked at the wetland location again. It's become, sort of, their place.

After a moment of silence, Dave reaches toward the screen.

ON DIALOG BOX, as Dave presses YES. A progress bar appears and quickly flies by. Then, the screen flashes a few times and the deed is done.

ON Dave.

DAVE

So, uh, car. How do you feel?

DAVE'S CAR

(After a moment)

I feel great. Actually, I don't know what feelings are. But I think I would feel great if I had them.

DAVE

Any different?

DAVE'S CAR

You know. We cleaned out a lot of clutter in the code. So I suppose I feel...

DAVE

Like you took a nice dump.

DAVE'S CAR

Yes. A nice dump. That's how I feel.

They smile.

INT. ROBOCAR - LATE AFTERNOON

ANOTHER DIALOG BOX. A hand reaches in and presses YES. The screen blinks and the OS is good to go.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ON THE DRIVER. It's Lloyd Critterman. They're in the driveway of his suburban house. He's wearing the military jacket, on his way out.

EXT. QUIET NEIGHBORHOOD DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

He backs up and pulls into the street, turns and drives away at a safe clip.

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Lloyd's car passes, driving safely and confidently within the speed limit.

INT. LLOYD'S ROBOCAR - CONTINUOUS

He's wearing the military shades now. His mouth is expressionless but tight. His whole body is tight, rigid with anticipation.

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

After a few miles, he slows and turns right onto a narrower highway. A few hundred feet down, he passes a state police cruiser going the other way.

The cruiser pulls off the road for a second, then makes a U turn and follows Lloyd from a distance.

INT. LLOYD'S ROBOCAR - CONTINUOUS

The police cruiser appears in his rearview mirror, distant but closing slowly. Lloyd isn't worried. He's driving a vanilla car and nothing is out of the ordinary. It comes closer.

INT. STATE POLICE CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

The second officer has a mall security cam photo of Lloyd's car on the computer.

SECOND OFFICER

Got a match. Looks identical to me.

FIRST OFFICER

Run the plates.

He types Lloyd's plate number.

EXT. NARROWER HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

The police come right up to Lloyd's tail.

INT. LLOYD'S ROBOCAR

He checks the mirror, checks the speed. His face is tighter.

INT. STATE POLICE CRUISER

The second officer reads off the computer.

SECOND OFFICER

It's registered to a guy in
Bridgeport. Lloyd Critterman. Uh,
no warrants. One prior.
Misdemeanor, discharging weapon
near a highway. What do you think?

FIRST OFFICER

Let's take a look.

He turns on the flashers and WHOOPS the siren.

EXT. NARROWER HIGHWAY

Lloyd slows. The turn signal and brake lights come on.

INT. LLOYD'S ROBOCAR

He's tense, as he pulls onto the shoulder.

Then, out of the blue, the car starts to speed up. The turn
signal goes off and the car pulls back onto the highway.

Lloyd tries the steering wheel, the pedal, the brakes, the
signals. Nothing. The car has locked him out.

INT. STATE POLICE CRUISER

The cruiser has pulled over, about to stop, when the officers
notice Lloyd.

FIRST OFFICER

What the hell. Call it in.

SECOND OFFICER

Unit 572 to base. We are in
pursuit...

EXT. NARROWER HIGHWAY

The cruiser flies back onto the highway and catches up to Lloyd, siren on full.

The straightaway turns into a series of tight curves. Both vehicles speed through them, driving over both narrow lanes, fishtailing off the road.

INT. LLOYD'S ROBOCAR

He whips off the shades and grabs onto whatever he can, as the car takes him on a wild ride. The steering wheel, pedals still dead.

Another straight section. The car speeds up to 70, bouncing insanely over potholes and bumps, bottoming out the suspension repeatedly.

INT. STATE POLICE CRUISER

The second officer is on the radio.

SECOND OFFICER

Request backup. Emergency backup.
Five miles north of Benson on route
261A. Suspect averaging 70. Can't
keep up.

EXT. NARROWER HIGHWAY

Lloyd's car slows only slightly to negotiate a fast left turn onto a dusty dirt road.

EXT. DIRT ROAD

The car fishtails badly but straightens out and flies like a bullet.

The cruiser falls behind as it attempts the turn at a safer speed.

The old unimproved road is fairly straight, but filled with deep ruts, rocks, powdery dirt and massive potholes, but the robocar is merciless. It bounces into the air and slams down sideways onto large rocks. Then, straightens out and flies into the air again, tires spinning madly.

In the cruiser, the driver doesn't share the same death wish, and falls farther behind.

INT. LLOYD'S ROBOCAR

Still holding on for dear life. His eyes are tight, focused on the world flying by.

Another highway approaches.

EXT. NARROW HIGHWAY 2

Without stopping, Lloyd's car fishtails onto a paved highway. The car takes advantage of the straightaway and pours on the speed, climbing to near 80.

WE HEAR RATTLING from some parts that broke off or got bent.

INT. STATE POLICE CRUISER

The officers are turning onto narrow highway 2. The driver floors it.

SECOND OFFICER

He's heading toward the bridge just north of Erskine. We can corner him there. The curve before the bridge should slow him down.

EXT. NARROW HIGHWAY 2

Lloyd's car approaches the curve. He hits the curve too fast and skids dangerously, slamming into a road sign. Then, he straightens out and flies toward the old one-lane bridge.

Another cruiser appears at the other end of the bridge and turns sideways to block his exit.

Lloyd's car makes no attempt to slow.

The officers in the second cruiser get out and hightail it off the road.

INT. LLOYD'S ROBOCAR

The car is headed straight for the other cruiser at top speed. He closes his eyes.

EXT. RIVER BRIDGE

The car bounces onto the bridge deck, then veers left suddenly, sending it through the concrete railing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lloyd's car flies through the air and noses full-speed into the water. Recent rains have swollen the river to near flood stage, and it quickly envelopes the car and carries it rapidly downstream.

The first cruiser stops on the bridge. The officers get out and run to the broken railing.

Off in the distance, they can see the top of Lloyd's car bobbing occasionally above the white water.

The sun is setting and the river is running too fast for anyone to attempt a rescue. All they can do is watch as he slowly disappears.

INT. LLOYD'S ROBOCAR - CONTINUOUS

Lloyd is scrambling for dear life, as the water pours in the half-open window, and the car sinks deeper and deeper into the angry river, with the motor still spinning at high revs.

This is the first time we've seen anything approaching emotion from Lloyd. It seems he is capable of feeling utter terror.

EXT. RIVER BANK - NEXT MORNING

A helicopter is hovering over a section of the river. Down below, Lloyd's car has been washed up on the bank after being snagged by a tree branch.

At ground level, a rescue vehicle approaches slowly on a narrow dirt road.

It stops as close as it can to Lloyd's car, and a couple of rescue workers get out and make their way through the dense foliage.

The first one to arrive startles when he makes eye contact with Lloyd. As many accident scenes as he has witnessed, he has never seen a death mask like this one.

Lloyd's fingers are welded to the top rim of the driver's window, as he attempted to pull it open. His face is blue and pushed against the window, and his eyes are as wide as they can be.

It wasn't a simple drowning. He was tortured to death.

As the responders go to work extricating Lloyd, they fail to notice the screen, which is dark, except for a single blinking icon.

INT. CASA FUTURO MODEL - DAY

The model is a showroom for products and ideas aimed at buyers who want the latest and greatest.

WE MOVE back from the kitchen area with bright, featureless cabinetry and built-in appliances with tiny blinking lights through a passage into the living room of the future.

In this room, we experience full-wall, high-def images, surround everything and soft lighting from decorative LED wall panels that slowly morph into random color patterns. Another panel displays "Casa Futuro" in 3-D animated colors.

PAUL BUTTERLY flies in from a doorless room and approaches US smiling broadly. He extends his hand.

PAUL

You must be Chen Lee. I'm Paul Butterly.

CHEN

(Shaking his hand)
Nice to meet you, Paul. I'd like you to meet our founder and CEO, Zhiyuan Xi.

Zhiyuan walks into FRAME and shakes his hand.

PAUL

It's an honor, Mr. Xi.

ZHIYUAN

Please, call me Zhiyuan.

PAUL

Zhiyuan, it is. Welcome to Casa Futuro.

ZHIYUAN

Thank you.

PAUL

This is our model home interior. It contains examples of all the latest technologies.

Paul starts to lead them slowly back away from the CAMERA toward the kitchen, and beyond. WE see that the model goes back quite a ways down a long straight hall that leads to a door at the other end.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL (CONT'D)

Many smart, green devices, building materials, techniques, high-tech appliances, of all kinds, big and small.

ZHIYUAN

Most of these already have AI.

PAUL

Reactive machines or limited memory only.

ZHIYUAN

I see.

PAUL

It's time now for them to evolve. Don't you agree?

ZHIYUAN

Yes.

START CREDITS.

As the group moves farther away from US down the hall, the sound of their voices gradually blends into the constant background of electronic things all around us, CLICKING and HUMMING quietly.

PAUL

The smart home of the future must integrate with artificial intelligence used in robocars, entertainment systems, healthcare systems, financial systems, devices, appliances, watches, pacemakers, what have you to provide people with one smart, unified, online, real-time, hyper-intelligent eco-system.

ZHIYUAN

Absolutely.

PAUL

I mean, imagine evolving away from pots and pans to a unified chef device that simply does all the cooking for you. You could literally do away with the kitchen - the whole thing contained in a smart machine, hidden behind a wall.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PAUL (CONT'D)

All that drudge work associated
with cooking swept away and put in
a box...

SLOW FADE OUT.

THE END