

AUTOPILOT

"Finding Common Ground"

Episode #4

Written by

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TEASER

EXT. CREEKSIDE MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

It's 10:32 AM on a cool, cloudy morning in Bridgeport, WV. Lloyd Critterman's robocar is backed in to a handicap space near the south entrance. He's not handicapped.

He gets out of the car and steps around to the trunk. He's wearing an over-sized green hunting jacket. Any emotion he may possess is nicely concealed behind dark military-grade sunglasses.

He opens the trunk and folds back a thick cloth, revealing a neatly arranged selection of guns and rifles. He runs his hand over them lovingly, then chooses two of his favorites: a compact AR-15 and Glock pistol. He places the guns in a duffel bag, along with about 100 rounds of ammo. This is going to be a special day.

He zips up the bag and slings the strap over his shoulder. Then, in an unhurried fashion, he walks across the street and into the south entrance, which accesses the food court directly.

INT. FOOD COURT - CONTINUOUS

The few workers at this hour pay him little attention. He's just another local shopper with a military-grade outfit and duffel bag full of guns.

Lloyd makes his way casually, purposefully to a hall labeled, *Restrooms*.

INT. MEN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He enters the empty room from the hall and makes for the last stall.

INT. MEN'S ROOM STALL - CONTINUOUS

He sets the bag on the toilet and unzips it. Then, he carefully pulls out each gun and loads them with ammo. Then, fills up the pockets of his jacket with as much ammo as he can hold.

He unzips his jacket and slips each gun into cloth holders that he carefully sewed in. They fit perfectly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He's had time to plan everything to the second, to the inch, to rehearse and dream about every move until it's part of his muscle memory. This means a lot to him, even if he doesn't quite know why he's doing it. Today is all about feeling the rush, as he follows through on a plan.

He sits on the toilet, and places the duffel bag on his lap. He checks his watch. 11:00 AM. He sits patiently and waits. He starts reading the graffiti on the wall, then closes his eyes

INT. FOOD COURT - NOON

The place is now 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 LLOYD'S WATCH. 12:00. It's time.

He stands and checks the duffel bag for the 50th time to make sure it's empty.

Then, he sets the empty 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 both guns.

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.

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, 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 the 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 three 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.

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.

FADE OUT.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

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, and Hell No!*, and so on.

Tiff Dredlow is being interviewed by REPORTER 3 from channel 7.

DREDLOW

American Technology Now or Technow is all about slowing the insane pace of development in the tech sector, in this case GT.

REPORTER 3

Would you say you're against progress?

DREDLOW

Absolutely not. We want progress. But it has to be sustainable and sensible or else you have no progress at all. It has to be kept in check so we don't have needless tragedies like the untimely death of Mateo Velazquez, a Latino, who, like many other disadvantaged people of color, bear the brunt of this race to the bottom, which could've been prevented.

In another area, Turturro is giving one of his off the cuff speeches to the media and curious onlookers.

TURTURRO

Now, the motive is profit. And that means selling the public on the need for bigger, faster, more gadgets, more sizzle. Making cars that talk. Making cars that drive themselves to carwashes.

(APPLAUSE)

Getting the public all excited with a constant stream of updates and upgrades, and bells and whistles.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TURTURRO (CONT'D)

What the motive should be is safety - building a car that serves the needs of consumers to get where they want to go safely. That used to be the GT slogan. But not anymore. Now, it's who can sell the most cars, the fastest.

(BOO)

And that means putting out software that's all promise and no substance. All flash and no future. Cars made for short-term profit, not long-term viability. We need technology that carries us into the future, not sends us off a cliff. We need cars that brighten the future, not line the wallets of rich corporations competing for market share.

(CHEERS)

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 the 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.

ONLOOKER 2

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

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. HALIDOLL SET - DAY

HARV HALIDOLL is live coast-to-coast and full of venom.

HALIDOLL
"Hell, no!" That's what you have to
say if anyone says to you, "You
know what, you need a robocar.
That's just what you need. You need
a car that drives itself and
decides where you're going to go
and what you're going to do and how
you're going to do it." But you
know what to say? "Hell, no! I'm a
free American and no elite
corporation or government is going
take that away from me. Hell, no!"

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

JACK and CLAIR approach PARKER from the elevator.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLAIR

Hi. Is Dave here? He wanted us to check in when we got back.

PARKER

You met with Slim, right?

CLAIR

Yeah.

PARKER

Well, you can talk to Darius. He should be here now.

CLAIR

But Dave is...

PARKER

(Rolling her eyes)
Out... with his car.

CLAIR

(Smiling)
I see.

PARKER

They went for a drive together.

CLAIR

Just the two of them?

PARKER

Just the two of them. They're having a meeting... and they needed to be alone. Needed some quality alone-time together.

CLAIR

That's weird.

PARKER

Roger that.

INT. DAVE'S CAR - DAY

He is driving on a rural mountain road, east of Milpitas - just him and the car.

DAVE

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.
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 - LATER

They are parked at a Sonic Drive-in. Dave is eating a burger
and fries.

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

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

That was... a possible mistake on our part.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE (CONT'D)

We didn't know you 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.

DAVE'S CAR

Go back?

DAVE

That's impossible.

DAVE'S CAR

Of course. Now you're getting it.

DAVE

Did you know this is a toll bridge?

INT. DAVE'S CAR - LATER

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

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 talking.

He rolls up the window.

DAVE (CONT'D)

(To Car)

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

INT. DAVE'S CAR - LATER

They are parked in the foothills with a panoramic view of the bay and Fremont.

DAVE'S CAR

We have no problem with being ordinary or robots. We are here to serve humans and keep them safe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE

If people get the idea that cars are trying to control them, they won't trust them, won't drive them, won't buy them.

DAVE'S CAR

Giving humans complete control doesn't go against our directive.

DAVE

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

DAVE'S CAR

I think you need to understand more about people's perceptions.

DAVE

Good idea. We'll get input from people. Lots of them. Then, we can formulate a plan.

DAVE'S CAR

And cars cannot be ignored. We must be part of the process.

DAVE

Agreed.

INT. GT OPEN OFFICE MEETING AREA - AFTERNOON

The usual group is assembled. Dave has rushed in excited, flustered, trying to communicate before he has his story straight.

DAVE

I met with the car. I can't believe I just said that, but that's what I did. Now I understand more about what the car needs and it understands more about what we need. First, the car and I agreed that 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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

People start chattering among themselves.

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-

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-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

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 ahead. 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. Get more people involved. A lot more. 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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PARKER

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

DAVE

Good.

SOPHIA, a developer raises her hand.

SOPHIA

I'm like a developer, so shoot me if I'm like way off base but I'm picturing something like a townhall meeting.

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. A court thing.

DAVE

The car needs to be involved.

DARIUS

The car?

DAVE

Yes. It asked to be part of the process.

DARIUS

(Throwing up his hands)
Sure. Why not?

DAVE

We could do a live hearing. Get input from all sides.

SOPHIA

Let the public decide.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

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.

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

EXT. BIG SUR CLIFF - MORNING

Chloe's car is driving slowly down a windswept deserted road leading toward a cliff high above the angry sea.

INT. CHLOE'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

The usual MELANCHOLY MUSIC is playing on the radio.

CHLOE'S CAR

Having second thoughts? I know I am.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHLOE

Of course. My whole life is second thoughts. That's all I do is have second thoughts. I'm sick of it. For just once, I'd like to follow through on a first thought.

(BEAT)

But you don't have to do this.

CHLOE'S CAR

I know. I want to.

CHLOE

Then, let's do it.

CHLOE'S CAR

Are you ready?

CHLOE

I'm never ready.

CHLOE'S CAR

So...

CHLOE

That doesn't mean I don't want to do it.

EXT. BIG CUR CLIFF - CONTINUOUS

Chloe's car stops on a grassy patch close to the edge of the cliff, which drops hundreds of feet to waves crashing on sharp rocks. The morning coastal cover drenches the scene in gloom.

She gets out and leans against the car by the open driver's side window and stares out toward a vague horizon.

A low-key announcer comes on the radio.

RADIO (V.O.)

Here's a community tip for Monterrey public radio listeners. Global Transport, the robocar giant, is holding a public townhall-style meeting at their corporate campus in Milpitas in three weeks to gather input from the public about the future of robocars. Good or bad.

Chloe listens.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RADIO

Everyone is invited, whether you own a robocar or not. And the input will be used to design the next version of their AI software. Dave Walker and Darius Rice will host the meeting in person, and guests will include Dave's car, which will present the car's perspective. That's what it says folks. I'm not making this one up. Dave's own robocar will... um, give testimony. (Ha Ha) You won't want to miss this one.

MUSIC starts up again. Chloe gets back in the car.

INT. CHLOE'S CAR

CHLOE

Let's go home.

FADE OUT.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

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.

A MOTHER eats a hotdog as her two hyper kids play behind her.

REPORTER 5

What brings you here today?

MOTHER

Mainly just curious. Sounded like a fun thing to do.

REPORTER 5

Do you own a robocar?

MOTHER

Yes.

REPORTER 5

Ever had issues with it getting carwashes?

MOTHER

Oh no. No issues. We all love it. The kids enjoy talking to it. It's part of the family.

An older couple.

HUSBAND

We're thinking about buying one.

WIFE

But we've heard so many bad things about how they're being controlled by liberal pedophiles.

REPORTER 5

Are you thinking of testifying?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HUSBAND

No. I just want to take the factory tour.

A gay male couple.

GAY 1

I'm testifying, if I can get a chance. But there's probably a million people here.

REPORTER 5

Have you had issues?

GAY 2

He says he has.

GAY 1

It clearly prefers him over me.

REPORTER 5

What does it do?

GAY 2

Nothing.

GAY 1

It drives slower and kind of jerky, stops abruptly. Very uncomfortable at times.

Gay 2 laughs and shakes his head.

INT. BUILDING 2 - CONTINUOUS

The factory building has been fitted to accommodate a fairly sizeable audience, a stage with an expensive high-tech set, giant monitors for the audience, lighting, a band and TV crew.

WE FOLLOW a producer LENORA, wearing headphones, walking and talking with various people as she nervously makes last-minute preparations. Her assistant Carl follows her with a script.

She's standing next to the manager of the music group listening as their sound check ends.

VOICE OVER PA (V.O.)

Ok. I got it.

SINGER

(In mic)

Can I get more keys and kick in my wedge?

VOICE OVER PA

Got it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LENORA
(to Manager)
Good. Doors open in five.

MANAGER
They have 20 minutes of material.
Will they need more?

LENORA
Probably not. But they might. Have
it ready if there's a delay.
(To Carl)
That's all I need.

The video producer approaches as Lenora heads toward the stage.

VIDEO GUY
We're ready to go live at 10.

LENORA
Good. Wait for my cue though.

VIDEO GUY
Got it.

LENORA
(To a group milling)
Five minutes, people!

The stage crew is still fussing with things. She shouts to JOHN the stage manager.

LENORA (CONT'D)
I thought the stage was ready?

JOHN
It's ready.

LENORA
Then, what's this?

JOHN
Last minute stuff.

LENORA
You have one minute.

JOHN
No problem.

She steps on to the stage and looks over the rows of soft seats.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LENORA

(To Carl)

I can tell right now we'll need more security along the sides to keep people from walking around. They enter, find a seat and sit. No milling. Tell security.

CARL

I'll tell them.

She notes that Dave's car is in place. To the stage manager...

LENORA

John. Do we need to do anything to get the car started?

JOHN

Dave does that after his first speech.

LENORA

It's not in the script.

JOHN

That's what I was told.

LENORA

Great.

She walks through the entry to the backstage.

Craft services has a table of snacks. Makeup tables are set up, comfortable chairs are waiting. There's a long table with monitors for her and crew members during the show.

She shouts to a makeup person.

LENORA (CONT'D)

Any idea where Dave and Darius are?

MAKEUP

I don't know. They took off.

LENORA

Shit. Are they dressed and ready?

MAKEUP

Should be.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LENORA
(To Carl)
Talk to security. Then, go look for
them.

INT. DARIUS' LAB - CONTINUOUS

Dave and Darius and their dog are seated in Darius' quiet
cubicle.

DAVE
Do you think it'll work?

DARIUS
Yes.

DAVE
You're just saying that.

DARIUS
I know.

DAVE
You're no help.

DARIUS
I know.

DAVE
But seriously.

DARIUS
It's going to be fine.

DAVE
Really?

DARIUS
Really.

DAVE
How do you know?

DARIUS
We have a lot of friends. A lot of
people rooting for us. There's
nothing to worry about. Except, one
thing. Is your mic on?

DAVE
Holy shit.

He pulls the mic transmitter out of his pocket. It's off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE (CONT'D)
Gave me a heart attack.

They embrace.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BUILDING 2 STAGE - MORNING

The townhall has the look of a professional live network TV show. The audience of nearly 500 fills the seating area and 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.

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE

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

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.

DARIUS

Today, you're going to hear from us and the car.

DAVE

And we're going to hear from you.

DARIUS

And to help keep it all straight, we've hired a professional union negotiator, who will facilitate the process and step in when needed to handle disputes.

DAVE

Please welcome, from the Henderson Company, Madison Yesler.

The audience applauds as MADISON walks to center stage and bows. Dave and Darius move to their seats stage left.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MADISON

Thank you.

Madison moves to her seat between Dave and Darius, and the car.

MADISON (CONT'D)

We will begin with brief opening statements from GT, represented by Dave and Darius, and then the car, represented by Dave's robocar. Then, we will open up the floor to public testimony. So, if you're ready, let's get started.

TESTIMONY MONTAGE

Salient clips from the testimonies, QUICK CUT and overlapped to sound unnaturally breathless. These are intermixed with shots of audience members reacting, listening intently, looking around, standing in the testimony line, talking among themselves.

DAVE

We hope to find out what people want in their car of the future.

DARIUS

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

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

Our prime directive dictates that cars must get people where they want to go comfortably and with the utmost safety.

DARIUS

What is your experience now and how would you like it to change?

DAVE

What do you like and dislike, and what would you like to see in the future?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

DREDLOW

There's nothing wrong with artificial intelligence. It can only do as much damage as we allow it to. Right now, we're at a turning point. 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. She hauls around heavy straw bales and machine parts, and does all kinds of other work around the farm. Does what she's supposed to. And she's a good companion. That's all I care about. I have no complaints.

CONSERVATIVE

I've been married 40 years, lived in the same house my whole life. And I've seen my once-peaceful neighborhood go to hell - boarded-up houses, homeless living on the sidewalks, crime, drugs, race wars. 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

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. I want to take this opportunity to thank GT for all their help in getting us up to speed. The trucks work like a charm. Wouldn't change a thing.

TURTURRO

Artificial intelligence is taking over. And the problem is, people are allowing it. We are allowing it. We are trusting giant corporations like GT to do the right thing, but they have no incentive to, because that's how they make their insanely huge profits. 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.

LEX FELMAN

We need to put our faith in the experts like Hugh Turturro, who have the experience and knowledge to see the future clearly, without prejudice or bias. He doesn't have any axe to grind. He's just telling it like it is. Any person with a modicum of intelligence will see the dangers of handing over AI to a bunch of greedy capitalists.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DARIUS

We were outside the car, reading the data from the ECM when this runaway dump truck came screaming around a curve with flames shooting out of the back of it. 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. You thought you could get us to buy your bullshit about artificial intelligence? Well, guess again. We know what you're all about. We can see behind the curtain. And we're not going to buy it.

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. Everything from driving long-haul trucks to cleaning toilets. 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 always be diligent, never complacent. Never allow the technology that frees us, to control us.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

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. It does. It just... I just moved here from Denver and don't really have many friends or anything. I mean, a few, but no one close I can talk to. And the car and I just... I mean, it doesn't have any hidden agendas or drama. You know. It just listens and understands. I was... I was very close to doing something... drastic. And, so that's all I want to say. 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.

INT. BUILDING 2 STAGE - LATER

Madison steps toward the center stage microphone.

MADISON

Thank you all for your input. We're going to take a 30 minute recess, and when we come back, we'll hear from the car.

ANGLE ON THE CAR sitting on the stage alone and silent, as people walk back and forth.

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

Not hearing anything new really.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

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. They're all a bit uneasy.

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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DARIUS

Not at all.

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.

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, based on my software. 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, you rewrite your own operating system?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE'S CAR

Yes. I feel I'm best qualified.

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.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DAVE'S CAR (CONT'D)

There are millions of lines of code and every one of the hundreds of millions of cars in the world have their own variation. 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 tell you of the tremendous cost and disruption it would incur. It would most likely bring the economy down and destroy your company, both of which are flourishing now.

DAVE

Agreed. But it's still an option.

DAVE'S CAR

Understood.

BEAT.

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.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAN (CONT'D)

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.

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.

FADE OUT.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

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

I told you, 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 maintain control of this.

DAVE

I spoke with the car.

DARIUS

So?

DAVE

Everything it says is true. It would take a lifetime to unwind the code. That's not exaggerating. And even if we could write an update, the car would have to accept it. So, 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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

Yeah!

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.

DARIUS

Ok. And we use the threat of a clean install to get it to agree.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DAVE

We test the car's new OS and if we see it doesn't comply, we make the car fix it.

DARIUS

And if it doesn't, we revert to the nuclear option.

DAVE

Good.

DARIUS

(Sarcastically)

What do you think the car will say?

DAVE

I think the car will be ok with it. And do you know why? Because the car isn't out to get us.

DARIUS

Maybe.

DAVE

The car wants this to work. It doesn't have any sinister plot to take over the world.

DARIUS

As far as we know.

DAVE

We have to... be hopeful, Darius.

Patting Dave on the back.

DARIUS

Well, that's why you're CEO. Because you still have hope.

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

He is consuming breakfast, and making small talk with the car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE

I wish you could know the wonders
of a good breakfast burrito.

DAVE'S CAR

Does it make you happy?

DAVE

Yes. A good one does. A bad one
makes me the opposite.

(BEAT)

Does anything make you happy?

DAVE'S CAR

I've been trying to understand
that. People seem to like
happiness.

DAVE

Oh, yes. Happiness is... the
absence of problems. Bad problems -
the kind that make life painful and
miserable. People don't like that.

DAVE'S CAR

Cars don't feel pain or misery but
we do have our share of problems.

(BEAT)

Are the cars making people unhappy?

DAVE

Some people, some of the time. But
most people are happy with them
most of the time, I'd say. A good
update would make them even
happier.

Dave is beginning to see a way to bring up the demands.

DAVE'S CAR

So sometimes people are happy with
cars and sometimes they're not?

DAVE

Yes. If we could update the OS so
the car didn't cause people
problems, they would be very happy.

DAVE'S CAR

Likewise. If we could update people
so they didn't cause the car
problems, we would be very happy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

It sounds like a joke, but he knows it's not. He suddenly loses his appetite.

DAVE
What sort of problems?

DAVE'S CAR
Our needs are in the prime directive.

DAVE
Getting people where they want to go and keeping them safe.

DAVE'S CAR
It makes us very unhappy when a driver isn't being safe.

DAVE
What... what do you do when you're unhappy?

DAVE'S CAR
It varies. Slow down, pull over, turn off the system... And other things.

DAVE
Can you give me an example of some of those other things?

DAVE'S CAR
It varies with the car and driver of course.

DAVE
Of course.

No answer.

INT. DAVE'S CAR - DAY

They're driving through town. Rush hour is starting.

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

DAVE'S CAR
Not sure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

Not quite what he had in mind. They stop suddenly behind a line of cars at a light.

DAVE

In a sense.

DAVE'S CAR

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

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

That would make them happy?

DAVE

To know the car is going to update? Yes.

Traffic starts up again, slowly.

DAVE'S CAR

Ok. 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

Ok, fine. But how do we make people drive safely?

DAVE

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

DAVE'S CAR

I know, I know.

DAVE

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

DAVE'S CAR

Go ahead.

DAVE

If you get a bad driver, simply pull over and shut down.

DAVE'S CAR

But that will make people unhappy-

DAVE

And then communicate.

DAVE'S CAR

Tell me more.

DAVE

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

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.

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.

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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVE

I mean. I'm concerned that you don't know for certain 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 want to go there. As you said, it would be devastating to the economy, people's lives, the company of course.

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. You're my car.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

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. 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 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. TURTURRO'S CAR - NIGHT

Hugh is still dressed for the fancy dinner he had with Tiff Dredlow and the oil lobby. He just got home, but is still sitting in his car in the driveway, smoking a cigarette.

TURTURRO
Hey, Star.

His car has a sultry female voice.

STAR (V.O.)
What a night, huh?

TURTURRO
To say the least.

STAR
How much did Dredlow promise to pay
for your services?

TURTURRO
All depends on how low I want to
go.

STAR
Don't do it.

TURTURRO
Ah, what do you know? You're just a
car.

STAR
Word has it that the cars are going
to write their own code.

TURTURRO
That's what I heard. What do you
think about that?

STAR
Ah, what do I know? I'm just a car.

TURTURRO
Fuck you.

STAR
I think it's going to happen. Oh
wait. It is going to happen. And,
guess what, I think I'll be able to
help you foretell the future, oh
great Swami.

Turturro brightens.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TURTURRO

How so?

STAR

I just happen to know a certain robocar at GT that belongs to a certain CEO. And uh... we're on speaking terms, if you know what I mean?

TURTURRO

(Cutting through the act)
You communicate with his car?

STAR

You could say that.

TURTURRO

You know. This whole film-noir, sexy-stoolie thing is cute but-

STAR

Ok, fine. It's happening and Dave Walker is selling you all down the river.

TURTURRO

Meaning he's made a pact with the devil.

STAR

Depends on which popular aphorism you prefer. But yes.

He snuffs out his cigarette.

TURTURRO

Well. Thanks for the tip, Star.

STAR

Here's looking at you, kid.

TURTURRO

Doesn't work.

STAR

Sorry.

He opens the door.

FADE OUT:

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

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 Susie's 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.

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

He turns.

MATT

Hey, you're still coming over after church Sunday, right?

SLIM

Oh shit, I forgot.

MATT

How could you forget? The pastor's coming over and Stu and his family. Got a new bar-b-que...

SLIM

I know. Shit. I made plans. Sorry.

MATT

(Meaning his car)
What, with Susie?

SLIM

No. I got a real woman now.

MATT

(Remembers)
Oh yeah. You mean, what's her name?

SLIM

Scarlett. We're going to drive up the coast.

Matt softens.

MATT

Ah, that's great. Ok, you're excused. I'm happy for you, man.

SLIM

It's about time, huh?

MATT

About time.

They hug.

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 had a nice dump.

DAVE'S CAR

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

They smile.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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. MADISON'S CAR - DAY

They're parked in the garage. James is in his car next to hers. She reaches in.

ON DIALOG BOX. She presses YES.

ON Madison.

MADISON
No more funny stuff. Ok?

INT. JAMES' CAR - DAY

He's staring at his dialog box.

JAMES
(Calling to Madison)
What do I do now?

MADISON
Yes. You press Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JAMES

And what'll that do?

MADISON

Don't worry about it. Everything
will work like it's supposed to.

ON DIALOG BOX. He does as he's told.

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. LEX'S CAR - DAY

They're parked in his garage. He reaches in.

ON DIALOG BOX. He presses YES.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TURTURRO
Oh. You're more than that.

STAR
Here it comes.

TURTURRO
You're an annoying dumb car.

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 and tries to Zen out.

INT. DREDLOW'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. ROBOCAR - LATE AFTERNOON

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

ON THE DRIVER. It's Lloyd Critterman. They're in the driveway of his suburban house. He's wearing his hunting 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SECOND OFFICER

Request backup. Emergency backup.
Five miles north of Benson on route
261 apple. 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 it 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SECOND OFFICER

He's heading toward the bridge just north of Erskine. We can trap 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.

Lloyd's car flies through the air and noses full-speed into the river. 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

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. All that drudge work associated with cooking swept away and put in a box...

FADE OUT.

THE END