

FALLEN ANGEL

John Boston

Warm Springs, Nevada is literally smack dab in the middle of nowhere. Fifty miles to Tonopah, sixty five miles to Ely. There's not much there, except for the springs and a trailer park. Lithium was discovered about ten miles away. Demand for the mineral was immense. Concordia Mining had gotten the contract from the BLM to mine the site. Forty four miners and their families lived in the Warm Springs Trailer Park.

The mine had leased the site and purchased the trailers. It was too far for most to commute. For the families that lived here, life was pretty Spartan. Each trailer had its own satellite receiver for TV and internet, but service was unreliable. It was hot in the summer and cold in the winter, with most days sunny and pleasant. It was not the kind of place anyone would want to live, except for a brief period of time. Make as much money as you can, then head back to civilization. That's pretty much what Wade and JD thought when they arrived over two years ago. Neither had any experience mining. JD was a truck driver and Wade was a heavy equipment operator. They started work the day the mine opened and had been there ever since. It had been a tumultuous two years, but they had both survived and were now running their respective crews. Thirty five dollars an hour plus overtime. Their housing cost two hundred dollars a month. When JD last checked his bank account, he had nearly sixteen thousand dollars in it. It had taken him almost thirty years, but he had finally risen above his surroundings and managed to make a decent life for himself.

Wade made more money than JD, but spent it as fast as he made it.

"You can't take it with you. May as well enjoy it while you can." he would say.

He bought a new truck and was paying his girlfriends rent in Ely as well. He liked to flash money and throw it around. He took his girlfriend on a vacation to Thailand last year. He paid cash for everything. He was a cowboy and damn proud of it. He and JD were really nothing alike, but they shared a passion for one thing and that was hunting. They had taken their first hunting trip together last year and had a blast, with each one bagging a deer. JD had taught Wade how to butcher it and they had enough meat to give away at the trailer park. Even though they were really nothing alike, they had become close friends over the two years they had been living in Warm Springs. They usually shared beers on the weekends and watched football together. They were sort of like a redneck odd couple.

Their hunting trips were not always legal and sanctioned either. Wade had introduced JD to "spotting". One shines a floodlight at the deer and the other one shoots it. Not legal and if caught, the fines can be severe, but this was a huge area and the state had few personnel to enforce its regulations. The two had Generation 3 Night Vision as well as a Thermal Imager. Getting deer and sheep at night was simple.

They would just drive around in total darkness until they saw something. Most nights they would come home empty handed, some nights they would hit pay dirt. They would work four days on, three days off. When Wade wasn't with his girlfriend, the two were usually out cruising the desert. Some nights,

they would just sit around and drink beer. Some nights they would have heated discussions about women and football or cars. The two of them had discovered they loved the desert and the hundreds of miles of nothingness that surrounded it. Some nights, they were the only two people for a hundred miles in any direction. It was just the two of them and the desert animals.

They had a makeshift camp set up in an old mining site. They knew there were plenty of big mouths and snitches back at the trailer park. Last thing they needed was any unwarranted attention about their extra curricular activities. They just couldn't show up at the park with a dead deer in the back of their truck. They did most of the cleaning and butchering in an old mining camp they had discovered one day. Most of the buildings were still intact. They could butcher the deer, then take the meat back with them. No one in the park would ever know. That's exactly what they were doing on that warm night in October when they saw it.

Wade was pretty buzzed and had thought about passing out on his cot for a while. It was unusually warm for this time of year. The weather could change rapidly out here. This was high desert country. He and JD had just shot a few rabbits and were skinning them for their hides, when he saw it up in the sky. He thought it was a helicopter at first and that set off all kinds of warning alarms.

"JD, we got company." he said pointing up to the sky. JD looked up and saw it as well. It was a bright light, too bright to be an airplane. Fish and Game would occasionally use helicopters to catch poachers.

"Shit, the hell we gonna do?"

Wade looked at the light for a minute and realized it couldn't be a helicopter or a plane. This was something else.

"The hell is that thing?" he asked

"That ain't no helicopter. Whatever it is, it's coming right at us, we better hide." said JD

The two of them ran into the cave and watched as the light streaked over them and let out a loud roar as it passed over head. Neither of them could believe what was happening. It flew by them and a few seconds later, they heard a loud thud as the object hit the desert dirt.

"The hell was that? That wasn't no airplane?" asked JD

"I don't know." said Wade as they ran out of the cave and looked on top of the hill.

The object had left a burning and smoldering trail behind it. It continued on for several miles. It crossed US 6 and was now out in the desert below the mountains.

The two men got in their vehicles and followed the wreckage for several miles off the highway. They had only their NVGs on and didn't want to risk tuning on their headlights. They were both nervous and excited. Whatever landed out here could not have been a plane. Maybe it was a missile. It seemed to be going fast enough. The Nevada Test Site wasn't too far away. Maybe it was something that went haywire and left the site. If true, there were bound to be all kinds of people out looking for it. Not the kind of people that either of them wanted to run into either. There was an old man in the camp who had lived in Warm Springs for the last 30 years. At one point, he was the only resident. He told them stories about some very strange goings on in the desert. Things he had seen. He advised the two of them not to

go out in the desert alone at night.

“Some really weird sheet out there boys. Kind of thing that makes the hair on you balls stand up. I know, I’ve seen some of them. I think our government is screwing around with things they don’t understand. One day, it’s going to come back to bite them in the ass, you just mark my words.”

“JD, you got your ears on?” asked Wade into the CB

“Yeah, go head.”

“Do we even know what the hell we’re chasing here?”

“Nope , not a clue.”

“Okay, just wanted to make sure.”

“I got a Geiger counter in the truck. I don’t even know why I bought it. If it starts acting up, we’re out of here.” said JD

“Okay. Where in the hell did you get a Geiger Counter?”

“You don’t want to know.” said JD over the CB.

The two men followed the trail for several miles. At one point they lost the trail. The object just disappeared. JD drove to the top of the mesa then spotted it. The ground had been scorched. Whatever this thing was didn’t leave much of a debris trail behind it.

“I see it. Damn, what the hell is that thing?”

“We gotta be careful here bud. Make sure there ain’t no black helicopters out here!”

JD looked through his night vision goggles and saw what appeared to be a circular type object about fifty feet in diameter. It was not large, but big enough to leave a giant whole in the ground. The closer the two of them got, the more excited they became. They stopped their vehicles about a hundred feet from where the object landed. JD took out his floodlight and shined it on the object.

Neither men had ever seen anything like it before. The heat it was giving off was intense. JD made sure it was not radioactive. The Geiger counter was reading slightly higher, but not in any dangerous amount. They knew it could be a while before the object cooled enough to get closer to it. Both men knew they had a once in a lifetime opportunity. They got as close to the object as they could. JD filmed it with his camera while Wade held the floodlight on it, then they switched. They had almost twenty minutes of recording time on the craft.

“Wade, look at that!” said JD

He pointed to some type of strange writing on the side of the craft. It looked like gibberish. He had never seen anything like it before or since. There was also some kind of symbol on the side of the craft. It looked like a triangle with more gibberish on it.

“Wade, I’m starting to think this thing ain’t from planet Earth.” said JD.

“I do believe you’re right buddy. We got to get enough evidence so we can prove it. I tried picking up some of the trash it left behind, but it was too hot to grab.”

A few seconds later, some kind of weird light emerged from the craft. It instantly cooled the exterior of the craft, as it suddenly seemed to change its temperature. The two of them could now approach the craft. Both men were filing. Wade had a small flashlight with him. The men knew what they had found. They knew nothing in their lives was going to be the same from this point forward.

“Look, Wade, we got enough evidence. Let’s get out of here before the Feds show up. We don’t want to be here when they get here.”

“Yeah, you’re right. Last thing we need is to be dealing with those assholes.”

Wade and JD had turned to walk away from the craft, when they heard what sounded like something opening. They walked around to the side of the craft and nearly shit themselves when it came stumbling out of the craft.

The three of them looked at one another. Wade and JD felt different, as if there was something hugging them.

“Wade, are you seeing what I’m seeing?”

“If you’re seeing a little alien, then yes.” he said.

The alien collapsed on the ground right outside the craft. The two men looked at one another in disbelief. Neither men could comprehend what was happening to them. They were looking at life forms from another planet.....on their planet.

“I think we should get out of here Wade.”

“Hell yeah.” said Wade.

The alien let out a loud scream, only it didn’t make the sound with its mouth, it screamed in their heads. JD and Wade put their hands over their ears to try and block it, but it was no use. All kinds of weird sounds and images began to flood their thoughts. The two men got away from the craft and the alien. They ran back to their vehicle and Wade pulled out a pistol.

“What are you doing?” asked JD

“I’m gonna kill that damn thing. Before it kills us!”

“I don’t think it was trying to kill us, I think it was trying to communicate with us.”

“You call that communication? It felt like my brain was turning to Jello.”

“I know.....look, imagine how famous we will be if we have pictures of the alien as well.”

“Yeah, you got a point there. I don’t know man, I don’t want to go back there, that thing is freaky. We don’t even know what the hell it is?”

“It’s an alien Wade. A real freggin alien! We have a chance to capture a real alien. Imagine what we could get for it!”

“Who the hell is going to buy an alien?”

“I’m sure somebody will. This could be our chance Wade. We can’t screw it up.”

“Okay, I’ll give you five minutes. If you’re not back by then, I’m smoking that damn thing, okay?”

“Okay.....just give me five minutes. It looked like it was hurt.”

“Hell, I’d be hurt too if I was inside that thing when it came down. Five minutes and not one second more.”

JD ran back to the craft. His heart was racing as he turned and saw the alien struggling to get back to its feet. Each time it tried to stand up, it would just fall back down. It picked its head up and saw JD. He walked over to the alien and stood above it. He got the same weird sensation he had earlier. He could feel the thing trying to get inside its head. It pressed two buttons on its wrist. It was wearing some kind of weird watch. A second later, JD could hear the thing speak.

“Where am I?” it said

“You’re on Earth. My name is JD.....John Dawson, everyone calls me JD. What’s your name? Do you have a name?” he asked

“Not in the same sense you do. You can call me Bobby, if you like.”

“Okay. Bobby. Are you hurt?”

“Yes, quite badly. I am surprised I survived. I will most likely not survive much longer on your planet. It is imperative that no one discover my presence on your planet.”

“Do you speak English? Do all Aliens speak English?”

“No, I am using a compute translator. I have not spoken in over seventy five years. I am thinking it and this machine is translating my thoughts into a language your life form can understand.”

“Wow, that’s pretty amazing. Is there anything I can do for you?” asked JD

“Go inside my ship. There are two small boxes with handles. Please take them with you. I am going to have to destroy myself and this ship.”

“Why are you going to kill yourself?”

“It is not possible for me to be here. We are not allowed to make contact with any planet that has not joined the planets of our galaxy. I am in very, very big trouble should I be discovered. I should not have

come here. It was an accident. I should have destroyed the ship before now. Please, get the two cases and then leave. I do not wish to harm anyone else by mistake."

JD slowly climbed inside the spacecraft. It looked like a bunch of mirrors with two small seats up front. JD figured this was some type of escape craft, sort of like a lifeboat. He saw the two cases on the wall. He popped open the latch and took them. He brought them back over to Bobby.

"Got them." said JD and gave them to Bobby.

"Very good. John.....JD, these are sort of like transmitters. They will alert my group as to where I am and inform them of my situation. I do not know if they are still working. You must go now."

"Well, holy shit! Ain't this a sight." said Wade, holding the revolver and staring at the two of them.

"Wade, this is Bobby. He's an alien."

"Bobby? That's his name? Aliens have names?"

"No, that's just what he wants us to call him."

"JD, I think we better get out of here. No telling who else saw this thing come down. We're stepping into a giant pile of shit here bud."

Your friend is correct JD. You should not be here. I just need you to go back inside the ship and grab the antenna for this device. It looks like a giant metal tarp. It is inside a green box."

"Look, I really don't want to go back in there. Can you do it, I'll help you get up?"

"I cannot walk. Your planet's gravity is far too strong for my frail body. I can barely breathe. It will only take a minute JD, please."

JD was just about to head inside, when Wade called him back.

"JD, we got company." he said.

The two men ran to the front of the craft and saw a pair of headlights approaching. There was only a single pair. The closer they got, the worse Wade felt. Somehow, he knew who it was.

"I have a feeling, I know exactly who it is." said Wade

"You've got to be shitting me." said JD

"Who else could it be?"

The vehicle stopped about twenty feet in front of the men. Out stepped Officer Zach Romanowski of the Nevada Dept. of Wildlife. He had been waiting for months to catch Wade and JD poaching. He knew their camp was somewhere around here, he just hadn't been able to find it.

"Hi ya Zach. isn't it past your bedtime?" asked Wade

“The hell’s going on here Wade?” he asked

“Well, Zach, we have a little situation here. Nothing we can’t handle. We’re not doing anything illegal, so if you just be on your way, we’d greatly appreciate it.” said Wade.

“Wade, what the hell is that thing?”

“Oh that, just something JD and I are working on. Looks real doesn’t it?”

“Wade, what is going on out here? Is that what came down earlier? I thought it was a meteor. I didn’t want it to start a fire, so I followed it. I guess you guys beat me to it. What is that thing Wade?”

Wade walked closer to Zach. He had tucked his gun in his pants, out of sight. He had to get this guy out of here. He could ruin everything.

“Zach...look. That thing over there is real UFO. There’s a real alien inside of it. Now, we did find it first here, as you can plainly see, so I’m going to have to ask you to please leave, okay. Trust me, you don’t want to be a part of this drama fest here.”

Romanowski just looked at Wade in disbelief.

“Are you drunk?”

“No, I am not drunk. Look, Zach, would you just fuck off and let us handle it?”

“That’s not how this works Wade. I’m going to have to call this in. If that thing is a real UFO, it could be radioactive or something.”

Romanowski turned his back to Wade to grab his radio. Wade didn’t even flinch. He pulled out his revolver and shot him in the back of the head.

“WADE! WHAT THE FUCK ARE YOU DOING?” screamed JD in horror.

“Well shit JD, we can’t just let him report this thing? This place would be crawling with cops and God knows who else? This is our find. Finders keepers. We found ol Bobby here and we should get to claim him. I’m just trying to be logical here.”

“ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR FUCKING MIND? YOU JUST KILLED A POLICE OFFICER!” screamed JD, who was now nearly hysterical.

Wade walked over to him and smacked him across his face.

“The hell is wrong with you? I didn’t want to kill him, he didn’t give me any choice. Stupid asshole should have just left when I told him to. Besides, we have ol Bobby over there to clean things up for us. I have a hunch I know what those two little black boxes are going to do.”

“What are you talking about?”

“Follow me.” said Wade.

The two of them walked back to Bobby, who had managed to sit up against a rock. Bobby had the face of a child, a very weird looking child, unlike any child he had ever seen.

“Bobby. My name is Wade. Look, I know you and JD here have been talking. JD’s a good man, but he’s not too fucking bright. If you want to get out of this thing, you’re going to need a thinker here. Somebody that can think their way out of this. Do you agree?”

“What do you want Wade?”

“I’m guessing those two boxes there are something you need for your survival, but judging by what I’m hearing, I’m guessing your own survival is the last thing you care about at this point. You don’t want any humans to discover this spaceship or you, am I right?”

“You are correct in your assumption.”

“Okay. Now whether you like it or not, you’re in no position to do very much. You need me to help us. Those black cases, they will destroy the ship and you, am I right?”

“Yes. Anything within 50 feet will be completely dematerialized. There will be no trace of me or the ship. It will be like none of this ever happened.”

“Right. Problem is, we don’t know who else saw you come down. We can’t just leave a dead cop in his truck. That’s going to bring a lot of people and they are going to be asking a whole lot of questions. I need you to make that cop and his vehicle disappear also, got it?”

“It is not that simple my friends. When my associates discover what has happened, they will surely respond. When they do not hear from me, they will assume the worst. It could be very unpleasant. We are not allowed to make contact with any planet who has is not part of the Universal Mind. Your planet should not suffer because of a mistake I made. I must transmit a message to my people.”

“How the hell are you going to do that?”

“The transmitter on my ship has been destroyed. It will not function. The only other alternative is to build one from the materials on this planet. I am not certain it is possible with your current state of technology, but we must try.”

“Okay then. You tell us how to build it and we’ll build it.”

“I am a pilot. I am not an engineer. I can only repair equipment, not create it. You will have to allow me to expand your consciousness. We need to dramatically raise your intelligence level to where you could fathom such an undertaking.”

“Okay, do what you have to do. You cool with that JD?” asked Wade.

“Wade, do you really know what you are doing here? I mean, this whole thing is way over our heads, for Christ’s sake. Do we really want an alien screwing around with our heads?”

“That is why we are here JD. We were to bring the gift of the Universal Mind to your planet. Of course, we had already selected those of you to receive such a gift. Scientists and clergy members. Those that have devoted their lives in the service of others. I am a minister of the Universal Mind. I am authorized to bestow such gifts on to persons of your planet.”

“What the fuck is the Universal Mind?” asked Wade.

“It is an intelligence that flows throughout this galaxy and beyond. It is the source of life. You’re closest analogy would be the term ‘God.’”

“You are going to make us into God?”

“In your sense of the word, I would be making you into the next level of human development. Your intellect and imagination would tower above all others on your planet.”

Wade and JD looked at one another. Wade smiled and JD knew they were about to cross a bridge they could never uncross.

“And here I am thinking I was just going to get drunk and pass out with my dick in my hand tonight. Alright Bobby, fire away. We’re ready.” said Wade

Bobby motioned for the two of them to come closer. He took out a small box. He opened it and had them place their hands on the small pad. Wade went first. He felt a slight tingle and then it felt like he had been shocked. He collapsed on the ground and was unconscious. JD was hesitant about going next.

“You have to trust me JD. I need your assistance. Your friend Wade is very dangerous. He must be kept in check. You and you alone are the only chance we have. You must build the transmitter and then send a message. Tell them ADAM has landed and the mission was a failure. Tell them not to have any further contact with the planet for another century. That will buy you some time.”

“Bobby, I’m just a redneck. I’m not the guy for this job.”

“You are now, whether you want to be or not.” said Bobby out loud. Hearing the thing speak out loud caused JD to take a step back. It had the voice of a child, but the mind of an adult.

“Take the black box over to that vehicle. Move all of the vehicles together, as close as you can. You put the case on top of the vehicles and twist the knob. Get as far away from it as you can.” said Bobby.

JD did as he was instructed. Wade always left his keys in the ignition. He moved Wade’s truck, then his as close to the Patrol SUV as he could. He knew this would mean the end of his truck, but he also knew to do exactly what Bobby had told him. He put the black case on top of the hood of his truck and turned the knob. The box instantly lit up. It made some kind of weird noise and then began speaking to him in gibberish. He ran away from the vehicles, back over to the spacecraft. He watched the three vehicles slowly dissolve right in front of him. Even the ground dissolved until there was nothing but a giant crater where they once stood. JD had to pinch himself to make certain he wasn’t dreaming. This just couldn’t be happening.

“Holy shit! Boy, you weren’t kidding Bobby.” he muttered to himself.

“I thought you said they were transmitters?”

“They have a multitude of functions. Remember what I told you about your friend, Wade. His intentions are dark and selfish. I have seen the results of someone of his character being given the gift. It does not end well, for anyone.”

He walked back over to Bobby. He could see he was struggling just to breathe. He grabbed JD’s hand and put it on the pad. JD felt a surge of something enter his body. He could see nothing but white light. He passed out and hit the ground seconds later.

JD was the first one to come to. He opened his eyes. He had no idea how he had gotten where he was. He had no idea where he was. He quickly stood up and looked around. He pulled out his phone and saw that it was almost ten o’clock in the morning. He saw Wade passed out about ten feet in front of him. He ran over to him and shook him awake.

“Wade, wake up Wade!” he said shaking Wade violently.

Wade was unresponsive at first, then quickly came to and opened his eyes. He said nothing and just looked right at JD.

“What the fuck happened to us?”

“I don’t know. I don’t even know where we are.” said JD almost hysterically.

Wade stood up and looked around. He took a few steps forward, then collapsed on the ground.

“Man, I don’t feel so hot.” he said holding his head.

“How the hell did we get out here?”

“Our trucks have to be around here somewhere, I doubt we just decided to take a leisurely stroll out in the middle of the desert.”

JD helped Wade up. He could now stand on his own. He held his head.

“Man, what a headache. Were we drinking or something?”

“We wouldn’t have gotten this drunk of light beer. No, something else happened.”

“I had this crazy ass dream that I shot Officer Romanowski. That asshole Game Warden who has been trying to bust us.” said Wade as he stumbled forward.

“You sure it was just a dream?”

“Well, yeah, hell I’m not going to shoot the son of a bitch, as much as I’d like to sometimes.”

They walked around the crash site. They saw the perfectly circular crater in the ground where their vehicles once stood. Wade and JD looked down in the hole in the ground.

“Man, that’s weird. It’s a perfect circle.” said Wade.

“I think somehow I did this.” said JD

“You did it? How?”

“I don’t remember. Wade, something big must have crashed over there, look at those marks in the sand.”

They walked over to the spot where the UFO landed. They could see it hit a giant rock and had knocked it back almost fifty feet. They could see where it had hit the desert floor and had skidded for almost another half mile until I hit the rock. There was another giant, perfectly circular hole in the ground.

“Wade, what the hell happened here?” asked JD nervously.

“I don’t know bud. My mind is like Jello right now. I can’t remember a damn thing.”

“I think we should get out of here.”

“Yeah. Where are our trucks?”

“I don’t know, I can’t see them anywhere.”

“There’s tracks all over the place, but they all stop at that big crater in the ground. I only see one set of tracks. Where are the rest of them?” asked Wade.

“Holy shit Wade, I think something big happened here last night.”

“How come we can’t remember it then?”

“Does the name Bobby mean anything to you?”

“I got a nephew named Bobby.” said Wade

“No, that’s not what I mean. I think Bobby had something to do with all of this.”

“What the hell could make a hole like this? It wasn’t an explosion, it would have thrown dirt everywhere. This whole is perfect, like the ground just vanished.”

The two men were scared now, with JD doing his best not to panic. Wade was just as worried, but he would never let it show. They looked and looked, but couldn’t find anything nearby. They searched for any clues and their trucks for over an hour. It was getting warm. They had to get back to camp.

They walked for over an hour until they got back to US 6. They both recognized the area and knew their camp was about half a mile away on the other side of the highway. They were both expecting to find their trucks back at their hunting camp, but when they arrived, they got even more anxious.

“Wade, what happened to our trucks?” asked JD.

“Well, obviously, somebody stole them.”

“What? Out here?”

“Why not? Where else could they have gone?”

“Maybe we parked them somewhere out in the desert.”

“I doubt it bud. I could see for miles around and I didn’t see shit. I also didn’t see any tracks leaving that area where woke up. If they took them, how did they get them out of there?”

“This is really weird Wade. How come I can’t remember anything?”

“I don’t know bud. Look, I’m sure we’ll remember in a few days. Christ, I got one hell of a hangover. We must have tied one on real good and just lost them.”

“I don’t know Wade. Something about this just doesn’t add up. How are we going to get back to the trailer park?”

“We’ll have to take the four wheeler. It’s got a full tank. We’ll just drive on the shoulder of the highway. Shouldn’t take more than half an hour.” said Wade

“I remember I was skinning my pelts, when we saw something in the sky. I think we chased it. That’s all I can remember.”

“Yeah, I remember thinking, I hope I didn’t knock up Sarah and then I got in my truck and then.....nothing.”

“Wade, what if we were abducted by aliens or something?”

“What the hell would aliens want with us JD?”

“I don’t know, but I figure we lost about ten hours. I can’t remember what happened in those ten hours.”

“We were probably passed out drunk.”

“Wade, I’ve been drunk before. I don’t feel like I have a hangover, I feel like I have something else. Every time I close my eyes, I can see this bright light. it’s like a bright string that goes right into my head. I can’t get rid of it.”

“We’ve been walking in the desert for hours, it’s bright as hell out here without sunglasses. It’s bound to do some damage.”

“Yeah, maybe. I just don’t think we got drunk last night. I think something else happened to us.”

“Well, it ain’t gonna do us no good to worry about it now. Come on, let’s get back to the park, maybe someone in the park knows what happened.” said Wade as he fired up the ATV. They grabbed their

rifles and JD climbed on back. Wade put it in gear and they drove on the shoulder of the road, till they got back to Warm Springs. They were lucky. They had caught a break in the weather. Normally, this time of year, the overnight lows can drop to freezing or lower. It had been warm out that night. Chilly, but not freezing. If they had been out there two nights from now, they would have been caught in a snowstorm.

They made it back to the trailer park. Wade parked his ATV and went inside his trailer. Cell phone reception out here was virtually nonexistent. Those that could afford them had bought satellite phones. They were extremely expensive, but they were about the only cell phones that worked out here. Wade still had an old fashioned corded telephone his mother had in her garage when he moved out here. He called his girlfriend Sarah and told her he must have passed out last night in the desert and was wondering if she knew where his truck was.

“You lost your truck?” she asked in amazement.

“No, I did not lose it. I think somebody put something in our drinks last night and stole our trucks. I always leave the keys in mine. I’m just glad they didn’t take my rifle. That was my grand daddy’s rifle.”

“What are you going to do?”

“I guess I’ll have to get a ride into town and report it stolen. What else can I do?”

JD had called Jesus and asked him if he knew what happened to them last night. He had no idea. He had been in Reno for the past two days. JD was now starting to get very worried. Something about all this was very wrong. He had tried all kinds of things when he was younger. Some legal, some not legal. Never once did he completely lose all memory of what had happened to him. Never. He would usually remember something. This was strange. The fact that their trucks were missing and they were out in the middle of the desert didn’t help matters either. He took some IBUs for the weird headache he had and tried to lay back down. About fifteen minutes later, there was a knock at his door.

“Knock, Knock.” said Wade as he entered. He always just came in whether he answered the door or not. It was like knocking was just a formality to him.

“I’m in here.” said JD on his bed.

“You okay amigo?”

“I guess. I just don’t feel like myself. Man, I wish I knew what happened to us last night.”

“Me too. Look, I’m going to go back out there and look for our trucks. They have to be out there someplace.”

“Okay. I’m going to rest here for a while. I’ll meet up with you later. I’ll call you on the CB.

“Okay. Look, man.....I’m sure we’ll figure it out. I think somebody slipped us a Mickey or something last night and made off with our vehicles.” said Wade

“You really think so?”

“It makes sense. Probably slipped it in our beers when we weren’t looking. I had this hooker in Tijuana do it to me once. I couldn’t remember what the hell happened to me. Fortunately, I hid my wallet from the little bitch before we screwed.”

“Yeah, well we got to find them. I gotta be at work in the morning.”

“Don’t worry, we’ll find them.”

Wade left JD’s trailer and hopped on his ATV. He was just about to leave the park, when he saw two Nye County Sheriff’s Deputies pull into the Trailer Park Office. He stopped and followed them inside. He recognized one of them as Officer Stanwick. He had pulled him over in Tonopah before. Cops like him were the reason Wade thought so poorly of cops in general.

The park manager was an old cowboy named Benjamin Frost. Everyone in the park called him “Frosty”. A world class bullshitter, but a nice guy. Wade couldn’t stand most people, but he and Frosty got along well. Stanwick and the other Deputy came into the trailer park office and Wade was right behind.

“Morning officer, what can I do for you?” asked Frosty.

“Hi. Gentlemen, we have a real serious situation here. Last night a Game Warden named Zach Romanowski disappeared while on duty. His last report was that he was going to look at a possible plane crash about ten miles from here. That was at approximately 11PM. He hasn’t been heard or seen since. Nye County Search and Rescue is coming up from Pahrump to assist. I’d like to ask for volunteers from the trailer park to help us. We don’t have a lot of deputies and we have a lot of ground to cover.

“Wow....well boys the mine runs round the clock and most of the miners work ten or twelve hour shifts. There’s not a lot of down time for them. I’ll ask around.”

“We’d sure appreciate it. Nevada Highway Patrol and White Pine County are going to be sending help as well. We’re supposed to get a helicopter soon as well. We’ll be setting up a command post on the highway near the springs. Everyone who wants to help can check in with us there.” said Stanwick. He and Wade looked right at one another. Wade just smiled and moved past him.

“Weren’t you guys out at your camp last night?” Frosty asked Wade.

The two deputies stopped and turned around. Wade knew he had to stay composed. A cop like Stanwick could probably smell bullshit a mile away.

“Yeah, we were out there. I drank almost half a case of beer and passed out by nine. I can ask JD if he saw anything.

“A trucker reported that he thought he saw something come down in the desert. Said it looked like a meteor. You didn’t see anything?” asked Stanwick.

“No. Hell I was passed out on my cot around nine. I’ll ask JD when I see him.”

“Please do.” said Stanwick as he and the deputy left the park office.

“Investigating a plane crash and he disappears? That’s weird. I hope we find him.”

“Well, Zach’s a big boy, he can take care of himself. I’m sure he’ll turn up.”

“Did you need something Wade?”

“Oh, my heater is acting up again. You might want to take a look at it.”

“Oh, okay. I’ll be there as soon as my relief decides to show up.”

“Okay. I’ll be out at the camp if you need me. Just call me on the CB. I’m on channel 26. I guess I can go help find Zach.”

“It’s the Christian thing to do Wade. If you were in trouble, he’d help find you.”

“I don’t know about that Frosty.” he said as he left the office.

He ran back over to JD’s trailer and pounded on the door. JD answered the door a minute later sipping a cup of coffee.

“We got a problem.” he said and walked into his trailer.

“What?”

“JD, I need to ask you something here. No bullshit. I wouldn’t trust anyone else in this park. So, I have to ask you, did I shoot Officer Romanowski last night?”

JD was stunned. He almost dropped his coffee cup. He sat down at his kitchen table and lit up a cigarette.

“Wade, for some reason, I think you did.”

“Why the hell would I do that JD, why? I don’t like the prick, but I sure as hell wouldn’t shoot him.”

“Oh, Jesus Wade, we’re in really deep shit here.....like really deep.”

“I know. Look, they haven’t found him yet. He’s just missing right now.”

“What happens when they find him?”

“I don’t know. He was investigating a plane crash. He wasn’t even looking for us. As far as the cops know, he was looking for a downed plane.”

“How do you know?”

“They just came into Frosty’s Office. They asked for volunteers for a search party.”

“Holy shit Wade, what are you going to do?”

“Look, I still can’t remember a damn thing about last night. JD, why would I shoot a cop, I’m not stupid.”

“I don’t know Wade. I’m not even sure if you did or not?”

“It was the first thing you said to me this morning, remember? The very first thing.”

“Yeah, I know.”

“Doesn’t make any damn sense. I shoot a cop, our trucks vanish, neither of us can remember a damn thing. I am sure of one thing though, we have to find our trucks before anyone else does. It’s going to look pretty suspicious if they find our trucks in the same area where he disappeared.”

Wade did have a point. It would look very suspicious. He was right, they had to find their trucks. JD was still paying on his.

“Okay, I’ll grab Jesus’s quad and we’ll go out there. What do we do if we find them?”

“We’ll take them to the camp. They aren’t even sure where he was when he disappeared.”

“They’re bound to find that crash site. Especially if they use a helicopter.”

“We might get a break. I just heard on the radio, there’s supposed to be a big storm moving in tonight. It will wash away all of our tracks. It’s going to turn the desert into mud. It might just be the break we need.”

“God, I hope so. Should we just go to the cops?”

“What? Are you out of your fucking mind? Of course not. We don’t even know what the hell happened to us last night. We don’t even know if we had anything to do with his disappearance.”

“No, Wade. I am sure of one thing.”

“What’s that?”

“We definitely had something to do with his disappearance,” said JD as he sipped his coffee.

The two of them took off back to their camp. JD asked Jesus if he could use his quad. He usually didn’t mind as long as it was returned with a full tank of gas. They could feel the wind start to pick up. By the time they reached the camp, the clouds had formed and the wind was blowing pretty hard. It wouldn’t be too much longer before the rains came. The latest weather report showed that the storm was going to dip farther south than first thought. That meant the park was going to get hit pretty hard. Some of the rain might even turn to snow.

They were both praying that the storm hit before the search party found the crash site. Even if they did find it, they would only find two large holes in the ground and nothing else. It was unusual, but not incriminating. What he was worried about was that they would trace their tracks from the crash site back to their camp. That would be very incriminating. They really didn’t have much of a defense. They knew the tracks would lead them right back to the camp. Their only hope at this point was that the rain would get here and wash away the tracks before the search party found them. They weren’t out there to help find Officer Romanowski, they were out there to keep tabs on the search party.

Fortunately, they were looking on the wrong side of US 6. They were at least ten miles or so away from the actual crash site. They got their first lucky break when the helicopter from Creech Air Force Base was diverted back to the base. The high winds meant no air support until after the storm. That was huge for them. It means now that the few people searching out there would be limited to ground observations only. JD and Wade decided not to go back to the crash site, for fear it might not look good for them if the site were discovered and the tracks back to their camp were also found, which they most surely would be. The sand was like snow, their footprints were pretty hard to lose. Anyone with any tracking experience could do it. They walked on the shoulder of the highway for about a hundred feet, then crossed the highway. From there it led directly back to their camp. They both knew they had to keep the search party away from the crash site. They just didn't really know how to do it, without looking suspicious.

For the moment, it was just a few Nevada Highway Patrol Vehicles and about half a dozen Nye County Sheriff's Deputies. They split up into two man teams and were spread pretty thin. Wade had his handheld CB with him. About three hours into the search, he heard an announcement from one of the Deputies that the search was being postponed until after the storm. Nye County Search and Rescue would be leaving sometime tomorrow morning and heading out the area. Wade and JD high fived one another. They had been very, very lucky. They turned around and headed back to the staging area at the now defunct Warm Springs Restaurant. Wade stopped his quad to take a leak. He killed the engine. JD knew something was on his mind.

"What makes you think I killed this guy?" he asked while pissing in the sand

"I don't know Wade, it's just this feeling I have. We met someone named Bobby. He gave us instructions to do something, something very important. I just can't for the life of me remember what it was. I remember you shot the Warden and I kind of freaked out. I know it doesn't make any sense, but that's what happened."

"JD, why in the hell would I shoot a Game Warden? We just met this Bobby out here and he tells us to do something? Come on man, that don't make no sense."

"If I'm wrong, then where is the Warden?"

"I don't know, but I sure as hell didn't shoot him, not unless I had a damn good reason."

"Maybe you did have a damn good reason."

"I still wouldn't have shot him. Maybe knock him out or something, but I ain't no cop killer. Who the hell is Bobby?"

"I wish I knew. He was very important."

"So, you only remember bits and pieces of last night, not the whole thing?"

"Something like that. I just feel so weird. I just haven't been right since last night. I keep getting these weird images in my head. I don't even know what they mean."

"I'm still going with the whole Mickey thing. In a few days, it will all come back to us and we'll remember everything, especially the part about me not shooting Romanowski."

Wade fired up the quad and the two of them drove back to the makeshift staging area near the old Warm Springs Restaurant. A Nye County Deputy was manning the post. They told him they had found nothing, which in many ways was a very honest statement. They hadn't found anything. Of course they weren't really looking either. The wind was blowing hard now and the temperature had dropped almost twenty degrees in just a few hours. When storms come to this part of the country, in higher elevations, they strike fast and hard, with little warning. The two of them had been caught in a flash flood last summer they nearly swept away their camp. They watched a wall of water come over the highway. Neither of them had ever seen anything like it in their lives. It turned the area around Warm Springs into a small lake with waves included. That would be just what they needed to cover their tracks.

They were back at the trailer park in JD's trailer, sipping coffee and looking for a football game. The missing game warden was now national news. Wade knew that it would only be a matter of time before this entire area was crawling with people, looking for Officer Romanowski. He was 99 percent sure he hadn't shot the Game Warden. Of course if he did, then where was he? Where was the warden's truck? Where were their trucks? Not much was adding up.

"Look bud, we still got to find our trucks. They find either of them out there it will look pretty suspicious. Won't take much to get these cops turned into a lynch mob, especially when they think we killed another cop. We got to find them, even if it means going out in this storm."

"I know Wade, but if it rains as hard as they say it will, we won't get very far. Even with the quads, we won't be able to cover much ground. I don't know what the hell happened to us last night. You know sooner or later, we are going to have to report the trucks stolen. If we don't and they find them, we're as good as busted."

"Yeah, I was thinking about that. We're going to have to do it soon. You know these cops are going to think we had something to do with his disappearance."

"Are you sure we didn't have something to do with it?"

"Hell yes, I'm sure. Look, until you know something for a fact, I would greatly appreciate it if you would refrain from making any more of your educated guesses about what happened to us last night. It's driving me crazy."

"Fine. We'd better go together."

"Okay, but we got to have some kind of a story to tell the cops. Just telling them we can't find our trucks is going to make us look stupid. Too stupid of you get my drift."

"What do we say?" asked JD.

"We just tell them we got drunk and passed out. When we woke up, the trucks were gone. We can't remember a damn thing about last night. If they ask us why we waited so long to report it, we just say we were embarrassed. We'll say that we figured they were back at the park. We went out today not to look for the cop, but to look for our trucks. We'll have to tie it into the missing cop. Try and convince them that maybe who ever offed the cop stole our trucks as well. Makes sense. They needed a getaway vehicle. Bingo, we're off the hook."

“What happens if they don’t find our trucks?”

“They have to find them, trucks just don’t vanish into thin air.” said Wade.

The two of them walked into Frosty’s office and found a Nye County Deputy sitting in a chair, talking to Frosty. The kid didn’t even look old enough to have hair on his balls, let alone arrest someone.

“Officer, my name is Wade, Wade Dawson. This here is John Davis, everyone calls him JD. Last night while we were out at our camp, someone stole our trucks.” he began.

“Really?” asked the cop.

“Sure did. We was hoping they were somewhere in the desert, with all that was going on here today, we didn’t want to make any more work for you guys. We just kind of figured they’d be out in the desert somewhere. I don’t know if it’s related at all to the missing game warden, but it just might be.”

“It’s a possibility. At the very least, we can put a BOLO Alert out for your vehicles. At least we can recover your truck.” said the Deputy. He told the two of them to get their documentation and paperwork about the vehicles and to head into the Sheriff’s Station in Tonopah where they could make a complete report. Neither of them wanted to spend the rest of the day in Tonopah, but they didn’t have much of a choice. They did give the Deputy their vehicle descriptions and license plate numbers so he could put an alert out for the trucks. What none of them could have known at the time is that neither vehicle still existed. It had been returned to steel and plastic molecules that had been absorbed by the sand. The two men really had no choice. Both men missing their trucks was bound to raise eyebrows in the little community. It wouldn’t be too long before the cops were knocking on their doors, wanting to know what happened to their vehicles. JD’s truck was over twenty years old and was falling apart anyway. Wade on the other hand was only about three years old. He had purchased it a few years back and was still making payments on it. There were bound to be more questions from the insurance company as well. Questions he couldn’t answer. Questions he didn’t know the answers to, not yet anyway.

The kid who took the report was thorough and made sure he had everything correct before they signed it. A nationwide BOLO ALERT would go out for the two vehicles. Wade and JD were both hesitant about filing the report. For all they knew they had simply gotten drunk and left them somewhere. Wade was not happy. He was going to have to call his insurance company tomorrow morning and report the vehicle stolen. He knew he would only get the fair market value for the vehicle and if it was stolen and recovered, he would have a hell of a time trying to sell it. He kicked himself for not being able to remember what the hell had happened last night. It was like he just lost ten or eleven hours. He tried to remember, but the only thought that came into his head was this weird bright light. He would close his eyes and see the light, just like JD described. He figured it was damage from being out in the sun for too long. He had no idea what was about to happen to him. He had a very strange headache. Not like the ones he usually got after drinking too much, no this one was different, like how your brain feels after concentrating too long on a math problem. It was like his brain was being pulled and stretched in all kinds of new ways.

A Sgt. had spoken to them before they headed back. They just reiterated what they had told the deputy. “So you guys were passed out and somebody just stole your trucks? That seems kind of hard to believe. You guys didn’t hear anything?” he asked the two men.

“We were passed out drunk. I know it seems hard to swallow, but that’s what happened. I can’t believe she’s gone. I hope you guys can find her, I’m still paying on her.” said Wade.

Wade knew there was going to be an intense manhunt for their trucks. He knew when they didn’t turn up, there were bound to be more questions, but that wouldn’t be for a while, it might buy them some time to get a better story together. Something that the cops would believe.

Both men knew the cops didn’t completely buy their story, but at this point they didn’t have any evidence to prove otherwise. Until they did, their story was going to stand on its own.

It started raining on the way out of Tonopah. By the time they got to Warm Springs, the rain was coming down pretty hard.

“We just got to pray there’s enough rain to cover up our tracks.”

“What if there’s not? What if they found something already?”

“Well, then we’re screwed. Look, I gotta get some sleep man, I’m beat. I got to be out at the mind by seven. I’ll see you later.” said Wade and headed back to his trailer.

He passed by Frosty, who drove everywhere in his golf cart. He was always wearing that stupid cowboy hat of his. Wade knew Frosty had money and you sure as hell didn’t make money being a cowboy. He wondered where the old guy made his money.

“You guys really had your trucks stolen? That’s crazy.” he said, stopping in front of Wade.

“Yeah, sons of bitches must have taken them while we were asleep.”

“I knew you guys weren’t out there looking for that cop.” said Frosty

“Have they found him yet?”

“No, not him or his truck. Just seems to have vanished.”

“That sucks. Look, I’m gonna head inside, I’m getting soaked out here. Let me know if you hear anything.” said Wade.

“Will do partner.”

Frosty called everybody “Partner”, whether they liked it or not. Sometimes he tried a little too hard to be a cowboy. Wade had grown up near Bakersfield and had been around plenty of real cowboys. Most cowboys at his age were beat up and looked like shit from years of chewing or smoking. Frosty didn’t have those kinds of damage. He looked like just somebody who always wanted to be a cowboy. Probably never handled a cow in his life. People pretending to be someone they’re not always made him nervous. It was like the old man could see right through him sometimes.

He was inside his trailer a few minutes later and turned on the TV. Reception was bad from the storm. He passed out about ten minutes later and was asleep until six am the next morning. He never woke up once.

When he finally did open his eyes, he nearly fell out of bed. It had been years since he had slept like that. He wasn't sure if it was this weird headache he had or just being hungover from the night before, but he woke up feeling better than he had in years. Too bad he had to waste today at work. It took him almost fifteen minutes to get ready. He packed his lunch and a can of chew and headed out to work. It dawned on him that he had no way to get to the mine. He flagged down Jesus and JD who were piled in Jesus's car. They were all headed to the same place. Lucky for him they were all working the same shift this week. Not having any transportation was going to be a bummer, especially out here. It was fifty miles just to the next grocery store.

Wade had been there long enough that he was now briefing his crew on what they had to do. The mine supervisor was a real dickhead. He and Wade had nearly come to blows a few times, the last time Jesus had gotten in between them and broken them up. He had tried to get Wade fired, but Wade was already talking to the corporate HR in Las Vegas and letting them know what had happened. They sent out a few corporate suits and ties to the mine the next day and spoke to several employees on the job site.

They called he and the mine supervisor in to an office and explained to both of them that if there were any more "incidents" like that one, they were both gone. That would have been fine with Wade, but he decided to stay on, just to be a hemorrhoid on this guy's ass. Wade had received an excellent job performance review from his boss just days before. They both decided at that point that it was probably best just to avoid one another from here on in.

The next few days were pretty uneventful. Most of their time was spent at the mine. They both worked ten hour shifts. After eating and drinking a few beers, they were pretty much done for the day. It took almost two days for the rain to let up. It rained so hard, it turned most of the desert floor into a mud pit. The search had pretty much come to a halt. When the skies finally did clear and they had enough volunteers, Wade was pretty much certain that the tracks must have been washed away. In the days that followed, they covered every inch of ground for a hundred miles around here, including the Nevada Security Site, which is normally heavily restricted to authorized personnel only. They didn't find a thing.

A new theory was being floated that Officer Romanowski may have simply disappeared on purpose in order to avoid paying his court ordered child support for his ex wife and two kids. He had received the summon to appear only two days before. It was beginning to get some serious attention. He had not been seen or heard from since his last report that evening when he said he was going to search for a possible downed plane. A few persons in the trailer park had reported seeing a streaking ball of fire on the highway. A couple coming back from Ely had reported seeing a meteor or something streaking across the sky. He gave a very detailed report, but no one really seemed to care. A week after his disappearance some big wig from the Nevada Highway Patrol came on TV and said that they now believe that Officer Romanowski had simply fled the area in order to avoid paying child support. He had hidden his vehicle somewhere in the desert and switched vehicles, using the storm as cover. He went on to say they were confident they would eventually find his vehicle. A reporter asked what led them to this seemingly far fetched conclusion and the guy only said something about "recently discovered evidence that was incriminating." Their trucks were still missing. No one seemed to draw any connections between the missing trucks and his disappearance. The search was called off the next day, with the exception of just a few people. Wade and JD had dodged a bullet, a huge bullet. None of them had any idea what had really gone down that night, at least not yet. They both figured he really had run off, just like the news reports said he had. Wade still could not remember killing him. The crash site had been almost completely washed out. All the tracks leading in and out of the area were

gone. The perfectly round holes in the ground were now half filled with mud. No one would have looked twice at them. Part of the UFO debris had been buried by mud. By the time there was a helicopter overhead, it passed right over and no one even looked twice. Wade and JD had almost gotten away with it, except for the strange headaches they had, that just seemed to be getting worse each day. It got so bad that JD told Wade he was going to have to go to Las Vegas to get his head checked out.

“It’s the strangest thing Wade. It’s not like a regular headache. it’s different, like I’ve been concentrating for too long on something. You know that feeling, when your brain needs a study break.”

“I hear you bud. I haven’t felt like myself either. These thoughts keep popping into my head. It’s almost like my brain is getting bigger. Getting too big for my head.” said Wade

“I know what you mean. It all started that day we woke up in the desert. Man, I sure wish I knew what the hell happened to us out there Wade. It’s really starting to freak me out.”

“Look, it was probably just us having too much to drink. Somebody stole our trucks and they’re long gone. Could have been some gorgeous ladies who slipped something in our drinks.”

“I know Wade, but I feel so weird. I’ve never felt like this in my life. Last night I was watching Wheel of Fortune and I actually got the word. The word was “Seismologist.” It just popped into my head. I don’t even know what that word means.” said JD

“So, you got a lucky guess, I get those once in a while too.”

“But there weren’t any letters on the screen. That’s why I think it was odd.”

“You got lucky. Hell, last night I was watching that show JEOPARDY, the one with that really obnoxious, snobby prick. Well, I just happen to change the channel and they’re on the FINAL JEOPARDY question. None of the contestants had a clue. For some weird reason, I just knew the answer. It was John Adams, our second President. How I knew it, I have no idea, I just did. Maybe I learned it years ago and shelved it somewhere in my brain until I thought I would need it again and there it was. Maybe, I’ll watch it again tonight, just to see what else I know. I tried it last month and only got two answers on the whole damn show. I got pissed and shut it off. They ask questions only an asshole would know, like what’s the Capital of France or something. Why don’t they ask questions about cars or hunting, shit every guy knows?”

“I guess it wouldn’t be much of a challenge then if the questions were too easy. I just hope I don’t have brain cancer or something Wade. I don’t think I could handle that.”

“I doubt you have brain cancer, you idiot.”

“How do you know that?” asked JD

“Cause brain cancer doesn’t make you smarter, now does it?” he replied.

JD knew something was wrong with him. He had been unable to think clearly since that night everything went haywire. He knew he and Wade were somehow involved, he just didn’t know quite how. He felt strongly that Wade had indeed killed that Game Warden, but if he did, what did he do with his body? He would lay down at night and could see something that resembled a child, only it was

wearing some kind of weird suit and it most definitely was not a child. It told him to do something, he just couldn't figure out what. Why was he unable to get this thought out of his head? He could feel his mind changing as well. It was like his brain was in the process of being rewired. Yesterday, for the first time in years, JD picked up a book. It was an old mystery novel that Frosty was selling in the office for a quarter. He thumbed through it and decided to give it a quick read. Reading was not really his thing.

He could barely read at a fifth grade level, something he felt almost ashamed about. JD never even finished high school. He dropped out, got his GED and joined the Army. He quickly discovered he wasn't much of a soldier, but it was better than being back in Arkansas. He played the game and even got a few medals. The Army had taught him how to drive trucks and how to operate them properly. By the time he got out three years later, he had driven just about every kind of truck the Army had. He got his discharge and went to work for a trucking company doing long haul work. Within 2 years, he had grossed nearly 80,000 dollars, more money than he had ever seen in his life. He had been driving across Nevada on lonely US 6 one day and saw the sign for the mine, which desperately needed truck drivers to move material. He applied and was working there within a week.

Life had not always been easy for JD. He never really knew his father. His mother was the town whore. She had JD when she was just 18. She had five kids, her last being when she was 39. She and JD rarely spoke. He sent her a card on her birthday and Christmas, that was about it. He really had no other family to speak of. When people inquired about his family, he would usually just tell them that his parents were dead and in some ways, they were to him. He did try to keep in touch with the rest of his family. He called his sister once a month and the two did their best to keep in touch. He sent Christmas presents to his younger brothers and sisters on Christmas, which infuriated his mother. She made bank collecting state benefits from having five children and not working. The state paid for her food and her medical expenses. His mother was nothing but classy white trash and JD's one mission in life was to rise up above his surroundings and make a name for himself. The last thing he wanted in his life was to turn into either of his parents.

Wade on the other hand was born to a fairly wealthy family in California. His father had made a small fortune in the oil boom of the 1970s. He purchased a large farm outside of Bakersfield and the family now farmed over a thousand acres. They had over two hundred employees, nearly all Hispanic. Wade could speak fluent Spanish. He too had left home to join the Army, but had been kicked out for punching his Platoon Sergeant. His parents wanted him to manage the farm, Wade wanted nothing to do with farming or the great state of California.

"Pretty soon, this state won't be nothing but millionaires and wetbacks. Middle class folks won't stand a chance here," he said over twenty years ago. Time would prove him right. He still got along well with his parents, but after his divorce, he pretty much soured on women and people in general. He targeted most of his rage and hostility on the US government. politicians were somewhere between child molesters and lawyers on the Wade Dawson Shitbag Scale.

"Why is it ok for the government to do it, but if I do, I'm a criminal?" he asked one day during lunch break.

"It's against the law to lie to the FBI when you are questioned. That's why Martha Stewart went to prison, because she allegedly lied to the FBI when they questioned her about the sale of some stock she owned. We can't lie to the FBI, but they can lie to us all the time, every day, all day and it's perfectly okay? Just bullshit, if you ask me. The law should be the same for everybody, rich, poor, black white, queer, straight. It never is and never was. Probably never will be. Hell in this state, you can post bail on

any charge except first degree murder. If you got the money, you can just post bail and then go out and do the same thing over again. Explain to me how that's right?"

"It's not right Wade, but it's legal. That's the difference." said one of the men overhearing the conversation in the lunchroom.

"Well, fuck legal. If it ain't right, it shouldn't be legal either." he responded.

"Maybe you should run for office Wade, I'd vote for you." said one of the men jokingly.

"The hell you would." said Wade.

"No, really, I agree with you, things have to change. They either change, or they're going to be replaced and I think that's what politicians fear the most, is not being able to control anything." said someone else in the lunchroom.

"Yeah, I wonder who the hell came up with all this crap. Who made all these rules we have to live by? None ever asked me my opinion." Wade said

"That's because nobody cares about your opinion Wade." said someone else.

Wade just threw his hands up in the air and stormed out of the room. To most, it was just Wade, blowing off steam. JD saw something else. He saw a man so fed up with the modern world, he was actually praying for its destruction. Even if it meant his own death. Wade thought WWII might actually be a huge step in the right direction for this country.

"JD, you're about the only man I've met in the last five years that's been worth a shit." he said one night as the men drank beers and listened to the radio in his truck looking out at the empty desert. JD had gotten pretty good at reading people and their emotional well being. He saw Wade as a man who had pretty much given up on people. JD wasn't ready to throw in the towel just yet. There were still decent people around, like his squad leader in the Army, SGT. Shultz, or Jesus. Good people. That's all that mattered to JD. He didn't care if you were black, brown, tall or short. You're either an asshole, or you're not. It was that simple with him.

He picked up the book and started reading. He quickly discovered that his reading ability had not improved over time. He had to look up the meanings of several words on his smartphone. He found it odd that a device as powerful as a smart phone that could elevate people like himself was really responsible for holding so many back. Most people never used them for what they were intended to do, they used them as a source of entertainment. He used his free time to better himself, not piss away hours looking at a computer screen. He had a lot of catching up to do, his smartphone helped him a great deal in situations like these.

He finished the first two chapters. Even though the book was written almost fifty years ago, he found he could really relate to it. Back then, people had to rely on their own smarts and abilities to solve crimes, not the internet and social media. He started reading the third chapter when Wade knocked on his trailer door.

"Hey bud, you got time for a beer?" Wade asked.

“Always.” he responded and threw him a cold one from the fridge.

“What you been up to?”

“Just called the insurance company. I have to wait three months before they will pay on the truck. Cheap bastards will only pay off the balance of the truck. They acted like they were doing me a favor. I’m back to square one.”

“Yeah, I’m still waiting to hear from my company. I figured they would delay it as long as they could.”

“I have to get a ride to Reno. I can rent a car there and the insurance will pay for it until everything gets settled, so I guess that’s good.”

“You got to go all the way to Reno?”

“Yeah, Sarah is away in Salt Lake City for her job, so I got no way to get there.”

“I’m sure you can get a ride with somebody.” said JD

“Oh, no. I’ll never ride with anybody that long again. Last year when I had to go to Elko for that meeting, I had to go with Sam Honeywell, remember him?”

“Barely.”

“After five minutes, he starts in with his whole Jesus pitch. I mean the whole ride there, I am stuck listening to this guy try and sell me on religion. Says he is trying to save my soul.”

“That sucks.”

“So, after the meeting, I told him I am not going to ride back with him. I was so pissed at this guy, I said I would ride back with someone else. I had to get Sarah to drive up to Elko and give me a ride back. I missed a whole day of work. I got suspended over it.”

“Now, I remember. You told everyone it was because you got sick.”

“I was. I was sick of him. I just couldn’t believe the nerve of this guy, trying to force his opinions on me like that. I certainly didn’t try to force my opinions on him. You know I realized something: this guy has never done anything in his whole life. He’s never been exposed to anything outside his little bubble. He grew up about an hour from here and never ventured out into the world. Never had his opinions challenged. Never did anything the good book told him was wrong. He was incapable of thinking for himself. People like that just make my blood boil. it’s like they’re just wasting their whole lives.”

“Didn’t he try and lead the shift with a group prayer?” asked JD

“Yeah, that’s the same guy. He got mad at me when I wouldn’t go back with him. I told him I wasn’t going to get in the car with him unless I could put duct tape over his mouth for the trip.”

“I bet that went over well.”

“He told me I was making a huge mistake. I realized there is just no reasoning with some people. Some of us just can’t be reached. Watcha watching here?”

“JEOPARDY. It’s the only thing that seems to come in clearly anymore.” said JD

They both looked at the TV and watched the FINAL JEOPARDY question come across the screen.

“THESE TWO COUNTRIES IN EUROPE HAVE ONLY ONE LETTER DIFFERENCE IN THEIR NAMES. YOU HAVE TEN SECONDS TO RESPOND.”

“Ireland and Iceland” they both said in unison.

They turned and looked at each other. Neither of them could believe they got the correct answer. They couldn’t believe each other got the correct answer also.

“See JD, I knew there was a brain up there, some place. Maybe whatever happened to us the other night flipped some kind of a switch in you.” said Wade.

“Lucky guess.” said JD

“Well, I was wondering if you wanted to go to Reno with me on Friday. I asked the boss to take the day off and switch with one of the guys. I was kind of hoping you would go. We have to go there and back in one day. Gonna be a long trip. I need my wingman to keep me awake.”

“Whose car are we going to take?”

“We’ll take Sarah’s. It’s at her house. We have to go to Ely , then hop on the 50 to Reno. Going to be a long day.”

“Sure, why not. I got to run a few errands in Reno.”

“Yeah, no problem. I sure do appreciate it amigo.” said Wade.

“If you can’t count on your friends, then they really aren’t your friends at all, now are they?” said JD

“No, I guess they’re not.” said Wade as he finished his beer.

General Michael Lindmueller was the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the US Military. He took the job on a whim. It meant permanent duty in the nation’s capitol with a huge staff to cater to his every whim. He was selected by the other Joint Chiefs to report directly to the President. His cell phone went off as he was about to leave his residence for the golf course. He wanted to get as much golf as he could before the winter set in. He did not recognize the number on the caller id.

“Lindmueller here.”

“Sir, this is Col. David Parker from NORAD calling. I’m assigned to the Special Services Division.”

“What can I do for you colonel?”

“Sir, I believe we have a possible FALLEN ANGEL situation in Nevada.”

Lindmueller stopped and took a deep breath. It was as if he had gotten the wind knocked out of him.
“Say that again soldier?”

“We have a possible FALLEN ANGEL situation in a remote part of Nevada. TAURUS has put the probability at around 92 percent.”

Lindmueller had to sit down. FALLEN ANGEL? He hadn’t heard that term in nearly ten years. It was not what he was expecting.

“What the hell is TAURUS?”

“Our resident AI supercomputer. The next generation of IBM’s WATSON. State of the art. Not available to the public.”

“Are you on a secured line?”

“Yes sir, DSN Level 4.”

“Have you recovered any bodies or parts of the craft?”

“Yes sir. Partial wreckage. No bodies.” said Parker nervously.

“You are certain the wreckage is ET?”

“Yes sir. It was analyzed five times. Unknown material. No one has anything like it. It’s like aluminum foil but total resistant to everything we threw at it.”

“Jesus.....is the crash site secure?”

“Yes sir. We told the locals it was a training mission for the USGS. Area is very remote, except for a small mining community about twelve miles away.”

“What is the probability that this ET made contact with the locals?”

“TAURUS puts it at around 78 percent.”

Lindmueller was shaking now. Even a seasoned man who had seen combat in several wars would be shaken to his core by something like this.

“Recommendations?”

“Sir, TAURUS strongly recommends that we follow the NEBRASKA PROTOCOL for dealing with hostile ET contact.”

“What the hell is that?”

“In 1996, the RAND Corporation did a six month study on a hypothetical scenario where an extra

terrestrial makes contact with a rural farming community in Nebraska.”

“We actually did a study on this?”

“Yes, the ET was able to completely control the townspeople and used them to create a very powerful weapon we could not stop. The President had no choice but to order a surgical strike on the town.”

“By surgical strike, you mean we nuked the town?”

“Correct.” said Parker

Lindmueller could feel a migraine coming on. He had medication for it, but it left him useless after taking it. The last thing he wanted was to be the man who ordered the nuking of an American town. He thought this type of thing was over and done with. The military wasn’t interested in UFOs anymore, at least not publicly.

“Sir, protocol dictates that I am to inform the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs directly in the event of such an occurrence.”

“Jesus, colonel, what the hell am I supposed to tell the President?”

“Sir, at this point, I would strongly advise against telling him anything, not until we know for certain. He can be rather unpredictable to say the least.”

The colonel did have a point here.

“How are we going to go about handling this?”

“We will have a team in place to look for anything unusual. Spikes in radiation, unusual sicknesses, spikes in electricity usage. If something is detected, we’ll follow the plan’s outline for containment. Since they are so close to the Nevada test site, this shouldn’t be a problem. We’ll simply say we are responding to a chemical spill.”

“Colonel, once we commit to this, there’s no turning back. I have to protect the President from the fallout. It’s getting harder and harder to just outright lie to the public. No one believes a damn thing we tell them anymore.”

“Yes sir. Understood sir. We just plan for the worst, but hope for the best. That’s all we can do.” Parker said.

“What has been this TAURUS thing’s success rate so far?” asked the General

“It has been very accurate sir. Within the margin of error.”

“I want to be kept up to date at all times. Where can you be reached?” asked the general.

He wrote down Parker’s cell phone number. He was almost praying that the damn computer was wrong, or this would just blow over without incident, but he doubted he’d be that lucky.

Lindmueller hung up the phone and slumped back into his chair. He had a permanent staff at his house.

They had all received top secret clearances, but he still didn't trust all of them. Some of them were young enough to be his grandchildren. Smart kids, but very inexperienced. He didn't want to throw this in their laps before they were ready.

"Everyone, put down what you're doing. I need everyone and I do mean everyone in the briefing room in ten minutes. We have a situation on our hands." he said and put his golf clubs down.

Whether they were ready or not, they were about to become a part of one of the most important military operations in this county's history.

Wade and JD left right to Ely after their shift at the mine was over. Wade bought him dinner and the two of them spent the rest of the night at a local casino. Neither of them slept much that night. They both stayed in Wade's girlfriend's house in Ely. They got up the next morning and were on the road by six. It was almost a four hour drive from Ely to Reno. They took turns driving. Each of them had the same thing on their minds but neither of them said anything.

There was something inside of them. Something that was beginning to change them.

JD knew it. Wade knew it also, but he dismissed it as the result of just being exhausted from long hours at the mine. JD was getting worried now. He was sleeping only a few hours a night. He would wake up and feel fine. He wasn't tired, in fact, in many ways, he felt better than he had in years. Last night, he was only asleep for two hours. He would have the most intense, unusual dreams he has ever experienced. It was as if some higher power was talking directly to him. Instructing him. Reshaping his consciousness. He was powerless to stop it. He woke up this morning with some design for an integrated circuit board in his head. He drew a picture on the back of a magazine. He had no idea what he had just drawn, but he knew it was important. He would drop Wade off at the car rental office and head to a local book store to pick up as many books as he could on electronics. He knew it was very important that he learn as much as could, as quickly as he could about the field of electronics, particularly resonance electronics, a fringe theory in the field of electronics.

Wade on the other hand, spent most of the trip just stewing about the entire situation. He had lost his truck somehow. As ridiculous as it sounds, that's exactly what happened. He knew it wasn't stolen, somehow, he just knew it was his fault it was gone. He had no idea what had happened to JD's old beater. JD's truck was on its last legs, but his was almost brand new. It had been almost a week since their trucks were gone and no one had seen or heard anything. Every cop in the country was supposed to be out looking for them. You would think some one, somewhere would have seen them. There weren't many roads in this part of the country. They shouldn't have been that hard to find. These local hicks couldn't keep a secret if their lives depended on it. If someone did steal them and they were nearby, the word would quickly have gotten out. Wade thought very little of the locals out here. If John Wayne were covered in cheap tattoos and on food stamps, that would be your local Nevadan. Wade was average in every single sense of the word back home in Bakersfield. Average job, average grades, average everything. Out here, he felt like Einstein around these people. He had never been around a group of people who were simply incapable of thinking on any level. Asking someone to think out here was almost rude. He figured he'd just put a little more time in at the mine and that supervisor job would be his. He had heard rumors that the current mine supervisor was leaving next month to go to Montana. Wade knew how to bullshit with the best of them.

Bullshit was becoming as abundant as oxygen.

Wade realized that these people were never going to amount to much. Most were alcoholics or drug addicts. They wouldn't last ten minutes in the real world and hid out here where the reach of society was almost non-existent. His neighbor, some idiot from Tonopah was drinking and using meth. The mine had given him a breathalyzer the other day, when he showed up for work, smelling like booze.. Somehow he had passed, but he wouldn't be so lucky the next time. Wade had little regard for people like that.

Christ, even a dog has enough sense not to hurt himself.

He wasn't alone. There was a lot of drug dealing and drug using in the park. Nye County had been called out to the park several times for family drama. It had gotten so bad, they were thinking of putting a deputy out at the park permanently. He would live in a trailer just like the rest of us. Wade had soured on the police as well recently. He had always been brought up to respect law enforcement and had even thought about becoming a cop himself at one point. He just couldn't stand watching some of these videos that showed police shooting unarmed suspects, or beating someone senseless. If your kid was lying in a pool of their own blood, you would probably feel the same way.

Well shit Wade, without police, there is no police state. You don't think these assholes in charge trust the military do you?

"No, you got a point there." Wade said out loud

"What's that?" said JD

Wade didn't mean to say that out loud. It was like he was having a conversation with someone in his head. Someone who knew him. Someone who felt exactly the same way he did about things.

"No, just thinking out loud." said Wade

"Nothing wrong with that. What's on your mind?"

"Nothing in particular. It's just sometimes, well, I guess it took me almost forty years of living to find out how to live. You know, how to play the game of life. Of course, by the time most people figure it out, it's too late to change anything. You're stuck. You try and tell the younger kids not to make the same mistakes you did, but they don't listen. They're too smart to make those mistakes. They step on the same landmine you do. Then the cycle just repeats itself."

"Sometimes I think you're natural pessimist Wade." said JD

"Yeah. Last thing I want to do is turn into some crusty old bastard whose dick doesn't work. Sarah wants us to get married. I just can't do it again JD, not after the way the last one turned out."

"I can't blame you. She has to understand your feelings on the subject."

"Understanding them and respecting them are different things. Hell, she was married once before also. Married her high school sweetheart. What a mess that turned out to be."

"Real bad huh?"

"You know JD, you can love a woman to death. She can love you back. You both love each other, but

that doesn't mean you're supposed to be married to each other."

"Good luck trying to explain that to the girl."

"Yeah, women are raised to believe in marriage and fairy tales from the time they get out of the crib. Truth is, most women just aren't cut out to be wives or full time mothers. They're not bad people, they just don't realize what they're signing up for. I got married and thought I was getting a wife. All I got was a permanent live-in girlfriend." said Wade.

"Well, just cause it didn't work out with her, doesn't mean it won't work out with Sarah. She seems like a nice lady."

"She is. A hell of a lot nicer than most. I just think we're too jaded to be married again. You can't go into a marriage with your fingers crossed behind your back. That's what it feels like we'd be doing with each other. Still, she wants to do it. I guess she just wants to be married to somebody. I'm next in line for the job."

"Being married ain't the worst thing in the world, Wade."

"Bud, I'm just too old to start over. I think I'm going to be one of those confirmed bachelors that lives in a cabin out in the middle of nowhere."

"Doesn't sound like much fun."

"Better than having to go through a divorce." said Wade.

They finally got Reno around noon time. JD dropped Wade off at the car rental office near the airport. He went to a local bookstore and found what he was looking for. He even found a electronics, hobby kit that allowed you to build your own devices and practice your soldering skills. He was almost excited to get back to the car and thumb through the book. He had finished the first chapter when Wade called, he was ready to be picked up. JD drove back to the rental office and picked him up. They stopped at a local diner for a bite to eat. Wade got a Mustang from the car rental office. Practically brand new. The car could really move. He would drive the Mustang back to Warm Springs and JD would drive Sarah's car. They were on their way back to Warm Springs by 2:30 in the afternoon.

Wade flew past JD on the 50. JD just waved and turned on the radio. About ten miles up the road, JD saw Wade on the side of the road with his flashers on. JD slowed down and pulled onto the shoulder.

"I got a flat tire bud. I got her changed out, but it's too far to drive on the donut. I'm going to have to go back to Fallon and get a new tire or get this one patched. You can head back to the park, no sense in both of us waiting out here."

"I can't just leave my wingman hanging out here." said JD

Wade smiled and got in the car. He called the rental office who said to take the tire to the nearest tire shop and have it repaired. He was to keep all the receipts and he would be fully reimbursed for the cost of the new tire when he turned in the Mustang.

"These fuckers got you coming or going. Good thing it was the back tire. I should have gone over the

car more carefully before I signed the paperwork. I was just so stoked about being able to get a Mustang.” he said

They drove back to a tire shop in Fallon. The shop was swamped and told them it was going to be a while. The sidewall was blown out, which meant no patch or plug, he would have to buy a new tire and have it mounted on the rim. Wade sighed, but knew he had no choice. He didn’t want to have another blow out on the way back to the park.

It was almost seven o’clock by the time they left the tire shop. It was another four hours back to Warm Springs. They both had to be at the mine for roll call at seven tomorrow morning. It was going to be a long night for both of them.

They got back on the road and headed back home. JD pulled into the trailer park, just shy of 11PM. Wade was right behind him.

“Thanks a bunch bud. I knew I could count on my wingman.” he said and gave him a pat on the back. As long as the day had been. Neither man really felt tired. In fact they were perfectly awake. JD went back to his trailer and started reading his book on electronics and electronic theory. He learned what a capacitor was and how to read it’s color code. He learned what a cpu does and all about Gate Theory. It took him exactly one hour to make his first project. He built a working FM radio, and even got a weak signal from Tonopah. He looked at his watch. It was nearly 3AM. Strange, he thought? Shouldn’t he be in bed? Shouldn’t he at least be tired? He was wide awake, as if he had just woken up. Didn’t make any sense. It was as if his body no longer required sleep. It was just an afterthought now, not something he needed.

What the hell is happening to me?

He went to brush his teeth and noticed something else, something even more disturbing. His hair was beginning to fall out. He stopped and pulled out a small clump of hair. He looked at it in his hand. This was not good. Something was very wrong with him.

“No JD, everyone else is wrong. You and Wade are the only ones who are right.” said the strange voice. JD didn’t know where it came from, but it scared him. He looked across the street and could see Wade’s light still on. He ran over and knocked on his door. Wade answered. He could see that Wade was also wide awake. This wasn’t right.

“Wade, shouldn’t we both be exhausted and sleeping right now?” asked JD nervously. Wade seemed almost puzzled by the question.

“Yeah bud, you got a point there. I’m not even sleepy.” he said drinking a beer.

“We have been up for almost 24 hours. Wade, this isn’t normal. I really think something is wrong with us.”

“JD, how can two people have the same thing wrong with them?”

“It was that night. I know something happened to us, something very strange. Something that....well something big out there that night. Look, I just read an entire book on electronics in four hours. I remember every word as it was written. I can even tell you what page it was on. I can draw you a CPU

and explain its architecture. I can build a circuit board. Wade, what the hell is happening to me?" said JD hysterically.

"I don't know bud. Something is not right with me either. I just watched your JEOPARDY show. It was a rerun or something. JD, I got every answer right. Every single one. I don't even know what some of the words mean, but I knew it was the answer. I don't know what's happening to us bud, but I think we should embrace it, not fight it."

"My hair is falling out Wade. My hair! I'm only 27. My hair shouldn't be falling out. It's not baldness, my hair is literally falling out of my head!" said JD

Jesus came walking over from his trailer with a coffee cup in his hand.

"What's up gringos?" he said sipping his coffee.

The three of them watched several vans pull up into the trailer park and park in front of the office. Frosty came out of his trailer and greeted the men. He was wearing a bathrobe.

"Now that's odd. I've never even seen that old bastard out of bed before eight in the morning. Must be really important." said Wade.

"Yeah, we drove by them today. They say they're from the Geological Survey. They are testing for Tritium in the water. Guess they do it every few years." said Jesus

"Tritium huh?" said Wade as he watched the men unload their equipment.

"Yeah, that's what they told us. They got some kind of a sampling station set up off the highway about ten miles up the road. They even have NHP out there to keep everyone away. Seems like a lot for just water sampling." said Jesus

JD and Wade looked at one another. They didn't have to say anything. They knew exactly what the other one was thinking.

"Have you guys been to sleep yet?" Jesus asked

"We're not really tired. So where exactly are they set up?"

"Bout ten miles down the road. Past the road for the mine, near the old restaurant."

"Well, good to know. No telling what the government is up to out here. Well, I gotta crash boys, I'll see you in a few hours." said Wade as he stepped back into his trailer. JD knew what Wade had on his mind. He was just waiting for Jesus to leave. He and JD chatted for a few minutes about work, then he left to back to his trailer. JD waited until he was out of sight, then went up to Wade's door to knock. Wade was already at the door. JD went inside his trailer. Wade made a fresh pot of coffee. He took one sip and then put it down.

"Bad coffee?" asked JD

"I don't know man. Lately, I just can't stomach the stuff anymore. Same with my smokes. It's like my

body is rejecting everything.”

“Wade, there is no way NHP would be out there if they were just taking water samples. They’re at the weird area where we woke up.” said JD

“I know. The fucking feds must have found out about it. Well, let them look, they won’t find anything, least not anything that can be traced back to us.”

“Don’t be so sure, they got a lot of high tech toys we don’t even know about. They’re probably figuring where there’s smoke there’s fire.”

“What do you want to do?”

“We have to find out what they know, somehow.”

“Bud, we go snooping around out there, we’re bound to look suspicious.”

“They’re going to find our camp. When they do, they’ll probably figure we were the closest ones to whatever happened out there.” said JD

“Again, what the hell have they got on us? Nothing. Not a damn thing. They can search all they want to, they won’t find anything.” said Wade

“They must know about our missing trucks. Couple that in with us being out at the camp that night and they’re bound to zero in on us.”

“Yeah, you got a point there, but still. Even if they did suspect we had something to do with why they’re out there, if they search our camp and the trailers, they won’t find anything.”

“What if they search us? Like do a medical exam on us or something?”

“What if they do? They still won’t find anything?”

“You sure about that? Wade, I haven’t slept in almost two days. I’m not even tired. I’m using words I don’t even know what they mean. No, something is not right with us.”

“JD, my grand dad would only sleep a few hours a night. He’d go to bed at midnight, get up a few hours later and put in a full day's work. Did this his whole life. Some nights, I don’t even think he slept at all.”

“I just don’t think we should sit around here and wait for them to find us. I think we should get out of here while we still can.”

“And go where?”

“Some place where they can’t find us, like Bolivia or something.”

“Just up and run away? How’s that going to look? No bud, Wade Dawson doesn’t run from any body, especially the feds. I watched those assholes nearly destroy my family’s farm in California with their

stupid environmental policies. Farm has been there for a hundred years and they want us to stop growing because of some toad they found in a creek? Insanity. We finally beat them in court, but it took years, we almost lost everything. All because of some asshole at the EPA who got to make up laws as he went along. I been just itching for a way to get even with them. Maybe now is the time.” said Wade.

“You’re going to take on the whole government by yourself?”

“Oh, no. Not by myself. With a little help from my friends.”

“What friends?”

“Last night I finally remembered who Bobby was. I remembered everything. I remember shooting that dumb fuck Romanowski. I remember the ship crashing in the desert. I remember putting my hand on that little black box and feeling the power of the stars enter my body. You’re right bud. We are changing, but we’re changing for the better. We’re becoming the next version of humanity and this is only the beginning. We’re still in the early stages of whatever is happening to us. By the time it’s done, we’ll be Gods on Earth and all these dumb little fuckers will be serving us. I’ll get my chance to even thing up with the feds and it’s been a long time coming.”

“Wade, I still can’t remember. I still don’t know who Bobby is.”

“You don’t know why he chose the name Bobby?”

“No, why?”

“The name of his planet, it’s BOBAL. The fourth planet from his sun. Twenty two light years from our own.”

“Jesus, Wade, this is some heavy shit. I don’t know if I’m ready for this. I just want to be John Davis, the truck driver for Concordia Mines.”

“You still are. Only now you’re John Davis, the man who touched the stars.” said Wade laughing. JD didn’t really know what to say. He was more upset with himself for not being able to remember what happened that night. As hard as he tried, he just couldn’t recall anything specific. He was sure of one thing though: he and Wade had indeed met someone named Bobby and he had changed their lives forever.

He and Wade stayed in his trailer until it was time to go to work. He couldn’t understand how he was still awake. He felt fine, almost as if he had just woken up from a deep sleep. It didn’t make any sense. Not much did anymore.

They both arrived at work at the same time for the same shift. Wade worked the loader, while JD and Jesus had to move some piping for an expansion project that was to begin next week. The contractors were all from out of state. He passed by one of them. They briefly looked at one another in the lunchroom. JD was almost positive he had seen the man a few days ago on the side of the highway working with the USGS Team, or whoever they were. Now he was here, working as a contractor. He left Jesus and walked over to where Wade and his crew were working. He waited until Wade had stopped moving the loader and then approached. He opened the small window in the cab and motioned for JD to come closer.

“What’s up?”

“Wade, I know this is going to sound crazy, but those contractors, the ones that are supposed to install the piping for the drip lines. I think they’re the same ones that were taking the water samples just a few days ago.” said JD

Wade stopped the loader and got out. He walked over to the lunch room with JD.

“We got to play this one cool amigo.” said Wade

He went into the lunch room and saw two of the men on their phones. He immediately saw they were satellite phones, not regular cell phones. He knew then that JD was right. Wade had looked into buying one when he first moved out here. They worked, but were extremely expensive. Used only in emergencies, not something you would use every day unless you were made out of money.
Of course, if they were feds, then all bets were off.

“Hi guys. Look, I don’t know if they told you at the gate, but you guys have to wear hard hats or head protection at all times when you’re on site. Do you guys have a copy of the work order our mine signed?” asked Wade.

“Are you the mine supervisor?” one of them asked.

“Yeah, today I am. The regular supervisor is off. I’m the senior person on site, so I guess it’s my job today.” he said

“Well, we don’t have any paperwork. Our boss just told us to report out here and the supervisor would tell us what to do.”

“Well, that’s not how this works. We have so many safety regulations we have to follow for MSHA, we’d lose our shirts if they weren’t followed. Our company policy is not to allow anyone on site without a signed work order from our corporate office in Elko. Can you have your company fax it over here?”

The two men looked at one another uncomfortably.

“I’m sure we can figure something out, just give us some time.”

“No problem. JD here will stay with you guys. I have to get back to the pit.” said Wade.
He turned and looked at JD. He didn’t have to say anything. JD knew exactly what he wanted. They both got back on their phones and made a call.

“Yes sir. They say we cannot enter the mine unless we have a signed work order. Yes, that’s correct. Well, can somebody in the office get one please? We have a lot of work to do here.” said one of the men

“Yes sir, we are at the mine. Just a little hold up, no big deal. We’ll begin the project very shortly.” said the other man.

JD had spent enough time in the military to be able to spot a soldier a mile away, even when they weren't in uniform. These guys were soldiers, straight up. They tried to hid it with beards and tattoos, but it was only a costume, underneath, they were still soldiers.

"You boys spent a little time in the military?" asked JD

"Yeah, a bit. Long time ago." said one of the men.

"Me too. You can always tell. What branch were you in?" asked JD

"Marines. My unit stormed Saddam's main palace in 2003."

"No shit? I spent almost a year in Afghanistan. Terrible place." said JD

"Yeah, so I hear." said the other man at the table.

The three of them sat uncomfortably at the lunch table. The phone rang and one of the men answered it. "Yes, thank you for calling. No problem, just a little misunderstanding. Safety first, yes sir. Yes, I'll put him on."

"Here you go JD, it's the CEO of the company." said the man as he smiled and gave the satellite phone to JD.

"Hello, this is John Davis speaking."

"Hi John. This is Roland Decker, I trust you know who I am." said Decker.

"Yes sir. I know exactly who you are.....yes sir.....oh of course sir, no problem, we'll give them everything they need.....yes sir, good bye." said JD. He handed the phone back to the men.

"Well, the boss says you are cleared to work on the mine. If there's anything we can do for you, just let us know." said JD

"JD, now that you mention it, we heard there was some kind of a plane crash out here about a week ago. Really weird. There's a missing game warden and hear that some people got their trucks stolen on the same night. Did you hear anything about this?" asked one of the men.

"Just what the news reports said."

"So you didn't see anything or hear anything?" asked one of the men

"Nope, no I sure didn't."

"Kind of hard to believe something could crash this close to the trailer park and no one saw anything?"

"Well, guys, it's a big desert. Lot of ground out here. If something crashed, wouldn't they have found some kind of wreckage? Isn't that what happens when things crash into the ground?"

"Yeah, you would think."

JD just looked at the men. The three of them knew exactly who they all were. JD decided it would probably be best not to go any further until he had Wade with him.

“Well, boys, I got to get back to work. Don’t forget your hard hats.”

“Thanks JD.” said one of the men.

JD watched the men go back out to their van and get inside. He went back to work.

“I think he made us.”

“I doubt it.”

“I think we should act like our cover is blown. I’m almost positive I saw him that day on the side of the road. He knows we’re not contractors, we don’t even know how to install piping.”

“Relax, his boss just told him to leave us alone. Unless he wants to get canned, he’ll do exactly as he’s told.”

“I don’t like being put in this position. What the hell happens when these hicks find out we don’t know the first thing about industrial piping?”

“We’ll be out of here long before then. The CEO of the company got paid a little visit by the big boys. They told him what will happen if he opens his mouth. He won’t say a word, not unless he wants to end up on the bottom of the ocean.”

“So what the hell are we supposed to do here, just look for aliens?”

“We’re looking for anything out of the ordinary. Anything that just doesn’t fit. We’re looking for signs of ET contact.”

“I think we’re just wasting our time here. If there was an alien hiding here, we would have found it by now. You really think these people could keep something like that hidden?”

“We don’t even know if there was any contact. We just have to be sure.”

“I don’t know how we’re supposed to do that.”

“By watching and observing. We have a team at the trailer park and another team with that search party still looking for the cop they think took off. I guess they just want to be sure he’s not stuck in some mine shaft somewhere.”

“Have you looked at these people? They’re all unusual.”

“Yeah, but then again, not all them may have contact with an extraterrestrial.” said the man as he lit up a cigarette.

JD was working the loader when he saw several workers all running towards the back of the fence. He stopped the loader and got out to see what was going on. As soon as he was outside the loader, he heard

the emergency alarm. That meant everyone stopped what they were doing immediately and rendered assistance. He ran over to the supply area. A crowd had formed around some tubing.

“What the hell happened?” he screamed.

He looked down and could see three of the men moving Jesus out from underneath a collapsed steel shelving that was used to hold supplies and tools. Some temp running a skid steer had accidentally bumped the shelving when Jesus and another worker were underneath working on it. The entire rack weighing several tons had collapsed. Part of the frame had pierced into his right thigh. He was bleeding profusely. Wade immediately knew Jesus had severed his femoral artery. If they didn’t get him fixed right away, he was as good as dead. Everyone stood over Jesus, knowing he was in deep trouble, but clueless as to how to proceed.

Sam Honeywell was the EMT on staff. Every shift had a certified EMT to deal with accidents and emergencies. Sam has been an EMT for almost ten years. He instantly knew how serious this injury was. There was not much he could do. He had blood packs he could administer to Jesus, but it was pointless. The blood would just leak right back out of him. Everyone was looking at Wade for guidance. He pulled Sam aside, away from the crowd. There was only one thing he could do.

“Sam, we don’t have time to wait for an ambulance. He’ll be dead before it arrives. He’s going to have to be life flighted to Reno. His chances are about zero. We have to operate on him here and fast.” said Wade.

“Wade, you’re not a trauma surgeon.....are you even an EMT?”

“No.”

“Well then what the hell are you thinking?”

“I’m thinking he’s as good as dead anyway, so how much harm can I do?” said Wade

“I can give him a transfusion. The ambulance is on their way.” said Sam

“He’s hours away from the nearest ER. He’s a dead man unless we can stop the bleeding. Now, are you going to help me or not?”

“Yeah, what do you want me to do?” said Sam.

“I need your medical bag. I’m going to need some industrial strength disinfectant, pure bleach if you have it. A soldering iron or glue gun and some small clamps, got it?”

“Jesus, Wade....you’re really going to operate on him? Are you nuts?”

“Maybe Sam, but I’m not just going to let him die right in front of me without trying to save him. The workers put Jesus on a stretcher and he was brought into the lunch room where they placed him on the table. There was so much blood, Wade was covered in it. Jesus was still in good spirits, but he was no dummy. He knew he was in big trouble.

“Chris, get me that can of starting fluid.” said Wade

Within five minutes, everyone was gathered around Wade. They were looking at him for some kind of guidance.

“EVERYBODY SHUT UP FOR A MINUTE!” shouted Wade.

“Jesus has a ruptured femoral artery. He’s losing a massive amount of blood. His chances of dying before he gets to an operating table are about a hundred percent. I’m going to do what is called a “femoral knick”, where I place a fake vein over the cut one and patch it. It should stop the bleeding. I’m no doctor and I’ve never done this before, but I don’t think we have any choice.”

“We don’t have a fake vein.” said Sam

“I’m going to use a straw. Same thing.”

“Jesus, Wade, I hope you know what you’re doing.” said Sam.

“Sam, you’re the resident EMT, shouldn’t you be the one doing the surgery?”

“I just took a 40 hour class guys, I’ve never even repaired a wound before.”

“This is insane! Is someone going to stop him, or do I have to?” said John Frost, Frosty’s son.

“John, Wade’s right. He’ll be dead before the doctors have a chance to work on him. He’s lost so much blood already, look at the color of his face.” said Sam.

Jesus was now barely conscious. He had trouble keeping his eyes open. He was shivering from losing so much blood.

“Speak now or forever hold your peace.” said Wade to all the workers in the room. No one said anything. No one knew what to say. Jesus needed a miracle.

“It’s just high school level biology along with having the right equipment.”

Wade closed his eyes and watched the bright light take over. He could feel its warm tingle over take his body. Some one else was now in control. Someone with infinitely more intelligence than he had.
Please God, please don’t let him die on me.

Wade had three men hold him down while they nearly suffocated him with a rag of ether. He waited until Jesus was passed out and then prayed that his chest was still moving up and down. Sam had his AED nearby in case Jesus went into cardiac arrest.

Wade had three small, razor sharp exacto knives to work with. He let them soak in bleach for a minute before taking his lighter to each blade and holding it there until it was bright red. He closed his eyes, when he opened them, he just light.

He made a deep incision into Jesus’s right leg. Cutting away the muscle and tissue until he got the severed artery. He knew a knick was not going to work, the artery was cut in half. He used small welding clamps to clamp off the vein while he worked. Time was critical, He couldn’t keep it clamped

for too long. He put a piece of aluminum foil behind the vein and began draining as much blood and tissue as he could with a small pump he had taken from the fish tank. When it was almost completely dry, he heated up his straw from his coffee cup and slid it over the severed artery, forming a bridge between the two pieces. He used a soldering iron to carefully heat up some pieces of saran wrap and make layers on each end to fuse to the artery, so no blood would leak out. When the plastic was sufficiently cooled and hardened, he released the small clamp and sewed his leg back together. The sutures were nearly perfect, as if Wade had done this before a thousand times. Jesus was barely conscious. Sam was monitoring his pulse. It was low, but began to climb as soon as Wade finished the stitches. Sam gave him both blood packs. The EMTs from Tonopah arrived as soon as Wade finished sewing him up. Everyone in the room was in awe of what Wade had just done. It was like something out of a movie. Even the EMTs were stunned. Jesus had regained consciousness to the point where he gave everybody a thumbs up as he was loaded into the ambulance. Sam went with them to town. Wade had given the EMTs very clear instructions as to what he did and how he did it. The EMT wrote it all down and stuck it in his pocket. He just didn't get it. How the hell did this guy pull this off?

"Are you a doctor or something?" he asked Wade

"No, I'm a heavy equipment operator."

"Well, then how the hell did you do that? That's pretty complicated surgery."

"I don't know. I just did it." said Wade

Jesus underwent surgery for six hours in Reno. The ER surgeons were all stunned by what Wade had done. They were all in unanimous agreement that Wade had saved Jesus's life by performing this hasty field surgery. They marveled at the skill of the surgery and precision of the cuts given what little he had to work with. Jesus was immediately put on a powerful cocktail of antibiotics. Surely, Wade must have some kind of prior surgical experience before he came to work at the mine. He must have. How else could he have done this?

That's precisely why Wade was asked to come to the Sheriff's Department in Tonopah and fill out a report. He was met by the only detective in Tonopah, Dave Peterson. He sat down with Wade and they went over everything that had happened. He had Wade fill out a police report and when he read it, it sounded like surgical notes from an experienced surgeon. He didn't even know what half the words met. Under Nevada's Good Samaritan Law, Wade could not be charged with anything for what he had done. Jesus had given his consent in front of a room full of witnesses. Clearly, Wade had done the right thing. Naturally, Peterson didn't believe that Wade had never done any type of surgery before. He figured Wade was hiding something.

"Wade, come on man. Don't bullshit me here, where did you learn how to do that?"

"Dave, I'm not bullshitting you. I never operated on any one before in my life. I don't even like needles. I don't know how the hell I did it."

Of course, Wade knew exactly how he had done it. He hadn't done it, something else had. Something so powerful and wise, that doing complicated surgery was about as difficult as wiping your nose. He couldn't tell Dave that. It would just make things even more messy. Some big shots from Concordia Mining arrived at the mine that night, after Wade had spoken to Detective Peterson. No one really knew what to say or do. The CEO of the company gave Wade a hug.

“You are either the smartest or the craziest son of a bitch I’ve ever met in my life.” he said to Wade.

“Well sir, I guess time will tell.”

A local newspaper did a story about Wade’s heroics. It was a print only newspaper. Cell phone reception at the mine was almost non-existent so no one had their phone with them, thus no one was able to film what he did and post it online. Most people just assumed Wade had previous surgical experience and for some reason decided to go into mining. People’s attention spans nowadays were short and getting shorter each day it seemed. With all the drama happening in the world just a click away, Wade’s incredible story fell by the wayside except for those in the mine and at the trailer park.

Wade was hoping for more publicity, not because he wanted to be famous, but because he figured it might be the best insurance policy he would have if the government were to suddenly “misplace him” somewhere, like six feet under in the middle of the desert. Wade knew the entire trailer park was being watched. Frosty let several of them rent a trailer, while they “tested” the water samples around the railroad valley. Wade thought somebody would ask how they were drilling for well samples when none of them actually had a well drill anywhere. They just piled in their van every morning and went back out to the crash site, then came back around four and just hung out around the trailer park. The three of them that were supposed to be installing the drainage pipeline were already behind schedule. Wade had seen enough at the mine to quickly realize that these guys had absolutely no idea what they were doing. They just kind of played with the tools and made a mess, but till had not installed even a foot of piping. It wouldn’t be too much longer before the rest of the crew at the mine began to get suspicious of them as well. Wade knew better than to confront the men. He figured his best card to play was to simply wait them out. Once they realized no one in the park was hiding anything, they’d pack up and leave. He knew why they were here and knew there was precious little he could do to stop them. Risking open confrontation with off the books government mercenaries was probably not going to end well for anyone.

JD was getting nervous as well. He seemed to be getting more worried each day about what was happening to them. He had begun to wear a baseball cap to hide the fact that he was losing his hair. He wasn’t just going bald, his hair was falling out of his head. He also seemed to be getting more and more inquisitive and intelligent by the day. He was creating things and building them after just reading snippets about them. He had a conversation with him last night that was so “un-JD like”, he almost wondered if it weren’t JD at all, but someone else. Whatever had happened to them that night was changing them both, in ways they could simply not understand. He knew what had happened, but even he was unaware of the full impact of what was about to come. He was changing as well. He was studying politics and history now, devouring book after book on the subject. His mind felt like it was growing by the minute, with more and more neurons producing more and more thoughts. It was JD that most surprised him. This was not the same JD he had known for years. This JD was new and improved. He was learning things that Wade didn’t even know existed. They were at his trailer last night when he saw a book in JD’s pocket.

“What’s that?”

“A book.”

“I can see that. What’s it about?” said Wade cooking their dinner.

“It’s a new theory of everything. It was written decades ago by a man named Dewey Larson. His postulate was that the entire universe can be measured in terms of motion, both vector and scalar. He

theorized that space and time are merely reciprocals of one another. Everything from atoms to supernovas can be put into simple terms of motion. The man was way ahead of his time.”

“Isn’t that a little much for you? Shouldn’t you be studying electronics or something?”

“I’m going to write a scientific paper relating the causes of zero point energy to Larson’s Reciprocal System of Theory.” said JD as he drank his beer.

“You’re going to what?”

“I’m going to prove that Larson was correct by proving his universal motion scale is directly responsible for zero point energy.”

“I see. Sounds like fun.” said Wade as he served their dinner. Both men were hungry, but not for this. They picked at their food. JD thought it was just him, but then he saw Wade doing exactly the same thing. Neither of them could eat regular food anymore. Their bodies were craving something else.

“You not hungry?” asked Wade

“I am. It’s just that lately I don’t have much of a stomach for regular food. I can only have protein shakes and rice. That’s all my body seems to want.”

“I hear you. I can barely even stand the taste of beer any more. I just feel off lately. My whole game is off.”

“Wade, what the hell did that alien do to us out there that night? Why are we acting so weird. I’m using words I don’t even know what they mean. My hair is falling out and I am beginning to hear people’s thoughts in my head. I’m really scared.” said JD with tears in his eyes.

“Look bud, he helped us. I mean come on, you’re going to write a freaking scientific paper. A month ago, you wouldn’t even have known what a scientific paper is and now you’re going to write one. You are learning new skills and ideas by the day. Pretty soon JD, you are going to be the smartest person on this entire planet. You, Mr. John Davis, from bumfuck, Arkansas are going to be the smartest person on this whole planet. Bobby, changed us. He made us better. Come on, you think I would have been able to save Jesus’s life if he hadn’t changed us?”

“I just don’t think he would have changed us unless he had a reason. If he was going to make the next version of humanity, he would certainly have chosen a better test subject than you or I.”

“Yeah, but remember, he was in a real tight spot. He knew he couldn’t be discovered. He did it, because he wanted us to somehow build a transmitting device to contact his home planet. That’s why he gave us the gift.” said Wade.

“A transmitter? How the hell are we going to do that?”

“You got me bud. We would need a massive antenna, like the one NASA has in Puerto Rico. VLAA, I think it stands for Very Large Antenna Array. Even if we somehow could use it, we still would be bound by the laws of physics.”

“How?”

“His planet is over twenty light years from our own. That means it would take a signal from Earth twenty two years to reach his planet and then they would need twenty two years to send the signal back to Earth. By the time the signal did arrive back on Earth, you and I would be dead. It would be somebody else’s problem. You see my point?”

“Well, why did he do it then?”

“I guess even aliens have to make snap judgments. He probably figured this was the only way. Even if a ship were closer, say ten light years away, it would still take them twenty years to get back to Earth.”
“What if they have found a way to travel faster than the speed of light?”

“I doubt it.”

“How can you be so sure?”

“You would think if they had the means necessary to just zip across the galaxy at will, they would have the means necessary to land their ship without crashing it.”

Wade did have a point. Bobby was not much of a pilot. Either that or he encountered something which he could not control. In any event he had made his presence known to the planet and that was a major no-no as far as Galactic Policy went. He had made a decision that could affect the entire planet. Earth’s future could be determined by one alien who lost control of his ship in a freak accident. It was the stuff they make movies about.

Wade and JD went to work the next morning at the mine. Neither men wanted to be there. They were both thinking of quitting, in order to pursue their new found talents. Work was just taking way too much time away from more important things. JD knew he had been chosen to build the device that would contact Bobby’s people. He wasn’t quite sure what Wade’s role in all this was. Maybe just be his helper. He would need a very intelligent helper to assist him. It would require stretching the boundaries of Earth’s technology past their limits. They were making new discoveries every day, even hourly on some days. JD was now able to completely disassemble and reassemble most electronic devices easily. He was solving college level physics problems in seconds. His mind was growing. The problem was, Wade’s was also. Unlike JD, Wade had little interest in the evolving of mankind. He figured it was a waste of time to give people new ideas and new technology. Their last discussion did not go well. Wade made it clear that he would be pursuing his own agenda.

“Look what the discovery of the atom did to humanity? Nuclear power, nuclear powered batteries and thermo nuclear weapons. We are so stupid, we let a bunch of criminals take over the biggest discovery in the history of humanity. Instead of harnessing its power for good, we let these assholes use it to destroy ourselves. It’s just incredible.”

“I guess technology does have its drawbacks.” said JD

“Look at the internet. It was created by a group of brilliant scientists back in the 1960s so that in the event of a nuclear war, our ICBMs could still communicate with one another. We went from that to internet porn in thirty five years. It won’t matter what we create JD, the government will take it away. They will never let us reach our full potential. They will never let us be the people Bobby wanted us to be.

They are our enemy.” he said coldly.

“I think I know where you’re going with this Wade and I don’t like it.”

“JD, we have to do something about those feds snooping around here. You can bet your ass they’re watching me after what happened with Jesus. They know about Bobby, maybe not everything, but they know where there’s smoke, there’s fire. What exactly do you think they would do to us if they found out we met him?”

“I don’t know. What do you think they would do?”

“We’d be locked in some laboratory some place and be studies like infected lab rats for the rest of our lives. Is that what you want?”

“What do you think we should do?”

“I’ve played this thing out in my head a thousand times. It’s like playing chess against yourself. Each time, I can come to only one conclusion.”

“What’s that?”

“We can’t do a damn thing. Not yet anyway. Not until we have more power. Not until we have a way of keeping them out of here. We need to make them think we will unleash hell on them if they move on us. We’re not there yet, but we’re getting close.”

JD could see Wade was very serious. He was like those atomic scientists back in the forties who were brilliant enough to harness the power of the atom, but not wise enough to see where their actions would lead them. If they could have seen what their discovery would have turned into, he doubted there would ever have been a MANHATTEN PROJECT. Most would have refused to go along with it. He wondered just how scientists like Einstein and Fermi felt after seeing the devastation and destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. They were responsible for those deaths, just like a gang banger who does a drive-by is responsible.

“Perhaps, there should be a discussion of where we both are going with this. There should be rules and consequences for breaking them.” said JD

“Okay, what do you have in mind.”

“Our power should be used for the betterment of the human race. Nothing we do should hurt anyone. That is our only rule....agreed?”

“JD, look, even though your IQ has been tripled, you’re still dumber than a pile of rocks. We still aren’t talking about the elephant in the room.”

“What would that be?”

“The government, the NSA, the CIA, who else! The people right down below us in trailer 12. They are the enemy. They are going to have to be dealt with eventually.”

“What do you want to do Wade, just kill them? The government will just send more feds and this time, they won’t be so polite.”

“Exactly my point. We’re on borrowed time. Instead of worrying about not hurting anyone, we should be more concerned with saving our own asses from these people.”

“I won’t hurt anyone Wade. I want to die with a clean conscious.” said JD

“JD, the only reason you are still breathing right now is because they haven’t been able to tie us to Bobby or the crash site. We got lucky with the storm, real lucky. You want to just turn the other cheek, is that it?”

“I wonder if this is how he felt?” said JD

“Wonder how who felt?”

“Martin Luther King and everyone else who stood up to them.”

“And where exactly did that get him? It got him killed, remember?”

“I have been reading some of his books. He was a very brilliant man. I guess in many ways I aspire to be like him and all the other heroes of this world. The ones that were faced with overwhelming violence and hostility. The ones who dodged bullets and were sent to prison. The ones that were faced with pure hate and responded with love and compassion. Those are the real heroes of this world. He and Jesus Christ are the two people I admire the most.”

“JD, do you really think he would have been so nice and understanding if he knew the government was going to kill him. I think he might have done things differently.”

“No, Wade, you’re wrong. He knew he was going to die. He wasn’t going to let that change his message of nonviolence towards his enemies. Look at all the violence and wars and death and destruction in this planet’s history. No one remembers the dead, but everyone will remember him. Nonviolence is what gets people’s attention. It’s against our will to fight in wars and kill one another. It’s not what God wants for us.”

“If it’s not what God wants, then why do we do it all the time?”

“I don’t know Wade. Maybe it’s because our government started putting little asterisks and fine print of the ten commandments. It became to kill as long as our government told us to do it. It became ok to steal, as long as it was for the government. Eventually, they stopped becoming commandments and became just suggestions. Moses led his people out of Egypt and that’s what we need to do, lead our planet out the darkness and into the light. Show them there is another way. That’s the real reason he gave us the gift.”

“JD, sometimes I think you actually believe your own bullshit.” said Wade as he lit up a cigarette. “Just cause you don’t want to hear it doesn’t make it bullshit.” replied JD

Wade was back at his own trailer watching TV and solving mathematical puzzles. The book contained over a hundred of them. He had solved seventy four within the first hour. He heard a rather loud knock

on his trailer door. He grabbed his 9mm and tucked it in his pants. He opened the door to find Shawn Waters on his steps. The kid had been tweaking bad and looked like garbage. He had been fired from the mine months ago, but was still living in the park, until Frosty finally threw him out. He had told him several times to quit using and get his shit together, which is apparently much easier for some than others.

“Whatever you’re selling, I’m not buying.” said Wade

“Please Wade. I got nowhere else to go. My wife left me. Frosty threw me out. I don’t even have enough money for a motel room. I’ll die out here. It’s so damn cold.”

“You look like a pile of shit. I told you not to use that stuff. Now, look at you. Why the hell would I let you stay with me? We both know you’re just going to steal from me. It would be better to let a wild animal stay with me. I would trust them over you right now.” said Wade.

“Please Wade, I’m so cold. I can barely feel my fingers.” said Shawn.

“Come on in. You can stay tonight, but you’re out of here tomorrow morning, you got me?”

“Oh, thank you Wade, you’re a good man, a good Christian man.” he said and came in. He immediately went over to the heater and began to warm himself.

It suddenly occurred to Wade that Shawn might just be exactly what he needed. Someone who would do exactly what he told them to do. Some one expendable. Someone who would not be missed. Someone just like Shawn.

He gave Shawn a beer and a few smokes.

“You know Shawn, I must tell you, I certainly do not approve of your lifestyle choice, but I’m willing to overlook that right now. I mean in a way, I could use someone like you, you now to help me out.” he said as he cooked Shawn a pizza.

“What do you mean?”

“Well, for argument’s sake, let’s just say that JD and I are in a very precarious situation of sorts. Have you seen those contractors out at the mine? The ones who are staying in those trailers down below?”

“Yeah, rude sons of bitches they are.”

“Well, they’re here looking for me and JD. They know we have something they want, but they don’t know where to look. They are not contractors, not in the same sense we would think of them. They are the government’s clean up crew. Janitors for psychopaths. Now, normally telling this to a tweaker would not be wise, but see you can be the wild card in all this. You can be the guy who levels the playing field. They are looking for somebody, they just don’t know who?”

“You mean they’re like spies?”

“Sort of. They are just people with no morals or principles. They do whatever their bosses tell them to. Murder, assassination, torture, you get the picture?”

“Why are they here?”

“Well, that is interesting. JD and I happened to find something one night a few weeks ago, something they would love to have. I can’t tell you what it was, but it’s only a matter of time before they find us. I need you to throw them off course. I need you to buy us some time.”

“Wade, what are you talking about? What did you guys find?”

“Something wonderful. Something that could change everything. Now Shawn, this is a very, very important moment in your life. Now, I want you to think very clearly, as best as you can here? What is it you want more than anything else in this world?”

Shawn looked away from Wade. He knew exactly what his response would be.

“I want to get high. I want to get so fucking high, I never come down. You wouldn’t understand Wade. Unless you’ve tried it, you will never understand. When I’m not high, I think about getting high. I never want to come down. I can’t control it. I wish I could, but I just can’t. I’m a junkie. I always will be.”

“I understand Shawn, I’m not judging you here. Let me ask you a question. How much does one hit of meth cost you?”

“Bout a hundred bucks.”

“And how long does the high last, usually?”

“I’d say around eight hours, depends how strong the meth is.”

“Right. The problem with methamphetamine and all the dopamine releasers in general, is their short half life. Twelve hours at best. Not going to do a lot with that. I’m working on something that you would be interested in. I’m going to create a new molecule that binds directly to the neurons of the brain and stays there. You could tweak all the time and never come down. Would you like that?”

“Come on Wade, how you going to do that?”

“The same way anyone does anything. They just do it.”

“Yeah but don’t you need a lab or something? I mean you can’t just do it in your trailer can you? Don’t you need equipment and stuff?”

Wade took out a small doggie bag of white powder. He held it up in front of Shawn. He immediately knew what it was.

“That what I think it is?”

“Yup. It’s all yours if you do what I tell you.”

“What do you want me to do?”

"I need the stuff to make meth. You ever cooked before?"

"No, but I know how to do it. I was locked up once with this cooker. He taught me how to do it. I know what to do Wade, just give me a chance."

"I don't know Shawn, this is some pretty heavy shit here. You sure you can handle it?"

"Damn straight I can. Just give me a chance to prove it to you."

"Okay. Now, get some sleep if you can. Tomorrow morning, I'm going to send you to Reno. You're going to go to an industrial warehouse and buy everything we need. Chemicals, tubs, pipettes, you name it. Here's a credit card. You work for the mine. All the paperwork you need is right here. Look the part and don't fuck up. I got this credit card from the mine. We have an account with them. I will give you a purchase number to use. Buy what you need. Tell them it is for a refurbishment project on the old crusher. You can buy the rest at a supermarket. I'll call them in the morning and tell them to expect you. I'll say I'm a mine supervisor. Do you have any photo ID with you?"

"I got my old Mine ID."

"Let me see it." he said.

"Shawn gave it to him. Wade carefully cut out Shawn's photo and put it over his photo on his Mine ID Card. He used a special glue that didn't leave any trace. It took him almost half an hour. He used an exacto knife to finish it up. Unless you held it very closely, you could not tell it had been altered.

"Are we really going to do this Wade? Are we really going to cook?"

"Damn right buddy. We sure are and you are going to make it happen. You're going to have all the damn meth you ever wanted." he said and rubbed Shawn's balding head.

Shawn had no idea he was being set up. Wade made certain when they busted his camp, they would find enough incriminating evidence in there to take him away. He had been meticulously planning this for days. He had been keeping a journal detailing everything that had happened to him, right down to reworking Bernoulli's equations. They were not wrong, just incomplete. He had even written extensively on the Pioneer anomaly. It was all there, right along with the details of the crash. He just had to make certain that the spooks got there first, before the cops did. He had to make sure everything was set up in place before he dropped the bomb on the spooks. His plan should work. Poor Shawn would never know what hit him. He was a tweaker, his life wasn't worth much anyway. He'd be sacrificing himself for the greater good. When they did hit the camp, he had to make certain Shawn was good and high.....and very paranoid. He hoped there would be gunfire. He was hoping for a lot in order for this to work. Of course, if it did, it would mean the end of the feds. Things could finally return to normal around here, whatever that was.

He walked into the mine boss's office the next morning. His name was David Henderson. He and Wade had gotten along pretty well. He could tell by the look on his face that Wade was not bringing good news.

"Dave, I really screwed up the other night."

"Why, what happened?"

“Remember that Waters kid, the one who used to work here?”

“Yeah, we fired him, didn’t we?”

“Yeah, he comes knocking on my trailer door the other night. Christ, he was so strung out. He said he needed a place to stay, so I let him stay with me. Well, when I got up the next morning, he asked me to borrow the car, said he had an errand to run. I let him use it. He comes back that night with a ton of new shit, looked like instruments or something. Well, I noticed that he had gone through all the draws in my trailer. Little bastard took my wallet. He took my mine ID and that credit card we have to buy supplies. I’m sure he used it to buy whatever it was he bought. I’m sorry man, I should have known better.”

“I’ll call accounting and see if there are any unauthorized charges on the card. Did you call the police?”
“I’m going to go there right after work, I just wanted you to know first. I hope I don’t get canned this.” said Wade

“Hell, he stole it, it isn’t like you just gave it to him. Make sure you report it stolen, we want to make sure we’re covered.”

“Will do, thanks man. I owe you one.” said Wade. He couldn’t help but smile as he left the office and headed down to the pit.

He knew the next part was crucial. He had to play it carefully. He waited a few days until he was certain Shawn was actually making the meth. One false move and he was as good as dead. He spied the two men working on the pipeline out back. Neither of them seemed to have any idea what they were doing. They looked pissed, as if this was the last place on Earth they wanted to be. Wade offered them a smoke and the three of them sat down on a large piece of pipe.

“How the hell do out guys live out here? It’s like being stuck on the moon?” one of them asked

“You get used to it. Me and civilization never really got along well in the first place.”

“No place to let your hair down or get laid. I’d never make it out here.” said the other man.

“We saw what you did last week with that guy. That was amazing.”

“Yeah, that was like some kind of Macgyver shit or something.” said the other man

“Guys, can we be real with each other for a second?” said Wade

“What do you mean?”

“Come on, I know you aren’t contractors. You two have never cut a piece of pipe before in your lives.”

“The two men looked uncomfortably at one another. Wade knew he had a huge fish on the hook. He just needed a little more time.

“Look, I’m not going to say anything. I know why you’re here.” said Wade

“Why are we here?”

“You’re here to catch those damn cookers. The ones who are cooking and selling the meth. I know what they’ve done. I’ve seen the damage they’ve caused. They got a huge operation out here. I guess they figured no one would look for them out here. They had a pretty nice gig going on for a while too. Pay off the local cops to look the other way. Guys, they have to be stopped. I’ll help you anyway I can.”

The men just looked at Wade and smiled.

“Well, you made us Wade. We’re certainly not pipe fitters, that’s for damn sure.” said one of them
“Who do you really work for?”

“We’re undercover DEA.” said one of the men as he flashed them his DEA badge. The other man next to him had a US MARSHALS badge, as well as an FBI Badge as well, depending on what the operation called for.

“I know where they’re cooking. I can lead you right to them.” said Wade nervously.

“You sure you want to get involved like that? It might mean you’d have to testify and send some of your buddies to jail, Wade.”

“Do you guys have any idea what that shit does to people? Of course you do, you’re the freggin DEA. One of the cookers, this Shawn kid, he was so strung out a few weeks ago, he tells me this crazy story about a UFO crashing in the desert, out near his camp. Yeah, he said he met an alien and received all kinds of special powers. I mean, he really believes this actually happened. Can you believe that?”

“No shit. Dude must be out of his mind.”

“He even says he has a video of the ship and this weird little alien. Says he is going to put it on the internet and make himself famous. Can you believe that?” said Wade

“No shit?”

“Guys, they have to be stopped, before they destroy any more lives. I’ll help you any way I can.” said Wade

“Well, Wade....that’s the problem. Sometimes in order to stop the bad guys, you kind of have to bend the laws a little bit. You really serious when you say you want these people stopped?” said one of the spooks.

“Hell yes, I’m serious. Thought about going out there a few times and arresting them myself.” said Wade.

“Then tell us exactly where they are. We swoop in, pick em up and send them to a detention center. If this operation is as big as you say, then most likely, the local law enforcement has been compromised.”
“Yeah, I thought the same thing myself. Here, I’ll draw the map as best I can.” said Wade and drew the map to his camp on a piece of cardboard.

“It’s real easy to find. Just a few miles off the highway.” he said.

His name was Rigby. He had been a Command Sergeant Major in the Army, before “dying” in a plane crash in Afghanistan in 2013. He had been working with the unit ever since. He had worked on over a dozen missions, mainly in the United States. His last one was the most memorable. He had to assassinate a US Congressman. Why they wanted him dead, he didn’t know. This business operated on a need to know basis and that was not something he needed to know. He called Lindmueller himself to bring him up to speed.

“Sir, I believe we have located the target. He's a local drug dealer. Meth cooker. Has his drug factory in an old mining camp about ten miles outside of the trailer park. His camp is only five miles from the crash site. We used the STARSAT imaging to trace two sets of footprints from the crash site back to the camp. We would have found them sooner, but a heavy rainstorm buried them. Do you want us to proceed as planned?”

“He has to be taken alive, is that understood? He is to be brought to a secure holding facility until we can have a team check him out. He’s dead either way, we just have to know if the ET passed anything onto him.”

“Yes sir, understood. We will have him airlifted as soon as he is in custody.”

“Good. I want your team out of there as soon as the operation is completed. We’ll worry about loose ends later. Right now I want to know what that individual knows.”

“Yes sir, Proceeding as planned.” said Rigby. He hung up the phone and called the rest of the teams. They were going to move on him this evening. He had to coordinate air support. Of course, there was still the little matter of just who exactly had made the other set of footprints, but that would have to wait for another day.

He decided not to inform JD as to what he was doing. He figured he would fill him in later, once the dust had settled. JD was a good man, but he was living in a fantasy world if he thought that this problem was just going to go away on its own. Something had to be done. As much as he hated to have to sacrifice an innocent person, it was for the greater good. Perhaps Shawn would be able to finally have some meaning in his life, even if he didn’t get to choose. He figured they would move on him tonight. He had sent Shawn out there with the supplies. He was already cooking his first batch of pure crystal meth. He told him it was too risky to be seen in his car, he didn’t want anything to be traced back to him. He had already called the Sheriff’s Dept to report his ID and credit card stolen. That wasn’t all he had reported stolen. He told the deputy that he was almost certain that Shawn had stolen one of his handguns as well. As far as anyone could tell, Shawn had stolen all of these things and was out there cooking by himself. The camp wasn’t even Wade’s or JD’s. It belonged to the BLM, they just used it occasionally during hunting season. He would tell the police that he had lent his car to Shawn that day so he could go to Reno to try and reconcile with his wife. He would say that Shawn had begged him and as a good Christian, he simply couldn’t refuse. He had no idea he was using the car to buy products to cook meth.

Shawn stopped by Wade’s trailer before going back out to the camp. He handed Shawn a small paper bag. Shawn looked inside. He pulled out a 9mm handgun.

“Dude, can I keep this with me?” he asked holding it in his hand. Shawn had never actually seen a

handgun up close before.

“Of course. I don’t want any of these shit bags to steal all of our hard work. We got to be able to defend ourselves. It’s not like we can call the cops.”

“Yeah, you got a point there.”

“Here. I know you work better when you’ve had a fix. Probably won’t be able to sleep much out there, so go head, take a hit or two.” he said and gave Shawn the bag of meth.

He poured some on the table and snorted it. He snorted some more. A big smile came over his face. “Man, I love this shit. it’s gonna kill me, but I don’t care. I love getting high. I wish I could stay high all the time.” he said as the methamphetamine went to work on his neurons.”

He let the meth kick in and about twenty minutes later, Shawn was good and tweaking hard. He would just pace around the room and giggle. Sometimes he would talk to himself. When he figured the drug was flowing through his blood stream, he decided it was time.

“Shawn, we got ourselves a problem. A biggie here.” he said putting his hand on the kid’s shoulder. “What is it?”

“We got feds here bud. DEA. They’re just a few trailers away. They are here to stop us and keep you from getting high.”

“What? How do you know that?” he asked

“I confronted them out at the mine today. They claimed to be pipeline contractors but didn’t know the first thing about pipe fitting or cutting. They told me they are working undercover. Guess they figured I wouldn’t say anything. They’re after us Shawn. They want our meth. What are we going to do about this?” asked Wade

“I don’t know man. The feds? That’s serious.” he said and sat down on the kitchen stool.

“We’re looking at federal drug laws. If the feds are here, they won’t just walk away empty handed. We’re looking at some serious prison time. So, what do we do?”

“Maybe we should just not cook for a while? You know, until they leave, then we can start back up again.”

“Maybe, except I got people who are depending on us. Drug dealing ain’t no different than any other business. If our customers think we’re unreliable, they’ll go someplace else. Besides, could you hold out that long. I know it must be eating you up inside. I hate to see a man go through that.” said Wade

“I know man, but federal prison? I don’t want to go to prison Wade.” he said starting to cry and beat his fist on the small table.

“I understand kid, believe me I do. I don’t want to go to prison either. I got an idea. It’s crazy, but it just might work.”

“What is it?”

“You got everything out there, right? I mean you’re cooking right now?”

“Yeah.”

“Okay, here’s what I want you to do. It’s very important that you do exactly and I do mean exactly what I tell you.” he said. Wade sat down next to him and started to explain. Shawn’s eyes got bigger and bigger. Wade’s plan was brilliant. Wade had to be like a genius or something.

Shawn raced into Ely to use the only payphone in the town. It was on the side of one of the casinos, where no cameras were present. He called Sgt. Stanwick. He and Shawn had never met. Shawn was going to put in the performance of a lifetime here. He had to make it sound believable. He called with a calling card he bought over a year ago. He tried to sound nervous, but not too nervous. *Last thing in the world he wanted was to sound like some dumb tweaker.*

“SGT Stanwick, how may I help you?”

“Stanwick, you don’t know me, but I got some real important information for you, so you better listen.”

“Okay, I’m listening.”

“I know who killed that cop, what’s his name, the Polak?”

“You mean officer Romanowski?”

“Yeah, him. Look, the same people are going to make a major drug deal tonight out by Warm springs, near the old gold mine, I think it was called *Roseville*?”

“Yes, I think I know where that is. It’s right up next to the boundary of the test site. There’s a dirt road leading off the highway.”

“Right. Now listen up here cop. These guys are no joke. They are not amateurs. They killed a cop and got away with it. They have fake DEA Badges. They’ll kill you and anyone else who gets in their way. No telling how well connected they are. The drop is tonight. I think they might use a helicopter. Be ready. Don’t let a bunch of cop killers get away. By the way, the license plate on the cops truck was 221.” he said and hung up the phone.

“Stanwick nearly shit himself. As far as he could tell, they had not released that information to the public. He called his Lieutenant, who called the Nye County Sheriff in Pahrump. They sent everyone they had out to Warm Springs. Counting NHP, they had a total of 15 officers who were armed to the teeth. They had a perimeter set up and US 6 was being watched for miles away. It was going down exactly the way Wade had hoped it would. All he had to do now was just sit back and watch the fireworks.

Shawn raced back to the old mine before anyone law enforcement could get out there. He didn’t want to be there, but Wade told him it was vital that he be out there when the bad guys showed up. He was the bait.

Rigby and his team drove down the dirt road at 9:47 pm. They were using blackout lights with night vision. They stopped about five hundred feet away from the camp and Rigby got out.

“Everyone knows what to do?”

“Yes sir.” they said in unison.

“We just hold him until he is airlifted out of here. I’ve got a chopper coming in from Nellis. Under no circumstances is anyone to shoot, unless I give the order. He is to be taken alive. Ok. Alpha team you go in from the rear. We’ll go in from the front.” said Rigby. He had only his side arm with him. After all, it was just one twaker and the rest of the team were armed with their MP5s. It never even occurred to him that he was being set up. No way a hick could ever out smart the great Command Sergeant Major Rigby, so way, no how.

It took about ten minutes for the teams to get into position. They had Shawn’s position. He was cooking in an old cabin that still had a roof on it. Pretty pathetic that a one hundred and thirty year old cabin was better built than most of the half million dollar houses being hastily constructed today. Rigby waited until they were certain he was alone. He had a generator running which powered the lights. He even had a small wood stove in the cabin to stay warm.

“Alpha Team, what is your status?”

“Alpha Team is green.”

“Ok, let’s go get this redneck and get out of here.” he said.

It took less than thirty seconds for the men to subdue Shawn and zip tie his hands behind his back. He offered no resistance. After he and the cabin had been searched Rigby sat him up.

“I trust you know why we’re here.” he said

Shawn just nodded.

“I knew I was gonna get caught sooner or later. I just hoped it would be later, much later.”

“Understandable. What’s your name?”

“Shawn....Shawn Waters.”

“Well, Shawn, it’s real important you level with me here, got it?”

“Yes sir.”

“Shawn, did you take anything from the crash last month?”

“What are you talking about?”

“The UFO or whatever the hell it was that crashed across the highway. You told your buddy Wade all about it.”

“Look man, I don’t know what in the hell you’re talking about. I’m just a cooker, that’s all. Wade told me to be here tonight and to just go along with all of it. He said not to worry, that you guys would let me go. He knows you’re not real cops.”

“Rigby looked around at several of the men in the room. They all suddenly looked very concerned.

That motherfucker played us like a goddamn fiddle! Rigby thought to himself.

“Let’s get out of here and get to the evac site.” he said.

The men quickly hurried Shawn back to their van. They got back inside and sped away from the old mine site. They were about a mile from the highway when they saw the floodlights and saw the police lights flashing. Three Nye County vehicles and one NHP vehicle blocked their rear. The men were trapped in the bottom of a ravine with no way out. They saw three men emerge from the darkness. They were wearing full tactical armor and holding AR-15’s.

“Everybody be cool. Remember, we are DEA Agents conducting an arrest.”

“What if they ask to see the warrant?” one of the team members asked.

“Just be cool. Nobody do anything unless I do it first. Let me talk to these hicks.” he said and got out of the vehicle.

Sgt. Stanwick held his flashlight. He was also holding onto his AR-15. Lieutenant Menendez was in charge of the county’s tactical operation. He approached the vehicle and was out in front of the others. They had two snipers deployed on either side of the ridge in case the shit hit the fan.

“YOU IN THE VAN! EXIT THE VEHICLE WITH YOUR HANDS IN THE AIR!” shouted Menendez.

Rigby got out and held his hands in the air. He had a few fragmentation grenades in his tactical vest in case things went south. A little diplomacy could go a long way in a situation like this.

“Easy boys. Agent Michael Rourke, Drug Enforcement Agency.” he said holding up his badge in the light.

“KEEP YOUR HANDS IN THE AIR”. shouted Menendez.

“Gentlemen, this is a classified DEA operation. Your assistance is not required. We can take it from here.”

Menendez and the other two deputies cautiously approached the vehicles. He held the light up to Rigby’s face. He looked at his badge. He gave it back to him.

“I want everyone out of the van. Come on, out!” he said.

Two other deputies emerged from the shadows with their guns drawn. Rigby wanted to kick himself for walking right into an ambush like this. Someone with his experience should have known better.

“Gentlemen, you are impeding a federal investigation. We just apprehended a local cooker, who is going to give up the major suppliers of methamphetamine here in this part of the state. We have to get him into protective custody immediately.” said Rigby.

Everyone could hear the roar of the helicopter approaching.

“The hell is that?” asked Menendez

“Helicopters approaching from the southeast. Bout two miles.” said one of his snipers over the radio.

“Nobody is getting any helicopter until I get some straight answers here. No one told our department about any federal investigation by the DEA in our county.”

“I have my orders gentlemen.”

“And so do we. I said, I want everyone out of the vehicles!” said Menendez.

“I’m afraid in the interest of national security I cannot allow that.” said Rigby as he reached for his grenade.

“Give me your badge. I’m going to have the sheriff call the DEA before anyone gets on a helicopter. Something weird is going on out here. This whole thing stinks like a week old tampon.”

“Sorry boys. You guys bit off a little more than you can chew here. Alpha Team, hostile contact, take action.” he said and threw the fragmentation grenade at the officers. One of them got a few shots fired. It hit Rigby’s rifle plate knocking him down. The van doors opened and several of his team jumped out. They started shooting at the officers. One bullet hit Menendez, knocking him down. He was wearing a rifle plate as well. The blast from the fragmentation grenade killed him instantly. It blew part of Stanwick’s face off. The entire area was engulfed by gunfire within seconds. A Nye County Deputy was hit, who was not wearing a rifle plate in his tactical vest. The snipers position up above shot and killed one of the team members instantly. Rigby saw him go down. He knew he couldn’t just leave one of his team members there that had supposedly died last year. That was bound to raise some alarming questions. The team’s vans were cut to pieces by the gunfire. Another one of his team was shot in the leg. The blood from his leg sprayed Shawn in the face. He was on the ground, still with his hands tied behind his back, scared out of his mind. Rigby was hiding behind some rocks., shooting at anything that moved. He was frantically barking orders into his radio, trying to direct his team and to get them to the evac site. He got on his cell phone and dialed the cell phone number of the pilot who had helped them out so many times before.

“Hello?” he said.

“Wyatt. It’s me. We are in some serious shit here. This is a hot LZ, can you lay down some bullets here.”

“Ah, negative, the bird is unarmed. We can drop smoke canisters.”

“Yes, do it. Get us the fuck out of here. Do you have out position?”

“Yes, copy that. Jesus, I can see the tracer rounds from up here.”

“Just hurry up.” shouted Rigby.

“Looks like I can land right on that dirt road behind you about half a click, can you make it?” asked the pilot

“We’re going to have to.” he said and hung up.”

“Alpha Team, if you have grenades, use them. We rendezvous about half a click back on the dirt road. Take all dead and wounded with you.” said Rigby into the radio.

Rigby could still hear the gunfire engulfing them. He reached into his pocket and pulled out another grenade. Just as he was about to pull the pin, he heard a deafening explosion on the other side of the road. He could hear a man screaming. He pulled the pin and threw his grenade as well. The chopper flew overhead and dropped several smoke canisters on the battlefield.

“Alpha Team, move!” shouted Rigby.

He stood up and started running towards what was left of the van. He passed by Shawn, who was still laying on the ground. He knew what he had to do.

“Sorry kid.” he said and shot him twice in the head.

Rigby was shot once more as he helped one of his team limp down the road. He saw the chopper land and his men raced to it. He threw the injured team member on board. They were carrying the other team member who was now dead. Two others had been shot, but their vest had saved them.

“I’m going to get that redneck son of a bitch if it’s the last thing I ever do.” he thought to himself.

Within twenty seconds, the chopper was airborne with his team. The grenades had stopped the Sheriff’s department from following the chopper. They didn’t want to risk any more dead or injured. Menendez was dead along with another deputy. Two others were seriously wounded as well. Rigby should have been in shock, but he wasn’t. He was angry. Angry at himself, angry at being out here and most of all, angry at Wade, who had just tuck his finger into one of the biggest and nastiest hornet’s nest on Earth.

“Jesus, H Christ. What in the fuck happened out there Rigby?” shouted Lindmueller on the phone. He had sent all the staffers out of the room, except for his aide, a Col. Nelson

“We were stopped by the local police. We had no choice sir. Our cover was blown, we had the suspect with us. It’s extremely regrettable, but necessary.” said Rigby.

“I just got off the phone with the governor. I had to do a lot of promising and basically had to buy the son of a bitch off, but he assured me, there will be no official questions on his end. The media is running it as a horrible case of friendly fire.”

“Sir, there had to be over a dozen officers out there. You really think they’re all going to keep their mouths shut?”

“Of course they will. We’ll just made it be known that their cooperation on this matter would be greatly appreciated. If not, they go in the ground. It’s that simple. You guys have made one hell of a mess out there. The suspect is dead, correct?”

“Yes sir. I shot him myself in the head.”

“Did he talk?”

“He was just a junkie. I don’t think he was anywhere near that crash site.” said Rigby.

“He was taken to a local hospital, so there’s another loose end I have to deal with.”

“I don’t think he’s our guy. I know exactly who our main suspect is.” said Rigby.

“Who is our main suspect now?”

“The son of a bitch who set us up.”

“Yeah, boy he fucked us good. Brilliant really. Now we can’t even touch him.” said Lindmueller.

“Why not?”

“So, we have more dead bodies we have to explain away? The American people, as dumb as most of them are, will have a hard time buying this. We have a shootout, dead cops, a UFO crash, missing vehicles, a still missing game warden and now you want to add more to the list? You will do nothing in the Warm Springs area until further notice. Am I clear?”

“Yes sir.”

“You better not fuck up like this again Rigby.” said Lindmueller.

“Yes sir, understood. Sir, there is one bit of good news to come out of all this.” Rigby said.

“Really? What would that be?”

“I know who that other set of footprints belonged to. The ones the satellite found at the crash site.”

“Leave it alone Rigby, do you understand me? I’m going to have a hard enough time trying to clean up your mess.”

“Yes sir,” said Rigby. Lindmueller hung up the phone.

“Well, what did he say?” asked one of the surviving team members who was standing in earshot.

“Nothing. Not a damn thing. It’s done. We got smoked good. Never judge a book by its cover. I must have heard that line a thousand times. You would think I would have learned that by now. I underestimated this guy and it cost us big time.

Enjoy your freedom while it lasts son. You want to dance with the devil? You better know how to dance.

“Wade. I want to know if you had anything to do with what happened out there last night.” asked JD

“I’m going to have to plead the fifth on that one JD. Next question.” said Wade

“Jesus, Wade. A bunch of people are dead. As in they’re gone forever Wade. What the hell have you done?”

“JD.....I did what I had to do to protect us. You really think it was an accident that the trailer they were staying in just happened to burn down last night? JD, Shawn was a waste of human life. Kid was never going to be anything except a junkie. I’m sorry he’s dead, but we have to face facts here. He sacrificed himself for a noble cause.”

“What noble cause would that be?”

“To allow us to reach our full potential. We’re changing JD. We are evolving a thousand generations every day. I don’t sleep anymore, at all. I can only eat pure protein and some carbs. My hair is falling off my body. My mind JD.....my mind feels like it is on fire. I’m studying graduate level math and nuclear chemistry. Not only am I reading it and learning it, I’m finding errors and correcting them. I read a book by your guy Dewey Larson. You’re right, he was onto something. I used linear algebra instead of tensor calculus to solve a physics problem and got the correct answer, using his theory. I didn’t even know what the hell these things meant a month ago. I know why the sky is blue instead of some other color. I know why the space shuttle exploded back in 86. I think I even solved Fermat’s Enigma. The sky is the limit. We can lead the planet if we want to.”

“Last night, I was in my trailer studying my books. I was reading all about human biology. I had this idea, it seems kind of out of left field. I think I can invent a device to lengthen the human lifespan.”

“Really?”

“Human lifespan hasn’t really changed since the Roman Times. Life expectancy and life span are not the same thing. We live longer on average because our infant mortality rate was slashed to almost zero and with the advent of antibiotics after world war 2, we were able to eliminate pneumonia and tuberculosis. Those two factors alone are why we live to around 76, instead of sixty, but we still run into a brick wall. Our bodies just don’t make it past 100, rarely anyway.”

“So what does your device do?”

“I’m studying electro biology. The reason we age and look older is because of coding errors in our DNA. Every time mitosis happens, the DNA doesn’t replicate correctly and we get broken DNA. Over time those coding errors begin to add up. My device uses a special frequency to fix the telomeres coating our DNA strands. They are what protects the DNA, sort of like the ends of a shoelace. I think shortening telomeres are what causes most coding errors. My device will stimulate them to grow longer and give more protection to the amino groups inside the DNA. I think I can easily double, if not triple the average lifespan of most humans.”

“Good work JD. You just continue to amaze me.” said Wade.

“What are you working on now?”

“Well, Mr. Shawn got me thinking. See I have a lot of ideas, but not enough time to pursue all of them.

We need helpers JD. P.H. D's and scientists to make our dreams into reality. Unfortunately, that requires money. A shit load of it and we don't have any. But, he did give me an idea. I've had it for quite some time now. Are you familiar with stem cell research?"

"Where you put your own cells back into your body?"

"Yes, our body recognizes them as its own and doesn't see them as invaders. I believe this is the future of medicine. It's the future of everything."

"What did you have in mind?"

"I'm going to invent a stem cell that can change based upon the needs of the body. If you have cancer it becomes a white blood cell. If you need a blood clot, it becomes a clotting agent. If you are senile, it stimulates brainwave activity. It can adapt. I'm going to do what mother nature was never able to do. I'm going to make the handyman cell."

"That would be incredible if you can manage it, you might even win a Nobel Prize? Wouldn't that be something?"

"Yeah bud, we just have a little cash flow situation right now that is preventing us from achieving our dreams. See, sometimes we have to bend the rules a little bit in order to win. Like I did last night. It was horrible, but necessary. I think a man of your intellect can appreciate that."

"What are you saying, Wade?"

"I'm saying that sometimes we have to hurt a tiny percentage of the population, so the majority of the population can benefit."

"Go on."

"See bud, I have an idea. I am going to make the purest, most potent crystal meth the world has ever seen, just like on that TV show. I realized a major flaw in the p2p molecule. My own brand will correct it. Instead of just getting high for a few hours, you can get high for days, maybe even weeks. It will be a slow releasing agent, so you can still function, go to work, make supper and all that, but in the meantime, your brain is making more dopamine than it should. We can make the world's most potent cocaine and heroin, all synthetic. All done right here in the park. We will use the money to buy the equipment we need and the correct staff to make it happen."

"JD, are you nuts? I'm not going to sell drugs to make my dreams happen." said JD in shock.

"Really? Then how else are you going to build your device and sell it?"

"I was just going to design one and then give away the plans for free." said JD

"Oh lord, JD. Have I taught you nothing in the time you knew me? You are always and I mean always selling yourself short. You could be on the cover of Time Magazine and you'd rather stay here in this trailer park, shoveling shit for the rest of your life. JD, you must realize by now, the dark forces that control this world, will never allow us to reach our full potential. They want the masses ignorant and living short lives, fighting over the little scraps they throw back to us. Much easier to control that way.

If you really want to change humanity for the better, you will have to change the people in control as well.”

“I’m not going to sell drugs or kill anyone Wade.”

“JD, those spies or whoever they were that were out here, what do you think would have happened to you if they discovered it was you at the UFO that night? You really think you would be here talking to me right now? You’d either be locked away in some lab some place or six feet under. Imagine all the people, the billions and billions of people who would suffer as a result of you not being able to reach your full potential? You see my point? Sometimes we have to do terrible things for the greater good. I’m not saying we have to enjoy doing them, but they have to be done. I hope you can understand that.”
“I’m not going to sell drugs Wade.”

“Junkies are as good as dead anyway. They all have flawed DNA that makes them addicts. I didn’t make them that way, maybe in time we can try and correct mother nature’s screw up, but for right now, we need them. We need their money. A controlled high, not one that sends you to the moon and makes you into a babbling idiot with a tweaker brain. We’re really trying to help them. At some point in all this JD, you and I are going to run right into the people who run the show. The shot callers for planet Earth. The chosen elites who rule mankind. You think they’re going to just welcome you with open arms? Didn’t really turn out too well for your buddies Dr. King and Jesus now did it?”

“There has to be another way Wade. There has to be.”

“Well when you figure that one out, please let me know. Making millions of dollars out of thin air, really would make you a genius.”

JD sat in his trailer. He was angry and scared at the same time. His body was doing things that made absolutely no sense to him. He almost seemed to be dying, but felt better than he had in years. He was eating almost a complete vegan diet and could only drink water and almond milk. He was now almost completely bald and instead of having blue eyes, they were losing their pigment. His eyes were becoming white. He knew his body was changing in ways he did not fully understand. He and Wade were the only passengers on this ship and neither of them had any idea where it was going, but so far, it had been one hell of a ride. Sometimes he would just sit outside his trailer, on his porch and listen to the stars. They were almost whispering to us, but we never listen. As a society, we had forgotten how to listen. They would tell him stories about what they had seen over the countless millions of years. All the civilizations to come and go. They were billions of years old. They had seen an awful lot in their time.

He knew Wade was going off the deep end. He was not going to use his gifts to help anyone, except himself. He wasn’t a bad man, but some of his ideas were bad. The ends do not justify the means. Brilliant people do not harm a few to help a lot. The Universal Mind did harm anyone. It was as old as the universe itself. When infinity became aware, the Universal Mind was born. It touched all corners of this universe and beyond. It had been watching this little planet for some time. We were like a science project gone horribly wrong.

In many ways Wade was right. The elites that controlled this world would never allow him to bring his ideas and invention into society. If they could not control him, they would simply kill him. Perhaps Wade had saved his life by getting the cops and the feds to shoot it out with one another. Two people were dead and JD felt responsible for their deaths. He knew his device could change the face of the

planet forever. Tesla, Rife, TT Brown, Schauburger, Nathan Stubblefield. Geniuses among geniuses. They were not allowed to become the men they were born to be. We only know of a fraction of their true potential. The elites had made certain of that. JD felt confused now more than ever. He had to ask himself: *What would Martin Luther King do in a situation like this?*

Wade knew the feds would be back. He had whooped them good, but if anything he had probably pissed them off rather than beaten them. It might not come today, or tomorrow, but it would come. Men like that hate losing and they had just lost the biggest game of their lives out here. That was for another day, right now, he had bigger fish to fry.

He had all of his plans drawn up for how he was going to start his drug factories. He was also going to try his hand at counterfeiting. He was going to make fake twenties and tens. He could duplicate the paper used to make the currency. He could just lick something or smell it and instantly be able to break down its most basic chemical properties. He could almost see the individual atoms in his mind. The Crane Paper Company was the only company the feds used to print their currency on. It was a big secret, just what kind of paper was used and what it was treated with to give it its unique properties. Wade had it. The rest wouldn't be too hard. He would start out small. He would use each of them like building blocks, cook meth, use the money raised to buy the products needed to print the fake bills. Use the fake bills to buy the chemicals and equipment needed to make the stronger meth and coke. Use that money to build his army and expand his network. Finally, buy a major pharmaceutical company to patent his handyman cell. He was going to lead a revolution. He had been a shit shoveler all of his life. Taking orders from everyone. Now Wade was the one giving the orders.

Now people were going to listen to him. He had to sit back and watch helplessly as everyone around him had screwed things up beyond belief. Now it was his turn to be the one calling the shots. He was the MFIC, the mother fucker in charge. This was his show. He wasn't going to live by someone else's rules from now on. He was going to live by his own set of rules. He just hoped his appearance wouldn't scare anyone off. Sometimes he even creeped himself out.

"You okay Wade? You don't look so good." asked Frosty the other day when Wade had stopped in to pay his lot rent for the trailer.

"I'm fine Frosty, never felt better."

"You just look, well you look like shit. You look like you've undergone chemo or something."

"No Frosty, I am not. I'm just going through a bit of a growth spell of sorts. I'd appreciate it if you would respect my privacy."

"Of course. Look, I lost a son of mine to cancer. I hate to see anyone have to go through that."

"I appreciate your concern, but I assure you I do not have cancer."

"Well then, what the hell is wrong with you?"

"Frosty, this is how everyone will look in about a hundred thousand years from now. I was just lucky enough to be the first one."

"What do you mean Wade?"

"I mean I am right and you and every one who looks like you are last year's model. When you look at me, you're looking at the future of the human race."

"Wade. You're skin, it's like you're tuning a different color. You look almost gray."

"Don't resist change Frosty, embrace it. Adaptation is the key to survival." said Wade and he walked out of the office.

Frosty wasn't quite sure what to make of Wade. This definitely was not the same guy who had shown up at the park two years ago asking if he could rent a trailer, this was someone else. Lots of people in the park were beginning to talk about what was happening to Wade and JD. Neither of the men looked right. *Something happening here, what it is ain't exactly clear.*

Rigby sat in his little apartment with a few team members drunk and fuming. He hated to lose, especially to someone like this Wade guy. He had his people pull up everything they could on him. His family owned a farm near Bakersfield. That was good, he could use that as leverage against him. He knew he had reported his truck stolen last month, about the same time that game warden disappeared out there. He knew somehow Wade was involved in that UFO crash. His team had actually recovered pieces of a UFO! A real goddamn UFO and Lindmueller was more worried about the negative press than finding the alien it belonged to. Typical general, more interested in politics than doing his job. He had mentioned to one of his team about going back out there and finishing the job. No one on the team was interested.

"Sir, you heard what Lindmueller said. Let it go. He is not someone you want to piss off." said one of the team members

"That fuck got two of our friends killed out there." Rigby replied

"No, we got them killed. We should have known something was wrong. We were way too confident. We're used to winning. I think we needed this to remind us to step up our game. We were lucky we got out of there at all."

"So, I guess I am going to have to do this alone?"

"Sir, I would strongly advise you to just let it go. We follow orders, that's what soldiers do. We follow orders even if we don't like the orders. That's just the nature of this beast."

"Look gang, I know Lindmueller thinks he is doing the right thing, but the fact of the matter is, we have two persons that most likely made contact with an extraterrestrial. A real alien, not from this Earth. Do you have any idea what kind of national security risk that is? Do you think this person can just go around, unobserved? Who the hell knows what happened out there? The alien could have exposed him to some alien virus that could wipe out the planet? We simply cannot let an individual like this run around free in society. If we can't control him, we have to eliminate him. It's the only way."

"Let it go Sergeant Major. It's not our call." said another soldier rather stoically.

"Fine, when all this blows up in our faces, don't say I didn't warn you." said Rigby as he stormed out of the room.

Rigby figured it would be pointless to rely on his team from here on in. They were good soldiers, but they weren't stupid. Their handlers didn't want idiots running around making things worse. They knew what would happen if they went off the trail so to speak. They were as good as dead and so was he. Even if he made it back, he would be looking over his shoulder for the rest of his life. Still knowing the risks involved, he couldn't just sit back and do nothing. He didn't just follow orders, he did what was best for his country and his country needed him to off Wade. They were practically begging him to do it. He could alter his appearance. He made certain everyone was looking for a long haired, bearded old guy. He had cleaned himself up and looked like a soldier once again. This soldier had a new mission, the most important one of his life.

Rigby knew he just couldn't go running back out there and kill the guy. He had to be patient. He had to play it cool. He would wait for the dust to settle. Let everyone think they were safe. Let them drop their guard. When they did, he'd be there waiting for them. Wade's time would come. He had a bullet with his name on it.

Wade bailed out two people from the Tonopah Jail. He needed workers and he refused to use Mexicans. One was in there for beating his wife senseless, the other was just caught with meth during a traffic stop. He also had a bottle of pills with someone else's name on it. He waited for both men to come out to the lounge area in the jail. Neither men could understand what was going on, but they were glad to be out of jail. It felt good to be wearing normal clothes again. The deputy made it clear to both men that they were being released into Wade's custody. Wade could send them back to jail anytime he wanted simply by revoking his bail. They were given a court date and sent on their way.

"Who are you?" asked one of the men

"Well boys, I used to be one of you, now I am one of me. I'm giving you guys a choice here. I don't want you to think I forced you into doing this, you can make up your own minds. You can either go back to trading blowjobs for money in jail, or come and work for me. It's your choice."

"What do we have to do?"

"Whatever it is I tell you to do. You guys ever cooked before?"

"You mean food?"

"No, I mean meth."

"No sir. I can grow some killer weed though." said one of the men.

"Weed is legal now, got no use for that. I can teach you guys, but you better catch on fast. I got a lot of crack to sell. You guys are going to be part of something incredible, something that is going to change the whole world." said Wade.

The two men looked uncomfortably at one another. Neither of them wanted anything to do with this whacko, but they sure as hell didn't want to go back to jail either.

"Look mister, I don't mind helping you out, I mean I am grateful for getting me out of jail, but I don't want a drug charge hanging over my head. All I did was slap my wife a few times."

"I understand. Boys, in a very short while, the cops will be working for me also. You'll all be playing for Wade's team. Don't worry about it."

The men looked at Wade. They had never seen someone who looked like him. It was almost as if he was wearing makeup or something. Nothing about this guy looked right. He was wearing sunglasses even though it was almost dark outside. He looked like a skeleton. His appearance creeped out both men.

They agreed to do whatever he asked, but made it clear they were only cooks, they were not going to be involved in violence. Wade agreed and sent both of the men on their way. He told them that he had secured an old house in the ghost town of TYBO, which was about ten miles away from the trailer park, up in the mountains. He told them to report there tomorrow morning at ten. He would fill them in once they got there. As they were leaving the parking lot, both men got this weird sensation in their heads. It was as if something was squeezing their heads. One of them stopped, he felt like he was going to just pass out.

"Don't let me down boys!" said Wade telepathically to both men.

They turned around quickly and watch Wade get into his car and drive off. Both men were shaken up. Neither of them was sure what had just happened.

"Man that guy gives me the fucking creeps." said one of them

"I know. Maybe we should just go back to jail."

"No man, not me. I'd rather die than go back to that place."

"I have this bad feeling that's exactly what's going to happen to us if we hang around this guy for much longer." said the other.

JD sat in his trailer, working on his latest project. His initial idea of simply lengthening the telomeres had morphed into something bigger and better. This was it. This is why Bobby had chosen him to receive the gift. It had occurred to him that he needed a better understanding of just what the Universal Mind is before he proceeded any further. He determined that at it's core, it was simply an oscillation, some kind of wave that emanated from the center of the galaxy in all directions. When it reached a planet, lie Earth, we were supposed to send back a vibration, that is a contraction back to the source. One full cycle completes a frequency. This cycle repeats itself over and over, with one period taking approximately 26,000 years. Something had happened to this frequency after the fall of Atlantis around 12,000 years ago. Our natural frequency had gotten out of sync. We were not vibrating any more. Something had gone wrong. The ancients knew this and attempted to correct it, but it was too late, the damage had been done. Our planet changed and not for the better. We have been on a downward spiral ever since. He simply had to correct the pattern and fix the frequency. When it worked correctly, the changes on the human body and mind were incredible. The reason biblical figures like Noah, Shem and Methuselah lived for hundreds of years is because in those times, Earth's frequency was functioning correctly. Our planet was a paradise. A warm, wet world with giant beings and giant creatures. Deserts used to be swamps and marshes full of all kinds of exotic creatures. JD's invention simply restored the natural frequency for short distance, less than a hundred feet. Anyone surrounded by, will get the full benefit. This includes a jump in one's intelligence and abilities and most of all, it fixes out broken

cellular functions so we can live to be hundreds of years old. We should really be eight or nine feet tall, just like the bible said we should be. JD was going to fix all this. It wouldn't be easy. Our pattern is so out of sync, it was going to take quite a bit of work to fix it. When his device was finished, he figured the first step was to try it on himself. He put the electrodes on his body and turned it on. Within a few minutes, he could feel its healing power begin to correct thousands of years of mistakes. He sat back in his bed and almost passed out.

When he opened his eyes again, he saw that almost four hours had passed. He turned the machine off and looked at himself in the mirror. He could feel the Universal mind flowing through his body. It was like he had been starving for all these years and was given a full buffet to devour. He knew this was his calling. This is what he was going to do with his gift. He was going to fix the planet Earth and finally bring us into the Age of Aquarius.

No more war. No more death and destruction. No more famine. No more four horsemen galloping right through humanity. NO more ICBMs. No more weapons of mass destruction. The planet was finally going to be as it should, the way our creator intended. *The way we were meant to be.*

Wade referred to his two accomplices simply as "his dogs". He met the men at TYBO Junction and drove with them up to the camp. It was private property, but Wade had simply used the power of ever expanding mind to convince the man to lease the whole area to him. The owner had no idea what he was doing and Wade put him to work as well. He got supplies for the other two and made trips into Ely when necessary. All of them were terrified of Wade. He was like some monster out of a movie, only he was all too real. He looked like a monster and often acted like one. He would hold daily meetings with his "dogs" and instruct them on what they were to do for the day. He disappeared for two days and when he returned his truck and trailer were loaded with new supplies. He used one of them to synthesize gasoline out of water while another one worked on the methamphetamine. He had a chart made up to track everyone's progress. One night at dinner, he told everyone that he was going away for a week to find some more dogs for his little town here. He didn't know when he would be back, but warned them against running away or slacking on their work duties.

"I'm really not the kind of person you want to piss off. I think you know what will happen if you disappoint your master." he said to each of them as he drove off.

Wade wasn't all bad. He made certain the district attorney in the case dropped the charges against the men, with a little mental persuasion. He told the men he would make certain they were rewarded for their work. He told one of the men they had a malignant tumor growing inside their throat, which Wade told him he would take care of. They were like his pets in many ways. They were the old version of humanity and he was the new. Still, the sight of his own appearance was beginning to worry him. He didn't even recognize himself anymore. He was also shrinking. It caused him much distress over his physical appearance. The more he looked at himself, the more convinced he became. He was changing into something else and he knew what it was. *I'm turning into a troll, a real fucking troll. A troll with an IQ of almost 500, but still a troll.* He was turning into the kind of thing he used to fear as a little boy.

JD realized the once you were in tune with the Universal Mind, it was very easy to spot someone who wasn't. He showed up at the trailer park yesterday. JD was in the office with Frosty when he came in. JD instantly knew something was off with this man. He was polite and friendly, but there was something wrong about his aura. It was very dark. The more time JD spent around him, the more concerned he became. Then he realized what was going on. This guy was somehow connected to the government agents who had been hanging around here a few weeks ago. He was here to finish the job.

The man said he was trying to get hired on at the mine and asked Frosty if he had any trailers left to rent. He introduced himself as *Mr. Rybek*.

No first name was given.

"I got one but the heater is out and I'm waiting for parts. As long as you have your own heater, it won't be a problem." said Frosty

"I'm sure I can scrounge one up. I really appreciate this sir. I don't want to drive back and forth every day, my car has enough miles on it already." said Rybeck.

"No problem. I am going to need first and last month's rent. TV is going to take about a week, maybe two. Electricity is already on. It's included in the rent.

"Wonderful."

"So, you're hoping to get a job at mine out here?" asked JD

"Yes. I got laid off at a mine near Ely. I got all my certs and everything. I just hope I can get hired on here."

"Mine is always looking for good workers." said JD. He looked at JD and tried not to stare. JD's appearance was now clearly in the freak category.

"When can I move in?"

"Well, I guess if you have the money, you can move in right now. I am going to have to see a photo ID and you'll need to sign the lease papers." said Frosty.

"Great. Here you go." he said and handed Frosty his driver's license.

"James Rybek. Nice to meet you. Everybody around here just calls me Frosty." he said and started the paperwork.

"Hope to see you at the mine James." said JD as he was walking out of the office.

"Mr. Rybek, if you wouldn't mind." he said.

JD walked back to his trailer and sat down on the couch in his living room. He knew if he told Wade about Rybek, Wade would simply kill him. Then the government would send another killer and Wade would kill them also. He knew he had to handle this situation on his own, he just had no idea what to do. Being smarter than everyone else doesn't always mean you will do the right thing. JD thought about it for a while, played out various scenarios in his head. Finally, he figured the only way to prevent a bloodbath was to just tell the guy to leave Wade alone. Tell him everything, maybe that will freak him out and he'll just leave. It was a huge gamble, but it was the really the only logical thing to do. He looked out his window and saw the man pull up into the trailer and take a suitcase with him. It was now or never. He walked over to the man's trailer and stopped him just as he was about to go inside.

“Mr. Rybek, may I have a word with you?” asked JD

Rybek was clearly caught off guard. JD somehow knew he had guns in that suitcase and a lot of bullets as well. This guy came prepared.

“Inside the trailer if you don’t mind?” he said

“What’s up man?” asked Rybek stepping into his trailer. JD closed the door behind him. Rybek seemed a little unnerved by JD’s actions. He was almost certain Rybek had a gun on him.

“Rybek, or whatever your name is. I know you aren’t here to work at the mine. I know you are here to kill Wade. I have to warn you, it’s not going to happen. Wade will kill you or worse, he’ll turn you into one of his dogs.”

Rybek was clearly caught off guard. He had no idea who this freak was. If the walls weren’t so thin, he might just off the guy right now. He had to be patient, it might be worth hearing the guy out.

“What are you talking about?”

“You know exactly what I’m talking about. Let’s not jerk each other around here.” said JD

“Dude, I just want to work at the mine. I don’t even know who Wade is?”

“Rybek, you can’t lie to me. You can lie to everyone else here, maybe even to yourself, but as you can see, I’m not like everyone else. I can see the changes in your aura when you aren’t telling the truth. Even someone as dark as you still knows when you’re lying.”

“Get the hell out of here you fucking freak!” he said and headed to the door.

JD turned to the door. He was about to step out, when he turned and tried one more time to reason with the man.

“If you kill him, pretty soon, you’ll have to kill me as well. You have no idea what you’re about to step into out here. You would be wise to just walk away from this one. It isn’t worth it.” said JD as he left the trailer.

Rybek was fuming. What the hell was going on here? How did this freak know he was coming? There had to be a leak. He had done several jobs for Rigby before, this one was no different. Did he set him up? That didn’t make any sense. If he was set up, why did this guy try and scare him off? At any rate, he had to call Rigby and get some clarification.

“Rigby, it’s me. Look man, my cover is blown. Some weird freak made me as soon as I got here. They know why I’m here. They even know my target.”

Rigby was now even more angry. He had pulled a few strings to get Rybek out there to clean up his mess. Still, even though it went against every bit of sense he had, he wanted Rybek to finish the job. He wanted this guy dead so bad, he could taste it.

“You have your orders Rybek. Proceed as planned.” said Rigby

“Don’t give me that shit Rigby. God only knows what else they know. I just met a guy who was like

seven feet tall and had no hair. No eyebrows, and his skin was like gold. Tell me that's fucking normal. It was like he could read my mind. What the fuck is going on out here?"

"That information is classified. You were paid to do a job and I expect you to do it."

"Our agreement was for me to take out some redneck. You must have a leak at your level. You set me up you son of a bitch!"

"There is no leak at our level, I can assure you of that. If somebody was talking, they'd be room temperature by now."

"Well then how the hell did this guy know who I was and why I was here?"

"I don't know?"

"I do. Somebody told him who I was. That doesn't leave many suspects, now does it."

"If they knew who you were, why are you still alive and talking to me?" asked Rigby.

"I don't know. I really think this guy JD was trying to convince me not to go through with it. He was trying to warn me."

"I met JD when I was out there. You're telling me that he is now seven feet tall? How can that be possible. When I met him I was a good six inches taller than him and I'm six foot five?" asked Rigby

"I'm just telling you what I saw. Dude is the freakiest looking man I've ever seen. Look, if you want me to go through with this, it's going to cost you. I want a hundred thousand."

"For killing one redneck? Are you serious?"

"Yes. That's my offer, take it or leave it."

"Fine, a hundred thousand. Rybek, you better come through for me. Make certain they can't find the body. I want proof of his death, or you don't get shit. Am I clear?"

"You'll have your proof. It's not like I haven't done this before Rigby." he said and hung up the phone. Rigby got off the phone and called everyone on his team.

"Meet me at the bar at five o'clock. We got some serious shit to discuss." he said. He knew his team would not disappoint him. They were going to freak out when they discovered he had hired a hit man to take of Mr. Wade, but that would pale in comparison to the other news he would drop on them. He needed their advice. They had blown the mission. They had to tell Lindmueller that the ET had indeed made contact with the locals. The ball would be in his court then. He wanted to brief his team to tell them to be ready to move. This time, they would not leave any witnesses. They were going to even the score with Wade.

TYBO had been unofficially renamed WADESVILLE. Wade was using generators for power. He had almost ten pounds of pure crystal methamphetamine ready to be sold to the highest bidder. This new recipe was his own. It warped the neurons and serotonin receptors in ways that were hard to fathom.

One hit of this stuff and it stayed permanently attached to your neurons forever, until he administered the antidote. One hit and you belonged to him forever. He was your master. His mind was expanding in ways even he did not really understand. Everyone in WADESVILLE had a job to do. You had better do it, or you risked the wrath of Wade. He ran his camp with an almost mechanical precision. He needed the profits from the meth to move onto the next phase of his operation. Counter fitting was the next step. Fake Treasury Bills and Notes. Once that was completed, he'd move onto a second factory, then a third. Once demand for his drug soared, he'd have enough money to do what he finally wanted, which was to run the State of Nevada. He was going to be the guy who said yes or no to everything. To hell with the rest of the country, he just wanted Nevada. He didn't even want Vegas. He wanted to sell his drugs there, but not be responsible for them. Pretty soon, he'd have a whole state so hopelessly addicted to his drugs, they'd be selling their own mothers for a fix. That's just what he wanted, a slave. He was tired of being a nobody in this world. He was going to have his name etched in every history book from here on in. He was going to join the elites. Pretty soon, they too would be hooked on Wade's Meth. Let these rich assholes see what it felt like not to get their fix. They had run the planet into the ground and would viciously attack anyone who got in their way. The tables had been turned. Once Wade had enough followers and money, he intended to rob a few National Guard Armories. If he intended to take on the big boys, he was going to need some serious firepower. Machine guns, anti tank weapons, anti aircraft missiles. He had a lot of work to do. The bright spot in his day was when Jesus and his family showed up at his makeshift town site. He got out and told Wade they were here to do whatever he needed them to do. They had a huge debt to pay back to him. Wade gave him a big hug and showed the family around.

"Don't bother going back to that mine Jesus. You work for me now. I need a good man like you to help me run the show here." said Wade.

"Whatever you need man. We're here for you."

Wade just loved Jesus. If he had a thousand men like Jesus, he'd be running the whole show in no time.

His team met him as he requested. They might not like Rigby, but like all good soldiers, they followed orders. He ordered them a round of beers. They sat in a far booth, in the back of the bar. The owner was smart enough to know who these men were and made certain they were not disturbed.

"Boys, we have a problem that concerns all of us. We got smacked real good there in Nevada. I can accept that. We can't control every little thing in situations like these. Our mission was to find out if there had been extra terrestrial contact with any of the people in the trailer park. I can say for certain now that contact has indeed been made. Our question now is just what do we do?"

"Rigby, this is out of our hands, we have our orders." said one of the men.

"An alien has infected some of the people in the trailer park! God only knows with what? If we do nothing and it is allowed to spread, it could mean the end of the human race. Would you want that on your conscience? Watching all of these people die and knowing you could have prevented it?"

The men looked at one another uncomfortably. They all knew where Rigby was headed.

"I have a man out there, keeping an eye on things and from what he has told me, the situation is getting out of hand. It may already be too late. The future of the planet could very well be in our hands. I have to ask you, what do we do? I'm not going to make this decision on my own."

“Sounds like you already have.” said another team member.

“I want that Wade Dawson dead as much as the rest of you, but I have to accept that right now, that’s just not possible. We are going to have to tell my boss, General Lindmueller. I don’t know what he’ll do, but I pretty much assume he will wipe out the trailer park to try and contain the infection. It’s really his only move. All those people will be killed. Maybe we could have stopped it and maybe not. We’ll never know. I’m taking a vote. All in favor of telling Mueller, raise your hands.”

One by one, the men raised their hands. When the last man had raised his hand, Rigby smiled. The men had not let him down.

“You men are the finest bunch of people this country has ever produced. I am honored to have known you. Someday, the people of this country will look back and remember this meeting and know we saved not just the country, but the whole planet.” he said

“Rigby, to what do I owe this honor?” asked Lindmueller as he was brushing his teeth.

“General, I’m going to be frank. We have a code red situation out there in Nevada.”

Lindmueller put his toothbrush down and rinsed his mouth. He wiped and then picked up his cell. “I thought I made myself clear.”

“General, the alien has infected some of the locals. Rapid, abrupt changes in personality and appearance. One of them has grown over a foot and half in just over a month!”

“What are you talking about?”

“I sent a cleaner out there to take care of the guy who set us up.”

“YOU DID WHAT?”

“Listen to me! He’s so scared of what he’s seeing, he won’t go through with it. He’s told me some really weird shit out here sir, really scary. One of the locals has set up a drug lab in the mountains. Claims that the man’s appearance is so hideous, he won’t even show himself anymore. The situation is out of hand. Pretty soon, we will have lost control.”

“We’ve been watching the area from the satellites. I know about the drug factory. We were going to send in some people to deal with it.”

“I’d advise against that sir. We don’t know what we’re dealing with at this point. We can’t assume anything.”

“Rigby, you better be damn sure about this when I take it to the President. We don’t have many options here and none of them are any good.” said Lindmueller.

“You say it’s infected the population? As in we’re dealing with a virus or something?”

“Unknown. Whatever it is, it’s moving quickly. I had to tell you general, this thing is bigger than you

and me. We have to act in the best interest of our country.” said Rigby.

“I have to tell the President. Make damn sure I can get a hold of you.”

“Yes sir, I’ll keep the cell with me at all times.” said Rigby as he hung up the phone.

This was perfect. Wade had won the first battle, but that son of a bitch was going to lose the war. He was going to lose and lose badly. Teach him to step outside the box. People like Wade want to be players in the game of life, but really, they were far better suited to just watch it from the sidelines. This was for people like Rigby. Wade was going to have to learn that the hard way.

Lindmueller figured he had better show up in person to deliver the news. The President was in the White House. He left and took 2 of his aides with him. The President was slightly unstable to say the least. No telling what his reaction was going to be. He really had no other options available. They had been closely monitoring the situation ever since Rigby’s fuck up in the desert. Things were spiraling out of control fast. If they didn’t act soon, whatever was happening out there could make it’s way to a major population center. It may already have, but taking out that trailer park was their only real option.

They had 2 men in place who were acting as delivery drivers for the mine. They had echoed the same statements Rigby had told him only an hour before. *Some very weird shit was happening out there.* President Fisk had shocked the entire world by getting the party’s nomination, then beating the incumbent. Americans were fed up with establishment politicians and establishment policies. Most of all, they were beginning to hate the media more, who had become the defacto fourth branch of the United States Government. He was sitting in his office with his chief of staff, Kay Landry, whom Lindmueller had taken an instant dislike to. He figured the feeling was mutual.

“General, how are you? I was told you need to speak to me?” asked Fisk.

“Yes sir.” he said as he and his staff entered

“Can I leave the door open, or do you want it shut?” asked Landry.

“Shut, definitely shut.” said Lindmueller as he sat down in front of the President and told him what was happening in Nevada. Fisk just stared at him like he and Lindmueller were discussing golf scores. Fisk looked at Landry, who was just staring right back at Lindmueller. His aides seemed totally lost in the presence of these men. They were in the big leagues now, but didn’t really seem ready for it.

Lindmueller spoke for nearly ten minutes. He told the President everything, from the UFO crash to the boondoggle in the desert, to the fact that one of the trailer park inhabitants was now almost seven feet tall and had golden skin, not tan, but golden. Lindmueller told him that in his opinion, there was really only one sensible thing to do.

“We have to completely destroy the trailer park, using one of the most powerful non nuclear devices we have. We can use a BLU-96 Fuel/Air bomb. The latest generation will completely annihilate anything within half a mile radius.”

Fisk blinked for a second. He sat back in his chair. He looked right at Lindmueller, never taking his eyes off of him.

“Well, holy shit. You want me to order the destruction of an entire town? I can’t do that general.”

“Sir, if this organism was to reach a major population center, the results would be catastrophic. We have to assume the worst at this point.”

“We don’t even know what we are dealing with. Whatever it is, it is not of this earth, that much we are certain of. We have to stop it from spreading, this is the only way.”

“It could already have spread, the hell do we do then?”

“It’s possible. We are monitoring every hospital on the West Coast and in Nevada for similar symptoms. Right now it looks like it is confined to this trailer park, only.”

“This organism causes people to look like surfers?”

“For some, for others it makes them into, well they look like monsters. It seems that it not only affects one’s appearance, but one’s intelligence and abilities as well. Whatever they become, they are no longer human, not in the sense that we know it.” he said.

Fisk looked absolutely dumbfounded, as if he were waiting for the general to say “gotcha!” or something. He looked at Landry for some kind of guidance.

“General, what the hell are we supposed to tell the media? In case you haven’t noticed, this administration and the mainstream media are at war with one another. We’d be giving them our heads on a platter.”

“We have a story in place. We have been planning for something like this for decades. We are going to say that a refueling plane crashed into the park on maneuvers. The fuel tanks ignited and exploded. I hate to say it, but we’ve told far worse lies to far smarter people. No one will question anything. We even have a fake black box recorder in place. We’ll drop the bomb, then crash the plane. As terrible as it sounds Mr. President, it really is our only option.”

“Isn’t there some other way general? Can’t we just send in the military and secure the area?”

“We could, but it wouldn’t be too long before our secret got out. Our enemies have the same satellites we have. The longer it went on, the less the chances of us being able to contain the media. We’d be in the same boat, except now the whole world would know what’s going on out there.”

“You’re certain this is the only way?” asked Landry

“Yes sir. As horrible as it sounds, we could be saving the rest of the planet. At this point we can only assume the alien is an organism and is highly contagious.”

“Jesus Christ general. What happens if this thing spreads to other towns and cities, do we just blow them up also.”

“No. Destroying the point of infection is an important first step in controlling the infection.”

“An infection that either makes people into Gods, or monsters? That’s one hell of an infection.” said

Fisk

“Yes sir. I gave you my opinion, the decision is your to make Mr. President. Either way, we have to do something quickly.”

“Can’t we just send in the army?” he asked

“We could, but they could become infected as well. It seems that there is something controlling the infection. We’re not even sure we have the equipment necessary to prevent infection. Our medicine is useless against whatever they have.”

“Okay general. Give me an hour. Stay in the White House and I’ll give you my decision.” said Fisk.

“Sir, if I may.....the future of the entire planet may very well rest upon what is decided here today. Sometimes, those of us in charge have to do things that make our stomachs turn, because it is the far lesser of two evils.”

“Right. God help us all.” said Fisk

The general thought about getting up and saluting him,, but he decided against it. It didn’t matter at this point. The uniform, the medals, none of it mattered. He had just asked the President to murder almost fifty Americans and knew the President would have no choice but to follow through. These weren’t psycho towel heads or terrorists, these were Americans, just like the rest of us. At least it would be quick. He got a call from his man on the ground at the mine. They had a chlorine leak and had to shut the mine down for several hours. No one would be there. Everyone was sent home. Almost all of them went back to the trailer park. The few that went elsewhere wouldn’t be too hard to find. It was now or never.....and never was a very long time to wait.

He waited only fifteen minutes. Landry found him in the hallway. He could tell by the look in his eye, he knew what they had decided. He had never seen a look of fear and anger all at the same time. As we get older, our emotions get older with us. Sometimes we can control them, sometimes they control us.

“You better be right about this general. The President has given his ok to the strike. You really think you can keep this a secret? A fuel tanker crashes into the only thing around for a hundred miles and no one’s going to be suspicious?”

“Let us worry about that Mr. Landry. That’s part of our job as well.” replied Lindmueller.

The snipers were deployed around WADESVILLE. It was a four man team, with another four man team at the base of the mine entrance, just waiting to pick off the survivors. The men had all seen extensive contact in every corner of the globe, but they had never been ordered to take out American citizens before. It wasn’t just illegal, it was immoral as well. Still, as much as it bothered them, they had their orders. They always carried out their orders. Mission objective and completion was the name of the game. Being a nice person wasn’t. They had .50 caliber rifles and the best scopes one could buy. They were to take out the leader first and everyone else came second. One of them had Wade in his crosshairs.

“Permission to engage the target.” said one of the men

“Take him out.” said the team leader.

Wade was standing in front of a make shift trailer he had just recently brought up here. He wanted to know why the crew were so far behind. He was just about to go off on one of his men, when he felt something on the back of his head. It was new and unusual. He had never felt anything like it before. It was almost as if someone was looking right at him, someone close, but far away. In an instant. He figured it out. He ducked and hid behind an old tractor just as the massive bullet zipped past his head. It struck the rock in front of him and shattered it to pieces. The other men saw what was happening and froze.

“We got company!” he said. One of the men threw him a 9mm. Wade cocked a round in the chamber. He watched a round take out Jesus, sending him flying backwards. His wife began to scream. Wade ducked down and closed his eyes. He summoned everything he had inside him. He concentrated as hard as he could. He could see the men and where they were in the hills and rocks around the camp. He concentrated even harder. He was looking for a backdoor. A way into these men’s minds. He found it, with the youngest of the group. His mind was the easiest to manipulate.

“Now my friend. Turn your weapon on the others. Kill them all. Kill them and I’ll give you a special reward. Something that will really make your little tail wag.”

The sniper turned his rifle towards the others and as soon as he had him in crosshairs, he fired, blowing the soldiers head off. The other two weren’t sure what was happening. One of them tried to look through the scope to get a better picture. The bullet came right through the front lens of the scope and blew off the back of his head. He rolled down the hill and landed right in front of the other sniper who looked over.

“Holy shit.....red team, we have two dead, I’m out of here.” he said over the radio. He packed up his rifle and slung it over his shoulder. As he turned, he saw all of the men standing right in front of him. He took out his side arm and aimed it right at the men. He looked over at Wade, whose eyes were now glowing a bright red. He could feel something almost crushing his skull. The man quickly discovered he had no control over the movements of his body. It was as if someone else was in control. He understood why his government wanted these men dead.

“How many more are there?” asked Wade.

“Four....at the bottom of the hill.”

“Call them up here. Betray me and I’ll turn you into a vegetable for the rest of your life.” said Wade as his eyes were glowing bright red.

“Red Team, this is echo leader. All targets have been eliminated, except for one. Move your team into the perimeter.” said the soldier over the radio.

“Copy.”

“How would you like a little treat for being such a good little soldier. You’d be doing us a huge favor. We need someone to test out our little experiment here. Would you like to help us?” asked Wade. The man nodded emphatically. He had no idea what they wanted, but he had to get this guy out of his head. First chance he got, he would kill him. He would kill all of them.

"I can hear your thoughts my child. Come, let's take care of the rest of these fellows, then you and I can get down to business." said Wade.

He put a leash around the soldiers neck and made him walk on all fours back to the camp. Wade liked his new pet. This one might actually be useful.

Frosty was sitting in his trailer, trying to figure out how to put his new gill together. The directions were obviously written by some one who had never grilled before in their life. He could figure this thing out. He decided to go out back to have a smoke and that was when he saw the two massive Chinook helicopters landing in front of the trailer park. Dozens of men got out wearing some kind of strange white suits. Another helicopter landed at the rear of the park. Several heavily armed men got out and set up a perimeter around the park. He looked at what was happening and could not believe it. Several of the residents were now outside their trailers as well, trying to comprehend what was happening. Frosty figured he had better get to the bottom of this ASAP. This was after all, his trailer park. Several of the suited men ran right past him. They were holding some kind of strange instruments in their hand. Someone who was obviously in charge with two men behind him came walking up to Frosty's Office. The two of them stared at one another for a second.

"You looking to rent a trailer?" asked Frosty nervously

"I'm Major David Druce, Nevada National Guard. This entire area has been placed under martial law by the President of the United States effective 3PM eastern standard time. You're cooperation would be greatly appreciated." said Druce .

"Martial law? Why?" asked Frosty

"Please let everyone know that no one is allowed to enter or leave this area. If they do, they will be detained. If we cannot detain them, they will be shot. I hope we're clear."

"Yes, we're clear. I think we all have a right to know what the hell is going on here, not unless you want a bloodbath here."

"We will explain everything, right now, I need a complete list of everyone living in the park. I need everyone accounted for."

"Jesus Frosty, what the hell is going on here?" asked one of the park tenants as she stormed inside with her children in tow."

"I don't know, let's just cooperate with them, so no one gets hurt." said Frosty.

Within an hour, four more helicopters arrived, along with dozens of scientists and doctors from the CDC. No one was allowed to travel on US 6 for any reason, the NHP had set up roadblocks on both ends of the highway. It was one of the most deserted highways in America, so stopping traffic wouldn't be too much of a problem.

President Fisk may have an explosive temper, but he was not about to slaughter fifty people just because Lindmueller suggested it. Fisk didn't trust him as far as he could throw him. He was a card carrying member of the deep state military industrial apparatus which was doing it's best to bring him

down. Fisk knew what was going to come. Perhaps he should have destroyed the community like Lindmueller had suggested, but he would have to take that to his grave and that was not something he took lightly. If there really was a virus or some kind of alien presence in that park, the best scientists in the world would find it.

Fisk had his own people at the highest level of the military and government as well, ones that reported directly to him and no one else. He had known about the crash for weeks and Lindmueller's silence only deepened his mistrust of him. He figured it was a deep state trap designed to have him take the fall for the slaughter, even though it was his own military advisors who recommended it. Fisk hadn't gotten to where he is today by trusting the wrong people and Lindmueller and his ilk were definitely the wrong people.

They still had the little problem of WADESVILLE and its inhabitants. Fisk had no problem ordering the air force to level the town and everything in it. Lindmueller reported that his men had not reported back for several hours and that they should assume the worst. That's exactly what President Fisk did and ordered the air force to destroy it.

Frosty's office was turned into the makeshift headquarters for the duration of the operation. An hour later, one of the officers came running inside the trailer with some papers in his hand. Druce took them and then walked over to Frosty.

"Okay, we have forty two of the forty four people living in this park accounted for. We are missing two, John Davis and Wade Dawson. You have any idea where they might be?" asked Druce.

"Yes. Wade is in TYBO, a ghost town up in the mountains. I think that's where you'll find JD as well. He said he was going up there to have a little chat with Wade. I'm guessing those two are the reason you are here."

"Well, yes, they are a very big part of the reason we are here." said Druce.

"I'll bet." said Frosty

JD drove out to Wade's camp. He took the turn past the NDOT Highway Station and turned onto a dirt road that led up into the mountains. He was about half a mile away from the camp and he instantly knew he was being watched. He kept driving. He stopped in front of a makeshift gate that had been erected by the inhabitants of the makeshift camp. He got out and looked around. It was freezing outside and JD had his winter jacket on. He had a gun with him, but he doubted it would do much good. A minute or so later, Wade and his followers came out to the gate. They were all armed, except for Wade. He wasn't walking at this point, so much as he was hobbling. JD hadn't seen him in several weeks and could not believe the transformation that had taken place. Whereas JD had grown taller and now had golden skin with golden hair, Wade had been hideously transformed into some kind of monster. JD knew what had happened, he just hoped he could get through to Wade before it was too late. The two of them just stared at one another. JD could feel Wade trying to pierce his thought pattern, but JD quickly shut him down. Once Wade realized he was not going to win, he went ahead with plan "b".

"JD, good to see you. You like what I've done to the place?" said Wade in a crackled voice.

"Yeah, it looks great Wade. I think you know why I'm here, so let's just cut to the chase." said JD

“Fine with me. What’s on your mind?” asked Wade.

“We have to turn ourselves in, before anyone else gets hurt.”

“Turn ourselves in? JD, what on Earth are you talking about?”

“Wade, they’ve quarantined the trailer park. I barely got out. Military people everywhere. They are here because of us. I don’t want anyone in the park to get hurt because of what we did.”

“I see. So, you think we should just turn ourselves in huh? Then what? Have you really thought this through JD?”

“Yes Wade. It’s our only option at this point. The government was going to destroy the town. President Fisk stepped in at the last minute and called it off.”

“I knew we made the right choice by electing him.”

“Come on Wade. Party’s over. Let’s just go back to the park and surrender.” said JD

“Boy JD, you never fail to fail, now do you? You have them right by the balls and you’re going to fold. Don’t you see, now is the time to double down and bet the rest of your chips. You need me JD, whether you want to admit it or not. You would just throw all of this away? Think of all the people we could help. All the lives we can save. All the good we can do for this planet?”

“Like selling them drugs?”

“You want to make an omelet , you have to break a few eggs.” he said

They both turned and could see a man wearing military fatigues come stumbling out to the gate. He looked right at JD and just started mumbling to himself.

“I.....I don’t know what he did to me, but I never want it to stop. I never want it to stop, because if it does, I might die before anyone else can experience this.....I don’t even know what I’m saying. Please kill me.” said the soldier.

“One of your creations, Wade?”

“He and his team were sent here to kill me. Now he’s my pet. I think being a junkie is better than being a killer. I’m making his life choices for him now.”

“Just kill me sir, please.....please!” said the soldier.

“Wade, what the hell have you done here? I mean, look at you and look at me. See the problem we have here?”

“No problem JD. You look like a ken doll and I look like something that lives in a kid’s closet. Looks aren’t everything. You’re still as hopelessly naïve as you were before he landed. You won’t last a minute without my help. You’re too damn nice. The rest of the world just eats up nice people and shits them out like a Tijuana burrito.”

“Maybe I am Wade. I guess if I have to have a personality defect, I’ll take that one over yours.”

“You would just surrender and let them dissect you like a science experiment? I don’t even thin they’d have the decency to kill you first.”

“You think you are going to run the planet? You’re delusional Wade. We don’t run anything. There’s two of us and six billion of everyone else.”

“JD, people will come running up to us, wanting to join us. They’ve seen what this planet has to offer. War, death, destruction, a hint of what fabulous technology the government has hidden. They hate this planet more than we do. Humanity is just one giant bowel movement. They need us and they know it.”

“You think the Universal Mind did this to us? It only brings out what we already have inside of us. All of us have hidden talents and powers, just waiting to be unleashed. We did this to ourselves, not some magical power.”

“If you say so JD. This is not productive. I think I will go back to my cooking. I gave the kid a taste of what we’re working on out here. A full dose will have you tweaking for the rest of your life. Well, until I sell you the antidote. The drugs are free, but the antidote will cost you.”

“You’re sick Wade.”

“I’m just trying to make an honest dollar JD. You better leave. I don’t think you have anything to offer at this point. When you’ve come to your senses, I will be more than happy to make you a full business partner. Until then, please don’t waste my time.” said Wade.

“You know Wade, it’s not our sky high IQs, or all the skills we have, or the things we can do that matter. I watched a video on open heart surgery yesterday. I can probably do it better than most surgeons. That doesn’t matter. The Universal Mind isn’t about changing you, it’s about making you remember the one and only thing that matters.”

“Really? What would that be?”

“The golden rule. The only rule that has and will ever matter. The only rule our planet has to live by. Treat others as you would want to be treated. If our planet followed that one simple rule, we would advance a thousand years overnight. No more war or poverty. No more genocide. No more slaughter of indigenous peoples. No more billionaires. No more bullshit. It’s so simple even a five year old can understand it. That’s the one lesson I’ve learned from all of this. That’s the one lesson I want to share with the rest of the planet. It’s our only way out of the mess we’ve created for ourselves. The rest of the planets in the galaxy figured this out thousands of years ago. I think it’s about time we followed suit.”

“If you say so JD. You know where to find me. All of your heroes are dead. Murdered, gone forever. Look at the world now. Look at what Martin Luther King and the other human rights leaders were fighting against back in the 1960’s. Those dark forces are stronger now than they ever were. Once the killer robots are built and deployed, humanity is finished. Look at what humanity has done to itself and you say I’m the monster?” asked Wade.

“Maybe you’re right Wade. Maybe I should just give up on the people of this planet. Maybe they won’t ever learn, but I will never stop trying. I will keep fighting for the law of one until I die. That’s my

mission, that's what I've chosen to accept. Somehow, Bobby knew that when he had me put my hand on that box. He could see all of this."

"You know there are two planes on their way here to destroy us? You know it and still you don't fight back. Why JD, why?"

"I fight back with love. That's what this planet needs right now more than anything. It's all anyone ever needs." he said.

The two of them could hear the F-16's overhead. Wade could almost see into the cargo bay. He knew what they were carrying. He knew it would be pointless to try and run or hide.

"Well, it's been nice knowing you JD. Maybe somebody will find your ashes with a magnifying glass and make an urn for you." said Wade.

The pilots armed the bombs and dropped them right onto their target. Wade and JD watched the bombs falling. Just as they were about to detonate, JD felt some kind of strange tingle in his body. He watched the world around him disappear. When he opened his eyes again he was some place else. There was bright light and everyone was standing around him. He was looking right at a man who was wearing a white robe. He smiled and put his hand on JD's shoulder. He didn't have to say anything. Everyone around him could read his thoughts.

"John Davis, it's a pleasure to meet you. My name is Thomas. These are the first humans. The ones who landed on this planet so many thousands of years ago. We came to deliver the same message as yourself. To spread the Universal Mind. To convince the people of this planet to live by the golden rule. We underestimated their resistance to such a simple concept. You have been chosen to lead humanity out of its own darkness, to make them one again with the universe and out creator. Will you accept such a role?" asked Thomas.

"I have to. I have no choice. We are too far behind the rest of the people's of this galaxy. I will accept this role. What has happened to the other one? His name is Wade?" asked JD

"Wade was sent to another planet, where there are others like him. A place where he may learn from his mistakes. Hopefully the individual will come around to our way of thinking. He'll have a few thousand years to think about it."

"What have you learned in all this JD? What have you taken away from this experience?" said one of the beings out loud.

"Well, I guess I learned that it isn't how smart a person is, or what kind of skills they have or what they look like that makes them who they are. It's what's in a man's heart that matters. That's all that ever matters. I just can't understand how Bobby chose me for all this? It was just an accident I was there that night."

"JD, it was no accident. The being knew exactly what they were doing when they chose you and the other to receive the gift. You and your planet were shown two possible futures. One where you follow the golden rule and one where you do not. The planet had to be reminded of this, that's why you two were selected for this adventure, because, as you say, it's what is in a man's heart that matters. It is all that ever matters."

In another instant, JD was back at the crash site. He opened his eyes and looked around. He could feel his body back to its old self. He was John Davis once again. Wade was gone. It was as if he never existed. JD hoped he would be ok, wherever he was. It was just he and he alone now. He was back to being just John Davis, the truck driver for Concordia Mines. The man who had reached out and touched the stars.....and the stars had touched him back.