

HOLO

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"It is what it is." President Donald J. Trump, August 2020

I: Inclusive

We were out in the terrain looking pass the sage and cacti, when Omar came upon us and offered us refuge from the environment.

"Dude, check this out!" Omar said setting up the Holo.

Suddenly after days outside the zone, there we were zoned in on the Holo. Mesmerized by the dreem-screen.

After months of being sliced in the atmosphere, there we were, drenched in the sallow of Holo, eking its flow, sensing its dimensions, salaciously taking its inclusion. The Holo had entwined our brains and we were subjected to its inclusive fold.

"You know, we are just posh to the invention of Soledad, enriched by delusional blowback." Omar stated.

"What? no, this is life!" I cried out.

"No, it's not!" Omar said

"Yes, it is...burn the fat!" I asserted.

"Wrong." Omar said with more authoritarian fervor.

"Then why are you setting it up if it ain't real bruh?"

What am I thinking? burn the fat is real. It's life. True life.

Not the illusionary world of Holo.

"It's Holo." Omar said with a smile to make you believe.

"Fine." I said.

"Holo." I succumbed to belief.

"Holo, be thy name." I folded and withdrew.

Omar sat with his face staring at mine, "You know Holo is everything."

"I believe Holo is everything." I said giving in to the reason of Omar.

"Yes, I believe in Holo as divine truth." I said crossing my fingers behind my back. I really didn't believe in Holo as the end all be all of life.

I sat staring at Omar staring at me. Thinking I got him this time, he believes my lie, he thinks I'm with him, a droid of inclusive alloy.

"I don't believe you." Omar yelled. "You're a liar, a fake a fraud!"

What? He doesn't believe me? I was so convincing. I had

believed the shit myself. And now, he doesn't believe me? He thinks I'm lying, a fraud and disbeliever. That won't do, I can't escape his wrath. He'll crucify me. Here on 23rd Ave. No fucking way is that going to happen, not in my lifetime, fuck that!

I launched my hand out and swooshed a bridge of distain across his brow. He dropped like a sponge on an elevator heading north to the upper east side.

Omar hit the ground, flooded the street with scum and dissolved into the pavement.

Fuck that shit! I said to myself, "Fuck you!" I shouted at what was left of Omar on the pavement on 23rd and Lexington.

"Fuck you!" I shouted again looking at Manhattan's lower east side. No way is bullshit going to run my life, fucking bastard.

Omar ceased to exist, gone from the realm of total consciousness, empty to the feeds of life, dead as a door nail as they say, Omar was gone, gone forever.

I looked at the street where Omar once was, nothing was left, not a drop of blood, semen, drool, nothing, he was lost forever, never to return to this place of the living. Only the dead, dead to existence, dead to the realm of living, dead as a door nail.

I did this, I thought, I killed Omar, forever, I didn't really mean too, I was just angry, angry at life, and I took it out on Omar.

Omar paid the price, life excluded, life demised, life exhausted and extinguished of zest. Life diminished and inert. Life beyond ingestion...he was dead.

My fault!

My Fault!

Omar returned from the dead and looked at me, "Liar!" he stated before vanishing.

"Liar?" what did he mean?

I wasn't lying about killing him, was I?

I'm troubled by fact, by illusion, by guilt. I am committed to the origin of Holo, I believe in Holo as life, I accept...Holo. I now took Holo as true, no crossed fingers, no not believing, I believe.

Holo be thy name...Holo is life, life is Holo, Holo equals Holo.

Holo is and will always be true. I submit to Holo and Holo is the way to achieve Holoness. Swallowed and ingested as Holo, we be Holo, we are Holo, Holo is Holo. Set up on Earth twenty years ago, Holo was released and accepted by everyone on Earth, the Moon, Mars and beyond. It

being the new Facebook and Instagram and all other data network platforms rose to universal acceptance and rapidly became the new hip-hop. We all bowed to its superiority.

Omar once again ryzen from the dead, "liar!"

My eyes rolled upward, what the fuck!

I said I accepted Holo and yet, he still haunts me.

What more can I do? I follow Holo ways, life, creed, isms, truths, be told, I believe in Holo, but yet I can't seem to make Holo believe in me, it keeps hounding me like a wasp on a feeding frenzy. I accept Holo as my life, why can't Holo believe me?

Omar once again appeared to me, dead as he was, white and gray and liquifying itself all over the carpet.

"Holo is a lie." Omar said before fading out on my carpet.

What?? Omar was a true believer in Holo, now he said holo was a lie. Am I to believe this inclusion, this statement from my dead friend Omar, am I to believe that Holo is a lie, just like I thought, that Holo was just a sponge of goo to eliminate my vision of truth, a form of brainwash, a lie, a subjective view of the world to decompensate my vision of truth. Holo was not the divine invention of truth but of make believe.

Falsehoods and illusions, lies and mistruths, something to occupy my mind with as my body slowly dies of intoxicants, sold by Holo, for the enrichment of Holo, to make Holo supreme.

Bullshit...fuck this!

"I don't believe!" Fuck this shit!" I said out loud, "fuck all this shit! Bullshit! Fuck YOU!"

I transported myself by AIEV (Artificial Intelligent Electric Vehicle) to the East River as sunset was approaching in the west part of town over what was left of the Jersey east shore.

I sat back on the edge of the river and stared at the reflection of Omar in the waves, "you too are bullshit!" A lie, a mistruth, omen of lies. "I don't believe in Holo, Holo is lies." I said out at the river flow.

I leaned back on my elbows, lifted up my shirt and let the breeze sweep across my bare chest. This is, this is life...not Holo. I said to myself, this is life...life without Holo.

My long brown hair flowed from the wind, my thin tan body felt the warmth from the sun, I sat there thinking about how I could try and not commit to Holo. Even as a Holo Influencer for the past five years. I could change my perspective on life.

I gazed out at the river and saw *Siddhartha*, I know

Siddhartha when I see him, even though, he said his name was Pho. *Siddhartha* was rowing his boat to shore, his long hair blowing in the wind, his beard full and dry. He loaded his boat on the sand and stepped out towards me, naked and tan, tall and lean. He grabbed a robe from his boat and approached my sector of beach.

Pho gazed at the sun and told me "I sense what you feel. I can feel your dismay."

I said, "Pho, what is life?"

Pho said, "It is what it is."

"But what does 'is' mean?" I asked. Pho gazed at the sun, looked at the waves of the river and said, "Is means, nothing or is it? I can't say for sure, but you can only equate it with being."

Siddhartha looked at me with his piercing eyes, "I can see you don't understand, but that's okay, it is what it is."

Siddhartha moved pass me and turned before heading back to his boat, his wild hair and beard flowing in the breeze. "Until we meet again." He boarded his boat and rowed back into the river disappearing into the fog that was streaming on the waves towards me from the ocean south of me.

Omar once again entered my vision, this time Omar didn't yell at me about being a fake liar, he was more serene. He

smiled, nodded and disappeared. It seems all was forgiven. I laid back on my elbows again, opened my wind closed shirt, felt the warm breeze from the river whip pass me, I closed my eyes, felt the warmth of the sun drenching me from within the spirals of the foggy mist and fell asleep for a few moments. I was at peace finally that moment, for that moment, as if that moment was to be always that moment and nothing more.

I awoke from my short nap, grabbed the bag of mix nuts from my pocket and ate my usual ten pieces of this salted delicacy, grabbed a banana from a nearby tree and had a few sips of wine that I stashed in my pant pocket before transporting myself back to Times Square to watch fireworks for the new coming year.

"Happy 4610!" everyone was shouting as the first firework went off. Thousands of people stood in the Square bringing in the new Holo year. They crowded all around from 45th Street down to 39th, from Hell's Kitchen all the way to Lexington. A very happy crowd of every human on Earth participated the new year.

Vistors from as far as the Moon and Mars came for the event of a lifetime. They had food vendors from the far reaches of the globe bringing in all kinds of delicacies, including rare forms of meats and spices from Southeast Asia. The celebration lasted for hours, until early dawn. The crowd dispersed quickly to get back to their new day,

immersed in Holo once again for the next year.

4610? That can't be, it's 1966, what's going on here, I'm not a time traveler, I'm a--- I had to stop my thought, what was I? I forgot who I was for a moment, I thought I was a young man studying law at NYU. The year of Holo 4610 injected into my brain, my old sense of time and space were diminished to vague illusions.

Lost my train of thought again, Omar came out of the side street smiling with long white hair, it didn't look like Omar, but I knew Omar when I sensed him, this was him, he was walking towards me with his hand out like to shake mine.

"Holo be." he said grabbing my right hand.

"Holo be." I replied. He withdrew his hand from mine and started tapping at the air in front of him, I could see words forming from his fingers and immediately took to my own space and started tapping words back, we were communicating via Holo, soon I could see others around me tapping, forming words, communicating among each other.

We were Holo, we were tapped in, 1966 was a vague memory of mine lost within the Holo, a dreen dream, the dreen-screen flickered inside my eyes, I had succumbed yet again to the world of Holo, I had been summoned by Omar from the river and told to be here at this exact moment in time, the 4610 new year of the Holo, a passing

thought came to mind; this was the beginning of the Ryzen Outpost of Holo, the end I feared of civilization. The end of free thought, free will, free life. We were all bought and sold and peasants to the Holo Hierarchy, my final thought to myself as myself was ... we're all doomed!

It was like a switch went off in my head, a sudden jerk of intense lightning, a flash of light on my eyes, my mind caught wind of a new immersion.

Blank went my thoughts, blank went my feelings, blank went the world, the real world around me, I no longer was in the 3D. I was in Holo, completely immersed in the walled closure of the matrix of Holo. The circuitry in my cornea gave way to the implant hidden at birth gave way to the vision of Holo. And just like that I was taken even more so than before.

I lost my soul, I lost my life, I was no longer in charge of what I thought, what I did, where I went, because, I went nowhere. I was in nothing, but Holo, Holo was all there was, tapping my brains out telling dreem versions of nothing to no one, but yet everyone. The wall was overwhelming, I couldn't see over it, through it, around it, cut off from the world of 1966 or 4610, it didn't matter, time didn't matter, life didn't matter. Holo, holo mattered more than life itself. Holo was in charge completely as of 12:01am 4610, the year of our Holo had begun, and there was no reset button, no way to undo what had just begun,

we were captured and solidified to the hierarchies whims and folly.

No sleep, no food, just tapping out meaningless words that were formed by Holo AI making us reply back to nothingness. Tapping my fingers to make words that spoke of nothing. It didn't matter if the words were true or dreen-lies, we still tapped and replied. All day, everyday, all night, sun up, sun down, rain or shine, tap, tap, tap, I had just a moment of free thought, I really did. I felt something real for a moment. Holo hadn't completely taken over me, there was still something inside, something that was me. I could sense it for a moment, a moment in time, that time was now. But that time also wasn't now, it was gone, as fast as it came. It was over, gone.

Tap, tap my fingers were getting sore, my wrists were numb, my mind was cluttered with words of dreen-like messaging. AI sent me another query, I answered voluntarily.

ANSWER SUBMITTED

My words were all in capital letters and stayed there in front of me, they didn't dissolve. I tapped another word.

FUCK

All of the sudden I felt me again, I smiled at the word I just tapped. I tapped something that was mine, not dreen-like,

not Holo, but ME!

FUCK SHIT MUTHERFUCKER

I laughed, had I beaten Holo, was I free once more?

Everything went blank on my vision lens. 'Shut him down' I heard in the distance, 'shut that fucker up', the words were getting closer. I was still in my cube of walls, was I safe here, would they not see me, was I able to be invisible from AI?

No, they found me. Walls went down, droids looked at me and grabbed me from my nanochair.

"You fucking asshole!" the droid said to me, grabbing me by my shirt, "You think you can beat us, you think you can win?"

"Maybe." I said.

"Fuck you!" the droid threw me on his airboard, we're going to Holo Intake, "re-education for you!" The airboard powered by mass amounts of small flux discs underground Manhattan's grid surface supported by mass amounts of tiny satellites above Earth magnetically creating a circuit to make for a rapid smooth ride.

I let out a heavy sigh and submitted my limp body across the board from their sedation injection and we flew into the distance towards Main Tower in the East Village.

I could see the glowing number on the building in the distance as we got closer to Main Tower 666, I smiled in my hazy vision and foggy brain; so typical, Holo and 666, why not.

Once again Omar appeared to me in my fog, smiled and dissolved. He knew, I thought, yep, Omar knew, he knew all of this, and yet; he didn't tell me, wouldn't let out the secret, the truth of it all, the real world of Holo in 3D.

The skylight opened as we made final approach to MT666. The droid grabbed my shirt to get me steady as we entered the opening and landed on the sky deck below roof level.

"There you go, all safe and sound." it said, raising me off the board, "H1 will see you now." It injected me again with a eye opener, my fog lifted instantly.

"H1? what's that?" I asked.

"You are such an asshole." it replied, "H1 is Hierarchy Leader No.1."

"Wow, the big guy, I'm honored." I said proudly, I knew who H1 was, I was just fucking with the droid.

"Don't be so honored, this is as bad as it gets, you may not like the outcome." It pushed me towards the elevator, the doors parted quickly, it shoved me in, punched in a floor button, the doors closed. All alone in the elevator

heading down to my fate. I was wondering what was really in store for me, and then again, what did I do so bad that H1 wanted to see me. I was always a drone, a cog in the works, why was I summoned to this?

My thoughts eased after hearing muzak playing in the elevator, Frank Zappa music from my recollection of music history, One Size Fits All, San Ber'dino.

The elevator floated me down a few floors to Level 420. I rolled my eyes, ridiculous, these typical numbers. I can also bet there wasn't a floor 13 in the building.

The door opened into a large darkened room, spot light on the center of the floor. Ten shadow figures semi-circled around it, I couldn't make out anyone, just tall forms in the darkness.

"Welcome 7896917." A voice said from the middle of the shadow pack.

"Wahsup?" I replied with a up nod, I really was a shithead, resistant to authority on all levels, I guess I was always a fuckhead, only today I was proving it not only to myself but to these assholes in the room.

Uh oh, little did I know this was a viral livestream to Global Holo.

Okay, I got that knowledge after seeing the Dreen-Screens near the ceiling of the room lit up with

world cities scanning across the bottom of the screens.

I felt a little awkward after realizing my celebrity spot. I don't like the limelight, I like the shadows, much like these assholes I was guessing. After a few moments the screens were all set up with responses from around the world.

Everyone was here, the whole world tuned in to my fate...I'm so honored, not!

"You are here, because of your disobedience, and we must decide what will be done with your dissension." The voice continued, a deep male voice, very authoritative and powerful. I could see why he was H1. He had that CEO whiff about him.

"You are the only one globally with this level of resistance." he continued, "You must be made a lesson for others who may follow your lead into not being of Holo."

"What do you mean?" I started to ask.

"Be quiet, dissenter!" he shouted, "You are to be re-educated, extreme re-education."

I didn't say a word. I just my look of bewilderment said it all for me.

"Deletion, total deletion." he said.

What does that mean, I wondered, deletion from the

matrix of Holo or deletion of Holo 3D or deletion from reality?

H1 stepped out of the shadows and towards me, he was tall, a little taller than me, probably 2 meters high and thin, like 80 kilograms; clad in black, and, a man with no face, a intimidating statue of a man.

"Total deletion...all levels." He said gazing into my eyes with his blankness. I could see his robe slightly open revealing a erected penis, I could also see the others in the room with erections stroking them as he sentenced me to deletion, these guys must get off on this stuff.

"Can I say something?" I asked.

He stepped back an inch and cocked his head to his left, willing to listen.

"You may." he obliged.

"Fuck you!" I shouted, and you know I was going to shout this, it was inevitable, I'm an asshole, even if my life depended on it, as it most certainly does now, and yet, asshole to the grave I guess.

"You are one funny guy." H1 said, "I'll give you that, you think you're above and beyond everything 3D and you think you are above Holo."

H1 came closer to me and softly said.

"I understand, I was a resister too in my youth, not wanting to be of Holo, wanting to be my own man. I totally understand, but, this is now, there is nothing but now, and you're in it, I'm in it, as a matter of fact, the whole system is in it via Holo Livestream." He said lowering his hood from his robe.

I could make out a face and his eyes now, he was not like the monster I envisioned but had a kind, gentle face and eyes to him. I might be wrong about Holo and H1, but what's with the hard-ons.

"I know," he said, "you are wrong, and because of your new interest in Holo, I may take total deletion off the table, only deletion of DNA protocols, you may exist in time...only."

I became bewildered again, and rolled my eyes, shook my head, "What?"

"You may live in time." He stated to me and to the system. "You may continue with your friend Omar."

How does he know about Omar? How did he know about my thoughts.

"I know, I am of Holo, you are of Holo, you didn't know you were, but you have always been of Holo and will always be of Holo, from the beginning of time to the end of time. Holo is." CEO H1 concluded his online speech.

Holo Livestream shut down. It was just H1 and his semi-circle of CEO's in the room now with me.

"I think that went well," he said, turning from me and returning to his place in the semi-circle. "You may go."

What? he's letting me go, I don't think so, there's something up, this isn't what or how things are done, usually they delete you after the cameras are off or so I'm told, maybe I was wrong.

"Nope," he said, "Holo isn't evil. We are all one"

I could hear the lie in his tone, as he continued to say what was going to happen to me, about how free I was to "walk about the cabin", but I could sense it was just a ploy to get me relaxed enough to kill me without my knowledge.

Then it happened out of left field, a sudden jolt to the floor. It seems there was a 6.9 earthquake suddenly happening at Main Tower 666 and the place was swaying like a hula hoop, then shaking pretty viciously, the screens were toppling from their brackets and the spot light was flickering on and off.

Alarms were blaring and the semi-circle of CEO's, including myself were losing our balance, and their hard ons, then another major jolt, the structure of MT666 was crumbling from the ground up. Very concerning, especially being so high in the sky from ground level. 420 floors

above Manhattan, this earthquake was causing some major damage.

I thought about running out while the going was easy, but the elevators weren't working, I had no place to go but with the flow of the earthquake.

The CEO's were attempting to head to their individual chambers to escape the calamity, I stood there bracing myself on the floor, legs spread in a surfing stance to balance.

So I was wondering while this was happening how was Holo doing while this was going on.

I'm sure Holo Cloud was someplace other than MT666, protected from all apocalyptic disasters imaginable. Safe from all harm, it was Holo after all. Nothing could destroy Holo.

Just then the top of the building blew off, the whole structure was reeling and ready to crumble, out of the corner of my eye I saw a airboard fall from what was left of the roof, it landed in the center of the room, it was a smaller board then the one I was brought here on.

I grabbed it, hopped on board and strapped into the boots and thrust it upward, I wasn't very good at controlling it at first, but it got easier. I headed up and out of the crumbling building into the night sky.

Hopefully, the boards sensors would adjust my interference of other boards, drones and buildings. I sighted my vision to the horizon south of the building to get away from MT666 as fast as possible.

I headed towards the East River, I know the East River, East River is my home, all the nooks and crannies were accessible to me, so I sped off to that direction. My peripheral vision saw as I sped away, MT666 was crumbling to the ground. I was pretty sure H1 and “family” were going to demise in the rumble that was about to happen.

I wasn't pleased of their demise, but happy that I survived both the destruction of MT666 and my DNA protocol deletion. Hopefully, I was eliminated from the databanks and free to do as I want in the future. If not, I was at least heading to a place I found safe and I could also get some help from my friends if I needed it; that is, if I still had any friends left after the livestream.

. . .

Omar hadn't appeared to me in over a day, that was pretty strange since Omar was always popping up frequently lately. It was nice not having that vision or guilt constantly weighing on me. I had other things to worry about, like my Holo livestream time. Would my friends and family disown

me for my stance on Holo or would they all understand. We still had free will, didn't we, at least I thought we did, but I could be wrong.

I huddled down in my apartment on 23rd, for the evening, it was a very long day. I won't give you the address, I don't want to be bothered by any Holoites who may or may not like me after my Livestream.

The following morning, well, mid-morning, I managed to get connected of my best friend in the world, Holly. She was my friend from before Holo was ever this big. She was not a Holoite or a geek anymore, just a normal everyday kind of person who didn't work or get drunk or use a computer. I guess you could say she was a retired monk. She did like fast food, places like Old Wand's is her favorite, extreme Vietnamese cuisine, let's just say it can get strange tasting.

I landed my "new" airboard outside her building, which coincidentally was across the street from my apartment, imagine that. That way, the board wouldn't be at my place but hers, I know, that's mean to do to somebody, but she was basically off grid, so no harm done.

I'm guessing Holo would probably still be after me. I wanted to lie low and not tap into Holo, but it was becoming really hard not to want to tap. I really had the urge to go Holo, I wanted to just drone out and tap a few

lines; just to stay in touch, look around, be a part of the whole, but if I did, I'd be discovered. I don't want that.

My urge to tap into Holo was really irking me. I pushed the revolving door in Holly's building and walked up the five flights to Holly's door and knocked. She opened the door, nude as always. I have to say she looked really good.

She was a very pretty woman without trying. She had this aura about her that she just made you light when seeing her. Being naked didn't hurt either, she was gorgeous. Tall and tan, a little shorter than me, her long light brown hair just touching the top of her firm breasts was exciting to see, chub, chub.

"So, what's new?" she asked while walking back to her chair.

"Oh you know, the usual." I said placing my backpack on the floor next to the door, "being chased, captured, belittled and scorned by Holo."

"So, typical day for you then." She said sitting back on her favorite rocking chair picking up her cup of green tea she was having before I interrupted her.

"I really need to Holo." I said to her, almost like a junkie. I was a junkie, a Holo junkie.

"You know, that shit is gonna kill ya, right." she said sipping.

"I know, but, I'm really hooked on Holo, I can't lie." I was not happy with this fact about myself, I really didn't want to Holo, it was something I was struggling with for years now. Holo was in my veins, brain and soul. I had Holo dreams, I bought Holo food, gear, listened to what Holo wanted me to listen to musically, it was imbedded in me and I couldn't get it out.

I was amazed how Holly could just leave it when she did. She was Holo long time ago, in fact, she worked at Holo. One of the chief code architects in the early days, but she was able to give it up within a year after quitting Holo over mismanagement. Holo leadership wanted to go Tri-Solar System. She thought Holo should just remain on Earth, just in case something went wrong and they could purge it if necessary. If it went tri, then Earth, Mars and the Moon would all be infected and purging would be harder to do, but management went their way, she went hers. She was better off, not a Holo bone in her pretty little body.

She sipped some more of her tea before putting the cup down and came over to the sofa where I was sitting and sat beside me. She put her arm around my shoulder and hugged me gently.

"Don't be afraid, I will always be here for you," she said kissing my cheek. "you're my favorite person in the world."

"Thanks." I said shivering from Holo withdrawal.

"I just can't believe how Holo has such a hold on you." Holly said as she rose up and returned to her chair and tea.

"Well, I'm just an addict kind of guy." I said, "I like being high, from drugs, alcohol, sex, Holo."

She choked on her tea for a moment, recovered quickly and blew me a kiss. "We could have sex right now if you want," she offered, "it might take that urge of Holo away if you had something else to occupy your mind and body with."

"That's was a great idea, I might take you up on that."

"Well, let's go to my bedroom." She placed her tea cup on the side table, rose up and walked into the next room shaking her bottom flirtatiously. Oh there is going to be some fun tonight.

She laid on the bed on her side and summoned me over. "Don't forget to take off your clothes." she said.

"Oh right." I was caught up in the moment I forgot to strip. She helped me with my shirt and pulled my pants off and underwear and socks, I slid up beside her and we slowly, gently made love. It was a good idea, it did take my mind off my troubles for a few moments, I could actually start to feel whole again and the itching to tap was fading. I felt like me again, which was nice to have happen. I thought

that I should just stay here with her forever, Holo would go away, the whole world would go away and I would be free to just be with Holly.

But I knew that was just a dream, I could never do that, neither could she, that's just a junkie dreaming of everything good happening and nothing bad. And life isn't one or the other, it's all, so that dream went out the window in moments.

"Stay here tonight," she offered, "don't go home, just stay with me, tomorrow you can either stay here or do what you must."

"I might take you up on that." I said, "I do need some rest, I've had a long hard week."

"Speaking of long and hard." She looked down at my dick. "Shall we do it again?"

"By all means, all night long if need be." I wholeheartedly agreed for an all night session of lovemaking. I fell asleep and Omar appeared in my dream.

II: Delusion

Dream, a dreen-dream, Omar, again I struggled with the vision of Omar appearing dead and unforgiving. I thought I

was rid of the guilt. I thought making love to Holly would end all Holo. But no, it didn't. It was getting worst. The urge to tap, the Omar visions. They were all getting worst. I thought I was over it all, I thought I could constrain my need for Holo. I thought Holly would make it all better. She tried, she was still here with me. Asleep beside me, I didn't want to wake her with my Holo dream. A nightmare really, my sweat was pouring off my body. The sweat was flooding her bed, she and I were swept off the bed onto the floor. Floating down the bedroom towards the living room. Sliding under the front door to the street, down the street to the river. Into the river, under the river, into the soil under the water. Under the earth, under the rock and molten lava to the center of the earth, into the core of the world.

I felt warm and fuzzy, the earths core was a cocoon of safety I've never witnessed before. Far from the toils of earth and of people and of Holo. I was indeed away from Holo finally. Holo could not find me here. I was free and safe in the core of the earth so warm and fuzzy, it felt like scag.

Holo was gone, I didn't need to tap. I was free from Holo, Holly was here. We were burrowed into our cocoon away from the world, deep within the world. No one could touch us, hidden away, far from all harm, far from Holo. Holo couldn't penetrate this far down in the earth. It couldn't

reach us, harm us, delete us. I didn't need it, I didn't want it, I just wanted to be free from it.

Just Holly and me, lost to the world in our own world. Living just for us, no one else, no one could touch us, I was free!

My brain ached, a surge of pain hit my right temple. My eyes shut from the pain, the warm and fuzzy nice and easy feeling was vanishing rapidly as the pain in my head pounded.

Holly was gone, the cocoon was gone, my safe place on earth was gone. I had nothing but a Holo dream influencing my thoughts while awake.

Holo had entered my mind as I slept, crept into my soul once again. The need, the need to Holo.

"Fuck!" I yelled as loud as I could.

No one heard. I was alone, not in a cocoon but a white room. Everything in white, bed, sheets, carpet, walls, ceiling, doors. All white and very small almost the size of a large closet. No AI quantum computers, not even a window, just the closed door.

But I could tap, I could feel it, the urge to tap. All I have to do is raise my fingers and start tapping. That's all I have to do, tap to freedom; tap into the Holo, be apart of what I needed. I needed to tap, and I needed to tap now. It was

so frustrating, that fucking urge, I had ... I have to do it, I have to do it ... fucking NOW!

My fingers rose above my shoulders I started tapping, anything, gibberish, just to get back to tapping in Holo. I didn't care what I was tapping. I was tapping, that's all I need, tap, tap, tap...

Found.

Holo found me, it traced my location.

'7896917 I found you.' Holo voiced in my head, I was again caught by my need to Holo, I wasn't free.

My head ached, my soul flatlined. I was not a happy man. Holly was nowhere to be found. I had no idea where I was; I thought I was home, or NYC or at the river or under the river. Where was I?

Where was Omar?

"Holo be" a voice said to me.

H1 was not dead, H1 was here beside me. H1 and the semi-circle survived MT666 collapse. MT666 didn't collapse, it remained upright and even more powerful.

"Holo be." H1 said to me.

"Holo be." I relinquished to follow.

H1 smiled that gentle smile of his. The whiff of brilliant

CEO could be tasted in my mouth. His awesomeness was soothing to the touch. It felt good to be in his presence again. Part of the whole, part of Holo once again.

Home.

A choir of voices said, "Holo be."

A choir of voices in my head said, "Holo be."

A choir of Holo in my soul said, "Holo be thy name."

Ah, that hairy feeling came over me, that warm and fuzzy cocoon like jellyfish spreading its tentacles around my body. Bringing me into it, enmeshing me into itself slimy gooey, sexy smelly aura of disgust, filth, urine infested taste of degenerate AI sod.

There I was again in Holo, Holo up to my filthy slimy neck, scaly, foul smelling shithole of Holo. Holo be thy name, right, you fucking filthy mutherfucking piece of shit I call fucking home! Holo!

Tap

FUCK

It stayed.

Tap

FUCK FUCK

Both stayed, I laughed, fuck you Holo, my shit is sticking

around again, mutherfucker!

H1 was not amused. Semi-circle was not amused. They collectively sighed of frustration with me once again. Once again my number was up for deletion, total deletion.

I have to admit, it doesn't surprise me, my arrogance is amazing. I'm still such a shithead, such a stupid mutherfucker who never fucking learns from his fucking mistakes. I had it all, Holly, freedom, deletion off the table; but no, my need to Holo interrupted all of that. My need to Holo and despise Holo at the same time interrupted that freedom. That freedom that I crave, but not enough to beat my addiction. Nope, I did it again, fucked up everything once again.

H1 looked at me, "What do your friends and family call you?" He asked.

"I don't have a family, but some of my friends call me dood, sometimes, they call me King."

"King, that's a strange name?" H1 said.

"Well, my parents named me that." I said.

"King," He said, "sounds royal."

"I wouldn't know, my parents died before I was born." I told him.

"How did that happen?" he asked.

"Transport accident, they were killed in a transport accident before I was born."

"How is that, a soul born from the dead?" he asked.

"I was cut out of my mother before she died." I explained unemotionally.

H1 looked at me, I could see sadness in his gentle eyes. "I feel so sorry for your loss." he said.

"I really didn't know them, so it is what it is." I replied.

"How did you know they called you King then?" he asked.

"My aunt told me, they had picked a name way before I was born after they knew I was male."

H1 sighed, looked at me and said, "You know, I'm not going to delete you after all."

I admit I was relieved by this, but I didn't understand why.

"You've had a pretty tragic life, and I can see where all of this resistance is coming from." H1 looked to the others in the room.

"Reprieve, a reprieve for you." he said thrusting his hand in reverence gesturing to the other CEO's.

"A reprieve, under condition." he continued.

"You will have to work for the Holo, the pay and the benefits are awesome."

I smiled sarcastically, bewildered, thankful, amused and grateful.

"You are to become Holo oriented with the new bash of newbies inducted into this years Holo Fame.

Holo Fame? what the fuck is that?

"Holo Fame, is this year's prestigious learning program to continue influencing others to follow Holo." H1 said explaining my question that he read from my thoughts.

"You and the newbies will be telling others of the system to follow the ways of Holo, it's not that difficult and you may actually like being a part of the whole."

I stood there blankly staring at the Hierarchy. Great, I have to be a part of what I despise. Ironic, coincidence, whatever...better than being totally deleted from Holo 3D.

Or should I remain true to myself. Should I consider to remain resistant to their will. Should I maintain, my sense of who I am, and not plunder to their way of life or thoughts.

I have to think about this carefully. I have to think about this without them knowing what I'm thinking. This is going to be really difficult. They know my every thought, even this one. I'm really fucked if they heard this. I'm really fucked if they know I'm not going to go along with their will.

Fuck! They probably heard that. I have to find a way and hide to think. I have to get away from their listening minds. I have to find Holly and run and hide in my cocoon in deep earth, oh shit, they probably know all this now ... I'm really fucked, shit!

III: Ramification

Well, Fuck! Why do I keep doing this to myself. I continue to switch on Holo, every single moment of the day. Considering the amount of Holo I subject myself to and constantly scrolling through mindless dribble, I can't stand that I actually fell for this bullshit again.

Even with deletion off the table, maybe that wasn't a wise decision, but my only one, if I'm to stay relevant and in motion on the same plane as everyone else.

But I signed this agreement with blood and grey matter. Signed away any hopes and dreams of living a free existence. Now I have to continue perched on my seat typing in shit for the world to see. Holo be thy ... crap!

Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, FUCK, that's all I type. I know H1 reads it. Holo always alerts them when the f word is typed or spoken or thought. They can't have such words being transcribed to the world, they're heading for a new pure

existence of one thought wins all. If you disobey, you get summoned. As I did, and forced to change or be deleted, as in my case, and I fell for it ... survival ... every ... single ... time!

Be that as it may, I'm here and I'm Holoing day and night like a good boy, drone, whatever the fuck I am.

This is mindless, this is bullshit, this is boring as fuck!

All I do, everything I do, this is nothing, nothing existence. Existence seems to be the word of the day. Fuck, the second word of the day, not even a word, mostly a thought, a thought that I hope H1 doesn't pick up on. The change has to come, I have to change my thoughts, I have to be like them, type nothing all day; post nothing all day, show the world nothing all day, just fucking bullshit.

Damn, I have to start typing something more in like with everyone else. Then I can continue, maybe find another way out of this fucking Holo bullshit.

The newbies all posted Holo shit. I posted back, some were funny, others just the party line. Mostly the party line, hardly anything funny anymore. In the old days, Holo was funny, and cool and nice. But through the years it became more and more party oriented. More like trying to persuade others to follow one thought, one true thought, the party thought.

One religion, one political party, one way of thinking, the H1 way. Most people sapped it up, went along with it, enjoyed it. Some tried to break free. Submit some form of free thought, but that was soon shut down. Most were re-educated, not extremely, but enough to be part of the whole again, like me. I was a follower of Holo once again. I had one religion, one party in politics. One currency, one set of clothing, which was the fad of the day. One way of eating, drinking and having sex. The pure way of sex, getting married to a fellow Holohead. So, yeah, I didn't have sex, I wasn't married. Holly was off grid and Omar was deceased from memory. I was wiped of all human, free-like person I used to think I was.

Tap, my fingers tapped nothing in Holo. I sighed with frustrating joy. I had become Holo after all. Indeed, I was part of the whole and I enjoyed it. I tapped another sentence of mass appeal. Did you watch the Emmy's last night, I tapped, wasn't the presenters funny this year? Good wholesome pure Holo tapping.

Time went by quickly, but my wrists were getting sore. I thought of having a beer, a good one, a high octane one. But I can't remember what kind I liked, maybe Holo has a new brand for me to try. I'll tap in the search box and see.

WHAT BEER TO DRINK THIS TIME OF DAY?

I tapped, it faded.

HOLO BEER VERSION 5.9%

Came the reply in my eyescreen.

Oh that sounds refreshing I thought, at least the world hadn't eliminated beer from the menu, like it did abortions and comparable religions and everything else like potato chips. What was wrong with potato chips I could never understand, they tasted great. But H1 had other thoughts what was pure for the body and soul, I submit, I follow, I concur.

IV: Revolution

"Concur, concur, concur..." Holly came to my apartment and heard me screaming at the holo screen while I was tapping into Holo. She touched my shoulder and zapped me out of my trance as I was shouting at an empty screen.

"What the fuck dood?" she said, pulling her face close to mine.

"What the fuck?!" she said again, slapping my hands.

"We're leaving!" she stated, "We're leaving right now, fuck your shit, fuck your stuff, we're outta here!"

And with that I dropped Holo, I breathed in hard, looked at Holly and smiled.

“Fuck yeah!” I said, “I don’t need this shit...I fucking understand, I’m fucking sick!”

Holly opened the apartment door and pulled me along with her, a AIEV was waiting outside and we were heading to Grand Central Station for the 3:10 to Tucson. The archaic MLT, I call it the BLT with cheese to Tucson was about to board. A trip that should take 3 hours to complete, after that, who knows what the experience was to be.

Magnetic Levitation Train 609 was preparing to part, when Holly and I entered our designated area for boarding. TSA was their usual selves, treating us like the enemy, and maybe we were. We were not the solemn crew that just accepted the status quo, we were outsiders, revolutionaries, the bad seeds of the nation. We weren’t the people that were normal for the train to Tucson, but we covered ourselves well, we boarded, wasn’t charged with any illegalities and settled in to our short trip from NYC to the desert. Hopefully, this will remedy my addiction to Holo, at least that’s what Holly was thinking.

The trip was rather dull, nothing extraordinary, except the bathrooms had low water pressure, so much that the shit wouldn't flush. We sat in the mid part of the train and had wine and cheese and laid back in our comfortable chairs

and napped for an hour or so. The MLT was fast, and quiet. it was nighttime as we entered Tucson's station just after 3am, almost on time, give or take a few minutes. The station was empty of people this hour of the morning, and Holly and I could exit without waiting to clear west coast border customs.

She already had a white SCEV (Solar Charged Electric Vehicle) waiting for us at the rental station to take us to Buenos Aires Wildlife Refuge west of the city to cleanse my soul. We wanted to be less conspicuous using a old fashion electric vehicle compared to a red sporty hydro-fueled AIHV. A few days out in the desert away from anything tech would be the answer to clear my addiction to Holo, she knew that, fuck, even I knew that.

We drove pass Border Patrol on Hwy 286, the guards saw that we were "whiteish" and just passed us through. You'd think that when Lunar and Martian people were on Earth, this border patrol thing would be over by now; but racism never ever leaves, no matter how many decades and uprisings happen.

We turned into the park and found a place to camp near the entrance, off the dirt road to the left side hidden among the low trees.

Holly seeded the nanotent and kitchen, and cooked us breakfast, vegan bacon, scrambled vegan eggs and

mimosas. The morning sunrise was just glowing over the horizon and the clouds were scattered throughout the sky causing the most delicious sunrise I've ever seen.

New York, didn't have sunrises like this, empty sky of blue, scattered clouds of white, glazed with light blue and violet, sun glowing orange across the scattered dry sage and low lying trees.

Not a soul around us, not one person in sight. It was so nice to just be the two of us, away from everything and everyone.

I sighed with relief for the first time in a decade it seemed, so nice of Holly to get me out of that dark. An empty world of tech and the fucking nonsense of bullshit and hypocrisy called Holo.

Just the two of us, nothing more. Holly did her usual stripping down to bare skin almost as soon as we entered the park, still urging me to follow her footsteps of total adjustment to desert life.

Slowly I took off my shoes, pants and shirt and sat down on the rug she prepared for us, cuddled up with her watching the new day rise, naked to the world.

Free from all the bullshit, all the H1 politics and now I could just enjoy being. Pho would be proud how I dismissed my usage. He'd be happy that I was a pure

soul, Omar would be happy too I thought. I did miss Omar, but I was happy he wasn't returning to me and haunting me in his usual way. This time, this was going to be different. I was gonna beat this challenge and find the truth finally and accept a new way of living or at least thinking.

Could I really find a true divine way of cleansing my Holo soul. I don't know, but Holly was willing to help me through my demons. Fuck, I was really hurting, I really had a problem, I knew it, but I'm such a dork for addiction, always have been, to be honest. I hope this works, but with my history, I'm not certain if it's going to take, but I'll give it a chance. I have to, it's my life and if I'm not happy with it, I should try and change it.

We spent the day surveying our surrounds and hiking and watching birds and listening to the desert sounds. We had a few more mimosas and cuddled in the tent during the hot point of the day, the nanoAC was making the heat bearable.

After sunset, I turned to Holly and asked, "Is there any beer?"

She laughed, "of course I brought beer, I'm not a monster!"

She popped open a cold Narwhal IPA from her backpack and handed it to me, "15 more from where that came from." she said, "And we have hot dogs, real hot

dogs, not soy, tufu or mushrooms. We also have white flour buns and mustard potato salad.”

Wow, what the fuck do I need Holo for. Hot dogs and beer and my favorite naked girlfriend watching a magnificent sunset in the Arizona desert. I really hit the lottery, I really should feel really good. I really should be the happiest man on earth, and I am. Right now, I really am. Happy to be living this kind of existence. But then, deep in my heart, the far reaches of my mind, I keep thinking, Holo.

I need to tap. Holo needs to know, how cool this is. I need to show the world what life is like without being stuck in Holo 24/7.

But I couldn't, there's no signal here. Nothing, just empty desert space without hookups to anything. I'd have to travel east to the small town of Arivaca and maybe find a signal to connect. But it's so small they probably aren't linked. Arivaca is only 10 miles away, when Holly goes to sleep maybe I could walk there and connect. I could give it a shot, fuck, the world needs to know how happy I am disconnected from Holo. I need to tell Holo all about not being subjected to the addiction of Holo. I have to tap, I have to tap now. I don't know if I can wait for Holly to fall asleep before I set out to Arivaca and find a link to Holo. I breathed heavily again, frustrated by my urge. I couldn't just give it up, I couldn't just cold turkey this need. I needed to tap into Holo, I fucking NEEDED to TAP into

HOLO, I FUCKING NEED TO TAP INTO FUCKING HOLO!

Holly slapped my face, “What the fuck dude!”

“I know, I know, I was ... thinking of tapping, I know, sorry.” I said looking down at my half empty beer bottle. I took a sip and looked at Holly and said, “I need to tap, I’m sorry but I need to tap into Holo and tell the world how happy I am.”

“Fuck dude, that’s fucking crazy!” Holly came closer to me, “you know, sex, we have to have sex, that will fix it.”

I smiled and said, “yeah, maybe ... maybe your right.”

Holly looked at me and I could see it in her eyes, she didn’t believe me. Even though it was true in my mind what I was saying. I really believe sex would be the real answer to my problems. At least, it couldn’t hurt. I placed a lot of reality into thinking sex was the answer to all my problems. Maybe because I probably never had enough of it. My id or ego or whatever it is; that thing when you think another person can save your life, other than yourself.

. . .

The next morning we were awoken by a strange old man walking through our camp.

He cleared his throat as he stood next to our tent.

“Hello?” he said in a half whisper, “anyone in there?”

I was startled awake, what the fuck!

“What!” I screamed, “what the fuck, who are you?”

The old man was taken aback by my abrupt language and demeanor.

“Sorry,” He said backing away as I poked my head out of the tent. “Didn’t mean to startle you, but I kind of need your help.”

I eased off and Holly and I both came out of the tent, naked.

He looked a little embarrassed by the two of us.

“Sorry again, but I’m in need of assistance.” He said lowering his backpack. Stumbling a bit from his worn muscles, he looked to be about in his mid-seventies, very tan, unshaven, scraggly hair under his frayed straw cowboy hat, clothes torn and shredded, plus he smelled like onions.

“My name is Wash McCain, and I don’t seem to know where I am.”

“Wash McCain?” I asked, “of the Arizona McCain’s, the historic family who owned most of Arizona for decades?”

“Yeah, those McCain’s, but I ain't really from them. Well, I was, but, they sorta shunned me 'cause of my addiction to

Holo.”

Oh my God, a fellow Holoer, how could I be angry at him. He and I were kindred spirits and addicts. We addicts have to stick together, that is until someone better comes along. But that’s neither here nor there. I had a fellow Hologrammer with me, and maybe he could show me where I could tap.

“I don’t know my barrings, I seemed to have dazed off tapping and lost my way. I’ve been roaming in the desert for a few days now, and I can’t seem to find a town.”

“Dude,” I said, “Sasabe is right over there and Arivaca is ten miles over there. How could you miss them?”

Wash lowered his head in shame, “I’m sorry, but I get lost in Holo and I might be doing things in real life, but mostly in a black out state of mind. I just roam and tap, and the next thing I know, I’m here.”

I sighed in acknowledgement of his black out state. God knows I’ve had a few of them myself, I totally understood his situation.

“Dude, no problem with us helping you.” I said as Holly moved closer to me, hugging my waist.

“You need a beer?” she asked Wash.

“Sure.” he replied smiling. “I haven’t had a drink in a few

days, my lips are dry and chapped and I'm really dehydrated."

"Well, beer won't help with that," she responded, "but it's something, but we have water, if you want that instead?"

"Oh no, no, beer is fine, especially if you had an IPA, at 14%, would be *really* fine."

The three of us laughed at the silliness of our segue into drinking addictions opposed to Holo addictions, but we all know addiction is addiction, no matter what the use.

"So..." I said to Wash. "What can we do for you, how can we help?"

"Well, I think you already have, at least I know where I am and where to go."

I asked Holly to get me another beer, so I could be alone with Wash for a minute, just to get my link to Holo, if he knew the link up signal I could hook up my own Holo and get back to business, hell, I could even tell Holo about meeting a real live McCain from Arizona, won't that make Holo envy of me, I could get a few hundred likes for that alone, let alone tapping about how great it is to not be Holoing.

Holly came out of the tent, with my beer and a stern look on her face.

“Dood, you know I can hear everything you’re saying.” She said handing me my beer.

“I’m sorry.” I said shaking my head looking at the unopened bottle of beer. She didn’t open it for me out of anger for my trying to pry Wash with information to get hooked up.

“You can open your own damn beer, sweetheart.” She said returning to the tent, “Let me know when you’re serious about this outing to clean yourself up.”

“Sorry Wash, I really have to clean up my act,” I said to Wash as he picked up his backpack and sipped his beer.

“I understand, and anyway, right here for the next five meters there ain’t no signal. You’d have to walk a few to just tag up, and it sounds like she’s not happy about that, and you should really try and break the habit, you don’t want to end up like me.” He said, turning towards Sasabe.

“Maybe Mexico would be a nice change for me.” He said half to me half to himself as he drifted off to the southwest.

I watched as his feeble staggering body faded into the desert morning sunrise. I could also see he found a new connection, his fingers were tapping into the sunlight as he walked into the desert like a mirage, like he never really existed at all.

I waited a few more minutes after he disappeared from

sight, I wasn't really ready to listen to Holly give me shit about trying to log on.

Time was up for my waiting her out, ten minutes total, thinking she might come outside and nuzzle up to me in love and affection.

She didn't, so I slowly slunked into the tent for my verbal, if not emotional reprimand.

"I'm sorry again, I keep saying I'm sorry, but I keep doing the same shit over and over again, sorry, fuck, there I go again." I sat down beside her.

"That's okay, I get it, I had Holo-itis too, long ago, I know the feeling, and I'm here for you, however long it takes."

"Can we have sex now?" I asked half jokingly, half not.

"Fuck no!" she said, getting up from her sitting position and putting on some clothes, "not for a few more hours, you need your punishment."

I lowered my head and understood my punishment. I really can't have everything I want, I know that.

Now where is that opener.

. . .

Holly was sleeping when I walked out of the tent after sunrise the next morning. I looked off into the distance searching for Wash, but he was long gone, probably in

Mexico, pretty sure that's where he was headed. Tapping in vacant ecstasy about shit. At least Holly kept me from informing the whole solar system about how happy I was not tapping in Holo.

I have to admit I was extremely happy and proud of myself from not joining in on the Holo bandwagon, I was happy and unlinked and why should I tell everyone in the galaxy how I was feeling, I don't have to inform everyone about every god damn feeling I have or do I?, Fuck! There it was, again, fuck my life, I can't break the hold Holo has on me.

But, fuck it, I'm not going to tap, I'm not even going to think about tapping, fuck that shit, I'm gonna break this fucked up habit, Holo isn't going to make me addicted to its trappings.

Later that day Border Patrol cruised by our camp, the agent tip his hat to us as we sat outside naked on our camping nanochairs enjoying the afternoon sun. The clouds were non-existent as the blue shined through the whole afternoon, the winds were calm, as were my nerves, the beer helped in my calming. Holly was back to being nice and sexy as always, giving me those sexy looks she could flash me. Day number two of cleansing, it felt good, but it's only a couple of days, nineteen more to go to get rid of the urge to be connected to the universe.

The sun was beaming down hard, hot and it felt so good, even though it really wasn't healthy to be out so long. The heat was getting to me after a few hours, Holly had already had enough and was in the tent taking a nap. 109 in the shade, humidity at 11%.

Looking to the west I could see something in the distance walking towards me, I thought it might be a precursor of a migraine aura or maybe a bunch of floaters forming together, but the image got closer and I still couldn't make out what it was, maybe a dust storm, then the image clustered together and it was Pho.

"Hallo King!" Pho shouted as he got closer, he was barefoot and naked, hair tangled down his back, beard dusty from the desert.

"Pho!"

"Greetings from Omar, he sends his regards."

"Wow, how did you get here?" I asked.

"Ah, it is what it is." He said giving me a big naked hug, it was Pho, it was no big deal to have another man hug me naked. Like he keeps saying, it is what it is.

"And how goes it here in the wasteland?" he asked.

"Oh, you know, day by day, more like moment by moment."

“Omar, says he has something to tell you, sort of a weird message, but you know Omar.”

“Yeah, I do, Dude has this... ‘it is was it is’ written all over his face.”

“Here’s the message, it’s kind of weird, but here goes. A lone coyote, jackrabbit and a man walk into a bar. The bartender asks what they would like to drink. They all say the elixir of life, the bartender says, sorry boys we’re all out of that. So they leave, the jackrabbit leading the way, thus the anaphase of bar hopping begins.”

“What?” I asked, “that’s really weird, even for Omar, I don’t get it.”

“Not my place to make sense, only for you to conclude your own hypothesis. My task is complete, I must bid you adoui.” Pho vanished into the sand and disappeared into the desert.

I was there alone once again, hot as shit and now this riddle was given to me by a shaman from another dimension or my own fragile deluded mind; but off in the distance I could see a coyote and jackrabbit sitting out there staring at me. I immediately shook that vision off and for some reason started to beat off. I guess the heat was getting to me and the hallucinations were sending me into self-absorption. I realized what I was doing and after getting a really nice hard on went back into the tent with

Holly. I definitely had enough sun for the day, but why waste a good hard on for myself when I could share it with someone.

That night a sudden flash flood came down at our camp. Holly and I managed to get out of the tent and into the SCEV before drowning in a sea of mud. As we sat in the SCEV we could see the tent and the rest of our belongings, including a ten pack of beer washing down the desert floor towards Mexico. Perhaps Wash McCain will find our belongings and set up a camp of his own down in sunny Mexico.

But we were now heading from “Arid Zona” to California, rumor has it that a new L.A. had emerged. Borrego Springs had a cult of revolutionaries against the Holo. Holly thought that would be the best way to help with my addiction, to get me involved with people against the whole data mining experience.

The ride to BS was slow, we had to charge up our Solar Charged Electric Vehicle a few times along the way, too many clouds covering the sun. The 10 was scattered about with old RV's and old gas cars abandoned on the freeway from the California border to north of Borrego to Thermal. After heading south on 86 and turning on S22 things opened up. Along the road were millions of RV's set up on the side of S22, like I said the new L.A.

There must have been a exodus of dataheads leaving L.A. proper to come out here to escape the Holo influence, it was amazing. I still might have hope of getting over this, maybe someone out here could help me.

The dips in the road were a bit treacherous to maneuver since the recent rains and plowing through the rain water was even slower than anticipated. The edge of town was surrounded by arm guards keeping Holo Heads at bay if they even left their cubicals to come out to the desert.

Holo provided everything you needed except food and water. Entertainment, vacations, everything else is just a few taps away.

Why leave your cube when all you have to do is plug in and tune in, turn on and be Holo.

Once we arrived near the Borrego Springs Golf Course, we were stopped by three dark-clad arm guards with face masks. Looking like menacing Mexican Federales, very intimidating, they looked like they weren't very friendly to outsiders like us.

Holly spoke to them when we stopped, spoke in fragmented espanol and they accepted what she said and let us into the compound that was the headquarters for the whole west coast opposition against Holo.

Holo was dismantled by a invisible shield to keep out

transmissions. A large wifi tower stood on Christmas Circle, providing local non-holo streams throughout the valley. It was buzzing with activity from all the residents surrounding it. The whole town was occupied by resisters that circulated fifteen kilometers around the ancient rustic town. How much space do you need to run a revolution against the whole galaxy of rich and powerful people invested in the inundation of the Holo, obviously not much.

We spun around the circle a couple times to get a signal, Holly then drove west into "downtown" BS and stopped at the new renovated Pablito's Bar and Grill, got out her phone and tapped in a four digit code, 1026, I guess the guard gave her a code to contact someone in the camp. A man came out of Pablito's and walked towards Holly's side of the SCEV.

Holly lowered her window and the man looked in. I could see a bit of his face, but couldn't really make out very much because it was getting dusk and the clouds were coming over the San Ysidro Mountains.

They spoke in Spanish and Holly closed the window and we were back on the road again heading south on 79 out of town. But only for a few miles, we could still see the city. She drove up a steep dirt road, it was really hard to see where we were going because of all the darkness and cloud cover. She managed to maneuver through the windy dirt road without incident. I could see a small tan adobe

house lit up by electric blue LED lights making the outline of the structure. More arm guards were surrounding the house, I could see their forms from the residual lighting.

Finally, we made it to our destination, that was a long trip from Buenos Aires NR to outside Borrego. I was really tired of being in the SCEV all day. Holly and I exited the vehicle as the leader of the revolution came out of his house to greet us.

“Hi, welcome to Ryzen. I'm Barron Von Trump the VIII, your host.”

“Ola!” Holly returned greetings. "I'm Holly and this is King, we're here to sign up to the resistance."

Barron smiled and nodded with pleasure of our personal donation to the cause. "Please park your vehicle over there by the neon lit grove of palm trees and come inside for refreshments."

We parked, gathered a few belongings from the back seat and walked up to the front door where Barron was waiting for us, along with his bodyguards.

“I'm sure you guys are famished, please come inside and eat, drink.” He said waving a welcoming hand towards the door.

Barron was a tall blonde haired man, longish hair down his middle back, clean shaven, a decade older than us, about

45 years old, very tan, HWP (height, weight, proportionate) and very friendly. He kissed both Holly and I on the lips. For the leader of the revolution, he was fairly unassuming. Clad in a flower printed shirt and old worn jeans with scuffed cowboy boots, almost like he was a rancher from a nearby ranch. Maybe he was in another life, but it was nice to get out of the SCEV and sit on an actual chair, and not a nanochair. It was nice to be inside a real house with furniture and indoor plumbing too.

“Would you guys like a tour of my humble abode?” he asked gesturing his arm around the room.

“Maybe tomorrow.” Holly said without confiding my wishes, I’d like to see the house, I thought, but then again, I’m just a junkie in need of cleansing, what the fuck do I rate for anything. Oh I’m sorry am I being a bit snippy, fuck you!

The house was lit with low electric lighting of a shade of yellow. Low wattage, probably 60 watt bulbs, you could barely see across the room with the lights so low. It made the whole place look more homey, and I liked that. The room was pretty much a Spanish styled house, soft colours, very large doors and really high ceiling. All in the adobe shade of tan and lots of rugs and dark iron gadgets around the large kitchen. Antique and old wood, like from the early 20th century. Nicely decorated and had a very friendly feeling to it, unlike outside with arm guards armed to the teeth with automatic weapons with laser scopes and

sound suppressors.

We met Barron's wife Julia, she was Mexican American and very pretty. Long black hair braided down her back, wearing a soft white dress, cut extremely flattering for her HWP body. She looked about twenty five years old and very educated from what I could tell from how she spoke and handled herself. Later on I learned she studied at Stanford before the education reduction happened.

"Would you like a drink?" Julia asked as we sat down before dinner, we arrived just in time for dinner, that was nice.

"Yeah." I said, Holly tapped my leg, indicating for me not to say anything foolish.

"What do you have to offer?" Holly asked.

"We have an assortment of drinks, from soft drinks, to aqua, to hard liquor and beer and wine, what would you like?" Julia asked Holly.

"We'd like a couple of aquas." Holly said for the both of us.

I was like, seriously, water, all the shit they have to offer and you choose water? Whatever.

"I'll have a glass of wine." I injected for myself. Holly gave me that mean look of don't defy me. But I have a soul and a will of my own, it might be a bit snooty and fucked up but

it's mine to fuck with as I will.

“Do you have any Cooper and Thief 3075?” I asked.

“Wow, that's rather specific.” Julia said asking her chef to check out the wine cellar. The chef, yes, they have a chef and a wine cellar, they may be revolutionaries but they still have style and taste.

As we sat and waited for the chef to see if they had the wine I requested; again against Holly's wishes, I had to ask.

“Trump?” Holly hit my thigh again, hard.

“Yes, I'm of the Trumps of Miami, but I'm so removed from the actual Trumps of the early 21st Century, I really don't have much to do with the clan other than my name and of course the VIII is hard to get away from. But, once our baby is born I'm going to change that once and for all.”

“You know, I just had to ask, I really don't care if you are a Trump or not, that was so long ago and all is forgotten.” I said waiting to see if the wine I asked for was coming before dinner would be served. You know addicts, we really don't care about anything except our vices, at least that's what everyone thinks of addicts, we're not really people.

The chef came back with a different wine and whispered in her ear about the differences of wines. “Sorry, King, we

don't have any Cooper and Thief, our cellar doesn't go back that far in history. We even looked in the lower cellar, and none were found." Julia said accepting the wine that was given.

"I hope you don't mind 1000 Stories Zinfandel, 4085." She continued as she handed the bottle back to the chef to open.

"No, that's fine, anything in that era would be nice and smooth." I said giving Holly a wink.

Holly gave me that look again of don't overstep yourself buster.

I smiled at her, letting her know my antics were over and I would settle down.

Barron and Julia were very welcoming and as we ate dinner of pork, brussel sprouts, rice and 1000 Stories wine. We chatted about our goals for the revolution casually. Not dwelling on heavy conversations about what we were planning to do, we'd get into details later.

Dessert was New York Cheesecake with raspberry drizzle, and a couple of espresso's with Chambord liqueur.

They led us to our room after more wine and small conversation. Left us on our own to settle in our enormous bedroom with a California King bed with lots of pillows to choose from.

Moments after Holly and I were undressed and ready for bed a soft knock came on our bedroom door. Holly got up to open and see who it was. A very beautiful young woman was on the other side. She was wearing a little frilly something, having small udder-shaped titties, and a hard wood floor (shaved pussy), long legs, tight butt and high heeled shoes making those legs curve nicely. Long dark hair, hoop earrings and a small necklace of gold and diamonds. Her face was peaches and cream in complexion with very small cute facial features, and pouty lips, she looked to be just over seventeen years old.

“Hi, I’m Ruby Galena, Barron asked me to stop by and welcome the two of you to our house.”

I rose up from bed in more ways than one, and asked, “So you’re the welcoming committee?”

“Well, I am if you want me.” She said looking delightfully young and sexy.

Holly showed her in, “Please, the more the merrier.”

Ruby slid between Holly and me in bed and we slowly started to get to know each other very well.

Ruby laid between us and started kissing Holly and caressing my penis with her hand, stroking slowly from my balls to the top of my dickhead, tugging gently and massaging me to get very firm very fast. Holly moved

down on Ruby's fresh young pussy and started slowly kissing her soft moist lips and sticking her tongue deep in her vagina. Ruby groaned with pleasure as Holly continued this for a few minutes, causing Ruby to cream more and to tug on my dick a little harder than intended, but it still felt good.

I kissed Ruby's small tits and sucked her nipples and kissed her neck, facial cheek and lips, French kissed her with wide open mouths, then back to sucking and kissing those lovely little titties. Holly moved up to the other tit and we both sucked simultaneously causing Ruby to squirm with delight.

Holly moved down Ruby's body licking all the way over to my dick and took it in her mouth and sucked on it causing me to get even harder than I was. With a firm erection I penetrated Holly for a few minutes and then slid out and hopped on Ruby, after thrusting a few moments, for some reason I had to ask, "By the way, what was your name again?" Ruby gave me a surprised and unfriendly look.

"Ruby." She said a little pissed off, but we continued with our fucking. I have to say, that was pretty shitty of me to ask her that at that moment. I don't even know why I asked that, I knew her name, I think I just thought it would be funny to say something like that at that moment. No wonder I have few friends. We continued making love to each other for at least another hour or two, until all of us

were satisfied of all our sexual urges and fantasies.

I think Ruby finally had forgiven me for my rudeness, she did go down on Holly later but needless to say, not me, oh well, live and learn.

As we drifted off to sleep, I could hear a few coyotes howl in the distance and also a train clanking south of town near the Mexican border. For some reason those coyotes and train sounds were like warm milk, making it easier to doze off, and cumming a few times was good for that too.

The next morning, the sun was shining through the undrawn curtains of the window in our room and peeked on Holly's face waking her. The warmth of its heat softly dancing on her cheeks made it cozy and pleasant to start the day.

We noticed that Ruby was gone and we slowly caressed each other in the morning light. There wasn't any hurry in getting up, since it was still very early in the morning. The sound of a few ravens outside and the wind were the only things we heard this early.

We noticed two roadrunners running across the courtyard and two jackrabbits sitting near the fountain scurrying away looking for fresh leaves to munch on. Speaking of munching, after last night's fun and games with Ruby, I continued to expand on last night's festivities with Holly.

Later a knock was lightly tapped on our door and a note slid under. I watched Holly get up naked and bend over exposing her pussy from the backside, looking so delicious, retrieved it saying it was asking us to breakfast in an hour if we wish. "Yeah, maybe in an hour or so, get your ass back in here." I said licking my lips, and eventually hers. We finished messing around and dressed and went down to the breakfast nook.

We could smell bacon and eggs, hopefully real bacon as we recinded from the second floor. After finding our seats, grabbing a couple of plates, I slid a couple of over easy eggs on my plate with a couple strips of bacon. Served up a plate for Holly and sat down at the breakfast table. Our coffee was at our settings already, steaming hot, fresh and strong, a real eye opener, tasty too.

"Mmm, this is good coffee." Holly said taking a sip after eating a bit of her bacon and eggs.

"Yeah, really good, thank you." I continued our praising to our hosts.

Julia and Ruby both attended breakfast together, they told us Ruby was Barron's mistress and lived with them. Ruby was a local who when the resisters set up camp, stayed in the area, and accepted the new way of living without Holo.

All the other local residents left for Inner L.A. Leaving Ruby to fend for herself and she became a real asset to

both Barron and Julia, after they took her in.

"So, not to change the subject, but I noticed your piano in the other room." I said finishing up one of my bacon pieces.

"Oh, do you play?" Julia asked.

"I dabble, I'm not very good, but I like a nice piano, and yours looks really nice, a Steinway?"

"Yes, from my mothers house in Mexico. We had music all the time when we lived there, until Holo took over our home." Julia said half excited about the past and half sad from the influence Holo had on society.

"Perhaps you'd like to play us something later." she continued to say to me.

"Oh, no, that's okay, I really just dabble, it would be too embarrassing."

"I'm sure you're not that bad, at least you know what a good piano looks and sounds like." She said chuckling while gathering up her dishes and putting them in the sink for her housekeepers to finish up.

Soon Barron entered the room and asked us if we wanted to take a horseback ride to Fonts Point after breakfast.

Holly liked the idea, I wasn't too keen on it, but accepted the offer. I never rode a horse before, but it can't be as

hard as flying a airboard through an earthquake, which by the way did or did not happen, maybe?

After the long ride to and from Fonts Point. The four of us had a more detailed discussion about Holo and the way that the revolution was to steer it to another form of existence.

The Western Front Alliance, Barron's profit investment hedgefund group would be making a transfer of funds to buy controlling shares of Holo Inc. Thus, transferring 53% of shares to that conglomerate. WFA was made up from the west coast of Earth, the dark side of the moon lunar colony and the colonies of Mars. Including some funding from far off moon sites of Jupiter to buy shares and have a major input in Holo Inc. According to Barron this was the future of Holo, moving from Tri to Multi Solar interests.

After discussing this with Barron I realized what was happening wasn't a revolution to dismantle Holo, but they were buying shares to own it for their own purpose.

Instead of Holo being owned by the H1 and CEO's of the east coast, it would now belong to the Western Front Alliance. Nothing would change, except ownership, the same old shit would continue under new management.

Both Holly and I looked at each other when we realized this was the coming attraction. Barron and Julia went off by themselves to make a new plan for the evening

festivities for us; assuming Holly and I were in complete agreement with this new arrangement for Holo Inc. which we weren't.

We were trying to disable Holo, not own it or get financial gain from transference of funds or being on the board of directors, which Barron offered us.

It was tempting to be involved with ending Holo from the inside if we could swing it. But with the overwhelming corporate tugging of these guys, that wouldn't happen. Holly and I weren't capable of over throwing both WFA and H1 by ourselves. We would need help, but we didn't know anyone who could help us.

We decided instead of being with the revolution here in Borrego Springs we would venture off to another destination, hoping for other like-minded people. After a few moments, the message from Omar became clear to me, the bar hop analogy. Moving from one place to another in search of a new way of thinking and living.

We told Barron about our plans to leave in the morning. He wasn't too happy with this development and strongly asked me and Holly to reconsider, causing me to yell out, "What, are we prisoners?"

Barron, backed off slightly and said, "No, not at all, you're my guest, my guest, but I must insist you stay for the duration of negotiations between WFA and H1."

“How long will that take, a year?” Holly asked.

“It's already in motion, hours, days maybe, I'm not sure, depends on things.” Barron assured her.

“Ha, a few days, are you fucking kidding me?!” I backed upped Holly’s frustration. “We want to leave now!”

“Sorry, but shit takes time to figure out,” Barron said, “and you know too much to just let you go.”

“Fuck you!” both Holly and I yelled at Barron.

“Sorry if you don’t like it, but that’s the way things are. We just can't have you traveling about with knowledge of our take over plans and spilled the beans.” Barron was getting a little frustrated with us.

“So, we’re prisoners?” Holly continued to get more information from Barron. Barron rolled his eyes in frustration. “No, just my guest, but do you want me to kill you to keep you from leaving?” he asked half seriously, “I really don't want to do that.”

Holly and I looked at each other thinking that’s extremely fucked up. Why would he want to kill us. Then we remembered he was a Trump. Bullshit is all they know, and intimidation.

Barron relaxed a little and smiled, “I'm sorry, but the negotiations are getting me a bit frustrated and worried. I

really don't want to be thinking of other things this close to the final deal, and we all know, it's the art of the deal that counts."

He settled in his chair and offered us some Scotch to calm the situation down. We looked at each other and reluctantly accepted his offer and Holly and I looked in to each others eyes and silently made a pact among ourselves to leave anyways. I'm sure Barron noticed our glances to each other and our posturing, he's not stupid.

Ruby came to us that night, and asked if the rumors were correct if we were serious about leaving the compound. She wanted to come along if we could find a way for all of us to leave.

Holly and I agreed to this, if, we could indeed find a way out of this cult encampment. It wouldn't be an easy thing for the three of us to do with the commandos. They truly had the place secured, but we had to do something.

Ruby knew the layout and gave us a good view of how to get out unnoticed. We weren't fully aware she was part of a plan to make our escape useless, if we were actually trying to do so, which we were.

Later that night, after leaving the main house and hiding from the guards and drones, Holly caught on as soon as we tried to escape further out of the encampment, when all the obvious signs of a foiled escape were so apparent.

How could we be making this much progress with all the surveillance and we were getting pretty far, she kept this enlightenment to herself.

Of course I wasn't the wiser, since I'm an addict, and not aware of my surroundings, so Holly keeps telling me, and as of this night I might agree with her. She had the clues which were so apparent to her, and her radar was up with all the things Ruby was telling us to do.

We managed to escape the compound and get outside the surrounding wall, but without our SCEV we were pretty much in the dark and empty desert. With no mode of transportation, Ruby offered more suggestions, which would have led us back to Barron's trap, but Holly saw through it and got the upper hand.

We were all surprised when Holly reached into her backpack and pulled out a rope and tied Ruby up before I realised what was happening. Leaving Ruby by the side of the road to be found later by drone surveillance unharmed.

Holly and I headed further south away from the drones and guardsmen. Exploring the desert with just Holly's phone and maybe my link to Holo if needed, but we weren't about to do that, not after all this time.

I was realizing the whole bar hopping riddle was more of a not stay in one place thing and that life was a constant motion of movement.

Going over the riddle more and more in my head opened up a new interpretation. Life was more of a bunch of bubbles just floating and evaporating into nothingness, was that it, was that life?

I kept thinking of these concepts as Holly led me through the desert sage to near the border wall of Mexico and away from Barron Von Shenanigans.

Omar once again approached me from out of a sage bush and said, "Hey, how you doing, bro?" sarcastically saying to me before strutting off into the desert and disappearing into the Mexican border wall.

I shrugged this Omar bullshit off and went about my business with Holly getting our shit together to head into California away from the insanity of Barron and his crew to take over Holo.

I was quite perturbed that the idea of retaking our old lifestyle was just a hoax and nothing more than a financial takeover corporate bullshit that has always been happening throughout history.

Barron would soon forget us once the financial statements started rolling in the next morning, the takeover was heading in the direction that Barron had anticipated and his wealth was gaining strength. His focus was on his ability to acquire as much wealth possible in a short amount of time and he was already spending his newly

acquired wealth on frivolous items that money can buy quickly, cars, yachts, houses, art, etc. Anything that can burn and turn to ash in a matter of minutes.

Although, once Ruby was discovered by the drones, it did have a little impact on Barron to maybe come after us, but with so much money pouring in, it was too much of a distraction, we really didn't matter to him anymore. The deal was done, there were no secrets to keep, so we didn't matter.

The trip to central LA proper was only a matter of hours thanks to a couple of nomads roaming the desert in their ancient RV. They were driving by us very early in the morning as we hitchhiked on 78 towards the ghost town of Julian. Holly and I were far from the bullshit of Barron and his fucked up crony fake society they established.

The nomads were heading to San Diego and dropped us off at Santa Ysabel where we could get another ride either north or west. We chose to go north when the only vehicle came an hour after they dropped us off. The heat was too unbearable to keep walking in the sun.

A farmer had driven us north to the high country of rocky hills of fog near the old city of Winchester a few miles from Menifee. The cities were long gone from existence and nothing but mounds of hills and rock and rubble remained. There were a few eroded buildings but nothing that looked

like they were even able to spend the night in to escape elements and chill. Wild animals probably roamed the place, bears and coyotes, and lots of geese for some reason. Geese shit everywhere, I couldn't wait for another ride out of here, and soon. The farmer headed east to his farm in Hemet, he gave us a few bags of food from his farm for our travels. That was nice of him, there are still good people in the world.

No one lived here for decades, the place was a wasteland, which was great for us to regroup our strategies and focus on what was next on the agenda. We had to start a fresh plan, if we had a plan.

I was still jonesing for Holo, but the risk was too much for me to fall back into my blackout state of random clicking gibberish for the masses. Those lost days of unhindered freedom of linking into Holo were over. If I dared to start up again our location and our freedom would be halted and it would be all on me and my fucked up addiction. If ever I would be a ... whatever the word is, it would be now, and my ability to not tap into Holo is my only way to redeem myself with myself and to Holly.

The question is...can I do it?

Again I was struggling to maintain some form of strength to stop tapping into Holo. I was struggling again and again to stop. Holly and I managed to get out of Barron's

attempted homicide of both of us; we were free in the Inland Empire, but lost in the wilderness. No one was looking for us, but there could still be the possibility of some form of revenge against us. So being on the DL would still be advisable, if...I could maintain my fucking shithole struggle with posting shit to fucking Holo.

Holly was steaming with anger with my desire to tap, and she was getting irritated by the way I wasn't even considering her existence and I really had to come up with a way to stop this fucking bullshit.

We were sitting on a rock pile north of the ruined city of Menifee and I started to look for a link to Holo and found one, and started my hands to tap in front of me when Holly hit my hands out of the sky and give me a look I won't forget.

"What the fuck dude?!" she yelled, "are you totally fucking crazy you goddamn muthafucking asshole!"

I was startled and realized what I was doing.

"You're right, I really need to stop." I realized this finally, tapping into Holo could end our lives, and I would be the one to blame, even though, you can't blame the dead, but it would be my fault and I don't like being the fault of anyone being dead, especially myself and especially if I killed Holly, that would be unforgiveable.

I asked Holly if she wouldn't mind disabling my nano-mini-microchip neurowave-transmitter from my cerebrum, unlinking myself from Holo completely. I should have done that long ago, but I didn't have a real reason to stop tapping, but now I did. Life and death reason. Holo wasn't what it was when I started. It turned into something more diabolical than I thought it was. It was now a way of controlling and making each of us tap into it to be brainwashed and maintaining some form of control over everything we did and thought. Disconnecting from the link would be the best thing I could do for myself and for Holly.

"If I disable the link, you won't have a link-system to the database of life." Holly said to me, asking in her own way if this is what I wanted. She still had her linkage and it pretty much kept everything in check from banking to physical nanohealth update implementations.

"No, I mean it, I don't care, all that shit can go away, this habit of mine is more damning than having it still connected, I have to disconnect from the cortex."

I reassured her that would be the best thing for me, and hopefully, she might be able to rig up something in the future for me if I needed to get my vital info back online.

But for now this system wasn't working for me and at this moment in time, my life and hers were more important than my life functions online for the database. Even if that

meant I wouldn't have any means of payments or anything that was basic in living. I only hope that Holly won't abandon me in this, my true hour of need.

With that she assured me she wouldn't abandon me, and said one word.

“Okay.”

She rigged a kit from whatever electrical gadgets and nanos she carried with her and made a macguyver electromagnetic pulse to disable the neurochip.

She clicked the switch and I blacked out. Total loss of human function for an hour, at least that's what Holly said.

My reboot wasn't a reboot at all, there was nothing to reboot, my complete inner system was disabled and gone. The feeling, thoughts, everything was mine, just me.

I didn't have a connection to any electro-system or interwavenet function. I was totally alone in my own life the first time in a long time, so long, I can't remember when my life was just mine, I was always connected to the Holo.

Now I was alone, even from Holly, she was still connected to the system. I might be the only one on Earth who wasn't connected.

Finally the link was over and I couldn't tap if I wanted to. It felt good to finally be free from that link I had so long. Now

my life was mine and whatever I did from now on was my own. I had nothing to do with Holo and I could finally be free from all that addiction bullshit. I could start living with Holly the way we were meant to be.

But then my thought, my thought, my real thought on my own was, I should start a movement, a real Ryzen movement. Since I had risen from the dead, maybe I should start what I thought Barron was doing. Not misleading people for his own path of wealth. Maybe I should take on the real disconnection of Holo for the masses. The followers of Barron who were brainwashed into believing his bullshit might want to follow me instead, the true following of a resistance to Holo.

That would be a real hard undertaking, since most of those people still believed in Barron and his preaching. I would have to find a way to make them see that his way was wrong and doing that wouldn't be easy since all were still interlinked to the system. This was a stupid idea, I should just take Holly and get to the coast, maybe the hills of Laguna Beach and just live out our final days together away from all this fucking nonsense. But I couldn't let it go, my new addiction was to change the world.

If the world wanted to change, that was the question.

V: Phobos

But I couldn't let it go, my new addiction was to change the world...the new mantra of my life kept sounding over and over in my head.

We took shelter in an old building next to the 215 and waited until someone drove by to get their attention so we could go some place more hospitable to make future plans.

We finally got the attention of a person after three hours waiting driving north on the 215. He was driving an old beat up transport van with a banner on the side saying, New Seattle or Bust.

People were talking about New Seattle in Barron's compound, they said it was budding with work on the landing docks for the lunar Artemis and Mars colonies. Shipping and receiving resources and trade to Earth. None of them were going there because it wasn't the best of climates, and we all know climate matters.

Holly and I thought it might be a good place to lie low, it was basically away from everything, except Canada, if the need arose for us to do so. Obviously the need had actually become true, so opportunity was handed to us in a beat up old van.

"What up dudes!" the man in the driver's seat yelled while opening the passenger window.

"We need a ride." I said while waving for Holly to come up beside me, nudging for her to show some leg.

"Sure, no problem, I'm heading to New Seattle via the 5, that okay?" he said unlocking the door.

"Yeah, that's great." Holly injected.

Holly got in the backseat, I sat in the front.

"My name is Rasheen." he said holding out his hand to shake. I was a little reluctant to shake his hand, I'm not much of a hand shaker really at least not with unknown people, but I did anyway, what the hell.

I reached out and we shook hands, it wasn't too bad of a thing, I guess it is a bonding thing. Holly had settled into the backseat of the van all comfy.

"My name is King and this is Holly." I told Rasheen as we started to head up the 215 to Laguna Beach and turned north on the 5 to go to New Seattle.

"I'm heading to old Snoqualmie Falls, WA, it's also called New Seattle (NS) by the locals, it's a port city, great place to start a new life." Rasheen said holding a couple of beers in his hands waiting for me to get comfortable.

As I settled into the seat and buckled up my harness, Rasheen handed our drinks to us, the vintage transport van was ancient looking but still it had a self driving

function allowing Rasheen to sit back and drink. From what I could gather from his speech and demeanor he was doing that for awhile.

"So what are you guys going to do in NS?" Rasheen asked as he gazed out the window.

"I don't know, probably start a new life like you." I replied. "Cool." he responded with a tinge of actual real interest. Looking at me and adjusting himself to sit better.

"What are you going to do?" I asked with the same enthusiasm as he.

He smiled and got a little excitement in his voice. "I'm gonna start a surf company, I use to surf back in the day before Holo took over my thought processes, but after rejecting Holo for the resistance, well, my form of resistance, I ain't no follower of anyone. But after a while of Holoing I got bored and my need to surf came back."

"That's awesome, maybe you could teach me to surf sometime once we settle in at New Seattle." I actually always wanted to learn how to surf and since Rasheen already did I knew this was a great opportunity for me to learn from an expert.

"Sure, no prob, you wanna another beer?" he asked grabbing a couple from under his seat.

"Fuck yeah!" I said grabbing one and popping off the cap,

while tucking one between my legs.

"Thanks bruh." I said trying to sound ultra cool.

"Fuck you kook!" he said laughing, "you're such a fucking newbie...but I like it!"

"So did you guys hear the news, it's all over there's some pandemic happening in New Seattle." Rasheen said between sipping his beer.

"What?" Holly and I both asked. "We haven't had much communication with the world in the last few days. When did this happen?"

"Just a day ago, some shipment from Mars was contaminated with something, no one knows what it is or what to do about it." Rasheen continued.

"Guess we'll find out what it's all about when we get there." I said, looking back at Holly. I put my beer on my lap and turned more towards her.

"You sure you want to go there?" I asked her seeing her concerned facial expression.

"It can't be that bad, it's probably some contaminated shipment, I'm sure it'll be gone by the time we get there." Rasheen interrupted handing me a shot of Stolichnaya.

"You wanna watch it on Holo, I have a link here on the dash?" Rasheen asked.

"Naw that's okay, we'll wait." I said sipping my shot.

We drank a few more beers while Holly slept in the back as we headed north on 5 driving through The Grapevine, not much traffic since the pandemic. The road was pretty much clear with quarantine lockdowns up and down the coast.

After five beers and a couple of shots of Stolichnaya, I started to get a little sleepy and dozed off for the last remaining hours to NS. Rasheen was already passed out in the driver's seat an hour ago. Drool coming out of his mouth latching on to his scruffy beard and matted dread lock brown hair. Dude was a mess, but friendly.

No one on Earth knew that with those shipments from Mars, a biological sequence of unforeseen elements would bombard the world causing major casualties without a cure. The Martian soil had an Ebola type of virus forming deep in the depths of an asteroid that penetrated Mars billions of years ago. Coupling with Martian scientists and doctors weaponising it with a highly infectious coronavirus, Earth didn't have a chance.

The virus was sent to labs on Mars to weaponise the asteroid virus with other viruses to find a product that would wipe out Earth once and for all. Martian scientists sent the sample 10,300 kilometers to a Phobos orbiting research lab for processing and development. Martian

scientists would have a virus that would be detrimental to Earth's population; since the two planets and the moon were at odds with each other over resources and trade inadequacies.

Making the deadly agent in only a matter of months of discovery and processing, the unknown virus came to be known as Phobos EVID erupted on the landing docks of the west coast that soon spread through the world, researchers and military on Mars placed the contagion on a trade ship without detection from TSA.

This was Earth's fifth world wide pandemic in the last hundred years. Our nanos couldn't keep up with the artificial evols of transmission and scientists had to come up with new tech to abolish the spread of diseases.

Mostly the cause for population increase of dying was from Holo itself imploring most of the population into virtual unreality.

Martian biologics soon would potentially wipe out the planet without a serum to protect us. Holo induced doctors didn't realize the hazard until it was almost circulating across the globe, and then it was too late to stop the pandemic from killing most of the population.

The Holo was a good way of stifling the outcome by keeping most of the populous under awareness of the situation and most people died tapping until their final tap.

But those of us who had abandoned the Holo or those of us who were totally unlinked from the network could see what was happening and tried to stop the pandemic only to be frustrated by the unwillingness of the populous to even be aware of the major devastation that was upon us.

The rapidly spreading pandemic was more severe in Washington than California, hundreds of people succumbed to the virus before quarantine was more secured. Once we entered the Washington state line guards were posted on the border checking to see if anyone was ill from the virus before entering. Since we were coming from California, we were let in without having any quarantine time as opposed to those from Canada, who would be left in quarantine for two weeks since most of the shipments were sent to Vancouver BC instead of NS. Vancouver was a bigger city and most shipments were sent there to import to the Americas.

NS was a secondary place for imports since it was just set up the last few years after the big flood. Which most people were unaware of thanks to Holo which blocked most of the populous from witnessing any catastrophes that happened in "real life".

. . .

Morning was gleaming off the east side of the ridge in North Bend and the sun was cascading off the mountain

tops of mist that hung around the tree tops. Rasheen woke up first and started to sequence his navigation map to enter Snoqualmie city from the south. I woke up after Holly jarred my shoulder from the back seat, she was awake before the two of us and watching us snore in our drunken hung over state.

"You guys and your alcohol." she said sarcastically, shaking her head with disgust of our male stupidity.

"So, we're finally here." she said looking around the pine and dripping mist of the Great Northwest Rainforest. Even with the global warming, the Northwest was still the northwest, rain, gloom, mist, clouds, it never changed. Humidity was around 75% and the temperature was always hovering around 70. At least New York was a desert oasis, but not Snoqualmie, it was evermore the same as always.

And why did I choose to come here instead of the southwest ... I still don't know the answer, was I just a person who wanted to suffer through life or was there really a meaning to come out to this hellhole.

Other than the fact that Snoqualmie held the most sustainable life biologics in the Americas, probably because it was so far away from any social cities that contained the virus, that it might be the only place to sustain life on Earth. Maybe, even with the contagion at

the landing pad, New Seattle still provided top notch scientists and doctors that could possibly cure anything.

But if I indeed wanted to change the world, this would be the place to do it. Far from anyone and anything to stop any kind of resistance, hell, no one cared about this place, not since the early 1990's when grunge rock ruled the world for a few months.

I woke up sick, depressed, anxious and my drinking was causing problems with Holly. Now that Holo was not available my new addiction was drinking heavily.

The virus was spreading rapidly in the city and the Governor issued a mass quarantine of the state. No one in or out for at least a few weeks.

After a month in quarantined, I was going off the deep end. We were stranded here, we couldn't leave until the pandemic was over or someone found a cure. My depression and fear of dying was making me suicidal, if you can understand that, I can't.

My ability to purchase enough beer and vodka was difficult, since ditching the neurotransmitter I could only rely on Holly's generosity and understanding, even though, my drinking and self pity was getting to her. I hope she doesn't leave me here in New Seattle and take off back to New York, that would suck.

Rasheen was still in town and started getting funds together to get the surf shop open. He found a few buyers before the virus hit, that was the reason he was heading up here from California. But as soon as he arrived the funds were slowly drying up and he had to continue looking for investors. This was easy since the ocean was just west of the Snoqualmie Falls. Nice sight to see the waterfall diving over the rocks into the ocean below. The long sand bars surrounding the hillsides of luxury homes and hotels below the falls was amazing to see. Especially when the sun peered out of the gloomy clouds, NS was a very pleasant place to live.

North Bay was horseshoe shaped and calm, looking over the sea to the Olympic Rainforest Islands. Yachts and shipping boats scattered throughout and away from the pandemic. If Rasheen ever did get the surf shop open, we could grab a couple of boards and head out to a boat and wait out the pandemic. But that was just pipe dreaming, since no one knew how long this was going to prolong. Scientists and doctors were feverishly looking for a cure, but since the virus was alien based and genetically manufactured, it would take years if not decades before a cure and people were getting sick quick from it. Incubation was two weeks and the sickness was unpredictable. Talk about apocalyptic outposts, I guess I actually found it after all, and not really what I thought would have been the end

of the world, this was so left field, that I think I need another drink or two or five.

Rasheen came back to the hotel we were staying in to say he found his funding for the surf shop, his parents.

"Dude!" he came in shouting with a six pack of beer in his hand, "I got the funding!" He was happy and relieved to find the cash needed, if only quarantine would be over so he could start his business.

Rasheen disinfected his hazmat suit and set it on the floor by the door.

"Cool beans bruv." I said reaching for one of his beers, which he was happy to give me.

"Dude, we gotta party like it's 1999!" He said giving another beer to Holly. She accepted it, that was very different. I hardly ever see her drink beer, but then again this is a very special occasion.

"We can start tomorrow to look for a place to set up, hopefully down on the beach next to the waterfall would be ideal." Rasheen said choking down a beer in three gulps.

"You can help, right?" he asked me.

"Sure man, no problem, love to." I accepted to help in anyway I could. It was so good to see someone get what they wanted, especially in these trying times.

We sat back and had a few more beers, I went and found some Stolli and warm beer that I still had and we all drank for the entire afternoon. Watching the view out of the hotel balcony of a nice sunset starting to change the colors of the blue sky to pinks and blue with highlights of orange. The clouds made a rainbow effect as the sun started to drop below the Olympic Islands. It was beautiful, we were happy, drunk, but happy, things were looking up.

The sun was gone and the lights of the city were coming on, we could hear a lot of noise in the street below the hotel. We all stood up and walked over to the balcony railing and saw crowds of people out on the street swarming around like ants. Shouting, guns shooting, almost like a riot was happening. Luckily we were so far up we didn't get hit by any bullets that might be fired our way. One thing about NS was its architecture, very modern, very high tech, very safe from any form of destruction, especially with its nanotechnology based structure. If something went askew it would rectify itself.

But the noise was deafening, and getting more and more out of hand, they were running around like they were all crazy, was this part of the virus effects, insanity?

I turned on the television, since I wasn't able to hook up to Holo anymore this was my only form of getting information now. Holly didn't bother Holoing, and Rasheen was too fucked up to link in. In fact, Rasheen just passed out a

second ago. I can only assume, he had a few too many even before he entered our room today.

When I switched on the television it was set to a channel showing Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy, the tv series from the 1970's. The part where Arthur Dent was telling Ford, "We're all going to die." Ironic or prophetic? Then the show jumped to the part where it said Don't Panic. I realised it was an edited version being broadcast for what was happening outside.

The news station anchor came on and started relating what was happening all over the world.

"It's a dire world we reap." the announcer on the news said, "as millions die from PEVid, I can only pray that we can continue to exist." he continued.

The screen flickered for a second then righted itself.

"I have only a few things I can say to hopefully calm the citizens of the world."

I know that voice I thought, then I saw his face on the screen, it was H1 talking to the people of earth.

"Everything will be all right, all we have to do is hook up and tune in, we all will be saved, this pandemic will just wave itself out of existence soon, there is no need to panic, all is well."

I sat down to listen to more of what he was saying, he was very soothing at this moment. I could still hear the people outside going wild, even more were out.

Holly looked over the edge of the balcony.

"Dood" she said, "it's getting really ugly out there, I don't know how long they'll remain sane. This could get really bad...maybe we should lock the door, head to the roof and steal a Airdrone and head back to the desert before this shit gets out of hand."

"Maybe we should, doesn't sound like it's going to get better, it does sound like it's getting worst." I concurred.

"Should we wake Rasheen up and get the fuck out of here?" I asked her as she shut the balcony doors and locked them.

"Maybe you should linkup to Holo and check to see if everything is cool for us to get out of here." I said to her while I nudged Rasheen out of his stupor.

"Whaaat?" Rasheen groaned, "leave me alone...I wanna sleep."

"Dude, we gotta go, bro!" I said nudging him again.

"Fuck off bruh!" he muttered as he slapped my hand away.

"Dude, we gotta go, the city is getting outrageous."

I kept nudging him, he kept resisting. Holly came over to

me and said, "Fuck him, we're leaving, and no, no fucking way am I hooking up to Holo...you crafty son-of-a-bitch, always wanting that fucking Holo, it ain't gonna help us anymore, it's fucking fried dude!"

I tilted my head in agreement, it was being fried, it always was fucked up, but I still had some love for it, hell it's been with me my whole life, but it was over now, I was disconnected never to get connected again, it was dead or dying, as was everyone in the solar system.

"Holly," I grabbed her arm, "where are we really going to go?"

"I don't know, somewhere safe, away from here, this place isn't safe."

"I know...nowhere is." I confided with deep sadness.

I wanted to see Holo dead, but not at the death of my own self or others. I just wanted the world to get back to itself, like it was before Holo took over everything, before this deadly disease killed everyone. I just want the world to be better, pleasant, healthy, happy and free. But none of that was really going to happen. I had no control over this universe as I did with being hooked on Holo and alcohol. I was deluding myself, I was fucked up on lust for power? Was I as bad as H1 and Barron, did I have my own agenda to rule the world. Was I as crazy as everyone else, did I have the virus finally after all this time in quarantine?

"Holly, help me!" I shouted standing up from Rasheen and grabbing hold of her for a deep embrace. I need to get a hold of myself, I'm starting to panic, Don't Panic! That's what the show said, don't panic. My eyes started to lose focus, my nerves were tingling, I was losing control I was freaking out, I was having an major panic attack, I couldn't hold on to reality anymore. Was I going through cold turkey from being disconnected from Holo or was this stress in the world finally coming into my brain and starting me to lose my mind finally once and for all.

Holly grabbed me, held me, "shhh" she whispered in my ear, "shhhh, it's all right, I'll never leave you, we'll be okay, shhhh." She hugged me some more, started to rock me back and forth; tried to calm me down, settle my panic attack, make me feel a part of the world again and not fly off in my insane freak out.

I took a deep breath and settled down, grabbed the remote control of the tv and shut it off. The crowd outside was still gathering, they were louder, more shooting, they were getting really insane. I could hear explosions, I could see fire in the distance. New Seattle was killing itself way before the virus would.

They were killing themselves, they were losing control nothing could stop them.

Barron and H1 were at war with each other. Both coasts

were trying to maintain control over Holo. Resisters in Borrego Springs were glued to Holo with Barron leading the way on the coast. H1 and his elite cronies were digging in the east coast, making sure most people were glued to Holo and maintaining overall control of the system.

Even with Martian and Lunar help WFA was having a hard time trying to gain control even with 53% now going down to 49%. The market was crashing, Holo was crashing. The Holo crowd were frivolous to the change. They kept their Holo's tuned to their own views. You can't change people no matter how hard you try. No matter how much propaganda you pose to them, they will still out maneuver your bullshit. They are the true heirs to the world and no matter how much you try to change their minds even through delusionary hologramming, they still will find a way to side step your brainwashing, at least most people, not all.

That was the only link I could use to take over all the bullshit between coasts. If I could find a way from the Great Northwest to get people to either switch from west coast and east coast to the Great Northwest. I could then have my opinion heard and finally have an outcome that I could achieve my goal of destroying Holo once and for all. Making it possible for people to abandon Holo and start living a new organic lifestyle of total emulsion in human

development and living a true organic real existence instead of the illusionary world of virtual Holo.

I wanted to change the world, and I still want to change the world. Mostly I want to dismantle Holo. The virus in the world was making my plans harder for me to grasp. The virus was world wide, and spreading even to the Moon. It was even slowly being seen on Mars itself. Backfiring on the solar system, the imperfection was devastating to the whole system.

The disgusting thing with people is their ability to continue being assholes in the face of annihilation. Millions of people were dying on Earth, the moon and Mars. The spread of PEV was solar stretching to most of the planets. Since the main ingredient for the virus was space born, it can remain alive even in the deepest darkest depth of space. Martian scientists and politicians were so eager to destroy Earth they didn't even see the problems they were creating even for themselves.

Holo was infected on its major bio-system, since the connection was nanobased neuro-transmission it was infected like its host. The Holo AI was trying to reboot its system over and over again to maintain control over its data banks. H1 was desperate to regain control of the solar systems holo bandwidth and try and make as much money as possible in the meantime. WFA was also doing the same thing, closing each other out of the system and

causing more destruction to the internal quantum core.

Holo itself was trying to keep its core cooled from overclocking the mainframe crystals to remain alive.

With so many data inputs, the system was overloading and starting to crumble. The energy to maintain control was becoming more and more isolated in internal structures that they were burning out as fast as they were cooling. It was imploding upon itself and no one was able to stop it.

Maybe the end of Holo was already being created without my help after all, I can only hope. My goal of killing Holo was coming to pass, a slight smile came across my face, satisfaction.

Suddenly I got a sharp pain in my neck and a bright flash in my eyes, I went limp for a second, just to rebound before falling to the floor. I managed to keep standing. My vision was altered, my body was stiff from something paralytic.

Ctrl Alt Delete

"REBOOT!"

"REBOOT!"

I shouted at Holly, she took a second glance at me, "What?" she was a little concerned. "what's happening?"

"REBOOT!"

I shouted again, my panic attack seems to have started a linkup to Holo again, the nerve endings from my cerebrum was trying to reconnect to the implant in my neck to find a new pathway to Holo.

Even though Holo was on the brink of disintegrating, it was searching for a link to my neuro-transmitter, which we thought we had disrupted. But now obviously we only temporarily disabled my connection. Holo was now trying to reconnect in its final degrade.

Holo had made a connection, I was once again attached to Holo. My vision cleared, my stance relaxed and I was able to gain control over my body once again, but I had indeed become one with Holo again. H1 was correct about that, we are of the Holo at birth and we are of Holo at death. The Holo was everything, and one can not get rid of it, even if it was dying itself.

Holly was very upset that I was once again engaged to the Holo, but we're in the final moments of our lives, what does it really matter. We weren't going to really get out of this mess we're in. The Airdrone was just a thought, the world was ending before our eyes. Holo was starting to dismantle its construct and life as we know it was changing, if not ending.

I shook my head looking at Holly, "Sorry, baby I didn't

think this would happen." I said, but deep inside, way deep inside I was sort of happy it did. I was really lonely without Holo being a part of me. But it was fun while it lasted, at least I got to see what the world was like without Holo being everything.

"You know what, we should watch television, have a few beers, go make love, wake Rasheen up, grab a surfboard and head out to sea tomorrow morning. Maybe the turmoil outside will have died down, literally." I said to Holly as I grabbed a couple of beers from the fridge. Rasheen was regaining consciousness as I sat down with Holly to watch the television about the "Breaking News" that was happening around us.

"Dood, what's happening?" Rasheen asked sitting up looking around for a beer to drink, I gave him one.

"The world's ending, actually the solar system is falling apart, well, not falling apart but dying." I said switching between news stations, they were all saying pretty much the same thing, except for H1's station, that was pretty much party bullshit.

But Holo was indeed inside my head again, if I wanted to tap, all I have to do is raise my hands up in the air and start tapping. Maybe someone will like my posts.

Omar flew through the balcony door came face to face to me and said. "Good to have you back buddy!"

He smiled a bright white toothy smile, his long white hair started to thin and fall from his head. He gave me that stare of his from those cool blue eyes and blew me a kiss. Omar was once again in my vision, my thoughts, my being.

Pho entered the building from his boat in the sea near the Islands, his long hair blowing in the wind, his beard washed and clean, his naked body coming to give me a hug.

"Check it out brother, they're painting the skies." he said giving me a big manly hug.

"I know bro, they're painting it with blood!" I replied in angst.

All of us together in the room above the falls looking out at the ocean and watching clouds form in quick fast moving shapes and colliding with rain clouds causing a dark heavy mist on the windows. The sounds of the crowd slowly quieting down as the morning was starting to open up to a new day. All my friends were with me including Holo, we were all here to watch the new day appear and probably watch it fade away the same day.

Holo be thy name, Holo be. It was back and I was okay with it, but then my vision was glitching and a pain in my temples charged my head like a migraine. I reached out for Holly to grab hold of reality and summon her to

possibly help me with this terrible onset of pain, but couldn't get a grasp of her.

I started to lose consciousness and fade away, I heard her call out my name, but I kept drifting away. I didn't want to go out like this, this wasn't the way I thought my life would end. I wasn't ready to go, no matter how many times I thought of suicide. I still wanted to live, I guess I just wanted to have things go right instead of bad; but this, this wasn't pleasant.

Holly came to my rescue and adjusted my head level with my body and tried to rectify my neuro-transmitter once again using her macgyver techniques, but it wasn't working.

I laid there in blackness, but I could still hear everything going on. Rasheen and Holly were calling for medics on the phone while I laid helpless on the floor. The pain was subsiding and my vision was restored after about a eon or at least it felt like a eon. Only a matter of minutes passed. My pulse was racing and my brain was clearing. Holo was still attached to my cerebrum I could feel the call of Holo, but my instinct to tap was gone.

If I wanted to Holo all I had to do was think. Holly came over putting her phone down and telling me medics were on their way. They had to get through the crowd below, it might take awhile. It seems the crowd of insane people

were all infected from the virus and went insane before dropping dead. There were hundreds of bodies medics had to wade through before getting to the door and coming here to help me.

My medical emergency was started to diminish and I was getting back to my old self, well, actually my new self, it seems I was upgraded. Holo went through a upgrade and I was the alpha version of the new WFA install. At least that was the assessment Holly told me from her expert knowledge of Holo from her old days of working on prototypes.

That was not pleasant, I did not like that, and hopefully that was the last upgrade for awhile. I still didn't understand why WFA would be upgrading Holo on Earth, especially since they wanted to destroy Earths inhabitants.

I sat up on the sofa and grabbed the phone to call off the medics from coming up since I was better. I know it would be prudent to have a medic check me out just in case, but the world was in a terrible mess and one more unimportant medical rescue would be a strain on the system. I'm too altruistic for that, at least I hope I am. I can be a pain in the ass, but at least deep down inside part of me can be nice if needed.

Rasheen was relieved I was okay and headed to the kitchen for some more beer for all of us. I grabbed hold of

Holly's hand and squeezed it and gave her a hug.

"Sorry." I said looking in her eyes, "I really didn't want to be connected to Holo anymore, everything was going well without it, but it's here now."

"I know," She said, "it's fine, I still have mine, and I thought we got rid of yours and I know it would be hard to live without it forever, but then again how long is forever these days."

We looked at the television and listened to the news about the outbreak getting worst all over the world.

People were told to isolate and quarantine for at least another month, after two weeks, most people got antsy and started to venture out too soon, more people died the following week.

"There goes my surf shop." Rasheen said downing another beer and handing me one with a shot of whiskey. "All my hopes and dreams shattered by this."

"I know, I really wanted that shop to become a reality, it would have been nice to sit around all day on the beach and rent boards to people and have fun all day drinking and surfing, but alas, no more." I said with a tear in my eye, not only for the lost surf shop but for all the people who had died and who were dying and who were about to die.

As the weeks went by, we stayed in our hotel room,

getting take out and delivery from drones to our balcony. Most people were listening to Holo, and more insanely listening to that crazy guy, H1 about how everything was fine and to just go about your business.

A month later millions of people were dead. The monkeys from the rainforest started to descend on the city and start eating the dead bodies. Holo upgrades were installed on others who survived the virus, which I guess we were. I don't know what's so different from us than other people, other than the fact that we were better off than most financially. Never thought of myself as a wealthy person but maybe I was, since my profession was Holo Ambassador, and Holly getting a nice buyout from Holo, and Rasheen, having wealthy parents. Maybe we were the selected few, maybe I wasn't as altruistic as I thought, maybe I was a shithead after all.

"I don't know how long we have," Rasheen said giving me a beer, "but at least we have beer." Holly shook her head, "fucking boys and your beer, now where's that joint?"

After spending three more weeks in quarantine in the hotel, we each got an invitation to go to Mars from WFA, of all people, they found a vaccine and we were welcomed to spend the rest of our days on Mars if we chose to do so.

The stench from all the hundreds of thousands of bodies in the world made our choice very easy. Our flight was

tomorrow at noon, we had a few drinks and couldn't wait to get out of here after all this time.

The Airdrone hovered above the roof landing pad. We each packed our bags and headed up to the roof to catch a flight to New Seattle's External-Launch Pad ten kilometers away for our transport to Mars Colony 6.

Hundreds of survivors and upgraded Holoites were loaded on four starships to Mars. Time to leave Earth behind and head to new beginnings. I sat in my window seat looking out at the world on last time thinking as I held Holly's hand.

I thought of Omar's continuing riddle of the constant movement of life.

Funny, I think Publilius Syrus said it best, how a rolling stone gathers no moss. I think that's true for us, we were constantly on the move, this time moving completely from our home base, Earth. Moving towards a new world, a new dream, a new life on Mars, who would of thought this would happen, not me.

