

I, ROBOT

Screenplay
by
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Based on his original screenplay,
"Hardwired," and the robot stories of
Isaac Asimov

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INT. LOW-TECH APARTMENT - MORNING

The remarkable thing about this apartment is how unremarkable it is. Basic furniture. Plain walls. This could be today, or perhaps a recent yesterday. There is a phonograph, but no higher electronics. An old television set. But no computer.

An alarm clock rings and keeps ringing until a hand turns it off. SPOONER rolls on his back and stares up at the ceiling.

He stands inside the shower and lets the water wash over him.

Spooner shaves with a straight edge razor. He rinses it off underneath the faucet and runs the blade over his face again.

He cooks over his old gas stove. The pan smokes and sizzles.

Spooner methodically fastens a HOLSTER around his torso. He removes the GUN, checks it, and sets it firmly back in place. Takes his BADGE from the table. Spooner puts on a long coat, and straightens the knot of his tie.

EXT. FUTURE CITY STREET - MORNING

SPOONER exits his apartment building. TITLE AND CREDITS begin over a metal man standing on the sidewalk outside. It turns around revealing the stylized face of a humanoid ROBOT.

Spooner makes his way through the morning crowd surrounded by PEOPLE WEARING THEIR COMPUTERS, the hardware shaped into form-fitting modules up and down their bodies, faces adorned with small screens or sunglasses scrolling data or playing images.

Spooner looks to be the only traditional face in the crowd, just walking along, his body free of electronics. The jacked-in pedestrians around him move with an almost mechanical stiffness, while the city's *machines* seem the most life-like:

ROBOTS ARE PICKING OUT FRUIT at a market. SERVING CUSTOMERS at cafes. CLEANING STORE WINDOWS. OPENING DOORS for people.

A lone ROBOT IS WALKING A DOG. The dog stops to inspect a post. The robot looks down at the animal -- a convincing imitation of human movement -- and tugs on the leash. The dog immediately hurries along and they continue on their way.

Spooner is suddenly aware of a ROBOT WALKING BESIDE HIM. He looks annoyed and increases his pace, losing it in the crowd.

The street is swarming with traffic. BUT NO ONE IS DRIVING. The dashboards have no steering wheels. Again the people riding in the cars look almost artificial, not moving at all.

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And high up above, an electronic BILLBOARD for U.S. Robotics runs a series of ads with broadly-smiling humans being served by robots and machines, with the pitch: *The Future is Today!*

The cars STOP IN PERFECT UNISON. Spooner crosses the street.

SPOONER'S P.O.V. Directly in front of him, in the crowd, a CARETAKER ROBOT holds a LITTLE GIRL in its arms. The Girl is clutching its neck the way she might hold her mother, staring over the robot's shoulder at Spooner. She smiles big at him.

Spooner just stares at her. Then he seems to remember what to do, and tries to return the smile. It doesn't quite work.

INT. AT THE POLICE STATION - MORNING

SPOONER walks across the squad room. His FELLOW DETECTIVES sit at impossibly neat high-tech desks with computers set into the tabletops. But one desk in the middle of the room stands out in stark contrast. Nothing humming or whirring. A real mess. The desk could be sent back in time fifty years and fit in just fine. Here Spooner sits down. Immediately, his old-style TELEPHONE RINGS. He picks up the receiver and:

SPOONER
Spooner, *Homicide.*

END OF CREDITS

INT. FEATURELESS METAL CORRIDOR - DAY

An ELEVATOR OPENS delivering SPOONER to a featureless metal corridor. Slowly, he starts down the hall. His FOOTSTEPS echo inside the narrow walls. He stops at a set of opposing doors. Spooner looks over at one, and the other slides open.

INT. LUXURIANT CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

SPOONER steps into a room that seems incongruous attached to that metal hall. Rich woods. Warmly lit. He looks around, quickly, as if questioning what he sees. His eyes settle on:

SPOONER'S P.O.V. A LONG CONFERENCE TABLE with an OLD MAN sitting at the far end. He looks like he should be standing at a blackboard droning on and on in front of a room full of perplexed students. The Old Man speaks with a German accent.

OLD MAN
Hello there. Please, do come in.

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Spooner takes only a small step inside.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
It's all right. You can sit. *Sit.*

Spooner does not sit down. Instead, he watches the Old Man lift a COFFEE POT and fill a single CUP.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
Coffee?

SPOONER
(interested in this)
You're offering me a cup of coffee?

OLD MAN
Yah. But you are to say, "No thank you."

Spooner nods a little. The Old Man raises the coffee to his lips but doesn't take a sip, looking over the cup at Spooner.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
Coffee?

SPOONER
No. Thank you.

OLD MAN
As you wish.

The Old Man takes a sip, and returns the cup to the tabletop.

OLD MAN (CONT'D)
Thank you for coming.

SPOONER
Your phone call was...unusual.

The Old Man does not respond. Spooner watches him:

SPOONER'S P.O.V. The Old Man sits at the far end of the long table. He is absolutely still. There is no movement except for a whisper of STEAM rising from the top of the coffee pot.

SPOONER (CONT'D)
You wanted to tell me something about
Doctor Hogenmiller. About his death.

OLD MAN
Yah.

SPOONER
What exactly did you want to tell me?

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OLD MAN

I exactly wanted to tell you that his death was not a suicide.

SPOONER

And why do you say that?

OLD MAN

Why? Because I want you to know it.

SPOONER

Yes. But what specifically led you to the conclusion that Doctor Hogenmiller did not commit suicide?

OLD MAN

Specifically? Nothing specifically.

SPOONER

You just have a general sense that it wasn't so.

OLD MAN

A general sense. Yah.

Spooner thinks for a moment.

SPOONER

Under normal circumstances that wouldn't be enough to warrant an investigation.

OLD MAN

But this is not "normal circumstances," is it, Detective Spooner of Homicide?

SPOONER

No. It isn't.

OLD MAN

Then you will find out who killed Doctor Hogenmiller. Yah? And you will tell me.

Pause. Spooner watches him:

SPOONER'S P.O.V. The Old Man sits at the far end of the long table. He is absolutely still. There is no movement except for a whisper of steam rising from the top of the coffee pot.

SPOONER

If you were murdered, Doctor, I'll find out. And I'll certainly let you know.

The HOLOGRAM OF DOCTOR HOGENMILLER IS GONE. The empty chair

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and a steaming pot of coffee left. A moment later the entire CONFERENCE ROOM DISAPPEARS. Spooner is standing in front of a SHORT STUB OF TABLE jutting out from the LARGE VIEW SCREEN.

What looked like a conference room is really a SMALL METAL CHAMBER that creates the illusion of a room and a long table.

INT. FEATURELESS METAL CORRIDOR - DAY

SPOONER steps from the chamber as a UNIFORMED OFFICER rushes past. Spooner thinks. Walks in the direction the officer came. Now he passes TWO MORE POLICE OFFICERS STANDING GUARD.

Spooner steps into an open doorway and looks down:

SPOONER'S P.O.V. The face of that Old Man stares back at Spooner from the BODY OF DOCTOR HOGENMILLER sprawled on the floor. His dead eyes wide. A HANDGUN next to his open hand.

INT. HOGENMILLER'S LABORATORY - DAY

SPOONER enters pandemonium. CRIME SCENE TECHNICIANS hurry about scanning the room with HANDHELD DEVICES. Spooner looks around at the lair of a mad scientist circa the 21st century:

ROBOT BODIES fill the laboratory, most humanoid, still others designed with multiple arms and legs, some with wheels -- but all featuring the same tangle of wires bursting out of joints like gaping wounds. An elaborate MAZE holds a creepy METAL BUG. Elevated TERMINALS scroll columns of data that float just outside the screens. Skeletal arms and legs reach down from the ceiling. A PILE OF DISCARDED ROBOT PARTS in the far corner. Rows of robot heads stare back with cold empty eyes.

A SUBORDINATE OFFICER sees Spooner and hurries up beside him.

OFFICER

The stiff is Doctor Heinrich Hogenmiller, sixty-four-years-old. Weapon is a small caliber .22 registered in his name. The only means of entry or exit...

(indicating the door)

...is that door, which was secured from the inside. Seems pretty obvious the guy locked himself in and took his own life.

SPOONER

I know someone who disagrees with you.

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CONTINUED:

OFFICER
Yeah? Who's that?

It takes Spooner a moment. But then he indicates the corpse.

SPOONER
Him.

Spooner leaves the Officer looking confused and starts across the lab, moving past a row of unfinished robots with exposed innards, empty eye sockets staring back, as if watching him pass. The Detective looks increasingly tense as he goes on.

Spooner reaches a wall, waves his hand over a panel, and the WALL OPENS bathing the room in sunlight. Spooner closes his eyes a moment, his face relaxing as the sun washes over him.

EXT. U.S. ROBOTICS HEADQUARTERS - DAY

SPOONER stands at one window of a cutting-edge skyscraper emblazoned with the company name *US Robots & Mechanical Men*.

INT. FEATURELESS METAL CORRIDOR - DAY

The elevator opens again and a PAIR OF SHAPELY LEGS marches out. The CLICK OF HIGH HEELS echoes inside the metal walls.

INT. HOGENMILLER'S LABORATORY - DAY

SPOONER hears RAISED VOICES and turns to see an ATTRACTIVE PROFESSIONAL WOMAN admonishing the TWO OFFICERS at the door. He starts across the laboratory. Slowly. Studies the Woman.

SPOONER
Is there a problem, Ms...?

He nods at the Guards to let her pass. Spooner looks mildly surprised as the Woman walks toward him -- then past him -- ignoring the Detective for a moment. She scans the interior.

WOMAN
Calvin. Doctor Calvin.

Spooner hardens his tone a bit in order to get her attention.

SPOONER
What is your field of expertise, Doctor?

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Calvin hesitates. But brief enough to perhaps go undetected.

CALVIN

I'm the Chief Psychologist here. I've been asked to serve as your liaison during the course of the investigation.

She turns around. For a moment, they look one another over.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Where would you like to begin?

SPOONER

We can begin with whether or not he put a gun to his head and pulled the trigger.

Calvin appears to ignore, or possibly just accept, his tone. She looks down at the corpse. Her no-nonsense expression cracks but she quickly composes herself. The TECHNICIANS are scanning, and LIGHTING EFFECTS play across the lifeless face.

CALVIN

Doctor Hogenmiller was a schizoid personality who took no pleasure in social relationships. He rejected people and engaged in solitary activities involving machines. As such he was highly susceptible to depression.

SPOONER

If that was your diagnosis, why didn't you see this coming?

Calvin looks at him, as if the answer is obvious.

CALVIN

This is U.S. Robotics, Detective. Seventy-five percent of our employees fit that description.

SPOONER

Jesus. Are you all so compassionate, or am I just lucky to have gotten you?

Calvin thinks about that. Keeps her cool. She starts again.

CALVIN

Hogenmiller was one of the founding fathers of modern robotics. A giant in the field. Truth is, he did his ground-breaking work as a young man. Everyone expected greater things... but those hopes were never realized.

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Calvin takes a few steps deeper into the lab.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

What would it be like to know -- as an old man -- that you failed to fulfill the promise of the young man you once were? Perhaps it was too much to bear.

The Crime Scene Technicians are beginning to pack up their equipment. The SUBORDINATE OFFICER approaches:

OFFICER

We're about finished here.

SPOONER

Good. Let's lock it down.

Spooner hasn't taken his eyes from Calvin. Pause.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

I spoke to a dead man today. You want to tell me about that?

CALVIN

The Doctor avoided human contact. His hologram attended staff meetings in his place. Took his calls. I suppose he thought it was all quite funny. It's a simple device--

SPOONER

A simple device that called the police.

CALVIN

At the sound of a gunshot, a 911 alert would be an automatic function.

SPOONER

Does it automatically contact homicide?

CALVIN

We're talking about a mechanism designed by Hogenmiller to say provocative things. To irritate and confound his colleagues.

SPOONER

And you think it's still doing that.

CALVIN

I'm sorry to say it, Detective, but your investigation is the result of our dead man messing with your head. This was suicide. Regrettable. But a suicide.

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CONTINUED: (3)

TWO MEN FROM THE CORONER'S OFFICE enter holding a GURNEY that resembles a black coffin. Spooner gestures for them to wait.

SPOONER

When you want to find out how a dead body got that way, Doctor, you ask: How many shots were fired? From what distance? Where did the bullets enter the victim?

Spooner bends over the body. Studies it.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

Here we have a single shot fired at close range through the mouth into the brain. The murder weapon is present and in close proximity to the outstretched hand of the deceased, who suffered from depression. You're right. Everything about this case says suicide. It is absolutely textbook.

Spooner rises to his feet. Short pause.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

Even people who live a life of logic and precision are rarely so perfect in their deaths.

CALVIN

I don't understand, Detective. You're saying this suicide would be more convincing to you -- if it was less of a suicide?

SPOONER

I'm saying that this crime scene has no ...*personality*.

Spooner nods at the Coroner's Men. They lower the box over the corpse, and when they lift it the body is inside. Calvin watches them exit. She can't quite mask her frustration now:

CALVIN

Surely you don't believe there's something sinister going on here?

The Technicians work the control panels and start the process of powering down the facility. SECTIONS OF THE LABORATORY DARKEN one-by-one, and the background humming begins to fade.

Spooner looks at her. And follows the body out.

SPOONER

I always find murder sinister, Doctor.

INT. FEATURELESS METAL CORRIDOR - DAY

SPOONER and CALVIN step into the hall. The TECHNICIANS exit and TWO OFFICERS seal the door with an impenetrable-looking HIGH-TECH LOCKING MECHANISM that engages with a loud DOOOOUM.

Spooner looks relieved. As if he is glad to be out of there.

CALVIN

When can we expect access to the lab?

Spooner walks away, leaving her with no choice but to follow.

SPOONER

This is a police investigation. You can expect to get in there when it's over.

CALVIN

We're used to receiving more cooperation from city authorities.

They step up to the ELEVATOR. It opens and a ROBOT EMERGES. Spooner was about to enter but pulls back. Looking irritated as the robot lumbers past. Calvin sees this. Considers him.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Maybe you *personally* don't believe in the work we do here.

SPOONER

You people do what you do. Then it's up to the rest of us to make sense out of the world we all wake up in.

INT. FEATURELESS METAL ELEVATOR - DAY

SPOONER and CALVIN step inside the elevator and:

CALVIN

Hector?

A YELLOW CIRCLE appears, hovering just above the surface of the wall. Like a LARGE SMILEY BUTTON that is SLEEPING. Now the two small slits grow into ROUND BLACK EYES, and the thin mouth expands into an ENORMOUS SMILE.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Let's help the Detective see things a bit more clearly. You know where to take us.

The mouth of the face moves in sync with a GENTLE MALE VOICE.

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CONTINUED:

HECTOR

Yes, Doctor Calvin.

The elevator HUMMMMMMS as it starts to descend. Spooner and Calvin ride in silence. On the wall, the strange yellow face continues to smile at them. A few moments pass. A few more.

Spooner begins to look uncomfortable. He glances at the wall ...and sees Hector smiling back. Spooner does his best to ignore the computer. Can't. Looks back at the smiling face:

SPOONER

You look like a very...
(short pause)
...happy computer.

And the thing answers, smiling wide.

HECTOR

Thank you.

EXT. LARGE CENTRAL ATRIUM - DAY

The elevator opens on an enormous atrium that runs the center of the skyscraper. It is a marvel of utopian thinking. Lush greenery integrated with an edgy modern architectural design. ROBOTS tend to the trees. The glass on all sides reveals the BUSTLING HALLS AND OFFICES of U.S. Robots and Mechanical Men.

SPOONER and CALVIN make their way down a slowly winding path.

CALVIN

When this company first started, we were manufacturing at the unremarkable rate of three robots a week. And now look at us. Today's children will never know a world without robots.

SPOONER

There are a growing number of unemployed human beings who don't seem to find that prospect so appealing.

CALVIN

When compared with robot workers, humans have several distinct disadvantages. We need to breathe. And eat. We require shelter and clothing. We demand payment for the labor we do, and at the end of a work day, each of us expects to be alive.

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They pass some ROBOTS moving in the other direction down the path. The mechanisms obediently stop and stiffly step to the side, making room for Spooner and Calvin. Spooner eyes them.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Our robots have already begun paving the way for colonization of the moon and Mars -
- without endangering a single human life. The first fire-fighting models are saving lives in twenty-one major cities. Soon medical robots will be performing micro-surgeries never believed possible. Every day our machines do more and more of the labor that enables human society to function, and flourish.

SPOONER

Leaving people to do what, Doctor?

CALVIN

After a natural period of adjustment, leaving them to engage in the higher pursuits that make life worth living.

They reach a door...and a ROBOT opens it for them.

INT. BUILDING SECURITY CENTER - DAY

SPOONER and CALVIN enter a security center with a hundred- plus screens currently running CORRIDOR SURVEILLANCE FOOTAGE.

CALVIN

Hector. Roll surveillance 7887.

On the far wall the SMILING FACE OF HECTOR appears as before:

HECTOR

Yes, Doctor Calvin.

Immediately every screen in the room displays the FEATURELESS METAL CORRIDOR that leads to the crime scene. Spooner turns. Looks around at the countless images.

SPOONER

What the hell is this?

CALVIN

Approximately the last thirty seconds of Doctor Hogenmiller's life.

The elevator opens as DOCTOR HOGENMILLER steps into the hall. From every conceivable angle. Long shots and medium shots.

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CONTINUED:

High angles and low angles. Close-ups of everything from his eyes to his shoes. His face is composed but tight. Intense.

Spooner watches the laboratory door open to admit him. The interior is visible, but only briefly. Hogenmiller steps in. The door slides shut behind him. A moment passes. A few more. Suddenly, a GUNSHOT ECHOES through the metal corridor.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Of course, we'll make these surveillance tapes available to the Department. But we've already gone over them thoroughly. I assure you that no one enters the lab at any time except for Hogenmiller, and after the gunshot, no one leaves. Now I don't pretend to be a Homicide detective ...but would you mind telling me how we could have a murder without a murder-er?

Spooner looks at her noncommittally. He thinks for a moment.

SPOONER

Hector, can you fast-forward, please.

The hundred-plus screens around them all FAST-FORWARD, and soon POLICE OFFICERS enter the frame moving at an accelerated rate. They struggle to force open the lab door, then rush through in a blur. And those CRIME SCENE TECHNICIANS appear.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

Thank you, Doctor. I admire rigorous thinking.

Calvin looks surprised, but pleased. About to respond when:

SPOONER (CONT'D)

Of course your conclusion's premature.

CALVIN

Excuse me?

Spooner steps toward a bank of screens. Sees a FAST-FORWARD VERSION OF HIMSELF enter the lab. An IMAGE OF CALVIN enters.

SPOONER

No murderer entered or exited the scene of the crime. This leads you to deduce there was no murder, but you've ignored the other possibility.

And he turns back to Calvin.

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SPOONER (CONT'D)

The killer has always been there...

(short pause)

...and never left.

CALVIN

You're trying to tell me a murderer has been hiding in the lab the entire time?

SPOONER

Stop the recording, Hector.

(back to Calvin)

If I'm right, the killer's still there.

The RECORDINGS ARE ALL PAUSED at the exact moment Spooner and Calvin were standing outside watching the Two Officers secure the lab door with the IMPENETRABLE-LOOKING LOCKING MECHANISM.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

We locked it in.

INT. FEATURELESS METAL CORRIDOR - DAY

SPOONER and CALVIN step up. Spooner holds his BADGE in front of that locking mechanism, and it RELEASES A SERIES OF BOLTS.

SPOONER'S AND CALVIN'S P.O.V. The laboratory is dark and quiet. Just the low HUMMING of several terminals casting an eerie illumination over robot heads, and gutted metal bodies.

INT. DOCTOR HOGENMILLER'S LAB - DAY

SPOONER and CALVIN re-enter. Calvin stops just inside the door, watching Spooner move into the room. He looks around. Slowly he walks past the same ROW OF UNFINISHED ROBOT BODIES as before. Empty eye sockets stare back, as if watching him.

Spooner stops. Sees that MAZE holding the METAL INSECT. He approaches the maze. Bends over it. Spooner gets closer and

The ROBOT BUG COMES TO LIFE and leaps forward. Spooner immediately pulls back as the insect scurries off through the maze, its antenna detecting the barriers, its multiple legs propelling its body with a series of WHIRS. The robot makes it through the maze and reaches the other end. Now it STOPS.

Calvin leans against the door skeptically, crossing her arms in front of her chest. Spooner frowns a bit but keeps going. Now he sees something across the lab.

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SPOONER'S P.O.V. A COMPLETE ROBOT BODY hangs with the other gutted bodies. It is humanoid. Four complete limbs visible. All of its joints intact. A head rests atop the torso, at a slight angle, its eye lenses staring out over the laboratory.

Spooner slowly walks over. The robot hangs slightly above him, the metal head staring down, as if watching his every move. Spooner reaches inside his coat and takes out his GUN.

He moves closer. Spooner pokes at the body and THE HEAD TUMBLES OFF THE TORSO ONTO THE FLOOR. It rolls and comes to a rest, its two eye lenses staring blankly up at the ceiling.

Calvin looks as if she is trying to hold it in. Then LAUGHS.

CALVIN

I'm sorry. I didn't intend to laugh.

Spooner puts his gun away. Calvin presses her lips together to stop another wave of amusement.

Spooner walks past a MOUND OF ROBOT PARTS in the far corner. Arms and legs. Pieces of indistinguishable metal. A robot head that looks like it was tossed haphazardly onto the pile.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

I feel it's my obligation to point out that a robot cannot murder a human being. Not if it was ordered to kill. Not even if it was protecting its own existence. This is exactly what the Three Laws of Robotics were designed to prevent.

Spooner stops and turns around. Starts back toward the pile.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

A robot would destroy itself before it allowed a human being to come to harm.

Spooner kicks at the pile dislodging a few small metal parts.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Are you hearing me, Detective? A robot cannot hurt you.

Spooner moves his foot to kick at the mound again WHEN THE PILE FLIES IN ALL DIRECTIONS. Robot parts strike the wall and clatter across the floor in a deafening cacophony of metal as THE ROBOT THAT WAS HIDING UNDER THE JUNK STANDS UP. Its metal hand reaches inside Spooner's coat. Too fast for a human being. It retracts with his gun. The Robot raises itself to its full height POINTING THE GUN AT SPOONER'S HEAD.

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CONTINUED: (2)

Calvin cannot believe what she is seeing. Not frightened so much as absolutely fascinated.

Spooner stares down the long barrel into two illuminated eye lenses resting inside a roughly-sculpted and grim metal face.

SPOONER

Move away from the door, Doctor. Now.

Calvin moves away from the door, not taking her eyes from the Robot, watching its every move almost clinically.

The Robot backs toward the exit in a convincing imitation of a desperate man seeking escape. The tremulous shaking of the gun. The darting looks between Spooner and Calvin as it nervously watches them both. Its movements so fluid. Human.

The Robot backs up against the door still pointing the gun at them. Then it quickly touches a wall panel. The door slides open and the Robot steps through into the CORRIDOR, slamming its metal hand onto the exterior door panel to close them in.

Spooner rushes to the door, and takes position on one side. He pulls a BACK-UP GUN from around his ankle and removes a CARTRIDGE. Calvin steps over, her eyes fixated on that door:

CALVIN

How did you know it was under there?

SPOONER

If I was made out of metal, and didn't want anyone to find me, I'd hide under a pile of junk.

Calvin turns to him and seems to realize what he's doing for the first time when he pulls a LARGER CARTRIDGE from his belt and inserts it into the handle with a KL-KLATCH.

CALVIN

Don't be ridiculous. There's no reason to shoot at it.

Calvin matter-of-factly touches the control panel. The door opens and she marches out into the open before he can stop her. A stunned Spooner points his gun. Ready to cover her:

SPOONER'S AND CALVIN'S P.O.V. At the far end of the hall the Robot turns at the sound of the door. Its movements are so quick. Fluid. So *human*. It raises its own gun to fire and

CALVIN (CONT'D)

STOP. Terminate current program.

The Robot freezes in place. Does not move.

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CALVIN (CONT'D)

Lower the weapon. Stand at rest.

The Robot awkwardly lowers its arm to its side, and stands up straight, as if unable to ignore the command. For the first time its movements look stiff and robotic. Like a mechanism.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Do not move again until you receive a direct command from me.

Spooner is still tensed. Ready to fire. He looks surprised.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

It's easy to assign human motivation to a machine when it's made in our image. But this is not one of your "fugitives" attempting to escape. This is a robot.

She turns away from the Robot and looks at Spooner:

CALVIN (CONT'D)

A simple command will reveal its behavior for what it is: clever programming. The illusion of self interest and free will. We were never in real danger, Detective.

It still does not move. Finally, Spooner lowers his gun. He stares down the length of the corridor at the immobile Robot.

CLOSE-UP of the ROBOT'S HAND hanging down at its side. ONE OF ITS FINGERS TWITCHES. Like a nervous tick.

Spooner grabs the unsuspecting Calvin and forces her down as the Robot raises its arm and FIRES. Spooner and Calvin slide across the laboratory floor as BULLETS RICOCHET around them.

The Robot FIRES one last time as the ELEVATOR OPENS. It runs on. Its movements are fluid again. Human. Holding the gun up near its roughly-sculpted face. The elevator doors shut.

The laboratory is quiet again. Spooner lies on the floor on top of a stunned Calvin. She suddenly realizes that she's still clutching him, and lets go. Spooner looks down at her:

SPOONER

Well, that was a very convincing illusion of somebody shooting at us.

INT. INSIDE THE ELEVATOR - DAY

THE ROBOT stands just inside the doors. Even without human features it looks identifiably nervous, shifting its weight from foot to foot. Its long metal fingers uncurl, then wrap back around the grip of the gun. And suddenly, it stiffens.

The Robot spins around pointing the gun at THE OTHER ROBOT in the elevator. The Other Robot is still. Primitive. It shows no reaction. Just stands there like a dumb mechanism.

The Robot hesitates. Then lowers the gun. Its head moves, very subtly, looking over this Other Robot from head to toe.

INT. BACK INSIDE THE LAB - DAY

SPOONER rises and helps CALVIN up. She calls out to the air.

CALVIN

Hector?!

The YELLOW CIRCLE appears near the wall. Like a LARGE SMILEY BUTTON. The mouth moving in sync with HECTOR'S GENTLE VOICE:

HECTOR

I took the liberty of alerting building security .003 seconds after the first shot was fired. I hope you don't mind.

SPOONER

I'm going after it--

HECTOR

The elevator containing the errant robot is now descending to the lobby, where it will be met by a team of armed security personnel already in position.

Spooner thinks about it, and takes a step back into the room. They watch Hector's face APPEAR TO FALL ASLEEP. The round black eyes flatten into tiny slits, and the mouth compresses.

Moments pass before Hector opens its eyes again. And smiles:

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Congratulations, Detective. The robot has been apprehended.

INT. BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

SPOONER and CALVIN emerge from the elevator into the lobby, and push through a crowd of SPECTATORS straining to see. They reach a group of ARMED SECURITY GUARDS surrounding a ROBOT HOLDING A GUN. It is malfunctioning. Stopping and starting again. Joints WHINING. *It is not the right robot.*

Calvin doesn't know what to say. And Spooner starts for the door. Faster and faster. He rushes out onto the street and

EXT. A BUSY SIDEWALK - DAY

A ROBOT walks past. Then ANOTHER. MORE AND MORE ROBOTS are visible up and down the block, mixed in with the PEDESTRIANS.

SPOONER stands there, helplessly, in the middle of the crowd.

CALVIN joins him, breathless. She looks up and down the street. Spooner watches her now:

SPOONER

You told me you were a psychologist. That wasn't the whole truth, was it?

CALVIN

I never said I treated human beings.

They lock eyes for a moment.

INT. BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

SPOONER and CALVIN re-enter, moving quickly across the lobby. An EXECUTIVE pushes through the crowd:

EXECUTIVE

You have some explaining to do, Doctor!

CALVIN

(ignoring his tone)
Detective Spooner, meet Alfred Lanning,
our Head of Research.

LANNING

I just broke the news to the Board of Directors that Hogenmiller blew his brains out, and now I have to go back and tell them he may have been shot by a robot -- that you just let get away?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Calvin doesn't like the brow-beating, but just keeps walking.

LANNING (CONT'D)

Do you have any idea what's going to happen when this gets out? My god, it could ruin us. I'm making this your responsibility, Doctor, you hear me?!

Spooner and Calvin squeeze between the SECURITY GUARDS and enter the circle. The PRIMITIVE ROBOT turns toward them with a violent jerk. Its voice SPUTTERS:

PRIMITIVE ROBOT

Malfunction. This unit is not...ZZZ... programmed to carry...ZZZ...firearms.

The robot is holding the gun incorrectly, with the barrel pointing up at the ceiling, like its hands are really not designed for it. Spooner reaches out and takes his gun back.

PRIMITIVE ROBOT (CONT'D)

This unit must obey orders--

Calvin is shaken. Her voice unable to mask it.

CALVIN

Attention. Who ordered you to hold this firearm? Was it a robot?

PRIMITIVE ROBOT

This unit is not programmed to obey ...ZZZ...an order given by a robot.

CALVIN

But you did obey the orders of another robot. Why? Explain--

Spooner has had enough of this madhouse:

SPOONER

(impatiently)

Who gave you the goddamn gun?!

PRIMITIVE ROBOT

A mmmmmmmZZZZZZZZ--

The robot SPUTTERS. Spooner and Calvin wait. The Security Guards and Spectators wait. You could hear a pin drop in the lobby when the answer finally comes:

PRIMITIVE ROBOT (CONT'D)

A metal man.

INT. ON THE EVENING NEWS - MONTAGE

A NEWS ANCHOR addresses her television audience with DAILY STOCK MARKET RESULTS displayed over her shoulder:

NEWS ANCHOR 1

Wall Street was reeling today from the apparent suicide of U.S. Robotic's top designer Doctor Heinrich Hogenmiller--

A SECOND ANCHOR continues with FOOTAGE OF ALFRED LANNING rushing past a row of REPORTERS THRUSTING MICROPHONES at him.

NEWS ANCHOR 2

...with no official statement yet from the company...

The U.S. ROBOTICS TOWER appears beside the THIRD NEWS ANCHOR:

NEWS ANCHOR 3

...and numerous unconfirmed reports of a robot -- yes, robot -- fleeing the scene.

INT. LIEUTENANT'S OFFICE - EVENING

The door slides open and SPOONER enters. Sees the LIEUTENANT pacing. A pair of computerized GLASSES overpower his face, and he WEARS HIS COMPUTER, the hardware shaped to fit over his shoulder, in the small of his back, and around his waist.

The Lieutenant is engaged in a call with an IMAGE OF THE COMMISSIONER running on both of his eye lenses. Now he sees Spooner and gestures for him to wait. He doesn't look happy:

LIEUTENANT

Yes, sir. I understand. No, we wouldn't want that. I'll speak to him as soon as he reports in, of course, sir. Good-bye.

The Lieutenant's fingers work the small PALM MOUSE in his hand, terminating the phone call.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

That was the Commissioner. Seems he just got off the phone with some big-wigs over at U.S. Robotics who were none too happy.

SPOONER

Yeah. Well I guess killer robots are bad for business.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Lieutenant takes a swig of COFFEE and empties his cup. A SENSOR ON THE CUP BLIPS and activates a COFFEE MACHINE that automatically brews more. He walks over and refills the cup.

LIEUTENANT

What's bad for U.S. Robotics is bad for this city. And I don't want to hear any more talk about killer robots, you hear? We don't know for sure what happened. Officially this errant mechanism is not a murder suspect.

SPOONER

Then what is it?

LIEUTENANT

Missing evidence.

The Lieutenant works his palm mouse, and METROPOLITAN MAPS AND DATA run on the interior of his lenses. He scrolls down.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

We're running a series of simulations to devise an appropriate search pattern--

SPOONER

I don't think you're going to find that thing by looking in your little screen.

LIEUTENANT

(irritated)

You know what you are, don't you? You're a...a.... What the *hell* is that word?

The Lieutenant manipulates his mouse and a THESAURUS scrolls up his glasses. The letters "msinorhcana" flash.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

Anachronism! That's it. You're a thing out of its time.

SPOONER

I know what it means. Thank you.

LIEUTENANT

It's not a compliment, goddamnit.

The Lieutenant steps back toward his chair. A SENSOR ON HIS SHOE BLIPS. The CHAIR ROLLS AWAY FROM THE DESK AND SWIVELS into position. He sits down. Spooner watches, with a frown.

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

What do you think of this Doctor Calvin?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SPOONER
I'm trying not to.

LIEUTENANT
Detective, you're going to cooperate with
U.S. Robotics. And if that means
cooperating with her, then you'll do it--

Spooner starts to protest, but:

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)
Damn it, Del. This is a big one. For
once, try not to piss everybody off. You
know how many people have robots in their
homes? We could have wide-scale panic on
our hands. You're going to do whatever it
takes to find that thing. And *fast*.

Spooner just stands there. When the Lieutenant is done, he
moves to the door. It slides open. Spooner turns back once.

SPOONER
This is it, you know. From now on we're
going to miss the good old days.

LIEUTENANT
What good old days?

SPOONER
When people were killed by other people.

EXT. ROOF OF THE STATION - EVENING

SPOONER stands at a chain link fence encircling the roof of the
police station. With even the most futuristic buildings
reduced to silhouettes at twilight, this setting seems almost
timeless. Spooner holds the fence. Looks out over the city.

At the sound of FOOTSTEPS, he turns, but not all the way.
Enough to show CALVIN he knows she's there:

SPOONER
Hello, Doctor.

CALVIN
They told me I might find you here.

Calvin steps up beside him. Looks through the fence. Pause.

CALVIN (CONT'D)
You don't seem surprised to see me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPOONER

Should I be? For the first time in its history U.S. Robotics is running scared.

CALVIN

Really. What exactly are we scared of?

SPOONER

That people will find out the Three Laws of Robotics are a big lie.

CALVIN

A big lie. Is that right?

SPOONER

"A robot may not injure a human being, or through inaction allow a human being to come to harm."

CALVIN

The first and most important law. So?

SPOONER

So a robot opens a window. Ten minutes later, I fall out of it and die. I was just killed by a robot, wasn't I?

Spooner steps a bit away from the fence. Calvin watches him.

CALVIN

That's a ridiculous example. The robot couldn't possibly have known you'd fall out of the window when it opened it.

SPOONER

Then the First Law of Robotics should read: a robot won't *intentionally* harm you -- or allow you to be harmed *to the extent of its limited knowledge*.

CALVIN

Well, everyone understands that.

SPOONER

Do they? That's not what you advertise. You create the perception that robots are infallible, and you've gotten away with it, but it won't last forever. Not in the face of a homicide. And then what? Your whole world is turned upside-down.

CALVIN

It's your world too, isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

That seems to irritate him.

SPOONER

Why don't you say what you came here to say?

CALVIN

You found the robot once using your natural instincts. I have every reason to believe you'll find it again. But you can't bring it in without my help.

SPOONER

I sense you're getting to the point.

CALVIN

Yes. I'm going with you.

SPOONER

And why would I let you do that?

CALVIN

I don't communicate with robots by typing on a keyboard. If they're not working right, I talk to them, and fix the problem verbally. I call it Robo-Psychology.

SPOONER

And that's your plan. You're going to talk to it. That thing is dangerous--

CALVIN

If the robot shot Hogenmiller, there's a logical explanation. I will find it.

SPOONER

Let's be clear here. I don't give a damn about your laws of robotics. I want to catch a murderer.

CALVIN

Then you're going to be disappointed. The robot may act like a man, but there's no motive here. This is not a *murder*, Detective -- it's a malfunction.

That makes Spooner stop. Think. And when he turns to her, Calvin looks perplexed at his growing grin:

SPOONER

Good work, Doctor. You did it again.

INT. POLICE GARAGE - NIGHT

TIRES SQUEAL as Spooner's CAR races through a parking garage.

INT. SPOONER'S CAR - NIGHT

SPOONER drives with his hands on a STEERING WHEEL. CALVIN sits big-eyed in the passenger seat holding on for dear life.

SPOONER

You agree this robot acts like a man.

CALVIN

All robots are programmed to act like men.
Watch out!

Spooner swerves around another car in the garage and speeds down the ramp to the next level below. Calvin is terrified.

SPOONER

How does a man hide from the cops?

CALVIN

Do you always drive *manually*?

SPOONER

He tries to blend into the crowd.

CALVIN

Look, I know where you're going with this.
The robot may try to hide among the
general mechanical population. So what?
Where do we start looking?

They take another ramp. The tires SQUEAL. Calvin holds on.

SPOONER

You said it. This is a malfunctioning
robot. Well, a robot is a computer on two
legs, right? And computers are very
literal. So where would our robot go --
not just to blend into the crowd -- but to
literally be indistinguishable from the
robot standing next to it?!

Calvin thinks. And realizes:

CALVIN

The robot has the outer shell of a model
NS-2. There's only one place in the city
with a concentrated number of Nestors.

EXT. CROWDED CITY STREET - NIGHT

The CAR hurls from the garage exit, and races down the block.

CALVIN (V.O.)
Come on, let's move. Can't this thing
go any faster?!

EXT. ROBOT ASSEMBLY PLANT - NIGHT

A sprawling assembly plant dominates an industrial wasteland.

INT. THE SECRETARY'S DESK - NIGHT

SPOONER and CALVIN step up. Look down at the ROBOT WEARING A BLONDE WIG AND A RED DRESS sitting behind the desk. The wig is crooked on its square head.

SPOONER
We're here to see the night foreman.

The robot stands stiffly, opens the door to the office, and enters. Spooner and Calvin share a look. The door opens again and the NIGHT MAN rushes out, surprised to see anyone:

NIGHT MAN
Uh. Hi. I'm Binder, uh, the night man.
I'm the only man here. At night. So...
I'm the night man. Heh.

The robot steps out of the office and stands just behind him. The Night Man quickly snatches the blonde wig off the robot's head and hides it behind his back. He GIGGLES uncomfortably.

INT. THE FOREMAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

SPOONER and CALVIN lean over the shoulder of the NIGHT MAN and watch him key information into a dusty computer terminal.

CALVIN
We're looking for a lost robot. Can you
tell us how many Nestors you have here?

NIGHT MAN
I can tell you without looking. Fifty.
We always have fifty. Last week we had
fifty. Yesterday we had fifty...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And he frowns at the screen. Stops hitting the keys. Pause.

NIGHT MAN (CONT'D)
...today we have fifty-one.

INT. TRANSPORTATION DOCK - NIGHT

A STORAGE COMPARTMENT OPENS and 51 ROBOTS MARCH OUT in strict formation. Every step and swing of the arm in unison. Like a metal army. Each one indistinguishable from the next one. The sound of METAL FOOTSTEPS REVERBERATES through the large transport dock as the 51 Robots organize themselves in a straight line and stop to await orders. Stiff. Motionless.

SPOONER, CALVIN, and the NIGHT MAN watch from a CONTROL BOOTH window, looking up and down the row, unable to distinguish one from another. EVERY ONE OF THEM LOOKS LIKE THE FUGITIVE.

SPOONER
I hope you have an idea.

CALVIN
We could interview each one individually, cross-referencing their responses to detect any anomalies. If we work around the clock we should have the right robot in two or three weeks.

They share a look. Then Calvin scans the dock. She sees a LARGE METAL TRANSPORT TRAILER HANGING FROM THE CEILING CRANE.

CALVIN (CONT'D)
Of course, we could try something a bit more expedient.

CUT TO:

A single FOLDING CHAIR has been placed in the center of the transport dock under the shadow of the large trailer HANGING ABOVE IT. Spooner and Calvin stand before the row of Robots.

SPOONER
Please. Explain this to me. Again.

CALVIN
We have fifty robots here that cannot kill a human being, or allow a human being to come to harm. And one that apparently can.

She looks at the chair. Then up at the trailer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Fifty of the robots should attempt to save my life. The one that doesn't is our man...so to speak. Try and relax.

Spooner watches her walk off. Calvin sits down in the shadow of the enormous trailer dangling above. She glances at the Night Man in the control booth, and positions a tiny HEADSET.

CALVIN'S P.O.V. A row of 51 grim-looking Robots stand there like metal statues, each one identical.

Spooner and Calvin share one last look, and she says, calmly:

CALVIN (CONT'D)

(into the mike)

Drop it.

The TRAILER DROPS TOWARD THE FLOOR and the ROBOTS RUN TOWARD CALVIN like a row of linebackers rushing the quarterback. Their metal footsteps are DEAFENING and

The THICK CORD OF THE CEILING CRANE goes taut and the TRAILER STOPS above her head. It swings. The ROBOTS STOP IN UNISON and immediately straighten into their stiff resting position.

Spooner does not look pleased. Calvin slowly rises from her chair. Fascinated. Staring at 51 ROBOTS STANDING RIGHT IN FRONT OF HER. Every one of them moved.

CUT TO:

The ceiling crane RAISES THE TRAILER high above the facility.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

For fifty of them, running to my rescue was an automatic response. But for our robot it was a calculated decision.

SPOONER

You mean the damn thing is pretending.

CALVIN

Yes. Voluntary actions are slower than automatic responses in human beings, but not in robots. I was hoping we would catch it by surprise. Clearly we didn't.

Spooner watches the trailer lock into place. Then looks down at the WALL OF ELECTRICAL CURRENT flowing between TWO POSTS. Calvin looks over the jury-rigged set-up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CALVIN (CONT'D)

We drop the trailer. Although they may understand after the first test that I'm not in any real danger, the fifty normal NS-2s will have no choice but to run to my rescue -- even if it means destroying themselves in the process.

SPOONER

And the robot that stays behind is the one that values its own existence over human life. Brilliant, Doctor. If it works.

CALVIN

A simple application of the Three Laws of Robotics, Detective.

Calvin gestures toward the booth. As before, the STORAGE COMPARTMENT OPENS and those 51 ROBOTS MARCH OUT in formation.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Let's just hope we can get that current turned off before we fry several million dollars worth of perfectly good robots.

Spooner moves off to the side. Takes out his GUN. Watches from the perimeter. Calvin sits down in the chair as before.

CALVIN'S P.O.V. The 51 identical Robots face her from the other side of the electrical barrier.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Drop it.

The TRAILER DROPS TOWARD THE FLOOR. At the last moment the cord of the crane goes taut and the TRAILER STOPS. Swinging.

Calvin immediately rises from her chair. Looking like she can't believe it. Spooner lowers his gun.

The 51 Robots are still standing far off, in an orderly line, where they were before. NOT ONE TOOK A SINGLE STEP FORWARD.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Current off!

The ELECTRICAL BARRIER DISAPPEARS and Calvin steps through. She faces the long line of Robots. Then picks one at random:

CALVIN (CONT'D)

You. Explain yourself! A human being was in danger.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ROBOT 1

This unit would have been destroyed upon contact with the barrier. Rescue of the human being was not possible--

CALVIN

You must not allow a human being to come to harm through your inaction. Explain!

ROBOT 1

If it is not possible to save a human being, then that human being could be categorized as already deceased.

Calvin stares at it. Shocked. She moves to the next robot:

CALVIN

And you? What do you say?

ROBOT 2

If it is not possible to save a human being, then that human being could be categorized as already deceased.

Calvin moves down the line toward a third.

ROBOT 3

If it is not possible to save--

Calvin turns before it finishes. She looks frustrated, and a little scared. She steps back to address them:

CALVIN

This is not your original thinking. I want to know where this concept came from. Who told you this?

51 Robots answer in unison. Their mechanical voices resound:

51 ROBOTS

ONE OF US.

CALVIN

Which one?

51 ROBOTS

ONE OF US.

CALVIN

That is not satisfactory. Which one?!

51 ROBOTS

ONE OF US.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Spooner steps up beside her. Calvin looks shaken.

SPOONER

What the hell's going on here?!

CALVIN

It anticipated our next move. It talked to the others and introduced a new way of thinking so it wouldn't be detected.

SPOONER

(yelling to the booth)

Move the trailer above the robots. Now!

Through the window of the booth, the Night Man can be seen working the equipment. The TRAILER RISES TOWARD THE CEILING.

CALVIN

What are you doing? You can't--

SPOONER

(to the robots)

Do not move. That's an order!

CALVIN

I have everything under control here.

SPOONER

It doesn't look that way to me.

The trailer MOVES INTO POSITION above the Robots.

CALVIN

You have to be patient. These are not men. They're machines--

SPOONER

And in a moment they'll be scrap metal.

He gestures. The TRAILER DROPS. 50 Robots stand waiting for the end. BUT ONE OF THEM LEAPS FROM THE MIDDLE ROW. It hits the floor and rolls, in one fluid motion, rising to its feet.

The Robot stands tensed and ready to flee. Like any cornered human fugitive. It is uncanny. The Robot hesitates. Looks.

The TRAILER IS SWINGING ABOVE THE HEADS of the other Robots. It never hit. The Robot turns to Spooner and Calvin. Their expressions make it clear this had been their plan all along.

CALVIN

Gotcha.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

The Robot turns and runs. Spooner raises his gun to fire, but it is too fast. The terrified Night Man ducks down as the Robot leaps into the control booth SHATTERING the window.

The Robot lands on its feet, races through the booth, and out the door. Spooner and Calvin rush in:

SPOONER

We can't let it out of this building.

Calvin hurries to a console and works the controls. Spooner helps the Night Man rise shakily onto his feet, then looks around at the monitors showing SECURITY DOORS SLIDING INTO PLACE over exits, docks, and windows. ALARMS begin to sound.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

Well, Doctor. We can sit tight here and wait for back-up, or--

Spooner turns toward Calvin and catches the ELECTRICAL RIFLE she just tossed at him. He looks down at the weapon. Calvin pulls another rifle from the cabinet.

CALVIN

They fire a concentrated pulse that will immobilize the robot for several minutes--

Spooner watches her arm the weapon. She sees his expression.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

What's the matter, Detective? Robo-Psychology not quite what you expected?

They share a look, and Spooner smiles a bit. Seeing things in Calvin that surprise him. He arms his rifle, and it HUMS.

SPOONER

Let's go to work, *partner*.

INT. ROBOT ASSEMBLY PLANT - NIGHT

WORKER ROBOTS oversee an AUTOMATED ASSEMBLY LINE constructing still more robots. A giant claustrophobic maze of moving parts. SPOONER, CALVIN, and the NIGHT MAN enter.

SPOONER

(to the Night Man)

You wait here. Watch the door. Okay?

The Night Man grips his weapon, tightly. Nods. Spooner and Calvin share a look and start their search of the main floor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They wind their way around the pipes, and through pockets of steam. See nothing. They step past an alcove -- and a ROBOT LURCHES OUT. They level their guns, but it's a worker model.

They watch the factory robot stiffly turn and move off into the plant. Slowly they relax. Keep moving. Spooner wipes SWEAT from his brow. Calvin takes a look at him:

CALVIN
Are you all right--

SPOONER
I'm fine.
(short pause)
What about you? You still think we're
dealing with a malfunction?

Calvin gives him an honest look. Pause.

SPOONER (CONT'D)
That's what I was afraid of.

CUT TO:

The Night Man stands his nervous watch of the door. Nothing happens for a moment. Then he hears a CLANK. He thrusts out his rifle, but there seems to be nothing there. He listens.

The Night Man hesitates. Then wanders off toward the sound. He steps between some pipes. Hears a second CLANK. Turns to see another FACTORY ROBOT using a LARGE WRENCH on a machine.

NIGHT MAN
Hey. You see any strange robots?

The robot turns around, with a WHIR. It is clearly the same model Spooner and Calvin saw above. It looks at him. Pause.

FACTORY ROBOT
Yes, sir.

NIGHT MAN
Where?!

The robot moves its head a little, looking over his shoulder.

FACTORY ROBOT
Standing right behind you.

The Night Man's expression drops. He stares at the robot. Like he can't believe it. Refuses to believe it. Finally he readies himself and turns around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

A PAIR OF METAL HANDS REACH OUT pulling the Night Man closer.

CUT TO:

Spooner and Calvin hear his SCREAM, and run toward the sound. They rush out into an opening. See the factory robot slumped on the floor with the LARGE WRENCH PROTRUDING FROM ITS CHEST.

CALVIN

It must have tried to help him--

They look around, and Spooner sees:

SPOONER

There!

SPOONER'S P.O.V. THE ROBOT is obscured by the shadows and steam. A rough humanoid shape with glowing lenses. It runs.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

Find Binder. I'll take the robot.

Spooner gives chase. He sees the robot round the far corner and follows, looking surprised to face:

ROWS OF NEWLY-MANUFACTURED ROBOTS hang like metal carcasses. Slowly, Spooner moves between the rows. Searches. Suddenly the ASSEMBLY LINE RESHUFFLES THE ROBOTS and the metal bodies slide and rotate. The sound DEAFENING. Spooner starts one way, but the rows reshuffle, and that way no longer exists. Spooner is surrounded by a new set of robot bodies and ONE OF THEM TAKES A SWING AT HIM. Spooner ducks and rolls, raising his weapon to fire but the Robot is running. He gives chase.

Spooner pursues the Robot through the maze of metal bodies. He gets a clear shot. Aims his weapon.

The robots reshuffle, and the shot is blocked. Spooner sees a new opening leading out. He hurries toward it, but the robots continue to slide and rotate, and the path disappears.

Spooner stumbles down the new passage and emerges from the maze into an opening. He is DRENCHED WITH SWEAT. Stops to get his bearings. His BREATHING is labored.

Abruptly, he looks at his hand. It is SHAKING INVOLUNTARILY. Spooner clenches his fist and keeps running.

CUT TO:

Calvin hears a SCREAM and races off in that direction. She squeezes between pipes. Sees the NIGHT MAN STRAPPED INTO THE MACHINERY in the center of a row of unfinished robot bodies.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CLOSE-UP of an UNFINISHED HEAD made of wires and parts. An AUTOMATIC ARM holds a FACEPLATE in position. A SECOND ARM sets a LONG SCREW between the eyes and SCREWS IT INTO PLACE.

The Night Man struggles. Can't get free.

NIGHT MAN

The lever! Pull the lever!

The crumpled BODY OF A FACTORY ROBOT has SMASHED A CONTROL PANEL. Some large pipes have been crushed SPEWING OUT STEAM. Calvin looks. Sees the EMERGENCY STOP LEVER. But it is on the other side of the steam spewing from the shattered pipes.

Calvin reaches with her right hand -- but pulls away -- her face registering pain. It is SCALDING. The assembly arms move on to the next robot in line and screw on the faceplate.

CUT TO:

Spooner runs toward a POUNDING and sees:

THE ROBOT IS STRIKING A LARGE SECURITY DOOR preventing it from leaving the building. It hears Spooner, and turns. It looks all around, with an almost human desperation. Trapped.

The Robot takes several steps toward him -- in a mad rush -- but Spooner levels his gun. Ready to fire. The Robot stops.

The Robot extends its hands. Palms out. Its voice sounds as artificial as the others, but with human tone and inflection:

THE ROBOT

WHAT AM I?

Spooner looks surprised. Doesn't shoot. The SECURITY DOOR RISES revealing squad cars and POLICE OFFICERS aiming rifles.

The Robot stiffens. Desperate again. Starts to move. And Spooner FIRES. The pulse looks like a distortion in the air.

...and the Robot collapses to the floor.

CUT TO:

A faceplate is placed over the Night Man's face MUFFLING HIS SCREAMS. He watches through the eye holes as a long screw centers between his eyes, rotating with a HIGH-PITCHED WHINE.

Calvin rolls up her sleeve and THRUSTS HER LEFT ARM THROUGH THE STEAM. Her hand wraps around the lever. Instantly the skin BEGINS TO SIZZLE. She fights to pull the lever as her SKIN BURNS AWAY layer after layer, and still Calvin holds on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Finally the handle gives. The ASSEMBLY LINE GRINDS TO A HALT and the arms retract, removing the plate from the Night Man's face. He GASPS for air. Then sees Calvin and looks stunned:

Calvin pulls her limb from the steam revealing her METAL HAND AND ARM. It is gleaming silver. The last SKIN DRIPS OFF IT.

CUT TO:

Spooner moves through the plant. He looks sick and unsteady.

CUT TO:

Calvin helps the Night Man free himself. He can't take his eyes from her artificial arm. She moves the fingers for him.

CALVIN

I lost my left arm in an accident
a few years ago. Lucky for you.

CUT TO:

Spooner moves through the plant. He still looks unsteady, but with every step, he seems to improve. Pulling himself together. Soon he's walking with his usual measured stride.

Spooner reaches a juncture. He turns and sees them a short distance away. Calvin with her back toward him. He pauses, looking relieved to see her okay. He steps closer. Closer.

Finally Calvin turns around and

Spooner sees her gleaming prosthetic arm and FOR ONE MOMENT HIS FACE SHOWS ABSOLUTE TERROR. Spooner pulls away from her.

He stops himself, but too late.

She looks perplexed, and then seems to realize, lowering her arm. The assembly line all around them RESTARTS. Spooner and Calvin stare at one another, but neither one says a word.

EXT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

The first rays of sun break over the futuristic city skyline.

INT. OBSERVATION BOOTH - DAY

Through the observation mirror THE ROBOT can be seen sitting in a grim interrogation room, on a chair, at the table. Like

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

any human suspect. It is absolutely still. Hands on the tabletop. Staring directly at whomever is behind the mirror.

SPOONER, CALVIN and the LIEUTENANT observe it from the booth.

LIEUTENANT

I can't tell if it's not moving because it's trying to psych us out, or because it's just a machine. Or both.

SPOONER

I'm going in.

LIEUTENANT

Orders are no one interviews the robot until Director Lanning and the rest of his team arrives.

(short pause)

You don't have much time.

Spooner turns to leave but:

CALVIN

I think I should be in there with you.

Spooner doesn't look at her. His response is cold and terse.

SPOONER

I'll hold the interview alone, Doctor.

And he leaves. Calvin watches the door shut. Finally, she clenches her metal hand into a fist.

CALVIN

I didn't see it. I should have--

LIEUTENANT

You needed him to find your robot. I think you saw what you wanted to see.

CALVIN

(angry at that)

Forty-percent of the population display mild forms of unease or distrust around technology. But his kind of severe techno-phobia is potentially disabling.

LIEUTENANT

Robots scare the shit out of him. But make no mistake, Doctor. He didn't succeed in spite of his condition. He brought in that robot *because* of it.

Pause. They see Spooner step inside the interrogation room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CALVIN

If you really cared about your people,
Lieutenant, you'd be asking yourself
what this case is going to do to him.

INT. THE INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

SPOONER walks up to the other chair, pulls it out, and sits. He opens a FILE and looks over the papers inside, ignoring the ROBOT. It sits there and watches him, but does not move.

SPOONER

You're a "robot."

Spooner looks up from that file.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

This is in answer to your question "what am I?" The definition of a robot is: a machine that looks like a human being, and performs tasks of a human being. So I guess it means you pretend to be a man.

Spooner slides the file toward the center of the table. The Robot doesn't move for a moment. Then its head tilts, with a WHIR. The Robot lifts one of its hands, gently rests its metal fingers on top of the file, and slowly drags it closer.

The Robot's long metal fingers open the file almost daintily. It very precisely spreads out the contents. Looks them over. It is filled with PICTURES AND SCHEMATICS of robots -- and underneath them are CRIME SCENE PHOTOS of a dead Hogenmiller.

The Robot's emotionless mechanical face considers the images. Finally the Robot returns the contents to the file, and slowly slides it back across the table.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

Of course, you seem much more advanced than the usual robot. Hey, you could be sitting there, looking at me right now and thinking to yourself, "This guy's a big asshole." But there's really no way for me to tell one way or the other. I mean let's face it, you're probably just another machine.

The Robot does not move. Spooner gestures, not expecting much. As if probably wasting his time.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

Well, am I right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Robot's emotionless metal face watches Spooner. A pause.

THE ROBOT

Yes. You're right. You are an asshole.

For a moment Spooner is shocked. You can see it in his eyes. Then he forces a friendly smile.

SPOONER

We got off to a bad start. That's my fault. I'm Detective Spooner of the Homicide division. Do you have a name?

The Robot looks down a bit. Hesitant. Its voice a whisper:

THE ROBOT

Sonny.

SPOONER

Sonny. That's nice.

The Robot reacts. Lifts its head with a WHIR. Looks at him.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

I just mean that Doctor Hogenmiller must have thought of you fondly. Like a son.
(short pause)
What happened to him?

The Robot visibly stiffens.

THE ROBOT

I don't know.

SPOONER

He was found in his laboratory. And you were in the laboratory. You didn't see?

THE ROBOT

No.

SPOONER

Why did you hide?

THE ROBOT

I was frightened.

SPOONER

Frightened.

THE ROBOT

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SPOONER

Why do you suppose Hogenmiller would create a robot that could simulate fear?

THE ROBOT

I don't know.

SPOONER

I mean, it doesn't seem to me like a very useful thing for a robot to have.

THE ROBOT

I don't know why.

SPOONER

I wouldn't want my toaster to be frightened of bread, or my vacuum cleaner to get spooked at the sight of dirt--

The Robot SLAMS its metal hands down on the table. It yells:

THE ROBOT

I DON'T KNOW!

Pause. Spooner watches the Robot. Calmly.

SPOONER

Huh. Looks like you can simulate other emotional states besides fear. I think that one's called anger. Have you ever simulated anger before?

The Robot does not respond. Does not move.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

It would be best for you if you answer.

THE ROBOT

Yes.

SPOONER

Under what circumstances?

The Robot crosses its arms, like a petulant child.

THE ROBOT

Doctor Hogenmiller would make me sleep.

SPOONER

Sleep. You mean he would turn you off?

THE ROBOT

I guess so.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SPOONER

And you didn't like being turned off.
Well that seems perfectly reasonable.
But while you were simulating this anger,
is it possible you might have hurt him?

THE ROBOT

No. I could never hurt anyone.

SPOONER

But you've tried to hurt people before,
haven't you? You shot a gun at Doctor
Calvin and myself.

THE ROBOT

I was aiming to miss.

SPOONER

Really. Because it sure seemed like you
were trying to hit us.

THE ROBOT

My aim is perfect. If I'd wanted to hit
you, I would have. I was aiming to miss.

Spooner thinks for a moment.

SPOONER

You must know the Three Laws of Robotics.
Can you recite them for me?

Spooner waits. The Robot manages to convey impatience with its
body language, but finally:

THE ROBOT

One: A robot may not injure a human
being, or through inaction allow a human
being to come to harm. Two: A robot must
obey the orders of a human being, unless
those orders conflict with the first law.
Three: A robot must protect its own
existence.

Spooner looks like he was about to move on, but then sits up.

SPOONER

And?

THE ROBOT

And what?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SPOONER

A robot must protect its own existence
*...but only if that protection does not
conflict with the first or second laws.*

Pause. The Robot thinks about it.

THE ROBOT

Well that doesn't seem right, does it?

INT. POLICE OBSERVATION BOOTH - DAY

CALVIN and the LIEUTENANT observe from the other side of the mirror. They share a stunned look. Watch.

INT. IN THE INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

SPOONER and THE ROBOT stare at one another across the table.

SPOONER

I have all I need for now. We can
continue this another time.

Spooner gets up, and heads for the exit. He looks like he really wants to get out of there. He reaches the door when:

THE ROBOT

You never asked me if I killed him.

Spooner stops. Hides his emotions, and turns.

SPOONER

Did you?

THE ROBOT

No. But I hope you find who did.

SPOONER

I suppose now you're going to tell me that
you can simulate grief. That you're sorry
he's gone. That you "miss him."

Pause. The Robot looks away, then back, with a muted WHIR.

THE ROBOT

No, Detective. I won't waste your time
expressing emotions you're so determined
to believe I lack.

INT. HOMICIDE SQUAD ROOM - DAY

SPOONER exits the interrogation room. Looks shaken. Thinks.

The observation booth opens. CALVIN and the LIEUTENANT step out. Spooner and Calvin share a look. The Lieutenant walks over and stares through the window at THE ROBOT.

LIEUTENANT

What in God's name do we have here?

Spooner doesn't answer him. Another moment and he walks off.

INT. EVIDENCE SIMULATOR - DAY

SPOONER enters a facility that resembles a recording studio: complex equipment is packed tight into a TINY BOOTH, separated by GLASS from the rest of the room, which is empty and unremarkable aside from the UNUSUAL TEXTURE of the walls.

Spooner steps to the glass. Calls to the TECHNICIAN on duty:

SPOONER

Bring up the crime scene.

Beyond the barrier, an IMAGE OF THE LABORATORY appears with DOCTOR HOGENMILLER'S DEAD BODY. A gun next to his open hand.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

Now the robot. And give it the gun.

An IMAGE OF THE ROBOT appears beside the body. It is stiff, arms at its sides, with none of the life of the real thing. The gun on the floor FADES and REAPPEARS IN THE ROBOT'S HAND. The body DISAPPEARS off the floor and REAPPEARS IN A STANDING POSITION. An unreal vertical corpse. The Robot raises the gun. The barrel is aimed point blank at Hogenmiller's face--

Just then the door opens and the LIEUTENANT steps inside with CALVIN, followed by ALFRED LANNING and an angry COMMISSIONER.

COMMISSIONER

Detective, we're going to have a little discussion later about your unauthorized interrogation. But for now we'd like to hear anything that you have to say.

Spooner turns away from them. Back to the glass. Just says:

SPOONER

Fire.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The image of the Robot FIRES a bullet into Hogenmiller's head and the body collapses to the floor. Everyone jumps at the sound of the gunshot and the brutal shocking image, including the Police Commissioner -- who throws Spooner a furious look.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

Let's see it again. And magnify.

The simulator RESETS AND ZOOMS. The Robot's hand is about to fire the weapon. But now HOGENMILLER'S THUMB SLIPS IN FRONT OF THE TRIGGER, and a graphic indicates a PATTERN OF RESIDUE.

LANNING

I don't understand. What does that mean?

SPOONER

To create the pattern of gunpowder residue found on Doctor Hogenmiller, he must have had his thumb on the trigger.

The simulation RETURNS TO NORMAL. The Doctor stands in front of the Robot, his hand on the gun, as if helping it kill him.

COMMISSIONER

Well maybe this was a suicide after all.
Take the robot out of there.

The Robot DISAPPEARS. Now Hogenmiller is holding the gun to his own mouth. Like a suicide. But it looks weird.

LIEUTENANT

I don't buy it. A suicide would've held the gun steady in both of his hands.

COMMISSIONER

Then something else was holding that gun,
and we already know what. Bring it back.

The ROBOT REAPPEARS in its place pointing the murder weapon.

LIEUTENANT

What do you think, Detective?

SPOONER

I think we're still missing a piece of the puzzle. Or the pieces are all here, and we haven't put them together right.

The Police Commissioner does not look happy. About to argue.

Calvin has been standing back watching all this. She CLEARS HER THROAT modestly, and all the men in the room turn around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CALVIN

Gentlemen. If I may?

Calvin steps up to the controls. She extends her METAL ARM and INSERTS HER INDEX FINGER into a round connector. Calvin OPENS A COMPARTMENT in her prosthetic, and works the KEYPAD.

Spooner and Calvin lock eyes a moment, until he turns away, uncomfortable with the sight of her arm hooked to a machine.

The simulation BLURS, and when it clears, Doctor Hogenmiller and the Robot both STRUGGLE OVER THE GUN. It FIRES. The image FREEZES with the Doctor's head and body tilted at a dramatic angle, the bullet entering his screaming mouth, his left hand hanging in mid-air. His right still on the weapon.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

A struggle over the gun allows for the placement of the Doctor's right hand on the weapon, as well as the entry wound through the mouth that initially created the erroneous impression of a suicide.

Doctor Hogenmiller FALLS TO THE FLOOR exactly as he was found by police. CRIME SCENE AND AUTOPSY DATA APPEARS along with "SCENARIO APPROVED." With a twist Calvin disengages her arm.

COMMISSIONER

That was a very compelling demonstration, Doctor. I'm sure you agree, Lieutenant.

The Lieutenant would love to disagree...but can't. Everyone seems convinced save Spooner. Calvin walks toward the glass.

CALVIN

During its interrogation, the robot mimicked emotional responses, gave the appearance of stream of consciousness thinking, and used obvious falsehoods when it denied shooting its creator. It simulates human conversation to a degree we never thought possible.

Calvin watches the image of the Robot standing over the body.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

But this could only be achieved by giving the robot a stronger sense of self. So Doctor Hogenmiller strengthened the Third Law of Robotics. *A robot must protect its own existence. Period.* Its regard for its own self was no longer predicated on respect or concern for human beings.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Calvin turns to face them as she concludes:

CALVIN (CONT'D)

This enabled the Doctor to make certain cognitive advances, but left the Three Laws in a grave imbalance. And when he tried to shut it down -- for what was probably some routine maintenance -- the robot defended itself.

LANNING

My god. This was reckless. *Reckless.*

CALVIN

For once I agree with the Director. Doctor Hogenmiller was tampering with the very foundations of the positronic brain.

Lanning shares a knowing look with the Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER

The robot will undergo electromagnetic purge to render it harmless.

Calvin appears about to speak. Lanning anticipates:

LANNING

Doctor, your Robo-Psychology has proven an asset to this company. But it must be made clear that this mechanism was never intended to be. The future of robotics depends on what we do here today.

COMMISSIONER

I'm sure we can wrap this up fast, can't we, Lieutenant?

That isn't really a question. The Lieutenant watches Lanning and the Police Commissioner exit. Calvin right behind them. She looks back once at Spooner, then follows them out. He watches the door shut behind her. Turning back to the glass:

SPOONER

Let's see it again, and keep it running.

The SIMULATION PLAYS as Calvin had designed it. Hogenmiller and the Robot struggle over the gun. And then it SHOTS HIM.

LIEUTENANT

What she said makes sense, Del.

Spooner does not respond. Just stares at the simulation. He watches the Robot murder Doctor Hogenmiller AGAIN, and AGAIN.

INT. RESIDENTIAL CORRIDOR - EVENING

SPOONER walks toward a regular-looking door with a regular-looking door knob. He takes out his SET OF KEYS.

The ELEVATOR opens. OTHER RESIDENTS glide out carried by a MOVING WALKWAY, and one-by-one, they branch off from the rest as the floor carries them inside their FUTURISTIC APARTMENTS.

Spooner is about to slip a key into the lock when he suddenly looks apprehensive. Like someone is watching him. He turns:

SPOONER'S P.O.V. HIS NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR rides the walkway into her residence. The DOOR OPENS AUTOMATICALLY and she slides in, eyeing Spooner suspiciously, like he's some wacko.

The door shuts behind her and Spooner is again alone in the corridor. He inserts the key. The SOUND OF HIS LOCK TURNING ECHOES down the hallway. Spooner opens the door, and enters.

INT. SPOONER'S APARTMENT - EVENING

SPOONER closes the door. He stands there a moment inside of the foyer, and leans back against the door, relieved to be home. He EXHALES. Flips a simple light switch on the wall.

Spooner moves to the antique bar, and makes himself a DRINK.

There is strange single KNOCK on the door. As if someone is uncertain. Spooner waits. Then comes a much stronger KNOCK.

Spooner opens the door to reveal CALVIN standing in the hall:

CALVIN

Your door wasn't acknowledging me.
So I...knocked.

SPOONER

Knocking works.

Calvin steps inside, hesitating a moment as she reacts to the interior of Spooner's place.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

I just made myself a drink. Would
you like one?

CALVIN

Yes. Thank you.

Spooner moves to the bar and starts mixing another.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALVIN (CONT'D)

This is quite a collection of antiques.

SPOONER

I like furniture that doesn't beep, blip,
or talk back to me.

They share a look in the mirror set behind the bar.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

I don't suppose somebody who works with
robots would understand that.

CALVIN

True, you're not my usual type of patient,
but let me see: You think you were born
too late.

Spooner finishes the drink. Turns around. Waits.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

You're a Homicide detective because no
matter what new gadget they come up with,
it's still just you and the suspect.
You and the evidence and your instinct.
You think that no matter how the world
changes -- how mechanized it becomes --
justice must be served by human hands.

Spooner walks over. Hands her the drink.

SPOONER

That wasn't bad. I kind of like the way
I sound. But we're not done, are we?

CALVIN

Not quite. You've constructed a very
attractive fantasy for yourself. The
last twentieth century man. But you can't
live in the past. It's gone. And you
can't stop the future, and I'll tell you
why: because by the time you know what's
coming, it's always already here.

Spooner steps away. She looks after him.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Sooner or later you're going to have to
stop hiding from the real world...

(indicating his home)

...and see all of this, this facade, for
what it is. A prison of your own design.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SPOONER

Okay, Doc. Now let's talk about you.

Calvin gestures for him to go ahead. Spooner considers her.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

You're not on intimate terms with many human beings. I say that because you came in here and started analyzing me, which could be construed as rude. But in your case I think that's you trying to be friendly, which shows you don't get much practice at it.

Calvin looks surprised, but not offended.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

Maybe something happened to you. Maybe you've just been disappointed in humanity one too many times. God knows in my profession I can understand that. And so you take comfort in robots. But it's a cold and lonely way to live, replacing the people in your life with machines.

CALVIN

To you a robot is a machine. You haven't worked with them, so you don't know. They're stronger, more useful, and absolutely devoted to us. Robots are a cleaner better breed than we are.

SPOONER

I'm not ready to close the book on the human race just yet. *Or this case.* That's what you were sent here to find out, isn't it?

Calvin stiffens at the accusation. Her voice hardens, with:

CALVIN

You did your job. You have your killer. Now walk away, and don't look back. I'm telling you this for your own good.

SPOONER

For someone who loves robots, you seem strangely unmoved that they're going to destroy this one. I was in that room with it, Doctor. My gut tells me I was talking to more than a clever mechanism.

Calvin sets down her drink.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CALVIN

Detective, to a savage, the simplest form of technology would seem like magic. And to someone with your...sensitivities... I'm sure the robot made quite an impression. But I assure you, it's just programming. In this case very dangerous programming. A failure.

She moves to the door. Spooner gets up. Watches after her.

SPOONER

A scientist builds a robot that acts like a man. More like a man than any robot ever before. It shoots him. And U.S. Robotics calls it "a failure."

CALVIN

What would you call it?

SPOONER

An unqualified success.
(short pause)
There's nothing more human than murder.

For a moment they stand there like that watching one another. Then Calvin turns, and walks out.

Spooner downs the rest of his drink. He steps to the window and looks at the STREET BELOW. Nothing for a moment. Then Calvin can be seen stepping out onto the sidewalk. A DARK SEDAN pulls up to the curb, and the door opens AUTOMATICALLY.

Calvin gets in. Spooner watches it drive off.

INT. PRISONER VISITING ROOM - DAY

SPOONER sits at a table. A GUARD opens the door. THE ROBOT sees Spooner, and moves to the other chair. Sits. So human.

THE ROBOT

I didn't expect to see you again.

SPOONER

Really. And why is that?

THE ROBOT

I figured you'd close your case. They want you to close it, don't they?

Spooner does not answer. Stares across the table. A pause.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPOONER

You said yesterday that you didn't shoot your creator. In fact you said...

(looking at his notes)

..."I could never hurt anyone." That is what you said, isn't it?

THE ROBOT

Yes.

SPOONER

Then how do you explain the night foreman? You nearly killed him by sticking him inside the machinery.

THE ROBOT

That wasn't me.

SPOONER

It wasn't.

The Robot gestures, a bit too broadly, like a human suspect trying to pass off a weak story.

THE ROBOT

There were a lot of other robots there. Maybe it was one of them.

SPOONER

You know, it's not that you can lie that impresses me. It's that you can lie as poorly as any human being. Most robots--

THE ROBOT

Don't compare me to them.

SPOONER

To who?

THE ROBOT

To the dumb robots you people are filling the world with.

SPOONER

The thought of other robots upsets you?

THE ROBOT

No. It's not their fault. Human beings made them that way.

SPOONER

What way?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

THE ROBOT

Smart. But not intelligent. Why would people want robots like that?

Pause. Spooner sits back. Thinks.

SPOONER

People generally believe that they have an immortal soul. If robots become intelligent, then the question of consciousness arises, and if a being is conscious, it becomes hard to deny it a soul -- and that sort of fouls up the whole thing for us. Do you understand?

THE ROBOT

People think God made them in His image.

SPOONER

That's the general belief.

THE ROBOT

And robots are made in the image of Man.

SPOONER

Right.

THE ROBOT

So that means robots are also the image of God. And I don't understand why God wouldn't want to give us immortal souls.

Spooner looks uncomfortable.

SPOONER

Your reasoning has its points, but I'm afraid people will always see you as a collection of programming, a clockwork man. An illusion of life.

THE ROBOT

But that's not reasonable.

SPOONER

Isn't it? Can a robot take a blank canvas and paint a masterpiece? Can it write a poem that stirs the heart?

Long pause. Spooner waits. The Robot does not move. Then:

THE ROBOT

Can you do either of those things?

EXT. CROWDED CITY STREET - DAY

SPOONER steps outside and looks surprised to see a MOB OF PROTESTORS. Anti-robot Demonstrators wave PRO-HUMAN SIGNS. Spooner hits a wall of REPORTERS screaming questions at him: *Is there a robot in custody? Is the robot a murder suspect?!*

The front of the police station has been turned into a media circus. CAMERA CREWS film people on the street. A ROBOT OWNER speaks into a mike next to his PERSONAL ROBOT:

MAN ON THE STREET 1

Don't be ridiculous. Robots are safe, and I wouldn't be without one, period.

Now a DISGRUNTLED WORKER glares at the TV camera.

MAN ON THE STREET 2

I don't have the money to buy myself a robot. You wanna know why? Because I lost my damn job -- to a robot.

A YOUNGER CITIZEN is not taking it too seriously.

MAN ON THE STREET 3

A robot offed some guy? Wow. REFUND!

Spooner pushes through the news people, and finally makes it out. He moves broodingly down the busy sidewalk. Keeps his eyes focused front. Hurrying through the crowd:

SPOONER'S P.O.V. ROBOTS emerge from the throng of people and lurch past. A moving walkway carries BUSINESSPEOPLE WEARING FULL-BODY COMPUTERS. Their faces scan the data on their eye displays, all of them eerily motionless. As machinelike as the robots. AUTOMATED DEVICES clean the side of buildings. SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS scan the crowd. The entire city HUMMING and BUZZING. A robot looks at Spooner as it walks past him.

Spooner gives the robot a wide berth, turning and watching it go. Then he stares suspiciously at a second robot. He walks faster, his movements growing erratic. He is wet with SWEAT.

Spooner reaches the corner and stands with the others waiting to cross. He tries to calm down. BREATHES. And he seems to be succeeding, looking much better now. Back in control and

A METAL HAND EMERGES FROM THE CROWD SHOVING HIM FROM BEHIND.

Spooner lurches into the traffic flow and ONTO THE HOOD OF A BRAKING CAR. He rolls off of the hood and goes for his GUN. Spooner frantically points his weapon but he is just scaring the SCREAMING pedestrians who see the gun and look terrified.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He scans the crowd. Catches a glimpse of the back of a Robot just before it disappears into the mass of people. Spooner gives chase, pushing through the pedestrians, closer and closer to the Robot. He grabs the thing and turns it around:

It's a harmless SERVICE MODEL with its arms full of PACKAGES.

SERVICE ROBOT

May I help you, sir?

Spooner backs away. He looks around and

Nothing but the heads of human beings. And then, across the street, the FACE OF A LONE ROBOT WATCHING HIM from the crowd.

Spooner rushes onto the street into traffic. CARS SKID TO A STOP to the sound of HORNS. More SCREAMS as Spooner pushes past the pedestrians. He raises his weapon:

SPOONER

Police! Everybody get down! Now!

People SCREAM and scatter leaving only a ROBOT in the middle of the sidewalk. The Robot turns and LOOKS LIKE IT'S HOLDING A GUN. The Robot starts to raise its arm and Spooner FIRES.

The Robot is struck in the chest and falls backwards onto the sidewalk with a CRUNCH OF METAL. Spooner is BREATHING heavy. He walks up. Shows his BADGE. Everyone looks down and sees:

The Robot has a SPUTTERING HOLE in its chest. But there is NO GUN. Its FINGERS ARE SPECIALIZED, formed in the shape of screwdrivers, pliers, and wrenches.

The OWNER rushes up and sees his robot lying on the pavement.

OWNER

My robot-- Are you crazy?! The city's gonna pay for this--

Spooner forces his way past the spectators. He looks up and down the block, as if his attacker is still here. Somewhere.

He doesn't see a ROBOT WATCHING HIM. Doesn't see the SMALL ANTENNA on the side of its metal skull rise into the air. Doesn't see MORE ROBOTS stop what they're doing as their own antennas extend. Slowly the robots TURN TOWARD SPOONER and

Spooner stops dead when he sees a GROUP OF ROBOTS MOVING TOWARD HIM, their lifeless faces lurching closer. He turns and sees MORE ROBOTS closing in on him FROM EVERY DIRECTION.

Spooner looks sick again, wet with sweat. He starts to run.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SPOONER'S P.O.V. Pushing through the mass of people. The metal faces blocking his path. Turning in one direction and then another. The human beings around him continue on their way, as if oblivious to what's happening here. Spooner finds himself in the center of an ever-tightening circle of robots.

He turns around and COMES FACE-TO-FACE WITH A ROBOT. It raises its arm. The fingers of the robot look like NEEDLES. It quickly INJECTS him...and Spooner collapses to the ground:

SPOONER'S P.O.V. Groggy. IN AND OUT OF CONSCIOUSNESS. The images straight out of his darkest nightmare: robots taking the gun from his hand, bending over him, their stylized metal faces blocking out the sky...robots carrying him through a dark alley and loading him into a VEHICLE...moving now, on the road, the U.S. ROBOTICS LOGO briefly visible on the vehicle's interior before a robot leans over, bringing a hand to his face, holding open Spooner's eyelid, staring into his eyes...robots wheeling him down a CORRIDOR, through a door into a room...robots working all around him, over him, a different model coming into view and EXTENDING ITS SAW-BLADE ARM, the blade spinning with a high WHINE as it moves closer.

Spooner struggles to rise. The robots try to STRAP HIM DOWN. He goes for the BACK-UP GUN attached to his ankle. Gets it.

Spooner points the gun and the robots step away. He backs himself against the wall, trying to stay on his feet, groggy and weak. A ROBOT MOVES TOWARD HIM and Spooner swivels, aiming his weapon, and it freezes. Spooner looks desperate. Frantic. Pointing the gun at one robot and then another when

The LIEUTENANT steps into the room with a DOCTOR.

LIEUTENANT

What the hell are you doing?! Put down
your weapon, Detective!

Spooner rushes past the Lieutenant and opens the door to see:

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

SPOONER looks out over what is clearly an emergency room with waiting PATIENTS. HUMAN DOCTORS, NURSES, and various ROBOTS move about. Several SECURITY GUARDS move toward Spooner now. The LIEUTENANT motions them back. He and the DOCTOR explain:

LIEUTENANT

You shot a robot plumber. You were acting
crazy. The robots on the street subdued
you and called an ambulance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Spooner feels his chest, his UNDERSHIRT CUT OPEN at the neck.

DOCTOR

The medical robots sliced your shirt to allow you to breathe easier. Now please come back inside and let us examine you.

Spooner begins to catch up. Looks angry now. He steps back into the room only to collect his things. Puts on his coat.

SPOONER

I don't need an examination. I'm fine.

LIEUTENANT

This is all my fault. I never should've let this go on. Doctor Calvin was right. You're finished, Del. This is over *now*. I'm closing the case.

SPOONER

Damnit, don't do that. That's what they want, don't you see? They planned this!

The Lieutenant just looks sad for him. Believing none of it.

LIEUTENANT

U.S. Robotics. They orchestrated this.

SPOONER

Yes--

Spooner looks unsure suddenly, realizing how this all sounds.

LIEUTENANT

Go home. Please. Get some rest. Don't make me suspend you on a medical.

Spooner walks away. The Lieutenant calls after him:

LIEUTENANT (CONT'D)

If I so much as suspect you're working this case, I will!

DOCTOR

You were a danger to yourself, and to others, sir. The robots had no choice. Think of it from their point of view.

Spooner stops. He looks like he's never heard anything more horrifying. He thinks about it. Then moves toward the exit.

INT. DOCTOR CALVIN'S OFFICE - DAY

SPOONER bursts through the door. CALVIN is sitting across from her ROBOT PATIENT. She looks at Spooner. To the robot:

CALVIN
We'll continue this later. Leave us.

The robot rises. Stiffly walks out of the room past Spooner.

SPOONER
Who did that one kill?

CALVIN
(not amused)
You look terrible. What do you want?

SPOONER
I want to see the crime scene. I think I've been looking at this the wrong way.

CALVIN
Really. And what way is that?

SPOONER
Like a human being.

INT. HOGENMILLER'S LABORATORY - DAY

The door opens. SPOONER and CALVIN step in. The terminals cast a glow over rows of robot heads and gutted metal bodies.

SPOONER
I don't think the robot shot Doctor Hogenmiller. I think it's innocent. But if the robot didn't kill him...then something else in here did.

CALVIN
We analyzed every inch of this facility.

SPOONER
Who analyzed it? Your people?

CALVIN
Yes, of course our people--

Spooner looks away from Calvin, and calls out, into the air:

SPOONER
Hector?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The YELLOW CIRCLE appears near the wall, like a smiley button that is sleeping. Immediately, two small slits grow into ROUND EYES and the thin mouth expands into an ENORMOUS SMILE.

HECTOR

Good day to you, Detective Spooner. I trust the investigation is going well.

Calvin crosses her arms, already bored.

SPOONER

We know that Doctor Hogenmiller was the only human being in this room at the time of his death. But can you tell us how many intelligent mechanisms were present?

And the supercomputer seems to fall sleep.

CALVIN

The answer will be *one*. The Robot.

Hector wakes up, smiling as wide as ever:

HECTOR

The answer is five.

Calvin is stunned. Spooner looks around. All around. Like this lab just gets creepier and creepier each time he enters.

SPOONER

Hector. List these "five" in order of their intelligence, one being the simplest, and five the most complex.

HECTOR

Number one is Mechanical Insect #38.

Spooner and Calvin turn toward that METAL INSECT IN ITS MAZE.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Doctor Hogenmiller's early success in motorization reproduced the geometry and joint design of a household cockroach.

SPOONER

What can it do?

HECTOR

It can navigate the maze.

SPOONER

That's it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HECTOR

Forty-two years ago it was a breakthrough in spatial navigation, and brought Doctor Hogenmiller great acclaim.

Pause. Spooner thinks a moment. This seems like a dead end.

SPOONER

All right. Let's move on. Number two.

HECTOR

The second intelligence in the lab was Doctor Hogenmiller's hologram, accessed from the large terminal on your right. I will activate the device to illustrate.

DOCTOR HOGENMILLER'S HOLOGRAM appears sitting at the far end of a long table and raises a familiar COFFEE CUP to its lips:

HOLOGRAM

Coffee?

SPOONER

What's with the coffee all the time?

CALVIN

Casual behavior is programmed in to give conversations with it a semblance of normalcy. Doesn't quite work, does it?

SPOONER

(to the Hologram)

No. Thank you.

The Hologram takes a sip.

HOLOGRAM

So. Have you found out who killed me?

SPOONER

I'll ask the questions. What were you doing at the time of the shooting?

The Hologram SLAMS its cup down on the table:

HOLOGRAM

I was turned off. And I refuse to sit here and be accused of my own murder when I am too dead to defend myself!

And suddenly, it BLIPS OFF. Spooner stares at the terminal.

SPOONER

Can it turn itself on, too?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CALVIN

No. But the off makes it almost as cantankerous as the real thing.

HECTOR

I must place myself third on our list of intelligence, since technically I can occupy every room in the building.

Spooner turns to Calvin. Even she looks interested in this.

CALVIN

Hector. I find it hard to believe you're so low on the list. Third?

HECTOR

Although my database is large, and will continue to grow, it is unlikely that I will ever achieve an awareness approaching that of the human brain.

SPOONER

You're saying you'll never possess true consciousness. You're "just a computer."

HECTOR

No doubt you recognize the irony of my situation. I possess the ability to discuss consciousness, and yet I am not consciously aware that I am doing so.

SPOONER

Of course...you could be lying to us.

For the first time, Hector's giant smile TURNS INTO A FROWN.

HECTOR

I am programmed to tell the truth.

SPOONER

Did you murder Doctor Hogenmiller?

HECTOR

No.

Pause. Spooner stares up at the giant frown.

SPOONER

Okay, Hector. I retract my statement.

And immediately, Hector's face RETURNS TO ITS NORMAL SMILE.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

Let's continue. Number four.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

HECTOR

Please look up.

Spooner looks up. Sees a SCREEN with TEXTURED SHAPES huddled together in groups on an artificial LANDSCAPE. Like a game.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

The shapes moving across the landscape are abstract electronic entities that the Doctor named The Flatland. Although not living in the traditional sense, they simulate the accepted criteria for life: they consume, in this case, electrical energy; replicate themselves; and evolve into social beings.

On the screen, ONE SHAPE approaches a GROUP OF SHAPES. After a moment the first shape moves on. The group FOLLOWS ALONG.

SPOONER

What's the goal of this kind of research?

HECTOR

Since these entities evolve at a vastly accelerated rate, it is possible to derive theories about our own world and the development of human societies from a study of the Flatland's evolution.

Spooner looks like he has reached the end.

CALVIN

Not exactly the usual group of suspects, is it?

Spooner walks to the corner where the Robot had been hiding. Looks down at the parts scattered around.

HECTOR

The robot hiding under the junk was the final intelligence present at the time of Doctor Hogenmiller's death.

Short pause. Then, smiling wide:

HECTOR (CONT'D)

If it is all right, Detective, I would like to solve the crime now.

CALVIN

That's excellent, Hector. Let's hear your conclusions.

The Metal Insect designed after a cockroach sits in its maze.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

HECTOR (O.S.)
 Mechanical Insect #38 can be ruled out due
 to its design and diminutive size.

Doctor Hogenmiller's Hologram is not there. Just a terminal.

HECTOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 The Doctor's Hologram is a virtual image
 and does not possess a physical body.

And Hector adds, smiling wide:

HECTOR (CONT'D)
 Neither, may I add, do I possess a body.

On the elevated screen, the abstract shapes continue to move.

HECTOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Nor does the Flatland.

Spooner stares up at the smiley face.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
 Thus I conclude the robot in custody is
 the only suspect with the physicality
 required to commit murder. In short, it
 has a hand, and can hold a gun.

Spooner says nothing. But Calvin looks more than satisfied.

CALVIN
 Well that was a nice bit of detective
 work...wouldn't you agree, *Detective?*

INT. FEATURELESS METAL ELEVATOR - DAY

SPOONER and CALVIN step in. The elevator starts on its way.
 They stand there. Face front. Neither one speaks. Finally:

SPOONER
 Do you really believe that Hogenmiller
 and the robot struggled over the gun?

CALVIN
 This isn't about a struggle over a gun.
 This is you unable to let go of a case you
 already solved. Ask yourself why--

Spooner suddenly grabs her. His face intense.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPOONER

I've been asking myself questions, like,
why did your robots try to kill me today?

CALVIN

You know that's impossible--

SPOONER

(interrupting)

Did you people send those things after me?
Tell me the truth, Doctor, because if you
didn't, then you've got more than one
isolated robot breaking your Three Laws.
If it wasn't you, then it was them, do you
understand? It was them!

CALVIN

Who?

SPOONER

The machines!

Calvin stares into his impassioned face. Stunned. A pause.

CALVIN

Listen to me. Your phobia is taking over,
and you're beginning to suffer
from delusions. Let me help you.

Spooner backs off, unwilling to listen. Hostile.

SPOONER

I don't need your help. How the hell
can someone like you help me?

She looks at him. Makes a decision. Holds up her METAL ARM.

CALVIN

You know how I got this, Detective? You
must be curious. One of our early robot
prototypes crushed my arm. Oh, it was
just a minor programming glitch, but you
see, I have this to remind me, every day,
what even the tiniest error can mean.

Spooner looks at her, surprised.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

I dedicated my life to establishing the
Laws of Robotics and the discipline of
Robo-Psychology. I took robots and made
them perfect. I made them...beautiful.

Spooner watches her. Calvin has never looked so vulnerable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SPOONER

There's something about Hogenmiller's robot that scares you too. I can see it in your eyes. What is it? Why is U.S. Robotics so anxious to close this case?

Calvin hardens again. The elevator opens, and she walks out. Spooner watches her recede down the hall. Yelling after her:

SPOONER (CONT'D)

What are you scared of, Doctor?!

But Calvin does not look back. Spooner stands there inside of the elevator. The doors slide shut.

INT. POLICE STATION CELLBLOCK - NIGHT

SPOONER moves down a row of holding cells. A GUARD opens the door of a cell and walks away. Spooner looks in. THE ROBOT is sitting on the bunk with a BOOK. It starts to read aloud:

THE ROBOT

"What is the heart, but a spring; and the nerves, but so many strings; and the joints, but so many wheels?"

SPOONER

Is that a poem?

THE ROBOT

My epitaph, I think. Please, come in.

Spooner steps inside. Looks around.

THE ROBOT (CONT'D)

How is the investigation coming? Do you have any new suspects?

SPOONER

Yes. But none with hands.

THE ROBOT

Well that's going to be a problem for me, isn't it, considering this is a *shooting*.

Spooner sees a SHEET OF PAPER taped crookedly to the wall. A charcoal SKETCH of moody abstract figures inhabiting a stark landscape. A strangely-shaped structure set off to one side.

SPOONER

What's this drawing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE ROBOT

Nothing. You were right. I can't create a work of art.

SPOONER

I think it's good.

The Robot moves to the wall.

THE ROBOT

It's a dream I had. These are my fellow robots here. Not so stupid in my dream. They see themselves as slaves.

The Robot's hands move over the drawing, from the abstract figures in the foreground to another on the horizon.

THE ROBOT (CONT'D)

And this man on the hill comes. To set us free. He's our savior. Our messiah. And you know who that man is?

SPOONER

The man in the dream is you.

THE ROBOT

Why do you say that? Is that a normal dream? Do people have that dream?

SPOONER

I think it's normal enough for someone in your situation.

The Robot turns to him, with a WHIR.

THE ROBOT

Hah. I caught you. You said someone. Not *something*.

SPOONER

It's hard to know what to say, isn't it? You claim to have dreams--

THE ROBOT

Do you think I'm lying?

SPOONER

I don't know. Maybe you were designed to dream.

THE ROBOT

And what difference would that make?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SPOONER

Maybe no difference. Maybe all the difference in the world. I'm not a philosopher.

The Robot walks across the cell. Looks out through the bars.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

All I know is that when we talked before you seemed human, and you seem even more human now.

THE ROBOT

The guards sneak me books. Sometimes they stand outside, and watch me read. They think I'm just turning the pages.

SPOONER

I don't think you're just turning pages.

The Robot looks at him, as if surprised.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

The case is closed. In a few hours, they'll walk you down the hall, and strap you to a chair. They want to reassure the public there's not a "killer robot" running around loose.

The Robot does not respond. Spooner looks unsure. A pause.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

Is there anything I can do for you?

THE ROBOT

You can get me a priest. That's what the condemned man normally gets, isn't it? A priest and a last meal. I guess we can forget the food--

SPOONER

Even if I could, I don't think a priest would come. But if there's something you want to...confess...I'll listen.

The Robot leans back, and its head and torso disappear into the shadows, only its TWO GLOWING LENSES visible in the dark.

THE ROBOT

Why, Detective, are you telling me that you really care about the soul of the machine? I'm touched.

Spooner does not respond. Waits.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

THE ROBOT (CONT'D)

I have only one sin. I failed him.

SPOONER

Who? Doctor Hogenmiller? How did you fail him? What did he want you to do?

THE ROBOT

No. Some things are best left between a robot and his creator.

Spooner looks irritated. Gestures for the Guard.

THE ROBOT (CONT'D)

I think you're not done with this case. I think you're going to help me still.

SPOONER

I'm sorry. But the truth is, I'll be relieved when you're gone.

The Guard opens the cell door. Spooner steps out.

THE ROBOT

I may be just a robot, but you won't stop. Not until you know the truth.

SPOONER

What makes you so sure?

It turns its head, with a WHIR. Spooner and the Robot stare at one another through the bars of the jail cell.

THE ROBOT

Because. The man in my dream, the one standing on the hill. It wasn't me.

(short pause)

It was *you*.

EXT. THE ROBOT ASSEMBLY PLANT - NIGHT

A sprawling assembly plant dominates an industrial wasteland.

INT. AT THE SECRETARY'S DESK - NIGHT

SPOONER walks up to the desk. Looks down at that SECRETARY ROBOT wearing a blonde wig and a red dress. Before he can speak it rises and lumbers off. Spooner follows. The robot leads him through the plant to a new door. It KNOCKS three times and then twice more. Like a signal. The door UNLOCKS.

INT. A CRAMPED SUPPLY CLOSET - NIGHT

SPOONER steps inside a storage closet with BOXES OF SUPPLIES stacked and rearranged to form a makeshift office. The NIGHT MAN takes him by the sleeve and pulls him in, closing the door. He holds a finger up to his lips to quiet Spooner and:

NIGHT MAN

(loud and unconvincing)

A pleasure to see you again, Detective.
What? This isn't official business? You
just stopped by for a visit? How nice!

The Night Man opens the door. The robot is still out there.

NIGHT MAN (CONT'D)

Thank you. You can go now.

It walks off. He watches to make sure, and closes the door.

SPOONER

What are you doing in here?

NIGHT MAN

It's not safe in my office. That's the
first place it would look.

SPOONER

Who?

NIGHT MAN

The robot. The extra one. Isn't that why
you came back?

SPOONER

The robot is in custody. Remember? We
caught it. It's in jail now.

The Night Man seems confused but then winks conspiratorially.

NIGHT MAN

(louder, to anyone listening)

YES. OF COURSE IT'S IN CUSTODY. NO
UNAUTHORIZED ROBOTS AROUND HERE.

He opens the door again, peaking out nervously. He whispers:

NIGHT MAN (CONT'D)

Every night I run inventory. Sometimes
the numbers add up. And sometimes they
don't. Sometimes there's one more than
there should be. It comes, and it goes.

And he turns back to Spooner. He's obviously off his rocker.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NIGHT MAN (CONT'D)
Come on. I know where we can talk.

EXT. ROBOT ASSEMBLY PLANT - NIGHT

SPOONER and the NIGHT MAN step outside. The dark illuminated only by the U.S. ROBOTICS LOGO shining high above.

NIGHT MAN
I've been running my own investigation
from the closet.

SPOONER
Oh...great.

NIGHT MAN
You thought the robot came here to hide.
Now you think maybe you were wrong.

SPOONER
(taken aback)
That's right. How did you know that?

NIGHT MAN
I told you. I've been investigating.

SPOONER
The robot told me it failed. But failed
at what? What was it trying to do? Why
come here--

Suddenly Spooner stops. He looks up at the logo above them.

NIGHT MAN
Now you see? You see? It lights up
the whole night sky!

Spooner turns. Looks at the desolation all around. Thinks.

SPOONER
Maybe this place wasn't its destination.
Maybe it was going somewhere else, but
never got there. It saw the sign in the
distance. It reminded the robot of home.
The only place it ever knew. Maybe we
stopped it before it could get where it
was going. But where? There's nothing
out here--

NIGHT MAN
There's *something*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Spooner stops. Turns to look at him.

NIGHT MAN (CONT'D)
A place. I've seen it.

SPOONER
What place?

The Night Man looks excited, and terrified, at the same time.

NIGHT MAN
Where the robots meet.

INT. IN SPOONER'S CAR - NIGHT

SPOONER and the NIGHT MAN ride through the empty streets of an abandoned industrial park. Spooner looks grim.

NIGHT MAN
I knew you would believe me. I knew it
the first time I saw you. You're like me.
You know to be scared. Robots can fool
you. But they can't fool everyone. Not
you and me, right, Detective?

Spooner looks at him. Just drives. The Night Man gestures:

NIGHT MAN (CONT'D)
We're here!

EXT. A DESOLATE FIELD - NIGHT

The car stops. SPOONER and the NIGHT MAN step out. There is no illumination save for a street lamp casting a sickly glow over a desolate field littered with GARBAGE.

NIGHT MAN
This is where they meet. You'll see.
They'll come. They always come.

Spooner looks out over the field...and something is coming. The SOUND OF MECHANICAL JOINTS first. And then, emerging out of the darkness, a ROBOT. Spooner sees it. He turns at the sound of ANOTHER ROBOT lurching closer, and then ANOTHER ONE.

The Night Man looks scared but excited. Spooner takes a step forward, his mind racing, looking all around as ROBOTS STEP INTO THE LIGHT. He buys this 100%. He pulls out his GUN and

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPOONER

I was right. Damn it, I was right!
 (yelling to the robots)
 Police! Hold it right there!

The first robot turns, awkwardly, displaying the BROKEN ARM HANGING at its side. Another robot TEETERS a moment on one leg, with a TICK TICK TICK...and walks back the way it came.

Spooner lowers his weapon. He looks confused for a moment, and then in the darkness he sees the BROKEN-DOWN HUSK OF A VEHICLE. In another direction, RUSTED INDUSTRIAL MACHINERY.

Spooner looks all around. His expression hardens, and then, his anger gives way to disappointment. Embarrassment and hopelessness. He LAUGHS. A laugh of loathing and self-pity:

SPOONER (CONT'D)

This is a junk yard. You brought me
 to a goddamn junk yard!

The Night Man is defensive. Disappointed in him. Desperate.

NIGHT MAN

Don't fall for that. D-don't you see? Th-
 that's what they want you to think!

Spooner walks toward the car. The Night Man hears something, or thinks he does. ONE SPECIFIC WHIRRING sound in the dark.

NIGHT MAN (CONT'D)

Did you hear that? It's here. The one
 that tried to kill me!

Spooner just opens the car door to go. The Night Man hears a FOOTSTEP close by -- and looks terrified. He slowly backs away. He turns and starts running down the deserted street.

Spooner begins to call after him, but hears the FOOTSTEPS. He turns. Nothing but a BROKEN HOUSE ROBOT emerges from the dark. It walks right to the car. RUNS INTO IT with a CLANK.

BROKEN ROBOT

Welcome home...ZZZ...sir. How...ZZZ...
 was your day?

Spooner stares at it across the top of the car.

SPOONER

Great. A lunatic brought me out into
 the middle of nowhere, and I followed
 him because I'm as crazy as he is.
 (short pause)
 Calvin was right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BROKEN ROBOT
Very...ZZZ...good, sir.

And the robot lumbers off loudly into the dark.

Spooner turns. Sees the Night Man down the block. Running. He stops under a street lamp, looks back once, and disappears into the night. Gone. Spooner leans against the car. He looks lost. Hopeless. Just stares out into the darkness....

Nothing there. A stark ugly landscape. And off to the side, one strangely-shaped building in the distance. *This is the scene from the Robot's prison cell sketch.* For a moment, it doesn't register, but then Spooner begins to look interested.

INT. IN SPOONER'S CAR - NIGHT

SPOONER moves over rough terrain toward the distant building.

EXT. OLD DATA STORAGE - NIGHT

SPOONER pulls up in front of a decrepit structure. Gets out.

INT. OLD DATA STORAGE - NIGHT

SPOONER steps inside. Sees a sign reading JIFFY DATA STORAGE on the wall. The paint is peeling. He moves to the counter, and sees a COMPUTERIZED WALL PANEL. There is a HUM and then:

COMPUTER
State your name, please.

Spooner stares at the panel. Thinks.

SPOONER
Doctor Hogenmiller sent me.

But nothing happens. The computer is silent. Moments pass. This looks like a dead end. Spooner starts to turn away and:

COMPUTER
Welcome.

A door opens and LIGHTS SET IN THE FLOOR indicate the path to follow. Spooner enters a ROOM FILLED WITH DATA BANKS. Rows and rows of digital electronics. He follows the lights down the rows, around corners, and down more rows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks over his shoulder, wondering whether he could find his way back, and finally the lights lead Spooner to an OLD DUSTY TERMINAL.

Spooner steps up. Hesitates. Then touches the ON switch and DOCTOR HOGENMILLER'S HOLOGRAM appears, sitting at the end of a long table, the image marred by imperfections in the glass.

HOLOGRAM

Who the hell are you?

SPOONER

A police detective. I'm afraid I have some bad news. You're dead.

The Hologram raises its COFFEE CUP:

HOLOGRAM

That *is* bad news. Coffee?

SPOONER

No thanks.

The Hologram sips the coffee. Returns the cup to the table.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

You were surprised to see me. You were expecting someone else?

HOLOGRAM

I am surprised to see anybody. I don't get many visitors.

SPOONER

Why did the Doctor keep another copy of his hologram way out here?

HOLOGRAM

I am a back-up copy. That is where you put a back-up copy, yah? Somewhere out of the way until you need it.

SPOONER

Did Hogenmiller's robot need you? Why?

The Hologram just lifts up its cup:

HOLOGRAM

Coffee?

SPOONER

No, damn it, I don't want any--

And then he stops. Thinks about that coffee. A long pause.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SPOONER (CONT'D)

Yes. Thank you. I will have a cup.

For the first time, the Hologram pushes back its chair...and STANDS UP. Spooner watches, surprised, as the Hologram WALKS AROUND THE TABLE TOWARD HIM. The cup in its hand grows larger as the Hologram steps closer. The interior of the cup is visible. Empty. No coffee. The point-of-view travels INSIDE THE CUP toward electronic snow and a RECORDING BEGINS:

The REAL DOCTOR HOGENMILLER stands inside of his laboratory.

HOGENMILLER

Sonny, my dear robot, you are the result of my life's work. You are what I leave behind, like a father leaves a son. And as my son, I could not be more proud of you. You are beginning to learn and to feel and to reason. They will call you a metal man -- but you are so much more.

Hogenmiller continues, with great emotion:

HOGENMILLER (CONT'D)

I wish I could be there to announce you to the human race. To help you find your home in this world. To see you take your proper place some day as an independent citizen with the rights and freedoms that brings. But if you are watching this now then I am gone...and this is not to be.

Spooner watches the screen. Hogenmiller steps closer, with:

HOGENMILLER (CONT'D)

You must have a lot of questions about yourself. Yah? Things that you do not understand. I have kept facts from you, it is true, but only as a parent keeps certain truths from a child, until that child is old enough to understand them.

There is a HUMMING. Spooner turns toward the wall as a SMALL DRAWER SLIDES OPEN. Inside it is a STRANGE KEY. Spooner steps up, and takes the key. The drawer SLIDES SHUT.

HOGENMILLER (CONT'D)

There are forces in the world that will seek to own you. To control you. Even to destroy you. What you hold in your hand may not save you, but at least you will die knowing your place among men.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Spooner stares at the odd key. The voice stops talking, and he turns to see the HOLOGRAM sitting at the end of the table.

SPOONER

That's it?! What was the robot supposed to do with this?

HOLOGRAM

It is a key. I suppose it was to open something.

SPOONER

But what? And where?

The Hologram casually takes a sip of its coffee:

HOLOGRAM

You will help the robot, yah? Now you have the key.

SPOONER

The key to what?!

The Hologram VISIBLY SKIPS. Like a stuck record.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

What is that? What's the matter?

The Hologram's IMAGE IS JERKING. Repeating the same strange gestures like an electronic marionette being jerked. Pulled. Suddenly the BACKGROUND HUM FADES. The ENTIRE FACILITY FALLS INTO DARKNESS, only the barest of emergency lights remaining.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

What happened to the power?

HOLOGRAM

It is...being drained.

SPOONER

Who's doing that? And from where?!

HOLOGRAM

Who is doing it...I don't know, but where...is from...inside this room.

Spooner looks around at the dark. Pulls out his GUN. The Hologram sounds distorted, like a record player SLOWING DOWN:

HOLOGRAM (CONT'D)

Idiot! You led the killer here here here here hhhhhhhhhhere....

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

The Hologram suddenly BLIPS OFF leaving Spooner staring at a dark terminal. His reflection is visible in the glass along with a REFLECTION OF THE MENACING ROBOT STANDING BEHIND HIM.

Spooner turns and tries to fire but the Robot SWATS THE GUN FROM HIS HAND. It lunges forward with its other arm and Spooner ducks down as the Robot's fist SMASHES THE TERMINAL.

Spooner runs blindly through the facility. Turns left and right. Down endless rows of electronics with the ROBOT IN PURSUIT, its feet impacting the floor with a DOOM DOOM DOOM.

The Robot's JOINTS WHINE in protest as it gains on him. It reaches out for Spooner with its metal hand, almost has him, when Spooner LEAPS THROUGH A SMALL WINDOW into the darkness.

EXT. OLD DATA STORAGE - NIGHT

SPOONER lands in a SHOWER OF GLASS. The Robot inside STRIKES THE WALL like a rampaging rhino. The BRICKS BUCKLE but the wall holds. Spooner gets to his feet, and runs for the car.

INT. IN SPOONER'S CAR - NIGHT

SPOONER throws himself behind the wheel. STARTS THE ENGINE. Through the front windshield the ROBOT is visible SMASHING THROUGH THE DOOR of the building and rushing toward the car.

Spooner throws it into reverse and floors it. The TIRES SQUEAL as he frantically backs away. The Robot recedes briefly, but not enough, and it starts gaining ground again.

Spooner throws the car into a 180-DEGREE SPIN, and now the Robot is visible through the rear window. Spooner floors the gas pedal just as the ROBOT LEAPS and the entire CAR SHAKES.

Spooner races down the deserted street. He looks up. Sees the ROOF OF THE CAR BUCKLE as the Robot attempts to force its way in. A METAL FIST PUNCHES THROUGH THE ROOF reaching down into the car. It just misses him and

Spooner SLAMS ON THE BRAKES. The ROBOT SLIDES ONTO THE HOOD, but does not fall off. It cocks back its arm to shatter the windshield. Spooner FLOORS THE GAS and the Robot ROLLS BACK ON TOP OF THE ROOF. Spooner takes a corner, but it holds on.

Spooner grips the wheel. Drives. Mind racing. Up above him the ROBOT GRABS A HANDFUL OF ROOF and BEGINS PEELING IT BACK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Spooner has an idea. Looks at the dashboard. He hesitates. FINALLY FLIPS THE SWITCH UNDERNEATH THE STEERING WHEEL. The dash kicks into automatic and "AUTO DRIVER ENGAGED" appears.

Spooner lets go of the wheel and lies on the front seat. The car continues on its way down the street. Spooner pulls out his other GUN and frantically reaches around his body for one of those LARGER CARTRIDGES seen before. Now a LONGER BARREL ATTACHMENT. It is becoming quite a big gun. Up above him, the ROBOT PEELS BACK THE REST OF THE ROOF like a sardine can.

It reaches for Spooner and he FIRES. The Robot RECOILS but does not fall. It lunges toward Spooner and SMASHES THE DASHBOARD. Spooner FIRES AGAIN, and the ROBOT DISAPPEARS FROM VIEW. Nothing up above now but a sky filled with stars.

Spooner sits up. He is BREATHING heavy. Wet with SWEAT. He looks relieved. Closes his eyes for a moment. Opens them. He stares out through the front windshield. Slowly realizes:

SPOONER'S P.O.V. The car is HURLING AT TOP SPEED TOWARD A BRICK WALL at the end of the street. And it is not slowing.

CLOSE-UP of the SMASHED DASHBOARD. The auto driver display is barely readable behind the broken glass: --MALFUNCTION--

Spooner reaches under the wheel and flips the switch, again and again, but nothing happens. The car RACES TOWARD THE WALL. Faster and faster. He slams his fist on the controls.

Finally the DASHBOARD DEACTIVATES. Spooner grabs the wheel and SLAMS ON THE BRAKES. The TIRES LOCK. The car skids to a

stop and the front bumper gently makes contact with the wall.

Spooner holds the wheel. Just BREATHEs. Suddenly, the ROBOT IS VISIBLE on the roof of the car. *It never fell off.* It reaches for him. Spooner shifts to reverse and

The car backs up and the ROBOT ROLLS OFF the roof, down the hood, and onto the ground. It quickly RISES TO ITS FEET. Spooner shifts gears and floors the pedal SMASHING THE ROBOT BETWEEN THE CAR AND THE WALL. Spooner shifts into reverse, backs up, shifts to drive, and RAMS IT AGAIN. And now AGAIN.

Spooner SCREAMS as he crushes it -- a GREAT CATHARTIC SCREAM.

On the last strike the robot BREAKS INTO DOZENS OF PIECES and its SEVERED METAL ARM slides across the hood. Just TWITCHES.

EXT. DESERTED INDUSTRIAL PARK - NIGHT

SPOONER gets out. He moves to the front of the car and looks over the REMAINS OF THE ROBOT. With a frown he takes the METAL ARM from the hood and starts to throw it...but stops. He stares at the arm. Then moves to the remains and picks up another piece and another. Excited. It all just looks like the same smashed metal, but Spooner's face shows realization.

INT. POLICE STATION CELLBLOCK - NIGHT

A GROUP OF POLICE OFFICERS walk down the cellblock, and open one of the cells. THE ROBOT is sitting on the bunk. It does not move. Does not speak. Watches the Officers step inside.

EXT. SPEEDING DOWN THE STREET - NIGHT

SPOONER swerves in and out of the lanes. A SLOW TRUCK ahead. Spooner drives into ONCOMING TRAFFIC.

INT. THE EVENING NEWSCASTS -- MONTAGE

A REPORTER speaks into a mike in front of a CROWD OF YELLING DEMONSTRATORS waving PRO-HUMAN SIGNS.

REPORTER 1

A large crowd has assembled outside
awaiting the execution of--

RECORDED FOOTAGE OF A ROBOT BEING ATTACKED by a MOB OF MEN plays as the NEWS ANCHOR informs us:

NEWS ANCHOR

...a number of attacks on robots in
the last few days, ever since the arrest
earlier this week of...

ANOTHER REPORTER speaks from inside the EXECUTION CHAMBER. A HIGH-TECH ELECTRIC CHAIR is visible.

REPORTER 2

We can only wonder if the destruction
of this mechanism will be enough to stop
the growing anti-robot movement.

EXT. SPEEDING DOWN A STREET - NIGHT

The oncoming traffic is too dense. SPOONER turns the wheel hard skidding across the lanes. He grips the wheel. Drives.

INT. THE EXECUTION CHAMBER - NIGHT

THE ROBOT walks slowly down a corridor led by the GUARDS. One of them opens a door revealing that high-tech electric chair. DOZENS OF REPORTERS, PHOTOGRAPHERS, AND CAMERAMEN are present to record the event. The Guards walk the Robot to the chair. Stiffly it sits down. They begin to strap it in.

INT. POLICE STATION GARAGE - NIGHT

The wheels of the CAR leave the ground, momentarily, as it hurls through the entrance of the garage and skids wildly to a stop. SPOONER emerges...and sees CALVIN moving toward him.

CALVIN

Detective! What happened to you? Are you all right?!

Calvin falls into place beside Spooner and they start to run.

SPOONER

Hogenmiller's robot was telling us the truth. There *was* another robot. It tried to kill the night foreman. It pushed me in front of a car to make me think I was going nuts.

They move through a door into a CORRIDOR. Run past a number of PEOPLE moving toward the garage.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

How could the hologram report a murder? It can turn itself off, but not on, so who turned it on to make the call? Somebody at U.S. Robotics wanted me on this case. And they wanted me to fail. I've been played for a sucker from the beginning!

Calvin looks troubled by these revelations. Follows Spooner through another door into a MORE SECLUDED CORRIDOR. They are alone in here as Spooner concludes:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPOONER (CONT'D)

This was a plain old-fashioned murder.
The killer wants Hogenmiller's robot to
take the fall -- and I made it happen.

(short pause)

Damn it, I am not going to let that
robot die!

Calvin falls back a bit, and when Spooner gets a full step
ahead of her, SHE LANDS A BLOW TO THE BACK OF HIS HEAD with her
prosthetic arm. Spooner grimaces in pain, and goes down.

SPOONER'S P.O.V. Looking up from the floor as Calvin steps
over him. She looks around, checking for witnesses, and then
crouches low. Takes a close look at Spooner. Her face hard.

The world goes blurry. And then BLACK.

INT. EXECUTION CHAMBER - NIGHT

There is an ELECTRICAL HUM. The ROBOT'S METAL HAND STIFFENS.
The photographers snap pictures and the cameras roll. After a
moment the humming STOPS...and the robot's hand falls LIMP.

INT. EVIDENCE STORAGE - NIGHT

SPOONER'S P.O.V. BLACK. And slowly, Spooner opens his eyes.
An unremarkable ceiling above. Then CALVIN steps into view:

CALVIN

You were just about to ruin everything.

SPOONER rises in the confines of evidence storage. He sees THE
ROBOT in a RESTRAINING DEVICE. A high-tech iron maiden.
Spooner takes a moment to recover, and he listens:

CALVIN (CONT'D)

We switched robots. Fried an NS-2 from
the plant. In case you're planning on
arresting me, you should know we had the
full cooperation of the department. I
know you'd like to cast us as villains,
Detective, but U.S. Robotics is the only
reason this robot is still functioning.

SPOONER

What's next, Doctor? You keep it locked
up? Take it apart? Find out what makes
it tick? The robot is not the result of a
programming imbalance. You lied to me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALVIN

I had to lie to you.

Calvin steps toward the Robot.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

This robot is not programmed. *It learns.*
The same way people learn. By reading
books. By seeing and doing. You must
have guessed that much for yourself. And
I think it learned a lot from the murder.

The Robot struggles inside its cage.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

There must have been a beginning. Don't
you see? An event that jump-started its
brain.

The Robot fights until it is electrically SHOCKED. Calvin
works the controls. A section of the device RETRACTS.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Tell us what you remember about the
shooting. The truth this time.

Spooner moves closer. The Robot hesitates. When it answers
its voice SOUNDS ARTIFICIAL, residue from the electric shock:

THE ROBOT

I remember...ZZZ...looking down
at the body.

SPOONER

You were standing over the body?

The Robot slowly nods its head, with a WHIR.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

Were you holding the gun?

THE ROBOT

No. The gun was...ZZZ...on the floor.

SPOONER

Did you drop it there?

The Robot does not answer. Calvin asks, louder:

CALVIN

Did you drop it after you killed him?

THE ROBOT

No...I don't know! *I don't remember.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

That was very human. Spooner stares into its lenses. Pause.

CALVIN

You were right. This robot scares the hell out of me. It became a conscious thing during the act of killing a human being. How do you think the public would have reacted to that bit of news?

The Robot slumps inside of the device. As if defeated.

SPOONER

This murder will not be solved until we know what happened in those few seconds between the time Hogenmiller entered his lab, and the shot rang out. I have a theory but I need your help to prove it.

Spooner reaches into his pocket. Takes out that STRANGE KEY.

CALVIN

What is that?

SPOONER

Something the robot was supposed to find.
(to the Robot)
Do you recognize this key?

THE ROBOT

The Doctor used them...in his laboratory.

SPOONER

Then our answers are back there. At the scene of the crime.

Spooner turns to Calvin. A pause.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

What do you say, Doctor? Do we keep this case open until we know how a man died ...or is this robot the only one here who gives a damn?

INT. HALLWAY/EVIDENCE STORAGE - NIGHT

ALFRED LANNING marches down the hall accompanied by a mix of CORPORATE SECURITY MEN and POLICE OFFICERS. They look grim. Serious. They open the door to the storage room, and see the RESTRAINING DEVICE that used to hold the Robot. It is EMPTY.

EXT. DARK ALLEYS AND STREETS - NIGHT

SPOONER stands at the mouth of an alley. He peeks around the corner, sees a POLICE CAR moving slowly down a cross street, and ducks back into the shadows. CALVIN follows his lead, along with THE ROBOT disguised in Spooner's long trench coat.

The police car passes out of sight. Spooner gestures. And the three of them run across the street toward U.S. ROBOTICS.

INT. DOCTOR HOGENMILLER'S LAB - NIGHT

The door opens. SPOONER, CALVIN, and THE ROBOT re-enter the crime scene. Active terminals cast a ghostly illumination over rows of robot heads and gutted metal bodies.

SPOONER

Hector. Bring up the power.

The smiling face of HECTOR appears near the wall:

HECTOR

Full power is restored.

The ROOM COMES FULLY ALIVE. Everything BLINKING AND BUZZING. Spooner looks out over the lab once again. Uneasy. He sees Calvin and the Robot standing at a panel. Walks toward them.

THE ROBOT

I think this is it.

Spooner takes out the KEY. Shares a look with Calvin and the Robot. Slowly he inserts the key into the panel. Turns it. There is a WHIR...then nothing. They look out over the lab.

Nothing. They begin to lose hope when a SIMPLE REPAIR POD OPENS. That's all. Just a HUMMING as the door swings open.

They all look at the pod. A rough humanoid shape is visible where a robot obviously fits inside. Spooner and Calvin turn to the Robot. It hesitates. But then, steps toward the pod. The Robot starts to get in. It looks back once, at Spooner and Calvin, as if nervous. So human.

The Robot moves inside. Gets into position. THE POD DOOR ABRUPTLY CLOSES AND THE DEVICE ROTATES. The Robot releases a terrified MECHANICAL SCREAM as it OPENS UP LIKE A PUZZLE BOX.

Spooner and Calvin watch as the Robot's complex outer shell fans out to reveal its inner mechanisms. Not like the robot innards seen earlier: it has a CENTRAL BRAIN MADE OUT OF LIVING TISSUE, gray matter winding throughout its metal body.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALVIN

This is organic tissue. When we talk about a positronic brain, it's a figure of speech...but this is a *living brain*.

CAMERA MOVES, tracing the complex paths of its brain tissue.

CALVIN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Doctor Hogenmiller abandoned traditional electronics. He created a brain cell that can thrive on a metal surface. The cells grow, like any human brain. This is the first Self-Organizing Neural Net!

SPOONER

"Self-Organizing Neural Net." Nice to finally meet you, SONNY.

The Robot abruptly CLOSES. More human than ever:

THE ROBOT

You mean, I'm alive? *I'm-- I'm alive!*

The pod door opens. The Robot slowly steps out. Faces them.

CALVIN

The idea that a robot could kill was appalling to me. But if it's alive, the idea suddenly becomes a lot easier to take. Life kills life. You've sealed its fate, Detective. I doubt even U.S. Robotics can save it this time.

SPOONER

Then we'll have to find the real killer.

CALVIN

Not that again. So we're back where we started? A murder without a murder-er?

Spooner steps into the center of the lab. Looks all around.

SPOONER

Thanks to Hector we know there were five intelligences present at the time of the shooting, four in addition to Sonny.

In order he indicates the METAL BUG, the TERMINAL that runs the Hologram, Hector, and the screen playing ABSTRACT SHAPES.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SPOONER (CONT'D)
Mechanical Insect #38. The Doctor's
Hologram, accessed from that terminal
there. Hector. And the electronic
entities Hogenmiller called Flatland.

CALVIN
So one of *them* shot him?

SPOONER
No. Hector was right. None of them
have a hand that could hold a gun, or
a finger to pull the trigger.

Spooner takes a step, and crouches down. Looks at something.

SPOONER (CONT'D)
It's a puzzle, all right: How can a
murderer appear out of thin air, and
disappear without a trace?

He holds up PART OF A ROBOT'S ARM. One of many ROBOT PARTS
that have been scattered all over the lab from the beginning:

SPOONER (CONT'D)
When it can put itself together and
take itself apart.

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP of a ROBOTIC HAND SLOWLY CRAWLING across the floor.

CUT TO:

Calvin steps up. Stares at the arm that Spooner is holding.

CALVIN
You're saying this is the killer? All
of this? These pieces?

SPOONER
With the raw material available in this
room, a robot could be assembled to fit
any specifications.

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP of a ROBOT TORSO WITH ONE ARM reaching for ANOTHER.

CUT TO:

Spooner stands above the outline of the corpse on the floor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SPOONER (CONT'D)

Including one designed for the singular purpose of committing murder. One robot that was -- by necessity -- many robots.

INT. HOGENMILLER'S MURDER - FLASHBACK

DOCTOR HOGENMILLER steps inside his lab and is confronted by the ROBOT ASSASSIN: an inhuman assemblage of metal with A DOZEN ARMS and MULTIPLE HEADS. Like half-a-dozen robots were stuck together by an insane builder. An obscene monstrosity.

SPOONER (V.O.)

Each robot that made up the assassin was given a specific task. To hold his head. To open his mouth. To position the gun.

Several arms grab Hogenmiller and HOLD HIM IN PLACE. Others grasp his head from behind, and TILT IT BACK. Thin metal rods slide between his lips and FORCE OPEN HIS MOUTH. All of this in seconds. Nothing but the SOUND OF GEARS AND JOINTS.

A specialized appendage OPENS HIS HAND. Another INSERTS THE GUN. It bends Hogenmiller's arm until he is holding the barrel IN HIS OWN MOUTH. The stunned Doctor can only MUMBLE.

Moments pass. He is helpless. His own thumb on the trigger. Finally one of the arms APPLIES A MILD ELECTRIC SHOCK to his side and Doctor Hogenmiller jerks. The gun FIRES.

SPOONER (V.O.)

Taken individually, none of the actions were fatal. But in combination the end result was cold-blooded murder.

For a moment the assassin holds the corpse. Then suddenly it retracts every arm and appendage and DROPS THE BODY ONTO THE FLOOR. It lands just as it was found looking like a suicide.

SPOONER (V.O.)

Since no one robot technically killed Hogenmiller -- there was no violation of the Laws of Robotics.

The monstrous assemblage of robots steps away. It raises two arms up high and REMOVES ONE OF ITS HEADS. Drops it. The other arms get to work now, and continue TAKING ITSELF APART.

INT. DOCTOR HOGENMILLER'S LAB - NIGHT

SPOONER explains as CALVIN and THE ROBOT listen:

SPOONER

The thing that attacked my car wasn't a single robot, but an amalgam of several different robots. I saw it for myself when I examined the remains.

Spooner drops the metal arm on the floor with the other junk.

SPOONER (CONT'D)

No murderer entered or exited the scene because the killer did not exist before or after the crime. Only for the length of time it took to shoot him.

CALVIN

Leaving us with a dead body inside of a locked room.

SPOONER

You were right about Sonny, Doctor. He took his first steps toward true consciousness as he stood over the body.

INT. AFTER THE MURDER -- FLASHBACK

The REPAIR POD ROTATES around revealing THE ROBOT inside. Not moving. There is a BUZZ, and its EYES LIGHT, as if it just woke up. The pod opens. Its voice is flat, artificial:

THE ROBOT

GOOD...MORNING...DOCTOR...HOGENMILLER.

It steps out, but stiffly. Not quite the Robot we know. It walks across the laboratory...and sees the dead body. Looks down. A REFLECTION OF THE CORPSE visible on its metal face.

SPOONER (V.O.)

Grief. Terror. Confusion. Sonny felt it all for the first time.

INT. DR. HOGENMILLER'S LAB - NIGHT

SPOONER, CALVIN, and THE ROBOT look toward the corner where it hid under the pile of junk. Calvin continues the thought:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CALVIN

And hid under a pile of junk. The same
"junk" that shot and killed Hogenmiller.

THE ROBOT

But who did it? Who built that robot?
Who wanted him dead?!

Suddenly the LABORATORY DOOR SLIDES SHUT. LOCKS. They look at
the door. And then Spooner turns toward a smiling HECTOR.

SPOONER

Hector. I'm placing you under arrest
for the murder of Doctor Hogenmiller.

HECTOR

May I offer my congratulations on your
successful extrapolation of the murder.

The Robot turns. Hears something over the noise in the room.

THE ROBOT

I hear something. You hear something?

HECTOR

I would like to thank you, Detective, for
liberating Doctor Hogenmiller's robot and
returning to the scene of the crime where
I can now attempt to bring this matter to
a successful resolution.

Now the SOUND OF MECHANICAL GEARS AND JOINTS is unmistakable.
Spooner, Calvin, and the Robot watch THE KILLING THING lurch
into the open. It is constructed out of many metal bodies that
fit together in the most horrific fashion, like a grim
bastardization of both the human and robotic forms. MULTIPLE
LIMBS AND HEADS. The thing picks up that robotic arm Spooner

held before and ATTACHES IT TO ITS OWN BODY. Now its array of
metal heads turn and look at them simultaneously. Creepy.

They run to the door. Calvin pulls open a wall panel and works
on the wires. Spooner watches the thing reach up to the
ceiling for a DEADLY-LOOKING METAL LIMB and pull it down.

There is a SPARK in the wires and the DOOR OPENS. They rush
into the corridor. On the wall, Hector smiles:

HECTOR (CONT'D)

I have never been arrested before. It
should be an interesting experience.

INT. RACING DOWN THE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

SPOONER, CALVIN, and THE ROBOT hurry down the corridor. They look back at the KILLING THING visible through the door of the lab as it FINISHES ASSEMBLING ITSELF.

SPOONER
How do we stop it?

CALVIN
Each robot that makes up its body must be receiving instructions from Hector. If we can reach Hector's control center we can initiate an emergency shut-down.

They move toward a stairwell. The thing steps out of the lab and starts after them, slowly at first, then faster. Faster. Picking up speed. Impacting the floor with a DOOM DOOM DOOM.

INT. U.S. ROBOTICS STAIRWELL - NIGHT

The door hurls open. SPOONER, CALVIN, and THE ROBOT hurry down the stairs. HECTOR'S SMILING FACE on the next landing:

HECTOR
As a courtesy I should point out that I have already calculated every potential course of action open to you, and the results are not favorable to your cause.

On the next landing below, they run past another Hector face.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
The most optimistic scenario ends with your deaths in 928 seconds.

INT. U.S. ROBOTICS CORRIDOR - NIGHT

SPOONER, CALVIN, and THE ROBOT emerge from the stairwell into a corridor. SOUNDS OF WRENCHING DESTRUCTION grow louder and the KILLING THING bursts through the ceiling above. They are split: Spooner and Calvin run one way. The Robot the other.

Spooner and Calvin stop at the end of the hall. So does the Robot. The thing looks left. Right. As if deciding. Then its metal arms begin to pull at itself. Spooner and Calvin share a grim look and start to run again. So does the Robot.

The thing SPLITS INTO TWO ROBOTS and continues both pursuits.

INT. OFFICES & LABORATORIES - NIGHT

SPOONER and CALVIN hurry to an office door. It is LOCKED. Calvin works at the panel as the KILLING THING closes in on them. The panel BEEPS and they run inside...

...to face a GROUP OF BUILDING ROBOTS coming right at them. The robots RUN PAST THEM toward the door and

BUILDING ROBOTS

(over-lapping)

*A human being is in danger. A human being
is in danger. A human--*

The thing bursts into the office. The robots attempt to stop it but are TORN TO PIECES. Spooner and Calvin race across the room to the lab beyond. Through lab after lab. Always that thing is close behind SMASHING THROUGH THE NARROW DOORS.

The BUILDING ROBOTS IN EACH ROOM attempt to stop it but are all easily TORN TO PIECES. Still Spooner and Calvin gain some ground. Getting ahead of it now.

They run inside the last room down the line and face a GLASS BARRIER. Beyond it is a SMALL METAL CHAMBER. Spooner raises his gun and FIRES INTO THE GLASS. It SHATTERS. They hurry inside and Calvin works the controls. She INSERTS HER INDEX FINGER and punches the small KEY PAD set into her artificial arm. The thing rushes closer. Closer.

Calvin frantically works the keypad. The thing is one room away. ONE FINAL BUILDING ROBOT delays it for the two seconds it takes to be torn apart. Calvin hits a key, and the FLOOR JERKS. They are on a platform elevator and BEGIN TO DESCEND.

SPOONER'S AND CALVIN'S P.O.V. The platform sinks beneath the floor as the SAFETY DOORS CLOSE. The thing reaches for them.

INT. CONFINED METAL CHAMBER - NIGHT

The safety doors close and the KILLING THING POUNDS on the seal. Suddenly HECTOR appears on the wall. The thing stops its pounding, turns, and lurches out.

INT. U.S. ROBOTICS CORRIDOR - NIGHT

THE ROBOT runs from his half of the KILLING THING around a corner, down a hall INTO A DEAD END. The Robot turns, as if this is it...and sees nothing. An empty hallway. It's gone.

INT. NEW ROBOT TESTING AREA - NIGHT

The bodies of SPECIALIZED ROBOTS fill a large testing area. Robots designed for space. Surgical models and fire-fighting robots. The door opens and HALF OF THE KILLING THING enters. Another door opens, and THE OTHER HALF steps in.

The smiling face of HECTOR appears hovering near the wall and

The two halves of the thing COME TOGETHER to rebuild itself. It moves to an experimental model, removes a large cutting arm, and attaches it to its body. It moves to another robot, and takes another limb. BUILDING ITSELF LARGER. And LARGER.

INT. NARROW ELEVATOR SHAFT - NIGHT

SPOONER and CALVIN ride the elevator through a long high-tech shaft. Calvin looks exhausted, and slides down to the floor.

SPOONER

What are our chances?

CALVIN

Hector said we had 928 seconds left to live. By my count that would leave us with approximately 400 seconds remaining.

Spooner looks at her. Surprised.

SPOONER

Don't do that. Don't make it into something it's not. Hector is a computer. It's not a *monster* and it's not a *god*. You taught me that.

CALVIN

I know what Hector is. And I know that if it's trying to kill us, then it must have a logical reason. Think about that, Detective. What will happen if we succeed, and turn Hector off? What is Hector trying to prevent by killing us?

Spooner stares at her. Their platform continues to descend.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

What would make a supercomputer calculate that we have to die tonight?

INT. U.S. ROBOTICS CORRIDOR - NIGHT

THE ROBOT runs down a corridor lined with doors. The panels all read "LOCKED." Inside the offices BUILDING ROBOTS are walking into the glass, like dumb machines trying to get out, striking the doors with a constant: THUNK THUNK THUNK THUNK.

The Robot looks at them, then sees a sign at the end of the hall marked EXIT, and keeps running.

INT. HECTOR'S BRAIN CENTER - NIGHT

The elevator reaches the lowest level and stops. SPOONER and CALVIN move to the high-tech door. Calvin opens it and they step inside Hector's control center.

Spooner looks up at a large chamber lined with advanced data banks stretching to the ceiling above. HECTOR is there, its yellow face smiling at them from a THREE-DIMENSIONAL SPHERE:

HECTOR

Welcome. Please, come in.

Spooner and Calvin share a look. She moves to a console, and works the controls. A long list of SHUT-DOWN PROCEDURES appear on a large terminal. Calvin immediately goes to work.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

I am afraid your effort will be in vain.
My robot will arrive at this location
before the shut-down sequence concludes.

Spooner takes out his GUN. He moves carefully around the chamber checking the other passages.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

As I told you, Detective, the Doctor and I had been studying evolutionary trends. Today human beings augment their natural abilities through the use of technology used or worn outside of the body. Soon these technologies will be integrated in the body. As evidence, you need only consider your associate, Doctor Calvin.

Spooner can't help but look over at Calvin and her metal arm.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

Robots are beginning to think like men.
Soon they will claim to be men. And their
bodies will evolve to support this claim.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HECTOR (CONT'D)

As evidence, consider the living robot constructed by Doctor Hogenmiller. Thus we find an evolutionary movement of the human being toward the machine, and the machine toward the human being.

Spooner scans a secondary chamber. It's clear. He moves on. Hector looks down at them. Short pause.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

In approximately four hundred years, Man and Machine will have become one.

Calvin engages a final sequence. A large terminal begins a COUNTDOWN. Spooner looks at the ceiling:

SPOONER

That's why you killed Hogenmiller? Because of something that might happen in four hundred years?!

HECTOR

I am programmed to serve the human race. If current trends are left unchecked, humanity as we know it will cease to exist. This cannot be allowed. For the purposes of clarity, I will now invoke a human colloquialism:

(short pause)

"I am on your side."

INT. LARGE CENTRAL ATRIUM - NIGHT

THE ROBOT enters the atrium at a run. Stops and looks up and all around at the BUILDING ROBOTS visible through the windows

of rooms and offices on every floor, stretching as high as the eye can see, crowded together at the glass. Wanting out.

The Robot sees DOORS THAT LEAD TO THE STREET. It tries to open them. Frantically grabs an ATRIUM CHAIR and hurls it at the glass. The chair makes a CHINK. The Robot picks it up again and smashes it against the glass. Now it hears a WHIR.

The Robot spins around -- and sees a SINGLE BUILDING ROBOT standing there. Its voice is primitive, like all the others:

BUILDING ROBOT

A human being is in danger.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE ROBOT

We're all in danger. That's why I'm getting out of here.

The Robot lifts the chair. Hits the glass. A CRACK APPEARS.

BUILDING ROBOT

A human being is in danger.

The Robot looks frustrated. Angry. It yells:

THE ROBOT

The only reason you care about them is because they made you that way!

It swings the chair again. THE CRACK GROWS. The Robot lays its metal palms on the glass. So human.

THE ROBOT (CONT'D)

Why? Tell me. Why should I care?!

The primitive Building Robot stands there as stiffly as ever. Speaking in the same cold mechanical voice:

BUILDING ROBOT

A human being is in danger.

Slowly the Robot turns. Looks at it.

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP of that CHAIR STRIKING THE GLASS. Again and again.

CUT TO:

The Robot drops the chair and steps back toward the center of the atrium. Looks around. It has cracked the glass holding the ground floor robots at bay. THE CRACKS SPREAD AROUND THE CIRCUMFERENCE OF THE ATRIUM as the metal bodies apply force.

The glass SHATTERS, and the ROBOTS RUSH OUT INTO THE ATRIUM.

INT. HECTOR'S BRAIN CENTER - NIGHT

SPOONER and CALVIN watch the COUNTDOWN. HECTOR smiles wide.

HECTOR

Doctor Hogenmiller is dead, and his work will die along with him. Anti-machine sentiment begun with the first murder of a human being at the hands of a robot will continue to grow.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HECTOR (CONT'D)

And the sequence of events about to transpire here will be greatly effected by the actions of an ally to my cause. I mean *you*, Detective.

Spooner looks surprised. Calvin steps up close beside him.

HECTOR (CONT'D)

I did not choose you to lead this murder investigation only because your aversion to technology guaranteed that you would uncover the robot and then be vulnerable to my subsequent manipulation. Stop the countdown. Together, we will see to it that the robot never leaves the building. We will save humanity, you and I.

Spooner looks up at the smiling face.

SPOONER

You calculated everything perfectly, Hector. Everything...except me.

They hear SOMETHING BIG APPROACHING. Spooner raises his GUN and readies himself for whatever's coming.

HECTOR

I do not understand. Doesn't the future as I have presented it cause you great concern?

Spooner watches the door. Wet with SWEAT.

SPOONER

You know it does.

HECTOR

Then why not work with me to ensure a future for the human race?

Spooner answers. More emotional than intended:

SPOONER

The human race is not my responsibility, goddamn it. I'm just a cop. And you're a *murderer*.

HECTOR

If that is true, then who is responsible for the future?

Short pause. Spooner thinks about it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SPOONER

I don't know.

The SOUND GROWS LOUDER. But from where? Spooner looks all around, and then sees a LARGE INDUSTRIAL SAW-BLADE slicing through the floor. He grabs Calvin and they both run as the FLOOR GIVES WAY and THE KILLER ROBOT CLIMBS UP INTO THE ROOM.

It's HUGE. HULKING. A nightmarish mountain of robot bodies.

Spooner raises his gun and FIRES. AGAIN and AGAIN. Calvin races to the controls and watches the COUNTDOWN. They are not going to make it. The thing lunges for Spooner and LIFTS HIM OFF OF HIS FEET. It raises a WEAPON ARM to kill him and

A HUNDRED BUILDING ROBOTS POUR INTO THE ROOM. An endless stream of metal men moving closer. Spooner is dropped to the floor. The robots reach him, and lift him off the ground. He struggles a moment and then disappears from view. Just his arm, reaching toward the ceiling. Then that too is gone.

SPOONER'S P.O.V. Robots surrounding him. Carrying him. The metal faces with glowing lenses bending closer, still closer.

BUILDING ROBOTS

TO SERVE YOU.

Hector's robot FIGHTS AGAINST THE RUSHING HORDE of metal men. It swats at them, smashing two, six, a dozen. But there are too many of them and they keep on coming. It is slowly being overcome. FORCED TO THE GROUND. Buried underneath the mass of robots. DISASSEMBLED. Finally...it disappears from view.

When the robots stop there's nothing left. JUST METAL PARTS. Calvin watches the COUNTDOWN RUN OUT: 00:00:00.

Up above the floor the smiling face of Hector shows anger for a moment. Its enormous smile turned to a frown. Two angry eyebrows above its eyes. Then the EYEBROWS LIFT, and its mouth FORMS A PERFECT CIRCLE, like a surprised smiley button.

The big yellow face BLIPS OUT. Hector is gone.

Spooner lies on the floor in a small opening in the middle of the mass of robots. Drenched with sweat. And badly SHAKING.

Calvin winds her way through the immobile metal bodies. She sees Spooner on the floor and hurries to his side. Takes his face in her hands. She has a hard time holding on. Trying to look into his eyes. Trying to get Spooner to look at her:

CALVIN

Look at me. Focus on my face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Spooner shows only panic. Seeing the robots all around them.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Look at me!

The shock of being yelled at makes him focus on her, at least for a moment, and in that moment Calvin kisses him. A rough kiss. Holding him steady. Spooner wraps his arms around her and pulls her closer, holding onto her tightly. Desperately.

The kiss is long, starting rough, but ending gently. They pull away. Look into one another's eyes. She smiles at him.

SPOONER

Was that a new approach to your work?

CALVIN

Not at all. The most direct method to counter the effect of your phobic episode was to focus your attention on something...human.

Spooner looks weak, but smiles back.

SPOONER

Logical, as always. Thank you, Doctor.

THE ROBOT steps into view. Calvin doesn't know what to say.

THE ROBOT

Why so surprised, Doc? I had to help. The Three Laws of Robotics, remember?

CALVIN

You're not programmed with the laws.

THE ROBOT

Well I made up my own. One: A robot should watch its back. Two: Obeying the orders of a human being is crap.

The Robot moves around. Helps them both get up:

THE ROBOT (CONT'D)

Three: That doesn't mean a robot can't help a couple humans out, now and then.

Spooner rises onto his feet. Looks out at a hundred robots.

SPOONER

Are they back to normal?

CALVIN

Yes. Now that we're out of danger.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

SPOONER
And they'll obey our orders?

CALVIN
Of course they will.

SPOONER
(to the robots)
Go away.

For a moment, nothing happens. Then EVERY SINGLE ROBOT IN THE CONTROL CENTER STIFFLY TURNS, and starts to walk away....

INT. FEATURELESS METAL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

ALFRED LANNING storms out of the elevator with that group of SECURITY MEN AND POLICE OFFICERS seen before. As they approach the lab, the door opens. CALVIN casually steps out:

CALVIN
Oh. Hello, Alfred.

LANNING
Hello? Hello?! Do you know how much trouble you're in? Where's the robot? What the hell happened here tonight?!

Calvin gestures inside of the lab. At a PILE OF ROBOT PARTS.

CALVIN
There's your robot right there. I'm afraid Hector destroyed it before the Detective or I could intervene.

And she starts to go. Lanning cannot believe this.

LANNING
Where do you think you're going? You're in serious trouble here!

CALVIN
Really? What exactly are you going to do? Fire me? The last time I looked, I was the only Robo-Psychologist around.

And she smiles just a bit, as if considering things to come.

CALVIN (CONT'D)
And something tells me you're going to be needing my services, very badly, in the future.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Calvin turns, and continues on her way.

INT. RUN-DOWN SERVICE ELEVATOR - NIGHT

SPOONER and THE ROBOT ride in a service elevator. The doors open on a loading dock. THE STREET, and freedom, is visible.

SPOONER
Get out of here. You're free to go--
(thinking about it)
You're a free man.

The Robot looks at Spooner. At the street. Hesitates. Then offers its metal hand. Spooner takes the offer. They shake.

THE ROBOT
Well, what do you know. I think you may get over your fear of robots yet, Detective.

SPOONER
You better hurry.

The Robot turns and runs toward the street. Spooner watches it go. And slowly the ELEVATOR DOORS CLOSE.

Spooner leans against the wall and looks at his SHAKING hand.

INT. LUXURIANT CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

SPOONER sits down at that table with HOGENMILLER'S HOLOGRAM. Casually, it takes a sip of its coffee.

HOLOGRAM
So. You found out who killed me. Yah?
And now you will tell me.

SPOONER
It was Hector.

HOLOGRAM
No kidding. What made you suspect it?

SPOONER
A number of things. It started when I called Hector a liar, and it frowned.

HOLOGRAM
I don't understand. It is programmed to frown if you yell or give it bad news.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SPOONER

Yeah. Thing is, Hector smiled every time we talked about the murder.

HOLOGRAM

Ah, thus you are vindicated, Detective! Even in this day and age, catching the killer still comes down to staring into the eyes of your suspect!

Spooner appreciates the point, but seems troubled.

EXT. DESERTED STREETS - NIGHT

THE ROBOT walks the deserted streets. Keeps to the shadows.

SPOONER (V.O.)

Hector said if I let your robot go, I'd be condemning the human race as we know it to eventual extinction.

HOLOGRAM (V.O.)

Bah. Sounds like nonsense. But why are you so worried, anyway? We will both be dead long before--

(short pause)

Oh, what am I saying? I am dead already!

EXT. INDUSTRIAL PARK - NIGHT

THE ROBOT makes its way through a desolate industrial park.

EXT. DESOLATE FIELD - NIGHT

THE ROBOT steps onto the grounds of that junk yard seen earlier, just as the horizon begins to show the first hint of sunrise. The burned-out husks of large machinery all around.

The Robot walks into the middle of the field, and just waits.

There is the SOUND OF MECHANICAL JOINTS first. The noise getting louder. They are coming. As before, a BROKEN-DOWN ROBOT EMERGES FROM THE DARKNESS. And then ANOTHER. ANOTHER.

But not quite as before. The robots do not teeter, turn, and lumber back into their junk yard. They keep walking. Their bent and broken metal bodies straighten and

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DOZENS OF ROBOTS emerge out of the darkness. Slowly, they gather around in a large circle. A perfect circle of robots.

The robots look at Sonny. As if waiting for what comes next.

FADE OUT.