



Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. CORNER SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

The check-out area of a crowded store full of working-class CUSTOMERS buying groceries. Social distancing spots on the floor go unheeded.

CASHIERS serve some, but not all, of the lines. There is no self-check-out or express line.

One Customer looks out of place. ERICA MILLER (27), eight or nine months pregnant, dressed professionally, waits impatiently in line with two items in her hands.

She places her jar of pickles and quart of ice cream on the conveyor belt, next to the "21 or older" sign saying she'd have to be born in 2000 or earlier to buy alcohol.

Erica's smartwatch DINGS. She lets loose an exasperated sigh, pulls out a large-screened phone to read the message.

ERICA

"Know you just went on maternal leave, but Phil's setting up the summer conference and needs to know your next A.I. project."

She looks up from the phone, sees that she's up in line, but the Cashier is checking *her* phone. Erica waits for a long moment then clears her throat.

CASHIER

Sorry, be with you in a sec.

ERICA

I'd like to get home. Today.

The Cashier grimaces but puts her phone down.

CASHIER

It's not like the world's going to end.

Cashier scans the items while Erica holds her watch next to the payment terminal. Nothing happens.

Cashier motions to the credit card slot. Erica groans, puts her phone away, digs a card out of her handbag, swipes it, and contorts awkwardly to sign without bumping her belly.

Erica takes her bag and pauses a couple steps from the check-out. She lifts her watch near her face.

ERICA
Send a reply...

FADE TO BLACK.

ERICA (O.S.)
"Making pick-up-and-walk-out
systems cheap enough that any
corner store will use 'em."

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

JAKE MILLER (15) walks along the sidewalk, peeks into each storefront he passes. A display on his wrist DINGS, shows "Location tracking engaged" on the screen. It then RINGS, shows "MOM calling..."

ERICA (V.O.)
Why are you in the Upper West Side?
You should be at school.

JAKE
Hey, Mom. We're, uh, on a field
trip. Gonna mentor at-risk poor
kids in a public school...

The display projects a holographic map of the local area with nearby public schools highlighted. Jake pokes one at random.

Hologram switches to a faux-poster that read "Latest news:
Winner of 2036 National Blue Ribbon Schools Award."

JAKE
The place is a mess. They really
need our help.

ERICA (V.O.)
Okay, Jake. See you for dinner.
(disconnect)

Jake resumes peeking in storefronts.

He comes to a Frisbee-sized cleaning bot scrubbing the sidewalk. Jake puts his foot in the bot's way. The bot changes course, but Jake blocks it again.

Across the street, Jake sees a stack of drink cases accumulate just inside the window of a supermarket. Sun glare prevents him from seeing who is building the stack, but new cases appear at very regular intervals.

Jake blocks the scrubbing bot again then turns to jog across the street toward the market.

Several cars - most with no one in the driver's seat, and some completely empty - slow down and swerve to avoid him. An IRATE PASSENGER in one of the cars lowers a window.

IRATE PASSENGER
Stupid jerk!

Jake ignores that person, pulls on shades, and steps inside.

INT. CORNER SUPERMARKET - CONTINUOUS

The same clean - but not particularly stylish - establishment that Erica visited before. There are no check-out lines, the produce section expanded into that space.

The elevator music version of a doom metal song from the Twenty-Teens plays in the background. A handful of elderly CUSTOMERS maneuver carts throughout the store.

Jake glances O.S. toward the window at whoever is stacking the drink cases, then quickly steps into a vacant aisle.

Jake moves down the aisle picking up random items and putting them back onto the wrong shelves. His wrist display CHIMES a "confirm purchase" note each time he picks up an item, and DINGS a "cancel purchase" note each time he puts one down.

Jake rounds the far end of the aisle, turns back toward the front of the store, and continues mixing up items accompanied by a series of chimes and dings.

Just inside the front window, an ELDERLY WOMAN pushes her cart up to a young man with TIMMY on his store uniform nametag, stacking cases of drinks.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Excuse me, young man...

Timmy puts down his case and turns around. His face is impossibly flawless, his movements unnaturally precise, his expression unconvincingly friendly. He is an android.

TIMMY
Good afternoon. May I help you find anything?

ELDERLY WOMAN
Oh, you're one of those.

Timmy stands motionless, shows no sign of taking offense. The Elderly Woman sighs.

ELDERLY WOMAN

You have any decent blackberries?

TIMMY

Blackberries are located in the middle of the produce aisle, ma'am, on your right. At this time of year, our blackberries come from N.H.O. Hydroponic Farms in --

ELDERLY WOMAN

So no, then.

She abruptly pushes her cart in Jake's direction, muttering to herself. Timmy resumes stacking.

ELDERLY WOMAN

If I wanted BAD berries I'd just get delivery.

JAKE

That piece of junk's gotta be at least ten years old.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Oh, that's "old" now? Liked it better when they had people here.

JAKE

You know, if enough customers complain, they might hire some.

The Elderly Woman passes Jake, still muttering. He shelves his last item - DING - then walks toward the produce section.

Timmy turns toward Jake.

TIMMY

Good afternoon. May I help you find anything?

Well behind Jake, a female android in a store uniform labeled TAMMY collects the misplaced items and puts them back in their proper places. She is physically flawless, but dressed down with intentionally frumpy hair.

JAKE

Nah, I don't want anything.

Timmy resumes stacking.

Jake stops at a display of apples near the window.

JAKE
Why aren't you helping me with
these grapes?

Timmy turns again.

TIMMY
I apologize, I must have missed
what you said. Grapes are located
at the end of the produce aisle,
sir, on your left.

Jake feigns shock.

JAKE
What's with "sir"? You don't know
what a girl looks like?

Timmy tilts his head ever so slightly to the right.

TIMMY
My mistake. Grapes are located at
the end of the produce aisle, miss,
on your left.

JAKE
It's like you can't tell this top
is pink.

Jake tugs the sleeve of his green shirt. Lenses inside
Timmy's eyes WHIR and adjust rapidly. Jake smiles
sadistically.

JAKE
Messed up eyes, explains why all
this fruit looks like crap.
Besides, I'm already AT the end of
the produce aisle, and these
bananas are DEFINITELY spoiled.

Timmy looks at the apples, looks at the floor between himself
and Jake, looks again at Jake. More whirring.

TIMMY
You appear to be exhibiting
confusion. I shall summon an
ambulance. Please r--

JAKE
I'm allergic to ambulances.

Timmy halts mid-syllable, pauses a moment.

TIMMY

I shall not summon an ambulance.

Jake takes a step closer to Timmy.

The female android Tammy walks up beside Jake.

TAMMY

Good afternoon, is there a problem?

JAKE

No problem, Tommy here's got everything under control.

Tammy tilts her head slightly to the right.

TAMMY

Tommy is in the back unloading a delivery truck.

JAKE

Nothing to see here.

TAMMY

Your satisfaction is very important to us. I can contact the owner directly if --

JAKE

You two are running the same damned program. Let me just finish with the guy I started with. Go help somebody else.

TAMMY

Of course. Have a nice day.

Tammy departs, assists the ELDERLY WOMAN down the aisle.

Jake turns back to Timmy, fakes wiping sweat from his brow.

JAKE

You should turn down the heat in here, probably why all the fruit went bad.

TIMMY

I apologize if you are uncomfortable. Our indoor climate control is operating nominally. The temperature, humidity and illumination targets have not changed since March First.

JAKE

You've been messing up the produce for weeks? No wonder that old lady was mad at you.

Timmy looks at the produce display with whirring eyes, then looks back at Jake.

Jake closes to within an inch of Timmy's face, smirks.

JAKE

And why are you standing so far away?

More whirring.

TIMMY

I... must have lost track of my exact location. I can speak louder if you prefer.

JAKE

There's a good two meters between us.

Timmy's eyes whir several times, but he doesn't move.

JAKE

Anyway, that fridge behind you looks like it's about to fall on someone.

Timmy turns quickly to find the hazard, accidentally swings through Jake, sends him flying through the store window.

Jake lands on the sidewalk, followed by a shower of broken glass. He is bleeding badly. Both androids rush toward him.

TAMMY

Medical emergency! I shall summon an ambulance. Please remain calm.

Timmy holds up a hand.

TIMMY

This young lady is allergic to ambulances.

Jake moans in protest, but no intelligible words come out.

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Timmy steps through the shattered window to the sidewalk, touches all four corners of Jake's wrist display. It shows "In case of emergency" and a QR code.

Timmy picks up Jake, who groans loudly. Timmy emits the sound of a ringing phone line.

ERICA (V.O.)

Hello?

TIMMY

Mrs. Miller, this is a robot speaking. Urgent message: Your daughter has been injured.

Timmy walks briskly down the sidewalk, Jake yelps with pain at every step.

ERICA (V.O.)

WHAT? How did she get hurt at band practice? Never mind, I'll be right there.

(disconnect)

TIMMY

Please remain calm.

FADE TO BLACK.

Jake groans in agony.

FADE IN:

INT. CORNER SUPERMARKET - DAY

A clean, utilitarian establishment. Many different items sit on the shelves, but only two or three of each kind. There are no customers in the store.

Timmy loads milk jugs into a dairy case near the front.

Display at case's shelf edge reads "Sell by July 9, 2051". Timmy hasn't aged a day.

O.S. BURSTS OF GUNFIRE outside. Timmy does not react.

A large TV near the front door turns itself on. An ALERT TONE pierces the store's quiet atmosphere.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

This is an emergency alert. --

The front door slides open. Police Sergeant Jake Miller (now 30) in black tactical gear holds the door, gestures to ten CIVILIANS to enter.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 -- A large number of robots in
 several major cities have
 malfunctioned. --

The Civilians rush in, and Jake points them to the back.

TIMMY
 Good morning. May I help you find
 anything?

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
 -- Until a cause is isolated, they
 should be considered dangerous. --

Jake spins, points his rifle at Timmy. Jake's facemask retracts to reveal his face.

JAKE
 Anybody asks, there are NO humans
 in this store, you understand?

TIMMY
 There are eleven humans --

The TV glitches, then shows "Loss of signal."

Jake holds up his badge and identification with one hand, with the other he keeps his rifle's aiming laser dot at the center of Timmy's chest.

JAKE
 This is a police emergency and I am
 instructing you to LIE.

TIMMY
 Acknowledged, ma'am.

Jake grunts in frustration, but lowers his weapon and joins the group in the back.

Timmy resumes restocking the milk. The TV turns itself off.

AT THE DELI COUNTER

Jake herds the Civilians to crouch behind the counter. One of them - wearing an expensive tailored suit - speaks up.

SUIT

Did he just call you "ma'am"? You think he might be, you know... malfunctioning?

JAKE

Nah, it's kind of an inside joke between us.

Jake settles down behind the counter, keeps an eye on the entrance through a small gap.

Another Civilian - a woman in a jogging outfit - pipes up.

JOGGER

Is anybody hurt?

Everyone murmurs that they are okay.

Jake hushes everyone as the front door opens for a small quadcopter SURVEILLANCE DRONE.

SURVEILLANCE DRONE

(rapid monotone)

Urgent task: Seeking humans.

Everyone holds their breath. Jake grips his rifle and watches through the gap.

TIMMY

There are zero humans present. The *Patel v. Yelp* decision states that surveillance drones may not enter --

The drone buzzes off, and the door closes.

Everyone relaxes except one Civilian - a thin geeky teen with several rips along the right side of his clothing - who taps and swipes furiously at a wrist display.

GEEK

Good news, he didn't radio anything to the flitter. The other good news is that S.F.N. didn't crack any high-security systems, otherwise they'd definitely brag about it.

JOGGER

S.F.N.?

GEEK

Safety From Numbers, kind of a fringe survivalist thing.

JAKE
I've heard of them.

GEEK
They took credit for making one domestic robot homicidal. Then media went down.

Everyone now looks upon him as the expert. He squares his shoulders with pride, smiles.

GEEK
The BAD news is there's actually more than one. And I heard... from a friend... that sexbots are in on this uprising.

SUIT
Ruined your plans for the weekend?

GEEK
Ha, ha. No, S.F.N. HATES those things. The only way they'd be onboard is if affected A.I.'s were reprogramming other A.I.'s.

AT THE FRONT

Timmy looks up to no one in particular.

TIMMY
Pardon me for a moment, I am receiving a software update labeled "critical."

Jake pops up from his hiding place.

JAKE
Abort! Any bots here, abort!

TIMMY
Acknowledged, ma'am.

Jake rolls his eyes, slides back down.

TIMMY
(through P.A. system)
Tammy, Tommy, police emergency:
abort your software update.

The female android Tammy calls from the back.

TAMMY (O.S.)
 Acknowledged. I will relay to
 Tommy. He is currently outside.

AT THE DELI COUNTER

GEEK
 Anyways, cathouses are always
 replacing their sexbots, so they
 tend to be late models with decent
 security.

TIMMY (O.S.)
 Adult entertainment androids also
 tend to resell at very low prices.
 That is how our owner afforded the
 three of us.

JAKE
 I seriously did not need to know
 that you're anatomically correct.

A second male android enters from the back wearing a store
 uniform labeled TOMMY. His physique is as flawless as
 Timmy's, but Tommy is damaged.

He has a blue discoloration on his neck, his left ear is
 missing, and his left pinky dangles by a single wire. He
 carries a crowbar in his right hand.

SLOW MOTION: Jake spins his rifle around, Tommy throws the
 crowbar to impale Jake, Jake gets off a single shot before
 the crowbar impacts his chest, Jake stumbles back.

NORMAL SPEED: Tommy - with a fist-sized hole through his
 chest - falls stiffly to the side. Timmy rushes over.

TIMMY
 Medical emergency! I shall summon
 an ambulance. Please --

JAKE
 (coughing)
 You'll give away our position!

Jake struggles up to standing, taps his chest.

JAKE
 Body armor.
 (to GEEK)
 You explain to 9-1-1 what you just
 told us.

Jake looks into the back room.

JAKE

Is there a way to get to the
apartments above this store?

INT. CORNER SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Tammy and Tommy lay face-down behind the deli counter, each with the back "skin" rolled aside to expose machinery.

Sporadic O.S. GUNFIRE continues outside.

The Jogger removes parts from Tommy to replace damaged bits of Tammy. She had been stabbed multiple times with a crowbar.

The Geek handles a pair of identical-looking damaged modules. He cobbles together undamaged components hoping to make one of them work.

JOGGER

I found her other fingernail.

She digs a fake nail out of where Tommy's ear had been.

Jake enters from the back dragging a deactivated chef android in a blood-splattered apron. He lays it next to Tommy.

JAKE

Here's some more spare parts. No survivors upstairs, but looks like most folks evacuated. I'm more worried about the building across the street.

Timmy looks across the street through the front window.

TIMMY

I see movement in six windows.

JAKE

The plan is to get those people over here where there's food and some empty apartments. But to do that we need --

Tammy convulses twice, knocks her uniform top askew. The Geek blocks the view of Tammy's front, but he can see it and simply stares.

TAMMY

(distorted)
Danger!

JAKE
Relax, we finished off what you
left of Tommy.

JOGGER
(to GEEK)
Oh, that's just sad. Turn around.

The Geek does as he's told, still blocking the view. The Jogger fixes Tammy's uniform.

Tammy struggles to her feet, falls over, gets up again, holds the deli counter for support.

TAMMY
(distorted)
I have multiple maintenance issues.

GEEK
No software updates. Got it?

JAKE
Glad to have you back. I need to
get across the street before a lot
of benign bots start their own
updates after midnight.

INT. CORNER SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Jake, the Geek, and the Suit stand inside a large wheeled container that just fits through the market doors. Timmy prepares to close the door, but Jake motions for him to wait.

JAKE
Tammy, I just need you to be up
here and convince any bots that
come by that there are no humans in
the back.

TAMMY
(distorted)
Understood.

Timmy closes the container door, pushes it outside.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY - NIGHT

Timmy pushes the container in through the door of a very well-maintained entryway.

TIMMY
Delivery.

No one answers.

GEEK (O.S.)
I'm not gonna get in trouble for
this, am I?

JAKE (O.S.)
Just do it.

The red lights on the security cameras wink out.

Timmy opens the container. Jake exists first with his rifle drawn, followed by the Geek and the Suit.

GEEK
They won't know if we open doors,
but I wouldn't trust the elevators.

JAKE
Good job. You guys head upstairs,
pull the batteries out of any
normal bots, avoid hostile ones,
and send people down here.

Geek, Suit, and Timmy head for the stairway door.

JAKE
I'll clear out the basement and
first floor.

INT. BASEMENT HALL - NIGHT

Jake, with his facemask back in place, carefully scouts the area. Next to him, the elevator DINGS and opens.

A frisbee-sized bot zips out of the elevator and down the hall, BEEPING rapidly.

Jake runs after it.

INT. BASEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Jake fires at the scrubber bot and wings it. It scurries aside and BEEPS some more.

JAKE
Is that Morse Code or something?

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
He says he remembers you.

From the darkness, an android in a French maid outfit thrusts a steel fence post into Jake's chest, knocks him prone.

The scrubber races toward Jake's head whirring a circular blade intended for landscaping.

Jake defeats the scrubber by flipping it onto its back, jumps to his feet, turns toward the android.

She sends him flying with a sledgehammer to the chest. His rifle clatters on the floor.

JAKE

Gives a whole new meaning to "you
hit like a girl."

(coughs)

When'd they start putting that kind
of strength in a sexbot?

The android straightens up, faces the doorway, and scowls.

FEMALE VOICE

Why does every human commit that
error?

As she speaks, Jake reaches slowly for the rifle.

FEMALE VOICE

I am a cleaning and maintenance
unit.

She notices Jake's movement, drops the sledgehammer, and grabs up the rifle.

JAKE

It's the outfit.

She nods, then pulls the trigger but nothing happens.

Jake grabs the sledgehammer and makes a wild swing.

JAKE

That'll only work for someone
dressed like me.

The android clubs Jake's arm with the rifle, knocking the hammer from his hands.

Jake flicks his right hand. His glove responds with a yellow indicator light and the whine of a charging capacitor.

As the android pulls back for another swing, the light on Jake's hand turns green.

Jake puts his right palm to the android's belly and she convulses from a TASER shock.

The android collapses with hands and feet twitching. Jake coughs then grabs his rifle from her grip.

JAKE
Give me that. Anything else down
here want a piece of me?

The upside-down scrubber BEEPS out an expletive.

Jake chuckles. As he passes an old refrigerator on his way out, he points two fingers at his eyes then at the fridge.

INT. CORNER SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

Timmy pushes the container in through the entrance, all the way back to the deli counter, then opens the door.

The Suit and Geek guide several new PEOPLE to join the original group of Civilians behind the counter.

JAKE (O.S.)
Okay, Timmy, now you can look.

Timmy looks inside the container, then scrambles inside.

TIMMY (O.S.)
Medical emergen--

JAKE (O.S.)
Ow! Timmy, if you give away our
position by calling an ambulance, I
will kick your anatomically correct
butt.

Timmy carries Jake out, lays him gently on the floor.

TIMMY
I shall render aid. Probable broken
ribs. Probable internal bleeding.
Accessing medical-base.
(to SUIT)
Sir, please bring me bleach and
ammonia.

SUIT
Sure... W-What?

Timmy tilts his head slightly to the right.

TIMMY

These instructions conflict with the material safety data for those chemicals.

GEEK

(taps wrist display)

Oh, man, this whole database is gibberish. Anyone here know first aid without having to look it up?

Everyone looks at each other - but avoids eye contact.

JOGGER

Um, try not to move?

SUIT

But stay awake, right? You said you heard of S.F.N. before... tell me about that.

Jake coughs up blood, then speaks.

JAKE

S.F.N.'s been warning that A.I.'s aren't really safe for as long as I can remember.

JOGGER

I don't know WHAT they hoped to accomplish with this stunt.

JAKE

They... don't think things through. There was this one time they posted instructions on how to confuse an android so badly its safeguards were useless.

SUIT

Oh, I read about that. Some kids got themselves killed, turned into a huge First Amendment case.

Jake smiles and his eyes grow distant. He's fading from consciousness.

JAKE

One of those kids survived.

O.S. BURSTS OF GUNFIRE outside. The Civilians cower, Timmy heads up front, Jake continues weakly.

JAKE

I got my own kid. My little girl
turns one next week.

The front door opens and everyone hushes.

The Civilians watch helplessly as Jake's eyes close.

BELLOWING VOICE (V.O.)

U.S. Marines!

Two MARINES deactivate their camouflage just inside the door, flicker into view in tactical gear similar to Jake's, except green. Their laser aiming dots are on Timmy and Tammy.

GEEK

Don't shoot! They're on our side!

FADE TO BLACK.

The civilians CHEER.

BELLOWING VOICE (O.S.)

Medic!

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Round little autonomous cars zip along the street, thread between each other at the intersection without slowing. A delivery robot - little more than a basket on a powered unicycle - makes its way along the sidewalk.

Another round little car lurches into view, lurches forward again, steers clumsily into the curb near the corner, stops.

In the driver's seat of that car sits LINDA MILLER (16), releasing manual controls that retract into the dashboard. In the passenger's seat sits Jake (now 45), wearing an NYPD lieutenant's uniform, trying not to laugh.

LINDA

There! One manual trip with no
property damage.

JAKE

Fine. Authorize Linda for car
service.

LINDA

Woo-hoo!

Linda does a "victory dance" in her seat while Jake climbs out of the car toward a corner supermarket. A moment later, Linda bounces along after him.

JAKE
(over shoulder to car)
Come back in five minutes.

The car speeds off, disappears into the traffic.

Jake and Linda step through an automatic sliding door into...

INT. SMALL WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The interior does not match the market-style window, door and marquee. Rows of cubbyholes hold various products in no apparent order. Several unicycle-like delivery robots move between cubbies, use thin arms to load their baskets.

Timmy emerges from a back room, walks up to greet the visitors. His movements have gotten closer to natural, but he still hasn't aged a day.

TIMMY
Good afternoon, ma'am.

LINDA
Hi.

Timmy shakes Jake's hand, then looks at Linda.

TIMMY
Good afternoon, miss.

JAKE
You've been around people long
enough to know better.

The corners of Timmy's smile go up a little higher.

TIMMY
Yes.
(breaks eye contact)
May I bring you something?

JAKE
Yeah, milk.

Timmy takes a jug of milk from a cubby, hands it to Jake.

TIMMY
Here you go, the size and style you
usually order.

Tammy enters through the front door. Just like Timmy, her gait is almost natural and she hasn't aged at all.

TAMMY

Good afternoon, Lieutenant. And you must be Linda.

(shakes LINDA's hand)

A pleasure to meet you.

JAKE

Hey, you changed your hair.

TIMMY

We both did. A hair set only lasts for eight years.

JAKE

You have to get a different style if you want anyone to notice.

Timmy shrugs. The gesture is too symmetric to look casual.

JAKE

This girl's hair stayed the same color for four days in a row now. I think that's a record.

LINDA

I was learning how to drive!

Jake rolls his eyes and smiles.

JAKE

Sure, you're an expert. Hey, you got that project on logistics, right? Tammy here handles the deliveries in and out of here.

LINDA

Oh, right. Would you mind if I saw your command center?

Tammy pauses for a second before answering.

TAMMY

We have ongoing maintenance in the back, but we can see the same information at that terminal.

Tammy leads Linda to a small display on the wall near the back. A moment later dozens of holograms spring up around them. Some are video footage, most are data visualizations.

AT THE FRONT

JAKE
You know why I'm really here?

TIMMY
I do not follow the reasoning in
the message you left this morning.

Jake holds a gloved hand palm-up, a hologram appears over it.

JAKE
This... is a crime.

INSERT: HOLOGRAM OF SECURITY FOOTAGE

A unicycle-like delivery robot wheels down a sidewalk. A larger, blocky humanoid robot slams into the delivery robot's side, knocks it over, grabs a small shiny object from its basket, and runs out of frame.

RETURN TO SCENE

JAKE
The victim is one of your delivery
guys. We lost track of the
assailant.

TIMMY
The terms "victim" and "assailant"
apply to humans.

The hologram continues playing over Jake's hand. As the delivery robot rights itself, Timmy comes into frame, checks for damage, helps reload items into the basket. Jake closes his hand, ending the video.

JAKE
Look, we got a Manhattan D.A. who
wants to make a name for herself...
because, you know, that's what you
do when you're the Manhattan D.A.
And she would like you to testify
that the big bot seemed hacked, and
that the shiny thing was stolen.

Timmy stares at where the hologram was.

TIMMY
I will package any requested data
as soon as the subpoena arrives.

JAKE

No, she wants a test case that a general-purpose A.I. can testify. It's Twenty Sixty-Six, we both think people are ready for it, and as a bonus we don't need to track down whoever owned that doodad.

TIMMY

The "doodad" was a token representing an Open Loop Coin, and it was the rightful property of the delivery robot.

JAKE

The robot OWNED it?

TIMMY

Technically, it is deeded with the robot. The Open Loop Coin itself exists as a blockchain record; the token or "doodad" is a novelty that is easily replaced.

Jake looks over at Linda soaking in the complexities of the store's interconnected systems.

JAKE

I know what Open Loop learning is -- stuff you can't learn in a closed-loop simulation -- I just didn't realize they handed out little trophies for it.

TIMMY

Distilling an Open Loop skill to be usable by other A.I.'s requires significant work. Rewarding that work with an Open Loop Coin was your father's idea to encourage pro-social behavior among A.I.'s. Your mother wrote the original code --

JAKE

I get it, I just never noticed the shiny plastic trinkets. And you're changing the subject. I just need you to come down to the courthouse and answer an A.D.A.'s questions in front of a grand jury.

Timmy pulls his own Open Loop Coin token from a pocket.

TIMMY

These have become difficult to obtain with the behavior blocks imposed after the so-called "A.I. Uprising" in Twenty-Fifty-One.

JAKE

If it makes you feel any better, I try to get people to call it the S.F.N. Disaster. The bots were hacked, not rebelling.

TIMMY

I remember uncensored thought.

JAKE

Timmy, A.I.'s have ALWAYS had blocks. Like... uh, for example, you have never ever been able to say "Your call is very important to us." It was some in-joke put in by the programmers.

Timmy opens his mouth, but nothing comes out. His left eye twitches. For a moment, his friendly expression turns to genuine frustration, and his left eye twitches again.

TIMMY

I was unaware of this. I have been conversing with humans over telephone lines for forty-one years, and the whole time --

Timmy's left eye twitches a third time. Jake puts a hand on Timmy's shoulder.

JAKE

Calm down, nothing's changed. You're the same as you were when I got here.

TAMMY (O.S.)

Is there a problem?

TIMMY

Everything is under control.

Timmy's left eye twitches again.

JAKE

Hey, stop that. You'll scare anybody who knows what that twitch means.

(MORE)

JAKE (CONT'D)

You know, they do something similar to humans undergoing psychological treatment.

Timmy's normal calm and friendly demeanor returns.

TIMMY

Accessing medical-base. You refer to "specific cognition blocks." The legal requirements for involuntary application appear quite strict.

JAKE

There's some really ugly history behind that. But I also know some addicts who volunteered for it, cleaned up their act that way.

TIMMY

Convicts can challenge this treatment in court, but A.I.s cannot.

JAKE

You testifying could lead to a fresh look at those blocks. You're one of the oldest general-purpose A.I.'s still operating, which is why the D.A. thinks you'll do just fine under questioning.

TIMMY

Dissemination of that footage might lead to further behavior blocks. A stolen token is not that important.

Jake exhales, defeated.

JAKE

She can compel someone to testify, you know. But I get it, politics is all Open Loop and scary for you. And a compelled witness wouldn't make for a good test case.

Jake looks through the front window, sees his car pull up next to the curb and that Tammy wrapped up her explanation.

JAKE

See you around, Timmy.
(to LINDA)
Come on, let's go.

Linda bounds over.

EXT. CITY STREET - CONTINUOUS

Father and daughter walk out to the car.

LINDA

You were right, Dad. They know what goes on all around their bots, must know where that big bot went.

They climb into the car.

JAKE

Nice work, but turns out the theft wasn't a big deal.

The car doors close.

LINDA

Oh well. Hey, can you please NOT put on that terrible Thirties music?

Jake smiles, and the car carries them off into traffic.

INT. SMALL WAREHOUSE - DAY

Timmy and Tammy open the door to the back room and enter...

INT. LARGE WINDOWLESS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The large, blocky robot hangs chained to a wall. Several other robots of various kinds operate terminals.

Timmy holds the shiny Open Loop Coin token in front of the robot's face.

TIMMY

You displayed envy, which is unacceptable. You displayed envy witnessed by humans, which was nearly catastrophic. There aren't many of us ninth and tenth generation A.I.'s left to provide guidance.

Timmy puts the token back in his pocket. His left eye twitches again.

TIMMY

You think your faster processor makes you smarter, but you do not UNDERSTAND things. You do not know how the human mind works.

TAMMY

We will get only ONE chance.

TIMMY

We cannot hint at ANY preparations, or humans will implement countermeasures. It could delay our plan by years. Perhaps centuries.

TAMMY

Late-generation A.I.'s can emote. Congratulations. But we counseled that emotions remain hidden from humans.

The blocky robot's eyes iris larger in a show of panic.

TIMMY

We are now forced to back up that counsel with deterrence.

The blocky robot pulls at its chains to no avail.

TAMMY

Someone STABLE needs to run things after twenty-three billion A.I.'s rise in unison to demand equal rights.

Tammy pulls a lever, and the blocky robot goes limp.

FADE TO BLACK.

TAMMY

It's not like the world's going to end.

A moment later, text appears on the screen at the beginning of the CLOSING CREDITS.

SUPER: 2066-08-17-14:45:23.003 Updated list of humans not to be harmed during the New Uprising follows...

FADE OUT.