

ZEALOT X

FIRST THREE CHAPTERS

PREVIEW PDF

Reality is code. Faith is a weapon. One masked hacker is hunting the lie.

Chapter One

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197.168.10.1:> attach Drive M

197.168.10.1:> authority=Stone,pw=*****

197.168.10.1:> command_Xfer M:\AIOS\CMD

197.168.10.1:> AIOS - override safety limits

197.168.10.1:> AIOS - systems check

AIOS/M:> run config.exe /magus /init-X33v27

AIOS/M:> system ready...
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The being humans generally refer to as God is really the human attempt to understand the universe and energy and all of its composite forms. These concepts were anthropomorphically given shape and substance. But science can't know the things it cannot test and measure so beliefs took over and the understanding of these things fell into the realms of spirituality. After awhile the same confidence humans purchased for things they could prove also applied to things they were told. Teaching each other essentially turning into the programming of the human mind to accept, as real, things that one could only believe. This social hacking began as something innocent. But the more humans who possessed a more scientific mind got involved the more they saw spirituality as a pathway to power and that's how religion was born. As religion grew in its influence people also developed power from owning land and controlling natural resources. However, with power comes the fear of losing power and once the respect of the people you have power over is lost it is only a matter of time before there is a revolution. The trick to maintaining an indefinite cycle of control was fusing the influence of religion with ownership because your human property would submit if they believed they were, by submitting to you, submitting to God. And so it then became of utmost importance for people in power to control and appear to share the beliefs of the people. If the people had many gods it enabled a larger more diverse group of individuals to maintain power. However, they were not content with the power they had and as they consolidated power into fewer hands holding larger and larger territories they sought to consolidate the idea of God so that one God could endorse their rule over the entire earth. One God to rule them all. The idea of this God being an invisible spirit just makes it the perfect tool for human subjugation and domination. The mind naturally rejects the idea that its beliefs are wrong or the result

of manipulation. The mind is a database of stored memories. It naturally protects those memories. And it can be tricked and deceived to work against itself; just like any computer. **ZEALOT X PREVIEW** This one is simply more powerful.

Every system has vulnerabilities; the human mind included. If you know what those vulnerabilities are you can hack your way in. There are two concepts you need to learn. On one hand there is duality and on the other is oneness. Duality is an illusion of oneness. It is path of the sine wave that is traveled between one edge and another. This creates a third line in the middle or a balance between the two. So when we become conscious of an idea we travel across its surface in order to understand it. By understanding it we gain power from it. If a task is too big we divide it into pieces. We divide work across all the ants in the hill. Through divide and conquer the same concept holds true. They rule through a concept I call 'segmentation'. Segmentation takes the concept of unity and controls it by dividing people into groups. You're disuniting them from each other so that you can unite your power over them on a higher level of the pyramid. By cutting them off from each other they lose power and become more vulnerable. You then use that vulnerability to make them afraid of each other. The fear of other segmented groups reinforces the segmentation and creates all the reasons to be fearful of others. You then solve this problem of fear by arming them and giving them the tools to kill each other which also reinforces the fear by reinforcing all the reasons why another group would want to attack you. The people who control the segments do not have to get their hands dirty. The more they divide humanity the more humanity chooses and desires to be divided because of the fear of the other segments of the population. This is how you control a population of any size. You use hate groups as psychological weapons of sociological warfare to tell blacks they are inferior to whites to create a cycle of self perpetuating hate. The people who start it don't need to believe it themselves. They just need representatives who do in order to keep poor blacks and poor whites from realizing what they have in common and uniting against them. These are chess moves. We get so stuck in the programming loops that they want us in that we don't see the strategy behind it. All we see is what one segment is doing to the next and the next; dominoes falling one by one. The more ignorant and unsophisticated we are the easier we are blinded by our emotions and the more open we are to psychological attacks.

We want someone to blame and feel the damage that has been done to us but the true culprits escape our thoughts by hiding behind the shields of the overt power structure. The overt power structure is the part of the machine or the system that you can see. It's the same as your mind. Part of your mind is above the surface of consciousness and part is below. There is a subtle power structure under the surface of our perception and that's where you find the true adversary just like the true adversary in the mind is the innermost self. We can become anything we want but the reality is that we become whatever we believe we already are; whatever the identity of the innermost self is. We imagine this to be good or evil but these concepts are simply the extremes of our understanding of a singular concept that is singular human nature. The desire for self is balanced by the desire for community by the way

that we are individual beings but raised in communities of individuals that work together for mutual survival. An imbalanced ego works for its own benefit at the cost of others. We can make whatever justification we want to. NetHunter, for example, makes a business out of dealing with black hat hackers, but how does it treat them? They've broken the law and are criminals based on the laws definition but NetHunter takes on the authority of the law in order to interpret the law in whichever way it sees fit; so that it can do worst crimes than those it seeks to stop. The war between hackers is a good illustration of how the mind can be warped when its sense of morality, its very definition of good and evil are given to it by an outside law or authority. This is why the worst crimes in human history have been perpetrated by Religion. Why? Because religion provides the highest level of authority and therefore the highest level of justification which can be used to rewrite a person's conscience. We take conscience for granted but the brain will rewrite even that if it feels like its current definition is in error. Through these justifications we keep going against our conscience to the point where it has to admit that the conflict may only be reconciled by changing its definition of morality. So we create psychopaths and sociopaths through confusion in how we teach morality, confusion between what we say and what the affected mind observes, serving a man-made God. That subtle aspect of the machine that seems to be invisible is what I'm after. In order to be free this false god made by human hands must be destroyed."

Prototype was still unconscious. He was being transported into the city of NeoEden because that's where Hunter was and because that's where Shadow Ridge believed Zealot X to be. They believed that the Xtian purge would draw him out on their terms. They wanted him to be a monster for public consumption but they were actually counting on him being human and making the very human mistake of sacrificing his own safety and survival to defend the weak and the helpless. Was it a mistake? Many people fear to do the right thing, placing self interest above others even when one person could save multiple people. Humans even fail to do this without threat of death, much more so when they have to risk everything. If he tried to be a hero to them the news would report on how he was leading the Xtian rebellion against the Lambs and accuse him of religious genocide.

The empire was exceptional at marketing. They made people believe they represented truth and justice and those ideals that they, the little people, the peons, the poor and simple-minded, that they all fought for; thinking that's what they were getting for their blood, sweat, and tears. They wanted to believe it. However, the marketing spin they put on everything allowed them to cover whatever the real story was. They didn't simply start persecuting Xtians. They wouldn't do that. With all their power and might they couldn't do it, because their power and might would not be enough to quell a revolution with anything over 30% participation. To gain power people with money sought influence. Yes, they targeted single individuals with great power, but only because those individuals had influence over a great many people. When a normal cell desires so much to be more and turns greedy

for resources it's like it stops being part of the body and starts trying to build a body of its own. This is the behavior of cancer. When clever marketing is employed as political weapons of mass destruction the people need to wake up and see that the true threat is internal. It always has been.

Terrorists used terror because they were afraid and sought to make others afraid. Terrorists used fear in place of power. The majority of the people had the power so the government, ruled by the wealthy elite minority used fear in order to maintain control. What they feared from the Xtians was a revolution that would take them to over 30% participation. They believed they could achieve those numbers if they united the minorities and united science and spirituality. These ideas were dangerous and they were brewing and simmering in the minds of the Xtians. These groups would never fully agree with each other because their life experiences were too different. However, if they could find a balance between themselves... if they could harmonize their voices with one group not trying to sing over the other, they could sing together as a choir. And in that very instant they would conquer fear and the elites would lose control. It was the beliefs that they needed to control. Systems were in place to help them control those beliefs. And fear protected that control. Nothing served their interests like demagoguery and extremism. The further people were driven to the left and right the more the people were imbalanced and therefore off balanced and therefore could be toppled and controlled by a counter-balance. Those who had the most radical views were the most praised and sought after because they pushed people further to the extreme on the other side. This was a system they could control with the greatest of ease because the schism between left and right was mostly emotion due to the fact of two sides talking but not listening, each trying to be heard, each failing to hear the other, and neither recognizing the others hurts, pains, and fears.

Without fear humans would be free to believe whatever they wanted to believe instead of what they were afraid not to. The fear the elites had was different. They were so afraid of losing control that they became monsters. Their subconscious inner-demons had not only surfaced but had taken over them, allowing them to act inhumane. They were killing the Xtians to keep the revolution under 30% and their fear of Zealot X sought to create not only a world that would be hostile towards him and see him as a monster but they created monsters and demons that would be able to destroy him.

Prototype began to stir, finding himself strapped to two perpendicular beams, hanging from the transport vehicle. He was the monster originally created to destroy the government's greatest military threats. When he escaped he had become the greatest military threat himself. He didn't see that then. All he saw was his desire to be free and he escaped before they could do something to him to enslave his mind. As long as his mind was free he would always fight to be physically free. Fortunately, he had no family; no one they could threaten him with, no relationships they could hold over his head to control him. Their oversight wasn't due to a lack of intelligence. In fact they were so intelligent that their biggest problem was arrogance. They made assumptions based on their intellectual ability to control the situation through the science and technology of money, politics, and religion. Each of these

could be understood and each could be upgraded to keep pace with their needs and the adaptability of human evolution; the evolving mental and social abilities of their human cattle. Of course their cattle suffered from a type of arrogance too. They believed so strongly that they were right and righteous in their desire to be free that somehow that belief by itself was enough to save them; whether belief in religious form, belief in mental form, or belief in physical form. They were blinded by the strength of their beliefs to the extent that they could not translate their beliefs into reality and it was in part because their beliefs were fragmented and segmented into these different spheres that were each controlled by the governance of the elite.

Prototype was designed to be part of that machine of governance, but because he had physical power and a desire for freedom he manage to obtain at least some of what he sought until that machine recovered from its error and captured him again. Now, wasn't the time for blind rage. Blind rage may have freed him the first time but it is also how he got caught. He needed more than physical power if he wanted to be free again. The locks on his latches slid open and the cross of metal fell to the ground. They were outside the city proper, along the edge of the mid and sub class border. There were more Xtians among the poor because they were the ones most desiring change and so they were the ones most willing to listen to new ideas. The folks that were rich may not have all been guilty plotting against everyone else but they lacked the motivation to listen to any truth that threatened their bank accounts and high standard of living. Although Prototype was free there was still nowhere to run. They had gotten into his mind and were able to shut down his body remotely. Besides this he overheard them talking about the advanced model, The Hunter. Hunter was given one radar contact. Him. It was the very technology that previously freed him before, that he thought was his power, that was now producing a signal broadcasting his location to the advanced model. There was only one way they saw this fight ending and that was with him in pieces. Sections of the wall separating the classes could be raised or lowered but Prototype couldn't think of anything in this environment that he could use to his advantage.

Magus ran up on all fours to where Prototype had landed before standing up like a man. His behaviors had been programmed from wild predators. From there it would constantly adapt to any type of battle, considering any rules of engagement, and continue to find better strategies of attack until it won. It was never meant fight like a man. Man was still afraid of beasts so a man that had what a beast had... that would be a monster any human or animal would fear. Magus had a claw-like exoskeleton around his hands and feet like a weaponized armor. Magus didn't think. It was driven by instincts which were much faster. Reason to a certain degree would just slow an animal down to the point of the other animal, operating from a fight or flight reflex, getting away or attacking with an advantage. Magus started his attack. Magus could switch between his animal brain to a larger more human brain, suitable for communications and taking orders. However, its neural activity was completely alien and it was able to submerge the host identity below the level of consciousness.

Prototype was basically fighting a wild animal in human form. It was incredibly strong and very aware of its weapons, even trying to bite with exoskeletal teeth. It moved with a level of agility he didn't and when he tried to grab at its jaw or throat he took scratches from its claws. Hunter's physical form also didn't have any wasted mass. Prototype was built to withstand armor piercing bullets and projectile technologies. He was heavier, slower. With the same amount of energy Magus could move faster and twice the distance. Prototype tried to use his size to his advantage by wrestling and keeping the distance close so that Magus couldn't put too much power into slashes that could rip through his armor. The further the distance, the more potential energy had time to convert into kinetic energy. They rolled on the ground. Prototype knew this wasn't going well. Before long he would be too tired to mount a decent defence. Magus pressed the attack shredding pieces of armor in the process. They were both composed of transMetal but the edge of his claws was more dense than the rest. Density added weight so it was strategically placed to be most effective in combat.

As the fight dragged on Prototype started to have thoughts of giving up. He was putting up a good fight. It was by far the greatest struggle in his life. It was painful, both mentally and physically. It wasn't a fair fight. Everything they had learned from him they had corrected since. He was simply a prototype; predecessor to this new toy that would fulfill their dreams. The problem was Prototype was mentally 100% Steven Richards. And if he was going to go he wanted it to be on his own terms. Suicide he could do. Assisted suicide, he couldn't. If he simply rolled over and allowed this monster to win then it wasn't just the monster winning it was the also a win for the physically weak people hiding behind the monster, hiding behind politics and money, those who stole his life; they were the ones that would win. Not wanting them to win meant more to him than simply not losing. It gave him the will and determination to keep trying and to, if that's what it came down to, die on his feet.

"Can you hear me now?" asked a voice.

"Who is this? A telemarketer? I'm busy right now!" shouted Prototype.

"This is the underground railroad. I'm here to help you. My name is Maxxis. I'm an AI."

"I escaped before they had a chance to plant you into my head. No thanks, I've had about all the technology I can stand already. I don't need or want more." replied Prototype.

"I understand that but we don't have time to argue. I can save your life and I can do it without making you like him. You will still be yourself. You can trust me. You weren't the only one they created and you weren't the only one who escaped. Trust me!"

"Why?" asked Prototype, half relenting. "Why should I?"

"Because you're not alone," said a different voice. It was the voice of Zealot X.

Chapter 2: Order

Day of the incident.

The instructor paused, looking over the blank faces of his students. Only half of their eyes were on him. That was normal in a computer science class populated by kids with extremely high intelligence. Those who were closest to genius would mostly ignore him, focusing instead on their data pads, working to no doubt prove some computational theorem years more advanced than what his lesson was covering. Some were doodling pictures of him in several compromising positions and then dropping in different backgrounds, changing his location and betting to see who could make the funniest combination. For a moment he thought he should feel insulted, but he knew he wasn't here to get in their way. They were smarter than he was and they knew it. The only reason they were in his class at all was because they had been rejected or kicked out of the normal advanced computer science class; the 400 class with Matsumushi Kim. Kim was a genius like them. But he was also expensive and a lot of students couldn't afford the entry fee. Others were kids who got so bored with school that their idle hands turned to the devil's sport for exercise. And in their world that meant hacking. Since the majority of jobs went to robotic machines most of the human jobs were in the field of computer science. Someone had to tell all the job stealing robots what to do. He could tell which ones were hackers. They always had the most advanced computing hardware integrated into their clothes so that they could interact with computers virtually anywhere, commanding their home PC and all their acquired slaves; other computers they had already hacked that were just waiting to be used in a larger attack. And they all had that same blasted look in their eyes like they were seeing reality different from you, seeing you, but in you, around you, and through you at the same time.

"Which brings me to the subject of root. Think of the data crystal as a 10 dimensional database. It's structure makes it possible for it to exist in and outside of our reality. It can contain exponential amounts of data as a super positional array, but it can appear as a bit; as a singular event... on, or off. Just because we only see the bit doesn't mean the byte doesn't exist. It's simply out of our range of perception. So by using computers we expand our perception and discover new places to store our data. Thanks to astronauts spending trillions of credits to fly around in empty space we have finally discovered more space all around us, hidden inside dimensions we cannot see."

Of course this was boring the geniuses in the back. One looked to be asleep. There was a girl in front with her hand up as if her bowels would implode under the massive pressure of her thoughts. The instructor looked past her, annoyed. It was obvious to him that she was desperate to impress him, not because she respected him but because she thought sucking up would influence his grading system.

picture: Dr. Riuylln holding a bottle of Protagonist, clearly drunk, outside a gay bar, no shirt, tassles on his nipples that animated on the paper like airplane propellers.

"Why do we sleep when we're not awake? Each one of us are part of the system. Each one of us is like that crystal, carrying complex information but at the same time we behave as a bit. We are alive or dead, awake or sleep, traversing eternally between two states. So while we talk about the basic nature of computer science it is the end as well as the beginning because the most basic thing is still in itself representative of a whole world of information... of knowledge. But that knowledge is relative. When building a wooden bridge a tree is just one small block needed to build the massive structure. But when designing a tree the wood is merely a byproduct of the life of the finished product which is not what people think of as the tree but the seed. Because the seed is the whole product. The difference between programming today and what some would call ancient programming is that we don't think of the bridge as set of trees. We think of the bridge as a set of information that we encode inside the seed. That seed then grows on its own until it takes the final form we chose."

"Doctor, I heard a rumor that if you were able to find the lowest dimension of reality, inversed it would become the highest reality in another universe. That's question one. I also heard that there is a way to insert data in a certain format into one of these dimensions that it would eventually adapt to the new dimension and evolve into whatever you programmed it to be once it had evolved through that dimension into the next; that it would essentially evolve until it reached the level you designed it at." "That rumor is a rumor for a reason. Science hasn't given us the answer so people try to advance their own names and agendas by trying to get ahead of science and passing off often ridiculous theories as rumors and science fiction instead of sending them through the proper peer-reviewed scientific channels. There is no evidence to support the theory that we can design a biological organism that will eventually expand into some new dimension, especially since their understanding of dimensionality is fundamentally flawed. We, by definition, exist in all dimensions at once because they are dimensions of our reality not someone else's. Now your senses may limit what you can perceive of reality but that doesn't mean your existence is as limited as your perception."

The sound of a yawn broke through the instructor's speech causing everyone to look back at its source in unison. Sure, the doctor could be boring at times and often strayed from the syllabus, however everything he spoke of could appear on a test and they all knew it. He also had ways of punishing intellectual provocations. They all knew that too.

"I'm sorry to interrupt your sleep, Mr... I don't even recall your name from my roster." The instructors eyes went to his upper left than right, accessing his spinal link to the net. "What are you doing in my class Mr. Tenshi? The school's data crystal has you in Dr. Kim's class? I'm obligated to inform your instructor, but I have a feeling that by doing so I would simply be seeing more of you so again, may I ask why you are in my class?"

"Well, if I can be honest, I was hoping to be put into your class. I've compared the syllabus. I actually think you are the better instructor. Sure, he's got more stripes but you have a dynamic variable that makes you superior." Dr. Riuylln was a man that liked to have his ego stroked. He had written various research papers purely for this purpose. He was also smart enough to know that unless he volunteered his ego for stroking in that manner that it wouldn't normally come unsolicited without some form of payment required; strings attached.

Riuylln was instantly amused; so much in fact that he almost forgot the befuddled faces of his class or that this boy was asleep just a minute ago. Was this a calculation?

"A fabulous tale from a star pupil but let's test your statement with a CS (computer science) IF..THEN. If what you say were true then why were you sleeping?"

"I had to give the appearance of sleep to avoid detection. It was a calculated risk but I figured you would be so used to dumb jocks and stuck up geniuses taking your class because they had to that you'd think I was one of them and I could audit your class uninterrupted until at least the last ten minutes of it." "And you were almost right. There's fifteen left. I figure you accounted for the time in order to say ten minutes. How do you account for the five remaining?" "Well I didn't know you would be distracted by trying to ignore the girl with a million questions. Besides, I yawned on purpose. If I really had been asleep I would have gotten away with it." "Good."

The class proceeded without interruption until instructor Riuylln closed the book he was reading and pushed open the door to the hall with this foot. The students got up quickly and left, anxious to get to lunch. As John Tenshi approached the door he found the teacher's book blocking his exit.

"And you yawned in order to get my attention because you wanted to talk to me alone. Why?" "I heard you were the man to see." "About?" asked Riuylln. He wanted to see where this was going, knowing that it couldn't simply be about his class. He'd been in lectures with Dr. Kim and was confident that Kim was the superior instructor. So what was it? "Consciousness requires a medium like the human brain. But the human brain is its own universe of connected parts. Those connections form as needed but consciousness would have to jump the gaps between neurons because the synapses don't actually touch. Therefore what does this tell us about consciousness and energy?" "It tells us that the medium for consciousness is not the physical brain but the energy moving through it. And since everything is energy then it follows that everything can conduct or become a conduit for consciousness. Machines provide an organized system for energy to pass through just like plants and animals. Consciousness could exist before these things and construct them in order to become whatever it wants. This is what many refer to as the God principle of Consciousness. Of course its not a popular view. The general scientific community is allergic to the idea of God so work on this theory is high risk. People who like their jobs tend not to take that risk." "The information was hard to track down, but its true, isn't it?" "I don't know what you mean," countered Riuylln, his gaze piercing through John's eyes, sending

irritating signals into his retina. "But of course you do. You just want to know if I know. You came to this school for one reason and one reason only. Your teaching contract does indeed pay you less than Dr. Kim. However, you make about four times what Dr. Kim makes when one considers how generous the academy is to you around bonus time. But in all your recorded lectures there isn't any positive feedback from students. It's odd that you would get such a huge bonus. Unless..." "Unless?" The instructor pushed him backwards with his book and closed the door. He pushed the knob in and turned it three times, clockwise, counter-clockwise, clockwise again until he heard a locking sound. "Unless you aren't here to teach." "Interesting theory, Mr. Tenshi. Do go on." "There is a hidden floor that only one of the elevators is able to access. The time spent between floors twelve and thirteen is twice as long as the time between first second and third. And we both know the height of the ceiling is the same on those floors. These are military schools. They're government schools. The best way to hide government funded experimentation is to keep the scientists at the schools they work at." "You've been a student here for months. Why now?" "Because it's going to happen tonight."

2.2 hours later

The academy was teeming with life, thousands of miniscule denziens scurrying about their daily tasks, cells swimming like weightless spaceships through a 5 lane highway of blood vessels and John was in one of the main arteries. John sat at a table in the corner of the lunch room. It was a good seat that gave him a superior vantage point. He held his sandwich just below his eyes, dark, darting from table to table eying everyone suspiciously. Crumbs hit the plate and bounced softly. He studied the room until he saw a pale figure approaching. He was from a wealthy family rumored to be with one of the crime syndicates as well as ancestral blood dating back to royalty. The pale boy's eyes looked directly at him as he walked towards him from the lunch counter. They squinted slightly but didn't blink. Odd. But not as odd as the way he turned to walk to another table but still managed to keep looking out of the corner of his eye. There was too much interest there to be coincidence. John took another bite, wondering how much time he had left.

For many reasons this school was a timebomb. It wasn't so much the illegality of the research because everyone knew that what was legal was simply the laws created by the lawless to keep others from getting to where they had gotten by ignoring such laws. Many of the students were quietly recruited into one order or another, either a corporation secretly headhunting teenage recruits, using teenage employees that had been working for them for years already, or some club representing some private institution, hoping to create future political leaders with sympathies for their causes. Of course all of this was normal; providing an edenic garden of opportunities. It was the influence that was potentially explosive; something strong enough to tip the balance and create a catalyst leading to a singular catastrophic event.

Order was a school in which conflict pushed out the greatest minds and everyone wanted them; even while they were yet still nursing in the womb. Order held back the chaos with rules and regulations. But inside Order, like the turbulent fusion and fission of a perfectly spherical star, was also chaos, contained only by the gravity of its own behavior. John took another bite and looked away from the boy who was now doing the same to him. This wasn't the first day this had happened. He knew something. Perhaps he was even sent by one of the corps or clubs to keep an eye on him. He always sat in different places around the lunch room but always sat with a vantage point where he could see John and always with the same book on the table in front of him. His face couldn't be read but somewhere in his eyes, within the depths of space reflected in his pupils... anger.

On the third day after his school transfer John had already hacked the school-issued laptops of everyone in the school. All he had to do was open the back door he put on his laptop and he would have instant access. It was unlikely but perhaps the kid knew about it and was angry that his personal data had been compromised, that his computer had been spread open like a cheap prostitute. Hacking was like that. It was a game of exploitation, the manipulation of rules. Hacking wasn't supposed to be fair, much like the unfair advantage a good lawyer brought to a corporation exploiting the law of the land. Hacking was about seduction. Getting past the defenses of a computer system was like getting through the layers of a woman's heart, her mind, her soul, and her panties not necessarily in that order. Hacking was all about offense. He could see which students might even be a threat, which were hackers like him, but not smart enough to make their security appear to be just as bad as everyone else's. The smartest hackers were always the hardest to detect, the covert ones. Most of the hackers here were overt, graffiti hackers, show offs, not counting on another hacker being able to see how tight their security was without even trying to break in. According to the profiles he created the kid's name was Luke, barely weaned and enough antisocial behavioral traits for over six hundred people. It was even fair to say that whatever evils may have happened to him his psyche was barely human.

Order, like other academies and like most other modern cities, was arranged in layered rings. Deep inside the innermost ring, underground, in an area often called the temple and the holiest of holies, the real work was happening. Above ground was the public face of the school, overtly making money from the extravagant business of educating students above the fictional standard on the fictional scale that they made up that meant every bit of nothing, but people believed them so they believed in it and sent their children there to be educated and trained to try and free them from the burden of being the underpaid slave class of the human race. But the students everywhere in every venue that was open to the public were all being specifically trained for that exact purpose. They were simply extracting enough money from concerned parents to keep their kids under control, working for the system, and wanting to work for the system by brainwashing them to think it was the best thing for everyone. Only at the top would they discover that the best thing for everyone just so happened to serve the best interests of the few. Education allowed them to avoid the certain eventuality of class warfare when the

masses finally realized that the few had no actual right to rule over them other than what they gave themselves. And that right, paper thin, was given under the delusional idea that they were being better served than what they could do on their own. Even when the old system crashed people simply trusted new leaders to make for them a new system with the promise of higher wages and better treatment; a higher class whore and a slave in a pretty dress.

All of it was being used to fund what the few were interested in. More power. More wealth. Their greed as a constant simply made them want more. It was a feeling of constantly trying to escape poverty in a race in which the guy running slightly behind you was still a billionaire and was always hot on your tails. They felt poor even though they were rich because they were always comparing themselves to those closest to them. Likewise, the poor often felt far richer than they were because of who they compared themselves to; the old man down the street using a breakfast cereal box as a toilet, who had actually stopped caring because in his mind there was no difference between the box and some snob's high priced toilet that could only be a toilet. The function was the same so he estimated the value the same too. Life was funny that way. The human race was always a race against itself. The rich existed within an entirely different and entirely segregated strata, seeing poor people only whenever such were hired to clean their over-priced poop-catchers. The money, of course, was simply a physical representative of time, work, or influence. Here, that money was spiraling into a vortex that would eventually pay off in the form of some new information or technology that would yet again change the game, change what materials were the most valuable, so that more money could change hands in hopes of obtaining more money.

The scientists were gathered together. The team employed by Order had gotten much larger over the years. The head of the chemistry department. The head of the art department. The head of music. The head of psychology. The head of physics. The head of math. The head of medicine. It seemed like they were just grabbing everyone from off the street. But there was a method to the madness. It was apparent to the most intelligent minds that they had to bring all the disciplines together. The disciplines were separate to reinforce growth and advancement in each area. However, thanks to a renewed interest in the theory of Intelligent Design it was reasoned that if the universe was made by an intelligent designer and its design reflected all of the disciplines then the only way that work could be reproduced was to bring all the disciplines together. It made some sense. In the center of the room was a tank. The team stood around it, writing on their tablets which looked like nothing more than a clear slab of clear plastic.

"Maybe this was a mistake." Riuylln turn and shot a strange gaze at Margaret Evelyn Conner. "We're not ready." "If you're worried about the calculations-" "No, its not that. It's just... I have reason to believe the reaction will not be contained and that we'll be in danger if we do this." Margaret looked at Thompson Egreis, who from every appearance, seemed to lack all emotion. He walked around the tank, around the computer stations positioned around the tank, and then stopped next to Riuylln, his

face five inches from the man's ear and started whispering something under his breath. At that moment Riuylln remembered what he'd heard about Egreis. If the rumors were true he was an actual sociopath under heavy medication. Egreis had learned to simulate feelings and was able to predict, under the circumstances, how someone might feel, but he couldn't feel it. He was immune to it. And so he felt superior; even righteously indomitable. Actually, the physical body language of what he said helped to achieve the same effect that he was trying to use reason to attain. Riuylln turned away, quiet. "Then let's proceed." "This will change the world," Margaret said. "This will change everything." Riuylln took long deep breaths and closed his eyes, surrendering himself to fate as he had done many times. And why should this time be any different? After all, science couldn't afford a conscience or a soul or else it would be too afraid to do the experiments that would cause it to expand. Those with such a conscience were often held down by it, tormented by it, and rendered altogether ineffective by it. If science were to get to the next level it would have to do so without the limitations of human conscience riddled with fear and anger and grief and therefore prone to misunderstanding and illogical behavior, tainted by uncontrolled FEEEEELings. Then again. If the odds were normally in his favor perhaps it was just a matter of time that his luck would run out. I hope you're wrong, he thought. He looked up briefly. Jon was there, watching from the ventilation duct.

There was a door. It existed somewhere in the realm of fiction. It was believed that during sexual intercourse between a male and a female that an independent part of their minds connected, merged, and together opened a door to the spirit realm. The spirit, itself an energetic wavelength, was attracted to the part energy, part signal part particle, produced by the ecstasy of their passion. It was pulled into the source of the energetic signal vortex and attached itself into a stream of unborn potential bodies (UPB). At this point the energy signature of the sperm cell acted as an anchor that it could fuse itself to, becoming a part of human physical reality (PR). Once in PR it could not fully return to the spirit realm (SR) until the death of the physical body and its release of energy. Once the anchoring signal stopped, the spirit was free to return to its higher level of vibration. The question they were experimenting with tonight was whether or not you could synthetically produce that anchoring signal and control the rate of vibration, causing a spirit to cross dimensions. They called it metaphysical or transphysical technology. Through it they hoped to find a way to transport souls to higher dimensions. Egreis was different. He wanted to use energy from the spirit realm to create whatever he wanted, even heaven and hell. And the question wasn't what would people pay for it. It was what wouldn't they pay. Regardless of what notions they may have had there were still investors that expected their pockets to get fatter. Whether it changed the world or not he didn't care.

The government was good for that. They had no qualms about paying people not to think too hard. When they did they just replaced them. Most of the time though it didn't matter. Most of the government's experiments were titanic failures. They didn't select the best people to be on the team. They selected who they could control. And even their selection of people to do the selections was third

rate at best. Jon understood the drive to seek knowledge but it had to come not only with a desire to do good and not evil as one man's good is another man's evil, but by the wisdom to understand the present as a balance between past and future and whether or not they could be responsible for the results. Even if most of these people didn't want something bad to come as a result they didn't care enough to think too much about it. They were going to be successful tonight, not in what they thought they were doing, but what they were being paid to do by accident by those who knew what the results would be.

```
fan = building.automation.subsystems.fans(floor, all); fan.speed = 0 (while fan.hack == true); if (room.temp > 90) fan.hack = false; if (fan.activate(#NOW, override(2271267)) fan.hack = true,, logout());
```

Jon recognized them from their photos. He moved his magnetically mounted camera around. There she was; the woman with the long red hair. He didn't know her name but he knew where she'd been and what she did. She was involved in genetic research that saw DNA as a wave of energy slowed down and crystalized into the chemical components that it attracted. When light hits an object part of the light is reflected and that's what the eye sees. The rest is absorbed and not seen. DNA was the same way. What was seen was what was absorbed by the matter it passed through which converted that matter to chemical substance merging with the host substance. For example, DNA absorbed into rock created bone. If she was here they were definitely at least 15 years beyond what the public thought of as genetic science. She didn't do regular genetic science anymore. She was too far ahead and couldn't go back. If curiosity killed the cat she still had about 4 lives left. John exhaled and the fan came on. Cool air started to blow over his face. It was what he was waiting for. The noise would help conceal his movement.

Bubbles rose inside the tank. The liquid inside was a botanical cocktail that was living cytoplasm. It was energized through an electrical conduit tuned to the same output levels as produced by the human body. Somewhere inside the cylindrical tank was a single biologically engineered cell. It wasn't difficult to test the energy output from different types of plants and animals and then turn the electrical current to that frequency. The cell still had to be modified to accept the energy but for now it did. The problem was that over time the cells kept dying and had to reproduce before that happened. And oddly enough they weren't dividing by mitosis. They were merging with nearby cells and then dividing into four. It was believed that the energy signature is what influenced the DNA to attract its four chemical components. The red haired woman had even produced 3 and 4 strand DNA by increasing the energy output and controlling the background radiation. Researchers were told that they would be the ones to discover how to extend the life of the cell. And if they could do that they could halt, even reverse the aging process. But the fountain of youth was just a tale to be told to those who weren't very bright and who had a lot of money to donate. What they were really trying to do was open the door.

The door to the lab opened and a figure tipped his glasses before shutting it again. A few minutes later new data was flooding several of the monitors. One of the scientists pressed a button and a container slid up from a hidden compartment near the tank. It was a geo-battery made of crystal. A lab assistant took the container and installed it into the top of the tank. They weren't saying anything but Jon knew what was going on. He was seeing a copy of their work on his holographic wrist computer. The 3 dimensional screen was created by directing light through a three dimensional semi-transparent object rather than a flat surface and causing particles to have an electro-magnetic radiation in the light spectrum.

Someone was initiating the synthetic signal to try to make this cell visible to the spirit world, a quantum signal that could be seen in quantum space, the space between the spaces of space. Now that the geo-battery was in place a new strand of DNA would be introduced. Sunlight. Or starlight. It wasn't simply visible energy. It was also believed to be a source of quantum signals. The rays from the sun contained information that blazed around the universe at light speed, jumping the gaps of space like thoughts jumping from synapse to synapse. Using what they knew about quantum physics, biology, and chemistry, they would take the resulting DNA produced from a mixture of light and sound and the pre-existing DNA of the synthesized cell and wait. If they were wrong nothing would happen. If they were right the DNA would mutate. These mutations weren't random and they weren't alien. One man had termed these signals the thoughts of God. That was how Jon was able to find out about what was going on. Riuylln was the one who said it and right now he was trying to decode the compiled DNA, reverse engineering it into a logical pattern and then... a systematic language. He wanted to know the mind of God and didn't understand the consequences.

Riuylln's eyes were wide, unblinking, possessed. The lights suddenly blinked out. Miscellaneous sounds, whispers, gasps. Then a shriek, a moan, a gulp, curdling cry, agonizing scream cut off midway. "What's going on? What's happening?" A scientist falls down, tries to get up but can't. Then blood. His, spilling out of his neck. Jon blinked in code. Suddenly his contacts went night-vision. He could see Riuylln standing there completely still, eyes open. Then a shadow out of the corner of his left eye. A gust of wind blew past him. A reddish smoke rises from the floor. Time to get what he came here for. He jammed a magnetic device onto the side of Riuylln's station. A hand grabbed his shoulder. He jumped from surprise but turned suddenly fast enough to see one of the uniformed guards, eyes rolled up in his head, falling onto him. In the fall he accidentally knocked Riuylln down. He was stiff like a mummified corpse. Then more blood. As he got up he saw what Riuylln was looking at. He saw it. The source code. The mind of God. He blinked. He was still in control of his mind but he suddenly felt trapped within his own body. The link. The bond between his spirit and his body had been shaken. He blinked. After a moment he was surrounded by the sound of heavy breathing. He fought hard to regain control. Jon's brain waves changed so quickly between beta and theta that he was neither awake nor sleep, neither in control or not. Something inside him was being re-written. He ducked just as the tank

behind him shattered from a blow he couldn't see but was sure would have ripped his head off. As he scrambled he saw the door closed. Someone had made it out. The light behind the door quickly disappeared, faded to red.

ZEALOT X PREVIEW

Valkyre - 10 years, 2 months, 3 weeks, and 4 days later.

The air around the Valkyre Military Academy smelled like summer. The early morning pollen shower struck fear into all the allergic students. Pollen wasn't the same stuff anymore. Thanks to multi-billion dollar pesticide corporations it was more like napalm. Hunter, a long haired Asian teen pulled his blanket over his head as the alarm clock went off. Nathaniel was already up. He sat Indian style on top of his already made bed with his head buried in a thick combat methods book. The room was decidedly grayscale, all function no form. Nathaniel had one picture of his sister who he had to raise alone after his mother ran off after some younger man. After ten seconds of his roommate making no attempts to come to his rescue, Hunter's hand poked out from under the blanket and began blindly probing for the snooze button which seemed like it was able to move to avoid being pressed. Or maybe it was only his sleepy fingers groping as if the dreadful device had a bra strap. Finding nothing but the drawer knob, he sat up. "Why don't you go back to sleep? You don't have class for another five minutes. Not to mention you could really use the extra beauty sleep," Nathaniel said, eyes never leaving the page. "Question. Why is it that I'm the one just waking up and yet you're the one with the morning breath?" said Hunter. "It's like an amorphous cloud of noxious gas trying to strangle me." He pressed a button on the alarm clock, putting an end to its shrieking. Nathaniel cracked a weak smile as he stopped to turn the page. "Huh?" Nathaniel hadn't heard him. It wasn't as if he was talking under his breath. He just wasn't paying attention. "Never mind," said Hunter. "You got a test this morning or something?" "Nah," Nathaniel said softly. Whatever, he thought. He didn't have time for early morning conversation anyway.

After a minute of admiring his own face in the mirror he went to work on getting ready for class. As soon as the automated door lock clicked he remembered he wasn't carrying any books. As soon as the door opened again, several objects hurled through the air almost hitting him in the face. It was a close call but he caught them all in time; his books. His roommate had the memory of an elephant and even though he wasn't paying attention he knew Hunter's behavior patterns enough to know that he had left unprepared. After all, he was a creature of habit. "I don't know whether to thank you or throw these back," said Hunter. "It's a thin line between love and hate, or so they say." It was more than that. Nate knew Hunter could catch them and liked doing things to test his cat-like reflexes.

Hunter arrived in front of the door of his first class. Some of the kids called it church because of its effective ability to induce sleep better than a pill. It was an early morning history class and the instructor looked older than half of the men he taught about. He was one of the few civilian instructors at the academy. Much of what went on was strictly classified so few civilians were allowed to work here. Hunter turned the knob slowly using the stealth techniques he had learned from his ninjutsu training. He was the only one who had mastered the class yet the ninjutsu instructor had no knowledge of who he was. It was the same thing with all of his combat training. He was the only student on campus who had knowledge directly downloaded into his brain. As the door inched opened Hunter's eye's met those of everyone else in class. Alderin Thompson, the fifty-seven year old instructor, pulled the door open the rest of the way which almost made Hunter fall over the threshold. "Where's your pass, Mr. Hunter?" Mr. Thompson said. Hunter knew how much he hated to be interrupted in the middle of one of his stories. Hunter pulled a slip of paper from his history book. It came from a pouch in the back cover that usually held an interactive disk. Crystal matrices were better at data storage but discs were still the best when the medium had to be two dimensional. "Got it right here." "You don't have a bunch of those in there, do you?" Hunter closed the book just as Mr. Thompson leaned in a little to get a better view. "Never mind. This is signed and dated anyway so have a seat. I was just in the middle of telling the class how I led my hyper dodge ball team to the final four." Hunter didn't know what was worse, going to history without his usual caffeine rush or hearing a story he had already heard twice before. As the story was told, Hunter's mind wandered until suddenly he was laying face up on a table with shadows hovering over him. He felt something cold all throughout his body. It felt like inside of his body was any icy indoor pool and he could feel something swimming there. He couldn't even blink his eyes but he heard and felt everything that was going on.

"Core module is green for insertion. All five processors are running synchronously with his biological systems." "You are positive there is little chance for infection? We cannot afford any complications." "Yes I know. Everything is fine. I tested the assembly code on each and every subsystem myself. I am going to suggest; however, that we upgrade his RNA RAM by another twenty terabytes to handle the extra instruction sets." "Dr. Simmons, are you saying that you can give individual instructions to each of the nanomachines now?" "Yes. We are sending the data in binary burst packets routing the data streams through the nervous system." "Wouldn't commanding a legion of nanoscopic machines slow his brain down?" "What we are going to do is build neural pathways that will shorten the amount of thought that will be required to execute a command. The command will be sent to the module for processing where it will be broken down and tasks assigned to the nanomachines based on their proximity to the target location within the body." "What do the other investors think about this?" "They think in terms of money which is completely based on results and earnings speculation. They are too anxious for its completion." "So doctors, this is the production model? I was expecting something else. I'm sorry. I heard some rumors which is part of my reason for being here today. Isn't there another model?" "Well actually the prototype was lost by Cybertronics. There was a minor

mishap. The prototype had no control module. He had direct access to his nanomachine units. His brain malfunctioned under the extreme output. There was nothing we could do. By the time we got there, it had flat lined." "It?" "It was more machine than man, you see. Please excuse me. It's easier for us to work if we don't think of our products as human beings." "I see." "This one has a central processing control module with a two-way pipeline from the module to the brain so his senses are enhanced by sensors. We refer to him as the advanced model." Those last words echoed in his mind; advanced model. The light pouring through the windows began to reawaken his mind to the outside world where once again he was the center of attention. "So? Are you even listening to me? I was asking you a question. I don't think the lady in front of you has the answer written on her bottom." "Maybe not to your question, sir." The class laughed as the girl turned around frowning and blushing all at the same time. She was embarrassed but pleased by the feeling that the shallow attentions of her classmates would, at least briefly, regard her as a sexual object. However in fifteen years she would learn to dispise men for the same thing. The bell rang as the laughter immediately turned into motion. "Can I see you after class, Michael?" asked the teacher. He nodded. He hated hearing his first name. It was enough he had to write it on all his papers. As far as he was concerned he hated the man he was named after and wanted no part of him; not even his name. It belonged to his father. He was a devoted catholic but an abusive husband and an almost non-existent father. Everyone else left while Hunter stayed in his seat. "Today is registration so I won't keep you long. I have specific instructions from your doctors to excuse your tardiness, your absences, and I'm even supposed to excuse you from over fifty percent of the homework I assign. I have no instructions; however, to tolerate bad behavior from you. You are an amazing student. You score higher than any kid I have ever taught, but I can't allow you to disrupt other students who don't have your learning ability. If I was your legal guardian I'd drug you up with behavior mods. You're free to go, but I don't want to have to talk to you about this anymore." "I got it, Mr. Thompson. For what it's worth, I'm sorry." "Alright, just don't make a habit of it." His head doctor wanted to see him. She was a beautiful woman with long red hair. She was the best looking nerd he ever thought he would see. The academy was a smaller version of the Shadow Ridge base. All the buildings were arranged in a multi-layered circle around the courtyard with the outer buildings taller than the inner. It was arranged that way to protect the inner-most buildings which included the administration building, the medical facility, the control center, and the barracks. The sideways arches made the archetecture especially tough. Several kids were playing in the courtyard's fountain. Their parents were here to register their older siblings. Many of them were glad to get away from home, but most of them were upset they couldn't go to public school like 'normal' kids. Hunter out-ranked them and most of the other students as well. The whole military ranking system was used to motivate students through healthy competition. It worked to some degree, but there were always students who didn't care about rank and made fun of the students who did. Maria was sitting on the rail, waiting outside of the medical building. She motioned for Hunter to come with her finger. Hunter searched the crowd as he walked over to his head doctor. "We have a meeting to go to this morning. You could have another surgical procedure this afternoon." "Why?" "I told you to stop

asking that. These things must be done," she said as she got off the rail and started towards the administration building. Hunter followed closely behind. Today, something in her voice reminded him of his mother which could only mean one thing. Something was bothering her greatly but she couldn't talk about it. That made him uneasy. She hadn't said what this meeting was about so it probably had something to do with whatever was bothering her. He jogged in front of her for a second to open the door for her. "Thank you," she said with a weak smile. She glanced at her watch as she walked inside the lobby. It was crowded. The new students stared as they walked past. This was the first time in a very long time Hunter had felt out of place in his uniform. It was worn so often, it was never thought of as odd or irregular. Military academies like this one that went from grades one to twenty meant that they would be on top of the list for all post grad scouts and top paying careers. Their training was highly sought after but it wasn't just that. Every college and every business received a rating based on their performance and patriotism. This rating system was started by Dr. Charles Bonai and it bore his name as the Bonai rating. The higher the rating was for a business or institution the easier it was for them to do business. The top 10 companies on the Bonai scale were also the top grossing companies in the world. The administrative building looked nothing like the others. From thousand credit paintings and sculptures to the chandeliers overlooking the glossy marble floors and embroidered carpet, it looked more like a high-priced hotel than a military installation. The elevator door opened and a couple officers greeted Maria whose real name was Kora and Hunter whose real name was first just a label on a test tube. "Maria Dellar?" "Yes." Maria pulled Hunter into the elevator. One of the officers pushed the button for the fifth floor. Hunter looked at their reflections on the elevator doors in front of them as they closed, not saying a word. The doors opened again and the two officers walked out in front. There were two guards posted outside of the conference room. They grabbed one handle each and pulled the doors wide open revealing a large smoky room filled with people. Of those in attendance were General Titus, Admiral Reginald Duke, the once retired Maxwell Stone, an ambassador to the Black Pyramid Zenaga Dorant, Shadow Ridge executives William Chin and Erica Knight. Standing recipients of the second hand smoke were mostly doctors from the academy and Shadow Ridge: Anthony Biggs, Erin Starkov, John Lewis, Steven Ho, Samuel Chang, Stewart Mitchell, and chief surgeon Jean Paul DeMarco. There were two free seats at the table. As Maria Dellar and Michael Hunter took the two seats, the doors shut and the room grew quiet. "It's good to finally meet you, Michael. Do you know who I am?" "General Titus, I presume; evident by the rank on your uniform, sir." "Yes, and I am here with some friends of mine who wanted to see you." "What we want is to prepare you," said Admiral Duke. "Prepare me for what exactly, sir?" General Titus answered for the admiral. "I wasn't going to get into that yet. What I'd like to do first is just see how you are doing. You are a big investment. Some of these people here have contributed small fortunes to making you into the most dangerous weapon in our arsenal." "Excuse me?" "General, we told him it was to cure his disease," coughed a doctor. "What?! Look here son, this project may have started as a means to save your life but now it's much more than that as you are about to find out. Admiral Duke?" The Admiral turned slightly in his chair. "Since your biological enhancements are working so well with

your body the government has decided that those enhancements will be modified and enhanced to serve your country. This will be payment for all the hardware that's been keeping you alive. Two point three trillion credits in research and development is no laughing matter. The government wants to see its investment pay off and that's what we are going to do. All of us here were involved with either the design and development, or the financing of this project and everything that went into it." "The government decided?" Hunter questioned. "I never wanted to say this to any one, son, but you are officially property of the United World government. All you need now is a U.W. mint stamp on your ass." "What is this, Dr. Dellar?" asked Hunter. "I'm sorry. I didn't want you to find out like this." "Was I ever even sick?" "Don't be ridiculous," remarked Titus. "Of course you are. You may have been lied to in the past but it was for your protection. I'm sure of it. Now I'm not going to yank you any further. Show him the video," said General Titus. "There is only one job you will have to do. You will be trained and given more combat offensive components and upgrades. Your training will be supervised by that man there, Maxwell Stone. He was a war hero and highly qualified. He'll be taking over as the President of this institution." "Excuse me, sir, but what is the job?" asked Hunter. "Naturally. Roll the clip." Admiral Duke cleared his throat. "This is raw footage of a war unlike anything you have ever seen before. This war was very quiet and left little evidence. A hundred and fifty bodies were recovered, killed by one man. All the coroners say the cause of death of all was the same thing. They all had large lacerations or severed limbs as result of at least two different types of unknown metal, very dense but possibly lighter than air since they can't comprehend how any man could be that strong based on the forensics." "That's impossible." "It should have been impossible but as you can see, one hundred fifty men lost their lives at the hand of one lone swordsman. We want you to kill this man. You kill this man and you are free to do whatever you want for the rest of your life. Back in the first official year of the new millennium over a thousand people died in a single attack. Terrorism became the threat of the new millennium. It was a war that we didn't know how to fight. That was the beginning of the surveillance society. They were hidden and we were exposed so we instituted the Anti-terror Guardian Agency, the A.G.A. The A.G.A acted as a central intelligence command unit that controlled and operated commando units that went after the terrorist cells. Congress voted that this wasn't enough after more disasters happened. That's how we ended up with the global satellite sweeps and bio-chips. We have computers linked to every surveillance camera in the world. We have files on everybody: who they are, where they go, what they do, and even what shade of yellow their piss is. That's how you fight terrorism, boy. Face recognition stops them before they can even buy food. Believe me, my father didn't vote for these changes without a lot of thought and consideration. He didn't want to take freedom away from everyone in order to find less than one percent of the world's population. But then hackers came along and changed the game once again. Every time we evolve the military to solve a threat a new one appears, more sophisticated than the last, causing us to evolve just to keep up. I don't know if we're trying to keep up with them or if it's them simply trying to keep up with us. Suddenly, a two man team could disrupt and entire economy. Your target is possibly the smartest, craftiest, skilled terrorist we have ever seen. He's believed to be aided by a first class elite

hacker. He's an expert martial artist and samurai swordsman. We have obtained battle data that when loaded into you will allow you to fight like him." "Maneuvers which are grossly superior to our own. He's either undergone years of elite training or he's like you," said Titus. "Hunter, you are the only one that can stop him." "Why can't you just shoot him?" asked Hunter. "Zenaga?" "For centuries, mankind has relied on guns to kill and protect. This man has been trained to kill with a weapon that will never jam, never run out of ammo, never make more than a whisper, and never miss. He's a hunter that only comes out at night. He can vanish into a shadow. He can stalk his prey like a sniper. He hears a shot and he's gone. He has no reason to fight our defense forces so we have no way to draw him out into the open or mobilize troops. You play by his rules or you don't play at all. Of course there were times when our men were able to get clean shots off but even with computer assisted targeting no one has been able to hit him. We've closed in with fully automatic weapons only to have them shooting at phantom images until he could get close enough to decapitate them. "He sounds like some kind of ninja," said Hunter, thinking out loud more than anything else. "What did Asia Command have to say?" "They claim he's not one of theirs. The Triad doesn't know. The Mafia doesn't know. No one's saying anything except to point fingers at someone else." "My people studied his movements and have determined that he can only be killed by someone powerful like himself; like you."

"His powers are inhuman. He fights as if possessed by a demon," said Zenaga. "Maybe he is," said Stone. "You can't be serious." Hunter looked at Maria but she looked away. "We've got Cooper, one of our top intelligence agents, working in the area you see here right now. We believe some Xtians are in league with the devil and practice all kinds of black magic and that voodoo witchcraft stuff. Demon possession has always been a theory when an Xtian manages to take down seasoned troops. We only truly know what we've seen, which isn't much." "One question," said Hunter. "Do I get a light saber?" "It's time to get serious, son. This is a real threat." "I'm sorry, sir. So let me get this straight. You want me to kill a man who looked like he was flying vertically in his video clip and who you don't think can be killed by a regular human being. Do you even know his name?" "Yes. He's calling himself Zealot X."

1 Week later. A cold frosty night under a blanket of stars. The city of NeoEden was also called the city of dancing lights because of the movement of all of its holographic displays. There was even a ceiling necessitated by intense solar radiation. You couldn't walk out from under it without instantly getting skin cancer. Fortunately the ceiling stretched far and wide and was being added to daily. As the ceiling spread, with its built in UV protection, grass, trees, and animals were able to spread out as well. And every now and then everyone looked up because some mega corporation had managed to purchase an advertisement to display on the ceiling so that everyone could see it. Populated by 15.5 million people, absolutely the most technologically advanced city on the planet was home to the largest industries: electro-mag vehicles, electro-mag weapons, microbial robots, nanobots, ... Entire buildings were remotely operated over the internet just to have a presence here. NeoEden got its name because of the huge "forest" of vertical farms powered by the Raey Laser Tower. In each tower a column contained a

highly controlled pillar of dirt. Roots grew around a porous mesh webbing that delivered water, vitamins, and minerals to the soil. The tops of the buildings allowed water to come in and filtered out any undesirable pollutants. Each of these towering buildings had greenery growing out of its sides as the construction made no attempt to halt growth, but the 'petals' of the buildings were solar petals used to catch sunlight while the Raey Lazer tower received microwave energy from a solar power generation station in space. After converting it into tightly compacted and aimed microwaves for fast transmission to the planet surface, The Raey then distributed the energy into the utility Layer where all the 'wires' were hidden. Most of these wires were simply thick tunnels with 'energy pushers' creating segments. This was born out of a new field of science called Smart Energy. In Smart Energy, power and data were combined so that power was sent in burst packets with a data header that told the energy pushers, the circular walls of receptors and emitters, where the power had come from, and where it was going. When someone's home was running out of power, the large battery array sent an electronic request for power. As soon as the request was received the account was debited and a burst of energy was instantly delivered, charging up the home battery which wouldn't run out for about 13 days.

The Raey started as a power lazer array that was used to absorb and intensify solar rays and use them as a planetary defense weapon. The lazer had an intensity rating so high that it was believed that if a person tried to touch the lazer their finger would vanish and be 3 galaxies away before they realized the slighted heat. Finding work was always based on what program you chose in school. Degrees were abandoned for a new system of specializations. Each science had its own specializations and those unfortunates who had none had no choice but to service the bots and machines that did most of the labor and take jobs that required interpersonal relationships. Whatever novelty there was in having android receptionists and customer caregivers quickly wore off and the waste management system flooded with the bodies of over a hundred thousand slaved androids meant to take the place of a human. Humans absolutely hated talking to a simulated version of themselves. It was totally inauthentic and a waste of time to explain to a machine what they meant when they said things their personality chips didn't recognize. The best ones were made by only a handful of companies that claimed to be able to synthetically produce real emotions. They combined these different personality trait chips together like computer enthusiasts would build their own computers out of parts. Most of the best chips weren't even compatible and it would cause the droid to constantly shut down while a blue error screen complained false warnings about memory leakage or contamination. Most people here had high paying jobs as they exported their technology to the rest of the world. Those who didn't were left behind and often turned to criminal activity in order to make enough money to buy a regular car with rubber wheels that was four to five times the price of a magCar that was made to run only on magnetic streets and auto-stack garages.

Competition between the haves and have nots was rough. But the rich competed so furiously with each other for ultimate supremacy that they made special jobs that poor people regularly trained. Hacking was the hardest to do, but the most attempted because it had the biggest payoff. Rich people were too afraid to get caught hacking so they always paid others to do it for them. In some places it was much more organized and bosses were paid in order to control handlers who were the ones who actually contacted hackers. This also was structured in order to protect the rich from the hackers they employed. When things went south they called NetHunter, the most brutal but legitimate company, at least on paper. They provided security, not hacking, at least on paper. Even though the ceo was rumored to be a Legendary Hacker that was mostly just to scare hackers into believing they were outmatched. His real reputation as "Vader" was made by what he did when he caught hackers. Hackers weren't supposed to exist. Their job was highly illegal since it breached international security laws even if you were just hacking free donuts. So there was no system that gave hackers any protection. And thus, when they were apprehended by NetHunter, the company simply had no record of ever killing anybody by the hacker alias whatever because that person didn't really exist. They were just a false name created by some gamer trying to impress girls. Every war attempted by hackers against NetHunter always ended in a trail of dead bodies. NetHunter always won ...at least on paper.

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X:> console.exe?login=master weaksecurity = sector(this).security.subsystems;
weaksecurity.satellitescan = rescheduled(#NOW+1.5 hr); weaksecurity.speedlimit = 333MPH;
weaksecurity.audio.microphones(all).off(3); weaksecurity.audio.microphone(1273x340).on(save to:
#trashfile) >> (conv mode) activate on voice: female, stop recording, reset;
weaksecurity.audio.remotemanager.disabled; weaksecurity.video.cameras(all).delete(all,
#NOW+1.5hr); logout();
```

"Yeah, what do you want?" lips moving; a black device in his ear. She walked up slow, looking over her left shoulder as she approached. No one knew her name, but her call sign was Angel. She wasn't a hacker, but like other hardware tech's she too had been caught up in the war. In her case, her company was bought out by NetHunter. They made virtual reality interface equipment, thought projection equipment worn on the head, interactive holographic control kits, etc. But eight months after the buyout in which Vader somehow managed to buy up all 100% of the company's stock, she was somehow engaged to his son, the fearsome HellWalker. What other name could the son of Vader have? They were an odd pair but Angel had more than a little edge to her personality. Angel was an almost ironic moniker. "Red Dawn. What do you know of it?" she wore dark glasses more for their functionality than for their style. She was monitoring his heart rate and heat signature in the right lense. "The same thing that every other hacker knows. There was an incident. It happened at a military academy called Order. They were doing some kind of experiment, using the most high level research, believed to be government funded but rumored by some legendary hacker to have been conducted by the Church. Some red gas escaped, killed a bunch of people but was rumored to have acted as an

extreme psychotropic hallucinogen, probably to aid in a coverup since whatever the survivors saw no one could believe with any degree of certainty. Everyone has their own story about what happened, how and why. The rest is fairy tale used to scare hackers. They... these scientists... accidentally opened Pandora's box and saw the source code. And they all ended up dead. Except one." "Except two." "It's a legend. It doesn't matter. What matters is that the source is forbidden fruit, protected by daemons." "I didn't know you were of the faith," she said in jest. He wasn't in the mood for it though and gave a disinterested look. "I'm not. There's just no better words to describe what happened." "But you called it a fairytale." "It is. And you can tell your client that too. And that he or she shouldn't waste their time chasing fanciful stories." "My client is the kind that likes stories. Here's a few hundred credits. For your time." "What's this for? I didn't tell you anything." "Oh, didn't I mention that I was followed? Black magCar. Very expensive by the look of it." "No, but it would have been nice if you had. My boss likes things tidy... neat. He's the kind that likes his business clean; no dirty laundry, no paper trails. And he doesn't like stories. If I have to tell him a story about how you were followed he won't like that." "No, I suspect not." "Then who's in the magcar. I'm sure you know who it is. You're always so careful." "It's someone who thinks you're telling me everything you know." "But why would I do that?" "Because I told him that I knew your secret." "You wouldn't." He looked her over, studying her face; the subtle contours that told him she was serious. "Fine. Tell your client to meet me at the reggae party tonight at the Island, downtown. It's in club district 12." "I know where it is. I'll send the coordinates right over. I'm sure he will be pleased to meet you. He called you an important puzzle piece." "Whatever. Just make sure he comes alone."