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THE REDUNDANCY MACHINE PART 2 – THE CONFERENCE ROOM OCCUPANCY
DIVISION
by
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If you, dear reader, believe that one department’s quirks are surely an isolated case, prepare yourself for a revelation. In the labyrinth of TranSys Global, each new role can bring fresh absurdities. Or, in Noah Barrow’s case, the same absurdities gift-wrapped in a different shade of corporate wallpaper.

The “Opportunity” Called CROD

On Monday morning, Noah Barrow arrived at his newly assigned post: the **Conference Room Occupancy Division**, a place cheerfully abbreviated as CROD. The office door bore a plaque reading, “*Facilitating Productive Spaces for All*,” which sounded to Noah like an improvement over re-scanning documents. He knocked politely, stepping into a room filled with wall-sized digital displays.

“Ah, Mr. Barrow—welcome!” exclaimed a jittery man with neatly parted hair. “I’m Wesley Ong, CROD’s supervisor. Delighted to have a fresh pair of hands.”

Wesley ushered him toward the displays, each labeled with a different conference room number. Glowing bars tracked the “reliability rating,” while tiny icons indicated occupant names—or sometimes purely fictitious placeholders. A blur of pings and dings reported new bookings, cancellations, and requests for coffee service.

“You see,” Wesley explained, tapping swiftly on his tablet, “we maintain *constant* room utilization. If a conference room sits idle, we risk a drop in reliability metrics. So, we fill every minute with actual or placeholder meetings to show we’re keeping busy.”

Noah raised an eyebrow. “So... if there’s no real meeting scheduled, we book a fake one?”

“Precisely,” Wesley confirmed. “It’s a proven system.”

In some universes, dear reader, “proven system” translates to “logical, well-tested process.” In the universe of TranSys Global, however, it often means “method of dubious necessity that is quietly revered as tradition.”

Settling In—With a Twist

Noah set up shop at an open desk facing one of the massive displays. His task was straightforward: **never let a conference room go empty.** He had to create phantom meetings, assign random employees, and occasionally rename events to sound important.

By noon, the building’s forty conference rooms were all “occupied,” at least on paper. Or digital display. Noah couldn’t help noticing how often real teams were bumped or shuffled to

maintain the illusion. Colleagues marched from floor to floor, perplexed by double bookings and phantom conferences.

If you, dear reader, have ever tried to attend a meeting only to find the room unexpectedly taken, you might blame poor communication. Here at CROD, it is a feature, not a bug.

Wesley, however, seemed genuinely proud. “Look at those charts, Barrow! Ninety-six percent utilization. That’s the highest we’ve seen in weeks!” He offered a hearty clap on Noah’s shoulder.

“Great,” Noah managed, though his thoughts whirled with ideas about a dynamic scheduling program that could prioritize real meetings over phantom ones. He made a mental note to explore it—*discreetly*—after his experience at the Paper Trail Department.

The Politics of Meeting Rooms

In the following days, Noah discovered that conference-room oversight was a hotbed of office politics. High-level managers demanded prime times and plush rooms to project authority. Lower-level staff scrambled for leftovers. Favors were traded like currency—control over meeting room assignments apparently gave you social power at TranSys.

Noah tried to follow protocol and keep everyone happy, but inevitably he stepped on toes. One evening, he unknowingly scheduled a junior intern’s meeting in the top-floor “Panoramic Suite,” typically reserved for vice presidents. The intern enjoyed a stunning view of the city,

while the VP in question was forced to hold a strategy session in a windowless cubicle on the third floor.

Wesley's face paled when he discovered the mistake. "We can't upset the higher-ups, Barrow! That's how you end up on Ms. Greene's radar," he hissed, referencing the formidable figure who'd orchestrated Noah's last "transfer."

Dear reader, one might suspect that a building filled with intelligent, well-educated professionals could sort out its own meeting schedules. But where the *Reliability Machine* fosters perpetual busyness, inefficiency becomes an art form—delicate, intricate, and steadfastly guarded against improvement.

Noah's Tinkering

Despite his caution, Noah couldn't resist a little experimentation. After-hours, when the office quieted, he started drafting a basic algorithm on his laptop. It would gather real booking requests, cross-reference them with the building's schedule, and insert phantom meetings only when absolutely necessary. In theory, that would reduce confusion and keep the utilization rating high.

One night, Wesley caught a glimpse of the code. "What's that?" he asked, eyes narrow with curiosity or perhaps concern.

Noah hesitated. He remembered too well how Ms. Greene had reacted to his automation attempt at the Paper Trail Department. "It's... just a scheduling helper," he said lightly. "I

thought maybe it could ease the load on us. We'd avoid double bookings, keep real meetings in prime slots, and keep placeholders for downtime."

Wesley considered. "It's... intriguing. But if the *Reliability Machine* sees fewer placeholders, might it think we're less busy?"

Noah suppressed a groan. "If it tracks actual usage, maybe not. We'd still fill the rooms whenever no one else needed them."

Wesley glanced around to ensure they were alone. "We'll keep this under wraps for now. I don't want Ms. Greene—or half the department—panicking about changes." He paused, dropping his voice. "I like what you're doing, but be careful. We've never messed with the official system before."

Why, dear reader, would anyone be alarmed at the prospect of making work more sensible? Because in this curious ecosystem, undermining a carefully maintained pretense can invite unwanted scrutiny. Sometimes, it's better to smile, nod, and pretend everything is exactly as it should be—even if it's patently absurd.

Hints of Trouble

In his first week at CROD, Noah excelled at juggling schedules, placeholders, and real meetings. At least, he looked busy doing so—enough to keep up appearances. A few colleagues whispered that he was "overly ambitious." Rumors abounded about his so-called "secret script."

During a routine coffee break, a coworker named Bianca cornered him near the vending machine. "I hear you're trying to automate something," she said, voice low.

Noah gulped. “It’s just a tool to make scheduling smoother.”

Bianca tapped her ID badge nervously. “Don’t let it land you in trouble. CROD thrives on the complexity. If it goes away, we all look... unnecessary.”

He wanted to argue, to point out that if the system truly needed them, it could handle *efficient* scheduling. But he bit his tongue, recalling how good intentions had played out in his last role.

You might, dear reader, question how a building so devoted to “reliability” can tolerate this ongoing chaos. It is a fair question indeed, though not one Noah is likely to see answered anytime soon.

Evening Reflections

One evening, Noah lingered after most of his coworkers had gone. The digital displays for each conference room showed a patchwork of fictional and genuine meetings extending far into the night—each room booked to maintain immaculate numbers for the Reliability Machine. The hush of the now-deserted floor gave Noah space to think. *Does any of this truly matter?* he wondered.

He glanced at his half-finished scheduling algorithm. If he deployed it, maybe fewer people would end up in the wrong rooms, fewer arguments would flare over timeslots. Everyone would benefit. Yet a twinge of dread reminded him: “benefit” at TranSys sometimes means *disruption*, and “disruption” is a dangerous prospect in a culture built on illusions.

If you feel a sense of foreboding creeping over this otherwise humdrum corporate tale, dear reader, you are not alone. Noah, too, sensed the edges of a mystery, though he could not quite grasp its shape.

Gathering his resolve, he shut down his computer for the night. He promised himself he wouldn't push too hard, too fast—but deep down, he couldn't shake the notion that the CROD's chaotic approach to “busy” conference rooms was a symptom of something bigger. Something that might not be about “reliability” at all.

In the elevator ride down, the neon ads for TranSys's many departments flickered overhead. *Where are we, exactly?* Noah mused. *And what is this “Reliability Machine” really aiming for?*

As the doors opened into the dimly lit lobby, he resolved to keep questioning. Because if no one else would, *someone* had to. And despite every cautionary tale from Ms. Greene's steely glare, he couldn't let go of the hope that real progress might still be possible—even here.

Of course, dear reader, hope is a stubborn weed. It can flourish between the cracks of the most sterile corporate floors, and sometimes it leads people to do bold things. In Noah's case, it might also lead him further down a path of complicated consequences indeed.