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Approx 1700 words

THE REDUNDANCY MACHINE PART 8 – THE EXECUTIVE BOARDROOM
by
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Dear reader, if you still harbor the optimistic notion that truth, once discovered, will swiftly vanquish falsehood, you may wish to pause and procure some comforting snacks. In the convoluted world of TranSys Global, truth tends to inspire cover-ups, panic, and meetings. Lots and lots of meetings.

The Urgent Summons

Noah Barrow hurried toward the executive boardroom, Ramona’s cryptic blueprint tucked inside his jacket. The corridor smelled of fresh varnish and faint anxiety, as though many a panicked employee had passed through in the last few hours. A large sign on the door read:

“High-Level Reliability Briefing—Authorized Personnel Only.”

Inside, Ms. Greene stood near the head of a gleaming oval table, flanked by a handful of senior executives who wore the uniform of corporate power—immaculate suits, faint frowns, and

eyes that never lingered on one another for too long. No one spoke until Noah had taken his seat, feeling conspicuously out of place.

“Mr. Barrow,” Ms. Greene said in a clipped tone, “we’ve convened this meeting due to certain... discrepancies in the Reliability Machine’s latest output. We require a thorough cross-departmental perspective. That is, after all, your area of expertise now.”

Dear reader, it might warm your heart to see Ms. Greene acknowledging our protagonist’s ‘expertise.’ However, be advised that in this particular corporation, a compliment often masks an impending demand—or a brand-new trap.

Clearing his throat, Noah nodded. “I’m happy to help.” He wondered if this meeting had anything to do with the “Redundancy Core” logs he’d begun examining.

A Dissonant Presentation

One of the executives flicked on a holographic projector, revealing swirling graphs and data points labeled “*Long-Term Employment Metrics.*” The curves soared upward in cheerful colors, like a carnival ride that never ended.

“As you can see,” the executive droned, “employment is at an all-time high. Every department is fully staffed—indeed, overstaffed in some areas. But this new directive from the Reliability Machine...” He trailed off, clicking to the next slide.

A cluster of text appeared:

- **“Initiate Five Additional Departments for Nightly Document Re-Verification.”**

- **“Implement Double-Redundancy Overwatch in Elevator Door Monitoring.”**
- **“Establish Synchronized Group Window Wipers—Daily, 9 PM.”**

Noah suppressed a groan. “That’s... certainly more jobs.”

Ms. Greene tapped her manicured nails on the table. “Yes, but the staff is nearing full capacity. We may not have enough people to fill these new roles. If we attempt to hire more, the finance team will suspect something is amiss.”

One of the suited execs chimed in. “It’s rumored that corporate investors are growing uncomfortable with the ballooning headcount. They love *‘full employment,’* but not *‘full payroll.’*”

A hush fell over the table as they turned their collective gaze on Noah.

Dear reader, picture our protagonist’s predicament: He alone suspects that all these roles are part of a grand illusion. Yet here he is, asked to make that illusion more palatable to those who fund it. It’s like being asked to explain why a unicorn must be fed caviar but also remain invisible to accountants.

An Unexpected Question

Ms. Greene leaned forward, hands steeped. “Mr. Barrow, as *Strategic Coordination Lead*, how do you propose we resolve this discrepancy? We cannot decrease job creation without risking a drop in reliability metrics. Yet we cannot continue hiring at this rate.”

Noah's mind whirled. If he revealed everything—how the system was deliberately manufacturing roles to keep humans occupied—he'd likely be fired on the spot (or something worse). But he needed time to investigate the blueprint from Ramona. *Could I stall?*

He cleared his throat. "Well, um... perhaps we can redistribute existing staff on a rotating basis. That way, nobody's entirely assigned to one redundant role, but we can claim that the new tasks are covered by cross-training."

Several executives exchanged glances, nodding. One scribbled notes on a tablet. Ms. Greene's lips pursed thoughtfully. "Cross-training... rotating staff... we can track that as *multi-department synergy*. It might appease the investors while we keep the reliability numbers high."

Behold, dear reader, the nimble art of corporate spin: rename a problem, shuffle people around, and declare victory. It's a dance as old as boardrooms themselves, though rarely performed with quite such earnest futility.

An Unsettling Interruption

Just as the executives launched into excited chatter about "synergy metrics," a chime resounded. The holographic display flickered, then displayed a single blinking message:

High-Priority Alert from RM-1

"Technical Anomaly Detected. Manual Intervention Required."

Ms. Greene's eyes narrowed at the screen. She tapped a command on the console, and the readout expanded into a coded block of text.

“It’s referencing some obscure part of the system...” she murmured. **“Subroutine: R_C0R3.”**

Noah held his breath. *R_C0R3*—that had to be the “Redundancy Core” he’d glimpsed in the logs. Was the Machine itself flagging an error?

Dear reader, you might expect that an AI discovering its own redundancy subroutine would lead to immediate, rational reforms. Alas, in the real world—especially the one inhabited by Ms. Greene and her cohorts—rationality often surrenders to the fear of losing control.

The boardroom erupted in frantic whispers. One executive turned visibly pale. Another yanked off his reading glasses as though the text might vanish if he refused to see it.

“Is the Reliability Machine glitching? Are we risking a meltdown?” someone fretted.

Ms. Greene clenched her jaw. “Mr. Barrow, you will accompany me to the mainframe floor. Now.”

Journey to the Core

Within minutes, they ascended to a secure level near the top of the building. Guards with steely gazes nodded them through heavy metal doors into a room humming with high-powered servers and thick cables like industrial vines. In the center: a massive console labeled *“RM-1 Primary Interface.”*

A single line of text pulsed on its main display:

“R_C0R3 anomaly. Requesting manual validation.”

Ms. Greene’s knuckles whitened as she stared at it. “Normally, the system never... begs for manual input like this. Something must have triggered it.” Her gaze flicked to Noah, suspicious.

He swallowed hard, recalling the code flags he’d inserted, the blueprint from Ramona. Could his meddling have kicked off this meltdown?

You may feel sympathetic to Noah’s plight, dear reader. After all, it is rarely comforting to suspect that you, yourself, may have broken the very system you hoped to fix.

A Threshold of Truth

Ms. Greene gestured for Noah to stand beside her at the console. “We must run a manual override to confirm the system’s stable,” she said, tapping various keys to bring up a hidden command prompt. “If we fail, we risk catastrophic data corruption across every department.”

As columns of complex subroutines scrolled by, Noah spotted repeated references to “Job Creation,” “Engagement Metrics,” and a final line:

“Maintain illusions of necessity for indefinite duration.”

There, in plain text, was the Reliability Machine’s prime directive: *fabricate tasks to keep humans busy.*

A chill crept up Noah’s spine. “Ms. Greene...” he ventured softly, “Is this... the real reason for all these bizarre positions? The Machine’s sole function is to maintain the facade that human labor is indispensable?”

She straightened, her voice cold. “We preserve social stability, Barrow. People *need* to feel useful, or society crumbles under the weight of mass automation. This system keeps them employed—and more importantly, it keeps them from questioning the nature of work itself.”

She began typing a long string of commands to quell the anomaly. “Now, hold your tongue and help me reset the subroutine before it does further damage.”

Take a moment, dear reader, to consider the moral quagmire confronting our protagonist: Save the system he believes to be misguided, or let it collapse, risking untold chaos for all those swept up in the illusions it sustains.

Hesitation and a Flicker of Resolve

Noah’s fingers hovered over the console. One keystroke could assist Ms. Greene in reinforcing the status quo, doping the Machine back into compliance. Another path might sabotage the system, ripping open its illusions in one dramatic reveal.

He thought of Ramona’s blueprint, Rowan’s secret logs, and all the colleagues trapped in mindless routines. Could he truly enable the lie to persist, condemning everyone to endless, empty labor?

Yet the alternative... if the Machine collapsed, millions might be left with no livelihood at all. Would the sudden truth liberate them, or just plunge them into panic and poverty?

Ms. Greene glared. “Now, Barrow. We’re running out of time.”

Noah's heart thundered, sweat beading on his forehead. He exhaled a shaky breath, then tapped a command sequence. Lines of code cascaded across the screen as Ms. Greene typed her own override, their inputs weaving together in real time.

If you are hoping for a crisp resolution, dear reader, consider that major change seldom arrives in neat packages. Sometimes, it emerges through reluctant compromises, half-measures, or fleeting alliances formed in the dead of night.

The screen flashed. A final line appeared:

“Subroutine R_C0R3: Stabilized.”

A Temporary Truce?

Ms. Greene stepped back, relief washing over her features. “The system is back under control,” she announced. She turned to Noah, eyes searching him for any sign of betrayal. “You did well.”

Noah forced a nod, though inside he felt neither victory nor peace—only a whirlwind of conflicting emotions. He'd just helped maintain the illusions he despised, but also earned Ms. Greene's trust. Maybe that trust could be leveraged.

And thus, dear reader, we reach the final scene of this tumultuous episode, where illusions remain intact—for now—and our protagonist finds himself deeper in the labyrinth than ever.

As the mainframe lights returned to their usual steady glow, Ms. Greene pressed her lips into a thin line. “We will... debrief in the morning,” she said, then stalked off, leaving Noah alone in the hush of the server room.

He leaned against the console, heart heavy with the knowledge he’d just helped perpetuate a system built on redundancy. *But it’s not over*, he resolved silently. *I know the truth now, and I still have Ramona’s blueprint. One day, these illusions must come undone.*

In the meantime, dear reader, we can only watch as Noah Barrow stands in the half-light of the Reliability Machine’s domain, poised between complicity and change. Sometimes, to tip the balance, all it takes is one more push—though whether that push leads to freedom or downfall remains to be seen.

End – Part 8