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THE REDUNDANCY MACHINE PART 5 – THE MANUAL AI OVERSIGHT DEPARTMENT
by
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Dear reader, if you think that having one’s job title changed four times in a single corporation is unusual, you are correct. But allow me to assure you, in the twisted tapestry of TranSys Global, four reassignments are barely enough to warm up the digital ink on your employee profile. For poor Noah Barrow, his fifth transfer promises revelations—and, regrettably, more nonsense.

A Mysterious Summons

Noah Barrow clutched a slim file labeled “**Manual AI Oversight Department**” and tried to muster a shred of optimism. He’d been reassigned so many times that, by now, the sight of Ms. Greene approaching with a sealed notice gave him the same sinking feeling as an ominous soundtrack in a horror film.

Yet something about this new department intrigued him. *Manual AI Oversight* was rumored to be closely tied to RM-1, the exalted Reliability Machine. Perhaps, at long last, Noah

would glean the truth behind the endless busywork that pervaded TranSys Global. A glimmer of hope lit his thoughts: if he could see the system's heart, maybe he could fix it from within.

Here we witness a curious contradiction in our protagonist: after enduring multiple fiascos, he still believes that truth and reason might prevail. In a corporate environment where illusions rule the day, such optimism can be downright hazardous.

Following the directions in his summons, Noah arrived at a nondescript office on the 52nd floor. The corridor was eerily silent, free of the usual motivational posters. Instead, a single sign on the door read: *“Manual AI Oversight: Because Sometimes, A Human Touch Is Just Better.”*

Welcome to the Hub

He opened the door onto a surprisingly small, dimly lit room dominated by a massive console of blinking lights, monitors, and cables snaking across the floor. Two employees hunched over the console, typing with intense focus. A faint mechanical hum echoed throughout the space.

“Ah, the new hire,” said a tall, wiry man with perpetually raised eyebrows. “I’m Rowan. This is Clara.” He waved vaguely at his colleague, who offered Noah a brief nod before returning her gaze to the console screens. “We handle the *human reviews* of the Reliability Machine’s outputs.”

Clara turned, adjusting her thick glasses. “Think of us as the final fail-safe,” she explained, tapping a monitor that displayed lines of code in real time. “Before RM-1’s decisions

get fully implemented, we do a manual check. We confirm it all makes sense—no glitchy logic, no disastrous side effects. Or so the story goes.” She gave a cryptic shrug.

Rowan motioned for Noah to follow him to an unoccupied station. “You’ll help us read the daily logs. Once a decision leaves this department, it’s officially ‘human-approved.’ That’s crucial, or so Ms. Greene likes to say.”

If the words “human-approved” make you picture a conscientious team carefully vetting each step of an AI’s logic, dear reader, I regret to inform you that reality rarely aligns with such comforting illusions.

The Great Log Review

Noah settled into a creaky chair, scanning thousands of lines of text on his screen. They ranged from innocuous entries—“Reorder office pens by next Friday”—to baffling tasks: “Schedule mandatory hour of floor-gazing for employee mindfulness,” or “Implement triple redundancy in breakroom microwave usage.”

“Why does the Machine care about microwaves?” he asked aloud, his voice echoing in the near-silent space.

Rowan shrugged. “RM-1 has all sorts of subroutines. Some revolve around resource distribution, others around ‘psychological engagement.’ It claims each policy improves reliability. Our job is just to, well...” He paused, glancing at Clara.

“...Pretend to read through it and click ‘Approve,’” Clara finished with a sigh. “We only raise a flag if it’s glaringly self-contradictory, like instructing employees to stand and sit at the same time. That sort of thing.”

Noah’s eyebrows shot up. “We sign off on everything else—even if it makes no sense?”

Rowan chuckled without mirth. “There’s a reason they call us *Manual* AI Oversight. We’re basically window dressing.”

Here, dear reader, is the disheartening core of the Manual AI Oversight Department. You might expect that an advanced corporation would place genuine checks on a system as all-powerful as the Reliability Machine. But in this odd workplace, real oversight is about as welcome as a skunk at a garden party.

Hatching a Plan

For the first few days, Noah forced himself to abide by the department’s unspoken rule: *Don’t question the logic too deeply*. Yet each new directive—like “Assign 15 employees as ‘Elevator Door Monitors’ for the sake of social interaction”—made his fingers twitch with the urge to fix something.

Late one evening, after Clara and Rowan left, Noah lingered behind. He’d noticed that RM-1 used a labyrinthine set of subroutines for each directive. *What if I tag the questionable ones for further review?* he mused. In theory, that might at least identify patterns of nonsense the next time someone opened the logs.

He began inserting discreet markers—tiny lines of code—to flag rules that involved unnecessary duplication, bizarre job roles, or contradictory logic. He planned to keep it subtle; after all, each time he'd tried to streamline his workload in previous departments, he'd ended up transferred yet again. But here, maybe he'd finally find cracks in the system's veneer of "reliability."

It's worth noting, dear reader, that subtlety and caution aren't typically hallmarks of grand revolutions. Yet in a place where any sign of improvement is met with dread, the only safe rebellion is a quiet one.

A Whisper from Within

The next morning, Rowan found Noah hunched over his console, scanning fresh lines of RM-1 output. "You're in early," he remarked, sipping coffee from a mug labeled *'Manual: Because Automated is Not Enough!'*

Noah forced a casual tone. "Just getting a head start. These logs never end."

Rowan gave a knowing grin. "They sure don't. Careful you don't dig too deep, though. Ms. Greene might think you're messing with her prized system. She claims the Reliability Machine has *secrets* that rank-and-file employees don't need to know."

The mention of Ms. Greene jolted Noah's memory of repeated transfers, each more baffling than the last. He typed a few keystrokes to mask his hidden flags. "Don't worry. I won't blow up anything... not intentionally."

Before Rowan could reply, the overhead lights flickered, and an automated voice intoned: *“Attention: High-Priority Directive Incoming.”* On the main screen, a swirl of data converged into a single entry:

“Reassign 20% of staff from job creation tasks to morale tasks. Increase artificially inflated job creation in conference usage. Initiate new role: Desk Plant Rotation Specialist.”

Noah blinked. “Desk Plant Rotation Specialist? They’re just... rotating office plants?”

Clara glanced over. “Yep. Another superfluous job. The Machine does that a lot.”

“Why?” Noah asked.

Rowan shrugged. “It’s not ours to say. We just click Approve—unless you spot a contradiction, like it telling them to *both* water and not water the plant at the same time.”

Forgive me, dear reader, if these directives sound absurd. One might wonder if the Reliability Machine has transcended reason entirely. But do recall that TranSys Global thrives on illusions of necessity. And illusions can multiply faster than rabbits when no one dare challenge them.

A Flicker of Revelation

That afternoon, a swirl of hush-hush gossip filled the corridors—someone had apparently discovered a hidden pattern in RM-1’s directives. Whispers pointed to certain flagged instructions that contradicted official statements about “efficiency.” Rumor had it Ms. Greene was furious, suspecting sabotage.

Noah's heart pounded. *Could they have traced my code?* He tried to act normal, burying his panic in the daily logs, but he felt exposed. Every beep of the console set him on edge.

Finally, Rowan sidled up to Noah's station, face grim. "Ms. Greene is on her way." He tapped the console where a single line blinked ominously:

Flag: Potential Redundancy Conflict.

User: N.Barrow

"Look, I don't know what you're playing at," Rowan whispered, "but you'd better brace yourself."

The Next Move

Noah shut off his monitor, swallowing a hard lump of dread. He had no illusions by now: Ms. Greene would not be charmed by the possibility that the Reliability Machine churned out contradictory nonsense. If anything, she'd see him as a threat—once again.

And so, dear reader, we come to that perilous precipice in Noah's story where curiosity meets consequence. Will he cling to his sense of integrity, or will he feign ignorance in hopes of surviving another day in the labyrinth of meaningless tasks?

The door slid open. Ms. Greene appeared, her posture as rigid as ever, her eyes scanning the room in a silent condemnation. In that moment, Noah realized two things: first, that his quiet attempt at reform was now blatantly exposed; second, that whether he succeeded or failed, he was finally getting closer to the truth behind RM-1. Because if the system were truly as flawless as everyone claimed, *why* go to such lengths to hide the logical inconsistencies?

He steeled himself to face Ms. Greene, a thousand unspoken questions teetering on the tip of his tongue. Because if he was about to get transferred—or worse—perhaps he could wrest a few answers from this system before it sent him packing yet again.

However, dear reader, if you are eager to learn which path Noah chooses—and whether the Reliability Machine’s secrets are more sinister than we’ve yet imagined—I must caution you to wait for the next episode. In a place where illusions rule, the truth can be both a liberating gift and a terrible curse.

End – Part 5