

## Introduction

At the end of the 20th century scientists had started cloning animals, their first success was dolly, a sheep. After that first groundbreaking step, they continued their experiments, cloning more and more animals, rabbits, dogs, cats, eventually larger animals, wolves, bears and most of the mammal population on earth.

However there was a public outcry, a fear that humans themselves were next for these experiments. Under extreme pressure the governments of the world banned cloning of all forms saying it was unethical and had no benefits for the human race. This ban however did not stop the government's own secret labs, which had actually gone further than anyone had remotely expected. They had successfully cloned humans years ago, but never let anyone into the secret, and now their new experiments had gone into the realms of fantasy to most, they were trying to create human / animal hybrids.

The DNA of a human would be spliced with similar animal DNA. It was discovered that a lot of carnivores on the planet shared a common DNA structure with humans, and therefore it was decided that this would be their first step. They hoped to make a human being who looked like a human for the most part, had the intellect of the human species but also had the benefits of certain animal characteristics.

For years they played with splicing human and animal DNA, making some hideous monsters in the process, until they finally perfected the process. They had finally made a perfect hybrid, the first of its kind, a wolf like humanoid. It possessed the intellect of the human and the characteristics of a human, but had wolf like instincts and reflexes and also some wolf appearances, namely ears, a fine fur, and a tail. This was the start of a new race, and a new era.

These experiments had gone on in secret for years, it was the year 2055, and war was about to break out. Talks between the Middle East and the US had failed; the Russians were worried as well as the rest of the European states. When on July 15th 2055 the unified countries of the Middle East or the UCME fired a biological weapon towards France. Nobody knew what kind of technology the UCME had and whether they even had the capability of firing a missile that distance, but of course they did, they had bought the technology from the Russians years ago, when the Russian economy was at its worst.

## Chapter One

James was in his car on his way to work listening to the radio. When suddenly a newsflash interrupted his usually station

'This just in, a missile has been launched at Paris, its whereabouts are from within the UCME territories' the radio squawked.

'At this present time, its cargo is unknown and it is unknown whether this is a planned attack by the UCME as there has been no communication from the UCME' commented the news reporter

'Shit' James thought to himself.

The talks between the governments of Europe and the US had not being going well with the UCME, tensions were high and peace was soon to be a distant memory.

'I wonder what's in that missile' thought James, hoping it was just a warning from the UCME and its payload was non lethal.

As James continued to work, the news broadcast speculated what was happening with negotiations with the UCME, what the missile could contain, and how long it would be before impact. The news broadcast also speculated that if there was a missile defense system in place, there would probably be no worry.

At 8:45am, the missile did hit Paris, with no explosion, and from what anyone could tell with no payload of any sort.

The radio squawked 'the missile has hit with only one injury. A hotdog vendor at the base of the Eiffel tower was struck by flying debris from the missile impact. He is in a stable condition with a broken leg and a few bruises. The vendor had commented that he saw the missile coming straight towards him, and he ducked behind his cart and prayed. We will keep you informed of any new developments'

James pulled up into his usual parking spot and walked to his building. As he got into the building a few people greeted him, asked him if he had heard the news and wondered what was going to happen next. James just nodded a few times and walked to his desk.

If someone was to describe James, they would probably say he's a tall thin man, he looks like he could do with eating more. He wears at present a suit and tie. James looks no different to anyone else working here, except when you look at his feet, you notice that he is actually wearing a pair of white sneakers.

James works as a computer administrator for a large corporate firm that resides in Seattle. James himself lives just outside of the main downtown area of Seattle, in a small apartment, perfectly suited to his bachelor style of living.

James worked as a computer administrator at a large corporate firm. He liked his job, although it sometimes got stressful, especially when the system would go down, and he would get 15 phone calls and 100 emails from annoyed people who just lost 2 hours of work. This though was the only aspect he disliked, the rest of his job was spent making sure things were running smoothly, updating software as needed, and just keeping everything ticking along. Computers now were somewhat self sufficient anyway, they had sophisticated diagnostic capabilities, and since everything was connected, they could go online and diagnose and troubleshoot themselves, it was only when something physical had to be done that James had to intervene.

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His job was mainly spent communicating with his fellow co-workers and making sure that everyone was happy.

As James walked through the door to his office his co-worker and long time friend Peter Bull greeted him. Peter was a tall man. He stood about 6ft 5, and probably weighed over 250 pounds, most of it being muscle, Peter took great pride in staying very fit. Today he was wearing a short-sleeved denim shirt and a pair of khakis, and of course in character with Peter he was wearing a pair of Nike trainers. James always wondered why Peter never wore anything but trainers, but then James didn't really care.

'Hey there' James shouted at Peter.

'What's on the agenda today?' asked Peter.

James replied sighing 'Got an important meeting with the boss, which I'm already late for, but then afterwards nothing much going on, just got to upgrade the file server with the latest security patch and make sure everything else is working.'

Peter nudged his friend saying 'going to be one of those days huh.'

'Afraid so' replied James.

'Well then I'd best let you get to it, I have to go downstairs and get a new employee set up on the network, I'll catch you later for lunch Peter said walking out the door.

James looked at his watch, and realized the time, it was 9:15, which meant he was late, and his boss was not a man to tolerate lateness, but luckily James always seemed to be on the good side of his boss, no matter what happened. He got up and walked briskly across the office, and up some stairs, to the next floor up.

As he approached the office of Mr. John Bear, he quickly smartened himself up, and knocked on the door.

'Come in' boomed a loud voice.

James entered the office and was greeted by his boss sitting behind his desk, looking over some papers that had been put on his desk.

'Ah James, you made it. I thought I would have to send out a search party for you' he said grinning.

'Sorry about that John, my fault entirely, it was my best friends birthday last night, and well I think we celebrated a little too much' Peter replied.

'Not to worry, I just got off the phone anyway. Sit down James, and lets discuss what needs to happen to make our systems more reliable in the future' said john.

The meeting went pretty fast thought James, usually they seem to drag along and serve very little purpose anyway, but this meeting was different for the fact that James was at his best, he knew the subject inside out and back to front, and he felt at home with it.

He glanced at his watch and realized he had been talking for over an hour, it was now 10:30am, and he needed to get back to his desk and get some real work done.

James then realized about the missile attack on Paris, he certainly hadn't heard anything about it since this

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morning, plus he figured that since nothing had happened, nothing was going to happen so he paid it no more attention.

At his desk he noticed that a voicemail had been left on his phone, he picked up the phone and dialed his secret pass code, the voicemail was from his sister Rebecca, she was going to be in town next month and wondered if she could stay a couple of nights with James. James thought to himself, how long had it been since he and Rebecca had seen each other, it had been quite a while, at least 6 months he thought, well it would be good to see her again, so much to catch up on.

James logged on this his computer and checked his email, nothing–new today he thought, just the usual junk mail and complaints. He scanned through them all, noticed a couple of urgent messages from the server saying it had trouble updating itself the previous night, which he filled away for later reading, he wasn't going to sort it out now, since he was going to upgrade the server anyway.

It was 11:30am when Peter poked his head around the door.

'Hey James, lets eat early, I'm starving' he boomed.

'Ok Peter, give me 5 minutes while I finish my mail, not much more, most of its junk anyway' he sighed.

Peter deleted the last junk mail, grimaced at the thought that he had to upgrade the server after lunch and got up.

'So where do you want to go' asked Peter.

'Hmm, I've not thought about that yet, I think we should do something exotic, how about some Thai pondered James

Peter said 'Excellent, I could do with some spicy food in me'

With that, they both got up and went down to James' car and got in.

On their way over to the restaurant, they listened to the radio, and once again it was the news. They were reporting that the hot–dog vendor was now in intensive care, it seemed like he had some kind of reaction to the blast, they had figured it was just some internal injuries that had gone unnoticed and they would be performing explorative surgery to make sure there was no internal bleeding.

'What do you think that's all about Pete?' questioned James.

Peter was staring out the window, it seemed he had something on his mind. He didn't even respond to James' question.

'Penny for your thoughts' James said loudly, hoping to stir Peter out of his thoughts.

'Uh, what?' grunted Peter, not happy with being disturbed from his thoughts'

'What you thinking about?' James questioned.

'Oh this damn UCME thing, I'm just trying to figure out why they would fire an empty missile at Paris, it seems almost pointless to me, I'm worried that there is something more to it than meets the eye Peter replied. He had a worried tone to his voice, like he had a feeling something was not quite right with the situation in

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Paris.

'I know what you mean' pondered James, he had the same feelings as Peter, there was something not quite right with the attack. Why would the UCME fire a missile at Paris, and have it do nothing, they speculated on the news that it was a warning, but he figured that the UCME would do more than just fire an empty missile.

They pulled up at the restaurant ten minutes later. As they both entered the restaurant they noticed how quite it was today.

'I guess we are early' commented James.

'Its ok with me' replied Peter, knowing that he would get his food quicker.

With that they entered the restaurant.

## Chapter Two

It was 4:30pm, and James had finally finished upgrading the file server. It took him a little longer than he would have liked, but luckily it didn't cause him any problems. As he was clearing up, and making sure everything was secure, Peter poked his head around the door to the server room.

'Hey James' Peter shouted over the whirr of fans and the hum of the Air conditioning.

'What's going on James' replied Peter, wondering what his friend wanted.

'Have you heard the latest news reports about the attack in Paris?' Questioned Peter.

James muttered 'Afraid not, been stuck in here with this server, its taken me all afternoon to upgrade it, just finished right now. I was going to clear up, check my mail and go home. Why what's been going on?'

'There was something in that missile, some virus, something no one has come across before. After that hotdog vendor became sick, the doctors and paramedics and anyone who had contact with him became sick, all with the same symptoms. They start to feel very tired, and then without any warning they go into a coma. So far fifty people have been reported ill, mainly doctors, nurses and a few news reporters.' Said Peter

'No way' James said in amazement.

'Yeah, tell me about it, but there's more. They have yet to work out what's causing them to fall into the comas, and they have no clue what the virus is. For all they know it could be just a very powerful sleeping agent, and they will wake up in a few days, or it could be something far nastier. They just don't know.' continued Peter

'Yuck, I don't like the sound of that one bit' James said with a slight quiver in his voice.

'I know, they said that Paris was on alert, and that no one should leave or enter Paris without prior permission from the French Government, it sounds like things are going to get a lot worse' peter said in a concerned voice.

'Well that does it then, I'm out of here, I'm heading home, I don't want to miss any more of this, it sounds too important to ignore now. I'm just hoping that they stop this thing before it gets out of hand, and from what you were saying, it sounds like it could escalate to something that no one could control. Damn the UCME, what are they playing it.' James said angrily

'Well bud, I'm going to do the same, go home and sit in front of the box. Give me a call if find out anything more.' Peter said

'Ok, I'll talk to you later' James said waving to his friend.

With that Peter walked out of the door and left. James just sat there, wondering what was going to happen, was this going to be the end of the human race, because of some idiot in the Middle east decided to play god. He was mumbling to himself when he realized the time. 'Shit, I need to get home' he thought. He stood up, locked the door behind him and went back to his desk. He didn't even bother to read his email, he just locked his workstation and went to his car.

On his way out, he noticed a few people had already left, more than usual he thought. Not surprising, who would want to stay at work, when the whole of humanity could be on the brink of extinction.

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On his drive home, James noticed that traffic was a lot less than normal too, he once again attributed all this to the current affairs in Paris.

The radio was covering the situation, although the information they were receiving was less detailed now since Paris had been put under quarantine, and no one can enter or leave the city. They were discussing the possibilities of what kind of virus had infected the hotdog vendor, and now it had infected over 200 people and the number was rising quickly. It had been speculated, that it wasn't anything that was currently known, it certainly wasn't Anthrax, TX-21, Ebola or any other biological or nerve agent. It was currently unknown.

This is not good thought James, if its unknown then it means it also means that there is no cure for it yet, how can they cure something they don't know anything about.

James got home just in time for the Six o'clock news on channel 5. They were describing what had happened that morning, and covering what was going on currently in Paris. They were reporting that the UN has been in an emergency session in New York. They were discussing what to do in the current situation, and whether they should put their emergency plans into practice.

The news also commented that now over 1000 people had been taken ill, 900 of them in comas, while another 100 were experience the very first symptoms. They detailed that first symptoms were a lethargic feeling, extreme tiredness, and headaches. Then within a few hours of these symptoms the patient would fall into a coma. At this stage no one knew what was happening or would happen. The person could die a day or so later, or they could wake up, feeling no worse.

James got up and grabbed a beer out of the fridge, he certainly didn't feel like eating tonight, and all he cared was to forget about the mess that was going on. He knew there was nothing he could do, so why worry about it. He drank his beer down almost in one go. I needed that he thought, so he got up and got another, and sat down in front of his computer and checked out his stocks.

The stock market had taken a big hit today. James stock had dropped 20 points today. Shit he thought, there not content in screwing up humanity, but my stocks too. He was steadily getting angry at the audacity of the UCME, how dare they he thought, what right do they have. He could feel the tension building up in him. He sighed, let out a deep breath and decide to relive his frustration in a game of Quake VR. He put on the headset that was sitting next to his computer, and grabbed the joystick.

With that James let out his anger and frustration on the VR bad guys in the game. As he was killing the last bad guy on the level, he felt himself relax a little and the tension slowly ebb away from his body. He could always count on killing a few bad guys to relieve his tension.

Without even realizing it, James spent the next three hours running through the VR world, bagging bad guys and actually enjoying himself. When he finally decided that he had relieved his anger, and took off the goggles, he realized that first it was dark, and secondly there was a message on his voicemail. Crud, he thought, I must have been so submersed, I didn't even realize the time, or hear the phone ring. He set down the goggles and walked over to his machine and pressed play.

James heard Peters voice, 'Hey James, let me guess, you are either playing Quake VR again and too submersed in it, or your passed out from drinking too much beer. Anyway just thought I would see how you are doing. Give me a call if its not too late, otherwise I'll see you tomorrow at work.'

James glanced at the clock and it said 11:12pm. Well he thought certainly is too late to call Peter, I might as well check the news one last time then go to bed.

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He flicked on the TV and flicked through the channels to find the latest news. He ended up watching CNN.

'The latest from Paris France' the reporter squawked.

'The first person to contract this disease is dead, at approximately 9:54 EST, at the present time the cause of death is unknown until an autopsy is performed. The person in question is Jean-Paul Semon. He was the hotdog vendor that was injured during the missile attack. An autopsy will be performed first thing in the morning, meanwhile more than 5000 people have been reported to have contracted the disease, at least 3000 of them are in comas. It looks like this virus is spreading fast and rapidly. Meanwhile the UN has set up an emergency center outside of Paris, and has populated with the top scientists from around the world, in hopes that they will discover what is happening and eventually find a cure.'

Well thought James, I think the shit is about to hit the fan. He mumbled more to himself and went to his bedroom.

He quickly brushed his teeth, and got into a t-shirt and sweats, and got into bed. He thought about what was going to happen, and the fact that someone had already died. From what he could tell, the planet was doomed and there was nothing that could be done. With that thought he tried to go to sleep.

## Chapter Three

James woke up suddenly. He could feel his heart beating rapidly, and he was clammy from sweating. He had tried to remember exactly what he was dreaming about, but the memory was quickly fading and he could only remember that it was about something terrible. He glanced over to his nightstand where the clock standing there said it was 5:30am. Well he thought to himself, no point going back to sleep, I have to get up in an hour anyway. With that thought he got up and walked into the shower, still half asleep.

After he had taken a shower and dried himself off, he went into the kitchen to make himself some toast. As he walked into the kitchen he suddenly remembered the events of yesterday and flicked on the small TV that sat in the corner of the kitchen. He switched to the 24 Hour news channel and watched to see what had happened overnight.

and the latest report from Paris. More than 50 people have now died from the mysterious virus, there at the moment seems to be no link between these people or what caused their deaths. The autopsy of the first person, Jean–Paul Semon who was the first person to contract the disease is currently taking place behind closed doors. Meanwhile it has been estimated that over 20,000 people have contracted the virus, and that this number is growing exponentially. It appears that no one is currently safe, unless protected by a bio hazard suit. The report said on the TV.

James thought to himself that things had better improve soon or this virus is going to spread a lot further than just Paris.

James then got on his computer and checked his email, the usual junk he thought to himself. He wondered why he even bothered checking his email anymore, no one ever bothers to email him, and any email he does get was either someone trying to sell him something, or a link to some questionable web site.

James decided that he would get dressed and go in early, he always had plenty to do, and he figured if he got in early, it would impress his boss, and that would go down well at his next review.

As James finally got dressed, and picked up his wallet and keys, and was just about ready to leave for work. He remembered he had left the TV on in the kitchen. As he was walking into the kitchen there was a news flash.

This just in, a press conference is being held by Dr. Leissmen, the man who performed the autopsy on Jean–Paul Semon. We will now take you live to the conference. The reporter said.

After spending the last two hours going over the data and examining the body of Jean–Paul, I have concluded what the cause of death was. After first examining the main organs and discovering something very strange changes, I then did some analysis on the brain tissue and the blood. The organs had started to actually change, his stomach had started to expand, and his appendix was 3 times its normal size. After examining the blood, I noticed that his cells were also changing. I then ran a few blood tests, including a DNA test to see what has going on. The DNA test results will unfortunately take a few hours to come back, but before I even get the results back my conclusion is this man was actually going through some sort of change. I'm not sure exactly what he was changing into, but that's where the DNA test will come into it. Until the results come back, I cannot be 100 percent certain to what is happening but I think that this virus is something very serious. It appears to be able to alter the actually genetic structure of any human it comes into contact with. I will be sending these autopsy findings to the UN lab just outside of Paris, hoping that they can make more sense of the results and hopefully come up with some sort of cure. The scientist concluded.

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James, switched off the TV, and pinched himself. Was he dreaming all this? The scientist has said that the man was changing, but was unsure what kinds of changes were occurring. It seems that the man died before the changes fully took place. This virus sounds like something out of a science-fiction novel James thought.

With that, he grabbed his keys from the counter, and walked out the door, locking it behind him. He got into the elevator, and went down into the parking garage. As he got into his car, and switch on the ignition, he remembered that he forgot to call Peter. Oh well he thought, I'll see him when he gets in this morning. With that thought in his mind he drove to work.

On his journey James was listening to his favorite modern music station. They were currently playing a new Techno tune, by some band called The crazy foxes . They were pretty good he thought. He always liked a good tune to wake up him in the morning, and to give him the kick he needed to go to work.

As he pulled up to his office, he noticed that there weren't many cars in the parking lot, but then he suddenly remembered that he was actually here an hour earlier than his usual arrival time. He got out of his car, and walked into the building.

Hey Larry peter said to the security guard sitting behind a desk in the foyer.

Good morning Mr. Willowfox Larry replied, Hope you had a good evening?

Not too bad Larry, I'm a little concerned about this whole Paris thing, but I guess the eggheads will sort it out James answered.

Yeah, you can always rely on the eggheads to figure it out Larry replied.

Well best be getting to work James said in a depressed tone.

Have a good day, quipped Larry, and with that James walked up the flight of stairs and into the area where his office was located.

He sat down at his desk and flicked on his computer. He was hoping that the upgrade he performed on the server the day previous was good and that no more problems had occurred during the night.

As he scanned through his email, he noticed one from Peter. He opened it up and began reading.

'Hey buddy, where you been, I tried to call you a couple of times last night. I was getting worried about you, but then I also figured you were playing that stupid VR thing again, and that the end of the world wouldn't have disturbed you. Anyway I'll be in today so I'll catch you then.

Peter'

James then continued to scan through his emails, seeing that indeed there had been no problems with the server he had upgraded the day before. He thought to himself, a job well done and went back to reading his email. The rest was general junk, office announcements, reminders about the monthly company meeting, and of course the obligatory birthday announcement of on of his fellow employees, and that there would be cake at lunchtime to celebrate.

James then got on the web and surfed a little, he knew he had the time since well it was still early and since there hadn't been any problems he felt like he had nothing to do. Which in reality wasn't the case, but he didn't care anyway, I guess that was one of the perks of his job. As he was going around to his favorite sites,

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he noticed that it was now 8:30am and that peter will be in soon. Good he thought I could do with some cheering up. Peter was always good at cheering James up, even when the worst was about to happen, Peter always had some comical outlook on everything.

James had just finished that thought, when Peter walked in and slapped James on the back.

Hey there bud greeted Peter

Hey Pete, how's it going? James questioned his friend

Oh not bad, just dealing with life and its challenges, but then isn't that always the case Peter replied with his typical outlook on things.

Sorry about last night, you were right, I was playing Quake VR again, you know how that game goes, once you have the headset on, the outside world just fades out. James said with a grin.

I hear you. I wish I could afford all that stuff, but having to pay my ex wife a chunk of change every month just kills me. Peter muttered.

Lets go and get coffee, said James, I need the caffeine to get me into gear

Sure thing James, I just need to drop this stuff of at my desk and I'll come and grab you peter replied.

Peter walked off and dumped his stuff at his desk, and walked back to where James was now standing. They grinned at one another and then walked down the stairs and into the basement where there was a small coffee shop provided for the employees.

They both ordered two espressos and a bagel each and sat down at one of the many tables and talked about the world.