



2120 ... and a Human Re-Engineered

Author

Karan Kamdar - karan@stople.com | <http://www.karankamdar.com>

Abstract

2120, is the year of the next wave of intellectual activity across all institutions of higher learning and research. Nanotechnology, pervasive computing and intelligent drug delivery systems have made their way into the books of normal human ontology. The research is highly classified and only the elitist have access to the systems that make them work. With surges of entrepreneurial activity and nanobotic snooping becoming more than apparent, the access to intellectual property has never been more threatening perhaps even mutually disastrous...

Chapter 1

August 22, 2120 Princeton University, New Jersey.

It was a big day for Prof. Dr. Cornel Westmon. Having recently returned from Dartmouth where he inaugurated the Lewis-Sigler Institute of Integrative Genomics, Dr. Westmon, although on a rather short notice, had deservedly been appointed as the new President of Princeton.

A 2106 Nobel Prize winner himself for his research on Gene Regulatory Networks and recipient of some of the most prestigious scientific awards in the United States, it was no wonder that Westmon drew hoards of inquisitive minds who knew the profoundness of his spoken word. As a visiting faculty at Harvard, MIT and Cornell, he sometimes stupefied, mortified and even petrified some of the best minds in the country as his ideas reverberated across campuses, scientific journals, top-notch publications and continental boundaries. Breakthroughs after breakthroughs came one after the other and with grants exceeding a prodigious 10 million from the National Science Foundation (NSF), Prof. ~~Cornell~~ was one of the most revered and recognizable faces in the world scientific community.

But today was when he shouldered a responsibility much greater than maintaining the integrity of his luminous mind. He knew that the Presidency was no child's play and the University had still much to achieve in its endeavor for scientific excellence. To be the vanguard of innovative long term decision making was agreeably tough, but to propel a whole community into an era of radically new scientific engagements was a hell lot tougher. However in spite of his long term commitment to the University, Prof. Westmon was more interested in knowing what was exactly happening in the darker corridors at Princeton.

Chapter 2

Prof. Rick McCarthy had just picked up a new series of hi tech glasses from the 'Wearable Computing Centre' located at about a mile from Princeton's Main Office building and headed straight to the Admission's Centre where he occupied his personal office.

Having entered the room, McCarthy ordered Frezler to pour make him some tea and report him on his missed calls and emails. Frezler looked confidently hi tech and flew in from a nearby distance towards the professor. With a wingspan of 4 cm, a length of 6 cm and an overall weight of little over half a pound, it gleamed shiny blue radiations from where it's eyes were located. Then it hovered in the space facing McCarthy and greeted him with its rather perfunctory message,

“Good afternoon, professor. It’s good to see you back. I’ll make you some tea in a couple of minutes. Meanwhile you have had no new emails, voice messages or nanobots delivered”

“Thanks Frez. I think I can manage now”

As McCarthy settled near his desk, he pressed a switch on his newly bought glasses and within moments a bright menu splashed before his eyes. His pupils tracked a 5 digit number and then with another press McCarthy knew that the connection was being made. Something blinked on the screen again and then a man with grey eyes and a black beard showed up.

“Goodness gracious me, just what’s it like to have a piece of cake meant all for you?” said the husky voice.

“I am not giving you even a small bite this year. You don’t understand do you? Just how many times do I have to warn you on this. A near fatal flaw and the anti-surveillance radar would have almost had us the earlier week “

“Somebody’s got to keep a watch on what’s happening at Princeton professor. Our bots seem to be working quite hard and ya sometimes they do get tired ”

“You don’t understand the risks. It’s me working on the inside over here and if something goes wrong then ...”

“A deal’s always an inside straight professor. It’s got much more than what it looks. How do you otherwise expect our cellars to feed us any honey? ”

“I am warning you to be cautious and if the line seems to be crossed you’d better find yourself asking for a lawyer’s help soon”.

“Don’t you worry about me professor. Enough resources to get the litigation working against you. After all what’s the New Jersey’s trading network been in news for these days?

“You dastard. Why did I ever have to play this dirty hardball with you?

“Easy professor, easy. I did only make an offer. You made the choice.”

“I trusted and you guys ”

“Well, who wanted some dough anyways? In the network it’s customary to live by such dealings and all I did was give you what you wanted”

“I never wanted to get into business with a traitor. Gave you the contract on recommendations of Prof. Nash only to know why Nash ever wanted to get me into this.”

“Well Nash has always been my prodigal contract maker. Seems to have been exploiting some rather naïve intellectuals at Princeton. But weren’t you impressed by his rather promising assurances?”

“I never construed that the risk would be so ominous and yes I gave into him just because he told me that the play would be safe and rewarding. But now it’s freezing the flow in my veins.”

“When you live with the network, connotations work in rather strange ways professor. And once you are on the node it’s hard to break off”

“No, whatever it is, I want to be out of this now.”

“That I think would be rather imprudent of you. It’s always been my good fortune to work for the intelligible human. But I think its time that I remind you what the rules of the game are. As I’ve always said, “pretty straight forward”. The players play for their own dough. You have your share and me mine. But as there’s good catch to any tactical game, if you falter then your survival’s decided by those who roll the dice.”

“You cut the rope and I stop hanging it from the other end. Just imagine the repercussions professor. The deal exposed, your rather dignified reputation and that much of Princeton at stake, a long agonizing lawsuit followed by a painful term of imprisonment, your recognized achievements and honors revoked, your morally upright image blemished and I don’t think you want to live the rest of what’s remaining anyways as an outcast despicably reprimanded by the same scientific community and society that respects you today. And then do you ever want your wife or children to bear the brunt of all this? Think about it professor. Your actions decide the fate of an entire generation. And the rules of the game dictate that

“What rules ... what game? I don’t understand. I don’t want to get into this anymore”

“The game can become mischievous professor. I recommend you to stay where you are and get the dealings done. Fair enough isn’t it. We hold the rope from both ends. And you did rather start expecting some more calls in another couple of months. The network’s on some high initiatives this year. So be prepared. Now tell me the count Prof. McCarthy”

“Six Hundred and Fifty”

“Not bad is it? Princeton seems to be doing well with it’s annual head count. You managed to roll in quite a good number this year. Curious minds will be treated alike. Ah yes, and it’s the network that’s always been at their service.”

“Listen Mr., its me who’s been living on the edge at the Office. You have extorted me for all matters to which I have listened helplessly. It’s time that we get this straight. If your bots are going to make matters worse, you did rather be busted to the term of your life”

“Ho ho that’s rather presumptuous from a 56 year old nutty professor. And do you ever have to give me that Mr.McCarthy? Let’s see if we can push you a bit further this year..”

“No I mean it and if you don’t want to understand this then ...”

The screen flickered for a moment and then went blank. A few seconds later the message “Call Terminated” blinked before his eyes. McCarthy disgustingly removed his glasses and laid back hopelessly in his office chair.