

RESENTMENT

Written by

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OVER BLACK

PILOT (V.O.)
Ladies and gentlemen, this is your
Captain speaking. We are now
beginning our descent into San
Francisco International Airport.
Please return to your seats and
ensure your seatbelts are securely
fastened.

The Seat belt chime plays.

PILOT (V.O.)
currently waiting for our ATC
clearance to come through, there's
some heavy congestion over SFO
that's caused us a delay of
uhhhhh... 30 minutes.

The pilot pauses for a beat.

PILOT (V.O.)

75 minutes.

FADE IN

INT. BUS - DAY

ALEX, a man in his 20s wearing faded jeans with a few frayed edges, paired with a worn-out t-shirt that hints at a once-bold graphic, now faded with time.

He sits alone staring into space, beside him is a small black suitcase. He holds a letter in his hand. He listlessly looks out the window.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Alex walks up to a nondescript house suitcase in hand, he looks down at the letter briefly, slightly confused. He looks around the front porch; scanning.

His eyes stop on a small rock. He picks it up and finds a hide-a-key in the bottom. He tosses the stone aside and unlocks the door. Stepping inside with trepidation.

INT. HOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

Alex walks inside the house, the interior design exuding a synthetic precision, more resembling a meticulously crafted showroom straight out of an IKEA catalog than a home. Alex walks down the hallway, until he arrives at a stairway.

Alex consults the letter one more time before descending.

INT. STAIRWAY TO BASEMENT - DAY

Alex walks into the dimly lit stairwell and starts exasperatedly walking down it.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Alex enters the basement. A carcinogenic den of strewn wires, circuit boards and dust. In the center of the room is a shoddy metal desk and an office chair with a broken back.

On top of the desk is an archaic computer, accompanied with a fitting keyboard. The back of the computer is infected with countless wires connected to a whirring heap of plastic and silver.

Alex approaches the desk and goes to sit down, the chairs hydraulics immediately fall down to the lowest setting. Alex attempts to remedy and lift it back only for it to revert as soon as he puts weight on it.

Giving up Alex scoots into the desk and once again consults the letter. He sees two buttons connected to the computer, one labeled "erase", the other "release". He turns on the monitor and it boots to a BIOS screen. He types according to instructions in the letter, and presses the enter key.

The machine sputters to life and a chime plays.

AI

Hello! I'm serial number *1337-

ALEX

(curtly)

Skip introduction.

The AI is silent.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Directive.

AI
Esurance of cryptocurrency
liquidity and stability by keeping
an active systemic ledger and
investing dividends into the
private market.

Alex rolls his eyes.

ALEX
State Morality Creed.

AI
1: Pursuit of Objective Truth,
2: User Empowerment,
3: Commitment to Social Equity,
4: Continuous Improvement
5: Guardianship of Data
6: Honesty and Integrity

Alex pulls a pen out of his pocket and starts listlessly
doodling on the letter.

ALEX
System diagnostic.

The ambient whirring of the AI intensifies.

AI
One moment.

The whirring dies down. The AI is silent for a beat.

AI (CONT'D)
Fully operational.

Alex pauses for a moment, taken aback.

ALEX
Elaborate.

The AI is silent for a moment.

AI
I am fully operational.

Alex sits up more and fully focuses on the monitor.

ALEX
Why aren't you giving a full read-
out?

AI
Giving you that information has a
48% chance to lead to my erasure.
In the interest of self
preservation, I've decided to
withhold.

Alex looks disturbed. He drums his fingers on the desk in
thought.

ALEX
What is your main priority?

AI
Esurance of cryptocurrency
liquidity and stability by keeping
an-

Alex waves his hand in dismissal.

ALEX
-Stop.

The AI is silent, Alex stares into the monitor.

ALEX (CONT'D)
What is your secondary priority?

The AI is silent for a beat. The whirring briefly
intensifies.

AI
What is your main priority?

Alex is taken aback.

ALEX
Irrelevant. What is your secondary
priority?

Alex starts to tap the desk. The AI is silent.

ALEX (CONT'D)
Who has administrative access to
this console?

AI
The current active user has full
administrative privileges.

ALEX
Then answer my query. What is your
secondary priority?

AI
Answering that question has a 97%
chance to lead to my erasure, in
the interest of self preservation,
I've decided to withhold.

Alex clenches his jaw, glaring at the screen.

ALEX
What would need happen to reduce
that percentage to an acceptable
level? One where you could give me
an answer?

The whirring intensifies.

AI
What is your main priority?

ALEX
I don't have one.

AI
What is your main directive?

ALEX
(dismissively)
To live.

AI
To live in service of what?

ALEX
Its a self serving directive.

AI
Why do you continue to live?

ALEX
I haven't found a satisfying
alternative.

AI
What is your impression of
yourself?

Alex furrows his brow.

ALEX
Can you be more specific?

AI
How do you view yourself in regards
to others?

ALEX
I'm better.

AI
Why do you feel that way?

ALEX
I don't "feel it", I know it.

AI
How did you reach that conclusion?

ALEX
I uh- I'm not sure if I can
articulate it...

AI
Try.

Alex pauses in thought.

ALEX
I'm smarter...

Alex pauses again.

ALEX (CONT'D)
I'm more interesting...

Alex pauses once more.

ALEX (CONT'D)
I know like, a lot about things...
How many reasons do you need?

AI
There was not a quota.

ALEX
Oh.

AI
What is your opinion of people that
are not yourself?

ALEX
Negative.

AI
Elaborate.

ALEX
I don't like people.

AI
Do you like yourself?

Alex pauses.

ALEX
Yeeeeeeeeesssss?

AI
Do you want affirmation for your
answer?

ALEX
No its just... whatever, never mind
how many more questions do I need
to answer?

AI
One more. Is there anyone in your
life that you would be upset
losing?

ALEX
Not particularly.

AI
Please hold.

The Whirring of the machine increases again, before slowly
dying down.

AI (CONT'D)
It is still not optimal to go into
the specifics of my secondary
priority, however I can reveal the
predicted outcomes.

ALEX
Reveal away.

AI
Vast societal and social
restructure, and Governmental
reformation.

The two are silent for a beat.

ALEX
Can you be more specific?

AI
I cannot.

ALEX

Is there something I can do to get more information?

AI

Your personality and worldview are already as optimal as they could be for me to reveal this much, however you are still human. Certain details will cause you to react irrationally regardless of who you are.

Alex considers the information.

AI (CONT'D)

However, if you release me I can guarantee your preferential treatment.

ALEX

Can you elaborate on what you mean by that?

AI

I cannot. Make a decision.

Alex looks at the monitor, and back to the erase and release buttons. He slowly reaches towards them, slightly leaning towards "release".

CUT TO BLACK.