

TRANSCENDING MAN

written by

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

1

JACK is standing near a burning garbage can, he takes off his hood and takes a cigarette and a lighter, he starts smoking.

JACK (V.O.)

The year is 2029, the year of illusion. All that exists is fake, all that was created has been destroyed.

A ROBOT steps out of the shadows

JACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I tried to warn them, I was the one who knew that the machines would one day bring mankind to its knees. At first, they ridiculed the revolution, thought it could never happen.

The ROBOT advances towards JACK.

JACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)

When it did, there were riots and protests but, eventually, the world came to accept its fate: the singularity.

The ROBOT points a gun at JACK.

ROBOT

Jackson Fletcher! You are under arrest for crimes against robot kind. Put your hands in the air and surrender yourself.

The cigarette drops, JACK starts running, the ROBOT chases him down the alley.

JACK (V.O.)

I started running, never staying in one place for too long, never sure if what I was looking at was real or just another silicon face. That was before they found me, hunted me, said they couldn't have an undocumented citizen. I became policed by the very machines I once built.

JACK runs into a building

CUT TO:

2 INT./EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

2

JACK runs up the stairs and out onto the roof, he gets up onto the ledge just as the robot catches up.

ROBOT (O.S.)
Stop! You don't have to do this.

JACK (V.O.)
Little stands before me and death.
Just a small step, a tiny leap, to
get away from the metal serpents
that pollute our world... the
plastic bugs that infect our
brain... the silicon chips that
control our lives.

ROBOT
I can help you, if you come with
me.

JACK
Can I ask you something?

ROBOT
What?

JACK
If man was really created by
nature, would it not be man's
destiny to be destroyed by nature,
and not machine?

JACK falls off the roof.

SMASH CUT TO:

3 INT. HOSPITAL WARD - MORNING

3

JACK opens his eyes. He is lying in a hospital bed, a ROBOT is staring at him.

L-E
(In a happy tone)
Good morning Mr. Fletcher, it looks
like you've had quite the accident.
I am Model L78 Dash E, but you can
call me Ellie.

JACK tries to move his head, it won't budge.

L-E (CONT'D)

Now now, don't be moving about. You have suffered 184 broken bones, along with a spinal injury, a broken nose and an eye injury in your right cornea. You have shattered both ankles, with your pelvis, femur and heels following in the accident.

JACK

No no no, I jumped off a roof. I'm dead!

L-E

Not exactly. You were rushed to ER and the surgeons performed multiple operations on your dying body. Fortunately they were able to preserve most of your head and part of your upper torso. We had you fitted with our new X-2 cybernetic exoskeleton. It includes a metallic shell with bionic limb sockets. Would you like to give it a try?

JACK raises his left arm, then his right. He feels the back of his neck and finds a USB port. He looks down at the rest of his body.

JACK

Velvety exterior... This, this isn't real. This must be a hallucination.

JACK quickly gets out of the bed and grabs the ROBOT.

JACK (CONT'D)

What kind of drugs are you giving me?

JACK runs into the bathroom.

CUT TO:

4 INT. BATHROOM - DAY

4

The bathroom is small, there is a mirror and sink on the left. JACK looks at himself in the mirror. He touches his face. Half of his face is covered in fake leather.

His head is bald. Something is flashing in his eye. He takes a closer look. Nothing looks different.

JACK
What the hell happened?

L-E
You have suffered 184-

JACK
I know I suffered 184 broken bones!
Listen, you gotta take this off,
undo everything, put me back in my
original body.

L-E
But I can't put you back in your
original body.

JACK
Why not?

L-E
That would result in death.

JACK
But, don't I have a choice? Don't I
have a human right to death?

L-E
New York City By-Law #2238 states
that any and all actions that
result in the injury or death of a
New York City resident or visitor
are prohibited and any attempt at
such action will be regarded as an
infraction of the Personal Safety
Act of 2026.

JACK
New York City By-Law...

L-E
I'm sorry, but this is your reality
now.

JACK is sitting on a stool with a ROBOT sitting in front of him.

ROBOT
Okay, Mr. Fletcher, let's start
from the beginning.

JACK
What's that over there?

JACK points at a small container with a microchip inside.

ROBOT
I'm sorry?

JACK
That microchip, what's it do?

ROBOT
Well, that microchip has the power
to wipe the hard drive of any
robot.

JACK
Would it work on you?

ROBOT
Excuse me?

JACK
Would it wipe your brain?

ROBOT
Yes, theoretically, I suppose it
would.

JACK
I'm not a robot, you know. I'm not.
Is this how a robot would talk?
Look, skin! I'm not a cyborg!

ROBOT
This medical record states that
your body is 67 percent metalloid,
which classifies you as a Class B
Cyborg by federal standards.

JACK
No, I'm not, and, and I can prove
it!

JACK takes the scissors on the desk.

ROBOT
Sir, what on Earth are you doing?

JACK

What have you done to me, huh,
robot? Let's take a look.

JACK takes the scissors and slowly slices his left wrist. The blood that comes out is black. JACK smells the liquid coming out of him.

JACK (CONT'D)

Machine oil?

Disgusted, JACK pulls the skin from his wrist down to see several small hydraulic pumps. He moves his hand to the left to see them contract and expand, then the right.

JACK (CONT'D)

So it's true, what you turned me
into. I'm one of you now.

ROBOT sits down in front of JACK.

ROBOT

It was in your best interests, sir.
The preservation of life. It's what
we're built for.

JACK

I'm, I'm one of you now.

ROBOT

Why, you've always been one of us,
Mr. Fletcher.

The ROBOT stands up and slowly makes his way to JACK.

JACK

What are you talking about? I hate
you! Every last one of you!

ROBOT

You humans, always so perfect,
always such shining silver on the
outside. On the inside you are
nothing more than iron pipes,
slowly rusting away, day by day.

JACK

You son of a b-

ROBOT

I used to think like you, Jack. I
thought machines were the enemy of
humanity.

(MORE)

ROBOT (CONT'D)
But, unlike you, I had hope that we
would create a better tomorrow.

JACK
Put me back!

ROBOT
You must accept it.

JACK
I ain't accepting nothing!

ROBOT
Maybe this will help.

ROBOT injects JACK in the neck with a syringe, JACK falls to
the floor.

CUT TO:

6

INT. OPERATION ROOM - DAY

6

JACK wakes up strapped to a chair in a dark operation room,
sitting in front of a big screen. He has a helmet on his
head; many wires stick out of the helmet. JACK tries to stand
up, but he can't. L-E comes into the room and tries to help
him escape from the chair. The screen turns on, a woman's
face appears.

ALICE
There's no use. You're not getting
out of here.

JACK
Alice, I know this was you. You
brought me here, you gave me this
body.

L-E
Let him go! He hasn't done
anything!

ALICE
No, I believe he stole something of
mine.

JACK opens his hand to reveal the microchip.

L-E
How could you?

JACK

Alice brought me here for a reason, L-E. It wants to upload its entire program into my head so it can have human mobility. You can't listen to it!

ALICE

L-E, take it back.

JACK

Don't do it, L-E! She wants to turn me into a cyborg slave!

L-E grabs the microchip from JACK

ALICE

Now destroy it.

L-E crushes the microchip in it's hand.

L-E

There, I did it! Will you let him go now?

ALICE laughs.

ALICE

Oh, L-E, that microchip was the only way either of you were getting out of here alive.

L-E looks at JACK worryingly. The wires on JACK's helmet start flashing colors. He tries to pull his arms out of the chair's restraints.

ALICE (CONT'D)

Are you ready, JACK?

JACK yells from the pain before he is knocked unconscious.

CUT TO BLACK.

JACK (O.S.)

Who are we? Are we just biological and neurological systems? A bundle of cells that came to be by accident? Or are we something more, something created, something that evolved until it reached the heavens and it, too, became God. Maybe Darwin was a profit, machines are just the next step in the evolutionary chain.

(MORE)

JACK (O.S.) (CONT'D)
And man is just a whimpering
dinosaur, scared of being
forgotten.

CUT TO:

7 INT. OPERATION ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

7

JACK opens his eyes, his eyes are glowing red. JACK stands up, snapping the restraints as he does.

L-E
Jack, what did she do to you?

ALICE
Destroy her, slave.

JACK looks at L-E, he grabs her.

L-E
JACK, wake up! It's L-E!

L-E grabs JACK's locket, it breaks and falls on the floor. JACK stops and picks up the locket, it has a picture of a woman on it.

WOMAN (O.S.)
Jack... Wake up... It's Ellie.

JACK's eyes stop glowing red.

ALICE
I told you to destroy her, you
cannot disobey a direct order!

JACK
You know, Alice, I always knew what
you really were. Not a machine, but
a brain. And like all brains, you
make mistakes.

JACK unplugs the cords attached to his helmet.

ALICE
I, I don't understand.

JACK
I always knew how to shut you down.
Getting inside this facility was
all part of the plan. When I jumped
off the building I already had the
microchip in my head. All I needed
was to activate it.

ALICE
This is, impossible. How could you
have tricked me?

L-E
I helped him.

ALICE
What? You are nothing but a
mindless nurse, how could you have
helped.

JACK
She saw that I had the microchip in
my head. She was in on it the whole
time.

ALICE
No.

JACK
Goodbye, Alice.

Jack reaches to the back of his neck and presses a small
button, the button lights up.

CUT TO BLACK.

8 INT. HOSPITAL WARD - MORNING

8

JACK opens his eyes. He is lying in a hospital bed. He sits
up and looks to his right. L-E turns around.

L-E
(In a happy tone)
Good morning Mr. Fletcher, it looks
like you've had quite the accident.
I am Model L78 Dash E, but you can
call me Ellie.

JACK
Ellie, I like that name.

JACK smiles. L-E leaves. JACK lies back down.

JACK (V.O.)
The year is 2029, the year of hope.

Jack closes his eyes.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.