

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 prophet, 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.