

WOLF

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The story has been wrestling through my head off and on since around 1995, when I was in high school. Since then, it has expanded from one story to an eight part saga. In this iteration, each part is summarized into two to three pages to give the reader (and myself in writing it) a general idea of the entire story arch of this character, Wolf.

This story is told through various genres and I hope that the variety comes through. For example, the first part, Seven Days, only takes place on seven days over ten years and skips from one day to the next, while others take place over a single night. The genres vary from action to suspense to science fiction. The other stories are more or less linear, with a few story elements and explanations postponed to a later story.

Thanks for reading! I hope you enjoy the story.

Nick Kish

Check for updates online:

<http://homepage.mac.com/nickkish/Wolf.html>

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Seven Days

The year is 2016 and David Bryce is on his way to New York City for the first time. He is 13 years old and a very intelligent young man. He is on his way to Columbia University for a special Intelligence Testing for young adults in the New England states. David knows that this test is being given to kids his age in various regions across the country. He is being driven from his hometown of Keeseville, NY, which is due north of NYC next to Lake Champlain, by his parents. As he gets his first glimpse of New York City, he is in awe and amazement at the grand city. Arriving at Columbia, David is taken to an Orientation session and then testing is to begin. David doesn't find the tests too difficult, but he soon figures out that some of the questions have been written to gain personality and characteristic traits.

After the tests, the children and their families are divided into smaller groups and are given a tour of the campus. Almost immediately, David meets a young boy and they soon find that they have a lot in common. The young boy's name is Kurt Naur and he is from Brooklyn. David is fascinated with life in the city and Kurt tells him all about it. David and Kurt continue to talk with each other through most of the tour and, shortly, become friends. They even talk their families into having dinner together that night. After dinner, they talk Kurt's parents to showing David and his family around the city over the rest of the weekend.

Six and a half months later, David is 14. After finishing an e-mail to Kurt, his father calls him down for breakfast. As gas is nationally in low quantity, David's parents are carpooling to work and dropping him off at school. It is a normal Tuesday in every way. On the way to school, their car is hit hard by another vehicle and David suffers a concussion to the head. David can't see anything as the paramedics show up and take him to the hospital. He keeps asking about his parents but no one answers as he is taken into emergency surgery. After a few hours of surgery, David is taken to a room where he wakes up but he still can't see because of the bandages from the surgery.

While laying there and no one answering his questions of his parents, David's mind wanders. He thinks of many things and his mind eventually drifts toward a movie he saw the previous weekend about some people robbing a bank. He then starts thinking about how he would do it. What would he do differentially? How many people? What about the police? Through the course of the afternoon, David thinks of the perfect plan to rob a bank. Right down to the last detail of having an inside man and a couple exit vectors, he thinks of all the details. And he lays there, quite content with himself. Until his thoughts are interrupted by a doctor coming in. Taking David's hand, the doctor tells David that his parents had been killed in the accident. David's mind reels with the news. It seems unreal and distant and unbelievable. Yet, he feels smothered in the great multitude of emotions and feelings it brings on.

A little over two years later, in the beginning of January, David had received a bee-bee gun for Christmas from his grandfather, Mike, and was going to be taught to shoot. He had been living with his grandparents in Roosevelt, MN since shortly after his parents' funeral and he was 16 years old. It had snowed a few inches the night before but that wasn't about to stop David from going out with his grandfather and his new gun. The two hiked out into the woods while David's grandfather explains a few of the responsibilities and rules about using any weapon, including a bee-bee gun. Through out the morning, David seems like a natural and is shortly doing very well, if even only a little comparable to his grandfather.

When they get home, David tells his grandmother all about it to keep his mind off of his date later on that night. Eventually, David gets ready and goes to pick up Kim Benjamin and they head off to the school dance. He has dated Kim a few months but the two weren't officially that serious, despite that David wanted to be. The Winter Dance proved to be more fun than he thought it was going to be. He hung out with a few friends, but mostly with just Kim. Later in the evening, David found himself with alone with Kim and the two begin talking about their feelings for each other and that they both wanted more of a relationship. Looking back, David knew that was the moment they had reached a new level in the relationship and that Kim was his first love. He never forgot about Kim and the times they spent together.

It has been almost a year since David joined the Marines after graduating high school. After a grueling boot camp, David joined the Sniper Division because he was a very good shot and showed a particular moral flexibility. He is 20 years old and about to go on his final mission to graduate Sniper School. On the chopper ride out to his drop point, he writes a letter to Kim, who is still his girlfriend. After being notified that they are a few minutes from the drop point, he tucks the letter in his pocket. The chopper slows down as it lowers closer to the ground and one of the crew helps him hook up to a drop line. He quickly drops the 50 ft to the ground and immediately disconnects the line and heads out into the woods as the chopper takes off. David checks his maps and compares them to his surroundings, gathering his bearings. He must navigate the woods to reach and take down his target.

It is a pretty long walk to the target site but David has a lot more experience in the woods than the Marines had provided. He has little trouble and arrives early with a few hours to spare. Shortly after arriving, he encounters a wolf in the woods. It runs off and, because he has some extra time, he decides to track the wolf for a while. His tracking takes him a quarter of a circle around from where his target is. He catches up to the wolf but only notices it too late as it attacks him. He wrestles with it a little before pulling a hand gun and shooting the wolf once in the head. He checks his time and sees that he doesn't have time to get back to where he is supposed to be, but he can hit the target from a different angle than planned. So David sets up his gear and waits for his target. Shortly there after, his target shows and David hits very accurately. The experience with the wolf really changes David. He is a different person. Word of his experience soon travels around the base and he is given the nickname Wolf, which he likes enough to decide to keep.

A year and a half later, David is 22 and is in the middle of his tour of duty for the Marines. He is a very accomplished sniper and his nickname Wolf is widely known. He is on a mission with two Marines, who are supposed to provide cover for him. The other two Marines are Tony Carnine and John Donner. They have to traverse across a mountainous area to get to the target and are on schedule to arrive near the area the next morning. While walking, they talk about a variety of things and, eventually, get to know each other quite well. Tony's uncle is a mob boss in Queens, NYC. John used to be a lineman in college and wants to get into law enforcement or security after the marines. Through the conversation, David's mind drifts a little and he remembers his plan of robbing a bank, considering Tony and John as team members.

About a half mile from the target area, the three marines set up camp for the night and then continue their conversation. David briefly tells the story of his car accident and how he came up with a plan for robbing a bank. He goes over most of the plan, not getting into too many specifics. Tony and John really like the idea and offer their assistance if he ever decided to go through with it. They settle in and go to sleep. As he drifts off to sleep, David begins to seriously consider the plan and decides to write to Kurt to see what he thinks about it. David

knew he had only to get Kurt on board and he would have everybody he needed to pull it off. But he also knew that Kurt was not going to be easy to convince.

Just under two years after his first of several missions with Tony and John, David is on a cargo plane with fifteen to twenty other various military personal heading towards a Minnesota Army Base. David is 23, his tour with the Marines is complete, and he is going home. Kim is there to pick him up and she mentions that he seems different. There are hints that the two have been drifting apart for a few years now but they still greet each other enthusiastically. Inside the hanger, where the other soldiers are meeting families and friends, an officer tells everyone that the president has an announcement to make. Everyone watches as James Rayzac, the president, announces the formation of The United Global Democracy (UGD) as his answer for world peace. Rayzac explains that the UGD would be a world government put over all other governments. He answers a few questions but explains that the specifics would be provided later.

On the drive home, David and Kim are swept up with everyone else discussing the liberal president's grand announcement. David agrees with the president in that something drastic was required for such a large undertaking as world peace. Kim disagrees with his method, in that she says a world government is not the answer to world peace. The casual discussion becomes heated and eventually becomes an argument about their relationship. As the two argue, Kim brings up David's plan of the bank robbery, which he's seriously considering by now. David defends himself but Kim lays down an ultimatum that if David intends to go with the plan, that she would leave him. They don't talk for the rest of the drive. When they get home, David heads to his room but instead of packing he sits on the bed, thinking. He packs up a few things, gets on his motorcycle, and leaves. He has no intentions of returning.

Two days after David's birthday and a little over a year later, David (now 25 years old) and his crew wait outside of the bank in Columbus, OH. They sync their watches and then walk in. John is the inside man and provided info on the bank. Tony utilized his family's mob connections and he provided most of the equipment and vehicles. Kurt is the wheelman and organized the various exit vectors for everybody. David was the mastermind and was on demolitions. The cameras had been disabled along with the alarm the previous night. Everything went according to plan and the four exit the bank, forcing everyone from the bank to leave as well. Shooting guns in the air, the people run in chaos, and the crew head for their respective vehicles parked at different spaces. Kurt and John in one car, Tony in another car half a block away, and David will be taking his motorcycle. Once David is sure everyone is out, he blows up the bank.

Arriving at the rendezvous (their hotel room) first, David quickly grabs his bag and readies his things. He pulls a note from his bag and a small amount of money (about 10% each instead of the 25% each as they had originally agreed) and leaves it on the table. He has no intention of waiting for the rest of the guys as he has made other plans. David leaves town and travels about 30 miles north of Columbus, pulling off the highway and heading to a small state park. He parks his motorcycle on the side of the road and heads into the woods. A few hours later, as a much dirtier David approaches the road, he sees a squad car and an officer who looked like he was calling in the his plates. Then he realized what had happened back at the hotel but he continues to the road, accepting his fate. Upon seeing him, the officer pulls his gun on David and orders him to the ground. After the station confirms the officer's suspicion that the motorcycle was involved in the robbery he had heard about earlier in the day, David is put in the back of squad car, knowing he had been turned in.

Aftermath

David Bryce has been in prison in Ohio for a little over four years for the robbery of a bank in Columbus. On his last day, he awakes quite peacefully. He sits up and looks around. He hadn't slept much, but he surprisingly not too tired. His cell mate on the top bunk gets up and jumps down to the floor. Shortly there after, the guard down the hall calls breakfast and all the barred doors slid open. Outside, David meets up with his friend Jim Lucas, whose cell is on the level below David's. On the way to breakfast, David and Jim recall how they met over a year and a half ago. After breakfast, David reminds Jim that he is getting out that afternoon and they probably won't see each other until they both get out. David tells Jim to find him on the outside. David says he plans of starting a business and he'd like to hire Jim.

A year and a half later, David is finally done with his parole. He has been living in the Columbus, Ohio, area. He had been following the NASCAR circuit the past few months and he sets out to follow the circuit. Last he heard, his old friend Kurt Nuarl was a mechanic for one of the drivers. After a few weeks of checking out security, he thinks he's found a way in. David thought the race is so much different (and better) from the pit area. An hour or so later, David finds Kurt sitting in the pit area waiting to be called on. David sneaks up on Kurt and scares him. When Kurt realized that it was David who scared him, they both laughed pretty hard. Kurt was obviously very excited to see David.

After the race, Kurt takes David to a local bar that he usually goes to. After a few minutes of silence with their beers, Kurt decides to break the silence. He asks David what had happened. David explains that the plan was his and he decided to take the majority of the money. Kurt tells David that he had left right after Tony and John decided to phone in an anonymous tip. After they settled their business, David and Kurt have a good time reviving old memories and stories. After the night and a lot of drinks, David tells Kurt that he will take him to where he buried the money and that Kurt can get a larger share.

A month later, while Kurt is on a vacation from work, David and Kurt set out to the woods. After passing through Cincinnati, David, who is driving, thinks that they are being followed. After another hour or so, David is quite sure they are being followed. Kurt looks back and sees that it is Tony and John. Still driving, David works with Kurt on a plan to deal with the two. David goes north of where the money is buried and wait for Tony and John to make their move.

David and Kurt arrive at the woods; grab shovels out of the trunk, and head into the woods. David knows that Tony and John are not far behind so he leads them away from where the money is. Arriving to a wooded area at the top of a ridge, David decides to stop walking and start digging. After half an hour, David and Kurt have a pretty good hole dug. David says that 'they have it' a little louder than was necessary and Tony and John come out from behind some trees. David pulls Kurt out of the hole and they run off to regroup. David and Kurt turn around and charge back to the hole.

Realizing David and Kurt are coming back and that there is nothing in the hole; Tony and John flee back to their cars. David and Kurt chase after Tony and John. The pair of cars race down the interstate back towards Columbus. Once in the city, Kurt, who is driving now, starts gaining on Tony and John. The road gets tighter and traffic increases and the chase gets harder for both drivers. Tony makes a hard left through on-coming traffic and barely makes it. Kurt tries a

similar maneuver, but is hit by another car. Kurt swerves to miss any more cars, but they've lost Tony and John.

A few hours later and back on the road, David wants to go after Tony and John. This is his chance to get back at the men who put him away for four years. But Kurt is reluctant. Kurt is thinking about everything he has accomplished and everything he has going for him. After discussing it with David, Kurt says that he is not going after Tony and John and that he is going home. David is unswayed and he heads to Pennsylvania to look up a friend who has a knack of finding people who are lost.

At a cyber cafe outside Pittsburg, David checks his email and sees that his friend is online. David sends an instant message to see if it's cool that he stops by and gets an 'okay' reply back. Arriving at an apartment building not far from the cyber cafe, David knocks on the door and his friend Jim (from prison) answers and greets him with a hug. After catching up, David explains the situation and the services he needs from Jim. Jim quickly corrects David, saying his handle is now OutR1ght. David says his handle has been Wolf for a long time. OutR1ght says it will probably take a few days, but he should be able to locate Tony and John without too much trouble. After two long days of searching, OutR1ght says that he's found them. David asks OutR1ght to get some surveillance, while David asks Kurt one more time.

A couple days later, David arrives at Kurt's apartment outside Richmond, Virginia. Walking up to the door, he sees that the door is open an inch or two. Fearing the worst, David gets his gun out and, holding in front of him, slowly enters the apartment. In the living area, David sees that someone else has been here as the place has been turned over. Then David hears someone in the back. There is an occasional grunting and the sound of things being toppled over. David quietly moves towards the back hallway. As he reaches the hallway, the sounds stop but David continues. Then John, a former lineman, jumps out from some room and runs David into the hallway wall. With a grunt of his own, David falls to the floor in serious pain as John runs out of the apartment.

It had defiantly been a while since David was in that much pain. Still lying on the floor ten minutes later, he wonders if anything is broken. Then he hears some one enter the apartment. He picks up his gun and aims it down the hallway towards the living room. Kurt walks around the corner and spots David on the floor. David notices that he has a bloody nose and he is limping a little. Kurt says that he saw John leave and they fought outside, but John ran off after a few minutes. David says that he thinks John was looking for the money, and then Kurt says that he was just out hiding it elsewhere. David says he knows where Tony and John are hiding in Columbus.

Having agreed to join David, Kurt takes David to his garage. David and Kurt work on deciding on the best way to attack the hideout and come up with a strategy using the surveillance that OutR1ght had provided. Kurt suggests a frontal assault and he shows David a customized armored car that he's been working on for the past few years. David agrees. They load the car into Kurt's trailer and drive back to Columbus where David had been staying. David takes Kurt to a garage that he's been renting. When David opens it, Kurt is surprised to see that David had constructed a gun cage inside with fortified walls and mounts for pretty much any kind of gun one could want. The guns range from pistols, assault rifles and David's coveted sniper rifle. David picks out a few guns for Kurt and several for himself and they head out towards Tony and John's hideout.

Tony and John's hideout is an old office & warehouse building for industrial parts in the south east area of Columbus. David and Kurt arrive a little past midnight and park a quarter mile away. David gets out and packs his guns in various holsters around his body and Kurt readies his guns and puts them on the front seat of the car. David runs up to the front entrance and picks the lock while Kurt races around to the back. David quietly moves through the small office and doesn't find anyone so he moves back to the warehouse area.

Sneaking around the warehouse looking for Tony and John, David hears some gun fire, but he hasn't seen anyone yet. David decides to get a higher view of things so he looks up and spots a catwalk and locates the ladder. While David is going to the ladder he meets up with Kurt. Kurt says that he killed John, but he hasn't seen Tony yet. David says that he's going to get some higher ground and suggests that Kurt head toward the warehouse entrance to keep Tony from escaping. David gets up the ladder and starts looking for Tony. Then he hears Tony call out to him, saying that he has Kurt. David spots the pair and Tony has Kurt at gunpoint but it doesn't look like Tony knows where David is. So, David quietly makes his way down the catwalk to get a better shot. He lines up Tony's head in his sites and pulls the trigger. Kurt is splattered in blood as both of them fall to the ground. When David gets there, Kurt is sitting up; he says that he can't believe David shot him. David just snickers.

At the Diner Deluxe on the north end of town, around 5:00 AM, OutR1ght is waiting with David's jeep. David and Kurt pull up in Kurt's now mildly damaged armored car. David hands OutR1ght an envelope, saying thanks. OutR1ght checks the envelope and sees the amount of money inside and says 'thanks' as well. David then offers OutR1ght a job of doing similar work for him. OutR1ght agrees and they decide to meet later and he leaves. David and Kurt then go inside to have some breakfast. While they're eating, David asks Kurt what he's planning on doing now. Kurt says that he's heading back to the NASCAR circuit ('where things aren't as exciting'). David says that he's planning on finally moving to New York City like he's always wanted to.

I Love NYC

David Bryce has been living in New York City for the past 2 years where he's been working as a freelance assassin. It's around 9:15 PM on a mid-August evening and he is working late. He should have been done with the job over an hour ago, but some one else showed up and got in the way. He is quite frustrated, as he is late for his date with his girlfriend, of 8 months, who still does not know for sure what he does for a living. Finally, at 9:23, the guy leaves and David's target is left alone. Shortly there after, David takes out his target in one shot from his sniper rifle. He then rushes back to his Jeep, where he changes quickly and freshens up.

Around 9:45, David hastily walks into the restaurant (not even 4 blocks from his hit) where he is meeting his girlfriend, Jill Gales, who is already there. David is 45 minutes late and Jill was about to leave after not being able to reach him. They eat dinner with out saying too much to each other. After dinner, David drives them to a dance club. David isn't that great, but he has much improved since they started dating. After a few hours of dancing, Jill says she's tired and wants to go home. They have a quick glass of water and then leave.

While walking back to Jill's apartment around 1:00 AM, Jill starts to bring up a few issues of trust that David apparently is lacking with her, but is shortly interrupted. A black van pulls up next to them on the sidewalk and five guys jump out. They head straight towards David and Jill and they're all wearing very nice suits. They quickly surround the couple, and it is shortly apparent to David that this is no ordinary mugging, so he tries to talk to the men. Without responding, four of the men jump on David and the fifth one grabs Jill. With a hand over Jill's mouth, the man throws her in the back of the van. Meanwhile, David is putting up a rather good fight against the other four. He puts two down, but is overwhelmed by the other two. Seeing that Jill is in the van the two still standing start to run off.

David starts to chase one of the men. The man runs into a restaurant and David chases him through. He exists from the back and heads for the back of a bar. The man gets out his phone and begins to call for help with David right on his heels. The man runs through a few other restaurants and bars and down various streets and alleys. A few minutes later, one of the other men comes out of no where and knocks David over. David gets up and starts to fight the two men. During the fight, David is knocked unconscious and falls to the ground hard.

David is awoken by the sound of his cell phone ringing. Looking at the phone, he sees that it's just before 2 AM and in some alley. Not recognizing the number on the caller-id, he answers the phone and it is one of the men that had kidnapped Jill. Still on the phone, David gets up and heads to the end of the ally. After checking a street sign, he starts walking to colleague's apartment. The man tells David that they are demanding a ransom be paid in two hours at a specific address. David recalls that the street given is somewhere in Queens and he says that he will get the ransom and deliver it in two hours.

After walking ten more minutes, David arrives at a rundown looking apartment building. David climbs the 4 flights of stairs and heads to the end of the hall and uses a key from his own ring to enter. This apartment belongs to OutR1ght, a hacker who works for David. After an explanation of what had happened, David asks OutR1ght to check the address where the ransom is to be dropped off and to trace the number of the caller. While OutR1ght works, David goes into a back room and changes into some black fatigues and a black t-shirt. Then he gets some munitions and the money for the ransom. He had no intention of letting it come to that, but he

knew it was better to be prepared. Shortly, OutR1ght traces the phone to a powerful mob family that lives in the area: The Carnines, now the biggest operating mob family east of the Mississippi.

David goes back into the other room and gets more stuff. OutR1ght provides the address to David and he leaves. After arriving at the address a half an hour later, David finds a good place to hide and waits. The address that belongs to the phone is a warehouse, but no one is there. After half an hour, David has OutR1ght do a check and he finds out that the Carnines own most of the warehouses in the area. David looks around and finds one that looks like it has occupants inside. Hiding along the way, he moves quietly up to the warehouse. He climbs up a side in the shadows from the street lights up to a window. Wiping one of the dirty windows, he sees that Jill is being watched by the five men that had kidnapped her. Climbing back down, he opts for a frontal assault. David heads back to his Jeep and grabs his gear: a .45 Assault rifle, two .50 Magnums, and large survival knife.

He picks the lock and walks in the front door. The men are very surprised to see David, as the drop time is in 15 minutes and a few miles away. David greets the four that he can see and tells them that there won't be any ransom paid. They all start to laugh and David learns that two men are up in the scaffolding with a rifle. David quickly draws his two Magnums and shoots two guys in the head, killing them. Before they hit the floor, David jumps to his left towards some boxes while unloading the rest of his clips at another one of the men. The remaining three men start to shoot at David, but they mostly miss. Dropping the handguns, he draws his rifle and picks off the two guys in the scaffolding. Then everything is quiet as David searches around the warehouse for the last guy, who surprises him with a shot to the left leg. David quickly spins and shoots the man down. Putting down his rifle, he starts to head back to Jill to untie her. On his way, a man he hadn't seen jumps out from behind some boxes and puts a gun to Jill's head. David knows he doesn't much of a chance to think, so he quickly pulls the knife from its sleeve at the top of his back and throws it at the man, killing him.

After hugging David, Jill slaps him across the face in a 'how could you put me through this?' manner. She also inquires about how well he did with out much more than a scratch. David admits that he had been shot, but Jill isn't satisfied with his answer. David avoids answering right away by applying a temporary bandage to his leg. But years of practice allow him to finish quickly with a decent bandage and Jill is still waiting for an answer. Reluctantly, David explains that he has been working as a free-lance assassin for the past 2 years. Jill also gets that that was the reason he was late to dinner earlier that evening. David says he will provide more of an explanation, but he must get her to safety first, so they leave.

Arriving at OutR1ght's apartment, David takes Jill up. She is very unsure and scared, given recent events, but David pushes her on, assuring her it will be okay. Letting himself and Jill in, OutR1ght says he has never had a girl in his apartment before. Both Jill and OutR1ght are clearly anxious of each other. David goes back to the other room and grabs a couple beers for them and explains the situation, which calms both of them down. Finally, OutR1ght asks David what he is going to do. David tells them that the best solution he can think of is to see The Father (of the Carnine family) and set things straight. While OutR1ght gets the address of where The Father stays, David stocks up on ammo. David assures both of them they will both be safe and he leaves. As he leaves, David hears the beginnings of an awkward conversation between his girlfriend and the hacker that works for him.

Arriving in the warehouse district of Queens, a half an hour later, David parks a block away from Father's office. He takes his guns to an ally, where he can remain unseen while he readies

them. Then, peaking out from the ally, he takes a second look at his target and then for a good position to begin his attack. He shortly finds a semi-truck and decides that it will be perfect and climbs up. He then takes a moment of silence and readies himself for what he about to do. David's info from OutR1ght said that there were about 30 guards. If he was lucky, he would only go through half of them. Then David starts sniping guards at particular times to not raise suspicion. But after a few minutes, a panic spreads through out and the guards spread to a defensive positions. David has to move in.

David puts the sniper rifle in the jeep and grabs his other weapons: an assault rifle, his pistol, and a large knife. The silencer on his magnum proves very useful. David also disables the security cameras on the way, finding them using the schematics OutR1ght had given him. David pictures The Father, in his office, watching his cameras go out one by one, and he chuckles a little. Through the warehouse, David runs to the stairs leading to the office area. He takes out a few guards in the hallway and makes his way to the double doors of The Father's office. David smiles into the camera watching him right before he disables it as well. He then takes a second to catch his breath again. Then David lets him self in the unlocked office.

An hour later, David arrives back at OutR1ght's apartment. Going in the front door, David is surprised to find OutR1ght's head in Jill's lap, both of them are asleep. David quietly wakes up Jill and she says he fell asleep in her lap while they were watching TV and she only just dozed off herself. David and Jill leave quietly and they go to Central Park to watch the sunrise. It's around 6:00 AM and David comments that that was the best date he's ever been on. After thinking about it, Jill agrees. As the couple sits there, enjoying the sunrise, a woman in a suit that David had never seen before approaches them and introduces herself as Ms. Russell. She says that she had been watching him for a few weeks now and wanted to offer him a job unlike anything David has ever known before.

The Rookie

The military camp is deep in the forest. The soldiers are not that spread out, but most are as comfortable as they can be. There are about 18 in the camp. During the night, a clearly larger force attacks them. The fight is short and most of the company is killed. The Chief (the commanding officer) calls for a retreat of the area and tells Frank (radio) to call for backup, citing heavy losses. Only 6 had survived the fierce battle.

Two days later, Rookie is dropped in. For his first drop, he actually does quite well, but it is by no means perfect. Shortly after, he meets his contact, Dirt. Rookie begins to tell Dirt his real name but is cut off as Dirt tells him they only refer to each other by nicknames. So the Rookie starts to say that his nickname is Wolf, but Dirt cuts him off, saying that he will just be known as Rookie. Dirt is a bare-knuckles soldier, carrying a hand pistol and sub-machine gun. Dirt leads Rookie a couple miles back to camp. As they approach, they come upon Goliath (demolitions), who is keeping watch on the perimeter. Dirt and Rookie pass and head towards the new camp. When they arrive at the camp, Rookie meets everyone else: Chief, Screamer (heavy weapons), Bishop (motivator), and Frank. Then, Chief talks with Rookie about Rookie's abilities and potential role in the upcoming counter-attack.

Later that day, Chief pulls everyone together and discusses the plan for the next morning's counter-attack. Rookie is surprised that it will happen so soon. Intel gathered by Bishop reports that there are 20-30 of the enemy forces. He also reports someone new had joined them as well. Everyone seems surprised by this news except Rookie. The Chief tells them that Rookie will be filling in for Eagle, the former Sniper who was killed in the surprise attack. Everyone seems uneasy with this decision but they are not left with too many alternatives. Rookie sleeps restlessly that night, dreaming of the past. He awakens suddenly the next morning to find it's just before dawn on the morning of the attack. Rookie looks around to see no one is awake except the Chief, who is fixing some coffee. Chief and Rookie discuss the attack and what is to be done. Then people start waking and rummaging around for food, but no one is really that hungry.

Shortly thereafter, everyone starts getting into positions. Rookie circles around with Goliath and Bishop to take up a flanking position. Goliath and Bishop leave Rookie to get into their own positions. There are a few tense moments, while everyone eyes their watches, waiting for the attack to begin. Chief fires the first shot to mark the start of the offensive. Initially, the enemy is caught off guard, and the company makes good progress. Within minutes, the enemy starts to retreat and Rookie can see the company advancing. The company makes a number of kills, but Rookie misses all of his shots. Within minutes, Rookie notices one of the enemies is not retreating but remaining stationary. Rookie stares this one down. He can see this one trailing one of the company and killing him with a shot to the back of the head. As this one of the company falls, Rookie can see that it is Screamer. Rookie decides that this person, the Pursuer, is his most important target, but he is out of range.

The only way Rookie can get to the Pursuer is leaving his current position. He starts to move in the direction Goliath and Bishop went but is quickly noticed by the Pursuer. Rookie runs this way and that, trying to stay hidden. For a few stressful minutes, Rookie waits, thinking he has lost the Pursuer. Then Rookie spots the Pursuer, also trying to stay hidden, moving toward him. Risking further detection, Rookie moves again. Seeing a large hole ahead he moves toward it,

thinking it would be a good place to hide. Without looking first, Rookie jumps in to find a number of dead bodies. It looks like the bodies are a few days old and are casualties from both sides.

There is gunfire ahead where the battle rages in the slight distance from the Rookie's hole but then there is a single gunshot very close behind him. Three others, in quick succession, follow the shot. Then Bishop falls into the hole. Rookie notices that Bishop is covered in blood and leaves. Rookie goes over and holds Bishop in his arms. Bishop, suddenly noticing Rookie is holding him, whispers something encouraging. Bishop then dies in Rookie's arms. Rookie lays Bishop's body gently down, laying his hands over his chest and closing his eyes. Bishop's words really stick with Rookie, lighting a fire in him and giving him a new sense of strength. He readies his weapons and goes to the edge of the hole, listening for the Pursuer or the enemy.

Not hearing anything close, he risks a peek and doesn't see anyone. He jumps out and charges toward the sounds of gunfire. As he runs he passes Screamer's body on the ground. He pushes forward and sees another bloodied body uniformed like him. The Chief was killed by what looks like an entire clip from a machine gun. Finding strength in revenge and his desire to prove himself, Rookie continues. He sees an enemy soldier ahead, running toward a clearing in the forest. Rookie stops and takes a shot. He hits the enemy in the arm but the soldier keeps running. Rookie continues to head for the clearing.

Suddenly noticing how quiet it is, Rookie stops abruptly. There is no more gunfire, no explosions, just a slight wind rustling the leaves in the trees above. He looks around but can't see anybody except a group of soldiers ahead in the clearing. He can hear taunting, but can't make out whom it is. Thinking they must be victorious, Rookie runs toward the clearing. Bursting out of the woods, he sees there is a small lake with a shore of twenty feet or so. Between the woods and the lake, Rookie sees Dirt, Goliath, and Frank on their knees with their arms behind their heads. They are encircled by 11 enemy soldiers. The three remaining of his company all look at him. Rookie can feel their eyes bore through him. Behind the three is the Pursuer. The five closest of the enemy all turn their guns on Rookie, and he is forced to surrender. Dropping his guns, he puts his arms behind his head and kneels, facing the other three.

The Pursuer then kills the other three one by one; Frank, Dirt, then Goliath; each falling with a thud on the ground that drives Rookie's pain deeper. The enemy then moves to encircle Rookie as the Pursuer walks up to him. The Pursuer talks to him like they've known each other for years. The enemy soldiers look a little surprised by this, but Rookie is not. Rookie and the Pursuer discuss the state of things tensely. Finally, the Pursuer says he must kill the Rookie and walks behind him. Rookie feels the heat of the Pursuer's gun push against the back of his head.

The woods suddenly go silent and he can no longer hear the taunting of the enemy soldiers or the rustling of the leaves up in the trees. He no longer feels the cool wind on his face or the heat of the gun behind his head. He can no longer support himself, and his body goes limp. His sight of the lake, how beautiful it looks all of a sudden, fades to black.

The Project

David Bryce meets with his supervisor Jack Williams after coming back from leave. David and his wife just had their first baby, Daniel, and David took some time off to help out. Jack has a new assignment for David. David needs to train two new cadets, Mike Andrews and Liz Citrel, in the Project. David hasn't been a trainer for a few years but Jack says that David is the best trainer the Project has ever had and that these new cadets are special. David will be bringing Mike in and someone else will be bringing Liz in. There have never been a male and female cadets paired before. Then, David asks what the status is on Calus. Jack updates him, saying that everything is about the same. Jack goes on to say that Mike and Liz are going to be important, as they will be the last cadets brought in before the visitors from Calus arrive. After their training, they will be put on a team with David and will be working with the visitors closely.

After reviewing Mike's file a little, David leaves to see Mike. Jill doesn't want David to go so soon after their son was born, but David reminds that she knew that this was part of his job. Mike shows a number of 'signs' for being right for the Project. Mike, 21, has lived by himself for three years since his parents divorced. Never being that close to either of them, he moved to New York City and works as a programmer. After a few days, David approaches Mike about the Project. Mike is reluctant at first but, after some thought, agrees to join the Project.

David brings Mike into Head Quarters for The Captain Hero Project (CHP). He explains a brief history of the Project. The Project was secretly started by the U.S. Government in the Early 1980s for the purpose of seeking out and making contact with extra-terrestrials. The Project original intentions were to protect the US but it quickly became apparent to the members that the true idea was to protect Earth. So, the Project is currently funded by all governments but does not fall under any political jurisdiction.

The next day, Mike is introduced to his competing cadet, Liz, who was brought in by Angela Wing. David explains to Mike and Liz how the system of competing cadets works and that there has never been a male/female competition. The idea of competing cadets is to bring out the best in the cadets by giving them competition in each of the six missions/tests in the Project. David leaves them to themselves to let them get to know each other while he prepares the initial training exercises. David tells them about his own experiences in Training and how he is the highest scoring cadet ever in the Project. Mike and Liz are given a few days and they explore the complex together.

The first training exercise involves some computer games. Mike and Liz team up against other enemies and play against each other. There is strategy, fighting, and first-person shooter games that test hand-eye coordination, reflexes, strategy, and thinking on one's feet. They then get into some physical training; exercising, sparring, and endurance are all tested. Mike and Liz fight against others, working as a team, and fight against each other like in the computer games. They also learn how to fly several aircraft, including the CHP Fighters. Starting out just flying and avoiding obstacles, they then get into the fighters and compete against each other and others. Mike notes to David that the training sessions seem awkward, but Mike dismisses it as just getting used to the whole Project. David knows what's really going on though.

The fourth training operation is the Rookie Scenario. Each of the cadets is placed on opposing sides during a battle. One side has more soldiers, but the other side has better, more trained soldiers. Mike is assigned the role of the Rookie and Liz is the Pursuer. Mike wins the match

by getting Liz. David tells the pair of his experience in the Rookie Scenario, saying it was the only test he failed and his opponent, Kurt, is still the highest scorer for the operation, having killed the entire company.

The next lesson is that of demolitions. David presents Mike and Liz with knowledge on different types of explosives and various ways of destroying buildings, vehicles, etc. The test is that Mike and Liz have to destroy a very large building faster and more effectively than the other. Liz uses a ventilation shaft, controlling her drop with a grapple line while planting the charges at predetermined floors and exits through the service entrance. Mike, planting a grapple line, jumps out the window and shoots the charges back in, he comes in 1/4 up from the bottom the building and runs to an atrium where a train comes through the building, leaving a charge or two in the atrium, and runs out the front entrance. David watches both and awards points accordingly.

A day or two later, very early in the morning, an unknown force attacks the Watchtower 53 outpost in space. Alarms all over the CHP complex wake everyone up. David watches in the command room as all communications were knocked out. And the security cameras surrounding the outpost are knocked out one by one. David switches from camera to camera, as they each go out in turn, following the crew as they are killed one by one. After everyone is killed, David switches to a docking bay camera and finds that it was a massive blob of some kind and its heading for Earth. David calls for the fighters to gear up as the blob is tracked with satellites. Mike and Liz head for their fighters with everyone else but are recalled by David, as they haven't finished training yet.

The CHP fighters leave the base as the blob approaches. Mike and Liz can do nothing except watch helplessly. The fighters engage and the blob puts up a really good fight. It manages to knock down two fighters right away. The remaining fighters circle around as the blob heads off toward a large city. The fighters keep shooting it but it regenerates and knocks out the fighters one by one. The fight is quick and the blob is victorious. A single tear drops down Liz's face as Mike comforts her. David shows no reaction at all.

Mike and Liz volunteer to fight the evil blob. At first, David is reluctant to let them go but then he says if they can figure out a way to destroy the blob before going to face it, then they can go. Mike and Liz frantically analyze the data sent back from the fighters before they were all destroyed. After proposing a few ideas, Mike and Liz are stuck. Then Liz thinks of freezing it some how and then Mike suggests using the icy waters of one of the poles. David agrees and lets Mike and Liz go out to face the blob. They find the blob in a baseball park killing all the fleeing spectators but it ignores their flybys. They decide to use one of their solar rays to get its attention. The solar ray is a system that uses special solar cells to absorb the suns heat and focus it into a super hot ray beam. After regenerating itself, the blob goes after Mike and Liz in their fighters.

David watches anxiously as Mike and Liz lure the blob to the South Pole. The blob chases them all over the South Pole area and the glaciers surrounding it. They try several maneuvers but nothing seems to shake it. Mike and Liz both comment how well the fighters seem to react to them and their desired maneuvers. Mike then thinks of baiting it some how, but they can't figure out how to do it. Liz analyzes the blob and discovers a weak spot. As Mike goes for it, the blob smashes his fighter and starts to go down with his engines out. On his way down, he somehow manages to fire his solar ray at the blob, taunting it. The blob attacks Mike's damaged craft and Liz follows Mike's lead and attacks the distracted blob at the weak spot, injuring it so it falls into the water and freezes. Liz picks up Mike and they head back to base.

David calls for a crew to go and get the evil blob so it can't escape. When they get back, there is much celebration.

Mike quickly notices that David isn't out in the hanger with everybody celebrating and mentions it to Liz. The two walk further in the base, followed by the roaring crowd, and find David in his office. With the sound of the crowd still cheering outside, Mike and Liz asks why David wasn't out celebrating with everyone else and he merely replies 'congratulations.' Then Mike and Liz wake up in a room they've never seen before but clearly still on the CHP complex. They are connected to a large computer in between them. David is there and congratulates them much more enthusiastically than before. The two think about it a few moments and David answers their realization. David fills them in that this computer and the others it connects to make up a system which creates an extremely life like, artificial world where their training missions have been held. While they were sleeping they have been hooked up to the machine and would wake up on mission day not even realizing they were hooked in.

Once it all settles in, after they graduate, David gives Mike and Liz their first assignment. Mike and Liz need to make contact with a particular person in the National Mall in Washington D.C.

Revelation

It's early June in 2037 and David Bryce walks with Mike Andrews and Liz Citrel along the gravel walkways of National Mall, Washington D.C., looking for their contact. While none of them know exactly what he looks like, they do have an idea of his general appearance. They also know that the contact is here with a woman. David, Mike, and Liz are all wearing earplugs, discreet microphones, and hidden cameras; which are all being monitored by a CHP team in a delivery van in front of the National Air and Space Museum. Then Liz spots the man they are looking for and notifies the team of his location. Mike and Liz take point on either side of David as he approaches and introduces himself and gives a respectful Calus greeting. The man looks at David in surprise at David then introduces himself as Alcoer in some type of broken English. Alcoer motions and a woman approaches. Alcoer introduces her as his wife, Poeh. David introduces his colleagues Mike and Liz and Mike suggests going some where a little more private.

A CHP car that was waiting in front of the delivery truck pulls up and David gets in with Alcoer and Poeh. Mike and Liz get in the delivery truck and they all head out of the National Mall towards a commercial area of the city. Going into the back entrance of an abandoned building, David leads them to a conference room which had been cleaned and furnished. As they enter, Jack Williams stands and greets the two guests. Alcoer and Poeh are obviously surprised but are soon comforted and they invite the rest of their party to join them. An hour later, 28 others had arrived at the office building. Alcoer tells David that they are called The Thirty. Seeing the time is finally appropriate, The Thirty invite the CHP members to join them in some of their planet's traditional introduction rituals. David suggests that The Thirty be taken to CHP head quarters for the more formal introductions.

David rides with Alcoer and Poeh as The Thirty are taken to CHP HQ. Once there, The Thirty find that a large room has been prepared for the Calus' Introduction Rituals. After the rituals, The Thirty are provided a general tour of the facility that finishes in a large conference room. David then gives a brief history of The Project and explains how they (the CHP) knew about them and that they are familiar with the Goriin and Skag. The Thirty seemed a little impressed, but still felt it necessary to provide a little more detailed explanation. Alcoer provides a brief history of their situation. He explains that the Goriin had lived millennia, grew very intelligent, and began developing new life forms by experimenting with genetics. They had created the Skag (what we call dinosaurs) and the Trug (what we call humans). The Skag project was the main experiment in genetics and creating new life. The follow up experiment was people, which was largely an experiment in evolution. The humans were separated into two groups, placing each on a different planet. Half were placed on Earth, the rest in their home planet of Calus. Then Poeh continues with more recent history. She tells of how the Humans of Calus discovered the Goriin and Skag and the Skag revolt and the war that has ravaged their home ever since. Then she tells how they, Alcoer and herself, deciphered the Goriin language and learned all this history of their enemies and of another planet of Humans, Earth. So they came up with a plan to win the war. At this point, Alcoer's supreme officer, Fob, interrupts Poeh. He says that their plan to win the war consisted of bring the fight to Earth so their war-ridden planet could recover and they could repair their fleet, so their fleet can come here at a latter point to destroy the Goriin and Skag fleet for good. He then formally asks the CHP and the People of Earth help them in their struggle against the Goriin and Skag. The room is silent for a few minutes until Jack stands and addressed everyone. Jack says that he will notify the President of Earth and that they will have all the help they need but they're level of technology is not yet at

that of Calus. Fob replies that they will help the People of Earth prepare for war. Jack then calls for the head of the CHP Department of Plans and Contingencies, Robert Watts, to present. Robert starts out by explaining that Plans and Contingencies forms plans in case of a number of various situations. Due to the fact that all of the resources of Earth are going to be required for such an undertaking, the people of Earth will have to be notified. The plan that accomplishes this best is Plan 39. Plan 39 basically covers the introduction of other species to the people of Earth. Watts estimates that the technology will have to be brought between 70 to 90 years to really be effective. He finishes by stressing that Plan 39 is merely the introduction to the People and that they will present another plan to handle the war itself shortly.

In the next few hours, Jack and David leave for Honolulu, HI, the Capitol of Earth to meet the President. At the Capitol building, they make their way into the President's office quickly because they outrank every one of the on-site personnel except for the President himself. Jack has the President called and Jack and David wait in his office. The President of the UGD, Mike Nurb, enters his office a few minutes later. Jack introduces himself and provides his rank and introduces David. Then, Jack gives an explanation of who he is and why he is there. He provides a general explanation of the situation, referring to David to fill in the necessary details. Nurb is obviously surprised and is at a complete lack of what to say. After a minute or two, he collects himself and asks the two men what needs to be done. Jack defers to David to fill in the basics of Plan 39 and says that Nurb will have to act as quickly as possible. David also mentions that this is basically an introduction of The Thirty to the People of Earth and that the CHP will present a plan on their plan for the war itself in a few days.

Nurb asks the two men to stay until he addresses the people. Jack and David agree and even have Alcoer and Poeh come out as liaisons. Nurb calls for an immediate Address to the People of Earth. A few hours later, David is sitting in a back room at the Capitol building, watching the introduction of the President of the UGD on television. He can't help but think how big the President must feel, talking over TV and radio stations to the entire world at the same time. Nurb speaks of the unity and brotherhood and peace that are the foundations of the UGD. Then he vaguely introduces Jack and the CHP and describes a little about what they do. Then the President enthusiastically introduces Alcoer and Poeh as members of The Thirty. He then switches to a more somber tone of the impending attacks by two other species, the Goriin and Skag.

A few days later, an official banquet is held to welcome the Thirty. There is a lot of high level government people and David feels quite out of place. Even with his wife, Jill, there with him, he is still uncomfortable. Most of the public seemed to be in shock for the first few days. The news is obviously all over the media and the Thirty are the most popular 'people' on Earth. As busy as he is over the next few weeks, David still tries to keep up with what's happening in the world. It seemed that once everyone came out of the shock of the news, the reactions were as varied as there are people. There are riots and looting in a few cities. There is also an increase in people going to church. Support groups are overwhelmed and in great need of volunteers. Various branches in the military had received record volunteers not seen since WWII.

A few weeks after the announcement to the world, the CHP Planning Dept. called a meeting with Jack, David, Alcoer, and Poeh. Robert starts off saying how hard his entire team had worked over the last few weeks. He continues in announcing a revised Plan 62. With information from Alcoer, Poeh and his own team, they have come up with a general plan of preparing the people of Earth for a war the likes of which they had never seen before. The plan also outlined how they were going to advance the current level of technology about 75 years. Alcoer also addresses everybody and states that they have detected two fleets approaching.

The Thirty estimates that the more advanced Goriin fleet will arrive first, in 10 to 12 months, and the Skag fleet will arrive later, in 12 to 14 months. Jack and David are immediately on a plane to inform The President.

Upon hearing the new plan, Nurb again addresses the people of Earth, outlining the plan. He says that every capable person will be working towards preparing the Earth for war. He also says that this is the biggest project in the history of Earth and that they will be bringing technology forward about 75 years with the help from the Thirty working with Earth's own scientists. Afterwards, Nurb tells Jack and David how important it is that the CHP lead this effort. With Jack as the manager over the entire project, things move quickly. Within two months, a new space station (named ISS-4) is started and weekly or even daily launches become common occurrences all over the world. Jack manages everything as efficiently as possible, delegating a lot of work like the manufacturing of ships, weapons, and facilities on Earth and shipping most of it into space for more work. After five months, a variety of new, and some secret, weapons begin arriving at the space station and fitted into place.

David is surprised how much has been accomplished in the past five months. On a much deserved day off, he spends it at a local park with his wife, who is pregnant with their second son, and Daniel, now a year and half old. But something worries David, like it's going almost too well. A few days later, David receives the bad news he thought was coming. Members of the CHP and some media begin hearing rumors of some unsettling news about an as yet unknown underground organization known as the Old World Order (OWO). David heads an investigation to delve deeper and finds that the rumors are true. Government begins to worry, fearing a rebellion will slow down the already bogged down progress on the war effort. But things continue with little slow down and the momentum continues to grow as all types of personnel are trained. Preparations move along nicely, but David is sure not to forget the OWO and the threat that almost was. People move on as David warns that just because the OWO didn't act just recently, doesn't mean that their threat is any less relevant.

It has been eleven months since David made his contact with Alcoer the previous summer, David ponders as he lays in bed before getting up to go to work in early May, 2038. David has been staying on the space station for the past month and he thinks he has finally gotten used to it. A lot of work has been done, it is quite surprising what people can accomplish when they put their minds to it. All over the station, through all the training, preparing, and construction, there has been a restless calm for the past few weeks. David is running through drills of the pilots of the fighters as alarms blare suddenly. The first fleet has arrived! David orders the pilots to get to their stations as he runs for his own fighter. Out in space, all the fighters get into formation with David, awarded General two months before, leading the charge. David comments that the fleet appears to be made up of Goriin and Skag ships. Alcoer replies that the station's analysis confirms it and he guesses that the Goriin and Skag have joined forces.

The Goriin and Skag fleet advance across space, past the Moon, to the awaiting Human fleet. David calls for a particular attack pattern and the line splits into three sections with the sides moving around and back in to flank the fleet in the middle to back of the force. The Human fighters are soon to realize that they are underpowered by the more experienced Goriin fighters and carriers. The fleet also consists of heavily armored Skag freighters. The Goriin repel the Human attack and push through the line. Liz points out that it looks like the Goriin fighters and carriers are escorting the Skag carriers. David orders a retreat to regroup at the station. An operator from the station relays that it appears the Skag carriers are full of Skag soldiers with layers of small weapons to provide backup for the Goriin fleet.

Now in full swing the battle rages on over the people of Earth. The experience of both sides show as the Goriin and Skag continue to advance. David and other members of the CHP fight very well, but it's not enough to stop the fleet's progression. The flanking sides have all but been destroyed except for a few fighters trying to make it back to the main group. David and the CHP fighters are running out of options when Mike tells the command center to scan the Skag carriers further as he sends them data on a weakness he thinks he's spotted. A few minutes later, they report that the carriers are being controlled by the bridge and; in align with what Mike had found; there is a weakness in the joint between the bridge and the rest of the ship. They are quickly destroyed, leaving the carriers as big crates in space and leaving little cover for the Goriin fighters. The humans are motivated even more by the advancement and pull together, finishing the remaining Goriin fighters one by one.

That night, back on Earth and on the space station, everyone is celebrating. The parties continue long into the night and a few into the next morning. A week later, members of the Thirty had finished analyzing the attack with other generals and members of the CHP. Alcoer reported that the Goriin showed their main weakness was underestimation. Even with their new ally, the Skag, their underestimation was still there and lost them the battle. They also reported that while the two species appeared to be working together, the Goriin were very much in charge. Poeh says that even if it is the Goriin's biggest weakness, they won't make it again. And she reminds everyone that the other fleet seen should arrive in the next few months.

Triumvirate

It's just before 2:00 AM in late July, 2038. David Bryce had arrived back on the space station a few days before. He was spending time with his family and their new baby, Kurt. The intercom on the wall beeps, waking up David. He is notified that there had been an emergency and that he's needed in the command center. Upon arriving, he is told that one of the Skag soldiers had been freed from holding. The Skag carriers had been left in space and fitted with cameras and a guard post on each carrier. This basically made the Skag prisoners in the cargo holds of their own ships. David decides that he will have to investigate, so he calls Mike. When Mike arrives, David briefs him on the situation and they head for the Skag carrier.

On the way to the carriers, David expresses how much he is proud of Mike and of how far he has come. Arriving at the station, David and Mike begin investigating the missing Skag. David begins viewing surveillance feeds from the previous night while Mike checks the records to find out which one of the Skag is missing. Mike finds out it is one of the Generals and reports the information to David. Then David narrows down the suspects from the videos to four individuals. After running background checks on them, he narrows it down to one. Mike asks how he could narrow it down to one by just looking for ID matches and running backgrounds. David replies that this one is the only one who is a known member of the Old World Order (OWO). David recognized that it was his old friend Kurt Nauri. David thinks that the OWO just made their first move in this war in aligning themselves with the Goriin and Skag.

Around 6:00 AM, as David and Mike are wrapping up at the carrier and preparing to head back to the space station, David is notified that sensors just picked up the second fleet arriving on the other side of the Moon. The Goriin and Skag are much more prepared this time. As David and Mike are heading back to the station, the fleet is quickly approaching. David hopes that the new blockade, they had constructed over the past few months, holds. But the Goriin and Skag quickly rip through it and advance on the station. David and Mike's shuttle arrives just as the attack on the station begins.

David notifies the command center that Mike and himself have arrived safely back on the station. They both head toward their fighters as the battle rages on all around. David is knocked over a few times by blasts to the sides of the station. Arriving at his shuttle, David jumps in and heads out into battle. Meeting up with Mike, David quickly surveys the situation. He starts to relay commands as he and Mike head into battle. They shortly find Liz and Poeh and the four of them work hard to salvage a counter-offensive. But the more prepared Goriin had already knocked out most of the main defenses. They too have had a few months to prepare for this battle.

Everything that David and his crew had done in the battle seemed to be falling apart by the minute. David just can't get everyone organized in time to accomplish anything. The station is about to be completely overrun by the invading fleet and David's options are narrowing by the second. Realizing that they can't stop this force now, David orders a full retreat to Earth's surface. As much as he hated to leave the station, saving as many lives as possible became obviously more important. As the escape transports start leaving the station, David orders all available fighters to cover them as they head back to the planet's surface.

David waits to escort one of the last transport ships from the station. David is surprised that once it is clear that the Humans are retreating, the Goriin and Skag leave the station behind and

continuing right into their invasion of Earth. As David begins escorting the transport ship with Poeh, he realizes that the prompt invasion leaves no time for the Human forces to organize themselves on the surface. David had heard of Skag invasions from Alcoer and Poeh, but he was not adequately prepared for the awesome sight laid before him. Escorting his transport ship, he glares to the side to see the gargantuan Skag leave their carriers and rampage the landscape. David looks around to see the sky blanketed with several hundreds of ships all entering the atmosphere at once. Once the retreat and invasion had begun, everybody had stopped shooting at each other. It had become a mad rush for the surface.

David and Poeh successfully escort their transport ship to a military base outside of Rio Grande, in southern Texas. David quickly realized why the Goriin and Skag had followed them, pressing on with the invasion. While Human forces were retreating and just landing the transport ships any safe place they could find, the Goriin had an organized invasion in full motion. The Goriin and Skag were landing on communication hubs and disabling them. Within a few hours, almost all long range communications had been disabled leaving the Human forces cut off from each other. David is glad to see a transport ship, escorted by Mike and Liz, arrive near by. Then Alcoer lands his fighter at the base. David quickly organizes everyone to bunker in and prepare for an attack that he knows is coming. He sends out runners to a few bases that may have soldiers, including one to NYC, where his family is living.

Four weeks had passed and still no attack. David had not been sleeping well for the past week because he is anxious for news of his family. Then, while David is checking the messages in the morning, the alarms ring all around the base, signaling an attack. David had put Mike in charge of the infantry as he knew Mike could handle it. David leads the pilots to their fighters and they take off for battle. As David gets into the air, he can see that there is a swarm of Goriin guarding two Skag soldiers. The fighters attempt to thin the swarm before they reach the outer defenses. Once they do, David leads the fighters to take on the Skag soldiers, one at a time. Everyone works well together and the defenses David had organized hold well. The fighters shortly kill one of the Skag and begin work on the next.

The Battle of Rio Grande rages on. David and the fighters have almost brought down the second Skag soldier. This soldier broke through the wall of defenses and started to decimate the base. The Goriin infantry started to pour through the hole, but it had created a choke point and the Human infantry make short work of them. Shortly after, the Skag soldier is killed with the combined efforts of everyone. Mike tells David that they have captured an unconscious and unknown Human soldier found behind enemy lines by Alcoer and Poeh, who had been separated from the group. Curious, David goes to check on this individual after landing. Upon seeing the man and hearing from the medics that he'll be okay when he wakes up, David orders that the man be placed in a holding cell.

That night, David checks on the prisoner. Seeing he is awake, David enters the cell. He greets Kurt Nauri, who had also been tied to a chair. David has had a long history with Kurt and he knew that he only had one chance with him. David goes through a few pleasantries. Kurt asks him to get to the point. David and Kurt have a rather heated discussion over politics, the war, and friendship. When David realizes he isn't getting anywhere, he reminds Kurt of the millions of lives that have been lost in the war already, in part, due to the help of the OWO. This really strikes a chord with Kurt and David leaves the conversation there. As David is wondering if he made it through to Kurt, he is notified that a few of the runners have returned. He is told of a Goriin and Skag base about twelve miles to the Southwest. David begins to plan a counter-offensive to strike back at the enemy.

After a week, David leads his forces from the base in Operation Switchback to attack the Goriin and Skag base. A few miles out, David receives word that Kurt had just escaped. David decides to let him go and press on with the attack. After a few hours, David begins his assault on a surprised Goriin and Skag. David leads the fighters over head and they begin their bombing runs. They certainly have the surprise and really take advantage of it. The Human infantry sweeps through the base while the fighters attack the Skag soldiers. The offensive is going well and the fighters are making short work of the enemy's ground forces.

Shortly, the Goriin launch their fighters and the battle really heats up. The early dawn sky is thick with fighters from both sides. David is having a hard time staying air born and remaining effective. David can see the swarms of Goriin infantry are certainly keeping Mike's ground forces just as busy, but they are holding on. Then Liz, who was on David's wing, is hit and starts to go down. David tracks her fighter and sees that it's heading behind the front line. David tries to protect her as she jettisons from the fighter and parachutes to the ground. David soon realizes that the tracking mechanism sewn into her flight suit was damaged in the landing and is not transmitting a signal. Mike wants to go in after her, but David says it is too risky at this point. This pushes Mike harder and he rallies the troops, while David rallies the fighters. They push forward and make up some ground.

The rally proved a success as they turn the tides. They push on and the signs of victory are beginning. Then David gets word that the runner from NYC came back in a plane and that the NYC base is about to be attacked. With his family in danger, David is quickly conflicted and obviously distracted. David wants to save his family but he just can't leave the battle. Mike tells him to go with Poeh to rescue his family. David assures Mike that he can win the battle and they take off. David and Poeh, both in the more advanced CHP fighters, push the engines to their limits and arrive in NYC in a little over an hour. Letting their presence known to the commanding officer, David asks where the citizens are being held. David heads in that direction while Poeh joins the struggling fighters in their battle, which has just arrived. Seeing that the hanger is rather unsafe, David decides that he needs to get his family out of there.

David gets a jeep and drives his family off the base and down the freeway to the city. He needs someplace heavily armored and has the perfect place in mind. It is a very safe place owned by some one that owes him a big favor. A few rogue Goriin fighters spot them in the city and they attack the only vehicle moving in NYC. David swerves back and forth until one of the tires is hit and they crash into another car. David realizes that Jill was killed and his two sons, Daniel and Kurt, are crying and injured a little in the back, but they are still alive. After a minute, David pulls the jeep out and they get to the destination: a warehouse in Queens. David crashes through one of the doors and is shortly greeted by twenty men with guns pointed at them. David yells for The Father (Louis Carnine), who comes out shortly. David reminds him of the favor he owes him and The Father takes them to the bunker under the warehouse.

The Eighth Day

It has been eight hard months since David Bryce's wife, Jill, had died in a car crash. David sits in front of Jill's grave in Beacon, NY, reflecting on all that has happened. Liz is still missing and they are still holding the bases at NYC and Rio Grande. David hopes for the strength to finish the fight. As he heads back to his car, David thinks he sees his old friend, Kurt. He goes to check it out but sees no one. The next day, David receives an anonymous e-mail which provides a set of coordinates where Liz can be found. David knows the latitude and longitude is somewhere in south western Montana. He decides to go check it out with Mike.

Landing half a mile from the coordinates, David and Mike hike the rest of the way to the location. They soon discover the location is the Montana State Prison. David tells Mike to wait behind as he sneaks closer. Inside, and after a few close calls, David discovers it has been taken over by the Goriin. He finds Liz and finds that, aside from a few cuts and scratches, she looks okay. Liz doesn't even look up from the book she is reading as David walks by. He sneaks out and meets up with Mike, telling him that Liz is okay, but he decided to break out everyone. Mike calls for Alcoer and Poeh to help break out all forty-two prisoners.

Alcoer and Poeh meet David and Mike in the hills about mile west of the prison. After discussing and establishing the plan, they prepare their equipment. Using various technologies of camouflage, the team circle around and sneak in through a service entrance on the east side of the facility. Once both teams are in place and ready, they begin. David and Poeh free the prisoners while Mike and Alcoer clear the exit. David gets Liz out first and has her assist in getting all the prisoners out. Successfully getting everyone out, they make their way to the designated safe location. When they get there, they encounter Kurt Nauri. For a second, Kurt and the team just stare at each other. Then Kurt shows the team the detonator in his hand and presses the button, blowing up the prison.

Kurt and the prisoners are all taken back to the NYC base. David has hope for Kurt, as he always has because of their past as friends, but the rest of the team is still skeptical. Sensing this, Kurt offers a show of good faith that he has changed his ways. He provides a way to communicate with military bases all over the nation. David begins talking with the commanding officers from various bases and locates a few generals. He then starts to organize a meeting. At the meeting in a base in Colorado, one of the generals says they should start a counter-offensive and Alcoer suggests taking back the entire U.S. Everyone agrees, so they begin to formulate a plan.

Using more of Kurt's information, David learns the locations of all eight of the Goriin/Skag bases in the nation. After a month, everything is in place. The plan formulated was to launch multiple attacks simultaneously on all eight of the bases and take them out as quickly as possible. The day arrives and the preparations are complete. David gives the order to attack and moves his own forces to what will be largest battle of the counter-offensive, Washington D.C., which is the largest Goriin base. Coming over the last hill and coming into full view of the base, David is shocked to see that it looks like the Goriins have been waiting for them.

David realizes that he has quite a battle ahead of him, but he knows that he can't retreat as everyone else is in battle as well. David radios all his troops to provide some inspirational talk, urging them to press on. The battle is hard and fierce and drags out longer than expected. On the third day of battle, David is notified that all other bases have been taken or destroyed, but no

one can provide any help as they are still cleaning up after their attacks. In his frustration, David looks to the sky, thinking of the strong possibility that they'll lose. Then it slowly dawns on him that the answer is in the sky. He remembers the Space Station and the very powerful weapon it has on board.

David quickly tries to think of any issues in using the weapon, but can't think of any, so he contacts Liz, who remained at the NYC to oversee operations. He has her try to access the Space Station, which is still in orbit. She is able to connect to the Station and runs a few quick diagnostics. She soon finds out that the Station will be in position in just over thirty minutes. David hesitates for a second, thinking of everything he's going to have to do, then orders the firing of the Solar Weapon. Liz says that there isn't enough power in reserves, but she can draw from a few other areas. David begins to order people out, hoping the Goriin soldiers will not follow. Fortunately, the Goriin do not follow and David suspects they think the Humans are retreating. Getting all but only a few people out of the blast area, the weapon fires a blast of light from the sky and the base is destroyed.

The next day, the team gets together at the NYC base to discuss how things went. After having a night to think about it, David states that the use of the weapon could have possibly been premature. Mike says that once the Goriin figure out what happened, they'll go after the weapon themselves. Liz suggests a team go up to the station to regain control of the weapon, but the shot had fried some of the power cells and it will need repaired before it can be used again. David says that it won't be easy and that they'll need a lot of cover. Mike suggests the distraction, a world uprising, citing that if the main Goriin base can be destroyed, then they will be leaderless and will no longer fight. Mike volunteers to lead the uprising. David says he will take a small team to the station, as he is the only one left alive who can access the area that the weapons bay.

Mike begins organizing his massive uprising while David and his team head down to the Rio Grande, where they will launch from in a week's time. David's team consists of Poeh, Alcoer, two scientists to fix and operate the equipment, and 20 soldiers to operate the on-board weaponry. Liz volunteers to help Mike on the surface. David and his squad spend the week preparing their ships while everyone else is getting. A week later, as Mike is launching his offensive, David's squad is taking off, heading for space. On the way, David's squad runs into a squad of Goriin fighters and David orders the team to push on best they can. Approaching the Station, they discover another squad of Goriin fighters patrolling the Station. David orders the soldiers to cover the crew as they push through to dock with the Station.

As the dog fight breaks out all around them, David pushes his shuttle on towards the docking bay. After docking, Poeh heads to the bridge to bring the station out of power standby and David leads the scientists to the weapons bay. David lets the scientists in and they begin to run primary diagnostics and checking out the weapon. Then David is called by Poeh. She has discovered an interstellar message from the fleet from Calus saying they are on their way. After some calculating, she discovers that the fleet will arrive in one week.

The message from the Calus fleet is good news but the scientists say it will take ten days to repair the Solar Weapon and power it to full capacity. The Solar Weapon needs to be at full capacity because the Goriins, being insect-like, dig deep tunnels under their bases which is where most of their upper leadership is located. David contacts Mike and informs him of the good and bad news. Mike says that the uprising is picking up steam but the Goriin and Skag are more prepared. Mike isn't sure they can last a week. David and Mike agree that this is the fight to end it all and it's a chance they'll have to take. The commander of the soldiers calls for

David saying that another Goriin squad has arrived and they could use some assistance. David rushes to his fighter and head into space to join the fray.

A week later, David had only lost half of his initial fighters. Mike had even sent reinforcements for them, despite the heavy losses he was facing. Mike and Liz had survived the week, but had suffered massive losses. Poeh running operations from the bridge, Alcoer manning a weapon turret and the thirty some fighters they now had, had all some how managed to survive the week. Then, a Goriin fighter that a soldier had shot careened out of control towards the Station and crashed into the turret Alcoer was controlling, killing him. Towards the end of the day, the Calus fleet arrives, much to the relief of the Human fighters. Making contact to the station, Poeh patches them through to David. He asks if they'll help out with the Goriin fighters, which they take care of quickly. Then, after some discussion, David agrees to remain in control of the Human forces and works to organize the two forces into one.

David calls Mike and notifies him of the reinforcements. David then asks for three quarters of the Calus fleet to assist Mike down on the surface and the remaining one quarter to protect the Space Station. As the Calus fleet splits and heads towards the surface, more Goriin fighters arrive. David struggles to keep everyone organized enough to hold off the pressing enemy. With the fresh reinforcements, the Human fighters have a new charge and they press on. Mike says the Calus fleet had saved him and had really reinvigorated his troops. The Humans rally one last time, pressing their advantage, to force the Goriin and Skag back. The next day, Mike says they have pushed a line straight to the main Goriin base on a small island in the Philippines.

A few more days of fighting and both side are starting to show it. Since there are merely a few squads in space, there isn't much time to rest, not that they sleep when they get a break. The Goriin fighters begin rallying and slowing the Human progression. David can't help but notice how much their experience shows in a time like this. But he still has one more hand to play in this game. David's forces have dwindled again and he requests the status of the Solar Weapon. The scientists report it should be ready in a couple hours. David orders his fighters to retreat to the station and man the weapon turrets on the station. With an hour to go, David notifies Mike to get his people out of the very large blast area. The weapon is fired, creating a crater a mile deep where the Goriin base once stood. Within hours, the remaining Goriin and Skag forces had surrendered. The war was over.

There is much celebration on the Space Station as well as on Earth's surface. David's own personal celebration is interrupted by a call from Liz on the surface. Sobbing, Liz informs David that Mike was killed in the blast. Mike was trying to get some of the last people out, but didn't make it in time. David heads toward the Human encampment near the blast site in the Philippines. David then began encountering the problem with leaving the enemy leaderless; there was no one in charge. The Goriin mustered their only remaining general to offer the official surrender. Then, the leaders of all species discussed a treaty to establish a peace. The treaty also set up provisions for the Skag, so they will be protected against the Goriin as well. It was agreed upon and signed by all a few days later.

The journey had been long and hard, but David had survived it. The Goriin and Skag begin the long road home, following the terms of the treaty. After the Goriin and Skag had left, David returns to the U.S. with Liz for funerals for Mike, who was like a son to him, and Alcoer, who had become a good friend. A month later, David visits Jill's grave again and he ponders his life and the war. David is a very different man and the world is a different place. All because of those seven days.

