

# Frameworks:

*The Price of Delusion*

James Regan

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**\*\*\*\*\*Due to some of the graphic content and disturbing images, along with the overall intensity of the storyline, some material presented here may not be suitable for children under the age of 12. Parental guidance is strongly suggested.**

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## Synopsis

Dr. Decker, a brilliant Nanotechnologist and Virtual Reality Engineer, is suddenly tapped by the government to help them on one of their Top Secret projects. Seeing this as a lucrative promotion and an opportunity to work with the latest advancements in his field, he decided to accept their offer. Little did he know that he was about to take a journey into a new reality. As time moved on, he went from the excitement of seeing how far mankind had progressed to the horrors of the high price that man would pay to get there. No man or woman had ever dreamt of the dangers inherent in the interweavement of human potential with good and evil, dangers that resulted in the ultimate hijacking of the human mind.

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## Acknowledgements:

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I'd like to thank my son Lawton for allowing me to use his very intriguing piece of art of the man rowing an aircraft carrier. Sometimes the things that come the easiest are the roots of true inspiration. A leader sometimes has to work with the little that he has in order to move something big. You have brought me a lot of honor and I look forward to the day that you are awarded the rank of Lieutenant in the Army of this great country of ours that has been founded on such great principles of freedom. I honor you and all the veterans who are like you who have stood for the freedoms this country represents.

I'd like to thank Mary Ishler for her art entries. While it came in near the finish line it added a very interesting flavor to the backcover. Her picture has been used only by her permission under the understanding that she retains full rights of ownership of the yellow sunflower picture. The second art entry of hers, (3 apples), is located on left hardcover panel and is also used by permission with full rights of ownership belonging to her.

To Phillip Guerra I would like to thank for his endless commitment to this work. Your collaborations have been invaluable and your perseverance has been thoroughly tested but you have still stood. Only you and myself truly know what we have been made to endure in order for this work to be birthed and come to be. Without your help and collaboration I do not believe this would

have come near to where it is now. There were a couple of times I had stand on the support of your shoulders and was only able to find victory when I did.

To JoAnne Wolcik, whose chance meeting wasn't really a chance at all, thank you so much for your story and for your dream. I know that this dream sat inside of you literally for almost three decades with no one really giving it any mind besides something like, "That's nice." It is very interesting how our pathways met like it was predestined thing to be. Rights to use this dream remain yours to use in any way you wish. We have used the raw part of your 30 year old dream exclusively by your permission. We thank you so much for it.

I also wish to give honor and thanks to my mother, Ardath Regan, for using her razor sharp editing eyes to find that important grammatical flaw. That comes from your ability to size people up quickly.

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Lastly but not least is Daniel, a man of excellence. Your dream started as a dream but over time it has become a reality. Yet the reality is, is that some have preferred the dream over the reality, only to find themselves lost in that dream. Whether they row, row, row their boat or use an oar to pull something as large as an aircraft carrier, the difference between the dream and their reality is that the dream usually lacks the safeness and surety of protective boundaries. The only way for a dream to be without boundaries in reality, is that it first must be mixed with a certain honorable substance. That hall of fame substance you have surely found and have definitely demonstrated it within the workings of your own life. I will see you soon.

# Foreword

By Eddie Lee

In these times of technological advances with interactive and virtual reality games you soon find yourself seduced into a delusion that takes you on a fantasy ride that will rock your reality.

Even though you participate in the ability to make giant steps in technology, the uneasiness of where it is going wrestles with your soul and while the ride gets wilder and more intriguing, you are snared.

Coupled with the general restlessness and tensions of the world, life's abuses, hurts and failures, can now find an escape inside, where these disappointments are masked and tucked away into the most remote recesses of your mind, places that you no longer care to visit.

Frameworks: The Price of Delusion by James Regan quickly takes you to a special niche of awareness, a place where you'll find, there is no escape, no spot of safety to hide behind, yet the seduction continues even though you seek the answers to break the strongholds of your own reality.

This book is absolutely a must read for everyone. It is timely and shares much truth. Though fictional, you will actually feel its embrace in your own life, as you move day to day with the characters in the story, who not only become meaningful characters, but friends.

## Chapter 1

### **September, 1952, at Dragon's Triangle in the Pacific near the Philippine Sea, 5:25 A.M.**

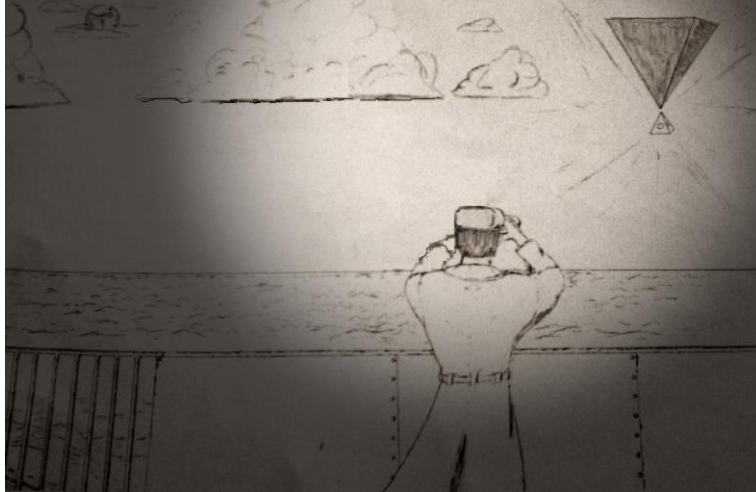
The moonlight danced gently off of the ocean's waves. Uneven fog banks began to form dark paths out to the horizon. The early morning breeze felt refreshing, as it mixed with the salty air. The waves were unusually gentle. The sounds of crewman scrubbing the deck and speaking in Japanese could be heard starboard. Just above the anchor of the ship was the name, (written in Japanese), Kaiyo Maru number 5. The thirty one member crew was busy conducting a hydrographic survey of the region. They had been traveling at a slow and steady pace since about 4:00 AM that morning. Every crewman was evenly dispersed throughout the ship and carrying out his assigned duty.

Everything was normal, it seemed, until the radar room started picking up a large signal. As the Japanese crewmember on radar duty alerted several others to what he was seeing, the compass began to spin and lights began to momentarily flicker. Another crewman confirmed the radar image for himself and immediately sent word to the Captain. The Captain who responded from the bridge went outside on deck to get a visual. As he looked in disbelief he saw a huge square-like dark mass rising up slowly out of the water.

The dark mass then quickly picked up speed, and the ship began to rock from its displacement of the water waves. The other men on the ship's main deck also braced themselves, while they began to see the large mass emerging like an upside down black-colored iceberg with its tip still in the water. As its tip reached the surface, the water began to calm again. The mass resembled an upside down pyramid. It appeared to be about the size of two football fields at the top and a bluish light began to arise from its bottom. As more and more crewmembers began to go outside to check out what was going on, the light seemed to pulsate and get bigger.

The Captain then came out again on the bridge with his binoculars this time to take a closer look. The texture of the mass appeared to be made of some kind of stone. Within the span of minutes it had partially risen hundreds of feet out of the water. There was a humming sound in the air that appeared to be connected to its source of power. At least two thirds of the crewmembers now had gone to the surface of the deck to see the anomaly. There were a few men talking amongst themselves but most were completely enthralled by the monstrous pyramid shaped object, as it began to clear itself fully above the ocean waves.





*Sketch by Scott Shivadecker*

The Captain and his crew were very nervous. They had previously heard of stories of strange happenings in this area known as the Devil's Sea. As the object finally cleared the water they began to notice a smaller right side up pyramid at the upside down apex of the first one. The smaller pyramid seemed to be the source of the pulsating bluish light. The pulsations and humming sounds of this bluish light began to get a little louder and more intense, as the object drew closer. The light being emitted from the pyramid created a hypnotic effect on everyone aboard, who was looking at it. Suddenly, the blue light exploded outward and individual beams went out from the light. Each beam was directed at a crewmember's head. The light was consistently pulsating and waves of blue energy began to emanate along the beams and into the crewmen's heads. Some of the beams penetrated the hull and found the remaining crew that was still inside the ship. Every single crewmember, including the Captain, became fully interfaced with the blue beams of light.

All of the crewmembers at once then dropped their hands to their sides no matter what they were doing. At first, they were just being involuntarily mesmerized. Then within a few seconds their minds became entirely hijacked by the beam's overpowering grip. While the bluish pulsating light continued, a holographic greenish gray-like plank quickly began to issue out from a door that had opened at the apex of the upside down pyramid about 100 feet above the upside down apex itself. The holographic plank reached the ship's deck just over the railing, and then stairs began to form under the plank to the deck itself. When the plank was fully extended and the steps were in place, the bluish pulsating beams stopped.

One by one, in this oceanic eeriness, the crewmembers began walking the holographic plank that led to the door of the upside-down pyramid. The procession went on for about twenty minutes until every single crewmember had left the ship and the plank was retracted. The door on the pyramid closed and then it slowly sunk back into the sea with the ship's crew, never to be seen or heard of again. Dawn arrived and the unmanned ship drifted involuntarily into the unknown fog.

**Present day: At an undisclosed location in a secret government lab.**

An unknown person in a military uniform with brown hair and rimmed glasses slid his badge and then entered a restricted door in a top-secret government lab. At first it looked like a small studio dark room used for photography, but as one took a panoramic view it revealed that it was much larger than that. A gray haired man, who was one of many programmers, was sitting in civilian-styled clothes in front of a computer looking at case files. The computer screen showed a picture of the Kaiyo Maru ship and information about its disappearance. "What is the status?" asked the first man. "We still are trying to find the right leader program," said the programmer. "She has been very resistant to several of the others." "Run the isolation program and then switch to another bait. Let me know when you've completed the process," said the first man as he left the room.

This programmer then walked over to the virtual reality section where there were several set ups. After that he walked up to a specific virtual reality bed that was in a booth. It contained a thin young woman with red hair. She was lying on it while wearing a special headset with glasses. To the right of the machine were a series of wires and a 4-sided holographic display box. There was also a regular monitor positioned there to give the programmer a visual reading of what was being seen by the eyes of the constrained virtual participant.

As the isolation program was initiated, she immediately found herself standing on a virtual representation of the 1952 Kaiyo Maru number 5 ship. By intentionally disorientating the subject by means of manipulating her brain's beta waves, they altered her sense of time. "I don't know how I got here," the young woman thought, as she wandered the deck of the Kaiyo Maru. She had been made to experience several minutes of this virtual program's time as if it had been several months. Each time the researchers pressed a button they would fast forward the actual program, yet the young woman experienced everything as if it were flowing in normal time.

The isolation program drove her to the edge, as the simulated months seemed to pass by at an extremely slow pace. She painfully remained in a very lonesome state of perpetual night. She initially speculated that she had been drugged and brought there by the men in black, but now she was not so sure. She began to hallucinate, or so she thought, but it was really the programmers manipulating and introducing the different stimulations into her mind while they observed her reactions. The programmers knew they had to get her to believe the imposed virtual scenario before they could effectively begin the layering process. As they made various preposterous creatures to confront her she began to doubt her very sanity, "This cannot possibly be real!" she thought as she observed a six-winged creature with glowing red eyes form right in front of her.

The programmer pressed another button and the creature then clasped its hands and released a slew of deadly poisonous snakes. Her reaction was one of immediate fright, making it obvious to him that she had a long seated phobia towards snakes. She tried to run, but she was unfortunately

surrounded. A cobra snake lunged at her and bit her torso while she desperately tried to remove it. She immediately began to feel herself going faint. “Could this be real?” she asked herself. Just then, from nowhere, a heavysset gentleman appeared and came to her aid with a syringe that resulted in a calming effect.

She suddenly became aware of her surroundings and found herself in a hospital room. The same heavy set person, who was a male nurse, asked, “Cindy, do you know where you are?” “Uh no,” she responded. “You’ve been in our psychiatric ward for a couple of months now, and this is the first time that I have seen you lucid. That’s very good news. I’ll go ahead and inform your doctor,” he said smiling as he walked out. His face seemed so reassuring to her that she didn’t want him to leave. The observing programmer was very pleased upon seeing this reaction; for now he could initiate the layering process. He quickly notified the OP Manager to come back in.

Cindy pondered over everything that she had just experienced and it made perfect sense to her. It had to have been all in her mind. She was in good hands now. She had been brought back safely to this pleasant reality as opposed to the horrific dream that she had been having, or so she thought. Cindy then turned on the T.V. and began to tap her fingers on the tray table while she watched. Everything was better now. She felt at peace and was oriented to the hospital’s surroundings. She believed that this was her true reality. Little did she know that even this hospital reality was actually the imposed bait program that had been switched on her. They had reached their objective and had finally gotten her to believe. With this accomplished the gateway to her mind was now fully open and ready for their program embedment.

### **Present Day: Arlington, Virginia.**

“Mr. Peppleton, how much longer?” asked the two-star General, while he sat fidgeting impatiently in the back seat of the specially equipped government limo. He had been on a tightly scheduled tour of several military centers. There had been a few stops including the White House where General Corsica had consulted with a group of Congressmen and the Secretary of Defense on a very pressing matter. The driver glanced at his watch and remained quiet as he assessed his whereabouts. The General spoke up loudly, “Mr. Peppleton?!” “It looks like about 15-20 minutes sir!” shot back Sergeant George Peppleton. “Once we get off the main highway, we’ll get on the direct access road to the Pentagon, sir.” The Sergeant had answered him cautiously, as the General was displaying a more grouchy tone about himself than usual. “Perhaps, he’s had a long day or didn’t get enough sleep,” thought George.

It had been three years since Sergeant Peppleton began driving General Corsica around. It started out sporadically at first but only within the last year did the Sergeant receive more orders to drive the General, until it was just about every day. He had not been officially assigned to the General but was stationed at the Pentagon primarily as a regular driver dispatched to whomever needed his services. Now, however, it seemed like he was becoming the General’s personal chauffeur and assistant.

Up to this point he had enjoyed meeting a wide range of people there at the Pentagon. With the

General becoming his steady and only passenger, it caused him to be more focused and remain on his toes with the constant demands and protocols that the General would continually set forth. This did not disturb the Sergeant as he had faced situations that were a lot tougher during his tours in Afghanistan; so this job was gravy for him. The Sergeant knew that this job might even lead to a promotion down the line. So the seriousness and urgency he sensed in the General's tone only momentarily unsettled his emotions.

General Corsica tapped his fingers as he looked out the window at the evening traffic. At 7:38 p.m. (19:38 hours military time) the evening ritual of cars going home was beginning to subside. As he looked outside at the passing buildings, he began to think on his wife and children. He reminisced about the previous weekend outing that he had spent with them at the Rock Creek Park in Washington D.C. near Silver Spring. The smell of the barbecue chicken cooking and the children playing nearby were all still very vivid in his mind. "It had really been good to get away with them," he thought.

Due to the mounting pressures in D.C. and other parts of the world, it was difficult to spend time with his family. As the General continued to replay and enjoy this memory, he recalled his specific feelings that he had as he watched his kids play with their dog, named Bubbles. He remembered calling over to John, his oldest son at thirteen, "John, don't go too far, the food is almost ready and it's going to be pretty good!" John called back, "Okay," as he threw the Frisbee to Bubbles and then watched the dog leap into the air to grab it. The General's two girls giggled incessantly as they saw Bubbles, their beautiful off-white Cocker Spaniel, come down, land on her side, roll over, and then still come up with the Frisbee smiling as if she was ready for another go at it. The General turned to his wife, Beth, who looked up and grinned at him, as she was busily setting up the table. She was putting out all of her famous homemade fixings to complement the General's barbecue.

The General kept savoring this memory until he was abruptly startled with a sudden stop by the driver who had to brake hard for a person who was running a red light. "Watch it Sergeant!" jumped the General. "Sorry sir, Civilian was running a light, sir," responded Peppleton. "Well, watch out anyway!" added Corsica. "Yes sir, will do sir," said the Sergeant, as he exacted the proper amount of deference needed for the moment. "We are 2-3 minutes away sir." "Good!" replied the General while he studied his watch. As it was almost 8 p.m., the General began gathering and tidying himself for the secret meeting that was about to take place at the Pentagon.

The military limo drove up to the gate and the guard there came over to check the driver's I.D. and the orders. After a short period of browsing, he then moved back to the rear of the car. The General lowered his window and the guard looked in. As the guard glanced at the General and the things in the car he said, "Nice to see you again, sir." "Likewise," replied the General. The guard retreated, the gate opened, and then he gave the General a sharp and full salute. The General returned his salute as they drove on. "I like how that guard operates," commented General Corsica. "Peppleton, what's his name again?" "Lawton, sir, uhh, Corporal Lawton Muncy Jr., sir," stated Peppleton. He further added, "He's been with us for six months now, sir." "Make a note and remind me to put in a good word for him about his thoroughness" ordered the General. "Right away, sir, consider it done, sir," responded the Sergeant.

The limo pulled in and arrived at the stopping zone for dignitary drop offs and came to a full stop. The Sergeant quickly turned off the vehicle and hopped out of the front like he was about to win the lottery. He opened the door with military style, snapped to attention and saluted. The General with determination in his voice got out and said, "Thank you, Sergeant, and please get my bag." "Yes sir, right away sir," responded Peppleton, as he quickly recovered the *two* bags. One was a carry-on for personal items and the other one was his briefcase filled with important documents and his personal computer.

It was now 8:20 p.m., and there appeared to be an unusual amount of activity going on in the Pentagon for that time of evening. There seemed to be a lot of movement and a bit of a hustle in the background, as they entered the stone building, which had a military-style, black and white chessboard, kind of flooring. There were rows of pictures lining the halls with cabinets and flags decorating the foyer for people to see as they came in. General Corsica picked up the pace, which made it difficult for Sergeant Peppleton to keep up, but he managed. "That's what service men in the army are trained to do," he thought. "They just keep up with their officers and leaders."

Peppleton knew that servicemen didn't always get the proper respect that they had deserved. Despite that, many still chose to serve their country with honor and without fail. Since the 9/11 disaster, at the World Trade Center, the respect had increased for them considerably. While the embarrassing and defamatory days of the Vietnam Era had long been forgotten, Sergeant Peppleton remembered what his grandfather had told him about those soldiers who served in that war. He remembered his grandfather telling him about the many hurts that were residing deeply in the hearts of those forgotten vets back then. The specific memories of their being shouted at and spit upon, as they arrived home had become the ultimate insult to them. Even though the Vietnam vets were well advanced in years, they were still stuck in that time point in their minds. Sgt. Peppleton thought, "If only someone would have shown them some appreciation for what they did." He suddenly shook himself back out of his momentary reverie.

The two briskly turned the corner inside and entered the battery of elevators that would take them to the restricted levels deep underground. A fuzzy feeling of nausea entered Peppleton as he stabilized himself without being noticed. He didn't like the sensation that he got in the elevator as the floor was dropping out from under him. Slowly, he braced himself for the final stop and steadied the General's baggage. "Ding" went the bell, and the door obediently opened. The two went out and quickly found the room where the General's meeting was being held. It was in 3M-242.

## Chapter 2

Two men in formal civilian suits were standing in front of Room 3M-242 as they approached the double doors. They had on those earpieces with the corkscrew wiring indicating that they were armed secret service. A third man, who stood adjacent to the door, was dressed in a colorful military uniform that was decorated with assorted medals. He was standing at full attention. The doors to the room were old but they eloquently exhibited their fine brown inner mahogany woodwork that was lodged within them. The eyes of the two secret service men began to make contact with the General, but the soldier at the door stared directly ahead as if he did not see anyone.

“We’ve been expecting you, sir, and everyone is present and accounted for just as you requested,” said Jamison, who was the leader of the two. “Good,” said the General. “Shall we get on with this?” “Yes sir,” replied Jamison. He then turned to the soldier and said, “Guard, please open the door for the General.” The guard, like an electronic doll, sprung into life as if the right buttons had just been pushed. His facial characteristics changed and he went right into action. He sharply turned, opened the door, and then held it for them.

As soon as the door opened, the men were greeted with the aromas of cigar tobacco and cognac. The room itself was also comprised of old mahogany, which had a delicate trim around both the ceiling and the floors. Large looming olive green draperies covered what appeared to be windows, but the cotton coverings were probably put there just for the effect. To the left was a plain wooden table with chairs placed round about. Sitting in three of the chairs were other officers, one of which, was puffing on a large cigar, leaning back, and observing the five other men who were across the table from him. They were standing there almost huddled over several manila folders. Other open folders and paper were spread out across the table. They appeared as if they were intensely studying or looking for something.

The light above the eight men at the table was generated by several soft light bulbs that were positioned on the ceiling overhead. The table area itself was drenched in a focused beam of brilliant white fluorescent light. It was coming from the lamp that was directly set above the table, resembling a rectangular billiard table lamp. The smoke arose primarily from one cigar and from a few other accompanying cigarettes. They each contributed to the lazy layers of smoke that were dancing slowly on the inside of the lamp’s fluorescent beam of illumination. It added a unique eeriness to the background atmosphere.

On the right side of the room was another pair of secret service men with their corkscrew earwigs and civilian suits. They were standing next to a desk that was flanked by two colorful flags. One was the United States flag and the other was the bluish grey flag of the United Nations. On the desk itself, was a nice golden antique clock. It had pendulum like golden balls that were rotating back and forth at the bottom of its glassed encasement. The desk also had a ledger book sitting on it for people to sign. It was opened and placed directly next to a few security badges.

As soon as the Major with the cigar in his hand noticed the General he pushed his wooden chair back, stood up very quickly, and began to belt out with his voice, "Group Attention!" Everyone froze from what they were doing and in unison stood up, swung around, and faced the General. Those in the military branch also saluted. "As you were," said the General. The others relaxed and then began to seat themselves back at their respective placements at the table.

The two secret service men inside the room then motioned the General and Sergeant Peppleton to sign in. One of them said as they motioned, "Over here General, please sign for your 3M-242 badges." It was a security requirement that lifted one up to the second highest classification level of security clearance. The highest level of security clearance was reserved for only the top twelve men in the Pentagon that directly interacted with the Secretary of Defense and the President on a daily basis. They were also in constant communication with the department of Homeland Security, the FBI, and the CIA. The General replied, "Tell the boys in the war room not to leave me out of their fun extracurricular activities tonight." The two Secret Service agents began to smile back at him cynically.

"And who is this, General?" asked Thomas. "Oh, yes, him..., let me explain." "This is..., " he said empathetically, "Sergeant First Class Peppleton. He's to remain with me now as my personal assistant." Sergeant Peppleton looked at the General both in surprise and bewilderment. He unconsciously set the two bags down on the floor for the moment as a result of it. He was surprised because the General was assigning him as his personal assistant. He was further astonished because of his being designated a Sergeant First Class. This was because normally, one would have to be promoted to Staff Sergeant first, before they got promoted to be a Sergeant First Class. This meant he was jumping up two steps in rank, instead of one.

The General looked at the newly promoted Sergeant First Class apologetically. With a small grin residing under his thick grey mustache he said, "It's the only way I could get you in here. I've been wanting you as my personal assistant for awhile now and so that's the way it will be." Sergeant First Class Peppleton cautiously replied, "Ok sir," and "Thank you sir." For the first time Peppleton began to appreciate what it meant to be working under authority.

"Ok, Sergeant First Class Peppleton, sign in here please," said Thomas the Secret Service Agent. He then began to recite his security clearance expectations to Sergeant Peppleton in a strong authoritative tone. "Sergeant First Class Peppleton, you have been granted clearance to the second highest grade of secrecy and classification at the Pentagon. Do you understand that everything you see and hear remains under the strictest confidentiality? This means that you may only discuss this information with the people in this room and no one else. That includes friends, family, or other

colleagues.”

Sergeant Peppleton was about to respond to this, but Thomas continued, “Do you further understand that if this confidentiality and secrecy is broken, and you are found out, you will be subject to both federal and military law, law that is punishable by court-marshal, imprisonment, and up to even death, depending on the severity of such a breach? Do you fully understand the scope of these responsibilities and charges that have been placed upon you?” concluded Thomas.

This whole security clearance disclosure brought the shock-level in Sergeant First Class Peppleton to about as much as he could bear. He almost did not know how to react. He paused with a drop of sweat beading up on his head, as that sick feeling began to re-emerge in his gut. Struggling to maintain his composure, he managed to say, “I do.” “Ok, Sergeant,” said Thomas, “you may take your clearance badge and find yourself a seat with the others.”

Sergeant Peppleton with a few nervous shakes in his hand accepted the badge. He turned with the General and moved to the other side of the room near the meeting table. Sergeant Peppleton gathered himself as he went and followed the General until they found their way to the head seat of the table, which was really at the back of the room. They both remained standing for the moment. Sergeant Peppleton then handed the two bags to him. General Corsica set his personal bag on the floor under the table, while he set the laptop bag on the top of the table. He left the laptop bag closed. Sergeant Peppleton then found a seat next to the General. As a result of this action he was now sitting directly adjacent to the Major as well, who was wielding his lit cigar. Sergeant Peppleton situated himself quickly in his chair and adjusted his lungs to the great amount of second hand cigar smoke that was present there in the room. “Sometimes, you just have to take it to get yourself ahead,” thought Peppleton, as he took in another deep breath of the cigar’s aroma.

General Corsica scanned everyone everyone at the table to see if anyone could answer the question that he was about to ask them, before he asked it. Everyone remained silent. The General carefully bounced his eyes from face to face as he tried to read between the lines and ascertain what was really going on. No one said a word, as they waited for him to speak and break the mounting needle-like tension that was suddenly rising in the room.

The General finally spoke, “So, have we come to a decision?”



## Chapter 3

Dr. Lawrence Decker was enjoying this particular group of students that came on a fieldtrip to visit his company called NRSD. The company's acronym name stood for NanoRabbit Systems & Deliveries. The students that had come from the nearby middle school were there to learn about the subject of Nanotechnology and how this science was about to revolutionize the world, when it was combined with the virtual reality experience. He was enjoying their enthusiasm and inherent curiosity as they began to see how this technology was already impacting upon their everyday lives.

“How many of you realize that you could be wearing nanotechnology right now?” asked Dr. Decker. The youngsters' eyes responded with a puzzled look. “The term ‘nano’ in nanotechnology actually refers to the sub-microscopic size of the nano-particles themselves” he declared. He then started a slide-show presentation and showed them that these nanomaterials and devices were already out on the market. They were found in all kinds of clothing and various other products. He explained to them that these nanodevices tracked shipping, inventory, and helped prevent shoplifting. “Years back,” he cautioned, “you might have been able to get away with stealing a candy bar or a small electronic device from the store, but not now. Technology today has made this nearly impossible. So don't even think about trying it. Okay?”

The group of 12-15 year olds remained as excited as ever, as he continued to discuss the coming advancements that would soon be in; computers, telephones, television, radio, and the music entertainment industry. “The best advances,” he announced, “will be in all of the new and outrageous breakthroughs that are happening in the area of virtual reality. The video games that you have been playing with and all of the great graphics that you have been talking about will soon be discarded just like the 8 track tapes were in the 60s.” “The what?” said the 14 year old named, Toby McIntyre. “You know 8 track tapes,” said Dr. Decker now realizing that it was way before their time. “Never-mind, what I'm saying is that these new video games will make the games that you are playing with right now look like they were made in the stone-age. With today's virtual reality technology you can play inside the game. You can be a part of it yourself, as you will soon see.”

“This little machine,” said Dr. Decker, as he showed them a small device that resembled a Bluetooth ear device, “is what actually brings you inside the game. As one of the players, you will be able to control all of your movements, your battle gear, and your equipment just by thinking about it. What is really cool is that you only have to place it on your ear” added Dr. Decker. “Imagine that you

won't even be able to tell that you're really sitting on your couch because your mind will be completely interfaced," he continued. A few students went, "Whoa," while others just gasped in awe.

"What if we could put you into a real race car? You could then experience real scenery zip by you as you navigate your car for the win of the race?" "Or maybe we can make you into a Sub-Commander who was on a secret mission. You would have direct command of the men who went with you. You would get on boats like the Navy Seals do, and then go rescue someone. Imagine feeling like you had real guns in your hands and not toys. These graphic guns are very realistic holographic tools that you could grab right out of the air. Your senses would not be able to tell whether the guns were real or not!" said Lawrence.

"Now that's what I call a game," said Toby. "When does this stuff come out?" "It should be out on the market in just a couple of years," replied Dr. Decker. "They are even designing learning courses for education and virtual recess realities for when it rains. Your parents will someday very soon be able to go on a virtual vacation. The latest Internet Avatar communities, such as *Tour-Chual Life*, are already beginning to open up their virtual travel agencies and selling their virtual vacation packages."

"Would you all like to see how this works?" asked Lawrence.

The kids immediately went ballistic with energy and excitement. Dr. Decker backed up a little as he smiled and said, "Whoa, whoa, calm down... Unfortunately, we only have time for one of you to actually experience the virtual reality. The others will have to watch by video screen." That did not help much as the kids got even more energetic crying out "Oh me, me, me-eeee!" They raised their hands just like they would in class. "Dr. Decker, choose me!!!" It was really a tough choice to make but Dr. Decker kind of liked how Toby had interacted with him before and so he said, "Toby, You're the winner!" Everyone else responded, "Awwwwwhhhhhh..." Some of them even pouted, as they were more than just a little disappointed. "It's ok, kids you will get your chance soon enough. They will be openly demonstrating these things out in public at stores everywhere soon. Every one of you will get your chance to try it then. But for now, let's go check this stuff out, shall we?"

The kids could barely contain themselves, as they moved through the room filled with all kinds of scientific gadgets, microscopes, instruments, and funny looking devices. Dr. Decker finally walked them over to an area that had a 52 inch LCD TV across from a very plain looking dark brown couch. "The TV is not for him, but it's for all of you. Are you ready for your little journey Toby?" said Dr. Decker. "Yeah!!!!" said Toby. "Are you sure you're ready?" questioned Dr. Decker, playfully. Toby started wondering, what am I getting myself into, but he said, "Yeah, sure, let her rip." Dr. Decker replied, "Ohhhhhkkkkaayy."

Dr. Decker then instructed Toby to place the Bluetooth looking device on his ear while he warmed it up. He went to another device that looked like a CD player but it had a black triangular wireless transmission gizmo also sitting upon it. Dr. Decker turned the instrument on and they then heard a main booting up sound that was nested amongst the other electronic whistling noises. The device on Toby's ear became alive and operational as well. It kind of took Toby by surprise and startled him a little bit. Dr. Decker told Toby then, "I think you better sit down on the couch now." So Toby did.

He did not know what to do and expect for he was used to grabbing some kind of game controller with his hands before he would play a game. He just sat there eagerly awaiting the game to begin, as the kids watched on. They were turning themselves back and forth between looking at him and looking at the TV that was turned on now as well. You could almost hear a pin drop against the instrument's faint background hum and the kid's quiet and eager anticipation.

Dr. Decker said, "Kids, you will want to look at the TV now." So they all did. Not one was watching Toby anymore. They wanted to see what was going to happen on the TV monitor. Dr. Decker flipped a switch and they then heard the sound of buzzing. The TV itself began to emanate a pleasant static like noise, as the CD looking instrument got busy at downloading the game's initial program and imagery. Toby's face seemed to go motionless. His eyes went into a stare at first and then they fully closed. He was still, however, sitting in the same position of attention. In fact, his attentiveness got even more pronounced, as the game progressed.

From the inside of Toby's mind it became white and almost dreamlike at first. 3-D imagery began to quickly assemble and organize around him. He noticed that there was a whole lot of noise, bumping, swishing, and water spray beginning to hit his face. It was like the sound of a steam sprayer going back and forth. It went, "Whoosh hoommph, Whoosh hoommph, Whoosh hoommph." The 3-D, living-imagery suddenly crystallized into a distinct and robust picture that was accompanied with full quadraphonic sound.

Toby realized that he had just materialized onto a very large Jet Ski boat and he was already driving it! Next, he saw another 3 or 4 skiers zip by him that splashed him with water. Vroommm Swish.., Vroom, and another one went by. He quickly had to assess his situation and then turned the handle bar grips, like you would with a motorcycle. He too then began to accelerate *really fast*. He was truly amazed at how fast he was driving and bumping over the water, as he navigated out the game's planned course. He could smell the salty air, feel the salty water, and experience the sun's gentle touch that seemed to dance upon his face. He also noticed the many sea gulls that were flying over high above in the sky.

Yet, he really did not have any time for sightseeing now because he had found himself participating *live* in a high pitched Jet Ski race. The kids watching on the TV never saw a game that was so clear and so cool!!! They even felt like they were inside of the race themselves, as they would sway along with every one of Toby's turns. Vmmmmooooommmmm...., Hairpin turns, speed zones, slow zones, and shallow zones. They all went by Toby incredibly fast. Toby had no time to think but only to hold on and to navigate. Then Toby saw what was coming up just ahead of him in the distance and thought, "Oh no." It was a huge ski ramp that was approaching fast and he had nowhere to go. He watched the other riders ahead of him lift way up into the air and then bolt off with their power booster accessory packs that had been strapped to their engines.

Toby now saw himself at the foot of this giant ramp and he grabbed the handlebars a little tighter. He geared himself up, in the seat, and prepared for his jump. Toby had never experienced the riding of a real Jet Ski before, and he never had been on a ski ramp like this before either. Toby thought, "If I just go with it and hold on tight I should be ok. I'll just have to play it by ear somehow on the

way down. Man, this is great!”

Toby suddenly felt himself getting lifted up high like in an elevator. It seemed like he was going sideways and up at the same time. He saw the watercourse below pull away from him somewhat and felt the cool air flowing around him. He then lunged forward as the Jet Ski boosters kicked in. They sent out two small fire streams from behind him. As he lunged forward he began to see himself going faster and the scenery starting to blur. He noticed how he was getting higher than he had originally anticipated as the ground below seemed to pull back even further. Toby began to think, “It will be over in just a minute and then I can guide this thing back down.” He was also experiencing a slight feeling of weightlessness, as he was coming to the apex of his jump. This was where the forces of gravity that were pulling down on him were beginning to equalize against the forces of the Jet Ski’s propulsion. Toby was now ready for the trip down, but then, something terrible happened.