# 49 Robots (S3, E10)

**SFX:**                              INTRO MUSIC

**Rev:** This is the first time recording an intro in the new space.

**Tass:** Yay.

**Rev:** Welcome to the new space.

**Tass:** We're here. We're doing it.

**Rev:** It's true. It's almost like stepping inside of, like, an airlock when you come in here from another room.

**Tass:** It is. It is really bizarre. And I love it.

**Rev:** How you guys doing? And it's been a while. We recorded ahead a little bit, just because of life stuff going on. How are you? How are you doing? I've done the intro by myself last couple of times. It's been so lonely.

**Tass:** Yeah you have. Aww …

**Rev:** How are you?

**Tass:** I'm very sore, but otherwise good. Because we just got done with our end of the move.

**Jake:** I am very sore and tired, but otherwise good.

**Rev:** [Chuckles] Well, it is that time. We want to take an opportunity to thank the patrons who joined us in the month of August. And after talking about it online and in the Discord, I think that there have been enough requests for me to keep in my struggling through the names, that this may be the first edit where I'll keep it in, so you can see my struggle. As opposed to doing a clean edit of them all.

**Jake:** How many names are on the list?

**Rev:** I think eighteen this month.

**Jake:** All right. I got five bucks that says six or more people confirm that you pronounced it incorrectly.

**Tass:** Oh my god.

**Rev:** It was going so well until last ... I think it was last month, where every other message I got was like, "Oh yeah, you were doing such a good job till you get to my name." [Laughs].

So again, thank you for joining us on our Patreon in the month of August. All of our new patrons: Michael Dannemiller, Molly ... I'm going to mess up your last name. And she did the beautiful art.

**Tass:** Oh, yes!

**Rev:** For Perilous Tides. And another one that's in the mail that I will share with everyone soon. But Molly Unquera? But I have to say it without a question mark, is the problem.

**Tass:** No you don't.

**Jake:** Nah. Just go on.

**Rev:** [Laughs] This feels so wrong. Mike McMullen. So this name is in the Discord. And underneath the name it says, "Not like the tea." And so it's C-H-A-I. I'm assuming that that means it's not Chai like the tea, unless it's like a cute joke like, "Oh I'm Chai, but not like the tea."

**Jake:** Unless it's like John Coffey. Like the drink, only not spelled the same.

**Rev:** Yes.

**Tass:** Yeah, yeah.

**Rev:** So I don't know which way that instruction is going. So Chai or [Prounounced "Chay"] Chai Cherkasski, Carol Shaynerman, Ellie, Chris Quigley, Anthony Mackinac — maybe ...

**Tass:** [Laughs]

**Rev:** I think this is the most uncomfortable I've been in two and a half years of doing this show.

Uh ... Justin Larose, Isaac Warren, Timothy Chisum, Matt Kimball, Brian Rockwell, Colton Mason, Andrea Klassen — that kind of rhymed. Elijah Personette, Davemane42, and Carolyn Kendrick. So thank you for all of our new patrons who joined us in the month of August. If you would like to join our Patreon, you can head over to Patreon.com/TheCritshow, and tiers start at just one dollar — that will get you onto the Discord. September actually is also the beginning of our new merch and swag cycle. So if you would like to get in on the T-shirt or the custom swag that we make for those Patreon tiers, September is the month to jump on that — to get into that cycle, to get the new swag when it comes out.

I'm trying to think if there's there's anything else that we have to talk about today. We've got a couple little things coming up. Maybe a little surprise for everybody, come International Speak Like a Pirate Day.

**Tass:** Ah, yes.

**Rev:** Also a reminder to go to thecritshowpodcast.com/monstermash to submit your bracket for the Monster Mash. Those, I believe, are due in by the 27th. And you will win a first edition copy of Monster of the Week signed by Michael Sands, and also some merch from our store. So you can find that, again, at thecritshowpodcast.com/monstermash. Do you have a favorite? I heard you talking with some people on Discord, and it seemed like you were kind of setting up some Vegas odds.

**Tass:** I mean, I have some thoughts, but I don't want to say them here to, like, sway anybody's votes. You know what I mean?

**Rev:** Oh, that's fair.

**Tass:** I want it to really be from them.

**Jake:** That makes it seem like somehow he's rigged this.

**Tass:** [Laughs] Oh, no, no, no ...

**Rev:** You're gonna the Gaming Commission called on us.

**Rev:** For what it's worth, if anybody has anyone that they like super want to win, just tell me and slip me some cash, and I'll lie about all my die rolls to make it happen. I'm easily bought.

**Rev:** This is our blue-chip moment. And with that, it's time to let the recap roll.

**SFX:**                              RECAP MUSIC

**Rev:** We see the two of you, Greg, and Grasshopper, inside of a very posh car hovering about a 120 stories in the air, headed towards The Nest. There are rows and rows of gold plated lockboxes — fewer on the bottom, more on the top, so it starts to curve out. And you see platforms rising and lowering and moving over between them.

All of the gold threads that run through this nest and around the boxes and out the back of them lead down into the floor. And just barely, through some of the twisting coils, you see just a hint of the cable that must supply the power.

**Tass:** "All right. So do we need to get you to that security office?"

**Rev:** GREGORY: Yes, if it is still the synths that you would prefer me to take after.

**Rev:** And an older gentleman in a broad Stetson hat walks by, and he notices Gregory.

**Rev:** MAN WITH STETSON: That's a mighty fine-looking synth you got there. I keep thinking about getting one for myself for security purposes. Is that what you use yours for?

**Tass:** "Yeah, he's great for security stuff."

**Jake:** I want to start looking over where that guy touched Gregory, for like a bug or something. Like, that was so bizarre, and that guy seemed insistent on putting hands on him. I want to see if he planted something or took something.

**Rev:** So you do notice, underneath Gregory's lapel, a tracker. And you recognize this tracker. It is the exact same type used by The Collectors.

**SFX:**                                    RECAP MUSIC FADES

**Rev:** The man in the Stetson hat has just left The Nest, after manhandling Gregory and his jacket. Upon inspection, Jake, you have discovered a tracking device under Gregory's lapel. What are you both doing?

**Jake:** Recognizing this as something that The Collectors use, looking back, was the man in the Stetson like a member of our team?

**Rev:** I think since you have recording eyes and you have stated already that they are running, you can roll back through that footage and roll Assess. On initial look, it is not someone that you recognize.

**Jake:** Twelve.

**Rev:** All right. You get a hold 3.

**Jake:** What do I notice, despite an effort to conceal it?

**Rev:** As you roll back this footage and freeze frame a couple of sections where the person was talking and handling Gregory, and when you got closer to them to step between, you do recognize the eyes. And with that, you're able to start scrutinizing around the eyes, around the neck, around the ears. And you were able to see very, very

fine lines, where it seems like some prosthetic or something is being worn. And as I said, you recognize those eyes, and they belong to Pascal, who you instantly know is one of the members of The Collectors. It is actually another Infiltrator on the team. They serve as the face. They are the charming one that talks their way into places, and often goes into disguise and takes on characters to do so.

**Jake:** How can I avoid trouble or hide here?

**All:** [Laugh]

**Jake:** Well, I don't ... Not so much hide, but like, they clearly know exactly where we are, and they have seen us, and they have been here and may still be here, like, waiting on the outside. So I guess maybe — this might even be  a what's my best way out, then. Instead of how can I avoid trouble. Like, how can I not have to encounter them for the rest of this job?

**Rev:** I think that if the elevator exists, that might be an option.

**Jake:** OK. So before I use my third, I am going to fill the two of them in on this. Because this is — this is just a tracker, right? I don't think this is like a listening device?

**Rev:** Correct.

**Jake:** OK. "Fuck me, that was Pascal."

**Tass:** I mean, I take that quick sec to access that and go, "Oh, yeah. Oh shit. OK ..."

**Jake:** "So they're here. Or at least, Pascal is here. It's safe to assume that the rest of the team is also here. They know that we're here. I can't imagine we get out of this without having to face them. The only way I could see to get out of this without having to deal with them is find out if that secret elevator is actually there, and take it out instead."

**Tass:** "OK. This feels like one more thing for Gregory to have to try to find. Or I can keep an eye out while I'm ... You know, I'm gonna have to get down under and try to find that power source. So, you know, maybe that can be part of my thing, too, is get down there, find that, cut the power source. I don't know. I don't know what else to do."

**Jake:** "I mean, I'm not going to have much of a role while you're cutting power and breaking into boxes and Gregory's hacking stuff. So I can just walk around and see if I can spot anything. I'm good at picking up details."

**Tass:** "That's true. That's really ... That's really splitting us, if you're not staying with Gregory. But I mean, if we think that's worth the time, if we can get him somewhere to deal with what he needs to and know that he's pretty safe in doing it, then, you know, OK."

**Jake:** "I mean, you're definitely gonna have your hands too full. You've got too much to do."

**Tass:** "Yeah."

**Jake:** "I'm not gonna be any use to Gregory in any capacity either, I don't think. Like, I'm not gonna be helpful with the hacking. And if he trips an alarm, I'm not gonna be very helpful with the fighting, either."

**Tass:** "Yeah, fair. All right, then. Priority one, get him there. I'll start looking for access below. Are we just gonna leave this tracker on him for the moment?"

**Jake:** "I think for the moment, so that they see natural movement around this place. And then before we leave, we'll dump it here somewhere or put it on someone else. Put it in one of the lock boxes before we go, or something."

**Tass:** "OK."

**Jake:** For my final hold, what potential complication do I need to be wary of?

**Rev:** You are familiar with Pascal's work. If the tracker is disabled, it does give off a very minor EMP. Like maybe five feet.

**Jake:** "Yeah, we definitely need to leave this thing running for now. Because once it's disabled, it's gonna EMP in a short radius, and that'll at least take out Gregory if it's still on him."

**Rev:** GREGORY: Oh.

**Jake:** "So we do not want to disable it yet. Let's wait until we're ready to go and then put it somewhere that it'll be safe to get rid of."

**Rev:** GREGORY: Would you like me to still keep wearing it?

**Jake:** Do I know if it can be, like, purposely made to do that?

**Rev:** Yeah, I think you would know that it probably could.

**Rev:** GREGORY: Don't get me wrong, I'm more than happy to do my part. But EMP means no more me.

**Jake:** "And an EMP for me means I'm blind. And an EMP for you means you're not moving anymore?"

**Tass:** "No, not necessarily. I just won't be quite as graceful."

**Jake:** "Maybe we should go ahead and plant this on a rando right now. So it still gets some, like, random, you know, movement around the vault."

**Tass:** "I don't know. Because then if that rando just leaves and they watch some rando leave, they know that we're on to it. I think if anybody should take it, it should be me."

**Jake:** Now, here's a question. You say five feet. If I put it in my shoe, will my eyes be OK?

**All:** [Laugh]

**Rev:** Yeah, seems like they'd be OK.

**Jake:** [Laughs] What else do I have on me that's technology? Hold on ... I don't know if it could shut down my taser. That's not the worst fate.

**Tass:** No that's, I think, an acceptable loss.

**Rev:** I would imagine that most weapons here, unless they are hand to hand weapons, would be affected by this.

**Jake:** I'll do that, then. I'll take it and I'll just slide it into my shoe. And just kind of clap the dust off my hands. "There we go. It only explodes in a five foot burst. My eyes are up here."

**Rev:** [Chuckles]

**Tass:** "All right. Where do we need to get Gregory to?"

**Rev:** GREGORY: Were you speaking to me? I'm Gregory.

**Tass:** "Yes, hello."

**Rev:** GREGORY: Why did you look me dead in the eye and ask that question?

**Tass:** [Laughs] I just thought ... There's a ... OK. "Yeah. Let's get moving. Get you to that central location. And I'll make sure that you're kind of off to the races there before I sneak off, OK?"

**Rev:** GREGORY: Very well.

**Rev:** And so Gregory points out to you, this is a very large round room and it has these seven different clusters of lockboxes that make up these seven big golden nests. And the door that Gregory thinks he needs to get through is actually on the back side of the nest that you just went up to to find box SS-166.

**Tass:** All right. Let's move that way.

**Rev:** All right. So the three of you move around the outside of these nests, and there is a door on the far side. And you can see that it has a little scan pad on it, and it kind of blends into the wall. You can just barely see the crease on it. And then the scan pad that's next to it.

**Tass:** Is this a level that I think I could at least just hack the security to get the door open?

**Rev:** I think you could roll Covert Entry.

**Tass:** All right. I'm gonna give it a try. Eleven.

**Rev:** All right. So as you head towards this door, there is the scan pad, and it does not look like the scan pads that are used with The Nest keys.

**Tass:** OK. I think I want to use a hold for bypassing a security system.

**Rev:** All right. Describe to me how you do this.

**Tass:** OK. So for these, part of what I have built in with the, you know, the skill wires in the skin, there's one little portion on the back of my forearm that I kind of pull my sleeve down a little bit and scan that. And for some systems, it will kind of match a card code, where there's a shimmer on the purple skin.

**Jake:** It's like that device in every spy movie. When they need to bypass something and it's got to be simple to move the plot forward, they just pull the front panel off, clip two things to it, and it runs through the codes. And then it finds the right one and opens it.

**Tass:** It's like that, but just with a scan bar. It's finding the right barcode lengths.

**Rev:** And so like all the freckles and stuff on your skin move to make new ... I see. I see.

**Jake:** [Laughs]

**Tass:** Yup.

**Rev:** Yeah, so the door in front of you cracks and then hisses open.

**Tass:** I'm gonna peek in.

**Rev:** So inside, you see a hallway that goes down about 20 feet and it has a turn to the right. But before it takes that turn to the right, about 10 feet down the hallway, you do see three circles cut into the left wall.

**Tass:** "We've got circles. Do we think arrows come out of them?"

**Jake:** "Or just really grabby hands?"

**Tass:** "Really grabby hands. It could be arrows or grabby hands." I'm gonna creep towards that to get a look at what we got here.

**Rev:** All right. Roll Act Under Pressure.

**Tass:** Oh, no.

**Rev:** And are you staying back, Jake?

**Jake:** [Chuckles] Oh, yeah.

**Tass:** Ten.

**Rev:** Yeah. So you get down and you sneak towards these three holes, and you can see that they open up into another room that has metal walls and a row of guns along that wall. And these holes are cut about four feet off the ground and they're maybe nine inches.

**Tass:** OK. So I am thinking passing this will get me shot a bunch.

**Rev:** The guns are not in the holes right now.

**Tass:** Oh, OK.

**Rev:** They're mounted on the wall behind, on the back side.

**Tass:** Oh, OK. So do I just think this is literally a "Grab a gun, come to the murder hole" kind of situation?

**Rev:** Seems like it.

**Tass:** Oh.

**Jake:** [Laughs]

**Tass:** That's much more amicable, somehow.

**Jake:** Grab a gun, come to murder hole. [Southern accent] Hi, I'm Big Tex. Why don't you grab a gun, come to the Murder Hole? Visit us off I-95.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Rev:** Sunday's kids shoot free day.

**Tass:** Oh, no!

**Rev:** Not "shoot kids free day."

**Tass:** [Laughs] Yeah. Well, no.

**Rev:** It's OK.

**Tass:** I don't want to get shot by kids, either! Do I see — like, is there a trigger here? Do I feel like there's something that going down this or going past this is going to alert someone to do just this?

**Rev:** No, you don't see anything.

**Tass:** OK. Then I'm gonna just wave them on to follow.

**Jake:** I do.

**Rev:** Yeah. And Gregory follows behind. You get down to where the hallway turns to the right, and there are two doors. One directly in front of you, and then one on the what is now your left side of the hallway.

**Tass:** "Do we have a strong feeling here, or do we need to check both?"

**Rev:** GREGORY: I believe that the one straight ahead is the one that I need access to.

**Tass:** All right. I'm gonna check that door.

**Rev:** Again, it has the same kind of security scan pad. Actually, both of these doors do.

**Tass:** OK, then I think I should use disable a system, again.

**Rev:** Yeah, no problem. You go over and you scan your arm over this, and the door cracks and hisses open. And you see banks of server racks, and there is cold air that comes out in a very low, quiet hum.

**Tass:** "OK, man. Time to do your thing."

**Rev:** GREGORY: Yes, good luck.

**Tass:** "You too."

**Rev:** And he goes in and closes the door behind him.

**Tass:** "Should we check this last door, just to make sure there's nobody here that's gonna wander in on him?"

**Jake:** "Probably."

**Rev:** Yeah. And so for your third hold, you go over and you crack this door open. And as it hisses open, what you see in front of you is a large square room, and there must be seven or eight rows of synths, all standing powered down. There looks to be thirty, thirty five in this room, just standing in rows of five.

**Tass:** I'm gonna quietly close that door, and jam an old school chair up under the doorknob.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Tass:** So they're not moving.

**Rev:** Correct.

**Tass:** OK.

**Rev:** They look just like the ones you see out in the main area of The Nest, just powered down.

**Tass:** OK. Do I see anything else pertinent in here?

**Rev:** Why don't you roll Assess.

**Tass:** Oh, OK. Ten.

**Rev:** All right. You get a hold 3.

**Tass:** Who or what is my biggest threat in this situation?

**Rev:** So you know that the synths in this building are controlled by Peregrine K. And you actually see, on the left side of this room, another door. It does not have a scan bar at it. It actually has a sign, kind of hanging crooked on it, that says Piss Off.

**Tass:** "Oh, Jake, I think we found Peregrine."

**Jake:** "Good. What do we do about it?"

**Tass:** "Either try to rush him, try to get in there. Or make sure we let Gregory know to, like, dogpile these synths at that door so he can't get out."

**Jake:** You said his door doesn't have a scan thing?

**Rev:** Correct.

**Jake:** "Let's gingerly gather all of the synths into a five foot area." [Laughs] "Let's just lay them all down and just kind of put all their heads within five feet and then destroy the EMP right there."

**Tass:** "Well, I'm not worried about the synths."

**Jake:** "I mean, you don't think if we piss him off, he's going to activate the synths?"

**Tass:** "Well, it depends on when we piss him off. We gotta get Gregory to have the synths ready first."

**Jake:** "So do we want to wait until Gregory ... Until we know he has control of these before we confront Peregrine?"

**Tass:** "That stands to reason."

**Jake:** "All right. I wonder if the elevator's like in his office, though. That make sense, wouldn't it?"

**Tass:** "It would. The access, all of that stuff would make sense."

**Jake:** "This man is a capital K killer. Like, I can't — I can't forget that." [Laughs] "I want to go on this trip with you, but I'm so scared for us to enter that room under any circumstances. Because 1v2, I'm pretty sure we die."

**Tass:** "OK. I know in other conversations I've brought this up before, but I want to talk about Lethal Weapon 4 again. Where Jet Li is fighting old Mel Gibson and old Danny Glover. And they come together and they do it. He is totally a capital K killer, but they persevere, you know? And only one of them almost dies."

**Rev:** And as you're standing here, having this conversation ...

**Jake:** [Laughs]

**Rev:** The front row of synths power on. And their heads turn up, and you can see that this blue light comes out of them and they start to scan the room. What are you both doing?

**Jake:** I can't imagine we're not like closing the door in a panic, right? Like getting on the outside of it?

**Tass:** One hundred percent, yes.

**Rev:** Who's doing it?

**Tass:** I'll do it. I probably have the door, like, in hand still.

**Rev:** All right. You slam this door closed and you hear the sound of footsteps, like they're approaching the door.

**Tass:** "Go! Down to Gregory's room. Quick, quick, quick!"

**Jake:** OK. I'll run down to the server room

**Rev:** So the two of you turn and sprint back down towards the server room, where Gregory is. And you get inside and close the door behind you. What do you do once you get inside?

**Tass:** I mean, I'm just shutting that door as quietly as I can so that if they did hear us, they're not sure where we are, at least at the moment, and spreading my arms across the door. [Laughs] I don't know what to do! But yeah, I mean, literally pressing the door back and looking for Gregory.

**Jake:** Yeah, I'm like, [Whispers] "Gregory. Gregory?"

**Rev:** GREGORY: Uh, hello.

**Jake:** "It's us."

**Rev:** GREGORY: Welcome back.

**Jake:** "You haven't taken control of any of the synths yet, have you?"

**Rev:** GREGORY: No, I'm trying to break through the firewall now.

**Jake:** "The first row of them has awakened."

**Rev:** GREGORY: The first row?

**Jake:** "Yeah. There's like, uh ... What is it, seven rows of five, or five rows of seven. How much — how many were in there?"

**Tass:** "Yeah. Yeah. There's like thirty five of them in there, and the first section of them started moving towards the door."

**Rev:** GREGORY: Oh. That's a lot.

**Tass:** "Yeah."

**Rev:** GREGORY: And there were approximately two per area of The Nest, so fourteen there. Almost fifty units. Ah, this will be quite an exercise.

**Tass:** "Listen, I believe in you wholeheartedly. One hundred percent. I don't think you've got this, I know you've got this because you're amazing."

**Rev:** And outside in the hallway you hear a dozen or so sets of footsteps go by. And then a moment later you hear them go by in the other direction, back towards the room where they were stored.

**Tass:** "Oh my god ..."

**Jake:** "Can you peek the door and see if they're just going back home, or if they're going out into the main bank area?"

**Tass:** "I would rather wait till I don't hear anything to crack this door. I assume some of them are like switching up, switching places, getting a recharge, maybe? Maybe they did hear something and they just walked the hall to make sure nobody was in it?"

**Jake:** "Oh, you think this might just be like a shift change?"

**Tass:** "Yeah. Since they weren't checking this door. They didn't even try."

**Jake:** "All right. Let's lay low in here, at least for a minute. And hopefully whatever's going on out there sorts itself or Gregory gets control of those synths. But while we're in here, I think I can tap into these servers and maybe figure some stuff out for us."

**Tass:** "OK. Hell yeah."

**Rev:** All right. Roll Research.

**Jake:** And I'm also — I'm going to spend one of my [intel] to reveal knowledge.

**Rev:** Hmm.

**Jake:** That I am familiar with an access point to this model of server.

**Rev:** Oh, OK.

**Jake:** I have discovered how to kind of tap into these. Like hardwire into this server, so that I can get to the information inside.

**Rev:** All right. So that will give you a +1 on your Research.

**Jake:** [Laughs] That was the dumbest way to explain technology. That was like talking about how to tap a coconut or something. Like, I find the hole to get to the milk inside.

Twelve.

**Rev:** All right, so you get a question, a follow up question, and a point of [intel] back.

**Jake:** Perfect. Where would I find the elevator?

**Rev:** So as you scan through here, you do find the old blueprint again that shows the elevator. And this is a much updated version of the blueprint, and it is indeed still there. And it is located in the back right corner of the room where you saw all of the sleeping synths.

**Jake:** So not through that other door.

**Rev:** Correct.

**Jake:** OK. Also, where would I find access to the sub floor?

**Rev:** It is in the back left corner of this server room.

**Jake:** [Gasps] "Hey, good news."

**Tass:** "What, what, what, what, what?"

**Jake:** "The ... What you need is right back in that corner."

**Tass:** "Oh!"

**Jake:** "Our way out, unfortunately, is in the synth room."

**Tass:** "OK. Then I'm gonna go. I'm going to go now. I'll get that done, try to get out and get our stuff, and then we'll reconvene and get through the elevator."

**Jake:** "OK, but we still don't know what the synths are doing out there. If you go cut the power and they are in fact out there hunting us, what are you gonna do?"

**Tass:** "Sneak."

**Jake:** "OK. Whatever, man." [Chuckles] "I'll be — I'll be here."

**Rev:** GREGORY: I am sensing an additional 10 synths online. There were 14 active when we came in. I can sense that there are 24 active right now. I'm not sure how many active ones I can control at a time without a hard access into them. I believe I could spread my consciousness to them and get a hold of the 25 that are active, but that would leave you vulnerable to the other ones that are not active. I could also try to spread myself out into the system more and get into all of them, but I would not be able to stay in all of them. I could shift around between maybe 15 at a time, but I would have control over the entirety of the 49 or so.

**Rev:** And so just to clarify, the options that Gregory's giving you here is that he can put himself into the system, which is going to leave his body kind of catatonic, and he will be able to move his consciousness around between any 15 or so of these if others become active. Or you can take over the 24 that are currently active, but those are the only ones that he'll have. He won't be able to mess with the remaining 25.

**Jake:** But either way, his body is catatonic?

**Rev:** GREGORY: Yes, because I will have to spread out my programming, as opposed to ... If we could take the time and go around and I could plug in to every single one of these, I could download a copy into them. But I think with the sheer number and the quickness with which it needs to be done, getting myself into the system might be the quickest way.

**Tass:** "Oh, god. OK. If you just do the 24 ..."

**Jake:** "We could sic 24 live synths on 24 inactive synths. Or 25 inactive synths. Walk them all right back into this room before they all power up, and just take those things apart."

**Tass:** "Yeah, could try. But I think if the ones out there start acting odd, if they all just convene here, Peregrine's gonna notice and activate the others before they all get here to do that."

**Jake:** "I mean, that's a very even match. Like, I think it's safe to say that they'll more or less take each other out, then."

**Tass:** "Yeah, I guess so. Subtlety is definitely gone at that point. If you're cool with that, I am too. If we do the 15, then there's that chance that we can have him kind of move around so that wherever we are, it's the 15 closest. If we have a way to communicate that, like where we are at any given time. But that still leaves, what, 34 on the table?"

**Jake:** "Yeah. And doesn't even cover, like, all the ones that are up right now."

**Tass:** "Right. Right, right, right."

**Jake:** "If he does the ones that are active right now, if he does the 24. And even if all of those stay active, but we manage to stay under the radar so that the rest of them don't activate, then we don't have to worry about it. We can move with impunity."

**Tass:** "Yeah. The thing I'm worried about with that is if he'ss like making them just kind of do what they were doing anyway and stay chill on that, if some of them like switch out, if some of them go back and have to power down while others are moving, then he's just lost all those — that he has to have them pretend to stand still. Hopefully we'll move faster than that, though."

**Jake:** "I mean, even if some of them do leave the floor and have to go pretend to stand still, they're at least still ours, and waiting in the wings in case we need them."

**Tass:** "That's true."

**Jake:** "The problem is if we're gonna try and go out the elevator, he's gonna have to disconnect to come with us."

**Tass:** "Right."

**Jake:** "So, like, that's what — I feel like we should leave ... We should try and keep this all looking normal, so that half of them stay powered down and useless in that room, and we — we just don't have to deal with them. I'm afraid that if he's, like, switching back and forth between the 15s that, when he's not in control of them any more, that sets off alarm bells somehow."

**Tass:** "Yeah. And lastly, that also reminds me that we still have Grasshopper waiting for us. So ..."

**Jake:** "We don't have a way to communicate out, right?"

**Tass:** "We do not."

**Jake:** Everything's blocked in here?

**Rev:** Correct. You could go outside.

**Jake:** Well ... [Laughs] I fear that The Collectors are waiting outside.

**Rev:** [Laughs]

**Jake:** I fear that if I go outside, I don't come back. They might just be like chillin with her. They might just be kicking it by the car. Like, hey what's up, Grasshopper?

**Tass:** Yeah, just ... I keep thinking about the tracker. The fact that they used that makes me not think that they're just waiting in an ambush outside. Because then why ... Why have done the tracker at all? I think they saw the message that this is where we were gonna be, they got somebody in so that they could see what in the hell we were doing and could get a bead on us, and be able to follow us and do whatever after the fact."

**Jake:** "I have kind of had it in my head that the tracker was partially to watch what we're doing in here. Like, to follow us through this building."

**Tass:** "Oh, sure."

**Jake:** "To get a better idea of what we're doing. But I guess if we can't ... If this is like a closed system and no communication out, then the tracker's probably not even working from inside here, is it?"

**Tass:** "Yeah, exactly. So then the sole purpose of the tracker is to see where we go, or what we do with whatever we get here."

**Jake:** Is that something I could discern off the tracker? Like whether it is succeeding at broadcasting? Is that something I could figure out at all?

**Rev:** I mean, I will say this. You know, nothing that Gregory or NOEL could do could get into this building.

**Jake:** So surely just the random tracker that The Collectors have can't get into ... I would hope. The only way I could think that I could verify this is like, you know, electronics ping each other. Like there is a ... There's got to be a conversation back and forth. So if this thing isn't receiving a confirmation response, then it's not managing to get its information where it's trying to get it. You know? Like by accessing the device itself, I could read basically packets in, packets out. And if no packets are coming in, then no packets are going out.

**Rev:** I will totally let you roll Act Under Pressure to try to access what you know is a booby trapped device.

**Jake:** [Laughs] I don't know about all that. Especially in the middle of the server room.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Jake:** Yeah, I'm not gonna do that. But I'll mention that. Like, "It might be possible to actually check this thing and see if it's managing to broadcast out. But just by nature of trying to figure that out, I might set it off. We might get fucked in a whole different way."

**Tass:** "Oh, yeah. This is ... This is not the room for that. Yeah. Let's do my favorite thing and assume, and operate off of that assumption."

**Jake:** "OK."

**Tass:** "I think that that can't fail us."

**Jake:** "So OK, so we assume that they're not waiting for us, they are planning to follow us."

**Tass:** "Yeah."

**Jake:** "So we'll be able to get to the vehicle and get underway fine without having to use the elevator to escape. And that way we don't leave Grasshopper screwed. We know Grasshopper just like acquired this vehicle, right? Like she plans to abandon it?"

**Tass:** "Yeah. I mean, this isn't her signature rig, no."

**Jake:** "So ... I mean, we can leave the tracker just in it and they get to follow our trail and follow where they think we're going. But we get dropped off, and she goes and puts that vehicle somewhere?"

**Tass:** "Yeah, I think so."

**Jake:** "They could always EMP it, though. In the sky!" [Laughs] "If they wanted to turn us into a smoldering heap, they could."

**Tass:** "OK, fair."

**Jake:** Yeah, I think I ... Right? I determined that I think somebody could trigger this on purpose.

**Rev:** Yeah. I think even down that road, you can probably, thinking back on some jobs, have thought about like, "Oh yeah, we snuck one of these on to this guy's mistress and he got her into his car. And they started flying up, and we triggered it."

**Jake:** I can't believe that conventional flying vehicles don't have some kind of safety measure to prevent them from just plummeting to the ground and exploding.

**Tass:** Oh, I'll bet some real high end stuff probably does, but certainly not everything.

**Rev:** I think if we've learned anything in our own history, it's that no matter how good of defenses we make, people always make a better weapon.

**Tass:** That's true. Oof. "OK. So I have some ideas on what to do to potentially have a signal still go out when we leave. Something that they can follow. But we just leave it here, we just leave it out on the roof and drive away."

**Jake:** OK, how?

**Tass:** I have to get through this without spending both [gear].

**Jake:** OK. All right. So that's a definite option. If we get through this without spending both the [gears], you can do that. And we don't even have to worry about taking it with us. If we don't manage to get through with both [gears], we do have to take it with us and hope that they don't blow us up because they'd rather know where we're going.

**Tass:** Yeah.

**Jake:** And hope that we can give them the slip in the process.

**Tass:** "Yeah. Or just huck it off the side of the building and drive as fast as we can. Try to lose them in real time."

**Jake:** OK. "Oh god, and hope that they didn't manage to turn Grasshopper, while we were in here. Like Pascal was here. What if Pascal stopped off for a conversation with Grasshopper on the way out and was like, 'That's not them.'"

**Tass:** New plan: we're not leaving,

**Jake:** [Laughs]

**Rev:** We are baby birds in The Nest now.

**Tass:** "Yeah. She's their contact. So I mean ..."

**Jake:** "Well, OK. All right, we know that they're dangerous and like kind of ruthless, but they're not stupid. They wouldn't just kill their own driver friend, right? Like, if they could talk to her and get her to turn or whatever, like, they wouldn't just kill her. So we probably don't need to worry about them just blowing us out of the sky. That would be a waste, right? If they just killed the three of us, they would have no answers and it'd be a fucking waste. I don't think the best of the best are probably that rash and stupid. So I think we're going to survive this, is what I'm saying."

**Tass:** [Laughs]

**Jake:** I think us and Grasshopper, at the very least, will survive, at least until we had to come into contact with The Collectors. And we don't think that they are probably gonna give a shit about the truth behind us. But at that point, I mean, we could maybe talk our way through it, you know? Like I think we're better — especially having the information they don't have and like the truth on our side, we're probably gonna be better at talking our way through something. I feel like typically we are. Than fighting our way through something or tricksing our way through something, or anything like that."

**Tass:** "Yeah."

**Jake:** "So even if they've turned Grasshopper, you know? And even if we have to deal with them, we'll be alive to do it."

**Tass:** "Right now, that's good enough for me."

**Rev:** GREGORY: Does that mean you've come to a conclusion for me?

**Jake:** [Laughs] "Oh my god! You're still here?!" Good god.

**Tass:** "Yeah. Yeah, I think that's it. I think Gregory, do the 24 that you can get that are active. I'm gonna go through this panel and cut the power, get out, and try to get those boxes. Of course I'll check in with you before I walk out of this to see which things are where and, you know, operate based on that. We'll convene back here, get you unhooked, try to be as casual as we can to get out. Or, throw them at the door. Throw them at the other 25, just to see if we can take out a bunch of those so that there's less resistance as we go and hightail it for Grasshopper. I'll try this thing with the chip, and we go. No problems. See how easy that is?"

**Jake:** "It's gonna go great."

**Tass:** "All right. Go for it, Gregory." And I'm gonna head over to the panel in the corner.

**Rev:** GREGORY: Very well.

**Rev:** And he reaches his hand down into the server in front of him. And you see that all of his fingertips have opened up, and he plugs both of his entire hands into the server. And that energy pulses through him, down his arms, and his eyes go dead.

Tass, you head over to the server that Jake had indicated. And in the floor, there is a panel that's got four screws in it that you can lift up and becomes a utility panel.

**Tass:** All right. I'll get that up and start shimmying down, see what kind of a little corridor this is.

**Rev:** You open up the panel, and there is a ladder that goes down. Seems maybe 15, 20 feet.

**Tass:** All right. I'm gonna head down.

**Rev:** So Jake, what are you doing while Tass ventures into this tunnel?

**Jake:** I guess I'm standing guard up here. Like, can anything in this room be moved? Or is everything, like, anchored in place?

**Rev:** All the servers and stuff are anchored in place.

**Jake:** All right. So I'm not going to be able to block the door physically. So yeah, I guess I'm gonna hang out near the door and like, listen? You know, see if I hear any more of the synth movement out there, see if I hear anybody seeming like they're approaching this door. And be ready to either talk or fight if somebody comes in and uncovers our operation.

**Rev:** All right. So Tass, you head down this ladder and it leads into a large room. You can see that there are various tool chests down here, as well as some hallways that lead into different rooms that have electrical cables running through them. There are some miniature generators, all kinds of different pieces of equipment.

**Tass:** Can I kind of spatially get an idea of like where I am underneath the nests, to know which ones to deactivate?

**Rev:** Yeah. Roll Assess.

**Tass:** OK. Twelve.

**Rev:** All right. You get a hold 3.

**Tass:** It seems like a different spin on this, but I'm looking for what's in control here. Like, what is in control of the power to the specific nests that I need.

**Rev:** So yeah, you look around and you can see that there are seven distinct hubs that have power cables and miniature generators running. And you can figure out which two belong to the nest that you're trying to deactivate.

**Tass:** OK. How are these generators or cables vulnerable to me?

**Rev:** So the cables you would have to sever, you think. The generators actually aren't running. They seem like they are backup generators. That these draw power from the building, and that the generators here are backup in case something in the building goes down. And so you can see that there are big chunks of these wires that go up into the nest, going into these backup generators, as well as into the floor — going lower into the building.

**Tass:** OK. What potential complication do I need to be wary of?

**Rev:** Examining these cables that go down into the building and into the generator, you imagine that there must be some kind of notification system that goes off when a nest loses power, because something triggers to activate the backup generator. So you would imagine that if the backup generator doesn't activate, someone somewhere is alerted.

**Tass:** Well, darn it. I think I'm going to go back up the ladder.

**Rev:** And go home?

**Tass:** Yup!

**Jake:** Abandon this endeavor.

**Tass:** I'm out.

**Rev:** Out to the car.

**Jake:** You give up this poisonous dream!

**All:** [Laugh]

**Tass:** "Jake, I'm gonna need you for something."

**Jake:** "OK. Right now?"

**Tass:** "Yeah. Yeah."

**Jake:** "Is there anything we want to do precautionarily about this door and room, and our exposed friend?"

**Tass:** "If you have any ideas for it? Absolutely."

**Jake:** "I don't. That's why I'm standing here with a holdout pistol in my hand. OK, all right. Yeah, let's go."

**Rev:** All right. You both head back down into the maintenance room.

**Tass:** OK. So what I want to do is spend one of the [gear] that I have, and I get out this device that's essentially like a little electrical highjacker. It's this thing that clips onto the wire, so that it stops it from continuing on. So that it will actually lose power to the nest above, but keeps that charge going through it, so that it seems like the flow is still going. It won't, you know, continue back to be like, "Hey, this thing is no longer working." If that makes sense.

**Rev:** OK. How do you have this?

**Tass:** I think it's something that we had needed for previous jobs. And, you know, going back through the thought of this being a place that is self-contained, no signals in and out. Some of the stuff, the more mundane stuff that I might have brought, just didn't really apply. So I just dug through for this. It was something that I thought, hey, if everything needs to be contained, I'm going to need something that's going to keep a signal going. As opposed to stop or redirect it.

**Rev:** What had you used it on before?

**Tass:** Oh, that was ...

**Jake:** Wires.

**Tass:** Absolutely for wires.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Tass:** No, I think it was a much more dangerous situation, actually. As opposed to it being kind of a signal type thing to stop, in this situation. We were working a job that was dealing with heavy explosives, and we needed something to make the other people think that all of their defenses were still up, but stopped us from getting blown to high hell. And it came in real handy then, and I held on to it just in case.

**Rev:** All right.

**Tass:** "All right. So here's my thought, just so we can make this as quick as possible. You know, you keep an eye on this. I'm gonna go up, get the first one, and let you know as soon as I have it. And then pop it off, put it on the next nest, and I'll get the second one. So I don't have to go back and forth and chance getting seen a few times."

**Jake:** "OK. Which other wire? I need you to be very explicit about where I'm going to put this the next time."

**Tass:** "Yeah. Yeah, for sure. And I'll lead him over and show him exactly how to set it up, and on which one."

**Rev:** OK.

**Jake:** Pull out like a red twist tie from a loaf of bread and twist it around that wire, so I don't forget.

**Tass:** You have to spend one [gear] on that.

**Rev:** But you do now have slowly staling bread.

**Tass:** Oh no. Aww …

**Jake:** I'm munching on it the whole time.

**Tass:** All right. I'm gonna go.

**Rev:** All right. So Tass, you head back upstairs and back out into The Nest proper. Describe this to me. What are you doing?

**Tass:** Uh, same kind of thing where I'm just trying to be chill, move casually. You know, I'm keeping an eye out for the synths, to see if they are acting erratically in any way, if any of them might be moving that aren't controlled by Gregory. I guess I could kind of look for the blue eyes, right?

**Rev:** Yeah. You see that all of the ones in the room before were inactive, and they seem to still be inactive. They have their heads down. But you do see just a faint blue glow on their cheeks.

**Tass:** That's awesome.

**Jake:** Just to elaborate. You said that all the ones we saw in the room before. What about the ones that we heard mobilize? Does he see — does he see excess synths out there?

**Rev:** He does not.

**Jake:** That could be very good or very bad.

**Tass:** I imagine it's awesome.

**Jake:** OK.

**Tass:** So I'll go to SS-166, hit the numbers, and go up.

**Rev:** All right. You get to the top, and the lockbox is in front of you.

**Tass:** I am going to use my last [gear].

**Rev:** What are you producing?

**Tass:** Simplest tool I can think of. It's just like a small pocket welder. It's just like a high heat little thing that I can melt through this gold, and grab what I need.

**Rev:** That's the simplest tool you can think of? What about like a lever? Or a ball?

**Tass:** Hmm. I have heard of these, what do you call them …

**Jake:** What about a wheel and axle?

**Tass:** A hammer?

**Rev:** Or a pulley.

**Tass:** Maybe it's hah-mer?

**Jake:** A hämmer. It's got an umlaut above the A.

**Rev:** Yes

**Tass:** [Laughs]

**Rev:** Why do you have this?

**Tass:** This is very simple. I think this is kind of an old mainstay for him. You know, he's an infiltrator, he's got to get through places. Sometimes there's just a panel in the way you have to burn through. It's just a nice little, you know, small, literally pocket sized thing.

**Rev:** All right. So I think this is going to be an Act Under Pressure as you try to blow torch open this lock box, hovering thirty some feet in the air, trying to do it inconspicuously.

**Tass:** OK. Nine.

**Jake:** I'm helping, by casting my positive thoughts into the ether.

**Rev:** Just holding on to the wires and channeling your goodwill.

**All:** [Laugh]

**Tass:** I just feel better about this.

**Jake:** I'm belittling the wire that leads to the box, to lower its confidence so that it's easier to break into.

**Rev:** So as you start to cut this open, you're going to be able to get it open and get the contents out. But there's going to be a power surge that will fry the device that Jake is using to help you, some sparks are going to draw attention from someone not under Gregory's control, or the torch is going to run out of gas once it gets through this single lockbox.

**Tass:** You may have heard this once or twice, but those are all really good.

**Rev:** [Chuckles]

**Tass:** Oh, man ... OK, so I think somebody notices. The other two options make it so that I just definitely can't get into the other box, unless we take some other drastic measure in the middle of all this. Yeah, I think ... I think that's got to be the one.

**Rev:** All right. So you have cut this open, and you can access the interior.

**Tass:** I want to look in.

**Rev:** Inside you find a small, hand carved wooden box. It's about eight inches long and four inches wide.

**Tass:** OK. I'm gonna take it and pocket it.

**Rev:** OK.

**Tass:** And I'm gonna press the buttons to go down, and look for the other terminal for RD-19.

**Rev:** All right. You head down and start moving over towards the nest that has the other lockbox on it. As you do, one of the synths that you pass by jumps a little bit, and you hear Gregory's voice come from inside of it.

**Rev:** GREGORY: Oh, no. I think there seems to be some kind of a problem.

**Tass:** "What kind of problem, Gregory?"

**Rev:** GREGORY: I only have access to these bodies. I can't seem to access mine.

**Rev:** And Jake, down in this sub basement, you're moving over to attach the electric component to the other nest. And you hear this loud thunk as something hits the ground at the bottom of the ladder. And you turn and you look, and you see Gregory's head rolling towards your feet.

**Jake:** I'm in trouble!

**SFX:**                                        OUTRO MUSIC