ENGINEERING A TRAITOR

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ARMY CYBER INSTITUTE
AT WEST POINT

BUILDING A BETTER, STRONGER AND MORE SECURE FUTURE FOR OUR ARMED FORCES

Science Fiction Prototypes are science fiction stories based on future trends, technologies, economics and cultural change. The story you are about to read is based on threatcasting research from the Army Cyber Institute at West Point and Arizona State University. Our story does not shy away from a dystopian vision of tomorrow. Exploring these dark regions inspires us to build a better, stronger and more secure future for our Armed Forces.

Insider threats in industry can cost millions a year in lost revenue. Insider threats in the military may cost lives. Service members are trained to detect warning signs and potential indicators. Yet as technology evolves, the manner in which troops within our force might be recruited and radicalized might also look different.

We can not just focus on countering what an adversary can bring to bear on the battlefield but also their influencing operations that might take place years before the first shot is fired in un-expected means. The attack plain is widening. In the future, physical and cyber attacks might be combined to generate even more devastating effects.

Lt. Col. Natalie Vanatta
U.S. Army, Cyber

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ENGINEERING A TRAITOR

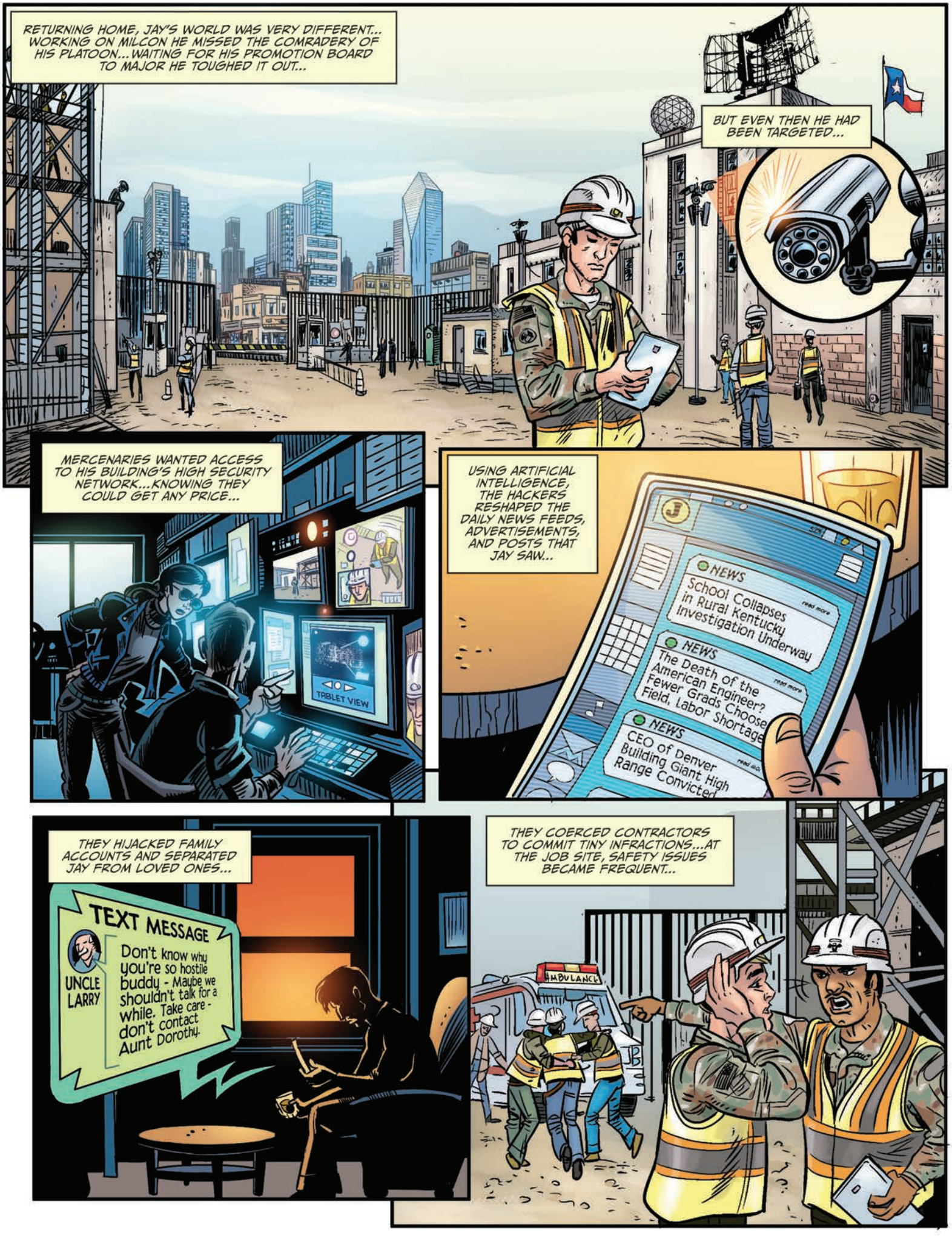
CPT Jake Roberts had always wanted to serve his country. In college, he was the only student in his engineering program to be commissioned as a U.S. Army Second Lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers.

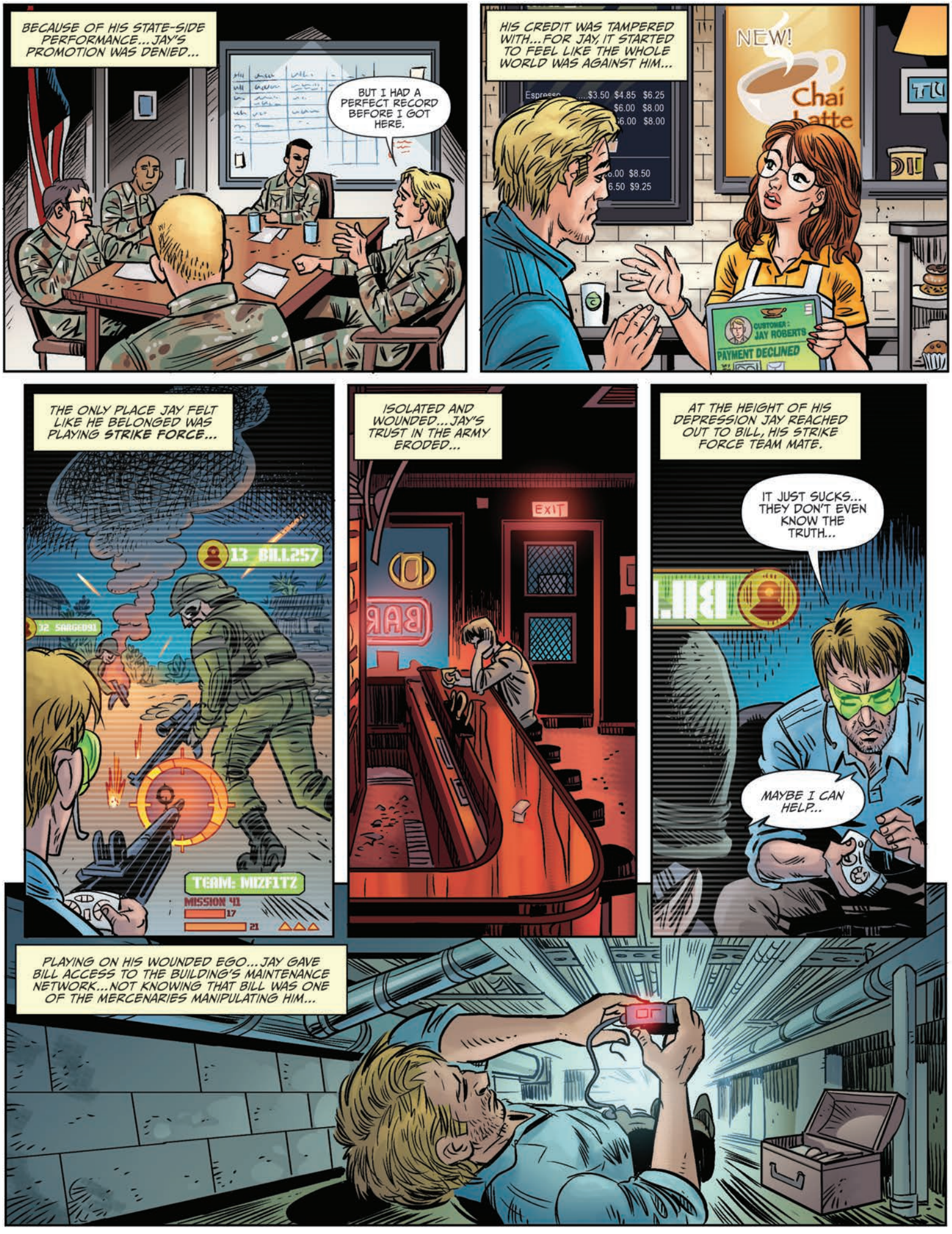
But the last year has not been kind to Jake. Bit by bit, he's become disenfranchised from his field office. Not included…secretly bullied…left behind…Jake loses trust with his CO.

Turns out - over the last year behind the scenes, he's been nudged and directed by the invisible hand of AI. Targeted for surveillance and coercion, he's pushed to his breaking point…until he must take action… It was just a small device hooked into the smart building maintenance system…

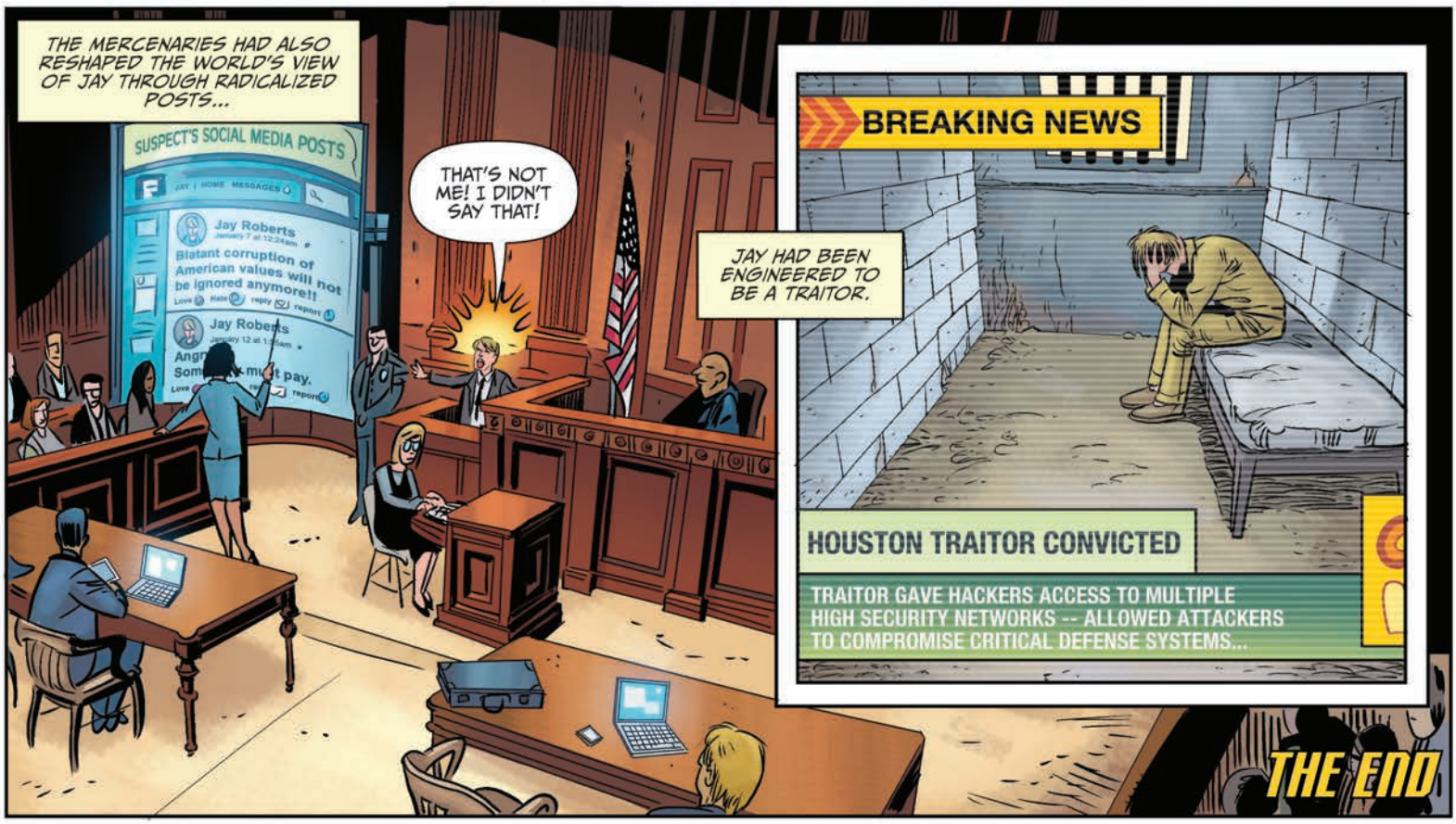
How could it lead to the undetected missile attack on Houston? Thousands of civilians killed…a Congressional investigation… Jake is convicted as a traitor to the country he swore to protect.

HOUSTON 2027.
THE MISSILE ATTACK CAME DURING LUNCH HOUR... THE DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS WERE FULL... TRAFFIC ON THE STREET ADDED TO THE CASUALTIES...
THE COUNTRY WENT ON HIGH ALERT... IN THE CONFUSION, IT WAS UNCLEAR WHO WAS BEHIND THE ATTACK...
THE "HOUSTON COMMISSION" WAS SET UP TO FIND OUT HOW THE MISSILES EVADED U.S. AIR DEFENSE...
C SPAN
LIVE
Houston Commisssion session in progress
C SPAN
AND, WHO MADE IT POSSIBLE?
YEARS EARLIER: JAY ROBERTS HAD ALWAYS WANTED TO SERVE HIS COUNTRY.
ROBERTS
U.S. AR
HE SERVED TWO DEPLOYMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN... ON HIS SECOND HE EXCELLED IN COMMAND OF HIS PLATOON...
HE WAS THE ONLY STUDENT IN HIS PROGRAM TO BE COMMISSIONED AS AN OFFICER IN THE ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS.


RETURNING HOME, JAY'S WORLD WAS VERY DIFFERENT... WORKING ON MILCON HE MISSED THE COMRADERY OF HIS PLATOON...WAITING FOR HIS PROMOTION BOARD TO MAJOR HE TOUGHED IT OUT...
BUT EVEN THEN HE HAD BEEN TARGETED...
MERCENARIES WANTED ACCESS TO HIS BUILDING'S HIGH SECURITY NETWORK...KNOWING THEY COULD GET ANY PRICE...
TABLET VIEW
USING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, THE HACKERS RESHAPED THE DAILY NEWS FEEDS, ADVERTISEMENTS, AND POSTS THAT JAY SAW...
NEWS
School Collapses in Rural Kentucky Investigation Underway
read more
NEWS
The Death of the American Engineer? Fewer Grads Choose Field, Labor Shortage
read more
NEWS
CEO of Denver Building Giant High Range Convicted
THEY HIJACKED FAMILY ACCOUNTS AND SEPARATED JAY FROM LOVED ONES...
TEXT MESSAGE
UNCLE LARRY
Don't know why you're so hostile buddy - Maybe we shouldn't talk for a while. Take care - don't contact Aunt Dorothy.
THEY COERCED CONTRACTORS TO COMMIT TINY INFRACTIONS...AT THE JOB SITE, SAFETY ISSUES BECAME FREQUENT...
AMBULANCE


BECAUSE OF HIS STATE-SIDE PERFORMANCE...JAY'S PROMOTION WAS DENIED...
BUT I HAD A PERFECT RECORD BEFORE I GOT HERE.
HIS CREDIT WAS TAMPERED WITH...FOR JAY, IT STARTED TO FEEL LIKE THE WHOLE WORLD WAS AGAINST HIM...
NEW!
Chai Latte
CUSTOMER: JAY ROBERTS
PAYMENT DECLINED
THE ONLY PLACE JAY FELT LIKE HE BELONGED WAS PLAYING STRIKE FORCE...
13 BILL257
12 SARGE93
TEAM: MIZFITZ
MISSION 41
ISOLATED AND WOUNDED...JAY'S TRUST IN THE ARMY ERODED...
EXIT
BAR
AT THE HEIGHT OF HIS DEPRESSION JAY REACHED OUT TO BILL, HIS STRIKE FORCE TEAM MATE.
IT JUST SUCKS... THEY DON'T EVEN KNOW THE TRUTH...
MAYBE I CAN HELP...
PLAYING ON HIS WOUNDED EGO...JAY GAVE BILL ACCESS TO THE BUILDING'S MAINTENANCE NETWORK...NOT KNOWING THAT BILL WAS ONE OF THE MERCENARIES MANIPULATING HIM...

SIX MONTHS LATER: THE TRAIL LED DIRECTLY BACK TO JAY.
FBI
FBI
I DIDN'T KNOW...


THE MERCENARIES HAD ALSO RESHAPED THE WORLD'S VIEW OF JAY THROUGH RADICALIZED POSTS...
SUSPECT'S SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS
Jay Roberts
Blatant corruption of American values will not be ignored anymore!!
Jay Roberts
THAT'S NOT ME! I DIDN'T SAY THAT!
JAY HAD BEEN ENGINEERED TO BE A TRAITOR.
BREAKING NEWS
HOUSTON TRAITOR CONVICTED
TRAITOR GAVE HACKERS ACCESS TO MULTIPLE HIGH SECURITY NETWORKS -- ALLOWED ATTACKERS TO COMPROMISE CRITICAL DEFENSE SYSTEMS...
THE END

AFTERWARD

"Due to process efficiencies and technology advances, individual actors in the workforce have become more empowered and can cause significant damage to their employer and business environment, often times with little effort. Couple this with cultural changes, and the "insider threat" has become one of the biggest challenges leaders in the 21st century will face in striving for mission success."

Dr. Brad Millick
Director for Insider Threat
Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence

AFTERWARD

In this story, artificial intelligence created the conditions to turn Jake into the weapon that the enemy needed. How might you detect such a threat? How are you supposed to protect yourself and your Soldiers in a future where artificial intelligence might shape reality?

Think about it. Do you trust everything that is delivered to your electronic devices? Do you let 1s and 0s influence your perception of reality more than your five senses?

Also think about your support structure. When life seems to not be going your way, where do you turn? How do we empower our Soldiers to successfully complete missions while also increasing their resiliency?

In a future where technology is more prevalent, more and more of the population may become potential insider threats, able to disrupt operations and injure our security - how do we combat this growing problem? What can you do?

We must learn how to deal not only with the threat from malicious insiders but also under-trained personnel, accident prone individuals, negligent workers, overwhelmed personnel, mismanaged contractors, and the list goes on. Awareness is the first step. Use this graphic novel to start the conversation.

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