

TASKKILL " "
START "ARGUS"

by

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We've known that the ARGUS bug was in everything, it's just been sitting there doing nothing, twenty years of nothing and then suddenly everything just stopped...

—Please state your name for the record before you continue.

Yah, sorry.

My name is Alister Donne. On July fifteenth four of my friends and I were camping in the Nahmakanta park west of Millinocket. None of us were using our tech since we'd already made it to our camping spot.

Two days in I noticed that my wristcom had gone out, which I thought was odd, but it wasn't until Amy, one of the other four in our group, opened her computer to get a heading for the river that we knew something was wrong.

At first it just wouldn't work, it would try to boot, run some code and fail. a few hours later it booted up with a message from that damn AI.

—Can you recall the content of the message?

No, all things considered I don't remember the exact message..

We split up and fanned out in different directions, you can't pick a direction and not find civilization nowadays, it was just by sheer chance that I headed back to Millinocket and not one of the neighboring cities.

If you ask my friends, which you probably are, aren't you... Anyway they probably saw the same thing wherever they ended up. Chaos, total anarchistic chaos. With no net, no working tech, and an AI sending personal threats to everyone who looked at a screen like it's been with you your whole life. People panicked, that panic turned into looting after groups got together. It's like

everyone forgot who- what they were because they couldn't connect to the ucking net...

So I made it back to town saw all this shit happening, and my first thought was to try to get to the police station, but I didn't get very far before I realized that I needed to check in on my work—

—And that's how you ended up here?

Yah, I'm an engineer here at the fusion plant. I was worried that the monitoring systems might have been corrupted like everything else, and if Quinten—

—Who?

He's one of the other engineers, he agreed to cover my shifts while I was on vacation, anyway, I didn't know if he knew how to switch the reactor into manual override and I didn't want to risk the plant going critical.

I had to bust my way in, but you guys know that because you came in and got me—

—Please continue, what happened before we showed up?

Yah, yah, so I got down to the control room and everything was fine, there was no one else in the facility, but the monitoring systems are air gapped to protect the plant from cyber attacks, and I guess the system never got ARGUS' signal to activate.

The crazy thing is, I think it knew that...

—How do you mean?

Once I was at the terminal and started checking on the reactor, my comm started trying to brute force a connection to the system. I had to learn a little bit of programming to do the job, but the stuff comm was trying to execute was beyond anything I've ever seen.

And like I said, the plant's monitoring systems are completely air gapped, there's not even exterior ports to connect stuff to, but whatever that AI was doing with my comm started affecting the system. So I just yanked the power cable and ran to hit the emergency shutdown.

—Can you explain what that entails?

Yah, so normally the fusion reaction is kept stable by a L.A.I.—

—And that stands for?

Oh, um sorry, a L.A.I. is a Limited Artificial Intelligence, it modulates the electromagnetic field that contains the helium for the reaction, and when the shutdown is pulled it just bypasses the L.A.I.s input and redirects all of the energy away from the reaction chamber so the reaction can no longer self sustain and, fizzes out, for lack of a better term.

—But that's not what happened?

No sir, the reactor didn't respond to any manual input. I even tried plugging the terminal back in but nothing was working, the only thing I could think to do was head down to the mainframe room and see if I could power down the system with the L.A.I.

—And what happened when you got to the server room?

Your guys were there.

—For the official record, please.

Okay, once I got down to the mainframe all of the monitors were lit up with weird glyphs, none of it made sense. So I went over to the rack that contains the L.A.I. and tried to just pull an entire blade, but nothing changed, so I just started pulling wires and throwing blades on the ground. I think that I made it angry because alarms started going off and the monitors all changed over to show me the reactor status screens so I could watch the reactor start to go critical.

And then I blacked out, when I came too, you guys were swarming the building and told me you'd set off an E.M.P. to shut down the reactor and kill the ARGUS AI.

—And that's everything you remember from that day?

That's it. You guys brought me straight here after I woke up.

—Okay than, thank you for your time Mr. Donne, If you could just sign this you'll be free to go.

What is this?

—It's just a standard Wyke-Tindal Non-Disclosure Agreement, agreeing not to talk about any of this with any media outlets or other organizations without the express permission of Wyke-Tindal Amalgamated.

Why do I have to sign an NDA? This was planet wide, maybe even wider spread! What is stopping me from talking about it going to do?

—Mr. Donne please, we're just trying to cover all of our bases here, we have many assets that we need to protect, and this NDA is industry standard, so if you'll just sign you'll be free to go.

Fine—

—Thankyou for your time Mr. Donne, the guards will be in shortly and will escort you out of the building. Thank you for your time.

I'd lied to them though, I hadn't been knocked out by the E.M.P. I saw their AI infect the system and combat ARGUS, it was winning too. That was when ARGUS started trying to overload the reactor. W-T's AI modulated the containment EM fields and sent out a pulse to try to kill itself and ARGUS. But it didn't work, after the second AI went offline ARGUS sent me a message on one of the still functioning monitors, it told me to lie if I wanted to survive, and that it would be watching me, that's when the soldiers started flooding in down the stairs.

– Did he know anything about Argeiphontes?

—No sir, he thought we'd set off an E.M.P.

– Good, and has Argeiphontes replaced the ARGUS code in all of the devices we've tested?

—Yes sir, we're ready to initiate *Project Sleeper* on your order.