

Prologue.

Tsawwassen, 18 Jul 2076

Manuel falls in line at the arrivals queue and assumes the bored scowl of a frequent flyer. His rapid heartrate is undetected as he nears the security station. He enters the scanner arch while his carry-on tote braves the parallel sensor.

An “all clear” chirps as he and baggage go unremarked. His lungs expel air. He exits and grins inwardly to stay hidden from **public eyes**.

For better or worse,
I'm past the 1st-hurdle.

Until this moment, Manuel has been skeptical about the electronic shield. **SOAR** has the best scanners on earth. Its sensors are reputed to appraise the number of carats in a wedding ring.

My fake ID and composite blade
have eluded SOAR's state-of-art
scanners. The Brotherhood has
upheld their part of the bargain.
I'm inside and free to do the job.
This has to be me. None of my
gofers can I trust to do it right.

The elevator takes him down 85 floors. Then he follows the crowd along a corridor which opens to a wider space between skyscrapers. Few locals wear **AR** glasses, and fewer yak on smartphones. His AR glasses are almost lifeless since no adverts appear, just an odd map display. He could be seeing through clear lenses.

Positively archaic!
Tsawwassen is the white
elephant everyone says it is.
No sense getting choosy
inside a peon's bargain byre.

At last, he sees a hotel banner across a courtyard of street-vendor kiosks and shoppers. Passing through the flea market, he enters the hotel lobby and books himself a weeklong sojourn.

Manuel can't afford to relax inside his hotel suite. Public camcorders are everywhere in **Tsawwassen**, even in the washrooms. His special ID and weapon stay sequestered for now. He does what a law-abiding tourist might do after coming to a foreign city. He stows his minimal luggage in the closet and refreshes himself in the shower stall. After which he grabs his camera and accessory pack then heads out for a looksee.

He knows newcomers are scrutinized more carefully than longterm residents, so he keeps body language casual and discreet. Manuel can't afford to do anything that might arouse suspicions. Even the weeklong stay at the hotel is a deception, for he must adhere to a tight schedule. It's important to take care of business ASAP and to leave by midnight.

Tsawwassen doesn't have rectangular blocks like other cities. It has a grid of hexagons called nexuses, which occupy 15 times more area than regular city blocks. The concourse level is reserved for bicyclists and pedestrians, each having separate paths, while rollerbladers, skateboarders and electric chairs roam as they please. They add chaos to the mix, but he doesn't see injury-causing mishaps. More amazing is the absence of motor vehicles which are shunted to the subbasement, whispering like tomb raiders.

He walks, refusing to wear AR glasses.

They're useless, for they
show very few adverts.
Might as well browse
with naked eyes like
the local bumpkins.

He takes purposeful strides, aiming to distance himself from the hotel. In the flea market he buys a toothbrush, Chap Stick and a box of mints. He strolls through two more nexuses before dumping the toothbrush, Chap Stick, unchewed mints and smartcard in a recycle bin. It's crucial to dump the smartcard since it might be sending a GPS beacon through which police could track his movements.

He enters a less-traveled nature park. He knows the main paths have mounted audiovisual recorders, but off-path woodlands have

only the odd aerodrone to monitor human mischief. Amid the underbrush is the safest place to dig out his unique smartcard and assassin's dagger, which he hides at the small of his back.

The **Brotherhood** has done thorough research and furnished a shortlist of **pets** that may offer sex on the side.

It's blasphemy to let whores
practice openly and legally.
Spacers are totally decadent.
Never mind, I'll assess their
online photos then choose
the one I attack tonight.

From previous online browses, a Jew bitch with thick brows and jet-black hair has caught his eye. If she isn't available he'll try an Asian gook or Polynesian. He'd love to torture a nigger or mulatto, but he doesn't trust himself to remain kind and considerate long enough to win her trust.

When he presents his doctored smartcard, it'll indicate a longtime resident with no criminal record. That fact ought to put a pet's fears to rest.

He calls the Jewess, and his nerves begin to sing...

Public Eye is the standard surveillance recorder in SOAR habitats.

Public eyes record 12-million pixels-per-frame in 24-qubit color at 75 frames per-second, with the visual stream synchronized to digital audio. [Back](#).

SOAR (acronym) Solar Omnifarious and Aspiring Republic. Spacer colonists belong to this economic confederation of member co-ops. [Back](#).

AR (acronym) Augmented Reality. AR glasses display websites and infomercials. Users can't get lost since they're linked to GPS which furnishes smart maps and situational awareness. [Back](#).

Tsawwassen is a futuristic metropolis (urban plexus) suspended over the Fraser River delta in former British Columbia, Canada. The name may also refer to the quasi-province or Tsawwassen Coastal Preserve (TCP). [Back](#).

Brotherhood is a terrorist group of antiabortionists who abhor members of the LGBTQ community. They believe men are the superior gender, and women must yield to their husbands. The group regards persons without European blood to be inferior. There are suspicions the Brotherhood is connected somehow to Red Falcons, a subsidiary of the transnat Zesticon. [Back](#).

pet (SOAR acronym) PsignoEmotional Therapist. Pets are professionals who render personal and psychoanalytical healing. Some pets apply mental techniques; others apply sensual therapy. [Back](#).