

Evil Walks Among US

Treatment by Tom DeWitt

### Overview:

"Evil Walks Among US" is a Science Fiction story set in the near future. It is a love story and a look into the souls of those who wield power in the US government. It is a story about incarcerating the country's worst criminals in a Virtual Reality Prison called the Secure Unfenced Operational Prison or SOUP. The SOUP creates a virtual world where inmates are kept alive in individually configured special coffins using the most recent medical technology to sustain their bodies. In the SOUP, criminals can murder, rape, and destroy without impacting real people, until their physical bodies die. Once you go into the SOUP, you never come out.

The story is about a US government Senior Executive who creates this virtual reality system while producing Artificial Intelligence solutions for various government agencies. He is driven to succeed by the memory of his wife and family, murdered in Texas by a convict released from prison. Known only as "the Supervisor," he sets a goal to incarcerate 100 prisoners in the prototype SOUP before revealing his new capability to the government's senior leadership. To achieve this goal, the Supervisor works with his team of medical and technology experts to refine the system while using his relationship with his best friend and senior Senator from Texas, Carter Hurst. Hurst creates an agreement with the State of Texas to convince the courts to send newly convicted criminals given life sentences to the SOUP located in Washington, DC, instead of the maximum-security federal prisons that typically contain the most dangerous offenders.

The Supervisor eventually reveals the capability of the SOUP to an oversight committee formed of congressional representatives and the Vice President of the United States. It is an overwhelming success and immediately classified at the highest levels.

The Vice President reports the system's success to the White House immediately. The President, facing re-election decides to de-classify the SOUP's existence and inform the public about "his" new solution for criminal reform. Americans no longer favor the death penalty however, Americans also expect that those incarcerated receive more humane treatment. The SOUP not only satisfies the wishes of Americans but also meets the financial requirements of a federal budget out of control.

The President selects Pulitzer Prize-winning author Alec Richardson to write a series of articles revealing the SOUP and its capabilities to America. The public overwhelmingly accepts and supports the new solution. Re-election is assured for the President until family members appear on TV voicing their concerns about never seeing their loved ones again that are sentenced to the SOUP. The political optics deteriorate quickly, and the White House demands a quick solution to the problem. This solution creates the conflict and drama of the story reflecting our own time's varied social and political values.

### Character Setup:

We meet the central cast of characters quickly once Jefferson Grant, a DC Metropolitan police officer begins to investigate the strange events that seem to be connected to a funeral home. Not long after Officer Grant observes these strange events, members of the Congressional oversight committee meet to hear a technical brief about the SOUP. After the successful briefing, the President is informed and quickly decides to use it for political gain. He declassifies the program and taps Alec Richardson to write a series of articles that will inform the American people. We meet Alec and Adelle Hall, a network executive who is also Alec's love interest, on a lazy Sunday morning in Richardson's Alexandria home. Together, they comprise a team that, while not perfect, represents the best of humanity.

**The Supervisor**, the Program Executive for the SOUP who closely manages all development and operations

**Senator Carter Hurst**, the Texas senator and the Supervisor's oldest friend, appointed to Chair the new, classified congressional oversight committee as requested by the Supervisor.

**Dr. Sandra O'Neil**, the technical genius who designed the SOUP infrastructure and Virtual World.

**Vice President Harold "Trip" Morrison**, is a hardball-playing political animal who leads the congressional oversight committee.

**Alec Richardson**, accomplished author and Pulitzer Prize winner tapped to write a series of articles detailing the SOUP concept, technical details, and successes.

**Adelle Hall**, a successful network executive and love interest of Alec Richardson

**Mr. UT**, is the SOUP medical doctor who integrates the inmate's mind and body with the technical system; he is also the designated messenger who meets with Alec Richardson to frame the articles about the SOUP.

### Story:

Prologue: The story begins with one of the inmates in the SOUP. It is an opening scene that represents the evil in humanity. It is Christmas, and the inmate knows that his next victim will be out shopping. The criminal abducts a local mother after she takes her daughter to school and takes her to his basement far outside of town. Her abductor reveals that he has always loved her and wants her to return his affection. Bound by chains and under the complete control of her captor, she resists his efforts. Using a demented ritual, he rapes and murders her. The Prologue ends with the woman safe and unharmed. The entire event took place in the mind of a convicted murderer. He created the event in the SOUP's virtual world.

A Washington, DC police officer, Jefferson Grant, is outside a local funeral home in Southeast DC. He is acting on a tip given to him by one of his street informants named Maggie. She said there was a lot of unusual nighttime activity at the funeral home, and he should "check it out." As the evening progresses, he witnesses a shipment of caskets arriving. During a heavy rainstorm, one of the workers mistakenly causes a casket to fall from the forklift, revealing its contents of technology, lights, and a body. The person in charge approaches the casket, assesses the situation, and shoots the person inside, leaving Grant to wonder why armed men are offloading caskets and shooting dead people.

The story shifts to a courtroom in Austin, Texas, where the judge sentenced a criminal to "Virtual Life". The defending attorney is unsure what virtual life is and discusses the unique Federal program with the prosecutor. The prosecutor explains that it is a new approach to incarceration.

The convicted felon is escorted out and given an injection to prepare him for entry into the SOUP. As the injection begins to work, the felon creates a virtual escape that results in a shoot-out as he flees from his Federal escort. He is unaware that he's been placed in a temporary shipment container and is about to begin his new life in virtual reality. This felon represents a significant milestone for the SOUP. He is the 100<sup>th</sup> inmate to enter virtual life. The Supervisor decides it's time to tell Congress about his creation because he needs political protection and funding to expand the program.

Back in Washington, DC, Jefferson Grant meets with Maggie again. She tells him other informants she knows on the streets are disappearing after visiting the funeral home. Maggie believes the disappearances are linked to the armed guards and strange activity. She explains that she went to the location, was observed on camera, and was told by the armed agents to leave. Grant is worried that now she's been identified and could also disappear.

The story returns to the Supervisor, who is in the US Capitol and preparing to brief the SOUP Program and its capabilities to the newly formed oversight committee. He confirms the funeral home in Southeast is where the inmates are brought in via coffins. The Supervisor describes how the SOUP works, the partnership in Texas, and the program's potential. He also explains how the program has created the ability to show the inmate's virtual world, projecting it into a "life video" that portrays the inmate's activity in the SOUP, essentially making it into a movie. The committee is particularly interested in when an inmate's last seconds of life are explained. When the system projects that an inmate's physical death is imminent, the virtual world of the SOUP "pixelates" into dots and the inmate is returned to their last memory in the real world. To wrap up his presentation, the Supervisor employs his Chief Scientist and technical genius behind the SOUP's creation, Dr. Sandra O'Neil, to present other technical details to the committee. She interacts with the committee seamlessly. At the end of her briefing, the Supervisor reveals that Dr. O'Neil is a hologram representing the state of technology used in the SOUP's virtual world. The committee is impressed and agrees that the SOUP is a fantastic national asset that will revolutionize incarceration.

The Supervisor travels to Senator Hurst's office. Hurst explains he will be the first Committee Chairman, and the Supervisor will report to him. This pleases the Supervisor and Hurst's announcement that funding and new SOUP locations will be planned immediately. After sharing the good news, Hurst reveals that the President wants to make the SOUP public and will use Alec Richardson to write a series of articles to educate the public. The Supervisor objects to this plan, but eventually decides to trust his friend and says, "Yes, sir." Hurst directs the Supervisor to bring Richardson to the DC facility and cooperate fully with the story's publication.

The story shifts to the house of Alec Richardson in Alexandria, VA. He is with his lover, Adelle Hall, a network executive. Their morning is interrupted by a phone call from Mr. UT, who says he wants to meet with Alec at the National Harbor on a matter of importance. Alec agrees to meet him the next day. Mr. UT explains that he is the Chief Medical Officer for the SOUP Program and that he is there to inform him that the President wants Alec to write a series of articles about the SOUP. Mr. UT confirms his request by providing a letter from the Vice President requesting Alec to participate. Upon agreement, Alec is sedated and travels with agents to the site without knowing its location. There, he interacts with the staff and sees the facility. He is extremely impressed. Alec is sedated and returned to Adelle.

Shortly afterward, Alec meets with Johnathan Wilkes, the Editor of the Washington Guardian. Wilkes is a self-serving friend from earlier days. The two meet to discuss the first story about the SOUP. The article sets the groundwork by describing a failing incarceration system and the costs of sustaining existing prisons. He tells Wilkes he is doing him a favor by bringing the story to him first and convinces Wilkes that he cannot alter the story if the Guardian is to be the exclusive publisher. Wilkes wants the story to be more than information from anonymous sources without credibility in DC. He wants Alec to cite himself as the reporter who visited the site to make the story real. The two men agree.

The first story is released. Polling shows that the American people favor the SOUP. The President's popularity jumps with his new prison reform solution. Everything looks good for re-election until the wife of an inmate grabs the national spotlight on TV and makes a case for not using the SOUP. A rattled White House wants the message fixed, and Hurst calls the Supervisor with the problem. The Supervisor invites Hurst to the facility to discuss options.

The story returns to Jefferson Grant, who finally hears from Maggie through their coded message system. Grant is waiting by the Washington Monument when Darnell Washington, Maggie's son, approaches him. Darnell discovered how to use his mother's messaging system by looking through her personal items.

Darnell believes his mother was taken and placed in the SOUP. Grant knows nothing about the SOUP until Darnell shows him the Guardian article by Alec Richardson. While not revealing the facility's location, the information and Grant's knowledge of the funeral home allows Grant to make the connection. Grant knows where the SOUP is located.

Senator Carter Hurst is now at the facility, preparing to discuss options to address the inmate-family visitation problem highlighted on TV with the Supervisor. The team devises three options, each with political ramifications unfavorable to the Administration. The Supervisor proposes a fourth solution, the Family Protection Program (FPP). The Supervisor suggests creating a second version of the SOUP for the family members of each of the inmates. The Supervisor states putting family members in the SOUP eliminates the problem of inmate visitation. He adds that having a "non-criminal" version of the SOUP will allow the Supervisor's team to develop reform solutions that will enable criminals who commit non-capital crimes to be put in the SOUP. While there, inmates would be exposed to these reform solutions, before being re-released into society. The Supervisor makes clear, reform not just incarceration is what he seeks. He believes all violent criminals can become productive members of society.

The Supervisor explains each of these reform solutions to Hurst. The Last Memory Jumpstart would allow inmates to enter the SOUP at a time in their memories before committing their crimes. A second solution, called Cause and Effect Scenarios, would be used to "create new positive memories" that replace their original ones. Once a method is developed for leaving the SOUP, convicted criminals would depart the SOUP without knowing about their criminal activity and with new personalities based on their positive new life memories.

The team and Hurst discuss the scientific facts supporting their ideas. Hurst hears the team's solid justification for their approach. Hurst talks with the Supervisor alone, and an argument follows in which Hurst states his displeasure for putting innocent people in the SOUP and then experimenting on them. The Supervisor argues that the visitation problem would be fixed and the number of family members would be small. The positive results of the research would far outweigh the negative of putting women and children in the SOUP. He further argued that these reforms would eliminate most crimes. The two reach an impasse, and Hurst does not make a decision. The Supervisor is committed to this course of action.

The story moves to a middle school in Shelbyville, TN. The school principal receives an email that one of his troublemaking students and the mother are leaving. The wife's husband is a convicted murderer and the boy's life has been rough in Shelbyville. They are going to a new school in Virginia to be close to family. The principal does not understand that the note is a cover story for the FPP and its implementation. A decision has been made to implement the program.

Darnell Washington visits Officer Grant at his home. Darnell has done research showing family members of convicted felons are disappearing in freak accidents. In each case, bodies are not found. Grant and Darnell are convinced family members are being taken and put in the SOUP. Grant does additional research on his own and finds evidence that family members are flown into Baltimore Washington International (BWI) Airport and taken to the facility in DC where Grant saw the shooting. Grant only has one other lead, the article by Alec Richardson. He finds Richardson's address and shows up. Adelle and Alec listen to his evidence. They all agree that something evil is happening. They decide to help and set a date to go to BWI when they suspect the next shipment of family members will arrive. The three stake out the airport and are rewarded when a hearse arrives to transport several caskets to a nearby warehouse. The three sneak into the warehouse and confirm that the coffins are loaded with life support technology that contains women and children. Before they can escape with their discovery, they are knocked out by a special gas and apprehended. When they awake, they confront the Supervisor.

The Supervisor knows Alec from his visit to the facility and knows he could write an article that could destroy the program. The Supervisor threatens them with treason and to ruin their lives if Alec does so. He releases them and tells them not to come near the program again.

Alec, Adelle, and Grant are distraught. They cannot believe what their government is doing to innocent people. Alec and Adelle cannot let it go. Alec contacts Johnathan Wilkes and sets up a meeting on the National Mall. Alec explains to Wilkes that the SOUP program is putting family members of the inmates into the SOUP to keep them from causing problems for the Administration. Alec offers to author the story about BWI in exchange for a favor from Wilkes. Alec knows Wilkes has powerful friends and wants them to assist with legal fees and protection if Alec writes and the Guardian publishes the story. Wilkes provides Alec with a compelling reason for writing the article about BWI and promises to publish it in October before the election. Wilkes convinces Alec that his friends will protect Adelle and Alec if prosecuted by the government for releasing classified secrets. The two men agree their plan is sound.

Alec and Adelle are discussing his meeting with Wilkes when the phone rings. It is Grant. He is upset. His wife, daughter, and Darnell have disappeared. He received a phone call confirming the program had them in the SOUP and was told to call Alec if he wanted to know why. The couple invites him to the house to calm him down and figure out their next moves. Grant arrives, and while discussing the details, Alec receives a text message from Mr. UT telling him to say no more; his house is bugged. Mr. UT wants to meet Alec the following day at the National Harbor.

Alec meets Mr. UT the next day and, as he approaches, Mr. UT takes a device and waves it near Alec's body. He explains that the SOUP Program has made significant advances in AI Technologies. On Alec alone were hundreds of "dust mites" connected to his cell phone to provide information to those listening. The device Mr. UT waved over Alec's body was a small Electro Magnetic Pulse (EMP) generator that destroyed the nanotechnology that powered the bugs. Mr. UT explained that the Supervisor had heard his discussion with Wilkes the day before. The Supervisor felt betrayed and took Grant's family and Darnell. Mr. UT explains that Grant's family was the last straw for him. He no longer believes in what the program is doing and no longer supports the Supervisor. He wants out of the program and to go off the grid somewhere west like Utah. He also wants to help Alec get Grant's family, Maggie and Darnell out of the SOUP. The two discuss how they will do it. Mr. UT explains that there is danger in what they are planning. The facility has a rapid response force authorized to use deadly force on escaping prisoners. Alec wants to press forward. When they finish their conversation, Mr. UT provides Alec with several gas grenade weapons he believes will help him. Mr. UT replaces the bugs, and the two separate, with Alec knowing he has to organize a "jailbreak" while people listen to his every conversation.

Despite the bugs, the group organizes and prepares to retrieve their friends from the SOUP. With Mr. UT's aid (he knocks out the guards with the same gas used at BWI), the three access the facility and rescue everyone from the SOUP through a series of dramatic events. Alec and Adelle are in the lead vehicle after departing the facility, followed by the van with UT, Grant, his family, Maggie, and Darnell. As they enter an intersection, the van is stopped by a vehicle, and from the side, the security response force springs into action, killing everyone in the van in a horrific gunfight. Adelle and Alec are helpless and continue with the plan to head west, leaving behind their dead friends. They can do nothing for them now, and they know they will be next.

After traveling West with no real destination, Alec and Adelle stop and lease a home in the small town of Salina, Utah. They hope to hide "off the grid" in the small town of 2500 people until they find a solution for their problem with the Supervisor. It's been six weeks since their attempted escape from the facility in Washington. Adelle has started to write an outline that exposes the escape intent and the incident at BWI.

Alec presents a solution that involves writing two articles instead of one. The first will blame the current Administration for abducting inmate family members and putting them in the SOUP. The article will highlight the need for change in the upcoming election.

Alec proposes that Wilkes print the BWI article immediately to provide time to build a party platform about the incident and discuss a new organization that will reform the SOUP. He believes the American people will be angered about the Administration's abuses and vote them out of office when they hear about the incident. More importantly, it will give the new administration time to develop a message and tell the nation that they will reform the rules and prevent incidents like the FPP from happening again. He reasons their party will reform the SOUP, which guarantees it remains as a solution for incarceration. Knowing the current Administration might seek revenge, Alec proposes they write a second article about the massacre in DC when attempting to free their friends. He explains the second article will provide security from both political parties if either takes action against them. They will write the second story and place it in the hands of a confidential source that will release it to the press if anything happens to them. The Supervisor will be given both articles and the conditions for their publication. Neither side would want the DC massacre story published. It would mean the program would be shut down, and both parties would lose the political and financial value of continuing it. Adelle agrees it is a good strategy.

Alec and Adelle find a payphone and call Wilkes at the Guardian. They tell him they have the BWI story, and its contents guarantee the Administration loses the next election. Wilkes is overjoyed with the news. Wilkes sees the value of the information and wants to print it in October, as they discussed on the National Mall. Alec says their life is in danger and that he and Adelle are operating off a new plan. Alec convinces Wilkes to publish it at once. Wilkes acquiesces temporarily on the publishing date and says he will confer with his friends providing the protection. Alec sends Wilkes the story via email using a computer at the local library. After this phase, he and Adelle "re-enter the grid," buying cell phones with relief and confidence. With protections in place, they are no longer worried about being discovered. They send both articles to Mr. UT's old email, hoping the mailbox is being monitored, along with their contact information for the Supervisor. They tell the Supervisor that the BWI article will be published. The second is for their security. The Supervisor calls, knowing the couple outmaneuvered him. The Supervisor does not want the program to end and suggests they return to DC to work out a truce, knowing the second article will protect them. Alec and Adelle agree to a meeting.

Alec and Adelle return to Alexandria. On their way to breakfast the following day, Alec receives a call from Wilkes. He says his friends want him to wait until October to publish and that his hands are tied. Wilkes will not alienate his paper's financial support and influence with his party. Alec is upset and tells Adelle over breakfast what Wilkes told him. She offers him an excellent suggestion. The two have breakfast and head to meet at the National Harbor with the Supervisor's team. Their meeting with the Supervisor's team goes well. The second article assures their security and the couple will not need to fear for their safety. Even the Supervisor does not want to see his program end.

Alec prepares to meet the White House Chief of Staff, Aaron McAllister, for drinks the next day to give him the BWI article. This was Adelle's suggestion. Alec felt it was the right course of action since Wilkes' friends did not want to make guarantees about an oversight organization. Alec decided they would rather win the election with an October bombshell than take the high ground and promote policy to prevent further family member abductions. McAllister is an old friend of Alec's who provided him with stories early in his career because he knew Alec would write them with integrity. McAllister was also impressed with Alec's Pulitzer Prize work in Afghanistan, despite Alec being on the opposite political side of the current Administration. Alec did not know, but it was McAllister who recommended him to the President to write the SOUP articles in the first place. Despite their political differences, their relationship is strong and based

on trust. McAllister took the offer at once to meet Alec. The two meet at the Willard Hotel bar across from the White House, and Alec explains what happened at BWI. McAllister is aghast. Alec explains that he has written an article that the Guardian will publish in October. Providing McAllister with the article now will give his administration time to react to the contents. In exchange for the story and its information, Alec wants a guarantee that the SOUP leadership will be replaced and transparency re-established with the public. Alec wants new oversight and changes to the program that Wilkes is unwilling to give him. McAllister promises to read the article; if it's as bad as Alec portrays, he will push for changes. The two men part company. On the way home, Alec calls Adelle and talks about the meeting. Both want to celebrate. Alec arrives home. As he freshens up, Adelle says she will wait for him in the car. Suddenly, an explosion rocks the house. When Alec makes his way to the door and opens it, he sees the smoldering ruins of his BMW, where Adelle was waiting for him. A bomb had been placed in the car while Alec was in the Willard bar. It was detonated with a cell phone by someone observing Alec's home. Adelle is dead, killed in the blast.

Alec awakes in an Alexandria hospital where Donna, an old friend of Adelle's, visits him. She helps Alec make preparations for Adelle's memorial service, which occurs a week later. Alec's hospital stay was just a few days. Once home, he retrieves the items Mr. UT gave him and makes other weapons preparations. At the service in Reston, Alec receives a note from the Supervisor asking him to meet the following evening at a warehouse in Sterling. Even before receiving the Supervisor's note, Alec knew what he would do. His meeting with the Supervisor was not going to be cordial.

Alec arrives early for the meeting and parks up the street at another location, knowing the Supervisor's team would monitor the parking lot. He waits until near the appointed time and drives to the site. The Supervisor also planned to arrive early but was late from one of Virginia's many traffic delays. Sensing this was his opportunity, Alec uses one of the gas grenades to immobilize the Supervisor and security team. Alec is filled with rage as he pulls the agents from the vehicle and kills them. He takes the access cards from around the Supervisor's neck and moves to the main facility. He opens the door knowing he will be met by gunfire and tosses in his last gas grenade. Convinced everyone is knocked out, Alec enters the facility and dispatches the occupants, letting his anger guide his actions. He returns to the Supervisor's vehicle and pulls him into the facility where he is bound. Alec waits for the Supervisor's return to consciousness.

The Supervisor recovers. Alec questions him about the murder of his friends and Adelle. The conversation evolves to philosophy, discussing good and evil, the need for sacrifice, and how personal actions cause outcomes. The outcomes can be positive or negative, based on the individual's morals. Once Alec has the answers he wants, he calmly shoots and kills the Supervisor and leaves the building. Alec climbs into the Supervisor's SUV and drives off, knowing that the program will track him down and kill him. He doesn't care. He has nothing of value left in life. As he drives, Alec sees the reality around him begin to pixelate and realizes he is in the SOUP. He recalls his last memories at BWI. He now understands that Grant and Adelle are alive before falling into a black abyss.

Outside of the SOUP, the Supervisor has generated a strong electrical current in Alec's box. The system acknowledges there is no longer any life and pushes the box into the system's crematorium. Alec Richardson is dead.

In the real world, the program team is checking the system functionality while also determining the best way to create cover stories that announce the death of Alec, Adelle, and Grant since their disappearance at BWI. Satisfied with their work, they provide the press with their fake obituaries. Meanwhile, Dr. O'Neil is meeting with Senator Hurst near the Capitol. She states that on his authority, the SOUP now has 230 family members of inmates, including Alec Richardson, Adelle Hall, and Jefferson Grant. Each of the three was



placed in the SOUP at BWI Airport when they discovered the program's shipping operations for the family members. Hurst denies giving the authority for the FPP and is angry at his friend for the problem he's created. She explains there is more. Dr. O'Neil tells him that the Supervisor has murdered Alec Richardson while using him as a test subject for new capabilities. The Supervisor is at the facility, confined to his room. He is peaceful. She suggests that Hurst come to the facility to talk with the Supervisor about why he killed Richardson. Hurst agrees.

Hurst arrives at the facility the next day and begins his discussion with the Supervisor. Mr. UT and Dr. O'Neil are present. Hurst asks if the Supervisor gave the authority for FPP. He admits he did, explaining that non-criminals were needed to perfect the cause-and-effect scenarios. The Supervisor explains he selected Alec Richardson as his first test subject for the scenarios because he was a good and honorable man. He further explains the scenarios (massacre in DC, Adelle's death) he used on Richardson, and that Richardson chose revenge to resolve his situation. The scenario results told the Supervisor that if a good man could choose revenge, more was needed to achieve meaningful reform for the inmates who were already criminals. After hearing the Supervisor's explanation, Hurst is at a crossroads. He can either launch an investigation that could cause the program to be defunded, thereby losing a valuable national asset while also destroying his friend's reputation, or he could sacrifice his friend. He chooses the latter and puts him in the SOUP using the Last Memory Jumpstart (later called Last Memory Reset). If the Last Memory Jumpstart worked, the Supervisor could be walked backward in his memories before his family was killed. This memory point would be his new starting point in the SOUP, allowing the Supervisor to "live" with his family for the rest of his natural life.

Hurst wants more answers from Dr. O'Neil and stays in the conference room to talk with her. She explains that the Supervisor knew the power that the Last Memory Jumpstart could have in reforming inmates. The scenarios, while effective, were not enough, as Richardson's decision for revenge showed them. Dr. O'Neil explains that testing the Last Memory Jumpstart required someone with shared experiences to walk the Supervisor back to the correct memories before entering the SOUP. For the Supervisor, that person was Senator Hurst – his longtime friend. Dr. O'Neil tells Hurst that the Supervisor knew Hurst would not allow him to risk his life with experimental technology and that killing Richardson would force him to decide between putting him in the SOUP or shutting the whole program. Dr. O'Neil denies knowing the Supervisor would kill Richardson to achieve this outcome. At the end of the conversation, Hurst knows he made the right decision, that his friend was willing to sacrifice his life for the program's success no matter the cost.

Weeks later, the Warden is the new Supervisor of the program. She finishes her report to the committee concerning the events at the facility with Richardson's death. The committee will not condemn Hurst for his decision. There is too much power and money tied to the program. Each is happy that Hurst just "handled" the problem, and by classifying the report at the program level, no one except the committee will know the truth. The new Supervisor begins presenting the economic potential of the program and offers the idea of using the SOUP for older adults and replacing nursing homes. Now that they know Last Memory Reset works, they can walk seniors back to a memory where they can start again, living a vibrant, virtual life until their physical body dies. The committee is in favor of this idea.

After the meeting, Dr. O'Neil approaches the new Supervisor for a personal discussion. She tells her that Richardson is **not** dead. Faking his death was the only way Matthew Boyd (the old Supervisor) could force Hurst into a decision. Dr. O'Neil and Boyd fabricated the entire incident and the supporting logs to convince everyone that Richardson was murdered. Only the new Supervisor, Mr. UT, and Dr. O'Neil know the truth. When asked why Senator Hurst should not know the truth, Dr. O'Neil tells her that the Senator has become a different man, working both sides of the aisle to find solutions for the country. She believes this is because Hurst knows that's what his friend wanted and sacrificed himself for a better world. Additionally, telling

Hurst would raise many other questions that could work out badly for the program. The Supervisor agrees to keep the "big lie" and looks forward to working with Dr. O'Neil and Mr. UT.

The Epilogue portrays a random life situation that confirms that the program has moved into the elder care space and that senior citizens can live healthy and productive virtual lives in their remaining years. The Epilogue provides a "good" ending to the book's "evil" beginning. The remainder of the story between the two is intended to have the reader make their own decisions about the government's actions and the program staff's decisions.