

PREMISE

Set on Earth in the 2400s. Hal Shepard is an "enhanced human" and works for Im-Sec, a government agency tasked with hunting down illegal immigrants. Due to huge overpopulation, Earth is closed off from the rest of the solar system settlements. After a routine operation goes wrong, Hal finds out he is being framed by the mysterious Triss—who represents a powerful off-world corporation—and agents in his own department might be in on the plot. Triss blackmails Hal into providing access to the government AI system, and thus access to unlimited confidential data, which they can use to bankrupt their competition and leverage government officials to do their bidding. With the Earth government crippled, it's only a matter of time before the criminal organisations take over and the population of Earth reduced to servitude. Hal must fight to clear his name and obtain evidence of the conspiracy, before Triss and her employers find out and destroy him and his family.

"When a government agent tasked with hunting down illegal immigrants is framed by a powerful off-world corporation, he must partner with a sentient AI in order to clear his name, save his family, and keep the population of Earth from criminal servitude."

Hero – government agent

Opposition/Villain – off-world corporation

Problem/Goal – our hero has been framed and must clear his name

Stakes – his reputation, his family, and potential servitude for Earth's entire population

SCENES

INTRO: MC THWARTS ATTEMPT

Influx of unregistered immigrants. MC is head of unit to intercept. Systems tracking band of people from Io in rough end of London borough. Heads in with team. Steadies himself by repeating company propaganda. Touches down. Team intercept, people are killed. MC discovers families and children. Has second thoughts but knows his duty. Calls it in and they are taken for deportation (likely Mars as a stop-off point - great place for delinquents!). Each of them is tagged with a location tracker. Explains the process in painless but only allows tracking from security clearance mainframes.

Notes: Needs interaction and familiarity with AI unit to allow for empathy later - otherwise we don't care whether the AI unit lives or dies in the proactive phase. The AI unit will become a central character in the conclusion phase so we have to care about it before then.

INTRO: MC HEADS HOME

Brain swimming with opposing emotions. MC heads home through streets to clear his head. Environment described. Soci-economic side explained. Reaches apartment. Crosses stranger in the hallway. Enters home. Argues with wife about having a family and not having enough money. Wife put her career on hold, for what? She will do what

she has to ensure their survival. He sleeps on couch. Goes into bedroom to reconcile. She is asleep. Phone buzzing.

Notes: needs more background and basis for marital issues, so they can be overcome later and develop more empathy.

INTRO: MC HEADS OUT

MC wakes full of regret. Attempts reconciliation but has another fight. Storms off. Heads to work meeting with potential informant. Finds himself sat down with powerful crime boss (LOCKE). Crime boss offers him money for intel. He refuses. But can't get evidence. Situation is tense but they know each other well and came from the same neighbourhood. Arguably they are the same, on different sides of the law. MC heads into the precinct / office to catch up on intel.

Notes: need to foreshadow GCM#1 here. We mention the bribe, but GCM#1 also needs video footage of the main character so that he can be convincingly framed. So perhaps the MC notices some analogue equipment he can't hack, which would provide the footage without him knowing about it until later. Also need to frame the world of informants - the "rules" that agents need to play by (so that his later visit to Bayliss is obviously a protocol no-no).

GCM #1 - MONEY ARRIVES

MC attends briefing. Told that the unregistered had been released and held in a secure location. Sees missed call from wife and ignores it. Later decides to make amends with a gift. Checks balance and discovers large deposit. Can't explain it. Realises someone is messing with him.

Notes: during the briefing, need to change the AI announcement to include the fact all departments will be fully audited before the system is rolled out beyond the testing area, to ensure security, etc. This means the MC will realise his upcoming "bribe" will be noticed and will cause him concern over his "backdoor" implant use. This drives him to seek help from tech guy. When the money arrives, it is accompanied by video surveillance of him with Locke. Doesn't look good - MC realises the upcoming audit will make it look like he took a bribe, and he knows the punishment for that.

REACTIVE: MC MAKES ENQUIRIES

MC suspects Locke. But can't understand why after their conversation. Pulls up intel and his own knowledge and concludes he needs to understand how money could be moved without a trace. MC heads to BAYLISS (casino owner and general seedy sort) to get intel, knowing that she is a sensitive informant and his boss won't like it one bit.

Notes: need more of an internal struggle before he decides to see Bayliss. Eg, that he knows it's against the rules but he's running out of time before the audit, at which point the blackmail material will be noticed by the department. He has no choice, is boxed in. MC needs to explain his choices here - what happens if he reports it? What happens if he runs? Needs to decide to investigate further.

REACTIVE: MC CAUGHT IN THE ACT

Bayliss is angry at the intrusion, but gives useful intel about how one might go about hiding money trails. eventually kicks MC out, and MC is berated by his boss (ARMSTRONG) about it. Revealed the unregistered caught in first scene have had their deportation delayed over a technicality. Told his team are grounded.

Notes: Armstrong must ground the team. More dialogue on this. And also more dialogue on what has become of the illegal immigrants (who are later revealed to be caught up in the conspiracy).

REACTIVE: NEW SYSTEMS

MC tends to his wounds back at the precinct. All staff meeting called by boss. Tells them the new intel AI is being made live early. MC asks why as it's not tested yet. Boss tells him to do as he's told. MC wonders why the freighter company would risk having unregistered onboard - unless someone smuggled them on?

Above and below are now one longer scene

REACTIVE: AI SYSTEM

MC goes to see tech leader behind AI. He is worried about the potential vulnerabilities, especially considering MC uses less-than-legal hacks to get leads on cases. Explains what data and power is held by the system and what could happen if it was breached. Says he's been working off books for a new security protocol that can seal a breach so long as it is installed before. But it's not tested and won't be ready for months, due to stringent testing. But he's confident it could work. In the meantime, he gives MC an update to his scanner. Allows him to access enhanced data on suspects only on his scanner, whereas normally he'd need to be at the mainframe and with security clearance. For emergencies only, and if used more than three times before manual reset will trigger a shutdown and alert. MC goes to see injured comrade WINTERS at hospital.

Notes: changes needed here. The AI unit is already operational in sandbox mode, and the discussion is around how it will change once the AI unit is rolled out into the main network. Tech guy suggests hiding MC's backdoor activity with a worm program that can delete data logs and remove any record of improper activity. Must emphasise that the MC's backdoor use is for the greater good and reinforces his moral character. Tech guy gives him a tracking upgrade that allows him to track suspects without needing the central database clearance.

~~REACTIVE~~- GCM#2 SHADOWS

MC followed on way back from seeing Winters at hospital, who reveals his suit malfunctioned - or did it? MC tries to lose pursuers but he is cornered. They tell him he now works for other crime boss, who introduces herself as Triss. That he will provide access to the new AI system via physical intel so they can smuggle people through. A says they can do it without him but if they do he will be framed. If he complies, he will keep the money and they'll hide any trace. MC decides too many people at risk, decides to confide in his boss.

Notes: Triss can't present any new info here, other than reinforcing what MC has already concluded about his predicament.

~~GCM #2~~: PROACTIVE: NEW ENEMIES

During meeting with boss (AMRSTRONG), MC starts to piece it together - the new AI, the mysterious money (knowing he had financial problems), the guy in the hallway knowing where he lived, his route home. Also revealed one of the unregistered is the brains behind the code to hack AI and his payment was getting his family to earth. Boss pulls a gun and reveals he was also coerced and happy to take the risk. MC asks "why me". Boss says "Talk to your wife".

Notes: Need to foreshadow explanation of why Winters was frozen in place during the raid - later it will be explained that Armstrong had to try and prevent the illegals from being found and gave the goons a fighting chance.

PROACTIVE: CONFRONTATION

MC confronts his wife. She says she did it for him. For them. Didn't think people would get hurt. Another argument. For fear of her safety, MC decides to play along but ensure there is a failsafe. Goes to rendezvous to provide intel for the operation. Returns home. Reconciles with wife. They make love. MC starts to feel more "human" again after years of emotional distance.

Notes: MC needs to get report from Locke and a message from Tech guy about his solution.

PROACTIVE: RENDEZVOUS

MC provides the intel the big boss wants to gain physical access to the AI servers to plant their worm. Revealed the boss brought the launch forward to allow this before the techs noticed the loophole. The worm will allow the bad guys to collect personal data on everyone in the city and manipulate it however they like. People in power could be influenced, immigrants trafficked like dogs, people erased from history. He gives them what they want. Will go down tomorrow. MC is to ensure all officers are somewhere else and to plant the worm in an office terminal once the physical failsafes are down. Bad guy gives him the worm on a drive to install (works on any device). MC resolves to thwart them at any cost.

Notes: fine as is

PROACTIVE: MOUSETRAP

MC now resolved to catch the bad guys in the act and provide evidence of his innocence. He calls tech guy who outlines a possible solution - a patch applied to MC's implants that will give some control over the worm - MC gets him to install the patch. Tech guy reluctantly agrees advising that it's not tested, and could go wrong.

Notes: changes to tech scene. Tech guy provides a worm program that can delete data logs to hid MC's backdoor operations, which are for the greater good. After learning of MC's predicament, tech guy suggests the worm-program can be used to delete or corrupt data passing through to the synapse drive, which the bad guys will only discover once they get to a safe place to inspect it. Tech guy advises that for a short time, the AI unit will merge with MC's implant and that the worm-program is untested in that situation and damage could occur.

PROACTIVE: THE PLAN

MC calls his wife. Tells her what he's going to do. She reluctantly agrees it's the right thing to do. They reconcile and agree to work together more in the future, have kids, etc. He tells her the plan - MC will wait for tech guy's signal and then install the patch, just as the bad guys are vulnerable in the server room. The patch will bring the systems back online via backup, and provide enough intel to get a conviction. ALSO REVEALED that the unregistered's picked up at the beginning have been released, due to a legal issue.

Notes: deepen the mystery of where the illegals have gone, and why / how they were smuggled to earth in the first place. MC realises there is more to them than he first thought.

PROACTIVE: TRAP IS SET

MC waits all day. Gets nervous. Wonders what will happen. Runs through scenarios. Dreams of having a family. His wife. Finally gets the call from the bad guys. Gets tech guy to install patch. Installs worm. New AI unit comes online and ÖmeldsÓ with MC. MC recovers and convinces AI unit of what is going on. AI unit can't stop the worm from scraping data for the bad guys unless MC applies the Kill Code, which will kill the AI. AI doesn't want to die. MC agrees to create a copy that lives on inside his implant until it can be safely removed. AI unit agrees, and killcode activated, but not before substantial confidential data is stolen and sent to bad guys.

Notes: in this scene, AI must merge with MC's implant. Then MC discovers the worm-program isn't working as expected. The AI unit tells him it would have been impossible for his plan to work and that the tech guy gave him bad info. AI tells him it's even worse than he thought, as the virus could allow for the bad guys to take control of his systems and wreak havoc. MC decides he has to deploy the kill code to prevent the bad guys doing this. The AI unit is then stored in MC's implant, essentially merging them together, but not before highly sensitive data is uploaded to the synapse drive. MC realises the tech guy was in on it but that as far as the bad guys know, the mission was a success and MC is none-the-wiser (as they couldn't predict the AI unit fusing with him and telling him all this).

PROACTIVE: BETRAYAL

MC rushes to tech guys office, asks why the patch didn't let him stop the data retrieval. Tech guy reveals he was coerced by boss (threatened family) before and knew the patch wouldn't work. But had to keep MC playing along so the theft could go through. Says the only way to protect people now would be to destroy the hard code, which the bad guys probably have close to them. And that the AI would have shut down shortly after the retrieval and would need to be backed up from a copy to work again. But the damage is done. MC realises he was never in control. Tech guy says now the deed is done he is free, and agrees to help. HE reveals the unregistered's were the

family of an expert AI programmer who was involved in the heist and is now running free. The three of them (including the new AI component) discuss what can be done. They realise the stolen data will be kept offline, mostly likely in a physical drive. They must now retrieve this.

Notes: slight change to make the tech guy help MC DESPITE the danger (eg - he is not "free" and is probably in more danger now than before). In this scene, the MC needs to get all the info he needs to win the day, as no more new info can be introduced during the conclusion phase.

GCM#3 PROACTIVE: DISASTER

MC returns home to find assassin with gun to wife's head - knows MC tried to stop them. Demands the rest of the data. MC tries to stall. His priority is to get him and his wife to safety and away from here. Assassin kills wife and shoots at MC, who manages to escape. Just. not able to place tracker on assassin.

Notes: this is no longer GCM3 but the "dark night of the soul" scene, where the MC hits rock bottom. Loses wife, knows he can't exonerate himself since his previous plan failed, curses himself for not being able to get tracker placed on assassin. Feels rage building.

CONCLUSION: GCM#3: RECRUIT AN ARMY

Blinded by rage, MC heads out into the night. Wonders if the tech guy's update works. It works and gives up last known location of Locke - from minutes earlier. MC heads there. Speaks to Locke. They agree he will give MC backup to bring down the other bad guys in return for intel on them. He shows them what it can do with the enhanced update, knowing if anyone uses it a third time without clearance, it will lock down and police will converge on their location. Finds the Triss. location from the tracker he installed earlier, shows it to Locke as proof.

notes: this is now GCM#3 and needs to show MC forging a plan based on info he has already. Gets the location of Triss and the hard-drive using the tech guys tracking upgrade. Is surprised it works. Throughout this scene, MC and the AI start to bond more and the AI's personality begins to grow, thanks to the merging. MC realises he now has a powerful advantage.

CONCLUSION: PREPARE FOR BATTLE

Using his new-found AI buddy in his head, MC returns to the precinct and bypasses all security to retrieve armoured suit and weapons. Meets up with Locke's goons and heads for Triss' hideout.

CONCLUSION: SHOWDOWN

Battle commences. Element of surprise means MC has upper hand. During battle, Triss reveals Armstrong was the one who made Winters' suit malfunction remotely to give him an excuse to ground MC's team, and make MC more available. Reveals the unregistered were part of the plan the whole time (thus why MC couldn't find any human trafficking evidence as they were guests onboard).

CONCLUSION

Triss escapes. The second in command (one of the unregistered) sneers that only Triss has the ability to open the safe and retrieve the drive with the intel (too sensitive to be kept on the networks). MC tells him about the AI in his head. SIC realises he's underestimated MC. MC knocks him unconscious and uses AI in his head to crack the safe. Decides to let the rest of the family escape, as they have done nothing wrong.

Notes: changed to allow MC to succeed and recover the drive. And AI unit has recorded the whole thing and collected evidence exonerating MC.

CONCLUSION: PARTING WAYS

Returning back to Locke, he goes to hand over his scanner - saying he won't need it where he's going. But needs to do just one more thing: uses the enhanced update a third time (triggering the silent alarm) and his newfound AI buddy to erase his data from the net and grant himself a new identity. Hands the scanner over and makes a run for it before the first bad guys realise what he's done.

Notes: transmits the code for the tracking, knowing Locke could reverse engineer it to avoid it being used on him. But knows that as soon as Locke uses it, the police will be called out. Uses his AI buddy to try and find the next ship leaving the planet that he could stowaway on, but AI warns him they are heavily guarded and he won't be able to get through without clearance - which can only come from the head of Im-Sec (Armstrong).

CONCLUSION: REAP WHAT YOU SOW

MC goes to see Armstrong and makes him regret his part in all this.

Notes: in an effort to redeem himself, Armstrong provides his clearance code and allows the AI to alter the records, removing any mention of MC from the official records. MC is now officially off the grid. He then provides clearance ID for MC to access the freight ships leaving Earth, under a false name. But notes that if he is discovered onboard after takeoff, there is nothing he can do about it. MC realises a new identity not needed and that "his name is all he has left".

CONCLUSION: THE END

MC watches out the window as earth recedes into the distance and wonders what it will be like on Mars.