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**The** stainless steel doors glided inward with a smooth

mechanical preciseness; they shut off the real world. Zach pushed the round illuminated button, a *ding* rang out and the elevator started to move. A prerecorded voice from a speaker above his head narrated, "You are in the tallest building in the world. The ascent to the Sky Deck will take a little more than a minute. You will be on the one hundred and third floor." If Zach were on vacation he would have listened more closely, but he was thinking about how he was going to change the country—possibly the whole world. His name would go down in history, next to Thomas Edison, Benjamin Franklin, Albert Einstein and the likes. 'Zachary Slenski' had a good ring to it. If this meeting went as he hoped, within five years his name would be heard around the world. What he had in the alumminum instrument case was the answer for the United States energy crisis.

The elevator slowed and then abruptly halted to an exact stop. The stainless steel doors parted and Zach stepped out. The sun beat directly through the floor to ceiling glass, it blasted into his eyes. At six in the morning even the Sears Tower was void of any diehard tourist. Out into solitude Zach walked straight toward the brass safety railing. His stomach knotted when he looked down! All the other skyscrapers in Chicago were dwarfed by this eagle's vantage point. Out across Lake Michigan, due east, the sun was actually lower in the sky than the 103rd floor of the building. Zach set the aluminum case down and then leaned out over the safety railing. He pushed up on his toes and still could not see the street directly below the Sears Tower.

Out of nowhere a voice echoed off the glass and marble floor. "You must be Mr. Slenski?"

Zach's heart jumped. His natural reflexes instantly locked a tight grip on the cold brass rail. With his heart racing, Zach quickly twisted his neck to the left and came eye to eye with a man dressed in a dark suit, blue shirt, and black tie. "Yes, I'm Zachary Slenski."

"Good, I'll take you to see Mr. Philip Charles Rubin. But, I'll need to pat you down first," barked the dark suited stranger as he pushed his dark glasses up into his greased down hair.

"What! Wait a second." Zach moved sideways down the brass railing, a good three feet.

Mr. Rubin's agent bent down and grabbed the aluminum briefcase. Before Zach had a chance to react the man reached up under his suit jacket and pulled out a dark gray object about the size of a pack of cigarettes. "I just need to scan this case for explosive material," he said as he moved the gray device in a circular motion over and around the aluminum case. "It's clean! Turn back around put your hands on the railing and spread your legs."

Reluctantly, Zach did as he was ordered. "Is this necessary? I'm a scientist not a terrorist."

"It's necessary if you want a meeting with Mr. Rubin," the agent answered and then patted down Zach's upper thigh area.

"Where is Mr. Rubin? I thought I was meeting him?"

"He's above us right now. Watching you."

"What? Zach looked back over his shoulder at the agent.

"For a scientist you're not too smart. There are more floors above the Sears Observation Deck." The agent handed the aluminum instrument case back to Zach, "Follow me!"

Zach followed the man past four large stainless steel elevator doors to a small magnetic card reader that was concealed in the corner. When he passed a security card through the strip, one of the wall partitions slid sideways exposing a smaller set of stainless steel doors. The man looked

up into a golf ball sized camera, the doors parted. "Go ahead, get on," ordered the agent.

"It would take more than a scientist to know that there was a hidden panel here, maybe if I were a psychic," Zach whispered to himself as he stepped into the elevator. The door slid shut, leaving him alone in the small cubicle. Instantly fear set in and his stomach knotted as the one lone light went dim. Zach turned one hundred and eighty degrees; there were no illuminated buttons, no floor indicators, and no stop button! It was so dark he couldn't even see if there was an emergency telephone. There was a jolt, followed by a loud hum. The tiny elevator went up what seemed about three floors and then the door opened.

Another agent was standing guard in front of the elevator. "Mr. Philip Charles Rubin is ready to see you. Follow me!" As the man turned to lead the way Zach noticed a tiny coiled wire coming out from the collar of his dark blue jacket, it ran up his neck and tucked behind his left ear. The narrow walkway was lit up by a yellowish diffuse light. On one side a security fence displayed red and white **Warning High Voltage** signs attached to the wire mesh. The other side had **Television RF Transmission Room** painted on the cinder block wall.

Red warning indicators on electrical panels were flashing and transformers were humming. There was a dry heat radiating from both sides, it felt like a sauna. At the end of the walkway was a door that looked like a bank vault. The agent stopped and looked up into another golf ball sized camera. The heavy steel door made a loud clunk, a deadbolt activated and a hydraulic ram pulled the massive door to the right.

"Mr. Slenski is clean. He didn't stop or talk to anybody all the way from the airport."

From the airport! What the hell. These guys must be spying on me, Zach thought as he followed the man into the room. This is nothing like any venture capital meeting I have ever had.

After the vault like door fully opened a distinguished looking
man stood up from a desk in the middle of the room. He walked
around the large metal desk. He was tall and looked about
forty. "Mr. Slenski, it's a pleasure to meet you." The lofty man
extended his hand.

Zach shook his hand. "You must be Mr. Rubin?"

"It's actually, Mr. Philip Charles Rubin. But, Mr. Rubin will be

fine."

"Well, Mr. Rubin it is nice to meet you. I really do appreciate you giving me some of your time to listen to my proposal."

"That's no problem, Mr. Slenski. It does look like you may be on to something. But, before we jump into business, come and look out here." Mr. Rubin led Zach around the side of the desk to the bronze tinted windows. "Do you have many tall buildings in Texas?"

"Not this tall," replied Zach, as he looked out over Chicago.
"By the way, how many more floors are there above the observation deck?"

"Well there are actually one hundred and thirteen floors. They claim the Sears Tower is only a hundred and ten stories tall. There's no need for the public to know that the top floors are filled with electronic transmission and microwave equipment."

"That's right." Zach rubbed his chin. "I had forgotten. Years back there was a permit halt to putting television and radio transmission towers on top of the Sears Tower." Zach paused. "You must constantly be exposed to radio and television waves. Aren't you afraid of getting cancer from all the RF energy?"

"Cancer!" Mr. Rubin's eyes shifted to the back of the room.

"Cancer is not a concern. This floor is shielded from radio frequency energy. The steel doors can't be blown or cut open. In addition this room is incognito to the general public. RF radiation on this floor is probably less than what a cell phone gives off."

Zach looked toward the stranger. "You sound like a fellow scientist?"

A man in a white lab coat got off a stool and walked toward Zach. "Let me introduce myself, I'm Carlos Gomez. I'm the person who ran the tests on the solar panel that you shipped to Mr. Rubin."

Zach shook his hand. "Good to meet you." They let loose of their handshake. "Mr. Gomez, may I ask what your background in the alternative energy field is?"

"Well, I graduated from Harvard with a PhD in geology. Then I spent ten years in the oil exploration fields in Mexico. Now, I work for Mr. Philip Charles Rubin." Mr. Gomez smiled with a kiss ass grin. "I also serve on the Nobel Peace Prize committee."

"Do you have any experience with solar energy?"

"Not a great deal. But, if you are asking if I think your theory for increasing the wattage output by cooling a solar panel is possible. I think that you might be on to something that is supported by the second law of Thermodynamics.

"Okay, enough with the science talk," Mr. Rubin interrupted. "There will be plenty of time to talk shop in a few minutes." Mr. Rubin motioned toward the window for the second time. "In the meanwhile Mr. Slenski, take a look at the view again. You will be able to have most anything out there, if this meeting goes right."

A dark coolness seemed to fill the room. Mr. Rubin had offered the same thing to Carlos when he signed on. A similar offer had been made some two thousand years ago on Mt Temptation. Zack's mind froze as he looked over everything below—finally he would get what was due him.

"I bet Texas is a good state for solar power." Carlos stated.

It took a moment for Zach to respond, "Texas is okay for solar but there are better places. California would be a great place to put a solar site with all their blackouts, but the land is so expensive. A site in Nevada connected into the LA grid feeder makes more sense."

"With all the summer blackouts and high demand for air-

"With all the summer blackouts and high demand for airconditioning, the price of land might not be a factor in California." Carlos offered.

"That's true, but California does not have a natural source for cooling. Utah might hold the key to affordable solar power? But, that would depend on how corrosive the water in Salt Lake would be. Mexico could be another possibility."

"Hmm," Carlos looked surprised. "Solar sites in Mexico? That would be a good place. Land and labor is reasonable." \*

"That's a stupid idea!" Mr. Rubin injected. "Solar sites in Mexico? That would be a joke! The Mexicans can't even clean up their water. Nor can they build a good road system. I wouldn't invest a dime on those Latinos."

"Mr. Rubin I would have to politely disagree," Zach rebutted. "With all the companies outsourcing across the border, Mexico's demand for electricity has increased substantially. That's why it's so important to develop my quad solar panels. Hopefully, someday they can be used all over the world."

"Let's not worry about the Mexican's. They have plenty of crude oil to run their diesel fired generators with," rebutted Mr. Rubin.

"Developing affordable solar power is not only about saving fossil fuels. It benefits the whole world by less pollution." Zach paused; debating someone that he was asking money from wasn't smart.

There was another uncomfortable silence that Carlos needed to end. "Mr. Slenski, I set up your demonstration a little different than what you asked. I hooked up an automotive bulb in place of the wattmeter. And for the Freon I got R22 instead of the R134 like you requested."

"R22 that stuff is a horrible on the environment."

"Could you two environmental nerd types just hold off a few minutes?" Mr. Rubin demanded. His tolerance for being corrected was at its end.

There was another long uncomfortable pause. "Your company name, Son Source is different. Don't you feel like you are using God's name for a business gain?" Carlos asked.

"Maybe, but God created the sun and the sun is the source of the energy that my quad panels get solar power from. Everyone knows that God sent His Son to bring hope and a new light into the world. That's what I want to do. Bring hope to the world by using a better way to capture sun light."

"That sounds plausible," replied Carlos. "At first I thought you were using the name to catch attention."

Zach looked over at Carlos and grinned. "You have to admit. The name Son Source does catch people's attention."

Mr. Rubin in a firm reprimanding tone injected, "You're right, it did catch an OPEC minister's attention! He mentioned that it could blow the deal with the other OPEC members."

Carlos replied, "If you're referring to Mr. Obaid Bin Naimi. I would expect that from him. He's a fundamentalist Muslim."

"Carlos, I want you to keep your mouth shut about God or His Son when you are around any Muslim. Allah and Mohammed are their idols." Mr. Rubin pointed his crooked finger at Carlos. "You Mexicans worship the Lady of Guadalupe so what do you know? Don't ever mix religion with my business or I'll make sure your wife and sick kid gets deported back to that crap hole of a country you all are from!"

Carlos cowered back to the stool in the corner.

Zack also cowered. Many times he had discerned mixing religion with business. Maybe the Son Source name did scare off potential investors. Gradually Zach moved to look at some huge maps on the adjacent wall of the large office. Why would an OPEC minister be interested in solar energy?

Mr. Rubin came up behind Zach and put his hand on Zach's shoulder. "Do you know what these maps represent?"

Zach scrutinized the maps more closely. "Yes, I think they are maps that show where different wars were fought throughout history."

"That's right. These maps represent the major battles of the last two centuries." Mr. Rubin pointed to a map that had **WWII** across the top. "This is the war that was never finished. When you hold WMD's and don't use them to their full extent you are weak. To give in is to. . ." A buzzer interrupted Mr. Rubin's rant.

The three men turned and watched the security guard speak into a small microphone concealed in the sleeve of his suit jacket. He opened a solid wood door that opened into a conference room adjacent to the office. Different banks of lights were being dimmed and others were being turned up in the large square room. There was a noise of motors humming and mechanical movement.

When Zack entered the room he was escorted to the side of the table that was closest to the windows. The table was thick and had a glass top. It was at least twenty feet across both ways. "That is your place, sit down!" The security guard pointed.

Carlos took the chair next to Zach. Directly across the expansive table two men were silhouetted by unique back lighting. One silhouette was a man dressed in a suit. The other silhouette was even more concealed by a tunic and head scarf.

Mr. Rubin entered the room last and took a place at a control console on the side of the square table closest to a different door. "Good morning, Prince Amer Nasser and Mr. Obaid Bin Naimi. I am appreciative that the both of you could make this meeting. I know that those oversea flights can be tedious." Mr. Rubin spoke carefully so to pronounce each word clearly.

The two men spoke in Arabic to each other. Then the man in the suit spoke. "Thank you. The air travel was fine."

"Good. Let's continue on with the introductions." As Mr. Rubin motioned with his left hand toward Zach he knocked two tall objects over that were on the table. The sound of metal bouncing on glass echoed off the concrete walls. In the dimly lit room it looked like two metal candlesticks had gotten knocked over. Mr. Rubin paused and then carefully stood the objects back up.

As Zach's eyes adjusted to the dark what he had thought were candlesticks now appeared as small mock oil derricks. There were other gold pieces on a ledge in front of Mr. Rubin. Under the ledge was a bank of switches and controls.

Mr. Rubin continued, "That is Mr. Slenski. He is the energy scientist that we have been informing the ministry about."

Zach waved toward the two silhouettes. "Good morning gentlemen."

"Next to Mr. Slenski is Mr. Gomez. He is the geologist who has been communicating with your people." Mr. Rubin gestured more carefully, so not to knock over anything else at his command console.

Mr. Gomez half stood from his chair and squinted across the table into the dark. "Mr. Obaid Bin Naimi, after all the teleconferences we finally meet. It's been interesting debating a petroleum geologist."

Zach sat still and was confused. Why are two Arabs sitting in on a proposal for venture capital for a solar energy project? Why would Mr. Gomez be debating a scientist with a petroleum background?

"Gentleman, let's get started," Mr. Rubin said while he looked down at the bank of controls and switches. "I know that the Prince has a flight later today." Mr. Rubin pushed one of the switches to the on position. There was a low buzzing sound of a motor running and the rattling sound of metal. In the back of the room a heavy security fence was lowering out of the ceiling, similar to what a mall store uses at night.

The noise caused both Arabs to look over their shoulders. Mr. Obaid Bin Naimi reached over and under Prince Amer's tunic for a Mac-10. Out of respect and for religious reasons Arab royalty are hardly ever searched.

It was too dark to see but Zach was sure Mr. Naimi was now concealing the mini machine gun under the table.

"Sorry gentlemen wrong switch!" Mr. Rubin took his finger off the switch and the steel curtain started to retract back into the ceiling.

Zach leaned over and whispered to Mr. Gomez, "What the hell is going on?"

Carlos put his finger up in front of his lips, making the gesture to stay quite. "Give him a minute, Mr. Rubin is inept when it comes to technical stuff," Carlos whispered back to Zach.

Mr. Rubin was still looking around the command center. He pushed on another button and suddenly an ear piercing high-pitched squeal emitted from above!

"Put on the noise canceling headphones! They are hanging under the table!" Mr. Gomez yelled out. Carlos grabbed two sets of headphones that were hanging from hooks attached on the underside of the glass table. He immediately put one set on, then handed the other set to Zach. "There is a switch on the side!" Carlos yelled out across the table to the Arabs.

Zach put the headset on and moved the small switch up. The ear piercing squeal was gone. A TV station could be faintly heard in the background. Prince Amer and Obaid Bin Naimi got their headphones on and used the commotion to conceal the Mac 10 back in the holster under the Tunic.

Mr. Rubin yelled, "Sorry, about that! I turned on the jamming equipment too soon! Can you all hear me now?"

Obaid Bin Naimi yelled, " ". \* This was 'yes' in Arabic

Zach nodded in an affirmative motion, as did Prince Amer Nasser.

"Mr. Rubin you don't have to yell. In fact it could defeat the purpose of the jamming equipment, someone could be using acoustic bounce equipment to pick up our conversation off all the glass," Mr. Gomez said and then gave the thumbs down signal for everyone to speak more quietly.

From the console Mr. Rubin pushed on a different switch. Another motor noise could be heard overhead. This time a flat plasma display started lowering out of the ceiling behind Zach and Mr. Gomez. Next, Mr. Rubin pushed a button and a spotlight shone on an easel next to where the display had been lowered. The easel held the solar panel that Zach had shipped almost a year ago. The spotlight highlighted the solar panel and Zach noticed that someone had wired in a light bulb where the wattmeter used to be. The light bulb was glowing at about half brightness. Oddly, the panel wasn't even turned toward the window. Zach felt uneasy.

Immediately Carlos Gomez started a presentation stating that Son Source Inc. was ready to mass produce the most powerful solar panels in the world. The flat plasma display coincided with his presentation and showed several charts and graphs of how many million barrels of oil would be saved. When Mr. Gomez started talking about solar power plants in California Mr. Rubin pushed another button. The entire twenty foot square conference table lit up and displayed a map of the world.

Wow, these guys know how to put on a sales pitch, Zach thought to himself. This world map looks three dimensional. What vivid colors. This is very high-tech and impressive.

Mr. Rubin used a long L shaped stick to push the two oil derricks so they rested over Saudi Arabia and then stated, "Let's say each derrick represents a million barrels of crude oil that would not be needed every day."

The vivid 3D map seemed to be far below the glass of the table surface and heat could be felt. Zach's curiosity got the best of him. He coyly looked under the table. How does this table work? There is no photo projector or optics under here.

Maybe it's a huge plasma panel? The three-D effect is really impressive. I bet its a hologram. When Zach sat back up Mr. Rubin had gotten out of his chair and was unlocking a walnut cabinet that was attached to the wall behind his command center. He took a large ornate metal box from the cabinet and returned to the table.

"Zoom to the northwest." Mr. Rubin spoke, pronouncing each word distinctly. There was a small motor noise directly above the table and the map zoomed in on North America. "Zoom to the western United States." There was more noise from the ceiling.

Zach looked up toward the motor sound. Far up into a long lens he saw red, blue and green intense beams projecting down on the table. Hologram technology is being used. I bet this display table cost at least a hundred thousand dollars.

"Gentlemen." Mr. Rubin touched different gold objects around in the box. "We will use these planes to represent solar sites." Mr. Rubin kept shuffling. "No, we will use these field hospitals to represent solar fields." He took out two pieces that were shaped like army tents with small red crosses on them and set them on the table. Using the hockey stick shaped wood he pushed one of the pieces right over the Arizona Nevada border near Las Vegas.

The plasma screen behind Zach started showing a slide show of how a solar site could be connected to the existing power grid. Some more slides emphasized that in as little as two years Southern California could cut down their demand on fossil fuels used for electric power generation by a million barrels a day. The presentation on the plasma display halted and with the wooden L stick Mr. Rubin moved the field hospitals pieces into Mexico.

"Gentlemen, the diesel power plants just across the Mexican border are good candidates for solar also. Without all the environmental regulations we could hook up to their grid and be generating solar power in a year." Zach sat in amazement as Mr. Rubin pushed the hospital pieces from Nevada over into Mexico. He looked over at Carlos expecting some sort of reaction. Across the table the two Arab men were now whispering in Arabic.

Carlos drew a deep breath and stood. "Gentlemen the Mexico solar logistics are top secret. That's why I was brought on board."

Zach sat silent, stunned and lost. Most of the facts on how fast solar would be able to replace existing diesel power plants were exaggerated. Zach kept still. All the years of research and his hard work were finally going to pay off. If a small lie needed to be told he could probably live with it.

Another ten minute sales pitch went by. Mr. Gomez finished by passing out a colored bar graph showing that in as little as seven years the United States could cut its glut for imported oil by one third. There was a long pause in the room. Zach had more mixed feelings. He was willing to bend the truth but not to promise something that could never happen.

Mr. Rubin stood up and said, "Gentleman let's take a short break before Mr. Slenski gives his presentation. We have one of his solar panels hooked up but he has the newest prototype to hook up."

While the two Arab men started quietly talking to each other in Arabic, Carlos pointed toward the solar panel on the easel. "I hope you didn't mind that I took off your meter and replaced it with a light bulb."

"No that's okay," Zach replied nonchalantly still looking over the colored bar graphs.

Carlos continued talking. "The bronze mirror coating they put on the windows of the Sears Tower reflected about forty percent of the power and gave your watt meter low readings. Plus the light bulb is more effective for demonstration purposes."

"No, it's okay. I don't mind that you hooked up a light bulb." Zach looked over at the solar panel and light bulb and

then whispered. "I think some of your presentation was exaggerated, maybe even a bit deceptive."

"Not so loud," Carlos whispered back. "Just bear with me."

There was a dead silence. Both Arab men were listening from the far side of the room.

Zach stood and walked over to the solar panel on the easel. He knew he may have been overheard. "I see you used alligator clips when you replaced the meter. That's good. I can connect this light bulb to my newest prototype solar panel."

"Newest solar panel! We didn't receive any new solar panel."

"I know. I brought it with me!" Zach said and glanced back toward the Arab men.

"Where is it? We only have a few minutes to get prepared.

Mr. Rubin will go ballistic if your presentation doesn't happen."

Carlos Gomez seemed overly anxious and frightened of Mr.

Rubin.

"It's already here," Zach replied, struggling to hold back his glee.

"What!" Carlos started scanning the room for a large box or a second 2' x 4' standard sized solar panel.

Zach picked up the aluminum briefcase and laid it on the illuminated conference table. He then rotated numbers on each clasp and they snapped open. Carefully packed in a foam cutout was one twelve inch by twelve inch glass solar panel. He carefully lifted it out and handed it to Mr. Gomez.

Carlos took it by the metal frame and started examining it. "I see you are using the same louvered venting system on the back. It looks as if you are using the same aluminum for heat dissipation." Carlos flipped the panel over. "Obviously this is a smaller version. But it looks as though you are applying the same cooling/venting technology."

"You're right Carlos. This proto-panel is smaller. In fact, its one eight the size of a standard two by four foot panel." Zach was holding back the most important fact. "Do these solar cells still have the same negative temperature coefficient gain as the one on the display easel?" Carlos pointed to the panel and light bulb.

"Yes, almost the same. A forty degree cooling factor produces almost a fifty percent increase in power output."

"Well I don't see the big deal. You just handed me a smaller version of what I've already been running test on."

"That's true Carlos," Zach paused. "What would you guess the power output of this one foot by one foot panel to be?"

"At the very most twenty five watts!" Carlos quipped with confidant. "It's one eight the area of the one two hundred watt panel. I'd be amazed if you even get twenty watts up here through the bronze tinted glass and all."

"Well, let's get it hooked up so I can finish the presentation."

Carlos examined the small panel even more closely. "Wait a second. You have the cells stacked in here. You found a way to stack the silicon wafers."

"You got it. My venting of conventional panels yielded a forty percent increase in power. Now, I'm working on reducing the physical size of my panels by stacking the cells. We are also working on reverse current losses so not to lose any power during the night." Zach stopped, his throat was dry and he needed to pee. "Carlos, where is the rest room?"

"Go out the door back there. In the hall the door on the right is the washroom." Carlos replied while he examined the small solar panel more closely.

Zach walked along the table and directly behind Mr. Obaid he opened a door. There were seven stalls on the left. He opened the first door, there was no toilet. He opened the door on the second stall, same thing no toilet. The third and rest of the stalls same thing; no toilet. He stepped back. The three quarter length doors looked right for changing rooms but why changing rooms would have such a small mirror seemed odd. The middle cubicle of the seven booths was twice as large. That

didn't seem odd; it was probably a handicap booth. Out of the corner of his eye he noticed a door at the end of the hallway.

The solid wood door on the right was the restroom; an automatic light came on when he entered. The black marble and gold fixtures were more like what he expected on a sky view executive floor. He used the urinal and back at the marble counter cupped water in his hands to splash on his face. Zack stared at himself in the mirror while water dripped on to the gold sink spout and handles. Looking deep into his own eyes Zack discerned: The darkness and deception in that room feels off and wrong. The heat from that display table makes it hot as hell in there. There's energy in there that I've never felt before.