Dirks’ black and white Dodge Ram 1500 screeched to a halt at the north gate. Stretching, he leaned out the window and quickly punched his code into the control box at the rear of the police station. The smell of his hot, melted brakes polluted the early morning air, followed by a brief fire on the driver’s side front brake assembly. As the brakes cooled from loss of friction, the fire died as quickly as it had been born.

Teeth gritted, he waited for the absurdly slow gate to roll open. Fingers tapping on the steering wheel, he stared through the bars and watched the SWAT truck with attached trailer leave via the south gate. Seemed the army had begun to assemble for its march up the hill to Deacon's latest catastrophe.

Dirks hands tightened. His knuckles turned white. “Shit!” *Son of a bitch, they're leaving with me*. If the gate didn’t move, he’d ram the damn thing.

It took another interminable thirty seconds before it opened wide enough for him to punch it. The truck jumped into the back lot, drove to the rear of the Armory, and he stopped as close as possible to the main door. Throwing the truck into park, he charged to the Armory and stopped before the door.

He felt like a football player waiting to hear his name and race down the tunnel. But then the door itself was an intimidating *motha*. A one ton chunk of steel that was three feet thick and stood at eight feet tall easily dwarfed him. An electronic key pad controlled a hydraulic hinge with a diesel generator for backup power in the event of a power failure. Between the two one man doors, the Armory was a stronghold within the police department’s fortress.

He quickly entered his code. The door latch disengaged with a bone breaking snap. The hydraulic hinge released a soft hiss. He stepped back to avoid being coldcocked by the steel massive door as it slid slowly open.

Early morning sun illuminated the arsenal. Heavy with the odors of gunpowder, solvent and gun oil saturated the air. Racks line the walls, filled with Glock pistols, Remington shotguns, Colt assault rifles, and H&K MP5’s. Laminated diagrams detailing the disassembly and maintenance for each of the weapons were nailed to the walls. Compressed air hoses lay staggered neatly amongst the work stations and paper targets. Stacked below the diagrams were hundreds of cases of ammunition for the assorted weapon systems, forming a wall of ammo.

Dirks trotted to the rear area. He pulled a key from the pocket of his pants and inserted it into the face of the digital keypad. The dual security feature was essential. It ensured nothing within was accessed by anyone without clearance. Not even the Chief could gained admittance with Dirks at his side. Grim-faced, he punched in another code, twisted the key, and opened the Vault.

The door to the Vault slowly creaked open. Stale air smelled of petroleum and nitro hissed. The door revealed explosive breaching charges and bulk high explosives. A bunker within a bunker. Its reinforced concrete walls were three feet thick. It was even climate controlled to make sure the contents remained happy and the summer heat didn’t piss them off. Nobody liked pissed off high explosives.

Dirks grabbed a red Gortex go bag from the top shelf of the Vault, unzipped it, and did a quick check making sure it had everything they would need. The bag contained a dual prime initiator and enough C4 to level a building. Closing it, he grabbed a second bag filled with nonelectric blasting caps. It was critical the caps and explosives remained separate. So much so, a copy of Murphy’s Laws was taped on the side of the explosives magazine as a reminder to do things by the book.

Murphy wasn’t allowed within fifty miles of the Vault.

Grabbing his shotgun, he raced to his truck, set the bag of bang onto the front passenger seat, and securely belted it in. Then he mounted the breaching shotgun in the forearm of the robot.

Returning to the Armory, Dirks unlocked, elongated cabinet. *Peterson is going to want you.* He pocketed his keys and pulled out the Judge—the department's Barrett .50 caliber sniper rifle. While it wasn’t a thing of beauty, it was a machined, blue steel precision tool of death to all who were sighted in its field of fire. A great big tube of ass whoopin' that spread hate and discontent to all the evil that befell it. It weighed in at a hair over twenty-eight pounds and required a bipod supporting the barrel to shoot accurately.

He slammed a five round magazine into the Judge, each round four inches long including the shell. Its ammunition was both difficult to come by and expensive at nearly ten dollars a shot. Once loaded, he engaged the safety.

With his press of the magazine release, a cold click rang throughout the room as it fell from the well and he caught it with his free hand. Then he topped off the magazine with another round for a full complement of ammunition, grabbed three more topped off magazines from the cabinet, and stuffed them in his pant cargo pockets. Exiting the armory, he slammed his hand onto the red push button beside the door. The plunger depressed. The hydraulic hinge came to life. The massive door sealed behind him.