

**REVISED OUTLINE FOR "SMALL SOLDIERS" REWRITE
FRANK DEESE -- June 14, 1994**

CAPTAIN AND FATHER

1) THE FAMILY AT THE HOUSE: GARY, 11, is in a funk. He lies on the floor of his incredibly messy bedroom, staring at the ceiling, sipping lazily from a juice box as his MOTHER passes through and scolds him for starting projects and leaving them out unfinished. When his younger sister LISA, 9, taunts and mimics him through the small crack in the wall separating their closets, Gary walks over and stomps down on the juice box, spraying his sister's face in the other bedroom.

In her late husband's tidy home office, their mother NANCY, about 35, looks desperately through a filing cabinet. Lisa runs in to report her brother's offense, but Nancy is interested only in when they'll be ready to go out.

In the back of the filing cabinet, Nancy finds something odd. It is a thirty year-old box top for a G.I. Joe with some recent size notations scribbled around it. Nancy's face reveals both longing for and exasperation with the man to whom it belonged as she tosses it into the trash can.

2) WHERE DAD WORKED: After first getting lost because no one in the family had ever been to where Dad worked - a small high-tech division of *CENTRAL ELECTRIC* (best known for Toasters, Blenders, and Nuclear Warheads) - Gary and Lisa are left in a hallway while their mother speaks desperately to a company executive about delays in her late husband's pension benefits.

The man claims that she couldn't have come at a worse time because C.E. has just announced it's closing the division. In another week, this high security building will be empty.

Bored, Gary wanders off down the hallway, through some security doors propped open with a trash basket, into a large amazing room with a sand box filled with what look like toys. A mechanical cockroach maneuvers around obstacles on the floor. An intelligent blimp bumps into things above. At the center of all this is an argument between FOUR MEN. A very loud Australian, a trim, angular ex-marine, a man who whines his complaints at a piercing frequency, and a brooding, unkempt man who slams his fist

into a steel door marked with the name: "TOOB". [The other locked steel cabinets are named "MERK", "SEMPER", "JOCKO", and then, set off from the others: "ARCHER".] Gary looks with wonder at the things on his father's incredibly messy desk which includes one of those fake old photographs of Gary and his father posing like Frontiersmen at the edge of the nineteenth century wilderness.

Breaking from their argument about the fate of the "devices" locked in these cabinets, the AUSTRALIAN DESIGNER notices Gary and recognizes him as the son of Dave, their sorely missed design team Captain. He welcomes the boy and explains some of the things in the room. Gary is in a daze, never having realized his father worked with such neat stuff and was such an important person. Is this really the same company with those stupid commercials?

We move to inside the "ARCHER" cabinet where two tiny eyes light up suddenly. Gary's voice is recognized. A tiny mechanical hand touches the steel to better hear outside just as a C.E. executive comes in, incensed the designers breached security by letting Gary in.

3) MOTHER WANTS GARY TO SHOW MORE EFFORT: On the drive home, NANCY is upset, breaks the news that the Division is shutting down and she's getting the run-around about their father's pension benefits. This is a difficult time and she needs both her children to be as cooperative as they possibly can, especially Gary who has been moping around at home and doing poorly in school. No more slacking off; no more messy room. Their father would not have put up with it and neither will she.

4) ARCHER'S TREK: We're back in the lab, late at night as the heavy combination lock on the "Archer" cabinet turns on its own, clicks open. Small black boots touch the concrete floor, walk across it. Close on - a phone jack into which **three tiny fingers** are inserted: Dial tone, three touch tones, then: "What city, please?"

We hear a man's authoritative but strangely stilted voice request the home address for Gary... McCray... The operator has no listing for a "Gary" but offers a McCray address in Los Gatos.

It is when Archer is walking a straight line across the parking lot that we see his true form: a humanoid robot, **twelve inches high**. When he reaches the busy boulevard, we see his face for the first time in the headlights of passing traffic. It is the serious face of a vintage G.I. Joe. He looks both ways, records the position and velocity of twenty-five approaching cars and trucks, then walks a

straight pre-computed diagonal, ducking only once before a low sports car passes over him.

He runs low on battery power, hitches a ride under a truck, counts the lines on the road before he pulls the brake line to stop.

5) ARCHER AT THE HOUSE: While Gary gets dressed the next morning, his mother Nancy calls out: Has he finished his homework like he promised? Shit! Gary looks at the 1/3 finished homework sheet, stuffs it into his back pack. Deal with it later.

And has he cleaned up his room? Shit! Gary frantically bulldozes toys and unfinished projects under his bed and into his closet. On his cluttered dresser against the window we see **ARCHER reclining amongst the other toys, sunning himself with his solar-paneled chest open.** Gary sweeps his arm across the dresser pushing everything into the open top drawer.

Later, at the breakfast table, Lisa has seen his room. "You're gonna get it. You're gonna get it." But what Gary gets is a hug from Nancy, warmly thanking him for being a real trooper and cleaning up his room so well.

Gary is confused, goes upstairs. His room is perfectly ordered, tidy - not like he left it. What the...? Did he do a better job than he thought? Dazed, Gary slowly picks up his back pack and heads out for school.

6) GARY AT SCHOOL: "Pass up your homework," MR. CONKLIN calls out to each row of desks in his sixth grade class. Dreading the inevitable, Gary reaches into his backpack to extract the unfinished page. But to his amazement, it has been completed in perfect (too perfect) handwriting. Gary looks into his bag; two eyes light up inside, look out at him: "Where is the Captain?"

Mr. Conklin, a self-realized man of the nineties (he's been to the woods, banged the drum), walks up to Gary's desk wondering what in his pack he'd like to share with everyone and why he's holding up the row with his homework. He inspects the page, pleased it's actually finished but openly suspicious of Gary's handwriting. Who helped him with this? Be honest. Gary honestly answers that no one did, but Mr. Conklin remains skeptical.

At recess, Gary carries his backpack to the corner of the play yard, let's it down on the lawn. "Is the Captain here?" Gary is speechless at seeing the twelve-inch robot walk out of his bag, squint at the bright sun, blue sky.

"Who is the Captain?" Gary can't believe he's asking this. But Archer is distracted by the world, pulls up some

of the grass, "feels" it in his tiny hand while some passing kids tease Gary for bringing his doll to school.

"The Captain has not finished *thinking exercises*." Gary is totally confused who "the Captain" is until Archer plays back Gary talking to his father DAVE over the speaker phone at work. It is a warm, happy conversation that quiets Gary - perhaps the first time he's heard his father's voice since he died two months before. WHERE IS THE CAPTAIN?

Gary understands now and whispers to explain. The Captain is gone; he isn't here anymore. Archer nods his head, taking this news literally. He climbs the chain link fence and runs across the busy street before Gary can finish what he was telling him.

ARCHER SETS UP BASE OF OPERATIONS

7) ARCHER BACK AT THE HOUSE: Gary runs into the house, into his room, relieved to find Archer who is working away on the various projects Gary had started with his father, but had not worked on since he died. Gary closes the door, shuts the curtains.

That night, with a flashlight under the covers, Gary tries to explain that *the Captain*, his father, is dead. He fell in a mountaineering accident. Archer understands him being dead, but doesn't understand the concept of an accident. Some ENEMY must have killed him.

When Lisa comes into the room wanting to know what Gary is doing under his covers [She can't sleep because their next door neighbor plays his loud home theater system late into the night], Gary vehemently resists, holding tight onto the blanket. Lisa pulls back, Archer grabs onto the sheets for stability; Lisa yanks hard and Archer is flung across the room. Gary turns on the light and Lisa sees the most amazing thing - a twelve-inch man standing up in the middle of the floor.

Gary implores Lisa to keep quiet. Mom will send him back to Dad's company if she finds out. Lisa is amazed. What is he doing here?

Gary has no choice but to tell her. Dad made him at work; and Gary thinks that he must have programmed him to come to the house, in case he died. But Dad died in an accident. How would he know? It doesn't make sense but Gary is convinced their father knew *something*.

8) THE PENSION MAN COMETH: The next morning, Gary is sent over to the noisy neighbor's house to politely ask he keep his home theater system down. The neighbor is polite back

but patronizing, completely denying he's done anything wrong.

A Central Electric CAR pulls into their driveway. Gary calls his mother; the company's PENSION MANAGER wants to talk to her. (Archer is re-charging in Gary's room when he hears of this visitor from "Dad's Company". He gets up to investigate.)

In the living room, the Pension Manager breaks the news to Nancy that because her late husband had refused to sign an important SECURITY RELEASE regarding the "device" he was working on, he had violated section 12, paragraph 4, of his employment agreement, and was therefore not eligible for death benefits.

Nancy is crushed, livid. She argues passionately with this man who stays calm, explaining away everything in pre-formed sentences. (He glances up toward some plaster ceiling dust strangely sprinkling on his head.)

Inside the ceiling, Archer inserts a **fish-eye fiber optic lens** into the pinhole he's drilled directly above the meeting. He watches as Nancy angrily defends her dead husband, charging that it was Dave's job, the long hours, the top secret distractions... She chokes up. **It was the company who killed her husband!**

Hearing this, Archer immediately zeroes in on the man's open CENTRAL ELECTRIC portfolio, scans it for information, stops on a rendering of the CENTRAL ELECTRIC Building in downtown San Jose.

Nancy implores the man to reconsider. Dave had been paying into this Pension Plan for fifteen years! That's regrettable, the man nods; but it was his choice to violate the agreement.

When the C.E. MAN leaves, Nancy sees Gary sitting on the stairs having heard everything. Tearfully, she explains that they will have to move now; they will lose the house because Gary's father was so stubborn he wouldn't sign a paper.

9) ARCHER OPERATES ON LISA'S DOLL: Gary rushes into his room just in time to see his clock radio being pulled off his table and dragged through what is now a shoe-box sized hole in the back of his closet.

He heads through the bathroom into his sister's room where Archer has torn apart a whole array of electronic toys and devices to operate on one of Lisa's "BARBIE"-TYPE DOLLS while all of Lisa's other dolls and stuffed animals are circled around like spectators. Gary insists that he must talk to Archer right away, but Lisa claims that it is her turn to play with Archer because Gary got him last night.

No! Gary closes the door. They're going to kick us out of our house!

"They will not," Archer replies, asking Gary to hold a wire on the doll he's operating on. Gary has to know: What did his father refuse to sign?

Archer's only response is: "The Company killed the Captain." Gary's eyes bug out. Dad must've *known something*. He refused to go along and they *killed* him. What are they going to do?

The Barbie-type doll suddenly sits up on her own, turns her head, flutters her eyelids. "My name is Glamour Gaby. Let's go swim!" Lisa lights up, delighted. But Archer shakes his head: No good. He disconnects her, continues working.

10) SATELLITE AND BEDTIME STORY: Once again the neighbor's home theater thunders the music and effects of the latest blockbuster while Gary crawls out his window, follows Archer climbing onto the roof of the house.

Archer looks up to the vast, starry sky while Gary points out **constellations**. Orion, Scorpio, the Big Dipper. But Archer is too literal-minded. He sees only stars, no pictures. Archer points to a **moving dot across the sky** - a satellite! He falls to his knees for stability, puts both his hands together and points them up, his sleeves opening out to form a satellite dish.

We hear the sound of a thousand different telephone calls until **Archer transmits his own signal**. [Then, we cut to the locked cabinets in the C.E. Division's Lab where all of a sudden we hear movement. From the cabinet labeled "Jocko", we hear the *whizz* of a tiny power saw cutting a round hole in the hard steel.]

Later, Archer comes down through Lisa's open bedroom window to find her awake. She can't sleep. He first offers to plug up her ears, but instead she wants him to read one of her books as a bedtime story. Archer tells his own story, however, a fable the "Captain" had told him as a "thinking exercise". Lisa closes her eyes, listens; but Archer stops when he notices she has fallen asleep. He taps her on the shoulder, wakes her up. The bedtime story isn't finished.

.....ACT TWO:

REINFORCEMENTS

11) THE ARRIVAL OF OTHER "DEVICES": It is raining and late in the morning when Gary finds his mother still asleep,

her bedside lamp still on with bills and papers spread out over the bed.

Gary whispers for Archer but can't find him in his room. Downstairs he sees him doing jumping jacks on the kitchen floor. But as Gary closes in, he realizes it isn't Archer dropping down to call out push-ups like a twelve-inch marine. And it isn't Archer having the tools between his joints tested and checked-off by Lisa's walking **Glamour Gaby** doll wearing a nurse's hat. And it isn't Archer dragging a bathroom scale under the kitchen counter or walking around on elbows like a soldier crawling under barbed wire. It's **SEMPER, JOCKO, MERK, and TOOB** having their physical condition and readiness checked out by Archer and Nurse Gaby.

"Right, Mate," Jocko says as he steps onto the bathroom scale, stretching his hydraulic arms, legs, and trunk until he pushes as hard he can under the counter; Glamour Gaby reads off the numbers.

"258 pounds."

"Bugger!," he exclaims, stepping off. Semper jumps onto the counter, counts out pull-ups. Glamour Gaby inspects MERK's wires and communication circuits, reciting her technical findings to Archer fixing a joint on TOOB's knee. Although these four other robots bear a resemblance to Archer, they seem cruder, much less finished and much more specialized to specific tasks.

Gary kneels down: What is going on? Archer doesn't answer but requests from Gary 25 integrated circuits, seven variable micro-capacitors, and one 15 millivolt inductor to complete repairs on his crew.

Why? What are they here for?

"The Mission," is Archer's only reply, asking for the electronic parts again just as Nancy comes down the stairs inquiring about hearing strange voices. As the robots file out then climb up the stairs, another loud movie blasts from the next door neighbor.

Nancy hugs her son, too anxious to complain about the neighbor's noise. She tries to promise Gary everything is going to be all right, but is unconvincing. The phone suddenly rings; Nancy answers. It's for Gary.

"Hello?"

"Gary, bring up two plastic trash bags," says Archer over the phone. Click.

12) DESTRUCTION OF NOISY NEIGHBOR: Gary comes up to a noisy and busy upstairs where Archer and the Glamour Gaby help Lisa repair other dolls and where Toob grabs the two trash bags from Gary's hand, quickly folding one of them up into a tight package while Semper and Jocko climb into the

other bag. Gary is trying to get Archer to tell him what they're needed for when Toob disappears with the bags. The TOILET flushes. Gary heads into the bathroom, but the robots are nowhere to be seen.

A few minutes later, the blare from the neighbor's house suddenly stops. There is a loud crash. Gary rushes to the window as he hears the NEIGHBOR shouting at something.

Gary picks up Archer. What is going on?! "Making Repairs," is Archer's only response.

A POLICE CAR screeches to a stop outside and Gary can hear his neighbor yelling "THEY WENT INTO THE TOILET!!" The shower goes on in Gary's bathroom and he runs in to find Semper, Jocko, and Toob washing off the sealed trash bag filled with tiny electronic components.

13) GARY LEARNS OF THE MISSION: Gary is at the very least impressed with this and while Archer busily installs the new pieces into Merk, Semper, and Toob, Gary demands to know what "The Mission" is and how Archer is so sure they won't be kicked out of the house. In the home office, Archer plugs the laser printer directly into MERK who in turns sticks his fingers into the phone jack, dialing and downloading **schematics** from the **CENTRAL ELECTRIC** Building in downtown San Jose. Looking at these, Gary jumps to a conclusion. This is an *intelligence mission*. They are going to use this map of the building to find out who killed his father, then expose the villainy. Excited, Gary agrees to be a secret ally in this mission and do whatever he can to help it along.

14) COMPANY PAYS A VISIT: Gary jumps out of bed the next morning, eager to help in the campaign, but finds the five robots completely gone. There is not a trace of them. Was it a dream?

That possibility ends quickly when a sedan pulls up to the house with **TWO EXECUTIVES** from the C.E. Division. Without ever saying specifically what they are looking for, the execs report that the neighbor's house was burglarized through the plumbing and that an unauthorized satellite transmission has led them to suspect their "sensitive devices" are nearby. Nancy has no idea what they are talking about or what they even look like, but resents the intrusion from the people she blames for all the troubles in her life. She refuses to let them into the house.

When asked, Gary swears he has no idea where they are just as he notices that the Sunday paper has been torn apart and strewn all over the den. The men leave barely satisfied

and with a warning that these devices were developed for "classified defense applications" and should be considered *extremely dangerous*.

Gary quickly cleans up the Sunday paper, finds a "TOYS R US" Advertising Supplement full of neatly cut rectangular holes on every page. Gary quickly excuses himself, gets on his bike.

15) THE TOY STORE: The store is crowded for the Sunday sale and it isn't long before Gary sees Semper in a bratty kid's hand who shakes him in front of his mother to buy it for him. Semper twists the kid's thumb with a Marine Corps *hee-yi*, then heads off to join the others. Archer puts Gary to work immediately to fend off the people who keep trying to pick him up.

Gary carries Archer down the aisles (as if he were going to buy him) as Archer orchestrates the acquisition of radio controlled cars, plastic "K'Nex" pieces, Nintendo cartridges, Lincoln Logs, Legos, Silly Puddy, and a Vac-U-Former, all hauled along by the robots in a Fisher Price Trike 'N Trailer.

Archer stops in the doll section, sees a Western Set, Cowboy Action figures. What did do they need here? Archer doesn't answer, just looks.

Gary looks at all the merchandise. How are they going to pay for all this? Archer recites the entire tab, assuring Gary that this is not his department as he heads under the check-out counter. To the bewilderment of the **check-out girl**, the entire bill for the toys is printed out at the cash register, all charged to *CENTRAL ELECTRIC*.

Once finished, Gary puts Archer under his shirt, walks out of the store. Someone grabs his arm - store security.

TROUBLED YOUTH

16) TOYS R US JAIL: Archer stands on the Store Manager's desk, the object of a "serious and growing crime", while Gary tries to convince his disappointed **mother** that the doll belongs to him.

When Gary can't say what store he got it from, how much it cost, and where he got the money to pay for it, Nancy apologizes to the Manager, explaining how Gary's father recently died and that he's really a good boy.

The Manager lets Gary go with only a warning, then instructs a clerk to put the toy back. The clerk has no idea where it goes and halfway down the hall we hear him scream - then the patter of little robot feet.

17) DRIVING ROBOTS AND TALK WITH MOM: Driving home, Nancy tries to have a serious talk with Gary about what made him do what he did. Does he need to go to Counseling? Group therapy for pre-teens? No!! But while Gary still pleads innocent, he sees a **strange vehicle** coming out of the alley and alongside the car. On four re-gearred radio-controlled CARS, an Air Hockey Board supports a netted **pile of toys**. Each robot steers one car while Archer sits atop the pile, wearing the COWBOY HAT he was admiring on the doll, synchronizing and directing the ride back to home base.

Anticipating an embarrassing rendezvous at the house, Gary suddenly succumbs to his mother reaching out to him, asks if they could go somewhere to talk. About what? Well... He's going through some "changes" -- you know, stuff they can't talk about with Lisa around.

At a Ben & Jerry's, Gary soon appreciates the hole he's dug himself as Nancy sincerely asks the dreaded question about "girls". Gary changes the subject, instead asks if his father acted at all secretive or strange before he died.

Well... yes. He did. Was it about that thing the company wanted him to sign? She doesn't know. For the last six months of his life he was troubled and even more distracted than usual. But whatever was bothering him, he found refuge in the mountains. Gary hears sad longing in his mother's voice as she describes how much the wilderness meant to Dave; he must've been a frontiersman in another life. Gary agrees with this and reveals to her that he and his father had a secret plan to explore the Santa Cruz Mountains for a week like a latter-day Lewis and Clark. Dad had made all the plans but, of course, they never went.

18) GARY'S ROOM A MESS: At home, Gary finds his room a shambles, the new toys already disassembled on the floor. He reaches to close the door, but it's too late. Where did all this come from?!!, Nancy wants to know. Gary rightly explains that it doesn't belong to him. It's something he's doing with some friends. A big joint project.

Nancy looks skeptically at the mess, claims she hasn't seen any of his friends around in a while. Oh, these are new friends. Believe me, they're here.

Later, as Gary helps the robots assemble the various pieces, Gary asks what they're building. **Tools**. *What do they do?* **They do the job**. *What job?* Archer finally explains that "PLANNING" isn't Gary's department.

19) ESCAPE FROM MR. CONKLIN: Gary is barely paying attention in class when Mr. Conklin calls on him for an

answer. Huh? Mr. Conklin proceeds to humiliate Gary, ~~pop-~~psychoanalyzing him in front of the class when a worried School Secretary comes in with a sealed letter from Gary's mother. Gary opens it. Written out on his mother's stationery is a detailed schematic diagram of a LITHIUM-ION BATTERY, including a notation on the number of units Archer needs. Gary quickly closes the letter, pretends it's tragic news. He looks at the Secretary and begins to weep; picks up his backpack and leaves in tears.

20) FIRST AMONG EQUALS: Leaving the school grounds, Gary is surprised to see his eight year-old sister Lisa with a similar schematic drawing for some other needed part. What is she doing with that? Lisa indignantly replies that Archer made a secret alliance with her and if he doesn't like it he can get lost. Gary is clearly upset by this betrayal and all the way to Radio Shack they fight about who is the most important ally of Dad's robots (a sibling rivalry laden with deeper meaning).

EVASIVE ACTION

21) ARCHER SPOTS SURVEILLANCE: The construction projects in Gary's room proceed quickly as the robots toss pieces back and forth to each other in near perfect coordination. Jocko misses a catch, asks Glamour Gaby to retrieve it.

"Would ya fetch it for us, Love?" Glamour Gaby looks between Jocko and the piece.

"Get... your... own... damn... piece..." comes the feminist reply. The other robots titter, especially Semper who doesn't hide his "robot thing" for Lisa's beach-blond babe of a doll.

When Gary and Lisa come home with the batteries and other electronic supplies, Semper and Toob seize on the Radio Shack catalogue, fight over it, tear it apart. Jocko inserts the batteries into the half-completed DRONES, strange looking contraptions made from toy parts and found objects.

Amidst this chaos, Archer notices from the window something strange in the distance. He zeroes in on a VAN moving through the neighborhood, a RADIO DISH on its roof pointing in their direction.

Archer draws the curtains closed; orders a radio-silent retreat from the house.

22) ROBOTS IN THE MIST: The robots and Glamour Gaby use two radio controlled All-Terrain-Vehicles (from Toys-R-Us) to breach the elevated wilderness behind the house while Gary and Lisa watch out, bring up the rear. But while Archer uses the top of the hill to discover there is not one but *three C.E. SURVEILLANCE VANS* roaming the neighborhood, the other robots seem infected by the wilderness. They run through the tall grass, swing from branches, and vie for the fickle attention of Glamour Gaby.

Archer reports what he sees to Gary. They lie low, discuss strategy. Archer calls Merk over to deploy his collapsible RADIO DISH. Merk powers up, unleashes a screeching, jamming frequency. [We cut to inside the vans where the eavesdroppers rip off their headphones to save their ears.]

Archer whistles, tries to bring order to his team, but to no avail. They are wild, like the *Bounty* crew in Tahiti; and Lisa is no help.

In the field, Archer informs Gary they need something to avoid future surveillance. *Cellular Signal Scramblers*. What?! Where's he going to get that?

Gary becomes impatient. When are they going to go to the building and find out who killed his father? Isn't that what this is all about?! Archer assures him the Mission is on schedule.

23) GARY IN TROUBLE: At the house, Nancy is home and angry that her children left school early. She was called into the school and had a conference with Mr. Conklin who offered his opinion that Gary is becoming a *mother's boy* and is screwing up because he's never had a **strong male figure** in his life.

Nancy is upset while Gary is furious at the intrusion promising his mother that nothing is wrong, that he has everything under control, and that it's all going to be all right.

24) MR. CONKLIN LAYS IN: At recess, Mr. Conklin calls Gary over while he patrols the play yard. No more Mr. Nice Guy. From now on, he's going to do Gary the favor of not cutting him any slack. Gary may hate him for it now; but when he's a man, he'll look back on this fondly.

Later, the class is taking a math test when Gary hears something tapping from inside his desk. He breaks his pencil, looks inside as he gets his sharpener, sees two little eyes staring at him.

"PHONE COMPANY," Archer whispers.

Gary whispers back that he can't leave now; he has a test to take. Seconds later, Gary feels something being pushed against his waist -- It is the same test sheet, but with all the answers written in perfectly.

"PHONE COMPANY. They have *Signal Scramblers*."

All of a sudden Mr. Conklin lifts the front of Gary's desk spilling everything out onto the floor, including Archer.

"This is sweet, everybody. Gary brought his doll to school." The entire class laughs as Archer freezes in an action pose and Gary gets on his hands and knees to pick up the contents of his desk, including Archer who he puts into his backpack.

25) GARY STRIKES BACK: Gary is walking down the crowded breezeway when he rounds the corner, runs face to face with Patti, a pretty girl in his class. Patti smiles, musters the nerve to tell Gary that she hates the way Mr. Conklin is treating him. Gary gives only short answers, he's so overwhelmed by her presence.

While Gary heads out of the school, Archer reports his heart rate went up 73 percent during that thirty seconds.

"Were you afraid because she's bigger than you?" he asks Gary.

"No. You know. She's a girl."

But Archer doesn't know, asks more questions that Gary is embarrassed to answer (He's worse than his mother!), then describes a *thinking exercise* the Captain taught him about how to make a certain "woman" understand when he can't tell her the truth. *What is the best strategy to avoid pain?*

But just as Gary is learning something very personal about his father, Mr. Conklin pulls up beside him in his VOLVO SEDAN, warns Gary if he continues the way he's going, he'll grow up soft, dependent.

"You can't play with dolls all your life, Gary."

Gary tells his teacher to stop talking because he just stepped off school property and doesn't have to hear it anymore.

"I'm doing you a favor, Gary. C'mon. Do you want to be a wimp forever?"

Gary yells at his teacher to leave him alone just as he sees Jocko emerging from under the VOLVO.

"Jocko!," Gary calls out bending down to save the robot from being crushed by the wheel.

"What did you call me?"

Jocko thrusts his hydraulic arms up under the car while Semper throws out a tiny grappling hook on the other side.

From the front of the school, Gary's fellow students are amazed by the illusion of Gary lifting and hurling Mr. Conklin's car over on its top.

They break out into a stunned applause. Mr. Conklin hangs upside-down by his seatbelt, screams something about "little men" as Gary lowers his pack to let the other four robots climb inside.

"What was that about being a wimp?"

Gary continues down the street, carrying away the culprits.

26) PHONE COMPANY STORE: In the phone store, the salesman takes forever to notice Gary; then leaves to help an adult customer before Gary finishes explaining what he wants. Gary manhandles the salesman, thrusting his printed request into his chest. *Signal Scramblers?* What, is he kidding? How does he expect to pay for this?

Credit, Gary answers. The Salesman tells him to grow up first, then walks away to help another customer.

Gary simmers, spitefully leaves his backpack full of robots under a cabinet counter.

"Meet you back at the house," he whispers knowingly before he walks out alone.

GARY WISES UP

27) GARY SEES WHAT THEY'VE BEEN UP TO: With the robots gone, Gary has a chance to see what they've been up to. Amazingly, his room is clean again but where there was once mess there are now seven homemade DRONES all ready to go. But go where? Do what? They are strange looking contraptions with most of them carrying large spools of insulated or uninsulated electrical wire. One has strange looking feet. One has wheels all around its perimeter.

In the kitchen, Nancy congratulates Gary on finishing his projects. But when Gary takes out the trash into the garage, he finds something strange. On the floor are two empty bags of fertilizer, a hamper full of squeezed down aluminum cans, and a garden hose in his mother's gas tank.

Gary hears a car pull up in front of the house. He lifts the garage door, sees the **police car**. In a panic, he cleans up the robot lab.

28) COUNTY MARSHAL DELIVERS EVICTION NOTICE: Inside the house, Gary soon learns that it is not the police but a County Marshal delivering an official notice of eviction from the bank. By now, Nancy has accepted their fate and

asks her two children to start packing their things into boxes.

Gary waits up late for the robots, desperate to tell them what's going on (and *find* out what's going on). He has serious misgivings, feels like he's missing something major.

In the next room he can hear his sister talking to herself in the dark. He crawls through what is now a gaping hole in their closet where Lisa is sitting on the floor, trying to get her Glamour Gaby to work again. But it's dead, she says. Gary assures her it's just the battery and Archer will fix it when he gets back. No. He doesn't need her anymore. Gary tries sincerely to console her, but senses that her feeling of abandonment isn't entirely to do with the doll.

All of a sudden, in the far distance, **there is a low crashing sound, a RUMBLE, then silence.** Gary walks over to the window. Far away, the moon illuminates the dust in the air. Gary's face falls slowly as he considers something. He runs downstairs, picks up the phone. It's dead.

29) PHONE COMPANY RUBBLE: In the early morning, Gary rides his bike as fast as he can back to where the two-story Phone Company Building once stood. Now it is a **perfectly symmetrical pile of rubble** surrounded by police, phone company officials, and local news crews amazed by the building's sudden and orderly collapse. [Apparently the few people who were in the building miraculously escaped without a scratch.]

As Gary looks at the specter with dread and awe, he notices the **Australian Designer** from the Lab across the rubble, almost admiring it.

Gary approaches him, asks if he knows how it happened. There is pride in the Aussie's voice as he describes the precise cuts that were made in the steel support structure. But he soon realizes Gary's questions indicate a little too much knowledge.

30) GARY LEARNS THE FIVE STEPS: The **Australian Designer** is only happy to take the Captain's son out for a Grand Slam breakfast; but how does he know so much? Gary lies, says his father told him almost everything about Archer, Jocko, Semper, Merk, and Toob. The Aussie relaxes. [What the hell? The program's dead anyway.] He tells Gary how the company was frustrated with the robots' literal mindedness and complete lack of judgment. Gary's father used to spend hours with Archer using "thinking exercises" to teach him judgment. The problem was Dave started to believe his little machine was more than just a little machine - **that**

its life had value and shouldn't be sacrificed like a piece of equipment. That's why he refused to sign the final Certificate of Implementation.

Gary is shocked hearing that. *That's why he wouldn't sign? Because he thought the robots had life?!*

Yeah. Dave didn't even want to run a test mission because the **fifth step** usually meant self-sacrifice for all the little buggers.

"Oh yeah," Gary fakes. "The fifth step. What were the other four steps again?"

The designer isn't fooled but puts up his open hand anyway. **One:** Assess situation and form alliances. **Two:** Lay out base of operations. **Three:** Gather supplies and build reinforcements. **Four:** Assemble destructive material **Five:** Destroy objective (and of course, themselves).

When the Australian pointedly asks what Gary really knows, Gary answers with a question: What happens when you mix gasoline and fertilizer? You know, just hypothetically?

Hypothetically, it's a bomb.

But before the Aussie can get any more information, Gary is excusing himself, running out the door.

31) GARY VERSUS THE ROBOTS: Gary skids to a stop in front of his house where men from a **Delivery Company** are loading the Drones and the hamper full of **Fertilizer-filled soda cans** into the back of their empty van. Gary asks what they are doing. Picking up for a "Mr. Archer" - for delivery to the **CENTRAL ELECTRIC BUILDING**.

Inside, Gary finds the robots getting themselves ready for transport. Stop!, he shouts with feigned authority. Gary announces that the mission is over because blowing up Central Electric is not going to do anything but kill a lot of people. It's not going to save their house. Archer repeats to Gary that this is not his department. Yes it is! When Archer refuses to listen to reason, Gary throws them all into a pillowcase and locks them in a bathroom cabinet. But they are out in no time and in another second have Gary on the floor. Gary struggles but soon sees a **roll of Dental Floss** unspooling in all directions over his head. What?

Like Gulliver, Gary is tied down, immobile on the floor in a thick web of dental floss.

.....ACT THREE:

SAVING THE BUILDING

32) CALL THE POLICE: Under the web, Gary tries to free himself, finally getting to the telephone. He calls the San Jose police to warn of the imminent destruction. But the police are amused by the story he's telling, ask him to repeat it for other desk officers.

33) TO THE BUILDING: Gary takes the shuttle/trolley to the *CENTRAL ELECTRIC* Building - a fifty year-old masonry structure in downtown San Jose - and asks the guard there if he knows anything about a delivery van. The Guard points him to the service entrance. The van is gone. Nothing is there. Gary looks around, looks up. Near the fifth floor, he sees a group of **FOUR ROBOTS**, tied together, ascending the brick like a team of rock climbers. He counts the number of windows up to where they are, then runs into the elevator.

34) METHOD OF DESTRUCTION: Gary is chastised for running when he bursts into an office and bounds over to an open window to try and reason with Archer who; with Semper, Jocko, and Toob; is laying upward a **forty-story bare wire** onto which Gary can see an alligator clip has been attached from a window at each floor leading all the way up to where he is now (and then eventually to the roof). Gary looks up, around; sees another wire with an alligator clip being fed from the air conditioning vent to a nearby window. But no one in the office notices or cares!!!

[We cut to inside the vent where we see one of the **homemade contraptions** unspooling wire through the ventilation system of that floor. The wire eventually comes out into the stairwell where another contraption hooks it to one of the **crushed gasoline and fertilizer-filled soda cans** already inserted into a hole in the concrete. Merk is there to repeat: "Watch your step, please. Watch your step, please." The few people who pass barely notice, one commenting that it's about time they fixed those holes.

35) GARY IMPLORES PENSION MAN: On the floor, Gary runs into, literally, the **PENSION MANAGER** who came to the house. Gary implores him to change his mind. It would be a very good idea for everyone if he did that. But the guy talks down to him; if his father had been more cooperative they wouldn't be having this problem. Gary blows up, claims his father was probably the best man who ever worked for this company. But he wasn't some drone. He wouldn't do whatever

he was told, even if it was *wrong*. His father was thoughtful and compassionate. He stood for something and ruined his life. He tried!, Gary shouts convincing himself but not the Pension Manager. Gary is so furious as the man gets on the elevator that he seems almost tempted to leave and find a good place to watch the building come down. He turns around; sees people coming and going; sees a family with small children; sees a large wall advertisement:

Central Electric -- "*We Bring Good Things To Life*"

36) DO OR DIE: Gary heads up the stairwell, sees some of the wires and pulls them out, but it is futile - there are forty stories, each with an independent connection. He knows now that if he fails to stop them, he'll die with everyone else. He hesitates, unsure what to do, but continues upward to the roof.

On the roof, Gary runs into the **four robots** coming up over the lip. He sees the bare wire and alligator clips connected at every floor forming a giant parallel circuit. Jocko and Semper fend Gary off while **Merk fastens the ends of the wires into a household plug**. He lifts an outlet cover and Archer marches toward inserting the plug when Gary pleads with him and the other robots to save themselves. Think before they do this. Think about exploring the wilderness, venturing off to the unknown. Gary pleads with Archer to choose life over death, ultimately appealing to that part of him, that *frontier spirit* he knows is his father. What Gary is saying clearly gives Archer pause, arouses a robotic desire to survive and just before he inserts the plug, he stops, turns to Gary and calls him "Captain".

Semper salutes.

SAVING THE ROBOTS

37+) But the robots' enlivened appreciation for life is threatened again as the **Executives** from the Division approach Gary on the roof to take them back for disassembly. (They had been tipped off by the Australian Designer). Gary now has the power of command and orders evasive action but it doesn't look good - There are five executives and they brought the necessary equipment to do the job.

All of a sudden we cut to the fifth floor where a secretary combing her long **staticky hair sets off a spark** near one of the **dangling wires**. The **fifth floor charges explode** setting up a distraction and smoky stairway down

which Gary escapes meeting Jocko and Semper who have rappelled to the bottom.

Gary's objective is to get the robots to the Mountain Wilderness behind his house, somewhere he knows they won't be found. But before that, there is a chase ending with Gary flinging his backpack full of Robots into the Los Gatos Reservoir, thereby forcing C.E. to spend a week dragging the bottom to get their top secret "devices" back.

But of course that was a fake, a ruse for another escape. At the end of the day, Gary stands at the edge of the wilderness and acts like Thomas Jefferson to their **Lewis and Clark**, ordering Archer and Jocko to explore the vast expanse with their crew and return in two months with detailed topographical maps, soil samples, pictures, and botanical information. The robots leave with a salute and a handshake (and Glamour Gaby), then disappear, forging a new trail.