

Excerpt from **HEXAHELIX**  
(my upcoming cyberpunk novel)

Logline: After an experimental drug hits the streets, causing chaos and death, it's the job of Neo-Narcotics Officer Roland Kincaid to find a way to get this drug off the streets and bring order back to Los Angeles in the year 2049.

## Chapter 7

### Pusher's Row

Patriot Park was made so families could play on the grass together on national holidays, but once all the grimy camping tents sprung up everywhere and every bench had a sleeping vagrant curled up on it, the citizens unofficially renamed the place Squatter's Park. The wide pedestrian walkway that snakes through Squatter's Park used to be called Lover's Lane, since the city planner envisioned cozy couples taking romantic strolls along it, stopping to snuggle and kiss in the string of gazebos that run beside it—each one named after a famous pair of lovers, such as *Romeo & Juliet* and *Anthony & Cleopatra*. But once the squatters took over the park, couples no longer felt safe taking walks down that path. And now, with Lover's Lane overrun with drug-dealers and contraband peddlers, it has a new name among the locals: Pusher's Row.

A man with a purple hoodie lurks in the shadows of some trees near where Pusher's Row splits off from the main sidewalk. He murmurs to himself, "Forget Chester the chemist. That's not who you are right now. Tonight, you're Technotron—just another drug dealer, out cruising for customers."

*More like guinea pigs*, he thinks to himself. His fingers play with the samples of Hexahelix he has in his pocket. *Time to see if this batch is on target, or if the formula needs tweaking.*

He clicks on his holographic sunglasses, which display a pair of dollar signs floating before his eyes. *This should help distract any potential witnesses. Don't need anyone spilling my facial details to some sketch artist later.*

Technotron steps out onto Pusher's Row. There is a steady flow of unwashed addicts and perverts filling the walkway. Along the edges, a string of vendors of forbidden pleasures pitch their wares to any of the downtrodden outcasts that pass by.

After just taking a few steps, one of these vendors accosts Technotron; the pusher is scrawny and has a shaved head except for two tufts of hair in the front, which he gelled and twisted into devil horns. He says to Technotron, "Yo, man! I got your banned quadruple-X-rated vid-clips right here." He raises up a baggie full of different colored data-sticks and gives it a shake. "You won't find these even in the darkest corners of the net, son."

Technotron ignores him and keeps walking, but the smut-peddler just keeps pace and proceeds with the sales pitch: "You wanna see some tasty teen runaway get strapped into a *Kama Sutra* machine? Yo, her screams alone will get you off, I promise you. Much less seeing all the positions that thing bends her into..."

Technotron says, "Buzz off, creepazoid."

But the dude with the devil-horns hairstyle won't take the hint. He just switches up his pitch, "All right, maybe you want some android-on-android action? Some Robo-S&M? Forget whips and chains, these junk dolls go to town on each other with power tools, yo! We are talking belt-sanders and diamond-tipped drills, homie. Hella sparks be poppin' off..." He notices Technotron's disinterest and seems a bit frustrated by it. "How about some VR then? I got this simulator that lets you be the dude that's doin' you!"

Technotron halts, then grabs the smut-peddler's lapels and says, "Yo, did you just tell me to go fuck myself?!"

Dude with the devil horns says, "Hey man, if that doesn't float your yacht, don't sweat it! I'm just sayin', whatever your fetish of choice is, I got it."

Technotron just shoves him off, smacking the pusher's back against a nearby lamppost, and then walks away. *Nobody is going to miss a few of these low-lifes*, he thinks to himself.

Technotron walks past a gazebo, this one has a plaque over its entryway that says *Helen & Paris*, and a woman steps out from inside to say, "What's the rush, handsome?"

Technotron pauses his stride and turns his head. She has pale skin and is wearing a purple latex trench coat. Her hair is dyed silver, and she has metallic lipstick on. "The name's Silver. Just step into my office and we can have our own private party."

"Got no time for that," Technotron says. "Tonight, I'm all business."

"You sure about that, sugar?" Silver says. "My BJs have that little extra jolt." She presses her lips together then makes them go pop—a tiny arc of electricity zaps between her lips for a second. "I got that taser-lipstick that makes all the boys see sparks."

*Great*, Technotron thinks, *she'll stun me with those electric lips and then rob me while I lie there twitching. I may be lonely and horny, but no thanks.*

"Yeah," Technotron says, "I've always wanted to stick my dick in an electrical socket. I'll pass."

"Your loss," Silver says. Then she turns away and grumbles, "Limp-dick loser."

Technotron continues to make his way down Pusher's Row. *This part of the row must be where all the sex and porn gets peddled*, he thinks. *I need to find where the drug-pushers and desperate junkies gather.*

After passing a few more gazebos, another guy steps up to sell his wares. He is wearing a blue beanie with a Yin-Yang symbol stitched onto the rim, and his eyes are so bloodshot that they look ready to burst with blood. He says, "Hey pal, the name's Lucid. Feel like takin' a trip? I got all the hottest hallucinogens, bruh. Any kind of escape you want out of this hellhole reality we're all stuck in, I got you covered."

Technotron stops to hear him out. *Best that I find out more about the competition*, he thinks. "All right, spit. Whatchu got?"

"You wanna see some sick-as-fuck dragons, yo?" Lucid says. "I got syringes of *Dragon's*

*Blood* locked and loaded! You'll be ducking flying lizards for days..."

"Not my kinda high," Technotron says. "What else?"

"Maybe you want to get biblical and trip on some angels and demons. I got plenty of *Heaven & Hell* pills on deck right now. Last time I tripped on one of these, I saw this warrior angel slay a succubus with a flaming sword! It was so freakin' vivid, yo. It was like I was watching *Heaven's Holocaust* in Holo-3D, only I don't even own a TV!"

"I'm an atheist," Technotron states.

"Right, right, no worries," Lucid says as he checks his jacket pockets for what else he has stashed on his person. "Ah, here we go." He reaches into one of his jacket's inner pockets. He pulls out a Ziplock full of little paper squares. "Maybe you're lookin' to see some aliens—and I don't mean Mexican border-crossers. I'm talkin' some real 'Close Encounters of the Third Kind' type shit. Flying saucers, big gray heads with almond eyes and skinny long fingers, all of it." He holds up the baggie full of tabs to show that each one has a cartoony alien face printed on it. "Just drop one tab of *Xenophobia* and you'll swear you just got beamed up to a UFO... minus the anal probe, of course." He chuckles and elbows Technotron in the ribs.

Technotron is unamused.