

Borg In The USA

A Get Smart! / Star Trek Crossover Story

by

Rex Ungericht

This is a work of fan fiction, and is not to be sold. But I hope you enjoy it anyway.

Star Trek and related marks are trademarks of CBS Studios Inc.

Get Smart! is a copyright of HBO.

This story started as a joke I made on the Star Trek Fan Production Group on Facebook. A whole story from a single joke? Yup.

Part I

Prologue - Sacramento, California

Maxwell Smart III leaned back and glanced admiringly at the photo of his grandfather perched on the edge of the cluttered desk. A moment later, he realized he had leaned too far and went tumbling backward along with the chair.

He quickly stood and looked guiltily around the empty office before setting the chair back up, carefully sitting back down, and returning his attention to the photo. *The greatest agent CONTROL ever had*, he mused to himself. *No, correction: the soon-to-be SECOND greatest agent.*

He picked up the report in front of him and glanced over it again. KAOS was rebuilding. Somehow, they had risen from the ashes of their destruction and were having unprecedented success in expanding their organization. CONTROL agents had been sent to infiltrate; none had returned. But now he, Maxwell Smart III, was on the case. This would be his greatest triumph and vault him to the spot of top CONTROL agent OF ALL TIME.

There was a quick knock on the door and the Chief walked in. "Max, I just printed out a report from HQ. Have you...?" Noticing the paper in Max's hand, the Chief snatched it and frowned. "Max, I've told you not to keep taking reports off the printer."

"But Chief," Max replied. "This is BIG. This is my chance. I can find out what's going on if you'll just let me."

The Chief sighed. He had never known the first Maxwell Smart, who was on record as having more successes than any other CONTROL agent, but he couldn't imagine that the grandson had anything in common with the grandfather. Maxwell Smart III was everything you didn't want in an agent - bumbling, mistake-prone, knowledgeable about very little - but even so, when he had applied for a position with CONTROL, the son of a previous Chief (who was a Senator and head of the Intelligence committee) made sure the application was approved.

"No, Max," the Chief said. But, he quickly added, seeing the crestfallen look on Max's face, "not because I don't need you on this case. It's just that I...have another assignment for you." For a moment, the Chief looked like he was concentrating furiously. Then he said "I...uh...need you to...uh...investigate something even bigger! Yeah, that's it. Something bigger."

"Bigger than the return of KAOS?" Max's eyes grew huge. At last the Chief was beginning to see his true potential. At last he was going to get a real assignment -- no more looking for the lost pets of government officials or stopping kids from operating lemonade stands without a license.

"Yes, Max. We've had reports from the Nevada desert. Reports of a sighting of such profound implications, confirmation would mean fame and fortune for the one who proves it."

Max stood, pushing his chair backward into the bookcase behind him, where several knickknacks fell crashing to the floor. He turned and started picking them up, saying "just a minute, Chief" while he pushed the chair back out of his way -- where the metal arm hit the Chief right in the knee.

"Max!" yelled the Chief, hopping back and rubbing his knee.

Max turned back around. "Sorry about that, Chief."

The Chief winced but continued gamely, "Max, what if I told you that it might finally have happened." He ignored the pain in his knee and tried to sound like a narrator on one of those conspiracy TV shows. "It just may be that space aliens have finally landed on Earth. I don't need to tell you that this would be the biggest story in the history of...well, history. I can't trust it to anyone but you."

Max swelled with pride. "I won't let you down, Chief."

Chapter One - One Month Earlier

Kevin Conway was bored. *Join KAOS, they said. Bring the world to its knees, they said.* So why was he stuck in this godforsaken shed (he couldn't give it the courtesy of calling it an office) out in the wastelands of Nevada?

Maybe if he wasn't the only one out here it wouldn't be so bad. Maybe if they would just let him visit a brothel every once in a while he could make it through the long weeks without punching holes in the walls. Maybe if -

He glanced at the laptop on his desk, hoping for a message, new orders, *anything* to relieve the boredom, but it just kept displaying the KAOS wallpaper put there by the IT department.

I should have become a architect like my mother wanted, he thought. Or stayed in the band - I wasn't bad on bass. I might have -

A low rumble interrupted his thoughts, followed by a boom.

Supersonic jet, he thought as he walked outside and squinted up. *Probably more military exercises.* But then his gaze locked on to a fireball as it dropped below the clouds, flashed by his position, and plummeted to the ground somewhere to his northeast. A few moments later the sound of the crash reached his ears.

Meteorite? Although he hadn't gotten a good look, it had seemed spherical, so probably not a plane. *Well, at least it's something to do*, he thought as he walked over to the pickup parked next to the shed.

It only took a few minutes to reach a groove in the earth, a groove that deepened the farther along it he looked. Pieces of debris lay scattered in and along the trench, with some even farther away. He parked the truck near the start of the wreckage and exited, then proceeded to walk down the trench.

At the end he discovered the still-smoking wreck of a vessel the likes of which he had never seen before. *Some kind of experimental craft? What was it made out of, that so much of it survived the crash?*

Excellent, he thought. This could be just the thing he needed to gain some stature in the organization and maybe get an assignment somewhere where he could just order a frikkin' pizza once in a while.

The wreckage was still smoldering as he reached it. He pulled out his phone and started taking pictures.

As time passed and the wreckage cooled he was able to get closer and closer to it. Eventually he was able to step inside. *I hope I don't run out of memory space for all these photos.* Some of the technology around him looked at least somewhat familiar, but a lot of it was like nothing he had ever seen before. He turned his phone in another direction and -- wait, was that movement? How could anyone be alive after a crash like this?

"Hello?" No answer. He walked deeper into the wreckage, just in time to see someone wearing some sort of weird suit full of technology pull a component off of another person in the same type of suit. That was odd enough, but then the second person just...vanished. *What was going on here?*

The person looked at him, and rasped "Resistance is...futile. You will be..." before falling over and laying motionless amid the rubble.

Kevin slowly walked closer and poked at the body with his foot. No response. What was all that tech gear the - now dead - person was wearing? He took a few pictures, then leaned in for a closer look. And in one last convulsion, the being jerked up an arm and shot two tubules into Kevin's neck.

Chapter Two - Now, Nine Miles NW of Willow Creek Reservoir, Nevada

Max stood on the hood of his CONTROL-issued 2012 Dodge Nitro, scanning the area through a pair of Leica binoculars he had appropriated from the office supply room while the inventory clerk was out to lunch.

For some reason, whenever he went through the proper channels to check out equipment, he always wound up with gear that was not in working condition - guns that misfired, recorders that would stop recording after three seconds, cameras that got stuck on unfocused zoom. But this mission was his biggest ever, and he made sure that he got the top-of-the-line gear. He even cleaned up some of the mess he made when he tripped over an extension cord and plunged head first into the water cooler, tipping the tank over and sending water back over the aforementioned extension cord, which promptly shorted and caused sparks to come out of the vintage toaster it was attached to, sparks that caught nearby papers on fire, which he rushed over to and slapped with his hands to put out, which made pieces of the burning paper break off and float to other locations in the room, which...

You know, he didn't want to think about it.

He would have stayed to deal with the mess, but he also needed to check out a vehicle and be on his way before the supply clerk returned. Besides, the sprinkler system put out all the flames.

Unfortunately, there was always someone tending the car check-out lot, so he couldn't just take whatever vehicle he wanted. He asked for a Hummer, but they told him the best that they could do was a Dodge. At least it had air conditioning. The Nevada desert heat was oppressive.

It had taken him three days to make the six-hour trip. First the GPS led him straight into Chimney Reservoir. After CONTROL road service came and pulled the Nitro out of the water and dried it off, it started but wasn't running as smoothly as it had been. A few hours later, he was trying to cut across country when he drove into a dry riverbed that appeared out of nowhere and swallowed the front of the Dodge. Again, CONTROL road service came to the rescue, but they were not as nice about it as they were the first time. When he ran out of gas, they sent a five-gallon container via drone.

But finally, he made it to the coordinates given to him by the Chief. There was little out here with the exception of a few creosote bushes. *At least it makes it easy to see everything around. If there's something out here, it should - hello, what's this?* Max zoomed in on a spot to his northeast. It was a low shed of some sort, painted the same color as the ground. It would have been easy to miss if it wasn't for the solar panels on the roof. *Excellent, Max thought. I'm getting hungry. Maybe I can order a pizza to be delivered there.* He hopped into his Nitro and hit the accelerator.

As he drove up to the building, the air conditioner made a noise like a startled hippopotamus, emitted a puff of smoke through the vents, and started blowing hot air. Max sighed, stopped next to the building and stepped out of the Nitro. There were no other vehicles around, no sounds. He walked around the structure and found a Tesla Powerwall attached to the far side. Except it had been modified. He could still see the TESLA on it, but there was black conduit and instrument panels and coils and things he didn't recognize. *Maybe...alien technology? If so, the aliens themselves were likely not too far away.*

He walked around to the door and knocked. No answer.

There was some sort of reflective panel mounted to the right of the door - maybe a handprint reader? Max put his hand on it and nothing happened. He said "open sesame" to it and nothing happened. He put his face close to it and nothing happened - other than the discovery that he had a pimple starting to appear on his forehead.

He backed up, got a running start, and hit the door with his shoulder, which successfully hurt his shoulder.

Finally, he tried turning the doorknob, and the door opened. He was hit immediately by heat and humidity, which made the interior far more uncomfortable than the outside.

There was no one in the building, just piles of metal and electronic scraps, and for some reason several holes in the walls that looked like someone had punched through the wood. He quickly stepped back outside, wiped the sweat off his forehead, and thought. Where did those scraps come from? They looked like something from an Elon Musk nightmare.

Max walked back over to his vehicle and climbed to the top of the Nitro, and then onto the roof of the building. Putting his binoculars to his eyes, he started scanning the area. He noticed a gash in the ground off to the northeast, but other than that there was nothing of interest. *Nothing to see out here*, he thought as his stomach rumbled. *So, food.*

Chapter Three - Tuscarora, Nevada

It had been ridiculously easy.

Once the cybernetics had grown on his body, Kevin began to understand the technology that surrounded him. For some reason, he felt an imperative to send a signal into space, but the necessary equipment was broken. He somehow knew, though, that in time he would be able to easily repair it.

He had spent two weeks salvaging the wreckage of the ship, bringing it to his building. He had also adapted the power system of the shed to bring the humidity up. The desert heat felt pleasant, but far too dry.

As he shuffled about, organizing parts, he became aware of other imperatives. He needed to recruit others. He needed to create a center of operations. And he needed to...to...he glanced at the laptop on his desk, with its wallpaper displayed. That was it. KAOS. He needed to bring order to KAOS.

He would start by assimilating (wait. assimilating? where did that word come from?) the nearby town of Tuscarora. That would give him a small collective (collective? huh? what were these words?) with which he could begin to carry out his plans.

He walked to the town. The folks he met were curious about him and would walk right up, making them easy marks. And once a few were assimilated, they quickly assimilated the others, although a couple got away. No worries though - there was now no one on this planet who could harm him (this planet? why was he thinking thoughts like this?).

He sent some of his drones (drones?) to KAOS headquarters to bring order there. Once they were done, KAOS would be transformed into an organization with the power to carry out its - his - objective, led by him. And once the world was his, he would present it to the queen (queen? WTF? He wasn't British).

Somehow, though, CONTROL had gotten wind that KAOS was rebuilding. They sent agents to spy on KAOS, but they were easily assimilated.

He sent drones to gather the materials needed to transform Tuscarosa into a central hub for his operations. He instructed them to use stealth: with their technology, no one would see them coming or going.

And now, according to one of his drones who was on surveillance duty, there were two CONTROL agents closing in on Tuscarosa. No worries, though. They would also be assimilated.

Chapter Four - Showdown

Max drove into Tuscarosa with his windows down, which did nothing but blow hot air into his face. It was still better than having the windows up. *I knew I should have brought sunblock*, he thought as he took another gulp from his water bottle and grimaced. The water tasted a bit off, or maybe it was just because it had heated up to the same temperature as the air. *Now, where's a McDonalds?*

As he drove around not finding a restaurant, he kept seeing people dressed like science fiction convention attendees.

What's going on? he thought, but then it hit him. *These people have seen the aliens. They're dressing up to make them feel welcome.*

He parked, got out of the truck, wiped his sweat, and asked one of them "excuse me, have you seen any space aliens? Also, is there anywhere around here a guy can get a bite to eat?"

The person looked at him and cocked his head, which was mostly hidden behind his costume, then a few seconds later said "follow us" in a weird voice.

"Great," said Max as he walked beside the character. "Because I don't mind telling you I'm starving. A burger will taste incredible right now."

"Burgers are irrelevant," came the answer.

What the heck does that mean? "Hey, you're not taking me to one of those vegetarian places, are you? Because I really prefer some good beef. Is there a steakhouse around?"

They walked up to a small building and entered. "Aaah," exclaimed Max. "What is it with you people? This place is as hot and muggy as that shed I found. Doesn't anyone around here like to be cool?"

A voice from the other side of the room reached him. "Coolness is subjective." Max looked in that direction and saw another of the costumed characters approaching him. "Besides, we aren't really concerned about the comfort of CONTROL agents."

Max tried not to look startled. "CONTROL? What's that?"

"Oh come now," said the person. "Well, let me make introductions. I am Kevin. I'm the...leader here." He motioned to another of what Max was now beginning to realize were KAOS agents. "And I think you know former CONTROL agent Jenna Grabowski."

Max stared. Was that really Jenna behind that costume?

Kevin continued. "We know everything she knows. Along with Sam Drabow, Lenny Williams, and Marsha Bellamy. Agents 42, 67, and 90, if I'm not mistaken. And I'm not. Welcome - Maxwell Smart III."

Max stared at him. *Stall, Max, stall.* He looked around the room with its banks of machinery. "Don't tell me this is some kind of super high-tech KAOS facility."

"That's exactly what it is."

"I asked you not to tell me that."

Max pivoted, searching the room for possible escape routes, but several more of the costumed KAOS agents had arrived and were blocking all the doors and windows.

He turned back to Kevin. "You should let me go right now."

"Why would I do that?"

"You don't think I would be stupid enough to come here alone, do you? As we speak, a team of highly-trained CONTROL agents is leading a Special Services strike force against this town."

"There are no agents coming."

"Ah. Would you believe a band of crazed survivalist militiamen?"

Kevin just smiled.

"Two Arby's cashiers and a rabid poodle?"

"There is someone I'd like you to see," Kevin said. He gestured, and two of the costumed KAOS agents opened a side door, allowing two other agents to enter. They were holding a semi-conscious person between them which they brought next to Kevin.

"Chief!" exclaimed Max.

"He arrived shortly before you did," said Kevin.

The Chief slowly looked up. "Max? How did you wind up here?"

"Now watch," said Kevin, "as I inject your Chief with nanoprobes and make him one of us." He extended his arm and two tubules shot out from the back of his hand into the Chief's neck. When Kevin withdrew them, the Chief was already blanching, and then suddenly jerked as some sort of technology broke through his skin above his left eye.

"Ah yes," said Max, "the old alter a person with nanoprobes trick. I see it all the time."

"And now you," said Kevin. Max felt himself being grabbed from behind, then a sharp pain in his neck, and then -

The KAOS agents began swinging their arms wildly. A couple of them started walking in random directions, bumping into things and each other. Others started shaking and falling down. And then, one by one, they disappeared.

"No!" yelled Kevin, but then he, too, was gone. Max looked around, but the only people left in the room were himself and the Chief.

He shuffled over to where the Chief knelt on the floor. "It...appears," gasped the Chief. "that we weren't assimilated enough to be destroyed."

"Assimilated?"

The Chief gathered himself and stood, putting his arm around Max for support. "Yes Max, assimilated. Incorporated. Adapted." He saw the still-confused look on Max's face and added "turned into one of them. In another minute or two we would have been enough like them that we would also have disappeared."

"Ah," said Max. "Missed it by that much."

"I'm guessing," said the Chief, "that when they assimilated you, they assimilated your incompetence. It registered as a malfunction in the collective, and they self-destructed."

Max thought about that for a moment. "So...I saved the day?"

The Chief sighed. "Yes, Max, you saved the day. You saved us all."

Max puffed. "You can always count on me, Chief." He reached over and tugged at the component on the Chief's forehead. It came off, but took some skin with it.

"Ow!"

"Sorry about that, Chief."

Epilogue

San Francisco, California

"I don't understand it, Chief" said Max. "That building was full of the same type of gear those KAOS agents were wearing, and more. But when I went back, it was all gone."

The Chief shrugged. "It must have disappeared when the KAOS agents did. It's a shame. The research department may have been able to do amazing things with that technology."

"Well, in any case," said Max, "that's the end of KAOS once again. Now if you'll excuse me, I need to be off."

"Off?" wondered the Chief. "Off where?"

Max look at the Chief with puzzlement. "Back to my assignment, of course. There are still space aliens to be found."

The Chief started to speak, thought better of it, and then simply said "Good luck, Max."

Nevada Desert

Max carefully made his way up the side of a steep hill, trying to be as quiet as possible. If the stories he had been told were accurate...

He reached the top and peered down the other side. He was just in time to see a ship rise up into the sky. There were markings on the side: "U.S.S. Chronon" and "NCV-263391".

Rats, thought Max. *Just some type of military test craft*. He turned and headed back down the hill, and so didn't see the strange warping of space and time that suddenly appeared around the ship, just before it disappeared.

Part II

Prologue - Starfleet Department of Temporal Research, Asteroid 26388

Lieutenant Commander Reginald Barclay was stressed. And appreciative. And beginning to get a headache.

Ever since Captain (now Vice Admiral!) Janeway had returned from the Delta Quadrant with Voyager, he had been working with her on the Borg project. She had dealt them a crippling blow, but almost no one considered them to be completely destroyed. So Starfleet had issued orders: try to determine the current status of the Borg, and continue developing defenses. As the one who had managed to first initiate contact with Voyager while it was still in the Delta quadrant, Barclay was promoted to Lieutenant Commander and put in charge of long-range surveillance with a team of engineers reporting to him.

I suppose they thought it would be good for me, he mused. But the responsibility of leading a project was anathema to him; he just wanted to be left alone to work. So when the opportunity arose to be just a researcher on the temporal project, he jumped at the chance. Besides, there were altogether too many occurrences of time travel in Starfleet records, and any one of them could have resulted in devastating consequences. He knew that personally. Something had to be done.

As it turned out, though, Starfleet wasn't about to lose their top resource on long-range communications. Oh, they approved his transfer - but on the condition that he work both projects. So he shuttled back and forth, back and forth between Earth and this asteroid where the TRC (Temporal Research Center) had been established.

Starfleet command said the TRC was out there "for privacy". But everyone who worked there knew it was placed on an asteroid to isolate them in case there was some sort of temporal accident.

Even though the dual-job assignment stressed him, he still made progress on both fronts. On Earth, he had come up with an idea that Janeway turned into a long-range transwarp corridor sensor. And Janeway herself had used knowledge gained from meeting her future self to begin development of a neurolytic pathogen to use on the Borg.

And now, as he sat aboard the *USS Chronon* and reviewed his calculations, he thought he had an idea that might develop into a working method of time travel. He could enclose ship (but only a small ship according to his calculations) in a bubble that would allow it to be unaffected by changes in the timeline. A side effect of this was that the ship could then move in a slipstream (he called it a "timeslip") between different times.

His idea was based on information from the records of the Enterprise-E. He had been on board when the ship had been caught in the wake of a temporal vortex created by the Borg.

He shook his head. *It all comes back to the Borg.* Almost all of the major recent technological advances Starfleet had made could - in one way or another - be connected to the Borg. From their assimilation process to their ship repair systems, the Borg had provided inspiration for hundreds of research projects that had so far turned into dozens of large and small advances for the Federation.

He reached out and opened an engineering panel, then grabbed his toolbag.

Chapter One - Borg

The first trials had not gone well. For some reason Barclay couldn't fathom, the timeslip bubble would become unbalanced just as it started to surround the ship, and just like a soap bubble, pop!

As he sat at his station in the TRC, he thought that surely by now his future self would have appeared to give him the answer. *What's the matter with you, future self?* But he knew the answer. If he succeeded, if he gave Starfleet a relatively (pun intended) easy and reliable method of time travel, there would be a strict policy of non-interference. *Still, future me, couldn't you at least drop a hint?*

He refocused his attention on the display where he was attempting to trace the problem. As he reviewed the equations, they unexpectedly flickered. But in that flicker, he clearly discerned a word: *transwarp.*

He jerked back, then looked around the room. None of the other engineers were paying him the slightest attention, and none of them were acting as though they had just seen something unusual. Did anyone..." he began, but then thought the better of it.

"Sir?" asked Lieutenant Norris.

"Um, never mind," he answered.

Transwarp? TRANSWARP? He had spent six months attempting to create a transwarp probe to send to Voyager when it was still in the Delta quadrant. The attempt had failed completely. Transwarp was a dead end.

Unless...

Forget about propulsion. What if he used a transwarp drive for the sole purpose of generating the timeslip bubble? He started plugging the equations in, and there, right in front of his eyes, the result popped up: a stable timeslip.

Thank you, future me.

He still had the model he had built to try and prove the concept of a transwarp drive for a probe. It could generate enough power for the timeslip. But, it was in his quarters on Earth, and he wasn't due to return there for another five days. And then he would be stuck down there for a week before he could bring the transwarp drive to the *Chronon*.

What should he do? Now that he had the concept, he wanted to try it *now*.

His communicator chirped. "Janeway to Barclay."

"Barclay here."

"Reg, I need you down here. We're getting some odd readings on your long-range sensors and I want you to look at them."

"Can't you just send me the data?"

"Not in this case," Janeway replied. "I want you here. Take a runabout and leave as soon as possible."

"Aye, sir. Barclay out." As he headed for the exit, a smile grew on his face. The Vice-Admiral had ordered him to take a runabout. And that meant he could take **any** runabout.

About 90 minutes later, he walked into the building on Earth assigned to the Borg research team, which someone had dubbed "building 1 of 1". He passed through the security checkpoint and down the hall to the communications center. When he entered, he was mildly surprised to find no one in the room except Janeway. "Reginald Barclay reporting as ordered," he said to the Vice-Admiral.

"Thanks for coming, Reg," she answered.

"So where are these mysterious readings you want me to look at?"

Janeway sighed. "I may have...slightly misspoken on the comm link," she said as she walked him to a console. I don't really need you to interpret the readings, I just want you to confirm them. And hopefully find a different explanation than the one I found."

Barclay started to ask a question, thought better of it, and turned his attention to the display that Janeway had brought up.

Almost two years ago Starfleet had sent relay probes through the Bajoran wormhole into the Delta quadrant with instructions to head for the Gamma quadrant, and they had reached a point in their journey where they could make a few useful observations with their longest-range sensors. That data, coupled with the data obtained using his quantum singularity sensors, was what he was looking at now, rendered onto a map of the galaxy.

Janeway pointed and had the computer zoom in to an area that showed several Borg transwarp corridors. "These were all made in the past two days."

Barclay stared at them, but all he saw was a random set of corridors in a variety of directions. "So there's a lot of Borg activity in that area," he said. "I - I don't know what it means, though. What else is in that sector?"

"From what we can tell, there's very little there," answered the Vice-Admiral. "But let me show you this data over time. Computer, play from time 002.7."

The transwarp corridors on the map vanished. Then one appeared. Then a second, which began close to the end of the first. Then a third. This continued until all of the corridors were displayed.

"It's just one ship," said Barclay. "But why is it moving so randomly?"

Janeway answered "In a minute. But first, computer, extrapolate the long-range course of the Borg ship."

A white line appeared on the map, overlaid across the corridors. It began extending itself through the Gamma quadrant and a corner of the Beta quadrant until it reached -

"Earth." Barclay stared at the map. "Is it moving randomly to confuse us? To make us think it's not heading here?"

"Possibly, but I don't think that's it. Notice how it keeps jumping back the way it came, but those jumps are short. Something is cutting it off."

"Something is chasing the Borg?"

"Not chasing, Commander. Herding. Someone is forcing the Borg to come to us."

"But...why?"

"I have no idea. But I do know that based on the current projection, they'll be here in less than a month. Do you concur?"

Barclay turned back to the map, had it replay the time sequence. Now he could see that the Borg ship was running and turning, always trying to head back deeper into the Gamma quadrant, but each time it was stopped and forced to go in another direction.

The only direction that wasn't being blocked was the one that led straight to Earth.

Think, Barclay! "Ok, someone out there is able to herd a Borg ship. Are they using some sort of tractor beam to force it to change direction? Probably not, because if that was the case they could just tractor it here. So they're using weapons. Here -" he pointed on the map - "and here, and here, the Borg didn't immediately move off in another direction. They tried to fight, and were forced to run each time. They can't figure out how to adapt to the weapons being used against them."

He considered. "By now they must have figured out what their pursuer or pursuers are trying to do. So they must be considering, do they continue trying to run? Do they keep trying to fight? Or do they give the pursuers what they want?"

"Those were my thoughts as well," said Janeway. "From their current position, if they did decide to make a run straight for Earth they could be here in a matter of hours."

Barclay kept staring at the map. "Then shouldn't we put Starfleet on alert?"

Janeway nodded. "I've informed command of my initial assessment. We're keeping watch. If the Borg enter Federation space, we'll be ready."

Chapter Two - Timeslip

After speaking with Vice-Admiral Janeway, Barclay had gathered up the model transwarp drive from his quarters and taken it to the *Chronon*, where he had spent his off time over the past two days manufacturing the components he needed to connect a one-twentieth scale model to a Federation runabout and actually make it work.

Then the alert had come, mere minutes ago. The Borg were heading to Earth. All ships were to assume a defensive position.

His wanted to finish the timeslip before the Borg arrived. But he had to get his ship in position. So he decided to get his ship in position and then continue working on the timeslip.

There was just one problem. The specially-prepared transwarp dilithium crystal was in a secure locker in the Borg project storeroom. So he was racing to the storeroom as fast as he could run.

Faster, Reg, faster!

If he got the timeslip working, perhaps he could do something with the Borg, like send them into the far future. Let the Starfleet of the year 4000 deal with them.

The fact that he would have to take them there himself using the *Chronon* was not a happy thought, but if everything worked he could return without them. If everything worked.

He reached the storeroom, gear bag in hand, then stopped in front of the door as he was scanned and gave his voice signature. The door opened and he was in. There was no one at the desk, so he opened locker 238 with his hand print. A tray slid forward, displaying a 4x10 arrangement of colored cylinders. He grabbed the cobalt blue one, tossed it in his gear bag, and bolted back to his ship.

Once in the *Chronon*, it didn't take long to maneuver to his assigned position, behind the ships with heavier firepower and shields. Surprisingly, he wasn't the last one to arrive, although Captain Lakasha did send him a snarky "thanks for showing up" message.

He checked his readouts. The Borg ship wasn't due to arrive for another 15 minutes. He turned to his model transwarp drive and hurriedly began making the final connections. When he finished, he pulled the cylinder out of his bag, opened it, and -

It wasn't his crystal. He removed the vial inside and looked at the label. It was the neurolytic pathogen that Vice-Admiral Janeway had been working on. "Gaaaaahhh," he exclaimed as he set the vial down and hailed the storemaster back on the planet. When he explained his situation, she checked her records and said "Your crystal was moved. Did you not get the notice we sent you?"

"Moved?" he said with dismay. "Why?"

"The transwarp project was discontinued. The room you went to only keeps stores for active projects."

My life, thought Barclay. "So where is it now?"

"Warehouse B, Room 412, locker 377."

"Can someone beam it to me? Immediately?"

"Not without authorization."

Great, what should I do now? Oh, right, he reminded himself, *I'm a Lieutenant Commander.*

"Authorization code REB2204, Lieutenant Commander Reginald Barclay."

"Authorization accepted. We'll have it to you within three minutes."

Two minutes and fifty-three seconds later, a cobalt blue cylinder materialized on the runabout.

As Barclay removed the crystal and placed it in the transwarp drive chamber, his history with the Borg kept running through his mind. On stardate 50893.5 the Borg attacked Earth, created a temporal vortex, went back in time, and assimilated the entire planet. Humanity was saved only because the Enterprise was caught in the temporal backwash. Because of that, the crew of the Enterprise were also able to travel to Earth's past, where they stopped the Borg. And he got to meet Zefram Cochrane.

If they try something like that again, thought Barclay, *I need to be ready*. He was making final checks when a Starfleet General Call went out. "Attention. A Borg attack is imminent. This is not a drill. All ships prepare for attack."

OK, all connections in place? Check. Everything routed to the correct inputs and outputs? Check.

No time for a trial run. It would either work or it wouldn't.

A minute later, the Borg ship appeared. It was one of their small, spherical scout ships, and it was badly damaged. And it was moving fast.

Barclay had seen Borg ships damaged, and he had seen how quickly they repaired themselves. This ship was not repairing itself. It looked like the only reason it didn't break apart was force fields and hope. Then he heard something he thought he would never hear.

"FEDERATION VESSELS," said multiple voices in unison. Barclay knew every Federation ship was receiving the message. "WE ARE THE BORG. WE REQUIRE YOUR ASSISTANCE."

At that moment, another ship appeared, only a few hundred kilometers behind the Borg ship. It was a huge vessel, bigger even than the Romulan D'Vorx-class ships. And it immediately started firing at the Borg.

The comm channels were suddenly abuzz with requests for orders and Admirals debating what to do. But Captain Lakasha didn't hesitate. She moved her ship between the unidentified vessel and the Borg.

The other Federations ships maintained their positions. But that meant the heavily-damaged Borg ship continued hurtling straight for the planet below. Barclay was conflicted. What should he do? But then the unidentified ship fired on Lakasha, and Barclay sprung into action. He shot the *Chronon* straight toward the Borg ship. He didn't have time to observe what else was happening as he caught up to the Borg vessel, extended his shields around it, and activated the timeslip.

He and the Borg were rocked by a blast from behind. In the same instant -

Everything went quiet.

Then both the *Chronon* and the Borg ship were in the atmosphere and plummeting toward the ground below. Moments before hitting the surface, Barclay realized he had to disengage his shields from around the Borg ship or he would crash along with them. He did so and managed to land just a few kilometers away.

After a couple of deep breaths, he checked his readings to see if the timeslip had worked. It had. Unfortunately, he hadn't finished programming a destination time, so when in the world was he?

He scanned for communication on official Starfleet channels. Nothing. He told the computer to scan for any signals, and a few moments later he heard "You're listening to *All Things Considered* on KLKR radio."

What? He let the audio play while he scanned his surroundings. After a couple of minutes, the computer was able to narrow the time period to the early 21st century. A minute after that, a voice on the audio said that the date was July 8, 2018.

How could that be? He had begun setting the timeslip for the far future, but had ended up in the past. He couldn't worry about that right now, though. He had a possibly damaged ship and the Borg to worry about.

He ran a diagnostic. One of the nacelles was damaged, and power feedback from the blast the ship took had fried some circuits. He could repair it, but it would take at least a couple weeks to do it all by himself.

Next, he scanned for Borg. He pinpointed the wreckage of the Borg scoutship, with only one very weak life sign. But - there was a human life sign approaching the Borg. *Oh no, what should I do?* He couldn't risk being seen in this time period, but if that Borg was still alive when that human reached it...

He continued monitoring as the human entered the Borg wreckage. He saw the death of the Borg on his sensor readings. And when the human emerged from the wreckage, Barclay could read the telltale signs that the human was in the beginnings of the assimilation process.

He continued monitoring as he began repairs to his ship, and was somewhat relieved to determine that the new Borg was spending his time salvaging the wreck of the ship and not assimilating others. Not that there were very many people around to assimilate in this part of the world, which the computer had identified as the northern sector of the state of Nevada, in the old United States of America.

A couple of weeks later, Barclay was working on the nacelle and he realized he hadn't checked on the Borg since yesterday. When he did, he was shocked to discover the Borg in a nearby village, and the population assimilated.

He scanned further. There were Borg in San Jose and Salt Lake City. They were clustered together and didn't seem to be going anywhere, but they were there.

He had to do something, and soon. The rate of assimilation would become exponential, and the entire planet would become Borg. And this time, he didn't have the highly-competent officers of the Enterprise with him. He had to solve this on his own.

Then another human appeared on his sensors, eventually reaching the building that held the salvaged Borg ship. Shortly thereafter, the person headed for the nearby village. As Barclay scanned the human and his vehicle, he had an idea. He found the vial of Janeway's neurolytic pathogen, and beamed the contents into the water bottle the human was drinking from.

And it worked. The man drank the water, the Borg tried to assimilate the man, and the pathogen eliminated the Borg. Vice-Admiral Janeway would be glad to hear that her pathogen was effective.

Epilogue

A few days later, the repairs to the *Chronon* were complete. Barclay had beamed the remains of the Borg ship into the runabout, which would allow him to complete the plan he had devised. *That unidentified ship was trying to destroy the Borg vessel, he thought, so I'm going to give them a destroyed Borg vessel.*

He lifted off from the ground and was just about to activate the timeslip when he noticed on his sensors that a human was watching. But then the human turned away, he activated the timeslip, and was gone.

He appeared back above the Earth only a second after he had disappeared. The fleet was beginning to react to the shot the unidentified craft had made on Captain Lakasha's ship. Barclay immediately beamed the wreckage of the Borg ship into the space next to the unidentified ship.

The unidentified vessel ceased firing. Barclay could hear Admiral T'Lara's voice on the comm. "Hold your positions!"

It was time to discover who these Borg-hunting aliens were, and why they were here.