

he was pitching this child safety program. Shit, look at your face. I shouldn't have said all this."

Mae couldn't speak.

"It's important that you know," Josef said. "This is why he's so passionate. I mean, his plan would pretty much eliminate the possibility of anything like this ever happening again. Wait. What time is it?"

Annie checked her phone. "You're right. We gotta scoot. Bailey's doing an unveiling. We should be in the Great Hall."

The Great Hall was in the Enlightenment, and when they entered the venue, a 3,500-seat cavern appointed in warm woods and brushed steel, it was loud with anticipation. Mae and Annie found one of the last pairs of seats in the second balcony and sat down.

"Just finished this a few months ago," Annie said. "Forty-five million dollars. Bailey modeled the stripes off the Duomo in Siena. Nice, right?"

Mae's attention was pulled to the stage, where a man was walking to a lucite podium, amid a roar of applause. He was a tall man of about forty-five, round in the gut but not unhealthy, wearing jeans and blue V-neck sweater. There was no discernible microphone, but when he began speaking, his voice was amplified and clear.

"Hello everyone. My name is Eamon Bailey," he said, to another round of applause that he quickly discouraged. "Thank you. I'm so glad to see you all here. A bunch of you are new to the company since I last spoke, one whole month ago. Can the newbies stand up?" Annie nudged Mae. Mae stood, and looked around the audi-

torium to see about sixty other people standing, most of them her age, all of them seeming shy, all of them quietly stylish, together representing every race and ethnicity and, thanks to the Circle's efforts to ease permits for international staffers, a dizzying range of national origins. The clapping from the rest of the Circlers was loud, a sprinkling of whoops mixed in. She sat down.

"You're so cute when you blush," Annie said.

Mae sunk into her seat.

"Newbies," Bailey said, "you're in for something special. This is called Dream Friday, where we present something we're working on. Often it's one of our engineers or designers or visionaries, and sometimes it's just me. And today, for better or for worse, it's just me. For that I apologize in advance."

"We love you Eamon!" came a voice from the audience. Laughter followed.

"Well, thank you," he said, "I love you back. I love you as the grass loves the dew, as the birds love a bough." He paused briefly, allowing Mae to catch her breath. She'd seen these talks online, but being here, in person, seeing Bailey's mind at work, hearing his off-the-cuff eloquence—it was better than she thought possible. What would it be like, she thought, to be someone like that, eloquent and inspirational, so at ease in front of thousands?

"Yes," he continued, "it's been a whole month since I've gotten up on this stage, and I know my replacements have been unsatisfying. I am sorry to deprive you of myself. I realize there is no substitute." The joke brought laughter throughout the hall. "And I know a lot of you have been wondering just where the heck I've been."

A voice from the front of the room yelled "surfing!" and the room laughed.

"Well, that's right. I have been doing some surfing, and that's part of what I'm here to talk about. I love to surf, and when I want to surf, I need to know how the waves are. Now, it used to be that you'd wake up and call the local surf shop and ask them

about the breaks. And pretty soon they stopped answering their phones.”

Knowing laughter came from the older contingent in the room.

“When cell phones proliferated, you could call your buddies who might have gotten out to the beach before you. They, too, stopped answering their phones.”

Another big laugh from the audience.

“Seriously, though. It’s not practical to make twelve calls every morning, and can you trust someone else’s take on the conditions? The surfers don’t want any more bodies on the limited breaks we get up here. So then the internet happened, and here and there some geniuses set up cameras on the beaches. We could log on and get some pretty crude images of the waves at Stinson Beach. It was almost worse than calling the surf shop! The technology was pretty primitive. Streaming technology still is. Or was. Until now.”

A screen descended behind him.

“Okay. Here’s how it used to look.”

The screen showed a standard browser display, and an unseen hand typed in the url for a website called SurfSight. A poorly designed site appeared, with a tiny image of a coastline streaming in the middle. It was pixilated and comically slow. The audience tittered.

“Almost useless, right? Now, as we know, streaming video has gotten a lot better in recent years. But it’s still slower than real life, and the screen quality is pretty disappointing. So we’ve solved, I think, the quality issues in the last year. Let’s now refresh that page to show the site with our new video delivery.”

Now the page was refreshed, and the coastline was full-screen, and the resolution was perfect. There were sounds of awe throughout the room.

“Yes, this is live video of Stinson Beach. This is Stinson right at this moment. Looks pretty good, right? Maybe I should be out

there, as opposed to standing here with you!”

Annie leaned into Mae. “The next part’s incredible. Just wait.”

“Now, many of you still aren’t so impressed. As we all know, many machines can deliver high-res streaming video, and many of your tablets and phones can already support them. But there are a couple new aspects to all this. The first part is how we’re getting this image. Would it surprise you to know that this isn’t coming from a big camera, but actually just one of these?”

He was holding a small device in his hand, the shape and size of a lollipop.

“This is a video camera, and this is the precise model that’s getting this incredible image quality. Image quality that holds up to this kind of magnification. So that’s the first great thing. We can now get high-def-quality resolution in a camera the size of a thumb. Well, a very big thumb. The second great thing is that, as you can see, this camera needs no wires. It’s transmitting this image via satellite.”

A round of applause shook the room.

“Wait. Did I say it runs on a lithium battery that lasts two years? No? Well it does. And we’re a year away from an entirely solar-powered model, too. And it’s waterproof, sand-proof, wind-proof, animal-proof, insect-proof, everything-proof.”

More applause overtook the room.

“Okay, so I set up that camera this morning. I taped it to a stake, stuck that stake in the sand, in the dunes, with no permit, nothing. In fact, no one knows it’s there. So this morning I turned it on, then I drove back to the office, accessed Camera One, Stinson Beach, and I got this image. Not bad. But that’s not the half of it. Actually, I was pretty busy this morning. I drove around, and set up one at Rodeo Beach, too.”

And now the original image, of Stinson Beach, shrunk and moved to a corner of the screen. Another box emerged, showing the waves at Rodeo Beach, a few miles down the Pacific coast: “And now Montara. And Ocean Beach. Fort Point.” With each

beach Bailey mentioned, another live image appeared. There were now six beaches in a grid, each of them live, visible with perfect clarity and brilliant color.

"Now remember: no one sees these cameras. I've hidden them pretty well. To the average person they look like weeds, or some kind of stick. Anything. They're unnoticed. So in a few hours this morning, I set up perfectly clear video access to six locations that help me know how to plan my day. And everything we do here is about knowing the previously unknown, right?"

Heads nodded. A smattering of applause.

"Okay, so, many of you are thinking, Well, this is just like closed-circuit TV crossed with streaming technology, satellites, all that. Fine. But as you know, to do this with extant technology would have been prohibitively expensive for the average person. But what if all this was accessible and affordable to anyone? My friends, we're looking at retailing these—in just a few months, mind you—at fifty-nine dollars each."

Bailey held the lollipop camera out, and threw it to someone in the front row. The woman who caught it held it aloft, turning to the audience and smiling gleefully.

"You can buy ten of them for Christmas and suddenly you have constant access to everywhere you want to be—home, work, traffic conditions. And anyone can install them. It takes five minutes tops. Think of the implications!"

The screen behind him cleared, the beaches disappearing, and a new grid appeared.

"Here's the view from my backyard," he said, revealing a live feed of a tidy and modest backyard. "Here's my front yard. My garage. Here's one on a hill overlooking Highway 101 where it gets bad during rush hour. Here's one near my parking space to make sure no one parks there."

And soon the screen had sixteen discrete images on it, all of them transmitting live feed.

"Now, these are just *my* cameras. I access them all by simply typing in Camera 1, 2, 3, 12, whatever. Easy. But what about sharing? That is, what if my buddy has some cameras posted, and wants to give me access?"

And now the screen's grid multiplied, from sixteen boxes to thirty-two. "Here's Lionel Fitzpatrick's screens. He's into skiing, so he's got cameras positioned so he can tell the conditions at twelve locations all over Tahoe."

Now there were twelve live images of white-topped mountains, ice-blue valleys, ridges topped with deep-green conifers.

"Lionel can give me access to any of the cameras he wants. It's just like friending someone, but now with access to all their live feeds. Forget cable. Forget five hundred channels. If you have one thousand friends, and they have ten cameras each, you now have ten thousand options for live footage. If you have five thousand friends, you have fifty thousand options. And soon you'll be able to connect to millions of cameras around the world. Again, imagine the implications!"

The screen atomized into a thousand mini-screens. Beaches, mountains, lakes, cities, offices, living rooms. The crowd applauded wildly. Then the screen went blank, and from the black emerged a peace sign, in white.

"Now imagine the human rights implications. Protesters on the streets of Egypt no longer have to hold up a camera, hoping to catch a human rights violation or a murder and then somehow get the footage out of the streets and online. Now it's as easy as gluing a camera to a wall. Actually, we've done just that."

A stunned hush came over the audience.

"Let's have Camera 8 in Cairo."

A live shot of a street scene appeared. There were banners lying on the street, a pair of police in riot gear standing in the distance.

"They don't know we see them, but we do. The world is watching. And listening. Turn up the audio."

Suddenly they could hear a clear conversation, in Arabic, between pedestrians passing near the camera, unawares.

"And of course most of the cameras can be manipulated manually or with voice recognition. Watch this. Camera 8, turn left." On-screen, the camera's view of the Cairo street panned left. "Now right." It panned right. He demonstrated it moving up, down, diagonally, all with remarkable fluidity.

The audience applauded again.

"Now, remember that these cameras are cheap, and easy to hide, and they need no wires. So it hasn't been that hard for us to place them all over. Let's show Tahrir."

Gasps from the audience. On-screen there was now a live shot of Tahrir Square, the cradle of the Egyptian Revolution.

"We've had our people in Cairo attaching cameras for the last week. They're so small the army can't find them. They don't even know where to look! Let's show the rest of the views. Camera 2. Camera 3. Four. Five. Six."

There were six shots of the square, each so clear that sweat on any face could be seen, the nametags of every soldier easily read.

"Now 7 through 50."

Now there was a grid of fifty images, seeming to cover the entire public space. The audience roared again. Bailey raised his hands, as if to say "Not yet. There's plenty more."

"The square is quiet now, but can you imagine if something happened? There would be instant accountability. Any soldier committing an act of violence would instantly be recorded for posterity. He could be tried for war crimes, you name it. And even if they clear the square of journalists, the cameras are still there. And no matter how many times they try to eliminate the cameras, because they're so small, they'll never know for sure where they are, who's placed them where and when. And the not-knowing will prevent abuses of power. You take the average soldier who's now worried that a dozen cameras will catch him,

for all eternity, dragging some woman down the street? Well, he should worry. He should worry about these cameras. He should worry about SeeChange. That's what we're calling them."

There was a quick burst of applause, which grew as the audience came to understand the double-meaning at play.

"Like it?" Bailey said. "Okay, now this doesn't just apply to areas of upheaval. Imagine any city with this kind of coverage. Who would commit a crime knowing they might be watched any time, anywhere? My friends in the FBI feel this would cut crime rates down by 70, 80 percent in any city where we have real and meaningful saturation."

The applause grew.

"But for now, let's go back to the places in the world where we most need transparency and so rarely have it. Here's a medley of locations around the world where we've placed cameras. Now imagine the impact these cameras would have had in the past, and will have in the future, if similar events transpire. Here's fifty cameras in Tiananmen Square."

Live shots from all over the square filled the screen, and the crowd erupted again. Bailey went on, revealing their coverage of a dozen authoritarian regimes, from Khartoum to Pyongyang, where the authorities had no idea they were being watched by three thousand Circlers in California—had no notion that they *could* be watched, that this technology was or would ever be possible.

Now Bailey cleared the screen again, and stepped toward the audience. "You know what I say, right? In situations like this, I agree with the Hague, with human rights activists the world over. There needs to be accountability. Tyrants can no longer hide. There needs to be, and will be, documentation and accountability, and we need to bear witness. And to this end, I insist that all that happens should be known."

The words dropped onto the screen:

ALL THAT HAPPENS MUST BE KNOWN.

"Folks, we're at the dawn of the Second Enlightenment. And I'm not talking about a new building on campus. I'm talking about an era where we don't allow the majority of human thought and action and achievement and learning to escape as if from a leaky bucket. We did that once before. It was called the Middle Ages, the Dark Ages. If not for the monks, everything the world had ever learned would have been lost. Well, we live in a similar time, when we're losing the vast majority of what we do and see and learn. But it doesn't have to be that way. Not with these cameras, and not with the mission of the Circle."

He turned again toward the screen and read it, inviting the audience to commit it to memory.

ALL THAT HAPPENS MUST BE KNOWN.

He turned back to the audience and smiled.

"Okay, now I want to bring it back home. My mother's eighty-one. She doesn't get around as easily as she once did. A year ago she fell and broke her hip, and since then I've been concerned about her. I asked her to have some security cameras installed, so I could access them on a closed circuit, but she refused. But now I have peace of mind. Last weekend, while she was napping—"

A wave of laughter rippled through the audience.

"Forgive me! Forgive me!" he said, "I had no choice. She wouldn't have let me do it otherwise. So I snuck in, and I installed cameras in every room. They're so small she'll never notice. I'll show you really quick. Can we show cameras 1 to 5 in my mom's house?"

A grid of images popped up, including his mom, padding down a bright hallway in a towel. A roar of laughter erupted.

"Oops. Let's drop that one." The image disappeared. "Anyway. The point is, that I know she's safe, and that gives me a

sense of peace. As we all know here at the Circle, transparency leads to peace of mind. No longer do I have to wonder, 'How's Mom?' No longer do I have to wonder, 'What's happening in Myanmar?'

"Now, we're making a million of this model, and my prediction is that within a year we'll have a million accessible live streams. Within five years, fifty million. Within ten years, two billion cameras. There will be very few populated areas that we won't be able to access from the screens in our hands."

The audience roared again. Someone yelled out, "We want it now!"

Bailey continued. "Instead of searching the web, only to find some edited video with terrible quality, now you go to SeeChange, you type in Myanmar. Or you type in your high school boy-friend's name. Chances are there's someone who's set up a camera nearby, right? Why shouldn't your curiosity about the world be rewarded? You want to see Fiji but can't get there? SeeChange. You want to check on your kid at school? SeeChange. This is ultimate transparency. No filter. See everything. Always."

Mae leaned toward Annie. "This is incredible."

"I know, right?" Annie said.

"Now, do these cameras have to be stationary?" Bailey said, raising a scolding finger. "Of course not. I happen to have a dozen helpers all over the world right now, wearing the cameras around their necks. Let's visit them, shall we? Can I get Danny's camera up?"

An image of Machu Picchu appeared on-screen. It looked like a postcard, a view perched high above the ancient ruins. And then it started moving, down toward the site. The crowd gasped, then cheered.

"That's a live image, though I guess that's obvious. Hi Danny. Now let's get Sarah on Mount Kenya." Another image appeared on the great screen, this one of the shale fields high on the mountain. "Can you point us toward the peak, Sarah?"

The camera panned up, revealing the peak of the mountain, enshrouded in fog. "See, this opens up the possibility of visual surrogates. Imagine I'm bedridden, or too frail to explore the mountain myself. I send someone up with a camera around her neck, and I can experience it all in real time. Let's do that in a few more places." He presented live images of Paris, Kuala Lumpur, a London pub.

"Now let's experiment a bit, using all of this together. I'm sitting at home. I log on and want to get a sense of the world. Show me traffic on 101. Streets of Jakarta. Surfing at Bolinas. My mom's house. Show me the webcams of everyone I went to high school with."

At every command, new images appeared, until there were at least a hundred live streaming images on the screen at once.

"We will become all-seeing, all-knowing."

The audience was standing now. The applause thundered through the room. Mae rested her head on Annie's shoulder.

"All that happens will be known," Annie whispered.