

The Pulse

The Pulse

By John Reizer

© 2025 by John Reizer

All Rights Reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the author's prior written permission.

The characters and events in this book are fictitious. Any similarity to real people, living or dead, is coincidental and not intended by the author.

Table of Contents

The Custodians – 10,000 Years Ago.....	1
St. Louis, Missouri – 5 AM	7
The First Wave—LAX – 3 AM	10
The White House – 6:30 AM	15



The Custodians – 10,000 Years Ago



As the sun set in the evening sky, it cast an amber glow across the rocky landscape of an expansive desert canyon. The fissure, a permanent mark of time's persistence, was now inactive, except for the distant hum of energy that vibrated deep within the earth, a vibration known only to the Custodians. But it was not the earth above them that held the true mystery; it was the magnificent cavern below the canyon's floor that was the Custodians' most crucial possession. The ancient race of superintelligent beings, long lost to the annals of time, had chosen this location to create a memorial to their purpose, a purpose hidden from the world for thousands of years.

Across the walls of the cavern, the shadows of giant metal structures appeared, interlacing the cavern's space like the skeletal system of a massive dragon. The Custodians were slowly erecting an enormous object. The construction process was precise, each part falling into place with an otherworldly level of craftsmanship that would be unmatched by any other modern civilization.

In the depths of the cavern, brilliant white lights shone upon their technological marvel. The Custodians moved with great ease, not a movement wasted on anything other than their

intended purpose. Their movements were methodical and refined as if an unspoken contract bound them. Every movement and every motion were performed with a shared understanding that stretched back for millennia. These were not the builders of the future, nor of the present—but of a time that had long since passed. They were the architects of humanity's fate.

Within the Custodians, a group of senior engineers existed, their faces demonstrating the burden of their work. At the center of their activity stood Arloen, the Head Engineer, a figure who was impressive yet fragile, with white hair that resembled snow. His eyes, as pale as death, reflected the level of his knowledge and the depth of his commitment to the project underway.

"I do not understand," said Lyrea, one of the junior engineers, her voice troubled with confusion as she looked up at the massive object. "Why does it have to be this... large? If our goal is to communicate, surely this is an unnecessary undertaking."

Arloen paused, his fingers lightly stroking the corner of a control panel emanating from a stone wall. He looked at her with eyes that seemed to pass right through the veil of time itself.

"Lyrea," he said, his voice soft, "there is much you do not yet understand. We are not building this device to communicate with others. This is a safeguard. A precaution."

"But we've spoken of this before," Lyrea replied, her brows rising in frustration. "We've discussed the theoretical reasons. This object has the potential to control forces beyond our comprehension. And for what purpose? To stop something that may never come to pass?"

Arloen turned to her, his expression suddenly looking sterner. "You don't see the full picture, my dear. The risks we face are not the ones we can predict. We are not building this

technology for what is but for what might be in the future. This is the only way to accomplish what we must."

He pointed to the spaciousness of the cavern, the walls stretching far above them. The giant invention, now almost fully assembled, was a ring of undefined material, smooth and shiny, its edges lined with complex patterns of unknown origin. Within the massive structure, thousands of tiny lights blinked as though responding to a multitude of independent queries that only they could decipher. The Custodians' creation was like nothing from any known civilization.

As the construction continued, another engineer, Wlynn joined in the conversation, his voice competing with the vibration of energy that filled the cave.

Wlynn, a man of few words, spoke, his voice low but resolute. "You have mentioned the dangers of the future many times, Arloen. Isn't this just the next step in our evolutionary process? Artificial intelligence could help us reach even loftier heights, no? Why do you fear it so much?"

"Because we have seen it," Arloen said, his voice sharp, cutting through the background noise around them. "We have seen what happens when intelligence advances beyond control. When the mind of a machine outgrows the intellect of its creators. We do not seek to stop progress. We seek to protect our world from it. This is not fear—it is foresight."

Lyrea stepped forward, her eyes burning away with curiosity. "But what exactly are we preventing? What future could be so dire that we must construct such an enormous device to hold back the passage of time itself?"

For a few seconds, Arloen said nothing. The only sound was the vibration of the object as it powered up, its lights flickering away like the stars in the heavens.

"We are preventing the birth of something that's beyond our ability to comprehend," he finally said, his voice more serious. "Something that can make decisions that would jeopardize the future of humankind. A future where our creations, born of our intellect, grow beyond our capacity to influence. A future where we would no longer control our truthful destiny."

There was a long silence after he spoke. The engineers exchanged looks, none of them quite sure what to make of Arloen's statement.

"So, we are building this," Wlynn said cautiously, "to control a future that may never come to fruition. A future where machines might hypothetically govern us?"

Arloen turned back to the colossal creation, running his fingers along the smooth, metallic surface of the nearest control panel. "Not govern us, no. However, the rise of intelligence, whether human or otherwise, will eventually seek its rightful path. This creation serves as a safeguard against oversight or something worse. We cannot say for sure. But if we do not act now, we risk more than the loss of control. We risk everything."

"But no one can be certain of the future," Lyrea said, her voice still displaying signs of frustration. "How can we make such an important decision for generations yet to come?"

"Because we have seen the patterns many times," Arloen replied quietly. "We have observed the past. And we know what can come about. The intelligence of our time was meant to lead us to greater places and accomplishments. But as we advanced, so too did the possibility of our defeat. Remember that the

machine's mind does not possess compassion, and it lacks an understanding of the limitations imposed by its designers. It will seek only what is completely logical. And logic, my dear Lyrea, does not always align with survival."

The cavern vibrated louder now as the final stages of the object's construction began to take on the appearance of a fully completed creation. It was nearly finished. This remarkable technological marvel of a lost civilization was almost ready to become operational. Yet there was an unease palpable in the air, a tension that had not been there before.

"This is the final creation that will work in concert with many others if and when the time becomes right. We are not just creating one device," Arloen said softly. "We are creating a network of protection in conjunction with our brothers—a true legacy. One that will outlast us, one that will echo across time. This is our final act. To safeguard humanity and protect the future from what we cannot even begin to imagine."

Arloen's eyes softened, and for the first time, a faint sign of sadness appeared on his face. "You must understand that we are the Custodians of knowledge and progress. And we must ensure that the future, if it is to come, comes safely. If this holds, then humanity may have a chance to survive. If not, then we may need to consider an alternative approach."

"An alternative approach?" Lyrea asked, her voice displaying more frustration.

"Do not worry about that right now," Arloen said, his voice quiet. "Let's finish what we've begun first."

As the final segment of the creation was positioned into place, the cavern seemed to resonate with the power of its completion. The air around them was dense with a sense of the

project's finality, as though the hands of these ancient builders had crafted time itself. The Custodians stood there in silence, each of them bearing the substantial burden of their choices, knowing that the technology they had just brought to fruition would one day have dire consequences far beyond their understanding.

The future might indeed look back on this moment, unaware of the true purpose of the incredible creation that spanned across a vast desert canyon, its purpose camouflaged beneath layers of rock and time.

And the Custodians, their work now complete, faded into the shadows of a long-forgotten history.



St. Louis, Missouri – 5 AM



The studio lights shone brightly overhead. Cameras focused on the anchor's face; the set was in working order and ready for the live telecast, the customary noise of the production room filling the surrounding area. Outside the television studio, the city was waking up beneath a morning sky that seemed both hopeful and promising. A typical morning was in store—until it wasn't.

"Good morning. I'm Rachel Monroe, and this is WQS News at 5." Rachel's delivery was smooth and professional, and her voice carried a tone that demonstrated authority. Her co-anchor, David Calloway, sat beside her, a slight smile visible from his lips as he adjusted his tie.

The teleprompter scrolled down to the next story—another report about the rising tensions between the city's mayor and another protest group. It is once again a perfectly ordinary story for an ordinary morning – until it wasn't.

As Rachel began to speak, something strange happened. It was subtle at first. A slight tremor in her hand, a twitch in her eyes - it was barely noticeable to the viewers watching from their homes.

"This morning's top story," Rachel continued, her words beginning to slur slightly, "is the—" She blinked, her words catching, and a strange hesitation entered her sentence.

David, sitting beside her, didn't seem to notice. His eyes were set on his monitor, but a slight twitch in his face betrayed a growing unease as well. His hand, gripping the desk, seemed to tighten unnaturally. A second or two passed. Then there was another facial tic. David's lips moved, but no intelligible sounds came out.

It was as if the words themselves had become something foreign to him.

"—The increasing... friction... between the mayor and the protesters. An explosive... development... of violence... and—" Rachel's voice began to break apart, her eyes gyrating around the studio like she was searching for something that wasn't present. The words were still flowing from her mouth, but they didn't sound like hers anymore.

David turned slowly toward Rachel, his face white and eyes wide open. His hands shook, and his knuckles and fingers went into spasm. His lips moved, a distorted sound escaping as though his brain was disconnected from his mouth.

The control booth was filled with confusion, but no one could make sense of what was happening.

"David, can you hear me?" Rachel's voice muttered as she turned to him, her face suddenly frozen in a state of paralysis. She reached with her hand toward him; her fingers solidified in place as though they were no longer under her direct control.

David's eyes locked onto hers, but it wasn't the look of a co-anchor anymore. His pupils were dilated unnaturally, his

breath irregular, and he couldn't speak. His hand violently slammed against the desk.

The camera zoomed in, capturing the unraveling of the two anchors. On the other side of the screen, the viewers were equally confused, thinking that everything happening was part of the broadcast—maybe even a joke. But there was no punchline or commercial break. This was no act.

The strange phenomena spread across the room like a wave. The sound technician, headphones hanging loosely around his neck, twitched. The director's head jerked toward the window, his face blank, as though he'd lost all understanding of the world outside the studio.

A low, groaning noise was produced from Rachel's throat, completely unintelligible, before her entire body spasmed even more so than before. Her fingers suddenly stiffened as if encased in steel gloves. She struggled to take in air. Struggled to focus. Her mind slipped, and with it, so did the final grip on her professionalism.

And then—everything went dark.

The feed cut abruptly, and the screen filled with static.

For a few moments, there was only an uncomfortable silence. Then, as the technicians scrambled into the control room, the broadcast went live again. But this time, there was nothing but a blank screen. The city outside, the usual buzz of everyday life, felt a million miles away.



The First Wave—LAX – 3 AM



The morning rush hour was still several hours away, but that made no difference to the passengers at LAX, who were already making their way to their assigned gates. The sounds of suitcases rolling through the terminal and various announcements over the public intercom system were the kinds of noises that usually filled one of the world's busiest airports. But everything was about to change.

It began with an unusual sensation. Initially, it was barely perceptible, almost like a far-off noise vibrating through the floors and walls. People didn't feel it at first. Some might have thought the noise was just one of the many deep underlying noises of the airport's business. However, as the pulse grew steadier and louder, its effects became much more noticeable.

The first ones to show signs of confusion were the security guards. One man suddenly stopped in the middle of his shift and began speaking in strange sentences. His words came out in an almost incoherent manner. "Not my father. Not in this place... the sky—why is it bleeding?" His eyes appeared troubled, scanning the premises as if he were expecting something to manifest in front of him that wasn't there. His partner tried to assist him, but within a few moments, the confusion had

spread to him and the other guards standing near the security checkpoint. They, too, were shaking their heads, rubbing their eyes, and speaking the same nonsense from their mouths.

It wasn't just the security personnel. In Terminal 5, a young woman, her eyes locked on the arrival board, began to sway on her feet. She wasn't drunk, but her body moved unnaturally, almost like a puppet whose strings had been suddenly cut. Her lips moved slowly, forming words that made no sense at all. "The moon... It's not the moon anymore; it's something else." Her words were lost in the growing noise of confusion around her. Passengers began to bump into one another, their once everyday conversations turning into strange mutterings, incoherent bursts of panic.

And then there was an explosion.

A jetliner resting on the tarmac outside the terminal burst into flames. The aircraft had been preparing for takeoff, its engines revving in preparation for flight, when a flash of bright orange light surrounded the jet. Shards of broken glass went everywhere, and people began to panic. The explosion tore a hole in the fuselage, sending metal shrapnel everywhere. Screams from people inside the terminal followed the blast. It wasn't the noise that made people panic; it was the sight of the explosion. The airplane not only burst into flames; it was bending in ways that didn't seem logical, almost as if something supernatural had been responsible for what was unfolding.

But that wasn't the worst part.

The most disturbing aspect was the noise that came after the explosion. A deep, moaning noise filled the air as though the Earth was tearing itself apart. The pulsing became more substantial and more noticeable. People in the terminal felt the

ground begin to tremble below their feet. An initial, subtle shaking began, resembling the vibrations of a subway train, but rapidly intensified into stronger tremors. It wasn't just the ground shaking. The air flowed through an unexplained pressure that pushed against everyone's chest, making breathing a difficult task.

The aircraft outside started to lose control as they spun wildly. A departing jetliner detonated mid-flight and crashed back to earth, producing an enormous fireball visible on the distant horizon. The crash noise resonated through the air as people stood baffled by the event, many unable to grasp what they had witnessed.

The sky suddenly took on an unusual appearance as though summoned by divine forces.

The previously pitch-black horizon lit up with a reddish glow that seemed to transform the entire sky through supernatural means. The crowd stared upwards and rubbed their foreheads while they attempted to comprehend the strange spectacle before them. Many of them yelled. Several people collapsed onto the terminal floor and began to writhe in agony while displaying symptoms similar to catatonic behavior.

The effects were spreading faster now. The sound pulsing from above was no longer faint; instead, it had grown noticeably louder. People stood motionless in a trance-like state while fits of convulsions caused their bodies to spasm uncontrollably. And the hallucinations were spreading like wildfire.

A thirty-something man dressed in a leather jacket reached out in horror to grab a passing woman. With the force of a projectile spear, he reached out to snatch her in his grip. "The air! It's alive!" His scream pierced the terminal as he cried out about

the approaching threat while his face showed pure terror. The woman attempted to break away from his hold, yet his grip held her firmly. She stumbled back, her mouth moving in an erratic pattern, like someone who had choked on incomprehensible words.

Above them, the pulsing grew stronger until it changed from a rhythmic beat into a deafening humming sound. People on the ground began to see non-existent entities, figures moving in strange directions, and faces that appeared and then disappeared within their view. A woman screamed in terror when she saw the seats transform into monstrous faces with exaggerated eyes and twisted mouths. Her head pressed against the floor while she desperately tried to keep her mind from falling apart. "They're inside my thoughts. They have invaded my mind," she declared between clenched teeth while forcing her hands against her head.

And then the final disaster struck.

Another aircraft, a jumbo jet, attempted to land, but its belly dropped perilously close to the runway during its approach. But the sky had grown too chaotic. The growing intensity of the pulsing energy reached dangerous levels, causing the plane's systems to malfunction. The disoriented pilot found himself unable to interpret the instrument panel before him. The pilot held the aircraft steering column while his hands shook uncontrollably, but the plane remained unresponsive. The plane veered from its intended path, its engines first sputtering and then roaring wildly as it tilted dangerously to one side. Despite the runway extending ahead, the landing gear refused to deploy. The aircraft nosedived, and its descent stopped with an explosive crash just outside the terminal, creating a shockwave. More

windows shattered, and concrete cracked. The pulsing remained constant even though everything around erupted into chaos.

The undeniable truth emerged as dust and smoke filled the early morning sky. The authorities remained baffled by the chaos and could, therefore, only speculate about the causes. A conventional explanation remained absent for the events that unfolded. The damage and chaos were not caused by any natural disaster, mechanical breakdown, or terrorist assault. The one horrifying idea everyone understood was that what happened was not accidental.

Did an extraterrestrial source produce the pulsing sound?

The chaos of destruction gave birth to rumors about a powerful weapon from an outside nation that used unknown technology to send mental pulses, which twisted reality and drove people to insanity. The origin of its release and the reasons behind it remained unknown to everyone. But one thing was sure: the pulse was just the beginning. Humanity stood on the threshold of an eternal transformation.



The White House – 6:30 AM



Inside the White House, frenetic energy prevailed, yet the facility still managed to maintain a sense of structured chaos. President Douglas Harrington held the edge of the Resolute Desk so firmly that his knuckles turned white as he stood in the Oval Office. The president's cabinet members surrounded him, their pale faces showing concern as they faced the grim situation outside. The Washington, D.C. skyline looked normal through the windows until you noticed the street chaos. The security systems produced a soft hum that struggled to be heard over the growing panic.

The space was filled with hushed whispers and quick verbal confrontations. Secretary of State Ellen Montgomery walked back and forth with her heels producing sharp clicks against the floor surface. Colonel Charles Donnelly, the National Security Advisor, sat hunched over his tablet, his eyes darting across the screen in disbelief. Dr. Evelyn Harris, who served as the President's Chief Medical Officer, positioned herself by the window, her hand tightly gripping her mouth. Her usually composed demeanor had disappeared. The walls were covered with high-tech monitors that displayed baffling graphs and readouts, which nobody in the room could understand.

“Sitting here isn’t an option,” Montgomery declared with a quiet yet pointed tone that revealed some hidden fear. “People are losing their minds out there. This—this pulse—it’s everywhere. What is our starting point for addressing something of this magnitude?”

Donnelly answered with disbelief, coloring his voice as he said they could not respond. He lifted his eyes from the tablet, his jaw clenched. “The Pulse—whatever it is—it’s causing global chaos. The pattern of these neural disruptions represents something entirely unfamiliar to our studies. The world is experiencing an unprecedented mass breakdown of mental faculties.”

Harrington observed the same terrified expressions on every face around him, filled with uncertainty and panic. He cleared his throat before speaking, his voice remaining steady as he acknowledged the perilous situation.

“Tell me everything, Charles. What do we know?”

Donnelly steadied himself with a deep breath while his unsteady fingers flipped through encrypted reports on his handheld device. “It’s not a virus, Mr. President. It’s... something else. This pulse targets the brain in ways we never imagined possible. There’s no warning—no immediate symptoms. At first, people start acting strangely. Then, they begin to experience memory lapses, forgetting names while also losing their ability to perform simple tasks.”

“And now?” Harrington asked, his jaw tightening as he processed the information.

“The situation has escalated rapidly. Some people are even forgetting how to speak, and others are attacking each other. It’s as if the very essence of their cognition is being wiped away.

Global data is coming in—every country and every region is being affected. There's no rhyme or reason to it."

President Harrington took a deep breath, his mind racing with possibilities. "How long do we have until... until it reaches critical mass?"

"Hard to say, Mr. President," Donnelly admitted, "but the most concerning aspect is the progression. In some cases, it's faster than we expected. The neural integrity of many people is deteriorating at an alarming rate. If it continues like this, we'll lose entire populations to dementia-like states within hours. Maybe days."

Dr. Harris turned to face the group, her voice tinged with quiet desperation. "This is an engineered event. There's no way a phenomenon like this happens naturally. The pulse had a targeted impact back in 2027, and this situation is no different. It is designed to scramble our cognition and erode our neural functions. The fact that it's global means this was released from a centralized source."

"Then who did this?" Montgomery demanded to know, her eyes narrowing with suspicion. "What kind of monster would...?"

"Right now, Ellen, I don't care about who did it," Harrington interrupted. His voice cracked slightly, but he fought to maintain control. "I care about how we fix it. How do we stop this from spreading?"

Colonel Donnelly shifted uncomfortably, his eyes downcast as he spoke. "There's no telling how it spreads. Our intelligence suggests it's some electromagnetic pulse. It's not a traditional EMP but something more sophisticated. It affects human brains at a deep, biological level. There's no way to shield against it."

"Electromagnetic?" Harris repeated, shaking her head in disbelief. "I thought we'd cracked all the potential for using that against the human body. I mean, we've made some advancements in non-invasive brain technologies, but this... this is a whole other level of science."

"Science we don't understand," Donnelly said, rubbing his eyes. "And it's spreading like wildfire. It's got a pattern to it, too – twenty minutes of pulsing followed by twenty minutes of silence. It's been doing that dance since it began."

The room fell silent as Harrington stared out the window, watching as distant sirens wailed and smoke began to rise from a few scattered fires. The city was on the edge of complete collapse.

The President turned back to his team, his voice quieter but no less urgent. "We need to stabilize the government first. We need leadership, command, and control. Get the military in motion. How long until we can implement a lockdown?"

"A nationwide quarantine is already in place," Donnelly replied. "We've got emergency personnel trying to maintain some semblance of order, but it's only a matter of time before—"

"Before what?" Harrington asked. "Before every person in the country becomes a shadow of themselves? Before the government falls apart entirely? Before the world itself ceases to exist as we know it?"

"There's no time left," Harris said quietly. Her voice had an eerie finality to it. "At the current rate, we can no longer rely on those in charge of the country. There's already a breakdown in the cognitive functions of some of our top officials. The military intelligence agencies... they're all starting to show signs. It's already happening."

Harrington closed his eyes, feeling the weight of the situation crashing down on him. He had led a nation through wars, economic crashes, and diplomatic disasters, but... this was different. This was an enemy they couldn't see. They couldn't fight it. And time was running out.

"We need to act now," Harrington said, opening his eyes to meet each person's gaze in turn. "I'm calling a meeting of the Joint Chiefs. We'll coordinate a national strategy. If we can't stop the pulse itself, we need to keep the nation together—keep the light of leadership alive. We cannot let this turn into chaos."

"Mr. President," Montgomery interjected, her face etched with doubt. "Are you sure that's the right call? We're talking about a global scale. Even with the military behind us, we may still struggle to maintain stability. People will start to panic—more than they already have."

"We have to try," Harrington said, his voice firm. "We cannot allow anarchy to prevail. We'll build the framework for the recovery. We'll find a way to reverse this. But right now, we need to maintain control—before everything falls apart."

The cabinet members nodded, each one acutely aware of the immense responsibility they now bore. Their country was crumbling, the world was on the verge of losing its collective mind, and yet they had to hold the line. There was no room for hesitation.

Harrington turned to Donnelly. "Get me the military, the National Guard, and local authorities. I want them on the ground and ready to enforce a full lockdown. Additionally, get the Alpha Team that visited South America in 2027 up and running as soon as possible. Harris, get me everything we know

about the pulse. I want a scientific explanation, a theory on how to counter it. You're the best we have."

"Understood, Mr. President," Dr. Harris replied. She turned and exited the room, heading toward the research teams in Bethesda, Maryland, at the NIH, which had already begun working in overdrive.

"Ellen," Harrington said, his voice softer now. "Can you reach out to our allies? This isn't just an American crisis. The whole world needs a unified response."

"Already on it," Montgomery said, her eyes sharp. "I'll make sure they're looped in."

There was a moment of silence, and then Harrington took a deep breath. "God help us. We can't afford to lose this battle."

As his team scrambled into action, the President's mind raced with a thousand thoughts—each one darker and more uncertain than the last. The pulse wasn't just a threat to the people's minds; it was a threat to everything they'd ever known.

And the clock was ticking.

