Grand Ouvert

A *Person of Interest* Fanfiction

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Figure 1: Harold Finch and John Reese

Nice to Know in Advance (Mostly Free of Spoilers)

What One Should Know About *Person of Interest* Before Reading This Fanfiction

Person of Interest is a terminated American television series (watching strongly recommended!).

In every of the about 45 minutes long episodes, the protagonists Harold Finch and John Reese try to prevent a murder. Finch is the wealthy and mysterious computer genius, who prefers to stay anonymous in the background and provide intel. Reese is an ex-CIA-agent, professional marksman, fighter and spy, who takes action when there is a murder to prevent.

Induced by the terrorist attacks on 9/11 the US government wanted to create a gigantic surveillance system which should prevent terrorist attacks. Harold Finch is the guy who built this system, an artificial superintelligence called "the machine". The government only wants to know about terrorist attacks, so that's the only information they receive from the machine. Finch has a backdoor in the machine which provides him information about upcoming murders that are not handled by the government. The machine provides its information only by sending the social security number of an involved person. The machine does by design not indicate whether the person is victim or perpetrator. This question is subject of every episode.

Root (Samantha Groves)

Sameen Shaw

Carl Elias

Lionel Fusco

Bear

Joss Carter

John Greer

The Fanfiction

My fanfiction is set in the universe of the series and attempts to imitate the original episodes. The plot is arranged to take place between the original episodes season 5 episode 09 and season 5 episode 10, as if it had been missing in the original. Since the first idea in 2016 this *treatment* has grown. It is not a screenplay (e.g. there are no dialogues yet), but there is not much missing to this. If someone would make a movie of this, it would probably result in more than the usual 45 minutes

playtime. I consider the plot to be finished.

Now I want to

- find other interested fans

- write a screenplay

- make a movie of the screenplay (not likely, but I like to hope)

- make a comic of the plot (if I find an illustrator; there are already small comics about the series)

- whatever you might think of

Legal Stuff

"Grand Ouvert" is a fanfiction (a story made up by fans) about the television series "Person of Interest". The fanfiction is created on top of the Person-of-Interest-universe, but is not made by the creators of Person of Interest. The whole project is a hobby without any commercial intent.

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Special Thanks

I'd like to thank *Peter Gerwinski* and *Daniel 724* for helping me write this fanfiction. I'd like to thank *Gianluca Podann* for introducing me to Person of Interest.

SPOILER ALERT: Everything After This Can Contain Spoilers to the Entire Series *Person of Interest*!

Context: The Plot Before (S5E09) and After (S5E10) the Fanfiction

This fanfiction is written to seamlessly take place in the Person-of-Interest-universe between season 5 episode 9 and season 5 episode 10, as if it just had been missing from the original.

What is Happening in Advance

Episode S5E09 ended with the heartwarming reunion of our heroes.

Shaw has managed to escape from Samaritan and arrived at the team machine. However, she was far from being recovered from the brain washing Samaritan did to her in the form of simulations of her future.

Fusco has finally been introduced to the machine. He has buried the hatchet with team machine.

Terry Easton, alias "The Voice" was the person of interest in the preceding episode. Easton pretended his wife had been abducted. With the aid of a couple of bombs planted by the ostensible kidnapper, almost the entire police was lured out of the department. Reese and Fusco, who wound up to be the only two cops left in the department, found themselves locked in – together with an armed gang of criminals. This was a trap set up by Easton. The department became a backdrop for a big shootout which was won eventually by Reese and Fusco together.

Finch and Elias worked together during the investigation on this case. In the end, Elias kills Easton.

Character Developments

Harold Finch

Finch's top priority is to get his friends out of this alive. And of course, to defeat Samaritan along the way. Finch is driven by the **fear to loose his friends**, due to a war he induced.

Hence he tries to keep his friends from the battlefield. But Reese has let Fusco in on the game, Shaw has returned and is belligerent as always and Elias obtruded his help upon Finch – so Finch is urged to employ his whole team in the fight against Samaritan.

Accompanied by intense discussions, Finch's decision from S5E10 looms, in which he will decide to fundamentally change his ethic and permit more aggressive and ruthless actions in the fight against Samaritan. His dispute with the others centers around **which methods for protecting humans are morally reasonable**.

From this dispute grows Finch's decision to turn the machine back into a closed system. He never states that explicitly during the fanfiction, but Root will broach it in the subsequent S5E10.

- How can I guide my friends out of this unscathed?

- Which methods are morally reasonable for saving human lives?

Sameen Shaw

Shaw fled from Samaritan and just managed to reunion with team machine. She still has to cope with the brain washing done by Samaritan: she lives in the dread to be in a simulation and bespeak everything she does to Samaritan.

- Have I truly escaped from Samaritan?

Root

Root is overjoyed to have Shaw back and wants to help her rehabilitate.

Root fears, Finch won't utilize the machine to the necessary extent in the fight against Samaritan, due to his noble motivations. Because of that, she furtively codes better defense mechanisms into the machine, with the condition that they must be activated by Finch in order to be used. Root is doing the programming during this fanfiction, but there is no explanation given.

- Shaw is back!

- How can we win against Samaritan?

Lionel Fusco

Fusco has boycotted the team because they withheld the main plot from him for his own safety. He felt like a kid excluded from the adults table. But in the last episode he got introduced to the big game, and his friendship – especially with Reese – has been recovered. The flood of new information astonishes Fusco and fuels his **curiosity**.

- What is the machine capable of?

- How does it work?

Carl Elias

Since they saved his life in the end of season 4, Elias has become absolutely loyal to team machine. He has physically recovered and wants to take part in the combat – although he grasps the risk. Like Finch, he dreads to loose his friends.

Elias apprehends that Finch is the most dangerous fighter in the team and he has curbed himself ever since.

- How can I help my friends?[1]

John Reese

Notwithstanding the circumstances, Reese continues to fight as hard as possible for his team, the irrelevant numbers and against Samaritan.

The Machine

The machine is currently an open system which allows team machine arbitrary access and has helped a lot. However, during this fanfiction, Finch decides to revoke the access and make it a closed system. It's never stated explicitly, but Root will bring it up in S5E10.

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[1] In S5E10 Elias hides his friends in an apartment tower. He mentions, that he has negotiated a ceasefire between the rivaling gangs to provide the shelter. This unexplained background story could be taken up in this or another fanfiction.

What is Happening Afterwards

In S5E10 the world goes away. More specifically, in the chaos of Samaritan's offensive hunt for Finch, Elias and Root die.

Finch gets in the clutches of Samaritan-Agents (they want him alive), but is luckily freed shortly after by his team. Interrupting the escape, Finch gets caught by the FBI.

In the interrogation room, Finch arrives at his major decision: to alter his moral ground rules in a way to permit more methods in fighting against Samaritan. Due to his noble reasons, he has driven with the handbrake on ever since. But now, Finch activates his dark and merciless side. Addressing Samaritan, he states the fact: "I will kill you."

Just as Finch is guided to an holding cell, he receives a call from the machine. She speaks with the voice of the deceased Root.

On Finch's command, the machine makes him disappear by letting him escape the prison together with multiple hundred other prisoners.

New Characters in the PoI-Universe: Adleman, Brewster and Cantrell

QC		The quantum computer on which Adleman and Brewster work.

QC.1		An algorithm for the QC which encrypts data so securely, that even the QC cant break it.

QC.2		An algorithm for the QC which can break common encryption, but not QC.1.

QC-Bitcoin An algorithm which generates Bitcoins. It is a trivial extension of QC.2.

- **Henry Cantrell**[2] is boss of a company[3], which officially mines crypto-currency using the conventional soft- and hardware. Cantrell wants Adleman and Brewster to build the QC so that it mines Bitcoins (QC-Bitcoin), which would be by principle way more efficient than mining with conventional computers. Cantrell's goal is indefinite money, which is why he is interested in QC-Bitcoin but not QC.1 or QC.2. Cantrell is an interested layman in the field on which Adleman and Brewster work. Cantrell either doesn't know or he doesn't care that QC-Bitcoin requires QC.2 and QC.2 breaks any encryption common nowadays.

- **Adleman and Brewster** are paid by Cantrell to work on a quantum computer (the QC) with the task to develop QC-Bitcoin. Adleman and Brewster were classmates in university and have been best friends. Their strong friendship may be compared to the Finch-Ingram-Claypool friendship. From time to time – increasingly in this episode – some conflict arises between them.

- **Michael Adleman** disrespects Cantrell for his money-oriented intentions with the QC – especially because he requires him to develop QC.2. Adleman tries to avoid accomplishing Cantrell's objectives even though that's his task. Cantrell is not happy with Adleman's performance, and the personal and occupational relationship between Adleman and Cantrell has grown tense.
Adleman is of the party to develop QC.1. He lives the belief that everybody should be able to communicate via inviolable encryption.
Adleman's hobbies are conspiracy theories around the topic surveillance, some of which he takes maybe too seriously.[4] To prove one his conspiracy theories, Adleman wants to read

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[2] Cantrell stands for Cash!
[3] The company is new in the PoI-Universe.
[4] Adleman likes to listen to AM520-WKCP, the radio station from S5E07 "QSO".

some highly-classified, highly-encrypted communication of the government. He wants acquire and decrypt it somehow.

- **Robert Brewster** wants like Adleman that everybody should be able to communicate via inviolable encryption. In contrast to Adleman, Brewster would approve more methods to reach that goal. He reasons that QC.2 would help to make QC.1 common by causing an IT-disaster since with QC.2 every encryption common nowadays would become worthless. Additionally, Brewster is keen on making money, so he is not only interested in QC.1, but also in QC-Bitcoin and (therefore) QC.2.

The Plot Before the Episode Begins

Cantrell's company mines crypto-currency using conventional hard- and software (the data center). **Adleman and Brewster want to develop QC.1**, but they need special, expensive hardware. They ask Cantrell, but he shows no interest at all. Cantrell only authorizes working hours and material if he can make directly money from it. Because of that, they present him a new proposal: **Adleman and Brewster offer Cantrell to develop QC-Bitcoin**. Coincidentally, this plan requires similar hardware like for developing QC.1. They point out to Cantrell that QC-Bitcoin would require developing QC.2. Cantrell is hooked right away to commission QC-Bitcoin, but he doesn't want to use QC.2 for breaking encrypted communication. He thinks that making money by breaking encryption and accessing secrets would be too dangerous. He prefers to directly print money in the form of generated crypto-currency. Because the currency would immediately loose in value, the three agree to keep quiet about QC-Bitcoin.

Adleman and Brewster allege QC-Bitcoin as a pretext to get the hardware for building QC.1. They plan to elope as soon as they finish QC.1 and leave Cantrell in the lurch with an incomplete QC-Bitcoin. Adleman would accept to stand trial for that if he could manage to finish QC.1 and publish the secret government communication he wants to prove his conspiracy theory with. Brewster on the other hand would hide underground or attempt to blackmail Cantrell.

Combining the new hardware with some persuasive powers to use racks of the data center, Adleman and Brewster have considerable computing power at command. The two use the computing power to run a highly specialized artificial intelligence which they will use to find QC.1. The AI is constantly fed with random input which makes it impossible to rebuild.[5] The paranoid Adleman has ensured that the AI is completely disconnected from the internet and other networks.

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[5] Neither Adleman nor Brewster can rebuild the AI. At least it's not trivial.

The Plot of the Episode

Shaw has a **nightmare**, in which she betrays Team Machine (TM) to Samaritan.

Shaw awakes – she slept in the subway, it's early in the morning – and catches Root red-handed as she programs something into the Machine (**defense mechanisms**, compare S5E10).

Adleman is tired of hearing his conspiracy theories were wrong, so he decides to focus on one of them and prove it. He plans to find and publish top secret governmental communication that proves his theory. **Adleman, on his own, hacks into a server of the government** and manages to download some encrypted e-mails which possibly contain highly classified information.[6] Adleman stores the encrypted e-mails on an USB-Stick he shepherds carefully from then on.

Adleman can't read the information he hacked, because it is too well encrypted. He tries to break it with various methods, but all fail. Adleman still refuses to develop QC.2, even knowingly he could use it to decrypt the mails.

TM gets Adleman's number, because the Machine predicts that Adleman's plan with the governmental mails will work out and he will learn of at least of one of the machines. Then, as predicted by the machine, Samaritan will try to kill Adleman because of his knowledge. TM receives the new number via the old phone in the wall of the subway. The ringing phone gives Root an opportunity to distract Shaw from what she was doing with the Machine.

TM begins gathering intel on the new number. They find out that Adleman and Brewster work in a lab for Cantrell on a secret project involving a quantum computer. Due to the lack of other involved characters, the initial guesses on who is victim or perpetrator, are based on intense discussions between Adleman, Brewster and Cantrell. TM gets a peek at the true motivations of the three characters. TM discovers Adleman's hack and that he only got unreadable encrypted data.

Adleman and Brewster use very good secured communication. TM fails to hack their cellphones. The communication between the two cellphones remains the whole time out of surveillance for TM *and the machines*. Hence TM bugs the lab and hacks into the internet provider of Adleman and Brewster to track the locations of their cellphones.[7]

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[6] Both machines recognize Adleman doing that. The government prevents Adleman's hack from becoming public, since they want to camouflage that the servers even exist. Also, since the stolen data is encrypted, the government doesn't sees it as a threat.

[7] Root suggests to ask the Machine for intel, but Harold vetoes against that.

Cantrell meets up with Adleman and Brewster to ask impatiently when QC-Bitcoin will be ready. Adleman and Brewster feed Cantrell with hopes of a working prototype, however only in an impractical model scenario. Cantrell isn't satisfied and suggests hiring more developers. Adleman and Brewster immediately argue against this, and persuade Cantrell by stressing their work must be kept secret to take effect and they would make much progress soon.

Adleman has ordered a sturdy briefcase with an explosive-based self-destruction mechanism (the QC-Briefcase) over the darknet. He receives a message that he can pick up his order. Now he's getting the briefcase.[8] TM puzzles over what Adleman plans to do with the briefcase.

Adleman takes the QC-Briefcase to the lab. There, he puts the USB-stick with the encrypted government e-mails in the QC-Briefcase.

A monitor turns on and presents a message: The AI with which Adleman and Brewster try to build QC.1 has come to a result. Adleman sighs and routinely unlocks the computer[9]. Without reading the detailed status message, Adleman performs the practiced backup routine: He fetches an SSD from a locked drawer[10], plugs it in, takes off his glasses, lays the glasses close to the computer[11], bows down to the display and enters a few commands. After the computer confirms the backup, Adleman puts his glasses back on.

Before Adleman puts the SSD back in the drawer, he takes a short look at the detailed message of the AI – and is taken aback. **The AI claims to have found QC.2**! The AI would never do that on its own, which tells Adleman that Brewster is responsible. Adleman is outraged, because Brewster brought QC.2 into life, and because Brewster did so without telling Adleman. (Brewster knows nothing about the encrypted government e-mails. He instructed the AI from his own interest.[12])

Adleman is just about to call Brewster to come down on him, but then he recognizes the QC-Briefcase laying around. There lies the USB-stick with the government e-mails. Adleman hesitates.

Adleman quarrels feverishly with himself. He is handed a chance to prove his conspiracy theory

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[8]TM wonders what Adleman has bought. Elias solves the mystery: he knows the seller, because he previously bought himself a briefcase too.

[9]The computer with the AI has no internet connection. That would be insane. The computer consists out of several racks, protected by a metal cage.

[10]Adleman has quite a lot keys on his key ring.

[11]Adleman places his glasses next to an NFC-transmitter. His glasses contain a storage chip that is loaded via the NFC-transmitter with a copy of the backup.

[12]Brewster wants to have QC.2 for several reasons: If Adleman and Brewster need to escape and go underground, he could use QC.2 to forge cover identities and scan through the secrets of Cantrell to find potential leverages. Using QC.2, Brewster (and Adleman) could build a better prototype of QC-Bitcoin to satisfy Cantrell and buy more time for developing QC.1. Shortly after Adleman and Brewster would publish QC.1, Brewster would publish QC.2 as well, to cause an inevitable IT disaster which would force everybody to implement QC.1.

on a silver platter. But he would need to use QC.2, which is taboo. Eventually, Adleman decides. He gets up, takes QC.2 (the SSD) and the government e-mails (the USB-stick) and rushes to the quantum computer.[13]

As soon as Adleman uploaded QC.2 to the quantum computer, a hidden program of Brewster starts, of which Adleman knows nothing. The program takes two prepared cover identities for Adleman and Brewster and makes the forgery perfectly undetectable.

Harold puts two and two together and fears that Adleman would find information about the Machine and Samaritan, if he could read the e-mails. It is too late:

Adleman has decrypted the government e-mails and reads them. He learns that Samaritan exists. Adleman is shocked. And frightened. First mechanically (open-mouthed) and then increasingly nervously, Adleman tries to publish the decrypted e-mails. The quantum computer is designed to have no connection to the internet, as is the computer with the AI. Because of that, Adleman copies the decrypted e-mails onto the USB-stick with the encrypted e-mails[14] and takes it to a computer with internet connection.

Because of this computer with internet connection, Samaritan and the Machine detect instantly what Adleman has done. Before Adleman can do anything, Samaritan has already blocked the internet connections of all devices Adleman has access to.[15] As a side effect, TM looses connection to their bugs in the lab.

Both machines ponder what to do, showed from their perspectives:

- Samaritan concludes without further ado that Adleman must be killed, because now knows about Samaritan.[16] The Machine has predicted Adleman's number correctly. Additionally, Samaritan has learned that QC.2 works, and wants to get control of all copies. (The government e-mails should be annihilated, obviously.)

- The Machine recapitulates how TM dealt with comparable cases. The Machine thinks of Henry Peck[17], Shaw and Max Greene[18]. After all, the Machine tends to delegate the decision, what to do with Adleman, to TM.

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[13] Doing that, Adleman himself abuses QC.2, but he justifies himself by thinking it would be for the greater good. This breach of taboo may be compared to Harold's decision in S5E10 to drastically change his own rules.

[14] Like with the backup of the AI, Adleman take off his glasses to transmit a second copy of the decrypted e-mails onto the chip inside his glasses.

[15] Samaritan shuts down the network of the lab computers, possibly deactivates a separate telephone line and blocks all surrounding radio circuits for Adleman's devices.

[16] Later, Samaritan attempts to recruit Adleman as an agent. However this plan develops only after QC.1 and QC.2 are deemed lost.

[17] NSA analyst from S1E22 and S5E12

[18] radio host from S5E07

Adleman gets even more nervous as he gets no internet connection. He correctly assumes, Samaritan had noticed him and cut off his internet access.

Because he has been discovered, Adleman wants to flee. He hurriedly grabs his belongings: Adleman puts the SSD with QC.2 and the unfinished development version of QC.1 in the QC-Briefcase, places the USB-stick with the en- and decrypted government e-mails next to it, reassures himself that everything is inside the QC-Briefcase and locks it up. Then he proceeds to sabotage the lab equipment so that nobody could use it to build QC.2.[19]

Just as Adleman goes to wipe the memory of the quantum computer, he discovers the little program Brewster wrote, which forged cover identities for the two. Because Brewster not only made a cover identity for himself, but for Adleman too, Adleman regains some trust in Brewster.

Because Adleman considers the lab compromised – he's right on that –, he wants to take everything valuable on his escape. Since his most recent discovery, this includes the cover identities. As he reaches out to reopen the QC-Briefcase, he hears screeching of tires from outside. A quick look out of the window shows him the Samaritan agents who are about to enter the building. Adleman is about to panic. To save time, he doesn't reopen the QC-Briefcase, but copies the cover identities onto the chip in his glasses. Right after, he wipes the memory of the quantum computer. This completes his sabotage.

Motivated by his new cover identity, Adleman wants to meet Brewster. Therefore Adleman writes down a time on a small note, which he hides in the lab. Brewster is meant to find this note and remember the place which Adleman and Brewster have chosen a long time ago for emergencies.[20] Nobody except Adleman and Brewster knows this place. (For now...)

Adleman runs with the QC-Briefcase out of the lab, immediately turns on his heel an slams the door back in the lock because he sees armed men headed towards him. (**Samaritan agents arrive**.) Adleman was so fast that the Samaritan agents couldn't shoot him. Adleman then runs out the back door and directly into Fusco. (Two Samaritan agents are lying knocked out in the background.) Fusco explains to the panicking Adleman that TM will save him. The rest of TM forms around them and gives covering fire.[21] From the corridor of the back door arrive new Samaritan agents so that TM and Adleman are encircled.

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[19] Adleman turns off the life support systems of the quantum computer (e.g. vacuum sealing). Hisses, warning lights flash, alarming beeps come in...

[20] Brewster has remembered the emergency reunion place as one of the strange but harmless outgrowths of Adleman's paranoia...

[21] Elias guards the escape route.

Adleman is completely speechless due to the sudden blaze of gunfire and the strangers protecting him. For a moment, Adleman gains trust into TM, because he assumes them to be conspiracists with the same intentions as him and they would therefore rescue him. Adleman's glasses get damaged in the turmoil which troubles him greatly.[22] Adleman has hidden a memory chip inside his glasses on which he stored QC.2, the development state of QC.1, the cover identities for Adleman and Brewster and the encrypted and decrypted government e-mails. Nobody except Adleman knows about the chip in the glasses. Adleman fears the chip got damaged.

A bullet grazes Root in the ongoing combat.[23] This provokes Shaw and distracts her so that she gets caught out by Samaritan agents. Shaw unluckily positioned herself so far from the others that nobody has the time to reach out and help.[24] Root screams in fear for Shaw and Shaw gets a paroxysm.

During **Shaw's paroxysm** the Samaritan agents pinion her and try to carry her away. TM simultaneously attempts to rescue her and escort Adleman to safety.

Because of her paroxysm, Shaw falls into a trance in which she thinks of the lovers of her best friends. The paroxysm is shown from Shaw's distorted perspective, including fragmented flashbacks, and *after that* from Samaritan's perspective through a surveillance camera. (Shaw drivels something during her paroxysm but the wording isn't clear thanks to her distorted perspective.)

First, Shaw thinks of Harold, which reminds her of Grace. Shaw remembers the scene where Harold turned himself in for releasing Grace from Samaritan.[25] Next, John makes Shaw think of Carter. This brings up memories of Reese's grief over Carter.[26] In the end, Shaw thinks of Root which leads her thoughts to herself. Shaw remembers her kiss with Root in the elevator in the basement of the New York Stock Exchange.[27] Shaw is shocked that simply her relationship with Root and TM puts them in danger – so much, that she awakes from her trance and the paroxysm is over.

Samaritan rewinds Shaw's paroxysm, quickly reviews it and creates a psychological analysis of Shaw and her paroxysm.[28] Having Shaw back under control and analyzing her paroxysm nudges Samaritan to evaluate whom it could abduct to blackmail TM. Samaritan lists the people in the relationships of which Shaw has presumably thought in her trance with name, mug shot and a

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[22] Shaw is annoyed and wants to shut Adleman up by knocking him out, but Fusco holds her back.
[23] Harold gets nervous and wants TM to flee.
[24] Root already expressed her discontent with this risky position as TM spread out.
[25] Episode S3E21 "Beta"
[26] Carters Funeral in S3E10 "The Devil's Share" and TM toasting to the deceased Carter in S3E14 "Provenance"
[27] S4E11 "If-Then-Else"
[28] Samaritan incorporates the data gained from the simulations conducted in S5E06 "6741".

certainty probability. All characters are highlighted with a high certainty probability and marked as *untraceable* or *deceased* – except one. Additionally to Carter, Samaritan has found Iris. Iris is given a smaller certainty probability but Samaritan assumes a strong connection to John and marks her as *located*.[29] Samaritan begins to analyze how it can blackmail TM using Iris.

Since Shaw has awoken from her paroxysm she manages to unfetter from the Samaritan agents. TM finally gets Adleman out of the building and flees with the escape car which was held ready by Elias. All the many questions that have accumulated in the last few scenes burst out of the nervous Adleman.[30] TM gives no satisfying answers. Shaw grumpily portends Adleman to shut up. Elias advises Adleman to rethink whether he really *wants* to know the things he is asking.[31]

Meanwhile, Samaritan concludes that John had a relationship with Iris[32] and TM can be blackmailed using Iris. To bring this Idea alive, Samaritan initiates an attack on Iris. Just as TM drives along a road without surveillance, a payphone rings. TM makes a pit stop on its escape and receives **Iris' number**.[33]

Samaritan demands the QC-Briefcase and Adleman from TM.[34] In return, Iris should continue to live. Adleman probably has encrypted the copies of QC.1 and QC.2. Samaritan wants Adleman to force him to decrypt the copies and then comfortably kill him. Samaritan doesn't plan to turn Adleman into an agent since it seems not worth the effort. TM receives this demand via an anonymous text message sent to Adleman's cellphone. Adleman reads the message out loud, because it is unintelligible to him.

Adleman reasons based on TMs behavior that there are two artificial super intelligences and TM is working for one of them.[35] TM confirms. TM immediately becomes a scapegoat to Adleman and he verbally attacks them. Adleman loses his temporary trust in TM.

The pit stop for the new number causes TM to loose lead. New Samaritan agents arrive and gunfire flares again.

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[29]Samaritan lists more people that Shaw could have thought of in her trance to be in relationship with John. Those people have noticeably smaller certainty probabilities and are only listed with anonymous IDs (e.g. social security number). The entry after Iris is marked as *deceased*, which matches Carter. The following entry could be Jessica.

[30]The freshly inducted Fusco is curious too. Elias is in earshot.

[31]Elias already conjectures a lot, but he *decided* not ask any questions, because he figured it would be safer for him and TM if he doesn't know the delicate things.

[32]Iris last appeared in S5E03. She broke up with John because she deemed it impossible that John could lead a normal life with her. Samaritan correctly assumes that the relationship ended but the affection is still there.

[33]Finch enters the number he got from the payphone in his laptop and immediately a picture of Iris flashes up. While everybody is distracted by the new number, Elias swaps out the QC-Briefcase against an empty copy. Nobody notices that.

[34]Samaritan does *not* demand from TM to turn itself in because the probability of success is too low and the actually chosen demand is attractive too. The scheduled attack on Iris further gives Samaritan a chance to lure TM into a trap when TM attempts to rescue Iris. Samaritan names an unimpeded, quickly accessible place for handing over Adleman and the QC-Briefcase, like the bridge to exchange Grace for Harold in S3E21.

[35]A blooper by TM could hint Adleman there is a "Machine".

Adleman absconds in the turmoil, with the QC-Briefcase.[36] Samaritan notices Adleman's escape but keeps its demand unchanged because it motivates TM to support Samaritan on its search for Adleman and the QC-Briefcase.

TM notes Adleman has left his cellphone in the car. TM can no longer locate him. They remove the battery and put the cellphone in a metal box, just in case Adleman tries to locate *them* with the phone.

TM manages to throw the the Samaritan agents off.

TM splits up:

- T1: *John* is going crazy in fear for Iris. *Harold* stops him from doing something rash. *Fusco*, powered by the recently reinforced friendship with John, gives emotional support and keeps a level head.

- T2: *Elias* transports *Root* into a nearby house of his and attends to her bullet wound. *Shaw* and *Bear* join them. After that, T2 wants to search Adleman and Brewster.

T1 looks out for Iris and finds her at work.

Samaritan doesn't want Iris to know what's happening because there is still a chance she has nothing to with TM and Samaritan wants to attract as little attention as possible. But Samaritan wants to create a real threat to Iris as leverage for its demand so that TM cannot disregard it and is forced to respond. Hence, Samaritan creates a threat that justifies murdering Iris. It works: Iris suspects no mysterious entity behind the death threat she receives.

The **threat to Iris** consists of Aaron Delaney, an attacker who apparently wants to murder Iris. Delaney is a corrupt cop (HR remainder, new in the PoI-universe).

Already before this episode – not staged by Samaritan – Delaney was caught by Louis Edgell, a third-party cop, in the act of murdering on impulse.[37] Edgell had only his own witness report to prosecute Delaney. Moreover, Delaney (a cop too) was the supervisor of Edgell. Edgell didn't know what to do so he secretly asked Iris. This way, Iris learned the details about the witnessed murder.

To create the thread, Samaritan kills Edgell in a way that makes it look like Delaney did it.[38] Next, Samaritan utters a warning to Iris via anonymous SMS. The message emphasizes that Iris will

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[36] After that, Adleman does not try to publish the government e-mails because he doesn't want to be found.

[37] TM got no number for this murder since it was not planned.

[38] TM got no number for this murder because it was planned and executed so fast by Samaritan that the Machine couldn't foresee it.

be killed, if she testifies against Delaney. It looks like Delaney threatens Iris, but really Samaritan threatens TM.

Iris seeks help. She doesn't try to contact TM because she doesn't want to burden John with her problems. Iris reports the message instead to a trustworthy policeman. (Using her psychological skills she indeed chooses someone truly trustworthy.) With help from there, Iris gets a bodyguard[39] who is trustworthy too. Samaritan however swaps the trustworthy bodyguard against a Samaritan agent.

T1 analyzes the threat to Iris and quickly becomes suspicious because they received no number for Edgell, who was apparently murdered on purpose by Delaney.

T1 finds out that the bodyguard is a Samaritan agent.[40] Furthermore TM digs out a surveillance video which shows how Delaney kills Edgell.[41] T1 asks Elias for help, because they suspect a connection between Delaney and HR. Surprisingly, Elias provides an airtight alibi for Delaney, meaning Delaney did not kill Edgell. Adding up all the facts, including the demand by Samaritan, TM concludes that Samaritan killed Edgell and feigns Delaney to be guilty in order to stage a threat against Iris.

T1 reconsiders the best practices and determines that a good option for saving Iris would be to kidnap Iris, give her a cover identity and let her live underground. But nobody wants that since Iris has family and friends. TM neither wants to rip Iris out of her live and separate her from family and friends, nor does TM have the resources and time to provide cover identities for Iris' family and best friends. The only sustainable solution appears to be convincing Samaritan that harming Iris doesn't move TM to anything.

T1 ponders how they can disqualify Iris' role as a leverage. T1 asks the Machine. The Machine thinks for a moment and then presents a list of options, each with a success probability. All success probabilities are dangerously small. The Machine highlights the highest one. The optimal strategy – as computed by the Machine – requires TM to remain on the sidelines and only work on other things, like Adleman's number. The Machine would deal with the threat to Iris on its own.

Doing nothing would be a radical decision, especially for John – T1 controverts that. They agitatedly discuss whether the proposed strategy is actually optimal. Whether they can trust the Machine. Whether Iris should go underground despite loosing her family and friends. And,

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[39] He doesn't have to be called "bodyguard", but he should be a minder, most likely from the police.

[40] The Samaritan agent may already be familiar to TM, e.g. Zachary. Alternatively the Samaritan agent could reveal himself due to his behavior.

[41] During the investigation an ignoramus remarks that the video *could be* manipulated, but it would be way too complex to seem realistic. In fact, the video *is* manipulated, by Samaritan.

whether TM should accept Samaritan's demand, for Iris' safety. Harold fears collateral damage of the unknown upcoming actions by the Machine, but is willing to take that risk for Iris (and for John). T1 surmises that they're about to decide whether Adleman or Iris should die, if rescuing Iris fails.

Eventually T1 finds no better solution and decides heavy-heartedly to accept the proposed strategy of the Machine and not do anything.[42] **Harold instructs the Machine, to save Iris.**

T1 begins to wait idly and filled with horror. A night full of worry passes.

In the meantime, T2 and Samaritan watch Brewster and search for Adleman. Brewster isn't very helpful, he sleeps. It's night, after all. TM has already hacked into the internet provider of Brewster, so T2 can track his position and keep a safe distance. Samaritan watches Brewster too, using field agents and the usual techniques. Samaritan waits for an action of Brewster that reveals where Adleman is. If TM showed up whilst doing the same, that would be additionally convenient for Samaritan. Therefore, both parties don't want to be seen by the other or Brewster, so they keep distance.

The lab is currently abandoned,[43] so T2 takes the opportunity and rummages in it. Shaw brings the bugs back online and walks around with Bear. In the same time, Root tries to charm information out of the computers.

Since T1 is incapable of acting on saving Iris, they join T2. Harold helps Root with the computers, but they don't find anything interesting. Elias keeps an eye on Brewster and reports that he picked up a brown envelope from a dead drop. Bear finds the message from Adleman to Brewster. TM puzzles over the meaning of it, but they have no idea.

TM notices that Brewster is headed towards the lab – he is just entering the building. TM puts the message back into its original place, so that Brewster can find it. Shown from Samaritan's point of view, **Brewster is marked as a possible agent**. Samaritan thinks about recruiting Brewster or kidnapping him, if needed. The Samaritan agents that followed Brewster are getting dangerously close – TM gets in position for a fight.

While Brewster examines the destroyed lab, TM holds the Samaritan agents at a distance. The opponents are busy with another so that Brewster has time to inspect the lab further. Brewster is looking for QC.2 and the cover identities but quickly finds out that the computers have been

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[42] John: "My heart wants me to save her but my mind tells me I must not." – Lionel: "Then what does your gut say?"

[43] No police showed up after the battle between Samaritan and TM, because Samaritan didn't want to draw attention to the lab. Cantrell is livid because of the havoc, but he fittingly wants no police (for now), because he wants to find the culprit single-handed instead of letting others in on the existence of the lab.

sabotaged. Brewster looks around more suspicious and finds the message Adleman wrote to him. He reads it and destroys it immediately.[44]

Harold flees from the Samaritan agents into a meeting room. He nervously looks around in the room. Suddenly, the videoconference equipment including a camera and a big screen turns on and Greer's suave smile is emblazoned on the wall.

The antagonists look into their eyes. Greer greets and asks, whether TM will fulfill Samaritan's demand. Harold clarifies that "the leverage Iris" doesn't mean any more to TM than any other person. Samaritan would force TM to decide between two human lives (Adleman and Iris). Hence, TM will do exactly nothing, not even protecting Iris. **TM won't fulfill Samaritan's demand**. Greer is doubtful.

Greer politely invites Harold to be kidnapped.

Since the Samaritan agents in the building are incapacitated, John and Shaw bolt into the meeting room. Before anybody can react, John confirms Harold's statement to Greer. One could not save everybody. Samaritan would only wreak more havoc if TM fulfilled the demand. Greer is now surprised and says they will find out, whether that's true for sure.

The Greer turns to Shaw and expresses his joy of reunion. Bloodlust glints in Shaw's eyes.

Fusco calls John and warns them that more Samaritan agents are on the way. John commands decampment, Greer bids them farewell.

Secluded from the meeting room, TM and the Samaritan agents kept each other covered so that nobody could go to Brewster. Brewster himself strolls out of the building with Samaritan and TM on his heels, both at distance. Brewster hasn't noticed anything of Samaritan or TM in the building.

The Machine warns Iris, she must disavow John. To deliver the message, the Machine sends Iris a note,[45] written in John's perfectly faked handwriting, so that Iris believes it came from John. The message asks Iris to disavow her relationship with John and dissociate from him due to an urgent dangerous situation. John already warned her in a conversation previous to this episode,[46] that he might need to make that request sometime. Iris remembers the conversation, which is shown in a

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[44] Brewster cloud be a smoker and use his lighter to burn the message.

[45] The scene starts with the journey of the note to Iris, from the perspective of the note. In the end, Iris "coincidentally" finds her favorite magazine and skims right to the cover topic, which she is deeply interested in. On this page, she finds the note.

[46] This conversation doesn't exist in the original PoI-universe.

flashback. Samaritan doesn't notice the warning.[47]

To exonerate Iris, the Machine needs a **plausible excuse** for the person of which Shaw thought in her paroxysm. The Machine chooses **Carter**, because she is already deceased and hence doesn't make a good hostage.

To make Samaritan believe, the Machine wants to leak a currently inaccessible recording of the kiss between Carter and John.[48] The Machine knows the footage, because it has recorded it live. Samaritan on the other hand didn't exist at that time. The owner of the crucial surveillance camera has stored the footage on tape, inaccessible from the internet. Samaritan didn't think the tapes had much value, so it never took a look at them.

The Machine arranges a big upgrade of the particular surveillance system, including a **digitization of the old tapes**. The owner of surveillance system doesn't know the Machine initiated the upgrade. The audience isn't told yet why the Machine lets somebody upgrade their surveillance system.

The note from Adleman to Brewster leads the two to a quiet, remote corner of the college where both had studied together. Samaritan and TM don't know exactly where Brewster is and have no clue that Adleman is there too.

Brewster immediately demands an explanation for the destroyed lab and the whole situation. Adleman nervously outlines that he is in danger because he found a proof for his conspiracy theory. Adleman unpacks the story of two outrageous surveillance systems of the government and the soldiers that protect it – but Brewster cuts him short: He deems Adleman completely crazed. Adleman points to the QC-briefcase in his hand and emphasizes that his evidence are secret government e-mails stored inside the QC-briefcase. The hunch Adleman could be right creeps up on Brewster.

Adleman entreats Brewster to publish the government e-mails and help him disappear. Brewster promptly refuses, because he would put himself in danger too, if he would have contact with the government e-mails.

Brewster wants to know, how Adleman could get and read the government e-mails. Adleman admits, he has hacked into a server of the government. Brewster says he would know the encryption standards of the government – whatever Adleman has read, couldn't be real governmental communication. Adleman blames Brewster for betraying his trust and creating QC.2, despite Adleman

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[47]Samaritan watches Iris, but doesn't suspect anything.
[48]The kiss happened just before Carters death, in S3E09 "The Crossing".

being vehemently against that. Brewster concedes that he should have informed Adleman, but he deduces delightedly that the AI has found QC.2 and it works. Then he accuses Adleman of using QC.2 even though he is the one that forbid anybody to use it. (Adleman is ablaze.)

Brewster asks, whether QC.2 is stored in the QC-briefcase too. Brewster wants to have the QC-briefcase, he claims he wants to hide it for Adleman – but Adleman refuses. Brewster actually means what he says, but Adleman doesn't believe him.

Samaritan appears, simultaneously with TM.[49] The teams open the fire and try to reach out to Adleman and Brewster.

Brewster gets nervous and attempts to steal the QC-briefcase from Adleman. This one gets nervous as well. In fear of loosing the QC-briefcase to one of these gigantic outrageous surveillance systems, Adleman triggers the self destruction mechanism of the QC-briefcase and throws the thing away. Brewster sprints after the QC-briefcase, swearing, to stop the self-destruction. He doesn't reaches it in time, and **the QC-briefcase explodes**[50] which carries Brewster off his feet.

The content of the QC-briefcase is undeniably irreparably destructed. Samaritan assumes that now the only way to get QC.1 and QC.2 would be to get Adleman. Samaritan retains its demand from TM. Should TM – against all odds – find QC.1 or QC.2, it would just be convenient. If they don't find them, TM would at least help to get Adleman, who can then be turned into a Samaritan agent so he provides Samaritan with QC.1 and QC.2 "voluntarily". Regardless of how this turns out, Samaritan intends to kill Adleman.

As Brewster heedlessly runs after the QC-briefcase, he goes into the direction of the Samaritan agents. They pick him up easily. Whilst **Brewster gets inventoried by Samaritan**, **TM advances to Adleman and escorts him out of the danger zone**. (Adleman lets them rescue him, albeit unwillingly.) A Samaritan agent destroys Brewster's cellphone.

Iris went with the bodyguard to a café. The **bodyguard unnoticeably poisons Iris**' coffee. She drinks it and blacks out. The bodyguard immediately drives her to the hospital, seemingly heroic. John sees red and wants to turn himself in to Samaritan in exchange for Iris – but T1 stops him. Iris regains consciousness but stays in the hospital for medical treatment.

In the meanwhile, Brewster is with Samaritan and has an audience with Greer.[51] **Greer de-**

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[49] T1 has to be there too, since they want to camouflage worrying about Iris.

[50] At this time, there is nothing important in the QC-briefcase, since Elias swapped out the real QC-briefcase against a mockup (this will be revealed later). There is no way to tell from the remains of the QC-briefcase that it was fake.

[51] Samaritan marks Brewster as possible agent.

mands that Brewster should lead them to Adleman. Brewster refuses, but offers to work for Samaritan, pointing out that he's the one that developed QC.2. Greer remarks that he already knows about Brewster's skills and insists on his demand. Greer further hints that Samaritan would kill Brewster, if he doesn't play along.

Iris is still in the hospital, mainly for good measure. She is in private with the bodyguard and starts a conversation to break the silence.[52]

Samaritan sends a command to the bodyguard and he secretly prepares a **poison syringe**. He takes a step towards Iris.

Iris brings the ongoing conversation round to John, her former patient. She compares him to Delaney.[53] The bodyguard tries to investigate what kind of relationship exists between Iris and John. (Samaritan continuously calculates the probability for Iris' suitability as a leverage.)

Iris lies, she had been in a relationship with somebody else during the relevant time and she couldn't abide John. Iris suffers torment inside, but the bodyguard appears to believe her.

The digitization of the tapes which include the record of the kiss between Carter and Reese is nearly done. Without suspecting he works on behalf on of the Machine, a technician loads the crucial tape and starts the digitization.[54]

As soon as the digitization of the tape finishes, Samaritan has access to the relevant surveillance footage, as intended by the Machine.

After final computation, which has been manipulated through the recently revealed recording and the warning of Iris by the Machine, Samaritan decides that Iris doesn't perform well as leverage against TM. Based on further probability calculations Samaritan concludes that it would be better to let Iris alive (independent of her usability as leverage). Samaritan sends the bodyguard a signal and he puts the poison syringe away. Iris looks at the bodyguard, completely unsuspecting. Samaritan lets the police take Delaney into custody and sends this message to the bodyguard who forwards it to Iris. The Machine gives TM the all-clear: **Iris is saved**.

Because Iris is no longer a way to get Adleman and belongings, Samaritan wants to use Brewster

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[52] Samaritan dictates the bodyguard what to say.

[53] Delaney got a hero complex and breaks taboos, whilst violently enforcing his interpretation of what is good.

[54] The relevant scene takes place in the PoI-universe at 14 Nov 2013 (episode S3E09). The episode before this fanfiction episode (S5E09) is set not before 16 Oct 2015. This makes the record on the tape almost two years old, what could justify it coming so late in the stack, if the technician works chronologically.

to reach it's goal. The intentions with Adleman and his software remains unchanged.

Adleman, who sits in lack of better alternatives with TM, has instigated a discussion about the moral defensibleness of the machines.

Adleman receives an invitation to meet Brewster in private.[55] Adleman is keen to accept the invitation but TM tries to convince him otherwise. TM warns Adleman he would die there in the best case. And if really Brewster would wait at the venue, he would have had too much contact with Samaritan to still be trusted. Adleman remains stubborn and argues, Brewster would be the last person on the planet he still trusts. And he would know ways to ascertain authenticity, Samaritan-safe.[56]

Finally, TM and Adleman agree that Adleman accepts the invitation, but TM shows up at the venue and kidnaps Brewster so the two may meet at a place not chosen by Samaritan.

A word and a blow.

Later, in the landscape far from New York, on territory without likewise surveillance, TM lets Adleman and Brewster meet. The two tersely greet and don't talk much more, since they're in earshot from TM. Their greeting includes an authentication question each.

TM explains that they won't claim to have a say in what Adleman and Brewster intend to do with their recently gained knowledge. However TM urges Adleman and Brewster to maintain silence in their own interest, pointing out the things Samaritan would do if needed.[57]

TM hands out cover identities (created by TM), some cash and keys to a car, which is already parked at the venue.[58]

Adleman and Brewster thank TM, say good bye and drive into the distance.

Thereafter, Adleman and Brewster are shown from normal camera perspective sitting in the car, with Brewster at the wheel.

Brewster nags that he had created cover identities on his own, but a crucial part is missing which should have been crafted using the quantum computer. Since this handy tech is no longer available, they'd need to use the untrustworthy cover identities from TM. Brewster grouses that Adleman has destroyed their whole work as he destructed the QC-briefcase – but Adleman cuts him short: Adleman counters, they probably can dispose the cover identities from TM, because he got

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[55] Adleman uses a new emergency cellphone, which only Brewster knew about.
[56] Adleman wants to ask Brewster a safety question to which only Brewster knows the right answer.
[57] TM has let Max Greene go with similar instructions. TM could mention his death as a well-meant warning.
[58] The build year of the vehicle let's one infer paranoia-friendly few board computers.

the missing part to Brewster's cover identities. Saying that, Adleman taps his glasses. Brewster mistakes that as a joke meaning Adleman has remembered the complex data. Adleman unwaveringly surprises Brewster by revealing the hidden memory chip inside his glasses. The chip suffered under the latest events. It appears to be intact, but whether the data may still be read is unknown. **Adleman explains that he stored the cover identities, the government e-mails, QC.2 and the development state of QC.1** on the chip in his glasses. Brewster is taken aback, amazed and amused by Adleman's typical foresight. Brewster means he now may kill Adleman, and laughs.

From interest and for good measure TM wants to keep an eye on Adleman and Brewster. Unfortunately, TM has lost track of the two, which makes them ask the Machine for help. The Machine launches a comprehensive search, but fails to locate Adleman or Brewster. TM assumes that the two have either managed to hide even from the Machine, or they landed in the clutches of Samaritan at unknown liveliness.

Elias unveils that he proactively saved the content of the QC-briefcase. **QC.2, the development state of QC.1 and the government e-mails are now in the hands of TM.**[59] However, it is uncertain, whether TM can access that information, because the QC-Briefcase is still sealed and Adleman might have (additionally) encrypted the data.

John asks Harold, what to do with the QC-briefcase. Closing credits.

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[59] Root ogles the QC-briefcase...