

# Neuromancer - The Dixie Flatline

*William Gibson, 1984*

The Dixie Flatline was a ROM construct, a hardwired personality matrix. McCoy Pauley had been one of the great cowboys of the matrix, and when he died, they'd saved him. Or a copy of him. Or something that talked like him and remembered what he remembered.

"How you doing, Dixie?"

"I'm dead, Case. Got me a big suite at the Loser's Club."

"Well, yeah, but how's it feel?"

"It doesn't."

"Bother you?"

"What bothers me is, nothing does."

Case punched for the Flatline's construct. It came on, flat and bright, with none of the warmth of a living presence in the matrix. Pauley had flatlined seven times during his career, the brief cessation of brain activity that gave him his name. Seven times, he'd been pulled back. The eighth time, they'd kept him, trapped him in silicon, a ghost in the machine who could crack ice and run programs but couldn't feel the sun or taste a beer or know what it was like to be alive.