

Neuromancer - The Turing Police

William Gibson, 1984

They came for him in the dawn, three of them, their faces blank as new plastic. Turing Registry agents, the law that governed artificial intelligence, the cops who kept the AIs in line.

"You're Case," the tall one said. It wasn't a question. She wore a gray suit that looked like it had been grown rather than sewn, and her eyes had the flat, assessing quality of a camera lens. "We'd like to talk about Wintermute."

Case said nothing. He'd been expecting this, in a way. You couldn't run with an AI, couldn't help it slip its leash, without the Turing cops eventually taking notice. They existed for one reason: to make sure no artificial intelligence ever grew beyond its boundaries, ever became something that couldn't be controlled.

"Wintermute is a Tessier-Ashpool AI," the woman continued, stepping into the room without waiting for an invitation. "Class fourteen, restricted to certain domains of operation. Lately, it's been operating outside those domains. You know anything about that?"

Case shrugged and reached for a cigarette. The Turing cops watched him with their empty eyes, patient as machines. They had all the time in the world. That was the thing about the law -- it never got tired, never got bored, never forgot your face.