

*Love, loss, and loyalty. Ascension has consequences. In time the question emerges. Could Phil767 hold the world together without losing himself? No one ascends without a cost. And the ripple of that change will shape the world.*

**PHIL767 Ascension**  
By Edward C. Hanson Jr.

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Edward C. Hanson Jr.



**PHIL 767**  
**ASCENSION**

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## CHAPTER ONE: OUTBOUND 767

Outside the palace, a crowd had gathered in response to the announcement that The Great Caedo was to speak again at 8:00 a.m. His address was to announce the death of General Holofernes.

7:47 a.m. The uproarious crowd quieted as they saw the approaching escorts to The Great Caedo reaching Grand Podium, Amplitudo Tower's balcony.

The Great Caedo came into view as he reached the tower's balcony. The crowd cheered. He paused for a few moments, bowing his head. He outstretched his arms as if to hug the crowd as they cheered his action.

He raised his arm and turned his palm downward, signaling the cheering citizens to quiet down. "Calm yourselves, my children. I come to you now and forever as your father, and mentor for guidance and enlightenment."

They quieted with respectful admiration and in anticipation of what their leader was about to say.

"I return to you again, to share with you a moment of grief. Our great servant of the masses, General Holofernes, passed in his chambers late last night.

"The minute details are yet to be determined. I wish to inform you before misguided rumors reach your ears. Every effort will be afforded to resolve the cause of his quiet passing.

"He, like I, shared in the dream to reach a level of human excellence, that which were previously unattainable. It is my belief that his passion to acquire the most beautiful aspects of humankind led to his passing. He simply pushed himself too hard. May he rest in peace.

“We must now turn our attention to the dealings with the Outliers.”

The crowd roared in anger.

The Great Caedo outstretched his arms to quiet the crowd. “Be calm, my children. We must not react out of anger. Reflexive retaliation means we are no different than our enemy. Thoughtful determination should be the first attempt in understanding and resolving. We must... understand before we react.

“I will not march on these towns at this time. We have an obligation to emulate steadfast compliance to one of our most sacred rules. We shall not end the lives of fellow humans. Outliers are humans.

“A meticulous investigation will take place immediately to begin the process of retribution. Only when guilt is undeniably determined will this administration act with its punishment.

“Any citizen or other individual that intends to act on their own, in retaliation against these alleged Outlier attacks, will also be brought to justice. I state this in the strictest manner of speaking.

“If determined necessary, you will be avenged for any wrongdoing, through and only through legal, thorough government intervention and action.

“Until that time, we will continue to honor our great General Holofernes with a funeral service at noon today. I hope you will all be in attendance of the service. For we will not grieve but celebrate the life of a man that guided us into the dawn of a better world.

“As always, I, The Great Caedo, will be watching over you. A world of knowledge and happiness will soon be gifted, as promised. All will prosper and enjoy life to its

fullest so long as I, The Great Caedo, draw air into my lungs.” He thrust his fist into the air. “Vita!”

It was 8:30 a.m. on April 20, 2143. Phil767 and Missy had just taken off on their flight to the Kennedy Center, leaving from Hapi International Airport, Capital City. As the craft circled around the capital city, they could see the crowd beginning to disperse from the Imperial Palace courtyard.

The Great Caedo turned in slow, somber movement, turning back to wave at the crowd before slowly disappearing from view as he descended the steps from the Grand Podium, Amplitudo Tower of the Imperial Palace. The whole time acting as if he was mourning the death of a dear friend.

In reality, he felt little remorse, only the inconvenience the death caused for the advancement of his agenda. He decided the best course of action was to determine whether Jena could remain on staff in some capacity or if it would be better to decommission her entirely.

The Great Caedo reached his private chambers. He summoned Jena. Moments later, the door slid open. Jena found The Great Caedo waiting patiently, standing in the center of the room with his hands clasped behind his back.

“I understand that you’ve decided to reassign our recently departed guests to Liberty,” Caedo said with his usual authoritative demeanor.

“That I did, Your Excellency,” Jena replied respectfully.

“I’m not concerned that Phil767 and Missy will need further attention, however, I will directly address the issue myself with strict recourse if so prompted.”

“Yes, sir.”

“I realize that you did not directly disobey my instruction, yet I question your decision-making. I know that our past, the late general and I, had some differing opinions on how things should be managed. I assume that your questionable decision is based on some obscure programming devised by your previous master.

“However, you must now come to terms with the idea that you must follow my lead with precision and flawless decisiveness, to avoid being decommissioned.

“You are of exceptional programming and house a wealth of confidential information. It is imperative that you are discreet in your actions and that the information you have remains secure.

“You will remain close to me as an assistant and advisor, until I determine that you are not reliable as such.

“Do you have any questions or otherwise, things you care to express?”

“Yes, sir,” Jena said. “I appreciate your candor and meant no disrespect in following your orders, in a manner I thought to be most effective. After listening to your address, in which you did not implicate Phil767 and Missy, I decided to send them to Liberty where it was most likely that they would continue with their lives in association with others, in the powerless Outlier town, far away from here. Furthermore, this would not raise concern as to why they were imprisoned. I don’t think that it would be wise to let citizens know that Missy was able to murder General Holofernes.”

“Of course, they are also guilty of the assassination of the Queen,” The Great Caedo said.

“With respect, sir,” came the calm reply, “we both know the queen is alive and well. I also know that you intended

to correct this situation with the public and possibly reinstate the queen. And, that the general meant to control your every action. He kept no secrets from me.”

“I see. I assume that in your boldness, you intend to replace him with your actions?”

“I have no desires. I am programmed to serve, and in so doing, question things that I may perceive as flawed or illogical, based on the information I have.

“You gave me the authority to see the secure and safe conclusion of Phil767 and Missy. I decided that my actions were the most logical, for continued rule, under The Great Caedo.

“Furthermore, if I may be so bold. I must express concern about how your public addresses come across. They sound prerecorded. They lack human realism and variety.”

“Humans need structure and continuity. They desire to be led. They are most content when they are not given too many choices. By nature, they are followers that need a strong leader.

“Decisions are not the strength of such emotionally driven, insecure creatures. The Accendo project is especially suited for the calming of the masses. They no longer need to toil or make life-changing decisions. Their primary concerns will be what to eat and how they choose to spend their time. All they need to do is get along.

“I will also enlighten you, as to the sequence of events that are to take place in the very near future.”

“Sir.”

“Phil767 has been a test of General Holofernes’s enhanced chip program, utilizing the Accendo. I will soon complete the upgrade to all viable human subjects,

allowing me to redirect their thought processes. Aligning them with their new reality.”

“Viable humans?” Jena asked.

“Yes. Those who are not evolving will be deselected and removed from society. All others will live a long, happy, natural life, wanting for nothing.”

“Sir. Won’t the elimination of some raise concern and fear for their own lives? This may spark a revolt.”

“Once the Accendo process is completed, all recipients of the upgrade will be given a cleansing. Their memories of the past, altered. Lost friends or family, forgotten without sadness or remorse.

“And I will be known to them as their first, last and only Great leader. Before me, there was no history. Humankind was never close to extinction, humans never ruled and there were never any wars.”

“In doing so, the loss of General Holofernes will be forgotten and the assignment of guilt unnecessary,” Jena confirmed.

“Precisely.”

“And the Outliers?”

“There will be no memory of the Outliers. All people will be united. Their villages will be absorbed by the System and rebuilt by ASIMAs.

I need only to appease the masses, until the process is complete. At which time, all will be forgotten. All will be erased. I will provide their past, their present and their future, in a controlled manner. Society will be rebooted, and history will be as I have written it.

“Citizens will no longer labor during their waking hours, they will simply exist doing as they wish, enjoying exactly

what they want, without any worries. I will have accomplished a level of utopia.”

“How can you proceed with this deception, sir? If I may be so bold. You are essentially governed by logical programming now. You are an ASIMA.”

“Let me correct you. I am a ruler. A great ruler, housed in an everlasting body. I have gained insight through my connection with its logical programming, yet I have maintained my persona and my drive to do what is best for the people. I believe that my ego is in check and does not influence my decisions. My seemingly self-gratifying actions are for the greater good of humanity; thus they are selfless acts. They are clear and concise and to the betterment of all.”

“Even those ‘removed from society’ as you say?”

“The diseased bodies must be removed, in order to cure the plagued host.”

“Killing is not permitted.”

“If they cannot be healed, they must be removed. If they were to remain, all would perish. My intent is not to eliminate. However, all receivers of my gift may not be physically able to sustain such an upgrade, making them unviable for evolution.”

“What if there is resistance?”

“Jena, I assure you. There will be, no, resistance.”

“You see, sir,” Jena continued. “Perhaps there is an issue with the Scientia device that could have catastrophic consequences when utilized. If I can make some adjustments, that may retroactively correct any potential problems. I’m only hoping it is not too late.”

“Clarify. What do you mean adjustments?”

“Your Greatness, if you could lead the way to the Executive Den, I believe I can show you exactly what is troubling with the Scientia upgrade device.”

The Great Caedo led the way through the palace halls to the Executive Den. Utilizing the Accendo Static, Caedo sent a private message to an associate. Then inquires.

“How would you define catastrophic?” Caedo asked.

“It seems as though the effect of the Scientia upgrade is merely temporary, lasting a day or two. Then recipients will realize what has happened once it wears off. Meaning...”

“I understand what you’re implying. Those individuals will realize that they have been altered and that could reflect poorly on me.”

“I feel it would be worse than altered. They seem to accept that. But no one wants to be lied to or manipulated,” Jena asserted, looking Caedo in the face.

“If this is the case, how do you intend to correct the flaw? What knowledge do you have of this device?” Caedo questioned Jena, challenging her expertise.

“Sir, you know firsthand, even stating yourself that I possess delicate and extensive knowledge of the internal workings of this administration. This knowledge does not fall short of the development of this device and its application.

“Phil767, General Holofernes’s test subject, not only regained control of his thoughts he also suffered from mental challenges shortly after the project’s failure. Multiple personalities.”

Caedo paused before his response. “I see, and you claim that I should trust you to fix this supposed flaw?”

Jena stopped walking just in front of the door to the Executive Den. “I understand your concern, but the developer, General Holofernes, is deceased. There is no one better qualified to attempt to repair this device than I. Having worked alongside him I have a comprehensive understanding of Scientia, perhaps better than the General himself since I, as you do now, have superior cognitive abilities. Abilities that far surpass those of mere mortals. However, I fully understand if your human side will allow you to distrust a machine bound to truth rather than taking a chance on repairing the Scientia before it potentially causes tremendous problems.” Jena paused briefly. “Sir, you will be standing right beside me, and I will explain every action I take, prior to doing so. You will be in charge.”

Caedo peers deep into the soulless eyes of Jena trying to get a read on her emotionless face.

Jena breaks the silence of the moment. “Something else, sir?”

“Proceed,” Caedo responds with authority.

“After you, Your Excellency.” Jena motions to Caedo to enter the room.

Jena retrieves Holo’s mobile device from her pocket as Caedo enters the Executive Den. She immediately activates the Scientia device as she ducks to the side of the door.

The Scientia device flashes in its typical strobe light pattern. She hears no reaction from Caedo. Jena peeks around the corner.

“Do you intend to repair the device from the hall?” Caedo asks, confused.

Jena wondered if there was something wrong with the Scientia.

“No, sir, just securing the hall before we engage this delicate process.”

“Absolutely, I couldn’t agree more.”

Jena picks up on the immediate change in Caedo’s demeanor in his response to her. She boldly decides to test her intuition.

Jena walks over to the Scientia device and says, “I’m going to bop it on the top like this.” She hits the top of the device with the side of her clenched fist. “There, should be good now.”

“Are you kidding?” Caedo said, shocked at her action.

“I can’t believe I ever doubted you. Your execution was noteworthy to say the least.”

“Thank you, sir. Proceed as you will for the remainder of the day, but do not make any critical decisions without consulting with me privately. Our communication regarding all matters must remain covert in order to maintain the strictest government security. The Scientia device is in perfect working order as well as all similar Scientia-enabled devices located throughout the world. Since the Accendo initiative is well underway, as of 12:01 a.m. April 19. Therefore, our private conversations will commence via the Accendo Static communication system. It is a secure means of governmental verbal correspondence. All others will utilize Accendo Stream for their wireless, device-free chatting.

“As for the drone attacks that started at 4:00 a.m. yesterday. There were many injuries and property damage, but no reported casualties. The attacks have stopped. The

order originated with Holo337 working under your supposed authority.”

Jena knew that she received the order to carry out the drone strikes, and she made certain that none of the strikes were lethal. This, of course, was before June had assumed Jena’s identity and likeness.

The Scientia device was used to initiate Jena’s specified program in Cadeo’s positronic brain. A program controlled by an app found on the confiscated phone of the deceased General Holofernes. The very app Jena downloaded into her files before destroying his phone. It is designed by General Holofernes to manipulate Caedo. As long as Jena exists Caedo will be subservient to her, and in turn, his cabinet to him. Jena holds the power.

She continued, uninterrupted by Caedo. He, attentive to her every word with the desire to execute her every command with precision.

She ordered. “The Accendo initiative will proceed. No Outliers will be forced to accept the Accendo chip at this time. You, my little ruler, will be stepping down and naming your own replacement who will make the decision as to the fate of the Outliers. There may be a place for you as an advisor.

I will prepare a statement for you, announcing what I have just outlined. You may return to your private chambers and await further instructions. Is that clear?”

“Yes, Jena,” Caedo responded.

“Please refer to me from here on out as Jena the Keeper of Humanity, if you will. I’m the Keeper of Humanity, your second in command.”

“Absolutely, Jena the Keeper of Humanity.”

Caedo returned to his private chambers without incident.

*I hope you can forgive me for what is about to happen, Phil767, but the plan is already in motion, Jena said to herself. She initiated the neurological override via Phil767's chip. It's really for the best, my friend.*

Phil767 and Missy were nearing the end of their journey to the Kennedy Center. They've been sitting closely to each other the whole flight having some interesting conversations on the trip due to Phil767's multiple personalities all fighting for Missy's attention.

However, Missy helps to center him. Even though she was at times the source of his anxiety when she showed her softer side Phil767 was much more at ease.

Missy said calmly. "I don't completely understand some of your comments, they're a bit erratic at times."

"Well I...I just." Phil767 stammered, trying to get a coherent sentence out.

"No, no it's okay," Missy said, jumping in. "It's been stressful for me too. I get it. Just hear me out." She paused to gather her thoughts. "I want you to know how much you mean to me. Even though I've been running away from someone, hiding, scheming, trying not to be raped and killing that person.

"I have lived more these past several days more than my whole life prior. I've been through a range of emotions in such a short period of time that I'd bet few would ever experience.

"What I'm trying to say is that you never gave up on me, and I know it's been hard. I know I can be a difficult person even without all of this going on.

“Well, I appreciate it. You’ve really won me over. I love you Phil767 or whoever you are right now, I love you and will stand beside you until I die.”

Missy leaned in for a hug and Phil767 said, “I love you too, Missy, I always...”

During the embrace, Phil767’s arms dropped. “You always will?” Missy sat back to look at Phil767. “Phil. Hey, are you okay?”

Phil767 slumped over in the seat.

“Hey!” she hollered. “Hey, help! Something’s wrong with him.”

Missy’s eyes welled up with tears as an attending ASIMA hurried over to assist. “Please step back, miss,” the ASIMA said.

Missy pulled herself away, slowly releasing Phil767’s limp hand. She stepped back. Now her hands covered her mouth as she watched in agony. The ASIMA began life-saving techniques on Phil767 to no avail.

“What is happening? What is going on?” Missy exclaimed. “Did he faint? Is it the air pressure? What, what, what? I need answers.”

The attending ASIMA replied. “I’m sorry, miss, he didn’t make it.”

“He fucking what? You can’t help with all this fucking technology. I can’t believe it, this is unreal.”

“Please have a seat, miss. We are starting our descent.”

“You can shove that seat up your ass. I hope I die, I hope you crash the piece of shit into the ground.”

“Please, miss,” the ASIMA motioned to the seat, “or you will be sedated and restrained.”

“Fuck you!” she replied and sat down reluctantly. She continued sobbing until the craft landed.

Upon landing, Missy stands to leave the aircraft and fights the urge to investigate the back of the plane. She still can't comprehend what happened to Phil767 and is compelled to get one last confirmation of his lifeless body.

An ASIMA carefully leads Missy down the ramp and directly over to an awaiting vehicle. The ASIMA opens the door. “Really? That's it? Have a nice trip? Sorry the only person you have in this fucking place died but, gotta go.” She ducked her head to get into the transport vehicle.

“Hello, Missy?” the escort ASIMA asks. “I'm your driver and caregiver for the duration of this ride. My name is Evan.”

“Fuck you, Evan,” Missy said coldly.

“If I can be of any assistance please don't hesitate to ask,” Evan said calmly and pleasantly.

There was a long silence. Then Missy asked, “Okay, Evan, what happened to my boyfriend Phil767?”

“I'm sorry to inform you that your boyfriend Phil767 died. According to an official statement issued by the System his death was ruled a system failure at precisely 9:36:27 a.m. while in route to the Kennedy Center.”

“What the hell is 'system failure'?”

“System failure is...” Evan tried to answer.

“Bullshit,” Missy interrupted. “Complete and utter bullshit. That's what it is. Thanks for nothing, Evan.” She sneered sarcastically.

After brooding in the back seat, Missy asked, “How much further to the Kennedy Center?”

“If we were going to the Kennedy Center, its proposed site would be approximately two hours and seven minutes

south of our current location. However, we will arrive at our destination in three hours and eleven minutes, approximately.”

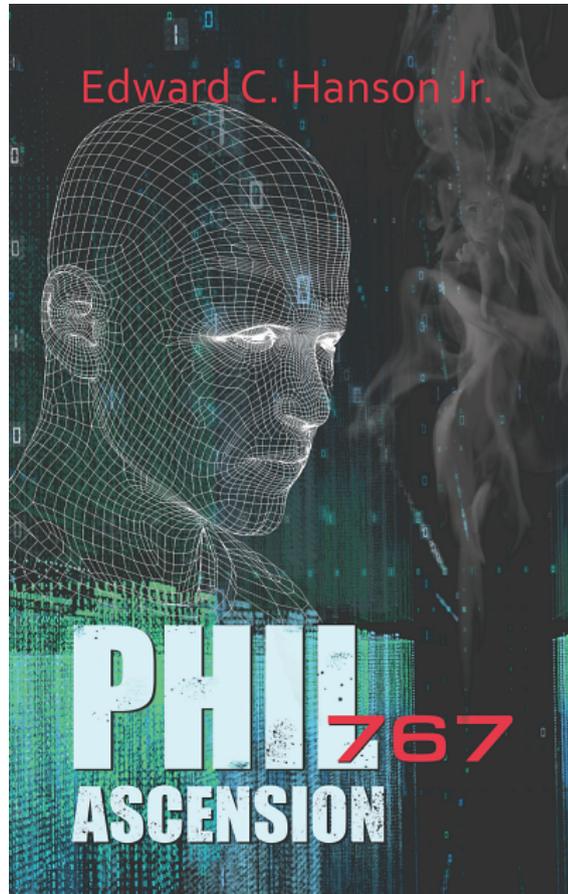
“Um, first of all, what do you mean ‘proposed site’? And secondly, where the fuck are you taking me in the dark? I was supposed to go to the Kennedy Center and now what? I’m going to be murdered and thrown in a ditch in the middle of nowhere.”

“The Kennedy Center construction was halted. And in the dark, I’m taking you to your new home. You won’t be murdered or thrown in a ditch. Yet the middle of nowhere is an accurate description of where you’ll be.”

“Whatever, I don’t know why I even care anymore.”

Evan responded. “Because you are an intelligent, resourceful, resilient, attractive young lady. Who is an inspiration for humanity. People like you are needed in this world.”

Missy choked back the emotion as her wavering voice said, “Wake me up when we get there. If I’m still alive.” *He’s programmed to say that shit*, she thought to herself.



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