

MACHINE WORLD

Series Proposal

Christof Bove
Junto Entertainment
5001 Wilshire Blvd, Ste 112
Los Angeles, CA 90036
213-841-8435
213-234-4545/fax
www.juntoent.com

THE WORLD

It is the not too distant future. Humans are pitted in a war against an enemy of their own creation: Intelligent MACHINES. At the moment our series begins, the MACHINES have already taken control of most of the United States. Their capital is our former capital, Washington D.C. Their agenda is simple: Conquer and Control. They want a pure society over which they can impose a strict class hierarchy with humans at the bottom.

Historically this moment is analogous to 1939, when Hitler started his imperialistic invasion of Europe. Like the Nazi regime, the MACHINES are at the beginning of their violent expansion. And like resistance groups in Europe of that earlier era, scattered groups of humans fight the MACHINES from independent, underground cells.

There are two classes of MACHINES: the Elites and the Soldiers. The ELITES are the original group of humans who masterminded the design, manufacture and overall plan for creating Intelligent MACHINES. They look just like humans because they are re-engineered humans. Into formerly human bodies, they injected a complex nano-tech organism that invaded and transformed human flesh and bone. They not only internalized armor but also made human thought efficient and therefore faster. In a very real sense, they represent a possible evolutionary step for the human species. And yet no one can predict the long-term consequences of "playing with God's design."

The SOLDIERS are robots of the future. Designed originally to save humans from the atrocities of violence, whether crime or warfare, they were co-opted by the ELITES to be their foot soldiers.

MACHINE WORLD looks and feels like today, except for this Nazi-like menace. Humans live in Villages that are basically prison camps, though they look much like your typical American suburb.

Ironically, the humans still perform most jobs; without their work, society would cease to function. The ELITES, however, have "plans" for the humans. We learn about the goals of the ELITES as the series progresses.

Even worse off than the humans living in Villages are the CONVERTS. These are humans who have been caught resisting

MACHINE domination. They have been enslaved by the MACHINES via the CONVERSION PROCESS, by which nanobots reconfigure the brain. Figuratively and literally this is a mental shackle. At the beginning of our series, everyone believes that CONVERSION is irreversible.

OUR HEROES

They are four teens from very different corners of the same small New England town who have survived subjugation and evaded capture by their wits, spirit and nomadic lifestyle.

Our heroes travel America, pursuing clues about how to defeat the MACHINES. The clues come from many places and lead them from location to location: Gettysburg, Washington DC, NYC, the Florida Keys, etc.

Over the course of the series, we search for the MACHINE WORLD's source of intelligence and power. This is the Holy Grail the kids are trying to find and destroy. Or so they think. As the series progresses, they discover that there is more mystery and intrigue than they could have ever imagined.

They are an unlikely group of freedom fighters, but we will learn that as a group, not individually, they hold the key to hope for the human race.

ORION is a senior from a snooty boarding school. He does everything he can do to hide the fact that he has been raised a "rich white boy" but sometimes it shows. We find out eventually that his dad worked for BRAINMAP, a privately owned company contracted by the government to design intelligent machines. In other words, ORION's dad was on the team of scientists who created the MACHINES. ORION has fragmented dreams that may lead us to the MACHINE WORLD's source of intelligence and power. He jots down the phrases, names, places and images from his dreams into a journal that he carries, secretly, with him. ORION has no idea if these dreams are memories or visions, "real" or "made up". He has no idea where these dreams come from but they are frequently related to his dad's work. ORION is tortured by this. He does NOT want the rest of the group to know who his dad was or that he's having these dreams. And yet, he may have a better passive knowledge of "what's really going on" than he thinks.

SPARK & PLUG aka THE SPROCKETS: Two Mexican brothers raised by their dad in his auto shop. They're very close and finish one another's sentences when they're not clobbering each other. They're very Cheech & Chong, but without the pot smoking. Constantly giving each other a hard time. They are rabid baseball fans always talking statistics and fighting over best plays and best games. The lack of professional baseball to watch in the MACHINE WORLD makes them crazy. So crazy that they are in the process of memorizing the history of baseball so they can relive the games. They both are constantly throwing things to (or at) each other.

Because their mom died when they were young, leaving their dad to raise them alone, the SPROCKETS were *literally* raised by their dad and his mechanic-buddies. The boys ate, slept, played and later on did their homework in the shop. There's nothing these guys can't fix or build. But beyond that, they have an innate understanding of all things mechanical. It's almost as if machines "talk" to them. They see the ghost in the machine.

BETSY aka SLUGGER: Public high school jock, Betsy was a swim team champion. She earns the nickname SLUGGER from our heroes after smashing the crap out of a SOLDIER with Spark's baseball bat. Initially, she strikes us as pretty and bland but can be snarky and defensive as well. She's also wicked-funny and has a way of throwing the boys off-balance. Betsy also has a passing knowledge of first aid as a result of having been a lifeguard. Despite her intellectual insecurities, she and the group come to realize her capacity for deductive reasoning (i.e. mystery solving and dot-connecting) is extremely high. She starts to make the boys seem slow, which spurs competition between the sexes.

JERSEY: Mysterious and a bit sullen, Jersey doesn't talk much. As a result, initially we don't really know who he is, except that he's been living alone and by his wits; in other words, he's a little thief. Jersey was on his own for so long that he doesn't trust anyone. Trust is a 2-way street and this makes for trouble within the group. Eventually we learn his back-story and where the chip on his shoulder comes from. When we first meet Jersey, he is in the process of trying to steal something way out of his league.

But this reveals another aspect of his character: he is wild and fearless and, quite literally, has his own bag of tricks. Our heroes need him.

THE PILOT

Teaser: An uninhabited suburban housing development in New Jersey. When we first meet ORION, BETSY, and the SPROCKET BROS they're driving a hydrogen-powered mini-van and a truck, clearly hugging the margins of the suburb for safety. The SPROCKET BROTHERS spot a high-tech MACHINE VEHICLE abandoned by the side of the road. As they approach it, they see a pair of beat-up boots sticking out of the open front door. The boots belong to a kid who's trying to hot-wire the truck.

The SPROCKET BROS manage to start the experimental MACHINE VEHICLE just as an older-looking version of the same MACHINE VEHICLE, manned by two SOLDIERS, appears down the road. A wild chase ensues and our group narrowly escapes largely due to some explosive tricks that Jersey has in his backpack. He also shows a real talent for driving and accidentally unleashes a few of the trucks defensive features. (Over the course of the first season, this vehicle will continue to reveal sophisticated and useful features that help our group to escape the MACHINES and pursue their mission. This vehicle makes KITT look like a Matchbox car.)

ACT 1: Puzzled by his silence, our team works at getting to know their new member. They toy with "The Mad Bomber" and "La Bombadera", and finally settle on JERSEY. It sticks. JERSEY's practical knowledge of explosives makes him even more mysterious than his silence and VERY valuable. While chance encounters with the ELITE are rare, SOLDIERS are everywhere and it's not always possible to "blend in".

As they drive along in all three vehicles, they talk about JERSEY on their closed-circuit walkies. They give one to JERSEY so he can listen. "We got no secrets, man," states one of the SPROCKET BROS. Through JERSEY's walkie we hear about the TEAM's current mission. They have information that makes them believe Betsy's dad is being held at a CONVERSION CAMP outside Trenton. As JERSEY listens to the team's plan, he shakes his head and looks down at the walkie in disbelief. It's clear he

thinks this group is insane. Furthermore, what BETSY, THE SPROCKET BROS and JERSEY don't know is that the information about her father is actually based on one of ORION's dreams. This will both help them and hurt them.

As the convoy moves on to Trenton, they show us some "tricks of the road". We also learn a little bit more about each of them.

In this act, we also see and learn more about MACHINE WORLD and how the TEAM navigates while trying to stay safe. We also start to learn about the goal of their mission to stop the MACHINES.

By nightfall, they're on the outskirts of Trenton. The kids hide their vehicles and make their way toward the CONVERSION CAMP.

ACT 2: Infiltrating the CONVERSION CAMP. These facilities are heavily guarded and very isolated, which shrouds them in a sinister mystery, making them a more affective threat against human rebellion. The TEAM scouts the CAMP to plan their break-in, which, as far as they know, has never done before. It's clearly going to be very risky.

In this act, we learn more about each team member's personal story. We also start to learn about what they do and do not tell each other. In spite of what one of the SPROCKET BROS said earlier to JERSEY, our heroes do have a few secrets. These secrets will cause important plot points later in the series.

ACT 3: Breaking-in part 1. Narrowly avoiding detection, the TEAM makes it into the CAMP. They are amazed and dumbfounded by what they discover. What looks like a prison facility from the outside is actually a lab or a hospital on the inside. Our TEAM doesn't quite know what to make of the HUMANS sitting in paper gowns at computers wearing headsets. HUMANS in paper gowns running on treadmills or lifting weights. It looks more like a rehab facility than a prison. This is not at all what they expected.

The TEAM begins searching for BETSY's dad.

ACT 4: Breaking-in part 2. The TEAM cannot find BETSY's dad, and time is now up. They are discovered and must flee. But their mission is not a total bust. They are able to rescue one victim, a man in his early 20s. His name is GREG.

The TEAM makes their escape, but not without another wild chase and, ultimately, a sacrifice. They are forced to blow up one of their own vehicles containing valuable equipment. Fortunately, they have JERSEY's vehicle.

ACT 5: The TEAM finds a hideout where they can assess their situation and plan their next move/mission. The SPROCKET BROTHERS get acquainted with the MACHINE VEHICLE and work at making it less recognizable. Meanwhile the rest of the group questions the young man they rescued.

GREG is able to communicate, but only in seemingly disconnected fragments. There is clearly something wrong with him. He has the tell-tale port in his chest for infusing nanobots. The TEAM discusses the many ways in which GREG might be dangerous and even considers ditching him. While this conversation ensues, JERSEY watches GREG and notices his right hand moving. He pulls some paper and a pen out of his backpack and hands them to GREG who immediately starts drawing schematics of some sort.

BETSY realizes that GREG is drawing a map, but of what they are not sure. They press GREG for more. He draws a schematic of one more piece and it dawns on BETSY: A piece of this reminds her of the Fort Gorges in Mine's Portland Harbor. She and her family used to spend the summers boating and exploring the islands. The fort was a real favorite. She and her brothers would act out imagined battles of the War of 1812. And in GREG's map, ORION sees something. A flash of a memory that makes him nervous but know that Fort Gorges is another clue and their next destination.

The Series

As the series progresses, our TEAM will come to realize that their resistance is not simply a fight against the MACHINES. They are in the middle of a war that may result in an irreversible blurring of the difference between man and machine. If our TEAM does not find the source of MACHINE power and intelligence and stop this process,

MACHINES and HUMANS will merge to form, in effect, a new species.

They learn that, initially a group of industrialists, politicians and scientists were simply working towards the goal of making smarter machines to better serve humans. But as their work continued and they were able to miniaturize the technology, they began to experiment with infusing nanobots into humans. The ELITES are the first generation of "successful" nano-tech humans.

As the series continues, we get to know some of the ELITES and it becomes clear that they are not all working towards the same goals. Like our TEAM, they too have secrets. Some heroic, some villainous and some simply human. One such secret we learn is the fact that somehow, without his knowledge, ORION was infused with nanobots. He is just like the ELITES. Will he be a force for good or evil?

A critical idea underpinning this show is the fact that kids live in a universe run by adults who have made a series of really bad decisions that may have permanently screwed things up for everybody. Adults have created a problem that other adults cannot fix. It's up to the kids. Each episode is a mission, during which each character will face physical and mental challenges, some of which might involve questions of ethics and morality, but all of which will involve daring and strength.