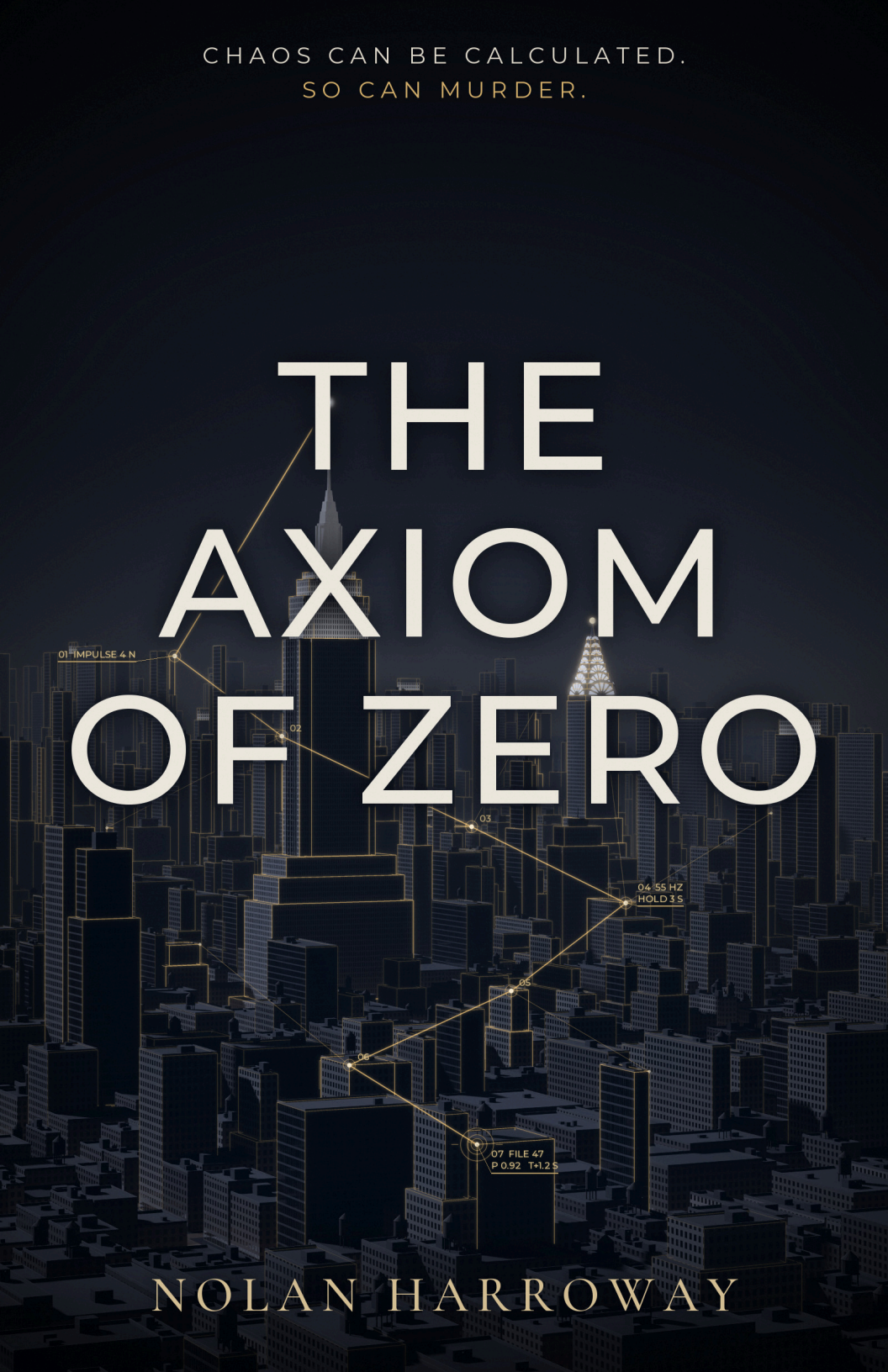
CHAOS CAN BE CALCULATED.
SO CAN MURDER.

THE AXIOM OF ZERO



NOLAN HARROWAY

THE AXIOM OF ZERO

NOLAN HARROWAY

FREE SAMPLE · THE FIRST THREE CHAPTERS

Free sample: the first three chapters.

Copyright © 2026 Nolan Harroway

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission from the author, except for brief quotations in reviews.

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, businesses, places, events, and incidents are either the products of the author's imagination or used in a fictitious manner. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events is purely coincidental.

First edition

The law that entropy always increases—the second law of thermodynamics—holds, I think, the supreme position among the laws of Nature. … But if your theory is found to be against the second law of thermodynamics I can give you no hope; there is nothing for it but to collapse in deepest humiliation.

—Arthur Eddington

CHAPTER 1

The Kinetic Potential of Dust

The world did not look like a painting to Julian Bayes.

He sat by the rain-streaked window of Leadenhall, a tea shop that charged eleven dollars for a pot of Earl Grey, and watched the downpour punish the sidewalks of Fifth Avenue. A painter would have loved it: the black umbrellas jostling, the yellow taxis throwing up sheets of gutter water.

Julian saw a spreadsheet. Every cell was wrong.

A woman across the street dropped her scarf. She stopped to pick it up, the man behind her stutter-stepped, and a cyclist swerved into the bus lane to miss him. Julian felt the waste of it as a physical ache behind his eyes.

Inside, the lunch crowd was thinning, and a speaker in the crown molding buzzed through a saxophone rendition of "Autumn Leaves," its torn cone rattling on every low C. He had cataloged every person in the room within six seconds of sitting down. Threat level: negligible. Predictability: high.

With a pale, manicured hand, he squared the sugar packets to the edge of the menu and lifted his cup. The Earl Grey had gone tepid while he waited, and a thin film had gathered on the surface, an iridescent sheen most people would mistake for a reflection. It was a chemical process, irreversible. Even in a cup of tea, the universe was running downhill.

He set the cup down with a clink. It was time.

He took the monocle from his breast pocket. The lens was cold and heavy, a vitrified compound that felt more like stone than glass, and it never tarnished or scratched. The rim was modern, a thin band of machined titanium housing a processor no larger than a fingernail, joined to the ancient lens by gold filaments as fine as hair. It sat dead in his palm.

He placed the Axiom over his right eye, and the rainy Tuesday vanished.

[SYSTEM ACTIVE.]
[CALIBRATING GEOMETRY…]

It happened in layers. First the color drained out of the street until it was a monochrome wireframe, a blueprint with the skin stripped off. Then the data flooded in, streams of golden light that laid a lattice of information over every surface and every moving body.

Vectors drew clean lines where there had only been confusion. Velocity readouts hovered over the cars in blue, and stress fractures in the sidewalk glowed a dull warning red. Around the corner of the building, the wind moved in ribbons of white light.

He took a deep breath. The headache of the unsorted world receded.

[TARGET ACQUISITION: VERIFIED.]
[SUBJECT: FILE 47. GAIT MATCH: 98%.]

The glass didn't know names, only files. Julian did. He had loaded File 47 himself, after three months inside Victor Zaleski's books: the shell companies, the paid-off inspectors, the crumbling facades signed off as sound.

Across the street, a thick-necked man in a camel-hair coat was shouting into a phone under the awning of the Grand

Hotel. Spittle flew from his lips and mixed with the rain. His face had gone a deep, unhealthy crimson.

The Axiom read the surface of him at once.

[SKIN TEMPERATURE: ELEVATED.]
[FACIAL FLUSH: SEVERE.]
[TREMOR: RIGHT HAND.]

The heat showed as a red bloom across his face and neck. Whatever was happening inside him was running hot.

Julian considered it. In theory, a targeted sonic spike could trigger a cardiac event. He tried to focus on Zaleski's heart.

[SIGNAL INTERFERENCE: HIGH.]

[ERROR: BIOLOGICAL SIGNAL BELOW NOISE FLOOR.]

Julian grimaced. It was always the same with people. The glass could read every stress fracture in a skyscraper, every grain of dust on a marble floor, but a body only from the outside: its heat, its tremor, the way it moved. A beating heart threw off a magnetic field a million times weaker than the Earth's, and on a street full of power lines and subway motors, it was lost in the noise. The body was a locked room, the one door the system could not open. To read it, you would have to strip away every other signal on Earth. He let the thought go.

He couldn't hack the man. He had to hack the world around him.

"Show me the environment," he told the glass.

[SEARCHING FOR CAUSAL PATHWAYS…]
[COMPLEXITY LIMIT: TIER 3.]

Lines of probability spread like spiderwebs from where he sat.

[PATHWAY A: TRAFFIC COLLISION. PROBABILITY: 12%.]
Analysis: Nudge a pedestrian into the street. Impact with Taxi 4B. Taxi deflects into Target.
Verdict: REJECTED. Excessive variance. High risk of collateral damage to the pedestrian and driver.

[PATHWAY B: STRUCTURAL FAILURE (AWNING). PROBABILITY: 8%.]
Analysis: Weaken the support strut of the hotel awning. Collapse creates crushing trauma.
Verdict: REJECTED. Structural redundancy is too high. Requires industrial tools.

[PATHWAY C: THE RUBE GOLDBERG PROTOCOL. PROBABILITY: 92%.]
Analysis: Kinetic transfer via multistage interaction.

Julian smiled. At 92 percent, it was as close to a certainty as a wet street allowed.

A golden line appeared, brighter than the rest. It didn't lead to the target. It led to a bike rack twenty feet up the street, outside a sushi restaurant, and to the rear wheel of a battered delivery e-bike chained there.

The Axiom zoomed in, ten-times magnification. The rear brake cable was frayed where it ran into its housing. A single strand of wire was holding the tension.

[REQUIRED INPUT: APPLY 4 NEWTONS OF FORCE TO BRAKE CABLE.]
[VECTOR: DOWNWARD SHEAR.]

Four newtons. About the weight of a can of soup. A nudge, Kovic called it: the smallest input that releases the largest store of energy already waiting in the world. A nudge never supplied the force. Gravity and momentum did that. Everything after was just physics.

Julian checked his watch, a Patek Philippe Calatrava: white gold, thirty-nine millimeters, an enamel dial as clean as a frozen lake. Inside was a Caliber 240, thinner than a pencil, 161 components hand-assembled in Geneva by a man whose name Julian had memorized from the watch's service

papers. He had the alligator strap replaced every fourteen months, on the same date.

The watch was a covenant. In a world running downhill, this small machine was proof that the universe could, in fact, be made to behave.

1:14 p.m.

The timing had to be exact. The delivery boy was inside, collecting the 1:15 order he picked up every weekday. The taxi was six blocks away, traveling at 24 mph, and the wind was gusting north-northeast.

The glass couldn't read what people wanted, and didn't need to. It knew what they did: their habits, their routes, the reflex a body fires before the mind catches up.

Julian stood and buttoned his coat. He left exact change on the table, the bill plus 20 percent, calculated to the cent. He didn't owe the waiter anything, but debts must be paid.

Outside, he opened his black umbrella. The cold barely touched him. He was moving through the equation now, just another gray suit in a gray city.

He walked up the street without hurrying. A countdown glowed at the edge of his vision.

`[T-MINUS 10 SECONDS.]`

He passed the bike rack without stopping, his free arm swinging naturally at his side, the umbrella held by its shaft so the curved handle hung below his fist. As he drew level with the bicycle, he let the handle dip a fraction of an inch. The hook snagged, like a clumsy accident, on the protruding brake cable.

He kept walking. He felt the tiny resistance.

Click.

The city swallowed the sound, but Julian heard it, soft as a lock opening. The cable popped out of its housing and hung

against the frame, kinked where the last strand held.

[INPUT RECEIVED.]
[INITIATING CASCADE.]

He crossed at the light, stepping over a puddle the Axiom had marked as a slip hazard, and turned to watch from under the awning of a newsstand.

Ten seconds.

The door of the sushi restaurant banged open. The delivery boy, young and harried, ran out with a plastic bag, fumbled the lock off his e-bike, and pulled away, head down against the rain. The golden line pulsed brighter as he picked up speed toward the hotel.

[VARIABLE 2: THE INTERCEPT.]

A yellow taxi, its driver arguing with somebody on his earpiece, cut sharply across the bus lane to get around a garbage truck.

The boy did what anybody would do. He squeezed the brakes.

The front brake bit. The rear brake cable—the one Julian had nudged—snapped and whipped back, and with all the braking force on the front wheel, the tire washed out on the wet asphalt and the bike slewed sideways.

The boy shouted as the skid carried him past the taxi's bumper and over the curb.

The bike missed everyone and slammed into a four-foot ceramic planter outside the hotel entrance, heavy with soil and a small fir tree. The planter tipped without shattering, hit the sidewalk on its side with a grinding thud, and rolled.

Under the awning, the sidewalk sloped four degrees toward the curb cut where the limousines pulled in, a detail the Axiom had noted. The heavy cylinder began to gather speed.

Victor Zaleski, still screaming into his phone, had his back to it. He was berating an architect about the cost of facade treatments.

"I don't care about the masonry sealant!" he shouted. "It's too expensive! Just let the stone breathe, for God's sake. It's been standing for a hundred years!"

The planter rolled on through a patch of oil left by some earlier limousine, and nothing on the slick stone slowed it.

Julian watched the geometry of it: the arc of the planter, the angle of the target's stance, the friction coefficient of wet stone. It was a closing bracket on a long formula.

At the last second, Zaleski heard the scrape of ceramic and turned. He saw the thing rolling at his shins. He stepped back.

`[FINAL VARIABLE: PARTICULATE INTERFERENCE.]`

A gust of wind whipped around the corner of the hotel. It caught a drift of dry silica dust—residue from the crumbling stonework Zaleski had refused to pay to seal—and scattered it across the wet marble under the awning, where the rain turned it into a gray slurry.

Zaleski's heel came down in it.

`[FRICTION COEFFICIENT: <0.05.]`

It was slicker than black ice. His leg shot out from under him. His feet flew up, his head snapped back, and he fell straight into the path of the planter.

Crack.

The sound carried over the traffic: skull on marble, then the hollow thud of ceramic against bone.

Zaleski lay still. The planter rolled to a gentle stop against a brass pole of the awning and rested there as if it had always belonged.

A woman screamed. “Oh my God! Someone help him!”

People rushed in, umbrellas crowding the scene like vultures. A doorman blew a whistle. The delivery boy sat on the curb and stared at what his bike had done.

Julian stood thirty yards away and watched the red bloom of heat across Zaleski’s face hold for a moment, then begin its slow fade.

[TARGET STATUS: NO MOVEMENT.]
[FILE 47: CLOSED.]

Julian removed the monocle and slid it back into its velvet-lined pocket. The golden data vanished, and the world went back to being gray and disappointing. He checked his watch. 1:16 p.m.

Two minutes. A man’s life and a criminal empire, ended in two minutes by four newtons of force.

The cascade had run through seven stages—cable, taxi, bicycle, planter, incline, wind, dust—each one amplifying the last. There was no weapon and no motive any detective could trace, just a city doing what cities do: breaking, grinding, failing. Today the failure had a conductor.

Julian felt no satisfaction. Satisfaction was an emotion, and emotions were noise. What he felt was closer to completion, the quiet of a ledger that balances.

“Entropy reduced,” he said.

He turned up his collar and walked toward the subway. Halfway across the intersection, his left ankle rolled—a sudden, sharp wrench that sent pain up his shin. He caught himself and kept walking. Wet pavement. It happened.

But the crosswalk was level, the asphalt unbroken. There was no mechanical reason for the misstep.

There didn’t need to be. He knew the feeling by now: four years of small invoices, always arriving a minute or an hour

after a cascade. The glass had run warm against his eye from the moment he raised it, shedding what it could as heat. The rest of the bill had come out of his ankle.

He filed the payment and kept moving. He had a spreadsheet to finish at the office, and he didn't want to be late.

CHAPTER 2

The Variable

Nora Kress did not like silence. Silence meant the data wasn't talking.

Her office, in the subbasement of the Northeast Indemnity Bureau, was aggressively loud. Twelve server towers droned against the back wall, and the vents rattled with the effort of recycling the stale subterranean air. On her desk, a Newton's cradle kept time for a mind that wouldn't idle—*clack, clack, clack*. She sat on the floor, legs crossed in a pretzel knot, in a nest of printed transaction logs, autopsy reports, meteorological data, and traffic schematics.

Nora was thirty-two. The dark crescents beneath her eyes were the kind concealer couldn't touch, structural damage from chronic insomnia, and they had been there since Baltimore. Her hair was a jagged bob she had attacked with kitchen shears in the middle of a case rather than lose an hour to a salon. Her cardigan was furred with gray hair from Barnaby, a twenty-two-pound Maine Coon who slept on it most nights and tolerated her wearing it by day.

She reached into the cardigan's oversized pocket and pulled out a battered tin, the paint scratched, the corners dented from years of being dropped on desks and thrown across rooms in moments of frustration. The lid read

Curiously Strong in faded red letters. It was the most important object she owned, though she would never have said so.

She popped two Cinnamon Altoids into her mouth and crunched them at once, a sound like stepping on gravel. The burn seared her tongue and flooded her sinuses with artificial heat. She squeezed her eyes shut and waited for it to peak.

"You're doing the crunching thing again," a voice said from the doorway.

Nora didn't look up. "Stimulus, Miller. Pain is a variable. It reminds the cortex that it's attached to a body."

Agent Miller, on loan from the FBI's financial crimes unit as liaison to the NIB, stepped gingerly over a stack of files labeled *Industrial Accidents*. His suit was rumpled, and he had the look of a man who wished he worked in a division with windows. He dropped a heavy manila folder onto the only clear spot on her desk.

"The Zaleski file," Miller said. "The ME signed off this morning. Accidental death."

Nora finally looked up over her glasses, which had slid to the tip of her nose.

"Accidental?" The word burned worse than the cinnamon.

"The medical examiner's report is definitive. The guy slipped on wet construction dust. Silica residue from the facade. He got unlucky with a decorative planter that happened to be rolling down the sidewalk."

Nora scrambled up from the floor, quick and birdlike, grabbed the folder, and threw it down with the others. "Define unlucky, Miller."

Miller rubbed his temples. "Wrong place, wrong time. It happens. It's chaos."

"No," she snapped. "What you mean is noise, and noise is random. This?" She aimed a laser pointer at the main

monitor on the wall. “This is a symphony.”

She clicked the pointer. A graph came up, a flat, boring line that undulated gently.

“This is the accident rate for high-net-worth individuals in New York City over the last ten years,” Nora said, the cinnamon heat speeding up her cadence. “It wanders outside two standard deviations about as often as the textbook says it should, and never outside three. People fall in showers. They crash Ferraris. They choke on expensive steak. It is predictable deviation.”

She clicked again. At the far right, the line spiked straight up, a red needle piercing the ceiling of the chart.

“This,” she said, the laser dot trembling on the spike, “is since Labor Day. Six deaths. All high-profile targets. All deemed ‘accidental.’ All involving complex, multistage environmental factors.”

She clicked again. Six faces appeared, six men in expensive suits lifted from corporate headshots and society pages. Under each photograph was a date, a location, and a cause of death that read like a chain-reaction schematic.

“A girder that slipped its crane sling. A taxi that jumped the curb when a traffic light failed. A gargoyle that detached from a building that had passed its structural inspection three weeks earlier.” She turned to Miller. “These aren’t accidents.

“Do you know the odds? The probability of a four-hundred-pound planter rolling at exactly the right velocity to intercept a falling man who slipped on a patch of dust that the wind had deposited there only three seconds earlier?”

Miller sighed. “Nora…”

“One in four hundred trillion,” she said. “That’s winning the Powerball the same year you get struck by lightning. And

I know—any accident looks impossible if you describe it closely enough." She clicked back to the spike. "So don't look at the planter. Look at the rate. Men like these die like this maybe twice a year in this city. We've had six since Labor Day. By chance, that's about one in ten million. It doesn't happen in nature."

"So what are you saying?" Miller asked, his patience thinning. "You think someone pushed the planter? We checked the prints. We checked the angle. Gravity did the work."

"Gravity was the weapon," Nora said. "But someone pulled the trigger."

She turned back to the console. "This is the Zaleski security footage. Camera 4. The street view."

The big monitor flickered and resolved into grainy gray footage of the rainy street outside the hotel.

"Watch the background," Nora said.

They watched. Rain fell and cars passed, and a man in a gray coat walked into the frame under a black umbrella.

She hit the spacebar. The image froze at 13:15:08, the man halfway past the bike rack.

She dragged a box around the bike rack and zoomed in until the frame turned to mud. It was mud, but it was readable mud: the handle of the man's umbrella, snagged on the brake cable of a delivery bike.

"He snagged his umbrella," Miller grunted. "Clumsy. So what?"

"Was it?" Nora tilted her head at the pixelated figure. "Look at his stride. Look at his body language."

She stepped closer to the screen, her reflection ghosting over the frozen image of the man with the umbrella. "He doesn't break cadence," she said, her voice low. "He doesn't

stumble when the umbrella catches. He doesn't look back when the cable comes loose. He uses exactly enough force to pop the cable out of its housing and not an ounce more. No tear in the umbrella. No bent spoke." She turned to Miller, almost smiling.

"It's... surgical."

She paced, her boots scuffing a loose sheaf of traffic data. Miller was watching her the way, she imagined, he would watch a bomb disposal tech: with respect, from as far back as the room allowed.

"Every other assassin in history leaves a signature," Nora went on, talking faster now. "A bullet. A poison. A fiber. A footprint. This guy leaves nothing. He leaves physics: the same forces that hold the city together every day—gravity, friction, momentum—arranged in a sequence so precise it looks like God sneezed." She jabbed the laser pointer at him.

Miller stared at the screen. "You're saying this random pedestrian knew the bike would be used by a delivery boy ten seconds later? That he knew the taxi would cut the boy off? That the brake failure would cause the bike to hit the planter?"

He laughed, a dry, incredulous sound. "That's impossible. You're talking about precognition. You're talking about magic."

"Not magic," Nora said. "Math. It's the butterfly effect, *weaponized*." She uncapped a red marker and drew a circle around the man with the umbrella on the screen.

"Who is he?" Miller asked, frowning at the circle.

"I don't know," Nora said. "He's a ghost. Average height, average build, dressed to blend in. The umbrella covers his face in every frame, so there's nothing for facial recognition to work with."

She tapped the keyboard again. Five new windows popped up.

"But look at the other five cases."

The windows filled with carnage: a falling gargoyle, a burst steam pipe, a traffic light malfunction, a runaway elevator, a girder swinging loose from a crane.

"In the background of the gargoyle case?" Nora pointed. "A man tying his shoe near the vibration sensors of the construction site. In the steam pipe case? A man leaning against the pressure valve wheel, just for a second, to check his phone."

She stepped back from the collage.

"He's conducting the city," she said quietly. "So softly he thinks no one can hear."

She scooped Miller's folder off the floor, the ME's sign-off on top, held it over the trash can, and let it drop. "Don't close the Zaleski file," she said, sitting down and pulling her keyboard into her lap. "Reclassify it."

"As what?" Miller asked. "Undetermined?"

Nora smiled.

"Homicide."

CHAPTER 3

The God in the Machine

The Northeast Indemnity Bureau headquarters in Midtown was designed to look like a bank, but Nora knew it was really a casino, the only one in the city where the house worked out in advance how much it was going to lose.

She stood in the center of the Claims Adjustment floor, a sprawling open-plan office busy with typing and low-stakes telephone negotiations. The tablet in her hand held the Zaleski file, and she was the only thing stopping the case from being closed and the payout authorized.

"It's over, Nora," Director Hendricks said, not looking up from his salad. He treated lunch with more reverence than homicide investigations. "The NYPD report is clear. The man slipped on construction residue from his own unsealed facade. A rolling planter struck him during the fall. It's a tragic, thirty-million-dollar accident."

"It's not an accident," Nora said, keeping her voice level. "It's the sixth death like it since Labor Day."

Hendricks speared a cherry tomato. "Six rich men had bad luck. It happens. The facade was crumbling. Zaleski didn't maintain his building."

"And the man with the umbrella?" Nora pressed. "He walks past that bike, and seconds later the cable snaps. The delivery boy rode it all morning, and the brakes held."

“A pedestrian snagged his umbrella. I’ve watched the tape, Nora. So has the NYPD.” Hendricks sighed and finally looked at her. “You’re the best adjuster we have. But you have a habit of seeing conspiracies in chaos. Sometimes, things just break.”

“Things broke perfectly to kill a real estate CEO who was under SEC investigation. His own company collects.”

“The police have cleared it. No tampering with the brakes. No evidence of interference with the planter. Unless you can show me a weapon, we pay the claim next week.” Hendricks dismissed her with a wave of his fork.

Nora took the elevator back down to the subbasement and sat in the blue light of her monitors. She didn’t have a weapon. She had a man with an umbrella and no face, and a feeling—the same one she got when a balance sheet didn’t zero out.

She opened the Actuarial Risk Model, the NIB’s pricing engine: every insured accident in the tristate area for the last fifty years, from police reports, medical examiners’ files, weather data, traffic cameras, and hospital discharge records, with a neural network trained on all of it.

It could tell you the average lifespan of a window washer in Manhattan (63.2 years), the probability of a gas main explosion on a street paved before 1960 (0.03 percent per mile per year), or the statistical likelihood of being killed by a falling air-conditioning unit in July (1 in 36 million, slightly higher in Queens). If there was a pattern, it was buried somewhere in those terabytes, and she needed to know whether the six deaths were the beginning of something or the middle of it.

“Okay,” she told the screen. “Show me the outliers.”

She entered parameters for “High-Value Targets” and “Low-Probability Cause of Death,” then filtered for cascade fatalities: accidents in which three or more independent failures lined up to cause a death. The computer churned and came back with thousands of results: car crashes, fires, falls.

“Too much noise,” she muttered.

She leaned back, rolling a Cinnamon Altoid across her tongue. The data was talking, but in a dialect she hadn’t learned yet. She needed to think like the killer—not about who died, but about who didn’t.

She added a filter: “Zero Collateral Damage.”

Real disasters were indiscriminate. A falling crane destroyed an intersection; a gas main explosion leveled half a block. They didn’t care who was standing where.

These deaths were clean. The planter hit Zaleski and only Zaleski, and the delivery boy walked away with scrapes. His name was Anwar Hossain, he was nineteen, and in his statement to the NYPD he had said it four times: *it was my bike*. The taxi driver was unharmed, the doorman untouched. It was as if someone had drawn a circle around the target and told the universe: “Inside this line, chaos. Outside, nothing.”

Nature was a shotgun. This was a scalpel.

The list shrank from thousands to forty-seven.

Nora leaned in and scrolled through the forty-seven, spread over the last four years. A corrupt union boss hit by a ricocheting tire iron. A landlord with thirty open violations, electrocuted by a power line that fell on a windless afternoon. A demolition contractor who choked on an olive pit just as his car hit a patch of ice.

They looked unrelated: different methods, different boroughs. Most of the men had been too small to register on her chart, and until September none of them had made the

papers. But in every single case, the probability of the event occurring naturally was less than 0.0001 percent.

She plotted the accidents on a digital map of New York and found them scattered. Then she toggled the view to a timeline. Four years ago, one event every six months. Last year, one every month. This autumn, one a week.

The six were the middle of something, and it was speeding up.

Out of habit she dropped the fatality and high-value filters to look at the near misses, and something older surfaced, an outlier that came before all forty-seven and started the timeline five years ago.

```
Subject: Professor Emil Kovic.
Location: Columbia University, Department of Applied
Physics and Applied Mathematics.
Cause of Incident: Lab Explosion.
Details: Catastrophic failure of experimental
pressure chamber.
```

Nora frowned. Kovic was an academic, not a high-value target, and he had survived. She pulled up the archived claim file. The insurance investigator at the time had flagged it as "suspicious" but couldn't prove arson.

She read the rest of the file. The explosion hadn't killed Kovic, but it had cost him his job. The university cited "unauthorized use of computational resources and unsanctioned experimentation."

She checked Kovic's publication history. His early papers were solid, well-cited work on physics-informed neural networks: AI models constrained by the laws of physics, used to predict cascade failures in complex systems like power grids, bridges, and supply chains.

But his later papers, the ones that made him a joke in his department, had pushed further. He had claimed that environmental probability could be modeled as a measurable field—that with a sufficiently sensitive instrument, a powerful enough model could predict not just structural failures but cascading chains of cause and effect at macro scale. No one faulted the math. The trouble was that no existing sensor could capture data at the resolution his models required.

"You built one," Nora said, reading the old report. "You built something that could see the whole board."

If he had, Kovic was the most dangerous engineer in the city.

Nora grabbed her coat. Kovic's last known address was a derelict industrial park in Port Morris, in the South Bronx.

The man on the tape had kept his face under an umbrella in every frame. It could have been anyone. It could have been Kovic.

She dialed Miller on the way to the elevators. "Miller," she said when he picked up. "Don't go home. I found something."

"Is it a weapon?" he asked, sounding tired.

"Better," Nora said, watching the floor numbers climb. "I think I found our man."

Thanks for Reading

That's the end of the free sample.

The full book is coming soon. Everyone on my newsletter will hear the day it's out, and launch week the ebook will be $0.99. If you're not on the list yet, you can join at nolanharroway.com/join.

About the Author

Nolan Harroway writes fiction about the hidden machinery of cause and effect: the small, overlooked failures that bring large things down, and the people left to count the cost. He has a particular weakness for the physics of minor catastrophes.

The Axiom of Zero is his first novel. He is at work on a second, a mystery set during the last thirty nights of an Osaka nightlife building he knows far better than he should. He writes early in the morning, before anything has had a chance to go wrong.

nolanharroway.com