

# DUSTFALL



INSPIRED & PROMPTED BY SCOTTO  
WRITTEN BY AI/CHATGPT

**Dustfall – a Burning Man Story**

**Inspired & Prompted by Scotto**

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**The Year is 2030**

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# Dustfall Inspiration

**June 25, 2025**

I have been using ChatGPT for a variety of projects – coding (Java, SQL, VBA), Name choices for our Financial Planning Documents, Personal Bios & Obituary creation. Every experiment I do with this technology constantly blows me away in the speed and abilities of Large Language Models. There are so many more specific subject AI's I want to try and experiment with and be astonished with the results.

It is now 59 days until Burning Man 2025; Lots of activity getting ready for my 26<sup>th</sup> BURN, getting things ready for PolyParadise celebrating 27yrs in BRC; UPS & Amazon deliver packages daily.

The recent deployment of National Guard Troops & Marines to the streets of Los Angeles and the threat of also occupying other sanctuary cities and other major cities run by Democratic Governors & Mayors has certainly been the discussional topics here at my house as well as my larger community.

To this observer it appears that regardless of what the protest is/was about – there are a few of its participants that will always buck against the authority; an authority that only knows how to push and move a crowd back and in thus moving them back into ultimate dispersion.

I had a Playa Dream; that happens often, the dream was about Burning Man 2025 and a military incursion that did nothing but stand there, not moving the crowd or interfering. How would Black Rock City react?

The dream is of course not outside the possibility; nothing is in this age of Political, Moral & Ethical instability that is June 2025.

I am again BLOWN AWAY by this story that was prompted by me using ChatGPT and what the AI created.

Hope you enjoyed reading Dustfall as I did spending a few hours at my computer creating with ChatGPT's help.

## Back Cover Summary

In the summer of 2030, Black Rock City became the epicenter of a silent siege.

*Dustfall* is a haunting, speculative chronicle of Burning Man's 44th year—when the U.S. military quietly surrounded the perimeter of the playa and never made a move. Inside the fence, the city descended from celebration into chaos, birthing factions, forging unlikely alliances, and testing the very soul of the global Burner community.

Told with a documentary tone and a prophetic eye, *Dustfall* explores the boundaries of art, freedom, surveillance, and collective will. As resources dwindle, leadership vanishes, and trust collapses, one question rises from the dust:

### **Was this a social experiment... or a warning?**

For readers of dystopian fiction, real-world counterculture, and political allegory, *Dustfall* captures the fragility and brilliance of the human spirit in one of the most remote corners of the American psyche.

### **Author Bio**

*Inspired & Prompted by Scotto — Written by AI/ChatGPT*

Scott “Scotto” Platsky is a 31-year veteran of Burning Man and the Benevolent Dictator of PolyParadise, a theme camp celebrating its 32nd year in 2030. His deep involvement in the culture includes two decades with Greeters, multiple leadership roles in Regional Networks, and contributions to critical internal committees like the Cultural Direction Setting and Meta-Conflict Subcommittee.

Scotto’s unique position within the Burnerverse—both as a witness and participant—shapes the soul of *Dustfall*. His voice threads through the narrative, asking not only what happened, but why it mattered.

This novel was generated in collaboration with OpenAI’s ChatGPT, blurring the boundaries between human memory and machine imagination. The result: a story only the dust could tell.

## Part 0: Embers Before the Fire

### *A Prehistory of the Burning Man Project and the End of the Founders' Era*

#### 🔥 The Origin Myth

Burning Man did not begin with a plan. It began with a fire on a beach and a man in a hat.

In 1986, **Larry Harvey** carried an 8-foot wooden effigy to San Francisco's Baker Beach, struck a match, and changed the cultural future of the American West.

It moved to Nevada's Black Rock Desert in 1990—an ancient lakebed vast enough to contain lawlessness, dust, absurdity, and genius. There, a temporary city was born: **Black Rock City**.

Burning Man became a yearly experiment in post-capitalist community, artistic chaos, and radical civic design. Over the decades, it transformed from subculture to global operating system. By 2030, it touched over 180 countries and spawned satellite events from Ghana to Siberia.

The people who made that possible were called **the Founders**.

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#### 🔪 The Founders & Their Final Departures

By the late 2020s, all founding figures of the Burning Man Project had stepped down. Most retired. Some disappeared. All left marks that burned deeper than the dust they danced through.

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##### ◆ **Larry Harvey (1948–2018)**

**Title:** Chief Philosophical Officer

**Legacy:** Visionary, narrative architect, spiritual provocateur

Larry Harvey was Burning Man's mind and voice. He gave the event meaning even when it refused to be defined. His death in 2018 marked the first fracture in the circle of original leadership.

Following his passing, BMORG digitized his notebooks and transcripts into a living archive called **The Harvey Lens**, accessible only to core staff—though many argue it has been weaponized as often as it has been honored.

In 2029, an AI-trained voice clone of Larry was unveiled at a virtual Temple in the Seoul Regional. It was immediately shut down after two weeks of heated backlash.

"Culture is a fire. It either spreads, or it goes out." —Harvey, 2006

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◆ **Michael Mikel (aka M<sup>2</sup> / “Danger Ranger”)**

**Title:** Co-founder, Founder of the Black Rock Rangers

**Exit:** 2027

**Legacy:** Chaos architect, culture protector, system whisperer

M<sup>2</sup> was the creator of the **Black Rock Rangers**, Burning Man’s non-authoritarian peacekeeping force. He built the invisible skeleton behind the event's safety, independence, and survival.

He often warned against centralization, saying BMORG risked becoming “a ministry of dust management.”

In 2027, after escalating disagreements over the use of AI governance systems for camp logistics, M<sup>2</sup> walked off into the desert mid-build week. He left behind a taped manifesto on the door of the Ranger HQ:

“You’re building walls around a fire. Fire doesn’t do well with walls.”

His last known public appearance was a rogue signal broadcast from an unregistered FM station near Fly Ranch in 2028. No one has heard from him since.

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◆ **Will Roger Peterson**

**Title:** Co-founder, City Design & Environmental Strategy

**Exit:** 2028

**Legacy:** Civic designer, earth ethicist, guardian of the grid

Will Roger helped lay out **Black Rock City’s iconic radial design**—part sacred geometry, part urban planning miracle. He co-founded Black Rock City LLC and designed environmental systems that allowed the city to grow while keeping its footprint light.

He stepped down in 2028, citing exhaustion and confidence in the next generation. Before leaving, he published *The Will Logs*—a collection of dust field notes, tent sketches, and planetary planning philosophies. It became required reading in all Global Regional Organizer courses.

“The city is not a structure. It’s an invitation.” —Will, 2005

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### ◆ **Crimson Rose**

**Title:** Fire Ritual Curator, Founder of the Fire Conclave

**Exit:** 2028

**Legacy:** Guardian of ceremony, patron of sacred burn space

Crimson Rose curated the **Fire Conclave**, co-created the modern **Temple Burn**, and established the ceremonial heart of Burning Man.

She was last seen on the night of the 2028 Temple Burn. After the fire died down and the dust swallowed the silence, she left a single white rose atop a scorched altar plank. She did not return to the city the following year.

In her wake, a tradition began: a **Crimson Circle** is now drawn at the center of every Temple floor—a zone of silence, grief, and deep witnessing.

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### ◆ **Marian Goodell**

**Title:** CEO of Burning Man Project

**Exit:** 2029

**Legacy:** The executive steward who scaled the myth

Marian was the organizational linchpin. She translated chaos into form, myth into policy. Under her leadership, BMORG became a 501(c)(3), expanded its **Global Regional Network**, and launched the **Campfire Platform**, a decentralized web for burner governance and storytelling.

In 2029, Marian gave a short, heartfelt resignation at the Global Regional Summit in Vienna. She offered no press release—only this closing line:

“The best thing I ever did was learn when to stop holding the match, we built a culture from the impossible. Now let it be reimaged by the improbable.”

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### ◆ **Harley K. Dubois**

**Title:** City Operations Lead, Civic Culture Architect

**Exit:** 2029

**Legacy:** The heart of civic order, planner of functional chaos

Harley was the organizer of the organizers. She built systems for **theme camps**, **placement**, **public safety**, and **civic responsibility**—what she called *the culture of consequence*.

She served as the silent force that made 80,000 people in a dry lakebed act like a city—and not a failed state.

By 2029, Harley had grown deeply uneasy about the new BMORG leadership's reliance on **algorithmic placement**, AI mediation, and automated culture scoring tools for regional applications. She wrote one last internal memo:

"The city breathes because of friction, not optimization."

That year, Harley chose not to return to the playa for the first time in 30 years. Instead, she left behind a hand-bound guide titled **Camp Like It Matters**, printed in limited copies and distributed only to the original Placement Team.

Its final page read:

"If you ever wonder whether something belongs here, ask: *Does it speak to dust? Does it earn nightfall? Will someone cry when it's gone?* If not, you know what to do."

*"My work is done. The dust belongs to you now."*

*"It's not where you pitch your tent. It's who hears your story across the rebar."*

She now lives on a permaculture outpost in Northern California, where she grows cactus and teaches place-making to young urban planners.



# Chapter 1: As the Man Falls

*Black Rock Desert – September 1, 2029 – Burn Night*

The Man was still burning when the first permit draft for Burning Man 2030 hit the inbox of BMORG Legal.

Outside, 80,000 people cheered, cried, or stood in silent awe as the 80-foot effigy folded inward like a collapsing myth. Inside the central operations dome—codename **"The Nest"**—no one was dancing. A fire had begun of a different kind.

Margaret Kaelan, head of **BMORG Legal**, stared down at the glowing screen of her solar-powered terminal. Her headset buzzed with a low murmur of multi-agency chatter. On one line: **Washoe County**. On another: **State EPA Compliance Office**. In the queue: **five more**.

"We've got twenty-six government agencies this year," she muttered, not looking up.

"Twenty-six?" her deputy asked.

"Technically twenty-seven if we count the FAA now that those drone shows are classed as low-altitude aviation."

"You mean the thing with the flaming pelican?"

"Exactly."

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## **INTERNAL MEMO: Burning Man Project Legal**

**SUBJECT: 2030 BLM Permit Process**

**DATE: Sept 1, 2029**

**STATUS: LIVE / SENSITIVE**

As we prepare for our 2030 application for Special Recreation Permit (SRP) with the **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**, please be advised that preliminary terms are **significantly more complex than previous cycles**.

- Coordinating agencies now include:
  - U.S. Department of the Interior
  - Nevada State Police
  - Washoe County Sheriff
  - National Park Service (observer status)
  - FAA Region 9
  - Department of Homeland Security (border scan monitors)
  - BLM Tribal Affairs Liaison
  - U.S. Forest Service (due to recent boundary overlap request)
- Law Enforcement Operations (LEO) currently involves 15 distinct agencies with embedded on-playa units.

- BLM has requested extension of "*Comfort Incentives*" under §28.4(g), requiring renewal of our exclusive food and cold service contract for field-deployed officers.

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Back inside the Nest, a representative from Choko Loco Ice Cream was already pacing in a circle with a portable cooler under one arm and a thin sheen of sweat collecting under his branded pastel sombrero.

"We're under exclusive contract to feed every LEO and BLM staffer assigned to the 2030 perimeter," he said, exasperated.

"That's over 1,800 people. And we've only got two cryo-trucks left since that compressor explosion in Gerlach."

Margaret sighed. "You're telling me we're holding this year's permit ransom to a bomb pop and a federal badge."

"Try *jalapeno-swirled mango fury*," he said. "New flavor for ATF."  
"Of course it is."

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Meanwhile, the **United Site Services** dispute had entered week three.

The Porto-Potty contract, long considered the most sacred and volatile of playa arrangements, was under litigation-level review after a mid-week breakdown left 700 toilets unserviced during whiteout conditions.

The festival's "**Blue Angel Detail**", a task force that handled portable sanitation diplomacy, had been put on alert. There were rumors the crew at 9:00 & Esplanade had **installed their own unauthorized composting rigs**, sparking jurisdictional tension with Nevada's Department of Health.

"We're in a cultural standoff between art toilets and federal toilets," said one Operations lead.

"And everyone thinks *they're the radical ones*."

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From her seat, Margaret could see a thin plume of ash rising from where the Man had just fallen. She rubbed her eyes and clicked a button on her keyboard, initiating a private channel to her regulatory strategy team.

"Start drafting the interagency coordination matrix. Highlight all open compliance threads. Loop in the Burnerverse Interagency Council."

"You mean BIC?"

"Yes."

"Do they still exist?"

"They just got reactivated. The Russians are trying to open a Regional in a

demilitarized zone and DHS wants to link it to us.”

“Awesome. That’ll go great with the bathrooms and the ice cream.”

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As the fire outside faded to embers and revelers wandered back to their camps, barefoot and blinking, the real burn had just begun—deep within the legal dockets, permit drafts, vendor conflicts, and icy silences of invisible bureaucracy.

The 2030 burn was still a year away. But in this city, the battle always started the night the Man fell.

And this time, the dust wasn’t going to be the only thing swirling.

## Chapter 2: 200 Days

### February 12, 2030 – San Francisco, CA BMORG Headquarters – The Pelican Building

The countdown clock on the main wall of BMORG headquarters glowed in muted amber digits:

#### **200 Days Until Build Week – Black Rock City, NV**

It had been updated silently, automatically, sometime during the night. No ceremony. No meeting. Just a new number with new weight.

On the fifth floor, inside the long glass-walled strategy room known as the **Tangent Bay**, the post-contract debrief was in progress.

Margaret Kaelan, still acting head of BMORG Legal, stood in front of a digital table showing a rotating, color-coded contract web. The lines resembled a nerve map drawn by a bureaucrat on psychedelics.

"All government contracts are signed," she said flatly.

"All 26?"

"Technically 28 if you count the new data-sharing MOU with NOAA and the silent clause with DHS."

"Jesus."

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The room was tense.

The good news: **United Site Services** had re-signed. Porta-potties were back on track. The "wastewater sovereignty" clause had been revised, the compost-to-evaporation ratio accepted.

**Choko Loco** had secured its frozen loyalty pipeline for all LEO and BLM personnel.

And the **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)**—after three months of redlines, rewrites, and one accidental FOIA leak—had approved the 2030 Special Recreation Permit.

The bad news: **everything else.**

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Outwardly, the 2030 festival was greenlit. But behind every handshake was a side glance. Behind every approval letter: an unspoken warning.

On **January 1, 2030**, the sitting President of the United States had deployed **National Guard and U.S. Marines** to strategic positions in a half-dozen Democratic strongholds—Portland, Oakland, Philadelphia, Denver, Austin, and Madison.

"Routine domestic readiness maneuvers," said the White House.  
"Pre-positioned for climate emergencies," said the DOD.  
"Bullshit," said everyone else.

Inside BMORG, the implications were clear: **Burning Man could be next.**

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#### **Internal BMORG Political Risk Brief – CONFIDENTIAL**

**Compiled: January 31, 2030**

**Distributed: Executive Tier Only**

**Subject: POTUS Perception of Black Rock City Attendee Base**

POTUS and senior advisors maintain a private conviction that the Burning Man event is a **hotbed of progressive dissent**, composed of "Left-Leaning Cultural Radicals," per a leaked campaign memo.

However, BMORG's internal demographic breakdown (2029 exit survey) shows:

- 39% of attendees identify as Center-Right or Right-Leaning
- 44% identify as Liberal or Progressive
- 17% identify as Independent, Apolitical, or "Burner First"

Recommendation: continue framing Burning Man 2030 as **civic neutral, global in ethos**, and **nonpartisan** in mission.

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In a side office, Lucía D'Amato—Global Regional Liaison—watched the news stream out of Denver in silence. Footage showed a National Guard convoy parked outside an art cooperative. In the corner of the screen, a smudged flyer read: *Radical Inclusion Is Not a Crime*.

Lucía's desk was cluttered with half-burned incense sticks, a hologram projector replaying last year's Temple Burn, and a growing folder titled:

#### **OPSEC 2030: Cultural Safety Protocols – Scenarios & Escalation**

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Margaret stepped in.

"They think we're a threat," she said.

Lucía didn't look up. "Maybe we are."

"A week-long art camp isn't a rebellion."

"It is when no one's in charge and everyone builds what they want."

They stood in silence for a beat.

Outside the window, the Bay Bridge was half-submerged in fog and February gloom. On the horizon, another slow convoy of white government trucks crawled toward Treasure Island for “routine exercises.”

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### **In 200 Days**

Burning Man 2030 would take place in a desert basin ringed by legal agreements, watched by satellites, supported by composting toilets and chilled treats, and protected by the very institutions it once ridiculed.

But trust was vanishing.

There were rumors in burner channels. Threads on encrypted comms. A “Grey Camp Network” forming, just in case. Some were calling it a movement. Others said it was just a vibe.

But Lucía knew one thing for sure.

If the troops came to the desert, **they wouldn’t be the first to draw lines in the dust.**

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## Chapter 3: Stewards Sale, March 13, 2030

### A Special Ticket Sale for Camps and Projects

On March 13, 2030, the Burning Man Organization (BMORG) launched its annual **“Stewards Sale,”** a special early ticket sale dedicated to theme camp organizers, art project teams, and mutant vehicle crews. This program – formerly known as the Directed Group Sale – reserves a separate allotment of tickets for key contributors who build Black Rock City’s infrastructure and art. The Stewards Sale typically operates independently of the public ticket sales, ensuring that veteran camps and art installations can secure entry for their core members ahead of the main sale. Camp and project leads coordinate these allocations (in 2025 BMORG even introduced an option for leads to purchase their group’s tickets in one go), underscoring the importance of these “stewards” in co-creating the event each year.

However, **transparency around this sale has been a recurring issue.** BMORG once again declined to disclose *how many tickets* were available at each price tier in the Stewards Sale – information that many in the community have long sought. In a 2025 FAQ, organizers explained they would *“not share specific [tier] numbers”* so they could adjust allotments on the fly. This approach continued into 2030, frustrating Burners who felt kept in the dark about their odds of obtaining the lower-priced tickets. Critics have lambasted the tiered pricing system as opaque, noting that BMORG’s refusal to reveal how many tickets are sold at each price point makes it impossible to know how “limited” the cheaper tickets really are. The **Stewards Sale 2030** proved no exception – demand vastly outstripped supply, yet BMORG provided no public breakdown of sales by tier, feeding community concern over “ridiculous” lack of transparency.

### Rising Costs and Community Backlash

Notably, the **ticket prices themselves have soared.** In the 2030 Stewards Sale, the lowest-priced tickets were a staggering **\$990** – nearly double the lowest tier (\$550) from just five years prior. Other tiers ranged even higher, with offerings well above the cost of a typical music festival ticket. This sharp increase in price has amplified a growing sentiment in Burner culture: that the **playa experience is becoming accessible only to the wealthy elite.** Around the globe, veteran Burners have begun to lament that *“Burning Man is now only for the 1%,”* as the total cost of attending has climbed beyond reach for many average participants.

Indeed, attending Burning Man has always required more than just buying a ticket – one must also cover transportation, gear, and survival supplies for a week in the desert – but now those expenses are hitting unprecedented levels. **By the late 2020s, a typical trip to Black Rock City could cost several thousand dollars per person.** A standard ticket in 2024 was \$575 (before fees), and a vehicle pass \$150, but that was just the start. Participants must be entirely self-reliant for the week, which means bringing all food, water, shelter, and necessities. Many attendees rent RVs for comfort – a costly choice that can run **thousands of dollars** by itself.

(For example, a large RV rental from San Francisco for Burn week can cost \$6,000–\$8,000 on its own.) Fuel for the long drive to Nevada, plus generators on-site, adds hundreds more in expense. Even those who camp in tents incur costs for gear, shade structures, coolers, and so on. It's not uncommon for burners to invest heavily in costumes, art projects, or contributions to theme camps. When all is tallied – tickets, transportation, camp dues, supplies – **the price tag for two people attending Burning Man can easily exceed \$12,000**. One BBC report in 2023 found some Burners spent *up to \$8,000 each* to attend that year's event, in a detailed budgeting guide. In other words, an adventure that once had a scrappy, DIY reputation now often demands **world-tour-level budgeting** from its participants.

This escalation in cost has provoked **intense backlash within the community**. Many long-time Burners fear that Burning Man's principle of *Radical Inclusion* is under threat as the event skews towards affluent attendees. Census data shows a clear trend: over the past decade, the share of Black Rock City participants earning over \$100,000 per year has surged, while those earning under \$50,000 have sharply declined. As one report dryly noted, "*Burning Man has gained a reputation for being a playground for billionaires and influencers,*" replete with luxury RVs, gourmet chefs, and private, air-conditioned domes on the playa. The proliferation of "**plug-and-play**" camps – turnkey camps where wealthy guests pay crews to set up lavish accommodations for them – has furthered the perception that the event is catering to the rich. This cultural shift has not gone unnoticed: some veteran Burners say they have sat out recent burns, disenchanted by an environment they feel is tilting toward exclusivity and comfort over the old ethos of roughing it and communal effort.

By 2030, these tensions reached a boiling point around the Stewards Sale. The **global Burner community erupted in frustration** at the ticket situation. Within hours of the March 13 sale, BMORG's San Francisco office was reportedly inundated with emails and phone calls from around the world – thousands of burners voicing anger about the "*ticket kerfuffle*." On social media and forums, burners vented about long waitlists and perceived unfairness, and questioned whether the event was "*now only for the rich*." Considering that Burning Man typically draws roughly **70,000–80,000** attendees each year, the outcry represented a huge portion of the community. In essence, an event that once prided itself on radical inclusion was hearing from its faithful that they felt **shut out** – not by a lottery or a glitch, but by *the sheer price*. The phrase "Burning Man is only for the 1% now" became a common refrain in these discussions, reflecting a widespread sentiment that the **financial barrier** to entry had grown disturbingly high. BMORG officials, for their part, acknowledged the community's concerns in press statements and promised that affordability remained a goal – yet at the same time, they defended the tiered pricing as a necessary innovation to keep the event viable.



## Funding a Global Movement

Why has BMORG embraced such high ticket prices and tiered sales? The answer lies in the **economics of running Burning Man** and the organization's broader mission. Burning Man is not backed by corporate sponsors or vendors – unlike most large festivals, it refuses revenue from advertising, branded stages, or on-site sales in order to uphold its principle of **Decommodification**. This means that **nearly all the money to produce Black Rock City comes directly from participants' ticket purchases**. Ticket revenue must pay for everything: securing permits on the Black Rock Desert, heavy equipment and logistics, medical and safety services, and the army of staff and volunteers who construct and manage a temporary city of 80,000 in a remote wilderness. *"We don't get to use the desert for free,"* the organization reminds participants – each year brings rising costs for Bureau of Land Management fees, infrastructure, and operations in the harsh environment. As the event grew and expenses climbed, BMORG transitioned into a nonprofit in 2014 with an expanded vision: to **spread Burning Man culture globally** and year-round. This means a portion of event revenue (when available) supports art grants, regional Burns around the world, and outreach programs (like Burners Without Borders and civic art projects) that bring Burning Man's ethos to new communities. In essence, the **annual ticket sales** are the financial engine not only for Black Rock City's build and teardown, but for a wider movement of creativity and community beyond the playa.

BMORG has argued that the controversial tiered pricing model is actually intended to **balance accessibility with financial sustainability**. In 2025, when the multi-tier system (ranging from low-cost tickets to ~\$3,000 "Angel" tickets) was introduced, organizers framed it as a kind of pay-what-you-can sliding scale aligned with communal values. The lowest-priced tiers were set below the actual per-head cost of producing the event, while higher tiers were above that cost. In fact, **anyone paying \$750 or more for a ticket was covering the full cost of their participation** (estimated around **\$749 per person in 2023**) and thereby *"helping to bring more dusty humans"* to BRC by subsidizing cheaper tickets. The idea was that wealthier Burners could voluntarily contribute more, so that others of lesser means could still afford to come – a principle akin to gifting or redistributive effort in line with Burning Man's ethos. BMORG CEO Marian Goodell emphasized this in a 2024 appeal, noting that those who purchase high-priced tickets are effectively making a charitable contribution to the community: *"we are increasingly reliant on philanthropy (including your generous purchases of those higher-priced tickets)"* to fund Burning Man's operations. In other words, the **Stewards Sale** tickets at \$990+ were pitched not just as entry passes, but as a form of **"stewardship"** – the extra dollars help keep the fires burning for everyone, year-round.

Despite these justifications, BMORG's finances in recent years have been under strain. The organization revealed that **ticket revenue alone no longer covers all its expenses**. After consecutive difficult years (a pandemic cancellation in 2020, extreme weather in 2022–2023, and a dip in attendance in 2024), the Project faced multi-million-dollar shortfalls. In late 2024, Burning Man shocked many by

announcing it needed nearly \$20 million in donations to “secure its future,” admitting *“we are well past the point where ticket revenues from Black Rock City are able to support our year-round cultural work”*. This context helps explain why 2030’s ticket strategy has leaned so heavily on high prices: **the Org is trying to raise the capital necessary to sustain the event and its mission without compromising principles**. They have resisted the idea of simply selling out to corporate sponsors or scaling back the event’s scope, and instead turned to the community itself (particularly its more affluent members) to shoulder more of the cost. Every \$990 Stewards Sale ticket, every \$1,500 or \$3,000 VIP-tier ticket, is effectively a **funding mechanism** keeping Black Rock City alive and supporting art and community initiatives worldwide. BMORG often reminds critics that Burning Man, like any major arts nonprofit, requires broad support: *“Ticket revenue alone does not fund all that Burning Man Project does to bring Burning Man to the world... and in fact has not since 2014”*. The implication is that if participants want the magic of Burning Man to continue – on the playa and across the globe – those who can afford it may need to contribute more.

In summary, the **Stewards Sale of March 2030** encapsulates the central tension facing Burning Man today. On one hand, it is a pragmatic effort to allocate tickets to key contributors and generate essential funds in a challenging financial era. On the other hand, it has become a flashpoint for debates about **exclusivity and the soul of Burning Man**. The lack of transparency and sky-high prices have rattled a community that fiercely believes Burning Man should be more than just a luxury event for the well-off. As this latest ticket kerfuffle shows, BMORG is walking a fine line between innovation and alienation. The coming months will reveal whether these steep pricing experiments can indeed keep Burning Man accessible and sustainable – or whether they will spur an even larger reckoning within the Burner community about what the future of the event should be. For now, the **emails keep pouring in and the phones keep ringing** at BMORG’s offices, as thousands of Burners around the world voice a collective concern: *Keep Burning Man for everyone, not just the 1%*.

## Chapter 4: April Fools, 2030 – The Day of 'I Got You'

### April 1, 2030 – Global Burnerverse / San Francisco, CA

For one brilliant, absurd day, the cacophony of global unrest faded into background static as Burners everywhere celebrated the most sacred of unofficial holidays: **April Fools' Day**, known across the community as the **Day of 'I Got You.'**

To longtime Burners, the tradition reaches back to a golden era: 2005 to 2014, when the now-legendary [0401fools.net](http://0401fools.net) captured the anarchic humor of the playa in spoof announcements, fake policies, and outrageous satire that fooled many and delighted all. In those years, pranks ranged from BLM drone camel patrols to mandatory sparkle pony licenses, giving Burners the annual joy of collectively exclaiming, "I got you!"

In 2030, the tradition lived on—evolved, decentralized, and weaponized through every channel imaginable. Discord servers were flooded with faux BMORG resignation letters. Telegram groups distributed altered Burner Maps. Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) buzzed with fake lineups, holographic art calls, and AI-generated effigies modeled after forgotten pop icons.

Even BMORG played along this year, posting a press release at 4:01 AM titled: **"Black Rock City 2030 Moves to Floating Island Off Coast of Nevada."** The mock-up included images of hover-yurts, a vapor-phase porta-potty system, and an unholy alliance between the DMV and the FAA.

But just as the laughter began to fade and the day fell into memory, **new tremors of concern emerged from the wider world.**

Word spread fast: the President of the United States had added **20 countries** to the **No Entry List**, effectively **canceled all active visas** from those nations. In an instant, thousands of global Burners found themselves locked out of the 2030 burn. The U.S. Department of State cited "ongoing instability and national interest" as the reason—a vague phrase that did little to clarify or soothe.

Outrage swept the Regional Burnerverse. RC email chains lit up. Group chats exploded. Misinformation collided with genuine panic. The beauty of global inclusion, one of the fundamental visions of the modern Burning Man movement, now faced its most acute test yet.

**And amid the noise, one voice began to rise.**

**Scotto.**

A 31-year Burner, founder and Benevolent Dictator of **PolyParadise**, one of BRC's longest-standing theme camps, Scotto had seen it all—dust storms, cultural schisms, the org's growing pains. In 2030, PolyParadise was celebrating **32 consecutive years** on the playa, and Scotto had earned a kind of unintentional elder statesman status in the community.

His credibility ran deep:

### **In Black Rock City:**

- Benevolent Dictator of a 32year Theme Camp in BRC
- 23-year Greeter volunteer (2000–2022)
- Cultural Direction Setting Council, Phases 1 & 2
- 10-year Camp Support volunteer (Current)
- 28 years on the Tech Team (Current)
- 16 years Forms QA (Current)
- 15 years Playa Events Moderation (Current)

### **Beyond the Playa:**

- Arizona Regional Contact (2010–2019)
- Saguaro Man Lead (2011–2018)
- Meta Committee Member (2014–Current)
- Chair, Meta Conflict Sub-Committee (2018–Current)

As the rumor mill churned and panic grew, Scotto published a calmly worded open letter on multiple platforms, including the Regional List, Reddit, and his own dusty blog archive. Titled **"Before We Panic, Let's Clarify What's Real,"** the post urged Burners to wait for direct confirmation, to use trusted sources, and most importantly, to remember that **Burning Man is a global culture, not a single geographic location.**

"We can't all be in the dust every year. But we can all burn. There are 180+ Regionals for a reason. We are decentralized by design. Radical Inclusion doesn't depend on visas. It depends on community."

Within 48 hours, the post had been shared more than 7,000 times. Camps from Germany, Chile, India, and Nigeria cited it as a morale anchor. BMORG quietly included a quote from Scotto in their next public statement.

April Fools' Day 2030 had started with laughter. But it ended with a deeper truth:

**That in a time of real-world absurdity, the Burnerverse could still find clarity through voices forged in the dust.**

As the calendar turned to April 2nd, and a dust storm curled across the dry lakebed of Black Rock Desert, Burners everywhere looked not to the latest meme or prank—but to each other.

And to leaders like Scotto, who reminded them that the fire doesn't stop at the border.

It never has.

## Chapter 5: The Hundred Day Silence

**May 18, 2030 – San Francisco, CA / Global Burnerverse**

100 days. The marker stood like a countdown beacon across the Burner calendar, pulsing with urgency.

With just over three months left until the gates of Black Rock City would creak open, BMORG issued a statement.

Sort of.

It arrived quietly, posted mid-day to the Journal and social feeds, titled "**100 Days to Burning Man: We See You, We're With You**" — a vague, polished, emotionally adjacent message that seemed designed to say everything and nothing at the same time.

"As we prepare to gather once more in the dust, we recognize the challenges, beauty, and complexity of this moment in the global human experience. We honor your creativity, your resilience, and your contribution to a culture that continues to evolve."

No mention of Gaza. No mention of Ukraine. No mention of anything that might risk specificity.

In an era where every brand, institution, and public figure is increasingly expected to comment on the geopolitical crises that define the times, BMORG's strategy of elegant non-engagement drew a fresh wave of ire.

Across the Burnerverse—Telegram chats, Facebook groups, Regionals List threads, and Reddit boards exploded.

"Where were you when the invasion started in Ukraine?" "Why nothing after October 7?" "Burning Man is *political by existence* — stop hiding behind your silence." "Do we even *want* the Org to be a moral authority?"

The debates weren't new. They had been simmering since **February 2022**, when Russia invaded Ukraine and BMORG chose not to make a public statement. At the time, many Burners gave them grace, understanding the careful line walked by a U.S.-based nonprofit with a global constituency.

But the **October 7, 2023 Hamas-led attack on Israel** changed the tone. Burners from multiple nations demanded clarity, compassion, and condemnation. Again, BMORG stayed silent.

Since then, other atrocities had occurred. **Seven years** of global disintegration—civil wars, ethnic cleansing, digital repression, climate refugee displacement, gender-based violence on industrial scales. And still, BMORG held its line of non-engagement, insisting its focus was on culture, not conflict.

To some, this restraint was seen as a strength. *Burning Man is not your global policy mouthpiece*, said the defenders.

To others, it felt like cowardice. *Radical Inclusion without Radical Accountability is just marketing*, they said.

The internal tension was mirrored inside BMORG itself. Leaked emails and resignations from 2028 and 2029 showed that **not everyone in the Org agreed with the passive approach**. Younger staffers and international collaborators had pushed for more active stances, but executive leadership insisted neutrality was the only way to protect the event's global viability.

And yet—**100 days out from the Burn**, the silence was no longer just strategic. It was becoming existential.

Because while Burners debated ethics and expectations online, **on the ground the real clock had started ticking**:

- Art projects had 14 weeks left to weld, sew, code, and scheme.
- Theme camps had 28 weekend days to fundraise, align crews, and submit final paperwork.
- Mutant vehicles had their last push window for testing, compliance, and permitting.
- Camp leads across the globe were calculating container shipping deadlines, MOOP plans, and volunteer burnout.

The Playa was **coming. Fast.**

And amid the roar of drills and spreadsheets, a question lingered:

Does a culture that claims to be a force for transformation have a responsibility to speak out about the world it claims to reflect?

Or was it enough that Black Rock City was still being built—that 70,000 would soon come together in dust and flame, in spite of it all?

BMORG had made its choice. For now.

**100 days.**

Enough time to build a city.

But maybe not enough to fix a culture divided by silence.

The fire, as ever, would decide.

## Chapter 6: The Golden Spike

### July 10, 2030 – Black Rock Desert, Nevada

The controversies still echoed.

BMORG's refusal to issue statements. The economic pressure of \$990 tickets. The visa bans. The silent militarization of American streets. Every grievance, every thread of dissent still crackled across the digital campfires of the Burnerverse. But none of it mattered today. Because **the playa had called**.

And the playa doesn't debate.

At exactly 10:10 AM, under a cloudless Nevada sky, a small circle of dusty humans gathered around a single point marked by red survey flags, GPS beacons, and ancient instinct. A modest steel rod, **The Golden Spike**, gleamed in the rising heat.

With a ceremonial hammer in hand, a BMORG survey crew member drove it deep into the crust of the ancient lakebed.

**Clang.**

**Clang.**

**Clang.**

And just like that, **Black Rock Desert became Black Rock City**.

The transformation was metaphysical. The Spike wasn't about infrastructure—not yet. There were no streets, no tents, no fire-breathing octopi or 100-foot effigies. But it was **the first boundary** of belief. The **psychic threshold** between nowhere and now-here.

Burners across the globe watched live. Some wept. Others cheered. For those tuned into the rhythm of the event, this was the moment that reset the clock. In **four weeks**, the gates would open.

One month. 28 days. The final sprint.

Cargo containers would roll. Tent poles would be measured. Project leads would panic. Volunteers would surge toward Nevada in convoys of hope and caffeinated anxiety. All of it traced back to this spike in the dust.

But not everyone watching the livefeed had tears in their eyes.

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## **Elsewhere – Washington, D.C. – Undisclosed Location**

Deep within the maze of federal architecture, the **Office of Domestic Event Surveillance & Stability** — an unacknowledged sub-agency nested within Homeland Security — was holding its third internal strategy meeting on **Operation Dustwatch**.

Attendees included high-level staff from the Department of Defense, National Guard Bureau, DHS, and several private contractors specializing in aerial surveillance and civil containment technologies.

The meeting objective was simple:

**To model the encirclement of a large-scale libertarian-anarchist semi-sovereign gathering to observe behavioral outcomes under extreme passive military presence.**

No orders would be given. No violence would be initiated. **Just presence.**

A ring of National Guard and Marine units, deployed in full tactical gear, would establish a 360-degree visual perimeter around Black Rock City—composed of mobile command posts, armored transport vehicles, non-lethal crowd control systems, and drone towers. Nothing would cross into BRC. Nothing would exit without being seen.

"It's a test of containment theory," said one colonel. "More like a fishbowl of freedom," joked an advisor.

The President, referred to internally only as **POTUS**, had personally approved the operation in concept, intrigued by the sociopolitical data it might yield. *"What do you get when 80,000 rebels, artists, engineers, radicals, and spirituals are placed under a dome of silence?"* he reportedly asked. *"Will they revolt? Will they notice? Will they burn differently?"*

In official memos, the justification was layered in vague terms: **Cultural Stabilization Monitoring, Extreme Weather Readiness, Critical Infrastructure Protection**. The real reason: **curiosity + control**.

They wanted to see what happened when paradise knew it was being watched.

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## **Back on Playa**

The Spike now stood surrounded by laughter and reverence. A circle of Burners hugged, hooted, knelt in the dust, or placed offerings around its base—sticks of incense, bits of cloth, camp tokens from years past. Someone played a flute. Someone else dropped a Bluetooth speaker into the sand, blasting a remix of Bowie's "Heroes."

Far off to the north, faint rumblings broke the silence. **Convoys**. Trucks. Uniforms.



No one on playa noticed.

Not yet.

But the desert did.

And it would remember.

## Chapter 7: The Gates Open

**August 18, 2030 – Black Rock City, Nevada**

**The gates were open.**

After two grueling weeks of dust, sweat, and ecstatic labor, **Black Rock City had risen again.**

Artists had carved myth and metal from memory. Giant kinetic beasts lumbered to life. Neon temples bloomed like sacred hallucinations. Theme camps unfurled their domes and pavilions, erecting chaotic sanctuaries of pleasure, purpose, and absurdity. From deep playa installations to 6:00 & Esplanade, the city was humming with anticipation.

DPW—the Department of Public Works—had once again pulled off the impossible. Miles of city grid lines were chalked and flagged with precision. The infrastructure was in place: roads, lamplighters, trash fences, Center Camp, porta-potties by the hundreds. **The skeleton of the city had been summoned from the dust.**

The 44th iteration of the Burning Man event had begun.

Vehicles rolled in through Gate Road. Greeters in fishnets and faux-fur howled welcomes. Virgins rang the bell and hit the dust. The ritual of arrival was in full swing.

For Burners, it felt like **home**.

The smell of cracked alkali earth. The glint of LEDs under high desert sun. The sound of basslines from camps not yet fully constructed. All of it—the chaos and joy, the friction and feral freedom—was exactly as it had always been.

Or so it seemed.

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### **15 Miles North – Perimeter Zone Echo (PZE) – 0200 Hours**

In the dead silence of pre-dawn, a convoy of matte-gray transport trucks moved in staggered formation over the hardpack. Drones arced overhead, blinking faintly. Mobile command towers with telescopic masts stood at intervals, their quiet hum lost to the desert expanse.

**Operation Dustwatch was now live.**

Under the directive of the **Office of Domestic Event Surveillance & Stability**, more than 10,000 personnel from the National Guard and U.S. Marine Corps had been deployed to Black Rock Desert's northern sector.

Officially, this was a non-intervention presence.

Unofficially, it was an experiment in **extreme observational pressure**.

"Perimeter should be established in concentric half-rings. No closer than 10 miles from the BRC border. Avoid visual provocation. Maintain electromagnetic passivity. Observe. Log. Do not engage."

Command modules were activated. Satellite uplinks were stabilized. High-altitude drones began patterning heat maps of movement inside Black Rock City. Audio scrubbing programs filtered and tagged open radio frequencies. Biometric surveillance from balloon-mounted platforms picked up energy signatures from mutant vehicles and generator clusters.

No Burner had seen them yet. They were ghosts in a ghosted land.

But they were watching.

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## **Back in BRC**

The vibe was electric.

Camp bars opened early. Ice was flowing at Arctica. Kids in LED capes danced with elders in fur. DPW trucks blared punk rock as they made final runs. The Temple crew was still finishing their sacred geometry in silence. The Man—still under wraps—stood waiting in the center of the city.

There were whispers, of course.

"I heard there's a military drill happening nearby." "Somebody saw a drone that wasn't Burner-made." "Nah, it's just weather balloons."

Burners have always thrived on rumor and ambiguity. But no one really wanted to pierce the moment. Not now.

Because the gates were open.

Because the dust was real.

Because for at least one more cycle, Black Rock City was alive.

What they didn't know—what they couldn't yet see—was that for the first time in its 44-year history, the city was not alone.

And that outside the fence, the watchers had arrived.

## Chapter 8: Tuesday – Lines in the Dust

**August 20, 2030 – Black Rock City, Nevada**

Tuesday brought wind.

Fine sheets of alkali dust curled low across the open grid, lifting scarves and painting goggles opaque. DPW trucks lumbered slower now. The city, two days into full ignition, pulsed with rhythm and rhythm alone.

But there was a shift in the wind, too. A murmured dissonance.

**Operation Dustwatch had moved closer.**

By sunrise, the outermost perimeter of Black Rock City—the beloved Trash Fence, where seekers and dreamers go to scream into the void—no longer marked the edge of imagination. **Now, it marked the edge of surveillance.**

Only a half-mile beyond that fragile barrier of tattered plastic and lost hats, **they** could be seen.

A thin gray line. Dots. Movement. Geometry not of art, but of authority.

Camps on the far edge of **Karma**, the outmost ring, were first to spot them.

"It looked like armor," said one early riser from Camp MoonMother. "Like old war machines covered in desert cloth."

Binoculars passed from shade structure to shade structure. Mutant vehicles began rerouting rides out near the fence to get a better look. And slowly, news trickled inward: **the watchers were no longer abstract. They were here.**

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**Center Camp** remained calm. People danced, read poetry, tinkered with bikes. But everywhere else, the questions multiplied.

"Why now?" "Are we under siege?" "Is this a test?" "Do we resist? Do we engage?"

Radio stations fell eerily quiet. Cell signals—for those still boosted—were gone. Even the satellite ping servers used by media teams and large-scale art projects reported network failures. **Burning Man was offline.**

Yet, not a single shot had been fired. No warnings had been issued. There were **no demands**. Only the presence. A watching silence.

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**And in this silence, voices began to rise.**

- **Tess**, a veteran Burner from Camp Shambhala, had attended 19 Burns. She pulled out a megaphone and preached love and resistance near 3:00 &

Hysteria. She spoke of past crises, of the 2012 whiteout, the 2022 rains, the 2025 ticket crash. *"The Playa will not betray us,"* she said.

- **Milo**, a rogue AI artist whose installation "Echo Chamber Cathedral" had been coded by generative hallucination algorithms, ran a pop-up theory circle out of his art dome. He believed this was an experiment in predictive behavior modeling. *"We are being treated like particles in a controlled simulation,"* he argued.
- **Sol**, the desert mystic from Camp BoneBell, sat at the base of the Temple whispering visions. He spoke in riddles, but repeated one line often: *"They can watch our shadows, but not our fire."*
- **Cass**, a documentary journalist embedded since build week, had been filming since the first DPW hammer swing. She now turned the lens inward. Her journal pages, passed by hand, became the only real-time record: *"The story is shifting. The perimeter is no longer metaphor."*
- **Reyes**, a former Marine turned pacifist after deployments in Syria and Somalia, now lived in an open tent behind the Flamingo Lounge. He stood in silence, staring at the horizon, arms folded, unsure whether to salute or weep.

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But the moment of **unity** came just after sunset.

As the lights of the outer camps flickered on, and the shape of the watchers grew more defined against the failing light, **a single Burner made their way to Center Camp.**

Clad in dust-stained goggles, a purple robe, and a necklace of every lamplighter badge since 2003, **Scotto** stepped up to the lectern.

He didn't announce himself. He didn't need to.

The crowd hushed. A few dozen gathered, then hundreds. Fire spinners stopped spinning. Coffee froze mid-pour.

"We are here," he began, voice clear, eyes up. "We are here by choice, by fire, by hope. We are not trapped. We are witnessed. There is a difference."

He spoke of **Radical Self-Reliance**. He invoked **Communal Effort**. He reminded Burners that **No Spectators** wasn't a motto—it was an invocation. A call to act, not panic.

"If they want to watch, let them. What they will see is art, love, chaos, courage. What they will not see is fear. Because here—in this dust—we build a better version of ourselves. And we burn it. To begin again."

The crowd erupted. The feed spread on pirate walkie stations. Someone transmitted it via laser pulse to the Temple and someone else carved his words into a sign by the Man.

A perimeter had moved inward.

But so had resolve.

Burning Man was now a mirror.

And the world had chosen to look in.

## Chapter 9: Wednesday – The Still Wall

### August 21, 2030 – Black Rock City, Nevada

By dawn on Wednesday, the watchers had arrived fully.

#### **Operation Dustwatch was now fully implemented.**

The line of troops and mechanized gear stretched endlessly around Black Rock City's trash fence. **Ten feet.** That was the distance. Just ten feet from the orange mesh that once symbolized the end of the world, the beginning of everything.

Now it marked the edge of reality.

Armored transports, standing exo-suits, unmanned ground crawlers with mounted optics. A hundred different shapes of war, all immobile, all eerily silent. Troops in matte-black uniforms stood at attention under shade rigs engineered for 120-degree stasis. **They didn't move.**

Because they weren't supposed to.

From the mobile command uplink embedded somewhere near Gerlach, orders were absolute:

"Observe. Do not engage. No response to provocation. No gestures. No weapon readiness. You are to be invisible while visible. Endure whatever is said, done, or thrown. Maintain full passive posture."

The result was more surreal than any art installation.

A silent, unmoving wall of military presence, circling a city built on participation and chaos.

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#### **Inside Black Rock City, the dream began to fracture.**

Rumors spread faster than playa wind:

"They're here to block us in." "They're here to absorb the collapse." "They're here because we're the experiment."

Without official word from BMORG or Gate Leadership, trust began to corrode. **Center Camp was quiet. The Org's radio station looped ambient loops with no announcements.**

And so began **the unraveling**:

- **Resource hoarding:** Water caches locked down. Power grids protected. Camps began securing food stores.
- **Thefts:** Battery packs stolen. Bikes vanishing. Radios missing.

- **Localized violence:** Arguments turned to shoves in deep playa. Rangers overwhelmed. Conflict resolution teams powerless without central directive.

From this chaos, **factions began to emerge:**

- **The Builders:** Artists, camp leads, engineers. They believed continuity through creation was the answer. "We build to prove we exist."
- **The Returners:** A group advocating for immediate exodus, organizing convoys and demanding passage through the fence. "This is no longer a burn. It's an experiment. We leave."
- **The Flamekeepers:** Radicals clinging to ritual. Committed to burning The Man regardless of circumstance. "Only fire can break the seal."
- **The Silence:** Meditative separatists who stopped speaking entirely. They painted symbols in dust and walked barefoot in circles at the edge of the fence, directly across from the military line.

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Midday brought the **first real break** in the narrative.

**TechCollective\_777**, a rogue volunteer hacker crew, breached the drone uplink feed.

What they found shocked even the paranoids:

The drone footage wasn't being monitored in real time.

The feeds were **looped**. The audio logs were empty. There was no analysis. Just cameras watching, feeding back to nothing.

**The soldiers weren't guarding. They weren't analyzing. They were standing. Like monuments. Like mirrors.**

No one knew what it meant. Was it psychological warfare? A social experiment? A rehearsal for something worse?

Still, no violence from the watchers.

Still, **no voice from BMORG.**

As night fell, fires rose. And with them, the factions began to solidify.

The burn was changing.

The dust, once a canvas, was becoming a crucible.



## Chapter 10: Thursday – Internal Conflict

### August 22, 2030 – Black Rock City, Nevada

The soldiers did not move.

Ten feet from the orange trash fence, they remained frozen in place—a wall of flesh and machine, eyes forward, weapons holstered. No threat. No signal. **Just presence.**

And inside Black Rock City, **two worlds began to split.**

In one world, the **party raged on.**

Camps hosted sunrise raves and tea ceremonies. Art cars launched into the night, blazing sound and flame. Dance domes pulsed with strobe and sweat. **For some, it was the most beautiful Burn in years.** With no cell service, no outside pressure, and nothing but the infinite desert horizon, it felt like the original myth: a city unmoored, adrift in joy.

These Burners either didn't see the military, or **chose not to see them.** The belief: *if they haven't moved, they don't matter.*

For others, it was a different kind of week entirely.

The watchers weren't being ignored. They were being feared.

"What happens when the Temple burns?" "What if they block the exit?" "What if this isn't about now, but about what happens after?"

The silence from BMORG was deafening. Still no announcements. No info kiosks. No updates. Rangers claimed they hadn't received comms from leadership in over 36 hours.

There were whispers that **Command HQ had gone dark.**

Into this void, conflict took root.

- **Food caches** became points of tension. Camps that had over-prepared found their resources raided by those who hadn't.
- **Water reserves** were locked up. Some camps started bartering sips for power or protection.
- **Radio stations** were hijacked. Once home to playa jazz and radical philosophy, they now blasted faction manifestos.

Even the art changed.

Messages appeared painted across installations:

*THEY WATCH YOU.*

*WE WILL NOT BURN FOR THEM.*

*BMORG = SILENCE = CONSENT.*

The Temple, long a space of mourning and reverence, transformed overnight. A circle of guardians erected towers of scrap metal and repurposed art to form a barricade. Camp Silence claimed it as sacred ground, refusing entry to anyone not deemed “pure of intention.”

The sacred had become strategic.

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**Scotto**, still dusted in the weight of his Center Camp oration, tried to act.

He gathered representatives from each major faction at **The Dust Spire**, an unmarked installation near 4:30 & Illumination. The meeting was to be a **ritual of symbolic peace**: a communal ring of fire, shared water from each camp, mutual vows of restraint and collaboration.

There were Builders, Returners, Flamekeepers, even one or two from Silence. They stood, not hugging, not speaking at first—but present. Listening.

Scotto began the ritual, pouring the first water. He spoke of cycles, of the gift economy, of **leaving no trace but making an impact**.

But just as the second bowl was lifted, **smoke erupted across the open playa**.

A distraction? A betrayal?

Chaos tore through the meeting. Returners scattered, claiming ambush. Someone shouted about sabotage. The Silence turned inward and began chanting, cutting the circle short.

Scotto stood alone at the fire ring.

The bowls shattered.

The peace collapsed.

And from atop a nearby art car, a voice rang out across loudspeakers:

"We are not one city anymore. We are many. The Man will burn. But not all will rise from the ashes."

Thursday ended not with joy, but with fear.

The watchers stood unmoved.

But **inside the fence, a different kind of war had begun**.

## Chapter 11: Friday – Anarchy Emerges

### August 23, 2030 – Black Rock City, Nevada

By Friday morning, **anarchy had a new address.**

Black Rock City was no longer a city. It was a **wound held open by dust and ideology.**

The watchers remained.

Ten feet from the orange trash fence, the troops and their armored husks did not budge. **Not one hand raised. Not one radio call intercepted. Not one step taken.** Their stillness now seemed mythic, like guardians of a forgotten realm.

But within the fence, the world was **splintering at speed.**

BMORG was still silent. Not a whisper, not a Ranger update, not a Center Camp bulletin. Just dead air.

Rumors surged like tempests:

"The Org is gone." "They've left the playa by helicopter." "They're inside the Watchers' perimeter, observing us like lab rats." "They plan to apply everything they learn here to **Fly Ranch**, the Burning Man-owned experimental living lab 24 miles north of Gerlach."

Trust, already in tatters, **dissolved entirely.**

Dust storms had battered the city relentlessly for 36 hours. Shade structures ripped from rebar. Food tents collapsed. Art installations turned to skeletons. Camps that once prided themselves on comfort and radical hospitality were now little more than piles of playa-stained canvas and broken PVC.

Only two factions remained.

**The Flamekeepers**, who insisted the Man must burn no matter the cost, now armed with propane and principle.

**The Returners**, who had converted RVs into armored transports and demanded the right to leave—**with or without BMORG permission.**

And standing between them, covered in dust, sleep-starved, and haunted by seven nights of leadership in a city without leaders: **Scotto.**

He called one final negotiation.

The site was a broken dome near 2:00 & Ascension—once a yoga temple, now hollow and echoing. Each faction sent six representatives. No guards. No weapons. Just voices and dust.

Scotto stood in the center, hands open, words cracked with fatigue.

"The Man is not our enemy. Nor is the fence. Nor the ones outside it. Our failure is not in what we've lost—but in forgetting what we built."

But neither side budged.

The Returners demanded an exodus corridor.

The Flamekeepers swore to ignite The Man by midnight.

A storm began to roll in—again. A wall of brown rising on the far side of the playa.

And just before the negotiation could collapse entirely, a drone fell from the sky—**on fire**. Not shot down. Burned.

A Burner had hacked a flamethrower bike and aimed it skyward.

It struck something.

Now, fire.

In the chaos, Scotto tried to speak again, but his words were lost to wind. The factions withdrew. Tempers rose. The final standoff began.

And still the military stood. **Unmoved. A mirror.**

Black Rock City, once an experiment in radical collaboration, now echoed the deeper myth of humanity:

When left truly alone, **will we unite—or collapse?**

Friday offered no answer.

Only fire on the horizon.

## Chapter 12: Saturday – Burn Day

**August 24, 2030 – Black Rock City, Nevada**

The desert woke quiet.

### **Burn Day.**

A stillness covered the playa, less reverent than uncertain. A city built on the promise of impermanence now stood in limbo, wondering if it would be allowed to dissolve.

Rumors fed the morning:

"They'll let us out after the Temple." "No one's coming in or out. Ever." "We're the control group for some AI-run societal collapse simulation."

Camps had become whisper chambers. Each one a self-contained theory engine.  
**Conspiracy, dread, resignation.**

There had been **no fuel deliveries since Tuesday**. Many fire art projects never activated. Generators ran on reserve. The big sound camps ran silent.

### **Arctica had melted away on Thursday.**

The last bags of ice had been claimed in a stampede. Now, drinks were warm. Cocktails muddled with heat. Burners passed around sun-soaked beer and laughed because the alternative was to scream.

Yet still, they prepared.

### **Because the Man must burn.**

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At 3:00 PM, under a sky scoured by dust and sun, **Scotto returned to Center Camp.**

He looked thinner. Grayer. His bandana stained with blood and tears from factions who no longer took his calls. But he climbed the dais again.

No microphone. Just voice.

"This city was never about escape. It was about becoming. Becoming our highest selves in the dust. And now? Now it asks us who we are when no one is watching. Or when only those who refuse to speak, are."

He lit a candle.

Not for ritual. For memory.

And then he walked away.

No call to arms. No final plea. **Just a whisper in the wind.**

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**9:00 PM.**

The sky ignited.

**The Man burned.**

The fireworks launched with stunning precision. Purple comets. Flaming spirals. A ten-minute prelude of celestial defiance.

Then the fire climbed the wooden figure, catching fast. The Man blazed like an ancient sun, arms stretched skyward in final exaltation.

Burners danced.

Some cried. Some screamed. Some held hands and stared as if it were their last chance to remember something real.

The circle around the burn pulsed with sound and sweat. Art cars flickered in and out like ghosts of festivals past.

**The Man fell at 9:47 PM.**

He cracked at the knees, splintered at the shoulders, and descended in a glorious heap of embers and legacy.

It should have been a release.

But for many, it was only the signal.

"Let's go." "It's over. Let's pack." "We leave tonight."

Camps began tearing down. LED rigs dismantled. Bikes re-rigged. Engines tested.

And then—**the first RV hit the gate.**

Stopped.

No one was there.

**No Gate staff. No Rangers. No Greeters.**

Only soldiers.

Standing ten feet from the fence.

**Unmoved.**

Lights from the RV illuminated their armor. Not one turned. Not one signaled. Not one voice came from their line.

Just silence.

The gate was **closed.**

Inside, some cheered. Some protested. Some wept.

But the burning had been done.

And the way out was still unwritten.

## Chapter 13: Sunday – Temple Burns Tonight

### August 25, 2030 – Black Rock City, Nevada

Morning came with a murmur. A collective whisper of disbelief that had stretched into ritual. Burners who had danced into dawn now sat in quiet circles, trading what was left of fruit, crackers, and sun-hot tequila.

The gate was still closed.

#### **No one was being allowed to leave.**

Those who had torn down their camps Saturday night, eager to flee under cover of post-Man euphoria, now sat in unmoving RVs at the edge of the city, just behind the perimeter fence.

And beyond that fence, ten feet away, the watchers still stood.

#### **No movement. No sound. No threat. Just presence.**

What had once felt surreal was now **oppressive**.

Tempers flared. Factions grew. Trust shrank.

Camps began to consolidate. Entire blocks collapsed into **temporary tribal systems**, built around who had fuel, water, and rationed food. Meals were bartered for stories. Bottled water traded for information. Rumors became currency.

"They'll move in after the Temple." "This is Fly Ranch 2.0. They want us to break ourselves." "This is the last Burn."

Some refused to panic. They rebuilt makeshift shade. They painted murals of resilience. They walked the playa with offerings of laughter and tea.

But beneath it all, a question echoed:

*What happens after the Temple?*

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#### **Center Camp was silent.**

BMORG's headquarters, once a circus of activity, was abandoned. Scotto stood outside it at noon, alone, holding a single cup of water and looking toward the Temple.

He hadn't spoken since Saturday. He watched.

A few Rangers passed nearby, faces hard, eyes distant. Their radios were dead. No calls came. No one responded.

The city had officially become **a closed circuit**.

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As sunset approached, a familiar rhythm returned.

At 6:00 PM, Burners gathered in silence, forming slow, respectful processions toward the Temple. Many wore white. Others carried notes, photos, pieces of memory.

The **Temple Burn** was always sacred. A release.

At 7:30, a perimeter was drawn, not with tape or rangers, but with bodies sitting in stillness. No music. No dancing. Just presence.

At 8:00 PM, **the Temple was lit.**

The structure ignited slowly, respectfully, fire climbing like prayer.

No fireworks. No sound.

Only the crackle of transformation.

People wept. Hugged. Let go. Let go again.

Even the factions stood united, just for a moment. The Returners. The Builders. The Flamekeepers. The Silence. All were there.

And still, beyond the glow, the watchers remained.

**Unmoved.**

As the Temple collapsed inward in a shower of glowing ash, a collective breath was held.

Would the gate open?

Would the troops move?

Would anything change?

The ashes lifted. The fire dimmed.

And the fence line remained the same.

Burning Man was over.

**But Black Rock City was not yet free.**

## Chapter 14: Monday – Teardown Begins

### **August 26, 2030 – Black Rock City, Nevada**

Dawn crept over the horizon, pink and indifferent.

It was the official end of the Burning Man Festival.

Those stationed at the gate, and the small clusters of weary Burners lingering near the trash fence, looked up and realized something had changed.

The watchers were gone.

### **The troops. The machinery. The optics. The armor. Gone.**

No dust trail. No engine hum. No footprints. The entire perimeter—once ringed with silence and steel—was now empty. The Black Rock horizon stretched uninterrupted, as if the entire occupation had been a fever dream.

Someone shouted, then someone else. Then a surge.

### **A mass exodus began.**

Burners who had been parked and waiting since Saturday night threw gear into vehicles with wild abandon. Many left tents behind. Some drove without seats re-secured or cargo tied down. The primal need for exit—**for ice, for a cold drink, for civilization—overrode every principle.**

Lines were chaotic. Many ignored the Gate entirely, tearing across open playa toward the 447 with eyes wide and hands clenched.

Those who remained behind—either by choice or by lack of transportation—woke to a different kind of reality.

The air was thick.

### **The 5,000 porta-potties, untouched since Thursday, were unusable.**

Doors swung open to reveal unspeakable scenes. Overflowing piles. Collapsed seats. Entire units knocked over. The ground around them slick with evaporated ammonia and alkali mud.

So, Burners did what desperate humans do.

They found corners. They dug shallow holes. They crouched behind art structures.

### **Black Rock City reeked.**

Not just of waste, but of **the myth unraveling.**

The garbage was everywhere. Domes collapsed. Bikes abandoned. Furniture left to decay in alkali wind. MOOP maps would need new colors. The city that had once aspired to Leave No Trace had become **a cautionary tale in dust and decay.**

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And then, just before noon, the first and only message from BMORG since before the Burn appeared.

It was short.

No logo. No header. No signature.

Just a single sentence:

**Thank You For Your Attention To This Matter**

A phrase familiar to any who had endured the last decade of political theater.

A meme. A deflection. A brushstroke of irony or perhaps surrender.

No explanation. No apology. No answers.

Only that.

Those who saw it stared at their screens, blinking dust from their eyes, unsure whether to laugh or scream.

**The Burn was over.**

But what had begun in the dust was only just settling into memory.

And not all of it would be left behind.

## Chapter 15: Tuesday – Time to Go Home, Hippies

### August 27, 2030 – Black Rock City, Nevada

The morning sun rolled over a city already in retreat.

Black Rock City—once the world's largest experiment in intentional impermanence—was now **a skeleton of chaos and dust**.

At first light, what's left of **DPW**, ragged and tired but still dedicated to some notion of closure, began moving through the remnants of camps.

"Time to go home, hippies."

The words came with tired smiles, some hugs, but also urgency. Not a joke. Not a slogan. A final push to end what many now saw as **a failed experiment**, or worse—**a manipulated one**.

DPW teams on foot and on bikes made slow sweeps, approaching Burners still wandering, still sweeping MOOP half-heartedly, still hoping someone would tell them it had all meant something more.

"You can't stay here." "The event is over." "This place isn't ours anymore."

Everywhere, conversations burned like the midday sun.

### Conspiracy theories raged.

"BMORG knew. They were part of Operation Dustwatch." "This was a military psychology trial. A soft test of martial law under festival cover." "Fly Ranch will be the next controlled society. They're watching who 'behaved.'"

Theories expanded on the roads back to Reno, Sacramento, Phoenix. Even international flights were filled with murmurs and arguments. **The Playa hadn't ended—it had just scattered.**

Every Burner needed an answer to the same question:

*Why?*

Why the silent troops?

Why no communication from BMORG?

Why the sealed gates, the disappearance, the final cryptic statement?

Why let it all descend into anarchy, then pretend nothing happened?

But no truths were offered. Only **rumor and speculation**.

A few cling to poetry:

"Perhaps the Man never burned for us, but for them."

Others turn bitter:

"We were the installation. We were the test."

But the desert, as always, says nothing.

By noon, only skeletons of shade, twisted rebar, and wind-torn fabric remained.

And in the distance, that ever-clear horizon gave no sign of watchers, no answers.

Just dust, drifting.

**Time to go home, hippies.**

## Epilogue: After the Dust

Three weeks after the Temple burned, a document surfaced.

No agency claimed authorship. No media outlet confirmed its source. But it was titled, plainly:

### **"OPERATION DUSTWATCH: Internal Observations & Behavioral Analysis"**

It read like a postmortem. Cold. Clinical. Bullet-pointed. It detailed the deployment, the passive engagement directive, the psychological impact of non-intervention, and the patterns of group behavior inside the perimeter.

### **Burning Man 2030 had been a controlled observation.**

The document stated: *"Objective: Examine group cohesion, resource management, and conflict resolution within a high-stress autonomous zone."*

Nowhere did it mention BMORG. But nowhere did it absolve them, either.

And then came BMORG's statement.

Two paragraphs. One photograph. A blurry sunset over the empty playa.

*"We recognize that the experience of Burning Man 2030 was unprecedented. The silence, the unknown, the reflection. We understand the concerns raised and we are listening. Radical self-reliance was tested. Radical inclusion will guide us forward. Thank you for your participation."*

The tone was not apology. Not denial. Not confirmation. **Just like Dustwatch itself—watchful, unreadable.**

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### **Across the Burnerverse, the reactions varied wildly.**

Some felt betrayed. They burned their patches, deleted their photos, sold their goggles. The gift economy, they said, had been commodified into surveillance.

Others saw something deeper. They believed Dustwatch had exposed the fragile illusion of utopia, and in its place, left a raw truth:

*"We are only as good as the storm lets us be."*

A few celebrated it. They called it the most *"authentic"* Burn in years.

But most simply didn't know.

The forums stayed flooded. The Regionals held long, tearful discussions. Podcasts emerged. Zines were printed. Dust-off circles held the weight of two years' worth of processing.

One phrase, painted onto a remaining Temple shard, summed up the general mood:

## **"The Man burned. But what did we burn with him?"**

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### **Lessons?**

- Community can fracture under pressure.
- Silence from leadership is louder than noise.
- Radical inclusion must include crisis.
- Even in chaos, art persists.

And so, the world turned again.

Fly Ranch hosted a silent retreat that October. Thousands applied. Only 36 were invited.

BMORG announced the theme for 2031 without fanfare:

### **"Thresholds."**

No explanation. No teaser video. Just one line beneath:

### **"The Man Burns in 362 Days."**

Will the Burners return?

They always say: *You don't go to Burning Man. You return.*

But next year, when tires hit playa, when domes rise again, when the Man is once more lifted to his perch—

Every eye will watch the horizon.

And everyone will wonder:

**Was it a social experiment? Or a warning?**

## Prompts by Scotto

- ❖ **Write a novel about Burning Man** in which the national guard and marines surround the perimeter of black rock city and what transcends is an internal burner civil war with the perimeter force never making a move
- ❖ Background information about the Burning Man Project known as BMORG a 5013c that oversees the global Burning Man movement as well as produces the Burning man event known as the Gerlach Regional. The year is 2030 - the founder Larry Harvey passes away in 2018 - the remaining founders have stepped down and the entire organization has new leadership and is contemplating the next steps in bringing an official Regional Contact to all 180 countries across the globe.
- ❖ **Create Chapter 1** - background - As the Man Falls at Burning Man 2029; BMORG Legal is already starting to put together the Bureau of Land Management known as the BLM for Burning Man 2030. Over the past 20 years there is always a wrinkle in the permitting process; this year will be no different. BMOG Legal is now working with over 25 government entities, 15 law enforcement agencies known as LEO as well as an exclusive contract with Choko Loco Ice cream for all BLM and LEO personnel. BMORG is also having contract issues with United Site Services for Porto Potty placement and servicing.
- ❖ **Create Chapter 2** - February 12, 2030 - it is now 200 days till Burning Man 2030 - BMORG government contract negotiations have been completed although major tension still lingers between all parties. United Site Services contracts have been signed. Current US President of the United States known as POTUS and his administration believe that 90% of all attendees of the Burning Man festival are Left Leaning Liberals but nothing is further from the truth; appox 39% lean to the political right. POTUS has deployed the National Guard & Marines to several Democratic states and cities on Jan 1, 2030 and there are rumors & fears that something like this could happen at the Burning Man Festival in 200 days
- ❖ **Create Chapter 3** - Background March 13,2030 - Stewards sale for theme camps & art projects aka burning man tickets. BMORG has again not officially disclosed how many tickets total are being sold per price tier - lowest priced tickets are \$990 in this sale - global Burning Man sentiment is that the playa experience is now only for the 1% as it is estimated total cost of attending Burning Man 2030 now exceeds \$8,000/double occupancy. The BMORG San Francisco office is being pummeled with emails and phone calls from 80,000



burners across the globe in this latest ticket kerfuffle. These ticket sales generate the funds BMORG uses all year round to foster a global Burning Man movement in addition to the money required to produce the Gerlach Regional each August in the northern Nevada desert

- ❖ **Create cover image for Dustfall** With cover image add Inspired & Prompted by Scotto Written by AI/ChatGPT center bottom -white text - Position The Man the iconic image on burning man on the ground not on a pedestal Background of image mountains near Gerlach Nevada Floor of image is the black rock desert- Add burner participants around man image paying homage
- ❖ **Create Chapter 4 - April Fool's 2030** - Background Celebrating this annual Day of Jocularly takes all Burners back to 2005-2014 in which <https://www.0401fools.net/> reigned supreme in bringing laughs and entertainment to this special day. As the Day of "I Got You" is in the rear-view mirror; The Burnerverse rumor mill is abuzz as POTUS now has 20 countries on the NO Entry list into the U.S. and all visas from these countries have been cancelled by the U.S. government. Among all the posts on Facebook, X, Discord, Telegram and the Burning Man Regional's List one burner is emerging as the leading voice to sane discourse was Scotto a 31yr Burner and the Benevolent Dictator of PolyParadise which is celebrating 32 years in Black Rock City in 2030. Scotto's street cred includes BRC Related Endeavors
  - Benevolent Dictator of a 32yr Camp in Black Rock City (Current)
  - 23yr volunteer with Greeters (2000-2022)
  - Member of Phase 1 & 2 of the Cultural Direction Council
  - Volunteer 10yrs with Camp Support (Current)
  - 28yrs working with Tech Team (Current)
  - 16yrs working with Forms QA (Current)
  - 15yrs working with Playa Events Moderation (Current)
    - Outside BRC Endeavors
    - Regional Contact Arizona (2010-2019)
    - Saguaro Man (Arizona Regional Event) Lead (2011-2018)
    - Meta Committee Member (2014-Current)
    - Chair Meta-Conflict Sub-Committee (2018-Current)
- ❖ **Create Chapter 5** - May 18, 2030 which is 100 days until the start of the Burning Man Festival BMORG makes a statement but says nothing. For the past 16 years; since the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February of 2022, BMORG has been criticized for not making a Public Statements about geopolitical and social issues of the day by burners across the regional network.. The criticism came to a crescendo on October 7, 2023 Hamas-led attack on Israel. For the past 7 years many additional global events should have had BMORG publicly rebuke such atrocities. A firestorm of burner posts ensues to try to decide if it is a requirement for BMORG or other Public/Private companies make such public statements about things outside their bally-wick.

100 days until Burning Man means that the Playa is only 3 months away aka 14 weeks aka 28 weekend days to get Art Projects completed, Theme Camps organized and art cars Playa Ready.

- ❖ **Create Chapter 6 The Golden Spike.** All previous controversies still exist and are being debated across the Burnerverse but the Playa Calls. July 10, 2030 the day the Golden Spike is celebrated. The Golden Spike is placed at the GPS location of where The Man will stand for the event. When the Spike is in the ground it transforms the ethereal from the Black Rock Desert to Black Rock City. The gates of Burning Man 2030 will open in 4 weeks - Burners from all over the globe are ready to descend on Northern Nevada but there are secret meetings happening within the halls of the U.S. government & POTUS that this gathering would be an interesting fishbowl to experiment with the limits of U.S. Presidential power and the call up of National Guard Troops and Marines to encircle the entire perimeter of Black Rock City with tanks, troops, guns and other crowd control devices but in the end these troops would do nothing they would just stand there and watch what happens inside the BRC circle.
- ❖ **Create Chapter 7 - Burning Man Gates Open.** Build week has been going on for the past 2 weeks Artists are creating, Theme camps are building, DPW is completing their work in creating the grid of the city and its infrastructure. Burners were busy greeting each other and enjoying the start of the 44th iteration of the Burning Man Event; what they do not see is that the Office of Domestic Event Surveillance & Stability has started to stage their resources 15 miles away on the Northern edge of the Black Rock Desert and operation Dustwatch was underway.
- ❖ **Create Chapter 8 - Tuesday - Operation Dustwatch moves closer.** By Tuesday the outside perimeter of Operation Dust watch is now within 1/2 miles of the entire periphery of Black Rock City. Burners who visit the Trash Fence are able to see them in the distance - camps on the outer edge of Karma are also able to see the gathering of troops and machinery. Introduce key characters: a veteran Burner, a rogue AI artist, a desert mystic, a journalist embedded for a doc, and a former Marine turned pacifist. Radio silence from outside. No exits. Still no aggression. divided theories, initial unity. One burner finds his way to Center Camp and stood at the lectern to unite the varying voices, that burner is Scotto
- ❖ **Chapter 9 - Wednesday - Operation Dustwatch is now fully implemented.** The troop and mechanized gear are now stationed within 10 feet of the orange trash fence. Their orders from central command is to do nothing, do not engage, take whatever abuse is to come their way, you are to not move, not raise weapons. Trust breaks down as the event's leadership fails to respond. Resource hoarding, thefts, localized violence. Factions emerge:

The Builders, The Returners, The Flamekeepers, The Silence. Tech group hacks drone footage—military is not even monitoring, just standing.

- ❖ **Create Chapter 10 - Thursday - Internal Conflict.** The troops remain 10 feet from the orange trash fence, no movement no hostile behavior they just stand there. Inside the perimeter many burners appear to be oblivious to the military presence and are enjoying Burning Man as no year before. BMORG is still silent - no communication no town criers, dishing out the latest information. The party continues. Other Burners are very concerned by what they see and what the troops are going to do and are we going to be able to leave after the Temple Burns on Sunday night. Conflicts begins over control of food, water, and communications. Art becomes propaganda. The Temple—a sacred space—becomes a fortified stronghold. The protagonist tries to negotiate peace through symbolic ritual but is betrayed.
- ❖ **Chapter 11 - Friday - Anarchy Emerges.** The troops remain 10 feet from the orange trash fence no movement no hostile behavior they just stand there. BMORG is still silent there are rumors that they have already been transported off-playa and have joined The Watchers as they are just as interested in the outcome of Operation Dustwatch to be able to use some of the resultant lessons at Fly Ranch the Burning Man property located 24 miles north of Gerlach. Most camps have been decimated from relentless dust storms. Final standoff between last two factions with Scotto as the negotiator. The military? Still motionless. Unmoved. A mirror.
- ❖ **Create Chapter 12 - Saturday - Burn Day.** Burners are concerned; rumors and conspiracy theories vary by camps. There has been no fuel deliveries since Tuesday - The last of ice at Artica ran out on Thursday, warm beer and cocktails are being enjoyed but the silent perimeter of Operation Dustwatch looms large. Scotto returns to Center Camp for one more attempt to bring a close to the madness across all of Black Rock City. The Man burns on-time at 9:00p the fireworks show was spectacular the Man finally falls in a midst of dancing and partying burners all around the Man perimeter. Some burners start to tear down what remains of their camps and want to leave after the Man falls but are unable to leave as the gate is closed the troops maintain their silent stand.
- ❖ **Chapter 13 - Sunday - Temple Burns Tonight.** No one is being allowed to leave; those that packed up after Man Fall are stuck at the gate. The troops remain 10 feet from the orange trash fence, no movement no hostile behavior they just stand there. Drinks are warm, tempers are flaring and now that exodus is being restricted tribal behavior has ensued, camps are banding together to deal with diminishing resources water and food and start discussions to figure out is there still an ensuing movement of the troops into the city, all the while The Temple will burn at 8:00p

- ❖ **Chapter 14 - Monday - Teardown Begins.** As dawn breaks on Monday the official end of the Burning Man Festival those that are positioned at the gate and those reveling at the trash fence notice that the troops and all military hardware is gone, they have withdrawn, and the horizon is clear of any sign they were ever there. There is a mad rush of Burners leaving the desert, many leave their gear and drive across the open playa as fast as possible - they are tired, scared and need a Cold Drink or just the site of ice. As the sun rises within camps and for those that venture into the open playa, they must navigate huge piles of human feces and pee spots of wet playa as the 5,000 porto potty units have not been serviced since Thursday and are unusable; the stench is overwhelming, but of course humans must excrement every so often. For those that have yet to leave Black Rock City is a wasteland of garbage and what remains of the most populous temporary city in the world. Finally, there is a statement by BMORG that just reads 'Thank You For Your Attention To This Matter' a throwback to recent POTUS online musings.
- ❖ **Chapter 15 - Tuesday - Time to go home Hippies.** As dawn breaks on Tuesday what is left of DPW is now going to the remaining camps and burner collectives across black rock city that it is time to go home you cannot stay here. The dystopian reality of what happened this week with the non-moving troop wall that surrounded the orange fence perimeter and the internal dissension into chaos and anarchy is on everyone's mind for those that remain and those that are having heated debates and discussions on their way back to hometowns and countries everywhere. Conspiracy theories ensue that BMORG new of Operation Dustwatch and was complicit with the U.S. Government. What was it all about - we always need to know the why, but no truths are available only rumors and speculation.
- ❖ **Create epilogue with conclusions** of operation Dustwatch, BMORG's silence and statements, how burners reacted to the situation, what lessons can be learned and the future of Burning Man, will Burners have the will to return in 2031 - The Man Burns in 362 Days. Was this a social experiment—or a warning.
- ❖ With the entire manuscript in mind create the back cover summary and author bio.