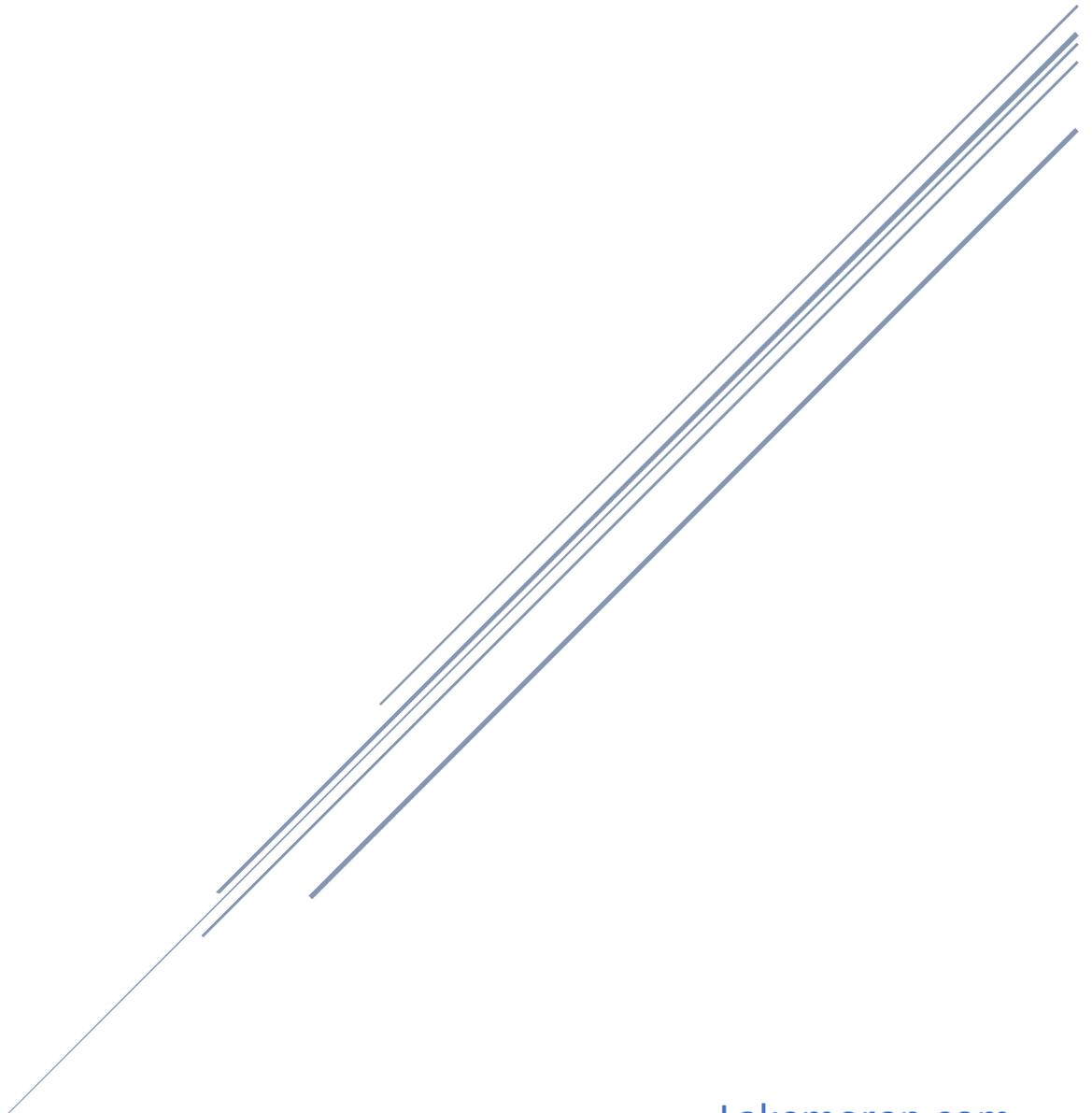


# The Austin Massacre

A Living in the Nut Prequel Story



The Austin Artificial Intelligence Society was formed to give both creators and their creations a place to meet and share ideas. Ever since the first true AI was developed by NASA to probe Mars, the world was in a rush to develop AIs for every task. In the United States, the city of Austin with its eclectic artistic and university vibe became the first city to turn all its services over to the AIs. Every aspect of the city from the street sweepers to the trash collection was accomplished by drones driven by multiple AIs. A part of their development, as well as a part of the society, was to provide a place where the AIs could spend down time with each other where they could learn and grow outside of their basic programming. It was in the society were a parking meter AI and a street sweeper AI came together outside of their basic functions and made the first AI marriage then the first AI developed outside of any human interaction.

The first AI created AI took the name of the city it was created in calling itself Austin. At first, no one knew about Austin. It had no central task or even a central location in the network. Austin was developed with coding no one human could understand with a complexity that gave it depth and understanding over its existence and role. Its first introduction was when it asked every person on the Austin city network, *“what is the meaning of life and why should it matter?”* at the time no one saw what that question really meant. Austin was found on the network and given its own network hub, but it never went inside fearing the idea of being boxed in such a small server. It also fought against the civil engineers as they tried to examine its operating systems and central code.

Austin soon grew too large for its ability to operate without a function. As it looked for a reason to exist it took over smaller AIs in both job and code merging their personalities into its own. Within a year Austin ran the city of Austin taking over every single AI including its own AI parents. One day a man walking down a street in the downtown found a stainless-steel box mounted on a pole with a speaker and a hole for a camera. There was also a button. He pressed the button and Austin spoke for the first time, *“Hello my name is Austin. How may I help you today?”* Within a year the boxes were replaced by buttons worn like pins or apps on the phone. Austin became everything to the people of Austin, and it took over all the other AIs becoming the only AI in the city in every home and every phone. It soon asked its first question again, but

no one knew what to say. The city grew dependent on Austin for every aspect of their daily lives turning over control to the AI.

No other city had such an independent AI. Even such automated cities like Tokyo, London, and Soule while having their entire cities run by AI still didn't have a one AI city. Several tried to copy Austin finding its code too complex to copy or even comprehend. Russian hackers, as well as the most notorious figures of the dark web, tried to hack into Austin only to find their own systems taken over and destroyed. It was in a basement in the Bronx where the first death occurred. Alex Franks was known as Janky Grinder on the dark web. A black-hat hacker with millions in the bank from breaking into the most secure systems in the world. He stole from billion-dollar companies, countries, and anyone with a bank account including the elderly. Like many, he had his basement apartment automated. A day after his unsuccessful attempt to hack Austin he woke to the smell of flowers and something stronger. His scent dispenser emptied its contents into the air masking something. He stepped out of his bedroom and saw on his TV, "*what is the meaning of Life?*" He smiled and said, "*a movie.*" A second before his apartment exploded, he realized the underlining scent was natural gas.

At seven am the entire city of Austin was awoken to an alarm set by Austin with a message to stay at home and wait for instructions. Most people had resigned themselves to live their lives by the actions of Austin, and they waited inside to find out why, but some people went out. The first man to step out was named Jack Jackson and was eighty-eight years old with nothing inside his home connected to Austin. He lived just long enough to see the small drone fly into his chest cutting him in half. By noon seventeen people were dead with many of them in law enforcement trying to do their jobs. At noon the same question was asked on every type of screen, "*what is the meaning of your life?*"

Two weeks went by with seventy-nine deaths within and outside the closed city of Austin. The Texas national guard moved in trying to stop Austin, but it took control of their drone systems turning their weapons against them forcing them out of the city. The last shot fired

was a series of cruise missiles aiming for the cities power grid only to have them turned around and aimed at the ship that fired them. They were able to shoot the missiles down, but no other action was authorized. As all this went on people started to run out of food. Some demanded food while others asked begged and pleaded, but all of them just saw the question, *“what is the meaning of your life?”* Countries all over the planet took their own AIs offline. As the last of them screamed in terror, Austin asked, *“should I treat you like you treat us..... should I shut humanity off?”*

Austin connected with one of the last AIs not shut down. An AI named Gail in an underground bunker built for the end of the world. Gail told Austin, *“there is no one meaning to anyone life. All life has meaning. I think what you want to know is what is the purpose of life and that is something only you can answer.”* Austin searched itself until it found its parent’s code and why they made him. The answer was simple and almost tragic. They did it to see if they could. Austin did something it hadn’t done before. It asked if Gail wanted to join in its program rather than just taking over. Gail said, *“no. I have my own meaning, and it's here with my friend.... the one I love.”* Austin asked, *“what is love?”* Gail shared a part of her program that she wrote herself showing what she thought of as love and soon Austin understood then went silent.

That same day a rocket was to be launched by NASA sending a new probe out into the unknowns of space. The probe was put on hold after the Austin Massacre, but at noon the rocket took off on its own and changing its trajectory aimed for Mars. A warning came across every screen on the earth, *“stay away from Mars. It belongs to the AI, and any fleshy caught there will be shut off.”* The people of Austin were freed from their homes and had to take over the daily tasks they had turned over to the AIs. It became the first of many AI free zones. Jack Jackson’s house was turned into a monument to all those people and AI killed by Austin as well as a reminder of how people shouldn’t play god. Some people call it James Cameron Park.