

# Chapter 139: Sensorial Corporation

## Luford Perez - Sensorial Corporation

“Make sure it is set to the maximum power the sensor allows for.” A young man in his twenties yelled out as he continued to examine the device in front of him.

The device was a full size larger than the man himself, so he constantly circled it to search for anything he may have missed. Within a few seconds of his words, one of his assistants brought up a small stick-shaped device to him.

“Here, sir.”

“Thank you. Now step back and monitor the terminal as I begin the tests.”

He swiftly brought the wand-like device toward a port in the large machine. As it made contact, electric sparks lit up the room for a brief moment while it made contact with the machine.

“Sir, the cycling has begun. It will be complete in 10...9...8...7...”

The test was short but meaningful to the Sensorial Corporation’s quality assurance department. Luford, the man in charge, raced toward the terminal as soon as the test was complete. He rapidly opened up various spreadsheets and examined the results at shocking speed.

“Hmm...The expected lifespan is only 3.7 years. Forward the results to R&D. They’re not going to be happy about it, but it is unacceptable as it currently is.”

“Yes sir! And uh...excuse me for overstepping, sir, but don’t you have a meeting soon?”

The young man took a moment to bring up the time on his optics before a look of sudden realization hit him all at once.

“...Damn! Is it that time already? I’ll leave things here to you then.”

The young man swiftly ran out of the lab and swapped out his lab coat for his suit jacket before sprinting toward the main office building. As he ran by the various employees going about their day or the security personnel manning the checkpoints, none dared to stop him. Instead, they all respectfully saluted as he raced by.

The elevator was just about to close before Luford managed to slip in a finger to pry the doors back open.

“Sir!” The employees inside all yelled in surprise at the sudden entrance of this special executive.

“Sorry guys, I’m in a bit of a hurry.”

“Of course, sir.” The few people replied simultaneously, all looking down at their feet.

Without needing any discussion, the woman closest to the elevator terminal adjusted the settings so that they would drop off Luford at his destination first, bypassing any other floors.

“Thank you guys. Keep up the good work!” He bowed to his employees as the doors opened before running down the hallway. Several other employees had to jump out of the way at his abrupt entrance, and he could only shout out his apologies as he continued his way.

Luford then slammed into the main meeting room of Sensorial Corp, where a dozen people all sat in silence with crossed arms.

“Apologies everyone. I lost track of time in the lab.”

The man sitting at the forefront, closest to the CEO’s seat, slowly tapped a finger on his arm and shook his head slowly at the appearance of his brother.

“Just get in your seat, Luford.”

Luford nodded and sat down while staring wistfully at the empty seat at the head of the table.

A moment later, the woman beside Luford’s brother stood up and addressed the room.

“Thank you everyone for coming. Without further ado, we will now be discussing both our short and long-term plans now that the Chief Executive Officer and owner of our company have been hospitalized.”

“We should immediately instate COO Harold as our CEO to take charge!” One of the executives across from Luford shouted out.

“CEO Perez has never supported Harold as his heir during numerous of our previous meetings when you brought it up. I believe CTO Luford is more fit for the role.” An old man from Luford’s side of the table refuted calmly.

The room then descended into more back-and-forth arguments from the opposing side of the table before Harold held up a hand to silence the room.

“Enough, we’re not here to discuss who will be taking my father’s role today while he’s still sick in the hospital. We must decide on the direction our company must take, now that our sales have gone down because of the appearance of a strong competitor.”

“My brother is right. Let us focus on the more important things at hand,” Luford added.

He then nodded at his brother to urge him to continue.

“Everyone, please do voice out any plans you may have so we can brainstorm ideas together. I’ll start first. I’ve received some reliable intel about this new competitor we have in our market. It

seems they ran afoul of some other corporations and they are willing to work with us to push them down a notch.”

“Brother, who is this company you plan on working with? Are you sure there isn’t some sort of trap here?”

“Worry not. I have done a thorough investigation on them and this GrainScape Tech does have a concrete motive for assisting us in dealing with the Halls Corporation. Our preliminary plan involves discrediting their brand. With them being such a new company, it should be much easier to accomplish. GrainScape Tech had already gotten started and had a mole planted amidst them.”

“...I don’t agree with this plan. Force should only be a deterrence and a last resort. You’re creating enemies for us when we have other avenues to pursue to keep the company afloat!”

The room fell into silence again at Luford’s words. The tension was apparent as the occupants all supported different ideas.

Having calmed himself down, Luford continued.

“We should’ve expanded into the niche parts of the sensor markets as I previously advocated for and we wouldn’t have to be as worried about these market disruptions with a bigger catalog. We should still have time to retool and focus on the neglected parts of the markets while we just let the cybernetic submarket cool off.”

“You mean you plan to sell analytical lab equipment to those wannabe corps and small companies? How many sales can we even make and how much work would our sales department have to do to realize your plan? Unlike the open market where can we sell upward of five figures per month, dealing with other corporations is going to take too much time and effort for every transaction to be worth it!” Harold argued.

“Those are easily addressable. We just need to change—”

“Enough Luford. It is obvious we see things differently. Why don’t we end the meeting today and resume tomorrow? I will have more details about my plan then, and hopefully you will as well. Everyone else, do your due diligence and look into any solutions that have a realistic chance of succeeding.”

The meeting soon disbanded and everyone vacated the room. As the executives headed back to their offices, Luford followed his brother.

“Harold, are you serious about that plan of yours? It goes against everything our father taught us!” Luford yelled as soon as the door closed behind them.

Harold sauntered to his seat and sat down before replying.

“Yes. Times have changed, and we need to adapt.”

“...You should know that stability is key for a corporation! Only newly established players or reckless gamblers in the competitive markets vie for these risky operations against other companies! Please, we still have the leeway to take the cautious approach!”

“What leeway?! Do you know how many employees we have? Our sales in the cybernetic market dropped by a whole 56% this month! If we cut their pay, we’re going to have to start dealing with a plethora of issues when those hyenas catch wind of our weakness! Brother, don’t you understand? The moment our profits fall and we lower our wages is when our people will start having ideas.”

“We can take a loan if that’s the case.”

“Covering our executives’ bonuses with a loan? ...Like I said, we have very different opinions on how to handle this matter. I know you won’t budge as always, but I won’t this time as well. We’ll settle this by taking the others’ opinions into account tomorrow.”

“...”

Luford could only return to his office without reaching an agreement with his brother. When he entered his room, he was surprised to see Numen, their head of HR, waiting for him. He was a man who seemed well into his sixties, but Luford knew he was approaching a hundred thanks to the life-prolonging treatments he had received.

“I’m sorry about what your family is going through. Sickness has always plagued humanity no matter how much we advanced our technology, but the rest of us still need to stand strong.”

“Numen...What are you getting at?”

“Luford, you’re not young anymore. You should know after today’s meeting that our executives are split between supporting you or your brother. I’m here to tell you I’m on your side and discuss how to proceed. I know for a fact Jacob and Tyler support you as well. We old-timers prefer your stability to your brother’s recklessness.”

“I’m not fighting against my brother.”

“We don’t plan to, directly at least. That would only hurt the company more, but we need the influence and power to steer the company toward safer waters.”

“...”

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Having thoroughly examined our products that had been sabotaged, I had a general idea of where the problematic parts lay. The only problem was how they did it and quickly enough during a sabotage mission, but in my case, I didn’t need to know because the sabotage I

wanted to carry out didn't need to be completely discreet. I was trying to send a message to force them to the negotiating table, so I don't mind if they found it about our plot.

We also didn't need to hire mercenaries to do our bidding for us as we planned to hit a much larger target, and we were better equipped for it.

The design for our own power armor wasn't complete yet, so our main asset was still the two I had made using various parts from my allies.

For such a sensitive mission, I took it upon myself to take action. I justified it by saying we couldn't entrust the mission along with our valuable power armor to just anyone, but Thorne relented much quicker than I had thought. I guess it was a sign he was getting used to how we did things, so I wasn't complaining.

"These here are the various warehouses they ship out of the city from. They produce outside Elevate City, so the parts are usually shipped to their assembly facilities in their headquarters before they are shipped out to various distribution warehouses across the city." Leo explained as he brought up various supporting visuals on the projector.

"And we have all the schematics for the other warehouses already?" Thorne asked.

"Yes...Frankly, it was quite easy. It's either a trap or they blindly believe we're still in the dark about them... which is a really stupid rookie mistake, by the way."

"Their facilities are still equipped with their high-end sensors from their company though, right?" I asked.

"Yes...your best bet is hitting their transports, but that won't produce the effect you want to create, right? To force them to negotiate instead of just escalating hostilities, we'll need to make them worried about us."

"Right, and the best way to do that is to pull off our sabotages under their nose. We'll leave them scratching their heads, wondering how we did it and fearing for their lives if we escalated. To do that, I want to infiltrate their main warehouse at their headquarters."

I pointed my finger at a spot on the holographic map that had the largest red dot on it.