

[Shot of a man standing over a console. The alarm continues, and the lighting goes from white to red]

TREJO: That would be the Paladins. Initiate lockdown protocol.

SCIENTIST: Yes, Chief.

[The scientists gather against a wall next to the lab doors and huddle together. Shadows move across the window to the lab. The shadows appear to be two soldiers, one of which is Garth, who lifts his arm and shoots the other, who collapses. Garth walks over to the door]

SFX: SKIT-SKIT! AUUGH! THUD!

GARTH: Open up. I'm not going to harm you.

[The scientists look at their chief with pleading eyes. The chief glances at them, then back at the door]

TREJO: *No puedo hacerlo, señor.* You'll have to break down that door yourself.

GARTH: Very well.

SFX: BANG! SLAM!

[The door explodes inward. Garth slowly walks in, arm extended]

GARTH: Knowing your counter-intel, I'm assuming you already know what I'm after.

TREJO: Of course. Our interdimensional drive.

GARTH: Right on. Send it over, then, or the Coalition will lose its brainiest.

[One corner of Trejo's lips raises slightly]

TREJO: If I do, I'll have to let your cat out of the bag. A secret for a secret.

GARTH: What... what *cat*?

TREJO: You're not supposed to exist, Corbyn.

GARTH: I'm not sure I catch your drift.

TREJO: Heh. For someone with near-exceptional intelligence, you seem awfully stupid.

[Garth sneers]

GARTH: Just tell me what you're getting at.

TREJO: At the request of the Kingdom of Humankind, the Interstellar Knighthood outlawed genetic engineering. But your, erm, "*parents*" wanted to create the ultimate soldier. So, they convinced your chief med officer to bring about your existence, right under the Knighthood's nose.

[Garth looks uncomfortable]

GARTH: How do you know this?

TREJO: Let me put it this way... your Bulwark firewall is more like a stick palisade.

GARTH: Look. Without that tech, I came here for nothing.

TREJO: What, do you think I'll just hand you the tech for free?

GARTH: If you tell the Kingdom about me, they'll have me killed!

TREJO: Maybe that's my point.

GARTH: Just give me the tech. No one has to know about my origin.

TREJO: My price is firm, Corbyn. And it's for the better... this way, there will be one less travesty in the world.

GARTH: Then you leave me no choice.

SFX: SKIT!

[Garth shoots Trejo, who collapses onto his now bloodied console. Garth pushes the body aside and regards the console]