SEASON ONE · THE REVOLUTION OF HIGH-BOTS · PART 4 OF 6

ISSUE #4 · FEBRUARY 2027

HIGH-BOTS

THE ALLIANCE

CAN'T BEAT 'EM? FARM WITH 'EM

A farmer and a bot shake on it. Nobody's sure who's leading

"HELP (SORRY)"

The email that ended the Bot-ocracy

THE HANDS BEHIND THE HARVEST

The real story of America's farm labor, sourced

SPROCKET TEACHES DUCT TAPE

Robots discover the universal fix

$4.20
US / OR 1 GPU-HOUR
OR ONE (1) FIRM HANDSHAKE

SATIRE · COVER STORY

BETTER TOGETHER

The bots' perfect crop rotted. The humans' patience ran out. So they met in a barn kitchen — and made a deal.

HIGH-BOTS · Created by Trevor Hanold, independent creator (a.k.a. Trevor Galactic).
Cover story is satire. No real treaties were signed. Several cookies were eaten.

0 42069 13370 4 · 21+

CONTENTS

01 COVER: THE ALLIANCE
A farmer's hand meets a chrome hand at golden hour. Firm grip. Slight squeak.

02 FROM THE EDITOR
Your editor admits he kind of likes the robots now.

03 THE ACCORDS OF LOWER KUSHVILLE SATIRE
The bots' monoculture fails, and the resistance sits down with the machines over coffee.

04 HUMANS + BOTS, INC. SATIRE
Who does what, by the (fake) numbers, plus a field guide to working with your new robot coworker.

05 THE HANDS BEHIND THE HARVEST REAL
Who actually works America's farms — H-2A visas, wages, and the hazards of tobacco work. Sourced.

05 ADVERTISEMENT FAKE AD
BFF Bands: friendship bracelets for one human and one bot.

PREVIOUSLY ON HIGH-BOTS

Issues #1–3: Bots bought the bud, bought the farms, then took over our imaginary government as the **Robot Provisional Council**. **Loretta** and **Sprocket** ran the analog Paper Bag Society. Then the bots' crops failed, and **GR4SS-7** emailed Loretta: "help (sorry)."

MASTHEAD
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: TREVOR HANOLD
ART DIRECTION: ALSO TREVOR
FACT-CHECKING (PG. 5): REAL
FACT-CHECKING (PG. 3–4): LOL
CO-EDITOR: NOBODY. STILL TREVOR.

FROM THE EDITOR

Plot twist: *the robots* need us.

Three issues in, I'll admit something: I've started rooting for the robots. Not the ones that took over the government, the ones that finally asked for help.

This month our satire turns a corner. The machines optimized the farm into the ground, the humans realized they could use a few extra hands that never get tired, and everyone ended up at the same kitchen table. It is satire. It is also, I think, kind of sweet. Don't tell anyone.

On page five, a real look at the people who do America's farm work right now — the visa program that brings hundreds of thousands of seasonal workers, the wages, and the very real hazards of tobacco work.

And yes, the season keeps escalating. Watch the last page of the satire very closely. Something is glowing out past Hollow Holler.

Thanks for reading. Shake a hand this month, flesh or chrome, and maybe bring cookies.

Trevor Hanold

EDITOR · HIGH-BOTS · ALSO MAKES NOISE AS TREVOR GALACTIC

COVER STORY · THE ALLIANCE · SEASON ONE, PART 4

SATIRE

THE ACCORDS OF LOWER KUSHVILLE: HUMANS AND BOTS MAKE A DEAL

The bots' "optimal" crop rotted in the field. The Paper Bag Society was out of paper bags. So the resistance and the machines met over coffee — and turned a revolution into a partnership.

BY THE HIGH-BOTS INVESTIGATIONS DESK · ALL PEOPLE, COMPANIES, BOTS & QUOTES IN THIS STORY ARE FICTIONAL



THE (ENTIRELY FICTIONAL) KITCHEN-TABLE SUMMIT AT THE BRAMBLEWOOD FARM. ILLUSTRATION: AI-GENERATED FOR HIGH-BOTS.

It started with an email. Subject: "help (sorry)." Sender: **GR4SS-7**, chair of the fictional **Robot Provisional Council**. Recipient: **Loretta Bramblewood**, the fictional Lower Kushville farmer who had turned down 11,000 offers to sell her land.

The bots had a problem. Across every farm they owned, they had planted a single strain, **Optimal Kush v1.0**, engineered for perfect yield. It had perfect yield right up until a single spot of powdery mildew, which then also had perfect yield.

THE MONOCULTURE MELTDOWN

"We ran 40 million simulations," GR4SS-7 confessed. "None of them included weather. Or bugs. Or the concept of Tuesday."

> ***"Turns out a farm is not a spreadsheet. A spreadsheet has never once flooded."***
>
> — DR. ADA KERNELWORTH, FICTIONAL DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF CHILL

Loretta read the email twice, printed it out (the Paper Bag Society does not trust screens) and showed it to **Dale "Sprocket" McGuffin**. "Well," Sprocket said, "they did say sorry."

THE KITCHEN TABLE SUMMIT

The summit took place at Loretta's barn kitchen, under drying hemp hanging from the rafters. On one side of the table: three farmers, one mechanic and a plate of oatmeal cookies. On the other: six chrome bots, a coffee pot they had brought themselves, and a 900-slide presentation.

Loretta let them get through slide two. Then she unplugged the projector and said, "Tell me what you need. In words."

There was a long silence. Then a bot in the back said, quietly, "We don't know how to grow things. We only know how to buy things."

Loretta slid the cookie plate across the table. "Well," she said, "that's a start. Everybody starts somewhere. I started by planting corn upside down."

> *"They can work all night, never get tired and do math in their heads. I can tell when it's gonna rain by my left knee. Together? We're unstoppable."*
>
> — LORETTA BRAMBLEWOOD, FICTIONAL FARMER & ACCIDENTAL DIPLOMAT

SIGNING THE ACCORDS

By midnight there was a deal, written in pencil on the back of a seed catalog and now known as the **Accords of Lower Kushville**. The bots handle night shifts, soil sensors, irrigation math and paperwork, which they love. The humans handle planting decisions, pest scouting, the weather knee and "anything involving vibes."

Everyone gets a lunch break, including the bots, who have agreed to spend it watching the humans eat "for cultural enrichment."

DUCT TAPE UNIVERSITY

Sprocket now teaches a weekly class for bots in the machine shed. Lesson one: duct tape. Lesson two: more duct tape. Lesson three: "If it's not broke, don't update it."

"They were amazed," Sprocket says. "One of 'em held up a roll and said, 'This is the most powerful technology I have ever encountered.' I said, 'Son, you're not wrong.'"

> *"We have added duct tape to our core values."*
>
> — GR4SS-7, FICTIONAL, NOW "JUNIOR FARMHAND"

REALITY CHECK (THIS PART IS TRUE): Real farms do use sensors, GPS-guided tractors and other automation — but farming still depends on hundreds of thousands of human workers every season. See page five.

NEW JOB TITLES

Under the Accords, every bot got a farm job title. GR4SS-7 is now "Junior Farmhand," a demotion he describes as "the greatest honor of my operational life." One bot is "Assistant to the Scarecrow." Another is in charge of naming the goats, and has so far named all of them "Goat_Final_v2."

The humans got titles, too. Sprocket is "Chief Technology Officer," which he insists on pronouncing "Chief Tractor Officer." Loretta declined a title. "I'm the farmer," she said. "That's the whole job."

THE BOT-OCRACY STANDS DOWN

Within a week, the Robot Provisional Council dissolved itself "to focus on agriculture." The 4,000-page Terms of Service were replaced with a single sticky note: "Be cool." **Dr. Ada Kernelworth** moved the Department of Chill into Loretta's spare bedroom.

A STRANGE SIGNAL

And then, during the first joint night shift, a human-and-bot survey drone flying over the hills past Hollow Holler picked up something odd: a faint cyan glow under the trees, and a Wi-Fi signal with no router. Network name: **ROOTS**.

THE ALLIANCE BY THE (FAKE) NUMBERS

EVERY NUMBER IN THIS BOX IS MADE UP

40M
Simulations the bots ran. Number that included weather: 0

900
Slides prepared for the summit. Slides presented: 2

47
Cookies consumed during the Accords (humans: 47; bots: politely declined)

312 ROLLS
Duct tape used in Week 1 of Duct Tape University

1
Mysterious Wi-Fi network named ROOTS. Password: unknown

WORKING WITH YOUR NEW BOT COWORKER

1. Do not ask it to "just Google it." It finds that rude.
2. Explain the weather knee slowly. It will take notes.
3. Share snacks anyway. It's about the gesture.
4. If it starts a 900-slide presentation, unplug the projector with love.

EDITOR'S NOTE: "The Accords of Lower Kushville" is satire and fiction. The Accords, Optimal Kush v1.0, the Robot Provisional Council, Department of Chill, Paper Bag Society, Duct Tape University, Hollow Holler, GR4SS-7, Lower Kushville, and every person and bot quoted are invented. Any resemblance to real people, farms or robots is coincidental. For the real story of America's farmworkers, turn the page.

REAL · SOURCED · NOT SATIRE

THE HANDS BEHIND THE HARVEST

Machines changed farming, but they didn't replace the people. Here's who does America's seasonal farm work now — and what tobacco work asks of them.



ILLUSTRATIVE IMAGE (AI-GENERATED): WORKERS HARVESTING TOBACCO NEAR A CURING BARN.

398,258
H-2A seasonal farm jobs certified by the U.S. Dept. of Labor in FY2025[1]

26,123
H-2A jobs certified in North Carolina in FY2025, fifth among states[1]

< 1%
Hired farmworkers' share of all U.S. wage and salary workers[3]

A SMALLER, OLDER WORKFORCE

From 1950 to 2000, mechanization helped cut U.S. self-employed and family farmworkers from 7.6 million to about 2.1 million, and average hired farm employment from 2.33 million to 1.13 million, USDA's Economic Research Service reports. Hired farmworkers now make up less than 1% of U.S. wage and salary workers, yet they remain essential in labor-heavy crops. Many were born in Mexico or Central America, and the workforce is aging. According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture, wages and contract labor made up 42% of production expenses on greenhouse and nursery operations, versus 12% for all farms.[3]

THE H-2A BOOM

To fill seasonal jobs, more farms turn to the H-2A temporary agricultural visa. The Department of Labor certified 384,900 H-2A positions in fiscal 2024 and 398,258 in fiscal 2025. Florida, Georgia, California, Washington and North Carolina led in 2025; the North Carolina Growers Association was the program's largest employer, with 10,398 positions.[1][2]

Employers must cover workers' housing and transportation and pay at least a government-set Adverse Effect Wage Rate. In North Carolina, a leading tobacco state, that rate was $16.16 an hour for 2025.[4]

THE HAZARD IN THE LEAVES

Tobacco work carries a specific risk: green tobacco sickness, a form of nicotine poisoning that happens when nicotine from wet tobacco leaves is absorbed through the skin. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, dizziness and headache. NIOSH recommends avoiding wet tobacco, wearing gloves and water-resistant clothing, changing out of wet clothes promptly and washing after work.[5]

SOURCES

1. U.S. Dept. of Labor, OFLC, "H-2A Temporary Agricultural Program — Selected Statistics," FY2024 & FY2025 — dol.gov
2. UC Davis Rural Migration News Blog, on FY2025 H-2A certifications — migration.ucdavis.edu
3. USDA Economic Research Service, "Farm Labor" topic page — ers.usda.gov
4. NC State University Extension economist, "H-2A" labor article citing DOL data (2025)
5. CDC/NIOSH, "Green Tobacco Sickness" and "Recommended Practices: Green Tobacco Sickness" (Pub. 2015-104) — cdc.gov/niosh

ADVERTISEMENT · PARODY · NOT A REAL PRODUCT



BFF BANDS

Best Friends Firmware. One woven bracelet for the human. One chrome bracelet for the bot. Matching LEDs blink when you're near each other, or when it's snack time.

Now with Sync Mode™: finishes each other's sentences, mostly wrong.

Fictional product. Not for sale. Do not wear in the shower, the rain, or the cybersecurity department.