

# AMERICA'S GALACTIC FOREIGN LEGION

## BOOK 6

### CULTURE WAR



The military science-fiction saga takes a new turn as Colonel Joey R. Czerinski and his division of legionnaires, just trying to maintain peace in planet New Colorado's New Gobi Desert, find themselves in the midst of more skirmishes with their spider alien foes.

The spider Arthropodan Emperor declares war on American culture, hoping to preserve Arthropodan traditions and avoid cultural contamination from the American way of life. Tasked with carrying out the Emperor's new strategy, the spider Governor of the North Territory takes his responsibility seriously by ordering the spider marine commander in the New Gobi sector to put a halt to interspecies trade. The spider commander complies by confiscating all incoming US merchandise flowing over the border between Legion-controlled and spider-controlled areas of the Demilitarized Zone.

But despite the spider commander's best efforts, the new generation of Arthropodan citizens on New Colorado have already adopted many American cultural icons, including the Nike Swoosh and skateboarding. Addicted to Starbucks coffee, the spider commander can't see he's a victim of cultural contamination as well.

As the cultural war escalates, Czerinski deals with everything in his own unique way – by overreacting and alienating those closest to him. But this conflict is bigger than even Czerinski suspects, and the revolution grows stronger while the laughs keep coming.

# **AMERICA'S GALACTIC FOREIGN LEGION**

## **Book 6: Culture War**

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## ~AUTHOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT~

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# AMERICA'S GALACTIC FOREIGN LEGION

## BOOK 6

*CULTURE WAR*



*by*

***Walter Knight***





## **CHAPTER 1**

Blue powder immediately impacted the Arthropodan Empire upon first contact with humanity. Even before diplomatic relations were established, traders were importing the drug. Drug addiction was a foreign concept before contact with humans. Now, drug addiction and alcoholism was commonplace in the Empire and a part of the culture. The Arthropodan Emperor declared drug and alcohol addiction even more dangerous to the fragile social fabric of Arthropoda than the human pestilence and their satellite TV.

Nowhere was the American contamination of the Arthropodan culture more pronounced than on the shared colony of New Colorado. Even the planet's name had been corrupted by the human pestilence. After several wars, the Arthropodan Empire and the United States Galactic Federation divided New Colorado at the equator, but the contamination spread north anyway.

During peacetime, commerce flourished between the spider North and the human South. Citizens of the Empire consumed large amounts of blue powder and endangered their health by eating fast food from Taco Bell, KFC, and McDonald's. The high cholesterol rates among spider youth were staggering. University students, drunk on Coors (cowboy) beer and spurred on by mind-numbing human pestilence music, demonstrated in the streets, calling for reckless concepts like democracy and an end to the Empire. Brain damage and hearing loss caused by the

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American music threatened the health of an entire spider generation.

The Emperor was convinced that militarization of the DMZ could at least slow down the American contamination from the South, with the ultimate goal being complete separation of the two species and cultures. A quarantine of the human pestilence would be implemented in increments. Even if it took generations, the Emperor was determined to purge Arthropoda of all human pestilence influence. It would not be easy. First, businesses would have to be weaned from free trade. Tariffs would be a good start in that direction. Immigration of humans to the North would be stopped. The Emperor realized public support was essential. To merely impose Imperial will would only fuel discontent, driving citizens to the increasingly popular Independence Movement and the growing Insurgency.

An incident was needed to garner public support against human pestilence contamination of Arthropodan culture. That would be easy. Satellite images showed large drug-producing poppy fields in the hills of the human pestilence South. In spite of numerous diplomatic efforts, the United States Galactic Federation seemed unwilling or unable to eradicate those fields. In fact, the poppy fields were still not illegal in the South. From an Imperial viewpoint, this was an inexcusable provocation.

The human pestilence lack of concern about the poppy fields would be their undoing. If the human pestilence refused to take action, then Arthropodan marines would be given the job of eliminating the blue powder menace. That would bring America's Galactic Foreign Legion into the fray. It would be easy to pick a fight with the Legion. The Legion was



predisposed to fight. It would not have to be a big fight. There was no need for nukes. The battle would be just big enough to create an incident, and a pretext to close the border. There would be no more Big Macs or Walmart Super Stores. With public support, the Emperor could send tanks and the Air Wing to get rid of casino gambling run by the human pestilence Mafia. Combating Mafia infiltration would be an even tougher fight than the Legion. Strategy dictated one fight at a time. Patience was the key, and the Emperor knew it.

The Emperor drank another cappuccino as he daydreamed of victory over the evil human pestilence. A triple shot of coffee in the morning gave the Emperor the boost he needed during these trying times. Giving his attention to that thought, the Emperor made a note to nationalize all Starbucks restaurants. The human pestilence would be given no quarter!

\* \* \* \* \*

I am Colonel Joey R. Czerinski, hero of the Legion, Butcher of New Colorado, and commander of the Legion garrison stationed on planet New Colorado at the New Gobi City border crossing. After several intergalactic wars, the United States Galactic Federation and the Arthropodan Empire are at truce, sharing colonies on planet New Colorado. The new commander from the spider side met me at the border checkpoint. He seemed upset, but spiders these days are always upset about something.

“Why are we meeting on the street?” I asked. “What is so important it could not be discussed later at poker tonight? The game is still on, right?”

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“Colonel Czerinski, thank you for meeting me on such short notice,” said the spider commander. “There will be no more Saturday night poker parties. The Emperor appointed a new governor, and he is a real tight-ass. The governor just decreed there will be no more fraternization with the Legion. That means no more gambling parties or drinking together.”

“What’s his problem?” I asked. “No more gambling? That’s un-American!”

“Exactly,” said the spider commander. “I am not even allowed to shop at Walmart. I have to send a team leader to get in on the Thanksgiving pre-Christmas sales. I’m expecting a boycott of Pizza Hut any day now.”

“So the poker games are cancelled permanently?” I asked, unable to accept what I was hearing. “Is that all you wanted to talk about?”

“I am not worried about the poker game,” said the spider commander. “I am sure the new governor will forget about that directive after a few weeks, and things will go back to normal. This always happens when a new boss comes in and tries to impress everyone with how he is in command.”

“Then what is on your mind?” I asked. “It’s hot out here. Right now I could be in my air-conditioned office, watching the World Series on TV.”

“The real problem is all those poppy fields you allow growing in the hills,” said the spider commander. “Either you weed your garden, or I will do it for you.”

“What?” I asked. “Poppies? What do I care about poppies? The stuff grows wild. You want to get rid of poppies? Lots of luck.”

“Your farmers are cultivating poppies used to manufacture blue powder,” accused the spider

commander. "It's an issue the new governor raised today. Drug addiction is causing untold harm to our population. All the poppy fields are on your side of the border. Spray them, or there will be serious consequences."

"The key to fighting illegal drug use is education," commented Major Lopez, my aide de camp and military intelligence officer. "On Old Earth, the *copa del ora* is just a harmless flower. If you spiders stopped snorting blue powder, you wouldn't have this problem."

"Who is he?" asked the spider commander. "McGruff the crime dog? I am giving you a heads-up that there will be serious difficulties along the border if you human pestilence continue to provide a sanctuary for illegal drug manufacturers and smugglers."

"We do not protect drug smugglers," I insisted. "It's just that there is no law against poppy cultivation. Besides, it's a police matter. I am not a cop, and I don't want to be a cop. What can the Legion do?"

"The governor does not want to hear your lame excuses," advised the spider commander. "He wants results. Destroy the poppy fields, or I will close the border."

"You can't do that," I said. "The trucks would be backed up for miles. Besides, you would upset the Teamsters Union big time. Do you want that?"

"The Teamsters Union?" asked the spider commander. "What do I care about Teamsters? Drug dealers are attacking the Empire from the South. Drug addiction threatens our culture. It's a war. Our sovereignty is threatened. Our border will be defended!"

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"You will care about the Teamsters when you wake up in the morning with a horse head under the blankets," I said.

"Horse head?" asked the spider commander. "What's a horse?"

"Okay, maybe they'll use a dragon head," I warned. "What's the difference? My point is, you are going to upset a lot of powerful special-interest groups. Your governor doesn't realize the kind of heat he is going to draw."

"The Empire will not be intimidated," said the spider commander. "Those poppy fields will be destroyed one way or another."

"Just make sure you do not cross the border," warned Major Lopez. "More military adventurism by you spiders will not be tolerated."

\* \* \* \* \*

After the meeting with the spider commander dispersed, Corporal Guido Tonelli approached the spider guard shack across the Military Demarcation Line. The spider border guard came out to greet Guido.

"Did you hear any of that?" asked Guido. "Are they serious? No more poker nights?"

"It gets worse," said the spider guard. "The 'no fraternization' order puts the Angry Onion Tavern off-limits to all Arthropodan military personnel. The governor thinks the Angry Onion is a bad influence on us, just because it's a biker bar."

"He's right," said Guido. "It is a bad influence. That's why we go there! Plus the biker babes are hot."

"Because I won't be there, I'll be missing the ball game on the big-screen TV," complained the spider

guard. "I want to place two hundred credits on the Yankees over the Red Sox. New York is going to kick butt tonight!"

Guido recorded the wager into his communications pad. "If anyone else wants to place a bet, just send them here," said Guido. "I'll be doing a lot of business right here in my guard shack, since I'm going to lose half my business at the Angry Onion. I should sue your new governor."

"We need to do something about all that blue powder coming across the border," said the spider guard. "That's what started all this nonsense. It would all be good if we got rid of the blue powder menace."

Guido reached down and patted his monitor dragon Spot on the snout. The dragon hissed affectionately. "What can we do?" asked Guido. "Spot has sniffed out so much blue powder from smugglers, I think he's addicted to the stuff. You spiders have already made drug dealing punishable by summary execution. If that won't deter the smugglers what will?"

"I don't know," replied the spider guard, getting depressed. "Change my bet to five hundred credits on the Yankees. You know I'm good for it."

"Bet responsibly," cautioned Guido. "You've been living life on the edge a lot lately."

"The governor is going to close down all sports gambling in New Gobi City," said the spider guard. "I have to make my money while I can. I'm going all in!"

"Don't worry," said Guido. "I heard your commander say this will all blow over in a few months. Then business will be back to normal."



## CHAPTER 2

An anonymous tip advised that a high-speed Arthropodan mini attack helicopter was going to dart across the MDL at midnight to blow up a Legion radio station that broadcast human music and Free Colorado messages and news to the spiders. The Legion was waiting with SAMs. However, the helicopter abruptly veered off course and dropped a powerful defoliant on the vast poppy fields south of New Gobi City. Afterward, as the helicopter took evasive action on return, it was shot down. Its pilot was immediately captured by the Legion.

“I demand our Air Wing pilot be released,” said the spider commander, again standing at the border crossing. “Your escalation of hostilities is a reckless and irresponsible provocation.”

“No,” I replied. “The pilot is being interviewed and may face charges.”

“Our Air Wing commander was flying an unarmed civilian craft when he innocently strayed across the border,” insisted the spider commander. “The Legion shot him down in violation of our treaty agreements concerning off-course or lost air traffic. I thought these incidents were behind us. This new provocation will not stand.”

“Your pilot crossed the MDL intentionally,” commented Major Lopez. “Why? I will find out sooner or later.”

“If you torture or abuse my pilot, I will hold you personally responsible for war crimes,” warned the spider commander.

“War crimes?” I asked. “Are we at war?”

“Yes, war crimes!” insisted the spider commander. “The Butcher of New Colorado should be very familiar with that term. Release my pilot immediately!”

“Pack sand,” I replied. “I will release your pilot only after I find out his mission.”

“I have reason to believe my pilot needs medical attention. If you won’t release him, I at least demand an Arthropodan medical team examine him.”

“I don’t think so. We don’t want him to end up with mysteriously terminal injuries.”

“Then I have no choice. Effective immediately, the border is closed to all traffic. The MDL will stay closed until you come to your senses and release my pilot.”

After a few days, the poppy fields began dying, and the pilot’s mission became more apparent. TV reporters camped at Legion Headquarters, wanting to know when the spider pilot was going to be released. I refused interviews. When I finally ordered the pilot released, the spider commander gave his pilot a hero’s welcome. The spider Air Wing commander was interviewed on all the Arthropodan Cable TV news and talk channels. He promised his mission was just one of many planned in the war on human pestilence drug trafficking. The war on drugs would continue.

Soon afterwards, upset human farmers gathered at Legion Headquarters, demanding compensation for crop damages, and that the Legion do something about the spiders. They claimed the defoliant not only killed their crops, but caused a nasty skin rash. Many feared the chemicals would eventually cause cancer and birth defects. The TV crews interviewed every farmer before they finally went home. I feared

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there would be more incidents making the news.

\* \* \* \* \*

In spite of intergalactic tension along the DMZ, my routine administrative duties needed attention, too. Master Sergeant Green brought Private Krueger to my office. "Sir, we have a problem," announced Sergeant Green. "Private Krueger here wants to get married."

"And you are here to get your commander's permission?" I asked. "That is not a problem. While I agree Private Krueger is irresponsible, too young, too immature, way too bad-tempered, starts bar fights, and is a drunkard, I think marriage might be just what he needs to settle him down. Private Krueger, I knew your older brother. He was a good legionnaire. Because of that, I have always taken a special interest in you. Good luck with your marriage. Permission granted."

"Thank you, sir," said Private Krueger, sliding the Legion marriage certificate permission form across my desk for signature.

"This application is incomplete," I commented, quickly scanning the paperwork. "Her name is Dawn? Does she have a middle and last name? Fill in the blanks, private. This application has to be completely filled out for security, identification, medical, and base housing purposes. And look at that. Dawn's thumb print is a mess. Do this over. Sergeant Green, walk Private Krueger through the paperwork process, and then I'll sign off on the marriage."

"That is not a thumb print," said Sergeant Green. "That is a claw print. Dawn is a spider."

"What?" I asked, staring at Krueger in disbelief.



“Why would you want to marry a spider?”

“I have to,” cried Private Krueger, now trembling. “I have no choice.”

“What do you mean by that?” I asked. “She’s not pregnant is she? Is that even possible?” I checked the database on my notepad, looking for answers.

“No way,” said Major Lopez. “Spiders and humans are not compatible for breeding.”

“Actually it is possible,” said Private Krueger. “But it would require a medical procedure involving the implant of a donor egg and—”

“Stop!” I ordered. “I do not want to hear all the gory details. If she is not pregnant, then why do you feel you have to get married? You have free will! Are you in love with Dawn?”

“Not really,” said Private Krueger. “Dawn says she is an old-fashioned traditional female. She says custom and law require us to get married after having sex ten times.”

“That is ridiculous,” I said, counting on my fingers the number of drunken encounters I could still remember with spider females. I gave up, trembling at the thought. “You are a legionnaire. You are not bound by spider law or custom, especially south of the MDL. You are protected by human laws and by the USGF Constitution. No one can make you marry against your will.”

“But Dawn says if I refuse to marry her and make her an honest female, her reputation and honor will be forever sullied,” explained Private Krueger. “Dawn says she will be well within her rights to kill and eat me, and will be honor-bound and forced to do so. I believe her.”

“Eat you?” I asked. “Is that some kind of spider slang? What do you mean by ‘eat’?”

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"I mean she will tear me apart with her fangs, suck my blood dry, and toss my husk aside," cried Private Krueger. "Please sign the marriage certificate and let me marry Dawn. She scares the hell out of me."

"This is why the Legion provides premarital counseling for its young enlisted men," I commented. "I am sending you to talk to Pastor Jim. You may be required to bring Dawn, too."

"That might upset her," complained Private Krueger. "Dawn is not the church-going type."

"If she loves you, she will go with you to see Pastor Jim," I advised.

"But she won't do it!" cried Private Krueger. "Churches weird her out."

"This can't get more weird," commented Major Lopez.

"There are parameters you need to make clear at the beginning of any relationship," I said. "You need to establish who will be the boss in your marriage. You need to wear the pants in this marriage. You need to lay down the law for Dawn. Otherwise, she will just walk all over you."

"But she is bigger than me," said Private Krueger. "And those fangs and her claw are vicious weapons. What do I do about them?"

"Never let females think size makes a difference," advised Major Lopez. "If she refuses to go to church, just bitch-slap her. That's what I would do."

"That's what I would do too," I added, nodding in agreement.

"Maybe she'd listen to a full-bird Legion colonel. Please talk to her, sir," pleaded Private Krueger.

"Where can I find your lovely Dawn?"

"She hangs out at the Angry Onion Tavern," said

Private Krueger. “She’s a Hell’s Angels biker babe.”

“I see,” I said. “What does Dawn do for a living?”

“She’s a drug-dealing blue powder crack whore,” said Sergeant Green. “I wouldn’t talk to her alone.”

“This only gets better,” I said. “I thought you said Dawn was an old-fashioned traditional biker babe.”

“She is!” said Private Krueger. “Dawn has a heart of gold. But her temper and those big knives she carries scare the shit out of me. Especially when she’s been drinking. Please, sir, talk to her. I don’t really want to get married, but I will – to save my life.”

“Major Lopez, take a platoon of fully armed Legion commandos to the Angry Onion Tavern and arrest the fair biker babe Dawn,” I ordered. “Lock her up without bail at the county jail. Tell Dawn I’ll be by later to chat with her about counseling.”

\* \* \* \* \*

Outside the Angry Onion Tavern, Major Lopez conferred with Corporal John Iwo Jima Wayne. Major Lopez hoped the big tough and worldly spider legionnaire could provide some insight about how to deal with female spiders.

“Our females are aggressive during courtship,” explained Corporal Wayne. “But once happily married, they become quite submissive. Krueger just needs to stand up for himself. If he continues to be such a wimp, after marriage Dawn will surely kill him. He’ll become a midnight snack.”

“That is unacceptable,” said Major Lopez. “We cannot let spider biker babes eat legionnaires. It sets a bad precedent.”

“Private Krueger isn’t one of our better

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legionnaires anyway,” commented Corporal Wayne. “His death will be an acceptable loss.”

As Major Lopez and Corporal Wayne entered the Angry Onion Tavern, Private Krueger pointed to his fiancée. The petite Dawn was playing pool with some other Hell's Angels. “There she is,” said Private Krueger. “Are you going to bitch-slap her now?”

“Shut up, or I'll bitch-slap *you*,” answered Major Lopez, reassessing his tactics. “We need to handle this diplomatically. Females are very sensitive. They are less rational than males, and tend to take the slightest criticism personally. For your own safety, try not to upset her.”

“Be careful, sir,” warned Private Krueger. “She has a pool stick in her claw.”

“Dawn!” called out Major Lopez, smiling broadly. “I need to talk to you. Could you please step outside for a minute?”

“You must be friends of Willie,” said Dawn, rushing to wrap four loving arms around Private Krueger. “Is the major going to be your best man at our wedding? It's a silly custom, but I'll tolerate it, if it makes you happy, Willie.”

“The wedding is exactly what I want to talk to you about,” said Major Lopez. “Willie's commanding officer, Colonel Czerinski, has not yet given permission for Private Krueger to get married. Colonel Czerinski has some concerns about your youth.”

“He better give permission,” said Dawn. The tavern went silent as bikers gathered around, hoping to see a good fight. Several wagers were immediately placed on Dawn to kill Major Lopez. “If Czerinski doesn't sign the wedding certificate, I'll rip his off his head and poop down his neck! You had better talk to the colonel for us. We are so much in love, I can't wait

to get married!”

“I’ll do my best,” promised Major Lopez.

“You are a handsome hairball,” gushed Dawn, happy now. “I have a sister. Would you be interested in meeting her? She is gorgeous, and even has a real job.”

“Sorry,” said Major Lopez, crossing himself and sprinting for the door. “I’m catholic. It would be a sin!”

“Religious zealot!” shouted Dawn as the legionnaire commandos quickly followed Lopez out. “What a waste of a fine hunk of male human pestilence.”

\* \* \* \* \*

“What in the hell are you doing up there in New Gobi City?” asked General Daniel Daley, speaking on the phone. “I have commanders all along the DMZ, but only you manage to shoot down unarmed spider aircraft! Are you trying to start another war?”

“No, sir,” I answered. “The helicopter was spraying poppy fields on our side of the DMZ.”

“So what?” asked General Daly. “Good riddance, if the spiders want to eradicate those poppies for us. The bottom line is, you shot down an unarmed aircraft in violation of our treaty, and now it’s all over the news and TV.”

“Sorry, sir,” I said. “We had a tip that the spiders were going to bomb the Free Colorado radio station.”

“And why in hell would the spiders want to do that?” asked General Daly. “I am sick and tired of all this bad press. It seems like every day it’s something new. Today I turn on the TV, and some poor broken-hearted spider girl is crying to the press that you

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won't sign a marriage certificate allowing one of your legionnaires to marry her. Sign that certificate now! I don't care if she is a spider."

"But sir, Private Krueger does not want to marry her," I explained. "He says she is coercing him."

"Coercing him?" asked General Daly. "What kind of pansies do you have in your battalion? I do not want to hear his sad story. Sign that certificate. He's getting married, and that's an order!"

"How about I transfer Private Krueger to the South Pole?" I suggested.

"How about I transfer you both to the South Pole?" threatened General Daly. "I am not in the habit of repeating myself to subordinates, but already I find myself ordering you a third time to sign that marriage certificate. This could be the public-relations bonanza I've been looking for. In fact, I think it would be a nice touch for you to send a Legion honor guard to the wedding. Take a lot of pictures. With luck, we can get some good press out of this fiasco yet. You will handle that personally."

"Not if Dawn eats Private Krueger on their honeymoon," I argued. "What if that happens?"

"Then he will be AWOL and brought up on charges!" answered General Daly, slamming his hand down on his desk. "Spiders don't eat humans. Although, I heard legionnaires under your command eat spiders. Is that true?"

"Those charges were dismissed at trial for lack of evidence. I have been ordered to not discuss the matter for reasons of national security."

"I can see I need to read your personnel file closer. I'm sure it's full of all kinds of interesting facts and tidbits. I am going to keep an eye on you!"



### CHAPTER 3

“The most destructive influence on Arthropodan culture may not be blue powder,” commented the spider governor. “I think human pestilence satellite TV does even more damage.”

“We can’t shoot down their satellites,” cautioned the spider commander of the New Gobi Desert sector. “That would cause a war.”

“Of course not,” agreed the governor. “But we can ban private ownership of all satellite dishes.”

“That would leave us with just the Imperial Cable TV Network,” said the spider commander. “Do you realize how boring that would be? The public would be driven to drink. I would be, too. Think about the effect mass liver disease would have on our culture.”

“Your argument fails to impress me,” said the governor. “I signed the new law today. Commanders will confiscate all satellite dishes and receivers in their sectors.”

“But sir, the World Series is tied at three games,” complained the spider commander. “We’ll miss the last game. Do you have any idea how much money has been bet on the Yankees? I don’t want to miss that game.”

“I’ve been so busy, I forgot all about the World Series,” conceded the governor. “Good point. Confiscate the satellite dishes next week.”

“What about pre-season football?” asked the spider commander. “Cable doesn’t carry the NFL either.”

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"We all have to make sacrifices," said the governor. "There is nothing I can do. The Emperor himself ordered the ban."

"But all cable TV offers is soccer," protested the spider commander. "Watching human pestilence Euro-trash riot at halftime is the only interesting part of the game."

"Maybe we can get cable TV to carry local sporting events like high school or college football," said the governor. "In the meantime, you have your orders."

"I suppose I could watch the golf channel," said the spider commander, slumping in his chair.

"That's the spirit," said the governor, before hanging up. "I knew I could depend on you."

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Just before the start of the final game of the World Series, the spider commander ordered pizza delivered from Pizza Hut to his office. However, Pizza Hut told him they could no longer deliver pizza because the Teamsters Union was on strike and would only make deliveries to the military if there was a national emergency.

"But this is an emergency," insisted the spider commander. "The game is about to begin. I don't even have hotdogs or buffalo wings."

"Sorry, sir," said the Pizza Hut employee. "No exceptions."

"How about nachos?"

"No, sir."

The spider commander slammed down the phone. Starving, he put a bag of popcorn into the microwave. He salivated at the thought of the extra



butter and salt promised on the fine print of package. When the popcorn was ready, the spider commander plopped down on the couch to enjoy the game and have a beer.

“Go Yankees!” he shouted at the TV screen. Between innings, the spider commander gave some thought to the fears of cultural contamination. “Idiocy! The Emperor is afraid we are all becoming Americans. So what? The Empire should seize the best and discard the worst of the lands it conquers. That will make the Empire even stronger. There is nothing to fear! It’s under control.”

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The Angry Onion Tavern was packed with customers watching the World Series on a big-screen TV. They dined on beer and hotdogs. There would have been even more customers watching, but the tavern was still off-limits to the Arthropodan military. The MDL painted down the middle of the tavern floor divided the noisy American side from the quieter Arthropodan side. It was a stark contrast.

Guido was still on duty at the border crossing, so he set up a satellite dish TV outside his guard shack and pointed it across the MDL for his spider guard friends. Spider border guards gathered to cheer for the Yankees. Guido accepted last-minute bets right up until the first pitch.

“It figures you spiders would be betting on the Evil Empire to win this game,” said Guido. “Go Boston!”

The rowdy crowd of spiders booed Guido and gave him the one-fingered salute. Everyone was having a good time rooting for the Yankees until late

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in the game when an Arthropodan marine team leader strode up to the MDL.

“What goes on here?” asked the team leader. “Is anyone bothering to patrol the border today?”

“Not on our side,” said Guido. “Since there’s no more truck traffic, there is nothing to do. We’re all just watching the World Series.”

“What’s the score?” asked the team leader.

“Seven to five, New York in the seventh inning,” answered Guido. “But their pitcher is getting tired.”

“Yes!” said the team leader. “New York is money in the bank. Now everyone get back to work! Protecting the border from the human pestilence is a serious matter! Don’t you know there is a no-fraternization order in effect?”

The spider border guards dispersed until the team leader left. Then, most returned for the rest of the game. The Evil Empire (New York Yankees) won eight to seven in the tenth tie-breaker inning.

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A large human carrying a pizza box entered the spider commander’s office and placed the pizza on the commander’s desk. He was accompanied by a small spider wearing sunglasses and a fedora.

“That smells like a pepperoni and sausage pizza with extra cheese,” commented the spider commander. “Poor timing, the game is over. Who are you?”

“I am Carlos O’Neil,” replied the large human. “I am the Teamsters business agent for local #107 here in New Gobi City. This is my associate, Mr. Kennworth. I heard you were refused delivery of a pizza, so I came by to make amends.”

The spider commander opened the pizza box slightly. It contained a delicious pizza and a bundle of cash. He quickly closed the box. "I'll bet you want the border reopened."

"We have trucks parked along the freeway for miles on both sides of the MDL," said Carlos. "It would be nice."

"And if I refuse?" asked the spider commander.

Mr. Kennworth opened the pizza box and removed a pizza slice with a long jagged knife. He ate the pizza delicately, savoring each bite. "That is not an option," he explained.

"I see," said the spider commander, giving thought to just shooting these two fools. But, he was planning on opening the border to traffic soon anyway, and that pizza looked too good to risk spilling human pestilence blood on it. The spider commander decided he would keep the money and the pizza. "Consider the border opened as of now. And, consider yourselves under arrest for making threats to a government official."

Spider marines rushed in as the commander set off an alarm. Carlos O'Neil and Mr. Kennworth spent the night in jail. They were both released in the morning. Mr. Kennworth was warned to never set foot in North New Gobi City, or he would be shot on sight. Carlos was instructed to deliver sausage and pepperoni with extra cheese pizza once a month, with more cash.

