

Empire America

by Christopher Lee Buckner

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Empire America

The year is 1929, New York City. Two hundred years ago the American Revolution failed, its founding fathers put on trial and executed for crimes against the crown. Now, as the Great World War rages without end, the American colonies of Great Britain are ripe for a new revolution.

Empire American combines cyberpunk with the roaring 20s, filled with a world of advance technologies, machines and weapons beyond imagination, set against the backdrop of history's greatest war, the war that would end all wars.

Designed as a Novelette, Part One introduces Cole Israel, an American-born war veteran, and inspector with Scotland Yard. When an elite New York police team is killed by a robotic GEAR, Inspector Israel sees the foundations for a new kind of war being fought on his home turf as the California rebels stand ready to ignite a Second American Revolution.

CHAPTER ONE: ENDING THE YEAR WITH A BANG!

New York City
December 31, 1928

The sirens of the armored police British Motors Futurliner, roared without pause as the heavy vehicle sped over eight kilometers an hour down the road, turning sharply on Second Avenue weaving onto the four lanes of East Fifty-Sixth Street, speeding west. The rain soaked roads made the turn difficult.

“Watch where you're bloody going!” yelled Sergeant Cid Millar, who rode shotgun. He watched as several pedestrians hurried to cross the intersection from the path of the oncoming police vehicle; a few of them yelling obscenities as it passed, weaving dangerously close between the slower moving cars on the road.

It was twenty past ten o'clock at night and the roads were cluttered with traffic as tens of thousands of people across the city were going home, or out to eat, or to see a picture show, perhaps even the latest Broadway hit: *Victoria, Our Queen*, which had received nothing but glowing reviews from the critics that hailed the play as the *show of the year*; a sure-bet to sweep the Tony Awards; while even more would be heading to Times Square to celebrate the New Year countdown.

The driver was the newest member of New York's Emergency Service Units, known as, ESU. He smiled as his senior officer stared at him with an annoyed expression while he gripped the armrests tightly, bracing himself with every violent turn the young officer made.

“Sorry, Sarge, I'm eager to get to the scene while I'm still young,” Officer Richard Glen said as he cocked his head towards the older man. He had only been part of the team for going on six weeks, and was still eager to show the old-timer what he had. Driving the big police bus wasn't too different from the tanks he drove in Europe, over the trenches of France and through No-Man's Land, only no one was shooting at him.

“Just make sure we get there alive, will ya, kid?”

“No worries, sir, I use to race derbies before I joined the Army,” Glen smiled as he veered the van purposely hard to the right, dodging a slow moving city bus that failed to heed the sirens endless wailing and flashing red and blue lights.

“Bloody colonist,” Millar mumbled to himself, rudely referring to his American-born driver.

Millar tilted his head low, looking under the sun visor that was lowered before him and sighted down the street, about five blocks, to two hovering blimps which kept a safe distance over the target building; their searchlights shining down, lighting up the roofs with their powerful beams.

“Damn fools are going to give away our approach,” Millar commented as he sat back.

“Nah, it is New Years Eve, boss. The *Rebs* will just think it is part of the normal patrol to keep the peace during the celebration. Those bastards are too dumb to realize that they are about to receive the biggest surprise of their short lives.”

“You’re an idiot, kid. Not everything is like one of those damn action yarns you fancy ever weekend on the *telly*. Now, slow down a bit and cut the siren and lights when we round this next corner.”

Millar raised his hand and then tapped his knuckles three times against a metal plate that separated him from the men in the rear of the truck, which held twelve officers who were eagerly waiting to reach their final destination; hoping that they had time to get back to the station before the New Year party was over, and the booze drank.

“Man up, boys, T-Minus four minutes to show time!” Millar called to his squad. He grinned wider as he heard their enthusiastic response as they all hooted, in sync, the squad battle cry, *Ka-Ra!*

The van quickly, but now silently turned north on Seventh Avenue and headed towards a cluster of high-rise apartments that lined the street along Central Park South. The road had already been closed off to all civilian traffic by patrol officers that stood by their cars, diverting pedestrians away from the scene.

Millar reached for his Thompson submachine gun from its perch next to his seat. He ejected the clip, double-checking to make sure the thirty rounds was loaded and the weapon primed for action before he rested it across his lap.

Officer Glen moved the van through the police barricades before he turned down Central Park South. A few blocks down he stopped the van alongside the road, three buildings over from their target.

Millar stepped down from the passenger side as Glen flipped a dashboard switch, which popped open the rear hatch, allowing the twelve man squad to file out.

Millar met them once the last man exited the van. They quickly fell into formation, six men across, and two men deep. They were in full combat gear: black vest with armored plates, dark jumpsuits, riot helmets and ski masks. Each man carried an assortment of weaponry from Thompson's, Twelve Gauge Shotguns, and the more powerful BAR automatic rifle, its long barrier sawed so it could be used with more effectiveness in tight spaces.

A moment later Glen joined the rest of the team, taking his place on the far right — his helmet already locked in place, and his shotgun slung over his shoulder as he listened to Millar address the men.

"You know the game boys. We go in, we hit them hard, we kick their teeth in, and then we go home and fuck our wives, or in some cases, our mistresses," Millar grinned, which brought a quick chuckle from each of his men, all of them standing eagerly — each man's heart pounding with adrenalin as they anticipated the action soon to come.

Millar knew that his men lived for this. He did too, even though his age was starting to catch up to him, so, he was more composed and less eager than they as he spoke again.

"These bastards, well, they're the lowest of the low: bloody arms dealers selling our weapons to the *Rebs*. So, expect anything, and go in hot. The Chief isn't interested in prisoners, save for our primary target. Everyone else, shoot to kill. Do you hear me?!?"

"We hear you, sir!" Each man hollered as one.

"Ka-Ra! Now, let's move out!" Millar cried as he lowered his ski mask over his face and led his men down the side of the street.

The Emergency Service Unit turned as they reached their target building, a towering Brownstone apartment complex. Inside the

lobby, which was large and classically designed with fine-crafted wood paneling, plush furniture and large crystal chandeliers, while two elevators were set against the far wall. They were already open as a pair of uniformed officers stood watch.

Millar directed his team to split into two groups as the elevators could only hold seven men in each.

It did not take the team long to reach the fourteenth floor, and as they exited the elevators, Millar, who ran point looked down both ends of the long hallway that was lined with apartment doors, each spaced twenty feet apart from other neighbors. More uniformed officers stood guard down each hall, out of sight, as much of the floor had already been cleared, leaving only target room occupied, or so the plan went.

Millar and his team turned right, moving stealthy in-file for ten meters before Millar signaled with a silent gesture of his hand the target apartment.

Millar took position to the left of the door, which read on its face, P16.

One of Millar's men, Officer Carter took the opposite side. He held in his hand a large iron ram, which he held ready out to the side of his body, as the squad quietly fell into line behind the entry-man.

Millar kept his eyes on Officer Carter, counting down with five nods of his head. On the count of zero, Carter raised his ram and slammed it with all the force he could deliver, bashing its round face squarely into the center of the door.

The cedar door broke open with a loud *bang*, but did not give on the first hit. However, on the second try, which followed a fraction of a second later, the whole thing fell inward with a violent *thud*, as it crashed down onto the hardwood floor of the target apartment.

The apartment was a private home belonging to one Christopher York, forty-six, a wealthy British importer that sympathized with the rebels, providing them with the pounds they needed to buy arms from the Mexican Empire, so they might continue their endless struggle against the crown.

Millar knew that there was supposed to be at least five persons in the apartment, including York. The targets didn't matter. They were rebel intermediaries, and there were already plenty of them locked up. So, anyone other than York was expendable.

As the ESU officers rushed into the apartment, they broke into their assigned teams, having already learned the layout before they deployed for the mission.

Millar stayed forward as his team broke, racing into the various halls and rooms. His destination was the living room, which lied ahead.

As he expected, a man raced around the corner. He was big, overweight by several stones, with a face full of hair. He carried a small pistol as he cursed in a thick New Jersey accent, "What the fuck! The Bobbies are here!"

Those were the man's last words as his chest was riddled with six well aimed rounds fired from Millar's submachine gun — the thick slugs, which traveled slower and hit with a heavy impact tore into the man's burly chest and stomach, throwing him back off his feet as his torso exploded in a mixture of blood and gore. He was dead even before his body fell on top of a glass coffee table, which shattered under his dead-weight.

Another man poked his head around the wall. Millar fired quickly, a short burst this time. The first bullet struck home, tearing through the man's skull, blowing brain-matter and bits of bloody bone out the backside of his head. No one else was stupid enough to round the corner next as the whole apartment filled with more gunfire and yelling.

Another burst erupted behind Millar, this time a series of shotgun blasts followed by smaller eruptions of pistol fire. This time, however, Millar heard one of his own men cry out as the man was thrown back from the second room, having taken a shotgun blast to the chest, and a second to his groin.

The officer twitched violently as he tried to cradle his inner thigh. Already, he was turning a ghostly shade of pale gray as blood oozed from his groin. He would not live another three minutes.

A second man in the room who carried a 1911 Model 45 pistol fired three times, striking another officer, two in the chest, but a third tore through his throat. He went down gargling as he drowned in his own blood.

A moment later the next officer took no chances as he unloaded his BAR into the room, emptying his entire magazine into the two men that had held up inside. The heavy rounds chewed their bodies to pieces until they were nearly unrecognizable, as one man's head, a tan-skinned Italian rebel's face exploded from the impact.

Millar couldn't think about his two men that were down even as he heard their names called out by the rear officers that came through the front door last. Nothing could be done for them; if they were still alive, they couldn't be helped until every room had been cleared, and only then could they be evacuated to a hospital.

Millar spotted another man as he rounded the corner and ran into the living room.

He relaxed his finger over the trigger as he recognized his target, Christopher York. The businessman already had his hands held high over his head as he cried out, "Don't shoot! I surrender!"

"Get on the floor, you limey bastard, now!" Millar yelled as he held York at gunpoint, holding his position as the British man begged for his life.

"Please, I don't want to die!" York pleaded as he seemed to not understand the instructions Millar had demanded.

"I said, get the fuck..." Millar's words were cut short as he watched York's head thrown suddenly forward as the front of his skull exploded, throwing large globs of blood and brain across Millar's face, and along the side of the walls.

"Christ!" Millar shifted his sights to the unseen murderer that stood just around the next bend in the apartment.

The killer was covered with a thick brown trench coat with a high collar, which was pulled up. A fedora covered the man's bald head. The target was tall, standing well over two meters, with a thin build around the legs and arms, but with a wide barreled chest that seemed to want to burst out from the coat that concealed the man's

identity from Millar. It was obvious that this man, whoever he was, didn't want Millar and his team to take York alive, so he shot the poor bastard without a moment's hesitation, as he now turned his aim on Millar and his remaining ESU officers.

Millar pulled the trigger nearly at the same time that Officer Glen had, each firing their weapons without a moment's pause as several dozen well aimed rounds bore into the target's body.

Twenty rounds from Millar's Thompson pummeled the target, while Glen fired six shots from his shotgun. However, even as the target staggered back several feet as each round and shotgun shell struck home, the man remained firmly on his feet.

Millar's Thompson sounded, *click*, signaling the weapon was empty.

"What the bloody hell?" Millar uttered under his breath as he stared at the still standing opponent, even though the man's overcoat was torn to smoldering tatters that hung by a few loose threads.

And then, he raised his hand and gripped the fabric over his chest before he tore it free. The loose clothing ripped away from his body as shreds fluttered to the blood soaked floor. Then, in one fluid motion it flung the fedora across the room, revealing its face and body to the ESU officers that now clustered around Millar, who looked on in horror, mouth wide open as he saw...

"My God, it is a GEAR!" Glen cried out as he tried to fire his weapon, even though it was empty of shells.

The GEAR lifted its rifle even as its hard metal body was struck time and time by the rest of the ESU officers, who unloaded everything they had at the metal monstrosity.

The GEAR fired; its aim precise.

Sergeant Cid Millar, even with ten years of service to the New York City police department, and twelve to the crown during the Great War, fell without a moment to think about the daughter he wished he had more time to see, having walked out on his wife fifteen years ago when the slow-life of a father and married man

became too much for a soldier that always sought the most difficult and adventurous assignments.

Another three officers, including Officer Glen dropped to the ground, and joining Millar after thirty rounds from the never-before-seen weapon the GEAR carried pelted through their protective body armor. Those that remained alive ran once it became clear their weapons were useless.

"Backup! We need backup! The *Rebs* have a bloody GEAR!" One of the remaining officers, Cooper cried down the hall at any uniformed man that could hear him. His words, however, were silent a second later as his chest exploded outward before his body was thrown up the side of the wall, just outside Christopher York's apartment.

The only ESU officer left was Kimble, the heavy weapons expert that carried a specialized BAR.

"You fucking bastard!" he screamed at the top of his lungs as he fired all twenty of his .30 caliber rounds into the GEAR, which did stagger backward several paces as the bullet's dented the heavy armor plates around its body. But, when Kimble's weapon emptied, it reared its head, seemly annoyed even though its featureless face showed no expression.

Kimble could hear more officers racing down the hall, but he knew they would be too late to do anything to save him.

As his heart skipped a beat when the GEAR's strange weapon *clicked*, he thought he might have been saved as the GEAR recognized with its limited intelligence that its weapon was dry.

"The fucker is empty! Hurry you bloody wankers!" Kimble screamed to the rushing patrol officers that were seconds from reaching York's apartment. But, then the GEAR rushed forward just as the first officer ran around the broken doorframe. He gasp in terror as the GEAR grabbed Kimble by his face and lifted him up, and without a moment's hesitation, it ripped Kimble's head clear off his shoulders before throwing the severed head at the dumbfounded man, who had only a standard police issue pistol to protect himself.

Kimble's severed head slammed into the officer nearest to the door, knocking him back as blood soaked his clean and neatly ironed uniform.

"Fire!" The lead officer, with six men behind him cried out as they rushed into the apartment.

The GEAR stood firm, taking the incoming rounds that ricocheted off its armored body as the weak copper rounds dropped to the carpet. It, however, knew that further resistance was futile as it turned and dashed out the window, crashing through the glass and falling fourteen stories to the street below.

Outside, the officers, twenty in all that had been rushing into the apartment complex, stopped in their tracks as they heard the breaking glass, and then watched as the GEAR descended down toward them.

"Destroy it!" a captain ordered as all his men fired once the GEAR had landed, falling prone on the top of a parked police cruiser — its weight and decent caving in the roof.

Small jitters of sparks crackled from its right knee, followed by black fluid that drizzled down its leg, and while the patrol officer's firearms barely dented the GEAR's improved body armor, it knew that it was in no further position to stand and fight. Soon, hundreds of uniformed officers would be on the scene as the distant city noise was replaced with police sirens.

The GEAR's soulless eyes shifted, surveying its surroundings, both sides of the street were blocked by dozens of police cars as more officers were rushing towards it. Above, as a series of searchlights shined down upon it, police blimps hovered, soon followed by the sounds of machine gunfire from above.

The GEAR quickly evaluated the situation. It turned its head, before it dashed forward, just as the police car it had landed on blew up a fraction of a second later once one of the blimps's fired a rocket down where it had been standing. And, while the GEAR had the element of surprise, the police of New York were always ready to fight a war, against any foe, rebel, German or GEAR.

The asphalt was chewed to pieces as bullets ricocheted off of the pavement as the GEAR raced forward with incredible speed.

It ran toward the outer walls that surrounded Central Park, and as it reached the high obstacle, it leaped over the wall before quickly disappearing into the thick of the trees.

A moment later, the streets were silent again, save for yelling police officers and the near and distant wailing of sirens. A moment later, the police rushed back into the apartment complex and upstairs, hoping to find that some of Millar's team was still alive, but unaware that it was all ready to late.

