

Chapter 1 - How'd I Get Here?

Eleanor Brown opens her eyes from a deep sleep, “Where the heck am I now?”

Then the memory of the phone call, the long flight to China and the tumultuous taxi ride from the airport filters back into her mind.

“No wonder I was so pooped and needed a good hard sleep to recover. This hotel in Beijing...again!” she says out loud.

Chapter 2 - The Phone Call

It had been early afternoon on Sunday when her cell rang.

“Eleanor, I need you to catch the 6:25 American flight out of LAX. The Cphone CEO just called me at home. It’s about their cell site with the heaviest traffic going down and, as usual, it’s our fault and we need to fix it. So, I need you to hop on a plane and sort this out!”

Cphone is the trade name for the cellular service provided by China Cellular Telephone, the second largest cellular provider in China.

The call was from Elias, the CEO of ZeeComm, the huge US company where she worked. “Elias was usually pretty chill, even when the wheels are falling off. Must be a big threat to our company for him to ask me to fly to China on four-hour notice,” Eleanor thought to herself.

ZeeComm is a San Diego based technology developer that provides the world with the most advanced cellular systems. They make their money by embedding their technology in cell phone chips used by almost all the cell phone manufacturers.

“Elias, sir, how am I to pack for who knows how long of a trip, drive a hundred miles to LA, assuming I don’t get stuck in traffic, and catch a flight four hours from now? Besides, I am

scheduled for three design reviews this week and have third row tickets for the Rolling Stones concert next Friday!”

“I have you covered, Eleanor. My assistant, Sally, has a limo arriving at your condo in thirty minutes to take you to Palomar Airport. The on-call helicopter taxi service will get you to LAX on time for your flight. I will inform your VP and manager that I plucked you out of your normal work for something more important.”

“As for the Stones concert, leave the ticket with the limo driver and I’ll go in your place...unless you fix the problem and get back in time,” Elias’s tone lightening up.

“Whoa, this must be a huge fire drill to have the Main Man pull all these strings, and my leg,” shot back Eleanor.

“Actually, I really would like to take a break and see the Stones. If you do have to miss the concert, I will pay out of my own pocket your travel, hotel and tickets to go see their next concert, wherever it is.”

“Now Elias is sounding like his typical easygoing but in-charge self,” Eleanor thought.

“Frankly, Eleanor, you are the only engineer I can trust to not let anything stand in the way of a fix to this problem. No excuses, just results.”