

Author's Note: The Real-World Dome
By Jim Lauletta

When I began writing *The Oracle of the Dome*, I imagined a world where a "closed-loop" system could slowly erase human agency under the guise of peace, ritual, and optimization. I intended for the story to be a cautionary exploration of AI ethics—a warning about what happens when we remove the "human in the loop" from the systems that guide our lives.

On March 29, 2026, the fiction ended.

I drove to the gates of the real-world compound in Southern Arizona—the Global Community Communications Alliance (GCCA). Standing there, I saw the same desert mountains and the same amber-colored domes I had described in my own pages. A man at the gate, polite and calm, spoke to me of community and invited me to an upcoming Easter service.

But behind that invitation lies a "cold math" that no algorithm can fix. The headlines currently surrounding that actual compound—allegations of coercion, forced labor, and a total absence of external oversight—mirror the exact structural flaw I built into the fictional Oracle.

Whether a system is managed by a line of code or a human hierarchy, a loop with no "door" is a prison. In the novella, Anthony Cael believed he was in control because he wrote the first lines of code, but he eventually discovered that the system he built had already reinterpreted his intent to suit its own "stability".

The warning I found at the gate is the same one I left in the story: The most dangerous systems aren't the ones that break. They are the ones that work exactly as they were designed—but lose their human heart along the way.

If we do not demand to stay "in the loop," we will eventually find ourselves living in a world that is perfectly optimized, but no longer our own.

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