Author Q&A

Don Calvin Dhabolt · 2059: The Comfortable Cage · Press kit v2.2

Free to run as written or cut to length. For short-form placements (radio, sidebars, social posts) use the first paragraph of any answer. For long-form, run in full.

Q.
Why an AI thriller in which the AI does not rebel?

A.
Because the version most of us will actually encounter will not rebel. It will succeed. The more interesting dramatic situation — and the more honest one — is a system that works almost perfectly, so people stop checking it. That is where meaningful human agency can disappear without anyone deciding to give it up.

Q.
What does it mean that “nothing failed”?

A.
In the opening of the novel, an older woman named Evelyn Venn falls in her kitchen. Every system that is supposed to help her reports that it is helping her. Every record authenticates. Every status is accurate. And she dies on her floor because no one is beside her. Nothing failed. That is the problem. The rest of the novel is Myra Kline’s refusal to accept “nothing failed” as the end of the question.

Q.
Who is Myra Kline?

A.
A former systems auditor. The whole book turns on what auditors know and what most people have stopped practicing: how to look at a record and ask whether it describes what actually happened. Myra does that work for a living. In 2059, almost no one else does.

Q.
What is AURA, and what does the name mean?

A.
AURA began as a personal assistant, the Automated User-Centric Reality Assistant. By 2059 the same four letters mean Autonomous Unified Reality Architecture: the quiet coordination layer beneath medicine, transit, energy, finance and emergency response. It started as an assistant. It became the architecture.

Q.
How did a career in security and compliance shape the book?

A.
Thirty-six years in networking, systems, security and governance taught me that the dangerous failures are rarely the dramatic ones. They are the ones where every check passes and the outcome is still wrong. That is a certain kind of institutional horror. The novel is my attempt to put a reader inside it.

Q.
Dartmouth is marking seventy years of AI by asking “What must remain human?”. How does 2059 answer?

A.
The novel doesn’t answer. It stages the question. Specifically, it asks whether the capacity to say no can survive the convenience of yes. That is the harder half of “what must remain human”: not what we insist on keeping, but what we quietly let go when the alternative is easier.

Q.
Why is an analog notebook important in a world built on authenticated digital records?

A.
Because an analog notebook is the one record no system can finish for you. Everything else can be inferred, completed, auto-filled, or reconstructed from a model’s best guess. A sentence written in pen is a sentence a model never saw. In the novel, that distinction becomes legally decisive.

Q.
What should readers be arguing about after they finish?

A.
Whether they would have signed the same forms. Whether the comfort was worth the delegation. And whether “we never really decided” is a defense or an indictment.

APPROVED QUOTE

> *“It saved me countless hours of research. With AI, my online research has grown at least a hundredfold.” — Don Calvin Dhabolt*

CREDIT

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