

Solar Slayers

by [Joe Giordano](#) (January 2024)



Cars– Ed Potapenkov, 2019

Turned out, the genius car inventor was nuts.

I'd kept my beater, pea-green Chevy, eschewing his self-drive,

thus touted safer, Volta solar-powered car, until my neighborhood cancel mob shunned me for my carbon footprint and laws were passed that threatened drivers with prison for even a minor accident. When I brought my Chevy to the salvage yard, the car looked at me more in sadness than in anger, and as the crusher descended onto its metal frame, I swear I heard a scream. Cars have feelings, you know.

I scraped together enough dough to purchase a used Volta with a turned up blue nose. Nothing but trouble, out of warranty, the car needed dealer service so often that I wished it qualified for Obamacare. Little did I know at the time that the vehicle's inability to start on damp mornings would save my life.

The genius inventor capitalized on climate change fears to wrangle generous subsidies and tax rebates on the purchase of Voltas from both the U.S. and foreign governments, resulting in the car dominating global sales, pushing virtually every other manufacturer aside. Made a multi-billionaire by the success of Volta, the inventor genius turned to space exploration, most thought as an expensive hobby, but as it turned out, for far more sinister purposes. He established Serenity, a Moon-based luxury resort, offering "sessions to deepen your mind-body connection, self-optimize in pursuit of personal growth, customize nutrition for ideal energy and wellbeing, with yoga under the stars like you've never seen them, and relaxing spa treatments before sinking into a Japanese O'furo tub." News feeds often pictured the genius inventor ferrying celebrities and female arm candy to Serenity on his private spaceship.

When a billion Volta solar-powered cars were in use worldwide, the genius inventor observed the milestone by declaring he would take up permanent residence on the Moon, assembling his entire fleet of spaceships, inviting special guests for the trip in Dr. Strangelove fashion ensuring he carried a 10:1 female to male ratio of passengers. On the launch pad, as the

final countdown ensued, he triggered a GPS signal, unleashing the robotic brains of Volta's everywhere to mow down any human they sensed. As his ships were escaping Earth's gravitation, Volta's were jumping curbs and plowing through buildings in a zealous quest to hunt down and eliminate every carbon dioxide puffing, methane farting, planet-killing human until mankind was extinct.

Fortunately, my Volta stalled upon receiving the search and destroy order and simply scowled at me when I entered the garage. Tires screeching and human screams alerted me to the danger unfolding around me and I sped up to a second floor just as a neighbor's car crashed through the front door and took out the staircase below my feet.

For months, I hunkered down, praying for clouds when much of the killer fleet temporarily lost power, using the opportunity to forage for a dwindling food supply. Lately, I've wondered what part of rotting corpses were still edible.

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Joe Giordano was born in Brooklyn. He and his wife, Jane, now live in Texas. Joe's stories have appeared in more than one hundred magazines including *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Shenandoah*, and his short story collection, *Stories and Places I Remember*. His novels include *Birds of Passage*, *An Italian Immigrant Coming of Age Story*, and the Anthony Provati thriller series: *Appointment with ISIL*, *Drone Strike*, and *The Art of Revenge*.

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