

THREAT

written by

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EXT. PARK BENCH - DAY

The late afternoon sun is filtered through the trees, and an occasional jogger or walker passes by on the path in front of MYRA, thin and 30s, and PETE, 40s and somewhat overweight, sit on a park bench, dressed in office attire.

Pete holds a beer can in a brown paper bag, and Myra takes occasional bites from a sandwich.

PETE

The hours are wearing me out.

MYRA

Me, too. Six-fifteen and this is my lunch, by the way. Not gonna stop anytime soon, though. Randall needs another surgery - the second this year. I don't know how he does it.

PETE

What are they saying?

MYRA

His esophagus this time. Didn't form right in one place. They say it's one and done, great chance of success. All the shit they're supposed to say to keep us from going to another hospital.

PETE

He's going to be okay.

MYRA

He will be. One thing about Synthetica, the benefits are good.

PETE

(takes a long pull from  
his beer)  
Pay's not bad, either.

MYRA

Nope.

EXT. PARK PARKING LOT - DAY

Fifty yards away is WALKER, early 30s, lean and in phenomenal shape, with a close-cropped military haircut. In a form-fitting dark tracksuit and with a fanny pack at his waist, Walker crouches between parked cars to watch Myra and Pete.

A car drives by and Walker turns away to avoid being seen, then pivots back to face Myra and Pete.

EXT. PARK BENCH - DAY

MYRA

What did the freak have you doing today?

PETE

Working with the Chinese to line up the botnet. What about you?

MYRA

Last part of the financing. Two-point-three million in two payments. One now, one after the release. They're getting greedy. That's half a million more than we were paying this time last year, and the Hong Kong banks take a bigger cut with every release.

PETE

Some late nights ahead.

MYRA

I'm not sure I can do this much longer.

PETE

Have you told him?

MYRA

Yeah. Talked to him yesterday afternoon. Said I wanted a transfer out of the department.

PETE

What did he say?

MYRA

He'd think about it. I'm a valued member of the team, can't do it without me. Like he read it out of an eighties business book. There's more to it than money. I gotta sleep at night.

PETE

What are you talking about?

MYRA

The nature of our business, some very basic shit that, in our continuous efforts to keep up with the work that gets piled on our desks, we don't think about too much.

PETE

Please get to the point, if there is one. I'm trying to drink here.

MYRA

I'm talking about right and wrong.

PETE

You are high.

MYRA

I'm a tiny bit high, but that doesn't mean I'm not making sense.

PETE

Keep telling yourself that.  
(takes a long sip)  
I'll go you one better. I told him I wanted more money.

MYRA

What did he say to that?

PETE

He said: You're very well paid for what you do. I said I needed more, that there were people who would be very interested in our strategy.

MYRA

Like who. Secure Com? Their antivirus sucks.

PETE

Technorati.

MYRA

That's the most-read technology blog there is. You might as well put it in The New York Times. What did he say?

PETE

Said it would violate my non-compete, then told me to never mention it again. I told him to think it over. Then I left.

EXT. PARK PARKING LOT - DAY

After looking left and right to ensure no one is in sight, Walker zips his tracksuit up to his neck, adjusts the fanny pack and strides toward Myra and Pete.

EXT. PARK BENCH - DAY

MYRA

I don't know if you've got the biggest balls on the planet or if you're just out of your fucking mind.

PETE

Maybe both.

MYRA

I'm gonna go with out of your fucking mind. There are times when that guy scares the hell out of me.

PETE

Because he used to be a spook?

MYRA

Because he's a scary guy. I don't think he gives a shit about anything.

PETE

Hey, who's that?

MYRA

Who?

PETE

Guy walking toward us. Looks like Walker.

Walker strides quickly across the space between them as he approaches. He smiles the smile of a shark.

MYRA

It is Walker. Shit. He's coming over here. What the hell does he want?

Walker stops directly in front of them.

WALKER

Good evening, Pete. Myra.

PETE

Hi.

MYRA

Hello.

WALKER

I come here three nights a week. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. There are trails that go for miles back into the trees, all the way to the reservoir. It's a great place to run and think. Sometimes it's hard to believe you're in the city.

PETE

Uh - it's Thursday.

WALKER

Yes?

PETE

Tonight's Thursday.

WALKER

You're right. It is Thursday.

MYRA

So, did you come here to run, then?

WALKER

No.

Walker withdraws a small semi-auto pistol from his fanny pack and points it at Pete.

WALKER (CONT'D)

Tonight I'm here for an entirely different reason.

PAK! PAK! Walker shoots Pete twice in the chest. Pete clutches at his chest and coughs, blood flowing from between his fingers, then folds over on the bench. Walker quickly turns. PAK! PAK!

Walker shoots Myra twice in the chest, and she falls to the ground. Pete, his eyes open, lies dead. Myra, crying and groaning, crawls away from Walker, wide-eyed and terrified, coughing, blood between her teeth.

WALKER (CONT'D)  
You're a tough one.

PAK! Myra stiffens, then collapses. Her eyes are open, her hair bloody and matted, and a trickle of blood rolls down her cheek, her face pressed into the sidewalk. Her mouth moves, as if to speak. She exhales one long breath, then is still.

Walker snaps his head left and right to survey the scene. He shoves the gun into his fanny pack, zips the zipper, and scoops up the five shell casings from the ground.

He picks up Myra's purse from the bench, unzips it and flings the contents across the path, then sprints into the trees.

INT. BRIAN'S CONDO - NIGHT

Inside a high-end, suburban condo are bookcases filled with books and a handful of photos in frames. A television on top of an entertainment center shows a news channel, and DOWNTempo MUSIC plays.

BRIAN, mid 30s and bored, is in the kitchen, sipping from a bottle of beer and staring blankly into the microwave at a TV dinner slowly turning as it cooks.

Brian hits the "Stop" button on the microwave, opens the door, and pulls out his dinner. He walks over and plops the food and beer on the coffee table in front of the couch and sits down.

He glances at a side table at a framed photo of a SMILING GIRL, early 20s.

BRIAN  
Gone too soon.

He picks up the framed photo and looks into her eyes, then presses the photo against his chest.

BRIAN (CONT'D)  
Where are you now?

Brian frowns, gently places the frame back on side table, and goes into the kitchen. He rummages through a drawer and then opens the dishwasher, pulls out a fork, sniffs it, rinses it off, and wipes it on his jeans.

As he goes to sit down a phone rings, and Brian turns to look on the kitchen counter at a smartphone.

INSERT - PHONE SCREEN

that reads "Ben Foster"

BACK TO SCENE

Brian picks up the phone and answers.

BRIAN

Hi, Ben. What can I do for you?

BEN (V.O.)

Brian, I know it's getting late,  
but I need someone to go to Old  
City Park.

BRIAN

You trying to get me mugged?

BEN (V.O.)

Normally I'd be in a lighter mood,  
but there's a crime scene and two  
people have been shot - killed, I  
think.

BRIAN

Why do you need someone to go down  
there?

BEN (V.O.)

One of them was wearing a  
Synthetica I.D. badge.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Brian pulls his car into the parking lot, parks under a  
streetlight, and climbs out.

There are several police cars in the lot, and UNIFORMED AND  
PLAINCLOTHES POLICE walk around the lot and up and down the  
sidewalk leading to the crime scene. Crime scene tape  
stretches across the sidewalk.

As Brian reaches the crime scene tape DETECTIVE CAMPBELL, mid  
40s and dead serious, wearing a dark suit with his badge  
clipped into the breast pocket, ducks under the tape to greet  
him.



DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
Sir, this is an active crime scene.

BRIAN  
I'm sorry, officer.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
Detective. Campbell. How can I help you?

Brian pulls his wallet from his pocket and extracts his ID and a business card. Detective Campbell examines the ID and looks up at Brian's face. He hands Brian his license and slips the business card into his inside jacket pocket.

BRIAN  
I work in human resources for Synthetica. I was told you found an I.D. badge.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
Mister McCutcheon, do you mind if I ask you a couple of questions?

BRIAN  
Go ahead.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
Do you have an employee named Myra Sedgwick?

BRIAN  
Let me check.

Brian pulls his phone from his pocket and rapidly taps the screen.

INSERT - PHONE SCREEN

with a headshot of Myra and

"Myra Sedgwick  
DOB 08/01/1983  
Date of hire: 11/11/2012  
Senior Project Manager"

BACK TO SCENE

BRIAN  
She's worked for us for more than a decade. What can you tell me about what happened?

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

There were two victims: Ms. Sedgwick and a male. They seemed to know one another. One witness noticed a single male assailant dressed in dark clothes, but couldn't give a description because he was too far away and hit the ground as soon as he heard the shots. Both appear to have been shot multiple times. Anything else, we'll have to wait for ballistics and toxicology.

BRIAN

Jesus.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

Mister McCutcheon, would you do me a favor?

BRIAN

Sure.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

We found an I.D. in the wallet of the male victim: Peter Davies. Was he also employed by your company?

BRIAN

Let me check.

Brian checks, tapping the phone screen a few times.

INSERT - PHONE SCREEN

with a headshot of a smiling Pete and

"Peter Sean Davies  
DOB 03/17/1975  
Date of hire: 1/22/2009  
Senior Project Manager"

BACK TO SCENE

BRIAN

He was.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

How close is your office from here?

BRIAN

Corporate Drive and one-eighty-one.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
About ten miles. Not exactly close,  
so they probably arranged to meet  
here. What does Synthetica do?

BRIAN  
We're a global antivirus solutions  
provider.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
So I might have some of your  
software on my computer at home.

BRIAN  
Or at the office. We provide  
solutions for large companies and  
governments.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
Company doing well?

BRIAN  
Over eleven billion in revenues  
last year.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
That's big money. Can you think of  
any reason why someone would want  
to shoot either of these people?

Brian stares down at his phone at the photo of Pete.

BRIAN  
No. No, I can't.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Seated at a long table are Brian, KIM, TINA, both mid-30s,  
and three HR EMPLOYEES. BEN, mid 40s and all business, walks  
into the room in a dark suit and tie, surveying everyone  
before sitting at the head of the table.

BEN  
As everyone in the room knows, two  
Synthetica employees were killed  
last night. We're not going to talk  
about what happened with other  
employees, other than what we need  
to share to take care of necessary  
benefits tasks. We're keeping this  
incident VERY close to the vest.  
Clear?

ALL

Clear.

KIM

Do you want me to arrange a memorial service and coordinate with employees?

BEN

Not this time. Send flowers to the families, up to two hundred dollars per arrangement, with this message: On behalf of the employees of Synthetica, we wish you peace in your time of loss.

TINA

Any reason we're not making an announcement this time?

BEN

Change in company policy. Leave it at that.

Brian looks down the table at Tina. They exchange a look. Brian looks back at Ben as Ben turns to him.

BEN (CONT'D)

Brian, get their personal items to their families.

BRIAN

Will do.

INT. BALLROOM - ONSTAGE - DAY

A large ballroom filled with EMPLOYEES. To the side of the stage, seated on a tall stool, is Synthetica CEO TOM FRANCIS, 60s and distinguished in a tailored sports jacket and slacks.

HELEN and JULIANA, both late 40s and serious in dark suits, are center stage.

HELEN

Good morning, everyone. Please find your seats so we can get started.

INT. BALLROOM - KATE AND BRIAN'S SEATS - DAY

KATE, early 30s and sharp-eyed, with shorter hair and little makeup, sits next to Brian.

KATE  
Tom looks good.

BRIAN  
He's got four-point-one billion reasons to be happy. You hear anything about the prep meetings last week?

KATE  
What day was it?

BRIAN  
Tuesday.

KATE  
On Tuesdays I do this other thing.

BRIAN  
What other thing?

KATE  
It's called working.

Kate casually rests her hand on top of Brian's arm.

BRIAN  
Okay, smart ass. First quarter results beat all the projections.

KATE  
That's your deal. They don't let I.T. in those meetings unless someone at the C. level needs help dialing into the conference bridge.

Brian looks down at Kate's hand on his arm and frowns. Kate withdraws her hand and grins.

KATE (CONT'D)  
Ha! Sorry.

INT. BALLROOM - ONSTAGE - DAY

Juliana goes to sit next to Tom, and Helen addresses the audience.

HELEN  
I'm Helen Bennett, vice president of investor relations.  
(MORE)

HELEN (CONT'D)

With me today are Tom Francis, Synthetica's chairman and CEO, and Juliana Turits, executive vice president and C.F.O. Juliana will provide financial highlights, we'll hear from Tom, and we'll close with questions.

Helen goes to sit next to Tom, and Juliana takes the stage.

JULIANA

Before Tom fills us in on some fantastic new products, I want to remind everyone of our first quarter results: gap revenue of four-point-one-two-eight billion...

INT. BALLROOM - KATE AND BRIAN'S SEATS - DAY

KATE

I could give a shit about shareholder value. I just want my quarterly bonus.

BRIAN

You'll get it.

JULIANA (V.O.)

Now let's welcome Tom Francis.

INT. BALLROOM - ONSTAGE - DAY

Employees applaud as Tom takes center stage with a flourish.

TOM

Thanks, Juliana, and good morning everyone. During the past quarter we've shown incredible dedication to our customers around the world, strong advances in the capabilities of our existing products, and the acquisition of technologies that will allow us to enter new spaces in the market. In our business there are lots of rules. We won't break them. However...

Tom smiles broadly, scanning the room.

TOM (CONT'D)

...we may bend a few.

Laughter followed by resounding applause. Tom presses down his hands for quiet.

TOM (CONT'D)  
Our first quarter results were outstanding, but they're only part of the story.

INT. BALLROOM - KATE AND BRIAN'S SEATS - DAY

KATE  
You heard about the two people who got killed yesterday?

Brian nods.

KATE (CONT'D)  
Okay, so - details?

BRIAN  
Not this time.

KATE  
Why's that? Hippa never stopped you before today.

Brian looks to see who is sitting nearby.

BRIAN  
This one's different.

KATE  
Because they were shot?

BRIAN  
Something else. Not sure yet. Ben's acting funny.

KATE  
Really don't like that guy. He's everything I always hated about H.R. No offense.

BRIAN  
None taken, and I'll let you know when I know.

INT. BALLROOM - ONSTAGE - DAY

TOM

Although our endpoint protection product, Taligent, has done well, we're still challenged by the competition in the E.U. We own a big piece of the government business, and we do fine with multinationals, but midcaps aren't looking at us. That has to change.

INT. BALLROOM - KATE AND BRIAN'S SEATS - DAY

BRIAN

What do you know about Sparticles?

KATE

The next big thing for us.

BRIAN

It works?

KATE

It's worked in testing, and last month it stopped a zero-day attack.

BRIAN

A zero-day attack on who?

KATE

On us.

INT. BALLROOM LOBBY - DAY

Throngs of SYNTHETICA EMPLOYEES flood past Brian and Kate. Brian eyes Tom talking to HARGROVE, stone-faced and early 50s, in a dark suit and tie, and CARR, late 40s and dressed in black, with tinted glasses and visibly uncomfortable.

BRIAN

Who are those guys?

KATE

Global Infrastructure. Kind of a weird deal there. Department was created a little over nine years ago. We ran cable into their office, a conference room in three south. One door, no windows.

(MORE)



KATE (CONT'D)

Once we put the card key on the door, we never heard from them again. No help desk calls, nothing.

BRIAN

Who has access?

KATE

Just them.

BRIAN

What would they be doing with Tom?

KATE

Must be doing something right.

BRIAN

I don't know. Two of their team died yesterday.

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Brian is seated at his desk, talking on the phone. Dressed in a navy suit, security guard TODD, 40s, appears in the doorway. He pushes a cart carrying two copier paper boxes.

BRIAN

How are you doing?

TODD

Good, good. I have the desk contents for Myra Sedgwick and Peter Davies.

Brian gets up and looks in the boxes.

BRIAN

That's it?

TODD

That's it. This box here is Miz Sedgwick's stuff, and Mr. Davies' items are in this box. Real shame.

BRIAN

Did you know them?

TODD

No, other than seeing them leave in the evening. They worked pretty late sometimes.

BRIAN

How late?

TODD

Some nights I never saw 'em leave.

INT. PETE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Brian is seated on a couch with ELLEN, late-40s, frumpy and tired, trying to keep it together. The box of Pete's belongings are in front of them on a low coffee table.

As Ellen and Brian talk, various RELATIVES, dressed in black, walk by, speaking to each other in hushed tones.

ELLEN

I don't know what he did at work. Projects. That's all he said. He didn't really want to talk about it.

BRIAN

I'd seen him in the building, but I didn't really know him.

ELLEN

From what he said, his team stuck pretty close together. The police said someone else was killed, too. One of his coworkers.

BRIAN

Myra Sedgwick.

ELLEN

They asked me if he was having an affair.

BRIAN

Ellen...

ELLEN

He wasn't. He had his weaknesses, but not that. But there was something going on. I found a bank statement for an account I didn't know we had. I called the bank, and they said he made deposits every month. He opened it nine years ago, after he moved to a new team.

BRIAN  
Could it have been performance  
bonuses?

ELLEN  
(shaking her head)  
It's a lot of money. I'm sorry, I  
never asked if you wanted something  
to drink.

BRIAN  
No, thank you. I'm fine.

Ellen looks in the box and pulls out a photo frame.

INSERT - PHOTO

of Ellen and Pete, both smiling and happy.

BACK TO SCENE

ELLEN  
For the past year he was troubled —  
didn't sleep some nights. He'd get  
up and stare out the front window.  
He doesn't stare out the window  
anymore.

BRIAN  
I'm so sorry.

ELLEN  
We loved each other. That still  
means something, doesn't it?

BRIAN  
I think it means everything.

Ellen puts the picture frame down on the coffee table and  
looks down at it, then up at Brian.

ELLEN  
Will you be at the funeral? It's at  
two o'clock at Hope Presbyterian.

BRIAN  
I'll be there.

ELLEN  
I'm glad. Will there be any other  
friends of his from work there?

INT. HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH SANCTUARY - DAY

Brian, dressed in a dark suit and tie, is seated in the center of a church pew. Organ music plays, and USHERS lead various FUNERAL-GOERS to the pews. The REVEREND is seated on a bench on the altar.

Brian sees Ellen pass by, supported by an USHER. She catches Brian's eye and he smiles slightly and nods at her. Ellen responds with a tiny wave. As she takes a seat in the front pew, the organ music stops.

The REVEREND stands and steps behind the podium.

REVEREND

We are gathered here today to mark the passing of Peter Sean Davies. Husband, family member, friend to many, taken from us far too soon. Today's service will be brief, in keeping with Peter's wishes that when the time came for there to be a service in his honor it would be short, so we could get past the boring part and get to the party.

There is laughter from the various Funeral-Goers.

REVEREND (CONT'D)

I first met Pete, as he insisted I call him, almost ten years ago....

Brian's phone buzzes in his jacket pocket, and he pulls it out.

INSERT - PHONE SCREEN

that reads "Ben Foster"

BACK TO SCENE

Brian looks left and right for the best way out and slowly stands.

BRIAN

Excuse me, please.

Brian edges past the other Funeral-Goers in the pew and walks down the aisle toward the doors at the rear of the sanctuary.

INT. HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH LOBBY - DAY

An ELDERLY USHER eyes Brian as he answers his phone.

BRIAN

Hello.

BEN (V.O.)

Where are you?

BRIAN

Peter Davies' funeral. His wife  
kind of cornered me.

BEN (V.O.)

How long will you be there?

BRIAN

Another half hour or so. I have to  
drop things off at Myra Sedgwick's  
house at three. What's up?

BEN (V.O.)

How did it go with Pete's wife?

BRIAN

She's holding up.

BEN (V.O.)

Did she say anything out of the  
ordinary?

BRIAN

She mentioned a bank account she  
didn't know about - a bank account  
with a lot of money in it.

BEN (V.O.)

How much?

BRIAN

She didn't say. Enough to surprise  
her. Pete worked in Global  
Infrastructure. Never heard of  
them. What do they do?

BEN (V.O.)

They're part of planning and  
allocation. Not that exciting.  
Don't worry about the bank account.  
I'll ask Legal about it. I'm  
meeting with them in half an hour.  
See you later.

Brian slips his phone back into his jacket and turns toward the sanctuary doors. He straightens his jacket and the ELDERLY USHER opens one of the doors.

EXT. MYRA'S HOUSE - DAY

Brian gets out of his MID-SIZED SEDAN in front of a small suburban house. He takes the box of Myra's belongings from the back seat and walks to the door. As he steps onto the porch, LIZ, mid 40s, her hair short and severe, opens the door.

BRIAN

Hello, Liz. Brian McCutcheon. I'm so sorry for your loss.

LIZ

Thanks. Come on in. You can put that down right there, next to the door. Pretty sure it's going straight to the trash. Nothing in that box'll make me feel any better about her being gone. Why don't you have a seat?

BRIAN

Thanks.

Brian puts down the box and goes to sit on a couch. Liz closes the door, then sits across from him in a chair.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I didn't know Myra. I saw her in the cafeteria a few times, but - I'm really, really sorry.

LIZ

I appreciate that. You want some coffee?

BRIAN

No, I'm fine. Is there anything you can tell me about what could have happened?

LIZ

You don't believe the rumor?

BRIAN

What's that?

LIZ

They were having an affair.

BRIAN

It's none of my business.

LIZ

No, it's not. And I can't tell you  
life with me was easy.

Liz points to a photo of a two-year-old boy on a small table.  
He's smiling, but he doesn't look right.

LIZ (CONT'D)

That's Randall. He was starved for  
oxygen in my birth canal. His brain  
won't develop normally, and it  
won't get any easier as he grows  
up. Myra and Pete were work  
friends, yeah. They ate lunch just  
about every day, mostly because  
they couldn't talk shop with anyone  
else. But there's no way they were  
messing around. Dick was the last  
thing she was interested in.

Liz regards Brian, measuring him.

LIZ (CONT'D)

I get feelings about people. Always  
have. Helps me tell the good ones  
from the bad ones. Wait here. I've  
got something for you.

Liz leaves the room. Brian looks at photos on a small table  
by the couch of Myra and Liz. They're both smiling. Other  
photos catch his eye: baby pictures, Myra and Liz standing on  
the rim of the Grand Canyon. Myra in a wedding dress with  
Liz, who is wearing a suit. Liz returns to the room.

BRIAN

So you're married.

LIZ

Back then, we had to do it in  
Canada. This country can kiss my  
ass.

Liz holds a white, letter-sized envelope and a USB flash  
drive. She hands the flash drive to Brian.

BRIAN

What's on this?

LIZ

Spreadsheets with a bunch of  
numbers. The first column is dates.  
(MORE)

LIZ (CONT'D)

Doesn't make any sense to me, but if she put it in the box with her baby pictures it must have been pretty goddamn important. She didn't talk about what she did at work. Whatever it was, they paid her an assload of money to do it.

Brian slips the flash drive into his pocket. Liz hands Brian the white envelope. She seems on the verge of tears.

LIZ (CONT'D)

Open it.

Brian withdraws a letter from the envelope.

INSERT - LETTER

At the top is the EU Allianz Insurance AG logo, and beneath it:

"Name of the insured: Myra Sedgwick  
Policy type: Whole Life  
Amount of policy: \$1.5 million USD"

BACK TO SCENE

BRIAN

Why are you showing me this?

LIZ

Look at the beneficiary.

Brian scans the letter to see, further down the page:

INSERT - LETTER

"Payable upon the death of the insured.  
Beneficiary: Synthetica, Inc."

BACK TO SCENE

LIZ

Does your company take out insurance policies on all its employees, or just the ones who do work they can't talk about?

INT. BEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Brian sits across from Ben, who is behind his desk.



BRIAN

I saw a letter today I wasn't supposed to see.

BEN

What letter was that?

BRIAN

Did you know Myra Sedgwick had a one-point-five-million-dollar insurance policy on her?

BEN

Good for her...partner.

BRIAN

Wife. Are you being cagey? I'm talking about the insurance policy WE had on her. I know we don't do that for every Synthetica employee. Why her?

BEN

Not all departments operate the same way.

BRIAN

Departments? Are you telling me we had a policy on Peter Davies?

BEN

I really can't talk about it.

BRIAN

What's going on? Because I'm starting to feel like I walked into the wrong company this morning.

BEN

Did you know Pete and Myra?

BRIAN

No, and that doesn't matter. They deserved to live. Instead, they died...badly. Someone needs to answer for that.

Ben measures Brian.

BEN

I have a ten o'clock, so we're going to have to close this here.

BRIAN

When can we talk about this later?

BEN

I need you to understand me. We're going to have to close this here.

Ben stares hard into Brian's eyes and holds his gaze.

INT. BRIAN'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Brian keys in his code on a keypad and drives through the entrance gate into the parking lot of his two-story condo complex. He heads toward his numbered, covered spot, but a SMALL CONVERTIBLE is parked in the space. Brian parks in an uncovered visitor spot.

EXT. BRIAN'S PARKING LOT - NIGHT - TRACKING

Brian gets out of his car, grabs his laptop bag, locks the car with a beep, walks up a flight of stairs, heads to the door of a unit, and knocks on the door.

Loud music plays from inside. BECKY opens the door, 20s and alternative. She looks sullen, then brightens when she sees Brian.

BECKY

Hey, what's up?

BRIAN

There's a car in my spot. Friend of yours?

BECKY

Boy-friend. HA! Hey Martin, get out here and move your car!

MARTIN appears, 20s with tattoos and piercings, no shoes, pulling a wrinkled T-shirt over his head. He scoops a set of keys off a table and heads toward the front door.

MARTIN

Hey, neighbor guy. How's it going?

BRIAN

Good. Appreciate it.

MARTIN

No prob.

Martin walks past Brian and goes down the stairs.

BRIAN  
Boyfriend, huh? Seems nice enough.

BECKY  
We'll see.

BRIAN  
Big improvement over the last guy.  
No kidding. See you later.

Brian turns away and Becky closes her door. Brian goes next door, unlocks the door, and goes inside.

INT. BRIAN'S CONDO - NIGHT

Brian flips on the light switch just inside the door and an overhead room light and a lamp on a small table next to the couch comes on. He drops his laptop bag just inside the door and closes and locks the door behind him.

Brian picks up the framed photo of his sister, presses it to his chest, and lies down on the couch, staring up at the ceiling, where a ceiling fan slowly turns. He closes his eyes.

INT. SYNTHETICA MAIN ENTRANCE SECURITY DESK - DAY

Brian walks up the corridor to the security desk at the main entrance, where a navy-suited SHORT SECURITY GUARD hands Detective Campbell a temporary badge.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
Mister McCutcheon, thanks for  
agreeing to meet.

BRIAN  
I see they've got you fixed up with  
a badge. And call me Brian.

Brian points out one of the electronic gates on either side of the security desk.

BRIAN (CONT'D)  
Come in through this gate and I'll  
show you around.

Detective Campbell passes through the gate, and he and Brian walk up a large open corridor, passing various SYNTHETICA EMPLOYEES as they walk.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

Have you heard anything in the last day or so?

BRIAN

I delivered the employees' personal items to their families. Peter Davies and Myra Sedgwick worked in the same department, part of our planning and allocation division.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

What does planning and allocation do?

BRIAN

Makes sure we have the hardware, software, and facilities around the world to support customers and business needs.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

Anything else you can tell me?

BRIAN

Peter Davies seemed stressed out lately. His wife mentioned a bank account she didn't know about. She said there was a lot of money in it, but didn't give me an amount. Myra Sedgwick's spouse found a thumb drive that apparently has some company documents on it. We're going to take a look at that. What have you found out?

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

Can't say too much. Both of your people were shot with the same weapon: a nine-millimeter. No shell casings at the scene, and the shots were precise, so the shooter was very proficient with a handgun. We've not been able to determine anything was taken from either of them, so we're classifying it as a double homicide. We've gotten all the details we can from the one witness. If you think of anything that could help us figure out why this happened, please call me.

BRIAN

You might want to talk with the director of the department where they worked. Larry Hargrove.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

I spoke with him a few minutes before I called you. Can't say he was as friendly as you are. He answered most of my questions, but I was a little surprised he was accompanied by Ben Foster from your H.R. team.

BRIAN

My boss. That may just be the way he works.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

Could be. Let's stay in touch. And let me know if you find out anything about the bank account.

BRIAN

I will. Anything else?

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

I think I've taken enough of your time for today.

INT. SYNTHETICA HALLWAY - DAY - TRACKING

Brian strides toward an elevator and sees Hargrove standing in the open elevator doorway. Brian picks up his pace. Hargrove calmly leans to the side and presses the Close Door button, his mouth wrinkling into a barely perceptible smirk as Brian reaches the elevator just as the doors close.

BRIAN

What an asshole.

INT. JOYCE'S CUBE - DAY

JOYCE, 50s and grandmotherly, is in her cube, typing. On the cube walls are color printouts of family of children and small posters of cats. Brian appears in the doorway.

BRIAN

How's it going?

JOYCE

Working on my monthlies. What's up?

BRIAN

You're pretty good with the new  
H.R. Soft, aren't you?

JOYCE

I'm the trainer for the company.

BRIAN

That's what I thought. Haven't had  
my class yet. Can you look at a  
record for a current employee?

JOYCE

Sure.

(clicks and types) )

We're in. What's the name?

BRIAN

Lawrence Hargrove. Director over  
Global Infrastructure.

JOYCE

Hargrove. Lawrence. Found him.

BRIAN

Is there a photo?

JOYCE

It'll be his badge I.D. photo.

BRIAN

Just want to make sure we're  
looking at the right guy.

A photo of Hargrove appears onscreen as part of the record.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

That's him. What's his record say?

JOYCE

Been here five years. Referred by  
Team U.S.A. Most ex-military  
employees come through them. Was he  
military?

BRIAN

Not sure. Does it tell you?

JOYCE

Usually. Nope. No military service.  
Hmmm, that's funny.

BRIAN

What?

JOYCE

We always ask if someone has security clearance, from the military, department of defense or a past job. Larry has ultra clearance, as in ultra top secret. I've never seen that before - not even for employees who work on D.O.D. contracts.

BRIAN

What else does it say?

JOYCE

This is a new one. He's employed as a senior manager, but his pay is leveled at the C. level. He's issued preferred stock four times a year as part of his package, just like the C. level and the board of directors.

BRIAN

Anyone else in the company set up like that?

JOYCE

No way. And to level his salary so far out of line with his title, someone had to sign off on it.

BRIAN

Someone like who?

JOYCE

Tom Francis or the board. Maybe both. Same for his medical package. No deductible, and everything's covered at a hundred percent.

BRIAN

Who else works in his department?

JOYCE

Don't tell me you can't read an org. chart.

BRIAN

There isn't one.

JOYCE

That would be a first. You know how we love our org. charts. Global Infrastructure, huh?

BRIAN

Yep. It's under planning and allocation.

JOYCE

Let's see what we can find.  
(types and clicks her  
mouse several times)  
There's no org. chart.

BRIAN

Told you so. How else can you see who works in that department?

JOYCE

Department code would do it.  
(she types and clicks)  
Hargrove's department code is three-four-two. Four other people have that department code, all here in the home office.

BRIAN

Who are they?

Joyce types and clicks.

JOYCE

Oh lord! It's those people who were killed.

BRIAN

I should have told you. You okay?

JOYCE

Yeah. It just shocked me is all. Not the first time I've had to deal with death at work. It's just...

BRIAN

This time it's different. Who else is still in the department besides Hargrove?

JOYCE

Malcolm Walker, senior project manager. Been here just under five years. Hired just after Hargrove. And Jason Carr, senior project manager. Been here four years. Both have been re-leveled to the S.V.P. level, plus stock and bonuses aligned with the S.V.P. level. It's a day for firsts.



BRIAN

Thanks, Joyce. Look, I have to run to a meeting, but do me a favor.

JOYCE

What's that?

BRIAN

Keep this to yourself.

JOYCE

No problem.

Brian leaves. Seconds later, TERRI, 50s and overweight, appears in the doorway, eating a bag of chips.

TERRI

What did he want?

JOYCE

He asked me to look up these guys.

Joyce displays photos and partial records of Hargrove, Walker and Carr on her monitor.

TERRI

Who are they?

JOYCE

They work in Global Infrastructure, where those people were killed.

TERRI

That's creepy. They look like weirdos.

JOYCE

Not nice.

TERRI

Seriously, I've seen that guy.

(points to the photo of  
Walker)

You say hi to him, and he never says hi back. Real jerk.

JOYCE

You're terrible.

TERRI

Lawrence Hargrove, Malcolm Walker and Jason Carr. Okay, I'm going to lunch.

(Terri leaves)

JOYCE

See you.

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Brian's picks up his office phone and dials four digits.

JOYCE (V.O.)

Hi, Brian.

BRIAN

Hi, Joyce. One more thing. If I wanted to look at older personnel records for a department, how would I do it?

JOYCE (V.O.)

Enter the department code in the department code field and click the department history tab. It'll be a historical record in chronological order based on when employees joined the department. Name, title, start date, etcetera. For a big department, you want to get a report done that sorts things into categories. You can see the last eight years. For anything older, you gotta go through H.R.I.S.

BRIAN

Thanks.

Brian clicks his mouse several times.

INSERT - BRIAN'S LAPTOP SCREEN

Brian scans the Global Infrastructure department record. He clicks "Termination date" to sort the page by date, and scrolls down to the name "Gregory Paxton". He clicks on the name to open the personnel record, at the top of which is a photo of GREG, early 40s, looking serious and professional in a jacket and tie.

BACK TO SCENE

BRIAN

Greg Paxton, I'm coming to see you.

EXT. GREG'S HOUSE - DAY

Brian stands next to his car outside a huge colonial with beautifully landscaped grounds and huge trees. GREG, 40s and tense, walks out his front door and trots toward the driveway, where a luxury convertible sits with the top down.

BRIAN

Morning, Greg. How are you?

GREG

Fine. Look, if it's about the noise last night, we had some champagne, one thing led to another...

BRIAN

I'm not one of your neighbors. My name's Brian McCutcheon.

GREG

What can I do for you?

BRIAN

Why did you leave Synthetica?

GREG

That's an interesting question. Who are you again?

BRIAN

Brian McCutcheon, Synthetica human resources.

GREG

Well, Brian. You know how it is. The pressures of corporate life. Extraordinary workload coupled with unreasonable deadlines.

BRIAN

I know what you mean. What do you do now?

Greg climbs into his car and starts the engine.

GREG

As little as possible. I'm retired. Synthetica was good to me. These days I concentrate on enjoying my life.

BRIAN

So you worked for Synthetica for just under two years and now you're retired. How did you manage that?

GREG

My financial planner's a genius. Now, please step back from the car. I'm late for an important meeting.

BRIAN

You said you're retired.

GREG

I did, didn't I?

Greg puts on a pair of expensive sunglasses, backs out of the driveway, and roars off. Brian watches him drive away, then turns to look at his house.

Upstairs, in a window, he sees a VERY ATTRACTIVE YOUNG WOMAN, early 30s, in a nightgown looking down at him. She's holding a glass of champagne. Unsmiling, she raises her glass to Brian, then turns from the window and walks out of view.

EXT. GREG'S CAR - DAY - DRIVING

Greg roars up a busy street, changing lanes, aggressively shifting, blowing through a light just turned red.

GREG

Phone. Dial asshole.

The phone rings through the car speakers.

INT. GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE ROOM - DAY

Walker is sitting at the conference table, writing on a legal pad. Hargrove is standing by Carr, pointing at something on his laptop screen, when his phone rings. He reaches into his pocket, pulls it out and answers.

HARGROVE

Hello.

GREG (V.O.)

Asshole.

HARGROVE

Gregory, good to hear from you.

EXT. GREG'S CAR - DAY - DRIVING

GREG  
Always so polite. Almost makes me  
feel bad for calling you asshole.

HARGROVE (V.O.)  
I'm a bit busy right now. What can  
I do for you?

GREG  
We'll save the boring chit chat and  
me asking how my old job's going  
and get to the point.

HARGROVE (V.O.)  
Which is?

GREG  
I just had a visitor. One of yours.  
Brian McCutcheon. Works in H.R. He  
asked me a few questions I found  
irritating regarding past projects.

INT. GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE ROOM - DAY

Hargrove sits down at the table and leans back in his chair.

HARGROVE  
I might need to introduce myself  
and impress upon him the importance  
of operating within his job  
parameters.

GREG (V.O.)  
I think you should. So, how much  
longer are you going to keep  
fighting the bad fight?

HARGROVE  
The next dozen releases. I'll be  
gone inside two years. Then they  
can find another babysitter.

EXT. GREG'S CAR - DAY - DRIVING

Greg pulls his car into the circular drive of an exclusive  
restaurant, stopping behind a luxury SUV, out of which come  
THREE BUSINESSMEN in suits. As Greg slows to a stop near the  
front door, a VALET moves toward his car.

GREG

Two more years? Don't get greedy.  
I'm here at the valet. Bye,  
asshole. Phone, end call.

EXT. SYNTHETICA HEADQUARTERS - DAY

HARGROVE

Thanks for meeting me outside.

WALKER

Sure. What is it?

HARGROVE

That was Greg Paxton who called a  
few minutes ago.

WALKER

What did he want?

HARGROVE

Brian McCutcheon paid him a visit.  
At his house. He asked a few  
pointed questions.

WALKER

What do you want me to do?

HARGROVE

I need you to have a quiet word  
with an old friend.

EXT. RESTAURANT - DAY

As Greg exits the restaurant, a VALET pulls Greg's car into the restaurant's circular drive, then gets out, bows deeply, and holds the door open for Greg. Greg absently stuffs a bill into the Valet's hand and gets in.

The Valet closes the car door, walks around the car, opens the passenger door, and gets in. It's Walker.

GREG

What are you doing here?

WALKER

He sent me. We need to talk. In  
private. Go somewhere quiet.

GREG

What's this about?

WALKER

It's about money. Do you still like money?

GREG

Don't be ridiculous.

WALKER

Then let's go.

INT. GREG'S CAR - DAY

Greg and Walker sit on a quiet side street in an industrial area.

GREG

I trust this is bleak enough for you?

WALKER

(scans the street in all directions)

It's fine.

Walker turns sideways in his seat and rests his left hand on the back of the driver's seat.

WALKER (CONT'D)

We're just a couple of old friends having a conversation.

GREG

So let's talk about money. How much?

WALKER

Millions.

GREG

When do I get it?

WALKER

You don't. It's my money.

GREG

I don't understand.

WALKER

Then let me get to the point.

SNICK! Greg's eyes go wide, and his jaw quivers, but he says nothing.

When Walker withdraws the blade of the spring knife from the back of Greg's neck, Greg's head lolls forward, and Walker wipes the bloody blade on Greg's shirt, then retracts the blade.

Walker again scans the street, then calmly gets out of the car and walks away.

INT. SYNTHETICA CUBE FARM - DAY - TRACKING

Brian weaves his way through the accounting cube farm, stopping at the cube for MINDY, 20s and sassy.

BRIAN

Hi, Mindy.

MINDY

Whenever H.R. is standing in the door to your cube, it usually means your day went wrong somewhere.

BRIAN

Not this time. Can you look something up for me?

MINDY

Sure. I definitely need a break. We're centralizing accounting.

BRIAN

Big job.

MINDY

Two months from now, everything will run out of headquarters, and everyone in accounting in the U.S. regions will be looking for a job. That's progress. What's up?

BRIAN

I'm looking into the Global Infrastructure group. Can you take a look at their budget for me? Department code is three-four-two.

MINDY

Never heard of them, but they're probably funded out of global. Hang on. Let me get out of this.

(types and clicks her mouse)

Okay. Let's look here.

(types and clicks)

(MORE)



MINDY (CONT'D)

One more spot to try.  
(types and clicks, then  
types a quick stream of  
characters)  
Bullshit!

BRIAN

What?

MINDY

There's nothing for that department  
in the system.

BRIAN

Can they have a budget that's not  
in our system?

MINDY

Maybe for a one-time project; but  
not for a department. How many  
people work there?

BRIAN

Five. Well, three now.

MINDY

Is that where those people worked?  
The ones that died?

BRIAN

Yeah.

MINDY

That's messed up. They're getting  
their money from somewhere. I'll  
keep looking and get back to you.

INT. GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE ROOM - DAY

Carr is seated at the table, typing on his laptop. Hargrove and Walker sit across from him, also working on laptops. Carr frowns, types some more, then works his trackball, clicking. He shakes his head.

CARR

Lawrence, Mac. We have a problem.

Hargrove and Walker look up from their laptops.

CARR (CONT'D)

Joyce Stobaugh and Mindy Karan have  
been accessing some files.

(MORE)

CARR (CONT'D)

Joyce opened our personnel records,  
and Mindy opened some of the German  
financials and some accounts  
payable files.

HARGROVE

Which accounts payable files?

CARR

India, China, and the Ukraine.

HARGROVE

Is there any reason either of them  
should be looking at those files as  
part of their job function?

CARR

No. Joyce is a trainer and Mindy  
handles expenses for U.S.  
operations, mostly real estate.

WALKER

You want me to take care of it?

HARGROVE

Not this time. You one tool in your  
toolbox: a hammer. Please be quiet  
while I make a call.

Hargrove picks his phone up off the table and stands, pushing  
a single button to dial. Hargrove stands still while the call  
connects.

HOUSEMAN (V.O.)

Good evening, how may I help you?

HARGROVE

Larry Hargrove calling for Tom  
Francis.

HOUSEMAN (V.O.)

Mister Hargrove, Mister Francis is  
busy at the moment. Can I relay a  
message to him?

HARGROVE

It's rather urgent. Unless he's in  
the bathroom, please tell him it's  
Larry Hargrove and that I'm sorry,  
but I need to speak with him.

HOUSEMAN (V.O.)

Certainly, Mister Hargrove. Please  
hold.

Hargrove paces, turns on his heels and walks back the same way. A few seconds pass.

HOUSEMAN (V.O.)  
Mister Hargrove, Mister Francis  
will take the call in his cabana  
office.

A few seconds pass, and the line is picked up.

TOM (V.O.)  
Larry, what can I do for you?

HARGROVE  
Tom, I'm sorry to bother you, but  
two employees were looking into  
things they shouldn't have today,  
and we need a quick fix.

TOM (V.O.)  
What were they doing?

HARGROVE  
Accessing this department's  
personnel records and transactions  
related to the work we do. I trust  
you understand the urgency.

TOM (V.O.)  
I do. Do I need to involve Legal?

HARGROVE  
I think it's best we show them the  
door, give them some walking money,  
and scare them on the way out.

TOM (V.O.)  
I'll get Ben Foster to take care of  
it right away.

HARGROVE  
Before close of business, if  
possible. Again, sorry to trouble  
you with this.

TOM (V.O.)  
Not at all. Happy to help. See you  
soon.

HARGROVE  
Goodbye, Tom.

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Brian walks into his office and sees his voicemail light is blinking. He hits a button to check it.

MINDY (V.O.)

Brian, Mindy here. If you have me on speaker, take me off.

Brian shuts the door and sits down at his desk. There is silence on the message for a few seconds.

MINDY (V.O.)

Unless you fell down or something, that should have given you plenty of time. I found out where that department is getting its money. It comes out of the global budget, mostly hardware and software, with some of it coming from a research budget. Most of the accounts are in Germany. A lot of money comes in, and most of it goes back out within a few days. So far this year that department has paid out more than two hundred million in contracts, all to companies in China, the Ukraine, and India. It's weird, because it's all one-time deals. No ongoing projects. That's all I can tell you. Call me.

Brian takes the flash drive from his pocket and plugs it in.

INSERT - BRIAN'S LAPTOP SCREEN

Brian double clicks on the "Payments" disk image to open it. Several directories appear onscreen, each named for a year. He double-clicks the "2013" directory and sees a dozen or so files. The filenames are numbers. He double-clicks one and opens it to see row after row of numbers, some appearing to be amounts in the hundreds of thousands, with some amounts in the millions.

BACK TO SCENE

BRIAN

What the hell is this?

INSERT - BRIAN'S LAPTOP SCREEN

Brian scrolls down the spreadsheet, seeing row after row of numbers. He furrows his brow, concentrating, then clicks out of the spreadsheet and opens another. The numbers are different, but the format is the same.

BACK TO SCENE

Brian clicks out of the spreadsheet and sits back in his chair, then leans forward and picks up the phone, dialing four digits. The line rings twice and then clicks over to voicemail.

MINDY (V.O.)

This is Mindy, and I'm away from my desk right now. Leave a message and I'll call you back. If it's about a particular invoice or file, leave the record number so I can look it up before I call you. Thanks.

A beep sounds.

BRIAN

Brian here. I wanted to follow up about the invoice we talked about. Call me when you can at one-six-nine-six. Thanks.

There is a loud knock at the door and Brian jumps in his chair. He gets up and opens his office door to see Kate.

KATE

I came down to see if you had the messaging ready on the new V.P.N. policy.

BRIAN

Should have it by tomorrow, and then I need to run it past Ben. Is tomorrow end of day okay?

KATE

Should be fine.

BRIAN

You busy right now?

KATE

Not really. Why?

BRIAN

You have time for a cup of coffee?

KATE

Sure.

BRIAN

Let me get my keys.

KATE

Why do you need your keys?

BRIAN

Because I need to talk to you, and  
I don't want to do it here.

KATE

Great. There's some I need to talk  
to you about, too.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Brian sits outside on a coffee shop patio with Kate.

BRIAN

There's something going on, and I'm  
not really sure how to handle it.  
What I'm about to tell you could  
cost me my job.

KATE

I won't say anything.

Kate puts her hand on Brian's and squeezes lightly, then  
leaves it there. Brian looks down at Kate's hand on his and  
shifts slightly in his seat. Kate nonchalantly draws her hand  
away.

BRIAN

The two people who were killed,  
Peter Davies and Myra Sedgwick,  
worked in Global Infrastructure,  
the same department as those guys  
who were talking with Tom.

KATE

That's what I heard.

BRIAN

I dropped off Peter's and Myra's  
personal effects yesterday, and  
Peter's wife told me about a bank  
account she didn't know about. I  
mentioned it to Ben...

KATE

Foster?

BRIAN

Yeah. He said he'd ask Legal about it. Then he cut me off. For good.

KATE

Wow.

BRIAN

Myra's wife gave me a flash drive with a bunch of spreadsheets on it. The line items seem to relate to dates and money, a lot of money. She also showed me a letter that indicated Synthetica had a one-point-five-million-dollar life insurance policy on Myra.

KATE

Was there one on Pete?

BRIAN

Ben wouldn't talk about it.

KATE

Why not? You're the V.P. for Employee Relations. You gonna ask about it again?

BRIAN

I was told never to bring it up again.

KATE

Then maybe you should let it go. It's a hard world. People die.

BRIAN

They didn't just die. They were killed. There's cancer, and then there's murder.

Brian pauses, looking far off into the distance.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

My sister was murdered. It was almost thirty years ago, but I'm not over it. I'll never be over it.

Kate opens her mouth to speak, but pauses, considering his words. She nods her head.

KATE

Fair enough.

Brian recovers, swiveling back to look at Kate.

BRIAN

There's more. The Global Infrastructure budget comes out of hardware and software accounts in Germany. It's a lot of money, and it doesn't stay around long before going to companies in China, the Ukraine, and India – most of it for what looks like one-off deals.

KATE

Who else deals with that department?

BRIAN

No one. And all three of those guys – Hargrove, Walker, and Carr – are getting paid far in excess of what their titles are. Hargrove's a director and Walker and Carr are senior project managers, but they get stock and bonuses like executive leadership.

KATE

So there's a department of five all paid like execs, with no ongoing projects, a budget that's funneled through another country, and now two of them are dead.

BRIAN

That's pretty much it.

KATE

That's insane. Who are these people, and where did they come from?

BRIAN

I'm hoping you can find out. Now what did you want to talk to me about?

Kate smiles a sad smile.

KATE

It's...it's nothing.



INT. BRIAN'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Brian pulls his car into the parking lot of his condominium complex and heads toward his spot, but Martin's car is there.

BRIAN

Really?

EXT. BECKY'S DOOR - NIGHT

Brian knocks on Becky's door. Becky opens the door, and as soon as she sees Brian, she calls out.

BECKY

Martin, move your fucking car!

Martin appears with his keys in his hand, slides between Brian and Becky, and heads for the parking lot.

MARTIN

Sorry, dude.

BRIAN

Don't worry about it.

BECKY

You look kinda stressed out. You want a beer or something?

BRIAN

I appreciate it. I'm just gonna go inside. I'll be back out to move my car in a bit.

BECKY

Come over if you change your mind. It's John Woo night. We're gonna be watching lots of people get shot.

BRIAN

Some other time.

Becky closes the door, and Brian goes next door and goes inside. He closes the door and leans against it, dropping his laptop bag to the floor. He breathes in and out, furrowing his brow. He suddenly looks very tired.

INT. JOYCE'S CUBE - DAY

Brian stands in the doorway to Joyce's cube holding a mug of coffee. Joyce is nowhere to be seen.

Her computer monitor is dark, and her photos and posters are gone. Brian goes next door to Terri's cube, where Terri is eating yogurt.

BRIAN  
Morning, Terri. Is Joyce in yet?

TERRI  
She's gone.

BRIAN  
Do you know when she's coming back?

TERRI  
I mean she's GONE. Fired or something. Ben called her in at the end of the day. Whatever it was, I figured you'd know.

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Brian closes his door and sits down, then dials a four-digit extension on the speakerphone. It rings once.

LYNN (V.O.)  
Ben Foster's office.

BRIAN  
Hi there. Is he in?

LYNN (V.O.)  
Offsite all day, but he's checking email. Do you want me to ask him to call you?

BRIAN  
I'll send him an email.

LYNN (V.O.)  
Okay.

BRIAN  
Can I ask you something?

LYNN (V.O.)  
Sure.

BRIAN  
Were you aware that Joyce Burlington was let go yesterday?

LYNN (V.O.)  
I was here when she came in.

BRIAN  
What happened?

LYNN (V.O.)  
Tom called Ben yesterday, and they  
brought her in at five. I don't  
know what it was about. Pretty sad.

Brian says nothing for a couple of seconds, just sits with  
the phone in his hand.

LYNN (V.O.)  
Are you still there?

BRIAN  
I'm still here. No message. I'll  
catch him later.

Brian hangs up the phone and taps his pen on his desk. He  
dials another number. After two rings, Mindy answers.

MINDY (V.O.)  
Hello.

BRIAN  
I'm sorry to bother you on your  
personal phone. It's Brian  
McCutcheon.

MINDY  
Okay.

Neither Brian or Mindy speak for a few seconds.

BRIAN  
Are you at work today?

MINDY  
Seriously? As of yesterday, I'm  
gone. Ben Foster called me into his  
office. He had some other guy in  
there, and he said they were  
eliminating my position, which is  
complete bullshit. No one has even  
the slightest idea how to work my  
area.

BRIAN  
Mindy, I didn't know anything about  
this.

MINDY (V.O.)

It's no big deal. Two months  
severance, and they won't fight me  
on unemployment. I've already  
blasted my resume to forty or fifty  
recruiters, so sayonara, shitheads.

BRIAN

I'm so sorry. Who was the other  
guy?

MINDY (V.O.)

Never seen him before. Dark suit.  
Older, in his fifties. Salt and  
pepper hair. Sat there and frowned  
the whole time. Total asshole. Saw  
his name on his badge, though.  
Lawrence Hargrove.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

KATE

Did you bring a change of clothes?

BRIAN

No. Why?

KATE

Because when you hear what I'm  
about to tell you, you're going to  
shit your pants.

BRIAN

You weren't on the network when you  
were doing this, were you?

KATE

You're kidding, right? I don't do  
anything on our network. I've got a  
sat device for my personal tablet.

BRIAN

All the same, watch your back. The  
last two people looking into this  
stuff got fired yesterday.

KATE

Fired?

BRIAN

Joyce Burlington and Mindy Karan.  
Ben called them in and let 'em go.

KATE  
Ben Foster again.

BRIAN  
He wasn't alone. Hargrove was in there, too.

KATE  
I'm about to tell you about Hargrove. In the meantime, I'm very comfortable being paranoid.

BRIAN  
What did you find out?

KATE  
We'll start with Hargrove. Been at Synthetica two years. Before that he worked for a consulting group that handled D.O.D. contracts. Before that, he worked for the N.S.A. as a chief analyst in the N.S.A.C.S.S. Threat Operations Center, where they identify and analyze cyber threats and develop mitigation strategies.

BRIAN  
Sounds a lot like what we do.

KATE  
If Hargrove's a perfect fit, Walker's a tougher sell. He started out in the Marines and did a tour in Afghanistan. Then he was honorably discharged after only two years. I can't get to his military records, but for them to kick him out that early something happened. From there he went to work for Stillwater.

BRIAN  
The defense contractor?

KATE  
Yep. He's back in Afghanistan for almost three years, and just before he's fired his name appears in a news story about a massacre at a Kabul intersection. Eleven civilians killed by heavy machine gun fire from civilian contractors.  
(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

Men, women, kids, all cut to pieces.

BRIAN

Jesus.

KATE

He's apparently unemployed for several months, and then he shows up here, hired by Hargrove.

BRIAN

What about Carr?

KATE

He's the one that blew everything up. Carr's a recent invention. He changed his last name four years ago when he got out of prison and came to work for us.

BRIAN

Prison?

KATE

For the second time. Jason Carr used to be Jason Lonergan. He's a hacker, twice convicted - hacker name Wendigo. Among other crimes, he made the Treefrog worm that infiltrated the databases of several universities and extracted financial aid data. He's a black hat that goes way back.

BRIAN

What's he doing working at Synthetica?

INT. BRIAN'S CAR - DAY - TRAVELING

Brian turns onto the long drive that winds past Synthetica headquarters. Early morning sunlight filters through the trees. He absently cruises up the drive, looking to his left at the building, where some lights are on.

A dark flash catches his eye, and Brian snaps his head back to the road to see Walker in his path. He slams on his brakes and stops with a SCREEEECH! Looking down, he pants and grips the steering wheel, then looks up to see Walker, dressed in a dark tracksuit, standing in front of the car.

Walker's gaze is fierce, and he slaps the hood with the flat of both hands. As Brian sits there idling, Walker removes his hands from the hood, wipes them on one another, and approaches the driver's side window.

Hands at his side, Walker stands as still as stone. Brian fingers the button to roll down the window, and Walker leaned in, his face looming in the window just inches from Brian.

WALKER

You should be more careful.

Walker stands up straight, steps away from the car, trots across the street, and then breaks into a sprint up a jogging path, disappearing over a low hill.

INT. TERRI'S CUBE

Terri is sitting at her desk, playing computer solitaire, absently clicking card after card.

TERRI

So bored.

Terri opens H.R. Soft and logs in.

TERRI (CONT'D)

Lawrence Hargrove, Malcolm Walker,  
Jason Carr.

Terri opens the records for Hargrove, Carr, and Walker, and their photos appear onscreen. ANNA, mid-20s, leans into the doorway to Terri's cube.

ANNA

You going to that meeting upstairs?  
Starts in five minutes.

TERRI

Yeah, I'm going.  
(hitting control-H to hide  
the H.R. Soft screens)  
How long is it?

ANNA

Girl, wake UP. It's all day.

Terri hits control-alt-delete to lock her computer and grabs a legal pad and pen from her desktop.

TERRI

Let's go.

Terri and Anna walk away.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Kate opens her laptop and turns it toward Brian.

INSERT - KATE'S LAPTOP SCREEN

A brightly colored cartoon lizard is her screen background. Kate double clicks the trackpad to the "OUTBREAKS" file on her desktop. A spreadsheet fills the screen, and Kate points to various fields as she talks.

BACK TO SCENE

KATE

The numbers in this column are dates, but it's not the dates that are important. These dates are three weeks before major virus outbreaks. January fifth, twenty-twelve. Three weeks later, Sluggo affected E.U. power grids. April ninth, twenty-twelve. On May first, the Mayday virus infects computers worldwide by exploiting an operating system vulnerability, scanning random I.P. addresses to find more victims and altering the host computer's O.S. Here's an entry for June eleven, twenty-twelve. On July fourth, Defcon Four was worldwide. It rewrote your operating system and you couldn't turn it off without cutting power to the computer.

BRIAN

There's a correlation for every entry?

KATE

Every one. There's an entry three weeks before Mozambique Drill. It used infected computers to wage a denial-of-service syn flood on U.S. government servers. October seventh. Spectre starts a smurf attack on October thirty-one, slowing the net worldwide. December fourth. Solstice hit worldwide on December twenty-fourth.



BRIAN

This isn't a spreadsheet of sales figures. Why would we be paying several different entities before the viruses hit?

KATE

There's a surge in power consumption for the Global Infrastructure room for a three-week period before every major virus outbreak in the past four years. Before a new virus hits, according to the card-access logs, they pretty much work around the clock.

Kate closes the spreadsheet and opens a file filled with strange characters.

KATE (CONT'D)

Look at this code. This is the Cossack worm from nineteen-eighty-nine. It infiltrated enterprise computers after entering through exploits in sloppy browser code. This is what makes a virus work. Of course, now you can download virus creation kits from a crazy number of websites, and any idiot can learn enough to be dangerous from half a dozen e-books.

BRIAN

Someone just downloaded this virus and sent it out there?

KATE

No. This was written line by line. This is some of Carr's earliest work. He was a kid.

BRIAN

He made this?

KATE

And a lot of others.

INSERT - KATE'S LAPTOP SCREEN

Kate clicks on a file in an open directory and opens another file. Lines of code fill the screen.

She scrolls down in the text of the code, then clicks to highlight a small part of the code: VV3N6IG0

BACK TO SCENE

BRIAN

What is it?

KATE

His elite-speak signature. V. V.  
three N. six I. G. zero. Wendigo.

BRIAN

What's important about this virus?

KATE

This is the code for Shutdown,  
released last November, targeting  
mobile devices and bank account  
info. It affected four percent of  
smartphones worldwide and  
reinstalled itself through wifi.

BRIAN

I.T. had to wipe my phone.

KATE

We were the first company to create  
a patch, five days after it hit.  
That virus alone is credited with  
more than four hundred thousand  
downloads of our software and  
contributed to us signing  
enterprise contracts with nine  
different companies. It added about  
one hundred and eighty million to  
our bottom line.

BRIAN

Are you saying an employee of this  
company created one of the worst  
viruses of last year and we made a  
hundred and eighty million dollars  
because of it?

KATE

No. I'm saying he created ALL of  
them. The viruses we make billions  
of dollars a year to detect and  
destroy? They all come from US.

INSERT - KATE'S LAPTOP SCREEN

The virus code fills the screen, and in the center of the sea of code is VV3N6IG0.

INT. GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE ROOM - DAY

Carr and Hargrove are sitting at the table, working. Carr shakes his head.

CARR

We're very popular these days.

HARGROVE

Explain.

CARR

Two people in H.R. have accessed our personnel files today.

HARGROVE

Who?

CARR

Brian McCutcheon, vice president, employee relations.

HARGROVE

His conversation with my predecessor notwithstanding, he's working on Myra's and Peter's departures. How long was he in our files?

CARR

He's been in and out a couple of times.

HARGROVE

He's becoming more of a problem, but not yet a critical one. Who else?

CARR

Terri Heath, benefits specialist. She's had our records since nine this morning; and her search-engine queries involve variations of our names.

HARGROVE

That concerns me. Track everything she does for the rest of the day.

INT. GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE ROOM - DAY

HARGROVE

Jason, get on Brian McCutcheon now.  
Track his car and internet traffic;  
tap his webcam; and pull his I.D.  
badge logins. I want to know when  
he gets here and when he leaves.  
Jason?

CARR

I'm on it.  
(types and clicks)

HARGROVE

We introduce Sparticles in a week.  
I've got a few leads on people with  
the moral flexibility we need, but  
for now you're responsible for Pete  
and Myra's tasks.

Carr nods.

HARGROVE (CONT'D)

It'll mean some all-nighters, but  
you get their bonuses, too. Buy  
yourself another supercar. Mac,  
McCutcheon's offsite now, so hit  
his office and take a look at  
everything. And as soon as he's in  
the building, you're on the way to  
his house. Clear?

WALKER

Clear.

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Walker enters Brian's office, looks back out the door, and  
closes the door. He inserts what looks like a flash drive  
into the USB slot of Brian's laptop.

INSERT - BRIAN'S LAPTOP SCREEN

The words "Drive mirroring in progress" appear in a popup on  
the laptop screen, with a fast-moving progress bar below it.

BACK TO SCENE

Walker pulls his phone from his pocket, turns on the video  
camera, and begins recording everything.

He scans papers, then opens drawers, recording papers as he pulls them from the drawers, then replacing them like he found them. He drops his phone into his pocket and looks at the laptop screen.

INSERT - BRIAN'S LAPTOP SCREEN

The words "Drive mirroring complete" are on the screen.

BACK TO SCENE

Walker yanks the flash drive from the USB slot and shoves it in his pocket, opens the door, walks out, and is gone.

INT. GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE ROOM - DAY

Hargrove is sitting at the desk, typing on his laptop. He sits back and frowns. The door beeps and Walker enters. He plops the flash drive in front of Hargrove.

HARGROVE  
Your timing is spot on. I need you  
to handle a problem.

WALKER  
Where's our little friend?

HARGROVE  
Smoke break.

WALKER  
Bad habit.

HARGROVE  
It gives us a few minutes to talk.

Hargrove points to his laptop screen, and Walker leans over to look at an H.R. Soft record with a photo of Terri on the screen.

HARGROVE (CONT'D)  
Terri Heath. Terri had our  
personnel records open all day  
today.

WALKER  
What do you think she found?

HARGROVE  
Without Jason pulling all the site  
pages, I can't say for sure.  
(MORE)

HARGROVE (CONT'D)

Our past employment, at least what's public, is no secret. But we can't have her looking into Jason's background.

WALKER

Next steps?

HARGROVE

Handle it quickly and definitively.

WALKER

I'll walk her out the door tonight.

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Brian is in his office at his desk, typing, when Hargrove walks in.

HARGROVE

You need to stop now.

BRIAN

What are you talking about?

Hargrove grimaces and closes the door, spins around, and plants his palms on Brian's desk. Brian scoots back a bit in his chair, clearly caught off-guard.

HARGROVE

Why were you harassing a former Synthetica employee?

BRIAN

I don't understand.

HARGROVE

Gregory Paxton.

Brian leans forward.

BRIAN

Because I'm charged with ensuring the overall well being of more than five thousand people in ten countries. You had a hand in getting two people fired, just because they opened some files. And I'm pretty sure if what I'm doing is making you this angry, I'm probably on the right track.

HARGROVE

You are completely out of your depth.

BRIAN

Out of my depth? Who talks like that?

HARGROVE

I'm telling you to stop. Don't open another document you shouldn't open. Don't log on to another server you don't need to access to do your job.

BRIAN

Less than a week ago two employees from your department were shot to death. You seem upset I'm questioning the official version. Why aren't you thanking me for what I'm doing?

Hargrove removes his hands from Brian's desk and stands tall, glaring down at Brian.

HARGROVE

You can't stay here forever. Enjoy your evening.

Hargrove turns, opens the door, and storms out. Brian is shaken. He stands, looks outside his office door, and closes the door, locking it. He sits down at his desk and shakes his head. Brian drums his fingers on his desk and then picks up the phone, dialing four digits. The phone rings four times, then clicks over to voicemail.

BEN (V.O.)

This is Ben Foster. I'm away from my office, so please leave a message. If you need to reach me right away, contact Lynn Erwin at extension six two nine one. Thanks.

A beep sounds.

BRIAN

Ben, Brian here. I'd like to talk with you in the morning as soon as you get in. Thanks.

Brian hangs up, then dials ten digits, followed by two rings.

BEN (V.O.)

This is Ben Foster, senior vice president of human resources for Synthetica. Please leave me a message and I'll call you back as soon as I can.

BRIAN

Ben, Brian here. Please call me on my cell when you get this. It's important.

Brian hangs up the phone, turns in his chair, and looks out the window, where the sun is setting.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Dammit. Dammit. Dammit.

INT. TERRI'S CUBE - NIGHT - TRACKING

Terri pulls several sticky notes off of the bottom of her computer monitor and throws them in the trash. She scoops up a small stack of papers, straightens them and puts them down, then turns off her in-cube lighting.

TERRI

Ann, I'm headed out!

Terri goes to the next cube over and sees the lights off and the computer monitor dark. She looks down at her watch.

TERRI (CONT'D)

Seven-fifteen. Get a life, girl.

Terri walks out of her department, down the hallway and into the large, open corridor through the atrium. She passes two PROGRAMMERS, 20s, sitting at a table with their laptops.

Through the floor-to-ceiling glass lining the corridor, Terri sees a CLEANER, 40s, pushing a large trash can, and a WOMAN, 30s, standing at a printer, waiting for her documents to finish printing. Otherwise, the building seems empty.

Terri exits the corridor through glass double doors and enters the hallway to the parking garage.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

In a deserted parking garage, Walker sits cross-legged in the darkness under concrete stairs, watching a small compact car in a parking place.



Dressed in a hooded sweatshirt, and wearing glasses and a wig, it's hard to tell who he is, but the eyes are Walker's.

Walker snaps to attention at the CLIP CLOP sounds of heels echoing on concrete, and Terri appears, walking toward the compact car.

Terri reaches into her purse for her keys, and Walker rises. Silently and quickly, Walker closes the gap between he and Terri. In one of his gloved hands is a tire iron. Keys in hand, Terri reaches to unlock her car door.

WALKER

Hello, Terri.

Terri turns and smiles. Walker pulls back his arm and SMACK, savagely strikes Terri in the face with the tire iron. Terri crumples to her knees and moans. Walker quickly strikes her three more times in the head, SMACK SMACK SMACK, killing her.

Walker looks around the parking garage and, seeing no one, smashes out the driver's side window of the car, then reaches in and opens the door. He picks up Terri's purse, turns it upside down, and scatters the contents on the ground.

Walker takes a last look at Terri, who lies face down, a pool of blood spreading from her head, and sprints down the ramp leading from the garage.

EXT. BRIAN'S CAR - NIGHT - TRACKING

Brian drives down a busy street, looking left and right, glancing down occasionally at his smartphone. He sees a sign that reads "Gun Shop", and turns into the parking lot.

Brian parks his car, turns it off, and sits for a few seconds, drumming his fingers on the steering wheel. He gets out, clenches his fists, and closes the car door.

Brian walks up to the door to the gun shop and pulls on the handle. The door doesn't open. He tries again, tugging hard, but the door still won't open. He puts his face to the glass and peers in. With a buzz and a click, the door unlocks.

Brian opens the door, and the door chime makes a TINKLE sound. Inside, the GUN SHOP OWNER, mid-60s, a little overweight, with gray hair, a full beard and glasses, stands behind a glass counter. He looks warily at Brian.

GUN SHOP OWNER

Evening.

BRIAN

Evening.

GUN SHOP OWNER

Something in particular you're looking for?

BRIAN

A gun. Something good for defense.

GUN SHOP OWNER

Would you mind showing me some I.D.? Driver's license is fine.

BRIAN

Uh, sure.

(pulls out his wallet and hands his license to the GUN SHOP OWNER)

Here you go.

The Gun Shop Owner looks over the driver's license, then hands it back to Brian, who puts it back in his wallet and shoves his wallet in his pants.

GUN SHOP OWNER

Brian, what do you do for a living?

BRIAN

Corporate H.R. Human resources.

GUN SHOP OWNER

Oh, I know what H.R. is. Used to work for an oil company. Twenty-two years of keeping my mouth shut when I had something to say. Now I have this business and I don't have to keep my mouth shut anymore. You said defense. My first recommendation would be a shotgun.

The Gun Shop Owner takes a shotgun from the rack behind the counter and holds it out for Brian to see.

GUN SHOP OWNER (CONT'D)

This is a twenty-gauge. Holds five rounds in the magazine. Very effective weapon for home defense.

BRIAN

I was hoping for something a little...smaller.

GUN SHOP OWNER  
Something concealable.

BRIAN  
Yeah.

GUN SHOP OWNER  
That's a different kind of weapon entirely. Brian, what are you scared of?

BRIAN  
What do you mean?

GUN SHOP OWNER  
Gonna ask you to pardon my directness, but you look shit scared. It's a look, and you have it. So I'm asking you again. What are you scared of?

BRIAN  
I need to protect myself.

The Gun Shop Owner nods and pulls a small semi-auto pistol from under the counter, setting it on the countertop.

GUN SHOP OWNER  
Forty caliber Smith and Wesson. Double action, so you can have a round chambered and pull the trigger to fire. All the knockdown power you need. Twelve-round magazine, so you can miss a few shots and still hit your target. Not the cheapest gun I carry, but it's one of best shooters, and I figure you can afford it.

Brian picks up the gun, works the slide, and peers into the chamber.

GUN SHOP OWNER (CONT'D)  
We also need to get you a concealed handgun license, so you can carry it. I got a range in the back. Next class is tonight at eight o'clock, an hour from now. Bring a thousand dollars and a lot of coffee.

BRIAN  
Tonight?

GUN SHOP OWNER  
You have other plans?

INT. SHOOTING RANGE - NIGHT

Brian and the Gun Shop Owner stand in the back of a small indoor shooting range. The overhead lights are bright and harsh. On a table is the pistol, two loaded high-capacity magazines, five boxes of ammunition, two pairs of hearing protector earmuffs, and a pistol-cleaning kit.

GUN SHOP OWNER  
When you're defending yourself,  
it's not about shooting the weapon.  
It's about stopping the threat, and  
sometimes that means shooting a  
human being. Some people wouldn't  
consider that a problem. That's who  
we have to watch out for.

INT. SHOOTING RANGE - NIGHT (LATER)

The Gun Shop Owner picks up the pistol, quickly inserts one of the magazines, racks the slide, and thumbs the hammer release to lower the hammer.

GUN SHOP OWNER  
Your weapon is double action. If  
you have a round chambered, like  
now, and you pull the trigger, it  
will shoot. Otherwise it's safe to  
carry. Keep your finger off the  
trigger 'til your sights are on the  
target. Use the sights if you need  
to, but if you have to shoot close,  
don't worry. Create distance  
between you and the target. Don't  
let a bad guy grab your weapon.

INT. SHOOTING RANGE - NIGHT (LATER)

The Gun Shop Owner demonstrates changing magazines.

GUN SHOP OWNER  
You have two magazines, the one in  
the weapon and a spare. Each holds  
twelve rounds. You're going to  
change magazines. The release is  
right here. Pull it down, and the  
magazine releases. Go ahead.

The Gun Shop Owner hands the gun to Brian. Brian thumbs the magazine release and the magazine falls out into his hand.

BRIAN

Okay.

GUN SHOP OWNER

Insert the second magazine.

BRIAN

Where is it?

GUN SHOP OWNER

That could get you killed.

INT. SHOOTING RANGE - NIGHT (LATER)

Brian stands in a shooting stall, the Gun Shop Owner behind him, both wearing hearing protector earmuffs, looking downrange at a silhouette target five yards away.

GUN SHOP OWNER

Your fight is probably going to take place up close. Now get into your Weaver stance, aim at the target, and shoot.

Brian adjusts his stance, aims, and fires PAK!, the bullet hitting the target in the chest area. He fires again and again - PAK! PAK! PAK! PAK! - all of the rounds hitting the target. Each time he shoots he shuts his eyes and cringes.

The Gun Shop Owner puts four boxes of cartridges on the ledge in the shooting stall.

GUN SHOP OWNER (CONT'D)

That's four hundred rounds. When we're done, that flinch won't happen anymore.

INT. SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

The training is over. Shell casings litter the floor and smoke hangs in the air. The Gun Shop Owner cleans the gun, running the cleaning rod through the barrel.

GUN SHOP OWNER

Is this guy a really bad guy?

BRIAN

He is.

The Gun Shop Owner nods, puts down the cleaning rod and the gun, and looks Brian squarely in the eye.

GUN SHOP OWNER

Then if you have to, you put him down. Keep shooting until you know he's never going to try to hurt you again. Only one of you walks away. For the other, it's the end.

INT. GUN SHOP - DAY

The door buzzes and Brian opens the door, flooding the gun shop with morning sunlight. The Gun Shop Owner calls out from behind the counter.

GUN SHOP OWNER

Pick up your weapon in three days. Keep your head down until then.

Brian nods and opens the door, and the small bells on the door TINKLE as he walks out into the sunlight.

INT. BEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Brian and Ben sit at a small table.

BRIAN

I'm asking you to do something. Hargrove is dangerous.

BEN

I'll admit his behavior sounds a little over the top.

BRIAN

A little?

BEN

Tom says they're fighting an organized attack on our LATAM servers. That, plus the deaths, you can see how he would be a little off his game. Stay out of his way and I'm sure it'll blow over. We have bigger problems today.

BRIAN

Like what?

BEN

You haven't heard?

BRIAN

Just got in.

BEN

Terri Heath was murdered last night, apparently beaten to death, here in the parking garage. Didn't you see anything when you came in?

BRIAN

I parked in the south lot.

BEN

Police are still working the scene. When they're done I'm sure they'll have more questions. I need you to be available. Put this business with Hargrove aside and focus.

BRIAN

That's three employees dead within a week. How much do you know about what's going on?

BEN

That's a weird question. I know what you know. Why?

BRIAN

That's what has me concerned.

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Brian leans back in his chair and rubs his eyes as Kate appears in the doorway.

KATE

What are you up to?

BRIAN

You heard about Terri Heath?

KATE

Yeah. Didn't she sit right out there?

BRIAN

She did.

KATE

Way too close to home.

Kate sits down, then leans forward and looks at Brian's laptop for a moment, then leans back.

KATE (CONT'D)

You have any meetings this morning?

BRIAN

A couple. Why?

KATE

Local or global?

BRIAN

Here in the office.

Kate stands and goes out into the hallway, wiggling her finger for Brian to follow. Brian joins Kate in the hallway.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

KATE

When was the last time you used your webcam?

BRIAN

Last week. Group call with Prague.

KATE

You sure you turned it off?

BRIAN

Yeah. I exited out of the program when we ended the call. Why?

KATE

Your cam is on right now.

BRIAN

How do you know?

KATE

The light's red. They're watching you. Listening, too, I bet. Do you have a built-in microphone?

BRIAN

I use a headset. It's only plugged in when I'm using it.

KATE

At least they can't hear you. They're probably monitoring your screen, too.



BRIAN  
What do I do?

KATE  
Just keep working, doing what you usually do, but don't work on anything you don't want them to see. I gotta go. Call me later.

Kate leaves. Brian continues to work for a minute or so, typing and shuffling papers, frequently stopping to look at the red light until he can't stand it any longer.

BRIAN  
What the fuck do you think you're looking at?  
(he flips off the camera)  
You can't hear me, but I'll bet you can read my lips. Fuck. You.

INT. GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE ROOM - DAY

Carr watches Brian in a small screen on his laptop, flipping them off.

CARR  
Shit.

HARGROVE  
What?

Hargrove walks over and Carr points to the screen, where they see Brian flipping them off.

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

BRIAN  
Show's over, assholes.

INT. GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE ROOM - DAY

HARGROVE  
Turn it off.

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

The light on the webcam goes dark. Brian grabs the webcam, yanks it from the USB port, and throws it out the door to his office. It lands on the floor and Ben appears in the doorway.

BEN  
Everything all right?

BRIAN  
Just fine, Ben. How are you?

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Brian is seated at his desk when Detective Campbell knocks on his doorframe. Behind him is SPECIAL AGENT TORRES, 40s and serious, dressed in a dark suit and tie.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
Hello, Mister McCutcheon. Do you  
have a few minutes?

BRIAN  
Sure, please come in.

They come in, and Special Agent Torres closes the door.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
Thanks. I asked someone else who's  
familiar with the case to join us  
today. Would that be all right?

BRIAN  
Sure.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
Good. I'd like you to meet a  
colleague and good friend of mine,  
F.B.I. Special Agent Daniel Torres.  
I asked him to stop by today as a  
courtesy.

BRIAN  
Good to meet you.  
(they shake hands)  
Please have a seat.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
What have you heard about the death  
of Terri Heath?

BRIAN  
She was killed in the parking  
garage last night. Everyone's  
pretty scared.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

Ms. Heath's body was found just after six this morning on the lower level of your garage by one of our patrol officers. We drive through your campus as part of our patrols. She appears to have been beaten to death. Did you know her?

BRIAN

Not well, but I saw her most days here in the department.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

Are you aware of any relationship that may have existed between Terri Heath and Peter Davies and Myra Sedgwick?

BRIAN

No, but there's something going on I think you need to know about.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

What's that?

BRIAN

I think they're making viruses.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

Who?

BRIAN

Global infrastructure, where Peter Davies and Myra Sedgwick worked.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

I thought your company cured viruses.

BRIAN

We do.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

Who would be making them?

BRIAN

Jason Carr. Used to be Lonergan. His hacker name was Wendigo. He's been in federal prison.

SPECIAL AGENT TORRES

You said Jason Lonergan.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
(to Special Agent Torres)  
You know that name?

SPECIAL AGENT TORRES  
I do. Does he work with Lawrence  
Hargrove?

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
Same department. Global  
Infrastructure.

SPECIAL AGENT TORRES  
Interesting.

BRIAN  
Hargrove threatened me yesterday.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
Where?

BRIAN  
Right here, just after six in the  
evening.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
You'd characterize the conversation  
as threatening?

BRIAN  
Absolutely.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
Did you have a meeting planned?

BRIAN  
No. He just showed up.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
What did he say?

BRIAN  
Didn't introduce himself. Just came  
in and stared me down, then said I  
should stop interfering and mind my  
own business.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
Interfering with what?

BRIAN  
That's what I asked him. He said  
I can't stay in the building  
forever. Then he left.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
Have you had any contact with him  
since?

BRIAN  
No. But my webcam was hijacked.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
How do you know?

BRIAN  
The light was on, and I know I  
didn't turn it on.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
Do you think you're still being  
monitored?

BRIAN  
I unplugged the webcam.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
And you've never had any dealings  
with Mister Hargrove before?

BRIAN  
Not even a good morning in the  
hallway.

SPECIAL AGENT TORRES  
Mister McCutcheon, in addition to  
Lawrence Hargrove and Jason Carr,  
who else works in Global  
Infrastructure?

BRIAN  
Malcolm Walker.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
We asked your security team to pull  
the camera footage. We watched it a  
few minutes ago. I'm going to tell  
you something in confidence, on the  
condition you tell no one else.

BRIAN  
Agreed.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
Whoever killed Terri Heath was  
waiting for her to go to her car.

BRIAN

I don't want to tell you how to do your job, but please work faster.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

We're doing everything we can. Tell your people to stay alert.

BRIAN

We're putting together an email for employees in the home office.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

Okay. I think we're done here, Mister McCutcheon. I gave you my card, didn't I?

BRIAN

You did.

Detective Campbell takes a business card from his shirt pocket.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL

Here's another one. If you think of anything. No detail too small. And be extra careful. The bottom number's my cell. I'm in the office until eleven most nights. If you need to, call me.

INT. GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE ROOM - DAY

Walker enters the room, takes a flash drive from his pocket, and tosses it in front of Carr, who is working on his laptop.

CARR

That's his drive?

Walker nods.

HARGROVE

Check it out.

Carr inserts the flash drive into a USB socket, opens it and begins scanning the directory.

HARGROVE (CONT'D)

What do you see?

CARR

Give me a second.

Carr continues to scan the files. He sits back in his chair.

CARR (CONT'D)

There's nothing here. His resume, personal emails and photos. A handful of e-books. He must keep everything on the server.

WALKER

What about planting a bunch of child porn and making a call?

HARGROVE

We need faster results. We have a release in a week. Nothing interferes with that. We're going to approach this problem using other methods.

WALKER

What kind of methods?

HARGROVE

The ones you're so good at. Try for something that looks natural, but do whatever you need to do.

WALKER

Understood.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Kate is sitting at an outside table when Brian walks up and sits down.

BRIAN

What's going on?

KATE

Thanks for meeting me. I want to talk to you.

BRIAN

Okay, I've got half an hour and then I have to be back for a five o' clock with Ben.

KATE

I don't mean talking like that, as in you're looking at your watch every five minutes because you have to get back.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

I don't mean you know me and I know you and we talk a couple of times a week, and we have coffee and eat lunch together sometimes, and you've got your friend in I.T. and I've got my friend in H.R. I mean really talking.

BRIAN

Okay, okay. Let's start with what the hell is going on with you?

KATE

How many times have we had coffee together?

BRIAN

About every week for...

KATE

For almost three years.

Brian nods.

KATE (CONT'D)

And in all that time, has it ever crossed your mind?

BRIAN

I feel like I'm waiting for the end of your sentence.

KATE

You can't be that obtuse. I think you know the end of my sentence.

Brian reaches out to touch Kate's hand. She shakes her head and gently pats his hand.

KATE (CONT'D)

And your timing...is terrible. We'll talk about this another time, because right now I'm terrified. This is not the kind of shit I'm used to. I'm used to working four or five hours a day and then slacking off. I'm used to Monday through Friday and checking out in my head about noon on Thursday.

BRIAN

What are you saying?



KATE

I'm saying this whole thing has blown up my mind. I'm not drinking a bottle of wine every night anymore, my food tastes like shit and it has nothing to do with the meds I'm on, or anything else. I'm looking at my LIFE. Do you know what I'm saying?

BRIAN

No. Are you talking about an existential crisis, a moment of clarity, a psychotic break? What?

KATE

I'm seeing everything, all the angles. I've been in this tiny world for so long I thought it was all there was. Food, booze, getting laid every six months, snorting coke once a year on New Year's Eve, and thinking about how it's going to be great someday, someday. Now it's like I looked up and saw the stars for the first time.

BRIAN

I get it.

KATE

What's your great plan? Don't answer. Now you're a V.P. of H.R. So what's next? S.V.P., and then E.V.P.? How long will that take? So then you've got a global leadership role and you're working sixty hours a week and traveling forty percent of the time. How many years can you do that? What are you, around forty?

BRIAN

Thirty-five.

KATE

Okay. You look good for your age, but it won't last. You'll do this as long as you can, but then you won't be able to anymore and you'll be looking at sixty, and what have you been able to save? What's your four-oh-one-k look like?

BRIAN

It's a joke.

KATE

Just like mine. What if I told you there was an alternative?

BRIAN

I'm listening.

KATE

I've been thinking. That's bullshit. I haven't slept in three days. I need you to sit still and say nothing for the next five minutes. No interruptions. No questions. No reply dialogue running in your head. Just sit there and listen - really listen - and then I'm done and we'll talk. Can you do that?

BRIAN

I can do that.

Kate reaches across the table and grabs Brian's hands, squeezing them tightly. Brian tenses, then relaxes, as Kate continues to hold his hands.

KATE

What I'm thinking about is crazy, and it involves you flushing the life you know down the toilet and never coming back.

As Kate continues to talk, her words fade and there is only the roar in Brian's ears. Brian sits, barely blinking, as he absorbs Kate's words, her reflection in his eyes as she talks.

INT. WALKER'S CAR - NIGHT

Walker opens the glove box, pulls out latex gloves, and slips them on. He unzips the fanny pack at his waist, pulls out an automatic pistol, racks the slide to chamber a round, decocks it with the decocking lever, replaces it in the fanny pack, and gets out of the car.

## EXT. BRIAN'S NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT - TRACKING

Walker trots across the street, making his way through a condominium complex to exit on the next street over to the complex where Brian lives.

Between buildings, Walker pauses and crouches next to an air-conditioning unit, waiting as a FEMALE JOGGER runs by.

Once she's gone, Walker darts across the street. He stops when he sees a row of natural gas meters, then looks upward to the windows of Brian's condo, which face the street.

Walker enters the stairwell and runs up the stairs two at a time. On the second floor he quickly locates Brian's unit.

Standing on the landing in front of Brian's door, he looks left and right. Seeing no one, he pulls a small tool pouch from an inside jacket pocket, removes two lock-picks from it, deftly unlocks the door, and steps inside.

## INT. BRIAN'S CONDO - NIGHT

Walker stands unmoving, turning his head left and right, listening to make sure no one's there.

Hearing nothing, he replaces the lock-picks into the tool pouch, shoves the pouch in a pocket, pulls out a small flashlight, turns it on, and surveys the unit.

Walker plays the flashlight beam through the kitchen, then down the hallway to the bedroom. He goes to the front door and paces the steps to the kitchen. He gives the stove a quick pull, snapping the bracket anchoring it to the counter.

## INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Brian checks his watch, sighs, and disconnects his laptop. He picks up his laptop bag and drops it onto his desktop, then shoves the power cord, mouse and laptop into it.

## INT. BRIAN'S CONDO - NIGHT

Walker pulls the stove forward a few feet, shining the flashlight behind it, then moves to the front door and flips the light switch. The overhead living room light and the light on a small table next to the couch come on.

Walker turns the light off, grabs a chair from the kitchen table, and sets it under the overhead light.

He climbs on the chair, removes the light cover, unscrews the bulb, takes them to the kitchen, and sets them down.

With the flashlight between his teeth, Walker puts his tool pouch on the counter and pulls out a thin metal spike. Holding the bulb over a kitchen trash can, he taps a small hole in the light bulb. POP. Small bits of glass fall into the trash, but most of the bulb is intact.

Walker goes back into the living room, climbs the chair, screws the bulb in, and replaces the cover. Then he returns to the kitchen and turns to the stove.

INT. BRIAN'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Brian is driving down the center lane of the freeway, listening to a song on the radio, tapping his fingers on the steering wheel. He signals and exits the freeway.

INT. BRIAN'S CONDO - NIGHT

Walker points his flashlight behind the stove, playing the light along the flexible metal gas line. He pulls the stove out far enough for him to get behind it. He squeezes behind the stove, crouches, and turns off the gas supply valve.

He puts the flashlight between his teeth and uses the wrench to disconnect the gas line from the valve. Grasping the line with both hands, he furiously twists it one way and then the other until the metal fatigues and snaps with a CLINK.

Walker plays the flashlight beam over a small gap between two segments of the hose.

INT. BRIAN'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Brian is the only car stopped at a red light. A black MUSCLE CAR rolls to a stop in the left lane next to him. Its loping idle and loud exhaust note RUMBLE sound menacing.

With its dark tinted windows, it's impossible for Brian to see into the car. Brian looks at the stoplight, which is still red, although no cars are coming from the left or right. The Muscle Car revs its engine, the loud RUMBLE jarring Brian.

The passenger window lowers, and Brian sees TEENAGE BOY ONE and TEENAGE BOY TWO, both late teens. A cloud of smoke pours from the car and Teenage Boy Two, in the passenger seat, raises a bong, tipping it toward Brian in a mock salute.

Brian, visibly relieved, smiles, shakes his head, and nods as the stoplight turns green and the Muscle Car roars off. Brian watches it go, then drives on.

INT. BRIAN'S CONDO - NIGHT

Walker uses the wrench to reconnect the gas line, squeezes out from behind the stove, and pushes the stove into place. He puts the wrench back into his tool pouch, slipping it into his inside jacket pocket.

Walker opens the pantry door and takes out a broom, using the handle to turn the gas supply valve and turn on the gas. Gas rushes from the broken supply line in a loud HISS.

Walker quickly returns the broom to the pantry, closes the door, and opens the front door. He looks left and right outside, turns the lock on the door handle, and exits, pulling the door shut behind him.

EXT. BRIAN'S CONDO - NIGHT

Outside the door, Walker stands still as a RESIDENT, 30s, walks by on the ground floor. After the Resident leaves, Walker strides to the stairwell and quickly descends the stairs.

INT. WALKER'S CAR - NIGHT

Walker watches as Brian, in his car, pulls to the entrance gate, then enters the parking lot.

INT. BRIAN'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Brian pulls his car into the parking lot and heads toward his parking spot, but Martin's car is parked in his space.

BRIAN

Dammit.

Brian looks left and right for an empty parking spot, but the lot is full. He drums his fingers on the steering wheel, then shakes his head and puts his car into reverse.

EXT. BRIAN'S PARKING LOT - NIGHT - TRACKING

Brian drives out the exit gate.

EXT. BRIAN'S CONDO - NIGHT

At the bottom of the door to Brian's condo, the gas fumes ripple in the air.

INT. NEIGHBORHOOD BAR - NIGHT

Brian walks into a quiet neighborhood bar. A few BAR PATRONS drink at the bar and at nearby tables. Brian takes a seat at the bar, where the BARTENDER, 40s, is washing out glasses.

BRIAN  
Gin and tonic. Extra lime.

BARTENDER  
Preference on the gin?

BRIAN  
Pour what you like.

The Bartender makes the drink right away and sets it in front of Brian on top of a cocktail napkin.

BRIAN (CONT'D)  
Thanks. Keep an eye on me. This  
won't last long.

INT. BRIAN'S CONDO - NIGHT

Inside the condo, it is dark. In the kitchen, violent ripples cloud the air, accompanied by the pronounced HISS of escaping gas.

EXT. BRIAN'S CONDO - NIGHT

Becky and Martin exit Becky's condo, and Becky locks the door behind her.

BECKY  
I say Vietnamese food. Oh, did you  
pay that traffic ticket?

MARTIN  
Um - uh.

BECKY  
Dumb ass!  
(pulls a cigarette from a  
pack in her hands)

MARTIN

Hey, do you smell that?

BECKY

Smell what?

Becky puts the cigarette between her lips, thumbs her lighter and the air catches fire with a deafening WHOOMP!

INT. WALKER'S CAR - NIGHT

A tremendous BOOM! shatters the air, and Walker doesn't blink as a fountain of fire explodes from the windows to Brian's condo and billows into the night sky, spraying shards of glass and debris into the street.

Walker's car rocks from the blast wave. Car alarms blare in the relative silence following the explosion, and flames quickly begin consuming the structure as several stunned CONDO RESIDENTS appear, stumbling away from the building.

INT. WALKER'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Walker starts his car and puts it in gear, slowly driving past the burning building - expressionless as he calmly regards the destruction.

INT. NEIGHBORHOOD BAR - NIGHT

Brian swallows the last of his drink and stands.

BRIAN

What do I owe you?

BARTENDER

Two call drinks. Fifteen bucks.

Brian pulls out his wallet from his jacket pocket, extracts some bills, and lays them on the bar.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

See you next time.

Brian walks out. After he leaves, the Bartender looks up at the television, where a NEWS ANCHOR, 30s, is reporting on a fire. Brian's building burns on the screen, and FIREFIGHTERS direct hoses at the flames. The Bartender turns up the sound.

## NEWS ANCHOR

The raging fire at three-three-two-six Creekside at the Oak Terrace condominiums – what you're seeing right now – has just gone to a third alarm. The fire may have begun as a gas explosion, and as of right now several people are missing. We'll update you as we learn more about the situation.

The picture changes to a commercial showing a sleek red sedan racing down a winding road.

## INT. BRIAN'S CAR - NIGHT - TRAVELING

As Brian drives, he hears a fast-approaching WEEE-OOOO, WEEE-OOOO of sirens, and pulls over as an ambulance and two police cars race past him, lights flashing.

As he pulls back into the road, Brian hears the WHUP WHUP WHUP of a helicopter flying low overhead, and leans down to look up through the windshield.

When he rounds the corner he sees a sea of emergency vehicles with lights flashing; hook and ladder trucks spray water onto the roof; dozens of FIREFIGHTERS direct hoses at the building; and panicked NEIGHBORS huddle across the street.

A POLICEMAN, 30s, directing traffic, motions for Brian to pull over. Brian stops and lowers his window.

## POLICEMAN

Sir, I need you to turn your car around and go back the way you came in.

## BRIAN

I live there! That's my building!

## POLICEMAN

Fire crews are doing everything they can. Park on the next block. Gotta keep the street clear for emergency vehicles.

## EXT. BRIAN'S STREET - NIGHT - TRACKING

Brian exits his car and trots, then sprints up the street, around a corner, and up the street toward his building.



He sees the building, where the fire is beginning to subside; over fountains of water arcing into the night sky; a YOUNG COUPLE carrying a large dog that appears to be dead.

He peers into an ambulance where an EMT, 30s, gives oxygen to an OLD WOMAN, 70s; and then into a second ambulance where TWO EMTs, 30s, frantically treat someone.

The crowd of Neighbors stands on the sidewalk. Brian wades into the group.

BRIAN

Becky!

Brian tries to see through the crowd, seeing the worried faces of the Neighbors as they turn to look at him. Among them: an OLD MAN, 70s, a SINGLE MOTHER, 20s, surrounded by THREE YOUNG CHILDREN, a YOUNG COUPLE, 20s, their arms around each other.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Becky! BECKEEEEEE!

Brian pushes through the crowd, which parts for him. He stops, sits down on the wet curb, buries his face in his hands, and sobs. A FEMALE NEIGHBOR, 40s, approaches him from behind and puts her hand on his shoulder.

INT. GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE ROOM - NIGHT

The door beeps and Walker walks into the room. Hargrove and Carr are working on their laptops.

CARR

Saw your work on the news.

WALKER

Really. What channel?

HARGROVE

Every channel. Results?

WALKER

Spectacular. There's no way he's alive.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Brian sits on the edge of a bed in a mid-tier hotel room, still dressed in his suit, which is spotted with dust and dirt. He stares out the window from four or five stories up, watching the cars race by on the highway below.

A small lamp illuminates a desk, the only light in the room. The hours pass in a rush as Brian continues to stare out the window, as the cars thin out on the road until only a few cars can be seen driving by.

Brian sits, motionless, as the sky brightens, the road fills with cars, and the sun rises. Finally, he stands and turns around, straightens his shoulders, cinches his tie, and steps forward.

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Brian is sitting in his office. He picks up his phone and dials ten digits. The phone rings twice.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL (V.O.)  
Campbell speaking.

BRIAN  
Detective Campbell, it's Brian  
McCutcheon.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL (V.O.)  
What can I do for you?

BRIAN  
Did you see the news last night  
about the building that burned?

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL (V.O.)  
I did. The gas explosion.

BRIAN  
That's what they're calling it.  
That's where I lived.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL (V.O.)  
You lived in that building?

BRIAN  
Not just the building. The unit  
that exploded.

A few seconds of silence pass.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL (V.O.)  
Where are you staying?

BRIAN  
In a hotel.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL (V.O.)  
Don't tell anyone where you are.

BRIAN  
Already thought about that.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL (V.O.)  
Mister McCutcheon, do you own a  
gun?

EXT. GUN SHOP - DAY

BRIAN (V.O.)  
I'm working on that.

Brian walks up to the door to the gun shop and rings the doorbell. The door unlocks with a buzz and a click, and Brian opens the door and goes inside.

INT. GUN SHOP - DAY

The Gun Shop Owner stands behind the counter.

GUN SHOP OWNER  
Morning.

BRIAN  
Morning. Do you watch the news?

GUN SHOP OWNER  
Try not to.

BRIAN  
My condo complex was on the news  
last night. The bad guy we talked  
about blew it up. I need the gun.

GUN SHOP OWNER  
It's gonna be two more days.  
Nothing I can do. It's the law.

BRIAN  
I don't have two more days. If I'd  
been home last night I'd already be  
dead. They killed my neighbors. I  
don't have anyone else to turn to.

GUN SHOP OWNER  
You're putting me in a tough spot.

BRIAN  
I'm sorry.

The Gun Shop Owner stares off into space for a minute, then pulls a pistol case from under the counter and lays it on the countertop. He turns to the shelf of bullets behind him and grabs a box, laying it on the counter.

GUN SHOP OWNER

This has been a good business for me, and I'm pretty good at saving money, so if I closed up today I'd probably be okay. I'm not one to make other people's troubles my troubles; but...I can't turn my back on you. So that's exactly what I'm gonna do, and when I turn back around I want to see the door shut and you gone.

BRIAN

I don't know what to say.

GUN SHOP OWNER

Say you'll remember where that second magazine is.

The Gun Shop Owner turns around and faces the racks of guns. The door opens and closes, followed by the TINKLE sound of the door chime. Then the Gun Shop Owner turns to see the gun case, the ammunition, and Brian gone.

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Brian walks in and tosses a legal pad on the desk.

KATE

I'm taking you to lunch.

Brian jumps, clearly not expecting Kate to be sitting in one of the chairs in front of his desk.

BRIAN

I'm really not hungry. Can we do it another time?

KATE

I heard what happened. I'm sorry about your place. We're going to lunch, but it's not about eating.

INT. SYNTHETICA CAFETERIA - DAY

In a huge cafeteria, two large video monitors play company programming on an endless loop as DINERS come and go.

Floor-to-ceiling windows let in light from outside, where diners sit on a patio around a fountain.

Brian and Kate sit outside by the window, peering in at Carr, who is eating by himself. He has his back to the wall, eating with one hand while he types furiously on his laptop with his other hand.

Carr suspiciously eyes everyone, and when a CAFETERIA WORKER, 20s, approaches to clean an adjacent table, Carr lowers the lid on his laptop until the Cafeteria Worker leaves.

BRIAN

He eats like a caveman. Eyes darting around like pinballs. Maybe that's how they eat in prison.

KATE

He was at Marion, just outside of St. Louis. Medium security. They have a Communication Management Unit. Restricted visitation and monitoring of all telephone calls and mail. Exactly what you need for Carr. For almost ten years they wouldn't let him anywhere near a computer or phone, and now here he is, working with us. See that hard drive hooked up to his laptop?

BRIAN

Yeah.

KATE

That's the key. He won't store anything on our network. Too cagey for that. That's military-grade, two-fifty-six-bit A.E.S.X.T.S. encryption. Probably has it set up to self-destruct if you try to brute force hack in. We need the code to that drive.

BRIAN

I'll get it. Look inside, on the ceiling, by the lights.

The small black ball of a surveillance camera is mounted on the ceiling between clusters of lights.

KATE

The camera.

BRIAN

He's in view of that one. I need to get to the security room.

(Brian stands)

Thanks for lunch.

INT. SECURITY ROOM - DAY

Inside the security room, navy-suited Todd sits in a chair in front of a large bank of monitors, each one showing a view of an area inside or outside the Synthetica building.

There's a knock at the door, and Todd gets up from his chair to open the door. Brian stands in the doorway.

BRIAN

Hey, Todd. I need your help. Someone's stealing food from the refrigerators, and I'm looking for an employee eating a particular kind of T.V. dinner.

TODD

Okay.

BRIAN

We're pretty sure the food was taken about fifteen minutes ago, so they're probably eating it now. I need to see the view from the camera over the center of the dining room.

TODD

It's up there on the top left.

Todd points to the monitor that displays a view of the cafeteria and several DINERS eating at tables.

BRIAN

That's what I need. Is there any way to get a little closer? I need to see what they're eating.

TODD

Sure.

BRIAN

Great. Really appreciate your help here. How about those three women sitting together? Can you get close enough to see what they're eating?

Todd moves a joystick and thumbs a scroll wheel, and the camera view moves over and zooms in on a table where THREE WOMEN, 40s, are eating salads.

TODD  
Looks like salads.

BRIAN  
Not what we're looking for. What  
about those two guys two tables to  
the right?

The camera view zooms in on a table where TWO MEN, 30s, are eating hamburgers.

TODD  
Burgers.

BRIAN  
What about that guy right behind  
them?

Todd moves the joystick and the camera view moves to Carr, eating a plate of Indian food. Todd thumbs the scroll wheel to zoom in.

TODD  
Hard to tell what that is.

BRIAN  
Could be what we're looking for.  
Let's watch him for a minute.

They watch as Carr types like a machine, occasionally stopping to take a bite. In the camera view is the top of Carr's head, the plate of food, his laptop, and the hard drive, on top of which is a keypad with numbers and letters, like a telephone keypad.

TODD  
Is that Indian food?

BRIAN  
Could be. Let's get closer.

Todd scrolls the wheel and zooms in on the plate of food, as well as the hard drive keypad. Carr closes his laptop and keys the passcode to lock the hard drive.

Brian watches as Carr presses 9363446, then places the hard drive on top of the laptop and exits the view. Brian moves toward the door.

BRIAN (CONT'D)  
That's what we needed. Thanks so  
much for your help today.

TODD  
Uh, sure. Happy to help.

Brian exits the security room and stands in the hallway.

BRIAN  
Nine, three, six, three, four,  
four, six.

Brian takes out his phone and dials.

KATE (V.O.)  
Synthetica, Kate speaking.

BRIAN  
I got it. Write this down.

KATE (V.O.)  
Ready.

BRIAN  
Nine, three, six, three, four,  
four, six.

KATE (V.O.)  
Got it. What an asshole.

BRIAN  
What do you mean?

KATE (V.O.)  
It spells Wendigo.

BRIAN  
Gotta go.  
(Brian hangs up.)  
Got you, you fucker.

INT. GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE ROOM - DAY

Hargrove, Walker, and Carr sit at the conference table. Carr is working on his laptop, and Walker and Hargrove are working on small tablets.

HARGROVE  
Malcolm, did the copy come in from  
the translators?



WALKER

Everything's in. Gave it to Jason this morning.

HARGROVE

Good. Jason, I want the multi-language patches lined up well in advance. I don't want the delivery problems we had last time.

CARR

We'll be ready.

Carr goes back to typing, then stops and sits straight up in his chair. He pushes back from the computer, clearly shocked.

CARR (CONT'D)

He's alive.

HARGROVE

What are you talking about?

CARR

Brian McCutcheon. His internet connection is active. He's in his office right now.

Hargrove snaps his head around to look directly at Walker, who slowly shakes his head in surprise. Hargrove barely controls his rage.

HARGROVE

How is this even - fucking - possible?

WALKER

I don't know.

HARGROVE

You will handle this. You will handle it personally. And you will handle it tonight.

Walker stands.

WALKER

Consider it done.

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Brian is sitting at his desk, working. There is a pizza box on the edge of his desk and a plastic bottle of tea next to some wadded up napkins.

ANNA (V.O.)  
Goodnight, Jeff.

JEFF (V.O.)  
Oh, no you don't. I'm right behind  
you.

Anna appears in Brian's doorway.

ANNA  
Hi.

BRIAN  
Hey there.

ANNA  
I heard what happened to your  
place. Do you have somewhere to go?

BRIAN  
Yeah. I'm in a hotel right now.

ANNA  
Do you need anything?

BRIAN  
No, I'm okay. Really. Thanks. I'll  
see you tomorrow.

ANNA  
Okay. See you tomorrow.

Anna leaves, and Brian stares out the door after she leaves.

EXT. SYNTHETICA BUILDING - NIGHT

Walker, all in black, moves in the shadows. He passes an office where a COWORKER, 30s, leans back in his chair while talking on the phone, past an office where a JANITOR, 30s, empties a trash can, then past two dark offices to the window outside Brian's office.

As Brian sits at his desk, typing a memo, Walker studies him.

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Brian continues typing, stops to look at wording on a page atop a pile of papers, picks up a pen and marks through a few lines of copy, then begins typing again.

Over his shoulder, outside, stands Walker, an unmoving black shape silhouetted by the dim light behind him.

Brian stops typing and looks out his office door. Looking uneasy, he spins his chair around and stands to look out the window.

EXT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Walker is gone, and Brian peers out the window into the night.

INT. SYNTHETICA BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT - TRACKING

Brian, carrying his laptop bag, is walking down the hallway to the garage. He turns around to see if anyone is behind him and sees no one.

When Brian exits the glass double doors, Walker steps out from behind a column and follows Brian, striding quickly up the hallway toward the doors. The shadow of Brian is trailed by the shadow of Walker.

Brian turns around to look behind him, but sees nothing. He starts walking again, faster this time. Walker moves faster, too.

INT. PARKING GARAGE STAIRWELL - NIGHT - TRACKING

Brian enters a dimly lit stairwell. He hears the CLIP CLOP of footsteps and stops, looking behind him, listening. He hears nothing and descends the stairs.

Behind him, the door to the stairwell opens. Brian jumps and brings up his fists to fight, and a FEMALE COWORKER, 30s, appears. She sees Brian and looks scared, but passes him and heads to the next level down, disappearing around the stairs. The door to the lower floor CREAKS open and slams shut with an echoing BOOM, followed by silence.

Brian stands on the stairs, breathing hard, then squares his shoulders and heads down to the lower floor. He opens the door to the level and Walker fills the doorway.

WALKER

Hi there.

Walker punches Brian in the face, knocking him backward onto the stairs. Brian drops his bag and falls hard, then tries to kick Walker, who grabs Brian's leg and slings him against the opposite wall. Brian's head hits the concrete and he falls.

Brian stumbles to his feet, and Walker immediately punches him several times in the torso, knocking him down and then kicking him in the stomach. Brian groans and tries to stand. Walker steps back and lets him get up.

WALKER (CONT'D)

You couldn't leave it alone, and tonight you surprised a burglar, maybe the same one who took care of your fat friend. Ready for more?

Walker punches Brian several times, including a shot to the face, easily dishing out blows while Brian tries to hit back and is effortlessly blocked by Walker every time.

After a series of especially brutal punches, Walker stomps on the top of Brian's foot, who screams. Walker then kicks Brian, flinging him backward to the opposite corner of the stairwell. Brian is on his knees, but slowly rises, grinning.

WALKER (CONT'D)

Do you have anything else to say before I beat the life out of you?

BRIAN

Distance.

WALKER

What?

BRIAN

Create distance between yourself and the target.

Brian quickly draws the pistol from beneath his jacket, crouches, points the gun at Walker, who charges forward, and fires three times in quick succession. PAK! PAK! PAK!

Walker is stopped in his tracks and staggers. He looks down at his chest and sees blood spreading from three wounds in his upper chest. Brian adjusts his aim to keep Walker in his sights.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

That's right, you shit. I shot you. Here's another one.

PAK! The shot hits Walker's shoulder.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

And another.

PAK! Another shot to the shoulder. Walker struggles to stand, swaying.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Those are forty caliber slugs, and that's five shots center mass, so you won't last long.

Walker gasps for air. Covered with blood, he falls to his knees and struggles to stay upright. With one arm he reaches out toward Brian. PAK! Ben shoots Walker again in the chest.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

That's six. I've got six left before changing magazines. More than enough to put you down like the rabid dog you are.

PAK! PAK! Walker is hit twice in the stomach. Sitting in an expanding puddle of blood, he wheezes loudly and drops his hands to his sides, desperately trying to hold himself up.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Bet it really burns you to be taken down by a wimp like me. Four shots left. Here's two for Myra and Pete.

PAK! PAK! Walker is hit twice more in the chest. Brian coughs and wipes his nose and mouth with his free hand. He narrows his eyes.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

And this one...this one is for my sister. Her name was Madelyne.

PAK! Walker is hit once more in the chest. This time he hardly reacts.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

You're all out of attitude now, aren't you? And you're out of blood, too.

Walker collapses completely, falling over backward to lie with his legs twisted and one arm folded beneath him, eyes open, dead.

Brian lowers the gun and looks down at Walker. Brian is completely spent, his eyes wild. Walker's blood drains from him, spreading across the stairwell floor. Brian watches it creep toward him, stepping back so it doesn't touch his feet.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

You see what you made me do?

Brian slumps his shoulders and regards Walker, shaking his head, holding out his arms, pleading.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I was good. I did the right things.  
Now it's all fucked up.

Brian starts crying. He sits down, leans against the wall, and looks Walker in the eyes.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Whatever was wrong with you, it's  
not wrong anymore.

Brian puts down the gun, pulls his phone and a business card from his jacket pocket, and punches ten digits. The phone rings twice.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL (V.O.)

This is Detective Campbell,  
homicide division. If you need to  
report a crime in progress, please  
hang up and dial nine one one.  
Otherwise, leave a message after  
the tone, and I'll return your call  
as soon as I can. BEEP!

BRIAN

It's Brian McCutcheon, and I'm  
looking down at the body of Malcolm  
Walker. I'm really hoping you can  
call me back, because I don't know  
what to do. I'm going to hang up  
now, because I think I'm going to  
throw up.

Brian hangs up and puts the phone and card in a pocket. He pulls the second pistol magazine from his jacket pocket and changes out the magazine, then looks up at the fluorescent light on the ceiling, which flickers, then shines brightly before becoming the light of the Global Infrastructure Room.

INT. GLOBAL INFRASTRUCTURE ROOM - NIGHT

Hargrove and Carr are hard at work. Hargrove is on his phone, and Carr is typing on his laptop.

HARGROVE

All I want to hear is that  
everything is in place. No, I don't  
care about that. Are you on  
schedule? Um, hmm. That's what I  
need to hear. Zai jian.

Hargrove hangs up his phone and stands, thinking, his back to the door, as the door beeps and Brian walks through it, holding the gun. Carr sees Brian first and sits up straight, clearly surprised.

Brian looks terrible. He has a bruised cheek, a split lip, his clothes are wrinkled, and he's limping. Carr opens his mouth to speak, but says nothing.

HARGROVE (CONT'D)

It's about time. Jason says India's asking for more money, so I need some good news.

BRIAN

Tell India the check's in the mail.

Hargrove looks up, shocked.

HARGROVE

How did you get in here?

BRIAN

With this badge.  
(throws a badge on the floor)  
Walker won't need it anymore.

HARGROVE

What are you talking about?

BRIAN

You let your dog off its leash. It bit me, so I put it down. Now if you want someone killed you'll have to do it yourself.

Hargrove moves toward a briefcase on the table while Carr looks back and forth between Brian and Hargrove. Brian raises the gun and points it at Hargrove, who stops in his tracks.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

You strike me as someone who might have a pistol in there, so I'd appreciate it if you'd stay the fuck away from your briefcase.

HARGROVE

You don't look so good.

BRIAN

I feel sick to my stomach – probably the adrenaline. But you?  
(MORE)

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Your heart probably isn't beating any faster than it does when you take a crap.

HARGROVE

What do you plan to do with the gun?

BRIAN

Just hold onto it. Makes me feel better.

HARGROVE

You need to leave now. The police are on their way.

BRIAN

Funny you should say that, because neither one of you has picked up a phone, and I know there aren't any cameras in here.

HARGROVE

Why don't you sit down and we'll talk about this situation?

BRIAN

How can you be so goddamned smug? I'm holding a gun, I told you I killed your muscle, and you act like we're about to haggle on the price of a used car.

HARGROVE

Did you ever wonder why we always had the first patch for every virus? This industry is forty billion a year worldwide.

BRIAN

Who cares? People were KILLED.

HARGROVE

Myra and Pete took their eye off the prize. Why don't you put down the gun? There's a way out of this that works out for everyone.

BRIAN

That's how it's done? After all this, you're still running scenarios in your head looking for the way this works out for you. It doesn't.



Brian turns to Carr.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

And you. It wasn't enough you built this shit and turned it loose. You let good people die.

HARGROVE

Let's stay on point here.

BRIAN

Shut up!

(leveling the gun at  
Hargrove)

You're a bad person. Your shining moments are things most people couldn't live with. That's why you have to go somewhere you can't hurt anyone else. But I'm not going to shoot you. I don't think I'll shoot anyone ever again. Catch.

Brian tosses the gun to Hargrove, who catches it, immediately points it at Brian, and pulls the trigger. CLICK! Nothing happens. Hargrove cycles the slide, points the gun, and pulls the trigger again. CLICK!

BRIAN (CONT'D)

It's not loaded.

HARGROVE

What are you playing at?

BRIAN

You were right. I'm way out of my depth. This whole situation has been over my head since the beginning. So I called the police, and they called the FBI, and the FBI called some people you used to work with, and they knew exactly how to handle this situation.

Brian pulls what appears to be a pen out of his pocket.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

They told me to come in here wearing this little camera, presumably so they could see and hear what assholes you two are.

HARGROVE

You've screwed up more than you know.

The door beeps, and in come BLONDE FBI AGENT and CREWCUT FBI AGENT, holding pistols, dressed in dark slacks and navy jackets with FBI on the back. Two UNIFORMED POLICEMEN enter, also holding their weapons.

Detective Campbell and Special Agent Torres come in. Crewcut FBI Agent puts away his weapon, approaches Carr, and pulls out a pair of handcuffs.

CREWCUT FBI AGENT  
Jason Carr, you're under arrest.  
(handcuffs Carr)  
It's time to go back inside; and  
this time you aren't coming out.

Carr is led away, and Detective Campbell approaches Hargrove.

DETECTIVE CAMPBELL  
Mister Hargrove, thanks for the bit  
about Myra Sedgwick and Peter  
Davies. Apparently that's one thing  
you don't talk about on the phone.

Blonde FBI Agent puts away her weapon and handcuffs Hargrove.

SPECIAL AGENT TORRES  
Lawrence Hargrove, you're under  
arrest for the murders of Myra  
Sedgwick and Peter Davies, with  
other charges to follow. At this  
time, I need to advise you of your  
rights. You have the right to  
remain silent...

HARGROVE  
Can we dispense with this nonsense?  
I see some old friends.

Led by SERIOUS FBI AGENT, the MAN IN BLACK, 40s and pure evil, in a black suit, walks into the room, flanked by two lean, leather-jacketed SPECIAL FORCES MEN. The four approach Special Agent Torres.

SPECIAL AGENT TORRES  
Your friends can't help you this  
time.

HARGROVE  
We'll see. Here they are now.

SERIOUS FBI AGENT  
Sir, these men are here to see you.

SPECIAL AGENT TORRES  
How can I help you?

MAN IN BLACK  
(briefly displays an I.D.,  
then hands Special Agent  
Torres a letter)  
We're here for Mister Hargrove.  
Here's the paperwork.

SPECIAL AGENT TORRES  
One page?

MAN IN BLACK  
Please examine the signature and  
seal. I've already spoken to  
regional director Carroll.

Special Agent Torres looks at the page, raises his eyebrows,  
then looks at the Man in Black and shakes his head.

SPECIAL AGENT TORRES  
Mister Hargrove, I'm releasing you  
into the custody of these  
gentlemen. I'll spare the  
introductions. My feeling is you're  
well acquainted.

HARGROVE  
(rattles the handcuffs)  
Are these still necessary?

Special Agent Torres looks at Serious FBI Agent.

SPECIAL AGENT TORRES  
Special Agent, please remove the  
handcuffs from Mister Hargrove.

Serious FBI Agent removes the handcuffs from Hargrove, puts  
them in his pocket and walks away.

HARGROVE  
Good evening, special agent  
whomever. Better luck next time.

SPECIAL AGENT TORRES  
(grabs Hargrove's arm)  
It's Special Agent Torres. You  
don't strike me as someone who  
learns from his mistakes. I'm sure  
we'll see you again. Maybe by then  
your friends will have grown tired  
of you.

Hargrove shrugs off Special Agent Torres' grip, and he, the Man in Black and the Special Forces Men walk away as Brian walks up behind Special Agent Torres.

BRIAN  
You're letting him go!

SPECIAL AGENT TORRES  
We're letting him go. He had a letter with a signature on it that gave me no choice. I'm sorry.

BRIAN  
They KILLED people.

SPECIAL AGENT TORRES  
Mister McCutcheon, I wish I could say things always work out like they should, or that I'd never seen this before — I really wish I could. That cut looks bad. We have someone outside who can take care of it. Let's go see them.

As Special Agent Torres and Brian turn to leave, Kate stands with her back to them next to the conference table, wearing a navy jacket almost identical to an FBI jacket.

BRIAN  
Kate, is that you?

KATE  
(turns around)  
I was worried about you.

BRIAN  
I don't even know where to start.

Special Agent Torres, Brian and Kate leave. At the conference table, the Blonde FBI Agent closes Carr's laptop, then picks up the USB cable connected to the laptop and examines the empty end.

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Brian is sitting at his desk. He picks up his phone and dials four-digits.

KATE (V.O.)  
This is Kate at Synthetica. Leave me a message.

Brian hangs up the phone, gets up, and leaves his office.

INT. KATE'S CUBE - DAY

Brian stands in the doorway to Kate's cube. Kate isn't there, but her photos and other desk items are there. Brian goes to the next cube over to talk to INEZ, 20s.

BRIAN

Hi there.

INEZ

Hi.

BRIAN

Do you know Kate?

INEZ

Yeah. I mean, I did, I guess.

BRIAN

Where is she?

INEZ

I heard she quit.

BRIAN

Her stuff is still there. Doesn't look like she took anything.

INEZ

Yeah. Kinda weird.

INT. BRIAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Brian is sitting at his desk, typing.

INSERT - BRIAN'S LAPTOP SCREEN

In his email program, he opens a blank email and types an address at the top: "kate@katemargulies.com"

In the subject line he types: "You did it, didn't you?" and clicks send.

BACK TO SCENE

An alarm chimes, and Brian looks at his watch, picks up a legal pad and pen and stands up to leave. The phone rings, and Brian lets it ring three times before answering.

BRIAN

Hi, Lynn.

LYNN (V.O.)  
Do you have a minute? Ben would like to see you.

BRIAN  
I was just heading over to I.T. for a meeting.

LYNN (V.O.)  
Jeff Reyes is going to cover that. Ben would like you to come over right now.

BRIAN  
Okay. Be there in a sec.

Brian walks out of his office. He walks twenty feet or so and turns around to see two navy-suited SECURITY MEN enter his office. They close the door behind them. Brian turns, squares his shoulders, and marches up the hall.

INT. OUTSIDE BEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Brian walks into the area outside Ben's office. Lynn sits at a desk. She looks up, frowns, then brightens.

LYNN  
Hi, there. How are you doing?  
Haven't seen you so far this week.

BRIAN  
I took a couple of days off after -  
ah - last week.

LYNN  
Right. Well, go on in. Tim  
Vechiarelli's in there, too.

BRIAN  
Thanks.

INT. BEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Brian walks into Ben's office, where Ben sits behind his desk in a dark suit and tie. Across from him, on the other side of the desk, is TIM, late 30s, also in a dark suit and tie. As Brian enters, both men stand.

BEN  
Hello, Brian.

BRIAN  
Ben, Tim. What's up?

BEN  
Let's sit over here.

Ben gestures to a small table, and he and Tim move toward it and sit. Brian remains standing.

BEN (CONT'D)  
Brian, have a seat. Please.

BRIAN  
I think this is one of those  
situations where I prefer to stand.

BEN  
Don't make this any harder than it  
has to be.

BRIAN  
Harder for who?

TIM  
I think you'll see the package  
we're offering is very attractive,  
considering the situation.

BRIAN  
What situation would that be? The  
situation where three employees  
were killed? Where the building  
where I live was blown up, killing  
three more people? The situation  
where an employee of this company  
tried to beat me to death and  
another tried to shoot me? Is that  
the situation we're talking about?

BEN  
Just sit down and let's talk about  
this.

BRIAN  
With all due respect, shut the fuck  
up. I can't imagine a package you  
two assholes could come up with  
that even remotely compensates me  
for the shit I've been through.  
Everything I own was incinerated in  
the fire. I've got a fractured eye  
socket, a stress fracture in my  
wrist, bruised ribs, and I've lost  
ten percent of my hearing.

(MORE)

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I can't sleep because every dream involves being chased through whatever scary, fucked-up scenario my subconscious can conjure up because, even though I'm here working my way through meeting after meeting - before this circus, that is - I just can't seem to believe it's over.

Brian collapses into the remaining chair and rubs his closed eyes. Then he opens his eyes, sharply focuses them on Ben and Tim, and sits back, folding his hands in front of him.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

So with that in mind, let's take a look at this very attractive package.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Brian and Mindy sit at a table. They both have their laptops open, and the table is covered with papers, legal pads, and empty cups.

MINDY

Did you see that position for the H.R. generalist at Supermedia?

BRIAN

I did. Place is a total sweatshop. Reviews on Glassceiling put them at two of five stars. Everyone below the S.V.P. level is miserable. I applied anyway.

MINDY

Still in the hotel?

BRIAN

Until next week. Then I move into an apartment in the heights. One-year lease. Part of my package.

MINDY

Sweet deal.

BRIAN

Not really. Had to agree not to sue their ass. With no place to live and no income, I didn't have a lot of options.



MINDY

By the way, most of those assholes are getting fired today.

BRIAN

Who?

MINDY

Tom Francis, that dickhead Ben Foster, and about a dozen others. One of my I.T. buds just turned off their email and phones. They're probably getting walked out right now. I bet at least half go to prison. Fuck 'em.

BRIAN

Mindy, did you go to finishing school? Because you've really got a way with words.

Mindy is typing on her laptop. She frowns.

MINDY

What the hell is this?

BRIAN

What?

MINDY

It's an email from Tom Francis. What could he possibly want?

BRIAN

Open it.

Mindy double clicks on the email to open it. She grimaces and furiously clicks her mouse.

MINDY

It's totally locked up. This is such bullshit. Look at this!

INSERT - MINDY'S LAPTOP SCREEN

Mindy turns her laptop toward Brian. The same brightly colored cartoon lizard graphic that was on Kate's computer fills the screen.

BACK TO SCENE

Mindy holds the power key to restart. After a few seconds her normal desktop appears.

MINDY

That's weird. Now it's fine. What the hell was that?

BRIAN

It looked like a virus.

INT. BRIAN'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Brian is sitting at the desk, working on his laptop. A chime noise sounds, and Brian clicks his mouse.

INSERT - BRIAN'S LAPTOP SCREEN

Brian opens his mail program to see one new email in bold at the top of the mail program window from "A friend." The subject line is "hello." He double clicks to open the email to see a photo of a beautiful sandy beach. Below the photo is:

"You need a vacation. How about the Maldives? We have an opening in HR. Get on a plane and get down here.

Your friend,  
Kate"

BACK TO SCENE

Brian leans back and stares at the onscreen photo. He quickly types and clicks for a few seconds before picking up his phone and punching in ten digits. The phone rings once.

MATTHEW (V.O.)

Thank you for calling Asia  
Airlines. This is Matthew. How can  
I help you?

Brian looks back at the onscreen photo, which goes in and out of focus. He looks around his hotel room, lowering the phone and picking it up again.

MATTHEW (V.O.)

Hello? Asia Airlines. This is  
Matthew. How can I help you?

BRIAN

I'm sorry. I...I have the wrong  
number.

Brian hangs up, puts down the phone, and frowns.

## EXT. MALDIVES BEACH - DAY

Brian, dressed in a dark suit, with his laptop under his arm, is standing next to a clear, blue ocean. He's alone on the beach. A small group of gulls wheels in the sky.

Brian steps forward toward the water, which laps at his feet, soaking his cap toe shoes and his pant legs. He scans the ocean horizon, then turns to see Kate, looking stunning in a bathing suit, approaching him from behind.

KATE

Aren't you tired?

BRIAN

I am. Is this where you are?

KATE

It's a plane flight away. That's how easy it is.

BRIAN

It's not that easy.

KATE

Sure it is. You know it's true. I'm not even here. This is your brain telling you to pull your head out of your ass. Dreams are peculiar fucking things, Brian. Yours is over now.

Brian wakes up in his hotel room and turns to look at the clock that displays 3:14 a.m.

## INT. JEFF'S OFFICE - DAY

Brian, in a suit, is seated at a table in an office with JEFF, 40s, who's dressed business casual and looks harried.

JEFF

Brian, thanks for coming in. I wanted to let you know we're moving on with another candidate.

BRIAN

Couldn't you have said that on the phone?

JEFF

I wanted to see you face-to-face. It's not like we found another candidate. We haven't.

BRIAN

Then what's the problem?

JEFF

Synthetica says they can't comment on your time there because of pending litigation. It doesn't look good to us, and it's not going to look good to anyone else.

(JEFF stands and extends his hand. They shake hands.)

All I can say is, good luck with your search. I'm really sorry.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Brian sits dejected at an outside table at the coffee shop, staring off into space.

JEFF (V.O.)

It was good meeting you. I'm really sorry.

As Brian picks up a coffee stirrer and taps the tabletop absent-mindedly, his phone begins to ring and vibrate. He picks it up and looks at the screen to see: "Unknown caller"

Brian puts the phone to his ear and answers.

BRIAN

Hello, Kate.

KATE (V.O.)

How are you doing?

BRIAN

Checking out of the hotel tomorrow and moving to a corporate apartment.

KATE (V.O.)

One of those corporate apartments in the heights? That place is a shithole. Kiss your car stereo goodbye. Had to live there for a month when I moved down from Cleveland. You need to move here.

BRIAN

And sell antivirus software.

KATE (V.O.)  
That's what we do.

BRIAN  
Who's we?

KATE (V.O.)  
Me and several dozen programmers  
from Moscow who were happy to leave  
the Russian winter behind to work  
in paradise. We have more than a  
hundred thousand users worldwide,  
and we're just getting started.

BRIAN  
What about all the regular people  
getting Carr's viruses?

KATE (V.O.)  
The basic version is free.

BRIAN  
Free?

KATE (V.O.)  
We give it away. Next week we open  
sales offices in San Francisco and  
Vienna to sell the enterprise  
version. We'll cycle through the  
viruses on Carr's hard drive in  
three years, and then everyone  
walks away with a big check.

BRIAN  
You've got it all figured out.

KATE (V.O.)  
It's already happening. Instead of  
paying shareholders, I'm building a  
tech school in Bangladesh and a  
clinic in Malawi. Free dental work  
for anyone who walks in. Come here,  
do what you do, then retire in  
three years and do what you want.  
You just need to get here.

INT. BRIAN'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

KATE (V.O.)  
You just need to get here.

A trashcan is filled to overflowing in the small kitchen. On the desk is a stack of resumes and envelopes and legal pads covered with notes, as well as two piles of bills with sticky notes on top that say "Past Due" and "Collections".

Water runs in the shower, followed by the sound of the water being shut off, the rustle of a shower curtain, and the sound of someone toweling themselves dry. A suitcase is open on the bed, half filled with clothes.

Brian exits the bathroom in a bathrobe and walks to the window. The curtains are open, and dawn is just beginning to light up the sky. Brian has his phone in his hand. He punches in ten digits and the line rings.

SYLVIA (V.O.)  
Thank you for calling Asia  
Airlines. This is Sylvia. How can I  
help you?

BRIAN  
Hello, Sylvia.

EXT. BRIAN'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Brian looks out on the world through the window as he talks to Sylvia. As the birds chirp and cars rumble by, through the glass Brian looks grounded, serious and certain.

One by one, cars exit the hotel parking lot and spill out onto the surrounding roads, making their way through the larger neighborhood, then onto the nearby highways.

In the distance, an airliner rises at takeoff, neatly bisecting the orange morning sky.