

TRADECRAFT

Pilot: "And The Truth Shall Make You Free"

Written by

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ACT ONE

GUNFIRE cuts through the night --

EXT. CAR - TRAVELING - WASHINGTON, D.C. - NIGHT

SHATTERING the rear window of an Audi A6 as it speeds down a service road near the 14th Street Bridge. The impact causes the Audi to sharply SWERVE, narrowly missing cars and trucks.

INT. CARTER'S AUDI - TRAVELING - CONTINUOUS

JULIA (30's) cowers in the passenger seat, sweat drenching her new outfit as she white-knuckles the grab handle above her door. Worst. First. Date. Ever.

As the car careens around a bend, she stares at CARTER (30's, mild-mannered, suit & glasses). He's not the least bit flustered. Instead he looks back at her, completely earnest.

CARTER

I can't tell you how sorry I am
about this.

JULIA

So I'm guessing you're not really a
party planner.

Before Carter can respond, two BLACK SUBURBAN SUVs appear on either side of the Audi. Their windows roll down to reveal automatic weapons. Eyes wide, Julia SCREAMS as --

Carter jerks the wheel, pops the hand brake and spins into a 180 DEGREE TURN. As he heads in the opposite direction --

One of the SUVs tries the same turn and ROLLS OVER, SKIDDING into oncoming traffic.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Carter, I don't understand. If all
you did was uncover a fake
operation...

CARTER

Not a fake op. A *false flag*.

JULIA

What's the difference?

CARTER
In my business? A lot.

In his rearview, Carter sees the other SUV gaining on him. He veers down an alley, stopping midway.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Sorry, but you're gonna have to
make it home from here.

As Julia opens her door, we see Carter SLIP SOMETHING INTO HER JACKET POCKET. She turns back --

JULIA
What about...

CARTER
(pushing her out)
GO.

As Carter speeds away, Julia hears the SUVs coming and ducks behind a dumpster. They race past.

EXT. 14TH STREET BRIDGE/POTOMAC RIVER - NIGHT

The SUV is close on Carter's tail as he speeds toward the riverfront. CONSTRUCTION ZONES block access to the bridge.

The only choice is to fall into the line of red tail lights following the detour.

Carter slows, eying his options. The SUV narrows the gap.

Suddenly Carter pulls onto the shoulder and speeds up, PLOWING THROUGH a barrier and RACING UP A RAMP...

As Carter's car becomes AIRBORNE, we FREEZE on it --

CUT TO:

SUPER: THREE DAYS EARLIER

In DARKNESS:

VICTOR (V.O.)
I'm not sure about this, Carter.

CARTER (V.O.)
Come on, Victor. It's not like it's
your first time.

VICTOR (V.O.)
But you've got the power, you call
the shots. What's in it for me?

A beat.

CARTER
What do you want?

INT. FORTUNE 500 COMPANY - EARLY MORNING

We're inside a glass-walled office for a global company,
behind a door marked "Director of Human Resources". There's
no one around, aside from a janitor tidying up, as --

Carter Franklin, impeccably groomed in suit and tie, waits
while VICTOR, a pudgy HR Director considers his options.

VICTOR
It's not the easiest thing in the
world to transfer an employee from
one country to another. You're
talking about a lot of paperwork.

CARTER
My heart goes out to you.

Victor glances at the personnel file on his computer screen --

VICTOR
What do you want with this guy
anyway? He's a lowly engineer.

CARTER
I have my reasons.

VICTOR
I know all about your reasons.
Doesn't it ever bother you, using
people like this? I'm guessing
Ahmad didn't do anything wrong,
aside from knowing some shady
people. If you send him back home,
they'll try to recruit him.

CARTER
That's what I'm counting on.

VICTOR
But Ahmad has no choice in the
matter. You're blackmailing him.
Just like you're blackmailing me.

CARTER

Victor, nobody forced you to
embezzle almost a million dollars.

Victor's eyes dart to the janitor just outside. Not so loud.

VICTOR

They didn't even miss it. You're
the only one who figured it out.

CARTER

Would you rather I told them?

VICTOR

No. But like I said, it'd be nice
to get something for myself.

Carter sighs. This day just got a lot longer.

ELLIOT (V.O./PRELAP)

A grenade-launcher?

EXT. CORPORATE CAMPUS - DAY

ELLIOT NEWBORN (40's, handsome but world-weary) stops short
in the parking lot of a large office structure.

Carter is beside him. Both carry briefcases.

ELLIOT

He asked for a grenade-launcher?

CARTER

An RPG-7, circa 1990. Collector's
item. They're not easy to find.

ELLIOT

I should hope not. You didn't get
him one, did you? Carter?

CARTER

Yeah, I got him one.
(off Elliot's look)
I didn't say it was operational.

INT. BUILDING - HALLWAY

Stepping off the elevator, Carter and Elliot pause at a
BIOMETRIC SCANNER outside an unmarked door --

ELLIOT

What happens when he finds out it
doesn't work?

As they continue inside, Carter smiles.

REVERSE ANGLE: OPERATIONS CENTER

A hub of activity, with dozens of people working with the
latest technology.

CARTER

Who's he gonna complain to?

An assistant approaches and hands Elliot a file folder.

CLOSE ON: the INSIGNIA on the folder

NATIONAL RESOURCES DIVISION: CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

TITLE CARD:

"TRADECRAFT"

INT. NATIONAL RESOURCES DIVISION - CIA - LATER THAT DAY

A photo of the exterior of the original headquarters shows
the inscription of their motto from John 8:32. "And ye shall
know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

We're inside the National Resources Division, the domestic
arm of the Central Intelligence Agency. Elliot addresses a
group of new TRAINEES (mid-20's).

ELLIOT

Welcome to National Resources, the
unsung heroes of the CIA. As the
domestic division of clandestine
services, NR recruits foreign
nationals who reside here to
collect intelligence from their
travels outside the country.

AUBREY (annoyingly industrious) listens closely while KARIN
(edgy, aloof) sneaks looks at WILL (trust fund baby).

ELLIOT (CONT'D)

We also assist the FBI and NSA in
running surveillance of foreign
emissaries on U.S. soil.

JONAH (sweet but schlubby) perks up at this, glancing around
to see if the others are as psyched to be here as he is.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)

I realize the image you have of the CIA is based on Jason Bourne.

(gesturing to himself)

And, yes, I know the resemblance to Mr. Damon is uncanny.

Aubrey laughs. Karin shares an eyeroll with Will.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)

But the work we do here is just as important as our missions overseas.

Two senior officers watch from the side. MARISA (30's, PhD in psychology) is fiercely competitive. A grown-up Tracy Flick.

Her husband HENRY (30's, cyber consultant) is soft-spoken and wry. Carter quietly slips into the room and joins them --

MARISA

Nice of you to show up.

CARTER

Please, he's barely made it to the "wizards behind the curtain" part.

ELLIOT

Most Americans have never heard of National Resources. As it should be. We are the wizards behind the curtain, the unseen facilitators...

CARTER

(under his breath)

...the ones who couldn't cut it as "real" spies...

MARISA

That's not true. Some of us left deep cover in order to buy a home, put down roots...

HENRY

...and get our three-year-old to stop repeating what the Somali pirate said to Daddy.

Carter looks at Marisa. She shrugs. Okay, that too.

ELLIOT

We don't claim credit for our work...

AUBREY

... "the pride is our reward."
 (off his look)

You gave a lecture at Princeton two years ago. It was inspiring.

Elliot nods, impressed. Karin loud-whispers --

KARIN

Kiss-ass.

AUBREY

(offended)

Elliot Newborn wrote the book on domestic ops.

KARIN

Stop, you're making me wet.

ELLIOT

In addition to working with Marisa and Henry...

(nods to both)

...you'll be in the capable hands of Carter Franklin, a ten year veteran of this division. I'm still not sure how we stole him away from MIT, but I'm glad we did. His record for recruiting assets is near perfect. You can learn a lot from him.

(only half-kidding)

But stick to what's in your manual. He has a habit of going off-book.

CARTER

Thank you, Elliot. I think they'll be fine as long as they don't fall victim to the classic blunders, the most famous of which is "never get involved in a land war in Asia..."

ELLIOT

...but only slightly less well-known is "never go in against a Sicilian when DEATH is on the line!"

They share a grin then look back at the trainees. Nothing.

CARTER

Vizzini? "Princess Bride"?

(to Elliot)

Philistines.

As Carter continues, Elliot is pulled aside by his assistant ANNIE. Whatever she's telling him, it's not good.

CARTER (CONT'D)

To do this job well you have to be able to think on your feet. Or on your head. My first assignment was recruiting a Chinese gymnast.

(still no reaction)

Tough room.

Elliot signals to Carter. Wrap it up.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Okay. Let's take a break before we delve into the fascinating world of asset profiling. No reading ahead.

As the trainees disperse, Carter makes a beeline for Elliot. Marisa is already talking to him.

ELLIOT

Deputy Director's on the warpath.

CARTER

I thought Grubman was out of town.

MARISA

He cut his trip short. We just got word there was a cyber attack on a major sovereign wealth fund.

INT. NATIONAL RESOURCES - WAR ROOM - DAY

Standing before a multi-touch collaboration wall computer, Henry briefs Deputy Director ARTHUR GRUBMAN (60's, blowhard) and the senior agents.

HENRY

Abu Dhabi Investment Authority is one of the largest sovereign wealth funds in the world, valued at more than seven hundred billion.

He taps the screen and pulls up several other wealth funds controlled by the United Arab Emirates, placing them in a list alongside photos of ruling SHEIKS.

HENRY (CONT'D)

ADIA is one of a half-dozen funds investing the oil assets of the United Arab Emirates. They're notoriously private.

(MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)

Most people don't even know they have offices in the U.S.

He highlights several cities on a U.S. map.

HENRY (CONT'D)

They finance university research and fund dozens of start-ups. And they consider themselves at the forefront of new technology.

MARISA

So a cyber attack of this nature creates national embarrassment.

GRUBMAN

Exactly. That's why the director of the fund reached out to me directly and asked us to investigate.

ELLIOT

But the FBI has jurisdiction.

GRUBMAN

It'll take a month before they even put a team together. And then another week while they decide what they're having for lunch.

Carter and Henry share a small smile. Elliot's a stickler for protocol, but Grubman's disdain for the FBI is clear.

GRUBMAN (CONT'D)

The United Arab Emirates is an important ally. We can't endanger that relationship over cyber security issues. We need to track down the originating source --

CARTER

That's a huge waste of time.

Grubman pauses, irritated by Carter's insubordination.

GRUBMAN

And why is that?

CARTER

Odds are, they didn't hack us directly. They got in through a foreign banking system with crappy firewalls.

HENRY

He's right. We can change encryption codes every week, but as long as we do business with countries that are less secure, we'll remain vulnerable.

Frustrated, Grubman glances at his watch.

GRUBMAN

I've got a meeting at D.O.D.
Marisa, take the lead on this.

Marisa tries to hide her excitement as Henry looks at Elliot, surprised that Grubman would ignore his seniority.

GRUBMAN (CONT'D)

I don't care how you do it, just come up with a list of names I can take to the Director.

MARISA

Yes, sir.

Grubman leaves. Marisa and Henry follow. But Elliot hangs back with Carter.

ELLIOT

If forensic detection is a waste of time, what do you suggest?

CARTER

Determine what was taken --

Realizing where he's going with this --

ELLIOT

-- and then figure out why.

CARTER (V.O./PRELAP)

Money. Ideology. Compromise. Ego.

INT. NATIONAL RESOURCES - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Carter stands beside a smart board, on which the four words are written, along with their acronym: M.I.C.E.

CARTER

The value of National Resources lies in recruiting assets from across the country who travel abroad on a regular basis.

Trainees Jonah, Will, Aubrey and Karin watch attentively.

CARTER (CONT'D)

You'll start by gathering intelligence on prospective recruits. Then use these motivations to seal the deal.

(beat)

One element may be enough for some. Others won't respond to all four.

JONAH

If someone is valuable enough, can't we compel them to cooperate?

CARTER

Compel them?

JONAH

Dude, we're the CIA. Can't we make people do stuff?

CARTER

No, *Dude*.

(PRELAP)

Your first assets have been pre-selected. We've worked with their organizations before and have good relationships with them.

EXT. OFFICE COMPLEX - STARBUCKS - DAY

Carter and his trainees sit outside a Starbucks in the courtyard of an upscale office park.

Carter hands Aubrey an iPad with her cover story, as well as a photo and bio of a fashionably dressed young woman.

CARTER

Yvette Bouchot from Loring International. Her father finances an extremist group out of Morocco.

AUBREY

She's agreed to spy on her father?

CARTER

Father in name only. He abandoned his family when Yvette was four. We've asked her to reconnect by claiming she needs a marrow donor.

JONAH
 Money, ideology, compromise...wait,
 is this ideology?

CARTER
 She wants to help because she
 thinks what he's doing is wrong.
 (beat)
 But never underestimate the value
 of another motive.

WILL
 Revenge.

CARTER
 As far as her co-workers are
 concerned, you're Veronique Delon,
 a friend from back home in Avignon.

YVETTE steps from a building with colleagues on either side.

Moving quickly, Carter takes Aubrey's arm and leads her into
 the pedestrian traffic.

AUBREY
 This is it? This is how we're...

CARTER
 Détendez. Tu feras bien.
 (subtitled translation)
Relax. You'll do great.

As they pass Yvette's group, Carter throws an elbow into the
 man beside Yvette, nearly knocking him over.

As the others come to his aid, Yvette glances at Carter (*is
 this her?*) and "recognizes" Aubrey.

YVETTE
 Veronique! Mon Dieu! Tu fais quoi
 ici?
 (subtitled translation)
My God! What are you doing here?

AUBREY
 Yvette? C'est étonnant! Si bon de
 te voir!
 (subtitled translation)
This is amazing! Good to see you!

Carter quickly apologizes for the collision and moves on,
 leaving Yvette to introduce Aubrey to her colleagues.

EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY - FIELD - DAY

A RUGBY GAME is underway. Will stands on the perimeter alongside Carter, both dressed in GW jerseys and shorts. Carter nods toward a tall, dark-skinned player. TUNDÉ.

CARTER

Tundé Razeem, a sophomore from Nigeria. His cousin is a member of the terrorist group Boko Haram.

Will nervously eyes the massive players.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Will, your grandfather led the evacuation of Saigon in '75. How would he feel about you bailing on a simple game of rugby?

Will's anxiety turns to shame as the other side kicks off.

WILL

Okay. But is this really necess...?

But before he can finish, Carter catches the ball and snaps it to Will, who stands bug-eyed as the opposing team RACES TOWARD HIM FOR THE MAUL.

INT. KIDS RULE PARTY HOUSE - WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

An upscale party venue for the privileged Beltway crowd. Five year-olds run and scream at the top of their lungs as smiling attendants preside over the chaos.

INT. TOWN CAR - STREET OUTSIDE KIDS RULE - DAY

As their car idles at the curb, Carter turns to Karin.

CARTER

Part of your job is recruiting American companies to provide cover jobs for agents operating overseas.

Through the front window we see an ELEGANT CEO (40's) who's overdressed for the occasion. Mother of the birthday boy.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Patricia Towning. CEO of Towning Capital, with offices in eighteen foreign cities.

Karin turns to PETER (5) a pint-sized boy seated next to her listening to his iPhone. She smiles, feigning enthusiasm.

KARIN

Okay, Peter, let's go have some fun! You can call me "Mommy".

Peter removes his headphones with a world-weary sigh.

PETER

Lady, you pay my quote, I'll call you whatever you want.

The pint-sized actor exits with a wrapped present. Karin looks at Carter, wondering what she's gotten herself into.

INT. NATIONAL RESOURCES - HALLWAY - LATER

Marisa falls into step beside Henry and hands him a file.

MARISA

It's Cobra 7 in Beijing.

HENRY

Where'd you get this?
(off her silence)
A tip? Don't you think that's awfully convenient?

MARISA

This is exactly the kind of thing they're known for.

HENRY

Cobra 7 steals proprietary technology, not cash.

MARISA

Chinese hackers stole patents to launch a robotics company. Maybe Cobra's doing the same thing. And if you bring it to Grubman --

HENRY

He'll assume it's credible.
(beat)
Honey, I realize this is your chance to impress the boss, but...

MARISA

Don't patronize me, Henry.

HENRY

Then don't treat me like a patsy.

She glares, but looks away when Carter appears with Annie.

CARTER

If it isn't Mr. and Mrs. Smith.

He grins, loading his next jab when KAYLYN ZARDARI (30, fragile) appears, frustration written all over her face.

Concerned, Carter quickly ushers her inside his office.

INT. CARTER'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

CARTER

Kaylyn. What are you doing here?

KAYLYN

Carter, I want to know who killed my husband. You promised me you'd find out.

CARTER

I'm working on it. These things take time.

KAYLYN

My mother-in-law won't leave the house. Ever since they brought Hassan's body back from Basra.

CARTER

I'm sorry, Kaylyn.

KAYLYN

His brother wants to sue Beekman Energy for not paying the ransom. He doesn't know Hassan was working for the government. What am I supposed to tell him?

(beat)

You said Hassan died a hero, Carter. I want to know why.

Off Carter, unable to answer.

INT. NATIONAL RESOURCES DIVISION - WAR ROOM - LATER

Annie hands reports to Elliot, Marisa and Carter.

MARISA

What's this?

CARTER

I asked Annie to see if this is the first time a sovereign wealth fund has been hacked. It's not.

They watch as Henry pulls up data on the computer wall: principals of each fund, where it's invested.

HENRY

Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency. A fund worth five hundred billion.

CARTER

And like Abu Dhabi, a lot of it invested in the United States.

HENRY

Qatar Investment Authority. Their sovereign wealth fund in Albuquerque was hit.

MARISA

What's a wealth fund from Qatar doing in New Mexico?

CARTER

Investing in smart grid technology. They use solar photovoltaic systems to power energy-smart houses. Qatar wants to build entire cities that way.

ELLIOT

Three attacks in six months.

HENRY

That's not the strangest part. In each case, the loss was only a few hundred thousand.

ELLIOT

That's a rounding error to them.

MARISA

When the Bangladesh account was hacked at the Federal Reserve, the North Korean hackers made off with eighty-one million. Who goes to this kind of trouble for chump change?

ELLIOT
What does the FBI have to say?

HENRY
No comment.

CARTER
Meaning they already have an
investigation under way. Think
Grubman knows that?

ELLIOT
Reach out to the embassies.

Marisa and Henry leave. Carter hangs back, watching Elliot roll his wedding band around his finger. He does it so often, he's not even aware.

CARTER
Your divorce is final next month.
Might be time to retire that.

Elliot looks down at his ring, shrugs. Soon, but not yet.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Kaylyn Zardari came by my office.
She wants to know what really
happened in Basra.

ELLIOT
Carter --

CARTER
The other day Victor accused me of
using people like pawns. This
morning Will asked how I could send
Tunde back to Nigeria knowing Boko
Haram might kill him.

He pauses, having a hard time with this. Elliot watches him, surprised by this moment of introspection.

ELLIOT
You've been doing this a long time,
Carter. Isn't it kind of late to be
growing a conscience?

Uncomfortable, Carter looks at Henry's graphic on the wall. A MAP with COLOR-CODED THREADS highlighting the three cyber attacks traced back to origins in Shanghai, Beijing, Chengdu.

CARTER
We shouldn't be doing this. It's
all just speculation.

ELLIOT

Marisa says it's Cobra 7. She insists it's a state-run op. Grubman wants to schedule a press conference.

CARTER

We can't condemn the Chinese without proof.

ELLIOT

The U.S. needs to show we don't take these attacks lightly.

CARTER

China can't afford to damage their relationship with Abu Dhabi. They need oil.

(beat)

It's a mistake, Elliot.

ELLIOT

Since when do you worry about diplomacy?

CARTER

I'm not talking politics. You know damn well when the Director of the Agency makes a statement it's news, picked up around the globe.

ELLIOT

So what would you do?

CARTER

Think three moves ahead. If we blame China, who benefits?

INT. CIA HEADQUARTERS - NEXT DAY

Reporters gather for a press conference. Marisa and other staffers can be seen making final preparations.

INT. OPEN SOURCE INTELLIGENCE BULLPEN - SAME

Agents man computer stations, monitoring Internet chatter and social media. Will and Karin scan popular tech sites, transferring URLs into a computer program that sorts them based on keywords. Jonah hovers over them.

JONAH

You working on that cyber attack?

WILL
We're monitoring chatter.

JONAH
If you need some help with it...

KARIN
We're fine. Thanks.

KARIN (CONT'D)
Aren't you supposed to be sucking
up to Uncle Artie?

JONAH
I call him Deputy Director Grubman.
(beat)
When I'm here, that is. Otherwise
that would just be weird.

He laughs, hoping she'll join in. She doesn't.

KARIN
Yeah. Don't care.

She turns back to her screen.

INT. CIA HEADQUARTERS - PRESS CONFERENCE - DAY

Cameras roll as the CIA DIRECTOR addresses the press corps.

CIA DIRECTOR
This agency is deeply concerned
about any cyber attacks. But those
sponsored by foreign governments
are especially troubling.

Carter, Elliot, Marisa and Henry watch from the back,
unnoticed by the reporters. Carter looks troubled.

INTERCUT BULLPEN as Jonah moves on to Aubrey's station where
she watches a video of a CAT PLAYING THREE CARD MONTE on a
kitchen counter. Just behind the cat is a refrigerator.

JONAH
Wow. He hasn't missed once.

AUBREY
It's on a loop.

JONAH
Oh.

A nearby TV plays the cable news' live broadcast of the Director answering questions from REPORTERS.

REPORTER

There have been reports the Chinese cyber-terrorist group Cobra 7 is responsible for these attacks. Do you think this is a response to the President's harsh words about the Chinese trade deal?

CIA DIRECTOR

Obviously I can't comment on an ongoing investigation.

Standing to his side, Grubman waits for his response.

CIA DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

But I can say that cyber theft will not be tolerated as retaliation between nation states, and we intend to do all we can to investigate these crimes.

In the bullpen, Will joins Jonah at Aubrey's desk.

WILL

Still watching that cat video?

She nods, then pauses the video, leaning closer.

AUBREY

But the background's different. This one has a refrigerator.

She ZOOMS in on the REFRIGERATOR DOOR in the background.

Where colored plastic letters spell out a question:

WHAT IS CIA DEPUTY DIRECTOR GRUBMAN HIDING?

And as the newbies stare at the computer in confusion --

We go CLOSE ON Grubman at the press conference, smugly watching the CIA Director deliver his warning.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. NATIONAL RESOURCES - WAR ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON: REFRIGERATOR LETTERS

WHAT IS CIA DEPUTY DIRECTOR GRUBMAN HIDING?

Grubman stares at the question in a frozen video still as Henry traces a color-coded map on the computer wall.

HENRY

The video was made by a woman in Michigan, then shared six million times around the world. But the original post is three weeks old.

Grubman looks at him -- wait, what?

MARISA

Someone took an existing video --

ELLIOT

--- one that was trending, likely to go viral.

MARISA

And they created a new background with the message.

(beat)

Most leakers focus on getting the information out, as quickly as possible. Whoever did this likes to play games.

Grubman pauses, looking at Carter.

GRUBMAN

You're awfully silent, Carter. Care to weigh in?

CARTER

Yeah. What were you doing in Palo Alto last week? I mean, it wasn't on your schedule.

Grubman glares at him. None of your damn business. An assistant appears with his briefcase and travel bag.

GRUBMAN

(to Elliot)

Find the leak. And seal it.

He exits. One look at Elliot and Marisa and Henry know they should go, too. As soon as they leave --

ELLIOT
Are you looking to get fired?

CARTER
It's a fair question. How are we supposed to investigate the leak if we don't know the reason for it?

EXT. GOTHAM BANQUET HALL - CHEVY CHASE DISTRICT - DAY

Carter, Aubrey and Karin arrive at a banquet hall.

KARIN
So these are cover jobs, like Clandestine Services has?

CARTER
Your assets will know you're with National Resources. But to protect them, you'll have this backstory.
(beat)
Lila Baxter caters to a lot of foreign nationals. She's been a good friend to the Agency, connected us to valuable targets.

KARIN
And her clients really believe you're a party planner?

CARTER
Don't kid yourself. I could throw a hell of a wedding if I had to.

TIME CUT TO:

INT. GOTHAM BANQUET HALL - LATER

Carter watches from the doorway, checking his e-mail as LILA BAXTER (50's) leads the trainees through a ballroom.

LILA BAXTER
Seats two-fifty, but in a pinch, you can squeeze another thirty.

JULIA SILVER (pretty, stylish) appears. She glances at Carter, looking him up and down.

JULIA

You must be Carter. I'm Julia
Silver.

Carter looks up from his phone, caught off-guard. Lila joins them, embracing Julia.

LILA BAXTER

Julia! I see you've met Carter.
Jules writes a column for the Post.

Carter nods politely, one eye still on his phone. Julia tries to fill the silence.

JULIA

My parents are so proud. Masters
from Georgetown School of Foreign
Service and I work the bridal beat.

LILA BAXTER

She's just waiting for an opening
on the international desk. You two
should talk, Carter.

JULIA

Maybe over a drink?

Aubrey and Karin return and Carter seizes the opportunity to escape. As he leads them out --

CARTER

Thanks, Lila. Nice meeting you...

JULIA

Julia.

He nods. As soon as he's gone, Julia smiles.

JULIA (CONT'D)

You were right. He's adorable.

INT. DINER - WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

A TV is tuned to CNN as talking heads discuss the rapidly retweeted viral video with the strange question.

Elliot enters, sees his ex-wife SAMANTHA sitting in a booth. He gives her a warm hug. There's obvious affection between these two. This was a marriage that ended not with a bang but with a whimper.

ELLIOT

Sorry I'm late. There's an op --

SAMANTHA
There's always an op.
(smiles)
It's okay. I understand.

An awkward beat. Elliot fidgets with wedding ring.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
Elliot, the divorce is final.

ELLIOT
I know.

SAMANTHA
It's time to move on.

ELLIOT
I know. How's your mom?

SAMANTHA
She misses Dad. But she's starting
to get out more.

ELLIOT
And life at the Bureau? Any
interesting cases?

SAMANTHA
(sighs)
I knew it. Elliot, you know I can't
talk about the cyberattacks.

ELLIOT
You're working on the cyberattacks?
(off her scowl)
Come on, Sam. I always said, you're
the best forensic accountant I ever
slept with.

SAMANTHA
I'm the only forensic accountant
you ever slept with. No, Elliot.

ELLIOT
What about Graham? He has embassy
ties. They won't talk to us.

SAM
Graham and I broke up.

ELLIOT
What, the excitement was over once
he blew up our marriage?
(off her look)
(MORE)

ELLIOT (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. That was uncalled for.
What happened?

SAM

I don't know. He barely said
goodbye. He left the Bureau,
Elliot.

INT. NATIONAL RESOURCES DIVISION - DAY

Marisa and Henry catch Elliot as he gets off the elevator.

MARISA

We got another message.

They head for Karin's desk, where she watches another video.
The trainees are gathering data at their computers.

WILL

The video was first posted a week
ago and hit nine million yesterday--

KARIN

-- but it'll probably double that
by tomorrow.

Onscreen, a Hispanic woman holds up a QUESADILLA with what
looks like A MAN'S FACE burned into it. Excited, she speaks
rapid-fire in Spanish.

HISPANIC WOMAN (ONSCREEN)

Es el Presidente! Estoy seguro!

ELLIOT

What's she saying?

AUBREY

It's the President. I'm sure of it.

Henry zooms in on a corkboard right behind the woman. On the
board is a CROSSWORD PUZZLE, with a message spelled out:

ASK CIA'S GRUBMAN ABOUT NEW MEXICO

INT. ELLIOT'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Elliot, Marisa and Henry talk privately.

ELLIOT

New Mexico.

HENRY

Where the second attack occurred.

MARISA

That could be a coincidence.
(off their looks)
Or not.

ELLIOT

Where's Carter?

MARISA

On a training op with Jonah.

EXT. UPSCALE CONDO BUILDING - DAY

A sleek tower. Lots of glass and steel.

INT. CONDO - SAME

An OTS AGENT executes a black-bag job, placing cameras and bugs inside the condominium. Carter takes photographs documenting each area before and after the installation.

Jonah is there to assist. Instead, he keeps touching items. Requiring Carter to WIPE DOWN each thing afterward.

JONAH

Man, it's just like being in a movie.

He gives a reverent nod to the silent OTS Agent.

JONAH (CONT'D)

Office of Technical Services. Bet you guys have seen some honest to God tradecraft shit. I want to learn everything you know.

OTS rolls his eyes at Carter. Who is this guy?

CARTER

Patience, grasshopper.

JONAH

Who lives here?

CARTER

Manu Patel. A hacker from India, part of an extremist group that attacks multinational corporations.

JONAH

You think he's the one who hacked
the sovereign wealth funds?

CARTER

Not sure. That's why we need
surveillance.

The OTS Agent produces a remote control, identical to the one
on the coffee table. He switches them, then moves on.

CLOSE ON: THE REMOTE

Seen through the LENS OF CARTER'S PHONE as he captures its
placement on the table. Suddenly it's SNATCHED UP --

Jonah stares at it like an excited kid.

JONAH

I heard about these. They record
just like a cell phone.

Carter takes the remote away from Jonah to wipe it down.

JONAH (CONT'D)

So I guess you and Elliot are
pretty close, huh? Do you and your
wives hang out together?

CARTER

I'm not married.

JONAH

Oh. Girlfriend? Boyfriend?
(off his silence)
Sorry. Too personal?

Before Carter can respond, the OTS Agent waves him over.

He points to a LISTENING DEVICE he's discovered. Searching
further, he finds ANOTHER DEVICE.

Confused, Carter pulls out a mini-tablet and types:

Has OTS already been here?

OTS takes the tablet and responds.

No. They're not ours.

As Carter realizes what this means --

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Elliot and Carter, in a line at a VIETNAMESE FOOD TRUCK.

CARTER

What does Grubman say about the latest video?

ELLIOT

I haven't asked.

Surprised, Carter looks at him. The line moves forward.

CARTER

So either Grubman is involved, or someone's going to a lot of trouble to make it look like he is.

ELLIOT

Why are we here, Carter? Why'd we drive eight miles just for lunch?

Widen to reveal the food truck is parked across the street from the upscale condo Carter tried to bug.

CARTER

I'm monitoring a prospective asset. We can't get eyes and ears inside, so I went old-school.

JONAH appears in the window to take the order, perky as ever. Elliot gives Carter a look: really? Carter just shrugs.

CARTER (CONT'D)

We'll have two pork banh mi, extra peppers.

JONAH

Excellent choice. Two pork banh mi, coming right up.

He gives Carter a wink, then hands the slip to the COOKS.

JONAH (CONT'D)

Danh. Quang. Do your magic!

But it's clear the Vietnamese cooks aren't thrilled with their new co-worker. The FOOD TRUCK OWNER pulls Carter aside.

FOOD TRUCK OWNER
 He keep taking order. Not part of
 deal!

Carter pulls out a wad of cash and peels off some bills. The owner waits, scowling. Sighing, Carter peels off a few more.

Jonah takes his post in the rear of the truck, surveying the condo through a back window. Suddenly his voice comes through on Carter's two-way earpiece.

JONAH (V.O.)
 Target is leaving building.

Carter peers around the side of the truck to see THREE ASIAN MEN emerge from the upscale condo building. One of them is older, Indian-born. MANU PATEL.

Elliot follows Carter's gaze --

ELLIOT
 That's no asset. You're running an
 op on Manu Patel?

INT. CARTER'S CAR - TRAVELING - DAY

Carter drives as Elliot vents.

ELLIOT
 Forget about not clearing this with
 me. Do you understand how it looks,
 you keeping tabs on one of the
 biggest hackers out there?

CARTER
 I figured Patel might know
 something about the attacks, how
 they're all related.

ELLIOT
 I asked you to find out who was
 leaking clues. Let the FBI
 investigate the cyberattacks.
 (beat)
 I don't know what's going on with
 you Carter --

CARTER
 You want me to take a polygraph?

ELLIOT

No. But if you're having a "come to Jesus" moment, do it on your own time. What brought all this on?

CARTER

I promised Kaylyn Zardari almost a year ago I'd find out why her husband was killed.

ELLIOT

You can't make promises like that.

CARTER

Doesn't it bother you that we ask innocent people to collect intelligence we can't get through normal channels?

ELLIOT

They're not all innocent.

CARTER

A Cornell professor who happens to have a radical cousin in Tehran. An NBA training coach who was raised in Somalia. They get debriefed every time they return home to see their parents. Neither offered his services. We made it clear we'd mess with their VISAs if they didn't cooperate.

He stares at Elliot, who stays silent.

CARTER (CONT'D)

And once in a while it all goes to shit. Hassan Zardari and his co-workers from Beekman Energy have their cover blown in Basra. And the agency makes it look like some corporate kidnapping gone bad.

ELLIOT

You knew what the job was when you signed up.

CARTER

The world is changing, Elliot. These people stepped up because they believed in our ideals. Freedom. Democracy.

(MORE)

CARTER (CONT'D)

And we put them in dangerous situations that turned out to be all about money and power. It's not what *they* signed up for.

(beat)

And when things go wrong, how can we be sure the guys in charge are telling us the truth?

Elliot looks at him, Carter's words having an effect.

ELLIOT

When you said "who benefits?" you didn't mean the hackers, did you?

INT. NATIONAL RESOURCES - ELLIOT'S OFFICE - LATER

Elliot is at his computer. Their conversation from the car still weighing on him.

INT. CARTER'S CAR - TRAVELING - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Carter lays out his theory.

CARTER

Grubman said he was going to San Diego for executive debriefing. Instead, he spent the day with his buddy Howard Latham at Praden Corporation in Palo Alto.

INT. ELLIOT'S OFFICE - RESUME PRESENT

Elliot enters a web search for "Grubman" and "Praden Corp".

A 2010 VIDEO shows Grubman, dressed in tux, beside a SILVER-HAIRED MAN on a dais in an elegant ballroom. Smiling, the man hands Grubman an award.

ELLIOT (V.O.)

Maybe Latham became an asset.

CARTER (V.O.)

But there's no paperwork, no interviews.

The text below the video reads "*Praden CEO Howard Latham and CIA Deputy Director Arthur Grubman have been buddies since their days at Yale University.*"

INT. CARTER'S CAR - TRAVELING - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Carter stares at his friend. Trying to make him understand.

CARTER

Grubman can go wherever he pleases.
Why would he need to lie about it?

INT. ELLIOT'S OFFICE - RESUME PRESENT

Marisa appears in Elliot's doorway. He looks up, hopeful.

ELLIOT

Anything?

She shakes her head.

MARISA

These videos, the amount of effort
it takes to set up accounts and
snake through piggybacked servers,
we're not dealing with someone who
writes angry letters to the editor.
This guy's a pro. With a serious
axe to grind.

INT. NATIONAL RESOURCES - LATER

Polygraph analysts are examining employees in a conference
room. The trainees anxiously watch from their computer bay.

AUBREY

Before this is over, everyone's
secrets are going to be broadcast
throughout the office.

Will and Karin exchange a furtive smile. Aubrey notices and
sighs, not happy about it.

JONAH

I wonder how Elliot and Carter feel
about that.

WILL

Elliot and Carter?

KARIN

Why would you think that?

JONAH

They've got this weird vibe going.
And Elliot said that his ex, Sam --

KARIN
Ex-wife. Samantha.

JONAH
Oh. I did not know that.

They resume work. Behind them, Elliot pauses, having heard the exchange.

EXT. CHEVY CHASE PARK - BASKETBALL COURT - EVENING

Half a dozen middle-aged men engage in a weekly game. From the casual nature, we can tell Elliot's a regular.

They take a break and Elliot sits down beside STEWART (40's) who pulls a water bottle from a duffel with the FBI INSIGNIA.

ELLIOT
I need to know what you have on these cyber attacks.

Stewart starts to shake his head. Come on. But he can tell from Elliot's expression he's not kidding around.

INT. DOWNTOWN DELI - D.C. - EVENING

The place is crowded with the dinner rush. Carter pays the cashier and joins others as they wait for their orders.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - SAME

Stewart lays out his investigation for Elliot.

STEWART
We're still trying to pin down a motive.

ELLIOT
What about market fluctuations?
Wouldn't be the first time someone used cyber attacks to play with the stock exchange.

STEWART
I thought that too. It's a quick way to make serious cash.

INT. DOWNTOWN DELI - D.C. - SAME

Still waiting for his order, Carter is unable to shake the feeling he's being watched. He glances around.

There's a tall, BALD MAN in a sports jacket reading a newspaper. Some WOMEN in yoga wear. A young COUPLE, texting.

And a MUSCULAR MAN in jeans. He eyes Carter, then looks away.

STEWART (V.O.)

But the SEC checked all the short sales and found nothing.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - SAME

Elliot's confused. This doesn't add up.

ELLIOT

Grubman insists it's China. He was the one who pushed the Director to issue a statement.

STEWART

Then that's rather convenient.

ELLIOT

What do you mean?

STEWART

After the attack on Qatar's sovereign wealth fund, we blamed South Korea. Two weeks later a U.S. company won the bid for a huge roads project in Doha. Guess who their competition was?

Suddenly understanding --

ELLIOT

South Korea.

STEWART

Right now Abu Dhabi is taking bids for a sixty billion dollar high speed rail project. Frontrunners are China Railway...and the Praden Corporation.

ELLIOT

Based in Palo Alto, California.

INT. DOWNTOWN DELI - D.C. - SAME

A TV over the counter shows VICE PRESIDENT FLYNN (Cheney-esque) being interviewed on a cable news program.

REPORTER (ONSCREEN)

But Mr. Vice President, there's no proof of who's behind these cyber attacks.

VICE PRESIDENT (ONSCREEN)

David, don't be naive. Any half-wit understands how much China stands to gain by undercutting our position in the global marketplace.

REPORTER (ONSCREEN)

People on social media are asking some strange questions about your close friend, Arthur Grubman, at the CIA. Know anything about it?

As Carter watches the TV, a woman passes, BUMPING his arm. Carter flinches, nervously eying the Muscular Man.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - SAME

Stewart explains the scope of this deception.

STEWART

It's not just one project. These countries have plans for new pipelines, highways, airports.

ELLIOT

And every one of these cyber attacks narrows the playing field.

INT. DOWNTOWN DELI - D.C. - SAME

Carter pays and collect his food. As he heads for the door the Muscular Man suddenly RUSHES TOWARD HIM.

Carter slips out the door just as --

MUSCULAR MAN

You forgot your card.

Relieved, Carter nods and takes his credit card. The Muscular Man smiles, and his gaze follows Carter as he walks away.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - SAME

Back at the court, Stewart looks at Elliot.

STEWART

You're right to be suspicious. This kind of thing doesn't just happen. Whoever's doing it better have a good insurance policy.

EXT. DOWNTOWN DELI - D.C. - EVENING

Outside, Carter looks around, feeling kind of silly. Shaking off his paranoia, he walks away, heading around the corner.

He continues down the next street, sipping his drink.

That's when we notice the TALL BALD MAN from the deli.

Following Carter.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. DUPONT CIRCLE CAFE - EVENING

Manu Patel and a FRIEND sit outside a cafe, drinking coffee.

MANU PATEL

With those weak-ass relievers,
they'll never make the playoffs.

Patel reaches for a sugar packet but the bowl is empty.

FRIEND

Care to make it interesting?

MANU PATEL

I'd like to. But you know...

He grabs some from another table. His back turned --

MANU PATEL (CONT'D)

...it's getting too easy to take
your money.

CARTER (O.S.)

Since when has that stopped you?

Patel looks up to find Carter sitting across from him.
Surprised, he looks around for --

CARTER (CONT'D)

Your friend decided he'd rather be
somewhere...else.

MANU PATEL

What do you want?

CARTER

I have to hand it to you, Manu. The
first two cyber attacks, I had no
idea. Why would I? You like to go
after the bad guys, or at least the
corporations you think are
destroying the motherland.

(no reaction)

But the hacker who hit the Abu
Dhabi fund, the code he used was a
variant of one created six years
ago by a promising young man from
Mumbai doing his graduate studies
in engineering at Stanford.

Patel sits back, sipping his coffee.

MANU PATEL

Carter, I'm flattered. But I don't know what you're talking about.

Carter smiles. Fine. Play it that way. He rises to go.

CARTER

If I were you, I'd be careful working for Grubman. The man spent twenty years in black ops before he put on a suit. When he's done with a job, he doesn't leave loose ends.

EXT. CITY STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Carter heads off down the street towards the Metro. But before he reaches the entrance --

TALL BALD MAN (O.S.)

You're becoming tiresome.

Carter stiffens, feeling the GUN against his back. It's the Tall Bald Man from the deli.

TALL BALD MAN (CONT'D)

You'd think someone with your education would understand the meaning of "expendable".

CARTER

You'd think someone your size would carry a bigger gun.

DRIVING HIS HEEL INTO THE MAN'S TOE, Carter spins around and YANKS his jacket down his back so he can't raise his weapon.

Then he SLAMS HIM against a pole and takes off, racing into the Metro.

INT. DUPONT CIRCLE METRO - CONTINUOUS

The Bald Man tries to follow. But as soon as he enters the metro --

A yellow "WET FLOOR" SIGN SMACKS HIM across the face.

The Bald Man staggers back. Carter snaps the back off the hard-plastic folding sign.

Then he jumps onto the wide middle partition, using the sign as a sled to SLIDE DOWN THE ESCALATOR. 188 feet.

The trip is BUMPIER than he expected. But still effective.

The Bald Man recovers and RACES down the escalator after him, knocking over any commuters in his way.

INT. DUPONT CIRCLE METRO - CONTINUOUS

As Carter puts his farecard through the reader, he glances behind to see the Bald Man on his tail. So he SLIPS a SMALLER CARD into the fare-reader as he's passing through.

As the Bald Man inserts his farecard, an ALARM sounds and the turnstile LOCKS.

Carter hurries down the platform, alerting two TRANSIT COPS.

CARTER

There's a bald guy in a black coat,
waving a gun around.

By now the Bald Man has jumped the turnstile. But as he runs down the platform, the cops head straight for him.

And Carter takes off in the opposite direction.

EXT./INT. SAM'S HOUSE - D.C. SUBURBS - EVENING

Sam answers the door to find Elliot on her porch.

SAMANTHA

Elliot. Everything okay?

ELLIOT

(holds up take-out)
Thought you might be hungry.

SAMANTHA

Elliot, I really don't think...

ELLIOT

(pleading)
I'm in trouble, Sam.

INT. SAM'S HOUSE - LATER

Sam and Elliot sit on the floor, take-out containers strewn across the coffee table. In the background, the TV plays a 24-hour news channel speculating on the CIA leak.

ELLIOT

If someone is doing this in my department, on my watch, I can kiss my career goodbye.

INT. CAPITAL HILL DINNER - EVENING

Deputy Director Grubman schmoozes with heavyweights on Capital Hill at a black-tie dinner.

The entry sign reads "Council on International Development".

ELLIOT (V.O.)

The first attack hit just before the Saudi's were about to award an airport contract to a construction company in Turkey.

INT. SAM'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Elliot shows her news stories regarding this on his tablet.

ELLIOT

But after we pinned the hacking on a Turkish terrorist group, the Saudi's changed their minds and went with a U.S. consortium.

INT. CAPITAL HILL DINNER - CONTINUOUS

We see Grubman making his way through, working the crowd.

ELLIOT (V.O.)

Grubman's friend Praden has devoted a lot of time pursuing this latest contract, a high speed rail project in Abu Dhabi.

Grubman approaches several SHEIKS dressed in traditional robes. He warmly embraces each of them.

ELLIOT (V.O.)

But UAE likes to go with the lowest bidder. So there's plenty of incentive to drive a wedge between them and the Chinese.

INT. SAM'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Sam considers this. But she's still not sold.

SAMANTHA

There's no proof of a conspiracy.
You're talking about perception.

ELLIOT

Perception matters. It can make
stock markets tumble and allies
grow uneasy.

Sam nods, beginning to understand.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)

When I started with the agency, Sun-
Tzu was required reading. "In the
midst of chaos, there is also
opportunity."

(beat)

I think somebody's putting that
theory to work for them.

INT. CAPITAL HILL DINNER - CONTINUOUS

Vice President Flynn approaches Grubman and his guests.

GRUBMAN

Mr. Vice President, how nice of you
to join us.

VICE PRESIDENT

I wouldn't have missed it.

Smiling, he takes Grubman's hand. He leans in, hissing --

VICE PRESIDENT (CONT'D)

For God's sake, get your house in
order. I will not be brought down
by this shitstorm.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - ROUTE 295 - NIGHT

Just off the highway, separated from nearby homes by woods.

Carter slips out of the woods into the yard, moving around to
a box on the side of the house.

He opens the box and we see what appears to be a SPRINKLER
SYSTEM CONTROL PANEL. Pressing the lower corner, he removes
the panel, revealing --

AN ALARM SYSTEM KEYPAD

Using an RIFD reader, Carter scans the keypad frequencies as a decryption app on his phone searches a selection of codes.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

Carter searches files in the dark. A LIGHT COMES ON.

GRUBMAN

Nice to see you're still
predictable.

(beat)

You're wasting your time. Been a
while since I used this place.

Slamming the drawer shut, Carter turns to face him.

CARTER

You know, at first I thought you'd
hired Patel to play with the
markets, bolster your IRA.

(beat)

But that wasn't enough for you, was
it? It's a clever grift, Arthur.
You get to screw over a foreign
interest and rig the game for your
friends, who kick back some of the
profits. Win. Win.

Grubman fights the urge to smile.

CARTER (CONT'D)

What'd you think I'd do when I
found out?

GRUBMAN

Your job. Same as always.

CARTER

But this isn't the same. Or don't
you see that?

GRUBMAN

Your hands aren't exactly clean.

This lands on Carter. He pauses, clearly remorseful.

CARTER

I'm not proud of what I did in
Iraq. But those were extreme
circumstances.

Grubman scoffs, not buying it.

CARTER (CONT'D)

What you're doing now, this game, this is different. It won't end with UAE freezing out China and hiring Praden. You're playing a game of global chess. And someone's going to lose.

GRUBMAN

Suddenly you're an altruist?

CARTER

You think just because you don't have a problem with this, no one else should?

GRUBMAN

Right now my only problem is you.

The Tall Bald Man appears, holding a semi-automatic.

CARTER

Hey. Mr. Metro. It's been too long.
(re his weapon)
I see you've traded up.

TALL BALD MAN

Maybe I'm not so dumb after all.

CARTER

Let's not get ahead of ourselves.

CLOSE ON: CARTER'S SMARTPHONE

Still in his hand.

His finger silently swipes the surface, unlocking it. It opens to the alarm interface.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

As the alarm keypad flashes "SYSTEM BREACH".

INT. SAFE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

An ALARM BLARES, activating the fire SPRINKLERS.

Bald Man looks up as water rains down, and Carter SMASHES his fist into his neck.

Bald Man stumbles back, dazed. Grubman reaches for his gun, but Carter COLD-COCKS Grubman and grabs the weapon.

Recovering, the Bald Man LUNGES for Carter, but he spins and gives a ROUNDHOUSE KICK, slamming him in the chest.

Gasping for air, the Bald Man collapses to the floor.

INT. SAM'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Sam's at her computer, pulling up financial profiles for the key officers in National Resources.

Marisa and Henry's accounts are on the screen. No anomalies there. She moves on to search the financial holdings of --

CARTER FRANKLIN, DOB 6/14/80

Elliot watches, unconsciously rolling his wedding ring.

SAMANTHA

You ever gonna take that off?

He pauses, smiling slightly as he stares at the band.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

What?

ELLIOT

Jonah thought there was something going on between Carter and me.

Samantha looks away. Off her silence --

ELLIOT (CONT'D)

Is why you slept with Graham?
Because you thought I was gay?

SAMANTHA

No. But you and Carter have a bond,
something more than friendship.
Maybe I was jealous of that.

ELLIOT

I'm not gay. Neither is Carter.

SAMANTHA

You ever see him with a woman?

Elliot pauses, realizing for the first time --

ELLIOT

I've never seen him with anyone.

SAMANTHA

He's been over here countless times
but we've never been in his house.
Never met any family. You don't
think that's odd?

Elliot knows it is, but refuses to admit it.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

You once told me he has an uncanny
ability to push people's buttons to
get what he wants. That he treats
work like it's a game.

ELLIOT

So?

SAMANTHA

Maybe he likes playing too much.

She turns her laptop, revealing an OFFSHORE ACCOUNT in
Carter's name.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

I know I'd enjoy my job a hell of a
lot more if it paid like this.

Elliot stares in dismay. The entries total \$10 MILLION.

INT. NATIONAL RESOURCES DIVISION - WAR ROOM - NIGHT

A color-coded graph of Carter's phone records, financials and
known locations lights up the computer wall.

As Henry tracks Carter's cell signal, Marisa makes a call.

MARISA

He's not answering. But we have a
read on his phone.

INT. ELLIOT'S CAR - TRAVELING - NIGHT

Elliot's on the other end of the line.

MARISA (V.O.)

A former safe house off 295.

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - NIGHT

A UNIT OF ARMED AGENTS slowly moves through the woods toward
the house. Elliot and Marisa are at the rear.

Marisa's phone BUZZES. Carter's ID. She shows it to Elliot, who signals for the unit to wait.

MARISA

Carter?

CLOSE ON: CARTER

His eyes are heavy with fatigue as he talks on the phone.

CARTER

Nine messages. You're nothing if not persistent.

INTERCUT CONVERSATION

MARISA

We need to talk.

CARTER

Oh, that's not good. Next thing I know you'll be saying "it's not you, it's me."

Marisa nods to Elliot who waves the unit toward the house.

MARISA

We found the money, Carter.

CARTER

Money?

MARISA

An offshore account. In your name.

CARTER

There's no money, Marisa. Someone's messing with you.

MARISA

Carter. You need to surrender.

The armed agents move closer to the door.

Hearing something, Carter pauses.

CARTER

Hold on, I think there's someone outside...

EXT. SAFE HOUSE - SAME

The unit RAMS the door and rushes in.

Elliot and Marisa enter and survey. The place is empty.

Elliot's phone RINGS. He answers.

CARTER (V.O.)
Did you really think it would be
that easy?

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Carter pays a Postmates DELIVERY GUY and closes his motel room door, still talking on the phone.

CARTER
Elliot. You're better than this.

INT. SAFE HOUSE - SAME

The unit commander appears, holding up Carter's smart phone. With a RIBBON tied around it. A present for them.

Elliot shakes his head. Should have known.

INT. NATIONAL RESOURCES - WAR ROOM - NEXT DAY

Marisa and Elliot wait as Henry scrolls through Carter's personnel file on the computer.

ELLIOT
How can there be no next of kin? He
said his mother lives in Vermont.

HENRY
He said a lot of things.

Marisa paces, furious.

MARISA
We would have had him if you'd done
a better job tracking.

HENRY
That's adorable. You think he
doesn't know how to re-route calls?

Ignoring him, Marisa turn to Elliot.

MARISA
What do you want to do?

ELLIOT
We can't track his phone. But we
can find whoever calls the number.

INT. MOTEL - BATHROOM - DAY

Carter is washing up when his phone rings.

INT. WASHINGTON POST NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY

Julia Silver sits in a cubicle, scanning wedding photos.

JULIA
Carter? Hi, it's Julia.

INTERCUT CONVERSATION

Confused, he pauses.

JULIA (CONT'D)
Julia Silver. Lila introduced us?

CARTER
Oh, yes.

JULIA
I was wondering, if you're not
catering an event tonight, maybe
you'd like to get a drink?

A beat as Carter makes the connection.

CARTER
You work at the Post.

JULIA
The wedding column. But only 'til --

CARTER
Right, right. GU School of Foreign
Service, specializing in...

JULIA
Middle East policy. That's me.

Carter smiles.

CARTER
I'd love to have a drink with you.

EXT/INT. TOWN CAR - TRAVELING - DAY

Riding in the back seat, Grubman stares at Julia's FACEBOOK PHOTO, attached to a message Elliot has sent.

ELLIOT (V.O.)
She's a reporter at the Post.

INT. ELLIOT'S OFFICE - DAY

Elliot's on the phone, looking at the same photo.

ELLIOT
Been on the job three years.

EXT. ROCK CREEK PARK - DAY

Sitting on a park bench, Carter works on his LAPTOP, casually moving items from his desktop into a folder.

GRUBMAN (V.O.)
This their first meeting?

Carter sticks a RED FLASH DRIVE into the USB port, deposits the folder into it, then removes the flash drive.

ELLIOT (V.O.)
Far as I can tell.

Closing the computer, Carter opens an ice cream bar. He takes a bite and savors it, enjoying the sunny day.

INT. ELLIOT'S OFFICE - SAME - INTERCUT

ELLIOT
I'll set up surveillance --

In the car, Grubman pulls out another phone and begins texting.

GRUBMAN
No. I'll take care of it.

He clicks off. Elliot pauses, disturbed by his response.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Julia is standing outside when Carter pulls up in his Audi. As he rolls down the window, she smiles tentatively --

CARTER

It's a beautiful night. Thought it might be nice to go for a ride.

INT. CARTER'S AUDI - TRAVELING - LATER

Julia listens politely as Carter talks. He's more intense than usual, almost lecturing.

CARTER

Abu Dhabi has nine percent of the world's oil but less than a million people. They've got plenty of cash and they're eager to spend it.

Julia tries to participate, but it's like they're having two different conversations. Probably because they are.

JULIA

And I thought I knew a lot about the Middle East.

CARTER

A new port, high speed rail, you name it, it's in development.

JULIA

I traveled there after college. Not a fan of how they treat women, but--

CARTER

In order to compete globally, U.S. companies need a piece of this development. But the competition grows fiercer every day.

His phone RINGS. He answers.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Can't talk Elliot. I'm otherwise engaged.

He gives Julia a wink. She beams. It's an unconventional date. But still a date.

INT. ELLIOT'S OFFICE - NIGHT - INTERCUT

Bleary-eyed, Elliot's still at his desk.

ELLIOT

This isn't a joke, Carter. You've put me in a difficult situation.

CARTER
Elliot. It's a set-up.

ELLIOT
If you care at all about this
department --

CARTER
It's not my money. I'm being frame--
TWO BLACK SUVs suddenly appear on either side.

JULIA
Carter!

Carter tries to speed up, but the SUVs keep pace. To Julia --

CARTER
Hold on...
He veers across the flat median, racing in another direction.
The SUVs blow past, then turn and double back.
GUNFIRE SHATTERS the rear window.

CARTER (CONT'D)
I gotta go Elliot. Guys with really
big guns are shooting at me.
He clicks off and looks at Julia, who is clearly terrified.

CARTER (CONT'D)
I can't tell you how sorry I am
about this.

JULIA
So I'm guessing you're not really a
party planner.

The SUVs appear on either side again. Their windows roll down
to reveal automatic weapons. Julia SCREAMS as --

Carter drops back, jerks the wheel and pops the hand brake,
spinning his car into a 180 DEGREE TURN.

As he speeds in the other direction, one of the SUVs tries
the same turn and ROLLS OVER, SKIDDING into oncoming traffic.

Carter races away as Julia struggles to comprehend the
situation --

JULIA (CONT'D)
I don't understand. If all you did
was uncover a fake operation...

CARTER
Not a fake op. A *false flag*.

JULIA
What's the difference?

CARTER
In my business? A lot. A false flag
is a covert op designed to
manipulate perception. The public
thinks the attack was carried out
by one nation when it was actually
done by another.

Carter sees the remaining SUV back on his tail. He turns down
an alley.

CARTER (CONT'D)
Sorry, you're gonna have to make it
home from here.

As she opens her door, he SLIPS SOMETHING INTO HER POCKET.

JULIA
But how will you...

Before she can finish, he pushes her out of the car. Stunned,
she falls back onto the pavement as he speeds off.

EXT. 14TH STREET BRIDGE/POTOMAC RIVER - NIGHT

The SUVs are close on Carter's tail as he heads for the
riverfront. CONSTRUCTION ZONES block access to it.

The only choice is to fall into the line of red tail lights
following the detour. Carter slows, eyeing his options. The
SUVs narrow the gap.

Suddenly Carter pulls onto the shoulder and speeds up,
PLOWING THROUGH a barrier and RACING UP A RAMP toward...
nothing but OPEN WATER.

The extension hasn't been built.

Carter's car becomes AIRBORNE, then PLUNGES into the river.
As it disappears from view --

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. POTOMAC RIVER - WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

Elliot and Marisa watch as a crane pulls CARTER'S CAR from the river. Once it's set down, a team searches it.

A POLICE COMMANDER receives a radio message from the team.

POLICE COMMANDER

Copy that.

(to Marisa & Elliot)

There's no body inside.

Marisa nods and walks away. Elliot just stands there, staring at the river.

INT. NATIONAL RESOURCES - BULLPEN - DAY

The trainees and other employees watch news coverage on TV. MEDIA ATTENTION to the online video clues is growing as reporters begin to connect the cyberattacks.

INT. NATIONAL RESOURCES DIVISION - WAR ROOM

Still shell-shocked, Elliot and Marisa meet with Grubman.

GRUBMAN

We need to make assessments. Find out if any of our operations have been compromised.

MARISA

I'll have Henry assemble a team.

She exits. Grubman looks at Carter's personnel file.

GRUBMAN

I never really trusted that man. There was something about him.

He turns to Elliot, who's staring off --

GRUBMAN (CONT'D)

You need to interview the trainees. Make sure no information was disseminated.

(beat)

Elliot? Did you hear me?

ELLIOT
(to himself)
They were shooting at him.

GRUBMAN
What?

ELLIOT
Last night. Carter said guys with
big guns were shooting at him.

He looks at Grubman.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)
Why were they *shooting*?

INT. JULIA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY

Still wearing last night's outfit, Julia watches TV news coverage of CARTER'S CAR being pulled from the river.

She hits "pause" and stares at the image of the car, trying to comprehend it. Exhausted, she starts to undress.

As she tosses her jacket onto the bed something FALLS out of the pocket. Reaching down, she picks up a RED FLASH DRIVE.

Julia turns the flash drive over in her hand, staring at the image of Carter's car on the TV.

INT. ELLIOT'S HOUSE - DAY

Elliot enters, dropping his keys by the door. He stands there a moment, absent-mindedly turning his wedding band.

Realizing what he's doing, he stops. He slowly pulls the ring off and drops it in the key bowl.

There's a NOISE upstairs. He finds Sam in the bedroom.

SAMANTHA
Did they find him?

ELLIOT
They're dragging the river.

She takes him in her arms, tenderly holding him for a moment.

SAMANTHA
I'm so sorry, Elliot.

There's a beat as he looks into her eyes, desperate for a physical connection to dull the pain. But she pulls back. And he sees a dopp kit of toiletries in her hand.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

I left some stuff in the cabinet.

His expression is so sad she instantly regrets confusing him.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

But that's not why I came.

(beat)

We have reason to believe someone is assembling their own unit. A counter-intelligence operation.

EXT/INT. WAREHOUSE - INDUSTRIAL PARK - DAY

A bare-bones operation. Filled with expensive high-tech equipment.

ELLIOT (O.S.)

What makes you so sure?

At the warehouse, a button-down man (tie and sweater vest) scans through reports. This is GRAHAM.

CROSSCUT as Samantha lays out her theory for Elliot.

SAMANTHA

Remember how I said Graham left the Bureau? Well, he's disappeared. Moved out of his house, closed out his accounts.

ELLIOT

One FBI analyst is not exactly --

SAMANTHA

It's not just Graham. A number of ex-pats from the intelligence community have gone off the grid.

As she lists each member, we see them at the warehouse.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

Vee Huang from NSA. Otis Dwyer from State.

VEE, an Asian-American woman in glasses crosses to speak to OTIS, a handsome African-American man in a Zenga suit.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)

And we've traced the last message.
It came from Alan Casper.

CASPER, a slight man in a white hoodie types code into a computer, ignoring everything around him.

ELLIOT

Casper? You think the Ghost is
behind this?

SAMANTHA

No, Casper's always been an
anarchist for hire. There's no way
he's calling the shots.

(beat)

Whoever's outing Grubman has a
score to settle. And plenty of
ammunition.

Elliot's phone RINGS.

ELLIOT

Yes?

INT. NATIONAL RESOURCES - MARISA'S OFFICE - DAY

Marisa's on speakerphone.

MARISA

Someone just tweeted another clue.

Her computer screen shows a throw PILLOW pinned on a
Pinterest board. Its embroidered message:

THE CIA AT HOME: NOTHING IS WHAT IT SEEMS

INT. ELLIOT'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Stunned, Elliot stands speechless.

MARISA (V.O.)

Elliot? You there?

ELLIOT

Yes.

INTERCUT CONVERSATION

MARISA

You understand what this means.
Either the unsub is someone else...

ELLIOT
 ...or Carter's not dead.

His eyes brighten at the prospect.

MARISA
 Elliot. I need to know you can do
 your job. That you're with me, one
 hundred percent.

Ignoring her warning/threat, Elliot answers evenly.

ELLIOT
 I'll see you in the morning.

INT. MARISA'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

As the line goes dead, Marisa glances up. GRUBMAN sits across from her. Not happy with Elliot's response.

EXT. GEORGETOWN BAR & GRILLE - EVENING

Elliot's at the bar, staring into space. He barely notices the bartender replace his draft as soon as he finishes.

WOMAN (O.S.)
 Been that kind of day?

He looks up to find a beautiful WOMAN with long, silky hair. Sexy and self-assured, but also warm and accessible.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
 You mind some company?

ELLIOT
 Thanks, but I'm...

He raises his left hand -- and realizes he's taken off his ring. Can't use that excuse anymore.

WOMAN
 One of those guys who lives at the
 office? You know what they say
 about all work and no play...

The bar is starting to fill up. Someone jostles her and she places her hand on Elliot's arm to steady herself.

Feeling the warmth of her touch, he looks into her eyes. The chemistry is undeniable.

ELLIOT
Do I know you?

WOMAN
Do we ever really know anyone?

ELLIOT
You did not just say that.

She grins, blushing.

WOMAN
Sorry. Philosophy major.

ELLIOT
Philosophy. That pay well?

WOMAN
These days it's more of a hobby.
But it helps me remember, every now
and then, to pause and take stock.
As Socrates said, "the unexamined
life is not worth living".

Elliot grows wistful as he considers this.

ELLIOT
It's been a while since I took
stock of my life.

WOMAN
You're not alone. People go years,
hell, decades, that way.
(beat)
But at some point you have to ask:
do the people around you believe in
the same things as you? 'Cause if
they don't, maybe it's time to move
on. Find the truth in your life.

Touching his hand again --

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Think about it, Elliot.

As Elliot watches her go, his phone RINGS. Marisa's ID.
Before he can even say "hello" --

MARISA (V.O.)
It's all a lie.

INT. MARISA'S OFFICE - NIGHT (INTERCUT CONVERSATION)

Her face is pale, her voice shaky --

MARISA

All of it. Everything we know about him.

ELLIOT

What?

MARISA

Carter Franklin didn't exist before 2008.

ELLIOT

What do you mean, he didn't exist?

MARISA

His resume, even the people they interviewed for his background check, they're fake. It was all an illusion.

She's scared. Of being fired, or compromised. Or both.

MARISA (CONT'D)

God only knows who we're dealing with. The agency's fully exposed.

The line goes dead. Elliot stares at the phone. Then he looks toward the door. And the woman disappearing from view.

She said *Elliot*. But HE NEVER TOLD HER HIS NAME.

Those eyes looked so familiar. But she was a *woman*.

Is it possible that all these years, the person he considered his colleague and best friend was actually a woman?

ELLIOT

Carter?

As soon as he says her name, he becomes more sure of it.

He races towards the exit but a crowd of people blocks him.

ELLIOT (CONT'D)

Carter!

Reaching the street, he looks up and down but she's nowhere in sight. He stands there, staring into the night --

POLITICAL PUNDIT (V.O./PRELAP)
Senior staff at Langley are
scrambling to find the source of
the latest social media jab at the
agency's domestic division --

INT. WASHINGTON POST NEWSPAPER - NIGHT

Listening to the political PODCAST, Julia sits at her
computer, poring over the treasure trove of information on
the RED FLASH DRIVE Carter slipped into her pocket.

Agency calls logs with multinational corporations. Travel
itineraries to foreign cities. Press releases on CIA mishaps.

POLITICAL PUNDIT (V.O.)
National Resources usually travels
under the radar. But these tweets
have turned a spotlight on one man
in particular.

One name keeps popping out on every page: Grubman.

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - HIGHWAY OVERPASS - NIGHT

Someone else is listening to the podcast. A man in a hoodie
standing on the overpass. Casper, the not-so-friendly Ghost.

POLITICAL PUNDIT (V.O.)
Deputy Director Arthur Grubman is
now under a microscope, scrambling
to deploy damage control.

Casper types another tweet on his phone.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED IN BASRA? GRUBMAN KNOWS.

The click of heels echoes on the pavement. Carter appears
beside him.

She's discarded the wig she wore to the restaurant. Now her
close-cropped hair is spiky but chic.

Gone is the buttoned-down demeanor. She looks edgy and sexy.
And more than a little dangerous.

Her eyes shine as she takes in the skyline, relieved to shed
the disguise she's been living for over a decade.

Now she can be herself again. And hide in plain sight.

CASPER
The team's in place.

Carter smiles.

CARTER
Then let's go. We have work to do.

As they step away, we pull back and pivot to see the landmarks all around them:

THE WHITE HOUSE -- THE CAPITOL -- THE PENTAGON

And beyond the beltway: the C.I.A. And all its secrets.

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW