

TROLL

Written by
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"PILOT"

EXT. OLGINO, ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA - DAY

An odd mix of historical and industrial architecture peppers the Olgino district of St. Petersburg. It's a warm, stale day. Not warm in a sarcastic "12 degrees" kind of way, but truly warm, high-70s.

We focus on a bar called FIDEL, with a faded picture of FIDEL CASTRO above the sign...

INT. BAR FIDEL - DAY

Dive bar. Cheap booze. Sticky floors. Devoid of sunlight.

Sitting at the bar by himself is ANTON MINDIYAROV, 34. Bags hang from his eyes. A borscht stain accentuates his dated dress shirt. The world has beaten him down.

The bar's surprisingly crowded considering it's high noon on a Tuesday. Boozin' is a popular sport in these parts.

Anton motions for the BARTENDER. **They speak in RUSSIAN.**

ANTON

Let's keep this train rolling.

BARTENDER

You need to settle your tab.

ANTON

You know I'll pay soon.

BARTENDER

No I don't. No money, no honey.

Anton reluctantly coughs up some cash. It's not remotely enough. The bartender shakes his head, taking what he can.

Anton's attention is drawn to a group of four AMERICAN BUSINESSMEN seated at a table behind him, celebrating something in a loud, obnoxious, organically American way.

AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN

... That chick wanted to fuck me!
She was all slobbering on her pen
when she was looking at me,
thinking about my dick!

The others are laughing, indulging this oafish idiot.

Anton's getting annoyed, taking down his fresh VODKA. But the guy just keeps blabbing and Anton can't take it anymore-- so he speaks up, **talking to them in English** with barely a hint of a Russian accent--

ANTON

How'd she know you had a tiny dick?

AMERICAN BUSINESSMAN

What'd you just say??

ANTON

You said-- no-- you PROCLAIMED IN
 QUITE A FUCKING LOUD MANNER FOR THE
 ENTIRE BAR TO HEAR that she was
 slobbering all over a pen while
 thinking about your dick. Soooo,
 how'd she know you have a thin
 little pen-sized dick???

The Americans stare at him for a beat--

SMASH TO:

EXT. BAR FIDEL - DAY

Anton has his dukes up, ready to take on the American businessmen who circle him on the sidewalk outside the bar.

The pen-dick guy takes the first swing, but Anton easily dodges it, knocking him out cold-- our guy has skills.

Anton takes down the second one with a deft jab, but he's too impaired to stop the other two guys from tackling and beating the shit out of him.

Just kicking and punching and fucking him up. Anton's drunk and defenseless-- and in a weird way, it looks like he's kind of enjoying it... as if he welcomes the pain.

Before it gets too out of hand, a BALD DOUGHY MAN in a SUIT, a loner from the bar, comes up on the scene, yelling in Russian. This is MISHA SOKOLOV, 36--

MISHA

(in Russian)

Get the fuck out of here before I
 get all your asses thrown in jail!

The Americans stop the beat down, staring at this Russian dude, sobering up to what they've just done... in a foreign country... in broad daylight...

The Americans bolt, bailing on the scene.

Misha helps up Anton. He's got a bloody nose and a swollen eye, but it could've been much worse.

Misha speaks to him in broken English.

MISHA (CONT'D)
Hey buddy, Misha Sokolov.

ANTON
Anton Mindiyarov, if we're being formal and shit. Thanks for that.

MISHA
I heard you in there. Your English is very good. Where did you learn?

ANTON
Xbox.

MISHA
You fight good too.

ANTON
Yeah, my eye socket really fucked those guys up.

Misha hands Anton his CARD.

MISHA
I think I have a job for you.

ANTON
I already have a job.

MISHA
Really? Because it looked like were drinking in the middle of the day.

ANTON
That's my job. I test alcohol... on myself. You were drinking in the middle of the day too.

MISHA
Lunch break.

ANTON
We both enjoy a light vodka lunch.

MISHA
Take the card. It can pay lots money.

ANTON
How much lots money?

Misha winks before heading away.

ANTON (CONT'D)
That's not an answer. You just
winked. Hello??...

MISHA
(not turning back)
See you tomorrow, Anton Mindiyarov.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF ST. PETERSBURG - DAY

We focus in on a unimpressive house. Old country. Every bit
of it on its last legs...

INT. UNIMPRESSIVE HOUSE - LATE DAY

Anton opens the side door, entering the kitchen. He spots his
daughter, VALERIYA MINDIYAROV, 11, in the living room, doing
homework.

He attempts to sneak through the kitchen into the hallway
without being seen by her.

They speak in Russian with English subtitles.

VALERIYA
(without looking up)
Where have you been?

ANTON
... Just out looking for a job.

Valeriya can tell he's lying. She glances up, spotting the
blood and bruises.

VALERIYA
Shit. What happened????

She pops up, following him down the hallway to his BEDROOM.
She instinctively grabs a towel and soaks it with water--
this isn't her first rodeo. He lays down on the bed while she
tends to his battered face.

ANTON
I just got into a spirited debate
with some gentlemen.

VALERIYA
Gentlemen who kicked your ass?

ANTON
Guess I lost the debate. They were
American. No class. Bad haircuts.

Anton makes a face. Valeriya smiles. So he goes further, making a grotesque monster face, making her laugh harder. He loves seeing her like this. He grabs the towel from her...

ANTON (CONT'D)

You don't need to take care of me.

VALERIYA

Just keep telling yourself that.

She heads out, leaving her dad there to lick his wounds.

INT. UNIMPRESSIVE HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

Anton stands at the stove, face bandaged, frying EGGS. Much like the house, the flame is utterly unimpressive. We get the sense that he's been standing here for a while.

Valeriya bounds into the kitchen, school bag slung over her shoulder.

VALERIYA

I'm late.

He looks under the pan at the flame-- it's as if a cigarette lighter is trying to cook these eggs.

VALERIYA (CONT'D)

Just leave them there, I'll eat them when I get back from school--

He takes a playful swing at her. She ducks it, heading out the door.

INT. ANTON AND VALERIYA'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Anton looks around the place. Such a fucking dump. He should do better. For himself. For his daughter.

He glances at his messy closet, which is half-filled with a WOMAN'S CLOTHING. A woman who clearly no longer lives here. He stares at the closet, angry. Sad. Range of emotions.

He the pulls MISHA'S CARD from his pocket, debating...

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING

Anton walks up to a generic, nondescript 4-level office building, showered and shaved, dressed to impress.

As he enters, a group of tired-looking EMPLOYEES exit, having just finished their shift.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING, LOBBY - MORNING

Anton hands Misha's card to a SECURITY GUARD. The guard picks up a phone and calls someone.

SECURITY GUARD
(in Russian)
Guy named Anton is here for you.

The guard nods/grunts, hangs up. Anton spots a FEW MORE ARMED SECURITY GUARDS BY THE ELEVATOR AND STAIRS. They all awkwardly stand there in silence for what feels like forever.

Finally-- Misha gets off the elevator.

MISHA
(in English)
Anton! Come on. This way, buddy.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Anton and Misha stand in the elevator. There's no elevator music. Just an unsettling level of silence. Finally:

MISHA
Did you watch the soccer game last night?

ANTON
Which one?

MISHA
I don't know. I am just practicing English. I am always practicing.

ANTON
Oh. No, I didn't watch any soccer yesterday.
(beat)
What is this place?

Just then, the elevator doors open. Misha motions for Anton to follow him.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING, HALLWAY - DAY

Anton follows Misha down a long hallway, passing SECURITY CAMERAS strategically positioned throughout the hall.

Through a small window in each door, we can see exactly 20 people sitting at computers, typing away at a furious pace...

INT. BOSS'S OFFICE - DAY

Anton and Misha sit across from THREE PEOPLE, a woman and two men. They're all in formal suits, but it kind of feels like they're playing dress up. The clothes don't fit well and the styles are from the late 90s.

Finally, the female boss, MARINA EGOROV, 39, overly friendly motivational speaker vibe, addresses Anton in English with a Russian accent:

MARINA EGOROV

I hear your English is super great?

ANTON

This is a very important question for you guys.

One of the men, BOGDAN LEBEDEV, 35, overly blunt with a haircut that keeps him perpetually single, jumps in:

BOGDAN LEBEDEV

You spent time in the US?

ANTON

Some, yeah.

BOGDAN LEBEDEV

How did you like it?

ANTON

It was... fine. Good beer.

They all laugh like he just told greatest joke of all time.

As the laughing peters out, Anton notices one boss still hasn't said anything. He's just been clocking the conversation. This is VIKTOR VASILIEV, 40, all business.

Upon closer inspection, Anton notices Viktor's suit actually fits nicely. He's wearing an expensive WATCH. He doesn't seem to be cut from the same cloth as the other two.

Finally, he gets up, circling Anton, which puts him on edge. Viktor holds a FILE in his hand and speaks with a **British/Russian accent--**

VIKTOR

Misha said your English was top tier, so I did little research on you. Seems our boy here served in the SVR. That right?

ANTON
No. Also, that's classified.

VIKTOR
(holding up his file)
Clearly, it's not.

ANTON
Solid counterpoint.

VIKTOR
(reading from his file)
Bright kid from Kursk. Recruited
right out of school. Computer
skills. Perfect English. Speaks
five languages fluently.

ANTON
Four.

VIKTOR
What?

ANTON
Four. I'm kinda shitty at
Portuguese.

VIKTOR
I'll adjust the file accordingly.
(beat)
And now we find you at Bar Fidel
yesterday, drinking, getting your
ass handed to you.

ANTON
I beat up a couple of those guys
before I got my ass handed to me.
Did Misha tell you that part?

Viktor nods.

ANTON (CONT'D)
What is this place? Misha said you
have a job for me?

VIKTOR
We do. We might. We'll see.

MARINA EGOROV
We heard you took a piss on
Stalin's face.

ANTON
His actual face? No.

MARINA EGOROV

His statue face. We heard you were discharged from SVR for getting too drunk and pissing on Stalin's face.

ANTON

I can neither confirm nor deny. I'll just say this, if pissing on Stalin's face is a deal-breaker, I should probably go--

They all chuckle. They like this guy. They think he can be an asset for them. The bosses huddle, speaking in a whisper:

BOGDAN LEBEDEV

Should we give him the test?

Viktor debates... then nods.

CUT TO:

INT. BOSS'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Anton sits across from Marina and Bogdan. They both have CLIPBOARDS in front of them. Viktor sits off to the side smoking a cigarette, studying Anton.

MARINA EGOROV

We are considering to hire you for the social media room.

ANTON

I'm not a big tweeter.

MARINA EGOROV

We have many departments-- "news division," "social media," and something we call "demotivators"-- they just make memes to influence dumb-dumb people.

ANTON

Dumb-dumb people?

BOGDAN LEBEDEV

We think you can be good in the social media room. It pays good too. You can get back in the good graces of your country.

MARINA EGOROV

90000 Rubles per week.

ANTON

That's super good. As long as I don't have to kill anyone, I'm in. Even if I do, I'm still in.

They just stare at him.

ANTON (CONT'D)

That was a joke.

MARINA EGOROV

You are good at English jokes. That's great. You must speak English here all the times. No Russian. That is a rule.

ANTON

Good rule.

BOGDAN LEBEDEV

To get the job, you must pass a test.

ANTON

Okay.

BOGDAN LEBEDEV

Do you know what vegetarian is?

ANTON

Yeah. Is this part of the test?

BOGDAN LEBEDEV

Yes. Do you like it?

ANTON

Do I like what? Vegetarians?

BOGDAN LEBEDEV

Yes.

ANTON

Haven't really searched my soul about it.

MARINA EGOROV

Please search now. Do you like them?

ANTON

I'm not a vegetarian, but I don't mind if people are-- I'm sorry, is this really the test??

MARINA EGOROV

We have to see if you can convince people. Please, think deep. What if we ask you to convince someone that vegetarian is stupid, what would you say?

ANTON

Um... I guess I would just say... you don't get enough protein from being a vegetarian.

MARINA EGOROV

What about tofu?

BOGDAN LEBEDEV

Yes, what about tofu?

ANTON

... It isn't good to have too much tofu... especially for women, because it can cause health issues.

MARINA EGOROV

VERY GOOD. Like what health issues?

ANTON

(beat, thinking...)
... Cancer?

MARINA EGOROV

Yes! Excellent! This is what I am talking about! Cancer is so scary.

BOGDAN LEBEDEV

It is the most scary.

They both mark down something on their clipboards. Then flip to another page of questions.

MARINA EGOROV

Do you know Hillary Clinton?

ANTON

Sure.

BOGDAN LEBEDEV

What comes to your mind when you think of her?

ANTON

Pantsuits.

MARINA EGOROV

Can you be more specific, my man?
Do you think she is a bad person?
Do you think she would make a bad
President for the USA?

ANTON

I... don't know.

MARINA EGOROV

Can you convince me she would be
bad? Like you did with why
vegetarian is bad.

ANTON

Um... I think... she's corrupt like
her husband.

BOGDAN LEBEDEV

Good. Dig deeper. Corrupt how?

Anton continues to debate. He needs a job, so he takes a deep
breath and goes for it--

ANTON

-- She erased emails. They were
classified. She lied about
Benghazi. She will rig the election
to help her win. Who knows what
would be in those emails if she
didn't erase them?

They all sit there in heavy silence for a beat, looking
around at each other, "pretty damn good." Then:

VIKTOR VASILIEV

Better question: why erase the
emails if you have nothing to hide?

Viktor winks, then stands up, heading for the door.

VIKTOR VASILIEV (CONT'D)

He's ready. Get him into that room.

Viktor exits.

MARINA EGOROV

Congrats, Anton! We will get a
computer ready for you to start in
the USA social media room tomorrow!

INT. ANTON AND VALERIYA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Anton cleans the cuts on his face, studying himself in the mirror-- Valeriya peaks her head in, **speaking in Russian.**

VALERIYA

Do we have any snacks?

ANTON

Did you look?

VALERIYA

No. I wanted to ask you before walking all the way to the kitchen.

ANTON

All the way to the kitchen? This isn't a mansion. It's like three meters away.

Valeriya shrugs.

ANTON (CONT'D)

If you go look, you might find something you like...

We follow Valeriya as she begrudgingly heads down the hallway into the KITCHEN. She opens the fridge to find it STOCKED.

VALERIYA

Ah wow! You got everything!

ANTON (O.S.)

I got a job so I thought I'd splurge a little.

Valeriya pulls out a 2 liter bottle of COKE.

ANTON (O.S.) (CONT'D)

But no Coke! It's too late.

She puts back the Coke. Grabs a bag of Lays "pickle and dill" chips (yes, they exist), and some apple pirozhki.

Valeriya turns to see Anton now standing in the doorway. He smiles at her, loving seeing how happy she is.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING, SOCIAL MEDIA ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Misha enters the "social media room" with Anton in tow. Two rows with 10 computers each. A person at each computer.

Florescent bulbs buzz. Blinds are drawn. Depression is palpable.

MISHA

Everybody, this is Anton. He will work here now. He has very good English like all of us.

Snickers from the group at Misha thinking he "has very good English." Misha laughs too, oblivious.

MISHA (CONT'D)

(to Anton)

You work on Twitter today. Make 100 new user by end of day. Tweet bad thing about Clinton.

Anton nods.

MISHA (CONT'D)

I come back in little bit. I have to make a shit now.

More chuckles as Misha exits.

Anton takes a seat at his computer. Across from him is a woman with her hair flowing and make-up done in full. An unusual sight for these drab offices. This is NINA ORLOV, 29. She shares a glance with Anton.

ANTON

(in Russian)

Hey.

NINA

(sing-song)

English only.

ANTON

Oh right. Sorry. How long have you worked here?

NINA

Almost a year.

ANTON

How do you like it?

NINA

It's the best job in the world.

She says this as if people are listening. Next to Nina, a short, bearded, effeminate guy with sweaty fingers speaks up. This is ROMAN KOZLOV, 28.

ROMAN

You got Clinton? Lucky boy. She's so easy. Emails, Benghazi, blah blah... I'm working on the real shit, baby.

Everyone groans, "here we go."

ROMAN (CONT'D)

What?? It's true. I'm hacking!

NINA

(to Anton)

90% of what comes out of Roman's mouth is bullshit.

ROMAN

Hey! I am hacking... kind of. I gather user data on Facebook.

NINA

They're GIVING IT to you.

ROMAN

Still.

NINA

Not hacking.

ROMAN

Pretty much is!

Suddenly, MISHA'S VOICE is heard via a SPEAKER in the room:

MISHA (O.S.)

You are not paid for party. Please keep converse to minimum.

ROMAN

(whisper)

He's watching us while he shits.

They all laugh. But they also don't continue talking. This job is too valuable to lose.

Anton gets to work, opening TWITTER. Staring at it...

ANTON

So I just pretend to be random people posting bad things about Hillary Clinton?

NINA

Bingo baby. Easy peasy.

ROMAN

Money in the bank... If I had a bank. I don't. Don't trust them.

Anton zeroes in on his computer. As he does, we focus on the DATE in the top corner of his computer screen:

9th JUNE, 2015

He creates NEW USER, starts following people... people involved in politics, sports, entertainment...

And then he follows people who comment on POLITICAL POSTS...

We see someone has posted a HUFFPOST article about Hillary as the clear frontrunner for the democratic nomination, with Bernie Sanders and Martin O'Malley in a distant 2nd and 3rd.

... From there, we jump into a MONTAGE...

... Anton's pulling images from Google. Although he's grabbing people of all races, he's primarily focused on one: WHITE MEN. Lots and lots of white men...

He's flying, creating profiles with these images... Posting as fake users, typing things like:

... *Hillary would tank the economy...*

... *Hillary couldn't satisfy her husband, how can she satisfy the country???*...

... *Did Hillary have people killed???*...

... *Killary should not be in the White House, she should be in PRISON!*...

... *If Hillary had nothing to hide, why did she delete her emails???*...

Anton's finding obscure publications-- far right wing and left wing articles, both seeming to hate Hillary equally-- and linking them to his posts.

We come out of the montage to find Anton exhausted.

He scrolls through the 100 users he created. All have followers that range from 2 to 14. 14 is the highest so far.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

Anton exits the building, heading home. The NIGHT SHIFT is entering. 12 hours on, 12 hours off.

Nina looks back at him as her and Roman head the other way:

NINA
Hey Anton, wanna fuck?

ANTON
(turning, thrown)
What?

NINA
Kidding. We're getting a beer,
wanna come?

ANTON
Oh, ha, no, I need to get home.
Maybe next time...

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Anton's fallen asleep on the couch in front of his TV. All the lights are off. Only light is coming from the tube--

He suddenly hears a NOISE and startles awake--

-- Gains his bearings. Glances down the hall, but doesn't see anything, so he lays back down. Probably just a bad dream.

... But then he hears FOOTSTEPS.

He MUTES the TV. Pops up, defensive.

Someone is inside the house.

He reaches under the couch, grabbing a GUN that's taped to the bottom of it.

He creeps down the hallway... Looking in each room, gun at the ready. Not finding anyone...

ANOTHER NOISE-- He spins, back down the hallway towards the KITCHEN...

... Getting there, he finds A GUY IN ALL-BLACK CLOTHING LOOKING THROUGH HIS FRIDGE.

ANTON
(in Russian)
Don't fucking move.

The guy in black instinctively knocks Anton's hand away, pulling his own gun. Now they're face-to-face, guns drawn.

Anton gets a better look at this guy.

ANTON (CONT'D)

Doug??

DOUG

Buddy!

This is, in fact, DOUG JENNINGS, 37, tight haircut, CIA agent who rocks a perpetual frat bro vibe.

DOUG JENNINGS

Wanna lower that gun?

ANTON

No, I'm good. What are you doing here??

DOUG JENNINGS

Wanted to chat. Can we retire to your living room?

Anton and Doug make their way to the living room, still in a standoff, aimed at one another.

ANTON

I didn't think the CIA was still shadowing me.

DOUG JENNINGS

We weren't. Not for a while. No point. You'd become as important to us as a shit-stained hobo in Minsk.

ANTON

High praise.

DOUG JENNINGS

You popped back on our radar yesterday. And guess who got assigned to you?

ANTON

Just like old times.

DOUG JENNINGS

Me shadowing you. You shadowing me. A couple a kids in love. Good days. Then you had to go piss on Stalin's face and ruin everything.

ANTON

They don't like it when you do that, I guess.

DOUG JENNINGS

For what it's worth, I thought it was funny as fuck.

ANTON

Thanks, man.

DOUG JENNINGS

You got anything to drink?

ANTON

That's not where this is heading.

DOUG JENNINGS

Fair.

ANTON

It's late. Get to the point.

Doug glances around the living room, spotting a PICTURE FRAME of ANTON'S WIFE, YULIYA.

DOUG JENNINGS

Come on, put the piece away.

ANTON

You first.

Doug debates, then nods. Putting it away. Anton reluctantly does the same.

DOUG JENNINGS

I'm here to help you.

ANTON

Oh yeah? And I'm the Pope.

DOUG JENNINGS

We know what they did to your wife.

Anton remains stoic.

DOUG JENNINGS (CONT'D)

We know they covered it up-- wouldn't tell you shit. That's why you snapped. Started drinking again. Pissed on Stalin, the whole thing.

(beat)

We know you were recruited by the "Internet Research Firm" yesterday. We were tracking Misha. We know a lot. And we want in.

ANTON

In?

DOUG JENNINGS

We want you to work for us.

ANTON

The CIA? Sure! Sign me up!

DOUG JENNINGS

With us. We want access to what you have. You're inside a place we could never step foot in.

ANTON

Why would I possibly do that?

DOUG JENNINGS

Because you know deep down what your wife discovered was right. She was about to blow the whistle, expose all the corruption. And we have the ability to help you find the people who hurt her and bring them to justice. Some people in that building you work in know what happened... Their hands are red and they ain't been finger painting.

This makes Anton think for a beat--

DOUG JENNINGS (CONT'D)

You got any beers?

ANTON

No. We have Coke, but it's for my daughter.

DOUG JENNINGS

You don't think she'd share?

ANTON

No.

DOUG JENNINGS

Cool. So, what do you say, you in?

Anton heads over to the front door, opening it for Doug.

ANTON

Time to go, buddy.

Doug reaches into his pocket, pulling out a PHONE.

DOUG JENNINGS

Take this. It's been equipped with
a highly sensitive wireless
recording device.

Doug tries to hand it to Anton, but he doesn't take it.

DOUG JENNINGS (CONT'D)

I'll just leave it on the table.
You help us, we help you. Win-win,
bro-ski...

INT. LIVING ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Anton and Valeriya head out the door. Before doing so, Anton stops, glancing down at the PHONE/RECORDING DEVICE on the table that Doug left him. He debates grabbing it...

INT. OFFICE BUILDING, SOCIAL MEDIA ROOM - MORNING

Anton is fast at work, posting as the various twitter users he's created.

The woman sitting next to him, KATYA DUBOFF, 26, techy vibe, streaks of pink in her blonde hair, leans over:

KATYA

Slow down.

ANTON

What?

KATYA

If you go too fast, they'll think
you're cutting and pasting and
they'll fire you... or worse.

Anton slows down a bit, taking it at a more casual pace.

ROMAN

She's fucking with you, buddy. If
you go too slow, they fire you for
lack of production.

She smiles sheepishly, guilty.

ANTON

(to Katya)

What are you working on?

KATYA

Posting about how the US is
purposely spreading Ebola.

ANTON

Wow. That's--

KATYA

So fucked. I know.

She smiles/winks. We get the sense that Katya enjoys this-- she likes messing with people, shaking up the status quo.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING, BREAK ROOM - DAY

Anton sits with Nina, Roman, Katya and some of the other English speaking employees on one side of the break room.

They're all SMOKING cigarettes except for Anton, who's eating a lunch he brought from home.

On the other side of the room sits a group of employees who all speak in Russian-- The "domestic" side of the operation.

NINA

Those are the domestic people.
They're only allowed to speak
Russian. And over there--

She points at a table of true freaks of nature.

NINA (CONT'D)

-- the "demotivators." So fucking weird. Sticky fingers. Stay away from them. Pretty sure they spend 12 hours here, 12 hours masturbating at home.

ROMAN

An endless cycle.

KATYA

Of jizz.

ANTON

You really think what we're doing here makes a difference? My top profile has like 36 followers.

NINA

You just started. It takes time.

ROMAN

One of my profiles gained nearly 5000 followers in the past month.

KATYA

I created a guy, Jed Franklin, he's a white dude from Kansas. He has over 96,000 followers now.

ANTON

That's crazy.

KATYA

He's nuts too. I like him. I'd be friends with him. I'd fuck him.

NINA

You know about the bonuses?

ANTON

No.

KATYA

I'm SO CLOSE to the next bonus.

NINA

You get bonuses when your profiles hit 50,000 followers, 100,000, 250,000, 500,000... and if you get a million...

KATYA

No one has hit a million.

ROMAN

But if you do... you get a car.

ANTON

A car?

ROMAN

A fucking car, bro. Mid-size sedan, but still.

ANTON

Who's funding all this? There's no way to make money here.

NINA

Who gives a shit? They pay on time. Good enough for me.

ANTON

You think people believe the accounts we create are real?

NINA

Everyone we create is real...

Anton chuckles. But the others don't. Nina causally motions to a SECURITY CAMERA with her eyes. It's watching them. Listening to them.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING, SOCIAL MEDIA ROOM - DAY

Back in the social media room, Anton is hard at work, but his mind is elsewhere, racing.

Nina and Roman enter and sit down at their computers.

KATYA

Where have you guys been?

NINA

Can't say.

ROMAN

Top secret. But they just asked us to start working on something big.

ANTON

Big? How big?

ROMAN

Epic. Size of my dick big.

KATYA

Okay, so hyped as big but actually super small, got it.

ROMAN

No, this is truly BIG.

Suddenly, Misha enters. Everyone sits up straight nervously, like they weren't just talking. He points at Anton and motions for him to follow him out into the hallway...

INT. HALLWAY - LATE DAY

Misha leads Anton down the hallway.

MISHA

Boss want to speak to you.

ANTON

Is it about what they just discussed with Nina and Roman?

MISHA

No, this is different. Did they say something about that to you?

ANTON

No. Not at all. I was just curious.

Misha stares at him, holding a serious expression.

Anton stops at the elevator, but Misha keeps walking, towards the FRONT ENTRANCE of the building.

MISHA

No elevator today. Come this way...

Anton tenses, unsure where Misha's leading him...

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - LATE DAY

Misha and Anton exit the building-- passing the ARMED GUARDS to find a BLACK MERCEDES waiting for them. The DRIVER opens the back door to show VIKTOR sitting there, waiting...

EXT. OUTSIDE ST. PETERSBURG, DRIVING - LATE DAY

Anton and Viktor sit in heavy silence as they drive towards the countryside... St. Petersburg shrinking in the distance.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE OUTSIDE ST. PETERSBURG - DUSK

Finally, the car pulls up to a FARM just as the sun starts to set. The driver takes them down a long DIRT ROAD, eventually coming to a stop.

Anton gets out and is led through a tall CORN FIELD by Viktor, who walks delicately, attempting to not get his designer shoes dirty.

Coming towards them is a BEATEN AND BLOODIED GUY being dragged by a couple large FARMHANDS.

Anton watches the guy get dragged away, heart racing.

Finally, in the middle of the corn field, they're met by IVAN PETROV, 50s. He wears a WHITE CHEF'S JACKET, flashes a killer smile and generally carries a jovial disposition. TWO DIFFERENT MUSCULAR FARMHAND types stand by Ivan's side.

Despite the friendly face, Ivan does not come across as someone to fuck with.

IVAN PETROV

Welcome, Anton! I'm Ivan. Viktor told me so much about you-- How well you've been doing.

ANTON

Oh, thank you. It's a great job.

IVAN PETROV
How do you like my farm?

Anton spots a MACHETE in Ivan's hand. He then hears SCREAMS coming from a BARN in the distance...

ANTON
It's... beautiful. Yeah.

IVAN PETROV
We're doing some work on the barn.
That's what those noises were.

ANTON
Ah. Of course. Makes sense.

Ivan starts walking through the corn field, motioning for Anton to follow. He does so with caution-- Viktor and the farmhands trailing close behind.

IVAN PETROV
I'm a chef, you know. Farm to table. Only the freshest. Fresh produce. Fresh meat.

ANTON
Oh, good. Fresh is good.

"Fresh is good?" Anton shakes it off, tries to calm himself.

IVAN PETROV
Do you believe in what you're doing at the job?

ANTON
Yes. Of course.

WHACK! Ivan uses the machete to hack a stalk of corn, tossing it to one of his farmhands, who throws it in the back of a nearby TRAILER.

IVAN PETROV
Do you know what the "Dulles Doctrine" is?

ANTON
... Not really, no.

WHACK! Ivan hacks another stalk of corn--

IVAN PETROV

Allen Dulles, director of the CIA in the 1950s, tried to destroy the Soviet Union by corrupting our values and heritage.

ANTON

Oh yeah. I thought that was just in a spy novel or something. I thought there was no proof it happened.

WHACK! More hacking at the corn. Anton startles each time.

IVAN PETROV

No proof? Look at us now. Look at them. Does the Soviet Union exist?

Ivan waits for an answer...

ANTON

Oh, you want me to answer? No, no it doesn't.

IVAN PETROV

What we're doing here, just so you understand-- Just so we're clear-- is what they did to us...

ANTON

Cool cool. Sounds good to me. I'm for that. 100%. Go Russia...

Ivan shares a glance with Viktor...

IVAN

Great. Thanks Anton. Your print outs are off the charts. You're a very impressive guy. It'd be a shame if it didn't work out with you. But I'm sure it will...

Anton nods, smiles, ready to get the fuck out of there.

IVAN PETROV

Whoa, look at this one!

Ivan holds up a LARGE EAR OF CORN.

IVAN PETROV (CONT'D)

What a beauty! Massive, huh?

ANTON

Oh, yeah. Wow. Huge.

IVAN PETROV
Take a picture of me with it.

ANTON
I'm sorry?

IVAN PETROV
Take a picture of me holding this
monster corn.

ANTON
... Okay, do you have a camera?

IVAN PETROV
No, just use your phone-- the one
in your right pocket.

Anton hesitates, unsure what to do. His breathing becomes short and quick.

IVAN PETROV (CONT'D)
Come on Anton, I don't want to
stand here all day.

Anton has no choice but to pull out his phone. We recognize it as the phone/recording device Doug gave him.

Anton raises the phone to take the pic, hands trembling. He snaps a few shots, quickly pocketing it again.

IVAN PETROV (CONT'D)
Can I see them?

ANTON
... I'll email them to you.

IVAN PETROV
Come on, I want to see them now.

ANTON
I should probably get back to work--

VIKTOR
Let him see them, Anton.

Anton nods, makes his way over to Ivan, hands trembling as he gives him the phone. More SCREAMS from the barn. A fucking WOOD CHIPPER can be heard revving up. Anton's sweating...

Ivan drops the corn, grabbing the phone with one hand, still gripping the machete with the other...

Ivan smiles at the pictures, shows them to Viktor and his muscular farmhands. They do not react in the least.

Ivan looks at the pics from different angles, really studying them closely... And then he hands the phone back to Anton.

IVAN PETROV
Keep up the good work...

Anton pockets the phone, turning for the car as fast as he can without looking insane, breathing a huge sigh of relief.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - THAT NIGHT

Anton exits the building with the others, heading home for the night, lost in a state.

NINA (O.S.)
Hey Anton, wanna fuck?

Anton turns to find Nina standing by her CAR.

ANTON
I can't go to the bar tonight.
Maybe next time.

NINA
Who said anything about a bar?...

INT. NINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Anton and Nina are dancing and drinking in her cramped little studio apartment. She's taking down shots of vodka. He's barely sipping a vodka soda.

NINA
(over the music)
You don't like your drink?

ANTON
No, it's good, I'm just-- I'm
trying to cut back on drinking.

NINA
Why?

ANTON
I've been doing too much of it.

NINA
Too much? Is that a thing?

She dances in close, taking a swig straight from the bottle, grinding on him... lips inches a part... She kisses him.

He takes it, so she goes for more, making-out with him. But she can tell something's off, so she pulls out of it...

ANTON

Sorry. I just-- I haven't been with anyone since my wife passed away...

NINA

Oh cool. That's a fun topic to bring up during a make-out session.
(realizing that was harsh)
Sorry. Let me try that again...
Your wife died? That's awful. What happened?

ANTON

I don't know.

NINA

Wait, what?

ANTON

She went missing. Kidnapped one day after work. Never came back.

NINA

Shit. I'm sorry. I just-- I didn't-- I was just looking for a fuck dude. I didn't know you had all this going on behind the scenes.

ANTON

And I'd love to be a fuck dude. That sounds great... I'm just not ready. No hard feelings?

Anton puts his hand out to shake.

NINA

You want me to shake your hand?

ANTON

No. Sorry. That was weird.

INT. ANTON'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Anton's in his bedroom, DRINKING straight from the bottle, telling his sensibilities to fuck off for the night.

He's staring at his closet. At all of his wife's clothes. He reaches for a blouse. Almost as if he's going to take it down, maybe even pack it away.

But he doesn't. He can't. Not yet. He takes another swig, crashing on his bed.

INT. ANTON'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Anton snores, passed out... Suddenly-- CRASH! He startles awake. Attempts to gain his bearings, groggy, disoriented.

His bedroom door slowly CREEPS OPEN... And standing there is a silhouette of a PERSON with a KALASHNIKOV in hand, pointing it directly at him.

Anton puts his hands up defensively. Terrified.

The gunman steps forward, revealing it's HILLARY CLINTON. Well, kind of. It's SOMEONE wearing a Hillary Clinton MASK.

HILLARY CLINTON MASK PERSON
Why did you say all those mean
things about me??

She kind of sounds like Hillary Clinton too...

ANTON
I-- I was just doing my job. It's
just a job-- Please...

HILLARY CLINTON MASK PERSON
I understand that. No really, I do.
I'm very good at understanding the
struggles of the middle class.

The Hillary Clinton-masked person sits down on the bed next to Anton, gun still pointed at him.

ANTON
Please... I have a daughter...

The masked person nods, "I know"... then presses the gun against Anton's forehead--

ANTON (CONT'D)
Noooooooooooooooooooo!

-- Anton suddenly STARTLES AWAKE drenched in sweat to find Valeriya standing over him, comforting him.

VALERIYA
(in Russian)
It's okay. You're okay...

He takes some relaxing breaths, laying back down.

She kisses his forehead before heading to back her room. Anton stares up at the ceiling, breathing heavy...

INT. ANTON AND VALERIYA'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

Anton's about to leave for work. He pulls out the phone/recording device that Doug gave him. He drops it and SMASHES IT under his foot, throwing it in the trash...

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - MORNING

Anton enters the building, passing the night shift. He checks the time on his PHONE: 08:59. The date below the time reads: **16th June, 2015**

INT. OFFICE BUILDING, SOCIAL MEDIA ROOM - MORNING

Anton's creating new profiles left and right, zoned in on the work. Toggling between commenting as his older profiles and building new ones.

He's caught a rhythm, settling into a groove.

He makes eyes with Nina. She sends him a flirtatious look back. Something still brewing there...

INT. OFFICE BUILDING, BREAK ROOM - DAY

Anton, Nina, Roman and Katya all share a laugh while smoking/having lunch. They're cracking jokes about the "domestic" employees on the other half of the room, who have no idea what they're saying.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING, HALLWAY - EVENING

Anton heads down the hallway with Nina, Roman and Katya-- a happy little foursome. Suddenly, Misha steps in their path.

MISHA

Bosses want to see you.

ANTON

Me?

MISHA

All of you.

INT. BOSS'S OFFICE - EVENING

Our group enters to find the rest of their English-speaking peers from the social media room. Marina and Bogdan stand at the opposite end of the room.

Anton clocks Viktor sitting off to the side, observing.

MARINA EGOROV

Okay, everybody is here, yes?

In front of them is a flat screen TV from the early 2000s.

ON SCREEN: DONALD TRUMP is standing at a podium in Trump Tower, mid-speech...

DONALD TRUMP (ON THE TV)

*... When Mexico sends its people,
they're not sending their best.
They're not sending you. They're
not sending you. They're sending
people that have lots of problems,
and they're bringing those problems
with them. They're bringing drugs.
They're bringing crime. They're
rapists. And some, I assume, are
good people--*

Anton leans over to whisper to Nina and Roman:

ANTON

Did he just say Mexicans are rapists and drug dealers?

NINA

Yeah, but he also said he *assumes* some are good people.

ROMAN

This is what they asked us to work on last week. Told you it was BIG.

The group continues to watch the speech, but the SOUND FADES as we zero in on Anton's face, realizing now why they asked Nina and Roman to start talking up Donald Trump a week ago...

Anton comes out of his trance as Marina mutes the TV, standing in front of it...

MARINA EGOROV

This was recorded earlier today. He goes on and on for a while. Point is, Donald Trump is running for President of the US.

BOGDAN LEBEDEV

You will all write about him now, along with everything else you have been assigned. Write about how he is a great leader. How he will create law and order in America.

(MORE)

BOGDAN LEBEDEV (CONT'D)
 How he will get rid of the drugs
 and gangs and terrorists. How he
 will make everyone rich like him.

ANTON
 Is any of that true?

BOGDAN LEBEDEV
 What does it matter?

ANTON
 No, yeah, good point.

MARINA EGOROV
 Okay, thank you! See you tomorrow!

As everyone exits, Anton notices Viktor clocking him...

EXT. ANTON AND VALERIYA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Anton checks the mail before entering his house. There's a
 paycheck from INTERNET RESEARCH FIRM, his employer.

He opens the envelope to reveal a check for the first week at
 his new post: **89047 Rubles. SUBTITLE: "\$1400 U.S. dollars"**

This is more than most currently make in Russia...

INT. ANTON AND VALERIYA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Anton heads down the hallway, lost in a state. Unsure what to
 do or where to go from here.

He stops and peers into Valeriya's room. She at her desk,
 listening to music, doing some homework. He takes her in for
 a beat, before moving on to the LIVING ROOM, sitting on the
 couch, opening his laptop-- looking at PICTURES of his LATE
 WIFE. A once happy family.

Suddenly, there's a KNOCK at his door. He peaks out the
 window, spotting DOUG. He gets up, opens the door, letting
 him in...

DOUG JENNINGS
 Yo! You stopped recording. What's
 going on??

ANTON
 I'm not helping you anymore.

DOUG JENNINGS
 What?? Why??

ANTON

Oh no reason, I was just taken out to Ivan Petrov's torture farm, that's all. He had me take pictures of him holding a machete and a giant corn.

DOUG JENNINGS

You took pics at Ivan Petrov's farm? Can I see them??

ANTON

I destroyed the phone.

DOUG JENNINGS

You what??? That was expensive shit! You could've just, like, turned it off or something.

ANTON

It's in the trash if you want it.

Doug sifts through the trash, finding the shattered phone.

DOUG JENNINGS

(examining it)

Man, this thing is fucked.

ANTON

It's getting weird. We're talking up Donald Trump now.

DOUG JENNINGS

That's why it's important for me to know if you're in or out. If you're out, I've got to move on. And if I move on, I can't protect you.

ANTON

What you're asking me to do is... impossible.

DOUG JENNINGS

If they were onto you, they would've killed you already.

ANTON

That's comforting.

DOUG JENNINGS

Don't let them get away with what they did to your wife.

ANTON

I have a job now. It pays well--

He holds up his PAY CHECK.

DOUG JENNINGS

I have no idea how much that is.

ANTON

It's a lot of money. I can provide for my daughter.

DOUG JENNINGS

What would your wife ask you to do?

ANTON

That's not fair. You know I can't ask her.

DOUG JENNINGS

I think you know what she'd say.

(beat)

That guy Ivan-- he knows a lot. You get close to him, you find out what happened to your wife. And we can help you. We can cover you. You can keep your job. You can keep providing for your daughter. But in the process, we can get back at the people that tore apart your family.

This seems to land with Anton.

DOUG JENNINGS (CONT'D)

You got any beer yet?

ANTON

No. I'm trying to stop drinking.

DOUG JENNINGS

Really? Why? That's weird. You should pick some up for the future. We're gonna be spending a lot of time together...

Doug puts his hand out to shake. Anton just stares at it-- He then looks up at the picture of his wife. And then down the hall towards his daughter's room... debating...

CUT TO BLACK