



快報

LOCATE THE
DROP-OFF
LOCATION
FOR A DRUG
SHIPMENT

FLORIDA SNOW

Chapter 1: Red Tide Rising

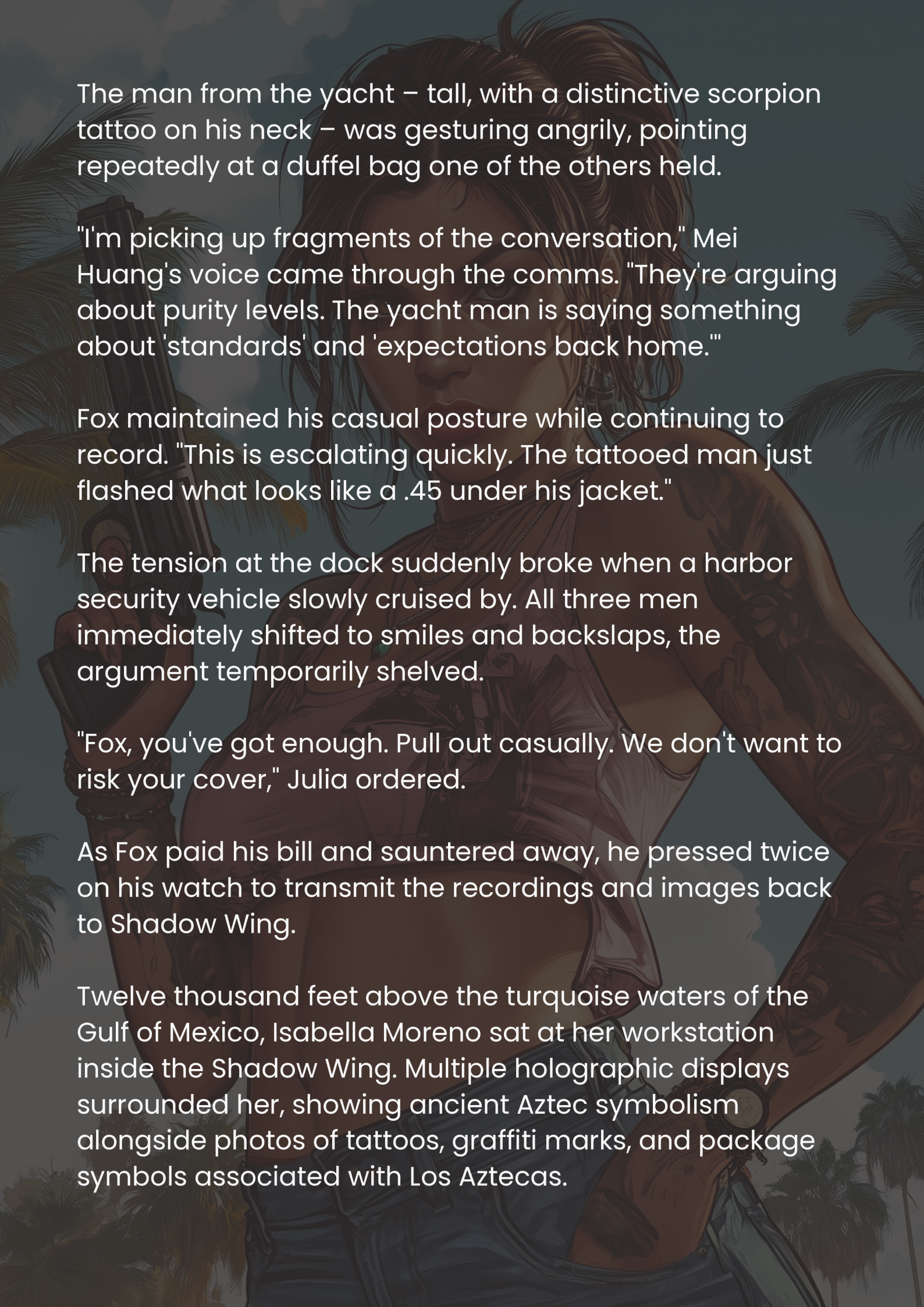
The Miami sun beat down on Fox Meyer's shoulders as he casually adjusted his sunglasses. To anyone passing by, he was just another tourist enjoying a cold beer at the waterfront café, his Hawaiian shirt and cargo shorts blending seamlessly with the other vacationers admiring the luxury yachts at Marina Hemingway.

But Fox wasn't watching the yachts. His attention was fixed on Slip 47, where a gleaming white Bertram 64 had been docked for three days. The Azteca Dawn – a name that had triggered multiple flags in SERPENT's international smuggling database.

"Movement at your three o'clock," Julia Sharpe's voice crackled softly in the nearly invisible earpiece Fox wore. The Overseer was coordinating from Shadow Wing, currently disguised as a private charter circling in sanctioned airspace twenty miles offshore.

Fox sipped his beer, using the motion to subtly activate the micro-camera embedded in his watch. "I see them. Two men approaching the boat. One matches the description of Ernesto Valdez, Los Aztecas' Florida distributor."

Through his sunglasses – equipped with facial recognition tech developed by Dimitri – Fox watched as the men approached a third figure who had emerged from the yacht's cabin. What started as warm greetings quickly devolved into tense body language.



The man from the yacht – tall, with a distinctive scorpion tattoo on his neck – was gesturing angrily, pointing repeatedly at a duffel bag one of the others held.

"I'm picking up fragments of the conversation," Mei Huang's voice came through the comms. "They're arguing about purity levels. The yacht man is saying something about 'standards' and 'expectations back home.'"

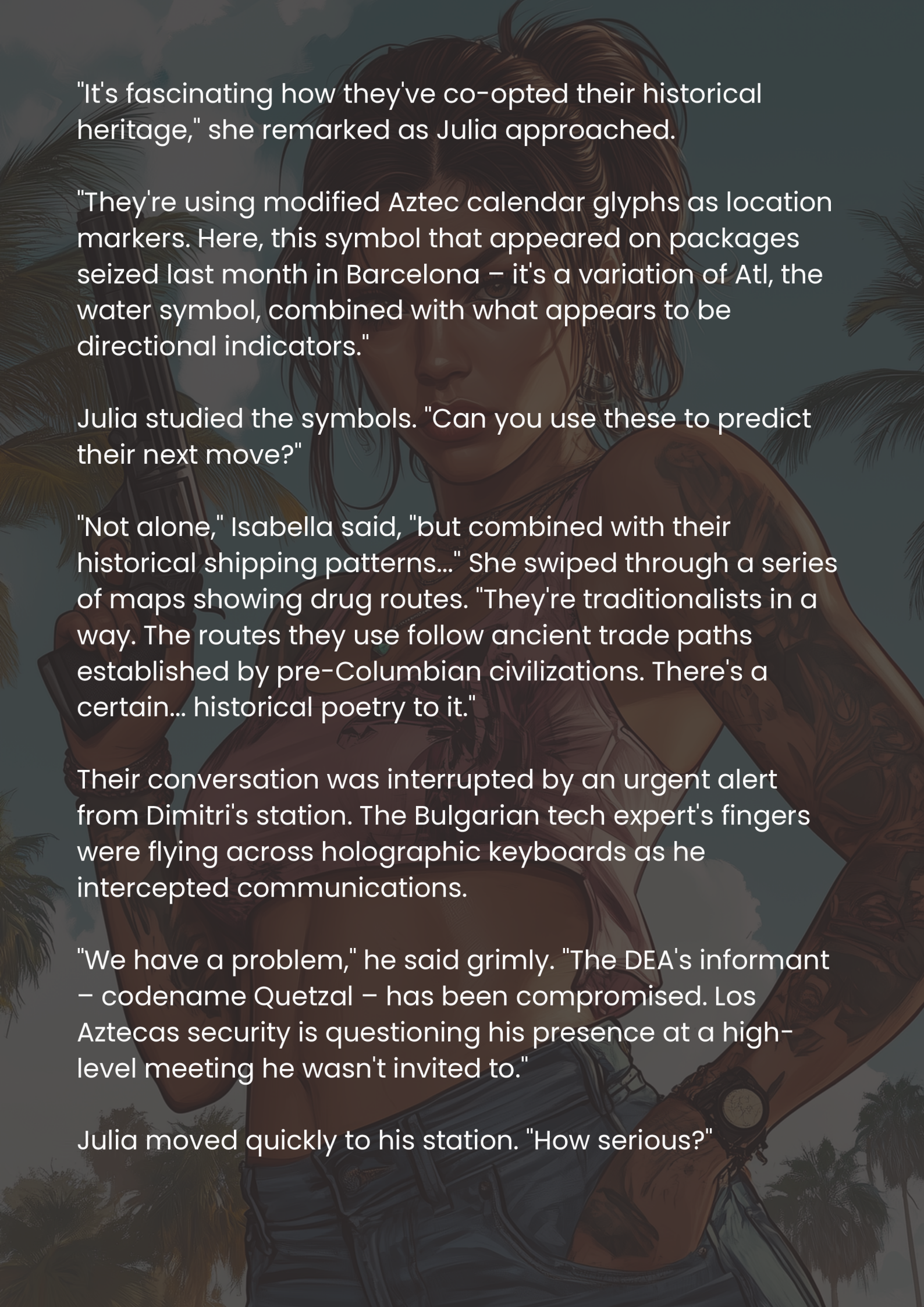
Fox maintained his casual posture while continuing to record. "This is escalating quickly. The tattooed man just flashed what looks like a .45 under his jacket."

The tension at the dock suddenly broke when a harbor security vehicle slowly cruised by. All three men immediately shifted to smiles and backslaps, the argument temporarily shelved.

"Fox, you've got enough. Pull out casually. We don't want to risk your cover," Julia ordered.

As Fox paid his bill and sauntered away, he pressed twice on his watch to transmit the recordings and images back to Shadow Wing.

Twelve thousand feet above the turquoise waters of the Gulf of Mexico, Isabella Moreno sat at her workstation inside the Shadow Wing. Multiple holographic displays surrounded her, showing ancient Aztec symbolism alongside photos of tattoos, graffiti marks, and package symbols associated with Los Aztecas.



"It's fascinating how they've co-opted their historical heritage," she remarked as Julia approached.

"They're using modified Aztec calendar glyphs as location markers. Here, this symbol that appeared on packages seized last month in Barcelona – it's a variation of Atl, the water symbol, combined with what appears to be directional indicators."

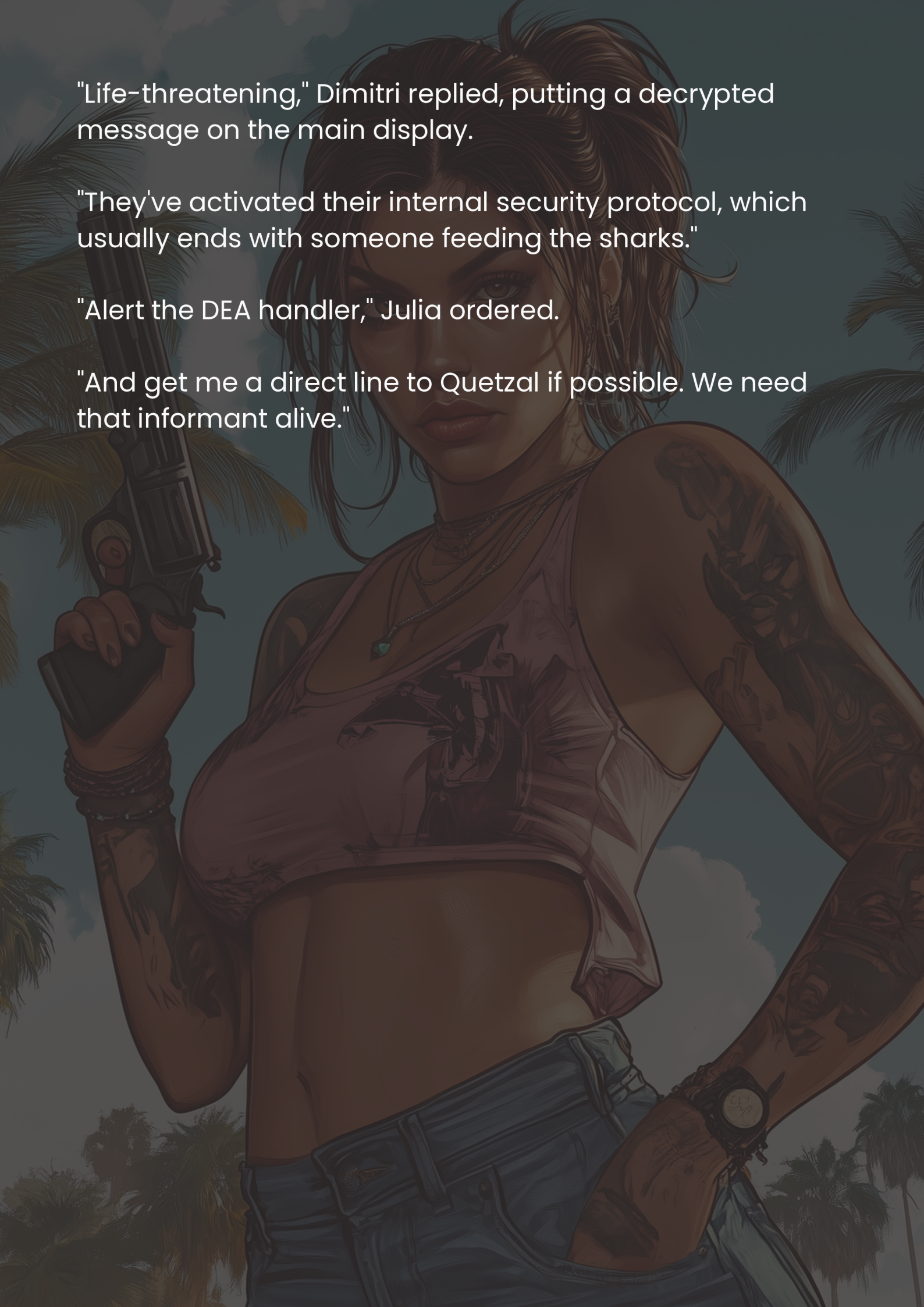
Julia studied the symbols. "Can you use these to predict their next move?"

"Not alone," Isabella said, "but combined with their historical shipping patterns..." She swiped through a series of maps showing drug routes. "They're traditionalists in a way. The routes they use follow ancient trade paths established by pre-Columbian civilizations. There's a certain... historical poetry to it."

Their conversation was interrupted by an urgent alert from Dimitri's station. The Bulgarian tech expert's fingers were flying across holographic keyboards as he intercepted communications.

"We have a problem," he said grimly. "The DEA's informant – codename Quetzal – has been compromised. Los Aztecas security is questioning his presence at a high-level meeting he wasn't invited to."

Julia moved quickly to his station. "How serious?"



"Life-threatening," Dimitri replied, putting a decrypted message on the main display.

"They've activated their internal security protocol, which usually ends with someone feeding the sharks."

"Alert the DEA handler," Julia ordered.

"And get me a direct line to Quetzal if possible. We need that informant alive."

Chapter 2: Shadow Networks

Dimitri Zechev hadn't slept in 36 hours, but you wouldn't know it by looking at him. His eyes were clear and focused as they scanned the cascading lines of encrypted code scrolling across his multiple screens inside Shadow Wing. Three empty energy drink cans were neatly stacked beside his workstation – the only evidence of his marathon hacking session.

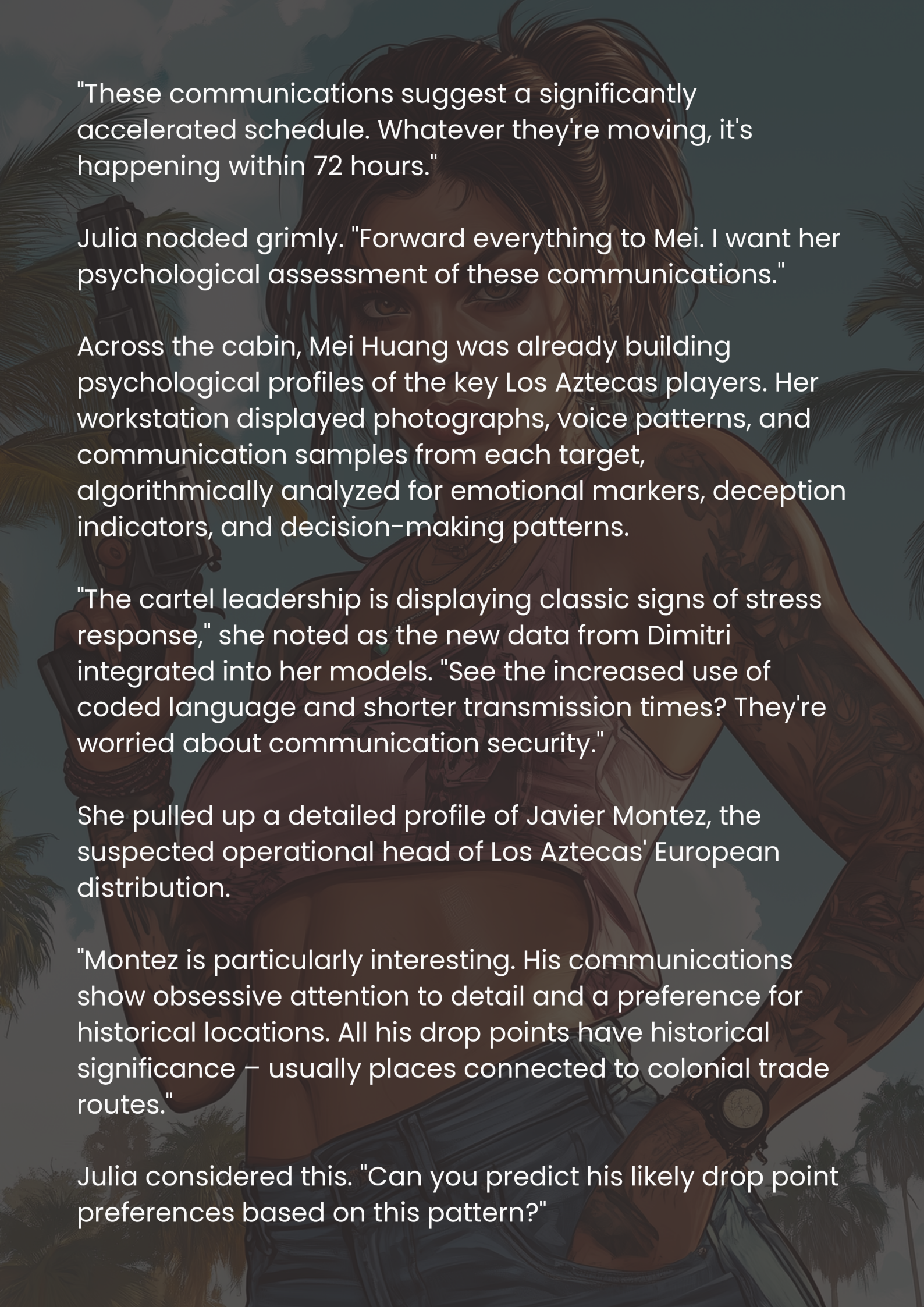
"Got you, you clever bastards," he muttered, a small smile playing at the corner of his mouth as his decryption algorithm finally broke through Los Aztecas' latest communication protocol.

Messages began populating his screen – communications between cartel cells from Florida to Spain and France. Most were routine, but one thread caught his attention immediately.

"Julia," he called out, not taking his eyes off the screen, "I think we have movement on 'Florida Snow.' Multiple references to a 'white package' being prepped for 'northern delivery.'"

The Overseer appeared at his shoulder almost instantly. "Timeframe?"

"That's the concerning part," Dimitri replied, highlighting several timestamp patterns.



"These communications suggest a significantly accelerated schedule. Whatever they're moving, it's happening within 72 hours."

Julia nodded grimly. "Forward everything to Mei. I want her psychological assessment of these communications."

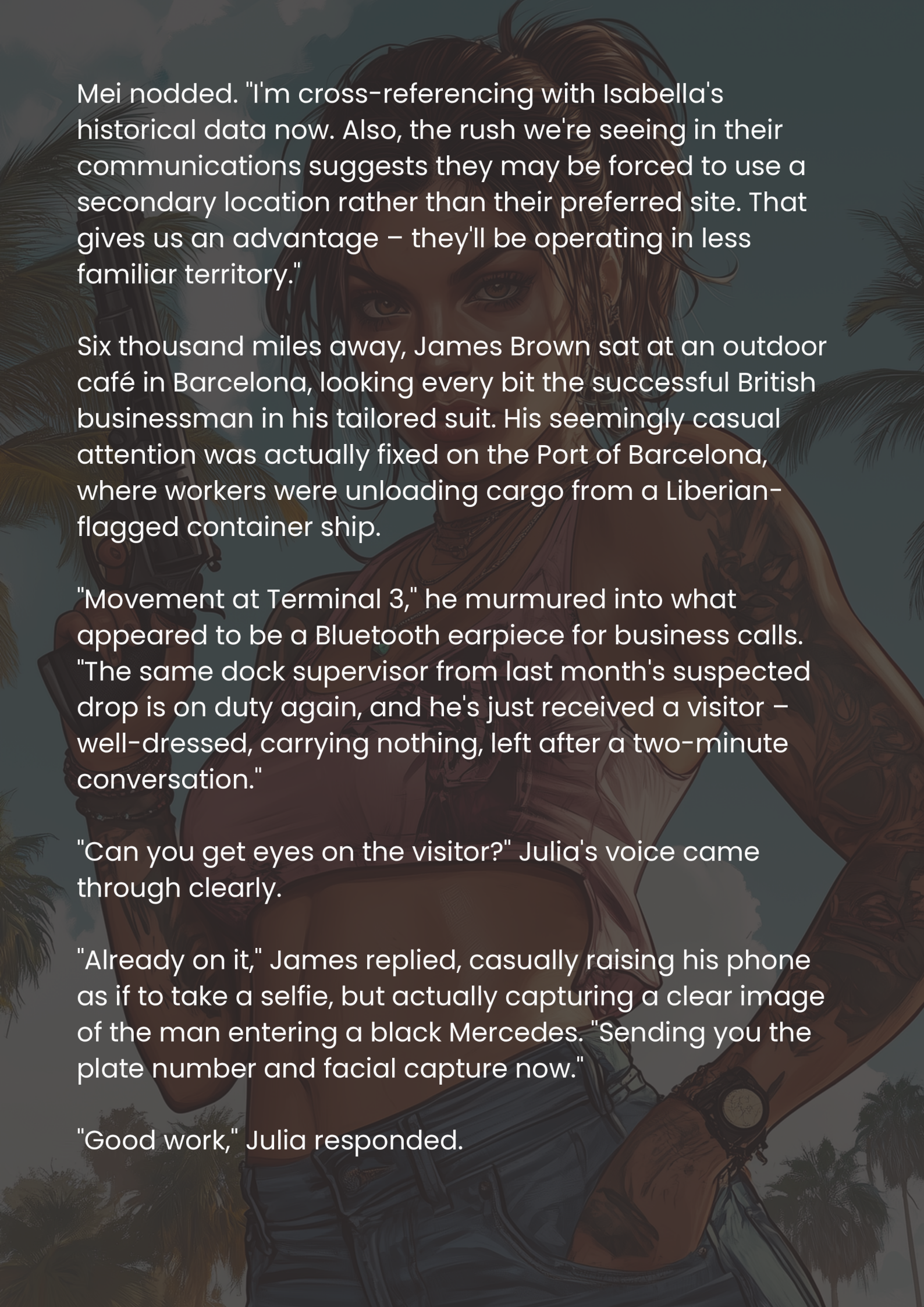
Across the cabin, Mei Huang was already building psychological profiles of the key Los Aztecas players. Her workstation displayed photographs, voice patterns, and communication samples from each target, algorithmically analyzed for emotional markers, deception indicators, and decision-making patterns.

"The cartel leadership is displaying classic signs of stress response," she noted as the new data from Dimitri integrated into her models. "See the increased use of coded language and shorter transmission times? They're worried about communication security."

She pulled up a detailed profile of Javier Montez, the suspected operational head of Los Aztecas' European distribution.

"Montez is particularly interesting. His communications show obsessive attention to detail and a preference for historical locations. All his drop points have historical significance – usually places connected to colonial trade routes."

Julia considered this. "Can you predict his likely drop point preferences based on this pattern?"



Mei nodded. "I'm cross-referencing with Isabella's historical data now. Also, the rush we're seeing in their communications suggests they may be forced to use a secondary location rather than their preferred site. That gives us an advantage – they'll be operating in less familiar territory."

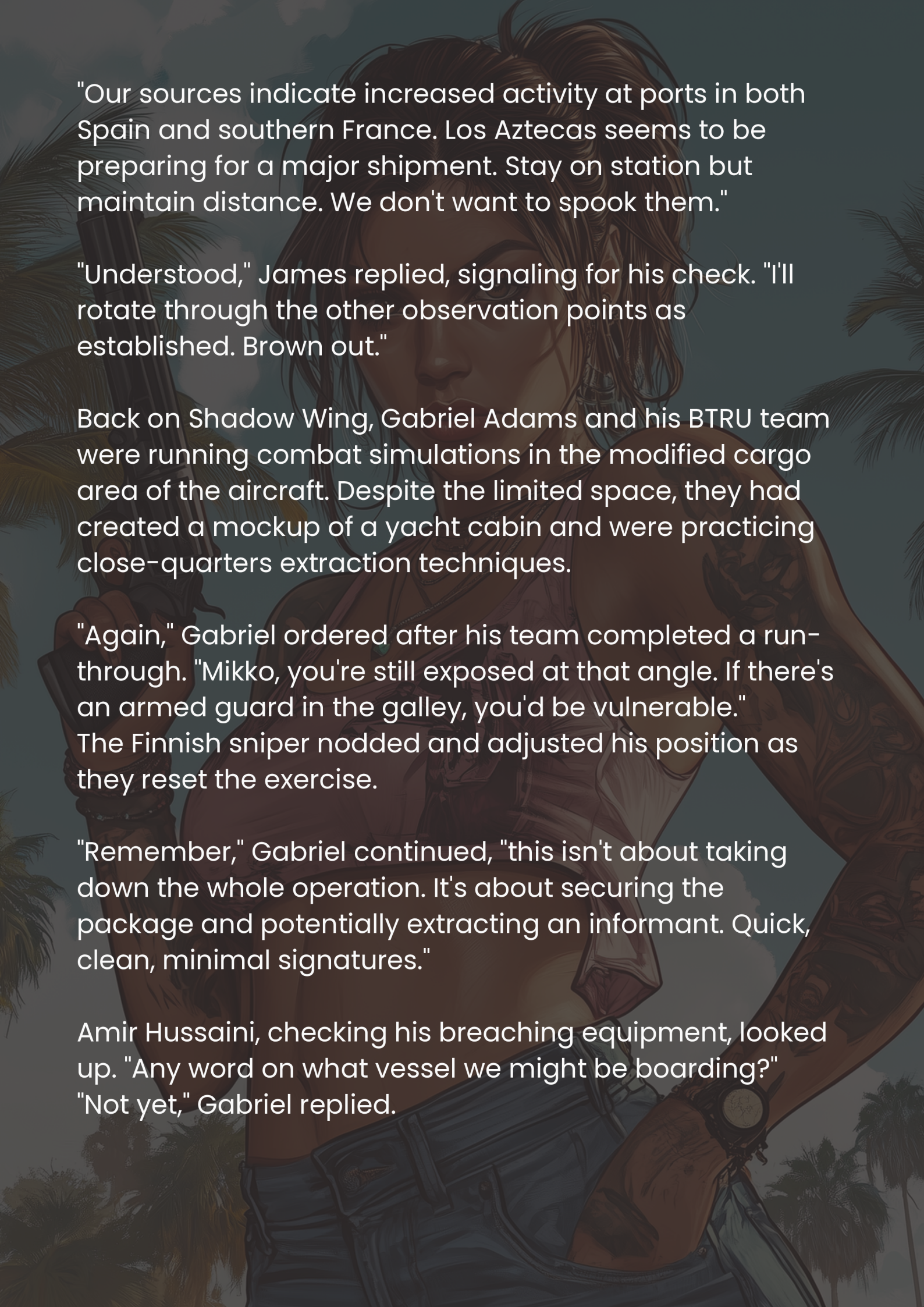
Six thousand miles away, James Brown sat at an outdoor café in Barcelona, looking every bit the successful British businessman in his tailored suit. His seemingly casual attention was actually fixed on the Port of Barcelona, where workers were unloading cargo from a Liberian-flagged container ship.

"Movement at Terminal 3," he murmured into what appeared to be a Bluetooth earpiece for business calls. "The same dock supervisor from last month's suspected drop is on duty again, and he's just received a visitor – well-dressed, carrying nothing, left after a two-minute conversation."

"Can you get eyes on the visitor?" Julia's voice came through clearly.

"Already on it," James replied, casually raising his phone as if to take a selfie, but actually capturing a clear image of the man entering a black Mercedes. "Sending you the plate number and facial capture now."

"Good work," Julia responded.



"Our sources indicate increased activity at ports in both Spain and southern France. Los Aztecas seems to be preparing for a major shipment. Stay on station but maintain distance. We don't want to spook them."

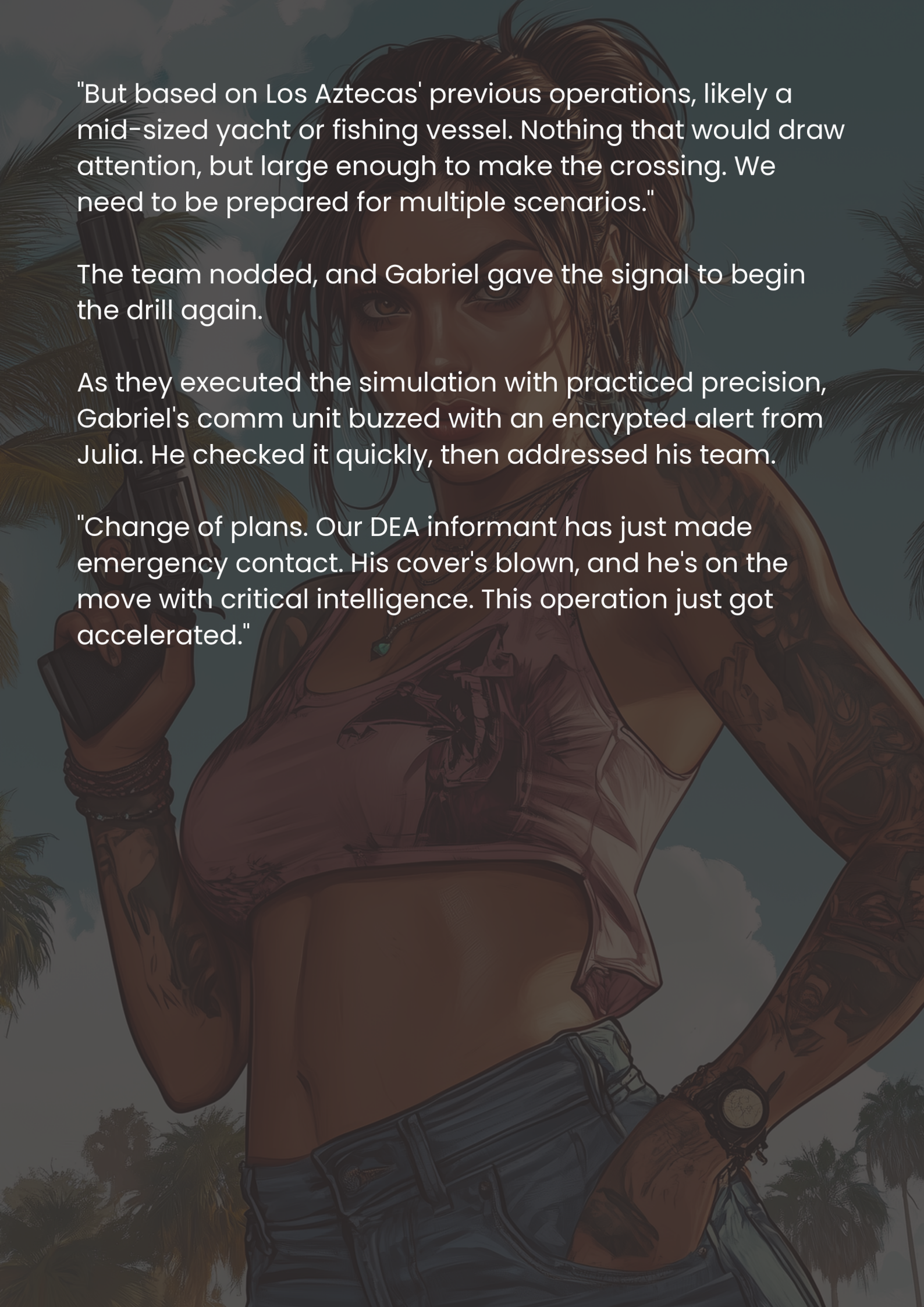
"Understood," James replied, signaling for his check. "I'll rotate through the other observation points as established. Brown out."

Back on Shadow Wing, Gabriel Adams and his BTRU team were running combat simulations in the modified cargo area of the aircraft. Despite the limited space, they had created a mockup of a yacht cabin and were practicing close-quarters extraction techniques.

"Again," Gabriel ordered after his team completed a run-through. "Mikko, you're still exposed at that angle. If there's an armed guard in the galley, you'd be vulnerable." The Finnish sniper nodded and adjusted his position as they reset the exercise.

"Remember," Gabriel continued, "this isn't about taking down the whole operation. It's about securing the package and potentially extracting an informant. Quick, clean, minimal signatures."

Amir Hussaini, checking his breaching equipment, looked up. "Any word on what vessel we might be boarding?" "Not yet," Gabriel replied.

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a light-colored crop top and blue jeans, is holding a handgun in her right hand. She has extensive tattoos on her arms and is wearing a black watch on her left wrist. The background is a tropical setting with palm trees and a cloudy sky.

"But based on Los Aztecas' previous operations, likely a mid-sized yacht or fishing vessel. Nothing that would draw attention, but large enough to make the crossing. We need to be prepared for multiple scenarios."

The team nodded, and Gabriel gave the signal to begin the drill again.

As they executed the simulation with practiced precision, Gabriel's comm unit buzzed with an encrypted alert from Julia. He checked it quickly, then addressed his team.

"Change of plans. Our DEA informant has just made emergency contact. His cover's blown, and he's on the move with critical intelligence. This operation just got accelerated."

Chapter 3: Zero Hour

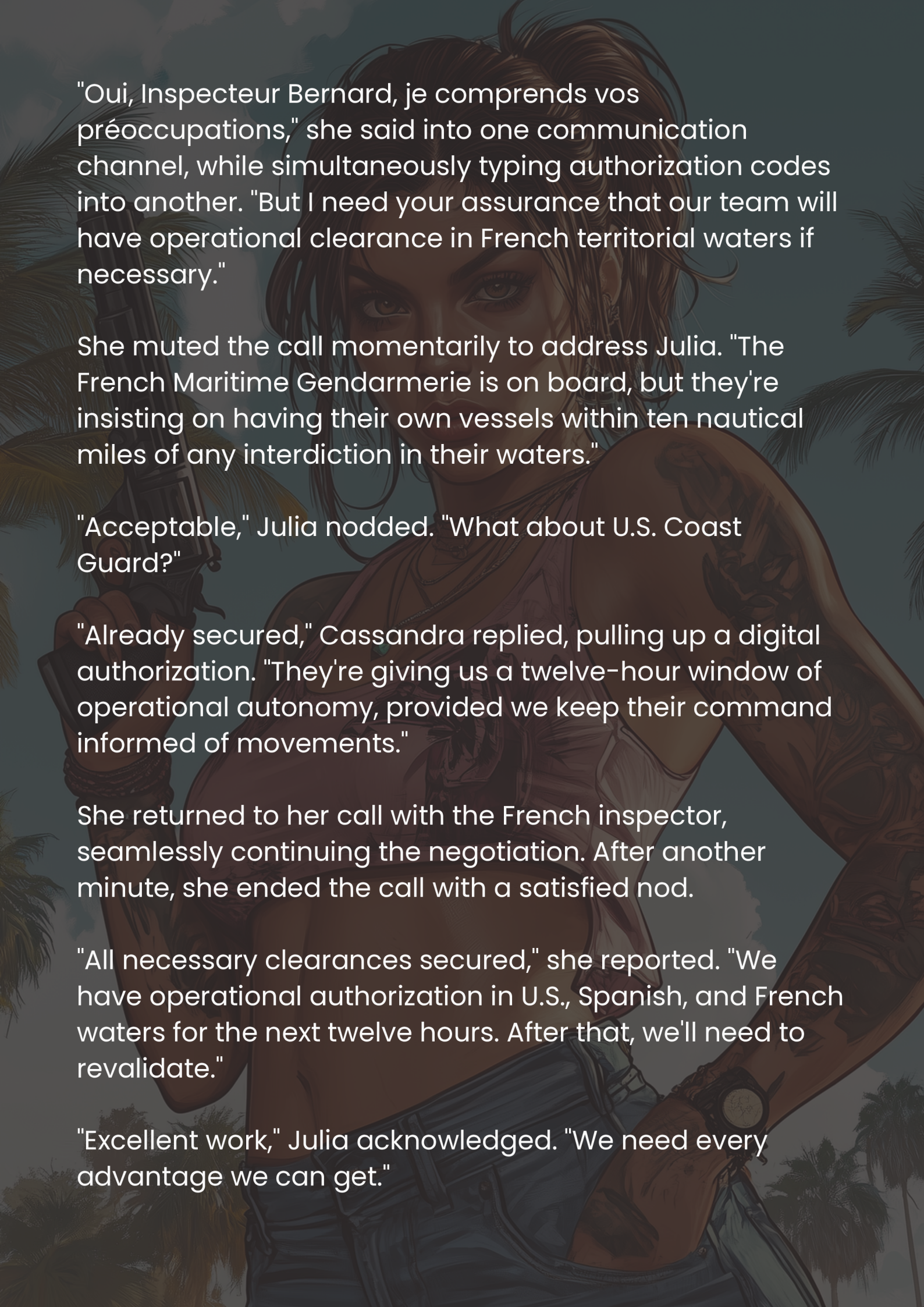
"Adjusting flight path now," Pablo Iglesias announced from the cockpit of Shadow Wing as he banked the modified Bombardier smoothly toward the Florida Keys. "We'll be within optimal range in seventeen minutes."

Beside him, Peter Jansen was already programming multiple contingency flight plans into the aircraft's advanced navigation system. "Setting up rapid deployment vectors for both European destinations and Caribbean alternatives. If they change course mid-transport, we'll be ready."

"Good," Julia's voice came through their headsets. "The DEA has extracted their informant, but it was messy. Los Aztecas knows they've been compromised, which means they'll either abort or accelerate their shipment."

"My money's on accelerate," Pablo said, checking the fuel systems. "Cartel organizations like this have too much invested to walk away. They'll push forward but change the parameters."

"Agreed," Peter said. "I've added three additional emergency landing options near suspected secondary drop points. If they go off-book, we'll need to be flexible." In the main cabin of Shadow Wing, Cassandra Laurent was engaged in rapid-fire conversations in three languages – her native French, fluent Spanish, and precise English – coordinating with diplomatic and law enforcement contacts across two continents.

A woman with dark hair and multiple tattoos is shown from the chest up. She is wearing a dark, low-cut top and a watch on her left wrist. She is holding a handgun in her right hand. The background is a tropical scene with palm trees and a sunset sky. The text is overlaid on the image.

"Oui, Inspecteur Bernard, je comprends vos préoccupations," she said into one communication channel, while simultaneously typing authorization codes into another. "But I need your assurance that our team will have operational clearance in French territorial waters if necessary."

She muted the call momentarily to address Julia. "The French Maritime Gendarmerie is on board, but they're insisting on having their own vessels within ten nautical miles of any interdiction in their waters."

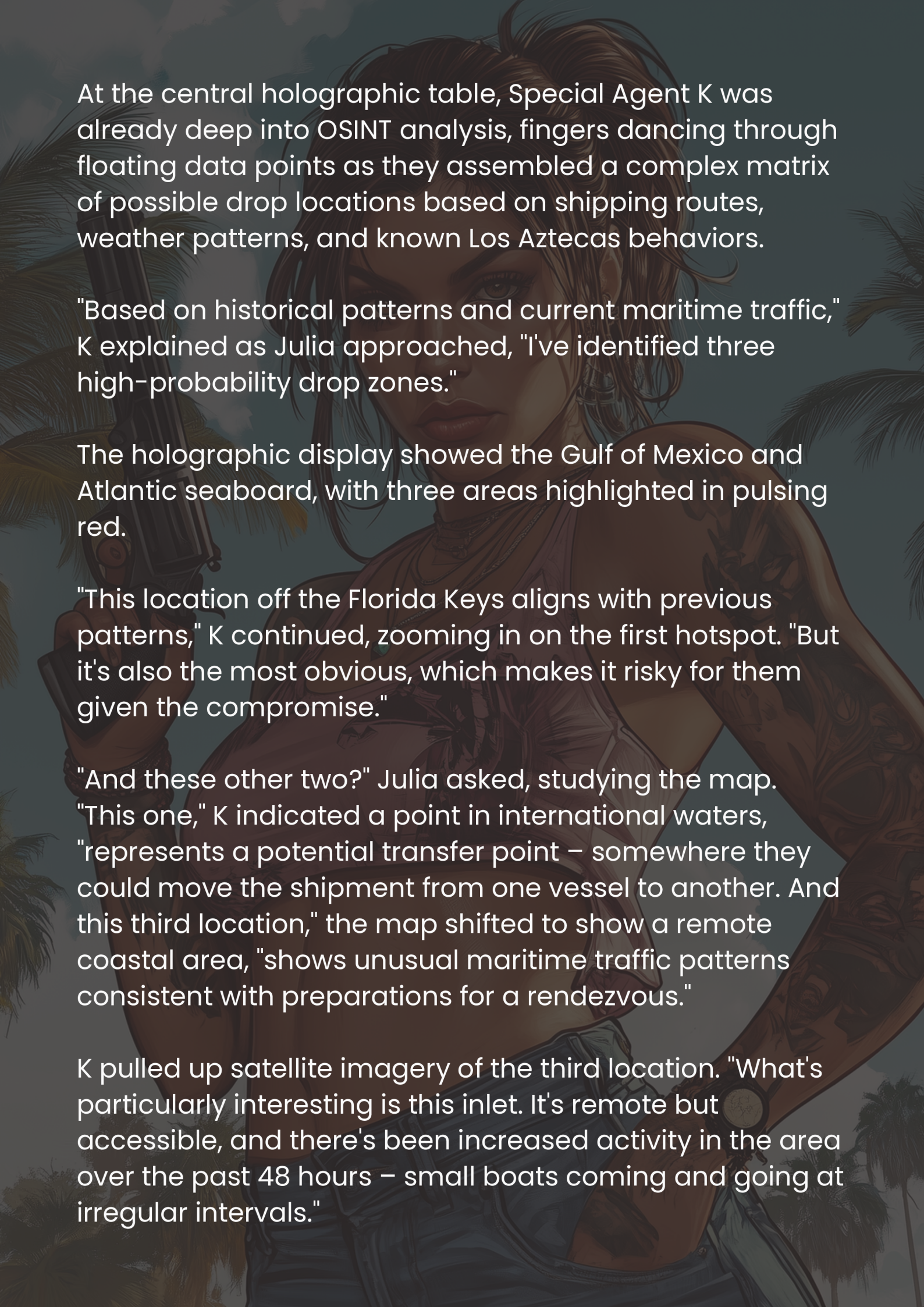
"Acceptable," Julia nodded. "What about U.S. Coast Guard?"

"Already secured," Cassandra replied, pulling up a digital authorization. "They're giving us a twelve-hour window of operational autonomy, provided we keep their command informed of movements."

She returned to her call with the French inspector, seamlessly continuing the negotiation. After another minute, she ended the call with a satisfied nod.

"All necessary clearances secured," she reported. "We have operational authorization in U.S., Spanish, and French waters for the next twelve hours. After that, we'll need to revalidate."

"Excellent work," Julia acknowledged. "We need every advantage we can get."



At the central holographic table, Special Agent K was already deep into OSINT analysis, fingers dancing through floating data points as they assembled a complex matrix of possible drop locations based on shipping routes, weather patterns, and known Los Aztecas behaviors.

"Based on historical patterns and current maritime traffic," K explained as Julia approached, "I've identified three high-probability drop zones."

The holographic display showed the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic seaboard, with three areas highlighted in pulsing red.

"This location off the Florida Keys aligns with previous patterns," K continued, zooming in on the first hotspot. "But it's also the most obvious, which makes it risky for them given the compromise."

"And these other two?" Julia asked, studying the map. "This one," K indicated a point in international waters, "represents a potential transfer point – somewhere they could move the shipment from one vessel to another. And this third location," the map shifted to show a remote coastal area, "shows unusual maritime traffic patterns consistent with preparations for a rendezvous."

K pulled up satellite imagery of the third location. "What's particularly interesting is this inlet. It's remote but accessible, and there's been increased activity in the area over the past 48 hours – small boats coming and going at irregular intervals."



"Reconnaissance," Julia suggested.

"That's my assessment," K agreed. "They're checking for surveillance, establishing escape routes, and preparing contingencies."

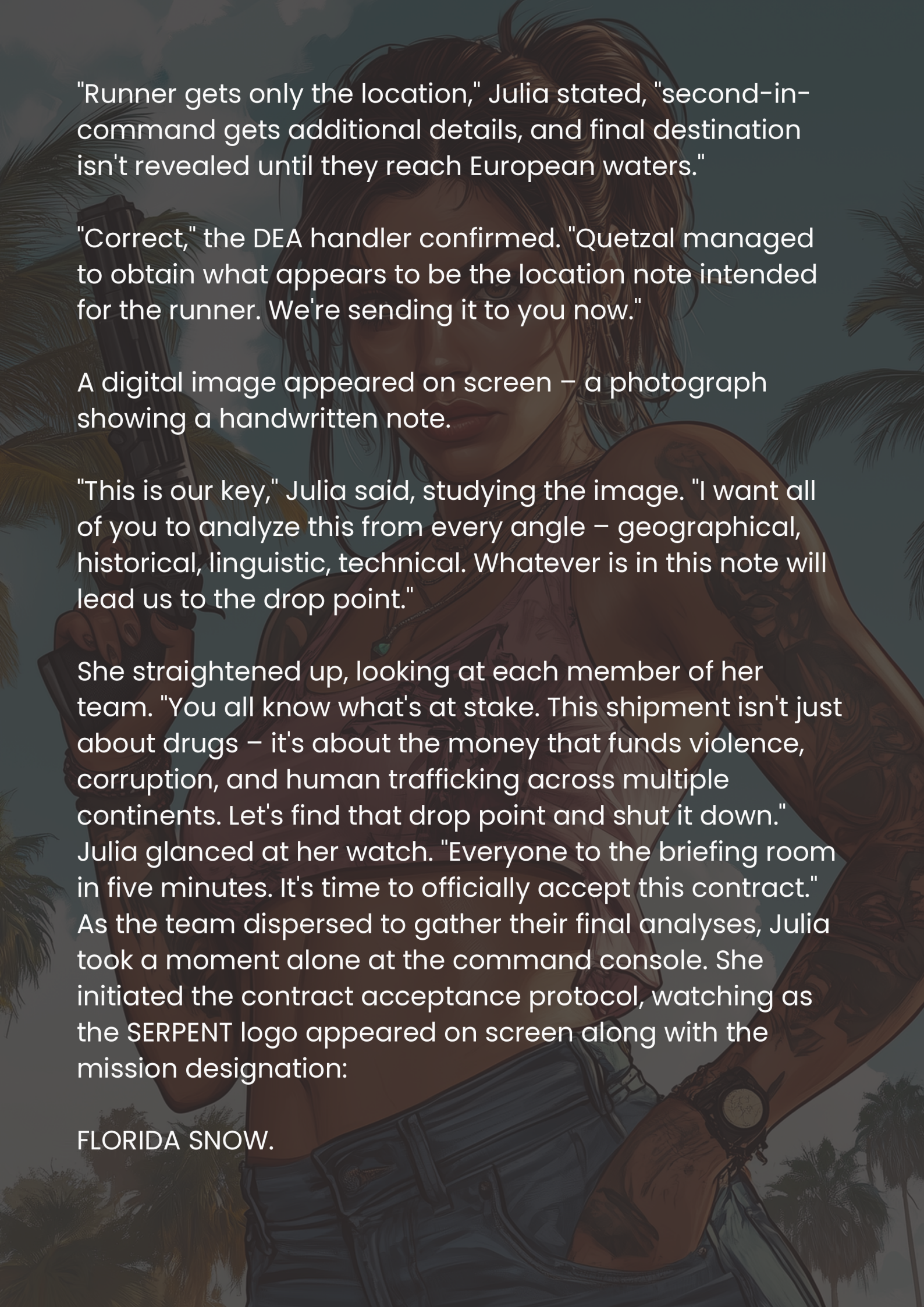
Julia studied the data for a moment. "Good work. Keep monitoring all three locations, but focus on that third site. If they're putting resources into prep work there, it merits our primary attention."

The mood on Shadow Wing shifted dramatically when an encrypted transmission came through on the DEA's emergency channel. Julia immediately routed it to the main display as the team gathered around.

The face of a DEA handler appeared, looking tense but controlled. "Overseer, our informant Quetzal has been successfully extracted. He's injured but stable. More importantly, he's provided critical intelligence on the Florida Snow operation."

"What do we have?" Julia asked.

"Los Aztecas is moving approximately two hundred kilos of uncut cocaine, street value around twelve million euros. The shipment is being prepped now, with departure imminent – within the next six hours. Quetzal wasn't given the exact drop coordinates, but he confirms they're using their standard protocol."



"Runner gets only the location," Julia stated, "second-in-command gets additional details, and final destination isn't revealed until they reach European waters."

"Correct," the DEA handler confirmed. "Quetzal managed to obtain what appears to be the location note intended for the runner. We're sending it to you now."

A digital image appeared on screen – a photograph showing a handwritten note.

"This is our key," Julia said, studying the image. "I want all of you to analyze this from every angle – geographical, historical, linguistic, technical. Whatever is in this note will lead us to the drop point."

She straightened up, looking at each member of her team. "You all know what's at stake. This shipment isn't just about drugs – it's about the money that funds violence, corruption, and human trafficking across multiple continents. Let's find that drop point and shut it down." Julia glanced at her watch. "Everyone to the briefing room in five minutes. It's time to officially accept this contract." As the team dispersed to gather their final analyses, Julia took a moment alone at the command console. She initiated the contract acceptance protocol, watching as the SERPENT logo appeared on screen along with the mission designation:

FLORIDA SNOW.



Briefing

Greetings, Special Agent.

We're currently investigating a drug smuggling operation on behalf of the DEA. They are in the process of infiltrating a drug trafficking operation, backed by the Mexican cartels. Moving mostly cocaine from Florida to Spain or France. The group, going by the name "Los Aztecas" adhere to very strict need-to-know policies and practice great opsec. So far we know they don't inform their runners of a new shipment until a few hours before departure.

The runner is supplied with a note, detailing the location and nothing more. The second in command for that run is provided with the additional information. As a last piece, the final destination isn't sent until they reach the waters of whatever country they're going to. Two hours ago, our friends over at the DEA received the latest run information from their informant in Los Aztecas. As you might have guessed, we need you to geolocate the drop point. We have no idea where in the world this is, that's where your expertise comes in.

As always, Special Agent, the contract is yours, if you choose to accept.



Materials

starting-image-florida-snow.png

Answer Instruction

Use the answer to unlock the flagfile, this will reward you with your badge.

Answer Format: country-city-streetname

Flagfile

Be advised, the flagfile is an encrypted ZIP. Make sure your OS supports the ZIP format. Ensure the password contains no hidden characters or formatting.

PS: Don't forget to claim your Coins and XP, by posting your card in the #card-brag channel in Discord.

<https://discord.hacktoria.com>

Write-Up

There is an attached file called a write-up, this will give you the answer in case you get stuck.

Acknowledgements

This challenge was made by Frank Diepmaat.