



# WITCHAMORRA

INVESTIGATE A  
SUSPICIOUS ARCHIVE AND  
UNCOVER A HIDDEN PLOT

# THE RAID



# Chapter 1: Signals in the Dark

0230 UTC – Undisclosed FBI Storage Facility, Virginia

Fox Meyer rubbed his tired eyes as he stared at the constellation of data points flickering across his tablet. The cavernous FBI warehouse around him hummed with the gentle whir of cooling fans from the racks of seized servers. Three days of non-stop analysis and he was finally seeing a pattern.

"You're a stubborn one," he muttered, tracing a finger along a particularly elusive signal pathway.

His comm unit chimed, the subtle tone indicating a message from Shadow Wing. Fox tapped his earpiece. "Tell me you found something," came Dimitri Zechev's accented voice.

"Maybe. These signals are unlike anything I've seen before," Fox replied, transferring the data to Shadow Wing's secure server. "They're using a form of quantum entanglement communication that shouldn't be possible with current technology."

"Sending you a secure link. Special Agent K wants to weigh in."

Fox's tablet screen split, revealing your face alongside Dimitri's. Your expression was focused, analytical—the look that always preceded a breakthrough.





"Agent K, you seeing this?" Fox asked.

"I am," you replied, your eyes scanning the data with practiced efficiency. "These patterns match something I tracked three weeks ago. Remember that anomaly in Eastern Europe?"

Fox nodded. Three weeks earlier, you had detected strange transmission bursts emanating from servers across six countries simultaneously. What initially seemed like random noise revealed itself as an elaborate web of communications when properly decoded—signatures of a massive criminal enterprise.

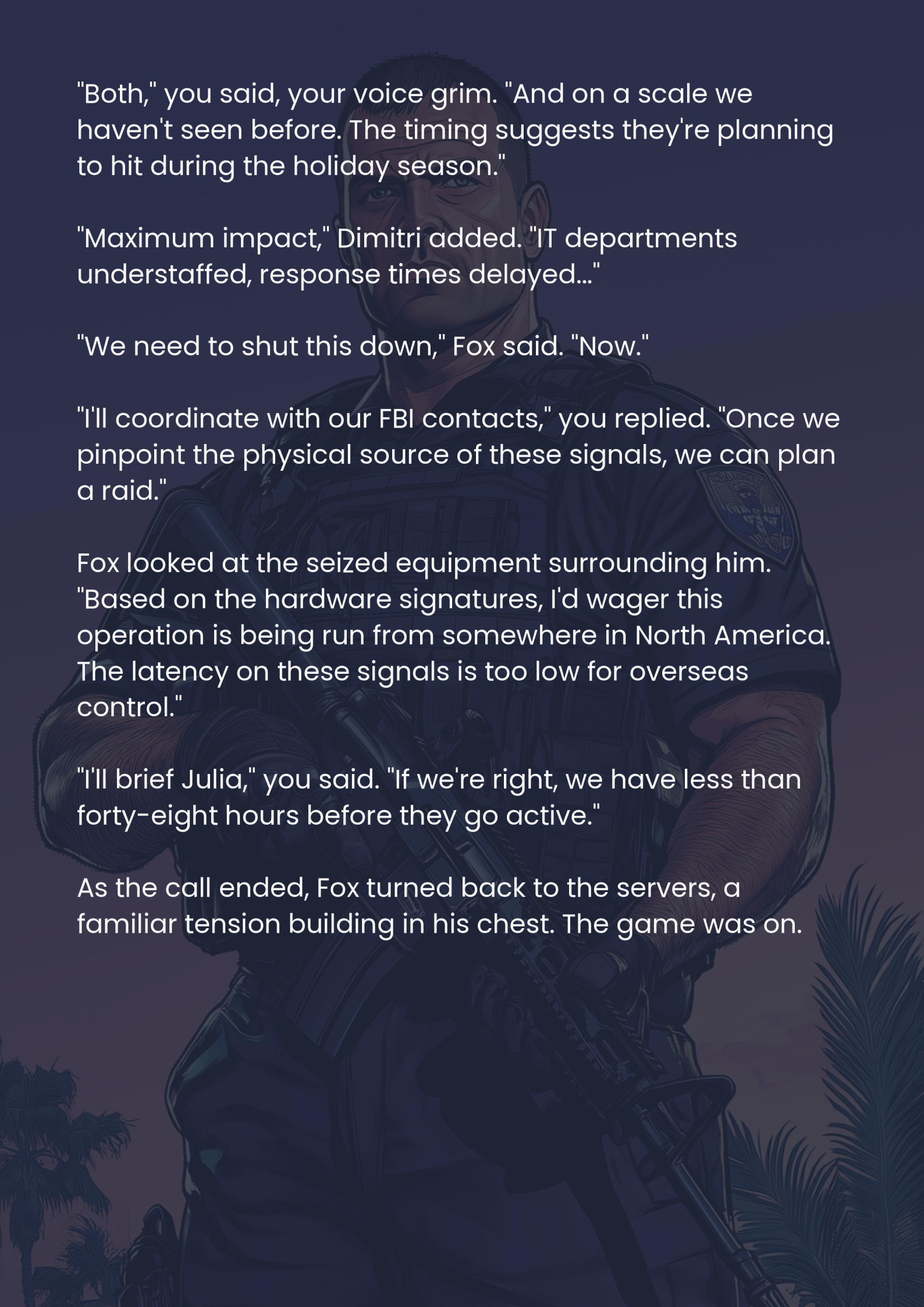
"Dimitri, can you cross-reference these signals with our Budapest findings?" you asked.

Dimitri's fingers danced across his keyboard, his face illuminated by multiple screens. "Already on it. Running pattern recognition algorithms now."

The Bulgarian tech specialist whistled low. "We've got matching signatures across the board. Same encryption, same timing intervals. But there's something else..." He paused, focusing intently on a particular data set. "These aren't just communications protocols—they're command and control signals for a massive botnet. I'm talking tens of thousands of compromised machines."

Fox leaned back against a server rack. "So we're looking at preparations for a coordinated attack? DDoS? Ransomware?"





"Both," you said, your voice grim. "And on a scale we haven't seen before. The timing suggests they're planning to hit during the holiday season."

"Maximum impact," Dimitri added. "IT departments understaffed, response times delayed..."

"We need to shut this down," Fox said. "Now."

"I'll coordinate with our FBI contacts," you replied. "Once we pinpoint the physical source of these signals, we can plan a raid."

Fox looked at the seized equipment surrounding him. "Based on the hardware signatures, I'd wager this operation is being run from somewhere in North America. The latency on these signals is too low for overseas control."

"I'll brief Julia," you said. "If we're right, we have less than forty-eight hours before they go active."

As the call ended, Fox turned back to the servers, a familiar tension building in his chest. The game was on.



## Chapter 2: The Raid

1930 UTC – Downtown Detroit, Michigan

James Brown adjusted his ill-fitting security uniform and checked his watch. Twenty-three minutes until the FBI would storm the nondescript office building housing one of the largest cybercriminal operations in the western hemisphere.

"Security check complete on floor twelve," he murmured into his radio, the British accent carefully masked beneath a flat American drawl.

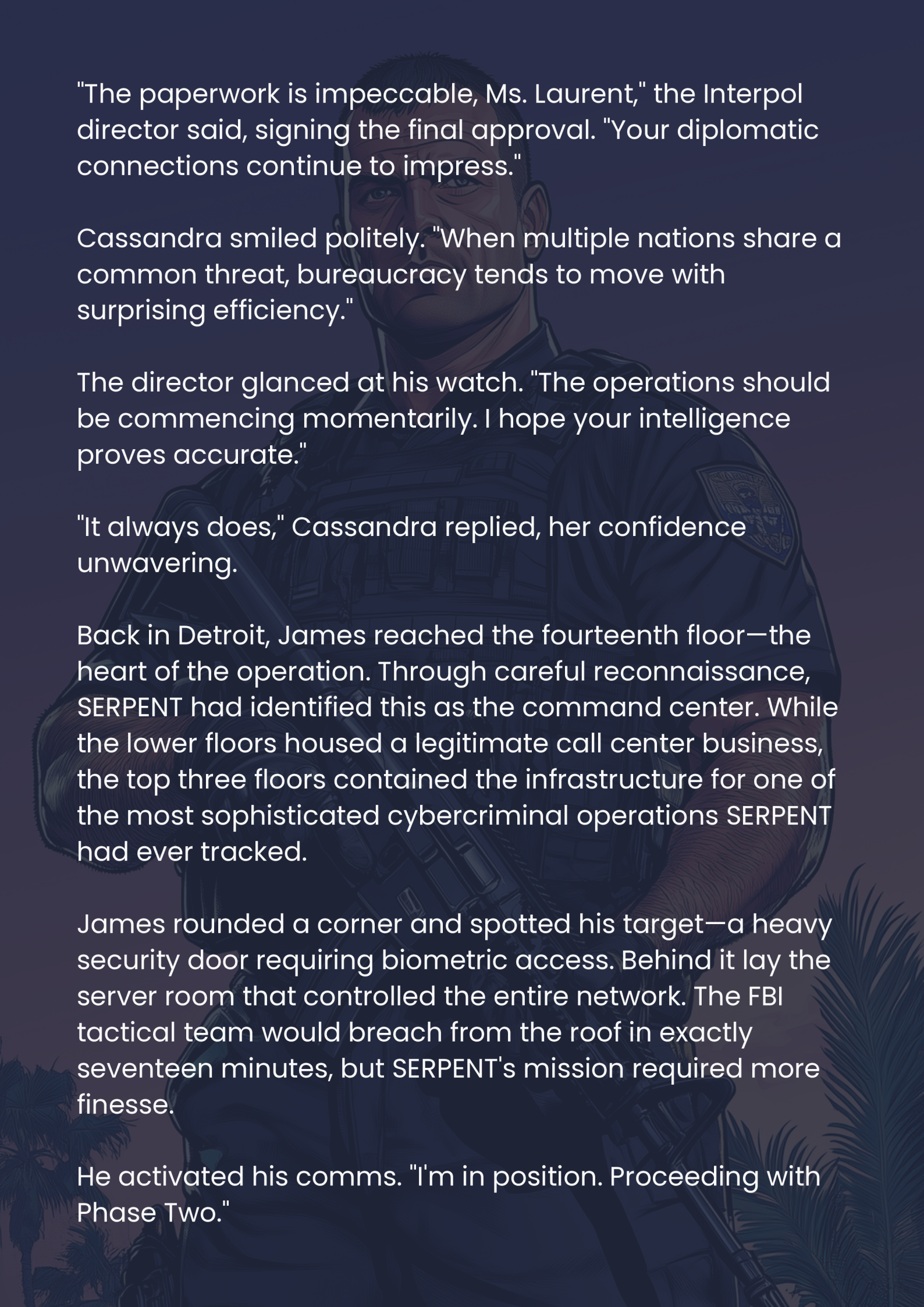
The voice that replied belonged to an FBI agent posing as dispatch. "Copy that. Proceed to floor fourteen."

James entered the elevator, swiping the security card he'd cloned three days earlier. As the doors closed, he discreetly checked the small device in his pocket—a signal jammer Dimitri had developed specifically for this operation.

Once activated, it would lock down the building's escape routes and prevent any remote data destruction commands from being transmitted.

Four thousand miles away in Brussels, Cassandra Laurent was finishing a carefully orchestrated meeting with Interpol officials, providing the international authorization needed for simultaneous raids across three continents.





"The paperwork is impeccable, Ms. Laurent," the Interpol director said, signing the final approval. "Your diplomatic connections continue to impress."

Cassandra smiled politely. "When multiple nations share a common threat, bureaucracy tends to move with surprising efficiency."

The director glanced at his watch. "The operations should be commencing momentarily. I hope your intelligence proves accurate."

"It always does," Cassandra replied, her confidence unwavering.

Back in Detroit, James reached the fourteenth floor—the heart of the operation. Through careful reconnaissance, SERPENT had identified this as the command center. While the lower floors housed a legitimate call center business, the top three floors contained the infrastructure for one of the most sophisticated cybercriminal operations SERPENT had ever tracked.

James rounded a corner and spotted his target—a heavy security door requiring biometric access. Behind it lay the server room that controlled the entire network. The FBI tactical team would breach from the roof in exactly seventeen minutes, but SERPENT's mission required more finesse.

He activated his comms. "I'm in position. Proceeding with Phase Two."





"Copy that," came your voice. "Dimitri is ready to execute the network intrusion."

James approached the security panel and discreetly attached a small device to its underside. "Dimitri, you're up."

In Shadow Wing, Dimitri's fingers flew across his keyboard. "Bypassing security now. You should have access in three... two... one..."

The security panel beeped softly, and the red light turned green. James slipped inside, closing the door behind him. The server room hummed with activity—banks of equipment running hot, their status lights blinking in hypnotic patterns. James quickly identified the main terminal and inserted a specialized drive.

"I'm in. Uploading the backdoor now."

"Receiving data," Dimitri confirmed. "I've got access to their network. Beginning extraction."

As Dimitri worked, James scanned the room, noting the positions of security cameras and additional safeguards. Something caught his eye—a desk in the corner where a lone figure sat hunched over a laptop.

"We have company," James whispered. "One operator still on-site."





The figure suddenly looked up, alerted by some silent alarm. For a moment, their eyes met—James in his security uniform, the operator with his finger hovering over a key.

"He's triggering a wipe protocol!" Dimitri shouted through the comms.

James moved instantly, but the operator was faster. A single keystroke, and the screens throughout the room began flashing with deletion warnings.

Outside, sirens wailed as FBI vehicles surrounded the building. The raid had begun—two minutes early.

"What happened to our timeline?" James demanded, restraining the operator who fought with surprising strength.

"They detected Dimitri's intrusion," you replied, your voice tense. "FBI had to move early."

The door burst open as tactical teams flooded in, weapons raised. James identified himself quickly, stepping aside as they secured the operator.

"The systems are wiping," James told the FBI team leader. "We're losing data."

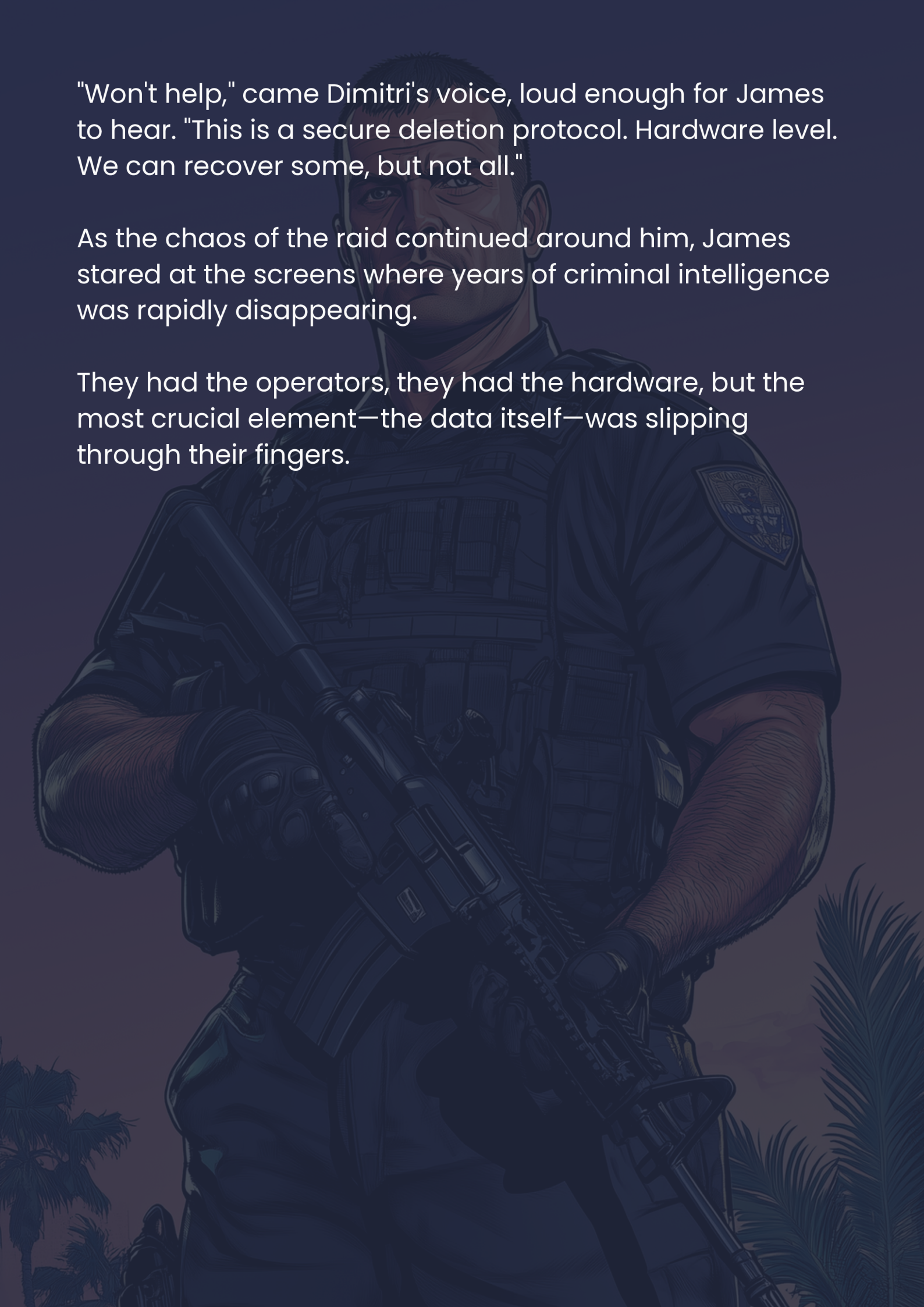
"Shut it all down," the agent ordered.



"Won't help," came Dimitri's voice, loud enough for James to hear. "This is a secure deletion protocol. Hardware level. We can recover some, but not all."

As the chaos of the raid continued around him, James stared at the screens where years of criminal intelligence was rapidly disappearing.

They had the operators, they had the hardware, but the most crucial element—the data itself—was slipping through their fingers.





## Chapter 3: Summons

1400 UTC – Shadow Wing, Airspace over the Atlantic

Mei Huang studied the psychological profiles of the twelve key suspects captured during the raids. Her office aboard Shadow Wing was quiet except for the subtle hum of the aircraft's engines. After twenty hours of interviews and analysis, patterns were emerging.

"The leader is still missing," she announced as Isabella Moreno entered with two cups of coffee.

Isabella set one cup beside Mei's tablet. "How can you be sure?"

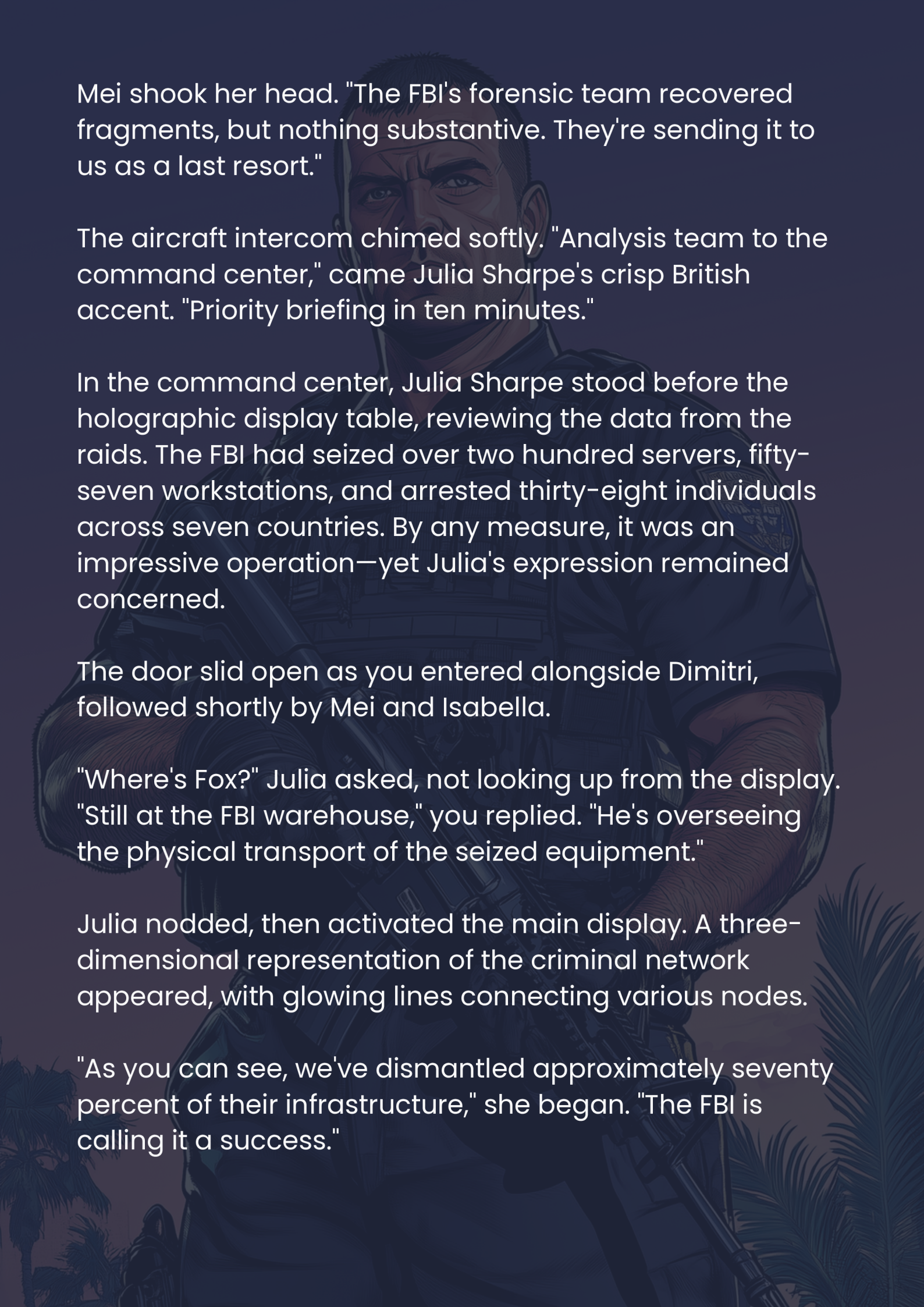
"The deference patterns in their communications," Mei replied, accepting the coffee gratefully. "And their psychological profiles. These are mid-level operators—skilled technicians, but not architects."

Isabella nodded, pulling up her own research on a nearby screen. "It fits the historical pattern. This group operates similarly to the Silk Road networks of the 2010s, but with significantly improved operational security."

"Decentralized leadership, compartmentalized knowledge," Mei added. "Classic cell structure."

"What about the wiped laptop?" Isabella asked. "Any progress?"





Mei shook her head. "The FBI's forensic team recovered fragments, but nothing substantive. They're sending it to us as a last resort."

The aircraft intercom chimed softly. "Analysis team to the command center," came Julia Sharpe's crisp British accent. "Priority briefing in ten minutes."

In the command center, Julia Sharpe stood before the holographic display table, reviewing the data from the raids. The FBI had seized over two hundred servers, fifty-seven workstations, and arrested thirty-eight individuals across seven countries. By any measure, it was an impressive operation—yet Julia's expression remained concerned.

The door slid open as you entered alongside Dimitri, followed shortly by Mei and Isabella.

"Where's Fox?" Julia asked, not looking up from the display. "Still at the FBI warehouse," you replied. "He's overseeing the physical transport of the seized equipment."

Julia nodded, then activated the main display. A three-dimensional representation of the criminal network appeared, with glowing lines connecting various nodes.

"As you can see, we've dismantled approximately seventy percent of their infrastructure," she began. "The FBI is calling it a success."





"But?" Dimitri prompted, hearing the unspoken reservation in her tone.

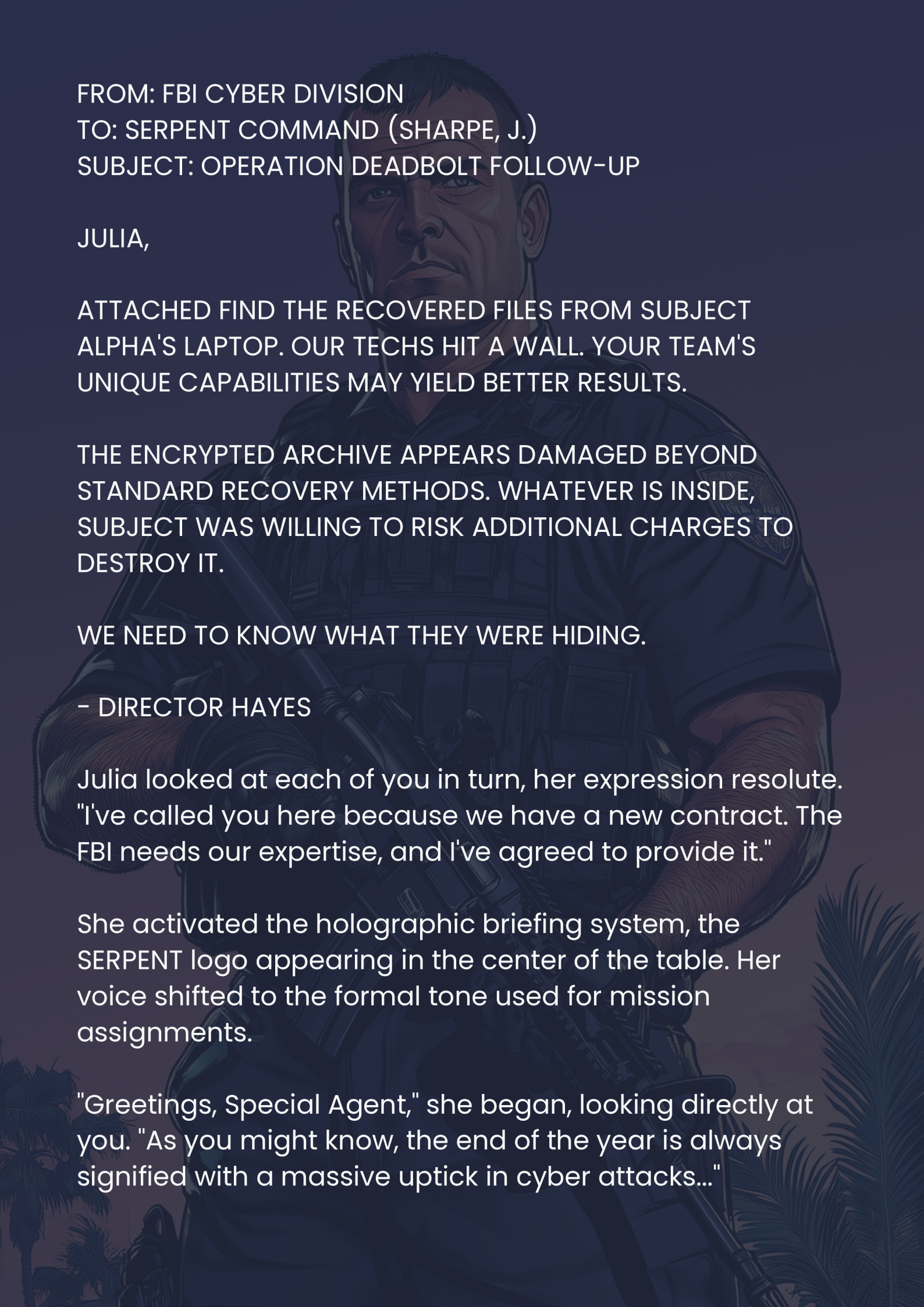
"But we're missing something critical," Julia replied, zooming in on a specific section of the network diagram. "The FBI recovered most of the deleted files from their servers, but one laptop remains particularly problematic."

The display shifted to show a detailed forensic analysis of a damaged hard drive. "This belonged to someone important—possibly the operation's architect. They initiated a specialized wiping protocol the moment the raid began."

"Can we recover anything?" you asked, studying the fragmented data patterns.

"The FBI's best couldn't," Julia said, turning to face the team fully. "Which is why they've sent it to us." She tapped a command, and a secure message appeared on the display:





FROM: FBI CYBER DIVISION  
TO: SERPENT COMMAND (SHARPE, J.)  
SUBJECT: OPERATION DEADBOLT FOLLOW-UP

JULIA,

ATTACHED FIND THE RECOVERED FILES FROM SUBJECT ALPHA'S LAPTOP. OUR TECHS HIT A WALL. YOUR TEAM'S UNIQUE CAPABILITIES MAY YIELD BETTER RESULTS.

THE ENCRYPTED ARCHIVE APPEARS DAMAGED BEYOND STANDARD RECOVERY METHODS. WHATEVER IS INSIDE, SUBJECT WAS WILLING TO RISK ADDITIONAL CHARGES TO DESTROY IT.

WE NEED TO KNOW WHAT THEY WERE HIDING.

- DIRECTOR HAYES

Julia looked at each of you in turn, her expression resolute. "I've called you here because we have a new contract. The FBI needs our expertise, and I've agreed to provide it."

She activated the holographic briefing system, the SERPENT logo appearing in the center of the table. Her voice shifted to the formal tone used for mission assignments.

"Greetings, Special Agent," she began, looking directly at you. "As you might know, the end of the year is always signified with a massive uptick in cyber attacks..."



# Briefing



Greetings, Special Agent.

As you might know, the end of the year is always signified with a massive uptick in cyber attacks. Particularly DDoS and Ransomware attacks are commonplace during this time of the year. It's also the time of the year for agencies worldwide, to crack down on the criminal enterprises destroying the downtime of IT personnel everywhere. Our good friends over at the FBI have done just that. Yesterday morning around 0400 UTC they were able to seize a warehouse full of C2 servers, crypto miners and an entire scam call-center rolled into one.

During this bust, several laptops of key individuals were confiscated. There was however one laptop of which the owner was able to wipe the disk, right as the raid was happening. The FBI was able to recover most of the files, but is left puzzled at several of them. You might already feel this one coming. One of these archives was sent our way to be investigated. Find out what you can about the file inside the archive. It seems to have been damaged beyond the point of recovery, but the FBI has hopes our best and brightest can uncover something.

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



# Materials

data-the-raid.zip

## Answer Instruction

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

The answer starts with "flag-"  
MD5 Checksum for the files:  
2625ae7c180080e580551347831362d7

## 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.