

HAZARD

A man in a blue suit and brown tie stands in a dark, narrow street at night. He is holding a handgun in his right hand. The background shows a building with a sign that says "KIDNAP" and a street lamp. The man has a serious expression.

A GRIPPING TALE OF
BLACKMAIL, ESPIONAGE
AND OPSEC FAILURES

THE RUSSIAN BLACKMAILER

Prologue

The soft hum of the Bombardier Global 8000's engines provided a steady backbeat to the tension aboard Shadow Wing. Special Agent K stared at the bank of monitors lining the wall of the ASIC command center, each screen displaying fragments of information about their latest contract.

Julia stood at the head of the holographic command table, her normally composed demeanor betraying a hint of concern. "This one's different," she said, brushing a strand of hair from her face. "It's personal."

The image of a young man appeared on the main display—James's university friend, Quincy Parker. His face was pale, eyes wide with a mixture of fear and embarrassment as he explained the situation during the recorded video call.

"It started with this email," Quincy's voice trembled slightly. "Claiming they had... compromising footage of me. I thought it was just another scam until I saw the attached video."

Special Agent K studied Quincy's file as it appeared on a secondary display. James and Quincy had met during their first year at Cambridge—roommates assigned by chance who became inseparable friends.

While James had pursued the path that eventually led him to MI6 and then SERPENT, Quincy had chosen cybersecurity, working to protect critical infrastructure across the UK. Their friendship had endured despite James's secretive career, with Quincy being one of the few civilians who knew anything of James's work, though not the full scope of SERPENT's operations.

They'd been through everything together—family losses, career challenges, even a narrow escape from a hostage situation during a holiday in Istanbul that had cemented their bond. Now, looking at Quincy's terrified expression, it was clear why James was taking this personally. This wasn't just a friend; this was family.

Dimitri leaned forward, fingers dancing across his keyboard. "The attachments are interesting. Two emails and a video file. The blackmailer must be amateur hour—leaving metadata intact."

Mei studied Quincy's microexpressions on the screen. "He's genuinely frightened, despite the follow-up email claiming it was just a prank. The psychological impact of targeted blackmail shouldn't be underestimated."

"Where's James now?" Special Agent K asked, eyes still fixed on the screens. "We've pulled him from field operations," Julia replied, her British accent more pronounced under stress. "His proximity to the victim makes him a liability on this one. Besides, he's taking it personally—his friend is terrified."

Gabriel, who had been silently observing from the doorway, stepped into the room. "BTRU is on standby if we need extraction. Just say the word."

Fox joined them, placing a tablet on the table. "I've been in touch with Klumgongyn. The Volracs have seen similar patterns before—Russian intelligence using locals for low-level operations. Sometimes these 'freelancers' go rogue, try to run their own game."

Isabella pointed to a section of Russian text extracted from the video file. "The language, the methodology—it fits certain FSB patterns, but something feels off. Like someone trying too hard to look official."

The holographic display shifted to reveal both emails and several still frames from the video evidence. Fragments of a puzzle waiting to be assembled.

"The blackmailer made a critical mistake," Julia said, zooming in on one of the video frames. "They've left breadcrumbs. Digital footprints that could lead us right to their doorstep."

She turned to face Special Agent K directly. "This is where you come in. Your OSINT expertise is exactly what we need. The video contains location data, the emails have traces of identity, and somewhere online, this would-be blackmailer has left a trail."

The cabin fell silent as the gravity of the situation settled over the team. This wasn't just another contract—this was about protecting one of their own by extension.

"We need to find out who this Russian blackmailer is and where they're operating from," Julia continued. "Once you've identified them, we'll decide whether to involve local authorities or send in BTRU for a more... direct approach."

Special Agent K nodded, mind already racing through investigative methodologies and OSINT techniques that would extract every bit of intelligence from the evidence.

The clock is ticking," Julia said, sliding a secure tablet across the table. "Everything we have is on here. The blackmailer claims it was all a joke, but the threat remains. Find them before they decide to follow through—or worse, disappear entirely."

The holographic display flickered with the final image: a contract acceptance form requiring only a digital signature.

"As always, Special Agent K," Julia said with the hint of a knowing smile, "the contract is yours, if you choose to accept."

A moment's pause, a single tap on the screen, and the hunt was on.

Briefing

Greetings, Special Agent K.

A dear friend of James, our new field operative, has received a threatening blackmail email claiming to have video evidence against him. Attached to the email is a video allegedly proving the accusation. However, shortly after sending the initial email, the blackmailer panicked and sent a second message claiming it was all a joke.

What the blackmailer didn't realize is that the "joke" has backfired—the video they sent may contain subtle details about their location. Given the name of the blackmailer, we believe there might be a Russian State connection. Therefore extreme caution is advised.

Since this matter affects James directly, we've pulled him from current field operations until the ASIC manages to solve the case. Once you have the blackmailer identified, we'll either get local authorities to deal with them, or the BTRU will snatch and grab them.

Your mission is to analyze the video and use OSINT techniques to uncover the blackmailer's identity and whereabouts.

As always, Special Agent K.

The Contract is yours, if you choose to accept.

Materials

evidence_1.eml
evidence_2.eml
Proof.mp4

Answer Instruction

Use the answer to unlock the flagfile, this will reward you with your badge. The flag will be the blackmailer's name and home address. Use the full name and capitalization.

Answer example:

{Artem_Bolzov_69_Parkway_Road}

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.

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