

CRISIS

Steve Meredith

This screenplay may not be used or reproduced without the expressed written consent of the author. Parties interested in producing this screenplay may contact the author via the e-mail address listed below.

Steve.Meredith@live.com

INT. NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY OFFICES - DAY

MICHAEL DONOVAN, 40s, salt and pepper hair, tailored suit, sits at his desk reading a classified file on his computer.

Suddenly, Donovan's office door opens, and REBECCA MILBURN, 30s, dressed professionally in a pants suit and flats enters, out of breath.

MILBURN:  
Mike, drone surveillance just  
picked up Scott Conway in Paris.

DONOVAN:  
Confirmed?

MILBURN:  
(nodding)  
98% biometric match.

DONOVAN:  
Jesus.

Donovan gets up from his seat and follows Milburn into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

DONOVAN: (CONT'D)  
We haven't heard from Conway in  
what, 12 years?

MILBURN:  
15. He went black in 2001 after a  
CIA asset botched a hit on him.  
Completely off the grid, without a  
sound. Last known location was the  
Congo.

DONOVAN:  
If I'm remembering correctly, he  
claimed it was a frame up before we  
lost contact, right?

MILBURN:  
(nodding)  
Yeah, said that CIA was involved.

DONOVAN:  
Well, they certainly won't admit it  
if they were.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Donovan and Milburn enter from the hallway. The room is packed with computers, monitors, and people working feverishly. Among them is MITCH PERKINS, late 30s, hair greying at the temples, dressed in a suit. Mitch is the highest ranking intelligence officer in the command center, and Donovan's subordinate. Mitch is studying Conway's dossier on the main screen.

DONOVAN:

(to Mitch)

What do we have?

PERKINS:

To be honest, I can't figure it out. This guy goes full black for a decade and a half. Why come out of the shadows now? You think he did this on purpose?

DONOVAN:

I'd assume so. Guy's got a genius level IQ. He's Jason fucking Bourne. Maybe he got tired of running.

PERKINS:

Yeah, well not if he lets us take him out.

(to the room)

Okay folks, listen up. The man on the main screen is an NSA top priority target. His name is Scott Conway. 17 years ago, he leaked classified documents to third party couriers who in turn handed that information over to the likes of UBL and KSM. The standing order on Conway was to take him dead or alive, but 15 years ago, he went dark. No contact, no communication, nothing. This the first time since then that he's shown his face.

DONOVAN:

(to the room)

Give me Conway's real time location and movements on the main screen. Let's get a mic on him. He have a cell phone?

An ANALYST, clad in shirt, tie, and headset, speaks up.

ANALYST:  
Yeah, bringing audio online now.

Garbled audio can be heard as the team now sees Conway's real time location broadcast on the main screen.

DONOVAN:  
Get the asset in place.

MILBURN:  
Yes sir.

PERKINS:  
(to Donovan)  
Do you think he'll let us kill him?

DONOVAN:  
I don't know, but I'm not missing  
the chance if he does.

INT. CATHEDRAL - LATER THAT NIGHT

The inside of the cathedral is vast. A stone structure with vaulted ceilings. It is dark and mostly empty, save for one or two parishioners, saying quiet prayers.

Donovan enters quietly, shutting the doors at the back of the church with care.

INT. CONFESSIONAL - CONTINUOUS

Donovan enters the screened side of the confessional. Unseen on the other side is Fr. COLIN ROONEY.

ROONEY:  
In the name of the Father, and of  
the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Donovan crosses himself.

ROONEY: (CONT'D)  
Tell me, when was your last  
confession?

DONOVAN:  
About ten years ago, Father. But I  
do attend mass on a regular basis.

ROONEY:  
I see. And what are your sins?

Donovan takes a deep breath, rings his hands.

DONOVAN:  
I killed a man today, Father.

ROONEY:  
You killed a man?

DONOVAN:  
Well, not exactly.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - SAME AS BEFORE

Donovan, Perkins, Milburn, and the rest of the Command Center staff watch the main screen with increasing interest.

Milburn is on her cell phone, talking to the asset, and turns to Donovan and Perkins.

MILBURN:  
Our asset is in place.

DONOVAN:  
Does he have a clean shot?

MILBURN:  
Affirmative, sir.

DONOVAN:  
Tell him to hold his fire.

On screen, Conway is walking towards someone when he abruptly stops, and looks directly into the camera spying him.

PERKINS:  
What the hell?

DONOVAN:  
(to the room)  
Are we absolutely sure of Conway's location?

ANALYST:  
GPS coordinates confirm, sir.

DONOVAN:  
Christ, it's like he knows we're watching.

MILBURN:  
The asset has Conway in his sights, sir. Should he execute or hold fire?

Donovan pauses for a minute as he turns his head slightly to

the side, like he's making eye contact with Conway. Donovan shuts his eyes, unable to watch what happens next.

DONOVAN:

Execute.

INT. CONFSSIONAL - SAME AS BEFORE

Donovan has his head in his hands before he lifts it up, staring at the screen in front of him.

DONOVAN: (CONT'D)

(to Rooney)

I gave an order to have a man killed.

ROONEY:

You know what the Bible tells us about killing--

DONOVAN:

I know Father. Unfortunately my job isn't as clear-cut.

(a beat)

My job, in a very real sense, is to stop people from doing bad things to America.

ROONEY:

And this man you ordered to be killed...he was going to harm the country?

DONOVAN:

Well, that's just it. I'm not sure he was guilty of what people said he did.

ROONEY:

So you think he was innocent?

DONOVAN:

I'm afraid that he was.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT (1999)

The room is windowless. Donovan is with OLIVER SPEERS, mid 50s, dressed in a suit. Speers is the Director of National Intelligence. Both men are watching a tape of Conway, who is afraid for his life, and has made the video in the hopes of clearing his name.

CONWAY:

This entire thing is a fucking snow job. A set up from the get-go. I'm telling you, there was another delivery man Johannesburg. He's the guy you want for this. I mean, Jesus, the guy smells like the Agency sent him. The only person I trust with any of this is Michael Donovan. He knows me, and he knows that I wouldn't do this.

Speers pauses the recording.

SPEERS:

Do you know why he would name you?

DONOVAN:

He and I were good friends in high school. I still get a Christmas card from him every year, but I didn't even know he was doing covert work.

SPEERS:

I want you to draw him out.

Speers motions to the TV again, and presses play.

CONWAY:

And listen to me. If the Agency, or Spec Ops, or anyone other than Mike comes for me, I will fall off the face of the earth, and you will never find me. Michael Donovan only. No one else.

The recording stops.

DONOVAN:

I'm assuming this will be a locate and capture operation?

SPEERS:

Sorry Mike. Conway leaked classified intel to known terrorist groups.

DONOVAN:

Allegedly. How credible is the intel? We can't just rush in there guns blazing.

SPEERS:  
Not my call this time. President  
wants personnel on the ground, and  
this situation buttoned up quickly.

DONOVAN:  
When was this decided?

SPEERS:  
At a closed door meeting in the  
situation room--

DONOVAN:  
So I was purposely excluded?

SPEERS:  
(no time for this)  
Oh, Jesus Christ Mike, you and a  
half dozen others. The President  
got wind of the video and was  
pissed. He called me into a  
meeting with the Vice President and  
Andy Wilhelm, that's it. It's not  
like we convened the National  
Security Council.

DONOVAN:  
Well maybe you should have. The  
Vice President and the White House  
Chief of Staff hardly seem to be  
the right personnel to be advising  
the President on something like  
this.

SPEERS:  
Watch your tone.

(a beat)  
Of the two of us, I'm the one with  
the office in the West Wing, and I  
technically outrank you.

DONOVAN:  
(a beat)  
I apologize sir, but can I be frank  
with you?

SPEERS:  
By all means.

DONOVAN:  
I don't think Conway's playing  
(MORE)



DONOVAN: (CONT'D)

around. If he's as good as I know the U.S. Government trains their operatives to be - you screw with him and he will go dark. Even if all of the world's governments pulled their resources together, we still wouldn't be able to find him.

SPEERS:

I'm sorry Mike. But what the President wants, the President gets.

DONOVAN:

Well in that case, we can all consider this a failed operation before it even starts.

SPEERS:

Would you like to brief the Commander in Chief on that one, or do you want me to fall on that sword? Think about who you're defending here. The man gave critical intel to the enemy.

DONOVAN:

Have you given any thought to whether or not he's telling the truth? Is CIA involved?

SPEERS:

(scoffs)

You think they'll admit to that? If Conway's telling the truth, then why is he running?--

DONOVAN:

Because he knows the way the U.S. treats captured enemy combatants. He's running because he knows that if he gets caught you're not going to give him a lawyer. He'll be lucky if he bypasses waterboarding and goes straight to Gitmo. For the love of God, Oliver, we need to bring Conway in and debrief him, find out what he knows, and use the intel he's got. The whole thing seems off, and for all we know this could be bigger than him.

SPEERS:

Mike, I admire your constitutional compass, I really do, but sometimes being in the wrong place and the wrong time is the very thing that does a person in. I'm sorry, but from an optics standpoint, this guy looks and smells like the rat. So he's probably our rat. I know he was your friend, but people can change.

DONOVAN:

So that's it?

SPEERS:

(lost all patience)

That's it, Mike. I'm sorry that my hands are tied, and now yours are too. Find Conway, and get rid of him, using a CIA asset, who we can easily disavow if needed. That's a direct order from the President. If you value your job, I suggest you learn how to follow his orders.

INT. CONFESSIONAL - SAME AS BEFORE (PRESENT DAY)

Donovan is rubbing his temples.

DONOVAN:

(to Rooney)

To be honest Father, I've had to give these kinds of orders many times throughout my career.

ROONEY:

So you've supervised the execution of multiple people?

DONOVAN:

Essentially.

ROONEY:

And you can live with that? I know that I wouldn't be able to, even if I weren't a priest.

DONOVAN:

I've always been able to forgive myself, in part because I've always felt justified in giving kill

(MORE)

DONOVAN: (CONT'D)

orders. I've watched men who captured Americans, or claimed responsibility for terrorist attacks die on my command, and I've always felt like I did my job, that I somehow shielded the American family of the horrors that lay beyond our shores.

(a beat)

But not tonight. Not this time. I honestly don't know how I'm going to be able to sleep tonight.

ROONEY:

God never tires of forgiving us. If you find yourself unable to sleep, just remember that.

DONOVAN:

With all due respect Father, the act of forgiving myself has become unbearable, and I'm tired of it.

EXT. MICHAEL DONOVAN'S HOME - LATER THAT NIGHT

Donovan's sedan enters the driveway as his garage door lifts. He pulls into the garage, and closes the garage door with his car still running.

THE END.