

THE ASSET

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INT - DOCTOR'S WAITING ROOM - DAY

A few people sit in chairs, reading magazines or watching TV, which is currently showing a Fox News report. One of the patients watching the TV is CHRIS GIBSON.

REPORTER:

If you're just joining us, we're covering breaking news this afternoon, as FAA officials have confirmed that a US Commercial Airliner en-route from New York to New Delhi, India has crashed. While the cause of the crash is unknown, there are several reports of an explosive object colliding with the aircraft prior to the plane crashing roughly 40 miles outside of the Pakistani city of Fiasalabad. For more we bring in Fox News Chief Middle-Eastern correspondent Dan Andrews. Dan, what can you tell us?

The report trails off as a medical assistant walks into the waiting room.

ASSISTANT:

Chris, she's ready for you.

Chris stands up and follows the assistant.

INT. - OFFICE OF DR. JENNIFER CARROLL

DR. JENNIFER CARROLL is scratching notes into Chris' file when her door opens, and the assistant ushers Chris into the room.

JENNIFER:

(standing up,
and extending
her hand):

Chris, nice to see you again.

CHRIS:

(shaking her
hand):

Nice to see you as well.

They each take a seat on their respective sides of Jennifer's desk.

JENNIFER:

How's the job coming along?

CHRIS:

It's going well. The financial sector really doesn't have much excitement. Monitoring clients' accounts, and checking stock prices certainly is a change of pace.

JENNIFER:

Do you enjoy the work?

CHRIS:

It's a job, it pays the bills. It's just a far cry from an Army Ranger.

JENNIFER:

Do you find yourself bored at work?

CHRIS:

I'm too busy to be bored. I like my life in general.

JENNIFER:

And what about your dreams?

CHRIS:

Less frequent now. Still the same dream, just now about a month apart. It always starts with me sliding down the rope of the helicopter, and ends with me realizing the compound is laced with explosives.

Jennifer scratches a note in Chris' file.

JENNIFER:

Do you have any recollection of how you got out of there and back to Germany, or to Walter Reed?

CHRIS:

I think if I did the dream would continue. There's a 36 hour gap in my memory. I faintly remember the florescent hallway lights at Walter Reed, but the next solid memory I have is waking up in recover after surgery.

JENNIFER:

Well details can get lost upon anyone who goes through a traumatic incident like that. Let's move on for now. How's your personal life? Have you met anyone special, or made any friends at work?

CHRIS:

I have a few work buddies, but I haven't met any new women lately. At least not any who would want to date me.

JENNIFER:

That's troubling Chris. One of the goals in the last session was for you to get out of your shell a little bit. I worry about you going home at the end of your day and spending it alone without any human contact. Do you at least go out for drinks, or dinner with your work colleagues?

Chris sighs heavily and his shoulders sag.

CHRIS:

Jen, I told you; I don't like bars. They're noisy, and there are a lot of sudden sounds that cause me to jump a lot. The guys at work wouldn't get it.

Pause. Jennifer takes out a prescription pad and starts scribbling.

JENNIFER:

I'm going to refer you to a military specialist. He spends most of his clinical time at the VA Pittsburgh Healthcare System's H.J. Heinz campus, but Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays he spends his time his personal practice out of his home. Given your situation. I think you'd benefit from visiting his personal practice.

CHRIS:

(taking the
piece of paper
from Jen.)

Jesus, when does this guy have free time?

JENNIFER:

It's the price you pay when you're starting out. I did it too. Worked at VA Butler Healthcare before moving down here and starting my practice. It'll give you more than a few grey hairs.

CHRIS:

Well for what it's worth, you don't look a day past 29.

Jen smiles.

JENNIFER:

Thank you. Now get outta here and go see him. Today. He keeps his personal practice open until 6.

Chris leaves, and Jennifer closes the door behind him. She then walks over to her desk and picks up her phone. She dials a number and waits a moment.

JENNIFER:

Chris Gibson is on his way to see you.

Pause.

JENNIFER:

Yes. In my opinion he's ready.

EXT. - WINDING COUNTRY ROAD - LATE AFTERNOON

Chris' car can be seen driving up to a sprawling farm house with a gravel drive way. He shuts off the engine and gets out of his car. A sign hangs off of the front porch reading "Steven Bell and Associates - Psychologists."

Chris walks up to the front door and knocks. He notices that the door is slightly ajar, and slowly pushes it open.

CHRIS:

Hello, Dr. Bell?

Pause. There's no response. Chris looks down both sides of the porch before slowly entering the house.

CHRIS:

Dr. Bell? My name's Chris. Dr. Jennifer Carroll sent me to see you.

Still no reply. Chris surveys the area around him. The living room of the house consists of a few couches and an easy chair, along with a grandfather clock the looks to be a

family heirloom. Chris walks over to the clock and notices something in the reflection.

Behind Chris, an assailant dressed in black attempts to take a slash at him with a knife. Chris dodges the blow and returns with a quick jab to the attacker's throat, before thrusting his knee into the assailant's temple. Knocking him out.

Chris is breathing heavily now, looking around the room for any signs of a second attacker. He hears foot steps coming from the next room, and a man dressed in an impeccable suit leans against the opening to the dining room. This is STEVEN BELL.

STEVEN:

Well. They can take you out of Afghanistan, but they can't take the Afghanistan out of you.

CHRIS:

Is this the way you greet all of your clients?

STEVEN:

Please, come on in. I promise there's only one of those.

Steven gestures to the unconscious assailant. Steven and Chris walk into Steven's dining room, where a steak dinner has been carefully placed at the table.

STEVEN:

(gesturing to
the empty seat
opposite his)

Please sit, Chris. It seems we have a lot to learn about one another.

CHRIS:

You're not actually a psychologist.

Chris sits at his place at the table. Steven follows suit.

STEVEN:

You're very perceptive. No, I am not a psychologist, that's my cover. It's a very elaborate cover complete with college transcripts and a fancy diploma hanging in my fake office.

CHRIS:

Okay, so why would Dr. Carroll send me to you?

Chris places his napkin in his lap and cuts a piece of steak. He brings it up to his mouth and stops for a moment, looking at the meat.

STEVEN:

It's safe. If I'd wanted to kill you I would have had the guy you just handled in my living room take you out with his sniper rifle. He had it trained on you from the moment you stepped out of your car.

Chris takes the bite.

STEVEN:

Dr. Carroll isn't a psychologist either, and what I'm about to tell you is classified information. I trust that an ex-ranger like yourself knows how to handle sensitive intel. We both work for the Central Intelligence Agency. Well, to be more accurate, we're both contracted by the CIA. We work for a separate, private security firm. Jen's a recruiter who makes sure that the people we deem appropriate for high level security clearance are mentally capable of handling such information.

Chris takes a sip of the wine.

CHRIS:

So what do you do?

STEVEN:

I'm the last guy who interviews you before your hired.

CHRIS:

I wasn't aware that I was looking for a job.

STEVEN:

From a cover standpoint you're not. You'll be moving up at Bank of America, and working out of their DC office.

CHRIS:
I didn't realize that I had
accepted the position.

Pause. Steven takes a drink of wine and sets it on the table
before crossing his legs and setting his hands in his lap.

STEVEN:
Chris, the best jobs in life are
not the ones that you seek out,
but the people who seek you out to
fill important roles on their
team. You're an ex-ranger who was
born to be a military operative.
You were looking at a career in
the military, with a possible SOC
command post in your future. The
injury that you suffered was
unfortunate, but I gotta be honest
with you, one of the worst things
that the Army did to you was give
you a Medical Discharge.

CHRIS:
What is the job exactly?

STEVEN:
You'll be a threat assesment
analyst and occassionally, a drone
pilot. Your background analyzing
stocks and financial data makes
you a perfect fit for the analyst
job, and with the way you took out
my guard...let's just say that you
know where to point the weapon,
how much force to use, and most
importantly, when to pull the
trigger.

CHRIS:
Wait a minute. So you aren't
worried that I feel anxious and on
edge all the time?

STEVEN:
Should we be? Jen tells me the
nightmares that you've been having
about your last raid as a ranger
have been happening with less
frequency. Is that true?

CHRIS:
Yes. I just...I don't know.

STEVEN:

Chris, if you had anything wrong with you that would seriously make me question your ability, you would be a bloody mess right now. You would have frozen, and my security guard would have handled you easily. You showed me three very important things in my living room.

CHRIS:

And those are?

STEVEN:

The ability to make a quick, accurate assesment of your situation, your ability to use extreme force with precision, and most importantly, the ability show restraint. My guard has a family. You could have snapped his neck and killed him, but you didn't. You eliminated the threat with accuracy, but you had something inside of you telling you when to stop. We don't need someone with an overdeveloped trigger finger. We need someone who can fly a drone into a crowd of people and discriminate the bad guys from civilians.

CHRIS:

Please don't tell me I'll be flying these drones on American soil and killing US citizens. I may not have PTSD as bad as you say I do, but I DO have a conscience. I'd like to be able to sleep at night, if its all the same to you.

STEVEN:

And you will. Come with me.

Both gentlemen get up from the table and walk into Steven's breakfast nook, where a laptop sits with his screen glowing. Steven sits down and proceeds to hit play on a video. A CNN report begins to play.

REPORTER:

Tonight CNN has learned that a small cell of radical muslims who have pledged their allegiance to the Islamic State, is now claiming responsibility for the attack. Meanwhile, more information is coming to light regarding the flight itself tonight. Most of the passengers aboard were American citizens, with only a few others being of European descent. This afternoon, the President made a stern statement, vowing to find those who perpetrated the attack, and bring them to justice.

Steven presses pause.

STEVEN:

This attack could have been prevented. My guess is, right before making his statement, the President was chewing out my boss for not stopping this attack before it started. That's our problem, and that's where you come in. The NSA has a team of 30 analysts running intel on the middle east. 10 of those analysts were working various sections of Pakistan, but four months ago two of them quit. The two who quit were working the Faisalabad region, and knew about the cell. The problem is, with the work load that the other analysts had, they couldn't handle their provinces and Faisalabad, which is why this slipped through the cracks. That's why we need you. The NSA needs you to analyze Faisalabad, because although the President and the Secretary of State don't want to admit it, Faisalabad is the next Bagdahd or Kabul.

CHRIS:

So I'll be doing the work of two people?

STEVEN:

At double the salary.

CHRIS:

How much?

STEVEN:

Six figures.

Pause.

STEVEN:

It's more than that though, Chris. You were born to be a soldier. This is the opportunity to be a soldier in a suit.

CHRIS:

Will I ever be able to have a personal life?

STEVEN:

If you can stand lying to your wife and everyone you care about until you go to your grave, then yes. The difference between your time in the military, and your civilian government job is that in this job, you can't tell anyone what you do. One of the hidden qualities that we liked about you is that you can handle sensitive information. You will be asked to handle such information on a daily basis. If you're okay with your wife and family believing that you're a boring investment banker, albeit a rich one, than yes, you can have a family. I've seen other guys do it. I've seen guys take their cover to their graves.

CHRIS:

Do I at least get some time to think about it?

STEVEN:

No. But quite honestly Chris, you don't need time to think about it. I can tell that this is what you want to do.

A long pause is shared between the two men.

CHRIS:

It is. I miss it.

STEVEN:
You can still fight for your
country. You'll just be doing it
in a business suit.

Fade to black.

SUPERIMPOSE: "ONE YEAR LATER"

REPORTER:
(v.o.)
In other news, a terrorist attack
was thwarted today, when U.S.
intelligence led troops to an
underground bunker roughly 30
miles outside of Kabul,
Afghanistan, where they found
three Afghan nationals with ties
to the Islamic State. Along with
the men, U.S. Marines found what
looked to be explosive vests and
other bomb making materials. This
follows a series of other attempts
across the middle east, all of
which had been tracked by U.S.
intelligence for at least the past
six months.

Roll Credits.

The end.