

## **An Account**

With his head tipped majestically way back over the edge of the custom black leather chair he'd had specially brought in when he moved into this new office, he kicked his slender, mildly steaming feet out of his black leather shoes and up onto the wide oak surface of the desk that defined his occupation. He crossed his feet this way then that, then back again, his weight slowly shifting backwards with each movement, sending the chair to a precarious angle in increments with plaintive plastic groans. He flexed his quads to iron out the knots that had developed after hours in all the sedentary poses he was aware of, at least those which were acceptable to strike in secretive conference rooms. He ran his hands over his silk trousers, black and beautiful. He moved his eyes upwards in their sockets to look upside-down out of the big windows behind him. He lifted an arm absentmindedly to brush one of the striped curtains hanging to his side. His eyes, manic when he walked in, were now furrowed in concentration as he began what appeared to be some kind of inward struggle. He started several times to reach into the breast pocket of his shirt where he kept his cellphone, each time reconsidering at his finger's brush against the light blue silk, and returning his hand behind his head (which preposition should really be replaced with "under" given his overly reclined position). Then, having pushed the envelope with gravity, the President of the USA toppled over backwards in his chair. A flag tipped over and the window behind him shattered (just the inner pane, to be sure, the outer ones can handle a slightly more nefarious level of abuse). He shot up reflexively at the loud sound, standing poised over his desk somewhat menacingly with his coat askew and arms slightly raised from the fall and rapid rise. Then the two phones on either side of the great desk rang at once. Figuring it had something to do with the fact that the Chairman of, as well as all of the, Joint Chiefs of Staff, had all given him different assessments of the probability of the necessity of boots-on-the-ground military intervention in the Spratly Islands following a strategic drone strike near Homs with an again-to-be-assessed probability of major civilian casualty ("major" being defined in no less than 5 ways by these nuts, because of whom the President had once seriously toyed with the idea of inviting them to Camp David for a communal waterboarding session to build trust and a door to an acceptance of his rejection of American exceptionalist views), not to mention the D/CIA, DNI, and the rowdy crowd from DNS plus the UN ambassador and the special envoy from Japan, who really didn't seem to be doing anything except plate-raises with their handbook Japanese-English dictionaries, he pondered for a moment which phone to pick up, or whether perhaps to try picking up both and hanging up on the first person to say "President". By then there were footsteps in both hallways. He hesitated for another second, then lay down amongst the glass shards, after throwing both phones off the hook. It would be good for his aides to see him like this. He'd recently developed, not wholly unintentionally, an aura of exaggerated intimidating austerity with his aides, and even to an extent, his advisors. The NatSec advisor for instance, had seemed to become more concerned with his own security than that of other 300 million people his job required him to be, going so far as to pay the membership price at a tanning salon and adopt a diet of 3.5 thousands calories a day, the former to mask his frequent public blanching, the latter to make less apparent his new habit of wearing Kevlar to the office, neither of which worked. When finally they came pouring into the Oval, his aides found him laughing.