

**Title:** VESPUCCI **Episode:** S4E7, "Abrupt Misconceptions" **Author:** Writing Editor **Date:** June 25, 2025

[SCENE START]

**INT. JOHN MICHAELS' OFFICE - NIGHT**

A room that feels like a museum of a bygone era of conflict. The walls are lined with floor-to-ceiling bookshelves groaning under the weight of declassified intelligence binders and leather-bound Cold War histories. A vintage Marantz turntable sits on a heavy mahogany credenza, a vinyl record of a mournful jazz piece paused mid-spin. Framed, antique maps of Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia adorn the walls, their borders starkly different from today's. It is the sanctuary of a man who believes in order, in tangible, documented history.

That order is being violated by the harsh, conflicting glows of two massive screens dominating John's expansive desk.

One screen is on a muted 24-hour US news channel. The chyron reads in bold, urgent letters: **"CANADIAN CRISIS DEEPENS: REPORTS OF ATROCITIES NEAR CALGARY SUBURB. LAWMAKERS DEMAND ACTION."**

The other screen plays a shaky, thermal drone feed. It shows the unmistakable, ghostly white outline of a rural schoolhouse, complete with the spectral shapes of playground equipment—swings and a slide—stark against the dark, cold landscape. Behind the school, the heat signatures reveal the geometric horror of freshly turned earth in unnaturally straight, long trenches.

JOHN MICHAELS (50s), in a loosened tie and rumpled suit, stands behind his desk, pacing a short, worn path in the antique carpet. He stops to refill a heavy crystal glass with whiskey from a decanter, his hand so unsteady that amber liquid sloshes over the rim. He looks cornered in his own sanctuary, a general besieged by a battle he can no longer control from a map.

The door opens silently and SANDRA WARREN (late 30s) enters. She is a vision of modern, minimalist power in a simple, severe black dress. Her presence is a stark, silent disruption to the room's analog history. She was summoned here without explanation, an unusual and therefore noteworthy event that has her on a quiet, internal alert.

<center>SANDRA</center> > John. You called. It's unusual for you to request a meeting outside of the Ops Room. This feels... personal.

John gestures angrily with his glass, a tremor in his hand that telegraphs pure rage. His fury is directed at both screens at once, as if they are two fronts in a war against his own sanity.

<center>JOHN MICHAELS</center> > I wanted you to see it away from your tactical displays and your goddamn efficiency metrics. I wanted you to see it here, in the real world. >

(He points a trembling, accusatory finger at the news screen) > The polling is a catastrophe, Sandra. A complete and utter catastrophe. I've got senators calling me at all hours, screaming into the phone, demanding to know why we're letting our northern border descend into barbarism. The President is getting hammered on every network... they're screaming for us to step in. They want boots on the ground yesterday. > (His voice cracks with a raw, visceral fury as he whirls and points at the drone feed) > And this—*this* is why. A mass grave... outside a goddamn elementary school, Sandra. It's leading every news cycle on the planet. This is your operation. Your people. You have to let us move in. Authorize it now.

Sandra walks calmly toward the desk. She doesn't glance at the panicked news reports. Her eyes lock onto the thermal drone feed. Her focus becomes absolute, her expression utterly placid, almost academic, as she analyzes the playground, the building, the disturbed earth. Her knuckles, however, are white where she clasps her hands behind her back. She gestures almost imperceptibly at the wall. The drone feed instantly projects onto a large, hidden screen, the image sharpening into horrifying, granular clarity.

She does not look away from it for the rest of the conversation. Her eyes dart across the screen, calculating, processing, trying to find the culprit. Her voice, when she speaks, is flat, cold, and laced with an anger that is all the more terrifying for its stillness and precision.

<center>SANDRA</center> > We didn't dig those trenches. > (beat) > The little Relish shifts did. That's the Canadian Federal Forces trying to hold a dying order together with terror. They're panicking. They're making mistakes. > (beat) > It was never us. (she says pointing out that it is in-fact the enemy who committed the war crime against the innocent kids and teachers and parents, she is physically sick at what she sees, the moral and ethical horror show she sees, but it is subtle other than her skin going slightly more pale)

<center>JOHN MICHAELS</center> > But it's your plan that lit the fuse! Your strategy that created this power vacuum! The headlines don't make that distinction! They see chaos, they see bodies, and they see American inaction! They see your fingerprints all over it!

<center>SANDRA</center> > (Her eyes are still glued to the screen, analyzing, dissecting slowly and silently building over from ethical and moral fury and disgust. Viewers get glimpses of the screen showing a thermal top down view of a large base, truck moving outside and two heat signatures beside the road by the trucks. Lots of activity in the base. ) > The headlines are irrelevant. They are a lagging indicator. We embedded to shape intention, not to manage atrocity. We forbid unauthorized civilian contact. Explicitly. It is operational law. Their tactics are desperate; ours are surgical. Look at the blast radius. The fragmentation patterns. Hasty. Messy. Amateurish. That isn't our signature.

She finally lifts her eyes from the screen to his. For the first time, we see the mask crack. Her eyes are red-rimmed, slightly welled up with a furious, unshed moisture.

<center>SANDRA</center> > (YELLING) > I— > (Her voice snaps down into a flat, intensely controlled tone, a terrifying display of will) > —am NOT my father, John. I don't do

THIS. I REFUSE to do this. I FIGHT this. > (beat) > You want this to be my stain so it's not yours, but I don't paint with blood. So don't you dare try to pin this amateur-hour butchery on my fucking house.

John is flustered, taking a step back from the sheer force of her quiet, analytical fury. He seems to shrink in his own office, the weight of his historical artifacts suddenly feeling like theatrical props.

</center>JOHN MICHAELS</center> > So what do I tell the President? That the chaos we secretly initiated is now too chaotic for our own good? The situation is untenable, Sandra. Just let our troops cross the border. We can end this. We can—

Sandra turns back to the horrific images on the wall. The brief flash of vulnerability is gone, replaced by a cold, data-driven fury.

</center>SANDRA</center> > You think this is bad? Look at what it could have been without us! What you see on that fucking screen was going to happen with or without us. Aegis says we REDUCED it by 98 percent from if WE didn't give them a way to defend themselves from those RELISH FUCKS. A failed communist state leaking refugees and extremists across a 5,000-mile border. That was the projection. That was the alternative you paid us to prevent.

She picks up a small, framed Cold War-era medal from his desk, a relic of a simpler, more binary conflict. She turns it over in her palm, her expression one of utter contempt for his shortsightedness.

</center>SANDRA</center> > If millions die, it's because we stopped it from being billions. > (A long, heavy pause fills the room, broken only by the faint, forgotten crackle of the record player he forgot to turn off.) > That's what no one ever thanks you for. The catastrophes that didn't happen. These graves, those victims. They happened with us or without us. To them they are disloyal and need disposal! Understand that this is NOT on my. Fucking. House.

She places the medal back down on his desk with a quiet, definitive click. Her decision has been made. Her patience is exhausted.

</center>SANDRA</center> > Be patient. Stage 6 will come. > (beat) > You will have your unified America.

Without another word, or another glance in his direction, Sandra turns and walks out of the office. The door closes with a soft, final click, leaving a vacuum in the room.

John stares at the empty doorway, the new information swirling in his head. The horror on his face is no longer just about the massacre, but about the chilling calculus Sandra just presented. He stumbles back to his desk, looking at the drone feed with new, terrified eyes.

He drains his whiskey in one long, desperate swallow. The ice cubes clink loudly in the sudden, oppressive silence.

[SCENE END]

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## INT. VSI COMMAND CENTER - NIGHT

A stark contrast to John's office. This is the nerve center of the modern world. Cool, blue light emanates from dozens of monitors. The room is quiet, populated by a handful of elite analysts who move with calm, economic precision. It smells of ozone and chilled air.

Sandra enters. An analyst, JAX (30s), looks up, his expression neutral. He knows this look on her face. It means a decision has been made.

She doesn't break her stride, walking directly to the central command console. The thermal images of the school and the trenches are already displayed on the main screen, pulled from the same feed as John's office.

<center>SANDRA</center> > (Her voice is dangerously soft yet aggressive) > Get me a location on the CAF unit responsible for this. I got a partial SAT code on the strike location but I need you to find the unit that called for it. Cross-reference signals intelligence with our embedded asset reports. I want their command structure, their supply lines, and their current position. Now.

Jax types with blurring speed. Data streams across the screen. Maps overlay satellite imagery. Within seconds, a red circle appears on a topographical map of a forested area miles from the school.

<center>JAX</center> > Got them. 5153rd Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment. Looks like they're falling back to a pre-arranged defensive position. They're exposed.

Sandra stares at the red circle. Her face is a placid mask, but her eyes are burning. The white-knuckled grip from earlier is gone, replaced by a terrifying stillness. This is not business. This is a violation of the principles of her war. This is an imperfection that needs to be erased.

<center>SANDRA</center> > Task the nearest High impact strike package. I want that position glassed.

Jax pauses for a fraction of a second, the only sign of surprise he allows himself. "Glassed" is not a standard military term. It's a VSI colloquialism for total, overwhelming annihilation, leaving nothing behind but fused earth.

<center>JAX</center> > The whole grid square, ma'am?

<center>SANDRA</center> > (Without turning) > I want to see the heat signature from orbit. I want a message sent that our client will hear in their sleep. This is not how this war will be fought. This is not how it will be won. > (beat) > Remove them from the board.

Jax nods, his fingers flying across the keyboard. He sends a single, encrypted command string. On the main screen, we see the icon for a Autonomous Marine detachment divert from its patrol route and turn towards the red circle. A new mission objective flashes beneath it: **STRATEGIC REMOVAL.**

Sandra watches the icon move, her expression unchanging. She has corrected the error. She has re-imposed order. The rage is gone, replaced by the cold satisfaction of a problem solved with brutal, absolute efficiency.

**FADE TO BLACK.**