

## Phreak

Paul is a bored computer scientist who likes to spend his time outside the office hopping from café to café scanning the public Wi-Fi networks to see what people are up to. One Saturday afternoon while watching network traffic at Paradigm Café, Paul reads his command prompt and realizes that he is being probed by someone else in the café. He quickly print screens, shuts off his Wi-Fi card, and closes the lid of his laptop. Trying to keep his cool, he furtively pans his eyes around the room. After a short while of pretending to work, so to not look suspicious, Paul walks for home. On his way, he contemplates the simple likelihood of someone else doing exactly what he does. However, once at home as he further analyses the packet sent to his computer, and realizes it wasn't a broad network scan. It was directed for him—the unknown person at the café was looking for his IP address and only his.

He recalls back about a week ago, when he intercepted a love letter written in an email. He found the message endearing so he saved it. Unbeknownst to Paul, it turns out this wasn't a love letter. It was a coded message sent by a secret agent named Rebecca to her commander. It was the mistake of the agent to send it over the café's public network, but due to the high priority of the information, needing to send it as soon as possible, she had to find the nearest Wi-Fi connection to get it sent immediately. The agent soon after recognized that an IP address was pinging her laptop and believed the interceptor to be another counter-intelligence agent. After this error, Rebecca and her command realized that she needed to find who intercepted it, interrogate them, and possibly eliminate them.

The next evening as Paul is arriving back to his townhome from a long day at the office. As he is putting his keys in the door, he is startled ghost white by a silenced pistol pointed inches away from his temple, held by a stunning female agent with sharp, serious eyes—who is looking to contain the potential mess she started. They both go inside. When they talk, the agent reveals herself as Rebecca and covers as a U.S. government operative. In her deception, she tries to learn the extent of the infiltration, as well as Paul's knowledge. Paul is both terrified and embarrassed that his hobby seemingly drew the attention of U.S. special intelligence. She orders him to reveal any files he's saved from his network scanning escapades. Just as Paul is going through his laptop, the agent begins to conclude he is expendable, and standing behind him draws the silenced pistol to the back of his head. At this moment, she sees out the window that she was being trailed as they went inside the house by two men, and that soon the home would be infiltrated. Now that Paul knows too much and threatens to reveal the agent, not wanting to commit a brash murder that would only further complicate her situation, they both flee Paul's home. In the back alley, a gunfight ensues. A bullet grazes the agents shoulder as her and Paul narrowly escape.

Rebecca tries to ditch Paul but she is convinced by him to go to his office for them to find a temporary hiding place and uses the first aid kit there to tend to her wound. When Paul helps bandage her, Rebecca is charmed and recalls back, examining her hesitancy and feelings when she was about to kill him when they were at his house. When they are at the office, they are approached by Alberto the janitor, who carries a much different speech and demeanor from what Paul typically sees of him. He has a more serious tone and is speaking perfect English instead of a Latino accent. He mentions to Paul that he has been monitoring the company for a couple of

years under order of U.S. intelligence, due to the accurate geographical data that the company collects—to ensure their data isn't “too accurate” so to gain knowledge of the military bases around the country, as well as to monitor who they are doing business with. The agent listens intently, as this involves missing pieces for her mission. He then says he is no fool to the real identity of Rebecca, and informs Paul that if she found him, that there is no doubt her reason was to interrogate or kill him. But he also has gotten word that her country is amidst purging a number of their agents to clean the tracks to their sources, as is a somewhat common occurrence when too many agents have been placed in the field. Paul is in disbelief, when the agent says it is true. And she thought her mind was playing tricks on her, but she did hear the men in the alleyway that were chasing them speaking her language. She thought they were U.S. agents at first, but feels betrayed upon realizing that it was her own country trying to kill her and not give her a chance to cover up her mistake. Alberto offers to them the chance to exit the rink, but considering how excellent of a position the agent is in, offers her to take advantage of this as a double agent in one more bout of intel operations..

Rebecca's country is on the verge of having too much information regarding the strategic mapping of the next generation U.S. nuclear deterrence sites. The cryptic love letter that Paul intercepted involved this type of information. The agent now has a chance to compromise their intelligence. She must meet with her commander and destroy their communications – however, this involves putting her life at risk. Paul is advised not to participate and return to debrief with Alberto, likely having to relocate and find a new job. Paul strongly objects to this, but both the agent and Alberto say it must be this way.

As Rebecca sets of to meet her commander in an abandoned warehouse, which houses their intelligence servers, unknowing she is followed by Paul. She gets into trouble, and it is evident that both her and Alberto knew she was headed to her doom. Paul takes the silencer off the pistol he found and intervenes. A large gunfight breaks out. Paul assists in working with the on-site servers, gaining information to the spying nations communications, and copying the data to a nearby HDD. (this is when Rebecca looks at Paul and says, “you're a freak.” to which Paul responds. “I'm a computer scientist.”). The communications relays are then destroyed by Rebecca and stored data is stolen, carried off by Paul. Both Rebecca and Paul get away and reconvene with Alberto and other U.S. intelligence agents. They offer the agent asylum and continued work outside the field, promising her safety as a result of her actions noble to the U.S. On the other hand, Paul offers Rebecca to join him for some coffee, he knows of a place she might like. Rebecca accepts.