**Maysa Brown: The return home**

**By**

**Hugh Hardy Jr.**

After eight grueling but positive years as president of the United States of America Maysa and Michael have returned home to Alabama to contemplate their next move. Charles has become a young man now and Michael Jr. has begun to come into his own and is learning how to make use of his ability with guidance from Michael and Zara.

“Maysa, you have that look on your face of boredom and that’s not good for any of the rest of us.” Michael says.

“Funny man. Maybe we should go on tour for your one-man comedy show.” Maysa says, laughing.

“Ok. What’s on your mind?”.

“I received a letter and a phone call from a search committee about running for governor. I blew the letter off but the phone call was very interesting and has me curious.”

“Do you really want to put yourself through another election after being in office for eight years?”

“The bigger question is do I want to take my family through another election. This time the kids need to have a vote because it will take time away from them especially Michael Jr. I think Charles can handle it unless he really didn’t like all of the attention he received.”

“I think the kids and I will be ok with whatever you decide but will you be happy running for office again and if you win dealing with all of the issues of being governor as compared to being president. Smaller scale but bigger headaches.”

“I’ll sit down with the candidate campaign committee and run some numbers and see what the public thinks. No need to waste the publics nor my time if they don’t want me.”

“Who couldn’t love this face?” Michael says, hugging Maysa teasingly.

“We’ll see. Let’s discuss more important things like lunch.” Maysa says with a laugh.

“How about some burgers?”

“With that special Michael sauce?”

“No other way for the queen of my world.”

Maysa and Michael’s quiet moment is broken up by Charles and MJ, Michael Jr., making their presence known.

“Hey dad when are you going to do those special Michael burgers you always do?” Charles asks.

“How did he know what we were talking about? We weren’t talking that loud were we?” Maysa asks.

Michael finds out how Charles knew what to ask.

“*Dad, I told Charles to ask you about the burgers. I was hungry and read your mind. You’re not mad are you?” MJ asks.*

*“It’s ok. Just don’t always just drop in when you feel like it ok? I may have important things on my mind and will need to be able to fully concentrate on the task at hand.”*

*“Ok. Thanks! Special sauce? What makes it special?”*

*“Get out of my head and go play.” Michael says with a laugh.*

*“I do need to talk to you seriously about something. First, I am very proud of you for maturing so quickly, Secondly, I love you and thirdly, you must keep what we are able to do a* *secret and be very careful when you do have to use your ability. Only use it when it is necessary and not just because you can. Ok?”*

*“I understand. Don’t just pop into places when it isn’t necessary. Gotcha!” MJ says.*

*“One last thing and this is very important. Never use your ability when you’re angry. You could accidently hurt someone. That is the most important thing I want you to remember above all else. When angry, walk away. By the way, mom doesn’t know about this little talent you and I have and neither does Charles. It’s just you and I but there are others and you’ll meet them at some point. Go play!” Michael says.*

*“I understand. Thanks dad.”*

*Maysa running for Governor*

“I have set up a meeting with the search committee and they are going to run my name pass some people to see if a former president carries enough weight to become a state governor.” Maysa says.

“The one good thing is you won the state both times you ran and that was unusual in and of itself. You know the people trusted you.”

“That’s why I married you. You keep me honest and my eyes open to all my surroundings.”

“That’s why you keep me around isn’t it. We keep each other aware of all our surroundings.”

“From the White House to the State House or just a house it is all good so long as it is OUR house.”

“Bingo! That is the winning statement. Now let’s go become governor.”

Governor Simmons is getting reports of Maysa returning to politics since her return to the state.

“Well she is seriously thinking about running I guess,” Gov. Simmons says.

“It would appear as though she’s at least thinking seriously about it sir.” Simmon’s chief of staff, Ruff says.

“Keep an eye on her and let me know if she starts to sway one way or the other in the next couple of weeks. We’ll need to start preparing for her in particular. She’s the only one who could actually beat us.” Simmons says.

“Yes sir.” Ruff says.

Maysa is sitting with her search committee and they believe that Maysa has just what it will take to not only carry her party’s votes but to also pull more than enough to carry the state. The problem is will her opponent come out swinging and claim Maysa is bringing her “big” government thinking to the state house. That could be a huge weapon to use against her no matter how good she was as president.

“So long as we guard our words and not mention federal government unless that is exactly what it is then we think you’ll be ok. Just be Maysa.” Marsha Brinks, the chairwoman of the search committee says.

“Ok. The numbers look good. It doesn’t appear as though I’ll get embarrassed so it’s a go.”

“Let us not be remiss and fail to inform you that southern government can be a lot dirtier than you ever thought federal politics could be.”

“What exactly do you mean by that?”

“Let’s just say that these good ol’ boys will not play fair and will take every low shot they can. That my dear Maysa is being kind.”

“I’ve got a secret weapon for them.” Maysa says with a laugh.

“What would that be?”

“My husband Michael.” Maysa says proudly.

“Oh yea! I’ve heard of your husband. From what I understand he is the truth and will defend his queen to the death. Is that him?”

“Yes. That would be my husband.”

“Then let’s take the fight to them. Prepare for battle Maysa or should I say Madam Governor.”

*It’s official: Maysa Green for Governor*

Maysa is making her formal announcement that she is running for the office of Governor of Alabama. The crowd is cheering for fifteen minutes before Maysa can actually get the words out of her mouth.

“Thank you everyone and this is quite overwhelming. I had a speech prepared but your kindness has brought me to tears of joy. Hopefully this means you will support my bid for governor of the state of Alabama.” She says above the roar of the still growing crowd.

As the crowd starts to settle down a lone voice yells out, “What makes you think we want your big government ideas here in Alabama?”

The crowd starts to boo the individual and Maysa says, “Well let me ask you this sir. Are you tired of being last in education? Last in regards to poverty versus wealth? And last in health care? Especially when the state always boast some of the best medical facilities in the country. I guess we can always boast about having the best college football teams but what happens during the non-football seasons? We’ve got to want and do more for all the people of the state because when the least of us does well then we ALL do well!” Maysa says.

The crowd goes crazy and the young man just throws up his hands and walks away to people laughing at him.

“I am here to better the state and take us to levels that we’ve never seen. We need people to WANT to come to Alabama for all of the right reasons and not to just land a good job and go home on the weekends. I need your vote and your support to move this state forward. I thank you for your support and as my husband would say, “Now let’s go win this thing!”” Maysa says.

Maysa walks off the stage to Michael, Charles and MJ.

“Mom, that was great! Charles says.

“Yea, Mommie!” MJ says

“Now that was the way you start a campaign rally!” Michael says.

“That was quite a rush!” Maysa says.

Brinks runs over to Maysa and says, “I have been involved with a lot of campaigns but never one to this level and this was just the announcement that you were seeking office. I’m glad we were outside or we’d probably all be deaf at this point.”

“That was as loud as some of my federal campaign rallies. I know not to get overly excited because the mud has yet to start flying.”

“You’ve got that right and it can get pretty heated. Prepare your family and yourself. The ride begins now.” Brink says.

As the family is riding back home Maysa decides that it is time to warn Charles and MJ that her run for governor could get quite ugly and to pay no attention to anything they hear or see. Charles nods his head as yes he understands, but MJ just stares at her for a few seconds and says, “Don’t worry. Everything will be ok.”

Maysa stares back at MJ and tells Michael, “How’d he know I was worried? It’s like he read my mind or something.”

“Don’t be ridiculous. MJ, reading minds?”

Then Maysa looks at Michael then back to MJ and says, “Nah! You had me running as president so I know we don’t have Michael times two!”

“Back to that again? First me and now MJ?”

“I’m just saying. He has dropped really phenomenal lines of wisdom for someone so young. Everything he says fits the situation perfectly.”

“He’s just wise for his age like his mother and just as good looking.” Michael says with a wink.

“Good answer!” Maysa says with a smile.

“Are you ready to start on your journey?”

“Let the mudslinging begin. I’m prepared for the worse they can through at me. They just need to leave my family out of it and I won’t have a problem with anything they say.”

“Just be prepared because it could and probably will happen.”

“Then let the games begin. I need to put out my feelers for my team.”

“Are you going to recruit who I think you are?”

“Yes I am and hopefully as many of them as will be willing to relocate to Alabama.” Maysa answers with a hopeful smile.

“Candice, this is Maysa Green. How are you doing?”

“Madam President! I am doing great just not as exciting with you and your family roaming the hallways.” Candice says.

“I have a small request to ask of you and several other former staffers. If I flew up one day for lunch say in the next week or two do you think that can be arranged?”

Laughing Candice says, “I think I can get the key players I believe you’re looking for.”

“You were always one step ahead of me. Thank you in advance and pick us a good spot.

*Maysa is getting her crew together*

Two weeks pass and Candice has picked a very nice place for lunch and the majority of Maysa’s old staff have shown up.

“Wow! I am truly honored to have this many of you to show up to see me on such short notice. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. My family and I truly appreciate your kindness,” Maysa says.

“If I may speak for the group Maysa it is our honor to serve OUR president,” Candice says.

Everyone erupts in cheers as Maysa wipes away tears.

“I hope you guys are still cheering when you hear my request that I am about to present to you. With that being said please enjoy your meal,”

“You’re not fattening the hogs before the slaughter are you Maysa?” Brandon asks with a laugh.

Laughing Maysa says, “I guess we’ll soon find out.”

The group enjoys their meal and Maysa begins her talk.

“First, I have truly missed all of you since we last worked together. As a matter of fact I told Michael other than he and the kids, retirement life has been rather boring. Secondly, once you’ve gotten a taste of a political life it is hard to get it out of your system. So with that being said I’ve decided to take a shot at being the governor of Alabama.”

There was dead silence and everyone just stares at Maysa.

Maysa ~~just~~ stares back at everyone and says, “Did everyone hear what I said about running for governor of Alabama?”

Smith stands up and says laughing, “Well we thought you were inviting us out to lunch to ask us to help you win the governorship. We already knew that it wouldn’t be long before you’d be back in politics. We even had a pool going to see how long it would take before you’d run for something.”

“You guys took bets on me? Who won the bet?” Maysa asks.

“Xavier was the big winner. A weekend at the New 4 Seasons Hotel and $500 spending cash,” Smith says with a laugh.

“Xavier? Don’t you owe me a cut of the cash? You can keep your hotel stay. On second thought I have two children now so you keep the cash and we’ll take the hotel stay,” Maysa says with a laugh.

Xavier says, “I’ll take either one of those Madam President.”

“So my real request is how many of you would be willing to leave DC temporarily to assist me in winning this job and how many more of you would be willing to stay IF I win? This is a big request and I need you to seriously think about that part of the equation. If the answer is no I completely understand because this would be a complete lifestyle change. So no answers today please. Go back to work and think about it. I love you guys and enjoy the rest of your day.”

“That went very well I thought,” Michael says.

“I did too. It was good seeing everyone.” Maysa smiles.

“How many do you thing you’ll get to assist with running for the governorship but more importantly how many will be willing to join you in leaving the oasis better known as DC versus moving to Alabama for a minimum of four years?”

“That is the harder question. It is a public service job with no guarantees and very few times you’ll hear thank you. Those that were invited understand how the game is played so we’ll see.

*A little southern flavor makes the move worth while*

Amazingly one of the first people to call back for more details is Xavier.

“So Madam President I’d like a few more details before I make my decision. What would my position be and how’s the night life in Montgomery? BTW, I am asking for a group of people and not just myself. ” Xavier says.

Laughing, Maysa says, “Somethings and people never change. Remember, unlike DC, Montgomery not only has it’s night life but the beaches are only a heartbeat away as well which gives you a lot of options for entertainment.”

“Oh wow! We didn’t factor in the beaches of Alabama but Florida as well. This is starting to look better and better. I’ll pass this information but you can go ahead and lock the Xman in to assist with the campaign and a position within your cabinet. You know I can’t stand the snow and extreme cold weather anyway.” Xavier says with a laugh.

*When they love you they just love you*

“I have one already on lock.” Maysa says.

“Let me guess, Xavier. Beaches and warm weather sold him!” Michael says.

“You got it.”

“You know who I was surprised to see at this meeting.”

“Who?”

“Smith.”

“He’s a special case. Smith has not been the same since Slim was killed and I think he needs a fresh start anywhere but DC so if I can help him I will and if we can pull this off we’ll get him a position here doing something even if I have to create it.” Maysa says.

“I feel ya.”

Maysa’s phone and email start to get very busy especially after Xavier starts talking about everything they could all potentially be doing if Maysa becomes governor. Maysa has to keep reminding everyone that she has to first become governor before they all start making plans and hiring moving trucks. Her people seem quite confident in Maysa’s abilities to govern a state if she could govern a country. She has to keep informing everyone that state politics is a whole different breed of animal and you have to watch your back in dealing with it.

“Maysa, this is Candice, Brandon and Christian on the line. We just wanted to let you know we’ve got your back and when the time comes we’re committed to making the move down south.”

“Wow! My left and right hand and Mrs. Christian also. This is an honor you three and I truly appreciate the trust you have in me and your willingness to pull up roots and move here really . . .” a sobbing Maysa attempts to say.

“We’ve got you. After Xavier told us about the short trips we can make to the beaches and the nightlife in Montgomery and Mobile we were all in.” Brandon and Christian say.

“Thank you all for having such confidence in me again.” Maysa says.

*Just being Maysa*

Later that evening while Maysa and the family are having dinner Maysa says,

“I’ve spoken to about ninety percent of the old staff and they will be here to help run the campaign and have agreed to move here as part of the new staff if we pull this off.”

Michael continues to eat his dinner without muttering a word. A surprised Maysa asks, “So you have nothing to say?”

“Oh, I’m sorry. I thought I was supposed to speak on the part that you got surprised about.” Michael says laughing.

“So you already knew?”

“No, but I know these people pretty well and if nothing else they are loyal to a fault.”

“You knew they’d back me? How

“I just figured all of them would back your move for governor and the majority would move to a warmer climate if a good opportunity presented itself. Knock, knock! Great opportunity and here they are.”

“You never cease to amaze me with that uncanny ability to read people good or bad. You do realize that is kind of scary right?”

Standing with his hands on his hips Michael says, “Only if you are attempting to do evil.”

“You are such a silly man but I love you anyway.”

“I thought that was my best feature.” Michael says with a laugh.

Just as the two are about to share a kiss Charles and MJ enter the room.

“MJ and I want to watch a movie. It’s the new Spider-man movie. May we?” Charles asks.

“Sure guys. Get you some snacks and enjoy yourselves.” Maysa says.

“Well Mr. Green it appears as though we’ve created a little quiet time for ourselves.”

“There’s never any free time with MJ around but any time we can sneak in I’ll take. Meet me in the Jacuzzi in about ten minutes.” Michael says.

“Not if I beat you there.” Maysa says with a giggle.

*They don’t call it the dirty south for nothing*

Brinks contacts Maysa to update her on the polling numbers and they are looking good but to beware of the attack ads that will start to appear on TV and radio.

TV commercial reads as follows: Former President or not she brings her federal thinking down here and thinks it will work in the state of Alabama.

Michael is laughing as Maysa walks into the room and she asks, “What are you laughing at?”

“I just saw the first attack ad they’ve thrown at you and it’s pretty funny.” Michael says still laughing.

“Rewind it please. Let me see how bad it is.” Maysa says.

Michael rewinds it and Maysa is sitting and awaiting the bad part and Michael says, “This is the weakest attack ad I’ve ever seen in all my life. Surely they’ve got better ammunition than this. Brinks said it was going to be down and dirty and tons of mudslinging.”

“Maybe this is as bad as it gets?” Maysa says.

“No. They really don’t have a lot they can throw at or on you so they may get personal.“ Michael says.

*Using the divorce as a weapon*

The next day another ad comes out talking about Maysa and her past federal history and then they throw a slight jab at her divorce from James. The ad asserts that sometimes her emotions cloud her judgements.

“Michael, have you seen this latest ad that includes James?” Maysa asks.

“James was the only angle they had to throw at you and honestly that was the only bump in the road that anyone could hit you with. If that is all they have then they are in a lot of trouble.” Michael answers.

“That’s a low blow using him to attack me but I can deal with that because that was my past and Michael Green is my present and future.” Maysa says with a huge smile.

“I’ll always have your back babe. Now let’s get with Brinks to set up a battle plan for taking the taking of the state house.” Michael says.

“How are you and the family doing?” Brinks asks.

“We’re doing fine.” Maysa says.

“I take it you’ve seen that most recent ad. Going after your emotional state during a divorce is a very cold attack but you and I both know they don’t have much to come after you with so here we are. Now I have to ask. Is there anything really negative that they can use against you from that situation?”

“The only thing they can try to flip on me is Michael which was already tried in DC and it failed horribly. I’m an open book with everything I’ve done so bring it on!”

“If they didn’t know I guess these guys are going to find out that you’re like a mama bear when it comes to your family.”

“Yes, and this bear has a very serious bite.”

“I’ve heard your husband has a nasty bite as well.”

“He’s the one you really don’t want to get upset. Slow to anger but he boils over very quickly especially when it comes to family.”

“When you see him tell him I said to be on his best behavior for me please or put them in their place in a very professional manner.” Brinks says with a laugh.

“I will. So when do we start running ads to let the people know where we stand and what we plan to do for the state?”

“Give me a week and our team will have some commercials setup and we will be prepared for you to tape and we’ll be ready to dig in.”

“What I would like for you to do is give me details on all of my opponents and label them from weakest to strongest. I want to know every detail about them right down to what and where they like for breakfast to their craziest quirks. I want someone looking at their past debates and commercials to see if they can identify tell-tell signs of when they’re lying or not. I’d like each one of them broken down for me please.”

A shocked Brinks says, “Wow! You have learned a lot while in DC. huh?”

“You either learn how to play the game or the game will play you. I just know now what to look for and not get played. It’s sad what you have to go through to make you tough but the consequences make it so.” Maysa says.

*Sizing up the competition*

Brinks gets her team started and within a week all of the requested information is gathered and stacked neatly from weakest to strongest opponent.

“So who do we have starting at the bottom?” Maysa asks.

“Governor Simmons heard you were running for office and he decided not to seek re-election and is out. Jordon Hightower. Silver spoon kid who has been given everything and thinks he should be given the governorship. His ego is as large as his bank account so don’t underestimate him to throw a lot of dirt. Sofia Lopez, well-educated but very timid and “cries” very easy with very little pressure. Robert Evans, very attractive and has the backing of blue-bloods around town and a lot of the women’s groups and the strongest is Rhonda Harris. Rhonda is highly educated with two master’s degrees and has multiple years of involvement in local and state-wide government. She has close ties with numerous religious groups and her only weakness would be her reluctance to pull the trigger on any racial disturbances. This may be insignificant but she has a real weakness for shopping at the very high-end boutiques.” Brinks says.

“Thank you Brinks. All of that was quite enlightening especially the little side-note about the clothes. You never know when that type of information may come in handy.” Maysa says.

*Everyone has flaws*

Maysa heads home for the day and discusses the information about her opponents with Michael.

“Brinks gave me the information about my opponents and I got what I kind of thought I would get about each one of them.” Maysa says.

“Was Rhonda Harris everything you thought she’d be?” Michael asks.

“Yes. She is brilliant.” Maysa says with a chuckle.

“So why are you laughing?”

“Her weakness is shopping!”

“Are you serious?” Michael asks laughing.

“Yes. She can’t pass on a good looking pair of shoes?” Maysa says.

“Wow! As simple as that sounds that could actually lead to some bad habits.” Michael says.

“I’ll tuck that little nugget away just in case I may need it for later.”

The campaigns are slowly building to a crescendo and all parties involved have decided to do one debate in September to officially let the constituents know where they stand and their thoughts on where their opponents stand.

Jordan Hightower shutdown his campaign about mid-summer, leaving Sofia Lopez versus Rhonda Harris and Robert Evans versus Maysa. Maysa has studied each and every one of her opponents.

“Michael, Brinks has me setup for my practice debate but I need you to practice with me as well if you don’t mind. You are so good at making me think quickly and stay on task.” Maysa says.

“Sure thing babe. Do you really want me to push you or just rehearse with you?”

“No. I need you to really push me because I will need it if we get past Evans.”

“First of all it is WHEN we get pass Evans and not IF. So I’m going to push you hard as if you were running against yourself.”

“Mrs. Green. Now that you are back in the beautiful state of Alabama if and how would you change the way business is handled here?” Michael as moderator asks.

“Thank you for welcoming me back. The first thing I would like to change are the deals that are made to get businesses to relocate here. I understand that you have to “horse trade” in order to lure companies from a good deal to a better deal BUT you can’t give away the cow and still expect to get milk. By that I mean when we bargain I can’t in good faith keep allowing companies to come here and continue to go without paying taxes for five to ten years and paying salaries as well. What message are we sending to companies that have been operating here for years?”

“Very good Maysa. Just the right amount of passion as well.” Michael says.

Michael gets that feeling when someone is getting ready to do something evil but he can’t quite figure out or see who it is and Maysa notices that familiar look that he’s had several times in the past.

“I know that look by now mister. So what sinister action is occurring or getting ready to occur?” Maysa asks.

“What makes you think something is going on?” Michael asks knowing Maysa knows his actions by now but still not believing his explanation of it.

“That look means something is definitely wrong. Out with it sir!” Maysa says.

“I think we’re underestimating Mr. Evans. I think there’s a bit more to him than just that pretty face. I think he’s got a lot of evilness pinned up in him and I think he’ll do anything to get this nomination. Smearing you and the family isn’t beneath him.” Michael says.

“So where are you getting all of this from? He hasn’t shown anything like what you’re describing during any type of event. We’ve gone over his profile inside and out and nothing indicates that’s his M.O.” Maysa says.

“Have I EVER guided you wrong? Something is missing from that report. Maybe someone deliberately left out a section to make us think he’s weak where he’s actually strong and not just a pretty face.” Michael says.

“So are you thinking one of the people Brinks brought in would deliberately leave something out?” Maysa asks.

“Everyone told us to expect the unexpected. We know our people from DC because we worked together for eight years but we’re on new ground now and we’ve got to get our footing. Give me a little time. I’ll get with Smith and we’ll smoke out the traitor.” Michael says.

“Do what you do and I don’t want to know who or why. Love you babe.” Maysa says with a wink.

Michael contacts Smith and informs him of the issue and Smith sets off on seek and capture mission and Michael finds a quiet place to go into a trance and try to find who has betrayed the team.

“Oh my! It appears that the culprit is Brinks’ right hand man, Thomas Bedford, who doctored the document and left out the key pieces. I’ll need to get Smith to confirm everything from his end before we can move forward.” Michael says.

“Michael, it does appear that one of Brinks’ people modified the document and redacted some very key pieces of the information. I’m glad we caught this before she got to the debate.” Smith says.

“Why did he do it? Money or a promise of power once the election was over?” Michael asks.

“Who knows but we’ve got him now and we need to inform Brinks to see what else he may have done.” Smith says.

*Brinks has a mole in her midst*

The next day Smith and Michael meet with Brinks in her office.

“Brinks, we have some evidence that you’re not going to like about one of your team members.” Smith says.

Brinks wipes her brow and asks, “Who did what?”

“Bedford redacted information from the files we pulled on all of the opponents and left us what didn’t appear to make Evans a strong candidate based on his past. That’s why you have to always do your own do diligence and get some of your own information especially if the ends don’t quite matchup. It was ~~a~~ nicely setup by Bedford and would’ve made Maysa look very foolish if she had gone after him based on the information we had.” Michael says.

“So how do you want to handle this Brinks?” Smith asks.

“Bedford was one of my most trusted people so give me a moment while I have a mini-meltdown.” Brinks says.

“Believe me, we completely understand. This is politics and life in general and we all get surprised at times when we least expect it.” Michael says.

“I tell you what I’m going to do. I’ll call a meeting with everyone and use the original document to call Bedford out one statement at a time in front of the group. If he blinks while we’re in the meeting then we’ve got him. If he plays it off then I’ll keep him after the meeting and call you guys in for a personal sit-down so long as you guys promise to play nice.” Brinks says with a laugh.

“Now Brinks, would we do otherwise or at least would I do otherwise?” Smith says with a grin.

“That smirk is why I requested you to play nice.” Brinks laughingly says.

Michael is just shaking his head during the whole conversation. Michael is already planning his own little bit of retaliation on Bedford for looking to embarrass Maysa though he does try to keep in mind that this is politics and it’s a part of the game. Yet, he still may take a short visit just to see the real reason why Bedford decided to betray Maysa, but even more Brinks.

Michael finds him some solitude and drops into Bedford’s mind and as he is looking around he can see why Bedford was willing to risk his whole career to assist Evans in becoming governor. Bedford’s mother is in a high end nursing home, his wife is a long term resident at the Hayes facility for chronic drug use and alcoholism. While his wife is in the facility he has a girlfriend who has very expensive taste. It is apparent to Michael that Bedford has gotten in over his head in almost every aspect of his life and now has to do whatever it takes to keep everything under the table. Michael now understands the why Bedford was doing it BUT that he was also willing to sacrifice his beloved Maysa was non-negotiable. On his way out of Bedfords’ head Michael decides to “flex” just a little to give Bedford a little headache for what he was planning.

*Calling out the mole*

The next day during the meeting Brinks does exactly as she said she would do and starts calling out what the outline is for Maysa then she starts reading out some information Bedford knows they shouldn’t know and he says, “Ms. Brinks, I don’t show that in the briefs that I handed out to the staff. Is this something additional that you added?”

“Why no Thomas, these are MY most up to date un-redacted notes. Are we not looking at the same information? I thought everyone was on the same page, with the same information. We are, aren’t we?” Brinks asks.

Bedford’s eyes start going from side-to-side and he says, “I must have just picked up the wrong pages off of my desk.”

Everyone on the team starts to whisper because they know something is up. Bedford is always the “point man” when it comes to information and he is almost never wrong so this is a major fiasco especially coming from him. After the meeting Brinks says, “Thomas, hang around for a minute please.”

“Thomas, you know why I asked you to stay with me for a minute don’t you?” Brinks asks.

“Was it about the mistake with the paperwork? That was a simple mistake of picking up the wrong stack of papers.” Bedford says.

“No, Thomas that was a little more than simple mistake of paperwork. I am now in possession of the un-redacted papers that you handed out to the group as factual papers. We now know what you did but we don’t know why. Now we could just fire you or you could tell us the why of your betrayal.” Brinks says.

“I’m fired either way so you may as well just send me on my way.” Brinks snaps.

Brinks taps on the table after a few seconds and then calls Smith and Michael to her office.

“Well, Mr. Bedford. My name is Smith and of course you know Michael, Maysa’s husband.” Smith says.

Bedford shakes his head.

“Are you ok young man?” Smith asks.

“Yes, just a slight headache.” Bedford says.

Michael just smiles and says, “So Thomas, what does Evans have on you that you’re willing to commit political suicide?”

“Nobody has anything on me. I just made a little mistake. Nothing else. Just fire me and let’s end this or would you prefer if I quit. Either way I’m out of here.” Bedford says.

“If it is not blackmail then what is it? Debt? Drugs? An affair with another woman?” Michael snaps.

“My wife? Please, she’s in the same rehab . . . I mean NO!” Bedford says.

“Your wife and his’ are both in the same rehab facility. That isn’t good and at least for you very expensive.” Michael says.

“Look, I’m in a world of deep debt, I’ve got bad habits that I can’t seem to shake and my wife is in very bad shape as you obviously already know. I don’t know anything about anyone else’s wife!” Bedford snaps.

“You really sound believable except we know you two are and have been as thick as thieves for a very long time. Your issues created a weakness in yourself for Evans that he couldn’t resist exploiting.” Smith says.

“Then if you know so much then I quit and I’ll be on my way!” Bedford says.

Smith looks at Brinks and says, “Could you excuse us for just a few minutes please?”

“Wait a minute! You’re going to leave me alone with these two guys?” Bedford asks.

“No. I’m just leaving alone with him. I wouldn’t dare leave you alone with Maysa’s husband.” Brinks says with a smirk.

“I don’t trust this guy. What do you want to know?” Bedford asks nervously.

Bedford tells the whole story about Evans and all of the information about the other two opponents that he left out of his notes.

*Surprises*

The debate goes well now that everything is on a level playing field. Evans does prove to be a stronger opponent than he was on the original paperwork delivered. Maysa becomes the democratic nominee for governor. Rhonda Harris and Sofia Lopez have a very lively debate and Sofia surprises everyone by being a stronger opponent than anyone thought she would be though Rhonda Harris eventually won out.

“Brinks, how do we setup the parameters of the debate? Do we each submit several questions then a neutral party selects and creates their own questions to be called out to each of us?” Maysa asks.

“That is pretty much how it works. It keeps everything fair with no one having any advantage. Two intelligent ladies like yourselves should have a lot of fun debating one another. Let’s just make sure we remind everyone that you are an Alabama original who rose up through the ranks to become the POTUS and that my dear should count for a whole lot.” Brinks says.

“Michael, Brinks has given me the parameters for the debate and we have to come up with seven topics each and they’ll probably choose two each from the subjects we choose then the moderator will choose three.” Maysa says.

“That seems fair enough to allow both of you to pick two strengths and then hope at least two of the remaining three fit like a glove.” Michael says.

“I think that’s fair too.” Maysa says.

“So what two topics ae you going with?” Michael asks.

“I think I’m going to go with Health Care and Violent Crime.” Maysa answers

“Why?” Michael asks.

“Violent crime per the statistics over the past five years has risen by one hundred and five percent. Once you add in the number of violent crimes with the number of people injured along with the still rising numbers of Covid19 related hospital stays these two issues are the most critical and need immediate resolutions to bring the numbers down.” Maysa says.

Michael ~~just~~ smiles and says, “Excellent answer. You tied it all in with a cute little bow. Have you already turned in your desire to discuss these two topics?”

“Yes I did. I felt strong about these two and made the call before Rhonda could. Honestly though after looking at the list of other choices I felt good about any and all of them.” Maysa says.

“Now that’s my Maysa. Confidence!”

“Any idea what topics Rhonda will choose?” Michael asks.

“I spoke to Brinks and she thinks Rhonda will probably go with gun policy and economic inequality.” Maysa says.

“Gun policy was a no brainer because the second amendment is always a hot topic in America and economic inequality will get you a lot of votes if you’re actually going to create opportunities for higher paying jobs for minorities.” Michael says.

“She made some good choices. Let’s just hope I can play even with her on her topics and deliver on my topics.” Maysa says.

“What did we discuss about hope? Go with what you know and hope your opponent doesn’t know as much as you.” Michael says.

“I know and you keep reminding me to just be me and everything will fall into place.” Maysa says.

As Michael was about to respond to Maysa he is interrupted by MJ saying, *“Dad get mom to calm down. She’s got this.”*

*Michael tells MJ, “Easier said than done. Remember we can’t always tell people about things in their life because it makes them nervous that you know something about what is happening in their lives that they don’t know.”*

*“Oh yea, I forgot. Sorry Dad.” MJ says.*

*“It’s ok. You’re still learning.” Michael says.*

Michael turns to Maysa and says, “Ok. You’ve got this. One day and one step at a time. Go call Brinks and get your game plan on for Rhonda.”

“Brinks, this is Maysa. How are you this evening?”

“I’m good Maysa and yourself?”

“I’m good. What are our next steps?”

“Prep yourself for your specific topics, prep for her topics and prepare for the general topics. I now have those topics for you and I’ll be faxing them to you in just a moment.”

Maysa receives the fax and says, “Ok. These are nice topics: The economy, Climate change and coronavirus outbreak as they all relate to Alabama. Very interesting topics.”

“Just remember not to engage in the big picture but scale it back to just Alabama and don’t let her drag you into national this or national that. She wants you to get caught up in the “America” focus and not Alabama.” Brinks says.

“But what we do here relates back to America right?” Maysa asks.

“Yes, but this debate is only about what happens in the state of ALABAMA and for this one night America does not exist.” Brinks says.

“Gotcha.” Maysa says.

Maysa comes back in to the den area and flops down next to Michael and before she can say a word Michael says, “Focus on Alabama and not America.”

“How did you know she was going to say that?” Maysa says.

“That’s just what I was thinking and thought she would too. I knew if I said it you would frown up and blow me off but Brinks you’d listen to.” Michael says.

“Anyway, I’m listening to my TWO best advisers now.” Maysa says laughing.

“Let’s focus on the three general topics for the next week and then go specific after that on her topics.” Michael says.

“So which one shall you go with first?” Maysa asks.

“Let’s go with Coronavirus outbreak first. We can answer the whys and why nots of how it spread, go over the statistical numbers from high population areas to the rural areas and how to lower the opportunities of getting infected. Then we can move on to the economy and talk about what is working, what isn’t working and what can be done to attain steady income/employment growth. Lastly, climate change which if you ask Alabama farmers could be a hot topic button for them because the climate is changing so quickly on them that it is disrupting their ability to produce their crops at the same levels they have over the past five years.” Michael says.

“WOW! You seem to know these topics better than I do and I’m the one running for governor.”

“I have to teach this stuff daily so I had better know it.” Michael says with a laugh.

“I’m just glad you’re not my opponent. I may have to drop out of the race before it even begins.”

“Yea, right. Politics is not my thing. I’m only here to help you be the best version of Maysa you can be and nothing more.”

*Upset young man leads to chance meeting*

The next day at school Michael is getting ready for class when a student ask him about Maysa making history as one of only a handful of people to actually run for governor and actually have a chance to be governor of a state after being president of the United States.

“I guess it would be history making if she does win.” Michael says.

“So will you continue to teach if she wins?” the student asks.

“Yes, that is my plan.” Michael says.

Michael finishes teaching for the day and goes to his truck and there is a letter attached to his windshield and a knife in his tire. The letter states for him and Maysa to go back up north where they belong.

Michael heads over to the security office and gets them to roll back the video of the parking lot and sees that it is a student who supports Rhonda Harris.

“Professor Green, would you like for us to contact the young man and get administration to throw him off campus? That would be within your rights.” Joe the security guard says.

“No. Just notify him that he owes me for a new tire and all is forgiven. By-the-way, what’s his name?”

“He’s not just any student supporting Rhonda Harris. His name is Robert Harris. Sir, he is Rhonda Harris’ son. This could get a little messy if you don’t mind me saying sir. Maybe you should stay out of it and let us handle it and then the problem is squashed without you getting involved.” Joe says.

“No. Just get the message to him and keep the video handy.” Michael says.

“If you say so sir. We’ll take it from here.” Joe says.

*Rhonda*

The next day Michael gets a surprise visit from Rhonda Harris.

“Professor Green?” Rhonda asks.

“Yes, I’m Professor Green.” Michael says.

“Green? You’re not related to Maysa Green are you?” Rhonda asks.

“Why yes I am.”

“This is a little awkward and embarrassing. My son told me what he did and I was hoping he was lying but for once he was telling the truth. Let me start off by apologizing for his behavior. Secondly, let me thank you for not pressing charges and getting him kicked out of school. He gets a little worked up at times especially when it comes to me. Lastly, how much do I owe you for the tire?” Rhonda asks.

“The tire is one hundred sixty-five dollars. Why ruin a child’s future over a material object that can be replaced. Lastly, he loves his mom and I can’t find any fault in that.” Michael says.

“Thank you for being so understanding. Can I make this up to you over lunch or dinner?” Rhonda asks.

Michael caught a little off guard says, “Thanks but no thanks. Considering you and my wife are opponents for the governor’s office that might look just a little inappropriate.”

“OK, just get the tire and send me the bill and I’ll make sure MY son brings you the money.” Rhonda says.

Michael’s mistake

Michael heads home debating as to whether or not to tell Maysa about his visitor or keep it to himself and he thinks better of the situation and decides to tell her.

“Let me get this straight. My opponent’s son cuts your tire, his mom comes by to apologize and make amends only to find out the victim of the crime is her opponent’s husband who doesn’t press charges because he doesn’t want to ruin a young man’s future. Is that about everything?” Maysa asks.

Michael just smiles and says, “Yes, that’s about it.”

“Let me ask you about those last two pieces again. The son and not the mother is going to bring your money to you for the tire but SHE offered YOU not US lunch or dinner for the inconvenience of the sliced tire? REALLY?”

“Now that YOU make the statement it sounds worse.”

“I have one more reason to not like her. Now she is attempting to give my husband a peace offering for her child committing a crime. Think about this too Michael: DINNER! So what was dessert? Michael a la mode.” Maysa retorts as she slams a few doors walking throughout the house.

Michael just shakes his head and thinks to himself *‘Maybe I was better off hoping she wouldn’t find out through other sources.’*

“I can’t wait to get her on stage.” Maysa says.

“Maysa, there will be no question regarding me, lunch, dinner nor anything personal so get all your anger out and get focused on the task at hand, becoming governor.” Michael says gently.

“You’re right. I need to focus on her and the task at hand. I wouldn’t put it beneath her to have made the offer knowing how upset I’d get.” Maysa says.

“Remember they attempted to say that you get emotional at times and it clouds your judgement. Don’t let her trap you and create a situation that does not exist.” Michael says.

“But it will be my motivation.” Maysa says.

The Debate

A few weeks pass and it is finally time for the long awaited debate. Two women who are much more alike than different but their philosophies differ in how to achieve their goals.

The topics switch to gun policy and you can see the light come on in Rhonda’s eyes because in her mind she is at a strong advantage on this topic.

“I believe in everyone especially Alabamians’ rights to obtain and own a gun if they so desire. My opponent wants all types of background checks and wants to use any flimsy excuse to not allow us to have a gun. It is our second amendment right and no one should be able to take it.” Rhonda says.

“My opponent would have you to believe that I would come back home and have you think I want or can change federal and state laws. If she completely understood the law she would know I nor anyone else running for the office of governor nor a president can single handedly change an amendment. That, my dear people, takes an act of congress. If you don’t believe me check it for yourself or wait until tomorrow when the local news does a fact check on every topic my opponent and I have discussed.” Maysa says.

The crowd goes into an uproar cheering for Maysa. Michael takes a little look into Rhonda’s head and sees that she feels the election just slipped away from her with that one single discussion. This was the one topic she felt the most confident about and felt it would be a downhill battle after this. Michael steps back out as he feels and sees defeat in Rhonda but he pauses as he feels a cold spirit come over him and he realizes that Rhonda has gone from a woman defeated to a woman seeking revenge. Michael can now see Rhonda’s demeanor has flipped the switch as this evil smirk comes across her face.

“Touche, former President Green, touche. We don’t have to wait until tomorrow for a fact check. You are one hundred percent correct. I just ask the people of Alabama to keep in mind that I have been here the past eight years serving you to the best of my ability with no scandals or whispers of anything inappropriate. When you go to the polls keep my name in your thoughts. Rhonda Harris, a hardworking, scandal free, morally right candidate with nothing to hide.

VOTE Rhonda !!!” Rhonda snaps.

Maysa and Michael turn and look at each as to say, “Where did that come from?”

“Where did that come from Michael?” Maysa asks.

“Wow! I saw this strange look on her face but didn’t expect those words to come out of her mouth. Big surprise!” Michael says.

Just as Maysa and Michael got the words out of their mouths Brinks steps up and asks the same question.

“Brinks, the person that made that last statement was not the same person that debated Maysa tonight. It’s like someone hit a switch and her alter ego came out. That smile at the end was definitely someone else. That person wasn’t there during the debate.” Michael says.

“Even the tone of her voice changed. I had to take a double take to make sure it was still Rhonda standing there.” Maysa says.

“I don’t know how many people in the audience noticed it but I know we couldn’t be the only ones that heard the change.” Brinks says.

“Well, I’m glad this is over and we safely learned a lot about Rhonda.” Michael says.

“Yes, don’t cross Rhonda!” Maysa says with a laugh.

Maysa and Rhonda both push hard the last two weeks of the campaign with Rhonda having a few flair ups when questioned about the economy and more specifically climate change. The votes start to slowly get tallied and Maysa wins and becomes the governor of Alabama.

“Congratulations Governor Green! I wish you luck over the next 4 years.” Rhonda says.

“Thank you Rhonda.”

“Fair warning. I’ll be watching you like a hawk to make sure you do everything you’re supposed to do.”

“I would expect no less.”

In her evil voice and still holding Maysa’s hand Rhonda says, “Believe me I WILL be watching.”

Maysa’s eyes get big as she can feel extra pressure being applied by Rhonda as she attempts to pull away.

Michael notices what is going on and comes over and pats Rhonda on the shoulder to force her to loosen her grip.

“Great race Rhonda. Very competitive between you two. We’re going to go look at the race for Lieutenant governor to see who we’ll be working with.” Michael says.

“Thank you for saving me. I thought she was going to break my hand!” Maysa says.

“There is really something wrong with her. She changes when she gets under intense pressure.” Michael says.

Michael is thinking to himself that he probably should’ve taken a longer look at Rhonda because there is something going on with her that he missed. He knows he needs to pay her another little visit.

Joshua Nightspring wins the Lieutenant governor’s race. Maysa and Joshua should work well together. They both have a similar mindset for running government.

“This is looking pretty good Michael. I’ve got a Lieutenant governor that I shouldn’t have to fight with over every little detail and a few new very supportive allies to help get us through the sticky situations. So an overall good night.”

“Yes it has been but that Rhonda situation has me a little perplexed. She took this loss too easy and again had that evil smile on her face as she congratulated you. Honestly, I don’t trust that reaction coming from her. I expect some type of fiery reaction and not a smile and a handshake.”

“Well, she actually told me she’d be watching my every move and she will call me out if anything looks off. I told her I would expect no less and moved on to the next person standing to shake my hand. Though I did notice that same evil smile again as she was shaking my hand. At least she didn’t try to break it this time.”

“I say we still need to keep a special look out for her. Well this can be Brandon’s first task. Set up a great security routine and keep Rhonda’s name at the top of the list.“

Maysa shakes her head at Michael and says, “Seriously, with all the evil people we have dealt with over the past eight years Rhonda is at the top of your list?”

“Your other enemies are either in prison or gone to the great beyond. Thus Rhonda has now jumped to the top of the Maysa Green protection list.”

“Are we sure about that? We thought Nasser was gone and he was manipulating Charlotte right under our noses. Honestly, are we sure we are finished with all of the family and friends seeking revenge for Nasser? The man is like a god to them and even in death they are still trying to get his revenge.” Maysa says.

“You’re right. You’re no longer president so that type of pressure and national problems should be miniscule in comparison.” Michael says.

“Now Michael with as much knowledge as you have about other countries and how their governments work you know just because you cut off one bad guy there are five to ten to take his or her place. This is the life we chose so we have to learn how to live within the parameters they provide. Besides, we’ll have the best security in the world starting with Brandon who I trust with my life.”

“We need to contact them and get your staff set up with temporary housing until they can get the places they actually want to live.”

“I feel real good about this. I just hope everyone will really be happy moving down here.”

“I believe they will because they have all looked at the good and bad of the situations and have decided they wanted to have a boss they enjoy going to into battle with and that is you.”

“I’ll be glad to see them because after spending the last eight years of our lives with them it will be like a family reunion.”

“Hopefully we can get Candice down here first and she can coordinate getting the temporary housing setup so we can get our people in place.”

Maysa’s phone rings and it’s Candice.

“Hello Governor Green. This is Candice. Just checking with you about when you need us to start reporting and do I need to start setting up temporary housing for the crew?”

“Hello Candice! Yes, tell everyone to turn in those notices and get prepared to head down south and let’s get everyone some housing and get this administration in place. I need you first so we can get everyone else in place.”

“Will do Maysa and I turned in my notice two weeks ago and have my airline tickets in my purse. I’ve been awaiting your call.”

“So you believed in me that much?”

“Yes I do and always have. Brandon and Christian are packed and ready to go as well. They’re already driving down to an apartment they have until they can start looking at houses to purchase. Xavier and Smith both have realtors looking for property for them as well.”

“Well, I am flattered and impressed. You guys did truly believe in me. Thank you. I hope you don’t regret following me down south.”

“We all do believe in you and we were all getting tired of the snow and cold.”

“Well get ready for hot summer nights and sporadic tornado sightings.”

“That is why they build tornado shelters.” Candice says with a smile.

“You’ve done your homework and won’t be discouraged huh?”

“No. We’re here to stay.”

“Happy hunting. By the way, if any of you are interested there are several houses being built or for sale in my neighborhood.”

“Even better for the crew. Thanks!”

Maysa gets to the Governor’s Mansion and calls Michael to inform him of how quickly the staff is moving south.

“You have a great team and they will follow you because they believe in you and that is the highest honor that one can bestow upon another person.” Michael says.

Maysa starts to cry, “I hope I can live up to all their expectations.”

Laughing Michael says, “Really! You just spent eight years with these people and they love you enough to uproot their lives and follow you to a different region of the country.”

“I guess you’re right. I’m ok. You and the kids need to get out of there before you’re late for school and work.”

Maria, the temporary secretary, says “I have several messages and lots of gifts for you.”

“Gifts?” Maysa asks.

“Yes. Gifts to welcome you to the Governor’s mansion. I will check these messages first, then we’ll have time this afternoon to arrange your gifts where you would like them placed.” Maria says.

“Ok. Give me my agenda for the day and let’s get started.”

“I know you have Candice arriving on Monday to be your personal assistant but if you happen to have any openings within your administration I would love to apply and stay on with your team. I have heard so many good things about how you and your staff operate and I would love to be a part of something positive.” Maria says.

“Ok. Leave me your resume for Candice to look over and I’ll get her to see where you match up best. We do have several openings.”

“Maria, could you contact Lieutenant Governor Nightspring’s secretary and let’s see when we can sit down with the whole administration and see where we stand.”

“Nancy, this is Maysa’s secretary, Maria. Maysa was wondering if Mr. Nightspring has room on his schedule yet for a full administrative meeting within the next few days. We know he’s got to fill out his staff but let me know when he’s ready and we’ll get started.”

“Ok. I know right now other than filling staff positions his schedule is light but let’s see what we can do. I’ll call you back in a few minutes.” Nancy says.

“Ok. Thanks.”

“Hey Maria. Is she like everyone seems to think she is, a real smart but down to earth person?”

“I really only met her face-to-face this morning but yes. She really seems down to earth. I’m trying to see if she has any positions available after her staff arrives. I really want to stay here and learn.”

“I didn’t think about that. Maybe I should be asking Nightspring the same thing.”

“I would if I were you. First impressions are lasting and we’re getting first shot.”

The two ladies laugh and wish each other good luck.

*Governor Green meets the whole crew*

“It is finally nice to meet everyone in person. I know we know each other from our bios but I like to get to know everyone personally if that doesn’t offend anyone and if it does please take the time and tell me so I won’t think it’s me personally or you just think I stink.” Maysa says with a laugh.

Everyone laughs and they start their casual meeting so everyone can get acquainted with one another.

“Now I realize we’re all still attempting to hire people for open positions. Is Jennifer Williams over finance here? Hello Jennifer. Could bring us up to date on where we stand on all of our budgets to date?” Maysa asks.

“I requested some more accurate numbers this morning and they haven’t arrived as of yet. I can send copies to you and Joshua as soon as they arrive on my desk if that is ok?” Jennifer says.

“That is ok with me if Joshua is ok with it.” Maysa says.

“Yes. I’d prefer if they were one hundred percent accurate so we know exactly where we stand.” Joshua says.

“Let us know when you get the numbers please.” Maysa asks.

Jennifer’s phone beeps and she goes to her office to get the numbers.

Jennifer returns to the meeting but has a strange look on her face.

“What’s the problem?” Joshua asks.

“Well, ahh . . .” Jennifer says.

Maysa looks up and says, “My husband always says if you start a conversation off with well that conversation is going south very quickly.”

“Your husband is one hundred and fifty percent correct. Basically we’ve been robbed and it all happened while we were settling in for our meeting.” Jennifer says.

“Approximately how much did they get?” Joshua asks.

“It looks like about three hundred million dollars sir.” Jennifer says.

“How could anyone get into the system and then get that large of a sum without any alarms going off?” Maysa asks.

“The only way that happens is if you know all of the codes and how to route the funds electronically to an offshore bank. You would’ve had to set this up months in advance and knew the perfect window in order pull this off.” Jennifer says.

A now very angry Maysa asks, “How many people in the previous administration have the knowledge and the guts to pull off such a deed.”

“John Ellison in accounting, Sandra White in Finance and of course Rhonda Harris.” Jennifer says.

“Ok. We’ll need to check all three and see which one if not all three are involved. Call the FBI and Homeland Security. I’ll call my guy and get him up to speed.” Maysa says.

Maysa adjourns the meeting and calls Michael.

“Hey babe. How’s the first day going?” Michael asks.

“We’ve been robbed.”

Michael starts laughing and says, “So you got robbed of your dignity on your first day?”

“No, we seriously have been robbed by someone who is very smart and knows how the system works.”

“WOW! Any suspects?”

“We have three on our list but we’ll let the FBI take a look at all of the forensic information and see if all of our suspects are on the list and if any additional people will become suspects.”

“What three do you guys have?”

“We have John Ellison in accounting, Sandra White in Finance and of course Rhonda Harris.” Maysa says with a grin.

“Rhonda Harris? Your former opponent for governor Rhonda? That would make sense that you’d have her on the list but very stupid on her part if she actually did something like this. Do you really think she’d actually pull a stunt like this?”

“YES! She was bold enough to hit on my husband before a debate so yes I believe she could and would. I’d say she wouldn’t have a problem attempting to pull a stunt like this. She is more than smart enough and if anyone would know the perfect window to strike it would be her.”

Michael shaking his head in disgust says, “You’re right and I can safely guess that you’re never going to forget about that invitation are you?”

“I open and close chapters in my life when I feel the time is right or deem everything is dead and buried. You know my M.O. about people and things I care about.”

Michael just smiles and says, “Still open huh?”

“Wide open!” Maysa says.

*The Robbery and the suspects*

The FBI has performed their preliminary investigation and comes back with almost the same conclusion. It was an inside job and the people involved knew exactly when and how to go after the money and cover their trail.

“So do you have any clues as to who it was?” Maysa asks.

“We’re not sure but they also knew one other fact. They knew the state would be covered for the funds and could still function and perform their day-to-day duties.” Special Agent Vargas says.

“I thought about that after we called you guys but we need to capture these people as quickly as possible.”

“Well, you followed procedure and we’re glad you put us in the loop. This is a federal crime and covered by insurance or not this needs to receive our top priority and it shall.”

“I don’t want to jump into federal jurisdiction but are the three people we suggested on your radar?”

“Now Governor Green you know I can’t discuss anyone or anything that is currently being investigated even if you gave me the information. I always follow procedure.”

“Well, Vargas you know I’ve been around for a while now so I do understand. Just let us know what we can do to assist in resolving this issue.”

“We’ll take care of everything and the guilty parties will be captured if it is possible. Everyone makes a mistake.”

*Smith is on the hunt*

Smith arrives later that afternoon and Candice rushes his paperwork through to get him on payroll.

“Governor Green, that has a nice ring to it. The first day on the job and someone is always stealing from you. You do have fun don’t you!” Smith says.

“Thank you Smith and it is nice to see you. We have a pretty good idea who did it but the how is the question. The timing was perfect. The first day we come in everyone is feeling their way through the offices. The first hour we’re meeting and getting to know one another. And lastly, first day that we’re trying to make sure all of our financial records match what is in the accounts.”

“Someone knew the routine you and your people would have to follow to get everything established. They were one step ahead of you the whole time right up to discovering the shortage in the accounts. Very smooth.”

“Too smooth if you ask me Smith. They knew how to bypass everything.”

“They didn’t have to bypass anything. Everything was the same as it was on the close of business on Friday as it was when you opened shop today. All of the access changes were scheduled for later this morning which was arranged by the previous administration. Give me the three names you suspect and I’ll get started tracking them down forensically from two weeks ago and see what their moves were. Honestly, if they’re smart they and the money have already gone to the Cayman Islands. If they are sloppy or a little stupid then I’ll find them.”

“Do what you have to do Smith and let me know what resources you need: Money, personnel, computers. This is not the way I wanted my new administration to start. Three hundred million dollars in the hole on the first day is a total nightmare but I know if anyone can resolve this you can do it.”

“Can you get Candice to rush Brandon, Xavier and Christian’s paperwork? They can help me to process this information faster.”

“Just tell her on your way out and I’ll sign off on it.”

“Thank you.”

“Ms. Candice, how are you today?” Smith asks.

“I’m doing well today. I heard I need to rush through some paperwork on a few people.”

“Yes. We need to check on a few people to see what they’ve been up to lately. I need these folks expert assistance.”

“Consider it done. Paperwork is completed and signature applied. Let’s get this show on the road.”

“Do you happen to know the actual location of the people in question?”

“All three are actually at a hotel unpacking. They were going to report tomorrow but I can get them some office space here and you guys can get started.”

“Good deal. Two steps ahead as usual. Thanks!!”

*The crew gets an early start*

Candice contacts Brandon and informs them to come to the capital to get an early start tracking down the three prime suspects according to the in-office team.

The team arrives and Brandon says, “Hello folks! I hear we’re getting an early start on a smart thief or thieves.”

Smith gives the group a hug and says, “Man it is so good seeing you guys and we can get the show started with a bang.”

“Xavier, you take Sandra White in Finance, Brandon and Christian take John Ellison and I’ll take Rhonda Harris. Rhonda may act a little bi-polar at times so if I can find her I may call for some back-up.” Smith says.

“You’ve got the numbers. Just give us a call. We’ve got your back.” Xavier says.

Xavier locates Sandra’s favorite places she enjoys ~~to~~ visiting: the Eastside gym,

S & H Fashion Boutique and surprisingly the Westover gun range.

Xavier strikes out with the gym and the boutique but he spots her car at the gun range.

Xavier notices her with two guns that she is practicing with. One is a Glock 17 and the other is a Glock 19. Hopefully that can be his way of starting a conversation.

“Hi. Do you like the way that Glock handles?” Xavier asks with a smile.

Sandra smiles back and says, “Which one?”

“Excuse me. So you have two Glocks. Do you have a preference?” Xavier asks.

“Now that is the right question and I do prefer the 19 only because it is more compact. Do you like that Ruger Security 9?” Sandra says smiling.

“You have an eye for guns huh?”

“Yea, I’m a Military brat. My dad taught me everything about a gun and even more about the type of men that carry the different types of guns.”

“Was your dad that spot-on good?”

“Yea. For the most part right down to the type of liquor they drink.”

“Oh, so from judging me based on my Security 9 and . . .” Xavier starts to say.

“Your clothes and even that alluring cologne you’re wearing. Yes, I feel confident in telling you what you drink and even eat.”

“Talk to me young lady.”

“You drink white liquor, don’t smoke, vegetarian, you party but not a hangout until 5am type of guy. You’re a one woman type of guy until something goes wrong either on your part or hers. You’re also a “gym rat” who stays until you feel the burn. I bet you drive a white on white sports car that you only hand-wash no matter the season.”

“WOW ! Am I that readable or are you just that amazing?”

“I could tell you a few other things but I’ll wait until after our first date.” Sandra says with a wink.

“So you knew I was going to ask you out? How do you know I’m not married or engaged or living with someone?”

“The conversation wouldn’t have lasted this long. You would’ve checked me out and kept it rolling. I’ve been hit on by too many guys with real game and no game. Believe me, I know the difference between a stud and a dud. When are you free to take me out?” Sandra asks.

“Since you insist. What about this Friday? The one thing you didn’t know was that I just moved to town so you’ll have to pick the spot for the date.”

“By the way, my name is Sandra. My number is 205-555-1111”

“My name is Xavier. My number is 678-555-2222”

Licking her lips Sandra says, “I’m looking forward to Friday night.”

“So am I.” Xavier says with a smile.

*Brandon and Christian going undercover*

Brandon and Christian are searching for details on John Ellison. His life seems too simple and quiet. Just because he’s an accountant you don’t figure he’s a church mouse either.

“Here it is Brandon. The real John Ellison: gambler, pushes a little weed, mescaline and pcp. He must be pushing the drugs to support the gambling habit.” Christian says.

“Looks like he is also into underground street fighting and the answer is no.” Brandon says.

“No to what?” Christian asks.

“Please. You heard street fighting and your eyes lit up. Unless we can’t avoid it there will be no street fighting. We’ll contact Jo-Jo if there’s to be any fighting. She’s the only person I know that enjoys fighting as much as you do if not more.”

“Ok. It just sounded like fun. We’ll track him through his other bad habits which shouldn’t be that difficult. Taking in a fight or two might be ok right?”

Brandon shakes his head and says, “Yes, Christian that should be ok. Don’t get all hyped up thinking you’re getting back in the game. We have a deal remember?”

“Yes. I remember and I know you will never let me forget.”

“No. We agreed no more fighting until after we have the baby remember?” Brandon quips.

“Yes dear. That’s why I love you. You try to keep me grounded.”

“Now let’s go do our job and get this guy.”

“Again, we either go the fight angle or the drug angle. We know the drug angle is a 100% no. So we’ll have to get them to front us some money so we can get close to him through the betting.” Christian says.

“I’ll contact Candice and get Maysa to sign off on some cash. And we’ll start betting in the same places as John and big bets should get his attention.” Brandon says.

*Smith is tracking Rhonda*

Smith’s assignment won’t be as easy unless Rhonda makes a mistake and starts spending money or all of a sudden takes off for the Cayman Islands. Smith flags Rhonda’s passport and any and all alias. He also flags her bank account for any transactions and checks to see if she has any safety deposit boxes in her name or any family related named accounts.

*Michael takes a look at the three suspects*

“Michael, I’m home.” Maysa says.

“We’re out back.” Michael says.

Maysa gives Michael a kiss and says, “Well the guys are out trying to track down the three and see which one if any have stolen the money.”

“Hey boys! How was your day?” Maysa asks.

MJ says, “I had a great day and dad decided to bar-b-que so this is really a great day!”

“Charles, how was your day?” Maysa asks.

“It was ok. Like MJ said the B-B-Q has made this a much better way to end the day.” Charles says.

“IF you can watch the grill for just a moment I’ll be right back.” Michael says.

Michael heads off to his study to try and get a look into the heads of the suspected thieves. The first person he looks at is Sandra White and she is very smart but has no motives to steal but she does plan on stealing Xavier’s heart. Once Michael sees how she plans on doing it he steps back out of her mind and thinks to himself, ‘*Xavier, Xavier, I hope you’re ready for what this* *woman has in mind for you. WOW!’*

Michael steps into the mind of John Ellison and with all of the drugs in his mind and body it is very difficult to read anything. He’ll have to get more details from

Brandon and Christian. That leaves Rhonda who Michael suspects but isn’t really sure about but he knows she has a spirit about her that is hard to describe. Even after taking a little stroll Rhonda’s mind Michael really doesn’t see much but then he notices that Rhonda has other issues to be concerned about. She is very intelligent but she is also a high functioning schizophrenic, meaning they have the ability to attend school, hold down a full-time job, they probably have good interpersonal and relationships skills and probably can function with others with no problem. If she doesn’t inform you of her condition you’d never know. She is scary because without her medication she could be very dangerous. I can’t tell Maysa nor Smith about this and I doubt there’d be any medical records indicating her issues with the HIPAA laws in place and they are here just for this reason. I may have to live with this one. I’ll just have to keep a close eye on her. Smith is going to love tracking her where-a-bouts. He returns to the grill.

“How was your day at work today Michael?” Maysa asks.

“It was good. More kids were actually listening to me instead of conversations on their phones. I’ve decided to do more pop quizzes to keep them on their toes.”

“You’re getting tougher on them than in the past.”

“Not really. More test gives them more opportunities to keep building up points. Less test means you have to know more and the fewer test forces you cram more so I’m actually doing them a favor.” Michael says with a smile.

“Always trying to give them better opportunities even when they don’t know you are.”

“Dad, will you still be teaching here when I’m ready to go to college?” Charles asks.

“Sure but you wouldn’t get a break. No my friend you would be my example of what I will be expecting from all my students.” Michael says laughing.

“Yes, but I’m your son.”

“Yes, and I will ALWAYS love you but I’ll be impartial in my classroom.” Michael says with a smile.

“Mom! Can he do me like that?”

“In his classroom he’s the boss.”

“Ok. I’ll change my major or I’ll be attending another in-state school.”

“You would actually change your major to get away from your dear old dad? I’m truly crushed.” Michael says.

“I’m just joking Dad. I can take anything you throw at me. I’m your son and you brought me up to be strong.” Charles says.

“Thank you son. I appreciate that and you’ve always made me proud.” Michael says.

MJ runs over and gives both of them a hug and then beckons for Maysa to join them in a family group hug.

*Vargas joins the hunt*

The next day Special Agent Vargas says that the case is not looking good even from a forensic point of view.

“Governor Green, good morning. I am afraid that the case is not looking good. We are checking everyone’s bank accounts and they are clean. We can’t find any trails showing anyone’s access to the accounts. It’s almost like a ghost slipped in and back out. We’re not finished but whomever they are have some out of this world skills.” Vargas says.

“Thanks for the update. I know you guys are probably doing this but can you do a deeper background check on the three key people and make sure there isn’t something missing or is being overlooked. Just a heads up. I do have my people checking as well and they have your contact information in case they find something and they will not crossover into your lane.”

“I think I either know or have heard of your people so we’re good.”

*Brandon and Christian go under cover on John Ellison*

Brandon and Christian are still trying to work their way closer to John but his combination of drugs and gambling is making for a very dark path for them to try and travel.

They are at an underground fight and see John and move close to him and start talking about how a fight is going and how they lost money on a fighter.

“Yea babe I thought this fight was a lock but that’s three grand gone on another loser.” Brandon says.

“That’s ok. We’ll make it up on the next fight. I’ve seen the blonde haired guy before and he is a beast.” Christian says.

“So you’ve seen the blonde guy before, huh? He really is good? I’ll follow your lead and put five hundred on him.” John says.

The fight starts and within three minutes the blonde guy wins the match with a quick knockout and John is ecstatic.

“Yes! My two new best friends. Who do you like in the next fight?” John asks.

Brandon and Christian have found a path to John and it is money. With Christian’s ability to pick fighters they should be able to keep John happy with his gambling and if he has the money he really won’t care about his loses but he does love to win.

John wins three out of the next four fights with Christian and Brandon’s help so he is ecstatic.

“This has been a great night! What do you guys want to do next? Clubbing, dinner or just getting high? What do you want to do? I’ve got the penthouse at the Riviera Hotel if you guys need somewhere to crash.” John says.

“We’ll come hang out for a little while then we’ll go.” Brandon says.

Christian whispers, “We’re going to look around at his place to see if he’s playing with long or short money?”

When they arrive at the penthouse both Brandon and Christian’s mouths drop open because the place is absolutely gorgeous.

“John, your family got money or you just this good at picking fights? This place is nice!” Brandon says.

“Just a combination of things between the fights, my nice government job I use to have and dabbling with a few side ventures have made me comfortable.” John says.

Brandon and Christian both look at each other and wink. They hang out for a little while and let John talk hoping he will talk and say something useful. Another time and another day maybe they’ll get something out of him.

Smith starts tracking Rhonda and apparently she has been tracked before. She doesn’t take the short route anywhere and weaves in and out of traffic like a professional race car driver. She seems to be a very suspicious person which makes you think she does a lot sneaky stuff or maybe she has had a stalker problem before. Either way Smith is not about to lose her.

“Hey Candice can you let me speak to Maysa please.” Smith says.

“Sure, hold a minute.”

“Maysa, this is Smith and I may have a little problem.”

“You never have a problem. So this must be major.”Maysa says.

“I’m trying to get leads on Rhonda but the way she travels and her apparent suspicious nature she has either been stalked or followed before. I won’t be able to continue following her or she’s going to recognize my car or me before long. I’m going to need some assistance with her.”

“Ok. Let me see who I can get for you until everyone else reports for duty here.”

Michael calls after Smith hangs up and Maysa informs him of the situation and Michael says, “Vargas should have people tracking her as well right. Unless they are just doing it electronically.”

“Smith is going to put a tracker on her car and possibly get a drone to track her as well but his bag of tricks hasn’t arrived yet.” Maysa says.

“I know YOU want to find out what she’s up to but you may have to cooperate with the FBI and work together to find out if she’s doing anything or just jerking you guys around.”

“You’re right as usual. I’ll talk to Smith and we’ll get something arranged.”

“Besides, do you realize how bad it has to be if Smith is asking for help? This woman must be a demon behind the wheel.”

*Smith gets a new partner*

The next day Smith contacts Vargas and says, “Special Agent Vargas this is Smith with the governor’s office.”

“I was expecting your call. Do I call you Smith or do you go by something else?” Vargas asks.

“No. Just call me Smith. Here’s my problem. Rhonda is a superfast and crafty driver and though I could keep up it would become obvious I was trailing her after a few trips throughout the city and or I end up with an accident or a reckless endangerment ticket on me with no way out of it.”

“You’re right. It could get dangerous. We’ll do a little swap and go on following her and that should ease the pace of following her. We don’t need to keep pushing the envelope and she hurts someone or we hurt someone trying to keep up with her.” Vargas says.

Smith gets a phone call and it is Candice.

“Smith, I know you need a partner tracking Rhonda until we get a full crew assembled here. I’ve got a person in mind if you don’t mind working with someone new.”

“You can send me the Easter Bunny if they can drive a car.”

“That much I can guarantee she can do plus she’s a sharpshooter and a black belt in karate.”

“How soon can you get her lined up?”

“Her name is Genesis Darkwater.”

“Did you say Darkwater?”

“Yes, the one and only.”

“I thought she was an urban legend. She really does exist?”

“Unfortunately for the bad guys she does. She’s never met a criminal she didn’t like to hurt.”

“So when can I get with her?”

“Honestly, she should be coming up on your six in about three, two, one.”

“Smith! Look out your side mirror. This is Genesis Darkwater. Which car are we tracking and I’ll take over from here for the next ten to twenty minutes and we can keep alternating until she stops or run out of gas.”

“Nice meeting you and she’s all yours. What is that you’re driving?”

“Old school Challenger with a few upgrades. She’ll clock 225 on a straight away and my weight shifter allows me to hug some corners real tight. Enough of the small talk for now. I’ll holla back at you in a few minutes Smith.”

“Candice, where on earth did you find this woman?”

“Smith, there are some questions you really don’t want the answer to. Believe me this is one of those times.”

“So is she working with us temporarily or what and does the whole crew meet her?”

“She will only meet with us via zoom and never in person. She is the next level up from Silk and Reaper and I know how much you respected them. Believe her last name fits her and we’ll just leave her right there. She has peaked your interest though hasn’t she?”

“Yes, mainly because I thought she was just a myth or legend. Who doesn’t want to meet a legend?”

“Smith. Let me let you in on a little secret. You’re a legend too. They do just call you Smith right.”

Smith just laughs then thinks, “Hmmm . . . nah!”

Smith stops to gas up his vehicle and gets a call from Genesis.

“Smith, your girl has pulled up to a high end hotel.” Genesis says.

“Let me guess the Riviera Hotel.”

“How’d you know?”

“That’s where her potential partner has a penthouse.”

“So how do you want to play this?”

“Just follow her in and see if she goes to his suite. She probably will and I’ll be there in just a few minutes to sit on her car.” Smith says.

“Genesis, do you realize that no one has a clue as to who you are or what you look like?”

“Yea, I know and I’d kind of like to keep it that way.”

“Candice kind of eluded to that. Does she know what you look like?”

“You don’t like being in the dark do you?”

“No. I work from dark shadows and other than my crew I’m not use to anyone being this much a shadow. That is why you’re considered a myth.”

“It also gives me the opportunity to actually live and not be judged. Enough of the small talk because I’ve heard that you my friend are the legend killer.”

“Only bad legends.” Smith says laughing.

“Looks like your girl is heading to the penthouse. These are some very bold people BUT if you’re not guilty of anything then you have no fear. Can we get a warrant to plant a bug or something in this guy’s room?”

“Not without just cause and neither of them has done anything to justify planting a bug.”

“We can run a trap on their bank accounts since the money is missing correct?”

“That we can do. I’ll check back with Candice and make sure it is done.”

“Was this the first opportunity to actually catch any of them together since the money came up missing?”

“Yes. The only one that seems to be free and clear at this point is Sandra White. Xavier is tracking her but I hope they give him some extra cash to entertain her because I believe she’s the weakest link and is way too busy enjoying life to be caught up in any mess. Never say never when you’re talking about the criminal mind though.”

*Meeting the new members of the crew*

“We’ll do a zoom call tonight to see where everyone stands with the people they’ve been assigned to. Then we’ll see if there has been a change in their bank accounts or any trips planned on any flights or ships. If not, then we’ll continue to follow them until something breaks.” Candice says.

Everyone gives their updates and Brandon says, “We’re playing John with our money but he hasn’t mentioned any money other than “family” money. His bank hasn’t fluctuated at all and a few wins should have flushed him out by now especially for a big time gambler who lives for the rush of the gamble.”

“Could anything else flush him out?” Smith asks.

“Yes, drugs but we can’t go down that path with him. He’s a functioning crackhead and we can’t fake getting high with him and honestly not willing to try.” Christian says.

“Well I don’t think Sandra White is involved at all because she’s too busy trying to party but she could be fooling me.” Xavier says.

“Poor Xavier. Sandra is going to wear him out with dinners, shopping and the clubs.” Smith says.

“Just the luck of the draw folks. She could be the real bad guy and you guys just could be chasing the angels.” Xavier says.

“You are correct but we shall see.” Smith says laughing.

“Smith, what is so funny?”

“I just hope you don’t get whiplash from Ms. Sandra is all I’ve got to say.” Smith says with a huge laugh.

Everyone else starts to laugh and Xavier says, “Haters!!!”

“Candice, do you think Governor Green will spring for a little spending cash on Sandra, I mean Ms. White?” Xavier asks.

“You may have to use your own money and we’ll reimburse you. That is actually better because you have no idea what you’ll be spending anyway, right?”

“You’re right. Thanks!” Xavier says.

“Don’t let them get to you. If they didn’t like you, especially Smith, you wouldn’t get two words out of them. So take it as a compliment.” Candice says.

Everyone gathers back in the conference room to discuss the day’s events but most are curious to hear and maybe see the legend herself, Genesis Darkwater.

“Hello everyone. I’m extremely happy to see everyone but not under these circumstances. Now as you know we have started off on the wrong foot with our new administration. Some way, somehow some genius has found a way to breakthrough all of the computer software defenses we thought we had in place and steal three hundred million dollars. Now the FBI has a plan in place for the much bigger list of potential people they suspect but we are going to concentrate on three unless you guys suspect someone else after going over the details and background checks of our three people. We have already started tracking them financially, forensically and in some cases using GPS and any other means deemed necessary. This administration will not be crippled by anyone’s delusional thoughts of grandeur at our expense.

With that being said we have a new member we have added to our team but this person’s physical identity will remain a secret. You all have probably thought she was just a myth but our own Ms. Candice has recruited her to join our team. She is the one and only Genesis Darkwater.

The room erupts in cheers.

“Thank you everyone. I hope I can live up to your expectations but you already have a living legend amongst you in Smith.” Genesis says.

The room erupts again in cheers for Smith.

“Well with two living legends hopefully we can catch the guilty person or persons and get us back on track running the great state of Alabama.” Maysa says.

“I almost forgot about one other person who is very dear and near to my heart and has been with me every step of the way since I completed college, my husband and my better half, Michael Green, who is at work teaching a class.” Maysa says with a huge smile.

“That’s all I have for now people. Unless you have any questions we will call it a night and start again in the morning.”

Maysa heads home feeling pretty good with how things are looking especially with having Smith and Genesis going after the thief. The problem is what if everyone is wrong and it is someone else?

“Michael. Where are you babe?” Maysa asks.

“I’m in the study. Dinner should be ready in a few.”

“With all of the places and things you’ve done have you ever run across the name, Genesis Darkwater?”

“Did you say Darkwater?”

“I shall take it by your reaction that you know or have heard of this person.”

“I was under the impression she was a legendary myth.”

“You mean I am aware of something the great Michael Green doesn’t know?”

“She does physically exist?”

“Yes! She now works for the office of the governor of Alabama~~!”~~

“Shut up!! I want to meet her. Can that be arranged?” Michael asks with excitement.

“Wait a minute. You’re awfully excited to meet some other woman. Is there something I need to know mister?”

“No worries babe. If the legend is true she could probably kill both of us without being in the same state, so no dear. I don’t want to get that chummy with her. Meeting a living legend in the flesh. WOW !!”

“I hate to bust your bubble but that is not going to happen.”

“I told you not to be jealous of anything happening.”

“No babe. This is how she operates. She did a “zoom” in for our meeting to keep her new team mates from physically seeing her. I can tell you that Smith was highly impressed with her and she is his new partner. She does drive a modified Challenger that she claims will clock more than 225mph with a weight shifter for cornering.”

Michael’s eyes bug out as Maysa talks about the car and he asks, “Wow! How did you guys get her?”

“Candice got in contact with her and she told us not to ask how. She’s with us now and that is all that matters. By the way, she also told us about our own living legend, Smith. He was part of the reason why she decided to join us.”

“So no face-to-face contact with a legend?”

“Sorry babe but I’ll get you her contact information and you can call her.”

“Ok. That’ll work.”

Later that night Xavier is out with Sandra and they are enjoying a great dinner, a live band and a slow walk down main street.

As they are driving along Sandra says, “I really had a great time tonight. So, can we see each other next weekend or do you have a hot date with some other woman?”

“You and I just met and I’ve already told you I don’t really know anyone else down here. Besides, why would you only want to see just me? I know you have the men lined up to take you out.” Xavier says, laughing.

“Actually, no I don’t. I’m very selective about who I hang out with. I was attracted to you when you smiled at me though it wasn’t really your smile that got me. A cute smile normally never gets my attention.” Sandra says.

“So it wasn’t the smile then what got your attention?”

“Your eyes really got my attention.” Sandra says.

They arrive at Sandra’s apartment and Xavier leans in for a kiss good night and Sandra says, “I only give out kisses when the night is actually over.

The next morning at work Smith looks at Xavier and says, “Son you’ve got to learn to take extra clothes in your trunk when the potential for a “sleep over” exist. Now run down the street to Whitaker’s and get two new shirts. You’ll be prepared the next time”

Xavier just shakes his head and says, “Thanks.”

“By the way, was it worth it?” Smith asks.

Xavier just smiles and says, “Yes!”

Brandon and Christian meet up with John and he has had another bad day until they arrive.

“I am so glad to see you guys. I have been losing bet after bet. I couldn’t pick a good fighter if they showed up wearing the championship belt.” John says, laughing out loud.

“We’ve got your back John. You haven’t been drinking and smoking all day too have you?” Brandon asks.

“Maybe just a little . . .” John says.

“Ok. Sounds like you need to chill out for an hour or two. We’ll make a few bets in your name and come back and get you. Go get some rest and clear your head.” Christian says.

Brandon and Christian drop John off and plant a few bugs at his place and come back to the fights. The tech guys are just waiting to hear anything and the only call he receives is from Rhonda.

“John, wake your stoned head up. I’ve got some business to discuss with you.” Rhonda says.

The tech guys immediately call Smith and Genesis and give them the message.

“Genesis, this might be the break we’ve been waiting for.” Smith says.

“I don’t think so. You don’t steal three hundred million dollars and leave a weak message like that. As a matter of fact, I’m not even leaving a message. Wherever we’re meeting is where we decide how and where the money will be decided and we won’t be discussing it in a hotel room or over a phone that you know I have and the line can be tapped.” Genesis says.

“So you don’t think these three stole the money. Then who?” Smith asks.

“Let’s go back to the original list and recheck everyone. If they all check out then we’ll circle back to these three. I just don’t believe these three did it together or individually.” Genesis says.

“Ok. We’re still keeping tabs on all three though.” Smith says.

Smith starts to laugh and Genesis says, “What’s so funny?”

“Poor Xavier is going to be heartbroken when I give him this news. Now at least he can start dating Sandra White for real.” Smith says.

“His way of tracking her whereabouts was to date her?” Genesis says laughing.

“In his eyes this was the best way to “get close’ to her.” Smith says.

“Oh boy. I’m not even going to ask how close he really got if they may now be actually dating. ROOKIE!!” Genesis says.

The group meets for their evening session and they want to inform Maysa that they don’t believe the three they have been suspicious of are the actual thieves.

“So if you don’t think any of these people committed the theft then who are we looking at?” Maysa asks.

“We can all but rule out these three but everyone else that the FBI has been looking at are now higher priority. We’ll let the FBI do their job and we’ll concentrate on putting a budget back together and keep working our angles on other known associates of our three.” Smith says.

“Oh wow! That’s not good Smith but ok. We’ll take your recommendation and go from there. We will not drop our guard because if we got hit that quick on our first day of administration then we’ll have to be on our toes now and more vigilant from now on. Smith, I want you and Genesis working with Special Agent Vargas hand-in-hand. We’ll only pull you two off if we need you.” Maysa says.

“Candice can you proceed with procuring the federal money to place back in our accounts. Also, get our tech guys to put a trap on any and all of our financial accounts just in case someone attempts to return to the scene of the crime. That’s all for now everyone. Let’s do what we do best, be great!!” Maysa says.

Maysa calls Michael and says, “Well, you were right. It appears that Smith and Genesis have hit nothing but dead ends on our three suspects. We’re going to look for known criminal associates for the three and move on to stabilizing the state budget. We’ll leave Smith and Genesis to work with the FBI.”

“That sounds like a plan but you sound disappointed.” Michael says.

“I know my guys could close this problem but we’re chasing our collective tails and we’re wasting taxpayer dollars. It’s time to move on.” Maysa says slamming her fist on her desk.

“It’s ok. The money is insured so you’ll get it back. So other than your pride what else has been damaged?” Michael asks.

“You do know me don’t you. The press is going to have a field day with all of this. I just see the headlines: Big shot former US President robbed blind the first day on her new job.” Maysa says.

“How about: Master criminal robs state department before new administration takes office.”

“I like your headline better than mine. I can just hear our former colleagues laughing about us moving back home and this happens.”

“In a few months the cybercriminals will be caught and life will shift back to normal. Whatever normal is now.”

“Thank you for trying to make me feel better but you don’t believe that and the words just came out of your mouth.”

“It’s not like you won the election then set this financial disaster in motion to harm yourself.

So just take a breath, calm down and think everything through. This will all work out.”

“That’s why I love you. You’re always there to slow me down and allow me to think.”

“I’ll always be here for you.”

“If we are at a dead end with Rhonda, Sandra and John, then who could have been this smart to pull this off?”

“Let me ask the more obvious question. If not one or all of these three then what work associate or person the three was intimate with?”

“OMG !! We were so locked in on the three closes to the actual money but not locating people these three would have shared secrets, bed time secrets with.”

“John was in love with getting high and having fun. In his defense I don’t think even high John would talk about his job. Sandra was eternally awaiting Mr. Right and could have him now in Xavier. That leaves Rhonda. I didn’t think she had a man, a woman, or lover of any type.”

“Actually, Rhonda is still dating her ex-husband, Carter.”

“Carter Harris, the boy wonder of computers? That Carter Harris.”

“Should I know who he is? I know you said boy genius with computers.”

“Yes, he could do a lot of things with zeros and ones. Stealing three hundred million dollars would be nothing for him to take.”

“Do you really think he’d set her up for prison like that ~~would he~~?”

“We’re talking three hundred million dollars . . . Yes he would. Remember I said they were divorced.”

“Ok. So we need Smith and Genesis to concentrate on Carter?”

“We probably need to do this by the book and keep Vargas in the loop as well. The FBI are better equipped to try and track Carter down. Tracking down the money on the other hand won’t be so easy. Carter could go to prison for six months up to thirty years but with nothing to link him to the money directly he could be right back out on the street.”

“Seriously? We know how the law works. Innocent until proven guilty and in his case without the money or a paper trail we don’t have anything on him. Right now the person we’ve been chasing is actually our best person of interest and she’s probably innocent.”

The next day when Maysa returns to the office she contacts Genesis and Smith.

“Good morning! I have some information to share with you two. We did a little background check~~ing~~ on Rhonda and come to find out she may still be linked to the robbery, but not quite the way we thought.” Mayas says.

“So Rhonda is involved but not really?” Smith asks.

“Rhonda is involved with her ex-husband, Carter Harris.”

“The Carter Harris? Former boy wonder of computers?” Genesis asks.

“Does everyone know this guy but me? Anyway, yes one in the same. I need you two to get with Vargas and let’s find out everything we can about him. Tear his life apart! Fair warning per my husband, Michael, Carter can find you anywhere if you land on his radar. So be very careful dealing with Mr. Harris.”

“How much damage could he do?” Genesis asks.

“Well, he could bankrupt you. He could turn you into a criminal. The world runs on numbers and he can either make them work in your favor or against you. That’s about it.” Smith says with a laugh.”

“WOW! That’s why I’m glad I’m off the grid. He use to do cybercrimes just to see if he could do them. I guess he finally decided to actually do the deed and in a big way.” Genesis says.

“Are any of our tech guys on his level?” Smith asks.

“No one is close to him but there is a guy that I helped put in prison that can probably go toe-toe with him.” Genesis says.

“What’s his name and let’s go pay him a visit.” Smith says.

“If we do this then we do it by the book. Smith make sure you take Vargas with you and of course we’ll need Genesis on computer to make sure he understands the severity of this situation. We could either make his stay in prison worse or better. His choice.” Maysa says.

“His name is Wayne Sanders and he is in prison at FPC Pensacola Prison Florida. He almost broke into several high profile bank systems as well as the U.S. military’s pay facility worldwide.”

“Genesis, exactly how did you capture this guy?” Smith asks.

“He was giving us fits and we could not catch him anywhere. He was always two steps ahead of us. He got greedy trying to impress some woman and that was his downfall.” Genesis says.

“Must have been one heck of a woman for him to make a mistake and get caught.” Smith says.

“Well I guess she was because the woman was me.” Genesis says.

“Oh wow! Does this mean this was the last guy to actually see you?” Smith asks.

“Actually, no. A lot of people have seen me but they just didn’t know who they were looking at.” Genesis says.

“So I may actually have seen you but didn’t know? Anyway, I’ll take the phone with me when we talk to Sanders but we don’t need him edgy for any reason. You will not be allowed to speak to him.” Smith says.

“Mr. Sanders my name is Smith and I want to ask you a couple of questions.”

“Who are you again? What’s in it for me?” Sanders asks.

“Again, my name is Smith and I work for the state of Alabama. Depending upon the information you give me I’ll speak to the warden for you.”

“What do you want to know?”

“Do you know of a guy named Carter Harris?”

“Yea, I’ve heard of the little hotshot. He used a lot of my techniques and claimed them for himself. It’s ok especially since I’m in here and he’s out there. If you happen to need help catching the little arrogant prick just let me know.”

“Since you brought that subject up we could use some assistance on where he would feel comfortable hiding out until his money lands. Is there a way to slow the transfer of his money for a day or two?”

“You’re probably a day late in delaying him getting access to the money. You can guess where he’s attempting to send it and you may get a kind local judge to delay him receiving it but no judge will stop it.”

“The ten best spots for offshore banking are: The Cayman Islands, Hong Kong, Belize,

Switzerland, Germany, The Republic of Seychelles, Singapore, Mauritius, Panama or Nevis but not necessarily in this order. If I were guessing I wouldn’t go to the obvious locations. I would use Nevis, Singapore or Belize. Everyone uses the Cayman Islands so I definitely would not use them and Harris wouldn’t either.”

“Thank you Mr. Sanders. That will help us tremendously. I’ll see what I can do about getting some privileges restored.”

“Thanks! If the warden doesn’t go for it that’s ok. Just get the little prick and send him here and that will be thanks enough.”

“No love lost huh?”

“Not one bit.”

“Did you hear all of that Genesis?” Smith asks.

“Yes. Harris must have really pissed him off. I’m glad I stayed out of your conversation too then.”

“It doesn’t get more personal than for one man to steal another man’s woman or his life’s work.”

“Let’s start our paperwork and hope one or two of the banks are willing to play ball with us.”

Candice makes the calls to the international banks and she in her very special way talks the Bank CEO into putting a hold on any money coming in at all three banks Sanders suggest.

“Candice, how are we coming on stalling an transactions with our primary banks?” Maysa asks.

“They all agreed to delay the process if any funds are inbound.”

“You convinced all three to put a hold on the transfers? But . . .”

“I really don’t want to know do I?”

Candice shrugs her shoulders and smiles at Maysa.

“Never mind. Thank you.”

“That is why I love my crew. It gets scary at times but I trust my people with my life at the end of the day.” Maysa says to herself.

A couple of days pass and Candice finally gets the information she’s been awaiting. Harris’ money has shown up in Belize and as promised they have put a hold on it.

“Genesis and Smith. Contact Vargas and you guys need to take the next flight out to Belize to try and capture Harris.” Candice says.

“Ok. Thanks. We’ll . . . I’ll be on the next flight out. My tag team partner will get there by her own means. Right partner?” Smith says.

“Don’t let me beat you there. I’ll have weapons arranged for our pick up once we arrive. Are you picky if it is a Glock, Smith & Wesson or Ruger?”

“Yes. I’d prefer a Glock 19 if you can arrange it.”

“Consider it done and pick up will be at the safe house. I’ll see you there.”

“You’ll see me there? I’ll get to see the “ghost”.

“Kinda sorta but we will be there together to get this guy.”

Smith and Genesis both arrive in Belize though Genesis arrives in a disguise and she has to identify herself to Smith.

“Smith this Genesis. I am at your six in a black outfit. Do you see me?”

“Yes. Glad you could join me.” Smith says laughing.

“Where is Carter?”

“He has the penthouse of course of the Belize Grand Hotel. That could be to our advantage. It will leave him with nowhere to go but down and that brings him passed us.”

“Hopefully, it also doesn’t involve any other guests with him on the top floor.”

“Let’s warn the management and get a pass key and some housekeeping clothes to be able to gain access.” Smith says.

“Sounds like a plan to me.”

“Guys! Carter has received word that he can come get his money. If you’re ready I would suggest catching him at the door before he has a chance to gets access to the elevator or stairways.” Candice says.

(Knock, knock) “Housekeeping sir!” Smith says.

“I don’t need anything right now. Can you come back in a couple of hours?” Carter asks.

“I’m sorry sir. I didn’t quite hear you.” Smith says.

Carter edges the door open and Smith puts his gun to Carter’s head.

“Well I’ll be . . .” Carter says.

“Hello Carter. I’m guessing this wasn’t the room service you wanted. Back up and have a seat for me please kind sir.”

Genesis joins Smith in the room and she notices that Carter while sitting is still turning Smith in front of a doorway.

“Hey partner. What is your boy hiding back here? He seems to be trying to line you up with this back bedroom door. Let’s stand him up and walk him back there and see what awaits us behind door number one.” Genesis says.

“Good looking out there partner. Stand up Carter. Let’s see who or what is behind door number one.” Smith says.

(Knock, knock) “Whoever is back there needs to come out or your partner will be the only person getting hurt.” Genesis says.

“Well, well. Look partner it is Rhonda’s personal assistant, Isabella Cooper. Your ex-wife is going to love this.” Smith says.

“Look I don’t have anything to do with any of this. I was just here to enjoy the ride and have a well-deserved vacation.” Isabella says.

“Well, I hate to inform you but your boyfriend stole a lot of money. He ~~is~~ will be going away for a long time and that is just with us. When they finish expediting him around America and then to other countries . . .”Smith says.

“Other countries? Carter! What does he mean by other countries? Wait a minute. I’m not going to prison for something I didn’t do. What do you need to know? I’ll tell you any and all I know.” Isabella says.

“Will you shut up please Bella!” Carter says.

“No! I knew you were doing something wrong but stealing and from other countries. No wonder you and Rhonda were getting divorced!” Isabella screams.

“Isabella he just needed you to verify the information he was getting from Rhonda during their pillow talk.” Genesis says with a smirk.

“Pillow talk? I thought you told me EVERYTHING between you two was over with and done. You’re still sleeping together! How stupid could I be!!!” Isabella screams even louder.

“Get me out of here so I don’t have to hear talk any more please!” Carter says.

“I hope you were better at stealing money than you are in bed!” Isabella says.

Genesis and Smith ~~both~~ look at each other and laugh.

“Well we have recovered the money and we’re returning the weapons to the safe house before boarding the plane. We had to get special seating so these two wouldn’t kill each on the flight back. The Air Marshall is sitting with Isabella. We should arrive in about six to seven hours. ” Smith says.

“Good job Smith as usual. We’ll see you in a few hours.” Candice says.

“Michael! Smith and Genesis caught Carter before he could collect his money and it is being transferred back to Treasury department as we speak. Guess who was assisting Carter?” Maysa asks.

“I don’t know, who?” Michael asks.

“Rhonda’s assistant, Isabella Cooper. Carter was using her to verify Rhonda’s information he was getting during pillow talk.”

“Does Isabella realize how much trouble she’s in or could potentially be in?”

“I think she does now. Smith and Genesis explained it in no uncertain terms and she was not very happy. She told everything she knew and then some.” Maysa says laughing.

“What’s the old saying about a scorned woman . . .”

“Yes! If Carter didn’t know he does now. Something about this went way too smooth though.”

“I would’ve thought you would enjoy smooth and simple?”

“I normally would but they stole three hundred million dollars and got caught with no incident. Seems just too easy to me.”

“Do me a favor and get your tech guys to backtrack and make sure only three hundred million was taken.”

“Why am I doing that?”

“Just a hunch babe. You said you thought this went way too smooth and I believe you’re right. This seems like a double cross. I’m thinking the three hundred million was a smoke screen for whatever amount the other person actually stole.” Michael says.

“No! You’re thinking Rhonda set Carter up while she skips the country with the real money right?” Maysa asks.

“Yes! The perfect cover is to blame your cheating, double dealing ex-husband and co-worker and send them both to jail. Contact Smith and Genesis as well but if I’m right, Rhonda is now long gone.” Michael says.

“Maysa, you called us?” Smith asks.

“Yes. I think you got the right people but not ALL of the right people.” Maysa says.

Smith and Genesis say, “Huh?!”

“The tech guys are double checking the money again and we think Rhonda set up Carter and Isabella in a double cross. They did steal the three hundred million but we think while we’ve been chasing those two Rhonda has made her escape. This is just Michael’s best guess. You know Michael is hardly ever wrong.”

“Closer to never wrong would be my call.” Smith says.

“Is he that good?” Genesis asks.

“You’ll see when you meet him. I understand that he really wants to meet you too.” Smith says.

“Me?” Genesis asks.

“Yes you and no more questions.” Smith says.

The tech guys come running in and the lead guy says, “We have found the anomaly and someone has hit and transferred seventy–five million to the Cayman Islands. They did it in increments of one million dollars every quarter of an hour and it was in sync with the stock market swings making it almost unnoticeable. Actually a stroke of genius if you ask me.”

“Apparently you were impressed huh?” Genesis asks.

“Technically, they created the perfect storm and beat the system. It must have taken them months to write the code for all of the internal moves the software had to make.” The technician says.

“Is there any way to see who wrote the code and who the money actually ended up being transferred to?” Maysa asks.

“If they have set up an alias then it could be anyone but more likely it is Rhonda.” Michael says.

“The money was setup to go to a Igota de Mone.” The technician says.

Michael starts laughing and everyone is staring at him.

“What’s so funny Michael?” Maysa asks.

“Listen to the name again. Igota de Mone. “I got da money” Michael says.

Everyone in the room falls out laughing.

“Again, pure genius.” The technician says.

“Just for the fun of it. Get the bank over there to fax us a picture of the person receiving the money. Tell them we just want to see who it is.” Maysa says.

Laughing, Maysa says, “Ok folks. Everyone get back to work. When the fax arrives I’ll get Candice to notify us. We’ll proceed with the prosecution of Carter Harris and Isabella Cooper.”

Maysa heads home for the evening and Michael and the boys are awaiting her arrival.

“How was the remainder of your day?” Michael asks.

“We’re awaiting word as to if the person in the Cayman Islands is actually Rhonda or do we have a mystery player amongst us.” Maysa says.

“My money is on Rhonda. I believe she figured out she was being played and took matters into her own hands. Seventy-five million could help you to forget a lot of pain and misery.” Michael says.

“Putting her ex-husband and his lover away was just icing on the cake.” Maysa says.

Michael slips away for a few minutes to look into Rhonda’s mind and see if it is her that they are looking for. As he is sifting through her mind he can see her laughing as she creates the identity of Igodda de Mone’. Michael can’t do anything but laugh at the situation. He knows Rhonda has been played by everyone and the final insult was her ex- using her to steal millions of dollars at her expense. This was her opportunity to “flip the script” and finally do something for herself.

Michael just laughs to himself as he drifts back out of her mind.

The next morning during the AM staff meeting Candice receives the faxed picture of Igodda de Mone’ and it is Rhonda. She knows she is on camera and sent her own personal message to all watching. She flipped everyone off and smiled.

“I guess we now know who “godda” the money by the gesture and after all she’s been through I wouldn’t waste a lot of time even thinking about going after her. Besides there is no extradition power in place there. We could go down there for a social visit though.” Michael says.

“A social visit? Is that what we’re calling it now Michael? This would be at tax-payer expense too huh?” Maysa says laughing.

“It was just a thought.” Michael says.

Everyone is laughing at Michael for trying to get a free trip out of the bad situation.

After a few months things start to settle down. The remainder of the Maysa’s D.C. staff finally move and get comfortable.

Michael gets a new transfer student and he seems to have a few anger issues so Michael attempts to talk to him to get him to be more comfortable.

“Trayvon B. Barnes. I have had some other professors to inform me that you are having issues in their classes as well. We’re all here to help make your transition easy and get you through the next three years. What can I do to assist you to get there?”

“Please don’t try to psychoanalyze me. I am way too smart for any of that psycho BS. My mom is the one that wants me to have this piece of paper not me.”

“No matter how smart you are unless it is your company/business everyone answers to someone.”

“I live in a world of zeros and ones and believe me I can do anything I want to do with a laptop in front of me.”

“That is probably why your mom wants you in school for the social aspect of school. Look you’re a genius and I get that but there’s more to life than zeros and ones. Humans are social creatures and being able to get along with other people is key to having a balanced life. Your other professors, the counselors and my-self are here for you. Just reach out and we’ll be there.”

Michael is thinking to himself, *‘I have got to find a way to reach this kid or leaving him to his own devices could be a huge mistake. He’s is very smart and depending upon the path he* *chooses he will either do so profound things to help change this world or cripple it. Maybe I need to take a little stroll through his mind and see what he isn’t telling me.”*

Michael drifts into Trayvon’s mind and everything seems normal at first. Michael sees lots of zeros and ones so he knows Trayvon is in deep thought about something, but what?

The picture becomes clearer and there’s Trayvon talking to a guy that looks familiar to Michael but he can’t quite put a name to him. Michael is getting a negative reading from this guy which is not good for Trayvon.

The next day while in class Michael is running the guys face through his mind trying to figure out who the person is that Trayvon was speaking with and then he recognizes the guy. It is a former lieutenant of Nasser’s who has shown up with a new game to run. This time the game is high level theft and Trayvon is the mule needed to do the heavy lifting with the technology. He has probably promised him fame and fortune and quite honestly with his skills Trayvon could pull this off without breaking a sweat.

Michael finally figures out who it is and it is Haajib Amin that has discovered Trayvon and wants to use him to the full extent of his knowledge to get all he wants, like Nasser, money and power. The problem is that Michael has no way to point the guy out to anyone unless he can find a way to get Trayvon to start talking about what is going on. Why should he speak out, he is getting to use his talent and do all of the things he is capable of doing with minimal effort. Michael also realizes that he probably need to try working this from the Amin side and not from Trayvon’s side. It could get too personal especially if things start going sideways.

“Smith, I have a question for you.” Michael asks.

“What’s on your mind?”

“Did we have a way of tracking Nasser’s lieutenants?”

“Not really. The only ones we have been able to track were the ones who made the most “noise”. If they were low profile players we didn’t. Just way too many to keep up with. Was there anyone you had in mind.”

“The only ones I was concerned about were his tech guys that were real ambitious.”

“Nasser only had a handful that were left that had some ambition. The one I would be concerned about would be Haajib Amin.”

“I was afraid he would be the one you would name.~~”~~

~~“~~Nasser always talked about him when it came down to the tech stuff but he was always under the radar because he wasn’t a high ranking lieutenant. Apparently, he was learning and has grown and matured a lot. Could he be here in the states?”

“He could be. There wouldn’t have been a reason to keep him out. He was basically a nobody. Why are you asking about him anyway?”

“Once you get Nasser on the brain you see him everywhere even after he is dead. I guess I’m just a little paranoid.”

“Ok. If you say so but I know better after all these years of being around you. Just tell me if your paranoia becomes reality and we need to make a move please sir.”

“I will. I promise.”

Smith knows Michael too well and decides to gather the troops and start looking through databases to see if any strange activity has been occurring over the past six months to a year.

“Brandon, could you and Christian start looking through the databases for the guy I just sent to your phones please. He’s a former low level tech guy for Nasser.” Smith says.

“Nasser! You’re not saying he survived again are you?” Brandon asks.

“No. Nasser is dead but this guy is one of the smart ones that is still around that may be residing in America now. He is very tech savvy and could be very dangerous.” Smith says.

“Who put us on to this guy?” Christian asks.

“I’ll give you one guess as to who brought him up.” Smith says.

Brandon and Christian look at each other and say, “Michael.”

“But why this guy?” Brandon asks.

“Michael said he just had a feeling and we all know when he has a “feeling” we need to investigate as much as we possibly can because it normally leads somewhere. If you need some help see if you can pull Xavier away from Sandra long enough to assist you in tracking Amin and any other top five of Nasser’s people that might be in the U.S.”

“We’ll get with Candice and see how Maysa’s schedule looks and then we’ll get started.” Brandon says.

Maysa along with all of the other governors have been summoned to Washington DC for an emergency meeting under a veil of secrecy.

“They have requested all of the governors, congressmen and senators to DC at the same time?” Michael asks.

“Yes. Kind of strange isn’t it?” Maysa says.

“This is unprecedented in the history of the U.S. From what I understand the heads of all the other countries around the world are also being summoned to their capitals or at the least to a zoom meeting.” Maysa says.

“Something is going on that they want a face-to-face with everyone,” Michael says.

The next day everyone has convened. Seated at the table are a large group of scientist, the president and military leaders.

President Taylor steps to the podium and says, “I want to thank everyone for coming on short notice and definitely under the veil of secrecy. As you can see we have a very distinguished panel of scientist in front of you. What I am about to say stays amongst us until we have weighed every option that we have available then we will share with the rest of the world. I will share with you the reason you’re here and the scientist will share any and all details that we have to this point. There is no other way to says this but we have dodged asteroids for years without actually being threatened but our number has finally come up. Our scientist have run every test, every scenario to avoid this situation and we have only one possible solution to our problem. Our military and scientist have a plan in mind that we hope and pray will save us from what looks like unpreventable situation. The next voices you hear will be that of scientist Claude Smitherman and General John North.”

“I am Claude Smitherman and we have been watching this asteroid for the past two years and it has shifted just a little but not enough to keep it off path from hitting our planet. I know your first question is whether or not if it is a planet killer and if left unchecked the answer is yes. This is where General North will step in with a possible solution to our dilemma.”

“I am General John North. We believe we have the technology to destroy the asteroid but it will take a direct strike in order to perform this task. If our calculations are off we won’ have time for a second attempt at destroying it and no we can’t go at it with a shotgun approach because that will cause other issues. You just can’t send missiles off into space with no regards to where they could possibly end up.” North says.

“So I have to ask this question then Gen. North. If we’re off and either miss the target or don’t completely destroy it then what happens?” Maysa asks.

“Is that former President Green asking that question?” North asks.

“Yes sir it is. I wish we were speaking under better circumstances.” Maysa says.

“Good seeing you. To answer your question though we are one and done. We could fire multiple warheads but what happens if we destroy the target with one of the missiles? That would be great BUT what happens with the other nuclear warheads we fired into space? What if they hit another planet, moon, or anything else with possible life on it? What other problems have we created for ourselves or other worlds down the line? We have thought everything through and it is not worth the risk. Yes, one and done. I know that’s not the answer you were seeking but that is the honest answer.” North says.

“Thank you for your honesty General. I know everyone here appreciates it.” Maysa says.

The Governor of New York ask, “So how much time are we looking at to get prepared for a missile launch? I am going to assume there is no time to look at trying to get people moved to safer locations?”

“Unfortunately even if we could get something built we would have to build special ships and everything like you see in the movies. This is not a movie Sir and there are just too many moving parts to make that scenario feasibly work in the real world. Believe me we have gone through every scenario and the only one that works is a missile in the heart of the asteroid. We WILL destroy the asteroid and life as we know it, for better or worse will continue on.” Smitherman says.

“If anyone has any better ideas please don’t hesitate to speak up or send an email to either the President, Dr. Smitherman or Gen. North.” President Taylor says.

“Excuse me Mr. President. I have a special request of former President Green if you don’t mind.” Gen. North asks.

“Go ahead Gen. North.” President Taylor says.

“President Green if I can get your husband some credentials do you think he would be willing to sit in with our team and see if he hears or sees something we may have missed? I trust our guys but your husband had this uncanny knack of seeing things that everyone else always seems to miss.” Gen. North asks.

“I’ll ask him but I’m pretty certain he’ll be honored to sit in and assist however you need him.” Maysa says.

The meeting adjourns and Maysa immediately calls Michael.

“Hey babe. We’ve got a situation up here and Gen. North has requested you to come have a sit down with the guys he’s working with.” Maysa says.

“Gen. North is asking for my assistance? This can’t be good then. So when do they need me?” Michael asks.

“Well we need to arrange to have someone stay with the kids for a couple of days. They would send a helicopter for you in the morning if you can get your classes rearranged.” Maysa says.

“Oh wow! This must be really important. Did someone die or something?” Michael asks.

There was silence for a long pause and then Maysa says, “Make the arrangements and get here as quickly as you can please.”

Michael now knows this is serious because Maysa never mentioned why the rush. He now knows he needs to take a look into her head to see what is troubling her so terribly bad. So Michael sits down and takes a look and what he sees is very disturbing and could change life on Earth as we know it.

“Good morning Professor Green. It is good seeing you again.” The pilot says.

“It is good seeing you too Wayne.” Michael says.

Michael arrives in DC and he is picked up and brought to the military base with the one other scientist, an astronomer, Dr. Cynthia Johnson.

“Professor Green, I don’t mean to pry but if they are calling in all these high level scientist why are they bringing you in? No offense but astronomy, none the less science, is not your specialty.” Dr. Johnson asks.

“A few people I’ve assisted in the past trust me. Beyond that I’m not sure what else I can tell you. I think they are just trying to get as many eyes and hands on this issue as possible. No offense taken.” Michael says with a smile.

Dr. Johnson walks in talking to a few of her other colleagues questioning why Michael is there and finally Dr. Smitherman says, “Michael Green is a certified genius and believe me when I say this. I will take him over any manmade calculator out there. I have seen him do calculations in his head faster than you can input them into a computer and be more accurate. Mathematical genius doesn’t come close to describing him so I hope you didn’t insult the man on the ride here.”

“Well, I kind of questioned why he was here.” Dr. Johnson says.

Dr. Smitherman just shakes his head and says, “We need as many people as possible to help resolve this issue and you insult the man on a twenty minute helicopter ride. WOW! Let me take a guess. He very politely told you his role and that we were trying to look at this very bad situation from as many aspects as possible didn’t he?”

“Yes he did. I didn’t know the man and I knew all of the other astronomers so I couldn’t figure out this guy’s part in all of this. So he’s actually that good?” Dr. Johnson asks.

“How many languages do you speak and other than astronomy how many other degrees in other subjects do you have?” Dr. Smitherman asks.

“Just astronomy but I have a PHD in my field.” Dr. Johnson says.

Laughing Dr. Smitherman says, “He speaks multiple languages and I think he has two or three PHDs and has multiple patents from weapons to all types of high tech gadgets. I think he has a law degree as well but you question and insult the man on a twenty minute helicopter ride. WOW!”

Michael is sequestered off to a private room with lots of white boards to back check all calculations and worst case scenarios. After a few hours Michael walks out on a bathroom break and Dr. Johnson says, “Professor Green I want to apologize for my earlier comment to you. I wasn’t questioning your knowledge I . . .”

“You don’t need to apologize. I understand your line of thinking and I wasn’t insulted as I hope you weren’t insulted by them inviting me to come here. We both have jobs to do so let’s just pray we both do our best to get it right.” Michael says.

Dr. Johnson thinks to herself ~~that~~ *‘ not only is the man smart but humble as well.*’

“Let me know if you need any assistance and again I do apologize.” Dr. Johnson says.

Michael returns to his room and finds a mistake in the original calculations. Once he presents his findings Dr. Johnson just stares at the calculations and Dr. Smitherman looks at her nods his head and smiles.

“Ladies and gentlemen this one calculation was the only figure that I could see was off but I also want you to know that the trajectory of the asteroid could change because of the small space debris between Earth and the asteroid. It will be very difficult to hit the target dead center and completely destroy it. I would suggest a multi-head missile that will give you more bang for your buck as well as expanding the area of the asteroid the missile should hit.” Michael says.

Everyone is elated over the news but then Michael looks up and says, “This only increases the odds of destroying the asteroid and not a guarantee of destroying it. Remember the space debris

will play into the calculations so we’ll just have to pray for the best case scenario.” Michael says.

“Ok. Then our odds of survival have increased and Professor Green will you please get with Dr. Smitherman and Gen. North on the missile design and we’ll be prepared to test in about ninety days.” President Taylor says.

After the meeting is over Maysa gives Michael a long passionate kiss and says, “My hero and savior of this world.”

“I don’t know about all of that.” Michael says.

“You found the error, told them of the potential for still more miscalculations and designed a multi-head missile to destroy the asteroid. I’d say you’re a savior even if you won’t.” ~~S~~he says.

“I just did my part. They had already done most of the heavy lifting.”

“Design that missile for them and the firing mechanism and let’s go home.”

“Actually I’ve already designed it in my head. I just need to do a rendition on paper for them and then we can work virtually on it after that.”

“WOW ! You are one very amazing man. How did I get so lucky for you to be in my life?” ~~Maysa asks.~~

“No. I am the lucky one. Doors have opened and opportunities have occurred that without you in my life never would’ve happened.”

“Ok. Then we’re both very blessed to have found one another and have this wonderful life together.”

“I have a question. Who gets to name the asteroid?”

“Why? Do you want to name it?”

“No. I guess I watch too much TV because I thought they always gave things like this special names and not just numbers.”

“Let me call Dr. Smitherman and see what he says.”

The next morning Dr. Smitherman says the scientist that discovered it wanted to name it after his daughter, Xena. So for the asteroid this will be the official name but with no fanfare for fear of opening the floodgates of questions about it’s course.

Michael already knows what is coming and realizes that someone is going to leak the information and try to capitalize on the situation. As the president is wrapping up his briefing he wants to thank Michael but instead ask him why the worried look on his face. Does he fear the mission will fail or what.

“Mr. President my problem is that either someone is going to leak the information or they’re going to try to take advantage of this situation and profit from it. Honestly, this is a gold min~~e~~ waiting to happen and you can’t do anything to stop it without letting the country in on the mission. You have to pick your battles and going after one greedy person or alarming a nation is a no brainer.” Michael says.

“You’re right Michael but once we succeed there is nothing to stop us from tracking down anyone who all of a sudden has taken advantage of a situation and profited from it. That much I can promise.” Pres. Taylor says with confidence.

“That truly sounds like a plan.” Michael says.

“Thank you again for stepping up when our country needed you.”

“The honor was all mine sir.”

When Maysa and Michael return home Michael informs Maysa of his conversation with the president and that he was very receptive of his concerns.

“I’m glad you told him. Sometimes we all need a little push from outside of your personal circle.” Maysa says.

“So while we’re in the midst of a potential global crisis you’ve still got to have Smith and the crew tracking down Amin and unfortunately Trayvon as well.” Michael says.

“Yes. It has got to be done. Spider webs capture everything it encounters and if Trayvon is there he will suffer the consequences of his actions as well. I wish we could spare him but we can’t give in because we like someone and charmers know how to work their magic.”

“I know but this kid could do so much good for the world if he could see his . . .” Michael hesitates to say.

“What’s wrong? You stopped talking.” Maysa asks.

“Trayvon just needs to see his full potential and maybe he will change his ways if he could see all the good he can and will do in this world.”

“Wait a minute Michael. You said he can and WILL do in this world. How are you going to sell the kid on a future you can’t show him. This isn’t the “Christmas Carol” where three ghost will show him everything about his life.”

“I’ll find a way to convince him because money is not the end all to everything.”

Michael has decided to visit Trayvon and give him a brief look at his potential future. Michael is showing Trayvon flashes of things to come. Trayvon is running the cybersecurity for a leading world financial company, he owns three homes across the country and a fourth that he purchased for his mother. Trayvon is about to open his own cyber security company to assist minority owned businesses throughout the southeast and finally his mom is standing next to him at an unveiling of a street that is being renamed after him for all of the hard work he has performed. Michael thinks to himself ‘*if this doesn’t convince him of the potential his life has for him then he will forever more be a lost cause.’*

The next day Trayvon shows up for all of his classes and Michael sees him and says, “Good to see you Trayvon. I’m happy to have seen you throughout the day.”

“Yes sir. I had this weird dream last night and it opened my eyes to a lot of things.” Trayvon says.

“That is good Trayvon. I’m very proud of you.”

“Yea but I made some poor decisions and I’m probably in trouble with some very bad people and I’m not sure how I’ll get out of it.”

“Come by my office and explain the whole situation to me and let’s see what we can do to resolve it.”

The next day Michael meets with Trayvon and gets the whole story and has got to get creative to get Amin put away and keep Trayvon from going to prison. Michael plans to get Trayvon to set up a sting operation where Amin will show up to collect his money only to walk into a trap. Michael also knows Amin isn’t stupid and will not trust Trayvon a hundred percent unless he thinks there’s a chance he could go to prison too.

“Professor Green, what if I have Amin to have to go to a particular bank to pick up his money and he has to show his ID in order to collect?” Trayvon says.

“That would probably work. We could have agents waiting for him to collect and as soon as he does they could arrest him. You just need to make sure you’re not with him when the arrest is made. Tell him you’ll be his driver or anything just don’t be with him or the police will be forced to arrest you too. Do you understand?” Michael asks.

“Yes sir. I do understand and thank you for believing in me Professor Green.”

Smith and the team are joined by Mason who just arrived from DC to join them. Everyone is in position but when Amin arrives he looks around at the situation and he backs away. Michael calls Trayvon and tells him to stay put in the car because something has triggered Amin to walk away from the money. Amin goes back to the car and tells Trayvon to drive him to another location in mind to get his money. Something didn’t feel right there.

“So where are we going now?” Trayvon asks.

“Quit asking questions and just drive.” Amin snaps.

“I was just asking a question.” Trayvon says.

Amin pulls a gun and puts it to Trayvon’s head and says, “I said to just drive and this will all be over and we can go our separate ways kid.”

“No problem but could you put the gun away. Guns make me nervous. That’s why I am a numbers man. No violence.” Trayvon says.

“Sure Trayvon. I wouldn’t want to hurt my best friend now would I? At the next corner take a left then two blocks up pull over to the right across from the drug store.” Amin says.

The new location is another location to receive wire transfers. Smith and the his crew have listened to the whole conversation and are awaiting outside to try and capture Amin at this location which has a lot more foot traffic and a lot easier to mingle into the crowd or try to slip out of the backdoor.

“Ok people. This mission just got a lot more dangerous especially for Trayvon and any of the people walking in and about the building. I’m not sure what spooked Amin but we’ll just have to play with the new hand we’ve been dealt and hope for the best. Since Amin seems comfortable at this location I’m going to try to contact Trayvon and get him out of the area.” Smith says.

Just as Smith is talking they notice that Amin has also changed his plans and now has Trayvon making the pickup. Michael decides to intervene and gets into Amin’s head and says, “Leave the kid out of this if you’re the man like you claim.”

Amin gets this strange look on his face and Smith says, “What is going on with Amin? He looks like he just saw a ghost and is trying to get the image out of his head.”

“Smith maybe we need to get someone in there with this guy. He is really looking strange and could hurt someone.” Mason says.

“Mason, you and Xavier go in and act like you’re waiting to see a loan officer or something please.” Smith says.

The two enter the building and Amin is now talking out loud to himself and other people are starting to notice. The security officer is now circling behind Amin and says, “Sir, is everything Ok?”

Amin pulls his gun and grabs a young lady and tells the security officer, “Drop your gun or she dies.”

The officer drops his gun and Amin says, “Trayvon! Get my money before I have to kill someone!”

Trayvon says ok and turns to Amin to give him the bags of money.

“No fool! You . . .” Amin attempts to say when he realizes he has been hit with a hand-held stun gun.

Mason and Xavier run over and put the hand cuffs on him and read him his rights.

“Thanks fellas but he’s going to spread the word on me and other people will be after me now.” Trayvon says.

“No Trayvon. That is not going to happen. Michael is always two steps ahead of all of us and already has a game plan for you and your future. According to him it will be very bright.” Mason says.

“Is he always right?” Trayvon asks.

“Yea, pretty much.” Xavier says with a laugh.

Michael sets up a meeting with the district attorney for Trayvon to go into the protection program. He will get a new name, money and a job to give him a fresh start in his life. They “leaked” the word that Trayvon had warrants all around the world and was being sent to another country for one of his crimes. This way no one is looking for him.

“Professor Green, I don’t know how to thank you. My mom so totally believed in you. I was the one that had doubts and I want to apologize to you for my behavior. I don’t know how I’ll ever repay you for saving my life.”

“We’re good. Just remember to pay it forward for the next person you see following in your previous footsteps and guide them away. Make a positive change in someone else’s life and pass it forward is all I seek.”

“Do you drink Prof. Green?”

“Yes I do. Why?”

“I want to buy you your favorite bottle so every time you have a drink you’ll remember me.”

“Well, I’d be honored. Thanks you Trayvon.”

“So what do you drink? White or dark?”

“I actually like two. One is Grand Mariner and the other is a pecan liqueur named Rivulet.

Either of those and I’d be very happy but ONLY after you get that first paycheck and not before.” Michael says with a smile.

“I promise. I just wanted to thank you again. I’ve got to go see my mom before they get me relocated. It’ll be hard to get use to people calling me by another name. Would you like to know what it is?”

“No. Don’t tell me that way no one can ever grill me over something I don’t know but you’ve got my number. Leave me a message and we can always talk. I’ll miss you kid.” ~~Michael says~~.

Michael heads home and sits down for dinner and looks at Charles and MJ and thinks about Trayvon. In his heart he hopes his two turn out as smart and family oriented. He sees how easy it is to flip the script and go for the easy money if it is put in front of you.

Michael is still just staring at the boys when Maysa asks, “So what are you thinking about? You’re awfully quiet tonight.”

“I was just thinking about how easy it was for Trayvon to turn to a life of crime if presented with an enticing motivation. Trayvon could just as easily be either of the boys and that would break my heart.”

“That’s not going to happen. We have raised our boys right and nothing could make them do what Trayvon was doing.”

Michael looks at Maysa and says, “ANYONE can be enticed when presented with the right and tempting opportunity. Money, power, drugs, sex can have an otherwise kind person and honorable person doing things they normally might not do especially if it came easy to them. Believe me, I’ve seen it too many times. The best we as parents can do is build them a good foundation and pray for the best.”

“I guess you’re right. This situation really got to you didn’t it?”

“Yes. This kid’s whole life was about to be flushed and I couldn’t sit back and watch it happen. I’m just glad I could help.”

“I’m glad you could help. Thank you for always being our family’s protector. I know the boys love you but I want you to know YOU are our rock that this family is anchored in and we love you.”

“Why thank you Maysa. That just completed my day.”

The next day Smith calls a meeting for the whole staff and says, “I just wanted to finally have a morning meeting with the whole group. People have been trickling in and we finally got our last person on board, Mason. Mason will be basically serving in the same role as he was in D.C.

We have been very busy from day one and though it was exciting we do not want that type of excitement every day. On a personal note I would still like to capture Ms. Igodda de Mone but unless she heads back our way she is off limits. We will keep a low level surveillance eye out for her. Does anyone else have anything to say?” Smith asks.

“Smith, who’s on the laptop zooming our meeting?” Mason asks.

“That would be Genesis Darkwater.” Smith says.

“The Genesis Darkwater? I thought she was a myth?” Mason asks.

There was a little laughter then Genesis says, “No, I am for real Mason.”

“How do you know my name?” Mason asks.

“I know everyone in the room. All of your likes and dislikes. What is really going to cook your noodle is how I know everything about everyone and no one knows anything about me except Candice and Smith. I will always have everyone’s back on this staff.” Genesis says.

Genesis gets a standing ovation from the staff because the one thing they do know is that her words written in stone and will die defending them. Pretty good for a woman that no one can point at and say that is Genesis Darkwater.

Maysa gets a call from D.C. about her and Michael attending another meeting about the asteroid.

“Michael, I’m truly getting concerned about this asteroid. Do you think they’ve got the numbers right?” Maysa asks.

“The numbers are right for this moment in time but this could all change in a few months when the numbers will really count. We are dealing with unknown factors and anything floating around in space including some of our own space debris could cause a problem. Sad part is that if it turns out our junk is a part of the problem we’ll really feel bad.” Michael says.

“Do you really believe that could happen too?”

“Yes! We are our own worst enemies when it comes to the environment. At some point Mother Nature will turn on us in retaliation for all the damage we’ve done. We have no one to blame but ourselves.”

Michael can already see that things are going to go wrong but can’t see enough to say anything and even if he did how could he explain his concerns. All he can do is give his best scenario and pray he is right. Michael gets this funny feeling and realizes it is MJ attempting to contact him and Zara as well.

*“MJ is there an issue son?” Michael asks.*

*“I can see what is going on. Are we going to die?” MJ asks.*

*“No son. We will survive this because we know how to adapt and we will.” Michael says.*

*“Thanks dad. I just wanted to hear it from you or Zara.” MJ says.*

Dr. Smitherman and the team all sit down and go over the calculations again and everything looks good.

“Michael, I heard that you have designed a multi-head missile that should maximize the effectiveness of the warhead.” Dr. Smitherman says.

“Yes I have. Hopefully, if it does what I have in mind there shouldn’t be anything larger than a football if it hits the target correctly.” Michael says.

“Michael, you always say IF. Why? Are you having doubts that we’ve missed something?” Dr. Smitherman asks.

“You know better that I do that we are dealing with the unknown and anything can occur and throw our calculations out the window. We, my friend, are dealing with something traveling in outer space. Once we fire the missile our fate is sealed for the good or the bad. I am praying for the best scenario but I am a realist and understand that a hair off here or there and the whole mission could be doomed.” Michael says.

“Ok. I do understand the Ifs better now.” Dr. Smitherman says.

“We’ve calculated everything out to the best of our ability and I believe we’re right. If we have to make a last minute adjustment then we do so. Everything is going to work out just maybe not perfectly.” Michael says.

Michael and Maysa return to Alabama and upon getting to class one of Michael’s students ask him why all of the governors went to DC?

“Who told you that?” Michael asks.

“My father’s brother is a lobbyist and he told my dad all of the governors were asked to report to D.C. for some important meeting. Didn’t your wife go to the meeting?” The student asks.

“Yes she went but it wasn’t anything secret. They just called a special session and I went along for the ride.” Michael says.

Michael calls Maysa after he completes his class and lets her know word has already spread about the special meeting.

“How did someone find out?” Maysa asks.

“One of the student’s uncle is a lobbyist and he’s been talking to anyone who will listen.”

“Well we all knew this could potentially happen. Hopefully they just don’t know why.”

“Michael let me ask you something that has been on my mind and heart since all of this began.”

“What’s on your mind babe?”

“Worse-case scenario, could this asteroid be an extinction level event? Please be honest with me.”

“Worse-case scenario, yes it could be BUT we will not let this happen. The best minds on this planet are working on this issue and you know this. They, I mean we will succeed.”

“The only person I am trusting with the children’s and my life is Michael Green. If this is the end I will go and be at peace knowing the man I love was included in making a sound decision for us and the world.” Maysa says while giving Michael a long kiss.

“Thanks for not adding any extra pressure on me like saving the world and all of mankind. Just a walk in the park in between teaching classes.” Michael says while laughing.

Maysa starts to laugh and says, “Hmm . . . I guess that did come across as a world saving request didn’t it.”

“By the way, Charles has started hinting around about driving lessons. Who gets the honor of giving him the first lesson? Shall we do rock-paper-scissor or using a deck of cards and high person wins?”

“This Saturday and high card wins the honor of second lesson.” Maysa says with a grin.

“Why are you grinning?”

“You already know I’m the luckiest person in the house so I’ll let you pull first.”

Michael shuffles the cards and pulls first. He pulls a Jack of hearts. Maysa pulls next and pulls the Queen of hearts. Maysa starts dancing around and tosses Michael the keys and says, “Teach him well. I would hate to have to clean up any mistakes you teach him sir.”

Michael goes to Charles’ room and says, “What are you doing Charles?” Michael asks.

“Studying for a Math quiz.” Charles says.

“Clear your schedule for this Saturday morning. I’ll be taking you for your first driving lesson.” Michael says.

“Thank you dad, thank you sooooo much!” Charles screams with excitement.

“Make sure you have gone over the rules of the road before you actually get behind the wheel of the car.”

Michael walks back into the room with Maysa and she says, “Well I guess he was a little subdued when he found out he was going driving huh?”

“Yes, he was just a little disappointed. I tried my best to console him.” Michael says.

“You do realize that the next step will be buying a car for him.”

“I kind of had a better idea. I thought maybe I could get a new truck and he could get my SUV. It’s in great shape and he has always said he liked it. We could get him some new tires and a tune up and he would be good to go.”

“Well, well. It would appear that you have been thinking about this for a while haven’t you sir.” Maysa says with a laugh.

“Maybe just a little but this works out well for everyone. It’s a win-win situation. Now let me show you what I’ve been looking at for . . . us!” Michael says with a grin.

“Oh, don’t try to include me in your devilish plot young man. Us . . . yea right! It’s must be that new off road truck your eyes light up about every time the commercial comes on.”

“You noticed that? The commercial just had a catchy beat and then I noticed the vehicle and I imagined it in black with black leather interior and . . .” Michael tries to say.

“Sorry for cutting you off but I can see where you’re going with this. You’ve ordered a vehicle haven’t you and probably already had your old truck inspected and tuned-up. You’d wash and wax it but he’s got to pass the test first. Stop me when I’m wrong.” Maysa says with a laugh.

“Ok. Maybe you’re right. I’m just doing my job and trying to stay two steps ahead of the family in providing for you guys.” Michael says while trying not to laugh.

“That was a great speech and I loved it right up until you started laughing. All points gained as the cool dad went right out the window.” Maysa says laughing.

“I thought I was very sincere with my words and actions.”

“Sorry sir. Your devilish Michael Green charms are not working today. Game, set, match goes to Maysa Green. That SUV does look great and would give us all more leg room for when we make our weekend runs to the beach.”

“Now you’re sounding like the Beach bunny Maysa instead of Governor Green.”

“So you don’t think I’m hot when I do my press conferences?”

“You’re hot no matter what you wear. As a matter of fact you should change all of the welcome to Alabama signs and have them say, “Welcome to Alabama home of Beach Bunny Maysa Green!”

“Nah that might be just a little too much for the people to handle. We’ll leave that alone.”

Maysa and Michael’s conversation gets interrupted by a phone call from Dr. Smitherman.

“Michael this is Dr. Smitherman and we may have a new problem. As you stated during our last meeting that anything in space could potentially change the course of the asteroid. Something has bumped it but not in an Earth friendly direction. I’m sending you the new coordinates now.”

Michael is studying the new photographs of location of the asteroid now and says, “Oh my God!”

“What’s wrong Michael?” Maysa asks.

“The asteroid has now been bumped into a group of other asteroids and this will now make it extremely difficult to pinpoint the main one we need to destroy.”

“Are you saying impossible?”

“No not impossible BUT very close to impossible even using the array design I created for the missile. If all of the five missiles lock on and fire they could pick out five smaller asteroids to destroy and the larger one could still slip by untouched.”

“My husband would always say, “Take your best calculated guess and go for it.”

“This time is different.”

“What makes this so different?”

“My decision or miscalculation could cost thousands or millions of people their lives.”

“It could also save thousands or millions of lives. Look at how many lives you saved during our eight years as president. All I am saying is that we have to keep it in perspective of how many lives can be saved versus lives potentially lost. We have an opportunity to protect and save lives as oppose to watching people suffer and die. I feel your pain but we have to take a best guess strategy and there is only one person I would trust with my life on the line to give me my greatest odds of survival. That person is Michael Green.”

“Thanks for the pep talk. I really needed it this time.”

“Go do what you do best and save us.”

Michael goes to his study and looks over each scenario and the numbers and decides he actually needs to send a second missile. The first would be the blocker missile to clear the path and the second to actually destroy the asteroid or at least attempt to. Michael sends his new calculations to Dr. Smitherman who rechecks all the numbers then runs them through the computer for the final check.

“Michael, I’ve run the numbers but I also noticed you’ve added a second missile. I’ll tell the rest of the committee what you’ve decided to do but please explain it to me so I can explain it to them.” Dr. Smitherman says.

Michael runs down the new numbers then explains the why especially the why of the second missile and Dr. Smitherman gets very quiet and finally says, “So our odds of survival have gone down huh?”

“Somewhat but I believe this will work even with the new path issue. We are a world of odds beaters and we will win this battle as well.”

“I believe in you one hundred and fifty percent but asteroids of this size devour planets and I am just afraid.”

“I understand. I have two sons whom I love and I want to see them grow up and become good men. I have a wife that I would give up my life for but sometimes we have to play the hand we are dealt and see what happens. This is not a perfect plan but I believe in it. Do you?” Michael asks.

For a moment there is dead silence and finally Dr. Smitherman says, “Yes, I believe. Let’s do this.”

It is now Saturday and with all that has been going on Michael has forgotten about the driving lesson but Charles has not forgotten and has taken a shower and eaten breakfast and is sitting in the living room awaiting Michael to get the lesson in before traffic gets heavy. Michael walks in the room and looks at Charles and says, “Well I seem to have not gotten up early enough for you. Let’s get some breakfast and I’ll . . .” Michael tries to say.

“I’ve already had breakfast, made up my bed and reread my driver’s book.” Charles says with a smile.

“Ok. Give me a minute and I’ll be right with you.” Michael says with a smile.

“Maysa, guess who is already up with keys in their hands?” Michael asks.

“Are you serious? Is his room clean?” Maysa asks.

“Everything we laid out for him to have done before any lessons is complete. I’m the one who is late for the party.” Michael says with a laugh.

“Oh wow! I guess you’d better get on your J-O-B sir.” Maysa says.

“You’re holding me up. I have work to do. See you in a little while.” Michael says.

“Alright Charles are ready sir?” Michael asks.

“Yes sir!” Charles says with a big smile.

Michael takes Charles to the school parking lot to practice his turns, parallel parking and the three point turn. Charles does a great job and comes home with a huge smile.

“So Charles how did the first lesson go?” Maysa asks.

“Ask dad and see what he says.” Charles responds.

“Well Michael. How did the student perform?” Maysa asks.

“Hmmm . . . He did ok.” Michael says with a laugh.

“Dad! You said I did great in the car.” Charles says.

Laughing Michael says, “Yea, he did ~~a~~ great especially for his first lesson. I was very proud of him. He only hit two old ladies and one dog.”

Charles chases Michael through the house while Maysa and MJ laugh at them.

“So what’s the verdict on his first lesson?” Maysa asks.

“He was actually pretty impressive. He knows the book from cover to cover and never once took his eyes off the road nor his mirrors.” Michael says.

“Anything in particular I’ll need to work on him with?” Maysa asks.

“Just get him to pause longer at traffic lights and stop signs. A new driver figures everyone follows the rules of the road and we know they don’t.” Michael says.

“Remind me to add Charles to our auto insurance now. I think he’ll probably pass his test on his first attempt.” Michael says.

“You really think so?” Maysa asks.

“Unless he changes overnight, I’m one hundred percent certain he will pass the test on the first attempt on both the permit test and the road test.” Michael says.

Michael gets a phone call and Dr. Smitherman asks him to catch a flight to D.C. immediately.

“What seems to be the problem?” Michael asks.

“As strange as this is going to sound it appears as though the asteroid and the other asteroids around it have sped up. We need to speed up our testing in order to meet it our designated safe zone.”

“Let me see if I can get someone to cover my classes and I’ll be on the next flight up there.”

Michael turns to Maysa and says, “I guess you heard most of that conversation. They need me in D.C. to assist in getting the missile ready to be fired. The clock has sped up. I’ve got my classes covered and they’ve booked me a flight. I’m not sure when I’ll be back.”

“We’ve already discussed this so go do what you’ve got to do. The boys and I will be fine.” Maysa says.

“I’ll call when I land in D.C. but I’ll probably be getting pulled in and out of different meetings once we get rolling.”

“You don’t have to explain. You know I know the drill too well.”

Michael arrives and they immediately whisked him away to the weapons design area. They have asked Michael to work on two additional missiles as backups to the main missiles.

“Ok. We are all agreed that we probably need to fire at least two missiles and possibly the third one to hopefully insure the target is destroyed. I understand that some of you don’t like the idea of just firing a missile that may miss it’s target and just be floating in space but Michael has setup an auto destruct mechanism for each one that does not hit an intended target. It is not perfect but it is better than allowing a missile to continue traveling through space and possibly destroy a living organism.” Dr. Smitherman says.

“Since the asteroid has sped up we have been forced to speed up our clock as well. Instead of the months we thought we had we only have a few weeks.” Dr. Johnson says.

“So at this point in time we are ~~now~~ forced to fire in seven to ten days in order to hit our target.” Michael says.

“Time wise Professor Green, can we actually hit this moving target?” Gen. North asks.

“Honestly, we’re taking in all types of calculations to lock in on a large object but it is in space. No heat signature to lock in on and all we can hope is that our timing isn’t too far off that we miss it with all three missiles. As you have noticed things can change in the blink of an eye especially in the voids of space.” Michael says.

“We will recheck everything and be ready to fire the missiles from the space station in three days time.” Dr. Smitherman says.

“Ok people if you have no other questions we’ll allow these people to get back to work and save our planet.” Gen. North says.

Michael’s phone rings and it is Maysa. She has gone to the grocery store and let Charles drive. Some kids were speeding and has hit the car. Everyone is ok but Charles is very shaken by the accident.

“Let me speak to Charles.” Michael says.

“Hey dad. I guess I’m not as good at driving as I thought. I’m sorry.” Charles says as he is crying.

“Accident will happen and a lot of them happen when other people do stupid stuff. So long as you, your mom and MJ are safe then we’re good. I love you. I’ll be back home soon.” Michael says.

“Everyone is ok right?” Michael asks.

“Yes, we’re fine and the truck is still drivable but the front fender is damaged.” Maysa says.

A few days and Maysa gets a phone call from an insurance company about the accident but they’re blaming Charles for what happened.

“Michael, you’re not going to believe this. The guy from the accident has called.” Maysa says.

“Great! We can get the ball rolling on getting the truck repaired. Are trying to tell me they don’t have insurance?” Michael snaps.

“No. Worse. The agent is trying to blame Charles for the accident.” Maysa says.

Michael starts laughing uncontrollably and says, “Are you serious? Charles’ fault.

The police report and the witnesses all said otherwise.”

“All I can tell you is they’re trying to blame him now.” Maysa says.

“I’ll be there in a couple of days and we’ll get to the heart of the matter.” Michael says.

“Do think the insurance figured out he’s the governor’s son and is trying to get a payday out of this?” Maysa asks.

“That would be my guess but apparently they don’t know Mr. Snow do they?” Michael say with a laugh.

“Oh yea. I almost forgot about Mr. Snow. They’re going to love a conversation with him. God bless their little hearts.” Maysa says with a laugh.

“Do you want the honor of informing him or shall I have the pleasure?” Michael asks.

“The pleasure is all yours sir.” Maysa says.

“May I speak to Mr. Snow please? It’s Michael Green.” Michael says.

“Hold on Mr. Green and I’ll ring you through to him.” The secretary says.

“Mr. Green. How are you today?” Mr. Snow asks.

“Well, we’ve got a little problem. Charles was involved in a little accident that on paper and through witness testimony clears Charles of any wrong doing.” Michael says.

“Is everyone ok? No injuries?” Mr. Snow asks.

“Yes, everyone is ok. Thank you for asking.” Michael says.

“Let me take a guess. They have discovered who you are and think they’re going to get something out of this little incident.” Mr. Snow says.

“That is about it in a nutshell.” Michael says.

“Well, this is the types of games I like so fax me over the police report and let’s see what angle they are trying to play. I’ve got this Michael. Take care of the family and the rest will be my pleasure.” Mr. Snow says.

The next day, after receiving the fax, Mr. Snow gives the driver of the other vehicle a call.

“May I speak to Joseph Walters please?” Mr. Snow asks.

“May I tell him who’s calling please?” the secretary asks.

“Tell him it is Mr. Snow of Snow Insurance company.” Mr. Snow says.

“Mr. Walters it is a Mr. Snow of Snow Insurance company.” The secretary says.

“The Snow Insurance company and Mr. Snow is on the line himself?” Mr. Walters asks.

“Oh boy! Did he say what it was about?” Mr. Walters asks.

“No sir. Should I ask?” The secretary asks.

“Yes. That would be very helpful if you did.” Mr. Walters says.

“Mr. Snow, could you tell me what this is in reference to?” the secretary asks.

“It is in regards to the Green/Stone accident he has on his desk.” Mr. Snow says.

“It is about the Green/Stone accident sir.” The secretary says.

“Ok. Send the call through.” Mr. Walters says.

“Mr. Walters. This is Mr. Snow of Snow Insurance Company. I understand we have some business to conduct in regards to my clients supposed involvement in an accident with your client.” Mr. Snow says.

“Yes. It would appear that your client was straddling the middle line leaving my client no room to maneuver while he was driving.” Mr. Walters says.

“Well, I just happen to have two videos that say differently Mr. Walters. As a matter of fact my young client was very shaken by the whole incident and it may take hours of therapy for him to recover. As such a young driver he could be scared for life.” Mr. Snow says.

“Two tapes? Can I get a copy of those?” Mr. Walters asks.

When I send the tapes I’ll also be send a figure over for you to look at as settlement or if you so choose we can go to court and my sixteen year old honor student is going to look pretty good on the witness stand. We all have choices to make in life, so take a couple of days and get back with me. I’ll be awaiting your call.” Mr. Snow says.

“Maysa, this is Mr. Snow. How are you?” Mr. Snow asks.

“I am fine. How are you?” Maysa asks.

“I’m good and better now that I’ve spoken to Mr. Walters who is representing Family Stone who, I don’t think will be pursuing a case anymore but we now have an issue because I told him Charles may be having a few issues with getting behind the wheel of a car for a while.” Mr. Snow says.

Laughing Maysa says, “So I may need to get him over to his Dr for a checkup just in case?”

“Yes, just in case. He is a youngster and new behind the wheel of a car.” Mr. Snow says.

“I’ll inform Michael upon his return of the update with the situation.” Maysa says.

“Oh yea, one more thing. The conversation did shift to compensation for all of the trauma young Charles has been put through. So instead of you paying money you may be receiving a check. Not sure of the amount but if nothing else it may cover a quick trip to the beach.” Mr. Snow says with a laugh.

Laughing Maysa says, “I wouldn’t want to get on your wrong side.”

“I’ll keep you updated and we’ll go from there.” Mr. Snow says.

“Michael, I’ve got an update for you on the accident.” Maysa says.

“I shall assume Mr. Snow handled everything with his normal grace.” Michael says.

“Yes and has turned a lawsuit against us into a potential check for Charles.” Maysa says.

“Huh?” Michael says.

“You heard me. A potential check for Charles.” Maysa says.

“Mr. Snow is a dangerous man!” Michael says with a laugh.

“Ok. So is everything in place on your end with the mission?” Maysa asks.

“I’m set and so is everyone else. All we can do now is pray and launch. I have been working on a backup plan to the missiles.” Michael says.

“So what and where is this backup plan?” Maysa asks.

“I’ve still got the plans for the weapons Nasser was developing and one was the sonic canon Silk and Reaper used in rescuing the scientist. I can retool and I can increase its range.” Michael says.

“Will it work?” Maysa asks.

“In theory it should work. I haven’t had time to test everything I’m saying.” Michael says.

“Do what you do and this may be something we’ll need further down the line. You boys and your toys.” Maysa says shaking her head.

“If you’ve got everything under control then tell the boys I’ll be one extra day to get everything in place with this backup plan and I’ll be home.” Michael says.

Michael calls Dr. Smitherman and informs him of the extra backup plan and he says, “Bring in your plans and I’ll get one of the weapons out of security and see how quickly we can modify it.”

Michael arrives and sets everything up and awaits the tech guys to make the modifications.

“Those modifications were a lot simpler than we expected so we’re ready to test the new weapon by this evening if you have time to await a few little adjustments.” Dr. Smitherman asks.

“Sure if they think it is ready.” Michael says.

The techs have everything in place and upon Michael’s arrival they setup for the first test.

“Is the recorder set? If so, we are ready for the first firing of the modified sonic canon.” The tech says.

Dr. Smitherman says, “Fire the test burst.”

The canon fires and a seven foot section of the concrete wall is obliterated with the weapon set at its lowest level. The next test will be accuracy and distance. Again at its lowest level it hits its target at two hundred yards. The last test will be at a distance of one mile which is actually the biggest.

“Ok Michael, here is where we need this thing to work perfectly.” Dr. Smitherman says.

“Fire away. I have faith that it will work.” Michael says.

“Gentlemen, could you fire the weapon at the new target and pray that it works.” Dr. Smitherman says.

The canon fires and hits the target dead center and leaves nothing but pebbles the size of small marbles. The room erupts in joy because they all know that all of humanity is at risk of being endangered. They all come and shake Michael’s hand and pat him on his back.

“Lock the weapon away and we’ll only use it if we need it. I’ll contact Gen. North and inform him of our success.” Dr, Smitherman says.

“I think he’ll be pleased.” Michael says.

“What maximum distance do you think we can hit a target accurately and destroy it? Dr. Smitherman asks.

“Well we know a mile but based on my calculations I believe we can hit a target at least one hundred miles away and destroy it. That makes this a very dangerous weapon that we should keep under lock, key and multiple cameras.” Michael says.

“We’re in one of the most secure buildings in this country if not the world and you think we need more security?” Dr. Smitherman says.

“Who would you trust around this weapon? This thing is a world changer and with the modifications that we’ve made you could hold any country within one hundred miles of its location at ransom. So yes, I’d say we need as much security as we deem necessary.” Michael says emphatically.

With the success of the canon testing Michael heads home to his awaiting family.

“Dad, you’re coming home!” MJ mentally talks to Michael.

“Yes son. I’m coming home.” Michael says.

“What’s wrong dad? I can tell you have lots of questions about this whole situation.” MJ asks.

“I’m ok. I’m just hoping we’ve covered all the scenarios. There’s nothing for you to worry about.” Michael says.

“Ok. If you say so dad.” MJ says.

“See you in a little while son.” Michael says.

Michael arrives at home and gets a huge welcome with a big kiss from Maysa.

Michael looks at Charles and says, “How’s my big man?”

“I’m fine dad. I’m sorry about your truck.” Charles says starting to cry.

“Hey big man, he hit you and not the other way around. Our agent Mr. Snow has taken care of that situation for us. I just need you to find a good body shop to get the truck repaired and you need to pick out a new color for it to be painted if you so desire.” Michael says.

“WOW! Really dad! Any color I want?” Charles asks.

“Just don’t go too far out there please.” Michael says.

“I already know the color I want. Black and if I could get some new seat covers that would be great.” Charles says.

“Black it is then. We’ll talk to the guy at the shop on Thursday. Does that work for you?” Michael asks.

“Yes sir. That works for me.” Charles says.

Maysa looks at Michael and says, “He’s got you eating out of his hand.”

Michael shrugs his shoulders and says, “He’s a good kid, with good grades, and always tries to do the right thing. You’ve got to reward that type of effort. Now his mother on the other hand she always finds a way to be bad.” Michael says.

Maysa smiles and gives Michael a long passionate kiss and says, “I thought you like it when I’m bad.”

Michael blushes and says, “Yea, you might be right.”

“Well when we get the boys to bed let me see if I can kick my badness up an additional notch since you’re trying to save the world and getting vehicles painted.”

“Well ok.”

The next morning Michael brings Maysa breakfast in bed and she says, “Wow, breakfast in bed. What did I do to deserve this?”

Michael ~~s~~miles and says, “Sometimes it is good to be bad.”

Maysa smiles and says, “For breakfast in bed more often I guess I need to be “bad” more often.

Michael ~~just~~ smiles and walks back downstairs to get the boys out the door for school.

Maysa just finishes her breakfast when she gets a phone call that the emergency warning system for the state and the nation has been activated and they will be contacted about the details as to what is going on.

Michael mentally contacts Dr. Smitherman and now knows that the clock has sped up again and it is time to launch the missiles.

The missiles are fired and the majority of the country has no clue as to what is going on. People take it as a sign of the end of the world and start to break into stores and banks. The worst in people starts to rear its ugly head but the police arrive to stabilize situations across each state.

The missiles are headed for their intended targets and they hit their targets but the largest asteroids is not completely destroyed and is still headed towards Earth. It is actually headed for the Gulf of Mexico. The southern- most states are going to be impacted and each state is trying to get the word out to get as far north as they possibly can. All of the meteorologist are saying that depending upon how far south the asteroid hits will dictate how far north the water will travel into each state.

People are catching flights on any type of plane they can catch to head north. Maysa and her family are pushed on a state plane.

“Michael, how far inland do you think the water will come?” Maysa asks.

“I believe that if we land in Birmingham we’ll be safe. The majority of the state will be under water for several days by my calculations.”

“Do you think that canon you worked on could destroy the remainder of the asteroid if you have enough time?”

“It would be worth a try.”

Michael calls Dr. Smitherman and ask him to get the canon to a plane and see if it will work.

“Michael, has no one notified you about what has happened?” Dr. Smitherman asks.

“Sorry doctor but we’ve been just a little busy after the asteroid news was announced.”

“One of our technicians has stolen the canon and we haven’t been able to locate him amongst all of the asteroid confusion.”

“I hope he enjoys attempting to make it fire because I created two safety features on that particular weapon. Before putting it in the lockdown room I pulled the firing chip and this gun would only fire for me because it recognizes my fingerprint and retinal scan. This way no matter what you do it will not function.”

“When did you do all of this?”

“I did it while we were ironing out the other issues. I always try to stay two steps ahead of everyone that way if there is an issue I will encounter it first.”

“Why keep the secret from me?”

“I was going to tell you before I left then all of this asteroid stuff came up and the canon became secondary. My apologies but I actually did leave you a breadcrumb as to what I was doing that I figured only you would pick up on.”

“What “breadcrumb” did you leave me?”

“I left you an email with a picture of a line of chips with one missing, a fingerprint and a picture of an eye.”

“I saw all of that and thought you were working on something for MJ and left it on my desk by accident.”

“The message said, Dr. Smitherman . . .” Michael says, laughing out loud.

“I messed it up Michael. I know you were trying to be secretive and I just looked at it the wrong way,” Dr. Smitherman says shaking his head,

“It was probably for the best because if I had known I probably would have informed Jimmy because he was one of my most trusted techs. He has been with me for years and I would have trusted him with my life.”

“I have another prototype in my office locked away in a gun case. The problem is that it doesn’t have the updates nor the capability of the original. It would probably take me a week to get it to that level and we don’t have a week. Sorry folks.”

“It’s ok Michael. You’ve done more than anyone I know to help this situation~~.~~ Go take care of your family.” Dr. Smitherman says.

State security sits down with Maysa to create a plan in case they have to evacuate but Maysa is more concerned of all the panic if this becomes a reality. The issue is not just for Alabama but for the entire country until the scientist calculate where the asteroid may or may not hit.

“Maysa remember your concern now is for the state of Alabama and not the whole country. That problem now belongs to the POTUS. Believe me you’ll have enough on your plate if this actually occurs.” Michael says.

“I love this country and I want the best for ALL the people and sometimes I believe my colleagues are only looking out for certain classes of people. I could be wrong but I don’t believe I am.”

“I believe you’re right. His backers have very deep pockets and have filled his coffers with lots of cash so he will jump whenever they say. If not, then there will be a very heavy price to pay.” Michael says.

“Do you think I could have been bought so easily?”

“You’re a very rare breed of person and what you did in eight years without owing anyone was phenomenal but it is extremely rare to be able to do it once but you did it twice. You also left office with the highest approval rating of all time, another historical feat. Anyway, no you couldn’t be bought so easily.”

“Thank you babe for all the confidence you have in me. In this negative political atmosphere I’m glad I have you on my side.”

“Every minute of the day!”

“Go do another check of your numbers and impress everyone with another miracle.”

“Sorry Maysa. I don’t have any more surprises that I can pull out of my bag this time. Besides, it’s your turn to pull out a little magic isn’t it?” Michael says with a laugh.

Before Maysa can answer, Dr. Smitherman is on the phone for Michael.

“Here are our latest statistics and they are not looking better. Between what hopefully be destroyed, then what will be vaporized coming through the atmosphere and lastly what our guys can shoot down we’re in good but not great shape.” Dr. Smitherman says.

“That is great news isn’t it?” Michael asks.

“Well, depending on the size and density of the asteroid we may not be able to destroy it or at least not completely. You have to keep in mind that not all asteroids are mainly ice. A lot of them are carbon and different types of metals. Some may make it through our atmosphere almost unscathed because of its density and composition. Those are the dangerous ones and yes size does make the difference.” Dr. Smitherman says.

“So, even putting our best, most powerful weapons to work may still not be enough?” Michael asks.

“Unfortunately, that would be correct.” Dr. Smitherman says sadly.

“Let’s roll the dice and get the president to contact all of the world leaders and we’re going to place everyone’s best shooters to work shooting at everything that comes through our atmosphere and see what happens.” Michael says.

“So you’re saying you want this world to unite and have its best artillery gunners to shoot down all of the asteroids that make it through the atmosphere and not at each other?”

“Yes I am. A united front to save our planet. If you can’t get behind that then we are lost as a people.”

“You really do believe this could unite this fragmented world?” Dr. Smitherman asks.

“I believe world destruction can heal all types of wounds and bring people together.” Michael says.

“Let’s see what the world thinks of your idea.” Dr. Smitherman says.

Dr, Smitherman, Dr. Cynthia Johnson and Professor Michael Green are in front of President Taylor and the other world leaders as the three attempt to explain what they are requesting.

“Mr. President and other world leaders let me share with you what we know can and will happen and then our best guess on the other potential matters. The first missiles will destroy the majority of the asteroid but there will some of which will get through and enter our atmosphere. Our atmosphere will destroy a lot of the smaller pieces but some asteroids are made of metals and will not be so easily destroyed. This is where we will need global assistance in destroying these pieces.

We are requesting the world’s best artillery gunners to take aim at our atmosphere and destroy any and all stray pieces that may get through.” Dr. Smitherman says.

“We acknowledge that what we’re saying is a terrifying scenario but we’d much rather be safe than sorry. So, think it over but the clock is ticking on this one.” Dr. Johnson ays.

“Professor Green, do you agree with their findings?” President Taylor asks.

“Yes, one hundred and fifty percent. Everything they told you will probably happen. We’re battling Mother Nature and she’s a beast. Take heed and follow their instructions.” Michael says.

“Ok my fellow world leaders. These three people have made it very short, clear and to the point as to where we stand and what needs to be done. Does anyone have any questions?” President Taylor asks.

“I have a question.” President Abreo of France says.

“Ask your question President Abreo.” President says.

“Do we only get one bite at the apple as you Americans like to say?” President Abreo asks.

“We’re actually taking several bites at the apple just almost all at different times as the asteroids come at us.” Dr. Smitherman says.

“So what you’re saying is that we’ll be taking different attempts at destroying the asteroids as they drift closer towards us attempting to use different weapons and hoping to minimize our own destruction?” President Russo of Italy.

“Yes sir that just about sums it up in a nutshell.” Dr. Johnson says.

The delegates start mumbling amongst themselves and Michael stands up and says, “People, my colleagues are opening the doors for you to ask the hard questions about our future existence on the planet Earth and I just don’t see the passion I expected considering ALL our lives could be potentially at risk. All of the scientist from around the world WANT to wake up three months from now and be able to kiss their family members and thank God they’re still here. Don’t you?”

“So are you saying we’re not overly concerned that our total existence as we know it could be gone in a matter of days?” President Yassin of Jordan asks.

“No sir to the contrary. I believe everyone SEEMS more concerned about their individual concerns instead of looking at it from a global standpoint. If we stand united with no weak links then OUR odds of survival go up dramatically. Someone somewhere will pay the price if we are not all on the same page.” Michael says firmly.

Michael takes the time to slip into President Yassin’s mind to see what he is really thinking. Just as Michael suspected President Yassin has been told to protect Jordan at all cost and then worry about the rest of the world.

“President Yassin, I understand that you and the other world leader’s main focal point is protect your own country at all cost and then help the rest of the world. Self-preservation is understandable and I commend all of you for protecting your home countries BUT if we all think like that then we are all doomed.” Michael says.

President Yassin is stunned how Michael knew exactly what he was thinking and how appalling it sounded when Michael spoke his words out loud.

“My apologies Professor Green for smoothing everything over for us and yes we were all being very selfish in our thinking. Tell us what we need to do and we all will do our part to save the planet.” President Garcia of Mexico.

“Once we get beyond this crisis I will communicate with each one of you on other ways we need to heal this planet that will help future generations of our families.” Michael says.

Michael gets a standing ovation as he leaves to take his seat.

“Michael that was a very impassioned speech. Have you ever thought about politics?” President Taylor asks.

Michael shaking his head says, “No sir. That is not a place for me besides you’ve already had my wife for eight years. Do you really want another Green in office?”

Laughing President Taylor says, “Just think about it.”

Michael’s phone rings and it is Maysa and she says, “Well, well. Word of your impassioned speech has spread very quickly President, I mean Professor Green.”

“Now you’ve got jokes too huh?” Michael says.

“Seriously, Michael your words spoke a strong chord with people around the world. My phone has been ringing non-stop. President Taylor himself talked about you for a solid ten minutes. You really touched these people’s heart and soul. I am so very proud of you.” Maysa says.

Michael drops his head and says, “They all seemed so wrapped up in themselves and their countries wishes. If we don’t destroy the asteroid then no one wins. This thing could put us all back in the stone-ages and no one seems too overly concerned.”

“Your speech woke them all up and everyone seems to be on board now. I am so very proud of you. Never change Michael Alessandro Green for you are the beacon of light a lot of us need when we’re lost and confused.”

“Thank you. I just spoke from my heart when I saw them drifting off into individual thinking instead of uniting as one against a common enemy.”

“Let’s pray everything goes well and we can have a story to tell our grandchildren.”

The asteroids draw~~er~~ closer to the Earth and the missiles are drawing closer to their target. The missiles fire and everyone holds their collective breath~~e~~s until they see their worst nightmare a big asteroid made it pass the missiles and is headed towards earth.

“Gen. North a huge asteroid has made it into Earth’s atmosphere. We need to switch to Mother Nest protocol sir.” the sergeant says.

“That is a go Sgt.” Gen. North says.

The Sergeant gives the word for all of the countries to fire their rockets. The missiles all fire only to find out that whatever the material is the asteroid is composed is stronger than anything they have ever seen. Syria fires a missile that has a very strange heat signature and everyone is questioning what it is and then it hits its target and destroys a quarter of the asteroid and changes its trajectory.

Michael looking at this on TV ~~and he~~ stands up and says, “Oh no! The asteroid is now headed for the Gulf of Mexico. Most of the southern states and Mexico will be devastated.”

“Michael ! I just got the call about . . .” Maysa says.

“You already know don’t you?” Maysa asks.

“Yes! How soon before the helicopter arrives?” Michael asks.

“It should be here in about fifteen minutes. Does everyone have their “to go” bag?” Maysa asks.

As Maysa and the boys are boarding their helicopter Michael notices an older woman and apparently her grandchildren struggling to get to a bus. The other people around them are pushing them around trying to get on buses to get out of harms’ way.

“Michael! Come on. We have to go!” Maysa says.

“Leave! I’ve got to get this lady and the kids on some transportation. I promise you I will get to you.” Michael says.

“Governor Green. We have to go!” The pilot says.

“Michael, you better get to us!” Maysa says.

Michael blows them a kiss and he grabs the two children and has the grandmother in tow to another bus. He gets them seated and the grandmother says, “Thank you young man and God bless you.”

Michael looks around and says, “Well, I now need to find some fast transportation. I guess I need to go back and get that new truck of mine to see how good it is.”

Michael gets his truck and as he is traveling he picks up a couple of people along the way. Michael is driving on as many side roads as possible to avoid traffic and put as much distance as he can between himself and the coast.

Michael’s phone rings and it is Maysa, “Hey babe where are you?”

“My new friends and I are about twenty miles outside of Birmingham. Just leave me the address where they’ve set you up and I’ll be there.” Michael says.

“They’ve set us up in a storm shelter in downtown Birmingham. We’ve got food, water, communications and lots of good protection. The only thing missing is my hubby. So I need you to bring your sweet self on to me.”

“I’m doing my best. I’ll see you in a few.”

“Sounds like your woman is missing you just a little. She must be important if they’ve taken her to the command center in Birmingham.” Josh the rider says.

“Yea, you can say that.”

They finally reach Birmingham and Josh says, “You never actually told me who you were after riding together. I truly want to thank you for getting me out of harm’s way. My name is Josh Wright.” Josh says.

“Michael Green at your service.” Michael says.

“The Michael Green, the governor and former president’s husband?” Josh says.

“Oh wow! God bless you and the governor. Nobody is going to believe this story. Anyway, thank you again.” Josh says.

“Do you have anywhere to go to for safety?” Michael asks.

“Not really. I was just trying to get as far north as possible.” ~~Josh says.~~

“I think we can probably squeeze in one more person if that works for you.” Michael says.

“I believe I’ll take that offer.” Josh says.

Maysa and the boys run to Michael and give him a huge hug.

Maysa says, “Who’s your friend?”

“This is Josh Wright and he and a couple of other guys rode with me from Montgomery. Josh had no one here so I brought him with me. Come to find out Josh is a civil engineer and might be able to give us a hand if things start to get a little dicey.” Michael says.

“Nice to meet you governor. The whole trip up Michael never once mentioned who he was. He just tried to be as calm and personable during this whole ordeal. All I kept thinking about was what if that thing hits what can I do but Michael stayed calm during the whole trip. The more he talked the more relaxed we all became.” Josh says.

“He tends to have that effect on people. It was nice meeting you. Make yourself comfortable and we’ll try to remain safe.” Maysa says.

Maysa walks over to Michael and says, “You’ve made a friend and he is very impressed with you. I’m just glad you got here safely. “How were the people and the streets as you were traveling?”

“Everyone we passed was in panic mode and considering the circumstances I don’t blame them. The not knowing how far inland it will come makes everything even more stressful.” Maysa says.

“Well I can tell you depending upon the size of the remaining asteroid it will probably move inland between ninety to one hundred twenty-five miles in Alabama but it will probably be worse in other states. If I were you I’d go ahead and declare Birmingham the new temporary capital of the state until further notice.” Michael says.

Maysa gets a call from President Taylor to get a status up date and she says, “We’re awaiting some official updates before sending out any of our people for damage reports.”

“Ok. I’ll get back with you after I hear from the other states.” President Taylor says.

“Governor Green, I have the disaster management on the line.” The corporal says.

“This is Governor Green. To whom do I have the pleasure?”

“This is Dr. George Steward, Governor Green and I can tell you that we are lucky in a sense that the asteroid was not as large as it would have been. With everyone blasting it smaller and smaller with each wave, and withits size being reduced that saved us a little and though hitting the water wasn’t a great help, it did help to cushion the impact some. I guess what I’m saying is that though we did receive smaller size tsunamis it, in my opinion, is better than the small particles of dust and dirt that could be floating around for a long time.” George says.

“Ok, thank you George. I’ll get out National Guard to get me out in the next day or two to survey the damage first hand.” Maysa says.

“Prepare yourself governor. It is not a pretty sight and it will take a while for the recoveries, both alive and dead and then trying to unbury over half the state.” George says.

Maysa and her staff take two helicopters to view the damage.

“This reminds me of how bad it was when Vice-President Harden’s helicopter went down.” Maysa says.

“Do we need to turn back Maysa?” Smith asks.

“No. I’m good. I just had a moment. Thanks Smith.” Maysa says.

“Are you ok up there? I just thought about Harden’s accident.” Michael asks.

“Yes, I just had a moment. How’d you know? Another Michael moment?” Maysa asks.

“I thought we were beyond all of the Michael moment stuff?” Michael asks.

“NEVER !! So long as you are Michael there will always be Michael questions.” Maysa says.

“Then carry on with your survey and I will see you this evening.” Michael says.

Maysa continues her observation of the state and it brings her to tears. She knows she will need to share a very sobering story with her fellow Alabamians the next morning. Her story will not be as devastating as the stories the other southern states will have to share.

“Pilot, could you please land me near the capital.? I need to view this up close. Thank you.” Maysa asks.

It is worse than any nightmare could ever be but she knows it can all be repaired but it will take

time and at least she has a temporary home in Birmingham. How many deaths will they encounter?

And how many people will not return to their homes and move to other states? Only time will tell.

With tears in her eyes Maysa says to her staff, “I want to apologize to all of you who packed up and followed me to Alabama. You expect a few bumps in the road if you live long enough but to have millions stolen and then have an asteroid hit the gulf and cause a tsunami that wipes out almost seventy-five percent off the state including your homes. I do apologize. Now if any of you would like to pack it up and leave I do understand and there will be no hard feelings. I love each and every one of you and only want the best for you and right now this doesn’t look good.”

“We all made our decisions to move here and unless someone here can control mother-nature we have to accept whatever happens.” Smith says.

“Smith is right. This was individual choices and I think we all made grown-up decisions and here we are. Let’s just break out the brooms and mops and get this place clean. We can start with the capital and work our way out.” Genesis says.

“Well as much as I appreciate you two speaking up first I have a special assignment for you two Reaper and Silk. I need that sonic canon found ASAP. I know Michael disabled it but we need it back in our hands. Please get with Michael because somehow he upgraded the weapon and it has a tracker device built in. Surprise!” Maysa says.

Smith scratching his head says, “How does this man stay this far ahead of everyone? Does he ever sleep?”

“I live with the man and I wonder how he does all that he does. I’ve learned on some days not to even asks the how or the why. I just accept it and move on.”

“Ok. I’ll talk to Michael and then I’ll contact Silk and Reaper and we’ll get with Genesis and track down this poor soul.” Smith says.

“Brandon, Christian, Xavier and Mason please contact Jo-Jo and tell her to meet you in Mobile. It has been hard hit but I need you to get with the local law enforcement and check on the banks and credit unions. This is probably prime time for any criminals to think they have free access to those facilities. Get all of them back online because I know we want to get business flowing as quickly as possible.” Maysa says.

“Candice, I need for you to check with the Mobile Port Authority chief. He said he was heading to check on the port and would stop to check on the Montgomery Ferry ship on his way. Tell him to do whatever it takes to start the ball rolling to get something rolling.” Maysa says.

There is silence and suddenly a huge round of applause and everyone says, “That’s how you handle a disaster and get the people onboard with a recovery. Maysa, that is why we’re all here because YOU never take a step back but always two steps forward.”

“Thank you all. One more thing Candice. Contact as many legislators as you can and let’s see if we can get a lottery approved while we are trying to recover. This may be perfect timing.” Maysa says.

“Someone will probably ask why we are discussing a lottery after such a devastating tragedy. Should I say it was already on your agenda of things to address and you’re just following through on another campaign promise?” Candice asks.

“Yes, exactly! I will ask Joshua to get his people involved on the capital clean up situation.” Maysa says.

“I need you to get Yolanda up here to assist you with all of these contacts. She knows how everything goes and I know you work well with her.” Maysa says.

“Will do. The plate was getting just a little full.” Candice says with a laugh.

“You know how I roll and if that plate overflows you either better stop me or just go get you some help.” Maysa says with a giggle.

Brandon, Christian, Jo-Jo, Mason and Xavier take a helicopter to Montgomery to assist with securing the banks and credit unions. The Chief of police says he hasn’t had many people out but he figures someone will start thinking about making a move with all of the banks and credit unions being left unsecured.

“Let’s start making a few calls to get the electricity back on before the back-up generators start to fail.” Brandon says.

“I know this is a huge scale clean-up but can we contact a few of those companies that do this type of work? Jo-Jo asks.

“Maysa said to get the job done by any means necessary so make the calls.” Brandon says.

Mason and Xavier are with a couple of police officers when they get a silent alarm at a bank. When they arrive they notice that there is a four wheel drive truck at the back of the bank and the back door has been yanked off of it’s hinges.

“Well officers I’d say that we just might have a robbery in progress.” Mason says.

“Sir, I do believe you are correct.” Officer Winston says.

“Gentlemen, I think we need to see what type of weapons they have before breaking up their little party. They could be carrying some heavy duty toys.” Xavier says.

“Oh my, there are five guys and two have shot guns, one with a glock and two with AK-47s.” Mason says.

“Officer Rosewood, would you please go back and get us some vests please. I have plans for a nice meal this evening and I don’t won’t to miss it.” Xavier says with a grin.

Mason calls Candice to inform them of the situation and Candice passes the message on to Maysa.

Maysa picks up her phone and calls Mason and says, “Hey, I don’t need you guys down there playing hero ok? I need you guys back here in one piece. Understood?”

“Understood.” Mason says.

“Officers Winston and Rosewood, have you gentlemen ever thought about working directly with the governor?” Xavier asks.

“Not really.” Rosewood says.

“It can be very exciting and you can have your eyes opened to some very positive things.” Mason says.

“Well, cover your eyes fellas. We wouldn’t want you to see too far into the future.” Xavier says.

“Jimmy, this is Mason. We need five multi-round blast into the coordinates twenty-five yards north-east of our locked positions. Fire at will.” Mason says.

Within fifteen seconds the targets are eliminated and the officers are look and asks, “What happened?”

Mason and Xavier look at each other and say, “The future.”

Rosewood and Winston say, “No, what happened?”

“Officers, we are not at liberty to say but you can go and pick up your prisoners.” Mason says.

“Well, I guess since you asked us to close our eyes you left us without a story to tell.” Winston says.

Mason and Xavier just shrug their shoulders and walk away.

“Candice, when Mason and Xavier return have them come to my office along with Smith.” Maysa says.

Mason and Xavier return to the capital and Smith and Maysa are awaiting them.

“Gentlemen, I know you’re good at your jobs but you took two police officers into the field and attempted to recruit them by showing off with secret high-tech weapons. Why?” Maysa asks.

“We needed to use the devices and we attempted to recruit them before using the “toys” and when it didn’t appear that the officers were interested we asked them to close their eyes, which they complied to and we used the weapons with discretion. Did they have questions after the fact, yes they did but the officers never saw how or what happened. All they know is that the assailants were stunned when they made their arrest.” Mason says.

“Why did you call in the strike?” Smith asks.

“The assailants were heavily armed and we thought it was best to stun them and not chance a lengthy shootout and potential loss of life for them or us.” Xavier says.

“Ok. That seems like a very reasonable answer all things considered. Next time, please clear everything through myself or Smith if possible. It was a very good judgement call though.” Maysa says.

“You guys must have really wanted to get those guys?” Smith asks.

“These guys had some heavy fire power and seemed pretty bold attempting to rob that bank in broad daylight so we had to go big to stop them.” Mason says.

“I bet those officers were just a little bewildered as to how you got those guys without firing a Taser or anything.” Smith says.

“Well, they were just a little too busy with their eyes shut and their heads covered.” Xavier says.

“Honestly Smith we thought they may actually make good recruits but after watching how they reacted under pressure we were very mistaken.” Xavier says.

“Now that was the answer I was seeking. Thank you. In the future please leave ALL recruiting to me.” Smith says.

Both Mason and Xavier say~~,~~ “Yes sir.”

“Michael, tell me what you think about this idea. Since about seventy-five percent of Alabama is covered with mud and the farmers are in deep trouble how about offering them to work together if we can build the giant “terrariums” the way we did in Africa. This would be the perfect time to offer the idea I was thinking.” Maysa says.

“I agree with you IF you can find common ground for the majority of the farmers. Considering the position they are all in at this moment you may stand a good chance of making it work. Go for it.”

“I’ll get Candice to contact the head of the Alabama Framers Association and try to set up a meeting. If we can get two “terrariums” built I believe we’ll be in great shape for years to come even if the farmers go back to their own farms. We could hire people to work them or rotate agricultural students from state-wide colleges and offer them scholarships. We could really turn this into a huge thing.”

“You are really excited about this. Have you made notes about the contacts and do you still have the files on the construction people we used in Africa?”

“Yes. I have a copy and I believe Candice may be able to retrieve the African information from Yvonne, President Taylor’s secretary.”

“Well let’s get the ball rolling and have you talk to the farmers. It is probably going to take the farmers about two years to get everything back on track after the tsunami and about the same time to get the “terrariums” built north and south. It is going to be tough but look how quickly you will be able to put people back to work. If the Alabama farmers agree on this deal you might want to sit down with the governors of Mississippi, Louisiana, and Georgia. They have all been devastated and could probably use some fresh ideas to help speed up their recovery process as well.”

The farmers come in with the mindset of “me” and Maysa know she’s going to have to convince them otherwise and it won’t be easy.

“Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I know your hearts are heavy with your business and personal losses and some government person is the last person you want to see. I am here to assist you getting back on your feet and to give you the opportunity to look into the future of farming on a global scale like you’ve never seen or imagined. I want you to repair and upgrade your farms but I also want you to look bigger and smarter with technology and collaboration. You’re probably looking at one another and wondering why would she be talking about collaboration in reference to farming. For those of you who haven’t looked at the pamphlet that was left in your seats. If you will look at it now it show you work my administration did for the people in Africa. We grew food for thousands and to this day they have predicted that we have saved two million lives over a five year time frame. If we assist you in repairing your farms and if we can get some of you to assist at the “terrariums” which are our stadium size farms that are self-sustainable.” Maysa says.

“So Governor Green are you saying we can’t get aide unless we sign-up to assist with the “terrarium” duty?”a farmer asks.

“No sir, there is no requirement for the aid. We’re just attempting to get assistance to help the world help itself.”

The farmers start mumbling amongst themselves and Maysa says, “Do you need more time to think everything over? If so, we can come back in a couple of days.”

“Yes, if you could give us until Friday to digest everything you said that would be great.” Another farmer says.

“Ok. We’ll reconvene on Friday for a vote. Thank you.” Maysa says.

“How well do you think my little speech went over?” Maysa asks Michael.

“It was a great speech and I believe they will actually agree but they weren’t going to agree no matter how good it sounded today. They’ll discuss it over dinner, then a few drinks and finally say it sounds good and agree.” Michael says with a laugh.

“~~LOL~~. You’re probably right. I’ll just be prepared for either response and we’ll go from there. I just hope they go for the “terrariums” and don’t think they’ll take away from their farms.” Maysa says, laughing out loud

“Make sure you put emphasis on the science and the construction work force that will be created and sustainable throughout its existence. You’ve also got to sell it to the state government and those “terrariums” are not cheap to build. You may have to find a way to get some federal funding to help sell the idea to your fellow politicians.” Michael says.

Maysa just stares at Michael . . .

“Why are you staring at me?” Michael asks.

“Because you are so amazingly smart and kinda cute too.” Maysa says with a giggle.

“Smart and cute. I got the double compliment. What’s on your mind young lady?” Michael asks.

“I can’t stare at my husband and wonder how blessed I am to have you? I often think back over the years how you’ve had my back when everyone else thought I was too young and naïve but you always stood by my side no matter what. I also think about all of the times YOU knew the answers but allowed me to take credit. Not many people would push others into the spotlight to look good when they could take the credit and look good themselves. I don’t know if enough people know just how smart you are. But I guess the world is slowly finding out especially after you saved the planet from a near world ending catastrophe without raising an eyebrow. Just an amazing man and you’re all mine.” Maysa says, crying.

“Thank you Maysa. That truly means a lot to me and that is why I love you.”

“Well, we have a little free time. Why don’t you show me how you really feel?”

Maysa and Michael make love for several hours before being disturbed by another phone call from the farmers and now several construction companies wanting to assist with the clean-up and restoration.

“Ladies and gentlemen, have you come to any conclusions?” Maysa asks.

“If you are truly here to actually help us then we already have a list of farmers and a schedule of who and when we will work at your “terrariums”. Our only question is if these things will be in direct competition with us as farmers.” Farmer Simmons ask.

“No sir. There will be no direct competition. The farmers that sign up to work there will have access to any and all crops if there is a hard freeze, drought or any other natural disaster that occurs and you lose your crops. Is that an agreement you can live with? If so, we can work out the details and get the restoration started and construction started in the next few months.” Maysa says.

The farmers and construction people are all nodding their heads in agreement. In the following weeks the senators and state congress all sign off as well.

Maysa is surprised by the governors of Mississippi, Louisiana and Georgia are there to witness the very quick and universal agreement of all parties throughout the state on the same page.

All of the governors come over to shake Maysa’s hand and tell her they really didn’t think she’d be able to sell that idea but again as when she was president she has a calming demeanor that can sell ice cubes in Alaska in negative twenty- degree weather. The difference is that she will back up what she says she can and will do.

Maysa spends the next few weeks prepping her other state leaders to attempt to do the same thing she just did and hoping they can duplicate the same success she did in Alabama.

Smith and Genesis are getting news about someone attempting to sell a non-functioning high tech weapon on the black market.

“Smith are we going to go get this guy this time?” Genesis asks.

“He is stupid enough to have posted that he’s in the Sudan and took a picture of himself with the weapon so I think we should oblige him and make a deal.” Smith says.

“If we didn’t know who he was it wouldn’t seem so dumb but we do know him and this should be fun.” Genesis says with a laugh.

“You’ll have to be the contact person on this deal since no one knows who you are anyway.” Smith says.

Smith and Genesis arrive in Sudan. Silk and Reaper are already on the ground locating the technician, Craig Swanson, before he gets to the designated meeting place. Genesis calls him and says, “This is Carman. Eleven AM at D12.75, seven cash.”

“D12.75, eleven AM, seven cash.” Craig says.

“Ok Smith the deal is set. I know we think this guy is an amateur but are we sure he doesn’t have some more sophisticated partners? If this were my first rodeo I’d have someone watching my back wouldn’t you?” Genesis asks.

“”You’re right. Why would he come out his first time through without someone watching his back for a piece of the pie? I’d better warn Reaper and Silk that he may not be alone. Good thinking Genesis.” Smith says.

“Silk and Reaper, this is Smith. Genesis brought up a good fact about Craig. This is his first rodeo and it’s on the big stage so he’s probably not alone. Watch for any other characters that seem to just be hanging around near the meet location they could be his partners in crime.” Smith says.

“Roger that Smith. We’ll go back and recheck the area and look for people just hanging around.” Reaper says.

“We’ve checked all of the street level folks and we’ve found nothing but we do have a guy on the third floor with a perfect spot for a shot at the table where they are supposed to do the exchange. Reaper and I will intercept and eliminate.” Silk says.

“Let me know when the target has been neutralized and we will proceed with retrieving the package from Mr. Craig.” Smith says.

Reaper and Silk make their way down to the third floor and neutralize the shooter. Meanwhile Genesis makes her way over to Craig with the briefcase of money. Craig smiles and says, “Oh wow! This money is the second prettiest sight I’ve seen today.”

“Oh really! I bet you say that to all the ladies who are giving seven figures.” Genesis says with a smile.

“Can I buy you a drink to celebrate our deal?” Craig asks.

“Nah, but if I were you I wouldn’t be so quick to celebrate. My friends want to share a few words with you. Don’t move now. Oh, by the way your friend is no longer there to have your back so you may as well sit back and finish your drink. It may the last one you have for a while.” Genesis says.

“Craig! My friend. You were oh so close to a huge payday but you stole from a guy who really keeps a close eye on his toys. Now that we have you we’ll make sure you spend some cozy time with your buddy from the third floor. I do have to ask you though. Did you realize that the weapon doesn’t work?” Smith asks.

“Yea, I found that out after I got out of the building with it. I didn’t realize Mr. Green was so thorough with his work and apparently has a few trust issues.” Craig says.

“No. He just knows that if you leave things unguarded someone will try and take advantage of the situation just like you did. We do want to thank you for the trip to Africa. The Sudan was somewhere I’ve always wanted to visit.” Smith says.

“Glad I could make your day. Who was that beautiful woman that I got played by?” Craig asks.

“Did you actually see her face?” Smith asks.

“No, not really but the voice and that body were breath taking.” Craig says.

“That was just another colleague. You can dream about her too while in prison.” Smith says.

Craig gets very quiet and just looks at the floor.

“Do you realize how much trouble you’re in and there is no one but you to be charged?” Smith asks.

“I really needed the money. I thought I could make a quick sale and move on. I never realized how smart Prof. Green was.” Craig says.

“You were trying to match minds with one of the smartest men in the world and lost. I’ll try to get you as much leniency as I can but this is a federal crime. I’m sorry. All I can suggest is for you to get a GREAT lawyer and pray for the best.” Smith says.

“How was Craig doing?” Xavier asks.

“He was almost in tears. I really don’t think he realizes how much trouble he’s in. He says he needed the money and thought this was a quick and easy way to do it. High tech toy on the black market does get you paid IF you don’t get caught. He did say he didn’t realize how smart Michael was in disabling the weapon from functioning with two simple chips.” Smith says.

Laughing, Xavier says, “He was attempting to match wits with Prof. Michael Green. That is a very quick way to lose a bet.”

“I told him I would try to help him but unless the president intervenes I think he’ll get at least twenty-five years.” Smith says.

Maysa, the family and her staff are headed to the ground breaking for the first “terrariums” in Guntersville.

“Mom, they are actually building a huge “terrariums” to grow food?” Charles asks.

“Yes Charles. It is a cooperative task to grow crops in a climate controlled environment with no worries about floods, frost or heat.” Maysa says.

“What about the farmers? Does this cut them out?” Charles asks.

“No. This will be used as a backup and a means to perform science experiments.” Maysa says.

“I remember they were used to grow and distribute food in Africa so I thought they were going to do the same thing here for the poor people.” Charles says.

“That is a very good idea Charles. There are programs here that do that sort of thing already.” Maysa says.

“Yes I know but most of the vegetable and fruit programs don’t occur until the summer and the number of farmers that get involved in the programs is limited. My opinion there should be a year round program to distribute goods. Do you realize how many fruits and vegetables get thrown away because they don’t look esthetically pleasing. They are still good fruits and vegetable but they just don’t “look” the part? We need to change this thinking so everyone can get good food into their bodies.” Charles says.

There was a moment of silence then the family breaks out into a loud cheer.

“Very good Charles! You truly thought this through. Yes!! Maybe you need to talk to the farmers.” Maysa says.

Charles smiles and says, “Yea, right mom.”

“Oh, I was very serious young man about you speaking before the Farmers Association. Everything you said was on point, very clear and from the heart. Yes, you will get fifteen minutes to speak your mind. Get your notes together and be ready to speak.” Maysa says.

“Are you serious?” Charles asks.

“Oh yes. I’ve never heard you be more passionate about anything. Believe me your words will carry more weight and be more sincere than anything I could say.

Maysa speaks to the crowd at the ground breaking and tells the crowd that she has a very passionate young man that wants to speak to the Farmers Association. She says, “He is very passionate about farming and performing humanitarian acts of kindness. By the way, he is my son, Charles Green.”

Charles gives his speech and gets a standing ovation from the crowd.

“Dad, did you hear them cheering for me? That was an amazing feeling.” Charles says excitedly.

“I am so very proud of you son. We could be looking at the future governor of Alabama.” Michael says.

“Thanks dad, but I’ve got my sights on a higher position.” Charles says.

“That’s my boy. Set your goals high and always go for the gold.” Michael says.

Maysa and Michael are getting ready for bed when Michael says, “I had an idea for you since they have retrieved the weapon. I have a new design of a remodified stun gun that is non-lethal and only stuns people without identifier in a quarter block radius, and a stun grenade launcher but these weapons would only be for a special task force of police. They would be recognized as the Nexgen Police.”

“Oh wow! You have really given this a lot of thought haven’t you?” Maysa asks.

“All of our D.C. people are very familiar with the technology and what they don’t know would be a very easy learning curve for them. If we had to trust anyone after the Craig incident it would have to be the people we already know.” Michael says.

“This actually sounds like a very feasible idea. Of course we’ll have to run it by the legislature and the all of the different levels of police in the state before we can create anything but we may be able to make it a special task force attached to the governor’s office for the time being. Get your team up to speed on the weapons and their knowledge of how they work.” Maysa says.

“I would like for Smith, Genesis, Reaper, Silk and Jo-Jo to be the actual first ones on the squad if that is ok with you.” Michael says.

“What about Brandon, Christian, Mason and Xavier? Won’t they be hurt if they’re not on the special task force? They have and always will be with me. They can be a part of the training but they are with me. Other than you I only trust those four if my life is ever on the line.” Maysa says.

“I understand that especially if we start talking about your life being on the line.” Michael says.

“How’s your new security person doing? I never hear you talk about him.” Maysa says.

“His name is Howard Wright but prefers to be called Raven. He says it was a childhood nickname and he responds quicker to it than Howard so I’m ok with that. He also speaks Arabic and Spanish so if we need to have a private conversation that works to our advantage as well. He’s an expert in karate and can shoot the wings off of a fly at 50 yards. So yea, we’re good.”

“Make sure you get him introduced to the others and get Smith and Genesis to set him up on a couple of days to train on the new weapons.”

“Will do.”

The training is setup and everyone is in place and talking when Raven walks in with Michael. All of the ladies start whispering as the two walk in and Michael says, “I know everyone knows each other and I’d like to introduce my security Mr. Howard Raven Wright. His preference is to just be called Raven.”

Jo-Jo stands up and says, “I’ll call him ANYTHING he wants to be called. Welcome to the team Raven.”

The room erupts in laughter. Raven just blushes as Jo-Jo calls him out.

Maysa enters the room and everyone stands and gives her a standing ovation. Maysa says, “Everyone please have a seat. We are setting up a new task force to clean up the new wave of high tech criminals the state is facing. At some point we will rollover and phase in some officers from each branch of our police: some from select cities, the sheriff’s department and the State patrol. The way I want to handle this is for our people to look over the list of potential officers and take them through a grueling physical and mental set of test.” Maysa says.

“Maysa, do we have any idea as to when we’ll get the recruits?” Xavier asks.

“First, Xavier we will not call them recruits. These will be seasoned officers that will be transferring in and we will treat them as such. We don’t want to insult anyone so please do not cross that line or you will face some harsh punishment. I wasn’t speaking to just Xavier. This goes for everyone.” Maysa says.

“When will the vote come from capital as to when we will be able to proceed?” Silk asks.

“That vote will come up in about two weeks so in the meantime everyone in this room including myself will go through some type of training. Yes, I can tell by your reaction you’re wondering why I’m including myself. I never like to send my people out into the field without having some idea as to what they might be facing. Remember, I was born and raised in Alabama so I had a rattler in one hand and a .38 in the other.”Maysa says with a laugh.

Another voice from the back of the room says. “Believe her people. She can hit anything she points a gun at. We’ve gone to the range a lot and she can put Annie Oakley to shame.”

“That would have to be my hubby back there giving away my little secrets.” Mays says with a laugh.

“These weapons are very special and when we go to the range you will see just how special. Sorry for all of the cloak and dagger about what we’re attempting to do but we’ve been burned once and we will not get compromised again. This will be a fun learning lesson.” Michael says.

“We have gone through a lot with the asteroid and then the tsunami and I know everyone has gone through a lot of personal issues and conflicts. I applaud each and every one of you for your dedication to the job. Thank you! So go home and get some rest. We have a long day ahead of us on tomorrow.” Maysa says.

The day starts with classroom talks about how the guns are DNA linked to each individual and will not fire by anyone else.

“So once a gun is linked it is basically that individual’s weapon until death?” Reaper asks.

“Yes, the weapon you are assigned is with you for life unless we recover it and reassign the DNA.” Michael says.

“I am working on a process that unless the “bio chip” is removed by the person whose DNA matches the weapon after seventy-two hours the weapon will automatically lock and will not recalibrate to function other than for the DNA match theoretically speaking.” Michael says.

“Sir, meaning no offense but if you are sitting around creating all of these devices when do you sleep? I mean, we all appreciate the brilliant work that you do but WOW!!” Mason says.

Laughing Michael says, “I honestly find creating the gadgets relaxing.”

“Trust me Mason when the asteroid was coming at us that was the most intense I’ve ever seen him and I still had to check his pulse to make sure he was ok. I’ve only seen him truly angry once and that was when I was kidnapped. “His version” of upset kicked in and it kind of scared me because I had never seen that side of him. The scary part was how quickly he appeared to turn it off.” Maysa says.

“Well Maysa maybe that is a side of Michael that none of us really want to see.” Smith says laughing.

“Anyway, does anyone have a question about the weapons? If not then we will start bright and early in the morning with your hands on training with the non-DNA weapons and your personal weapons will be ready in about a month.” Michael says with a smile.

“I have a question Professor.” Jo-Jo says.

“What’s your question Jo-Jo?” Michael asks.

“Will the new weapons come with the devices to insure we only target people without the “patches”?

“Good question Jo-Jo. Yes. These weapons will come with that option and the suits will be linked to the weapons and the “patches” will automatically link and activate.” Michael says.

“Just making sure just in case we try to catch people in a cross-fire and we don’t accidently shoot one another.” Jo-Jo says.

“Jo-Jo, I have a request of you as well and anyone else, Raven and Christian, that is a martial arts expert. We need to start some classes for ~~the~~ all of the people on the special task force, the personal protectors of the governor, and Lieutenant governor and anyone else that is interested.” Michael asks.

“Ok, I’ll get with Raven and Christian, if they’re interested and set up a schedule.” Jo-Jo says.

“I’m in.” Raven says

“Me too.” Christian says.

“Ok. I’m counting on you three to get everyone to a comfortable level. Thanks!” Michael says.

Maysa and the family are setting up to attend the second ground breaking in Montgomery after weeks of heavy machinery moving dirt to get the area prepared to start the second project.

“Boys are you guys almost ready to go?” Maysa asks.

“Yes. Dad is helping Charles with his tie and I’m having a few issues with my shoes but I’m ok.” MJ says.

“Michael, after you finish with the boys could you give me a hand for a minute please?” Maysa asks.

“I’ll be right there.” Michael says.

“Could you help me with this necklace and zipping my dress please?” Maysa asks.

“Would you prefer me to zip it up or unzip it?” Michael says with a wink.

“Is this my husband getting frisky?” Masysa asks.

“Yes, it is your one and only hubby getting frisky!” Micael says.

Maysa kisses Michael and says, “You know your timing is very bad right?”

“My timing always sets the table for things to come.” Michael says with a smile.

“I don’t know what has gotten in to you but I like it. We’ll discuss our options when we return to Birmingham.”

“Ok. You’re on.”

Everyone boards the plane for the short trip to Montgomery and then they check and recheck the vehicles before departing for Prattville, which is about a twenty minute ride from Montgomery.

As they are riding along the highway Maysa’s security notices a lone drone closing in on their position.

Maysa’s driver, Matt, informs Maysa and the family that they are being tracked and to hold on.

“Smith, what is going on?” Maysa asks.

“We’re not sure. This drone may have been tracking us for miles but we didn’t notice it until it came into visual sight. It could also be some kids drone just following us. We don’t want to shoot at it unless it does something threatening.” Smith says.

At this point the drone speeds up and pulls up beside the police officers and shoots their tires out.

“Matt, I think this would be the time to show us your driving skills. All lead motorcyclist please go to evasive maneuvers to protect the governor.” Smith says.

Matt speeds up and the other officers drop back to protect the governor. Smith says, “Genesis where are you? We have an issue that needs your undivided attention please.”

“On my way. I’ll be on your six in five minutes.” Genesis says.

“Make it two minutes because this has an eerie feeling about it.” Smith says.

“On it!” Genesis says.

The drone is shot at but the bullets bounce off and it keeps on coming.

“Smith, is there a problem?” Michael asks.

“This might be just a little bit of a problem sir. Regular bullets don’t seem to have an effect on it so we may have to try bigger guns or at least bigger ammunition. Problem is we really weren’t expecting to fight bulletproof drones.” Smith says.

“Ok, boys. The car is bulletproof but I need you to stay on the floor of the car please.” Michael says emphatically.

“Michael, this would be the time that brilliant mind of yours is supposed to kick up another notch and say this is a solvable problem and no need to worry.” Maysa says.

“She’s right Michael. This is about that time. Could you please pull that rabbit out of your hat. It would be greatly appreciated.” Smith says.

“Keep doing the evasive driving. As the old saying goes it is very hard to hit a moving target even if its a limousine. It would appear as though it is being maneuvered manually but whoever it is they are very good and these are not ordinary drones. These are military grade and specially modified on top of that.” Michael says.

Genesis is pulling up on the limousine and says, “Smith, are you having a drone party and didn’t invite me?”

“Unless your car is bulletproof I’m going to suggest you pull in front of us to keep from getting shot.” Smith says.

“You mean where that other drone is coming. Nah, I think I like where I am for the time being. I feel more comfortable especially if your driver can actually drive.” Genesis says.

“I do have a radio and I can hear you whoever you are and yes I can drive if you guys can clear the path for me.” Matt says.

“Ok Matt. I’ll do my part if you protect my crew riding with you.” Genesis says.

“Genesis. These drones are bulletproof and ordinary pullets have no effect on them. I hope you have some special bullets with you. I need you to be in hunting mode.” Smith says.

“When am I not in hunting mode should be the question.” Genesis says with a laugh.

Genesis slams on the brakes and stops to take a shot at the incoming drone and she misses. Two more officers get shot as she lines up her next shot. She fires and it explodes. While she is reaching in her car to reload to fire on the second drone she takes on incoming fire from the other drone and is wounded.

“I’m hit Smith but I think I can still reload and get that second drone. Give me a minute.” Genesis says.

The second drone pulls up behind the limousine and fires several rounds and then fires a special explosive round that eats through the metal of the vehicle and creates an opening to fire through. Michael sees what is happening and attempts to cover Maysa as quickly as he can but a bullet gets by him just as Genesis fires another round. Explosion . . . The drone is gone but the damage has been done. Maysa has been critically shot and Michael has been wounded. They are rushed to Prattville Mercy hospital. Michael, Genesis and two of the officers have surgery and are ok. Maysa is in intensive care and has lost a lot of blood.

Dr. Jacobs comes in to talk to Michael about his injuries and all he keeps asking about is Maysa.

“Dr. Jacobs, I appreciate the news about me but how is my wife?” Michael asks.

“Mr. Green, your wife is in critical condition. She lost a lot of blood and we have flown in the best surgeon in the state. We need for you to get better for your boys sake so that all of you can be there with your wife. I promise you if there are any changes I will inform you.”

Michael goes into a trance and steps into Maysa’s mind to see for himself how bad she is hurt and it is very serious. Michael contacts Zara and they combine their power to help heal Maysa.

*“Thank you Zara. I truly appreciate you. I’m not sure what I would do if something were to happen to Maysa.” Michael says.*

*“No thanks required. You’d do the same for me. We are of a kindred spirit. Soon MJ will be as well. ” Zara says.*

The next morning Dr. Jacobs comes to Michael’s room and says, “Professor Green your wife has taken tremendous steps in her recovery. I have never seen anyone heal so quickly overnight. It is truly a miracle in and of itself. I will take you to see her when we get her moved to a secure room.”

“When will I be released? How are the other people that came in with me?” Michael asks.

“We will release you either this afternoon or tomorrow morning. The other people will be released in a day or two but Ms. Darkwater has already released herself.” Dr. Jacobs says.

Michael starts laughing and the Dr. says, “Did you know she would do that?”

“Yes. I’m surprised she didn’t attempt to perform her own surgery. It’s kind of her thing. Self-sufficient at almost everything. She probably didn’t want anesthesia as you performed the procedure and never flinched?” Michael asks.

“You’re right and no she never flinched once.’ Dr. Jacobs says.

The next day Candice brings the boys to the hospital to get Michael and visit Maysa.

“Mom how are you feeling? The boys ask.

“I am so much better now. Thank God for the good medical staff at this hospital and thank God for the people who risked their lives for us. This could have been much worse. I’m just glad you boys are ok.” Maysa says.

“I’ll get with Smith and the guys to see what information they have discovered about what happened.” Michael says.

“Candice, thank you for taking care of the boys for us and when you get time could you set up some type of memorial for the officers that died and . . .” Maysa attempts to say while holding back tears.

“I’ve already setup an awards ceremony for the other officers to acknowledge them for bravery upon your return.” Candice says.

“Thank you Candice for all you do. You have no idea how much you mean to Michael and myself. Your dedication will not be forgotten.” Maysa says.

“Not a problem. I’m just glad you guys are ok. This is family and we take care of family.” Candice says.

“If you’re ok I’m going back to Birmingham for the afternoon but I will return by late evening.” Michael says.

“Go do what you have to do.” Maysa says.

“Smith are you ready to roll?” Michael asks.

“Let’s go find out who the genius was that knew everything about our plans right down to the route we were taking to Prattville.” Michael says.

The whole crew including Silk and Reaper are awaiting the orders on what they need to do.

“Michael, are you up to going after this guy?” Silk asks.

Michael looks around the room and says, “That woman laying in a hospital bed is my whole life. She is my beginning and my end. I will not rest until we have the person in custody who tried not only to take her away from me but my boys and you guys. So am I ready? Yes! Let’s find him and end it now.”

“We found his weapon and a note saying who he is and why he shot at your car and in particular Maysa.” Reaper says.

“He knows us?” Michael asks.

“Yes and it is a ghost from years gone by!” Reaper asks.

“So who is he and why does he want us dead?” Michael asks.

“His name is Gaffar Hafeez and he is the son of Nasser. He says he is seeking revenge for the death of his father and will do whatever it takes to get his revenge upon you and your family. He also says he has been tracking you for years awaiting the perfect opportunity to get you. This was only the beginning of the reign of terror he intends to unleash upon you. Be prepared to have nightmares for the rest of your life and your children’s lives. This can only end in either your death or mine. لله المجد” Silk says.

Xavier asks, “What is that last statement?”

Michael says, “That last part translation is: “To God be the Glory”

“Let’s get him before he gets any more of us. I truly don’t enjoy being hunted so we need to flip the script on this guy right now.” Jo-Jo says.

“Now I need to make sure we do not mention any of this to Maysa. We go do what we have to do without discussing this around her. I will make sure she goes to the house and Candice will reroute any and all calls away from her.” Michael says.

“Let’s go do what we do best: hunt ! ” Reaper says.

“We need to back track him from his last known residence to how he actually got here.”

Silk says.

“Obviously he was outside of the U.S. when he started tracking Maysa and you. He seems to know all about the family and every vacation you have taken. This could be eight to ten years in the making. That is a very long time to have planned all of this out which really gives him an advantage but we’ll apprehend him.” Smith says.

Michael is now trying to track this guy but without knowing anything about him he is a complete ghost.

Michael is now spending time with the boys and sitting in Maysa’s room. Michael is finding it very difficult to explain that someone wants to kill their mother.

“Dad, I know with her job everyone doesn’t always agree with mom but why would someone want to kill her and us as well?” Charles asks.

“Sometimes son people get very angry about actions your mom and the U.S. government takes and they seek some type of retribution. Sometimes, like in this situation they take it too far.” Michael says.

“Is mom going to be ok?” MJ asks.

“Your mom is a fighter and she will pull through this. You boys are her strength so keep praying for her sending all your love her way.” Michael says.

Michael contacts Smith and asks, “Any updates on Mr. Hafeez?”

“Nothing yet but we’re still following leads. He is like a ghost Michael the only thing he’s probably going to stick his head out for will be you and your family. Honestly, we could set a trap for him but we would need one of you as bait but I couldn’t do that and I don’t think any of our team would do it either. Michael, don’t let those words come out of your mouth that you’ll volunteer because the boys need their father more than ever right now. Please don’t waste your breath asking.” Smith says.

“I guess you guys are starting to know me just a little too well.” Michael says.

“We also know how much you love that woman and you’d do anything for her but YOU WILL NOT be doing this and get hurt.” Smith says.

Just as Smith and Michael are talking there is a disturbance two floors down. Someone has a drone and they are firing hundreds of rounds of ammunition into the west side of the hospital.

Dozens of people are either getting injured or killed.

Michael knows who it is but needs to get his hands on the drone to be able to get a read as to how far away the transmitter is and the radio frequency of the device. This way he can at least get a read on how close he has to be to operate the device.

Michael goes to the roof of the hospital and ties off several bricks to a bed sheet and drops it over the drone. The drone keeps firing until it is out of bullets and the sheet takes it to the ground. Michael takes the drone back to his lab and learns that it has a range of three hundred yards for his line of sight to fire the weapon. Calculating that with the line of sight factor Gaffar has to be at the Sterling Building. Jo-Jo gets security to review the tapes of people in and out of the building within the past two hours and there he is, Gaffar sending his drone over to the hospital to let everyone know he can reach out and touch anyone he so desires to touch even a sitting governor.

Michael has reprogramed the drone with a stronger signal to return to the original source the next time the signal comes on line.

Michael is sitting with Maysa and is looking at her and thinking about a future without her and says, “I promise you I will track down Gaffar and make him pay for your pain.”

Michael goes to the chapel and drifts off into a deep trance and locates Gaffar.

Michael gives Gaffar a swift kick on his way in and says, “So you decided after all this time that you want to exact your revenge on my wife when she gave your father every opportunity to walk away and play by rules everyone else was forced to play by. Now, she is hurt but that means now you will have me to deal with. If she were to die there will be nowhere on the planet that you will be able to hide from me and that I promise.”

Gaffar asks, “Who are you and why are you in my head?

“I just told you who I am and next time I will make a bigger entrance!” Michael says as he flexes and gives Gaffar another kick on his way out.

Michael realizes that Gaffar is hiding around a large body of water to make it more difficult to track him but Michael now has a lock on him and will pass the information on to Smith and Genesis who has her on score to settle with Gaffar after putting her in the hospital.

“Smith, I have looked into the skill set of Gaffar and he is very good at surviving in nature and for him he wouldn’t be too far from his prey so he is either near Lake Guntersville or Lake Tuscaloosa.” Michael says.

“We’ll get two teams and go check out both areas.” Smith says.

“Be careful. His drones are fast and carry some deadly weaponry. Let’s not forget that Gaffar might not be alone. Just like his father he probably has some very loyal followers who also believed in Nasser and will have no problem in laying down their lives for Nasser or his son. If they have been in the country for almost ten years they will have planned everything out.” Michael says.

“Speaking of which. If I can get you a drone can you outfit it with some weapons so both teams have some aerial support while they track Gaffar?” Smith asks.

“I can probably connect a few toys to whatever you bring me. What exactly would you like attached?” Michael asks

“Lasers, grenade launcher and possibly a machine gun.” Smith says.

“Give me a couple of days and I’ll have it ready for you.” Michael says.

Michael prepares the other drone and both teams now have aerial support in case of an attack but Michael has set his drones up with a software patch that send his drones into “dog fight” mode and they will aggressively seek and attack all other drones that don’t have an embedded signal indicating it is a friendly drone.

Smith is leading one team and Reaper and Silk are leading the other team.

“Smith have you seen anything yet?” Reaper asks.

“No. It is beautiful out here but this is just a little too quiet for me. It is almost like they know we’re here and looking for them.” Smith says.

“Michael has an infrared switch on the drone remote. Let’s try switching to it for some different results.” Silk says.

“Michael thinks of everything on the toys he invents or modifies.” Reaper says.

“Speaking of which I just had a monitor to go off indicating warm bodies nearby and potential other drones one hundred yards to our west at Lake Guntersville.” Smith says.

“Check it out and let us know so we can start heading in that direction.” Silk says.

“I think you’d better start this way. The controller just went red and we’re going into full attack mode.” Smith says.

“Well don’t wait on us. We’ll be there but it’s going to take us a while to get there. We’ll send the drone ahead to help you guys.” Silk says.

“We’ll send you the coordinates.” Smith says.

“Thanks, we just received the coordinates and it is on its way. We’ll get there as quickly as we can.” Silk says.

Gaffar has two drones doing advance scouting for Smith and his crew. Jo-Jo has a plan to knock out the drones.

“Smith, I’m going to circle and flank the drones as they come this way. I’ll get one if not both of them.” Jo-Jo says.

“Don’t do anything stupid Jo-Jo. Go for the sure shot and don’t go all cowboy on me trying to out shoot a drone.” Smith says.

“If you and the guys keep their attention I’ll do what I need to do.” Jo-Jo says.

The guys spread out and start shooting, drawing attention to themselves while Jo-Jo takes position behind a metal wall.

“I’m in position Smith and I’m going for my shot!” Jo-Jo says.

“Take them out Jo-Jo!” Smith says.

Jo-Jo fires and gets the first one and then she rolls to her right, reloads and fires at the second drone and gets it too.

“Good shooting Jo-Jo!” Smith says.

Jo-Jo doesn’t respond.

“Jo-Jo! Respond!” Smith says.

Everyone runs towards where Jo-Jo was taking her shot and she is laying on the ground motionless.

“Smith is she ok?” Xavier asks frantically.

“It is appears as though she was grazed by a bullet and is unconscious.” Smith says.

“I’ll need someone to stay with Jo-Jo and . . .” Smith was attempting to say.

“Smith, get off of my hand and help me up.” Jo-Jo says.

“Are you ok?” Xavier asks

“I’m fine. Just help me to get up high and I’ll cover you bunch of losers while you go kick their sorry butts.” Jo-Jo says.

“Are you sure?” Smith asks.

“I’ve got this. Just go get Gaffar and let’s wrap this up. I’ve got a splitting headache.” Jo-Jo says.

The team ~~is~~ slowly make their way towards an apparent camp sight. Genesis looks up and sees

the second drone has arrived and the local police arrive about the same time.

“Smith link in the second drone and let’s go end this before anyone else gets hurt.” Genesis says.

“It is linked and I’m sending both of them in and they are hunting for the original signal that Gaffar was using.” Smith says.

A couple of the local officers have been hit and their cars have been destroyed by missile strikes.

“What’s taking that signal so long to lock?” Smith asks.

“Gaffar must be trying to override the controls from his end and can’t figure out what the problem is. He is probably getting very frustrated about now.” Genesis says.

“I’m getting a little frustrated myself waiting on the signal to lock. Make sure the power is at full strength and try it again.” Smith says.

“We have signal lock Smith.” Genesis says.

“Fire !!” Smith says.

The drones unload with everything they have and afterwards find no signs of life. They find the remains of Gaffar and call Michael to inform him of the news.

“Are you sure he is gone?” Michael asks.

“Yes, we’re sure. He was sitting on several other drones but hadn’t completed setting them up. It appears as though he was preparing for an all-out assault at some point. We’re lucky we got to him.” Xavier says.

About this time Silk and the rest of the team arrive.

“Smith is everyone ok?” Reaper asks.

“Jo-Jo took a hit as she was taking out the drones but she is ok.” Smith says.

“Silk, will you please contact the local police and the FBI of what has happened. They will want a full report as to the whats and whys of this situation.” Smith says.

“Do we have any updates on Maysa’s condition?” Xavier asks.

“She’s still in intensive care but she’s a fighter.” Michael says as he steps out of Maysa’s room.

Just as Michael is walking out of Maysa’s room a disturbance occurs at the nurse’s desk and everyone heads in that direction including the security and Michael. A nurse enters Maysa’s room and is putting a pillow over her head. Michael suddenly stops walking and realizes something is going on in Maysa’s room. The nurse is attempting to smother Maysa and Michael leaps into action. He jumps on top of the nurse and throws her across the room into a wall. The nurse then pulls out a knife and Michael gets a metal tray and he uses it as a shield. Michael grabs a scalpel and begins to cut the nurse on her arms, legs and any spot that he can reach. He finally uses the pan as a weapon and hits the nurse in the throat and then finally hits the nurse on the head knocking off his wig. The police officer finally makes it back to Maysa’s room and finds Michael standing over her attacker.

“Sorry, Prof. Green. Are you and the governor ok?” The officer asks.

Out of breath Michael says, “We’re ok. Put the cuffs on this guy and get him out of here.”

With that being said Maysa wakes up and looks at Michael and says, “Are you playing my hero again?”

“Nah, I’m just protecting my queen and my heart as any good husband would do.” Michael says.

“No, Governor Green. This man is as tough as they come and this poor guy probably never wants to see your husband again.” The officer says.

“My hero. What would I do without you?” Maysa says.

“Hopefully you’ll never have to find out.” Michael says.

The doctor comes in and checks Maysa out after everything settles down and she is doing great now that she has awakened.

“Maysa we’ll keep you here another couple of days and then we’ll release you to go home to bed rest and hopefully a vacation if that can be arranged,” the doctor says.

“Thank you Doctor,” Maysa says.

“Well where would you like to go for a vacation Maysa? You name the place and we’re there.” Michael says.

“I’ve never been to the Cayman Islands. Let’s go there.” Maysa says.

Maysa and Michael set everything up to take well deserved vacation.

“This place is beautiful. I could learn to like a place like this to live out my life.” Maysa says.

“It is a little piece of heaven isn’t it but only with the right person by your side.”

“All I need to complete me is Michael Alessandro Green.”

Maysa and Michael go back to their room and make love all afternoon and then head out for an evening of dining and dancing. They are sitting at their table when someone sends over a bottle of Cristal Champagne. Michael stops the waiter and asks, “Who sent this over to us?”

“It was a red-haired young lady sitting at the end of the bar but it appears she is gone but she did leave you a note that is attached to bottle.” The waiter says.

Maysa reads the card and it says, “So glad you guys survived all of the carnage and finally get a chance to relax. Learn to enjoy each day because tomorrow is not guaranteed. Signed Igodda.”

Michael and Maysa laugh and Michael says, “You know she’s right. She may be a criminal, but she’s right. We need to start doing something every weekend when we return.”

“Learning a lesson from a criminal sounds very weird but I agree. Let’s go for a walk on the beach.”

As Maysa and Michael are checking out from their hotel the front desk informs them that their total bill has been paid in full with a note that reads, “Thank you for opening my eyes and setting me free.”

“Say what you want about her but she does have a flair about her.” Michael says.

“That she does. That she does.” Maysa says.