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# Drone

By Paul A. Birkett

What time did you get  
in last night?  
Late.  
You were snoring.  
Hmm.  
I don't snore.  
You do when you're stressed.  
He goes back to school today.  
They'll catch who did it.  
He could have been killed.  
Probably some stoned kids  
being stupid with daddy's gun.  
Looks good to me.  
It's tragic.  
I don't know when that happened.  
Oh well.  
Hey.  
Don't worry.  
I'll talk to him today.  
I wish he'd talk to me.  
He's been so quiet.  
Teenagers don't talk  
to their parents.  
They have a code of silence.  
He'll be fine.  
Last call  
for flight 306...  
Hey bud, you awake  
in there?  
Funny.  
Funny, dad.  
Hey, uh... so, is gramps  
gonna have a open casket?  
Closed casket.  
Why don't we just roast him?  
Oh, that's lovely.  
It's called cremation.  
And no, he's going to be buried  
next to your grandmother.  
I think that gramps would  
like to have a viking funeral.  
Viking?  
Yeah.  
I mean, he loved that stuff.

Like, you just, like,  
put him on his boat and...  
And light it on fire and,  
you know,  
send it out into the ocean.  
Hey, there's an idea.  
That's one way to get rid of  
your boat.  
Hey, drive him to school today?  
I was planning on it.  
Love you.  
Love you too.  
You working late?  
I hope not.  
You need to start thinking  
about that eulogy.  
I know, I will.  
I'm ready when you are.  
Oh, shit.  
Dad, it- it doesn't matter,  
really.  
Dad, come on.  
Alright.  
I have an idea.  
What if I kept the boat?  
Yeah, why not?  
You live in the boat and I use  
your bedroom as  
my second office.  
- Fine with me.  
I'm joking.  
Come on, we're gonna be late.  
You ok?  
Yeah.  
See you later.  
Hey, uh...  
Anytime you wanna talk,  
we're here for you.  
Ok, bud?  
Yeah, I know.  
Thanks.  
Thanks, dad.  
See ya later-  
sir, let's see

some identification.  
Badger, tower one.  
We have confirmation target  
has left the nest.  
Roger that, tower one.  
We're ten clicks away.  
Badger, target has picked up  
the package.  
Wait a sec.  
Shit.  
Tower one, badger,  
we lost the link.  
Badger. Tower one, abort?  
Negative, tower one.  
Third time this month.  
Every time I'm back...  
Re-acquiring a link.  
It's gonna be tight.  
Tower one, badger,  
we're back up.  
Target  
traveling north towards  
the main straightaway.  
Speed, altitude,  
heading all good.  
Targeting.  
Target locked and we are  
on the straightaway.  
Tower one, badger,  
are we clear to fire?  
Badger,  
tower one, Roger that.  
You are clear to fire.  
Take the shot.  
Three, two, one.  
Rifle.  
Impact in ten seconds.  
Holding target.  
Five, four, three, two...  
Splat.  
Tower one, badger,  
partial hit on target.  
Confirming kill.  
Wait, I think- I think

i see movement.  
Wow, would you look at that.  
That's one tough dune coon.  
Tower one, badger,  
kill is not confirmed.  
Repeat, kill is not confirmed.  
Permission to fire  
second hellfire. Over.  
Affirmative, badger.  
10-4.  
Still locked.  
Three, two, one.  
Rifle.  
Are you gonna be allowed out  
of the house this weekend?  
I'm busy with the funeral.  
Oh, Christ.  
I'm sorry, I forgot.  
It's ok.  
Have you ever written  
a eulogy?  
Yeah, actually I have.  
For my uncle stu's funeral.  
It did not go well.  
Why, what happened?  
I don't- just- ok.  
He was kind of a miserable guy  
and, you know, he took it out  
on his wife and his kids  
and everybody,  
including me, so I said fuck it,  
I just got up there  
and told it like it was.  
It was fucking hilarious.  
So...  
Were you born an asshole,  
Gary?  
Quite possibly, yeah.  
Look, you're gonna be fine.  
Your dad was a stand up guy.  
Yeah, but how do you condense  
a man's entire life  
into five minutes? Huh?  
There's probably an app

for that, right?  
You, like, download a template,  
put in his name  
and then boom, it writes it  
for you?  
Might even give the speech  
for you, huh?  
Great, thanks.  
I don't know, ask Ellen.  
Women are good at  
this kind of shit.  
She's doing too much already.  
Well, don't ask a guy.  
You know?  
We- we bury that shit for,  
like, 20 years  
and then deal with it  
in therapy later.  
- Guess what.  
- What?  
Hey.  
We're opening a new office,  
right on Campbell street.  
Really?  
Yeah, right next to the college.  
Think about how good our  
lunch dates would be then.  
Yeah, I think our...  
Our lunch dates are working  
pretty good right now.  
I've been thinking.  
What?  
How about a weekend away?  
It can be a work thing. Right?  
Like a conference or a workshop.  
Whatever you want.  
I don't know.  
What do you mean,  
you don't know?  
I don't know.  
Either we have something  
or we don't.  
Of course we do, Ted,  
but a weekend away

is a whole...

Wake up next to me, Ellen.

Spend an entire day with me.

I thought we agreed no pressure.

Right?

I mean... that was sort  
of the deal.

Yeah, that was the deal.

That was also three months ago.

Ted...

Ted.

Ted!

Hey, Ted!

You were very clear.

Come on, please.

Ted, come on.

Please, don't be mad.

Promise me you'll think  
about it.

I'll think about it.

I promise.

State department

spokesperson Daniel winters

said this in last night's  
emergency press conference:

"Due to the latest release  
of hacked NSA cables,  
substantial damage  
has been done.

We believe that these government  
personnel have been put

at potential risk

because their names have  
been compromised

in this release.

We will find those responsible  
and they will be dealt

with accordingly."

In international news,

the us launched air strikes

against an Isis stronghold...

Oh, oh...

Woah!

Don't hit the slide, guys.

Oh, here we go.  
Remember my rule,  
no hitting the bench.  
Let's go!  
Ok.  
I got it, I got it.  
There you go.  
Alright yeah-  
throw strong.  
Come on, son.  
Yeah, alright.  
Let's do this.  
I haven't seen you around  
here before.  
I'm... I'm visiting.  
Visiting, huh?  
Yes.  
So, you waiting for someone,  
or...?  
Yes.  
You're meeting them here?  
No, I'm just enjoying  
the sunshine.  
It's a lovely day.  
Hey, come on,  
remember what I said?  
Catch it with your hand.  
Geez. I tell ya.  
It's a park for kids, mister.  
I like it here.  
I like to watch  
the children playing  
with their mothers and fathers.  
Right.  
News flash, buddy.  
In this country  
we don't like strangers  
watching our kids.  
Especially strangers like you.  
So why don't you get lost?  
Why don't you go to a mosque and  
read that little book of yours?  
I meant no offense.  
Well, I'm offended. Ok?



So beat it.  
Sorry if I ruined your day.  
Any time now.  
"Confirm visual, I repeat,  
confirm visual.  
Hey.  
You ok?  
Yeah.  
I thought you were gonna  
be here earlier.  
Yeah, traffic was a bitch.  
You uh... can have  
the dresser.  
Catch.  
How's the eulogy coming?  
Harder than I thought.  
You want me to write it?  
No.  
No, I said I would and I will.  
He dropped bombs on Hitler.  
Yet he died barely able  
to hold a crayon.  
I'm not ending up in  
a place like this.  
There's no guarantees in life,  
big brother.  
Hey, if I end up talking  
to the walls, you shoot me.  
I mean it.  
Hey, did you see this?  
Charlie gave it to me.  
He was saying how Shane would  
visit a couple times a week.  
You raised a good kid.  
Huh.  
I'm surprised he found the time.  
You didn't know he visited pops?  
Sure, I knew.  
I just didn't think he visited  
that often.  
You sure didn't.  
Hey.  
Neither did you.  
Yeah.

Well, I guess we both dropped  
the ball there.  
Listen, I know we don't talk  
a lot,  
but I just want you to know that  
I'm here for you.  
And I'm here for you.  
That's what dad  
would have wanted.  
Come on, give your  
little brother a hug.  
Come on.  
Come here.  
What are we gonna do  
with all this stuff?  
I'll take care of it.  
You sure?  
Yeah, I'm sure.  
Yeah.  
- Hey.  
Yeah?  
Hey, dad.  
How was school?  
It was ok.  
Any updates?  
Nope.  
What game are you playing?  
Um, bullet catcher iv.  
I uh, I saw your uncle today-  
dad, uh, do you mind?  
I'm online here  
with a couple players.  
Sure.  
What?  
I... nothing.  
Shit.  
Can I help you?  
I said, can I help you?  
I was, uh, I was passing by  
and I saw the sign.  
Oh yeah?  
I'm sorry, I didn't mean  
to intrude.  
Are you really interested?

Yes.

I am interested.

I... I put an ad online,  
must have been a month ago.

To be honest, I forgot the sign  
was still there.

Yes, I uh, I read  
the ad actually.

Great.

Want a closer look?

Please.

"Amazing...

Grace.

Grace.

Grace.

"Amazing grace".

Are you a sailor that keeps  
the name of the boat?

Amazing grace is a perfect name.

If I buy this I will  
re-paint it.

May I ask why you're selling it?

When my father couldn't  
manage it on his own anymore  
he gave it to me.

He's a generous man.

He was.

He passed away recently.

The cabin is in good shape.

There's beautiful mahogany  
wood down below.

She's much faster  
than you would expect.

So uh, one day you just decided  
to jump into the deep end?

The deep end?

Yeah, looking at buying a boat  
like this, you know?

Out of- out of the blue?

It was a boat from the blue,  
yes.

Well, uh, just so you know

I'm asking 16-  
16,000

\$16,000?

Yes, \$16,000.

Are you firm on that price?

What do you have in mind?

Perhaps we can sit down

and discuss a price

that works for both of us?

Yeah, why not?

I'm Neil wiston, by the way.

Imir.

Shah.

Beth, Ted's been calling

every 20 minutes, I don't

know what to do.

A weekend away?

We're talking serious risk.

Right.

I know, but I think I'll lose

him if I don't go.

And that doesn't set off

warning bells?

Ok, I got it.

You don't think I should go.

Honey, listen to me.

Right now you and Ted

have a thing.

If you go away with him,

it's not a thing anymore.

It's a different thing.

Don't go down that road

unless you're absolutely sure.

Are you there?

Yeah.

Ellen, are you ok?

Hey!

Hey!

Come here!

Get back here!

You get back here!

You little fuckers!

Nooo!

Hey!

Oh my god.

Beer?

Thank you.

I wasn't sure if uh, alcohol  
was allowed.

Haram.

Haram, right.

And it's been a long time  
since I was in a mosque.

Oh, so you're not a-  
you're not a practicing-  
uh, not a practicing one, no.

Ah.

This must be your son.

That's him. That's Shane.

How old?

16. Smart kid.

Takes after his dad.

May I ask what you do  
for a living?

I'm in it.

Um, computers.

Jesus Christ, my laptop!

Shit.

I hope this wasn't my doing.

No, no.

I'm uh, trying to write  
my father's eulogy.

It's driving me crazy.

Were you and your father close?

Yeah, I like to think so.

I need a good opening.

Once I get that, then  
the rest will follow.

Maybe you should start  
with a childhood memory.

Speak to who

your father was,

not what he accomplished  
in his life.

Oh, I got plenty of  
sailing stories.

My brother Dave and I spent  
every weekend on the boat  
when we were kids.

There. You've got your opening.

May I make another suggestion?

Sure.

In my humble opinion,  
allow the story of your father  
to have true meaning.

True meaning?

I was taught the dead live on  
in three ways.

Through their good deeds,  
through the charity other  
people give in their name  
and, most important,  
through the knowledge they  
leave behind in this world  
that benefits others.

Wow, that's beautiful.

Thank you.

I hope I was helpful.

Yeah, you were.

My wife, I uh, I gotta give her  
a hand.

Do you mind?

Of course.

What happened?

Baseball.

Kids.

Jesus.

- I know.

You ok?

Yeah, I'm fine.

You should have called me.

I'm fine, really.

Hey.

Hello.

I'm imir shah.

Um, you must be Shane.

Yeah.

Um... my dad around, or...?

Yes, um, he's outside.

Greeting your mother.

I'm here to talk about  
buying the boat.

That was my granddad's boat.

I know.

You sure you wanna buy it?  
You don't think I should?  
Well, I don't know, I mean,  
it's just an old boat.  
Hope it doesn't have termites.  
Hello.  
Hi.  
Ellen, Mr. shah.  
Mr. shah, I hear you're  
interested in the boat.  
I am. Please, call me imir.  
It's nice to meet you, imir.  
-Pleasure.  
I'm just gonna put these down  
and grab a drink.  
Would you like something?  
-No, thank you.  
He already has a beer.  
I also have real masala  
chai tea, if you'd rather.  
That sounds lovely,  
thank you, Ellen.  
Great. Sure.  
Do you need a hand?  
No, I'm fine. Thank you.  
You really do have  
a beautiful home.  
Thank you.  
Yeah, we're uh,  
we're working on it.  
You're coming home from work,  
is that right?  
Yeah.  
She teaches at the uh,  
community college.  
What do you teach?  
I teach, um, comparative  
cultures.  
You're an anthropology teacher.  
Ethnology, actually.  
You must have read Levi Strauss.  
You know his work?  
I was under the impression  
his ideas were central

to ethnological methodology.  
Well, in structuralism, yeah.  
A bit out of fashion these days.  
Why, are you an-  
anthropologist?  
Unfortunately, no.  
I'm a computer engineer.  
My father threatened  
to pull me out of Oxford  
if I switched disciplines.  
Oxford?  
God, I'd love to study  
at Oxford.  
It's not nearly as glamorous  
as the brochures and films  
make it seem.  
We should probably get back  
to the business at hand.  
Um, I'll take it.  
That boat.  
I accept your price.  
Are you serious?  
Yes.  
What was the price?  
Sixteen.  
Great. Great.  
I uh, don't want to change  
your mind,  
but I thought we were  
gonna negotiate.  
Well, you seem like  
honest people.  
I'm sure what you're asking  
is a fair market price.  
Thank you.  
That's nice.  
That's nice, yeah.  
Cheers.  
Cheers.  
Thank you.  
I hope you enjoy it.  
This tea would not be  
out of place  
at a cafe in Karachi, Ellen.



It tastes like home.  
That's sweet of you.  
I'm glad you're enjoying it.  
Imir's been helping me write  
dad's eulogy.  
Really?  
I'm surprised he mentioned it  
to you.  
Hey, I was surprised, too.  
What can I say?  
Imir enlightened me.  
What was it you said?  
Start with a childhood memory?  
Something that speaks  
to who dad was,  
not what he accomplished  
in life.  
There's my opening.  
A sailing story.  
But it's gonna have  
a life lesson.  
Something dad taught me.  
Ok. I got an idea.  
Why don't you stay for supper?  
Honey, I'm sure-  
we can talk some more.  
-No.  
I'm sure he's got other plans.  
As it happens, I don't.  
I would love to share a meal  
with you.  
Great. Great.  
Yeah.  
We'll celebrate  
the sale of the boat.  
I'll fire up the Barbie.  
What do you want? Steak?  
Um, actually I don't eat meat.  
What else do we have?  
Salmon? Do you like salmon?  
I do, yes. Thank you.  
Ellen?  
-I'll have salmon, too.  
And if you're doing a steak,

do one for Shane.  
Surf and turf it is.  
Pearly whites.  
A lot of money in braces.  
Hey, mom.  
Oh, hey honey. This is Mr. shah.  
He's buying our boat.  
Yeah, yeah.  
We met earlier.  
Hey, what time's dinner?  
It'll be ready in about  
a half hour.  
Cool. I'm just gonna go out  
for a bit, so...  
Ok.  
That's Shane.  
He doesn't seem very happy,  
does he?  
Oh, I don't know.  
I think-  
he has a face my teenaged  
daughter would sometimes make.  
Right, well...  
Teenagers, right?  
I mean, his grandfather  
just died,  
so that's probably part of it.  
Oh, of course. I'm sorry.  
No, it's...  
Do you mind if I use  
the loo to wash my hands?  
Oh, god, yeah sure, but the  
one down here doesn't work,  
of course. You'll have to go  
upstairs.  
It's just down the hall.  
Thank you.  
What's this?  
David gave it to me.  
Did you know Shane was visiting  
dad twice a week?  
No.  
He didn't say anything.  
I'll see you in Valhalla,

gramps!  
Where's Shane?  
I don't know.  
He said he wanted to go out  
for a little bit.  
I'm gonna put a tracking device  
on that kid.  
Can't you track him  
with GPS?  
I hear a lot of American parents  
are doing this.  
Yeah, I was actually joking.  
But yeah, I do know  
some parents  
have this new tracking app.  
Paranoid parents,  
which we're not.  
Don't give him any ideas,  
please.  
So where... where exactly  
are you from, imir?  
Karachi.  
Mmm. The city of lights.  
How long have you been  
in the states?  
I just arrived.  
I'm starting a new contract.  
Oh yeah? What do you do?  
Systems integration.  
I'm a programmer.  
Listen, I uh, I don't wanna  
change the subject,  
but maybe we could discuss how  
you plan to pay for the boat.  
I- I can... arrange a bank  
transfer tomorrow  
if that's alright.  
I don't see why not.  
Yeah. Perfect.  
Hey, bud. Glad you could  
make it.  
Sorry, dad.  
Hey, actually is it ok if I just  
eat in my room?

No, that's rude. Sit down.  
Neil.  
Growing boys eat like  
their limbs are empty, hmm?  
What's the American term  
for it? Chow down?  
Yeah.  
It's a... military expression.  
Hmm.  
For eating.  
It's work.  
Excuse me.  
Yeah?  
Bad timing?  
My steak's getting cold.  
What do you want?  
Play nice.  
I'm doing you a favour, here.  
Security briefing at 07:00  
tomorrow, ok?  
Attendance is mandatory.  
Security?  
Why? What's up?  
It's the leak.  
Head office is flipping the fuck  
out over the gun sight videos.  
Some Geneva convention bullshit  
about non-military  
combat missions.  
How does that affect  
the program?  
Because if the press finds out  
we're contractors  
they're gonna shut us down.  
It wouldn't be the worst thing  
in the world.  
Just... I'll see you tomorrow,  
ok?  
Yeah.  
Sorry about that.  
Was that Gary?  
Yeah.  
What'd he want?  
One of the servers is down

so I'm in early tomorrow.  
What a shock.  
Honestly, if we made time  
and a half for all the hours  
he works overtime  
we'd be rich.  
It's 9-5 one day, it's graveyard  
shift the next.  
It's completely crazy.  
Can I be excused now?  
You may.  
How about I get us some dessert?  
Some cheesecake, huh?  
I've never had American  
cheesecake.  
I hear it doesn't even taste  
like cheese.  
Hey, Shane.  
Go help your mom  
with the dishes.  
Are we saving this for anything?  
We're gonna toast the sale  
of the boat.  
Perhaps we should include  
your grandfather in the toast.  
Yeah, I like that idea.  
You have a big heart, imir.  
If it wasn't for dad,  
we wouldn't be standing here,  
would we?  
I suppose not.  
Pop grove. 2012.  
That was a good year.  
First and last time I won  
my fantasy six football pool.  
In 2012 I had been working  
abroad for two years.  
I hadn't seen my family  
in all that time.  
That's tough.  
It was.  
We would video chat  
but it wasn't the same.  
I missed this. Family meals.

Nine hacks of classified files,  
four attacks on NSA firewalls.  
We should have picked him up  
at the Seattle airport.  
It's not my call.  
Rover, this is canary.  
We have a match  
in your vicinity.  
Hey, stop here.  
The house belongs to  
a private contractor.  
He works for us.  
Are you kidding me?  
A toast to new friends.  
To fair weather sailing  
on the water and off.  
Fair weather sailing?  
Hey, don't interrupt.  
I'm just getting started.  
He is not famous for his toasts.  
-Yeah, no kidding.  
Watch out.  
To everyone's health.  
Including financially.  
And lastly, to my father.  
For as long as I can remember  
he loved the sea.  
And he loved that boat.  
Imir, we're passing on a piece  
of wiston family history to you,  
and I know we've only just met  
but I think my dad  
would approve.  
Because you're a good man.  
Thank you. I am honoured.  
Cheers.  
Cheers.  
Cheers, everyone.  
Cheers.  
Why don't you give me  
your plate.  
So imir, it must be so hard  
to be away from home, huh?  
When do you get to see

your family again?

Soon.

The last time I shared  
a family meal,  
my daughter was about your age.  
Nazarene.

She was having some trouble  
in school.

See, before we moved to Karachi  
she had never been  
in a co-ed school.

She had never been  
around boys her own age.

And the other girls knew this,  
and they would tease  
her and shame her.

-My god.

I tried to talk to her  
but nothing I said made  
any difference.

I felt like I was helpless.  
Like I had failed as a father.  
I think- I think all parents  
feel that from time to time.  
Yeah. Perhaps.

A few days later they went  
to miranshah  
to visit with some relatives.  
I couldn't go, I had to stay  
in the city for work.  
Miranshah is in waziristan,  
right?

On the Afghan border  
where the Taliban are?

Among other things.

But yes, the Pakistani Taliban.

Hmm.

So there's two different types  
of Taliban?

It's complicated.

It is complicated, isn't it?

Yeah. Yeah, it is.

We want the world to be  
black and white.

Good guys, bad guys.  
So often in the real world  
that's not the case.  
You see, uh, waziristan  
is a tribal area.  
Very conservative,  
very religious.  
They treat their women  
like cattle.  
I'm sorry, have you been there?  
Can't say that I have, no.  
But I was in New York  
a week after 9/11.  
Seemed pretty  
black and white to me.  
Dad, can I have another  
glass of wine please?  
Sure.  
-I don't think it's a good idea.  
No, it's a celebration, Ellen.  
Come on.  
My wife is very well-respected  
in my family and my community  
and we built a very happy  
life together.  
Yeah, of course.  
Of course.  
What's her name?  
Fatima.  
It's beautiful.  
She was.  
There's no beauty in death.  
I'm so sorry.  
Wherever she is,  
she's with nazarene.  
They died together.  
Oh my god.  
What happened?  
It's uh- I don't think  
we should-  
no, it's alright.  
Um, they were struck  
by a missile.  
That's... awful.



It was awful.  
So, I mean... who fired-  
who fired the missile?  
A drone aircraft  
belonging to the CIA.  
That's horrible.  
Were they just...  
Just in the wrong place  
at the wrong time?  
Yeah, must have been.  
They weren't the only ones.  
I ask you, what is  
the right place?  
The men they are attempting  
to kill  
are constantly surrounded  
by civilians.  
So, I mean, did the CIA,  
did they think that  
the civilians were Isis?  
I don't care what  
they thought.  
Only what they did.  
Well, whatever...  
Whatever it was  
they were trying to do,  
the- the us government does  
not fire indiscriminately.  
Well, perhaps the CIA  
has a different definition  
of "indiscriminate".  
Well, yeah,  
I mean... mistakes happen.  
But i- I think it's easy to um,  
you know,  
take things out of context.  
I mean, sometimes we don't know  
the bigger picture.  
Perhaps the bigger picture  
is that,  
in the border regions,  
civilians have been living under  
the threat of these bomb strikes  
for a decade.

Children are afraid to go  
to school.

Public gatherings of any kind  
are avoided,  
all because America thinks  
it's above the law.

I- I don't understand.

Why is the us firing missiles  
into civilian territory?

I mean, that doesn't seem-  
very good question, Shane.  
Maybe Neil has the answer.

No, you know-

listen- hey, everyone,  
i don't think we should-  
let's just not get into  
this right now, please.

No, hey, it's just discussion.

Ok, but I think it's enough. I  
think it's enough.

Look. I can't- I can't even  
imagine how you feel,  
and we are all so sorry  
for your loss.

Yeah.

We are. Of course.

Of course we are.

Thank you, Ellen.

And I'm sorry, this is-  
it's not a topic of conversation  
for your dinner table.

I've been wholly inappropriate.

Today's just not a good day  
for me.

It's the anniversary  
of their deaths.

Ellen, why- why don't you go  
make some coffee?

Yeah. Ok.

Would you like some  
more tea?

Um, actually coffee  
sounds good.

Ok. Give me a hand?

Yeah.

Oh my god.

That was... are you ok?

Yeah, yeah. I'm fine.

He's obviously distraught  
and dad's obviously had  
too much to drink.

It's a bad combo.

Mom, I mean really, we're just  
talking, it's not a big deal.

No, you know what?

We're done talking.

Ok? We're gonna serve this  
coffee and call it a night.

Now get me the cream.

Fine.

So what happened  
to the CIA guy?

Happened?

Nothing ever happens  
to them.

He simply continued on  
with their work.

I gotta take this.

So, the military,  
they just allow that?

Talk to me.

Alright, I checked the logs.

We flew a sortie into miranshah.

One year ago today.

What was the target?

Some al-quaeda bomb-maker  
in the middle of town.

Hellfire strike outside  
his house, right?

You see, Shane, some drone  
pilots aren't even soldiers.

They don't come within 1,000  
kilometers of the battlefield.

They work in their  
secure cubicles,  
essentially playing  
a video game.

The only difference

is in this video game  
the victims are real.  
Do you remember  
any collateral damage?  
Possibly, but we didn't have  
boots on the ground  
so if there was a body count  
we couldn't verify it.  
They come home to their families  
after a long day of murder  
and put their children to bed.  
It's so easy to divorce  
what they do  
from real life consequences.  
I didn't know that.  
Some coffee?  
Thank you.  
Cream and sugar?  
No, it's fine like this.  
Ok.  
Could this information  
have come out in the leak?  
Wait, is that what  
you're worried about?  
Ellen finding out?  
No, not her.  
Ok, then who?  
Just answer the question,  
will ya?  
I don't know, maybe,  
but it's a stretch.  
Why? What- what's this about?  
Nothing.  
I'll call you in the morning.  
Listen, we should probably  
go over the spec on the boat  
and the registration.  
Can I see you in my office  
for a minute?  
I don't know what kind of game  
you think you're playing  
but I want you out of  
my house right now!  
Will you threaten with

physical violence if I refuse?  
Trust me, you do not want  
to go there.  
I must admit, you're not  
what I expected, Neil wiston.  
I'm calling the police.  
You won't do that.  
Oh yeah? Why not?  
Because of what I've got  
in my briefcase  
sitting in your kitchen.  
And this detonator.  
Do you know how much  
high explosive  
is in a hellfire missile, Neil?  
Almost 20 pounds.  
I googled it.  
Ah, damnit.  
Canary?  
Oh, shit.  
It's rover.  
Code red. I repeat: Code red.  
Target has a possible  
explosive device.  
In a few minutes it'll be  
exactly one year  
from the moment of  
my family's death.  
What do you want?  
In time.  
Give me your phone.  
Give it.  
Look.  
Look, your family is dead.  
I know, and I'm sorry.  
I really am.  
But I don't know what the hell  
you think that has to do with-  
you know exactly  
what this has to do with you.  
I told you!  
I write code for a living!  
Stop lying!  
Your government data breach,

Neil.

It opened up a back door  
to your drone program.  
To your flight logs  
and ultimately to where  
we're standing right now.  
So from now on you will tell  
the truth to me and to them.

Yeah, ok.

[Phone buzzes)

Mom?

Mom? You gonna get that?

Oh, good.

Everything all settled then?

Do they ever show you pictures  
of the innocents you kill, Neil?

I've got your things.

Are you a dutiful wife, Ellen?

Sorry? What?

Do you respect your husband?

My relationship with my husband  
is none of your business.

Now is the time to be honest.

Is there something you want  
to tell your husband?

Please-

Neil.

Your wife is seeing another man.

What- why are you saying this?

Because it's the truth.

Mom?

Neil... why are you doing this?

Why are you doing this?

Please...

What is this, you sick fuck!

I learned this from you.

I put you under

the same surveillance

you put my country under

with your satellites

and your drones.

So normalize.

Or shall I tell your wife

and your son who you really are?

Neil?

I don't work for lyker surveys

what are you talking about?

Actually, there is

no lyker surveys.

Not really, uh...

What do you mean?

It's just a cover.

A cover?

Are- are you an undercover cop?

No.

A criminal? What?

No, I'm not a criminal.

That's a matter of opinion.

I uh... I'm a- I'm a contractor  
for the CIA.

The CIA?

Yeah.

As in the central intelligence  
agency?

Look, I couldn't tell you  
the truth

because what I do is classified.

I'm your fucking wife!

Then we're all lying!

Tell me the truth!

Dad!

Dad, what do you do?

I told you, I fly uav's. Drones.

I'm- what would be classified  
about aerial mapping?

Please tell me it's just maps.

I've been part of a test program  
for contracted covert missions.

Oh my god.

The us air force uses uav's  
to target enemy movements.

Just like the military.

We do everything we can to  
minimize collateral damage.

No. No!

You do not get to reduce it  
to collateral damage!

They are people! With names!

Nazarene. Fatima.  
They have names.  
Ok, be careful.  
Careful.  
Ok Shane, let's go.  
Neil.  
Ellen. Ellen!  
No!  
Come here!  
Sit down!  
No!  
Sit down!  
We do what he says, ok?  
We do what he says.  
Is that a bomb?  
Is it?  
I'm so sorry that  
you're involved in this.  
Hey, Shane!  
Come here!  
Sit down!  
Sit down!  
Go. Answer it.  
You get the door.  
Go.  
Shh.  
It's going to be ok.  
What's up with all the shouting?  
Oh, parent-kid stuff.  
Shane's being a pain in the ass.  
What're you doing here?  
Well, you hung up on me  
so we were never able to finish  
our conversation.  
Oh. Listen, I uh...  
I'm sorry about that.  
It's just not a good time, Gary.  
I'm sorry. Ok?  
Oh, right.  
Well, I'm just trying to figure  
out what was so important  
about that particular mission.  
Forget about it.  
Forget about it?



Ok. Ok.

Uh... how- how long we been partners, now?

I don't know. Three years?

Yeah. Three years.

And I know when you're spooked.

And you're spooked, ok?

Look, when you called about the security briefing and the leak, i- I got to thinking,

I just got a little freaked out but it's all good now.

You got a little freaked out?

Yeah.

Gary, I swear, you're reading way too much into this.

Am I?

-Yes, you are.

Am I?

-Yes.

Ok.

Who's that?

Oh, our neighbour.

He saw Shane bust up Ellen's windshield with a baseball.

Yeah, I saw that.

Yeah, Shane was lying about it, so...

Acting like a little shit, huh?

Yeah, dumb shit.

Ok.

You're ok then, huh?

Yeah.

Ok.

Ok.

Alright. Well, why don't we have a little pow wow before the meeting in the morning.

Tomorrow.

Yeah, ok.

Oh, and uh, tell Shane to fly straight

or I'm gonna kick his ass.  
You hear that, Shane?  
Yeah, he heard it.  
Alright.  
Yeah, you got it.  
Have a good night.  
You are a painfully good liar,  
Neil.  
Are there any other secrets  
we should discuss?  
Dad, there's something that  
i need to tell you.  
Shane, you don't have  
to do this!  
You tell him nothing!  
Don't tell him anything!  
I was there, dad.  
When granddad died.  
He squeezed my hand and he  
hadn't done that in months.  
And then he looked at me  
and he knew me.  
And then... he stopped.  
He stopped breathing.  
I could have gotten a nurse.  
I didn't feel like that was  
what he wanted so I just-  
I left him there for them  
to find him.  
I guess I didn't tell you  
because I didn't want you  
to feel guilty for not being  
there.  
You should have been there,  
dad.  
You should have been there.  
That's a very good confession,  
Shane.  
But the guilty should  
never be spared.  
Visual ID confirmed.  
Have you ever felt real guilt,  
Neil?  
When you look at those

people below  
and you take their lives,  
do you feel anything?  
What do you want? Huh?  
Do you want a confession?  
Fine.  
Me and the guy who just left,  
we killed your family.  
Satisfied?  
Not at all.  
Come on. You want revenge,  
don't you?  
You want revenge.  
Come on, give me your best  
fucking shot.  
Take it out on me!  
But let them leave.  
Who said anything  
about revenge?  
Well, why else would  
you be here?  
Haven't you listened to anything  
I've said?  
I'm listening. I'm listening.  
Please tell us  
how we can help you.  
Tell us.  
I've lost everything.  
I'll never see my family again.  
There's nothing left  
for me here.  
You're upset, you're not  
thinking clearly.  
This- no, you don't want this.  
Please.  
I am thinking clearly.  
Please.  
Please, please, please.  
I'm thinking of how they were  
taken from me.  
I'll do anything you want.  
But please let them leave.  
I miss them so much.  
I miss them so much.

Look.

Please, imir, let them go.

Just- just let them leave.

I'll do anything you want,  
please.

Just let them leave.

Just let them go.

I'm sorry.

Now's the time, Neil.

No!

No target.

Shane!

No visual on detonator.

Hold positions.

Hey!

Get off me!

Now you... understand, Neil.

No.

You're not gonna die!

No!

No!

In the wake of  
the recent NSA data breach,  
private drone contractor  
Neil wiston has come forward  
with more information  
on the CIA test program  
that blurs the line between  
contractors and the military.

Ironically, as a private  
contractor,

Mr. wiston may be  
held responsible  
for any civilian casualties  
during these previously  
autonomous combat missions.

Some folks may call wiston  
a patriot

but I have no doubt he is  
a traitor to this country  
and will be charged  
with these crimes.

Serious damage has been done to  
programs of national security.

This is the danger of  
whistleblowers like Neil wiston.  
They make our nation  
vulnerable.