

# Habeas Corpus

by Pamela McCaughey (2002)

based on the series "UFO" (1969-71)

Based on "UFO" created by Gerry & Sylvia Anderson, and Reg Hill (1969-70)

and "Law & Order" created by Dick Wolf (1990-2002)

and "The X-Files" created by Chris Carter (1990-2002)

*With research from: A&E's and NBC's Law & Order web sites*

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*"In the criminal justice system, the people are represented by two separate yet equally important groups. The police who investigate crimes, and the District Attorneys who prosecute the offenders. These are their stories."*

## Chapter One

**June 12th, 1994**

Detective Lennie Briscoe leaned inside the back seat of the car and looked down at the standard issue NYPD body bag, "What have we got here, Norris?"

The Coroner's Officer pulled down the bag's zipper, "Pretty messy. Her whole chest cavity and abdomen are carved up. Looks like some organs were removed."

"Geez, now I know how a turkey feels at Thanksgiving...", Briscoe muttered.

"Hey, Lennie!" Briscoe's partner, Mike Logan, walked over, his dark hair ruffled in the early morning breeze, "They're taking the guy that was with her to Harlem Hospital."

"What kind of shape is he in?"

"Unconscious," Logan gestured to the men hauling the now zipped body bag out of the car's back seat, and noted the huge splashes of blood on the upholstery, "She cut up bad?"

"Gutted just like a trout."

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**Lieutenant Van Buren's office...**

"Any ideas on this one, gentlemen?" Anita Van Buren looked across her desk at Briscoe and Logan.

"Rogers says all the woman's thoracic organs were taken out - stomach, heart, lungs, pancreas, liver, etcetera," Logan replied, "The male vic's still unconscious - we're waiting for the hospital to call when we can talk to him. No ID on either of them. Jane Doe and John Doe."

"Who'd take somebody's organs?"

"Well, there is a black market trade in organs for transplant," Briscoe supplied, "Both bodies were found nude in the car - the man in the driver's seat, the woman in the back. He's pretty marked up too, but the doctors say he's intact. Nothing missing."

"This doesn't exactly sound like our usual garden variety twisto perp. Any chance the man found with her is our guy?"

"Anything is possible, he was covered in blood - we're waiting to find out from the lab if it's her blood. But, he's in such bad shape, I have a hard time right now pinning this on him,"

Logan commented, "Until we can ask him some questions, I think we're after a third party perp."

"Have you run their prints through the system?"

"Bupkes, as Donnie Cragen used to say, on both. No records - criminal or bonded. Got Profacci running their photos too."

"Was there anything else in the car?"

"We had it impounded and the boys from CSU are going over it with a fine-toothed comb. Lots of blood. No clothing, no wallets, not even anything in the glove compartment or the trunk. All kinds of mud and grass on the tires - wherever they came from, they didn't get that stuff in the city. We're getting the registration of the car run down as we speak," Briscoe took a sip of his coffee and grimaced - cold again.

Logan shifted in his chair, "There's a ton of prints inside and outside the car - it's gonna be fun trying to match anything up. We're thinking the car might have been a rental because of all the prints. A black sports model."

Van Buren sighed and shook her head, "I just don't see this as a black market operation. They don't leave bodies all over the place."

"Yeah, it looks like the male vic actually drove the car - his feet were on the pedals and his head was resting on the wheel. There was blood on the car keys, which were found in the ignition."

"They weren't exactly found in a whites-friendly neighbourhood," Logan offered, "and CSU thinks the car was there for a couple hours before anyone noticed it."

"Who called it in?"

"Couple of home boys out all night - they were probably gonna help themselves to whatever was there to take - till they saw the carved up body in the back. Scared them shitless. We tossed them - no wallets, credit cards or whatever on them that could be from the vics."

"M.E. fix a time of death for the female vic?"

"Wee hours of this morning. We'll get more info when Rogers' report is ready."

"Keep me in the loop on this one - the shit's sure to hit the fan upstairs," Van Buren waved them out.

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### **Office of the New York Coroner**

Rogers lifted the white sheet back. The body on the elevated steel dissecting table was that of a blonde, white female. Her chest was gaping open, "Whoever did this has a pretty technical knowledge of how to remove organs," Rogers pointed, "See this? Ribs were spread back to get the lungs and heart, just like transplant doctors do it. Only things left are her ovaries, Fallopian tubes, uterus and the large intestine."

Rogers turned to the counter behind her and pulled a series of large victim photos out, "Look at these marks all over her back and upper arms - they're not burns, but I don't know what caused them. And, the flesh around the thoracic cavity has been seared with something to keep it open. Here's another ugly detail - this was all done while the vic was still alive."

Briscoe closed his eyes for a moment and shook his head, "You mean vivisection?"

"Just like a lab rat."

Logan jumped in, "Well, if she was alive, that means her organs were still functioning. Maybe this is about organ transplants after all."

"I can't say for sure. All I know is our perp or perps knows something about organ removal surgery," Rogers pushed the photos back into the envelope and handed them to

Briscoe, "Keep these - I've got the originals. I'll have the full report on paper for you by tomorrow morning."

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### **Omega CompuDesign Headquarters - Manhattan**

"How long since we last heard from them?" General Ed Straker asked, a pinched look on his chiseled face.

"Just over ten hours. They checked in via Paul's secure cell-phone."

"Nothing since?"

"Not a word," explained Lew Waterman, former Skydiver submarine skipper, now a top officer in SHADO's sister organization, Omega, "I'd like to send out a team to investigate."

"Where were they headed?"

"Upstate. Some of our operatives were getting reports in the lake country about 'strange lights' and a couple of missing people. Paul and Glynnis went up to check it out."

Straker's brow furrowed, "I don't like it, Lew, but the regulation waiting period is twelve hours..."

"Have you got the telly on in here?" a young woman's head popped in the office door.

Waterman picked up the TV remote, "What is it?"

"Channel 5 - I think it's Colonel Foster!"

The television blared to life as Waterman flicked through the channels until he got to the one with the news broadcast, "...found earlier today in east Harlem. Officials with NYPD describe the female victim as having had her internal organs removed, and the male victim is still unconscious and currently in Harlem Hospital," a picture of Foster popped up on the screen, He was lying in a hospital bed, eyes closed, "Police are still looking for the identities of the victims. If anyone can identify this man, please call..."

Straker and Waterman stared dumbfounded at the wide screen TV, and then at each other, "Christ," Waterman's voice was hushed, "What the hell happened out there?"

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### **June 14th, 1994**

Omega was not all it seemed to be. To the casual observer, Omega CompuDesign was an up and coming firm specializing in a custom line of business and personal computers, software and other accessories. But, inside Omega's huge office complex was a big secret. A secret so provocative that billions were spent annually to keep that secret from the public.

Since the 1970's, Omega and its sister organization, SHADO, had been waging a war. Not a conventional war against another country or faction, utilizing conventional weapons. This was an invisible interstellar war - with SHADO and Omega pitting their people, hardware and resources against Earth's biggest threat - an alien race from another solar system. This unnamed alien enemy had targeted planet Earth as a world filled with all the precious natural resources they no longer enjoyed on their own planet. They were a dying civilization, and Earth was providing all they needed in large quantity - including human organs for transplant into their own sick bodies. Humanoid in form, but unable to breathe Earth's atmosphere, the aliens applied their considerably advanced technology to plundering what they could.

That SHADO and Omega had managed to keep a lid on this war, and hide it from public knowledge for over twenty years was a major coup. Financed by the "black budgets" of over 100 countries, and employing thousands of operatives, experts in every field of science, submariners, and the entire staff of a well-established base on the Moon, these twin bastions were all that stood to halt the aliens' total exploitation of planet Earth.

SHADO was the military arm of this dual organization, providing the foot soldiers in the war - under the sea in an intrepid fleet of subs; in the air as reconnaissance and fighter pilots; on land as investigators and operatives; and in space, as astronauts working to keep the aliens' ships from getting to Earth. SHADO stood for Supreme Headquarters Alien Defense Organization, and its GHQ was located in England.

Omega, the computer company, was a cover for the scientific and MIB branch. Its people were scientists and operatives working below the radar - shadowy figures well-versed in cover-ups, and often connected to secret governmental bodies in many nations. Their mandate was to provide the highest level of security world-wide, so SHADO could continue its covert operations against the aliens. New York City had been chosen as their headquarters back in the 1970's, partly because of the necessity of liaising with the United Nations, and partly because NYC was such a mammoth megacity that it was easier for a new company to get "lost" in the shuffle there. With vital shipping and air links, NYC was the kind of place people could come to and go from without attracting much attention. Omega had field offices world-wide, and enjoyed a global security net which would have made the Mossad, the KGB, or the CIA envious.

It was protecting this security that Straker and Waterman had in mind when they presented themselves at Briscoe and Logan's precinct, number 27, to identify Paul Foster.

"Thank you, gentlemen, for coming forward, about our John Doe," Lt. van Buren smiled at the Omega men, "We didn't intend for the details of this story to be leaked to the press, but we did want to ID your Mr. Foster."

"We understand he's still unconscious," Straker commented, lighting up one of his cigarillos, "Although the hospital told us he's in stable condition, physically."

"Yes. Once he's awake, my detectives will question him."

Straker smiled, "Actually, we were hoping to send Mr. Foster back to Great Britain for further treatment - at company expense, of course. I'm sure he's been through a terrible trauma, and his family is eager to get him home, too," he'd been lying for so many years that it came easy to him now.

"Not until he's been questioned."

"But, in his current condition, it could be weeks - perhaps months - before Mr. Foster is out of his coma. The expense of maintaining him in an American medical facility will be astronomical," Waterman explained, "He's a British citizen, holding a British passport. If he was transferred back to Britain, he'd be covered under his own government's Medicare program."

"So...what you're saying is that your company wants to send him back to the UK to avoid paying any more medical bills," van Buren smiled, pretending to take the bait Waterman had laid out for her.

"Precisely," Straker smiled, exhaling, blowing smoke rings.

"What about the woman who was found with him - dead?"

Waterman nodded, "We were just down to your morgue to identify her as well. Glynnis Baxter. She was one of our software engineers. It's shocking. Her family will be notified of course, and once her body is released, we'll be shipping it home for burial."

"Well, we're not quite ready to release the body."

"We were told by the M.E.'s office that the report was finished and we could have Ms. Baxter this week," Straker impatiently tapped the ashes off his cigarillo onto van Buren's office floor.

"That's not entirely accurate. We're planning to send the body to Quantico for further examination."

"Quantico? You're getting the FBI involved in this?" Waterman asked.

"There are a number of outstanding questions about the condition of the body that we want to have a second opinion on," Van Buren explained.

"You don't trust your own M.E.?" Straker's voice was sarcastic.

"This is an unusual case. We want to explore it fully before sending the body away to England for burial. You'll be notified when the body is finally available."

Briscoe and Logan entered van Buren's office, "These are the detectives handling the case - Lenny Briscoe and Mike Logan," there were handshakes all around.

"Ed Straker, President of Omega CompuDesign," the silver-haired man indicated his companion, "Lew Waterman, Vice-President in Charge of Production. Your Lieutenant tells us you're running into some problems on this case," Straker didn't see anything wrong with fishing for some extra information.

"The problem is that somebody gutted one of your employees and left the other for dead. And we don't think it happened here in NYC, even if they were found here," Briscoe replied.

"Oh, and where do you think it happened, Detective?" Straker's expression never changed.

"That's what we intend to find out," Logan told him, thinking Cold bastard !

The phone on van Buren's desk rang, "Yes?" there was a pause and then she hung up the receiver, "That was the hospital - Mr. Foster is awake now."

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### **June 14th, 1994, Harlem Hospital...**

Lennie managed to buttonhole the doctor before he hurried off to another case, "What can ya tell us about this guy, Doc?"

"Your man in there has been through quite a lot of trauma," he pulled some photos out of an envelope, "See these marks? I don't know what made 'em, but he sure as hell wasn't handled with kid gloves. Looks like some kind of burns, but not the usual kind. These were made with some sort of instrument."

Logan scanned the photos as Briscoe handled them over, one at a time, "Christ - what could make those kind of marks? A cattle prod maybe?"

"I've seen the marks those things leave - and I can tell you this scarring wasn't caused by any cattle prod made in the United States," the doctor replied.

"How's his mind?"

"The usual, he wants to know who he is, where he is. I told him you boys would be in to clear things up for him."

"Can we keep these photos? I'd like our M.E. to see them, and we may even send them on to Quantico," Lennie slid the pictures back into the envelope.

"Sure, those copies are yours - but if you ever find out what made those marks - let me know. Just too weird."

"And, Doc, we don't want this guy running off somewhere. He's our only link to this crime so far - so if his bosses come around here trying to get him released - don't let him go, eh?"

The doctor nodded, "He's not in any shape to go anywhere. These photos prove that."

Logan and Briscoe marched into the hospital room. Sitting up in the bed was a handsome man, with an uncertain smile for them, "Are you the police?" he asked eagerly.

Logan pulled out his NYPD badge and showed it to him, "I'm Detective Mike Logan, this

is my partner Lennie Briscoe. We came as soon as we could."

"Please, have a seat. We have a lot to discuss, officers," the voice had a definite British cadence.

"First of all, we found out who you are," Briscoe told him, "We ran a photo of you on local television and it seems you're someone special. Your boss came to see us and identified you as Paul Foster, an employee with Omega CompuDesign."

Both detectives saw the look of relief on the Brit's face, "Well...that feels better. Not knowing who you are or where you fit into things isn't a very comforting prospect. They haven't told me much here. I was hoping you could clear that up for me. I gather I'm to undergo some CAT scans and other tests before I can be released."

Briscoe exchanged grim looks with Logan before saying, "We'd like to ask you a few questions - they may help us to tell you more," he watched Foster nod his head, and continued, "What's the last thing you remember?"

They watched Foster lower his head and close his eyes. He was silent for a few moments, "Something about trees - being out in the woods, I think."

Logan's eyes widened - CSU had taken mud and grass samples off the car tires and said they'd been picked up out in the woods somewhere, "Can you picture the geographical location?"

"Not really. Just...a wooded area."

"Do you remember if you were with anybody?"

Foster shook his head, "No. I just recall seeing trees...like I was on the ground looking up at them...and the sky...I think it was at night...I saw the stars...What really happened? Can you tell me anything?"

"We found you and a woman, nude, in a dark sports model car two days ago. You were in the driver's seat, she was in the back seat - dead. Her name was Glynnis Baxter. Apparently you both went missing. Your boss, Ed Straker, ID'd you," Briscoe explained him.

Both Briscoe and Logan watched Foster's face as he digested Lennie's explanation, "My God," He whispered, "Who is Glynnis?"

"Your boss told us you and she worked for Omega. She was a software engineer...," Lennie tried to tweak Foster's memory about the dead victim again.

"I'm sorry...I just can't piece anything together right now...just the woods...trees...the stars...I didn't know there was anyone else...involved...how did she...how did she die?"

Briscoe looked at Logan, who took up the story, "Paul, she was murdered," he said quietly, "Somebody cut her open and took out her heart, her lungs, her liver...almost all her thoracic organs."

They saw Foster's eyes fill with tears, "Who could... who could do such a thing?" he asked them, obviously appalled.

"That's what we're trying to find out. Anything you can remember would help us to nail this perp."

Foster laid back on his pillows, tears streaming down his cheeks, "Oh, my God..."

\* \* \*

"Think he's our guy?" Briscoe asked Logan, as they exited the hospital together.

"If he is, he's one hell of an actor," Logan replied, throwing Lennie the car keys. They both got in their vehicle.

"Let's take those photos over to Rogers and see what she thinks. I'd like Liz Olivet to have a go at this guy. She might be able to tell if he's really an amnesiac, or just putting us off

with a good act."

\* \* \*

"Has he been charged with anything?" Dr. Olivet sat down facing van Buren in her office.

"No, but we thought maybe you'd be able to cut through the psychological crap and tell us if he's telling the truth about his memory loss," the Lieutenant told her.

Logan handed Olivet a cup of coffee, "Yeah, Doc, we're not the experts - he seems for real, but right now, he's all we have to go on. What if he's stringing us along? Whether he remembers it or not, he was the last person to see Glynnis Baxter alive, and only he knows what happened to them, and where."

"Memory loss due to severe trauma is real. After looking at your photos of the female victim, and your Mr. Foster, I'd say they've both been through something horrible. Just what happened to them is locked up inside his head right now. It may be something so horrible, that his mind refuses to access the memories, so it's blanked everything out, including easier to cope with details, like who he is and who he was with when it all happened," Olivet took a sip of the coffee and grimaced, "This is really bad coffee, y'know."

"Thanks, that's a step up from shitty," Briscoe grinned, "Blame it on Profacci - he made this pot. But, Doc, isn't there something you shrinks can do to get information out of people whose memories don't work right?"

"Are you referring to hypnosis?"

"Yeah. That hocus-pocus stuff with the swinging pocket watch and all."

Olivet smiled, "It's not quite that simple. Yes, hypnosis is sometimes used to unlock information from traumatized patients, but forcing them to relive a traumatic event may drive them deeper into psychosis. And, with all the research into false memories planted by doctors, the field has been muddied and the process has lost a lot of respect in the profession. You can't be certain of the results. And, whatever results you do get are not admissible in court, if memory serves me right. It's like a lie detector test - you can get answers, alright, but those answers can be tainted."

"If you don't even try, we're still at square one," Logan said, "I gotta tellya Doc, we wanna see this one solved. What kind of wacko would carve somebody up like that?"

Olivet paused before responding, "It takes time to wreak that much damage on a human body. Whoever did this must have had plenty of time on his hands. The fact the victim was still alive when it was done, well, that's pretty merciless. But, from the photos, it looks like your perp was planning to do the same thing to Paul Foster and just didn't get to it. Foster must have managed to get the victim into the car and drive back into the city - they must have escaped. But I can't imagine she was alive by that time. He must have carried her to the car."

"See, that's what's getting us - if something really bad was going down - why did he make the attempt to get a dead woman out of there? He had to know she was dead in that condition, right? And, we found them both nude."

"You said there was evidence on the car that they were originally out in the woods - maybe they were in the car for a romantic tryst and the perp came across them - or followed them. Maybe the murder itself happened in the car. If Foster made the attempt to get Ms. Baxter's body to safety, he must have cared about her."

"That's why we need to get something from this guy, Liz," van Buren insisted, "There are so many theories and ideas, that we can't get a fix on this at all."

"Well, I can't promise the results you think you want, but I will go and see him and do an assessment. Then you can decide if you want to try hypnosis."

\* \* \*

**June 15th, 1994, Omega CompuDesign's Manhattan office:**

"They're what?" Straker jumped up from his seat, "When?"

Waterman's expression was serious, "Within the hour. I just found out. They're sending one of their state-contracted psychiatrists in to see Paul in the hospital. My source tells me that they're not sure if he's really suffering from amnesia or not. And, the word hypnosis has been bandied about, too."

"Christ, that's all we need, to have some two-bit police shrink get a story of alien abduction out of Paul! We've got to get him out of that hospital!"

"I checked on that after I spoke with my source - the hospital isn't planning on letting Paul out right away. Not till the police are done with him. We might have to do an 'extraction' of our own," Waterman suggested.

"Who do you recommend?"

"Al Leslie is one of Omega's top alien experts - and he's also pretty handy at covert operations of this type. I'll get him to assemble a team."

"What can we do about keeping Glynnis Baxter's body from going to Quantico? The last thing we need is for the FBI and that nut ball agent Fox Mulder to get involved."

"Again, I'd say Al's your man. He can set up an intercept team to get the body back for us."

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**June 15th, 1994, Harlem Hospital...**

"Have you been having trouble sleeping?" Dr. Olivet was seated across from Paul Foster.

"They give me something at night. Otherwise, I don't think I could sleep. I keep having dreams...awful dreams...but I don't know if they're connected to whatever...happened..."

"Can you describe those dreams to me? What do you see?"

Foster frowned, "It's not so much what I see, as what I feel...I'm terrified...I want to escape...I want to get away from...something...but I don't know what..."

"Is there anyone else in your dream? Do you see any faces?"

"I don't know if they're faces so much as images...I can hear screaming...I don't know if it's me or someone else...and...there's this fear...this terrible mind-numbing horror...I try to scream and I can't get anything out...and there's pain...a lot of pain...more than I can stand..."

"Would you be willing to try hypnosis, to see if we could unlock some of the details? You have the right to refuse of course, but if you could remember anything, it might help the police track down whoever did this to you and Ms. Baxter."

Foster's eyes were stricken, as though he'd glimpsed hell, but couldn't remember it, "I want to co-operate with the police, I really do, but..."

Olivet smiled reassuringly, "I know. Part of you wants to know, part of you doesn't. That's normal for someone in your situation. If you decide you want to try this procedure, you can call me and I'll come back in," she got up and handed him her card, "My cell number is there too, so you can reach me any time."

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Foster turned Liz Olivet's card over and over in his fingers. He wanted to know what had happened... but part of him cringed at the very idea. And, his aversion to medical instruments and tests while in the hospital had been noted by his doctors. A phone had been installed at his bedside by the police "in case he could remember anything to help them." He looked at Olivet's card again and picked up the receiver...



## Chapter Two

**June 16th, 1994**

"How the hell did that happen?" Logan demanded, looking down at Foster's doctor.

"We honestly don't know. Someone came to the nurses' station and told them Foster was being taken down to X-Ray. They didn't argue the point, and before they could check their charts, he was gone."

Lennie rolled his eyes, "Oh, this is just dandy - our only witness to a major crime has been abducted! Right out from under your noses!" he turned and pulled out his notebook, "Mike, I'll go interview the nurses, you check out Foster's room."

Foster had been kept in a single room. Logan looked things over - the bedclothes, the floor, the items on the movable table which sat swung away from the hospital bed. Logan pulled out his cell and hit a speed dial number, "CSU? Yeah, can you send a team over to Harlem Hospital..."

He joined Briscoe at the nurses' station a few minutes later, as Lennie was bidding the ladies goodbye and handing out his cop card.

"See anything?" Lennie asked.

"I've got CSU coming up to look things over. Whoever did this obviously doesn't want Foster talking to anyone. Remember Olivet said she offered him the option of hypnosis..."

"Yeah, and then the guy conveniently disappears right after that," Lennie followed Logan to Foster's vacated hospital room to wait for the CSU team to arrive, "Now, who'd want to shut him up that bad?"

\* \* \*

"I'm afraid I've got more bad news for you," van Buren greeted Briscoe and Logan as they entered her office, "Glynnis Baxter's body has disappeared."

The two detectives stared at each other and then back at van Buren, "What? I thought the body was on its way to Quantico?" Logan's voice was shocked.

"Somewhere between the body being moved out of the morgue and into a vehicle to transport it to Quantico, it just...dropped off the radar screen."

"Looks like somebody is systematically removing all the evidence we have in this case," Lennie shook his head, "And, all of it done with Secret Service proficiency - CSU didn't come up with anything on Foster's abduction. The nurses I talked to couldn't even tell me what the abductors looked like."

Van Buren fixed both detectives with a basilisk stare, "Now, who do you think would have the most to gain by removing both the vic's body and Mr. Foster?"

"Guess it's time to check out the Omega Corporation," Logan sighed.

\* \* \*

"Omega's President is an expatriate American," Logan explained, "The company specializes in software, but has moved big time into the PC industry - home computer components, laptops, games, specialty software - they appear to have major contracts and contacts within the defense industry in the U.S. as well as abroad. They also have sub-offices on every continent. A very expensive organization for a company that is nowhere near as powerful as Microsoft, and yet, it has an even bigger infrastructure. Here's an interesting footnote - in addition to owning a computer company, Straker owns a film studio in England. In fact, he doesn't come to New York that much. He seems to leave things in the hands of Paul Foster, one of his VPs."

"That's an interesting little detail he left out when he were in this office," van Buren replied, "Didn't he introduce Waterman as one of his VPs?"

"Yeah," Lennie raised an eyebrow, " VP of Production, or some exalted title like that. But, Foster is supposed to be Omega's top man after Straker. I don't think the perp we're looking for is local. I think Foster and the girl were offed by their own people. We know Baxter was a software engineer and Foster was one of the company's officers. The computer industry is one competitive business - maybe there was some industrial espionage going on"

Logan leaned forward to address van Buren, "Yeah, and they're the ones who identified Baxter and Foster. They wanted to spring Foster and the vic's body and send them back to England, right? Now, the body and Foster have both disappeared. Who's responsible for that? If the people at Omega weren't responsible for their own people getting hurt, why were they so eager to get them away from us? You'd think they'd be keen to give the police as much help as possible to solve this thing. Instead, these guys just wanted to shove the whole thing under the rug."

Van Buren nodded, "Why don't you pay our friends at Omega a little unannounced visit. Put a little heat under them. See what it leads to."

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"May I see your identification?" the voice spoke out of the speaker at the front door of the Omega Corporation's Manhattan office tower. Briscoe and Logan shot each other disgusted looks - was all this security that necessary for a computer company? They held up their NYPD badges to the camera lens, and waited impatiently for another five minutes or more until they were buzzed into the front foyer.

Upon entering the foyer, they realized they were still within a confined space. There was a squad of security people there - several were armed, and the others were stationed inside a closed booth. None of them wore any of NYC's security company uniforms. They were all designated as Omega employees.

"What can we help you with, gentlemen?" one of the guards stepped up to them.

"We'd like to see Ed Straker," Briscoe said.

"Do you have an appointment?"

"No, we just thought we'd drop by to have a chat. Police stuff, y'know."

"Mr. Straker is in meetings all day. You'll have to make an appointment."

"And, how do we do that?"

The guard turned back to the closed booth, "These police officers would like to make an appointment to see Mr. Straker."

A girl inside nodded and placed a call on her phone, "I'll check with his executive assistant."

Several more minutes passed before the girl put down the phone, "Mr. Straker's assistant will be right down."

The NYPD detectives cooled their heels for another ten minutes until one of the elevator doors opened and an attractive young woman exited. She walked towards them, "I'm Gloria Carlin, Mr. Straker's exec assistant. I'm sorry, but Mr. Straker is in meetings all day and he's expected to leave for England later tonight."

Logan was angry, and it showed, as he pointed a finger at Ms. Carlin, "Listen, you better get this through to your boss. Two of your employees were involved in a major crime. They've both disappeared. He's headed out of the country. Now, any or all of these incidents taken separately would be cause for suspicion, but coming all together - they're downright indicative

of some sort of monkey business coming out of this office. You get your boss down here on the double. And, we're not leaving until he we see him and ask him a few questions."

"I'll... see what I can do..." and Ms. Carlin turned back to the elevator and disappeared.

There were no seats in the Omega foyer, and Briscoe and Logan figured that was to discourage anyone from hanging around. They stood and looked over the posters on the walls, depicting the different type of computers made by Omega, and all the varieties of software they advertised to the public. It took a full hour before the elevator opened again and deposited Ed Straker into the foyer.

"I understand you wish to speak with me," the silver-haired computer exec greeted them. His blue eyes were steely, his voice tone cold. They noted the severely tailored business suit in black, with the red power tie.

"You're not the easiest man to see," Briscoe observed sarcastically.

"I'm trying to tie up my business here so I can take a flight out to London this evening."

"Yeah, well, you might as well cancel that flight, because you've got some business to take care of right here - with us," Logan's own voice was cold with anger.

"I beg your pardon?" Straker eyed Logan like an irritating insect.

"Unless you want your people here to listen in on our conversation, you might want to discuss this in private," Briscoe suggested.

Straker nodded and waved over two of his security guards, "You'll surrender your weapons to these men, please."

"What?"

"Industrial espionage is rife in the computer industry, gentlemen. And, we don't permit weapons out of the foyer, even the weapons of police officers."

Neither cop wanted to hand over their pieces, but it seemed to be the only way they were going to get this man to answer their questions, "You'll get them back when you leave," and Straker pressed a wall panel. A piece of the wall slid back and he led them into what looked like a board room.

"Your security is pretty stringent here," Briscoe commented. The room was decorated expensively, and the cops watched Straker press yet another panel which opened out with a coffee machine, perking espresso, and a tray of fancy biscottis.

"As I said, in my business, we have to be very careful. All our visitors are carefully screened. My security people checked your badge numbers with our on-file information and confirmed you were indeed who you said you were before even letting you into the foyer. As you can imagine, our staff here are equally screened before being hired, and they obey our security measures here to the letter," Straker poured out a tiny cup of espresso, "Care for some coffee?"

"How did you get Paul Foster out of the Harlem Hospital and remove the body of Glynnis Baxter from the morgue?" Logan didn't mince words.

Straker sipped his espresso experimentally, as if making certain the blend was to his taste, "When last we spoke, you said Paul was going to be in the hospital for some time, and Ms. Baxter's body was on it's way to the FBI lab at Quantico. You mean you've managed to lose both of them?"

"Don't play cute, Straker. You came down to our crib looking to spring them both - send them back to England - get them out of New York as fast as you could. Now they're both gone. Who else could be responsible but you and your people?"

"Those are very serious accusations," Straker turned his steely blue-eyed stare on them,

"Do you have any evidence to back them up?"

"C'mon, what happened? Were they some sort of security risk? Did they defect to another company and try to steal from you? Your people messed up trying to murder them? Or did they just cut up the woman to make it look like some sort of weirdo perp- just to throw suspicion off yourselves?" Logan demanded.

"Our company likes to take care of its own, Detective Logan. That's why we offered to send Mr. Foster back to England, and to have Ms. Baxter's body flown home to her family, at our expense. Believe me when I say we had nothing to do with what happened to them."

"Even if you people weren't the original perps in this case, you sure as hell didn't want Foster talking to us, did you?" Briscoe continued, "He knows something you don't want us getting at, doesn't he?"

"I think we've tried to co-operate with the police. After all, we went in and identified both Ms. Baxter and Paul Foster for you, and explained that they worked for us. What more do you want?"

"Give us access to their employee records, and access to whatever it was they were working on at the time they first disappeared," Logan told him.

"I'm sorry, but that's not possible. It's classified," Straker's posture was almost military in its bearing.

"Classified? You make it sound like you're the in army or something," Briscoe said.

"We do classified work for the military, yes. But, everything here is considered classified. It's part of our company-wide security policy. You must understand that we are working on many prototype technologies and software here. One leak, and years of work might go down the drain."

"Look, Straker," Briscoe temporized, "This is a police investigation. If you won't hand those files over to us now, we'll be back - with a search warrant. Then you'll have to give us those files."

"I don't have to give you anything," Straker said, his eyes blazing, "I think it would be best for all concerned if you just dropped this investigation entirely. With no body and no witness, you're out of leads."

"We've still got a case, no matter whether you've managed to spirit Foster and Ms. Baxter's body away or not. All those photos, tissue samples, every bit of evidence we've collected - will help us tie somebody to these crimes."

"You think I'm responsible for removing Foster and Baxter?"

"You sure look good for it," Briscoe nodded, "And, refusing to co-operate with the police and obstructing this investigation are considered criminal offenses in this country - or did you forget that, Mr. Expatriate American?"

"I don't have time for this! If you have something to accuse me of - fine. If you don't, get out. I've spent too much time on this already."

"Look, that girl was murdered on our turf - so it's up to us to find out why and who did it. Now her body and Foster have disappeared and look who stands to gain from that - the Omega Corporation. You're the only ones putting up a hassle about this case. We can come back here with all kinds of warrants and shut you down for days. Ka-peesh?"

Straker pulled himself up to his full height and looked down at the detectives seated at the briefing room table, "One phone call from me, and you're finished as New York City detectives. I could have you both back to walking a beat. Close this case - NOW!"

"Threats just make you look like you've got something to hide, and we're going to find out

what it is - one way or the other," Logan retorted.

"This meeting is over - you can leave now - or you can be escorted out."

"Don't get too comfortable - we'll be back. With warrants."

\* \* \*

Straker watched Logan and Briscoe leave the building via the front foyer's CCTV, then he called Waterman on his cell phone, "Time to get into Foster's head, Lew. Get Doug Jackson over here asap. If anyone can unlock Foster's memories, it'll be him. Put a rush on Baxter's autopsy. And, beef up security, I think we're going to have some trouble with the local law."

\* \* \*

### **An hour later at the office of Assistant District Attorney Jack McCoy...**

"Let me get this straight... you want a warrant to search the entire Omega Corporation complex. That's a thirty story office tower in downtown Manhattan!" McCoy was standing behind his desk, hands on his hips, "I don't think the NYPD has the manpower to take on such a task."

"Straker practically threw us out, and told us he could have our jobs if we didn't close this murder-abduction case. We think he's got plenty to hide, and the only way we're gonna get anywhere near what he is hiding is to get access to that place. You should see the security there - tighter than god dam Fort Knox!" Briscoe grouched.

McCoy's assistant, Claire Kincaid, looked up from reading some of the files Briscoe and Logan brought with them, "Pretty serious stuff, Jack," she commented, "A mutilated body, an amnesiac who's the only witness - and then both the body and the witness disappear. Bizarre."

"Not to mention Straker waltzed into our precinct a few days before Foster and the body disappeared, asking for them both to be turned over to them -- now they're gone and nobody over at Omega wants to talk to us or answer any questions. They're just blowin' smoke up our asses all the way," Logan added.

McCoy opened a photo file on his desk and looked briefly at the autopsy pix of Glynnis Baxter's body. He sat down, his head in his hands, "You've got nothing but gut reaction and a lot of bull shit from the Omega people. Maybe it just looks like they had something to do with all this... I mean these photos don't resemble the work of a bunch of computer geeks - they're more on the scale of a Jeffrey Dahmer or a John Wayne Gacy."

"That's just it, counselor, we figure whoever messed these people up are either part of the Omega Corporation, and the company doesn't want the bad publicity that might come out of this by giving them up, or the perps were ordered to do these vics by their own company, and they're being protected by Omega. We've got lots of theories on these crimes - lots of evidence even. We just don't have the perps to pin it on - and Omega is sure as hell hiding something. They even took our guns at the front door," Briscoe explained.

"A case of industrial espionage wouldn't warrant the kind of murder Baxter went through," Kincaid said, crossing her arms across her chest, "According to the M.E.'s report, her organs were removed while the vic was still alive - even the Mafia wouldn't do something like that. This has to be the work of a twisto."

"A twisto who's being sheltered by the Omega Corporation. For whatever reason the first crime happened, the second and third crimes - the disappearance of the vic's body and our man Foster - is definitely connected. Olivet told us she offered Foster the chance to be regressed hypnotically - within hours, he disappeared right out of the Harlem Hospital without a trace. And, the vic's body was supposed to be on its way to Quantico for further analysis - when it was preempted - by somebody," Logan told them.

"At least get us a search warrant to get access to whatever Foster and Baxter were working on - maybe there's something there - Straker was really overprotective of their work - said it was 'classified'," Briscoe commented.

"Classified? That sounds like military work," McCoy replied.

"Apparently, they do have contracts with the military - but for what, we couldn't find out," Logan added.

McCoy shook his head, "We could be opening up a whole new kettle of fish if we get involved with the military," he gestured to the cops, "I agree these people look like our best bet for some sort of information. I might be able to call in a couple of favours and at least get a warrant for the work records and personnel files for our vics."

Briscoe stood up, "I'd like to slap that Straker with a subpoena for obstruction, too."

"First things first," McCoy reminded him, "Let's see if Straker really is keeping us from seeing anything vital to this case in those files before we jump the gun. I'll call you when the paperwork is ready and you can go back to Omega."

Logan smiled as he got up from his chair, folding his old overcoat over his arm, "This I'm gonna enjoy!"

\* \* \*

#### **Omega's Manhattan office complex a few hours later:**

"You're kidding, right?"

"I wish I were, General, but there's a squad of NYPD officers and those two detectives at the front door holding search warrants," Lew Waterman told his superior, "Under the law here, we have to let them in and honor their warrants, whether we like it or not."

Straker pounded his fist on the table, "God damn it!" he punched the intercom button on his phone console, and barked at Gloria Carlin, "Get me Adam Schiff, the District Attorney," he looked up at Waterman, "Those bastards are not to be allowed outside of the front foyer, you hear me?"

\* \* \*

Adam Schiff was enjoying a quitting time drink with Jack McCoy when the phone rang. He picked it up, and with his usual curmudgeonly charm, said, "Yeah?" into the receiver.

The string of invective was so loud Jack could hear it, even though the phone was pressed to Adam's ear. Finally, Adam replied, "I understand from sources in my office that you people have been less than co-operative, Mr. Straker, and the warrants are meant to provide access for the police to documents which may be relevant to this case. I don't particularly give a shit if you don't like it, your company is at the centre of a murder-kidnap case, and nobody is exempted from this police investigation," he paused listening, "You can call whoever you want on this, it's the law. If you have friends in higher places, go to it." he hung up the phone with a crash, and picked up his leaded crystal drink glass, "Some people think they're above the law in this country."

\* \* \*

"Come on, buddy," Logan dissed one of the Omega security officers in the foyer, "We've got this search warrant and you have to let us use it."

"My orders are not to permit you beyond the foyer. Until those orders are changed, I can't let you upstairs."

The elevator opened, and Straker stepped out. Briscoe tilted his head towards him, "Don't look now, but it's the big man himself," he said, sarcastically, rolling his eyes.

"I just got off the phone with District Attorney Adam Schiff, and several other people,

including the Mayor, and the state Governor. Those warrants will not be honored here."

"Nobody has that much power," Logan pointed a finger into Straker's chest.

"Guess again," Straker replied, a grim expression on his face.

Briscoe's cell phone rang. He pulled it out of his jacket and stepped a few paces away to take the call. He nodded and came back, "That was McCoy. He said Adam Schiff told him to call off the search warrants."

"What?" Logan stared at his partner. He swung back to face Straker, "Who the hell do you know?"

"I made a deal. If you leave now, Omega will agree to turn over any files we deem relevant to your case. Tomorrow morning."

\* \* \*

"Well, that little bit of business with the Governor bought us some time," Waterman watched his boss sit down behind his desk.

"I want you to personally sift through those personnel files and the bogus stuff we have on Baxter and Foster, so we'll have something to hand over to the police."

"There's not much there, sir, mostly propoganda to make it look like Glynnis was doing software research."

"Hmmm. Let's see if we can transfer some real research data over to her files - something simple and non-controversial - what's the status on some of that new game software?"

"I can probably move that material over into her files and make it look like she was working on that."

"Good - get to it. And, Lew?"

"Yes, General?"

"How's Jackson doing with Paul?"

"He's running more tests. So far Doug's got nothing of any value. There's a new drug Doug's been experimenting with - he may try using it to get at Paul's memories."

\* \* \*

### **June 17th, 1994**

"Nada. Nothing. Zero. Bupkes," Logan slammed down Glynnis Baxter's and Paul Foster's files, which had been delivered an hour earlier by the Omega Corporation.

Van Buren looked up at him, "What do you mean - nothing?"

"All that's in here is the usual bio, next of kin crap and some research the Baxter girl was doing on new game software. Nothing contentious there."

"Well, we asked for it, we got it. Unless, of course, the really important stuff was excised long before we got the files," the Lieutenant suggested.

Lennie nodded, "That's my guess. They had all kinds of time before those files were delivered this morning to take out whatever they didn't want us to see. What I really can't believe is that this guy Straker could pull strings with the Governor!"

"Yeah, that's odd, too. Who the hell has that kind of power?" van Buren asked. The phone rang. She picked it up, "Yes?...Alright, I'll tell them." She hung up the receiver, "That was McCoy. He wants to see you asap."

\* \* \*

### **Jack McCoy's office...**

The two NYPD cops sat down across from a rumpled looking ADA McCoy, "What's up?" Logan said.

"How much research have you done on this Omega Corporation?"

"Enough to know that this is no ordinary computer company, counselor," Briscoe commented, "These people have unbelievable drag. You know what happened yesterday when we tried to use those search warrants you got for us."

McCoy nodded, "Adam filled me in. Did they deliver the files as promised?"

"Oh, yeah, but they aren't worth anything to our investigation. If there ever was anything useful, we figure all the goodies were removed before delivery."

"I got a call this morning from a top-ranking brass-head at the Pentagon. Told me to leave Omega alone."

Logan leaned forward, "Can somebody like that threaten a civil investigation? This isn't a military problem!"

"I told him the same thing. All he said was that the Pentagon did a lot of business with Omega and they didn't want this thing going any further. And, most of all, they didn't want the case getting anymore publicity."

"Why would the Pentagon be interested in a murder-kidnap that didn't involve military personnel?" Briscoe asked.

McCoy made a face, "What if the two vics in question were military personnel?" he pressed his intercom button, "Claire, can you bring in that information you were working on for me?"

Claire Kincaid entered the office, and deposited a thick file on McCoy's desk. Logan stared at its thickness, "You got all that this morning?"

"Once I knew where to look..." she replied and opened the file folder, "It turns out our Mr. Edward Straker was once a Colonel in the United States Air force."

"How did you know to check out the military?"

"Once the Pentagon came calling, it was just a hunch. Why else would someone like Straker have friends in such high places?"

"And?"

"Straker left the USAF in 1969 with one of the highest security ratings achievable, not to mention he was a graduate of MIT and considered something of a prodigy at the time."

"Why would someone like that, obviously a career officer, leave the Air Force?" McCoy wanted to know.

"No reason was listed on his file. Not even an honorable or dishonorable discharge - just - one day he's in the Air Force - the next he's not."

"What did he do after that?"

"He left the U.S. and became the CEO of a British film company. One that hasn't been doing too well financially over the last few decades. He's not even in the U.S. that often."

"So, why does a career officer 'leave' the Air Force for a failing movie studio?"

"And, then turn up years later as the President of a computer and software company dealing with the U.S. military?"

"I think our victims got too close to something and had to be silenced - one way or the other!" McCoy finished, "They must have either been involved in some project for the military they didn't like, and were going to squeal, or perhaps they were planning to sell military secrets to some other buyer. Unless we can get access to what they were really doing for Omega, we'll never know for sure."

"So, what do we do now? If the Pentagon is breathing down our necks, and the Governor is stalling us, what's our next move?"



"The Governor really has no jurisdiction in this. It's not like judiciating on whether to commute a criminal's death sentence to life in prison. We're simply trying to get enough evidence to solve a crime. And, the feds haven't gotten involved - they've laid no charges, and in fact don't even seem interested in the case so far. All we've got is a nasty phone call from the military and an uncooperative computer company."

\* \* \*

### **June 18th, 1994**

"I hated to get the Pentagon involved, but..."

"Look, Lew, I'm for whatever gets these people off our backs. Have our operatives been able to find the location Foster and Baxter were attacked?"

"The report I got in from Al Leslie says they think they've found fresh tire marks near a possible alien landing spot in upper New York State. I managed to get a copy of the NYPD CSU files on the car they were found in so Al and the boys could make some comparisons. There's also a lake very close to that area - the aliens might have even hidden their ship underwater. They've done that before."

Straker nodded. He remembered a pair of UNCLE agents who ended up involved in a similar case back in the 1970's, "Any idea on why Foster brought Baxter's body back with him? Has Jackson managed to get any closer to those memories locked up in Foster's head?"

Waterman shook his head, "No luck yet. Jackson speculates Foster might have taken Baxter's body to keep it from being discovered by anyone else. Maybe he even thought he could make it back here to headquarters. He was probably in such a poor mental state from the trauma that he wasn't thinking straight."

"No, I suppose not. I doubt the aliens realized they were Omega operatives - they probably just saw them as ripe for organ harvesting."

"Foster and Baxter were found with no clothing, no ID, no weapons - everything was removed. Oh, the aliens knew who they had, sir. And, they went ahead and did it anyway. How Foster managed to escape alive and take Baxter's body with him is the \$64,000 question."

"Unless the aliens let him escape....," Straker mused aloud.

"Hmmm. That would be evidence of a lot more emotion than we've ever seen from the aliens. They don't seem to be bent on revenge. They just do their thing, regardless of how we react to them."

"Tell Jackson to try that experimental drug if he has to. We need to get Foster to talk - now."

## Chapter Three

**June 19, 1994**

Olivet stood in van Buren's office, a small tape in her hand, "Anita, I've got something here...maybe it was unconstitutional of me to even make the tape... but there might be something on it which could help you out in this weird case you've been working on."

Van Buren took the proffered audio cassette tape, "How did you make the recording?"

Sitting down, Olivet said, "I had it in my open purse, sitting on the table across from Paul Foster when I went to see him in the hospital a few days ago. After that rapist gynecologist case awhile ago, I've started taping a few conversations here and there. Most of the time I just tape over them, if nothing important comes up in the session, but when I listened to this one again, I was struck by what Foster said. Turn it on - I've got it cued up to a specific spot in our conversation."

The Lieutenant punched the tape recorder's PLAY button, "*They give me something at night. Otherwise, I don't think I could sleep. I keep having dreams...awful dreams...but I don't know if they're connected to whatever...happened...*"

*"Can you describe those dreams to me? What do you see?"*

*"It's not so much what I see, as what I feel...I'm terrified...I want to escape...I want to get away from...something...but I don't know what..."*

*"Is there anyone else in your dream? Do you see any faces?"*

*"I don't know if they're faces so much as images...I can hear screaming...I don't know if it's me or someone else...and...there's this fear...this terrible mind-numbing horror...I try to scream and I can't get anything out...and there's pain...a lot of pain...more than I can stand..."* the tape ended.

"So, Liz, what does this mean?"

"I did some research afterwards. Your Paul Foster sounds like he may be a member of a very select little group. An alien abductee."

\* \* \*

Mike Logan just about choked on his coffee after hearing Olivet's tape recording and her assessment of it, "Come again?"

Olivet looked up at the police detective earnestly, "Foster's responses to my questions and his trauma, both mental and physical, are highly reminiscent of those recorded in so-called alien abductions."

Briscoe put his own coffee cup down on van Buren's desk, "Liz, do you know how this sounds?"

"I *know* how it sounds. You may not have Foster or Glynnis Baxter's bodies now, but you do have all the tests and photos. At least let me take them to an expert in this field and have him take a look at them."

Van Buren shrugged her shoulders, "We're at a standstill in this case, with vital evidence and witnesses disappearing faster than we can collect them."

Logan shook his head, "Lieutenant, with all due respect - you think these two people were worked over by little green men?"

"What else have we got to go on? We can't get the right kind of co-operation from the Omega people and we've got the Mayor and the Governor, plus the Pentagon, trying to shove this whole case under some bureaucratic rug. It can't hurt to explore some new avenues."

Briscoe inclined his head, "As crazy as this sounds, the government has been accused for

years of covering up the whole UFO thing. Roswell, and all that shit. And, both Rogers and the doctor at Foster's hospital were at a loss to understand the marks on both bodies and how anyone could remove Baxter's organs with such surgical precision."

Logan rolled his eyes, "Lenny, I thought you were a better detective than that!"

Olivet held up a hand, "Police officers have been involved with alien abductee cases before. It's considered a legitimate concern among mental health and investigative workers."

"Oh yeah, the kind that wanna see their names printed in the National Enquirer!" Logan scoffed.

Van Buren shouted them all down, "Look, folks, it's worth a try. I'm not advocating putting aside the criminal investigation for one moment. I'm just saying we should parallel it with an expert opinion on Olivet's tape and some of the files from CSU."

"Do you know one of these UFO crackpot-experts?" Logan grinned at Olivet.

"Yes, and he's considered a very important researcher in the field."

\* \* \*

### **June 26, 1994, the office of Dr. D. Thomas Robertson**

Briscoe and Logan were ushered into Dr. Robertson's 30th floor suite in downtown Manhattan. Olivet had turned copies of her tape, CSU reports and photos of Baxter's and Foster's bodies to him a week earlier. Now the NYPD had an appointment to quiz the good doctor up on his findings.

"Well, Doc, whaddya think?" Briscoe opened, accepting a cup of gourmet coffee from Robertson's secretary.

Robertson waited until Logan had also taken a cup before speaking, "Gentlemen, I think you may have to consider this case unsolvable."

"Just what does that mean?" Logan demanded.

"I've gone over all the material Dr. Olivet supplied me with thoroughly. I hate to tell you this, but it does smack very strongly of alien abduction."

"Oh, great! I can just see me announcing this to Assistant DA Jack McCoy!" Lenny snorted.

"Seriously, the physical wounds and the mental trauma evidenced in the material are consistent with hundreds of reported cases of alien abduction. Most of the abductees I've researched have had medical tests performed on them by *someone*, and have been released relatively unharmed, if somewhat mentally affected by their experiences. But, there have also been hundreds of cases over the last fifty years or more of human and animal mutilation - all with the hallmarks of alien intervention. These cases stretch back even further than I've been involved in this type of research. Some of them have been documented by the government and the military - and hushed up. These files have become classified. I managed to get access to some of the older ones through the Freedom of Information Act. But, anything 50 years up to the present date - forget it."

"So, you're saying there really is some kind of on-going government cover-up."

"At the risk of sounding like a crackpot, I think so. Most of the UFO investigations undertaken by the military have centred on debunking the idea of aliens, alien abductions, close encounters, et al. Most of the investigative bodies have hired people to run them who are definitely in the job to keep the public from knowing any details. J. Allen Hynek, who ran Project Blue Book for the military, made a career out of saying every case he came across was easily explained as a natural phenomena, and not as alien encounters," Robertson took a sip of his own coffee, "Being narrow-minded about such things can be as much of a fault as being

too credulous."

"But, why would little green men extract somebody's organs?"

"Hard to say. Many abductees mention body fluid samples being taken from them, hair samples, skin samples - even sperm and ova have been removed from some victims. The common view of the abductees is that the aliens treat them the same way human researchers treat trapped animals here. They paralyze them with some sort of drug, check them over, sometimes even attach radio boxes to them to track their migration patterns. Then they set them free. I've often wondered how those animals feel after a close encounter with a group of human scientists!"

"Except, these two didn't get set free. One of them ended up dead and the other was in pretty rough shape, mentally and physically."

"As I said, not all abduction stories have happy endings."

Logan shook his head, "As much as this theory would be the simple answer, we've still got other problems in this case - like who hijacked Baxter's body and who kidnapped Foster."

"I think those situations are close encounters with *human* agendas," Robertson put his coffee cup down, "And, it wouldn't be the first time, either. I've personally done research on a couple of cases which almost cost me my reputation and my life because I was getting too close to the truth."

Briscoe finished his java, "Well, Doc, it's been interesting. We'll take a copy of your report to our Lieutenant and Jack McCoy and pursue it from there. Thanks for the coffee."

\* \* \*

"It's the first sign the feds may be interested in this case after all," Claire Kincaid told Jack McCoy, "I got a phone call from an FBI agent named Fox Mulder earlier today. He wants access to our CSU files, our autopsy reports, whatever documentation we've got."

"Did he say how he found out about the case?"

"I guess when the body didn't turn up at Quantico, his partner, a doctor by the name of Scully, called him about it."

McCoy sat down in his seat, "Just what we need. The FBI."

"Briscoe and Logan want to see you today. They've been to see some expert in regards to the case and have a report they want you to look at."

"Fine, tell them to come in for lunch."

\* \* \*

"Claire's had a call from the FBI. Some agents named Mulder and Scully are tracking the body that didn't make it to the lab in Quantico. We're going to have to pass on copies of all our evidence to them," McCoy explained, between bites of his sandwich. The DA's office had sprung for a cheap lunch for them all.

"This is just getting weirder as we go along," Briscoe replied, "Our so-called expert, Dr. Robertson, thinks Foster and Glynnis had a very unpleasant close encounter of the third kind."

"What?"

"Yeah, I know - sounds crazy. But, Liz Olivet put us onto this guy and she's pretty straight."

"Are we talking about aliens? Science-fiction?" McCoy was incredulous.

"According to this guy, what happened to Foster and Baxter is consistent with some of the more hushed up alien abduction stories. He says the government is tryin' to keep a lid on stories involving body mutilation," Logan answered, "Robertson says Foster's comments and trauma are similar to other abductees he's interviewed."

"Even if this were true, as far-fetched as it sounds, where does that put people like Ed Straker and the Omega Corporation? Why have they been so unwilling to co-operate with us unless they had something criminal to hide?"

"That's what we don't get," Briscoe munched his smoked meat on dark rye, "They've clammed up to the point of obstruction."

"Straker told us to drop the investigation, in no uncertain terms, and his company does do work for the military," Logan suggested, "Maybe their lack of co-operation is coming from their involvement with the Pentagon."

"And, now the FBI wants to get in on the case. Maybe those federal agents are part of the government's clamp-down policy?"

"I had Claire do some checking - apparently Mulder and Scully are agents who specialize in weird cases - and their supervisor, a man named Skinner, isn't always very supportive of their work."

"Well, if they like weird cases, have we got one for them!" Logan grinned grimly, "But, I don't wanna just hand this over to the feds. This happened on our watch. I hate to just give it up, y'know?"

"I know what you mean. I'd like to get to the bottom of this myself," McCoy opened a bag of potato chips and munched thoughtfully, "Let's see what they want. They might be able to supply us with some answers."

"Most of the dealings I've had with FBI humps in recent years is that they don't give us regular cops anything to work with. They're not much for the spirit of co-operation. They're as bad as Straker."

"Straker was in the Air Force back in the 60's. We never found any evidence that he'd ever really left the military. What if he's some sort of government plant in private industry?"

"OK, so he's a plant. Maybe he works for the US military. Doing what? Computer software?"

"It could be computer, it could be more important than that. I mean, we've all heard of black budgets and money being funneled off into covert operations and organizations."

"You think Omega is really owned by the government?"

"Why not? It's no crazier a theory than little green men running around cutting out people's innards."

"Let's see these FBI people and put a few of these questions to them."

\* \* \*

### **27th Precinct squad room**

Lieutenant Anita van Buren brought two stylishly dressed young people over to Briscoe and Logan's desks, "Guys, this is Special Agent Fox Mulder and Special Agent Dana Scully. They're here to discuss the Foster case with you."

Logan smiled up at Scully, a pert redhead, fashionably attired in a chocolate brown pant suit, "I think we can scare up some coffee and an interview room for us to get down to business."

Briscoe extended his hand to Mulder, and they shook, "Lenny Briscoe - nice to meet you. We've got the CSU files, the autopsy reports and photos - the whole schmeer ready for ya."

\* \* \*

"I understand this case has been something of a mystery," Mulder seated himself with a cup of hot java, "We were tipped to it when Glynnis Baxter's body didn't make it to Quantico."

Scully also sat down, crossing her legs attractively. Logan had held out the chair for her

and smiled as he passed her a cup of coffee, "I got all the paperwork on the body, but never got the body," she smiled back at him.

"As far as our guys were able to research it, the body left the morgue, supposedly on its way to you folks at the FBI, and just disappeared. The two men who signed the papers and took the body weren't NYPD employees after all, even though they had NYPD badges and ID."

"Well, forgery is pretty easy these days with computers," Scully said, "I suppose your morgue is busy and the other workers didn't see any need to check the ID any more thoroughly than they did."

"The morgue doesn't usually have to worry about having bodies stolen," Briscoe smiled grimly.

Mulder was flipping through the photo array file Logan had placed in front of him quietly, "I read the file your morgue sent Scully about the body - all the thoracic organs were cut out. How about the other victim?"

"Foster was marked up pretty good, and covered with Baxter's blood, but we don't think he's the perp. Not that we can find him. He disappeared too."

"Disappeared?"

"Yeah, after our shrink paid him a visit, he was kidnapped from the hospital - without a goddam trace. CSU went over that room and the corridors and stairs a dozen times. Nada. No fingerprints, no footprints, no hairs, no nothin' - a real professional job."

"Your DA said there was a computer company involved somehow," Scully prompted Logan.

"The Omega Corporation. Foster and Baxter were their employees. Other than identifying their people, the company has given us zero-co-operation. In fact, we were threatened by the company President, and the DA got phone calls from the Mayor, the state Governor, and even the Pentagon. We're supposed to roll over and play dead - forget this case ever happened."

Mulder cocked an eyebrow, "That's a lot of bureaucratic firepower for one man to channel. What did you say his name was?"

"Straker. Ed Straker. Former US Air Force officer. Left active duty in the military in 1969 - turned up a few years later as the CEO of a British film company, then, as the President of the Omega Corporation. A computer company with military contracts and a close personal relationship with the highest brass in the Pentagon."

"Very odd. You'd think an employer would do all they could to co-operate in the murder investigation of one of their people," mused Mulder aloud.

"That ain't the worst of it...," Logan leaned forward in his seat, "Our shrink got a tape recording of Foster telling a story about alien abduction."

\* \* \*

If Mulder had been blasé a few moments before, he was fully alert to what Mike Logan had just disclosed, "I beg your pardon?"

"Yeah, listen to this...," Logan played a copy of Olivet's tape for the FBI agents, eagerly watching the expressions on their faces. Scully kept her demeanor neutral, but Logan could see Mulder was more than a little interested, "We had this expert Olivet knows in the field - a former top psychiatrist-turned-UFO-researcher - look at our photos and listen to our tape. Alien abduction. That's what he came up with."

Briscoe laughed deprecatingly, "Yeah, we're gonna call in Peter Hurkos and Kreskin next!" referring to the Dutch self-styled psychic and the American mentalist.

"Who told you this was an alien abduction case?"

"Ever heard of Dr. D. Thomas Robertson before?"

Mulder's face was somber, "Yes, he's considered quite an expert in the field."

"You know him then."

"By reputation," Mulder said quietly, "The FBI uses a variety of experts in different disciplines."

"His report is in the stack along with our stuff. Have a look at it."

\* \* \*

Mulder's hotel room later that afternoon

"Don't jump to conclusions, Mulder."

"It had to have been Robertson who called me, Scully. He didn't identify himself, but who else would know enough about this case to suggest it was an X-File - an alien abduction case?"

"Look, even the cops are skeptical about this."

"I read Robertson's file. If the evidence is all correct, then, yes - this case has all the earmarks of a nasty alien encounter."

"I read it too. All Robertson had to go on were photos of the body, the marks on Foster and the tape."

"He had the autopsy report which says the morgue was not able to identify the instruments used to open the body and remove the organs, or the instruments used on Foster."

"Maybe they were just sloppy."

"You can't suggest that every lab worker doesn't do their job, Scully. Haven't we been through enough weird cases by now that you'd learn to accept the unacceptable?"

"The cops' original theory of a murder gone dreadfully wrong makes a lot of sense! If the Omega Corporation was doing top secret military work, and Baxter and Foster were selling those secrets, somebody might have decided to get rid of them. Briscoe and Logan thought maybe Baxter was carved up to put them off the trail of murder for hire, and onto some sort of twisto killer. That Baxter was mutilated just to throw them off the track."

"I don't buy that. My gut is telling me we've got a bona fide alien abduction case - and the body and the one living witness were removed so the real story wouldn't surface."

"Suppose for a minute you're right. This is a case of alien abduction. Who's trying to cover it up? How does the Omega Corporation figure in all this? Who disposed of Baxter's body and where is Paul Foster right now?"

"It's our job to find out, Scully!"

\* \* \*

"First the local law, now the FBI!" Lew Waterman was sitting across from General Straker in his posh Omega Corporation office.

"Where are they?"

"Waiting in the front foyer. We've checked their ID - they're legit. You might remember one of them - Fox Mulder."

Straker rolled his eyes, "The man's like a terrier with a damn bone. Well, they we can wait for awhile. I have an appointment with Jackson to discuss Paul's condition."

\* \* \*

"He's very deeply traumatized. The new drug was ineffective, I'm sorry to say. Without some way to unlock those memories, I don't think Foster can be certified to return to active duty. He is suffering nightmares every night, sleeping and eating poorly. The only procedure we can work on right now is critical incident de-briefing, but it would help more if Paul could

remember the events of that night clearly. Apparently, he's reacting to his trauma from a subconscious emotional standpoint."

Straker shook his head, "Paul's a pretty resilient guy, he's suffered alien incursions before."

"Not like this. Even though he claims he doesn't remember anything, even Glynnis Baxter, he is blocking it all out, because mentally he can't deal with the trauma or the grief."

"What do you advise we do? Paul's a top man, one of our best."

"I was going to suggest we take Foster out to the site of the incident. Lew Waterman sent me a report from Omega Security - apparently they've located the spot where everything took place. It might be enough to shock Paul into remembering on his own."

"That's a pretty cruel means of doing it."

"General, you want results, don't you?"

Straker stood up and straightened his tie, "That's what I brought you here for. And, if that's what it takes, well, I want to go up there with Paul. I'll get Lew on this right away. "

\* \* \*

"He wouldn't see us. We stood in Omega's front foyer for over an hour," Scully told Logan, "Mulder rented a car and is sitting parked in front of the Omega offices downtown, keeping an eye on things right now. We thought if we staked them out, you might be willing to co-operate with us on this case."

Briscoe raised an eyebrow, "Sure, we don't mind being buddy-buddy with you feds - as long as we're in the loop on everything. What can we do to help?"

Scully's phone chirped, "Pardon me," she said, opening the cell, "That you Mulder? Really? Ok. Keep us posted." She put the cell back in her jacket pocket, "Mulder says he just got a glimpse of a vehicle leaving the Omega parking lot - and he's sure Paul Foster was in the back seat. He's going to follow them."

Logan jumped out of his seat and threw on his own jacket, with the American flag pin on the lapel, "Let's give him some back-up - call him back and keep in constant contact."

\* \* \*

Omega Security arranged for one of their special SUVs to transport Major Leslie, Omega agent Pete Little, Dr. Jackson, Paul Foster and General Straker to upstate New York. The vehicle was loaded with special equipment and weapons, and tinted glass all around made it more difficult to see inside. As they drove out of the parking lot, Foster complained of being too warm, and opened the power window on his side. Straker leaned over him and closed the window again, "We can't risk being seen, Paul."

With Major Leslie at the wheel, the SUV pulled out onto the main thoroughfare and headed for the nearest highway exit.

\* \* \*

"What? Fine, we'll head out there to meet up with you, Mulder," Scully told Logan, who was driving, which highway route number her partner was moving onto to follow the Omega vehicle.

Briscoe leaned over the front seat, "If they're on that route, they must going upstate."

Logan nodded, "Remember the CSU reports about there being soil, grass and tree material on the car tires and around the wheel wells?"

"We figured Omega must've been behind Foster's disappearance, but from what they said in our office a couple of days ago, it seemed like they were hell-bent to get him out of the country."



"Obviously, they've been keeping him under wraps in their building," Scully commented, "I wonder if they've found out how much he remembers."

"Why would they take him back upstate?" Logan asked.

"If CSU's evidence points to the original incident occurring in upstate New York, maybe they've been able to get him to remember where it happened. Maybe they're going back up there to look around, or jar his memory some more," Briscoe offered.

Scully's cell came to life again, "Ok, Mulder, will do," she folded the phone shut, "He says they're moving over to route..."

\* \* \*

Major Leslie turned the Omega SUV off the main road and took a smaller dirt track into the woods. Following at a discreet distance was Mulder in his rented car. He was grateful he'd rented an all-wheel drive car; it was rough going, and he was afraid of losing them several times. It was coming onto twilight when the Omega vehicle slowed and made another turn deeper into the forest. Scully assured Mulder by cell phone that they were only a short distance behind him. It was agreed they'd rendezvous and decide on a course of action before surprising the Omega people.

\* \* \*

The SUV came to a full stop beside a small lake. The driving lights were halogen and shone brightly, dappling the waters.

Straker followed Foster out of the back of the vehicle, along with Jackson. Leslie and Little exited too, their sidearms visible on their belts.

"You think...this is where Glynnis and I were...attacked?" Foster asked haltingly.

Leslie nodded, "We were able to match up the tire tracks here to your car, Paul. We know you two came up here to investigate some reports from the locals about people disappearing."

Jackson nodded, "Everything points to your abduction by the aliens on the night in question. And, we've autopsied Miss Baxter's body again. What we don't know is how you managed to escape, with her body in tow, and drive back to the city," he paused for a moment, "Miss Baxter is dead..."

Foster finished the question for him, "Why aren't I, right?"

"Paul, just take it slow. Look around a bit. See if anything seems familiar or jogs anything loose," Straker suggested. He wanted to know what was locked up inside Foster's brain too, but he knew his Omega chief was too traumatized to be pushed hard.

Foster walked down to the edge of the lake; the others followed him. It was completely dark now. The stars were becoming visible overhead, and there was a full moon on the rise. Paul stopped just before he touched the water with his shoes, his eyes closed tightly, his fists clenched at his sides. There was a soft rustling in the trees as an owl prepared to hunt for the evening meal, and a grassy scent hung in the air.

Jackson asked Foster quietly, "Can you see it in your mind now? Can you see what happened?"

"They...came out of the water...with these weapons...we couldn't move...it was like we were paralyzed...I couldn't...I couldn't help her...," Foster's eyes were spilling tears, "I couldn't help myself...she was screaming...I couldn't even make a sound...it was like I was screaming in my head..."

Jackson's voice was low and sonorous as he spoke again, "Did the aliens take you into their ship?"

"No...we never really knew where they came from...if they came from the woods or the lake...we knew their ships can't stay in Earth's atmosphere for long...I thought maybe they had their ship hidden in the lake...but we never saw it..."

"What did they do? Did they...hurt you?"

Foster's eyes were still closed tightly, his fists beating the air as though he were striking invisible assailants, "They took Glynnis...I heard her screaming...My, God, she was alive! She was alive when they...started cutting her up...", Foster opened his eyes and looked at Jackson, "They treated her like a fish! Like she didn't matter at all - like she was just a...thing!" He covered his face with his hands, "And...I couldn't even help her!"

"Did they attack you here in the open?" Jackson's voice was still soft and quiet.

"Yes...right here...they had these...gadgets...these cutting tools that had no sharp edges...but they made a hissing sound...Oh, God, I could smell Glynnis' flesh as they cut into her...and she was screaming...begging them to just kill her..."

"How did you manage to get away?"

"I don't really know...it seemed like...the aliens were ready to work on me...and somehow the paralysis wore off...or stopped...or something...because I was able to get up...I wanted to run...to just get away before they could do to me...what they did to Glynnis...then I saw her lying there on the ground...and all I could think of was...she didn't deserve to be left behind like a dead carcass..."

"That's enough for now, Paul," Straker looked at Jackson and held up a hand, "We can get the rest of the story when we get back to New York."

"I think we'd like to hear the rest of the story right now," a voice enunciated the words out of the darkness. When the flashlights came on, the Omega people could clearly see Logan and Briscoe, and Mulder and Scully - handguns leveled at them.

## Chapter Four

Mulder, Logan and Briscoe came forward, with Scully slightly behind them. Leslie and Little put their hands to their own firearms, but Straker waved them off, "I see we have company," he said, his voice mildly sarcastic.

"Isn't this interesting?" Briscoe replied, "The disappearing man suddenly appears. I knew you people at Omega had something to do with Foster's kidnapping."

"Why the cover-up?" Mulder asked Straker, "Why take a sick man out of the hospital? Why not just let him stay there and tell his crazy story to the police? It might have ended there."

"I don't owe you any answers," Straker said.

"Oh, but you owe *us* answers - big time!" Logan held his gun a little higher, "Let's see - obstruction, kidnapping, maybe even murder. That's *quite* a lot to answer for, I think."

"You don't know what you're getting involved with," Straker warned him.

"Maybe he doesn't, but we do," Mulder added, "We've been tracking down this kind of evidence for years. We know the real thing when we see it. Who are you people - and what are you covering up?"

Straker turned his attention to Mulder, "Oh, yes, Special Agent Fox Mulder. Otherwise known as 'Spooky' Mulder to your associates in the FBI. I don't think they take much you have to report very seriously."

"Things have been changing at the FBI, Mr. Straker, if that's your *real* name," Scully retorted, "Our supervisors know we follow some pretty strange leads. That's why we have carte blanche to investigate people like you."

"People like me?"

"And, covert organizations. Like the one you head up," it was a shot in the dark, and Mulder knew it, but he saw by the flicker in Straker's big blue eyes that he'd hit something that mattered.

"I am the President of an up-and-coming computer company, no more."

"And the CEO of a failing film studio in England - don't forget that!"

"Not to mention your odd departure from the USAF in 1969. You never resigned - never were discharged. You're working for the military, aren't you?" Logan asked.

Straker just smiled that enigmatic smile of his, "Omega does have *some* military contracts, but I don't work for them."

"So how do you explain kidnapping the witness in a murder investigation - and stealing the vic's body before it can make it to the FBI labs in Quantico? You didn't want any of this to leak to the regular channels of law enforcement, did you?" Briscoe queried.

"I didn't steal anything - let alone a dead body."

"So you had your humps do it for you - nice work by the way. CSU had one devil of a time finding any evidence at the hospital - or at the morgue." Briscoe commented.

Scully moved forward, covered by the NYPD detectives and her FBI partner, "We'll just take Mr. Foster, here, back into custody and let him tell his story to the people who matter. I'm sure there are a lot of law enforcement officials who'd be very interested in what he has to say."

Leslie and Little moved forward to protect Straker, Foster and Jackson, "I'm afraid we can't let you do that," Straker said, "A little thing called security!"

Before Scully could reach out for Foster, the four of them were felled by a strange

smelling substance. As they hit the ground, Leslie and Little went over to check them.

"Are they alright?" Straker asked.

Little looked up after checking their pulses, "Out cold. They won't wake up for awhile."

Leslie nodded, "We'll check down the path - they musta come in on foot, but they'd prob'ly left their vehicles somewhere around here."

"Good. Dr. Jackson can administer the amnesia drug to them all, and you and Little can put them back in their cars. Let's get this taken care of quickly and get out of here before the sun comes up," he turned to Jackson and Foster, "We'll get you two on a flight out of NYC as soon as we get back to the city."

\* \* \*

### **June 21st, 1994**

"What the hell were you doing out all night in upstate New York? I've been trying to reach you for hours!" Anita van Buren exclaimed when Briscoe and Logan came into her office. They both had unshaven stubble on their chins, and looked as though they'd slept in their suits, "Where's that pair of FBI agents?"

Briscoe shook his head, "Our cell phones and our handguns were gone when we woke up this morning. Same with Mulder and Scully. They went back to their hotel to get cleaned up and check in with head office."

"Why did you go up there?"

"Well, we were following Mulder. He said he had a lead and for us to go up there after him. He needed back-up. After that...it gets a bit fuzzy..."

"Fuzzy?" Van Buren was not used to her detectives using that word at all.

"Yeah, I know this is gonna sound crazy, but we woke up in the car."

"Were you guys doing some sort of stake out?"

"That's just it, we're not sure," Lenny's voice trailed off.

"OK, you two, sit down, I'll get Profacci to put on the coffee, and let's start from the beginning on this..."

\* \* \*

Scully had just gotten out of the shower when there was a knock on her hotel door. She answered it wearing her robe, a towel around her head, "Yes?"

"It's me, Scully," her relief was evident on her face as she opened the door for her partner.

"Not only our cell phones appear to be missing - our pieces too," Mulder told her.

Scully nodded, "Yeah, mine's gone, alright."

"I called the 27th Precinct. Briscoe and Logan were in a conference with their Lieutenant and the 'do not disturb' sign was out, apparently. I left a message for them to get back to us here at the hotel." Mulder sat down on the edge of Scully's bed, "We got too close to *something*, didn't we?"

"I think so. I just can't remember what. We've been on a lot of weird cases, Mulder - this is the first time I've ever lost all recollection. I know we followed you upstate. I remember driving with Briscoe and Logan, following your directions over the cell phone. Then, there's...nothing."

"We've been messed with, Scully. Somebody did this to us. But, who? And, why?"

\* \* \*

### **ADA McCoy's office later that day**

"I can't work with a case that has no bodies, no victims, and a story of little green men.

Plus a pair of NYPD detectives that seem to have conveniently lost their memories on an unauthorized stake-out in upstate New York!" Jack McCoy was more than a little irritated.

Van Buren looked across McCoy's desk, "We've still got the theory of the crime that the Omega Corporation may have killed Baxter and then kidnapped Foster to keep their industrial espionage a secret."

"We have no proof, Anita. Can you tell me we can get proof that the Omega people were involved in this? Can we get past that phalanx of military and political stonewalling to even get into the Omega building and serve the warrants we'd need to search the place?"

The Lieutenant sighed, "Not right now. But, if we had a little more time..."

Claire Kincaid was sitting in on the meeting, "The most we know about Omega is that they seem to have some sort of protection at the highest levels. We can't get beyond that. We're being told, in no uncertain terms, to drop the case. Even your own detectives can't say what happened out there last night. Where does that leave us if two NYPD officers and two FBI agents can't get their shit together on this?"

"I guess we're nowhere, then."

"Look, Anita, I agree with you that something criminal has gone on here - but I need evidence of criminal wrongdoing to even get this thing to a Grand Jury. Without witnesses or evidence of any kind, I'd just be wasting the court's time," McCoy temporized.

Van Buren nodded and got up to leave, "Do you still want that report from Olivet when she gets done talking to Briscoe and Logan?"

"No, don't bother. I doubt if they're going to come up with anything at this point. Close encounters of any kind are not arguable in court."

\* \* \*

"Agent Mulder?" the voice on the phone was vaguely familiar.

"Yes. Who's speaking, please?"

"My name isn't important, but what I have to tell you may be. Do you know two NYPD detectives named Briscoe and Logan?"

The caller had Mulder's attention now, "What have you got?"

"I think you should contact Dr. Elizabeth Olivet. She's a psychiatrist with the New York police department. She just might have an interesting report for you to look at." the line went dead.

Mulder hit the star-69 button, but the computer told him that number was unavailable. Then, he hit the quick-dial button for his partner, "Scully? I think we've got to make another trip to New York."