

Kyser In Praeteritum

November 2, 2008

Washington, D.C.

It was a pretty normal and dull day, in the gray-skyed, Washington, D.C. I had just gotten off my shift and was heading to my car. As I got in and sat, I went to check if I had all my stuff: wallet, keys, gun, swiss knife, and sunglasses. I started the car and started to drive down the road, as my phone buzzed indicating a text. I was tempted to check it but knew it was wrong to do that as I was driving. As I went down the road, my family flashed before my eyes.

“Was it all worth it? Was I really happy,” I asked myself. I always thought of leaving work for my family but never got the strength to do so. I pulled over to my favorite coffee shop and got myself seated. Haven’t felt this type of peace ever since I went to visit my family in Daly City in California. After some time and thinking I decided it was time to get back home.

When I reached home and got myself ready for some rest, I checked my phone. Just some weekly CompStat numbers and whatnot. There was one thing I have wanted to do for the past week and that was to call my wife- I stared at the phone app like I was expecting it to do something. I did that for what felt like an eternity. I built up the courage and hit the “ring” button.

**Ring* ...*ring**ring*-*

“What do you want!?!?” a voice yelled on the other line.

“I just wanted to ask how you guys are doing,” I replied.

“Listen I’m off to my shift and I don’t have much time. We’re doing fine.” I sighed...

”How’s Mac?” I asked.

“Why do you care? Don’t you love your work much more than us?”

I was shaken.

“Listen, Samantha, I’m trying my best to get some loose ends tied and-” the line was cut. I tossed my phone to my desk and crashed onto the bed.

“Will they take me back?”

November 3, 2008
Washington, D.C.

As I was driving into work today, I got a call from the ASAC Office. They wouldn't give me information over the phone, but they told me to hurry. I rushed over to the office and hastily opened the door. The Assistant Special Agent in Charge told me to take a seat...

"What can I do for you, sir? I rushed over as quickly as I could," I said.

"Agent Wayne, we have just received a threat from an unknown caller, specifically asking for you." He picked up his phone and played a voice message:

"I am calling for Kyser Wayne. Meet me personally at the North Sentinel Islands or your family will get it. Don't bring backup. Don't bring anyone. You will come to me unarmed and with no contact with the outside world. You have 1 week."

I was shaken to my core.

"The techs couldn't figure out the voice from all the criminal databases since the voice on the message was distorted," said ASAC Holt.

"What am I gonna do, sir?" I asked.

"You mean what are we gonna do? I'll get the techs to figure out where the message came from. You and another agent could help pull out some records following the information from the techs. Agent Wayne, you are gonna have to go solo."

Solo? No way. I have a family! But what good is my family if they die at the hands of the mysterious caller?

After about half an hour after the ASAC called me into his office, I got the info from the techs. The call was confirmed to come from the North Sentinel Islands. I got in my buddy, Special Agent Halpert, to help me in getting some records and old case files. We pulled on some relating to the North Sentinel Islands. After some digging, we found one match for the location: Anton Wiles.

"I know that name...did I work his case before?" Then it hit me. I busted half of the Wiles family for firearm and diamond smuggling. But why would he get back at me only now? I kept browsing his file...*deceased*.

"But he's dead...I shot him in the head..." Who called me then? Another family member whom I haven't busted?

November 3, 2008

Washington, D.C.

I couldn't sleep easily. The thought of my family in danger and me not being able to be with them was killing me. I had stayed up all night trying to figure out who called in the threat before I realized it was morning and it was time to go back to work. I threw down a mug of coffee and rushed back to work. As I walked in, Agent Halpert noticed me. Agent Halpert is Spanish and is a short, but buff guy. He was loyal and had a great sense of humor.

"Rough night, bud?" he asked.

"Yeah, that usually happens when you are scared out of your mind about the safety of your family," I said sarcastically. He gave me a look.

"I'm sorry I haven't slept all night."

I got myself seated at my desk and laid my head down on the cool, hard, desk. I had 6 days to get to the North Sentinel Islands with a plan of not dying and at the same time keeping my family safe. This was impossible. My buddy Halpert sat down next to me.

"Hey man, I could go with you to the Sentinel Islands."

"Nah. I can't do that to you, Halpert."

"Hey man, it's fine. I don't got a family," he reasoned.

"That's not the problem. I don't want you to risk your life because of me."

"We're still gonna die on the force together like we always said," he replied.

"Well..."

"I insist. I'm going with you!" Halpert exclaimed, walking off to get a coffee.

"But..."

What was I supposed to do? Stop him? No, I'm scared down to my very soul. I'm thankful that he insisted.

I've been deciding whether the entire thing was a trap, but all signs pointed to it not being one. Halpert has been weirdly excited to be going with me on the mission.

"Didn't ASAC Holt tell you I was going solo?" I asked, with a tired expression.

"I already told him, he had the same look you had," Halpert chuckled.

Great. He already told him. Just great.

November 4, 2008

Washington, D.C.

I had just started packing my things for the trip:

Guns and ammo

Clothes

Food and water

Surveillance equipment

More guns and ammo

All set. I called up Halpert-

**Ring*... *ring*... *ring*-*

"Halpert here, what's good?"

"Hey. Are you ready for the trip?"

"Yeah man, just cooking up my breakfast. What about you?"

"Oh, I'm just finishing up now. Could you do me a favor?"

"Sure man. What is it?"

I thought for a while.

"Could you get my family in protection? Just in case, you know...when things go south?"

Halpert took an unusually long while to reply...

"Uh...sure buddy!"

"Alright, thanks...I'll be seeing you later."

I hung up the call and put the phone down.

I met up with Halpert at the office, went into the briefing room, and was greeted by ASAC Holt.

"Alright, agents. We just got satellite imaging of the place where our caller was traced. They seem to be staying in a bunker right in the dead center of the island. The plan is to be secretly

transported onto the island and take him out without alerting anyone. The mission should not take long. You both have a week to complete the mission. All means of transport will be funded but not arranged by the FBI. Winston has men in Bangladesh so arranging any transport will raise alarms. Any questions?"

"All clear," said Halpert.

"Agent Wayne?"

I stayed silent for a bit.

"All clear," I said

"Alright gentlemen, good luck," replied ASAC in conclusion.

A little later we were boarding a plane going to Bangladesh.

"You nervous?" Halpert asked.

"Not at all. You?" I replied.

"Nah I think this is going to be fun."

Wow. Fun. The guy's a psychopath.

20 hours later...

We arrived in Dhaka, Bangladesh. After Halpert and I had checked into our accommodation and got ourselves situated, we stepped outside to explore our surroundings. The bustling street was full of street food, cars, and rickshaws, and the smell of street food and burning charcoal filled the air. Halpert went to try some Bangladeshi street food.

"Do you want some? It's called shingara. It's like this Bangladeshi samosa," Halpert asked me with his mouth stuffed with food.

"We gotta be on the down-low, man. The target might be expecting us here," I rebuked.

"Oh relax, Kyser. You've been so worked up for the past few days."

"Probably because the safety of my family depends on this entire mission," I replied angrily,

"I'm sorry man. Want a shingara?"

I shook my head. As we both walked down the **busy and compact** street, someone bumped into me. I looked back and checked my pockets. My wallet was gone. I then proceeded to dash down the street toward the thief.

“Hey! Where ya going?” Halpert yelled.

I finally caught up to the thief and tackled him to the ground. I pulled out my gun and aimed it at them. I looked into their eyes and masked face.

“Unmask yourself and put your hands up,” I said, pulling out my ID.

They complied.

He looked like a young boy. 13 or so. With curly and bushy hair.

“Give me my wallet.”

He slowly backed away...

“HEY! DON’T MOVE.”

He tip-toed toward an alleyway.

“HEY, I WILL SHOOT,” I screamed.

He darted for the alleyway and I gave chase, pushing through people and carts. As he was about to turn a corner, an arm swung out and struck him right on the head. Halpert stepped out from the darkness.

“Hey, you’re lucky I caught up”. He said grinning.

“Thanks,” I replied.

Halpert kneeled down and checked on the boy.

“He’s unconscious. Let’s get him to a hospital.”

We got a ride to the hospital and got him on a bed. While waiting for him to regain his consciousness, Halpert and I sat down and formulated our plan to interrogate him:

“So what are we gonna say to him?” I asked

“We aren’t really sure whether he works for the target or whether he’s just a street thief. I mean he did just go for your wallet,” Halpert replied.

"We should probably just let him go- we don't have time for this. I have my wallet back anyway."

"Agreed. Ooh while we go back to the hotel can we get shingara?" Halpert said excitedly.

I sighed.

We just got back to our accommodation when we got a call from ASAC Holt:

"Agents, how are you both doing?"

"We are doing just fine, sir. Anything new developments?"

"We just ID'd your target. Winston Wiles. Son of Anton Wiles and is 34 years old. His appearance shows a height of 5'9 and is Hispanic. He escaped from prison and is hiding in the North Sentinel Islands. He is rumored to have forced the local and normally hostile tribe to work for him. Look out for him once you reach the island. Do you copy?"

"Affirmative, sir," I replied.

He hung up and I put down the phone.

"Forced the local tribe? The man's a psycho," said Halpert, angrily.

"Yeah, he is one piece of work," I said.

It was 10 pm, and we had to get some rest before we hit the docks tomorrow.

"Alright. I guess I'll hit the hay. See ya in the morning, buddy," said Halpert.

"Good night."

November 7, 2008

Dhaka, Bangladesh

I woke up with a start. I just had a dream last night where my family was captured and taken back to the Sentinel Islands. Not a great thing to dream about...

I got myself dressed and geared up and woke up Halpert:

"Halpert, wake up," I whispered.

"Oh. What's up?" he replied.

"It's time to get moving. We're hitting the docks in 10 minutes."

I quickly went to get us some food outside and returned to our accommodation. By the time I returned, Halpert was all set to go. We ate a quick meal and promptly headed outside to get a cab:

"HEY, I NEED A RIDE!" I said, beckoning over to a driver.

We put our stuff in the trunk and hopped in.

"We need a ride to Port Dhaka," I told the driver.

He nodded and started driving.

After the short ride and paying the driver, we hopped into the boat that ASAC Holt arranged for us. The boat took us down to a dock that had access to the open sea. The dock was old and rickety, feeling as if the boards they used as a walkway would give way anytime.

"Well, Halpert. This is it, the point of no return."

"Oh cheer up, Kyser. We're gonna nail this mission. Have faith," Halpert replied.

"If you say so..."

Halpert and I looked for a boat driver that was willing to get us close enough to the Sentinel Islands where we could dive and swim towards it. A lot of drivers refused our offer of 3000 dollars for a boat ride to the Islands, and we usually got told to stay away from the island because of the hostile tribe. We were about to give up hope until we found one driver....

"Hey, would you be willing to get us to the North Sentinel Islands?" I asked.

"What? No no no. You stay away from the Islands. The tribe will kill you!" said the driver with a Bangladeshi accent.

"Would give 3000 dollars for it. We just need to get close enough to swim towards it," I replied.

His face lit up with glee after I mentioned the 3000 dollars.

"3000? Wow. I can pay for my daughter's education with this!" he exclaimed.

"So you'll do it?"

"Yes, sir. I will prepare the boat. We leave in 10 minutes."

I smiled and shook his hand. I gave Halpert a thumbs-up indicating I have gotten us a driver, and he gave a thumbs-up back.

10 minutes later we boarded the boat, greeting the driver as we entered. I found it kind of sad that this driver is risking his life for his daughter to get an education, so I tried to get more personal with him:

"I'm Kyser, nice to meet you. What's your name?" I said as I shook his hand.

"My name is Achyut," he said with a smile.

"You got a wife?" I asked.

"Yes. And I have 3 kids."

"Oh, nice. How old are they?"

"One is a 13-year-old girl and the other is a 4-month-old boy."

"Oh, I see. That's nice."

Fear engulfed my heart knowing I have endangered a man with a family. I turned to Halpert:

"We must protect this guy at all costs," I whispered in his ear.

"I thought that was assumed. What just dawned on you?" he chuckled.

"He has a family. Man, we gotta keep him safe."

"Of course."

Achyut started up the boat and we slowly moved away from the dock and maneuvered to face the open sea. The boat we rode on was a motorboat with enough food and water to last us 5 days. I turned to Achyut again:

"So do you do this for a living?"

"Yes. But no one has offered as much as you. I would normally not accept a trip to the North Sentinel Islands," he said.

"Oh, I see."

8 hours later and a day's worth of food later...

"Kyser, Halpert. We reached the island." Achyut said with binoculars up to his eyes.

I woke up with a start. I beckoned for him to pass me the binoculars.
There it was. The island.

I woke up Halpert and both of us geared up for a dive. I reached into my duffle bag, pulled out a holstered Glock 40, and handed it to Achyut.

"Hey, I don't usually hand guns to strangers, but this time I could make an exception," I said.

"Oh. Uhm...ok, thank you," he said, surprised.

Halpert pulled me aside and whispered in my ear:

"You aren't supposed to be giving guns." He said angrily.

"I know but we are near a very dangerous place, come on. Understand me," I replied.

"Fine."

We wore our oxygen tanks and walked over to the edge. As I looked over into the dark water, with the hot sun beating against it, I asked myself if I should just fight or surrender.

I turned to Achyut:

"Don't use that gun unless you absolutely need to."

He nodded and attached the holster to his hip.

"You ready?" I asked Halpert.

"I guess," I told Halpert.

And we dived...

...deeper, and deeper....

After about 15 minutes of swimming, we finally hit land. **The hot, moist tropical jungle ahead of us greatly varied from the atmosphere back in D.C.** We quietly pulled out our suppressed AR-15s from a waterproof bag and slowly walked forward, aiming towards the treeline. When we hit the treeline, I pulled out a bag and we changed our diving suits into combat gear.

"Testing, testing," said Halpert to the radio.

"Radios operational," I replied.

We advanced into the thick jungle, checking every angle for any threats. I was watching from the front while Halpert was at the rear.

"9 o'clock." Said Halpert on the radio.

In a flash, I aimed my rifle to my left. But I wasn't seeing what I was expecting; a fully geared mercenary armed with a rifle. No, it was a young Sentinelese boy, carrying a string of fish- just looking at us.

We slowly backed away. Gesturing to the boy to keep quiet. He dashed off into the thick jungle, screaming.

"Now's our time to run," I said to Halpert.

"Affirmative," he said worriedly.

We rushed back to where we first emerged and ducked behind a thick bush. Luckily, our combat gear was camouflaged in a jungle pattern, masking our location. In moments, a whole swarm of Sentinelese tribesmen was rushing past us, bellowing out a blood-curdling war cry.

"I'm gonna check on where they are," I said to the radio.

"Copy," replied Halpert.

I snuck up to where I last saw them headed. The crunching of the flora beneath me left me worried about giving away my position. I opened up some bushes just enough to peek through and saw that the tribesmen were searching for us at the beach, all with crude spears and knives.

Halpert caught up to me and raised his rifle, ready to fire. I reached over and lowered his rifle, gesturing to him to keep quiet and we shouldn't blow our cover.

It wasn't long before the tribesmen retreated back into the jungle where they spawned. Halpert and I continued our advance for about 2 hours. Pulling out a map, I checked for the coordinates of where the bunker was located.

"Man, I'm really tired," Halpert said as he fanned himself.

"I know, but it won't be long before we reach the bunker," I replied.

"How long 'till we get there?"

"About 20 minutes," I replied.

Approximately 20 minutes later...

We were getting nervous. We were nearing the location but there wasn't a sign of anything. Until...*thud*. My steel-tipped boots hit something hard on the ground. I bent over to inspect it: It was metal...I unearthed the finding to reveal a vault door.

"Here we are," I said to Halpert.

I slowly turned the handle of the door until...**whoosh**....

I flashed a light down the entrance, revealing a ladder leading down into the bunker.

"Start going in, I'll provide cover," said Halpert.

I stepped in and slowly started to climb down...

It was risky to enter the bunker this way, but it was the only way. I was paranoid as my boots hit the rock floor below me. I started advancing as Halpert followed, our flashlights lighting up the shadows surrounding us. The light revealed a small steel-paneled room with a blast door at the end, **with every bit of movement ringing the steel floor beneath us**. After I took one more step, a deafening alarm sounded.

Halpert and I threw our rifles to our backs and started climbing. Once we reached the door, we held our rifles up as we were sprinting to cover.

Bang*...*bang*...*bang

Bullets went whooshing past us. We both dove behind a boulder and did tactical stances. The enemies emerged from their hiding places and took their positions. They had maroon hoodies and bulletproof vests, with their faces covered with balaclavas, and armed with AK-47s. Their inexperience in combat showed in the shots they were taking, which were far-off.

Halpert and I took our bursts, leaving piles of 5.56 cases on the ground.

**pew*...*pew*...*pew*...*

**pew*...*pew*...*pew*...*

We both took out 4 enemies when we made our retreat into the thick jungle. I was huffing from the distance we ran but I was so sure I heard a different sound.

The sound of a pickup truck echoed through the jungles.

Vroom ... *vroom*.

“Oh no,” I said under my breath.

I was losing hope when Halpert found a cave:

“HEY, WE COULD GET IN HERE.” He screamed.

We both dove in, not caring whether it was a good idea or not. We just had to escape.

I ducked down behind a rock, while Halpert hid in the shadows. We waited for the enemies to pass, with our rifles aiming toward the mouth of the cave.

As they ran past us, we both heard a foreign unknown language.

“What language is that?” Halpert said through the radio.

“I have no idea, man,” I replied.

I took a peek and saw that the masked men had slight resemblances to the Sentinelese tribesmen that chased us down earlier.

As a group of them walked by, one of them looked over into the cave with a flashlight. He probably saw me quickly escaping back into the darkness indicated by him and 2 others slowly advancing into the cave.

“Come out. Hands up,” he calmly ordered.

I gestured over to Halpert to make a run down into the cave, and we both took off. We didn’t look back, but we could hear the running footsteps behind us.

“STOP WHERE YOU ARE!” one of them screamed.

We reached a dead end. There was no hope for us.

“There has to be a way,” I said.

“Better find that way quick,” Halpert said, aiming his rifle back where we were.

I felt around for a little bit, and I found...a button.

I pressed it and it opened a trapdoor leading to a staircase.

"Welp. Here goes nothing." I said.

Halpert followed and the trapdoor shut behind us. We stayed put for a while to keep quiet in case our pursuers would hear us. We could hear their boots scurrying across the ceiling above us.

"We lost whoever we were chasing." One of them said.

"Probably it was just nothing. Let's just go back." Another one said.

Their footsteps indicated a sound of retreating, and we were safe.

Halpert and I turned on our flashlights, hoping that what we just stepped into wasn't a trap. We started descending the stairs, with darkness surrounding us as we continued on, **hoping we wouldn't hit our heads on the jagged ceiling we were under.** There were rails along the side, protecting us from what looked like a very far drop into darkness. At the end, we saw another blast door, identical to the one we saw last time. Halpert turned the handle and I took a tactical stance, waiting for the door to open- ready for whatever awaited us on the other side...

Whoosh....

I rushed in, guns up and ready to go. Four men in the same maroon hoodies stood up from a table, reaching over to their AKs. Halpert and I took them down before they could move for another second, bodies falling down quietly. Halpert walked over to the table:

"Looks like our friends were having a game of blackjack," said Halpert.

I grinned and searched the room. There was another door at the other side of the small room.

"What's with all these blast doors?" I wondered.

Halpert just shrugged and went to open up the other door. Yet again, I took my tactical stance.

Whoosh...

We rushed in the same style as we did the other. This time, there were no enemies. Just a long steel-plated hallway, with rooms lining both sides. The hum of the fluorescent lights somehow gave me a calming sensation. As if I wasn't in enemy territory and could die at any moment.

The silence was abruptly broken after the sounds of footsteps started ringing on the turn at the end of the hallway. Halpert and I rushed over into one of the rooms. Luckily the doors weren't blast doors and were just stainless steel entry doors. We quickly entered, checked the room, and ducked on either side of the doorway.

I held my breath, hoping that the footsteps would just pass by us. But alas, my fears came true. Apparently, the room we had just entered was the only storage room within that hallway. We learned this only after we exited the room following a short combat session:

The door opened. As the enemy entered, I got him in a headlock and knocked him out unconscious. Before Halpert helped drag the body into one of the crates in the storage room, I snagged a map from the body to know the layout of the bunker. We both exited the room and went left of the hallway. We moved like a swift and dangerous team, taking tactical positions left and right. There were almost no indicators of the current location, which is why the map came in handy.

As we went deeper into the bunker, more and more groups of enemies came by us- giving us such an ordeal. Multiple times, we almost get caught by one of them, and multiple times did we have to stealthily knock one of them out. We had to be careful not to take out too much of them, otherwise, they would notice and start looking for us.

Eventually, we reached an area designated "QUARRY ACCESS". Flashbacks to when I busted Anton Wiles and his diamond mining and smuggling empire flooded my brain.

"So Winston Wiles has been carrying out his father's operation in hiding this whole time..." I radioed Halpert.

"Seems like it," he replied.

As we entered the quarry, sounds of heavy machinery and drilling started surrounding Halpert and me. There were those same guards in maroon hoodies stationed at almost every angle. We took a peek at the quarry down below. I was horrified at what I saw.

"Are those...Sentinelese tribesmen?" Halpert asked.

"They are using the Sentinelese as slaves. This guy is a monster." I said.

Sounds of crying Senintelese men echoed through the walls of the quarry, sometimes mixed in with the sound of shouting. I noticed that the guards in charge of watching the slaves spoke what I can only assume was Sentinelese since the slaves could understand. The other guards patrolling the premises spoke English when they communicated with one another. I deduced that Wiles used some Sentinelese people to betray their tribe and use them as the only way of communication with their captors.

We exited the quarry onto another hallway. This time, the sign said "WINSTON ESTATE".

"Bingo," I said.

There were two elevators gaining us access to the estate. But there were 4 guards blocking our

path.

**pew*... *pew*...*

**pew*... *pew*...*

Halpert and I took down the guards in quick succession. We had to hide the bodies quickly before any other guards showed up.

“And down we go.” Said Halpert as we descended in the elevator.

**ding*...*

**pew*... *pew*...*

**pew*... *pew*...*

Our silenced ARs were way too quick for the two guards standing in the way. We then were faced with yet another blast door, but this one was more reinforced and bigger than the others.

“Damn. We need a password to enter.” I said.

**ding*...*

The elevator behind us was about to open up. As two enemies stepped out, Halpert took down one while I held the other at gunpoint. But the one I held at gunpoint was different. This one didn’t have a maroon hoodie- but plated armor and a beret.

“Well, what a convenience,” Halpert said.

“Open up the passcode now,” I said.

“Never,” said the captive.

I kicked his leg and held the gun closer.

“OPEN IT,” I shouted.

He crawled up the blast door and reached for the keypad.

**beep*... *beep*... *beep*... *beep*...*

**whoosh*...*

We were in.

I then took down the captive then advanced into the new area. The Estate was very luxurious. With walls lined seemingly with gold, marble flooring, a huge chandelier, and a fountain in the front, you wouldn't think this place belonged to a diamond smuggler, but that would make sense.

It was awfully quiet in the estate. The entire area seemed to have the same interior. All we could hear was the trickling water of the huge fountain and the sounds of our boots hitting the ground. Behind the fountain was a grand staircase, leading up to yet another level with a fountain.

"This guy is living the life..." said Halpert.

We ascended the grand staircase, checking every possible angle. There was still nothing. We checked every single room in the estate, still nothing- until we reached a doorway with the words: "MAIN OFFICE".

"This must be where he is," said Halpert.

"I guess so. Get ready to breach," I replied.

Halpert moved back and kicked the door down. We rushed in not to see a man cowering in fear, but instead, a man, sitting at his desk, with his back turned toward us. The room revealed a large, curved, glass window behind the desk, giving us a fantastic view of the jungle down below. That's when we realized that the office we were in was built on top of a gushing waterfall. When he turned around, he had a nonchalant expression on his face. He was wearing a velvet suit with a black bowtie. He had tidy black hair and a mighty-looking face.

"I see you have found me. You didn't follow my demands. I am Winston Wiles," he said with a British accent.

"You think I would just come here alone and unarmed? I'm not stupid," I replied with rage in my voice.

"Yes, but you weren't clever enough to figure out this was a trap," he said with a grin.

At that moment, squads of guards came bursting out of the rooms where we once were. They stopped in the hallway leading to the office and took positions. Halpert and I quickly overturned the desk and held Winston hostage.

"DON'T TAKE ANOTHER STEP. I WILL SHOOT," I shouted.

Behind the squads of guards, laughing emerged. It was the voice of Winston Wiles.

"But how..." I said.

I looked over to the hostage I thought was Winston Wiles. But it was just a decoy.

"Fire," ordered Wiles.

We quickly ducked behind the desk, with bullets whooshing past us. There wasn't much we could do, the desk isn't really a good cover. I aimed my rifle at the desk and blind-fired.

I looked over to Halpert as I shot my gun. My face turned white. I saw his arm bleeding down onto the floor. The gunfire continued on.

"Oh my...you're shot. What do we do?" I asked.

"I'll be fine," he said with a grunt.

"How do we get outta here?" I asked

"Jump out the window and hope that the water is deep enough to break your fall." He replied hastily.

"You must be joking," I said.

He looked straight at me dead in the eyes.

"No," I said sternly

"You have to. It's our only way. I'm gonna stay here to cover for you. I'll just be deadweight to you anyway," he replied.

I looked around. With bullet holes peppered along the floor and desk. I looked over to the bleeding Halpert.

"Goodbye. I will look for you." I said with a salute.

He saluted back. I peeked over the ledge. The rushing water and the mist made me unsure of my survival.

I laid on my back and put my foot towards the desk we used as cover then with a mighty push, I started to fall out of the window into the mist.

Falling...falling...falling...

CRASH

I suddenly found myself in the cold waters at the bottom of the waterfall. I blindly swam further into the darkness, hoping I would find some land. A bit of sediment touched my vest, indicating I am now near some land. The water got more shallow as I crawled up and out of the water. As I regained my stability, I choked on some water. **Back into the thick jungle I went.**

"Search down below. We need to find him." Wiles shouted at the estate above me.

I quickly ran into some bushes, my rifle at the ready. In moments, the area was surrounded by guards.

"Did you find anything?" a guard asked another.

"Nope," the other replied.

"He won't be happy..."

I waited for about an hour in that bush, when they finally left. My legs were aching. It was nighttime, so I set up the sleeping bag that I pulled out from my combat bag.

I had a tough time sleeping, the thought that Halpert might be dead and the whole mission is a disaster started flooding my brain.

"Oh, what have I done..." I said to myself.

November 8, 2008

North Sentinel Islands.

I woke up with another bad dream. The story my brain played for me while I slept wasn't very tasteful. It included the death of Halpert, my family, and me. I brushed it off and went on to get going. I was still wet from the waterfall, but wet clothes won't stop me from rescuing my buddy and putting an end to this villain. I rolled up my bag and continued on.

Finding a new entrance was not easy- I searched for an hour. I had no choice but to climb up the way I came down. I got my grappling hook out and aimed at the window...

**pewshh*....*

**cling*...*

I started to climb up the rope, hoping that no one would be waiting for me at the top. It was a long and tiring climb, but I finally reached it. My goal was to retrieve Halpert and eliminate Wiles.

The first thing I noticed was cautionary tape lining the entire office. As I pulled myself up, I heard

footsteps ringing through the halls, getting closer and closer. I unholstered my suppressed Glock 17 and aimed right where the sounds were coming from. As soon as I saw the maroon hoodie, I shot.

**pew*... *pew*...*

I quietly dashed towards the body, looting it for any source of information. I also did one thing Halpert and I probably should've done before. Use the disguise.

I dragged the body into a nearby room, cautiously searching for any enemies that could be there. When I knew the coast was clear, I started stripping down my combat suit and stuffed it into my bag. I was soon dressed like one of the guards, balaclavas and all. I searched the vest for an ID, hoping that it would grant me unrestricted and peaceful access to most if not all facilities in the bunker. There.

"We are now Mike Podolski," I said as I pulled out an ID and clipped it to my vest. I then hid the body in a vent then went on with my mission.

As I walked in the hallways, someone called out behind me:

"HEY, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? GET OVER HERE."

I got nervous, then slowly turned around and started walking toward the hostile man.

"You are supposed to be on Floor 7. Get your butt over there right now," he said sternly.

I nodded and started going my way over to Floor 7. The problem was...that I didn't know *how* to get to Floor 7. I wandered around for what seemed like hours, hoping I wouldn't bump into that same guy who told me off. I then saw an elevator- what a relief. I slid in my ID and then entered into the elevator.

"Hmm...ah. Floor 7."

**beep*...*

As the elevator descended, I formulated a plan to find Winston in his estate as I got out a pair of thermal goggles and a grappling hook.

I unscrewed the vents on the ceiling of the vent and then grappled myself up. As I got on my feet on top of the elevator, I spotted another vent along the elevator shaft. Bingo. I jumped off the moving elevator and then unscrewed this vent. After the last screw fell off, I looked down to see the elevator moving up.

“Oh no.”

I hastily unlatched the grate and then climbed in, barely missing the elevator that was about to cut me right in half.

I pulled out a blueprint of the vents I had snatched from a maintenance room hours ago. I looked for the place where they would keep a hostage- maybe a prison.

“Ah. Perfect,” I said putting my finger on the blueprints.

My goal was to get back to the Estate, bust Halpert out, then radio Achyut for exfiltration.

After 45 minutes of crawling in the dark vents, I reached the prison. There were obviously no vents in the cells, so I was directly outside the prison. I quietly unlatched the vent, pulled out my pistol...

**pew*... *pew*...*

The guard dropped dead. I cautiously jumped down from the vent and then pulled out the card which I only assumed would open up the cell. As the prison door opened, I shot two more enemies standing guard of the cells inside.

**pew*... *pew*... *pew*...*

**pew*... *pew*... *pew*...*

Walking through the prison revealed some things I never knew about Winton. He was manipulating and imprisoning the local tribe. I looked around and saw the pitiful tribesmen trying to convince me to free them in a language I did not understand.

“I will come back for you guys, I promise,” I said sternly.

I continued searching and finally found Halpert, lying on his bunk.

“Hey! I’m busting you outta here,” I whispered over to him.

He quickly got up and his iconic grin came back to his face. I picked the lock and then went to hug my buddy.

“I thought I’d never get outta here man. Thank you,” he said.

“I need help to take down Wiles.”

“You always have to ruin everything,” he said with his eyes rolling.

We started dashing back outside.

“Do you know where we could get guns?” I asked Halpert.

“Yeah, I passed by an armory while being escorted here.”

“Alright, let’s head over there,” I said

After we cleared the bodies, I pulled myself and then Halpert up the vent.

“Just follow my lead. This ventilation system is a little complicated.”

We crawled for about an hour because Halpert kept making wrong turns, but we eventually reached the armory, dropping down to enter.

“Where’d they get all these weapons man?” Halpert said.

“I don’t know. They must have a contract dealer,” I said.

After Halpert armed himself we took back to the vents and made our way to the Winston Estate. Our intel showed us that in the huge space that the Winston Estate is, Wiles stayed mostly around his office area, but that area turned into a warzone when he and a platoon of his men stormed it and trashed the room- meaning the office is no longer the place we would first look. The Estate had an indoor garden, two tennis courts, and a theater. And that’s only the places we explored, there was still so much more to the Estate.

We reached a vent located right in front of an elevator. I carefully and quietly unlatched the vent and then shot the two enemies standing guard:

**pew*... *pew*...*

**pew*... *pew*...*

I dropped down then Halpert followed. I called an elevator as Halpert dragged the bodies with the intent to bring them with us on the elevator so as to not raise alarms. Once the elevator arrived, we both dragged them in.

After a few moments, we reached the Estate to see two guards cleaning up the bodies we both took down and did not hide.

**pew*... *pew*.. *pew*...*

**pew... *pew... *pew*...*

And down they went...

"Huh. Did they not clean up?" Asked Halpert.

"Probably not..." I replied.

"It wouldn't hurt to dump two more bodies would it?"

"I suppose not."

We rid ourselves of those bodies and then proceeded with the mission.

The Estate was surprisingly quiet to us knowing that this was the last known place two intruders (us) were first engaging in combat. We immediately went searching for Winston in the Estate. The tennis courts were clear, the theater was clear, and all of the bedrooms were empty. The last place we checked was the indoor garden.

We reached the door to the indoor garden and stepped in front of a set of two huge doors.

"He's probably in there...you ready?" I asked

"I guess..." Halpert said hesitatingly

We stepped inside. The garden featured a beautiful grass-floored room with a glass roof and multiple species of flora. And there he was. Winston Wiles, still wearing that velvet suit with a black bow tie and armed with an AAC Honey Badger and a whole platoon of men.

"Hello, boys." He said with a grin.

The platoon of men raised their rifles at us in response to us raising ours.

"Hold your fire," Wiles said, stepping forward.

"Don't take another step or we will shoot you," I said.

"Don't you have eyes? You are outnumbered. There is no way you are getting out of this alive," chuckled Wiles.

I menaced at his smug, nonchalant expression.

"You go left, I go right," I whispered to Halpert.

"I go left, you go right?"

I nodded. At that moment, we threw some smoke grenades and then jumped into cover. As we navigated through the smoke, we would hear the enemies shouting and coordinating their movements. With my thermal goggles, it was fairly easy to pick off enemies with all the smoke. As their numbers dwindled they gradually started to get careless in their shots, movements, and overall dynamic as a team. I stepped out of cover to engage in hand-to-hand combat to get as close to Wiles as possible. Two enemies spotted me in the smoke as I was sneaking toward Wiles. I tackled the first guy and used him as a shield as the second enemy carelessly emptied his magazine on me...

**RATATATATATATAATATATATATATAATATATATATATAATATATATATATAATATATATATATA*...*

Once the guy I used was clearly gone, I dashed toward the reloading enemy, disarmed him then took him down, knocking him unconscious.

Wiles was the only one left.

"Kyser...where are you? I'm gonna kill you..." he said with a chuckle.

I snuck up behind him and then proceeded to get him in a headlock. In a struggle, he successfully pushed me away and centered his gun on me. Just before he pulled the trigger, Halpert stepped in and kicked the gun right out of his hands and gave him a right hook to the face, but before Halpert could do anything else, Wiles pulled out a Colt 1911 and shot him right in the abdomen.

"NO!" I shouted standing up.

Before Wiles could take a shot at me I grabbed the gun right out of his hands and threw it behind me. I gave him a round-house kick, temporarily disorienting him, but he tackled me to the ground with a karambit knife. I struggled to get the knife away from my throat, but every second it keeps coming closer. As I looked to the side, I could see Halpert on the ground pointing Wile's Colt 1911 at us.

"TAKE THE SHOT," I shouted.

As he nervously aimed, I closed my eyes.

**BANG*...*

Those few seconds felt like forever. I felt numb. I didn't know if I was shot or not. After my consciousness hit back at me. I felt the weight of Wiles' lifeless body come down on me.

I pushed his body aside and stood up. I proceeded to kick Wiles' body to make sure he was for sure dead. Sure enough, he was gone. I looked over to Halpert with a thankful smile.

"Thanks, buddy," I said to him.

"I always got your back," he replied with a smirk.

As the thick cloud of smoke cleared, I looked around what used to be a beautiful, lush, indoor garden. Now the walls and floor were peppered with bullet holes. Dead bodies, ammo cases, and blood littered the ground. It made me realize how quickly beautiful things like the garden could turn into a cesspool. I walked over to Wiles's body and closed his eyes. I then took out my departmentally issued phone then proceeded to take a picture of the body that I would attach to the case file back home.

"We should probably head back, man," Halpert said as he walked over to me.

"Yeah, I just needa do one more thing..." I said.

"What is it?"

We went back to the prison and quarry to release the captives. Halpert was kinda skeptical because of them being a "hostile tribe". But they were actually very thankful to us as we separated in the jungle.

As we walked back to the beach, changed our clothes, and picked up our stuff, I looked back at the jungle. I was embarrassed that only now I realized how grateful I should be for a friend like Halpert.

"Hey, uh...I didn't get to tell you how grateful I am for you coming with me. I would've never made it out," I said.

"No problem. As I said, I always got your back.

**CRACKLE*...*

"Hello? Achyut? Are you there? Over," I said to the radio.

After a few moments...

"Hello? I am here. Do you need a pickup?" Achyut responded over the radio.

"Yeah. We'll be waiting, over," I replied.

Once we were on the boat, we got worried looks from Achyut. Our torn and bloodied combat suits were totally the ones giving us the attention.

“Uhm. Are you guys okay?” Achyut said worriedly.

“I’m fine. But maybe Halpert needs some patching up. Do you have a medkit or anything?” I asked.

“Right in that box,” he said pointing.

I proceeded to open the box and pick up the medkit.

“Set yourself down, and remove your vest, Halpert,” I said.

After he sat down and removed his vest, I began the operation. I lifted up his shirt, which revealed the bullet stopped in the vest but only slightly penetrated the skin.

“Is it bad?” Halpert asked.

“Nope, it just barely penetrated the skin, I don’t think anything’s hurt inside. Just some blood loss.” I replied.

“That’s good,” he said with a sigh.

“Uh...are you guys ready to go now?” Achyut asked.

“Yeah. Thank you, by the way, for going all the way out here.” I said.

“No problem.”

“Halpert, get some rest. You’ve done a lot today,” I said.

He nodded and laid down on one of the sleeping bags we brought with

13 hours later...

“Hey. Wake up,” Achyut whispered into my ear.

I jolted awake and confused. I then looked around. We have arrived at Port Dhaka. I shakily stood up and walked over to Halpert.

“Hey, we’re here now,” I said tapping him.

“Huh...?” he said, confused.

After he helped unload our stuff and catch us a ride, I reached into my bag and retrieved the payment, in the form of rolls of cash.

"Here's 3000 dollars," I said as I handed the rolls of cash to him.

He looked at the huge sum of money. Then he looked back at Halpert and I then gave both of us warm hugs, which I found to be very wholesome.

"Thank you so much," he said with tears in his eyes.

"Hey, you earned it," I said as we loaded our bags into the cab.

Halpert and I quickly entered the cab and left. We left in a hurry before he could notice that I slipped in 1000 extra dollars, but we were close enough to hear Achyut say...

"Hey! You gave me an extra thousand dollars..." We drove off before he finished his sentence.

November 8, 2008

Washington, D.C.

"Ahhh. Back home," Halpert exclaimed as we stepped off the plane.

"I need a break," I said grumpily.

"You and me both, man," he replied.

When I reached home, I got on my phone.

**RING*... *RING*... *RING*...*

"Hello?"

"Hi, this is Agent Wayne. I'm back in D.C., could you get my family out of protection?"

"Affirmative. We will start the process," the voice on the other line replied.

"Thank you."

After ending that call. I waited and waited. Until I drifted into sleep.

November 8, 2008

Washington, D.C.

I woke up with a jerk. I looked around confused. I had my phone in my hand. Then it finally hit me- I was waiting for a call from my family. I opened up my phone and checked my notifications. Still no new messages or voicemails. Damn. I got up, made myself a delicious breakfast, and

got started on cleaning up my baggage. I opened my duffle bag and started unloading the many guns and ammo I had stored inside. I took the weapons back into the places where I usually hid them. MP5K inside the kitchen counter, two Glock 17s hidden inside the drawers where I keep my forks and spoons, and a spare AR-15 inside a hidden compartment at the back of my closet. I was getting to my ammo when my phone rang.

**RING*... *RING*... *RING*...*

I picked it up.

"Hello...? Who is this?" I asked

"OH MY GOODNESS I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE OKAY!" my wife, Samantha, exclaimed on the other end.

"Samantha? Yeah, I'm fine." I replied.

"DADDY! DADDY!" my 7-year-old son, Mac, exclaimed.

I chuckled after hearing the sweet voice of my son.

"Hey, buddy," I said with a huge smile on my face.

"WE MISS YOU!" Mac exclaimed.

"I miss you guys too," I said, sighing.

"So, uh... when can I meet you guys?" I asked, hoping that I could just meet up with them. I knew that Samantha hated me for always putting the job before my family.

"It's okay Kyser, you can stay with us again...we love you," Samantha replied.

I let out a big sigh of relief.

"I love you guys too."

A few hours later...

I started packing up my stuff to begin moving back to my old house. My current apartment was mostly empty because this would just be a "workplace" while I would be here in Washington, D.C., so packing up wouldn't take too long. All was smooth sailing until I reached my firearms. I should probably explain before I move in...

**RING*... *RING*... *RING*...*

"Hello? You called again?" Samantha asked.

"Yeah...uhm...so do you have a lot of space for me to move my stuff?" I asked.

"I guess...why?" she replied.

"It's just that I have a bunch of weapons...and guns... and ammo..."

"Oh. I guess you can bring them into the basement," she replied.

I was shocked at how unconcernedly she replied. It was almost worrying...she was the religious type that would usually recoil at the mention of weapons or anything relating to violence. I guess she got used to it when I told her many stories about my job.

"Great. By the way, how is Mac doing in school?"

"He's been doing great! He's in the second grade now," she replied.

"Oh...isn't he only 7 though?" I asked.

"Yeah, but the school moved him up since he was doing so great."

"I see. Well, that's great. Anyways...that's all I had to call you for. Bye." I said before I hung up.

November 9, 2008

Washington, D.C.

I was on my way to the FBI Headquarters when I got a call from Halpert:

**BUZZ* ... *BUZZ* ... *BUZZ* ...*

"Hello?" I said, picking up.

"Hey, how are you doing? Will you be going to work today?" he asked.

"Well yeah. Is there something up?" I replied.

"Nah nothing. Just called in to check up on you. See you at work."

"Alright. See 'ya."

Kinda weird but nice feeling getting a call out of the blue from your best bud.

I got into the building and went straight to Holt's office.

"Agent Wayne," he said as I walked in.

"Sir."

"I see your mission was a great success. Our agents have seized 3.3 million dollars worth of 1-carat diamonds. What a bust!" He exclaimed.

"Have they come in contact with any primitive tribe of some sort?" I asked.

"Well they suspected there would be hostiles but they haven't made contact with any. I ordered not to pursue them, like what would they have to do with all this?"

"Yeah..." I said while letting out a sigh of relief, knowing that I'm the one that set them free.

"Anyways...I hear you will be moving to California. Here are the papers. Fill them out and your transfer will be official." he said, handing the papers over to me.

"Thank you," I said, taking them.

I was walking out of the office and then headed over to my desk when Halpert approached me.

"Hey man, I heard you're moving to California," he said.

"Yeah. I am moving back with my family," I replied.

"Good to hear you guys are back together," he said with a chuckle.

"Yeah. I missed them so much."

"Well, we're gonna miss you here," he said with a sigh.

"Well, I don't really know anyone other than you and Holt and a bunch of other agents," I said, now realizing that there are actual people that are gonna miss me.

"I understand."

"But... you should come to visit me, alright? ALRIGHT?" I said loudly.

"ALRIGHT!" He shouted back.

We both looked around to see the entire office looking at us.

"We may have been a bit too loud..." I said.

"Yeah..." Halpert nodded in agreement.

"Anyways..." I said concludingly.

"Yeah...uh. I'll see you in California?" he said.

"Yup," I said as I was going in for a hug.

7 years on the force together, going for a close. I never realized how much missing someone hurts. Is this how my family felt when I was always on the job?

After locking up my apartment and bringing my bags out, I proceeded to call a taxi. It started to rain and it made me feel really deep for some reason. I realized that I actually wanted my family to move over here because I was gonna miss D.C. very much. "Too late now," I said. I was the one supposed to move to California. My family deserves that much. As the cab drove me to the airport, the areas it took me through made me very reminiscent of my stay here. The coffee place, the FBI headquarters...and that's pretty much it. When I first stayed here, I refrained from getting attached to D.C. because I knew and hoped that my family would take me back. Nevertheless, I still enjoyed and will most likely miss D.C. My short trip down memory lane got abruptly cut off by the sound of the driver telling me that we had arrived at Ronald Reagan International Airport. I went through the usual airport processes, security checks, and all that. After about 2 hours of waiting, the speakers finally spoke up.

"All passengers boarding flight 117b to Daly City, California, please proceed to Gate 3"

I finally boarded the plane and took my seat next to another gentleman.

"Goodbye, D.C.," I said, as the plane lifted off the runway with great speed.

The man seated next to me opened up:

"Moving away?" he asked.

"Yup."

"Why?" he continued.

I didn't know at the time if it was the best idea for me to tell a complete stranger seated next to me about my family situation. I told him anyway.

"Moving back with my family. Haven't seen them in a while," I replied.

“Ah. I see. Have a fun time,” he said with a smile.

I smiled back.

The End