

Crosswired - Episode 10

Written by
Steven Cardinal

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Final Draft

steven.cardinal@straighttalkwithsteve.net

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SCENE 1:

Marius and Gretchen ride in a cargo van through the storm.
Gretchen drives.

GRETCHEN Have I done something wrong?

MARIUS Wrong?

GRETCHEN I feel like I'm being punished for something.

MARIUS On the contrary, you've done good work with the asset.

GRETCHEN But you have concerns.

MARIUS Nothing unexpected. Your... entanglement... You knew that going in.

GRETCHEN I know but...
(She sees Boyle and Abrahms trying to free their car from the mud)

Oh god, look at those poor bastards out there.

MARIUS Fools for parking in the mud. (pause) Yes, I'm concerned. Two years. Feelings were bound to develop.

GRETCHEN I am still focused on this mission.

MARIUS Of course, but there are many ways you can help us succeed. Working with the cyborg may no longer be the best use of your talents.

GRETCHEN Then what?

MARIUS When we reach our destination and the asset has been secured, you will be given new orders. How's your Russian?

GRETCHEN A little rusty.

MARIUS You'll be given an opportunity to bring it back up to speed, then.

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GRETCHEN Why there?

MARIUS Our enemies are everywhere. In every major government, they have a hold and it's getting stronger every day. We've just lost a very important set of eyes, but not the only set.

GRETCHEN There are other... beings like Simon?

MARIUS No, I'm afraid not. He's still the pinnacle. Nevertheless, we have agents. Watching. Something big is happening, Gretchen. Something very big. I fear if we don't discover exactly what they're up to very soon, it will be too late.

GRETCHEN And Simon?

MARIUS We'll see. As I said, he is the pinnacle of what we've accomplished. Is he still an asset, though? We certainly can't reintroduce him into the NSA. His cover is blown. It would be a mercy to terminate him. Before someone else gets their hands on him.

GRETCHEN His brain, though. Can't it be placed in another body?

MARIUS It's not that simple. The body we created had to be almost identical to the original, otherwise the brain would reject it. We'd pretty much need an identical twin. And that wouldn't do much for hiding him, now would it?

GRETCHEN No sir. (pause) There's the gas station up ahead.

MARIUS Ok. Let's make this quick.

SCENE 2:

Agent Brown, out of breath, gets into the car, closing the door. Kazin is waiting for him.

KAZIN Any troubles?

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BROWN No sir. It's attached. We should be able to follow at a safe distance until we're ready.

KAZIN Which did you put it on?

BROWN The cargo van, just like you said.

KAZIN Any sign of the asset?

BROWN No sir. Just 2 men. No one else got out of the vehicles.

KAZIN Can't blame them. One of the perks of leadership, Agent Brown.

BROWN Yes sir.

KAZIN Radio the others. Give them the tracking codes. Once we know where they're heading, we'll plan an ambush.

BROWN Roger that.

SCENE 3:

Gretchen and Marius, who is dozing, continue driving.

GRETCHEN It's breaking up.

MARIUS (wakes suddenly) Huh? What's that?

GRETCHEN Sorry. Didn't mean to wake you. The storm. It's breaking up.

MARIUS I haven't had much sleep the past 48 hours. Our Mr Dougherty is responsible for much lost sleep for a great many people, I imagine.

GRETCHEN (pause) So, I've been thinking. About uses for Simon.

MARIUS Gretchen...

GRETCHEN You said it yourself. There's nothing like him that's ever been created before. To just casually toss him aside...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARIUS Nothing about this is casually done. The years of work. The failures and sacrifices. Necessity, however... Stopping our enemies.

GRETCHEN His mechanical body. He could be trained and deployed for the field. Resist threats a human body couldn't withstand. Defend himself and his team.

MARIUS He's doesn't have the psyche for it. Too passive. Some men are lovers and some are fighters. Mr Dougherty is no fighter.

GRETCHEN Fair enough. But still...

MARIUS Gretchen. Do you know how we developed cyborg technology?

GRETCHEN No, I assumed you had some super smart... But, no. Dr Warkovsky. She said it couldn't be possible. How, then?

MARIUS The Chinese. 12 years ago, a man who went by the name of Santiago Chavez hacked into a top secret facility in Tianjin. He was looking for plans for a rumored aircraft that pretty much every government was trying to get its hands on. He managed to bypass their cyber defenses and exfiltrate a large cache of technical documents.

GRETCHEN The aircraft?

MARIUS No. He found something far more interesting. And impossible.

GRETCHEN Cyborg tech.

MARIUS He put together a team of some of the top scientific minds to decipher it. They spent years trying to make a cyborg. There were many failures. Lives were lost. Your boy Simon - he's the first and only successful cyborg the program managed to create.

SCENE 4:

Kazin and Brown are driving down the highway. Brown is communicating with someone over his headset.

BROWN Copy. Stand by. Mr Kazin, we're pretty sure we've identified where they're heading.

KAZIN And?

BROWN There's a pass along I-77. Here. Some construction going on there. We're prepared to lock it down at your command.

KAZIN I want choppers behind that ridge and men in construction gear along the road. Divert any other vehicular traffic.

BROWN Yes sir.

KAZIN You sure they'll pass through there?

BROWN Confidence is high, sir.

KAZIN Right. Make it happen. And get us there in time to clean it all up. I want this surgical. Stop them. Take the asset. Kill the rest.

SCENE 5:

Gretchen and Marius in the van.

GRETCHEN How did the Chinese develop the technology? Do they have any successful cyborgs?

MARIUS We don't know the answer to either of those. We're not sure they even knew they had the plans.

GRETCHEN What? How the hell--

MARIUS Chavez found terabytes of data. Far more than he could take and avoid detection. He got scared, though. He decided to take something he thought wouldn't be missed. The access dates were old. Like they'd been dropped

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MARIUS (cont'd)

there and never even considered again.

GRETCHEN

But who developed them?

MARIUS

(pause) It's been rumored that first contact was made. With the Chinese.

GRETCHEN

First contact... Aliens? Dr Warkovsky thought it might be, but...

MARIUS

Yes, well, she's not the only one to think that. Perhaps it was an exchange of gifts. Who can say? In any event, we still haven't completely figured it out.

GRETCHEN

Figured what out? You've got Simon. I'd say he's pretty worked out.

MARIUS

Not exactly.

GRETCHEN

What?

MARIUS

He's unsustainable. Without regular maintenance, like Dr Garvin was providing, he won't last.

GRETCHEN

What does that mean? He won't last.

MARIUS

His body isn't self-sustaining. Some kind of... residue keeps collecting on his synaptic interconnects. If it isn't recalibrated regularly, the entire neural network - that thing that links his organic brain to his cyborg body - will break down. He'll develop paranoia. He may become violent. The boy's father... We had to destroy the previous attempt at a cyborg before he could even be deployed. If we can't find someone else who can do what Dr Garvin did, terminating Mr Dougherty may be our only choice.

GRETCHEN

Simon's father?

MARIUS

Volunteered. And it went bad.

GRETCHEN

You destroyed him?

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MARIUS He was my friend. (pause) Yes. I destroyed him. He thanked me. Before he shut down.

GRETCHEN I can't leave Simon.

MARIUS Could you do what needs to be done?

GRETCHEN I...

MARIUS Don't do that to yourself. Take the Russia assignment. Let Simon go.

GRETCHEN But what about his sensory network?

MARIUS His what?

GRETCHEN The sensory network. Those things he can do like detect danger, lies. Stuff like that.

MARIUS What the hell are you talking about?

Gretchen's cell phone rings.

GRETCHEN Shit. Hang on, it's Bannister.
(answers) Yeah?

BANNISTER We need to stop for gas.

GRETCHEN She says they need gas.

MARIUS I thought they filled up when we did? Put her on speaker. (pause) What's going on?

BANNISTER Maybe we got a leak, or this thing is just a gas hog, but we need to fill up soon. We're going to pull off at the next exit.

MARIUS Dammit. Well, we're not stopping. Be quick and get back on track. We'll meet at the warehouse.

BANNISTER Aye-aye. I mean, roger.

Gretchen hangs up the phone.

MARIUS I don't like this.

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GRETCHEN Sometimes we have to adapt. As long as Simon's safe in the back, what's to worry?

MARIUS Diversions introduce risk and risk--

GRETCHEN Speaking of diversions. Looks like we got construction ahead.

MARIUS Dammit. Just keep moving. They won't have people out with the storm and all. What's this sensor thing?

GRETCHEN He called it his spidey sense. Actually, I came up with that. Dr Warkovsky said it's some kind of neural network sensory something or other. (sees flagmen ahead) Shit. I thought you said no one would be working?

MARIUS Keep going.

GRETCHEN The guy has a stop sign.

MARIUS Don't stop.

GRETCHEN But if there's a truck coming... Oh shit.

As vans pull out into the road ahead, the sound of choppers rising up from behind the ridge fills the air. Gretchen slams on the brakes.

SCENE 6:

Boyle and Abrahms are driving quickly while listening to the action coming through the microphone on Gretchen's phone. Helicopters, gunfire, and shouting can be heard.

GRETCHEN Oh shit!

ABRAHMS Does that sound like a helicopter?

BOYLE It sounds like a lot of helicopters.

ABRAHMS Where'd they come from? Did you...?

BOYLE I've been with you the whole time.

GRETCHEN Marius, get down!

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SIMON Gretch?

GRETCHEN Simon? How did you...? Look out!
The sound of gunfire.

GRETCHEN (cont'd) Simon!

ABRAHMS Someone's attacking them!

BOYLE I know!

ABRAHMS Can't you drive faster?

BOYLE How much ammo did you bring?

ABRAHMS Ammo? I got 2 laptops, a pocketful of
thumb drives, and a card skimmer.

BOYLE Then why should I be driving faster?
There's an explosion over the speaker, followed by 2 more.

SIMON Come on! Gretch!

GRETCHEN Those... How did you...?

SIMON Run! We need to get out of here!

GRETCHEN Marius!

SIMON He's dead. Now come on!

GRETCHEN Oh god!
The feed goes dead.

BOYLE What just happened?

ABRAHMS I dunno. I lost the feed. Maybe her
battery died.

SCENE 7:

Simon speaks to the listener.

SIMON Sitting in that box for hours, my
mind followed every pathway, every
connection. Eventually I found the
chip that allowed them to disable my
motor functions. After that it was
trivial to kill it.

(MORE)

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SIMON (cont'd)

When the truck skidded to a stop, my body just sprung into action. I tore through the box like it was tissue paper. My neural net was on fire with rage. I'm not exactly sure how, but I took the helicopters out with a thought. Directed energy, I guess. There will be time to explore that later. At least I hope so. Right now we need to hide. Whoever sent those men will not be happy.

And Gretchen. What to do about her? I haven't decided, but I think I'm safer with her near me. She knows things I need to learn.

As for KANTO? They seem to think they're the good guys. But doesn't everyone think their cause is the righteous one? The people who took me may have been killed in that attack, but they're a small cell in a large organization. Surely they'll come looking for me. Bet they'll be surprised at what they find.