The Conspiracy

Why? That was the last word from that dead man’s lips. Or was it a woman? I could never remember. Their faces meld together, a mosaic of pain and suffering. I would always remember the look on the man’s face, the scream from that woman.

I work as an undercover agent for the organization C.I.A., the *Central Intelligence Agency*. The things I do would haunt normal people, but not me. I am no normal person, for I was trained by the C.I.A. since I was a young boy. I was trained to be the sly, immoral human being that they needed. I was trained to never question my superiors, to mindlessly obey, like drunken sheep. Never before have I questioned the orders that I received, no matter how ludicrous or cruel they were. But that was different. That was before I took the mission. It was known as *Operation Nighteagle*, or, as it was more affectionately called, the *Amputation*. My orders were unknown, to be issued immediately before execution. Afterwards, I was to report back to H.Q., where a debriefing would ensue.

 The silence was deafening. The darkness was blinding. Again, I asked myself, “Why? Why do these people deserve to die? Why do I have to be the one who kills them? And more frequently, why did I take this mission?” Then there was the buzz, and then the familiar mechanical voice.

“Bzzzzzzzzzzt! Agent Double X, please hold out your right arm.”

I held out my arm, and a needle pricked my wrist. They had taken a DNA sample. Must be for security

“Agent Double X, meet your new team members.”

The light went on, a brilliant white light. I was in a long hall, with seemingly no beginning. I saw two other agents standing, facing a door. One was an athletic man, white, with an unremarkable face. The other was a woman. That was odd. A female agent was very rare.

“Please exit for your mission information.”

With a loud hiss, the heavy iron door opens.

I found myself in a large room with many chairs. A large presentation screen was mounted on one wall, the projector on the other. There was the damp smell, giving away the fact that we were underground. We positioned ourselves in the front row, and waited. The presentation screen flickered on. The usual C.I.A. briefing, with the agency’s seal, and the typical patriotic images. A war photo appeared on the screen.

“C.I.A. agents, we are facing a national crisis. Our oil supply has once again dwindled to dangerous levels. We need more oil. At this rate, our oil supply will not last for another year. The solution is to invade the Nation of Qatar. Qatar contains a very large amount of oil. In 6 months Qatar will finish contracts with other countries. It will take 2 months to build the necessary pipelines. We have an 8 month window to go in, take their oil, and leave.”

I look at my fellow agents. We all had looks of skepticism.

“To start this war, we need a reason, a source of conflict. Our plan? To bomb the parliament.”

Now this was a surprise.

“Each one of you was hand-picked. Each one of you has a special job.”

That’s always nice to know. I suppose.

“Agent Phoenix, you are the explosives specialist. You are responsible for the positioning of the explosives.”

The woman looks up, and gives a quick nod.

“Agent Otto, you are the field leader. It is your job to guarantee that the mission runs smoothly. Agent Double X, your job is to detonate the explosives. You will each find your separate mission portfolios inside your quarters. Agents, you are dismissed.”

Today is mission day. Over the past 25 days, all the preparations have been made and the bombs have been placed in position. Now it’s just up to me to detonate them. The time is 10:23. I have 120 seconds. I move into position. 70 seconds. I take a deep breath. 20 seconds. I look around. 10 seconds. Why am I doing this? 9 seconds. Is this right? 8 seconds. How can all these innocent people die? 4 seconds. I can’t do this. 2 seconds. I have to do this. For my country. 1 second. I pressed the button, and all hell broke loose. The parliament building was pure marble, so the bombs didn’t do as much damage as it would have to a modern building. But thanks to our great structural analysis, the building toppled in less than 10 minutes. After the fact, we would learn that 120 people were killed, no survivors.

A man named Yakov Davidovich was accused for the bombing. We declared war on Qatar, and within 10 days, our army had entered Qatar. I was promoted to First Lieutenant. The President gave me the Medal of Honor, for my duty to the country. I had infiltrated the terrorist spy ring. Or so they said. So why was I not content? Was it because of the guilt? Or did I know that it was morally wrong? All I knew was that other people had to know. Now and again, the president shows up on national television, and talks about our war on terrorism. Always, another victory. Another high profile terrorist killed. Another drone strike successful. How many weren’t? How many killed innocent citizens, trying to make a better life for their family and themselves? That’s when I started to think. Started to think about my actions, but also to think about my crimes.

It’s been 10 years since that bombing. The event was dubbed one of the worst terrorist attacks in recent history. We ended up recovering from the oil crisis, but Qatar has become one of the poorest nations in the world. I have changed. When I close my eyes, I see the faces of the thousands of people who died because of me. American and Qatari. And still, nobody knew what had really transpired that day. I had to let people know the truth. They had to know.

I contacted the Qatar government, and they offered me asylum if I leaked the information. I finished my plans to flee to Qatar, and then I contacted a news reporter. After weeks of persuasion, he finally agreed to leak the information. When everything was in place, I flew to Qatar and gave the reporter the documents. I knew that I would never be able to return to my country, that I would have to live as a fugitive, in a foreign country, among strange people. Immediately after, U.S.A. convicted me of treason, sentenced to death. However, as long as I never returned home, that sentence could not be carried out.

I am now 75. In my home country, the C.I.A. has been dissolved. In a government investigation, it was found that the C.I.A. has been using these tactics for decades. The leaders have all been jailed for indefinite sentences. The American Government has pardoned me for my crimes. I have finally returned home. They have rebuilt the Parliament. So much has changed. They do not blame me for the war. I will never be able to atone for my crimes, but I am at least satisfied in what I have done to fix the pain brought on from my actions.

Word count: 1223