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CHAPTER 3



On the afternoon flight back to Texas Zach’s mind couldn’t slow down. Several times before boarding he had taken the quad panel out of the aluminum case to examine it. At most he could see one small fracture and it didn’t even cross an entire crystalline cell. The thermal problem he had been working on might be solved with something as simple as tinted glass and divine intervention. The trip to Chicago wasn’t wasted at all. Instead of trying to sell investors on venture capital for research and development, Zach could be promoting a perfected quad panel that didn't self destruct. He couldn't wait to get back to the clean room at Son Source to do an inspection under a microscope.

Against his penny-pinching personality Zach picked up the air phone that was connected to the back of the airplane seat. Ten dollars a minute to make an air to land call was highway robbery, but he had to share the news. The phone rang at least ten times. Zach wondered why Sally wasn’t home. A quick glance at his watch and an explanation popped into his head. *Sally must be helping out at Kendra’s dance practice? Or Ben could have had a soccer game after school. I’ll try her from the airport. She’ll finally believe in me. I can’t wait to tell her about the break through. Finally, after all the years of research I will be famous and respected.*

Zach's train of thought was broken when the flight attendant leaned in. “Are you having problem with the air phone?”

“No, I’m waiting for our home answering machine to pick up.”

“Sir, the air phone won’t connect unless a real person picks up on the other end. Our passengers get upset if they have to spend ten dollars to talk to an answering machine.”

“Oh.” Zach put the phone back into the cradle on the back of the seat.

33 "Is there anything else I can do for you?" the flight attendant
34 asked.

35 "Yes, I need to use the lavatory but the one at the back of the
36 plane has been occupied for the last twenty minutes."

37 "Follow me sir, you can use the one in first class."

38 Zach unclasped his seat belt and followed the flight attendant up
39 through the curtains into the first class section. Immediately his eyes
40 locked on the passenger wearing the white Ghutra and matching
41 Thawb. Zach stopped midway in the first class section and looked to
42 the side. "Prince Amer Nasser, what a surprise to see you on this
43 flight."

44 The Prince glanced up at Zach. In a guarded tone he replied. "Is it
45 really a surprise or is it part of a calculated scheme that Mr. Philip
46 Rubin put together?"

47 "What?" Zach looked puzzled.

48 Mr. Obaid Naimi was in the window seat and started speaking to
49 the Prince in Arabic. He then looked directly at Zach and asked. "Mr.
50 Slenski could you tell us why you followed us on to this flight?"

51 "I'm on this flight because I live in Dallas Texas and that is where
52 this plane is going to land."

53 The two men started speaking in Arabic again. Then Obaid Bin
54 Naimi asked, "Mr. Slenski would you mind showing us a piece of
55 identification that proves that you reside in Dallas Texas?"

56 In an automatic reflex Zach reached for his wallet then stopped.
57 "Excuse me, but I only came up here to use the bathroom. I have no
58 reason to prove to you two where I live!" Zach moved forward to the
59 lavatory just behind the cockpit door.

60 As Zach washed his hands in a sink no larger than a salad bowl
61 he looked at himself in the tiny mirror. *After the good fortune and*
62 *knowledge I gained this morning I probably won't need venture capital*
63 *from Mr. Rubin or OPEC. Sally would call it divine intervention. But*
64 *what it has really been is a lot of hard engineering and lab work.* When
65 Zach pushed open the lavatory door he noticed Mr. Naimi get out of
66 his seat and take a blocking stance at the curtain separating first class
67 from coach.

68 When he passed the galley and was halfway through first class
69 Prince Amer Nasser's hand grabbed onto Zach's wrist. "Mr. Slenski
70 could we talk for a minute?" Prince Amer moved to the window seat
71 and held on to Zach's arm.

72 "We don't have anything to talk about." Zach yanked his arm back.
73 From the gray partitioning curtain and with a death threatening
74 glare Obaid Bin Naimi pointed for Zach to sit.

75 Zach plopped down in the aisle seat that Prince Amer had moved
76 from. "Okay, only for a minute."

77 "Mr. Slenski, I know we both want the same thing. I would like to
78 reinstate my offer. Let's work together to make the world a better
79 place."

80 "How can we? You don't want solar energy," Zach paused, "And I
81 do!"

82 "Mr. Slenski that is not true." Now Prince Amer paused to put his
83 thoughts in order. "Is it okay if I call you Zach?"

84 "Yeah, sure... Zach or Zachary, whichever you like."

85 "Good, please call me James." Prince Amer Nasser needed to ease
86 the tension and turn on the persuasion.

87 "James is that the American name you went by while attending
88 USC." Zach replied in a sarcastic tone. "Where you learned to speak
89 English and all about the American way?"

90 Prince Amer Nasser frowned. "Zach, I know that solar energy is a
91 clean and alternative future power source. I'm just asking that you
92 hold back for a few years."

93 "A few years? Look at the energy problems right now, today!" Zack
94 had his usual rebuttal in order. "Look at California. You attended
95 college there. Can you imagine being at USC without air conditioning?"

96 "An Abaya or a Thawb could help students stay cool," James'
97 snipped back.

98 "Yeah, right! I could see the Chancellor at USC telling the students
99 to turn off their air conditioning and wear a white robe to stay cool."
100 Zach quipped with more cynicism.

101 "I did see a lot of white robes at Toga parties when I attended
102 USC."

103 "Sorry, I didn't mean to offend the Muslim dress code or Islam
104 faith."

105 "You didn't. A very good friend and USC star basketball player took
106 me to one of those frat parties. We had fun. Peter joked that I didn't
107 have to dress up. Actually, I was one of the few there not in a Tunic. "

108 "I never went to any college parties. I was there to learn electrical
109 engineering not have a good time!" Zack replied.

110 "A, okay." Prince Nasser replied and then let loose of his grip on
111 Zach's wrist. "I fully understand that solar is a reliable alternate source
112 of electrical energy and is good for the United States. I get it."

113 "That's right." Zach moved his head up and down in affirmation. "I
114 went to college to help build an alternative energy grid to improve the
115 standard of living, not only to benefit the United States but the whole
116 world."

117 "I studied hard at USC also. I studied economics and business. So,
118 do you really think solar will improve the standard of living in the
119 Middle east?"

120 "That shouldn't be a problem. From what I know of Saudi Arabia is
121 that you have lots of sun. Solar power would work great in your
122 country. You must have a smog problem from all the oil fired electrical
123 generating plants."

124 "I don't think you know that much about my country, we don't
125 have a smog problem. Have you been to Saudi Arabia? Do you know
126 that the average Saudi family consumes less than one tenth the fossil
127 fuel as an American family does? Do you know that the export of our
128 crude oil makes up over eighty five percent of our Gross National
129 Product?"

130 "Sorry, I just assumed you had a smog problem. And no, I have
131 not been to Saudi Arabia. And yes, I do know that Americans are
132 wasteful," Zach fired back his answers with disdain to the third degree
133 interrogation.

134 "America's lust for oil has been our financial security since 1938,"
135 Prince Amer now spoke in a barely audible voice. He knew firsthand
136 the deaths and wars Black Gold had inflicted in the Middle East—the
137 alternative would be worse.

138 "So eighty-five percent of your GNP is from the exporting of oil?"
139 Zach scratched his head. "I would have never guessed that much. Are
140 you sure about that percentage rate? Often facts like those are
141 distorted."

142 "Were the facts at our meeting this morning distorted? I would
143 question how fast solar power sites can be hooked up to the electrical
144 power grid in the United States." Prince Amer rebutted.

145 "Those were not my facts. Those were facts Carlos Gomez found.
146 His facts seemed skewed to me also," Zach replied with honesty. "But
147 one fact is that my quad panels will produce almost four times the
148 power in the same area."

149 "I realize and understand that implication." Prince Amer looked
150 directly at Zach. "What kind of effect do you think there would be in
151 Saudi Arabia if the demand for oil dropped by ten percent in a short
152 period of time?"

153 "I'm not sure? I guess you would have to cut back on oil
154 production."

155 "That is correct. We would have to cut back on production. We
156 tried that with the oil embargo in 1973. OPEC has still not recovered
157 from that blunder."

158 "That OPEC orchestrated oil embargo was a big wake up call to the
159 United States. Your leaders and oil ministers wanted to punish
160 American citizens for speaking out against the slaughter of Jews in
161 Israel.

162 "I know," Prince Amer said in a disappointing tone. "I was
163 attending the University of Southern California at the time. I sat in the
164 long gas lines also."

165 "So you saw firsthand the dependency that the United States had
166 on oil?"

167 "I did. Back then alternative energy was not even a household
168 word."

169 "Well, it is now! Hopefully my quad panels will finally bring solar
170 energy's cost per watt in line with fossil fuels."

171 "Zach, I totally understand cost per watt." Prince Nasser twisted in
172 the wide first class seat and looked Zack straight in the eyes. "Your

173 panels could create a surplus of oil on the open market. Supply and
174 less demand could collapse the price of crude. The Middle East is
175 different today. Radical fundamentalist are gaining power by selling oil
176 on the black market."

177 "Prince Nasser." Zach paused. "Sorry, I meant James." Zach put
178 his thoughts in order. "James, supply and demand in the long run is
179 good for everybody. I'm sure that there would be a slight down turn
180 for the economy in Saudi Arabia but in the long run cheaper oil and
181 more solar power would benefit the entire world."

182 "Zach your concept of supply and demand is limited to free
183 capitalism. Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy. The tension with
184 different Muslims sects is frightening! Most of the wealth and power is
185 controlled by a few royal families. If my country falls it will be the
186 beginning of world war three."

187 Zach closed his eyes and pushed his head back into the gray
188 headrest. Never in all the years of working with solar energy had the
189 thought of what affect an abundance of clean efficient solar power
190 could have in the Middle East. Solar power was associated with good.
191 Oil was dirty, dark and almost always brought evil. Zach was at a loss
192 at what to say, he slowly open his eyes. "Prince Nasser, I'm not a
193 world economist nor do I pretend to know anything about the Middle
194 East."

195 "I can arrange a trip if you would like," Prince Nasser pleaded.

196 "I'm sorry for your people, but I have to continue on with my solar
197 panel development. It's the right thing for the United States."

198 "Mr. Slenski, you need to think like a Globalist not a Nationalist. If
199 you want to do right, then give me some time!" Prince Amer Nasser
200 paused. "I will change my offer to fifty million dollars for just four
201 years of silence."

202 Zach paused and discerned the offer. *It will probably take at least*
203 *two years more of research and another year to get the quad panels to*
204 *market.*

205 "Prince Amer continued, "Four years is a good offer. You are not
206 even at the production state yet." James looked back over the top of
207 the gray headrest. Obaid Bin Naimi was no longer standing at the first

208 class separation curtain. James cautiously stated. "Working with me
209 would be the Christian thing to do."

210 "So you would give me fifty million dollars not to release my new
211 panels on the open market for four years?"

212 "Yes, that is the offer I'm prepared to do." Prince Amer jerked his
213 head back when Obaid came back from the back of the plane.

214 Zach closed his eyes and pushed his head back into the headrest
215 for the second time. *Fifty million dollars for four years. Research on*
216 *tinting the quad panel will take time. Plus, I still need to solve the*
217 *reverse current problem. The thermal fracturing should be tested*
218 *through two summer seasons. Venture capital is getting harder to*
219 *come by. Fifty million dollars is ten times more than I was hoping for.*
220 *Sally would be thrilled. Ben could go to any college he wants to. We*
221 *could pay off the house. I would be famous eventually. The best part, I*
222 *could cut that asshole Mr. Rubin out of the deal.*

223 "Mr. Slenski, let me tell you a little more about the Middle East.
224 Maybe it will help with your decision." Prince Amer Nasser noticed
225 Zach had his eyes closed. "Mr. Slenski!"

226 Zach opened his eyes. "Okay, I'm listening."

227 "A few hard facts about Saudi Arabia." Prince Amer spoke in a
228 factual tone. "After the 1973 oil embargo the price for a barrel of crude
229 was almost forty five dollars. Then between 1980 and 2003 the
230 average price of crude fell and has never climbed over twenty five
231 dollars a barrel. The inner turmoil in the Middle East can not survive
232 the price of crude declining anymore than what it is at today. Plus the
233 hate and . . ." There was no mention of the burgeoning Iraq War,
234 weapons of mass destruction or the sectarian tension between Sunni
235 and Shia Muslims. It had been two years since the World Trade Center
236 attack—that discussion was also squelched

237 "How would four years help?" Zach quipped.

238 "It would buy some time and we could anticipate a slowdown in oil
239 production. We'd immediately start to draw down the amount of oil on
240 reserve. That would help to stabilize our situation."

241 "Stabilize your situation? Don't you mean have the price of oil
242 increase for the benefit of the Middle East?" Zach said loudly.

243 "No, I mean stabilize the situation. Religious tension is very high in
244 the Middle East." Prince Amer leaned in toward Zach and spoke very
245 softly. "Many Arab's are ignorant that oil revenue brings prosperity
246 into the region and that prosperity is good. A lot of tribal Muslim
247 Cleric's preach that the greed of the western world is evil." Prince
248 Amer paused. "I'd like to ask these religious radicals where they get
249 their money to pay for their human bombs. These self appointed so
250 called cleric leaders preach Jihad to all Christians in the United States
251 and around the world."

252 Zach got a concerned look. "Why?"

253 Prince Amer Nasser turned his head around to see how close Obaid
254 Naimi was. "All wars are evil in disguise and fueled by hatred. That's
255 all I can say right now. We need to be careful with our words and what
256 we discuss on an airplane flying in US airspace."

257 Zach sat silent for a moment and then leaned toward Prince Amer
258 Nasser and whispered, "When would I receive the fifty million dollars?"

259 "That would be between you and Mr. Rubin. The original
260 agreement would still stand." Prince Nasser paused. "You'd still have
261 to go through Mr. Rubin to get your percentage."

262 "Go through Mr. Rubin? No way in hell."

263 "I don't know what deal you and Mr. Rubin have. But, I'm sure he
264 takes a large percentage just like the arms dealers that I have worked
265 with."

266 "What if my panels didn't go to market for three years, instead of
267 five? Would you be interested in a ten million dollar deal directly with
268 Son Source?"

269 "No way in hell," replied Prince Amer.

270 Zach paused and was confused. "Why?"

271 "You would not want to follow through on your end of an
272 agreement with Mr. Rubin," Prince Amer Nasser warned in a low voice.

273 "Why not a deal just between you and me? I'd only need two
274 million up front." Zach bartered in a whisper.

275 "Are you asking me to do a deal behind Mr. Rubin's back?"

276 Zach leaned in closer. "Yes, you could save OPEC forty million
277 dollars."

278 "Mr. Slenski." Prince Amer Nasser looked hard into Zack's eyes.
279 "Never double cross a person like Mr. Rubin. He is ruthless and evil.
280 You would be putting many lives at risk, possibly your family."

281 "I have not signed any agreement with Mr. Rubin. I would make
282 sure our deal was legal." Zach continued to whisper.

283 "At this point, I would never try to cut Mr. Rubin out. I'm warning
284 you, don't go behind his back."

285 Zach sensed the stern warning. "James, your acting like Mr. Rubin
286 is some sort of God or something."

287 Prince Amer Nasser leaned in closer. "He wants to play God." The
288 Prince lowered his voice even more. "Do you know he was a major
289 influence in bearing false witness about weapons of mass destruction
290 in Iraq? Did you see all the war maps in his office?" Prince Amer
291 Nasser stopped whispering, his eyes looked up over the top of Zach's
292 head.

293 Mr. Obaid Bin Naimi was now at the leather seat and handed a
294 yellow folded piece of paper over Zack's head to the Prince. He then
295 spoke in Arabic. Prince Amer Nasser quickly unfolded the yellow paper.
296 "I see you are telling the truth. You do live in Dallas Texas. You have a
297 wife, Sally and two children. Kendra age seven and Ben age fifteen."

298 In a crazed motion, Zach grabbed the piece of paper from Prince
299 Amer Nasser fingers. "Where'd you get this information?" Zach was
300 unable to read anything on the paper, it was written in Arabic.

301 "What else does it say on this piece of paper?" Zack demanded
302 from Obaid Naimi.

303 "You don't think our Oil Ministry has the right to check on someone
304 who is blackmailing us for millions of dollars?" Obaid Nami replied
305 firmly.

306 "No, I don't!" Zach felt violated and threatened. "I never wanted
307 dirty oil money in the first place. That's against everything I stand for."

308 "At this moment you don't want the money. But, Mr. Rubin's offer
309 will nag at you. Money always trumps over good intention," Prince
310 Amer replied.

311 "You're wrong! I don't plan to deal with Mr. Rubin, ever. After the
312 meeting this morning I told myself that when my panels are at full

313 production I will expose Mr. Rubin." Zach drew a deep breath. "Now, I
314 might even expose your involvement!"

315 "What expose me?" Prince Amer Nasser laughed. "Do you think the
316 Middle East even cares what the United States thinks? Mr. Slenski you
317 need to come for a visit. Please come as a guest of the Royal Palace. I
318 will show you chaos created by men like Mr. Philip Rubin."

319 Zach closed his eyes and backtracked that morning meeting.
320 Everything seemed to revolve around one person. The warning Carlos
321 Gomez had given; now Prince Amer Nasser was warning him. Zach
322 opened his eyes. "A moment ago, you said Mr. Rubin was an arms
323 dealer. You lost me. I don't have a clue of what you are talking about.
324 He's a venture capitalist. Isn't he?"

325 "Venture capitalist, arms dealer, or even an altruistic
326 environmentalist. Mr. Rubin will become whatever you want him to be,
327 even your friend."

328 "He's no friend of mine! I never met him before today. Last year
329 his associate contacted me via email. Carlos never mentioned Mr.
330 Rubin until a couple of weeks before the meeting that we had this
331 morning."

332 "That's how he operates; always in the shadows." Prince Amer
333 Nasser leaned very close to Zach and whispered. "Mr. Philip Rubin's is
334 probably linked to that bus full of Orthodox Jews that got blown up
335 coming home from a prayer service last month in Jerusalem."

336 "He bombed a bus!" Zach exclaimed in disbelief.

337 The door to the cockpit made a loud thump noise! The air marshal
338 was at the small peep hole looking out, his hand at his shoulder
339 holster ready to draw the 9mm Glock loaded with 17 hollow points.
340 The copilot radioed ahead to the control tower in Dallas.

341 Hidden behind the curtain that separated first class from coach an
342 undercover CIA agent approached. He pushed Mr. Naimi up to the
343 galley and against the left side loading door. Mr. Obaid Namie
344 collapsed on the gallery floor. He had a fear of flying and being pushed
345 against the hatch handle overcame his knees.

346 The cockpit door flung open and the air marshal emerged and
347 pulled the galley curtain closed. Only the first class passengers were

348 aware of the commotion. "Has the situation been radioed in?" the CIA
349 agent asked the Air Marshal as he put handcuffs on Obaid Bin Naimi.

350 "Yes, the copilot has been in communication with TSA." The Air
351 Marshal pushed the gallery curtain to the side and kept his eye on
352 Zach and Prince Amer.

353 It took less than two minutes before the copilot emerged from the
354 cockpit. "Release Mr. Obaid Bin Naimi! He's an OPEC oil minister and
355 has diplomatic immunity."

356 "What? Did you tell them about the bomb conversation and about
357 the guy that came on board with an aluminum case?" Both agents
358 pulled Mr. Naimi to his feet.

359 "Yes, I communicated that information. The tower responded that
360 the aluminum case was scanned and sniffed. It was cleared at O'Hare
361 by TSA."

362 Mr. Obaid Bin Naimi twisted from their grip. "I want your names
363 and identification numbers. Take off these handcuffs now!"

364 The TSA air marshal huddled with Randy the CIA agent. Diplomatic
365 relations were strained with Saudi Arabia ever since Nine Eleven.
366 Randy had thirty plus year with the CIA. He knew this take down
367 situation could have serious repercussions and quipped, "Using the **B**
368 word on commercial aircraft is a federal offense."

369 "I didn't use the **B** word," Obaid turned to have the handcuffs
370 removed.

371 "Don't use the **B** word again!" The veteran undercover CIA agent
372 warned.

373 "I didn't use the **B** word. It was probably the American Scientist."

374 Randy pulled a micro-recorder from his vest pocket and then hit
375 the **Play** button. Prince Amer's voice played back. "Mr. Philip Rubin's is
376 probably linked to that bus full of Orthodox Jews that got blown up
377 coming home from a prayer service last month in Jerusalem."

378 Then Zack's voice came out from the small speaker on the micro-
379 recorder. "He bombed a bus!"

380 It was a gotcha moment. In silence Randy removed the handcuffs.
381 The Air Marshal followed the copilot back into the cockpit. The sound
382 of the heavy dead bolt broke the monotone jet engine noise. The

383 seasoned agent realized that he had just broken twenty plus years of
384 being undercover.

385 Zach let Obaid have his seat back and approached Agent Randy. "It
386 was me that said the **B** word."

387 "Yeah I know. I screwed up. Agent Randy Calhoun clipped the
388 handcuffs onto his belt replied. Despondent the older CIA agent took
389 up a position on the fold down flight attendant's jump seat.

390 Prince Amer Nasser whispered to Obaid Bin Naimi and then Obaid
391 spoke back in Arabic.

392 Mr. Naimi looked up the aisle and spoke loudly, "Mr. CIA agent
393 come closer. Prince Amer Nasser would like to shoot you." Prince
394 Amer Nasser reached under the white tunic!

395 Randy instinctively drew a small hand gun from an ankle holster.
396 In one fluid motion he stood up, pushed Zach to the side and took aim
397 directly at Prince Amer's head. Several passengers in the first class
398 section screamed!

399 Cautiously from under his loose fitting white tunic Prince Amer
400 Nasser pulled out a camera. He held it above his head so everyone
401 could plainly see what it was. He pushed the shutter button and the
402 flash went off. Thirty plus years of training was the only thing that
403 kept Agent Calhoun from discharging his weapon.

404 "Thank you. That will be a good picture for the Aljazeera news
405 tomorrow." Prince Amer quickly concealed the camera back under the
406 white cloth as did Agent Calhoun did with his gun into the ankle
407 holster.

408 "Give me that damn camera!" The gray hair CIA agent demanded
409 as he moved between the oversized first class seats.

410 Prince Amer crossed his arms across his chest. From across the
411 aisle a passenger got a video camera out. The air marshal was
412 observing thru the peephole in the cockpit door but Zach was blocking
413 his view. The pilot's voice came on over the intercom, "Everybody
414 please stay calm. We just had someone use a word that is forbidden
415 on aircraft. The situation is under control."

416 Prince Amer Nasser ignored the demand for the camera and looked
417 out the window.

418 "Sir, I have been keeping track of you ever since your freshman
419 year at USC." Agent Calhoun paused. "Over all those years never once
420 did I even bother or approach you."

421 "I know that. So why should I help you?"

422 "If you release that picture of me drawing my weapon to the news
423 media my career will be over. I'm nearing retirement and it was a spur
424 of the moment mistake."

425 "So why should I help you?" Prince Amer asked a second time and
426 then spoke in Arabic to Obaid Naimi. Bin Naimi got up and headed
427 toward the back of the plane. Not being in Arab traditional dress was a
428 good thing. The entire business class section was on edge and ready.
429 Since nine-one-one no American plane would ever be taken down by
430 terrorist ever again without a fight with the passengers!

431 "Mr. Calhoun. I know that you have spied on me for many years."

432 "How do you know my name?" The seasoned agent asked with a
433 look of shock.

434 "Well, Mr. Calhoun. Or would you like me to call you Randy?"
435 Prince Amer Nasser asked with a tone of hilarity.

436 "How do you know my full name?"

437 "I've known your entire name for years. I also know that you have
438 four grown children and live in Baltimore."

439 "How did you get all that information?" Agent Calhoun asked in full
440 on alarm.

441 "The same way you got all the information about me and my
442 family. We have our own people. The **General Intelligence**
443 **Directorate** is the primary intelligence agency of the Kingdom of
444 Saudi Arabia."

445 ""Oh," Agent Calhoun paused. "I didn't think the GID knew that I
446 was spying. I was undercover."

447 "Let me ask you Agent Calhoun." Prince Amer Nasser looked
448 directly into Agent Calhoun's eyes. "During those years of spying on
449 me in college do you have any pictures that could be a threat to me or
450 my friends?"

451 Agent Calhoun rubbed at his balding head and then whispered.
452 "A... I think in you file there are some pictures of you smoking
453 marijuana at a college party."

454 "Okay, that concerns me." Prince Amer looked over the back of his
455 seat to make sure Bin Naimi had followed orders to go back to Zach's
456 assigned seat in coach class.

457 After a long pause. "Over the years I took several pictures of you
458 at different sports bar drinking with other college students. I recall one
459 strip club or sleazy bar where you just sat in the smoke and stench
460 there. Outside of those you kept mostly to yourself. But, there are
461 thousands of pictures in your file."

462 "Do you think there are any pictures of Peter Craft and me? Peter
463 was the captain of the Trojans basketball team. He was hard to miss at
464 six foot eight."

465 "I don't know?" Agent Calhoun sat down in the vacated aisle seat.
466 "I really don't recall taking any pictures of you with the basketball
467 team. But, as I said, there are thousands of photos in your file. Is
468 there anything specific you are concerned about?"

469 "Yes, any pictures with me and Peter Craft." Prince Amer reached
470 up under his Tunic, took out the camera and popped out the memory
471 card. "I'm not all that concerned about photos of me at a party or at
472 any sports bar. And that wasn't a strip club, it was a hookah lounge."

473 "As I recall those photos were dark or blurry, anyhow. That place
474 had a thick sweet smelling smoke that almost made me sick."

475 "We were smoking Shisha. It's smoked at many cafes' in my
476 country. You should try it."

477 "No thanks."

478 "I'm concerned of what some people in Saudi Arabia would think if
479 I attended a pro American meeting or something like that. Something
480 a fundamentalist Moslem would use against me and my family." Prince
481 Amer had lowered his voice to a whisper.

482 "Oh." Agent Calhoun paused and reflecting back over all the years
483 of trailing the Prince. The photos he had taken were nothing more than
484 typical college kid stuff, nothing out of the ordinary.

485 Mr. Obaid Bin Naimi had just come into the first class section from
486 the back of the plane. Prince Amer Nasser carefully put the flash card
487 into Agent Calhoun's hand. "Maybe you'll come across and destroy any
488 photos of Peter and I before you retire."

489 Agent Calhoun clutched the memory card. When he stood his head
490 banged into the overhead luggage compartment. "I'm getting clumsy
491 in my old age," he said moving into the aisle so to let Obaid Naimi
492 have his seat back. When Mr. Naimi sat down Agent Calhoun winked at
493 Prince Amer Nasser and thought. *A photo of someone six foot eight*
494 *should be easy to spot.*

495 From the galley Zach quickly fell in line behind Agent Calhoun.
496 They parted between the curtains and returned to their assigned seats.
497 Zach reclined his seat and closed his eyes. *Wow, that was like some*
498 *clandestine B rated movie.* Next he recapped the entire day. *These*
499 *people are in a whole different world than me. Forget them! Forget Mr.*
500 *Rubin, I'll never need to have a meeting like the one this morning ever*
501 *again. Now that I know tinted glass is the solution to the overheating*
502 *of the solar cells. Hopefully, we can go into production within the year.*
503 *After all these years it was fate at one bizarre venture capital meeting*
504 *that will end up solving the world's energy crisis. Karma or something*
505 *is finally going to pay off...*

506 The copilot's voice came on over the PA system. "We apologized
507 again for the mock drill. Just a reminder to be careful of what words
508 cannot be spoken on aircraft or in airports. Our ETA at DFW is 7:32pm.
509 Passengers connecting to international flights will unboard first."

510 Zach opened his eyes and looked at his watch; his mind was still at
511 full speed. *I'll have to wait till Monday morning to share the news at*
512 *Son Source.* No sooner had Zach pushed his head back into the
513 headrest and closed his eyes when panic exploded in his head. *Mr.*
514 *Obaid Naimi came back here! He knew about the aluminum case! A*
515 *knot tightened in his gut. Zack jumped into the aisle and opened the*
516 *overhead compartment. The aluminum case had been moved and*
517 *turned on its side.*

518 "Sir you need to sit back down and fasten your seat belt. We are
519 on our decent into Dallas Fort Worth," ordered the flight attendant.

520 Zach grabbed for the aluminum case. The male flight attendant
521 pulled his arm back and slammed the overhead compartment. "I'll
522 notify the Air Marshal again if you don't sit back down and fasten your
523 seat belt. Your aluminum case has caused unnecessary panic for the
524 other passengers. It stays in the overhead compartment."

525 Zack plopped back in his assigned seat and fastened the seatbelt.
526 *Unnecessary panic! What is that flight attendant talking about? Maybe*
527 *they're all working together? Prince Amer Nasser and the older agent*
528 *were whispering while that other Arab was back here. Maybe cheap*
529 *energy would put the world's economy into a tailspin?* After landing
530 Zach ditched into one of the restrooms at the back of the plane.

531 When the cleaning crew came on board and with his overnight bag
532 in one hand and the aluminum case in the other Zach headed directly
533 out of the airport. He jogged to the long term parking garage and kept
534 looking back over his shoulder.

535 At the white Prius he gasped for air and pushed the key fob button.
536 The door did not unlock! He used the backup key to get in. When he
537 tossed the overnight bag onto the passenger seat the lid on the glove
538 box rattled—it was unlatched. He did a 360 degree look around the
539 parking garage and then slipped the aluminum case behind the driver's
540 seat. Another 360 degree glance and Zach put the Prius into all electric
541 mode. In this mode he could exit the garage in silence, without an
542 internal combustion engine noise. A few miles from the airport Zach
543 was no longer out of breath but his heart was still pounding. He pulled
544 into an abandoned parking lot and positioned his car so he could see in
545 all directions. One look around and he got out of the car and pulled the
546 aluminum case from behind the seat and placed it on the roof. The
547 metal clasps *twanged* when they sprang open. The quad panel was
548 there!

549 A mixed sigh of relief was exhaled. Stuck to the flat plate glass
550 was an eloquent black business card. **AMERCO OIL** and an **800** phone
551 number were embossed with real gold ink on the front. Zach pulled the
552 card off the quad panel and flipped it over. On the back, handwritten
553 in green ink were the numbers **011 966 11 555 0011** along with the
554 words: **Call for better offer.**