

EMP 2

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A work of fiction, meant for adults. Read something else if you are not an adult, or are offended by stories with sexual content. Then again, if all you're looking for is in-out, in-out, in-out, you should probably read something else. I welcome constructive comments. Enjoy.

Not a Drill

Kendra and I woke to all hell breaking loose. Emergency horns were going and the emergency lights were on. I started to get out of bed, but she pushed me down and rolled out on her side, next to the wall.

I looked at the display panel on the wall as she pulled out her gun; the display background was red; this was not a drill. I slid over to her side of the bed and got out, standing near her.

I glanced again at the display as it changed; the phone lines had been cut and the power was out; we were on our own emergency power. I could hear the generator starting up automatically.

A new alarm sounded and started beeping. This was bad, very bad. Then Kendra grabbed my head, looked me straight in the eye, and said one of our code words. The room spun momentarily around me as she repeated it and I said it back to her.

I stood up straight, fully awake now. We were definitely under attack. The last alarm that sounded, and now started sounding intermittently, told us that the other two crypto-keys had been disabled. I looked at the display: we had valid self-destruct codes from my son-in-law Kenny's key, and Ahmed's key. We had lost wired contact with both their homes at almost the same time; this was a coordinated attack.

We had planned for this and rehearsed it many times. We had periodic drills. We had developed and put in place deep hypnotic conditioning to deal with these events. Now our planning was being put to use.

I held out my wrist to Kendra, showing her my crypto-key. It looked like a standard medic alert bracelet, other than being too thick. There was no clasp; it was permanently attached. She looked me in the eye, sighed, and yanked it off my wrist, breaking the chain. The bracelet started beeping. It would beep for ten seconds. She dropped it on the nightstand, and pressed the key sequence on the security panel to silence that alarm.

I'd pulled on my sweat pants and put on my 9mm pistol, making sure a round was chambered. I felt calm, but I knew it was artificial, a product of deep conditioning. I looked at Kendra as she put on her sweats and buckled her holster, checking her Glock. Our eyes connected and I saw tears forming. Both of us knew all I had to do was say the word and she would shoot me in the head, then shoot herself.

The display background went bright yellow; my crypto key had died. It didn't matter now if we lived or not.

"Shit! Helicopter!" Kendra hissed. I listened and heard it. We ran to the hallway, and she took the cover off the self-destruct controller. She pulled out the two transmitters and handed me one. I put it in my right hand, holding the switch down, and pulled out the safety pin. "Set," I told her. She grunted and hit the red button. Different ceiling lights went on; the system was armed.

All the data storage for the project was kept in my library, a small building about a hundred yards from the main house. The team tied into it from around the country. It's amazing what you can do with virtual private networks and Rivest's "Chaffing and Winnowing" encryption technique. All the electronics had been moved to the concrete and steel lined basement after our first test shots. In the center of that basement room was a small device, cooled by its own refrigeration system. The left over "gamma" device would go off if we released the transmitters. All the project files, and everything electronic within a few hundred yards would be turned into junk. There were also separate C4 charges on each hard disk drive. It should be very difficult to recover anything from the resulting debris.

"Kitchen," Kendra said. That room had the best view down to the road. I went into the bedroom and scooped up my crypto key from the nightstand. I went into the kitchen a few steps behind Kendra. She was looking out the windows, using a pair of night vision binoculars. We could hear the chopper approaching, so could our dogs; they knew something was up and were barking their heads off.

I grabbed a Pyrex measuring cup from the counter and dropped my crypto-key into it. I put it into the microwave oven, set it for three minutes at high power, and hit start. A few seconds of spitting and crackling turned to a low hum as the contents of the measuring cup started glowing; reverse engineer that you bastards!

I turned to a secondary display in the kitchen and brought up status. We had confirmation of all three crypto-keys destroyed. We'd gotten wireless data links to both Carol's and Ahamed's houses, and automated 911 calls had gone out from both places. Our primary cellular link had failed; I suspected jamming. The secondary link, using a concealed high gain very directional antenna pointed at a cellular tower twenty miles away worked like a charm, sending in our automated 911 call. I looked at my perimeter sensors. A single lane path about a mile long leads down from the house to the main (two lane) road. The gate at the main road showed closed, and the road sensors up to the house were quiet, as were other perimeter sensors. It was a couple of miles each way along the main road to other turnouts; we'd put wireless sensors along the road. They showed a number of vehicles passing one sensor but not the other.

“We have company waiting on the road. Should I blow the bridge now, or arm it and hope it survives the pulse?” I asked Kendra. Just after our gate was a small bridge over a creek. I could blow it up, or arm a system that should blow it up when the first vehicle got to about 100 yards from the house. We weren’t sure the triggering system would survive the pulse.

“Do it now,” Kendra said, still looking out over the darkness. I keyed in the code and hit the “go” button just as she said, “Down!” and swept me to the floor. We heard the chopper pass low overhead. I looked up and saw confirmation that the bridge was gone.

The chopper was heading off into the distance; it flew over low, but hadn’t landed. Why?

“The dogs...” Kendra whispered. It was quiet. They’d stopped barking.

“Chemical,” I said, as I went for the hallway. We didn’t have any protection from a bio or chemical attack. All the windows in the house were open. I sat down in the hallway and pulled Kendra next to me. I held her and squeezed her. “I love you.” She cried and said, “I love you too.” I caught a whiff of something fruity, yet metallic. I threw my transmitter down the hall; Kendra did the same. She slid her pistol down the hall and I followed suit. We lay down on the floor and held each other. The helicopter was returning. The world was starting to spin, and I was losing my grip on her as we kissed, but I heard and felt the “whump” and a strange tingle as the gamma team finally got their test shot. All the lights and alarms in the house went dark; a good test. I hoped the chopper was in the main lobe of the pulse; I tried to look at my digital watch to see if it was still alive as the world dissolved in the buzzing of millions of enraged bees.

Questions

I went through strange dreams; part of me knew they weren't dreams -- I was being interrogated under drugs. Voices wanted to know about the keys, what the keys contained. I remember laughing as I told them that nobody knew; they each contained a 4096 bit random number generated from radioactive decay.

A man wanted names; I couldn't remember names, other than my daughter Carol, her husband Kenny, and Kendra. They tried regression, taking me back in time to where I could remember names, but that didn't work. The man and then a woman asked questions and questions and questions. If I had an answer, I told them. Most of the time I didn't have answers. This went on and on and on, sometimes with gaps, some times for long periods. I remember my heart racing, trying to wake up, hurting, but it went on and on and on.

Finally I woke up. I was in a large bed in a mid sized room; it could have been a hotel. I looked out the windows at high desert. It could be morning, but I wasn't sure. I looked around the room and a woman was sitting in a chair at a small table, reading a book. She smiled, put the book down, stood up and walked over to me.

"Good, you're awake. Let me check you." She pulled out a stethoscope as she walked to the bed.

I tried to move quickly, but got dizzy again and dropped back to the bed. I hurt from head to toe.

"No, don't try, you're still too weak." She checked my pulse and listened to my heart, then shined a small flashlight in my eyes.

"You are recovering very well; it's good you are in such good physical condition."

I looked at her; the room had stopped spinning. "Where is Kendra? Where is my daughter?"

She looked at me and smiled; she looked to be in her early forties. "Your daughter and her husband are safe, they are down the hall. Kendra is next door. Would you like me to get Kendra?"

Thank God they were still alive. "Yes, I would like that very much."

"Here, let me help you sit up."

She pulled me up in the bed and propped some of the pillows around me. When she was sure I was stable, she stepped away from the bed a little, and watched.

I felt shaky, hungry, weak. I looked at my shaking hands and then at my arms; they were covered with needle marks. I looked up at my captor again.

She smiled and walked over to one of the three doors in the room. I could tell one went to a bathroom. The other two had small plates about chest height on the wall near them.

“I’ll get Kendra for you. She can help you get cleaned up and dressed, and then call when you are ready for something to eat.”

“Shalom,” I said, guessing at the identity of our captors, “Thank you.”

She laughed and put her right hand up to the plate. I heard a small beep, then a substantial thunk, and she opened the door and stepped into the next room. “Kendra?” I heard her say, “he’s awake and would like to see you.”

I heard swift footfalls and Kendra came into the room quickly, practically jumping on the bed with me. She gave me a hug, then tossed me on my back. I was a little surprised, but not much when she started examining me carefully from head to toe, the consummate professional.

Each needle mark brought a soft curse from her lips. She stripped off my night clothes and went over my chest, then rolled me to my stomach and went over my back, then rolled me face up again. She looked in my eyes intensely as she sat next to me, her hands on either side of my head.

“How do you feel?”

I thought a bit, closing my eyes and surveying my body. “Weak, hungry, my joints are sore, my right forearm is sore. Other than that I think I’m okay. Thank God you are still alive.”

I started opening my eyes as she leaned over and kissed me. After a while we just held each other and cried. She sobbed, “We didn’t know how much you could take, or how long they’d push you. You made it; you made it.”

I started pulling up her sweatshirt. She pulled it off and undid her bra, then held me to her breasts. I put my arms around her, still weak, and felt her hold me close and tight.

After a while I sucked on her gently, relaxing in her arms once again; something I thought I might never be able to do again as that chopper had flown over our house.

I stopped eventually. She nestled me between her breasts again and sighed.

“Can you help me up? I’d like to go to the bathroom and shower. I don’t think I can make it on my own.”

“Of course,” she said. She helped me up slowly and led me to the bathroom. My legs were wobbly; I’m not used to feeling like an old man, even if I am one. I sat on the can a bit and

peed, more for habit than need. The bathroom counter had my favorite soap on it, and my shaver, toothbrush, toothpaste, hairbrush...

"Hmmm... Looks like our hosts expect us to stay for a while."

"That's right. Will you be okay while I go get my things?"

"I'll sit right here; I promise not to move," I told her.

She gave me a kiss on the head and left the room. She soon returned with her shampoo.

As she stripped off her sweat pants and panties, I asked, "How long have we been here, and where is here?"

She glanced up briefly at the ceiling.

"I know we're being watched and listened to," I told her, scowling, "If they didn't pry it out of me so far, it's not there to be pried."

She smiled. "We've been here at least three days; I don't know how long we were out. I should know in a day or two. We're a little bit closer to the equator than we were, still Northern Hemisphere. I haven't gotten a look at the stars yet. Could be anyplace in the Southwest."

"Or the Negev?" I added.

She nodded her head.

"So I shouldn't have my heart set on a bacon sandwich on sourdough bread then. At least six slices of bacon, not too crispy," I said loudly to the ceiling.

Kendra laughed, and opened the shower door to turn on the water.

She helped me into the shower and we showered together. I was very glad she was there with me; not only because I love her, but because I almost fell a couple of times.

As we washed I noticed some spots on my chest; I'd evidently been wearing EKG electrodes for a while. I noticed some needle marks on Kendra, but nowhere near the number on me. She was also unbruised, which comforted me about as much as I could be in the situation.

We dried off, and I shaved and brushed my teeth while she dried her hair. All the outlets were 110 volt standard. Did Israel use 110 or 220? I couldn't remember.

She wobbled me back to the bed and I collapsed on my back with a sigh. I let my eyes close. I felt her straddling me. I opened my eyes to meet her piercing gaze.

“Got enough energy for love making, you old goat?” she asked, swaying her breasts over my chest, brushing me lightly.

I smiled. My body was already saying yes as she teased me.

We made love gently, softly. She did most of the work, but we shared in the pleasure. We lay together afterwards and I suckled once again.

After a few moments she switched me to her other breast. I kissed it and then nestled in, just resting my head between her breasts and listening to her heart beat.

I had a thought. “Getting tender, darling?” I asked.

She chuckled. “Yes, a little.”

I knew how she could tell the date; her menstrual period was regular as clockwork, and her nipples got tender about 12 hours before it started. We carry our own clocks with us.

“So what do I have to do to get something to eat?” I asked her.

“It’s almost lunch time, would you like to eat with Kenny and Carol?”

I tilted my head up from its wonderful spot and said, “Yes!”

She smiled and kissed my forehead. “They let us eat together. Let’s get you dressed and go over to their room.”

We got dressed, both wearing sweats that had been looted from the house. There was a phone and a small clock on the desk. It was twenty to twelve, date and time zone unknown.

Kendra picked up the phone and pushed “4.” After a moment she said, “We’ll be eating together.” There was a pause, and then she sighed. “That will be fine,” she said, and hung up the phone.

“At least they seem pleasant,” I told her.

She gave me a smoldering look that told me otherwise. I squeezed her hand and whispered. “I’d like to help.” I’d like to help pay them back, slowly and painfully.

We had adjoining rooms. Kendra walked me through hers, a copy of mine. I took a look at the door as we walked through. It was a very solid door, with very sturdy remotely operated bolts on both sides, about two feet from the top and bottom.

We walked across her room to the next adjoining door and stopped. Kendra knocked.

Carol opened the door, saw me, grabbed me, and started crying, “Oh, Dad...”

Kenny rushed up and got in on the hug, then started looking me over, going over my arms.

“One at a time, please!” I said. Carol pulled away slightly. I reached up and dried her tears. “I’m here baby,” was all I could say.

My legs started to wobble again, and Kendra picked me up and put me in a chair. Kenny pulled my sweatshirt off and started going over me.

“Kendra did that already,” I told him. He ignored me, leaning me forward and putting his ear to my back. “Take a deep breath,” he told me. I sighed a bit and did it.

After he finished, and I put my sweatshirt back on (with help), I took my daughter’s hands and asked, “How’s my baby girl?”

Carol smiled and sniffled. “I’m okay daddy, how are you?”

I told her, “I’m feeling weak, and hungry, and a little sore in spots, but other than that, I think I’m okay. Doctor?” I looked up at Kenny.

He gave me a sour look. “Yes, considering. You’ll need to take it easy for a few days, given the chance.

“I saw the marks on Kendra,” I said as I put a hand on her waist and drew her close. “Did they put you all through the same thing?”

“Oh, Dad, only briefly. They kept it up on you for days, hours at a time.” Carol told me.

I felt a growing debt that would need to be paid off. “Nobody hurts my baby girl,” I growled.

“We still aren’t sure just how many days passed before we woke up,” Kenny said. I looked up at Kendra.

She nodded her head and said, “At least one, but less than three.”

Kenny gave her a questioning look. “Are you sure? How?”

Kendra smiled. “I’m sure. I’ve been regular as clockwork since I was twelve.”

That could put us anywhere on the planet, given at least a day to move us. Kendra and I had been in Northern California, and Carol and Kenny in Colorado; plenty of time to take us anywhere.

We sat quietly, holding hands. I looked out the window occasionally; it could be high desert just about anywhere. I hadn't paid attention to the water swirling down the toilet to see if we were in the Northern or Southern hemisphere, but I trusted Kendra's judgment.

Our silence was interrupted by a knock on the door. We all looked at it, heard the thunk of bolts retracting, and the door swung open into the room. A cart appeared, pushed by my "hostess," and followed by another cart pushed by a much younger woman. Out in the hallway we could see two men in nondescript not-quite-uniforms. I didn't need to see uniforms to tell why they were there -- you could tell from their posture.

The younger gal closed the door and we heard the bolts shoot home. The older one asked me, "Are you feeling better, Doctor?"

"As well as can be expected," I replied curtly.

Both women put covered trays around the table; Kendra swung my chair around to face it.

The older woman said, "I'm afraid we didn't have sourdough, but we do have bacon. I hope the meal is to your liking." She took the cover off the dish in front of me to reveal a bacon sandwich on wheat, two eggs over easy, and corned beef hash. My mouth started watering. They gave me a large glass of milk, and a small bottle of Cholula hot sauce for the eggs and hash. The others got very good looking hot lunches.

Kenny spoke up. "I want a stethoscope and a blood pressure cuff so I can check him more thoroughly."

Our younger hostess looked up briefly, looked away really, and then said, "Yes, we'll bring them down to you shortly." She paused again, then continued. "We can give you the last EKG and blood values if you'd like. Aside from the stress involved, he went through the procedure very well. We are sorry it was necessary. Would you like the medical records for all of you?"

I looked at the younger gal. I could see a wire going up the back of her neck; they were probably both wearing radios.

Kenny gave her a disgusted look. "Yes, I'd like to see whatever you have."

She nodded to Kenny. "Very well, Doctor. You'll have them before you finish lunch."

The carts empty, the younger one put her right hand up to the plate by the door, got the beep, the door unlocked, and one of the gorillas outside opened it. They left, and the door closed and relocked. I hadn't seen anything on her hand or wrist, or the older gal's. The plate looked pretty opaque; something implanted under the skin perhaps?

Kenny was still fuming; they all were.

“Calm down, please. Save that energy for later,” I said, and squeezed Kendra’s hand.

I wolfed down half my bacon sandwich; it was delicious and I was starving. I probably hadn’t gotten anything to eat for a few days. Oh well, I’d been meaning to lose a little weight.

I forced myself to eat the rest slowly. About halfway through lunch there was another knock on the door, it opened, and our hostess brought some file folders, a stethoscope, and BP cuff in and sat them on the desk next to the phone. She exited curtly, without saying a word.

Kenny started to get up, but I reached across the table and held his hand. “Not until we’re through eating. I want to enjoy this meal with my family.” He sat down. Kendra and Carol started sniffing; my eyes filled up as well. I held their hands and gave them a squeeze.

We finished lunch. Kenny picked up the folders and started to look at the contents, then he dropped them back. He got the BP cuff and stethoscope and came over to me. “Shirt off again, dad.”

“Damn bossy doctors,” I muttered a little too loud under my breath. It got the chuckle from everyone that I’d hoped for.

My BP was a little high and my pulse a little fast; to be expected. Kenny checked everyone else, and then Kendra checked him. Kendra seemed to be the one that had recovered the fastest, not surprising considering her age and physical condition.

Kenny took notes with a pencil from the desk. He started to pick up a folder again, but pushed it away in disgust.

I shook my head. “So who else have we met? I remember two male voices and one female.”

Kendra gave me a startled look. “You do? None of us remembered a thing. What do you remember?”

Poker time; I didn’t want to reveal to our hosts just what I remembered, not that I was too sure of it anyway.

“Not much, just the voices. Two men, and a woman other than our hostesses.”

Kendra said very calmly, “We’ve met one man, and a woman. Both of them hold positions of power, and there is tension between them. Other than that we don’t know much.”

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