

THE BLACKLIST

(#86 THE MENTOR)

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TEASER

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY

A frigid autumn morning. Tourists litter the National Mall. Families pose for pictures, Washington Monument in the bg. Children exit a school bus in front of the Smithsonian.

CONGRESSMAN SPELLING (PRE-LAP)

It is my honor to be in the
presence of a true hero. One that
I am proud to have as a member of
my congressional district...

ON THE STEPS OF THE CAPITAL BUILDING...

CONGRESSMAN HOWARD SPELLING (40s) stands behind a podium. To his left, a small cadre of ARMY SOLDIERS in DRESS BLUES.

Prominently in front of the rest is MASTER SERGEANT JOSHUA PETERSON (30s).

A small CROWD, largely FAMILY with a few REPORTERS mixed in, watch. Cameras roll.

CONGRESSMAN SPELLING (CONT'D)

...It's men like Sergeant Peterson
that keep us safe. Protect our
freedom. Our liberty. It's with
that knowledge that he is awarded
the bronze star for valor.

Spelling turns to Peterson. A CAPTAIN steps forward. Pins the star to Peterson's uniform. The crowd claps, cheers. The captain steps back.

A smile of pride beams from Peterson's face just as -- a BULLET EXPLODES through his skull.

Pandemonium. The crowd scatters. The Captain darts to the fallen Peterson. Knows instantly -- he's dead. The Captain looks up, scans the distance.

EXT. ROOFTOP - SAME

QUICK CUTS of a SNIPER RIFLE being disassembled, placed inside of a padded, CANVAS BAG.

EXT. SMITHSONIAN - MOMENTS LATER

A KOREAN WOMAN (30s), wearing a power suit, flags down a taxi.

I/E. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

The woman tosses a large canvas bag into the back of the cab, slides in beside it.

CABBIE

Where to?

KOREAN WOMAN

McLean Gardens.

The taxi pulls away.

INT. TOWN CAR - DAY

RAYMOND "RED" REDDINGTON reclines in the back seat, sipping a can of CHEERWINE soda. DEMBE, his "body man," sits in the driver's seat. They're parked beside a private airfield.

RED

Why is it that Cheerwine never gained traction outside of the Carolinas? The notes of black cherry are marvelous.

DEMBE

This should be her.

A GULFSTREAM G6...

Descends, lands on a nearby runway.

RED

Frankly, it's the only soft drink I can stand. Have you ever tried Royal Crown cola? Dreadful stuff. Completely unpalatable.

The jet taxis, pulls next to the town car.

DEMBE

Do you think she's ready?

The jet door depressurizes, opens. Stairs descend.

RED

She's ready.

Red grabs his hat, opens his door.

RED (CONT'D)
You'll see.

EXT. RUNWAY - CONTINUOUS

Red pulls on the hat, watches the plane door.

A YOUNG WOMAN (black, 20s) descends to the tarmac.

Red dramatically throws his arms open as he walks toward her.

RED
My dear, you look simply
effervescent. I trust the flight
was to your liking?

INT. CONDO - DAY

Shades pulled tight. Daylight seeps around the edges. Otherwise, the studio-sized condo is dark, with the exception of a single lamp.

The Korean woman sits in a folding chair. Along with a folding table, it's the only furniture in the room. She stares at...

THE WALL.

A collage of photos, all taken with a telephoto lens, surround a map. Pieces of yarn stretch from different photo sets to specific points pinned to the map.

We are drawn to a pin pushed into the capital building, its yarn leading to a cluster of photos of Master Sergeant Peterson.

To the right of the map are nine head shots. Six of the photos are X'd out with a red sharpie, including Peterson.

On the table, below the photos, is a clock. It counts down. 19 hours, 53 minutes, and 22 seconds remain.

The woman stands, walks to the table. It's covered in weapons: multiple handguns, the sniper rifle, C4, a garrote wire, an array of knives, a crossbow, etc...

She selects several blades, slides them into the pockets of a chef's knife roll. Rolls it up.

TITLE CARD: (#86 THE MENTOR)

INT. RESTAURANT BAR - NIGHT

F.B.I. AGENT ELIZABETH "LIZ" KEEN sits at the bar. Nurses a beer.

A MAN (30s) approaches, takes a seat on the stool next to her.

MAN
(to Liz, re: beer)
What's your poison?

LIZ
Blood orange wheat beer.

MAN
Uh-oh. Sounds like one of those craft brews. Not a beer snob, are you?

LIZ
Nope. Just sounded good.

The BARTENDER approaches.

BARTENDER
What can I get for you?

MAN
Black Label. Neat. Make it a double.
(to Liz)
You're Elizabeth?

LIZ
That's me.

MAN
Thought so. Andy.
(extends his hand)
Nice to finally meet you.

They shake. The bartender returns with ANDY's drink.

ANDY
Thanks.
(to Liz)
Don't take this as a sign of alcoholism by the way. Just need to settle my nerves. Never met anyone from online before.

LIZ
That makes two of us.

ANDY

Kind of exciting though, right? A little mystery. A little intrigue.

LIZ

Actually, I was trying to avoid mystery and intrigue.

ANDY

I guess I shouldn't tell you that I'm a Russian spy then?

LIZ

I'm FBI, not CIA, your secret's safe with me.

ANDY

Good. I'm harmless. Mostly. Why you decide to go with E-Harmony?

LIZ

I like the anonymity. Don't have to deal with the bar scene. Can skip work drama. And unlike other sites, I don't have to worry about someone stalking me based on a picture and a name.

ANDY

Unless you get matched with a hacker. In which case maybe you weren't even matched up by the computer. The hacker could bypass their protocols and run a script looking specifically for you.

LIZ

There's always that.

ANDY

In hindsight, that probably made me sound like some sort of a creep. I'm a software engineer. Data security. My brain is kind of wired that way.

Liz tunes Andy out. Notices a WOMAN stealing a glance of her from a booth in the corner. Nearly imperceptible.

EXT. SUBURBAN HOME - NIGHT

A SILHOUETTE slices its way through the darkness, along the side of the house. Peers through a window.

SILHOUETTE'S POV...

TWO CHILDREN on a couch watch television.

The silhouette moves on. Slides along the edge of a deck, behind the house.

Through a sliding glass door a man washes dishes. We can't see his face.

The silhouette silently climbs the deck stairs. We see the reflection of the Korean woman in the glass door.

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

AGENT DONALD RESSLER (40s) lifts weights by himself. Dead-lifts, squats, bench press. Struggles to push the bar up one final time.

He sits up, hands trembling slightly.

Looks up, stares across the room at a...

BOTTLE OF PRESCRIPTION PAINKILLERS.

He closes his eyes. Takes a deep breath. Lays back down, positions his hands on the bar.

INT. RESTAURANT BAR - NIGHT

Liz, distracted by the woman in the booth.

ANDY

Everything alright?

LIZ

(regaining herself)

You know. I'm not really feeling this place. I think I'm gonna go.

Liz stands. Fishes through her purse.

ANDY

Oh... okay. I understand. Is this about the hacker thing? I regretted saying that as soon as it came out of my mouth. Can we --

LIZ

-- Want to come back to my place?

ANDY
Your place?

LIZ
Unless that makes you
uncomfortable.

Andy stares at her, perplexed. No response.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Judging from the indentation on
your ring finger, either you're
married or a widower. I'm guessing
married. If I checked your pockets
I put the odds fairly high that I'd
find a wedding band. Which,
honestly, I'm okay with. I don't
know what that says about me
exactly. But I'm pretty sure it's
not good. Beyond that, I don't
know what it says that a
mathematically calculated algorithm
matched me with a liar. I guess
the bonus is that for once I'd know
what I'd be getting into
beforehand. So. You coming with?

ANDY
I. Uh. Yeah. I better not.

LIZ
Fair enough.

Liz tosses money on the bar.

LIZ (CONT'D)
(re: Andy's ring finger)
Best of luck with that.

Liz turns, accidentally bumping into the woman who had been
watching from the booth.

LIZ (CONT'D)
Sorry.

Liz leaves.

EXT. RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Liz's phone rings. She answers.

LIZ
What is it?

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Red, dressed in protective gear, holds a phone in one hand, an Épée (dueling sword) in the other. He stands on a fencing mat in the middle of the expansive, rusted out building.

INTERCUT

RED

Good evening to you too, Lizzy. I believe I have another member of the blacklist for you. But if you're too busy.

LIZ

No. Sorry. It's just --

RED

-- Don't worry about it. Water under the proverbial bridge. Shall we meet? I so prefer to see the twinkle in your eye when we speak.

LIZ

Where?

RED

Dembe will give you directions.

Red hands the phone to Dembe, who passes Red a protective helmet.

Red, facing an opponent, pulls the helmet on. Gets into a fighting stance.

RED (CONT'D)

Shall we?

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - NIGHT

The man continues to wash dishes. Places a pan on a drying rack, picks up a wine glass. He turns to find...

THE KOREAN WOMAN.

Shock. The glass slips from his grip, shatters on the floor. A deep breath.

MAN

You scared the crap out of me.

KOREAN WOMAN

Sorry.

She leans in to kiss him. This is her HUSBAND.

HUSBAND

You're going to give me a heart
attack one of these days.

KOREAN WOMAN

Don't be so dramatic. How are the
kids?

END OF TEASER