

MATCH PROTOCOL

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FADE IN:

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

The hotel suite is empty. There are two open laptops on the table in the living room. Folders and documents are scattered on the table.

The door opens, and NATASHA, 30s, a passionate, cunning, and tenacious spy, rushes in. SAWYER, 30s, an enigmatic, intense, and experienced spy, follows Natasha in the door.

Natasha and Sawyer both seem fairly stressed and anxious. The tension between them is palpable. Natasha starts pacing all around the suite after she walks in. She looks very frustrated.

Sawyer takes a deep breath as he watches Natasha pace around. Sawyer pulls out his gun, unloads the magazine, and places the gun on the table. He slowly takes a seat as he waits for Natasha to cool down.

NATASHA
(frustrated)
What the fuck!

Sawyer is completely silent. He ignores Natasha's comment and patiently waits for her to calm down.

NATASHA (cont'd)
What's wrong with you?!

SAWYER
I'm not the one yelling...

NATASHA
Fuck!

Natasha stands still with a concerned look on her face. After a moment, she seems to calm down a little.

Natasha pulls up the bottom of her dress. She pulls out a knife she had strapped to her thigh. Natasha places the knife on the table before pulling out a second knife that she had strapped to her other thigh. She places the second knife on the table and sits down.

NATASHA (cont'd)
(annoyed)
So... What's your fucking deal?

SAWYER
My deal is you blew it.

NATASHA

Excuse me?

SAWYER

We had an approach. You decided to get cute and you blew it.

NATASHA

I'm the one who blew it?!

SAWYER

We had an approach. It was your job to execute the approach. But somehow you managed to fuck the whole thing up.

NATASHA

I fucked it up?! Your approach was bullshit!

SAWYER

It wasn't.

NATASHA

Your approach was bullshit! You know it. I know it. It was never going to work!

SAWYER

Okay...

Sawyer slowly stands up. He turns his back to Natasha while he takes a moment to think. Sawyer turns back around and gives Natasha a serious look before he begins to speak.

SAWYER (cont'd)

You seem to forget your place sometimes, Natasha.

(beat)

Your job was to execute the approach. You were briefed on the whole thing. You knew exactly what to do, when to do it, and how to do it.

NATASHA

The approach was bullshit!

SAWYER

That's not your fucking job!

Natasha is wide-eyed and taken aback. She seems a little scared. She listens to Sawyer attentively. Sawyer walks closer to Natasha and he puts his hands on the table to get close to her.

SAWYER (cont'd)

Your job was to execute the approach. We had an objective. An objective we accomplish by following orders. Orders that come from extensive analysis of our intelligence sources --

NATASHA

It was never going to work.

SAWYER

We did not accomplish our objective. Simply because orders were not followed. By you. Now there's a huge fucking mess, and we have more problems now than we did at the beginning.

Natasha leans back and crosses her arms in frustration.

NATASHA

The approach wasn't going to work.

SAWYER

That's not your fucking job, Natasha! You don't get to decide what is going to work and what isn't! Your job is to follow orders!

(calmly)

Why is it you can't seem to get that right?

NATASHA

Yell all you want. I don't care. It wasn't going to work and we both know it.

Sawyer steps back and walks around the room for a moment. He is frustrated with Natasha. Natasha is completely silent. After walking around for a moment. Sawyer slowly and calmly sits back down.

SAWYER

You really seem to think it wasn't going to work...

NATASHA

I know it wasn't going to work.

SAWYER

You seem to misunderstand how this whole thing works... Your job is to follow orders.

(MORE)

SAWYER (cont'd)

There are a lot of things you don't get to know. You are making stupid decisions on impulse in an attempt to fly solo.

NATASHA

Go ahead. Tell me I'm wrong. You know it was never going to work.

SAWYER

Natasha... This isn't my first rodeo. Things are how they are. They are not how you think they are.

(beat)

It was going to work. And you blew it.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - DAY

Natasha is sitting at the living room table with RODERICK, 30s, an intelligent, serious, and dedicated spy. Roderick has his laptop open in front of him. There are some folders and documents on the table.

Roderick has been speaking with Natasha for a little while. Roderick is referencing some documents as he speaks to Natasha. They are both focused, professional, and serious.

RODERICK

We still don't have a reliable explanation for these events. We do believe they're all connected. We can't seem to find a definitive connection or a catalyst that precipitated these incidents. However, the symptoms exhibited by all the victims are completely identical.

NATASHA

I don't get it. Who wins here? Nothing's actually happening...

RODERICK

What do you mean?

NATASHA

These people are not attacking or hurting anyone. Nothing is being taken. They don't even seem to be destroying anything.

RODERICK
Are you serious right now?

NATASHA
Yes. I don't get it. Who wins here?
What's the point of this whole thing?

RODERICK
People are getting hurt, Natasha.
That's the point.

NATASHA
No, they're not. These symptoms are
obviously induced on purpose by
someone. But these people aren't
harming anyone. Why would anyone be
doing this? The culprit doesn't get
anything out of this, Roderick. This
whole thing makes no sense.

Roderick takes a moment to think. He seems anxious because
of Natasha's comments. Roderick closes his laptop and pushes
it aside before addressing Natasha again.

RODERICK
Is everything okay with you, Natasha?

NATASHA
(defensive)
What's that supposed to mean?

RODERICK
Your head doesn't seem to be in the
game. And the obvious is going right
over your head.
(beat)
Are you okay to keep doing this,
Natasha?

NATASHA
Are you fucking serious?!

RODERICK
I am. Are you okay to keep doing
this? Yes or no.

NATASHA
Did Sawyer say something to you?

RODERICK
No. Sawyer doesn't tell me anything.

NATASHA

Okay... So if Sawyer didn't say anything to you, where the hell is this coming from?

RODERICK

There are things that are known. And your irresponsible behavior as of late is one of those things.

NATASHA

Well, fuck you.

RODERICK

Are you in this or not?!

NATASHA

Yes, asshole! What the fuck could I possibly be missing?!

RODERICK

There are victims, Natasha. Victims. I said it, but for some reason you don't seem to hear it.

NATASHA

There are no victims! These people aren't hurting anyone!

RODERICK

Those people *are* the victims!

Roderick angrily stands up and paces around the suite. Natasha seems very confused about the whole situation.

RODERICK (cont'd)

(frustrated)

Fuck!

NATASHA

None of this makes sense.

RODERICK

You just seem to know it all, don't you?

(beat)

You're not my first choice for this. You're a loose cannon and this one's too big for you right now.

NATASHA

I can literally handle anything.

RODERICK

Fine.

Roderick sits back down. He opens up his laptop, and starts opening some files on it. Roderick tosses a folder with some documents in front of Natasha. Natasha opens the folder and starts looking through the documents.

RODERICK (cont'd)

The person of interest is one Mr. Simon.

(beat)

That's our best lead as of right now.

NATASHA

Okay... I understand.

RODERICK

We have reason to believe Mr. Simon is behind all this. He seems to be selling electromagnetic conditioning devices through his corporation.

NATASHA

That's impossible. There's no way anyone could get away with that.

RODERICK

He is calling them something else. That seems to be enough to get away with it.

(beat)

Mr. Simon seems to be in the business of selling "cultural assimilation systems" to extremely affluent clients.

NATASHA

Do they work?

RODERICK

That's unclear at the present moment. Mr. Simon's motives and endgame are also unclear at the present moment.

NATASHA

That's fine.

RODERICK

You have an appointment booked with him. You'll use the alias Ms. Wesserton. Here's everything you'll need for your alias.

Roderick pulls out a manila envelope from his bag. He tosses it in front of Natasha.

NATASHA

I understand.

RODERICK

Your orders are to find out as much as you can about Mr. Simon's "cultural assimilation systems", without raising any suspicions from the person of interest.

(beat)

Do you understand?

NATASHA

I do. I get it.

RODERICK

You know what to do. You have all the intel you could possibly need. Make sure to do your fucking homework, Natasha.

Roderick packs up his laptop in his bag. He stands up and starts walking towards the door. Before opening the door, Roderick stops and turns around to talk to Natasha one more time.

RODERICK (cont'd)

Don't blow it this time.

Roderick exits the hotel suite.

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE - DAY

MR. SIMON, 50s, a professional executive with a frighteningly friendly demeanor, walks towards the door to his office. The office has a sitting area with sofas and a coffee table, as well as a work desk with a computer and documents on it.

Mr. Simon opens the door to let Natasha in. Mr. Simon is extremely friendly and professional as he greets Natasha and shakes her hand.

MR. SIMON

Welcome, Ms. Wesserton! We are very glad to have you here.

NATASHA

Oh, why thank you, Mr. Simon. I have been looking forward to learning more about your services.

MR. SIMON

And I am excited to tell you as much as you'd like to know, Ms. Wesserton.

(beat)

Please, make yourself at home.

Mr. Simon pulls out a chair at his work desk for Natasha to sit on. Natasha sits down, and smiles at Mr. Simon. Mr. Simon goes around the desk to sit at his chair. Once he sits down he gets very professional and ready to talk business.

MR. SIMON (cont'd)

Well... If it's okay with you, would you mind telling me what you know about us so far?

NATASHA

Mr. Simon I really don't know very much. A trusted friend of mine told me you would probably be the best person to help me out with a little problem I've been having.

MR. SIMON

It would be our pleasure to be of assistance to you. What exactly is it you need help with?

NATASHA

So... I'm not sure about the best way to explain this...

(beat)

I have these... -- Let's call them employees.

MR. SIMON

I'm listening. Please feel free to share with me as much as you'd like. We would love to be able to help you with your situation.

NATASHA

Okay... So these *employees*... They seem to be giving me a very hard time. I don't know the proper way to explain what's happening. But they just don't seem to be able to get with the program.

MR. SIMON
(attentive)
Uh-huh...

NATASHA
It's like they don't understand how
things work at my... Ummm...
Organization...

MR. SIMON
I see...

NATASHA
And I just don't know how to get
through to them.
(beat)
I heard you have a "system" that
could be of help here. But, to be
honest, I don't know if there's
anyone out there who can help me with
this...

MR. SIMON
Oh... No, no, no. Ms. Wesserton,
that's exactly what we do here!

NATASHA
(unconvinced)
Really?

MR. SIMON
Our cultural assimilation systems are
the perfect solution to your current
situation, Ms. Wesserton.

NATASHA
How do you mean?

MR. SIMON
I have something exactly for this.

Mr. Simon quickly reaches for some folders on his desk. As he is looking through the folders, a business card falls out from one of them. Natasha glances at the business card. She recognizes it and begins to freak out. Natasha is visibly nervous, but she is doing everything she can to mask her panic.

Mr. Simon quickly picks up the business card and places it back in the folder. He doesn't notice Natasha's reaction to seeing the business card. Mr. Simon continues to look through the folders until he finds what he is looking for.

MR. SIMON (cont'd)

Ah! Here it is!

(beat)

This is a handout we put together for our prospective clients. You probably have a lot of questions --

NATASHA

I'm so sorry. Excuse me.

Natasha looks through her purse for her phone with an apologetic demeanor. She pulls out her phone, quickly unlocks it and looks through it. Natasha makes a worried face after looking at her phone for a little while.

NATASHA (cont'd)

I'm -- I'm really sorry, Mr. Simon. I hate to do this to a professional like you, but I have to leave. It seems I have an emergency I need to deal with right away.

MR. SIMON

(understanding)

That's absolutely fine. I completely understand. We can reschedule for another time. That's no problem at all.

NATASHA

Yes. Thank you.

Natasha gets up from her chair and gets ready to leave.

MR. SIMON

Would you like to take our handout with you?

NATASHA

Oh. No, no. That's okay. I would much rather go over all of this with you in person. Thank you for your time, Mr. Simon.

MR. SIMON

My assistant will reach out to you to reschedule. Thank you for reaching out to us, Ms. Wesserton. I look forward to seeing you again.

Natasha walks towards the door.

NATASHA

Thank you. Bye.

Natasha rushes out of the office.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Natasha is sitting at the living room table in her hotel suite. She is patiently waiting.

Sawyer opens the door. He walks in and sees Natasha sitting at the table waiting for him.

NATASHA

Hello.

SAWYER

(confused)

Hello.

NATASHA

Why didn't you tell me?

SAWYER

I don't know what we're talking about. But whatever it is, I probably didn't tell you 'cause it's not your business.

NATASHA

Why didn't you tell me what you were doing with Simon?

SAWYER

Who the fuck is Simon?

NATASHA

Mr. Simon!

SAWYER

(accusatory)

Oh... Well the way you say it, it sounds like you guys are friends.

Natasha stands up and walks close to Sawyer to confront him.

NATASHA

What's the deal between you and Mr. Simon, Sawyer?

SAWYER

Not your fucking problem. Natasha.

NATASHA

Fuck you!

SAWYER

Wild fucking guess here. You blew it again.

NATASHA

Fuck you!
(beat)
Tell me the truth!

SAWYER

The truth is, there's a lot you don't get to know. And that's how this whole thing works.

NATASHA

You're a sanctimonious piece of shit, Sawyer.

SAWYER

What's --

NATASHA

What are you doing with Mr. Simon?!

SAWYER

This job requires trust and the ability to work with limited information.

NATASHA

Are you deflecting?

SAWYER

What I do is not your business. You're going to have to learn a thing or two about trust if you want to stay in this line of work.

(beat)

You need to spend some time with yourself. There's a lot you need to sort out in your head.

(beat)

You need to learn your place, Natasha. Things are rarely what they seem...

Sawyer turns around and walks out of the hotel suite. Natasha stands there completely motionless. She looks like she is questioning every decision she has made in her life up to this point.

FADE OUT

THE END